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## E-Learning for Distributors: Identifying Passion

By *Mike Sawchuk* — posted 10/19/2010



### Show Your Passion By Becoming an I.C.E. Professional!

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The next I.C.E. Workshop is November 8-9, 2010 at the ISSA/INTERCLEAN North America Trade Show in Orlando, FL. [Register](#)

The theme of the 2010 Connections Conference and Exhibition, the largest trade show in the industry specifically for the carpet cleaning and restoration fields, was “Be a Hero.” Presenter after presenter reminded attendees and exhibitors that we are heroes in our own ways, helping our clients maintain their homes, offices, and schools in a clean and healthy manner.

Having passion for our industry, our customers, ourselves, and the people we serve is very much a part of being a hero. And when it comes to distributor and distributor sales representative (DSR) training programs, specifically e-learning courses, it appears passion is what separates those who take advantage of these opportunities from those who do not and, even more important, enjoy business success as a result.

This is the conclusion we reached by analyzing those distributors and DSRs who have taken our e-learning program, which was first introduced at last year's (2009) ISSA/INTERCLEAN® North America trade show in Chicago. The program includes 46 courses and more than 160 modules.

Like most e-learning programs, it is designed to be available 24/7 and, in most cases, the courses can be repeated. There is a quiz attached to each module that must be passed satisfactorily. However, unlike most e-learning programs, this one is designed exclusively for jansan distributors/DSRs, and much of the instruction focuses on the products, situations, and challenges distributors/DSRs face every day.

### **What We Looked For**

Before discussing the results of our analysis, we should identify who the participants were. The distributors and DSRs selected were a mix of old and new, large and small distributors associated with Enviro-Solutions, a manufacturer of green cleaning products. The 570 participants came from a sampling of 65 companies based in the United States and Canada. To determine sales impact, we analyzed the sales of the selected distributors from January to June 2009 vs. January to June 2010.

To analyze the effectiveness of our e-learning program, we decided to focus on the following five questions:

- Has the program had an impact on distributor sales?
- Has the program had an impact on individual sales?
- Has the degree of involvement by the distributor or individual impacted the results?
- Are incentive programs encouraging distributors/DSRs to take the courses effective?

- What types of changes should we consider in the program, in its presentation, and to encourage distributors/DSRs to take the classes?

What we realized almost from the start was that there were essentially three types of participants taking the program: those who were passionately involved with the courses and the program, those who were moderately or passively interested, and those who were simply not interested at all. This third grouping we referred to as the low/nil group because they had very low or no interest in the program.

We then set out to answer our questions. For the first two, looking into the impact of the courses on distributor and individual sales, we discovered:

- The passionate participants experienced an increase in sales that averaged 45 percent for distributors and up to 275 percent for DSRs;
- The passive participants saw their sales rise about 2 percent for distributors and up to 22 percent for DSRs; and
- Low/nil participants experienced a decrease in sales by 24 percent; DSRs declined 27 percent.

These figures indicated the value of taking the e-learning courses for those who get passionately involved with the program. So we wondered if an incentive to take the program, possibly financial, would be beneficial. What we found was that incentives were not helpful. Again, it all came down to passion. If the participants were passionately interested in the courses, they would complete them and the possibility of this being translated into sales results was very likely.

Finally, we wanted to know what types of changes in the courses or program were warranted. Of course, technology must always be re-evaluated because it is changing so rapidly. However, ultimately, the success or failure of an e-learning program rests with the participant. As long as the material is worthwhile and presented in an effective manner, it is the passion of the participant that makes all the difference and all we can do is encourage participants to realize this.

 Check out this video where Michael Marks discusses distributor/manufacturer relationships. [Watch it now.](#)



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