

# FINDING THE GOOD FIT

By: Pat Heidrich

**PRICE** isn't everything anymore, nor does sales volume guarantee profitability. Marketing and sales have shifted from an emphasis on transactions, sales volume, and competitive pricing to an emphasis on creating and retaining the right customers. The key word is "right." It means that not just any customer will do.

The effort to force a fit is misguided. When you chase customers whose needs do not fit with your core offerings and abilities, you end up with liabilities instead of relationships. The demands of a single "bad-fit" customer can be costly to your company, even in a short-term relationship.

**A FOUNDATION OF GOOD-FIT CUSTOMERS IS THE KEY TO LONG-TERM SUCCESS.**



Only customers whose needs fit with the company's core offerings are likely to establish a relationship that generates profit. As a manager, it is critical for you to plan and implement sales strategies that will enable your sales force to gain, retain, and profit from long-term relationships with "good-fit" customers.

Better to sell to a good-fit customer whose demands your company can meet without straining its resources and competence, and who will likely buy from you again. As a sales manager, you need to know how to distinguish between good-fit and bad-fit customers. Then your people must have the courage to get a clear no from the bad-fit customers and the skill to bring home the good-fit customers.

The critical issue for relationship-oriented marketing is determining whether there is a fit between the prospect's needs and your company's product or service offering. One of Sandler's basic rules is, "It is better to get a clear 'no' than waste time trying for a maybe or even worse, a weak 'yes.'" In other words, it is important to disqualify prospects whose needs and values do not fit with your company's offerings.

You and your salespeople need to make the same distinction with your existing customer base when exploring ways to grow your business with them. In this case, the question of fit is twofold. First, is this a good-fit customer with whom you can build a long-term relationship? Second, what other product or service offerings does your company have that also provide a good fit with this customer?

Finding a good fit benefits both you and the customer, which will result in a win-win relationship. A foundation of good-fit customers is the key to long-term success. 🏆



*Pat Heidrich is the local owner of Sandler Training, a world leader in innovative sales and sales management training. For more than 40 years, Sandler has taught its distinctive, non-traditional selling system and highly effective sales training methodology. Pat can be contacted at: 704-895-6303 or Pat@Sandler.com.*