Blue Print Service: Sales Rep for a Day

Many Dutch companies are actively exploring new international markets. Visits of (export area) managers to unexplored markets have proved to be much more successful if follow-up is efficient, continuous and carried out by local experts. Very often the incorporation of a local company and employing a full-time staff member in a target country, is considered too risky from a budgetary point of view and laborious from an administrative standpoint. Having branches in all export countries might simply be unrealistic and unfeasible for the great majority of Dutch SME`s.

Sales Representative for A Day (SRAD) offers a much more flexible, less costly structure. The client selects the amount of time and defines the service it would like to use, and the service provider provides the right staff member. Typically, this is for 1 workday a week, aimed at expanding and consolidating the client base in the target country.

NLinBusiness has developed a blueprint for this service, so service providers can tailor their services to the needs of SME companies, and entrepreneurs can ask the right questions to select the right provider. It allows Ducht SME to open new markets that would otherwise be too costly to enter.

With the concept of Sales Rep for a day, the client enjoys practical and commercial advantages of having its own "boots on the ground" business foothold in the country, but without significant administrative burdens. SRAD has proved to be an instrument that is particularly valued by Dutch SMEs, since the commercial implications are substantial, while costs are in line with their more limited budgets. The service will be especially relevant in the phase of entry and initial growth in a new market and can be followed by in-depth marketing and sales support provided by trusted third parties.

The (export area) manager of the client and the staff member of the service provider, work closely together and have complementary roles. SRAD does not replace employability in The Netherlands but complements it by providing hands-on local support in the target country.

In the current Covid-19 situation, flexible solutions at limited cost are needed. Many Dutch companies are now more aware of the limitations of not having a local foothold and business development without travelling has become more relevant than ever.

<u>Understanding the service: purpose, scope and process for execution:</u>

SRAD should be understood as a business development service. Main goal is to locally support market entry and/or market expansion for Dutch companies in a flexible, continuous and effective way. Central idea is to allow the client to make savings by outsourcing the tasks that can easily, more efficiently and successfully be executed locally in the target country.

Typical activities and responsibilities of a SRAD consultant include:

• Define and execute product-market combination (PMC) focus and strategy for successful market entry and growth.

• Create, maintain and continuously expand database of potential clients and partners.

• General business promotion in target market (company visits, send proposals, follow-up, and others).

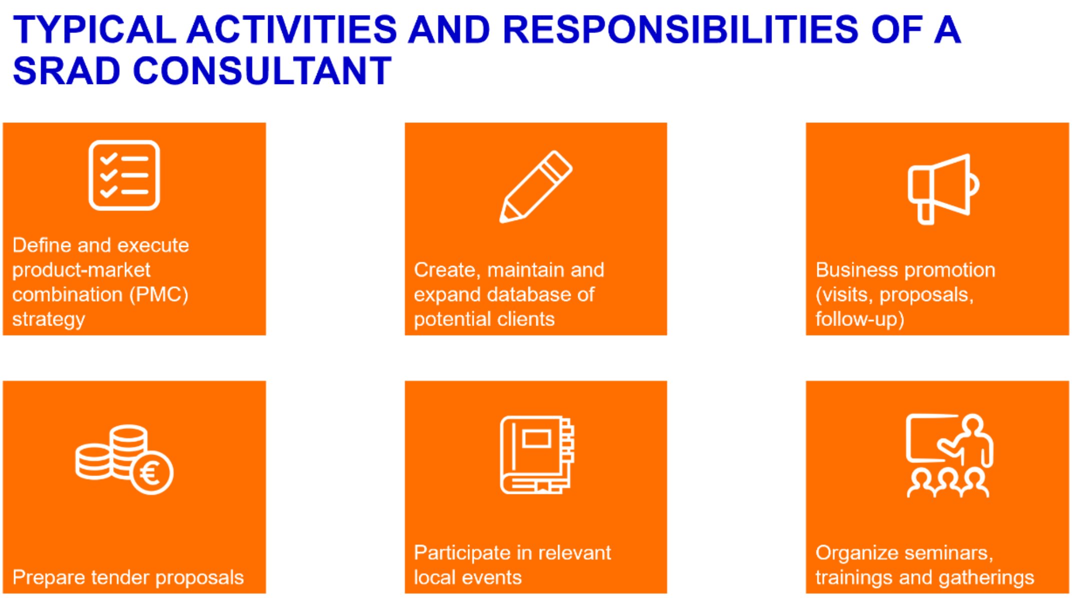
• Prepare tender proposals for public and private sector.

• Participate in events related to the business of the client.

• Prepare periodic visits of the client´s managers to the country.

• Organize seminars, trainings, press releases, gatherings, and events, which should contribute to achieving the aforementioned goals.

• Achieve objectives through effective planning, setting sales goals, analyzing data on past performance, and projecting future performance. The scope could be extended and should be mutually agreed upon. The activities could also include cold calling and translating documents such as offers, brochures, website, etc. However, it is recommended to look for the right balance between routine and more challenging activities.



Promotion

The service providers that are already offering the service, have identified the following unique selling points to be most compelling:

• Local support by professionals that dominate language and business culture (“way of doing business”).

• Elimination of time difference limitations: the export manager will not have to make phone calls in the early morning or late evening to be able to follow-up on prospects, leads or pending issues.

• Cost-effective: “pay for what you use” according to local salary standards.

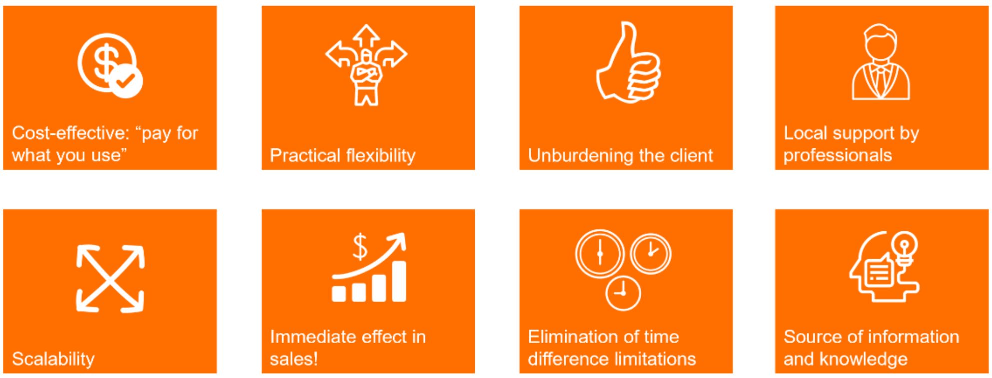
• Unburdening the client: allow the client to outsource the tasks that can efficiently be executed in the target country itself.

• Practical flexibility: advantages of being able to locally make spontaneous visits, deliver samples personally, attend events, etc.

• Scalability: time dedication and service can be adapted each month. In many cases 1 workday/week becomes 2 workdays/week within the first 6 months.

• Source of information and knowledge: the client will have access to unique expertise and the consultant will answer questions, give suggestions and advise on strategic decisions.

HOW TO CONVINCE A POTENTIAL CLIENT



<u>Tips & Tricks for the Executing Consultant</u>

The service provider should select and prepare the responsible consultant optimally. Hereafter some of the most important recommendations .

• Responsibilities and work tools. The consultant knows exactly what type of activities should be developed and what the client expects from him/her (further refeerred to as ‘specific role’). Furthermore, it is necessary to define the work tools necessary to carry out the tasks in the best possible way (corporate e-mail, Excel, Skype, Teams, PDF editor, business cards, etc.).

• Time planning. Before starting the SRAD representation process for a new client, the consultant has to define well how he/she is going to distribute his/her time and look for the best possible fit with existing commitments. The consultant should make a standard planning for each week (Monday client 1, Tuesday client 2, etc.), which should in turn be adapted for specific weeks/periods depending on workload and deadlines. A certain degree of flexibility and ability for multitasking is also required. Although a consultant would spend his/her time for a specific client on Tuesday, it could be necessary to respond to an urgent e-mail or request for proposal on Thursday. This flexibility is required, should be anticipated and can be compensated in other weeks.

• Time registration. Sometimes for reaching 5 potential clients by telephone, many attempts will be needed and a complete day can go by. For Dutch user companies, it can be rather hard to understand how the time is being spent. Using applications such as Toggl, Clockify or Harvest could help to give the necessary insight and avoid complaints. It also makes it easier for your client to identify cases for which they could provide valuable advice. Your logbook will tell them a lot. A “no” you receive, could be turned into a “yes” with a bit of help.

• Involvement. The more you engage and win the user company`s trust in efficiently using the time and obtaining the envisaged results, the more the role of the client will change from `supervisor` to `supporter`.

• Establishing priorities. Workload tends to increase in particular months and establishing clear priorities becomes paramount. Together with the client, certain categories or systems (sales funnel, traffic light labelling, etc.) can be determined to have a clearer concept for prioritizing: e.g. leads, formal proposals, and projects in execution.

• Effective communication. Having fluent and continuous communication with the client is important. Always keep in mind that the service provider is providing a service for which the client is paying. The contractor will put an obligation on himself to carry out the agreement to his best knowledge and ability with professional care. If the client has offices/representations in other countries in the region, surely it will also be necessary to keep in touch with the representatives in those countries as often as possible.

• Always ask. Very much related with the previous recommendation. As a SRAD consultant there is probably more that you do not know at the start, than the information you do manage. By asking the right questions, the knowledge regarding sector, company policy, methodology and all kinds of technical concepts will grow.

• Commercial orientation. Dutch companies are generally result-driven and straightforward in their aim to generate sales, projects, strategic alliances, local partners, etc. It is important to frequently follow-up with prospects, leads and clients in your country or region. In this sense, the consultant has to be proactive since he/she is the direct connection between the company's objectives and the local market.

• Professionalism. The consultant will build relationships with clients, stakeholders, local authorities and will possibly travel on a regular basis. These contact moments and activities require a high degree of professionalism.

• Share your point of view and advise the company. Since the consultant is the representative of the client, he/she should always try to measure, analyse, reflect and propose. Share ideas and advise the company assuming that you are more aware of the economic, social, and political context of the country.

• Support by local colleagues. The consultant can rely on a multidisciplinary internal organization and should benefit from that (contacts, procedures, or perhaps legal and administrative issues).

• Although the SRAD consultant works directly for and with the client, do not forget to use the institutional weight and importance of the service provider. Cold calling will probably be much more efficient and effective under the name of a renowned local service provider. Once the door has been opened, you act directly on behalf of the Dutch company.

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS, SKILLS AND TRAITS