



Your time for another point of view...

## Outside Looking In SESSION GUIDE

### Prepare to challenge assumptions

Penetrating questions honestly answered by your key personnel inevitably results in a healthy reality check for all Outside Looking In (OLI) session participants. With this input OLI Team Members turn a spot light on opportunities for new, client business success. *Results can include increased sales & profits, more cost-effective marketing, improved customer acquisition and retention, streamlined sales channel support - not to mention decision-making risk reduction and management disaster-avoidance.*

### Objectives typically include

- Define company structure, corporate culture, mission, core competencies, business strategy, and relative positioning tactics.
- Establish a baseline for new or revitalized marketing efforts.
- Identify current communications criteria, encompassing push/pull/engagement strategies

### Typical hot spot issues - SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats)

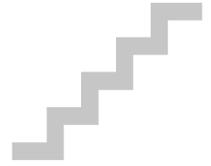
- \* Corporate structure, culture and philosophy
- \* Internal and external perceptions regarding current company identity
- \* Desired image traits/characteristics
- \* Marketing Planning - short and long term objectives/strategies
- \* Competitive environment, communications materials/practices
- \* Customer communications - advertising, PR, sales collateral, social engagement, Internet strategies
- \* Differentiation strategies and positioning opportunities
- \* Present and future product/service offerings
- \* Key audiences/core messages
- \* Geographic expansion, growth/acquisition strategies
- \* Strategies for securing new business
- \* Dealing with barriers encountered during the sales process

**Mining for marketing gold** - By careful orchestration of the review process, OLI team members will synthesize strengths and deficiencies of existing marketing efforts, sales strategies, customer support practices, and more. Questions answered individually by key client stakeholders bring diverse insights and perspectives. Typical questions draw out a snapshot of issues effecting your: industry, business, current situation, markets, customers, competitors, products, marketing and communications for sales lead generation and conversion.

### A 10 Question SHORT CUT to start the conversation...

1. **Why did you build this product?**
2. **Tell me about your first customer.**
3. **If I called them today what would they say about the product and your company?**
4. **If your product was not on the market what would your prospective customers do?**
5. **Describe your favorite customer.**
6. **Tell me about the last sales that you won.**
7. **Tell me about the last sale that you lost**
8. **What are your business objectives?**
9. **How does your product fit with your objectives?**
10. **What is it that you like about your product.**

Recognizing that any consulting process is a tap on resources, prepare your team in advance to respond with more detail from the following.



#### BUSINESS OVERVIEW

1. What is your company's mission?
2. What are current year objectives?
3. What is your business strategy?
4. How do you define your company's culture?
5. What have been your key successes or failures?
6. Describe your primary competitive advantages?
7. What are your core business strengths?
8. What are your core business weaknesses?

#### SITUATION ANALYSIS

9. What are the structure and strategic groupings of the industries in which you compete?
10. What are the industry and market forces that most impact your business today?
11. How do suppliers impact your business?
12. What technologies threaten your business?
13. What technologies create opportunities for your business?
14. What are the sustainable competitive advantages for your business?
15. How does the overall economy impact your business?
16. How does government or regulations effect business?
17. What legal actions impact you now or in the future?
18. Other (i.e. sociocultural) issues that effect your business?

#### MARKET ANALYSIS

19. Identify your target markets?
20. Describe your most important market segments.
21. What is the size of each market and segment?
22. What drives market trends?
23. Identify any unmet needs in your markets.
24. How are they presently coping with unmet needs?
25. What your company's potential for market growth?
26. What is your estimated market share in each segment?

#### CUSTOMER ANALYSIS

27. Who are your customers?
28. How do you segment them?
29. What do customers want?
30. How do they make their buying decisions?
31. Describe your customer demographics.
32. What motivates decision makers within your sales funnel?
33. How does your customer measure value?
34. How do you measure customer satisfaction?
35. What constitutes "better" in your customers' eyes?
36. Describe your ideal customer.
37. What is the lifetime value of a customer?

#### COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

38. What is the nature and degree of competition?
39. Position competitors and their degree of product/service differentiation.
40. What are the barriers to entry/exit in your market segment(s)?
41. How difficult is it for customers to switch?
42. What are your competitors' advantages (low prices, better quality, lower overhead)?
43. What are the competitors' weaknesses? How are you exploiting them?

#### PRODUCTS or SERVICES

44. Position your product mix and strengths/weaknesses within your market(s)/segments.
45. List key features and benefits.
46. What are your product or service brand names, brand image, and brand equity?
47. What is your current pricing structure?
48. What are your current distribution channels?
49. How do you rate your current product packaging?
50. How have your customers responded to any changes you may have made, i.e. pricing, features, promotions?
51. How do you manage product life cycles and new product development?
52. Is there a particular technology or supplier/vendor that is key to your sales or profitability?

53. What technologies or suppliers/vendors can threaten sales or profitability?

## MARKET STRATEGY & TACTICS

### STRATEGY

54. What is your value proposition (company/product/service unique selling proposition)?
55. How are you perceived by your customers?
56. Do you have a marketing plan?
57. What are your marketing objectives?
58. What are your market share objectives by products and/or customer segments?
59. Describe your markets, decision-maker demographics, bottom-up/top-down sales dynamics.
60. What can the company do to make things better?
61. How can the company become the customer's first choice?
62. How do you measure marketing and sales performance?
63. What are your pricing objectives, method and strategy?

### TACTICS

64. How do you convert purchasing decision makers from triers to buyers?
65. What are your sales distribution channels?
66. How do you choose a distributor, representative, or other channel partner?
67. What is your pricing structure?
68. Describe sales force requirements, techniques, and management structure.
69. What triggers for sales hiring, allocation of internal or independent resources?

### MARKETING CREATIVITY & COMMUNICATIONS

70. How do you generate awareness (for new product introductions, etc.)
71. How do you currently generate inquiries?
72. What is your current message? Should it be different?
70. What action would you like decision makers to take after viewing a promotion?
71. How do you conduct sales promotion?
72. What are your publicity and public relations programs?
73. How are you using marketing communications media (i.e. advertising, Web, SEO, SEM, email, social, telephone, events)?
74. How do you measure campaign or program success?

## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER YOUR FIRST OLI SESSION

Included in an OLI discovery session is a verbal review of OLI team member interview notes. On-the-spot, client stakeholder points of view are consolidated, and OLI consultants collaborate before presenting specific recommendations for post-session actions that can have the greatest return on client investment. OLI Team Members are prepared to help with implementing any prescribed

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