

## Live vs. Virtual Training

by : *Tim Deese*

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Training is everything, and live training is the most important. You try all day long, from the time you arrive, until the door is closed, you are training your people. They follow you, good or bad, right or wrong, they do what you do. They follow your every move whether you like it or not, which simply means your every move is being watched and copied by someone or everyone on your staff. After all, you are responsible for the success of your people. Isn't that why you were named "manager" in the first place? Your direct supervisor wanted you to duplicate your good points and transfer them to the employees you manage.

For many years trainers have been trying to teach people to follow their methods by using books, pamphlets, radio programs, tapes, CDs, DVDs, TV programs and now virtual training. Manufacturers have been training salespeople for years through brochures and questionnaires, and finally computer online training. We have even progressed to the next level: Live interactive computer training courses with preset times, courses, and tests, with the goal to save time and money. The real "nuts and bolts" of training, still comes down to live interactive, hands on, real person-to-person, touch it, hold it, feel it, experience it training. This creates the excitement and enthusiasm, while teaching others about the things they want employees to know and remember to reach and maintain a set goal of job performance.

What makes training in your store different and what makes training your managers different? What makes you believe that sitting your people in front of that electronic piece of equipment can train them to be any better salespeople or managers? How often do they just memorize, or sleep through, repetitive verbiage that holds no interest for anyone? Training is very simple to explain, but very hard to accomplish in today's virtual-tech computer savvy world. A great trainer has the ability to convey knowledge from person to person without losing their interest. Then those trained eventually become the trainers. It is their job to convey learned knowledge to someone else without losing or changing what was taught, and training is everything, but live training is the only way to accomplish good, thorough learning.

Now, we do not mean to imply that the money your company has spent on virtual training is not good or that good things do not come from that computer program, but it is not, and never will be as valuable as live, hands on, person to person training. Remember what we said in the beginning? You are responsible for the success of your people and they will follow a great leader. Furthermore, you are always training. In our live workshops, we often give this as an example: If your top salesperson was having a terrible month and you counseled him and found he was upset because his checkbook was not balanced, he was bouncing checks, and could not straighten it out, your first response may be to balance his checkbook and get him back on track. Problem solved, salesperson back on track and all is right once again.

But what did you teach him? Most people would respond by saying you taught him nothing. Wrong! You taught him a very valuable lesson. Every time he has a problem, and he stops producing, he will come to you when you are busy and you will fix the problem for him! That is not training...that is enabling! That is not a good practice and yet you will put your people in front of the computer, leave them there, return to ask them a few questions and call that training? Wonder why they do the same thing with the customers?

The only way for training to be effective is to put your people in front of real people who specialize in the area you want your people trained. This goes for managers and yes, Mr./Mrs. Dealer, for you as well. Get trained by a professional, in person, away from your stores, in an environment that is designed for training, interaction with dealerships country-wide to form new ideas, renew old ideas, generate better ideas, and in all, sharpen your ax, because in today's market you will need it. Stop trying to save a few dollars and train your people continuously until they are doing what you want them to do, and the way you want them to do it. Training is everything, and training is every day, all day long. Do it live and do it often.

**Tim Deese** is the president of Progressive Basics, Inc. He is a former franchise car dealer who has designed and implemented used car training and marketing for 15 manufacturers in 28 countries. Progressive Basics has trained over 40,000 dealers and managers. Deese has been a speaker at numerous NADA conventions, and was one of the top rated speakers in 2001 at the Australian Automobile Dealers Associations Convention. In 2005, as an international expert on pre-owned vehicles, Deese was asked to do a special about pre-owned sales practices on CBS News with Dan Rather. He speaks to state, national and international group associations. Progressive Basics does seminars as well as in-house monthly programs.

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