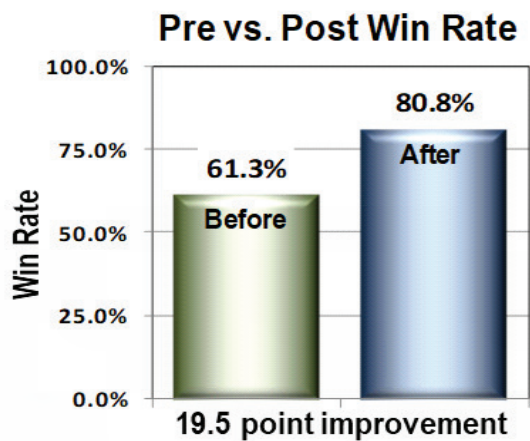


An Exposition Services Company links sales, service and production through common approach to enhance the customer experience



Business Situation

The stakes were high for this trade show industry leader whose clients had quickly grown to number in the thousands. They had shows staged at multiple locations around the world. Decision makers were frequently new players, corporate boards of directors, or exhibitor advisory boards. Contracts covered multi-event portfolios. High-tech innovations were developing at a dizzying pace. If that wasn't enough, the competition was tougher than ever! With all of these factors, increasing customer loyalty within this organization was paramount!

Goals

- Ensure that customers receive the best trade show and event service experience in the industry
- Achieve 90% client retention
- Drive double-digit annual revenue growth
- Develop stronger client relationships (high and wide)

Challenges / Needs

- Aggressive, low-cost competitors – need to differentiate and communicate the value of products/services
- Price and cost-driven clients – need to get beyond the project “specs” to link solutions to a client strategic business goals
- Missed opportunities and lack of growth – need to identify and close new business (before RFP is issued)
- Align teams through a shared mission and strategy/process to create optimal results

Our client recognized that each employee who interacts with customers has the potential to directly impact the customers' perception of their organization. That's why the company is taking major steps to ensure that employees are empowered to make the most of each customer experience.

Solution

- Executive planning and alignment sessions
- Implementation of *R3 Sales Excellence* (and, later, *R3 Service*)
- Application of the 12-week *Follow Through* program
- Measurement using PulseCheck surveys and Bottom-Line Tracking (Level 4)

It started with *R3 Sales Excellence* consultative selling method for sales teams. The strong support and results for the sales project prompted our client to expand its use of Acclivus' performance-development offerings to include a company-wide implementation of *R3 Service*, a process that enables service and production professionals to take communication with customers to a higher standard of excellence. Service professionals learned how to diagnose problems and identify needs beyond the obvious—a key benefit for this, or any, organization.

“Having skills to guide each service dialogue ... taking time to sit back and really listen and identify customer needs before jumping to conclusions... these are making a difference for us. The better we can discern customer expectations, the better we can manage their needs,” says the Senior National Director of Exhibitor Services.

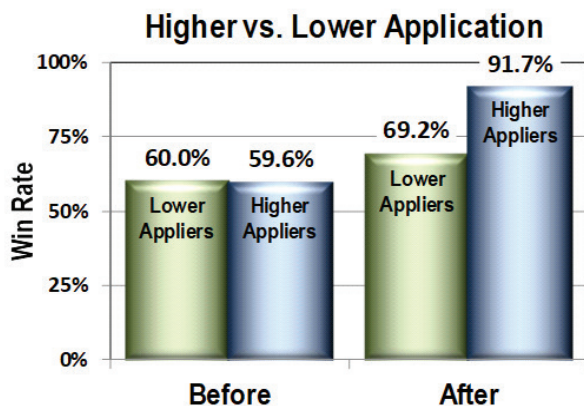
Adopting a consistent customer processes for sales, service and production is a “logical way to deal with our customers,” says Director of Training. “It gives us a common link between our sales group, our Exhibitor Services group, and our Convention Service group, creating an enhanced customer experience.

Regional vice president of sales in the busy West Coast market says the team approach to serving customers means that service and production professionals are brought into the process much earlier now to ensure a seamless and successful product. **“Service and production may be involved in preparing the proposal and supporting the sales presentation,”** she says. **“When you do multicity bids and try to show a consistent presence to your client, you have to make sure that everybody is on that proverbial same page.”**

Sales professionals handle a large number of leads and accounts simultaneously. *R3 Sales Excellence* has been an effective tool to assure that “nothing is missed,” she says. “The basic skills like how to open and close calls, probe for clarification, qualify opportunities, and ask for the business are all there and in the right order. Likewise, *R3 Service* provides a compatible systematic approach for our service and operations teams.”

Results

Tracking results from a Sales Excellence implementation for directors of sales, sales executives, sales managers, account executives and trade show planners showed a **19.5 percent increase in the hit rate for opportunities and one- to three-year contract renewals. In addition, executive-level customer relationships increased 55%.**



When comparing the win rate of higher and lower appliers of the *R3 Sales Excellence* skills before and after the workshop and follow through, we found that, while all sales executives improved, those who more frequently applied the *R3 skills* showed a 22 point **higher increase in win rate** than those who applied them less frequently.

Services increased its hit rate from one- to three-year contract renewals last year while initiating a strategy to improve customer loyalty.

Individual Success Story Examples:

“We started working with their consultant and worked our way up to the president of a publishing company who is sponsoring this event. They met several people in our organization and viewed our facilities and capabilities. **This was a TEAM effort, and it paid off in a two-year contract.**”

A sales executive from Chicago reported that he was successful at winning new business “at the 11th hour through probing for needs, listening and presenting good targeted solutions.” **The results: a \$1.3 million contract with a resort hotel.**