



| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Industry: | Custom Manufacturing Capital Equipment |
| Demographics: | 60 employees • MI HQ • International |
| Projects: | Custom Training • OD • Management Training and Coaching • Soft Skills |



Since 1992 Automated Process Equipment Corporation (APEC) has specialized in the design and manufacturing of ingredient automation equipment and controls. APEC serves a variety of industries and diverse applications internationally.

We started with APEC in 2014 with the goal of increasing market penetration, sales engineer close ratios, margins, and overall sales internationally. We worked on various projects from 2014-2020, interfacing directly with ownership, leadership, and employees' company-wide.



PROJECTS INCLUDED:

- EI and DiSC Profiling
- Custom Sales Training
- Management Training
- Soft Skills Training
- Company Image Development
- Proposal Response Package Refinement
- Go-To-Market (GTM) refinement
- VP of Sales, Coaching
- Sales Engineering, Coaching
- Sales Meeting Management
- CRM re-launch and Customization
- Sales Representative Business/Territory Plan Development
- LinkedIn Strategy Development
- Project Management and Engineering Department Training
- Company-wide Communications Program Development
- Owner Strategic Planning

RESULTS:

- Personality profiling to use in sales manager/sales rep coaching approach.
- Customized sales training manual, deck and tools.
- Customized management training manual, deck and tools.
- Company image and proposal rewrite/rebrand.
- CRM utilization from zero to complete.
- LI and social media presence/footprint and lead gen results.
- Project Management: tightened process, training and tools, ongoing management.
- Communication process, helping to breakdown the department silos.
- Doubling of sales revenue over 6-year span.
- Increase in ASP (average sales rep productivity) year over year.

TESTIMONIALS:

Brian worked with the APEC sales team and senior management for a period from 2014 to 2020. Brian helped us in many areas including training of our sales and management personnel, help with CRM integration, help with succession planning, and increasing effective communication between the various departments. His assistance in these areas played a major role in an increase in sales and a more efficient operation among our management team.

My main goal in working with Brian was to train our sales team. Our team was very good technically, but lacked knowledge in the finer points of customer relationship management, prospecting and closing of sales. His unique approach put the emphasis on customer service and problem solving, rather than trying to sell the customer something that they don't need. We quickly learned that there were other areas of training that Brian could help us with including management training and interdepartmental communications.

I had worked with a business consultant in the past. During that experience it seemed that the person that we were working with was just regurgitating words that he got from us during the interview process. He made some recommendations, and there was no follow up. Brian, on the other hand, not only gave us valuable recommendations, but also gave us a plan to execute and a way to measure the results of this plan.

I was extremely happy with the recommendations and changes that Brian brought to APEC. The time that he spent with APEC did so much to build our professionalism and take our sales team to a whole new level. I saw a huge difference in how we planned and executed the sales process and how the sales, engineering and manufacturing parts of the business could be more effective.

— **Terry Stemler President APEC (retired), April 26, 2022**



From 2014 until 2020 our company, Automated Process Equipment Corporation, contracted with Brian Nixon of Summit Learning Solutions for consultation and training. As the VP Sales Manager I was initially skeptical and guarded as to why we had to bring in an outside sales expert. I perceived this as an insult to my abilities and the performance of our team.

Today I can honestly say that the association, teachings and concepts Brian presented was the BEST thing to happen to APEC, myself and our team.

Nothing was forced upon us and we were never told “You are doing it wrong and here is what you need to do”. Concepts were presented and those concepts were supported with material and real life examples. We were free to implement what we wanted and modify what we felt needed modification.

Our sales process improved and the results showed. Metrics became extremely important as numbers don't lie! Our sales team learned to ask the right questions at the right time. The team became more efficient and sales revenues increased.

After the professional agreement was finished with Summit Learning, whenever our Sales team was faced with a dilemma or puzzling question, the common refrain was “What would Brian say about this?”

Personally, Brian helped and challenged me to become a better manager and helped to reshape my thought process. Brian proved to be an excellent sounding board and mentor. Always listening and never judging. He took my input, processed it and presented ideas with supporting evidence. The final decision and action taken was always up to me.

Partnering with Summit Learning Solutions was the best business decision made by APEC during my tenure. If you have any hesitancy about partnering with Summit Learning Solutions, cast them aside and forge ahead knowing you are gaining a strategic partner who wants nothing more than for you to grow and succeed.

— Dave Mattice VP of Sales (Retired), April 22, 2022

Prior to Summit's sales and manager training, our company was very compartmentalized. Summit's training series opened the eyes of staffing in all departments, making them aware of the challenges others are facing within the company. This created a new culture of empathy and wiliness to help each other among teams, it also encouraged improvement on teamwork. In return, this gave APEC improved sales, product quality, and productivity.

Before working with Summit, our sales team presented projects to the clients in a very professionally but laid-back manor, this method of sales left it up to our customer to decide our fate. The style of sales also caused closing rates to be like an annual roller coaster ride, making it very difficult to manage production staffing needs, and to generate accurate sales projections. The Summit program gave our sales team the confidence and knowledge to lead the customer through the entire process, including, but not limited to asking for the business. We continue to use and review the Summit program-process with our teams throughout each business year, and we include this training to any new sales or management individual. The confidence building program allowed us to realize growth and consistent sales with major reductions in our past roller coaster adventures, it has also assisted with maintaining product quality, and personal productivity throughout the company.

— Kendall Wilcox President and CEO, April 24, 2022



Brian Nixon of Summit Learning Solutions was initially hired to work with our sales team. At that time, none of the team had had any formal training in sales. All were engineers or technicians first, salespeople second; sometimes third. Even the VP of Sales. The only difference in the group was time in service as a salesperson and individual people skills.

Brian taught us how to lead the customer instead of being led by them. How to present yourself and your products as an ally to the customer along with the material to back it up. Another important aspect was how to create allies within the organization you are targeting. He also taught us the tools and strategies necessary for preparing for the first and subsequent meetings so that you, not the customer drive the agenda.

Brian was also contracted to coached us on teamwork between the different departments in the company. Engineering, Sales, and Service work more harmoniously now. It's not all sparkles and unicorns but there is a level of trust and empathy that was not there before. I believe this has led to the company not taking on any jobs that proved to be losers after the sale in these last five years.

We have one individual in the sales department who was not making it and came close to getting the axe. What I can only attribute to the time Brian spent with him and our VP of Sales, he came close to being the number one salesperson last year and to date, this year is way ahead of the rest. He's on track to be the number one of all time.

APEC is a better, healthier and more performance driven company now thanks to Brian's training and support. Most importantly, it's more profitable.

— Garrett Billmire (Partner), May 9, 2022

