

Six Account Management Worst Practices to Avoid

By Ron Snyder

What is the worst account management practice you've ever seen?

Given the complexity of selling to large accounts today, it is easy to miss something that will end up costing you a lot of business. Further, one of the most important elements of account management is laying a good foundation. Without this, everything else is more difficult if not impossible!

Poor account management causes the following problems.

- Missing important opportunities in the account.
- Unnecessarily increasing sales cycle length.
- Creating unnecessary stalls in the sales process.
- Losing business you could have won.
- Selling at a greater discount than necessary.



Here are **Six Account Management Worst Practices to avoid**.

1. **Assuming you know all the new purchases the account is pursuing.** It is easy to get lulled into thinking that you know everything that is going on in your strategic account- within your area of specialty. Given how rapidly things change in today's world, one needs to be constantly checking the landscape to identify new opportunities.
2. **Not planning at a strategic level.** Most sales people are comfortable with pursuing individual sales opportunities. Account planning is very different. It requires a longer-term view; identifying strategic initiatives across the organization, engaging important high-level players and presenting long-term value propositions.
3. **Not balancing long and short-term objectives.** Many get stuck in the details and fail to pick their head up to take a broader view of the situation. Others get enamored with the strategic perspective and neglect implementation. One must keep both views in mind.
4. **Insufficient management of progress.** It is imperative to constantly review key objectives, strategies and progress. The strategic account manager must be the "conductor" of the band of resources marshaled to accomplish specific objectives; penetrating the account.
5. **Not leveraging all resources available.** Missing an important person can spell disaster. It is important to operate as an account team to leverage your network of people inside and outside the account who can influence purchase decisions and strategic relationships.
6. **Not using a planning template.** Strategic account managers often overlook elements of the planning process. This can lead to the issues noted above. Providing a planning template that guides thought process and leverages account insights into effective action is a key to success.

You must plan and execute well to win in today's world!

Plan 2 Win Software

Ron Snyder is President of Plan 2 Win Software. He has helped many companies improve their sales effectiveness, including industry leaders, such as HP, Cisco, Siemens, Philips, Alliance Imaging, Synopsys, Mentor Graphics, Adobe and rapidly-growing companies such as NetSuite, Zeus Technology and Zonare. Plan 2 Win Software was founded by sales veterans and former VP of Sales. We saw that Sales Force Automation Systems needed territory and key account planning tools.

Our sales planning software enables Salesforce.com (SFDC) users to create and manage territory and account plans right in their SFDC environment. These plans are perfect for Quarterly Business Reviews (QBRs) and strategic account reviews. This enables sales teams to fill their funnel with better prospects, make better use of their time and resources and produce better results!

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