

How KAM helps you find your next job



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The world is full of depressed economies and millions out of work. Many KAMs have been made redundant or 'mothballed' and/or are worried about their future. However, there is good news for the KAM community. The knowledge and skills that you have developed can be applied in a new direction: to help you get your next job. Indeed, Key Account Managers are in a unique position to help themselves get better jobs.

Even those who are not worried should still be plotting their future career path. Being good at KAM helps you throughout the career development process, because the competencies you used to grow your account business can be used to grow yourself. You just need to reframe the account as the job market, the sales opportunities as the job opportunities, the buying team as the recruitment team, you as the product, the other candidates as the competition and the account plan as the career plan. You can then be better at winning the best jobs and connecting them together into a coherent career strategy.

The process below has been developed through working with experienced sales and marketing executives and with students embarking on the job market: it really does work. It may not be easy but for those that wish to learn the process, the rewards are incredible.



Step 1: Match yourself to the job market

Before we can go outwards, we need to go inwards. First you need to understand yourself, properly. What are your real strengths and weaknesses? The template identifies 16 areas of possible strengths, covering different competency areas and types. Completing this template may take you an hour or even a few weeks if you are brave enough to share it with colleagues, family or friends. The conclusion, though, is a comprehensive Personal Strengths Audit (PSA). Getting this right will have major implications in all your downstream work.

Let's consider the example of David Swift (not his real name). He is an experienced sales executive looking for a new career. He has 15 years of experience working in business development roles (including several years managing big, corporate, key accounts for large firms and lastly doing management consulting work for a small consulting firm). However, he

feels his career has reached a dead-end. He now wants to really understand what is his purpose on this planet and forge a new career path to get there.

The key strengths for David are highlighted in bold and those are the ones that made it to the Strengths quadrant on his Personal SWOT.

Once you have done that, you can start the next task of defining the job market you wish to play in. This is like defining the scope of your account, and you should think carefully about the scope of your job market. Do you have a global, national or local scope to your job search? Is it in a particular industry or restricted to a type of organization? If you work in the hospitality industry, consider what strengths you have listed that will be sought after in other industries. These might even include non-commercial organizations like universities, charities and government. Some of your KAM skills are very transferrable. In the new home working world, it is easy to see why good communication skills is the most frequently mentioned requirement for jobs on LinkedIn.

How to do it in 4 Steps



1: Match Yourself to the Market



2: Develop a Career Strategy



3: Sell Yourself



4: Take Action

How KAM helps you find your next job *(cont.)*

Example Personal Strengths Audit: David Swift

Competencies	Technical	Behavioral	Functional	Management & Leadership
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 years designing Key Account Management (KAM) Programs that work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20+ years of being open to new experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 years of international business development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 years of building b2b businesses
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to build and execute a KAM Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lifelong learner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to make good decisions (via MBA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How a business works (via MBA) Managing budgets How to be a good leader (via MBA)
Skills & Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A good negotiator Financially literate Good writer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boundary traveler Good communicator Reliable Flexible & Proactive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrepreneurial Process-driven Results-driven 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing people from a wide variety of backgrounds Leading radical change
Attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comfortable with technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong believer in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ethical behavior - mental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passionate about personal transformation Customer-focused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set the right example Lead from behind when needed

Just as you research your account and their market, you should investigate your target job market. What are the key trends in that market and how will those translate into opportunities and threats? For example, what will be the real issues that organizations in your job market will face as we come out of Covid, and what impact will that have on recruitment? You will then be in a better position to complete your Personal SWOT. You may have done a quick SWOT in your Account Plan - now is the time to do an excellent one on yourself and your job market.

Within the job market, you will be able to identify potential job opportunities. Highlight a few of them for deeper analysis, which you can treat like sales opportunities. Each has a value (the annual benefits package), specific needs for the right candidate, a buying team of recruiters, a buying/assessment process and a set of competing candidates. Your task is to understand this better than the competition.

Pull out those KAM tools that you use to understand your account and use them on each job opportunity. Use Porter's 5

Forces and PESTEL analysis to understand the forces acting upon the industry, the organization and the function within the organization. Use your relationship mapping skills to try to figure out who are the real decision makers in the recruitment process. Use your sales skills to connect with people in that industry to find out more. One executive I coached managed to use LinkedIn to connect and speak with 10 different Key Account Managers in the organization he wanted to work for. He knew a lot about their KAM Programme before his interviews!

You can use your deep discovery skills to understand the real needs of the recruiting decision-makers. These are the real deal-clinching needs that separate the winning candidate from the other finalists. They may not even appear on the job advert that HR has issued. If a company is growing fast, its recruitment needs will be different from one stagnating or in decline. The needs of the KAM Programme Leader will be different to the needs of the CFO or the CMO. In one case, Sales Transformation was the real need, even

though that term was never used in the job advert. That message needed to be tailored to each of the decision-makers to show how it would help them.

As you go along, update your SWOT as new information comes to light. If you are exploring two or three different industries, create two or three different SWOTs. It is said that a great KAM has a PhD in their account. You need to become an expert in your future job.

Read the next Bulletin for Part 2 of 'How KAM can help you find your next job' steps 2 - 4

And consider whether a Diploma in KAM would help to future-proof your career – see page 7

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