THE NEW ‘DISTANCE-SELLING’ CHALLENGE

7 APRIL 2020

RICHARD NELSON, MANAGING DIRECTOR, ABYSS GLOBAL LTD.
THE NEW ‘DISTANCE-SELLING’ CHALLENGE

AGENDA

▸ What new challenges are we facing?
▸ How do we market and sell professional services?
▸ How must we adapt our marketing and sales practices now?
▸ What tools, technologies and techniques can we use?
THE CHALLENGE
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THE CHALLENGE

- Social distancing due to COVID-19 has made everyone “WFH* Warriors”
- How do we maintain business development progress while working remotely?
- We don’t want the pipeline to dry up
- We need to continue moving leads and opportunities forward
- We want to avoid revenue disruption

* Working From Home
HOW WE DEVELOP BUSINESS
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SELLING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES — THE PERCEPTION

MEET CLIENT → GET RFP → SUBMIT PROPOSAL → WIN JOB!

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SELLING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES — THE REALITY

20%
- Business plan (SWOT, research, ops plan, targets, mar/com, etc.)
- Research
- Develop network
- Targeting
- Filtering
- Identify prospects
- Awareness marketing
- Brand positioning
- Sales planning

60%
- 1st meeting w/ client
- Info gathering & estab. cred.
- Stakeholder mapping
- Value proposition
- Pitch testing/development
- Stakeholder relationships

20%
- Get RFP
- Submit proposal
- Relationship management
- Interviews
- Further solution development
- Negotiations
- Win job!
- More negotiations
- Sign contract
- Deliver project
- Service & CRM

Networking - supporters, influencers, etc.
SELLING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES IS A ‘COMPLEX SALE’

- Complex sales are characterised by:
  - Long sales cycles – sometimes several years
  - Multiple decision makers, or decision by committee
  - Multiple stakeholders and stakeholder groups contribute opinions
  - Customer tends to control the selling process – RFQ > RFP > interview > negotiations
  - The solution is business critical/impacts the buying organisation on a strategic level
COMPLEX SALES CARRY MORE RISK

- Filters and steps in the process are designed to reduce the risks to the client associated with making the wrong buying decision.
- You must build trust and credibility with the client.
- Client knowledge and consultative selling skills required.
- Build intelligent client relationships.
- Navigate and avoid the political pitfalls within client organisation.
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INTERNATIONAL COMPLEX SALES REQUIRE ADDITIONAL SKILLS

- Cross-cultural awareness and potential language barriers
- Sensitivity to meaning and intent
- Understand local political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental (PESTLE) issues in the jurisdiction(s)
- Detailed due diligence on targeted clients
- Awareness of tax, legal, cash flow, payments, insurance, regulatory, FX, mobilisation and resource planning strategies
- Sensitivity to communication preferences – phone, email, WhatsApp/WeChat, FaceTime
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FIVE TYPES OF SALESPEOPLE

- **Relationship Builders** - Focus on developing strong relationships and advocates. Strive to meet client’s every need, work hard to resolve tensions.

- **Hard Workers** - Go the extra mile. Make more calls and conduct more visits in a week than anyone else in team.

- **Lone Wolves** - Self-confident, the rule-breaking cowboys of the sales force who do things their way or not at all.

- **Reactive Problem Solvers** - Highly reliable and detail-oriented. Focus on post-sales follow-up, ensure that service issues resolved swiftly.

- **Challengers** - Know clients’ business, push thinking and take control of the sales conversation. Share potentially controversial views, are assertive.

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 WHICH ONE PERFORMS BEST?

- **Challengers** absolutely dominate as selling gets more complex
- 54% of best performers in complex sales are Challengers
- Relationship Builders represent only 4% of high-performing reps in complex environments

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WHY CHALLENGERS ARE SO SUCCESSFUL

▸ Challengers teach their clients - Focus not on features and benefits but on insight. Bring unique perspective on client’s business with new ideas that can make/save money for client, often opportunities client hadn’t realised existed.

▸ Challengers tailor their sales message to the customer - Have a finely tuned sense of individual customer objectives and value drivers, use this to position their sales pitch to different types of client stakeholders within company.

▸ Challengers take control of the sale - While not aggressive, they are assertive and comfortable with tension. Are unlikely to acquiesce to every client demand. Can press clients a bit – not just on their thinking but around price.

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THE WAY WE MUST SELL NOW

▸ No one wants to be ‘sold to’, but all clients value relevant insights
▸ Don’t waste clients’ time on ‘check-ins’ or ‘low-value’ conversations
▸ Clients want to work with people who are focused on them - Understand their business
▸ Clients want to learn new ways of doing things - Educate them
▸ Clients want to hire experts - Demonstrate thought leadership
▸ Clients want to hire people who add value - Offer solutions
▸ All of which can be done virtually as well as in person
ADAPTING OUR BD PRACTICES
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THE WAY WE MUST SELL NOW

- The old sales adage says: ‘No one buys a million-dollar solution over the phone.’
- Current situation is testing that wisdom
- We can still be a valuable resource for clients
- This can all be done virtually while we are WFH Warriors
- As much as people like to meet in person, clients are understanding of the current situation

UNDERSTAND THEIR BUSINESS
EDUCATE THEM IN NEW IDEAS
DEMONSTRATE THOUGHT LEADERSHIP
OFFER UNIQUE SOLUTIONS
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FOUR STEPS

UNDERSTAND

EDUCATE

DEMONSTRATE

OFFER

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UNDERSTAND THEIR BUSINESS

▸ How much do you really know about your client’s business?
▸ Research their website
▸ Read their annual reports and business updates
▸ Watch webinars or online videos about what they do
▸ Watch their CEO’s TED talk (or similar) to ‘get inside their head’
▸ See what your client contacts are Tweeting or posting on LinkedIn
▸ Learn what’s important to them and what they are struggling with
▸ Consider how you might use this intel as you approach them
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EDUCATE THE CLIENT

▸ Show client where we have solved their problem before

▸ Be specific and relevant - one on-target case study is better than a brochure full of so-so examples

▸ Offer to have a phone call or video chat with them to walk them through it, bring in the team if necessary

▸ Give them a ‘valid business reason’ for the virtual meeting - Tell them what they are going to learn

▸ Think about how you can help them and provide insights—not how you sell them something
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DEMONSTRATE THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

▸ Leverage papers & presentations you or your colleagues have done

▸ Share specific third-party articles that address their issues

▸ Share a link to an article published online with added comments showing your insights

▸ Write a thought leadership piece if you have an idea, then share with clients

IS YOUR CLIENT LOOKING TO BUILD A ‘SPACE COLONY’? IF SO, SEND THEM A RELEVANT ARTICLE TO MOVE THE CONVERSATION FORWARD.
OFFER UNIQUE SOLUTIONS

- All clients are always looking to **FIX, AVOID or IMPROVE** something
- Ultimate demonstration of your expertise and thought leadership
- What can you do for the client to add value to their business or solve their problem?
- May involve detailed presentation of a similar case study, or a limited amount of speculative work
- Based on deep understanding of the client and their situation
- Will almost always **move the discussion toward contract/closing**
TOOLS, TECHNOLOGIES, TECHNIQUES
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TOOLS MOST FIRMS HAVE AVAILABLE RIGHT NOW

SMARTPHONES

EMAIL

WEBSITE

BROCHURES & PUBLICATIONS
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TECHNOLOGIES AVAILABLE AT LOW OR NO COST

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

ONLINE PUBLISHING
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TECHNOLOGIES AVAILABLE AT SOME COST (BUT EFFECTIVE WHEN REMOTE)

VIDEO TOURS

VR/AR TOURS
12 TECHNIQUES YOU CAN IMPLEMENT REMOTELY

1. Direct Business Development

- **Pick up the phone** to current/targeted and lapsed clients to see what they are trying to Fix, Avoid or Improve

- Review **presentations/marketing collateral** to ensure it can be **understood without being presented in person**

- Explore **new presentation techniques** - video clips or interactive media

- Learn to be more effective communicating via **virtual meetings** – plenty of free online advice

2. Online Business Development

- Review/listen to the **online content** generated by our clients

- Look for **opportunities to engage** and contribute to this content

- Increase use of social media platforms – LinkedIn to **connect with clients**

- **Ramp up** your personal profiles on social media to target clients
12 TECHNIQUES YOU CAN IMPLEMENT REMOTELY

3. PR/Marketing

- Ramp up your **corporate online presence** through social media
- Broaden use of **webinars, podcasts, vlogging**, to reach new business
- Communicate your capability to provide a **remote service** to your clients
- Continue to supply **regular news** to audience – be seen as being busy!

4. Account Based Marketing

- Good **time to focus** on this activity
- **Gather intelligence** on target key accounts
- **Research** key individuals
- Develop **account plans**
- Leverage your marketing team to **build a campaign** to target each account
12 TECHNIQUES YOU CAN IMPLEMENT REMOTELY

5. LinkedIn

- **Regularly post** new content that is relevant to your target clients
- **Like, share and comment** on content from those with whom you want to build relationships
- Develop your **online profiles** further in line with your target clients

6. CRM System

- Use this time to **update your contacts**
- **Record intelligence** gathered on prospects
- **Update leads** and opportunities
- Update **sales forecasts**
- Plan new contacts for the **next two quarters**
7. Webinars

- Great alternative to live seminars, completely online
- Easy and inexpensive to do using tools like Zoom
- Audio-visual version of content you’ve probably already created
- Scheduled events

8. Videos

- Share thought leadership through videos or regular Vlog
- Can be easily recorded with a smartphone
- Can be distributed any time
- Upload to your website and push through your social channels
12 TECHNIQUES YOU CAN IMPLEMENT REMOTELY

9. Thought Leadership

- **Trends, innovations, new approaches** relevant to target clients
- Share your **expertise**!
- **Distribute easily** through any or all the low-cost methods outlined

10. E-newsletters

- **Timely e-blasts** on current subject matter (such as COVID) or project-specific issues
- Keep your firm and your expertise ‘front of mind’
- Ensure your blasts are **permissions-based** (GDPR compliant)
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12 TECHNIQUES YOU CAN IMPLEMENT REMOTELY

11. Website

‣ Keep **staff profiles** updated

‣ Regular **news updates** – people, projects, ideas

‣ Links to **relevant content** – projects, thought leadership, etc.

12. Social Media

‣ Weekly **virtual walkthroughs** of project models or videos – guided tour by project leader

‣ SoMe campaigns to **leverage your unique content** – seminal projects, company milestones, key people, etc.

‣ Personal **profiling of experts**

‣ Regular **project milestones**
FINAL THOUGHTS
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FINAL THOUGHTS

- It may be a long road ahead, but we **will** get past this crisis
- There are **plenty of tools and techniques available** to continue developing business
- On the upside, you **will learn to be a more efficient and effective** business developer
- You are **not spending time and money on travel**
- You’re also **reducing your carbon footprint** – not a bad thing
- Be realistic and manageable – **pick one new client** to start
- Run through the four steps with that client:
  - **WEEK 1**: Understand their business
  - **WEEK 2**: Educate them in new ideas
  - **WEEK 3**: Demonstrate thought leadership
  - **WEEK 4**: Offer solutions
- By the end of week 4, you may find yourself **negotiating a contract**!