

Selling Concepts

In the highly competitive world of complex selling, we often find ourselves focused exclusively on the wants and needs of our customers. We try feverishly to match their desires with the features and benefits of our products or services to differentiate ourselves from our competition and win that “home-run” deal.

In the confusion of this whirlwind of travel, meetings, sales calls, and activities sometimes we forget to ask the essential questions. To compete as effectively as possible, we need to know three things:

- **WHY** the customer is buying anything at all; what are their business drivers and initiatives?
- **WHAT** the customer is focused on buying, or the details about the product, features and the project in general. And finally...
- **HOW** is the customer buying? How will the decision be made and who will be involved in the process?

All three are equally important but at times only items one and two get any significant attention. However, the larger the deal, the bigger the dollar amount and, the more individuals that are involved, the greater the need for understanding HOW the client will arrive at a decision. This is where organizational and interpersonal dynamics have a profound effect on the outcome and on your success.

That is where influence mapping, and this tool, come into play. Influence mapping is the process of systematically analyzing your account/opportunity against a proven method. Influence mapping will help you identify who and what you know as well as what critical information is missing. It will help you become cognizant of the organization structure, interpersonal relationships, and determine how they affect your business.

The Value

The value of influence mapping is not in the end product, but in the process, you undertake in creating the map and assigning values to the individuals within the map. As best as possible be critical and detached. Be pragmatic and brutally honest with yourself. Apply critical thinking. With each value or role, you assign ask yourself:

- “Why do I believe that?”
- “What have I seen that makes me think that?”
- “Am I being honest with myself or am I blue-skying this?”

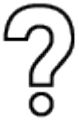










Analysis under the bright light of pragmatism can help you see more clearly the reality of the situation and will strip away the “high-gloss sheen” of your own wants and hopefulness. Not to say that you are overly optimistic (or self-delusional); it simply means that detached critical

thinking will help you avoid the most common pitfalls and identify missing information before it becomes fatal.

The Basic Concepts






Buying Roles

Everyone on your client's side that is involved has a buying role. Buying roles have specific, activity-based roles and some are very similar to and may overlap with a buyer type. Everyone can have multiple roles depending on the organization. Those buyer roles include:

	<p>Unknown - This person's role is unknown in relation to this opportunity. Work to understand this person's role. Any unknown Buyer Role is a risk to you.</p>		<p>Coach - A coach is your advocate. They provide timely and useful information to you. They are knowledgeable and respected within their organization. This person takes a personal interest in you and guides you through the selling process.</p>
	<p>Not Involved - This person does not have a role in relation to this opportunity.</p>		<p>Spy - This person is working for your competitor and against you. They are the anti-COACH. Be mindful of all interactions with this person. What may seem to be kind gestures or invitations to draw closer are likely a ruse to gain advantage over you.</p>
	<p>Gatekeeper - This is a person who grants access to information or people within the organization.</p>		<p>Owns Budget - This person controls the budget for the project or purchase in question. This is the person with signature authority.</p>
	<p>End User - The person who uses your product to do their job.</p>		<p>Wizard - This person has a disproportionate level of influence with the Ultimate Decision Maker (UDM) than what their title or position may suggest. The UDM takes their recommendation. Can be the hardest person to identify. Deals are hard to win without their support.</p>
	<p>Influencer - This person has some level of input into the purchase decision.</p>		<p>Ultimate Decision Maker - This person holds the final decision. They are the one person who can say "Yes" when everyone else says "No". They may abdicate their decisions to others within the organization and they look towards the Wizard for their recommendations.</p>
	<p>Evaluator - This person will review your product for a technical fit or appropriateness of use.</p>		

Buying Types

There are five basic buyer types. They are used to identify each person's primary perspective into the opportunity they are:

	Executive - Viewing the opportunity from a company impact perspective.		Administrative - Legal issues, compliance, contracts, and the PO are central.
	Financial - Focused on the dollars, cents, ROI, and budgetary aspect.		Line of Business - Focused on business value, effect on workday, ease of use.
	Technical - Interested in the compatibility, sustainability, and integration of the solution.		

Foe / Friend

This ranking is your client's opinion of you, your organization, and its product offering, favorable or unfavorable.

Buying Power

This ranking measures the amount of power or influence a person has in this buying event. This power magnifies or erodes the importance of the Friend/Foe ranking. For example:

If you have someone who hates you (-4 Foe / Friend) but they have no buying power (0), don't worry about them. If the wizard or ultimate decision maker hates you, don't forecast the deal.

Strategies and Comments

Once you understand the players and their involvement, you can now plan your strategy for everyone.