

Enabling the shift from product to solutions-focused selling

Over the course of 18 months, Lucent Worldwide Services, with the help of GeoStrategy Consulting, revised its strategy to focus on selling “solutions” to better serve its customers in a competitive environment. Its revamped approach and selling collateral now enable more effective solution selling, communicating differentiated value, enabling a customer dialogue, and speaking to an executive audience. Over 75% of the firm’s solutions have been adapted to the new approach, and the very language and culture of the firm is evolving, to ultimately support the new approach.

Challenge: Evolve marketing communications to drive services revenue

Need to grow revenue



Lucent Technologies, a leading telecommunications products and services vendor with \$8B in revenue, found itself facing significant challenges driven by a changing technological environment and new, stronger competitors. Weakness in earnings drove a revised strategy to build services – Lucent Worldwide Services – to better meet customer needs. The Executive Vice-President of Marketing and Services Strategy was therefore challenged to rapidly grow the services business.

The Services Marketing organization recognized that meeting the challenge would require a radical shift from the current product-based strategy to a solutions focus. It also recognized that this shift would require a significant transformation of the company’s “go-to-market” strategy – a transformation that would drive wide-reaching changes in the firm’s approach, as well as in its tools and priorities. And, the new approach would demand involvement across the company to evolve the culture and mindset to effectively sell in a new way.

GeoStrategy was brought in to help effect the changes necessary to drive revenue and by re-crafting and aligning collateral to support a consultative sell. The result: a powerful “Sales Toolkit” that produced reinforcing, consistent, clear messages in thoughtfully-constructed documents – along with a mindset shift to enable the emerging approach Lucent Worldwide Services would come to call “Engagement Marketing”.

Shift from products to solutions focus



Lucent Worldwide Services’ existing sales collateral, derived from years of product-based marketing, was not sufficiently strong to promote a consultative sell. Instead, the collateral consisted primarily of internally focused and technically intensive brochures, presentations, proposals, and other materials. Simply put, the types of marketing and selling documents that worked for a product-based company did not enable a solutions-based strategy, which required targeting a more senior, executive buyer, and supporting a consultation with the customer to identify needs. The collection of documents Lucent Worldwide Services had in place tended to lack standard language and consistent definitions of services and solutions, as well as compelling, clearly delineated differentiators and meaningful illustrations of value delivered. Further, they were not designed to support the dialogue with a customer that is critical to selling solutions; specifically, they were missing elements designed to define the customer’s needs and to effect a discussion around how Lucent’s capabilities could address those needs.

Compounding these difficulties was a weak underlying process, again designed for a product-based selling approach. Marketing and Sales could not quickly and efficiently create documents for sales opportunities that fit a given customer’s circumstances and the type of solution on

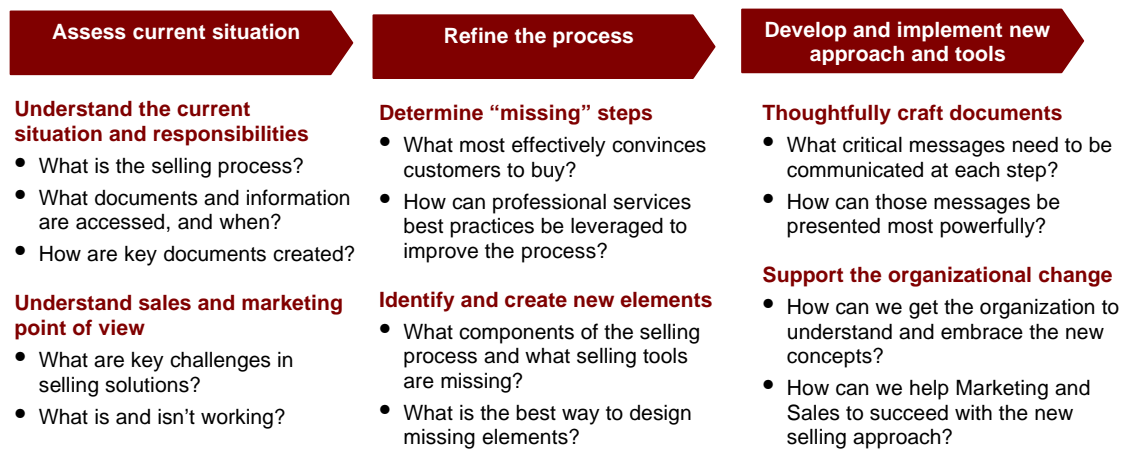


offer. Further, they could not easily access critical competitive and market data, essential for a productive dialogue with a potential customer.

Approach: "Powering up" the Selling Process

GeoStrategy assessed the initial state of collateral as well as the underlying processes and existing barriers to success. It then developed a re-defined "Sales Toolkit" to fit the company's evolving strategy. Across functions, including Marketing, Sales and Service Delivery, GeoStrategy worked with Lucent Worldwide Services to define marketing elements crucial to building powerful messages, then constructed a new set of selling materials to communicate the firm's capabilities, enable a consultative sell, and define differentiated value offered. The project extended to support the organization's transition to ensure that all pieces were in place to build new business.

Approach Overview:



Specifically, the key marketing elements that needed to be defined were, first, a service delivery methodology, and second, consistent value propositions and differentiators. GeoStrategy and the Lucent Worldwide Services team defined these key elements, then constructed two new documents. These were the Customer Discussion Documents for the initial stages of the sale, to communicate the firm's capabilities and assess the customer's needs, and the Executive Proposal for the subsequent stages of the sale, to communicate the tailored solution developed to meet the needs of that customer, complete with a detailed project approach.

Critical Marketing Elements



Service Delivery Methodology. One of the most important new elements designed to facilitate the shift from a product-based approach to a solutions approach was a service delivery methodology – a consistent, clearly articulated process by which Lucent Worldwide Services' solutions would be executed. GeoStrategy recognized that a solid methodology would communicate discipline and credibility around Lucent's ability to deliver not just a "box", but a solutions-based transformation ... with strength in its consistent delivery and flexible application across solutions. GeoStrategy worked with Practice leaders to understand the current state of service delivery, and how it was being described. With the client team, they then defined a consistent methodology and created a distinctive graphical element to communicate and to brand the methodology. The resulting methodology features a consistent five-phase process that can be used as a framework for discussions of all solutions and their component services.

Value Propositions and Differentiators. Another challenge in the shift to solutions-based selling was in defining the value propositions and differentiators specific to each solution. While products can be compared based on features and performance, solutions can only be meaningfully compared based on differentiated value – what benefits the customer will receive that can be delivered only by this firm. This requires a clear articulation of the bottom-line benefits for the customer – as well as a credible explanation of why this value is unique, by articulating and communicating Lucent Worldwide Services' unique strengths – those elements that make it the best partner to achieve optimal results for that customer.

Sales Toolkit Documents



Customer Discussion Document. Lucent Worldwide Services recognized that the selling process had to better frame a dialogue with the customer at the early stages of the sale. GeoStrategy worked with the Lucent Worldwide Services team to replace what had been either lengthy PowerPoint presentations or very high-level brochures, both concentrated on internal capabilities, and typically presented in very technical terms. The new "Customer Discussion Document" was a presentation designed to leverage a standard "story" around a specific solution, but tailored to fit a given customer situation, and designed to open the door to a dialogue with the customer. It represented a significant departure in that it was short, structured with a clear story line, and focused on the customer's perspective – and intended to achieve several key goals:

- *Reach an executive-level audience.* Given the complexity of a solution vs. a product, and the importance of convincing the ultimate decision-maker to buy, the presentation throughout had to speak not just to a technical audience, as these types of materials had previously, but now first and foremost to the "C-level" executive. Therefore, the language needed to feature bottom-line results and strategic implications for the company.
- *Support discussion with the customer.* The Customer Discussion Document was so named precisely because it was designed to drive a dialogue with the customer. Solutions selling required that a customer's needs be well defined, to identify how Lucent could customize its solution to address those needs. The document therefore presented information about the customer's industry and current environment, in order to spur dialogue around the types of initiatives the customer was interested in, what they had done and were planning in the specific solution area, and the challenges they were facing.
- *Communicate breadth and strength of services.* This early-stage presentation needed to persuade the customer of the firm's strength in services, and to communicate the breadth of its capabilities overall and in a given solution area. Because of Lucent's strong reputation as a product company, its capabilities around delivering services were not always as well known to potential customers. Explicitly outlining Lucent's services offerings were therefore critical to build the market's understanding.



- *Explicitly discuss value.* Both because there were market misperceptions about the company's services strengths, and also because of the importance of business results for the executive audience, the document had to outline the value that could be expected from Lucent's solutions. It therefore included anticipated results in language that an executive could appreciate, specifically focused on bottom-line, quantifiable value.
- *Create a sense of urgency or excitement.* Although short, the Customer Discussion Document was carefully structured to home in on a solution's potential benefits and successes, as well as the inherent risks of engaging not just any firm, but specifically Lucent Worldwide Services, in this solution area. While it was intended to educate the customer, it also had to incite a customer to act.

Having a standard, thoughtful, customizable presentation meant that each selling opportunity would address the most critical selling messages. With the new "Customer Discussion Document", Sales was better equipped to find common ground in a customer meeting and to proceed to the next stage – of presenting a proposal.

Executive Proposal. The Customer Discussion Document was intended to be used to communicate Lucent Worldwide Services' capabilities and to define the customer's needs, and to determine how Lucent Worldwide Services could meet those needs.

Previously at this stage, Lucent Worldwide Services lacked a standard process or selling materials to communicate a tailored proposal for a given customer, such that often, the process moved too quickly to a contractual Statement of Work (SOW). Lucent recognized the "middleware" was missing – between a general discussion document and an SOW. GeoStrategy worked with Lucent Worldwide Services to define the missing element – a proposal owned and delivered by the sales force to an executive-level audience, focused on communicating the tailored solution – including an in-depth description of the approach, a clear outline of key deliverables and results, and a thoughtful discussion of anticipated benefits. The intention was to provide sufficient detail, still value-focused, that could justify a significant investment in the offered solution.

The resulting "Executive Proposal" was designed to build on and reinforce key messages of the Customer Discussion Document, while adding specific information on the customer's needs and explicitly defining what would be done.

Defining a new process, articulating new marketing messages, and constructing new selling collateral – all were critically important to the transformation. However, successfully completing the transition to solutions sales would require that individuals within Marketing and Sales – across the organization – understand the new approach and be armed with the information and tools needed to actually implement the change. To that end, training materials were created to explain the impetus behind the shift and the philosophy underlying the new selling approach. In addition, Marketing practitioners were now expected to present solutions in terms of value and differentiators. "Solution Managers" needed to be able to articulate the results their solutions



could effect and why Lucent’s market offering was the best alternative for the customer. To that end, GeoStrategy developed sophisticated yet useable frameworks and tools to help individual Solutions Managers find and sift through the information available to convincingly define differentiated value and the drivers of that value.

Finally, to complement the new approach and primary selling documents, “secondary collateral” was designed for broader dissemination prior to a targeted customer meeting. These materials were designed to introduce and reinforce those messages critical to a solutions sale, which would be later echoed in the Customer Discussion Document. GeoStrategy also assisted Lucent Worldwide Services in developing internal collateral to outline the strategy, goals and key elements of each solution, to ensure that Sales had the critical information needed around the many solutions they were responsible for selling.

Result: A holistic, complete sales approach enabling new business

The project delivered a compelling set of market-ready selling materials specifically designed to enable a services-based, solutions orientation; a tailored set of documents to support a pilot with a customer; and supporting frameworks and training materials.

Phase of Process	“Before”	“After”
Early - Understanding customer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document content and messages inconsistency • Presentation-focused materials not supportive of consultative selling • Internally-focused, “let me tell you about us” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent, concise structure and impactful flow and content • Customer-focused • Clear value proposition and differentiators outlined • Enabling of the consultative selling process
Middle – Presenting a tailored Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent process without a structured opportunity for executive overview and discussion • Value not explicitly outlined • Communication of the specific Solution unclear and not tailored for the customer • Reliant on a contractual Statement of Work (SOW) early in the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New “Executive Proposal” provides an opportunity to showcase the value of the tailored solution and provide summaries to “shop around” the C-level suite • Consistent content and messaging • Sufficiently powerful to justify major buying decisions
Final – Providing the legal and contractual details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOW previously a primary tool to communicate a proposed Solution • Little to no linkage to customer challenge and objectives • No tie-in to prior selling documents and supporting collateral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOW less important to communicate the proposed work, but instead serves as contractual follow-up • SOW now intended to build on and complete the work of the Executive Proposal
Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product-based mindset • Little communication and training to drive consultative selling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear understanding of the “philosophy” behind the consultative sell • Training and supporting tools to enable solutions sales

Most importantly, within 18 months from the project’s beginning, over 75% of Lucent Worldwide Services’ solutions have adapted the new toolkit, and training is proceeding at an aggressive pace.

Case Study: Solutions Selling in Telecommunications

Across the company, employees are armed with a clear understanding of the new solutions-based approach, and with the tools and knowledge needed to successfully drive sales. Presently, the substance of this evolving approach, the underlying mindset, and the new documents are becoming part of the “language” of the Lucent Worldwide Services organization. The changes are revising how the company speaks to its customers, as it helps to build the firm’s future strategy.