

# **LEVERAGING SALES AND LEADERSHIP TALENT TO GENERATE EXCEPTIONAL RESULTS**

*Creating Vision, Strategy, and Revenue Growth*

*A New Horizons Computer Learning Center  
White Paper*

## **LEVERAGING SALES AND LEADERSHIP TALENT TO GENERATE EXCEPTIONAL RESULTS**

New Horizons Computer Learning Centers (NHCLC) is the world's largest independent IT training company with over 300 centers in 60 countries. Over the past 25 years, New Horizons has provided innovative learning solutions that have transformed businesses and helped 25 million students reach their career goals.

As the company has evolved into a global training network, the hiring and training requirements for sales and general management teams have escalated. Once known for a state-of-the-art outbound selling machine, today NHCLC blends a broad array of Account Executives, Career Counselors, and IT professionals into a solutions-oriented selling team.

This white paper provides a clear view of how sales professionals can apply key principles and practical tools to rapidly improve their results. For the sake of broad adaptability by large and small companies, this paper highlights one NHCLC mega-market center in Denver, Colorado. The concepts are exponentially beneficial when applied across a full-scale enterprise.

### **New Horizons Colorado**

Mark Villareal, Vice President of Company Owned Locations, realized an opportunity to positively impact the New Horizons' bottom line when NHCLC purchased a former franchise location in Denver, Colorado. After it became part of his company-owned portfolio, Villareal moved fast. He began a turnaround of this prime location by establishing clear objectives focused on:

- 1) A results-oriented culture grounded in principles and values.
- 2) Growth and profitability independent of the economic environment.
- 3) Metrics for building a team of entrepreneurially-minded professionals.

The results speak for themselves.

New Horizons Colorado revenues are at an all-time high and profitability has grown from 8% to 18% in a two-year period. In addition, revenue per sales professional is up by approximately 71%. The secret to the success of New Horizons Colorado model is a three-fold strategy with clearly defined components.

The NHCLC team in Colorado has:

- 1) Adopted an unrelenting appetite for excellence.
- 2) Built a leadership team constantly challenging the malaise of mediocrity.
- 3) Integrated a process for identifying, hiring, and coaching sales professionals based on 16 specific sales and leadership traits. This process incorporates the **SALES AND LEADERSHIP EFFICACY SURVEY (S.A.L.E.S.)**, a tool designed and administered by CMI of Dallas, Texas.

### **Revitalizing an Underperforming Asset**

New Horizons' franchise owners are typically seasoned professionals with an eye for running efficient training centers that grow organically and deliver healthy profits. The business is intense and requires continuous engagement by the leadership team. Absentee owners fall behind and their centers lag in performance.

Villareal stepped into the Denver center and spotted the core problem. The tail was wagging the dog in a steady, counter-productive rhythm. Employees were in complete control. Despite some degree of success, the existing management team was broadly infected with the cancerous "we've always done it this way" mindset.

They celebrated success in meager accomplishments. They embraced an outdated belief that tenure was evidence of talent. Each employee was busily doing his/her own thing to the detriment of the entity at large.

As an example, long-term Account Executives had a vice-grip on the best revenue opportunities in their center's portfolio - regardless of their inconsistent energies to maximize potential. Sales management placated this tendency by hiring whomever they

felt best fit into the existing culture. The center appeared to be hostage to the whims and complaints of largely uncommitted employees.

Management had no method for identifying high potential employees capable of contributing mightily to the revenue growth of the center. Managers were unclear on the character attributes inherent in a super-achiever. There was no objective barometer for determining which new sales applicants had the talent, tenacity, or a desire to succeed.

### **Options on the Table**

The range of alternatives for Villareal included:

- 1) Spend an inordinate amount of time and energy coaching the existing management team... realizing their many poor habits. Their judgment was shaped by prior ownership. Resistance to change was high.
- 2) Find an outsourcing group or headhunting firm to bring in a slate of new talent.
- 3) Get outsourcing help and spend an excessive amount of time coaching.
- 4) Construct a new model for continuously building and sharpening the team.

Villareal decisively moved forward with option four in the quest for fast and measurable ROI.

### **Establishing Expectations and Discipline**

As the first order of business, Villareal dramatically raised the bar of expectation for everyone. His clear and consistent message revolved around this theme: Success is a result of good habits. Good habits are built on great behavior. We will take ownership of our behavior, change our habits, and redefine our expectation of success.

He told key performers, "It won't be easy. We will need new players to make it work. And if you stick with us... by year-end, you'll be glad we made these changes."

Villareal's approach: Factual, supportive, and direct.

## **Changes in the Denver Hiring and Coaching Process**

Since NHCLC is a sales-oriented corporation, Villareal assesses Colorado sales professionals, sales assistants, sales managers, and the general manager utilizing the **SALES AND LEADERSHIP EFFICACY SURVEY**. This provides him with a baseline for coaching and recruiting.

As the individual feedback from the first assessment reports came in, Villareal met with managers and reviewed the results. He coached his G.M. and sales managers regarding the criticality of each of the 16 key criteria measured by **S.A.L.E.S.** and provided real-world examples of how he had witnessed the application or absence of these traits in their daily activities.

The results of **S.A.L.E.S.** enabled Villareal to zero in on each individual manager's strengths and opportunities for improvement. From their reaction to coaching dialogue, Villareal could tell which ones "got it" ... as he conveyed the message.

These conversations with managers paved the way for each of them to have similar conversations with their Account Executives, Sales Support Professionals, and Sales Assistants. H.R. was briefed on the process and their input shaped these discussions.

The developmental conversations were productive, and New Horizons Colorado revised its hiring process to incorporate **S.A.L.E.S.** to make proactive hiring decisions based on 16 critical attributes measured by **S.A.L.E.S.** The new process works as follows:

- 1) Sales managers interview potential candidates.
- 2) Candidates who excel take **S.A.L.E.S.** administered via [www.KeithMartino.com](http://www.KeithMartino.com).
- 3) Results of **S.A.L.E.S.** are sent to the hiring manager. Challenge questions, provided by **S.A.L.E.S.**, enable managers to delve into potential weaknesses.
- 4) Sales professionals who do well in the interviews and score above the Denver team **S.A.L.E.S.** average are offered a position. Those who stumble on either front are eliminated from consideration.
- 5) H.R. ensures the process is consistently applied.

## **Results of the New Game Plan**

As a direct reflection of the changes initiated, New Horizons Colorado is in tight contention for “Center of the Year” within the New Horizons system of approximately 300 locations around the globe. Colorado is currently number two among mega-market centers which are the largest markets by population in the NHCLC system.

Revenues are up sharply. Profits are 70% above last year’s performance. Expenses have been reduced by 15%. Center management has found they deliver greater revenue growth and profitability with a slightly smaller, highly focused sales team.

Employees from all areas of the company are commenting on how exciting it is to be part of a team that is striving for excellence. Three employees were promoted recently to senior sales status as a result of their sales performance.

Villareal’s intent is to grow earnings per share of NHCLC by revving up his underperforming centers like Colorado to maximum potential. His focus is on the fundamental issue of finding the right players and developing them utilizing the developmental plans offered by **S.A.L.E.S.**

*New Horizons continues to expand its offerings, locations, and solutions to meet the growing demands placed on organizations and their employees. For more information, or to find a local New Horizons Computer Learning Center, visit [www.newhorizons.com](http://www.newhorizons.com).*

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