

T.E.A.M.

TOGETHER EACH ACHIEVES MORE

*Selling*TM



FOR THE SALES PROFESSIONAL[®]
AND ACCOUNT SELLING TEAM

BY
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ACADEMYfor
Professional Sales
Development

Forward

Greetings Sales Professionals!

Changes are constant and challenges are great in the interesting times we are experiencing. I felt compelled to share my story, after spending over 40 years selling in the field, and as a sales trainer. The last several years I have witnessed many changes in selling, from forecasts and budgets to building relationships, to online bids, to the advent of teams. Although Team Selling is not new, it's difficult to execute without proper structure and disciplines. I've tried to capture the importance of structure in building world-class sales teams, and how necessary it is to define the roles in selling and servicing Customer Buying Teams. I used the theme of "**T.E.A.M. (Together Each Achieves More) Selling**" as the focal point of capturing and sharing my experiences, as well as positioning ourselves for Next Generation Selling as Sales Professionals and what's needed to be successful.

Many of you have experienced dealing with buying teams and committees with mixed results. I've witnessed similar problems with lack of communication, no leadership or follow through, duplication of efforts and not delivering a consistent Value Story to all buying team members. As selling is becoming more complex, so are the stages of buying. Now, more than ever, multiple touch points are needed to get the customer's attention and make contact. Technology, innovation and social media will only continue to expand and are not going away. All of this has put a burden on account managers. As an account manager, you can't do it all by yourself anymore! Utilize the power of the Account Selling Team and "match up" to the Customer Buying Team. Allow this "quickie book" to help guide your thinking as we all navigate through these challenging and interesting times. Share it with all of your sales associates and team members to help align your teams and focus on the customer. Remember, it's no longer about the seller, it's all about our customer.

Good Luck & Good T.E.A.M. (Together Each Achieves More) Selling,



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T.E.A.M. Selling For The Sales Professional®

Together Each Achieves More

Next Generation Selling Is All About The Buyer

The Sales Professional® is in the midst of going through a re-transformation. The concept of being a vendor or supplier is no longer applicable. Customers' ever-changing expectations and buying habits require skilled sales consultants, who become trusted advisors, by providing solutions that add value to the customers' offerings. Unfortunately, many salespeople are not capable of adapting from a seller-perspective strategy to a buyer-perspective strategy, which is critical to completing this transformation. Fortunately, new knowledge, skills and training can be taught and learned to help facilitate this re-transformation to Next-Generation Selling.

Today, it takes critical thinking to change your perspective toward selling. Everything around us is rapidly changing. So is the demand for the Next Generation Sales Professional. It's time to transform your sales team from traditional (seller-perspective – bottom-up) selling strategies that use “features and facts” pushing your product; to next generation (buyer-perspective – top-down) selling strategies that use “benefits and value” to focus on delivering solutions.

Revenue, Margin And Market Share...Oh My!

No, we're not taking a trip down the “yellow brick road,” but we are on a true quest or journey for survival. Since the economic crash of 2008-2009, all of our businesses and corporations have witnessed a financial principle called, “Cash is King!” So many had to put their heads down and “barrel through” drops of 40%, 60%, even up to 80% loss in revenue. For the most part, companies quit buying...less volume and less frequency of ordering. Corporate America put training on hold; believe me as a training consultant. In over 40 years, I've survived three recessions, but nothing like this one. Now, I gauge and monitor cash flow, not margin. Some say we'll never see a bustling economy like we once had. There are hope and expectation as well as good news. Many industries and organizations are thriving again, experiencing double-digit growth and capturing market share. Regardless, all eyes are on sales and marketing and we're on center stage, baby!

“We live in interesting times,” a Chinese curse about change. We either learn to “manage change or change manages us.” There is a new breed of salesperson emerging. The Consummate Sales Professional must be able to provide a valuable insight into the customer's business to impact performance, productivity and profits. When you bring these solutions to the customer as the trusted advisor, you create the “mindshare” so when they need something, the customer thinks of you first and calls you. This requires a different sales perspective and change in mind-set which requires critical thinking from the salesperson. This requires a change in behavior, knowledge and skill set, completely supported with standards, procedures and regulations on a consistent basis. Finally, this requires the selling profession to adopt and develop a Sales Certification Process for Next Generation Selling.

Why Sales Certification?

There are many challenges facing all sales forces today...limited access to buyers, less customer loyalty, product complexity and increased customer sophistication. Add to that, obsolete selling systems, inadequate resources and lack of sales leadership that have created a different selling environment for Next Generation Selling. The power has shifted from the seller to the buyer, and buyers are flexing their power in an inordinate way to the sellers. No longer are we pushing a product. Customers and buying needs have changed, creating the transformation of the new Sales Professional.

This new breed of Sales Professional will develop and evolve like other professionals in other professions: doctors, lawyers, accountants and engineers. Knowledge and skill development require continuing education and training. All professions have three basic requirements:

- 1. Education, studies and training in basic principles.**
- 2. A standard licensing or certification process.**
- 3. Professionals are specialized.**

Other industries and professions offer certification in a multitude of disciplines. Internally there are purchasing, quality, HR and technical certifications requiring continuing education to maintain licensing. Externally, there are professionals in a similar fashion to raise the standards of sales and service excellence. For over 50 years, Butler Learning Systems has trained, educated and certified Sales Professionals by the thousands and will continue to do so for Next Generation Selling. It's an honor and privilege to be recognized as ***The Sales Professional®***.

Sales Professionals are eligible for TSP Certification after completing three levels of sales training. Certification is granted by Butler Learning Systems, based on over 50 years' experience of sales leadership and backed by hundreds of thousands of Sales Professionals who have proven and verified the effectiveness of the Sales Certification Process. Once certified, ***The Sales Professional®*** is entitled to all rights and privileges to use the initials TSP to designate achieving this sales certification.

So, are you ready, willing and able to proceed with us down the pathway and journey toward T.E.A.M. Selling? Do you have a choice? Yes, you do, always! Remember, the choices we make today have an impact later, so read on and learn what it is going to take to Become ***The Sales Professional®*** and be successful in Next Generation Selling.

Quality Circles & The TQM Movement

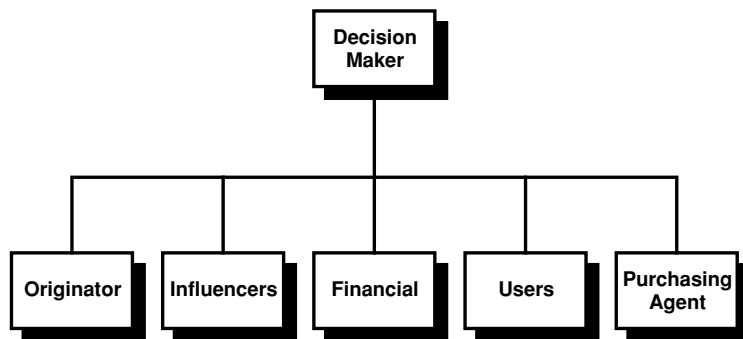
My first exposure with workplace teams came in the late 1970s when business and industry were knee deep in Total Quality Management (TQM). Deming's quality concepts that were perfected in Japan after WWII were brought back to America, with the understanding that they would "fix things," especially between labor and management. Little did they know that these quality tools were only as good as the people who worked together and used them in the proper sequence and manner. So, the advent of teams in Corporate America arrived under the identity of Quality Circles (QC) in order to bring associates together. The theme was to improve quality and be able to compete globally, especially with the Japanese in automotive. The problem was culture shock, or lack of. Management took these traditional Japanese concepts and skills and tried to implement them directly with our independent, strong-willed and "proud to be an American" worker with mixed results. About one-third of the teams were successful, another third mediocre and the final third of the QC teams failed miserably. Why? Management didn't embrace the strategy and/or the team members lacked structure and training. It seemed like we spent the majority of time doing team building and problem solving in training classes. Most teams never got past the training hurdle, continued to struggle and soon shut down completely. The ones that survived continued to evolve into cross-functional teams and ended up as completely self-directed, operating on an ad hoc basis. These experiences solidified in me, the importance of teamwork, structure and being in alignment with common goals. It's interesting how the same team concepts and skills can apply to work, at home and to sports teams as well.

Team Selling Is Not New

I remember a company in the 1980s that pioneered the concept of Team Selling with their customers. They called their sales teams CBUs or Customer Business Units. It was a great concept and provided a competitive edge for them. Unfortunately, the units or teams had no structure or training which led to disastrous results, creating mayhem internally and externally. Lack of communication, duplication of efforts and other inconsistencies with quality, lead times and delivery, created a distaste to the customer. Team Selling is no different than implementing a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. A company must have the infrastructure and systems already in place internally or must build them as they implement. This can create more problems, as so many of you know who have been through these experiences.

Certain disciplines must be in place for Team Selling to work. There's a school of thought that says, "Structure must follow Strategy," made famous by the late Peter Drucker. It takes structure and discipline in order to execute Team Selling successfully and continuously. All sales team members must be trained, skilled and dedicated to the team approach to achieve sales success. Can a sales team do a better job than sales reps working alone? Yes! You've got to believe this and realize the power of working together as a team. Teamwork is multiplying each others efforts where the sum of the parts are greater than the parts (1+1+1=5 or 7). Synergistic results are achieved when everyone is in alignment toward a common goal. As an account manager today, you can no longer do it all by yourself! So, let's move forward and establish the structure for Team Selling to work. Remember the sales mantra in **T.E.A.M.** – **T**ogether **E**ach **A**chieves **M**ore. The following pages will provide the framework needed to help build world-class sales teams with a customer focus and to be successful in Next Generation Selling.

Customer Buying Teams



What's happening today? What are you seeing? Are you running into buying teams? Large or small, formal or informal, national account or small account; Customer Buying Teams will continue to grow. All of this is creating a complex selling environment. No longer can one account rep handle all buying team members. The selling cycle is being extended because of this. Different members have different motives so relationships might be hampered or neglected, creating further conflict or delays. Today it takes multiple touch points by different members to get someone's attention. So, in order to be effective communicating to the customer, utilize the strength of your Account Selling Team to help accomplish this. But first, you must learn the Customer Buying Team members inside and out.

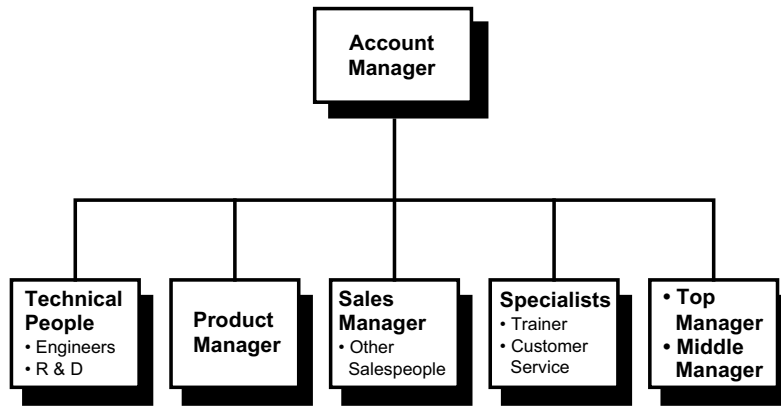
Identify & profile the Customer Buying Team members.

The sooner you can do this, the better. It will save time later in building the right relationship with the buying team members in the account. Take the time to develop a contact person or originator as your "go to" person. Understand who the influencers are and use them accordingly to advance the stages of the sale. Influencers can say "No!" but they cannot say "Yes!" Be thinking how you "match up" the Customer Buying Team with your Account Selling Team. Decision makers are being protected and shielded, so try to identify up front. Even though you may deal with a buying group or committee, there's usually a senior manager that has the final say. Be ready to ask and qualify who this person is. Remember, try not to expend any energy or make a presentation unless the decision maker is present. Otherwise you just may have to do it again, or you won't have another opportunity to do so!

Buying teams have an inordinate amount of power and they're flexing it frequently. The account manager's ability to harness and manage these influencers varies greatly and takes time. There are engineers, maintenance groups, outside consultants, operators, technicians, purchasers, plant managers and third party consortiums. If working with a formal purchasing process, get to know the purchasing manager or agent as soon as possible. The sooner, the better! Why? Most sales reps "steer clear" from purchasing to the end when it's time to award the P.O. The seller has no relationship, so there goes the price...down! This person is no different than the others on the team, so get to know them like the others. Allow the relationship and your Value Story to help overcome any hurdles on price. Typically, the better the relationship, the less "positioning" of price. It's relationship selling first, product selling second.

How can one person manage all of this and continue to sell? They can't! You must be in position to bring in an Account Selling Team to offset and counter the buying team's position of leverage, strength and power.

Account Selling Teams



Account Selling Teams have grown out of necessity today. Think about it! How can one key account rep serve and sell an eight member buying committee? Although each member is in alignment with a common goal, there are various levels of degrees of influences on these teams. Add to that, each one of them has their own motives, desires and actions that can pull together or pull away from the other team members. The account manager can only work or meet with a few of these people, so the only way to effectively reach, sell and serve this buying team is through the Account Selling Team.

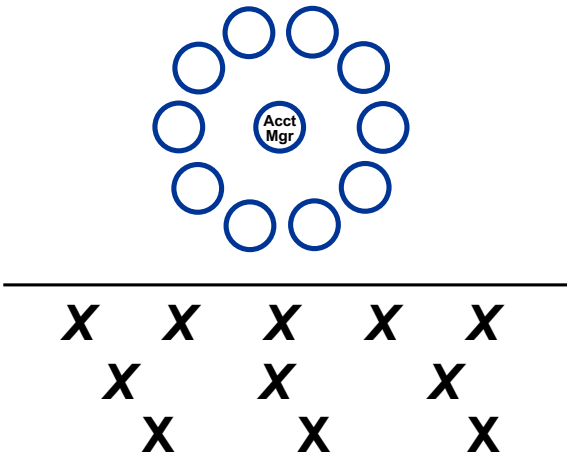
Match up your Account Selling Team with each member of the Customer Buying Team.

How hard is it to get in touch with your customers today? It takes 7 to 9 touches to reach someone. How many times have you heard, “Just give us a call back and we’ll let you know,” and you can’t get in contact with them again? Today, it takes multiple touch points to get someone’s attention. This takes time. You should try to contact people in cycles of three: e-mail, phone message, and drop in as an example. Allow your sales team members to be a touch point or one of your cycles of three. This saves time. Sometimes you just can’t “connect” with people, or personality clashes occur working with buying team members. This drags you down and delays the selling cycle. If you have this problem, switch out the sales team member immediately and assign a different person. Remember, people still buy from people they like, so don’t allow “people issues” to damage relationships with any of the buying team members. The key is to “match up” your players with their players, and through multiple touch points, deliver your Value Story with consistency.

Identify the roles of the Account Selling Team and profile the strengths, personalities and responsibilities of each team member.

Again, the sooner you can identify the roles and profile the Account Selling Team members, the better. It puts you in position as account manager to take the initiative and start building relationships sooner. Introduce these people to the buying team members, let them do their jobs and watch what happens! As long as your members are trained, skilled and accountable for their roles, the sales team will succeed. If not, you have total chaos, finger pointing and no one stepping up to serve the customer. Usually, it's harder to work together internally than serving our customers externally. How much more effective could we be and whose responsibility is it to get the sales team in proper alignment with common goals? Ah yes, success or failure falls on the shoulders of the account manager.

The Account Manager Becomes The Quarterback



Today, you don't have to become a sales manager to lead the Account Selling Team! You do have to have skills, experience and ability to orchestrate the sales team, like a conductor of a symphony, or better yet, like the quarterback on a football team. How a quarterback executes and implements on the field is no different than how the account manager directs and controls the sales team's activities with the customer. Problems stem from lack of leadership, failure to communicate or no follow up. Typically, sales management relies on their veterans or seasoned sales leaders who have the education and experience. It's up to management to provide the structure and training to assist these account managers in implementing sales strategies and initiatives. Sounds so easy and simple, doesn't it? Yeah, right! What skills and sales activities does the account manager need? Preparation, preparation, preparation! All of this takes time and some of it, like team building, can't be rushed. Planning and decision making are needed. So are setting account goals, dealing with different behaviors and personalities and developing account business plans. Don't forget coaching and training too. One account manager once asked, "What's left?" Not much! Remember, it's all about being able to sell, present and close the buying team, as well as develop and grow the account deeper and wider!

Training becomes the vehicle to introduce change.

Training becomes the vehicle to communicate all of this to the Account Selling Team. People learn plateau by plateau, so “chunk” the training when you need it and make it relevant to your goals and initiatives. Do you have the systems and infrastructure already set up to utilize Team Selling? Make sure you have a Selling Process in place, along with a contact management program or CRM-type database. Technology can be very helpful for Team Selling to work and maximize leads, activities and opportunities. More important are the people skills and team building required to make the sales team function smoothly. As the account manager, this falls on your shoulders, so accept your leadership role in Team Selling as the quarterback and be prepared to “huddle up.”

The Huddle Concept

A good friend of mine, former sales training manager of a tire manufacturer, shared an experience he had with Urban Meyer from Ohio State. My buddy attended a business luncheon where he heard Urban speak about his “huddle concept” and how he attributed it as his key to success with managing the college athletes. As Urban got further into his talk, he mentioned how everybody in our society judges each other by how much money you have, how big your house is, what car you drive and the exotic vacations you take. But none of this really matters if you’re in the huddle. Urban made them all stand up and hold hands in a circle as he continued, “Eleven professionals with specific talents and skills come together and huddle up. Everyone is interdependent on each other, working together to achieve a common goal...“ONE GOAL, ONE TEAM.” “It doesn’t matter how good you are, what color you are or where you’re from or how much money you have. When we huddle up, it’s ONE TEAM, ONE GOAL!” Damn, if that doesn’t send a shiver down your spine, nothin’ will! So, account managers, here is a little “inspiration” to go with your “preparation” as you develop, coach and lead your Account Selling Team to minimize your “perspiration!”

Account managers lead the team by selecting, communicating and getting a commitment from each member on his/her role.

As the account manager, step back and look at the big picture for a moment. Define the sales team members’ roles in relation to each Customer Buying Team member. Only select and use these players when needed. Allow the structure to discipline your team so everyone knows the expectations and end results. When your team is running smoothly, you can achieve sales success. It starts with you. It’s by your leadership and positive persuasion that the team comes together, united as one. Lack of leadership will let the members go back to independent, self-serving activities without a common goal. Which do you prefer? Let’s continue to define the role of the Account Selling Team for successful Team Selling.

Sales Management

Sales managers, relax! Can you empower your people and subdue your ego? More importantly, can you utilize your power and strength to offset the customer's position early in the relationship process? A common mistake I see frequently is neglecting to "match up" management on both sides. The sooner, the better. Why wait? Get the "big kahunas" together as soon as practical and jump start the relationship quicker. I've asked thousands of sales reps, "Have you brought management together yet in your key accounts?" They answer, "No!" "Why not?" I ask. It's easy to see how important the account really is in the eyes of the customer by introducing management in the early stages, so please don't overlook this.

Remember to match up management on both sides early in the process for your key accounts.

Sales managers, don't overlook your key role on the Account Selling Team. You are the consultant and coach to the account manager as well as the others. Communicate your plans and delegate to the team. Coach, reinforce, support, cheer lead, discipline, reward and praise accordingly. That is your role as a senior sales leader. Sales management holds the key to unlock a Selling Process and make it sustainable!

Everywhere I go, in practically every organization, I witness sales managers struggling with trying to standardize a Selling Process. Eight out of 10 (80/20) companies do not follow up, reinforce and coach their salespeople before, during and especially after the call. Alright, six out of 10 then, at least! Hence my frustration as the training provider is the first one to blame. Several years ago, three months after facilitating a three-day sales training boot camp, I met with the president on a follow-up call. He started off the meeting and said, "Your process isn't working!" Much to my surprise, I restated and asked, "What do you mean?" He said, "I mean no one is using the Selling Process." Then my probing kicked in and surfaced the real motives. "Why not? What follow-up have you provided? What action items are you working on? Did you even hand out the Playbooks 30 days ago?" Nope, notta, nothing.

I went home that night, frustrated as all "get out," mainly because I "failed" in his eyes, regardless of whose fault it was, so I was driven to lay out a step-by-step, detailed outline that I call, "Coaching The Sales Professional®...a process for life!" That's right! All levels of a sales organization must be coached to continually reinforce and follow up, to see if the Selling Process is in place, in working order AND being used. Every 60 to 90 days, you must do a "check up" and figure out what needs to be fixed, quickly. Flexibility is the key as you continue to adjust to fit YOUR sales culture. A "one size fits all" is no longer acceptable. The Selling Process must be custom to your sales culture, otherwise it won't flourish.

Top-down training is still the right strategy for management to communicate their sales initiatives and systems approach. All too often we "bypass" the mid levels of sales management and drill down to the reps. The typical report back: "Our reps aren't using the process." It's no wonder management does not coach, follow-up and reinforce, especially each other, let alone getting it down to the salespeople. The only way to get sales management to coach, follow-up and reinforce is to train them to do it with each other. Practice, skill and repetition provides knowledge, but training plus practice develops habits that lead to sustainability. When coaching becomes part of your pre- and post-call debriefs, you know you're heading

in the right direction for your sales culture to grow. When pre-call planning becomes a daily regimen, utilizing a Selling Process, you're well underway. But remember, you must do "check-ups" every 60-90 days to ensure all sales team members are on track.

Sales managers need the same coaching from their managers in order to keep it going. So often, this is where breakdowns occur and must be addressed. It's never too late to do a refresher and continue to practice the skills of coaching until they become habit. Remember, salespeople have a tendency to "drift." That's why the quarterly "check-ups" are mandatory for sustainability.

Going back to my original story, meeting with the president...we got back together within a week and I presented my "Coaching for Life" outline. We modified it to fit his game plan, I coached him on coaching pre- and post-call debriefs with the reps. It's become a daily routine and the company continues to grow. So, sales leaders, if I've upset you or "ticked you off" and you still disagree, give me a call and let's talk it through. Better yet, let me send you our "Coaching for Life" outline to provide the structure you need to make your Selling Process sustainable.

Marketing

Where are my marketing people? Thank God marketing is on the sales team! This is where we get creativity and innovation for literature, customer satisfaction surveys, presentations, data information, lead generation, etc. Marketing can become your "secret ingredient" and image builder to the Customer Buying Team. Get marketing on your team and involved early in the process. Today, marketing plays a crucial role in the targeting and selection of key accounts, from prospecting to the close and beyond. In order for a sales culture to flourish and Team Selling to work, marketing and sales must be in sync. For example, on a new product launch, the product guys must be able to communicate the features and benefits in the same "sales language" that the sales team communicates to the customers. Too often, marketing gets "left out" of sales training, creating a "disconnect" on communicating with sales. When the sales team depends on a Selling Process for pre-call planning and to deliver a Value Story with benefits, as well as handling objections with "best practice" responses; all learned in a "common sales language," marketing must be properly aligned and communicate back to sales in the same language. Comprene? Si! I hope you agree that marketing needs to be involved in Team Selling from the very beginning.

Allow marketing to bring creativity and innovation to the Account Selling Team.

I've witnessed some great feats put on by marketing, from sales blitzes to trade shows, in demos and presentations, to being right in front of the customer, face-to-face. It's all about creating value. Value, to me, is all about perception which satisfies a want. Marketing should be front and center in communicating their Value Story with consistency and with a customer focus. Now, get ready for some of the biggest changes happening in Team Selling: inside sales and customer service.

Inside Sales & Customer Service

Culture shock. I hope you're ready for this. In the last few years I've noticed a shift in sales training, more toward inside sales and customer service. Whether OEM, Tier I or Tier II suppliers or Aftermarket; there have been some big changes and they have had a major influence on Team Selling. As companies continue to change, restructure and redefine themselves, I've seen the customer service function leave operations and fall under sales and marketing, which is good. Up to 50% of incoming calls are now being handled via e-mail, fax or e-commerce. Inside sales has created a funnel in the sales pipeline and is missing big opportunities on customer inquiries with add-ons, cross-selling and up-selling. Customer service and inside sales are witnessing culture shock by being asked to make outbound calls and being sales driven by numbers, plans, incentives and quotas. In the last few years, I've trained several hundred inside sales and customer service reps on sales training. It was a re-awakening for me and another problem area for Team Selling. Many companies are blending a mixture in training of customer service skills along with sales fundamentals to create more "proactive" selling from an inside perspective. It makes sense as these key players have the relationship with your contractual accounts by handling the day-to-day operations and placing their orders. We're seeing a transformation as the traditional Customer Service Rep (CSR) is quickly becoming the Inside Sales Specialist (ISS). This Inside Sales Specialist quotes, troubleshoots, negotiates and grows the business, especially with incremental sales. Their sales approach becomes "outbound" driven and not just inbound. The ISS must be equipped and skilled to handle these transactions which add to the complexity of selling. The ISS truly becomes the "go to person" in the eyes of the customer. Many of these inside sales teams do not have the skills, hence their frustration and reluctance which leads to failure. There is a huge "Culture Shock" that must be overcome, transitioning from calls coming inbound to making more outbound calls. It takes training, along with practice, drill and repetition to make this transformation successful.

Once they got over the "sales culture shock" or reluctance of making outbound calls, the inside reps became the nucleus of the sales team. If the account manager is the quarterback, then inside sales and customer service reps are the center, who hands off the ball to the quarterback. One company I worked with turned all of their CSRs to inside sales, and with the proper training, they were successful on quote follow-ups while growing sales in a flat economy.

Utilize inside sales and customer service to be proactive in making outbound calls in order to sell deeper and wider in the customer accounts.

Don't allow technology to replace the human element of emotion when communicating to customers. Let this inside specialist provide the direct contact (touch point) that's needed on a daily or weekly basis. These people truly build their accounts and relationships on a daily basis which creates the mindshare. Let them know that they are the center to the sales team and don't allow them to become the funnel in the pipeline over missed customer opportunities. The account manager continues to execute the strategies or plays while leading the sales team from the field, always looking for new opportunities.

Do you use brokers, dealers or other independent distributors? Let's see how they fit in with the Account Selling Team concept.

Are Manufacturing Reps/Distributors Needed Today?

You have to admit customers either love or hate to deal with a distributor or dealer. OEMs continue to struggle with this, vacillating one way or the other. But, the overall trend seems to be going direct to the larger accounts and filling in marginal or non-saturated market areas with independents. Like it or not, the independent dealer or agent is being challenged to provide value-add, and if they are part of your Team Selling, then they need to be schooled accordingly.

Communicate with your manufacturing/distributor reps just like another member of the Account Selling Team.

Utilize these members as they develop key relationships in your supply chains. They can provide coverage in areas that may be difficult to get to, and help to expand market share. As long as these players can demonstrate value-added services in the chain, there will always be a place for them in selling. The key is to be direct, straight forward and communicate up front so there are no surprises or complaints from the customer. Where do repairs/spare parts fit in to Team Selling? Could this be our “diamond in the rough?”

Repairs/Spare Parts Impact Margins & Grow The Business

Aftermarket is big business! Sales and service go hand-in-hand. Sales may bring in customers, but service and parts keep them for life! Whether you're an OEM or MRO manufacturer or supplier, this business is growing and has a huge impact on margins and profitability, especially with service contracts, repairs and parts. Develop a customer base that keeps coming back as you sell deeper and wider into these accounts. In a down economy, service and repairs can often pick up the slack until the economy turns up again. So, utilize this group as part of Team Selling to grow the business and increase market share with your brand presence.

Maximize margins and profitability with service repairs/spare parts.

Keep these people sales-oriented, whether it's through e-commerce or counter sales. The same selling skills apply as well as delivering a Value Story with a customer focus. Relationships are the key to establishing the “mindshare” for your products and services. The Account Selling Team must be synchronized, utilizing all the players who carry a consistent message to the Customer Buying Team throughout the stages of the buying cycle, while using multiple touch points.

Team Selling Concept

We all have our own perception and vision of how these teams should operate. My belief is that sales teams are no different than sports teams. Execution of fundamentals is what separates the winners from the losers. It takes preparation, training, practice, coaching and skill. Put in the structure and the disciplines needed to get everyone in alignment toward a common goal or focus. Define the roles properly, communicate consistently and get a commitment from the other players. Allow training to become the vehicle to communicate change. Brainstorming and problem solving become the activators for creativity and innovation...all with a customer focus. Sound too good to be true? Not at all! Be aware of the challenges and continue to push forward in these interesting times.

Challenges With Team Selling

What are the challenges we are faced with? The number-one issue is working with people in a team-oriented environment. It's difficult to get associates to transition from a self-awareness to a team-awareness. Team building takes time and must evolve. It can't be a revolution like the Quality Circles were in the 1980s, which became short lived. It has to be a natural evolution for true teamwork and trust to occur. The heart of teamwork is understanding and applying the skills of brainstorming and problem solving. These skills build trust and bring people together. Conflicts occur with change, both internally with the Account Selling

Team and externally with the Customer Buying Team. Understanding conflict resolution is another barrier that must be dealt with in order for teams to grow. Account managers must be able to tap the power of the sales team for synergistic results.

Other infrastructure and systems need to be in place or it will add to the challenges. Companies are standardizing their Selling Processes, providing a common sales language, proficiency in selling skills, and consistency of message from all members of the selling team. The ability to formalize your Value Story with consistency among sales team members will also have a major affect on all buying team members. Also, the Account Selling Team concept needs to integrate with your CRM or contact management system to assure multiple touch points with each member of the buying team. Another area of concern is keeping up-to-date with inputting the customer data from sales, marketing and customer service. Account business plans and customer profiles are being used to "cleanse" the data. The Sales Certification Process will continue to grow and will become mandatory, as in other professions. Lastly, we see sales incentives and compensation packages changing to reflect the overall team success and not just that of an individual. However, when it's all said and done, the benefits of Team Selling far outweigh any of these challenges!

Team Selling Is Here To Stay

Sales teams have reported better forecasting and budgeting results with Team Selling. It also provides a strategic advantage, along with a competitive edge. Selling deeper and wider into customer accounts creates "mindshare," as the buying team thinks of you first, as their supplier of choice. Sales teams establish longer term, better quality relationships as the supplier of choice. Multi-year agreements will continue to grow to keep competitors at bay. Team Selling increases the flexibility in meeting the needs of demanding global customers. It helps generate better input to R&D on new product/service development for greater creativity and innovation. Teams come up with new ideas, stay abreast of market changes and respond faster to customer needs. If executed properly, Team Selling is more efficient and cost effective. It's all about increasing revenue, margin, market share and profitability during these interesting times we live in.

"May You Live In Interesting Times."

Together Each Achieves More

Working together toward a common goal is what teams are all about. People either come together in a team environment and multiply their efforts, or they become self-serving with their own agendas. That's the difference between being ordinary versus extraordinary as a high-performance team today, compared to the QC teams of the 1980s. Continue to lead and preach the sales mantra for Team Selling to be successful: **Together Each Achieves More. All of us need to step up and become the sales leaders that are necessary for Team Selling to lead us successfully into Next Generation Selling. When I think about successful teams, I'm reminded about an experience with the Pittsburgh Steelers of the '70s. One of the most memorable experiences I had was in April of 1980 when my Dad and I drove to Pittsburgh to meet with Chuck Noll, head coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers. Chuck was at the top of his game and the Steelers were coming off of their fourth Super Bowl win in six years, after beating the Cowboys. When my Dad first approached Chuck for his ideas, the Quality Movement was rampant and team building was at the height of training in America. Chuck shared with us, over 40 team concepts and characteristics of what it takes to build successful teams. We were amazed how these same teaming concepts were also applicable to our workplace environment. I still use these concepts today in team-building exercises. Chuck considered himself a teacher first and a coach second, and spent a considerable amount of time training and building his team. Their motto was "Whatever It Takes" and his philosophy was, "There are no stars on this team. It's 11 professionals, trained, dedicated and working together for a common goal."**

As we toured the locker room, Dad and I had a chance to meet the Rooney's, Art and Dan, who were the owners. Joe Gordon, the PR Director for team operations came up to us and said, "How did you get Chuck to take the time to meet with you two? He doesn't advertise or endorse anyone or anything." Dad smiled and looked up at Joe stating, "It doesn't hurt that Chuck played football with my younger brother, Lee, at the University of Dayton in the '50s. Lee brought Chuck home to the Butler house for Sunday night dinner on a regular basis!" As you can see Sales Pros, it's all about relationships as you navigate through the journey of life.

About The Author, Bob Butler

Bob Butler began his career at Butler Learning Systems (BLS) after graduating college from Bowling Green State University. He worked in the areas of graphics production, sales and facilitating BLS seminars. He co-authored the company's sales, leadership and customer service programs with his father and founder of BLS, Don Butler (1925-2002).

As second generation, Bob continues to position BLS as a training publisher with over 30 programs (200+ modules) in Next Generation Selling, Persuasive Leadership and Service Excellence. His vast insight, knowledge and experience stems from working with top management and their associates in literally hundreds of companies and industries. Bob attributes his success to facilitating seminars to hundreds of thousands of people, learning from them as much as they were learning from him. Bob is truly "**The Sales Professional®**" celebrating over 40 years' experience in the sales trenches and is a "Product of the Product." He resides in Dayton, Ohio.

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- Prospect new accounts to increase revenue, margin and market share
- Understand how Team Selling impacts Next Generation Selling
- Continue to sell and resell value to justify the price

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