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SALES DESIGNATIONS: Unlocking Canada’s Business Potential



Advancing sales. Accelerating performance.

The sales profession is a vital part of the Canadian economy

1.2 MILLION sales professionals work in Canada today, representing **6.6%** of the national workforce.

The Government of Canada is targeting a **30% GROWTH** in goods and services exports by 2025. Achieving this bold goal will require a strong, well-qualified sales force.

THE CHALLENGE:

A SKILLS GAP – CPSA’s 2016 sales recruitment survey found that **a majority (73%) of Canadian sales leaders report difficulty finding qualified candidates to fill open positions.**

THE SOLUTION:

87% OF SALES AND HR DECISION-MAKERS AGREE a clear set of measurable standards for sales professionals would improve their ability to effectively hire and retain qualified candidates.

BUILDING CANADA’S PROFESSIONAL SALES FORCE CAPACITY CRITICAL FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

Telecommunications giant TELUS faces a challenge that is increasingly common for Canadian companies – difficulty recruiting and retaining sales professionals equipped to meet the ever-complex needs of its business customers.

“In the past, as a telephone company, we sought very specialized sales talent not in high demand elsewhere. But today, our offering is so large and technology-based that we’re competing in the labour market against companies selling other technologies,” says Louis Morin, vice president, sales performance, with TELUS.

“Everybody is looking for the best talent available, and it’s hard to find.”

Compounding the recruitment challenge is the changing role of sales professionals, and the expanding levels of knowledge and skills required for success, Mr. Morin says. “I think that’s the biggest challenge every company is facing. Sales has moved beyond the “product pitch” concept to a solutions approach; it’s not easy to find sellers who understand customers’ business priorities, growth opportunities and emerging competitive risks.”

The often-frustrated quest for high-quality sales talent is also gripping other industries. Michael Dunlop is director of sales operations with Wolseley Canada, a national wholesale distributor serving plumbing, HVAC, refrigeration, waterworks and industrial markets. With a head office in Burlington, Ontario, Wolseley has 220 branches across the country.

“Our customer’s expectations continue to evolve beyond a transactional level to that of a true business partner who adds value be-

“Everybody is looking for the best (sales) talent available, and it’s hard to find.”

Louis Morin
Vice president, sales performance, TELUS



Today’s effective sales professionals understand customers’ business priorities and provide innovative solutions. Canada’s sales community is working to equip sellers with the knowledge and skills to meet evolving customer expectations. **ISTOCK.COM**

yond just product,” says Mr. Dunlop. “We need sales professionals skilled in meeting these changing expectations. As the traditional sales model has focused on product sales, the available pool of sales professionals skilled in meeting these changing

expectations is limited.”

“The rules of engagement are changing; everyone can provide product. Our customers are aligning with suppliers who understand their business goals, objectives and challenges, and provide solutions

that go far beyond product,” adds Mr. Dunlop.

“They are looking to leverage knowledge, data analysis and technology to improve their efficiencies – allowing them to create more value for their customers and grow profitably.”

TELUS and Wolseley are among the companies that have turned to the Canadian Professional Sales Association (CPSA) to help them elevate the quality of their sales training. The association has spent the last few years putting in place the building blocks to make the sales role a true profession – with standardized competencies, skills assessment tools and educational frameworks, along with graduated designations that support career progression.

“Skilled sales professionals are integral to a company’s success, but for a long time, the sales role was taken for granted,” says Peter Irwin, president and CEO of CPSA. “And the true skills and competencies required to be a good seller weren’t standardized.”

The CPSA set out to change all that. “We conducted research on what employers need and worked with our industry partners to develop the competency framework,” Mr. Irwin says.

“Employers now have a set of standards that helps solve recruiting challenges, and organizations can evolve a developmental path for their sales professionals, embedding continuing education into the mix. As sales team members develop their skills, they can be certified at a higher level, providing a clear career path.”

Enhancing career-development opportunities is also designed to **See TALENT on CPSA2**

INSIDE

SELLING THE NATION’S TECHNOLOGY: Canada’s booming IT sector challenged to find enough skilled sellers. **CPSA2**

A NATIONAL NETWORK: CPSA-accredited partners deliver standardized training. **CPSA4**

DEVELOPING SALES LEADERS: New education and training elevate leadership skills. **CPSA6**

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WANTED: SKILLED SALES PROFESSIONALS

Initiatives launched to increase pool of sellers with information technology know-how

The skills shortage currently being seen on the sales side in the information technology (IT) sector could be seen as a good problem to have. That’s because it comes as a result of a boom in Canada’s IT sector over the last five to eight years.

“In Canada in recent years, a large number of tech startups have done really well. They’ve been well funded and consequently have been aggressive in hiring sales talent to drive the top line numbers they need,” explains Joan Leroux, senior vice-president of sales and customer success at Adlib Software in Burlington. “In their pursuit to do that, it’s really diluted the pool of sales people with IT knowledge.”

While the growth in IT in Canada has definitely contributed to the shortage, another issue cited by Leroux is an image problem for sales as a profession.

“A lot of grads don’t even think about sales,” she says. “It’s creating some drag in the market for uncovering emerging talent, as well as those who haven’t quite realized their talent for sales.”

Ms. Leroux says she’s been trying to hire one account executive with an enterprise technology sales background and “it’s feeling like looking for a unicorn these days.”

The high demand for IT sales professionals is good news for those who do have both IT training and sales skills because there are plenty of jobs – but for those trying to fill the positions, it’s a challenge.

The Canadian government has made it a priority to address the sales talent shortage in IT and other key economic sectors. The Government of Canada recently provided funding to the Canadian Professional Sales Association (CPSA), to allow the association to accelerate its initiatives to improve the skill

“
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Joan Leroux
Senior vice-president of sales and customer success, Adlib Software



Standardized professional training and more post-secondary sales programs are among the solutions to address the IT sales talent shortage. [ISTOCK.COM](#)

levels of the Canadian sales force, attract new people to the profession and establish professional designations for sales professionals.

Expanding consistent standards for skills assessment and training, and creating professional designations are all seen as key mechanisms for build-

ing a more qualified IT sales force.

Ms. Leroux says there are plenty of sales professionals being downsized because of automation or obsolescence – those who sell newspaper ads or office equipment, for example. With a little retraining, they would be very interesting candidates for companies like hers.

“We hired a lot of people from the Yellow Pages and Xerox a few years ago. Many organizations that had historically invested heavily in sales training were redefining their go-to-market sales strategy. As a result, a new source of sales talent opened up to employers willing to invest in product and market training,” she says.

create a career path so people do come out of school with a career in sales in mind,” Mr. Sheridan says.

“We want them thinking about sales as a profession at the college or university level, and creating more options for themselves with employers like us.”

Mr. Sheridan says introducing sales as part of a business-degree curriculum makes sense.

“We are slowly starting to see sales courses offered and people coming out of school with some form of sales experience or education,” he says. “If they’ve already been thinking about sales and have some of the fundamentals, I can bring them into my workforce and have an impact sooner.”

“I could take someone with a sales foundation and then spend time training them specifically on the “Challenger” methodology, which is how we like to train our sellers. If you have someone with a computer science degree who’s also studied sales – that would be a clear indicator they want to apply their technical know-how in a customer-facing sales environment.”

Asked if a lack of skilled sales talent is slowing Canada down globally, Ms. Leroux says the shortage poses challenges for smaller companies.

“It might mean they need to deploy alternative sales methods – offshoring to call centres or alternative market strategies,” she said. “It likely means a slower start without the talent.”

JOB-READY PROFESSIONALS BREAKING STEREOTYPES

According to the Conference Board of Canada, the sales and marketing professions have been among the top five in highest demand over the past 10 years. While the image that comes to mind for many is still often the stereotypical, 1900s-style used car salesman, the Canadian sales workforce is now extremely diverse, with about half of sales positions in business-to-business roles.

In researching its latest report, The New Sales DNA, the Canadian Sales Professionals Association (CPSA) received a clear message from industry: continuous training is seen as vital for sales success. Employers want a national standard for sales professionals, and they want more from new recruits, including more skills, knowledge, commitment and results.

For those seeking a career, meeting industry’s requirements pays off: the CPSA report also found that 90 per cent of commercial sales professionals felt that sales is a good or very good job; they were twice as likely to say they are getting ahead in their personal finances than falling behind.

Rich Workman’s career trajectory aligns with these findings. The Western North America sales manager of Sophos, an international cybersecurity firm, graduated from BCIT’s sales program in 2000 and has hired graduates of the program in his role at Sophos for seven or eight years.

“The most important benefit is that graduates are completely job ready,” he says. “The program prepares them for a day in the life of a sales professional in a high-tech company like ours, where they are asked to do a massive volume of work. They have to manage their time well, and they learn to do that, along with the

“
It’s about having the right balance of intelligence, intellect and drive, as well as the ability to prioritize, balance and deal with constant change.”

Rich Workman
Western North America sales manager, Sophos



practical skills. It’s about having the right balance of intelligence, intellect and drive, as well as the ability to prioritize, balance and deal with constant change.”

“Professional salespeople understand that sales is a process that needs to be adapted for each customer, so they are very effective in understanding needs and aligning their product or service to benefit each customer,” says Bruce Anthony, a faculty member in BCIT’s marketing management – professional sales program. “The two main attributes are the drive to overcome rejection and continue through the process, and interpersonal communication skills – with the emotional intelligence to work well with others.”

Professional selling requires a broad skill set, so BCIT’s two-year applied diploma focuses on fundamentals: approaching prospects, diagnosing needs, professionally and persuasively presenting products and services, and coming to agreements. In addition, the program covers effective use of all communication channels and building customer loyalty by providing a high level of service.

About a third of BCIT’s graduates go into technology, another third into business services and the balance into other sectors. “I would like to see more business schools emphasize professional sales skills to their students,” says Mr. Anthony. “We’re a trading nation – it’s what’s needed in Canadian business.”

Learn more about current Canadian post-secondary and graduate sales programs at [cpsa.com](#).

FROM PAGE 1 TALENT: EXPANDING CPSA STANDARDS, DESIGNATIONS

attract more people into the sales profession. The CPSA has other initiatives designed to make sales an attractive career, including sharing curriculum materials with educational institutions.

“Educators are developing programs using CPSA standards, and that is also designed to increase the flow of students into the field,” Mr. Irwin says. “Our goal is to increase the acceptability of sales as a professional career. It’s not always on students’ radar in part because sales has not been taught at the undergraduate level. We are slowly starting to change the landscape.”

The Government of Canada recognizes the value of a skilled sales force to support national targets for innovation success and economic growth. This fall, it announced funding under the Sectoral Initiatives Program (SIP) to help CPSA accelerate adoption of its standards and designations.

“The Government of Canada is focused on ensuring Canadians have the skills to fill good quality jobs in industries that are in need of workers. The Canadian Professional Sales Association and its industry partners are doing great work creating learning pathways that will benefit job seekers and those working in the industry,” says Patty Hajdu, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour.

Meanwhile, TELUS and Wolsley

both say they are already seeing success from integrating CPSA standards into their training.

TELUS worked with the CPSA to audit a first-level training curriculum within its TELUS Sales Academy, and this past summer, became the first organization in Canada to have an internal training and development program accredited by the CPSA.

“We have always had training, but now our program has closed some gaps and gives our sales staff a strong career path,” says Mr. Morin. “These higher standards have definitely helped us with recruitment. We had a new recruit recently comment on our training and digital learning tools, saying, ‘TELUS is like the “Club Med” of sales – everything is included.’”

Wolsley’s Mike Dunlop is also seeing the benefits of using the CPSA standards and designations – for both junior and senior sales staff. “Today’s young workers expect more. If the new generation coming into our business in sales doesn’t see opportunity for career development and an investment in their continuing education, they will move on.”

“We are also making it a priority to upgrade the skill set of our experienced sellers,” he says. “They also value the opportunity to gain knowledge and learn new strategies to help them meet the evolving expectations of our customers.”



Graduates of BCIT’s marketing management – professional sales program are in high demand and widely seen by employers as “job ready.” [SUPPLIED](#)

THE MAKING OF A TRUE PROFESSION

The face of sales is changing for the better



BY PETER IRWIN
PRESIDENT AND CEO, CPSA

Like all industries and professions, sales is changing – and changing rapidly.

Indeed, in The Future of Jobs Report 2018, the World Economic Forum finds that 54 per cent of workers will require significant re-training and upskilling by 2022. This is due mainly to technological changes such as automation and artificial intelligence (AI).

Granted, robotics will not impact the sales profession the same as other industries such as manufacturing, but we are seeing automation play a role in sales.

And education, re-training and upskilling are critical to the future of the sales profession for two important reasons.

First, we need to address the shortage of skilled sales professionals – or “skills gap” – across Canada. And second, we need to re-frame the image of sales professionals in the public mindset. Sales is a profession just like accounting or law, not simply a job to close a deal and pick up a quick commission.

For some time now, the Canadian Professional Sales Association (CPSA) has been working to erase the misconceptions about sales that have prevented many talented people from entering the profession.

Sales professionalism is difficult to achieve without proper training and schooling. Through critical research and education, we’re helping to lift lingering negative perceptions of

Economic forecasts call for unemployment to soon hit a five-year low. That’s good for the Canadian economy, but adds challenges for sales leaders when it comes to hiring and retaining talent.

sales in the general population.

And with the backing of the Government of Canada, corporate partners and dynamic educational brands like Ryerson and HEC Montreal, the CPSA is turning sales into a profession like the others with undergraduate university courses, continuing professional education and industry designations that must be earned and updated.

Just last month, the Government of Canada committed to a three-year investment in the CPSA, as we reach out to post-secondary institutions and the sales community to increase education and training around our designation framework.

This investment is part of the Sectoral Initiatives Program (SIP) and it will help fund more research; develop new systems to better match employers, educators and job seekers; accelerate the introduction of designations; and provide educators with more tools to drive sales into the curriculum.

The SIP identifies key sectors of the Canadian economy and bolsters human resources and skills capacity in them.

For too long, young people have ignored sales as “Plan A” in their career paths and “fallen into” sales

later, often without formal training.

This is part of the reason for the skills gap, where three-quarters of Canadian employers say they’re having difficulty finding qualified candidates to fill sales positions. And let’s face it, if you produce the most wonderful products and services but don’t get them to market with an effective sales team, your company is in trouble.

The Government of Canada is clear that the sales profession should no longer be underappreciated for its contributions to the economy. This endorsement is something new and shows government commitment to our profession like never before.

With the government’s backing, we’re confident we can help close the skills gap and, in turn, improve Canadian competitiveness.

In addition, employers want better national standards. Beyond getting sales courses into undergraduate programs at Canadian universities, CPSA’s professional credentials – the Certified Sales Associate (CSA), Certified Sales Professional (CSP) and Certified Sales Leader (CSL) – all help in this regard.

By creating consistent skill sets and bases of knowledge, employers can rely on the fact that professional des-

ignation holders have demonstrated the skill sets for success in sales through rigorous training, examinations and on-the-job experience. At the levels of CSA, CSP and CSL, each also requires annual professional development to maintain the designation.

Economic forecasts call for unemployment to soon hit a five-year low. That’s good for the Canadian economy, but adds challenges for sales leaders when it comes to hiring and retaining talent.

Sales professionals are frequently identified among the top three groups of employees (along with engineers and IT) who are most difficult to recruit and retain. Plus, the federal government is targeting a 30 per cent growth in goods and services exports by 2025, putting even more pressure on reducing the sales skills gap.

To achieve this goal, we must produce a strong and vibrant sales profession – armed with the fundamentals to sell into markets at home and abroad. It can be done.

Discover what CPSA is currently doing to help the sales community at cpsa.com.



Creating more university and college sales programs will help bring more young people into the profession. [ISTOCK.COM](http://istock.com)

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REDEFINING PERFORMANCE SKILLS

CPSA competency model – A new standard for sales talent development

Assessing the skills of candidates for sales jobs is a challenge for many companies as they try to determine if applicants have the right competencies for the position. But that’s changing due to a new sales training and designation program developed by the Canadian Professional Sales Association (CPSA) Institute.

The Sales Professional Competency Framework, identified and refined by industry leaders, aims to provide essential sales skills as the foundation of all CPSA Institute designations, from Certified Sales Associates to established Certified Sales Professionals and Certified Sales Leaders.

Richard Louttet, CPSA vice-president, education & certification, says research showed that sales leaders in Canada were having difficulty identifying qualified candidates to fill sales roles.

“There were often many applicants for a job, but no standard to measure them against and determine if they had the qualifications to be successful in a sales role,” he says.

CPSA worked with industry representatives to create a competency framework and designation program to meet the skills standards employers are looking for when hiring new salespeople.

Candidates for designation can choose one of the three levels, depending on their existing knowledge and experience. The program is delivered by accredited educators approved by CPSA. It requires candidates to complete a certain number

“We are moving away from the notion that anyone can be in sales, to a point where sales is seen as a profession with identifiable competencies and skills that people need to learn as they advance through their careers.

Jeff Guthrie
Chief sales and marketing officer, Moneris



of hours of instruction, either part-time or in a one-week intensive full-time program, and then pass an exam at the end of the course.

Jeff Guthrie, chief sales and marketing officer at Moneris, was on the industry advisory council that helped develop the framework. He says



until now there hasn’t been a benchmark against which to measure the competency of a salesperson.

“All we could do was ask if they have the experience and can they close, that sort of thing. It was very subjective and differed from company to company,” he says.

The CPSA designation will now provide evidence of levels of competency that are essential to success in sales and give sales the credibility it deserves as a career – particularly among young people considering career options, adds Mr. Guthrie.

“We are moving away from the notion that anyone can be in sales, to a point where sales is seen as a profession with identifiable competencies and skills that people need to learn as they advance through their careers,” he says.

Mr. Guthrie believes even veteran salespeople who may rely on little more than gut feel to be successful can improve their performance and be more effective by adopting the competency model.

“Gut feel is all very well, but it’s not what drives sales in today’s sales environment, where data and science and a grasp of social media and an understanding of how customers use the internet to research purchase decisions are increasingly important competencies for successful salespeople,” he adds.

Find out how your current skills measure up at cpsa.com.

ASSESS YOUR SKILLS

You’re in sales, but how much do you really know about the skills you need to succeed and how to improve them? The new Canadian Professional Sales Association (CPSA) online Sales Assessment will help you find out.

The 30-minute assessment is made up of 30 questions designed to challenge your day-to-day skills as a sales professional. Each question has been developed and reviewed by sales professionals to provide an assessment based on CPSA’s sales competency framework.

The assessment allows new sales talent as well as seasoned professionals to regularly review their strengths and areas for improvement, and helps guide professional development priorities for the year.

Each question is linked to an area of the CPSA competency framework. On completion, CPSA provides you with a summary report of the skill areas where you assessed well and the areas that might be improved through professional development.

For more information about the Sales Assessment and Sales Professional Competency Framework, visit cpsa.com.

ACCREDITED PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS HELPING TO BUILD CANADA’S SALES EXCELLENCE CAPACITY

Research conducted by the Canadian Professional Sales Association (CPSA) shows that 73 per cent of businesses have open sales positions that they can’t fill. Many candidates apply – but they simply don’t have the skills and expertise required.

Because a skills gap of this magnitude is too difficult for any one organization to close on its own, the CPSA has created a national network of accredited sales educators, including universities, colleges, private training companies and enterprises with in-house training. “If you’re an undergraduate student studying business, you now have the opportunity to specialize in sales through a university or college partner. If you’re a practising sales professional who wants to upgrade your skills or move to a new position, we can connect you to high-quality sales training courses from our approved providers,” says Karla Badger-Brown, the CPSA’s senior accreditation manager.

The association is also building awareness and programs within companies such as TELUS, one of its enterprise partners, which means sales professionals can acquire new skills by participating in their training and development programs, she adds.

Jobs with attractive compensation and benefits await graduates of these programs, says Dr. Badger-Brown. “There’s a massive need for qualified sales professionals today, and the Canadian government is predicting a 30 per cent growth in goods and services exports by 2025.”

The current skills gap developed alongside dramatic changes in what it means to be a sales professional. “There has been a radical shift in the way buyers buy,” says Gord

“If you’re a practising sales professional who wants to upgrade your skills or move to a new position, we can connect you to high-quality sales training courses from our approved providers.

Karla Badger-Brown
Senior accreditation manager, CPSA



Smith, a partner in the RAIN Group, a CPSA-accredited partner. “You often hear things like, ‘Buyers are 60 per cent of the way through the buying journey before they engage with the sales team,’ which is largely true. Prospecting has also become more difficult, as everyone is in a heightened state of distraction. And a decade ago, there might have been three or four people from the client side involved in making a \$500,000 purchase decision – that number has doubled.”

A RAIN Group study asked 700 buyers who collectively purchased \$3.4-billion in products and services, across industries, what distinguished the organizations they chose from those in second place.

Three factors emerged as essential: educating the client on new ideas and perspectives; collaborating with the client; and persuading them that they would achieve results, using tools such as impact case studies.

All of these factors require that sales professionals become lifelong learners, says Mr. Smith. “Organizations such as the CPSA offer training, accreditation and designations, so it’s possible to build skills incrementally. The gap between a mediocre and an exceptional salesperson has been widening, and I think the difference comes from a person’s commitment to their own personal development.

“With exceptional performance comes exceptional compensation,” he adds.

Success in the sales profession requires the evolution and expansion of skills, says Carol Bureau, a professor of marketing in the Pilon School of Business at Sheridan College, another CPSA partner. “In sales, you have to have increased focus on the final outcome with the customer being a win-win solution, because that is what is required for long-term relationship building.”

The modern salesperson has to work as part of a team within the organization and with the client to develop client-focused solutions, she says. “Partnering with the CPSA has been key to our curriculum development, ensuring our curriculum is aligned with what industry is looking for from our students upon graduation. It has also helped us elevate sales as an important career option for students to consider upon graduation.”

Learn more about CPSA Accredited Partners at cpsa.com.

COMPETENCY-BASED DESIGNATIONS FUEL GREATER EFFECTIVENESS

Martin Boucher’s parents were not impressed when, as a young man, he told them he planned to pursue a career in sales. His three brothers had gone in different directions; one was an architect, another an actuary and the third an engineer.

“My parents’ reaction made me feel I had failed them in some way,” he says.

As it turned out, Mr. Boucher had great success in sales and is today vice president sales at the Canadian Professional Sales Association (CPSA), where a big part of his role is to raise the status of sales to a recognized and respected profession through a new professional designation program based on specific sales competencies.

“By establishing national standards for sales professionals, and agreement on the skills, behaviours and performance required to be a true sales professional, we aim to change the perception of sales as a career,” he says.

For example, instead of just having “the gift of the gab,” which was once regarded as the characteristic of a good salesperson, accredited educators delivering CPSA’s certification program will instruct candidates in skills such as negotiations and closing, client relationships and business acumen.

Mr. Boucher believes certification will lead to greater sales effectiveness.

“A professional designation states that you are a top sales performer and you strive to offer the most professional sales experience possible to your customers. Sales is your career. You are raising the bar of professional standards, and that helps negate whatever negative perception some organizations or customers may still have towards salespeople,” he adds.

A graduated designation framework also offers sales professional a clear career path and advancement opportunities, which Mr. Boucher says makes sales more rewarding and more attractive as a career choice.

Brian Gooding, managing director of plastic container manufacturing company Sæplast Americas Inc. in Saint John, New Brunswick, agrees. He and his entire 11-person commercial sales team have either completed CPSA’s training and certification, or are in the process of doing so.

“We see our relationship with customers as a collaboration, and certification provides the credibility to promote collaboration,” he says. “It’s

“We see our relationship with customers as a collaboration, and certification provides the credibility to promote collaboration.

Brian Gooding
Managing director, Sæplast Americas Inc.



evidence of our commitment to true professionalism.”

Mr. Gooding says even those members of his sales team who have so far completed only the Fundamentals of Selling module in the certification process are already more effective. “We are closing faster, selling more and average prices have gone up,” he says.

Mr. Boucher says certification is also a competitive differentiator, particularly for those sales teams that are first to market with professional sales designations.

While the Certified Sales Professional designation is seen as a pathway to greater effectiveness for customer-facing salespeople, the Certified Sales Leader (CSL) designation is an acknowledgement of years of investment in the profession and recognition of the ability to coach, develop and lead high-achieving sales teams.

“A CSL designation tells a potential recruit you are a leader who believes in investing in your team’s career development and success, and you are committed to personal growth. You are walking the walk and demonstrating a sales culture mindset that’s attractive to every sales professional,” says Mr. Boucher.

Want more details? Get more info about sales designations at cpsa.com.



CPSA has created a national network of accredited sales educators, including universities, colleges, private training companies and enterprises with in-house training. SUPPLIED

CPSA SALES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Canadian sales experts contributing to the advancement of the profession



FORMED IN 2016, THE CPSA’S SALES ADVISORY COUNCIL HAS CONTRIBUTED INVALUABLE STRATEGIC INSIGHTS AND ADVICE, INFORMED BY ITS MEMBERS’ EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE ACROSS DIVERSE SEGMENTS OF CANADA’S SALES COMMUNITY. THE COUNCIL’S KNOWLEDGE OF EMERGING TRENDS AND CHALLENGES CONTINUES TO HELP CPSA SET THE SALES PROFESSION ON A PATH TOWARDS EVEN GREATER QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE.



JEFF GUTHRIE,
CHIEF SALES & MARKETING
OFFICER, MONERIS



JOAN LEROUX,
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,
GLOBAL SALES AND
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GREG COUTTS, P.ENG., MBA,
CONSULTANT & VP, SALES &
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT,
KIKO WATER SYSTEMS LTD.

“What sets top sales professionals apart isn’t just their ability to build relationships or their knowledge of the product, but rather the comprehensive skills and knowledge to succeed in a rapidly changing environment. The graduated certified sales framework is a much needed standards-based, professional pathway which helps to build knowledge and skills for success in a rewarding sales career.”

Derek Clarke,
Chief Commercial
Officer, GE Canada

CPSA BY-INDUSTRY, FOR-INDUSTRY

For as long as sales has existed in Canada, the Canadian Professional Sales Association (CPSA) has been there to support and advance sales professionals with tools, training and resources that accelerate their success.

As a by-industry, for-industry, not-for-profit professional association, CPSA is committed to the design and development of industry-validated, competency-based designations and accreditation programs to help solve labour market challenges faced by employers. The Sales Advisory Councils are comprised of senior sales leaders from across the country and representing a variety of industry segments and work to ensure that national frameworks represent the latest skill sets required for success in sales.

SPECIAL THANKS

In August 2018, CPSA, working with Quebec partner HEC Montréal Sales Institute, formed the volunteer French Sales Advisory Council.

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UNIT, MERCK

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Advancing Sales. Accelerating Performance.



SUCCESS FROM STRONG LEADERSHIP

Developing leaders helps companies stay competitive

In the highly competitive world of sales, ensuring strong leadership often presents a daunting challenge for organizations.

“What we’ve often seen happening is people who get great results become the sales leader by default,” says David Jeffrey, regional vice president, commercial sales at Toronto-based Salesforce Canada Inc., a leading customer-relationship management platform provider whose parent company, Salesforce.com Inc., is headquartered in San Francisco. “But just as in sports the best players aren’t always the best coaches, the best sales performers don’t always make the best sales leaders.”

Companies spend more money on leadership education than any other type of corporate education, according to a 2015 report by the Brandon Hall Research Group in Delray Beach, Florida. Yet only about 20 per cent of organizations believe they do a good job at developing leaders, and more than 70 per cent are worried about their current leaders’ ability to guide their organization into the future.

Given that the sales department drives revenue and market growth in virtually any company, building strong sales managers must be recognized as a critical imperative, says Mark Healy, executive director at the Ivey Academy, the executive learning centre at Western University’s Ivey School of Business in London, Ontario.

“I think competition between businesses today is much more intense and the sophistication level of companies with good sales organizations is higher,” he says. “So the stakes are higher, which means companies today need to be doing everything they can to succeed.”

A new leadership framework developed this year by the Canadian

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David Jeffrey
Regional vice president, commercial sales, Salesforce Canada Inc.



Professional Sales Association (CPSA) could soon make it easier for companies to identify and develop strong managers in their sales organizations.

Over the summer, an executive committee at the CPSA worked to define the key competencies of an effective sales leader. Mr. Jeffrey, who was part of the committee, lists off these attributes: compelling communicator, business acumen, ability to build a sales team, coaching skills, solid understanding of sales processes, technology competency and professional sales conduct.

“Throughout the summer, we ran a series of focus groups and interviewed sales leaders in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver,” recalls Mr. Jeffrey. “Now that we’ve defined the sales leadership profile, we’re moving on to the next stages.”

These next steps include defining the indicators and measures for each competency, and testing the framework.

“What we’re doing now with the competency framework is creating subsets under those big headings,” says Mr. Jeffrey. “Creating measures for this is the hardest part – it’s a work in progress.”

For instance, a subset under the coaching competency might include emotional intelligence, which influences a sales leader’s ability to read people and get the best out of them, adds Mr. Jeffrey.

Already a number of schools have shown interest in the framework. The Ivey Academy, for one, is using the framework to build a new sales leader designation program, which is set to launch next spring.

“The CPSA reached out to us because we had a sales management program that

they felt matched the leadership competency framework they had built,” explains Mr. Healy. “CPSA asked if we could build a program that aligns with the framework, and within three months we came up with a revised program.”

Mr. Jeffrey notes that the importance of more comprehensive sales and sales leadership education

has not gone unnoticed in Canadian schools. Ryerson University, for instance, is introducing a new sales major program. “We’d like to see this roll out across all business schools,” he says.

See the Sales Professional Competency Framework at cpsa.com.

INTERVIEW

TELUS SALES ACADEMY PREPARES SALES PROFESSIONALS FOR THE FOREFRONT OF BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY



In 2016, TELUS Business began a far-reaching transformation of training and continuing education for its sales professionals. **PAUL BLEIER, DIRECTOR, SALES ENABLEMENT AT TELUS BUSINESS,** discusses the factors driving this transformation and explains the strategies the company has used to elevate the performance of its sales force across Canada.

What changes in the business environment led TELUS Business to transform its training programs?

We recognized that the sales function in Canada is changing as customers demand more from their sales professionals – repeatedly pulling them out of their comfort zones. Aligning the capabilities of a sales organization to the customer’s business is no longer an optional exercise. Now more than ever, our complex selling environments require a focused effort by sales-enablement teams to help move sales behaviours from product selling to business-outcome selling.

We knew that without this shift, it would become increasingly difficult for our sales professionals to differentiate themselves, and successfully influence customer buying decisions.

What was the primary goal of this initiative?

Our overarching goal was to establish the best and most customer-focused salesforce across all our businesses globally, by implementing a world-class sales onboarding and continuous learning program – focused on performance-based, progressive development for sales excellence.

What did you identify as the necessary training components to drive higher sales performance?

One requirement was to ensure consistent use across the country of our Premier Sales Organization methodologies. We also intensified

our focus on coaching and developing specific sales competencies among our team members. In terms of knowledge, we reinforced the importance of knowing customer markets and buying cycles, provided education on TELUS’s products and services, and ensured that sales professionals really understood the customer’s business transformation challenges they could address through the strategic use of technology.

How did you bring together all these approaches?

Our significant multi-year investment culminated in the launch of the TELUS Sales Academy (TSA) – a modern sales-enablement initiative to help sales professionals learn, grow, share and ultimately advance their careers in sales. TSA is a training and career-development program designed to facilitate adoption of industry best practices and sales competencies through formal and just-in-time learning, which both leverage recent investments in powerful sales enablement platforms. This includes training and coaching programs focused on leadership selling processes, funnel management, account planning, opportunity management, executive-level sales messaging, white-boarding techniques and social selling strategies.

TSA learning opportunities are grouped to form curriculums and structured around a three-tiered model: Foundation, Practitioner and Mastery, each designed to feed into the next through a rigorous certification process. To progress from tier-to-tier, candidates must complete the certification at each level of the curriculum, which is managed by regional certification boards.

What makes the TSA methods and approaches unique?

The novel nature of this program was recognized this past summer, when TELUS became the first organization in Canada to have an internal learning program of this calibre accredited by the Canadian Professional Sales Association (CPSA), giving new and tenured TELUS sales professionals an opportunity to become a Certified Sales Associate.

Earning official professional designations from the CPSA adds credibility to TELUS Business’s sales teams and reminds customers of our ability to create meaningful and successful partnerships by putting customers first at every stage of the sales journey.

To learn more about how TELUS Business supports career advancement for its sales professionals, visit telus.com/careers.

NEW SALES LEADERSHIP CENTRES HELPING ELEVATE A VALUED CAREER

Professor Karen Peesker makes her Ryerson sales students do an elevator pitch. Lots of business professors likely invoke the concept in their teaching, but at the recently launched Ted Rogers Sales Leadership Program, Ms. Peesker says she makes them physically get on the elevator with her.

“They have 55 seconds to pitch and get a meeting with me,” says Ms. Peesker, who acts as the potential customer. “Some said they didn’t expect all the noise and beeping and people coming and going – but that’s real life. Others, if they hadn’t secured a meeting when we got off, learned to walk with me and keep trying. It was a good learning experience.”

Ryerson’s program is one of only two in the country, the other being Canada’s first – the Sales Institute created by HEC Montréal, an internationally renowned business school affiliated with Université de Montréal. Both aim to improve the chances their business students will consider a career in sales.

“Often there is an old-fashioned stigma about what sales is about,” says Ms. Peesker, whose sales career took her to 15 different countries on four continents. “But sales is an incredible career. The Ted Rogers School of Management (TRSM) is the perfect school for this program. Ted Rogers himself was a proud salesman. Regardless of what he was doing, on his business card, he always kept his title as ‘senior salesperson.’”

She said the salesperson of today is a “strategist, collaborator,

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Often there is an
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incredible career.

Karen Peesker
Director, Ted Rogers Sales Leadership Program & Assistant Professor, TRSM



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Regardless of how
good a company’s
culture and product
are, if they don’t
have a good sales
force, they will never
attain the results they
could.

Jean-Luc Geha
Director, HEC Montréal Sales Institute



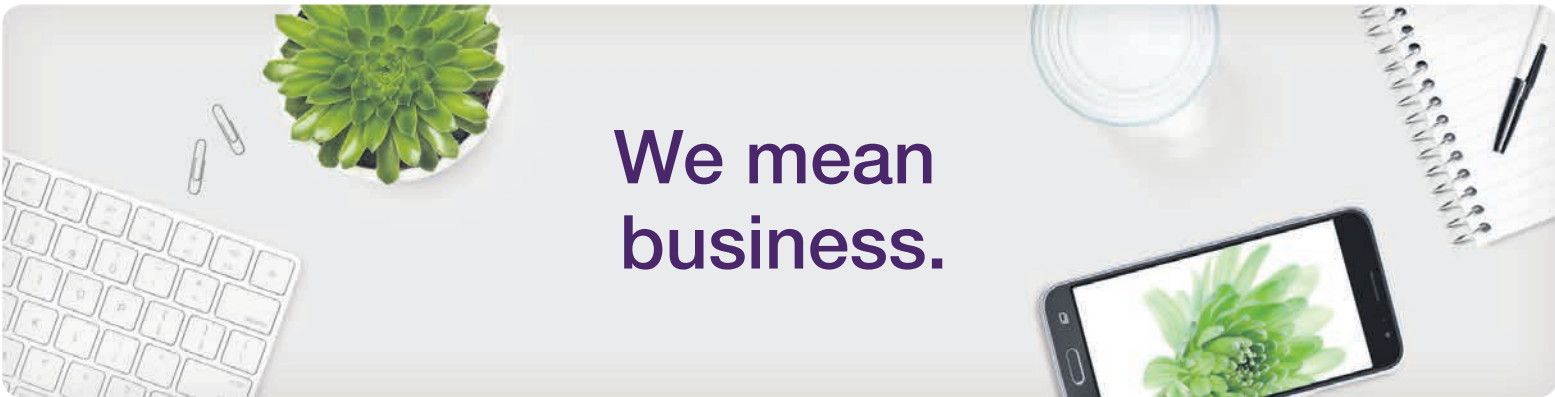
planner and executor focused on delivering impact and outcome for customers.” She hopes her graduates will be “drivers of growth and ambassadors of customer delight for their organizations.”

Ms. Peesker and her students just returned from the Northeast Intercollegiate Sales Competition at Bryant University south of Boston. As the only Canadian team, the TRSM students earned first place and overall university champion. “It was like a Disney movie – these young people from Canada coming in as the rookies, battling the odds to win against intense competition,” Ms. Peesker says. “It was simply amazing.”

Jean-Luc Geha, director of the HEC Montréal Sales Institute, is also part of the movement striving to raise the profile of careers in sales.

“There’s a shortage of skilled salespeople – and there’s an image problem,” Mr. Geha says. “Salespeople are not valued, so we have to better communicate the importance of sales. Regardless of how good a company’s culture and product are, if they don’t have a good sales force, they will never attain the results they could.”

The HEC Montréal Sales Institute and Ted Rogers programs are among the first to offer CPSA-accredited education programs towards new professional designations in sales offered by the Canadian Professional Sales Association, and both also partner with corporate stakeholders to help raise the profile of professional salespeople.



We mean
business.

CPSA SALES DESIGNATIONS

Advancing knowledge and skills for a competitive sales force



PROFESSIONAL SALES DESIGNATIONS ARE A CRUCIAL COMPONENT OF THE EFFORT TO BUILD THE CAPACITY OF THE CANADIAN SALES FORCE AND IMPROVE SALES PERFORMANCE.

THE CANADIAN PROFESSIONAL SALES ASSOCIATION (CPSA) offers three designations – suited to different stages of a sales professional’s career, as well as their roles and responsibilities within their team. Each designation is aligned with the Sales Professional Competency Framework and is awarded to individuals who meet specific criteria and/or pass a certification exam.

THE VALUE OF CPSA DESIGNATIONS



FOR SALES PROFESSIONALS

- A pathway for career development and improved performance
- A mechanism for building strength in areas essential to

success in today’s complex sales environment

- A means of demonstrating knowledge and skills to prospective and current employers
- A door to expanded opportunities and higher income



FOR EMPLOYERS

- A means of defining qualifications for recruiting new sales staff
- A way to assess the capabilities of potential

and current employees

- A process for enhancing performance of individuals and sales teams
- An incentive and support mechanism to help retain valued employees

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Congratulations Ted Rogers’ Sales Team!



Left to right: Tristan Broks, Stanley Sik, Kaitlann Silao, Winston Devendrarajah, Dr Karen Peesker, Sarah Oliver, Adrian Cheng, Vinh–Son Hoang



CPSA congratulates Dr. Karen Peesker, Assistant Professor, TRSM and Head of the Ted Rogers Sales Leadership Program and her talented student team on winning their very first sales competition - the US North East Intercollegiate Sales Competition.

Beating out 24 top US schools, the team took home 4 awards including Individual Sales, Speed Selling and overall University Champion.

You are the future of professional sales in Canada and we couldn’t be prouder.

THE PATH TO SUCCESS



CERTIFIED SALES ASSOCIATES

Work Experience 6 months

Demonstrates a solid foundation for success in their first sales roles



CERTIFIED SALES PROFESSIONALS

Work Experience 4 years

Sets the gold standard in the industry, representing at least 4 years of experience in sales and a deep commitment to the highest levels of sales excellence on large, strategic accounts.



CERTIFIED SALES LEADERS

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The top sales leaders and executives who are committed to developing themselves and their teams, and positioned to take their entire organization to the next level.

INVESTING IN SKILLS, PERFORMANCE

ReSource Group Canada powers up sales process with CPSA-accredited training



The retail industry is changing as new and disruptive players enter the market. ReSource Group Canada, a national sales organization that helps consumer electronic brands develop go-to-market and sales strategies for implementation coast to coast, knew it needed a vision for the future to maintain its position as a sales leader.

ReSource Group Canada launched a comprehensive staff training program with CPSA and Accredited Partner Lisa Leitch of Teneo Results.

“There’s something very powerful when everyone uses the same language, with the same knowledge, and approaches sales the same way,” says Jeremy Lenk, ReSource Group Canada president & CEO, noting the investment paid off with a 25 per cent growth in business the year they completed training. “There wasn’t one person driving it – every person saw growth in their business, so the proof is there.”

LEARNING TO COACH

The CPSA’s Sales Coaching for Success course taught managers the skills they needed to more effectively coach staff. Mr. Lenk says it’s tempting to “go in and be the rainmaker. The training helped us learn to step back, train our staff and build the leadership pipeline so we have the leaders of tomorrow.”

TRAINING THE TEAM

As an established sales organization, ReSource Group Canada had considerable sales success, but everyone had their own process, Mr. Lenk says. CPSA training taught a new and consistent approach, but for veteran sales reps, overcoming resistance to change was often the first hurdle.

“Within that first hour in the training, they start to realize much is changing in the marketplace and, as a result, we (as salespeople) need to change,” says Ms. Leitch. “We help them lock in the consultative selling process. Many people might think they’re already using this process, but we give them tools to have better conversations and uncover opportunities to get better results.”

“When you are selling yourself as a professional sales organization, showing that we’re investing in training and accreditation helps sell the value of our business. It really resonates with people.”

Jeremy Lenk
President & CEO, ReSource Group Canada

“Knowing they’re making an investment in their employees was very important to me. It definitely helped make my choice to join ReSource Group a whole lot easier.”

Ryan Escalante
Key Account Manager, ReSource Group Canada



ReSource Group Canada’s sales team members have seen strong results including business growth after earning their CSP designations. **SUPPLIED**

READY FOR THE REAL WORLD

To make the training even more relevant, the program was customized to situations ReSource Group Canada was facing. “It’s not like we were talking about some fictional character and their selling issue; it applied to our business. It was quite powerful,” recalls Mr. Lenk.

For the sales team, the comprehensive, year-long training program and earning their Certified Sales Professional (CSP) designation helped embed the processes and engrain the skills. “When you do it for a whole year and you speak the same language, it becomes ingrained and a part of your culture,” says Mr. Lenk.

Ms. Leitch adds that the skills help companies become much more agile and prepared to overcome any challenges that are going to come their way.

RECRUITING POWER

Investing in professional development is a core business value, and having a

formalized professional development program helps with recruiting new talent. “It’s more than just a salary or a car allowance; they are getting something tangible that will be with them forever,” says Mr. Lenk.

Ryan Escalante recently joined ReSource Group Canada as a Key Account Manager from a large electronics retailer, where he worked for seven years as a buyer. The move from buyer to sales was going to be a learning curve, so Mr. Escalante appreciates that ReSource Group Canada makes training a priority.

“Knowing they’re making an investment in their employees was very important to me. I didn’t have experience on the other side of the table in terms of strategic selling. I knew it was going to be an adjustment, but they weren’t going to leave me high and dry,” he says. “It definitely helped make my choice to join ReSource Group a whole lot easier.”

Mr. Escalante’s buyer’s experience

also provides a unique perspective during the training sessions, but he admits “it can be a little scary to go from a role you’ve been doing for a long time (as a retail buyer) to a new (sales) role. The training is helping me make sure each conversation and each meeting is effective, and I think will help me be even more successful.”

A MARK OF PROFESSIONALISM

With its entire staff trained in consultative selling and CSP accredited, ReSource Group Canada profiles its team’s professional sales designations on business cards and electronic signatures.

“We actively tell clients about CPSA and that we’re all CSP designation-holders,” says Mr. Lenk. When you are selling yourself as a professional sales organization, showing that we’re investing in training and accreditation helps sell the value of our business. It really resonates with people.

CPSA Accredited Partners are building the future of sales.



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