

## Case Study:

Terminal Supply Company  
Troy, Michigan

PI Worldwide 

# Terminal Supply Achieves Unprecedented Sales Growth with PI Worldwide® Sales Assessment and Training Tools

For more than 40 years, Terminal Supply Company has been a trusted name in the automotive electrical industry. Founded by a husband and wife team in 1966, the family business headquartered in Troy, Michigan has expanded to include seven branches throughout the Midwest. A key cornerstone of the company's long term success is its people, particularly its knowledgeable and experienced sales force.

Terminal Supply leveraged the behavioral assessment tool, Predictive Index® from PI Worldwide® to ensure strong job fit, retention and effective coaching. When the organization learned PI Worldwide offered a sales skill assessment, they were intrigued.

Chris Imbrogno, national sales manager for Terminal Supply has been with the company for the past 17 years. After completing the Selling Skills Assessment Tool™ (SSAT) from PI Worldwide®, a targeted assessment that measures sales skills, strengths and weaknesses, he was surprised by the results. "I had been the top salesman for many years prior to moving into the management so I didn't understand why my SSAT score was so low."

**"The ROI on this program is immediate and is worth every cent it cost, and more."**

*Chris Imbrogno*  
**National Sales Manager**

Guided by a PI Worldwide Member firm, Imbrogno realized that while his overall SSAT score was lower than expected, when the results were broken down, it uncovered that he was achieving top sales numbers by relying solely on sheer will and determination rather than practiced skills as part of a comprehensive consultative approach. Similarly, when Imbrogno's 50-person sales team completed the SSAT, the individual results once again seemed contradictory. "The group of sales professionals who were doing really well in our organization had some of the worst scores on the SSAT," he said. Like Imbrogno, this group of sellers relied on a "single sales muscle" to get the job done rather than implement a sales strategy for immediate and long-term success. "Meanwhile, several people who were average sales performers or who were fairly new to the company had really high scores," he said. This skills gap indicated the salesperson knew what to do in a sales situation but was not applying this knowledge effectively and consistently.

Based on the data collected from the SSATs, Terminal Supply was introduced to PI Worldwide's Customer-Focused Selling™ (CFS) program, a customized instructor-led training that provides the core competencies for effective consultative selling.

Initially Imbrogno's outside sales team was not very receptive to the idea of training.

"When you're paid 100% commission, anytime you're not on the road you're not making money and that really concerned a lot of people," said Imbrogno. Many seasoned sales people were also skeptical of what they perceived would be yet another cookie-cutter sales training program teaching them what they already knew.

On the contrary, throughout the two day workshop, participants found the CFS approach offered a targeted process for improving individual skills, increasing team performance and addressing the skill gaps identified by the SSAT results. Unlike other training programs, SSAT/CFS provides participants with a data-based understanding of their sales strengths and weakness, and then delivers a highly interactive program to improve upon these specific areas.

According to Imbrogno, one of the most effective benefits of the training was changing the way the sales reps approached a sales situation. "The key for us was focusing in on the 'Investigative' part of the consultative selling process, giving us permission to ask those probing questions that resulted in fully understanding the client's needs and allowing us to provide comprehensive solutions." Given the fast-paced nature of Terminal Supply's business, many reps were not only missing new opportunities but according to Imbrogno, "they were overlooking business that was right in front of them with existing accounts simply because they didn't stop to ask the right questions in the right way." As Imbrogno describes, "The investigative approach as part of the holistic CFS model provided the sales reps with a blueprint for selling into a new account or to maximize sales results from existing accounts. The ROI on this program is immediate and is worth every cent it cost, and more."

Unlike Imbrogno's seasoned sales team, Inside Sales Manager Judy Tye oversaw a group of 10 inside sales reps, many of whom had entered the organization during a time of rapid growth and therefore had limited sales experience. Tye, who has worked in Sales for

Terminal Supply for 15 years before entering management, had enrolled her team in various sales training courses and seminars over the years. Yet, she says, “I never really saw a big impact like we did with the SSAT benchmarking and CFS training.” The highly interactive, real issues-driven learning format of CFS delivered the specific knowledge Tye’s inside sales team was lacking to achieve better sales results with greater consistency.

Unlike other training programs employees had undergone, the participants immediately began applying the new learning to their own prospects and customers—a practice that Tye says continues to date.

### **Reinforcement Drives Results**

Although Terminal Supply’s salesforce had experienced various training programs in the past, Tye and Imbrogno agree that CFS is unique in impacting sales results for the long term. Tye notes a key differentiator of the CFS process is the focus on reinforcing the learning internally. Following the CFS training, senior sales managers participated in the CFS companion program, Coaching to Excellence™, that focuses on coaching skills for sustainable results. The company also began weekly “sales huddles” led by Imbrogno which enabled reps to discuss issues and re-apply the learning acquired during the sales training. “These sales huddles where we apply the CFS model to address individual challenges have also increased the manager and sales rep engagement. Now, District Sales Managers meet with sales reps more frequently—on a monthly or weekly basis—and develop a coaching relationship that ultimately benefits the salesperson and the bottom line,” said Imbrogno.

### **Sales Success without a Script**

In the past, Terminal Supply provided support materials to help guide sales calls. As a result, many of the reps found themselves “getting stuck” in routines that didn’t deliver results. Tye explains, “Since participating in CFS training, the reps have been getting away from the passive approach of, ‘What can I get for you today?’ and securing more sales by proactively engaging the caller with investigative questions and customer-focused information.”

### **Results: Confidence in Numbers**

Within months of implementing SSAT/CFS training, Terminal Supply saw sales increase dramatically at the individual and team levels. Imbrogno reports, “In the first three months of implementing SSAT/CFS, we had the best month ever in the history of the company along with other milestones. Overall sales for this period were up 20% with a few individuals achieving upwards to a 60% increase.” More astoundingly, Terminal Supply senior management has noted performance improvements across the board. Imbrogno says, “Typically, when we have had spikes in sales, it was usually attributed to one or two individuals securing large orders. What I’m seeing now is everybody doing a little bit better and taking a team approach to adding to the pot every month.” He adds, “So to me, that says that everyone is either working harder, smarter, or both and that no one individual is carrying the increase.”

Since being trained in the Summer and early Fall of 2010, Terminal Supply experienced five consecutive months of sales increases with October 2010 being one of the strongest months in the history of the company and November 2010, the best November on record. For the month of December 2010, Terminal Supply was already \$55,000 ahead of revenues compared to the previous year. The company has steadily increased revenues an average of \$2 Million since 2009, an unprecedented 15% growth rate. “Since implementing CFS, we have seen double-digit year-over-year percentage increases each month through the start of 2011. We expect this growth to continue throughout the year and beyond.” Imbrogno concludes, “Going through the SSAT/CFS training has made our people better sales people—more professional and more in tune to what the customer needs. This kind of approach is what separates us from the competition.”