

OnTarget's Executive Alignment and Management Alignment Workshops

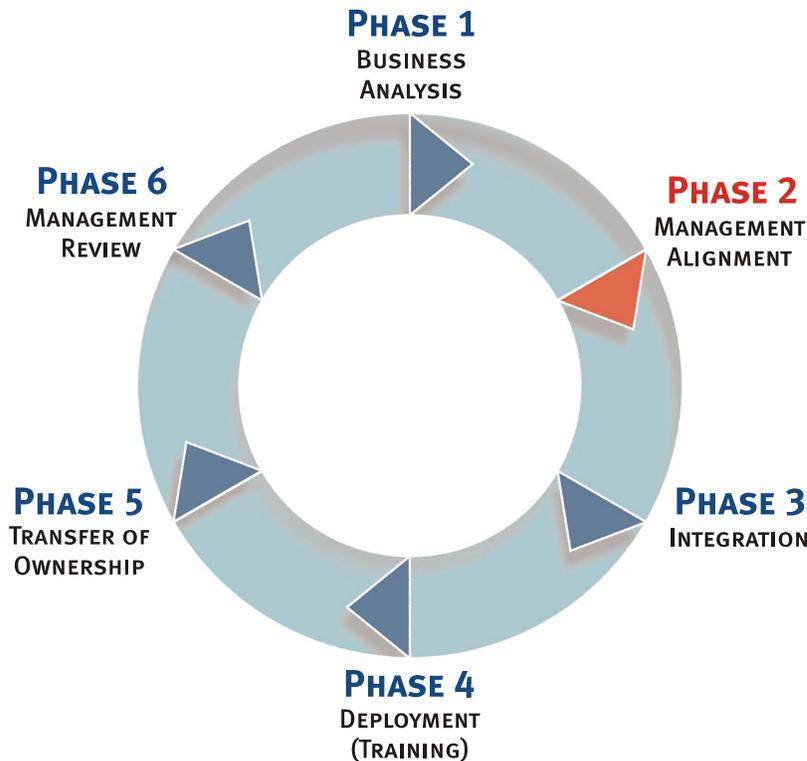
Implementing a traditional skills program across your sales organization typically requires little real involvement from the executive or senior management teams. Of course, first-line managers need to reinforce and coach their people in the new skills, but that is normally the extent of management's involvement. If the training is effective, individuals will see the personal value of their learning these new skills and, if coaching takes place, the effectiveness of the individuals will be improved.

Implementing a new sales process or methodology across the organization, however, requires a very different approach. You can't afford to leave to chance the fact that individuals will see the value for themselves. You need to have everyone adopt the new approach, or its effectiveness will be dramatically reduced. The reality is that with so many changes occurring in sales organizations today, this initiative which you believe is so important will probably be viewed as just one more change you are asking your salespeople to take on board.

Our experience helping over 350 clients worldwide to implement new sales processes and best practices has revealed a number of reasons why such change initiatives often don't get institutionalized by the sales organization. In general, salespeople:

- See no reason to change their proven successful behaviors
- Don't see the change as urgent
- Don't see the value to themselves and/or to the organization
- Are unclear what outcomes are expected as a result of the change
- Are unclear how and when the change is going to affect them individually
- Don't see executive management's reinforcement of the message beyond the initial announcement of the program
- Don't see sales management "walking the talk"
- Get inconsistent messages from executives and managers

Additionally, initial successes are not made visible across the sales organization.



OnTarget's Executive/ Management Alignment Workshops are delivered as part of the Management Alignment phase of OnTarget's Implementation Architecture.

As a result of these factors, even when the change you are asking your salespeople to make is viewed positively, initial “uninformed optimism”^{*} can quickly turn to “informed pessimism,” causing people to check out, privately or publicly, from the program. While the initiative may therefore be received with initial enthusiasm, often after only a short time will the change lose momentum and fail to be sustained by the organization. Several successive failed management initiatives will render it extremely difficult for subsequent initiatives to succeed, no matter how important they are. Executive credibility will eventually suffer, morale of the sales force will decline, and this spiral will be difficult to overcome.

For these reasons, OnTarget has developed, as part of our tried and tested change management approach to implementing process change, two levels of short, half-day alignment workshops.

OnTarget Executive Alignment Workshop

The first of these, the OnTarget Executive Alignment Workshop, is aimed at those functional/business unit executives whose organizations will be affected by the new process or methodology. Delivered before the major training rollout takes place with your people, we provide the Executive Team with a brief overview of the program, then we take the team through a series of exercises designed to develop action plans in the following critical areas:

- Properly communicating the change to each part of the organization affected by the change

^{*} From Daryl F. Conner, *Managing at the Speed of Change* (Villard Books)

- Defining executive and management accountability, roles and responsibilities
- Identifying current sales and marketing processes which may need to be modified to be consistent with the new program
- Defining success measures for the initiative
- Finalizing the Implementation Plan

The OnTarget Executive Alignment Workshop ensures that the Executive Team is completely aligned with the initiative and understands what it needs to do to implement it throughout the organization.

OnTarget Management Alignment Workshop

Immediately following the OnTarget Executive Alignment Workshop, we run one or more OnTarget Management Alignment workshops. Similar to the OnTarget Executive Alignment Workshop, these are targeted towards all managers between the Executive Team and your salespeople. The purpose of the OnTarget Management Alignment Workshop is to ensure that every manager: clearly understands the reasons for needing to implement this change; can communicate a consistent message to their people; and comprehends their role in supporting, reinforcing, coaching, and sustaining the change process. Without this critical step of OnTarget Management Alignment workshops, we have discovered that all too often some managers—either explicitly or implied in their behaviors—can easily become the cause of “black holes” into which the change initiative disappears, never to be

seen again!

Through this cascading series of half-day OnTarget Executive Alignment and Management Alignment workshops, we will ensure that there is complete management alignment behind this change within your organization, before we begin training your people. These workshops can usually be completed quickly, either by region or by business unit, with no delay in the main implementation. Having attended one of these workshops, your management will be willing and able to help set the scene for this initiative and establish the right context for the required change to take place.

The combination of OnTarget Executive Alignment Workshops, Management Alignment Workshops, and our one-day management programs—which are designed to teach your managers specifically how to analyze and coach their people in our processes and methodologies, and delivered after they attend the main training with their people—provides the perfect “bookends” before and after the training, ensuring that the methodology becomes truly institutionalized within your sales organization.

This end-to-end approach will help ensure that your investment in the OnTarget processes and methodologies is protected, that you will achieve both the team and organizational effectiveness you are seeking, and that you will not need to repeat this exercise a year or more from now because the first attempt failed!



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