

Multinational
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Account Team Applies Strategic Processes and Achieves 154 Percent of Extraordinary Sales Objective

To strengthen its executive-level customer and prospect relationships, this multinational software company made a strategic decision to align a myriad of sales cultures and business processes into a streamlined account management model. Company executives looked to Critical Path Strategies (CPS) to facilitate a series of process-based account planning sessions, and by the end of the year, more than 200 sales professionals had developed clearly defined milestones, value propositions, and strategic action plans designed to expand senior-level relationships within key accounts.

“The CPS planning process is the silver bullet that all sales reps hope for. It’s where the magic is.”

- Account Team Leader

With the sales teams better prepared to position the company as a thought leader in customer-aligned business solutions, the account representatives estimated that their ability to close a Tier 1 deal could jump from 48 percent to approximately 70 percent. The next step was to execute these new long-term action plans, fill the sales pipeline with qualified leads, and make the estimated close rates a reality.

Extraordinary goals yield confidence and executable plans. During the CPS-facilitated planning sessions, account teams were challenged to establish an “extraordinary goal” for each key account. For the team supporting an existing customer—a national telecommunications company—this required a huge commitment. “The sales quota for this account was aggressive already, and the thought of making the goal even larger was daunting,” said the team leader. “However, the process of setting an extraordinary goal—one that we couldn’t clearly see how to make happen—got the team’s creative juices flowing. Instead of focusing on what we *couldn’t* do, we started focusing on what we *could* do.”

Once the goal was set, CPS led the account team through a process that helped them identify the major opportunities that would contribute to the attainment of the goal. An important outcome of the planning process was the realization that although the team and the company had delivered first-rate customer support throughout the life of the account, the team did not have a solid grasp on the customer’s critical success factors.

“As we debated what we believed to be the driving force behind our customer’s business goals, we determined that our first step was to identify an executive-level IT decision maker who could provide insight into the

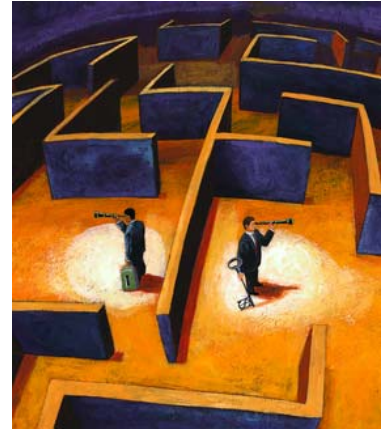


It was a win-win for everyone and we ended the sales year at 154% of our objective.”

company's critical success factors,” said the team leader. “We immediately went about creating a relationship strategy that would help us understand the company leadership’s motivation.”

The executive they identified happened to be a man with vision who introduced the mantra of “cost, service, leverage” throughout the IT organization. What better person to explain the company’s business drivers? What began as an overwhelming experience was transformed into a series of logical, documented steps.

Account team treats the customer like a valued team member. With a plan in hand, the account team contacted the customer executive and told him that the team wanted to better understand his critical success factors in order to align its resources more effectively and become a true strategic partner. Intrigued by the notion that a vendor was interested in helping him solve the problems that kept him up at night, he agreed to the meeting. “We wanted his issues to be our issues,” said the team leader. “We had an open and honest discussion about his expectations and what it takes to be a strategic partner. This conversation resulted in his personal commitment to bring together our account team and his directors for a discovery session.”



During the first meeting, the account team listened to presentations outlining the responsibilities of each director and their most pressing, business-critical issues. The account team digested the information and invited the customer to attend a personalized briefing to outline areas where they believed they could serve as a true value-added partner. The team’s focus was on the customer’s business problems rather than product features and benefits. At the end of the session, the account team and customer representatives identified a list of Best Next Actions to help prioritize and activate the account team around a project of most value to the customer.

Changing a business culture from a point-product focus to a business-problem focus is challenging, but the account team worked hard to keep all team members focused on the overall enterprise view of the customer’s needs. Ultimately, the vision they created was customer based and presented as a true value statement that aligned with the company’s capabilities.

“Our account team was awarded a contract that contributed significantly to our extraordinary goal,” said the team leader. “Although this wasn’t the only deal closed at this key account, it was the first one that was created based on the account team’s ability to identify a key customer executive and follow a deliberate process to nurture a new, stronger customer relationship. The team members are ecstatic that they created a new opportunity and transformed it into a tangible, measurable value for the customer and for the company. It was a win-win for everyone and we ended the sales year at 154% of our objective.”

ABOUT CPS. Critical Path Strategies helps clients improve their competitive position by providing comprehensive consulting services to improve the effectiveness of major account sales organizations. Our portfolio of services addresses the strategic, organizational, and relationship issues that impact selling performance. Engineering successful sales teams the Critical Path Way enables clients to develop strong selling organizations, build high-value customer relationships, and accomplish strategic business initiatives. Our clients—emerging companies and members of the Fortune 500 alike—typically measure 100 to 500 times their CPS investment in revenue growth.

