



It's the call you never want to have to make.

"Hey boss, remember that customer we both agreed we can't afford to lose? Well...."



71%

The glue binding you to your customers isn't as strong as you think it is. 71% of B2B customers report being willing to switch suppliers whenever necessary.

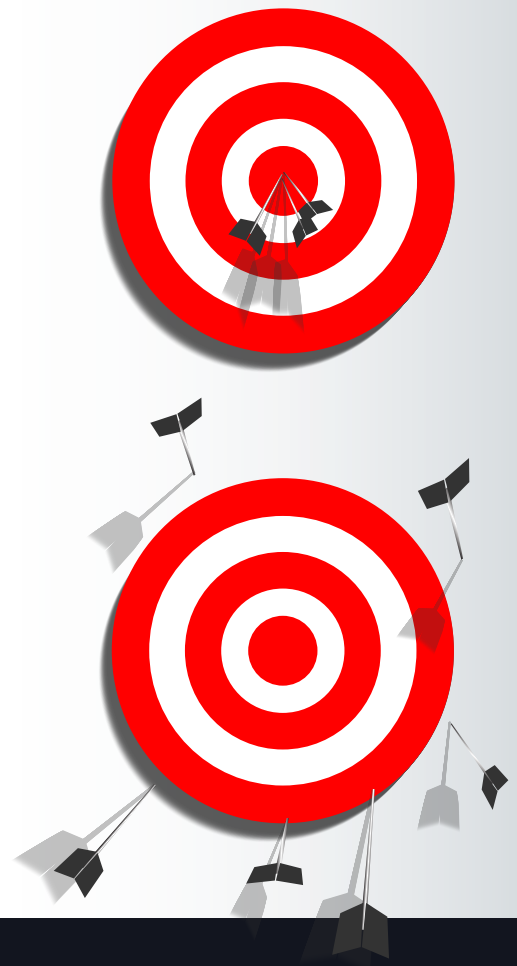
Your company's fortunes depend on a few critical customers you literally can't afford to lose. Are you doing everything you can to protect and grow those customers?



But companies don't usually just up and leave. There are always signs that a relationship is heading toward a schism.

Warning signs a "strategic" relationship is in danger:

- Your customer only calls when they need something from you. Meetings are routinely rescheduled.
- You're getting hit with RFPs. You're being funneled into Procurement, away from key decision makers.
- You're spending more time responding to execution issues than finding ways to grow together. Issues that didn't used to be a big deal suddenly are.
- You're being treated as a transactional supplier.



While this customer may be strategic to YOU, you probably aren't strategic to THEM.

By the time a customer relationship is exhibiting these signs of stress, it is often too late to turn it around. And, the typical steps that suppliers take are often doomed to fail.

- **Change your account managers.** An ill-suited strategic account manager can torpedo any strategic customer relationship, but changing too often can alienate the customer.
- **Add more expensive resources to your account team.** You can throw money and manpower at the problem and still lose the customer.
- **Lower your prices.** Congratulations, you've just affirmed your status as a transactional supplier.

So how do you make your most critical relationships absolutely shatterproof?



THE KEY TO MINIMIZING STRATEGIC ACCOUNT DEFECTIONS IS TO BECOME *INDISPENSABLE* TO YOUR CUSTOMERS.

These are some signs your customer considers you indispensable:

- You enjoy multiple relationships within your company and the customer, from top to bottom and across silos.
- Your relationships run through the business units, not Procurement.
- Either the RFPs dry up or, when they do exist, your company is writing them.
- Your customer is consolidating its business with fewer suppliers, including you.
- The customer wouldn't dream of undertaking a new initiative without getting your point of view first.



The bottom line: The most important thing isn't the thoughtfulness of your internal processes, the efficiency of your organizational chart or even the individual quality of your account managers. It is learning how to become an indispensable partner to your strategic customers. SAMA's entire reason for existence is to help the world's most well-run, forward-thinking companies protect and grow their most important strategic customer relationships by becoming indispensable to them. It is why these companies join and why they stay.

SAMA IS UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO HELP OUR MEMBER COMPANIES BECOME INDISPENSABLE TO *THEIR* CUSTOMERS.

- SAMA has unique access to hundreds of the world's most esteemed companies, who have established their market dominance by learning how to become indispensable to their customers.
- We mine these companies continuously for insights into how they have achieved this state of indispensability: where it happens, how it happens and what are the barriers that prevent it from happening.
- Then, we connect people who need answers with the people who have them – through webinars, training, conferences, leadership symposia, coaching and direct peer-to-peer exchanges. Through a half-century of work with our members, SAMA has developed frameworks that describe how to optimally design a SAM program, how to deploy an efficient process for customer-focused value creation, and how to find, develop and retain the people capable of making it all work.



The head of the SAM program at a large healthcare company recalls attending a session on customer feedback at his first SAMA conference. Using a deceptively simple idea he learned there, he designed a new survey that revealed hidden problems lurking at one of his strategic customers. As a direct result of this insight, the company turned around this faltering relationship. He estimates this insight has been worth about \$500 million in business.

THE SAMA APPROACH WORKS AS CLEARLY BORNE OUT BY THE RESULTS.



2x the growth rate for strategic accounts versus non-strategic accounts



Mature SAM programs earn 20% higher gross margins than young programs and 10% higher profit margins.



Two-thirds of SAMA members report increased customer satisfaction.

Arcadis, a global engineering firm headquartered in Amsterdam, launched a global strategic account management program with SAMA's help in 2014. Today, the company has grown its program from \$200 million to \$1.2 billion, and the strategic accounts portfolio now delivers double-digit growth rates, more than double the rate for its non-strategic accounts.

The simple SAMA approach delivers astronomical ROI for our customers, which is why they join and why they stay. Don't risk becoming the one who has to call your boss to let them know you lost that "can't lose" customer.

To join SAMA and start making yourself indispensable to your most important customers, call SAMA Director of Membership and Strategic Accounts Chris Jensen at +1 (312) 251-3131, ext. 10.



Nearly 70% of SAMA members say they've transformed a struggling strategic customer relationship thanks to SAMA.

SAMA'S APPROACH WORKS AND DELIVERS RESULTS.



Strategic Account Management Association
Tel: +1-312-251-3131
www.strategicaccounts.org



Transforming even one strategic customer relationship can cement your reputation as a business leader of the first order. It's why top companies join SAMA and why they stay.