

# GLOBAL TRAINING PROVIDER ThomsonNetg KNOWS IT NEEDS TO SWALLOW IT'S OWN MEDICINE IF IT IS TO IMPROVE

One of the hallmarks of a successful company is its ability to regularly take stock of its accepted practices and challenge its own thinking so as to identify those areas where it can further improve. Because in today's highly competitive market, 'resting on one's laurels' is not an option.

**W**hich is why Thomson NETg, a global leader in 'corporate blended learning solutions', employed the Gazing team to review its already highly successful sales approach, with surprising results.

Not only did they recoup their investment in Gazing in double quick time, but the adoption of Gazing's highly acclaimed 'Strategic Sales Model' has helped the Thomson NETg sales team to increase its average contract size and to sell a broader range of training courses.

First established in 1971, Thomson Netg has built a global reputation for continuously developing blended learning solutions that save employees' time, support business goals, and lead to demonstrable job performance improvement.

The company, now part of the Canadian Thomson Group, has built a vast learning library across all media types (e-learning, live classroom, text and mentoring). From this archive, it has assembled an array of training programs that can be customized to the needs of a customer's culture, its technical infrastructure and the individual characteristics of its learners and their jobs.

Its ultimate goal is to help companies transfer the necessary knowledge and skills to its employees so that the company can sustain growth and competitive advantage.

This portfolio of technology-based, e-learning products and services is sold by a traditional sales team based around the world. Its international sales team, which covers both Europe and Asia Pacific (covering Australia, Singapore and Honk Kong) is based in Chiswick, West London and reports to Colin Tait, the International Sales Training Manager, who has been with the company for over fifteen years. And it was Colin who instigated a review of the company's sales approach, to see whether any improvements could be made.

Taking up the story, Colin said: "Our existing sales strategy had been in place for some considerable time and had served us well. We had ridden the 'dot-com boom' with some success and had grown very quickly on the back of it. But the marketplace had changed and competition had intensified. And as the market leader, we were the company that everyone else was targeting. I knew that our five-step sales approach worked, but felt that it needed 'spicing up' so as to better prepare us for the future, when we could foresee that we were going to have to fight much harder for every sale. **Specifically, like all sales managers, I wanted to see if we could push up the average size of the contract as well**".



gazing  
performance  
systems

Gazing Performance Systems UK Limited

Capital House 67 - 69 Johns Road  
Isleworth Middlesex TW7 6NL  
United Kingdom



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www.gazing.com  
E: [gazing@gazing.com](mailto:gazing@gazing.com)  
T: +44 (0)20 8568 0298  
F: +44 (0)20 8568 9782



Colin was aware that the existing sales approach, based on completing a “sequential cycle” comprising presentations followed by needs analysis, followed by a proposal, then close, was becoming too “formulaic” and was becoming insufficiently flexible to adapt to the ever-widening range of training being offered to prospects. This flexibility was especially important to a company that prided itself on its ability to customize its service offering so comprehensively.

He therefore turned to the Gazing team to help him. The Gazing team, first analyzed the company’s existing sales strategy and then reviewed the company’s positioning in the market, before recommending that the company adopt its highly successful “Strategic Sales Model”. This Model, like all Gazing’s training courses, is based on helping the delegates achieve higher levels of performance whilst under pressure. **Central to this approach is Gazing’s unique use of “performance maps”; simple one-page documents that help the delegate “navigate” their way around a pressure situation and, critically, help them to be aware of the psychological factors that are at work, and which might prevent a high level of performance from being achieved.**

By introducing performance maps to the Thomson Netg sales team, Gazing also helped them overcome a problem common amongst many sales teams, how to respond to the prospects’ requirements, yet stick to the script.

Gazing’s performance maps are famed for introducing greater flexibility into the sales approach, by allowing the prospect to articulate his or her precise requirements, and yet still giving the sales team member the ability to continue to “navigate” his or her way through the sales process, through to its successful conclusion.

The remaining element to Gazing’s “Strategic Sales Model” is the insight that it provides the delegate into the mind of the prospect, and the various mental stages that they go through during the sales process.

Thirty six team members from Thomson Netg attended the original training course run by Gazing and all responded in a very positive manner. Colin Tait’s measure of the success of the training course was its impact on sales. And he too, was pleasantly surprised by the result. He said **“The Gazing training received the best feedback I have seen for any sales training we have undertaken. The big bonus was that, unlike the previous training, the entire sales force started to use it straight away. This produced some quick wins of quality sales which were well above the average deal size. In this respect the training paid for itself.”**

Perhaps the last word should be left with Colin Bell, the Sales & Professional Services Director at ThomsonNetg who said: “As a training company ourselves, return on investment is paramount in our thinking. Our investment in Gazing has already paid for itself and, as we go forward, I would expect it to pay for itself many times over.”



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