

Winning at Prospecting

Overview



Whether you're calling from a cold list or targeting a specific prospect, our research tells us that the odds are stacked against you. The best strategies for drawing new clients to the bank are community-based networking and referrals from centers of influence.

Clarity Advantage Corporation is a business consulting firm. We help banks implement and execute sales strategies to generate more profitable relationships faster. Banks accelerate sales by focusing on their value propositions, improving sales processes, and boosting sales manager effectiveness.

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PROGRAM PURPOSES:

Build Confidence, Implement Strategies, Generate Appointments

Many branch managers and small business bankers struggle with prospecting and blitzes. **Winning at Prospecting** teaches branch managers, assistant managers, and small business bankers strategies and skills needed to choose and make appointments with qualified, desirable small businesses emphasizing community-based networking and warm introductions that can be more effective than cold calling and drop ins. This networking strategy increases the yield from time invested in prospecting and repositions the bank and its team members as “potential partners” rather than “pushy product sellers” with little value to add.

Specifically, program participants learn how to:

- Focus and prioritize the business types and companies to pursue.
- Integrate prospecting and business development activities into their daily and weekly routines.
- Leverage their effectiveness with centers of influence and other referral sources.
- Develop strong “conversation starting” questions and statements that focus on business owner concerns rather than bank products or promotions.
- Reduce or avoid appointment resistance.

Learning Activities – Pre-Work, Classroom, Field Sales Meetings

PREPARATION

The bank chooses focus industries, refines or re-articulates its small business value proposition, begins development of a best practices guide, and develops tools branch team members and small business bankers will need to support their prospecting including letter templates, voice mail templates, and articles to be shared with prospects.

KICK-OFF

Senior managers review the bank's goals and plans for small business prospecting; agree on expectations they'll set for region managers, district managers, branch managers, and small business bankers; and agree on the coaching and other support they will provide, expect, and inspect to support the prospecting effort. Senior managers and first- and second-level sales managers then participate in the **Winning at Prospecting** classroom training and create specific action plans for implementing and coaching **Winning at Prospecting** in their regions and districts.

CLASSROOM

Participants complete pre-classroom work including discussion with their managers, brief readings, and collection of information about specific business types assigned to them by their managers. During the one-day classroom session, participants complete a series of small group learning activities and discussions:

- **The Big Picture.** On which business types will we focus? How will we decide which specific companies we will pursue within the selected business types?
- **Knowing Your Prospects.** What are the internal and external challenges prospects face and for which they'd welcome ideas and help?
- **All the Time.** How do we integrate prospecting activities into daily routines including (for example) visits to healthcare providers, school meetings, community meetings, or business meetings or events?
- **Reasons to Meet.** What are the trigger business issues we can use to start conversations with prospects? Where do we look for them? How do we translate trigger issues into opening questions that start discussion?
- **Asking for a Meeting.** How do we craft approaches that work by phone, in community meetings, or in casual daily encounters? (Participants learn a specific template for approaches.)
- **Responding to Declines.** How can we respond positively and learn more about prospects even when they decline a particular proposal for a meeting?

OPTIONAL (AND ENCOURAGED) FIELD SALES MEETINGS

Following classroom training, first-level or second-level sales managers may also lead Field Sales Meetings that expand and extend points raised during the classroom session. The Field Sales Meetings are approximately 45 minutes long. Topics include: Developing COI Relationships, Prospecting at Events, Staying in Touch with Prospects, and Working with Gatekeepers.

Support Tools

During the project, Clarity encourages the development of support tools, including a Best Practices Guide (bank and Clarity best practices), additional letter and email templates, and additional articles and other pieces that bankers can share with prospects.

Variations

Clarity has developed variations of **Winning at Prospecting** for other sales teams including commercial and corporate bankers calling on larger companies.