

IMPLEMENTING SUCCESSFUL METHODS

How they did it at Fortum

What is the background?

Fortum is a leading energy company in the Nordic countries and the other parts of the Baltic Rim. Fortum's activities cover the generation, distribution and sale of electricity and heat, the operation and maintenance of power plants as well as energy-related services. Their main products are electricity, heat and steam.

Fortum's competitiveness in the power and heat business is based on a pan-Nordic concept. Fortum's customers are international power plants, industries and private customers. The company is registered on the Helsinki Exchange. The average number of employees working within the Group is approximately 9 000.

The energy market consists of several small to large sized players and the competition is tough. Fortum's main objective is to become "The supplier of choice", i.e. their customers first choice. One intention is to become the best, *not* the biggest another intention is to become "The benchmark company" within the energy sector.

The agents working within Fortum's Customer Center's handle most of the customer contacts. Today Fortum has Customer centers in Sweden,

Finland and Norway and they employ approximately 250 people.



Customise and have results!

Angelique von Gegerfelt, Team Manager at Fortum Customer Center and Project Manager for the Swedish Fortum project says: "We created a truly tailored training in line with our needs. Mercuri International are very sensitive and flexible and show great interest in us and our line of business. The employees feel that the training is customized to their situation and in-line with their current needs."

What was the challenge?

Mercuri International's task together with Fortum was to develop their Customer Center's "Sales through excellent service" – i.e. how one sells Fortum by providing first-class customer care. The main objective is to make the Customer Center the most important sales channel within Fortum as this is where the greater part of the

customer contacts are made. The potential for developing Fortum's customer care and for winning new customers lies within their Customer Center's. The objective is to become "Best Customer Center all categories" in each Country.

23% rise in signing new contracts for additional or complementary services

The results of cooperation and development

- Sales have become part of the everyday life within the organization – everyone sells and does it with pride. An awareness of bad service sometimes being the equivalent to not selling is established.
- The added sales as well as re-sales to exciting customers has increased with a percentage of several hundreds
- Everyone has become more pro-active – one is more pro-active in contacting existing customers as well as looking for new customers in an innovative way
- Measurements are done on a regular basis, both on a group as well as individual level. A bonus has been introduced
- Less "churn" – for example when 18 out of 22 customers, who had decided to leave, changed their mind and remained a Fortum customer after having been contacted by one of the Customer Center agents
- More calls per hour are answered compared to before
- The absence due to illness has decreased within teams working with coaching
- Fortum have developed their acclimatization program for new employees by linking some of the contents from the development program provided the agents
- Other units within Fortum find Customer Center more service-minded, also when dealing with internal matters
- There is an upward trend both in regards to customer satisfaction as well as personnel ditto. Among other things the commitment is higher than before
- The team-leaders have developed from being specialists/administrators to becoming coaches and they devote circa 75 % of their time on supporting their employees
- The team-leaders work with co-listening and their pre-studies are thorough in order for them to give good feedback and follow-up on the efforts done
- The team-leaders follow-up on the sales results both on an individual, group as well as site level, and they do it more often than before.
- The co-operation and exchange of knowledge between the team-leaders has increased

Targeted **38%** rise in winning new customers exceeded

Tuulikki Honkanen-Lindvall, Country Manager for Customer Center in Finland says: "We had never achieved these results had we not run this project. The development program was directly linked to our situation and our values which made all employees strongly involved and motivated". According to the Customer Center agents themselves, the main reason for today's high quality level is the raise in motivation and competence among the employees as a direct result of the sales training. The competence development project is also considered being the main reason for Fortum being awarded the honour *Best Energy Company* in Finland 2005.