

Collaborative Problem Solving

Sales Booster



Theme

When faced with a complex or new problem, sellers may become indecisive, paralyzed or just stuck for ideas on possible solutions. This energetic brainstorming process produces multiple quality ideas to solve a problem or capitalize on an opportunity in just 15 minutes! Once sellers know this quick-paced process, they will use it whenever a problem arises or an opportunity emerges.

Approximate Preparation Time

- 15 Minutes



Materials

- No prepared flip charts are needed
- Collaboration Preparation worksheet - one per seller
- Flip chart and markers
- Success Achievement Plan worksheet - one per seller



Success Set-Up Tips

- Consider instructing sellers to complete the Collaboration Preparation worksheet 3 - 7 days in advance. Advanced preparation provides sellers time to reflect on their most meaningful issue and have a well thought-out worksheet completed.
- Plan ahead and determine the individual group size (no less than 4) and the number of groups. The key is to have a minimum of 4 sellers in a group.
- The exercise is designed to address 1 problem solving challenge (per group) within 15 minutes. For example, if there are 8 sellers, divide into 2 groups of 4. One seller per group will present their problem for the group to collaborate on for a total of 2 problems. If there are 12 sellers, there are 3 groups of 4 and then 3 sellers will have their problem or challenge addressed.
- Options for selecting the seller who will have their problem addressed: volunteers or draw names.
- Follow the 15-minute format for a quick paced brainstorming and problem solving session. Do not divert from the process. Using a timer helps stay on track.

Collaborative Problem Solving



Time	Session Outline	Dynamics	Visual
	Opening This sales booster, Collaborative Problem Solving, will allow us to help each other find actions and/or new solutions for a specific problem, challenge or opportunity in just 15 minutes. It is a very structured process with time limits and instructions. Once we have experienced the 15-minute format, this collaborative problem solving tool will be available to us at all times.	Large Group 	
	Collaborative Preparation Worksheet <i>If the pre-work option was selected, sellers have completed the Collaborative Preparation Worksheet.</i> <i>If this was not completed prior to the seminar, sellers will complete it now. (Allow 3 minutes)</i> Once completed, divide sellers into groups of at least 4.	Individual 	Collaborative Preparation Worksheet Page 1
	Select One Challenge Everyone has completed the Collaborative Preparation Worksheet. Today we'll only have time for one person per group to have their challenge discussed. In the next 5 minutes each person will quickly tell their challenge to your group and each group will select one to use in today's exercise. We'll schedule additional meetings for the other challenges. Begin sharing your challenge and selecting one.	Groups of 4 	
	Introduce Activity Format Now you have selected one seller's challenge. Let's review the 15 minute activity format. The designated seller has 15 minutes devoted to them. 1. First 5 minutes: In the first five minutes, the designated seller explains their problem, challenge, or opportunity.	Large Group 	Flip Chart the 15-Minute Process

Collaborative Problem Solving



Time	Session Outline	Dynamics	Visual
	You have briefly explained this to have been selected. You'll use these 5 minutes to provide any additional pertinent information. 2. Second 5 minutes: During these 5 minutes everyone in your group asks the designated seller questions about the situation. Only questions are allowed in this 5 minutes. The designated seller answers all questions to the best of their ability. It may be tempting to offer solutions after a few questions. Refrain yourselves, as this is not the time to offer solutions. 3. Third 5 minutes: These 5 minutes is for the entire group to brainstorm solutions. Everyone participates, even the designated seller. The seller writes the ideas on the Success Achievement Plan worksheet page 2, item #1. At the end of this 15 minute brainstorming session, you will have at least one, if not several options on how to proceed.	Large Group 	Flip Chart the 15-Minute Process  5 M: Explain the Problem, Challenge, Opportunity 5 M: Questions Only 5 M: Discuss Solutions
	Begin with the Designated Seller First Five Minutes Reminder: This 5 minutes is to explain the problem, challenge, or opportunity. Your group may complete this in less than 5 minutes. I'll watch each group and if we finish earlier we'll roll the extra minutes into the next 5 minutes. (Announce when 1 minute remains)	Groups of 4 	Collaborative Problem Solving Worksheet Page 1 
	Second Five Minutes Reminder: This 5 minutes is to only ask questions. Do not offer any suggestions. (Announce when 1 minute remains)	Groups of 4 	
	Third Five Minutes Reminder: This 5 minutes is for sellers to brainstorm solutions. Everyone participates, even the designated seller. The seller writes the ideas on the Success	Groups of 4 	Success Achievement Plan Worksheet Page 2 Item #1 

Collaborative Problem Solving

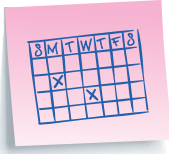


Time	Session Outline	Dynamics	Visual
	Achievement Plan worksheet page 2, item #1. (Announce when 1 minute remains)	Large Group 	Success Achievement Plan Worksheet Page 2 Item #1 
	Debrief Activity 1. What challenges did you have with this process? <i>Possible responses:</i> • Taps in to colleagues talents • Not jumping in with solutions • Listening without interrupting 2. What did you like about this 3 step process? <i>Possible responses:</i> • Great ideas generated 3. What other opportunities are there to use this process? <i>Possible responses:</i> • With customers • As challenges arise that affects everyone	Large Group 	
	Success Achievement Plan Worksheet Sellers complete the remaining items on the Success Achievement Plan worksheet page 2. In pairs, share how this activity helped you even if it was not your challenge that was selected to brainstorm.	Individual  Pairs 	Success Achievement Plan Worksheet Remaining Items, Page 2 

Reinforcement Tips



Collaborative Problem Solving



Reinforcing the Message

- First opportunity: 1 - 4 weeks later
- Repeatability: As needed, even at impromptu moments throughout the day or the week.

Facilitation Ideas



1. Use the following questions to lead either table group or large group discussions:

- How did the seller whose situation was brainstormed in the last session use the information?
- How did the brainstorm exercise help you?
- Reflecting back on the discussion, what types of questions were most helpful in finding the root of the problem or opportunity?

2. This sales booster can be incorporated into each meeting.

- When you hear of a specific problem, opportunity or challenge during the week, make a note of it to use at your next meeting.
- Ask sellers to volunteer for the 15 minutes of focus on their situation at the next meeting. Repeat often to keep building this process into a best practice.
- Use for proactive planning. What opportunities do the sellers have in the upcoming week of month that the 15-minute focus would provide additional ideas?

Next Sales Booster



- *Beg or Brag* or *Round Robin Selling* found at www.30minutesalesmeetings.com

Success Achievement Plan



Collaborative Problem Solving Preparation Worksheet



1. A specific problem, challenge, or opportunity you would appreciate ideas to help resolve.
(Be concise to get to the main issue you would like to present.)

2. The issue is important to me because: (What effect does this issue have financially, on service, family, products or the future?)

3. The ideal outcome will be:

4. Any additional background information: (What have you already done? Why/When/How)

5. What help do you want from your colleagues? (Be specific as to what suggestions you are seeking.)

Success Achievement Plan



Collaborative Problem Solving



1. The suggestions shared to resolve the problem, challenge, or opportunity:

2. How this helped me:

The Specific Action I will take to increase my success this week:

The resources I may need to implement the Specific Action: (people, time, dollars)
