

Developing a Strategic Selling Plan

Case Study #2

Carew International



Sam Bemis

You have been helping Rampart Company with sales-productivity issues for ten months now. It took you some time to develop a sense of trust with the training department.

The Director of Training at Rampart is Sam Bemis. He is assisted by his administrator, Irma Rosa, who relieves him of detail work and follow up. Sam once said, "Irma makes the trains run on time."

Sam has been in this position for three years, and it appears as though he runs a "happy ship." Sam's department never seems to get into jams, and a friendly atmosphere prevails throughout... if you are not on the outs with Irma. Irma has been known to be hard on people who do not follow through

Sam was exceptionally receptive to you on your first call. He was very gracious, offering you a cup of coffee and engaged you in conversation about your family and background.

Your weekly call on Sam is usually enjoyable. His office is a hub of activity. People clearly feel comfortable stopping in to update him on their various activities, be they good or bad. It is clear that Sam has his finger on the pulse of most goings on at Rampart. On various calls you have noticed him sorting through issues related to the United Way campaign, an intra-company lobbying effort designed to persuade the Senior VP of Sales to accept a speaking gig at the annual industry conference, and once, listening to him coach a manager through the sensitivities of counseling one of her employees.

Sam's gregarious nature seems to make it a bit of a challenge for him to get away from conversing and to focus on the task at hand. You have a number of customers similar to Sam and as a result, typically plan for a longer call than with some others. For example, on a recent call Sam spent a good bit of time talking about the company's work with Junior Achievement, an effort he has headed up for a number of years now.

One day while you were in Sam's office, a Senior Manager, Janet Zimmer, burst into the office seeming to be quite upset about one of the current training system suppliers; SNAP. "They have missed a promised deadline for the third time in a row. Why don't you dump that company, Sam? They can't live up to their commitments," Janet stated. Sam registered concern with SNAP's lack of performance, and provided Janet assurances he would consider her suggestion to replace SNAP. Sam's tone changed when he spoke to Tom Stevens, the SNAP resource representative, on the telephone. "Tom, please come over and spend some time with Janet Zimmer. She is really upset this time and wants me to replace you. You know how influential she is. She can make life miserable for both of us if we don't solve this problem," Sam said.

All in all, you have been doing pretty well with Sam. He likes you, and you never seem to have a problem with Rampart. The only unfortunate part is that you have not been successful in getting Dimensions of Professional Selling endorsed for Rampart's salespeople. Your boss sees training Rampart salespeople as a great way to create a team atmosphere.

When you raise the subject of Dimensions of Professional Selling with Sam he puts you off by changing the subject or interrupts your efforts by asking someone into the office. You sense that he is in general agreement but for some reason seems hesitant. Nothing is happening. You are no closer to your objective with Sam today than you were at the outset. You would like to start training the Rampart sales team immediately.