Building the customer base

By building a relationship with the customer, we are able to compete for the big deals. We do this directly through the end users or indirectly through the resellers.

We never go for the hit-and-run, but stand for building a relationship in which the customer goodwill also plays an important role.

The first and most important goal is always to achieve a break-even turnover. This means that the costs incurred are just as high as the income that is generated. This is important, because it ensures that the organization has a right to exist!

By spreading your attention over the different customer groups (direct and indirect), our experience shows that the chance of success is greatest.

Just briefly and for the sake of clarity, we distinguish the following customer groups.

Direct customers and customer groups:

• Hospitals and Health institutions. Also think of psychiatric institutions, old people's homes
• Government institutions, including the municipality
• Multinationals (Heineken, DHL, Engie, Vodafone, T-mobile, Car Brands (BMW, Mercedes, Fiat) and so on
• Banks, Insurance companies, pension funds, construction companies and airports (for example)

'Indirect' customers and customer groups:

• Cloud Migrators, (G-Company and so on)
• (License) Advisors, (Deloitte & Touche, KPMG, Blackbelt and so on)
• Microsoft Resellers, (Tech Data, Bechtle, Crayon, Comparex and so on)
• Resellers of hardware and software in general.

But how do you ensure that turnover can be realized through these channels?

There are a number of ways to do this, which we explain below. It may work differently for different regions, but in general it won't be much different.

The most important thing, as mentioned before, is to become part of the market. That means that you have to be seen and recognized in the market. In addition, you can also ensure that you are seen as a specialist and/or authority through Free Publicity.

We achieved this in the first period in the Netherlands by being interviewed (unpaid) on the radio several times and by explaining our proposition. Reports have also been published in Business Newspapers. These are all small building blocks that contribute to the success and appearance of the organization.

Make yourself heard and show yourself.

What tools do you have at your disposal to make initial contact?

Social Networks : Linkedin, Xing, Microsoft Partner Pages and more

The goal is not to get as much contact as possible, but to ensure that you come into (physical) contact with people. Make sure you sit down at the table and/or at least start a dialogue!

Existing contacts within our (international) network

In recent years we have built relationships with various international companies. The advantage of this is that these companies often have branches throughout Europe. For example, if you want to get in touch with one of Microsoft's major resellers, it's no problem for us to arrange an introduction!

Consider the following… Crayon is an organization that is active throughout Europe and often competes in tenders. What we could simply do is call Crayon in your area and share our successes with Crayon and our organization in other countries. The contact person is easy to find for us and the moment you call this person, he has already heard our story once and they know that it is a 'success formula'! The big advantage is that after a certain period we can also call (for example) Crayon again to hear whether action has already been taken. Then you have a push and pull effect.

Below are a number of tools that we use once the initial contact has been made.

Indicate at which organization you would like an introduction, or ask us if we would like to make a proposal, we are ready for you.

Fairs and meetings

Fairs and meetings were almost non-existent last year, but they are now starting to come again. Do not immediately think: “a stand is much too expensive and I am too small”.

Perhaps both are true, but by playing it smart, you can always be at a fair or event for free. For example, contact a reseller or organization that participates in a trade fair and ask if you can be on his stand. If you can indicate what the added value can be for them, this can also form the basis for a far-reaching collaboration. Think, for example, of an organization that specializes in Cloud Migration or provides advice on this. If you can explain at their booth that the excess licenses can be sold, the organization has an (unexpected) budget to pay the organization that does the migration. This just as an example you can come up with a lot of other workable solutions. By now you are at a trade fair and you can communicate that you are at such and such a stand and that an existing organization is working with you.

With this you can achieve a lot of goals without cost: you are on a stock exchange, you have exposure, you are part of the market, you are an authority because you stand on a stand as an advisor and so on!

The phone is patient!

You would almost forget, but we also have a telephone and people can just call. Our advice is to call at least 10 potential customers every day and to make as many appointments as possible. Make sure to sit down and give yourself the chance to pitch your story.

These are useful tools once you're in touch:

“Make sure you come to the table by asking a question!”

If you call an organization and indicate that you want to exchange ideas about a 'new' concept, it sounds much better than if you indicate that you want to sell a product or service.

Once you are seated, you can indicate that you are investigating why organizations that have gone to the Cloud are not cashing out their excess licenses. You then immediately ask whether the organization where you are located has done this or not. If they say “yes”, then you indicate that they are well informed and you want to know who advised them to do so, we can most likely supply licenses to that party again. If they say "no", you can come up with your first recommendation and indicate that they can sell the excess volume licenses!

You can easily check in advance whether or not they have been migrated to the Cloud, using the tool we have for that purpose 😊. If you now see that they have migrated to the Cloud and they no longer have any excess licenses (or they do), you also have the chance to see what can be saved in Hybrid Cloud solutions. We then propose to collect information or ask who is responsible for this and then use the information to make a comparison between cloud and hybrid cloud. Without a doubt, come across as the specialist and take it from us that we usually know a lot more than the standard Microsoft specialists in this area.

“No one has ever refused to brainstorm”

If you call a person/organization and indicate that you have just started a franchise formula, which is very successful abroad and wants to test this on the local market, there is a good chance that someone will give you the opportunity to ask questions and to exchange ideas.

It is not important to be able to make a sales pitch, but simply to start a conversation and tell your story!

“Who should I sit at the table with?”

We are still internally discussing who you should sit down with and opinions are divided. You can choose to join the financial / budget man, the ICT manager or the management.

What wisdom is has to do purely with the organization and also with the knowledge of the person you are sitting with! Sometimes we have conveyed a top story to the management or the financial man, but this is at odds with the advice of the ICT department. He does not want to look 'crazy' and then it is difficult to change his vision, sometimes even if this costs the company many thousands of euros!

It often also depends on the contacts you have, where you sit at the table. Because the management and the financial man often do not know enough about the matter, we have made short films and these can simply be forwarded to the IT man!

“NDA, better save than sorry”

Always start by signing the organization's NDA or offering our own NDA. This guarantees that we treat all information as confidential and also indicates that we are used to handling this type of information and documents!

“Make sure you can do a Pilot”

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, they say. So make sure that you can do a pilot, so that the organization can see what you can do for their or their customers.

The response to this is often enthusiastic and people indicate that they will think about it in future cases. What we always say is: Give us the numbers of a case that you have just completed, then you can get started right away and you don't need the name of the company, you just want to show what our added value is !

“Which 2-3 people would you like to introduce us to?”

You can conclude with each conversation by asking whether the person in his network still has contacts who benefit from our proposition.

These names then immediately become 'warm' leads and you can call and/or approach them to make an appointment, referring to the conversation and your contact!

“Retirement homes and care institutions, etc. often work with umbrella organizations”

Many organizations work with partnerships and with this you can immediately make a big difference. It is often the case that, for example, the umbrella body meets a number of times a year and it makes sense to propose to make a presentation there. If possible, we can also fly in and tell our story, no problem. If there is an umbrella organization, it is in any case important to get the names of the other persons responsible and to approach them as little as possible.

“Use trusted channels”

The advantage of our proposition compared to the traditional solutions is that we DO make a margin. If the margin is enough, you can also share… If you can share, you can both share something and share your margin with them!

The organizations with which you want to share your margin must therefore bring you something…..and that is a trusted distribution channel! An organization that has been supplying ICT solutions to a company for years has their trust and advice from this organization is followed almost blindly. Make sure you find the organizations that have earned this trust and take advantage of the opportunities together!

“The calculators on the website are a great tool”

We have several calculators on the website. Use these in your proposition and your story and also make sure you share them with people you want to get into business with. If they share and use the calculators themselves, you're in the position you want to be in. That of authority and specialist!

“Help, I'm not a Microsoft expert”

Oh great, neither do I, but we do have the experts in our team and can come up with substantiated advice! Suppose you are sitting at the table with an organization and they have worked out an entire plan for the next 5 years. Based on the general and standard knowledge, you can indicate that we look at the possibilities to save or earn back money. What is most important for that, to make sure you find out who the person is who can provide the information. We ensure that we receive the correct information from that person (after the meeting) and we come up with a proposal based on that.

The most important function is that you collect information and become the contact person, as it were. For the specific work and technical knowledge, we have a team that takes care of the backup! We always assume that the people on the other side of the table know 10 times as much about Microsoft licenses as we do… that's usually true, only in the field of Hybrid Cloud and redundant licenses we know more in all cases 😊.

With the above tools and our backup, it can't be missed and it's only a matter of time before a regular customer base is a fact!

How can I help you? Let me know and we'll get started!

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