

Transitioning From Sales To High Value Consulting

By Gary Nash

Everyone is always excited when the contract has been signed . . . but the reality is that the sales process does not end until the customer's problem is solved. In order for the Consulting Team to successfully solve the problem and exceed the customer's expectations while doing so, we must be able to answer two simple questions:

1. What are the problems that this solution is intended to solve?
2. What expectations have been set during the sales process?

Unfortunately, since many consultants aren't involved or included in the product sales process, they risk not having enough information when the implementation begins. This will usually result in either having to ask the customer about their requirements or relying solely upon sketchy information that may have been provided during an informal transition process. This substantially increases customer frustration, since they spent quite a bit of time explaining their requirements to the sales team as part of their evaluation process. Instead, a High-Value Consulting Team will work closely with the sales team and share the rich information gathered during the selling process and a well attended transition meeting.

The High-Value Consultant will better position the services organization to improve profitability by aligning services delivery with the "sales promises". The High-Value Consultant understands how you and your customers can transition successfully and efficiently from the sales process to the delivery phase and from the delivery phase to the support phase. Establishing and performing to expectations, as a team is critical when you are building a relationship-oriented approach to delivery.

High-Value Consulting Benefits:

- Improved customer satisfaction due to expectations being met.
- Improved customer satisfaction due to perception that the customer is at the center of the engagement, vis-à-vis the service provider.
- Improved internal interaction throughout the customer lifecycle – e.g. between the sales team, the consulting team and the account management team.
- Increased revenue through paid scope changes.
- Increased revenue through enhanced opportunity discovery.
- Reduced costs due to reduced rework.
- Reduced costs due to more effective service delivery and meeting management.
- Better qualified opportunities coming from service delivery to the sales team = shorter sales cycle = faster time to revenue and faster time to value.

High-Value Consulting is all about delivering services and solutions that meet expectations that many times are set by someone else. This is a difficult requirement because the degree to which you meet or exceed the customer's expectations correlates directly to customer satisfaction. If the customer is not satisfied with the results, the process, or some other less tangible aspect of the engagement, their expectations are not met and they are not satisfied.