



How To Use Retail Sales Training To Get The Profits You Deserve





You've only got one shot at training new hires in your retail store. One. You can't go back.

The skills and attitude you instill via retail sales training affects how employees will approach their job with you forever.

This guide will answer some of retailers' most common questions about how to leverage retail sales training to grow profits—without losing money or good employees in the process.



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SECTION I

5 Mistakes That Kill Your Retail Sales Training—And How To Fix Them

Here are **5 of the most common mistakes made in retail sales training programs that ruin their effectiveness**. Fortunately, they're easily avoided with a little insight and focus.

Mistake #1

Dumbing the sales training down. Treating sales training like a kindergarten class is the #1 way to kill employee motivation.

Your Fix: Assume your sales team is capable of the sales skills you expect from them. First, focus on fundamentals: instilling the right attitudes, teaching a process to sell, and then practicing those skills so they can truly be your brand ambassadors.

Mistake #2

A firehose of content. This is another over-complication of training. It's good to have visual materials. Many learn best by reading. But when your new reps hit the floor, they won't have a textbook to crack open.

Your Fix: It's far more important that your team develops confidence and composure while communicating. Interactive, practical sales training is the only way to build those real-time skills.



Mistake #3

Obsessing over scripts. Encountering a salesperson incapable of interacting without a script is a total turn-off for customers. If customers are in your store, it's because they want to be there. The more your sales team builds their trust, the more likely they are to buy and return.

Your Fix: All salespeople need to have general scripts to rely on. But the salesperson must personalize the script and make the process seem effortless in order for scripts to be effective. It's more important that your team has a good grasp on the process of leading someone through to making happy purchases.

Mistake #4

Throwing trainees to the wolves. It's tempting (in theory) to just toss new hires out on the floor, letting them flub their way through interactions while a trainer hovers over their shoulder. In reality, it alienates customers, ties up floor staff, and leaves new hires unmotivated or embarrassed to learn in front of strangers.

Your Fix: Set up designated sales training areas. Be willing to invest time, energy, and resources into creating a stellar learning environment.



Mistake #5

Not having a superb trainer. You might have the most brilliant sales training program in the world, but if your sales trainer—the one who is supposed to be making that training real, actionable, fast-paced, and fun—is a lump of coal, you’re going to make little lumps of coal out of your trainees.

Your Fix: The job of a sales trainer is not just to disseminate information; it is also to breathe confidence into your team, and to deliver energy and attitude aligned with your brand personality. A superb retail trainer accepts 100% ownership and responsibility.

Don’t let the mistakes get you down—we’ve all made them.

Training is a process—for both the business looking to educate their employees as well as the salesperson.



SECTION II

Competing With Online Retailers Through Sales Training

Brick and mortar retailers often point to online shopping as the reason for their sluggish sales.

This is like pointing at an aching toe and ignoring the nightstand you just stubbed it on.

Online retailers are successful because they offer convenience more than anything (and, to a lesser extent, savings). That's it. Too many retailers have been trying to battle them on the same field by lowering prices and offering options like buy online, pick up in store.

Unfortunately, this is playing right into the hands of online retailers. You can't beat them on price and convenience options rob you of upsell opportunities.

The solution, then, is to change the playing field.

Stop trying to compete with them on their strongest points and play to your own strengths.

So—what are the strengths of a brick and mortar retail chain versus an online retailer?



The solution, then, is to change the playing field.

Stop trying to compete with them on their strongest points, play to your own strengths. So, what are the strengths of a brick and mortar retail chain, versus an online retailer?

#1: Your employees are your biggest strength.

Your salespeople can offer personalized attention, problem solving, informed advice, and camaraderie. The very best do it all with an ease and sense of humor that draws customers back again and again. Try getting that out of a computer screen.

#2: A good experience keeps customers coming back and buying more.

All retailers have the potential to offer that exceptional customer experience, but actually doing it is the key. Salespeople can offer all of these things, but that doesn't mean that they're able to. Disinterested part-time employees with a few hours of instruction aren't going to offer much more than grunts and nods. Training is what makes the difference.



#3: A well-trained staff is your not-so-secret weapon against online retail.

As the owner of your retail establishment, you have two options when it comes to educating your staff:

1. You can stick with what you've been doing, which may be taking it on yourself or relying on senior staff to bring new hires up to speed while on the sales floor.
2. Or, you can invest in a training program that's built from the ground up to create unique experiences for your customers and increase sales.

If you chose 2, keep reading.



SECTION III

The Key Elements Of Retail Sales Training

To be effective, sales instruction needs to have some key elements—the specifics can be tweaked for your needs, but you absolutely must have these foundational elements:

It Must Address Known Problems

You need to know exactly what problems you expect your sales training to fix. Identify the issues you're having—low conversion rates, low-average ticket, low items per transaction, high turnover, or customer complaints. Then you can start looking for a training program that will address those issues.

It Must be Specific

Your learning program needs to tell your sales team exactly what to do and how to do it. A great sales process provides the skeleton of an exceptional experience. It gives them structure without making them robots.



It Must be Accessible

You need interactive, attention-grabbing instruction that provides immediate feedback on success or failure. This is the video game generation, and old fashioned educational methods will cause them to disconnect almost immediately.

It Must be Digestible

The learning modules must be divided into small, easily absorbed chunks. The longer a lesson is, the harder it becomes to learn all of the specifics and the greater the chance of losing something.

It Must be Repeatable

Education isn't a one-time event. Lessons will be forgotten over time. Salespeople need to brush up on key concepts as needed. Unlike product knowledge instruction, you don't train so they get a concept right just one time—you train so they can't get it wrong on the sales floor.



Turning A Blind Eye Will Cost You

Untrained employees are more likely to turn over quicker, and the cost of replacing them is about 16 percent of that person's average wage. For most retailers, that's between \$750 and \$2500 every time they lose someone.

The better solution, for a fraction of that cost, is to utilize an existing, customizable, award-winning retail education program that has all of these essentials and more.

Use your most valuable asset—your crew—to create an exceptional customer experience that moves your merchandise at full price.



SECTION IV

How To Choose The Right Retail Sales Training For Your Store

Congratulations for reading this far—it means you don't have to be convinced that training your retail crew how to sell is necessary.

You understand that training is something that's ongoing, like an athlete working to perfect their form—not something you did once, like visiting the City of Mermaids in Florida.

Good. Most retailers know they have to train new hires at some level. The best know they have to constantly train their entire staff.

First, you will have to decide who this training is aimed at and then who will do it. This section of the guide will highlight the pros and cons of four different types of trainers.

1. An Existing Employee

Does your store mainly have tribal knowledge that you are looking to share? Then you probably already made an existing employee your trainer, often on an ad hoc basis.

Most retailers train their new hires this way. Some call it shadowing, some schedule the training time outside regular shifts, and most train while on the sales floor.



PROs

- The employee probably grew up in your system, so they know how things work.
- They probably have been good at selling or running the register.
- They probably have been with you awhile so they have your trust.

CONs

- Just because someone was a good salesperson or a reliable employee doesn't mean they know how to train someone.
- You probably didn't give them a choice so they feel it is something they have to do, which translates to frustration with their learners.
- Training is looked at as something to get through, rather than a system of continual learning and practicing, so little time is budgeted for the process.



2. A Salaried Trainer

Do you have videos, training materials, a separate conference room, or multiple stores? Then you probably have hired a full-time trainer for your company.

Larger chains are able to spread the cost of a salaried retail sales trainer whose sole job is to deliver and monitor training across a variety of stores, increasing the ROI for the investment. These trainers usually create a program that takes tribal knowledge and expands it, so everyone from the new hires to the existing employees learns the right way to do everything.

PROs

- They usually come with a background of success as a trainer.
- Since training will be their sole responsibility, they can focus on getting that job done.
- They usually travel from store to store to give hands-on training.

CONs

- They are “from corporate”, which could affect their perceived authority.
- Traveling around to stores can be expensive and create a lack of individual attention.
- Materials you give them to use may be outdated.



3. An Outside Retail Sales Trainer

Retailers who do not have an established sales process, up-to-date materials, and/or an energetic staff member may look to an outside retail sales training expert.

PROs

- They usually have the energy to make the training fun and interesting.
- They can certify that those who take the training really understand the materials.
- They have materials created just for you.

CONs

- Once they leave, without additional training and follow-up, the learned behaviors may not take hold.



4. Online Retail Training

For years, larger brands and retailers have relied on technology to deliver product information. They know online videos make learning more engaging. But, if truth be told, most online videos work better for training product knowledge than training selling skills.

PROs

- 24/7 training can mean anyone can train at any time.
- Employees can see every product and learn all the specifications and features of each.

CONs

- Video training can be very passive.
- Product training is usually seen as something to “get through”.

You’re looking to take your selling culture to the next level. That means change.

I’ve been training for nearly thirty years, and resistance to change is nothing new.

No matter who is working on your sales floor, several are going to initially fight any sales training.



What is new is that the stakes have changed for brick and mortar retailers.

When I started, a retailer's only competition was down the street. Or maybe in a catalogue.

Now, your competition is walking in the door on the customer's smartphone.

New hires come to you already feeling that a customer's decision to purchase an item is dependent solely on price. And they know that an online competitor probably has a lower price.

Your existing employees who feel everything is working just fine probably don't know what you know about your industry, or even your own financials.

But you do.

You can't compete on price. The only way to compete is to train your own employees to deliver an experience that is second-to-none.

That's why I'm adding a fifth training option to the list.



5. SalesRX

SalesRX is the only interactive retail sales training that has all the pros of 3 and 4, but with the one-on-one aspect of a personal trainer.

It's also available to each of your employees at their own time and at their own pace. They can take the short, interactive lessons over and over until they master them.

I'll put all that into a handy bullet point list like I did for the other four:

PROs

- SalesRX has the energy to make the training fun and interesting.
- SalesRX can certify that those who take the training really understand the materials.
- SalesRX has materials created just for you.
- SalesRX's 24/7 accessibility means anyone can train at any time.
- SalesRX is customizable, helping employees learn the specifications and features of your own products.
- SalesRX has all the benefits of a one-on-one trainer at a fraction of the cost.



TAKE A FREE SALESRX LESSON NOW

**SECTION V**

8 Questions You Must Answer While Considering Your Retail Sales Training Options

Training is a learning process. It is not natural.

Just like reciting lines in a play isn't natural, like playing a team sport doesn't just come to you, like learning how to write your name doesn't feel right at first, it is all a learning process.

When choosing the right format to deliver your retail sales training, be honest about the time commitment and give your employees the best experience you can.

Then, you're sure to see improved employee attitude as well as improved retail sales.

Whether the retail sales training is delivered in person by a sales trainer like myself, online through a program like SalesRX.com, or via an in-house program, you'll want to answer these concerns prior to launch:



Who is going to be our point person and take overall ownership of the learning process for the stores?

1

They must be behind the need for training 100% and believe in how it can increase sales.

How will we kick-off the training?

2

With a company-wide workshop? By email? One-on-one? If it's not thought out, it will not be as impactful.

Who in each store will oversee the retail sales training efforts and make sure there is a complete buy-in from managers to associates?

3

This is the person on the floor who will inspect what is expected from the learners to make sure they are using the learning, not just completing it.



What software or analytics program will we use to measure ROI and other key performance indicators?

4

There are hundreds of reports you can select from, but you want to figuratively take the organization's temperature before you launch your new training with a few key metrics (and compare at monthly intervals).

What is the desired outcome of our retail sales training efforts with respect to our customers, employees, and marketing programs?

5

Set a goal for how much more customers will buy per transaction, how much more employees' average number of items per transaction will rise, and how it all ties into your marketing.

What will our training calendar and process look like?

6

Note slow times of the year, busy holidays, vacation schedules, etc. While you can slow down at times, don't pause learning—ever.



What methods will we use to inform staff/employees of our (their) successes, victories, etc. when it comes to using and implementing the training?

7

The effects of the sales training must be reinforced in various ways if you expect the new behaviors to take hold. Employee meetings are the best, but how about on a daily basis or in-the-moment reward like a gift card?

What are we going to do to make our existing training materials and methods coincide with our new training efforts?

8

That might mean a complete rewrite, or tweaking or adding to existing materials. Just be sure when new training is introduced to understand the challenges for senior employees who've learned another way.



SECTION VI

How To Calculate Return On Investment Of A Retail Sales Training Program

Most businesses see sales training as a cost when it should be seen as an investment. It's the only way you can profitably lift sales in the long term.

After all, learning is the source of competitive advantage. And that's not technical knowledge—it is the soft skills of how to engage, build rapport, and sell to a stranger.

You have to begin any potential training program by looking at the benefits you expect to receive, and create a scorecard of what exactly you want the training to produce.

Of course the #1 answer is higher sales, but other key performance indicators should include number of items per transaction, average sales, and average sales per employee per hour of work. On a long term basis, you should also expect to see a drop in your turnover rate.

So while the employees are using the training and getting results, there have to be frequent updates to everyone—including the CEO—to show any initial fears were unfounded.



To Determine Your Return On Investment Of Retail Sales Training:

- Look at your key performance indicators.
- Look at the cost of your training program for one year.
- Look at how much your training would have to lift sales to break even.
- Divide your expected gross sales by your cost of training. The result is expressed as a percentage.

Example:

Your store does \$750,000 per year. Your 20 employees on a program like SalesRX for a year would run \$6960. Divide that into your total yearly sales. In this case, it is 9/10ths of one percent. A 1% increase in sales would yield \$7500. Imagine what a 5%, 10%, or 20% increase would yield (or just do the math: \$37,500, \$75,000, or \$150,000).



There's no marketing program you can offer that will deliver back that kind of lift.

There's no discounting.

No fulfillment or shipping costs.

And, unlike a promotion, your sales training can and will help every sale, by every salesperson, every day.

With such a minimum outlay and minimum needed lift, your return on investment is huge.

While you can aim for a 5%, 10%, or even 20% lift in your key performance indicators, your cost of training doesn't even have to meet that threshold to be a sound investment. Typically, it takes about three months to see the results in sales and performance indicators.

If you are looking for increasing your conversions of lookers to buyers in your retail store, **there's nothing that can increase the average check of every sale.**

Nothing that gets more merchandise at a higher price.

Nothing that can alter your profitability as much as retail sales training that teaches the soft skills of customer engagement.



Higher Sales. More Profit.

SalesRX is the retail sales training solution you've been looking for.

Hundreds Of Successful Brands Know SalesRx Works



Get More Out Of Your Traffic



Turning existing browsers into buyers, increase average ticket size, create repeat customers, and give shoppers a reason not to buy online.

Get The Skills To Manage Better



The SalesRX Train the Trainer module helps you roll out the program perfectly. Learn how to better hire & retain staff, and effectively track ongoing performance.

Get Everyone On The Same Page



SalesRX gets every employee speaking the same sales language & optimizes their time spent selling.

Get Tailored Training



Whether you're a big brand or one independent store, SalesRX is scalable, affordable, and easy to implement.

 **TAKE A FREE SALESRX LESSON NOW**



Let's Talk

You've searched for answers, and we've given you several around how to train your salespeople and grow your sales. But a guide like this can only do so much.

Let's start a no-obligation conversation around your retail sales training needs.



BOOK A FREE CALL WITH BOB

