

ENTERPRISE-LEVEL SOLUTIONS

How we helped a Fortune 100 organization pivot to a new business model.



Opportunity

From Closing to Consulting

In a marketplace that's changing at the speed of technology, more and more companies are forced to pivot. The leaders of startups do so all the time, identifying a new opportunity and speedily adapting as needed to go after it right away. But if a larger company decides to shift, there is a lot more that has to happen to turn that large of a ship. First and foremost, the company has to figure out how to pivot without entirely disrupting present-day operations or jeopardizing client relationships.

This was the situation a Fortune 100 company was facing when they decided to overhaul the revenue model, switching from one-and-done sales strategy to a recurring revenue model. Every aspect of the business would be affected by this change, but none as acutely as those on the customer side.

It was the commercial arm that we were brought in to support. Prior to this pivot, there's no question that the sales leaders were skilled at closing deals. With this change in the business model, however, that revenue-first orientation would have to change too. These leaders would need to start thinking and acting like account managers committed to their customers' success. Instead of just closing the deal, they would need to connect with the customers and lead them to the value their products could deliver – all to ensure consistency in revenue growth, even in the midst of the business model changing. And to do that, they would need development.

Approach

Making the Sale to Salespeople

Sometimes EDC is brought in to diagnose a problem. Most often, organizations want us to then design and deliver a solution, targeted at that diagnosis. And because of the depth and breadth of experience of our partners, we can easily adapt our approach to the situation at hand. This organization knew where they wanted to go (a salesforce aligned to the new way of selling). They just needed a partner who could help them get more than 600 senior leaders aligned to that new direction.

When working with a group of this size, one of the not-so-readily-apparent challenges is figuring how to execute it. It's tough enough scheduling time for a one-on-one with a senior leader, but coordinating the calendars of 600 very busy people is a herculean endeavor. Fortunately, we did not plan on taking on the

entire cohort at the same time. Instead, we opted to divide them into groups of approximately 30 – a much more manageable size - while we geared ourselves up for 20 deliveries in 18 months around the world.

We also put a lot of thought into the make-up of these groups. When you're working with a global organization, the natural tendency is to divide the group by market. However, it can also limit how open the participants are to receiving and incorporating new information as old relationships can lead to groupthink or resistance. In this case, because our objective was radical transformation, we chose to mix up the groups so that participants would be working with colleagues in each session from all around the globe, forming new networks that opened up information flows around the company.

The workshop itself was a 3-day experience designed around the following principles:

- **External Exposure: Inviting the Outside In**

If you want to accelerate adoption of new mindsets, bring the outside in. Bother leaders (be likably bothersome) with how the world is changing at an accelerating pace. Haunt them by their own potential for irrelevance by tangibly showing them how and where disruption is occurring in or near the spaces where they compete. By inviting the outside in, you can change your team's outlook and jumpstart the conversations required for change.

- **Candid Feedback: Establishing a Baseline**

A key to changing behavior is to establish the gap between what is and what needs to be. It's one thing, an ineffective thing, to intellectualize about the changes a leader must make to adapt to the business's next normal. Much more effective is giving that leader a clear sense of where he or she is achieving that end and where not. Whether through psychometric assessments that create self-awareness or more hard-hitting 360s or in-depth assessments, leadership development must lay truth on the line.

- **Real Work: Making It Relevant**

Leadership development must be contextually specific. In fact, we believe that the business should be in the foreground with the development effort supporting in the rear ground. A well designed and run leadership development experience should feel like an incredibly compelling business meeting complete with some compelling new ways to think about the business. And all roads should lead to applicability and action.

- **A World in Flux: Staying Flexible and Adaptable**

For organization leaders, disruption is a daily occurrence. And while they can't stop it, they can learn to manage it. With that in mind, it's important to build flexibility into every leadership development exercise. Share techniques. Not step-by-step tutorials.

After three days of confronting disruption, engaging with followers, scenario planning, and addressing the change that needed to occur, leaders left with a new mindset that would prove invaluable – and profitable – as the company moved in a new direction.

Outcome

A Repeat Customer

One hallmark of a successful project? When the client gives you the next project. Over the course of several months, we ran the 3-day experiences almost 20 times. As we were nearing the end of the engagement, our main client contact asked if we could redesign the curriculum for their next level of sales leaders – a group nearly 2,000 strong. And that wasn't the end of it. As the marketplace kept shifting, so did the content in the curriculum we developed. We also led the original 600 leaders through the newest iterations two more times – a 2.0 and a 3.0.

So, did they actually pivot? Short answer: yes. That Fortune 100 organization is still a Fortune 100 organization that has created billions in value because of its transformation. A lot has contributed to that continued success, and we're proud to have played our part.

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