Consultative Selling – Competencies and Tips from Super-Sellers

Concept – Define Your Sales Model

Key Points

- Define your sales process and model
- Define the individual competencies, skills, knowledge and behaviors aligned to your model
- Assess your knowledge and skills for each core part of the model
- Create an individual performance development plan aligned to your model

Tips

- Review your sales process model on a regular basis. Keep it top of mind to know where you are in the sales process, what you currently know and what you need to find out.
- Conduct effective pre-call planning based on where you are in the process with each customer
- Plan value oriented interactions based on each individual customer influencer, role and behavior

Competency – Consultative Sales Approach

Key Behaviors

- Demonstrates a solution-oriented approach to selling
- Demonstrates value specific to each customer
- Seeks to understand needs beyond the obvious
- Provides innovative solutions for customers
- Utilizes questioning skills appropriately
- Gains deep understanding of core customer business and process
- Is prepared, conducts appropriate pre and post call-planning
- Articulates value proposition appropriate to each level of contact
- Uses support technology appropriately depending on the interaction or presentation

Tips

- Develop questions prior to sales calls based on pre-call analysis of customer needs
- Review sales plans to ensure that dialogues emphasize value – typically in terms of saved time, money, resources, better efficiencies, etc.
- Customers don't care to know everything about what you do, only what's important to them. Position solutions that add value according to business impact and based on personal motivation for each influencer
- Spend time learning about your customers and their business – tour their facilities and ask strategic questions
- Value typically translates to saved time, money, peace of mind, better efficiencies, saved money or resources

Competency – Expands Business

Key Behaviors

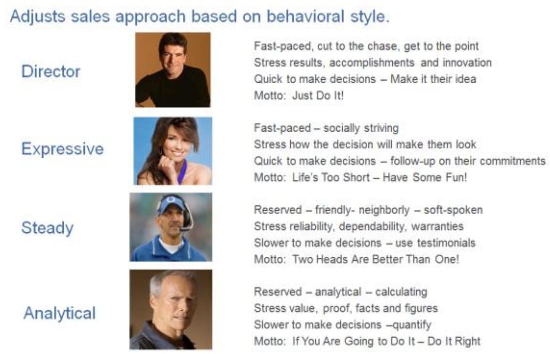
- Develops, prioritizes and maintains a territory plan
- Assesses individual account value/potential
- Creates SMART sales call objectives
- Utilizes customer profile information to develop account strategy and relationships
- Demonstrates effective telephone prospecting skills.
- Sells to multi-level influencers
- Strategizes with sales manager/team members
- Develops strategies for each key influencer
- Stays current on relevant market/industry trends
- Utilizes effective prospecting tools
- Utilizes current technology to research and network
- Makes sales contact according to prioritized plan
- Proves significance with each sales contact

Tips

- Conduct pre-call planning to include sales call objectives, account potential, specific value proposition for each influencer
- Prioritize sales activity based on potential whether current customer or not.
- Network with non-competitor sales people who serve the same customer base
- Use online resources such as LinkedIn to mine pre-call intelligence. Looking up profiles of influencers reveals volumes on how to sell to them
- Enroll in Google alerts to stay current on the latest news regarding your customers and clients.
- Position a relevant idea with each contact

Consultative Selling – Competencies and Tips from Super-Sellers

Competency – Effectively Influences



Key Behaviors

- Builds relationships with multiple influencers
- Builds relationships by importance to the customer
- Identifies dominant customer behavioral styles
- Adjusts sales approach based on styles
- Identifies communication style and most appropriate means of communication for each customer
- Uses sales aids based on communication style/preference
- Adjusts presentation to meet the needs of various behavioral and communication styles
- Clarifies vague messages to increase understanding
- Encourages dialogue with customers to understand needs

Tips

- Identify your own behavioral style and corresponding strengths and opportunities
- Identify behavioral and communication styles in customers
- Plan sales presentations according to the value most representative of each style group
- Include customer behavioral and communication styles in CRM fields or other account planning and communication tools.
- Appeal to communication and behavioral styles with your team and other internal customers
- Read your customer's mental map – or you are just sending information!

Competency – Overcomes Stalls/Objections

Diffuse – Agree with the customer – Price is important, isn't it?

Clarify – How much too much is it? Or What are you comparing it to?

Categorize:

Skepticism – Use proof – like testimonials

Indifference – Show consequences of not taking action

Opposition – Minimize the importance of the opposition – quantify value

Key Behaviors

- Clarifies stalls to the sale to verify the concern
- Develops answers to most common objections
- Uses proof sources to overcome skepticism
- Uses consequences to overcome indifference
- Gains commitments in response to price inquiries
- Quantifies value in terms of cost versus price
- Overcomes price concerns and other opposition type objections by minimizing

Tips

- Practice clarifying statements to get beyond the first stall. For example, if a customer says, "Send me some information", you could clarify by asking, "What specific information are you interested in?"
- Diffuse objections by not getting defensive
- Skepticism is doubt – provide proof to eliminate the doubt such as a trial, demo, customer testimonial
- Indifference is lack of action or urgency – show consequences of not making a change to move the sale forward
- Quantify price objections by demonstrating cost vs. price – demonstrate that the solution will make them more or cost them less in repairs for instance.

Competency – Gains Commitments

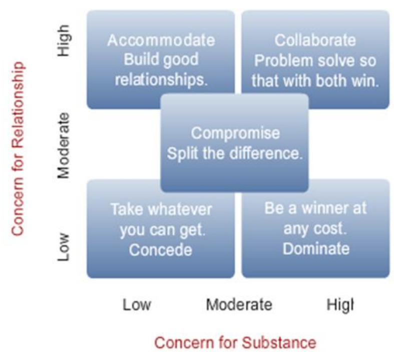
Key Behaviors

- Recognizes buying signs
- Responds to opportunities to gain commitments.
- Diffuses negativity professionally
- Applies convincer strategies where appropriate.
- Demonstrates a consultative approach to gaining commitments
- Eliminates or reduces buyer anxieties or fears associated with commitment

Tips

- As part of pre-call planning ask, "What specific objective should be reached and what action should be taken as a result of this meeting?"
- Research client profiles and other online data. Pay attention to recommendations that they make about others. Use that information to propose solutions based on what convinces them most
- Recognize buying signs like when a client leans forward or asks more questions
- Don't introduce anything new after asking for a commitment

Consultative Selling – Competencies and Tips from Super-Sellers

Competency – Provides Timely Service	Key Behaviors	Tips
	• Responds quickly to customer inquiries • Seeks to understand the need of customer initiated calls or interactions • Directs customers to best solutions based on expressed needs, inquiries or problems • Keeps promises or commitments • Makes honest/accurate claims • Builds trust and rapport • Seeks to exceed customer expectations. • Clarifies responses to customer follow-up • Keeps customer profile information to strategically build relationships	• "After the sale" follow-up includes identifying additional opportunities and beginning the sales process again • Consider using sales teams in order to have inside sales support to fulfill immediate service requests • Keep customer profile information in CRM or other data profile. Consider different campaigns and touch points for different customer points and for different account values • Research the competition and describe what differentiates your company, solutions and services that you provide
Competency – Negotiates Collaboratively	**Key Behaviors**	**Tips**
	• Seeks mutual problem solving for a win/win solution • Utilizes a collaborative approach to negotiation where appropriate • Determines the best negotiation approach to use depending on pre-negotiation knowledge • Makes concessions conditional • Plans for successful negotiations. (See negotiation planner) • Makes concessions that improve profitability • Recognizes powers and strengths in negotiation. • Recognizes and overcomes buyer tactics • Utilizes negotiation positions that best suit conditions • Plans for how different customers negotiate. • Identifies non-monetary concessions and uses them appropriately • Applies the rules of win-win negotiations	• Use a negotiation planner • Every negotiator is concerned about outcomes of the negotiation and relationship. Plan according to each and the importance of each to the client • Decide the most feasible negotiation approach based on strengths and weaknesses • Understand the cost of making concessions and the importance of making them conditional • Evaluate the "real" profitability of a sale both pre and post review and analysis • Make every concessional conditional to maintain integrity and perceived value, "If I, then you…" • How you negotiate is more important than what you negotiate. Concede in small and diminishing increments. • Use price lists to validate your pricing. • Know your HAP and LAP prior to beginning the negotiation process. HAP is your highest advanced position, or what you will ask for coming in. LAP is your lowest acceptable position, or your walk away point. LAP does not mean your bottom line! Once you set your LAP, stick to it!