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Selling - The Way People Buy

David Smethers, www.stratuspartners.com

What is your first response when you sense someone is trying to “sell” you something? If you are like most of the clients we work with, your response is negative. There is good reason for this. Sales efforts are perceived as manipulative because they usually are. Traditional techniques and tactics are instantly recognized and resisted. Mastering yesterday’s methods does not work today. Selling with energy and persistence are no longer enough. Sales excellence today is focused on how people buy...not how you sell.

These are some of the challenges sales executives are experiencing making the transition.

Inability to Identify Customer Business Drivers

Clients expect you to understand their business and contribute new ideas that improve performance. There are typically only a few key issues that your clients will be focused on. Failure to identify key issues puts the rest of the sales process at risk regardless of how good your products and services are. Traditional “open ended” questions will not uncover these issues because this type of inquiry does not earn the right to a meaningful response.

Stratus Solution

We coach your sales force to identify and verify account specific issues based on the trends, events, situations and competitive environments that are or will be impacting a client’s business. We advise sales people on how to understand and communicate these business drivers in practical terms and from perspectives that clients will relate to with interest and a sense of urgency.

Difficulty Linking the Impact of Product Value to Customer Business Issues

Purchase decisions are predicated on how well your offering connects with their business challenges. Generic offers to “save you money”, “cut costs”, “improve efficiency” provide no new value. Premature

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prescriptions invariably miss the mark. Your offer needs to address measurable improvement in the areas your clients are most concerned about. Value propositions must make compelling connections linking your products to performance improvement that can be tracked and proven.

Stratus Solution

We work with your sales and support team to proactively craft entry point value statements that generate interest and engage clients in value added dialogues which link their challenges to the potential value of your products and services.

Engaging Too Late in The Buying Cycle and Too Low on the Decision Chain

Purchase decision criteria are set by management early in the buying process. The later you engage the more likely it is that you will be delegated to a purchasing “gate keeper.” To influence buying criteria, you must gain entry and generate interest early or risk allowing the selection criteria to be aligned with your competitor’s value proposition rather than with yours.

Stratus Solution

We help your sales professionals spot the signals to understand and synchronize the timing of your sales process with your customer’s buying process. We advise them on how to determine the correct points of contact, engagement timing and create an awareness of the dynamic nature of value and how it differs according to the level, function and personal agendas at various contact points.

Failure to Recognize and Capitalize on Personal and Political Agendas

All demand begins with personal wants and needs. Every organization has a political structure. These two realities play a powerful role in vendor selections. People do not act against their own self-interest for very long. If they see personal benefit in what you offer they are much more likely to respond positively. Knowing how to identify and advance personal and political agendas can be your most significant competitive advantage. The required competency is the ability to connect client agendas to your differentiated solutions.

Stratus Solution

We coach your sales executives what to look for to quickly develop insight into the personal motivations at play within your client’s environment. We help them understand the dynamics of politics and how politics impacts buying decisions. We teach them to map the political landscape of any client enabling them to capitalize on legitimate personal agendas and to use organizations analysis tools to measure personal influence and the quality of relationships.

Lack of Insight into Informal Decision Process That Precedes Formal One

Purchasing decisions are shaped and tested by an informal decision making process before they are translated into formal buying cycles. A few key people typically have the power to shape and influence this process. Not knowing who the key people are and how they orchestrate the informal process locks you out of controlling the formal decision.

Stratus Solution

We help your sales team get you involved in the informal decision making process so that formal decisions will be “wired” in your favor. The earlier you get involved in co-developing and pre-testing your value proposition, the stronger your competitive poison will be.

Lack of Effective Competitive Counter Tactics

Many sales people are good at playing offense, priding themselves on their product knowledge, assertive sales techniques and determination. Unfortunately, they are usually not good at playing defense. Very few can proactively place the subtle traps and blocks that assist the competition in losing. To avoid “selling negatively” sales people will forego the opportunity to sell competitively. Most companies know how their competition will sell but fail to take advantage of this competitive intelligence by executing a well thought-out, ethical set of competitive counter tactics that precondition the customer environment in their favor.

Stratus Solution

We help you formulate and execute outstanding competitive game plans based on proven competitive traps and blocks, gather the right kind of competitive intelligence and apply appropriate counter tactics. The greater your competitive intelligence, the lower your competitive vulnerability will be.

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