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Case Study - The Laminex Group

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Executive Summary

The Laminex Group is Australia's leading marketer, distributor and manufacturer of premium decorative work surfaces and bench tops. The company was investing heavily in training and developing its national sales team in five States, when it sought Objective Assessment's expertise to improve its return on investment.

Barry Smith, the Laminex Group Sales and Distribution Manager confirmed that Laminex had previously realized

the need to train and develop its National Sales Group, but he had no way of confirming if this investment was achieving the return necessary to allow Laminex to realize its true national sales potential. Barry chose Objective Assessment to assist him in confirming this potential by utilizing Objective Assessments sales force assessment tools. Once Objective Assessment had completed the task nationally, Barry was able to:

"The process unearthed a significant upside in our sales management team, giving them the opportunity to fully appreciate their roles as managers, team leaders, coaches and mentors."

- Barry Smith, Group Sales and Distribution Manager, The Laminex Group

- Evaluate the existing National Sales Group from Sales Managers down.
- Realize the strengths and weaknesses of the State teams as a collective and the Managers and sales people as individuals.
- Have Objective Assessment coach and mentor the Managers and their team on their assessments.
- Move to realize the true State sales performance and individuals' growth potential to sell.
- Realize and or modify the sales training investment to get the best return through increased sales and market share and better stability in the National Sales Team.
- Translate this professional development into tangible financial and commercial gains.
- Recruit top sales people going forward.

THE laminex GROUP



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The Laminex Group looks for return on sales training investment

Barry Smith, comments, "We were spending significant amounts on learning and development for the sales teams so needed to know how these programs were improving our interaction with customers."

"Before continuing our intensive training schedule, I felt it crucial to stop and look at our peoples' ability to develop and apply training in their day to day worlds."

"I asked our State Sales Managers, 'Are we effective?', 'Do we have the right mindset to create a major step change?' and 'How can we create a competitive advantage?' They agreed there could be potential room for substantial improvement in our existing teams."

As one of the State Sales Management team comments, "Our sales force effectiveness program focused on tools for our sales people to identify opportunities in their territories, but there was one fundamental flaw in our program - we knew the strengths of our sales teams and sales managers but did not know where their areas for development lay."

The goal: To develop The Laminex Group's existing team.

How was this achieved?

Barry sought an external supplier to evaluate, train and mentor his national sales force.

"We reviewed six providers including many traditional training suppliers. Objective Assessment focused on an individual's capacity to grow based on their learning ability and potential, which was important because we wanted to not only develop our existing team but also recruit well."

"They took a holistic view, offering tools on an individual and collective basis to assess our teams against known international benchmarks. This approach, I believed, would assist us to create a 'sales profession' within our company."

"My vision is that The Laminex Group gains the reputation of an employer of choice for professional sales people – that getting a sales role here is difficult because our recruitment process is rigorous and our standards are high, without apology."
- Barry Smith, Group Sales and Distribution Manager, The Laminex Group

How the online evaluation reveals the sales team's capability and potential

The first step was assessing The Laminex Groups team of 150+ field sales people using Objective Assessment's Sales Force Profile evaluation tool. "The online program evaluates each team member, but most importantly, builds up a collective view of our entire sales organisation. Through it we benchmark individuals internally as well as compare State operations, to provide consistency of output across the company," explains Barry.

How did Objective Assessment make the results meaningful and actionable?

Communicating the report findings to sales managers and salespeople in a non-threatening way was paramount, Barry explains. "Objective Assessment used a combination of coaching and mentoring to ensure my managers were comfortable with the assessments."

"Understanding how to make meaning of the data was important because the sales managers had to review their team's effectiveness as well as their own. Objective Assessment helped the managers understand first – then educate," Barry finishes.

According to one member of the Sales Management team, "We found the insight and results unexpected. I didn't expect to learn some of the things that Objective Assessment revealed. It helped me personally identify areas for my own development. It's a revealing and honest process."

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Identifying growth potential within the sales teams is a major step forward

The Objective Assessment evaluation pinpointed the potential achievable by an individual.

Barry continues, "Based on these assessments we now connect individual growth potential to actual State performance. By overlaying actual financial results with possible improvements, we forecast the commercial impact to the business of optimising their performance individually and as a group."

"The question then becomes how do we tap into that to make sure the individual, and our support for that individual, enables us to realise the upside?"

How Laminex achieved the team potential by focusing on professional development

Barry explains how The Laminex Group is creating positive organisational change by altering its approach to training and focusing its development budget, "We are carefully targeting development by territory and individual. We are building a program around individuals and we can see how our in-house learning departments and sales managers can best influence positive behavioural changes."

"It is our responsibility, hand in hand with Objective Assessment, to make sure we tap into the 'upside' of our sales team and realise it."
- Barry Smith, Group Sales and Distribution Manager, The Laminex Group

How Laminex is using Express Screen to set the standard for all future sales hiring

The Laminex Group also uses Objective Assessment's Express Screen pre-hire tool to profile candidates as part of its formal recruitment process.

"The pre-hire tool is not the ultimate decider, but it helps set a standard and gives us another piece of intelligence on candidates. The Express Screen evaluation allows us to recruit at a particular benchmark nationally, without diluting our standards," Barry finishes.

"We are applying individual and collective learning tools to actually translate professional development into tangible financial and commercial gains."
- Barry Smith, Group Sales and Distribution Manager, The Laminex Group

The final outcome, a mentor and partner in Objective Assessment

"We wanted someone to become part of our process – Objective Assessment has certainly done that. The company's MD, Beverley Jones, has freely given her time and expertise, from one-on-one meetings to group sessions tailored to the needs of our sales managers."

"My objective was to get return on investment by improving the effectiveness of the application of training funds. The Sales Management teams have commented that, with the help of Objective Assessment, we are now well on our way." says Barry.

"Objective Assessment's willingness to get involved at the coalface and their ability to actually understand our culture and what we are trying to achieve, is first class."
- Barry Smith, Group Sales and Distribution Manager, The Laminex Group

"We are seeing real results. We are advocates of Objective Assessment."

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Objective Assessment works exclusively at the executive level to provide crucial, timely, insightful and unique information that helps companies make more intelligent decisions to increase the effectiveness of their sales organisation to meet their growth plans. Using world leading programs and local expertise we have helped the leaders of Small to Medium Enterprises to the CEO's of major corporations in the Fortune 100 list in Finance & Banking, Manufacturing & Distribution, Industrial, Business & Professional Services identify & fix the real issues preventing sales growth. Call us on (02) 9025 3980 to explore how we can help you grow your business.