

New Skills Required For Solution Selling

BTA Southeast
June 2010
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Solution Selling



- ▶ Misunderstood “Buzz word”
 - NOT selling a product or service
 - Providing a “fix” to a customer business issue
- ▶ Requires a different mindset of BOTH the customer and the sales professionals
- ▶ It is the ONLY defining difference that can compete with the Internet

New Skills Needed

- ▶ Needs Analysis
- ▶ Account Management
- ▶ Business Acumen
- ▶ Technical Knowledge
- ▶ Customer Loyalty



Needs Analysis

Activity	Percentage of time spent	
	Traditional	Solutions Provider
Finding and Qualifying Customers	30%	20%
Learning business goals and needs assessment	5%	30%
Preparing Proposal/Quote	20%	20%
Closing the Customer	40%	10%
Building Relationships	5%	20%

Needs Analysis

- ▶ Research
- ▶ Vertical/Horizontal Markets
- ▶ Value Propositions
- ▶ “Question based” Selling
- ▶ Understanding a Customer’s Environment



Account Management

- ▶ **Formal Sales Process**
 - Used on Every customer
 - Followed by sales manager
- ▶ **Account Planning**
 - Know ‘what’s next?’ for top 20 customers
 - Activities planned for each one
- ▶ **Team Selling**
 - Solution selling requires “experts”
 - Salesperson is still the quarterback
- ▶ **Project Management Skills are a Plus**



Account Management



- ▶ If Sales Manager does not expect and inspect Account Plans for each key account, process is more likely to fail!
- ▶ Consistent account reviews are required!

Business Acumen



- ▶ Understand the “language of business”
- ▶ How does your customer make money?
- ▶ What are the top business issues faced by your customer?
- ▶ What are the top 5 controllable expense areas for your customer?

Business Acumen

- ▶ Be able to review Income Statement and Balance Sheet
- ▶ Understand how to qualify for a lease
- ▶ Know what products and services are profitable
- ▶ Identify recurring revenue opportunities



Technical Knowledge

- ▶ Do not need to be a technical “expert”
- ▶ Need to know technology possibilities
 - What’s realistic
 - What’s “bleeding edge”
- ▶ Need “hands-on” experience with software solution products and services– “how stuff works”
- ▶ Turn focus away from equipment
- ▶ Not a good use of eLearning tools



Customer Loyalty

- ▶ Building Lasting Relationships
- ▶ Developing “stickiness”
- ▶ Becoming the Trusted Advisor
- ▶ OWN the account
- ▶ Increase recurring revenue
- ▶ Incremental Improvements



Timing

- ▶ Development of these skills should have already started
- ▶ Difficult to “hire” these skills into the organization
- ▶ Some investment is needed

