



Whitepaper

Selling Skills and Behaviours Have To Change



Advance
Creators of SCOTSMAN®

Add Value To Stay Alive

The 2015 report, "Death of a (B2B) Salesman," by Andy Hoar, VP and Senior Analyst – Forrester Research, projected that 1 million sales reps, or 22% of the 4.5 million B2B sales agents in the United States, would lose their jobs by 2020.

Why?

B2B buyers prefer online facilities to educate themselves, research and buy relatively easily defined products and services.

Why?

It's quicker, easier and more efficient for them.

Why?

Power Shift from Seller to Buyer

Disruptive technologies have enabled the game to be changed. The power has shifted from seller to buyer. And there is often no need or desire for a salesperson to be involved in a purchase.



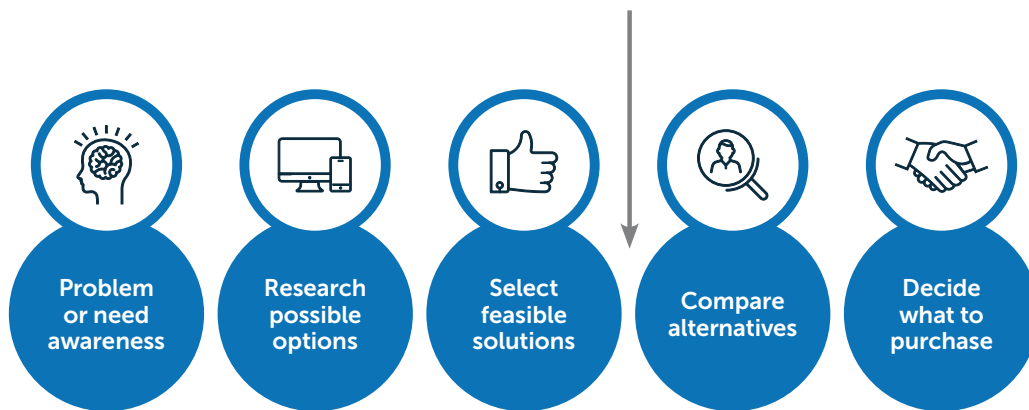
Most of the lost jobs, Hoar said, will be among sales reps involved in basic order processing, while sales reps that offer higher-end services to help buyers in large corporations order complex products and services will fare better.

"Order takers are the ones in trouble," he says. "It all comes down to value in the ordering process – whether sales reps add value or not."

The report also pointed out that "B2B buyer behavior has changed significantly in the past few years." Nearly 75% of B2B buyers said buying from an e-commerce site is more convenient than buying from a sales rep, and 93% said they prefer buying online when they've already decided what to buy, citing a survey of 236 B2B buyers Forrester conducted with Internet Retailer.

B2B buyers are now 60% or more through each purchase before they contact any sellers.

Salesperson's Involvement



We interpret this change not only as a dramatic reduction in the selling process cycle time, from the salesperson's point of view, but also that the buyer is over half way through the process before the seller gains access.

Buyers now have most of the information that sellers used to provide. Salespeople's influence and 'information leverage' has gone.

Or has it?

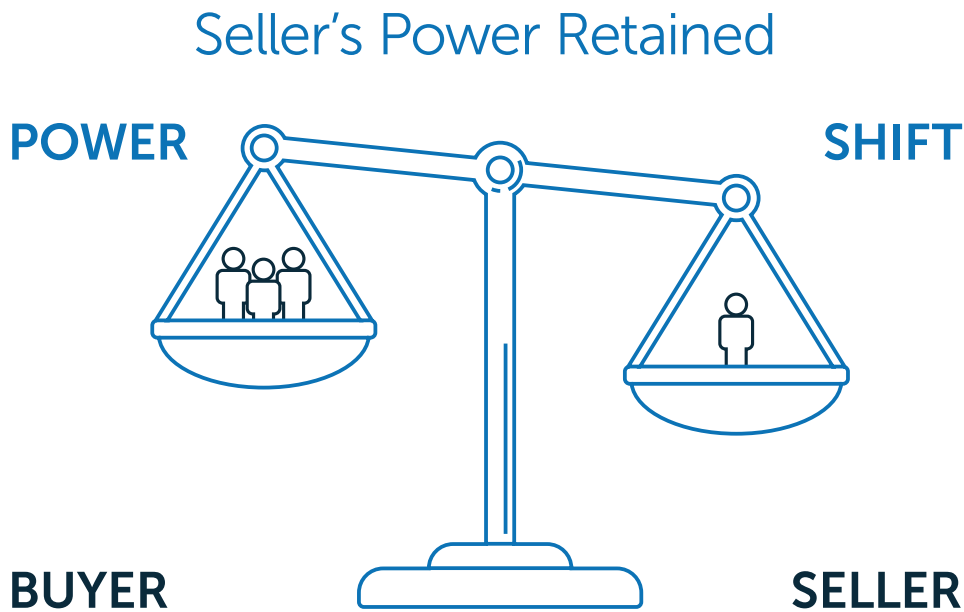
Here, the big issues for sellers are:

- Little time or opportunity to manage the sale
- Inability to influence the decision criteria
- Risk that the buyer may be focused on price rather than value.

Redressing the Balance

We have always advocated that the salesperson should be involved as early as possible. Consultative selling skills and behaviours, in particular, come into their own when the salesperson engages very early in the sales cycle, long before there is a decision making project. It is best when there is a business problem and the buyer knows that something has to be done but is not sure what. And indeed the salesperson believes that he or she can help, but is not sure how.

The opportunity to be involved this early is reserved exclusively for 'trusted advisors'. Only they can get involved prior to the start of the buying process. It's about managing politics, nurturing relationships and adding value. Technology poses little threat here – it's all about people.



Disruption has been created by the convergence and interconnecting of technology, and changing environments. This change has enabled new thinking, new business models and new ways of interacting with the buyer. Buyers now expect every advantage made possible by technological advances and the disruption they have created.

Selling organisations need to up their game and, where necessary, upgrade their skills, behaviours and technologies to make that possible.

Not everything has changed. Buyers still need help and advice on complex requirements. But, enabled by new technologies, buyers' expectations are higher. They want the best technology has to offer – at a competitive price – with the help of an informed trusted advisor, when needed.

In this white paper we explain how the skills and behaviours of salespeople need to be developed and applied in different sales models, in the context of today's and tomorrow's technology-driven disruption.

Selling Styles

Salespeople sometimes feel that 'selling is selling'. There is one set of skills that meets all requirements. That is certainly not the case. We would like to spell out some different sorts of selling, and the sales behaviours associated with them.

The justification for sales training courses often arises from these distinctions. The culture or product demands a different behaviour from the sales force. The approach made to the prospect changes for different products and different types of buyers. If an inappropriate style of selling is used the buyer will become very uncomfortable.

And given the disruptive impact of advances in technology, the one set of skills that do always apply are the skills that add value to the buying process. It's now almost a case of 'no value-add opportunity – no salesperson required'.

Let's look at some different buyer/seller scenarios, and the skills and behaviours required of the salespeople involved.

They Can See It

The first distinction to be made is that there are some sales where the prospect knows exactly what he or she wants to buy. The only question the prospect has is "Who do I buy it from?".

So there is a well-defined list of criteria and suppliers. Price is a major determinant. This type of sale is to a recognised need. From the salesperson's viewpoint, there is little or no need creation needed and all the qualification questions probably have answers....

What are the timescales? What's your budget? Who makes the decision? Who else are you asking to quote? The answers all exist.

Historically, the actual purchase was delegated to a more junior person. Today, with increasing frequency, the buyer simply orders online, because it's quicker and easier. The buyers are well educated in this scenario. They know the product or service's capabilities, and don't need much, if any, help from a salesperson.

They Can See It
 Recognised Need

We are selling to a 'recognised need' with clear criteria and a clear decision process. Price is important.

They Can't See It... (yet)

There is another form of selling. This might be defined as "They can't see it (yet)". This type of selling arises when we have a solution looking for a problem. The salesperson has a specific product or service that he or she wishes to promote. It might even be something that the prospect has never heard of. In this environment, we have a completely different process. Now our salespeople have to seek out prospects that are likely to be interested. They are promoting an idea, trying to create an interest, educating the prospect – adding value.

With this type of selling, none of the qualification questions have answers. What are the timescales? What's your budget? Who makes the decision? Who else are you asking to quote? There are no answers to these questions because there is no project as yet.

We are selling to an 'unrecognised need' with no criteria nor decision process to start with. The salesperson has to create and justify the project. It is a very different sort of selling. The salesperson has a valuable role to play.

They Can't See It (yet)
 Unrecognised Need

They Can See It
 Recognised Need

We came across a curious sales management problem directly from this analysis. A telecoms company sold network business. This business was very much a recognised need business, a commodity sale.

It was also a low profit sale, so they were trying very hard to create added value product and services. These types of service are almost inevitably unrecognised needs. Their ability to grow these high value offerings was critical to their success.

Their forecasting system asked the sales force all the key qualification questions. It then placed a weighting on the answers. If the total score was below a particular threshold the system told the salesperson "No Bid".

Management was initially blind to the implications of their system. Unrecognised need sales, the ones which were so critical to their success, all got low scores because there was no budget, no timescales, no clear decision process, etc.

The salesforce was being told by the system and encouraged by the management to quit the very sales they needed! The ones where, clearly, they could add value.

But Can We See It?

There is a further way we can look at selling. There are some sales where we know exactly what it is we are trying to sell. We Can See It. And there are others, where we are not exactly sure what it is we can sell.

There is an opportunity but some work is needed to find out what we will sell.

	We Can See It	We Can't See It (yet)
They Can't See It (yet) Unrecognised Need		
They Can See It Recognised Need		

It is interesting to look at these boxes one by one and see the different selling patterns, the role of the buyer, the seller and technology.

They Can See It, We Can See It

So, let us examine the bottom left box. They know exactly what they want to buy and it is a bog standard product or service that we offer.

Advance Sales Models

We Can See It

We Can't See It (yet)

They Can't See It (yet)
Unrecognised Need

They Can See It
Recognised Need

From the buyer's point of view, what is the process they would go through? Probably they will write up a list of criteria. They will go to the market place and find several suppliers. There may or may not be formal proposals. In the end, price will be a major determinant. This description is the typical price/criteria sales model.

Today, in more and more cases, the complete 'research > select a supplier > place the order process' is carried out by the buyer online, without the involvement of a salesperson. Forrester Research predicted that 33% of these order-taker jobs will go by the end of 2020.

Advance Sales Models

We Can See It

We Can't See It (yet)

They Can't See It (yet)
Unrecognised Need

They Can See It
Recognised Need

	Price Criteria	

They Can't See It, We Can See It

Now look at the top left hand box. We can see it, they can't.

Advance Sales Models

We Can See It

We Can't See It (yet)

They Can't See It (yet)
Unrecognised Need

They Can See It
Recognised Need

Price Criteria	

Does this situation happen? All the time. It happens whenever you have a solution looking for a problem. The salesperson has a specific offering and is trying to promote it to the prospect. So from the sales perspective what happens?

The sales job is to create the need, educate the customer, promote an idea, and generate a sales project with funding and a will to purchase. It is a very different process from

the Price/Criteria sale. Here, there is definitely a need and an important role for the salesperson, one that helps the buyer, and adds value to the process.

The main weapons in his or her armoury are reference stories, demonstrations, case studies, etc. Typically, in sales, we have done it before and are promoting this new idea. To give it a label, we call this box 'Application Replication'.

Advance Sales Models

We Can See It

We Can't See It (yet)

They Can't See It (yet)
Unrecognised Need

They Can See It
Recognised Need

Application Replication	
Price Criteria	

They Can't See It, We Can't See It

The next box is when neither side can see it?
Can this situation ever happen?

Advance Sales Models

They Can't See It (yet)
Unrecognised Need

They Can See It
Recognised Need

We Can See It

We Can't See It (yet)

Application Replication	
Price Criteria	

It arises all the time. It happens regularly when a new product is announced and the sales force doesn't really understand the application of the product in any depth. There are no case histories or happy customers yet.

Your honest answer is, "I'm sure I can, but I have no idea how just for the moment." How do you deal with this type of situation? You might set up a joint planning session, or a workshop or some sort of study. "Let me find out more about your needs."

It also happens when you have a very good relationship with your customer. Their world changes. Maybe, there is a change in legislation. Or they have to merge with another department. These changes affect your area. So, they come to you and ask, "Do you think you can help?"

This process is the typical consultative approach. The skills needed are those used to gain access to the key people and gain a 'Hunting Licence' to establish the scope of the project.

Advance Sales Models

They Can't See It (yet)
Unrecognised Need

They Can See It
Recognised Need

We Can See It

We Can't See It (yet)

Application Replication	Consultative Selling
Price Criteria	

It is very different from both Application Replication and Price Criteria selling.

The phrase 'Consultative Selling' is sometimes used as a panacea for all selling. It tends to be given a broader meaning. It is used as a label to describe the simple process of listening to the customer's needs before giving a solution.

Two Ways of Creating Needs

The punch line is that there are areas in sales where the prospect is not sure of their needs. The need has to be created by the salesperson. There are essentially two different mechanisms for creating need.

Application Replication (sometimes called Solution Selling) is used when we already know what we want to sell. Consultative Selling is used when we need to work out what we want to sell.

We have done a great deal of work with Professional Services companies. These distinctions can cause some confusion for them.

Of course, that is absolutely the correct thing to do. But the phrase 'Consultative Selling' is somewhat heavy weight for such a basic process. We prefer to reserve it for this specific type of selling – selling where the salesperson can add the greatest value. This is certainly a role that technology has not replaced, and is unlikely to for the foreseeable future.

There is a big difference between Consultative Selling and 'Selling Consultancy'. Consultancy can be sold by any of the techniques described. It could be in response to a tender, or it could be because the firm has some specific expertise to promote. Consultative Selling becomes a problem because it is instinctive for consultants to charge for workshops and joint planning.

The prospect rightly says, "You want to charge me for your time selling to me. No way!"

Professional Services organisations need to make a clear distinction between sales and marketing effort which should be free, and their proper day job for which they charge.

They Can See It, We Can't See It

The final box arises when your prospect comes to you with a clear view of a really complex requirement. "Do you think you can help?"

This situation will arise only if they have a close and trusted relationship with you.

If you can solve their problem, you are in a wonderful situation – the ideal situation – adding maximum value to both their organisation and yours.

Sometimes, however, their requirement is well outside the scope of your day to day products.

Advance Sales Models

They Can't See It (yet)
Unrecognised Need

They Can See It
Recognised Need

	We Can See It	We Can't See It (yet)
They Can't See It (yet) Unrecognised Need	Application Replication	Consultative Selling
They Can See It Recognised Need	Price Criteria	

You have several options. One might be to quit; qualifying out. "This type of business is not for us."

Or, you might get on to your product development and technical staff and try to push things around to make a fit.

Or, more typically these days, you find a partner or partners and build up some form of Consortium bid.

Once again, this form of selling is very different from Consultative, Application Replication and Price Criteria.

Advance Sales Models

They Can't See It (yet)
Unrecognised Need

They Can See It
Recognised Need

	We Can See It	We Can't See It (yet)
They Can't See It (yet) Unrecognised Need	Application Replication	Consultative Selling
They Can See It Recognised Need	Price Criteria	Consortium or Partnership

Different Interests

Sales managers are often too focused on the "We Can See It" column. This interest shows itself when managers continuously ask, "How much business will you be bringing in this week/month?" The manager is only interested in those projects that we can really see.

The rhetoric might be to do more creative selling but the measurement is different. And people do what their managers measure.

He or she is not interested in managing the sales process, just in getting the results.

Advance Sales Models

	We Can See It	We Can't See It (yet)
They Can't See It (yet) Unrecognised Need	Application Replication	Consultative Selling
They Can See It Recognised Need	Price Criteria	Consortium or Partnership

Buyers, on the other hand, are mostly interested in the bottom row. The bottom row represents the recognised needs.

Advance Sales Models

	We Can See It	We Can't See It (yet)
They Can't See It (yet) Unrecognised Need	Application Replication	Consultative Selling
They Can See It Recognised Need	Price Criteria	Consortium or Partnership

Where the buyer is not purchasing online, salespeople can just respond to these needs.

Or, they can go for the top row where there may be a recognised business issue but an unrecognised need for a particular product or service.

The motivation for many of the courses we have run over the years is that too many people are in the Price Criteria box and management want to push them up into the top row – to move from Need Responding to Need Creating; from dealing with recognised needs to more selling to unrecognised needs. This is more important than ever to sales communities and companies today, because if they stay in that box there is a 33% chance their job will go, along with the opportunities to develop relationships, influence, upsell, cross-sell, etc.. In 1 in every 3 cases, online marketing will replace them. In this sales model, Marketing is increasingly the new Sales.

Recognised needs selling asks the prospect for his or her needs and then tries to address them. The salesperson's role has been (and still is) 'Deal Responder'. It is essentially reactive and is perfect for e-commerce.

Unrecognised needs selling is an attempt by the salesperson to add value by bringing something new to the sale. The salesperson's role is 'Deal Maker'. This part of the buying process usually cannot be handled online, and is where the vast majority of salespeople need to be today and tomorrow if they want to survive and thrive.

Advance Sales Models	We Can See It	We Can't See It (yet)
They Can't See It (yet)	Need Creating	
They Can See It	Need Responding	

Selling Styles - Recap

There are four fundamental types of buying/selling situations, requiring differing sets of sales skills and behaviours:

Application Replication Model (Solution Selling)

Buyers are looking for someone with the answers:

- Complex product/service, simple buying environment,
- The seller has done it before,
- Has solution looking for buyer's problem
- Sales role required: Solution provider

Price/Criteria Model

Buyers know what they want:

- Simple product/solution and buying environment,
- Simple/well defined decision-making process,
- Sales role required: Order-taker.

Consultative Selling Model

Those who are dealing with double complexity:

- Complex product/service, complex buying environment,
- Seller works with buyer (et al) to develop the solution,
- Sales role required: Consultant.

Consortium/Partnership Model

Buyers are dealing with multiple suppliers of a solution:

- Simple product/service, complex buying environment,
- Multiple sellers work together to propose the solution,
- Sales role required: Project Manager.

Advance Sales Models

We Can See It

We Can't See It (yet)

They Can't See It (yet)

They Can See It

	We Can See It	We Can't See It (yet)
They Can't See It (yet)	<p>Application Replication</p> <p>The promotion sale. The buyer is not sure of what is available so seeks education. Demonstrations, case studies and reference stories prove capability.</p>	<p>Consultative Selling</p> <p>The buyer is not sure of what is available so looks for someone who both understands and can work with them to create a solution.</p>
They Can See It	<p>Price/Criteria</p> <p>The buyer knows what he/she wants and seeks out the best deal</p> <p>Buying process carried out partially or fully online.</p>	<p>Consortium/Partnership</p> <p>The buyer knows what they want, the seller can't do the whole job so links with a consortium or partner to satisfy the buyer.</p>

Selling Skills, Behaviours and Supplier Relationships

As the level of the relationship with a supplier develops, the type of selling develops too, often starting with simple price/criteria,

then developing to consultative selling, and the salesperson's achievement of 'trusted advisor' status.

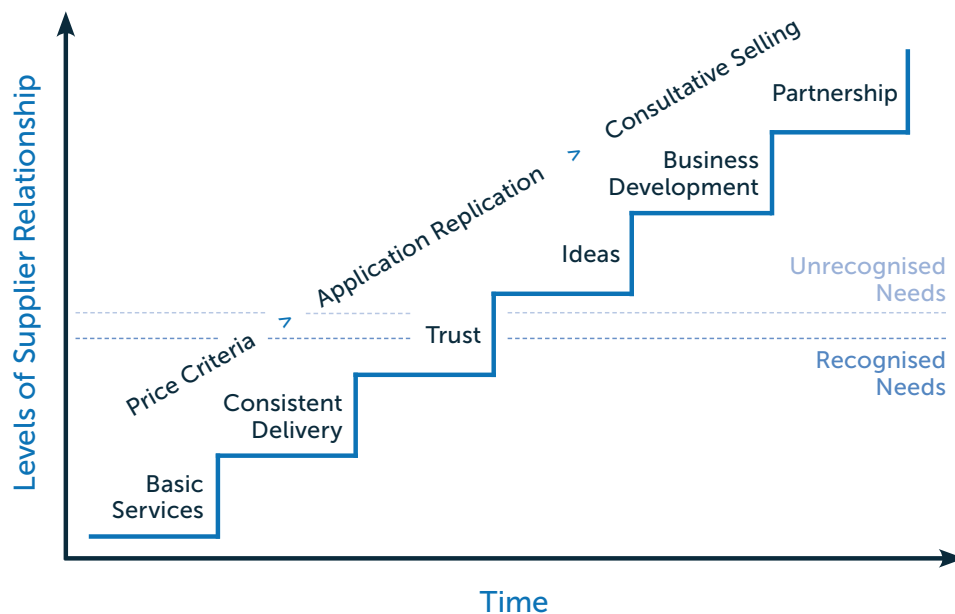
Crossing the Line

The relationship may well have started at the bottom of the 'ladder', and it takes time to climb to the top. At every stage you are reconfirming that you are the right salesperson to deal with. You are building rapport and credibility.

The higher you climb, the more value you can add. The more value you add, the higher you climb – a virtuous circle.

As you can see from the diagram below, there is very strong relationship between selling skills and behaviours and your position on the supplier relationship ladder.

From Order-Taker to Trusted Advisor



Every salesperson operating in the Price/ Criteria environment might be wise to assess the level of threat to his or her livelihood.

Then work on developing any new skills needed to cross the line between recognised and unrecognised needs to 'safer territory' in

the Application Replication and Consultative Selling environment.

Unrecognised needs are where most value-add opportunities are, and where technology is least likely to take over sellers' jobs ... yet!

Business Skills and Behaviours

It almost goes without saying that all salespeople must have a set of business skills. But the extent of the business skills required varies with the sales model.

Salespeople operating in the 'Consultative' and 'Consortium/Partnership' models need the widest set, then comes 'Application Replication', followed by Price/Criteria.

Skills and Capabilities

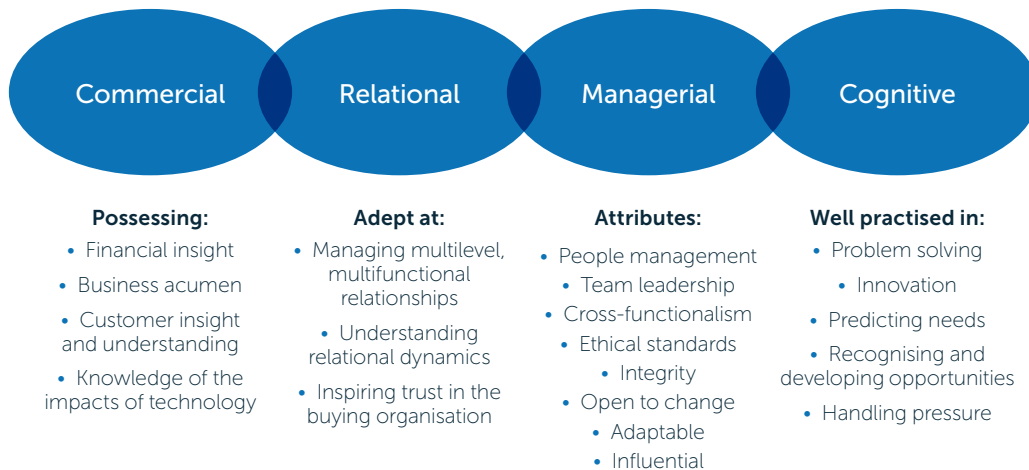
Adapted from Harvard Business Review, Talent Management, "The (New) Skills You Need to Succeed in Sales".

Lynette Ryals and Javier Marcos

Successful salespeople do not only influence their prospects towards their company, products and services. They also have to work closely with their own organisations to make sure necessary changes are implemented to better satisfy specific buyer requirements. Traditional selling skill sets are no longer enough in today's relational selling environment.

Two main drivers that brought about the change in the environment are the use of technology and changes in buyer expectations.

Ryals and Marcos offer four groups of skills and capabilities areas that salespeople need in this new selling and buying environment:



The major skills and capabilities required for successful B2B selling, particularly in our top two sales models don't include what would be regarded as traditional selling skills.

Many people who are suited to these new sales roles may well not come from a sales background.

Those with 'mill' and management experience gained in almost any operational area will have developed the valuable planning, problem-solving and cross-functional skills needed for Consultative and Consortium/Partnership B2B selling, for example.

But they will need some selling skills too.

Selling Skills and Behaviours

The need for many traditional selling skills and behaviours hasn't gone away, of course. They do have a place in the new selling and buying environment.

Skills such as:

- **Territory Research**
As important as ever, along with segmentation and prioritisation.
- **Using the right style of selling**
To match the model in which you are operating.
- **Need Creation**
There are usually potential opportunities, even in the Price/Criteria model.
- **Listening**
Asking the right questions, letting the buyer do most of the talking, listening actively.
- **Giving Evidence**
Telling reference stories, running demos, arranging reference visits, avoiding claims.
- **Qualification**
Of pivotal importance – the biggest waste of time is the sale you lose.
- **Gaining Commitments**
Getting the buyer to do things for you that move the sale forward.
- **Dealing with Senior Executives**
Using language and approach that matches the level of the person you are meeting.

We view the above skills, and their associated behaviours, as core, and have the same view of some 'business skills', such as problem-solving and planning.

There are many more skills we could list, both business and selling. The important message is that the need for salespeople to have business skills is growing as sales jobs move away from the order-taker, and buyers' expectations for demonstrable added business value increase.

Sales Managers' Challenges and Opportunities

Where is your Sales Force now?

- Is your business all Price/Criteria?
- Are you currently selling to recognised and unrecognised needs, in multiple sales models?
- Do you consciously manage the value your sales force brings to your customers, prospects and their buying processes?
- Are you ensuring that your salespeople's skills and behaviours are fit for purpose in tomorrow's world?

	We Can See It	We Can't See It (yet)	
They Can't See It (yet)	<p>Application Replication</p> <p>You're a solution seller, with a solution looking for the buyer's problem.</p> <p>There's a 25%* chance that you will be replaced by disruptive technology.</p>	<p>Consultative Selling</p> <p>You're a consultant, working with the buyer to develop a solution.</p> <p>Demand for people like you will rise by c. 10%*.</p>	<p>Unrecognised Needs</p> <p>Deal Makers</p>
They Can See It	<p>Price/Criteria</p> <p>You're an order-taker. There's a 33%* chance that you will be replaced by disruptive technology.</p> <p>Get out of this box If you're adding no value.</p>	<p>Consortium/Partnership</p> <p>You're a project manager forming/leading a team to satisfy the buyer's need.</p> <p>There's a 15%* chance that you will be replaced by disruptive technology.</p>	<p>Recognised Needs</p> <p>Deal Responders</p>

If your business is all Price/Criteria, what plans do you have to get out of this box and into one or more of the other three? Is this possible?

Change always creates opportunities – new needs, both recognised and unrecognised, for skilled, value-adding salespeople to expose and fulfil.

Opportunities are growing rapidly in number, somewhat paradoxically as a result of the new ways of working made possible by disruptive technologies, but not in the bottom left box.

Contact Us

We hope you found this white paper thought-provoking.

You may like to learn more about how we:

- Adopt a blended approach to developing selling skills, sales process management and sales management processes
- Help salespeople transition from order takers to consultants ... trusted advisors.
- Can work with you to ensure self-sufficiency and sustainability of new sales skills, behaviours and ways of working
- Foster why as well as how conversations
- Assist in delivering the business and personal benefits that ensue.

If you would like to learn more:

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We look forward to hearing from you.

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