

IN SALES YOU DON'T NEED ONE OF THESE



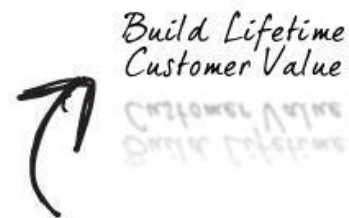
**BUT YOU MUST HAVE
SALES SKILLS EXCELLENCE**

"Prepare, Engage, Propose and Close"

The SalesPulse™ Sales Excellence Handbook

ACCOUNT PLANNING

“If you are to successfully sell your products and services, you need to understand where they will have the most impact on your customer’s profit”



THE OBJECTIVE OF ACCOUNT PLANNING

To build a mutually beneficial business partnership with your customers.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF ACCOUNT PLANNING

Preparation

- Ⓢ Understand your customers business
- Ⓢ Understand their market and its dynamics
- Ⓢ Know their people

Planning Session

- Ⓢ Involve only those people who can add value
- Ⓢ Ask your customer to set the scene
- Ⓢ Set a SMART objective over a two year time scale
- Ⓢ Identify “winnable” sales objectives and document them
- Ⓢ Get positive affirmation from your team

Execution and Review

- Ⓢ Tell your customer the outcome – they will be dieing to know!
- Ⓢ Nothing is forever, situations change and your account plan must respond to changes.

SALES CAMPAIGN PLANNING

Definition: A scheme, program, or method worked out beforehand for the accomplishment of an objective: *a plan of attack.*

A campaign or sales plan comprises:



- ① **The objective** of the plan – what are we selling?
- ① **Campaign Status** – how well qualified is it and how are we doing?
- ① **Requirements summary** – the prospect’s needs
- ① **Value statement** – what return will the prospect get from us?
- ① **Value proposition** – does it resonate, is it unique, can you prove it?
- ① **Relationships** – who do we have to convince?
- ① **Issues management** – what do we need to fix?
- ① **Action plan** – what, who and when?
- ① **Strengths and weaknesses** against strongest competitor – the prospect’s perception

A sales campaign plan is a living document; not only does it provide guidance to the sales team but shows managers the status of the campaign.

CALL PLANNING

“Perfect preparation prevents poor performance”.



The key to really successful customer meetings and calls is preparation. Great preparation, practice (and execution) allows you to control the meeting and maximise the value of time spent with the prospect.

You need to really understand and document the following:

Who am I meeting, what do I know about them, what will they want from this call?

- Ⓢ What are my rapport building statements or questions?
- Ⓢ What are my objectives, what would be a great result (stretch objective), what would be acceptable?
- Ⓢ What do I need to know?
- Ⓢ What do I have to say, what objections will they raise and how will I respond?
- Ⓢ What questions will they ask me and how will I answer them?
- Ⓢ Summarise the meeting, action points, timescales and ask for their agreement
- Ⓢ Do your call report
- Ⓢ Do your actions *fast* and get them to your prospect
- Ⓢ Review the call, did you achieve your stretch objective? Why not, what could you have done better, and what did you learn about the call?

RAPPORT, RELATIONSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT

“Life is like tennis, the player who serves well seldom loses”



- ☉ People still buy from **people** in the business world despite the internet.
- ☉ Establishing personal **wants** can be as important as identifying business needs.
- ☉ To create an excellent dialogue, you need to **understand the customer** and his personal interests and agenda.
- ☉ Sport and family life are great **openers** if you want to get to know the customer better.
- ☉ It takes real planning and effort to keep all **relationships** alive.
- ☉ Plan to have **time to listen** to the customer and care about his problems.
- ☉ Entertain when you can but always **deliver** on promises.
- ☉ **Trust** is the lifeblood of relationship building.
- ☉ A good listener hears and understands and then provides **considered feedback**.
- ☉ Turning sympathy into **empathy** requires patience and dialogue.

QUESTIONING

“You can tell how clever a person is, not by the answers they give, but by the questions they ask”




Excellent salespeople work on the basis that getting the prospect to talk, and most people love talking about their company or organisation, is the best way to unearth business opportunities. To achieve this you have to ask questions.

Open questions are designed to

- Create rapport
- Get the customer to talk
- Seek information
- Identify problems and pain
- Understand the implications of problems
- Be consultative (not a talking brochure)
- Qualify an opportunity

Closed questions are for

- Seeking agreement
- Confirming facts
- Agreeing actions

 **Clarification questions are used to ensure you understand what the customer has said. The best of these is “What do you mean by that”?**

LISTENING

“Listening is the number one sales skill”

Answer the questions – you know what the answers should be, so apply them. After your next call see if your listening has improved!



QUESTION	YES/NO
1. When talking with someone, do you completely refrain from doing other things and give them your full attention?	
2. Do you anticipate what someone will say and jump ahead in your mind?	
3. Are you easily distracted when you’re talking with others (e.g., by other people or activity, by mobile devices or phones, etc.)?	
4. When someone begins to ramble or is unclear, do you find yourself tuning them out or pretending to listen?	
5. Do you listen with the intent to fully understand what someone is saying before you begin to formulate your response?	
6. When appropriate, do you rephrase what was said in order to be sure you completely understand what was trying to be communicated?	
7. Are you able to accurately recall or relay most of the details of a conversation?	
8. Do you listen with an open and unbiased attitude?	
9. Do you give someone the chance to fully explain his or her position, problem, etc., without interrupting or finishing his or her sentences?	
10. Do you make appropriate eye contact with others when they’re talking?	
11. Do you physically acknowledge different discussion points when someone is talking (e.g., nod your head, change facial expression, etc.)?	
12. Do you completely face someone with whom you are talking?	

QUALIFICATION

“65% of lost business should never have been bid for”



Qualification is a simple investment decision; all you are asking is “Is it worth my company’s time and money working on this particular sales opportunity”?

The bullets below identify the types of questions you should ask to determine if the opportunity is real and winnable.

- Ⓞ **Budget** – do they have one, or can they get one?
- Ⓞ **Authority** – Who is the ultimate decision maker?
- Ⓞ **Needs** – What are they trying to achieve?
- Ⓞ **Timescale** – When do they need it?
- Ⓞ **Relationships** – Do we know the decision maker(s)/influencers?
- Ⓞ **Uniqueness** – What makes our solution stand out?
- Ⓞ **Competition** – Do we know, and can we beat our rivals?
- Ⓞ **Size and/or Strategic Fit** – is it big and/or important enough?

“Situations change; qualification is a continuous process”

VISIT/CONTACT/CALL REPORTING

“A call report dictates the next actions in a sales campaign”



VISIT/CONTACT/CALL REPORT

VISIT/CONTACT/CALL REPORT

Customer	People	Date

SUMMARY OF OUTCOME

QUALIFICATION

B	A	N	T	R	U	C	S

QUALIFICATION DECISION **STOP/GO**

ACTIONS

Action	Who	When	Status

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There is no use making a customer call or doing a call report if you do not follow up when you say you will. Call reports are **fundamental** to sales best practice.

LEAD MANAGEMENT

“Opportunities multiply like they are seeds but they die when neglected”



- ☉ Qualification needs dialogue and listening.
- ☉ Well qualified leads are like Manna from Heaven to good sales people.
- ☉ Keeping prospects and suspects current and realistic requires effort and feedback.
- ☉ Understanding the buying cycle is key to effective sales effort – timescales and authority levels help.
- ☉ Track record in customer, market or solution area helps give confidence and improves the chances of success.
- ☉ Ruthless continuous qualification helps prioritise resources and action taking.
- ☉ Use all your contacts to provide good leads – it can be a small world in many business segments.
- ☉ Spray and pray leads to lots of casualties.
- ☉ Allocate quality time to lead generation and qualification every week. Busy fools never look up.
- ☉ Poor customer care drives leaky sales funnels – good care inspires repeat opportunities.

TEAMWORK

Winning teams often contain great individual talents but the trick is to get more than the sum of the individual parts.



- ☉ Clarity of roles and responsibilities helps **craft winning solutions** but be clear who is conducting the orchestra.
- ☉ Be aware of the need for **constructive feedback**. Critical friends can help
- ☉ Partnership needs someone to **give** something to the partner. One way tickets often lead nowhere.
- ☉ **Involve the customer** in your virtual sales and solution development team if you can.
- ☉ Ownership of the solution between the salesperson and the customer is **powerful motivation** to buy.
- ☉ Confidence and competence should not lead to arrogance but **empathy**.
- ☉ Motivated virtual teams require good **communications and recognition** to achieve the best result.
- ☉ Put the **customer** top of the agenda and have management help not hinder.

FORECASTING

“Forecasting begins with an F because it is error prone”



- ☉ Sales forecasting is at the heart of business planning – accurate forecasts inform the right business decisions
- ☉ Good forecasting is a combination of art form and scientific analysis.
- ☉ It requires continuous assessment of your position relative to the customer’s need and competitive offers.
- ☉ Most prospects take longer to close than expected, especially by the customer.
- ☉ People in trouble decide faster than people who are content.
- ☉ Understand the stage you are at in the journey to customer commitment.
- ☉ Understand the risks and opportunities
- ☉ Graphical funnel representations often help

PROPOSITION DEVELOPMENT

“Solution Development and Ownership are key to success in solving customer problems”



- ① The journey to real **VALUE** is never smooth. It requires dialogue, understanding and regular feedback.
- ① Start with the customer and identifying his needs and wants first. Make sure you translate **Features** into **Advantages**, **Benefits** and **Value** for the customer – the **FABV** process.
- ① Complex problems may require special solutions – products and services honed to make the customer feel **KING**
- ① **Teamwork** with colleagues, partners and even the customer is vital – understand your role as conductor of the orchestra.
- ① Focus your team on the **out-to-in** dialogue and understanding – customer first, product last.
- ① **Differentiation** requires uniqueness or an understanding of what this means to the customer.
- ① Develop the **value proposition** with the customer when you can, transferring ownership to him on the journey.
- ① Be **passionate** about your solution but take feedback on the journey.

PROPOSALS AND PRESENTATIONS

“Remember, customers are not interested in you or your company; they are only interested in what you can do for their business”










- ☉ A proposal is merely a confirmation of what you have said, done or demonstrated – no surprises!
- ☉ Put yourself in the customer’s shoes – do you want to read, or worse listen to 10,000 words on how good your supplier says they are
- ☉ Know your audience, be they readers or listeners. Is there a “What’s in it for me” (WIIFM)?
- ☉ Make it easy for them to say YES. Focus on the their needs and the value and benefits that your proposal offers
- ☉ Don’t make promises you can’t keep or statements that you cannot substantiate – openly state your references, show them your proof
- ☉ Use pictures, they are more interesting than prose
- ☉ PowerPoint is not the only presentation tool – try story boards or posters

OBJECTION HANDLING






"If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough"

Objections are raised in every sales campaign about price, service, product functionality, your company, contractual terms etc. When an objection is raised you should:

-  Pause – gather your thoughts
-  If you are not sure what the prospect is saying or means ask for clarification
-  Even though the question might be dumb, do not smash the objection
-  Answer clearly and confidently
-  Check that the prospect is happy with/understands your response
-  "Is there anything else bothering you"? Get all the problems out.
-  Summarise your agreements

Every company comes across the same objections:

-  Have a list of standard objections and responses.
-  Have an objection handling meeting
-  Have it as a topic at your sales meetings

NEGOTIATING

“ Life is full of give and take – good partners do both well”



- ☉ Have a negotiating **strategy** and a tactical plan
- ☉ Have a **walk away** position
- ☉ Drive towards a **WIN/WIN** position
- ☉ Use the **IF** word regularly
- ☉ Keep the person **separate** from the problem
- ☉ **Explore** options together
- ☉ Satisfy Interest not Position
- ☉ Be **Fair** and Objective
- ☉ Change the package not the price
- ☉ Try to **move to the other side** of the table
- ☉ Be ready to find a **Golden Bridge** to span the chasm
- ☉ Be prepared to **change the game**
- ☉ Consider making a **trial** offer to break an impasse

CLOSING

“Ask the right questions and get the right answers”



- Ⓞ Timing is key but if you do not ask, you do not deserve to get
- Ⓞ There are many ways to continue talking but only one way to make the sale – ask for the order.
- Ⓞ Closing is about asking for the order in a nice way. Sometimes silence can be the best policy when decisions are difficult.
- Ⓞ Try to sit at the customer’s side of the table, helping him decide.
- Ⓞ Trial closing on smaller decisions can smooth the journey to the big decision.
- Ⓞ Trials or testers can be a great way to start a new business relationship.
- Ⓞ Do not try to close before the door is open.
- Ⓞ Establish your value proposition in the customer’s environment first.
- Ⓞ People in trouble are more decisive than people who are fat and happy.

WIN OR LOSE

“It is not a crime to lose business, but it becomes a crime if a colleague loses business because the lessons from the first loss have not been learnt”



STANDARD WIN/LOSS REPORT

CUSTOMER NAME

OPPORTUNITY	ACCOUNT MANAGER	VALUE	WON/ LOST

WHAT DID WE DO WELL?

WHAT COULD WE HAVE DONE BETTER?

HAS EVERYONE WHO NEEDS TO KNOW BEEN TOLD?	YES/NO
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DO YOU KNOW THE SIGNS OF SALES BAD HABITS?



“The most common cause of bad habits is complacency”

- Ⓢ Are **elapsed times** from lead to close increasing?
- Ⓢ Are an increasing number of campaigns **ending in no result**?
- Ⓢ Is your **win rate falling**?
- Ⓢ Are existing customers turning to **alternative suppliers**?
- Ⓢ Is **price** increasingly becoming an issue?
- Ⓢ Is your **forecasting accuracy** declining?
- Ⓢ Are the number of internal **complaints and debates** increasing?
- Ⓢ Are your sales people claiming that there are **too few leads**?
- Ⓢ Are your **sales managers** spending more time in the office?
- Ⓢ Are the number of **sales reviews** increasing?

To stop these bad habits you need to understand selling and salespeople – we do so just turn this card over and give us a call



the business improvement people

If you would like to know how we can help you please contact:



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