



FACTSHEET

KEY ACCOUNT MANAGER ROLES - CATCHING A KAM

Many articles have been written about the best way to engage with our customers in the NHS. How best to partner with this new breed, made up of payers, commissioners, and medicines management gurus. How best to tap into their agenda. In fact, many careers have been built on telling us just how to sell to our customers, and an awful lot of consultancy fees have been paid to experts so that we can all be scared to death about this 'new' customer group who we are told work hidden away, been firmly shut doors in an increasingly complex and confusing NHS maze.

In my simple world view, yes, of course we do need to speak the same language as our customers, but we also need to ensure that we are getting the balance right, to ensure that our customer partnerships are mutually beneficial. We need to be truly customer focused, but we also need to achieve the win:win equilibrium, to avoid promising the world in value added services for very little commercial return.

Over the last few years, Key Account Management has been the new pharma industry term that seems to be bandied about on a daily basis. It is used often and widely and it seems to mean different things to different people in different companies. Every hiring manager seems to be looking for the elusive KAM. Does it mean a hospital representative? Does it mean an NHS Liaison Manager? Is it a bit of both? Or is it just a very good salesperson with the right attitude, the right skills and the common sense to convince key influential customers to sit round a table, to weigh up the pros and cons, and to agree on decisions that will help them to achieve their desired outcomes, but that will also grow product sales for their company?

In many ways, Key Account Management is a philosophy; a way of thinking, rather than some magical process. Account plans and systems can of course help to keep business on track, but they cannot be the golden ticket on their own. People still, and always will, buy from people. Outstanding KAM's need to be outstandingly talented sales people. In the 'good old' days, when sales people were autonomous, and they had full accountability for their results, the successful ones managed their own business and they managed it well. Naturally, they identified and involved all key stakeholders, naturally they engaged with clinicians, and non clinicians alike, and naturally they engaged the people who ultimately held the purse strings. They were unblocking the clinical and funding barriers that KAM's and Market Access Manager's do today, whilst always remembering to sell.

This breed are driven, competitive, innovative, competitive, hardworking, flexible responders to change and above all, as superb net workers and communicators, they can be relied upon to consistently achieve results.

At 20:20 Selection Limited, we know that recruitment agencies are mainly fishing from the same pond. The skill we use to catch the KAM's is to recognise the specific species, and to know which bait to use.