

# Cracking

## Major Accounts

### Top five tips for new sellers

I was recently asked, "If you were mentoring a new salesperson, what would be your top five sales tips and how did you learn those?"

Good question. There are so many things I'd like to tell a new seller. But what are the most important? What things could I recommend that would have the highest impact on success?

After serious deliberation, here are my top five picks:

**1. Focus on making a difference.** Nobody cares about your product, service or solution—a difficult concept for sellers to grasp. All potential clients care about is the difference you can make for their organizations.

For example, if I were to call a vice president of sales and mention that I sell sales training, they would tell me they're not interested. However, once I changed my focus to the tangible outcomes they'd get from using my sales training, the door opened wide. After all, they were extremely interested in shortening their sales cycle, reducing the ramp up time for new hire sales representatives and driving revenue growth.

**2. Slow down to speed up your sales.** When I first started selling, I was so eager to be successful that I tried to "wow" my prospects with my great product knowledge. I closed

often and early. But the more I tried to rush things, the more resistant to moving forward my prospects became. They'd present obstacles and objections that I couldn't overcome. When I learned to slow down, parcel information out over multiple meetings and simply advance the sales process one step at a time, suddenly my sales increased.

When you're scared about not getting the business, your prospects can intuitively sense your fear. One of the major symptoms is rushing the sales process.

**3. Pay the price of admission—do precall research.** To connect with large companies, you can't make 100 cold calls repeating the same line to everyone. Several years ago, corporate decision makers stopped answering their phones and rolled all calls to voice mail. They deleted most messages within seconds because they sounded like salespeople making pitches.

The only way to capture the attention of these corporate decision makers is to create a very personalized message based on in-depth research of their firm. Once I started doing this, I started setting up meetings.

**4. Create an account entry campaign.** It takes seven to 10 contacts to crack into a corporate account these days. Most sellers quit after three to five attempts. To set

up a meeting with a corporate decision maker, plan multiple touches from the onset. It takes a while to break through their busy-ness and register on their Richter scale, but it can be done.

You also can use multiple formats in your campaign: voice mail, e-mail, direct mail, invitations to teleseminars and more.

**5. Analyze your sales approach from your customer's shoes.** It's not important what you say, but what your customer hears. For example, when I was trying to reach a decision maker a while back, I decided to leave the message on my own voice mail first to see how I sounded. When I listened to my message, I was appalled. I sounded pathetic. So I worked on scripting my message and kept calling myself over and over until I finally created something I would respond to if I were the prospect.

By JILL KONRATH

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