

# Landing the Big Ones

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to attend a Chicago AMA seminar that really stuck with me: *Landing the Big Ones: Achieving Explosive Sales Growth*.

The seminar featured three dynamic speakers—Steve Kaplan, Stephen Meade and John Fox. They provided a virtual “how-to” on getting and keeping large accounts. Here are some of the valuable nuggets:

## 1 » BUILD A SOLID CLIENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Use a combination of creative mailers and followup phone calls to identify the right contacts, break down barriers and set the meeting. If a meeting can't be set, stay top of mind with ongoing newsletters, emails and other mailers. The goal is to be systematic about it—in addition to smart and motivated.

## 2 » MAKE YOUR BIG ACCOUNTS TOP PRIORITY

Lavish plenty of attention on your big prospects and accounts. Return calls immediately. Answer questions and address problems speedily. Respond to opportunities with these customers with the utmost priority. Big customers like to feel special.

## 3 » DO WHATEVER IT TAKES

Be willing to bend over completely backwards to meet your big customers' needs. Offer total flexibility from paperwork to providing additional services outside of your core business. Look for opportunities to save them money or streamline a process. Meet every need they have and exceed every expectation.

## 4 » BUILD AN “ADVISORY BOARD” AND PARTNERSHIPS

Advisors and partnerships provide knowledge and credibility. Determine what you may be able to offer in return, and get some big hitters on your side. They'll provide insight and advice as well as valuable referrals and contacts.

## 5 » KNOW THEIR SYSTEMS

First, learn the company's lingo. You'll look more like an insider. Do everything possible to understand their budgeting, approval and buying processes. Using the right forms, language, analysis (ROI, NPV, IRR, etc.) and styles can help your proposal fly through approvals quickly.



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### 6 » KNOW THEIR PEOPLE

Be sure to understand who, beyond your immediate contact, is involved in the decision process. Know how high of a priority the pain you are trying to solve really is to the organization. Make it a point to meet everyone who influences and buys. Also, ask who could kill. Big companies have some powerful deal killers. Don't be blindsided.

### 7 » LOOK THE PART

People at big companies are often risk-averse. That's why they tend to buy from other big companies. You must present your firm as a solid, established resource. Go in there with nothing less than a highly professional graphic identity and website, and fully leverage your past successes and client list.

### 8 » KEEP IT FUN

Having fun—and showing it—is a great way to distinguish yourself from your competitors, most of who will be so focused on getting the dollars that they'll forget about the relationship.

By the way, if you're interested in more detail on landing large accounts, Steve Kaplan's *Bag the Elephant!* has lots of ideas and advice. And if you want to initiate your own marketing campaign targeting large accounts, give us a call. We'll provide the advice, system, creative ideas and the highly-coveted "spice" that will help you land the big ones!

