

Conducting a Media Sales Transformation



A large broadcast media company was facing a changing business environment, with increased competition and the rapidly rising integration of digital technologies. They knew that in order to thrive in this new, competitive marketplace, they would need to change their way of selling - and quickly.

Rising customer expectations were significantly impacting the way sellers approached the market. Buyers were increasingly dissatisfied with transactional product delivery, and instead wanted sellers to provide insight and create compelling cases for how their offerings would accelerate business results. Historically, the organization's sales team was forced to split their time between customer engagement, fulfillment, and administrative work.

The company had built a strong, well-known brand, but lacked an internal, centralized marketing and pricing organization. Without this centralized function, the organization's 40 local units were left to work independently, running sales and campaign delivery without critical resources and tools. In order to be successful in the new business environment, the organization knew they needed to change the division of labor to empower the sales team with the tools necessary to sell and service their customers effectively.

Implementing the Sales Transformation

To address these challenges, the company collaborated with a leading strategy consulting firm to create a blueprint for the new company structure. This included new corporate product offerings and centralized product, marketing, and pricing management functions.

The company then partnered with BTS, a global professional services firm, to implement these changes by focusing on the people side of the strategy. BTS was

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tasked to communicate the changes to the current workforce, integrate the newly created work processes into the organization, and ensure sales teams learned the skills and behaviors necessary to carry it forward.

BTS interviewed the company's critical stakeholders to incorporate key perspectives and align the sales transformation program with the organization's desired future state. They then designed a targeted communication strategy and developed a multi-phase sales transformation journey that included:

1. Launch Simulation

This one-day workshop was a discovery-based learning experience designed to provide context about the changing market and introduce the sales team to the organization's new direction. More specifically, the workshop gave the sales team a chance to understand the organization's reasons for the change, the vision for how responsibilities of existing roles could change, and how centralized and local roles will work together in the future to drive greater satisfaction and growth for both the sales teams and their customers.

2. Sales Team Virtual Assessment Center

Each sales team member participated in a 2.5 hour individually-administered, virtual assessment center. This experience provided the team members with the opportunity to demonstrate their skills in a simulated future-state environment. The assessment experience mirrored the organization's newly defined roles and evaluated the organization's current talent against critical sales and service capabilities. Trained assessors evaluated each sales team member's behavior in two exercises. The assessment results were then aggregated to identify participants' operating styles, strengths, and areas for development for both the sales account executive and account manager roles.

3. Strategy Implementation Working Sessions

Implementation working sessions were held after the completion of each local market's assessments. Assessment results, past performance data and direct manager input related to observations and team member aspirations, were used to configure the local revenue teams and place team members in newly defined roles. In addition, BTS collaborated with sales leaders to segment their current client base and align key client accounts with best fit talent.

4. Sales Training and Performance Support

Finally, each local unit's sales team participated in a two-day sales skills training that addressed the local business unit's critical issues and business goals. Participants gained insight to the changes in customers' buying behavior and practiced key sales skills that equipped them to succeed in the new technology dominated marketplace. After completion of the program participants were provided with a mobile app that reinforced the new skills and behaviors and allowed them to apply the learning during a series of activities.

Results

BTS conducted an initial pilot in 4 local markets. Over the course of the following year, over 20 additional local markets and more than 600 participants completed the program.

The insights gained from the assessment and the active inclusion of the local market's revenue team members in the sales transformation initiative proved to be a huge benefit to the company and allowed them to accomplish two important goals:

- Place their talent in the right roles by proactively utilizing assessment results
- Reduce employee turnover by aligning talent's success with the business' overall success

Program debrief interviews with the company's leadership team have produced highly positive feedback. The leaders demonstrate optimism and confidence in their newly formed teams and their ability to successfully tackle the challenging market conditions.

About BTS

BTS focuses on the people side of strategy, working with leaders at all levels to help them make better decisions, convert those decisions to actions and deliver results. At our core, we believe people learn best by doing. For 30 years, we've been designing fun, powerful experiences™ that have profound and lasting impact on people and their careers. We inspire new ways of thinking, build critical capabilities and unleash business success. It's strategy made personal.

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