

5 Closes to a Managed Services Sale

In the Managed Services environment, you most often don't close a client on one conversation or in one chance meeting. Instead, there are 5 closes that pull a prospect all the way through the sales funnel:

- Marketing Message
- First Appointment
- Get the Discovery
- Present the Findings
- Agreement/Solution

This whitepaper provides some tips and tricks for successfully making all those closes and ensuring you're able to collect at the end of the day.

Marketing Message

Your marketing message is your first opportunity to make an impression on your client, so you want to put special care into the appearance, feel, and message of your marketing. It's important to keep in mind these few rules for developing an effective marketing message that will pique interest but not give away the whole solution.

- **One Touch is Simply not Enough:** How many promotional emails or postcards or voicemails do you get that you never open simply because they fall down to the bottom of the stack? The likelihood that one touch is going to get someone interested enough to make a phone call unless their entire network just died at promptly the same time you sent your marketing material, is slim to none. We recommend no less than three touches (phone, email, and postcard/promotional item). \
- **Don't Sell on Hardware:** Your marketing material, in most cases, should not flash your latest and greatest gadget and list out all of the tech specs. The only time this is acceptable is if you are giving away the product and want to entice a prospect to enter some type of a drawing. Otherwise, you just look like the local bargain basement technology company.
- **Don't be Cookie Cutter:** How many marketing messages do you see in one day? How many of them look the same, so you just turn your head and move on? You don't want your message to appear in the stack of look-alikes and me-toos. Every other technology company sells on price and blathers on, "We can save you \$x if you use us." Don't join that club. Stand out by saying things like, "You can generate warm new leads and increase your revenue by x% using our solution."

1st Appointment

The elevator pitch is dead! As sales people in the managed services provider (MSP), cloud and IT services markets, we practice and practice in front of the mirror to perfect our pitch. Often times we only have a short time to keep prospects interested before we throw up all over them. Why do we think the elevator pitch is a good way to promote our brand and company?

In reality all the prospect is thinking is, “I can’t wait until this self-centered guy gets done talking about his blah blah product so I can get on with my life.”

The Real Goal

The main problem is that by focusing on the elevator pitch, you’re missing the key point of being a professional sales person: **selling is all about understanding**. This all starts in the first appointment by focusing on them and following these simple steps:

- You first find out what their Problem is, and then you let the Objections come through.
- They will give you Alternatives; but here is the kicker, you haven’t told them what the solution is yet!
- The ball is in your court; you know what their Problem is and what Alternatives they have, so you can rock them with the perfect Solution.

This appointment is meant to pique their curiosity. Make them want to have you in to do a complete network discovery and later to do a presentation.

Get The Discovery

Like with all of the other steps, it’s all about building curiosity. When you get your foot in the door, you now have their trust. They are trusting you to take a peek into their network and see what shape00 it’s in. You walk around talking to all the employees and management building your case. **You never have to fabricate anything on the discovery. This is your chance to see what the day-to-day front lines users of the company are experiencing.** By getting a full understanding of not only what their technology issues are, but the challenges they face with their current job roles, you can build a solution that will meet all of their needs.

While walking around you learn the office manager spends 5 hours a week on the phone with copy and telco vendors trying to get issues fixed. Well, this is a good selling point for your vendor management solution and selling them on getting their office managers 5 hours a week back. Learn if they have issues after hours or how many shifts they have. You can't sell on the value of 24/7 support if they are only open from 9-5. During the discovery you learn all the internal pain points along with a full network audit to see if that so called IT guy they have is really doing anything. They are curious as to what you're going to find and the more you learn their staff and their stories, the more credible you become.

Sure you can get up there and say whatever you want when it comes time to present, but if you have stories and issues from their staff, it shows you did your homework and really care about the health of the network. Then you toss a 250 page network report on their desk and they know you mean business.

Present The Findings

You put a great deal of work into preparing a presentation for your prospect from creating the right marketing messaging, to earning your Discovery at the first appointment, to conducting a proper desk to desk Discovery gathering all the data that you need to present the perfect solution. Don't blow it now. There are some pretty important ground rules:

- **Present to the Decision Maker:** You've completed your Discovery, you're all ready to present, and then you hear, "Oh, you can present to me; then, I'll pass on the information to the decision maker." What do you do? Wait until the decision maker is available. Having someone who probably can't even spell IT deliver your presentation to a decision maker is worse than planning the kindergarten game telephone. They will likely only pass on the price. We know that our price will be well above competitors, so we will lose every time. If we get in front of that decision maker and appeal to their perceived value in the offering, the tables completely turn.
- **Home Field Advantage:** Try to schedule your Sales Presentation on your turf. When clients arrive, take them on a tour. Make sure the environment is clean and organized. Train your staff about what to do. Shake hands, make eye contact, dress up a little bit. Serve them lunch on real plates and with real silverware. One of your staff should also be watching closely to know when to clear the plates and get the presentation started. Make sure you make the presentation an event.
- **Know Your Environment:** If you can't do the presentation at your office, make sure you know the environment where you will be presenting. Do they have a conference room? Do they have a projector, or do you need to bring one? How many people will be attending?

Agreement/Solution

The Sales Presentation is one of the final steps toward the great sales divide, getting a signature on the dotted line or losing the business. How you perform in this presentation will make all the difference. Over the past 20 years of owning and selling for ARRC Technology, our CEO, Alex Rogers, has perfected the Managed Services Presentation, focusing on prospect's major pain points uncovered in the Discovery Process and making tangible connections, rather than relying on geek speak.

- **Every Presentation is a Fingerprint:** Each prospect has different needs and pain points. You cannot use a canned presentation, and even though these slides and stories will provide you all the tools you need to present to a Managed Services prospect, ensure that you tailor the presentation to them. Highlight their biggest pain points. Connect to their biggest problems.
- **Only Share the Facts:** Only utilize numbers and facts that you garner during your Discovery process. Do not make assumptions. For example, don't say things like "It probably takes your office manager 10 to 12 hours a week to deal with problem vendors, which amounts to about 40 hours a month – a huge waste of time. We can solve that problem!" This will sound great if vendor management truly is a problem. If not, they will tune you out and the sale is lost.
- **Take Out Anything That Does Not Apply:** Eliminate services that would be irrelevant. For example, if they are only open from 8 to 5, 24-hour monitoring and service will be of no value to them. Mentioning this in the presentation will only open you up for a price objection.

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