

Generic Sales Guide Outline

Introduction

Following is an outline for a sales guide that can be tailored to the specific needs of particular companies, especially companies that aim to sell products or services that incorporate complex technology or address complex business issues. Hoffman developed this outline based on preparation of multiple sales guides for various clients in recent years. Some sales guides may require only a subset of this material, may require additional material not shown here, or may require its presentation in a different order or form. However, Hoffman has found this outline to be a useful starting point in most cases.

I. About this Guide

- a. Purpose
- b. What's in it for you? (Indicate typical size of deals to suggest revenue potential, with breakdown into categories like hardware, software, services if needed.)

II. The Sales Opportunity

- a. Why Sell This Now?
 - i. Market Trends (What's driving customer demand for this?)
 - ii. Opportunities to Leverage
- b. What Do I Sell?
 - i. Define the offering (what it is, how it works, key features, etc.), clearly and concisely. Include a value proposition and elevator pitch, key messages and differentiators (space needed varies considerably with different offerings).
 - ii. Key Benefits
 - iii. Provide Web links to more detailed information

III. The Customer

- a. Who is the Sales Prospect? (Ideal customer profile, such as key industries, best prospect markers, organization types, job titles and responsibilities, and driving needs or goals.)
- b. What Impact Can My Customer Expect? (Indicate how offering meets customer needs/benefits gained.)
- c. Who Is a Successful Customer? (Provide several brief problem/solution/benefit customer success stories).

IV. The Competition

- a. Who Is the Competition? (Include a competitive landscape, ideally one that compares key capabilities that are important to the target customer.)
- b. How Do I Beat the Competition?
 - i. Target the differentiators/capabilities that the sales person should focus on—ones that set the offering ahead of the rest. Explain them in more detail and provide any supporting facts, details, if possible.
 - ii. Help the sales people address key competitor strengths that will pose serious roadblocks to sales.

- c. When Do We Win and When Do We Lose? (Indicate situations in which you tend to lose and tend to win.)

V. Sales Resources

- a. Initially Qualify Prospects
 - i. Provide key information needed to qualify an opportunity, such as:
 1. Explain what types of customer problems or needs to seek.
 2. Explain additional attributes of likely prospects
 3. Indicate the attitude of a likely buyer (e.g., hates risk, values customer satisfaction, propensity to outsource, etc.)
 4. Indicate when to stop the sales process so the sales person avoids wasting time.
 - ii. Include questions to ask to identify/qualify prospects.
- b. One and /or Two Minute Drill (Write short and long elevator pitch that summarizes key messages for initial sales calls.)
- c. Increase Chances for Success (Indicate other questions the sales people should ask to increase chances for success, such as who is involved in making decisions and what the process is like, budget questions, etc. The goal is to identify potential roadblocks in advance and plan to overcome them.)
- d. Potential Objections and Responses to these Objections

VI. The Sales Process?

- a. The Sales Engagement Model/ Resources Needed
- b. How To Obtain Sales Support/What Is Available When?
- c. Resources and Contacts

VII. Pricing and Configurations

- a. If lengthy, may need to provide links to detail

VIII. Additional Online Resources

Note: Other sales guide sections may include topics on the following:

- Solution delivery
- Key partners/contributions
- Support
- Product positioning
- Second-level qualifying questions
- Information to compare options

For More Information

Hoffman Marketing Communications, Inc., has written sales guides for leading enterprises around the world, including HP, Symantec, SAP, and many others. Hoffman is also a leading producer of custom white papers, multimedia content, and collateral. For more information, contact steve@hoffmanmarcom.com visit www.hoffmanmarcom.com, or call 408-778-5414.