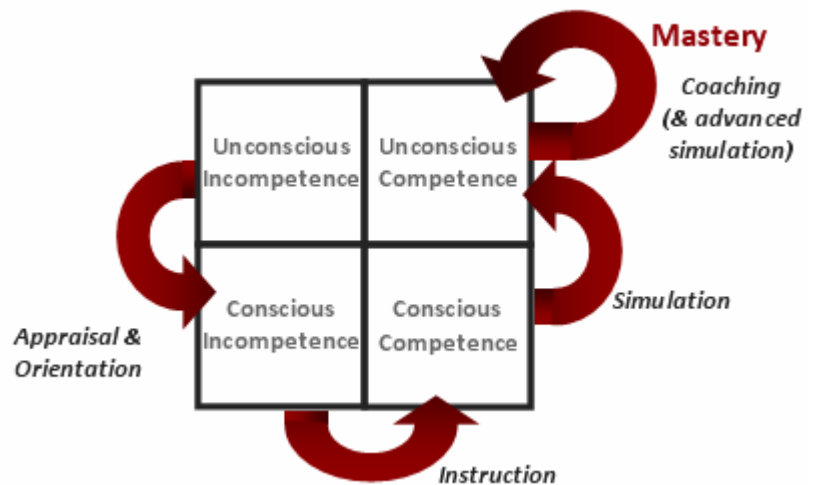


# Behavior Change Methodology

# Beyond Sales

# Training

## Briefing Paper



This brief document describes the *ProAct* approach to changing sales behaviors. We passionately believe that while traditional 'sales training' has a valuable place, by itself it will not bring about the transitions in behaviors that most organizations are seeking.

### Traditional Sales Training

Sales Training has undergone many developments over the last few years. We have progressed from simple instruction to interactive presentations, activities, exercises and role-playing, together with the introduction of powerful tools for Opportunity Qualification and Planning, as well as Account Planning etc.

Organizations have struggled to measure the effectiveness of sales training (as with nearly all soft skills training) and at best have managed to identify changes in specific behaviors (for example, the types of questions asked by sales people). There now appears to be a growing realization that once basic skills have been gained, the effectiveness of any sales training can only be judged as part of a larger sales transition program. For example the move from product to 'solutions' selling. We can measure the overall transition program, and have to be cognizant of the fact that use of new skills or tools can only be judged as part of the overall picture.

This paper describes our approach to changing the real life behaviors of individual sales people. We have other publications discussing thoughts about the wider aspects of sales force transition.<sup>1</sup>

### Our Inspirations

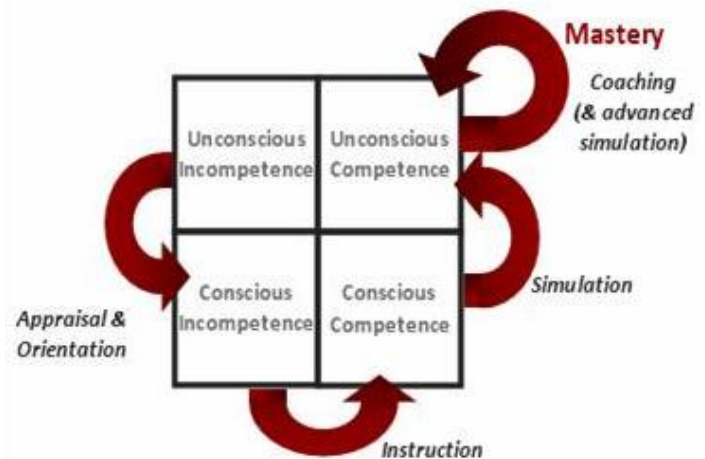
In developing the *ProAct* approach to sales behavior change in complex business-to-business selling, we have been guided by three principles and a number of experiences:

#### Principles:

- Selling today is a complex affair, combining multiple skills, people, tools and knowledge.
- The vast majority of sales people understand the basics of the many elements that go into being successful.
- No single skill or tool will make the change; there is a need to integrate specific changes into the overall selling approach.

#### Inspirations:

- We have researched the methods used by sports coaches, particularly sports where the activity is fluid and involves complex integration of strategy and multiple individual skills (football, soccer, rugby, tennis, basketball, golf etc.)
- We have researched the myriad of new techniques being applied in the general world of education, to discover successful approaches in other fields.
- We have used our own experiences both as line sales managers, and as facilitators helping many 1000's of sales people change their behaviors.



### The Models

We have adapted a well known overall model, and then applied it to sales behavior change. The model looks at the four traditionally defined stages of development, and adds a fifth stage, identified and described by many academics and sports coaches in recent years.

<sup>1</sup> For example 'Characteristics of the Successful Solution Selling Organization'.

Using this model as a basic template, we have developed our Five Stage Model of Sales. We further define these stages as:

<b>Struggling</b>	<b>Unconscious Incompetence</b>	<b>Old behaviors</b>	<b>Approach</b>
<b>Learning</b>	<b>Conscious Incompetence</b>	<b>Understanding of change needed</b>	<b>Appraisal &amp; Orientation</b>
<b>Developing</b>	<b>Conscious Competence</b>	<b>Knowledge of what to do</b>	<b>Instruction</b>
<b>Performing</b>	<b>Unconscious Competence</b>	<b>Automatically do it in reality</b>	<b>Simulation</b>
<b>Mastery</b>	<b>Aware Conscious</b>	<b>Constant tuning</b>	<b>Coaching</b>

**Struggling:** The sales person is not aware of the need to change and has no motivation to do so. Sales Management need to be heavily involved in helping the sales person to realize that change is needed, either to maintain current performance levels, or very often to meet new challenges that are being implemented across the sales team. For example, a sales person may be very competent as a Product Seller, but will need to understand why and how an organization is transitioning to a Solutions Selling approach, requiring changes in that sales person’s skills and behaviors. Senior Management can be instrumental in helping to set these future transitions, and first line sales management is critical in the appraisal and orientation process.

**Learning:** In this phase the sales person realizes the precise changes that need to be brought about. This can happen through line sales management appraisal and / or during the initial session of a sales training workshop.

**Developing:** Through ‘training’ the sales person develops the ability to apply new skills and behaviors. Where *ProAct* is involved in this process, we will utilize modern Accelerated Learning techniques, and focus on best practices, models, activities, exercises and role-plays. During this and the subsequent simulation phase, we borrow a very successful technique from sports coaching, the Whole – Part – Whole approach, where we initially look at the overall sales situation, then break it down into its relevant constituent parts, and finally put it together again in a simulation. At the end of this phase, the sales person should be competent in understanding and being able to practice new specific skills or use new tools. Most traditional training programs stop at this point.

**Simulation**  
 Many clients are amazed when they first experience a *ProAct* simulation. This unique experience involves:

- Every 15 minutes is a new ‘day’
- Meetings every other ‘day’
- Teams choose who they should meet with
- Meetings viewed and recorded by CCTV
- Various tasks, reports, forecasts to be completed
- Instant feedback from ‘customers’
- Competitive atmosphere with prizes

**Performing:** Knowing what to do is not the same as regularly doing it in day-to-day business. To get to the stage of the new behaviors becoming a reality, the sales person will have to integrate the new skills into their overall repertoire, develop confidence, and experiment with new approaches under difficult conditions. To borrow an analogy from golf professionals – there is a world of difference between doing it on the driving range, and being able to do it on a difficult course, during a tough competition!

The crucial discovery that we made was that it is essential for sales people to practice, refine and become comfortable using the new found skills during any development workshop. In real life, sales people face tremendous pressures, and expecting them to start implementing new skills after a 'training' program just does not work. This discovery was behind the development of our simulation methodology, which enables workshop participants to start actually using their new found skills and tools in an environment which as closely as possible reflects real life, but in a very condensed time period. Sales people should exit this phase with the confidence to use the skills automatically, having tested and experimented with them a number of times.

### Role Play vs. Simulation

#### Role Play

- Focuses on a single skill
- Bounded by time and scope
- Ideal for practicing and gaining proficiency in a single element
- "Like being at the driving range"

#### Simulation

- Multidimensional
- Utilizes many skills simultaneously
- Incorporates client tools, processes, goals
- Integrates use of skills in the total role
- Tests the skills in different conditions
- "Like playing a full 18 holes"

**Mastery:** The world of sports coaching in particular has found that there is a phase beyond 'Unconscious Competence'. Listen to any top sports person describe a recent performance, and even though they had been under intense pressure and having to react automatically to events, they are still able to pinpoint particular detailed aspects of their game. This points to the fifth stage as being one of 'Aware Consciousness' and it is this ability that can really determine excellent performance. In sales there are no prizes for coming second, and in a competitive market winning is often about being just slightly ahead of the others.

Mastery is brought about through constant coaching and development. This can be done by the individual themselves, but just as with sports people, probably requires a knowledgeable coach to help with feedback, reinforcement, and suggestions.

## Design of Sales Behavior Change Programs

Our realization of the elements of real transitions of behavior change with sales people, has led us to architect our workshops using a standard yet flexible template:



'ProAct Briefing Papers' are short briefing papers, designed to help clients who are working with ProAct Business Development. No warranty of any kind is implied. Please provide us any comments or suggestions for improvement at [info@proactbd.com](mailto:info@proactbd.com) or visit our web-site at [www.proactbd.com](http://www.proactbd.com).