Chapter 10
Mobile Learning for Sales Force Development:
Building Skills While Meeting Quota

Agustín Couto
Columbia University, Brazil

ABSTRACT

This chapter will describe an innovative mobile sales training program created by Escola Brasileira de Vendas (Brazilian School of Sales). The program in question recognizes that sales executives are mobile by nature, and that their skill development occurs organically while performing their job function. By reviewing and analyzing a real case application, this chapter will demonstrate how incorporating mobile learning technology with traditional face-to-face workshops could generate professional transformation and improve skill building for sales executives.

INTRODUCTION

In the sales field, the majority of learning is done either empirically or through short-term training programs that range in duration from two hours talks to two days. Compared to many formal education programs offered in the market today, short-term options lack sufficient time for practice, which in turn inhibits the consequent development of crucial skills necessary for success in sales activity. There are two additional features these traditional sales training programs fail to account for:

1. Mobility of learners and
2. The real-life context in which they operate.

Traditional training programs require executives to leave their daily activities to attend sessions that are held inside a classroom with peers; this environment may not provide the best representation of the real-life challenges that sales executives face when dealing with clients. In other words, the training environment is often detached from the work-context, and hence, may lose utility. Such training pro-

grams attempt to cram a whole set of theoretical and practical learning experiences into a one or two day classroom events, with the hope that field performance will improve and sustain itself through time.

Many learning and development and human resource professionals, as well as sales executives, might find it customary to train employees in this fashion. Using such methodology might seem like the best way to train and develop sales skills. However, what if it could be different? What if sales skills development could be guided more intensely on the field than away from it? What if training could be promoted continuously, following sales executives wherever they went? What if learning could happen on-the-job, while simultaneously overcoming real sales challenges and meeting quotas?

This chapter will describe an innovative mobile sales training program created by Escola Brasileira de Vendas *(Brazilian School of Sales)*. The program in question recognizes that sales executives are mobile by nature, and that their skill development occurs organically while performing their job function. By reviewing and analyzing a real case application, this chapter will demonstrate how incorporating mobile learning technology with traditional face-to-face workshops could generate professional transformation and improve skill building for sales executives.

CONTEXT

Organization

The mobile learning program was implemented in a large multinational financial organization that recently bought a technology-based card payment processing business with high potential for growth. In order to realize growth and conquer higher market share, the institution was investing on many fronts: infrastructure, marketing, and personnel. On the personnel front, the organization needed to develop its sales force capacity to generate businesses and differentiate against the competition by superior sales service quality. To accomplish that, it decided to offer sales training to forty of the company's account executives.

Participants

The forty account executives that participated in the program were experienced sales professionals with over 10 years' experience in the sales activity. Each one of them was based in a different region of Brazil, and together they were collectively responsible for selling to medium-sized companies with yearly revenue between R$10Million and R$100Million. In each assigned region, the account executive had to prospect new clients, initiate contact, and conduct the sales process until the end.

To lead the training efforts and conduct the sales skills development program, the organization's board of directors selected Escola Brasileira de Vendas (henceforth referred to as EBVendas) for its innovative approach and use of mobile learning technology. EBVendas was the vendor capable of delivering real, on-the-job learning by leveraging mobile technology to guide, encourage, and support sales executives in the field on a daily basis. To guide participants through the program, two of the EBVendas sales coaches were responsible for twenty participants each. The program's face-to-face group coaching sessions were held in the city of Sao Paulo, and the practice of sales skills happened on-the-job, with real clients, throughout Brazil.

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