



## Customer Relationship Development

The Customer Relationship Development Basics track is geared toward inside and outside utility sales and marketing professionals that would like to improve both their confidence and competence in selling natural gas products and services to end user natural gas customers. This track is made up of 12 units, and teaches a sequential customer/business development process. Each unit is approximately 60 minutes in length, and will have an application assignment.

### **Unit 1: Prospecting for New Customers**

This unit will help students identify the characteristics of a great prospect, and to help focus their time and energy in pursuit of meaningful natural gas opportunities. They will gain insights on several methodologies to more effectively prospect, and they will learn methods to research their prospective customers. The more you know about the prospect, the more likely it is that the business development interaction will be successful. Knowledge is power!

### **Unit 2: Understanding the Customer's Decision Making Process**

When a customer makes a major energy decision, they go through a series of steps when deciding what to buy, who to buy from and when to buy. We will explore the psychology of buying, and will focus on the five buying decisions the customer goes through, creating greater insight to the sequential process for "selling." When the sales professional guides the customer through the decisions they need to make in a methodical way, success is far more likely.

### **Unit 3: Understanding Your Selling Style**

This unit will focus on helping participants discover their own behavioral style, and identifying both their strengths and weaknesses, as it relates to promoting various gas options. No one style is better than another, just different. Participants will learn how to capitalize on their strengths, and to mitigate their natural weaknesses.

### **Unit 4: Planning Your Sales Interaction**

Planning is an activity that world class business development professionals engage in! Stephen Covey said "Begin with the end in mind." This principle is extremely applicable in a customer/business development environment. We must figure out what our goal is for the interaction, and plan to achieve it. Focus will be on gaining commitment from the customer, developing a simple sales cycle plan, and the fundamental components of a pre-call plan.

### **Unit 5: Launching the Customer Interaction and Making a Positive First Impression**

First impressions are lasting, so yours better be good! Learn how to have presence when you step through the door of your prospect. Participants will learn how to use their body language, words, and verbal skills to create a great impression. Students will also gain insights on how to introduce themselves and their business to the prospect in an impactful way.

### **Unit 6: Asking the Right Questions**

Questioning is the most important skill in delivering the right energy solutions to your customer, and the most successful account reps are those that help their prospects self-discover the solution! Customers don't like to be told what to do; they appreciate service and

sales professionals guiding them through a process to make a thoughtful decision. When it's the prospect's idea, it's bound to fly! This unit will focus on asking five different types of open-ended questions, resulting in knowledge about the prospect's business, their competition, the prospect's budget, the decision making process, and the customer's time frame.

**Unit 7: Listening and Confirming the Customer's Needs**

Listening in a sales interaction is imperative! If you don't listen, you won't be able to solve the customer's problem or present a solution that is compelling. As a "seller," it's easy to get distracted when the customer's talking and to be preoccupied with what your next question will be. This unit will provide the participant with some tips on how to effectively listen, and to confirm the customer's needs. To be successful presenting solutions, the seller has to understand the customer's needs the same way that the customer understands their needs.

**Unit 8: Understanding the Customer's Buying Style**

Just as the seller has a style, so does the customer. This unit will teach participants how to read the customer's behavioral style, and how to formulate strategies to adapt to the customer's style. "Selling" is a relationship oriented business, and customers do business with sellers that make them feel comfortable.

**Unit 9: Presenting Solutions via Compelling Value Propositions**

To get the customer to agree to a new gas solution, the account rep needs to make a compelling argument when they present their solution. This unit will teach the account rep how to create a solid value proposition, and how to clearly and concisely present it. No more rambling and stumbling and boring the customer! A simple method for how to present value will be the ticket to moving the customer forward with the solution.

**Unit 10: Asking for Commitment**

This unit will focus on a very basic process for gaining commitment from the customer to move forward with the gas solution. Account reps often neglect to ask or are hesitant in asking for commitment. Gaining commitment from the customer isn't a trick or manipulation. It's simply a by-product of a solid "sales" process.

**Unit 11: Managing Stalls and Objections to Get to Yes**

When customers tell us no, it will come in the form of a stall or an objection. Learn how to identify stalls and objections, and how to address them. If it's a price objection, the account rep must handle that differently from an objection that relates to a previous experience with their company. Participants will learn strategies to overcome common objections encountered in the customer decision-making process.

**Unit 12: Putting It All Together: Creating Your Pre-Call Plan**

This unit will help participants to create an effective pre-call plan for a prospective customer. It will focus the learner on incorporating all of the skills and knowledge they have gained through the curriculum to create an effective plan for interacting with a prospective customer.