



MARKS & ASSOCIATES Advanced Consultative Selling

The consultative salesperson's job is to solve problems for the customer. Unlike a "vendor" who sells based on price and product features, a consultative sales person sells using analytical and problem solving skills combined with the ability to forge a strong relationship with the customer. The consultative salesperson is a diagnostician - using inductive and deductive reasoning to really understand the prospect's needs and align his or her solutions to the goals and issues of the customer. This sense of alignment can convince the customer that the salesperson might actually be able to add business value beyond the product he or she is selling. That is how strong relationships are formed - both parties add value to each other.

Think of the consultative sales person as being like a doctor. Doctors have two primary functions - diagnosis and treatment. The "vendor" focuses on the treatment exclusively and prescribes whatever product he or she is selling this week, month or year. Then he relies on price to close the deal. Any doctor can write any prescription. The key is writing the right prescription to solve the problem. That is where the diagnostics come in.

Our Advanced Consultative Selling class teaches diagnostic and treatment skills. It helps the sales person develop:

- Enhanced questioning ability to really learn the customers business
- Strong inductive reasoning skills to understand the key issues in the customer/prospect firm
- Superior closing skills based upon the diagnostics used in the engagement
- Substantially improved ability to sell more deeply into each relationship
- Greatly improved sales presentations skills
- Reduced reliance on old and tired techniques
- Greater ability to understand opportunities and how they tie to still more opportunities
- A huge increase in confidence

The single most frequent complaint about bankers is that, "They don't know my business." If bank salespeople spent as much energy understanding the customer's business as a lender might spend preparing to convince the credit committee that a loan should be approved, we would have happier customers who buy many more products from us.

This advanced, two-day class is designed to meet that need. It is for the more experienced sales staff. It takes them to a much higher level of skills development by using a series of instructional lectures, role-playing and case work. It uses a series of exercises that will hone their skills and dramatically improve their confidence and success rate on calls.

It recognizes that the best place to invest your scarce training dollars is in making sure your people not only get in the door of prospects but sell more deeply into existing customers. Investing in a higher level of training for your sales staff so they can produce more work from existing customers will pay off faster than increasing the number of "sales calls" they have to make or prospects they have to cold call. The class can be targeted to your better

performers to give them added skills. Experience shows that training dollars invested in top performers returns a much greater value to the bank than broadly executed sales training available to all the staff.

Bringing value to a customer isn't always easy. We can talk about relationship management but the truth is that it usually means giving away products or cutting prices. It's also almost always described from the bank's point of view. Good consultative salespeople understand that relationship management is about the customer's needs and problems. More than that, they know what those needs and problems are and are constantly thinking about ways to add value by satisfying those needs and solving those problems.

This class takes your sales staff beyond the basic skills acquisition phase of training. It helps them hone and solidify their skills to allow them to bring real value to the interaction with customers and prospects. At the completion of this training your people will have the tools to better understand the customer's needs, they will sell more, sell more deeply and forge a stronger relationship with your customers. That is what relationship management was always meant to be.