



Restructuring ■ Acquisitions ■ Sales Leadership

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5 Sales Leadership for Tough Times

Whether you are a CEO of a start-up driving towards your first order or a regional sales manager striving to hit your 2009 sales target – sales are everything in today's tough markets. My recent gig, leading the turnaround and double digit growth of the software group, Teamstudio over the last 7 years has many lessons worth sharing.

Sales growth starts with a **compelling story**. A vision to believe in! This story flows with passion through every aspect of a company, creating powerful marketing campaigns and effective sales scripts that encourage prospects to take action. Given this mindset, let me shine the spotlight on the work of David Sandler and more recently Jeff Thull to help you create a world class sales organization that will deliver consistent results. My take on their work was that Jeff's processes were inspired by David's tactical genius for closing deals. The essence of Jeff's process – there are four main pillars to execute remarkable conversations with your prospects, close deals and add huge value: Discovery, Diagnosis, Design and Delivery.

Discovery

Discovery is about research and preparation. It encompasses how sales professionals get ready to engage and serve clients. The discovery process is aimed at the identification of a specific client who has the highest probability of change. No desire to change – no Purchase Orders. It allows a team of professionals, outside sales, inside sales, engineers, and marketing staff to sign off on an **Engagement Strategy** for each priority prospect/customer. (Clearly these are constantly evolving).

Diagnosis

The Diagnosis stage encompasses how salespeople help their prospects and clients fully comprehend the inefficiencies and performance gaps. It is a process of "hyperqualification" during which we pursue an in-depth determination of the extent and financial impact of their problems. It is important to deal with each manager, one at a time. Generic value propositions will not compel action. This is a very personal and focused conversation with your prospect.

Design

Design encompasses how salespeople help the client create and understand the solution. It is a collaborative and highly interactive effort to help clients sort through their expectations and alternatives to arrive at an optimal solution. This also takes the drama and confrontation out of proposals.

Delivery

In the final phase of the sales process, the previous phases come to fruition. It allows the salesperson to execute the desired solution and deliver real results for their clients.



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This approach ensures that sales conversations are set in the context of “trusted advisor”. The sales professional’s objective is to ensure that the client **achieves** better results. By investing in your client’s success, great things happen, such as: repeat business, testimonials, deeper long term relationships!

By embracing a diagnostic approach to selling, constantly exploring the consequences of customers ignoring priority issues and relentlessly pursuing improved performance for your customers, your sales team can become a world class organization. They will be seen, over time, as a source of great competitive advantage to their customer base.

World Class Sales Organizations Contain:

- A Specific compelling value proposition
- Engagement Strategies
- Diagnostic Questions
- ROI spreadsheets
- Costs of problems
- Harmony between sales and marketing
- War Rooms
- Deployment of White Papers
- Great cookbook metrics
- A passion for delivering improved client performance
- A relentless follow through
- The smart deployment of technology
- Mentoring of sales professionals