

Welcome to this issue of *The Sales Solution*, the semi-monthly sales tip from Sales Solutions, the one stop for all your sales training and coaching needs.

This issue's tip is in the Complex Sale category.

When selling in a complex environment (defined for purposes here as a deal involving multiple players involved in the evaluation and selection of a vendor), it is critical to your success that you understand that *individual people* – several of them – will be involved in evaluating and making buying recommendations or decisions regarding your and others' solutions. That said, it's incumbent upon you to learn *how* each member will decide for whom he or she will cast his or her vote, as well as which members' votes count more than others'. Armed with this knowledge, you'll know *what* to say and *on whom* to focus your efforts. In Part I of this two-part Tip, we introduce a framework for doing just this, and discuss the first two steps of the framework. In Part II, we'll cover the remaining three steps of the framework, as well as provide examples of ways to implement it. This framework for selling in complex sales situations will dramatically increase your success rate for closing business in such situations.

The framework consists of five components:

1. **Roles**
2. **Types of Needs**
3. **Dominant Buying Value**
4. **Motivational Triggers**
5. **Buying Style**

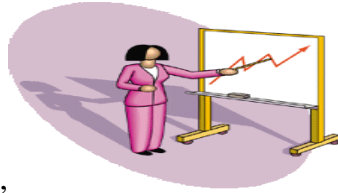
### Component 1 - Roles

Individuals within an organization play different and multiple roles when it comes to evaluating an investment. These roles can be viewed as *Function*, *Degree of Influence*, and *Degree of Advocacy*.

**Function:** Buyers with different functions in an organization consider different sets of factors and are motivated by different sets of benefits when participating in a vendor evaluation. Business considerations of senior executives, for example,



focus on the big picture, such as the effect of an investment on share price, competitive position, market share, and corporate image. Personal considerations include the effect of the investment on personal image, and status among other executives. Likewise, middle managers, technical,



financial,

and user-level buyers will have their own



respective business and personal considerations and motivations.

### **Degree of Influence:**



Although all members of a project's buying team will have an opinion on the selection of a vendor, not all will have the same degree of influence and impact on the final selection. There are those whose opinions, by dint of position, superior knowledge, or more extensive experience with the subject at hand, count more than those of others (contrary to widespread belief, degree of influence is not always correlated with a team member's title). There are those who are just along for the ride – those whom corporate protocol dictated had to be invited to participate. There are those who have veto power – usually one person but possibly more. And there is always one person – even in situations where a committee “decides” - who has the ultimate decision power - who has the authority to write the check. It is this person, and the key influencers, whom the seller has to identify and sell.

**Degree of Advocacy:** In any given sales engagement, there may be those who want you to win (allies), those who want you to lose (enemies), and those who are indifferent. In many cases, there may also be one individual who will champion your cause (your champion or sponsor) and/or one who will try to sabotage it (an anti-sponsor).



## **Component 2 - Types of Needs**

Business people buy not only to satisfy business needs, but also to satisfy personal needs and to fulfill personal agendas. It is important to be able to distinguish between the two, and to understand why it's important to do so:

- Business needs include such company-related objectives as improving efficiency, increasing market share, streamlining processes, and cutting costs.
- Personal needs include trying out a newly-learned skill, such as project management, working as part of a team, or getting peer-approval. A personal agenda might be to be recognized by the CEO, to get a raise, or to get promoted.

While business needs are important for the seller to address, it is often the *personal* needs and agendas of individual members of a buying team that take precedence. Sellers need to understand this when selling individuals on their solutions, and quickly determine what those personal needs are.

### **Action item:**

Take two complex deals you're currently working on. For each deal, assign a functional role, degree of influence, and degree of advocacy to each member of the buying team (hint: if you haven't yet identified all the members of the buying team, now's the time to do it!). Next, write down the business needs, personal needs, and agendas of each member (again, if you don't know them, determine them now!). Now, use this information to plan a strategy that consists of what benefits you will sell each member, that focuses on selling the ones who are more equal than the others, that neutralizes any enemies and/or an anti-sponsor, and that cultivates a champion if you don't already have one.

Let me know how this exercise works for you. If done properly, you should find that you have a better understanding of what it will take to clinch the deal. Then return for the next Sales Solution Sales Tip, to complete the framework and see some examples.

Good selling!

Craig