



[Andrea Sittig-Rolf](#)

Business & Sales Strategist

Better Ways to Land Bigger Accounts: Getting Your Foot in the Door

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Fortune 1000 companies as clients are what I like to call "premium accounts" because they're typically larger and allow you the opportunity to sell more of what you sell as well as increase revenue more efficiently than with smaller accounts. But, getting a Fortune 1000 company as a client is no easy feat. The decision makers we would typically deal with inside these premium companies are bombarded by salespeople on a regular basis and, as a result, practice tight screening tactics to prevent you from getting through. While cold-calling techniques can be very effective in some cases, if you're both persistent and patient, there is another way!

You're probably familiar with networking as a technique to try to get into high-level companies, but I would guess your networking strategy is typical of most entrepreneurs. If so, you attend networking events and work with referral partners by simply asking "who do you know that I could talk to who might benefit from the products and services I offer?" Now, instead of this approach, try company-specific networking.

Here's how it works. Create a spreadsheet of your top 10 most desirable premium accounts. The headings across the top of each column should read as follows: Company name; contact name; mailing address; email address; phone number and notes.

Next, complete as much of the information on the spreadsheet that you already have, company name being the most obvious, but also include information such as mailing address and phone number, if you have it. Whatever information you don't have, leave blank.

OK. Here's where it gets interesting.

Now, email your best referrals partners and contacts and attach the desired premium accounts spreadsheet you've just completed. Send the email to one referral partner at a time, rather than an

email blast, to keep it more personal. The body of the email you send to your contacts should read something like this:

Hi (referral partner name)! I'm on a quest for some new premium accounts and I'm hoping you can help me.

Attached you will find a spreadsheet of my top 10 most desired accounts. I have completed the information I already have, and am hoping you will have some additional information that I am missing, such as the appropriate contact name at each company. I prefer to speak directly with (title of your decision maker), however, would greatly appreciate having the contact information of anyone you know inside each organization so that I may get my foot in the door.

In exchange for your help with this project, I would be happy to do the same for you.

Thanks in advance for your help!

You may also consider offering a Starbucks gift card, of a nominal amount, as a thank you for any information that is provided by each of your referral partners.

Also, notice the offer at the end of the email that you would be happy to do the same for each of your referral partners. By offering to do the same for your referral partner, you increase your chances for success in getting your spreadsheet back with some of the additional information. You'll be happy to know that the people who receive your email will be thrilled to help because they understand the effectiveness of a company specific networking strategy and will be able to implement the same strategy for their own businesses.

Once you've compiled the remaining information on the spreadsheet you were initially lacking, you now have the information you need to get your foot in the door with each of your premium accounts. Now, instead of cold calling, you should have a contact name at each company. If the contact at each desired premium account given by your referral partners is your typical decision maker, great! All you have to do now is call the person to whom you've been referred and use the name of your referral partner as a reference.

If the person you have been referred to is not your typical decision maker, you still have the "in" you need.

Begin the search for your desired contact within each desired premium account by calling the contact you were given by your referral partner, and use your referral partner's name as a reference. Next, simply ask the person you've been referred to who at their company would be the appropriate person for you to speak with based on the products and services you provide. Take it from there to schedule a meeting with the desired contact and start the sales process to eventually close the deal.

Try this technique today and finally get your foot in the door at those premium accounts you've been dying to land! **Follow Andrea Sittig-Rolf on Twitter: www.twitter.com/TheBlitzMaster**