



Challenges

By 2012, after a series of acquisitions, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) had 14 separate sales organizations, selling complementary products. However, each team still had its own sales systems, spreadsheets and methodologies.

Lee Ramsayer, Executive Vice President of Global Sales and Linda Duchaine, Senior Vice President of Sales and Services Enablement, knew from experience that a single methodology would help unify the teams. With executive leadership support, they made the strategic decision to adopt the ValueSelling Framework® as the keystone to an integration that involved a common sales system, a common sales process and a common language—all focused on the customer.

The methodology is clean, clear and straight-forward. With ValueSelling, the sales organization is equipped to discuss opportunities, evaluate a customer's needs and create a strategic plan to deliver the right HMH solutions for educator and student success.

“I started using ValueSelling at Oracle and now at HMH. The best thing about it is that it's simple. ValueSelling can be boiled down to 2 Vs and 2 Ps. So you can use it after you walk out of the classroom.”

Lee Ramsayer, Executive Vice President of
Global Sales, HMH



Executive Summary

Learning company Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (NASDAQ: HMHC) is a leading provider of K-12 core curriculum serving more than 50 million students and 3 million educators in 150 countries. HMH selected the ValueSelling sales methodology as part of a significant global transformation:

- From product-centric to customer-centric
- From core education-based to integrated solution-based
- From content publisher to learning company



Part of the DNA

By onboarding sales team members and providing a continual refresh—every day, every week, every month—Sales Enablement has readied the sales reps for higher-level conversations with a better solution mix and greater differentiation.

“From soup to nuts, ValueSelling permeates the HMH sales process. It’s part of our DNA. We don’t get away from it, because the day you stop is the day you forget...and we don’t want to do that.”

Linda Duchaine, Senior Vice President of Sales and Services Enablement, HMH

Transforming Sales

From Product-centric to Customer-centric: “HMH had plenty of information (i.e., materials, content, and tools) to provide the sales teams, but the sales conversations needed to change,” says Linda. “ValueSelling is about the customer—front and center. It’s the glue that helped us move from being product-centric to customer-focused.”

From Core Education-based to Solution-based Offerings: Moving beyond single products, the sales team now offers comprehensive solutions that address a customer’s challenges holistically.

From Content Publisher to Learning Company: HMH has combined professional development services with core curriculum solutions so that teachers obtain in-depth training, coaching and leadership skills to impact student outcomes, resulting in the organic growth of its professional services offerings.

In-house Expertise to Navigate a Complex Education Landscape

Teaching and learning now include multiple delivery channels—print, digital, adaptive learning, data analytics and more. State guidelines are ever-changing and customers range from thriving districts to those facing deep challenges. Given these complexities, Linda tapped four HMH content specialists to become certified ValueSelling facilitators. “We get the sales team ready for value-based conversations, which requires a different cadence and sophistication. The ValueSelling Framework® keeps us focused, so we don’t lose sight of the customer and solutions we have to provide,” said Linda.

Making the Customer’s Vision a Reality

Through its commitment to integration, HMH is now able to forecast with greater accuracy. Sales teams are using a common vernacular and a positive cultural shift is underway across the organization.

As HMH is introducing its suite of next generation core solutions—Into Reading, Into Math and Into Literature—to the K-12 space, the sales team is ready to engage in deeper conversations, address school district challenges, and support teachers with powerful tools and techniques to allow every child in the classroom to grow.



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