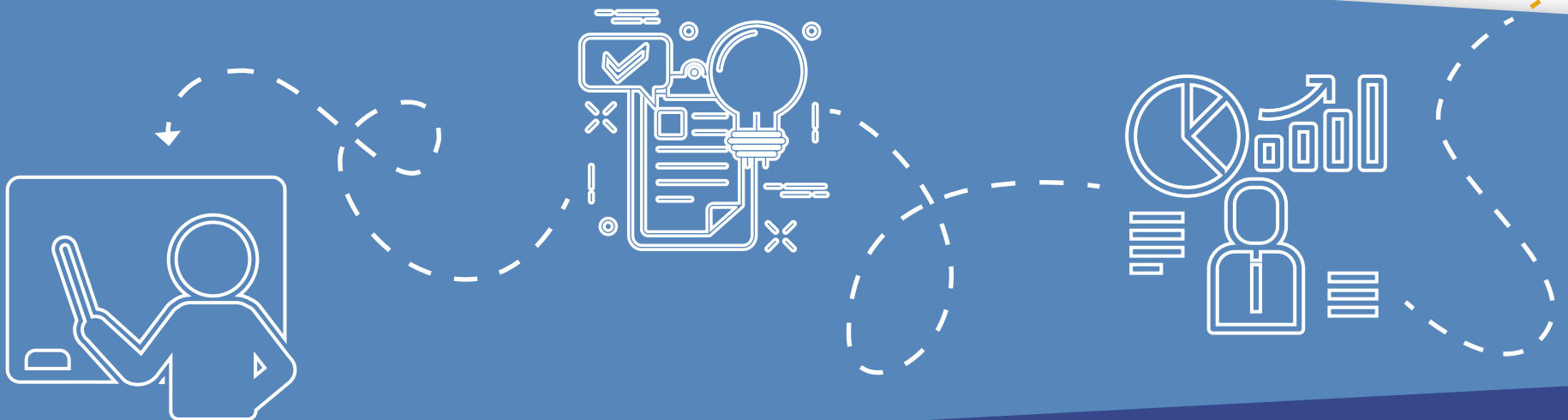
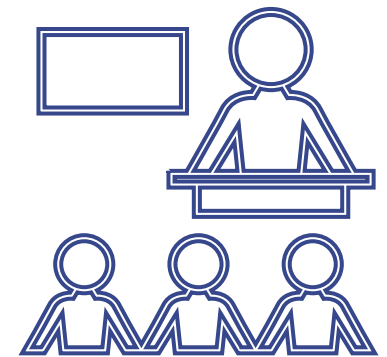
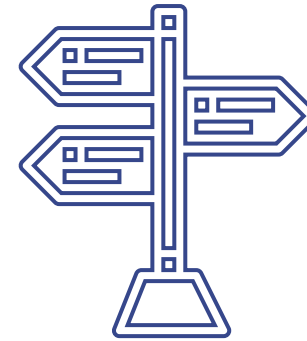


# 6 BIG MISTAKES COMPANIES MAKE When Selecting Sales Training Providers



Sandler Corporate Training has worked with corporations around the globe to design, build, and execute sales and sales management training programs. Our programs are personalized for our clients and are delivered in a truly blended way, combining instructor-led, virtual reinforcement and self paced learning. Throughout the years, we've seen the good, the bad, and the ugly, and learned best practices for adoption and execution during the selection of a training partner.

Avoid the six most common mistakes we've seen over and over when it comes to making your decision. Training is an investment in your most precious asset – your people.

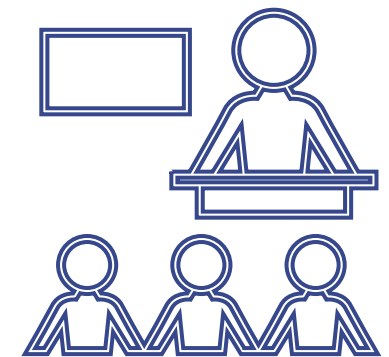
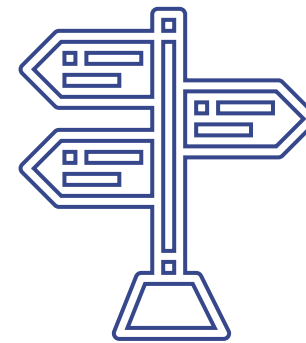


## 1. Not attending an in-person training before making the decision.

*If you haven't seen the training team in action, you have no idea whether this provider is or could be a good fit for your team.*

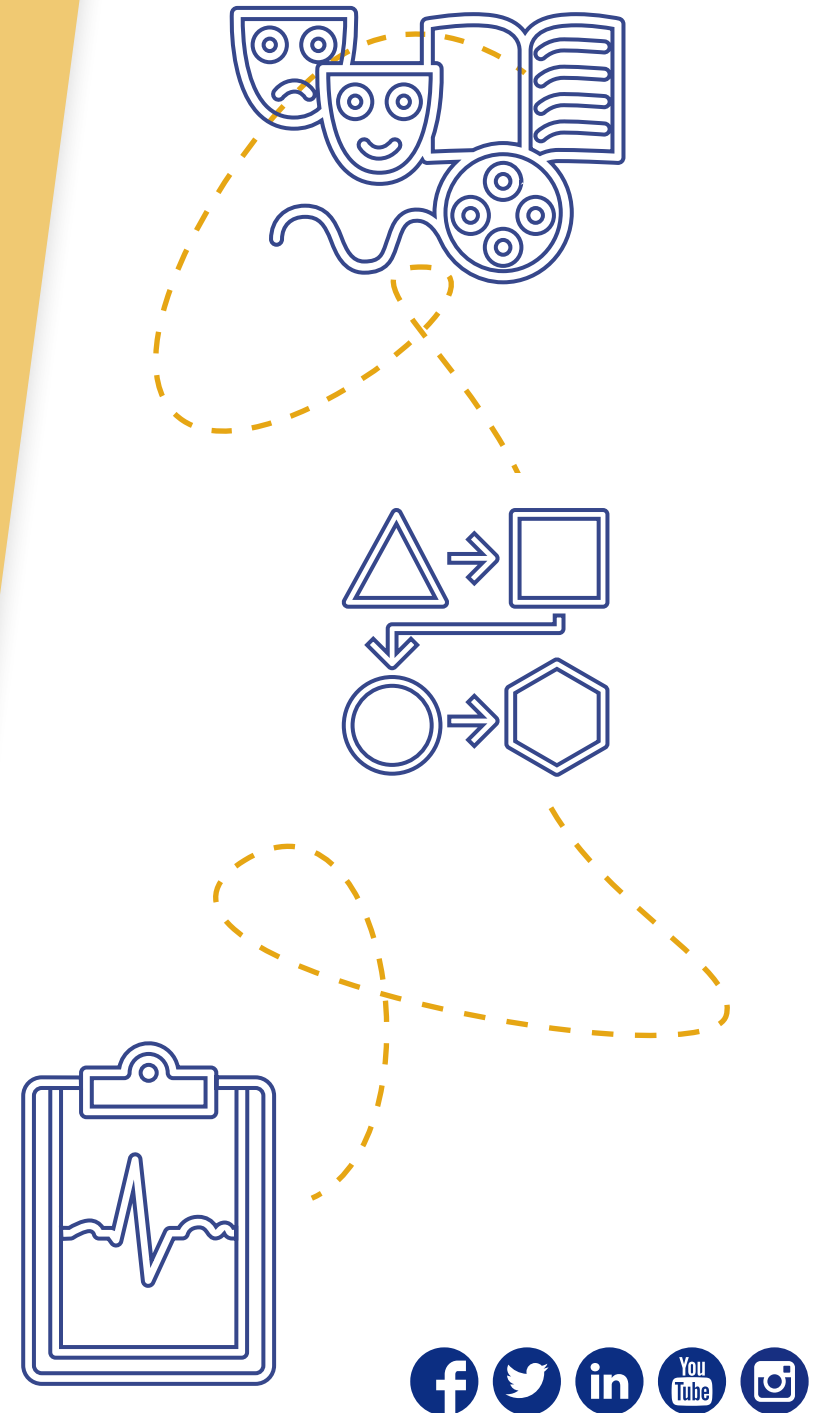
You look at a house before buying it. You go on a date before you ask someone to marry you. Why would you agree to let someone train your people before you've seen what they actually do during a training session – and whether they are capable of engaging your people?

Picking a training partner your team is resistant to can be an extremely expensive mistake. At the very least, you should see the trainer in action, and determine whether learners are responding positively in real time.



There are any number of important questions for you to consider before making a final decision about a training program – questions that can't be answered unless you see a live training session. These include:

- **Culture** Who will be conducting the training? What is this person like in action? Will this person understand our company, our values, and our unique challenges? How do we know for sure that this is the case? Who internally has met with the trainer?
- **Content** Do the foundation principles and core deliverables of the program the trainer is delivering make sense and apply to our company? Do we even know what they are? Have we shared them and discussed them with the appropriate team members on our side?
- **Process** Does the trainer have a process that makes sense to me? What is it? How does the trainer approach relationships with new clients? How do they approach learning in general? How will they customize their process for our situation and our objectives?
- **Results** What is the objective of the training session we are observing? Is it clearly stated? Does it match up with what participants are hoping to achieve? How will attainment of the objective be measured? What, specifically, would we want out of our partnership with this trainer? How would that be measured?



## 2. Thinking in terms of a single training event.

*This common error overlooks the critical factor of reinforcement.*

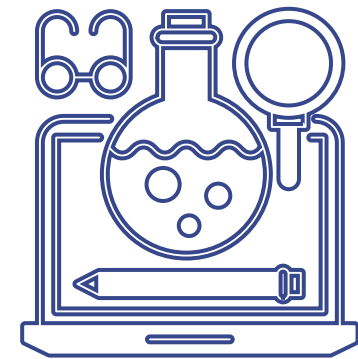
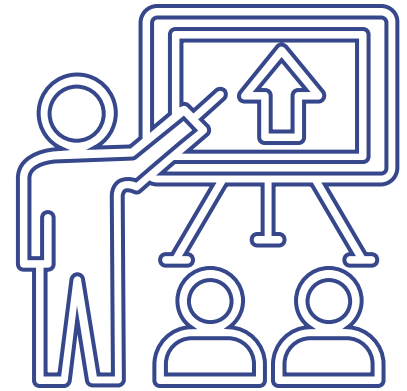
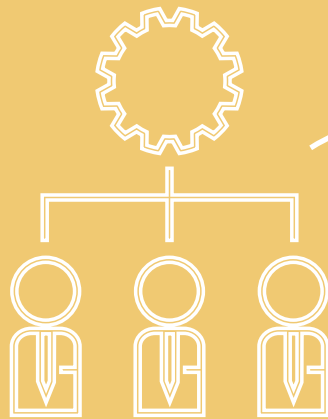
Typical questions we hear from decision makers include: “What would it cost for a keynote?” and “How much for a single day of training for our team?” The underlying assumptions of such questions are worth a close examination. Training isn’t a “check the box” item, and it’s not an event; it’s part of a learning process that continues over time.

**Reinforcement is how people learn – and how behaviors change over time.** Training your team for a single day is like telling someone to go to the gym once a year for eight hours straight. Will that person truly be better off? Would you take one lesson from a golf pro ... and consider yourself ready for a PGA tournament?



We ask our clients to think about training in a truly blended way – instructor-led, with phone and video reinforcement, and featuring self-paced learning to allow participants to pick and choose the content that is most important to them. We also recommend changing the delivery medium regularly to include lecture, practice, video, audio, podcasts, books, articles, and white papers ... and building **strategic onboarding and reinforcement initiatives** that employ multiple learning modalities.

Why do we focus on that? Because the numbers demand it. The *Harvard Business Review* estimates that the **annual turnover rate for US sales teams now stands at 27%**, and in our experience can be far higher, depending on the company and the industry. Problems with onboarding are a big reason for the unacceptably high turnover numbers ... but the *Society for Human Resource Management* recently reported that new hires who are introduced to the company as part of a well-designed onboarding program are **69% more likely to remain at the company for the long haul**. And business units with highly engaged employees can be expected to deliver **21% higher profitability**, according to *Gallup's State of the American Workforce*.



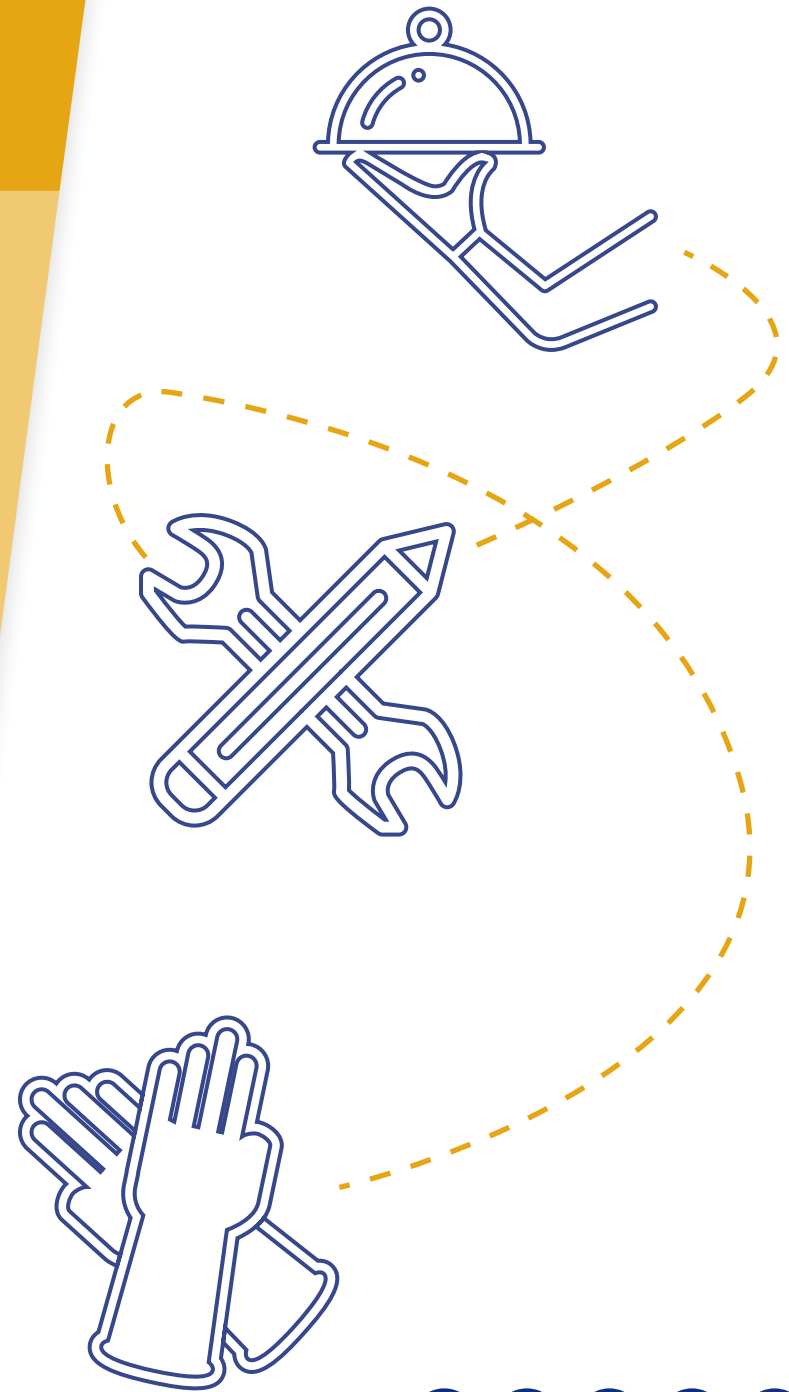
### 3. Assuming one size fits all.

*A boilerplate approach to training and development is a recipe for failure.*

In a standard, uncustomized, one-day “training session,” you end up paying an outside provider who may be entertaining ... but who can’t possibly ensure that the material delivered during the session matches up with your organization’s culture, content requirements, optimum delivery and reinforcement process, or desired results. If any of that is important to you – and it should be – you won’t want to buy training “off the rack.”

When it comes to sales and sales leadership training, we find that customization means different things to different people. That’s because every organization’s sales process is unique. We believe the best results come when you sit down with a partner who will take the time to **understand your specific sales team’s situation ... and your individual team members’ blind spots.**

We have found that most of our clients want to start with foundational learning, some core concepts, to get the teams on the same page ... and then move forward from there, by either matching the key issues to one of the existing pieces of content from our half-century of curriculum development for salespeople ... or by creating courses, tools, and case studies that are “glove-fitting” to that client’s world. Your situation will depend on the specific challenges your team is facing.

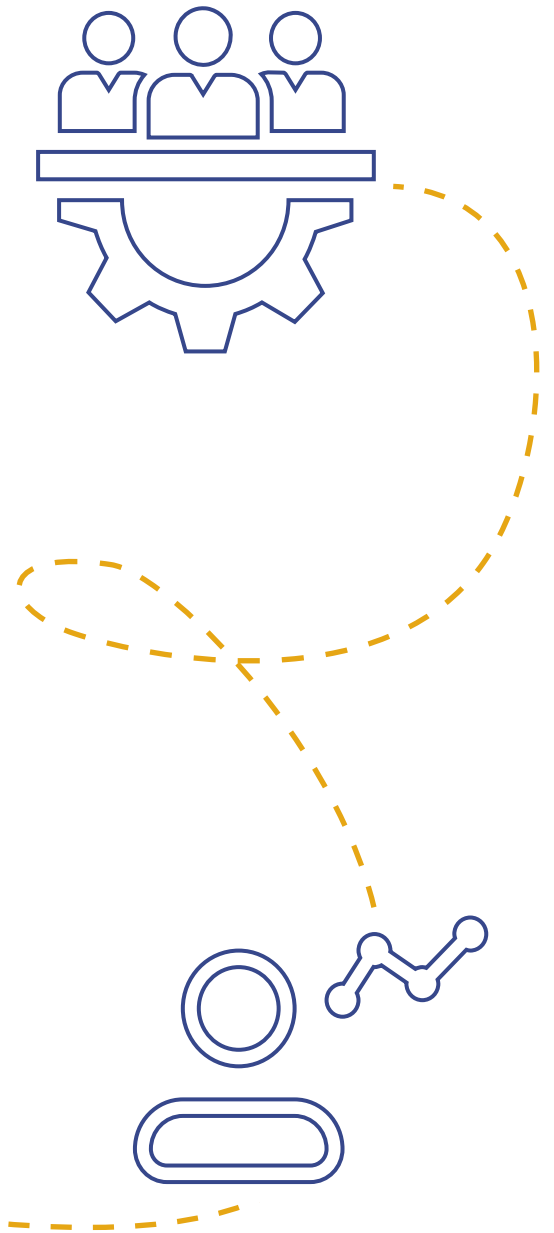
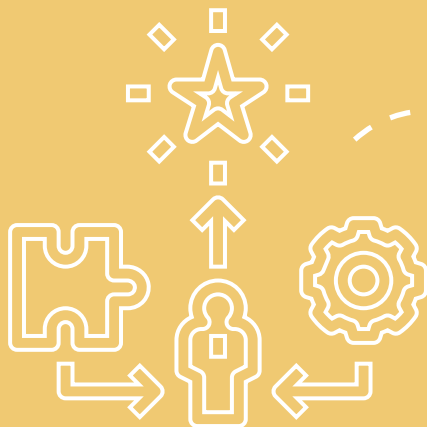


## 4. Treating potential candidates like a vendor, not a partner.

*There must be a meaningful exchange of information before the training event is launched.*

A low-information selection process gives your organization a low-impact training initiative. You will get better results when co-building a solution with your training partner. Our best engagements have always come when we have partnered with a company early, stood in front of the white board together, and worked as a team to build the future learning plan for the company.

If we end up collaborating with you, we will ask you to tell us exactly where you want the company or team to go ... and then **we'll work with you to create relevant KPIs (performance benchmarks) so that both sides can track measurable progress** toward that common goal. We will always share our learnings and insights as trainers with experience gathered from in front of the room and during one-on-one coaching sessions. We will not assume we already know everything there is to know about your organization.





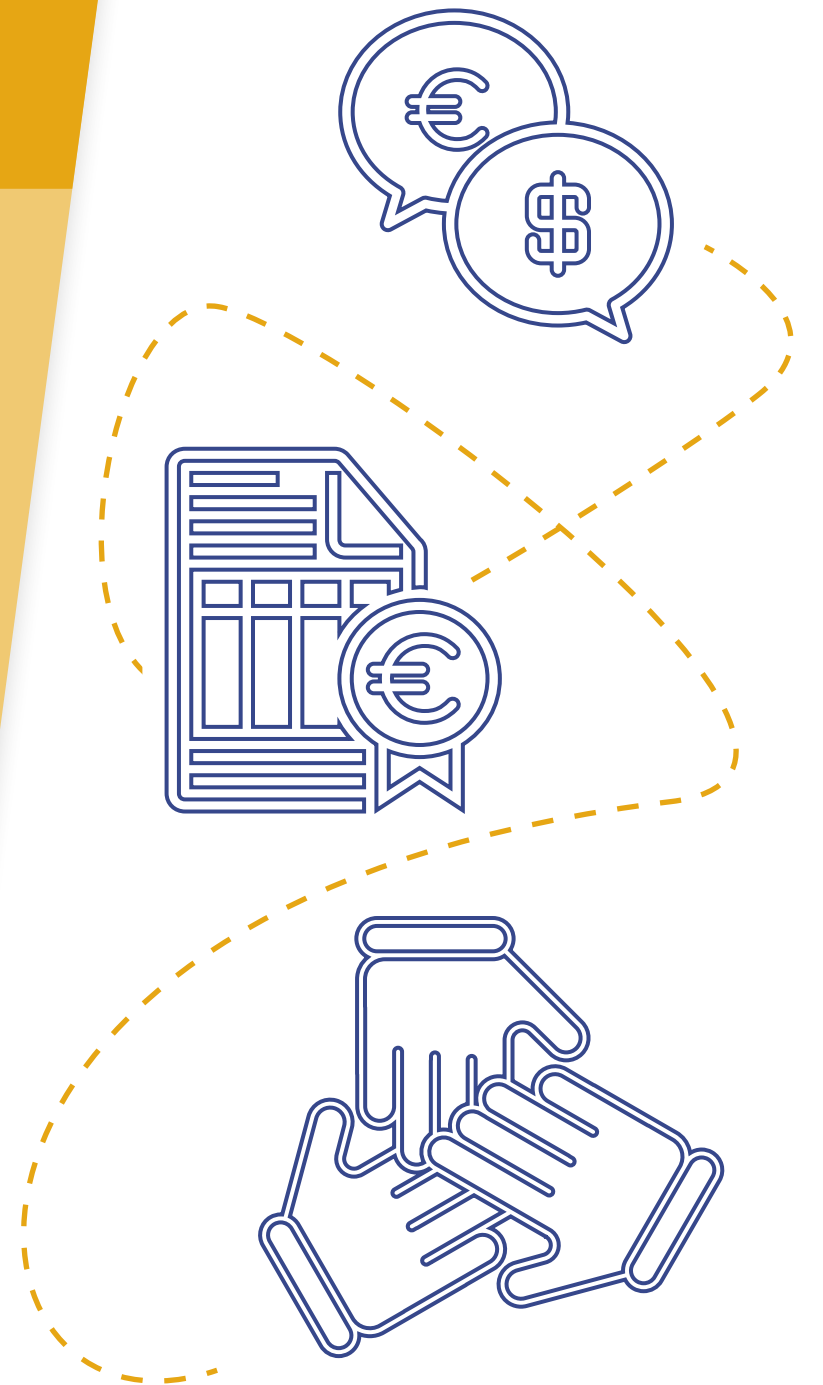
## 5. Thinking an RFP gets your organization the best price.

*A training initiative that has zero impact on desired behavioral changes isn't worth doing, no matter how little you pay for it.*

Every time we get a request that asks us to develop a proposal without any meaningful information, we have the same response: “We’d like to submit, but we have no idea what to propose!” Consider: A training commitment is part of a strategic decision to invest in your people’s development ... not because there is leftover money in the budget, but because you want to solve specific problems that are unique to your organization. How could we possibly know how we’d approach that task without knowing anything about your organization?

The traditional RFP process creates a deeply misleading “popularity contest.” Just like on the television show *The Bachelor*, what you’re told doesn’t necessarily reflect what you will get. **Some training companies approach RFPs with a low bid to win the business, and then increase their fees on the back end.** If you purchase the “bare bones” version of anything, you’re likely to get nickel and dimed at some point down the line! **Other companies overcommit**, throwing in everything but the kitchen sink, so that the true focus of the program – a measurable behavioral change in the sales staff that results in sustainable increased revenue – is lost.

We recommend that you pick a vendor you can collaborate with as a long-term partner, and that you consider a two-to-three-year relationship that identifies all the relevant costs up front.



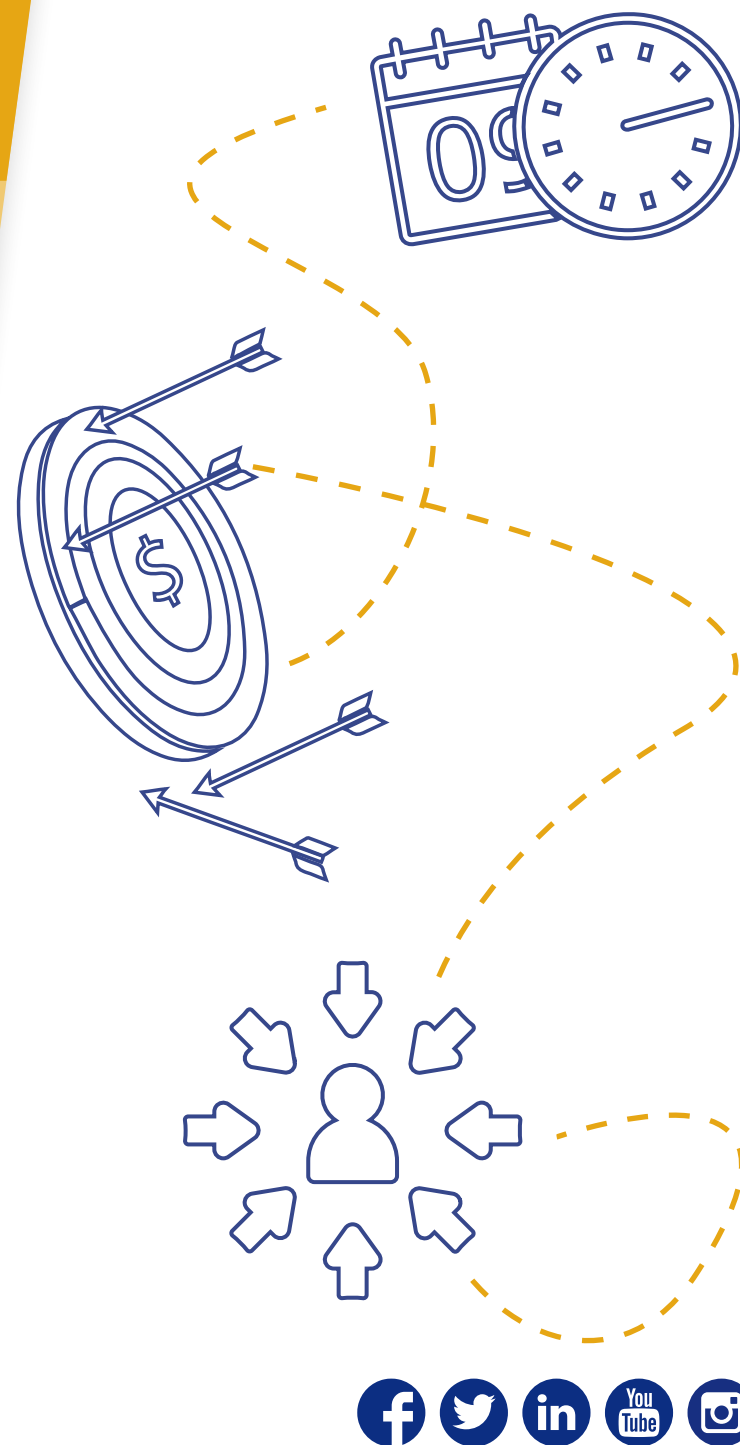
## 6. Trying to bring the training in-house too soon.

*If the person delivering the training has not personally implemented the behaviors, attitudes, and techniques needed to succeed in the area in question, that individual is not qualified to lead the training.*

**Effectively training a sales team is difficult.** Our experience is that many training companies convert their clients to train an internal trainer too early in the process, which leads to a failure in execution. This transition should happen gradually over time because trainers need to master the material for it to be effective, and mastery takes a long time. Our data shows that transitioning to an internal trainer too quickly could potentially increase the cost of the training when you factor in all the costs, including the costs of lost opportunities.

**Fewer than 5% of companies that arrange for a train-the-trainer program end up bringing that program to conclusion.** Why is the record so bad? Because companies try to make the transition too soon. It quickly becomes obvious to everyone (including participants) that the internal trainer hasn't internalized the content ... and can't deliver the desired outcomes.

We want your team to reinforce our training content effectively over time... because we know that's the only way they will succeed. That's why we recommend against transitioning too early to an internal trainer. We have a proven record of helping sales teams reinforce and master our material. Instead of trying to build the reinforcement "house" from scratch themselves, our clients have found that it's far more cost-effective to hold off on the train-the-trainer initiative, so the members of their team can build on the foundation co-created with Sandler.



# About Sandler Corporate Training

Sandler Corporate Training specializes in designing and building world-class sales, management, and customer service training programs for middle market companies to Fortune 500 companies. We help companies facing unique challenges in their sales and business development workforce to dramatically increase efficiencies and achieve maximum results.

## Sandler Corporate Training Areas of Expertise:

- Personalized programs
- Large scale execution
- Online Learning
- Large U.S. based and global sales organizations
- Sales management
- Companies using a “channel”

**For help in building your training plan,  
email us at [corporatetraining@sandler.com](mailto:corporatetraining@sandler.com).**

\* Statistic references pulled from the *Harvard Business Review*, *Society for Human Resource Management*, and *Gallup's State of the American Workforce*.



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