

# SAGE Publishing Ends Q1 20% Ahead of Previous Year, Credits New Extreme Productivity Challenge

SAGE Publishing and RAIN Group

Best Unique or Innovative Sales Training Program

September 2019



## Company Background



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| <b>Company-at-a-Glance</b>   | SAGE publishes more than 1,000 journals and more than 900 new books each year, spanning a wide range of subject areas. A growing selection of library products includes archives, data, case studies and video.   |
| <b>Headquarters</b>  | Thousand Oaks, CA   |
| <b>Year Founded</b>  | 1965  |
| <b>Employees</b>   | More than 1,500   |
| <b>Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)</b> | SAGE Publishing publishes and disseminates research and learning on a global scale, with registered publishing offices in Los Angeles, Washington, DC, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Melbourne and Toronto. To ensure the widest possible dissemination of its content, SAGE works with representatives and agents across five continents. SAGE has sales offices in Beijing, Cairo, Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur, Seoul, Taipei, Shanghai and Rio de Janeiro. |
| <b>Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)</b>       | Specific to this project, SAGE's commercial sales team calls on a wide variety of customers looking to market to the SAGE audience. This includes pharmaceutical companies, medical device companies, educational services and more.  |
| <b>Industry</b>  | Publishing  |
| <b>Website</b>   | <a href="http://www.sagepublishing.com">www.sagepublishing.com</a>  |

## Company Background



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| <b>Company-at-a-Glance</b>   | RAIN Group is a global sales training and performance improvement company that unleashes sales potential by delivering transformational experiences for its clients. For two decades, the company has helped hundreds of thousands of professionals, managers and leaders significantly increase their sales results through real behavior change.   |
| <b>Headquarters</b>  | Framingham, MA   |
| <b>Year Founded</b>  | 2002   |
| <b>Employees</b>   | 115  |
| <b>Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)</b> | RAIN Group delivers training in 75 countries. With offices across the U.S. and internationally in Bogotá, Geneva, Johannesburg, London, Mumbai, Seoul, Sydney and Toronto, RAIN Group works with clients locally and has delivered global roll outs.   |
| <b>Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)</b>       | RAIN Group works with clients in various industries, including professional and business services, banking, financial services and insurance, technology and telecommunications, industrial and manufacturing, and healthcare and pharmaceutical. The company works with national and international organizations such as Toyota, Citibank, Canon, Bright Horizons, BDO, Hitachi, Hologic, Optus and hundreds of others to unleash sales performance. RAIN Group offers a variety of programs such as RAIN Selling: Foundations of Consultative Selling, Strategic Account Management, Insight Selling: Advanced Consultative Selling, RAIN Sales Negotiation, Winning Major Sales, Extreme Productivity Challenge, RAIN Sales Coaching, RAIN Sales Management and RAIN Sales Prospecting. |
| <b>Industry</b>  | Sales Training   |
| <b>Website</b>   | <a href="http://www.raingroup.com">www.raingroup.com</a>   |

## Business Conditions and Business Needs

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In 2017, SAGE Publishing's sales team missed its target. When mid-2018 rolled around, the company was faced with another problem — an even bigger miss.

Since 2013, the publishing company has worked with RAIN Group to deliver customized sales skills workshops for its sales teams. Past sales trainings had largely been focused on sales skills, helping sellers with storytelling, needs discovery, negotiation, pipeline management and other key areas.

Leadership was confident that its sales team had great selling skills, but they just weren't getting traction. After examining CRM data, SAGE discovered that its sellers were spending too much time with each customer. "We needed to revisit the fundamentals of productivity and learn how to spend time more efficiently," shared **Nicole Louderback**, Director of Commercial Sales at SAGE.

Around the same time, SAGE noticed the decrease in activity. RAIN Group launched its Extreme Productivity Challenge (XPC) to help SAGE's sellers and sales managers maximize motivation, take control of their time and achieve peak performance. RAIN Group's Co-President **John Doerr** said, "When Nicole shared the CRM sales activity, I knew they were a perfect candidate for the program."

## Overview

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Prior to starting the Extreme Productivity Challenge (XPC), SAGE had three key goals — not miss target again, increase revenues and learn how to do more with the time they had.

In July 2018, SAGE put its global sales team through the 90-day intensive program. The approach included:

### Extreme Productivity Assessment

Prior to the training, each participant completed an assessment to measure against The Three Keys (The XP3) and Nine Habits of Extreme Productivity. A self-rater tool is used to measure 36 productivity behaviors and how they affect performance. This allows participants to pinpoint the best areas for driving increased productivity and results.

### One-Day Live Workshop

Participants learn how to:

- Maximize motivation, make consistent progress and achieve goals
- Ignite proactivity

- Re-engineer habits to drive success and happiness
- Control time with the simplest, most effective time management system
- Ignore distractions, focus and get in the Extreme Productivity Zone
- Master The XP3 and Nine Habits of Extreme Productivity
- Implement an accountability system to maximize execution
- Achieve maximum output per work hour by focusing on the activities that get outsized returns

### **Reinforcement**

Following the training, participants went through the following:

- eLearning — Online lessons covering a variety of core XPC topics.
- RAIN Mail — XPC content reminders, tips and interactive scenarios delivered via email or mobile app.
- XP Coaching — Coaching is what makes Extreme Productivity stick, transfer to the job and last long term. RAIN Group trained sales managers and leaders to run the proprietary XP Coaching process.

Once the training with the sales team concluded, leadership discovered a significant improvement in how time was managed and an uptick in sales activity. The goals — not missing target, increasing revenues and learning to be more productive — were met.

In fact, the progress was so undeniable that SAGE requested a second XPC training for employees outside of sales. In December 2018, RAIN Group delivered an XPC training to its administrative professionals.

### **Design of the Program**

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According to the RAIN Group Center for Sales Research, 64% of companies do not believe their sellers manage their time, focus and personal effectiveness well.

The team at RAIN Group began testing pilots of its Extreme Productivity System (XPS) through a series of 90-Day Extreme Productivity Challenges (XPC) with its long-time clients.

The results were eye-popping.

One client who applied the Extreme Productivity principles saw a 31% jump in sales activity in their CRM system during the days before their bi-weekly XPC coaching meetings. Shortly after the client noted the activity boosts, they shared they had their best month of sales results ever.

With a second client, RAIN Group ran an XPC with 20 partners at one of the world's largest accounting and consulting firms. Their challenge focused on proactively growing existing accounts. Only four months later, they reported generating 16 times in additional sales won than what they paid for the program. They attributed this revenue increase directly to the XPC.

A third XPC client, a division at a very large telecommunications company, reported generating \$100 million in additional sales pipeline in half a year.

Based on these results, RAIN Group decided to take the Extreme Productivity System big and wide.

The program is innovative because it helps sellers and sales managers maximize motivation, take control of their time and achieve peak performance. While most sales training focuses on giving sellers the skills they need, this program provides the execution assurance that most programs are missing. It helps sellers employ the habits of The Extremely Productive (The XP) so they get more done every day.

XPC is a unique, transformational experience that drives accountability, changes behaviors and habits, and unleashes sales potential.

## **Delivery of the Program**

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Prior to the start of the training, participants received a pre-work introduction email from RAIN Group with steps to prepare for the workshop. The first step was to complete the 10-minute Extreme Productivity Assessment. Once complete, each participant received an individual report and productivity quotient.

Then, a live training was delivered over two days to sellers and sales managers, teaching them the productivity habits of the Extremely Productive. They were introduced to a productivity planner outlining exactly how to set goals and action plans, stop bad habits and start good ones, utilize a proven five-step morning routine, start each day with their greatest impact activity and more.

To sustain the momentum from the training workshop, participants were enrolled in the XPC online training and registered for RAIN Mail scenario emails to reinforce the training content. Over the course of 90 days, participants received two scenario-based questions each week. Participants competed against the rest of the group for the top spots on the leaderboard by answering questions and earning points along the way.

SAGE sales managers were trained in the proprietary XPC coaching process and worked with participants to ensure behavior change and hold sellers accountable to their plans.

Fortunately, SAGE didn't encounter any challenges before, during or after the training. In fact, the success from the first training made them realize that additional trainings with other departments would be beneficial.

One sales manager stated, "When the training concluded, the sales team immediately started integrating what they learned. Since they were the only group that went through the training, not everyone was on the same page. For instance, the sellers were starting to take back control of their time. They learned the importance of saying no to some things in order to focus on other higher priority tasks. Not everyone was given the same opportunity and we wanted to change that."

## Measurable Benefits

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As SAGE continues into 2019, there are many indications that the training has not only boosted productivity, but also revenue. Metrics include:

- Ended Q1 2019 being 5% ahead of target and 20% ahead of prior year. The two previous years, SAGE averaged a decline of 10% YOY, so to be 20% ahead is a significant achievement.
- Customer outreach increased by 31% in Q1 2019 over Q1 2018.

"The initial results were impressive and we're continuing to see the impact this training has had not only for the sales team, but also other departments," shared Louderback.

## Overall

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The XPC training completed by all members of the global sales team was one of the most important milestones in 2018. The skills and hacks to make daily habits are being implemented across the department and many of the self-reviews pinpoint the XPC training as an important growth factor in 2018.

SAGE is impressed with what they've accomplished in productivity and believes the results from those changes will be fully apparent in 2019.

The XPC training has had a significant impact on productivity and sales. The entire team is onboard and has a shared goal around productivity. There are consistent conversations on how to pare down and make sure sellers are not getting in the way of themselves and customer performance.

Louderback concluded, "This program isn't something that's sales specific, but it's important to sales success. XPC was the best sales training we've ever had. You can see the team implementing it. You can see the behavior changes. The training was very out of the box. An extra bonus is that this training doesn't just impact work lives, but also personal lives."

## About Brandon Hall Group

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Brandon Hall Group is an HCM research and advisory services firm that provides insights around key performance areas, including Learning and Development, Talent Management, Leadership Development, Talent Acquisition, and HR/Workforce Management. With more than 10,000 clients globally and more than 25 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

### Inspiring a Better Workplace Experience

**Our mission:** Empower excellence in organizations around the world through our research and tools every day. At the core of our offerings is a Membership Program that combines research, benchmarking and unlimited access to data and analysts. The Membership Program offers insights and best practices to enable executives and practitioners to make the right decisions about people, processes, and systems, coalesced with analyst advisory services which aim to put the research into action in a way that is practical and efficient.

### Membership Offers Tailored Support

Our membership delivers much more than research. Membership provides you direct access to our seasoned team of thought leaders dedicated to your success, backed by a rich member community, and proactive support from our client services team.

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