

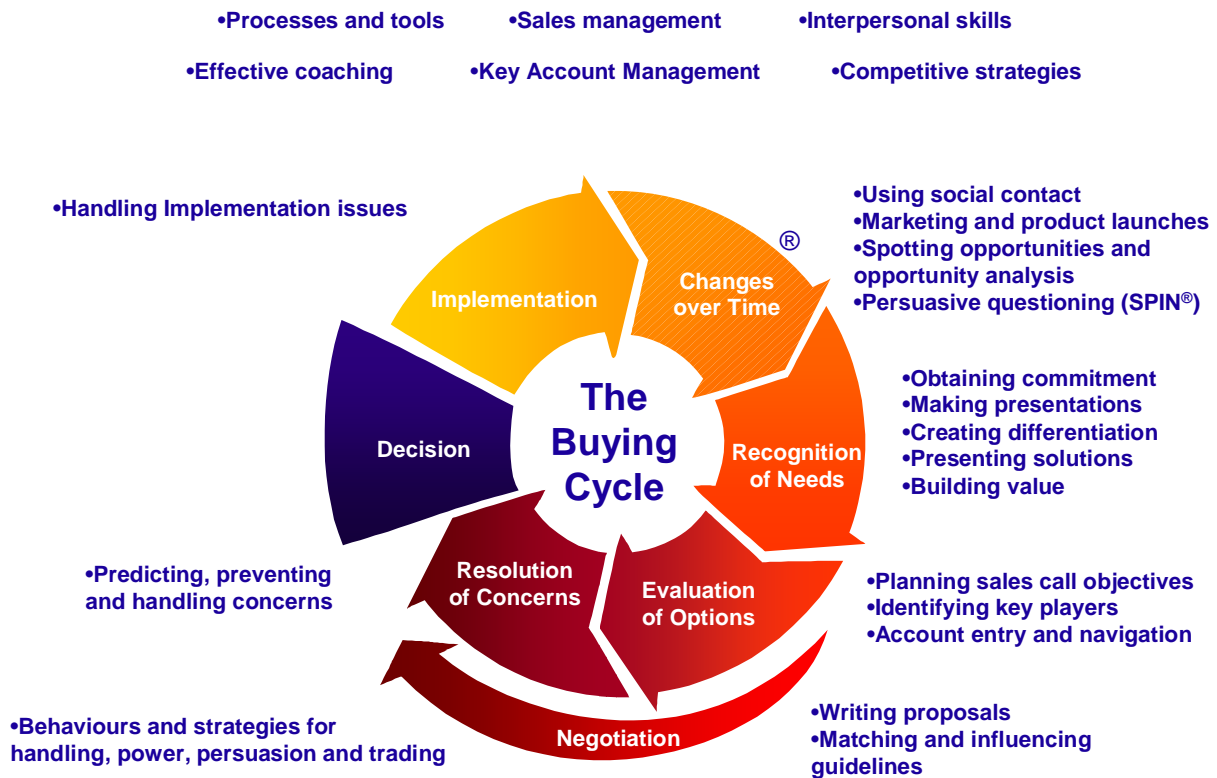
Skills and strategies for sales performance improvement



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The list of skills and strategies mapped round the buying cycle shown below are the building blocks that provide the foundations for each unique client solution. Having established with you the business outcomes you are seeking, we select the appropriate building blocks - derived from our years of research and best practice observation and overlay them with new, customised materials created specifically to reflect your market situation. The resulting programme(s) provide a blend of tried and tested models and new, unique, designs that create the most effective route to your desired business outcomes.

The client/seller interaction is the core of effective selling, but not the whole of it. We also work with you to consider sales in its widest context: sales management and coaching, alignment with marketing, key account strategies, core interpersonal skills and processes and tools.



Processes and tools

The impact of improved skills and strategies is greatest when the processes and tools that support them are aligned with those skills. We offer a range of interactive, web based, stand alone and paper based tools, both generic and customised, to compliment sales, coaching and account strategy activities.

Coaching

All the evidence suggests the best results are achieved when skill development is embedded through coaching and reinforcement. We can help develop a range of coaching skills, from generic coaching skills to the coaching of specific sales strategies.

Key account management

Like it or not, you may have some customers who are strategically significant for your business, and who therefore receive extra special treatment – the key accounts. This suite can help identify if a KAM strategy is right for you, which accounts are key and how to execute KAM strategies.

Sales management

It's a fact of life that most sales managers are promoted into that role from the salesforce. Whilst they will have been trained to sell, and may even have been trained to manage, they will not have been trained to be sales managers. Is it any wonder that the transition from seller to sales manager is at best painful and, at worst, a disaster? This suite addresses these issues.

Marketing and product launches

It makes perfect sense for sales development projects to coincide with important new product launches or high profile marketing campaigns. But what if the sales and marketing are not aligned? Even worse, what if they actually undermine each other? These skills look at ensuring maximum benefit is derived from coordinated marketing and skill development projects.

Spotting opportunities & opportunity analysis

Most salespeople can spot an opportunity. Smart sellers do two things differently; spot opportunities earlier, and hence have more influence over the client's needs, and spot 'good' opportunities (the ones most likely to result in a sale) rather than waste time chasing opportunities that come to nothing. These skills reveal the science behind this ability.

Handling implementation issues

Many buyers' pet-hate is the seller who disappears the minute the order is signed (only to reappear when the next opportunity presents itself). Implementing a complex solution is never straightforward and buyers, like anyone, need and deserve some reassurance. So why is the person with whom they have developed a good relationship, the seller, suddenly nowhere to be seen? This module looks at the skills effective sellers use to minimise the

negative elements during implementation and use it as a springboard for securing the account and identifying future opportunities.

Identifying key players

Most sellers know who their key contacts are. However, most don't know who all the key players are and, more significantly, they don't know what role in the decision each key player has. These skills look beyond obvious, and often misleading, clues such as job title and explore the real roles within a decision-making unit.

Account entry and navigation

Two questions we are often asked by sellers are; How do we get into new accounts and, once in, how do we move away from our original contact without upsetting them? These skills look at how effective sellers plan their moves, in terms of direction, timing and content, in order to gain momentum and maximise impact across the decision-making unit.

Using social contact

One of the biggest variables across market sectors is the degree to which social contact plays a part in selling. In some sectors socialising with clients is unheard of, in others it's purely social and has no commercial purpose beyond cementing relationships, but to a third group it's a fundamental element of the sales process. Surprisingly, even in this third group, many people have difficulty balancing social contact and often find themselves torn between pure socialising and thinly disguised sales pitches. This skill set looks at getting the balance between social contact and purposeful contact right – from deciding the type of event you arrange, through who you invite, to the skills you use when working the event.

Planning sales call objectives

For many sellers planning call objectives is

more to do with getting a tick in the right box on a call record rather than what's the most appropriate outcome to aim for in a particular call. These skills consider how to measure the real outcome of a call – particularly those mid-cycle calls where the order is still some way away, and plan stretching but robust objectives accordingly.

Persuasive questioning (SPIN®)

It should come as no surprise that effective questioning lies at the heart of effective selling. It is now universally accepted that, except in the simplest, most transactional sales, questions are vital. So why do so many sellers ask loads of questions but still struggle to win sales? Because life is never that simple. It's not simply a matter of asking questions; it's about asking the right questions at the right time. This module looks in depth at the most fundamental and important skill set a seller needs to succeed.

Building value

In the 70's sales were won by creating technical differentiation, in the 90's quality was king. Now, with product differentiation short-lived and quality taken as a given, it is the creation of value, both in your solution and your relationship with the client, that is the key to sales success. This skill set looks at what constitutes value and how to create and deliver it to the client during the sales process.

Creating differentiation

Identifying the client's needs, and building value are fundamentally important, but what if your competitors can do that too? Regrettably you rarely have the client to yourself and others will be trying to win the business against you. This skill set considers how the most effective sellers use effective questions to build a unique, and hence differentiated, offering to the client's needs.

Presenting solutions

All too often we see sellers doing a great job of uncovering the client's needs only to create massive problems for themselves when they come to talk about their solution. Research shows the behaviours most likely to win the customer's approval are the behaviours least used by most sellers. This skill-set shows how to avoid this trap and ensure your solution has maximum impact on the buyer.

Obtaining commitment

There has probably been more written about 'closing' than any other selling skill. Unfortunately many of the 'techniques' advocated only work in small, transactional sales and are in fact counter-productive in high-value sales situations. This skill set looks at the key steps to effectively concluding a sales meeting in high-value, B2B sales scenarios.

Matching and influencing decision criteria

At some stage in every sale your customer will, either consciously or sub-consciously, compare what you can offer against what he or she wants. Invariably that will happen when you are not with them – so how do you make sure your solution matches the customer's decision guidelines most closely? This skill set looks at how you can influence these guidelines in your favour and align your solution most closely to them.

Competitive strategies

It's inevitable that, in most sales, you will be up against one or more of your competitors. This module looks at the forms competition can take and the strategies and skills you can employ to effectively counter competitive activity.

Writing proposals

For many sellers writing a proposal is seen

as a chore, an inevitable but irritating hurdle to the sales process demanded by the client. However, in reality the proposal often represents your one and only chance to influence directly those members of the decision-making team you have not met face-to-face. So why are so many proposals little more than product information with prices and little or no persuasive content? This module looks at how to ensure your proposals positively persuade all the decision-makers.

Making presentations

A formal sales presentation is unique in two ways; it's your best, and possibly only, opportunity to meet all the decision-makers face-to-face and it's your best opportunity to bore them all to death with endless slides and graphics! 'Death by PowerPoint' is all too familiar, so how do you avoid it? This module looks at how to ensure the structure and content of your presentations are memorable, easy to understand and, most importantly, persuasive.

Behaviours and strategies for bargaining, power, persuasion and trading

Despite all your best efforts to build value and create differentiation most customers will want to negotiate a better deal than you've offered. Indeed, the primary role of the professional buyer is to get the best deal from you they can. So how do you ensure you get the order and keep a good relationship with the client without giving away all your hard-earned margin? This suite looks at negotiation, from preparation and planning, through strategies and tactics, to the face-to-face skills used by successful negotiators.

Predicting, preventing and handling concerns

Why do some sales that seem to be going so well, suddenly fizzle out in a string of

unreturned calls and ignored emails? By definition, major purchases are big decisions, and big decisions carry risk. Many sales falter because the customer has concerns about the risk involved in buying your solution that remain unresolved and push the customer towards the 'safest' answer, which is often to do nothing or to stick with the current supplier. This module considers when concerns are likely to arise, how to avoid them and how to deal with those that do appear.

Interpersonal skills

It's reasonable to assume that most sellers should have pretty good core interpersonal skills. However, most of us have come across sellers who are great on their own, but disruptive and unhelpful in group situations or the seller who is charm personified when talking to clients but a pain in the neck when dealing with colleagues. This suite provides a mechanism for understanding our own interpersonal style and its impact on others and considers how we can change our behaviour to have the most positive and appropriate impact in a range of situations.

Customer service

Critical to ongoing retention of clients is the level of service they receive. The levels of satisfaction and loyalty depend very much on how they are treated over time. Huthwaite International understands the need for a seamless experience from sales through to service and our programme ensures that all customer touch points use familiar language and behaviours to help your company grow.



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