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Expert advice on your questions

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Sales are down. How do I decide if it's time to call in a sales trainer?

Bob Henricks, owner, Henricks Corporate Training, a Sandler training company: You've got to answer some important questions — what are my company's strengths and weaknesses? Is my strategy poor, or is it the execution? What are my goals in the short term? Then, what will this yield in the long run? We all know the rebound is coming. Am I going to be ready for it?

If you have to pick and chose who gets training, ask where your largest potential lies. The heavy hitters will always be hot, and the low performers will always be behind. The middle-performing group is a good investment.

Mary Bruce, owner, Kaleidoscope Business Options Inc.: It's wrong to just throw a trainer at your sales staff. If you don't address the underlying issues, a sales trainer is not going to get you where you want you go.

You need to analyze what's going on and where sales are dropping. It may be time for a strategic shift in focus to find new customers. You have got to go after new market opportunities — like a different industry or small rather than large firms, or perhaps making a different sell to the same customers.

Philippe Le Baron, president, LB4G Consulting Inc.: Sales training is worthless if you don't know what you are training for. It's not one-size-fits-all.

Sales trainers are not magicians — they come in to solve particular problems. It's tied to the development of each individual.

So understand what the problem is. Is the pricing wrong, or is it the strategy? Look at the entire process — does your sales staff need to prospect more? Close better? In figuring this all out, make sure everyone is part of the process. Your salespeople can give you lot of valuable input on why sales are down.

To submit questions, e-mail David Harris at dharris@bizjournals.com.

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