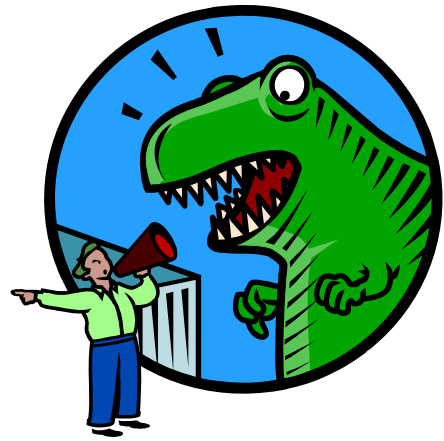


# Customers Are Evolving – Is Your Sales Approach?

Solution selling – providing customers with information, with solutions, trading on what has been called ‘Information Asymmetry (I know more than you and therefore have the upper hand in this negotiation) is increasingly yielding poorer results for salespeople. Studies by CEB a NYSE listed research organisation confirm what we can all observe in daily business life, best-in class sales and marketing techniques look less and less like the conventional thinking embedded in most company’s performance metrics – sales process, pipeline, marketing messages and sales training.



One European head of sales quoted in the research outlined the 1 in 3 problem “We have a world class product and brand and that gets us into the customer’s top three every time but because the customer’s own research has deemed all three to be acceptable they always go with the lowest price” a familiar story in our marketplace and one of the reasons for the rash of installer schemes aimed at adding value to a commoditised product. It’s a lesson that most companies haven’t learnt, the biggest

## ***The ‘1 in 3 problem’:-***

***“ We have a world class product and brand and that gets us into the customer’s top three every time but because the customer’s own research has deemed all three to be acceptable they always go with the lowest price”***

competitor is not another business it’s your customer’s ability to learn whether that’s from the internet, in online communities or third parties.

Highly informed B2B customers (and increasingly retail consumers as well) are typically 60% of the way through the buying process before they seek to see a salesperson so simply telling them what they already know feeds the ‘1 in 3 problem’ – price becomes the differentiator. What customers want is insights a consultative relationship if you will:-

Solution selling targets organisations that have a clear vision and known demands, Insight selling looks to companies that have emerging demands or are willing and able to change.

Traditional selling teaches salespeople to discover what problems a customer is seeking to address but the insight a customer needs is what unrecognised needs they have, looking to have a sales conversation before a customer has focussed in on a problem or opportunity.

Traditionally sales people are taught to ask questions and listen to dig out an opportunity for their solution but increasingly more effective is to proactively offer insights into what the customer should do.

Installer schemes are like bits of plastic, they become part of the product to a customer and therefore are copied and executed to a greater or lesser effect by competitors. If everyone has one and the top three are deemed to be acceptable it's not a differentiator, we are back to price!

This insightful approach is not easy and requires considerably higher cognitive skills from salespeople but if you can't give your customer anything more than they can learn from somewhere else the conversation is going to be pretty predictable.

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