

Case Study: Using the *Everything DiSC Tools* To Improve Selling Skills In An Agricultural Coop

Transitioning employees from a products and consultations focus to emphases on sales and understanding customers can be done seamlessly using the Everything DiSC Sales Profile, Customer Interaction Maps, group reports and comparison reports.

Company

- Agricultural cooperative
- 200 employees
- Five major divisions, each with its own sales team
 - Agronomy
 - Energy
 - Feed
 - Grain
- Approximately \$150 million in sales annually

Products Used

- *Everything DiSC® Sales*
- *Everything DiSC Facilitator Report*
- *Everything DiSC Group Culture Report*
- *Everything DiSC Sales Customer Interaction Maps*
- *Everything DiSC Comparison Reports*

Challenge

The employees of this 70-year-old company have had little training in the service skills arena. Instead, the training focus has historically been on product knowledge. Following several years of personnel and leadership change and two years of record-high sales, they became concerned about maintaining their position in the market because of their rapid expansion in the organization and territory coverage.

Their focus began with the sales team. Even with little formal sales training, they have done remarkably well, particularly in the past two years.

However, many recent changes have shifted the sales' role and environment from consultative to transactional, with an ever-increasing emphasis on price. They were concerned about maintaining their current customer-base while continuing to expand the business with new clients. Traditional sales training to increase individual skills was needed.

Also, the five sales teams were too focused on their own divisions, not considering that they were part of the larger company team. All of the division teams needed to build awareness of how they could assist and complement each other in their sales endeavors.

Solution

We created five lunch-and-learns around the Personal Listening Profile. Most employees and managers were engaged and began to buy in to their self-development.

After the lunch-and-learn sessions were over, we were asked to coach a few of the new managers. We used the Everything DiSC Management Profile, a workbook we created, and the *Everything DiSC Management* video to individually coach each manager. As part of the management-coaching process, we used the *Everything DiSC Comparison Reports*. We ran comparison reports between the CFO and the managers, and by request, any two managers who wanted one.

We had facilitated coaching sessions with the controller and two managers who were his direct reports. The controller's managers gave him feedback about his management style. At one point, the controller was resistant to the feedback he was given. The high-C manager who gave him the feedback was able to provide the

controller with an example of when his management style doesn't work well for their relationship. She told him that when she works very hard to gather and bring him correct data, he often makes her feel like he doesn't trust her numbers or ideas for solving problems with the data.

The individual coaching sessions were so successful, that the CFO wanted more training. Together, we designed a program that included two sessions for managers, two sessions for employees, and a final session on conflict management for the entire group.

We started with the managers and opened with reviewing the *Everything DiSC Management Profile*. Next, we went over the *Everything DiSC Group Culture Report* and had a great discussion about what their culture looked like and how it might impact the organization. At the end of the session, we gave the managers random *Everything DiSC Comparison Reports* and gave them the assignment of pairing up with their Comparison Report partner. They reviewed their Comparison Reports together and talked about the information and how it could help their working relationship.

After the management session, we began two employee sessions, following the same format we used with the managers. For the employee group, we used the *Everything DiSC Workplace Profile* along with the Group Culture Report and random Comparison Reports.

Finally, we ran Comparison Reports between each manager and each of their team members to use to improve their working relationship.

Coaching Results

- One manager, who has a high D/I style, was rubbing everyone the wrong way. As we discussed this in our coaching session, she began to cry and said, "I'm a D, I tell them they can come in and tell me what's on their mind." She thought that people would then come to her directly if they felt something was wrong.

We gave her some candid feedback about how her words sent a message, but her behavior told a different story. The next day, she had an epiphany and realized how much her behavior was impacting not just her team, but others too. Since then she has made a great effort to accommodate people

based on their styles. One of her team members, who was close to being put on a performance plan, is now her "superstar." By communicating differently, she is getting much more out of people.

- During another session, a manager who many employees were having problems with, openly stated he realized he was causing conflict by not being aware of how his high-D behavior was affecting others. One of his direct reports was ready to quit; this manager told her that he now realized he needed to communicate differently with her and would make an effort to do so.

Other Results

- When the CFO came on board, business-close took approximately 21 days. It is currently about 5 days.
- The finance and accounting department have had happy hours and events outside of work.

For more information about the [Center for Internal Change](#) and the *Everything DiSC* and *DiSC Classic* products we provide, please call us at toll free at **877-311-DISC (3472)**, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm CST, Mondays–Fridays.

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