> ***"Our customers are becoming more financially sophisticated; we need to have a business conversation at every level of the organization that focuses on Grainger's financial impact. That's how we will win in the market."***
>
> **Senior Sales Leader**

W.W. Grainger, Inc.

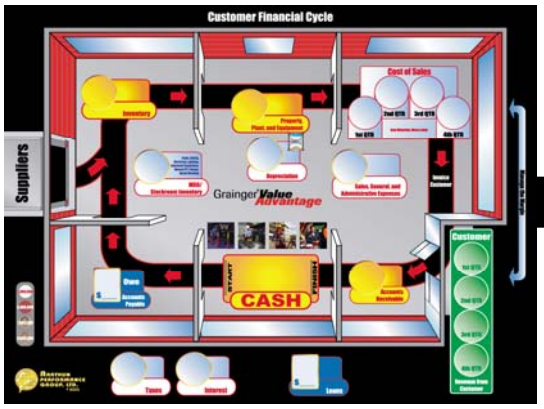
Building Better Business People

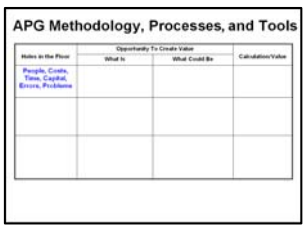
Grainger is a $6 billion industrial supplier specializing in the maintenance, repair, and operations (MRO) market. In 2004 after several years of flat or slow sales growth, they introduced a new go-to-market sales strategy called *The Grainger Value Advantage* (*GVA*) which included their value proposition for cost savings, improved cash flow, and inventory optimization for their customers. Grainger knew that the market was ready for a whole new approach to improving profitability. *GVA* was designed to differentiate their sales organization, to consolidate customer's spend, and achieve substantial market share and sales growth. But to be successful they knew it would require their salespeople's understanding of the financial and business drivers that their solutions directly impacted. To win in the market they needed to enable their 2,000 sellers with the knowledge, skills, and tools to sell their solutions based on the financial and operational improvements they delivered. The results have been dramatic. Grainger has achieved:

- **Record sales growth** – from $4.6 billion in 2004 to $5.8 billion in 2006
- An increase in **operating profit** from $386 million in 2003 to $578 million in 2006
- A climb in **stock price** from the low 50's to an all-time high of over $80 dollars a share

One of the fundamental pieces to their *GVA* strategy was Aarthun Performance Group's (APG) program *The Profit Specialist®*, which provided their sellers with the financial and business skills that helped them develop an understanding of the financial drivers that *GVA* impacted. Whether it was calling on small entrepreneurs, executives of Fortune 100 companies or plant managers who had P&L responsibility, salespeople engaged decision makers in a conversation about their business and their key concerns and needs. They learned how to address customers' key strategies of growing their business, managing costs, and redeploying capital for greater return. They developed the confidence to engage decision makers in ways they never had before. The outcomes from *The Profit Specialist®* included:

- Sellers that understand both Grainger's and the customer's key profit drivers
- Greater access to senior levels where economic decisions are made
- Access to more and better information to address the customer's full range of business needs
- The ability to position Grainger solutions as a cost management and profit improvement strategy
- Grainger sellers that have the knowledge to position themselves as true business partners





Results Tracked