

Edison Group – Competitive Solutions for Sales

Edison Introduction

Edison Group is a custom consultancy, prepared to answer specific challenges in sales, marketing, and development. In today's rapidly changing environment, our custom approach is especially effective.

- As a content provider, we deliver competitive analysis, product and solution analysis, product testing, business value and Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) studies, customer and partner research, customer case studies, partner program support, white papers, sales enablement tools, market analysis, and related marketing content.
- As a content distributor, we use social media channels to target appropriate audiences with actionable messaging that drives intended audiences to pre-determined landing pages.

We work with technology executives to help them educate customers, to understand why customers want a product or solution, and to quantify why theirs is the best and obvious choice.

The objective of both of these activities is to enhance revenues.

How We Help Sales Teams

We help sales teams who are:

- Concerned they don't know enough about their competitors' products, or how they stack up against them, in order to win in competitive solutions.
- Worried they don't have the right sales tools to deal with competitive claims.
- Having difficulty providing their customers with compelling reasons to buy.

Edison works closely with product managers and sales enablement teams to help them meet their sales goals by arming them with knowledge and tools to:

- Define and differentiate products
- Counter competitor claims
- Focus on competitor weaknesses and their own strengths
- Answer tough questions from their customers
- Level even tougher questions at their competitors
- And most importantly, to win sales

Goals of Competitive Solutions

1. Strategize positioning, differentiate products, clarify value proposition, develop messaging, and plan promotions.
2. Enable the sales force to win by providing them strategies, tactics, and resources.
3. Answer specific competitive questions and challenges raised during sales process.
4. Re-invigorate the competitive spirit by creating a drumbeat of relevant competitive information, news, and topics.

Working with Edison Group

Because all of our work is customized, we go through a discovery process during initial project discussions. When you are faced with competitive challenges, the most efficient method of working with Edison and starting this discovery process is for you to send us a summary of your needs that briefly describes:

1. Your goals and what you are looking to accomplish.
2. The type of research and methodology you have in mind.
3. What results and deliverable you want to have developed.
4. A project timeline and budget range that all your requirements need to fit within.

From this, Edison creates a project understanding document that describes the various aspects of the project scope. We then work with you to enhance and refine the scope until it accurately describes your needs and expectations for the project. Once we have a mutual understanding, we create a proposal that includes project timeline and cost.

Research Methods

Edison can incorporate a variety of primary and secondary research methodologies, including but not limited to, interviews or surveys with appropriate vendor personnel, outside analysts, customers, and sales representatives; examination of existing Edison research data, hands-on product testing and benchmarking; review of many sources of publicly available information, product documentation and demos, online resources, client-provided materials, and trade press resources.

Analysis Methods

Depending on the sales tool and what is appropriate and necessary, Edison will review and analyze research data and information, and will develop competitive analysis, analyst insight, recommendations to sales, response to competitive news and events, and actionable sales strategies.

Deliverable Descriptions

Competitive Product Matrix

The competitive product matrix is a visual representation with side-by-side comparisons of the features, configurations, functionality, and support options for client's product vs. the competitors' products. Although it is meant for internal purposes, it can be sanitized for use as a “leave-behind” for sales people.

Competitive Sales Guides

The competitive sales guide is a strategic and actionable document used to arm the sales force with knowledge and tools to counter competitor claims, to answer tough questions from customers, to level even tougher questions at competitors, to focus on competitor weaknesses and their own strengths, and most importantly, to win sales. The sales guide applies the information gained from product analyses to objections and opportunities encountered in actual sales situations, based on interviews with the sales team.

Competitive Battlecards

Used internally by the sales force, the battlecard is a succinct guide on how to sell a product or solution in a competitive situation, and how to gain an advantage over the competition. The level of detail and depth of the battlecard is based on the clients needs but may include summaries of the following: product overview, top features and benefits, feature comparison, pricing and licensing, system requirements, product strengths, product weaknesses, and challenges and responses.

Competitive White Paper

The white paper is a public report that offers an objective third-party perspective, provides evidence that validates claims, educates customers as to the strengths and benefits of the product and what it can do for them, and promotes to the entire industry that the company and solution is the better choice. This report offers key information prospective clients need to make product selection decisions. Although presented in an impartial format, it shows how a client's product's strengths and unique features contrast with their competitor's product's weaknesses.

TCO Study

The TCO study provides an objective review of the business value, including all credible and meaningful financial impacts, of deploying and implementing your solution rather than your competitor's solution. This report provides a framework that clearly communicates the total cost of ownership, helps your sales force articulate your solution's value proposition, and reduces your sales cycle.

Customer/Partner Needs Analysis

Through interviews, surveys, and other research, the needs analysis helps you better understand your customers and partners, their problems, concerns, and product needs. This can help you find untapped opportunities, plan your product roadmap, improve your marketing strategy, enhance your partner program, and increase market share.

Case Studies

Brief customer case studies on competitor tear-outs, including the business challenge, client's solution, the results, and technical implementation. Case studies can be published via WebEx recordings, anonymously via social networking channels, or via traditional media outlets.

Sales Presentation

Augmenting and following the topics of the competitive sales guide, Edison can create a slide presentation with presenter notes for internal sales training. A customer facing version of the slide presentation can show the advantages of the client's solution and can be used as a leave-behind with customers.

TCO Calculator

The TCO calculator is an essential tool used to calculate the total direct and indirect costs, not only the cost of purchase, but other aspects in the further use and maintenance of the technology. It interactively demonstrates to IT decision makers your solution's financial benefits, showing a clear and compellingly business value of your solution that is meaningful and believable to prospects.

Retainer Based: Sales Challenge/Rapid Response

When account managers encounter a specific competitive challenge in a sales situation, they submit a competitive trouble ticket to Edison, who researches the issue and responds with a brief document that describes how to deal with the competitive situation, how to counter the competitor's claim, and how to win the sale.

Retainer Based: Compete Flash

A compete flash is a short email that addresses a specific competitive issue. It is emailed daily or weekly to the sales force. The topic for each flash usually comes from a competitor's press release, an industry news item, or a sales rep's question. Edison will analyze the topic, perform any additional research required, and will provide commentary, as well as recommendations and action items, if appropriate. Alternative methods of distribution include podcasts, internal compete blog, and client's intranet.