
Overview

This standard is about managing and developing business relationships at a strategic level with major customers, or key customers. This is sometimes referred to as relationship selling, and involves developing a two-way partnership with those customers selected for their current and/or potential importance to your organisation. It is recognised that such relationships often involve a team of experienced individuals with responsibility for retaining and developing a profitable business relationship with the customer. This standard is for senior sales professionals with responsibility for developing strategic relationships with selected key customers.

**Performance
criteria**

- You must be able to:
- P1 identify the customers which fulfil the organisation's criteria to be classed as a major customer
 - P2 develop an in-depth understanding of the major customer's business and their corporate business and marketing strategy
 - P3 develop an understanding of the current and future strategic and operational business challenges faced by the major customer
 - P4 identify and agree prioritised common business objectives between the organisation and the customer which are consistent with both organisations' financial objectives and business strategies
 - P5 assess with the customer strategic options towards achieving the common business objectives which involve mutual working
 - P6 work in partnership with the major customer to develop a plan and actions towards addressing the identified challenges and common objectives
 - P7 identify the key areas of business expertise required in the team to work with the major customer
 - P8 identify appropriate individuals for the team, ensuring that they have the relevant, influence, attitudes and competencies to add value and to build effective business relations with the major customer
 - P9 ensure the effective coordination and input from relevant business functions in the organisation towards developing the strategic relationship with the major customer
 - P10 ensure that the team acts as a focus for all transactions with the major customer
 - P11 create value in influencing the customer's business direction
 - P12 monitor and evaluate the outcomes of activities in developing the strategic relationship with the major customer, including the return upon the investment being made
 - P13 address any concerns regarding the outcomes promptly and correctly in line with the organisation's aims and business objectives
 - P14 ensure effective succession planning towards maintaining an ongoing relationship with the major customer, with contingencies should particular

individuals no longer be able to work with the customer

P15 balance the needs and expectations of key stakeholders and win their support

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 legal, regulatory and ethical requirements in the organisation's sector and that of the major customer
- K2 market developments in the organisation's sector and that of the major customer
- K3 standards of behaviour and performance in the industry or sector, and that of the major customer
- K4 the vision, values, objectives and plans of the organisation
- K5 the criteria which would justify a customer receiving particular investment towards its retention and development
- K6 the principles of strategic management and business planning
- K7 the topics to be addressed within a strategic business plan with a major customer
- K8 how to reflect corporate social responsibility within the strategy for working with a major customer
- K9 how to develop strategic objectives
- K10 how to identify potential risks in relation to the achievement of objectives
- K11 how to delegate responsibility and allocate resources to support joint working with a major customer
- K12 how to identify and meet the information needs of colleagues both within the organisation and within the major customer
- K13 what information it is appropriate to provide to colleagues, including those working for the major customer, and the factors that need to be taken into consideration
- K14 the importance of taking account, and being seen to take account, the views of key internal and external colleagues, particularly in relation to their priorities and business objectives
- K15 how to recognise and take account of political issues when dealing with internal and external colleagues
- K16 how to manage the expectations of internal and external colleagues
- K17 how to monitor and review the effectiveness of the business relationship with the major customer(s)

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- K18 how to identify conflicts of interest with internal and external colleagues and the techniques that can be used to manage or remove them
 - K19 how to develop measures and methods for monitoring and evaluating the relationship with the major customer, including the return upon the investment being made.

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