

3 Tips to Nurture Business Opportunities in Complex Environments

In a globalized marketplace, managing key customer relations for your strategic accounts has become an art of being defensive and offensive towards the client and competition. While you establish, and try to develop, nurture, and sustain the relationship you have to deliver value for the customer while simultaneously wading of advances from competitors.

You want to silo your customers, but you can't. It's like walking on a tight rope, one hand sparring with the competition trying to move past you, and taking out the time to meet your customer when the need arise, swiftly returning to push back the competition.

All of this, and more — without falling off.



Image: [Account handling is like running between a tight rope](#)

So how do you develop business opportunities in such a complex global environment?

Here are my top three tips:

1. Move Beyond Profiling Your Clients — Create a Case Study

Never create an “ideal client” profile. They’ll ruin your prospects.

Rather, understand your client’s “environment,” the landscape in which they are functioning, and identify the problems they are facing — individually.

Stalk. Ask questions. Investigate.

To enter into a sustainable relation with your client, inter-personal communication solely geared towards addressing their perception of fears and opportunities is crucial. You need to understand their fears, what they perceive as obstacles to opportunities, and what they think are springboards.

Only by understanding these can you create a real “pain statement” for the account and gain the language to be able to engage them, communicate value, and create strategies for delivering measure results.



Image: [Strategic opportunities](#)

2. Establish a Value Position for Each Key Player

One account, yes. However, you’ll always have multiple stakeholders and decision makers involved in the management process and value creation chain.

You cannot, and must not engage all of them on the same level. You have to prioritize based on their roles and level of authority and influence. Start by identifying the key players and positioning them in terms of the dynamics of their decision-making process (how fast/slow it is), and their degree of influence on the project and the overall process. This will create a value position statement for each key player involved with the account.

This will allow you to express a clear and common point of departure and state measurable results. Once you have created value position, establish a framework for the co-defined project where commonalities and measurable are defined.

3. Never Shy Away From Indirect Questioning

Ensure that you are on the same page with the stakeholders through indirect questioning. Engage in conversations to discuss potential blockages as opportunities for improvements. This will allow you to gain a more realistic response and a commitment from the stakeholders.

Additionally, indirect questioning also allows you to avoid confrontational situations, making it easier for you to remain focused on creating more value from the account as a whole, consistently define, and redefine value for key accounts and how you can meet their expectations.