

Developing a Strategic Selling Plan

Case Study #1

Carew International



Joe Parker

Your company has been a prime supplier to Midwest Manufacturing and Distribution (MM&D) for three years. You worked diligently to create a productive relationship with the Director of Manufacturing Production. Three weeks ago, the Director accepted a new position with another company in a different industry. The new and confidential nature of his new position prevented him from giving advanced warning of his departure. The Director was replaced from the outside by Joe Parker.

Joe has squeezed (his words) you into his “busy” schedule, and during your two previous visits you have found that he does most of the talking. Further, he has a tendency to ask a lot of questions and frequently interrupts your responses.

It didn’t take him long to cover the walls of his new office with trophies and awards ranging from a speech award to his most recent, a certificate of recognition from the American Management Association (AMA). Joe did not move into the office of his predecessor. Instead, as part of his agreement to accept the new position he moved into the senior corporate management section of the building. During his first week on the job, he broke standard protocol of promoting from within, and went outside MM&D to hire a new assistant.

Joe has been quick to point out his achievements with his former employer. He speaks of how MM&D’s top management is vesting more authority in his position, particularly as it relates to manufacturing innovation and productivity improvement

The informal, given-and-take atmosphere is gone. Joe insists on firm appointments scheduled through his assistant. On your last visit, he indicated he expects a courtesy call from your senior leadership.

On one occasion when you recommended lunch, Joe selected a well-known, high priced restaurant. Before leaving the office, he instructed his assistant to make a reservation to facilitate immediate seating upon arrival. Just before being seated, Joe went out of his way to visit the table of some key company executives.

During your sales calls you note Joe to be brief and directive with his associates. Your meetings with Joe thus far have been non-productive. When you are talking, Joe does not seem to be listening. More than once he has mentioned that he is a multi-tasker and not to be offended if he does not appear to be giving you his full attention. During your last meeting he referred to his plans to reorganize the supply chain in an attempt to “shake things up.”

Most alarming is his intention to reassess existing resources, both within and outside the organization. You get the feeling that “reassess” might mean changing things just to change them. As one of MM&D’s prime suppliers you are concerned your organization might be a primary recipient of Joe’s changes.