

## WHO SHOULD BE IN PRE SALES ?

In my many meetings with clients, I have been asked this question countless times. Before answering this question, let us examine who end up in Pre Sales.

Pre Sales thus far has been a sort of 'dumping ground' of people do not fit in somewhere or on the bench. (Apologies to many of my pre sales colleagues who obviously do not fit this mould !).

Why was this the case ? Traditionally, organizations used to put the best people in Sales or in delivery/servicing. These functions have clear cut business outcomes to achieve and there is a well tested path of competency building and processes available for people to follow.

The realization started coming that Sales required significant help and support during the Sales cycle and that's how the Pre Sales function was created. While never considered a strategic function, it ended being a cost centre to support sales.

No I am not bypassing the question, but will address it further down.

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE PRE SALES FUNCTION

With businesses becoming more complex, especially in the B2B space, the ability of Sales to completely understand the client's needs and then communicate with an appropriate solution became limited. The issue started getting further complicated with high attrition in the Sales function.

Furthermore, the organization knowledge and competencies were difficult to communicate to the Sales function especially if they were operating in remote geographies.

### Quick Read :

The evolution of the Pre Sales function especially in complex B2B organizations has acquired strategic importance. Organizations can no longer afford to staff them with less than the 'best and the brightest'. Organizations need to invest in this equally important function by staffing them with people with a winning attitude, ability to harness organization resources and a relentless client focus.

Pre Sales function was soon recognized by many organizations to be the conduit between the Sales and rest of the organization.

The 'best of breed' organizations have created Pre Sales as a strategic function with equal incentives to not only win more business but also win the 'right business' for the organization.

In organizations where Pre Sales is recognized as a strategic function, Sales has considered them to be equal partners in their pursuit of business. This has resulted in Sales becoming more client focused as opposed to fighting the internal battles and territorial politics.



## PRE SALES CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS WINNING MORE BUSINESS

With the recognition that Pre Sales plays a critical function, how has Pre Sales helped in winning more business ?

- By equipping Sales with content, capabilities and credentials.
- By leading and closing Sales through a consultative process
- By putting together innovative and credible solutions and convince clients to do business with their organization.
- By shielding Sales from the organization complexities especially when organizations have grown inorganically.

## IT'S A PEOPLE GAME

Hopefully by now, the need to staff the Pre Sales team with the 'best and brightest' is evident. So what sort of profile and skills should Pre Sales team members have :

- A winning attitude. Half the battle is won with this attitude as the Pre Sales function demands creativity without reinventing the wheel every time.
- Ability to harness the organization resources. Assuming that somebody somewhere knows the answer to a problem will help drive towards better solutions for the client
- A service mindset towards Sales. Recognizing that Sales need to be enabled should motivate the Pre Sales team to deliver the best to Sales.
- Ability to think 'Outside In'. Relentless focus towards what the client is expecting to achieve and how therefore the organization should tune its solution to meet these expectations.

- **A winning attitude.**
- **Ability to harness the organization resources.**
- **A service mindset towards Sales.**
- **Ability to think 'Outside In'.**
- **Attention to detail**
- **Agility**

- Attention to Detail. Responses to RFP require precision and attention to detail is a significant skill to possess.
- Agility. Opportunities require continuous pushing and prodding to give it shape and critical mass. Members with agility help this process significantly.



APRIL 2014

### IN CONCLUSION

It is not expected (and even impossible) that one single person has all of the above skills. It is important that the Pre Sales function in its totality demonstrate all of the above skills to be successful.

Investing in the right people is a first major step in converting a Pre Sales function into contributing directly towards the growth of the business. The Pre Sales function should develop strong processes which not only helps bring consistency to the services provided but also provides agility.

Contact : Krishnakumar Iyer | [krishnakumar.iyer@mindit.co.in](mailto:krishnakumar.iyer@mindit.co.in) | +91 9970621342

[www.mindit.co.in](http://www.mindit.co.in)

### About MindIT :

MindIT provides end-to-end Bid Solutions for companies who are in complex B2B engagements. MindIT collaborates with your organization to provide Process solutions, Bid Management solutions and training services.

In the past, MindIT has been engaged by clients like Capgemini, Hexaware, Zensar and more.

