
Solution Selling: Creating and Sustaining a Competitive Advantage

Training &
Consulting Services

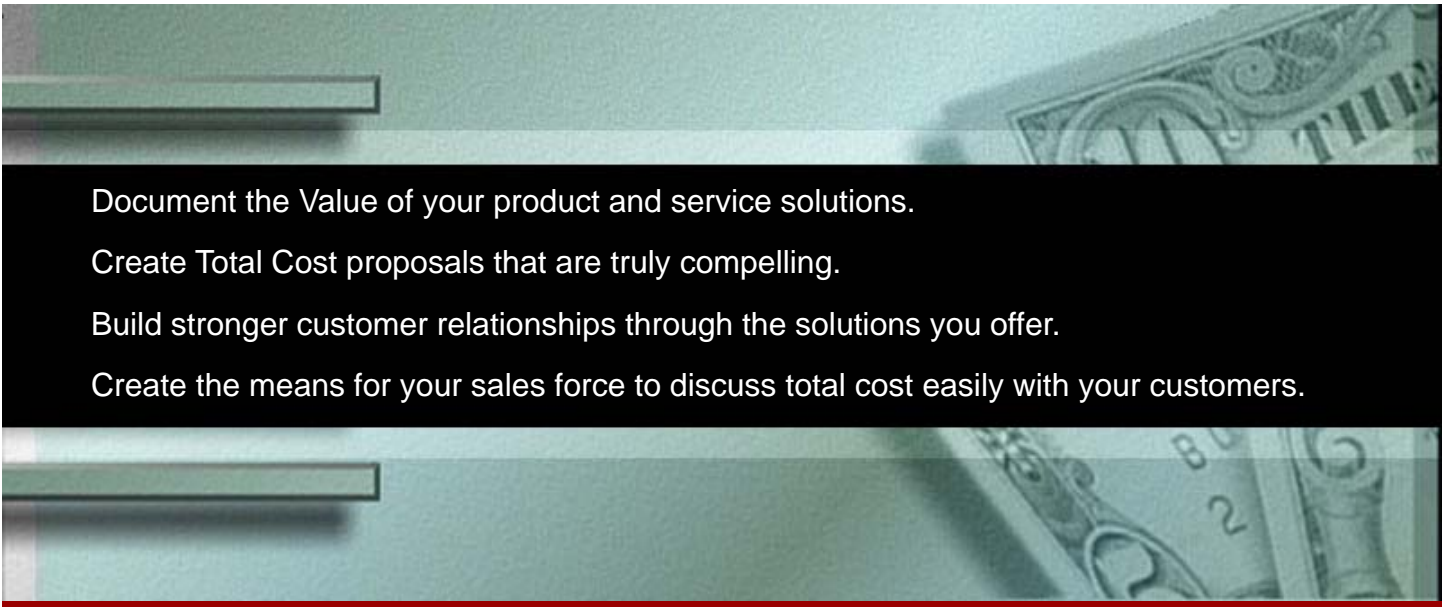
Market Trends and Total Cost

Many customers are working in closer collaboration with fewer suppliers. The opportunities this trend provides are obvious: the ability to retain and penetrate accounts for significant increases in revenues. But while the opportunities are significant, so too are the risks, including: loss of key accounts, margin erosion, and increased service requirements that further reduce potential profits.

At the same time sales organizations are facing another challenge that can dramatically impact their success in being selected and kept as the supplier of choice: purchasing is under greater pressure than ever before to reduce costs, and price is the easiest cost for them to focus on. Without the ability to demonstrate the savings your solutions provide, some customers may consider looking at alternative products and suppliers as the means to control rising prices.

As customers consider alternative sources, they are often informed by these suppliers that they can provide all of the services you can, or provide them with more cost effective product alternatives. Without the means to show the customer the true value you provide, your customers cannot understand the risks of switching, and are more willing to pursue a relationship with a different supplier or purchase alternative products.

To more effectively penetrate and retain accounts in this market environment, you need to find ways to leverage the services, expertise and products you bring a customer.



Document the Value of your product and service solutions.

Create Total Cost proposals that are truly compelling.

Build stronger customer relationships through the solutions you offer.

Create the means for your sales force to discuss total cost easily with your customers.



Strategic Business Solutions L.L.C.

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Are Your Solutions Paying Off?

Leveraging what you bring to the customer starts with understanding why it is important to them. In most cases this means you have provided them with either a product or service solution that helps resolve a known need. But the solution is only viewed as valuable if it helps the customer to achieve their objectives more effectively or reduces their operating costs to a greater extent than other solutions.

We all talk about the Value we Add. And in some cases we even document it. But the vast majority of documented savings, over 80% for most sales organizations, is in the area of price reduction. Why: because it is the easiest savings to measure and demonstrate to the customer. Yet when this is the primary savings we demonstrate, it also creates the impression that price is the true value you add.

The question you have to ask yourself is: Do you provide product and service solutions that reduce costs other than price? If the answer is yes, you need to find a way to document the savings, or be prepared to accept a lower margin because the value you added is not seen by the customer.

Without the means to involve your sales force in documenting the value they add on a daily basis, much of the value you add is lost. So too is the competitive advantage these solutions help you to achieve.

One of the most difficult requirements that we must endeavor to comply to is the customer's expectation of documented cost savings. This program (training and software) allows you to do that in a systematic and straight forward fashion that will help your sales people think outside the box.

Gerard Kollar
Director Corporate Accounts
Graybar

This subject (documenting and selling value added) is an absolute necessity to our survival and growth. It documents and captures what we do.

Troy Entwisle
Regional Manager
Werner Electric



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Results: Profit Improvement

When a solution provides you with a competitive advantage it either allows you to gain/retain more sales or command a higher price. For example:

Consider your key accounts, how many of them are at risk of switching suppliers? What if you were able to demonstrate significantly greater savings, and were able to stop even one key customer from switching...what would be the profit impact?

Now consider the key accounts you have targeted. Could demonstrating the Total Cost impact your solutions provide help you capture more accounts?

Or, what if through your ability to demonstrate your value, you were able to avoid a price reduction or capture an account at a higher margin?

By demonstrating the value you provide, you create a competitive distinction, one that helps you to be seen as the supplier of choice. And at the same time allows you the opportunity to enhance your profitability.

Quit giving your services away ... not sure I can get back credit for all we have done...but now it will be easier for us to "prove" what we have done from this point forward.

*Charley Slagle
Vice President
Tool Crib, Inc.*

Every person responsible for the sales of technical / automation products should understand this method of proving your value.

*Frank Hurtte
VP Technology
Van Meter Industrial*



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Support in Creating a Competitive Advantage

Since 1987 we have been helping companies create and sustain a competitive advantage through the solutions they provide. We are the recognized leader in documenting the value companies add in a number of industries and we can help you to:

1. Develop the means to document the value added from both your product and service solutions.
2. Build stronger relationships with existing customers.
3. Create compelling Total Cost proposals.
4. Leverage the strengths and abilities you bring to the relationship to help position yourself as the supplier of choice.
5. Provide the means for your sales force to measure and discuss your value with ease.

To help you accomplish this, we provide a number of services, including:

1. Joint workshops with your customers for identifying total cost reduction opportunities and the development of the strategies for on-going collaboration in finding future solutions.
2. Internal skill set for identifying and measuring and working with customers on a total cost basis.
3. Training on selling solutions: aimed at building collaborative relationships where you are the supplier of choice due to lowest total cost.
4. Training on the skill set for measuring total cost, and using the SalesStrat software.
5. Training and supporting the internal experts on how to support the field sales team.
6. Support in documenting/measuring actual solutions to customers.

If you provide solutions and need to create a competitive distinction in the marketplace, call us. Let us show you what we can do to make you the supplier of choice.



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