

SALES EXCELLENCE

SALES EXCELLENCE EXPLORES THE BEST PRACTICES ON IMPROVING SALES EFFECTIVENESS BY IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

END OF YEAR BUSINESS REVIEW

THE EXECUTIVE GROUP

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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE END OF THE YEAR

When it comes to building our book of business and planning our strategies, there are a couple of things we as salespeople need to think about and keep in mind.

Beginning after Labor Day and into the 4th Quarter, your clients will evaluate many things:

- ✓ How the year went – what went well and what didn't
- ✓ Next year's projects and capital improvements
- ✓ Creating next year's budget
- ✓ How to spend what is left in this year's budget

Rest assured that they will even be evaluating you and your company. They will also be evaluating your competitors to see who will be their vendor for next year. It is important to remain highly visible and always be in front of your client.

For your current customers, now is the time to step up the level of your service, your relationship and account management strategies so that when your customers do start to review their vendors and put budgets into place, you and your company will be the unanimous choice.

Implementing your account management strategies now and meeting with your clients in the fall can position you to be that *Strategic Business Partner* you seek to become.

In the position of Strategic Business Partner, you can help your clients:

- Spend leftover money in their budget
- Help them identify things they should add to their budget for next year
- Help them write the specifications or define the scope of work for special projects being considered. You might even get lucky and they will decide to just give you the business on the spot.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING, BUT IF YOU'RE NOT THERE WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT, YOU LOSE!

A year end business review is the prelude to successful account management and a key component to building a stronger relationship with your contact as well as other key decision makers. It is a way to get deeper into the organization and meet the key decision makers you may not have been able to get to before because you feared alienating your main contact.

A year end business review should:

- Review what has been done previously
- Uncover any potential problems or concerns you may not have been aware of so you can resolve them and smooth over any issues that might need to be addressed
- Open the door for next year's discussions
- Lay the groundwork for things you may be able to help them with going

What better way to position yourself as a Strategic Business Partner?

Remember, it's all about building strong business relationships. This is a great time to do just that. For your year end business review, you can take your clients to play golf or do dinner, but at the very least, have a formal meeting to discuss the state of their business and what the year in review looked like. More business is done on the golf course than in the boardroom, so do not be afraid to use every angle and opportunity you have to make this review happen.

Trust me, your competitors, who are not as sophisticated as you are becoming, will not likely do their homework and might take their customers for granted. It happens ALL the time. If your competitors are not on top of their game or in tune with the dynamics of what it takes to keep a client, you will have the odds in your favor. This leaves you a window of opportunity to capture business for next year from customers whom you are strategically targeting today. Because your competitors are asleep at the wheel, if there have been ANY service glitches, you could capture a competitive advantage before the end of the year.

As September closes out, people will have moved from their summer vacation mindset and start to focus on closing out the end of the year strong. As well as having good third quarter numbers, the 4th quarter is the time for you to bear down so you can have a strong finish for the end of the year as well. Knowing people are wrapping up the year gives you an opportunity to focus on what you can do to support their initiatives.

You must begin to lay the groundwork and position yourself in October and November to be included in their process for next year's projects and budget. To wait any longer to attack the market leaves you vulnerable to your competitors.

PART OF SALES IS RISK MANAGEMENT

As the year comes to a close, you **MUST** also keep something in mind from a strategy standpoint; there are likely to be personnel changes as clients review their budgets or evaluate their people and their people needs. They will also be evaluating their staff and their effectiveness and get rid of non-performers. When these changes or cutbacks come into play, it creates the potential for a huge void and vacuum, meaning the person you may have been working with may no longer be there. If you are too shallow in your contact base, meaning if you have not tunneled deeper into the organization, you are definitely treading on thin ice as clients tighten their belts.

If those changes do come into play, there are two things that will happen as a result of your diligence. First, you should have developed a deeper level of contact within your client to sustain the relationship. Second, you should have a strong enough relationship with the person who left that they will take you as a vendor with them to their next job. Either way you win. Without it you lose, and as a result, you have to start all over. That is a tough way to make a living and a poor way to run your business.

Now is the time to develop a strong **Strategic Business Partner** relationship and your **Year End Business Review** is a must. Do not allow yourself to be an afterthought in your client's project initiatives for next year. You must be proactive not reactive. Pre-fall planning is a proactive approach and you should set your strategic initiatives and strategy for every account you have. Why not "Beat the Competition" and aggressively go after your share of the market?

GO FORTH AND SELL!