Win-Loss Interview Service: Getting Started

This document assumes that a decision has been made to conduct interviews. It provides an overview of the steps to get started.

1. **NDA:** A Non-disclosure Agreement needs to be signed by PSP Enterprises to safeguard your information such as sales rep and customer names and phone numbers and the resulting Win/Loss or Reference interviews. All of which are confidential and are your property. Most companies have a standard contractor NDA agreement that PSP Enterprises will sign.
2. **Contract:** If you have a standard contractor agreement, that needs to be put in place.
3. **Purchase Order:** You will need to issue a purchase order number and provide an Accounts Payable contact name to PSP Enterprises to ensure that we follow the right procedures.
4. **Education:** We will need some training on your company to make sure we understand your product line. An overview presentation, white paper or other collateral at a mid-manager technical level would be the most appropriate. Independent analyses by third parties such as Gartner and Forrester are helpful.
5. **Memo to Sales reps:** You will need to have a high-level manager send an email to the targeted sales reps so that they will accept our phone calls and/or emails and respond. We can provide a sample.
6. **List of your key competitors:** We need a list of your primary competitors.
7. **Customer Questionnaire:** We will draft for you a customer interview questionnaire based on the education materials you provide and our desk research. Sample questionnaires are located on our website. You will need to review one of these and provide any changes you want to make. It is especially important that the list of selection criteria reflect your industry as closely as possible. RFPs are a very good source of criteria lists.

   Caution: an executive interview cannot last for more than about 45-50 minutes. They just cannot sit still for much longer. So, it is important to budget time for your highest priority questions and provide time for drilldown discussion.

   We aim to make the questionnaire as correct and complete as possible to have consistency across the entire set of interviews and therefore more opportunity to find statistically significant patterns. However, interviewers always probe for unexpected issue, and we can adapt the questionnaire to meet changing market conditions and areas of interest for you over time.
8. **Customer contact Information:** PSP Enterprises requires customer contact information so that we may call and conduct interviews. We need enough customer contacts and phone numbers to complete the target number of interviews. We will need the following information:
   a. **Name of person we will interview:** We need the most senior person who has a detailed knowledge of the vendor evaluation and can speak to functional, technical, commercial and strategic aspects of the decision. Usually this will be the head of the selection committee or a program manager who helped run it. We do not want people who merely authorized a decision made by others or worked on only one part of the evaluation. We need at least one contact but more are welcome provided they are qualified to speak on the matter. We will reach out to these contacts in turn.
   b. **Job title, email and phone number for the customer contact**
   c. **Whether the deal was won or lost**
   d. **How much the deal was worth**
   e. **When the deal was won or lost**

f. **What competitors you faced in the deal, if known.**

9. **Validate customer contact information with sales reps:** In most companies, only the field sales reps can reliably say who we should call for an interview and how we can best reach them. CRM systems rarely track this information well enough, so it is necessary that sales reps at least review the list of contacts generated from a CRM report to validate that the deals and contacts are appropriate. Sales reps are very busy people who have lots of requests thrown at them from many directions. It is sometimes difficult to get their attention and response. We recommend you address this challenge as follows:
   a. By having a senior leader of the sales organization send an email to reps and their managers informing them of the program and the importance of win/loss to the sales organization. This kind of air cover is essential to show the reps that their management supports the program and that it's not voluntary. Do not approach reps asking them a "favor" that they "help" the program or you will find that future requests for validation will become more and more difficult.
   b. By asking reps to validate that the companies and contacts identified for interviews in your CRM system were in fact competitive and that the people are qualified to speak to the issues. **Do not ask reps to "nominate" accounts for the program; this tends to lead to cherry-picking of accounts and potential bias in the results.**
   c. By providing the sales rep a transcript back from any interview we can complete. However, this incentive only works in the second and subsequent quarters of the process. In the initial startup quarter, the reps do not know what they will get back.
   d. By carefully tracking and reporting who has responded. Sales reps are driven by visible metrics. Thus, only by making it clear that their response is being tracked can we insure we get them to participate. You will receive a regular status report on who has responded.