

Competency Development Toolkit

New Product Field Sales Benchmark



Signature Profile

Benchmark Profile Description

The New Product Field Sales role is responsible for maximizing sales within a territory/market by finding new customers and servicing existing ones. The mix of revenue from new business to existing business can be as much as 70/30. With a typical sales cycle of six months to one year, these sellers are tasked with understanding the needs of multiple buyers within an organization (who may have little experience with the seller's products) and building a solid business case for the sale.

Predictive Competencies

- Achieves Results by Tailoring Message to Resonate with Buyer Motivations
- Makes Persuasive Presentations
- Qualifies Prospects for Fit
- Addresses the Needs of Multiple Buyers
- Tailors Style to Fit Customer Expectations

Achieves Results by Tailoring Message to Resonate with Buyer Motivations

Produces above-average results selling relatively new products or discretionary purchases which have several alternatives vying for the same budget dollars by working to understand customer buying motivations and matching the sales proposition to them; has the ability to identify hot buttons to appeal to a specific buyer without appearing insincere or heavy-handed

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impatient or uncomfortable with needs analysis ▪ May focus on own objectives without really understanding what the customer needs ▪ May try to force an immediate match of the product to the customer's need, then quickly move on if unsuccessful ▪ May use a standard benefit message regardless of the prospect's motivation to buy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is driven to understand prospects' and customers' needs so the product offering can be properly positioned with the appropriate group of features and options ▪ Enjoys the challenge of exploring a unique set of needs ▪ Varies the benefit message to fit the buyer even though the product offering is fairly fixed ▪ Works to identify the approach or product offering that is most appealing to a prospect

Mindset Tips:

- Learn the importance of needs analysis – it is essential to understand customer preferences when selling a product with no track record.
- Commit to discovering each prospect's buying motivations – both practical and emotional.
- Remember that each customer has unique business needs – do not enter the sales process thinking that every prospect has the same objectives.
- Although it is good to be persistent, be careful not to become so focused on completing the sale that you appear pushy – remember that remaining flexible and responsive is the best way to make a sale.
- Be certain to emphasize the benefits of your product that will appeal most to your prospect, rather than focusing on features that you personally find attractive.

Success Tactics:

- Elicit information from your contacts regarding their objectives and concerns – do not assume that everyone seeks the same results from your product.
- Prepare a list of questions that will aid you in unearthing customers' hot buttons – determine what features of your product will most incite them to make a purchase.
- Perform a detailed written needs analysis for each contact that you meet – list each prospect's requirements as well as the features of your product that could satisfy that need.
- Network and probe to uncover each contact's buying motivation – it could help you to secure a future sale.
- Remain flexible – try different angles until you find a sales approach that appeals to your prospect.
- Consistently gauge the prospect's willingness to buy – if you are not generating sufficient excitement, try a different approach.
- Take your time when trying to appeal to a prospect's needs – ask questions and try to suit your routine to the customer.
- Sit in with a salesperson who consistently modifies his sales technique to suit his prospects – take notes of the methods he uses.
- Watch the customer's reaction during your sales routine – take a different angle if the prospect does not seem enthusiastic about your product.
- Remember to continually test the waters in order to gauge your customer's level of interest – change your technique if the customer seems bored or reserved.

Makes Persuasive Presentations

Excites the customer with an enthusiastic presentation style; demonstrates value and actively promotes products and services by making an emotional appeal; holds the customer's attention and interest by keeping the presentation content relevant; varies style to build toward a buying decision

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May be more comfortable with establishing a dialogue that emphasizes listening and an exchange of ideas than with making an impact on the audience ▪ Uses presentations to entertain rather than inform or persuade ▪ Sticks too closely to a script and does not vary the content or emphasis to address the needs of each audience ▪ Too focused on the mechanics of the presentation itself to pay attention to audience understanding and concurrence ▪ Cannot easily adjust to a nonsupportive audience response and may rush an ineffective presentation just to finish it rather than alter the presentation to change that response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Makes formal presentations that focus on creating an impact while communicating information ▪ Has the potential to capture and hold the audience's attention ▪ Takes charge and keeps control of the information being communicated through a presentation that is polished and rehearsed ▪ Varies style and content to appeal to the audience ▪ Projects enthusiasm about a solution to the audience, moving them closer to a buying decision ▪ Monitors audience response and adjusts presentation to stay on target

Mindset Tips:

- Commit to becoming fully informed about your product, so that you can answer questions and easily highlight exciting features.
- Get to know your customer so that you can focus your presentation on those benefits that they will find most interesting.
- Do not focus so much on conveying information that you lose sight of style – be informative but strive to be entertaining.
- Strive to focus less on your words and more on audience reaction – if you note boredom, make a mental note of what you were saying at the time.

Success Tactics:

- Analyze your presentations to see if they are too bland or overly detailed – modify them to generate more excitement.
- Record your presentations and then watch them so that you can see, first-hand, where you lose audience attention.
- Attend presentations by charismatic colleagues – take note of the techniques they use to generate excitement and implement them in your own presentations.
- Ask an experienced co-worker to listen to your presentations – ask them for pointers on how to add excitement to the content.
- Write your presentation on paper before performing it – highlight all the verbs you use and try to replace them with words that denote more dynamic action.
- Attend a formal public speaking class that can ease your fears and hone your performance skills.
- Practice your presentations until you're comfortable enough to perform them in a more casual, conversational style.
- Speak as often as you can in non-work-related areas so that you can gain the confidence you need.
- List all the questions asked during your presentation – repeat questions may need to be worked into the presentation itself.
- Analyze your audience and modify your presentation to suit their personality – for example, if they are more technically oriented, focus on the technical aspects of your product.
- Work with different groups to learn how to analyze audience reaction and how to alter your message to reach them.

Qualifies Prospects for Fit

Determines the prospect's potential fit within product modification parameters; efficiently decides the level of effort and focus needed to move the prospect along in the sales funnel or remove them; focuses the majority of effort on assessing the prospect's level of interest in a product/system designed for industry or function needs; keeps to a minimum the time spent making modifications to an established product or system; presses to make progress in the sales process

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May not analyze how effectively a prospect's needs can be met without considerable modification of the existing product or service ▪ May allow a desire for the business to drive a decision to customize an established product or product without consideration of associated costs or profit potential ▪ Lacks an in-depth understanding of product applications and/or the prospect's business ▪ Uses interest in a prospect's needs or problems, or compatibility with contacts, as the criteria for keeping that prospect in the sales funnel ▪ May be slow to 'cut loose' noncommitted prospects ▪ Diverts time and resources from 'hot' prospects by trying to generate increased interest from lukewarm prospects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conducts an effective needs analysis to determine a profitable match between the prospect's requirement and a product or product designed to accommodate industry or function needs ▪ Holds a fact-finding meeting to identify prospect needs and requirements ▪ Asks questions at the appropriate approval level ▪ Possesses a solid knowledge of the product/service applications in the prospect's setting ▪ Does not allow time to be consumed by prospects who should be disengaged or deferred based on the quality of business they will provide ▪ Is willing to 'cut loose' an indecisive prospect and focus on those closer to a buying decision or more likely to find satisfaction within the parameters of a product or product modification

Mindset Tips:

- Understand that you will not be able to sell to every prospect – some prospects require special, and costly, modifications to offerings in order for their needs to be met.
- Remember that spending too much time with prospects who require extensive modifications to your offering is not only costly, but a waste of time and resources that could be spent pursuing prospects who are ready to make a purchase and will be satisfied with a standard solution.
- Do not allow personal preferences to get in the way of determining which prospects are worth keeping – just because a person is likeable and pleasant, does not make that person a good potential customer.

Success Tactics:

- Create a profile of any standard needs that link to each of the products or systems in your portfolio; once the customer's needs have been identified, you can suggest solutions that are based upon your existing sales offering.
- Once key prospects have been identified, spend some time researching the company, their strategy, their business issues, and their key initiatives so that you can identify their needs and requirements.
- Create a set of prioritization criteria and rate targets in terms of how likely they are to benefit from and buy specific products and solutions from your company as well as whether or not those solutions will require a large amount of modification.
- Ask questions that will unearth how the specific solutions your company provides can potentially help prospects to achieve their goals so that you can turn loose those prospects who do not fit with your sales offering.
- Look for prospects and targets who are seeking standard solutions to their issues – not all customers need a customized sales offering to meet their requirements, thus making them a prospect worth pursuing.

Addresses the Needs of Multiple Buyers

Sets high goals and works with complex customers by devising a plan to meet the needs of the various buying influences; consistently produces above-average sales results by developing an overview of potential barriers and minimizing the conflicts that can occur when selling to various needs of multiple components in the customer's organization

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can be content with marginal success or lowers goals to reach a level of success that is easier to accomplish ▪ Without a plan for dealing with varied needs of different contacts within an organization, could be unprepared to deal with obstacles created by conflicting agendas ▪ Lacks the flexibility to manage the needs or requirements of multiple contacts ▪ May commit to a primary customer contact without making provisions for assessing and addressing the weight carried by additional buying influences within the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Driven to achieve ambitious goals; 'hungry' and aggressively ready to produce above-average results ▪ Holds results achievement to a high personal standard ▪ Plans a logical approach to the sales process that responds to various and potentially conflicting needs presented by multiple buying influences within a complex customer ▪ Thrives on complexity and the intricacy involved in opportunities to offer total value solutions to multiple customer contacts ▪ Expects barriers or delays to result from balancing the varied requirements of different elements within the customer organization and factors these obstacles into the timeline for the sale

Mindset Tips:

- Identify all potential buying centers within an account and create a strategy to engage with all potential contacts.
- Understand that your success relies upon your ability to meet the potentially conflicting needs of multiple contacts within the customer organization.
- Commit to understanding every facet of your customer's requirements and then work to fulfill them.
- Clarify the requirements and expectations of each decision maker and influencer within the customer organization so that you can devise a solution that will balance all their needs.
- Realize that focusing on the primary contact in the organization will result in your falling short in providing the best possible solution – strive to meet the needs of every contact in the organization as a means of achieving sales success.

Success Tactics:

- Ask all the contacts within the customer organization about their short- and long-term business strategy and link your solutions/products/services to helping them achieve their strategy.
- Create a system that allows you to capture and update information on each contact's unique needs, expectations, and business strategies and ensure all account activities reflect this knowledge.
- Demonstrate an understanding of what constitutes value for each unique contact within the customer organization – hold your results to this standard and do not lower those standards in the face of obstacles.
- Build a coalition of support within the customer organization by establishing relationships with a variety of individuals throughout the organization.
- Do not be satisfied with your current level of output – build upon each month's results by taking a more consultative approach to complex customers.
- Create a set of satisfaction criteria and results measures with each buying center in that account to ensure you're providing differentiated service to each customer.
- Be willing to customize solutions for individual buying centers or contacts within a customer organization – remember that flexibility, when dealing with complex customer systems, will establish you as a valuable source of customer support.

Tailors Style to Fit Customer Expectations

Tailors image to fit customer expectations; adapts to different situations with sincerity and realism, taking care to avoid obvious role-playing or acting; recognizes the value of first impressions; studies the image or style with which customers are most comfortable and adopts the conversational style and language most trusted by them

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May blatantly promote company or self without anticipating how the customer will respond ▪ Fails to do the homework on a prospect or customer that would identify or verify the image that would be consistent with customer expectations ▪ By focusing so intently on own style and objectives, fails to make it a priority to establish and reinforce credibility with the customer ▪ May ignore or fail to be concerned with the image projected to others ▪ May be inflexible about changing personal style to accommodate a customer who would be more comfortable with or impressed by something different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exhibits interest and commitment through involvement in industry activities ▪ Quietly promotes self and company in a manner that is respected by and gains credibility with the customer ▪ Before the first impression is made, becomes familiar with customers, their business, and how success has been achieved with similar customers in the past ▪ Recognizes the business etiquette (such as dress and speech) appropriate to a situation ▪ Has the ability to read people and react to individual needs ▪ Assumes the appropriate professional level to match the customer ▪ Adjusts own communication style to ensure that the message is heard and to encourage dialogue

Mindset Tips:

- Remember that first impressions are critical, therefore arm yourself with knowledge that will help you to build credibility and prove to the customer that you can meet their expectations.
- Understand that as different customers have different expectations, it is impossible to work from a script – having an agenda for the meeting is fine but personalize it by providing materials that will have the best impression on the customer.
- Realize that knowledge is power – researching your customers before visiting them will provide you with the information you need to appeal to your customers' personal preferences.
- You never get a second chance to make a first impression – therefore it only makes sense to study customers carefully in order to ascertain what they expect from your meeting and then provide it.

Success Tactics:

- Use the internet or any public domain sources to research the background of the company and gain insight into their corporate image – whether it be a company of MBA's, technical experts, or innovators.
- Before meeting with customers, work to understand their expectations – gather testimonials and other materials that will make the best impression.
- Read the Annual Report of the company before the first visit, as it contains valuable information about the company's mission, vision, strategic priorities, and values.
- Build a portfolio of materials that will demonstrate how you have helped companies similar to the customer's to succeed.
- Be prepared with the requisite support material, data, examples and customer stories you think will most establish trust and credibility with the customer.
- Understand the unwritten personality of the company – education level, style of dress, company jargon – and attempt to mirror that style in each interaction.
- Use speaking patterns, gestures, and vocabulary that are compatible with those in the customer organization.
- Role-play with a colleague or superior so that you can practice modifying your approach for different customers.



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