

Repackaging of Zig

By Trish Lambrecht
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The Art of Selling CD-ROM, 1999, Skills Online; 800.371.7085, www.skills-online.com. Purchase US\$189.95 (single-user license), \$1,295 (library license). Other material: none.

This multimedia program could be described as Zig Ziglar meets technology—sort of.

The Art of Selling is a repackaging of some classic Ziglar concepts. For example, when I was teaching a college sales class last year, I viewed a 1960s Ziglar film. Amazingly enough, in the closing of this 1999 CD, he uses the same copier example that he did in the '60s film. But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let's go back to the beginning.

The CD is easy to install, and you realize quickly that the setting is a conference center with seven lecture halls. I spent some time wandering around and discovered a lot of glitz and glamour that serve little purpose. Personally, I was unimpressed with being able to move virtually around the conference center and uninterested in reading "brochures" about the people responsible for the CD.

Upon entering the conference center, you're greeted by a receptionist. Then, you can enter any one of the lectures: the keynote address, the psychology of selling, prospecting, product, process, objections, and closing. I began with the keynote address. Zig gives a brief talk in his characteristic voice, espousing some of his basic sales philosophy, including that selling is a transference of feeling, and you can have everything you want if you help others get what they want.

At the end of each session, there's a link to a workbook page. The exercises are no more than fill-in-the-blanks, and there's no online feedback or real interaction.

The lectures, presented by a variety of people, offer content that's valuable but not new. As in so many programs, these use acronyms—for example, T.R.U.S.T., which stands for think, relate, uncover the needs, sell the solution, and take action. As hackneyed as acronyms can be, they tend to work. In

RATINGS KEY

★★★★	Outstanding
★★★1/2	Very good
★★★★	Good
★★★1/2	Above average
★★★	Average
★★1/2	Below average
★	Poor



addition, the speakers occasionally present a concept and then an example. That's helpful.

At the end, Ziglar introduces the copier example from his earlier film. It wasn't the first time in the program that I noticed an almost verbatim use of previous material, and that's not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, one could make the argument that it demonstrates that the material has stood the test of time. However, it did make me wonder, Why a CD?

The content of this multimedia program is pertinent, and the variety and competence of the presenters are good. However, from the user's standpoint, the CD is no different from watching a video and filling in a workbook. Frankly, as multimedia, I found it boring. I couldn't decide whether it was because I was disappointed in the use of technology or whether the material, presented as it was, would be more effective as a video shown on a bigger screen. The value for a single-user license seems reasonable, but a revised version with more interaction would be a huge improvement.

The Art of Selling

★★★★	Ease of installation
★★1/2	Holds user interest
★★★★	Production quality
★	Degree of interactivity
★	Quality of interactivity
★★★★	Value of content
★★	Instructional value
★★★★	Value for the money
★★	Documentation
★★1/2	Overall rating

Learning the True Score

By Daniel J. Knight
President, HPS Associates



Balancing the Corporate Scorecard: An Interactive Simulation CD-ROM and print, 1998, Harvard Business School Publishing; 800.998.0886, www.hbsp.harvard.edu. Purchase US \$795. Other material: user guide, facilitator guide, HBR article.

Wing walkers entertain folks at county fairs by walking along the biwings of vintage airplanes hundreds of feet in the air. These daredevils share the survival secret of holding firmly onto one wing strut as they reach out and tightly secure the next strut before moving farther along the wings. Likewise, the *Balancing the Corporate Scorecard* interactive simulation offers us a strut-by-strut learning experience to internalize its content. We learn the fundamentals of the balanced scorecard without putting our careers or companies on the line.

The BSC is a powerful performance measurement framework. It takes organizations beyond looking only at financial measurements to balance them with three other measures: learning and growth, internal business processes, and customer focus. The BSC emphasizes a strategic cause-and-effect relationship among these measures.

Upbeat music welcomes you to the program, followed by Phil, the onscreen guide. He introduces the BSC developers, Bob Kaplan and Dave Norton. They give a brief introduction, and the simulation begins. The program uses Sentra, a fictional subsidiary of GigaSoft, as its learning vehicle. Sentra is in the data-mining software business, and you take the role of Sentra's new CEO. Your boss, GigaSoft CEO Steve Tucker, instructs you to get out of the consulting business and into full-time, data-mining software development and customer service. Accepting your mission at face value, you plunge into the simulation and click your way first through a company orientation and then—quarter by quarter—a realistic scenario. You're guided by a panel of updates, including profit, cash flow, revenue, market share, sales forecast, and customer satisfaction. You

get pop-up emails, voicemail, memos, news stories, and drop-in visitors along the way to keep you in touch with the evolving situation. You respond by setting product prices, hiring and firing, investing in training and information technology, and adjusting software-debugging time.

Heady victory in the early quarters turns into ignominious defeat in the last several quarters, though. The fun stops, and you start feeling like you're flying blind. No matter what adjustments you make, things get worse.

During the last quarters, Tucker skewers you several times, the VPs bicker, and customers leave in droves. By quarter 15, you run out of cash and the screen goes dead. Tucker comes on the phone and says you get one last chance, Phil comes back to offer you encouragement, and the consultants arrive to help you and your VPs with a BSC.

You then work your way through several exercises to understand the sensitivities of the BSC measures, learning how they interact with each other and market conditions. You also view a focus-group discussion and the results of a customer survey. Phil gives a tutorial on what went wrong, using an instructive systems diagram. Basically, the shortcomings cause dissatisfied customers who buy less and switch to competitors. As a consequence, revenues, profits, and cash levels drop.

Part 2, "Dig Deeper," begins with Phil coaching you on building a new BSC panel. You go through a menu of measures, pick those that seem most appropriate to the situation, and advance—quarter by quarter—following a trial-and-error, decision-making process.

Guided by feedback on your BSC panel and more pop-up communications and visits, you begin to click your way to success. Part 2 ends with a big congratulations from Tucker and the promise of a large bonus.

Then, you move to part 3 of the simulation: "Extend Your Learning." It gives deeper insight into how the BSC simulation works, shows how to reset the parameters of the model, and encourages you to run the simulation again.

In parts 1 and 2, the simulation accomplishes its learning objectives: learn the key BSC principles, experience the importance of the metrics, discover how to link cause-and-effect relationships and select appropriate measures, construct a BSC step by step, and develop a

capacity to use the BSC effectively in a fast-changing market.

That won't help people in a hurry; the simulation requires about six hours. But for the time invested, you receive a well-constructed learning experience that's easy to use and of high quality. For a CD, the animation in the systems diagrams works well. Maybe the producers tested the simulation on lots of M.B.A. students.

In one case, I believe the producers try to push beyond the capabilities of CD technology. With a full-scale simulation model, we could see graphically the effect of the loss of experienced employees, the time it takes to acquire and retrain replacements, and the difficulty of achieving a steady state in the face of continuing losses. Because of the limits of CD technology, however, those effects fall flat.

I also believe the simulation sets users up for failure in part 1. The guide seems to acknowledge the long odds against first-time success. In fact, users are manipulated, but for a good pedagogical reason. According to the program, the best way to convince people to use the BSC is to force them to run a business without one.

Motivating participants to use a BSC seems fair. With that thought, I ran part 1 again. On the surface, the part 1 and 2 simulations appear to be the same, so this time I used the guaranteed success strategy from part 2. Guess what? I ran out of cash in the 20th quarter! It seems that no strategy works for part 1 because of its coding. I called to verify that conclusion with the producers, and they told me they expect to offer an improved version with more coaching within a year.

I found added depth in the related materials—the articles, case studies, videos, and books. Surprisingly, *Cost and Effect* (Harvard Business School Press, 1998) is missing. By Robert Kaplan and Robin Cooper, it provides excellent coverage of activity-based costing, an important part of balanced performance measurement.

This CD-based simulation serves as an effective training vehicle for

- organizations adopting or considering adopting the balanced scorecard
- executives, managers, and individuals concerned with performance measurement
- individual or group training on performance measurement.

The facilitator guide is top-notch and thorough. In addition, I called the technical support number twice and got

Balancing the Corporate Scorecard

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★★★★	Value of content
★★★★	Instructional value
★★★	Value for the money
★★★★	Documentation

through to a knowledgeable technician both times in less than a minute. This program possesses rich content suitable for use as a freestanding learning experience or supplemented with additional instruction and some of the materials listed in the facilitator guide.

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