Agenda

9.30    The Association for Key Account Management
9.50    Professionalising KAM
10.10   Knowledge and Competencies
11.00   Break
11.15   Feedback on Knowledge and Competencies
11.45   Assessment and Accreditation
12.30   Lunch
13.15   Why KAM Fails
15.15   Break
15.30   What do Key Account Managers want from AKAM
15.50   Next steps
16.30   Close
Why AKAM?

Dr Kevin Wilson
Kedge Business School
Two fundamental reasons for AKAM

Establishing KAM as a professional MANAGERIAL role, not a SALES role

Creating a COMMUNITY around Key Account Management

Practitioners Companies Consultants Academics
Why AKAM?

• Increasing strategic importance of key account management and yet....

• The real nature of its strategic importance is often poorly understood, at C level.

• As with sales, (and largely as a result of its association with sales) KAM is largely ignored by the academic community.

• Key Account Management is often confused with Key Account Selling.

• The potential of the key account manager role often goes unrealised.
  • All the above with some notable exceptions
Why AKAM?

• No universally accepted competencies associated with the role of key account manager
• No “mixed” community to develop those competencies
• Lack of globally recognised professional qualifications
• Lack of common process or process tools with which to manage programmes
• Relatively low levels of research to support practitioners
ACKAM is Different

• Different because it will

  • Define KAM industry competency standards in collaboration with academic institutions, practitioners, academics, companies and consultants supported by European Funding (Erasmus+)
  • Establish recognized qualifications for key account managers at Certificate, Diploma and Master levels (Using CATS and APEL)
  • Impartially accredit development programs against competency standards.
  • Build a mixed community of practitioners and researchers/experts engaged in KAM research and practice.
  • Gain greater benefit for practitioners from real, researched knowledge of KAM
  • Involve a geographically/culturally wide membership
  • Offer opportunities to participate in AKAM’s evolution
AKAM is different through collaboration

Consultants

Academics

Practitioners

Companies

AKAM
AKAM is different – non-commercial

• We are not in competition with Universities, Business Schools, Consultants, In-house programmes or other industry bodies!

• We do not, and will not, offer training programmes.

• Funding will come entirely from membership subscriptions, public funding, accreditation, student fees and conferences.
AKAM Collaboration with companies

• To strengthen KAM programme performance and standing in the firm
• Help structure ongoing professional development
• Facilitate recruitment and career development

– Opportunity
  • To achieve world class performance
  • Know you’re recruiting the right people
  • Know you’re developing the right competencies
AKAM Collaboration with practitioners

• To facilitate their achieving recognised qualifications in KAM
• Engage them with mentors and support programmes
• To determine research and pedagogic development

– Opportunity
  • To gain a recognised qualification
  • Be part of a professional community
  • Gain recognition for achievement
AKAM Collaboration with academics

- Develop competency frameworks
- Validate certificate and diploma level qualifications
- Applications for EU funding
- Engage in collaborative research driven by practitioner interest

- Opportunity
  - Funding – research and programme development
  - Executive programme development with accreditation
  - Masters’ programme development
AKAM Collaboration with consultants

• To accredit their programmes and integrate them into the credit accumulation and transfer
• To develop innovative delivery and assessment programmes
• To enhance their content

– Opportunity
• To validate programmes and make them more attractive to students/companies interested in the qualification/professionalisation process
• Refresh their offerings from academic input
• Input into AKAM initiatives
Professionalising key account management

Dr Diana Woodburn
Visiting Fellow, Cranfield School of Management
Board Member, AKAM
Why professionalise KAM?

- Still regarded as new and questionable (only 30+ years old!)
- Often misunderstood as selling (lacks widely agreed definition)
- Practice is poor to patchy
- Lack of recognition means companies and practitioners don’t know where to go for support
- Job is under-valued, under-specified and under-rewarded
Professionalising key account management

- What makes a profession?
  - Recognition of importance and value
  - Differentiation from other professions
  - Body of researched knowledge of practice and theory
  - Authenticated communicators of the body of knowledge, practice and theory
  - Formal qualifications for practitioners
Recognition of importance and value

- €Billions bound up in transactions between global giants
- Big customers keep getting bigger
- Companies collapse through loss of major contracts
- Complexity is normal, creativity and consistency demanded, customer management is challenging

A definition of KAM

Key/strategic account management is a supplier-led process of inter-organisational collaboration that creates unique value for both supplier and strategically important customers.

Woodburn and Wilson, Handbook of Strategic Account Management, 2014
Differentiation

KAM is not:

- Sales
- Marketing
- Operations
- Logistics
- Finance

It’s all of those and more
Authentication of communicators

- Communicators like universities, colleges, consultants, in-house trainers and developers define the scope and set the standards
- A ‘broad church’ still needs broad agreement
- Aim to be inclusive not exclusive
- Accreditation scheme to guide companies and individuals seeking assistance to providers
Qualifications for key account managers

• Position the role to companies and practitioners
• Scope the role for key account managers
• Validate key account managers’ value and competencies
• Certificate and Diploma initially, Masters later
• Awarded on a portfolio of evidence (competency, learning through experience and knowledge of practice and theory) and final viva
Knowledge and competencies

What is expected of key account managers?
Competency areas

- Customer understanding & development
- Relationships
- Knowledge
- Sales and business development
- Critical core competencies
- Organisational effectiveness
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headline competency area</th>
<th>Competency</th>
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| Customer understanding & development                        | • Customer organisation  
  • Customer plan  
  • Customer plan implementation                                  |
| Relationships                                                | • Customer relationships  
  • Internal relationships                                            |
| Knowledge                                                    | • Product knowledge  
  • Applications/processes  
  • Own company operations, strategy and capabilities                  |
| Sales and business development                               | • Selling                                                                  |
| Critical core competencies                                   | • Communications  
  • IT and systems literacy                                            |
<p>| Organisational effectiveness                                | • Managing without authority                                               |</p>
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<td>Customer understanding &amp; development</td>
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<td>• Value creation</td>
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<td>• Industry knowledge</td>
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<td>• Knowledge of complementary disciplines</td>
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<td>Sales and business development</td>
<td>• Business development</td>
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<td>Critical core competencies</td>
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<td>• Political awareness</td>
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<td>• Global effectiveness</td>
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Questions

**Group 1**
1. Do the **headline** competencies from both qualifications cover the role of a key account manager?
2. To what extent are they recognisable to companies’ Learning and Development departments?
3. Are they/can they be aligned with current provision from colleges and consultants?
4. If not, what should change?

**Group 2**
1. Is up to 3 years’ experience an appropriate indicative period for a **Certificate-level** qualification?
2. Do the Certificate-level competencies represent reasonable expectations of a key account manager in the first 3 years (as a key account manager)?
3. What would you add/remove/change, if anything?

**Group 3**
1. Do the **Diploma-level** competencies represent reasonable expectations of a key account manager after 3 years experience as a key account manager, assuming they have acquired Certificate-level competencies?
2. What would you add/remove/change, if anything?
Assessment

• Judged on each competency by portfolio of evidence
  – Physical document verified as true by employer or provider that demonstrates competence in the various areas
  – Justifies the award of CATS points towards either the Certificate or the Diploma.
  – May include standard academic work (report, essay, discussion document case study), work based documents, records of achievement, diaries
  – Assessed by AKAM Academic Board
  – Viva by internet

What are your thoughts?
Accreditation

- CATS – a Pan-European scheme with partners globally, allowing students to accumulate credits toward academic and vocational qualifications both from different institutions and through APEL (Accreditation by Prior Experience and Knowledge).
- Erasmus+ offers opportunities for funding to draw together a consortium of practitioner organisations, academic institutions, consultants and other industry bodies to develop
  - The professional association
  - The qualification and accreditation process
  - Outline modules