

Competency Development Toolkit

Relationship Product Sales Benchmark



Signature Profile

Benchmark Profile Description

The Relationship Product Sales role is responsible for acquiring new customers and servicing existing ones within an assigned territory/market – usually a 20/80 ratio of new to existing business. They sell the full array of products to buyers who are reasonably expert at using them. They are tasked with advocating for, and providing good service to, their customers, building strong relationships through regular contact and growing sales by uncovering additional buyers within the account and seeking referrals.

Predictive Competencies

- Overcomes Objections by Addressing Emotional Concerns
- Closes by Building Relationships
- Provides Service by Empathizing with Customer Concerns
- Effectively Communicates in an Informal Manner
- Drives Toward Success by Systematically Managing Accounts
- Expands Relationships and Networks Within Accounts

Overcomes Objections by Addressing Emotional Concerns

Focuses on uncovering and resolving the emotional component of customer or prospect barriers to the sale; responds to any hint of concern or complaint that will keep a prospect from buying; takes responsibility for relieving the tension or distress of a prospect; draws on strong empathy for the prospect or customer to offer product alternatives and/or increased personal service to address concerns; is willing to take the heat of a prospect's concerns, believing that keeping the prospect happy is worth future business or goodwill; keeps the customer focused on what can be provided and compensates for objections that cannot be removed with personal support and commitment

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May believe so strongly in the product that there does not appear to be a need to uncover additional concerns ▪ Misinterprets unspoken objections as nonexistent objections ▪ Dismisses objections without validating the prospect's concerns ▪ Does not believe there is a realistic chance to find a mutually satisfying resolution to objections ▪ Is argumentative in an effort to overcome versus resolve objections ▪ Can take objections personally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intent on uncovering concerns that may prevent customer acceptance of the solution ▪ Works hard at being responsive to any hint of concern or complaint that could keep a prospect from buying ▪ Promises support or enhancement of, not replacement of, in-house expertise or invention ▪ Justifies cost to the organization in terms of superior delivery and added value advantage ▪ Takes steps to 'win over' the user as well as the decision maker (when not one in the same) ▪ Knows the pros and cons of each offering in the product line to help the customer select the best-fit choice ▪ Acts as an advocate for the prospect, offering alternatives when feasible ▪ Does not take customer resistance personally

Mindset Tips:

- Try to anticipate objections by focusing on the potential negatives of your solution – what could cause concern, and how would you go about addressing the issue?
- Accept objections as interest in your offering and challenges that must be overcome – keep your emotion in check and adjust your offering until it offers a common ground solution.
- Balance short-term sales objectives with a long-term view of the customer relationship– try to work 51% for the customer and 49% for your own objectives.
- Strive to be responsive to any hint of concern on the part of the customer – be it logical or emotional.

Success Tactics:

- Ensure you probe to understand all the factors the customer is wrestling with as well as how they will be addressed as a result of the solution.
- Ask questions in order to get to the root of objections as well as uncover concerns that may have gone unspoken – if necessary, devise a list of questions that could clarify and reveal issues.
- Review your sales routine to ensure that you are asking a sufficient amount of questions and that nothing is taken at face value.
- Learn to read the clues that could indicate a possible concern – body language, facial expressions and simple inquiries can reveal a lot about what is on the customer's mind.
- Sit in with a colleague who effectively finds solutions to customer concerns – take note of the methods this person uses to balance the customer's needs with those of the organization.
- Describe features and benefits in a way that appeals to each customer's unique needs/expectations – be willing to make some concessions in order to overcome objections, but do not sacrifice company objectives.
- Allow the client to choose among the options on the table to ensure their final buy-in – know the pros and cons of all your offerings so that you can find a common ground solution.
- Enroll in a negotiation class so that you can learn to remain objective in the face of customer concerns and effectively balance their needs with those of your organization.

Closes by Building Relationships

Bases an assumptive close on personal friendship and loyalty; focuses more on emotional than logical benefits of the sale, such as what it takes for the individual to meet business goals and get ahead, versus emphasizing cash savings and cost reduction; determines and addresses relevant benefits important to the individual rather than work from a checklist; builds a personal trust and empathy with the customer, securing the purchase decision by becoming a player on their team

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reticent to invest the time needed to cultivate a personal relationship, preferring to emphasize logical over emotional reasons for making the purchase decision ▪ Tends to use a standard checklist that ends with asking for the order rather than approach the close by understanding what motivates a customer to sign off on an agreement ▪ Waits for customers to come to the conclusion that their needs will be satisfied by the product or service offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Patiently builds a personal relationship that will cement the deal ▪ Brings customers to an acceptance of the purchase decision by understanding what they need and addressing issues of specific concern to each customer ▪ Accepts a purchase decision on a handshake ▪ Makes a personal investment in the client relationship, and builds a mutual trust and loyalty that makes it easier to ask for the order

Mindset Tips:

- Remember to take your time in building customer relationships so that you can understand what products and services would be most beneficial to them.
- Cultivate trust and empathy with customers by showing them that you're a player on their team – work to understand their needs and then guide them to the appropriate products.
- Remember that customers are unlikely to buy from someone with whom they do not have some type of relationship.
- Understand the impact that customer trust and loyalty play in the closing decision – customers will be more apt to purchase from a friend than a complete stranger.

Success Tactics:

- Get to know your customers personally – articulate the benefits of using your products and solutions in terms of how this will help your customer look good to others.
- Seek opportunities that combine business meetings with social activities, for example, conduct meetings over lunch so that you can create a relationship that seems more like friendship.
- Don't hesitate to act as part of the customer's team, advocating the solution you think is best, based on your knowledge of them, their organization and their needs.
- Show customers how your solutions will fulfill their needs while improving their image – by working to make them look good, you position yourself as part of their team.
- Don't rely on standard closing procedures – it's fine to use a set of questions to determine customer needs, but try to intersperse the business questions with more personalized dialogue.

Provides Service by Empathizing with Customer Concerns

Empathizes with customers who feel they are not getting what they expect; is sensitive to customer concerns and demonstrates a sincere desire to help; listens to the nature of the problem without feeling that it is a personal attack; identifies with the customer's pain and works to relieve it; gives priority to making the customer happy; judges the success of service skills by how the customer feels about the resolution

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May treat the resolution and dismissal of a problem from a list of tasks as more important than the customer's satisfaction with the resolution ▪ By personalizing negative input from the customer, adopts a position that is more adversarial than supportive ▪ Spotlights own contribution to the solution rather than keep the focus on how the customer feels about the outcome ▪ Wants to impress customers with the amount of time and effort that is being expended, focusing more on the process than on finding a solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrates loyalty to customers by using their satisfaction as a key performance measure ▪ Seeks service solutions that resolve the problem with ease, convenience and minimal disruption to the customer ▪ Provides an immediate response, even if just to reassure the customer that the concern has been heard and will be addressed ▪ Increases a customer's comfort with communicating problems or dissatisfaction by keeping own emotions in check and absent from the resolution process ▪ Asks for customer feedback about a service solution to ensure complete satisfaction and a continuing relationship ▪ Believes the ultimate test of a service solution is the customer's happiness with the outcome

Mindset Tips:

- Commit to going the extra mile to solve customers' problems instead of relying upon standard solutions.
- Focus on listening to customers – having a sounding board is the first step in resolving their issues.
- Concentrate on improving your listening skills so that you can uncover the heart of customers' complaints.
- Resolve to spend twice as much time listening to customers' complaints as you do addressing them.
- Realize that no account runs smoothly 100% of the time, therefore you should see complaints as part of the process rather than a personal attack.
- Realize that going the extra mile for customers is your duty – look at their satisfaction as your reward rather than seeking accolades for your endeavors.
- Challenge yourself to focus on the results of your effort, rather than the effort itself.
- Understand that trying to impress customers can leave a negative impression, no matter how quickly or effectively you solved their problem.
- View customer service as a means to building customer loyalty.

Success Tactics:

- Enlist the help of a colleague who can provide suggestions on how to improve the way you address customers' concerns.
- Before offering a solution, pause to ensure that you have adequately listened to the complaint and that your offering completely addresses the heart of the problem.
- Demonstrate that you are willing to put customers' needs ahead of company policy.
- Take ownership of the job of supplying top-notch customer service – don't consider it an option, but a necessity.
- Implement a system by which your customers can provide feedback for the service they've received.
- Always make your job look easy – customers come to you with complaints, they do not want to hear about the enormity of your efforts.

Effectively Communicates in an Informal Manner

Communicates essential points in an informal and conversational manner; prefers to share information in a one-on-one or small group situation; varies style and language to ensure listener understanding and is attentive to closing the loop on communications; seeks feedback and responds appropriately to listener reactions; makes presentations that are unrehearsed and adapted to individual situations

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May attempt a one-size-fits-all communication style that does not account for different information needs ▪ Sticking to a prepared script does not leave any room for customer feedback/reaction or adjustment in the presentation in response to that input ▪ Unwilling to risk personal rejection or judgment, they may create an image or persona rather than be natural ▪ Keeps the audience at arm's length, making the presentation seem less personal to the customer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sensitive to the customer's circumstances and response, adjusting the communication of information or ideas to accommodate their need to know or level of understanding ▪ Encourages questions, comments, and feedback from the customer ▪ Backs an informal presentation with professional tools and company guarantees ▪ Gives specific details of how/who/when, promising that the complexity of delivery and servicing of the product line will be shouldered by the seller ▪ Keeps the focus on content and substance, not flash and performance ▪ Creates a presentation that is informal, low-key, and unrehearsed ▪ Talks with the customer, creating a team feeling of working together, versus directing a speech at the customer

Mindset Tips:

- Don't rely on a script for your presentation – follow a basic outline but remain flexible so that you can alter the style and content to fit your customers' reactions and priorities.
- Determine presentation agenda and objectives – but be prepared to switch gears in response to audience reaction.
- Make time in your presentation for customer feedback and questions – use this information to ensure that your message is understood.
- Anticipate potential customer concerns, objections, or questions before the meeting and work the answers into your presentation.
- Remember that you have two important goals in a small group presentation – the first is to make your audience feel comfortable and the second is to ensure they understand your message.

Success Tactics:

- Strive to listen more than you are talking, asking your customer questions to elicit participation and feedback in a conversational manner.
- Devise a checklist of items that need to be covered, but remain flexible so that you can change course should your audience appear confused or disinterested.
- Don't hide behind fancy, high-tech presentations – set the customer at ease by taking a more personal approach.
- Find a colleague who can help you practice giving presentations in a more low-key, informal manner - have this colleague role play as a variety of different customer types you may encounter.
- Adopt a more conversational style – don't speak at customers, speak with them.
- Be flexible and go where the customer wants to take you – even if it means veering from your established agenda.
- If using support materials, work from prepared handouts to create a more informal environment – analyze your presentation to see what other changes could be made to make it more personal.

Drives Toward Success by Systematically Managing Accounts

Consistently meets or exceeds sales targets through personally controlling the critical aspects of the sales processes; systematically works each account plan and anticipates problems in order to work around them; is driven to win customers' attention and treats their business as an honor, never letting them feel taken for granted

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May adopt a casual or relaxed approach that fails to project personal commitment or dedication ▪ Is comfortable with achieving average results, rising above the bottom of the performance chart but not striving to be the best ▪ Adopts a more interdependent and team-oriented approach to accomplishing goals ▪ May depend too much on fate or 'being in the right place at the right time' rather than plan and work to make things happen ▪ Expects account management plan to proceed without the need for careful monitoring and contingencies ▪ Can take customer relationships for granted and may not work at continually demonstrating appreciation for the business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meets or surpasses sales goals as a means to gain more freedom and independence ▪ Maintains personal control over those aspects of the sales and delivery process identified as top priorities ▪ Sets high self-expectations and holds associates to the same stringent standards of dedication ▪ Expects to encounter barriers a fair percentage of the time and prepares to deal with setbacks or delays in order to ensure the success of plans ▪ Concentrates full energy and attention on systematically accomplishing key tasks ▪ Places customers on a pedestal and shows them how valued they are

Mindset Tips:

- Commit to not just meeting, but exceeding, sales results by taking control of the sales and delivery process.
- Slowly elevate your sales targets until you reach the level of your peers.
- Gradually take control of the key aspects of the sales and delivery process – challenge yourself to take control of a different phase each week, until you are eventually in control of each step.
- Challenge yourself to achieve better than average results – do not become complacent with being in the middle of the performance charts.
- Never assume that plans will go as anticipated – implement a system by which you can ensure that key tasks are completed.
- Learn that waiting until problems arise is a waste of valuable resources – it takes much more time to correct a problem than to work around it in the first place.
- Remember that making your customers feel valued is an important key to your success – customers who feel underappreciated will take their business elsewhere.
- Understand that although a winning personality is an asset, charm alone will not win over customers.
- View contacts with customers as opportunities to demonstrate how much their business means to you.
- Never forget that your success is directly related to how much you appreciated your customers feel, there it only makes sense to make their satisfaction your top priority.

Success Tactics:

- Review each phase of the sales and delivery process to determine where you may be letting things slide.
- Develop regular status reports that require you to check the status of accounts – it will make the monitoring process a part of your routine.
- Do not wait for customer complaints to arise - monitor progress so that you can spot and avoid obstacles before the customer knows that they exist.
- For each customer, make a list of potential problems – having an idea of trouble spots will simplify the monitoring process.
- Empathize with customers – treat them with the same appreciation and respect that you would want if you were in their shoes.

Expands Relationships and Networks Within Accounts

Networks throughout an existing customer's organization to identify opportunities for expanding product or service purchases; uses established contacts as a referral base to identify new areas for expanded usage of currently sold products/services and new opportunities for expanded sales offerings; seeks to increase the volume of purchases by establishing relationships with multiple users

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is uncomfortable expanding the contact base within the customer's organization beyond the initial contact ▪ Expects the initial or primary customer contact(s) to be the funnel of any additional opportunities within the organization and conducts all business with that contact ▪ Takes repeat business for granted and depends upon the customer to initiate additional or altered needs for products or services ▪ Focuses on servicing immediate needs at the expense of recognizing and addressing additional or future needs that could be met ▪ Inconsistently tracks or reviews consumption, allowing a deterioration of sales cues generated by inventory management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expands relationships to include other potential users in the organization by networking through satisfied contacts ▪ Regularly audits customer relationships to uncover opportunities to build a place in the customer 'family' and solicit referral sales from the main contacts ▪ Monitors changes in the customer's focus or specifications that would alter the existing business contract ▪ Watches for new trends in the industry that could impact customer needs or service capabilities ▪ Establishes a plan to deal with the customer's ordering patterns

Mindset Tips:

- Commit to spending more time networking within your customer's organization – this way when a need arises, your name will be the first suggested.
- Remember that although your primary contact may be able to open doors to future sales, it is up to you to establish relationships with others within the company who could offer you business.
- Understand that networking beyond your primary contact could reveal supplemental information that can increase your current amount of sales.
- Realize that staying on top of your customers' reorder needs is not just good for your customers, but good for expanding your current sales base.
- Understand that some customers will not know when they need to expand their product and service usage – it's up to you to take control and step forward with suggestions.

Success Tactics:

- Work with sales professionals who successfully networks within their customers' organizations – take note of the techniques they use to make their name and their sales offerings known.
- Make sure to introduce yourself and offer product and service information to everyone you meet in the customer's organization.
- Ask your primary contact to introduce you to other members of the organization who may be interested in the products and services you offer.
- Make yourself a common fixture at your contact's company – this way you can become synonymous with the solutions you provide.
- Learn to view each customer as a key to opening new doors of opportunity within the organization.
- Devise a list of steps you can follow to remain in control of the resale process – intervene if you see changes that could affect current business volumes.
- Focus on evolving customer needs so that you are able to make suggestions and alternations to existing reorder plans.
- Be proactive by looking beyond customers' current reorder patterns to possible changes down the road – suggest other products or services that could be of use.
- Develop a system to check your customers' current and future needs.
- Step in with suggestions for product expansion rather than waiting for the customer to initiate additional orders.



937.259.1200 | 800.254.5995

ChallyAssessment@chally.com | www.chally.com