

## KEEPING OPPORTUNITY KNOCKING

**T**he old proverb says opportunity knocks but once. Happily that's not always true. Sometimes, as BCS Systems is finding out, there are so many opportunities in the marketplace it's difficult to go after them all. But BCS' newly revamped Sales Support organization is trying.

Says Karen Varnas, BCS' new Sales Support vice president, "Our job is to give the account teams all the tools they need to make their jobs easier and their selling efforts more productive so that customer needs are truly met. What we are trying to do is make certain that wherever there is a profitable sales opportunity in any of our markets, a BCS salesperson is knocking on the door."

Deploying those sales resources effectively, however, is a complex job, one involving new programs to free-up salespeople for more face-to-face selling, and targeted tools such as discounting programs, to help close more sales of key products.

Moreover, with the sales channel becoming increasingly specialized to meet the needs of customers and to blunt the competition's edge in the marketplace, Sales Support is becoming more specialized and targeted, too. The Sales Support organization's primary job to ensure that salespeople's time is well-spent, in face-to-face contact with the customer.

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"We're looking at how we can help out at the branch level. We're trying to take the burden of time-consuming activities off our salespeople," Varnas says.

One such activity is bid preparation. AT&T salespeople spend nearly a third of their time preparing bids and responses to customers' Request For Proposals (RFPs). As a rule, the competition's salespeople spend less time on proposals, and more time on sales calls.

To help relieve that particular drain on salespeople's time, BCS last month opened the National Proposal Center in Denver. The center responds to large RFPs involving 1,000 lines or more for the System 85 and DEFINITY® Generic 2 Systems, and provides assistance to account teams that reduces bid preparation time from weeks to days. Four regional centers that will handle jobs of fewer than 1,000 lines are slated to be up and running later this year. A dedicated center will handle Federal Systems proposals.

"The value of this program is that it effectively uses our resources in Denver to generate proposals," Varnas explains. "And with the boilerplate proposal tools we provided the branches in May, a sales team can customize a proposal for its particular customer's needs in less than half the

time required previously. That lets salespeople focus their efforts exactly where they belong...on face-to-face selling."

The National Additions Center also is helping the sales force to spend even more quality time with customers. On August 1, the NAC expanded to handle all AUDIX and AUDIX Voice Power configurations and additions. By the end of the year, says Barbara Augun, district manager, the NAC will handle all additions to existing systems regardless of size, instead of handling only smaller additions of fewer than 500 lines.

Discounting is the focus of a trial program aimed at improving the profitability of new sales. The program gives BSD branch managers the authority to set discount levels offered to individual customers, and rewards sales teams with increased compensation when they sell at lower discounts. The trial, which started in June at five branches, was expanded to three Sales vice presidents' organizations in August.

"This trial empowers the Field to act faster in competitive situations," Varnas says. "When they feel discounts are justified and needed to close a sale, they will be able to offer them. The trial's success will be measured against profitability, not just revenue. The goal is improved BCS margins and win rates."

An AUDIX stimulation program to increase sales in this high-growth market includes a \$500 price reduction, which makes AUDIX much more competitive at the low end of the market.

Another AUDIX stimulation program offers current customers a free upgrade to the new AUDIX R1V5 software, when it becomes available early next year. The new software provides features such as prioritized messaging and enhanced broadcast capabilities that give AUDIX the edge in head-to-head comparisons with the competition. Also underway is an AUDIX Voice Power Try-It/Buy-It program, which aims to duplicate the 80-90 percent success rate of the AUDIX Try-It/Buy-It program (see "Try-It/Buy It Available for AUDIX Voice Power").

Each of these efforts is being helped through the temporary redeployment of BCS headquarters staff people, set in motion just last month. The first group of headquarters managers, Varnas says, were assigned to the National Additions Center and the National Proposal Center. Additional headquarters people will soon take up account executive and Sales Support positions in the Field sales force.

The thrust of the 90-day redeploy-



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ment program is to generate new sales and revenue in the short term and, over the longer term, provide valuable information for BCS' ongoing marketing efforts.

"Our sales force is the critical link between BCS and our customers," says Varnas. "We need to use this link to understand our markets and our customers' requirements better. Once we do that, we'll be able to take better advantage of all the opportunities the marketplace offers."

## TRY-IT/BUY-IT AVAILABLE FOR AUDIX VOICE POWER

**T**he Try-It/Buy-It program has been expanded to include the AUDIX Voice Power product. This 60-day trial gives account teams an additional tool to increase AUDIX Voice Power sales.

AUDIX Voice Power, BCS' PC-based voice mail and messaging system, is targeted to smaller customers with up to 300 voice mail users. Introduced a year ago as a basic stand-alone voice messaging system, AUDIX Voice Power allows full integration with AT&T's DEFINITY® System, Generic 1, System 75 PBXs, and System 25 PBXs.

"AUDIX Voice Power fills an important niche in the market," says Kim Epley, Product Marketing manager, "by bringing the power of voice mail and messaging and AUDIX-like features to smaller customers whose needs do not economically justify a full-size AUDIX system. With the trial program, we can position the product better with strategic customers who require a product trial to prove the value of voice messaging to them. We're confident that this program will help us increase our market share."

## AGT WINS IN LOTTERY MARKETPLACE

**W**ith more than \$10 million in sales, AGT International, Inc., based in Columbus, Ohio, is a company that provides state governments with cost-effective solutions to their lottery needs.

What's special about AGT is that it's providing significant new services to the lottery marketplace through its Lottery Interactive Telephone Information System (LITIS™). LITIS, based on AT&T's CONVERSANT® Voice Information System, provides public information services, winning ticket validation, ticket ordering and invoice activation without the need for on-line operators.

Says Jeff Gatwood, AGT Marketing, "Using AT&T's CONVERSANT System enables us to offer a previously cost-prohibitive solution to state lotteries, their retail customers and lottery players."

Lottery players use the CONVERSANT System to communicate with a lottery's host computer by pressing numbers on the telephone touch-tone pad. The CONVERSANT System converts the touch tones into data signals that the host computer understands, and lets callers know whether their tickets are winning ones.

AGT installed its first LITIS System for the Virginia Lottery in September, 1988. To avoid some of the pitfalls associated with starting a new lottery, Virginia used the LITIS System to validate "instant winner" tickets by phone. As a result, only a handful of people are needed to answer calls from the state's 5,000 retail agents, who call 24-hours-a-day for information.

Without the CONVERSANT System's help, a lottery office ordinarily would need at least 25 validation clerks to handle such call volume.

In addition, the state uses LITIS for a public information line that gives winning numbers for the previous year, location of lottery offices and instructions on how to play games. This line, Gatwood says, recently handled 44,000 calls on a single Sunday, and supports roughly 400,000 calls each month, validating nearly all of the tickets for Virginia's lottery.

Another big CONVERSANT System user is the Ohio Lottery, which earlier this year went networkwide with a LITIS-based system for instant ticket validation. Annual ticket sales of Ohio's instant lottery games tripled in the past two years. To keep up with the growth, Ohio needed to automate some of the operations. In addition, ticket agents were being inconvenienced by an inordinate amount of administrative work, which had a negative impact on sales.

The Ohio lottery worked with AGT, which provided a solution that integrates the LITIS System with another of its lottery offerings, ZIP Cash™. ZIP Cash is a unique "bar code reading" terminal that communicates bi-directionally with LITIS and a CONVERSANT System to enable instant ticket retailers to communicate

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