



## Strategic Space Development

# Business Development Secrets to Success

## Buying Modes

Jim Cantrell

### Special points of interest:

- Buying modes— which mode is your potential customer in?
- Recognize the buyer's perceptions.
- How to approach each mode.
- New Capture Management Course in September
- Lay the groundwork before you write that winning proposal.

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Why does it seem that some sales go quickly and others never seem to develop? In fact, from your perspective, the potential client really needs your idea or product?

It is the responsibility of business development professionals to discover the customer's needs and in turn identify the product or service to fill that need. For many BD professionals and veterans of the business development process, it is second nature and almost done sub-consciously in social and meeting situations. Yet we rely on our own view of someone else's needs and our perspective of their situation to make those judgments.

A good example of this comes from our consulting practice at Strategic Space Development where we see organizations with sales that have slumped and their new business pipeline has dried up. Walking into an organization typically yields the clues to the root cause within a very short period of time and is usually organizational in nature. This is quite simply a good news/bad news scenario in most cases. The good news is that there is a need and we are in the business of helping people in these

situations by shoring up the business development processes and building the pipeline back up. The bad news is that they probably got to this point by not realizing that 1) they were in trouble or 2) they were not doing what they needed to do to avoid depleting the new business pipeline. Thus approaching this potential client has risks depending on their *perceptions of reality* and the *buying mode* that they are in.

It is imperative as business development professionals to recognize that the buyers' perceptions will be different from our own. From our external perspective, we may see things that they in fact do not see. The buyer exists within their own perceptions and thus their own reality.

Sometimes we come upon buyers who are enthusiastic and are ready to embrace a change or new way of doing something. In our consulting practice, these buyers typically come to us. These are *growth-oriented buyers*. They recognize their current situation can be improved by our product or service and are ready to engage. These are the best buyers to deal with and indeed are likely to act quickly. To en-

gage this kind of situation, your speed of response will be the single most important factor in turning this into revenue.

We often come across buyers that have a problem, recognize the problem and are motivated to act before that problem becomes worse or even materializes. These *problem-oriented buyers modes* are really a variation of *growth-oriented buyers* and are also likely to act on a solution that meets their needs and is available in the correct time frame. In the end, sometimes *problem-oriented buyers* may appear as *growth-oriented buyers* since the behavior will appear the same.

Business development professionals are a proactive group and will often go "prospecting" for clients that have a need for their solutions. While this is not a bad strategy, the sad truth is that this technique yields mostly buyers who are in the *even keel mode* or in the *everything is great mode*. Buyers in the *even keel mode* are not



## Buying Modes continued



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aware of a problem and their perception of reality will not lend themselves to see a growth opportunity nor a threat from a potential problem. These buyers can sometimes be convinced to “see the light” but in general they are unlikely to act on a proposal as they see no need for it. A variation of this buying mode, the *could not be better mode*, is the buyer who not only cannot see the growth opportunity or potential problem but actually thinks that the things never could be better. To this buyer, not only are they not motivated to entertain a proposal, they will often see your proposal as a threat to their position.

In the end, sales are almost always made to buyers in the growth or problem solving modes. *Even keel buyers* are occasionally persuaded but are not likely to act fast. *Even-*

*rything is great buyers* will not act in any circumstance. When you encounter buyers in growth or problem modes, act quickly as this is real opportunity. When you encounter a buyer in *even keel mode*, I recommend that you maintain contact with them on an occasional basis and most of the time, if you are correct, they will eventually come around to seeing

your view of the growth opportunity or problem. In this case, you will be remembered as the one who saw it coming. The last buying mode, *never had it better*, can only be avoided. They typically cannot be engaged nor changed and are best left to their own devices.



## Effective Capture Management Course December 2, 2008 Los Angeles, Sofitel LA Hotel

Strategic Space Development is adding a one-day course in *Effective Capture Management* to its highly successful three-day Business Development course in Los Angeles December 2 - 5.

Customized for but not limited to Program Capture Managers, this course focuses on proven methods to successfully posture your company to win major competitive programs. The course takes you through the capture process from identifying the initial opportunity to the release of the proposal announcement by the customer. Using real-world examples, this course provides valuable insight into the customers' perspective.

Registration begins August 2008. Go to [bdcourses.com](http://bdcourses.com) for more information.

**Dr. Pat Dougherty, VP, Strategic Planning and DoD Programs of Strategic Space Development**, is a highly educated and experienced teacher who gained a broad understanding of the customer's needs during his 20-year Air Force career in the acquisition corp. Presently, Dr. Dougherty develops business opportunities and capture strategies for suppliers to DoD and NASA. Dr. Dougherty has served on government source selection panels. Additionally, Dr. Dougherty has 16 years of business development and management experience in the civilian aerospace industry. The combination of his extensive real-life training with four college degrees (2 Master Degrees in Management) qualifies him to share the lessons he has learned.

## Don't Fight the Upward Battle

Pat Dougherty

Some organizations spend the bulk of their Business Development resources assembling a compliant, well-written proposal and still find that they lose. The truth is that **most competitions are won in the months prior to writing the proposal -- during the Capture phase.**

It's during this time, when the program is in the formulation phase, that win strategies are developed, the competition is assessed and relationships with the customer are built.

When Business Development staff members pursue a technology development contract while it is still formulating in the customer's mind, your business has the opportunity to help the customer generate a feasible, affordable solution. Your development efforts in this early Capture phase can be a valuable resource to the customer providing a wealth of information on products that have already been successfully and unsuccessfully built, in a specified time frame and for actual costs. When customers understand how their desired product will evolve from current technology, they can generate more accurate estimates of the probable cost and the time required to advance technology to meet their needs. Your business becomes a valuable resource to the customer as you provide this historical data. Additionally, you are in an even better position to present your product to the customer's needs and specifications. In this phase you have positioned yourself to describe specifically how your product can be modified, what performance can be expected and to offer justifiable cost estimates for the modification.

Customers award contracts to get companies to develop technology and systems that meet their needs. Your job is to understand their need, deter-

mine if your company has an offering that can meet the requirement or provide the foundation for evolving technology. A few of the key steps that need to be accomplished during the Capture phase are:

- ◆ Understand the needs of your customer
- ◆ Understand how your company is postured to meet those needs (core competency)
- ◆ Help the customer understand the technology "State-of-the-Art"
- ◆ Understand what your competitors are likely to offer
- ◆ Understand how your competitors are viewed by the customer
- ◆ Determine if an investment by your company can increase your chances of winning and provide you a marketable product for future procurements
- ◆ Ensure that your customer has been exposed to your solution well before the proposal submission

When the proposal finally arrives at the customers' office, you should know that your Business Development team helped with the evolution of a feasible solution and also that the customer will not be surprised by what they find in your proposal.

Dr. Pat Dougherty, SSD Vice President has a proven track record in Capture Management for aerospace contracts and years of experience in the Air Force acquisition community. Allow SSD to share with you real-world Capture Management successes at one of our upcoming courses in Los Angeles (see p. 2 and 4 for details).

*If you wait to expend BD dollars until the proposal – You're fighting an uphill battle!*

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*Strategic Space Development is a business development consulting firm specializing in aerospace and defense sector business and competitive intelligence. Strategic Space has many top drawer clients in the high tech and aerospace sectors and works with companies to grow revenues, identify and pursue new business opportunities, and make sound strategic decisions. Our efforts focus on working the client factors that increase the probability of winning new business. SSD's staff hails from DoD, Intelligence Community, and civil space backgrounds and has a breadth of business and engineering experience to work across the large domain of technical sales and strategy considerations. SSD also offers professional development courses in business development, competitive intelligence, strategy development, and engineering disciplines.*

### Strategic Space Development ..... Delivering Increased Win Probability

[www.strategicspace.net](http://www.strategicspace.net) and [www.bdcourses.com](http://www.bdcourses.com)

## Business Development courses in Washington DC

This Fall is a perfect time to ramp up your business development efforts and strategically plan to increase your capture win rates for 2009-2010. Join us in the Nation's capitol for our three-day Business Development course held at the Sofitel Lafayette Square Hotel .

Mr. James Cantrell, President and CEO of Strategic Space Development, a highly successful aerospace consulting company, will not waste your time with academic theory but give hands-on examples of the hidden forces at work, how to "follow the money and how to guide a prospect from uncertainty to a high probability sale.

This course is meant for both experienced business development professionals and those new to the profession and focuses on:

- *Understanding the sales process*
- *Developing the new business funnel*
- *The role of marketing and brand generation*
- *Developing Competitive Intelligence*
- *Proposal strategy development and execution*

#### Rates

Early-bird - \$3100 for 3-day course (available until August 17)

Regular - \$3500 for 3-day course.

We offer special rates for clients and groups.

Visit [bdcourses.com](http://bdcourses.com) to register and for more information.

**Contact** Rebecca Stowers at [rebecca@stratspace.net](mailto:rebecca@stratspace.net) or 1-888-327-3993. ext. 7.

We also offer on-site courses at your place of business. Eliminate travel costs and add wider exposure within your company. Contact us today for details.

