

Selling through a Slump

An Industry-by-Industry Playbook to Help You Prepare for the Recovery

SKIP ANDERSON, MIKE KUJAWSKI, MIKE WISE, MATT HOMANN, ANNEKE SELEY, CHARLES H. GREEN,
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THE CUSTOMER COLLECTIVE

Selling through a Slump

An Industry-by-Industry Playbook to Help You Prepare for the Recovery

Index of
11 market sectors



Selling in a recession is tough. Salespeople know that better than anyone. Aggressively waiting for the phone to ring doesn't work. Neither does doing the same things with double the energy. But there are things you should do, and there are things you should not do, in times like this. You'll find that guidance in this eBook.

Selling through a Slump: An Industry-by-Industry Playbook to Help You Prepare for the Recovery brings together 11 top sales blogger-trainer-authors from [11 distinct vertical market sectors](#), ranging from retail to health care to telecom—because one size doesn't always fit all.

Selling through a Slump contains the best of the best—Top Ten (and more) lists on how to sell in a recessionary market from well-known sales experts like [Jill Konrath](#), [Charles Green](#), and [Dave Stein](#). Each list is a mixture of practical-tactical tips and experience-based wisdom. The answers you're looking for are here.

On the next page, take a quick scan to find your industry and your blogger/expert; then savor the ideas.

But that's not all. Come back to the [index](#) and scan the other industries' material. Not all great ideas are industry-unique. If you're in the media, you might be surprised at the nuggets you can pick up reading advice to lawyers or the public sector.

In any case, enjoy. There are links, of course, to any writer you might want to explore further.

And thanks for reading.

THE CUSTOMER COLLECTIVE

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RETAIL

Selling for Retailers

BY SKIP ANDERSON

Retailers face incredible challenges during this recession and need to make real changes in order to survive and prosper.

Forget the old "I refuse to participate in this recession" mindset. It's a recession, and you're in it—and how you proceed will determine how you will fare.

1. **Managers, get on the sales floor**—with your employees and your customers. Interact with them in a very human way to leverage those relationships. Delegate the busy-work to someone else, and instead be visible, helpful, and—most of all—*connected*.
2. **Don't wait for business to get back to where it used to be.** The current recession is changing the retailing industry forever. Be forward-looking and proactive, not backward-looking and reactive. Those who learn the new rules of retailing will survive the current recession and become the retailing champions of the post-recession economy.
3. **Hold a "talk to our customers" event.** If you have customers who are loyal fans that rave about your products, leverage those relationships by inviting them to act as pseudo-salespeople on a Saturday morning. You'll get PR juice out of the event. Make your customer-sellers easily identifiable to create buzz in your store.

Nobody can sing the praises of that high-end barbecue grill like the customer who has been using it and loving it for the last six months.

4. **Distribute a daily insider sheet to your browsers.** When your salesperson is absolutely unable to get a shopper engaged in a conversation and the shopper insists she just wants to browse, have the salesperson hand her a small "insider sheet," which could feature a blurb about a particular product, a customer, a salesperson, or an unadvertised promo item. But keep it brief.
5. **On busy days, place a manager outside your store** to greet incoming customers and, more importantly, to ask exiting shoppers if there was anything they couldn't find or didn't get resolved during their visit. Some will tell you about their bad experiences or frustrations, or even share needs they didn't communicate to one of your salespeople. You now have a chance to get those customers



RETAIL

Selling for Retailers

BY SKIP ANDERSON



Skip Anderson is an authority on consumer selling and the founder of Selling to Consumers Sales Training, as well as the creator of 3D Selling™, a selling paradigm designed to unleash the buying potential of every prospect. Skip hosts a podcast, edits newsletters, and writes a popular blog,

all under the Selling to Consumers rubric. He is the founder of the Sales Bloggers Union, an international group with a global perspective.

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back into your store instead of allowing them to move on to your competitor.

6. **Hire sales people to sell, not customer service people.** It's high time that the retail pendulum swing back to an environment of professional salesmanship. Anybody can straighten stacks of sweaters, but not everyone can turn a \$500 sale into a \$5,000 sale.
7. **Create an invitation-only promo where your customers determine the invitation list.** Tell your best customers that this promo will be for only the customers' friends and family, and ask for names and addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers of their friends and family. Be sure the promotion provides enough benefit that your customers will willingly help you invite people to your event.
8. **Ask your front-end salespeople where your company is missing opportunities at the store level.**
9. **New and different sales training can help you weather this new and different selling environment.** Invite a different sales trainer to speak to your group to supplement the sales training you already have in place. Help your team ignite creativity, passion, and energy with some new perspectives and information.
10. **Teach your employees how to reach out to their personal and family networks and turn them into prospects and customers.** Many retail salespeople are notoriously poor networkers, yet perhaps dozens (or thousands) of potential customers exist just below the surface within your employees' formal and informal networks.

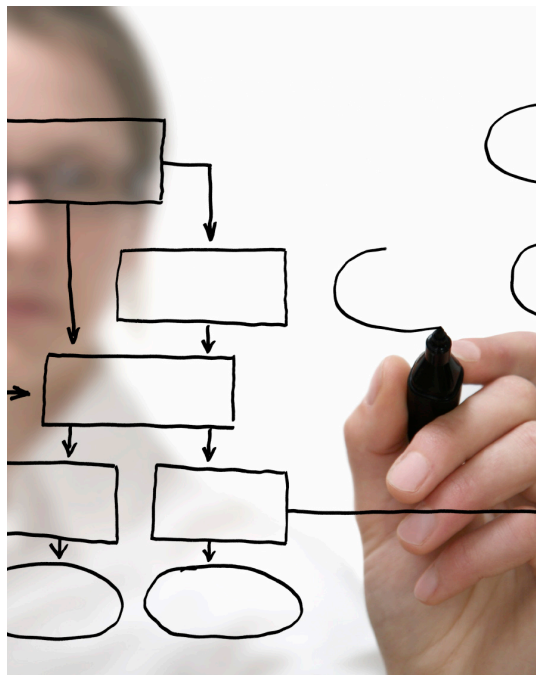


PUBLIC SECTOR

Selling to Public Sector Clients

BY MIKE KUJAWSKI

Mike Kujawski offers 12 tips for selling to public sector clients:



1. **Be open to change.** If the terms “Web 2.0” and “social media” are alien to you, stop what you’re doing and read up on them before you embarrass yourself in front of a client. We now live in an era where the marketing landscape has been turned completely upside down. Two-way engagement and dialogue rule this new world, as opposed to one-way communication. The technological barriers that have restricted the “one-to-many” model of communication are no longer present. Now anyone, within seconds, can start a blog, post a video, write a review, join a social network, or start a podcast and have their content viewed or heard by millions at virtually no cost.
2. **Develop a personal marketing strategy.** All too often the “shoemaker’s kids have no shoes” effect takes place in consulting firms. Whether you are independent or not, you should have a marketing strategy for yourself. All the elements of the marketing process (Objectives, Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning and Product, Price, Place, Promotion) need to be considered. Everything should be measured based on your objectives and continually adjusted as necessary. Above all, you should be able to immediately answer the client question: Why should I hire you over competitor X? Are you more “strategy”-focused? Do you offer a more competitive per diem? Do you have 24/7 availability? Do you have 30 years of experience in your field?
3. **Crowdsource your work!** Learn how to leverage the wisdom of the crowd through the online social collaboration that is currently occurring on a global scale. Here are some ideas for you:
 - Free primary research (e.g., asking your network a question on [Twitter](#), using [Survey Monkey](#), or using the [LinkedIn](#) “Questions” feature)
 - Free access to previously invisible contacts in your network (using [LinkedIn](#))
 - Free presentation ideas to save you time (e.g., [SlideShare](#))
 - Free consultant reports (e.g., [Scribd](#))



PUBLIC SECTOR

Selling to Public Sector Clients

BY MIKE KUJAWSKI

The more valuable and relevant content you produce, the more visible your online brand and the more perceived authority you have.

- 4. Learn to give content away for free.** This is perhaps one of the toughest concepts for many consultants to grasp, and yet it is essential for long-term success. The more valuable and relevant the content you produce, the more visible your online brand and the more perceived authority you have. This, in turn, leads to more clients. In return for your efforts, you will always get 10 times the value of what you put in.
- 5. Assume that the whole world will see any digital content that you produce.** Few people realize that all of their uploaded photos, videos, text messages, forum comments, news mentions, etc., will be available on the Internet forever. Even deleted posts and private e-mails can be accessed by someone, somewhere, at any time. Remember this the next time you e-mail somebody about how annoying your client is being. It can come back to haunt you years down the road.
- 6. Understand the phrase: “You are whoever Google says you are.”** Marketers must realize they simply cannot control organizational and/or brand messaging like they used to. People now “Google” information. You can spend all the time you want crafting the perfect message for your website or brochure, but at the end of the day people will click on one of those top 10 organic search results deemed most relevant to their search query. (You can use [“Google Insights for Search”](#) to find out what these are.) Monitor and interject, where appropriate. If someone is complaining about your service, find out why. If someone is praising you, thank him or her!
- 7. Be your own biggest critic.** Before presenting a deliverable, you should be able to clearly define the pros and cons of each recommendation you are making. Learn to play the devil’s advocate, and be able to mitigate every possible risk your client will likely identify.
- 8. Create short, concise, deliverables.** The era of the 100-page report is dead. True skill lies in picking out the key elements and devising a concrete action plan based on all the prior strategic work that you undertook. Throw the details in the appendix if you absolutely have to include them.



PUBLIC SECTOR

Selling to Public Sector Clients

BY MIKE KUJAWSKI



Mike Kujawski is a marketing and social media strategist interested primarily in helping public sector and nonprofit organizations find ways to achieve their objectives more efficiently and effectively. He helped launch the Centre of Excellence for Public Sector Marketing, where he

now leads the development of major national, provincial, and municipal public sector and nonprofit client marketing strategies. Mike's specific niche is strategic engagement through social media and the study of the broader cultural/anthropological changes being brought about by these channels.

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- 9. Avoid the use of bullets in presentations** (“death by PowerPoint”). I am often shocked that many people in the marketing industry still don't know how to create engaging presentations. Learn how to find and use carefully selected stock photos to illustrate a point. This stimulates both the left and right hemispheres of participants' brains. Don't believe me? Read “[Presentation Zen](#)” by Garr Reynolds or “[Slideology](#)” by Nancy Duarte as a start. On another note, never use the exact same presentation for different clients. Even if it's just a few name changes, statistical updates, or more relevant screenshots, fine-tuning goes a long way and is always appreciated by the client.
- 10. Meet with past clients every quarter for lunch.** The intent here is not to explicitly sell more services, but rather to touch base and see how their initiative is coming along. Build a long-lasting relationship. Even when you know that more services will not be possible, meet with them. Word of mouth from happy former clients goes a long way, especially in the era of social media. Stay “top of mind” with your clients.
- 11. Always be learning.** In this industry, it is easy to fall behind. If you don't have the time to get fully immersed in all the new channels yourself, then get others to find relevant information for you! You can identify the top 10 bloggers within your niche and subscribe to their posts (use an rss reader). Do the same for microblogs (i.e., [Twitter](#)) to track instant conversations. Between these two, you will see people debating, identifying new trends, recommending books, talking about upcoming conferences, etc., all of which will make it easy for you to stay in the loop with minimal effort (i.e., you will always know if something significant is happening or about to occur in your industry).

12. Love what you do.



INSURANCE

Selling for Insurance Agents

BY MIKE WISE

Mike Wise offers 10 tips for selling for insurance agents:



Mike Wise is Vice President, Insurance Technologies, for IdeaStar Inc, where he leads e-commerce efforts in the insurance industry, primarily the health and life sectors. With more than 20 years in technology and sales in three different industries, his

experience in e-commerce projects is deep and wide. A frequent speaker, panelist, and Webinar presenter, Mike's specialty is translating complex Web concepts into practical strategies and tactics.

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- 1. Assess the prospect's channel-of-choice:** face-to-face, phone (home or cell?), e-mail, Web-chat, virtual, social network, text. Be comfortable and understand the etiquette of all media.
- 2. Assess and continuously improve your writing skills.** Take a typing course. Pursue blogging or other forms of creative writing—anything to help with speed and effectiveness of your written communications.
- 3. Network continuously, in-person and on-line.** Word-of-mouth referrals will get you in front of the right person at the right time.
- 4. What is your message?** Understand what your audience wants. Do they want to see proof sources? Do they want to become a mini-subject matter expert? Or do they want you to be on call whenever a question comes up?
- 5. Understand referrals.** Why do your clients refer you? Knowledge about insurance? Good guy? Ethics and trust? Personal relationship? Something else? Cultivate your hard-core fans into steady streams of referrals.
- 6. Develop a professional blog.** Let it be your main website—something simple like john-doe.com or something clever like bestlifeinsurance.com. Either way, it's all about you and what you know and how much you care about helping people. And it's interactive. Let it be your prospecting workhorse.
- 7. Develop a Web storefront.** This is what your blog points to. Again, remember channel-of-choice. You need a website where prospects can run quotes, see brochures, use needs calculators, see news about you, etc.
- 8. Use automated tools** (e.g., auto-responders) to work leads at the top of the funnel and to stay in touch with and cross-sell existing clients.
- 9. Add value within your community or sphere of influence.** Be the go-to person. What are your talents outside of work? How can those talents be used to help others with no expectation or repayment? They will remember you're the insurance expert along the way.
- 10. And of course, understand your product inside and out.**



Selling for Lawyers

BY MATT HOMANN

Matt Homann offers 10 tips for selling for lawyers:



Matt Homann is a lawyer, mediator, blogger, and entrepreneur – and an innovator in ways to change the practice of law to benefit both lawyers and clients. Founder of LexThink LLC, Matt advises lawyers on billing strategies, creative marketing techniques, proven customer-service principles, and the application of cutting-edge ideas from other industries and professions.

techniques, proven customer-service principles, and the application of cutting-edge ideas from other industries and professions.

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BONUS:

Ask your clients what they buy from you. If it isn't time, stop selling it!

1. **It costs less to delight a client than it does to frustrate him.** You pay to delight them once, but you pay for frustrating them forever.
2. **You'll never be passionate about selling yourself until you start searching for clients you'll be passionate about serving.** Remember, a great client is one for whom you'd work for free, but one who'd never ask you to.
3. **The most effective way to get new clients is to impress old ones.** Measure the happiness of your existing clients with the same diligence you measure your time, so you can work less on developing new business and more on deserving it.
4. **When meeting a potential client, don't sell your competence, sell your compassion.** They must know you care about them before they'll care about you.
5. **Recognize that while it is usually easier to ask for new business from prospective clients** than it is to ask for more business from current ones, it is rarely more profitable.
6. **The most compelling thing you can sell to a prospective client is more sleep.** Ask what problems keep them up at night, and build your business around solving them.
7. **There are (at least) 10 things your clients wish you'd do differently,** and I bet you don't know what they are. Innovation begins with conversation. Engage your clients so they'll keep engaging you.
8. **If your clients can go months without hearing from you, they can go forever without recommending you.** To lawyers, indifference and incompetence are two different things. To clients, they are one and the same.
9. **Never assume your current clients know all you can do for them.** Never believe your former clients remember all you did for them. Reach out to both and remind them. New business will follow.
10. **The single best sales strategy in the world** is to find your best clients and ask them, "How do I get more clients like you?"



HEALTH

Selling to Buyers of Health Care Products

BY ANNEKE SELEY

Anneke Seley offers 10 tips for selling to buyers of health care products:

With collaboration, you'll not only see better results – you'll also establish a more harmonious relationship that is ultimately better for your customers.

1. **Find out what it's like to be in your customers' shoes.** Ask questions about *their* business and financial targets. If you are selling to doctors or other health care providers, for example, make this inquiry: "What are you trying to accomplish in your medical practice this year?"
2. **Align your marketing strategy and programs with sales goals, both long-term and short-term.** Marketing and sales people that make strategic decisions and create programs together and have shared success metrics and compensation have a greater likelihood of succeeding. Do your sales and marketing organizations have different definitions for your target audience or the characteristics of a qualified sales opportunity (or the volume required to meet quota)? With collaboration, you'll not only see better results – you'll also establish a more harmonious relationship that is ultimately better for your customers.
3. **Help your customers win.** Design marketing and sales materials that help your buyers achieve *their* business goals (not yours). When selling to medical practices, for example, provide tools to help them increase their revenues and better serve their patients.
4. **Don't assume that what worked in the past is still effective.** Traditional, expensive sales and marketing approaches are often ineffective and inefficient for your customers as well as for your company. Can you identify areas to lower sales and marketing costs, such as replacing expensive seminars with online events?
5. **Try engaging prospects by phone and the Web.** Just because you've always met your buyers face-to-face and bought them lunch when they are first beginning the buying process, doesn't mean that that's productive. There are many examples of health care buyers who prefer the convenience of a self-service approach or a quick phone consultation to a lengthy meeting. Some added benefits: It's more cost-effective for you and could give you a substantial competitive advantage.



HEALTH

Selling to Buyers of Health Care Products

BY ANNEKE SELEY



Anneke Seley is the CEO and founder of Phone Works LLC, a sales strategy and implementation consultancy that has helped more than 300 large and small businesses build and restructure sales teams to achieve predictable, measurable, and sustainable

sales growth using Sales 2.0 principles. Phone Works specializes in helping companies incorporate phone and Web selling into their sales models. Anneke was the 12th employee at Oracle and the designer of OracleDirect, the company's revolutionary inside sales operation.

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6. **Try strengthening customer relationships by phone and Web.** It's a lower-cost way to increase communication and keep customers engaged without travel and typically leads to increased revenue and referral business. It's also better for the environment.
7. **Measure your sales process.** Research shows that the most successful sales organizations have the most consistent, yet flexible, use of process in addition to the strongest relationships with customers. A measurable sales process makes your forecasts and sales results more predictable, which management appreciates. Plus, it's good for your company's valuation and stock price.
8. **Strengthen your online presence.** More and more buyers across industries are educating themselves before making purchase decisions without engaging with a salesperson. They are watching [YouTube](#), joining communities, and finding websites via online search. Is your company tracking your customers' use of new media and using innovative online tools to provide value and build trust?
9. **Collaborate with other salespeople.** Your own sales team members – and even those in other companies or industries – are great sources of information about successful selling. Share best practices and learn what is resonating with today's customers.
10. **Constantly try new things.** Are your buyers on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)? How do they prefer to communicate? What are they telling you about themselves in social media that could lead to a conversation and the beginning of a trusted bond? Many health care buyers may not be there yet, but mainstream trends have a way of entering the world of business communications. (Think e-mail and the Internet.) Could you create a competitive advantage by being there first?



Selling for Accountants & Consultants

BY CHARLES H. GREEN

Charles Green offers 10 tips for selling for accountants and consultants:



1. **Surprise your clients with something for free, even in tax season, when everyone thinks you're busy**—say, a 2-to-3 hour clinic for your clients' kids who are now college graduates on how to do their own taxes.
2. **Hold topical, lunchtime, 60-minute phone calls for five of your medium-sized clients' treasurers on recession-relevant topics.** You run the logistics and line up the topics. And do it when they're hurting, even if you're busy with tax season.
3. **If you're a professional services firm with underemployed staff, offer to swap them for a client's similarly underemployed staff.** Both will gain valuable perspective and experience without being taken off critical work. The employees involved will feel grateful and challenged. And the linkages between the firms will be strengthened—none of which would happen easily in good economic times.
4. **In tough times, shift your business development efforts away from new client acquisition to existing client development.** Not only is current-client bizdev always more efficient, but this is the time to show the love. This is not a recession; this is the bottom half of a natural business cycle. This is the time you earn the loyalty that clients will remember later.
5. **Buy two tickets now for a major cultural or athletic event** scheduled for mid- to late 2010. Send one of the tickets to a highly favored customer or client, with a note saying: "We will get through all this, together, and I look forward to celebrating with you once we do. Keep this ticket in a safe place, because mine is the seat next to yours."
6. **Offer to defer payment** if, in the middle of an important assignment, a key client tells you he can't afford for you to finish the work. Talk it over with him and offer to wait until he can pay. That could be a long time. But if the relationship is good, this generous offer creates trust and greatly reduces the risk of nonpayment. And the cost of financing these days is



Selling for Accountants & Consultants

BY CHARLES H. GREEN



Charles H. Green is a speaker, executive educator, and author on trust-based relationships and trust-based selling in complex businesses. As founder and CEO of Trusted Advisor Associates, he has spoken about, consulted on, and conducted seminars about

trusted relationships in business for a wide and global range of industries and functions. With an MBA from Harvard, he was previously vice president of strategic planning at Gemini Consulting. His articles have appeared in Harvard Business Review and American Lawyer, among other publications.

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very low. It doesn't cost much to be generous, and it lowers credit risk by creating trust and reciprocity. A little faith and courage can do wonders for a relationship!

It's a naked world...
←

7. **It's a naked world—you really can't hide anything anymore** thanks to e-mails, meetings at Starbucks, and cell phone records. You may be practicing transparency unintentionally. But “oops” moments make you look deceitful, especially in sales. So, don't do that. Don't say or write anything you wouldn't mind everyone reading in the newspaper. Honesty and lack of spin in sales in downturns is so refreshingly counter-intuitive that your sales will increase.
8. **Once you develop your plans for addressing the recession, share your information and concerns with key customers**, including how your plans could affect the relationship. This can create an intense, positive discussion.
9. **Do NOT tell your business development people to close existing client deals sooner**—just think how you feel when a vendor is pressuring you for more sales in a downturn. Instead, re-deploy resources from new client acquisition so you can over-invest in a better job of selling, absorbing longer time frames as necessary.
10. **There are no free lunches.** Of course you have to trim back. But trim back on second-tier clients and new business development. This is the time you make the case for loyalty. This is the time to earn trust by investing selectively in key clients. This is when you buy low, so you can reap the benefits of selling high later.

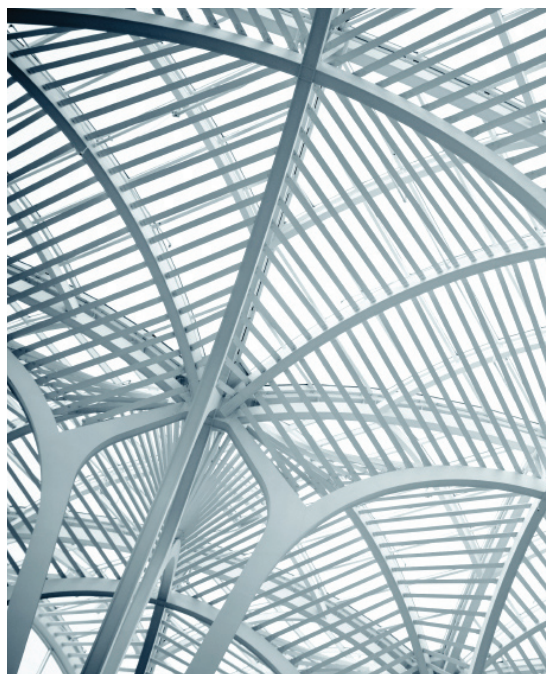


TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Selling into Telecommunications Markets

BY JOHN CADDELL

John Caddell offers 10 tips for selling into telecommunications markets:



- 1. (Financial) Engineer It!** In telecom, capital expenditures are easy targets for the budget-cutters. If you've sold your product as a high-upfront-cost item, consider moving to a lease/rental or SaaS model.
- 2. Go after the ones that got away.** The recession has taken its toll on your competitors, too. Go back through recent losses and see if you can get back in the game at the expense of a weakened competitor.
- 3. Get more out of customers' existing processes.** The uncertainty of the times means that most telecom companies have no stomach for large-scale or disruptive change (there are exceptions—see below). If your product helps them improve productivity without disturbing their organizations or systems, you'll have a market for it.
- 4. Help companies reinvent themselves.** Not every company can maintain the status quo. Some are in danger and

desperately need to change how they do business. In those cases, a powerful (though risky) strategy is to partner with them on a radical change—like Ericsson recently did by outsourcing Sprint's network management.

- 5. Make use of "stranded assets."** Telecom companies have invested tens of billions of dollars in their networks. Some of that equipment is not operating at full value. Help companies take advantage of these underused assets, and they'll consider buying your services.

Job one for telecom companies is holding onto customers.

- 6. Help them improve the end-customer experience.** Job one for telecom companies is holding onto customers.



TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Selling into Telecommunications Markets

BY JOHN CADDELL



John Caddell, founder and principal of Caddell Insight Group, combines his experience in the business world with his background in the creative arts to deliver highly creative solutions to the issues of attracting and retaining customers, innovation

management, and new product development for companies worldwide. For more than 20 years, he worked in the telecom industry, developing, marketing, and implementing complex IT solutions. He's a speaker, trade press author, and blogger, whose "Customers Are Talking" blog is syndicated in Pennlive.com.

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Competitors are desperate to poach them and customers are open to change. Ensure your products help your telecom clients make their customers' lives easier.

7. Understand (deeply) why your customers use you. Apart from any economic value you bring, there are deeper, emotional values at work in your best customer relationships—perhaps you are more responsive, or reliable, or you are easy to do business with. Make sure you know what those values are—they're the key to unlocking deals with new customers.

8. Seek out the white space. Is your sales strategy to be the 25th vendor in line outside the CIO's office? Another approach is to help out new initiatives in the business units, for which consolidation has meant less attention and prioritization from internal groups, with a resulting openness to vendor solutions, especially if they're attractively priced.

9. Remove geographic blinders.

If you've focused on the mature markets of the US and Europe, consider the growing (though challenging) markets of Africa and the Middle East.

Make sure you know what those values are—they're the key to unlocking deals with new customers.

10. Try what worked before. You've probably developed sales techniques that worked once or twice in the past. Perhaps you got busy and forgot about them. This is the time to dust off those proven approaches and try them again.



TECHNOLOGY CONSULTANTS, VARS

Selling Technology

BY DAVE STEIN

Dave Stein offers 10 tips for selling technology:



1. **Don't sell technology, sell business improvement.** Your customers' budget holders rarely care about the features of your technology. Right now they want to know one thing: what you can do to get them through this economic situation. Tell them.
2. **Understand that risk is a big concern to your customers.** They are very concerned about risk—their companies, their jobs, their projects, your product, and making a mistake. Understand, anticipate, and mitigate their concerns. Don't wait for them to ask. Provide references, assurances, proof statements, examples, try-and-buys—whatever it takes.
3. **If you have a truly unique product, demo early.** If not, demo late. Don't foster the product bake-off approach by asking your customers to compare your product to the competition's. On the other hand, if you have a unique product, grabbing the prospect's mind-share early can pay off.
4. **Qualify some more.** In many companies, IT budgets are frozen. Since many salespeople tend to under-qualify, I'll ask you this: Are you sure your product is seen as critical by your customer? If it isn't, and you can't reasonably position it that way, consider spending less time on that one and more on another opportunity.
5. **Execute better than your competition.** There are fewer deals out there. You need to win more of them. Plan and precisely execute every phone call, demo, presentation, and reference visit so you are measurably better than your competition.
6. **Leverage the trend: IT people are becoming more business-oriented.** There is increasing pressure on IT management to be more attuned to their companies' business goals and

Are you sure your product is seen as critical by your customer?



Selling Technology

BY DAVE STEIN



Dave Stein is CEO and founder of ES Research Group Inc. (ESR), which provides independent advice about sales training programs, sales performance improvement tools and approaches, plus evaluations and comparisons of the companies that offer them. Dave

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strategies. Coach your IT sponsors on the business impact of your solutions so they can be better equipped in positioning them to their superiors and business manager counterparts.

7. **Don't get distracted by all this new technology:** Sales 2.0, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#). There are plenty of new applications out there, and some can be very useful in helping to find and win new customers. But right now reps that are winning B2B deals are focused on what has been proven to work—following a buyer-centric sales process—without shortcuts, silver bullets, or the approach *du jour*.
8. **Focus on what and how your customers want to buy.** Collaboration continues to be an effective sales approach. If your customer wants to phase in your product, or he wants only one module instead of the suite, don't fight it. Help him buy what he wants to buy now. If it gets the job done, he'll buy the rest later.
9. **Leverage your sales engineers.** Many salespeople don't understand the impact sales engineers can have. Include them in planning sessions. Keep them informed. Coach them on your strategy and the politics in the account. Make them a critical part of your overall plan.
10. **Tune up your competitive selling skills.** As your competitors get more desperate, they'll try anything to win. Anticipate what they will do, when they will do it, and with whom in your customer's organization. Only then can you protect your plan, your relationships, and your value proposition from attack.

*Focus on what
and how your
customers want
to buy.*



SERVICES

Selling in Service Businesses

BY JILL KONRATH

Jill Konrath offers 11 tips for selling in service businesses:



1. **Adopt your customers' objectives as your own.** Invest time getting the straight scoop on their key performance indicators, strategic imperatives, and top priorities. Ask yourself, "How can I help my customer achieve these objectives?" Continually look for any ideas that could have an impact.
2. **Make sure every single contact is valuable – for your customer.** Would your customer pay you \$500 for every meeting? If not, you're vulnerable. Unless customers think their time with you is well spent, there's a high likelihood they could disappear into a black hole.
3. **Challenge your customer's thinking.** Ask provocative questions, bring fresh insights from outside the industry, offer a different perspective, and address assumptions or business directives that don't quite make sense.
4. **Slow the decision process down.** Harried customers, racing to get things done, want "the facts" as fast as you can deliver them. But too much gets missed without a full understanding. Help them understand why multiple conversations help them make better choices.
5. **Bring your customers a way to spend less money with your company.** While this may hurt you financially at the onset, the trust it engenders pays for itself many times over. And, it's better for you to bring up this topic than for your customer to hear about it from competitors.
6. **Frame everything from your customer's perspective.** Phone calls, meetings, presentations, and proposals are always about how you can help your customer achieve his or her objectives. Remember, your offering is simply a tool; it's not what she wants.

Challenge your customer's thinking... bring fresh insights



SERVICES

Selling in Services Businesses

BY JILL KONRATH



Jill Konrath, author of *Selling to Big Companies*—which was selected as a Fortune “must read”—helps sellers crack open corporate accounts, shorten their sales cycles, and win big contracts. She’s a frequent speaker/trainer at national sales meetings and industry events.

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Detach from the outcome. Sales is not all about closing.

- 7. Update customers on what their colleagues are doing.** Corporate decision makers, with their nose to the grindstone, often have no idea what others in the organization are doing. Bring them ideas from their peers in different divisions. Set up meetings to share best practices. Be the network.
- 8. Respect their time; it’s their most precious commodity.** The days of “winging it” are past. Customers today expect you to research their companies prior to meeting, come in with an agenda, ask insightful questions, and lead the conversation.
- 9. Help customers understand and navigate the internal barriers to changes.** The complexity of today’s solutions, combined with the challenge of getting internal buy-in and support, can be overwhelming for people who make these decisions once every few years. Give them guidance.
- 10. Use changing priorities to continually bring value.** Keep up-to-date on what’s happening in your customer’s organization, and always be asking: “What ramifications does this have for his business? How can our products/services make a positive impact?” Bring your ideas to your customer.
- 11. Detach from the outcome.** Sales is not all about closing. If that’s your focus, your customers can smell it a mile away. Instead, focus on whether the decision makes sense for your prospect—and be willing to walk from the opportunity if it doesn’t.



MEDIA

Selling Media

BY ANNE MILLER

Anne Miller offers 10 tips for selling media:



Anne Miller is an author, speaker, and seminar leader whose specialty is the art and science of communicating complex messages to key constituencies for the purpose of professional selling and presentations. Clients include Meredith Corp., Citigroup, Yahoo!, Dow

Jones, The Blackstone Group, and the UN. She writes two newsletters, "The Metaphor Minute" and "Make What You Say, Pay." Her books include *Metaphorically Selling and Presentation Jazz!* Anne is an associate with Alan Krinsky Associates and with EQmentor.

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For high-end products, establish the value of a customer.

- 1. Stay current on position changes.** Read the trades and online sites. When people move, that can be an opportunity for you to add business elsewhere or an excuse to call on their replacement.
- 2. Know your advertiser's business issues:** objectives, challenges, current solutions.
- 3. Ask how your advertiser sees himself in his competitive set.** The answer can give you added insight as to why he should advertise with you.
- 4. For high-end products, establish the value of a customer.** For example, if I buy three Calvin Klein suits a year at \$900 each, and two of my friends love my suits and become customers, too, with each of them ultimately buying three suits a year—then one customer is worth \$8,100 a year. Furthermore, if a customer tends to be a loyal customer for three years, then the true value of one customer is \$24,300. This knowledge helps you defend the advertising value of your publication or website.
- 5. Kill the canned general presentations.** Tailor every presentation to each advertiser's needs and situation.
- 6. Integration is key.** What other ways can you help an advertiser reach his market? Print, online, mobile, etc.?
- 7. Be an intelligence resource to your advertisers.** They are desperate for information that can help them market to their customers. Show them any latest studies, relevant articles, and trend reports you see.
- 8. Don't get stuck calling on your friends or trapped at one level.** Meet the planners, but also the account managers, media directors, etc.
- 9. It's the client's money.** Meet with the client's key players. Bring managers, research people, and marketing pros to show you're really working to help solve their problems.
- 10. Talk at the contextual level of the person you are seeing:** profits and market share to senior executives and marketers, efficiencies and reach to media planners.



MANUFACTURING

Selling to Manufacturers

BY DAVE BROCK

Yes, the manufacturing sector has been hit hard. Plants are closing. Companies are looking to get rid of excess capacity. No one's buying. How do we find ways of creating revenue in this sector?

Dave Brock serves up 11 tips to help you make that sale:

There are a couple of ways we can look at it. You can sell products, services, or solutions to help manufacturers design, develop, manufacture, and support the products they develop. Or you can sell components, parts, or subassemblies that are embedded into the products the manufacturer builds. Let's look at both.

- 1. If you normally turn right when walking through your customer's front door, on your next visit turn left.** Too often we call on the same old people all the time. Explore your customer, call on new people, new functions, new divisions. If you last sold to the manufacturing and production lines, this time go to development and engineering. Meet them and see if you can help them solve problems. If you normally deal with a certain engineering group, call on the engineers one cubicle over. You may find new opportunities.
- 2. Look upstream and downstream in the process flow.** If you supply products or services to support the manufacturing (or engineering design/development) processes, look at how you fit into the process. Can you extend your reach upstream or downstream to make the process more efficient and better integrated? If you supply component parts, look at the parts you connect to. (Think the hip bone connected to the thigh bone, the thigh bone connected to....) Can you supply those components or even a subassembly? Can you increase your part count in each product?
- 3. Look at key/hot issues the industry faces,** and show your customer how your products and services address those issues. For example, if you can help make peanut products safe, you're gold! Are there safety, environmental, regulatory, or compliance issues your customer must address that you can solve? Can you help with sustainability or energy issues?



MANUFACTURING

Selling to Manufacturers

BY DAVE BROCK

*I believe opportunities
abound in the
manufacturing segment.*

*Those that take
advantage and dig
deep will find those
opportunities and
succeed!*

- 4. Leverage plant consolidation and downsizing to your advantage**—and to help the customer. In shutting down plants, customers have to consolidate operations into fewer facilities. This creates a whole raft of nightmarish problems for manufacturers. How do they handle the logistics? How do they make their lines more flexible? How do they transition products? How do they do better planning/forecasting for the combined workloads? How do they better manage productivity, quality, and efficiency in a smaller number of plants that are doing more. This is a terrific opportunity if you can solve those problems.
- 5. Make sure they are using your products and services as efficiently and effectively as possible.** Are they getting the most bang for the buck/euro/yuan? Audit the use of your products and services to see if they are operating at top efficiency. Look at the parts you supply: Can you suggest other parts that would be more effective or efficient? This is also a terrific opportunity to look at additional services you might provide (and charge for), and to educate your customers about how get the most out of your products and services by making them more knowledgeable, productive, and comfortable with your offerings. At the very least, when they start buying again, they will tend to buy what they know and trust.
- 6. Focus on supply-chain efficiency.** Can you wring out costs in the supply-chain/procurement processes? If you supply parts, can you take over more of the logistics management headaches? They probably have gotten very lean, and supply-chain management may be a big problem. If you supply equipment/systems/services, sometimes common tools used by suppliers help dramatically reduce costs and improve efficiency through the whole value-delivery chain.
- 7. Ask your best customers to introduce you to their most important suppliers.** If you have created great value and efficiency for your customers, it only serves them to



MANUFACTURING

Selling to Manufacturers

BY DAVE BROCK



Dave Brock is President and CEO of Partners in EXCELLENCE, a global consulting company focused on improving performance in sales, marketing, and business strategy. He has advised executives in the high-tech, industrial products, and professional

services fields, working with both large corporations and start-ups. Partners in EXCELLENCE has trained more than 100,000 sales professionals globally in how to outsell and outperform their competition. Dave is a board member of several companies and not-for-profits and has held executive positions with IBM, Tektronix, and Keithley Instruments.

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have suppliers that are achieving the same value and efficiency in their operations—it can reduce your customers' costs.

8. **Look at what is happening to your customers' customers.** Can you identify things that are happening that present opportunities for your customer to grow his business—which may drive demand for your offerings? Helping your customer grow his business is the surest way to grow yours.
 9. **Become best friends with the finance/controller functions in your customer.** Make certain you understand how they evaluate investments. Make certain you understand ROI/payback hurdles they apply in their analysis. Look at where they are trying to take cost out of operations or how they are trying to improve the financial position of the company. Make certain you converse in their language and lingo.
 10. **Focus on rich collaboration with your customer.** Become an integrated part of his team. If you sell parts, become part of his engineering and design teams to help design better products, thus reducing design time and costs. If you sell equipment/systems services, look at how you can establish a deeper relationship with the customer.
- I'm giving you 11 tips instead of 10 for two reasons:** First, I always try to give my customers more than they ask for. Second, prime numbers have a certain elegance—so I had to end this list on a prime number.
11. **Ask your customer how you can help, and listen to what he says.** Sometimes, that's all the help he needs, but no one ever paid attention.



THE CUSTOMER COLLECTIVE

Selling through a Slump

An Industry-by-Industry Playbook to
Help You Prepare for the Recovery

Yes, selling through a slump is tough. But you can use that adversity to your advantage, and turn it into opportunity.

Focus on the basics, whatever your field.

Be creative. Put yourself in your customer's shoes.

Most important: Be your customer's ally.

- Use new technology and Web 2.0 tools like Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook to keep on top of what customers are thinking and to stay connected.
- Use any tools you can to help your customers do their jobs better.

You will have their loyalty when the economy picks up.

To connect with the thought leaders who have shared their advice here, and for more valuable knowledge from these and other leading sales experts, be sure to join the conversation at [The Customer Collective](#).

Good luck, and happy selling!

