

### Chapter 14—Developing Diligence; Pages:153-156

When engaging with various external content providers, keep in mind that sales is their business. This means that most are well-practiced and able to quickly articulate many of the common performance challenges that a growing company is facing. Ask the provider to offer specifics on how their content directly connects to each of the performance gaps covered in your plan. If you want them to go the extra mile before you invest, ask that they map their content to your Sales Development Plan and then ask for a content walk-through so that you can compare it with the map they've created and see the fit for yourself.

Speaking of other realizations that come after signing a content provider deal, companies that are just getting their feet wet with outsourcing are often surprised by how little service they get from the provider compared to how much support they *actually* need. While providers may express appreciation for where your business is in its evolution, ultimately they aren't going to assume responsibility for how your Sales Development Plan is implemented—they are there to ensure that you get your content or platform. Generally, that's it.

As a quick analogy, imagine that you and some friends have tickets to see your favorite comedian or band. It is up to you to get to the show on time. You have to secure a babysitter. Figure out who is going to drive or where you will meet up. Deal with traffic, parking, the long lines of people waiting to get inside. Then you have to find your seat and possibly slow-walk your way to the restroom. More lines. Perhaps you and your friends start looking up bars or restaurants to hit up after the show. Then boom, the lights go down, the announcer comes on, and within minutes the performance begins. After two hours or so, it's back to the drudgery of baby-stepping your way through the massive crowds out to the street and then figuring out what's next with your friends. We all love to watch a live performance, but it takes planning, preparation, cooperation, and action before and after the show to actually get a return on your entertainment investment.

Contrast this reality with that of the entertainer. That individual is well paid and in many cases a bit pampered as they prepare to take the stage for a few hours and do what they do best—perform. They aren't concerned with how their audience gets there or back home. The entertainer is there to do their best and leave the rest to others. In this scenario, of course, the entertainer is the sales training or content provider. While most are prepared to do their best for clients, they stay laser-focused on their specialty—after all, they are in business too, and getting in and out is how they make their money.

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