Author it ®

Background

Author-it Software Corporation is a global innovator in content creation and management. Its software is used by some of the world's largest enterprises for authoring, content management, publishing and localization of product manuals, training materials, compliance documentation, operation manuals, customer support materials and sales proposals.

Author-it brings efficiency to content creation by centralizing the process, creating content as reusable components and storing this content in databases. These content components can then be used and assembled in various ways for multiple purposes and audiences. Clients report greater author productivity, faster document release cycles, and a significant reduction in content translation costs with Author-it.

The Challenge

Enterprise-level authoring software is a significant investment for companies. As a result, the sales process was long, averaging more than nine months, and closure was unpredictable. The company sales approach was primarily to sell and demonstrate features and functions to buyers - typically technical writers - who did not have the power to approve significant investments in software and often viewed the product as a commodity. Further:

✔ Resources were often wasted pursuing the wrong prospects

✔ Deal size was consistent, but a larger average deal size was desired

✔ Author-it's solution promised millions of dollars of benefit in cost reduction, increased productivity and improved compliance, but the company didn't have the messaging to gain the interest of an executive with purchase authority (Power – the person who can purchase without a budget)

The Solution

The ZEBRAselling approach required Author-it to identify the seven attributes of its perfect prospect (Zebra). The company now evaluates all prospective clients against these attributes, scores them on a scale of 0-4 for each attribute, and pursues only those prospects with a high enough Zebra score to merit attention.

Scoring continues throughout the sales process to ensure that only the best opportunities are pursued. (For ease of use and efficient implementation, Zebra qualification and sales strategy tools are integrated in the company's Salesforce account.)

Average deal size has Increased **305%** in 2 ½ years.

Further, Author-it identifies "Power" within the prospect organization and partners with that person to verify the value of an Author-it solution. This ensures that Author-it sells to the person with purchase authority and cultivates buy-in early in the process.

A business case is co-developed that identifies the prospect's "pain points" and how Author-it will solve them. The business case includes proven results achieved by current Author-it customers.

Results

The Zebra scoring tool has improved Author-it's close rate because it now only pursues the best prospects. In addition, selling business value relative to prospects' pain points differentiates Author-it from its competitors. This has increased revenue and shortened the length of the sales cycle. Specific results achieved:

✔ Sales cycle length has been reduced by 50% from an average of 243 days to 121 days

✔ Three-year revenue for the average deal has more than tripled in 30 months from $216,000 to $660,000

"A higher percentage of sales cycles close because sellers identify Author-it Zebras and have an early meeting with Power to gain sponsorship to verify a pre-prepared value proposition."

-Steve Davis, President and COO