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Putting Track Shoes on the Gazelle

Many years ago my sales manager had a poster on his office with a picture of the African Savannah and with this quote, “Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up, it knows it must outrun the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning in Africa, a lion wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the slowest gazelle, or it will starve. It doesn’t matter whether you’re the lion or a gazelle-when the sun comes up, you’d better be running.” He made it abundantly clear that he considered anyone who failed to achieve their sales quota a “slow gazelle.” I took his lesson to heart and have been running ever since. The problem today is that running fast isn’t enough. The lions are a lot faster today than they were when I started in advertising in the early 1980’s. Today we face much more intense competition and many local businesses have been swallowed up by national retailers. To succeed today, we need to be continually improving our skills and expanding our knowledge. There are many ways to do this, reading books on sales, and attending conferences to take seminars and classes. There are problems with these strategies, most sales books are generalized, they do not cover the specific needs of advertising reps and often our schedules do not allow us to attend a conference. Fortunately there are a number of free, industry specific resources online that you can draw on to improve your skills.

TLI Online Learning Center

For almost a decade, The Leadership Institute (TLI) has been offering training at AFCP and regional association conferences. Created and taught by respected industry professionals, TLI classes have earned a reputation for conveying practical sales training for free and community paper sales people. Realizing that many people in our industry are unable to attend a conference to participate in TLI training, TLI recently began offering online training. These sessions are free, easy to use and count as credit toward earning an AAE (Associate Advertising Executive) Certification. Currently there are five TLI classes available online but more classes will be added soon. You can take these classes at any time and there is even a brief quiz at the end to test your knowledge of the subject covered. Here is how you can access this valuable resource:

1. Go to the AFCP website <http://www.afcp.org/>
2. Click on the “Member Benefits” tab at the top of the page
3. Click on “The Leadership Institute”

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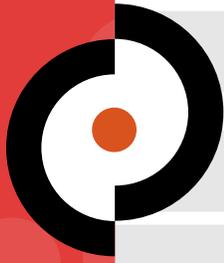
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4. Click on “Online Learning Center”
5. At this point you will see a list of courses available
6. To take a class click on the “Proceed to Online Learning Center” button at the bottom of the page
7. Click on the class you wish to take
8. If you are a first time visitor you will need to register. Returning visitors just have to enter their username and password.
9. Anyone can access TLI 103 (Answering the Classic Sales Objections) and TLI 108 (Four Essentials of an Effective Advertising Campaign)
10. AFCP Members can access the other classes by obtaining an access code from the AFCP office
11. The courses are easy to navigate, simply click “next” to advance to the next screen
12. Read the information and digest the information on each page before you advance. The lessons are designed to let you progress at your own pace.
13. During the lesson you will be presented with several multiple choice quizzes about what you’ve learned. Once you select your answers, go to the next page. You will see the correct answers to the questions allowing you to gauge your understanding of the material. If you answered incorrectly, you can use the “back” button to return to the previous page(s) to review.
14. When you reach the end of the lesson you will see a button that reads, “Start Quiz.” This will redirect you to a brief multiple choice quiz covering the information in the lesson.
15. Once you have completed all the questions, you may either review your answers or select the “Submit and Save” button.
16. Once you submit your answers, you will immediately receive your score. This page will also allow you to review your answers and compare them to the correct responses.
17. Anyone who takes the course and passes the quiz will automatically receive credit toward earning their AAE Certification for the online class.

Other classes available currently are, TLI-101 Closing the Sale, TLI-104 Opening a Sales Dialogue, and TLI-105 Communicating Through Listening.

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Learning from the “Podfather”

In addition to being the “Dean” of The Leadership Institute, Rob Zarilli is the official “Podfather” of our industry. For several years, Rob, a recognized leader in the advertising industry, has been producing a series of podcasts covering various aspects of the sales process. Rob’s “Podfather” programs are brief, very informative and fun to watch. They are an excellent way not only to enhance your skills but to energize yourself before or after a tough day. Currently there are 25 of these podcasts online, here’s what you need to do to watch the “Podfather:”

1. Go to the AFCP website <http://www.afcp.org/>
2. Click on the “Member Benefits” tab at the top of the page
3. Click on “The Leadership Institute”
4. Click on “Podcast Archive”
5. Select the podcast you wish to view and click on it

(Warning: “Podfather” podcasts can be addictive)

Link & Learn Archive

PaperChain is an organization dedicated to promoting the community paper industry. They sponsor this column and distribute it to the industry. Many individual sales people and their sales managers use Link & Learn as a training resource. All of the Link & Learn columns (100+ articles) are archived on the PaperChain member website. Here is how you can access these articles in PDF form:

1. Go to <http://paperchain.org/>
2. Click on the “Link & Learn” tab at the top of the page
3. This will show a page of links to Link & Learn articles
4. There are 9 pages of PDFs on the site to find additional articles float your cursor over the Link & Learn tab to activate a drop down menu showing the other pages

You may download this and all issues of Link & Learn at www.PaperChain.org



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Link & Earn Archive

Link & Earn is another service offered by PaperChain. Link & Earn are success stories submitted by PaperChain members. There are several great ideas for special sections and promotions. PaperChain encourages members to submit ideas for possible inclusion in Link & Earn. Here is how to access Link & Earn:

1. Go to <http://paperchain.org/>
2. Click on the "Link & Earn" tab at the top of the page
3. This will show a page of links to Link & Earn articles
4. If you have a success story or a great idea you would like to share with the industry contact PaperChain and let them know.

Smart Gazelles don't end up as a lion's lunch. We live in challenging times. Advertising sales people need to be at the top of their game 100% of the time. As our customers become more sophisticated and our competitors get more aggressive we need to constantly improve our skills. With the online resources available today there is simply no excuse not to enhance our knowledge and abilities. Taking online courses is a quick and easy way to "put track shoes on the gazelle" and stay far ahead of the "Lions".

This article was written by Jim Busch of the Pittsburgh Pennysaver.

Link & Learn is brought to you every month as part of PaperChain's[®] mission to provide educational material to the free paper publishers. **If you have an issue you would like to see covered please email janderson@wisad.com, put "Link & Learn" in subject line.** Be sure to check out www.paperchain.org for past issues, electronic ready promotional ads and much more to help you remain competitive.

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