



SALES FOCUS

INTELLIGENT SALES OUTSOURCING

Ultimate Guide to Customer Acquisition in the Ever Changing IT Industry

SALES SOLUTIONS FOR THE IT INDUSTRY

For the past 30 plus years my career has been primarily focused in the IT sector. That is a long history and I have lived through many changes. When I began my career in 1984, desktops were just becoming more popular. I had one of the first laptops, that had to be carried around on a cart! The computing power was minimal by today's standards, but the growth of the IT sector was booming. Technology was evolving at a tremendous rate of speed. The ideas were endless. No one thought about a cell phone with enough power to run a business, take photos and keep you connected across the world in an instant. We were happy to have a pager and Pacman! In my early career I was fortunate to work for a company that was implementing a networking technology, that was truly state of the art. Counter rotating ring technology that allowed universities to connect and share data, the start of the internet. The speed wasn't that great, to today's standards, but the technology to share information was life changing. Data Centers were being constructed that took up entire floors of buildings, dialing up to connect to AOL was getting very popular and the changes continued, faster and faster with each year. I learned early in my career, I was not cut out to be the technology expert, systems engineer, where I started my career. My focus quickly changed to sales in the IT world. The change for me was to focus on how we can make a business run better, increase revenue, reduce redundancy, improve performance and overall become a faster and stronger business. My focus has always been on solving business problems with technology solutions.

In the mid 1990's I was running an IT company that focused on selling managed services, from desktop support to IT outsourcing services. In 1996 a new term started to become popular, Business Process Outsourcing (BPO). Instead of just outsourcing the technology, with a BPO solution, you take over the people, process and technology. I watched companies become successful with BPO solutions in the IT, Payroll, and Admin world. Seeing the opportunity, I created the first Sales BPO company. In 1998, Sales Focus Inc. (SFI) pioneered the Sales Outsourcing industry. Our focus was simple; build, train and manage dedicated sales teams for our clients. Our initial focus was primarily targeting small IT firms, who were founded by technologists and didn't have the knowledge to build or manage a sales team.



Think outside the box

Small technology companies constantly made the same mistake, hire someone to do sales, but not have enough support to make them successful. Within 6 months, the sales person was to blame for lack of results and the company would fire them and hire another person. They stayed on this rollercoaster of trying to find the “right” person. The problem wasn’t necessarily with the sales person. The company didn’t have the knowledge and bandwidth to provide the necessary support to make the sales person successful. The sales person(s) struggled because they didn’t have the knowledge to self-manage. Overall, it was a recipe for wasting time and money. For the past 25 years, we at SFI have been helping IT companies overcome this and many other sales challenges and obstacles.

Within 2 years of launching SFI, we started to make an impact with small and large companies alike. We launched sales teams for several small IT companies, along with launching sales teams for Sprint and HP. Our business model, which was originally developed to focus on IT organizations and helping them grow, was easily transferred to every industry across the globe. Our foundation was to help IT companies, but what we quickly found is that our ability to quickly launch dedicated professional sales teams across the US, and globally, was a model that can be utilized in any industry. Over the past 20 years, the markets have matured and new methods for customer acquisition have evolved. The IT sector includes many types of businesses, selling products and solutions, along with many ancillary markets that incorporate IT solutions into their business. The markets are across the US and internationally and range from small and medium businesses to large commercial customers and global conglomerates. The opportunities, although very competitive, can be very lucrative with the right approach to customer acquisition, focused on solving business solutions, improving revenues and reducing redundancy and overhead.



What you plant now, you
will harvest later

The approach to selling IT solutions is multifaceted and has many layers, many decision makers and many influencers. The job of the sales person is to convey the value proposition and understand who within the organization are the decision makers and influencers. A good IT sales person is like an orchestra leader, they need to know when to bring in the right people or the right instrument to make the music flow, or the sales process flow. Good sales people are not always the most technical people, they are the glue, the connection between the organizations. They know how to listen, how to present and how to solve problems.

Quality Sales Professionals - Sell Value

Nobody wants to be sold something they don't need, and indeed you'll have a much tougher time convincing people they need a service if they really don't (plus, is that even ethical?). Although there will always be situations in which a discussion with a prospect will reveal a benefit they didn't know they could get, it's crucial that everything you suggest to them falls within the realm of necessity. A big key to selling your services is identifying what will bring the most value and distilling that into a solid sales message your prospects will understand. People buy solutions and value, sell them on the value you bring to their organization.

Develop Your Unique Selling Proposition

How is your product or solution different from the competition? I have been told many times that our product is unique, it's different, we have no competition. There is always competition, acknowledge the competition, know the competition and know where your value is to the customer. How are you unique? What makes your product/solution unique, how will it best help the customer. Sometimes the sales person is the unique selling proposition, the quality, the professionalism, the ability to listen and solve problems is what makes you unique. You are the differentiation in the selling process. Don't underestimate your skills. Invest the time and energy to know your product and your competitors so you can be the difference. If you have done a good job building trust, you will make the difference.

Don't watch the clock; do what it does. Keep going

Is Your Message Clear

When there are so many potential services you can provide, services can get complicated fast—particularly when contracts and service agreements are part of the mix. Among the biggest benefits a client can get from hiring an IT provider is simplifying a major component of business. It won't seem simple to them if your first interaction involves a complex list of services. One popular way to present services in a simple way is to organize them in three or four easy-to-digest tiers. This way, prospects can easily see what they get from each tier and quickly decide which might be most beneficial. Many technology companies try to solve all problems or try to be all solutions to all problems. Focus on what you do best, what is your message, your value to the client. Focus on what you can do for them.

Identify your target market. Ideal Client Profile (ICP)

Determine whether you will target businesses, consumers, or both.

Targeting businesses presents a very lucrative opportunity as companies tend to have bigger budgets than consumers. Companies are always in need of vendors and they tend to treat vendors as needed suppliers of inputs and business services unless they can cover the need internally. You will have more competition if you choose to target businesses than if you target consumers.

You'll want to consider the size of the businesses you decide to target. Selling to Fortune 1000 enterprises will require a longer sales cycle and the approval of more decision makers. Selling to Fortune 1000 companies may also require purchasing liability insurance. Contracts received from Fortune 1000 companies will be larger, but will be more competitive. Targeting small to medium sized businesses is often touted as pursuing "low lying fruit" and can be a good place to start.

What differentiates sellers today
is their ability to bring fresh ideas.

Set Clear Expectations

Setting clear expectations begins with the sales process, setting follow ups and coordinating next steps. Throughout the buying process, a good sales person will have a multi-tiered approach to make things simple, less is more in a sales presentation. Most sales people, especially IT sales people try to go too far into the technology dark hole. The focus should always remain on what we can do for your business. What circumstances call for what types of action? While selling in tiers works perfectly for a basic sales document, you still need to have a service-level agreement that defines what it is you are responsible for and what a client is responsible for. Making these things clear to a client upfront avoids ambiguity and helps you manage their expectations about what happens when.

Decide on your approach to the market.

Just cold calling prospects is an old-fashioned way of getting business and if it's not targeted with a specific approach, it may be a waste of money. Start off by buying a list based on certain specifications from a reputable lead supplier and then contact the decision makers via email, phone or direct mail. What is the best way to reach your ICP? Optimizing your website for keywords or phrases that potential buyers might enter when using search engines can create a steady stream of inbound traffic. Search engine optimization, or SEO, is an effective way to generate warm leads. Do a case study marketing campaign. Perform a case study on one of your first customers. Being able to describe the services you provided and the results obtained is crucial. Be sure to include any metrics quantifying results as they are very important along with a calculation of ROI. Convincing potential clients they will get their money's worth is critical to obtaining their business. Display a completed case study on your company website and allow prospects to download it in exchange for their contact information. This exchange provides a supply of warm leads.

The way to get started is to
quit talking and begin doing.

Price Fairly

This should go without saying, but overcharging for services or nickel-and-diming customers for every little thing isn't a great way to build trust with them or to inspire loyalty. Aim to price services within a fair market rate, and be reasonable when it comes to the little extras. This doesn't mean you should give your services away. There's nothing wrong with being expensive, as long as you're worth it. Value is perceived by how you present and what you deliver! Be clear in your presentation of price and value. If something is too expensive, it's because the value is not recognized. Giving something away free, typically shows zero value and can immediately cause a prospect to not trust you. Most customers are willing to pay for value, will the product or service your bringing to my business pay for itself, by reducing overhead or increasing revenue. This can make the buying decision very easy.

Build Trust

A great provider becomes a trustworthy consultant who offers advice, takes the time to get to know the clients' hopes, dreams, goals, and employees, and works to make sure their businesses are successful. It's not just about implementing or fixing or monitoring their technology, it's about being a partner and helping them take their business to the next level—IT is a massive part of that process, and as a provider you're their most reliable resource in that field.

The other side of building trust is consistently delivering (or over-delivering) on your promises. Do what you say you will, and your clients will have great respect for you. You might be surprised how often service providers don't quite live up to their promises. Become a great communicator, not just until someone buys from you, but afterwards as well. Trust, partnerships can develop a lifetime customer and a great referral source!

Setting goals is the first step in
turning the invisible into the visible.

Be Excellent

Lastly, from pricing to managing customers to doing work you can stand by, the best service providers are successful because they never cut corners. Business owners need quality work, partners they can trust, and their technology taken care of. When you can prove yourself with the clients you have, you'll have plenty more breaking down your door to see what all the fuss is about.

Quality sales people need to represent their companies accurately, professionally and with great pride. A sales person is the reflection of the customers brand. If you value your brand and customer care, the Sales Focus sales outsourcing model is a good fit for your business. Our model is driven by our trademarked process S.O.L.D.™, which allows us to launch any size sales team anywhere in the world in 45 days or less. In today's competitive market, getting feet on the street quickly is essential to customer acquisition, but making sure the sales team is performing at the highest level of integrity should also be a priority. There are many forms of sales, that range from Independent Contractors, Distributors, Telemarketers, Direct Mail, Marketing Campaigns, Community Association Marketing, Partnerships and Sales Outsourcing. How do you decide what is best for your business? How do you decide what is the right balance for your company? Many times, organizations try multiple methods. You need to decide what is important, what will yield the results you demand while maintaining sales integrity and professionalism. Unfortunately, the word "sales" has developed into a bad word, as many people have been scammed or slammed by unprofessional or unethical sales people over the years. Unfortunately, too many people were sold products/solutions that really didn't help them and cost them more in the long run. Too many unscrupulous sales people took advantage of the marketplace and sold products knowing they were not going to help the business owner or homeowner. The market demands professionalism and ethics, it demands proper training and management. To ensure success, too many vendors take shortcuts with new customer acquisition, by allowing companies to represent them without proper vetting management and verification. In today's competitive environment it's easy to lose sight of what is really important, providing a product/solution that actually benefits the customer. To make sure the customer is buying a solution that is good for them and will serve them well over an extended period of time.

Well done is better than well said.

Exclusivity should also be important to vendors, Sales Focus' approach to the market provides our clients exclusivity to a particular territory. We will not compete against our clients in the same market. We ensure our sales agents are 100% focused on driving new customer acquisition specifically for you. All our sales agents work fulltime, dedicated to our partner client. They are not just pushing the product with the best commission or lowest price; we focus on what's important to the customer and what's important to our clients. Finding customers that stay on board for the term of the contract and beyond is key to long term success for our clients. We make sure the customer understands the product, understands the terms and conditions and is satisfied with their decision. The customer becomes a strong referral for SFI and our customer. Building teams that focus solely on our clients product has made SFI the premier provider of dedicated technology-based sales teams across the US for the past 20 years.

How does a company find the right partner? How do they ensure success and quality? How do they protect their brand? Finding the right partner and process is paramount to the success of every vendor. If you want to secure new customers and protect your brand, Sales Focus has been successfully representing technology companies across the US and globally. Over the past 20 years we have had the honor to represent many companies in every market across the US, from small service providers to large Fortune 500 enterprises. No company is too large or too small for SFI.

We are proud to have launched and represented well over 500 IT companies over the past 20 years across all markets and industries. We have generated millions of dollars for our clients and acquired well over 5,000 new customers for them. We continue to expand our relationships and partnerships as we grow our clients book of business by acquiring new customers. Our rigorous recruiting and training process has allowed SFI to become the leader in sales outsourcing solutions for the IT sector. It is why successful IT companies chose SFI. We are focused on your success. Building relationships, developing long term customer relationships and exceeding expectations is our focus for all our clients.



There is always room at the top.

Sales Focus has 20 plus years' experience in the IT Industry across all platforms, products, solutions and services. Our sales outsourcing model has allowed our clients to quickly launch a dedicated sales team that is 100% focused on their brand, and commits to targeted cost of acquisition. SFI guarantees all our programs, based on performance and quality. Over 20 years of experience, we have written thousands of contracts and not 1 time have any of our clients had to worry about unethical or unprofessional sales behavior. SFI takes great pride in our commitment to sales excellence and performance. Our relationship with our clients is very close, we become an extension of our clients brand, as every sales person on the street is specifically hired, trained and managed to represent a particular brand. We provide our clients with a direct and dedicated sales approach. All our staff are full time employees of Sales Focus, who are specifically recruited based on skill sets, then they are trained to meet specific standards, and managed daily to ensure success. If you are care about quality, brand protection and sales success, we are the leaders in dedicated sales teams in the IT Sector.

Our process is what sets us apart. Any size sales team, anywhere in the world ready to go in 45 days or less. We have launched sales teams as large as 300 people across the globe and as small as 2 people in our sales center. Feet on the street or inside sales, we can do what you need with the quality you demand. The SFI S.O.L.D.™ process is our key differentiation in the market, along with years of experience and knowledge. Our SOLD process positions SFI as the leader in the industry to quickly and efficiently build and manage a dedicated team of qualified sales professionals. We begin the process with the Study phase to fully understand your business and what makes you stand out. Understanding your process and keys to success so we can build the team to meet your goals and expectations. Immediately following the Kickoff meeting and the Study phase, we begin the Organization phase, which includes two parallel processes, developing a sales training document, we call the "sales toolkit" and begin the recruiting process to identify the people who best fit the qualities we demand on our programs. All the sales people go through multiple levels of interviews, background checks and drug testing. Each candidate selected must fit the profile that will lead to success. The initial recruiting steps and stages are essential to finding a team of professionals who will represent your brand with the professionalism we demand.

Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great.

Once the team has been assembled, we will train them, test them and provide sufficient role play to verify they understand the key differentiators and your value proposition. We track the sales agents every day to verify quality and consistency. Since our sales team are employees of SFI, we can control the training and daily activities. Unlike a broker or 1099 model, our staff are W2 employees of SFI. Every bit of data we capture in the field becomes your data. Customer, competitive and marketing information is provided to you in our weekly program reviews. Your team will have direct management oversight from SFI, with our HR, Operations and Recruiting teams focused on providing a quality team, that is focused on success.

Our focus is simple. Make you successful! **Our goal is to exceed your goals and expectations!** If your company cares about quality and protecting your brand, then Sales Focus is the solution for you. No one has the level of experience in the IT industry as we do. Over 20 years of experience in all IT sectors, thousands of contracts executed for our clients, and Zero complaints. Call us today to a free evaluation and see what SFI can do for you. 410-442-5600 or visit us at www.salesfocusinc.com.