

Talking Business with Small Business®

Overview



Branch managers and platform staff learn to lead more effective discovery conversations with small businesses. Talking Business with Small Business® complements and adds power to any sales training program you may now be using.

Clarity Advantage Corporation is a business consulting firm. We help banks implement and execute sales strategies to generate more profitable relationships faster. Banks accelerate sales by focusing on their value propositions, improving sales processes, and boosting sales manager effectiveness.

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PROGRAM PURPOSES:

Build Confidence, Improve Conversations, Cross Sell More

70% of branch managers don't understand small business cash flow. 50% of branch manager small business calls are little more than product dumps. **Talking Business with Small Business®** combines "training + business calling" to build bank branch manager and small business banker confidence ("I understand what business owners are talking about.") and business conversation skills ("I know how to lead conversation with business owners about their challenges.") leading to deeper conversation, stronger differentiation, more cross sales of bank products, and better loan applications. Customers and prospects will experience a banker who "... really understands my business."

Specifically, program participants learn:

- How cash flows through a business and the impact of cash flow timing differences.
- The connections between business activities and financial statement numbers.
- The challenges small business owners must address when managing cash flow and the bank products that respond to those challenges.
- The differences between "short-term" and "long-term" cash flow timing differences, questions that distinguish short-term from long-term, and the appropriate use of lines of credit.
- How to lead an engaging, productive, differentiating sales call conversation that uncovers multiple challenges or issues that the bank can address.

Learning Activities – Pre-Work, Classroom, Field Sales Meetings

PREPARATION

The bank chooses the cash management challenges on which to focus program participants; more clearly defines branch manager and small business banker roles in selling cash management, deposit, and loan products; and determines how and to what extent to change the bank's credit application process to incorporate the specific lessons learned in the **Talking Business with Small Business®** training. In addition, Clarity and the bank determine how to integrate the **Talking Business with Small Business®** conversation structure with sales training that the bank has offered or plans to offer.

KICK-OFF

Senior managers review the bank's goals and plans for selling and cross selling small business deposit and cash management services; agree on expectations they'll set for region managers, district managers, branch managers, and small business bankers; and agree on the coaching and other support they will provide, expect, and inspect. Senior managers and first- and second-level sales managers then participate in the **Talking Business with Small Business®** classroom training and create specific plans for implementing and coaching **Talking Business with Small Business®** in their districts and regions.

CLASSROOM

Participants complete pre-classroom work including discussion with their managers, self-directed learning focused on selected bank products, and a pre-training quiz to assess their product knowledge and redirect participants to additional study, if needed. Participants also make appointments with 3-6 existing small business customers, participants summarize their existing bank relationships and identify important industry or economic trends or events that could affect them.

During the two-day classroom session, participants complete a series of small group learning activities and discussions:

- **Pre-Test.** A 20-minute quiz covering accounting definitions, cash flow concepts, and products.
- **Business Simulation.** A table-top cash flow simulation covering two years of a growing, seasonal custom cabinet business, demonstrating cash flow circulation and the cash flow challenges of seasonality and growth.
- **Cash Flow Management Challenges.** An interactive small group exercise based on the simulation. Participants focus on the typical cash flow management challenges bank customers and prospects face day to day and which bank products and services address those challenges, reducing customer costs or risks, increasing their revenues, or accelerating cash flow.
- **Recommending the Right Loans.** A combination of lecture, small group work, and discussion in which participants learn to distinguish between "short-term" and "long-term" cash flow timing differences, determine when a line of credit is likely to be the best fit, and ask questions concerning cash flow that help them determine which loan products might be best and assess whether requested loan amounts are roughly appropriate.
- **Review Exercise and Post-Test.** A competitive small group exercise to review course content and concepts, followed by a second quiz and discussion of quiz.
- **Conversation Guide.** Paired role plays through which participants learn to use a call agenda called the "Conversation Guide" that integrates course concepts about cash flow and financing into a sales conversation.
- **Call Preparation.** Paired or small group activity in which participants complete preparation for and practice (role-play) calls on one or more of the customers with whom they made appointments prior to the classroom training.

FIELD SALES MEETINGS

During the weeks and months following the classroom training, first-level or second-level sales managers lead four Field Sales Meeting which expand and extend points raised during the classroom session. The Field Sales Meetings are approximately 45 minutes long. Sales managers may offer one or more Field Sales Meetings repeatedly to help team members increase their skills and effectiveness. Field Sales Meeting topics include: Cash Flow, Financial Statements, Recommending the Right Loans, and Leading Conversations with the Conversation Guide.

Variations

Clarity can tailor **Talking Business with Small Business**® to integrate with any internally-developed or vendor-provided sales programs or sales initiatives either in its standard two-day format or in shorter formats that eliminate modules that may be covered by a bank's other training programs. In addition, Clarity can develop variations of **Talking Business with Small Business**® for other sales teams including treasury management sales team members and commercial bankers calling on larger companies.