



Art of Selling...

By Art Waskey

ARE YOU REACHING THE STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKER?

Several years ago I was prospecting a large manufacturer with one of our senior sales reps. We were visiting with the Shop Superintendent and we thought we had the account closed. However, in a follow-up call a few days later, when we asked for our decision-maker, we learned that he had suddenly been replaced. We have tried many times since then to get back into this facility, only to be consistently frustrated.

How many times have you been misled, or lost the sale because your contact was replaced, or even worse ... found you weren't really dealing with the right decision-maker?

Next time, change your strategy. As part of your information gathering, go on-line, or call the receptionist, and request an **organizational chart**. Reviewing all the data you have accumulated, visualize the part each key player may have in the final decision-making process. Classify each key decision-maker into one of the following roles:

- **Ally or Inside Sales Person** — this may be your initial contact. This valuable person will always be willing and able to get you an audience with the decision-maker.
- **Gatekeeper** — typically has access to the flow of information, but may not always be willing to share this critical information.
- **Influencer** — has respect from those in the organization, but may or may not be in the organization themselves, i.e., consultant, advisor, etc. The Influencer could also be the end-user of your product.
- **Ratifier** — usually willing to let others decide; typically is part of the approval process, possibly serving as a committee member.
- **Decision-maker** — makes the final decision, but usually solicits input from others; may not be directly accessible to vendors.

Spend time developing this “cast of characters”; determine the specific role each person plays in the final decision-making and how it affects your product or service. Then, coordinate with your **inside sales person** and strategize the best way to get your proposal presented to the final decision-maker. If you are unable to have access to the ultimate decision-maker, it is crucial to instruct your **ally** HOW to sell your product or service.

My opening story has a happy conclusion. Recently, through a mutual friend, I was introduced to the manufacturer's CFO. We discovered that our backgrounds had crossed many times and rapidly developed a close relationship. On our second visit, we were afforded an opportunity to visit with a round table including the CFO, Director of Purchasing, Shop Superintendent, and Controller. Understanding the roles of each key player, we secured our first commitment from the decision-maker.

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2006 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 9-11, 2006

GAWDA Spring Management Conf.
Hilton Chicago, Chicago, IL
Web: www.gawda.org

May 10-12, 2006

Commercializing Clean Coal 2006
Vancouver, BC, Canada
Web: www.intertechusa.com/cleancoal.html

May 15-19, 2006

ACHEMA 2006
Frankfurt/Main, Germany
Web: www.achema.de

May 16-19, 2006

Beijing Essen Welding & Cutting Fair
China International Exhibition Center
Beijing, China
Web: <http://essen.cmes.org>

May 22-25, 2006

Cryogenic Engineering Training Short Course
Boulder, Colorado
Web: <http://www.cryo.com>

May 31-June 2, 2006

WeldMex 2006
Cintermex, Monterrey, Mexico
Web: www.weldmex.com

July 10-14, 2006

SEMICON West
Moscone Center,
San Francisco, CA
Web: www.semi.org

July 17-20, 2006

Conferences at Purdue
International Compressor and Refrigeration
Purdue University,
West Lafayette, IN
Web: www.ecn.purdue.edu/Herrick/Events/2006/Conferences

July 17-21, 2006

CryoPrague 2006
Praha, Czech Republic
Web: www.icaris.info/CryoPrague2006/

September 13-15, 2006

CHINA-IG
International Exhibition on Gases
Beijing, China
Web: www.china-gases.com

September 19-21, 2006

Medtrade Conference & Exposition
Georgia World Congress Center
Atlanta, Georgia
Web: www.medtrade.com

October 10-12, 2006

COLLABORATIVE 2006 — The Society of Manufacturing Engineers
Huntsville, Alabama
Web: www.sme.org

October 14-18, 2006

(Tentative dates)
GAWDA 62nd Annual Convention
Walt Disney World
Swan Dolphin,
Orlando, FL
Web: www.gawda.org

October 30-Nov. 2, 2006

GAWDA at FABTECH/ AWS
Atlanta, Georgia
Web: www.gawda.org

October 31-Nov. 2, 2006

2006 FABTECH/ AWS
Atlanta, Georgia
Web: www.aws.org

November 4-8, 2006

International Oxygen Manufacturers Association (IOMA)
Los Cabos, Mexico
Web: www.iomaweb.org

November 13-17, 2006

2006 Fuel Cell Seminar
Honolulu, Hawaii
Web: www.fuelcellseminar.com

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