

SIMPLE SIMULATION

Five Ways to Work It into Your Curriculum

**THE HEART AND EDGE
OF A LEADER**

**DYNAMIC LEARNING:
EXPANDING THE SCOPE AND
IMPACT OF TRAINING**

**FIELD OF DREAMS
HELPING MANAGERS GET
THE MOST OUT OF THEIR
ONE-ON-ONE WORK DAYS**





Field of Dreams

HELPING MANAGERS GET THE MOST OUT OF THEIR ONE-ON-ONE WORK DAYS

by Rick Rosenthal and Rayna Herman

How can you improve the performance of your district managers (DMs)? Management development teams throughout the pharmaceutical and biotech industries confront that challenge every day.

Experience shows that while company training can help, the impact of training events subsides over time. Indeed, our research confirms that regional managers (RMs) hold the key to driving sustainable improvements in DM effectiveness.

TIME IS VALUABLE

Management development teams can help their organizations leverage the role of the RM in DM development by helping regional managers conduct more effective one-on-one work sessions.

RM observations help DMs focus on critical strengths and areas for improvement, and their coaching accelerates DM skill development. The one-on-one RM-DM work session could provide the ideal forum for coaching and development—but this potential remains largely unrealized. In fact, only 38% of DMs feel highly satisfied with the coaching and development they receive from their RMs.

OFTEN MISSING THE MARK

In theory, RMs contribute to DM skill development with every phone call, voice mail, and e-mail. But as one philosopher noted, "In theory there is no difference between theory and practice, but in practice there is." These technology-assisted interactions contribute to skill development only as course corrections or progress updates. They do not provide an ideal environment for the in-depth discussion and collaboration so crucial to effective coaching.

The one-on-one work session remains the foundation for RM development of DMs' skills. This uninterrupted face-to-face time occurs only three to four times per year, and DMs approach these opportunities with high hopes for constructive feedback, teaching, coaching, and counseling from their leaders.

Currently, 70% of RM-DM work sessions proceed without strong developmental agendas. They consist of tactical activities, such as reviewing sales numbers and completing administrative requirements. Ad-hoc discussions may touch on opportunities for DM skill improvement, but this hit-or-miss approach falls far short of a systematic approach to DM development.

HOW MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT TEAMS CAN HELP

Two stakeholders collaborate to execute a productive RM-DM work session: the RM and the DM. By addressing the needs of both groups, management development teams can help create more productive one-on-one work sessions throughout the sales organization.

Perception and Reality: Not Aligned



Tools of the Trade

Tool	RM Use
Descriptions of DM skills and competencies, including observable changes as skill increases	Assess DM strengths and weaknesses, and individualize approach to each DM's development
Pre-work session communications examples or templates	Facilitate RM-DM communication, such as exchanging work session objectives
Work session agendas	Balance "to do's" with DM skill development
Resources (activities, literature, courses, etc.) supporting development of each skill	Engage DM on proposed approaches to skill development
Action plans	Ensure that RM and DM follow through on commitments
Work session report templates	Document developmental progress, creating link to future work sessions

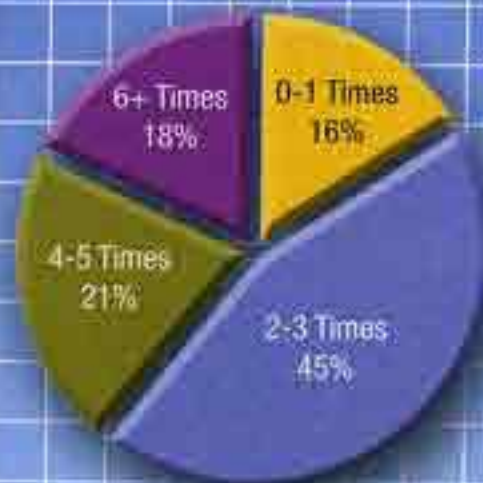


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What DMs Say

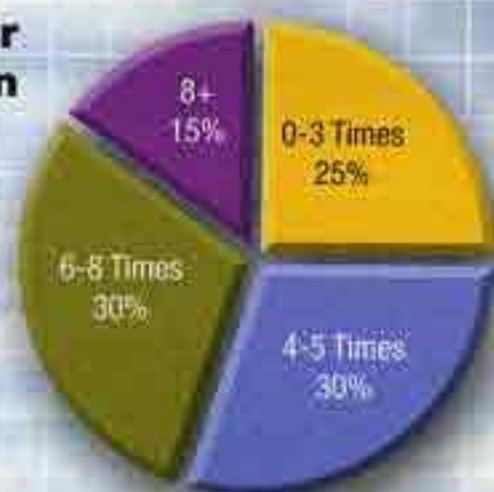
Times in last year DM met one-on-one with RM (in person)



How many were 1/2 day or longer



How many times in last year did manager meet in-person with their team for 30 minutes or more



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WHAT RMS NEED

Many RMs possess previous experience as DMs. In the DM role, they typically receive training on coaching and build experience by coaching representatives. But coaching DMs requires different approaches and sometimes different skills. Why? Reasons include the ability to observe the skills being coached and differences between representative and DM competencies, professional experience, and tenure. However, few RMs receive training on coaching managers. These sales executives need training on coaching managers. Key focus areas for the training should include:

- Observation and diagnosis skills
- Coaching skills
- Creating effective developmental plans for managers
- Motivating and developing tenured district managers.

RMs can also benefit from tools to help them plan, execute, and follow up on one-on-one work days. Though these tools

often exist in a format appropriate for supporting interactions between a DM and representatives, they do not adequately support RM-DM interactions. Recommended tools are listed in the sidebar, "Tools of the Trade."

These resources from descriptions of competencies to templates for documenting work sessions can help management development teams speak a common language with their RMs and DMs. They also provide a framework around which best practices emerge. This enables management development teams to leverage successful developmental approaches across the organization.

WHAT DMS NEED

Companies often overlook the role of the DM in the RM-DM one-on-one work session. As a result, DMs may not know how to use these work sessions to facilitate and accelerate skill improvements. As part of initial DM training, and on an

DMS RESPOND

What one thing could your manager do to enhance your development as a DM?

- All RMs are too burdened with directives from HQ to devote the time needed to develop/mentor district managers.
- As a tenured DSM, I need projects to assist me in my development.
- Ask me about my development needs.
- Ask me what my goals are.
- Be available to discuss my development.
- Continue to give feedback on areas that I need to develop.
- Continue to give me projects for additional development.
- Discuss my performance with me and how I can improve—manage me.
- Give feedback on written coaching.
- I would like more one-on-one feedback on how I am doing.
- Identify my weaknesses.
- Make developmental suggestions.
- Meet with me one-on-one on a regular basis to go over my development plan, that of my district, and how you see me fitting into your short- and long-term plans.
- More coaching—feedback on what is working and what is not working.
- More consistent and predictable development discussions.
- More feedback on what good looks like.
- One-on-one development discussions once every three to four months (i.e. structured schedule for development meetings set over a 12-month period).
- Set aside a day for developmental discussion.
- Ask me what my interests are and help me plan accordingly.

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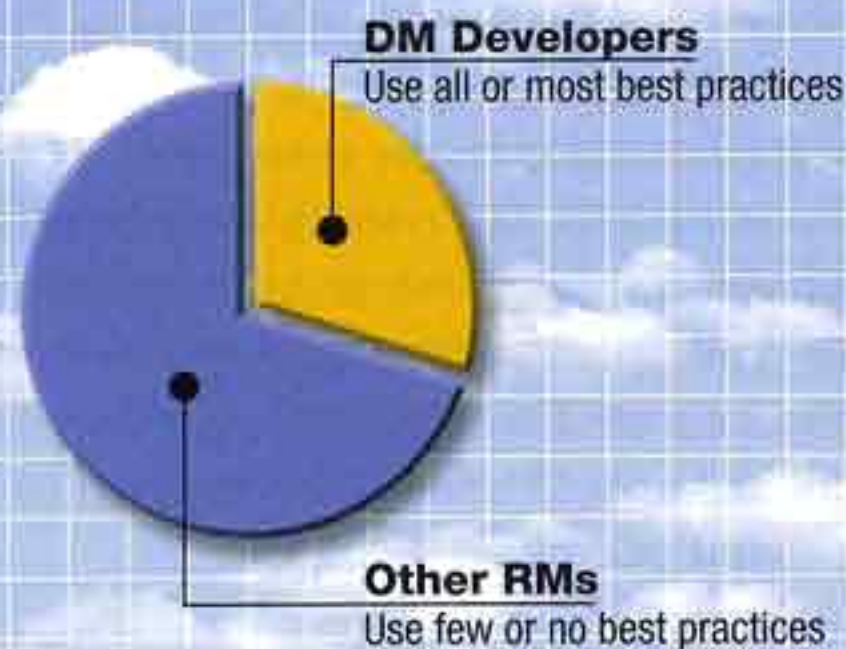
Best Practices: Pre-Plan & Follow Up on Work Sessions

Pre-planning

- Exchange objectives
- Review previous work session outcomes
- Balance current business objectives and longer-term skill development

Follow up

- Develop mutual action plans
- Create work session documentation



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ongoing basis, management development teams can help DMs learn how to work more effectively with their RMs and champion their *own* development.

Training areas for DMs include self-assessment skills, RM engagement skills, and the ability to view district business from the RM's perspective.

Self-assessment involves identifying strengths and weaknesses. Typically, that requires DMs to their own analyze skills—as demonstrated with real examples—against those listed in the DM job description or competency model. DMs contribute to their development by asking RMs to help increase exposure for their strengths. Developmental activities include serving on a task force, leading a region initiative, or mentoring someone needing help with that skill. For weaker areas, DMs can ask the RM to teach or model the skill, request a mentor, or suggest books, articles, or courses.

DMs can improve the developmental impact of one-on-one work sessions by learning to engage the RM—keeping him or her in a teaching/training mode. For example, DMs can steer RMs away from talking *about* a skill (e.g., coaching) and toward an activity that helps *work on* the skill (e.g., role play). RM engagement also includes communicating objectives before the work session and progress on action items afterward.

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AVOID PREMATURE DEPLOYMENT



UNFORTUNATELY KNOWING WHO'S PREPARED AND WHO'S NOT ISN'T ALWAYS OBVIOUS

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**Best Practices:
Do's & Don'ts For Individualizing Objectives**

Do's

Ask questions to clarify DM's career goals

Stay in constant contact with new DMs

Consider tenure one factor in determining developmental approach

Exchange developmental objectives with DM prior to work sessions

Use multiple streams of direct and indirect observation to diagnose needs

Don'ts

Make assumptions about DM's goals

Rely on new DMs to possess insight into their developmental needs

Assume tenure equates with skill

Use ad hoc agendas for work sessions

Rely on a few, or only the most recent, interactions

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DMs also contribute to productive work sessions when they learn to view their business from a regional perspective. Examples include the district's share of the region's sales or potential for each brand, or disproportionate pull-through opportunity with particular health plans or government sectors. This approach focuses discussion and developmental activities on areas likely to demonstrate a business impact.

CONCLUSION

RM-DM workdays have tremendous potential for accelerating DM skill development. Yet too often, this potential remains untapped. Management development teams can help increase the quality of these work sessions by training RMs and DMs to balance time between tactical to-do's and strategic skill development and by supporting RMs and DMs with appropriate tools and training. Organizations that raise the quality of these interactions stand to benefit from increased sales performance and improved personnel development.

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Rayna Herman is Principal, Health Strategies Group. Rayna leads the firm's sales force effectiveness practice, which provides syndicated services and consulting support to sales executives from 15 leading pharmaceutical and biotech companies. Her work has been featured in Pharmaceutical Executive, Pharmaceutical Representative, the "Pink Sheet," The Wall Street Journal, Selling Power and SPBT FOCUS. Prior to joining Health Strategies Group, Rayna spent eight years in sales and marketing at Merck and Co, Inc.

WHEN IT'S APPLES AND ORANGES



ALWAYS GO WITH THE **ORANGE.**

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Pre-Launch Disease Modules | On-Site Launch Training | Distance Learning

ONGOING REPRESENTATIVE TRAINING
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