

INFORM, EDUCATE and ENGAGE

A Recipe for Field Sales
Success in a Digital World

The sales process has gone through a massive shift since the introduction of the internet. So much so that some companies mistakenly think the internet can completely replace their sales force and that the digital world can perform this function instead. The reality is that rather than reduce the power of salespeople the internet has made salespeople even more powerful than ever before.

Learn how to create a successful sales process based on integrating sales with digital technology.

Why can't the internet replace salespeople? Salespeople are much more than order takers.

1

The impact of the internet in the 20th century was enormous. So much so that many experts predicted the **death of the salesman** and that positions in sales would disappear. The internet could do everything. Experts declared that positions filled by Factory workers, Switchboard operators and bookkeeping jobs could all be automated so why not the sales force? What eventually happened?

The answer? It turns out that the number of people in sales related position has grown. In May 2014 there were 14,248,470 salespeople employed in the US. This number was 1,310,343 more than there were 15 years earlier. Further the number of people in sales related positions continues to be around 10.5% of the US work force. The prediction that the sales force would disappear was not just wrong. It was massively exaggerated.

Salespeople are much more than walking, talking, brochures and order forms. Using CRM tools and data they are much better equipped than ever before. The reality is one of realignment not replacement. Companies and customers still want them and need them for the value they add. Salespeople have increasingly embraced technology.

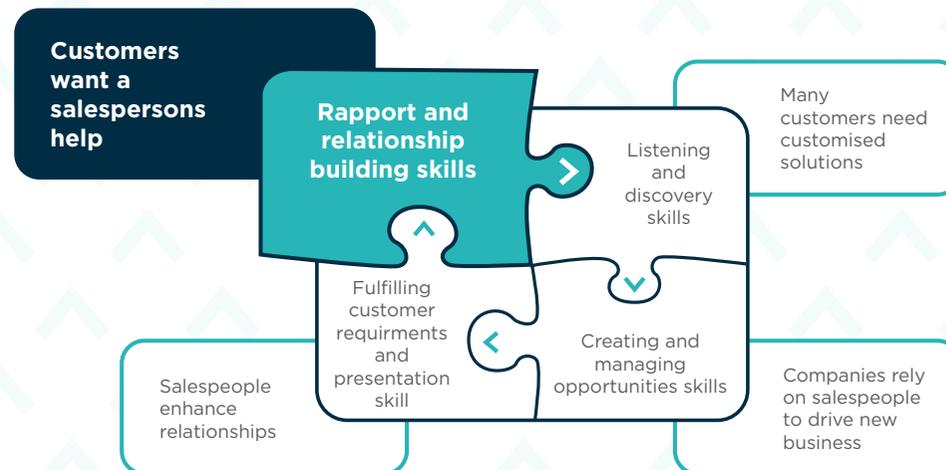
Customers and Companies want **SALESPEOPLE.**

2

Technology enhances relationships but no matter how great technology is it still can't replace the need for a salesperson's help.

The Information Technology Services Marketing Association found that 70% of B2B buyers still want to connect with a sales person early in the sales process. Customers want Salespeople and companies need Salespeople.

Salespeople are much better than any digital program when it comes to asking questions, recognising apathy, hearing frustration, empathising and matching a problem to a solution. A salesperson's ability to quickly establish **Rapport and Build Relationships** has become even more important in this digital age



Many buyers want **CUSTOMISED SOLUTIONS.**

3

Many large purchases today, particularly in the B2B environment, require customised solutions. Strategic consultants, creative advertising agencies, M & A advisors, corporate law firms and custom software developers are among the many businesses who tailor their products, solutions and services extensively to their clients/customers and target accounts.

One size does not fit all. Online marketing materials are not able to address unique requirements or offer the level of knowledge and expertise a salesperson can. The salesperson is much better equipped to listen, and tailor a package or solution to match each buyer's unique situation. This in turn creates an ever-growing need for better trained and more effective sales professionals rather diminishing the need for salespeople. **Listening and Discovery** skills need to be at a much higher level than even before in this digital world.



Companies rely on salespeople to **DRIVE NEW BUSINESS.**

4

While digital marketing is equipped to handle inbound enquiries it does a relatively poor job at introducing new products or services.

Outbound sales people who make ethical and intelligent calls to prospects are critical drivers of new business. They also play an important function in providing proactive lead generation, relationship nurturing, qualifying prospects, and (probably most importantly) saving time. The human touch is a key element of outbound sales and one which is clearly absent in digital selling.

The most intelligent salespeople are skilled in using data about prospects within the context of calls to ensure that calls aren't cold and buyers are quickly moved through the pipeline. Broad technology-based skills together with the ability to **Create and Manage Opportunities** have become critical drivers of success in the digital world.



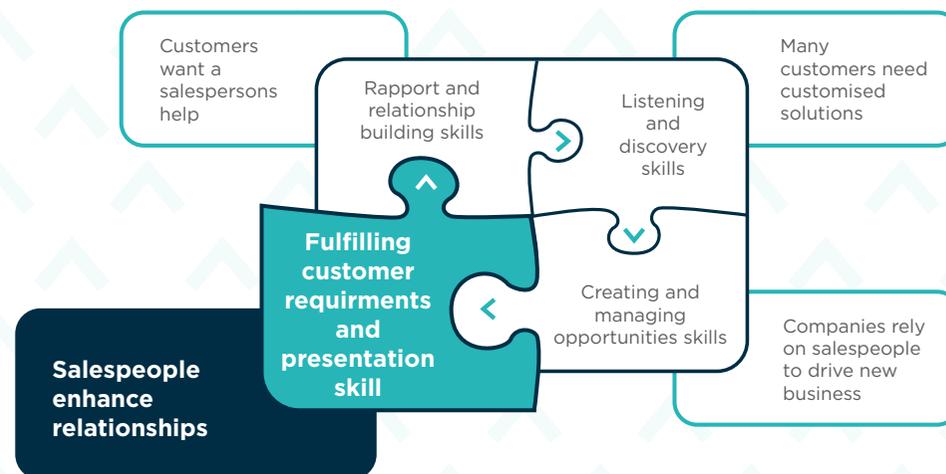
Salespeople ENHANCE RELATIONSHIPS.

5

The internet is a one way information system and cannot ask intuitive questions or add value beyond the content of its marketing materials like a salesperson.

If your business has a high bounce rate (people coming and visiting but leaving without buying) like Real Estate or Car Sales then salespeople are absolutely critical to adding value and communicating confidence in your company's products. Also because buyers are much more informed and often appear much later in the sales process your sales team needs to be equally skilled at adding value and taking advantage of data from the internet.

Top salespeople need to be technically more adept and better able to use social media tools and digital data to enhance relationships, ask intuitive questions, persuade prospects and win business. Winning business relies heavily on **Fulfilling Customer Requirements and Presentation skills** to ensure customers remain engaged in the offering during the sales process and recognise the added value the salesperson is able to skillfully present to the prospect.



Interaction begins much later in the NEW MODEL OF SELLING.

6

In the new model of selling interaction begins much later in the sales cycle. Informative, meaningful and relevant content delivered at the right time and from the right place become key components in the process. The new model of selling looks more like the graphic below. This process is very different from the old school model where the sales person was involved from the start and was responsible for leading the prospect through the sales funnel from start to finish.

Salespeople need to learn that contact with the customer often happens much later in the process and that approximately 80% of a lead's research is conducted well before that customer even talks with a salesperson. Salespeople must be particularly skilled at establishing rapport early and engaging with the sales prospect on the first contact. When the customer is ready the sales person's job is to move the customer through to a sale by building trust and adding the missing pieces of information that only the human element can achieve. Selling is all about helping people buy. Not hoping customers will find their own way through the process with little or no support.



<http://www.marketingprofs.com/articles/2013/9987/lead-nurturing-and-marketing-automation-15-key-questions-answered-question-6>

Use the internet to **INFORM, EDUCATE and ENGAGE** the customer.

7

Sales is more than building a website and hoping prospects will visit and purchase at the end. Content needs to inform, educate and engage, the website needs to be well designed as well as being optimized for mobile and providing original content. Posting on Social Media, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Effective Email Marketing, Lead Nurturing, and data analytics have become key components of this new sales approach.

Salespeople must learn how to embrace this new technology (using analytics, CRM tools, digital automation and nurturing systems). They must also have an understanding of each leads goals and pain points in order to personalize content, email, online messages, conferencing, social media and respond to **“CLICK TO CALL”** buttons at each stage in the nurturing process. Sales and digital technology must be aligned and not operate independently of each other.



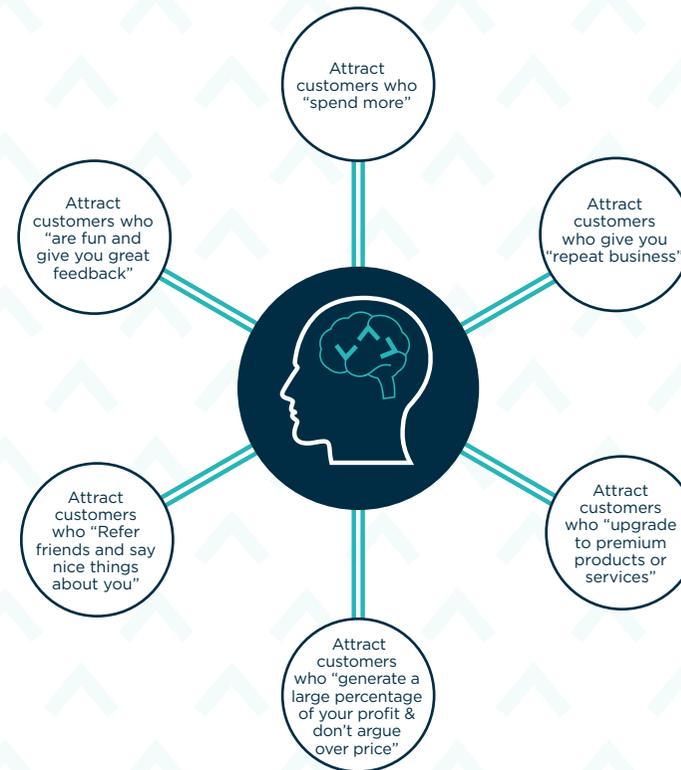
Focus your sales approach with a **CUSTOMER AVATAR**

8

Not all customers are equally profitable so it's important that your sales message focuses on the right people. The success of your sales and marketing approach depends on having a deep understanding of your ideal customer. Not just their demographic profile but also their values, knowing what they're passionate about, their social environment and what's important to them - in other words their psychographic profile.

A well-developed customer "Avatar" allows sales and marketing to create tailor made messages which your ideal customer is most likely to respond to. It also forms a key step towards increasing sales conversions and decreasing the number of customers who reject your product or service.

Salespeople must learn how to develop and use a customer "Avatar" to respond to the emotions and thoughts a customer might have as the salesperson addresses their problems (buying decisions are driven by emotion and justified by logic), identify the language to use, learn how to dissolve buyer objections, and understand the customer's specific pain.



SUMMARY

The selling process has undergone a substantial shift since the introduction of the internet and a more modern day process has emerged whereby the customer is more informed and connects with the salespeople much later in the sales cycle. The need for salespeople has grown rather than diminished since the introduction of the internet. Modern day salespeople need to be much better skilled at communicating with clients, adding value and using social media and a range of other data to influence and lead customers through to the purchase stage. The development of a customer Avatar plays a critical role in informing, focusing and aligning the sales approach.

Accela provides exceptional sales management, leadership training, coaching and consulting for faster and easier results.

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About Accela

Accela is an Australian owned company, established in 2005, renowned for exceptional sales management and leadership training, coaching and consulting. Accela has assisted many Australian blue chip and international companies to realise their teams' full potential with a comprehensive range of development solutions. To complement their existing methodology, the Hub was created for clients to measure, report, manage and continuously drive faster, easier sales results.

Accela has over 30 accredited trainers and facilitators across Australia and New Zealand, and over 40 accredited local multi-lingual trainers across Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tokyo, Bangkok London, Frankfurt, Milan and Paris.



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