

Slaying The Dragon: 5 Keys to Closing BIG Accounts

Are you tired of hustling every day with small accounts? Sure, they can add up to bigger bucks, but they can also be a lot of work for what you get in return. And this is frustrating when you see those other sales pros making the big bucks – smiling and laughing and acting like they don't even have to work that hard. **Their one big account earns exponentially more than all your account combined.** How do they do it?

The truth is, closing a big account is the same work as closing small accounts. But the Dragon Slayers, or Superstar Sales Pros work differently than you and everyone else. And the key things they do (that you don't) help them land the big accounts you only wish you had.

So, what is their secret? **Superstar sales pros do five key things consistently to bring in the big accounts.** And if you apply these same tactics, you can too.

#1: Fact Finding

Before you ever step foot into the door of a company, do your research. You've got to know your customer inside and out. And this goes well beyond just knowing basic details about their company. **You need to get to the bottom of what will make the customer's business better.** *And you need to know exactly how the product or service you are selling will help them.*

Fact-finding includes knowing how the office works. When you on call them, be strategic about it because you will most likely have to find and get past a *gatekeeper*. Try these two effective strategies:

1. **Befriend the gatekeeper.** For the moment they are more important than the actual buyer. If you can charm this person you can gain valuable information and/or access to the decision maker. Overlook or underestimate this person and your name is mud forever, even if you switch companies.
2. **Avoid the gatekeeper.** If it is hard to get past the gatekeeper, then plan your calls either early in the day or late after most employees have gone home. *I often used this strategy because the key leader generally puts in longer hours than the staff and would answer the phone because everyone else was gone. There were even times where the office door was open and I just walked in and got extended time with the buyer because they were wrapping up the day and were more relaxed than during business hours.*

Fact-finding is about preparation and timing. Do not give your customer a reason to doubt your capability or your product. When they say "no" (and there is a good chance they will), you must continue to ask questions about the business problems they need to solve, and personal questions to get to know them better. Develop a relationship with as many people in the account as possible. The likeability factor is powerful, and can result in them giving you valuable intelligence. It may take time but stick to it!

#2: Stand Out with Your Service from the Beginning

Big fish know that they are big fish and they expect to be treated like a big fish. So, if you want to land one, you've got to give them special attention. When you reach out to them and are lucky enough to get a response, nurture it. Return their calls immediately and address their

problems personally. Don't pass them off to your customer service department or someone else. **YOU** make sure that their issue is handled promptly.

You see, if you do today what others won't, you'll have tomorrow what others won't.

Be flexible and show them that you are willing to do whatever it takes to win their business (that's legal, moral and ethical btw). Take on a small project that won't make you any money, or a difficult one that nobody else wants if that is what it takes. Even if the task involves number crunching, data entry, or a seemingly never-ending pile of paperwork, if the big account asks you to do it, you do it! Keep that big fish on the line as long as you can and wear them down with service and thoughtfulness until you can reel them in.

#3: Plan and Speak a Long-Term Relationship

Don't be shortsighted when you approach a potentially big account or put limits on what you can do for them. **Company leaders have a long-term vision for their business – show them that you are there to help them see it through.** *They need to know that you aren't there to land a one-time big sale, but that you can be a partner in their vision – helping them by fulfilling a need or service.* Plan out your selling strategy in advance and beautifully lay it out for them so that they are just as excited as you are about the possibilities.

#4: Look for Disaster

Wouldn't it be sweet to come in and save the day for a prospect who has repeatedly told you "NO"? You could be the hero! **Superstar sales pros understand the value of keeping in touch with their repeat "no's".** An elite sales pro will gently remind these prospects that if they ever need help in a pinch, just give them a call. And sure enough, there will come a time when a current supplier or vendor doesn't come through. Or their vendor becomes complacent. You get to rescue them, and may even get to land the account for being attentive and bringing peace and calm to an otherwise chaotic situation.

#5: If All Things are Equal – You Are the Tie Breaker

You've got to be excited about what you do, period. Even if you are selling widgets, those widgets may be critical to the success of your customer's business. *If you aren't enthused about providing them helpful solutions that increase their success, then why a customer be excited to buy their products from you?*

When you are talking to your customers, you should be interesting and positive. *Bring joy to the situation and show them that you are genuinely interested not just in selling them something, but you are also interested in learning about them.* Ask questions. Learn details about them, their families, and their children, whatever they are interested in. You want them to look forward to catching up with you and sharing their stories. **You want them to feel like you are invested in their success and well being.**

Finally, treat others in the company with this same kind of interest and respect – make the staff happy. When you walk in and everyone around is excited and happy to see you, decision makers will associate the likeability factor with your brand. And trust me, **clients always prefer working with someone they like.** So, make it a pleasant experience for the entire staff when you pay them a visit.

Conclusion

Want to be known as the Dragon Slayer in your company? If you practice and master these five habits you'll improve your closing ratio, and find yourself in the top 10% of your stack rankings.

Don't stare at Superstar Sales Pros with envy. Their work speaks for itself and the numbers don't lie! So sharpen your skills, go find your dragon and take it down!