HIGH PERFORMANCE KAM SKILLS
INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

LINE MANAGER'S INTRODUCTION& ROLE

Introduction to the Program

Dear Line Manager,

One or more of your Account Managers is enrolled in the Key Account Management - Advanced Selling Skills Program.

This Introduction has been written for you the Line Manger and will explain how the Program works and how you can support your direct reports throughout the Program.

Topic 1 – How does this Program work?

Let’s first talk about how the Program works and then we will discuss why it works. Most of us have attended traditional classroom teaching at some point in our work life. In the traditional model, we attend a one or two-day training seminar in which a trainer explains a number of learning points and we may get to practice some of these ideas in artificial role plays.

A great many studies have been conducted in recent years which show that this traditional approach is not very effective. We just can’t take in all that learning in such a short time and it is tough to apply the new ideas to our real world when we are sitting in a classroom.

The value of the training is not so much the training itself but the application of the training; it is the application of the learning which differentiates effective skills development.

So this Program uses a different approach which most people find much more effective.

In this Program we shall use a more flexible approach over a longer period of time so that the individuals have plenty of time to understand the concepts and to apply them in their real world.

Here is how it works:

The Program is divided into 10 Modules; one Introduction Module, eight teaching Modules and one Review Module.

Each Module consists of online videos, a group Tutorial and a series of tasks and exercises, some of which the Account Manager will complete alone, some in small groups and some with another manager. All the tasks and exercises are related directly to your customers and your business so we don't have any academic exercises.

Every two weeks the Account Manager will receive a Work Book. The Work Book will either prepare the Account Managers for the forthcoming Tutorial or help them to apply the learning from the Tutorial just attended. Account Managers can work through the Work Books in their own time whenever it suits them.

The schedule would look like this:

Week 1	Pre-Tutorial Work Book (online video, tasks and exercises)
	Attend the Group Tutorial
Week 2	Post-Tutorial Work Book (application of the learning)
	Complete the ‘Buddy’ exercise
	Complete the ‘Assessed Task’ – a piece of work specific to the Account Manager’s presented to the line manager or other manager for review
Week 3	Pre-Tutorial Work Book for the next Module…and so on

Every two weeks we address a new topic. Some topics will be familiar and others may be new. Each of the topics we discuss has been defined by considering Best Practice. This means that the topics we discuss will each be directly related to best practice capability – in other words we would expect the top performing managers to have high capability in these areas.

To help focus the learning on these best practice topics, there is a Best Practice Capability Scorecard for each Module. This Scorecard summarises the most important capabilities which we would expect a high performing manager to demonstrate. Since we all want to operate at the best practice level, we shall use this model to assess performance. The Module is structured to address each of the Best Practice capability criteria.

As the Line Manager, you are encouraged to review the completed Scorecard with the Account Manager and to question the score the Account Manager has given him/herself. In particular you should ask for evidence, either written or verbal, that the Account Manager really does understand the point.

Program Modules

Module 1	Introduction
Module 2	Selling Fundamentals
Module 3	Common Mistakes to Avoid
Module 4	Preparation for the Sales Meeting
Module 5	Starting the Sales Meeting
Module 6	Customer Needs Analysis
Module 7	The Sales Presentation and Close
Module 8	Dealing with Questions and Objections
Module 9	Post Meeting Actions
Module 10	Program Review

Topic 2 – Why does the Program format work?

We have already made the point that most studies show that traditional classroom training is a less effective approach to professional learning. The reasons most frequently cited are:

Not enough time to absorb the material – most of us forget most of the content with a very short time. In fact most of the studies show that you will recall very little indeed within a few months of the program

It is hard to be away from your business even for a day – most of us have constant demands from the company and from customers so taking two or more days away from the business may not be practical. It is not unusual to find Delegates on day-long programs spending much of their time answering emails

You have to apply the material for it to be useful – the classroom is not the real world and for most of us it is hard to apply the concepts in abstract. One the job training is most effective.

There is no time to review and revise – most of us need to try the new idea a few times before we get it right - whatever you are doing you will need to experiment and make mistakes before you get it right – traditional classroom training does not allow this

What is the most effective way to learn?
We each learn in slightly different ways; some want to hear about it, some see it, some read about it alone and some to talk about it in a group first.

Whichever way suits you best, the studies show that there are a number of things we can do to make the learning most effective. Here they are:

- If you can explain it then you understand it - once you are confident to explain something the chances are high that you really do understand it
- Long term exposure to the issues allow the ideas to sink in and enable you to experiment
- Talking about the application of the ideas in the real world with others helps to stimulate your own thoughts
- Applying the knowledge (learning by doing) means that you can develop the skills
- Multiple sessions mean that you can discuss your experience (good and not so good) and so make changes
- Use defined best practice to benchmark capability and performance – by summarizing what the highest performers are doing we have an excellent framework to build our model

The Program is structured to include all of these approaches.

This means that the Account Managers will have different opportunities to experience the material. They will see lecture style presentations (via the video), have optional, will discuss the issues together and have the opportunities to apply the learning individually, as part of a Buddy pair and as a group.

For example, when we deliver the Tutorial, we ask the Account Manager to explain how he or she will apply the material to the real customers and prospects. In this way we can ensure that everyone understands the concepts and others can contribute with some additional ideas and insight.

The Buddy system

Talking about specific issues with a sympathetic and disinterested person is a very good way to consolidate learning and so we use a Buddy system. Each manager is paired with one other – the Buddy. Some exercises specifically require the Account Manager to contact the Buddy at some convenient time during the week to complete an exercise, test an idea or discuss results.

Assessed Tasks

For each Module, there will be one Assessed Task. This is a task which is critical to success (for example preparing a presentation) based on established best practice. For the Assessed Task, the manager will prepare a short presentation or document which will be presented to you the Line Manager for review and assessment. This is your way to ensure that the manager is absorbing and using the learning in the real world.

Once the manager has presented the work to you, you will be asked to assess the work using a number of guided questions. The questions relate to your assessment of the manager's ability. You will also be asked to comment where applicable and to discuss your view with the manager.

In most cases you will be satisfied with what you have seen although you may have some additional advice to support the manager. In a few cases you may want to the manager to revise some aspect of the work and occasionally to repeat the task in its entirety.

This assessment is not marked in the sense that it contributes to a program mark but rather provides the manager with a third party view on progress in a formal way and provides the line manager with a regular progress review. Most managers find this very useful.

Topic 3 – What will the Account Manager experience during the Program?

Work Books
The manager will receive a two Work Books for each Module of the Program. The Work Book will either prepare for the next Tutorial or help to apply the learning from the most recent Tutorial.

Just like this summary, the Work Book is divided into core 'Topics' and each topic includes some text, directions to watch the relevant teaching video, self-reflection exercises, tasks to use the learning, the Best Practice Scorecard and Personal Action Plan.

Online videos
Each Module uses a number of video presentations to make the relevant learning points. The videos are short. Experience shows that 4-6 minutes is about the right length for a presentation video. The Work Book will direct the manager to watch a video and may then ask them to address a question or complete a task.

The Group Tutorial

Every two weeks the managers will attend the group Tutorial. The Tutorial lasts for 90 minutes so we keep things moving quickly. The aim is to provide a group platform to discuss, debate, develop and practice the ideas from the Module.

Format of the Tutorial

Each Tutorial will start with a rapid welcome and then spend a few minutes reviewing the main points from last time. We address questions from the last Tutorial at this time.

The Tutorial will then address each of the core topics. The managers will have already prepared for some of the topics in detail so less time will be devoted to these.

One of the best ways to ensure understanding of a topic is to explain it to others, so in some cases the managers will have the opportunity to explain the different points made in each Module to the group as well as discussing their personal experience.

Depending upon the topic, there may be issues for discussion, exercises for smaller groups and time for problem solving.

Topic 4 – Personal Objectives and Action Plan

Setting objectives is a good way to focus efforts for the Program and to measure progress.

The Account Manager will be asked to use the form below to set his or her own personal objectives for the program. You should make time to review and discuss these objectives and to review progress every four weeks.

Personal Development Plan

Your Personal Development Plan (PDP) will help you to acquire new or develop existing skills and approaches so you can:

- **enhance your performance in your current role**
- **plan ahead for possible changes in your current role**
- **learn and practice new skills for you next role**

You can use the Scorecards in each Module to help identify your specific development needs in each topic.

It is well worth getting a view from your line manager or a colleague to add some level of objectivity.

You should refer to your development plan regularly – at least every two weeks - to see how you are progressing.

Personal Development Plan: Terminology and format

Different organisations will use different terminology and formats – we have aimed to keep this format very simple; feel free to change the terminology and format to suit your organisation and personal preference.

Development Objectives- these are the specific objectives you have selected to help you to move towards best practice – make sure they are clear and measurable.

The Priority column helps think about the importance of this development for you. It might be:

1. **important in your current role**
2. **beneficial but not important in your current role**
3. **important in your planned future role**

In the Support column you can list the support you will need - this will include the module material and perhaps input from your manager, colleagues, coaching, practice and so on.

When you review you should:

- **Assess your progress to date**
- **Reflect on your learning**
- **Get input from a third party (line manager, colleague, etc.) for objectivity**
- **Consider whether any aspects of the plan need to be amended**
- **Identify factors that may have prevented you from achieving your development objectives – how will you resolve this next time?**

Personal Development Plan: Template

My personal development Objectives are	Priority (1,2,3)	I will do the following activities	I need this support	Due date	Done

Topic 5 – Personal Action Plan

We use a Personal Action Plan to define the specific tasks the manager want to set for themselves for the next two weeks as a result of the work we have done in the Module. We shall review progress each time we meet.

The template form appears below. Please make time few weeks for a quick review with the manager.

My Personal Review and Action Plan

I have achieved the following so far

As a result of this Module, I will do the following

What?	By when?	Done?

Topic 6 – Thinking about your own team

To help prepare, think about your current situation and answer these questions…

What are you hoping this Account Manager will get from the program?

……

……

……

Which area of skill/capability do you want his/her to develop particularly ?

……

……

……

What would success look like for you at the end of the Program?

……

……

……