Are your hunters hunting or farming? How focused account profiling can help business growth.

By Brian Gardner, founder of SalesProcess360

During a CRM roundtable webinar I recently hosted, we discussed ways to use CRM data to make *better* business decisions. One of the hot topics was **Account Profiling** and how using a 4-dimensional approach can help grow your business volume with focus on where your sales team should spend their time. You may say, "We have a profiling system and we grade our accounts." In my experience, the information is usually only 1-dimensional; basing it off current or the past years business volume and not growing volume. This is where the 4-dimensional approach becomes invaluable.

There are other variables you could use to determine Target Accounts, but I am a believer in keeping it simple so here are four areas you can consider in determining if an account should be a hunter account or farmer account. Profile the account and answer these questions.

1. What is the Current $ Volume?
2. What is the Potential $ Volume?
3. What are the Current Product/Services the account buys?
4. What are the Potential Product/Services the account might buy?

Let's first start with the current and potential volume:

Current $ Volume:
Consider a grading scale of A, B, C, D for each account. Example: A = >$250,000 year, B = $150,000 to $249,000 year, etc.

Potential $ Volume:
Use a similar grading scale as Current $ Volume. As an example, ABC Chemical is currently buying $50,000 a year from us, but potentially could be buying $250,000 a year. That would put ABC Chemical into the CA matrix category. C for Current $ Volume and A for their Potential $ Volume.
Complete the exercise and you should have all the accounts profiled and organized by category groups.

Category Examples:

- DA = Currently a D, but Potentially an A (High-Growth Target Account)
- BB = Currently a B, but Potentially a B (Maintain Account)
- CA = Currently a C, but Potentially an A (High-Growth Target Account with Leverage)
- AA = Currently an A, but Potentially an A (Key Account)
  (See the sample worksheet on next page)

Target Accounts

Yellow Highlighted cells are input cells

Blue Highlighted cells are calculated

Sales Scale		
A	>$250,000	
B	$150,000	$249,000
C	$50,000	$149,000
D	<$50,000	

Matrix Ranking

AA	Stay Close 7 Days	DA	Highest Growth but no products leverage
BB	Maintain 30 Days	CA	High Growth with something to leverage
DD	Last Resort	DB	Good Growth but no leverage

Account	Current Sales	Potential Sales	Matrix	Current Products	Potential Products
Shell	C	A	CA	Valves, Fitting	Pumps, Motors, Drives,
Dow	C	B	CB		
Kimberly Clark	B	B	BB		
Boeing	B	A	BA		
Duke Power	C	B	CB		
Solar Turbo	D	D	DD		
Exxon	C	B	CB		

Idea take this sheet and create one for each of your sales guys. Have them fill it out. Once filled out create a tab for each target account and document your action plan.
Focus on getting new products into the accounts with the largest grow potential. Look at how you can leverage the existing products you sell into that account.
Make them participate in the process.

(Download the worksheet here)

This will give you laser focus based on if the account is an account positioned for a hunter (growth) or should it be handled by a farmer (maintain). So what are the first accounts you should focus on for growth? The CA accounts. These are currently doing some business with you and have the potential to be an A account. The CRM system can be set up to help you make sure you are staying focused on these growth accounts. So, if you have CA accounts with no new activity or touches within the last 30 days, this is a red flag and the sales team should be refocused.

Where does the 3rd and 4th dimension come into play? Start with your CA accounts and now dive a little deeper and list the current products/services you are selling them and then list the potential products/services. To start with take 1 potential product and create a “proactive” opportunity in your CRM to help you manage the process for winning this business.

While discussing this, the comment was made by a participant: “Another dimension to consider would be clones of existing customers. Shouldn’t we use those as prospects?” Absolutely, as they say, ‘Birds of a feather flock together’! One should also consider tracking accounts by industry and application. Taking past sales or service successes and carrying them into similar applications is a great way to promote growth in other accounts, and this matrix can be set up in the CRM.

Using this approach can create a structured process to make sure your team has the right people pursuing and maintaining the right accounts. Outside Sales can focus on growth accounts and allow Inside Sales to focus on maintain accounts by using the 4DAP (4 dimensional account profiling) system and taking ‘subjective’ out of the equation. In a nutshell, you want to make sure you don’t have hunters doing the farming!

Brian Gardner is the founder of SalesProcess360, which works with industrial sales organizations to improve sales processes and get ROI from CRM. Learn more at salesprocess360.com.