

Redesigning the Sales and Marketing Process to Enable Solutions Selling

Industry & Client Situation

A multibillion dollar computer and terminal systems manufacturer was facing increasing pressure from “me too” players and rapid innovations in technology, which were forcing commoditization of their core products. Already having had to exit the low end computer market (a revenue loss of over a \$1 billion), our client was looking to develop and rapidly implement a strategy that would allow it to survive and eventually thrive in the industry.

Approach

The executive team embraced a new strategy to move away from its traditional focus of being a product seller, and position the company as a solutions provider. This required the organization to define a set of solutions comprised of its myriad of products and services. Once this definition was complete, the major challenge became how to re-engineer the sales force from one that traditionally sold products to one that was capable of a consultative selling approach. The existing process was rigid and bureaucratic. After modeling the performance of internal high-performers, a non-sequential process was designed. The new process focused on those activities most critical to “making the sale.”

A project team was formed to focus on implementing the new sales process and developing the required supporting enablers throughout the organization. Early on, the team discovered that a few specific knowledge elements were critical to impact sales performance. The project team focused on what specific knowledge elements were required, what format the information should be in, how current it should be, and who in the organization was the best source of that knowledge. After prioritizing the knowledge requirements, the project team worked to establish a process across various functions and business units to efficiently create and maintain the knowledge required to support sales performance. Finally, the project team worked to design a web-based sales desktop which delivered information based on a specific user profile, organized knowledge based on the major sales activity it supported, and automatically routed insights from the sales associate to the appropriate person in the organization.

Results

The results have been impressive. The sales teams now have a central repository where all relevant data is easily available. The marketing organizations developed an enhanced understanding of which elements and messages are most important to impacting sales performance. Communication of marketing programs to the sales teams also improved, reducing time to market and associated costs, while increasing the quality of execution. Finally, as a “solutions provider”, the company has been able to more seamlessly adjust their strategies and reposition themselves in the marketplace. In the year following this engagement, our client’s stock price was up over 40% and margins were the highest in the industry. As the CEO was recently quoted, “Our strategy is working and the tough decisions we made a year ago are paying off.”