

Sales Coach Series

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Working effectively with colleagues

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The Dilemma

I have to involve and rely on colleagues to supply and install the solutions I sell. I often face internal resistance to my requests and feel like I'm the only one who cares about the customer.

The Coaching

As Account Manager you are likely to feel closest to the customer but that doesn't mean that colleagues should be obstructive or ambivalent towards meeting customer needs.

Firstly consider if the problem is 'personal' to you or symptomatic of organisational structure and staff morale? What do other salespeople experience? Either way, you can make a difference. Ask yourself:

- Do I afford my colleagues the same courtesy as my customers? - Do I 'tell' them what to do and expect them to 'just get on with it'?
- Think about the interests and motivations of your colleagues - what are they measured on and why should they be interested in your needs?

Many employees complain that salespeople expect urgent priority for everything and always 'give in' to unreasonable customer demands. Often they attribute this to poor sales and time management skills!

To address this and build win-win working relationships involve key people early and

- Solicit their views and ideas, preferably at proposal stage for a complex bid - a better solution may result!
- Work to understand each others' role objectives and pressures and how best to collaborate and co-ordinate efforts.
- Clearly establish parameters to ensure that individuals understand what needs doing, why and by when. Focus on defining the required end result and let others determine how to achieve this
- Make them part of the virtual team and encourage liaison and involvement