

# Key Account Manager

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## WHAT I LIKE BEST ABOUT THE CAREER

*"One of the nice things about this job is you have endless opportunities to make a difference. You have so much information and so many tools at your fingertips. It's really up to you to maximize the business results of your work."*

## THE WORKING WORLD

*"Picture where you want to be and hold that as your long-term goal. Then set short-term goals and develop your plans to achieve both."*

## EMPLOYER

*Kraft Canada Inc.*

## EDUCATION

*Bachelor of Science*

## YEARS IN WORKFORCE

*3.5 years*

## SALARY RANGE

*\$45,000 - \$70,000*

## CAREER PATH

*Restaurant Manager,  
Sales Representative,  
Marketer, Key Account Manager*



• **Mark Kozak** •

## WHAT IS A KEY ACCOUNT MANAGER?

Mark Kozak is a man who knows his coffee. He is also a man who knows his client, a large retailer based in Calgary, Alberta. Comprehensive knowledge of both is required to do Mark's job, ensuring his client's needs in the product categories of coffee and refrigerated cheese and snacks are well met. In a smaller company, a key account manager may manage many products for one customer. At Kraft, the product line is so diverse and this client's operation so immense that the job has been further specialized to focus on two categories of product.

## WHAT DOES A KEY ACCOUNT MANAGER DO?

"Ultimately, my job is to make sure that everybody wins - the client, the company and the consumer," says Mark. A key account manager is responsible for one or several major accounts (or clients) of a company. Key account managers develop and maintain a close relationship with each client, and serve as the main conduit of information with these clients. Understanding, anticipating and interpreting the customers' needs, goals and plans is a key part of the job. "So is understanding the competition," stresses Mark. "I need to know who my competitors are, what they offer and what role each of their products



plays in this category." Combining these essential understandings with comprehensive product knowledge, Mark is able to best position Kraft products to serve the current or emerging needs of his customer.

**Number Crunching** "Sales forecasting is a big part of the job," says Mark, who spends part of each week analyzing financial data to define purchasing patterns and predict production needs. "We do a lot of research into how our consumer behaves at retail, what they shop for, how price impacts purchasing – everything," explains Mark. "It's really understanding how things work and what is the optimum way of doing business."

**Team Player** In addition to continuous contact with the client, key account managers work as part of a cross-functional team from all parts of the company to develop plans and presentations for the customer. In a typical week Mark will work with coworkers in finance, information, customer service, the sales office, and marketing. In addition, Mark takes time to represent the company on the board of Calgary Food Executives, a local networking and professional association.

## HOW TO BECOME A KEY ACCOUNT MANAGER

Mark started his career with this company shortly after graduating from university with

a Bachelor of Science degree. Working as a sales representative for the first year and a half provided invaluable experience on the frontline of sales and service. After a short term in the co-marketing department building marketing programs direct to the customer, Mark was promoted to this position.

What does it take to be a key account manager? "You have to be a team player," says Mark, "with a consumer and customer focus." Interpersonal skills, communication skills, time management and self-motivation are also important. Mark sees "selling" as a combination of two pivotal skills: presentation and negotiation.

People considering a career as a key account manager should pursue a degree in business and/or marketing. If possible, Mark recommends gaining job experience in a retail grocery environment.

## THE FUTURE

Mark sees unlimited potential for the future. "I look forward to learning new skills while exploring the parameters of this position," says Mark "and then taking on a new challenge. In this field and in this company there are always opportunities to move up and beyond."

## RELATED CAREERS

### Sales Representative

*Sales representatives make sales at the store level to all retail stores within an assigned territory.*

### Area Sales Manager

*Area sales managers are responsible for a sales force in a geographic region. Training and developing the sales force is a key part of this job.*

### Category Sales Planner

*A category sales planner is involved in strategic planning, working internally to develop plans for different categories of product for all customers.*



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