

# SANDLER®

WHITEPAPER

## 8 Unique Challenges in Enterprise Selling





**Imagine a client roster filled with the biggest and best of the world's corporations with names like Apple, IBM, Samsung, General Motors and Walmart.**

Now imagine working with those clients every day, delivering great service and earning the right to grow your relationships over time.

Winning enterprise business presents unique challenges to selling teams and selling organizations in general. First, you need to understand how selling to large corporations differs from the less complex world of selling to small and medium-sized companies. It takes time, energy, commitment and money but the payoff can be huge.

Here are eight challenges we at Sandler see every day in serving our clients selling into the enterprise space, and how to overcome them:

# 01

## The competition is sophisticated and relentless

Your competition for enterprise business will be sophisticated, strategically focused and absolutely relentless. They will come prepared.

### The Solution

Don't make the mistake of underestimating them. Understand their who, what, where, when and how. Research their history, relationships and track record with the account you're targeting. Understand not only their business models, strategies and offerings but the customized value propositions that they are likely to present in a specific pursuit. Act on what you learn. It may drive your Go/No-Go decision about whether to accelerate a pursuit or exit early.



# 02

## The sales cycle can be lengthy

When selling to enterprise clients, prepare to learn patience. The sales cycle can take months and, in some cases, years.

### The Solution

Know the buyer network so well at the account you're targeting, that you're informed about its time frames. Have the right people on your pursuit team to ensure effective and timely solution development. Gain your client's fingerprints on how you plan on proceeding every step of the way. Establish a systematic process for driving Go/No-Go decisions and use it consistently.



## 03

### The investments can be significant

Pursuing an enterprise client requires a significant financial commitment as well as human, managerial and logistical resources. And the opportunity costs connected with enterprise pursuits can handcuff an organization's ability to take advantage of other initiatives.

#### The Solution

Conduct focused territory planning so you maximize your chances to do what you do best where you're most likely to be successful. Profile all of the accounts in your portfolio so you can customize account planning and map your resources as relevantly as possible. Use collaborative account planning to ensure that you go after winnable accounts. Save resources by reusing assets effectively so you're not recreating solutions.



## 04

### The buyer networks are wide and diverse

The buying centers of enterprise clients are comprised of a wide variety of functions that may include HR, purchasing, accounting, marketing and legal. It can be a little overwhelming and make you long for the days when you sold to a single buyer across a desk.

#### The Solution

Use your advocates on the inside of the account to understand how the various functions in its buyer network collaborate. Understand the impact of every individual buyer. Expect the unexpected and be prepared to deal with new influences over the course of the long sales cycle because they'll surely come.





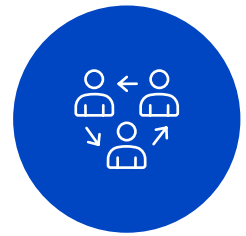
# 05

## The necessity of a cross-functional sales team is a given

The buyer networks of enterprise clients encompass many functions, and so should your sales team. Since enterprise organizations buy in teams, organizations seeking their business must typically sell in teams as well. Without question, it makes the sale more complicated but it's an absolute necessity.

### The Solution

When it comes to landing an enterprise client, *everybody* in the selling organization is on the selling team. So tap into the expertise of your coworkers for help in mapping to subject matter experts at your target accounts. Having corresponding representatives on your team will show the strength and substance enterprise clients demand.



## 06

### The decision structures are complex

In traditional selling, decisions are typically made quickly and based on price versus performance. In the enterprise world, however, the decision process can be complex, multilayered and lengthy.

#### The Solution

Get a clear picture early in the process of the decision structure and financial models used in the client's buying decision process. Understand the requirements of the deal and allow that to drive dynamic Go/No-Go decisions. Clearly understand an opportunity's potential rewards and risks and work to mitigate the risks as a key component of the pursuit. Your success in this area is critical to the decision to accelerate or exit.



## 07

### The organization and its footprint are incredibly diverse

Enterprise clients don't present simple and direct structures to your selling team. They differ from smaller entities in their complex structures, multiple business lines, portfolio complexity, depth and breadth of markets served, and globalization issues.

#### The Solution

Enterprises are marketplaces unto themselves so do your research to understand the complexities and opportunities they present. Effective and collaborative account planning combined with a logical framework of pursuit management will position you to gain clarity from the complexity.



# 08

## The focus on business value is laser-like

With the enterprise client, the business value of the solutions you develop and implement must be unassailable or winning their business will be impossible. The pains and needs of the client, not your product or service, must completely drive the value.

### The Solution

Build your client intimacy from account planning through service delivery. Your deep understanding of the pains driving your customer's needs earns you the right to build a customized solution with an integrated value proposition, highlighting specific and measured business value over time.



## Winning profitable business from enterprise organizations comes with complications that make it more challenging than selling to smaller entities.



The Sandler Enterprise Selling (SES) program can help. With SES, we've taken everything that's made our training so effective and elevated it to address the needs of organizations selling to enterprise accounts. The result is a highly strategic system that will help you win business with enterprise clients, serve them effectively and expand the relationships over time.

[Learn more about Sandler Enterprise Selling.](#)



## About Sandler

Sandler is the worldwide leader in sales, management, and customer service training. We partner with organizations of all sizes, across all industries, to help them improve their revenue performance. Sandler not only provides the initial and advanced strategies and tactics needed to excel, but we also empower your team to develop the attitudes and implement the behavior necessary to reach the highest levels of success.

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