

The slow death of "old" selling continues

Are old fashioned sales techniques dead and buried? Probably, according to this fascinating article ["Death of the old-style salesman"](#) from earlier this year.

I thought it was a great read. It struck a chord with me and definitely reflected the changes I have witnessed during my 30 years in sales.

The theme of the article is to explore how sales techniques have had to change in the past few years and continue to do so. In short...

Out with the old, in with the new

I talk briefly about old style and new style selling in [my book](#). It's an ongoing process that's been influenced by increased all round awareness as the consumer markets have matured, legislation against dodgy sales techniques and of course the massive impact of social media and the internet in general. I'm sure there will have been other influences; those come to mind for now!



In the article, senior Sales and HR Directors of major Corporates demonstrate how their organisations have had to change the way they sold. It also explores how they identified and resolved the issues they faced in their companies. Without fail they recognised the need to move from the 'old way' to the 'new way' of selling...

The old way

- The sales person held 'the cards'. He/she presented the features and benefits and the buyer chose whether or not to believe them
- The image of the sales person being a fast talker who had their eyes purely on closing the deal
- The sales person would present their pitch one on one – a buyer/seller relationship in which no-one else was involved

- The sales person regarded themselves as here to win, here to beat the competition, here to get the best possible deal out of the customer
- The sales person was the one with the loud voice, who didn't care what people thought, who would pressure people into giving them the order

The new selling environment

- Sales people have much less opportunity to influence the buyer at the very start of the buying process
- The internet allows buyers to research potential purchases thoroughly before speaking to anyone from the company
- The sales person has to demonstrate exceptional levels of customer service
- Buyers go in to knowing as much as the sales person – they have much more chance of telling if the sales person is pulling a fast one
- The best sales people are those who are more interested in helping their customers than in getting the contract signed. Additionally they are able to communicate clearly, are committed to excellent customer service and can rapidly build rapport and trust
- Buyers knowing more means a more consultative approach is required and often with several different stakeholders – requiring different skills sets from the sales person compared to previous
- The sales person must bring more to the table. More knowledge about the prospect. More knowledge about the industry they operate in. More knowledge and potential ideas about the solution

Finally, here's a quote from the article...

"The key difference between the stereotypical sales person and the customer-focused communicator who is more successful today is mentality. These skills can be acquired and practised. What it really comes down to is mindset – how individuals view themselves, their jobs and the world"

It won't surprise you to know I loved that! So are you ready? Are your colleagues? Is your team? No-one denies the end objective – to get more sales, reach targets, live happily ever after.

It's the journey there that's changed.

Until next time...

Leigh

PS: Remember to check out next month's Trust Conference - Bob Geldof's going to be the Keynote Speaker! Click for details



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