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## TRAINING PROGRAM FOR INTERNAL FACTORY STAFF

As a manufacturer there are several options from which to choose how to go to market. Some of them are direct factory sales people, independent manufacturer's agents (reps), stocking distributors, and direct sales to end users via catalog, telemarketing, or the Internet.

This segment deals with the use of reps and the understanding and training of the manufacturer's staff regarding their relationship with their reps.

Since most manufacturers use Independent Manufacturer's Agents as their "outsourced" sales force it is assumed that all internal staff members understand the rep function and how to interact with it. However, this is not necessarily the case. Attitudes and relationships range from "partnership" to "adversarial" in nature.

It is the objective of this chapter to provide the framework for the training of the internal staff on how to maximize their positive impact on the rep's business.

An outline of considerations for the development and implementation of your program are listed (but not limited to) the following;

- Selecting the orientation team
- Establishing an agenda with time frame
- Setting up the meeting logistics
- Implementing the agenda
- Gauging your success

### A. **Selecting the orientation team**

A team should be selected based on the key departments that have regular interaction with reps.

Sales and Marketing  
Customer Service  
Credit/Financial  
Engineering

The size of the company and diversity of product line will also be determining factors for team size. Care must be taken to develop the appropriate size team in order to maximize effectiveness.

It is also suggested that at least one rep be included on the team to help assure all necessary departments are included.

### B. **Establishing an agenda with time frame**

Once selected, the team should meet to develop an agenda designed to meet the objective of the program. As part of this process it is important to collect a list of departments (job functions) to be targeted. It is also important for these departments (or individual people) to offer their current understanding or perceptions describing their relationship with each other, reps, and the entire process (bringing manufactured goods to the end user).

Once collected the data should be consolidated into a systematic, rational presentation. Flow charts are an excellent graphical way to bring visual substance to the process. A time frame must be developed for each part of the presentation.

**C. Implementing the program**

Once the agenda has been properly researched, planned, and timed the team should rehearse the presentation. Timing, energy, and interest level are essential for a successful presentation. Finally, allow a set time for questions and answers. Resources include a magazine editorial published by MRERF OutSourced Field Sales – Adding Value for the Customer. Please call MAFSI for an order form at 404-214-9474.

**D Gauging your success**

With this investment of time and resources it's essential to develop a means to learn how effective your program was. A "bull's-eye" needs to be established as part of the objective during the Agenda phase. Clearly defined and briefly written it should state the "ideal" result you are seeking from this meeting. A second target should also be defined. This will be a list of "acceptable" results. If you don't have a target or expectation you cannot be sure you have hit it.

Follow-up with all department personnel trained concerning interdepartmental and rep communication improvements will give you your answer. The results will also act as a key letting you know where changes or improvements can be made.