



John Care • Aron Bohlig

MASTERING TECHNICAL SALES

SECOND EDITION

THE SALES ENGINEER'S HANDBOOK



Contents

Acknowledgments	xvii
1 Introduction: Why Study “Technical Sales”?	1
New SE	4
Experienced SE	5
Sales Manager or Sales Trainer	5
Sales Representative	6
Marketing and Product Management	6
Technical Consultant	6
2 An Overview of the Sales Process	7
Definition of the Market	8
Marketing Campaigns	8
<i>Customer Events</i>	9
<i>Trade Shows and Seminars</i>	9
<i>Mailing Lists and Outbound Calling Campaigns</i>	9
<i>Partners</i>	9
Lead Qualification	10
Request for Proposal	10
Needs Analysis, Discovery, and First Customer Engagement	11
Presentation, Demonstration, and Proposal	11
<i>Presentation</i>	11
<i>Demonstration</i>	12
<i>Proposal</i>	12
Evaluation (Optional)	12
Negotiations: Close or Lose—Getting the Deal	12

Postsales Support and Ongoing Account Management	13
Summary	13
3 Lead Qualification	17
You Can Get Leads Too	19
Lead Quality	19
<i>Lead Ratings</i>	19
<i>Qualification Criteria</i>	20
<i>Acute Organizational Pain Can Trump Budget, Time Frame, and Fit</i>	23
Effective Lead Qualification	23
<i>Competitive Implications of Technical Qualification Criteria</i>	23
<i>Making the Decision to Say No</i>	24
<i>Defending Your Position When the Sales Rep Disagrees</i>	24
<i>Low-Cost Fallback Strategies</i>	24
Internal Roles in the Lead Qualification Process	25
<i>Sales Representative</i>	25
<i>Telemarketer/Lead Development</i>	26
<i>Sales Management</i>	26
<i>SE</i>	26
<i>Care and Feeding of the Telemarketing Team</i>	27
Lead Qualification in Action: The Process with Three Common Scenarios	27
<i>Solicited Leads</i>	27
<i>Unsolicited Leads</i>	28
<i>Current Projects or Recommended Leads</i>	28
Summary	29
4 The RFP Process	31
Creation of an RFP	31
Basic Rule of RFPs	32
The Go/No-Go Decision	33
Internally Scoring the RFP	34
Handling Deadlines	35
Strategies for Avoiding an RFP	36
The Alternate Response Tactic	37
Completing the RFP	38
Presentation and Follow-Up	39
Summary	40
Appendix 4A	42

5 Needs Analysis and Discovery	43
Overview	43
Why Discovery Is Critical	44
The Seven-Step Needs Analysis Approach	45
<i>Step 1: Identify Needed Information</i>	45
<i>Step 2: Build the Perfect Pitch</i>	48
<i>Step 3: Explain the Needs Analysis Process</i>	50
<i>Step 4: Interview Key Customers</i>	52
<i>Step 5: Observe Current Processes—Get to Know the End User</i>	54
<i>Step 6: Synthesize Information</i>	54
<i>Step 7: Prepare and Present Summary</i>	55
<i>Wrap-Up</i>	56
Customizing the Discovery Process	57
<i>Getting the Economics Right</i>	57
<i>Adapt Your Questions to Your Audience</i>	58
Summary	60
6 Successful Customer Engagement	61
First Contact	62
<i>Remember What They Want from You</i>	63
<i>Dissecting Project Dynamics</i>	64
<i>Back the Strongest Faction</i>	64
Identify the People You Need to Know	65
<i>Use Your Intuition</i>	65
<i>But Don't Forget to Use Your Brain</i>	65
<i>Covering the Whole Team, Including the Minor Players</i>	66
Coaches	66
<i>Where to Find Coaches</i>	68
<i>What If There Are No Obvious Options?</i>	68
<i>How to Get to Potential Coaches</i>	68
<i>Developing the Coach</i>	69
<i>The Unconscious Coach</i>	69
<i>Maintaining the Relationship</i>	69
Credibility	70
<i>Maintaining Credibility</i>	70
<i>Losing Credibility</i>	71
<i>Trying to Regain Credibility</i>	71
Know What You Don't Know	71
Summary	72

7 The Perfect Pitch	73
Developing a Focused Message	74
<i>Start with the Structure</i>	74
<i>Do a Data Dump to Identify Solution and Proof Points</i>	75
<i>Organize the Ideas</i>	76
<i>Focus the Message</i>	76
<i>Transfer to PowerPoint</i>	76
Nonverbal Delivery Skills	77
Verbal Delivery Skills	79
<i>Strategize the Start</i>	81
Special Situations	82
<i>Very Large Audiences</i>	82
<i>Presenting Via Teleconference</i>	83
<i>Around the Conference Room Table</i>	83
<i>Feature and Function Presentations</i>	84
<i>Using Humor</i>	84
Using Nervous Energy to Your Advantage	84
Finish Strongly	86
Summary	86
8 The Dash to Demo	89
Why Does the Dash to Demo Occur?	91
“The Product” Becomes “The Solution”	91
Risk Mitigation	92
Failing to Plan Is Planning to Fail	92
Logistical Implications	94
The Agenda	96
Preparing the Way	96
The Audience	98
<i>Segment the Audience</i>	99
<i>Dealing with Technical and Business Audiences</i>	99
Checkpoint Charlie	100
Summary	101
Appendix 8A: Sample Agenda	102
9 Snap Demos	105
Scoping the Snap Demo	106
Structuring the Snap Demo	107
Exhibit 9.1: Sample Snap Demo Structure	107
Keep the Demo Snappy	108

Wrapping the Snap Demo (Tell Them What They Saw)	109
Snap Demos for Executive Audiences	109
Closing the Demo and Establishing Next Steps	110
Snap Demo Considerations	110
Summary	110
10 Remote Demonstrations and Webcasts	113
The Basic Premise	113
Advantages and Disadvantages of the Remote Demonstration	114
Best Practices in Preparing for a Webcast	116
The First 3 Minutes are Critical	118
Effectively Constructing and Delivering PowerPoint for a Webcast	119
Some Really Bad Habits to Avoid	120
Engaging the Audience	121
Prime Time for Webcasts	121
The Wrap-Up	122
Summary	123
11 Evaluation Strategies	125
Developing the Strategy	125
<i>Conducting an Evaluation: How Did We Get Here?</i>	125
<i>Negotiating Engagement in a Trial</i>	126
<i>How Do You Define Success?</i>	127
How to Win: Determining the Success Criteria	127
<i>How to Ensure Success: Evaluating the Success Criteria</i>	128
<i>Intellectually Closing the Deal</i>	129
<i>Working Backward from the Definition of Success</i>	130
Running a Trial	130
<i>Trial Phases</i>	130
<i>Basic Trial Organization</i>	134
<i>Training</i>	136
<i>Documentation</i>	136
<i>Equipment</i>	137
<i>Networking and Access</i>	138
Anticipate and Outdeliver Your Competitor	138
Avoiding a Trial	139
<i>Does the Customer Do Trials?</i>	140
<i>Are They Paying for the Pilot?</i>	140
<i>Using References</i>	141
Summary	141

12 Contract Negotiation and Pricing	143
An Introductory Approach	144
Creative Ways to Say Nothing	145
Understanding the Quote	145
An Advanced Tactic	145
Summary	146
13 Sanity After the Sale	149
Developing the Transition Plan	150
Ongoing Engagement Plan	151
Customer Meetings: Project Kickoff	151
<i>During Deployment</i>	151
<i>After Rollout</i>	151
Leveraging the Rest of the Sales Team	153
<i>The Inside Sales Team</i>	153
<i>Executives</i>	153
Having a Fallback Strategy	153
Personal Benefits of Postsales Support	153
<i>Personal References</i>	154
<i>Maintain Relationships for Add-On Sales</i>	155
<i>Keep Your Reservoir of Customer Stories Full</i>	155
<i>Potential for Customer Satisfaction Objectives</i>	155
<i>Good Way to Build Skills</i>	156
<i>Benefit to the Customer: Free Consulting</i>	156
<i>Justifying Engagement with Your Management</i>	156
<i>Where to Draw the Line</i>	156
Troubleshooting the Handoff	157
<i>Major Accounts Have Special Requirements</i>	157
<i>Customer Skimps on Training</i>	158
<i>Customer Tries to Do It Themselves</i>	158
<i>Working With System Integrators</i>	159
Summary	159
Appendix 13A: Record-Keeping Forms for Postsales Information	161
14 Getting Started	163
The Ramp Process	163
<i>Setting Goals with Your Manager</i>	164
<i>Find Out What You Need to Know to Succeed</i>	164
<i>Boot Camp</i>	166

<i>Why Use Benchmarking?</i>	166
Develop a 30-/90-/180-Day Plan	167
<i>Example Plan 1</i>	168
<i>Example Plan 2</i>	169
<i>The 30-/90-/180-Day Structure</i>	169
<i>Qualities of a Good Plan</i>	170
<i>Ready to Go</i>	170
Tips on Making the First 6 Months a Success	171
<i>Find a Mentor</i>	171
<i>Read the Manual—Really!</i>	172
<i>Watch the Video</i>	172
<i>Master the Technology</i>	172
<i>Master the Product</i>	172
<i>Boot Camp Training Contacts</i>	173
<i>Work in the Factory</i>	173
<i>Face Time and Relationships</i>	173
<i>Practice, Practice, Practice</i>	173
<i>Learn About Key Customers and How They Actually Use Your Product</i>	174
<i>Understand the Financials of Your Value Proposition</i>	174
<i>Learn the Math; Don't Just Memorize the Answers</i>	174
<i>Understand Content, but Don't Feel Overwhelmed</i>	175
<i>If You Can Use Your Product in Everyday Life, Do So</i>	175
<i>Get Feedback—from Everyone</i>	175
<i>Review Your Plan Weekly</i>	175
Summary	176
15 Objection Handling	177
Before You Start	177
Categorizing Objections	178
<i>A Valid Objection</i>	178
<i>A Competitive Objection</i>	178
<i>The Seymour Objection</i>	179
<i>The Coaching Objection</i>	180
<i>The Hostile Objection</i>	181
<i>The Generic Objection</i>	183
Basic Techniques of Objection Handling	183
<i>Basic Technique 1: Listen</i>	183
<i>Basic Technique 2: Coordinate</i>	184

<i>Basic Technique 3: Clarify</i>	184
<i>Basic Technique 4: Restate</i>	184
<i>Basic Technique 5: Answer</i>	185
Working With Consultants	186
Follow Up Leads to Closeout	186
Summary	186
16 The Executive Connection	189
What They Think of You	189
Keep It Simple	190
Plan the Meeting	191
<i>Setting the Stage</i>	191
<i>Following the Dollars</i>	192
<i>Determining the Goal of the Meeting</i>	193
<i>You Are the Expert</i>	193
Execute the Meeting	194
<i>Education Versus Selling</i>	194
<i>Presentation Ideas</i>	194
<i>Presentation Technique</i>	195
Follow Up After the Meeting	196
<i>Building a Relationship</i>	196
<i>A Rational Decision</i>	196
The Informal Executive Connection	196
Summary	198
17 The U in Technical Sales	199
Me, Myself, and I	200
What Are Your Goals?	200
Your Personal Value Proposition: Self-Branding	201
<i>Internal Branding</i>	202
<i>External Branding</i>	202
<i>Communicating Your Personal Value Proposition</i>	203
Delivering on Your Value Proposition	204
<i>Put Together the Plan</i>	204
<i>Put Your Plan Into Action</i>	204
<i>Career Progression and the PVP</i>	206
<i>Benchmarking</i>	206
Ethics in Sales	207
Summary	208

18 Selling with Partners	209
Partnership Defined	209
Defining Account Ownership	211
Working the Relationship and Building the Infrastructure	213
The Dangers of Dealing with Partners	215
Summary	217
19 Competitive Tactics	219
Identify the Competition	220
Develop a Competitive Strategy	220
Know Thine Enemy	222
The Art of Competitive Analysis	224
“Tell Me About Your Competition”	224
Using Product Benchmarks	227
Summary	228
20 Using the CRM/SFA System	229
Why CRM Is Your Best Friend	230
<i>Time and Resource Prioritization</i>	232
<i>The Art of Repeatability</i>	233
Gain Advantage by Tapping Organizational Knowledge	233
Look at the Numbers	235
<i>Annual Review Time</i>	235
Summary	236
21 Crossing Over to the Dark Side	239
What Is Your Motivation?	239
Positioning for the Change	240
What You Should Expect	242
How to Make It All Work	243
Summary	245
22 The Hybrid Sales Specialist Position	247
The New Role of the Account Manager	248
Introducing the Hybrid Technical-Sales Position	248
Parallel Sales Forces	249
Complexities of the PSR Model	253
<i>Compensation</i>	253
<i>Communication</i>	254
<i>Cross-Selling</i>	255
Summary	256

23 Organizational Structure	257
Structure	258
<i>Structure 1: Separate SE Structure</i>	259
<i>Structure 2: Strong Branch Management</i>	260
Roles in the SE Organization	261
<i>Training</i>	261
<i>Demonstration Preparation</i>	261
<i>Bid Support</i>	262
<i>Mentoring and Skills Development</i>	262
<i>Motivation</i>	263
<i>Product Expertise</i>	263
<i>Point of Escalation/General Management Support</i>	263
Review of Sales Support Functions	264
<i>SE Manager</i>	264
<i>Trainer</i>	264
<i>Lead SEs</i>	265
<i>Infrastructure Support Groups</i>	266
<i>Overlay Sales/Market Executives</i>	266
<i>Field Marketing</i>	267
Advanced Topics: Five Models for SE Organizations	267
<i>Ratios: 2 to 1 or 1 to 1</i>	268
<i>Model 1: A New Organization—Five SEs and \$0 to \$20 Million in Annual Sales</i>	268
<i>Model 2: Getting Off the Ground—20 to 30 SEs and \$50 to \$100 Million in Annual Sales</i>	269
<i>Model 3: Economies or Diseconomies of Scale—100 to 200 SEs and \$350 Million in Annual Sales</i>	270
<i>Model 4: Over \$500 Million in Annual Sales—Splitting the Business Unit</i>	271
<i>Model 5: Differences in the SaaS SE Organization</i>	272
<i>Making the Models Work in the Real World</i>	272
Summary	273
24 Building the Infrastructure	275
A Little Philosophy	276
Training Techniques	277
<i>Initial Corporate Training</i>	277
<i>Initial Technical Training</i>	278
<i>Follow-Up/Update Training</i>	279
Demonstration and Equipment Support	280

Knowledge Management and Retention	281
<i>Key Requirements for a Simple Knowledge Management System</i>	282
<i>Implementation Suggestions</i>	282
Engineering and Technical Support	284
General SE Processes	284
Summary	285
25 Hiring Winners	287
The Job Description	288
Using the Hiring Profile	289
Dealing with Recruiters	291
Screening Candidates	292
The Interview	293
<i>Setting Expectations</i>	293
<i>Be Prepared</i>	293
<i>Questions and Answers</i>	295
<i>Judging the Candidate's Performance</i>	296
Hiring	296
Summary	297
26 Time Management for SEs	299
Fixed Time and Infinite Demands	299
<i>Running Your Schedule Like a Business</i>	300
<i>The Procrastination Problem</i>	301
Prioritization	301
<i>Qualification</i>	301
<i>Quantification</i>	302
A Simple Structure for Managing Your Time	302
<i>Importance</i>	303
<i>Impact</i>	303
<i>Timeliness</i>	303
<i>Prioritizing the Tasks</i>	304
How to Run Your Day	306
<i>The Daily Close</i>	307
Designing Graceful Fallback Plans	308
<i>Get a Little Help from Your Friends</i>	308
<i>Apply the 80/20 Rule</i>	308
<i>Attaching Caveats</i>	309
<i>"Be Prepared" Prioritization Tactics</i>	309

Long-Term Time Management	310
<i>Negotiating Work Levels with Your Manager and the Sales Rep</i>	311
<i>Personal Commitments</i>	311
<i>Working in Abusive Environments</i>	312
Summary	312
27 Managing by the Metrics	315
Managing by the Metrics for the Individual	316
Managing by the Metrics for the Manager	316
Weighting the Metrics	318
Managing-by-Metrics Bonus Compensation Versus MBO	318
Rolling Out Metrics-Based Management to Your Organization	319
Avoiding the Pitfalls	320
Summary	320
28 Final Words	323
Be Passionate	323
Keep Work and Personal Lives in Balance	324
Consistently Outperform Expectations	324
Build and Maintain Relationships	325
Set and Achieve Goals	326
Continually Challenge Yourself	326
About the Authors	327
Index	329