

SPIN[®] Selling provides a **springboard for sales** improvement at BNP Paribas



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A world-leader in global banking and financial services, BNP Paribas has long recognised the importance of skills training in providing its customers with the level of service they expect.

Easy to say perhaps, but achieving this in a fast-moving market like the Middle East has presented a number of challenges in recent years. *“Our work in retail banking, for example, has many sides,”* says Maha Sobhi, head of training and development at BNP Paribas, *“as we advise customers as well as provide them with products that meet their specific requirements.*

This means that we need to recruit the right people and then rapidly train them to ensure they have a broad range of technical and consultative selling skills to sell proactively to corporates and reactively to individuals.”

In late 2007 this became a major issue as the banking sector experienced substantial growth, particularly in Egypt. *“In order to compete successfully with other banks and make the most of this booming market, BNP Paribas had to build a much larger retail branch structure,”* confirms Motasem Kamal, finance sector manager, at Huthwaite Egypt. *“As part of this, the bank had to undertake a mass recruitment*

drive which meant employing staff with a broad range of skills and competencies. It was critical that the chosen training solution was not only quick and easy to implement but provided a consistent high level of customer-facing skills.”





Common language

BNP Paribas' early experience of SPIN[®] Selling had been positive. It provided a solution which ideally met the particular requirements of the Egyptian market. *"We looked at a number of options,"* confirmed Sobhi. *"Rather than proposing a standardised, off-the-shelf solution, Huthwaite responded by taking care to completely understand our needs before recommending a SPIN[®]-based approach, which uniquely addressed a number of key issues for us."*

Kamal explains: *"The sales culture in Egypt involves a strong element of personalised selling in addition to a technical understanding of the product or service on offer. And this is even more important in a highly-competitive banking environment involving complex, high-ticket items. Here, customers need to have total confidence in the seller's ability to recommend the right investment solution as they seek to build desired long-term relationships."*

"The SPIN[®] model is ideally suited to meet all these needs. Not only is SPIN[®] proven

globally across a wide range of banking customers, it also works well within the Egyptian sales culture by allowing for the social conversation ahead of the business interaction."

Expanded skills training

This became especially important as BNP Paribas dramatically geared up its recruitment drive throughout 2008. Having worked closely with Huthwaite Egypt in developing a tailored solution, SPIN[®] training was delivered to more than 1,200 banking staff throughout 2008 and early 2009, including all new hires within three to six months of joining the bank.

BNP Paribas identified an increase in sales due to this training drive, with front-line corporate and branch sales staff responding very positively to the Huthwaite training approach. As a result, a number of additional programmes were developed to reinforce and extend the range of skills acquired in the initial SPIN[®] selling course.

Managers have since undertaken SPIN[®] Coaching courses in order to ensure that

their staff are carrying through into the branch offices the new behavioural skills they have learned. This reinforcement has also been supported more recently in January 2010 with the introduction of a series of one-day refresher courses.

Key branch staff have undergone a range of other improvement initiatives, including Huthwaite's Negotiation Skills, Account Strategy for Major Sales (ASMS) and Customer Service Skills training. Future plans under discussion include Sales Management training for branch managers.

For Peter Belsey, business director for professional services, this is a perfect example of the value of Huthwaite's training approach. *"The successful relationship with BNP Paribas shows how local market knowledge and high quality sales improvement messages can be implemented consistently on the ground, wherever they are located."*





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