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TOP SALES WORLD

INSPIRING THE GLOBAL SALES COMMUNITY

Focus On
Barb Giamanco

Guest Articles from

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Blurred Lines

The Convergence of Sales & Marketing

OneSource's James Rogers Reveals All ...

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This Month's Top Features

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Blurred Lines

The Convergence of Sales & Marketing

OneSource's James Rogers Reveals All ...

The Executive Board recently issued a report in which they state "The lines of distinction between Sales and Marketing are increasingly obscured. The best marketers are pushing content deep into the customers' buying process to shape decision making.

Meanwhile, the best sales reps attempt to engage customers well before their needs are identified—increasingly via social media channels—and guide customer consumption of key content and messages to build momentum in the sales process. Winning commercial organizations build a capability spanning sales and marketing centered on engaging customers with insightful messages and content."

The blurred line between sales and marketing is ever-present in our industry today, and we are finding that both departments are taking advantage of new tools and techniques and collaborating to nurture and target customers and prospects. Delivering the right content with the right message, whether in face-to-face conversation, on the phone or via email, is no longer a nice to have. In order to foster relationships that result in driving revenue, both sales and marketing teams are in need of accurate and insightful information and they are now given the power – and the budget – to implement solutions that make this a possibility.

Gartner has predicted that by 2017 the CMO will spend more time and money on technology than the CIO, and we are already seeing this shift take place. Marketing and sales have become increasingly more data-driven and with that, it has become critical for organizations to understand how to take advantage of the data and use it to dictate interactions with customers and prospects. Integrating solutions that provide this level of detail is what will set successful companies apart from the competition. With the decision making power now moving into the hands of the CMO, we're going to see a convergence of sales and CRM in the marketing department, as technology is implemented to fuel growth and connections with new and existing customers. There is no longer a need for siloed technology, as there are solutions available that provide the depth of information and the services needed to fulfill the demand for meaningful data with multi-channel delivery that sales and marketing departments are desperate for.

At OneSource, we have studied this shift closely and understand where technology has been coming up short. We know that 42 percent of sales reps feel they do not have the right information before making a sales call and that 80 percent of the average salesperson's day is spent on non-revenue generating activities, including not knowing where to find good prospects or recognizing them once they find them. Research is critical, but it should not be done by those who are supposed to be generating leads and engaging with prospective buyers. On top of that, once the information is compiled – where is the insight and context? Intelligence and analytics are critical to putting the data to work, and there is only so much one person can do when being tasked with producing sales. We see the demand for a platform that delivers from end to end, regardless of where you are in the sales journey.

Now is the time to react and adapt to change. The ability to identify key critical events that indicate change will put your organization ahead of the curve.

Now is the time to react and adapt to change. The ability to identify key critical events that indicate change will put your organization ahead of the curve. Better data leads to increased productivity and, ultimately, more results. Knowing who to call, when to call and what to say ™ makes the difference in the sales cycle. We've created technology to make this a possibility. Prioritized prospect lists with accurate and detailed contact information, news around new hires, funding, executive appointments, personnel history, a summary of recent business events and milestones, arm sales and marketing professionals with the material they need, at the appropriate time, to make contact. This allows for more time to be spent actually selling, increasing productivity for the organization as a whole, and ultimately increasing a business's bottom line.

As quotas are increasing year over year and we approach the beginning of the 2014 sales cycle, it seems impossible for sales and marketing to hit the mark, if they are responsible for manually sifting through the endless amounts of data that organizations churn out monthly - let alone take the time to personalize outreach based on the information they uncover. However, relevant emails drive 18 times more revenue than broadcast emails, and personalized emails improve click-through rates by 14 percent and conversion rates by 10 percent, proving the need for taking the extra step on the part of sales and marketing.

Technology can make the seemingly impossible possible. Business information ,augmented to account information, provides better targeting for emails as well as ideal profiles for prospecting and lead scoring, and it can be done automatically. The ideal platform sources the infinite amounts of data available, provides insight in real-time, denoting the best time and way to reach out while delivering the information, however the sales or marketing rep would like to receive it. This means that there are no boundaries tying sales or marketing professionals to their desks. They have the information they need at their fingertips, allowing then to interact, engage and target more customers and prospects than ever before. With the right strategy and solutions, companies can build a productive sales force and a marketing department that delivers results. ■

James has spent the majority of his career building marketing departments at various companies. He focuses on making marketing a revenue center. **www.onesource.com**

Barb Giamanco

It Is Not About You

Access to decision makers is tougher than it has ever been. According to a UNC study conducted in 2005, 92% of the time a decision maker will merely hit delete when receiving an email or a phone call from someone they do not know.

Yet, day in and day out, broadcast sales pitches are unleashed on unsuspecting prospects via email, the telephone and now through social networks.

Stop Confusing Activity with Effectiveness

The ability to use technology to cast a wider net has given rise to the delusion that, if you just broadcast your message to more people, you are bound to land more meetings. If sales people expect to make quota, they need to remember that it's all a numbers game, right? Wrong. The theory that simply increasing the number of "people" you contact means you'll get more business is outdated. Times have changed. It just doesn't work that way anymore.

Target, Target, Target

Sending 100, 1.000 or 10.000 emails to the wrong people with the wrong message is not an effective prospecting strategy. A fishing expedition perhaps, but if your goal is to fill the pipeline with qualified leads and secure sales meetings, you need a different strategy.

Two things need to change:

1. Sales approach
2. Message

Chasing down anyone with a pulse is a costly waste of time and energy. Though it may seem counter-intuitive, you actually have a higher likelihood of securing meetings and closing deals more quickly when you focus your attention on a targeted list of decision makers to pursue.

Message matters! Now that you've narrowed your focus, it is time to personalize your message. The Internet, and social media in particular, is full of insights that can help craft a message that is relevant to the buyer you've targeted.

If you don't want to fall into the 92% of communications that are deleted without a second thought, follow these tips:

Sending 100, 1.000 or 10.000 emails to the wrong people with the wrong message is not an effective prospecting strategy.

- It is not about you… Prospects don't care about your company history, the latest infusion of VC cash or the fact that you won an industry award. Tell them what is in it for them!
- Create a compelling subject line that captures interest.
- Check your facts. If you sell services to staffing agencies, then be sure you are emailing staffing companies.
- Check the grammar and spelling.
- Don't use jargon that only people in your company understand.
- Get the person's name right.
- Stop asking people to visit your website to learn more or ask them to get back to you to answer any questions. This is lazy and presumes your prospect has the time to do your sales job.
- Make sure the customer examples used are relevant. Don't tout examples of enterprise organizations if you are emailing a small business.

Successful selling in today's digitally wired world necessitates a mash up of targeted and customized offline and online strategies to help you reach your goals. When using email, the phone or communicating through social networks, remember to ditch the pitch! ■

To find out more about **Barb**, visit:
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The Dating Game and the Sales Game

What can sales people learn from the dating scene? No doubt, lots of bad lessons! But there are some good lessons as well – in particular, what makes people respond positively to others.

Despite all the advances in sales systems and processes, most sales still require some personal interaction. And the quality of that interaction matters.

The Dating Game

Back in the 80s, a book called *The Rules* caused a minor storm for its non-politically correct message to women about how to attract men. It included rules like never answer the phone on the first two rings, and never say you're free for Friday night after Wednesday.

While the women's movement had some obvious issues with the book, any gender-conscious being could also sense a bit of truth in the book.

A decade or two later found a couple of men offering dating advice for their gender: be "cocky and funny," said David DeAngelo. And in a more obvious riposte to *"The Rules,"* Neil Strauss wrote *"The Game."* Each advised men to be unpredictable, slightly aloof, and immune to feminine wiles as a means to being more attractive to the opposite sex.

The Rules and The Game look remarkably alike. Each is premised on the idea that we are not attracted to neediness. Instead, we want those who are strong enough to stand on their own two feet – and still have something left over to offer us. Male or female, we want people who promise to be independent, not co-dependent. We want people who want us – but who don't need us.

Why? Because people driven by need can't be trusted. First, they are weak – not an attractive trait. But most importantly – they can't be believed when they say they are doing something for our sake. Their neediness is a very self-oriented, selfish kind of motivation that colors everything.

"I need you" may sound good in the occasional love song, but it's a bad dating strategy.

From the Dating Game to the Selling Game

The bio-genetics of all this are fascinating – but so are the implications for sales. In fact, customers react very much the same way to sellers as we,humans, do to potential mates.

Need amounts to greed. It is almost always short-term focused, it's the antithesis of customer-centric, and it makes all motives suspect. A needy seller is a greedy seller, and every buyer can sense it a mile away.

Customers don't want needy sellers even more than people don't want needy mates. First, because needy sellers are weak. That means they might not be around for long. They probably don't have competitive offerings. They don't have the resources or inclination to go to the mat for us.

But most of all, needy sellers are almost by definition in it for themselves. They may or may not try to pretend they're in it for the customer, but even if they're honest about their selfishness, it doesn't excuse the self-orientation in the eyes of the customer.

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Winning the Selling Game

The key to winning in both sales and dating is the same: you have to want it but not need it. You have to play the long game, deferring gratification. You have to have some principles, including customer focus for the sake of the customer, because you know everyone does better that way in the long run. You have to be confident enough in your own service to not be needily dependent on any one sale or any one customer.

It's all a paradox. The more you need it, the less you're going to get it. The more you rise above it all, the more abundance you get. It may sound like a Beatle song or a Buddhist koan, but it's no less true for that – those who give get more in return.

Not Just for Personal Sales

All the above was about interpersonal dynamics – how people, as individuals, relate to each other. You may think it has nothing to do with the broader side of selling, the CRM systems, the sales processes we use, the goals and metrics and policies. But that would be wrong.

People behave in needy, selfish ways – or in strong, generous ways – depending to a great extent on their environment. If the sales environment in your organization is constantly using war metaphors to describe client relationships; if you're addicted to short-term promotions at the expense of longer-term, more client-relevant sales; if your sales leadership focuses on metrics over principles – well, then you may be encouraging the kind of self-aggrandizing, short-term needy behavior that turns off customers.

As it is at the personal level, customer organizations want to deal with selling organizations that are strong, operate from principles and a long-term perspective, and are not afraid to be transparent. Personal or corporate – we like to buy from those who like us, not from those who need us!

To find out more about **Charles**, visit:
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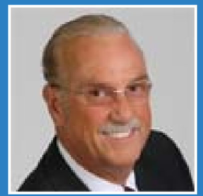

Intelligent Mobile Sales Enablement

It was the mid 1980's when the world's first laptop computer was introduced.

Manufactured by GRiD Systems, they weighed 12 lbs were encased in magnesium, had 32MB of RAM and, fully loaded, cost around $16,000! I was a sales rep for GRiD Systems back then. The way we explained the value of mobile was that sales reps could get their work done any time and any place.

Give salespeople a laptop computer and they could be as productive away from their desk as they were while at their desk. They could use their word processing and spreadsheet software, no matter where they were.

In other words, the value proposition of Mobile computing wasn't that it would change the way salespeople got their work done, it was only that it changed when and where they got their work done. That remains the main value proposition today, some 25 years later. We're still using mobile devices primarily to run office software like word-processing, email and CRM.

Given that mobile technology has radically advanced, shouldn't our use of the technology advance commensurately? Today's mobile technology is "always on" and always connected. It also offers unique capabilities like voice recognition, geo-location and multimedia. We can and should demand that we benefit from a new value proposition. **Instead of *doing work the same old way,* we should demand that mobile technologies give us *new ways of doing old work.***

We should employ mobile apps to intelligently present the information salespeople need, when and where they need it. There isn't any reason field salespeople should waste precious time searching for the right information and materials, when they could have the information and materials delivered to them intelligently in much less time.

Let me give you an example of an intelligent mobile app that gives salespeople a new way of doing old work, and that consequently, greatly improves sales rep efficiency.

Selligy is a service that helps mobile salespeople manage their daily flow of customer meetings, and reporting requirements, in a whole new way.

Selligy Enterprise uses a salesperson's mobile context – where they are, who they're meeting, and calendar availability – to automatically intuit the precise data they need from Salesforce CRM, social media profiles, and other systems.

By intelligently matching context to data, Selligy Enterprise stands to significantly reduce the time salespeople spend navigating applications in search of key information. Equally advantageous is that it changes the way salespeople provide updates back to critical systems at corporate.

An example of its intelligence is that Selligy Enterprise automatically detects when a meeting concludes and pings the salesperson's mobile device reminding them to record the meeting results. Tapping the notification presents a customized mobile meeting report which completely eliminates the need to manually connect to Salesforce CRM, and to search for and update many different records.

When finished, the system automatically transfers the information into the appropriate Salesforce CRM fields. No more excuses for not entering deal status in near real-time.

And Selligy allows customers to easily create custom meeting reports to include key questions after each meeting.

The impact is profound. Sales leaders can build dashboards that better gauge deal qualification, competitive tactics, and forecast accuracy, and even use the meeting report questions to reinforce best practice sales behavior.

Selligy on smartphones can actually help salespeople more intelligently manage their workflow and deal-flow. Organizations with mobile sales team should be using mobile devices to sell and manage smarter. And that's the value proposition of Selligy.

To find out more about **Nancy**, visit:
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Don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater

It seems pretty obvious that the profound shifts in customer behavior render traditional sales processes obsolete. Why then do so many managers still insist on the compliance of their people to such processes?

Most sales managers perceive any change proposed, on how to assure making their numbers, to be as risky as open heart surgery. Declaring the death of the sales machine (as a metaphor for the traditional sales process) and proposing more reliance on intuition of the sales people might therefore involve too much risk for sales managers. They prefer to stay in denial that what got them here will not get them further. Maybe a metaphor comparing the adaptation to the new customer behavior with the evolution from using automates (machine) to using robots might be less daunting.

A robot differs from an automate in two aspects. A robot has sensors to be able to recognize context and is built for agility to adapt to and to act within this context. Automates are built to work only in one context. However, the behavior of robots is still guided by rules and principles programmed into the robot.

The new sensor system for Sales

We first have to accept the fact that a single customer can choose different journeys when purchasing goods and services. As sellers, we need thus to develop a sensor system which allows us to predict which journey the customer is going to choose, to recognize evidence on what journey the customer is on and where the actual position in this journey is.

This implies that we have a set of standards, allowing us to determine the customer evidence needed to answer those questions in an unambiguous way within an entire sales organization. Checking the adherence to these standards, instead of asking for compliance to a given sales process, is then the new foundation for managers to assess whether they will make their numbers. To assure managers that such an approach will work, we can find evidence in research from CSO Insights which shows that continual tracking of customer behavior leads to higher forecast accuracy. This sensor system is actually implemented through comprehensive diagnostics, going much beyond the simple process of just probe for a pain in order to be able to offer a solution.

Using principles to achieve agility in Sales

Within a customer journey, there are still logical sequences - the very characteristic of the existence of a process. Ignoring these sequences will have a detrimental impact on the outcome of a sales effort. However, spelling out these sequences on the level of granularity of individual activities is ineffective. Therefore, we should work on the level of principles which allow for flexibility on choosing the activity best suited to perform on these principles. This will Increase the agility of the sales organization.

The sensor system will be used helping sellers in selecting the right sequences of principles that should be applied. By using the proper sequence of principles, the seller can provide added value in guiding the customers through their different journeys. This increases the likelihood of winning the deal. Customers tend to decide in favor of the offering of the sales person having provided the most added value in the journey.

Here’s a proposed list of such principles: Rapport Building, Triage, Pain Creation, Vision Engineering, Vision Re-Engineering, Establishing Confidence that expected business outcomes can be obtained with the proposed offering, Value Confirmation. Triage might be an expression needing some clarification. It is used prior, or during, the initial customer interaction for a single sales case. It determines the customer’s choice of the journey and the position within that journey. Triage, Pain Creation, Establishing Confidence and Value Confirmation are needed in this exact order to help navigate through any customer journey.

The need for Rapport Building is limited to situations where no relationship exists yet between the seller and the buyer. If used, it must precede Triage. Value Engineering or Value Re-engineering are also only relevant as alternatives in some journeys. Value Engineering is needed for customers who have not spent any money, neither with us nor the competition, for a particular category. Value Re-engineering is used when the customer has spent, or currently spends, money with competitors for a category where we have to offer viable alternatives. It is also used when we recognize that the customer has adopted a vision before our initial contact with them. To make the right choice on the alternative, Triage is a prerequisite.

On the level of these principles, there is no freedom on what needs to be done and when. There are also clear rules when and how to use optional principles. This provides a framework for managers on how to coach their salespeople on the application of those principles. In this coaching framework, there is room for intuition when determining the actions on how to best execute on the principles.

Conclusion

Given today’s Customer behavior, replacing the classical sales process by a framework based on standards and principles helping us to become more agile within a well understood context, seems a viable alternative to throwing out the sales machine and depend on more intuition. Establishing this framework, however, does not guarantee success. Competencies of salespeople, and particularly sales managers, must equally be augmented for successful execution. The framework helps however to understand the capability gaps. ■

Competencies of salespeople, and particularly sales managers, must equally be augmented for successful execution.

To find out more about **Christian**, visit:
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Get Your Head Out of Your Assumptions

Have you ever done something that you know is not in your best interest? Have you ever avoided doing something that is in your best interest? Have you ever crafted such a well justified excuse that you actually wound up believing it yourself?

Allow me to introduce to you my definition for the global phenomenon that impacts us all which, in essence, allows us to validate our own self-sabotaging behavior. Sounds paradoxical? It is. A diversionary tactic is an action, excuse, assumption or belief you hide behind that justifies a lack of self-accountability. Whether in your behavior, attitude or performance, these diversionary tactics provide you with the out so that you do not have to be accountable for your performance, responsibilities, relationships, goals or the situations you put yourself in.

Other examples of diversionary tactics are as follows:

- An excuse for the behavior you really don't want anymore.
- An action, a lack of action or a belief that keeps you from being accountable or looking at the real truth in a situation.
- A persistent or constant complaint.
- A source of energy. (Even though it may be a negative energy source, human beings tap into any available energy source, even if it causes additional problems, stress, and difficulties.)
- A justification for your attitude or doing something you are better off not doing which isn't aligned with your goals and objectives.

Some non-negotiable tasks, activities, and priorities in your life may be obvious, such as your commute, showing up for work, engaging in your favorite hobby or pastime, and spending time with family. However, some may not be so visible, such as prospecting, practicing self-care, one-to-one time with your employees, planning, goal setting, or putting time aside for professional development.

If there are activities you need to engage in that support your lifestyle and will truly determine whether or not you will reach your personal and professional goals, it's essential that you make these tasks non-negotiable rather than optional. Otherwise, you'll find that they have tendency to take a back seat to other activities that may need to get done and have some degree of importance.

If we can't hold ourselves accountable for our own personal commitments, then how can we expect to hold other people accountable for their commitments?

Honor The Commitments You Make To YOU

Here's an irony I always find fascinating around the concept of commitments. Think about when, how and why you commit to something. Whether doing something, changing something, or trying something, what is your criteria for making a commitment?

And what about when it comes to other people? How consistent are you at honoring the commitments you make to others? I'm going to bet you're pretty good at it.

Now, what about the commitments you make to yourself? You know, it could be a personal goal you have or something you want to do or try or change. Yet, when it comes to the commitments that you make to yourself, how consistent are you then? Maybe not so much?

An interesting irony. We are much better at honoring the commitments we make to others than we are at honoring the commitments we make to ourselves. There needs to be a fair balance. Otherwise, if you never make yourself the priority, when are things ever going to change for the better?

If we can't hold ourselves accountable for our own personal commitments, then how can we expect to hold other people accountable for their commitments? After all, we model the behavior we want to see in others. Your own behavior and attitude; that is, how you communicate and present yourself, the way you dress as well as your disposition, how you manage your day, handle conflict and upsets, work through a challenge, support people, honor your word and engage with your team, peers, customers and prospects sends the message and sets the unsaid expectation, "This is how it is done." Then, especially as a manager, we wonder why coaching, managing people and holding others accountable around their goals and responsibilities is such a struggle!

Mired In Mediocrity

The assumptions or beliefs you have about yourself ("That's just who I am"), as well as the activities or tasks that you may be more comfortable doing (cleaning your office, dealing with paperwork, responding to emails, helping other people, compiling data, customer service, working on making your marketing material "perfect") don't significantly move you forward to create unprecedented results. Instead, they keep you stuck in maintenance mode and mediocrity, allowing you to do just enough to stay afloat.

Then, you have conversations with yourself that sound like:

- "That's okay, I was too busy today to have that tough conversation with my (spouse, children, customer, direct report, peer, boss). I'll do that tomorrow."

- "I could never be that successful."
- "I wish I could be more extroverted and confident. But because of what happened to me (when I was a kid, in my last job, where I grew up) I could never really be that type of person."
- "Listen, I know you may find my management style very directive and to the point but that's just how I am."
- "I just wasn't able to find the time to get to prospecting today. I know I have to be more consistent with my cold calling and business development activities. I'll make up for the calls that I didn't get to another day. Besides, I still need to do a little more research on those companies before I start calling on them."
- "Sure, I want to (change jobs, write a book, become a public speaker, ask my boss for a pay raise, start my own business, become physically fit). But you see, the timing isn't right. Besides, I'm not ready yet." (And when, exactly will you be "ready?" Are you collapsing the word "ready" with "perfect?")
- "There's no way I can manage and adhere to a structured, daily routine that would allow me to engage in the daily activities which would move me closer to my goals and take control and ownership of my day. There are too many people and daily issues that wind up driving my day and pulling me away from my schedule."

Wouldn't you know it, something else always seems to come up that gets in the way of doing what we know is best and right and becoming who we can truly be, limiting our fullest potential! I don't suppose this has ever happened to you? I trust my sarcasm is translating well. Enter the elusive and falsely justified diversionary tactics that we are all seduced by.

This busy work will disguise the truth, creating the illusion that you're working hard, simply because you feel busy. These diversionary tactics enable you to do everything else but the activities that would dramatically accelerate your success. Just ask any salesperson who has to prospect to build their business. They can justify practically any and every activity that will take them away from prospecting or cold calling, allowing them to major in the minor activities that act as a diversion to doing what's truly needed to build their business.

Choose Your Time to Be Who You Want

If you, can't seem to "find the time," for these activities, I have yet to stumble across time that I just happen to "find." It becomes a never-ending search, an exercise in futility. Consider that these non-negotiable activities that you may be avoiding must become as habitual as waking up in the morning, brushing your teeth and breathing. These are the activities you do, without a second thought.

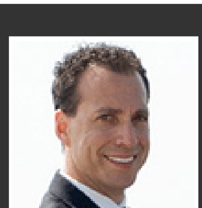
Years ago, my wife bought me a picture that hangs on my office wall today.

"You will never find the time. You must make it."

We all need to recognize and take ownership of our own self sabotaging diversionary tactics. Unfortunately, people cannot change what they do not see. While apparent to everyone around us, we are usually the last person to recognize our own destructive behaviors. After all, when something is always going on, you become blind to it. That's why the most successful people, as well as the world's greatest athletes work with a coach; because it's often very difficult to self-diagnose your own gaps and diversionary tactics.

These diversionary tactics do come at a cost; the greatest one being, your time. Moreover, consider the consequence you incur by not making certain changes or activities non-negotiable. For example, if you're a salesperson what does it cost you if you don't prospect; professional satisfaction, selling opportunities, peace of mind, income, even your career? If you're a manager, what is the costly impact of not building the trust needed amongst your team to effectively and consistently coach them to continually better their best?

Uncover your diversionary tactics. Once you do, you will then be able to make a profound and powerful choice. That is, allow your diversionary tactics to either keep you prisoner, limiting your ability to grow into who you can truly be or choose to engage in the activities and adopt the attitude, mindset, and beliefs that serve you best. Once you take ownership and let go of your diversionary tactics, that's when the real breakthroughs begin. ■



To find out more about **Keith**, visit: **http://keithrosen.com/**

Stop Typing, Start Talking:
3 Ways to Succeed in Sales 2.0

Technology helps salespeople do many things more efficiently, but to seal the deal, we must put away our toys and have a grown-up conversation.

The digital world opens up many new opportunities for salespeople, but it also threatens personal connections. Even with whisper-light computing power and immediate, 140-character Twitter posts, people still buy from people - not from technology.

Email, CRM, social networking, marketing automation, and other technological developments certainly have their place in business today. But technology will never replace the power of an in-person connection. The most valuable tool in your sales toolbox is still you!

Experts have been quick to tell us that technology changes everything — that Sales 2.0 is an entirely new way of working. And I was one of the first to scream: "No, no, no!"

Technology has certainly changed how we gather information about prospects. It's also changed how they gather information about our companies and what they expect from salespeople. And let's face it: If you're not active on social media, you're about five steps behind. However, our smartest, tried-and-true business-development, lead-generation, deal-closing tool is, and has always been, ourselves. And that's not going to change anytime soon—if ever.

So what does it take for salespeople to succeed in today's technology-driven world?

1. Know What Buyer 2.0 Needs From You

In the days before the Internet and social media, we were our client's only resource for information about our companies, products, and services. Not anymore! Buyer 2.0 is very good at homework. Before making contact with us, our customers have usually checked us out, compared pricing, read a white paper or two, listened to a webinar, and/or viewed a demo. They've also researched what people are saying about us and our competition.

Technology has certainly changed the dynamic of our client relationships. But information isn't knowledge. Knowledge comes with wisdom, experience, and a clear vision of the big picture—which is exactly what great salespeople have to offer.

Our prospects come to us with problems. But they're often unclear about exactly what's causing their pain or how to alleviate it. That's why they need us. We know our industries, our products, and most importantly, our clients. By asking the right questions and applying our vast experience, we can show them exactly where it hurts—and help them find the right solutions.

2. Put the "Social" Back in Social Media

It often seems that social media has changed everything about our society. But has it changed the way we sell? Yes and no.

Social selling enables us to more effectively gather information, conduct research, and identify connections. And it definitely impacts the early stages of our sales processes, enabling us to quickly assess a buyer's qualifications and spend less time on unproductive prospecting.

However, it has not changed the way we talk to prospects, how buyers relate to us, or why they choose us over our competition. Top salespeople understand that selling requires building strong relationships with clients—relationships based on mutual respect and trust. And with few exceptions, this cannot be done online.

Social media is an invaluable sales tool, as long as we understand the parameters. It serves these purposes only:

Our prospects come to us with problems. But they're often unclear about exactly what's causing their pain or how to alleviate it.

1. Researching new or potential clients
2. Learning more about the networks of those in your social networks
3. Identifying the strongest connections to your hot prospects
4. Building a community of loyal customers
5. Positioning yourself as an expert
6. Search engine optimization

Then it's time to log off the computer and pick up the phone. At the end of the day, it's not social intelligence we need. Relationship intelligence seals the deal.

3. Never Underestimate the Value of Relationships

While globalization and rapid developments in technology make the world seem larger and more impersonal than ever, people crave connections with one another. Most buyers start out by conducting online research, but after they've done their homework, where do they turn for help narrowing down the options? They ask people they trust, who they trust.

What's the best way to reach, communicate with, develop, and sell to your key audience? If you think back over your most successful business deals, I bet face-to-face, person-to-person, high-touch communication—a phone call, a video conference, or (best of all) an in-person meeting—has accelerated your sales process time and time again.

In a CSO Insights Sales Performance Optimization (SPO) study, almost half of sales execs said that enhancing lead generation is their top initiative. Of course it is. But focusing simply on "lead generation" can take you down a rabbit hole of unproductive, inefficient prospecting strategies.

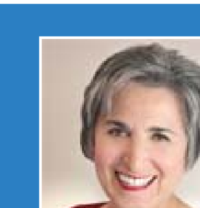
The key is generating more qualified leads, and technology won't help you do that, nor will your marketing department or LinkedIn account. But referrals will.

It's time to make referral selling your business-development priority—to establish metrics, integrate asking for referrals into your sales process, and build the skills to confidently ask for introductions to your ideal clients.

Yes, it's important to have an online presence. You definitely want to leverage social media and explore the plethora of technology tools available to make your sales process more efficient. But don't fool yourself into thinking these give you a predictable, guaranteed edge, because your competitors are using the same tools.

What will give you an edge is a well-connected, well-nurtured network of people who are ready and willing to refer you. It's our job to make connections that matter. And those connections are cemented with phone calls or in-person meetings, not with status updates. That's right—it's still people, not technology, that seal the deal! ■

To find out more about **Joanne**, visit:
www.NoMoreColdCalling.com



REV 2014 TALKS
THE REVENUE MARKETING SUMMIT

Your Journey Begins January 27, 2014

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WHAT IS REVTALKS?

Four hundred marketing executives will gather on January 27, 2014 to discuss, listen to and share the most innovative, inventive and transformational ideas affecting Revenue Marketing today – all in a Ted Talks style.

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This track will share practical advice on key elements of change you are charged with leading once you begin the path to revenue.

Sales & Marketing Alignment

During REVTalks we share insights into why this alignment is critical and best practices for how to achieve it.

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We share why Revenue Marketing requires a new organization structure and a new skillset on your team and how to achieve both.

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We tackle the issue of how to go from strategy to practical execution that will deliver a revenue result.

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Client partners and sponsors that will be participating in this year's summit.
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REV 2014 TALKS THE REVENUE MARKETING SUMMIT

PEDOWITZ GROUP

2013 Top Sales & Marketing Awards

http://topsalesworld.com/topsalesawards

However you choose the measure the success of this year's Awards, you can only arrive at one conclusion – AWESOME!

More than 700000 votes were cast in the 16 categories, and the competition was intense.

It must be remembered that this annual contest – now in its fourth year - has been created to hail "the heroes" of the sales and marketing space; to laud those companies and individuals who have gone that extra mile; who have been unafraid to challenge paradigms; who have had the courage to pioneer, when others remained wedded to the status quo.

This year's live online ceremony took place on December 17th and was again hosted by Top Sales World's CEO, Jonathan Farrington and Selling Power's Gerhard Gschwandtner. From the comments that flooded in from the capacity audience, everyone had a wonderful time.

So here then are the medal winners from each category:

2013 Top Sales & Marketing Assessment Tool

- OM Group
- Sales Effectiveness 360
- Profiles International

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2013 Top Sales & Marketing Thought Leader

- Jill Konrath
- Jeffrey Gitomer
- Linda Richardson

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- Tibor Shanto
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- Dave Kurlan

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2013 Top Sales & Marketing Article

- Dave Kurlan
- Jill Konrath
- Trish Bertuzzi
- Joanne Black

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2013 Top Sales & Marketing Blog Post

- Sales Benchmark Index
- Nancy Nardin
- Debbie Qaqish
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2013 Top Sales & Marketing Book

Nancy Bleeke | Debbie Qaqish | Joanne Black | Frank Belzer | Kendra Lee

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Pgi | Konrath/ Albee | Schultz & Doerr

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Top Sales World | Rain Today | Sales Gravy | Selling Power

Sponsored By Sales Aerobics for Engineers® Blog

2013 Top Sales & Marketing Social Media Site

LinkedIn | Twitter | Facebook | Google+

Sponsored By Workbooks.com

2013 Top Sales & Marketing Tool Start-Up

Witty Parrot | Hushly | Glider | ToutApp

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2013 Top Sales & Marketing Webinar

Koka Sexton · Jill Konrath · Ryan Tognazzini · David Newman

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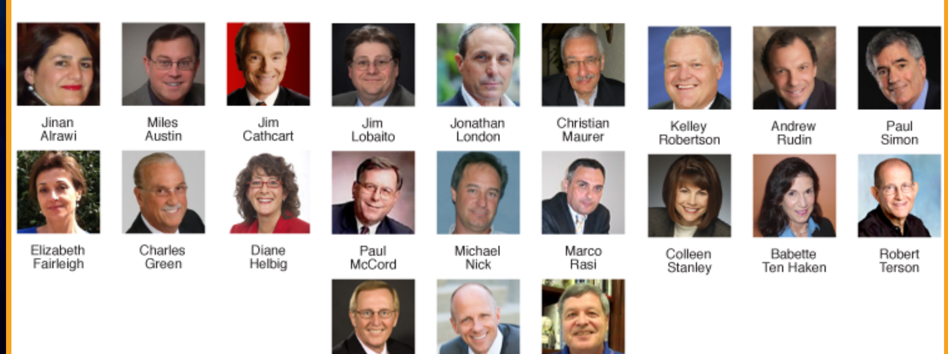

Jinan Alrawi · Miles Austin · Jim Cathcart · Jim Lobaito · Jonathan London · Christian Maurer · Kelley Robertson · Andrew Rudin · Paul Simon

Elizabeth Fairleigh · Charles Green · Diane Helbig · Paul McCord · Michael Nick · Marco Rasi · Colleen Stanley · Babette Ten Haken · Robert Terson

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Thank You To Our Judges

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Top Sales Management Highlights November 2013

Top Sales HardTalk Interviews

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The Rise and Rise of Social Selling

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Leadership Skills

The Five Main Drivers For Improvement Within Any Organization

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4 Questions for Sales Managers to Diagnose and Prevent Future Sales Problems

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Sales Leaders Should Always Stay Focused On The Present – But Have One Eye On The Future

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Sales Leaders Who Balk At Taking The Journey Of Self-Development Could Find Themselves Isolated

Here ▶

Hey Sales Hunters! Who invented Your Spear and Other Tools?

If your business model separates the Hunters from the Gatherers, the Doers from the Sellers, perhaps it's time to make these relationships more fluid, instead of siloed.

If you are seeking your next wooly mammoth, or new business acquisition, it takes more than your brains and brute sales strength, or your engineering nimbleness, to close the sale. There's the matter of how to process, throughput, and implement the object of your hunt. How is what you learned on that hunt shared throughout your organization, or tribe, to create consistent success in future new business acquisition?

While every wooly mammoth may be one-and-done until the food supply runs out, those early hunters and gatherers were doing more than just sitting around munching crisps in between hunts. There was future planning (strategy), tracking migration patterns (trending), improvement of tools involved in the hunt (process and continuous improvement), tribal health and possibly expansion of membership (scalability) to consider.

Those early tribes involved everyone working collaboratively. There was understanding of each member's area of specialization and how What They Knew related to What Needed to be Accomplished. Yes, once domestication was achieved, along with population explosion, cultures developed with hierarchies, silos, "Us versus Them" mindset, and well… that's for another blog post!

If you were hunting a difficult target in a complex setting, you needed a robust plan with spears and other tools which would be up to the task. That meant sitting around the fire with the left-brained tool makers, collaborating on how your right-brained creative hunting needs could be met by their designs to achieve the desired strategic outcome: survival, sustainability.

You have the potential for that same type of niche-focused collaboration within your own company culture. In reality, what does your sustainable tribe look like?

You have the potential for that same type of niche-focused collaboration within your own company culture. In reality, what does your sustainable tribe look like?

As sales folks, how well do you collaborate with your tool making engineering and technical colleagues? To you, they always seem to mess up the sales process, don't they? Perhaps you brought them into the sustainability equation too late. Perhaps you didn't really understand, in the first place, how to fully utilize the tools they provided for you. Perhaps they didn't explain how robust their engineering designs were, so you could create a strategic, instead of tactical, solution for your customers.

Perhaps you both didn't fully collaborate across the interface between sales and engineering. You both have a lot in common - you sustain your organizations by driving revenue, profitability and innovation. When you think about your right and left brained colleagues like that, it seems like the whole can become far greater than the sum of the individual parts. That sounds like a winning – and sustainable – business equation to me!

To find out more about **Babette**, visit: **http://salesaerobicsforengineers.com/**

Dave Kurlan

The Future of Selling

Most experts cannot agree on what selling will look like in a year or two, never mind 5 years from now. I have decided to play futurist and walk us through the coming evolution of selling. Would you like to join me?

Professional selling has already evolved more in the past 5 years than it had in the previous 40. After 5 decades of talk, a consultative approach is finally recognized as a requirement for any company that needs to differentiate. What hasn't yet changed is that salespeople continue to be unable to execute and master this approach. Most salespeople still lack a basic understanding of what it really is and how to use it effectively.

Social selling tools, like Google, LinkedIn and Twitter, are being utilized by most salespeople. But they aren't being used strategically, consistently or effectively.

CRM has gone mainstream. You would be hard pressed to find a company that isn't using some program, application or tool for relationship management and pipeline management. What hasn't improved much is compliance – getting salespeople to enter their updates in real time so that salespeople and management alike have accurate and predictive dashboards with up-to-date information.

Inbound is now an established method for getting found and generating interest. Leads are plentiful, requiring sales and marketing to determine whether it's the leads or the salespeople that suck.

Selling has been moving from outside to inside. The latest technology, an ongoing need to cut costs, busy prospects and practicality have all combined to make the move from outside to inside sales a reality. As with so many other changes, salespeople have been slow to adapt.

Prospects own the information. The abundance of knowledge on the Internet has allowed prospects to do much of their research online, making one-dimensional salespeople, once the primary source of product information, obsolete. Despite the approach, tools, technology and knowledge, selling has become more difficult than ever. Now, it can take more than 10 attempts to make the first contact, prospects routinely go missing within longer sales cycles, win rates are down, and most salespeople have not adapted to these changes.

A Look Forward

The evolution in progress doesn't stop here. We haven't even come close to where this will all end.

Webinars? Collaboration? The tools are pretty slick but as selling moves inside, we know that online presentations are still rather impersonal. While great for one on many presentations, online still makes it difficult to have quality meetings and discussions. So what will replace these great tools? Holographic Meetings. The holographic versions of you, your prospects and customers will be able to meet virtually and conduct traditional conversations as if you are there. Cisco has been working on this!

More and more salespeople are working remotely from company headquarters but new technology will allow for remote coaching where sales managers will be able to listen-in and coach salespeople who are time zones away. ConnectLeader.com already has an effective working version of this.

I predict that we will eventually have intelligent CRM which, based on next steps and/or the goals of a scheduled meeting, will automatically reach out to salespeople and update itself. Based on a salesperson's history, the new breed of CRM will predict the likely story lines and outcomes of a scheduled meeting and reach out to the salesperson to confirm, modify or cancel. Salespeople won't have to "log in to the CRM app" any longer, and management will always have the latest and greatest data. Of all the CRM applications out there, I believe that Membrain is best positioned to create this.

Selling will become more, not less sophisticated. Salespeople who don't adapt, and fail to "be the value", will have no choice but to accept lesser roles in transactional sales models - the B2B version of retail clerks.

Social selling will evolve to include audio and video components that people will initially find quite cool but eventually, very intrusive and distracting. Salespeople will rediscover that the coolness of the telephone is an improvement over the distraction of texting and the impersonal nature of email. Look for people, including prospects, to be more respectful and responsive to their callers.

In much the same way that stores and malls are still very much alive, salespeople will be very much alive as well. Before inside sales, telemarketing, appointment setters and inbound, it was the salesperson's responsibility to find new opportunities. In recent years, despite staff dedicated to generating interest and scheduling meetings, pipelines are thinner than ever because these groups are focused on activity rather than quality, and don't receive the same training as salespeople. While all forms of marketing and advertising will continue to play a large part in creating interest, salespeople will once again own complete responsibility for finding new business and seeing it through to closure.

Great salespeople will be valued as much as ever, but there will be little tolerance for those that fail to adapt and are unable to meet expectations.

The Most Important Change to Come in the Near Future

18 months ago, I published a study on trust (available for download **here**), and it showed that except for industrial salespeople, those in other sales roles were not considered very trustworthy. Auto and personal insurance salespeople led the way in garnering distrust, and young males were the least trusted salespeople of all. It was one of the most intriguing studies I ever conducted because the reasons driving the lack of trust were very surprising.

As more colleges and universities offer courses in selling, and people in general demand more integrity and transparency, sales as a profession will finally become a respectable career choice.

Conclusion

Sales will continue to evolve, but even faster and more profoundly than ever before. Great salespeople will be valued as much as ever, but there will be little tolerance for those that fail to adapt and are unable to meet expectations. Technology will be more intelligent, futuristic and powerful but unlike today, salespeople will not only be required to use it - they will want to. I foresee a future of selling with great anticipation, optimism and confidence.

What does the future of selling look like to you? Contribute your thoughts, comments, suggestions and opinions **here.**

To find out more about **Dave**, visit:
www.kurlanassociates.com/

This is not your Daddy's presentation: 5 things you must do to engage today's busy buyers

When my dad was in sales, he didn't have to compete with a steady stream of "urgent" texts or emails for his prospect's attention. He was rarely rushed along, asked to stick to the "script" or sandwiched in between competitors.

My father had the luxury of building rapport and transitioning into his presentation organically. I don't have to tell you that times have changed and so have buyers! So why are so many sellers still using the same old presentation techniques from the seventies, eighties and nineties?

If you want to connect with today's busy prospects, stand out from your competition and be remembered when buying decisions are made, you need to start carrying some tools from the present in your "present"ation kit.

In today's fast-paced world, you may have your prospect's eyes and ears at the start of your presentation, but don't be fooled - you have yet to win his mind! Like an actor at curtain's rise, you must quickly gain your audience's attention and give them a compelling reason to come along with you on your journey. This requires a whole different approach to your presentation, and your opening in particular, unless you're willing to risk losing your audience. And as any good actor knows, once lost, it's nearly impossible to win them back…

Here are 5 new tools you can put to use now to win the audition for your buyer's mind:

1. Ditch the corporate overview

Remember getting cornered by "that guy" at a networking event who went on and on about himself immediately after being introduced? Bad news: You may be "that guy" if you're still opening with a corporate overview! Your prospect likely already knows - or has access to -much of what you think you need to tell them. Sure, there are key points you want to highlight for your audience, and there's a place for that, but it is not in the first few minutes of your presentation. Sprinkle in relevant facts or accomplishments throughout your presentation. Place your overview at the end or have it available as a leave behind. Trust me, it won't be missed.

2. Start in the middle

Think about how we communicate today: Texts are 160 characters, Twitter, 140. Even commercials have been reduced from 30 seconds to 10. Are you taking this into account in your presentation? Today's buyers are short on time and attention. They want you to get to the point…fast. Yet, like the rest of us, they will sit through a two hour movie. Why? Sure, it's entertainment, but think about where movies begin. Do they start with a lot of backstory about how the characters met or where they grew up? No! They start with the car chase or the lovers meeting. Identify the most interesting part of your message and jump in. Trust that your audience is intelligent enough to connect the dots.

Think about how we communicate today: Texts are 160 characters, Twitter, 140. Even commercials have been reduced from 30 seconds to 10.

3. Rehearse your opening

The opening is a great place to show your personality and build rapport. It is not, however, a great place to try out new material. What first comes out of your mouth should not be a surprise to both you and your audience. Yet salespeople often tell me "I like to wing it." Unless you're Robin Williams, I highly recommend leaving "winging" it to professional improvisers! There's too much riding on those first few minutes to start down a path that may take you down a rabbit hole. Invest some time crafting a compelling opening, editing it down to an ideal length (45-90 seconds) and practicing it until it shines. Having a rehearsed opening in your back pocket will give you a powerful boost of confidence and set the tone for the rest of your presentation.

4. Know your "One Thing"

Imagine your prospect is telling his manager about your presentation the next day. What is the one thing you want to be sure he gets across? Of course we all have many things we'd like our prospect to remember, but if you had to pick one, what would it be? In their book, Made to Stick, Chip and Dan Heath state, "if you attempt to say three things, you end up saying nothing." Make it easy for your audience to recall what's really important by summarizing your "one thing" in a simple power-bite, then put it up-front in the opening and call back to at the end. It will make your message, as the Heath brothers like to say, "sticky".

5. Tell a story, add a prop

In one of my workshops, a student began his presentation with a quick story about a "Kodak moment" he'd experienced. He then pulled a nickel out of his pocket and showed it to the audience. "This," he said after a dramatic pause, "is what Kodak's stock is worth now." A simple prop that cost him – I'm guessing a nickel – and a story (which illustrated his "one thing": the danger of resting on past successes) made a lasting impact on his audience. A well-framed, well-told story and the right prop, whether it's slides, video or spare change, can give a creative punch to your presentation and re-ignite waning interest.

Step into the present with your presentation. Make the most of hard won time in front of busy prospects and leverage the power of a contemporary new tool set. Your daddy would be proud! ■

To find out more about **Julie**, visit: **http://actingforsales.com/**

The Rapidly Changing Face Of Professional Management

Old ways of doing business no longer work... The increasingly intense competitive challenges of the world economy force everyone, everywhere, to adapt in order to prosper under new rules.

In the old economy, hierarchies pitted labor against management, with workers paid wages depending on their skills, but that is eroding as the rate of change accelerates.

Hierarchies are being replaced by networks. Labor and management are uniting into teams. Wages are coming in new mixtures of options, incentives and ownership. Fixed jobs melt into fluid careers.

As business changes, so do the traits needed to survive - let alone excel. All these transitions put increased value on emotional intelligence. Competitive pressures put a new value on people who are self-motivated, show initiative, have the inner drive for outdoing themselves, and are optimistic enough to take reversals and setbacks in their stride. The ever-pressing need to serve customers and clients well, and to work smoothly and creatively with an ever more diverse range of people, makes the ability to empathize all the more essential.

At the same time, the meltdown of old hierarchies increases the importance of traditional people skills, such as building bonds, influence and collaboration. And that is as true for employers as it is for employees. The task of the leader draws on a wide range of personal skills. Research has shown that emotional competence makes the crucial difference between mediocre leaders and the best. Indeed, emotional competence makes up about two thirds of the ingredients of star performance in general. But for outstanding leaders, emotional competencies – as opposed to technical or cognitive cues – make up 80 to 100% of those listed by companies as crucial for success.

Star performers show significantly greater strengths in a range of emotional competencies, such as the skills of persuasion, team leadership, political awareness, self-confidence and achievement drive. Empathy, one of the key elements of emotional intelligence, is central to good management. It is difficult to have a positive impact on others without first sensing how they feel and understanding their position. People who are poor at reading emotional cues, and inept at social interactions, are very poor at influencing others in the workplace.

Empathy has become more relevant as the whole world of work changes. These are troubled times for workers – it seems that no one is guaranteed a job anywhere anymore! The creeping sense that no one's job is safe, even as the companies they work for are thriving, means the spread of fear, apprehension and confusion. An attitude of self-interest is, understandably, growing more common for employees confronting downsizing and other changes that make them feel their organisation is no longer loyal to them. This sense of betrayal or distrust erodes allegiance and encourages cynicism. And once lost, trust – and the commitment that stems from it – is hard to rebuild.

If employees are not treated fairly and respectfully, no organisation will gain their emotional allegiance. Sensing others' development needs, and bolstering their abilities, is emerging as second only to team leadership among 'superior' managers.

Empathy has become more relevant as the whole world of work changes. These are troubled times for workers – it seems that no one is guaranteed a job anywhere anymore!

For sales managers, developing others' abilities is even more important. Indeed, it is the emotional competence most frequently found among those at the top of the field. This is a person-to-person art, and the effectiveness of counseling hinges on empathy and the ability to focus on our own feelings and share them.

Research suggests the best coaches show a genuine personal interest in those they guide, and have empathy for and an understanding of their employees. Trust is crucial – when there is little trust in the coach, advice goes unheeded. This also happens when the coach is impersonal and cold, or the relationship seems too one-sided or self-serving. Coaches who show respect, trustworthiness and empathy, are the best. One way to encourage people to perform better is to let others take the lead in setting their own goals, rather than dictating the terms and manner of their development. This communicates the belief that employees have the capacity to be the pilot of their own destiny.

Another technique is to point to the problems without offering a solution - this implies the employees can find the solution themselves. And people hunger for feedback, yet too many managers, supervisors and executives are inept at giving it or are simply disinclined to provide any.

Virtually everyone who has a superior is part of at least one vertical 'couple' in the workplace. Every boss forms such a bond with each subordinate. Such vertical couples are a basic unit of organizational life. Therein lays the blessing or the curse - this interdependence ties a subordinate and superior together in a way that can become highly charged. If both do well emotionally – if they form a relationship of trust and rapport, understanding and inspired effort – their performance will shine. But if things go emotionally awry, the relationship can become a nightmare and their performance a series of minor and major disasters!

While vertical couples have the entire emotional overlay that power and compliance bring to a relationship, peer couples – our relationships with co-workers – have a parallel emotional component, something akin to the pleasures, jealousies and rivalries of siblings.

If there is anywhere emotional intelligence needs to enter an organisation, it is at this most basic level. Building collaborative and fruitful relationships begins with the couples we are a part of at work. Bringing emotional intelligence to a working relationship can pitch it towards the evolving, creative, mutually engaging end of the continuum. Failing to do so heightens the risk of a downward drift towards rigidity, stalemate and failure.

Don't miss JF Uncut in January ..."2013, Where Did it All Go Wrong?" Jonathan lifts the lid on why sales achievement levels were so poor, and yet sales costs continued to rise.

Accelerating Your Channel

Recently, I wrote about my experience and recommendations about on-boarding new salespeople. I discussed how to create a detailed three week plan and how to ensure a successful launch with a 30-day Tracking System.

I heard from quite a few readers and there were excellent levels of discussion. That work has led to this column.

Much of my work is actually with organizations that create and resell products/services through channels of independent organizations - resellers, dealers, partners, etc. Normally, in that environment, there is a recruitment process, levels of training and hopeful sales objectives. However, in many situations, the ramp to successful levels of sales results tends to be longer. This can occur for many reasons - differing levels of focus/commitment, other products that compete for time, and market/customer awareness. For those companies that sell through a channel based sales organization, these are all common challenges.

During the past 12 years, we have worked with several large organizations on building programs aimed at accelerating the revenues within their partner/reseller channel. In several of these programs, there were new products being introduced. In others, there were new organizations being added to their channel organizations. During that work, we have focused on around some of the same topics you would consider when on –boarding a new salesperson to your own organization. However, there are many differences when the channel organization does not directly work for you!

Obviously, just like a direct salesperson, choosing or approving appropriately qualified potential resellers/partners into your channel becomes a critical success factor. In designing the program, there are many issues to consider.

First, scalability. Instead of training one new salesperson, you have much larger audience to be trained that could be North American based or worldwide!

Second, you may have multiple individuals with differing levels of responsibility to train. Executives may need overviews ; technical teams, salespeople and even administrative staffs, would need to be trained and /or certified on various aspects of your offering.

Third, you need to earn trust, commitment, increase execution, plus gain mindshare of the entire team. It is very easy to train an independent organization - it is another thing to have them to execute effectively…

Based upon my professional experience of leading a channel based organization, and the past 12 years of consulting with major vendors on a variety of programs, I would recommend the following tactics when considering building out a channel using an on-boarding program.

Create a Letter of Commitment: This document simply lists what both parties will work towards over the "on-boarding timeframe" - signed by Executives.

Prepare an electronic business/practice assessment. This tool allows the senior management team and the vendor to evaluate their Operations, Sales & Marketing, as it relates to the vendors product/offering. HINT: This assessment should be re-taken every 90 days to show progress during the first twelve months.

Develop Project Plan. This tool is used to keep everyone moving forward and build accountability. This would include the reseller's personnel, as well as the vendor's.

Ensure Focus. Depending upon the vendor's solution. Create a Statement of Focus that defines who, where and how the solution will be sold.

Perform Account Mapping. Do this BEFORE contracts are completed. By actively engaging by mapping your solutions to their top 25 accounts, a vendor will know if there is "substance" to the relationship, and both parties will understand market potential. More importantly, experience tells us that the sooner a partner gets to a closed opportunity within the first 90 days, the longer they will stay an effective partner of the vendor. Here's a side benefit to account mapping as the first step: once you find potential opportunities and develop a pipeline by creating an Account Map, the contracts get done quicker, plus the reseller will have a higher level of focus.

Obviously, just like a direct salesperson, choosing or approving appropriately qualified potential resellers/partners into your channel becomes a critical success factor.

Keep it simple but useful. The entire program must be easy to understand (Steps 1, 2, 3) and real world. Make the program easy to implement and valuable to the reseller.

Make is comprehensive. Some organizations are good at sales or excellent in marketing, and others in operations. Most only do one of the three well. Create tools, guides, best practices that can solve all of the potential weak links in your channel organizations. Again, think in terms of simple - but useful.

Ensure early success. Once the letter of commitment is achieved or training is activated, create a special launch offer to ensure your new reseller becomes actively engaged with your solution. The secret, at this level, is to create a targeted sales/marketing plan on pre-selected accounts that the vendor and executives agree upon during the Letter of Commitment stage.

What I have seen too often is that targets are set that define the number of new resellers signed up each quarter in the channel vs the number of actual successful resellers selling each quarter. Lots to do, but if your channel strategy is complete, it will include a plan and program to ensure success. ■

Ken Thoreson

To find out more about **Ken** visit:
www.AcumenManagement.com

How To Drive Cross-Functional Collaboration With Councils

Part 2: Trainings Council

Sales trainings – what's crossing your mind first? Product trainings? You are in good company. But that's only one of several sales training categories. That's why there are many different stakeholders, perspectives and target groups to be orchestrated. And that's the reason why cross-functional councils can increase effectiveness significantly.

At this point, we assume that an overall strategy is in place and that sales trainings are considered as a strategic issue: More in Dave Stein's excellent article Tactics vs. Strategy: The Distinction Makes a Difference.

Let's look at the **two different target groups: Front line sales managers and sales reps.** Whatever you invest in sales reps, you will have much better results if your sales managers are equipped accordingly – how to become a world class front line coach for their teams. To equip the sales managers the right way is essential to leverage any sales system's full potential.

Next, let's look at different training categories that are relevant for each target group, but in different shapes and forms:

- Skill trainings that cover e.g. value messaging skills, storytelling skills, questioning skills, presentation and negotiation skills or how to manage tension. Coaching is part of this category.
- Product or portfolio trainings - revisited. They should equip people how to sell, what products and services do and what they mean to different customers - rather than what their features and functions are. Ideally, these trainings are closely connected to messaging trainings. If integrated, even better.
- Sales methodology, sales process and customer's journey trainings: This is all about how your sales methodology and your processes look like and why it helps to be valuable and successful. Account management is also in this category.
- Tools and system trainings: CRM, SFA, sales enablement and collaboration platforms, pricing tools, proposal tools, client visit tools, on all devices, and many more.

So much for that. Your **foundation** should be an overall sales enablement framework with the customers at the core, with different sales milestones that are mapped to the different stages along the customer's journey. All that should be connected to the sales process. Such a framework is your design point for all enablement - not only for training services.

Let's define a **Trainings Council** as a cross-functional strategic board that makes strategic decisions on design, piloting, rollout and impact metrics for all defined sales training categories and for both target groups: sales managers and sales people. The execution can remain in the initial functions. Budgets should be assigned to the council, but your point of departure will often be the other way around. True leadership is required!

Follow these steps to initiate your trainings council:

- **Create a compelling story to sell your vision internally and to get senior executive buy-in:** Address the challenge clearly (current focus is too narrow on product trainings, an integrated big picture is required across all training categories on what and how to sell, efficiency potential between content and training has to be leveraged, coordination has to be improved to avoid "random acts of sales support"). Make pretty clear, that sales managers need a special focus on coaching to leverage a sales system's full potential. Your story is to make the whole training landscape much more efficient and effective. In a perfect world, the sales, the marketing and the HR leader are the council's senior executive sponsors.

Budgets should be assigned to the council, but your point of departure will often be the other way around.

- **Define the trainings council lead:** The person who leads the strategic sales force enablement team should lead the trainings council to provide strategic guidance, based on the overall framework. Make sure that your partner in crime, the content council leader, is a member of the trainings council.
- **Define the council members:** Typical members are the leaders of product & solution marketing, vertical marketing, portfolio management, content council, any kind of dedicated training teams and – often overlooked – HR business partners and skill development leaders are important members.
- **Create a council charter:** Such a charter defines vision, mission and principles, defined outcomes for each phase of your roadmap, members, sub-teams and sponsors as well as a meeting calendar. Creating this charter together will help you to build a strong team.
- **Define a first roadmap:**

- **As-is Analysis and big picture:** Create transparency on all the different training services that happen across the sales system. Map them to three dimensions:

Your target groups (sales managers and all sales roles), the customer's journey (where along the customer's journey is this training most relevant?), and to your training categories. Identify redundancies and gaps. Create a big picture of your desired future state based on the above mentioned dimensions.

- **Define two fields of action:** One to fix the worst redundancies, one to address the most important gap (which will be often a sales manager coaching program).
- **Create a roadmap from current state to future state and define teams to execute the first two projects:** Such a road map needs milestones that are easy to communicate (design, pilot, rollout or as-is-analysis, redundancies are fixed and gaps are closed), that help you to track progress and to communicate success and to address necessary decisions to your sponsors.

These three streams decide on your council success: Your vision and how well you execute on it. The next two streams are ongoing streams, which – depending on your organization's maturity – have to be developed from scratch or just to be honed.

- **Align trainings and technology to increase efficiency and effectiveness**
- **Create metrics along the customer's journey to measure efficiency and effectiveness**

Start your trainings council and create impact!

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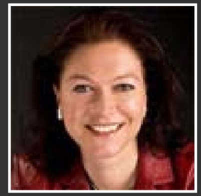


The Truth about 2014 –
3 Actions to Take NOW!

I wrote the book The Truth About Leads because I wanted to reach senior executives, in companies big and small, with the truth about what is going on in their company and what to do about it.

The preface outlines the current state of affairs in many, if not most, companies:

1. There is no agreement on the definition of a qualified lead.

2. Forecasts are thin and/or inaccurate.

3. There is no closed loop to measure the effectiveness of marketing programs.

4. There are no processes to track anything other than the number of leads generated, their cost and total revenue.

Sound familiar?

The purpose of this article is to provide a high-level recap of the most important recommendations from the book followed by three actions I recommend all companies take in 2014.

Observations and Recommendations from "The Truth About Leads"

Chapter two addresses the gap between marketing and sales and provides (on pages 21 – 22) a five-step process for closing that gap. Excerpting from those two pages:

1. Don't keep spending on marketing when the results are unknown

2. Start new programs by TESTING—crawl, walk, run

3. Pinpoint your market

4. Test the market, media and message—frequently

5. Measure what matters—hint: that is NOT cost per lead

Chapter five reveals how many, if not most, companies fail to turn raw leads into real opportunities because they give up too soon. The chapter also includes the attributes of a well-qualified lead including: vertical, firmographics, decision-making matrix and process, environment, engagement, pains or needs uncovered, timeframe and budget indicated by a sense of urgency and the competitive landscape.

Chapter eight is a packed nine pages with detailed recommendations around deployment, monitoring & managing and coaching & counseling—the "art" of sales management. It also includes a detailed check-list covering how to tell if you have a real deal. In summary:

1. Is it a real deal based on application, urgency and economic justification?

2. How do we stack up (realistically)?

3. Can we win (or are we too late—such as RFP's that are usually column fodder exercises)?

4. Do we want to win (can we make money, is this a strategic, good deal)?

Actions for 2014

After looking back at 2013 – I recommend the following three actions:

1. Get better at prospecting: Today, marketing departments are focused on the number of leads and cost per lead whiles sales reps are focused on revenue. In one case we have a client that pays $23.15 per lead and buys thousands of them. They know that sales reps ignore all of these leads because only 1.28% of them are qualified—but it is still "too important a source of leads" (read: otherwise I won't make MY number and get MY bonus) to not buy them. Geez. Kurt Andersen, executive vice president of sales enablement and marketing for SAVO, the market leader in sales enablement says it best: "With 80 percent of marketing leads not advancing, it's clear that sales needs more than just contact details once a lead transitions from their marketing automation solution to their CRM pipeline. Sales enablement is the missing cog in your sales and marketing machine."

2. Get better at nurturing: A large percentage of leads that are not immediately interested in your product, solution or service could well be qualified and interested in a relatively short period of time. Most of the value of marketing campaigns is wasted simply because there is no "home" for staying on top of longer term opportunities.

Craig Rosenberg, The Funnelholic and long-time proponent of feeding sales with high quality leads, wrote this blog on lead nurturing. He makes a number of relevant points:

- You can't be good at lead nurturing if you aren't good at content marketing.
- Buyers prefer to work digitally—don't fight it.
- Don't forget to call—combine channels like email and voice in your campaigns, you will increase overall conversion.
- Your blog is part of your nurturing strategy—but, buyers want to educate anonymously. Let them.
- LinkedIn is a nurture tool and the fastest path to conversion. Use it!
- Data is the reason your lead nurturing is failing.
- Segment your database by buyer and deliver relevance. You win.
- Help instead of sell, and then lead nurturing will help you build a trusted brand.

3. Start running marketing and sales like a business: I recently wrote that CFOs should INSIST on lead audits. I recommend this because companies large and small are wasting money by the fistful on marketing programs that have little or no return on investment. Dave Stein, founder of ES Research, has a great blog on this topic. He says in summary, "I believe that sales is in an unfortunate state because it is not treated like the business that it should be. …

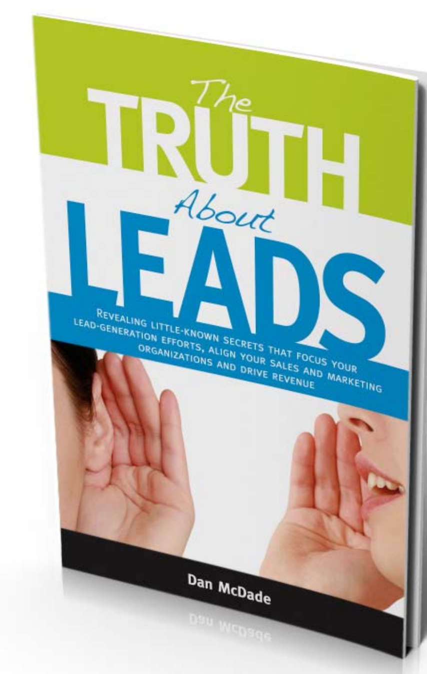
"One significant contributing factor is the deliberate and conscious effort by many companies and sales leaders to equate their "sales teams" to sports teams and to treat them that way. Sales teams are not sports teams. Selling is not a sport. It's a business. …

"Are there important things we can learn about teamwork, strategy, and execution from sports? Sure. But wouldn't it be better to learn by examining successful sales experiences, sales case studies, and research about selling, or effective teamwork, strategy, and execution from other functions and departments within our own companies? …

"Sports teams are run like the businesses they are. Why should sales departments be run like the sports teams that they are not?"

There you have it. Three actions to take right now to positively impact 2014! I hope you enjoy a wonderful and restful Holiday!

"Sports teams are run like the businesses they are. Why should sales departments be run like the sports teams that theyare not?"



To find out more about **Dan** , visit:
http://www.pointclear.com/

Focus On
Barb Giamanco

Barb heads up Social Centered Selling. She's the co-author of The New Handshake: Sales Meets Social Media – the first book published on social selling. She is the author of the Harvard Business Review article Tweet Me, Friend Me, Make Me Buy published in the July 2012. Her first of its kind research report: Social Media and Sales Quota proves the measurable return-on-investment when using social media to sell.

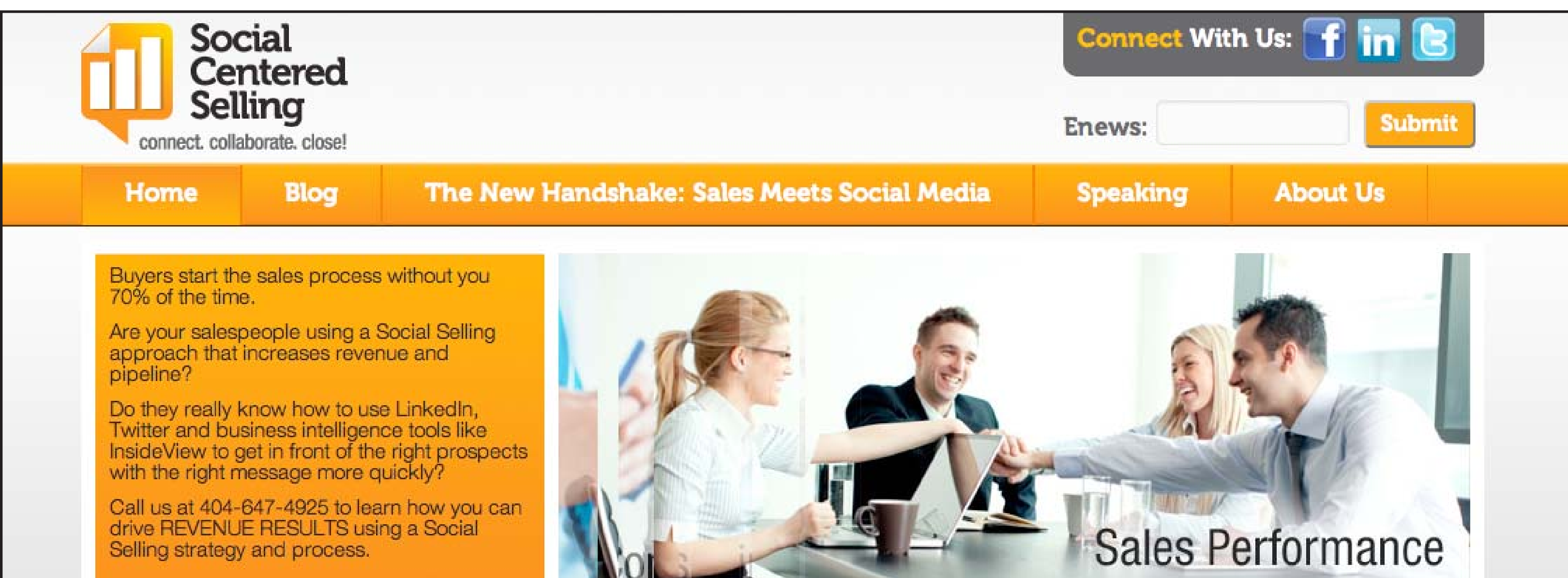
Barb is a sought after Social Selling Strategist, Speaker and Facilitator who works with Sales and Marketing teams to achieve sales results.

She has a proven, 30-year track record in generating sales and capped a corporate career at Microsoft, where she led sales teams and coached executives. Throughout her sales career, Barb has sold $1B in products and services.

Barb is a contributing writer and blogger for Top Sales World, Social Selling University, Harvard Business Review and the Sales Thought Leader Blog. She is recognized by InsideView as one of the Top 25 Influential Leaders in Sales, a Top 25 Sales Influencer on Twitter, one of Top Sales World's 2013 Top 50 Sales and Marketing Influencers and her LinkedIn profile ranks in the Top 1% of profiles viewed.

An active member of the business community, Barb is VP of Marketing and Social Media for NAWBO (National Association of Women Business Owners) Atlanta and the Past President of the Atlanta Chapter of Sales Marketing Executives International (SMEI).

Barb was honored as a 2011 nominee for the Turknett Leadership Character award, and she was the 2009 recipient of the Atlanta Women in Business "Results Count" award.



To Find out more about Barb, visit: http://scs-connect.com/

HIRING SALESPEOPLE **BASED ON THE RIGHT CRITERIA**

"What does your gut tell you?" I asked my client about her potential sales candidate. She stated; "I don't believe he would be the right fit." "I would follow your gut," I responded.

Two weeks later I received this email from her: "I've decided to move ahead with this candidate. Despite the fact that I told him I had other candidates he persisted in his follow-up. I believe he will do very well here."

Translation of that email: I've had this position open for a while. No one has impressed me. I value persistence and I am basing my hiring decision mainly on the candidate that exhibited this attribute the most.

Given the sales cycle is over 6 months for this client's services, this hiring mismatch will not reveal itself for a year.

Here is a simple technique that I used to evaluate her candidate that clearly illustrates this is a hiring misfire.

Continue Reading

Hire The Best is a weekly blog addressing sales talent acquisition challenges. It covers topics in identifying, finding, screening and recruiting top sales people.

Hire The Best is written by Jim Lobaito. Jim is the founder and President of Performance Group a sales recruiting and consulting firm.

Read more Hire The Best at **PMGLLC.net**

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