



Running a Value Lab: Collaborate to Grow Your Existing Accounts



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Andy is a recognized authority on high-performance sales and leads RAIN Group's mission to unlock the full sales potential of its clients. Over the past 18 years, he has worked with thousands of sales teams in SME, mid-market, and enterprise organizations, driving sustained sales improvement. Andy is renowned for helping sales leaders stay focused on the proven strategies and activities that fuel real, measurable growth within their teams.

With an entrepreneurial spirit, Andy co-founded two successful consultancies and has served as a key advisor to flourishing start-ups within the Australian business community.

Empowering Sellers with a Value-Forward Sales Approach



- Team members were subject matter experts, not dedicated sellers
- They needed consistency and structure in their sales process

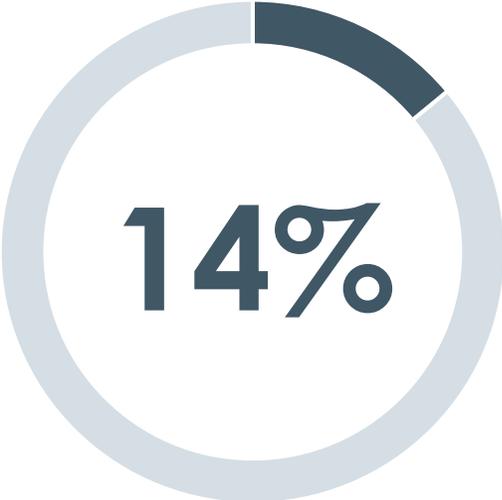
- Urban Science gave their team members strategic account management training
- This included collaborative workshops aimed at creating new opportunities for client growth

- Sellers shifted to value-first conversations
- The team renewed contracts despite stiff competition
- They also reengaged past clients and improved relationships

“We had a client needs discovery meeting, ran internal Value Labs, and then did a client Value Lab where we proposed new ideas—they loved it. We identified a second opportunity with a related client, did a similar process, and they also agreed to buy.”

Sellers Don't Generate Enough Value

Among buyers:



report discovering strategic opportunities from a seller vs. other people and personal research

Top Performers in Strategic Account Management are



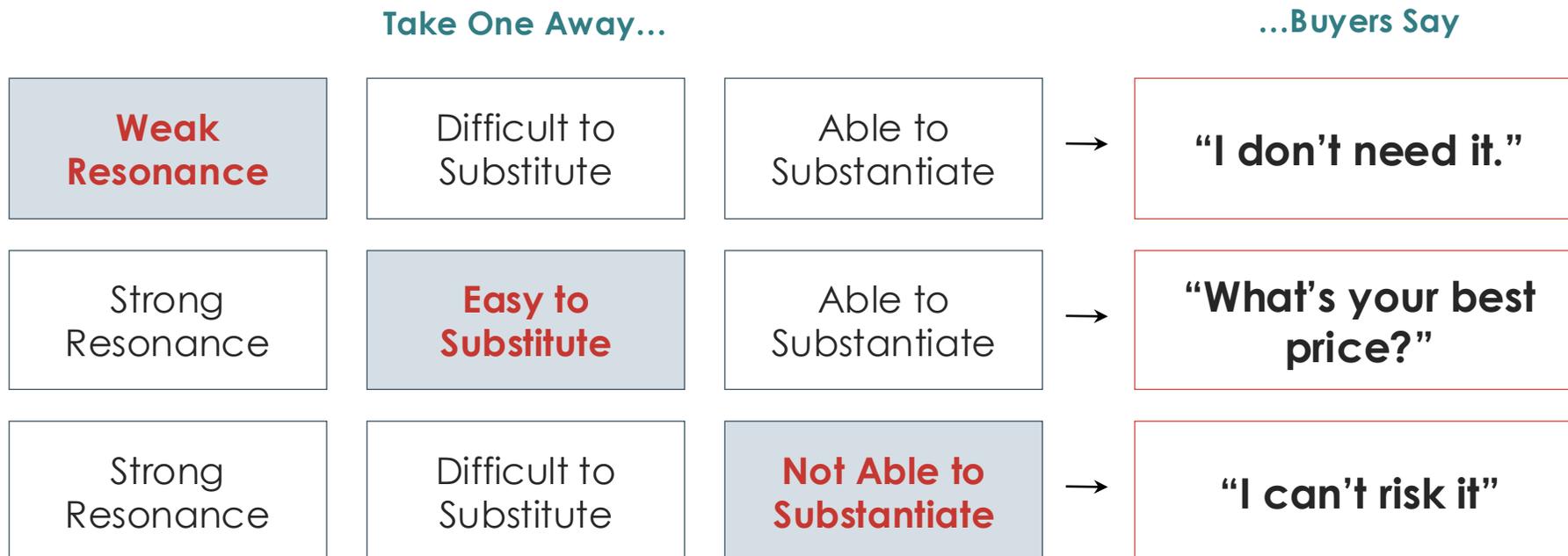
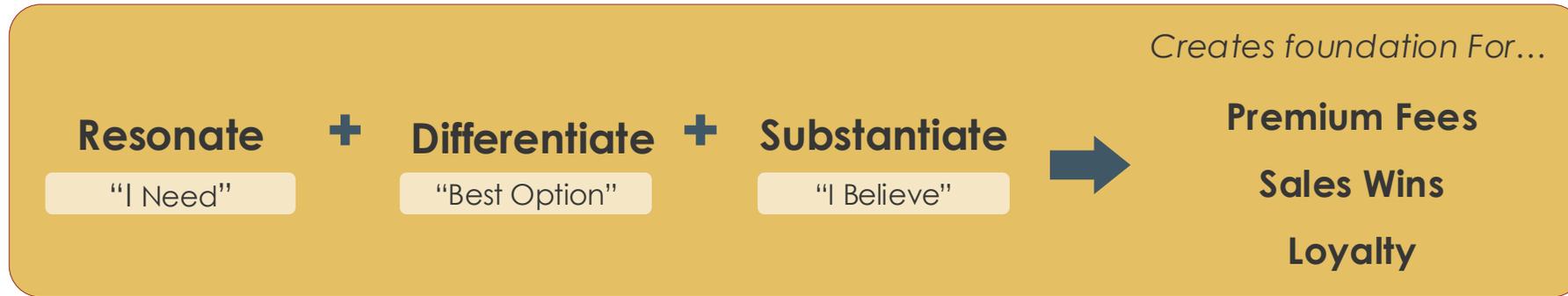
more likely to **grow revenue** by 20% or more in strategic accounts

Top Performers are



more likely to have an **effective process** to assess and evaluate additional value they can bring to accounts

Defining Your Value Proposition





Chat

Think of a time you wanted to expand value for a client.
How did you get started?

3 Ways to Expand Account Value



Value Connection



Value Creation



Value Co-Creation

Differences Between These Approaches

	Value Connection	Value Creation	Value Co-Creation
Who drives the demand	By the provider or account	The provider, usually	The provider
Who builds the offering	Provider	Provider	Defined collaboratively
Who it's built for	The market	A specific account	A specific account
Leadership involvement required	Not necessary	Not always necessary	Almost always necessary
Essence of the interaction	Not much development	Independent development	Joint development
Level of customization	Typically limited	Typically moderate	Extensive

What Is a Value Lab?

- A facilitated, collaborative discussion to uncover maximum account value and need
- Educates clients with new ideas and fosters collaborative partnerships
- Builds psychological ownership, commitment, and advocacy with your clients
- Aligns you with key stakeholders and executives from your accounts

Internal Value Labs

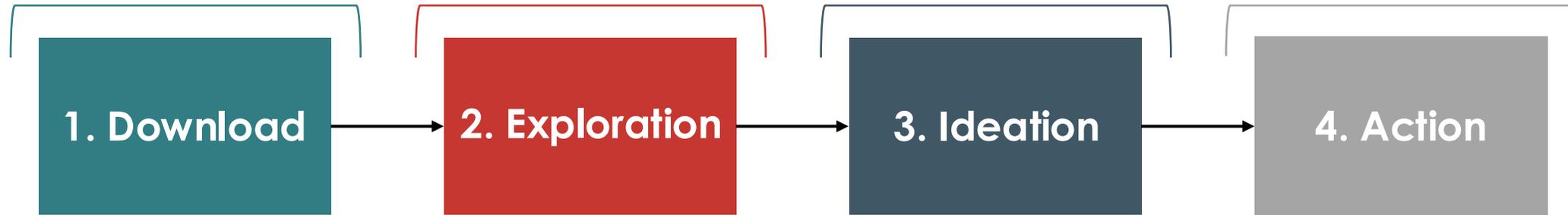
Develop strategic account plans and bold ideas with you team before engaging clients.

External Value Labs

Collaborate with clients to define opportunities and develop a shared action plan with the goal of creating shared ownership.

Process for Leading a Value Lab

4 Stages of Structured Problem SolvingSM



- **Name the issue you need help with.**
Ask, "How do I/we...?"
- **Summarize the situation.**
State, "Here are the relevant assumptions."

- **Examine the issue.**
Ask, "What else?"
- **Create healthy conflict.**
Ask, "What's debatable?"
- **Continue to state new or different relevant key assumptions**

- **Explore options.**
Ask, "What's possible?"
- **Provide ideas.**
Ask, "Why not consider...?"

- **Summarize an action plan.**
- **Test the action plan.**
Ask, "Will it solve the issue?"
- **Drive accountability.**
Ask, "Will we implement this?"

General Guidelines

- One stage at a time
- Balance advocacy and inquiry
- Ask clarifying questions
- Encourage diverse points of view

Stage 1: Download



5-10% of session time

Objectives:

Review Account Information

- What does your account value?
- Who is on the account team?
- What trends are affecting this account?
- How can we support their agenda?

Set Objectives

- How do we work at the enterprise level with this account?
- How do we align ourselves with our account's agenda?
- How do we expand the value we deliver to our account across departments?

Solicit Perspectives

- Incorporate multiple account management roles
- For external value labs, give stakeholders the chance to share their perspectives
- Confirm that everyone agrees on the problem

Stage 2: Exploration



25-30% of session time

Objectives:

Examine the Issue at Hand

- What value can we offer?
- What value have we offered similar accounts?
- Are there any major changes in your strategic agenda or key staff?

Create Debate and Healthy Conflict

- Are there areas we're not living up to for this account?
- Should we go over-and-above to drive or create additional value for this account?
- They said their budget was X maximum. Can they spend more?

Raise Potential Concerns

- Have we identified all buying influences for this account?
- Do we have executive advocacy?
- Will we face difficulty for not having expanded the account globally?

Stage 3: Ideation



40-50% of session time

Objectives:

Ask Questions About What's Possible

- How can we support their agenda with our offerings?
- Can we co-create value in innovative ways?
- Could we change their current vision of how to achieve their agenda?

Moderate Discussion

- Build on each other's contributions
- Avoid dismissing points
- Keep energy high
- Encourage a diversity of ideas
- Capture ideas visually

(If External) Prepare Prompting Questions

- In what untapped areas can we drive value for you?
- What opportunities and threats might affect new initiatives?
- How can we tie new initiatives into future organizational changes and product launches?

Stage 4: Action



15-20% of session time

Objectives:

Summarize a Possible Action Plan

- Select 3-5 initiatives that deliver the greatest impact
- Outline likely courses of action
- This doesn't have to be your final plan; it can be tightened up later

Troubleshoot

- Determine whether the plan will achieve goals for you and your account
- Discuss your confidence in getting the plan implemented
- If there are issues, figure out what you need to change to make the plan viable

Set Next Steps

- Establish ownership, timelines, and upcoming tasks
- Schedule the next touchpoint
- Send any materials created in the Value Lab to participants after

Tips for Leading an Internal Value Lab



Prepare beforehand,
but leave room for
differing perspectives



Reduce complexity



Invite no more than
5-7 participants



Balance advocacy
and inquiry



Have the infrastructure in
place to visualize



Include a range of roles

Tips for Leading an External Value Lab



Think collaboration,
not pitching



Be direct when asking
about the meeting



Get relevant
stakeholders to attend



Get buyers excited
and build ownership



Facilitate and introduce
how the process works



Prepare in advance

Avoiding Pitfalls



In general, don't:

- Skip straight to solutions
- Allow one dominant voice to drown out all others
- Let momentum die after the session
- Fail to address ownership



For external Value Labs, don't:

- Talk too much too early
- Miss inviting key stakeholders
- Treat it like a pitch
- Overpromise next steps

Key Takeaways

- Value Labs are a tool to grow key accounts and drive collaboration with buyers
- Understand when to use an internal vs. external Value Lab
- The 4-Stages of Structured Problem SolvingSM is your structure for Value Labs, turning ideas into measurable action
- Use Value Labs to proactively generate new initiatives and deepen relationships



Key Account Management Training

Give your team the knowledge, skills, and action plan they need to grow their most important accounts.



Train your sellers to:

- Identify and prioritize accounts with the greatest potential for growth
- Analyze and map out relationships with key stakeholders
- Develop and execute account growth plans
- Drive business with key accounts through strategic sales plays



Thank you!
