



Shadow Experience

"Everything is sold on relationships, even above price" – Chad Wyatt

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Introduction: Companies' Backgrounds

Dawn Food Products, Inc

For my sales career shadow, I chose to pursue B2B sales in Utah commodity industry. Dawn Food Products is one of the leaders in the industry and provides goods to businesses throughout the state, nation, and has recently entered the international market. Having very little experience in the commodity industry, I have since learned a lot about the competition and growth that commodities can have. Before going on the shadow, I had a pre-conceived notion that commodity sales would be straighter forward and simple than complex sales like Griffin Hill integrity Sales System. From my experience, I have found that the success Dawn Food Products has had is just as rigorously won as the complex tech companies' successes.

History

Dawn Food Products began as a little bakery in Jackson Michigan “nearly a century ago” and has since grown to offer more than 4,000 products across “North America, Mexico, Central America, the U.K., Europe, and many other countries worldwide.”¹ They started with two bakers in one location and have grown to 3,500 team members in 40 locations. Dawn’s main businesses units are distribution, manufacturing, international pursuits, bakery items, and Dawn Foodservice. From the research that I’ve done and the facts that I received from Chad Wyatt, Dawn’s niche is to provide high quality bakery products and solutions to problems for their customers. Like the Griffin Hill Integrity Sales System suggests, their teams are trained to build relationships first before the product profits.

¹ http://www.dawnfoods.com/public/managed/about_us/history/index.asp

Products

The four brackets of what Dawn Foods calls “product solutions” are bakery products (which include glazes, frozen brownies or the batter, cookies, and other mixes to make delicious treats), foodservice (which includes more raw or prepared bakery items), Dawn Distributor Advantage ® (which is a premiere distribution system that “[takes] all of the work out of the purchasing process”), and consumer brands (these include ready-made products for Weight Watchers).² Another sub segment includes gluten-free options to continue to provide product solutions for their over 40,000 customers.³ All the product categories boast high or top quality and all mention benefits more than simply features.

Product Knowledge

The product knowledge needed for success for Dawn Foods is extensive and dynamic for each client interaction by the sales rep I shadowed, Chad Wyatt. Wyatt’s product/process knowledge included insights into the needs of the customer’s current target market, the customer’s positions in their industry, the timeline of how products should work down to the second, the processes of how to make every commodity item, how every item is processed and where, how competitors prepare similar products, and how to solve problems when the product’s performance doesn’t hold up Dawn’s promises. Chad Wyatt, during the sales call, had to not only understand his customer’s skill level in order to teach them how to fix problems, but he had to understand his product down to the chemical makeup in order to diagnose the problem.

Maverick

The company that we visited primarily was one of the local Maverick locations that Wyatt is an account manager over. This Maverick location had had problems in the past with

² <http://www.dawnfoods.com/public/dynamic/products/index.asp>

³ <http://www.dawnfoods.com/Public/Managed/products/Gluten%20Free/index.asp>

their doughnut blaze, hotdog buns, and packaging of muffins. The sales call I attended was a follow-up on the condition of the doughnut glaze and a needs audit to other needs that Maverick may be having. We talked to the head chef, the store manager, and other employees while we were there.

We also visited two other locations for sales calls, a car lot and a pawn shop. We visited two gun sale customers which I will mention briefly, but Maverick was where I gained most of my experience and insights from..

Salesperson Background: Chad Wyatt

Background

His Career History

The person I shadowed was Chad Wyatt, a key account manager and sales representative for Dawn Food Products, Inc. Wyatt has worked for Dawn Food Product, Inc. for over 14 years and has seen the evolution of how Dawn interacts with customers. He started his career in the distribution side of Tony's Pizza for Schwan's consumer brands due to a contact he had at the company. When a major promotion to the sales side of Tony's Pizza opened up, he put himself in a position to take over a high stakes route to sell to. His strategy was to use the relationships that he had built through the distribution channels and use those to benefit the sales side. Against high risk and having received little training, he exceeded all quotas and expectations at an unprecedented rate. This performance earned him a nationally ranked recognition award that had never been awarded to a sales representative in Utah.

At the height of his success at Tony's Pizza, an offer was made from Dawn Food Products, Inc. He switched companies but took his ability to build relationships with him. Due to

his skill set and previous work experience, Dawn Food Products just recently began servicing to Maverick locations across the state. The circumstances of this breakthrough will be discussed below, but suffice it to say that Chad Wyatt is a humble force to be reckoned with in the sales industry and it was an honor to shadow him. He currently lives with his cute family in Farr West, UT and not only succeeds at Dawn Food Products, but runs calls for his own business in gun sales.

Industry Trends/Corresponding Selling Skills

Having been in the industry for over 14 years, Wyatt has a lot of experience and insights into how sales calls have evolved since he first started with Dawn. Years ago, Dawn Food Products, Inc. differentiated itself only on price and in the commodity industry that caused volatile sales opportunities. One week, a customer is was Dawn's best friend, but if the following week the price of wheat nationally rose causing a rise in Dawn's prices then the customer will jump ship. Dawn mainly dealt with smaller companies and Wyatt would run direct sales calls each week to around 10-15 companies. Every week the competitive field would change either benefiting sales numbers or killing them. Wyatt was constantly a hunter because farming wouldn't stick in this environment with Dawn's focus being on profits.

Since then, Dawn has changed to promote long-term relationships with larger companies and have changed the volatile sales environment that Wyatt once worked in. The benefit to working with large companies is that although they still demand affordable prices, their perserved value of dependability and reliability is higher. So as long as Dawn can deliver a high quality commodity reliably to their locations, the larger companies are less likely to switch suppliers in the event that prices shift. Although Dawn still works with the occasional small business, like a company that makes caramel corn in the shape of a corn cob in Logan, they mainly cultivate

long-term relationships with larger, less volatile companies. The sales skills set that Wyatt has developed allows him to promise dependability to his contacts, become their life-line in times of distress, and allows him to be their doctor to diagnose and fix any problems that the client faces. He has patience and a charismatic attitude with the clients. One of his main strengths that many people have commented on is his “I know a guy” attitude. If Wyatt doesn’t know something or can’t provide something for his client’s, you can be sure that he knows someone who can.

Sales Calls

Maverick

Strengths/Weaknesses

From the moment we walked in, Wyatt was making jokes and making everyone feel comfortable. He had obviously built strong relationships with the employees and he used that to his benefit. His ability to joke and talk to his customers was a major strength and plays a big part into his success with his client. He related to them on a personal level and asked about specific parts of their lives that they must have discussed last time. A crucial thing to note about this call was that it was unannounced and no one seemed to mind a bit.

After he had re-established the relationship with the Head Chef, he followed up on approximately 5-7 different product problems that he was working to solve with her. These included faulty doughnut glaze, hard hotdog and hamburger buns, muffin containers, paper products, and other Bonfire branded products.. I was very impressed with Wyatt’s ability to recall and ask open ended questions about a variety of products and their processes. He talked about the processes involved in-depth to add credibility while basically performing a Needs Audit at the follow-up. He asked about the current situation for the doughnuts, where they are seeing problems, why they think it is happening, and where they would like to see their doughnut

sales in the future. After a lot of listening, he would give them his diagnoses and formulate ways to fix it. If it couldn't be fixed in the moment, then he would promise to follow-up with more information.

The main weakness that I saw with his sales presentation, which at essence is what his conversation was with this employee, was how scattered the topic subjects were. In his efforts to find more needs, he jumped from subject to subject and back again. This may be the most effective way to discuss problems in his experience, but from my perspective it became a little muddled to follow. Also, while he was discussing the problems with the chef, in order to find needs a lot of negativity was discussed. It might have been better to add more praise for the good things that Dawn was providing them instead of drilling down the problems one right after the other.

He gave them praises throughout the discussion and asked about random competitors' products to fish for new things to fix. I was extremely impressed with his ability to mine for more needs to solve. From what I understand, because of his ability to find needs and his "know a guy attitude," Dawn was finally able to do business with Maverick. For years, Maverick avoided sales interactions with Dawn since Maverick executives claimed to be "satisfied" with current offerings. But when Wyatt found a need he could fix with his experiences and contacts, the director or foodservice allowed them to produce hot dog buns which opened doors for many more categories. And even on the sales call I attended, Wyatt was still searching for and solving needs to find the next breakthrough.

Objection Handling/Relationship Building

After we were done talking with the Head Chef, we went to discuss our findings about the doughnuts with the Store Manager, Kamille. Wyatt and Kamille still had a strong relationship but she was more business focused than the head chef. As doughnut conversation progressed between Wyatt and Kamille, Wyatt hit an objection with the doughnut glaze. Unfortunately, it seemed the doughnut glaze issue that Wyatt had tried to solve was still a major barrier to vision. The glaze was sliding off the doughnuts and costing Maverick considerable sales of breakfast doughnuts. And things got worse when Kamille became convinced that Dawn had sent them an inferior product and solution. Wyatt was in a pickle considering he thought the glaze was due to poor training of a doughnut employee who had only been hired for 3 weeks. However, he couldn't accuse the client of causing their own problem outright.

To further research into the problem, Wyatt asked to see how the doughnuts were being made and the batch product that they had used. His solution to their problem was brilliant and I am still very impressed. Instead of accusing Maverick of poor training, he remembered a product that Dawn produces, (a bucket of some kind), that makes glazing doughnuts easier. He said he would bring it in soon to fix the problem and order a new batch of product. He praised their efforts and validated their concerns. Kamille was pleased with this solution and their relationship was further solidified. Upon talking to him after this interaction he disclosed the real intent of this solution. The bucket would make glazing easier, but this solution would also give the new employee time to learn in order to stop the real underlying problem. He was fixing the supposed problem by providing a quick fix while solving the real problem of time to learn on the employee's part. He overcame their objection without placing blame and taking full

responsibility; it was a brilliant strategy. He made sure that the relationship was paramount over profit or being right.

Closing and Asking for the Order:

Due to the nature of this sales call, there wasn't a physical closing of an order. There was however a follow-up for checking on the doughnuts again and bringing in some options for new products. He scheduled the next event and left the clients happy and well-taken care of.

Buyer Interview

Why do they pick Dawn/ Role of Salesperson

When I asked the store manager what their favorite part of working with Dawn is and why Maverick works with them, she immediately pointed at Chad Wyatt and said, "Him." She talked about how they really value his dependability and that he is what makes Dawn Food Products great in her stores. Other employees walking by agreed that the main reason they like Dawn is because of Wyatt's performance. Wyatt seemed to be surprised about her opinion and was very humble. From the interactions I had seen with them, I agree with her that Wyatt makes a huge difference in the sales interactions. If they were instead dealing with someone who didn't understand Maverick at the same level, I honestly doubt that Dawn Foods would be in that store for long.

Good, Bad, Ugly

When I asked her about other vendors that she works with she was adamantly against Hormark. Apparently, they are the distributor for some Dawn Food Products, Frito Lay, Pepsi, and many other big vendors. However, this company is a major bottleneck for products getting to Maverick shelves. Hormark, she explained, is unreliable and late on deliveries all the time. Their

sales representatives don't keep their promises, but the value they offer is high enough to make it worth the investment. They are difficult to do business with but they distribute so much of Maverick's product that there are few other options. Maverick is left to deal with this necessary evil in order to keep products stocked.

As I've thought over this, even though Hormark is such a large distributor, this is a major opportunity for Dawn. Dawn has patented their distribution process and could do very well to distribute their own products instead of going through Hormark. The costs may be higher, but since Dawn is no longer strictly price driven this may not be a problem. There is a premium for quality, reliable, relationship-based product sales.

Car/Gun Contact

For the second sales appointment, we met with what seemed to be an old friend of Wyatt's that actually turned out to be a business contact. We met him at a used car lot, which the contact owned, and Wyatt offered him some gun product that was overstocked. At a previous tradeshow during another gun deal, the man selling to Wyatt had given Wyatt ammunition as an incentive to buy a particular gun. Now, Wyatt was showing the product to his contact. However, from my perspective it seemed that Chad Wyatt was just discussing life with an old friend and happened to sell him some ammunition. What I came to realize was in the course of a 20 minute conversation, Wyatt had made a follow-up appointment to sell another gun and had made over \$250 dollars. The contact bought a sizable amount of ammunition at a price he himself set.

This experience was an additional example of how good a sales person Chad Wyatt is. Sales is all about relationships and by building strong ones, a salesperson also builds strong

profit opportunities. Whether it's selling guns or bakery items, the skill set is still the same. Relationships in almost any setting are equally important to success.

Pawn Shop

We went to a pawn shop in the outskirts of Salt Lake in order for Wyatt to follow-up on a gun sales contact. All I learned from this sales interaction was to be good enough at sales so I don't have to work at or sell my belongings to a pawn shop.

Next Generation Salesperson

Summary:

After this experience I discovered I am a Sales Jedi like my father before me (literally, my dad and both of my grandfathers are in sales). By shadowing Chad Wyatt my desire to pursue sales strengthened and taught me at least three takeaways:

1. Sales is nothing without relationship-based transactions regardless of previous success in transaction-based relationships.
2. Gaining as much knowledge I can from every experience is crucial to being successful in sales.
3. Everyone has a need, the key is to find it and make money fixing it.

Sales = Relationships

As we discussed in class and as I learned in this shadowing experience, relationships are king. It used to be cash but now it's all about who knows who instead. Chad does an amazing job at keeping an open network in order to meet any need that crosses his path. When Maverick needed straws to their specifications, because of contacts he knew he saved them millions of dollars for simple straws. The ability to meet needs even when that need doesn't fall in my

company's corner is still a need met and a trust building moment. A client's continuing business is only as strong as the relationships that started the trade agreement. If price is the only differentiator, then that contact may be gone unexpectedly. Even if this tactic of short-term relationships has worked in the past, in the new world of sales this is doomed to fail. Technology keeps everyone too connected and if you don't sufficiently meet a need, someone else will. But forging a strong relationship with humor, good will, and honesty can help keep long-term business alive.

The bigger the network of customers, suppliers, and contacts, the stronger a sales pitch can be. Chad made a point to name drop where appropriate and that helped bring more credibility to his claims. The client's seemed more at ease when this was done. As we talked about in the Rapport Play, the strongest way to build a relationship is based on building off a previous relationship with an old client and a prospect. The other way to look at this is to avoid burning bridges in the sales industry. It's hard to say when the need will come to cross that bridge again.

Gaining Knowledge

Another key takeaway I learned from Chad was that whatever capacity I'm in I better learn everything I can from it. The next opportunity that I take may call for the information I could have learned in a previous opportunity. Chad demonstrated this with his packaging expertise. He worked in packaging and gained a lot of knowledge about it through the years. Chad leveraged his knowledge of products and processes in order to secure sales at both Tony's Pizza and Dawns. Even though he is now in charge of key accounts for bakery goods, he still has networks in packaging and continually looks for opportunities in that channel. Regardless of where my professional life takes me, whatever step I'm in I will try to collect product and

process knowledge, business networks, and satisfied customers in order to leverage them in my next opportunity.

Everyone has a need

My final takeaway was that everyone, no matter how satisfied they seem, has a need to be filled. The key is to find a way to fill it in a way that makes money or builds a relationship. By using a casual needs audit like Chad or a formal needs audit like Griffin Hill, the importance is finding the need and assuring them you can fix it. This principle can apply to B2B sales as well as B2C. Finding needs is a difficult endeavor and can be filled with barriers of uncertainty, but overcoming them allows your company to offer real value instead of just features.

The other takeaway is that by building strong relationships and gaining knowledge, finding the need becomes easier. The three takeaways fit together and give each other incentive. By realizing everyone has an unmet need, there's incentive to gain knowledge and develop a relationship to fix it. By gaining knowledge you can gain more relationships in the process and find more needs to meet. These three principles are interconnected and will constitute the pillars of my sales strategy going forward. Although, I wouldn't have fully realized them without the experience that I had with Dawn Food Products, Inc key account manager, Chad Wyatt.

Thank you Note:

Due to the type of relationship I have to my shadowed sales rep, my thank you was done over text. In hindsight I should have emailed him as well, but here is the text correspondence:

(If proof is necessary to prove this happened, I can provide his phone number upon request.)

Chad: "It was awesome to talk with you today. Hope I was some help and didn't absolutely bore you to death."

Gracie: “Chad, I had a wonderful day today! That was fascinating to see what I’m learning in a the real setting and learning real life experiences form people I look up to! Thank you for letting me come with you...”

Chad: “Absolutely...”