

# Why Training Should Report to Marketing

**S**HOULD TRAINING REPORT TO MARKETING? Yes, but only if your bank is interested in growing revenue!

I am not a marketer, per se, so I can opine that training should report to marketing without being self-serving. But truth be told, I rarely see training reporting to marketing. It more commonly reports to human resources. It is also common to see no training department at all, especially in community banks.

Why marketing? Because bank strategies are increasingly identifying service, advice, speed to close a loan, and community involvement as sources of competitive advantage. All require people as the primary delivery channel. So how much do you invest in your people?

Put another way, how much do you invest in your people that is not relating to operations, such as how to order vault cash, or compliance? Compare that to how much you rely on your people to grow the revenue of your bank!

**If growing revenues is critical to your strategy, and people are the main drivers of revenue, then what is your plan to train them to execute your strategy?**

Training starts with strategy. Does your strategy require branch managers to call on retail and small-business customers within a certain radius of the branch? If so, are job descriptions specific? Do you hire based on those that have the greatest likelihood to succeed executing job duties that are tied to bank strategy? Is there a training curriculum that includes operations, compliance, and the skills to call on customers

and serve them well? In other words, do you train your staff to build the relationships critical to differentiating your bank from the one across the street?

## **Training should be relevant to bank strategy**

While in the Navy, I led the training division of a 200-sailor department. Each sailor had a curriculum based on his/her specialty and seniority. We developed the needed coursework and on-the-job training (OJT), and each sailor was responsible for completing the curriculum within a specified period. It was part of his/her performance evaluation.

I rarely see such a program in banking. Other than compliance, training is typically performed ad hoc. If your bank is strategically focused on growing revenues, why is your curriculum developed to be compliant with regulators, and not bank strategy? And why does the training function report to specialists who have little to do with growing revenues?

Curriculum need not be home spun. Although product training is probably specific to your organization, you can develop the curriculum to help your employees succeed through in-house, external and correspondent course work. Trade associations, such as the ABA and others, your technology vendors, and other professional trainers can round out a well-constructed

curriculum designed by function. If well thought out, in addition to giving employees the skills to grow revenue, your bank can prepare up and comers to manage, lead, and develop their direct reports.

Imagine a well-constructed training program designed to develop entry-level professionals into productive business bankers. Launch positions could be the assistant branch manager, the credit analyst or the cash management specialist. Through OJT, webinars, trade association school, and direct mentorship, a budding commercial lender forms. If we had such a program in place over the past decade, would our loan-growth challenges and desperate search for "experienced lenders" be so profound? I doubt it. What we didn't do 10 years ago has come home to roost today.

Our people are the most important resource in executing our bank's strategy. It is management's responsibility to give them the tools to succeed. If growing revenues is critical to your strategy, and people are the main drivers of revenue, then what is your plan to train them to execute your strategy? And who should develop the curriculum and track its execution?

Marketing, that's who! ■

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