Creating Your
IT Services
Sales Playbook

Finally...An Honest, Straightforward And Extremely Powerful Method For Closing IT Services Sales Without Discounting, Stupid Sales Tricks Or A Lot Of "Convincing"

How would you like to have prospects take your advice and close more sales WITHOUT playing games, discounting or a lot of "needy" follow-up? To put an end to cold prospecting and command more respect from the prospects you meet with? To close a greater percentage of sales without discounting? To reduce or greatly reduce sales stalls, delays and prospects that "go dark" and suddenly stop returning your calls?

If you're a CEO of an IT services company: How would you like to get your sales team to be far more CONSISTENT and two to three times more productive than the industry norm? To get new salespeople closing sales and profitable in weeks rather than months? To avoid having them fail to produce at all? To have MOTIVATED salespeople?

Salespeople don't burn out from selling; they burn out from cold prospecting and not having any quality prospects to sell to. If you want to really motivate your sales team, figure out a way to feed them a steady flow of high-quality leads so they're not getting worn down and burned out from the daily grind of cold prospecting.

ALL of this is 100% possible – but to accomplish these results requires more than an "incremental improvement" approach to selling. It requires a completely different and far more strategic approach to MARKETING, coupled with a more organized, sophisticated approach to how you engage with (and sell) prospects.

Why Most Sales Training Is Fundamentally Flawed

There are TWO major flaws in practically every sales training program on the market today.

The FIRST is that they don't address the elephant in the room that is preventing most companies from successfully winning more business – that is their inability to articulate WHY a prospect should buy from them over all other competitors and options available. Most sales trainers will teach you to talk about the BENEFITS instead of FEATURES, which is solid advice. However, that's not the only hurdle you need to overcome. Prospects do NOT lack options for IT support. If they need to find an IT services company (or application developer, phone system, etc.), they are only a 5-second Google search away from getting a LONG list of companies who would be happy to sell it to them.

Against popular belief, not all prospects have "price" as their #1 criterion for choosing an IT company; but when all the providers they find appear to be selling pretty much the same services, using the same tools at the same price point using the same platitudes of "We're proactive," or "We're the BEST!" prospect will DEFAULT to choosing a lesser expensive option because that's the ONLY differentiator they can determine.

So if YOU are struggling with price resistance and are finding it difficult to get invited in to more prospective clients' offices to talk about being their IT department, h**ere are three things to keep in mind:**

1. <u>No one knows how good you are BEFORE the sale; before they buy, they only know how good your MARKETNG is</u>. And no one is going to leave an IT provider that is good for someone *potentially* better. This is why having a USP, or unique selling proposition, is so critical.

2. The easier it is for someone to do what you do, **the LESS you'll get paid to do it**. Ask yourself, "How many other IT firms can do what I do?" Or more to the point, "How many other IT firms can SAY they can do what I do?" If you can't deliver a service that is significantly more valuable that your competition, how can you expect to get a flood of prospects to want to talk to you?

3. Given no other logical, compelling reason upon which to make a decision, a prospect will ALWAYS buy on price.

But instead of working on fixing these fundamental flaws, sales trainers try to teach you manipulative techniques for getting someone to like you and build rapport, like sending a little thank-you note after a meeting or looking around in their office for cues about what this person is interested in so you can get them talking about it. While all of these tactics work to some degree, it's just putting lipstick on a pig if you can't clearly and powerfully articulate why a prospect should do business with YOU over any and every other option available.

The second fatal flaw in most sales training programs is that they teach you how to be a better SALESPERSON. What's wrong with that, you say? In a word, *everything*. The LAST thing you want to look like, act like or be perceived as IS a salesperson.

Think about how salespeople are treated: "No Soliciting" signs are hung on office doors. Secretaries are instructed to filter out all sales calls that come into the office and block any salespeople who happen to wander in. You go into a store and the salesperson says, "Can I help you?" Your response? "No thanks…just looking," even IF you went in to buy something. A Gallup poll listed salespeople LOWER on the trust scale than politicians and lawyers! We all know there is a universal, negative, knee-jerk response to salespeople, so if you are perceived to be a salesperson, you're STARTING with a huge disadvantage.

What I coach my clients to do is to use marketing to position themselves as a trusted advisor and a celebrity expert. Fail to do this and you'll be greeted with distain and disrespect because you're "just a sales guy." Prospects (even honest ones) will feel no remorse if they lie to you, block you, ignore you or disregard any advice or recommendations you make.

To combat this, sales trainers tell people to work the referral angle as much as possible – which is great advice EXCEPT you can't always hit your goals on referrals alone. Plus, you're *still* perceived as a salesperson and, while you'll be treated more kindly, you lack the authority and the power to influence that prospect.

The second way salespeople try to combat prospects' resistance to talk to them is through gimmicks and tricks. They reason, "If I send the gatekeeper a gift before I call, maybe it will soften her up enough that I can get through to the decision maker." Or they try to call after hours, when the gatekeeper isn't there to block them. Or they'll tell you to call the gatekeeper by their first name, compliment them and ask for their help so they feel important. Or sales trainers tell you to be sneaky about how you describe who you are and what you're calling about so the gatekeeper thinks you're a friend of the decision maker (yeah, right…no one has tried *that* before, right?).

So to avoid the whole "salesperson" trap, you need a marketing system that will ATTRACT prospects predetermined to do business with you by positioning you as an authority specialist in solving a specific business problem they need solved – NOT as a computer repair guy or salesperson. That process is outlined in our flagship program, **The Technology Marketing Toolkit**. Of course, generating those INBOUND leads properly is step one. You STILL need a sales process that will carry them over the line to becoming raving-fan clients – which brings me to my next critical point…

One Of The Most Valuable, Moneymaking Assets You Can Develop In Your IT Services Business

One of the most lucrative assets you can develop for your organization is a sales SYSTEM. By definition, a system is something that happens the same way in the same order every single time to produce a consistent result. When you have a good sales system:

- You can rely on your sales process to consistently close business instead of having a roller coaster ride of one really good month followed by months of dry spells and slumps.
- You get greater performance from your sales team, which means you don't need to hire as many to get the same results.
- You can get new salespeople producing in a month or two versus 6 months or more.
- You can know with certainty what your sales are going to be this month, next month or this quarter, which gives you more confidence and peace of mind about cash flow, making payroll and investing in growth.

But if you look at most IT services firms, they are woefully lacking ANY process or system for selling. They're completely winging it and, if pressed, couldn't articulate the process they use to close a sale; and even if they *could*, they're almost never following the process they think they have. Worse yet, they've gotten lazy about selling because they've only had to close referrals, which are the lowest of low-hanging fruit – so they can "show up and throw up" and still manage to close some sales. Imagine if you took that same lazy, disorganized, "seat-of-your-pants" approach to servicing clients! You'd have chaos!

That's why every IT services company needs to have a Sales Playbook, which is a series of systems designed to enable them to close more business with more consistency, less resistance and at a higher profit margin than the majority of their competition, who are too lazy or too stupid to work at this. It also allows them to grow their sales team in quantity AND quality.

What follows is a high-level outline of what your Sales Playbook must contain. Your Playbook should be a living document of information, systems and processes that you and your sales team live by.

There IS a "right way" to do just about anything; so why should you and your sales team waste a single minute making the SAME mistakes over and over again, burning leads, losing opportunities and simply not being as productive as possible? That is why a Sales Playbook is so critical to your organization.

Need A Good Sales Process Fast? Our Ultimate IT Sales And Persuasion Blueprint contains a complete, comprehensive Sales Playbook for IT services. This program covers everything you need to close more sales faster including compensation plan, job scorecards, closing strategies, overcoming objections and much, much more. For more information on this program, contact us at 615-790-5011 or e-mail my team at ask@technologymarketingtoolkit.com. You can also learn more by going to www.sales-a-palooza.com

What Your Sales Playbook Must Contain:

Company Information:

- The vision and mission of your company.
- Company history (how you got started, why you got started).
- Company org chart detailing the chain of command and who does what.
- Your company values; specifically, what will make you successful here and what will get you fired.
- Company goals for the quarter, year and 5-10 years.
- Detailed outline of the products and services your company delivers and the unique benefits of each product/service, who they are most appropriate for, how they are priced, margins expected for each one, etc.
- The specific target market(s) your company focuses on, with a detailed demographic and psychographic profile of your ideal client.
- Your company's USP, outlining specifics as to why someone should hire you over the competition, along with a list of known competitors and how to unseat that incumbent (strengths and weaknesses).

Sales Scorecard For Each Position:

- A document that details the mission/purpose of the position.
- The top three results they are expected to generate that are specific and measurable (these results cannot be open to interpretation or opinion).
- A list of the specific activities and responsibilities they must perform.
- Your compensation plan; how they get paid and how they progress in your company to earn more.
    - Clear, specific goals they must achieve, and by when (quota).
    - Minimum performance standards (sales/profits) to keep your job.

Employee/Team Training:

I recommend having a list of things they need to know how to do OUTSIDE OF SELLING as a checklist for YOU to conduct training and make sure they know how to do them correctly. *Examples:*

- How to answer the phone (verbally) as well as how to use the phone system properly.
- Appropriate use of company data, IT, e-mail, etc. (AUP training).
- How to process a contract, both for a NEW client and a returning one (no changing contracts unless approved by management; scan and save it to the server using this naming convention in the sponsor's folder; deliver to the client as a PDF signed for them to countersign, etc.).
- How to collect payment, when the money is due, how to take payment via a check, credit card, bank transfer, etc.
- How to deal with an unhappy client or prospect.
- How to generate (and deliver) a quote with correct profitability.
- How to add a record (prospect) into your CRM, including what information must be entered, how it should be entered, etc.
- How to use your CRM (in general), including pipeline reports, scheduling follow-up activities, updating key fields (like a status field), etc.
- How to provide you with reports on activities, sales closed, pipeline, etc.
- Their responsibilities AFTER the sale is closed.

Marketing Collateral

- Service name, logo and description.
    - Web page
    - Brochure
    - FAQ sheet
- Overview of the various levels and pricing for managed services plans (if applicable) or other services you provide.
- Folder for holding materials for initial meeting with business card holder.
- Shock and Awe box.
    - A cover-letter template (confirms the meeting, instructs them on what the Shock and Awe box is, what content is inside, what to do before the meeting and what will happen during the consult).
    - FAQ sheet.
    - Testimonial book or document with testimonials that match your prospect.
    - Self-published book and/or free report(s).
    - Service provider comparison chart.
    - Guarantee certificate.
    - Audio business card.
    - Other credibility-building info (news articles, newsletters, etc.).

- Business card.
- Logo materials, such as pens, stress hammer, chocolate (winter only or, if hand-delivered, in summer), notepads or other appropriate logo items.

A Detailed Sales Process:

NOTE: You will need a different Playbook for each sales role. For example, an inside salesperson calling on existing accounts will have a different set of activities and goals than an outside salesperson hunting new accounts.

Inside Sales (Appointment Setters)

- Daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly ACTIVITIES they must perform and details on how these activities should be performed.
  - Dials per day/week
  - Contacts per day/week
  - Appointments set per day/week
  - Appointments SAT per day/week (goal)
- Scripts for live answer and voice mail for EVERY campaign and lead type (referrals will have a different process than cold calls, for example).
- A process for how many times they should call before giving up, based on the lead, situation or marketing campaign (you might want more follow-up on a referral than on someone you mailed cold who has not expressed interest).
- What to send in advance of an appointment.
- How to confirm an appointment.
- How to handle a "Take me off your list" request.
- How to handle a "Call me back in a month" request.
- How to update a record in the CRM.

Outside Sales (Closers)

- A scripted, detailed process for each phase of the sales process:
  - Qualify
  - Discovery
  - Diagnose
  - Prescribe
  - Close
- A clear set of RULES and CODE OF CONDUCT. (Example: How to dress when meeting with clients; how to answer the phone; all prospects' and clients' calls should be answered the SAME DAY; no going to the strip club with clients, etc.)
- A detailed profile of who your IDEAL client is so they know WHO they are supposed to be pursuing and WHY.

- A clearly defined "product" for them to sell that they can easily describe and explain to a prospective client.
- Daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly ACTIVITIES they must perform and details on how these activities should be performed. Example:
  - How to prospect (give them a specific process).
  - A time-management plan to help them structure their day to maximize productivity.
  - How many calls, appointments, contracts, sales, etc., they should be making every day, week, month, quarter and year.
- How to respond to an RFP.
- A list of common objections and a PROCESS for eliminating them and/or addressing them.
- A list of FAQs and well-thought-out answers. (This should be in your marketing collateral as well.)
- A process for asking for (and following up on, rewarding) referrals.
- A process detailing what is expected of the salesperson to help onboard the client.

Account Managers (Farmers)

- Daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly ACTIVITIES they must perform and details on how these activities should be performed.
  - Clients called per week.
  - Meetings, appointments or other "touch point" minimums for client engagement and outreach.
- A strategic plan for high-level accounts (if appropriate for their position).
- Scripts for handling an upset or disgruntled client.
- Scripts and process for selling EACH of the various products and services you offer, including hot buttons, objections, the product's USP, etc.
- How to specifically look for opportunities in every account.