

SAMA EMEA 2015 Conference Soundbites

What leading companies have to share on how they drive successful Key/Strategic Account Management.

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Scope of this report

From March 16th to 18th, about 120 Key Account Management practitioners met in Berlin for the Strategic Account Management Association (SAMA) EMEA Conference. A variety of presentations and workshops allowed them to share experience and best practice and learn from each other. This document captures the key ideas discussed during this exciting event.

Soundbites for the C-level

- KAM is both a growth opportunity and a Business Transformation.
- Companies who drive KAM properly see a change in perception by their Key Accounts compared to their competitors as well as a stronger growth over time on the Key Accounts compared to other clients.
- Implementing KAM successfully requires unequivocal engagement from the very top of the Company. There is no single company highly successful with KAM without a strong support from the Executive team.
- Implementing KAM is a journey and takes several years to mature. It fosters and requires true customer centricity as well as the adequate Values, especially openness, transparency, collaboration and the capacity to drive continuous improvement.
- More and more the engagement with the most strategic customers includes a process of Value co-creation which strengthens the relationship.
- The Status, progress, results and challenges of a KAM Program must be reviewed regularly at C-level.

Soundbites for the KAM practitioner

- Building a true KAM Program infrastructure with the right standardized processes and tools is instrumental to success and to scalability.
- The selection process of Key Accounts must be a very clear, facts-based process without neglecting the importance of intuition. The process must

include deselecting Accounts with whom the relationship does not develop in a truly strategic way.

- Many companies use different level of Key Accounts, for example national or divisional Key Accounts and corporate of global Accounts.
- It is better to start small with a pilot, learn, adapt and expand later.
- Building a strong strategy to approach a strategic customer can only be done by carrying a true in-depth analysis of the customer's strategy and business. Ignoring this leads to weak Account strategies and plans.
- Developing a very deep knowledge of the Key Account must include the knowledge of their business ecosystem.
- The capacity to articulate Value and to use Solution Selling techniques is essential and must be developed across the organization.
- Technology matters and, properly used, brings an advantage in many areas; analysing the environment and the customers, capturing and leveraging knowledge, building and implementing account plans, supporting collaborative processes.
- Developing new individual and collective capabilities in terms of strategic thinking, collaboration, presentation and convincing has a high positive impact on KAM programs.

Soundbites for Talent Management and HR

- The position of (true) Key or Global Account Manager is a high-level job that requires a broad skill set and solid managerial and entrepreneurial capabilities. For these reasons, successful sales people are not necessarily the best suited for these positions.
- As a consequence of the above, in a company using KAM as a strategic competitive advantage, Hiring and Talent Development practices must look for the required skills and capabilities.
- KAM Training should not be provided only to Key Account Managers but to other team members and to supporting functions.
- Training is not enough to enable performance. It must be complemented with individual and team coaching as well as with other type of actions that develop the collaborative skills and dynamic.
- Coaching is a key element in developing the capabilities of the Key Account Managers and of their teams. However, the meaning of coaching and how it is used must be clearly defined and must be implemented in a professional way.

In addition, many companies apply the word coaching to classic management conversations therefore missing the benefit of a true coaching process.

- In order to embed KAM into the company's culture, a position as Key or Global Account Manager must become a key career milestone.

From whom does this experience come?

- Frank Arne, CEO, AAK
- Corrado Cestis, Head of Heavy Industry BU, SKF
- Dominique Coté, Executive Director, Commercial Operational Excellence, Zoetis
- Fadi Homsy, Head of the Global Account Management Program, Mettler Toledo
- Louis Robinson, Global Head of Business Development, HSBC
- Philly Texeira, VP Marketing, Global Sales and Business, Maersk Line
- Janny Vos, Strategic Partnerships Director, CABI
- .. and many other KAM practitioners from various industries who took part to the Conference.

Interested at diving deeper into these topics?

Take a look at our KAM resources: <http://www.olivierriviere-consulting.com/kamgam/kamgam-resources>

On this page, among other resources, the white paper "KAM, a must consider for Executives" provides a deeper insight into many of the soundbites presented above.

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