

## How to Write a Strategic Account Plan

By Ron Snyder

### How can you write a Plan that enables you to Penetrate and Grow a Strategic Account?

In order to gain the insights you need to create a winning plan, you must ask the right questions. Use this checklist as a guide. Your plan will guide your strategic account reviews and will help you manage your team.

#### 1. Analyze your Target Account's Business

Start with what is going on in your account's business.

- What are the key trends in their industry?
- Who are their top prospects and customers?
- What are the top issues facing their customers?
- What are the critical trends in the geography?
- What is reflected in their financial reports and news about them?



#### 2. Understand what is Driving the Account

You must understand their objectives and challenges.

- What are their strategic initiatives?
- What are the characteristics of their high-payoff customers/prospects?
- Are there verticals that they are winning in more than others? Why?
- What "pain" or business issues do they solve?
- What is their competitive position?
- What is their purchase history and decision-making process?

#### 3. Clarify your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

Conduct a SWOT analysis that examines how you can help this account.

- What **Strengths** can they benefit from? For example, a unique business model or capabilities.
- Which **Weaknesses** do you need to respond to? This includes the strengths of competitive and alternative solutions.
- Which **Opportunities** in the marketplace will you take advantage of... and help them take advantage of? How do you uniquely meet their compelling needs?
- What **Threats** in your selling environment will you defend against? Consider competitive moves, changes in technology, industry and regulatory standards.

#### 4. Determine your Selling Approach

Consolidate the above insights the critical strategies and actions necessary to succeed.

- How do you help them accomplish their strategic objectives?
- What is your unique selling (value) proposition?
- Based on your SWOT, what are the critical few strategies to win in the account?
- What type of opportunities will you concentrate on?
- How can you leverage your differentiators? (Sales approach can be a differentiator.)
- What is your strategy to leverage current successes?

#### 5. Engage the Resources you Need

Enroll the people and gather the knowledge you need.

- Which internal resources have the skills/connections you need?
- Who inside the account can help you win?
- Are there external resources that can support you (partners, people “in the know”)?
- What additional account information do you need? What sources can provide it?
- How could you improve your selling and account management skills?

#### 6. Create and Work your Plan

Use your plan as a guide to proactively produce your intended results.

- What are the high-leverage actions?
- Which resources are needed for each task?
- What are the due dates and key milestones?
- Do you take action and update the plan on a regular basis?
- Are you engaging your management, internal and partner resources?

If you don't plan your work, you can't work your plan. Winging it is the best way to lose a big opportunity you could have won!

Good luck and Good Selling!

### Plan 2 Win Software

Ron Snyder is President of Plan 2 Win Software.

Plan 2 Win Software was founded by sales veterans and former VP of Sales. We saw that Sales Force Automation Systems needed territory and key account planning tools.

Our sales planning software enables Salesforce.com (SFDC) users to create and manage territory and account plans right in their SFDC environment. They capture key trends in the industry, geography and vertical market. Sales execs, then, develop strategies, identify target accounts, business opportunities and partners to leverage and develop action plans to grow their business. These plans are perfect for Quarterly Business Reviews (QBRs) and strategic account reviews. This enables sales teams to fill their funnel with better prospects, make better use of their time and resources and produce better results!

Visit us at <http://www.territoryplan.com> and on the app exchange at: <http://bit.ly/eCZcFR> (account planning) and <http://bit.ly/hPTdDT> (territory planning).

For our complimentary white papers on Territory and Strategic Account Planning, go to <http://www.territoryplan.com/free-white-paper/>.

For our new book, **PLAN to WIN: Strategic Territory and Account Planning**, go to <http://www.territoryplan.com/resources/plan-to-win-book>.

