The Mirren Sales Meeting Prep Tool

The purpose of this Sales (Prospect) Meeting Prep Tool is to help you prepare for and assemble the critical elements necessary to convert a sales meeting. By being armed with new category and consumer insights – and the elements below – you will create an opportunity to engage prospects on resolving their business and marketing-communications challenges.

Our insight for this proven approach comes from our research with clients uncovering exactly what they want when being approached by an agency, and from the best practices of those agencies growing most quickly.

In your first meeting with a prospect, be prepared to cover the following elements within 30 – 60 minutes:

Step One: Your Expert Position
Step Two: Deep Category Insights
Step Three: Get the Prospect Talking
Step Four: Deep Prospect Insights = Agency Projects

To get the most out of this tool, use it as a guide or checklist as you plan for a first sales meeting. Write your notes on the following pages, which can then be pulled together to create your personalized presentation.

PRE-MEETING – PROSPECT PERSONNEL INSIGHT
OBJECTIVE: Know who will be in the room and what it will take to convert each person.

ADVANCE PREPARATION	YOUR KEY PERSONNEL INSIGHTS
> Name and title > Role in decision-making > Reporting structure > Knowledge of the agency > Any issues to be aware of	

Best Practice: Most agencies are blindsided by unexpected comments and issues from prospects. Know who will be in the room and what it will take to persuade each person.

MEETING STEP ONE – YOUR EXPERT POSITION
OBJECTIVE: Position your agency as the only relevant expert that can impact their business.

DISCUSSION POINTS: 3 MIN'S	SPECIFIC POINTS YOU WILL MAKE (& SUPPORTING ITEMS YOU WILL BRING)
A three-minute focus on the expertise you have in the areas of most interest to the prospect: > Your primary area of expertise > Hint: focus on the prospect's category/industry, target demographic, business/ marketing problem, etc. > Your relevant client list > The business impact your clients have derived from your expertise	

Best Practice: Don't bring a laptop PowerPoint presentation. The Agency Introduction and sales meeting is best delivered with simple discussion seated next to the prospect, along with a few simple headline-oriented hand-outs. It should not come across as a slick sales presentation.

MEETING STEP TWO – DEEP CATEGORY INSIGHTS
OBJECTIVE: Reinforce your position by discussing a few new category insights that the prospect could leverage to drive sales.

DISCUSSION POINTS: 10 – 15 MIN'S	SPECIFIC TRENDS AND INSIGHTS YOU WILL DISCUSS (& SUPPORTING ITEMS YOU WILL BRING)
New category trends your research has uncovered. For example: > New sales trends > Competitors that are succeeding, why > The impact of environmental factors (economy, demographic shifts, etc.) > Marketing communication effectiveness: - media channels - messages - events, experiences	
New consumer behavior insights your research has uncovered. For example: > Purchase decision behavior > Usage behavior > Influential user groups	

Best Practice: Before ever speaking to a prospect for the first time, you must be able to answer: What new insights do I have for this prospect that will impact their business?

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MEETING STEP THREE – GET THE PROSPECT TALKING
OBJECTIVE: Get reactions to your insights, which leads to a discussion about their challenges.

DISCUSSION POINTS: 10 – 15 MIN'S	SPECIFIC QUESTIONS YOU WILL ASK/REACTIONS YOU EXPECT (& SUPPORTING ITEMS YOU WILL BRING)
Has the prospect noticed these trends and insights affecting their business? How have they experienced this impact? Note: this question may come up during each trend/insight.	
Smoothly transition the discussion to a brief discussion about their business: Where does the prospect plan to take the business over the next few years?	
What are the prospect's performance metrics against those objectives?	
What will most hold the prospect back from achieving those objectives?	
Other areas to explore.	

Best Practice: Upon completing this part of the sales meeting, you will have established your expertise, engaged the prospect in a meaningful discussion, and uncovered their most pressing business and marketing issues. You are now in a position to discuss your ideas to resolve some of these issues and create a project opportunity for the agency.

MEETING STEP FOUR – DEEP PROSPECT INSIGHTS = AGENCY PROJECTS
Objectives: Based on your new insights, articulate ways the agency will help this specific prospect capitalize on new business and marketing-communications opportunities.

DISCUSSION POINTS: 10 – 15 MIN'S	SPECIFIC "BUSINESS IMPACT PROJECTS" YOU WILL DISCUSS (& SUPPORTING ITEMS YOU WILL BRING)
Based on your new insights, specifically what are 2 or 3 potential marketing-communications solutions the agency could offer that will bring business impact to the prospect? 1. The Insight (behind each solution) 2. The Action (the agency can take as a potential project) 3. The Business Impact (of taking the Action based on the Insight)	

Best Practice: Come prepared to discuss 2 or 3 ideas about how your agency can impact the prospect's business. The essence here: Stop selling the agency. Start solving the prospect's problems.

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PRE-MEETING – CONVERTING THE FIRST MEETING
OBJECTIVE: Anticipate reactions/objections and gain agreement to a specific "test project" that would bring business impact to the prospect.

ADVANCE PREPARATION	SPECIFIC REACTIONS YOU EXPECT/POINTS YOU WILL MAKE (& SUPPORTING ITEMS YOU WILL BRING)
What basic questions or reactions will the prospect have? Specifically, what will your response be to each?	
What questions, reactions or objections could the prospect have that might derail the meeting? Specifically, what will your response be to each?	
What are the next 2 or 3 steps you will request the prospect do to begin the project?	
What are steps the agency will be able to take immediately to begin moving the project forward?	
If you are not able to close in the meeting, does an opportunity still exist within the next 6 months for the agency? What steps can the agency take to maintain value-added contact with the prospect until the close?	

Best Practice: Agreement to send information in writing is not a desirable outcome; you should be looking for a face-to-face meeting as your next step (even if delayed until the budget becomes available).

Additional Best Practices

- Keep the group small. Do not descend upon the prospect with hordes of agency execs. Two people from the agency: the person who made the initial contact and a bona fide subject matter expert.
- Make the meeting as casual as possible. Avoid prospect conference rooms. A relaxed meeting off-site in a coffee shop or in the prospect's cafeteria can be most effective.
- The more the prospect talks during the meeting, the better your chances of gaining revenue. Make sure it's a continually interactive dialog.
- The best sales meetings, while smoothly and seamlessly guided by the agency, actually follow the lead of the prospect. Be prepared to move in the direction of the prospect's greatest challenges and how you will resolve those challenges.
- Plan the meeting thoroughly, and rehearse. Role-playing can be exceptionally helpful. Be sure to include practice of prospect questions and objections.

For additional insight on Prospecting/Lead Generation or on how to maximize the value of this planner, contact Bob Wiesner at 212.388.9543 or bob.wiesner@mirren.com.