

FORTUNE

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By Anne Fisher

: The topic of that original column was whether executive coaching pays off in real dollars and cents, and Metropolitan's experience strongly suggests that it does. The company put part of its retail sales force through an intensive coaching program, and afterward found that productivity among those salespeople increased by an average of 35%, while 78% of the sales reps embarked on the pursuit of a new license or professional designation, and 50% identified new markets to develop. Perhaps most important, Metropolitan has retained all of the salespeople who had the coaching--a big deal, since industry statistics show that each rep who leaves a company with three years' experience costs \$140,000 to replace. In all, Keating writes, the program, which cost about \$620,000, delivered \$3.2 million in measurable gains.

Done right, coaching clearly works.