



Act Big Consulting

Small & Medium Business Marketing & IT

"Put the right foot forward and leave greater impressions."

Making the Most of Your Sales Force Investment

Translate Strategy into Sales

An effective sales force can mean the difference between excellent and mediocre bottom-line performance for small and medium businesses (SMB), so it's no surprise that SMB invest heavily in their sales initiatives. Successful SMB capitalize on this investment by effectively translating strategy into real processes for salespeople who regularly interact with its customers. The sales force is an extension of the organization, and by aligning incentives with corporate objectives, providing reps with integrated, current product and customer information, training them to manage their customer bases as individual businesses, and structuring territories to increase value for customers.

Connect Your Strategy to the Marketplace.

Get management to exert market influence. It's critical to have "top-down" support for the strategies being introduced into the field so market implementations can be made less arbitrary and achieve greater success.

Organize around customer value.

Whether you have your sales force or operate through a distribution network, bringing strategy into the field means aligning your sales force by the natural organization of your customers. The implementation of this seemingly simple and logical strategy is often hindered by historical sales territories and lack of change management planning and support from senior management.

Bridge the sales and marketing gap.

Marketing develops product strategy and sales people implement it. By creating streamlined communications between sales and marketing you initiate an ongoing dialogue between you and your customers.

Move decision-making closer to the customer.

Customers won't wait while decisions trickle down through layers of corporate decision makers. Still, you can't ascribe unlimited discretionary power to every sales channel. The challenge is to migrate decision making ability as close to the customer as possible by building tools that support sound, consistent judgement in line with corporate business rules.



AB Approach to Sales Force Optimization

Your sales force is a vital asset in achieving overall business strategies. AB will work closely with both the sales force and senior executives to identify gaps and devise and implement solutions that will have the greatest impact on sales performance. Our non-invasive approach involves people at all levels without interfering with their most important responsibilities - running your company and generating sales. Our structured, systematic approach accelerates positive results. Here are some of the elements:

Let strategy set the course. Maximize value by aligning the size, structure, and incentive system of the sales force with corporate strategy.

Inventory the customers. Use data-intensive analytics to reveal who the high-value customers are today, who will be tomorrow, and how your sales force can influence customer buying decisions.

Check in with the sales force. Interviews and custom surveys identify performance improvement opportunities from the field, a fertile ground for early successes.

Investigate the competition. Due diligence and benchmarking provide a reality check and uncover creative ideas from the marketplace.

Connect the internals. Operationalizing strategy requires communication and coordination. We help you transfer knowledge across departments and across markets.

Get the job done. Helping organizations convert ideas into actions that lead to lasting performance for small and medium sized sales forces is an Act Big strength. We'll help you develop the tools, processes, and under-laying technology necessary to focus your sales initiatives and keep them focused.

Lessons Learned and Cautionary Notes

Act Big's experience in helping organizations improve their sales force effectiveness has given us several insights that you can benefit from. For example:

Be careful; you might get what you ask for. A good incentive system makes the objectives of your organization the objectives of your sales force. So when the system is poorly conceived or too complicated, you end up paying sales people to ignore corporate goals. More data probably isn't the answer. Reams of unsynthesized data confuse sales efforts and waste time. Instead, provide actionable tools and information that enable them to consistently identify and pursue high-value customers.

Markets change faster than sales forces. The best selling teams have the capabilities, resources, and flexibility to serve new customer structures, whether or not their own alignment remains unchanged. Generic training



programs that teach every sales person operating in every market how to treat every customer are of little value. Although the product knowledge may need to be the same, learning to think strategically about customers and influence their buying behavior requires a market-based approach.

The Bottom Line

Act Big Consulting helps clients maximize the return on their sales force investments by taking strategy into the field. For more information write to solutions@actbigger.com or call 617.480.4213.

About Act Big Consulting

Act Big Consulting (AB) is a professional services firm delivering customer-focused business solutions to small and medium businesses (SMB). AB combines leading-edge customer marketing technologies with business strategy to help clients build customer loyalty. By creating the necessary connection between technology and strategy, AB builds solutions that help clients derive greater internal business performance and cultivate long-term relationships with their most valuable customers.

Act Big specializes in services helping small and medium businesses derive growth and brand loyalty from enhanced customer understanding and integrated marketing. Founded in 2001, Act Big Consulting serves clients nationwide from offices in Boston, Massachusetts. For more information about our solutions and services, contact askbig@actbigger.com or call 617.480.4213.