

Spring 2008

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It's Conference Time!

GAEA Award Nominations

Nominations are being accepted for the Annual GAEA awards. For details, please visit the website, www.gaea.org/admin Don't hesitate to brag on yourself or a colleague. If you do good work, say so!

Hot Sheet

Overheard at recent professional meetings

To download asap

USPS Publication 28

The US Postal Service offers USPS 28 with information on Postal Standards. Adhering to USPS standards could save you money on bulk mailing costs, as well as unraveling some of those undeliverable mysteries. Google USPS 28 for a free downloadable copy.

Twitter

Do you tweet? Millions do and while FaceBook and MySpace are about contacts, Twitter is about followers and is more aligned with marketing www.twitter.com

Moodle

An Open Source (read free) Virtual Learning Environment

Educators and hobbyists alike can create online courses and dynamic web sites for their students.



It's spring in Georgia and that means it's almost time for another GAEA Annual Meeting! This year the meeting is scheduled for **May 12, 2009**. Central Georgia Technical College will host what we believe will be our first ever drive-in, one day conference.

Given recent events and their impact on all programs we felt that it was more important than ever to gather and discuss the timely and important issues facing continuing education in Georgia. But, with cuts to travel budgets and heavier workloads, a lengthy conference just wasn't possible.

So this year, in support of our membership, we are pleased to announce a one-day meeting, free to our members, where we highlight and discuss the topics burning in the minds of Georgia's CE leaders. Appropriately, our theme is **HOT! HOT! HOT!**

Know someone who wants to become a member? Have them drop a line to our email address, gaeaE-mail@gmail.com.

A complete agenda including sessions, speakers and registration information is available on our website, www.gaea.org.

Please join us for what promises to be an energizing and educational opportunity.

Solution Selling

Getting the Edge on Larger Accounts / By Kathy Yeager

Order taking died in the 90's! However, some colleges still believe they are selling when they answer the phone and take the customer's self-diagnosed order for training!

In today's economy, high performing colleges are utilizing solution selling techniques to find and close larger contracts. What is solution selling anyway? It isn't a trendy buzz word or just a process only for

large corporations. Solution Selling is a technique used to target high potential customers, asking probing questions to uncover their need (pain) and listening carefully to responses to determine issues within the company. Next you ask more probing questions to get to the real need, and then respond with a solution-based proposal outlining all the different solutions that could address the company's issues.

We as college sales staff need to stop selling classes and start selling solutions. When we do this, we become a trusted advisor with answers to problems instead of a Continuing Education reseller of classes in the catalog.

Do companies think of your college as a solution's provider? Unless you have positioned and branded your col-

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Gene B. Clark



We are saddened to note the passing of Gene B. Clark, past president of GAEA and a recipient of the Distinguished Service Award. Mr. Clark was also recognized by GAEA in 1988 as the Outstanding Adult Educator in Georgia. In his words, actions and work, Mr. Clark taught us that life is a precious gift. May his lessons live on.

Join us **May 12th**
at Central Georgia Tech for our annual
Spring Conference. This year's theme?
Hot, Hot, Hot!

We're on the web! www.gaea.org

Solution Selling (cont. from pg 1)

by Kathy Yeager, President, Contract Training Edge

lege as a solution provider, companies probably don't think of you in that light.

However, colleges can rebrand themselves and begin to supply solutions for the company's pain. Once this occurs, companies will think of your college first in times of difficulty.

How is Solution Selling different from selling classes? First, you aren't in the sales meeting to sell anything that day. You are there to ask questions, probe for pain and listen and take notes. Therefore, you will need some really strategic probing questions, prepared before the meeting to ask your customer. Next, how do you know what to ask? Research of the company will uncover possible vertical market issues and identify their potential need ahead of time.

In the study, **Workforce Development Benchmark Project**[®], 44% of colleges indicated they were conducting reactionary sales calls 75% or more of the time. They answer the phone to an unqualified lead, allow the customer to self-diagnose their need ("We need communications training because no one talks to each other!") and then schedules the training for next Thursday from 9:00-4:00. And, colleges

wonder why their contracts are small and repeat business is almost non-existent!

Today, more than ever before, college administrators are charging Workforce Development Areas to grow, make money and build long-term relationships with businesses. This isn't going to happen in the order taking, catalog showing, just-selling-classes method. The Benchmark Study also revealed that 52% of institutions sold contracts of \$4,000 - \$7,999.

When you practice solution selling, the following benefits occur for your organization:

- Target the "right" company for your products and services
- Speak only to the decision-maker
- Close more business
- Shorten the sales cycle
- Contracts will be larger
- Build long-term relationships with the company
- Companies will buy from you, even in this economy, because you have solutions to their company issues.

What are your goals? Can you

reach them using your current sales techniques? Is your sales staff positioned to make targeted sales calls to key companies? Here's how you know it's time to move into Solution Selling:

- Your sales staff says they don't know who else to call

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your college first in times of difficulty.***

- Sales contracts are small and take a long time to close
- Sales calls are reactionary instead of proactive
- Face-to-face meetings are with non decision-makers
- Customers buy only one class and don't return
- The profit margin is small or non-existent on contracts
- The sales person shows the catalog and talks about their classes instead of asking questions to uncover customer needs
- No new business is coming in

If these situations plague your Workforce Development sales area, then it's time to obtain Solution Selling training for your entire staff. Everyone in your whole department needs a mental shift to understand this technique, because everyone is in the business of sales.

Selling training to companies isn't always the answer. Once colleges understand this and begin to think of all the different products and services they could offer a company as a solution to their "pain", the more successful the college will be in building that lucrative long-term relationship.

Remember, order taking died in the 90's! Give it a proper burial and move into today's cutting edge answer—Solution Selling.

For more information, contact Kathy Yeager, President of Contract Training Edge, specializing in Solution Selling, Marketing, Benchmarking Workforce Development, Sales Coaching and Consulting. Call 913-593-5347 or email kyeager@ctedge.net. For additional information, review the website at www.ctedge.net.