# HOW TO OVERCOME ENTRENCHED RELATIONSHIPS

*We sat down to interview Colin Westmoreland, SVP & GM Oilfield Services, to get his views on the new industry dynamics that have emerged in the Oilfield Services market due to the fall of oil prices. After hundreds of client meetings, he shares with us what he has learned about overcoming entrenched relationships and growing your business.*

**Our industry has relied on strong relationships since the beginning. How are OFS companies winning business from competitors who already have strong alliances in the industry?**

First, let me say the importance of having good relationships with your clients will always be critical, especially in our industry. While it is true companies might be much more selective right now when deciding on a vendor, it is also true people buy things from people they like. However, this doesn't mean you have to double-down on suite tickets or steak dinners in order to win a bid these days; you just need to better understand what challenges your client is facing and more importantly, have a clear understanding of why you are the best one to help address these challenges.

**So you're saying the days of "handshake" deals are done?**

Not exactly. As I mentioned, there will always be a component of this, but the industry is certainly shifting as more seasoned relationships are retiring. There also seems to be a very common misconception when people talk about the need to "build rapport" with a prospect or client. Building rapport does not simply mean you have to wine and dine a prospect to get them to do business with you. In today's world, many of the decision-makers are much more focused on the results of doing business with you and want to see the data behind it. Walking into a client's office and demonstrating you know their business and understand exactly how you can help them is the best way to build rapport and get a client or prospect to listen. In the past, decision-makers might have stuck their neck out for someone they liked, but they cannot afford to do that as much these days when every dollar spent is scrutinized.

**Most reps are constantly on the go. When would they even have time to do this type of research?**

It's really not that hard. The key is automating the process so they do not have to spend much (if any) time doing it on a daily basis. There are a couple of ways we are seeing Drillinginfo members accomplish this and it starts with the sales executive or manager defining their respective sales territory. This can be set up geographically, such as by city, or they could set it up to monitor their specific named accounts. The they set up a VirtualScout™ to only monitor operator activity within their territory that specifically meets a criterion they believe is a hot lead. For example, if a rep is responsible for operators in the greater Houston area and his company specializes on horizontal wells drilled within a specific 500-mile radius in the Permian basin, he will only receive updates on those things. That way, when he's notified daily on his phone, he already knows that it is a relevant lead. It is especially handy for keeping track of new operators as well.

**You mention "new operators." How are sales reps keeping track of smaller operators they have never heard of?**

This is an important focus area for a lot of companies we work with. Sales reps can monitor these companies using the same "set it and forget it" method above. For example, imagine there is a start-up operator in your sales territory who has never filed a permit before. You already have a VirtualScoutTM set up so as soon as that operator files a permit you receive a notification on your phone and call them before anyone else. You might be calling them before your competition has even heard of them. The operator might be surprised you already know about their new permit, but more importantly, they will know you are serious about your business. Additionally, you might not have to overcome or displace an existing relationship if they are a brand new company.

**What other best practices have you seen this year for OFS companies winning deals?**

The best teams we are seeing are doing a good job with internal communication flow, specifically around competitive activity. They know what their competition is doing and they understand why they are winning and losing deals. There is natural friction around sales reps using customer relationship management CRM solutions, so we are working on something we believe will help. I have seen some of the best sales teams really focus on the onboarding process for their reps and ensure they know their products. More importantly, reps know how their products differentiate from their competitors. It seems the companies that have a good understanding of how to efficiently align territories are seeing a lot of success. These companies are leveraging local relationships and saving on costs by not sending their reps all over the country to call on operators.

**So if you could bullet point some of the key takeaways, what would that look like?**

- Focus on automating more relevant opportunities to put your reps in a better position to win
- Understand what your competitors are doing
- Use an onboarding program to train your reps on your key differentiators
- Leverage tools to help identify new operators where you might not have to displace prior relationships
- Decision makers today are much more data driven; have data to support your claim
- Find a CRM solution that works; your most valuable source of intel are account executives and the best companies are finding a way to leverage that intel daily