How to Sell KnowledgeSync

What to Say, What Materials to Use & When to Use Them

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There's a LOT of KnowledgeSync sales and marketing material around – from data sheets and white papers, to PowerPoint presentations, case studies, and ROI calculators.

But what are the key questions you should ask when initially approaching a KnowledgeSync prospect; when should you use one piece of literature over another, and under what circumstances should you demo the product?

The purpose of this guide is to give you a general outline regarding how to approach a KnowledgeSync prospect and the best order in which to use specific KnowledgeSync sales materials. This guide will help you form a "KnowledgeSync Plan of Attack" – and identify the best ways to turn a KnowledgeSync prospect into a KnowledgeSync sale.

Speak to the Person; Not to the Technology

KnowledgeSync has broad appeal across an organization; from the CEO to the IT staffer, KnowledgeSync offers significant benefits. Unfortunately, those benefits are not the same for each of these various people, and so you need to tailor your KnowledgeSync opening message according to the person(s) you are directing it at.

Consider the following positions within an organization and the corresponding benefits that each of these people will be looking for:

- **Executives** wish to see value from an investment. Your opening message should address how KnowledgeSync can increase sales, reduce operating costs, help gain visibility into what's happening (and not happening) within their organization, and provide a competitive edge.

- **Departmental Managers** wish to increase productivity of their staff. Your message should focus on departmental business processes that can be improved by using KnowledgeSync.

- **Departmental Staff Members** want to address specific business pains. Your message should include very specific scenarios that these staffers can relate to -- and help them see how KnowledgeSync can make their jobs easier and make them more productive.

- **IT Managers & Staff** want a solution that will lessen the burden of tasks that the rest of the staff rely upon them to do. At the same time, IT personnel will want a solution that puts a minimal amount of additional application maintenance on their plate while adding value to as many of their organization's software applications as possible.

In most cases, KnowledgeSync interest will be led by an executive or departmental manager; as such, the following sections will address how best to engage those people and how to move them along in the sales cycle.

"I'd like to tell you about . . . "

So – what's the best way to introduce KnowledgeSync?

Many slogans and tag-lines have been applied to KnowledgeSync; the one that seems to have adopted the most wide-spread usage and acceptance is "**Alerts and Workflow**". It's simple, descriptive, and lacking in the usual high-tech jargon and acronyms. Other tag lines that have been used include:

- "Alerts on steroids"
- "A smoke-detector for your data"
- "The right information to the right people at the right time"
- "It's what you don't know that will hurt you"
- "The invisible assistant" (or "our extra worker")
- "A monitoring and response solution"

Of course no tag line would be complete without an acronym, and KnowledgeSync is no exception. "Business Activity Monitoring" (or "BAM") is the official classification of the KnowledgeSync software.

Categorized under the broader heading of Business Intelligence, a BAM technology is one that watches over business data looking for specific activities and then automatically executes the appropriate response actions.

Immediate Objections

After initially broaching the subject of KnowledgeSync Alerts and Workflow, your prospect will either respond with some degree of interest and desire to learn more, or they will present one of two immediate objections to your proposal.

- "I don't need it (or have the budget for it) right now . . . "

  Or:

- "My current ERP/HR/CRM system already does alerts."

The first objection is best addressed by asking the prospect if they've taken the time to calculate what **not** having an alerts & workflow solution in place is costing them today. At the same time, you can mention that with KnowledgeSync, the prospect can implement a solution for less than $2,000.

One approach to this objection is to ask the prospect to take just twenty (or so) minutes and go through the KnowledgeSync ROI Calculator. Chances are that they'll be amazed at just how much **not** having an alerts solution is costing them.

By using the real life scenarios in the ROI Calculator, you can get a prospect to start thinking about ways they can improve their business processes to save money, increase revenue and/or improve cash flow.

(E.g., one KnowledgeSync prospect was losing a significant amount of business to their competition because they'd run out of stock on particular high-margin items. They addressed this issue by using KnowledgeSync to monitor stock levels, create purchase orders, get the required approval, and auto-deliver those POs to the corresponding vendors.)

The second objection is the more common – and it is entirely due to a prospect's narrow vision of what an "alerts system" can do. Read on . . .

When You Say "Alerts", Your Prospect Envisions . . .

. . . an **alarm clock**.

That's right -- to the vast majority of prospects out there, an "alerts system" sends out reminders. For example:

- Reminders of stock running low
- Reminders of overdue invoices
- Reminders of contracts about to expire

So – one of your first tasks after introducing KnowledgeSync to a prospect is to "take their blinders off" – that is, to expand their vision of what an alerts & workflow solution can really do. Consider the following two scenarios:

- *When a new sales order is placed, KnowledgeSync automatically generates the customer's invoice in PDF format and emails it to them and to their salesrep.*

- *At month-end, KnowledgeSync calculates each customer's purchases and compares it to the customers' average monthly sales. If the difference is over 25%, the customer's salesperson is notified.*

Are those "alerts"? You bet they are. But does a prospect think of them as "alerts"? Absolutely not.
So -- when it comes to educating your prospects about what's possible with an "alerts & workflow" solution, we suggest expanding your definition in the following way:

"KnowledgeSync Alerts and Workflow uniquely combines BI-strength data analysis with alerts, automatic document and report distribution, and workflow capabilities."

(And at this point, some additional "alert scenarios" such as the two above will help further illustrate and validate the preceding statement.)

You've Got Their Attention – Now Get Their Interest

Okay – you've introduced KnowledgeSync and have expanded the prospect's understanding of an alerts and workflow solution. But does your prospect yet see a need for KnowledgeSync?

To start discussing specific alert scenarios is -- at this point – premature.

You first need to ask "big picture" questions in order to know which alert scenarios might appeal to the prospect. These big picture questions are provided in the KnowledgeSync Talking Points document.

The "Talking Points" document contains a list of general questions to ask your prospect, along with the potential answers that you may receive from them. Based upon your prospect's answers, there are additional follow-up questions to ask.

Among the questions that **<u>you</u>** can ask during this process are:

1) In your daily business activities, have you ever felt like saying ***"If only we had known . . . ?"*** Can you give me a few examples of that?

2) Do you spend time running reports or using analytical tools to look for "**exceptions**" in your daily transactions? What reports do you use for this?

3) Does your organization have **mobile or remote staff** who need to be kept informed regardless of time, location, or communications device? What do these staff do and what devices do they use?

4) Would it be helpful to **automate** some of your workflow processes – such as "if stock drops below 'x', automatically create a purchase order for vendor 'y'"? What other repetitive process does your organization have?

5) Would it be useful to have a **single solution** that could monitor & respond to conditions in all your business applications? What other business applications are you using?

With some prospects they'll beat you to the punch and begin to ask questions of their own, wondering whether KnowledgeSync is the solution to their needs. In this environment, <u>listening</u> is key. Listen for phrases such as:

"We need a way to know when . . . "

"We end up having to do 'x' because we didn't know about 'y' . . . "

"We need a way to automatically send out invoices, statements, dunning notices, or other forms . . . "

"Right now we wait until the end of the week or end of the month to . . . "

"We have a whole bunch of reports and the person who runs them . . . "

"We've got this other application and there's no way to tie together . . . "

"We'd like to automate some of our processes, like re-ordering stock . . . "

"We don't have a lot of money to spend . . . "

The top two questions are the most important – the problem of "not knowing" or of "knowing too late". But keep your ears open for business processes that are currently done manually and could be automated.

The KnowledgeSync "Big Three" of Collateral

If you've gotten this far in your discussions with your prospect, it's safe to say that you've got genuine interest on your hands. Now is the time to provide the prospect with material that serves two purposes:

- It summarizes the general benefits that you've just reviewed with them.

- It drills-down to specific business scenarios ("pains") that the client can relate to.

There are three pieces of collateral that you should give your prospect at this time:

1) The **<u>Data Sheet</u>**. This summarizes KnowledgeSync's general benefits.

   Short (one page back & front) and concise, this recaps the high-level capabilities and benefits of KnowledgeSync. Note that the Data Sheet is "application-type" specific; that is, there are separate Data Sheets for KnowledgeSync depending on whether it is to be used with ERP, HR, or CRM solutions. (The business "cases" in each vary accordingly.)

2) The **Discovery Document**. This enables a prospect to identify specific "pains" and business scenarios that they could use KnowledgeSync to address.

   Like the Data Sheet, there are separate Discovery documents for each application type, such as ERP, HR, and CRM.

3) The **Return on Investment (ROI) Calculator**. Also specific to "application type", the ROI Calculator lets a prospect see how long it would take to pay off their investment in KnowledgeSync.

   The result of the ROI Calculator is usually strikingly low – the average ROI period of almost 1,100 KnowledgeSync clients (surveyed in 2009/2010) was just 88 days.

With these documents, you have a very good chance of gaining that prospect's KnowledgeSync business.

Role-Specific Collateral Modifications

As mentioned at the very start of this document, depending on whom you're discussing KnowledgeSync with, your "message" needs to vary somewhat. This is most easily done by making the collateral that each person receives be specific to their job function.

The following are ideas regarding suggested "literature packs" that you can supply to each of your prospect types:

- **Executives**. Give them the "big three" plus a case study (the one on "Toyo Ink" is excellent), a product review (Forbes.com -- http://www.knowledgesync.com/news-release-details.php?nid=57) and a white paper (either "Data-Driven" or "Two Types of BI"). The last 3 items provide an executive with the reassurance that they are investing in a proven, established solution.

  Be prepared to accept that an executive will probably not go through the ROI Calculator on their own, but in seeing it, will often assign that task to the corresponding departmental manager.

- **Departmental Managers**. Give them the "big three" accompanied by the list of pre-configured KnowledgeSync events for the application (ERP, CRM, HR, etc.) their department is using.

  It's important that you get departmental managers to go through the ROI Calculator, as they are the only people who know their department's needs well enough to accurately go through it.

- **Line of Business Staff Members**. Give them the same materials as their managers, but realize that they will probably not have broad enough knowledge to go through the ROI Calculator.

  Instead, direct their attention to the "Discovery Document", which will not only help them understand what KnowledgeSync can do, but will also get them thinking about additional potential uses of the KnowledgeSync solution.

- **IT Manager or IT Staff Member**. Give them the KnowledgeSync Data Sheet, Technical Specifications document, and links to the Pre-Installation Guide, KnowledgeSync Manual, and Training Library.

  The Data Sheet will help this person understand what KnowledgeSync does, the rest of the pieces will provide information on how KnowledgeSync does it, and what impact on system resources it will have.

  The pre-installation guide and manual are available from:

http://www.vineyardsoft.com/downloads-documentation.php

(Under the branch titled “Technical Documents”.)

And the training library is located at:

http://www.vineyardsoft.com/training-vids.php

Is a Product Demo Always Necessary?

In a word – no.

Over 65% of all KnowledgeSync clients have purchased the software without ever seeing the application. This is partially due to the low cost of KnowledgeSync, and is also due to the fact that KnowledgeSync is not a user-based application and therefore there is less interest in the look and feel of the application.

Thus once a prospect understands the types of business conditions (“pains”) that KnowledgeSync can identify, how KnowledgeSync sends alerts, how it delivers reports, and how it executes intelligent workflow, many prospects feel that there is little need to “prove it”. The sales collateral you have provided them, along with a historical track record of success (12 years; 7,500+ clients) is often enough to convince many prospects to buy it sight unseen.

Then again, there are people from Missouri (the “show me state”), and they need to “see” the product before they’re willing to buy it. But don’t forget that demos are like sales literature; what’s ideal content for one person may be wholly unnecessary for another.

In general, departmental managers and executives are looking at the application from a business-need perspective; a demo to them should spend the majority of its time reviewing the pre-configured events (“value now”) with the remainder of the time devoted to the twin subjects of ease-of-use and ability to customize to company-specific requirements.

If your primary demo targets are more technical in nature, ease-of-use and flexibility are of primary importance, seeing how it’s most likely going to be their job to configure and manage KnowledgeSync on an ongoing basis.

Regardless of whom you’re selling to, don’t automatically assume a demo is a required part of the KnowledgeSync sales process; in many cases a demo is nothing more than an unnecessary expansion of the sales cycle for a product that – in the prospect’s eyes – they’ve already decided on.

(And don’t forget that pre-recorded product demos also exist – and can save you a lot of time!)

The KnowledgeSync Presentation

At this point in the sales process, your prospect should:

- Understand the overall purpose and value proposition of KnowledgeSync
- Understand the difference between “basic alerts” and KnowledgeSync “Alerts & Workflow”
- Realize that the price-to-value benefit (the ROI) of KnowledgeSync is very cost-effective
- Have in mind specific business scenarios (“pains”) that KnowledgeSync can address

So – now you simply need to “prove” to the prospect that the solution (KnowledgeSync) exists, provides the functionality already discussed, and is relatively easy to use.

This is what the KnowledgeSync demo is all about.

Here are some basic guidelines about giving an effective product demo:

- Split your demo into two parts; the first part should be a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation in which you review what you've already told the prospect about KnowledgeSync, followed by a description of KnowledgeSync's components, and (lastly) its pricing.

  This PowerPoint presentation should take between 15 – 20 minutes.

- The second part of your presentation should be a live KnowledgeSync demo. The demo itself should also take from 15 – 20 minutes. The demo should show the prospect that the functionality thus far discussed can be seen in corresponding options within the application, the demo should also illustrate KnowledgeSync's ease of use.

Lastly – and unquestionably most importantly – if you don't feel that you (or a member of your organization) can do a great KnowledgeSync demo, ***let Vineyardsoft do the demo for you***.

There is no charge for this service, Vineyardsoft will let you "manage" the overall presentation, and we'll make sure to touch upon whatever key points you wish us to cover. In other words, we guarantee you a top-notch presentation. Just email sales@vineyardsoft.com and we'll get it done.

The KnowledgeSync PowerPoint Presentation

There are a LOT of PowerPoint presentations about KnowledgeSync – so make sure you choose the best one for your prospect. In general, KnowledgeSync PowerPoint presentations tend to fall into one of three categories:

1) **Partner Specific Presentations**. These are presentations that have been private-labeled for specific software vendors. One such company for whom these presentations are available is Sage Software – so the presentations are branded "Sage KnowledgeSync", and the product is treated as part of the Sage Software family of solutions.

2) **Product Type Presentations**. These are presentations that have been tailored according to the "type" of application that the prospect is interested in using KnowledgeSync with. Thus Vineyardsoft offers presentations that address KnowledgeSync's use with ERP applications, CRM applications, HR applications, and so on.

3) **Business Objective Presentations**. These are presentations that focus more on specific business initiatives or objectives, and correlate those objectives with the capabilities provided by the KnowledgeSync solution. Among the presentations in this category are:

   i. **"How to Become a Data-Driven Organization**"
   ii. "**How to Achieve Cost-Effective Compliance**"
   iii. "**The Two Types of Business Intelligence**"

In many cases, there are presentations that fall into all three categories – such as a "Sage-specific" presentation for users of "ERP" solutions who are looking to become more "Data-Driven".

Two of these presentations are available in a pre-recorded format from the Vineyardsoft website:

- "KnowledgeSync Overview" – an 18-minute presentation on the general uses, benefits, and modules of KnowledgeSync when used to monitor an ERP solution.

- "KnowledgeSync for the Data-Driven Organization" – a 20-minute presentation that is similar to the "KnowledgeSync Overview" but focuses initially on the need for organizations to become more "data-driven" – along with a definition of what that means.

These presentations were created by Vineyardsoft and are available to all KnowledgeSync Business Partners – and may be customized by each partner according to their needs. Please contact Vineyardsoft if you wish to receive any of these presentations or to request that a new presentation be made to fulfill a specific market – we'll be happy to oblige.

(These two presentations are also available from the Sage KnowledgeSync website http://www.sageknowledgesync.com/).

Pre-Recorded KnowledgeSync Product Demo

A pre-recorded KnowledgeSync product demo can be found on the Vineyardsoft website (www.vineyardsoft.com) at the lower right-hand portion of the homepage. Under the section titled "Learn More . . . " you'll see something called the "KnowledgeSync Product Walk-Thru". It's a 20-minute recorded demonstration of the KnowledgeSync solution.

As above, this presentation is also available at http://www.sageknowledgesync.com/.

What to Show in a KnowledgeSync Product Demo

Because KnowledgeSync is not a user-based application (but is rather configured, turned on, and left alone), you should not spend much time demonstrating how the product works, but rather focus on showing what the application does. Here are the points typically covered – in chronological order – within a KnowledgeSync product demo:

- Technical compliancy – general hardware & software requirements
- Enterprise-wide applicability
- Pre-configured business scenarios ("events")
- The ease with which business conditions can be identified
- The various alert delivery methods
- Form & document delivery plus Crystal report generation
- The flexibility of alert recipients
- Workflow options (application updates)
- Frequency of monitoring
- Multi-step process support (job streams)

Note what this demo does **not** do – it does not show a KnowledgeSync event being triggered and an alert being sent, a report being distributed, or a workflow being executed.

Why not?

Because everyone already knows what an email looks like; what a report looks like; and what data in an application looks like. Prospects don't need to be shown the obvious. The "glitz" in KnowledgeSync is the engine itself and its flexibility, ease of use, and breadth of functions. To end a demonstration by showing just one or two "end results" of KnowledgeSync is to lessen the overall impact of the solution.

If You're Doing a KnowledgeSync Webinar . . .

KnowledgeSync webinars are very popular (and successful); if you're considering hosting such an event, there are a couple of extra considerations around supporting collateral:

- Generally speaking, webinars are either product-focused or business-focused. A product-focused webinar invites people to "learn about KnowledgeSync" whereas a business-focused webinar might invite people to "learn how to make their organization more data-driven".

- Business-focused webinars should provide attendees with a "take-away" – a collateral piece that reinforces the business subject that was discussed. Vineyardsoft offers companion "white papers" on subjects such as "the Data-Driven Organization", "Cost-Effective Compliance", and "the Two Types of Business Intelligence". Feel free to offer these to the webinar's attendees.

- Product-focused webinars should always provide attendees with the KnowledgeSync Discovery document and ROI Calculator. Make sure to provide the appropriate pieces (ERP, HR, or CRM) to the corresponding audience.

What About All That Other Collateral?

So . . . what about all that *other* KnowledgeSync collateral? When would you use a KnowledgeSync case study, or refer to any number of KnowledgeSync newsletter articles, blogs, or other marketing pieces?

Let's start with KnowledgeSync case studies. Vineyardsoft offers case studies of a variety of clients, ranging from manufacturers to newspapers, financial institutions, and software companies. Two of the available case studies are most popular.

The first is the case study of the SalesLogix division of Sage Software, who use KnowledgeSync to add value to their own internal implementation of SalesLogix. This study is applicable to any organization using a CRM application, to any company specifically using the SalesLogix application, and to any organization in the computer software industry.

The second case study is an excellent profile of Toyo Ink; they use KnowledgeSync with their ERP solution and the financial (and time-savings) ramifications are substantial. This client's "pains" are the same as most any other organization using an ERP solution, and the benefits would apply to virtually any organization, regardless of industry.

Also available from Vineyardsoft are industry articles; this includes articles written for magazines, reviews of KnowledgeSync by third-party organizations, articles posted on various news blogs, and content from Vineyardsoft's own newsletters – which include technical tips, frequently-asked questions, and new product release announcements.

The value of these materials is in your ability to use them as "touch-points" with your client and prospect base. Some of these articles will help to prompt an undecided prospect to give KnowledgeSync a try; other materials can help existing KnowledgeSync clients learn of new ways to use the technology they've already invested in.

Lastly – but certainly not least – are the lists of pre-configured KnowledgeSync events (called "EventPaks") that exist for over 80 various front-office and back-office applications. These event listings have two important uses:

1) They enable a prospect to see their own business pains addressed by KnowledgeSync

2) They show a prospect that they'll get immediate return on their investment

(With eventpaks, a prospect can start benefiting from KnowledgeSync on the same day they install it.)

So – if you've got a prospect who is a user of a popular ERP solution, show them the 40, 50, or more pre-configured "business events" that KnowledgeSync can identify and respond to right out of the box.

Something as simple as a pre-configured alert about overdue invoices can easily result in at least one fewer invoices having to be written off by that prospect. And that one invoice – more often than not – can completely pay off the client's total investment in the KnowledgeSync solution.

Now <u>that's</u> ROI.

Try It . . . You'll Like It.

Although not a required component in the KnowledgeSync sale process, always remember that a prospect can "test-drive" the KnowledgeSync software.

Available as an easy download, the KnowledgeSync "trial" software is in fact the live, shipping KnowledgeSync application – with nothing disabled. The only "catch" to the trial software is that it "times out" (stops working) 30 days after the date the prospect first goes into it.

But if the prospect does decide to try the product out, remind them that if they reach the decision to purchase it, there is nothing additional for them to download, install, or configure. All of their work during the trial period is retained; the client is simply issued a "perpetual" license code to take the place of the 30-day one they used before.

And prospects are welcome to – and encouraged – to contact KnowledgeSync tech support as they're going through their evaluation process. Not only is this a free service to all prospects evaluating KnowledgeSync, it also helps prospects understand that they're not just purchasing a solution, but rather are purchasing a solution with an experienced and knowledgeable company that stands behind it.

"I wish you had a marketing piece that . . . "

Did you ever wonder where the vast assortment of KnowledgeSync sales and marketing collateral came from? It's simple – it came as a result of requests from KnowledgeSync partners like yourself.

So . . . if you ever find yourself wanting to promote KnowledgeSync in a certain way but discover that there isn't any sales or marketing material from Vineyardsoft that's "just right", there's only one thing for you to do.

Tell us.

Tell us what you need to successfully promote KnowledgeSync. Put quite simply . . .

<u>"If it will help to sell it, we will build it."</u>

So just let us know. Whether it's a data sheet, case study, white paper, calculator, or PowerPoint presentation, no reasonable request will be denied. Product-specific (or not), industry-specific (or not), we can put the materials you need to succeed with KnowledgeSync in your hands.

Any requests, suggestions, or comments should be emailed to Tricia Cate, Partner Channel Manager, at cate@vineyardsoft.com or at 800-850-8055, extension 123.

And – as always – a sincere "thank you" from Vineyardsoft for making KnowledgeSync a success; we couldn't do it without you.