



The Advisor

Organizational Effectiveness News & Trends

October 2008

Driving Profitable Sales in 90 Days



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Customers! Customers! Where art thou? Today's economy has impacted nearly all industries, and dramatically slowed or halted purchasing decisions. Those that grow their revenues faster than their expenses (operating efficiency) will survive these challenging times. Read on to learn three key ways you can improve profitable sales today!

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Driving Profitable Sales in 90 Days

The Challenge

A perishable product wholesaler engaged ClearPath Alliance to help them develop a West Coast sales strategy for their mass-market accounts. Downward trends in year-over-year sales and margins prompted them to accelerate short-term revenue growth, capture increased market-share, and enhance customer loyalty. "We need to create a sense of urgency", said the President. "Times are really tough, and we must act as 'one' team and move with speed."

ClearPath Alliance partnered with the executive team to design and facilitate a series of two-day sales summits. The desired outcome was a "unified" clear 90 day action plan to increase profitable sales and reduce spoilage. The goal was \$15 Million in new sales across their three facilities within 120 days. Three keys to their success were as follows:

1) Know Thy Market

The summits were designed to raise awareness, gain agreement, and focus on the customer experience. Context would be crucial for consensus. Day 1 focused on the marketplace - trends, price points, competition, and 2009 challenges (e.g., the economy, fuel prices, labor costs). External opportunity areas and threats were identified, as were critical customer needs based on what was selling and why. Actions were identified to:

ClearPath Alliance helps executives facing complex challenges who want to accelerate their success.

We bring "process" thinking, customizable tools, and valuable experience to help you achieve great results.

- Conduct market research to identify emerging trends
- Share winning sales strategies across facilities to accelerate success
- Develop multi-level relationship plans to better service key accounts

2) Know Thy Self

Day 2 focused on an internal review of core processes and products from a customer perspective. Areas for improvement were identified based on how well customer needs were being satisfied. In addition, ClearPath Alliance suggested the COO interview the Sr. Buyer from their largest national account via speaker phone. The real-time feedback was powerful and gave new context to the phrase "partner of choice". The team then reflected on "What have we learned?", which resulted in additional actions to:

- Assess profitability by account and create customized sales strategies
- Commit to shared SLA's (Service Level Agreements) across all three facilities
- Meet with key customers to dialogue about their business, sales forecasts, and jointly solve supply chain issues

3) Know Thy Path

Dozens of excellent ideas are great ... focused execution is even better. Soon, seasonal business needs would stretch their staff. Leadership was concerned about follow through and accountability. ClearPath Alliance suggested the following management actions to ensure early wins, build momentum, and drive short-term sales to achieve the \$15 Million goal, including:

- Prioritize summit actions by customer impact, quick wins, and strategic investments
- Introduce SMART goals (specific, measurable, etc) and a customized Action Plan template for the teams
- Use cross-functional teams to address: forecasting, problem escalation, and sales innovation

Actions to Take Now!

ClearPath Alliance has helped clients with the above actions, which you, too, may want to start today. To recap:

- Assess and understand "your" market - develop a common sales philosophy
- Seek customer feedback and areas where you can serve them even better
- Prioritize your challenges and what you can do about them in the next 90-120 days

Next Steps

If you are ready to take action and improve your organization's sales and/or operating efficiency call us at 858-292-5361 for a consultation.

The "Organizational Survey" is quick and effective way to determine the health of your business. Click on the link below to download a free survey and conduct your own confidential self-assessment.

[Organizational Survey](#)