

## **Payer & Employer Relations: Roundtable Discussion Summary**

*The following is from The Alliance For Healthcare Strategy And Marketing's 1997 Managed Care Toolbox.*

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### **Work Health, Occupational Health and Group Health**

Issue of having separate products and services all being sold to the same target customer and purchaser. Need to think of a sales strategy that recognizes what employers are buying and why. Position required work health products and services with occupational health as the foot in the door while conducting needs analysis with the client in order to develop a customized solution to address their business needs, concerns and healthcare budget.

### **Shift to portfolio of services directed to a target audience**

Claim a differentiated position with the target audience by building a customer-focused portfolio of services, have trained full-time staff responsible for selling and managing the relationship with the customer and utilize a consultative selling versus transactional and menu selling, selling value rather than price.

### **Two tiers of marketing communication; i.e., employer and their employees**

Develop strategies and tactics that manage both relationships optimally. Your sales approach needs to clearly develop the relationship and indicate how you will manage the account, grow the account and cross/up-sell the customer into new business solutions. Once the employer is sold, your organization needs to have the employer endorse your ongoing relationship with their employees, their families and retirees. This might include a formal marketing communications plan, internal communication opportunities, coordinated health calendar, educational and screening events with ongoing integration into care management, nurse triage and other programs and services available to your community at large. This needs to be well thought out and seamless in its delivery. This plan needs to be developed, easy to implement and may be delivered as value-added, small charge per head per month or integrated into the cost of other products and services. Remember, it is most important that your organization have an endorsed presence with the employed (possible covered lives) at this workplace.

### **Integrated Sales Approach**

Providers need to look at how they structure their sales, account management, account growth and customer services interactions with customers as well as how operations and clinical services will deliver and interact with the customer. How should technical

and product-specific sales occur and who should be responsible for the sales approach and effort with the customer, especially if the customer has indicated a desire for one point of contact and ease of access?

### **Philosophical shift for providers to look at the current menu of services and change:**

- 1) How they are packaged
- 2) Sales approach, style and philosophy
- 3) Sales structure, staffing, training and presentation
- 4) Sales account management and customer service
- 5) Delivery of services – and ultimately the seamless coordination between all of the entities involved within a healthcare provider organization

Another issue is that if you are good at driving sales, eventually your organization is going to need to address the issue of account management.  
For instance:

- 1) Day-to-day taking care of the client.
- 2) Account maintenance – keeping the client as part of your “bread and butter business.”
- 3) Account development, i.e., long-term growth to optimize the sales effort to the current client.
- 4) Account referrals to build new business opportunities in your marketplace. This requires developing an organizational approach, structure, accountable staff and clarification of how the organization intends to manage this process.

### **What do employers want?**

Market research indicates employers are looking for providers who can work with them as partners in building proactive solutions that address the four key business problem areas:

- 1) decrease cost,
- 2) increase profit,
- 3) improve or enhance productivity  
And
- 4) enhance their competitive position.

Employers indicate that they continue to want one-stop shopping, ease of access, value-added and enhanced perception of benefits and health plan satisfaction. Employers are also seeking providers to be more directly positioned to work with them on both work and group health issues rather than separating them out. They want a provider who will work with them proactively in cost management and better allocation of the current health dollars in services acquired. They want the provider to be able to demonstrate return on investment. Focus group research has indicated that healthcare decisions are being made in two employee size groupings: 1) 150 or less employees, with more group health and purchase level is either owner of the company or a safety/human resources purchase – more transactional as-needed purchase, 2) 150+ employees, looking at total healthcare dollars, vice president or higher in decision making or there is a team involved in the purchase or product review, more likely to put out request for proposals (RFP).

### **TPA/Broker issues**

- Know who your organization is working with and why.
- Understand your organization's strategy for managed care, contracted lives, direct contracting. Understand how that applies to your areas and your customers.
- Identify strategically which TPAs and Brokers you should work with and how.
- Provide education to them about your organization and build opportunities to team-sell to the same customer base. Work on ways you can best represent each other with different customer populations – what is a win/win way to sell to different customer populations and/or different product solutions? Can you share leads? Can they sell for you or bring you in the door as a value added enhancement to the health plan deliverables or for enrollment, orientation and employee education in order for them to be better healthcare consumers?
- Are you competing with them with your own organizational insurance-based product or physician network? If so, what are your strategies and tactics? How does that impact upon your relationship with the end customers? Are they confused?

### **Tips/Successes**

- Endorsement with TPA and/or Brokers.
- Three-way sales relationship and product deliverables with TPA/Broker, Provider and Employers.
- Add value with your deliverables to the TPA/Broker product that they are selling.
- Quarterly reports to the clients that demonstrate outcomes and return on investment.
- Claim and demonstrate a proactively different sales approach and product deliverable.
- Build case studies from your own environment to use in your sales approach; i.e., practice what you preach and use what you are selling to others, translate those case studies into sales opportunities and benchmarks.
- You must deliver the goods, if anything, always over-deliver.

- Also measure all levels of satisfaction, employer, patient, employee, health plan, etc. Use the feedback and respond to the feedback. This feedback, if positive, provides you with third-party case studies and testimonials. If negative, it provides a fast opportunity to resolve problems before they acerbate.
- Learn insurance, direct contracting, managed care and all the products and services applicable to each target audience.
- Think, behave and deliver in a customer-focused manner. Build everything you do and deliver from the outside in.
- Build and manage customer-focused integrated teams that are comprised of planning, marketing, sales, public relations, clinical, delivery, teleservices and customer services/account management.



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