



## SALES FOUNDATIONS TRAINING CASE STUDY: UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

### THE CLIENT

At the University of Waterloo (Waterloo), Co-operative and Experiential Education (CEE) is a strategic pillar and popular with both students and employers. A world leader in co-operative education (co-op), Waterloo has the largest network of employers in North America.



### THE CHALLENGE

With a vast number of education programs offered, Waterloo's CEE team needed a solution to help pair their growing pool of diversely educated students with high-quality employers in various industries.

#### Students Expectations

When students enroll, they can expect to gain real world experience that complements their studies.

#### Employers Benefits

Employers benefit from highly skilled students who contribute to today's talent needs and help to build a strong future workforce.

### IDENTIFYING GOALS

To address the challenges of new, expanding education programs and an increase in co-op students, senior employment relations staff were tasked with developing a strategy to help quality employers discover the benefit of hiring Waterloo co-op students. This included raising hiring rates with existing employers and attracting new employers from a variety of industries. Waterloo understood that effectively communicating the value of co-op to employers and enabling them to hire students was essentially a form of sales.

To achieve their overall objectives, Waterloo sought to provide CEE employees with sales training. They also wanted to ensure management had the tools and

reference material to provide ongoing coaching and training to employees and new hires through the onboarding process. Doing so would ensure customers (students and employers) receive maximum value. The CEE executive team at Waterloo outlined the following goals:

- Engage a sales training provider that understood their business model
- Ensure the training provider was knowledgeable about CEE staff and individual roles
- Develop customized training program to suit CEE's specific needs and achieve the overall objective - increase in students working for quality, approved employers under Waterloo's co-op program

“We were interested in working with a partner that was willing to provide more than traditional sales training. In the academic world, the word ‘sales’ often carries a negative connotation. SalesEvolve was able to understand that and work with it. They helped to alleviate the fear of sales in our employees and focused on the benefits of providing sales as a service. We didn’t want this to be a tick box exercise or a ‘one and done’ training delivery model. We wanted this training to continue to live where sales management were equipped with the tools to continue to train their employees and new hires. SalesEvolve went one step further – and created the legacy to build the sales training module into our onboarding for new team members.”

**ROSS JOHNSTON**  
Executive Director, Co-operative Education, University of Waterloo

## COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Upon selection by Waterloo, SalesEvolve got to work, developing an interview-style, information-gathering project to get to know the business model and staff, including business development, account managers, regional managers, communications & marketing and executive staff. 32 people were interviewed and provided SalesEvolve with an understanding of the workflow and challenges involved in increasing their customer base.

“Through individual interviews, SalesEvolve was able to pin-point the themes and areas where we had previously identified a need for growth and then developed workshops to address these areas of focus. Our staff felt heard and by the time we entered the workshop phase of the sales training, relationships were already established. It reinforced our confidence in SalesEvolve - they got it right.”

**Domenica De Bilio**  
Director, Employment Relations, University of Waterloo.

## THE RESULTS

SalesEvolve tailored the core training subjects according to what was learned in the interview phase and customized the delivery approach to align with Waterloo’s desired outcome and the rapidly changing needs of the team due to COVID-19. Training was designed by SalesEvolve to complement the needs of the executive team and to provide ongoing sales support to their respective departments. Training workshops were conducted online with 32 team members and broken into smaller groups to promote sharing and discussion.

“We felt that the team discussion that SalesEvolve facilitated was crucial in opening up the team to sharing between peers. As a result of those team discussions, we were able to leverage the findings that allowed us to best support our team.”

**Ross Johnston**, Executive Director, Co-operative Education, University of Waterloo

Following the formal training sessions, SalesEvolve held smaller team sessions of about 6 people each to discuss content and to help staff apply concepts to everyday work scenarios. SalesEvolve also led mentoring and brainstorming sessions with Managers to help them provide their staff with ongoing training and support. The training modules covered subject matter including:

- Value based selling
- Employer buying cycle
- Customer Communications & Best Practices
- Qualification of opportunities
- Objection Handling
- Account Management
- Achievement Plans
- How to conduct efficient customer meetings
- Progressing opportunities with employers

Wrapping up the project, SalesEvolve also offered a final report of recommendations regarding team structure, sales processes, and effective supporting documentation. Recommendations were also made to support continuous development. SalesEvolve delivered in-depth training summaries, which included concepts taught in training sessions, to enable the CEE team to train new staff as their team grows.

“SalesEvolve came in determined to listen and to get to know us. Beyond listening, they were able to act upon the information they received and provided a tailored approach to sales training. They were open to adapting and evolving as we went through the process together and it really helped to create a partnership and trusting environment.”

**ROSS JOHNSTON**  
Executive Director, Co-operative  
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