Design Document

Sales Opportunity Snapshot

Learning Solutions International

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Sales Opportunity Snapshot®
(SOS)

One Day Workshop for the Sales Professional
Design Document

Sales Opportunity Snapshot (SOS) is a one-day, fast-paced interactive workshop that represents the next generation in opportunity management. It focuses on helping professional salespeople analyze and manage their current sales opportunities quickly and more effectively.

SOS provides a structured, scalable process for qualifying and winning strategic sales opportunities where competitors are strong and customer buying protocols are influenced by formal and informal decision criteria.

The workshop content is supported by a robust tool, created and developed using Visual Basic within Excel. The tool is extremely visual, easy to use and dramatically depicts various aspects of a sales opportunity, including the following:

- *Snapshot Assessment*® of the sales opportunity, based on nine key criteria
- *Influence Map*, consisting of an overview of key client executives who influence the sales opportunity
- Methodology to select a sales strategy for the opportunity, including an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of major competitors
- Summary of the ACTION PLANNING process
- Unique and specific value proposition created for the sales opportunity

The *tool* can be forwarded to all direct and extended members of the sales team and can also be used by sales management to validate forecast probabilities and allocate resources. It can also be used to prepare and update sales executives who might be asked to call on various executives in the client organization.

Learning is supported by several short case study scenarios and by immediately applying activities against the current sales opportunities of the participants. Each module contains several activities that are applied against sales opportunities, so participants leave the workshop with an improved plan for their own opportunity. Participants also discuss and de-brief these activities in table groups throughout the workshop, thus affording additional opportunities to improve the quality of their plan.

An integral part of the workshop's success is the credibility of the facilitator. Each SOS workshop is delivered by an experienced facilitator with significant business-to-business sales experience. The workshop requires facilitators to apply their expertise in each module. Inevitably, sales issues not covered by the workshop content arise and each facilitator must rely on his or her sales or sales management experience to address those key issues. As a result, the workshop is facilitator dependent and, for that reason, SOS facilitators are carefully selected, trained and certified to ensure their ability to address questions and problems that arise throughout the day.

Overall Learning Objectives of the Workshop

At the end of the workshop, participants will be able to…

- Effectively qualify each of their sales opportunities, using the *Opportunity Snapshot* process
- Use concepts of influence and power to leverage a relationship with the relevant executive
- Select a competitive sales strategy that enables them to compete for each opportunity they pursue
- Develop meaningful actions that will enable them to win the deal
- Quickly and effectively communicate the status of each sales opportunity to others in the organization

Pre-Workshop Assignment

- Participants are asked to assemble information about a current sales opportunity they are pursuing and bring that portfolio of information with them to the workshop

SOS Workshop Modules

The workshop is comprised of the following modules:

- Brief Introduction – The Value of Opportunity Management
- Qualify the Sales Opportunity
- Align with the Political Landscape
- Select a Competitive Sales Strategy
- Develop a Value Proposition and Action Plan
- Summary and Close

Introduction Module – The Value of Opportunity Management

The workshop begins with a reinforcement of why salespeople need to have a process in place to systematically evaluate their sales opportunities. The overall workshop objectives are disclosed and the SOS Process is overviewed in a brief, but comprehensive manner.

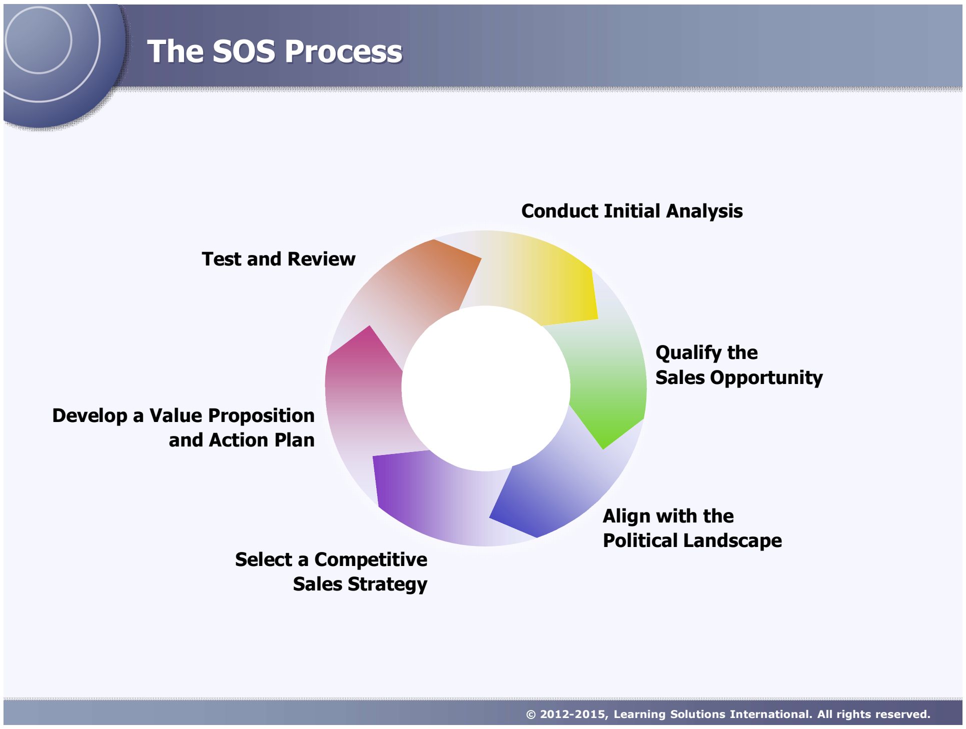

Figure 1 - The SOS Process

The teaching methodology for the *Introduction* module is interactive discussion. Participants are organized in table teams at the beginning of the workshop to facilitate robust discussions of the two brief case studies, as well as individual and table team activities that are conducted throughout the day.

Qualify the Sales Opportunity Module

This module delivers a comprehensive and insightful methodology to quickly assess current sales opportunities. It is accompanied by a visual tool that is easy to use and dramatically displays the status of any sales opportunity, ranging from the simplest transactional sale to one that is multifaceted and complex.

The SOS Opportunity Assessment process is based on nine criteria that lie within three compelling questions. It is suggested that these criteria be assessed at multiple times during a sales campaign.

The three compelling questions are as follows:

- **Is there an opportunity we should pursue?** Is this project or application driven by one of the client's key business initiatives? Is there significant payback associated with that initiative or are there significant consequences to the client if no action is taken? What is the client's driving reason to change and why does the client need to take action?

- **Can we effectively compete for this opportunity?** Do we have a solution that provides specific business value to the client? Does the client think that we have some level of business value that differentiates us from our competitors?

- **Can we reasonably expect to win this opportunity?** Does the most powerful person in the client organization (that impacts or is impacted by this buying decision) want us to win? What has that person done to demonstrate that level of commitment to us?

These three compelling questions are linked directly to another sales training workshop; namely, Selling at the Executive Level (SellXL). That said, the SOS workshop, as well as the SellXL workshop stand alone as separate and distinct sales training offerings.

By the end of this module, participants are able to…

- Qualify their current sales opportunity
- Decide whether to pursue that opportunity or disengage, based on a Snapshot assessment of their sales opportunity
- Begin to develop the most appropriate actions to:

  - **S**trengthen their position
  - **O**btain missing information
  - **S**often their weaknesses

The teaching methodologies used for this module are interactive discussion and activities which support the application of the process to the first case study and the individual sales campaigns of the participants. The *SOS Excel Tool* is introduced in this module and used by participants for a variety of activities. (Note: For participants without access to the *Excel Tool*, paper-based worksheets are provided throughout the workshop).

Align with the Political Landscape Module

This module focuses on the third compelling question previously described; namely, *Can we reasonably expect to win this opportunity?*

In this module, the concept of the *relevant* executive for the sales opportunity is introduced. In the context of the SOS workshop, the ***relevant*** executive is defined as the executive in the client organization who stands to gain the most if the project succeeds and to lose the most if the project fails.

Participants also discover that there are typically two types of decision-making processes (associated with the buying decision) taking place within the client's organization; namely, formal and informal decision-making processes. They learn which is more important and how to identify people of influence in the client organization.

A unique and groundbreaking tool, the *Influence Map*, is introduced in this module. It contains a view of the client's organization not seen in the traditional organization chart. It also contains a significant amount of information about each client executive that has a role in the buying process for the sales opportunity. Activities within this module focus on having each participant create a unique *Influence Map* for their sales opportunity.

By the end of this module, participants are able to…

- Expand their view of the client's organization, by reflecting on the importance of formal and informal power
- Develop the political landscape for their current sales opportunity, including the *relevant* executive
- Describe the level of influence for key executives in the client organization
- Create an *Influence Map* for their current sales opportunity, that enables them to win the deal

The teaching methodologies used for this module are interactive discussion and activities which support the application of the process to individual sales campaigns. An *Influence Assessment* instrument is introduced in this module as the basis for creating the *Influence Map* and the *Excel Tool* is used to support a number of key activities.

Select a Competitive Sales Strategy Module

In this module, participants learn that there are three different competitive sales strategies that can be applied against a sales opportunity. They are also introduced to a step-by-step process for selecting the specific sales strategy that they can employ to increase the chances of winning the sales campaign.

SOS facilitators provide business and personal examples to illustrate the characteristics, requirements for success and the caveats associated with successfully applying the correct strategy for the sales campaign.

By the end of this module, participants are able to…

- Describe the three competitive sales strategies
- Position the client's business initiative against their sales objective, focusing on the specific business value of their solution

- Select a specific sales strategy that enables them to compete for each opportunity they pursue

The teaching methodologies used for this module are interactive discussion and activities which support the application of the process to a second, brief case study and the individual sales campaigns of the participants. The *Excel Tool* is again used for several key activities within this module.

Develop a Value Proposition and Action Plan Module

The module begins with the creation of a meaningful value proposition, which client executives revealed is an essential ingredient in developing a lasting relationship with the client's organization.

Participants are given a template and a process for creating an effective value proposition. They immediately practice applying the template and creating a value proposition for their current sales opportunity.

Throughout each module of the workshop, participants have been using Post-It™ Notes to create specific action planning items for their current sales opportunities. They placed those Post-It Notes at the back pages of each module in their workbook throughout the workshop. In this module, we further define the ACTION PLANNING process and have participants consolidate their action planning notes into a logical sequence of events they will implement within the next 30-45 days of their sales campaign.

By the end of this module, participants are able to…

- Describe the key components of a value proposition
- Create an effective value proposition for their current sales opportunity focused on the client's business objectives and using their metrics
- Develop a comprehensive set of actions for the next 30-45 days of their sales campaign by consolidating the ACTION PLANNING notes they developed throughout the workshop

The teaching methodologies used for this module are interactive discussion and activities which support the application of the process to their individual sales campaigns. Again, the *Excel Tool* is used as the basis for some of the activities.

Summary and Close Module

In this module, the progress made on the current sales campaigns of the participants is summarized. Key concepts delivered during the day are discussed and reviewed.

SOS Optional Day 2 – Validate, Test and Improve the Plan

An optional second day (half-day or full day, at the client's discretion), complete with materials, has been developed to support the SOS workshop.

The specific purpose of the second day of the SOS Workshop is to have participants experience a process of validating, testing and improving the plans of key sales opportunities. The supporting material contains the process, multiple copies of the corresponding worksheets and targeted pages from the SOS participant workbook.

The structured process of plan improvement involves a number of steps that are managed and directed by the facilitator. Key opportunities are presented by salespeople who own the specific opportunity and the reviewing teams have a focused objective to help the salesperson improve the quality of the plan so that they can win the deal.

Improvements to each plan are centered on optimizing the core concepts that were reviewed during the previous day of the SOS workshop. The salesperson whose plan is being reviewed will be asked to articulate the following components of their Plan:

- A current *Opportunity Snapshot*
- An *Influence Map* for the opportunity, featuring key client executives who are involved in the buying decision
- The sales strategy selected by the salesperson, including the rationale for the specific strategy selected
- An overview of the ACTION PLAN for the next 30-45 days
- Their value proposition

Each plan selected will undergo a rigorous process that includes validating, testing and improving the plan. Even if a salesperson's plan was not selected for review, the rigor of each plan improvement process provides substantial benefits for all participants.

Reinforcement Days

Reinforcement Days can also be scheduled to support the testing of individual SOS opportunity plans on a scheduled or planned basis.

The specific purpose of the Reinforcement Day is to have participants experience a process of validating, testing and improving the plans of key sales opportunities. This Reinforcement Day is very similar to the Optional Day 2 of the SOS Workshop, described immediately above.

The supporting material for the Reinforcement Day contains the process, multiple copies of the corresponding worksheets and targeted pages from the SOS participant workbook.

In practice, the Reinforcement Day can initially be conducted by a certified SOS facilitator; however, our objective is to transfer the skill for conducting Reinforcement Days to sales managers within the client organization.

Another Option for Reinforcing the SOS Process

Another option has been created for reinforcing the SOS process. In this option, a series of six weekly telephone conference calls of 60-90 minutes in duration are hosted either by a SOS consultant or by the client's sales manager. A complete Leader Guide with suggested topics to cover on each call, as well as detailed email communication messages that include a number of questions that the salesperson should use to prepare for each of the six calls, has also been created.

Documented evidence is available that shows improving the effectiveness of a salesperson requires both embracing a sales methodology and consistently applying and practicing the principles. The SOS Reinforcement Process is aimed at accelerating the infusion of the methodology into the client's organization.

Testing – A Level 2 Approach to Evaluation

A Level 2 approach to evaluation is achieved by the use of SOS Pre- and Post-Test instruments that are made available to clients at no charge. Obviously, this process is only implemented when the client's culture supports the use of testing as a way of evaluating the learning that has taken place in a workshop.

In that case, the SOS Pre-Test could be administered on-line in advance of the workshop or at the start of the workshop itself. A similar test, perhaps with the questions re-sequenced, is also administered at the end of first day of the workshop to provide information about the learning that has taken place in the workshop.