The Benefits of Online Sales Training

A guide for helping staffing leaders understand the benefits of online sales training and sales onboarding

By Dan Fisher

MENEMSHAGROUP

Introduction

Since our founding in 2008, Menemsha Group has successfully helped hundreds of IT staffing companies accelerate time to productivity for new hires, shorten their sales and recruiting cycle, improve fill rates, increase overall quota attainment and increase profitability per employee.

We've trained thousands of staffing professionals including sales reps, recruiters and front line sales and recruiting managers (Branch Managers). We've delivered instructor-led classroom training over full-day, half-day and multi-day workshops and have hosted hundreds of sales training webinars. We've also deployed online sales and recruiter training for thousands of staffing professionals.

The results are clear, online sales and recruiter training is far more effective for learners for engaging in, retaining and adopting the skills, knowledge and behaviors being taught. Online sales and recruiter training is also far more cost effective for business owners, CEO's and CFO's.

This eBook explores the key benefits to online sales training including its benefits over instructor led classroom training. The intention of this eBook is to help staffing professionals identify ways in which they can improve their sales onboarding and sales training program, and determine whether or not online sales training is a fit for their organization.

New Hire Onboarding Challenges For Staffing Companies

Effectively onboarding new recruiting hires and sales hires is a challenging task that requires strategic thinking, proper planning and complete buy-in and commitment from executive leadership and frontline managers. Before exploring the key differences between instructor-led classroom training and online training and the benefits of, let's first identify and frame the key reasons for why many staffing firms struggle with new hire ramp up time and employee retention.

Water Through Fire Hose Training

It doesn't work to try to cram as much information into the brains of your new hires in the shortest possible time. This fire-hose strategy overwhelms new hires, delays knowledge and skill acquisition and ultimately leads to failure. According to a study conducted by Xerox, sales people forget 87% of what they learned within 30 days. Giving your recruiters and sales reps a short orientation (day or multi-day bootcamp) and then turning them loose and expecting them to "figure things out" is a recipe for failure.

Staffing firms should deploy a sales onboarding training solution that is NOT about time to completion but instead focuses on learners developing 'skills mastery.'

Shadow Training is the Most Common Onboarding Tactic for Staffing Companies

Most staffing companies rely heavily on shadow training because they believe "if my new hire shadows my

top performer he or she can clone their behavior." Despite the good intentions, most new hires lack the context or experience to know what to look for or what questions to ask. Top performers also have weaknesses that in all likelihood will not be showcased when being shadowed by a new hire which means your new employee only gets a limited view into your sales or recruiting process.

Services and Processes Oriented (Sequenced) Training

We've learned over the years that most staffing companies, and many of our competitors, orientate their new hire training including new hire orientation and "bootcamps" around their company service offerings including their internal recruiting processes and CRM/ATS training. While new hires do in fact need to be trained on these topics, they don't warrant being incorporated into a new hire orientation program.

Teaching a new sales rep or recruiter the "in's and out's" of your CRM/ATS system is not going to help them accelerate their time to an initial sales meeting, first job order or first placement. In fact, it actually delays those desired results because it only gives the new hire additional and unnecessary information to think about. We also know that teaching a new hire the company "elevator pitch" including service offerings and company accolades is also a poor approach because this encourages the new hire to go into "pitch mode" when engaging a prospect or candidate.

It takes a seasoned and experienced team of Learning and Development professionals who understand the buying behaviors of IT hiring managers and IT candidates to understand what training content is needed, when it is needed, and what order it should be sequenced and consumed in to optimize learner ramp up and adoption.

Lack of Engaging Training Content

Creating and deploying engaging content that captures the mind and attention of recruiters and salespeople is a common challenge all IT staffing companies face. Most firms rely on 'full day immersion sessions' which include lecture, Powerpoint presentations and other static content in which new hires are tasked with reading through piles of outdated documents focused on dry topics describing the company history, service offerings, policies and procedures. As we will explore, engaging training content is key to engaging learners and driving training adoption.

Lack of a Consistent New Hire Onboarding Structure and Experience

Fact: when training content and/or delivery of the training content is inconsistent, the results are inconsistent. Most staffing companies lack consistency in how they onboard their new hires including how they run their boot camps and instructor-led classroom training.

It is difficult to ensure new hires receive the same consistent and intended message when training is instructor led, classroom based and facilitated by different leaders or when you rely on shadow training. Inconsistent training delivery mechanisms equals inconsistent results and without a consistent vehicle for training delivery, it becomes impossible to track and measure the effectiveness of your training program. As a result managers can't identify leading indicators that predict success or failure. This is why we see many staffing firms who hold onto underperformers far too long before managing them out of the organization; inconsistent training produces inconsistent results and high wash-out rates.

Lack of Manager Involvement

Many staffing companies invest in training their recruiters and sales people but fail to hold their frontline managers accountable to participating in the training with their employees including sales onboarding. Owners and senior leaders say to themselves "my manager has been doing this for years, they don't need the training, besides they're too busy with other work." The reality is front-line managers are the most significant leverage points for sustaining behavioral change. When frontline managers fail to participate in their new hire onboarding they miss out on the opportunity of observing to what degree the new hire is engaged with the training material and how effectively they can execute. Skipping out on this opportunity means frontline managers are failing to plan out a personalized development, reinforcement and coaching plan that details how they will support, coach and evaluate their new hires on what they were taught during onboarding. Fortunately, with our training solution, we have built a virtual coaching solution that automates the coaching process to ensure managers remain involved but also allows them to minimize their overall time investment.

# Benefits of Online Sales Training

As you're probably aware, more and more educational institutions and businesses are adopting online sales training. This is largely due to the increase in affordable and easy to use technology that makes online sales training so cost effective and quick and easy to deploy.

Learner Adoption is Faster, More Effective with Online Sales Training

By putting your sales training on an online platform such as a learning management system you can take advantage of video sales training. One of the benefits of video sales training is that video is proven to accelerate learning and improve learner retention over reading documents and instructor-led lecture. Forrester Research estimates one minute of online video equates to approximately 1.8 million written words. In addition, 90 percent of information transmitted to the brain is visual, and visuals are processed 60,000 times faster in the brain than text. This indicates video improves learning styles and increases the rate at which we retain information.

Online Sales Training Ensures Continuity

For staffing firms truly committed to becoming a market leader and rapidly scaling their business, you will need a training solution that is guaranteed to train all existing employees and new hires the exact same way.
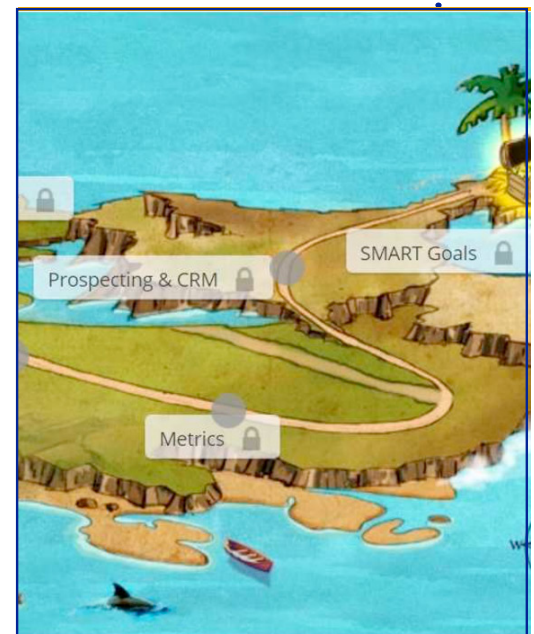
For most staffing firms, nobody truly "owns" training. As a result, managers, tenured employees and members of leadership share the delivery of training by rotating who will lead and serve as the instructor for each of the different training courses and/or new hire classes. While this is all done with good intentions, this training is typically informal in which each "rotating instructor" trains or instructs each class by drawing on his or her own personal experience. Let's assume you have five internal employees who collectively share the responsibility of training delivery. Imagine applying this approach with your next ten sales hires. Your ten new sales hires will hit the market selling five different ways because there is no continuity. To further complicate things, what happens when one of your "rotating instructors" is not available to deliver training or leaves the company? How do you ensure continuity? This training approach doesn't scale.

Online sales training and the use of video ensures your learners receive the exact same training and learning experience. Online training and the use of video allows you to visually standardize your sales training by establishing "what good looks and sounds like." Standardization is key because it enables consistency and without consistency you can't iterate and improve. When your employees all receive the exact same training it makes it easier and quicker to identify and diagnose the skill deficiency and then provide the necessary coaching. But when a manager has a team of sales reps or recruiters who have all been trained slightly differently it becomes difficult and time consuming to make the corrections.

Video Training Accelerates User Adoption

We live in the age of video and YouTube. If you want to perfect your golf swing, learn how to build a shed for your backyard or change the oil in your car where do you go? You search for how-to videos on YouTube. Recruiters and salespeople are no different. Your employees prefer and your millennials expect to consume training and learn something new by watching a video over reading documents, emails or blogs. By asking your employees to consume training via watching videos, you make your training content far more persuasive which not only makes the training more engaging but it drives adoption. By creating IT staffing sales and recruiting training videos that incorporate animation, and interactive learning you can address a variety of different learning styles including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, all of which work perfectly on smartphones. Video based training also supports micro-learning (small bite size videos) in which your learners can quickly and easily learn what they need while on the go (in the field).

Video based training drives consistent and predictable training results by delivering a consistent message for all employees, regardless of location, tenure or experience level. This makes it far easier to build a high performing sales culture. It will also enable you to quickly scale your business office to office, market by market because it is now quick and easy to replicate the desired sales & recruiting behaviors. If a picture is worth a thousand words then video may be worth well over a million. Studies from Psychology Today show that people process the message delivered via video 60,000 times faster than they can from reading text

# Online Sales Training is Ideal for Millennials

Studies show that online training appeals to Millennials and Generation Z because of features like gamification including badges, leader boards and certifications. Online learning is also appealing because it is interactive where team members can collaborate online through chat and video features. This is referred to as social

learning. Finally, and as you probably already know, Millennials want feedback. They want to know where they stand (with their supervisor and relative to their peers). With online learning they can get just that. Online report cards like the one you see in the inset provide learners with quantifiable feedback as to how well they are engaged with and internalizing the training material.

Microlearning and Mobile Learning

Studies indicate that retention spans continue to recede. By incorporating microlearning into your training you can increase and accelerate retention which accelerates new hire time to productivity. Microlearning is a way of offering training in the form of small, manageable bite-sized pieces. Participants can access quick bite size (2-5 minute tidbits) training pieces from any mobile device which accelerates knowledge adoption and retention. By making your training content including your videos and job aids available through mobile application, learners can access bite size learning content such as a case study, objection rebuttal, email or voice mail template quickly and easily while in the field or from the comfort of their home.

People are constantly connected to their devices so rolling out and getting your employees to adopt mobile sales training is easy because it gives your employees the freedom and flexibility to access their training material whenever and wherever they like. If I have learned anything from training thousands of sales professionals and recruiters, learning is a process and everyone learns differently and at different paces. Online learning including mobile learning allows learners to consume training at their own pace and to consume it as many times as necessary until they internalize it. They can pause it and repeat it whenever and as frequently as they like. With mobile sales training the training is delivered on the learners terms, not the instructors terms.
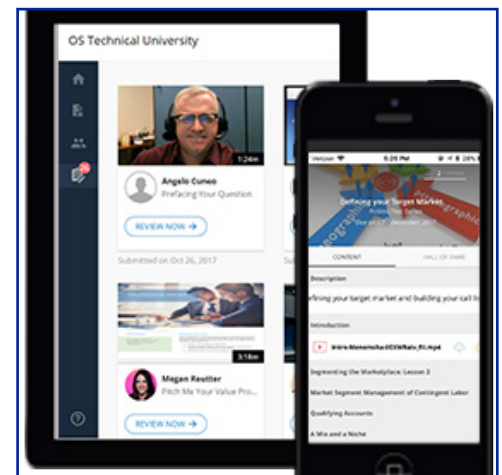
Personalized Training and Learning Paths

With online sales training you can deploy modular, milestone driven learning paths that are personalized to the learner based on their skill and/or experience level and tenure. This helps more of your new hires and tenured employees succeed in the shortest possible time frame. This not only helps new hires quickly ramp up so you can meet your aggressive growth plans it but it also minimizes the revolving door syndrome that plagues many staffing firms.

A personalized learning path is a learner-centered training approach that emphasizes learner-specific goals and objectives, as well as preferences. It also refers to the path that a learner elects on their own, such as which online activities and exercises they choose to participate in during the onboarding and training experience. Each activity gives them a better understanding of the topic. Personal learning paths give learners control over their own training experience so that they can more effectively acquire and retain knowledge and skills that will help them in the real world.

For example, to provide sales new hires with a roadmap that is most relevant to their needs, you could design your training and sequence them to align with and mimic the stages of your sales process. Suppose your sales cycle is 90 days from initial cold call to placement. With a three-month sales cycle, you could focus on getting sales reps fully ramped in three phases, with each phase lasting 30 days and consisting of only the relevant training modules unique to each phase. Unlike instructor led classroom training in which everyone and everything this is bound by time (cram as much training content into a small window of time), online training allows you to break it down into small bite size pieces and focus on teaching learners only the skills and knowledge they need at that moment in time, not the skills and knowledge they will need 60 or 90 days down the road.

Automated, Video Recorded Role Plays Certify Learners are "Conversation Ready"

Sales reps and recruiters need to be able to engage in meaningful conversations in order to win. To do so, they need to feel confident and prepared and managers need the confidence in knowing that every sales rep and recruiter is "conversation ready." Many of today's online sales enablement platforms (including the Menemsha Group sales enablement platform) gives employers the most effective way for certifying their reps and recruiters messaging is consistent and on point.

Practice, Rehearse & Certify: Sales reps and recruiters can participate in online automated video role play missions in which they're tasked with navigating dozens of everyday, real world IT staffing sales/recruiting scenarios in which they must audio and video record themselves executing a customer or candidate conversation while apply skills and knowledge they learned in order to properly execute the mission and receive manager certification.

Reinforce Skill Mastery: Managers and subject matter experts can provide quantitative and qualitative feedback to reinforce and drive adoption of what has been taught ensuring skills mastery and training ROI.
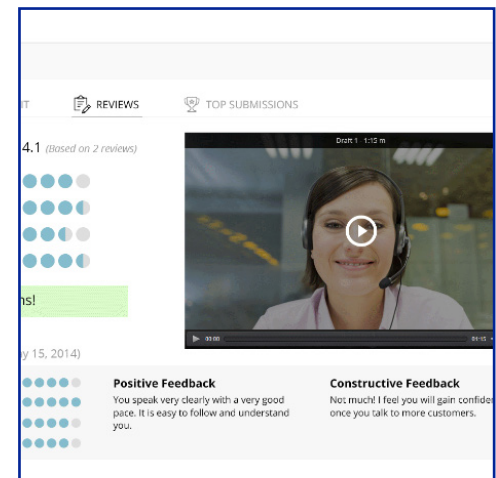
Social Learning and Gamification

Salespeople and recruiters are naturally competitive. It's woven into their DNA and an intrinsic personality trait that comes into play whenever it's time to compete. We also know that sales people, especially millennials would rather learn from their peers by watching and hearing how their peer executes a cold call, overcomes the same objection or delivers the same message they're trying to deliver than have their manager telling them what to do. Right, wrong or indifferent, seeing and hearing how a peer positions their value, leaves a voicemail message or executes a negotiation has more validity than when it comes from the manager. Not only does it make learning more exciting, but it brings out the best in your employees to compete for recognition among their peers. Nothing gets sales reps and recruiters more engaged in training then when they can watch each other's video recorded role plays and read the manager's qualitative and quantitative feedback to see how they rank

against their peers.

Cost Effectiveness

One of the biggest advantages of online sales training is cost-effectiveness. Online sales training is far more cost effective than traditional instructor-led classroom training. An online approach to sales training removes the burden of coordinating schedules, printing handbooks, travel and lodging costs, and speaker fees. Oh and let us not forget, opportunity costs. There is a cost to taking your sales reps and recruiters out of the field and off phones and enrolling them in a full day or multi-day training workshop.

With instructor-led classroom training there are variable costs to account for. Below is just a rough estimate to account for when flying your team in for a workshop. Feel free to adjust the numbers as you see fit.

- Airfare : Average, $500/per person

- Hotel: 2 Nights @ $200 per night

- Meals: 2 days @ $100 per day (including bar tab both nights:)

Total Potential Investment BEFORE Training: $1,300 per person and that doesn't include a team event or other activities. This also does NOT include the cost for the instructor to prepare for and deliver the training event or if you need to rent space such as a banquet room at a hotel or other facility. Finally, don't forget the opportunity cost, the cost of taking your people out of the field and off the phones to attend instructor led classroom training.

With online sales training you can expect to pay to pay between $500.00 and 2,500.00 per employee, depending on the scope and complexity of your training program.

Data Driven Insights, Learner Report Cards Improve Learner Performance, Training Effectiveness

Staffing firms waste millions of dollars every year on new hire onboarding and training because they lack the data analytics to track and measure the effectiveness of their new hire onboarding and training program. Online sales training gives you visibility into what training programs and classes work and help you identify the capabilities that drive results. With an online sales enablement platform you gain real-time visibility into your team's sales readiness. You can track, measure and improve team capabilities and gain insight into your sales training program regarding user engagement, content retention and adoption.

With training analytics and report cards you will know in real-time whether or not your new hire is progressing down the path to productivity or simply going through the motions and meandering into the abyss. Rather than waiting six months (or longer) before realizing your new hire is not going to make it, this insight will save you thousands of dollars by enabling you to make better management decisions.

Getting Started with Online Sales Training

To get started with online sales training, consider the following questions. Answering these questions will reveal key insights into your "online sales training readiness."

- How engaging is the delivery of your existing sales training content?

- How quickly and easily are your learners adopting your training l materials?

- Is your training content including your sales assets easily and readily available for all to access?

- Is your sales messaging consistent rep to rep, office to office?

- Does your current sales onboarding and training program account for training millennials and generations t0 follow?

- Can your reps easily watch and learn from other reps including your top performers?

- Is your current sales training delivery model scalable?

- Do you have access to data to quickly and easily iterate and improve your existing training program? To improve employee retention?

- Are you getting your desired ROI out of current sales onboarding and training program?

Your answers to these questions could be a tell tale sign that it is time to reboot your sales training program. But you will only know for sure by taking the time to review your existing sales training material including how it is delivered and consumed. You and and should also interview team members including new hires for their feedback.

Next Steps

To learn more about Menemsha Group's sales and recruiter enablement solution including how we leverage innovative technology and modern learning methods to make winning behaviors repeatable and deliver predictable revenue growth, download our eBook, **Menemsha Group's Sales & Recruiter Enablement Roadmap for Scalable Growth.** In the eBook you will discover the tools, technologies, techniques, methodologies, content and processes we employ to help staffing and recruiting firms attain scalable, repeatable success. **Download it today!**

[GUIDE]
MENEMSHA GROUP'S SALES & RECRUITER ENABLEMENT ROADMAP FOR SCALABLE GROWTH

DOWNLOAD

About the Author

Over nearly a quarter-century, Dan Fisher has accumulated a successful track record in consistently driving revenue growth for staffing and recruiting firms as an individual contributor and sales leader. Since founding Menemsha Group in 2008, Dan has designed and deployed sales and recruiter onboarding, training, and enablement programs for hundreds of staffing firms. He has also coached thousands of recruiting industry professionals. Connect with Dan on Linkedin.

About Menemsha Group

Menemsha Group serves the staffing and recruiting industry with data-driven insights, enterprise-class performance, and industry-leading content built on more than two decades of industry experience delivered through an award-winning, sales enablement platform. See why more staffing and recruiting firms choose Menemsha Group for recruiter and sales onboarding and enablement. Menemsha Group provides an out-of-the-box turnkey sales and recruiter enablement solution consisting of:

- Content services
- Training services
- Coaching Services
- A SaaS-based, AI-powered recruiter enablement platform

Menemsha Group is also a Bullhorn marketplace partner. We help Bullhorn customers design and implement scalable and repeatable sales processes to drive Bullhorn adoption. We lead the refinement and validation of sales stage definition, alignment with the buyer's journey, exit criteria including verifiable outcomes, CRM workflow configuration, linkage to messaging, sales methodology, sales metrics, and sales forecasting.