

Going long



The past year and a half has seen countless articles analyzing the origins and lasting effects of the latest (though particularly bad) Great Recession. I don't know about you, but before bed I often enjoy doing some light reading about interest rates, credit default swaps and the Glass-Steagall Act. The thing is, when


all is said and done, the root cause of all financial bubbles can be traced to simpler terms such as greed and fear. Many times – not just in economics but life – short-sightedness and instant gratification rule the day. It's the following day when we realize mistakes were made and the poor choices have created long-term consequences canceling out whatever benefits had been sought in the first place—well, for most people and institutions anyway. Thinking about it just makes me want to put down my 401(k) statements and copy of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act and go to sleep. Why can't we remain focused on the long term when it's clearly in our best interest?

For *Velocity's* part, it always has articles about the long-term (and even short-term) advantages of thinking and acting with the long term as the goal. But then that's a central component of strategic account management, isn't it? No wonder it's so important to foster a robust SAM program both before and during times of duress. Your customers will thank you, and you'll thank yourself for being better prepared for the inevitable ups and downs of the business cycle. This magazine issue has much more to say about the subject plus a variety of others.

Bernard Quancard, SAMA's president and chief executive officer, says on Page 12, "Most global companies I have recently communicated with say the same thing: To thrive in the new economy, it is more important than ever to reinforce their global strategic accounts initiative. Lately companies have done what was necessary to survive. They are done (or nearly done) with cost cutting, they have preserved cash, short-term solutions are being instituted, the bottom line has been focused on, and it is time to place our focus back on what really matters: understanding our most crucial customers' needs and

producing programs that will deliver cash-generating, long-term solutions to both buyers and suppliers."

In his article on Page 17, "Future focus: selling and account management in the new global economy," frequent SAMA contributor Paul Hesselschwerdt of Global Partners Inc. looks at recent customer-supplier trends and what the next phase will look like. On Page 21, Wilson Learning Worldwide's Ken Valla says approaches that have served you well in the past may not be enough to avoid unwelcome surprises as your customers shift strategy to meet the challenges of uncertain times. Sibson Consulting's Joseph DiMisa says instead of continuously concentrating outward, managers need to look inward so they can focus communication within the sales organization to shore up the connection between managers and their key account teams. (See Page 24.) DHL Asia Pacific's Richard Owens says on Page 31 (the inspiration for this issue's cover), "This is the time to forge stronger partnerships with customers, take the long view and make their problems your own."

Other writers include Peter Cheverton of Insight Marketing and People Ltd., Cisco System Inc.'s Jim Day and Sandy Dick, NewLeaf Partners' Tori Eggleston, Development II Inc.'s Steven W. Lewis, Market2win Ltd.'s Edmund Bradford and Paula Viner of Cushman & Wakefield Investors. Bradford and Viner's article, "Getting started with SAM: winning hearts and minds at CWI," forms the basis of their presentation at SAMA's Pan-European Conference from February 28 to March 2 in London. Quancard will present there his always popular "Elements of SAM" session. He will also moderate a practitioner panel titled "Next-level best practices in SAM" at SAMA's 46th Annual Conference from April 25 to 28 in Chicago. Although both the London and Chicago conference will be held in the near future, we hope each sets you up well for the long term. 

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