



## How to... UPSKILL TO KAM

Everyone knows key account managers possess a different profile to the traditional sales representative. For KAM, it's about building stronger and more sophisticated relationships – so what are the secrets to achieving this?

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### Top skills

#### » Active listening

The ability to listen to customer conversations and capture the key strategic elements, their needs and priorities. It's also about communicating effectively with different healthcare stakeholders using language relevant to them.

#### » Strategic thinking

Identifying what's important to the stakeholder – taking into account commercial drivers and constraints from both the customer and company point of view – and providing relevant solutions that will add value. This is not just about uncovering needs but providing solutions that meet the customer's own metrics. It involves preparation, research, organisational skills and patience.

#### » Collaboration

Encouraging a joint working relationship by communicating and working collaboratively within your own company as well as inside your customer's organisation. This involves leadership, the ability to adapt your organisation's services to address individual customer needs and to represent the customer's interests when talking to colleagues within your own company.

### Top behaviours

#### » Understand the health economy

That means understanding who the influencers and stakeholders are, their roles, what they are trying to achieve and what their priorities are. This also requires knowledge of the wider healthcare economy including patient pathways and needs. So research, access and analyse publicly available information, break the account into networks, and use your initiative.

#### » Generate value

Only by truly understanding the health economy can you provide the value your customers need. This is about value beyond the pill and beyond cost. Customers will want to engage with people who can make things happen and who will be seen as strategic assets in helping customers achieve their goals.

#### » See people

Don't get stuck in the office – get out and about, cultivate internal and external customer networks, share knowledge and insights and regularly validate your understanding. This will help cement relationships and build trust.

#### » Top tip:

Bosses need to nurture these skills and behaviours to ensure success. They also need to empower the key account manager – KAMs need the freedom to adapt and negotiate based on local needs.

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## KAMs must be supported by a multi-channel marketing strategy



Many of the skills, behaviours and strategies of a KAM team must reflect not only the changing needs of the customer market but also a more intelligent approach to sales and associated marketing that is common-place in other vertical markets outside healthcare, such as finance and telecoms.

The key is to provide more insight and intelligence on how products fit within the health economy and to adapt solutions

to customer needs: fundamentally it's all about building longer-term relationships. Of course, this requires not just face-to-face engagement but also the provision of information, research data and other key messages across the multi-channel marketing mix, as well as directly through KAMs.

This is how the "air cover" can enhance and reinforce face-to-face relationships, especially across multi-disciplinary teams

where KAMs might struggle to cover the breadth of customer groups and relationships now required in the NHS.

So recruiting the right KAM team and upskilling behaviours is key – but it's also critical to provide the right support through effective channels. For instance, pointing customers to the right information from within their working environment, including their NHS intranets, can add real value to these relationships.

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