

TRANSFORMATION & SALES TEAMS

THE PERFECT FIT



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The traditional role of a Sales Executive has evolved over the last decade. Gone are the days of taking the market by storm with a great product or service and a viable cost structure. Today times are tough and, more often than not, this reflects in an organisation's sales figures. Although Top Management, Sales Directors and Managers recognise the downward spiral in Sales Executives meeting their targets, little is done to find that one thing that may differentiate them from the competition.

Sales Directors and Managers are feeling the pressure, as they only meet their targets upon their Sales Teams meeting theirs. In a desperate effort to enjoy the successes of the past, some see the solution as increasing the number of mandatory client visits per week for each member of their Sales Team. Others, however, opt to performance manage their Sales Teams with disastrous consequences that often have an impact on morale and, more often than not, come with costly recruitment fees to replace a Sales Executive.

Perhaps the answer to increasing an organisation's sales lies in Transformation. Organisations generally drive their B-BBEE agenda through their Human Resources or Transformation Department. In most cases, the person driving an organisation's Transformation agenda works behind the scenes and is only seen or heard by the Sales Team during a monthly or quarterly B-BBEE briefing session.

Merge Sales and Transformation

In business generally, sales and marketing are a natural fit. Primarily, a Marketing Team supports a Sales Team in getting their product or service offering to market. This may be in the form of an advertisement, a direct mailer, a roadshow or an event, to name but a few. However, what many do not see as a natural fit is a Transformation Team and a Sales Team, as their mandates are worlds apart. Contrary to popular belief, it may well be the achievement of a Transformation Team that provides the leverage for a Sales Executive to broker a deal.

Knowledge is Power

It is a fact that most Sales Teams go out into the market oblivious of the strides being made by their Transformation Team. In many cases, a Transformation budget exceeds that of a sales budget.

A case in point is that the achievements made by a Transformation Team in terms of a favourable scorecard should form part and parcel of an organisation's sales credentials. This collaboration could be the missing link, the leverage needed to win or retain business.

Wooing the Pipeline

The majority Pipeline Customers already use the product or services you provide through your competition in the market. Therefore, the goal of a Sales Executive is to encourage the Pipeline Customer to redirect their business. A Sales Executive can do one of two things to encourage the Pipeline customer to redirect their business:

- ① The Lottery Approach – A Sales Executive continues to contact a Pipeline Customer to build a rapport in the hope that a relationship is established that will convince them to move their business. Essentially, it is a waiting game, as the Sales Executive waits for the competition to make a mistake that annoys the Pipeline Customer enough for them to move their business.
- ② The Google Approach – A Sales Executive can proactively get the B-BBEE Certificate of their competitor. As a joint exercise, the competitor's B-BBEE Certificate should be compared with that of the Sales Executive's employer to evaluate where the strengths and weakness of both certificates lie. As the Preferential Procurement process is a vital part of brokering a deal, a comparison should include which certificate has the most favourable Preferential Procurement Recognition.

B-BBEE Certificates are usually available on an organisation's website. However, it is mandatory for a listed organisation to publish theirs. Alternatively, it is not outside the law to call the competition directly to ascertain where their B-BBEE Certificate can be sourced. A tip, generally organisations with a favourable B-BBEE Certificate make it easily accessible. The Transformation Team and Sales Executive should work closely so that the Sales Executive understands the reason for the process. A calculation should be done, based on the amount the Sales Executive believes the Pipeline Customer is worth. The competitor's Preferential Procurement Recognition value should then be compared to yours to ascertain which organisation is most beneficial from a procurement perspective.

If the comparison results in the competitor's Preferential Procurement value being more beneficial than yours, the Transformation Team and Sales Executive must identify where the shortfalls lie. A report should be generated and distributed to Top Management, as well as the Sales Director and Manager. It would be unusual for a Pipeline Customer to switch a supplier for a less favourable procurement recognition. If the comparison indicates your Preferential Procurement Recognition value is more beneficial to the Pipeline Customer, the information should be similarly captured. Following this, the report should be forwarded to the Pipeline Customer's Management, Procurement and Transformation Teams. The Fact is, it is imperative that organisations have a favourable Preferential Procurement Score, as it is vital to pitching and winning new business. Therefore, once the Pipeline Customer is aware that they are not procuring from the most favourable supplier, they may well re-evaluate which supplier they use to enhance their Preferential Procurement score.

B-BBEE is more than just 123

It is, therefore, imperative that organisations adequately educate their Sales Team in the basic, but critical, elements of the Amended Codes. None of the complexities, calculations or methodologies of the needs to be taught, only the basic principles. Similarly, a Sales Team must be educated on the Transformation agenda that guides their organisation and initiatives being rolled-out.

A Sales Executive should have the confidence and knowledge to meet a Pipeline Customer to ascertain what their B-BBEE mandate is. They should be able to source information about the Pipeline Customer's Enterprise Development or Supplier Development Beneficiaries, as these could become future Pipeline Customers.

Therefore it makes sense that Transformation and Sales Teams become a natural fit. Face it, the success of the Transformation Team filters directly through to sales in terms of a favourable Preferential Procurement Recognition. Should a pattern emerge following comparisons of B-BBEE Certificates, it will either incentivise an organisation to communicate their B-BBEE status and successes to all their current and Pipeline Customers, or it will be a clear message to Top Management, Sales Directors and Managers to re-evaluate their B-BBEE Strategy. The outcome for all is a win-win situation.

The Sage BEE123 solution provides Transformation Teams with the ability to ascertain their Preferential Procurement value and the impact this will have on their Customer's scorecards, thereby understanding BEE competitive impact.