



The Association for
Key Account Management

Introduction to the Association for Key Account Management

KEDGE Business School

Paris 21 January 2016

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



The Association for
Key Account Management

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

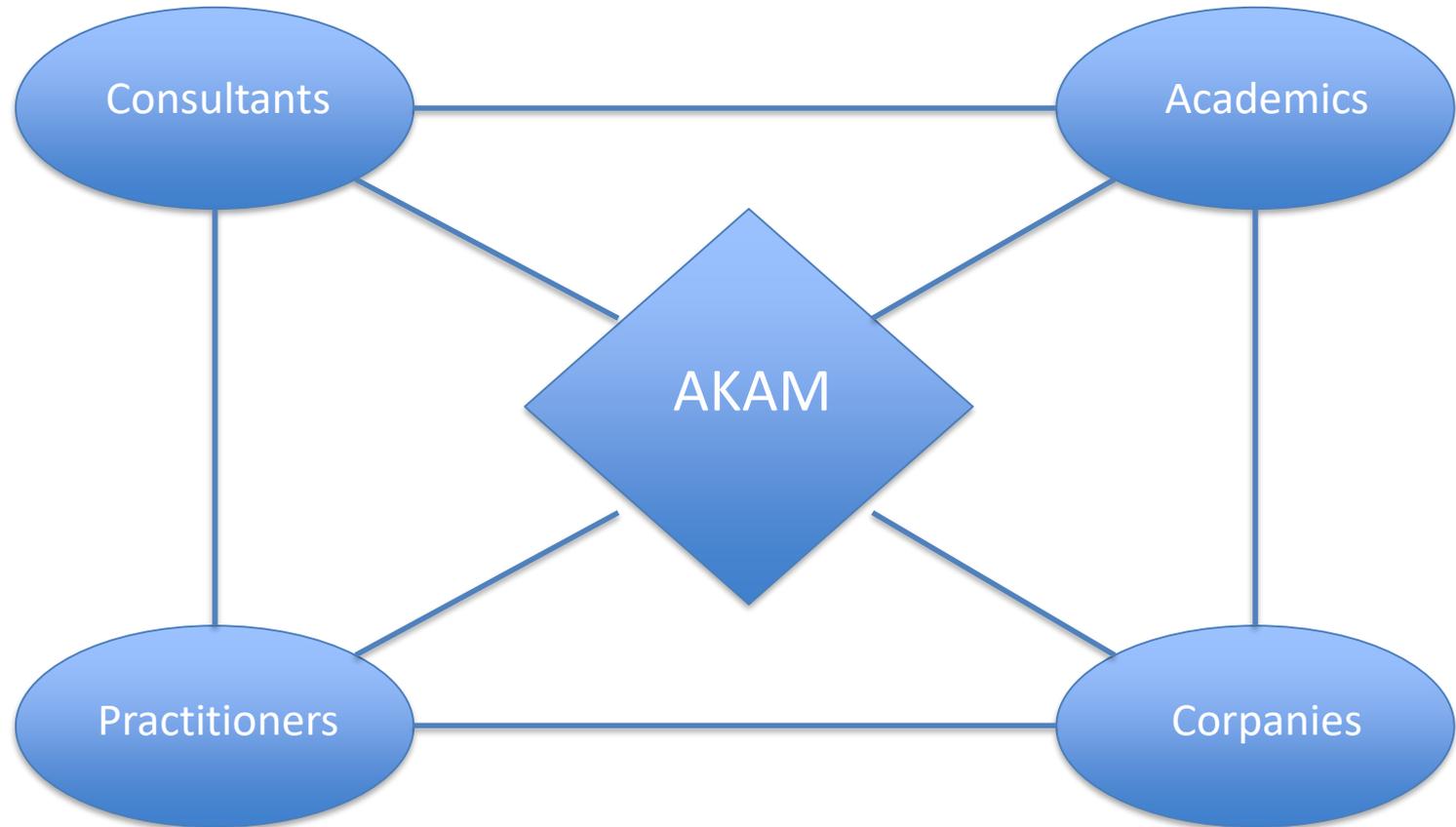
Why AKAM?

- 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

AKAM 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



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

Certificate level

Headline competency area	Competency
Customer understanding & development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer organisation• Customer plan• Customer plan implementation
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer relationships• Internal relationships
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Product knowledge• Applications/processes• Own company operations, strategy and capabilities
Sales and business development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selling
Critical core competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communications• IT and systems literacy
Organisational effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managing without authority

Diploma level

Headline competency area	Competency
Customer understanding & development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer business• Value creation• Customer strategy development
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trust• Other stakeholders• Networks
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Industry knowledge• Knowledge of complementary disciplines
Sales and business development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business development• Negotiation
Critical core competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finance• Decision-making
Organisational effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership• Political awareness• Global effectiveness

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