



ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES TO CONSIDER TO MAXIMIZE RETURN IN EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Investments in education and professional development seldom prove successful in creating desired change if generic training offerings fail to address specific core issues. In our work with some of the most challenging clients who provide engineered products and services, MBDⁱ has found a direct association between revenue results, behavior and thinking. Effective behavioral change leading to increased revenue generation occurs only when the individuals in the role of business development are provided the education that challenges them to elevate their thinking to a higher level in essential areas. In order to accomplish that objective and to maximize the investment in professional development, we've found it prudent to consider the following points in working with a business development services partner.

- Under the constraints of the non-disclosure agreement, it is important to cultivate a working knowledge of the customer's strategic plans and objectives, in particular how the business development objectives coincide with those plans and objectives.
- It is imperative to know whether operational and tactical business development plans for revenue growth exist, and if so, how well they are developed and communicated within the organization.
- It is critical to evaluate the business development leadership in order to ascertain their capability. This must be factored into the assignment as this dynamic will determine the ultimate success or failure of the entire project. Leadership's ability to correctly assess the present situation, be aware of the challenges and be prepared to address them, in both the short and long term, is fundamental to success.
- It is essential to understand the role of every individual involved in the entire business development process. Individuals may be engaged either directly or indirectly in business development and might include business development support, customer support, product management and marketing as well

as the general managers of product lines and/or business units.

- It is important to understand that the strategic objectives and plans of a given entity could entail the integration of business development organizations, the turnaround of an existing business development operation, the intent to grow revenue with an existing business development operation or simply an improvement in the run status of the existing organization. By the same token, it is necessary to have thorough insight into the qualifications of the individual who has the overall leadership responsibility for these objectives as well as their plan for implementing them.
- It is imperative that the professional services supplier have a technical understanding of the client's products, services, markets and customers.
- It is further necessary to correctly assess the baseline level of thinking and ability of all individuals around whom the business development process and methodology will be based. This may be achieved by conducting focus groups, individual interviews, field call audits, a skill gap analysis and/or other related preliminary study work prior to beginning education and professional development.
- It is crucial to determine whether parity exists between the *mission* of the organization and the personal and professional goals of the individuals who are to be provided education and professional development. Acquiring this information is one of the key reasons for performing the initial assessment.
- It is vital to evaluate the human resource and organizational development capacity that presently exists within the organization, and ascertain their availability to assist in designing and building a successful business development process.

- An understanding of the existing business development culture within the organization as represented by the current composite thinking, as well as a firm grasp on what degree of shift is required and at what rate to signal a change in behavior and revenue results is a prerequisite.

- Also requisite is knowledge of how the success of an education and professional development process will be measured and at what pace. The ultimate measure of success is revenue growth. Assuring revenue growth frequently requires not only a change in business development process but also culture. Education and professional development cannot be successful if behavior is not changed. And, behavior cannot be changed without a corresponding change in thinking.

- Mandatory to success is determining the base business development process currently in place, how it is utilized, how it has been learned and documented, whether or not it has achieved desired results in the past, and if it can be built upon going forward.

- The new business development process that is implemented must be documented and serve as the basis for the education and professional development curriculum. A methodology must be put in place to accomplish this coordination.

- It must be possible to train the business development managers first in the new process, so they are able to coach, mentor and model the new behaviors with their business development teams. They need to further engage in and embrace the new process as their subordinates are being trained.

- The skill gaps uncovered in the course of assessing overall business development capability will impact

success, and as such must be addressed.

- The degree of customization required in the design of the new process should be addressed up front. Does the business development process need to be built around strategic growth hunter mechanics or organic farmer mechanics? Is it to be used by both direct and support individuals? Is it adaptable for both domestic and international business development?

- A typical business development reinforcement and implementation process requires two years of consistent attention. Management must *buy-into* this process and be willing to invest the resources to accomplish it.

- A critical component of this project is the integration of the business development process with the CRM program in order to document the quantity and quality of behavior and information gained through client contacts.

- The budget for this project should include an investment for upfront, preliminary training, initial education and professional development and follow-up reinforcement implementation.

As a rule of thumb, organizations determined to create a successful revenue generating, business development culture should expect to invest 1% of gross sales per year for at least two years in this project. This time and budget investment ensures the completion of appropriate preliminary work, the installation of the initial education and professional development training which addresses existing challenges, and the conclusion of follow-up reinforcement and implementation support work.

At a minimum, the end result is a ten-fold return on revenue invested during the project period.

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