Helping our customers better help their customers

koru

In today's competitive and commoditised environment, the true point of differentiation is

Professional Sales Skills

The ReEnfourse® Sales Excellence Handbook

ReEnfourse®

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ReEnfourse®

Welcome to the latest version of the Koru Sales Excellence handbook. This pocket-sized guide provides quick reminders of crucial sales skills and tactics. It forms part of our ReEnfourse® system, designed in partnership with De Montfort University, to help our customer's salespeople retain and use more of what they learn.

Koru help customers in the following key areas:

Engagement services
- Disruptive Speaking
- Consulting / Engagement services for Public Sector bodies & Developers

Sales Strategies and Processes
- Planning
- Implementation
- Reviews

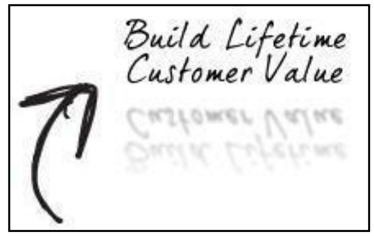
Interim Sales Teams
- For fast market access

Sales Training
- Bespoke Training for organisations wanting to improve their sales skills

Leadership development
- Strategies and Coaching to help Leaders be more

According to Neil Rackham, the founder of SPIN selling, 87% of sales training is lost within one month. ReEnfourse® is our system to help people remember and implement sales best practice as a matter of course. This handbook, an element of ReEnfourse®, is an example of how a simple tool can be used to embed learning from our Sales Training programmes and provide an on the spot aide.

ACCOUNT PLANNING



"If you are to successfully sell your products and services, you need to understand where they will have the most impact on your customer's profit"

THE OBJECTIVE OF ACCOUNT PLANNING

To build a mutually beneficial business partnership with your customers.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF ACCOUNT PLANNING

Preparation

- Understand your customers' business
- Understand their market and its dynamics
- Know their people

Planning Session

- Involve only those people who can add value
- Ask your customer to set the scene
- Set a SMART objective over a two-year time scale
- Identify "winnable" sales objectives and document them
- Get positive affirmation from your team

Execution and Review

- Tell your customer the outcome – they will be dying to know!
- Nothing is forever, situations change, and your account plan must respond to changes.

Digital Lead Generation

"If people like you, they'll listen to you, but if they trust you, they'll do business with you."- Zig Ziglar

Digital Marketing and Social Media have transformed the way that businesses generate new leads. In our experience, there are a few key principles that you need to stick to.

- Be consistent. Plan your campaigns with enough content to publish in a pre-planned schedule to keep your message in front of prospects
- Content is key. Focus on providing value-added content, which keeps prospects up to date with developments that affect them as well as how you can help
- Use Social media to share your content and build rapport over time. Remember, trust takes time to build
- Use Email marketing to augment your Social Media strategy. Remember, you're likely to reach different audiences via different media, so 'sweat your assets' and re-use material as much as possible
- Use advertising sparingly to drive traffic to your website, where you can show how you can help, who you've helped and what they achieved using your help
- Take expert advice on optimising your website for engaging and converting prospects into customers

And remember, when done correctly, you can build lasting relationships through digital marketing.

PERSONAL REFERRALS

"The most winnable sales leads you will ever get come from personal referrals".

Personal referrals are so good because:

- They are prequalified leads
- There is little or no effective competition
- Have a 70% plus win rate
- Take less than 70% of the time to close
- Satisfied referees often become referrers
- Delivering a great customer experience will generate unsolicited referrals.

*A personal referral is the personal **introduction** of a seller to a potential buyer by the seller's customer.*

If you are thinking of using referrals as part of your sales strategy, you should have a plan which includes:

- What is the objective of a referrals' strategy?
- How much business do we need to generate?
- How many referrers do we need?
- How many have we got?
- How are we going to plug the gap?
- What actions do we need to take?
- How do we know if we are being successful?

The rules of referrals

- Your referrers must trust you
- You must do great job for the referrers and the referees
- Always ask for a referral face to face

SALES CAMPAIGN PLANNING

Definition: A scheme, program, or method worked out beforehand for the accomplishment of an objective: *a plan of attack.*

A campaign or sales plan comprises:

- **The objective** of the plan – what are we selling?
- **Campaign Status** – how well qualified is it and how are we doing?
- **Requirements summary** – the prospect's needs
- **Value statement** – what return will the prospect get from us?
- **Value proposition** – does it resonate, is it unique, can you prove it?
- **Relationships** – who do we have to convince?
- **Issues management** – what do we need to fix?
- **Action plan** – what, who and when?
- **Strengths and weaknesses** against strongest competitor – the prospect's perception

A sales campaign plan is a living document; not only does it provide guidance to the sales team but shows managers the status of the campaign.

CALL PLANNING

"Perfect preparation prevents poor performance".

The key to really successful customer meetings and calls is preparation. Great preparation, practice (and execution) allows you to control the meeting and maximise the value of time spent with the prospect.

You need to really understand and document the following:

- Who am I meeting, what do I know about them, what will they want from this call?
- What are my rapport building statements or questions?
- What are my objectives, what would be a great result (stretch objective), what would be acceptable?
- What do I need to know?
- What do I have to say, what objections will they raise and how will I respond?
- What questions will they ask me and how will I answer them?
- Summarise the meeting, action points, timescales and ask for their agreement
- Do your call report
- Do your actions *fast* and get them to your prospect
- Review the call, did you achieve your stretch objective? Why not, what could you have done better, and what did you learn about the call?

RAPPORT, RELATIONSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT

"Life is like tennis, the player who serves well seldom loses"

- People still buy from people in the business world despite the internet.
- Establishing personal wants can be as important as identifying business needs.
- To create an excellent dialogue, you need to understand the customer and their personal interests and agenda.
- Sport and family life are great openers if you want to get to know the customer better.
- It takes real planning and effort to keep all relationships alive.
- Plan to have time to listen to the customer and care about his/her problems.
- Entertain when you can but always deliver on promises.
- Trust is the lifeblood of relationship building.
- A good listener hears and understands and then provides considered feedback.
- Turning sympathy into empathy requires patience and dialogue.

QUESTIONING

"You can tell how clever a person is, not by the answers they give, but by the questions they ask"

Excellent salespeople work on the basis that getting the prospect to talk, and most people love talking about their company or organisation, is the best way to unearth business opportunities. To achieve this, you have to ask questions.

- **Open questions (Who? What? How? When?, etc.) are designed to**
    - Create rapport
    - Get the customer to talk
    - Seek information
    - Identify problems and pain
    - Understand the implications of problems
    - Be consultative (not a talking brochure)
    - Qualify an opportunity

- **Closed questions (Do you? Are you? Will you?, etc.) are for**
    - Seeking agreement
    - Confirming facts
    - Agreeing actions

- **Clarification questions are used to ensure you understand what the customer has said. The best of these is "What do you mean by that"?**

LISTENING

"Listening is the number one sales skill"

Answer the questions – you know what the answers should be, so apply them. After your next call see if your listening has improved!

QUESTION	YES/NO
1. When talking with someone, do you completely refrain from doing other things and give them your full attention?	
2. Do you anticipate what someone will say and jump ahead in your mind?	
3. Are you easily distracted when you're talking with others (e.g., by other people or activity, by mobile devices or phones, etc.)?	
4. When someone begins to ramble or is unclear, do you find yourself tuning them out or pretending to listen?	
5. Do you listen with the intent to fully understand what someone is saying before you begin to formulate your response?	
6. When appropriate, do you rephrase what was said in order to be sure you completely understand what was trying to be communicated?	
7. Are you able to accurately recall or relay most of the details of a conversation?	
8. Do you listen with an open and unbiased attitude?	
9. Do you give someone the chance to fully explain his or her position, problem, etc., without interrupting or finishing his or her sentences?	
10. Do you make appropriate eye contact with others when they're talking?	
11. Do you physically acknowledge different discussion points when someone is talking (e.g., nod your head, change facial expression, etc.)?	
12. Do you completely face someone with whom you are talking?	

QUALIFICATION

"65% of lost business should never have been bid for"

Qualification is a simple investment decision; all you are asking is "Is it worth my company's time and money working on this particular sales opportunity"?

The bullets below identify the types of questions you should ask to determine if the opportunity is real and winnable.

- **B**udget – do they have one, or can they get one?
- **A**uthority – Who is the ultimate decision maker?
- **N**eeds – What are they trying to achieve?
- **T**imescale – When do they need it?
- **R**elationships – Do we know the decision maker(s)/influencers?
- **U**niqueness – What makes our solution stand out?
- **C**ompetition – Do we know, and can we beat our rivals?
- **S**ize and/or **S**trategic Fit – is it big and/or important enough?

"Situations change; qualification is a continuous process"

VISIT/CONTACT/CALL REPORTING

"A call report dictates the next actions in a sales campaign"

VISIT/CONTACT/CALL REPORT

VISIT/CONTACT/CALL REPORT

Customer	People	Date

SUMMARY OF OUTCOME

QUALIFICATION

B	A	N	T	R	U	C	S

QUALIFICATION DECISION STOP/GO

ACTIONS

Action	Who	When	Status

There is no use making a customer call or doing a call report if you do not follow up when you say you will. Call reports are **fundamental** to sales best practice.

LEAD MANAGEMENT

"Opportunities multiply like they are seeds but they die when neglected"

- Qualification needs dialogue and listening.
- Well qualified leads are like Manna from Heaven to good sales people.
- Keeping prospects and suspects current and realistic requires effort and feedback.
- Understanding the buying cycle is key to effective sales effort – timescales and authority levels help.
- Track record in customer, market or solution area helps give confidence and improves the chances of success.
- Ruthless continuous qualification helps prioritise resources and action taking.
- Use all your contacts to provide good leads – it can be a small world in many business segments.
- 'Spray and pray' leads to lots of casualties.
- Allocate quality time to lead generation and qualification every week. Busy fools never look up.
- Poor customer care drives leaky sales funnels – good care inspires repeat opportunities

TEAMWORK

Winning teams often contain great individual talents, but the trick is to get more than the sum of the individual parts.

- Clarity of roles and responsibilities helps craft winning solutions but be clear who is conducting the orchestra.
- Be aware of the need for constructive feedback. Critical friends can help
- Partnership needs someone to give something to the partner. One-way tickets often lead nowhere
- Involve the customer in your virtual sales and solution development team if you can
- Ownership of the solution between the salesperson and the customer is powerful motivation to buy
- Confidence and competence should lead to empathy, not arrogance
- Motivated virtual teams require good communications and recognition to achieve the best result
- Put the customer top of the agenda and have management help not hinder

PROPOSITION DEVELOPMENT

"Solution Development and Ownership are key to success in solving customer problems"

- The journey to real VALUE is never smooth. It requires dialogue, understanding and regular feedback.
- Start with the customer and identifying his or her needs and wants first. Make sure you translate Features into Advantages, Benefits and Value for the customer – the FABV process.
- Complex problems may require special solutions – products and services honed to make the customer feel KING
- Teamwork with colleagues, partners and even the customer is vital – understand your role as conductor of the orchestra.
- Focus your team on the out–to-in dialogue and understanding – customer first, product last.
- Differentiation requires uniqueness or an understanding of what this means to the customer.
- Develop the value proposition with the customer when you can, transferring ownership to him on the journey.
- Be passionate about your solution but take feedback on the journey.

CASE STUDIES

"A Customer Case Study is much more likely to convince a prospect than virtually anything you will tell them."

- Always ask customers for Case Studies. If they're happy, they'll say yes
- Get Case Studies from customers in all market sectors you work, so you can make the one you offer to a new prospect as relevant as possible
- State the issue the customer had, what they had to consider and what it was costing them to not fix it
- How did you propose to help them?
- What did you actually do for them?
- What was the result (including numbers)?
- Include a quote from the customer
- Use images of your work / end result
- Get permission to use their logo

PROPOSALS AND PRESENTATIONS

"Remember, customers are not interested in you or your company; they are only interested in what you can do for their business."

- A proposal is merely a confirmation of what you have said, done or demonstrated – no surprises!
- Put yourself in the customer's shoes – do you want to read, or worse listen to 10,000 words on how good your supplier says they are?
- Know your audience, be they readers or listeners. Is there a "What's in it for me" (WIIFM)?
- Make it easy for them to say YES. Focus on their needs and the value and benefits that your proposal offers
- Don't make promises you can't keep or statements that you cannot substantiate – openly state your references, show them your proof
- Use pictures, they are more interesting than prose
- PowerPoint is not the only presentation tool – try story boards or posters

OBJECTION HANDLING

"If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough"

Objections are raised in every sales campaign about price, service, product functionality, your company, contractual terms etc. When an objection is raised you should:

- Pause – gather your thoughts.
- If you are not sure what the prospect is saying or means ask for clarification.
- Even though the question might be dumb, do not smash the objection.
- Answer clearly and confidently.
- Check that the prospect is happy with/understands your response.
- "Is there anything else bothering you"? Get all the problems out.
- Summarise your agreements.

Every company comes across the same objections:

- Have a list of standard objections and responses.
- Have an objection handling meeting.
- Have it as a topic at your sales meetings.

NEGOTIATING

"Life is full of give and take – good partners do both well"

- Have a negotiating strategy and a tactical plan
- Have a walk away position
- Drive towards a WIN/WIN position
- Use the IF word regularly
- Keep the person separate from the problem
- Explore options together
- Satisfy Interest not Position
- Be Fair and Objective
- Change the package not the price
- Try to move to the other side of the table
- Be ready to find a Golden Bridge to span the chasm
- Be prepared to change the game
- Consider making a trial offer to break an impasse

FORECASTING

"Forecasting begins with an F because it is error prone"

- Sales forecasting is at the heart of business planning – accurate forecasts inform the right business decisions
- Good forecasting is a combination of art form and scientific analysis.
- It requires continuous assessment of your position relative to the customer's need and competitive offers.
- Most prospects take longer to close than expected, especially by the customer.
- People in trouble decide faster than people who are content.
- Understand the stage you are at in the journey to customer commitment.
- Understand the risks and opportunities.
- Graphical funnel representations or dashboards often help.

CLOSING

"Ask the right questions and get the right answers"

- Timing is key but if you do not ask, you do not deserve to get.
- There are many ways to continue talking but only one way to make the sale – ask for the order.
- Closing is about asking for the order in a nice way. Sometimes silence can be the best policy when decisions are difficult.
- Try to sit at the customer's side of the table, helping him decide.
- Trial closing on smaller decisions can smooth the journey to the big decision.
- Trials or testers can be a great way to start a new business relationship.
- Do not try to close before the door is open.
- Establish your value proposition in the customer's environment first.
- People in trouble are more decisive than people who are fat and happy.

WIN OR LOSE

"It is not a crime to lose business, but it becomes a crime if a colleague loses business because the lessons from the first loss have not been learnt"

Whether you win or lose a deal, it is important that you capture the reasons you got the result. This is a perfect method of building on strengths and eliminating weaknesses. Many businesses will ask why they didn't win something, but not so many ask why they **DID** win a deal. There is as much to be learned from both scenarios – if you ask the right questions!

An example of a Win/Loss Review template can be seen below.

Win / Loss Review template	Client Response	Categorised response				
		Client A				
WINS		Price	Offering better	Track record	Personal chemistry	Other
Why did we win?						
What specifically set up apart frm the competition?						
Are there any specific areas where the competition was stronger than us?						
What impressed you about our proposed solution?						
Losses						
What was it about the competitor that made you select them?						
How well did our solution align to your needs?						
Did you feel fully engaged and listened to?						
How flexible did you consider us to be during the process?						
Would you be more or less inclined to award us business in the future as a result of this process?						
What can we do differently next time?						
		Us	Comp			

DO YOU KNOW THE SIGNS OF SALES BAD HABITS?

"The most common cause of bad habits is complacency"

- Are elapsed times from lead to close increasing?
- Are an increasing number of campaigns ending in no result?
- Is your win rate falling?
- Are existing customers turning to alternative suppliers?
- Is price increasingly becoming an issue?
- Is your forecasting accuracy declining?
- Are the number of internal complaints and debates increasing?
- Are your salespeople claiming that there are too few leads?
- Are your sales managers spending more time in the office?
- Are the number of sales reviews increasing?

To stop these bad habits, you need to understand selling and salespeople – we do, so just turn to the next page and give us a call

Increasing your sales with realistic
Customer led change

If you would like to know how we can help you, please contact:

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