Tips for Target/Prospect Research

Researching the prospect or customer is critical to a successful sales pursuit. Take time to understand the organization and the people involved in making buying decisions. Be sure to:

- Get familiar with the decision makers. Get clues about their mindset, background and how they behave.
- Understand where you can help them uncover and solve problems on key issues.
- Prepare to ask insightful questions about their organization and key business drivers.
- Uncover important items that you'll cover in a meeting/presentation or first-time call.

SEARCH FOR:

Basic Information:

- Mission (why they exist) and Vision (what/who they want to become)
- Strategies (how will they achieve their Vision)
- Values (how do they behave? make decisions? work? philanthropy?)
- History (what are they proud of?)
- Logistical – company size and locations, services or products, parent company or subsidiaries, distribution methods, etc.

NOTE: Do this research to avoid asking questions that the customer already knows how to answer. Develop valuable questions that make the customer think.

Deeper insights and trigger events:

- Are they shrinking, staying the same, or growing? What are their plans to address their situation?
- Do they have a new leader? Owner? What events have they experienced?
- Learn about their key competitors. How do they plan to compete? Besides their product/service, what else do they compete with or for?
- Identify the customer's customer.
- Understand the company culture (conservative, aggressive, collaborative, disruptor, energetic, traditional, etc.)

WEBSITES:

Of course, search the organizations website. Be sure to visit the careers/jobs page which gets updated regularly.

- Indeed and SimplyHired can also inform where (both location and departments) the organization is hiring and investing.
- Google is a no-brainer, and click here to narrow your searches for much better search results. To find a person try (include the quotes) "TITLE + @COMPANYNAME.com."
  Example: CFO + @SALESFORCE.COM

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- Google Alerts will send you content about organizations you select.
- Dun & Bradstreet for data, financials and other facts. Free version is limited but worth visiting.

Other sites worth visiting:

- https://hunter.io/ to find email addresses or at least figure them out the structure.
- https://www.yougotthenews.com/blogs/ do a search for a blog related to your customer.
- https://www.yougotthenews.com for new articles.
- Social Media searches can help you find out about the people who you'll call or visit with. Use what you find to customize your content or to better understand their background and interests.

One last idea: Reach out to other project partners and compare notes.

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