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9 Tips for Dealing with the Buying Centre

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9 Tips for Dealing with the Buying Centre

How to make use of buying centres in sales

DEALING WITH THE BUYING CENTRE – HOW TO MAKE USE OF POLITICS IN SALES

No one can deny that politics play an important role in sales. Whether you participate in the one or other political game or not – players are going to play. The question is whether you participate as a passive or an active player who knows how to use the circumstances for their benefit.

Companies vs. people

Even before their initial contact with prospects, most salespersons think a lot about whether a) they are addressing the right companies and b) the right people there. However, especially point b) can rarely be answered definitely beforehand because in a multi-level, strategic sales process, frequently several people – aka the buying centre – must agree to a deal before it can be closed.

Buying centre

Buying centres are becoming more and more common in companies and organisations particularly in the case of capital goods. This buying centre is normally made up of representatives from various departments, hierarchical levels and functions. Consequently, a buying centre can be made up of members from the department where the product or service will be used primarily, employees from the purchasing department, representatives from the controlling department and product-specific experts (e.g., technicians).

The common goal is to achieve an optimum economic result by considering various experiences and points of view.

The salesperson must include all decision makers in the sales process in a skilful and diplomatic way and provide each member of this group with the appropriate sales arguments. To this end, it is not only important to understand how this purchasing committee is staffed but in particular which roles the respective members take and what motives they pursue.

Within the buying centre, we mainly differentiate between four types:

1. The user
The product or service will be used in their department primarily.
2. The evaluator
They solicit, check, compare and sort quotations.
3. The decision maker
They are responsible for the project and make the decision.
4. The veto
They have the right of veto and their “no” vote renders any previous “yes” votes worthless.

The role of CRM systems

It is best to document the acquired findings directly in a CRM system and map the interaction between the members of the purchasing body and the sales (team) there.

The sales (team) must supply the respective types of persons with different information. The following is an example of motives influencing a purchasing decision in IT: The general management is usually interested in the ROI, growth opportunities and costs in general. The sales management is interested in increasing sales or contributing to target achievement. Users are interested in functional topics, mapping as well as integration into everyday work and user-friendliness. The IT department is interested in the technology, integration into the system landscape and implementation effort.

This is why it is important to staff your own sales team so that all topics are covered by experts. This is the only way to receive a purchase decision based on the right amount of information, at the right time and in the desired depth.



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Buying centre vs. selling centre

The best solution is to staff your sales team in the way that every employee from the buying centre has a counterpart from your organisation who can cater to the respective sensitivities accordingly. For example, if you know, that the IT management is represented on the customer side and they are concerned about technical issues, you should make sure that you also include an expert from the IT department on your side. In order to satisfy the needs of the increasingly complex and complicated communication – especially in dealing with the buying centre – a system that optimally supports the seller and maps the complexity of different roles and types is sensible and important.

It is essential to know for sellers and their sales success what types of buyers (user - evaluator - decision-maker - vector) they have already identified and that this relationship network is represented graphically.

The communication should not only be mapped in the system, it should even be guided in the context of assessment of opportunities. This allows the sellers to evaluate more validly where they stand and who in the company they still have to speak to in order to significantly increase sales probability and ultimately close the deal.

9 TIPS FOR DEALING WITH THE BUYING CENTRE

To identify the people who, in fact, influence the purchasing process, you should consider the following:

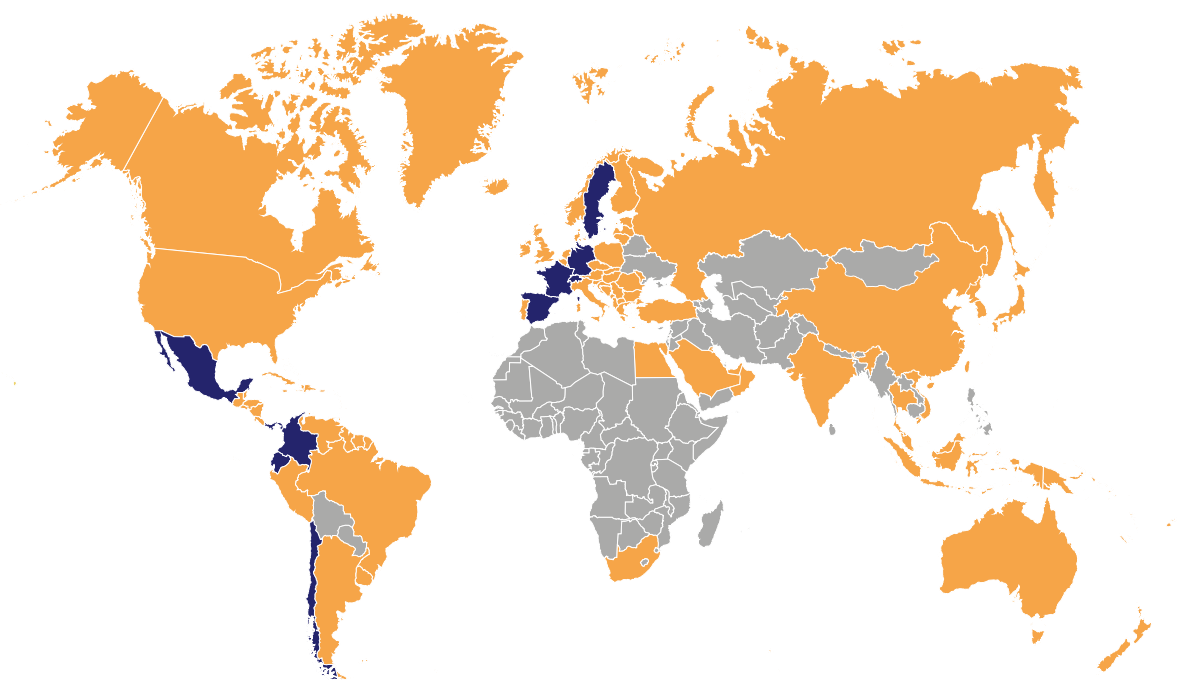
1. Ascertain the decision-making process as early as possible in the sales process.
2. Also enquire early on who is involved in the decision-making process.
3. Determine the respective roles of the people involved.
4. Enquire who makes the final decision in favour or against a purchase or who has the power to do this.
5. Consult your network regarding relevant activities and informal structures. Keep track of who receives information although they never personally attend meetings.
6. Watch organisational and personal changes as well as budget changes.
7. Be mindful of strategically important decisions that are not made in formal decision-making structures.
8. Find out who can stop a sale, which is believed to be safe, in the last minute.
9. Oppose the customer's buying centre with your selling centre.



WITH THE CC|CRM POLITICS ADD-ON FOR MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365 FOR SALES, WE MAP INFORMAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES BEYOND THE OFFICIAL ORGANISATIONAL CHART, STORE THESE FOR THE LONG RUN IN OUR COMPANY AND THUS MAKE OUR SALES MORE SUCCESSFUL.

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