

Sales & Commercial Excellence in Today's World

Quarterly Insights – 2nd Quarter 2020

A publication for the clients of Mercuri International





A black and white photograph of three business professionals in a modern office hallway. A woman in a white dress stands on the left, holding a tablet. Two other people, a woman and a man, stand on the right, looking at a document. The hallway has large windows and concrete walls.

GROW YOUR PEOPLE – GROW YOUR BUSINESS

Every year Mercuri International empowers companies in over 50 countries to achieve sales excellence.

We serve our clients both locally and globally with customized solutions and industry expertise.

With implementation-oriented sales consulting and sales enablement concepts, we support our customers in successfully meeting market challenges, both in B2B and B2C.

Our goal is to make your managers and employees more successful and thus help you to realize your strategic goals.

We grow profit through people, providing the tools and processes to tackle any sales challenge.

GROW YOUR PEOPLE – GROW YOUR BUSINESS

Welcome by the Editor

Dear reader,

Dear Sales & Commercial Excellence community,

We are very pleased to present to you today the first issue of our "Sales & Commercial Excellence In Today's World" edition.

Sales & Commercial Excellence is of increasing importance for a wide range of companies. Especially in today's climate with all of its challenges, therefore, successful market and customer management is in the focus of many companies. Right now, it is not only a matter of coping with the current situation as best as possible, but also of creating the foundations and conditions for a successful future.

We have chosen "Sales & Commercial Excellence" as title. With this title we consider the fact that successful market and customer development today no longer depends exclusively on sales. Changes in the B-to-B customer journey present companies with far-reaching challenges and require innovative approaches for customer-centric B-to-B market cultivation. For the provider, this means consistent advice, orientation and customer care across all touchpoints in the company. The internal coordination and interface management of all involved areas along the entire B-to-B customer journey, such as marketing, sales, inside sales, sales back office and service, are therefore a challenge and at the same time the key to successful customer-centric market cultivation.

Our intention is to support you with valuable information and insights in an entertaining form. For this reason, we rely on a mixture of interviews, articles, case studies and other elements.

We wish you stimulating reading combined with some interesting insights into Sales & Commercial Excellence. And, of course, we also welcome any kind of feedback in the form of praise and criticism as well as suggestions and requests.

Best regards and stay with us

Michael Herrmann

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Read more about Sales & Commercial Excellence:



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INTERVIEWS with Experts

From the Practice for the Practice



Expert Interview: Dr. Herwig Mehrwald

Dr. Herwig Mehrwald – Former Head of Global Sales – Festool GmbH



"The process of constantly striving for excellence in sales is a complex and large subject area that cannot simply be completed overnight."

"Our managers are a decisive factor in our Sales Excellence Program! Without their active participation, support and follow-up of the program and its respective focus topics, the chances of success are rather low."

1

Festool is known as a global premium manufacturer of power tools and systems for professional craftsmen. Festool has been successful in the market for over 90 years and is characterised by a high level of customer orientation. But of course there are challenges in your market as well. Can you tell us which challenges Festool is particularly confronted with in this respect?

We are currently facing a number of challenges: On the one hand, there is the ever-increasing internationalisation of trade. In our market, this means that more and more retailers are setting up cross-border structures and the national borders – especially in Europe – are disappearing for our business. Secondly, we are observing a worldwide consolidation of dealers. Smaller dealers are increasingly closing their businesses because they cannot find successors or are being taken over by larger retailers. Thirdly, the Internet and the digitalization that goes along with it are creating a hitherto unknown transparency in the procurement of price and product information. This is changing the buying and information behaviour of both our dealers and our end customers.

A constant challenge is the growing demands of end customers in terms of customer orientation and service. These factors will continue to increase the pressure on retailers in the future. The sale of Festool's premium products requires retailers to deal intensively with the product range in order to be able to communicate the added value of our products to the end customer. One challenge of the indirect sales model via retailers is that Festool's brand promise as a premium supplier is often not transported to the end customer. For example, customers often do not receive information about our comprehensive range of services, although this is an additional differentiating feature and gives Festool a positioning advantage over its competitors.

We have a lot to do at the group headquarters and our national companies, both conceptually and in terms of implementing suitable measures, to meet these challenges.

2

Against this background, Festool launched a global brand initiative several years ago, which was combined with a Sales Excellence initiative. Would you like to tell us a little more about the background and the associated objectives?

Festool has established a brand code for a uniform and premium brand image. This global initiative was used to determine how the brand should be perceived by retailers and end customers. In order to meet the increasing demands of retailers and end customers, Festool set up a Sales Excellence Programme in 2013, which describes a step-by-step, long-term plan for the continuous improvement of sales activities. The primary goal is to establish premium sales for Festool as a premium brand in the long term.

Expert Interview: Dr. Herwig Mehrwald

This is to be achieved by implementing globally standardised processes and structures as part of Sales Excellence. The programme is based on the slogan "You are part of the brand" to illustrate the necessary involvement of all employees of the Group, without which a positive external image and brand perception is not possible.

At Festool, we systematically divide our Sales Excellence Programme into two dimensions: "Channel Management" and "Sales Force Management". The former serves to optimise and internationally standardise processes in dealing with retailers and focuses on topics such as pricing and conditions, logistics requirements of retailers and dealer contracts. The "Sales Force Management" dimension includes measures to optimize the effectiveness of sales. The measures defined so far relate both to the field sales force and their managers. The internal sales force as an important contact point for dealers and end customers is **3** next target group to be added to the Sales Excellence program.

Sales Excellence comprises many parameters. In your experience, what are the most important levers?

The process of constantly striving for excellence in sales is a complex and large subject area that cannot simply be completed "overnight". At Festool, we have therefore developed a plan not to cover the distance in a sprint, but to approach selected key topics step by step with focus. Striving for excellence requires, among other things, changes in behavior. In addition to leadership work, such as "coaching" and the consistent tracking of progress, these also require a little time. Our selected focus areas initially included simple-sounding topics such as "how many dealer/end customer visits are expected per day?", "which dealers should I visit when and how often?" and "how do I plan my optimal route?".

This clear focus allows us to work on the same topics simultaneously with all colleagues worldwide and reduces the risk that employees feel overwhelmed by the amount of tasks they have to perform in their daily sales work. It is also important in the program to have a well-functioning systemic support to track the issues. To this end, we use a globally standardized CRM system and a dedicated CRM team that takes care of the system and its continuous development, making it an essential tool for the operational implementation of Sales Excellence.

4

Your initiative has also led to adjustments in market and customer processing and thus to concrete requirements for your managers and sales staff. Why was this necessary, what were the biggest challenges and how did you tackle them?

Our managers are a decisive factor in our Sales Excellence Program! Without their active participation, support and follow-up of the program and its respective focus topics, the chances of success are rather low. Involving our managers from the very beginning was therefore a key success factor. This is and remains a challenge. All our managers have diverse tasks, different business focuses in their markets and therefore it is not easy to keep their focus on the continuous Sales Excellence work. Since our managers and the leadership of employees are important success factors, we have defined a focus topic for our managers: coaching of sales employees.

The regular "coaching" of sales employees by their managers supports the necessary changes in market and customer development as well as the implementation of the Sales Excellence focus topics. We work closely with Mercuri International, our international partner for sales training, to train our sales executives and their teams. Mercuri has been conducting our "Sales Excellence Training" in all our national companies since 2016. The internationally valid training content is developed together with Mercuri and is "tailor-made" to our Festool processes and the respective focus topics. In this way, we ensure that the demands made by our **5** managers and end customers on our sales force and on us as a premium brand can be met worldwide.

Managers always play a decisive role in such change processes. What expectations do you have of managers in the Sales Excellence initiative?

Our managers must be fully behind the Sales Excellence program! Only if the managers are convinced of the sense and purpose of the program, have understood the key issues and the need for consistent and regular follow-up, and actively contribute to its implementation, can we improve together worldwide.

To achieve this, we regularly inform our managers about current topics and create technical support options within the CRM system to make it as easy as possible to track Sales

Expert Interview: Dr. Herwig Mehrwald

Excellence topics in daily management work. In addition, we meet with all sales managers at least once a year to discuss the current status of the Sales Excellence program and future direction.

6

The sustainability of Sales Excellence initiatives is of great importance for all companies. How do you deal with this topic and what role do you personally play in this?

As already mentioned, we have decided to "only" choose topics that are relevant to Festool's daily business. In this way, we ensure that the topics are dealt with and practiced in a sustainable manner and are not forgotten. It is better to implement a few topics correctly at the same time than to merely touch on many topics and jump to the next topic.

At Festool, the Sales Excellence Program is organizationally assigned directly to me, as the worldwide Sales Manager, and is coordinated and controlled primarily by a staff unit responsible for this. By reporting directly to me, I am always informed about the status and progress of the program. In addition, the program is supported by the regional managers in the parent company, the so-called cluster managers. They are very important for the progress of the program. Together we define the key topics and the Cluster Managers take a central role in local introduction, implementation and, if necessary, local adaptation.

7

You have chosen to use external support. What were the reasons for this and where do you see the added value of such support?

In 2016, we decided to work with Mercuri International as our global cooperation partner for training our employees in Festool's national companies. To this end, we have jointly designed Festool-specific training courses and have now successfully conducted more than 250 training sessions in around 20 countries. Our extensive experience and global presence makes Mercuri the ideal partner for us. Regular training, discussions and practical exercises on the selected key topics under the guidance of experienced Mercuri trainers are an important part of the Sales Excellence program.

8

One last question, Dr. Mehrwald - do power tools also play a role for you outside your profession?

Since I started working for Festool in 2012 as an international sales manager, it has become a matter of course that I look around for Festool products on every construction site and at every tradesman I meet, or that I talk about them! I am fascinated and inspired by our well-thought-out products as well as the very large number of Festool fans worldwide.

Brief description Festool

For over 90 years, professional craftsmen in the fields of wood construction, carpentry, painting, renovation and varnishing have relied on power tools from Festool. As one of the leading family-owned companies in its sector, Festool has been active in over 50 countries with almost 3,000 employees since its foundation in 1925. Festool GmbH develops and sells high-quality electric and pneumatic tools, system accessories and consumables for professional users. The tools are sold worldwide exclusively through specialist dealers and are supported by around 400 field staff. With a clear commitment to well thought-out, high-quality products and service orientation, Festool has positioned itself as a premium brand within the power tool industry and is also perceived as such. Festool's commitment to production in Germany is extremely important to Festool: the vast majority, approx. 80%, of its products are manufactured at its main plant in Neidlingen, near Stuttgart or in Illertissen.



Expert Interview: Martin Michel

Founder MMC (Martin Michel Consulting)

Consulting for Marketing for TV/ Streaming Services & Digital Former Managing Director Sky Media GmbH



"The team has to be informed about the background of the change process and must always be picked up again in terms of content."

Currently consultant for TV/streaming services and digital with focus on marketing, entertainment and sports.

Current position:

- Founder MMC (Martin Michel Consulting)

Previous positions:

- Managing Director Sky Media GmbH
- COO El Cartel Media (RTL2)
- SVP & Deputy Managing Director MTV Networks
- Sales Director & Managing Director IP Deutschland (Advertising Marketers of the Media Group RTL)

"Especially regarding the dominance of pricing and discounts, the topic of "Sales Excellence" naturally has enormous significance."

1

Dear Martin, you have had an impressive career in the marketing of electronic media. You have worked in leading management positions for companies such as Sky Media, El Cartel Media (marketing organization of RTL2), MTV Networks as well as IP Deutschland (marketing organization of RTL, VOX, n-tv, etc.). Can you tell us what challenges this industry is facing in particular?

At present, the media industry - like other industries - is certainly massively affected by the corona crisis and advertising revenues have collapsed dramatically in some cases since April. However, this is not the first crisis to be overcome and I am rather confident that we will see a positive development again by 2021 at the latest. However, I see two issues as a real challenge: 9 out of 10 media pitches have the objective of buying media more cheaply and usually the advertisers also receive this guarantee. If price continues to dominate and the quality of media planning and/or the impact of the booked medium is only considered secondarily, then it will inevitably lead to advertising money being saved more and more. This development could indeed be accelerated even further by the current crisis. By the way, I can observe this point globally from my consulting activities, no matter which country you look at, the problem of these pitches is generally present.

Expert Interview: Martin Michel

The second major challenge lies in the changing use of media. Here too, Corona has created a completely different picture (increasing TV usage, also among younger target groups since April), but don't let this deceive you. The fragmentation has been there for years and especially the big TV stations are losing reach year after year. While it was always pointed out at first that streaming providers only stand for US series and movies and that the competence of the national TV industry was in sports, shows and local productions and therefore seemed to be unassailable, this is now changing. Streaming providers are and will become the central challenge for the entire TV industry.

2

Could you tell us a little bit more about the importance of the topic "Sales Excellence" for you against this background? And which goals are relevant to you in this context?

Particularly regarding the dominance of pricing and discounts, the topic of "Sales Excellence" naturally has enormous significance. If, as a sales manager, I allow myself to be defined solely by the price or discount to be given, then I should not be surprised that at the end of the day it is all about that.

For me, "Sales Excellence", especially for the marketing of media, basically consists of two decisive points:

1. How well do I know my customer? What information do I have about him, his product, his industry? What are his objectives and media strategy?
2. How can I match this objective with my product or improve it for the customer?

As a prime example I would like to mention the following case: a large brand manufacturer had decided to completely discontinue a 30-year-old brand. The turnover went down year after year, the contribution margins as well, and it had not been possible to promote the product for years. Thanks to customer knowledge and an outstanding relationship management to this customer, a perfect offer could be developed which took up all previous problems of brand management and in the end achieved a sales improvement of more than 30%. The product still exists, we are talking about a long-term success. For me, this is "true sales excellence" when my own sales success leads to the long-term sales success of my customer.

3

Sales Excellence comprises many parameters. In your experience, what are the most important levers?

Listen up. Listen up. Listen up. I let my client talk first, and then I listen. I have seen salespeople who have opened with their ready-made presentations and have rattled off their portfolio or offer without a point and comma. Such appearances usually come only twice. The first - and last time. The probability of matching the customer's goals in such an approach is rather low or you have a top offer in your luggage. But then this has relatively little to do with "selling".

As I said, the main issue is how I can convince my customer with my special product/offer that it will better meet his needs. To do this, however, I first must determine the need in the first step. As a further parameter I see the point of defining a clear objective before an appointment with a customer. What do I want to achieve in this appointment? Sounds banal, but I have seen many examples where exactly this was not done and probably neither the customer nor the salesperson could see a recognizable advantage for themselves after the appointment.



Expert Interview: Martin Michel

4

Sales Excellence initiatives usually also lead to a considerable adjustment of market and customer processing. And are often associated with considerable demands on managers and sales staff. From your point of view and against the background of your experience, what are the biggest challenges in this respect and how did you tackle them?

Here too, I would like to refer to a current practical example. Within the scope of my consulting work for a South European TV group, I had to follow the dramatic slump in the advertising market there as well. Initially, there were tendencies there to stimulate the falling demand with higher discounts, which in my experience is usually fatal. Those who still advertise during the crisis pay even less. We then tried to cluster the customers. Which customers are directly affected by the crisis and cannot offer their product now, for example an airline. Which customers are partially affected, and which customers are less affected or even benefit from it (as is the case in parts of retail). Is it possible to put together additional themes/packages for segments 2 and 3 that are specially tailored to these customers and thus meet their needs? Sales are then targeted at these customers. As a manager, you are naturally challenged even more in these situations. The role model function in implementation, motivation, attention to success, however small it may be, is currently even more important than usual.

5

Managers always play a decisive role in such change processes. What expectations do you have of managers in the Sales Excellence initiative?

I expect good communication and, as I mentioned before, always a role model function of the manager. The team must be informed about the background of the change process and must always be updated on the content. Goals are clearly communicated and monitored. The prerequisite for this, however, is an agreement between all those involved that these changes or measures are to be implemented. In addition, the manager has an increased coaching task in these times. Best practices are highlighted, and responsibilities are also specifically and separately emphasized.

6

The sustainability of Sales Excellence initiatives is very important for all companies. How do you deal with this topic and what role have you personally played in this so far?

Here, too, I know personally experienced good and bad examples. As a bad example, I see sales strategies that are dictated without a coordinated approach with the team. If a changed strategic orientation then misses the market or unrealistic goals are linked to it, then the consequences are easily described. The belief in the success of this change is missing and the implementation will fail. Even well-intentioned sub-goals (such as a long-term improvement in customer knowledge) then suffer from this chosen approach and are only approached half-heartedly. It is like a jigsaw puzzle with missing or mismatching pieces.

I have always taken this negative example as a consultant. A foreign project from the previous year had a similar objective for me. Development of a sales strategy with a medium to long-term improvement in sales performance. I could have relatively easily transferred my experience and skills as a TV expert to this market. In this case, however, I listened without exception and gained an overall picture of the market. It was my clear objective to first understand the market 100% in order to then bring in recommendations or ideas. The special features of the market were sometimes so difficult that one had to deal with them very specifically and therefore previous experience or procedures would have been fatal in the implementation. I then also developed, discussed and jointly approved the strategy with the employees. The employees believed in what they had put on paper themselves and we jointly adopted ambitious but realistic goals. Success was pre-programmed and not only motivated the team but also strengthened it in the long term.

Expert Interview: Martin Michel

7

What were your greatest learnings or is there something you would do differently in retrospect?

My learning is not to let myself be bent again. In the case described above, I should have intervened immediately, even at the risk of having to take the risk, since I did not support the changed sales strategy. But it was a big mistake to continue and to pass on a strategy and goals to my team without my own conviction and motivation. This unsettled my employees, caused internal trench warfare and in the end, there were only losers. What I expect from every salesman, to stand for his product, to burn, to believe in success, I lost because I could not share this strategy. Fatal, because up to this point it was my dream job and company.

8

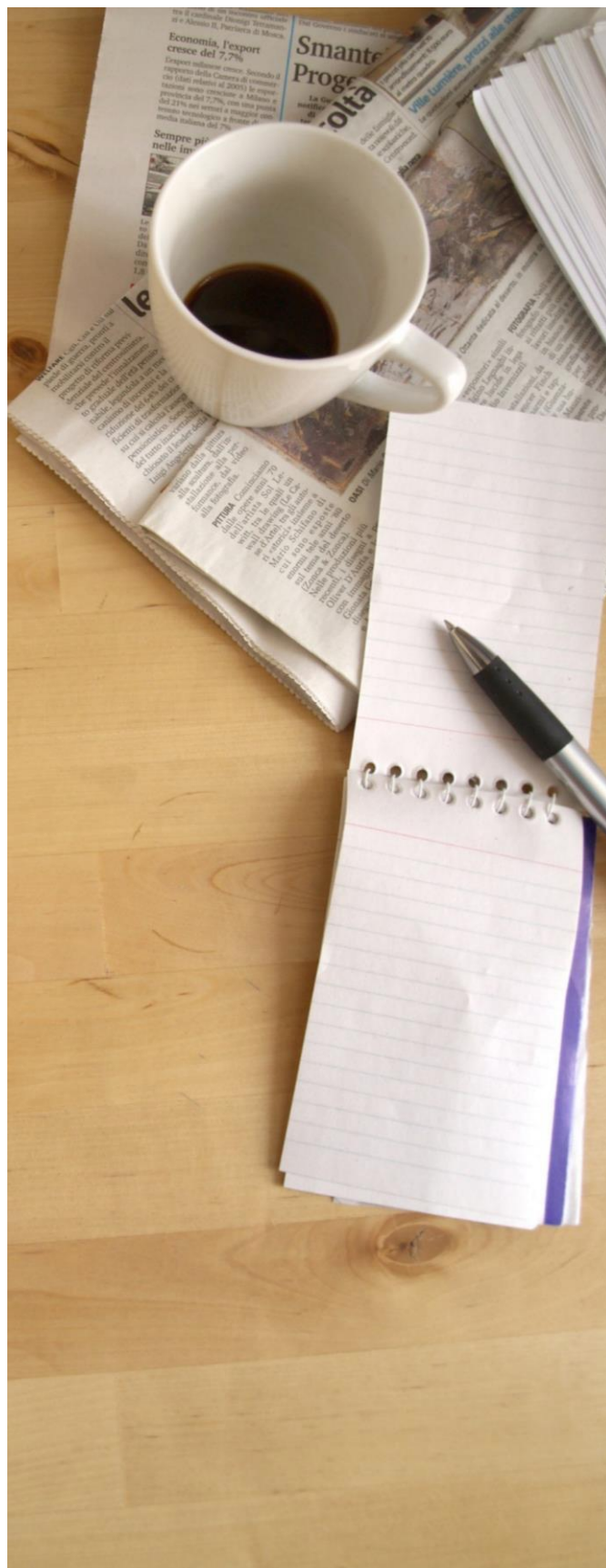
How many of your own customer contacts did your own daily routine still allow you? How often have you been on tour with your sales staff?

I have always seen myself as a "thoroughbred salesman" and had some discussions with my board of directors about this. They wanted to see me more "inside" as a manager. For me it was always important to have a good balance here, with a certain tendency towards "external". Why is that important to me? I always wanted to have an ear to the market. That directly and not through reports and accounts. That's the only way to correctly classify change processes and make decisions easier. This is especially true for industries that are undergoing massive changes. But as I said, the balance must be right.

9

One last question Martin - do electronic media also play a role for you outside of your profession?

In any case, I now regularly receive my onscreen usage from my devices on a weekly basis. Professional and private use become blurred; it is hardly possible to differentiate between them. For example, I really watch a new series on Netflix for both reasons. I now satisfy >90% of my daily information needs from digital channels.



Selected Articles Benefit from Experience



THE NEW WIND

EVERYDAY IS A SECOND CHANCE

ATTITUDE POSITIVE MIND, POSITIVE VIBE, POSITIVE LIFE

Having a good brand strategy allows you to have a major advantage in gaining a large increase in your market opportunities. The brand tells your customers and they can have a good idea of the products and services you offer. Are you innovative or are you the experienced professional in your field? The brand tells your customers and they can have a good idea of the products and services you offer. Are you innovative or are you the experienced professional in your field?

Brand messages are delivered and defined based on the questions how, what, when, where, and why your brand strategy is. Advertisement, visual communication and distribution channels are a part of brand strategy.

The marketing strategy you have should be consistent with the brand strategy you have.

Brand messages are delivered and defined based on the questions how, what, when, where, and why your brand strategy is.



FEAR DOESN'T SHUT YOU DOWN, IT WAKES YOU UP

Marketing strategy's goal is to increase sales and achieve the company's objectives. It includes short-term and long-term objectives. The objectives of a company's marketing strategy will be based on the company's situation and the market's needs. The objectives will be based on the company's situation and the market's needs.

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This is in order for you to know what is beneficial and what is not.

•FREEDOM•

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The Simplicity

EVERYDAY IS A SECOND CHANCE



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08 TAKE LIFE ONE SIP AT A TIME

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EXPLORATION

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02



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A FAIR AGREEMENT WITH A TEAM YOU CAN TRUST

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Seven Factors that Separate Winners from Losers in an Economic Downturn...



No one has missed the global crisis we are in right now. A crisis that caused countries to completely close their borders, caused the worst stock market crash in modern history and where large parts of the economy are completely shut down. This is happening for real. But it is also a fact that there are factors that separate winners from losers in a situation like this.

This is not the first time the world has suffered a major economic crisis. Over the past 50 years, we have gone through nine major economic crises, all with different origins and consequences: Black Monday 1987, 9/11 and the 2008 financial crisis to mention a few. Even though the "corona crisis" is basically not an economic crisis, the suites of this event will have unmistakable and undesirable economic and humanitarian consequences. What does this mean then? That we should lie down and give up? Wait and see? No, quite the opposite. From history we can learn several things. Perhaps the most important lesson is to understand the fact that it is now decided which companies have the ability to adapt to new conditions and thus emerge as winners when it turns around.

Based on ProSale's own research and studies and experiences from previous crises (not least the 2008 financial crisis), we have listed seven areas that distinguish winners from losers in times of great challenges.

1. Send a clear message that you will become a winner!

Do you see yourself as a victim of the circumstances or as a player who can change? Having confidence in one's own power and mobilizing one's strengths is crucial to success. Especially when negative thoughts easily gain a foothold in the company. Therefore, start by sending a clear message to your organization. Should you have a crisis or not in your company?

"I was asked what I thought about the recession. I thought about it and decided not to take part."

Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart

2. Anchor the faith in success – don't let negative thoughts take over!

The major problem of a recession or crisis is not the downturn of economic indicators, it's the downturn of people's minds. Faith in success is one of the most important factors for achieving high sales performance. This shows ProSales's long-standing research of thousands of sales reps. And it's even more true in a time of crisis. The belief that one will succeed results in ambitious efforts, and the belief that one will fail leads to underperformance. As a leader, it has never been so important to inspire, create positive images of the future and make employees believe that it is now that we can take market shares, that is now that we can invest offensively and that is now that we can run away from our competitors. Although the numbers say something different. The pessimists must not take the upper hand. Therefore, focus on positive thinking!

...Seven Factors that Separate Winners from Losers in an Economic Downturn...

3. Think long term – crises don't last forever!

During the last banking crisis, I gave a talk where I asked the audience how long you think an economic downturn lasts on average. To my surprise, I got a response three or four years. Fortunately, that's not true. In general, economic recessions don't last as long as growth periods do. Since 1945 the average duration of a recession is 10 months. Why is this important? Well, first of all it's important not to lose perspective. Crises do not last forever and neither does this. We don't know for how long this crisis will remain but we have to think long term. Secondly, it makes us act a little more rational. We must make changes in the short term. But not too drastic changes that affects our long-term opportunities. Thus, don't forget about the long-term perspective!

This is the fuel that you and your organization need to hear in tougher times. It's not about whether it's doable or not. In this situation, it is a symbol that we must all roll up our arms. It's going to be tough. And we will be affected. But in tough times, it is important for leaders to send clear signals that you will emerge victorious on the other side! Therefore, start by sending out the message: Crisis = future opportunity!

4. Speed and brake simultaneously!

In times of crisis, it is important to prioritize right. But it is rarely a good idea to apply the brake when it comes to sales and marketing. Braking may be necessary, but more importantly, dare to keep or even increase your investment in marketing. In a study where 600 business-to-business firm's net sales and marketing expenditures from 1981 to 1985 were analyzed the researchers revealed that companies that did not cut their budgets or chose to increase spending experienced significantly higher sales during and after the 1981-82 recession. In fact, at the end of 1985, those companies that had maintained or increased their marketing during the recession enjoyed an average sales growth of 275 percent over the preceding five years, while those that had decreased their advertising had to settle for an average sales increase of only 19 percent. Clearly, cutting marketing investments during an economic downturn can mean both short- and long-term negative effects on sales and profits.

5. Spread the risks and diversify your offering!

During the recession in 2001, McKinsey studied over 1,300 US companies and found that companies that emerged from the recession as industry leaders generally had more diversified offerings and a greater geographic presence before, during, and after the recession than did their less successful counterparts. In short, they sold their products and services in different markets and to different target groups, targeted towards profitable customers. This gave them greater strategic flexibility that became even more important during the recession. Those who only had one offering targeted at a specific target group in a market were extremely vulnerable. This strategy has probably never been clearer than today. Some industries and companies are extremely hard hit by the effects of the actual crisis, while others have never had more to do. Therefore, select the target groups that are not as hard affected and focus on the products that can solve the challenges the customers are facing today. Ensure that you spread the risks by having a balanced offering with different target groups.

6. Play offense by reinvesting selectively for commercial growth

Following the global financial crisis in 2008, Bain & Co conducted a study of 3,900 companies comparing winners and losers. The companies that succeeded best had an average growth of 17 percent compared to zero growth among the losers. One of the four areas that was significant for winners was that they played offense and distinct by reinvesting selectively for commercial growth. While others thought only about survival, they went on offense early in the cycle of recession making top prioritizes among customers and prospects, optimizing the marketing mix to do more with the same or less and improving the customer experience by making it simpler and more personalized. The losers waited to see what would happen which made them too late to make the necessary adjustments, they bought the wrong asset or paid an inflated price. In the rearview mirror, we will probably see the same pattern after this crisis. The winners will be those who dares to invest early, make the right prioritizes and act with power!

...Seven Factors that Separate Winners from Losers in an Economic Downturn

7. Focus on customer value and risk, not product or price!

In tough times, customers become more risk aware and short term oriented. They don't dare to take chances as wrong decisions can have major consequences. In such situations, it may even be justified to employ suppliers who charges more but who are solving the problems that customers are facing right now. It is in times like these that we will see which companies really succeeded in managing customers' perceptions of risk and value and adapting their offerings accordingly. Offering lower prices or selling products that are far down the customer's priority list will not succeed very well. Focus on finding out what values customers are willing to pay for in this specific crisis and make sure you can solve this instead of lowering the price.



This is an article from ProSales which is a leading Swedish Research and Management Consulting organization specialized in B2B Sales Excellence. ProSales belongs to the Mercuri International group.

The Battle for the Brains – Lack of Qualified Labor...

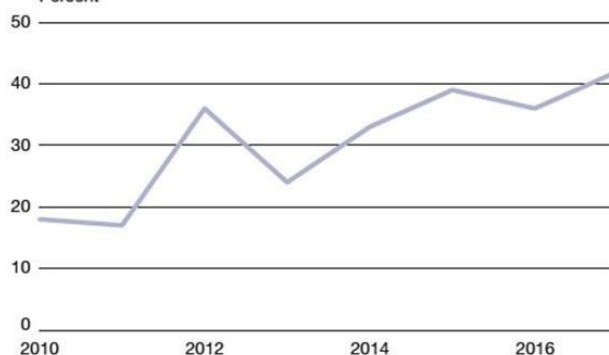


The transition to a knowledge-based society means that in the future the economy will not be about optimizing production, but rather about innovation, business models, networking, branding and marketing. The companies that succeed in attracting the smartest people, who come up with the best ideas, are those who will succeed.

This means that people will be the primary source of competitive advantage. Competitors can copy products and automate and build factories but replicating a company's labor force with respect to competence, dedication, and culture is almost impossible. Despite the difficulties of measuring immaterial assets, it is to a large extent these that will determine a company's future development.

The consulting company McKinsey & Co coined the phrase "The war for talent" back in 1997. They meant that it was talented co-workers that separated successful organizations from those that fell behind. Based on demographic data they could also show that the competition for talent would tighten in the coming 20 years. We can testify that their prophecy was right: the war for talent is now a fact.

Figure 4. Share of Swedish employers that indicate that they have difficulty finding personnel
Percent



Source: Manpower Group

The shift that we are now witnessing leads to a regular battle for the brains; a talent hunt where all companies must ensure that they have the best possible team configuration. According to the Manpower Talent Shortage Survey, 45 percent of the world's companies have difficulty finding the right personnel – an increase from 30 percent in a period ten years. In Sweden, 42 percent of companies maintain that they experience difficulty recruiting for key positions. The fact is that, at the moment, there are 140,000 vacant positions – but despite the many unemployed it isn't possible to fill these jobs.

It is the qualified positions that constitute the challenging sector. At the same time, they determine growth in the labor market. Statistics from the EU's research arm Eurofound show that most new jobs are comprised of qualified positions. 4 Over time we have seen a gradual shift toward more and more sophisticated tasks, which is not surprising because machines and computers increasingly have taken over the heavy manual and routine work. Eurofound has also analyzed how demand for different skills has changed over the past 20 years. Skills tied to strength, abilities and routines are decreasing substantially. What is in demand is mathematical skills, aptitude for problem-solving, and reading and writing skills.

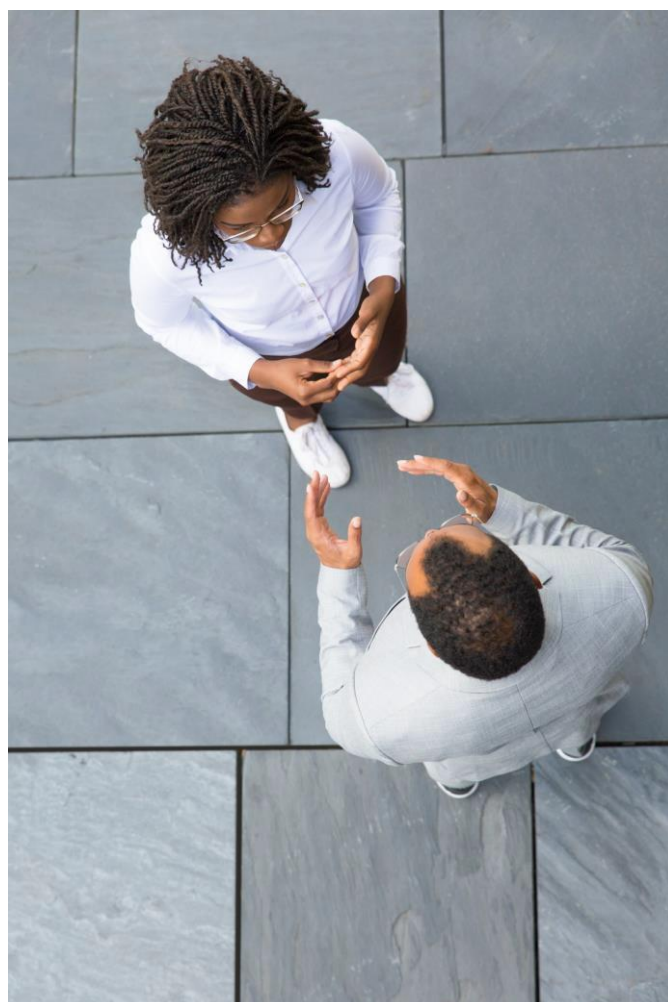
...The Battle for the Brains – Lack of Qualified Labor

A great workplace is not espresso or lush benefits or sushi lunches, grand parties or nice offices. | Patty McCord, Chief Talent Officer, Netflix

It is primarily two functions in companies that have the most difficult finding personnel: IT and sales. That companies are screaming for qualified IT-laborers is well known, but now sales organizations are also participating in the battle for the brains. Actually, this isn't surprising given the polarization of sales logics that we described in an other article. The simple, traditional sales jobs, that perhaps didn't require so much training or knowledge, are becoming fewer. They are being replaced in part by sales positions under the complex sales logic, where demand for competent advisors, business developers and consultative sales reps is increasing. Suddenly the sales profession is competing with other qualified jobs in advisory and consultancy services. In part they are being replaced by jobs under the transactional sales logic, where there is a growing need for people that are analytically driven and can handle digital tools – competencies that so far don't grow on trees. We are also experiencing a double competency gap that makes it more difficult to find, attract and recruit salespeople.

At the same time, sales organizations are faced with weaker demand for sales positions, particularly for younger workers. Sales representative is not amongst the ten most popular careers amongst 18 to 25-year-olds and ranks lower than both administrative jobs such as the criticized teaching profession. There are many reasons for this. Sales competence is often perceived as an inborn talent – “the ability to sell is something you're born with.” Another explanation is that the profession's status is influenced negatively by a lack of certifications and higher education. Perhaps the most problematic is that there are many prejudices associated with marketing that don't match well with what coming generations want from a job.

On the whole we can argue that sales is – and will continue to be – a particularly challenging sector when it comes to recruiting. When the gap between supply and demand for qualified sales reps grows, there will be a battle for the brains. Managing this competency gap will become an increasingly strategic question for management. It will be important to have a strong brand, good leadership, and interesting work assignments to attract the brains.



Automatization – When Machines Do the Work...



Everything began when someone, for the first time, crushed a nut with a stone when they got hungry. That is when the idea was born that tools and instruments existed that could serve mankind. The use of tools has continued to develop since then, with oxen and horses that have plowed our fields and carried our loads. Wind and water have ground our grain and crushed our iron ore. The breakthrough of the power of steam in the 1700s enabled us suddenly to transport people and objects over long distances. In the middle of the 1800s the industrial revolution arrived. Machines, conveyor belts, vending machines and later industrial robots have effectively replaced simple manual tasks. Machines are tireless when it comes to screwing on lids, folding cardboard boxes or soldering electronic components. No machine has ever complained to their boss, asked for a raise or taken a smoking break.

Technical achievements continue, as does the hunt for continuously-increasing productivity. But this has also changed our role in the workplace. We have stopped manufacturing products, and manufacture machines instead. As a result, many professions have disappeared. Between 2006 and 2011, about 10% of Swedish jobs disappeared because of automatization. Most of these were routine jobs in industry, at cash registers and administration, but a not-too-bold assumption is that we have only seen the beginning of this development.

A large portion of the work that we see as self-evident today will disappear in the future. With the encroachment of computers and smart algorithms we may see many other cognitive and thought-demanding professions automated. In the 2014 report "Every other job will be automated within 20 years" it is estimated that upwards of 53 percent of all professions in Sweden may be automated in the coming decades. That is equivalent to approximately 2.5 million jobs and will result in major cost savings for companies – just over 71 billion US dollars in lower payroll expenses when technology takes over.

From an evolutionary perspective this is groundbreaking. Only thinking beings have been able to play chess, diagnose illnesses, drive cars and handle terrorists. But today we are developing machines that can manage these things better than we can. Many bankers, engineers, stockbrokers, economists, teachers, real-estate agents, pedagogues, lawyers and judges, for example, have long been protected from automatization, but can eventually rapidly reduce in numbers. What happens, for example, when an advanced algorithm can try more court cases in one day than a jury member can try in their entire lifetime? Or when a simple push of a button on a brain scanner can reveal fraud and lies with nearly 100 percent accuracy. In the not-too-distant future we will have such lie detectors in use. How many jury members and defense attorneys will disappear then?

Sometimes our lives seem better suited to robots, for machines that can be programmed. We work. We clean. We pick up the kids. | Danica Kragic Jensfelt, Professor in computer science, KTH Royal Institute of Technology

...Automatization – When Machines Do the Work

Even doctors are prey for automatization. IBM's supercomputer Watson, which won the TV quiz show Jeopardy in 2011 against two reigning masters, is making a quick career in the world of medicine. In a recent test, Watson diagnosed a patient's symptoms in ten minutes by running the patient's information against 20 million existing patient journals. Doctors are astounded. Diagnosing patients at a much earlier stage makes it possible to take action that can be crucial to a patient's survival, and even final healthcare costs. An AI like Watson has enormous advantages over a human doctor. First, it can store information about different illnesses, medications, research findings and medical statistics. For a human this is impossible. Second, it can compare this data with information about a patient's entire health history, including family, neighbors and friends. Many believe that Watson may well become the world's best diagnostician.

Just as Watson can ask questions and diagnose patients, we can see a similar development in sales, marketing and customer service. Machines can very well be successful sales reps that diagnose customers' needs, help them with relevant information and finally assist in the actual purchasing moment. But they can also take over traditional work tasks previously assigned to market analysts. Martin Hoffman, CIO for Volkswagen, amongst others, contends this. He provides as an example their own virtual sales planners that have the capacity to analyze potential sales for more than 200 car models, with hundreds of accessories, in over 50 markets.⁵ Their accuracy is 90 percent. He maintains that this "bot" would be able to change the price dynamic on demand.

That more and more sales reps will be replaced by machines is something that is already happening. As early as 2013, two researchers from Oxford University predicted that many simpler sales professions would be automated in the future. Many signs point to their prognosis becoming a reality. According to the authors, the following sales professions are at greatest risk of eventually becoming automated (with the probability of automatization percentage in parentheses):

1. Telephone sales reps (99 percent)
2. Event sales (94 percent)
3. Sales reps in shops (92 percent)
4. Insurance agents (92 percent)
5. Real-estate agents (86 percent)
6. Sales reps in wholesale and manufacturing (85 percent)
7. Advertising sales (54 percent)
8. Sellers of technical products (25 percent)

Today, to mention a few examples, many telephone sales reps have been replaced with automated marketing, sales reps in shops with e-commerce, and advertising sales reps with programmed advertising.

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that automatization is not only about jobs disappearing. In many cases it involves a transition, where an old profession has lost its value but been replaced with a new role that requires new competencies. Therefore, we don't need to face mass unemployment. The opposite may in fact be the case. In reality we will need more labor than before, which McKinsey and AI-expert Anna Felländer amongst others have predicted in their analyses.

By extension we can talk about two types of work that will remain: in part those jobs that create and manage systems of computers and machines, and in part those who work with things that machines and computers can't manage. The latter includes value-generating and customer-oriented sales projects where we utilize man's thus far superior abilities, such as emotional intelligence, feelings, understanding of complex connections, fantasy, creativity, new thinking and artistry. In short, it will be the different languages of feeling that will become the valuable human contribution to the business deals of the future. This and a substantial portion of problem-solving capability.

Thought Leaders – the Return of the Oracle...



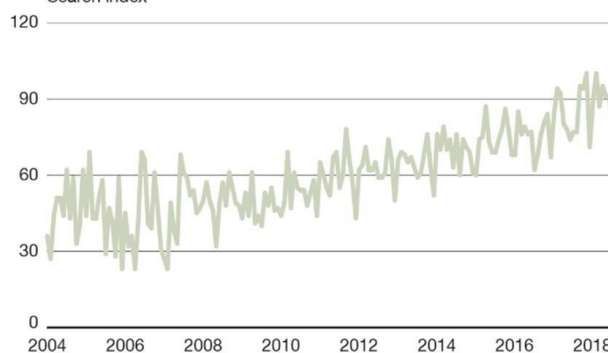
In the mid 1800s, the priest Henry Ward Beecher became known for his fight to abolish slavery in America. He received extensive praise and achieved great influence through his spell-binding lectures and powerful efforts to collect money to purchase freedom for slaves. Beecher is historical in that he was the first ever to receive the designation thought leader.

Thus, the term thought leader has its roots far back in history. But it was first in 1994 that the American economist Joel Kurtzman made it a concept in the business world. He defines a thought leader as an individual or a company that builds its competitiveness and profits on being a known authority within a specific area. There are large similarities with the newer concept “influencer” but there is one defining difference. An influencer can be a thought leader but usually isn’t. A thought leader, on the other hand, is always an influencer.

What unifies thought leaders is that they have created a unique position and changed people’s perceptions by coming up with new ideas, knowledge, and insights, which makes them the self-evident actor to turn to for expert help. Business leaders like Elon Musk and Ariana Huffington, researchers like Michael Porter and Cynthia Kenyon, or organizations such as McKinsey and Harvard Business School are all examples of thought leaders. But there are also of course a range of other more niched actors in various sectors, industries and functions.

Driven by consulting companies such as McKinsey, IBM and Gartner, ideas about thought leadership as a strategy have, since we entered the digital era, become an object of increasing interest. Gartner even claims that thought leadership is one of the most powerful trends in sales and marketing and is currently the highest priority for most B2B companies. Interest in thought leadership has increased continuously over the past decade and has not stopped growing despite several years of hype around the concept.

Figure 6. Interest in the search term “thought leadership”
Search index



Source: Google Trends

According to Gartner, the largest driver behind this trend is tougher competition, where well-informed customers experience little or no difference between different products and suppliers. The need to differentiate one’s self increases pressure to be the thought-leading company that customers turn to when they seek help. Another driver is the difficult task of penetrating with one’s marketing. The competition for customers’ attention today is brutal, and if you aren’t perceived as an authority in your area you will have more and more difficulty with outreach. Therefore, one needs to build a brand that creates a feeling of authenticity, respect and trust, which manifests what thought leadership is about.

...Thought Leaders – the Return of the Oracle

The entrepreneur Brian Clark, who started the blog Copyblogger in 2006, is someone who has succeeded at this. In 2017 Copyblogger was the most influential blog about content marketing, with more than 200,000 unique followers. Clark claims himself that he never needed risk capital, advertising or to hire sales reps. As a thought leader, customers come to him for advice. Many companies study with envy how he has succeeded like a magnet in creating such a strong position as a thought leader.

Thought leadership is when a leader's thoughts are being used by leaders to lead others. | Onyi Anyado, prize-winning speaker, entrepreneur and writer

Thought leaders exist in all areas that require expertise. Those who achieve the greatest impact often come with huge new ideas and knowledge that inspires and encourages change. They identify trends and social phenomena and look beyond the horizon. At its core, this is about showing that they have a deeper understanding of customers' problems and current and future challenges than the competition. Consulting and analysis companies often try to achieve this position by publishing advice, research, statistics, trend analyses and new management models in their own publications, such as McKinsey Quarterly, A.T. Kearney Executive Agenda and Deloitte Review. Even we at ProSales Institute have this approach as a goal – to build a thought-leadership position through solid research and trend analyses about B2B sales & marketing.

This has become an important strategy for many companies. So important that many companies have emerged that help their customers to develop trustworthy evidence-based material. Longitude Research, which was on the Financial Times' 2017 list of the thousand fastest-growing companies in Europe, is one of these. Many major brands within media, such as Forbes and the Wall Street Journal, offer similar services.

A cornerstone for anyone who aims to achieve a position as a thought leader is to stop hiding their knowledge and share it instead. In today's transparent society there are great opportunities for those who dare to take this step. For example, the company GE Plastics, which made molds for plastic, opted to publish their 30 years of research publicly on the Internet. Registered users gained access to fact sheets, test results, expert advice and simulation software. It can seem strange to give away their collected knowledge: something that had been their competitive edge. The competition was of course there and searched for information, but so did their customers – one million per year visited their new information site. In addition to the enormous attention gained by the company and its strengthened position as a thought leader, customer satisfaction increased, and costs decreased. The quantity of customer support calls for example decreased from 500,000 to 250,000 per year. By building this knowledge center they also created a new tool for generating new business deals.

One important conclusion in this context is that all companies don't strive to become thought leaders. But for an increasing number of companies this strategy is becoming more important in a growing knowledge-based society, where doing so helps and strengthens the marketing process. Here, all of the functions in a company – including sales and marketing – must work together if one really wants to succeed.

Case Study

Gain from Best Practices



THE INTERNATIONAL

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IN THIS EDITION: 50 PAGES OF RESEARCH-BASED CONTENT, INCLUDING: KEY COMPETENCIES FOR DIFFERENTIATION... GROWING TOGETHER... SALES MESSAGING FOR EXPANSION... GAINING ACCESS TO SENIOR EXECS... SELLING THROUGH DIFFICULT ECONOMIC TIMES... CLASSROOM VERSUS VIRTUAL TRAINING + SALES RESEARCH ROUND-UP

TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO SALES

NeGOtiate&WIN

How a unified negotiations approach drives customer loyalty and more revenue for SAP.

Article summary The software and IT industry is undergoing a massive transformation as customers look for new business models and a way to harness "digital transformation" to stay competitive in their markets. While large and small IT companies aim to generate business value through digital innovations, they are also challenged by more professional and trained negotiators. SAP's global NeGOtiate&WIN program enables SAP salespeople to become more confident and comfortable negotiating, while improving profits and returns for SAP's aggressive 2020 growth plan. This programme is delivered in partnership with Mercuri International.

The digital revolution is having a dramatic effect on the sales world. Listening to the customer, taking their concerns and strategic objectives on board, and using their feedback to identify the best possible solution has always proved to be an effective strategy. However, sales success can also be achieved by avoiding signing a bad deal. More customers nowadays are very well equipped with professional and well-trained negotiators.

If sales are not equally equipped with proficient skills and techniques this could lead to an unprofitable deal by making too many concessions, along with a high level of discount. Or, even worse, losing a deal. "I personally have been in sales for a long time and seen many negotiation conversations; some were excellent but others not to the point," says Rainer Stern, Global Vice President, Sales Acceleration and Leadership Programs at SAP. "So, how does this align with day-to-day sales activity at SAP, and the way the company's sales enablement function is supporting salespeople?"

The vision: more profitable deals and confidence in negotiating

First, a bit of background.... Over the past few years, SAP has sought to further intensify its leadership with an aggressive growth plan and fundamental changes to its core business – specifically, a shift from "on premise" to cloud software deployment. This includes offering a complete digital transformation roadmap incorporating machine learning, artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), and advanced analytics technologies that help turn customers' businesses into intelligent enterprises.

NeGOtiate&WIN

Along with this strategic shift came ambitious revenue goals for the year 2020, including €7.5 billion to €8 billion in cloud subscriptions and €26 billion to €28 billion in total revenue. In Sales Enablement, we knew that to meet these goals, we would need to rely heavily on our Account Executives' (AEs) ability to negotiate, as well as their facility to uncover needs and bring value to our customers (at a low cost to our organization). This will – from a 2020 revenue standpoint – be pivotal to our success in the Digital Age. To meet these challenges head-on, we developed the NeGOtiate&WIN program to give AEs the skills and tools they need to negotiate with confidence, improve returns, and drive SAP's success. Participants gain insights on how to clearly define an efficient negotiation process, become proficient in highly effective negotiation tools, and achieve new confidence when negotiating with customers.

One single model that sales can apply in complex situations

While the main goal was to implement a program to support SAP's aggressive revenue ambition and massively reduce discounts, they noted an additional challenge. "Over the last decade we built a network of training vendors teaching negotiations," Stern explains. "By now we had more than ten vendors, teaching different negotiations techniques across the globe. We have been mandated by the SAP board to solve this challenge: one global provider, capable of delivering in local languages with one methodology." Following individual interviews with AEs and sales leadership across the five regions, the program team put together a set of requirements to choose the right vendor to support this program, including: global reach, a proven track record in teaching negotiation skills, and offering negotiations in 12 local languages. Additionally, it was important to select a vendor that could provide an easy-to-use framework that is immediately applicable to the needs of the sales organization.

The NeGOtiate&WIN program: a blended learning approach

"From the very beginning it was clear to the team that we would need a blended-learning approach," Rainer explains. "Bringing sales together in one room for three or more days simply makes no sense.

"More importantly, we wanted to design a program that had various elements that would provide a blended learning approach. These elements include traditional classroom training, virtual learning, the opportunity to practice ensuring behavioral change, a forum to exchange best practices, and a post-workshop coaching session." NeGOtiate&WIN is a blended learning program designed to deliver maximum impact to our learners in a format that fits conveniently into their busy schedules. It's also important to note that the program was designed in response to a thorough analysis of SAP's business performance and learning needs. Our business and performance needs analysis included over 35 interviews with AEs and sales leadership and a close analysis of all KPIs and their relationship to revenue generation. The result was a list of KPIs management deemed vital to the success of our quota carriers and the subsequent impact they'd have on SAP's 2020 revenue goals. These included: • Reducing discounts • Increasing revenue generation • Increasing deal size Our learning needs analysis focused on surveys and interviews with members of our target audience (AEs) to gauge the level of training necessary to boost negotiation skills. We also sought to identify the time available in their busy schedules to be educated on this topic. With our analysis complete, we were able to take this information (from both analyses) and design the NeGOtiate&WIN program. We chose to partner with Mercuri International, a professional services company specializing in negotiations, sales training, and performance training. Due to Mercuri's global experience and ability to provide negotiations workshops in local languages, we chose this partner to work with both for executing the program at a local level plus further enhancing it based on new studies and best practices. At the heart of the program – over the course of a two-day workshop – participants learn a four-phase negotiation process ("A Focus on Value"), gaining first-hand experience through role plays and coaching from skilled facilitators and negotiation coaches.

The results

So, what did the program achieve? Without any doubt, improvements can be seen across all the KPI areas set at the very beginning when we designed and planned the program. Measurements were put in place in relation to business metrics, participants' satisfaction and behavioral outcomes, and satisfactory outcomes for the customer.

NeGOtiate&WIN

Participant satisfaction rates jumped significantly when comparing average pre-workshop and post-workshop outcomes for participants. Most notably the program has seen 9.6% and 11.4% jumps in satisfactory outcomes for customers and participants respectively. CRM pipeline data analysis reveals that the NeGOtiate&WIN program has also made a significant financial impact on the organization:

- 22.65% reduction in anticipated versus achieved discount following training
- 37% reduction in discount when comparing last five negotiations before training to five after training
- 5.6% increase in revenue generation
- 5.6% increase in deal size

Moving forward

There is no question that acquainting and executing on a unified negotiations approach is key to SAP's aggressive growth plans while also executing a "customer first" mentality, ensuring customers are getting the best and most out of their SAP investment. To this end, SAP will continue to invest and roll out additional NeGOtiate&WIN workshops in 2019 and beyond. This will ensure a unified approach to how salespeople are negotiating with their customers, while reinforcing global targets to reduce discounts and concessions within deals. In addition, the program team will continue to track and evaluate measurable business outcomes, to ensure that the NeGOtiate&WIN program provides the expected outcomes set by the executive leadership team. We will continue to run the program throughout 2019 and 2020 and anticipate exceptional business results that will help us to achieve our 2020 business goals.

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"About the author

Katherine Collins is a Senior Director of Global Sales Leadership programs and has been with SAP for 15 years in sales and sales enablement. As a certified executive coach with 17 years' experience in sales she specializes in creating and facilitating global sales leadership programs. For the past seven years Collins has focused on designing, developing and facilitating several sales and sales management leadership programs for SAP's top performers globally, including SAP's award winning NeGOtiate&WIN program, Digital Elite, and the Global Account Director Academy. Collins also acts as an Executive Coach and Master Facilitator for global programs offered for SAP's other lines of business.



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Interesting Content Key Insights in a Nutshell



MERCURI INTERNATIONAL INFOGRAPHIC



THE NEW NORMAL?

IN 2020 THE ONLY CONSTANT IS CHANGE.

Remote working is a big part of that. Here are some interesting insights from data gathered **before** and **during** the outbreak...

SELLING HAD ALREADY GONE VIRTUAL

Sales reps are already embracing virtual technologies to engage with customers:

12%

INCREASE FROM 2015-2018¹⁾

"Among the many factors driving the increase in virtual selling, buyer preference stands out. Buyers are **digital-first** and don't feel the need for face-to-face communication"

TRISH BERTUZZI, PRESIDENT & CHIEF STRATEGIST, THE BRIDGE GROUP

REMOTE WORKING MIGHT ACTUALLY IMPROVE EFFICIENCY...

of remote workers:

56% are as efficient/more efficient²⁾

44% are less efficient²⁾

...than before compulsory remote working



...AND SAVE COMPANIES
MONEY...

\$11,315

- average saving for US firms for a half-time remote worker³⁾



...WHILE GIVING MORE TO
EMPLOYEES*

\$2,500 - \$4,000

- average saving for US employee, working remotely half the week³⁾



... LESS TIME IN TRAFFIC MEANS MORE
TIME TO WORK

11 days per year

Half-time remote workers save on average 11 days per year by not commuting³⁾

FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY
ARE KEY...

73% of organizations have observed new ways of working that they might use in the future²⁾

44% of organizations have observed new processes that they might use²⁾

76% reported an innovation they might use²⁾

...BUT NOTEVERYONE'S UP TO
SPEED...

18% of UK office workers had the flexibility to work from home prior to 2020's crisis⁴⁾

441 believe that their employer has the technological infrastructure to allow productive remote working⁴⁾

GLASS HALF FULL? HOW MIGHT
ENFORCED REMOTE WORKING
BENEFIT BUSINESS?

22% considering cross training employees to add new skills⁵⁾

13% creating new products and services

34% re-thinking assumptions regarding current business practices⁵⁾

8% don't think it could be advantageous⁵⁾

MERCURI
international

ONLINE LEARNING WILL ALSO BECOME THE NEW NORMAL



\$107bn - online learning market 2015

⁶⁾ **\$325bn** - predicted value in 2025...⁶⁾



Every year Mercuri International empowers companies in over 50 countries to achieve sales excellence. We serve our clients both locally and globally with customized solutions and industry expertise. We grow profit through people, providing the tools and processes to tackle any sales challenge.

For more information visit mercuri.net or mercuri.de

* Based on 2.5 days per week. Primary savings are increased productivity, lower real estate costs, reduced staff absenteeism / turnover, better disaster preparedness.

1. Salesforce "State of Sales" Report 3rd edition
2. econsultancy/marketing week surveys, March 2020

3. Global Workplace Analytics

4. Tyto PR

5. Future Workplace Survey (publ. In Forbes)

6. Research and Markets (publ. In Forbes)

NEW TO VIRTUAL TRAINING?

Top Tips for Running a Great Session

Webinars are a great tool, but sometimes we need to take things to the next level. That's where virtual training sessions come in. Here are our top tips: when to use virtual training and how to give your audience the very best experience.

WHAT IS VIRTUAL TRAINING? IT IS...

Live and instructor-led using a specialized online platform

IT ISN'T...

A conference call, webinar, or e-learning module

CHOOSE VIRTUAL TRAINING WHEN...

Your main objective is teaching, rather than just informing

You want your audience to participate and ask questions

You need participants to 'learn by doing', not just listen

PREPARATION IS KEY. GET READY BY...

Practicing with the technology and rehearsing in advance

Knowing your audience. What topics will drive their interest?

Remove distractions. Turn off email, phone, and messaging

DESIGN FOR SUCCESS. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE...

Great interactive design, with engaging and attractive slides

A good presenter with strong verbal and presentation skills

Explained to participants how to use the online platform

DO...

Respect your audience's skill- level, culture, and individuality

Keep them engaged - ask questions and encourage responses

Promote interaction every few minutes to keep interest high

DON'T...

Exhaust your audience. Ideally keep training sessions to 1 to 2 hours

Spread yourself too thin. Keep group sizes to 10-12 people max

Use humor unless you are very, very sure of your audience

AND LASTLY...

The classroom is virtual, your audience isn't. Keep it human

Make it easy to understand, with appropriate speed and volume

Vary pitch, tone, and inflection to convey interest and enthusiasm



WANT TO RAISE YOUR REMOTE SELLING GAME?

HERE ARE OUR TOP 10 TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

1

LEARN THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FACE-TO-FACE AND REMOTE

Accept that while some of your existing sales skills are relevant, you're going to need additional ones to make the most of this environment.

2

UNDERSTAND THE TECHNOLOGY

Make sure that you're familiar with software and hardware in advance – test out video conferencing tools, microphones, and headphones on calls with colleague.

3

PREPARATION IS KEY

Collect as much information from the web as possible – asking questions is good, but not if you should already know the answers...

4

PREPARE WITH THE 4S METHOD

- a. Understand your customer's current **SITUATION**
- b. **SELECT** relevant objectives
- c. Choose the **SCENARIO** of the upcoming meeting
- d. Have all the **SUPPORTING** tools to hand

5

USE SLIDESHOPS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR MESSAGE

Information on screen is easier to absorb than voice only – so take advantage of the fact that you have a captive audience sitting at a laptop.

6

ACTIVELY LISTEN TO YOUR CUSTOMERS

Give them your full, undivided attention – before you launch into your sales pitch, ensure that you've fully understood their needs.

7

USE STORYTELLING

Engage with your audience on a human level – emotion is a critical factor in decision making.

8

BE FLEXIBLE

Accept that your usual messaging might not work with customers facing new challenges. Be ready to adapt your pitch.

9

GET CREATIVE

A standard sales pitch email can get lost in the noise. Consider including videos, value-adding content etc.

10

BE PATIENT

Don't forget that for every novice remote seller there's a novice remote buyer – give your customer time to adapt to a new way of doing business and don't be in too much of a rush to close the deal.



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