

A+ IN Empathy

Developing Customer Understanding on a Global Scale

At SAP, one of the world's largest software organizations, our nearly 100,000 employees do business with more than 400,000 customers in 130 countries around the globe. In an organization this large and diverse, it's an ongoing challenge to keep the salesforce unified in their focus on the customers' business. In order to meet that challenge, we created the SAP Global Academy for Sales Leaders.

As we began to develop the Academy, we were looking for a way to generate more customer empathy in our global audience of sales leaders. We looked at many business and customer acumen programs, but when we saw *Interplay* we knew it was genius and just right for our audience. Over the past two and a half years, *Interplay* has proven to be a highly engaging and interactive experience that helps our sales managers rethink their role as leaders.

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– Julietta Stotz, Director, Global Academy for Sales Leaders

Interplay™ is often customized by clients to reflect their organization, their customers, or even their competitors.

15 sessions per year (ongoing)
20-30 sales leaders per session
23% increase in revenue (for Academy participants)

Understanding Pain Leads to Added Value

Called a “mini MBA-in-a-day,” *Interplay* is a business acumen simulation that incorporates game-based learning in an interactive, high-impact day that is both challenging and fun. Working as the leadership team of a simulated company, table teams compete with each other as they develop strategy and resolve business challenges. *Interplay*'s experiential learning process helps participants see how their decisions have business impact and contribute to the company's short- and long-term success. Expert facilitators provide real-time debriefs and help participants connect insights and the customer perspective to their own job-related challenges and opportunities.

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– SAP Sales Leader

The ability to focus on the customer perspective is a critical skill for our salesforce. At SAP, our software runs in the background so typically our customers don't think about it from day to day – and we don't want them to! It's not helpful or relevant for our salespeople to approach their customers with a lot of facts and figures about what our software does. By going through the *Interplay* experience, our sales managers have greater empathy and awareness of the challenges our customers are facing – and what their pain-points are. *Interplay* helps our managers teach their teams how to approach customers and conduct value conversations. They learn how to talk to customers about their challenges so they can unlock the intangible and tangible value they want to create and link our solution to that.



Less Pain – More Gain

Interplay has been a key component of our very successful Global Academy for Sales Leaders. Academy participants have experienced an aggregated 23% increase in revenue and 38% improvement in the deal win rate as well as a 57% increase in pipeline opportunities and a 54% increase in pipeline value compared to non-participants. *Interplay* is such an integral part of the Global Academy that when we reduced the Academy from two weeks to one, we decided to keep the full one-day *Interplay* experience intact.

One sales leader who attended the workshop related a winning benefit of *Interplay* when he told us, “This experience was incredible! I'm not sure why we didn't learn accounting this way in college. It would have been much more interesting.” The program participants really enjoy the experience and it stays vivid in their minds. Through the workshop, they have experienced their customers' world – it's not just something we told them. As a result, the experience will remain longer in their systems.

The ultimate benefit for me, as director of the Academy, is that our participants have greater confidence in their ability to approach our customers with a stronger empathy for the decisions they have to make. *Interplay* is the winning solution for understanding our customers' worlds.

