

CASE STUDY WILHELMSSEN SHIPS SERVICE

From fragmented to channelled: an enterprise-level sales approach elevated and transformed.

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As one of the four regions that comprise the world’s largest maritime services network, the Northeast-Asia regional offices of Wilhelmsen Ships Service (WSS) run a busy operation and have high expectations for sales success. Operating in one of the most economically vibrant regions of the world and in an industry that is the linchpin to global trade, they have highly ambitious sales targets to achieve—and intense competition.

As Paul Rogers, Hong Kong-based Director of Wilhelmsen explains, they were looking for expert advice to accelerate sales, gain a new competitive edge, and transform a fragmented approach to selling into one that is channelled and flexible.

They found what they were looking for with Colleen Francis and Engage Selling.

Right from the start, says Rogers, Engage Selling was aligned with his group’s goals on contractual selling and on changing customer perception of their brand: “We needed a new, consistent approach to how we were approaching and selling to our customers...so that they would start seeing us as a strategic partner.”

What first stood out for Rogers and his staff in the Northeast-Asia regional offices were the personally-hosted sales coaching webinars that Colleen conducted over a two-year period including an intensive series of follow-ups online. “These helped establish buy-in among our staff to the sales methods that she advocates for,” he explains.

There is no substitute for face-to-face engagement. Proof of this was when Colleen travelled to the region for the Wilhelmsen regional sales kick off meeting. Rogers points out that it made a great impression on everyone, including the sales management team for the six countries represented at the sales gathering.

“Her energy, her inner passion for excellence and dedication to sales success really connected with our people,” says Rogers. “That’s when our relationship with Engage really gelled.”

Colleen Francis and Engage Selling helped the firm’s Northeast-Asia regional offices make an important transition to contractual selling. As Rogers explains: moving from selling a single concept to a round of concepts is a significant shift both in terms of strategy and in the way that a sales force needs to think about sales. “We recognized that moving in this direction would mean a longer selling cycle and Colleen showed us how we could change our selling approach to capitalize on this great opportunity.”

Rogers cites must-have skills that all sales professionals need, which Colleen provides in her coaching sessions. “Knowing how to ask the right questions of customers, being prepared for objections from prospects and clients rather than trying to deal with them on the fly: these are elemental skills that



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Paul Rogers, Director, Wilhelmsen Ships Service

often get overlooked in enterprise-level sales. Colleen really knows how to drive those points home with practical examples and solutions you can implement right away.”

Today, Wilhelmsen business reviews and case studies are better leveraged to unlock their full potential both as a selling tool and further entrench the firm’s globally respected reputation as an innovator in marine shipping. “People see its power now to generate new business,” says Rogers. These factors, combined with a more strategic approach to sales have been elemental to boosting the performance of the group’s sales force. Sales leaders within the firm’s Northeast-Asia regional offices now have a better understanding of the importance of getting into a prospect’s executive suite, where decision-making authority resides. There is also a deeper understanding that better, more informed discussions with existing customers can lead to bigger sales and deeper business relationships.

It has been over two years since the Northeast-Asia regional offices of Wilhelmsen first began working with Engage Selling. The difference in sales has been nothing short of remarkable. “We’ve sold the largest amount of contracts in our network,” says Rogers. “That’s as a result of the significant contributions made by Engage to how we sell to our customers.”

Having successfully made the transition from fragmented to channelled selling, the results have been transformative for the Northeast-Asia regional offices of WSS. “Today,” he adds, “we’re seeing growth levels like we never have before.” Working with Engage is a great experience that Paul Rogers and his staff can attest to: “It has been a real pleasure working with Colleen, and we look forward to doing so again in the future.”



ABOUT COLLEEN FRANCIS

Colleen is driven by a passion for sales – and results. A successful sales leader for over 20 years, she understands the challenges of selling in today’s market. Clients who work with Colleen note her frank, no-nonsense approach to solving problems and addressing opportunities. Colleen has become renowned for her practical strategies and use of measurement and accountability to inspire sales team results.

Colleen has been distinguished as a Certified Sales Professional (C.S.P.) and an inductee into the Speaking Hall of Fame. Sales and Marketing Magazine has called Colleen and Engage Selling: One of the top 5 most effective sales training organizations in the market today!



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