



**Trekker International**

## **How to Get More Money for Talent Development**

***Jesse Mendez, Founder of Trekker International***

You lead a Talent Development Organization (TDO) and know that you and your team are capable of being an extremely high performing TDO. Your front line customers truly appreciate your work and have ideas for you about the other types of training their team needs.

But as the leader, behind the scenes you are struggling to get resources or you keep missing out on the ability to break through to the next level. It's tempting at this point to say we don't get the support we need from senior leaders, budgets are tight, etc. But maybe that's not the "whole" story at all --- maybe part of the problem is that we as learning professionals sometimes fail to make a case that truly resonates with leaders, or we simply misunderstand the "real" motivators that will influence senior leaders to buy more of our learning solutions. ***Remember, people buy for their reasons and not our own.***

Ask yourself the following question --- why does anyone buy a product or service in the first place? In the realm of B to B sales, the basic reasons/motivations for making a buying decision fall into some pretty tangible categories as follows:

- To grow revenue (AKA make more money --- grow sales)
- To create efficiencies (AKA strip cost out of the process)
- Increase margin (AKA be more profitable)
- Save time (AKA spending too much time on non-critical stuff)
- Save money (AKA budgets are tight)
- Improve productivity (AKA focus on the right priorities)

Some less tangible but often equally impactful categories as follows:

- Employee morale is in the tank (AKA engagement scores are down across the board)
- Managers are more focused on their own agenda (AKA managers and leaders are not aligned)
- Our communication is ineffective (AKA employees are getting mixed and incongruent messages)

These scenarios are very common in organizations and a high performing TDO can make a positive business impact by crafting solutions and interventions to break through the malaise. As learning professionals we are sellers, creators and implementers of learning solutions that help people and companies reach their full potential, but to do that we have to first understand what motivates leaders to buy our solutions in the first place and then persuade them to act.

### **The Training Professionals' Dilemma**

Most trainers that I come across have a passion for developing and teaching people. That's why most of us got into the business in the first place, it's a calling, right? But the harsh reality is that to make the impact that we desire and our organizations' need, we have to be very comfortable asking for money. And to ask for money with confidence you have to uncover the real motivators behind the leader's dilemma.

You can't help them if you can't get the resources required to begin solving the most important problems. So let's fix this for one simple reason, thousands of employees are sitting in companies today, craving more meaningful development opportunities and they are relying on us as training business professionals to get the resources so that

we can help them to reach their full potential. No pressure, but the weight of the company is on your shoulders and thousands of employees are counting on you.

### **KPI's are Your Best Friend**

Every Senior Leader in your company lives according to a core set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). Their success or failure depends on their ability to meet/exceed their KPI's every quarter/year. Your value as a learning professional is to intimately understand those KPI's for your most important customers in the organization and then craft and implement solutions that can positively impact those KPI's. Otherwise we are left open to the argument that we are doing training for the sake of training. When the budget crunch comes and you know it will, your team and solutions will be viewed as a nice to have vs. core to the business. So let's make sure that doesn't happen.

### **Making Your Pitch**

You've done your due diligence, you know the needs of your customer, you know what is motivating them to buy and it's time to make your pitch. You are sitting in front of the CFO and other key leaders and you are about to propose a 2 million dollar training budget, you work past the butterflies and here it goes .....

*In preparing for our presentation today I led a series of discovery sessions with our Heads of Sales, Operations and Customer Care and we targeted a set of 3-5 KPI's per division and the training support required to enable them to accomplish their objectives. As part of our discussion today I would like to walk you through our top 3 proposed training solutions and the potential business impact of pursuing these opportunities. I think you'll see that the "investment" we propose from a training point of view is justified by the direct influence we can have in driving important business results across 3 of our most important divisions.*

*Also, the investment per person for everything I am about to propose is roughly \$Xpp which is in line with what competitors in our industry are currently investing.*

And you are off and running....instead of having to wade through a conversation about how much training do we need, or why are we doing XYZ, you are now facilitating a conversation about how you and your team are aligned and driving the business forward. You'll get pushback and have to defend your numbers, but you'll do it with confidence and the conviction of knowing that your proposal is directly aligned to the needs of the business. Maybe you only get \$1.75 million approved, but there won't be any question about the value your team adds to the business.

### **Act Now**

- **Uncover the Real Motivators** --- Make Money, Create Efficiencies, Increase Margin, Save Time, Save Money, Improve Productivity
- **Focus on your customer's KPI's** --- They are motivated to solve their challenges, show them how your team can play a meaningful role
- **Ask for Money with Confidence** --- You've handled the business case, know how your proposal influences the business, have the confidence of key stakeholders, so close the deal with confidence

*Jesse Mendez is the founder of Trekker International and has built Talent Development Organizations from the ground up for multibillion-dollar organizations and has traveled the globe working with leaders to help people and businesses alike reach their full potential.*