Guide: Selling into the Big Fortune 1000 Companies

A cookbook with recipes for success and tips on avoiding the pitfalls

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SALESQUEST ®

Home of CRUSH Reports™

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I. INTRODUCTION

Who should read this e-paper? Continue reading if you're selling or marketing a technology solution to the Fortune 1000 …

Selling to the Fortune 1000 is an expensive and time consuming undertaking. SalesQuest ® delivers sales intelligence to the biggest and best high tech software and IT services companies in the World and we've interviewed over 5,000 decision makers, recommenders, and influencers in the Fortune 1000 to compile this Guide to Effective Selling in the Fortune 1000.

Smart sales reps and marketers know that it takes time and a high number of 'touches' to land a deal. For some of our customers, it can take them 12 to 18 months to secure a contract and during that time, they can 'touch' the prospect more than 30 times.

This Guide will help you save wasted marketing dollars by examining where our customers, high tech industry leaders, get the biggest bang for their marketing buck.

SalesQuest ® works with the largest and most successful high tech software and IT services companies in the world.

- Accelerate Sales Cycles
- Eliminate Research Time
- Make New Contacts
- Secure New Meetings
- Uncover New Sales Opportunities
- Generate New Proposals
- Drive New Sales Revenues

CRUSH Reports™ track the Fortune 1000, the Global 500, and the top spending Federal, State and local departments and agencies. CRUSH Reports™ feature dozens & dozens of accurate contacts, org charts, IT systems landscapes, strategies, major initiatives, projects and relevant news to help sales reps eliminate costly research time, jump-start sales cycles, and drive new sales revenues faster. CRUSH Reports™ are updated regularly and can be purchased individually or as a membership subscription.

CRUSH Alerts™ is the most advanced and highly customizable 'Trigger Events' service in the marketplace today. There are more than 50 specific sales triggers to choose from in system and it's growing quickly. The CRUSH Alerts™ service systematically delivers sales leads to each of your sales reps every morning in a single easy to read email. Each sales trigger event is tracked in SalesForce.com, Siebel CRM OnDemand, or in the CRUSH Web portal as a lead or event.

II. SECRETS TO EFFICIENTLY QUALIFYING PROSPECTS

How To Start Off On the Right Foot

It's the old 80/20 rule again. Why is it that 20% of your customers are making up 80% of your stress? If you looked up "complainer " in the dictionary, your customer would be pictured there dolling out a stream of negative adjectives to describe everything that is going wrong with your project, your company, your products and it is all aimed directly at you. All this agony and yet you know you will still go back for more "Well, he is the big boss and well, the customer is always right." WRONG!!!

This is one of the biggest mistakes salespeople and companies make constantly. They lay the first bricks right at the beginning of the relationship by immediately giving away too much and taking too little in return.

SalesQuest ® interviewed top performing sales people to find out how they avoid and change this dominate pattern of relationship building.

1) ESTABLISH IMMEDIATE MUTUAL RESPECT - According to one of the top reps at Cognos, one way to do this is to call high in your account and establish a peer-to-peer relationship with the top executive. If you can square off and become a "trusted advisor " at the place in the organization "where the money is", you will save yourself a lot of time and energy, shorten your sales cycles and almost automatically have the respect of the folks in the rest of the organization.

2) SORT VS. CONVINCE - Inexperienced sales people spend a lot of time trying to convince decision-makers to do things like meet with them, talk to them and buy their products. If this customer is not open to admitting pain or sharing challenges, this will burn cycles of energy and leave the sales person with an empty pipeline and forecast. The most successful salespeople sort through those prospects and move on to those who are willing to start a relationship by answering key questions about their business.

3) DO YOUR HOMEWORK - If you approach a decision maker with something you have learned about the person, the company, or the challenges, your path to having them respect you and welcome your advice will be more easily traveled. There are many great ways to get this information including interviews and discussions with other people in the prospect's organization, the Internet, and other great research tools.

4) DON'T GIVE TOO MUCH AWAY - This is one of the basic laws of negotiating and it begins right at the very start of any relationship. Giving may feel like the right thing to do (i.e. let me tell you everything about my product or service) but doing this will help you lose respect and it will begin to form the basis of your submissive status with them. Steven Covey's fifth habit reminds us to "seek first to understand and then be understood". This speaks volumes to successful selling.

5) CONSTANTLY REESTABLISH YOUR VALUE - We suggest that you try saying "NO" to your customers more than you say "YES". Make sure you work hard at maintaining the established level of respect and be cognizant of your value in the relationship. In the end, both of you will get much more out of the experience; the relationship will be stronger and more fruitful.

III. HOW TO GET PAST THE GATEKEEPER

There have been many articles written about how to deal with gatekeepers. Every salesperson knows they can be the biggest speed bump or the one of the best assets to unlocking the kingdom of the decision-maker. We decided to interview some top C-Level gatekeepers at some of the largest technology companies to find out the straight story on what makes them tick, what they know and how they deal with vendor calls.

Gatekeeper Research Findings:

1.) Respect Thy Gatekeeper - C-Level gatekeepers are well paid and highly educated. All sales manuals will tell you to treat gatekeepers with respect but they never tell you why. One of the main reasons is that they may actually be better paid and more highly educated than YOU. We found that 80% of the gatekeepers have at least a B.A. degree and their income average is about 60 - 70K including bonuses, travel and other perks. A very large percentage of them had worked for the company for years and worked their way up from other positions, knew the company well and had relationships with many of the top executives.

2.) Do Thy Homework - The gatekeepers we interviewed had all been highly trained on the company's strategy, tactics, plans, and most importantly NEEDS both long term and short term. Many sales reps assume that the gatekeeper is only a means to an end. We found that this is simply NOT TRUE. They know what is going on and what the company may be looking for in terms of products and services. So, make sure you do your homework, know the company, have your 'elevator pitch' prepared and treat them like you would the actual decision-maker.

3.) Use Thy References - Gatekeepers told us that, in general, they delete 85 - 90% of the voicemails in their boss's mailbox from 'vendors'. Which ones do they save or act upon? If there is a valid reference name that can be checked or verified, they will spend the time to do so. If it is valid, they may call the vendor back to either set up a meeting, find out more information or have the exec make the call back, depending on the situation. References do make a difference and should be used with gatekeepers.

4.) Talk Peer-to-Peer - We found that some of the biggest mistakes vendors made with gatekeepers was being rude, condescending or threatening. In one case, there was a need for the service but the gatekeeper was so offended by the caller that she called back into the company's offices and asked for the president of the company. She explained who she was, that they may be interested in doing business with them but that she NEVER wanted to hear from the sales rep again. The deal was done but the sales rep learned a huge lesson and the president of the company was saddled with the damage control work detail. The case of wine that she later received did help to patch things up.

5.) Use The KISS Principle - The best success stories from these gatekeepers were experiences where the caller was respectful of the gatekeeper's time, clearly articulated the message they were carrying, showed that they had done their homework, had 'honed in' on something there was a need for, had a reference, and had confidence about their company and why they were calling. Part of the executive gatekeeper's job, particularly if the executive has a large number of direct reports, is to route the call to the right person. Vendors who are very concise and clear on the call will win.

6.) Call When the Gatekeeper is NOT There - The final question we asked these gatekeepers was about whether or not we should advise reps to call the executives during the 'off' hours, the hours that the gatekeeper is not minding the shop but when the executive is there, working early or late and may indeed have the tendency to answer the phone him or herself. This was a tough question for them, especially because they knew we would be sharing this advice. In one case there was a long pause and then the response "ABSOLUTELY!" What we found out is that the gatekeepers are much better than the execs at saying "no" to vendors.

IV. INCREASE CALL BACK RATES FROM VOICEMAILS
Credibility, Curiosity and Personalization Are the Keys to the Vault

Credibility - Credibility is the fuel for starting a relationship and without it the sales process cannot and will not proceed. The easiest way to add this to your sales or marketing message if the person you are contacting does not know you or your company is to use a name that the prospect currently knows and or trusts. This can be a company name or a person's name. The number one key here is using a reference or a brand.

Curiosity - While most reps are familiar with using references, very few realize that if the person you are calling is not curious or interested in you or your company that they WILL NOT call you back no matter how many times you call them. This is why the "curiosity factor" is a big key to the bank vault. If the CEO of your company called you wouldn't you be curious as to why? Does he or she want to promote you or fire you? Maybe they have a question about one of the deals you have going on? The curiosity factor is so high that your heart is probably pounding. Curiosity is a powerful human emotion and also the catalyst for the rest of the sales process. Top producers know how use it to their advantage.

The number one key to creating curiosity is by using intriguing and interesting questions or statements both in your voicemails and in your conversations with prospects and customers.

Personalization - The thing most annoying about sales calls from the prospect's point of view is that they all sound alike, scripted and generic. This is why sales professionals will never be replaced by robots (we all hope!). The more your calls and messages are personalized specifically to the prospect you are addressing, the more likely you will have success.

Top sales and marketing performers spend time researching and calling lower in their accounts to uncover things that the decision makers will find interesting and important and then they make the call. They specifically personalize the call to create the credibility and curiosity we have described above. This will greatly differentiate your message from others and also give the person you are calling the impression that you are interested in speaking with THEM specifically and not just calling randomly hoping that if you make enough calls, you will eventually hit the target.

V. HOW TO LEAVE AN EFFECTIVE VOICEMAIL MESSAGE

Some ***Do's*** when leaving a message:

1) Mention 3 goals and objectives that may align to the prospect's business. If one matches he/she will listen further.
2) Reference other customers in his/her vertical your company has helped.
3) Brand awareness is very effective. Leverage your partner or vendor's brand if you work for a no-name company.
4) Use an internal reference or colleague's name. If that name is going to be used, have that reference let the prospect know you are going to be calling.
5) "The CEO referred me to you" Powerful, yes it works. Sometimes overused, and if overused, they will not respond.
6) Tell your prospect something he/she doesn't know. Challenging, yet effective.

Some ***Don'ts***:

1) Do not say you'll save him money.
2) Do not say you will solve his problems (unless you know well right what his problems are).
3) Do not leave a message every day. Weekly is effective. Silent sweep as appropriate.
4) Don't call them "Dude".

VI. SECRETS OF TOP PERFORMING SALES REPS

How do sales champions consistently keep their pipelines full? After interviews with top companies like Cognos, Progress Software, Greenpages, and Adobe, we identified and documented a few of their keys to success:

1) Be “trusted advisors” in their accounts. We found that the most successful account developers acted as business consultants rather than pushy sales people. They truly added value throughout the buying process.

2) Use company resources wisely. The best reps know what marketing resources their company budgets for and they take advantage of the resources and programs. Most companies have access to online marketing databases, door opener campaigns, lead development programs, trade shows and events.

3) Be confident, enthusiastic, and this helps them sell more. Their prospects and their customers can sense a confident attitudes and it's infectious.

4) Reinvent sales approaches. They are creative and they try new things. Mix up your elevator pitch and presentation style. If something doesn't work, try something else.

5) Research their target accounts. They know their prospects' top corporate strategies and align their solutions accordingly. They read press releases and know what's going on inside the companies. They always prepare a series of intelligent questions that helps them qualify the account and determine if they are a prospect or not. The top reps are always sorting qualified prospects from 'tire kickers'.

6) Use referrals to identify and grow new business. Every successful business developer we interviewed grows accounts and pursues referrals once an initial sale has been made. They are constantly asking, “is there anyone else that you believe might benefit from our capabilities?”

7) I.D. pain points inside their target accounts and let the customer do the talking. The top reps that we interviewed told us that they listen to their prospects much more than they talk about their products and services.

8) Ask the tough questions. It takes time, relationship building, and trust before you can ask the really tough questions. Don't rush it.

9) They take both a tactical (sell-it-now) and strategic (sell-it-in-the-future) approach to making a sale and building a solid pipeline.

10) Use CRUSH Reports™ to eliminate research time and accelerate sales cycles.

VII. HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT TARGET PROSPECTS

Why do so many companies fail to pick the right target accounts when they launch marketing and sales campaigns? We believe this to be one of the biggest mistakes companies make and a mistake that is easily correctable. The very beginning of the sales process is a place where few sales executives, at all levels, put much focus. (Our research indicates that sales generally place this important decision making process on marketing). The most successful sales AND marketing organizations apply the most of amount of time and care when selecting their best prospects.

One of our clients had developed a technology solution for SAP customers, an area where large Fortune 1000 companies continue to invest (information technology). After a year of believing that SAP would introduce their technology to the SAP customer and sell for them, they finally came to the conclusion that they would need to just do it on their own. The second step in their new sales strategy was to hire a lot of sales people and attack the marketplace. All along, there were high hopes that these newly hired sales guns had good Rolodexes or “black books “ and would bring them into the 10,000+ SAP base of customers.

This was a very expensive sales strategy that ultimately produced very little results. In the end, the costs were in the millions, they added a couple of new customers to their list, but they did not satisfy their investors. Finally, they realized that they needed to align their technology solution to the most progressive and cutting edge SAP customers. They chose to select the early adopter SAP customers based on several factors and focus their sales and marketing efforts on less than 150 SAP customers that were the most likely to adopt and implement their solution.

Here are a couple of quick ideas on how to select and target the right prospects:

1) USE REAL CUSTOMER DATA - For your early adopter customers, note which verticals, technology platforms, and corporate cultures seem to play out best, but have a large enough number of customers before jumping to this conclusion. Use the best and most accurate customer data to develop and drive your sales strategy.

2) CUSTOMERS ARE YOUR BEST SOURCE OF REVENUE – Your current customers are your best prospects. This sounds simple but it is the most overlooked strategy out there today.

3) COMPETITIVE DISPLACEMENT - Look closely at your competitors’ customers, they may or may not be your best prospects depending on several factors including the contract terms for software and services (long term outsourcing contracts and long term ERP software licensing and support) but don’t jump to either conclusion before examining closely.

4) FOCUS - Focus on a smaller number or prospects and hit them several times (like the example above) versus casting such a wide net that your sales and marketing campaigns are watered down. Would you rather ‘touch’ 100 prospects 3 times or ‘touch’ 300 prospects once?

5) USE SALES INTELLIGENCE – Utilize resources like SalesQuest ®. We have developed some of the best sales intelligence reports on the Fortune 1000 available in the market place today. We know who’s HOT and who’s NOT based on the following questions:

    a. Are they early adopters of technology?
    b. What technology platforms and systems are they running?
    c. What enterprise applications are they running?
    d. What is their culture like? Open or closed to new vendors
    e. What is their decision-making process?
    f. Who are the decision makers, influencers and recommenders?

VIII. 5 CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS IN LEAD GEN PROGRAMS

A few of our clients recently asked us how we consistently repeat successful sales and marketing programs time and time again. Our answer is simple.

We have found that there are 5 critical success factors to any sales and marketing program and if any one factor is missing, positive results are not achieved. As we formulate a plan for success and map out the framework of a sales and marketing program, we always take into consideration the following 5 factors:

1) **What 's in it for me (WIFM)?** What 's the strategic message and value proposition that is compelling enough for someone to make a change? This message must resonate personally within your target audience and draw them to take action in a situation where they wouldn't have otherwise acted. Short of giving something away for free, you need to offer something to the customer or prospect that has a measurable value. For example, we recently recommended that one of our clients tell a customer success story in Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) vertical and offer to consult with the prospect (free of charge) and to help them map their business requirements to our client 's technology solution.
2) **Brand Name Recognition** -There must be some brand name recognition whether it is through your own brand, the brand of your customers, or the brand of your business partners. Today, more than ever, customers want to do business with trusted household names. This is primarily due to the fact that many companies were burned during the tech boom of the late 1990 's. Companies are risk adverse by nature and want to do business with companies they know and trust. Find out how to leverage your brand and use it to your advantage.
3) **Caller Credibility** - The person reaching out to the executive on the other end of the phone better know their business, the corporate objectives, the competitive landscape, and their products and services. The caller needs to know how to speak with a chief executive and a technical manager and know that the topics of discussion are generally different. To make an impact and leave a positive impression, there must be a peer-to-peer discussion.
4) **Target Database** - Segment your target markets by vertical industry, geography, and annual revenue figures. Understand how you are going to approach each unique market and craft a message that addresses the specific needs and issues affecting them individually. Understand your solution and how it impacts each market segment. You can save a lot of wasted marketing dollars by segmenting your target markets properly.
5) **Follow up** - Our job as sales and market analysts is complete when we deliver an intelligence report to our clients. We understand that our success hinges upon what our clients do with the actionable intelligence afterwards. It is critical that our clients act upon our recommendations, close deals, and drive revenue. The follow up activity by sales and marketing determines how significant a return is realized on marketing dollars invested.

It is often said that 50% of marketing dollars are wasted on marketing activities that produce no results. We have found that this simple equation significantly reduces wasted marketing dollars.

We have successfully executed dozens of successful marketing and sales programs that have generated revenue and some that have not. Our experience and knowledge has helped us derive the critical success elements that formulate a repeatable model for measurable positive results.

IX. HOW TO EXECUTE AN EFFECTIVE DOOR OPENER CAMPAIGN

I am starting to think that there is a competitive game out there regarding expensive packages to send to unqualified prospects. The other day I interviewed a Marketing VP who was so proud to tell me that he had developed a $500 per piece campaign to send out to CIO's a so called "Door Opener" campaign. Wow, I thought to myself, that tops the remote control car, the iPod, and the golf shirt. "How did the campaign go?" I asked. He replied, "We spent a total of $75K on the campaign and we got zero responses". I was in shock. How could that be? With that I decided to do more research to find out what works well and what doesn't so that I could share my findings with others who wish to increase their chances of success and produce results.

I set out to get the scoop from the marketing and sales teams who launch and execute these campaigns. I also thought it might be interesting to interview a few executives on the receiving end of these "Door Opener" campaigns to find what really motivates them to take action or not. Here are the results of my research and suggestions based on what I found in the market place:

THE DO'S

- DEVELOP AN ACCURATE TARGET LIST - Simply put "More money is spent marketing to the wrong people, people who have left the company, and even people who are dead." My research showed that this was the #1 difference between success and failure.
- QUALIFY, QUALIFY, QUALIFY - Qualify the recipients and confirm they are the decision makers with a simple phone call. Sales reps need to qualify the prospects before doing the mailing to increase the response rate of the campaign. I suggest you speak with a few direct reports to the recipient (decision maker) before you FedEx the package.
- BE CREATIVE - One of the most popular responses amongst executives that receive "Clutter Busters" and lead them to remember the gift and accept a phone call from a sales person was CREATIVITY. Be creative.
- PERSONALIZE IT - Send something to the executive prospect that means something to him personally. A decision maker at a Boston-based venture capital company told me that if someone sent him a Red Sox Hat, he would definitely remember and take a call. His bottom drawer was filled with "worthless cheap stuff" that had been sent to him by vendors. Give-aways that are not meaningful or memorable don't work.
- TRACK IT - Sending something out via the USPS to a large company with a "mail room" can be extremely unsuccessful. We found in 70% of the cases, the mail never made it to the recipient's office.

THE DON'TS

- DON'T GIVE AWAY THE "GIVE AWAY" TOO SOON - If you give something substantial away (binoculars) without getting something in return (an appointment), they have no reason to call you. That sounds like a no-brainer but believe me, it happens a lot. One idea is to give something that is not complete (remote control) and then the rest (toy car) after they give you something in return. Backfire on that one: A company I spoke to sent a remote control Mini Cooper to a CTO at Ford.
- DON'T EXPECT ANYONE TO CALL YOU - Prospects who don't know you will rarely call you back no matter what you might send them. What a good Door Opener campaign can do is "warm up" a cold call and differentiate you from your competition. These campaigns can work, however your sales team must, I repeat MUST follow-up if you plan to get the desired results.
- DON'T THINK QUANTITY, THINK QUALITY - The companies who failed to achieve the desired results were typically the ones who were measuring only by the numbers as compared to looking at the quality of the list, the quality of the names and ultimately the quality of the prospects. Numbers alone can be a very deceiving metric. More successful campaigns are very targeted and focused on quality vs. quantity.
- DON'T MAKE THIS YOUR ONLY MARKETING TOOL - The companies we interviewed who wasted their entire quarterly marketing budget on a campaign like this typically did NOT get results. The reason: you need to market to prospects in a variety of ways over time if you expect a response and a sale. I used to carry a hammer around in my briefcase to remind marketing people that you have to hit your prospects over the head about 8 times with a hammer before they buy something. These campaigns can be a great part of an overall integrated marketing plan.

- DON'T GO CHEAP - While five hundred dollars may be a little pricey, we found that going cheap is a major marketing crime according to a VP we interviewed. “If you are going to send me cheap golf balls they will not even get into my bag so don’t bother. On the other hand, give me a Titleist ProV1 with your logo and it will be the first thing I put on the tee.”

Most of the responses we received from executives who receive this clutter can be summarized by the following CIO we interviewed “I get the Door Openers all the time! They drive me nuts. I give most of the toys to my one-year-old daughter. She loves the Dell Nerf Football.” So, you can see that at least they do not go to waste “ how many years until she’s a CIO? Maybe you can sell something to her in 40 years. In the meantime, here’s to a better campaign the next time around.

X. CONTACT SALESQUEST®

The largest and most successful technology companies in the world use SalesQuest’s ® CRUSH Reports™ to eliminate research time, uncover new sales opportunities and drive new sales revenues.

For more info on SalesQuest ®, CRUSH Reports™, GovCRUSH Reports™, Global CRUSH Reports™, CRUSH Alerts™, and the CRUSH Update Online Annual subscription please contact a SalesQuest ® sales rep.

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