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Journal of Sales Transformation

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VALUE FIRST

WHAT IS VALUE? UNDERSTANDING TRUE VALUE. PUTTING THE VALUE INTO VALUE PROPOSITIONS. IS YOUR ORGANISATION LEAKING VALUE?



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Richard Vincent

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2022 / ISSUE 8.3 / ISSN 2058-735X

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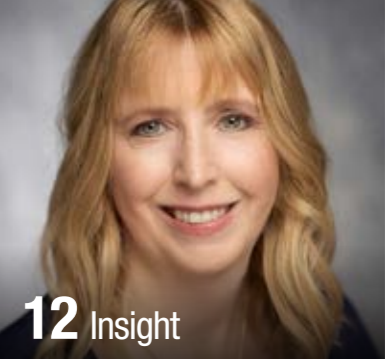
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On the cover: Value first

These days everything is about value. That said, there is a mountain of misleading information out there about how to articulate value. Bob Apollo makes an excellent point when he argues: “it’s the value your customers actually achieve through their real-world consumption of your offerings” that is important. In this edition we have brought together a number of new articles on value, together with a couple of our best past articles on the topic. We also review the new edition of Todd Snelgrove’s definitive book “Value First, Then Price”.



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Contributors: Bob Apollo, Jeremy Noad, Richard Vincent
Chairman: Dr Philip Squire

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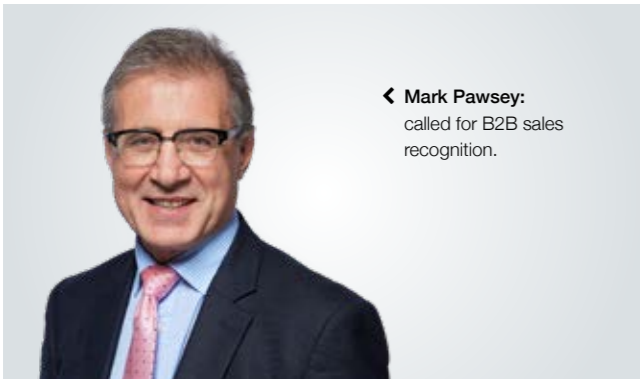
B2B a top UK priority says MP

The importance of business-to-business (B2B) selling for jobs and growth in the UK was highlighted at Westminster on 19 April. In a debate at Westminster Hall, Mark Pawsey MP called for government support and recognition for the professional B2B sales sector.

The MP, who leads the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Professional Sales, explained that the UK has struggled to recruit and train the B2B salespeople the economy needs, and he urged the government to help.

He said: "As the government's priorities shift away from job retention and towards retraining people for the skilled jobs of the future, B2B sales must be one of the UK's top priorities."

Pawsey also highlighted the selling challenges faced by Britain's small businesses. He said improving sales skills in SMEs and encouraging more young people to retrain in B2B selling would speed economic recovery and job creation, help Britain to commercialise its innovations in research and development, and facilitate overseas trade.



◀ Mark Pawsey: called for B2B sales recognition.

Measure behaviours as well as outcomes

Only 25% of sales organizations are directly measuring sales behaviours that drive sales success, claims ValueSelling Associates. "Our research findings mean that 75% of sales teams are driving down the interstate with their focus fixed on the rear-view mirror," President and CEO, Julie Thomas tells the *Journal*.

"Many sales leaders only measure sales outcomes. Measuring both selling behaviours and sales results is critical to determine if a healthy revenue pipeline is on the horizon."

ValueSelling Associates and *Training Industry* surveyed 464 sales leaders and sales enablement decision-makers. They found that, while 98% of survey respondents measure their team's sales performance, their understanding of sales effectiveness is most often tied to sales outcomes. Sales leaders' understanding of sales effectiveness is mainly based on sales coaching reports (57%) and supervisor ratings (55%), with sales success often attributed to market circumstance or luck, versus the skill of the salespeople.



◀ Julie Thomas: Measuring selling behaviours and sales results critical.



In brief

SalesWorks appoints trainers

Consultancy SalesWorks has appointed Cara Pepper and Alzaysha Johnson as sales training leads. The role sees them working with clients to design and deliver sales training programmes, tailor programmes for advanced reps to refine and improve their skills, and spotlight areas of focus to up-skill teams, improve processes and increase revenue.

Pepper started in travel and hospitality, transitioning into the fintech industry as a sales leader, providing her with experience ranging from services to software. Johnson joins SalesWorks following a successful sales career in hospitality for major brands including Marriott.

SalesWorks founder and CEO, Shabri Lakhani (left), commented: "Cara and Alzaysha are the latest in a series of key appointments as our training business grows. We're looking forward to continuing to invest in high-quality talent with both the execution and leadership experience required to effectively support our clients in their own growth journeys in the months ahead."

Three-quarters of sales leaders favour lagging indicators, such as increased revenue and margins, transaction size, and the number of deals won. By contrast, the other 25% take a more comprehensive view and monitor sales *behaviours*, which are leading indicators, according to ValueSelling Associates. These behaviours could include sales reps blocking time on their calendars for prospecting, completing more phone calls, and writing more follow-up plan letters.

The research reveals that 81% of companies that agree they can connect sales behaviour with results also have sales practices that nurture credibility, trust, and rapport in buyers, compared to only 44% of companies that could not connect behaviour with results.

See more about the research findings in the e-book, [The Behaviors and Skills Sales Leaders Care Most About – and How to Measure Them](#), or listen to the on-demand webinar, [Measuring the Virtual Sales Skills that Matter](#).

Philip Morris sales apprenticeship scheme

Philip Morris Limited (PML) opened its first sales apprenticeship scheme to applicants in February. The first group was scheduled to start work in April across four English cities: Nottingham; Northampton; Sheffield and London.

Over an 18-month period the "embark" scheme aims to provide a grounding across the entire sales function, equipping the apprentices with the necessary skills and experiences as they work towards earning a Level 4 Sales Executive HNC qualification – the equivalent to a foundation degree. The rotations will focus on developing practical skills, exposing the apprentices to varying roles across the function, from having their own sales area as a Territory Activation Executive to shadowing the Head of the Field Force.

Successful applicants start on a £23,000 a year salary plus company car and private medical and dental insurance together with £500 of flexible benefits, according to the PML website.



Snapshot 1

DIGITAL EVOLUTION IN SALES: MAKING SENSE



BY 2025: 80% OF B2B SALES INTERACTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE VIA DIGITAL CHANNELS.

BUYERS ARE SUFFERING FROM INFORMATION OVERLOAD: BUT THAT'S NOT THE REAL PROBLEM; THE CORE ISSUE IS MAKING SENSE OF THE INFORMATION.

MAKING INFORMED TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN VENDORS AND THEIR CAPABILITIES IS DIFFICULT: 55% OF CUSTOMERS SAY THIS IS PROBLEMATIC BASED ON THE INFORMATION THEY ENCOUNTER.

INFORMATION FROM SUPPLIERS APPEARS TRUSTWORTHY, BUT CAN BE CONTRADICTIONARY: 66% OF BUYERS REPORT.

AI WILL HELP SELLERS BECOME "SENSE-MAKERS": SALESPeOPLE CAPABLE OF GUIDING BUYERS THROUGH THE MAZE OF INFORMATION NEEDED TO MAKE CONFIDENT BUYING DECISIONS.

A SENSE-MAKER HELPS CUSTOMERS RATIONALIZE ALL THE INFORMATION THEY ENCOUNTER: THIS HELPS THE CUSTOMER PROCESS THE SENSE-MAKING SALESPerson'S INFORMATION MORE EFFECTIVELY VERSUS THE COMPETITION.

AI WILL ENABLE SALES TEAMS TO DO THIS AT SCALE: IT WILL ASSIST BY UNEARTHING RELEVANT INFORMATION, SUGGESTING CONVERSATIONS TO HAVE, AND PROVIDING CONTENT TO SUPPORT SALES ACTIONS.

THE ABOVE FACTOIDS ARE BASED ON GARTNER RESEARCH, INCLUDING A SURVEY OF 1,174 B2B BUYERS.

What is value?

✎ Bob Apollo

Exploring the changing face of value in B2B sales.

It seems as if the phrase “sell on value, not on price” must have been around since shortly after the dawn of B2B selling, and it would be hard to argue with the sentiment. But what do we actually mean by value, and perhaps more importantly, how do our customers perceive value?

The value of your product

When I started my sales career, companies were keen to boast about the “value-added” characteristics of their products. For the most part, these seemed to refer to features, functions or capabilities which they claimed to offer that their competitors could not.

This inevitably resulted in pointless features-driven “arms races” and spawned endless Harvey-ball¹-based comparison lists that sought to imply that the more features you could offer, the better – regardless of the customer’s actual needs. Of course, customers soon recognised that irrelevant features often made the offering more complicated and expensive without increasing its usefulness.

The smarter customers quickly realised that when a vendor used the “value-added” phrase it actually meant “cost-added”, in that they were being asked to pay for features they didn’t need. So, they started using this as a negotiating tactic. Who can blame them?

The value of your “solution”

As this era drew to a close, vendors increasingly started to talk about their “solutions” rather than their products, in part in order to try and better articulate their value. It wasn’t long before almost everything was being promoted as a so-called and self-described “solution”.

You’ll probably already have recognised the flaw in this line of thinking, in that the only entity that can legitimately describe anything as a “solution” is the person or organisation suffering from the problem, and certainly not a vendor trying to sell the same old product at a higher margin.

There are two obvious conclusions to be drawn here: firstly, vendors have no right to call anything a solution unless that claim is based on a clear and deep understanding of the

“*Year-by-year, desired features and functions are becoming less important in the overall decision and approval processes than the confidence that the desired business outcomes will be achieved.*”

issue that their customer is trying to fix, avoid or achieve. Secondly, the real-world value of any solution is directly related to the value of the problem being solved, whether that is an avoidable cost that is being eliminated, a risk or threat that is being avoided or mitigated, or a potential new revenue stream that is being enabled.

This line of thinking has driven the evolution of “solution selling” or “value-based selling” concepts, and it can still be applied to useful effect if vendors are selling their offerings on an outright purchase basis. But this approach starts to fall down with the irreversible movement towards consuming things as a service rather than as a one-off transaction, not least because at the point at which an order is placed, any value calculation is merely a projected future benefit, rather than anything that has yet been proven.

The value of your customer’s outcomes

We now live in a world in which almost everything is being offered as a service, and where customers increasingly prefer to pay for things as a service rather than buying them outright. If you have any doubts about this, just look at the offerings that are now being promoted and consumed as a service: from aero engines to industrial equipment to almost all new software investments.

The Technology & Services Industry Association (TSIA) has reported that services have grown eight times faster than products over the past decade, and there are no signs that this trend is abating. In fact, if anything, it is gathering pace, and this has significant implications for vendors. Even for technology-based offerings, B2B buying decisions are increasingly being led by line-of-business operational

“*In our current and future business climate, it’s not the projected value of your products or even your so-called solutions that matters; it’s the value your customers actually achieve through their real-world consumption of your offerings.*”

units rather than the traditional “technical experts” in IT and elsewhere. Year-by-year, desired features and functions are becoming less important in the overall decision and approval processes than the confidence that the desired business outcomes will be achieved.

When prioritising which investments to make in an uncertain world, your customers are looking at the combination of strategic relevance, tactical urgency, and rapid time-to-value. Rather than lengthy, risky, multi-year projects with matching payback periods, customers are looking for quick wins and value that rises proportionally over time with usage.

In other words, in our current and future business climate, it’s not the projected value of your products or even your so-called solutions that matters; it’s the value your customers actually achieve through their real-world consumption of your offerings.

Profitability path

There’s another important implication of this trend: in the “good old days” of transactional sales with large upfront invoices, vendors could usually count on being profitable from the point the initial invoice was raised and paid for. Not anymore: in most typical scenarios, customer acquisition costs mean that vendor offerings now only become profitable once customers choose to expand and renew their usage. Offering your “solution as a service” can, of course, help to open the door. But your long-term profitability as a vendor is now dependent on the visible and proven value your customers actually derive in practice from consuming your products or services, and their willingness to continue doing so.

That, in turn, places a far greater emphasis than in previous waves of B2B selling on understanding, influencing and actually achieving the business outcomes your customer is looking for. Classic “need discovery” tactics that tend to focus on required features and functions simply won’t suffice. Only an emphasis on business outcomes will deliver the value that both you and your customers are looking for.

Becoming outcome-centric

This transition is not something that can be achieved by the salesforce acting in isolation, although you can certainly take the lead. At the end of the day, becoming customer-outcome-centric has to be a company-wide commitment:

- Executive leadership needs to ensure that the entire organisation is aligned around understanding and achieving the customer’s expected business outcomes and exceeding their expectations.
- The development organisation needs to create products and services that make it easy for the customer to achieve their expected business outcomes with rapid time to initial value.
- The marketing organisation needs to deeply understand the business issues your customers are trying to fix, avoid or achieve and position your organisation as trusted experts and advisers.
- The customer success function needs to ensure that the expected business outcomes are in fact achieved and that the value is recognised.
- The support organisation needs to make it easy for the customer to achieve their outcomes and proactively eliminate any obstacles that might be standing in their way.
- All other functions need to ensure that your organisation is easy to do business with.

And, of course, your sales organisation needs to inspire your colleagues by demonstrating that you are capable of understanding and influencing the specific business outcomes each customer is seeking to achieve and by creating the confidence that these outcomes will be achieved.

That, in my opinion, is where the future of value in B2B sales lies, and it suggests that you have an important and potentially vital role in leading the transition. Are you ready for the challenge?

¹ Harvey balls are round ideograms commonly used in comparison tables to indicate the degree to which a particular item meets a specific criterion. They were invented by Harvey L. Poppel, who led Booz Allen Hamilton’s IT consulting practice in the 1970s and are not to be confused with Harvey Ball, creator of the iconic smiley face – Ed.



About the author

Bob Apollo is the founder of UK-based Inflexion-Point Strategy Partners, the B2B sales effectiveness experts. Following a successful career spanning start-ups, scale-ups and corporates, Bob now spends his time as a coach and advisor to growth-phase technology-based businesses, equipping them to adopt the principles of Outcome-Centric Selling.

Understanding true value

✍ Julie Thomas

Engage buyers using the basics of value-based selling.

We all know the frightening stats: buyers spend 17% of their time interacting with sales professionals, and nearly half (43%) prefer a completely rep-free experience (Gartner). Yes, this is alarming. However, this roadblock is just that, a roadblock – it's not impassable.

After all, the buying journey is complex and contains numerous opportunities to influence decision-makers along the way – or so we thought. Recent [research from Forrester](#) shows that 25% of B2B buyers know what they intend to buy before beginning their purchasing journey. How can your sales team overcome this seemingly insurmountable problem?

Salespeople must take a value-based approach to selling to elevate the conversation from the technical problem to the corporate objectives and what is getting in the way of achieving them. Yes, buyers might know everything there is to know about your product's features, but they don't know the terms and conditions you're willing to offer, your CX track record, or how your solution mitigates risk.

At the end of the day, businesses don't make buying decisions: people buy from people – and that's where true differentiation happens, on the individual level.

Sales professionals who can empathetically connect on a human level become the most important part of any frictionless buying experience: a trusted business advisor who sets the ROI of their offering on unshakable ground and implements a plan for providing measurable value to both the individual and the organization.

That's [the core of value-based selling](#), and it's a methodology that enables salespeople to compete – and win – in the most competitive or commoditized markets. Let's look at the three foundation elements of value-based selling and common pitfalls to avoid.

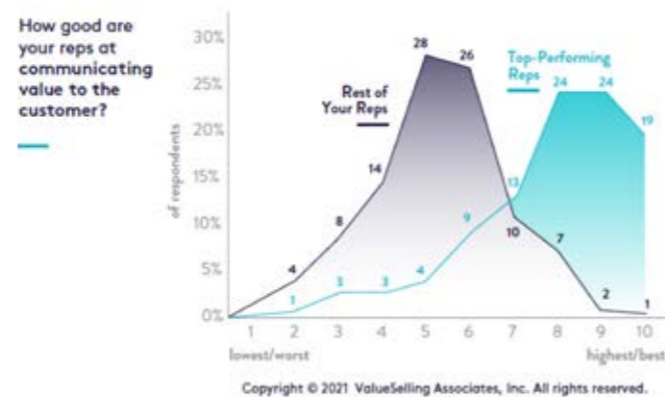
Knowing the difference between your value proposition and value selling

I hear it all the time: "Oh, I already know how to sell on value." Then the salesperson goes on to describe their company's value proposition. The confusion is understandable. Knowing your product's potential impact on your ideal customer is essential. It's your big promise to the marketplace – but that's not value selling.

Value selling is a sales professional's ability to take

that broad promise to the marketplace and sit down with an individual client to quantify the expected impact on their business that comes with implementing your product/service. It might seem like a small distinction, yet research shows it's often the difference between marking a deal closed-won versus closed-lost.

In 2021, we partnered with [Selling Power](#) to survey more than 150 senior sales leaders. While we identified [seven key habits of top performers](#), nothing had as much impact as a seller's ability to communicate value (Figure 1).



▲ **Figure 1:** Communicating value is a key characteristic of top-performing salespeople.

To have those value-based conversations, we need our prospects to invest time with us to gain alignment and learn these crucial insights. That requires a human-to-human connection built on a foundation of trust, credibility and rapport.

Building trust, credibility and rapport

B2B purchases can have profound consequences for the buyer. No one bets their career's health on the recommendations of someone they do not trust, like or believe is credible — especially executive-level buyers. [Our latest research study](#) supports this. When we surveyed 464 sales training decision-makers to identify what matters most at each stage of the buyer journey, we discovered that the selling behaviors necessary

to succeed in a virtual selling environment had a common thread running through them (see sidebar, "The most impactful behaviours at each stage of the buying cycle"). Clearly, winning more business rests on authentic and strong human-to-human connections, so how can sellers build them?

The Most Impactful Selling Behaviors at Each Stage of the Buying Cycle



Trust

Many sales professionals are still struggling to adapt to a virtual world. They believe that trust can only be built through face-to-face interactions; however, experience and research tell us that's not the case. Sure, tech hiccups and dogs barking at a delivery person will continue to disrupt our virtual sales calls. However, sellers don't have to get it perfect every time. They need to show they're a trustworthy human making an effort – and there are actions they can take to stack the deck in their favour.

Think about it this way: when you meet a professional contact, what's your next move? For most, a quick search on LinkedIn is often step one, which is why sellers must build an authentic online brand. [A study by LinkedIn](#) showed that no social-selling action had a greater impact on sales success than the completeness of a seller's LinkedIn profile.

Salespeople shouldn't stop there. Even for sellers with carefully crafted profiles, there's still the danger of coming across as inauthentic. To truly differentiate themselves, salespeople should share research that interests them, articles that allow them to share a personal take instead of a summary.

“

Sales professionals who can empathetically connect on a human level become the most important part of any frictionless buying experience: a trusted business advisor who sets the ROI of their offering on unshakable ground and implements a plan for providing measurable value to both the individual and the organization.

Another crucial component is follow-through. Trust is built over time and fluctuates according to actions. The easiest way to ensure that prospects continue to trust your sales team is to make sure they're doing what they said they would do in the appropriate timeframe.

Credibility

Ever heard the saying, "Show me that you know me."? That's advice that never goes out of style. To sell to executives, salespeople have to prove that they know the prospect's business and challenges that are likely on their radar. That begins with targeted research.

Let me ask you this: do you want your sellers to only know high-level information like the prospect's title and role plus generic news surrounding the company? Or do you want them to know the CEO's top three priorities for 2022, the company's recent acquisitions or technology investments, the likely business challenges on the executive's radar, and how they'll be compensated if they hit their goals?

The first approach might get an email opened, but it will not be the start of an impactful business relationship. Once salespeople have put in the time to understand their buyer's situation, the next phase is to prove they've done their homework.

One of the most compelling and succinct ways to do that is with [a value-based story](#). It's a 30-second opener that explains how a seller and their company have helped individuals like the potential buyer in the past. If done well, it's a sure-fire way to pique interest and establish credibility from the start.

Rapport

Nothing builds rapport like asking the [questions that further a high-level business conversation](#) and actively listening to the prospect's responses. Conversational intelligence tools free sellers from note-taking, enabling them to be more present and focus on guiding the conversation. Now, that doesn't mean salespeople shouldn't record the highlights from every conversation in their CRM. This is an essential step for processing and synthesizing the information learned. Ultimately, every conversation is an opportunity to learn more and align your solution with the prospect's personal and professional motivations.

Understanding how to impact the client's business, before talking price

When sales professionals understand the importance of customer-specific value quantification, it enables them to build a powerful business case to justify the purchase. Closing the gap between business objectives and the current strategy must

winning the *four value* conversations



► science-backed strategies to win your most critical sales conversations

Asking your prospects and customers what they want doesn't make you a an effective seller—it makes you a tape recorder.

Buyers want you to tell them what they should want. They don't want to sift through all the information; they need you to deliver insight into what they could be doing to improve their performance.

Get this e-book and discover the science, research, and counterintuitive selling techniques you need to win your most critical sales conversations.

GET THE E-BOOK: <http://cvi.to/4-value-convo-eb>

5 REASONS AR MATTERS TO SALES

AUGMENTED REALITY INCREASES SALES: SOME COMPANIES HAVE INCREASED SALES CONVERSIONS FROM ONLINE CHANNELS UP TO 200%.

AR BOOSTS CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT: TIME VIEWING PRODUCT IMAGES AND VIDEOS UP FROM AN AVERAGE OF 30 SECONDS TO EIGHT MINUTES.

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY FOR ONLINE SHOPPERS: AUTOMOTIVE OR BIKE SALES, CONSUMER ELECTRONICS, HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, AND PERSONAL LIFESTYLE PRODUCTS LIKE JEWELLERY AND MAKE-UP.

AR BRIDGES THE GAP BETWEEN E-COMMERCE AND CX: E-COMMERCE BECOMES 3D COMMERCE, ENABLING CUSTOMERS TO TRY OUT PRODUCTS VIRTUALLY ON THEIR MOBILE DEVICE.

IT'S NOT JUST FOR CONSUMERS: AREAS OF APPLICATION INCLUDE AUTOMOTIVE SALES, FASHION, FURNITURE, TRAVEL AND TOURISM, AND LARGE INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY.

THIS SUMMARY WAS ADAPTED FROM A BLOG WRITTEN BY SUSAN GALER ON BEHALF OF SAP: "AUGMENTED REALITY BOOSTS ONLINE SHOPPING SALES UP TO 200%."



be much more impactful than the expense: if you have a five-million-dollar headache, my \$200K aspirin is an excellent deal; on the other hand, if you have a \$100K headache, my \$200K aspirin is absurd.

To reach this stage, salespeople must develop a solid understanding of the business they're selling into. This means understanding the metrics the prospect currently uses, how they'll measure success, and working with them to determine any gaps in their measurement plans.

Sellers are taught to go after the pain. Guess what? All businesses have pain and problems they're not interested in solving. When competing solutions must win the fight for capital at the CFO level, only the solutions that directly impact key business drivers will receive funding.

Remember, your sales team might be selling to a company, but it's an individual or group of individuals who will ultimately sign the purchase order. The concept of personal value is one of the most overlooked aspects of value-based selling.

Buyers never lose sight of "What's in it for me?" and neither should sellers. Salespeople must put themselves in the other person's shoes: What does success mean to them? On the other hand, if this initiative fails, will they be looking for a new job?

The key is to firmly establish the business and personal value of your product or solution in the prospect's mind before having the price conversation – if not, sellers are at a tremendous disadvantage. Yes, the inevitable negotiations on price will come up, but when sellers and buyers agree on the impact and have a firm plan for value realization in place, it is much easier to maintain price integrity.

Ultimately, when sales professionals go into every meeting with the mindset, "if the buyer wins, I win", it enables them to connect authentically at a human level and forge the business relationships that help B2B buyers feel confident – the essential ingredient to closing complex deals in a world dominated by similar digital experiences, virtual selling and commoditized markets.



About the author

Julie Thomas is President and CEO of ValueSelling Associates. She began her sales career at Gartner Group. In 1999, she became Vice President of Gartner's Sales Training for the Americas. In 2003, she joined ValueSelling Associates as Chief Executive Officer and President. She is the author of *ValueSelling: Driving Sales Up One Conversation at a Time*.

The secret power of introverts

✍ Monica Parkin

Too shy to sell? Why organisations need introverts.

Do you ever hear the words “introvert” and “sales” in the same sentence and wonder if it is even possible to be successful in sale *and* shy or introverted? The conventional stereotype is that sales is an extrovert’s playground, but the reality is that this is simply not true. Countless industry giants are introverts, and not only did it not hurt their growth, but in many cases, it propelled them to amazing heights. Very successful entrepreneurs such as Bill Gates, Elon Musk and Warren Buffet are all self-professed introverts who have defied introverted stereotypes. If you are an introvert trying to carve out a career in sales, you likely have superpowers you didn’t even know about. Here are some secrets that successful introverts use to grow their networks along with how organizations can tap into those hidden talents:

Top five introvert superpowers and how to harness them:

- 1. It’s a marathon not a sprint.** If you are an introvert, you may take more time to reach your networking goals, but its not a race. Maybe working a room of 200 people and shaking hands and making small talk is not your forte, but that doesn’t mean you don’t have amazing communication skills. Studies such as the one by organisational psychologist and Wharton professor [Adam Grant](#) tell us that introverts actually have some phenomenal communication skills. They are great listeners and deep thinkers who love to solve problems. They build relationships one at a time instead of ten at a time, but those relationships are rich and authentic and often last for a lifetime.

Start with a simple goal of connecting with one new person a week, and when that no longer feels overwhelming move it up to one new person a day. You can do this with strategies that are as simple as sending an email to someone to let them know you enjoyed their presentation, or tried their product, or related to their message. Start by just reaching out and connecting, and then, a little at a time, take steps to continue to grow and nurture that relationship. Before you know it you will have many different connections across industries, communities, and organizations.

- 2. Critical thinking and problem solving are “introvert gold”.** That ability we just talked about to listen deeply, ask meaningful questions, and find unique solutions to complex problems is an underrated skillset you are probably amazing at. When you listen carefully you come up with great questions; when you ask great questions, you discover great information and, with great information, you can take actions and find solutions that you would never find by rushing right into solving the problem without taking that time to pause and discover. Shake someone’s hand at a networking event and they will remember you until the next person comes along. Solve a customer’s problem and they will remember you for life.
- 3. People notice people who notice them.** Have you ever had someone reach out to you to tell you what an amazing job you did, or how much they admire you? Had them share your post or give you a great review? How did that make you feel? I bet it made you curious to know more about them, or if you already knew them, it made you like them and want to support them in return. Be the person who lifts other people up, makes them feel supported, valued and heard, and they will want to do the same for you.

Reciprocity is a human phenomenon that should not be overlooked. People like people who like them, and they notice people who notice them. It’s completely free and it takes very little time out of your day just to say a few kind words, share a post, leave a review, or tell someone how they impacted you. The action only takes a moment, but the results will continue to benefit you and your business for years to come.

- 4. Authenticity shines.** Nothing screams shallow more than trying to be someone you are not. Not only does it come across as inauthentic but when you are trying to pretend to be someone else you are essentially telling your brain to lie. This in turn causes it to work overtime to try to remember all the details of your fake persona, which leads to you looking and feeling more awkward. When you are just your real quirky authentic self your brain can just relax, and people see and feel that you are genuine and are more likely to feel a genuine connection to you. If you look at people who are thriving in their fields as introverts such as Bill Gates, Elon Musk, and even Meryl Streep, they do so by being

“

When you are trying to pretend to be someone else you are essentially telling your brain to lie.

themselves. It puts the people around them at ease and allows them to build deep, meaningful relationships that are based on things like shared values, common interests, and passions.

- 5. Consider prepping for networking events with a list of prepared questions.** If you look at some of the differences between introverts and extroverts, one of the things that stands out most is how easily they manage small talk. Extroverts are often naturals at finding conversation starters and using those as openings into deeper conversations. They can come up with small talk and opportunities to chat with someone on the spot with no preparation, and so it is relaxing and fun for them. For introverts the stress of being in social situations may make it more difficult to think on the spot, which makes small talk stressful and overwhelming. Instead of waiting to get to an event to look for conversation openers or relying on the extroverts to start the conversation, consider having a few questions prepared in advance. Questions such as “Have you been in this industry long?” or “How are you enjoying the event so far?” are good places to start. Those lead to deeper questions like “Do you have any advice for a newcomer?” that lead into more meaningful conversations. People love to talk about themselves, and they love to be helpful, so make it easy for them by getting curious, asking questions, and being genuinely interested in the answers.

Why organizations need introverts

Despite the obvious stereotype that extroverts are natural leaders and excel in business and sales, numerous studies show us that introverts outperform their extrovert colleagues

Sales isn’t the career for me... or is it?

If you say “yes” to the following you might be surprised by how much you enjoy a career in sales:

- You love to find solutions to problems
- You are a good listener
- You ask good questions
- You are a responsive communicator
- You care about people
- You can simplify complex ideas
- You are passionate about a specific product

in many areas. Specifically, they thrive on tasks that involve creativity, interpersonal communication, and team building, all of which are essential ingredients in sales and marketing.

Given that introverts make up almost half the population, employers would be wise to take notice of this untapped talent pool and ensure that they give introverts a voice and make space for their unique skill sets within their teams. One of the best ways to do this is to provide them with opportunities to work with clients one on one, in small groups, and ask them for input on complex problems rather than just listening to the loudest voice in the room. That quiet employee sitting in the corner may in fact be processing a problem and coming up with a solution that will grow your business.

Create a culture where introverts feel safe speaking, sharing, and being their authentic selves, and employers and managers can harness both the introverts and extroverts in their organization for maximum impact and success.



About the author

Monica Parkin is a self-professed introvert, an award-winning international speaker, author of *Overcoming Awkward, the Introverts Guide to Networking Marketing and Sales* and podcast host at the *Juggling Without Balls Podcast*. Find out more at monicaparkin.ca, connect with her on [LinkedIn](#) or email her at info@monicaparkin.ca.

Putting the value in value propositions

✎ Dr Simon Kelly and Dr Paul Johnston

This is the first of a series of articles in which the authors explore customer value and differentiation. In this article Dr Simon Kelly and Dr Paul Johnston consider the importance of customer value and its criticality in building effective value propositions. They draw together their experience as marketing and sales practitioners, their recent academic and commercial research, and their ongoing conversations with sales and marketing leaders to give a contemporary view on how effectively customer value is understood and embedded into value propositions that help or hinder salespeople to sell. They also consider how marketing and sales alignment impacts on successful value proposition development. Much of what is covered builds on their co-authored book *Value-Ology: Aligning Sales and Marketing to Shape and Deliver Profitable Value Propositions*, (Kelly, Johnston, Danheiser 2017).

and Marn (1997:99) identified:

"Value may be one of the most overused and misused terms in marketing and pricing."

This means that the sales professional's ability to interpret, understand and respond to the variable nature of customer value is vital for sales success and requires a good working knowledge of different types of value and competence in working with what is essentially an abstract concept.

As sales professionals we know we must justify the value of product-service solutions to customers all the time. This can range from conversational explanations of potential benefits to highly formalised tender documents detailing the anticipated return on investment, and, there's a problem lurking in this seemingly run-of-the mill situation.

The idea of delivering customer value is so embedded in the everyday practice of salespeople that it is easy to take it for granted and ignore the fact that skill in reading and adapting to the changeable nature of customer value is something that separates top sales performers from the rest. When we spoke with Eric, CEO of an international commercial refurbishment company, about being complacent on value his big concern was that his salespeople weren't tuned into the value conversation.

"Now if we're not careful and we keep just cookie-cutting the same thing out – without ever taking a step away with the client to ask 'is it still relevant?' – the ultimate worst-case scenario is when the client sees somebody else's work and says 'Wow, that's really sexy and current' I'll talk to them because my current supplier isn't adding any value to this process."

To try and understand why this is the case we researched how value is considered by senior sales and key account management professionals, and we reached the conclusion that the idea of value is an "elephant in the room". Our research suggests that whilst there is much talk of "adding value" or "giving the customer value for money", it is frequently the case that what is actually meant by value in any given situation is assumed and, just like the blind men in the story of the elephant, different people have different understandings of value depending on the part of value they hold to be most important. Some people emphasise cost/price value, some relational value, others the value of technical knowledge, and so on.

Sales professionals need to stop and think carefully about value to avoid value bias in favour of their preferred take on value. Psychologists call this an "anchoring heuristic" which is where a person believes that everyone else thinks about something in the same way that they do.

Studies into the concept of value

Contemporary business researchers have conducted numerous studies into the nature and characteristics of value, and

Credible commercial research suggests there is definitely a problem out there. In a recent study performed by Televerde, 47% of B2B salespeople said that the major reason they lost a deal was because the product or service's value had not been adequately conveyed to the prospect. Small wonder that 46% of salespeople said the asset they most wanted from marketing was "value proposition".

In this omnichannel world, the customer can be an average of 60% of the way through the buying process before they contact a salesperson (CEB research), at which time 67% of the customers have a clear picture of the solution they want (Sirius Decisions). This means that the "value proposition" conveyed in marketing content that the customer receives must resonate with the customer and be consistent with sales messages throughout the customer journey – strange then that 94% of customers claim to have disengaged with organisations because they are being sent irrelevant content that gives them no value (CEB research). Perhaps the most telling statistic is that 58% of sales deals end in no deal because the customer has not been convinced of the value in signing the deal (Qvidian Sales Execution research).

Value – the elephant in the room

When we interviewed Clark, the CEO of a leading company in the global telecoms sector he was emphatic about the centrality of value to the sales conversation. He told us that:

"... objections and a push back on the price happen because the initial conversation wasn't anchored in value. The cost of failure from this problem is huge and the prize for those companies that make the change is transformational."

Delivering value has been recognised by academics as central to achieving competitive difference and generating shareholder value (Woodruff 1997) but for many businesses there is a problem in making this happen because as Leszinski

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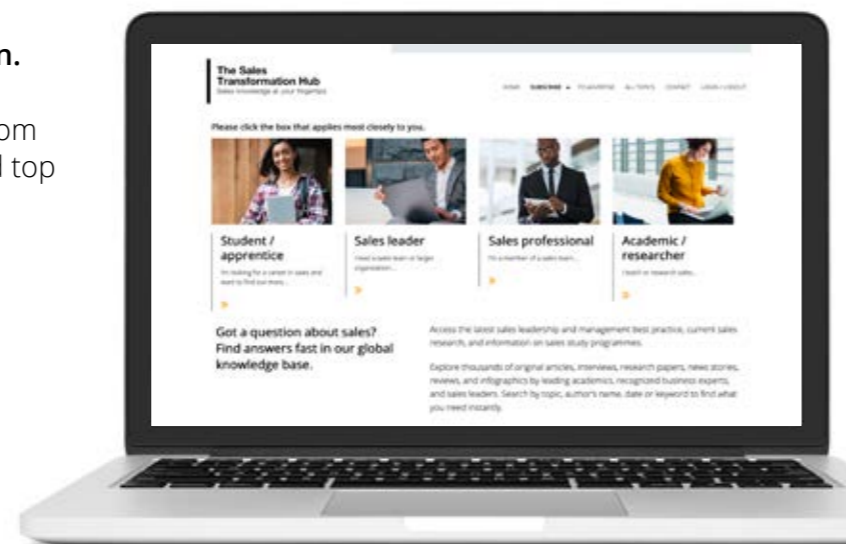
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Holbrook	Ulaga and Eggert	Brock-Smith and Colgate	Almquist et al
Efficiency	Product quality	Functional	Inspirational
Effectiveness	Delivery	Experiential	Individual
Status	Time to market	Symbolic	Ease of doing
Esteem	Direct costs	Cost/sacrifice	Functional
Play	Process costs	Emotional	Table stakes
Aesthetics	Service support	Epistemic/knowledge	
Ethics	Supplier know-how		
Spirituality	Personal interaction		

▲ **Figure 1:** Dimensions of value.

Christian Gronroos (1996) points out that a concern with value in business can be traced as far back as writings on rice merchants in ancient China. An important shift in thinking about value beyond pure monetary terms was provided by Valerie Zeithaml (1988) when she emphasised the subjective and perceived nature of value, defining it as not just the monetary price you pay but anything you give (such as time and effort) for what you get.

Holbrook (1990) describes eight elements of value that consumers intuitively use to make product-service value judgements; Ulaga and Eggert (2005) describe eight core elements in a B2B context, while Patricia Coutelle-Brillet (2014) suggests that Holbrook’s consumer value dimensions had relevance in B2B too. Many other researchers have produced their own classifications such as Brock-Smith and Colgate (2007) and Almquist et al (2018) in which the main categories are broken down further into a complex array of value factors (see Figure 1).

To make thinking about this diverse and fragmented topic more manageable we summarise the main dimensions of value that sellers and buyers work with as, economic, perceived, relational and experiential (Kelly et al 2017:9) such that professional salespeople need to be able to recognise, blend and balance the value the customer is seeking in order to sell on value rather than price alone. For those who want to dig deeper into the complex nature of value, researchers such as Ravald and Gronroos (1996), Payne and Holt (2001) and Khalifa (2004) provide comprehensive reviews; it is Robert Vargo and Stephen Lusch (2008:7) who sum up the tricky and ephemeral nature of value in the following way when they define it as:

“Idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual and meaning-laden.”

Keep a finger on the value pulse

Value is an ever-moving target and something that can change without notice from customer to customer, situation to situation. It is for this reason above all others that the sales professional has such a special and valuable role in organisations – because it is only through being personally close to the customer and engaging in open and wide-ranging discussions that a finger can be kept on the value pulse. What this means is that a salesperson’s ability to read subjective signals from the buyer is equally if not more important for sales success than picking up on the customer’s functional and monetary needs. Reading value means reading what is really going on in the customer’s mind.

So, probably the biggest mistake in this situation is for a sales professional to talk about themselves and their company.

Trevor, an independent vehicle tracking consultant, was helping his client select a supplier and his take on the typical sales pitches he was given tells the story.

“I sat there as the consultant and sat in each meeting for every single tracking provider and all bar two came in and presented about their company before asking a question. Did the whole presentation about their company about how good they were, and how brilliant they were, and all their customers, and all that sort of stuff, and then spent five minutes asking them what they actually wanted.”

So, value lies under the surface of buying decisions and acts like the generating force of those buying decisions. Whilst customer need is an expression of a desired outcome, value judgements are often undeclared assumptions about how those needs are formed and they need to carefully teased out of the customer conversation.

Value – the start point for value propositions

So, though it may sound obvious, it often seems to get forgotten that value propositions have to be rooted in customer value that has come out of research into customer issues (marketing) and through real conversations with customers (sales). Customer issues and concerns need to be identified in the discovery phase, which is often not the case, as Steve Eungblut, Managing Director Sterling Chase and former VP of Sales at BT points out:

“A big cause of failure is that the salespeople are not developing a compelling set of needs (and associated urgency) or aligning their proposition to those needs in a compelling way right at the beginning of the sales cycle.”

So, it’s clear that customer value is what underpins a compelling value proposition... but what is value proposition?

What is a value proposition and why should we care?

There is a broad and varied body of both academic and commercial literature in which, like value, the definition of value proposition is contested. In *Value-Ology* we summarise some of the main themes coming out of the literature and land on our own definition:

“A value proposition is a promise of expected future value, illustrating that future relevant and distinct benefits will outweigh the total cost of ownership.” (Kelly, Johnston, Danheiser 2017 p30).

So, if a value proposition is a promise of value that we expect to help the customer create in the future, we have to understand the issues and concerns they currently have and, crucially, convince them of the need and urgency to change from their current situation. Given that 58% of deals end in no deal, with 47% of B2B salespeople admitting they lost a deal was because the product or service’s value had not been adequately conveyed, convincing customers of the need to change is clearly problematic.

It would seem to follow that the better you are at developing value propositions that resonate the more likely you are to stand out from competitors and increase your ability to convince the customer of the need to change, combating your biggest competitor: inertia. What comes out of academic literature is strangely in sync with this view. Professor Christian Kowalkowski observed:

“The general conclusion is that the ability to communicate a firm’s value propositions strategically and effectively is a new area for the development of competence at the heart of competitive advantage.”

(Kowalkowski 2011, p277).

Through our own research and business experience relating to how well marketing and sales are aligned to develop effective value propositions, we have found that, while there are some concepts that sales and marketing generally agree on, there are some where there is a high level of misalignment. Our findings also seem to indicate that some of the competencies sales and marketing people need to develop effective VPs seem to be missing or under-developed.

Value proposition definition – points of contention

The differences in academic definitions of value propositions pale into insignificance when you talk to practitioners. Here are two completely contrasting responses to one of our simple research questions: What is a value proposition?

Althea, Vice President of Marketing at a cable company, saw a value proposition as something that seemed to start with the product, an inside-out view:

“The compelling reason that a customer would be interested in your product; it’s your differentiator.”

Caila, a seasoned Sales Vice President, provided a much more outside-in view:

“Where you really get customers’ attention is completely about understanding what concerns a business or what the next challenges are... a value proposition is where you can come in, really show you understand that.... It’s a little bit like detective work. You have to find out what’s been going on and then you have to solve for it.”

Caila presents a view consistent with what Steve Eungblut calls “Selling from the left”, doing the spade-work to understand what a customer may value as a precursor to a value proposition. Althea, who comes from a product background, describes the world from the product “inside-out” perspective. People in marketing roles closer to the customer do tend to give a more customer-centred view similar to Caila’s but the difference in definitions can be stark.

In *Value-Ology* we recommend that organisations should land on a clear and agreed definition of what a value proposition means to them. Next time somebody says value proposition in a meeting, as inevitably they will, stop and ask them what they mean. From experience, if you come from the same camp as Caila – as many salespeople do – be prepared to be very surprised or disappointed.

The value proposition stack – point of agreement

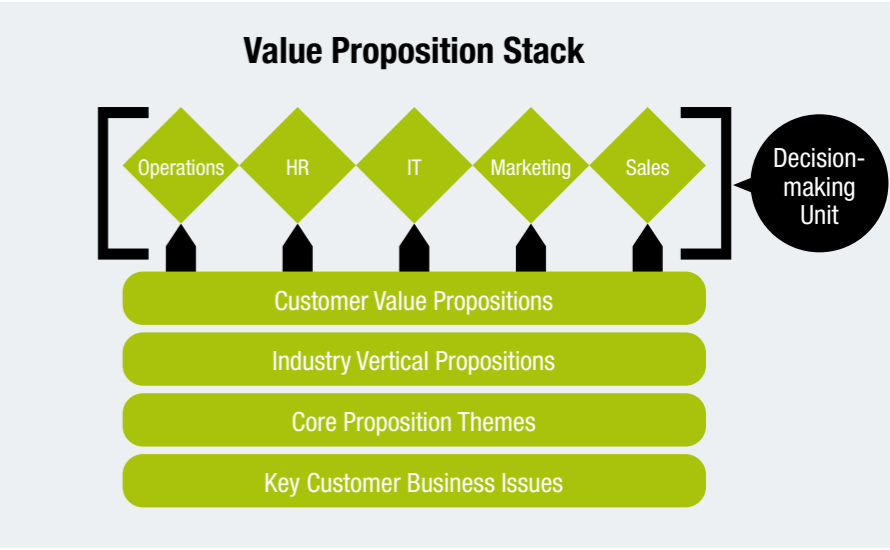
There is broad agreement from sales and marketing practitioners who have taken part in our formal research that value propositions are layered and contextual. In *Value-Ology* we summarise this in the Value Proposition Stack (Figure 2), a simple model designed to help sales and marketing role clarity, and ultimately provide salespeople with numeric value propositions, for individual customers. From the perspective of the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) the first step should be to understand the key customer issues and use these to focus on key themes that are important to customers like “productivity”, “agility” or “security”. The CMO should also lead the effort to align the product and services to the chosen themes.

Many B2B organisations split their customers into industry sectors. It should then be the job of the Industry Marketing

Director to take the value themes and develop them for their specific sector. For example, what productivity or security issues do financial services customers face? How can we address these issues? Answering these questions in detail should lead to the Agility or Productivity Value Proposition for Banks.

Eli, Sales Vice President of a US-based Software organisation makes the relationship between marketing and sales in developing value propositions very clear.

“Maybe the core of the conversation between sales and marketing is in developing a value proposition of our offering and customising that value proposition into the segments in the verticals that we’re addressing. What I really want marketing to do for sales is to develop go-to-market messages for specific verticals to my target customers that will address their problems and will fill a gap in my customer’s business and improve their probabilities of buying.”



▲ **Figure 2:** Value Proposition Stack (Kelly, Johnston, Danheiser, p34).

Mind the sophistication gap

Moving from industry value propositions to customer value propositions is the point where things can become problematic because it’s the handover point between marketing and sales! Now the salesperson has to develop value propositions relevant for their customer that should align to the themes to help develop the overall company brand. There is often a chasm at this marketing-sales handover point that one SVP of Sales has insightfully dubbed the “sophistication gap” – as often the material that comes from marketing is too generic.

“Generally speaking there is a sophistication gap and certainly you’ll hear from sales: ‘I need use cases; I need references; I need a translation of your insights into actionable discussions.’ And I think the argument is whose responsibility is this to create those actionable discussions. And I think it’s a joint responsibility.”

Building on this, Tim Chapman, Managing Partner at Sales EQ, and former Sales VP at Vodafone said:

“Sales and marketing need to work together effectively, or it simply falls down the ‘sophistication gap’. The marketing team needs to develop the ingredients and the sales teams work on a unique recipe for each client. The sales focus needs to be on listening and tailoring messages to specific customer business challenges. Or developing insights the customer should be thinking about.”

It certainly falls to sales to develop and craft the value propositions for each individual member of the customer Decision Making Unit (DMU) at the top of the Value Stack. According to research by the Corporate Executive Board, 6.2

In *Value-Oology* we recommend that organisations develop MUSICAL value propositions which contain:

- **Monetary calculation** – of financial benefits minus costs
- **Unique** – things that set you apart from competitors
- **Spend (costs)** – how much the customer is prepared to pay
- **Impact** – how it will positively impact the customer organisation
- **Capability** – what it is that you can do for the customer to make this impact
- **Aligned** – to the key needs of the customer

people in the customer organisation now have to sign off major deals, so the value propositions have to resonate with the different players in the DMU: for example, Finance, IT, HR, Marketing. IDC research found that 95% of executives require formal financial justification on any significant purchase decisions. In contrast, research by Professor Malcolm McDonald found that only 5% of salespeople developed numeric value propositions demonstrating that financial benefits outweighed costs.

Any value proposition developed with a single customer needs to have the ability to have an impact for the company at an overall brand level and deliver against the chosen company value proposition theme, for example, “agility”. We are often asked if it’s OK to start the value proposition journey with individual customers and sales, and to a degree that is what Account-Based Marketing (ABM) programmes do. We would say emphatically “no” because, although it could help you win sales at an individual account level, it may not help your company develop competitive advantage, in line with Professor Kowalkowski’s thinking.

We interviewed a marketing director who was waxing lyrical about the ABM programme he ran at a Global IT company and how successful this was. When we asked “what’s your company’s competitive advantage?” the answer was “None, it’s a commoditised industry.” It seemed to escape his attention that developing relevant value propositions was the basis for differentiation.

Mind the capability gap

Hopefully we’ve made it clear that both value and value propositions can be slippery concepts, which is why we recommend that you should agree what these mean to your organisation to avoid people talking past each other. It may not come as a surprise that we suggest that unearthing customer value is at the heart of any value proposition you may develop and the quest for value is at the start of the sales and marketing process.

In the end, sales need to develop numeric value propositions that makes the case for change and provide the customer with a sense of urgency for that change. Our research led us to develop the Value Proposition Stack which is an idea we hope you can use to help gain better alignment between marketing, sales, and the customer. The reality is that lots of research shows that many deals are ending in no-deal because value has not been proven.

As Tim Chapman said:

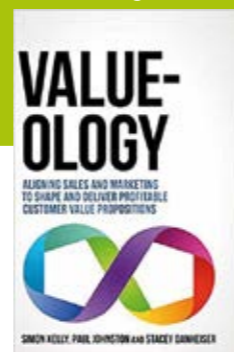
“Poorly articulated value in the customer’s eyes is the biggest contributor to sales opportunities resulting in ‘no deal’, or opportunities that sit in the sales pipeline going stale because the sales team has not articulated value or urgency.... Ultimately it’s not what you sell but what will it do for the customer and, perhaps more importantly, their customers (the bit where your client makes money).”

In *Value-Oology*, we have provided you with a template for MUSICAL value propositions that can help you make the customer case for change. Sadly, if 58% of deals are ending in no deal then this type of help seems to be being ignored. While we acknowledge that we (and others) have provided training and advice designed to help create more sales and marketers create compelling value propositions, something does not feel quite right. We have ample evidence to show that there appears to be failure in behavioural practices and some capability gaps that we will explore later in our series.



About the author

Dr Paul Johnston is co-author of *Value-Oology* and a former lecturer at Sheffield Business School. His research specialism is B2B marketing management. Prior to this, he spent 20 years in the gambling and electronic games industry with board-level roles in competitive strategy, key account management, marketing research and product innovation roles.



About the author

Dr Simon Kelly is a Lecturer in Sales and Marketing at York University. He has 35 years’ experience in the ICT industry in customer service, sales and marketing. He was Marketing Director for BT Major Business where he pioneered the move from “product push” to “value-based” selling and marketing. He led a canon of knowledge for the CIM on best practice B2B marketing. Now a “pracademic”, he has developed innovative marketing and sales skills modules for Sheffield Business School. He is President of SHAKE Marketing Group, based in London.

Is your organisation leaking value?

Mark Davies

The spiral of value leakage starts when organisations fail to focus on the customer and what they value. Instead, businesses should focus on creating “infinite value”.

Peter Drucker is famous for making the following observation: “Because the purpose of a business is to create a customer, the business enterprise has two (and only two) basic functions: marketing and innovation.”

If you are not involved in marketing and innovation, this could seem to be a tad harsh – but Drucker had a point though, and his thinking is even more relevant today. Changes advance as economies shift to new countries such as China; rapidly advancing technology innovation disrupts business models and, with these advancing technologies, communication and connectivity are also advancing – seemingly on daily basis. We are at the first stage of the Internet’s capability, and already it has transformed business: it has done so by empowering customers and consumers by providing a go-to source of information and insight.

For suppliers, this creates a scenario whereby an offering that was unique last year will not be unique this year. Thus, to remain competitive and relevant as a supplier you must transcend this creeping commoditisation to be recognised as a partner that adds significant value by helping the customer thrive in this rapidly changing environment.

But which business function is in prime position to deliver the necessary game-changing marketing and innovation effort? Marketing is often looking too far to the future while obsessing over managing brands and products; meanwhile, innovation is all too often left to the experts in R&D, again focusing on long-term research of new product lines.

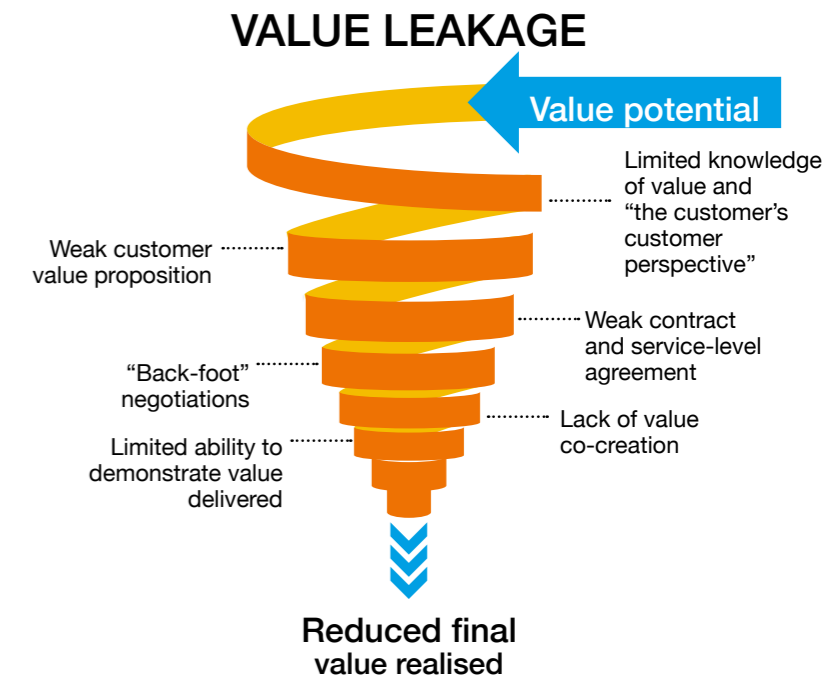
The challenge for organisations today is to be more flexible, reactive and to constantly demonstrate innovation with their customers on a daily basis. Surely the only people who can achieve this are salespeople and account managers? And here lies the challenge – one that is essential to accomplish but very rarely fulfilled: do your sales groups innovate and create competitive advantage?

A possible response

For enterprise organisations, understanding these shifting and ever more demanding markets – and then responding with innovative customer value propositions that provide a competitive advantage – can be difficult. Whilst it is essential to

have great products and brands, these can be relied upon too much.

Organisations’ marketing efforts often look to maximise returns from products that they have available and have spent millions developing. When the the world is shifting quickly though, maybe these products no longer fit the needs of your



customer. If your differentiated product is in fact no longer “different”, buyers will take the view that it is a “me-too” offering. It may be technically robust and manufactured to high standards, but if it is the same as your competitors’ offering, the buyer will have the upper hand and you will be fighting on price.

This may not sound like a ground-breaking observation, but sadly this situation occurs far too often and suppliers end up losing potential profit through a lack of providing products and services that meet customer needs. **Figure 1** illustrates how organisations can lose profit through a lack of focus on value.

This spiral of value leakage starts when organisations fail to focus on the customer and what they value. If you are lucky, they value your offering and it meets all their needs. More likely, you must focus and tailor your offer.

However, a broad product or brand value proposition aimed at a large segment of customers is not enough. A focused

“
Here lies the challenge – one that is essential to accomplish but very rarely fulfilled: do your sales groups innovate and create competitive advantage?”

bespoke customer value proposition (aimed at a single customer) is far more likely to accelerate success. Of course, organisations cannot produce tailored offerings for all their customers, which is why they default to a generic vanilla offering designed to suit everyone.

For lower opportunity customers, that may well suffice. Organisations absolutely should,

however, identify those top few customers that offer potential growth of a significant scale for the future. These high-potential key accounts warrant additional investment, focus, service and bespoke value propositions – one of my definitions for a key account is that it contains significant value opportunity, but this can only be unlocked with a bespoke offering.

Building a value-based business

If the solution for organisations is to focus on high-value customers and essentially “give them things that they value” why is it that supply organisations struggle to succeed? Part of the answer sits with organisational culture. If you have become successful by selling a range of technologies, products and brands in the past, it is difficult to stray from this business model.

The advantage of adopting a value-based approach however, is that this historical approach does not have to be abandoned – in fact, organisations must continue to foster this approach. The secret to success in these changing times is to build another *complementary pillar* to your business model. This has historically been branded as “customer-centricity”; today, however, you need to adopt a more collaborative value-based business model. Six steps can help with this.

- 1. **Be a value-based business, not just customer-centric.** (Maybe this is what Drucker meant.) Value-based businesses consider the customer, but not at the expense of developing results for themselves. They also maximise relationships and support from their suppliers and other valuable stakeholders, such as associates and (where possible) collaboration with competitors.
- 2. **Recognise that the traditional sales model is changing.** Sales is getting squeezed in two areas. Smaller, transactional customers can be served more efficiently via digital channels (or via third-party distributors). Larger, higher-value customers are served directly – these are the key accounts. Consequently, the only direct selling that organisations do is becoming key account management. This capability needs to be developed.
- 3. **Organisations need to build a value-based business.** This spans several areas, but most importantly covers value-based selling, key account management, and offer development and innovation. At the heart of this is value-based selling. Key account management often fails if there is a basic lack of ability to understand complex customers, gain their trust and co-create value. It really is the foundation of the value-based business. Sales is transitioning – it is morphing into a more advanced way of working with customers.
- 4. **Adopting techniques such as account-based marketing (ABM) can “force” your organisation to become more**



value-centric. ABM is a formal approach to business whereby marketing experts are allocated to a specific key account team for a set time. They bring focused effort and expertise to the customer in times of high work load.

5. Recruit and develop exceptional key account managers. The people who manage your key accounts are the experts and value ambassadors who span the interface between your organisation and the customer organisation, and bring together other groups of individuals who can assist. Exceptional key account managers are hard to find; they should be carefully recruited, developed and respected.

6. Finally, keep developing those great brands and products. Whilst the value-based business develops a stronger alliance with the customer, the conversations will be short lived if you don’t have the relevant products and brands at the core of your value proposition.

Remember, the value-based business works alongside traditional product-based businesses, not instead of them, but this approach will satisfy Drucker’s observation and establish your organisation to be centred around marketing and innovation.



About the author

Mark Davies is managing director of Segment Pulse Limited, a Visiting Fellow with Cranfield School of Management and Aston Business School. He has an MBA and an MSc in Advanced Manufacturing Systems; he is a Chartered Engineer, Chartered Marketer and a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing. He is the author of *Infinite Value*, recently published by Bloomsbury.

Value-pricing: 12 key points for implementing strategy

✎ Nick de Cent (adapted from Todd Snelgrove)

Value First, Then Price: Building Value-Based Pricing Strategies, edited by Andreas Hinterhuber and Todd C Snelgrove, is the definitive book on value selling. To celebrate the publication of the second edition we have interpreted some of the main points in one of the key chapters of the book: “Quantifying your value so customers are willing and able to pay for it”.

As Warren Buffet once said, “Price is what you pay. Value is what you get.” From a sales perspective, however, it is important to ask how you get paid for the value you created. In the latest edition of his book, Todd Snelgrove acknowledges that this question has been asked by every premium player in every market of the world. Given the

financial benefits of value creation and pricing, why do so many companies fail to achieve their desired results after they’ve done the work to create something of value?

1 PV ≥ Cost = Action

If the **perceived value** of something **exceeds the cost**, then likely you will have a **sale**.
Most importantly, this must be about PV from the customer’s perspective. Moreover, if that value can be expressed monetarily, it will be a more concrete value than a PV that is not. Cost includes the asking price, together with all other associated costs (shipping and handling, research time, cost of capital, and so on). The greater the difference between PV and cost, the higher the percentage of people who will buy.

2 What is customer value?

As discussed, for the concept of value to be meaningful, it has to be about the customer (**Figure 1**).

WHAT IS VALUE?		
1	Value is always defined by customers and their success metrics.	Customer insight.
2	Value is always created collaboratively with customers and must be recognized by customers.	Collaboration.
3	Value is always quantified as the monetary value of quantitative and qualitative benefits delivered	Measurement of business impact.
4	Value is always based on key differentiators and relative to best available competitive alternatives.	Differentiation.
5	Value is always substantiated by case studies and by documented performance improvements.	Substantiation.

Figure 1: What creates value-selling success.

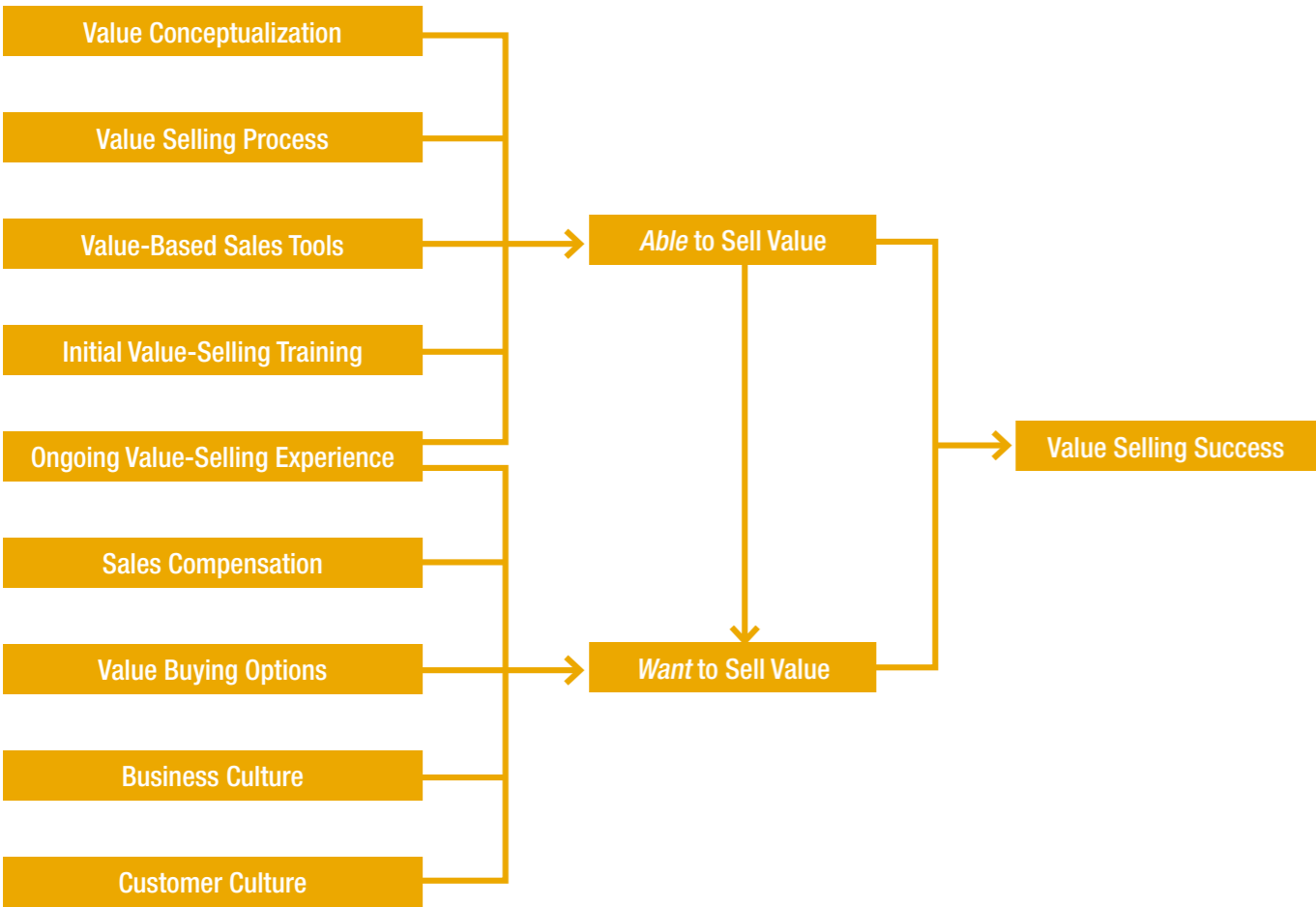


Figure 2: What you need to sell value.

3 You need to take a strategic approach to value

According to Snelgrove, companies that employ a good value-based pricing strategy are 20% more profitable than those that have weak execution on value pricing, and 36% more profitable than those that are good at executing a cost- or market-share-driven strategy (Hogan, 2008). Accordingly, he argues that value pricing works only if additional areas are also addressed. A company must create value, communicate it through sales and marketing, and quantify that value in monetary terms – only then can it get paid for the value created.

He emphasises that “selling on value takes focus, management support, tools, and training, and product or service differentiated attributes to see the results”. Moreover, numerous other things need to happen to make value-selling work for a company.

For a salesforce it comes down to two main focuses (Figure 2): do they have the *ability* to sell value, and do they *want* to sell value? Snelgrove suggests that most companies focus on the ability area and assume that the salesforce wants to sell value and that they just need to go and do it.

4 You must quantify value

Quantifying value is something your customers want and need you to do, allowing them to justify buying your option, unless you’re consistently the lowest-priced offering.

In recent decades, “purchasing” has evolved into the

strategic focus of “procurement”. The difference is important: today procurement people decide what is of value and what they are willing to pay for. Importantly, because they are not the ones who will see and receive the benefits, they are less likely to pay for them.

In today’s budget-constrained world, the question is whether the customer has the money or budget to buy the better offering. Case studies, research, and anecdotal stories confirm that if value can be quantified in monetary terms, then obtaining new budgets or reallocating money from another budget can easily happen, and procurement will be willing to invest.

In today’s world, where your offering is competing for funding and priority over other options, the one that has the best business case, with the hardest values, and the highest probabilities of realization, will be the offering that is purchased. Conversely, if you cannot quantify the value of your offering, it will be placed in the dreaded “no decision” or low-priority, bucket. Or the purchase will be seen as a commodity and you will be compared with your competitors based on price and delivery.

5 You need the ability to sell value

Value has to be part of your selling process. Do you merely react to customers’ requests or do you proactively engage customers, solve problems and articulate that value during your sales process?

6 Are you ensuring you do this as early as possible in the sales process?

Most of us are aware of the 2015 research by the Corporate Executive Board (CEB) which found that, of more than 1,400 B2B customers’ sales interactions, those customers completed, on average, nearly 60% of a typical purchasing decision in researching solutions, ranking options, setting requirements, benchmarking pricing, and so forth before they even talked with a supplier. Thus, if the customer has decided that three suppliers meet its minimum criteria, then price is the only measurable point of difference. Consequently, it’s hard to come in and ask the customer to rethink its requirements and focus on value or total cost of ownership.

7 Focus on total profit added

The salesforce needs to be equipped to have an intelligent discussion with procurement, finance, engineering, and even the customer’s CEO to explain how lowest price is not the same as lowest cost. Can your company affect, measure and reduce costs and increase value in using your product or service during the phases of acquisition, installation, operation, maintenance, and disposal?

However, it is important to note that total cost of ownership is not the only significant factor; **total benefit of ownership is key**. Can your company increase the benefits your customer receives, for instance through increased production, lower risk, higher safety, more sell-through?

By looking at the total cost of ownership (reduction of costs) along with the total benefit of ownership (increase in benefits of value), you can understand and demonstrate in numbers how you can affect and measure the impact of your offering on the customer’s total value of ownership: the difference in reduced costs plus increased benefits minus any price difference.

Because this approach makes the customer measurably more profitable, Snelgrove refers to this as “total profit added” (TPA), citing it as the most holistic measure of all the costs saved (TCO) and all the increased benefits created. This allows for a clear demonstration that the price charged will lead to the highest profit for the customer (versus other options) over the total life of the product or service.

8 Creating a value-based sales tool is only part of the journey

While many companies mistakenly think that having a value-based sales tool is the be-all and end-all, Snelgrove stresses that it is only one of the foundational building blocks. He argues: “For a value quantification tool to really work, it must be easy for the technical and financial person to understand. Remember, a good TCO tool is not a sales tool in and of itself. It’s a process and methodology for benchmarking, finding, prioritising, customising, and quantifying expected values in financial terms so that customers can see if it makes sense for them to invest in your solution.”

A good TCO quantification tool:

- Benchmarks data ranges and reference points.
- Allows customers to change input data.
- Is clear and concise.
- Shows the results as your customer would like to see them, for example in terms of ROI, net present value, cash flow break even, money saved.
- Is functional – allows users to save cases and work through a process to go from proposal, to accepted, to verified.
- Builds in an archive so that cases can be saved, searched,

and sorted by industry, application, country, distributor, customer.

- Provides live updates when connected to the corporate server; links to reference material.
- Is easy to use – available in a light version such as for an iPad, multiple languages and currencies.

9 Initial value-selling training

For all this to work, you need to ensure your sales force is comfortable with selling based on value versus price or technology. Snelgrove recommends spending time during initial training discussing why this is a good strategy for them and your company, and why customers want and need proof of value.

Programs that come as edicts from the head office usually encounter resistance in the field, he warns. “Bring the team along on the journey; don’t ram it down their throats. Also, if your salesforce is technical, then you will need to spend even more time getting their buy-in.”

Of course, they also need to understand and practice with the tool’s functionality.

10 Sales must want to sell value

Training is not a one-and-done thing; it must be ongoing. Consider having a senior manager role play the customer to challenge a salesperson’s presentation and offering by asking: “What’s the value for me, the customer?” Snelgrove suggests you will only be comfortable with value selling when you know and have answered similar questions hundreds of times. He also recommends that regions and countries include discussion of value during every meeting, where someone presents a case, what numbers were used, how the process worked, and key learnings.

Inevitably, sales compensation will have an impact on how your people behave. For instance, do you incentivise volume targets? If so, then you shouldn’t have to ask yourself why your salespeople are so eager to cut prices. Also, remember that free services, free samples, free training and extended terms are just other more creative ways for a salesperson to discount. Snelgrove suggests that the salesperson who sells less but at full price should be rewarded more than the salesperson who spends most of their time with internal management justifying that a particular customer needs to get a discount.

Vendors should also consider whether they’ve given their customers an option to buy based on value realized. In other words, do you use pay-for-performance models that allow customers to pay once value is realized for them? If not, then they might not be able to buy based on promises of potential future value.

11 Business culture

Snelgrove recommends asking the following questions: are you really a value company? Does your CEO talk nonstop about the value you create for your customers? Do you reward and recognize the people who create the most value or the newest ways to save customers money? Or are you just using a few buzzwords in a presentation or corporate brochure? Value needs to be part of your company’s DNA. Does the sales organisation receive mixed messages like “Get every order and sell value”?

Unless your message is clear, you will end up rewarding and motivating sales to cut prices, and volume will be the underlying dimension that’s rewarded. If you’re unable to prove your value you might get a short-term order based on lowest price, but over time it will not translate into more sustainable

BEST PRACTICE VALUE PROPOSITIONS

CHECK	ITEM	KEY ISSUE	RATE
	Is the target customer group clearly identified?	segment	
	Is the key business issue we resolve a real pain-point for this segment?	relevance	
	Is it clear that the value proposition is superior for this customer group?	better	
	Does the value proposition reflect our competitive advantages?	advantage	
	Is the value proposition relative to the customer's best available alternative?	competition	
	Are customer benefits quantified? Is the quantification the result of quantifying both financial as well as qualitative benefits?	quantify	
	Is the value proposition based on sound customer market research?	research	
	Does it reflect changing customer priorities? Is it relevant... tomorrow?	update	
	Can you substantiate the value proposition with case studies or evidence of quantified performance improvements delivered?	substantiate	
	Can you articulate the value proposition in 1-2 minutes?	short	

Figure 3: Best-practice value propositions.

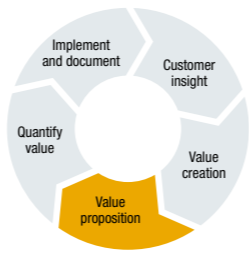
orders as someone comes along and undercuts you.

12 Other success factors

A value-quantification tool should be the output of the strategy of creating, communicating, quantifying, and getting paid for value. That said, numerous other issues need to be addressed. For value quantification to become part of your company's raison d'être, other supports must be in place. A key factor is who will drive this program internally and externally – a program without a driving person is destined to fail.

Just as importantly, will the ability to quantify the value of new products and services be part of your new-product-development process, so that when a new “solution” is presented to the market you can quantify its financial impact for customers? Snelgrove recommends that external marketing should consistently reinforce this as part of a company's brand image: trade shows, magazines, brochures, and company speeches should have a dedicated “section” where your company can summarize the hard value your company has delivered.

Finally, here is a template for achieving best practice in developing value propositions (Figure 3).



Value First, Then Price: Building Value-Based Pricing Strategies by Andreas Hinterhuber and Todd C. Snelgrove, Routledge; 2nd edition (28 Dec. 2021).

Andreas Hinterhuber is Associate Professor at the Department of Management at Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italy. Todd C. Snelgrove is Senior Managing Partner at Experts in Value in Clarkston, MI, USA.



Selling face to face

Rod Tonna-Barthet

Being there is still important in the modern B2B sales process.

Businesses increasingly communicate with customers and prospects in new ways as technology advances. Today's sales reps use a variety of tools to accomplish their tasks – email, social media and video-chat tools among others. Consequently, traditional in-person sales meetings have become less common.

Nevertheless, even as the B2B sales process becomes increasingly digital, face-to-face meetings still offer certain benefits that no technology can replicate. In-person requests are 34 times more successful than those made over email,¹ the close rate for in-person meetings is 57%,² and executives and business travellers estimate that 28% of their current business would be lost without in-person meetings.

While virtual communication is key, face-to-face meetings still hold the following advantages in the modern sales process.

1. Human connections fuel success

Best-in-class sales representatives have a thorough understanding of human relationships. The human brain is wired for connection and appreciation; we want to belong and feel valued. To build relationships and close deals, it is essential to understand what makes each person tick. Businesses need to remember that face-to-face sales are often the first time a customer gets acquainted with your brand, products, and services.

Focus on a softer approach and less hard-selling, while emphasising relationship-building. It is imperative to pay attention to potential customers' wants and needs, identify common interests, and demonstrate empathy to put yourself in their shoes.

2. Clear communication of shared values

Shared values between consumers and brands help to establish concrete relationships. By authenticating your brand and promoting human connections, shared beliefs lay the groundwork for building connections. By engaging in face-to-face sales, prospects and customers can learn about your brand's values directly.

3. Educate prospects and customers

Face-to-face meetings provide an excellent opportunity for salespeople to answer any burning questions a prospect may have about your products or services. Your field representatives must be armed with a wide range of knowledge pertaining to not just the products being discussed, but also your entire industry.

4. Build credibility and trust

Brands and companies that customers recognise and trust are more likely to attract them as customers. Using face-to-face meetings to show how your product helps them solve their problems, wants and desires is crucial. As you learn more, your

business will be better able to serve them – and you may even witness an uplift in customer retention and brand loyalty.

5. Showcase complicated products or services

Do you recall the last time you were offered a free sample in your local supermarket? Customers are far more likely to purchase a product after seeing and tasting it; therefore, supermarkets have mastered the art of demonstration. Taking the time to demonstrate your product allows prospects to learn how it will benefit them the most. Using face-to-face meetings to show how your product helps them solve their problems, wants, and desires is crucial.

6. Eradicate technical difficulties and miscommunication

In some cases, technology improves communication efficiency during the sales process. In other cases, technology exacerbates the problem of poor sales communication. Any sale can, for example, be ruined by a dropped call or poor internet connection. Face-to-face selling overcomes these technical challenges, allowing salespeople to build real relationships with prospects. You'll also be able to better measure prospects' reactions by using body language cues.

Blending tech and a human touch

All in all, success in B2B sales means using all the methods available to you, and using them well. Technology should, of course, be used extensively when it is sensible to do so, but the value of face-to-face interaction can never be understated. At a time when societies and the world are opening up again, embracing in-person meetings is sure to yield success.



About the author

Rod Tonna-Barthet is President and Chief Executive Officer at KYOCERA Document Solutions UK.

¹ Vanessa Bohns, "A Face-to-Face Request Is 34 Times More Successful Than an Email," Harvard Business Review, 11 April 2017.

² Michael Damphousse, "The ROI of Conference Calls vs. Face to Face Meetings," Green Leads.

Research Review – edited by Jeremy Noad

The research review aims to help readers keep up to date with recently published research on sales-related topics. The review highlights short abstracts of academically peer-reviewed research. This selection of published research is from a range of academic journals. In this edition, the abstracts include four themes that focus on **sales performance**, **customer management**, **behavioural studies**, and **systems and tools**.



Sales Performance

The ongoing quest for reliable sales forecasts

Improving business forecasts is a major goal of many companies because of its strong positive impact on future performance and potential competitive advantages. Even though sales managers have been called to serve as a profound base for business forecasts from a theoretical perspective, this premise has not been subject to empirical testing to date.

Addressing this research void, the authors analyse under which conditions sales managers' business forecasts are reliable and when not. The authors conducted a cross-industry field study including two measurement points with 180 high-ranking senior sales managers. Results show that managers' forecast accuracy fundamentally depends on contextual moderators. Sales managers predict future business situations 2.5 times more accurately when they exhibit a long firm-specific experience and high confidence levels in their forecast. Furthermore, a comparably long sales cycle improves forecast accuracy. Conversely, sales managers may make considerable misjudgments if the before mentioned conditions are not met. **Schneider, J V, Alavi, S, Guba, J H, Wieseke, J, & Schmitz, C (2020), "When do forecasts fail and when not? Contingencies affecting the accuracy of sales managers' forecast regarding the future business situation", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 1-26.**

Moving to personalised sales targets and incentives

Performance-based incentives are widely used in B2B sales; however, sales managers find it challenging to customise such incentives. In response, we propose a new methodology to assess salespeople's capability using performance

history data. To evaluate relative performance, we filter out the impact of systematic factors of job characteristics (eg, channel type, territory, and market size). Therefore, by providing appropriate benchmarks, our approach captures the idiosyncratic component of performance, allowing a direct comparison of a salesperson with other counterparts in the firm. We also account for prospective customer characteristics that let us distinguish between competent salespeople and those fortunate enough to have a customer mix with a high predisposition to buy. Using a data set of automobile insurance sales to small business owners in the US, we model salesperson performance as three stages: generating leads, converting leads to customers, and upselling. Our output, a "grade card" for each salesperson, contains metrics that can aid managers in setting individual level performance goals, deciding who should be rewarded or let go, and diagnosing salespeople's strengths and weaknesses. Our easy-to-implement methodology is useful for various applications, wherever relative performance needs to be judged.

Agnihotri, R, & Zhang, W (2021), "Developing benchmarks to capture relative performance for sales force incentives decisions: Lessons from B2B insurance industry", *Industrial Marketing Management*, 92, 55-71.

Incentivising the inside sales team

Although companies are increasingly deploying inside sales units, knowledge is scarce regarding how to incentivise them effectively. In addressing this neglect, this study draws on network theory to scrutinise how various unit and individual financial and non-financial incentives affect inside sales units' performance. In addition, the authors examine the contingent roles of two unit-level network measures, density, and centralisation. Using data from 366 salespeople working in 118 inside sales units, the authors empirically test the predicted relationships. Results reveal that unit incentives are positively related to unit performance, whereas individual incentives

notably have a negative relationship with unit performance. Results further reveal that density and centralisation influence the incentive-unit performance relationships. Overall, findings indicate that the effects of various incentives in the inside sales unit context differ from those in other contexts, resulting in important implications for managers.

Homburg, C, Morguet, T R, & Hohenberg, S (2021), "Incentivising of inside sales units—the interplay of incentive types and unit structures", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 1-43.

Do salespeople use value calculators?

Value-based selling is assumed to increase B2B sales performance, but empirical evidence about specific practices such as value calculators is lacking. This study explores value calculators in B2B sales work using a mixed-methods approach. First, data on value-calculator usage and sales performance from a B2B service firm show that the usage of value calculators relates to lower-value won deals and does not affect sales conversion or sales-process duration. Second, the analysis of interviews from various B2B firms adds depth concerning the contingencies of effective calculator use. The results reveal that deal anatomy and challenges in daily sales work limit the general domain of applicability of value calculators. In contrast, challenges related to quantifying implicit value drivers and salesperson and customer skills may explain their negative effect on sales performance.

Pöyry, E, Parvinen, P, & Martens, J (2021), "Effectiveness of value calculators in B2B sales work—Challenges at the sales-call level", *Journal of Business Research*, 126, 350-360.

Unpacking value creation and value capture

Although the relationships among different dimensions of value creation, characteristics of dyadic relationships and value concepts are well studied, they have been conceptualised

“**Results show that managers' forecast accuracy fundamentally depends on contextual moderators. Sales managers predict future business situations 2.5 times more accurately when they exhibit a long firm-specific experience and high confidence levels in their forecast.**”

independently and without much linked theorising. Hence, little is known about how these concepts and their effects interplay. This article takes a configurational approach and investigates how different dimensions of value creation and relationship factors affect value capture. The study draws on an embedded case study encompassing relationships of a focal customer in the financial payments industry with six specialised service suppliers, followed by a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) of 29 relationship conditions. Value creation is based on "core" value dimensions and relationship characteristics, such as power and change in supply strategy for both buyers and suppliers.

Focusing on both buyer and supplier perspectives of the same phenomenon, the study increases knowledge of how contextual variables influence value capture. Five different configurations of these constructs represent sufficient conditions to increase value capture, by either negotiating

better prices or shifting volume among the parties involved. From a practical perspective, the proposed configurations help managers choose adequate supply strategies or better allocate resources according to specific conditions of a business relationship.

Minerbo, C, Kleinaltenkamp, M, & Brito, L A L (2021). “Unpacking value creation and capture in B2B relationships”, *Industrial Marketing Management*, 92, 163-177.

Sales enablement: where should it focus?

Over the past decade, there has been rapid growth in sales enablement in the marketplace due to numerous changes affecting the buyer-seller interface. Despite this growth, little is known regarding the magnitude of its presence, what assistance is being offered and to whom, and what metrics are found to be valuable. In an exploratory study, the results from 561 responses across three regions of the world (Asia Pacific, Europe, and North America) suggest that several significant differences exist as it pertains to sales enablement. Findings indicate that salespeople and account managers are the primary focus of sales enablement initiatives, but significantly different stakeholders also exist across the regions of the world. Moreover, the specific services offered by sales enablement (eg, training, content, tools, processes, onboarding, coaching) are shown to vary widely across the globe. Even productivity goals are not uniform within sales enablement initiatives. This study contributes to marketing capabilities theory by extending its application into a new paradigm of sales enablement. We summarise the findings and the managerial implications of this global inquiry.

Peterson, R M & Dover, H F (2021), “Global perspectives of sales enablement: Constituents, services, and goals”, *Industrial Marketing Management*, 92, 154-162.

Maintaining relationships with “lost customers” enhances reacquisition

Reacquiring a lost customer is often easier, faster, and less expensive than acquiring a new customer. Thus, reacquisition activities have become important fundamental aspects of selling. Improving our understanding of the customer reacquisition efforts of business-to-business salespeople is the primary objective of this study. When customers leave, they leave behind a network of personal connections with the supplier. This research examines how assessments of these connections by salespeople relate to salesperson effort and reacquisition success. We distinguish between buying centre members who support a salesperson (ie, advocates) and those who work against the salesperson (ie, adversaries). A conceptual model is developed, and results show that advocates in a customer organisation enhance both sales effort and the level of reacquisition while adversaries increase salesperson perceptions of reacquisition difficulty.

Leach, M P, Liu, A H, Pullins, E B, & Wang, S (2021), “Advocates and adversaries: examining the role of supplier advocacy on customer reacquisition”, *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 1-14.

Sales organisations need strategic sales decision-making autonomy

Extant international business (IB) literature on Headquarter (HQ)-subsidiary relationships has established that where decision-making occurs, it influences a firm’s performance. Existing studies propose that the degree of autonomy in

decision-making at the subsidiary level is not the same for all value chain activities, paying more attention to upstream activities. This paper contributes by exploring decision-making autonomy in downstream strategic sales activities. Sales has rarely been centre stage in IB investigations, and we, therefore, lack a thorough understanding of its role and importance within the MNE decision-making processes.

Conducting a mixed methods exploratory study in the fast-moving consumer goods sector in Germany, we test for antecedents and outcomes of subsidiaries’ strategic sales decision-making autonomy. Results confirm external and internal embeddedness as antecedents, and the dominant role played by the local context but provide insights into potential risks of internal embeddedness. Results challenge existing theory in as much as subsidiary importance is not a significant driver. A critical implication of this finding is that, compared to upstream activities, the HQ may not have the option of mandating a subsidiary to transfer sales strategy skills and knowledge across the network. Our results show that, in an era of globalisation of sales and the internationalisation of retailers, HQ managers must pay heed to directly interacting with subsidiaries and sharing strategic sales decision-making across the network to consolidate the MNE’s global sales strategy.

Reichstein-Scholz, H, Giroud, A, Yamin, M. & Andersson, U (2021), “Sales to centre stage! Determinants of the division in strategic sales decisions within the MNE”, *International Business Review*, 101859.

Inauthentic selling strategies affect customers and the brand

Prior research finds that the more attached salespeople are to a brand they sell, the more effort they extend on behalf of the brand, thus improving sales performance. However, high salesperson brand attachment may also have undesirable consequences that are only evident when viewed from the customers’ perspective. We argue that brand attachment can have a “blinding effect” on salespeople, leading them to adopt emotionally laden sales strategies that diminish customer brand trust and, by extension, their intent to purchase the brand.

We explore these ideas using data collected from salespeople in the direct selling industry. The data collected includes 20 exploratory interviews with salesperson-customer dyads, a field study of 153 salespeople and 98 matched customers, and analyses that allow for the presence of non-linear, moderated effects. The salesperson data provide evidence of a brand attachment bright side (affirming prior research findings), while the dyadic data confirm the existence of a dark side that emerges when salespeople employ inauthentic selling strategies. The study findings point to the potential perils of internal marketing investments directed at enhancing salesperson-brand bonds.

Beeler, L, Zablah, A, & Rapp, A (2021), “Blinded by the brand: inauthentic salesperson brand attachment and its influence on customer purchase intentions”, *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 1-50.

Being “sold out” increases customer urgency to buy

The present research explores how the proportion of sold-out options in the choice set affects consumer purchase choices. Across five experiments, we find an inverted U-shaped relationship between the proportion of sold-out options in a choice set and consumer purchase choices. Fuelling this effect

are two competing processes: the presence of sold-out options signals the overall quality of products in the choice set, which prompts consumers to purchase available options, while it also evokes psychological reactance, which impedes purchases. The quality signalling effect features a concave shape, whereas the psychological reactance force takes on a convex shape, so in combination, these two forces form an inverted U-shaped relationship. In addition, two boundary conditions were identified: (1) this effect is obtained only when psychological reactance is not induced by other situational factors; and (2) this effect disappears when consumers make purchases for others, not when they make purchases for themselves.

Tian, J, Chen, R, & Xu, X (2021), “A good way to boost sales? Effects of the proportion of sold-out options on purchase behavior”, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*.

Customer Management

Is customer entertaining still useful?

Customer entertainment is any activity considered to provide entertainment, amusement, or recreation. Business-to-business firms, as part of their sales strategy, have entertained customers for decades in hopes of influencing purchasing and building long-term relationships. Using social exchange theory and the element of reciprocity, this study examines how customer entertainment influences buyers’ perceptions of gratitude, indebtedness, and purchase intention within their relationship with the B2B seller. In order to assess the importance and strategic role of customer entertainment in building and strengthening buyer-seller relationships, this study investigates customer entertainment throughout the sequential relationship stages of exploration, expansion, and commitment.

A multi-method research design was developed comprised of two qualitative studies, three pretests, and a conclusive experimental field study that compared buyer attitudes with salespeople’s perceptions of buyer attitudes. The final study contrasts results between 248 buyers and 245 salespeople and consists of a three by three experimental field study, with the levels of customer entertainment events and stage of a relationship as manipulating variables. The analysis reveals that salespeople and buyers’ view of reciprocity differs, with salespeople being more socially oriented and focused on gratitude while buyers are more economically oriented and more attuned to indebtedness.

Oakley, J, Bush, A J, Moncrief, W C, Sherrill, D, & Babakus, E (2021), “The role of customer entertainment in B2B sales strategy: Comparative insights from professional buyers and salespeople”, *Industrial Marketing Management*, 92, 190-201.

Likeability influences the early phase of relationships

We investigate trust formation in the understudied area of early-phase relationship and its effects on the selection of purchaser-supplier governance. The theoretical framework underlying the research draws on purchaser/supplier relationships, swift/affective trust formation, social exchange theory, and transaction cost analysis to develop the hypotheses. This study is the first to provide insights into early phase relationships and demonstrate that purchaser-supplier similarity and supplier’s likeability are significantly related to purchaser trust in suppliers. In particular, similarity has a stronger positive relationship with trust than supplier likeability. The combined results of a field study and a scenario-based experiment offer strong evidence that suppliers’ similarity and likeability play a key role in forming early trust and governance selection.

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Using social exchange theory and the element of reciprocity, this study examines how customer entertainment influences buyers’ perceptions of gratitude, indebtedness, and purchase intention within their relationship with the B2B seller. The analysis reveals that salespeople and buyers’ view of reciprocity differs, with salespeople being more socially oriented and focused on gratitude while buyers are more economically oriented and more attuned to indebtedness.

Nagel, D M, Giunipero, L, Jung, H, Salas, J, & Hochstein, B (2021), “Purchaser perceptions of early phase supplier relationships: The role of similarity and likeability”, *Journal of Business Research*, 128, 174-186.

Political skills are key in customer relationships

The purpose of this research is to understand the use of political skill (PS) in the context of business-to-business sellers’ relationship building and ethical decision-making. Drawing on social influence, relationship marketing, and ethical decision-making theories, a model and hypotheses are proposed to examine the impact of political skill, customer-relationship-building competence, and moral intensity on the frequency of customer-directed deviance while considering the effects of neutralisation techniques and consequences of unethical behaviour.

Structural equation modelling is used to analyse responses from 240 business-to-business salespeople. Findings suggest guidance for sales managers (eg, training and coaching) to assist salespeople’s application of political skills to build customer relationships and reduce customer-directed deviance. While political skill has received limited analysis in the context of business-to-business salespeople, these findings suggest the direct and indirect effects of political skill are meaningful to sellers and researchers.

Schweper Jr, C H, & Good, M C (2020), “Influence of salesperson political skill: improving relationship building and reducing customer-directed deviance”, *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 1-35.

Customer success needs to be a continual process

In business-to-business markets, customer success management is gaining growing practical importance. The concept comprises customer-related activities that aim at monitoring, securing, and enhancing customer success as well as the implementation of the corresponding organisational

structures and processes within the supplier firm. In contrast to existing research, this article takes a customer perspective to customer success management and investigates how business customers judge respective supplier activities; first, to reveal the quality dimensions business customers apply when assessing suppliers' customer success management activities, and second, to investigate how the quality of suppliers' customer success management activities leads to business customers' perceived value.

Addressing these questions, this research contributes to the literature by exploring customer success management from a customer perspective. The findings elucidate that customers' perceived value in use does not simply develop over time. Rather, through the implementation of customer-related activities of customer success management, suppliers can actively influence customers' value-in-use experiences, thus fostering customers' rebuy decisions. From a managerial perspective, the findings support suppliers in successfully shaping their customer-oriented customer success management activities as well as the necessary internal structures and processes.

Prohl-Schwenke, K, & Kleinaltenkamp, M (2021), "How business customers judge customer success management", *Industrial Marketing Management*, 96, 197-212.

Customer loyalty to the salesperson rather than an organisation has risks

Past research suggests that customer loyalty is a critical component in successful business-to-business sales relationships. Challenging this view, this study suggests that customer loyalty may actually have an unexpected "dark side" to it. Specifically, grounded in Emotions as Social Information (EASI) theory, this research investigates the role that customer loyalty (to a salesperson) has on customer coping behaviour post salesperson ethical transgressions. We take the often-underrepresented customer perspective in selling relationships to test our theoretical model using a field study that consists of 239 professional procurement specialists.

Our results indicate that when customers believe that a salesperson is more genuine in displaying emotions, after an ethical transgression, customers are more likely to forgive and less likely to seek revenge against or avoid the salesperson. On the other hand, when customers believe that a salesperson is "faking" emotions, customers are more likely to cope with ethical transgressions by avoiding and seeking revenge against the salesperson. Our study also finds that when an ethical transgression occurs, a "love becomes hate" effect occurs, where customer loyalty undermines a salesperson's efforts and does not always favour the salesperson.

Chaker, N N, Beeler, L L, & Delpechitre, D (2021), "Can customer loyalty to a salesperson be harmful? Examining customer perceptions of salesperson emotional labor strategies post ethical transgressions", *Industrial Marketing Management*, 96, 238-253.

Behavioural Studies

No one is an island unless you are a salesperson in a pandemic

Industrial salespeople spend more time outside of the firm than inside of the firm. As a consequence, they may be particularly prone to salesperson social isolation – or feelings of being disconnected from coworkers and colleagues. Potentially magnified by the 2019 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the prevalence of social isolation may become a more common

and modern-day challenge for salespeople. As part of this, managers must consider the notion of salesperson social isolation and its impact on job performance.

To explore this phenomenon, we employ a multi-study, mixed-methods approach. In study one, we conduct a quantitative survey-based study (with a sample of 233 industrial salespeople) investigating the relationship between salesperson social isolation and salesperson performance and the processes through which it occurs. In Study 2, we utilise a discovery-oriented theories-in-use qualitative approach (with a sample of 27 sales professionals) to investigate the nature of salesperson social isolation (with certain pandemic-related factors), its consequences (also considering pandemic-related factors), and important manager and salesperson actions that offset the negative effects of salesperson social isolation. Altogether, our findings shed some light on the if, how, what (in much more detail), and when aspects of salesperson social isolation. Theoretical and managerial implications are also discussed.

Chaker, N N, Nowlin, E L, Walker, D, & Anaza, N A (2021), "Alone on an island: A mixed-methods investigation of salesperson social isolation in general and in times of a pandemic", *Industrial Marketing Management*, 96, 268-286.

Mindfulness in sales

Social anxiety affects salespeople. Yet, little is known about its association with salesperson performance and the resources that might alleviate its presumably negative impact. Drawing from work on social and clinical psychology, this study investigates how personal (ie, mindful acceptance) and social (ie, perceived sales manager support) interventions can serve as safeguarding mechanisms that salespeople can leverage to reduce social anxiety and its impact.

The findings, derived from a dataset consisting of survey data collected from 135 business-to-business salespeople matched with objective sales performance data, show that social anxiety is negatively associated with sales performance. The results also show that higher levels of mindful acceptance and perceived sales manager support are associated with lower social anxiety and alleviate the negative relationship between social anxiety and sales performance. The findings and implications are examined through in-depth interviews with 15 sales professionals. Implications of this research are also discussed.

Lussier, B, Philp, M, Hartmann, N N, & Wieland, H (2021), "Social anxiety and salesperson performance: The roles of mindful acceptance and perceived sales manager support", *Journal of Business Research*, 124, 112-125.

Intuition influences sales performance

According to the Dual-Process Model, salespeople might utilise intuitive and/or deliberate judgments to make sales decisions. These two systems are distinct and used in isolation by the decision-maker. On the contrary, the Uni-Process Model suggests an alignment between the two styles of thinking based on common rules and principles, meaning they are integrated into one decision-making process. The processes happen simultaneously, not independently. We subscribe to this logic and test these two judgments according to salespeople's perception across three studies. First, we examine salespeople in the shoe industry, second salespeople working in retail banking, and finally through a comprehensive meta-analysis. We investigate the effects of salespeople's intuition, deliberation, and "intuition-deliberation alignment" on sales performance through the mediating mechanism of acquisition-retention ambidexterity, finding effects across each context.

While this does provide evidence that the two judgments



may work well separately, it strongly supports the use of the Uni-Process Model to explain and predict sales outcomes. Specifically, while both intuitive and deliberate judgment isolate increased sales performance through salespeople's ambidextrous behavior, the newly created intuitive-deliberative alignment construct suggests that sales performance is higher when salespeople's intuitive and deliberative judgements are both high rather than when both are low, and this effect goes through A-R ambidexterity.

Vieira, V A, Faia, V D S, Gabler, C B., & Cardoso, R N (2020), "The impact of intuition and deliberation on acquisition-retention ambidexterity and sales performance: comparing the Dual-Process and Uni-Process Models", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 41(1), 56-69.

Performance reviews directly impact job satisfaction

This study aims to investigate an under-researched area: the impact of causal attributions (ie, causal stability and company-related/-unrelated attributions) on salespeople's job satisfaction following their performance appraisal. When salespeople correctly attribute their performance, causal stability affects their job satisfaction. However, company-related attributions affect their satisfaction only in the case of a poor performance outcome. As expected, salespeople who make biased attributions experience misattributed or "unwarranted" satisfaction or dissatisfaction, a higher or lower satisfaction level than they would have experienced had they made proper causal attributions.

Using Weiner's theory of emotion and motivation as a theoretical framework, this study confirms that cognitive appraisals of event outcomes (in this case, performance reviews) impacts salespeople's emotional experience. Furthermore, causal ascriptions following the salesperson's performance appraisal affect job satisfaction. This study discusses how managers can ensure the continued satisfaction of their salespeople, which constitutes a stable source of motivation, by understanding their performance attributions. This study introduces a new concept of misattributed job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. While anecdotally some scholars have investigated when salespeople play "the blame game", this study shows how salespeople correctly or incorrectly ascribe blame for the outcomes and the impact on job satisfaction.

Lai-Bennejean, C, & Beitelspacher, L (2020), "Impacts of salespeople's biased and unbiased performance

attributions on job satisfaction: the concept of misattributed satisfaction", *European Journal of Marketing*.

Political skill builds social capital and enhances salesperson performance

Research suggests that political skill affects how salespeople build and leverage social capital. However, there are important questions left unanswered in this relationship. First, although it is linked to specific structural characteristics of networks, it is unclear how political skill affects the overall quality of one's social network. Similarly, it is unclear if objective and subjective social network quality measurement approaches produce comparable results. Third, although theory positions political skill and social network quality as desirable personal and structural resources, it is unknown how these resources affect dyadic relationships between salespeople and clients. Finally, there is a need to assess how the dimensions of political skill differentially affect social network quality.

To address these questions, we propose a new model of social network quality, examining how political skill influences social network quality and salesperson performance in a two-study investigation. We begin by predictively testing the unique contributions of objective and subjective social network quality in the relationship between political skill and sales magnitude one year later. We then extend these findings using dyadic salesperson and customer data to explore how political skill and social network quality predictively impact sales magnitude, sales frequency, and relationship performance.

Munyon, T P, Frieder, R E, Satornino, C B, Carnes, A M, Bolander, W, & Ferris, G R (2021), "Selling your network: how political skill builds social capital and enhances salesperson performance", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 1-31.

Helping salespeople cope with stress and reduce burnout

Salespeople are subjected to high levels of stress on a day-to-day basis. Over time, this can lead to burnout if they lack sufficient coping resources to handle this stress. Given the major problems associated with burnout, managers and scholars are interested in discovering factors that help salespeople cope with stress and reduce burnout. The authors argue that interpersonal mentalising (IM) skills may be effective ➤

in reducing salesperson stress and its negative outcomes. Salespeople with greater IM skills are better at regulating their emotions, building work relationships, and understanding what others think. The authors posit that these skills help salespeople to cope with stress and reduce burnout through a process mediated by active and avoidance coping strategies. Following one surprising finding in Study 1, which involved 149 B2B Fortune 500 salespeople, the authors developed a post-hoc hypothesis that oscillating between active and avoidance coping strategies can result in more optimal use of coping resources. Given that extant theory argues that active coping is an adaptive strategy and avoidance coping is a maladaptive strategy, the finding that oscillating between the two can be more effective is an important theoretical advancement. A second study was conducted with 215 B2B salespeople working in a cross-section of industries to increase the generalizability of the results and to test the novel oscillation hypothesis. The authors' findings demonstrate that IM skills reduce burnout and play an important role in shaping the coping strategies salespeople use. **McFarland, R G, & Dixon, A L (2021), "The impact of salesperson interpersonal mentalising skills on coping and burnout: the critical role of coping oscillation", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 1-25.**

Adaptive selling behaviours still make a difference

Theory suggests that adaptive selling behaviours improve sales performance. While this causation appears to be supported using the ADAPTS measurement scale, an alternative explanation is that perception of past performance predicts response to the ADAPTS scale. The ADAPTS items often contain abstract concepts such as "sales approach" and "not working", which may be difficult for respondents to interpret. Consistent with a halo error, salespeople may draw upon their overall attitude toward their selling ability to help them answer abstract ADAPTS items. Because past performance contributes to overall attitude toward selling ability, past performance could be biasing ADAPTS ratings through a halo error. This research consists of three studies. The first study uses a qualitative methodology to investigate ADAPTS item interpretation. The second study uses a time-lagged experimental methodology to demonstrate that past performance influences ADAPTS ratings above and beyond actual adaptive behaviours. The final study uses a survey methodology to show that sales self-efficacy mediates the relationship between self-rated performance and ADAPTS, even while controlling for an acquiescence bias. The results of the three studies demonstrate that ADAPTS contains significant bias. Alternative methods for operationalising adaptive selling behaviours are suggested. **Arndt, A D (2021), "Past performance contaminates the ADAPTS measurement," *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 1-53.**

Humble and honest sales leaders result in improved sales performance by their team

Drawing on Leader-Member Exchange Theory, our study explores how salesperson perceptions of their leaders influence leader-salesperson relationship quality and ultimately salesperson outcomes, including customer orientation and performance. Extending prior research on sales leadership, our model proposes that an important personality trait of a leader – honesty-humility – influences leadership style (ie, servant leadership). Servant leadership has a positive effect on

“
Using the concept of practice work and building upon institutional theory, we argue that social selling practices emerge in a bottom-up way, depending on the work initiated by salespeople.

salesperson outcomes because it enhances leader-subordinate relationship quality. Data from 317 professional salespeople representing a variety of industries lend support for the proposed serial mediation model: honesty-humility → servant leadership → relationship quality → customer orientation. We conclude that the personality trait of honesty-humility affects leadership style, which in turn impacts salesperson customer orientation and performance via a positive effect on relationship quality. Additionally, we show that salesperson perception of difficulty in attaining quota moderates the relationship between relationship quality and customer orientation. **Kirkland, J C R, Edwards, B D, & Flaherty, K E (2021), "The effect of honest and humble leadership on salesperson customer orientation", *Journal of Business Research*, 130, 49-58.**

Keep calm and carry on, a practical sales approach during the pandemic

COVID-19 has proven to be a disruptive and world-altering event, often forcing professional salespeople to rapidly change the manner in which they do business. Thereby, this pandemic illuminates the importance of understanding salesperson characteristics and behaviours that enable sales success in disruptive environments. This study identifies COVID-19 as a Critical Sales Event and introduces the concept of "bricolage" to the larger body of sales literature. Bricolage is a combination of "making do" under environmental conditions of resource constraint. Bricolage characterises a salesperson's ability to utilise available resources effectively by assessing available resources and working to reconfigure them in order to meet new challenges and create opportunities. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative research from professional salespeople, this study identifies a salesperson's creativity, learning orientation, and grit as three important antecedents to salesperson bricolage. Moreover, this study shows that salesperson bricolage relates positively to sales performance under conditions shaped by the COVID-19 disruption, with salesperson bricolage becoming more strongly related to sales performance when sales environments are more highly disrupted by the pandemic. **Epler, R T, & Leach, M P (2021), "An examination of salesperson bricolage during a critical sales disruption: Selling during the Covid-19 pandemic", *Industrial Marketing Management*, 95, 114-127.**

Company communication key for salesperson resilience

The business-to-business (B2B) sales sector is among the business sectors severely affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. It is critical to understand how to help the workforce in the

B2B sales sector grow resilient through such a crisis. The main aim of this study is to examine the role of employer event communication in fostering B2B salesperson resilience. The data were collected from 447 sales employees from manufacturing firms in an Asian emerging market during the pandemic crisis. The results revealed the positive link between employer event communication and salesperson resilience. Deliberate rumination was detected as a mediator for the relationship between employer event communication and resilience. However, while a significant and negative association was observed between employer event communication and intrusive rumination, a non-significant relationship occurred between intrusive rumination and resilience. Customer demandingness moderated the effects of intrusive and deliberate rumination on salesperson resilience. Discussions on theoretical and practical implications are displayed. **Luu, T T (2021), "Activating salesperson resilience during the COVID-19 crisis: The roles of employer event communication and customer demandingness", *Industrial Marketing Management*, 96, 18-34.**

Systems and tools

Organisations need a digitalisation strategy for sales activities

Sales organisations are actively pursuing digitalisation because they see value through greater efficiency and effectiveness. In this paper, we examine the challenges in implementing salesforce digitalisation and suggest ways in which organisations can overcome these challenges. We present a sales effectiveness framework and discuss how digitalisation affects its key components, including customer strategy, organisation design, talent management, customer engagement, and the supporting architecture. We propose a conceptual model for digitalisation success that considers the digital readiness of the organisation, usage, and adoption of digital solutions by the sales force, and actions for driving sustained impact. We map three types of digitalisation failure to this model, exploring the causes of slow progress, poor adoption, and low impact. Then, we share success factors for overcoming these challenges. These include getting the right team to lead the effort, using an agile approach, and putting the organisational support elements in place to sustain success. We present these success factors in the form of a checklist of critical dimensions that organisations tend to overlook. Finally, we discuss the value for practitioners, share limitations of the work, and propose areas for further research that can enhance our ideas and improve sales digitalisation success rates. **Zoltners, A A, Sinha, P, Sahay, D, Shastri, A, & Lorimer, S E (2021), "Practical insights for salesforce digitalisation success", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 1-16.**

Salespeople need a social media plan

While the use of social media has become widespread among business-to-business organisations, the diversity of the social selling practices undertaken by salespeople and the extent to which they rely on them for their sales approach remains limited. Contrary to previous studies that emphasise the benefits of top-down approaches, we adopt a salesperson-centric approach, with the belief that the salesperson's agency is a key factor in the development of new sales practices related to social media. Using the concept of practice work and building upon institutional theory, we argue that social selling practices

emerge in a bottom-up way, depending on the work initiated by salespeople. Based on a qualitative study of 32 B2B sales professionals, we show that salespeople perform three kinds of practice work: promotion, reconciliation, and disruption. These efforts can diffuse but also thwart social selling practices in sales organisations. This article offers new insights into how organisations can develop salespeople's depth of social media usage and encourages firms to support salespeople's social selling initiatives instead of controlling them. **Schmitt, L, Casenave, E, & Pallud, J (2021), "Salespeople's work toward the institutionalisation of social selling practices", *Industrial Marketing Management*, 96, 183-196.**

Salespeople proactively using social media to serve their customers

The importance of social media usage by B2B salespeople has been well documented in the sales literature. In particular, a B2B salesperson's use of social media to prospect for customers and adapt their sales approach has primarily been shown to explain sales performance. However, an increasing body of literature in the sales domain has called for B2B salespeople to be ambidextrous by engaging in service activities aimed at helping their customers. We argue that by giving B2B salespeople an opportunity to communicate directly with their customers, social media is used by salespeople to proactively service their customers and hence can play a critical role in driving sales performance. Drawing from the Task-Technology Fit theory, we develop and test a conceptual model in which B2B salesperson social media usage affects salesperson performance indirectly through value-oriented prospecting and proactive servicing. Additionally, peer social media usage was a key moderator in the relationship between B2B salesperson social media usage on the one hand and value-oriented prospecting and proactive servicing on the other hand. We test the model with data from 171 B2B salespeople and find that salesperson social media usage relates positively with proactive servicing and value-oriented prospecting. While we did not find support for the relationship between social media usage and adaptive selling, we did find support for the impact of all three sales activities on salesperson performance. In addition, results show that peer social media usage has positive moderating effects on the B2B salesperson social media usage and value-oriented prospecting/proactive servicing relationships. **Bowen, M, Lai-Bennejean, C, Haas, A, & Rangarajan, D (2021), "Social media in B2B sales: Why and when does salesperson social media usage affect salesperson performance?", *Industrial Marketing Management*, 96, 166-182.**

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Cranfield KAM Forum online

✎ Richard Vincent

Reports from Q1 2022

While the Cranfield KAM Forum is planning to restart face-to-face meetings in late 2022, the success and popularity of the online seminars has demonstrated that there is a benefit from them continuing in parallel with face-to-face sessions. The speakers and subject were chosen to be particularly relevant to key account managers building and maintaining business in the current rapidly changing environment.



Sales tips from an advertising guy: Stephen Mangham

Former Ogilvy Saatchi and Saatchi and Saatchi ad man Stephen Mangham shared his insightful views of the KAM market from the fresh perspective of someone who had a very successful career in advertising observing the companies that get things right and those that do not.

Marketing is “the art of satisfying consumer needs.” It is vital to avoid the “commodity trap” by understanding the value your offerings bring to customers and defining your segments by their behaviour and circumstances rather than demographics. This allows you to focus on the specific value that you bring and get away from competing on price and product specifications with every other company on the

internet.

It is also vital to build a distinctive brand as that is what will get you into the initial selection process. Distinction is much more likely to bring success than following the crowd so go for distinctiveness even if that means alienating a percentage of customers. Companies need to recognise that customers are rarely loyal to brands. Emotions trumps reason for brands.

- Advertising increases or maintains sales and margins by:
- Slightly increasing the chance that people will choose your brand by...
 - ... Making the brand easier to think of and easier to buy, and...
 - ... Creating positive feelings and associations, via...
 - ... Broad-reach ads that people find interesting and enjoyable, and...
 - ... Target activation that they find relevant and useful.



The rise of the intelligent organisation: Sean Culey

Sean Culey, speaker on disruptive technologies and their impact on supply chains

and author of *Transition Point, from Steam to the Singularity*, noted that it is undeniable that the whole world is going through a period of unprecedented change (**Figure 1**). Culey showed that this is not just due to the particular set of immediate circumstances but part of a much bigger underlying pattern which was first spotted by Soviet economist Nikolai Kondratieff in 1925.



Figure 1: Change elements.

There have been five so-called Kondratieff waves (**Figure 2**), characterised by periods of rapid growth and change punctuated by major financial crashes. The financial crisis of

2007-09 marked the end of the fifth wave; we are now in the upswing period of the sixth wave, the most disruptive point of the cycle (**Figure 3**).

Welcome to the Upswing...

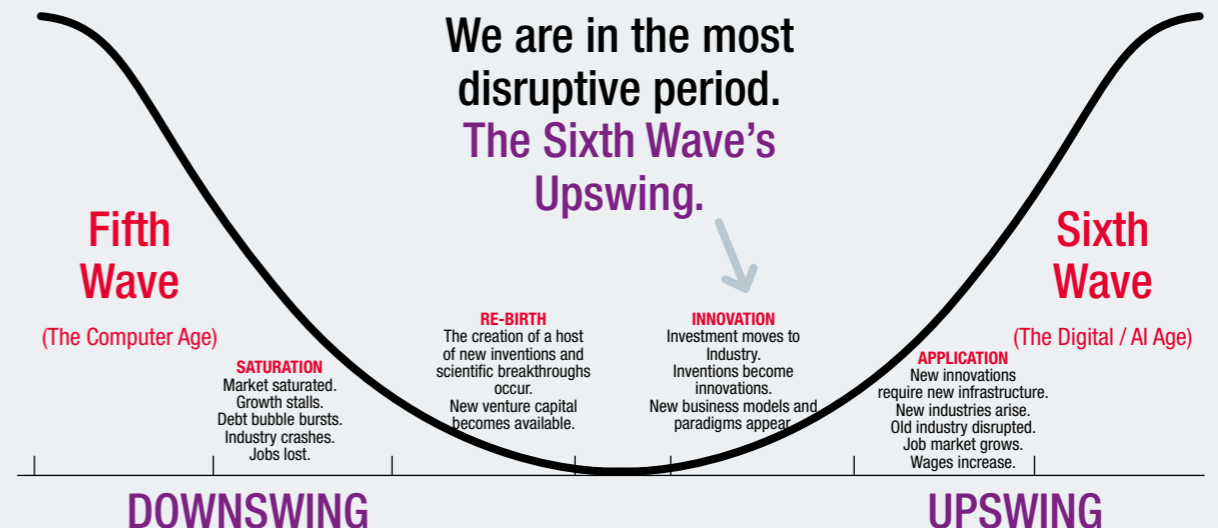


Figure 3: Upswing.

	WAVE 1	WAVE 2	WAVE 3	WAVE 4	WAVE 5
	FIRST INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION	AGE OF STEAM & RAIL	SECOND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION	THE AGE OF THE AUTOMOBILE	THE COMPUTER AGE
TIME PERIOD	1760-1820	1820-1870	1870-1914	1908-1970	1971-2008
LENGTH	60 YEARS	50 YEARS	44 YEARS	62 YEARS (2 WORLD WARS)	37 YEARS
POWER SOURCE	STEAM ENGINE + COAL	STEAM	ELECTRICITY	ELECTRICITY, PETROCHEMICALS	DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS
TRANSPORT MECHANISM	CANALS, SAILING SHIPS	RAIL, STEAM SHIPS	RAIL (ESPECIALLY US), BICYCLE, TRANSATLANTIC SHIPPING	ROAD, RAIL, PLANE, SHIPS	ROAD, PLANE, SHIPPING CONTAINERS
COMMUNICATION MECHANISM	PRINTING PRESS	TELEGRAPH	TELEPHONE	RADIO, TV	TV, VIDEO, MOBILE TELEPHONY, INTERNET
INDUSTRY	COAL MINING, COTTON, POTTERY	STEAM POWERED FACTORIES. IRON BRIDGES AND CONSTRUCTIONS	STEEL, HEAVY ENGINEERING (CIVIL, CHEMICAL, ELECTRICAL AND NAVAL)	MASS PRODUCED AUTOMOBILE, CONSUMER WHITE GOODS	COMPUTER HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE, SMART PHONES, E-COMMERCE, SERVICE INDUSTRIES

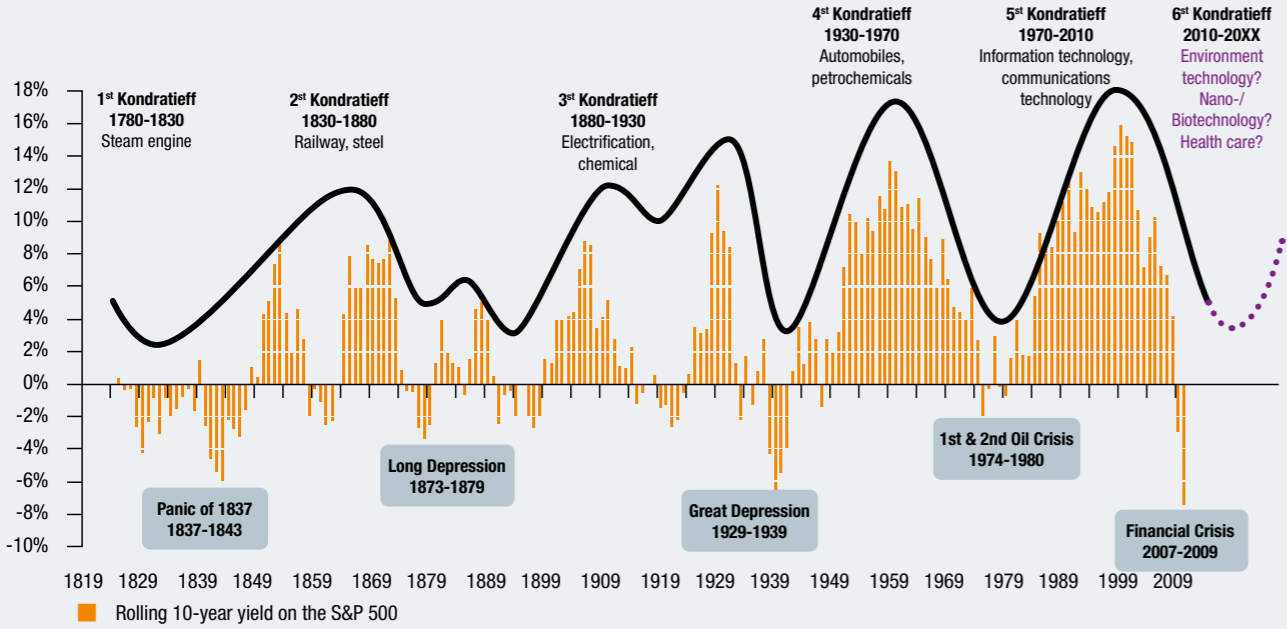


Figure 2: Kondratieff cycles.

Because change can now propagate at the rate of digital communications, both negative and positive changes will happen more quickly than ever before. The conventional wisdom for managing supply chains and most organisations has been to make them as lean and focused as possible, focusing on efficiency but incapable of responding quickly to changing conditions. This is diametrically opposed to what is now required: supply chains need to be more flexible. The consequence of this mismatch is that supply chain disruptions are becoming the norm.

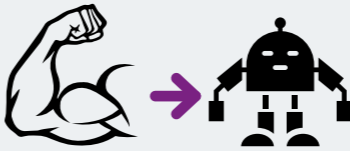
There are three interrelated areas of change that Culley calls the “triple whammy” of creative destruction (Figure 4).

“It is vital to avoid the “commodity trap” by understanding the value your offerings bring to customers and defining your segments by their behaviour and circumstances rather than demographics.”

“In a machine world, our uniquely human skills will become more crucially important.”

THE CREATIVE DESTRUCTION TRIPLE WHAMMY

WHAMMY 1:
Horizontal Convergence
Muscle to Machine



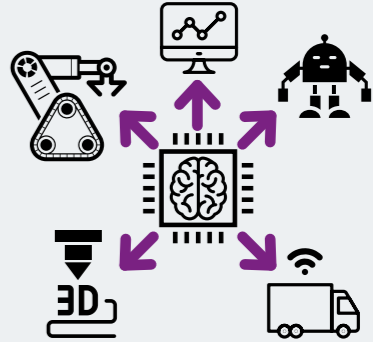
The Automation
of Physical Tasks

WHAMMY 2:
Vertical Convergence
Mind to Machine



The Automation
of Knowledge Based Tasks

WHAMMY 3:
Technological Convergence
Machine to Machine



The Automation
of the End-to-End Supply Chain

Figure 4: The creative-destruction triple whammy.

In a machine world, our uniquely human skills will become more crucially important. In the past, experience and knowledge determined your value; from now on your value will be determined by your ability to use a mix of data imagination and creativity to deliver new solutions.



Avoid getting lost in translation: Richard Brooks

Cranfield University Visiting Fellow and CEO of language services provider K International, Richard Brooks discussed the importance of language in communicating to customers and consumers, explaining why precision in the translation of business messages, documentation and contracts is crucial for Global Account Managers.

Companies that specialise in helping global organisations with cross-border communication often get asked: “Why can’t you just Google translate it?” Brooks explained why communication of even the most apparently straightforward of subjects needs sophisticated and nuanced solutions to be effective. What can so easily go wrong with auto translation was highlighted when Welsh-language ATMs in a new supermarket in Aberystwyth offered “free erections” rather than “free cash withdrawals”!

Consider communicating in different languages

People sometimes argue: “Why bother? They all speak English anyway.” This is demonstrably not the case in many markets: Figure 5 shows that less than half of the EU population is able to hold a conversation in English, for example.

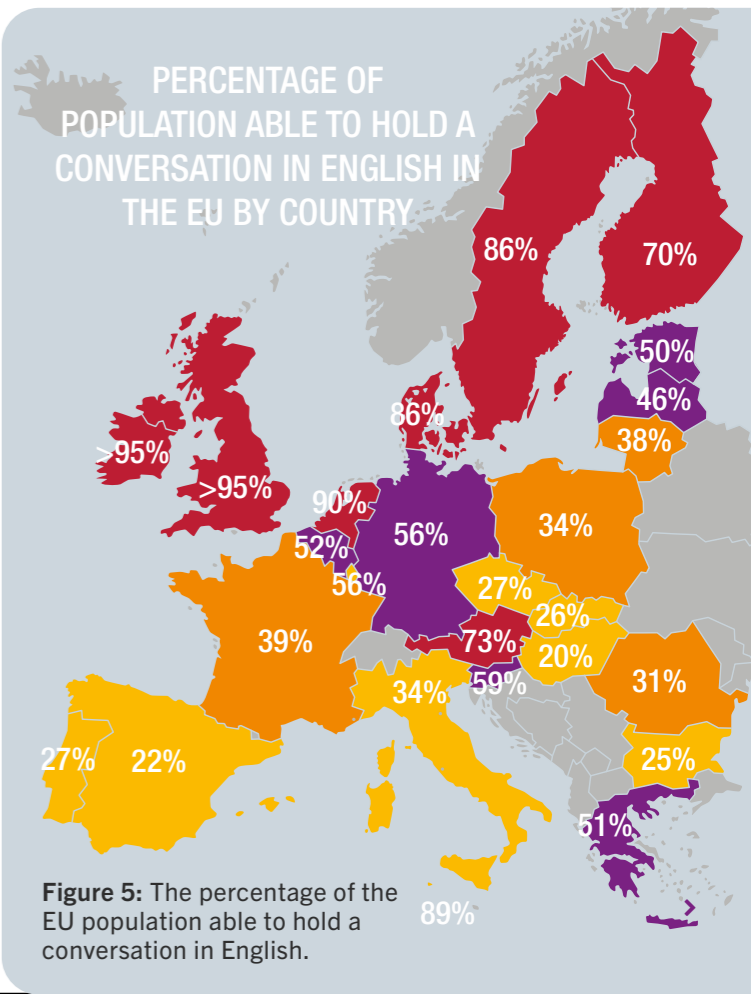


Figure 5: The percentage of the EU population able to hold a conversation in English.

Even for countries comfortable with English the situation is neatly summed up by Willy Brandt, former Chancellor of Germany: “If I’m selling to you, I speak your language. If I’m buying, dann müssen Sie Deutsch sprechen!”

Emphasise clarity and precision

Improvement of the communication often comes down to listening more and speaking less, as encapsulated by the Dalai Lama when he said: “When you talk, you are only repeating what you already know. But if you listen, you may learn something new.”

Brooks’s advice is straightforward: “Go to your accounts and give them a bloody good listening too!”

Brooks offered four critical takeaways:

1. All language is contextual.
2. You’ve got two ears and one mouth.
3. Communication over Zoom or Teams is difficult, but it is not impossible.
4. Trends come and go, but people will always be people!



Six steps for creating financially quantified value propositions

for key accounts: Prof Malcolm McDonald

Emeritus Professor at Cranfield and Visiting Professor at Henley, Warwick, Aston and Bradford Business Schools, Malcolm McDonald explored financially quantified value propositions, which he defined as: “The translation of the supplier’s offers into monetary terms and the demonstration of their contribution to the customer’s profitability.”

Professor MacDonald started his presentation with what some people might regard as contentious statements. He argued that there is no such thing as “a customer” and that “delighting customers is the fastest way to go bankrupt.” His reasoning is that too many companies focus on relationship marketing, and by striving to delight imaginary “typical” customers without needs-based segmentation, they end up delivering mediocrity to everyone. The best way to overcome this is the use of financially justified value propositions, which is something that fewer than 5% of companies currently do (McKinsey).

He declared: “Stop asking your customers stupid questions about what they want, because they almost certainly don’t know.” A much better idea is to work closely with them to understand their world and to uncover their previously unarticulated needs, and then to make proposals that will reduce their associated pains.

Far too often, a focus on using digital tools and channels leads to a lack of focus on marketing basics. Consequently, digital marketing becomes “an expensive waste of time”. Websites all become very similar, which is disastrous: 90% of the buying cycle is done before speaking to suppliers, so



Even if you have no other differentiation, the very act of financially quantifying what you can do for customers will set you apart.

a lack of differentiation is fatal. Even if you have no other differentiation, the very act of financially quantifying what you can do for customers, will set you apart.

Step 1: Define the target market – A helpful starting point is to make a list of target key accounts where you are most likely to get the best results or that are the most attractive to you for strategic reasons.

Step 2: Identify buyers and the buying process – Place particular emphasis on helping the customer make the right choices by providing relevant information about your offering. Understand the priorities of the members of the decision-making unit and make sure you address each of them independently.

Step 3: Conduct an added-value analysis – To be seen as a strategic supplier, you must connect your business offering to both the customer’s primary and secondary value-chain processes.

Step 4: Quantify value-added financially – Use the analyses to devise and quantify ways of creating demonstrable financial benefits for the customer.

Step 5: Categorise and document – Realise that there will be individuals in the decision-making process who are only interested in very specific elements, so that it is important that you succinctly explain how your offering will help the customer achieve both their strategic goals and their operational requirements.

Step 6: Communicate the value created – Define a strategy to communicate the value created to all relevant stakeholders. This will require aligning the key account management function with these principles and training and empowering salespeople and account managers to:

- Always support their claims with robust analyses
- Focus on customer value creation through boundary redesign
- Design compensation systems that favour value-based selling
- Price and monetise value-added services
- Create long-lasting relationships throughout the customer organisation
- Don’t offer price discounts

Key take-aways

- Fewer than 5% of companies have financially quantified value propositions (McKinsey).
- Developing them will differentiate your company, help you close more deals, reduce cycle time and reduce discounting (multiple sources including Michael Nick, “The ROI on ROI” www.rol4sales.com).



Seven keys to the strategic application of social media for B2B: Dr Annemarie Hanlon

Senior Lecturer in Digital Marketing at Cranfield School of Management and author of *Digital Marketing: Strategic Planning & Integration*, Dr Annemarie Hanlon suggested that, while most organisations realise the importance of digital marketing, often in their enthusiasm to adopt it, many forget the basics of marketing and consequently have very little success.

Common worries

Organisations are often very wary of social media because they know anything that is posted online will be both visible and permanent; they are also frequently disproportionately worried about competitors getting insights into their plans, but Dr Hanlon’s advice is to take control and manage your content. Competitors will not find out anything they could not discover by other means and you will be in the best possible position to control what is posted.

Unrecognised opportunities

People who buy from you in the B2B environment will be individual consumers outside of work. So, you can raise your brand’s profile with your customers by having a presence on the wider internet. All major brands are on social media in some form. Twitter can be excellent for raising brand profiles not just in its own right but because all tweets are captured by Google, essentially becoming free search engine optimisation.

Social media and strategy

There are seven key ways that social media can help you in your B2B strategy:

1. **Engagement** – Active participation through value co-creating activities and contributions.
 2. **Entertainment** – Often a motivator for individuals to use social media but it should be used carefully because, if customers don’t think it is relevant or reinforces the brand values, it can easily backfire.
 3. **Offers and sales** – The primary purpose that many B2C companies use social media for. For B2B, it is part of the customer journey and lead generation. Links can also be a very effective way of measuring the effectiveness of campaigns.
 4. **Gaining reviews** – This is increasingly important in the B2C world as customers often put more faith in the words of strangers than they do in anything generated by companies themselves.
 5. **Delivering customer service** – The key to being effective is clear rules of engagement: for example, specifying when responses can be expected.
 6. **Customer segmentation** – Data from many sources enable better segmentation. The social media algorithms segment customer by demographics and “webographics”.
 7. **Brand management** – Protecting your estate, managing myths and misinformation will need a clear strategy and this needs active monitoring to ensure it is working.
- You don’t need to do all of these things, but you should be aware of the opportunities and make conscious decisions about which ones are key for you and ensure that those are then actively resourced and managed.

Cautionary tale

The responsibility for dealing with an organisation’s social media is too often delegated to some of the youngest and least experienced staff, whose understanding of the company’s values and strategy may not be extensive. This is the

corporate equivalent of giving the keys of your new car to an inexperienced driver. Some supervision may be appropriate.



Entrepreneurship in corporate life: Gordon McAlpine

Long-term success in a key account management role often requires a great deal of entrepreneurial spirit, entrepreneur Gordon McAlpine told delegates. He has grown multi-million-pound tech organisations and featured in the Channel 4 television programme *The Secret Millionaire*. You also need the ability to develop resilience to face challenges posed by markets and customers alike.

McAlpine believes that the secret to his success has been building companies by organically growing sales (Figure 6) and building relationships rather than relying on external finance or capital. He argues that finance-first is a very fragile strategy: 90% of start-ups fail altogether, and only about 1% reach £7.5million/A revenue. Thus, the standard approach to business building has significant risks. Growing by increasing sales provides a much more robust foundation and removes the pressures that come from having external finance.

The final element that is essential to everything is grit. There will be times when things are hard. Balance determination with ensuring that you are retaining your work-life balance; don’t ever expect everything to be easy – grit will be required.

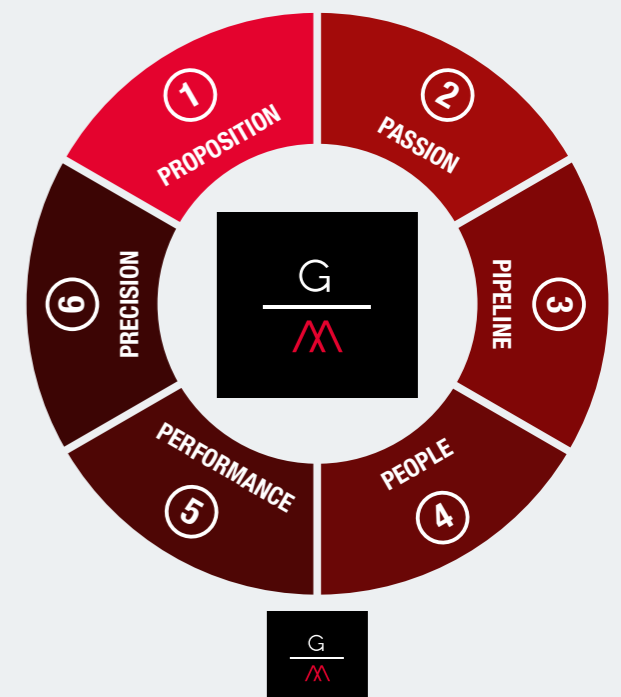


Figure 6: McAlpine’s sales philosophy.



Figure 7: Nike's campaign featuring Colin Kaepernick.



The SAP KAM journey – purpose-driven KAM: Alf Janssen

Alf Janssen, Chief Partner Officer SAP (previously Sales Director Strategic Accounts Netherlands), outlined his research that has focused on purpose-driven partnerships.

As one of the world's largest technology providers, and arguably, one of the companies that has developed the most advanced strategic customer-management practices, SAP has a purpose statement: "To help the world run better and improve people's lives."

He argues that leading with purpose is now expected and has become the new normal. Younger people require firms to lead with purpose. He cited the example of Nike which championed Colin Kaepernick, who risked his football career by "taking the knee" and refusing to stand for the national anthem in protest at racial injustice. Nike's campaign slogan is: "Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything" (Figure 7). Although this led to boycotts from some customers, the overall impact was extremely positive, improving brand loyalty and an estimated \$6 billion-plus in revenue.

The future of doing good business belongs to "conscious capitalist" organisations that take into account the views of customers, consumers and employees rather than just shareholders. He recommended looking at your purpose statement and that of your customer to identify shared values that can then become the starting point for conversations along

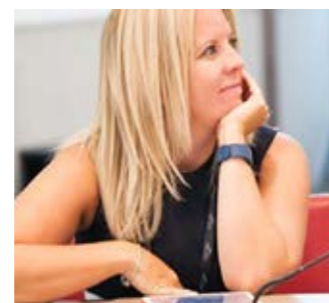
the line of, "So how can we help you achieve your ambitions?" He offered a call to action for every sales team:

Lead with Purpose – Put your customers' purpose at the centre of your C-level conversations and expand your network based on Shared Values.

Land and expand – Define small projects to prove your value and use the ecosystem around your customer to further expand on the purpose journey.

Generational diversity – Infuse younger generations into your senior (sales) teams as they make a perfect match of experience and how to touch the hearts of the latest-generation consumers.

Finally, a reminder of the statement from Mark Moffat, a partner at PwC: "If you do something that impacts the emotional level, relationships become deeper."



The future of work: Professor Emma Parry

Professor Emma Parry, Professor of Human Resource Management and Head of

the Changing World of Work Group at Cranfield School of Management, outlined a "future of work" model (Figure 8). She highlighted how, over the past few months, we have seen profound transformations in the way organisations structure work for both office-based and mobile employees.

Societal trends tend to be long term and can move quite slowly: for example, demographic changes. Disruptions can initiate change suddenly and unexpectedly, and can impact everything including the trends. For example, the pandemic has

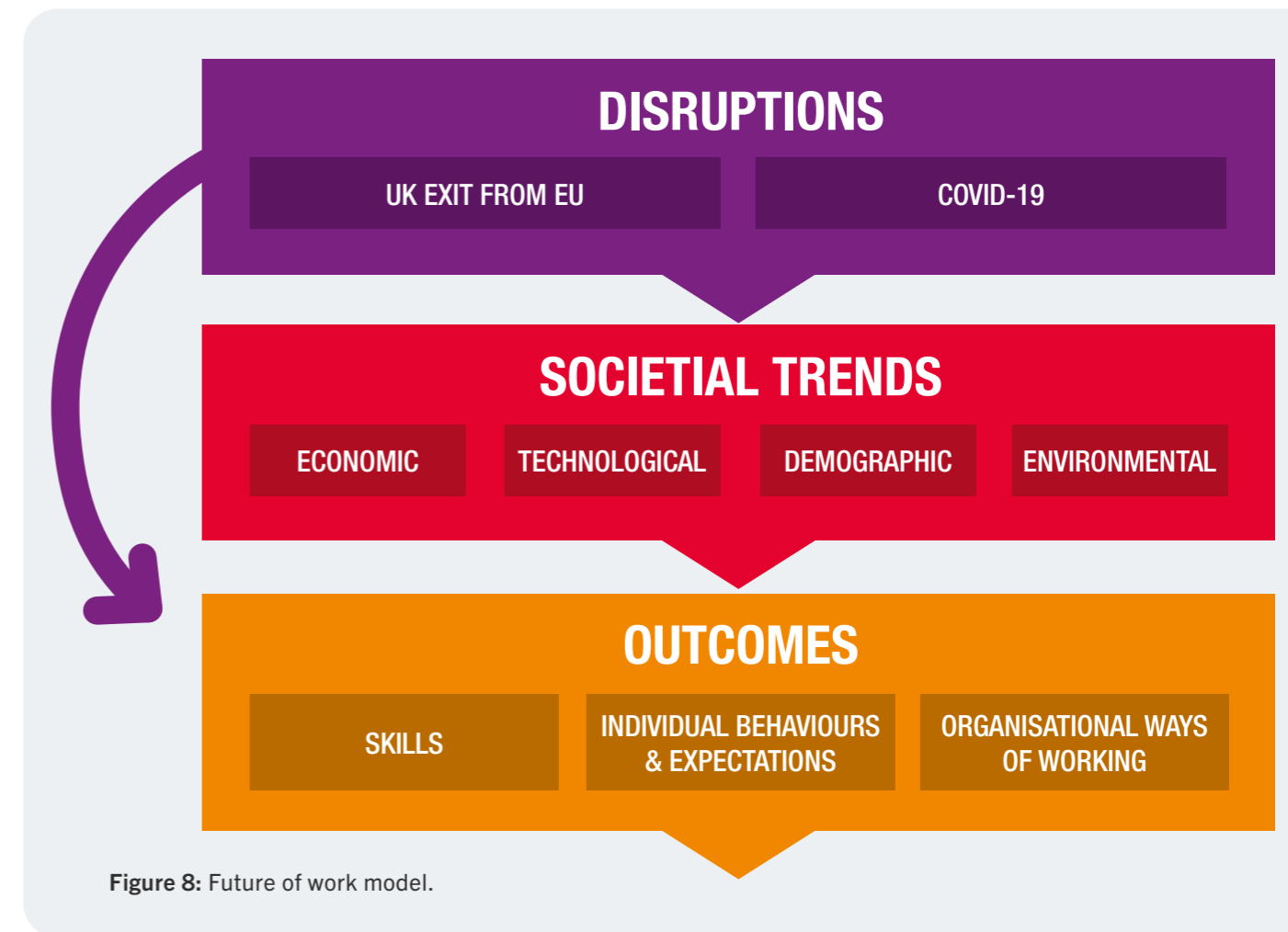


Figure 8: Future of work model.

led to widespread home working, which has had a significant impact on the use of some technologies. Outcomes can be conveniently split into three categories: those that impact the skills that will be needed over time, those that drive individual behaviours and expectations, and those that shape the way work has to be done.

Four areas that are experiencing a significant degree of change include:

1. Hybrid working

- Evidence strongly suggests that people would prefer hybrid working in the future
- 86% of firms planning to adopt a mix of home and office working (BBC 2021)
- There is a risk that employees will seek other jobs if hybrid work is not enabled
- More than half of the workforce in employment, are unable to work from home, and many more cannot do all of their jobs from home.

2. Technological advancement

- Some job losses will occur as a result of automation.
- There are predictions that 45 million jobs in the USA will be automated by 2030, but that most of the people involved will nevertheless stay in the same job or occupation.
- There has been a long-term trend of automation over the last century, and there is little evidence that AI is moving things any faster.

- The emphasis is mainly on augmentation rather than pure automation.
- There is also an offset due to job creation from technology in roles such as programmers, social media managers and digital marketers.
- 85% of jobs in 2030 haven't been created yet (Institute for the Future 2017).

3. Diversity, equality, and inclusion

- There are new issues resulting from the pandemic, in addition to the pre-existing issues that have not yet been resolved.
- Women, ethnic minorities and young people are often hit harder by labour market problems, and by automation.
- Hybrid working can create "them and us" divisions in the organisation.
- Those working remotely are often disadvantaged in opportunities.
- Organisations need to take active steps to ensure decisions are fair and everyone is fully included in conversations.

4. Changing workforce attitudes

The rhetoric around workplace attitudes of different generations often ascribes very different attitudes to Veterans, Baby Boomers, Generation X & Generation Y. However, research has revealed little evidence that this is the case. The reality is being driven more by changing attitudes in society as a whole. For example, no matter when people were born, they are much

more likely to be using technology in 2021 than they were in 2001.

The reality is that nowadays all employees expect:

- Increased engagement with environmental, social and governance issues (ESG) and have higher expectations of corporate social responsibility.
- Increased flexibility of working-hours and work-life balance.
- Increased focus on job security.
- Careers that have meaning.
- Increased career flexibility.
- Broadening diversity and inclusion.
- Greater employee voice and participation.

In the vast majority of organisations, diversity and inclusion and gender pay gaps have improved but don't confuse improvement with elimination. Most organisations still have bigger issues to deal with than they are consciously aware of.



How do suppliers create and capture value through collaboration with retailers in the FMCG Market: Dr Chris Leach

Chris Leach was part of the team that authored the ECR blue book, *The Consumer and Shopper Journey*, while his book *How to save the FMCG Industry* was published recently. While doing his PhD, Dr Leach came to a realization that there is a major disconnect between suppliers and retailers, because FMCG suppliers prefer to look many months or years ahead for their planning, but retailers have a much more short-term focus of a few weeks at most

Context

Much of the \$5.7 trillion global grocery industry is in trouble. Despite growing around 4.5% annually over the last decade, growth had been erratic: both growth and profitability are now on a downward trajectory for grocers in developed markets. This is due to rising costs, falling productivity and race-to-the-bottom pricing that has led to a massive decline in share value for the listed companies.

For any industry to grow, it needs strong partnerships, collaboration and both long-term and short-term views. However, that is not what is happening in UK FMCG. Retailers often take a confrontational, short-term view, accompanied by threats of punitive action against suppliers.

Overall, the UK market is dominated by four retailers that between them have around 70% market share. ALDI and LIDL are still small by comparison, together accounting for about 15% of the market, but they are growing rapidly as are convenience channels and online sales. The big four are seeing profitable instore business move to the unprofitable online and convenience channels where it is challenging for them to make a profit.

ALDI and LIDL are able to offer consumers lower prices because they have much more efficient supply chains and much better cost models. The more established supermarkets

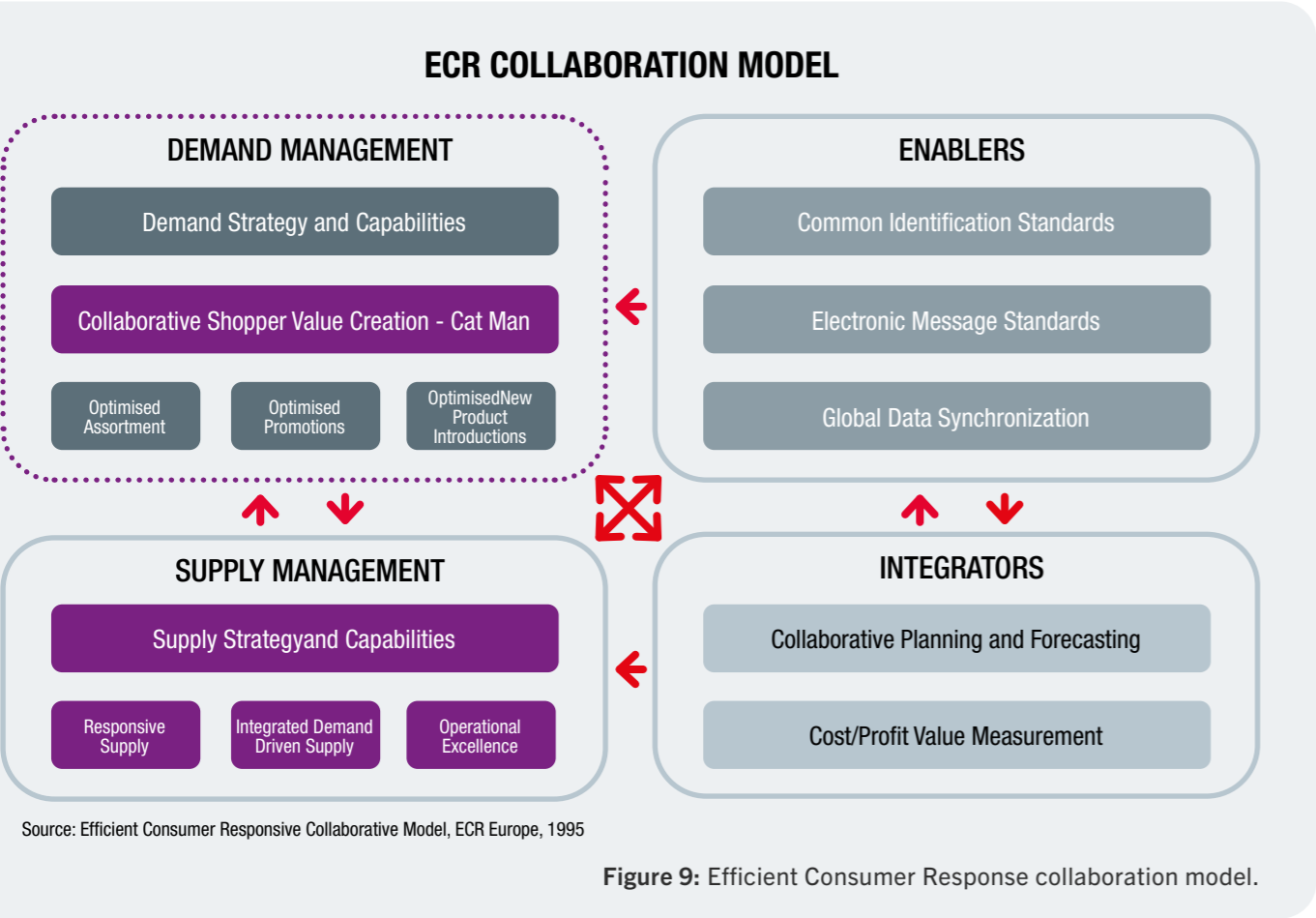


Figure 9: Efficient Consumer Response collaboration model.

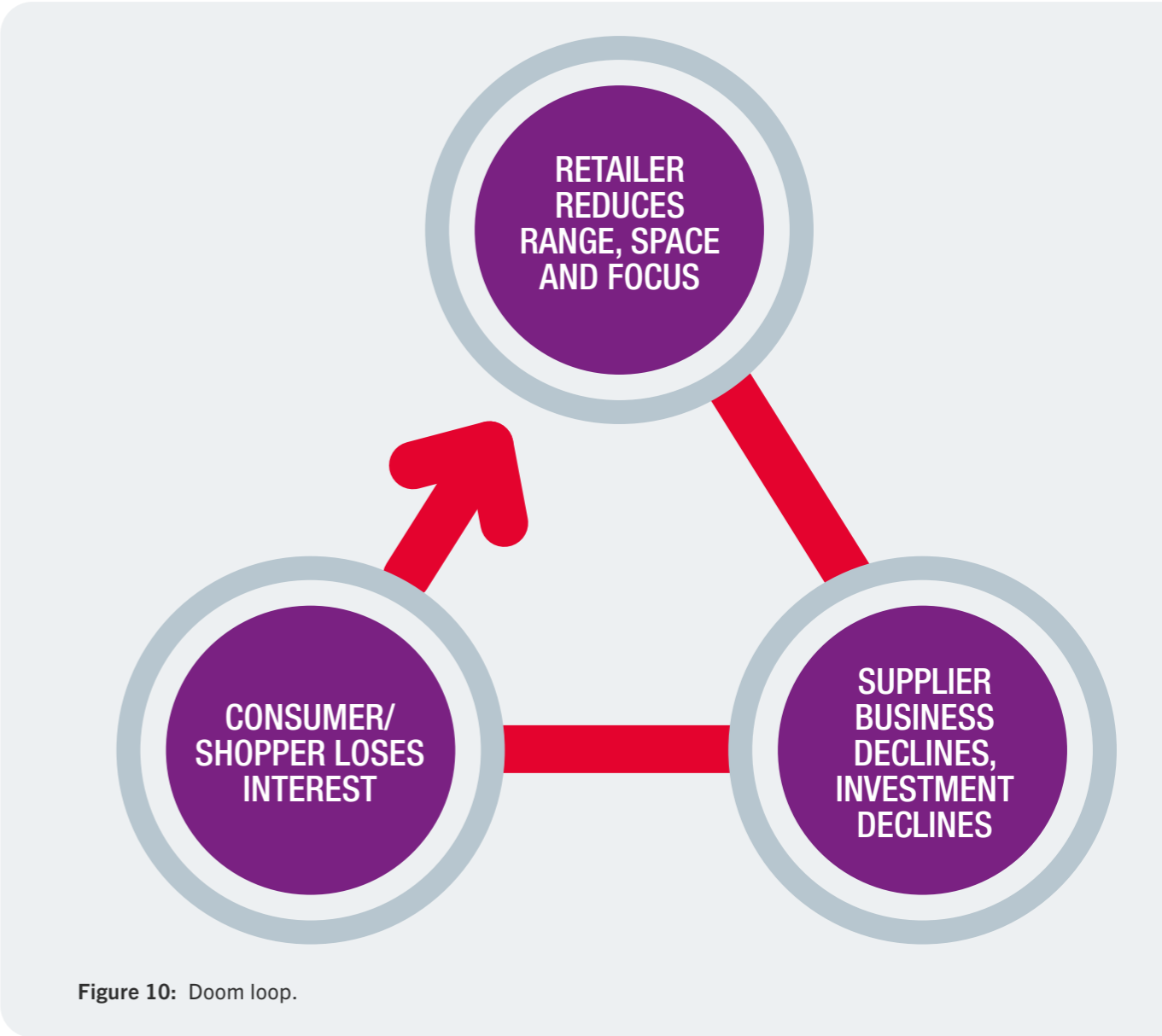


Figure 10: Doom loop.

are trying to compete with them and other discounters with price-matching offers but can only do this at the expense of significantly reduced profit margin, and so consequently, they are trying to address that by putting pricing and range-reduction pressures on their suppliers.

KAM in FMCG

KAM is well established in the UK grocery field. The industry itself created a committee and a process for collaboration called the Efficient Consumer Response collaboration model (Figure 9). However, one of the core challenges of this approach is that it is difficult to foster collaboration when the suppliers and retailers are competitors in many areas.

The UK government recognised the problems caused by the asymmetric nature of supplier/retailer relationships and saw the issues that were unfolding. In 2013, it introduced a regulatory body called the Groceries Code Adjudicator where suppliers can report breaches in the code of practice. However, even this hasn't eliminated all of the issues.

Avoiding the “doom loop”

The risk associated with the current situation is that the major retailers are attempting to compete with the discounters on price but do not have the efficient cost models that would allow them to do so profitably. So not only are they taking on an unwinnable battle but also, in an attempt to reduce costs, they are compromising their differentiators such as variety of range and staffed counters. Because their underlying cost models remain too expensive even after these efforts, they are then attempting to obtain the further reductions that they need by putting unrealistic pressures on their suppliers. This creates a vicious circle or “doom loop” in which the supplier's business and investment will inevitably decline, leading to the consumers losing interest and further compounding the original problem, until one or more of the players are unable to continue (Figure 10).

To avoid this scenario, grocery retailers in the UK need to recognise that healthy suppliers are an intrinsic part of a strong supply chain, and they need to truly collaborate with them to generate customer value.



Storyselling for key account managers: Roger Jones

Storyselling expert Roger Jones enjoys delivering “pragmatic storyselling” coaching programmes, workshops, and conference speeches to leaders and managers across all business sectors, throughout Europe, Asia and the USA. Understanding that KAMS often need to communicate complex messages concisely and compellingly, he suggests that a robust mechanism is to develop storyselling competence. Storyselling is the Intersection between psychology, traditional selling and storytelling (Figure 11). Working with Jones, a global company carried out a

controlled experiment with its sales force: half of them took a traditional approach to sales while the other half integrated just one relevant story into the process and had two to three times more success.

Why stories work

Stories work because they are the most natural way of learning. We take this for granted when we teach young children but forget it once we teach adults. Jerome Bruner’s research showed that if facts and figures are embedded into a story, they become 20 times more memorable than those presented without one.

Jones set out the essential elements and structures that make up every story and provided a comprehensive list of “dos and don’ts” to ensure success, and explained the importance of understanding the storytelling triangle of “story”, “storyteller”, and “listener”. From the storyteller’s point of view, the story and the telling of the story are entirely under their control. Still, the listener has their relationship with the story, and the storyteller can only engage via the other sides of the triangle. To do so, you should be very clear about the point or meaning of the story.

Figure 11: Storyselling as the intersection.



“

Jerome Bruner’s research showed that if facts and figures are embedded into a story, they become 20 times more memorable than those presented without one.

Nine plus one stories

There are typically nine stories divided into three groups: the first three help with engagement; the second three make you the obvious choice, and the final three help with getting to “yes”. The plus-one story is the story you tell yourself, your internal narrative. Your inner narrative dictates your personal beliefs, outlook on life and mindset. You need your past and future narratives to be fully aligned. Your plus-one story is the most significant deciding factor as to whether you’ll succeed as a salesperson.



Connective engagement: How to enhance your impact in virtual presentations and sales meetings – an interactive session with Betty Monroe

Actress and founder of Connective Engagement, Betty Monroe brought her professional experience to bear on the fact that salespeople and account managers have found themselves having to engage with customers and others via virtual platforms over the last two years. Being both an active television and film actress and working with the sales-enablement community, Monroe orchestrated an insightful dialogue about how to enhance your impact in virtual presentations. She shared tips on how to ensure that your participants are happy to turn on their cameras, both reading body language and ensuring that yours is giving the right signals, and practical tips on lighting, backgrounds and ensuring that your kit is arranged appropriately.

THE RISE OF E-COMMERCE



IN THE US, B2B SELLERS ARE NOW MORE LIKELY TO OFFER E-COMMERCE CHANNELS THAN IN-PERSON SELLING: 65% OF SELLERS OFFER E-COMMERCE VERSUS 61% FOR IN-PERSON. (THE LATTER TOOK A DIVE DURING COVID.)



THE TOP TWO REVENUE-PRODUCING CHANNELS ARE E-COMMERCE AND IN-PERSON SALES: BOTH HIGHLIGHTED BY 18% OF B2B SURVEY RESPONDENTS.



B2B BUYERS PREFER DIGITAL OR REMOTE: E-COMMERCE IS SINGLE MOST-EFFECTIVE CHANNEL (IDENTIFIED BY 32%).



E-COMMERCE + ONLINE CHAT + VIDEO CONFERENCING IS THE WAY FORWARD.



E-COMMERCE WORKS FOR HIGH-TICKET ITEMS TOO: 35% OF BUYERS WILLING TO SPEND \$500,000+ VIA DIGITAL CHANNELS.



THE ABOVE FACTOIDS ARE BASED ON MCKINSEY RESEARCH. FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE: “BUSTING THE FIVE BIGGEST B2B E-COMMERCE MYTHS”.

Conferences and exhibitions

GSSI – Global Sales Science Institute – Frankfurt, Germany

8-11 June 2022
The GSSI 2022 Annual Conference will convene on “Creating Value for Customers and Companies in a Changing World”. In the pursuit of sales excellence and profitability, companies and their salesforces must adapt to the new realities of the COVID-19 pandemic, political changes, environmental crises, and rapid technological advancements. The 2022 GSSI Conference will focus on how salesforces can successfully navigate such a dynamic world to create value for both their customers and their own companies.

<https://gssi.world>

2022 Hybrid Sales Educators' Academy – Aston University, Birmingham, UK

21-23 June 2022
The conference will include multiple sales-related themes, including: interpret and use business analytics, psychometrics and social styles, empathy and adaptability, management of CRM systems, understanding strategy, implementing key account management, financial analysis, case study analysis, identifying the value proposition, team selling, ethics, business buyer behaviour, complex selling, internal selling, recruiting students, and grabbing attention.

<https://www.aston.ac.uk/events/sales-educators-academy-conference-sea-2022>

National Sales Conference

Thursday, 10 November 2022
“Win & retain more business in less time”. Includes streams: **Sales Learning & Development**, for heads of training, I&d and enablement; **RevTec**, Technology for sales & revenue operations; **Entrepreneurship**, for start-ups & angel investors (in partnership with Global Entrepreneurship Network and Pitch Training from UK Business Angels Association).

Cranfield KAM Forum

Details of webinars are available from: Hayley Brown, KAM Forum Administrator, Centre for Strategic Marketing & Sales, Cranfield School of Management.
h.brown@cranfield.ac.uk, www.cranfield.ac.uk/som/kambpforum

Please update the *Journal* with details of your forthcoming events by emailing editor@journalofsalestransformation.com.



ISP events

Details of upcoming events can be found at the Institute of Sales Professionals website. <https://www.the-isp.org/events>

Sales Cycle Best Practice – New Thinking

Thursday 5 May 2022, 09:00

Push Back Against Post-Pandemic Procurement Pressure

Tuesday 10 May 2022, 09:00

Buyer Behaviour – What are the key drivers in the decision-making process?

Tuesday 24 May 2022, 09:00

Improving your Proposals

Wednesday 25 May 2022, 09:00

Thirsty Thursday

Thursday 26 May 2022, 14:00
The Emerging Professionals Network invites you to join them for their inaugural event celebrating the differentiation, development, and support of salespeople at the early stages of their sales career. This is a free live event.

Engage, Empower and Enable your people with an UBER Culture

Tuesday 14 June 2022, 09:00

Pricing models: Selling vs Value realisation

Tuesday 21 June 2022, 14:00

Learning when to let go and move on

Wednesday 13 July 2022, 09:00

Creating a #Results-Driven Sales Culture

Tuesday 19 July 2022, 09:00

Using coaching as a Sales Leadership Superpower – Sales Leader Round Table

Thursday 21 July 2022, 09:00

Six actionable steps to preparing financially quantified value propositions

Tuesday 26 July 2022, 09:00

Leadership in Sales (setting clear direction and getting out of the way!) – Sales Leader Round Table

Tuesday 4 October 2022, 09:00

Sales competitions

ESC-European Sales Competition – Han University of Applied Sciences, Arnhem, Netherlands

18-20 May 2022

<https://www.europeansalescompetition.com>

Ohio Collegiate Sales Competition – Cleveland State University, Cleveland, OH, USA

14-15 October 2022

<https://business.csuohio.edu/sales/ohio-collegiate-sales-competition>

The Great Northwoods Sales Warm Up – University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, USA

October 2022 (dates TBD)

<http://www.uwecsaleswarmup.com>

West Virginia University Professional Sales Competition – West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV, USA

15 October 2022

<https://business.wvu.edu/academics/marketing-department/marketing/wvu-sales-competition>

RMM – Virtual Rocky Mountain Madness – Hosted by MSU of Denver (virtual)

17-20 October 2022

<https://www.msudenver.edu/center-for-professional-selling/competition/>

NTSC – National Team Selling Competition – Indiana University, Kelley School of Business, Bloomington, USA

20-22 October 2022

<https://kelley.iu.edu/faculty-research/centers-institutes/global-sales-leadership/national-team-selling-competition/index.html>

Pi Sigma Epsilon (PSE) Pro-Am Sell-A-Thon Regional Conferences – 4 regional conferences + 1 virtual event, across the USA

Dates for 2022 regional conferences: 4 & 11 November 2022

<https://pse.org>

NCSSC – National Collegiate Sports Sales Championship Online Qualifier

November qualifier dates TBD

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-collegiate-sports-sales-championship/>

NISC – Northeast Intercollegiate Sales Competition – Bryant University, Smithfield, RI, USA

11-12 November 2022

<https://nisc.bryant.edu>

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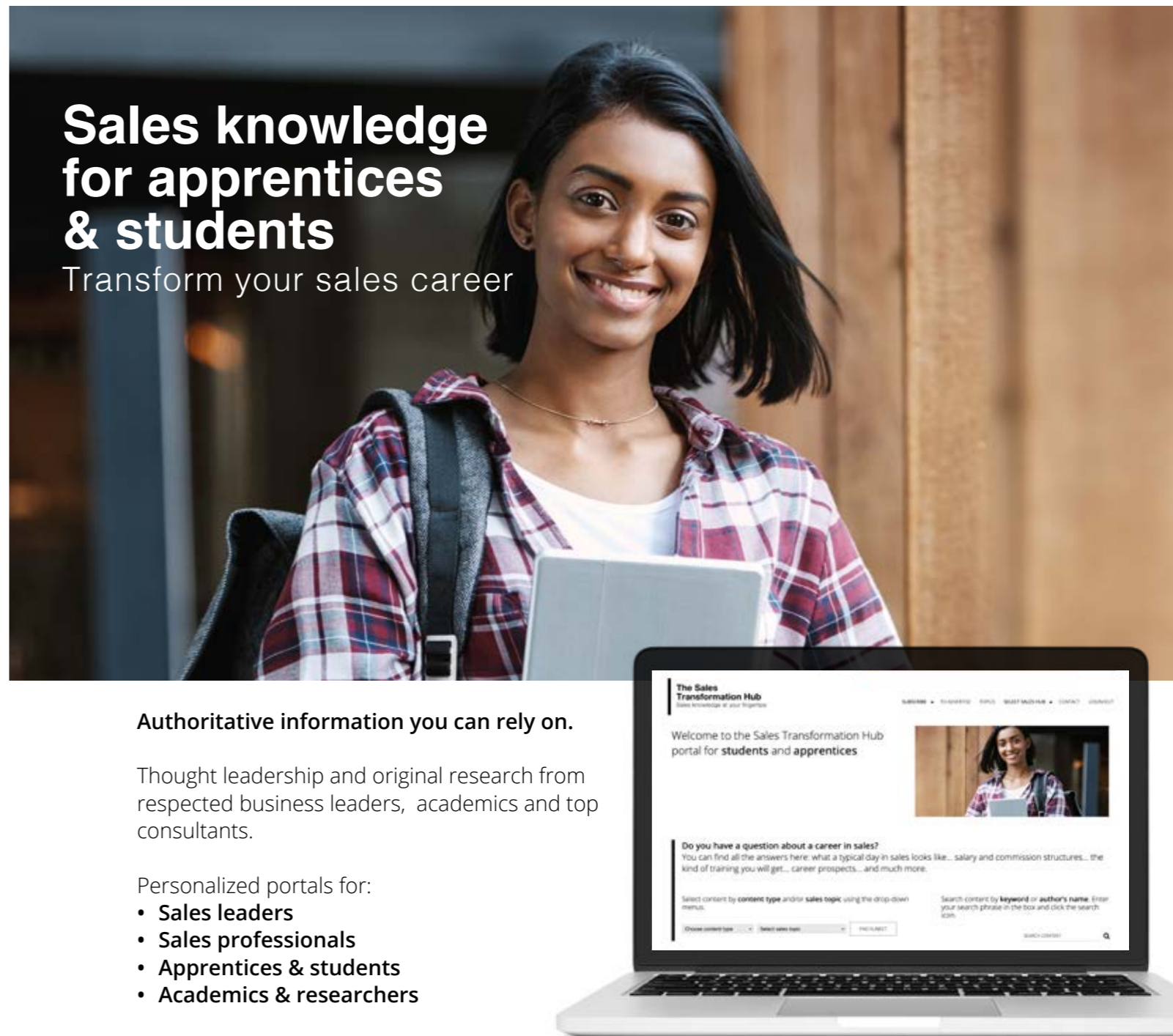
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