

**Where Does Organic Sales
Growth Come From?**



What are you investing in?

Are you investing in territory realignment, a new selling model, coaching skills workshops, etc. with hopes of driving growth—only to see little, if any, change.

These “investments,” though well intended, often end up having little to no lasting impact on business results. And in today’s hyper-competitive, closely regulated healthcare marketplace, the ability to drive organic growth is an issue that is constantly on the mind of sales leaders.

The reason for this disconnect is simple:

The investments listed above do not address two core drivers of sales productivity – managerial **focus** and coaching **quality**

FLM’s are force multipliers.

Your FLMs are crucial to the success of your commercial strategy. When effective (i.e., feedback is focused on components of strategy and coaching quality is high), FLMs drive growth. The opposite is also true. When not effective, FLM coaching lacks focus and execution falls flat, leading to limited impact and diminished results.

Today, FLMs are, by nature, overwhelmed and often overworked. Most FLMs struggle to keep their coaching priorities straight. So, when their organization provides them a new approach, it can feel more like a “rock in their backpack” instead of a solution.

Give up the flavor of the month

When FLMs lack the time and energy to adapt to organizational initiatives and investments, new skills are never embedded and managers default to the way they've always done things. This approach—often referred to as “flavor of the month”—is based on two long-held misconceptions

1. **“New” = “better.”** Introducing a new model or coaching platform to an already overworked manager is a recipe for disaster. Most managers, when polled, would rather focus on mastering existing tools and skills than adopt on a whole new approach.
2. **“It’s impossible to measure quality.”** One of the biggest misconceptions that leaders have today is that coaching quality cannot be measured. They rely on a “sense” that coaching is subpar without ever asking, “Just how good is our coaching?”

As a result, leaders invest in solutions that fail to address the core issues (i.e., coaching **focus and quality**). Though some investments produce an initial “lift,” momentum is short-lived and no lasting impact on growth is achieved



Measure managerial focus and coaching quality

For nearly 20 years, Echelon analysts have identified and refined the criteria associated with effective coaching. In that time, we have reviewed more than 30,000 coaching conversations and mapped the focus and quality of coaching to overall performance. “Effective” coaching is defined as focus + quality

Balanced

Provides a contrast between the current and desired level of skill proficiency

Actionable

Facilitates a sense of ownership on the part of the “coachee”

Specific

FCR includes a detailed description of skills and behaviors

Impact

Includes coaching focused on coachee’s ability to impact customer decision making

Continuity

Creates momentum in the development process by providing ongoing coaching to a small number of skills or behaviors

Supportive

Aligns to the individual employee’s development plan, goals and needs

Don't underestimate the role of focus

As noted above, today's managers are often overwhelmed and overworked. The reason for this is that most strategies—brand, sales, effectiveness, and learning/development—require the FLM to play a central role in their reinforcement and execution.

Faced with a large number of loosely defined and shifting priorities, many managers opt out. They default to “the way they've always done things” or simply coach to the numbers.

In a recent analysis, Echelon found that 86% of coaching and feedback from top-performing managers was focused on skills and behaviors aligned to strategic imperatives and business results. **FLM ability to focus on skills and behaviors associated with strategic priorities is crucial to driving sales growth.**

Case Study

In our experience, coaching can be categorized in 4 levels:

- Level 1 - Coaching to the numbers
- Level 2 - Skill focused, but static
- Level 3 - Skill focused with mentoring variable coachee engagement
- Level 4 - Effective coaching

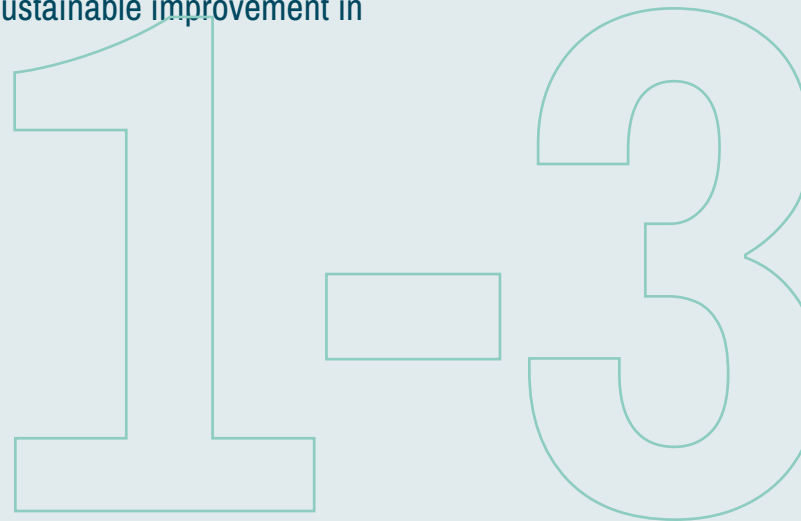
For this case study, Echelon reviewed field coaching from 198 FLMs from one specialty sales team. At baseline, nearly half of coaching conversations from these managers were found to be ineffective (Level 1). Another 30% were categorized as Level 2.

Though these results were likely disappointing, this organization achieved a critical first step in terms of improving coaching quality: **they successfully quantified their current level of coaching and avoided making an investment based on a “hunch.”**

Once this organization established a quantifiable and actionable baseline of quality, Echelon leveraged a three-step process for creating a measurable and sustainable improvement in coaching.

Steps

1. **Engage senior leadership.** Sales VPs and second-line managers were equipped with the tools, skills, and insights needed to reinforce expectations and “walk the talk” in terms of quality coaching.
2. **Train.** First- and second-line leaders gained clarity in terms of focus (the skills and behaviors that aligned to business priorities) and coaching quality.
3. **Reinforce and measure.** Learning was sustained through a mobile learning and reinforcement platform with improvements being measured in monthly increments.



Results

In just six months, FLM coaching reflected a sustained improvement in overall effectiveness. By 18 months, the majority of coaching was classified as Level 3 with more than 25% of conversations classified as Level 4. In this time, the client saw a significant increase managers' ability to provide quality coaching to strategic priorities, such as:

- Components of brand message;
- Approved brand resources;
- Patient identification;
- Product trial, and
- Core skills (closing)

Coaching Quality & Business Impact

By focusing on coaching effectiveness, this team successfully drove organic sales growth. In addition to the improvements in coaching this client—and many others—experienced a measurable and sustained impact on key metrics.

In as little as six months, and with results sustained for more than four years, Echelon clients have reported improvements in:

- Sales performance (i.e., organic sales growth)
- Productivity
- Use of approved resources
- Employee engagement, and
- Retention

Let's bring these insights to your commercial team. Contact Echelon at 732-305-0205 to start a no obligation preliminary analysis.

To learn more about Echelon's CoachAlytics platform visit us at thinkechelon.com/insights

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