



Q: We want to train our associates, and they've told us what they want to learn. Where do we start?

A: I've done a lot of marketing training and find that I often get called *after* the Marketing Directors have asked the associates what training they want to receive, ranked their responses, distributed the results, and committed to provide that curriculum to them. Although this seems like a decent and democratic strategy, I have found that this can make it harder to create the most effective program for the associates. Here's why:

Too often what the associates *want* is not really what they *need*. In other words, because they don't yet have the skills or understanding about how professional services business is actually developed, they misperceive what they need to know. For example, the top vote-getter is often something like "How to close the deal" or "How to ask for business," when actually their real need might be learning how to develop relationships, build a personal network, work a room, provide terrific client service, cross-sell, *etc.* They just don't know yet what they don't know.

Asking them what they want can be helpful in learning where they feel they are in their marketing efforts and help them buy into the training program, but the ultimate decision about the curriculum should be *yours*, and based upon their *true* needs. If it's a well-constructed, interesting, and educational curriculum, they'll immediately benefit and appreciate the training.