

What's the best strategy for getting in the door at high potential new accounts?

Contrary to popular opinion, the best way to gain entry to a new account is not to start at the top. Our research reveals that calling on the ultimate decisionmaker too early is a fatal mistake few salespeople ever recover from. Instead, a successful sales entry strategy focuses initially on non-prospects who are receptive to sharing information, then dissatisfied individuals whose problems may represent a sales opportunity. Here's how:

The Focus of Receptivity

People who are curious about offerings like yours, and receptive to exchanging information

1. **Gain** entry by appealing to their interest in being on top of things.
2. **Reassure** them that you're interested in their ideas and not out to sell them anything.
3. **Query** them about who's who, what's what, and where people are reporting problems.
4. **If a problem** seems an opportunity for you, see if they'll introduce you to the problem owner.
5. **Move on** if you're not getting the information or access you need.

The Focus of Dissatisfaction

People who are experiencing problems in an area where you can likely help

1. **Begin** by asking questions to better understand the source of their dissatisfaction.
2. **Help** them to see the problem as serious enough to require immediate action.
3. **Withhold** the virtues of your offerings until the problem cries out to be solved.
4. **Enlist** them to help you make a business case to the ultimate decisionmaker.

The Focus of Power

People who are in a position to approve or reject the purchase of your offering

1. **Recognize** that most decisions are driven by problem owners not purchase authorities.
2. **Use** individual at focus of dissatisfaction to sponsor you and help prepare your case.
3. **Take** control of meetings with purchase authorities – don't let their position intimidate you.
4. **Do** your homework. Don't waste access with small talk and routine information requests.
5. **Power** can shift as business changes. Be sure you're calling where the action is today.
6. **Don't** put all your marbles on "Mr. or Ms. Big" – recognize that power is increasingly shared.

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