

## Putting Key Account Management into Practice

If you have very large clients, do not hesitate to take the key accounts approach as far as possible. Especially if it is annoying!

### Key accounts are Business Units!

Key accounts are markets in their own right that are to be worked as veritable sources of profit, something which rarely happens. A Key Account Manager is often a very good salesperson but not yet a future Business Unit Director with broader expertise than a salesperson.

As shown in the chart opposite, companies generally have traditional account plans.

Unfortunately, the content is unsatisfactory as it is not that of a profit-making business. Managing a key account as a profit-making business means including the words, 'budget', 'specific logistics', 'medium-term', 'R&D investment', 'specific offers', 'marketing investment', 'specific services', 'return on investments', 'hierarchical organisation of teams allocated to the account' rather than, 'operational management of the sales teams', 'operations', 'R&D', etc.

This last point is the most important as it gives absolute power to the person responsible for the account; this is a step that few leaders agree to take as it stirs up the organisation methods and practices in place to a great extent.

Experiments in this area, which have been few and far between, have given such positive results in terms of effectiveness that they have sometimes been the victims of their own success: a stop had to be put to such overwhelming and disturbing evidence.

Anglo-Saxon country leaders often have fewer qualms about shaking up their form of organisation and their key account managers are considered as tomorrow's managers with a gift for knowing the client's needs, risk-taking and profit; just what is needed alongside a CEO.

### CONTENT OF AN ACCOUNT PLAN

