BUYER CENTRIC SELLING

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HOW BUYER FOCUS CREATES BUYER CLARITY AND DRIVES BUYER CONVERSION

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David Bonney

For Krysta, Lynix, and Scarlytt, who are my daily example, that absolutely anything is possible.

To all of the Change Agents and aspiring Change Agents in the world… we have a lot of work to do. The world will never be the same when salespeople return to their rightful position as one of the most respected and appreciated roles by the markets they serve.

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Buyer Centric Selling

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Chapter 6

Chapter 7

Chapter 8

Chapter 9

Chapter 10

Chapter 11

Chapter 12

Chapter 13

Chapter 14

Chapter 15

Chapter 16

Chapter 17

Chapter 18

Chapter 19

Chapter 20

Chapter 21

Chapter 22

Chapter 23

Chapter 24

Chapter 25

Chapter 26

Chapter 27

David Bonney

INTRODUCTION

It was a cold February day in Nashville, Tennessee and we were about to complete the final test on what we considered to be the most effective sales closing process we had ever witnessed. Three steps, when executed correctly, should end in yet another resounding, *"Yesss,"* from the prospect.

Up until now, in all our tests, this closing process had driven every call to a decision and created zero friction between the rep and the prospect. It was repeatable and our data to this point showed it was creating the highest increase in conversion we had ever seen from a single variable we tested.

We were like scientists who had been in the lab breaking down some set of elements from the periodic table and reconstructing them into a revolutionary new scientific discovery. If our hypothesis was true, we could in fact ask a consistent set of questions at the end of the sales process that guided the prospect to a logical decision to purchase.

Our hypothesis stated the prospect could feel no pressure or manipulation from the process. The sales rep could have zero concern they would damage the relationship or the sale by guiding the prospect to a decision. It was our final test with our last rep, Arin. All other tests of this close had turned out a positive result. If this did as well, we knew we had a game-changing solution for sales reps all around the world.

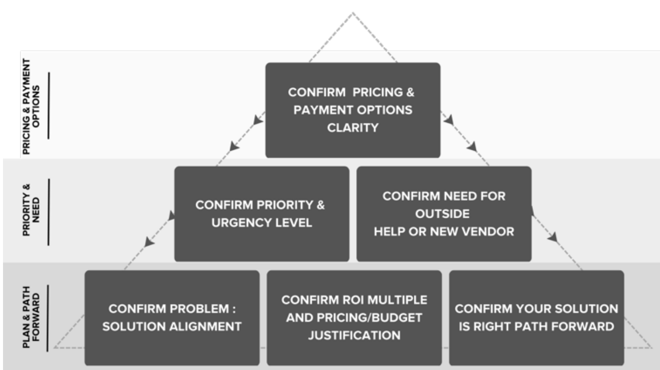
We called it the Confirmation Close and it was the final step in our Buyer-Centric Sales Playbook. The objective was to simply confirm the information in three core sections to help guide the conversation to an absolute decision every time. We could have no "maybes." The three parts of the close were:

1. Confirm Pricing & Payment Option Clarity
2. Confirm Priority & Need
3. Confirm Plan & Path Forward

There was one key to this close. It was designed to simply confirm strategic pieces of information we had *already* collected from the prospect during the Discovery, Diagnosis, and Demonstration phases of the sales process. We had already learned years earlier that *reacting* to objections after they had already taken root in the prospect's mind had a much lower success rate than if we proactively eliminated the objection during the process. By proactively removing the most common objections to moving forward, we would be able to drive the call to a decision with no friction. That decision usually being a, "yes."

Our research had shown that far too many sales calls ended in a "maybe" from the prospect. "Maybes" are the avoidance of a decision and the eventual process of following up and chasing prospects afterward was a leading factor in decreasing rep conversion. Simply put, time is not our friend in the sales process. But because maybes are comfortable for everyone, they happen often. A "yes" from the prospect is fine. A "no" is fine if we're not right for them. A "maybe" must be eliminated at all costs.

We diagramed the close process out like a pyramid, which was fitting since we all considered it to be something like an ancient mystical formula we had found in our sales research journey.

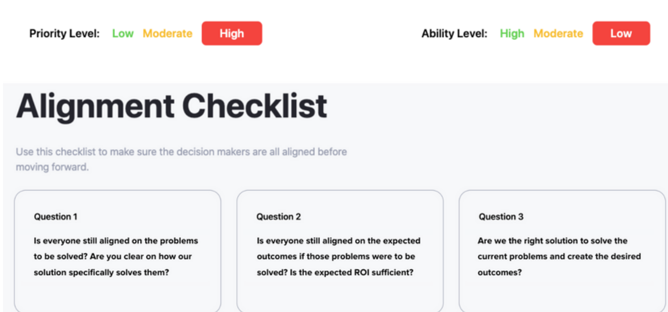


Arin was a solid rep whose performance had plateaued in the last several months and needed a boost. She was finishing up step one of the close process with her prospect, confirming clarity on pricing and payment options, as we listened in.

"Any other questions about our pricing breakdown and payment options, James?" Arin asked. *"Nope, it's straightforward enough."* the prospect responded. Arin nodded her head confidently and started to scroll down on the screen share away from the pricing section.

We had already learned a year earlier that the pricing section was a terrible point in the conversation to attempt the close. Closing isn't about the money. It's about the prospect choosing the right solution to solve their problems. The problems causing the most pain and keeping them from reaching their most important outcomes. No matter how many adjustments we made in our tests, we could see the pricing figure on the screen distracted the prospect from being able to answer the most important question. *"Are we the right solution to get you to where you want to go?"*

Arin scrolled down on the screen share. The prospect could now see a summary screen that included a horizontal checklist she would use to guide the prospect through the rest of the close.



This screen was part of the Guided Selling Technology we had developed. It allowed for the close to be executed perfectly every single time with a beautiful visual guiding the prospect through it. It may be the most powerful part of the platform we've meticulously built.

"If we're good on pricing and you don't have any other questions about our solution... I know we've had a lot of dialogue throughout this process, James," Arin continued, "*and I know how important this decision is for you and your business... So, let's bring the entire conversation back together and* ***confirm*** *we are all still on the same page,"*

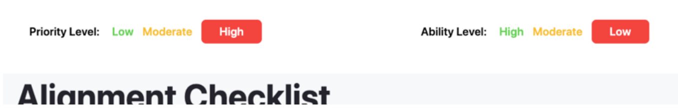
My heart started racing a little bit as I listened in. She moved to step two, confirming priority and need.

"James, are we still aligned that this is an urgent priority for your company to solve based on the issues we outlined it is, and will be, causing?" She brought her cursor over to the summary section on the screen to put attention on the already highlighted "High Priority Level."

"Yep, solving this is still our top priority," James replied. I pumped my fist slightly as the *"it's not the right time"*

objection had just been eliminated.

"Are we still aligned that you don't have the internal resources to solve this problem and you need outside help?" Arin asked. "*Yes, as I said before, it would take us too long to figure it out*," James answered as Arin's cursor was now pointed at the red box reading "Low" on the Ability Level summary on the right side of the screen.



"Still," I thought to myself. That may be the most powerful word at this stage of the process. Using *their* words to guide the decision *they* should be making. No self-serving sales antics or pushing them to do something they didn't think they should do.

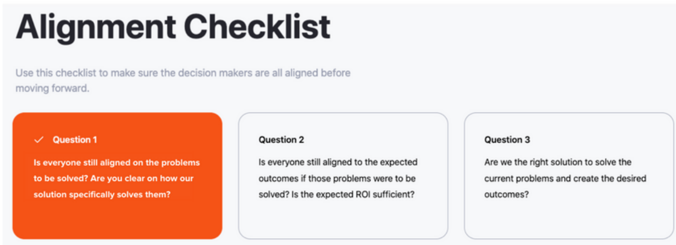
Arin leaned in slightly and continued, "*Ok, so you've got to take action on this, and you need help solving these problems... so it's just a question of which path forward is right for you."* She moved her cursor down to the Alignment Checklist section of the close screen where she would execute step three, confirming the best path forward.

Up until this point in the sales process, narrowing everything down to a very focused decision between us and the competition was a key part of the Discovery and

Diagnosis strategy. The prospect needed to know they must take action to solve the problem and needed outside help to do so before our reps ever presented their solution. Because we cleared out all of the other noise, the entire solution presentation could have a singular focus for the rep. Ensure it clearly connected the dots between the problems that needed to be solved and the core components of the solution… with an emphasis on how we specifically solved those problems better than the competition.

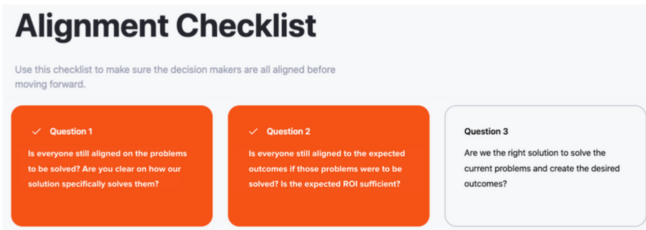
We had put major cycles into outlining, designing, and refining solution presentations over the last four-plus years. While the competition was underwhelming and generally confusing the prospect with their pitches and detailed demos, our solution presentation was simple enough to understand and powerful enough to create the confidence that it could help them achieve their desired outcome better than the rest. This piece of our strategy, alone, was responsible for significant increases in conversion. But the Confirmation Close finally brought it all together.

Arin continued by reading off the wording in the first box, "*Are we all <u>still</u> aligned on the bigger problems you need to solve?"* Arin asked. *"Yes,"* James replied. *"Ok, are you clear on <u>how</u> our solution specifically solves those problems?" "Yes, you did well connecting the dots on that,"* James answered. Arin checked the first box turning it a bright orange color on the screen share. The *"I need* *time to think it over"* objection had now been eliminated. My fist clenched tighter as she moved to the next box.

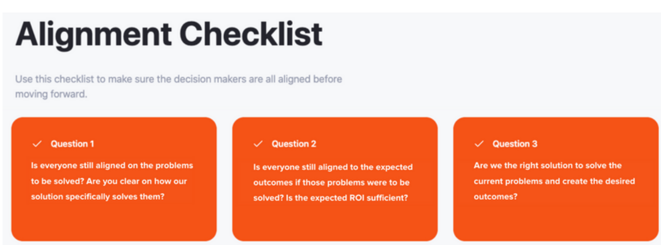


The Alignment Checklist had been built as a *visible* set of pre-defined questions for a very specific reason. Our testing showed that if the questions weren't visible to the prospect, the close appeared to be a set of random questions and the prospect showed less trust in the process. So we tested displaying them in the prospect's workspace and presented them as simply the key questions any person needs to answer if they are going to make the right decision at the end of the sales process. By doing this, we saw an increased willingness from the prospect to engage and increased confidence in the final decision.

Arin continued, *"Are we all still aligned on the conservative increase of $135K in gross sales over the next 6 months as the expected outcome if these problems were to be solved?" "Yep,"* James answered. *"And now that you know our price of $17K, is the ROI of roughly 8X sufficient, James?" "Yes, the ROI works great for us,"* he replied. The second checkbox was clicked. Price and budget objections were now neutralized. I could feel my fingernails digging into the palm of my hand as my fist turned my knuckles white.



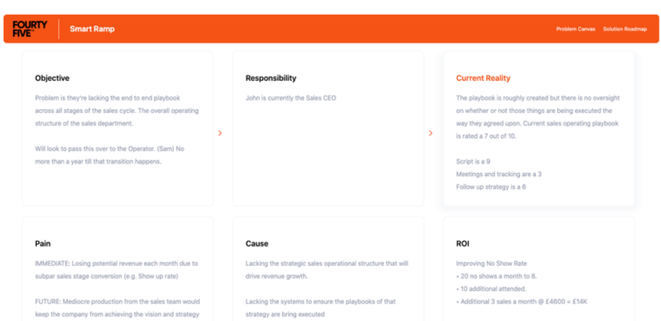
"Ok, so the last question we need to answer is, do you believe we are the right solution to solve your problems and get you to your desired outcomes?" Arin asked confidently. After a slight pause, James answered, *"I do! Let's get started. This process has been awesome. We've really enjoyed working with you, Arin."* She checked the final one and a row of beautiful bright orange boxes were now visible. She moved smoothly to next steps as I pumped my arms up into the air as if we had just successfully landed on the moon.



The questions were designed to guide the prospect away from the confusion and indecision they typically felt at the end of the process and towards the confident action they needed to take. The action that was going to help them finally solve their problems and create the outcomes they so desperately wanted. We knew James was a good fit for this solution and the questions simply allowed him to know that too. The visuals on the screen reinforced it every step of the way.

I remember a time early in my days of selling when there was a feeling of surprise when the prospect chose to move forward. By the end, they were usually confused and indecisive. With this process and the technology that organized all of the important information needed to guide their decision making, reps and prospects were now aligned and we were surprised if they didn't close. The best path forward seemed to be so clear and obvious by the end.

The entire sales process of Discovery, Diagnosis, and Demonstration was designed to create what we called a Buyer Action Plan we could deliver to the prospect using our software (in part shown below).



This plan was organized succinctly and beautifully for the prospect and shared with a simple link to ensure all decision makers on their side (and our reps) were aligned on the critical information we would call on during the Confirmation Close, or Decision phase. This made it easy for prospects to simply confirm their previous answers at the end allowing all of their confusion and indecision to evaporate. They were finally able to understand their path forward and why it was going to be the best path for them.

If the prospect said no to any of the questions in the Confirmation Close, the sales rep was trained to simply acknowledge their answer, scroll up to the correlated information in their Buyer Action Plan on the same screen, and ask where they had gotten out of alignment.

The underlying secret to this sales process was that we made *the Buyer* the star of the show. It wasn't about pitching our stuff and then trying to persuade the prospect to buy it. It was about understanding *their* situation, *their* problems, and *their* desired outcomes. It was all about *them* so if the information in the Confirmation Close didn't line up there was no resistance or awkward fight to overcome their objections. There was simply a lack of alignment in the plan we helped them create to best solve their problems. Revisiting that part of the plan as their Trusted Advisor and having a discussion around what changed is a much easier position to resolve the objection from.

Although the complete sales method was very systematic and even scientific, we decided to call it Buyer-Centric Selling because that core shift of focusing completely on the buyer was the most important discovery that finally allowed everything else to be possible. As salespeople, our *intent* matters far more than our *technique* to our potential buyers.

As far as we were concerned, the intention wasn't to sell anything at all. Our work was to position our sales reps as the Trusted Advisors who would help their prospects formulate a plan to achieve their desired outcomes. We obsessed over the best ways to create those plans of action for every single prospect. We built technology that allowed us to easily deliver those action plans to them on a sharable landing page as we referenced above called a Prospect Workspace. A page where our reps and all of the decision-makers in the deal got aligned on the plan. Our ability to do this created consistency and predictability in every rep's performance. In the grand scheme of things, we are still early in the testing and optimization phases of where this could go. But to put it simply, sales will never be the same again.

We say this because Guided Selling Technology has created a quantum leap forward for sales. The technology allows for the consistent execution of any sales process, and this gives us enough feedback and data to analyze how it performs so we can optimize each phase. Think about what Digital Marketing did for marketers back in the 1990's and beyond. In the same way, this finally gives us, as salespeople and sales leaders, unlimited ability to improve the factors that drive the Key 3 Sales Metrics of conversion rate, average sales price, and time to close *through testing and optimization*. This opportunity simply doesn't exist when every sales call is executed differently.

Early on in our days of coaching and training reps, we would spend months delivering content and every time we went to review their calls, we found they weren't executing the process as designed. Sales rep improvement suffered, and it proved to be the major flaw in traditional sales training services. All of the money, time, and energy invested, with low effectiveness and results for the client in the end.

This inconsistent execution eliminated our ability to truly evaluate the effectiveness of the process. And if we couldn't evaluate it, we definitely couldn't optimize and improve it.

We were focused on iterating on the close process in this specific round of testing because we wanted to improve the average time to close. Our goal was to cut that time for all of our clients by at least 30%. Our research showed that too many "non-decisions" at the end of the process were the cause so we went to work on solving that. To our surprise, it ended up driving the single biggest improvement in close rate of any other variable we tested, along with hitting our avg time to close goal.

In the upcoming chapters, I will break down everything we have learned after spending over 10,000 hours in our sales lab executing, inspecting, and optimizing sales processes. We'll start off by breaking down the step-by-step playbook that teaches you how to execute the Discovery, Diagnosis, and Demonstration phases of the sales process so you gather the critical information needed to drive the prospect to a decision through the Confirmation Close at the end of every single sales call.

I will then break down how we inspect the execution and adoption of the playbook so we can create individual training plans to improve reps' results. Lastly, I will break down how we implement operational meetings for sales teams that allow for the fastest and most effective iteration of a sales strategy to ensure sales are being maximized.

This selling system has improved our reps' conversion by an average of 52%, their average sales price by 21%, and their average time to close by 36% and it will do the same for you no matter your current talent or experience level. Let's dive in.

CHAPTER 1

THE RISE OF THE TRUSTED ADVISOR

Salespeople are the lifeblood of every business. They choose to wake up every day with a significant part of their compensation plan on the line and do everything they can to usher new clients into our companies.

When they win, they are celebrated! When they lose, they are held accountable and at times, let go. A salesperson is only as good as their last month, and the pressure to perform is constant. The stakes are just too high for us not to hit our goals, and management isn't shy about reminding us about that.

Too often, when deals don't close, and we don't hit our goals, we tend to blame our prospects. They're flaky, too cheap, or flat-out just don't "get it". But our prospects aren't the problem. We as salespeople and the experience we choose to put them through are. This book is about identifying and solving the critical mistakes causing your prospects to balk at your pricing, ghost you, or go with a competitor at the 23rd hour when you thought the deal was a sure thing.

If you bought this book hoping it was going to have a bunch of sales tips and tricks to help you close more deals … it won't. Those books are a waste of time. Our prospects don't want our tricks, *they want our help*.

Our prospective buyers would love for us to step up and be *their Trusted Advisor* in *their process* of solving *their problems* and getting to *their desired outcomes*. But instead, they are most often met by someone who is focused on selling them stuff. This misalignment in focus is the cause of their confusion and conversion suffers because the confused mind cannot act.

Despite this, companies everywhere continue to make their business and the products they sell the star of the sales process. Our prospects don't care about our products and services. They don't care about our companies. Our solutions are nothing more than a necessary evil. If our prospects could solve their problems without us, they would be more than happy to.

Our prospective buyers care about *their* pain and the problems causing it. They care about the outcomes *they* want to create.

The improvement our potential buyers want us to make will require a complete and total shift to making *them* the center of our experience and star of the show. Once you do this, you will unlock a completely new relationship with your prospects. A relationship free of resistance and pressure. You will become part of their team and someone they trust and rely on to create a plan to solve their biggest problems. While other sales reps will be on the outside looking in, you will have a seat at their table.

Other sales books have attempted to teach a more consultative sales approach. But we have found these books aren't going deep enough to solve the real problems reps face when attempting to implement it. This book will break down the exact steps you need to become your prospects' *Trusted Advisor*. This is the exact sales playbook we have optimized and taught hundreds of reps to create high-value experiences centered around your prospects and their needs so in the end, you can focus on confirming the important information and confidently move forward together.

We don't consider this to be another sales book. We consider it to be the first important step in the war against sales rep failure. Failure that is negatively impacting salespeople, their families, their companies, and ultimately their potential buyers.

Each year we help companies all over the world stop pitching their stuff and transition to creating a Buyer Centric Sales strategy. These companies have been simply amazed by one simple fact. When you consistently deliver the value your prospective buyers are looking for in the sales process, you'll convert more. A lot more.

CHAPTER 2

BUYER / SELLER MISALIGNMENT

According to Forrester, 68% of potential buyers do not want to interact with a sales rep at all during their buying process. Let me say it again a little more clearly.

YOUR PROSPECTS DO NOT WANT TO TALK TO YOU.

A harsh way to kick off a sales book, I know.

But it brings up what we believe is the most important question needing to be asked in our industry. Why don't our prospects want to talk to us?

After conducting thousands of sales meeting audits over the last 5 years we have figured out the biggest contributor to this. To explain it, let's start out by walking through the two most common types of sales conversations.

The first type of sales conversation is the one every salesperson loves. A “raving fan” prospect joins the meeting and starts off by asking detailed questions about your product or service. They already know about your company, and they are fans of what you do. They are far enough into the buying cycle that the sales rep can talk about their product or service, answer a few questions, and gather payment info to close the deal or send the contract over.

We call this a Seller Centric sales process.

Why? Because the only thing you have to do as a sales rep is talk about *your* company and what *you’re selling* because the “raving fan” prospect has already done most of the work in the buying process.

If only all our prospects were like this. The challenge obviously is, most aren’t.

The more typical sales call starts off with a guarded prospect(s) joining the meeting. They are a bit on edge and don’t want to divulge information because they don’t know how it will be used to manipulate them later. They don’t believe you care about *their* problems and *their* outcomes. They think you care mostly about your product because that is what sales reps mostly talk about. They believe you primarily care about your quota because “getting them to buy your stuff” is the apparent motive behind most sales reps’ actions.

The reality is that most prospects don’t care about what you sell. They don't care about your company, and they definitely don't care about your quota. They care about *their* problems. They care about the pain *they're* going through and the outcomes *they're* unable to achieve because of it all.

But we take this guarded attitude as a sign that they're not a qualified sales opportunity. The truth is, they are qualified! They have a lot of interest in solving their problems. They're just not excited to talk to someone who will prioritize hitting their own goals over helping them achieve theirs.

According to LinkedIn's Annual State of Sales report, 88% of prospects buy *only* when they see a salesperson as a "trusted advisor." Meaning, they have *not* entered the sales process to listen to your pitch and buy. They are wanting someone with expertise and intentions they trust to guide them toward their desired outcome.

Potential buyers are seeking a trusted advisor but believe they are engaging with someone who is focused more on, and will ultimately prioritize, getting to their own outcomes instead of the buyer's. We call this Buyer/Seller Misalignment and this misalignment is at the center of why our prospects would rather not engage with us.

This misalignment exists because sales reps have mostly been trained to focus on what they sell and not how to effectively focus on the buyer and their needs. Prospects are focused on themselves, and we as salespeople are focused on ourselves. We are tuned to different frequencies and both sides grow frustrated because we can't hear each other.

The modern buyer is demanding a modern sales approach where a Trusted Advisor helps *them* identify and solve the core problems causing *their* pain. If they don't get it, more and more, they will not choose to work with your company. In fact, according to a Gartner study, 89% of consumers buy based on the overall experience they receive, regardless of price or functionality. Providing a valuable buyer experience is no longer an option. Prospects will move on.

Buyer Centric Selling is a complete shift from focusing on selling your stuff, to being the Trusted Advisor your prospective buyers want. It's all about capturing and delivering the right information at the right time. When you do this, taking action with your company will be your prospect's logical next step.

CHAPTER 3

BUYER INCOMPETENCE

Before we jump into Buyer Centric Selling, there is a critical concept we must get aligned on. This concept is key to our ability to effectively execute the Diagnosis phase of the sales process. The reason our prospects are looking for an effective plan of action delivered by a Trusted Advisor is because of their own incompetence.

We hear it repeatedly in sales call reviews. Our prospects don't understand the actual problems they are facing! They identify simple, surface-level issues, and are largely unaware of the root causes. *This is because we are all generally incompetent in the areas we are experiencing the most pain.*

If we were competent, we would have solved the problem as soon as it became a minor annoyance or at the very least before we decided to engage in a sales process. But because we lack knowledge and know-how in this area of weakness, we continue to let it go until it gets so bad that it can't be ignored.

This incompetence is why such a high percentage of buyers are wanting a Trusted Advisor in the sales process. A sales rep focused on selling their stuff isn't going to help them. They need someone who will be able to identify the bigger problems they are suffering from and create a plan to ultimately solve them.

The implications of this are enormous.

We cannot go into discovery searching for a problem *our prospects* have identified and move to show them how our product or service will solve it. We must enter into problem discovery, seeking the necessary information that will allow us to identify their pain and *diagnose* the real issue causing it. We are very much like medical doctors in the sales process, and we must step into that position of authority and expert status.

We start with *Discovery*, then move to *Diagnosis*, and if we can cure their pain, we go into *Demonstrating* how our product or service will do that. Then we move to guiding them toward a *Decision*. Our process must be centered around them.

1. Discovery of *their* current situation.
2. Diagnosis of the problems *they* are suffering from
3. Demonstration of how our company can help *them* solve *their* problems

4. Decision on *their* best path forward

Our prospects are wanting us to show them the path to the future they desire. They want to trust us in this way. We must step up and be that Trusted Advisor for them if we are to truly do our job in the sales process.

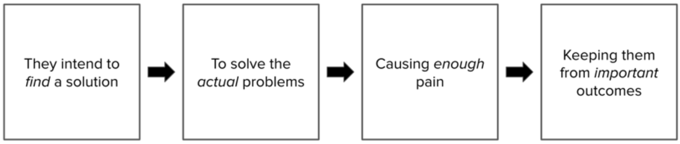
CHAPTER 4
BUYER'S INTENT

Despite what most sales reps believe, your prospects aren't casual shoppers who don't have anything better to do with their day than talk to a salesperson. They are prospective buyers who have shown an intention to solve a problem… A problem big enough that they've spent time and energy *already* researching solutions before they ever attend a sales meeting.

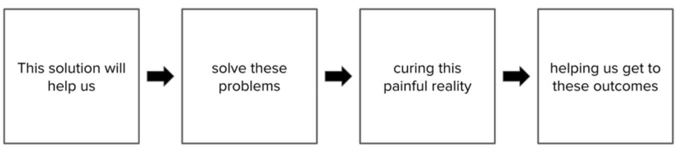
According to CEB, prospects have completed 57% of the sales process before they ever engage with a sales rep. Unfortunately, that last 43% of the journey isn't simply taking an order from a raving fan. Most of our prospects are still needing more detail and guidance from companies so they can decide what the right next step is for them.

We call this Buyer's Intent.

BUYER'S INTENT



At its core, our prospects want an effective plan of action. A clear plan that gives them the confidence and clarity they need to take the action they so desperately want to take.



Notice that our solution is only important if it is put into context with and connected to *their* problems, *their* pain, and *their* desired outcomes. We cannot state this enough. What we offer doesn't matter until we are aligned with our prospective buyers on these key pieces of information.

This is the first step in becoming a Buyer Centric Seller. Understanding the value our prospective buyers are looking for when they engage in the sales process and being committed to executing a plan on how that can be delivered, each and every time.

In this new world, when executed properly, prospect resistance is eliminated. They want to answer our questions. They need our help getting clear in each of these areas. In nearly every sales meeting, when executed effectively, you should hear your prospects say, “great question” or “I haven’t thought about that.” These are signs they are seeing you as their Trusted Advisor. There is no need to coerce answers out of them. No sly tricks necessary. Just straightforward questions to help them gain clarity on each section and the entirety of their story.

CHAPTER 5

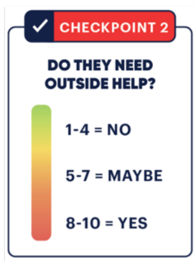
THE THREE BUYER CHECKPOINTS

Potential buyers and buyer-centric salespeople actually have the same goal. Our prospects want to buy things that solve the biggest problems causing them pain. Buyer-centric sales reps want to sell them something that solves their biggest problems, causing them pain.

To figure out if we will achieve our goal together, three checkpoints need to be hit as we go through the discovery, diagnosis, demonstration, and decision phases. These will align perfectly with the Confirmation Close we are leading up to in the end. If any of these are a NO, then the buying process breaks down.

1. Checkpoint 1: Is the pain they're experiencing or hoping to avoid bad enough that solving it is an urgent and high priority? If their current situation isn't a high priority to solve, there is no reason to continue the conversation.

2. Checkpoint 2: If this, in fact, needs to be solved, is the potential buyer capable of solving the *actual* problem(s) causing it without outside/new help? If they can, there is no need for them to buy a new solution.



3. Checkpoint 3: If they need outside help to solve it, is our solution the best option to solve those problems amongst all other competitors? Bringing our time together to very specific decision is critical.

THE 3 BUYER CHECKPOINTS

Buyer Centric Selling is about clearing out all of the noise and confusion in the sales process and striving to help our prospective buyers (and us) clearly answer these three simple questions.

This is at the center of being their Trusted Advisor. If those three checkpoints are reached, and you can clearly and simply articulate that back to your buyer, they will take action faster than you've ever dreamed.

Why? Because we've guided them through the decision-making process.

"So Janet, are we still aligned that solving this problem is an urgent and high priority for your company?

If yes, then we know they will take some type of action.

"Are we still aligned that you do not have the needed resources to solve it on your own?"

If yes, then we know they will purchase an outside solution.

And this brings us back to the Buyer's Intent. They are now clear that they need an outside solution to solve the bigger problems, causing enough pain and keeping them from the outcomes they want to achieve.

Now it is simply about separating ourselves from the competition. When you are able to clear out the alternative next steps, their decision-making process will be easier and clearer. And while the competition continues to confuse them, they will take action with your company more often than not. No fake urgency, discounting or pushing. Just clarity on their current reality and an action plan to make their lives better is all they need.

This is why they want a Trusted Advisor in the process and not someone who tries to pitch their stuff. We must help pull them out of the complexity of their current situation so we can ground them on a simple and clear path forward. They need to take action. They need outside help. They clearly see why we are the right solution.

David Bonney

CHAPTER 6

BUYER CENTRIC SELLING

How do we lead our prospective buyers through a process that discovers the answers to these three checkpoints? Our ability to do this will guide them to a decision using the Confirmation Close so we must have a consistent and effective way to do it, or everything will fall a part in the end.

This is the basis of Buyer-Centric Selling. Imagine Buyer-Centric Selling is like a playbook. The best professional athletes in the world don't run around the court or field randomly. They run plays that put them in a position to score. They still have to score, but they will be able to score far more when the offense strategically puts them in the position to do so.

That is at the heart of the playbook we are about to break down at a high level for you now. It has been designed through hundreds of hours of testing and iteration to put you in a better position to gather the critical information that will ultimately drive the prospect to make a clear decision on their best path forward.

1. Do they need to act?
2. Do they need outside help?
3. Do we have the best solution?

We will dive deeper into each section in the upcoming chapters, but first, let's run through the complete Buyer-Centric Selling Playbook in summary form. This is proven to work for a one-call or multi-call sales process depending on your product or service's price point.

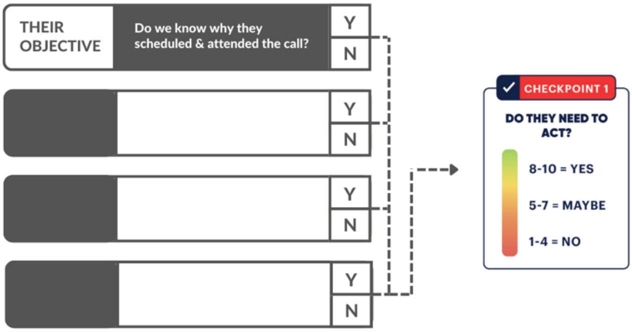
DO THEY NEED TO ACT?

THEIR OBJECTIVE

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle One: Your prospects have an objective when they schedule a sales meeting

A prospective buyer scheduled the call because they had a problem they were trying to solve or a goal they were trying to achieve. Why else would they be looking for a solution?

We must start the conversation here to ensure we aren't disrupting the continuity in *their* journey to solve *their* problems.

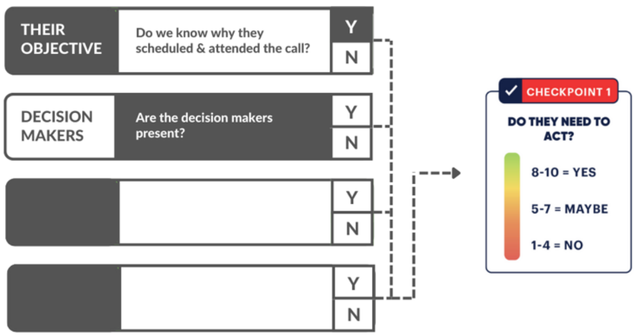


THEIR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Two: The person responsible for solving the problem and the person with the authority to make the decision must be present

To effectively solve a problem or achieve a goal, a prospective buyer must have their key decision-makers involved in the process.

We need to identify those decision-makers every single time and bring them into the conversation. At a minimum, we need to understand who is responsible for solving the problem or achieving the goal, and who has the authority to make the decision on how to do it.

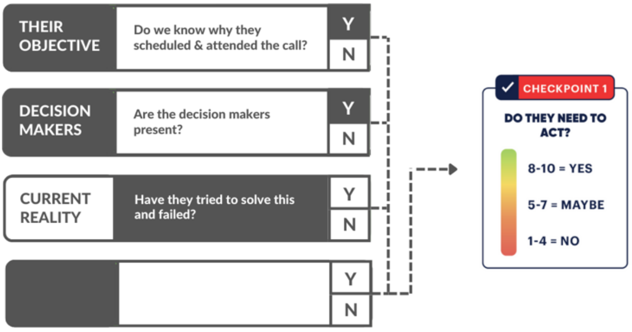


THEIR CURRENT REALITY

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Three: They have already tried solving the problem or achieving the goal and it hasn't worked.

People's first action is not to talk to a salesperson when solving a problem. For most solution, a prospective buyer has likely already tried certain things to solve the problem or achieve the goal but those efforts haven't worked for specific reasons.

Understanding what they've done and why it hasn't worked gives us critical insights into the level of priority this holds and ultimately how we diagnose the real problem causing it all.

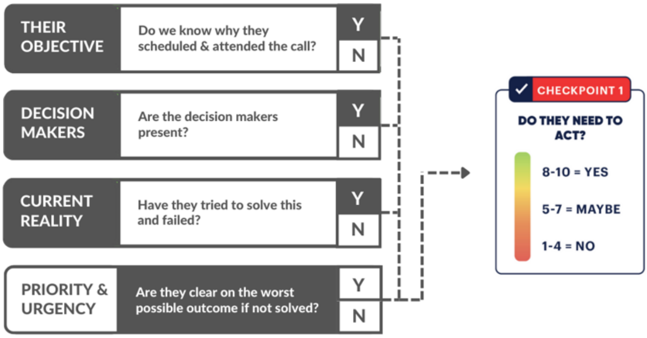


THEIR CURRENT & FUTURE PAIN

Buyer Centric Selling Principle Four: The current and future pain these problems are causing will determine their level of priority and urgency

A prospective buyer will experience certain "worst-case realities" if they don't solve their problems and/or achieve their goal. These realities are painful.

Current pain and fear of future pain drive the decisions we make. Understanding the pain and the worst thing that will happen if their current situation doesn't change is critical to determining if this is something they need to take action to solve.



THEIR URGENCY & PRIORITY

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Five: A priority and urgency rating must be given by the prospect

This is the first Buyer Checkpoint. A rating based on their current and future pain clearly assesses if a prospective buyer deems their current situation to be an urgent and high priority to take action on or not.

Using a scale of 1-10 so we can assess the level of priority together is a simple and effective way to stop guessing and start knowing if your prospects plan to take action on this or not.

CAN THEY SOLVE IT THEMSELVES

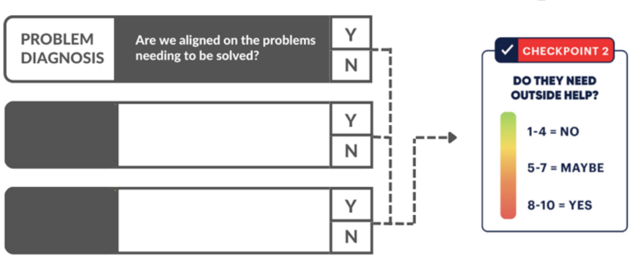
THEIR PROBLEMS DIAGNOSED

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Six: *We* must diagnose their problems because they are incompetent in this area

Our prospects must understand the diagnosis we give them and they must be aligned on it being the bigger problem(s) needing to be solved.

This is vital for two reasons:

1. It will be key in their ability to assess if they can solve it on their own, without us
2. It will provide the context necessary for them to understand our solution and how it will help them.

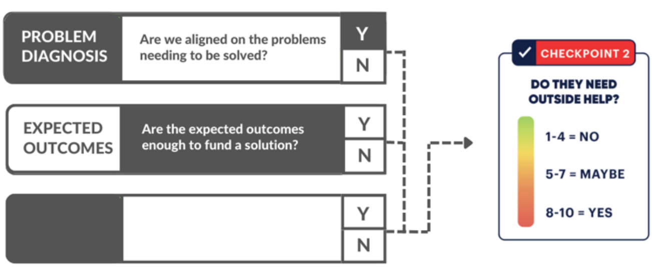


THEIR EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Seven: Short-term and long-term expected outcomes will, in part, determine their budget and desire to take action

A prospective buyer must be clear on the short-term and long-term outcomes they can expect if those problems were to be solved. Not just by us... but by anyone.

Price objections are rooted in price sensitivity. Price sensitivity typically comes from a lack of anchoring to a bigger number like ROI. What outcomes or returns will they expect if the problems were no longer present?

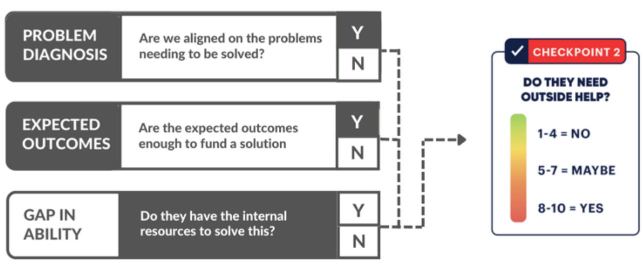


THEIR GAP IN ABILITY

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Eight: Prospective buyers must assess if they have the resources to solve this without outside help

Considering they don't understand the bigger problems needing to be solved, our prospects are typically unclear on whether they have adequate resources internally to solve them on their own.

We have created the needed emotion to drive them to take action. We must now help them assess if they can act on their own. Doing it themselves will feel like the fastest way to get out of their current situation and create the future they desire. But will it be effective? Most likely not, since they didn't understand the problem causing it to begin with.

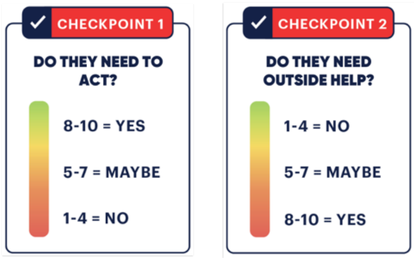


THEIR ABILITY ASSESSED

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Nine: A rating of their ability to solve this problem on their own must be given by the prospect

This is the second Buyer Checkpoint. A rating clearly assesses if a prospective buyer deems their current resources to be adequate to solve this problem(s) without outside help.

Using a scale of 1-10 so we can assess their ability together is a simple and effective way to stop guessing and start knowing if your prospects plan to take action on their own or not.



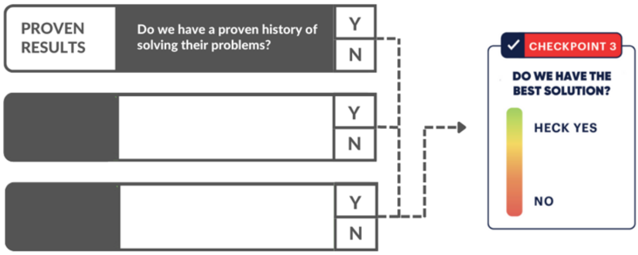
DO WE HAVE THE RIGHT SOLUTION?

TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Ten: A prospective buyer wants to know we have a proven track record of solving these problems for companies like theirs

Rarely do prospects want to be the test patient. They want their pain eliminated and their outcomes achieved as quickly as possible. Picking a company that doesn't seem to have it figured out yet won't be something they'll do.

It's vital they understand our company exists to solve the very problems causing their pain and has a track record of creating the outcomes they want.

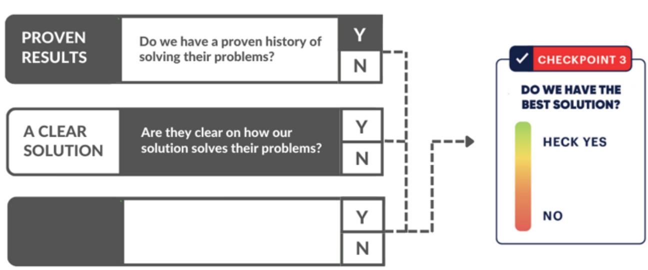


A CLEAR SOLUTION

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Eleven: An incompetent buyer must be clear on what our solution is and how it specifically solves their problems

The longer your solution presentation, the more likely you're confusing your prospects. It is your company's responsibility to bear the burden of complexity and turn a complex-sounding solution into an easy-to-understand, yet powerful presentation.

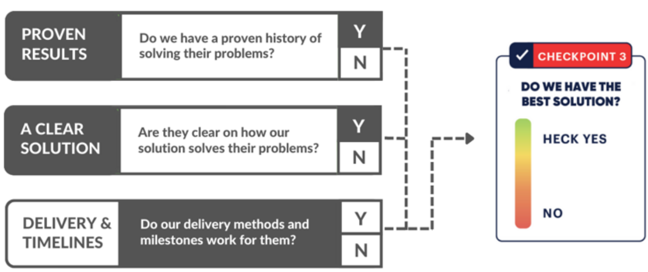
Make time for questions where they want to go deep, but don't assume they want to hear about all your "bells and whistles."



DELIVERY METHOD & TIMELINES

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Twelve: A prospective buyer must be clear on how we deliver our solution and when we hit critical timelines

Knowing the key parts of our solution is not enough. How we deliver it and what timelines they can expect us to hit are key to our prospects determining if we are the right solution or not.



THEIR DECISION

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Thirteen: We must guide our prospects to a logical Yes or No at the end of the buying process.

Closing a sale should be the most natural part of the entire sales process. Unfortunately, it is riddled with awkwardness and confusion.

The Confirmation Close is the simple three-step closing process that leads our prospects to clearly decide if we are the right solution to solve their problems or not.

In the following chapters, I'll start our deep dive into each principle Buyer Centric Selling, showing you how each important step comes together into a powerful plan of action for every single prospect you work with. This plan of action will be centered around them while positioning your company as the key variable to making it a reality.

I will go deeper into every step we outlined above to assess each of the three critical Buyer Checkpoints, why they're so important, sample language you can use, and what happens if you miss them. There will be nothing held back here. Once you are done, you will have everything you need to become the Trusted Advisor your prospects so desperately want you to be.

CHAPTER 7

THEIR OBJECTIVE

Buyer Centric Selling Principle One: Your prospects have an objective when they schedule a sales meeting

Sample talk track: *"When people take time out of their schedule to hop on a call with me, there is typically a problem they are trying to solve or a goal they are trying to achieve. Which is it for you?"*

One of the greatest secrets of the Buyer Centric Experience is creating continuity from your prospect's marketing experience into their sales experience.

Remember, on average, our prospects are already 57% of the way through the sales process by the time they talk to us.

By scheduling and attending the call, the prospect has already told us something critically important. There is something going on that is problematic enough for them to spend their time and energy researching solutions and attending a sales call with a complete stranger.

This telling action is where we start.

After some light rapport building and setting the agenda for the call, the first and most important question to a Buyer Centric sales process is, why have *they* taken time out of *their* schedule to talk to us?

Any other question at the start of the call is an invitation into confusion because we are interrupting the continuity in their own actions. Questions like "*Tell me about your business*" or *"How did you hear about us?"* are examples of opening questions that break your prospect's continuity of thinking and enhance the confusion they are already suffering from. Do not fall into these simple yet destructive traps.

Align to the reason they took their last action and you will instantly feel the momentum of the call and the confidence in your buyer build.

After thousands of call reviews, we have figured out that the answer to this opening question will fall into one of two categories.

They are on the call because they either have a

1. problem they are trying to solve
2. and/or a goal they are trying to achieve.

Why else would they be looking for solutions?

Understanding their reason for attending the call will allow us to string together a series of questions to consistently and effectively determine if this is something they ultimately need to prioritize and act on (Checkpoint 1).

IF MISSED: If we don't ID the core reason they scheduled and attended the call we miss their core motivation, breaking the continuity of their experience and creating buyer confusion at the onset of the call.

CHAPTER 8

THEIR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Two: The person responsible for solving the problem and the person with the authority to make the decision must be present

Sample talk track: *"Who is responsible for solving this problem of [insert problem] / achieving this goal of [insert goal]?*

Who has the authority to make decisions about this problem / goal?

How do you all typically make decisions on how to move forward on solving problems like these?"

It doesn't have to be complicated to identify all of the decision-makers. We have just found out there is a goal they need help achieving or a problem they need help solving. It is completely natural to find out the people in volved in doing just that.

Asking this early in the sales process ensures we know who the main characters' perspectives are in the action plan we are working to create.

At a minimum, we want to identify three things.

1. Who is *responsible* for solving the problem or achieving the goal from question one?
2. Who ultimately has the *authority* to make the decision on how it gets solved?
3. What is their typical *process* for making these kinds of purchases/decisions? (If applicable)

We strategically place this after *Their Objective* because of the natural flow it brings to the conversation.

"Ok, so you're having a problem getting the bottom half of your sales team to consistently hit quota?" transitions naturally into, "*Who is ultimately responsible for solving this problem / achieving this goal?*

If one of the key stakeholders is missing, we can begin to seed the idea of getting them engaged in future steps. We can also execute the rest of the process asking a key question, *"How would [missing stakeholder] answer this question?"* This allows us to create an action plan with a more well-rounded perspective. When the action plan link is shared with the absent stakeholder, it will resonate, allowing them to be more aligned when they enter into the sales process.

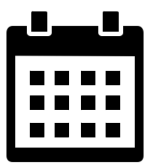
When diving into how they typically make purchasing decisions, we will have the opportunity to identify other stakeholders who will *influence* the decision. Once identified we can start to determine if and when they are needed in the process.

IF MISSED: If we don't ID the key decision makers and their process for choosing solutions we are potentially talking to the wrong people needed for the action plan. The rest of the process will be filled with constant disruptions because the key people making the decision are not aligned with the plan we've built.

CHAPTER 9

THEIR CURRENT REALITY

Buyer Centric Selling Principle Three: They have tried solving the problem or achieving the goal and it hasn't worked.



"What have you done to [reach this goal or solve this problem] and why has it not worked at the level needed?"

Our prospect's past actions are the best indication of a problem being bad enough that someone needs to take serious action to solve it.

Have they tried to solve it on their own already? Have they used other vendors without success? If they haven't then it begs the question "why not". Is this not important enough? Or are there other reasons? Has the problem come on suddenly and caused serious pain making their first point of action to research specialists to make it go away?

Either way, their past efforts are a key insight and part of the conversation leading us to Checkpoint 1.

We strategically place this after *The Decision Makers* because of the natural flow it brings to the conversation.

"Ok, so Tim, you're responsible for solving this problem and Janice will be the one ultimately making the decision." transitions naturally into, "*"What have you done to [reach this goal or solve this problem] and why has it not worked at the level needed?"*

If they have tried to solve it, how long did those efforts last? What were those efforts and why does the prospect think they ultimately didn't work? Have they already attempted some of the things you would recommend? If so, was it the right strategy but they executed it poorly? Or have they already figured out that strategy doesn't work?

Their past actions haven't gotten them to where they want to be and we know this because they're talking to us. This will help you better understand why. Understanding where the breakdown occurred is key to us putting together the most powerful action plan possible for our potential buyers.

IF MISSED: If we don't ID their past efforts, we lose critical information in helping them decide if this is painful enough to take action against. If they have acted but we don't dive into why it didn't work, we won't be able to gauge their ability to solve this on their own or accurately diagnose what the bigger problem is, putting checkpoints 2 & 3 in jeopardy.

CHAPTER 10

THEIR CURRENT & FUTURE PAIN

Buyer Centric Selling Principle Four: Current and future pain will determine the level of priority and urgency

Sample talk track: *"So together, we can assess the level of priority this needs to take in the business right now. As far as you can see, realistically, what is the worst thing that will happen if you don't solve these problems [insert problems]."*

According to Sigmund Freud's pain/pleasure principle, people take action for one of two reasons. To eliminate pain or receive pleasure. Our research shows most prospects take action to eliminate or avoid pain. But there are a few that do so to achieve something they desire. This motive too though, falls into the category of avoiding pain. If someone wants to achieve something bad enough, the fear of their life having failed in that pursuit will be painful enough for them to take action.

In either case, we must uncover what their current painful reality looks like as well as what the future looks like if nothing changes. This will allow us to partner with our potential buyers to truly figure out, amongst all the other problems they are dealing with, does solving this one need to be a top priority for them.

We strategically place this after the current reality step because of the natural flow it brings to a difficult part of the conversation for most salespeople.

"Ok, so you have tried x,y, and z training systems but they haven't worked because your team ultimately didn't adopt what was being taught." transitions smoothly into, *"if these issues don't get solved, realistically, what is the worst thing that is going to happen?"*

Probing 2-3 times after the initial question will be necessary if you are going to help them get clear on this emotional sore spot.

This clarity will determine the urgency they feel to solve this problem and the level of priority solving it will take.

We make decisions based on emotions and rationalize those decisions with logic. This is the key part of the conversation that will allow your prospective buyers to tap into the emotion needed to take action and improve their situation. We will cover the logic side later.

The biggest issue at this stage of the conversation is the sales rep's discomfort. Most salespeople are uncomfortable diving into pain. Whether they are the relationship-based Advocate sales archetype who wants the call to be high energy and full of optimism or the strategic-minded Hustler sales archetype who wants to keep everything professional and not get into emotions. Both of these rep types have to get past their discomfort if they are going to help our prospects get clear on what they need to prioritize.

IF MISSED: If we don't understand their current and potential future pain we cannot effectively gauge their level of urgency and whether or not this needs to be a priority to take action on.

To learn what sales archetype matches your selling style take our CHASM Sales Assessment using the QR code below or go to https://fourtyfive.io/chasm-assessment/

CHAPTER 11

THEIR URGENCY AND PRIORITY

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Five: A rating of the level of priority and urgency must be given by the prospect

Sample talk track: *"On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate this as a priority, 10 being your top priority and needs to be solved very soon, 1 being not a priority and can be solved anytime in the future?"*

This is the first major checkpoint our potential buyers need to pass through. Is solving this an urgent and high priority for them?

To truly understand the power behind the prospect's answer to the previous question, we found the use of a scale is most effective. Based on the worst thing that will happen if this doesn't get solved, how would they rate the level of priority this needs to take in their life/company on a scale of 1-10?

Quantifying this gets us aligned. It allows us to form a conclusion together on whether or not *they* should take action to solve all of this. Generally, if their answer is a 1-4 they absolutely do not need to take action to solve this. 5-7 is a maybe and most maybes turn into no's. 8-10 is recognition that this is something they need to take action against and they need to do so soon. But if their answer is a 6 or below, it begs the question, why are they spending time looking for a solution? This is a completely appropriate question to ask at this point to ensure we are helping them prioritize the right things in their businesses.

We strategically place this after *Their Current & Future Pain* because of the natural flow it brings to the conversation.

"If these issues don't get solved, realistically, what is the worst thing that is going to happen?" transitions naturally into, "*Ok, based on that, on a scale of 1-10 how would you rate this as a priority? 10 being your top priority and needs to be solved very soon, 1 being not a priority and can be solved anytime in the future?"*

Sometimes their answer will surprise you. You either thought their score was going to be higher or lower than it actually is. This is a great time to probe. Dive deeper to ensure you are clear. If you aren't clear, they aren't clear and the confused mind will not act.

IF MISSED: If we don't quantify their level of urgency to solve this problem at this point in the call, we will jeopardize alignment on the foundational question of any buyer action plan and a critical piece of alignment needed in the Confirmation Close. Do they need to take any action at all?

CHAPTER 12

THEIR PROBLEMS DIAGNOSED

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Six: WE must diagnose their problems because they are incompetent in this area

Sample talk track: *"We've already gone through some of the issues already, but let's dive more into your current situation so we can figure out what's really causing all of this."*

A key responsibility of a Trusted Advisor in the sales process is being able to accurately diagnose the bigger problems causing the prospect's pain. Again, your prospective buyers are incompetent in the areas they experience the most pain. So, we need to help them ID their problems and we do this with problem discovery questions that uncover what's really going on.

Usually, every company has a list of problem discovery questions their sales team can pick from to figure out what is going on. This is because our companies don't solve a million different problems. Largely, a company solves a combination of 5-9 core problems for their market. These will align with the core components of your solution and ensure your prospects understand why you're recommending the solution you are during checkpoint 3.

It shouldn't be difficult for our prospects to connect the dots between the two. And this is the beginning of building that "easy to understand" foundation.

While helping you get to the bottom of what's going on, these questions also act like salt in the wound of the potential buyer as they see, and have to admit to themselves, their own level of incompetence in being able to solve all of this. The prospect loses confidence in their own understanding of the problem and gains confidence that you can help them solve it with every question you ask exposing their shortcomings. This is a critical part of the prospect giving up control and rightfully trusting an outside company with their future.

"We know the problem now... we just need to figure out

how to fix it." Light at the end of their once dark and murky tunnel emerges.

We strategically place this after *Their Urgency & Priority Rating* because of the natural flow it brings to the conversation.

"So this has a priority level of X" for you all." transitions naturally into, *"Ok, so I know we've already gone through some of the issues you're dealing with, but let's dive more into your current situation so we can figure out what's really causing all of this."*

AVOID THE ADVICE MONSTER

Diagnosing their problems doesn't mean that you give the answers on how to solve them. When we see our reps turn into Advice Monsters, we in turn see our prospects taking copious notes, convincing themselves they can partner with Google's search engine to figure this out on their own.

Flexing your competency at this point in the call is key. But you do that by asking good discovery questions and then diagnosing the actual problem. That turns you into the expert. Not rattling off the things they need to be doing to eliminate their pain.

IF MISSED: If we don't ID the bigger problem to be solved they will lack the needed context to assess their own capability to reach their desired outcomes

(Checkpoint 2) and evaluate whether our solution is right for them (Checkpoint 3).

CHAPTER 13

THEIR EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Seven: Short-term and long-term expected outcomes will, in part, determine their budget and drive to take action

Sample talk track: *"If these problems were solved and you no longer had to deal with these barriers, conservatively speaking, what outcomes would you expect?"*

Now that we understand the problems causing all of this, we have a unique and important opportunity. We can now look at the potential outcomes if those problems were to be solved. Not necessarily solved by us. But by anyone or in any way. Keeping your solution out of it at this point is key. It's NOT ABOUT US! It's about the results *they* would expect to see if *their* problems were solved. This is typically where we look to calculate an ROI for the potential buyer. The ROI is critical so companies can understand the proper level of investment on their side.

We strategically place this after *Their Problem Diagnosis* because of the natural flow it brings to the conversation.

"*Ok, now that we are aligned on the problems causing all of this."* transitions naturally into, *"If these problems were solved and you no longer had to deal with these barriers, what outcomes would you expect?"*

It is important to do what we call "back of the napkin math" with them. Your prospects won't have any idea what kind of quantifiable outcomes to expect. Let's use a marketing company as an example: *"If these problems were solved, conservatively, how many more sales conversations would you generate? What is your current sales conversion rate? And what about your average revenue per sale? etc."*

This will lead them to quantify the appropriate outcome.

If the expected return is high enough, you'd be surprised by the number of your prospects who will reallocate budget away from other initiatives and fund the action plan you've built with them.

Calculating ROI creates two important outcomes:

1. It anchors them to our price. Most companies are looking for a 3-10x ROI on a purchase (depending on the type of solution). By calculating ROI we are giving them a much better sense of where our pricing will be before they ever see it.
2. It effectively opens up the conversation around budget. *"So conservatively speaking you are looking at a potential ROI of about $265K over the next twelve months if these problems were solved. Did I get that right? <u>What do you all have budgeted to create this kind of outcome?"</u>*

Price objections should never happen in a Buyer Centric Selling process because talking about money shouldn't be awkward. It's completely appropriate and needed when discussing their plan of action. This two-step process will crack open the conversation about how *they* plan to allocate *their* resources to solve *their* problems and create *their* outcomes. If their budget isn't sufficient to solve the kind of problem they are dealing with, we as their trusted advisor must call attention to this and discuss. If they're budgeting too much, we must do the same so they don't assume our solution isn't sufficient just because it costs less.

IF MISSED: If we don't get clear on the expected outcomes if the problems were to be solved your buyer will have no context to base the price of a solution and will have no strategy on how/if they should fund an outside solution.

CHAPTER 14

THEIR GAP IN ABILITY

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Eight: Prospective buyers must assess if they have the resources to solve this without outside help

Sample talk track: *"Given the gap between your current situation and the future vision... tell me what stopped/is stopping you from solving these problems on your own?"*

It's always going to be easier to solve a problem on your own. You can get it done a lot faster, without spending money, and for most, there is less risk in trying it themselves.

Now that we know the actual problem to be solved and the outcomes at stake, it is critical to evaluate if they can and should be solving this on their own.

We strategically place this after *Their Expected Outcomes* because of the natural flow it brings to the conversation.

"*Ok, now that we are aligned on the expected outcomes you all would expect if these problems were solved."* transitions naturally into, *"What has been keeping you all from figuring this out on your own and achieving these outcomes?"*

Talking through why they haven't been able to solve this on their own to this point will help them clarify their shortcomings. It will also ensure they haven't gained a false sense of security during the conversation that shouldn't be there.

The truth is, if they could have solved it themselves or with their current vendor, they would have done it already. But they haven't, and they most likely can't. Ensuring we talk through this with them is another way for us to be their trusted advisor and ensure they don't waste even more time, allowing their problems to wreak more havoc and cause more damage.

If in the rare case, solving this on their own is the best route for our potential buyer, then we need to figure that out together. That way, we can help them set next steps, a clear point on when to reevaluate their attempts, and a measurement of success to define whether or not their efforts worked.

If we have done a good job getting them clear on their failed past efforts and the simple fact that they aren't competent enough to know the real problems causing it all, they will see they cannot solve this for very real reasons and will clear Checkpoint Two.

If they recognize they cannot solve it, their answers will usually always come down to three options:

1. *"We can't figure it out on our own."*
2. *"We need to do it faster than we can if we try to do it ourselves."*
3. *"We need a proven system, so we don't waste resources figuring it out on our own."*

IF MISSED: If we do not ID the gap in their ability to solve, we will not know if they genuinely need outside help and will waste time continuing the sales process.

CHAPTER 15

THEIR ABILITY ASSESSED

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Nine: A rating of their ability to solve this problem on their own must be given by the prospect

Sample talk track: *"Given the bigger problems we're now aligned on... your past efforts and the current gap you just explained... on a scale of 1-10 how would you rate your current resources to solve for all of this? 1 being not able to do this on your own at all and 10 being you have everything you need to get this done?"*

After understanding why they can't solve this on their own, it is critical we establish together, they in fact need outside help. To create this clarity, we have found the use of another scale is critical.

Given their previous efforts not yielding results… given they are only now just getting clear on the bigger problems causing all of this… and given the shortcomings in their own ability to solve this, on a scale of 1-10, how would they rate their ability to solve for this without outside help?

We strategically place this after *Their Gap in Ability* because of the natural flow it brings to the conversation.

"Given your previous efforts not yielding results… given we are now clear on the bigger problems causing all of this… and given the shortcomings in your own ability to solve this…" transitions naturally into, "*on a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your ability to solve for this without outside help?"*

They have enough pain to take action and they are clear they need outside help to solve their problems. They are ready to learn about our solution.

IF MISSED: If we do not quantify their confidence in their own resources we will lose an important piece of alignment in their action plan. Do they need to act on their own or do they need outside help?

CHAPTER 16

TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Ten: A prospective buyer wants to know we have a proven track record of solving these problems for companies like theirs

We are now entering into Checkpoint Three. They need to act, they need help from an outside solution, and it's time to establish if our solution is the right one for them to choose.

Our sales process optimization efforts have shown improved conversion when we start with proving our ability to solve their problems and achieve their outcomes. It does this because it grabs their attention at a critical point in the discussion.

When dealing with a difficult illness you wouldn't choose a doctor who has had very little experience with patients in your condition. *"I think you're suffering from X condition. I haven't treated many patients who have this, but we'll give it a try!"*

We don't want to peril at the expense of a service provider who still needs time to figure it out.

It is critically important that we establish our company's credibility in being that guide. *"We have seen these problems before and helped many clients to the promised land."*

This credibility should be established with two things:

1. Clarifying that your company exists to solve these core problems reinforcing you're a specialist.
2. Numeric proof of the success you have created in the market. Typically 3-4 high levels numbers will do it.

Your prospect knows they need outside help, and now we have their attention after establishing ourselves early on as the expert who can do it the best.

IF MISSED: If we do not show proof of past success, we will not have their complete confidence that we can predictably do it for them, and their attention will waiver during the presentation.

CHAPTER 17

A CLEAR SOLUTION

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Eleven: An incompetent buyer must be clear on how our solution specifically solves the problems we're aligned on

At this point, our prospects know what their problem is. They know they have a credible guide who can solve their problems, but they need to understand what your company *does* to solve those problems and why it's different from everyone else's solution.

CLARITY

Their ability to clearly *understand* your solution presentation is the most important thing you must focus on. To ensure they can understand it, we must focus on the high-level points of your offering. Getting too detailed and in the weeds will only confuse your prospective buyer. They are incompetent in this area, so we must avoid presenting a level of detail that only experts like us would understand.

For those rare potential buyers who are an expert in what we do, we leave space for questions. Let them guide you down the rabbit holes *they* want to go down and then "flex" in those areas.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Remember, your prospects only care about your solution as much as they are able to see it being able to solve *their* problems. Your presentation must clearly connect the dots between the problems you diagnosed earlier and how your solution solves those problems in a way that is different/better than other methods *(i.e your competitors)*.

Connecting those dots for them during the presentation, explicitly, is key if you are going to give your company the best chance at being the one they choose in the end.

THE BURDEN OF COMLEXITY

At FourtyFive, we often say that when you confuse your prospects, you lose your prospects.

No company wants to create a simple solution presentation that makes their product or service look, amateur. We all want to ensure our prospects know it is sophisticated enough to get the job done. But creating a presentation that is simple for our prospects to understand and also explains this sophistication is difficult. The reason being, it is hard to be both clear and impactful with any message.

Simple yet effective communication at this part of the Buyer's journey is critical and takes time. It should be an effort the entire sales department works on. Put in the necessary cycles to create a clear and impactful presentation, and prospect engagement will soar.

DIFFERENTIATION

Some companies need help understanding their secret sauce. What makes your company more capable of solving your potential buyer's problems than competitors?

Knowing this secret sauce is critical to teeing up the right problem diagnosis.

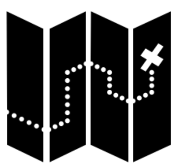
When we do this work with our clients, we establish their core list of "problems to diagnose" from an outline of the core solution and, ultimately, their secret sauce. They should completely align, so it is easy for potential buyers to connect the dots between what you do and how it solves the problems we've gotten aligned on.

IF MISSED: If we do not clearly explain our solution and how it solves their problems, they will lose the connection between the two and become confused.

CHAPTER 18

HOW WE DELIVER OUR SOLUTION

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Twelve: A prospective buyer must be clear on how we deliver our solution and when we meet critical timelines.



In the absence of information, people will make up their own. And this is where we must ensure there is no lack of clarity.

Your prospect will stall if:

1. They are worried it will be difficult for their company to get value from your solution
2. They believe it will take too long to see their desired results

3. They think it will require too many of their resources to solve the problem.

This section is most effective when it is broken down into four parts.

1. Delivery Overview – High-level overview of how you deliver your solution.
2. Timeline – When your company will hit critical milestones in the process of solving their problems.
3. Minimum Standards Required for Success – What key standards they need to meet if your work together is going to be most successful.
4. Solution Summary – Key points are brought back together in an easy-to-read review to assess alignment.

IF MISSED: If we do not explain how we deliver the solution, we will leave it to them to fill in that part of the narrative creating potential objections about timing or resource allocation on their side that should never have come up.

CHAPTER 19

THEIR DECISION

Buyer-Centric Selling Principle Thirteen: We must guide our prospects to a logical Yes or No at the end of the buying process.

Now that the prospect understands our solution, it is time to move into pricing. This is the first step in the closing process, not the last.

In our research, closing is one of the most troubling phases for struggling reps. They either:

1. don't transition into a clear closing process and don't directly ask for their potential buyer's business or
2. transition in an awkward/pressured way that doesn't GUIDE the buyer to logically answer the question based on all the key information we have gathered.

In a buyer centric sales process, their decision to buy *should be a logical conclusion.*

After presenting pricing and potential payment options, our ONLY job is to ask if they understand our pricing and how our payment options work. If our pricing does make sense, we immediately move to what we call the Guided Closing Process.

Do not pause after you've confirmed they understand your pricing. Do not allow dead air to make them think you are asking for their decision right then. That is how Seller Centric salespeople do it and it's awkward. It drives them to say "maybe" most of the time. Maybes turn into no's, and your prospective buyer's opportunity to solve their problems with you fades away.

The Confirmation Closing Process is a systematic way to move into the closing phase of the call that is comfortable for everyone and drives them to make a decision.

The Confirmation Closing Process
As soon as they say they understand your pricing, move immediately into summary. *"Ok, so to bring our entire conversation back together and ensure we are on the same page..."*

1. *"Are we all <u>still</u> aligned that this is a high priority for you to solve?"* Yes or No. No MAYBES!

2. *"Are we <u>still</u> aligned that you don't have the needed*

resources to solve this problem internally and need outside help?" Yes or No. No MAYBES!

3. *"Are we all <u>still</u> aligned on the problems needing to be solved? And are you clear on how our solution solves those problems?"* Yes or No. No MAYBES!

4. *"Are we all <u>still</u> aligned on the expected outcomes if these problems were to be solved? And now that you know our price, is the ROI sufficient?"* Yes or No. No MAYBES!

5. *"Are we the right solution to solve your problems and get you to your desired outcomes?"* Heck Yes or No. No MAYBES!

If we get a *"no"* on any of the first four questions, we can go back to our action plan and determine which information was incorrect. If we get a *"no"* on the final question we can scroll back up to our solution presentation and identify which part of our solution is creating the concern. It is far more effective to overcome objections by using the information we have already gathered from *them* and simply seek understanding of where we got out of alignment.

Your days of feeling like you have to push prospects to make decisions they aren't ready to make are over.

The goal of these questions is to drive them to a Heck yes or a no. NO MAYBE'S! Maybes are the cuddly blanket our prospects want to snuggle up to. They keep them comfortable by avoiding the fear of not making a decision either way.

When driving them to this Heck Yes or No, we must ensure they know we are doing this *for them*. *"No's"* are ok. We won't be the right solution for everyone. And a *"no"* for us should mean a *"yes"* for a competitor, so either way, your buyer will be on their way to a better future and our job as their trusted advisor will be complete. We cannot be afraid of helping our prospects in that way.

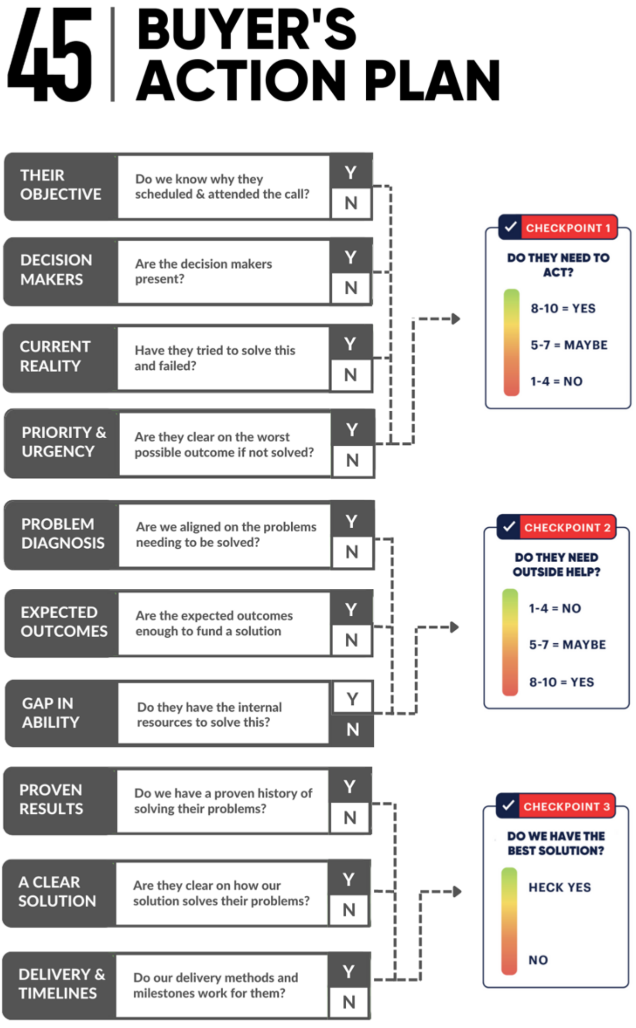
But more importantly, if it is a no, we can decipher why it's a no and discuss it. You cannot discuss maybes. They are ambiguous by nature, and that is why your potential buyers like them.

CLARITY DRIVES CONVERSION

For those worried about getting a *"no,"* we must remember that time is not our friend. The longer their indecision, the more likely it will end up in a *"no"* anyway. Driving them to a decision is critical.

For those who are worried about hearing your competitor won the deal, we will give you a sneak peek into your future. The truth is, your competitors are most likely confusing your prospects like you used to. Your process that delivers a clear plan of action for them to achieve their desired outcomes will win out far more than it won't.

Have confidence in that. Have faith that your methodical, buyer-focused experience and trusted advisor approach will win the day. It's what your prospects want. You need to deliver it to them. If they do say *"no"*, because sometimes they will, you will at least know and have the ability to transition that focus and time to helping other companies get to where they want to go and stop hoping that stalled deal comes through eventually.



To download this action plan, scan the QR code below or got to www.fourtyfive.io/buyer-action-plan.

CHAPTER 20

THE BUYER'S NARRATIVE

To increase the clarity and effectiveness of buyer action plans, we have found technology to be critical. To take things to the next level, we have found the power of story to be unmatched.

As salespeople, we must be storytellers. More specifically, biographers. We must get better and better at unpacking the needed information from our potential buyers and crafting that into a compelling narrative that stirs the needed emotion for them to act anytime they read it. This is a big part of Guiding them toward the sale.

To make a narrative compelling, each section must bleed into the other, just like a story. Buzzwords they used during the conversation should be reflected in that story to evoke emotion when they go back and re-read it.

Think of this as a 12-chapter story. And you're connecting this narrative for them chapter-by-chapter.

Chapter 1 – There is a problem that needs to be solved or a goal that needs to be achieved.
Chapter 2 – Our main characters are the person responsible and the person who has the authority to make the decision.
Chapter 3 – These main characters have tried x, y, and z to solve their problems, only to be left frustrated and stuck!
Chapter 4 – These characters are in PAIN and likely to meet these dreaded outcomes if they do not figure this out!
Chapter 5 – THEY MUST TAKE ACTION!
Chapter 6 – Enter the Trusted Advisor, who breaks down the bigger, more insidious problem or set of problems they must face… and hope emerges.
Chapter 7 – If these bigger problems were solved, we can see a brighter, more desirable future for our main character. The stakes are set.
Chapter 8 – The main characters have realized they cannot do this on their own and become open to help from the outside.
Chapter 9 – THEY MUST FIND AN OUTSIDE GUIDE!
Chapter 10 – An established and credible guide is there to help them just like they've helped so many others before.
Chapter 11 – with a clear and straightforward explanation of what they do to solve the buyer's problems.
Chapter 12 – and a clear breakdown of how that solution

will be delivered.

Buyers taking action at the end of the sales process means that a specific set of information needs to be true.

A needed outside solution solves the bigger problems causing the pain buyers urgently want to solve and gets them to the outcomes they want. Those outcomes justify the budget required for the solution and help to monitor key metrics in the process of solving it.

If carefully crafted and displayed to your prospects, this narrative will stir the clarity and emotion needed for them to take massive action.

We are not salespeople. We are Trusted Advisors who tell stories in the form of an action plan. And telling the prospect their story powerfully and clearly is one of the most critical parts of the job.

CHAPTER 21

PROCESS vs. PERSONALIZATION

Process vs. Personalization.

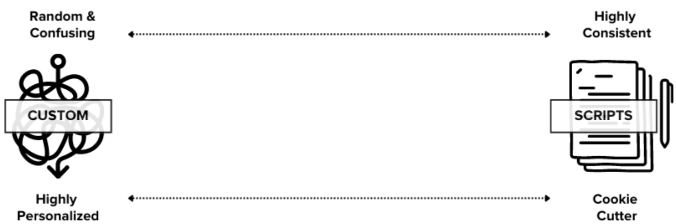
The debate continues to rage on.

And if we are being honest, in the old era of sales, personalization won the war if we gauged broad sentiment.

But it won the war because the definition of process was wrapped up in inflexible words like “scripts.”

Scripts drive salespeople to execute sales calls consistently. Unfortunately, they are calls that will make your stomach turn. Completely rigid and lacking the critical personal context from the conversation with your buyer.

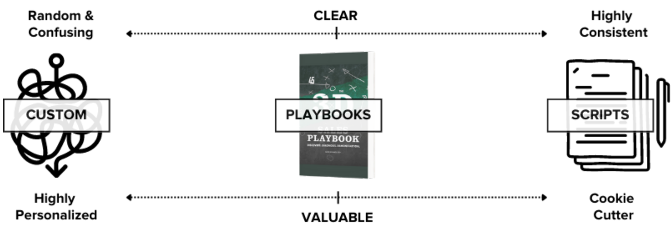
The alternative is almost as bad. The personalized call approach feels almost entirely random. Salespeople jumping from one question to the next. Prospects growing just as frustrated as with the scripted approach because they can't see where the conversation is going. They lose more and more confidence that they will get the value they were hoping for when scheduling their call.



But you can have a sales process and not have it be a rigid script. You can have a personalized conversation without it being a wide-open format that can go off the rails at any moment.

In reality, process and personalization are both critical to a successful prospect experience that converts a large number of high-quality new sales.

We call the combination of Process and Personalization, Playbooks.



Playbooks create the needed framework to ensure that all the critical areas of the conversation are being hit every single time while still allowing for the personalization required by our prospects.

The process creates consistent value for buyers in their journey to solve their problems. The personalization gives them the confidence that the conversation applies to their specific situation.

CHAPTER 22

GUIDED SELLING TECHNOLOGY

All of our call reviews and analysis have pointed to one simple truth: Sales rep failure is largely made up of an accumulation of small failures. Failures to gather the right information at the right time in the process and a failure to present it back to the prospect clearly.

In our call audits, we have found that on average mid to low-performing reps at any given company miss almost half of the 7 critical pieces of information needed in any given sales call. To summarize from early, those are listed below:

1. Why did they schedule the call?
2. Who are the decision makers?
3. What have they tried and why hasn't it worked?
4. What is the pain or worst thing that will happen
5. What is the problem causing it all?
6. What is the expected ROI?

7. Why can't they get this done on their own?

How are these reps still closing deals?

Because their prospects happen to be clear on that information already. For "less aware" prospects who aren't clear on the key pieces, the rep is unable to create the needed clarity, and the deal falters.

If pieces of the action plan are missed, conversion suffers. It's that simple. Every single part of the Buyer Action Plan is critical to unpacking the information that covers all three checkpoints creating clear and decisive action by our prospects at the end of the sales process.

But it's human nature for reps to miss pieces when left to their own efforts. They lose control of the call, forget to ask a question, go down confusing rabbit holes, or start unintentionally taking shortcuts. Take our word for it. After years of coaching hundreds of reps to execute a company's sales playbook, no matter how hard we tried, getting consistent execution of the Playbook was near impossible. Buyer Action Plans suffered. Checkpoints weren't established and prospects were indecisive at the end of the sales process.

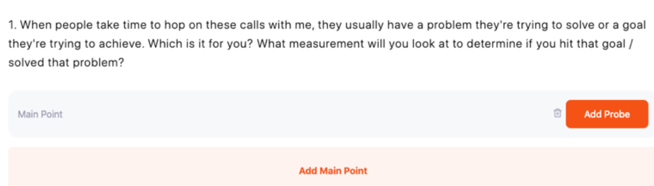
This was the original driving force behind the creation of Guided Selling Technology. A piece of sales software focused on three things:

1. *Guiding* sales reps through the consistent execution of sales playbooks or processes.
2. *Guiding* prospects through the decision-making process via a clearly displayed action plan and a logical set of questions (The Confirmation Close) to determine their next actions.
3. *Guiding* leaders to identify where their reps need coaching in the execution of their playbook.

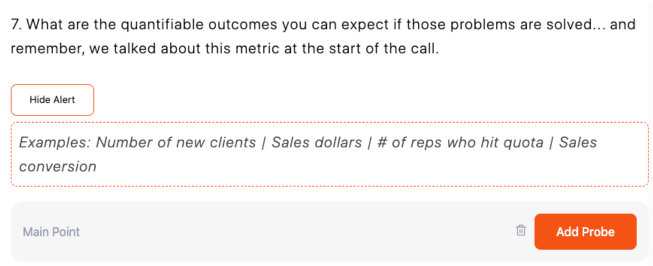
The last 15 years of experience in driving revenue told me if we could support our sales reps, potential buyers, and sales leaders in this way, failing in the sales role could become impossible.

Guiding the Sales Rep

Guided selling technology guides sales reps through a sales process by displaying the key questions to ask at each stage of the conversation. The right information is being collected at the right times and is being documented so we can clearly summarize it for our prospects.

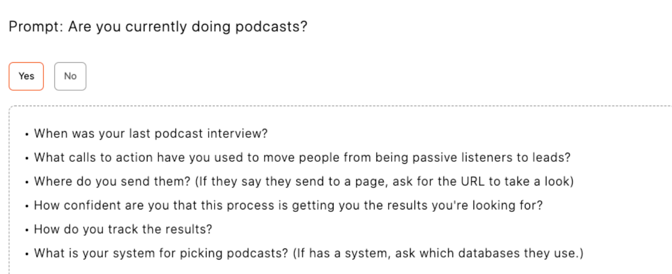


To assist new or struggling reps, we created "Alerts." Alerts act like over-the-shoulder coaching during the sales call. Information like example answers reps can expect to hear and subsequently focus on or drill down questions that can be asked to crack open specific parts of the conversation.



For certain verticals, it's useful to give your sales reps Yes/No questions to ask that drive clarity and direction. It's important we arm them with optimized responses to either of those answers to ensure the call is headed in the right direction either way.

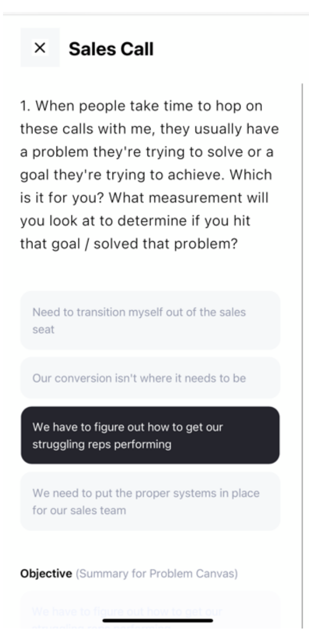
"Prompts" allow us to do this whether it be in the qualifying stage executed by SDR's or in the Discovery stage executed by sales reps.



PREDEFINED OPTIONS

For sales calls conducted over video conferencing or sales meetings where you have your laptop in front of you, the above format for sales forms works great. For sales execution out in the field where sales reps have to be mobile, we created predefined options. A simple way for outside sales reps to follow the playbook and document answers in real-time with their prospects.

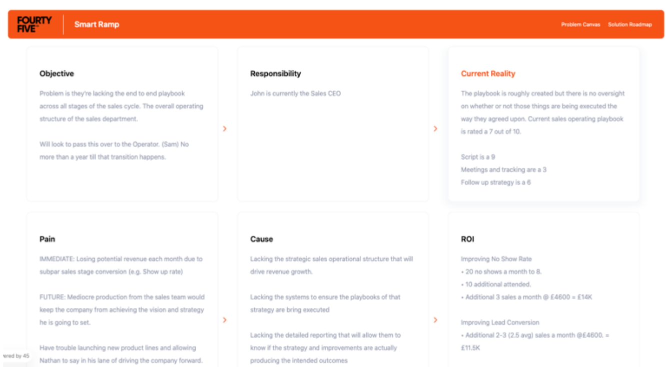
The key to creating ease of use in an on-premise sales environment is realizing there are not a hundred different answers our prospects will give us to our questions. There are usually 5-9 core answers they will end up on. Experienced salespeople know those options and they use them to anticipate needs. Now everyone on your team can.



Guiding the Prospect

Guiding the prospect to a clear decision means they must have a summary of the vital information right in front of them when needed. Doing this creates a superior experience over the competition.

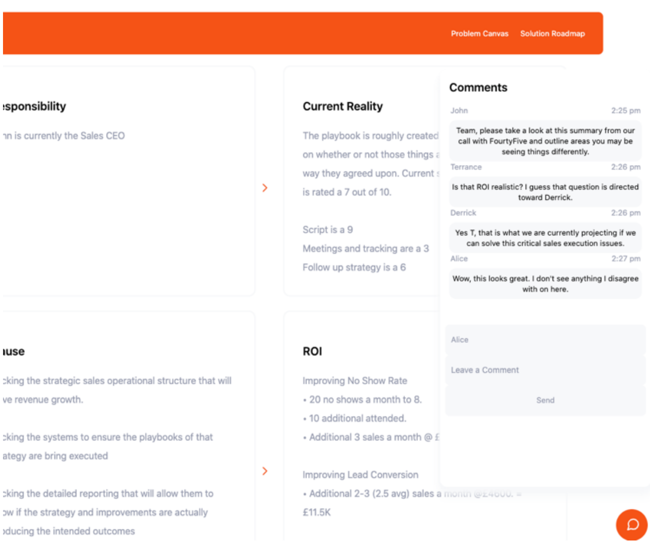
To do this, it is essential that Guided Selling Technology takes the critical information captured in the Discovery and Diagnosis phases and displays it in an easy-to-consume, beautiful summary screen that every decisionmaker can easily access.



According to CEB, the average number of decision-makers in a typical purchase is only increasing (from 5.4 to 6.8). We may have missed something during discovery. Perhaps their discussions have evolved. According to Gartner, only 17% of the buying group's time is spent with the solution provider. The ability to deliver a clear summary to prospects gives us the critical asset for everyone to organize around and, when needed, identify misalignment.

Misalignment is a killer to the momentum of a prospect's buying process. Our solution suddenly doesn't make sense if we are misaligned on the problems to be solved. Our pricing won't make sense if we're not aligned and agree on the ROI. And so on...

To minimize this, our guided selling technology allows remote teams to align via a chat function right in their workspace. Especially since Covid, more and more team members are remote, and this feature is critical to buyer alignment and, ultimately, buyer success.



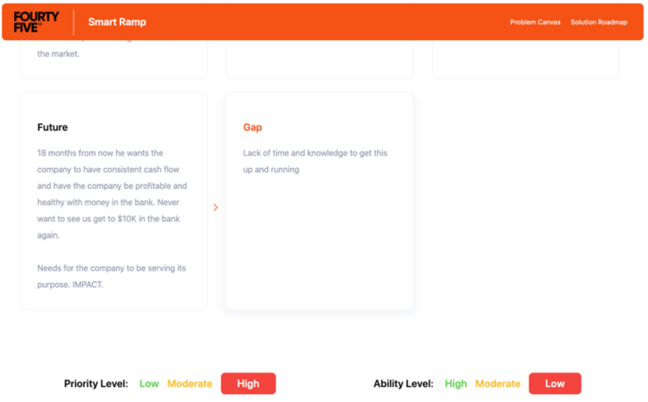
SOLUTION ROADMAP

As we explained earlier, a Buyer Action Plan not only summarizes the Discovery and Diagnosis phases of the sales experience, but it must also include the information that helps them decide if we are the right solution for them or not.

Leaving it up to your prospects to remember how your solution will solve their problems and get them to their desired outcomes will fail you and ultimately create gaps in their plan on how to move forward. The old school way of sending them a one-off attachment lends itself to that. It gets buried in email. Most don't ever open it to read it. And if they do, it's not in context to the rest of their action plan.

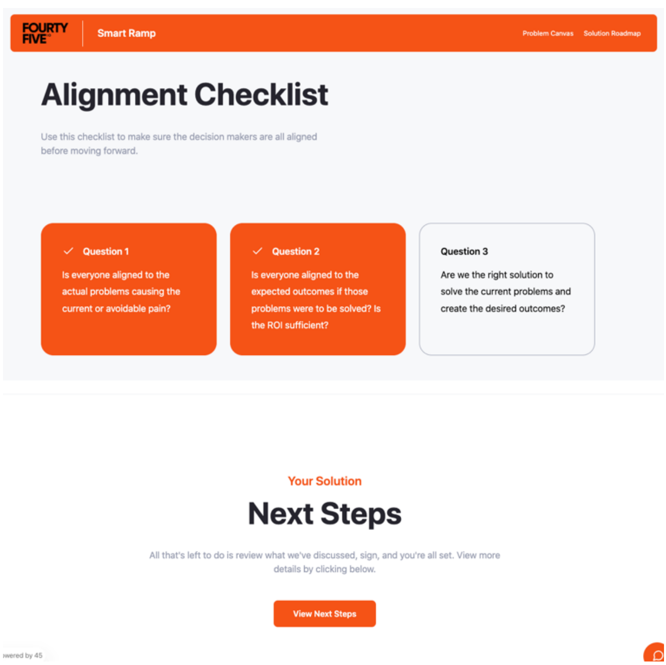
For this reason, Guided Selling Technology leaves everything in one place.

DISCOVERY & DIAGNOSIS SUMMARY



DEMONSTRATION SUMMARY

THE GUIDED CLOSE



Solution presentations, the systematic Confirmation Closing process, and next step links ensure your prospects burn fewer calories figuring out if you're the right next step they need to take. When you do this more effectively and elegantly than the competition, you will close more deals and ultimately dominate your industry.

CHAPTER 23

PIPELINE INSPECTION

One of the most significant issues causing sales rep failure is the coaching gap between a sales leader and a sales rep. A sales leader's ability to support and help their sales reps close more deals is nearly impossible in the typical sales environment because they lack sufficient access to the needed information. They depend on the salesperson's recollection or opinions on the deal, which are almost always flawed, or one-off call reviews that don't usually identify the most critical problems causing the rep to underperform.

The collection of critical information inside Guided Selling Technology ends this problem. Sales leaders now have the essential prospect data right in front of them with a click of a button in the Pipeline Inspection report.

Name	Created	Priority	Ability	Commit	Key Decision Maker(s)	Days in Sales Cycle	Workspace Views	Opportunity Score
Closer.io	10/22	High	Low	Yes	Yes	4	12	🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥
Unteathered	10/19	N/A	N/A	No	Yes	5	2	🔥
Sixth Division	10/17	High	Low	Yes	Yes	7	26	🔥🔥🔥🔥
SDRegulators	10/17	High	N/A	No	No	7	1	🔥
Smart Ramp	10/14	High	Low	Yes	Yes	10	19	🔥🔥🔥🔥

A progression of information is key for a leader to properly inspect their team's pipeline in a way that will allow them to effectively guide and coach toward a sales rep through how to establish each of the Buyer Checkpoints. Is this a high priority for the prospect, and do they believe they have a low ability to solve it on their own?

Name	Created	Priority	Ability	Commit	Key Decision Maker(s)	Days in Sales Cycle	Workspace Views	Opportunity Score
Closer.io	10/22	High	Mid	Yes	Yes	4	12	🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥
Unteathered	10/19	Mid	Mid	No	Yes	5	2	🔥
Sixth Division	10/17	High	Low	Yes	Yes	7	26	🔥🔥🔥🔥
SDRegulators	10/17	High	Low	No	No	7	1	🔥
Smart Ramp	10/14	High	Low	Yes	Yes	10	19	🔥🔥🔥🔥

The prospect-given rating needs to be easily visible for leaders so they can quickly understand if there is work to be done. If the ratings aren't aligned with what's required for the deal to move forward, clicking into the sales form to review the prospect's answers is a simple and highly effective way to get a second set of eyes on whether or not a compelling narrative has been built. From there, a strategy can be discussed, and a sales leader's ability to help drive deals to a successful outcome has improved exponentially.

The days of being forced to go through long call reviews as the *only* meaningful way to do this are now over. In two minutes, sales leaders can dig deeper and help their reps create a game plan to uncover the needed information to solidify the critical information required to close a new customer.

As for the last checkpoint, we need an indication of whether or not our solution and the way it was presented resonated with the prospect. The days of relying solely on prospect verbal feedback or a sales rep's recollection of this are over.

The most effective way to understand if our solution and the entire narrative are clear and compelling for our prospects is by measuring their level of engagement with the Prospect Workspace. Guided Selling Technology counts the number of times the prospect has viewed their workspace. If there is low engagement, we can be sure our solution presentation wasn't compelling enough. The entire story did not come together in the way we intended.

Name	Created	Priority	Ability	Commit	Key Decision Maker(s)	Days in Sales Cycle	Workspace Views	Opportunity Score
Closer.io	10/22	High	Low	Yes	Yes	4	12	
Unteathered	10/19	N/A	N/A	No	Yes	5	2	
Sixth Division	10/17	High	Low	Yes	Yes	7	26	
SDRegulators	10/17	High	N/A	No	No	7	1	
Smart Ramp	10/14	High	Low	Yes	Yes	10	19	

Our data shows that 5+ views are the minimum needed to evaluate if your solution is in the running. Some of our clients will have upwards of 70+ views. This is from larger organizations using this as a key point of alignment in their decision-making process across a large number of stakeholders.

All of this data, accessible in 2 short minutes, now gives sales leaders never before seen ability to coach and guide their reps to winning more deals.

CHAPTER 24

THE SALES CONVERSION FORMULA

In sales, the three numbers that matter the most are:

1. The number of closed deals
2. The average revenue per closed deal
3. The average time to close

If salespeople sell a lot at a high average price and close quickly, they are hitting on all cylinders.

This should describe your top performers.

This will one day be how you describe every sales rep on your team. Achieving this comes from leveraging the performance data of your top-performing reps to identify the gap in execution effectiveness of your lower-performing reps.

Buyer Centric Selling

To be clear, we have clients who leverage their sales playbooks and guided selling tech for just their struggling and ramping reps. Those companies that choose to do so get fantastic improvement in their team's performance. But companies that want to drive their team's performance to the next level require top performers to buy in and use the technology as well.

Their performance data will set the benchmark all other reps will be driven to achieve.

At this point, we should have the sales playbook created mirroring the execution patterns of your top reps, outlined and deployed using Guided Selling Technology. Our hope was that step alone would solve all problems plaguing lower-performing rep conversion. It improves performance significantly but doesn't quite do enough to turn them into top performers.

They are executing the process consistently, but *are they executing it effectively*? How do we identify the areas of opportunity and train them to execute these areas as your top performers do?

This is the problem that led us to the Sales Conversion Formula.

The Sales Conversion Formula is a revolutionary new data set leaders and reps alike can use to find out exactly what is keeping their lower performers from being the top performers they should be.

What is the average Pain/Priority rating your top performers are getting from their prospects?

What is the average confidence/ability rating your top performers are getting from their prospects?

How many decision-makers, on average, are a part of the sales process for your top-performing reps?

What is the average ROI calculation for your top-performing reps?

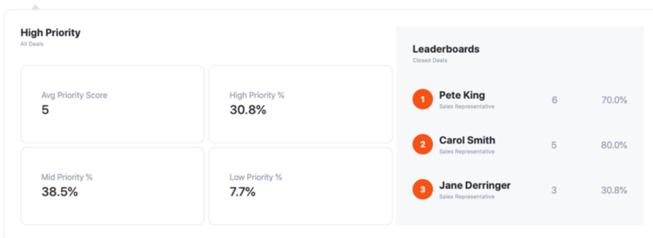
What percentage of prospects give a verbal commitment at the end of the solution presentation for your top performers?

These four critical execution numbers set the standard for your entire sales team.

Once this formula is established, you can bump the data from your lower-performing reps against those standards and identify the areas where your bottom performers need the most coaching.

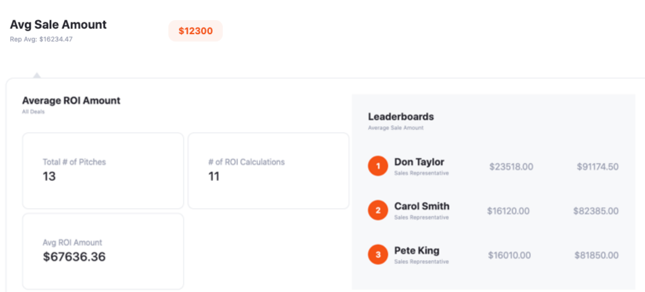
As shown in the image below, Jane Derringer has closed half as many deals as Pete. She is also only getting 31% of her prospects to say their current problems are an 8-10 on the urgency scale. This is compared to Pete's 70% and

Carol's 80%.



We can either determine she's getting terrible quality leads and fix that. Or we can identify her ability to effectively execute the pain section of her calls is suffering, and this is where we need to dive in and train specifically.

Another example is the average sales price. In the screenshot below, you can see Jane's average deal size is \$12,300. Don Taylor's is at \$23,518. Nearly DOUBLE. The critical execution data point? Average ROI calculated. Don is calculating, on average, over \$90K of ROI in his sales conversations. Jane is calculating just under \$68K.



Jane is having difficulty stacking ROI, creating more price sensitivity in her deals, leading to negotiations and a trimmed scope of work.

These are unheralded insights for sales leaders. Insights that will finally give them the information they need to drive up the quality of execution for each rep and, ultimately, their performance.

These data sets become your leading indicators. They become the measurements you use to guide every rep you have to turn them into a quota-hitting, top-performing machine.

The days of being unable to identify precisely what is causing your sales reps' poor performance are GONE. The days of poor sales rep performance will soon be gone too.

CHAPTER 25

A SEAMLESS PROSPECT TO CUSTOMER JOURNEY

CRM has largely become a cesspool for insufficient and incomplete information about our prospects. This is most apparent in the prospect-to-customer transition. New customer after new customer repeating themselves to onboarding specialists, wasting time and confidence en route to achieving the outcomes they hoped to when they bought.

This frustrating reality is a thing of the past for our clients who have started to use the prospect-facing workspace in the kickoff process.

The critical information documented and confirmed throughout the sales process is now used to set the foundation for their customer experience and create complete continuity in their experience.

For customer service, this information is critical. Understanding why this is such a big priority for the client, what pressing problems they want to solve, and their expected outcomes gives them all the context to manage the account more effectively.

What is the new client's motivation to do the work they need to do? What products and services can potentially be upsold later based on what the client tries to achieve? How do we effectively measure success and avoid using the client's *feelings* as the critical measure of successful delivery?

Please make no mistake about it. A world-class client journey starts during the buying process. It is the foundation we must leverage for their experience if we are going to deliver on our most important promises and the impact we aspire to provide to our market.

CHAPTER 26

UNCAPPED SALES CONVERSION

What if I told you there was a path and a process that would allow your company to drive your sales conversion higher and higher with no limits?

We call it Uncapped Sales Conversion.

The key to building a world-class sales process for your company is not to copy someone else's. Their process is for their target market. It is for their product or service. It aligns with their company culture.

The key to any company building a world-class sales process is to follow these steps:

1. Set the initial process
2. Execute the process
3. Review data
4. Tweak and adjust the process
5. Lock the process in
6. Optimize the process to work with different types of

prospects and other markets

Early this year, we analyzed conversion data for one of our clients and saw that they weren't converting bigger companies in their market. Specifically deals with a larger anticipated sales price. The small and mid-sized prospects were doing well. If we could start converting the larger deals, we could not only increase conversion, but we could also increase average revenue per sale.

As we broke down calls with these larger companies, we noticed issues with how we approached some of our questions. We weren't seeing or hearing thought-provoking answers to 3 of the core questions we were asking.

The way they were worded was too simplistic for where these CEOs were in this market's lifecycle.

On the decision-maker question, we were stopping short. We needed to expand the question and fully understand how they made purchases in the company.

So we created a new playbook specifically for these companies asking the questions in the order and in the way that this level of company wanted to hear them. Hence, they knew they were talking to a company that understood them. This added form created an immediate improvement in conversion.

So what do you do then?

Rinse and repeat.

Continue to find the cohorts of prospects who aren't converting at the average level and optimize the process for them.

Any company that does this for 12 months will have a world-class sales process they can use to recruit the best of the best and retain as many of their current reps as possible. Any company that does this for 12 months will optimize their sales experience and, ultimately, their sales numbers to levels they have never seen before.

CHAPTER 27

#NO REP LEFT BEHIND

As a revenue leader for 15 years, a mantra formed in all of my teams. And that mantra was, No Rep Left Behind.

Me or my teams never believed that 20 - 30% of the team shouldn't be hitting quota each month. We thought that, if we were a team, we would all fight like hell to perform at our best level, and then we would fight like hell to help everyone on the team do the same so that EVERYONE HIT QUOTA.

As we turned that into a reality, some told me directly that my team's goals weren't high enough if everyone could hit them.

My response?

"Maybe your determination to ensure everyone on your team is successful isn't high enough. It has nothing to do with the number in our revenue model."

The rich get richer in sales, and when you build a team of reps who consistently win, you have created a high-energy, optimistic performance culture that continues to propel itself forward.

It's part of the secret to creating a high-performing sales organization. Raise the floor. Raise the performance of your lower-performing reps, and they will naturally push your middle performers up.

No one wants to be at the bottom.

Your middle performers will push your top performers, and the typical stagnation you see in performance across a sales floor is eliminated. Your team is constantly striving to close more deals at higher amounts faster.

No rep left behind is the mentality. A buyer-centric selling strategy is the way. And guided selling technology is the how.

CONCLUSION

I want to thank you for going on this journey with us. We are entering a dramatically different and much-improved era in sales and Guided Selling Technology, and Buyer-centric Sales strategies will dominate this era. Sales rep success will become the norm. Buyers getting the value they are looking for, and the help they need to create positive change in their lives and businesses will be the standard.

And to do that, we need your help.

If this book resonated with you… If you see a fast-approaching new era upon us in sales, we urge you to join us, and we encourage you to tell everyone you can. Please help us spread the word to end the failure on both sides of the sales experience.

If you want more help, visit www.FourtyFive.io to learn more about how we can help you and your company dramatically improve sales results.