

I never knew we did that!

Art Waskey

Consultant and guest speaker



One of my young sales reps approached me some years ago about a large opportunity he had just discovered that involved a major account. This rep had become a trusted consultant to the repair shop superintendent at a major national brewery. He learned that the superintendent was interested in exchanging 24 used welding machines for new state-of-the-art equipment, and introduced our products to him. At their next meeting the rep needed to determine the details of this very large transaction. As I was a seasoned salesman, well versed in our product offerings, the rep asked that I join him as an advisor on the deal.

Following our first meeting with the superintendent, the rep asked if our company had an exchange program for welding machines. He was unaware of our used equipment programs, as well as other offerings our company had in place, such as financing options. Are you an expert on the services that your company offers that may be needed to structure your next big deal?

Consider investigating programs within your company in these key areas:

Finance – Does your company offer payment terms on large product sales? The customer in the above example was looking to purchase new machines over a one year period. While we only offer up to 90-day terms in-house, our credit department has relationships with three outside lenders that offer annual terms and we connected the customer to one of those. Make sure you have a working relationship with your finance department. This is particularly valuable when closing

large deals and when working with customers who have credit issues.

Used equipment – The manager of our repair department joined the account rep to negotiate a trade-in agreement for this customer's machines. As a bonus, one of our store managers was glad to stock the used equipment in his shop and was able to sell it quickly.

Case Studies – Our company maintains a portfolio of histories of customer projects that include details on cost savings. A sales professional should be constantly exploring ways to save his customers' money through the innovative use of products and services. Case studies are a great way to do this and are a valuable sales development tool.

Customer Service – Do you know the programs your company has available through your inside sales department? Normally a company's larger customers and frequent buyers are offered services—like special pricing, online ordering, monthly specials, delivery options, scheduled orders, etc.—through the inside sales team. To build and maintain loyalty, be sure each of your large accounts has an assigned team member to help process sales and keep them informed of your service capabilities.

Training – Stay current on your company's demonstration capabilities, product training facilities, and online offerings, such as YouTube videos. If your company has training centers for long-term individual or small group customer programs, make sure you are aware of

what those are and keep your customers informed. Training is value added and a great selling point.

Marketing – Best-in-class companies are constantly promoting their latest product and services online, through social media, and with customer mailings. Use your marketing department's capability brochures to keep customers and potential clients aware of the latest company competencies, proficiencies, and customer experiences.

In the sales example above, the customer's current supplier did not offer a competitive strategy for meeting his need. We won the contract by being able to arrange a loan, replace the equipment, train the welders, set up continuous communication, efficiently process the order, and arrange for quarterly preventive maintenance. Years later, this customer continues to be a Top 10 account.

While our salesman didn't know all our capabilities when this opportunity presented itself, he was astute enough to ask for the help of someone that did. After this experience, the rep made a point of learning about our various department capabilities and has been able to maintain consistent sales growth even in the toughest economies.

Be sure you are familiar with your company's past and future competencies and communicate them to your customers. Don't get caught saying, "I never knew we did that!" [GW](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Art Waskey has over 45 years' experience in the welding and industrial gas industry. He travels across the country consulting and giving seminars on business skills and has published 2 books about the sales cycle. Contact him at [Impact Speaking Dynamics, artwaskey@ispeakd.com](mailto:artwaskey@ispeakd.com), www.impactspeakingdynamics.com