



MARKS & ASSOCIATES

Building & Managing Key Relationships - Course Outline

Strategic approach to account planning, managing important relationships

As the central point of client contact and sales activity, bank relationship and treasury managers are valuable resources. Too often they spend precious time chasing potential clients and businesses that simply do not pay off or they fail to optimize what should be expansive relationships. Why? The business may be lost to the competition, it may be won and turn out to be a poor investment. Equally frustrating is discovering that you have acquired a client but failed to help them sufficiently by providing the right mix of products at the right time leaving savings for them and revenue for you on the table.

Taught in a workshop format, this session shows relationship managers how to effectively focus their limited time on those key clients where the investment will pay off. Every banker has the prospective client he has been chasing for months; the relationship she has been trying to expand; the target prospect that senior management wants to bank. Using the tools and techniques discussed in this workshop, bankers will be able to convert these problems into more business and better relationships. Participants learn how to manage their relationships by actively using account planning, marketing themselves, networking, team-building, planning and positioning, and SWOT (strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-trends) analysis.

The session uses a combination of workshop activities, lecture, discussion, real life case studies and other activities to sharpen participants' vision and planning skills. Participants are asked to prepare a brief case study using an existing or prospective firm. They are instructed to select one of these examples based on its strategic importance in terms of revenue, industry, or senior management agendas. They could also chose a client company that seems to be "at risk" or a sale that went wrong. The participants will work with the case studies in the class sessions so at the conclusion they will have a real-life plan for dealing with that relationship in addition to having mastered the skills to effectively plan for other key accounts.

"Building & Managing Key Relationships" is a two-day course taught on site. It is designed for individual relationship or treasury managers with attendance limited to 12-15 people. As an option, the class can be configured for 4 to 6 sales teams or cross-disciplinary teams, including members from relationship management, various product specialty areas, customer support, operations, product management and other relevant areas. A team can include between three and six people.

Following is a general outline of the workshop.

I. Relationship Dynamics: Most Bankers understand how relationships are supposed to work, but few know what to do when things go wrong.

- A. How they work
- B. How they change
- C. Evaluating relationship styles
- D. The importance of planning for the client's and the bank's success

II. Relationship Management Tools: Relationship Management is not just selling more and more bank products and services. It is building a base of mutual trust and becoming one of the few that is called on to help that firm when organizational issues arise

- A. Being a "Relationship "Manager": How much can you actually manage?
- B. Leveraging Your Relationship Investments: Using your time to do things that help you achieve several goals
- C. Analyzing the Decision-Making Structure
- D. Team-Building: Working with others internally and externally to build stronger ties to the client. Creating internal teams

III. Using a Focused Relationship Strategy: Bankers have many clients and prospects and they all require different expenditures of time and attention. Your staff must learn to prioritize clients so they can focus their scarce resources wisely.

- A. Targeting Key Clients: Looking for the existing and prospective clients that are worth investing in a focused relationship strategy
- B. Climbing the business relationship hierarchy: How to go from selling commodity-like, price sensitive products to being viewed by the company as an external asset who solves organizational problems
- C. Evaluating Your Current Relationship Position: What do you know about the company? How do they see you? How do you see yourself, the relationship and them? How do you want to be seen?
- D. Setting strategic relationship goals: Changing your way of viewing the relationship and articulating your goals in terms of bringing value to the customer. What are your target revenues, target dates, target events, target decisions?
- E. Focusing Your Relationship Investment: Identifying which actions are likely to help you reach your target
- F. Knowing When to Say When: Dumping lost causes and sorting through marginal opportunities.
- G. Dealing With Lost Business: Understanding the client's mind-set; debriefing and analyzing what was actually said, not just what we heard

IV. Developing a Relationship Action Plan: Good relationship management requires planning. Learning these planning techniques will change the way you see a relationship from the very beginning.

- A. Setting objectives: These are stepping-stones toward your overall relationship goal. They provide incentives to keep you moving forward
- B. Creating milestones: Points where you measure your progress
- C. Closing the Gap: Recognizing the point in all relationships when its time to step up your efforts to get where you want to be and doing something about it

V. Summary

Companies do not live in a vacuum. There is a constant flow of factors that affect the firms which come from inside and outside the organization. External factors such as: Market demand fluctuations, interest rate changes, competition, access to key suppliers, cost of new machinery, new technologies and regulatory issues are just a few that bombard all firms. Internal issues including: Political issues, managerial changes, and other pressures from the board, access to qualified and talented staff and a host of other issues also affects firms on a daily basis.

As companies change, no matter what the reason, your people must be able to help that firm cope with the changes, many of which will affect cash flows, both long and short-term, as well as assisting them in keeping control over their financial profile. Understanding where your prospects and clients are going can help you to make the kinds of recommendations to the firm that will draw you into the trusted circle of advisers, so you are not just another banker.

This session will teach your people how to think more like a strategic planner and focus on issues beyond the sale of your products and services to help the client leverage what you offer for their gain. That is how you build and maintain key relationships.