**The Sales Contest: Do You Make This Sales Training Mistake?**

Let me tell you a story because that's what I do.

You may remember to conduct a seminar called *Radio Sales $101.* It was a one-day seminar for new Radio advertising salespeople that cost $101. Clever, huh?

We got a call from a budget challenged sales manager that went like this: "We can't afford to send our whole team to your seminar in Columbus. So, we're going to have a sales contest to see who gets to attend," he said.

"I hope you're planning on sending the loser," I replied.

"We're planning on sending the winner. Why would we send the loser?"

"Because the winner of your sales contest will have the least need for sales training," I said. "And the loser will have the most need for the training."

"But we reward people who sell well with extra training," he objected.

I tried to reason with him one more time. "Why not reward the winner with a weekend at a nice hotel in the city and some theater tickets? Make the loser sit through six hours with me."

There's nothing wrong with training and retraining your best salespeople. The lapse in this sales manager's logic was thinking of sales training is a reward for, and not a driver of, performance.

You can also be using your sales training program as a recruitment tool. Many entry level people want to know what you're going to do to make them successful. Their friends are talking to them about the training they're getting in their first jobs.

Ongoing learning should be part of your retention program, too. Market your sales learning program to your current team.  Let them know that you have a budget for their ongoing development and how much it is.

Here's why: When salespeople think of your sales department as a place to grow rather than just a place to work, they will stay with you longer.