

Selling to Big Companies

**ABSOLUTELY
IRRESISTIBLE**

*The #1 Strategy to Get
Your Foot in the Door*

JILL KONRATH

ABSOLUTELY IRRESISTIBLE

***The #1 Strategy to Get
Your Foot in the Door***

Jill Konrath

Copyright © 2003, Jill Konrath. All rights reserved.
No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in
any form without permission from the publisher. Exceptions
are made for brief excerpts used in publisher reviews.

Published by:
Selling to Big Companies
2227 Foxtail Ct., St. Paul, MN 55110 USA
Printed in the United States of America

How to Be Absolutely Irresistible

Great ideas – they're the absolute best way for small businesses to get into big accounts. Why? Because people can't resist them.

Imagine this. You receive a phone call from someone you've never met. This person tells you that she's been studying your company, marketplace and competitors. Then she says, "I have an idea for you that I think could drive some significant costs out of your supply chain. I'd like a half hour of your time to share it with you."

Are you curious? If you're like most people, you can't help but be interested. Ideas are like magnets. People are irresistibly drawn to them, wanting to learn more.

And, because this woman mentioned she'd already invested some time understanding your business and needs, your curiosity is even further aroused. So you ask, "Can you give me a 30 second overview so I know if it's worth my time?"

"Of course," she answers quickly. "You have over 100 distributors for your products worldwide. The idea I have relates to the processes your company uses to communicate with your channel. I've put a rough outline of my ideas down on paper and I'd like to share it with you."

Are you ready now to spend 30 minutes with her? Of course you are! She's talking about a particularly sore spot in your operations. With all the other projects you have going, you haven't spent a lot of time on this particular issue. But it's not going to go away – and if this woman has invested time thinking about your challenges, you want to know what ideas she has for you.

Ideas are absolutely irresistible! They're the best account entry strategy you can have. But good ideas don't just emerge from thin air. And, quite frankly, most people have done very little to increase their idea generation proficiency.

If you want to increase your idea generation proficiency, you need to understand the process for coming up with great ideas. You also need to know how to create a stimulating environment that enables great ideas to emerge.

3 Stages of Idea Generation

There are three essential stages for coming up with good ideas. All three are needed to find the real gems that your prospective customers will clamor to hear.

1. Immersion

This stage is where all the hard work is done. It's where information is gathered and you steep yourself in learning. It's the primary focus of this report. It's also the stage that most people are tempted to shortchange. But if you cut corners here, you'll never be a great idea generator.

2. Incubation

After immersing yourself in the challenge of finding ways to help your prospective customer, it's time to take a break. Great ideas can't be forced. You need to give your brain a chance to work on connecting everything you've learned about this company with everything else you already know. Sometimes a short break of a couple hours may be all you need. Other times, it may take weeks or longer.

3. Illumination

This is the AHA! time when the great idea or its early seeds come to you seemingly from out of the blue. You may be driving your car, in the shower or in bed when all of the sudden it hits. Make sure you write it down. If you don't, your idea may vanish into thin air just as quickly as it came.

Hard Work + Stimulation = High Payback Ideas

If you truly want to come up with a great idea that opens the doors to a highly desired customer, plan on investing quite a bit of time in the Immersion stage.

It may seem like you're wasting lots of time and resources when there aren't any guarantees you'll get anything out of it. Consider it as the price of admission. If you don't pay it, you may never get in – no matter how many contacts you make. And, if you do happen to get in, without this immersion you'll be much less effective.

Here's how you can get the most from your immersion process:

1. Start with Questions

Posing your challenge as a question (as opposed to a statement) immediately kicks your brain into gear. Look at the difference between these two comments:

- I want to get into Generic Industries.
- How can I get my foot in the door of Generic Industries?

Do you feel the difference? The first one is flat, uninspiring. But the question has energy behind it. In fact, just the process of asking it starts your brain working for you behind the scenes.

Make sure you play with questions. By wording them differently entirely new ideas emerge. Here are some different ways to ask questions related to "getting in" Generic Industries:

- What are Generic's biggest challenges that can be solved with my offering?
- How can I help Generic improve their productivity?
- In what ways can my offering reduce operating costs for Generic?
- How do the recent happenings at Generic create opportunities to help them?
- Based on what I'm learning about Generic, where can I have the highest impact?

Continue to ask yourself new and different questions throughout the Immersion stage. Use your new learnings about your customer to create new questions for you to think about.

Questions generate ideas. If you keep asking them, the number of ideas you come up with expands exponentially. Most people stop thinking after they have 1-3 ideas. But research into creativity shows that most early ideas are too commonplace to generate the interest and excitement you want your customer to feel.

You must come up with lots of ideas to find the real gems.

2. Preparation

In order to come up with good ideas, your brain needs raw material to work with. You already have a wide base of knowledge - everything you've already learned. But to come up with good ideas to get your foot in the door of a new customer, you need to add to this knowledge base.

Specifically, you need to immerse yourself in understanding this particular customer's situation and other factors that impact it. Here are some areas in which you may need additional information about your customer:

- Vision / mission
- Goals & objectives
- Critical business initiatives
- Core competencies
- Industry & market trends
- Primary challenges
- Changing customer requirements/needs
- Competitive landscape
- Organizational structure & culture
- Current service/product/solution provider

Check the company's web site. Read their annual reports and analysts' analysis of their business. Look for recent articles about them in the press. Interview people who work there. Talk to their customers.

As you research and gather data, take notes. Writing your observations down helps your brain remember them. The more you know, the more connections your brain makes. The more connections your brain makes the more and better ideas you'll get.

3. Create a Stimulating Atmosphere

Ever been in a meeting where you need to come up with some good ideas? I'll bet it was held in a drab conference room in a sterile corporate atmosphere. It's likely that even after a brainstorming session few, if any, breakthrough ideas emerged from it.

To get great ideas, your brain needs additional stimulation. As a muscle, it needs to be warmed-up before it works its best. Here are a few suggestions to create an atmosphere conducive to creating great ideas. You can use these suggestions in groups or all by yourself.

- Play some fun music that makes you smile.
- Have good food and lots of coffee handy.
- Draw a mind map with pictures to outline the situation.

- List 30 different non-traditional uses for a fork or a coffee cup.
- Do a crossword puzzle.
- Pick a word out of the dictionary; find ways to relate it to your customer's situation.
- Look at the challenge from other people's or company's perspective: What would Microsoft do? How would your customer's customer think about it? What advice would Mother Theresa give?
- Reverse your questions. Instead of, "How can I get more sales at Generic?" ask, "How can I help Generic get more sales?"

All these things flex your mental muscles. By doing them before you actually tackle the idea generation process, you'll realize significantly better results.

4. Brainstorm

The key to good brainstorming is to come up with lots of ideas fast. First, pose the question to yourself that you want to think about. Then, rather than trying to come up with one or two good ideas, shoot for 30 ideas in the next 20 minutes. Give yourself permission to come up with really off-the-wall ideas. Write everything down – stupid as some of them may sound.

When your initial list of ideas is complete, review everything on your list. Pick 3 non-traditional ideas and ask:

- What are the possibilities in this idea?
- What could make this idea feasible?
- What else would be needed to make this idea attractive to your customer?

As a next step, pose a different question to yourself – perhaps even the reverse of your initial question. Again, come up with 30 ideas in 20 minutes. Then repeat the exploration of the non-traditional ideas as described above.

If you want, you can repeat this same exercise again to generate even more ideas. If you find that your ideas are becoming stale or commonplace, go back and do some exercises to stimulate your brain.

What Happens Next

You've done enough work now. It's time to move into the next stage of the idea generation process. Put everything aside. Go do some other work. Take a walk. Go out to lunch with a friend. Take a nap. Do anything but work on the challenge.

Your brain is now processing everything you've learned about the prospective customer, your knowledge of your product and service, how to work effectively with people, how to sell and many other things. This is the Incubation stage of idea generation. All the work is going on behind the scenes and you're not involved in it at all.

What ultimately will happen is that the kernel of some really good idea will pop into your head at an unlikely time. Or, the idea may emerge fully developed – and all you have to say is "AHA! I now know what to do." This is Illumination.

To get your foot in the door of your targeted customer, you don't need to be a genius like Einstein. You can borrow an idea from someone else. You can borrow an idea that another company used. Your idea only has to be unique in its application to this particular customer.

Everything in this special report is what top idea generators continually do to come up with ideas that get them into new accounts or to expand their relationships with existing customers.

If you commit to doing what it takes to be an idea person, you'll find that the large, seemingly impenetrable doors of big corporate accounts will suddenly open wide for you. The people you meet with will be receptive to you and want to hear what you have to say. They'll appreciate the investment of time you made to think about their business situation and how you can improve it.

After sharing your idea, discuss it. Don't worry if it's not accepted at all or in its entirety. The door is open. Think of other ways you might help the customer and propose them. Also, suggest a logical next step for moving forward. This is how relationships with new clients begin.

Remember – the best strategy for getting into companies you want to work for is YOUR ideas. Not your product. Not your service. Not a glib phone script or a well-scripted letter. Come up with good ideas for your prospective customers and the doors to these companies will miraculously be wide open for you.

Jill Konrath



Jill Konrath, President of SellingtoBigCompanies.com and Leapfrog-Strategies, is an expert in major account sales and new product launches in the highly competitive B2B market. For over 20 years she has helped sales organizations leverage high-gain strategies for increased sales results.

Jill publishes a leading online newsletter, "Quantum Leaps Selling: Ideas & Insights to Increase Sales" which is being read in over 70 countries around the world.

She is the author of "Winning More Sales: Take Your Business to the Next Level with Insightful, Powerful Questions", the "JumpStart Your Sales" self-study guide and numerous eBooks on critical sales topics. She has been featured in Sales and Marketing Management, Selling Power, American Airlines in-flight magazine, Entrepreneur, Business Advisor, The Business Journal, Sales & Marketing Excellence, Sales Tribune, Sales Vault, Finance and Commerce, Management Consulting News and numerous on-line publications.

Her website, SellingtoBigCompanies.com, is an excellent resource for salespeople, small businesses, entrepreneurs and independent professionals who want to win big contracts at corporate accounts.

Since forming her consultancy in 1987, Jill's clients have ranged from Fortune 100 technology companies to small professional services firms. She has worked with well-known corporate giants such as 3M, Imation, General Mills, Medtronic, eFunds, and Honeywell.

She's successfully launched numerous new products for her clients, as well as trained and spoken to thousands of salespeople. Her speeches and workshops are filled with real-life experiences, giving her instant credibility with even the toughest sales audiences.

Contact Information

(ph) 651-429-1922
(fax) 651-426-0983

jill@sellingtobigcompanies.com

Quick Order Form

Email Orders: <mailto:jill@SellingToBigCompanies.com>

Fax Orders: 651-426-0983. Send this form.

Telephone Orders: Call 651-429-1922. Have your credit card ready.

Postal Orders: Jill Konrath, 2227 Foxtail Ct., St. Paul, MN 55110, USA

If you're not satisfied for any reason, you will get a full refund— no questions asked.

Sales Tools: Manuals, Self-Study Guide, Audios	Price	Qty	Total
Winning More Sales: Take Your Business to the Next Level with Insightful, Powerful Questions. 167-page manual with over 550+ questions. A proven, step-by-step guide to winning sales without being a pushy salesperson. Bonus eBook: <i>Stop Losing Sales</i> .	\$77.00 PDF \$97.00 Printed	___	_____
JumpStart Your Sales Self-Study Guide: Complete audio workshop on how to get your foot-in-the-door of big companies. Includes: Set of 4 CD/Tapes (please specify), 40-page workbook plus 3 eBooks: <i>Developing Strong Value Propositions</i> , <i>Claiming Your Niche!</i> and <i>Attracting More Customers</i> . Bonus eBook: <i>Winning Sales in a Tight Economy</i> .	\$147.00	___	_____
Winning Sales in a Tight Economy: Key strategies to be successful in today's marketplace. Audiotope or CD (please specify), plus 10-page workbook.	\$37.00	___	_____
Developing Powerful Value Propositions: How to create such a strong value proposition that customers want to meet with you. Audiotope or CD (please specify), plus 10-page workbook.	\$37.00	___	_____
Winning Big Clients When You're Not a Big Company: How to get in and win business when you're not a household name. Audiotope or CD (please specify), plus 8-page workbook.	\$37.00	___	_____
eBooks – Delivered electronically, PDF format	Price	Qty	Total
Claiming Your Niche! How to target your sales efforts to win more business.	\$19.95	___	_____
Developing Strong Value Propositions: A prerequisite for getting in to see busy decision makers.	\$19.95	___	_____
Attracting More Customers: How to create a compelling "Elevator Speech" that draws the right clients to you.	\$19.95	___	_____
Turning Prospects in Buyers: How to create urgent needs using powerful questions (included in "Winning More Sales" Manual).	\$19.95	___	_____
Powerful Executive Meetings: How to have insightful discussions with senior management (included in "Winning More Sales" Manual).	\$19.95	___	_____
Winning in Competitive Situations: How to use questions to differentiate yourself and win sales when up against tough competitors (included in "Winning More Sales" Manual).	\$19.95	___	_____
Absolutely Irresistible: The #1 strategy to get your foot-in-the-door – and it's not what you think.	\$19.95	___	_____

Quick Order Form – 2

More eBooks – Delivered electronically, PDF format	Price	Qty	Total
Winning Sales in a Tight Economy: Key strategies to increase sales in a changing marketplace.	\$19.95	_____	_____
Stop Losing Sales: How to eliminate critical selling mistakes and win more business.	\$19.95	_____	_____
Sales Call Planning Guide: How to effectively pre-plan an initial client meeting to maximize your chances of sales success.	\$19.95	_____	_____
SUBTOTAL			_____
SHIPPING & HANDLING (see below)			_____
TOTAL			\$ _____
Charged to your credit card or amount required on check			

SHIPPING & HANDLING COSTS:

- Winning More Sales Manual - \$10 US & Canada
- JumpStart Your Sales Self-Study Guide - \$15 US & Canada
- Audiotapes & CDs - \$3.50, US & Canada
- eBooks – none; delivered electronically

PLEASE FILL IN THIS FORM COMPLETELY

Payment: Check (enclosed) Credit Card: Visa AMEX Discover Master

Card Number: _____

Name on Card: _____ **Exp. Date:** ____/____

eMail Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

DELIVERY INSTRUCTIONS FOR:

JumpStart Your Sales Self-Study Program, Winning More Sales Manual & Audios

Send me: CD Tape

Mail to: _____

Company Name: (if sent to your office) _____

Street: _____ **Apt/Suite #** _____

City/Town _____ **State/Province:** _____

Zip/Mailing Code _____ **Country** _____