



Post Traumatic Learning Disorder

an article
from T10



Dave woke with a start, he'd had an epiphany. He said to himself in the mirror, "Let's increase knowledge in our sales force. Let's face it, the more they know about widgets, the more they'll sell."

Over breakfast he thought some more and remembered something his old mentor had told him about knowledge equalling information and that an informed sales process will always win sales. So he concluded that his sales force should know everything about widgets, right down to the last microchip – there'll be a sales revolution and he'd be able to take all the credit.

Dave told Steve the L&D guy, who said "That's a brilliant concept Dave, all we need to do is add a quiz to test their learning and we're done. I'll get on it right away."

One month later, a memo arrived in Dave's inbox from Kevin in accounts. "Figures are down Dave – tell your blokes to get their fingers out." Dave thought for a moment and concluded that as it was August, most people were on holiday, things will pick up in September. It'll be fine.

Six weeks later, a memo arrived in Dave's inbox from Kevin in accounts. "Figures are down AGAIN Dave – I thought you said your blokes had been upskilled – so where's the result? Looks to me that they've been downskilled and at this rate of decline we'll all be out of a job by Christmas..."

The next week, out on the links, Dave noticed that Phil the regional sales manager was under par in more ways than one. "What's going on Phil?" said Dave. "You and your blokes have had the most in-depth training we've ever done and the results from the quiz were fantastic."

"Yep." replied Phil, "The training was detailed but it was too much to take in AND we had to change the sales process to include all the new information and it's now nearly two hours long and our customers are bored at the end of it!"

"Oh no, what have I done?" said Dave.

Let's see shall we? Dave had created an information dump. He'd overloaded the sales force with irrelevant information which meant that they became living, breathing, widget encyclopaedias instead of highly focussed sales people.

He'd forgotten that their job is to sell, not to be humanoid technical manuals simply reciting information.

He'd also forgotten that sales people sell to earn themselves and their company a living.

Sales people need to be empowered and supported by an L&D function to be able to tell customers about how their products will benefit the customer's business. How their products will make the customer's business more streamlined or what effect they will have on their bottom line.

They should be able to:

- ask open questions which identify their customer's needs
- identify the best widget for the customer
- use their finely honed sales skills to close the sale.

Don't be a Dave – remember what your learners really, really need to learn to be able to perform their job.

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