

# ttraining

## A Matter of the Mind

When Vito Torregiano interviewed with Oki Data Americas, Mt. Laurel, NJ, for the position of vice president, U.S. Sales, he told his potential employer that he had a few requirements of his own. Among his priorities was an investment in training for the salesforce. Oki Data agreed, and a year later, the sales team was seeing double and triple-digit growth in key areas.

“I wasn’t surprised by the results,” says Torregiano, who was hired early in 2001. “I traveled with the majority of the salespeople before we engaged in training, and I knew that if we could put something in front of them that was innovative and provocative, we would see significant growth.”

Key to the growth was a change in the selling strategy for Oki Data’s LED color printers. Rather than continuing to sell through the division’s established distribution channels, the salesforce would be asked to sell directly to organizations –typically, corporate IT managers and CIOs – with the dealers fulfilling and servicing the orders. The challenge was that the salespeople lacked the experience and the confidence to do so.

Torregiano selected Rochester, NY-based 2logical to train his people after learning about the company’s focus on developing the right “mindset” as well as sales skills. “It was the major difference [among the training companies]. The mindset piece really appealed to me and struck a chord with my managers,” explained Torregiano.

2logical’s mindset training addresses aspects ranging from being solution-oriented to maintaining a positive attitude and becoming self-motivated. It starts with getting salespeople to be 100 percent responsible for themselves. “If you can’t get people to do that, any other training you do with them is destined to fail,” says David Naylor, EVP of 2logical.

Some 65 salespeople went through 56 hours of sales training in groups of 15-25. Those same salespeople then went out and increased color printer sales by nearly 200 percent. “We grew our pipeline by about 300 percent as well. It was a function of getting in front of the customer,” Torregiano says. “When you look at the end result, I have a very confident salesforce now.”

In addition to his commitment to sales training, Torregiano is committed to having that training be instructor-led. “I think you can transfer knowledge in a computer-based or remote training environment, but when you get into skills, you have to teach that live. You need the interaction among the people involved.”

-K.E.