



MAKING SALES MORE PRODUCTIVE: WHAT B2B CUSTOMERS REALLY EXPECT

In today's increasingly competitive world, the sales force is more important than ever. Regardless of which path customers take, they want to deal with people who can help them move toward a purchase decision. In fact, B2B buyers report that, compared to other sources of information, these interactions are the most influential in their decision-making process.

In this challenging environment, vendors must differentiate not only through what they sell but also through how they sell. Their sales approach must become one of their key competitive strengths. Unfortunately, there is, from customers' perspective, considerable room for improvement in nearly all aspects of selling.

The new dynamics of B2B sales

Business-to-business selling has become less linear as customers research, evaluate, select, and share experiences about products. Web sites, blogs, and other digital media have made vendor organizations more visible and transparent to potential buyers. Many buyers will have researched a supplier, queried some of its customers and screened the supplier out of consideration before the supplier's rep has an opportunity to contact the prospective buyer. Hence, if you know how your target customer's evaluation process occurs, you can take steps to influence the buying decision early on and lead the buyer to purchase much faster.

Customer preference: Trust, knowledge and expertise

Vendors shouldn't assume they know what customers want. They should interview their customers to determine which skills and expertise they expect, assess their salespeople's current performance against the desired skills, and develop recruitment procedures and training programs to address the gaps. It's obvious that customers want a sales rep to be the type of person they can trust to get the job done. As surveys show, they put salespeople's subject matter and solution expertise at the top of their list of important qualities.

An important attribute of good first meetings for customers is the quality of questions the sales person asks, and how well they listen to the answers. A strong understanding of the customer's business and industry is required to formulate high quality questions.

Creating customer value

Strong sales are driven by emphasizing the benefits that your product or service brings to your customers. If you know the challenges that face them, it's much easier to offer them solutions. Your salespeople can learn a great deal about your customers by talking to them. Asking them why they're buying or not buying, what they may want to buy in the future and asking what other needs they have can give a valuable picture of what's important to them. Talking to your customers can help you gain essential knowledge about your markets and competition, maintain and defend your positioning within your industry, and spot new opportunities for growth.

Sales excellence enables a company to achieve significant and measurable performance improvements by focusing on the levers that enhance flexibility and speed, quality, reliability, and customer value.

Empower your sales team

The sales profession is undergoing some pretty radical changes. The buyer is in charge, technology is transforming the profession. To survive in this environment, salespeople need a new set of skills.

The sales experts of MFB Resultants know the ins and outs of your industry and can help you determine with confidence which paths will lead to significant increases in sales performance. Then, we'll help you move from recommendations to action and change.

MFB Resultants – We deliver results.