

A **SOAR Performance Group** White Paper



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SOAR Strategic Talent DevelopmentSM:
Maximizing Talent to Drive Improved Sales Performance



Driving Forces

In today’s business environment, change is a constant that cannot be escaped. Changing customer preferences are putting pressure on all businesses to adopt new strategies and execute them seamlessly. Increasing competition is a constant as industries adapt to a “new normal” that requires faster time to market for new products and services, new ways to connect with customers in an increasingly social world and the ability to respond to threats from new competitors in the market. The right strategy with the right people to execute the strategy is paramount in a rapidly changing business environment.

Organizational Response

In response to these driving forces, organizations globally are setting objectives focused on increasing profits and prospering in the “new normal” of accelerated change. In developing strategies to increase profitability in a rapidly changing business environment, these objectives are frequently focused on growing revenue and reducing cost. This white paper will focus on the “growing revenue” factor in the profitability equation as this is the area where we hear the greatest focus in our discussions with clients today. After a long period of restructuring across industries to drive cost savings, do we have the right talent, team and customer engagement approach to achieve these new growth objectives?

If we consider a set of revenue growth strategies (Table A) and the people implications, it provides an interesting perspective for one of the paradoxes of strategy. Most strategies fail not because they weren’t good strategies, but because of poor execution. If we make the extension to what is required for successful execution, Soar Performance Group believes people are the key to successful strategy execution.

**Table A
Growth Strategies
People Implications**

Growth Strategy	People Implication
Grow share of wallet in existing customers	Do we have the right people to build high, wide and deep relationships in accounts?
Acquire new logo accounts	Do we have the right people to drive acquisition of new accounts?
Increase size of deals	Do we have the right skills to up-sell and cross-sell?
Sell more high margin products	Do we have the right skills to position the value of higher margin solutions?
Increase win rates	Are our sales teams targeting the right accounts and opportunities?

What Issues Prevent Success?

Considering people are the key to success, have we considered the important people implications of our growth strategies? Are we taking a strategic view of our talent development to ensure we have the talent, team and customer engagement approach to drive successful execution of the strategies? What can stand in the way of successful execution? What are the organizational implications (Table B) of the new growth strategies?

**Table B
Growth Strategies
Organizational Implications**

Growth Strategy	Organizational Implication
Grow share of wallet in existing customers	Are new account coverage models and segmentations required?
Acquire new logo accounts	Is a new account acquisition focused role required?
Increase size of deals	Are specialist roles required to support the cross-sell expectations?
Sell more high margin products/services	How do we build knowledge of the products and services?
Increase win rates	What opportunity targeting, qualification and coaching support is required?

The Solution

To ensure the success of your new growth strategy, you must have an answer to sales talent development. Sales talent development is a conscious, deliberate approach undertaken to attract, develop and retain people with the aptitude and abilities to meet current and future organizational objectives. It involves individual and organizational development in response to a changing and complex business/sales environment. At SOAR, we call this deliberate undertaking SOAR Strategic Talent DevelopmentSM.

SOAR Strategic Talent DevelopmentSM determines the makeup of your current and future sales talent, it identifies your sales talents' knowledge and skills deficiencies, and arms your people with the knowledge and skills they need to drive ongoing sales success.

The SOAR Strategic Talent Development Approach

SOAR Strategic Talent DevelopmentSM is a four step approach that ensures your sales talent is in the best position, has the right skills, and the necessary knowledge to execute your sales strategy and enable a more profitable business. The approach and its details are seen here:





➤ *Step 1 – Establish the Talent Profile*

In order to execute a new sales strategy, the first step is to establish the skills, knowledge and traits for each sales role that the sales people in that role will need to be successful. This is called the SOAR Success Guide™.

The SOAR Success Guide™ is developed by observing the skills, knowledge and traits of the top performers in your company and aligning them with the critical success factors of the new sales strategy. The success guide then becomes the instrument that connects the business strategy to your sales team's capabilities.

➤ *Step 2 – Determine Current Talent Makeup*

The next step in the approach is to assess and determine the organization's current talent makeup. Whether the organization needs to fill positions quickly to meet current needs or build talent to address future capability demands, it's important to evaluate the whole person – including knowledge areas, experiences, behaviors, motives, values and personality traits – and not just technical skills.

The SOAR Success Guide™ assessment uses an automated assessment platform to evaluate team member's knowledge, skills and attributes against the expectations of the success guide. This provides critical insights as to which team members have the greatest opportunity for success in a role based on the knowledge, skills and attributes of current top performers in the role. The assessment data can be aggregated and reported to provide insights by role, geographic region, sales team, business unit or experience. This means the assessment can provide a benchmark for both individual and organizational development.

➤ *Step 3 – Establish Development Plan*

As a result of the assessment and understanding the gap between the current state of a sales organization's talent and its desired future state, it is time to consider how the sales organization can develop its talent. SOAR Performance Group works closely with its clients to build a learning strategy that supports the individual and organizational development plans at all levels of the sales organization. These development plans are aligned with the Success Guides and they harness the power of training, coaching and mentoring to enable next level performance.

➤ *Step 4 – Develop Talent for Continued Success*

Step 4 is about executing the development plan. At SOAR, we do this by developing highly customized training, setting up coaching and mentoring programs and promoting internal best practice sharing. The SOAR Strategic Talent Development team has designed and implemented highly impactful training for every level of the sales organization, from front line sales representatives, to strategic account managers, to VP and Director level leadership. SOAR is also very experienced with blended learning approaches and social learning programs that enable our clients to make transformational changes in their sales approach.



Proven Results

SOAR Clients represent some of the largest and most profitable technology, telecomm and manufacturing companies in the world. SOAR's approach to Strategic Talent Development has enabled these clients to realize key revenue generating initiatives. Here is an example of a recently successful SOAR Strategic Talent DevelopmentSM program:

- **Situation:** A new group was launched within a Fortune 500 communications company. In order to meet their aggressive growth targets, they recognized the need to hire and develop "A" players on their sales teams.
- **Solution:** SOAR developed a Success Guide to define the knowledge and skills required to be an "A" player in the new organization. SOAR integrated the success guide with the hiring, coaching and development approach through interview guides, coaching guides, and aligning the training curriculum with the most important skills.
- **Result:** As a result of implementing the Success Guide, the organization was able to find and develop the "A" players it needed to drive the business. The organization grew from a start-up to over a \$1 billion business unit and was successfully integrated back into the company's core business.

Why SOAR Strategic Talent Development?

As competition increases, technology evolves and customer preferences continue to change rapidly, there are always going to be powerful forces driving the decisions your business makes in an effort to remain profitable. At SOAR Performance Group our mission is enabling the execution of our clients' most strategic sales initiatives. We do this by focusing on 3 key areas of our clients' sales organization – their sales team, sales talent and customer engagement approach. This approach is called SOAR Sales Capital ManagementSM and our clients see it as the key to achieving the results their business is counting on.

Strategic Talent Development, a key component of SOAR Sales Capital ManagementSM, is the engine that keeps the wheels to success spinning. Research has consistently demonstrated that sales organizations with well defined, comprehensive and rigorous onboarding and talent development programs have sales people who consistently achieve quota and have lower turnover. If your business is aiming to achieve its strategic objectives and revenue generating goals through a commitment to better development of sales talent resources, please contact Ana Gomez, *Practice Leader – Strategic Talent Development* (ana.gomez@soarperformancegroup.com)