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redefining our G2C model.”

Expert Interview – Matt Shermann –
Global Head of Sales Enablement
Lonza Pharma & Biotech - Bioscience Solutions



“Invest in improvements that effect the vast majority of your team. Don’t put too much effort in the superstars or the laggards, put your effort in that group of sales reps that represent the average ~80% of your sales team. Bring them up a bit and see the return on that investment.”

Lonza Bioscience provides life science researchers with the tools they need to develop and test therapeutics, from basic research to final product release. Lonza’s Bioscience products and services range from cell culture and discovery technologies for research, to quality control tests and software for biomanufacturing.

1

Can you tell us what challenges Lonza Bioscience Solutions is facing in particular?

As sales channels continue to change and shift towards virtual, we wanted to ensure that our go-to-customer strategy was befitting of the modern commercial environment. We also wanted to normalize our sales training efforts, to be sure that each of our employees was provided the same foundational competencies to effectively and efficiently grow their business.

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Against this background, Lonza Bioscience Solutions launched a Global Sales Excellence initiative. Would you like to tell us more about the background and the associated goals?

Prior to COVID, Lonza recognized the need to go from ‘Good to Great’. We wanted to consistently achieve above market growth. Shortly after initiating this project, COVID drastically shifted the way we sell.

We were able to incorporate Mercuri training into our sales paradigm to both globally raise our sales competencies and learn some new techniques to effectively adapt to the changing environment.

3

Sales Excellence comprises many parameters. In your experience, what are the most important levers?

For us, Sales Excellence can perhaps be summed up in a fundamental shift of focus from selling products to individuals to providing workflow solutions to markets. We wanted to fully understand the customer's environment so we could provide the best solutions that support their goals.

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Your initiative has also led to a considerable adaptation of market and customer processing and thus to considerable demands on your managers and sales staff. Why was it necessary, what were the biggest challenges and how did you tackle them?

The biopharma market is rapidly changing, especially with the recent successes of Cell & Gene Therapies. The way people buy has also changed drastically, even before COVID, B2B business was shifting towards digital channels. If you don't adapt, you die, so we chose to invest considerable efforts into redefining our G2C model. This was difficult for individuals in our organization since many of their roles changed a fair amount. Additionally, we're onboarding more digital commerce tools that change the way we do business. In general, we expect our sales representatives to travel considerably less than previously. We want our teams in the Field to concentrate on a smaller number of accounts that have known higher opportunity potential. We want our Remote teams to identify accounts in the long-tail (of the Pareto curve) that might actually have considerable opportunity with our business.

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Managers always play a decisive role in such change processes. What expectations do you have of the executives in your Sales Excellence initiative?

We invested in additional training in Change Management and the Mercuri processes specifically for our Managers. We expect our First-Line Sales Managers to drive the implementation of the day-to-day changes. We expect leadership from our Directors and above and communication as to why this is an important change that we have made.

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For all companies, the sustainability of Sales Excellence initiatives is of very high importance. How do you deal with this topic and what role do you personally play?

As the Global Head of Sales Enablement, this firmly falls under my responsibility. In addition to investing in the initial training, we've also engaged Mercuri in Implementation Sessions (for Managers and Sales Representatives). We've incorporated the Mercuri methodology into our individual contributors' annual goals and aligned our sales incentive plans to reflect the goals defined by our new G2C strategy.

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What were your biggest learnings or is there something you would do differently afterwards?

The biggest change I would have made is to focus even more on the change management support. We decided to make the organizational changes on 1 January, which is of course a very busy time. We rolled out our training program at the end of January. It was a lot for our teams to digest in a short period of time. I wish we had prepped them even further than we had in Q4 of the prior year, so expectations were

well understood and perhaps frustrations could have been mitigated better

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You have opted for external support. What were the reasons for this and where do you see the added value of such support?

We had limited bandwidth to develop our own training program. It had been approximately four years since our prior sales methodology training program, so we were in dire need of a very professional, well-fitting course. Conceptually, we were sold on several aspects of the Mercuri methodology, including the RAC concept, the Sales Platform concept, and Battle Plans. Mercuri worked with us to understand our goals and potential pitfalls to develop a 40-hour program that we extended over 9 sessions over ~3 months. They familiarized themselves with the Lonza products, target markets, and customer personas, and provided effective training and practical scenarios to refine our skills.

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What is your recommendation to all those who are responsible for or involved in the topic of "Sales Excellence"?

Understand benchmarks! Does your team have the needed training and competencies to consistently

perform? Invest in improvements that effect the vast majority of your team. Don't put too much effort in the superstars or the laggards, put your effort in that group of sales reps that represent the average ~80% of your sales team. Bring them up a bit and see the return on that investment.

Understand when/what to outsource! If you don't have the capabilities in-house, find a partner that can support you. Whether this is training programs (Mercuri) or another sales tool, use the experts outside of your company if you don't have them in your company.

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One last question Matt – do the Lonza Bioscience products also play a role for you outside your profession?

Lonza Bioscience products play a huge role in everyone's personal life. Our endotoxin testing solutions are critical to ensure the safety of pharmaceuticals. Without these tests, drugs would be significantly more risky to use. Lonza Bioscience provides the tools to develop new drugs. For a recent example, our discovery products were utilized in COVID research (not to mention that Lonza Pharma supported the manufacture of the Moderna vaccine).