

National Research Corporation is an industry leader in healthcare research that provides healthcare organizations with tools to track their performance at various levels. Publicly held, the company is experiencing explosive growth – both in revenue and the size of its sales force. Bill Eckstrom, Senior Vice President of Business Development, along with Vice President of Sales for NRC+Picker, Jason Rau, lead the selling organization to which senior management attributes a large part of the company's success. "We hire the best of the best right out of college – real overachievers," said Mr. Eckstrom. "And then we provide an extensive training program to develop a world-class selling organization." NRC has purchased a number of affiliated product companies, and the management team and sales group have diversified into these associated areas. The sales group is assigned to regions of the country that are managed by a Regional Manager.

Business Performance Group developed a customized, consultative, 1-day training workshop around critical competencies identified by sales leadership and regional sales managers during a day-long workshop. After the kickoff event, focus groups of the salespeople, called Area Managers, were organized by length of experience. "We wanted to identify additional needs at each stage of an Area Manager's development, from new hire to experienced," said Pete Poppert, NRC's sales trainer. The next goal is to develop a series of training modules to improve skills at each stage of the sales process.

The Area Managers have challenging responsibilities from prospecting and appointment setting over the telephone to identifying needs with clients in the field. The sales process involves extensive travel and requires strong telephone selling skills. The Area Managers also present NRC solutions, both in web-based formats and in person, and provide comprehensive proposals for the use of NRC's extensive solutions. Many of the Area Managers are graduates of the University of Nebraska, which is located not far from NRC's corporate headquarters in Lincoln.

NRC has provided healthcare information services to the American Association of Health Plans and the American Hospital Association. NRC clients have benefited from a committed, organized staff of associates who remain up-to-date and involved in the crafting of key performance initiatives that shape the healthcare industry.