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Most sales leaders aspire for all of their key account managers to have relationships in the C-suite.

Whether or not they control the purse strings, CXOs are important influencers. Making them aware of how your company is helping drive their business forward is a no-brainer. When budgets get cut, if you have not demonstrated how your offer lines up with their priorities, you could find your business in jeopardy.

Plus, even with all the technology and tools that salespeople have at their disposal, sales is still about trust. Building and nurturing relationships at the highest level within your key accounts gives you an edge over the competition that will be hard to replicate.

But the truth is, only a small percentage of top performers have mastered the art of C-suite engagement. Time and again, sales leaders say that the ability to establish trust with executive-level customers is one of the key attributes that separate average salespeople ("B performers") from high-performing sales pros ("A performers"). The difference between the two can be summed up as follows:

B Performer: someone CXOs avoid	A Performer: someone CXOs welcome
Unprepared: low sales readiness and confidence	Prepared: high sales readiness and confidence
Low business acumen: speaks like a product jockey	High business acumen: can have a business conversation
Hopes he is selling to the right person	Knows he is selling to the right person
Comes off as a pushy sales guy to be avoided	Comes off as a knowledgeable peer to consult
Plugs holes with small, one-off product sales	Sells larger, more holistic solutions
Speaks your company's language	Speaks the customer's language
No customer loyalty	Strong customer loyalty
No competitive advantage	Strong competitive advantage
Longer sales cycle	Shorter sales cycle

Doing your homework on your customers is always the first step to relationship building — especially when approaching executive decision makers. One of the most successful business people of all time, Warren Buffett, takes a very simple and disciplined approach to dealmaking.

According to Tom Searcy's book, "How to Close a Deal Like Warren Buffett—Lessons from the World's Greatest Dealmaker," Buffett uses basic research and insight to "sell" his deals, *often winning out over competitors offering better terms.*

For Buffett, it all comes down to this:

Profile Your Buyers — We sell to people — and people are irrational for different reasons. It's not enough to know the facts, have the best ROI or most effective solution. If you do not understand the individual motivators of all of the members of the buyer's group, he says, you are flying without the right instruments.

Do your homework — When Warren takes a meeting, he doesn't ask about industry, market, competitors or advantages. He already knows them. He believes asking these questions demonstrates a lack of preparation.

Buffett thinks about all the angles, including whom — not just what — he is selling.



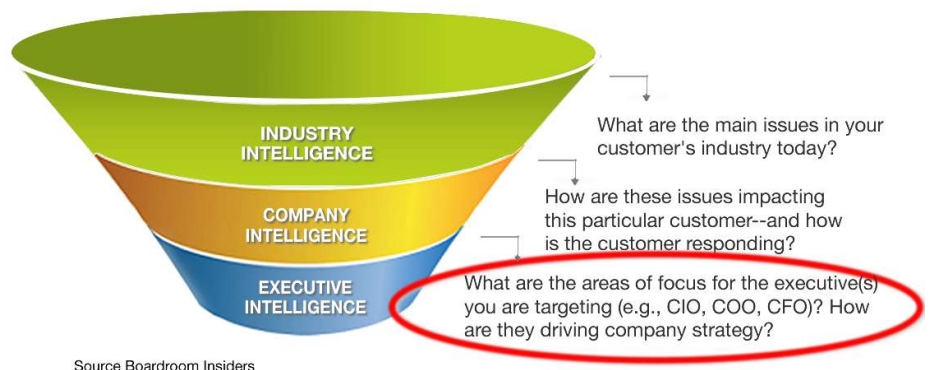
James (Jim) Steele
Chief Customer Officer
Salesforce.com Inc.

"When sellers call on me, I want to know that they're listening, that they have a point of view, and to hear some recommendations and ideas in the context of my business. If they don't relate it to me, they've lost credibility and set their sales cycle back...Of course, I'm going to have looked at as much information as I can get my hands on ... If you want to engage with a customer, what better way than to show them you're interested in their business?"

Top sales pros unanimously agree that customer intelligence is a critical element of their sales prep.

But faced with a digital avalanche of info and so little time to consume it, how much is the right amount? Too little (e.g., a quick glance at the company's website) and you feel unprepared. Too much (an inch-thick stack of reports and articles) and you're headed down the proverbial rabbit hole—and there goes your weekend.

Here's a simple formula that came out of speaking with hundreds of enterprise sales pros over the past several years. These top performers say they want to know three things when preparing for an important sales call—a formula we like to call "The Funnel:"



Industry Intelligence: What are the main issues in the customer's industry today?

Company Intelligence: How are these issues impacting this particular customer—and how is the customer responding?

Executive Intelligence: What is top of mind for the executive you are targeting?

Top sales pros tell us they leverage company-provided tools such as Factiva, Hoover's, OneSource and others to get their industry and company intelligence.

But when it comes to executive intelligence, they typically gather their own information through Google searches—and sometimes they don't get to it at all.

For "A" performers, knowing the priorities of a decision maker is a must-have. And making an executive sales call without knowing their careabouts can be like walking into a minefield. We've heard horror stories: for example, a sales rep going in to talk to a Wells Fargo IT exec about BYOD only to find out that the exec was a BYOD contrarian who had given several press interviews about his adamant opposition to the idea. Ouch!

We created Boardroom Insiders to prevent this from happening. We help you avoid sales gaffes by filling the critical executive intelligence gap. Companies like Dell, Cisco and NetApp hire us to provide information that helps them close bigger deals, faster.

Whether you do your own homework or get it from us, understanding the careabouts of the people to whom you are selling is a no-brainer.

The first thing to remember if you are trying to engage a CXO is that they are unimaginably busy. They are also surrounded by people (gatekeepers, in sales-speak) whose sole function is to filter out any "noise" unrelated to the executive's top business priorities.

The second thing to remember: you are "noise" until you prove otherwise.

Following these simple do's and don'ts will help you rise above the noise and demonstrate worthiness, increasing your chances of successfully getting the attention of a CXO.

Do	Don't
Be Relevant and Specific. Cite one thing about this person's business that you can help them with. This shows you care enough to have done your homework.	Give a Generic Product Pitch. As enamored as you may be with what you're selling, no one cares until you've made it relevant to <i>them</i> .
Be Brief. Say what you have to say in as few, well-crafted words as possible. Pique their interest and leave them wanting more, not less.	Send a Long Email. We live in a mobile era. If someone has to scroll endlessly through your email on their phone, you've lost them.
Be Authentic. Communicate in your own true voice, using simple, jargon-free language.	Use Cheap Tactics. Don't try to trick them with "fake" personalization like a subject line that says you are "following up on our conversation" that never happened.
Be Generous. Offer to share one specific thing that they would find valuable, such as how another customer solved a problem similar to one they are facing.	Be Arrogant. Don't brag about your product/business/service — if you can't connect it to their business, they don't care.
Be Clear. Deliver a simple and clear call-to-action that does not require too much of their time; a 10-minute phone conversation, permission to send more information, or a referral to one of their lieutenants.	Ask For Too Much. Asking for a one-hour, in-person meeting in the first communication is too much, given the demands on a CXO's time. Better to show them your value, then let them set the pace.

We've all been there. You have a big opportunity on the table with a major account. You know that if only you could get the CXO's endorsement, you could seal the deal.

Then the call comes: Ms. CXO has agreed to meet with you.

That's when the fear sets in. You've been waiting months to get this meeting but now every time you think about it, you get a queasy feeling in your gut. If you are like most of us, this fear comes from three places. See if you recognize this internal dialogue:

- 1 Lack of knowledge:** Who is this person? What do they care about? Why did they agree to meet with me? What are they expecting from me?
- 2 Lack of confidence:** This is intimidating! My boss expects me to "have a business conversation" but I don't feel prepared. How can I connect the dots between this person and what I am selling?
- 3 This is your only shot:** This is a rare opportunity. If I don't immediately demonstrate value, the meeting could be cut short — and I won't get a second chance. The fate of the entire account rests on this one meeting!



Pretty scary stuff, indeed.

While we can't take away all the fear, we can address some of the root causes.

- **First:** What if you could go into these meetings feeling 100% confident and prepared to have that business conversation? The definition of a business conversation is this: your ability to cite an executive's business initiatives and tell them exactly how your solution can help drive them forward. Doing your homework—whether it is through your own research or using a tool like Boardroom Insiders—will make you more knowledgeable and confident.
- **Second:** Try to remember that the CXO is a human being just like you and me. She does not want to have a bad meeting any more than you do. She is hopeful you can address some of her many business challenges. She doesn't want you to fail; she wants you to be the rock star you know you are!



In this digital age, face-to-face meetings are becoming a rarity.

This can be an obstacle to building loyalty and relationships with important customers. Companies often use events—such as industry trade shows, sports sponsorships and user conferences—to get face-to-face with their biggest accounts. Given the cost of sponsorships and events, it is important to make the most of these opportunities.

A small investment in executive insight can go a long way in maximizing return on event investments. Knowing something about your customers before they arrive—and engaging them before they get to the event—speeds up the "ice breaking" and helps you get down to business faster.

With this in mind, we offer five tips for using executive insight to make your customer events more effective.



1

Get the right people to attend your event. You can avoid the last minute "get butts in seats" scramble by proactively making a wish list of the top companies — and individuals — you want at your event. Write them a personal email well in advance that directly connects your event with something they care about.

Example: "I recently read that you were looking to build a private cloud this year. We will have several customers there presenting their private cloud stories, a few of whom are from your industry..."

2

Use insight on desired attendees to drive content strategy and speaker selection. Once you know who you want at the event (see Tip 1, above), research what they care about and who they know. Let this insight guide your topics and speaker selection.

Example: One customer learned that their target attendees (CIOs) were struggling with how to work effectively with CMOs. They used our database to find one executive who had held both CIO and CMO roles at Fortune 100 companies—the executive equivalent of a needle in a haystack! He was the perfect person to deliver their event keynote.

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- 3 Tell customers what they have in common:** One of the biggest reasons people go to events is to network with their peers. If you can tell them who else is in the room and what they have in common, you help support and facilitate networking, which attendees appreciate.

Example: During their opening keynote, one customer showed graphics and statistics about the audience in the room—where they come from, top colleges attended, top hobbies, top concerns and initiatives, etc. as well as key quotes and photos of select attendees. They collected the information from our profile database as well as from a pre-event survey.

- 4 Use insight for customer matchmaking:** Use specific insight to help set up meetings between customers who share similar initiatives and challenges. This will help establish you as a credible, valuable partner who understands their business—and it will give them more incentive to attend your event.

Example: "I know you are in the midst of a major customer service initiative and I thought you might benefit from a meeting on-site with Customer X, who has some interesting experience in this area..."

- 5 Create a customized, VIP experience for key accounts:** Huge industry trade shows put a lot of demands on an executive's time. Avoid the temptation to push your customers to every single activity your company is doing; instead, learn about what they are focused on and design a thoughtful, relevant, customized experience.

Example: One customer offers a VIP booth tour for key accounts at all of their most important industry tradeshows. Sometimes they even do it during off hours when no one else is in the booth so they can have customized digital signage, special presentations, demos, executive meetings and refreshments.

The secret weapon for enterprise sales pros

Fortune 500 Executive Profiles

Successful account planning requires understanding a core group of decision makers — and where they are headed next. Boardroom Insiders provides extremely in-depth executive profiles, telling you what's top-of-mind with the people influencing your sale. Wouldn't you like to have executive profiles like this for your accounts?



Jennifer Stille Warren

SVP and CMO

RadioShack Corporation

Last Updated: 04/24/2013

Biographical Summary

What makes this person unique?

Biographical Summary

Warren in April 2013 was appointed Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer of RadioShack Corporation, the Fort Worth, Texas-based electronics specialty chain that's still suffering from a misguided plunge into low-margin mobile devices. The chain consists of approximately 4,400 company-operated stores; nearly 1,400 dealer outlets; nearly 700 wireless phone kiosks throughout the United States; and approximately 200 company-operated stores in Mexico. Warren is charged with leading all aspects of RadioShack's marketing, including brand strategy, advertising, corporate communications, social media and online customer experience. She has extensive marketing experience, having worked at such top agencies as Razorfish, GSD&M and T-3. Warren has worked on such accounts as Samsung, Walmart, Sam's Club, Marshalls, TJ Maxx, Zales, World Market, Land Rover, Charles Schwab, Kinko's, Dell, Chili's and Hallmark.

Personal Attributes and Interests

- Warren is married to Jim Warren.
- Warren attended Nederland High School in Texas.
- "I'm most interested in learning about brands who have found new ways to connect with consumers in the constantly changing digital world," Warren said.
- Warren served as a national Effie judge.
- Upon Warren's hire, RadioShack CEO Joe Magnacca said of the new hire, "We're excited to have Jennifer join the team at this exciting and critical time in RadioShack's history, as we set the stage for our stores' and the brand's evolution and growth. Jennifer has a proven track record of transforming brands from the inside out, by aligning with its purpose to create a compelling, meaningful and fun experience for consumers. This fits exactly with what our near-term plans are for RadioShack."

Personal Attributes and Interests

Hobbies, likes/dislikes, management style, personal anecdotes and quotes

Current Focus

- **Management Shakeup:** Warren joined RadioShack Corporation in the latest in a series of management shakeups. Coming aboard at the same time was Michael DeFazio, as SVP, Store concepts. DeFazio's responsibilities include the conceptualization, design, development and implementation of a new shopping experience for RadioShack consumers. He brings more than 36 years of retail experience to the company, including 30 years in store operations. In the last six years, he led the transformation of store concepts for two retailers as both a store manager and daily living destinations. During his tenure with Walgreens from 2011 to 2013, he managed Walgreens Well Experience store and all flagship stores for the company. "I have confidence that he has a unique ability to reinvent the shopping experience from the inside out," said Joe Magnacca. "He starts from the consumer perspective, and combines his experience as a merchandiser with his talents as a visual and experiential designer to deliver an exciting, compelling and fun shopping experience to the store." He added, "Jennifer and Mike are becoming members of the talented, world-class executive team we are building at RadioShack, all of whom have a focus on - and proven records of - transforming brands."
- **Brand Transformation:** Warren will play a key role in RadioShack's dramatic brand transformation, announced in April 2013. TWICE magazine reported that the troubled chain "plans to refresh its brand, assortment and stores to attract a new, younger customer and reverse a string of successive quarterly losses." The still-evolving strategy was outlined in "broad strokes" by recently installed CEO Joe Magnacca during a first-quarter earnings call, in which the chain announced a \$43 million loss for the period. Magnacca joined RadioShack in February from Walgreens and said he spent the ensuing weeks assessing the chain and solidifying its new management team. According to TWICE, he said the most immediate change will be a new branding campaign under the theme "Let's Play" that positions RadioShack as a neighborhood technology playground. The tagline will be highlighted in network TV spots, newspaper inserts and social and digital media, beginning with a new Beats commercial. Inside the store, expect to find a renewed focus on private-label brands and products, which differentiate RadioShack from its competitors and provide higher margins. Magnacca said his merchants are currently rationalizing the assortment and that the fruits of a recent product development foray in China will hit stores this summer. The stores themselves will undergo a refresh, beginning in

Current Focus

What is top-of-mind for this person?

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Blog, etc.





Current Focus (continued)

New York. The remodeling program leverages the stores' existing fixtures and footprints to keep capital expenditures low, and will include more interactive demos and "power brand" displays that group products by brand rather than category. Magnacca noted that Apple products are dispersed throughout the store by product classification rather than presented in a central Apple area, making it more difficult for customers to find what they're looking for. Sales staff will also be reinstructed to sell "the whole store" rather than aggressively focus on mobile phone sales, as they had previously been directed, which some customers found off-putting (i.e. flight cancellations). When asked why Zoghlin decided to take the position at Hyatt, he said, "I'm looking for a challenge. I want to work in a country with a ton of great data where technology can make things better."

Key Challenges

What is standing in the way of success?

Key Challenges

- **Botched Transformation:** RadioShack has seen its transition from a chain of all-purpose tech stores to a retailer primarily of mobile devices has backfired. Though the transition helped the company at first, the narrower focus is weighing on RadioShack's bottom line because of slim margins, increasing competition from online and discount stores and detrimental moves by smartphone carriers. In April 2013, RadioShack reported that first-quarter losses widened to \$43 million from a year-ago net loss of \$8 million. CFO and former interim CEO Dorvin Lively attributed the red ink largely to the company's postpaid mobile business. Handset unit volume fell 25% year over year amid reduced promotional activity, constrained inventory on popular models and a dearth of "iconic" introductions, he said on a first-quarter earnings call, while RadioShack's exit from its failed mobile department program for Target accounted for \$8.5 million of the loss. In contrast, prepaid mobile sales were up double-digit during the quarter as the addition of premium models helped remove any stigma from the category, and the wireless accessories and Bluetooth speaker categories also showed particular strength. Consumer electronics, laptop and MP3 player sales were weak but enjoyed margin rate improvement, Lively said.
- **Store closures:** In a first-quarter earnings call in April 2013 in which RadioShack reported a \$43 million loss, CEO Joe Magnacca said that while there are no plans for wholesale closures of stores, "redundant locations" may be shuttered as leases expire. The chain shut 104 company-operated stores in 2012, but the new management team is considering using its more than 4,000 locations as mini-fulfillment centers for online orders as it moves to bolster multichannel sales.
- **Analyst Relations:** One of RadioShack's biggest challenges is restoring investor confidence and winning over analysts who have long been down on the chain. In a research note, Janney retail analyst David Strasser in April 2013 blamed RadioShack's woes on "a long list of top management that sold out the long term for near-term profits," and said that based on his remerchandising track record at Walgreens' New York-area drugstore chain Duane Reade, "listening and giving [new CEO Joe] Magnacca the benefit of the doubt, here, could prove worthwhile." Still, Strasser described the company's first quarter results as "a disaster by any stretch of the imagination." Up to now, Zoghlin has had a following as one of Chicago's leading "techies" best known for launching and running early-stage companies including Neoglyphics Media Corp and G2 Switchworks and as the founding CTO for Orbitz. Some have wondered why now, at 43, Zoghlin has decided to "play with the big boys" (according to Crain's Blogs on ChicagoBusiness.com) and join the public Hyatt with its 100,000 employees. "This is my first corporate gig," laughed Zoghlin. "I've built up a reputation from companies that get too big." But he says he is looking forward to the challenge of data such a corporation provides with technology to make the company better.

Biographical Highlights

Academic studies, career path, etc.

Biographical Highlights

- Born circa 1973.
- Warren earned a degree in Marketing from Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas.
- She joined The Think Tank (T3) in 1998 as Senior Account Executive.
- She joined GSD&M in 1999 and over the next 13 years held the following positions:
- Director, Brand Development (2000 - 2001)
- Senior Integrated Communications Strategist (2001 - 2003)
- Account Supervisor (2003 - 2004)
- Account Director (2004 - 2007)
- Vice President, Account Director, Idea City (2007 - 2008)
- Senior Vice President, Group Account Director (2008 - 2012)
- She served as Samsung Client Partner at Razorfish in 2012.
- Warren in April 2013 was named as Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer at RadioShack Corporation, where she leads the company's marketing, including brand strategy, advertising, corporate communications, social media and online customer experience.

Other Boards and Organizations

- Member, Board of Directors, Austin Advertising Federation (2000 - 2001)
- Founding Board Member, Central Texas Direct Marketing Association
- Events Chair, Central Texas Direct Marketing Association

Other Boards & Organizations

Possible points of connection through companies, non-profits and industry associations

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Boardroom Insiders is your one-stop resource for executive insight. Enterprise sales pros use our executive profiles to close bigger deals, faster.

Our Customers



Rick Marcet
Senior Director,
Sales Productivity
Citrix

"Boardroom Insiders is driving opportunities in areas we have not thought of in the past. The executive profiles give us the confidence to go outside of IT and demonstrate to the customer that we know their business. We can talk about specific initiatives that we previously did not have visibility into. BI is now 'baked in' to all of our playbooks, roadshows, and training. It's really embedded in what we do."

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