

Bright Horizons

Sales Training Boosts Early Education Center Enrollment; Conversion Rates Increase 30%

Bright Horizons Family Solutions is a leading provider of employer-sponsored child care, early education, and work/life solutions. With operations in the United States, Europe, and Canada, Bright Horizons serves more than 700 clients, including more than 90 of the Fortune 500. In addition, the company provides community child care, back-up care solutions for children and elders, and college counseling services.

Challenge

The company was looking to increase enrollments at its full-service community child care centers in Massachusetts. The tough economy magnified the company's need for improved sales and marketing. To increase enrollments, they relied on a staff that consisted primarily of educators and child care providers, along with enrollment-counselor parents. While this team delivered the high-quality care Bright Horizons was known for, they were not a traditional sales force.

Every enrollment counselor was either a current or former parent in a Bright Horizons child care center. Improving the business development skills of these "passionate parents" could have a substantial impact on conversion rates.

Beyond the business goal of increasing enrollments, the company knew it could also enhance the experience for potential customers, and do it all in a way that was comfortable for and in keeping with the nurturing approach of its team of educators, caregivers, and enrollment counselors.

In the past, leadership conducted staff sales training in-house. Given current circumstances, however, they knew they needed to expand beyond that approach. It was time to bring in an external training partner. "There's definitely an authenticity you get by bringing in a high-quality expert from the outside. You get engagement [from staff] that you don't get with an internal

resource—no matter how good they are, and I think we're actually pretty good at it," explained the Senior Vice President of Business Operations.

Solutions

Bright Horizons brought in RAIN Group to take their sales training to the next level.

RAIN Group conducted a pre-training analysis to assess the business development needs of 75 center directors, assistant directors, and enrollment counselors. The group was then separated into three cohorts based on level of experience, and received [RAIN SellingSM](#) training tailored to improve the business development skills of each participant. Two in-person training programs were complemented by monthly coaching sessions to reinforce the training.

The small [group coaching](#) sessions offered role-playing opportunities, allowed participants to share their business development challenges, and provided them with specific advice and approaches to help put their training into practice in real-life.

Results

The sales training program has been a successful one for Bright Horizons. Noteworthy highlights include:

- Increased conversion rates by 30% with improved customer service
- Staff has internalized the sales methodology so that not only does the training "stick," but sales performance continually improves

"John Doerr is skilled at drawing out the elements in people that allow them to grow, and RAIN Group's program helps them to improve on their own—so that each time they have an experience with a potential customer, they are using that to inform their next experience. Now, by applying the skills learned during the training and coaching, the enrollment counselors are able to use their own stories effectively in conversations with prospective families. They've internalized the training."

Senior V.P. Business Operations, Bright Horizons