



# 'Not all clients are created equal'



Tania de Decker

"When running the business of global strategic clients, you need to organize yourself in such a way that you match client expectations. Not all clients are created equal, so stop treating them as if they are. Focus your valuable time on the highest potential, use intrinsic interest and personal candor to open the collaborative space, be your clients' guide through available resources, anchor yourself deeply and stay ahead of the transition curve."

**In the spotlight is the energetic and determined Managing Director of Global Strategic Accounts at Randstad Enterprise Group, Tania de Decker. Tania brings more than 25 years of experience in all facets of talent acquisition solutions and technology. With deep insights and progressive perspectives, Tania impacts HR and talent leaders to play a strategic role in driving growth.**

According to Tania, commercial excellence is about doing the right things for the right reasons. From an organizational perspective you need to segment your clients based on their relational needs and service preferences. Not all clients want the same thing. They have objectively segmented their clients based on potential, mix of services, geography and relationship commitment. The last one is rated at 50% of total. Why? Because "if there is no need for a real collaborative strategic approach, don't try and convert them," Tania replies. It is not because you have a relationship that you sell more. It's all about having the right partnership. Realism about where the client sees you on its strategic scale is paramount. And at the same time, there is also a gut feeling about what is possible. Prioritizing clients that want to commit to real partnership, leads to better priority setting, creating more time for collaborative solution design and a greater positive impact on the client's strategy. To be successful, invest your valuable time where your leverage is the highest and business will flourish.

So, how do you develop commercial excellence? Of course, it is about listening and interacting effectively. But, equally important, it's also about predicting and foreseeing where the

client will go. It's important to know your client and what their challenges are, preferably based on data. Most importantly, when dealing with executives you need to be transparent and consultative; they hate a hidden sales mindset. The most important mindset, according to Tania, is intrinsic interest. Being curious about the client, googling everything about them, doing some mystery shopping and reading about them, are ways to stay curious. From that curiosity arises engagement and positive drive to challenge them as well. These conversations need personal candor, Tania acknowledges. And you cannot fake personal candor; it comes from within, she says, and helps build trust.

What really works in engaging your clients, is bringing them together to meet and discuss their challenges in a round table setting. These exclusive executive tables give clients the ability to benchmark with each other and are highly appreciated. But also, innovation workshops and consultancy meetings are ways to engage with your clients and grant them access to scarce resources they need to be successful. Tania states that more often innovation — and solution design — are the entry ticket to C-level and not the other way around. You need to create enough trust, success and breakthroughs to get their attention. And once you do, make sure you use a multi-level approach to engage all relevant constituents.

The biggest changes in the past decade, according to Tania, are the growing number of stakeholders (up to 16) involved in a deal and a longer decision-making process. The complexity of solutions has also increased significantly. And finally, the flexibility and agility that are required in a commercial role has gone up as well, demanding strong personal anchors and an intrinsic motivation to stay effective and successful in a fast-changing environment.