

# 2016 Alumni of the Year Award

Finalist Information – Taylor Pierce



# Taylor Pierce

Senior Director of West Coast Sales, Cigital  
memoryBlue Exit Year: 2012



## 2015 Opening Highlights

Taylor led Cigital's West Coast region to become the highest performing practice across all of his company. Specifically, the following key accomplishments were significant for his business:

- In 2015, he exceeded a "New Business" quota of \$3M by 254% (closing over \$7.6M of net-new sales) and ultimately closing over \$10.5M in total sales for the year.
- Taylor personally developed three enterprise accounts in the Bay Area from under \$250,000 to over \$1.1M in sales over the course of 1-year (2015) and multiple work streams across various several business units in each firm.
- He was promoted to Senior Director at the end of 2015 as a result of his outstanding performance and demonstrated leadership across the West Coast practice.

## About Cigital

Cigital is one of the world's largest application security firms, earning over \$50M in revenue for the 2014 fiscal year and likely headed beyond \$75M once fiscal year 2015 officially closes. They offer a comprehensive portfolio of solutions delivered through managed services, professional services, and products. Cigital is headquartered near Washington, D.C. with regional offices throughout North America, Europe and India.



# Taylor Pierce

## Finalist Application – Q & A

**#1: Explain why you deserve to be memoryBlue's 2016 Alumni of the Year. Expand on information from your initial application (where possible).**

I deserve to be memoryBlue's 2016 Alumni of the Year for the following three reasons:

I have demonstrated a consistent, year over year, ability to exceed my performance goals in the very competitive IT Security market of the San Francisco Bay Area. I embody the characteristics and skillset of the modern High Tech sales representative. And third, I actively contribute to memoryBlue's growth and reputation.

Looking purely at 2015 numbers, I exceeded my \$3,000,000 "New Business" quota by \$4,600,000 (254%) and added 21 net-new logos as customers of Cigital. Of those 21 companies, six were in the Fortune 250 and three were Fortune 50. Including new business, upsell and renewals, I closed over \$10,500,000 on 133 deals (\$79K Avg. deal size). In 2014, I exceeded my quota by 238% while adding 29 "New Logo" customers with nine in the Fortune 100.

On a more qualitative front, we were able to substantially increase the quality of our revenue in 2015 by selling new services into existing accounts in order to increase the strength of our relationships and create "stickiness" with our customers.

Additionally, we were successful in nurturing smaller existing accounts from 2014 into \$250,000-\$500,000 spend customer in 2015. That growth in our Tier 2 accounts reduced our revenue liability risk across the region and hedged against the potential downside of losing an anchor account.

More importantly than Quotas, Customers and Revenue Quality, I am proud of my own personal development into a stronger sales representative for my company, and ultimately a better partner for my clients. In 2015, I made a concerted effort to learn not only about my job and responsibilities, but the jobs and responsibilities of the people that I depend on during my sales cycle.

When I played football, I was always taught to know the responsibilities of the player in front of me and the player to my outside shoulder. We did this because if we knew each other's responsibilities, we were much more aware of what presented a challenge for our teammate and also knew where the boundaries of that position's influence started and stopped.

Just like in football, once I started to internalize the responsibilities and challenges that my Customers, ISR, Marketing team, Service Delivery team and Contract Attorney's faced – it

enabled me to modify my approach, and potentially augment my sales cycle, in a way that would ultimately make it more effective in closing deals.

In an age where our customers have often made 70% of their decision before speaking with a sales representative, I feel that it is more important than ever for a Sales Representative to be not only good at selling, but a phenomenal team lead that can understand requirements of a customer and then provide guidance to everyone involved on how best to get the deal done.

Lastly, I deserve to be memoryBlue's Alumni of the Year because I consciously gave back to memoryBlue in 2015. I will answer this question in further detail on Question #4, but in short, I have been involved in bringing on four memoryBlue Alumni into Cigital's organization, I have referred individuals to apply to memoryBlue and I have been involved in the Silicon Valley Offices' social events; I even assisted with locating interim office space when mB first arrived in Silicon Valley.

When it is all said and done, I am grateful for everything that memoryBlue has done for me and I believe in the value memoryBlue provides. By recognizing me as the Alumni of the Year – memoryBlue will be validating the success of its unique model for building high performing IT Sales Representatives.

## **#2: What is one thing you do that differentiates you from other sales professionals?**

I will answer this question in two parts:

- The first part is a strategic belief that I have that directs all of my actions both internally at Cigital and externally with customers.
- The second is a tactical activity that I do, which I feel most of my competitors don't and should.

I was in a sales meeting with a large Financial Services organization in the Bay Area and towards the end of the meeting while we were planning next steps, the client apologized for giving me a hefty amount of follow-up without a defined opportunity in the pipeline and said something to the effect of, "I know you are somewhat coin operated, but if we can get this deck together, I think I can get a budget for this project approved".

Now, I know sales professionals that even label themselves as coin operated, but for me, not only do I take offense to that statement, but at the time I didn't understand what I had done to signal that I was solely motivated by money. I stopped the meeting immediately and told my client that while I am very much the sales representative at this table – my sole focus is him, his challenges, his firm and that I wouldn't work anywhere that had a reward model that wasn't based upon enabling customer success.

I went one step further, and told him that I would send over the proposal that we discussed, but that I was going to leave the price off. I told him that the price is very much a part of the overall solution and once we got the project's scope approved – he and I would sit down and figure out where the price needed to be in order for my proposal to be a viable solution to his problems.

Today, he is one of my largest customers and is someone that offered to speak to memoryBlue as a reference for this competition!

In short, I refuse to be relegated to the “sales guy” that comes into a meeting with the sole responsibility of “asking the hard questions” around budget, authority, needs and timeline. When I walk into a meeting room, I may not be the smartest person in the room, and I'm definitely not the most technical, but every single time I am confident that I am the one that is closest to solving a customer's problem(s).

On a more tactical note, I leave a hand-written “Thank You” follow-up note after every face-to-face on-site meeting that I go to. Before I walk out of the lobby, I jot down a quick note, drop in a business card and ask the security attendant to send it up to my POC. It takes very little effort and I get a ton of kind emails and texts thanking me for the sincere gesture.

### **#3: What key things did you do to develop professionally in 2015?**

In 2015, I began spending much more of my time traveling with executives at Cigital and also began working almost exclusively with our Enterprise clients. One thing that I quickly learned was that individuals in leadership positions—the positions that I want to be in—are much more considerate of business strategy, corporate finance and general industry knowledge than I was.

Gaining exposure to these higher level conversations drove me to develop myself professionally in two (2) primary ways: getting an MBA and getting more involved in the AA-ISP.

I began studying for the GMAT in the Spring of 2015 and am happy to say that I have reached my target score and plan on applying for MBA Programs in the Fall of 2016. I am in the process of completing my application for UNC-Chapel Hill's MBA@UNC and am also looking at some of the part-time MBA programs that are available here in the San Francisco Bay Area. Studying for the GMAT and thinking about Business School has already helped remind me to always consider a client's greater business challenges and corporate inner-workings and I am exceedingly excited by the opportunity to apply what I learn in an MBA to my day-to-day job.

Secondly, I began attending the local AA-ISP Chapter meetings for the Bay Area. I attended some of the meetups back in Northern Virginia and always enjoyed hearing about sales technologies, how people setup their teams and ways to architect your sales program to optimize enablement and career development. It was good to get tied back in to the community in 2015, and we ended up experimenting with several ideas that we drew from AA-

ISP meetings and I regularly keep in touch with some of the VP's of Sales I have met at various meetings.

#### **#4: How are you serving as an ambassador for memoryBlue?**

In 2015, I served as an ambassador for memoryBlue by opening up a recruiting channel, professionally supporting memoryBlue Alumni and directly referring a prospective Account Executive to memoryBlue.

- In July of 2015, I introduced Marc Gonyea and Chris Corcoran to Ellen Masters, who is the Director of Career Advancement at Hampden-Sydney College (my alma mater) and surfaced an opportunity for memoryBlue to participate in Hampden-Sydney's annual "C-Day" event where industry professionals come and speak to the Juniors and Seniors about a particular industry.
- This also presented an opportunity for memoryBlue to setup a recruiting booth. Several Hampden-Sydney Alumni have gotten their start at memoryBlue and hopefully I assisted in making that relationship even more productive.
- I supported four memoryBlue alums in their interview process with Cigital, Inc. These four individuals have all joined the Cigital team from memoryBlue and my opinion was solicited in each hiring decision.
- I directly referred Quentin Shank to memoryBlue. Quentin is now employed as an Account Executive and my referral from 2014 (Ben Davis) was successfully hired out by his clients.
- I have always recommended memoryBlue when a potential opportunity comes up in conversation and have been involved in some (not as many as I would like, unfortunately) company-sponsored social events with the memoryBlue team in San Jose, as well as helped the local Managing Director to find office space in the TechMart building while a larger space was being prepared for his team.

I am proud to be an alumnus of memoryBlue and would like to think that the effort I put into my career and the accomplishments that I achieve are all small victories for memoryBlue and its growing reputation as a premier training ground for top sales talent.

#### **#5: What one piece of advice would you give to someone that is brand new to sales?**

If I could lend one piece of advice to someone thinking about getting into a career in sales—or someone just starting out—I would tell them that they should always consider his or her salesmanship as a "craft", just as they might consider wood-working, jewelry design or pottery

a craft. Becoming an outstanding sales professional requires years of practice, studying, failure, repetition and unwavering dedication. You can't just get good at your current role. You have to always be learning about new ways of getting in front of your customers, creative new ways of pitching a product and you have to have the work ethic and experience to pull all of that together into one seamless experience of expert workmanship that is readily apparent to your customers.

Being competitive, social and quick on your feet is the bare minimum for being in sales. If you want to be outstanding, you need to have a voracious appetite for learning and the modesty/open-mindedness to learn from everything.

**#6: Give an example of how you exhibited mentorship or leadership in 2015.**

In addition to the leadership that I am required to demonstrate to the individuals on my team, I exhibited mentorship above and beyond what is called for in my responsibilities by mentoring two members of the Inside Sales Team to expand their skill sets and position themselves for promotions to the SMB Sales Team.

I began working closely with two members of the Inside Sales (Lead Gen) team when they were supporting the West Coast Region and had regular status calls to review weekly leads and activity metrics with them. As they became more and more successful on the Inside Sales team, I began giving them more responsibilities on our calls together (leading the introductions, pitching particular services or closing the call and assuming responsibility for follow-up action items).

When it became clear that they were both viable candidates to join the SMB Sales Team, I worked with them to practice their messaging while pitching certain products, provided guidance on how to navigate internal personalities and worked with both of them to identify areas outside of their immediate responsibilities where they could add additional value. Before long, both individuals were "riding along" with me on email threads for full-cycle deals and were working under my supervision to close small opportunities that weren't being picked up by the outside team.

When positions opened up on the SMB Sales Team, both of these individuals were viewed more as incumbents to the role (as opposed to candidates) and were offered positions to join the team.

I think that my mentorship in the six months leading up to their promotion was beneficial in not only getting them into a position to be considered for the role, but also for being successful once they attained the new job.

**#7: Share a specific example of how you exhibited HUSTLE in 2015.**

When I really think about the definition of hustle—and what memoryBlue has taught me about HUSTLE—I think about a specific opportunity that I worked on in the late Summer of 2015. I think of this particular experience is a good example of hustle because it embodies a hard work ethic, a “no excuses” mentality and a relentless drive to be successful.

The client (a leading provider of an Operational Intelligence platform) wanted Cigital to build a custom Sharepoint portal to support a stream of security assessments being performed on companies that upload their applications onto its marketplace. We had been working on the deal for several months, but one week before the end of the month—and quarter—our business sponsor found out that she was going to lose her budget if we didn’t close by the end of the week. To make matters worse, my partner and technical counterpart was on PTO that week.

Long story short, I ended up taking over the management of an outside development partner to oversee the development of the portal, while also doing nightly portal-usage trainings with the end-users (who were located in Taiwan). Right when we were starting to get on top of things, we received a request for a “User Guide” to the portal on Thursday evening. In order to accommodate the request—and still hit the budgetary deadline—I stayed up until 3:00AM PST authoring the User Guide and then woke up at 9:30AM PST to do the final negotiation with the Procurement team.

By the end of the week, we had held five 8:00AM PST scrums with the development partner, five 9:00PM PST calls with the user group in Taiwan, stayed up until 3:00AM PST on Friday morning and then defended our full-price quote of \$300,000 on Friday morning. The client accepted the contract and I got one of our rock star accountants to drive into the office on a Saturday to submit the invoice before the new month started.

Maybe it is just my experience at memoryBlue, or the memoryBlue Alumni that I keep in touch with, but when I think of what “HUSTLE” means in the context of memoryBlue – I think of it as a constant reminder to never get complacent, to never get too comfortable and to approach all of my business dealings with a high level of intensity and focus.

The example above is demonstrative of the success one can achieve by putting his or her head down and HUSTLING hard enough that you simply cannot be beaten.

**(Continue on page below for professional reference information)**



# Taylor Pierce

## Professional Reference

**Submitted by:** Mary Arakeri

**Relationship:** Client (LG Electronics)

I am flattered to be asked to write this recommendation for Taylor Pierce for memoryBlue's Alumni of the Year competition. My name is Mary Arakeri, a Senior Information Security & Risk Manager. I have worked with Taylor for the last two years, both in my previous and current organizations.

I met Taylor while we were looking for vendors for ethical hacking of our products/services. During this time, I became very familiar with his work ethic and personality, and am happy to share some of those experiences with you. Taylor is not only a great "business partner", who I have a lot of respect for, but someone I am honored to call a friend.

Taylor is one of the most proactive sales/business professional I have met. He is honest, reliable, sensitive, compassionate, flexible, and a great relationship builder with very good business acumen. He is always interested in discussing viable options to solve our problems, with integrity, leadership skills and character. He is diligent in collecting information and creates proposals that are unique and relevant to customer needs for mutual benefit.

Taylor's advice, providing resources, guidance, and helping scope, allowed our organization to expand from 5 to 15 assessments a quarter, utilizing multiple vendors. Taylor did not sell his organization as the only way to go, but rather, the benefit of using multiple vendors. Through these assessments, it brought comfort that the product/services being delivered were secure. Though in sales, I have always looked at Taylor as a business partner. He is enthusiastic, loves what he does, has great communication skills, a joy to be around and knows how to put people at ease.

Taylor's professionalism and approach makes what he does much more valuable to his clients. I can understand how in the last two short years, he has grown from a Sales Manager, to Director of Sales to Senior Director. Taylor's efforts in building relationships and working through the bureaucracy of a large organization truly enabled Cigital to become an ideal business partner.

I would highly recommend Taylor for the memoryBlue's Alumni of the Year award. It is not only for his professionalism, but for who he is as a person. Taylor is a person who listens, is humble, learns about you and the organization and is willing to recommend the best solution for the organization, even it is not to his benefit.