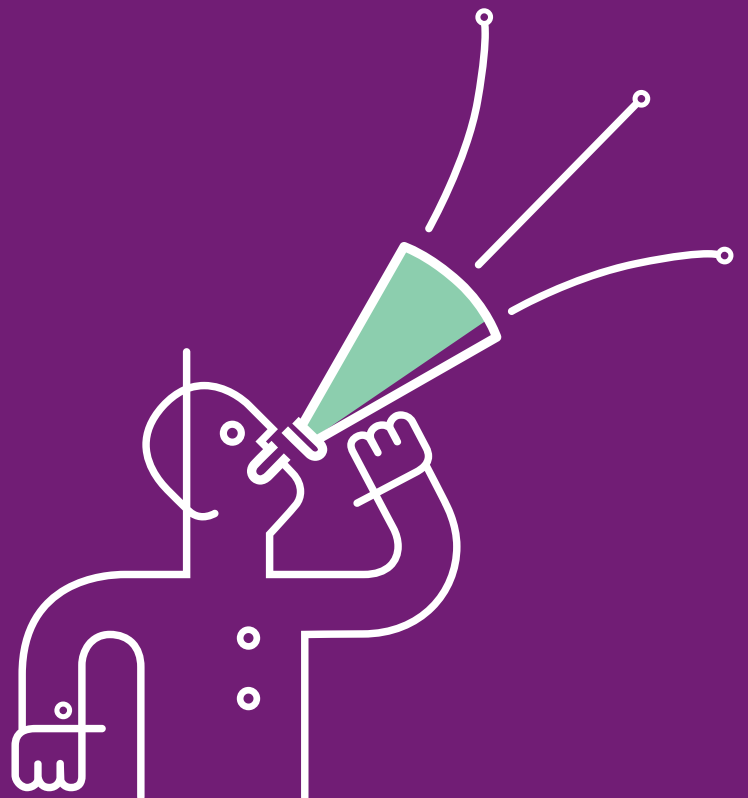


Acquiring new clients

Strengthening your sales proposition





Strengthening your sales proposition

The most effective way of winning a new account is by way of a referral or introduction from one of your existing clients, another supplier to your prospect or a meeting at a business function or event, where you have had the opportunity to break down barriers etc.

The most difficult approach is the 'cold call', where you have had no previous contact of dealing with the company or the senior management team. Your key objective being, to get through to the decision maker or key influencer!

There's very little that matches the thrill of winning an account where you have 'started from scratch', overcome the barriers and have the letter of appointment or order in your hand. So, how do we get there?

There are 5 main phases and issues that you must address (there are no short cuts):

1. Getting to know the prospect, their business and the sectors / environments in which they work.
2. Preparing for the first call
3. The first meeting
4. The proposal
5. Closing the sale

The prospect

Firstly, you need to be clear in your mind the type of client you are going to target in terms of size, business sector, and why. Is this based on your expertise and knowledge and ability to provide solutions to meet their needs or, can you be all things to all men? Refer to our guide on determining your market.

When the global organisation, General Electric (GE) surveyed their largest clients and asked what they expected from a salesman, the response they got was;

"The number one thing we expect is excellent knowledge of our company, our industry and the environment in which we do our business".

Of course, there are various sources available to assist in building up a profile of the prospect, their services, products, geographical areas of operating. These include their website, annual report, Companies House, Google (to access press releases etc). Check out their legal and financial advisers or bankers and cross reference these contacts with your network of contacts. Are there any similarities, routes in?

You must do detailed preparation so that you are not in a position where you have to ask them 'what do you do?' This may seem basic but you will have met Jack The Lad who can sell anything to anybody, you know the guy, he was on the last weeks' episode of The Apprentice.

When you eventually get your meeting, think how confident you feel when you ask the 'how did you sell Product X to that large American manufacturer?' you are demonstrating you've done your homework.

So, how do you get there? You need to pull together your research into a format that will prepare you for your first approach/meeting. Various templates can be used to build the profile of your prospect (or Client) however what is important is the information you gather.

The technique is often referred to as Strategic Sales Planning and needs to include, as a minimum, the following:

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Political (internal and external)

Economic (micro/macro issues affecting their business)

Consumer and Competition (trends and activities)

Socio-demographic (social and population trends affecting performance in the future)

Technology developments (impact on market sector and players)

Environmental (threats and opportunities)

Legislative (threats and opportunities)



This information, captured into a SWOT analysis will give you an awareness of the key issues and obstacles they face. If you have done your strategic planning or gap analysis you will be in a position to offer a solution to enable them to assist their clients – a real win/win.

In addition to knowledge of the organisation and the business environment, it is important to know the decision makers and influencers of the organisation. It is always better to start at the top and be referred 'down' rather than the softer, and often time wasting option, of going for middle managers.

'Fail to Prepare or Prepare to Fail, which option are you going for?'

Read our other guides in the range:

- **Understand your competitors**
- **Determining your Market**
- **Know your tactics**
- **Determining your USP**
- **SWOT up on your marketing**

Horizonworks Marketing is a strategic marketing company based in the North East of England specialising in the science, technology, healthcare and manufacturing sectors. We provide a range of services to clients including:

- Marketing strategy
- Marketing planning
- Communications
- Branding
- Public Relations
- Events management
- Sales and marketing campaigns
- Mentoring



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