



SALES  
INTROVERTS

# ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

ILLUMINATE THE KEY 'CAREER  
BOOSTING' SKILLS YOU NEED  
TO MASTER TO MAKE MORE  
MONEY IN SALES.

*by kyle asay*



# COACHING FOUNDATION

## INTRODUCTION

I struggled to find success during my first two years as an AE. Then, I started to be promoted faster than anyone in my company, from SDR to VP in seven years.

I'm frequently asked, "what was the big change?"

The truth is, there wasn't any single significant change. Instead, I made meaningful improvements across dozens of key areas.

Meaningful improvement across many areas compounds. The result was going from a struggling AE to winning five consecutive President's Clubs as the top AE, top sales manager, and then a VP of sales.

This resource explains the skills you should focus on to drive your success. The guide is broken out into four sections:

1. Territory Planning and Pipeline Generation
2. Discovery
3. Solution Presentation
4. End of Deal Navigation

Each section is subdivided into competencies.

Improving just a few of these competencies will lead to increased earnings. Improve many, and you'll be on your way to the top of the leaderboard.

## INTERESTED IN IMPROVING THESE KEY SKILLS?

Head to [salesintroverts.com](https://salesintroverts.com) to explore the proven frameworks and programs that took me to #1 in my company as an AE and a Leader for multiple years in a row.

You'll join hundreds of other sellers who are dominating the competition and smashing their quotas.

# TERRITORY PLANNING AND PIPELINE GENERATION

## ACCOUNT PRIORITIZATION

### *Why It Matters*

If you are like any of the AEs I've managed, some of your best accounts are sitting unnoticed and unworked. Very few AEs go deep enough into their territory to know what they have to work with and spend significant time working on lower-quality accounts.

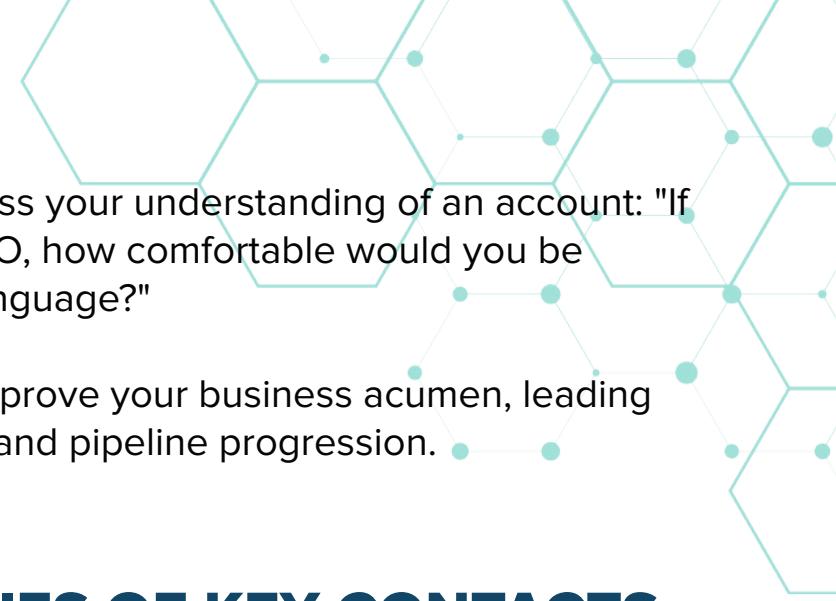
Most reps rely on "Account Scores" provided by Sales Operations to dictate their account planning. Because data quality is never perfect, great accounts are ignored.

My first priority for a new hire is to get them focused on the accounts that will most likely lead to revenue.

## UNDERSTAND BUSINESS MODELS OF KEY ACCOUNTS

### *Why It Matters*

You can't prospect effectively into accounts you don't understand. Without an understanding of your accounts' business models, you definitely can't hold in-depth value-based conversations.



Here's a question you can use to assess your understanding of an account: "If meeting with their CEO, CFO, and CMO, how comfortable would you be talking about their business in their language?"

Strengthening this competency will improve your business acumen, leading to more effective pipeline generation and pipeline progression.

## UNDERSTAND PRIORITIES OF KEY CONTACTS

### *Why It Matters*

"Tell me about your role and goals" is a much less effective question than, "Most CMOs I talk to are concerned about hitting higher targets with a decreased budget. Can you walk me through how you decide which campaigns to fund vs. cancel and how you plan to track success?"

Senior buyers don't want to spend their time teaching an AE about their job. They want help solving their problems. Entering sales conversations with a foundational understanding of your buyers ensures the call is valuable for both parties.

## MESSAGING

### *Why It Matters*

Without effective messaging, the foundational knowledge you build as you learn about your accounts and buyers will be wasted. Effective messaging ensures you get the attention of your most qualified buyers.

# PROSPECTING CADENCE/STRATEGY

## *Why It Matters*

Even with industry knowledge, persona mastery, and compelling messaging, you will rarely set meetings in their first outreach attempts. Having a cadence to ensure continued follow-through is critical.

You will also benefit from clearly defining what a successful day looks like as you execute that cadence.

If you want help defining a great day, watch this four minute video:

<https://youtu.be/R2DyVSz96tU>

# CUSTOMER EXPANSION

## *Why It Matters*

Current spend is often the best indicator of potential future spend. Still, many AEs approach customer expansion reactively and miss the benefits of a proactive strategy.

# DISCOVERY

## CURRENT STATE

### *Why It Matters*

Not understanding a prospect's day-to-day is a fast way to lose credibility. If you don't know what they do, how can they assume to help them with a new solution?



## NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

### *Why It Matters*

I've analyzed hundreds of deals lost to "No Decision" - the one commonality among 90%+ of these opportunities was a lack of substantial negative consequences.

An improved After State is rarely enough to convince a prospect to change the status quo. A new state requires change, and change introduces risk.

Identifying and teaching negative consequences tied to a prospect's current state helps balance the risk of change associated with moving towards a new After State.



## POSITIVE INDIVIDUAL AND BUSINESS OUTCOMES

### *Why It Matters*

Individuals evaluating your solution have full-time jobs outside of evaluating new vendors. Every hour spent with you and internally advocating for your solution is time away from influencing metrics that impact their core responsibilities. If your solution does not motivate your buyer by clearly mapping to a personal priority, your deal will stall as they prioritize their core job over evaluating your product.

Your champion's biggest problem is rarely their boss's biggest problem. It's seldom the company's biggest problem. Armed with only the value your solution brings them, a motivated buyer will often hear executives say, "this isn't a priority for the business right now - let's revisit in a few months."

An effective discovery uncovers outcomes that matter for our primary contact(s) and the broader business.

## INITIAL VALUE HYPOTHESIS

### *Why It Matters*

Potential buyers don't want to finish their discovery call without knowing if and how you can help them. If discovery is just an info-collection call for the AE, they'll ward off requests to meet again with some version of, "send me a case study, and I'll get back to you." Being able to finish each discovery call with a strong Value Hypothesis ensures the conversation continues.



## TEACHING IN DISCOVERY

### *Why It Matters*

Average sellers differentiate with their company's offering. Elite sellers also differentiate by adding value in every conversation. Your buyers will be excited to continue the conversation if you teach them valuable insights during discovery.

For your ideal buyers, I recommend spending as much time planning what you will teach your buyer as you spend preparing the questions you want them to answer. While your competitors badger them with all the same questions they've heard repeatedly, you will be able to intermix your questions with insights that matter.

# SOLUTION PRESENTATION

## EFFECTIVE USE OF SLIDES

### *Why It Matters*

Slides can be a way to communicate valuable information efficiently. Unfortunately, slide presentations are frequently an opportunity for your AE's prospects to catch up on email.

I rarely see slide presentations done well. Hopefully, you will become the exception once you improve this competency.

## EXPAND DECISION CRITERIA/DIFFERENTIATION

### *Why It Matters*

80%+ of the features in your product are offered by your competition. If you spend most of your demonstrations covering that functionality, you'll lose. Understanding where your product is different, and successfully highlighting those differences, is a critical component of a successful demonstration.

## DEMO MATCHES USE CASE

### *Why It Matters*

Few people walk into a store, see something they think looks interesting, and think, "Wow, that looks cool. I have no idea how I will use it, but I'll buy it anyway and figure out how to use it later."

Professionals behave similarly: they won't purchase a solution they can't envision in their environment. A strong high-level overview gets a buyer to agree to a demo. Knowing how they'd use your solution to solve their problems brings a buyer to sign a contract. Don't waste valuable demo real estate with high-level content as your buyer is already past the part of their journey where it is needed.

## EVIDENCE OF INDIVIDUAL AND COMPANY VALUE

### *Why It Matters*

This competency builds on the "Positive Individual and Business Outcomes" in Discovery. In Solution Presentation, we must provide evidence that we can deliver those outcomes.

## ONGOING DISCOVERY

### *Why It Matters*

Even the best AEs running perfect discoveries will still have gaps in their understanding as their deals progress to Solution Presentation (and beyond). An emphasis on continuing discovery will strengthen every aspect of your deals.

# END OF DEAL NAVIGATION

## CONTROL OF DEAL

### *Why It Matters*

A lot happens between sharing a proposal and a deal closing. This stage is often referred to as "Business Consideration," and most reps pass control to their buyer at this point.

Learning how to maintain control when your buyer says, "let me take your proposal and discuss internally," will ensure you can continue influencing the deal through the end-stage rather than hoping your buyer gets it done.

## MITIGATING RISK OF CHANGE

### *Why It Matters*

The status quo is always easier. Even when a buyer is excited about the potential of your solution, they will be worried about the consequences if they buy and it fails. If you cannot increase your buyer's confidence in a successful implementation, you'll see even strong deals come back with "not now."

# UNDERSTANDING ECONOMIC BUYER

## *Why It Matters*

It doesn't take long for a new seller to learn that an excited primary contact does not mean a closed deal. The seemingly strongest opportunities can fall apart when our "champion" asks for funding.

Unfortunately, months of your work sometimes culminate with your contact spending two-three minutes pitching your solution and being rejected with a "this isn't a priority right now" from the economic buyer.

Understanding who approves funding for your solution and how to appeal to their priorities ensures that the budget request is better positioned and more likely to be approved.

# EVIDENCE OF INDIVIDUAL AND COMPANY VALUE

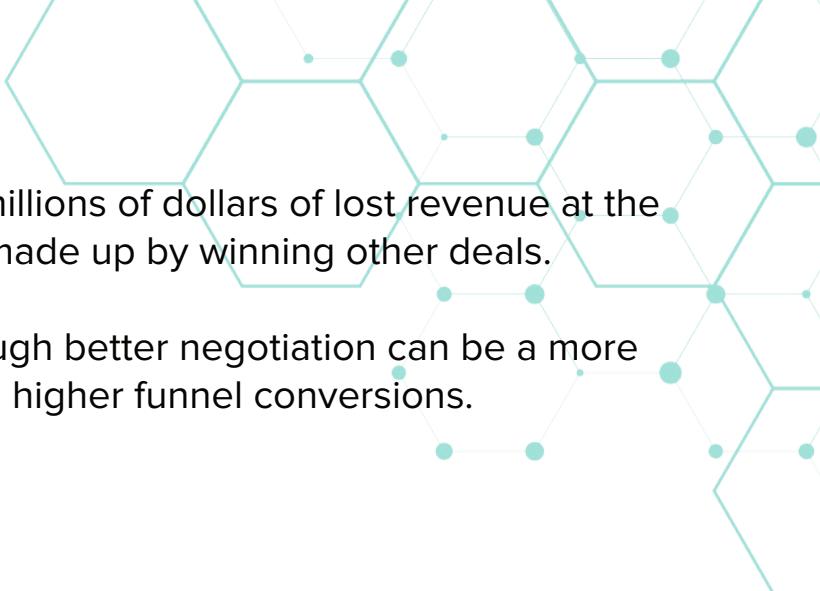
## *Why It Matters*

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# NEGOTIATION

## *Why It Matters*

Most AEs are willing to offer pricing concessions to solidify late-stage deals. Individually, these 10-20% discounts don't seem extreme. However, when you think about the scale, those discounts are painful.



Consistent 10% discounts can lead to millions of dollars of lost revenue at the team level. That revenue needs to be made up by winning other deals.

Increasing your average deal size through better negotiation can be a more efficient revenue driver than increasing higher funnel conversions.

## YOUR NEXT STEP:

Improving my skills across these competencies led to becoming the #1 AE (out of 200+). Teaching these competencies led to leading the #1 team in consecutive years.

Your first step towards similar outcomes is diagnosing your abilities across these critical skills.

Take control of your career by leveling up your skills with the resources at [salesintroverts.com](https://salesintroverts.com)