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## How Vail Resorts Sold Sales Skills to Ski Instructors

Vail Resorts (NYSE: MTN) is the premiere mountain resort company in the world. The company owns five world-class ski resorts: Vail, Beaver Creek, Keystone, Breckenridge, and Heavenly. In total, all five mountains sell approximately 500,000 lessons to skiers and riders each winter<sup>1</sup>.

VAIL RESORTS

### Challenge

The five ski schools saw a 19.7 percent drop in revenue due to the economic downturn during the 2008-2009 winter<sup>2</sup>. This was a \$16 million drop from the previous season.

*“There is no doubt in my mind that this effort has directly impacted this growth, and will continue for years to come.”*

*—Chris Jarnot, COO of Vail Mountain*

The best sales force for each ski school is their own instructors. Instructors’ pay is directly tied to their ability to get current students to return for more lessons.

Vail Resorts needed to figure out a way to get the sales skills of its best instructors into the hands of its entire staff. They needed a central resource that could help create trainings, help managers coach instructors, and allow instructors to learn on their own time.

### Solution

Vail Resorts tapped Kelly Coffey to write *The Snowsports Instructor’s Guide to More Returns and Requests*. This 45-page sales skills manual laid out a customized sales process for ski and snowboard instructors. It highlighted top instructors at all five ski schools and used those high



<sup>1</sup> VailResorts.com

<sup>2</sup> Fiscal 2009 Vail Resorts Form 10-K

performers' stories to flesh out why they were so successful in getting students to return for more lessons.

The professionally designed and written e-book was easy to email and print out. Managers could quickly get copies into the hands of their entire staff, no matter where in the world their employees lived. The layout and the e-book format made it easy and enjoyable to read on both a computer screen and printed on paper.

## Results

*The Snowsports Instructor's Guide to More Returns and Requests* was launched to all Vail Resorts ski and snowboard instructors at the start of the 2009-2010 winter. Managers at all five ski schools have used this sales skills manual to create trainings, pull tips for daily meetings with instructors, and even leave around the locker rooms and employee lounges for instructors to read while they waited for their next lessons.

Because the stories of top performers were about their coworkers, the results seemed more attainable to other instructors. They better saw the direct link to applying these skills to their job.

The 2009-2010 winter saw the five ski schools increase revenue by 8.3 percent over the previous year<sup>3</sup>. "The rebound in business the Vail Snowsports School has seen this season has been amazing, and while we haven't yet recovered to pre-recession levels, we are clearly on the right path," said Chris Jarnot, Chief Operating Officer of Vail Mountain. "There is no doubt in my mind that this effort has directly impacted this growth, and will continue to for years to come."

Read a sample chapter at [krcoffey.com/casestudy](http://krcoffey.com/casestudy).



**Challenge:** Vail Resorts needed to increase the sales skills of its large and spread-out staff of ski and snowboard instructors.

**Solution:** A 45-page sale skills e-book that was easily emailed and printed out to all Vail Resorts instructors.

**Results:** The story-based guide allowed instructors to see how their successful peers used sales skills to deliver great lessons.

<sup>3</sup> April 21, 2010 Vail Resorts ski season metrics news release for the season to date through April 18, 2010