

“A must for any knowledge driven sales person. A must for any sales professional.” Ben Turner, ISMM

Includes 29  
FREE sales work  
kits, tools and  
offers worth  
£1,350

# The **Natural** Sales Evolution



**Your customers have evolved...have you?**



Next →

## The Natural Sales Evolution

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# Foreword

*Contributors to the Foreword section include both Neil Warren from Modern Selling, and Ben Turner from the ISMM.*

## **NEIL WARREN – FOUNDER OF MODERN SELLING**

### **An independent body for the UK sales profession**

Why does the modern day sales professional NEED this book?

Well, let's start to answer this question with another question: What are the consequences of not reading this book?

Put simply, as a sales professional you'll get left behind. The world of buying has changed which means the world of selling has changed. As a sales professional you need this book to help you take the simple steps to adapting in today's environment.

While your competitors are taking all your prospects off your hands and you're missing sales targets left, right and centre, you'll be looking around wondering what on earth changed. Well, I can tell you right now what changed: everything. And that has been driven by the internet.

The internet, specifically the changes in the online business resources in the past three years, has re-written the rules and transformed the selling and buying environment. This is rivalling all sales revolutions that went before.



What we're seeing is a planet wide realignment of how people live, work and cooperate. Where you once needed to be physically based somewhere, today you're not tied down by those same restrictions. What's more, the internet has liberated the buyer too. They don't wait at home for a sales person to knock on the door if they want to buy a Hoover. They're empowered to go online and / or choose to take such research and go shopping, online or in-store – you've seen the adverts encouraging just that.

The modern day sales professional must take this seriously because the traditional methods simply don't make sense in the world we live in today. Why would they when there is a brand new platform that buyers and sellers are migrating towards?

# Even if you are the best sales person in the world, nothing is staying still.

You need to keep changing adapting and evolving to make sure that you stay in the know and ahead of the game.

Understand that everything is changing all the time, so read this book, evolve with the changes around you, and enjoy the financial fruits of your labour.

Neil Warren

**MODERN SELLING**

[www.modernselling.com](http://www.modernselling.com)



**BEN TURNER - THE INSTITUTE OF SALES & MARKETING MANAGEMENT (ISMM)**

**Also Founder of The SalesPro**

There has been a fundamental shift in the way modern businesses conduct themselves. The evolution of social media and new technologies mixed with a larger macro shift in the world economy means that the way we sell today has changed, and with it, the nature of the sales professional.

**Particularly over the last 24 months, the rise of the sales professional has been prominent.**

The profession has further understood its value and its importance, and reflected on its poor reputation within business – the change has been realised and reacted to.

The sales professional is a different animal to that of the past 30 years. These individuals are knowledge-driven, have a deeper understanding of their environment and their client base, but perhaps more importantly, a deeper understanding of sales and what it takes to excel in this challenging profession.

As sales professionals assert themselves in the commercial world and seek new sources of information, new learning, and new knowledge, they gravitate to the best content and ideas that can help them increase performance – The Natural Sales Evolution is a prime example.



The Natural Sales Evolution encapsulates this change in the modern world and offers insight and expertise on how to handle and compete.

*This book is a must read for any knowledge-driven salesperson; a must for any sales professional.*

Ben Turner

**ISMM & THE SALESPRO**

[www.ismm.co.uk](http://www.ismm.co.uk)

## Introduction

“The illiterate of the 21st Century won’t be those who can’t read or write. They will be those who can’t learn, unlearn and relearn.”

Alvin Toffler

We opened our doors at Natural Training in London in January 2005 which, at the time of writing, was nearly eight years ago. In that time, we have trained nearly 5000 salespeople. Their attitudes, skills and knowledge have been diverse: there have been salespeople who were absolutely on a high after winning countless deals and making the most of their natural style, and salespeople who were at an all-time low, questioning their worth in a world that seemed pitted against them. And in between those two extremes there has been every type of selling attitude imaginable.

For all their diversity, the people we have trained shared one very important quality: they were mentally prepared to evolve and prosper.

It seems perfectly straightforward: we all know that customers are changing as the rhythm of business evolves. Likewise, we salespeople must evolve with them, or if we can, slightly before them. If we don’t, we risk scrambling around for an increasingly smaller piece of the action. There is no doubt that selling has become tougher in the past few years. But this is only the case for those who haven’t adapted their sales process and approach to suit the modern day buyer. This is EXACTLY what inspired us to write this book.





In our experience from this considerable sample of 5,000 individuals, less than 10% evolve in an effective way to meet the changes of today. Those 10% of salespeople are in a very enjoyable position indeed, and don't really want the other 90% getting up to speed with today's natural selling evolution, because they are making great money!

So why don't salespeople evolve? There are several reasons – lack of motivation, energy, economic growth, successful management and plain old smarts being some of them. It also has a lot to do with attitude; to borrow from the Toffler quote at the start of this introduction, it is easier to do nothing than it is to learn, unlearn, and relearn selling behaviours.

However, the main opponent to sales evolution is fear. Salespeople carry with them some of the ritualistic attitude of top athletes: "If I win the biggest game of the year with my blue underwear, then I'm wearing blue underwear for every game." And the sales version: "If I win a big deal by presenting using PowerPoint, then I must present using PowerPoint for every big deal." (Never mind that the big deal was in 2009!) Fear of failure is, therefore, a bigger motivator for the majority of salespeople than the thrill of success. That's a sad indictment on a profession known for just the opposite.

Evolution in sales is about being strategically adventurous, bold and creative. It's about going for deals, and even if you lose, being remembered for being different. Better that than to lose and instantly be forgotten! Evolving in sales is also about being curious and picking up on the signs around you. If your customers are engaged in a new communication technology such as LiveChat, which is promoted on their website, then chances are you will establish a stronger connection by communicating with them using that technology. If customers are demanding value, then work out some ways to package it up and give it to them. And if customers want your solution to be different, stop saying "We can't" and start thinking about ways to adapt!

So, where does Natural Training, and this book, fit in with the fast changing selling evolution around us? Well, during the past eight years, we have helped salespeople to evolve by introducing them to a very personal, high-impact range of strategies and techniques that reflect two main dynamics:

- 1) How customers like to do business right NOW, and
- 2) The natural style of the salesperson.

Along the way, the results have been impressive in terms of our clients attracting and retaining the right type of clients, and closing more deals at higher margins – all with less work and anguish! We know we are on to something - which is why we published this book. It serves as a “best-of” all of our techniques to ensure today’s salespeople are better equipped to deal with change.

Do you have to make massive changes to be effective? Absolutely not.

## Evolution starts with one small change that disrupts a pattern.

This leads to another change, and another, until it forms a new pattern – temporarily completing an evolutionary cycle.

The key, however, is to make that first small change. Implementing just one or two of the tools and methods in this book will help drive your success to new levels. For example, while reading the first draft of this book for us, one of our clients noticed an idea that she hadn’t realised



could be achieved for such a low cost. She recognised that her sales team was communicating with customers in the same way it always had, which was having a negative impact. In fact, clients viewed it as dull and tiresome. So, she listened, and evolved the business to suit how the customer liked to communicate. As a result, in one month she moved from 20% conversion from pitching stage, to 50% conversion, which in monetary value was worth over £100,000. And that was just ONE of the techniques you are about to read. (We won't tell you exactly which one, but it appears in Chapter 13.)

The standout words in the example you've just read are: noticing, recognising, listening, evolving and, most of all, implementing! At Natural Training, we strongly believe that it's implementing what we teach that gets the results - not the theory. This is why this book is packed with practical advice and tips. Look out for 29 bonus sales tools, offers, templates and resources at the end of each chapter to help kick-start the implementation of your evolution strategies.

### **A final note on how to use this book...**

It is not a novel that is meant to be read cover to cover, nor is it an instruction manual designed for robots. Instead, it is a rich breeding ground of ideas. We want you to read something so wonderful that your pulse starts to quicken, and your brain starts to whirl. This book is designed for you to dip in and out of, as you prioritise your own issues.

As always, it starts with you. Where are the weak links in your sales cycle? For example, you might be fantastic at managing clients from online to offline (Chapter 11), but you feel you aren't describing your product in a way that creates excitement in today's market (Chapter 3). Or you might feel that you are up-to-date with modern objection handling techniques (Chapter 8), but you can't get hold of enough decision makers to begin with (Chapter 4). Or



maybe you have no problem presenting to a client via some of today's newest methods (Chapter 7), but feel guilty about your poor LinkedIn presence (Chapter 12). The point is, work out what you need first and target that!

Make the book your own by scribbling notes all over it, personalising it to reflect your own natural style, feelings and goals. That way, it will be easier to own your evolution.

As always, we would be delighted to receive your feedback. If you would like to share your thoughts on how selling has changed, your greatest sales challenge, or about a current trend, please get in touch by calling our London office on +44 (0)207 613 7830 or emailing [evolve@naturaltraining.com](mailto:evolve@naturaltraining.com). I will personally see and hear about all of your communication.

Evolve and prosper!

Matt Drought

**FOUNDER - NATURAL TRAINING**

[www.naturaltraining.com](http://www.naturaltraining.com)



## Acknowledgements

**JUST LIKE THE OPERATION OF ANY GREAT SALES COMPANY, PRODUCING THIS BOOK HAS BEEN A TEAM EFFORT. THIS BOOK IS A TRUE COLLABORATION WITH THE NATURAL TEAM OF COACHES, SALESPEOPLE AND DIRECTORS.**

Selling runs through the blood of everyone in our team. Like you, we're passionate about sales and about getting results. We like to call ourselves 'The Naturals' because we're committed to providing you, the sales professional, with the latest strategies, techniques and tools to help you naturally evolve in this sales evolution. It made coming up with the title nice and simple: ***The Natural Sales Evolution.***

The Natural team of contributors includes Fiona Challis (an AMAZING driving force), Nick Golding, Fred Robson, Deborah Sowry, Paul Owen, Paul James, Greg Keen, Mark Williams, Sean Sidney, Salli Glover, Pat Upton, James Marshall and Mark Fineman.

And to all our Naturals who could not contribute to this book but who have **absolutely contributed** to our success over the years, a massive thank you.

We would also like to say thank you to Ben Turner and Neil Warren for their forewords.



Thanks also to my wife and business partner, Feena, and our beautiful baby girl, Sive, who are both a constant inspiration.

I would also like to say thanks to our loyal customer base and subscription base for supporting us throughout the years and for welcoming us into their sales organisations.

Finally, we would like to dedicate this book to the sales profession. Salespeople get an awful kicking from all angles, and probably always will, but we box on with determination, as always.

**THIS IS FOR YOU.**

## 29 FREE SALES WORK KITS, TOOLS AND OFFERS WORTH £1,350!

At the end of each chapter, you will see some bonus resources to help kick-start your personal selling evolution.

### Here is the complete list:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Natural Sales Evolution Audit                                    | 16. "The Winning Pitch" ebook download                                   |
| 2. Sales Maker worksheet  | 17. Send us your video sales pitch                                       |
| 3. Customer Decision Making Cycle worksheet                         | 18. Get 20% off our Open NaturalStyle 2-Day Presentation Skills workshop |
| 4. 20% off our Complete Telesales Skills open workshop              | 19. PURE Objection Handling worksheet                                    |
| 5. Customer Personality Analysis worksheet                          | 20. 50% off a Natural Training Team Taster Objection Handling session    |
| 6. Value Selling Warren Buffet Style - PDF                          | 21. Negotiation Dashboard template                                       |
| 7. Value Proposition Creator  | 22. Procurement Profiler download  |
| 8. Five tips to handle gatekeepers and leave voicemail – audio file | 23. Secrets of Selling to Procurement – audio file                       |
| 9. Send us your phone recording – free coaching offer               | 24. Procurement Matrix worksheet   |
| 10. BITE PDF and template   | 25. One-page Lead Generation Plan  |
| 11. Role Play template  | 26. "HEAT" ebook download  |
| 12. NaturalFlow™ Questioning desktop planner                        | 27. Free 'Online to Offline' marketing critique                          |
| 13. Case study template   | 28. Performance Mindset & Goal Setting planner                           |
| 14. Trusted Advisor tip sheet                                       | 29. 21 Recommended Sales Resources factsheet                             |
| 15. 10 Tips for Client Video Testimonials                           |  |

To access the Natural Training sales resource centre for your 29 FREE resources, [simply click here](#) to buy the full version of the book



## CHAPTER

## 1

Selling is evolving, and we must evolve with it. The time to change how we prospect, develop relationships and sell is NOW. This chapter looks at how selling has changed. We highlight what exactly has changed and what you, the sales professional, need to do to adapt and find the levels of success that you've been used to in the past...

## How selling has evolved

They say that the Olympic Games don't really open until the flame is lit in the main stadium. However in 2012, many people felt that the real starting point of the London Olympic Games was signalled with the immortal words spoken by the Queen, "Good evening, Mr Bond".

Producer Danny Boyle had pulled off a master stroke: James Bond (played by Daniel Craig) walked into the Queen's actual private quarters and escorted her out of Buckingham Palace to the Olympic ceremony. It was unlikely – and it was magnificent!

Five years ago, if you asked anyone whether it would be possible for the Queen to embrace pop culture and do an acting gig with Daniel Craig, they would have laughed in your face. Now, having made this leap, it's not inconceivable that the Queen herself will be Tweeting on a daily basis in the near future. Watch this space!

The point is, that simple act by the Queen represented much more than a bit of fun. It



represented real and exciting change – a significant milestone in the evolution of culture and communication. When you break it down further, it becomes even more exciting. Here is a figurehead, representing one of the most conservative and dignified organisations on earth, doing a cameo in a promotional piece by a producer who shot to notoriety with a film about a group of heroin users!

The real message is if the Queen can change, so can you. The way customers buy and salespeople sell is evolving.

## The rules are evolving around us daily at a pace that's leaving many salespeople cut adrift.

If you work in sales, you need to sit up and pay close attention to what's happening around you. Sell how you have always sold, and you risk becoming a relic of the past. Embrace the new world of selling and you have a wondrous opportunity to be at the vanguard of sales success, enjoying the increased income as a result.

Let's have a look at the way selling has changed in the past five years: (See next page)

YESTERDAY'S SELLING	SELLING NOW
1. Traditional selling approach	1. Blended selling approach
2. Product is King	2. Customer is King
3. Salesperson generates leads	3. Technology generates leads
4. Cold calling is weight of numbers	4. Develop modern, smart and intelligent cold call campaigns
5. Salespeople rely on customers knowing less than they do	5. Educated modern day buyers know more than some sales people!
6. The priority is on relationship selling	6. The priority is on providing value and results
7. There is no recognised power in Procurement function	7. Selling to Procurement and Buying Agencies is, in most cases, a necessity
8. "We have loyal customers who only spend with us."	8. Customers are constantly being tempted with competitive offerings and their spend is fragmented
9. "We communicate solely with customers by phone and face to face."	9. "We now communicate using multi-media platforms including Webex and Skype."
10. The sales starts with a call	10. The sale starts online
11. "I am a salesperson."	11. "I am a Sales Maker."
12. Salespeople qualify leads	12. Customers use an automated online sales process to do the pre-qualifying for you
13. "I don't need to change my sales approach because my results are fine."	13. You are missing out on a huge opportunity to <i>improve</i> your results. Going from being good to great is within your power but it takes the right attitude.

## WHAT IS DRIVING THIS CHANGE AT THE MOMENT?

In truth, there is only one main driver. It sits at the heart of the sale and is the real hero. No – it is not WHAT you are selling (yesterday's hero) but WHO you are selling to.

**Insider Tip:** Your customers are central to everything now because they are infinitely more educated and resourced. They make very powerful allies indeed!

# Modern day buyers have changed how and why they buy, which has created the need for the modern day sales professional to change how they prospect and sell.

So what has sparked this change?

We know that the entry of the internet marked a huge change in selling. In the last few years, however, the internet has evolved from being a graduate research assistant to a powerful consumer ally.

At the click of a mouse, your customer has a unique window into your virtual shopfront. But that's just the start. They also have access to details about your people, your sales performance, your company records, your customer information and many other facts that will either work for you – or lose you the sale before it has even started. The information and choice available to buyers today gives them great buying power. And don't customers, as we all are, love it!



# In many cases, a mildly interested customer is more informed than a lazy salesperson.

That's a key role reversal. The buyer can reach everything they need in an hour or two and have all sorts of buying advantages. This means that the modern day sales professional not only has to adapt the way in which they sell, they also need to ensure that they know their industry, sector and products and services inside out.

## HERE'S A GREAT EXAMPLE...

In 2008 at Natural Training, we did a few days of telesales training for a reseller of a major photocopier brand. The company's whole sales process involved cold calling schools, surgeries and small government agencies with the aim of selling them a photocopier for £13,000 with a large, ongoing maintenance contract. The company sold about a dozen of these machines a month. However, if its customers had simply 'Googled' the model number, they would have seen the same product for £6,200. That's right – the reseller's business model was reliant on 100% mark-ups from standard retail prices.

The customer, as always, was central to this. This company, which had 12 salespeople, was relying on an ill-educated, ignorant, poorly resourced customer base. It was a market the company desperately hoped wouldn't check or compare pricing; a market of trusting or non-caring customers who would have bought anything from anyone. In other words, it was a rapidly shrinking market. We had discussions with the client - begging the key decision makers to develop a more sustainable new business strategy that could initially sit alongside the shrinking one, and then take over in the long term. They didn't listen.



Fast-forward to 2012 and that same company only has two employees – the Director and the Administrator. They work out of the Director's lounge room. They are essentially washed up – finishing up the last of their maintenance contracts, wondering what went wrong (blaming the customer), and working out what to do next.

*So, what happened in this example?*

It's simple: technology evolved. It pulled their uneducated customer base into a position of wisdom. Their competitors also evolved, forming alliances with other organisations that were able to get them larger contracts in the new 'print solutions' space. Yet this company failed to evolve – applying four-year-old business practices to a market that no longer needed them.

Meanwhile, the rest of us realise that sales is evolving fast - led by a wise customer who is spoiled for choice. That customer wants to do business on their terms, be communicated with in the way they want, with their considerations met at every turn.

This educated customer is central to selling today. Successful salespeople and selling organisations have evolved their sales process to meet the market. These people aren't pushing their sales process onto a market that doesn't want it.

**Customers need to be listened to, and they want to deal with people who want to develop and collaborate with them.**

Put simply, today's buyers will not tolerate weak, ill-informed salespeople. Sales roles have changed over the years.

**In the following diagram, you can see the evolving nature of salespeople, from Seller to Sales Maker:**

1. **Seller:** "I think I have what you need – now I need to convince you."
2. **Consultant:** "I'm going to ask questions to find out what you need."
3. **Collaborator:** "Let's work together to find out how we can make your life easier."
4. **Trusted Adviser:** "You see me as the expert, so I'm going to encourage this trust with sound counsel and genuine empathy."
5. **Sales Maker:** "You know what you want and you need me to make it happen."

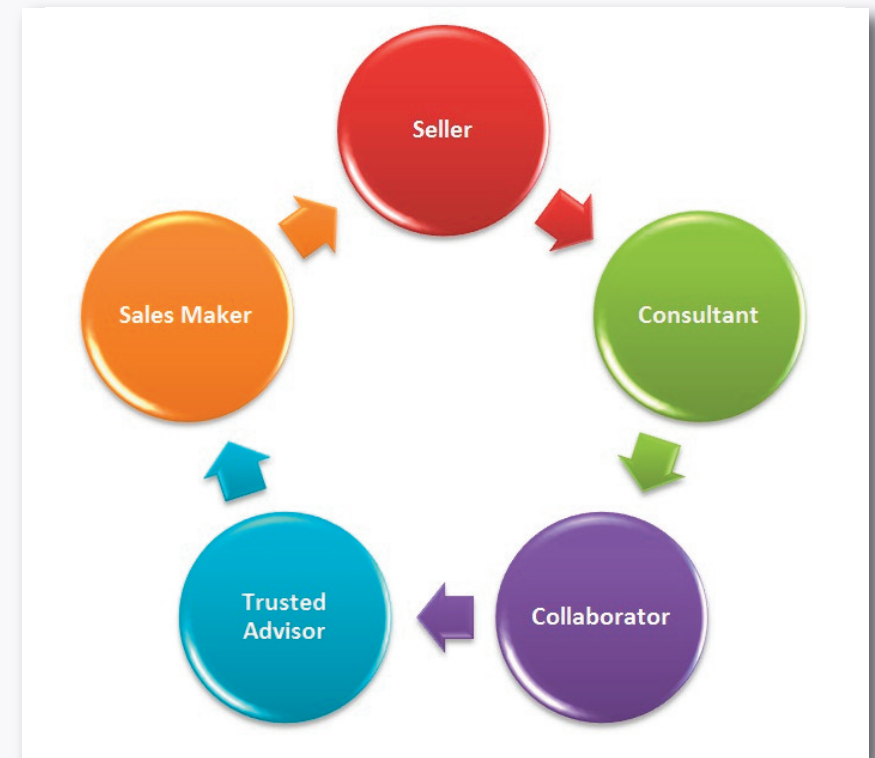


Figure 1.1: Sales Maker Evolution

The salesperson now **MAKES** the sale – they make the sales happen by bridging the gap between computer and customer. Sales Makers are the face of the organisation. They bring the brochure to life, they personify the sales process, they fill in the warm, human component that technology cannot.

Each part of this evolution is critical and valued. There is nothing wrong at all with being labelled a 'seller': people who sell make the world go round, and we need them more than anything. When I want to buy a Big Mac, I don't need a consultation. I want to hand over the money, and walk out with a hamburger.

The same principle applies to consultants, collaborators and trusted advisers: these are all very valuable roles that you make your own depending on your industry and where you are positioned with the customer.

It is the Sales Maker, however, that we would like to focus on, because we feel that this is the newest breed of salesperson.

### **WHY THE ROLE CHANGE?**

First some background: as we discussed previously, your customer is at their most sophisticated right now. If, five years ago they were at a Bachelor Degree level, now they have attained their Masters in you, your company, your pricing and everything else they need to know. They may even have sampled your product, or talked to an existing customer, or filled out an enquiry form outlining exactly what they need. (In that enquiry form, it is getting increasingly common for customers to write, "Don't call me, I just want a price" or "This is an early stage – please no contact".)

Customers are used to dealing with a 'thing' (the internet) rather than a person, which is you. They are much more trusting of technology. In fact, as Gen Y moves into management, many don't know any other way.

## They don't want to talk to anyone – they know what they want, and they get it.

For example, recently we were contacted by a genuine 'digital native' [ – a Gen Y Human Resources and Training Director from an office supply company with 92 employees. One of our salespeople took the call, and was surprised at the information the caller knew. For example, she knew more about two of our competitors than he did! She had three very quick, sharp questions:

1. How much is it for eight people to get trained in high value proposal writing?
2. Do you have availability on December 3?
3. Do you have a trainer with the right experience for our industry – it wasn't clear on your website?

Despite his best efforts to keep her on the line, the call was over in two minutes. She wouldn't give any particular contact details, nor would she entertain another call. Rightly or wrongly, she knew what she wanted, and our sales guy couldn't find a way to add any value right then. He did have her name, and was able to follow up later, but in many respects, he had felt the horse had bolted. We never got the business.

This might strike you as an extreme example, or it might be happening to you frequently.





Either way, it is definitely becoming a much greater part of today's Natural Selling Evolution. At Natural Training, we used to get a dozen calls like this every year. Five years on, we get two or three of them a week: that is, customers using the phone purely as a way to find stop-gap information and moving on quickly. They simply don't want engagement.

### **ENTER THE SALES MAKER!**

The Sales Maker, as the name suggests, makes the sale happen. They are the human face of the company, the conduit between a computer screen and the delivery of the product. Simply stated, Sales Makers add the bits that an online experience can't provide.

#### **Key attributes of a Sales Maker in today's selling evolution include:**

- ✓ Sales Makers need to be 'Johnny on the spot': available right there, right away, within two to three rings of the phone.
- ✓ They need to be on their 'A game': the consultation period has trended down quite substantially. If customers used to have 30 minutes to talk to a salesperson, today's new breed of customers have 10 minutes.
- ✓ Sales Makers need to add value – a spark, something different and new that the internet hasn't provided their customer.
- ✓ They understand that the customer must be persuaded – quickly. They have to bring their considerable talents to the table in record time, and help structure a persuasive argument based on the customer's reality. Not easy, but achievable with practice and a dedication to the evolution!
- ✓ Sales Makers understand that customers are more guarded, because they don't want a team of rabid salespeople to set upon them. They will have their defence mechanisms up!
- ✓ They will use a phone conversation as a launching pad to other media, as they under-



stand customers will be open to being approached via LinkedIn, Skype and MSN Messenger.

- ✓ Sales Makers know today's evolved customers don't want to wait around for quotes, proposals and next steps. They know that customers see no reason why they can't have it NOW! And when they do get it, they don't want to wade through information to find out what they want. They aren't conditioned to search for stuff for longer than about 10 seconds.
- ✓ Sales Makers know that one small step to undermine trust is deadly, particularly during this increasingly smaller window of contact.

If you recognise some or all of the above attributes, then the pressure is on! Welcome to the Natural Sales Evolution!

## **DOES THIS MEAN THAT THE ROLE OF THE SALESPERSON WILL BECOME REDUNDANT?**

The simple answer to that is, no. In 2000, around the time of the dotcom boom, some people predicted this would happen. Yet 12 years on, and sales professionals are thriving in most industries – even the ones that were definitely going to be redundant, such as travel. It seems that the human face of your commercial organisation, the salesperson, will always have a valuable role to play. However the role is definitely adapting at a rapid pace.

### **SO LET'S LOOK AT SOME OF THE OTHER MAJOR CHANGES...**

Although we would love not to include the economic downturn in this book, we can't hide from the fact that it has been a major factor in how customers have changed their buying habits. We would like to stress, however, that salespeople who use the economic downturn as an excuse for

not achieving are simply in denial of the new ways in which you can still successfully sell.

So how has it affected sales? Well, the major change is that a lot of companies made some cutbacks within their organisations to reduce costs and increase profits. This means that today's decision makers are more than likely to be in multiple roles with increased responsibility, which makes time their most precious commodity. This affects their ability to concentrate, to read sales and marketing collateral and to take sales calls or visits.

The economic climate has also had a major impact on the decision making process and budgets. In the B2B arena, five years ago you might have sailed through the decision making process without having to go through Procurement. Those days are gone, and many decision makers are measured on how much money they save and the extra value they generate. We'll talk about this much more in Chapter 10, which is all about Procurement.

Buyers know that some salespeople will heavily discount simply to win the deal - putting them in the driving seat when it comes to getting the best deal. They will know, for example, why you are particularly keen for them to buy off you towards the end of the month when your targets are looming!

**Remember, today's customers are better equipped, educated and far more aware of salespeople needing to maintain existing accounts and win new business.**

When you do finally get to engage with customers offline, you will be one of the chosen few that they have carefully selected to give you their precious time. With time being their most



precious commodity and the level of information they already have at hand, today's buyers are demanding. There is less tolerance for small talk and a greater desire to have you, Ms Sales Maker, get to know their situation efficiently and recommend the right solution.

They also won't tolerate seller-centric salespeople who simply want to talk about themselves – you need to have customer-centric messaging.

Buying has changed, and this has initiated the change in how we sell. Continue to sell as you have always done and you will miss out. Adapt and change your approach using the information in this book and you can look forward to getting back in the driving seat of your sales success.

## **SO WHAT PARTICULAR SKILLS DO YOU NEED IN THE NATURAL SALES EVOLUTION?**

To be a Sales Maker, you need to convert calls and meetings into customers and sales. You need to have a strong value proposition. You need to ask intelligent questions that position you with trust, credibility and nous. You need to be ready to prove results. You also need to be prepared to handle objections, have confidence in moving through the negotiation arena, and be ready to sell to Procurement.

These are must-have skills for the modern day sales professional which is why we have included a separate chapter on each of these skills in this book.

## SUMMARY

- If the Queen can evolve, so can you!
- Selling has changed in 13 fundamental ways over the past five years, which is mainly technology-led.
- Today make the customer the hero – not your product.
- Customers have evolved to be much more educated and won't tolerate ill-informed salespeople.
- Salespeople have evolved too. Today it's all about the Sales Maker – bringing a sale to life.
- Key skills of today's Sales Maker include making a rapid, favourable impression.

### TIME TO EVOLVE! YOUR SALES TOOLKIT:

- Become aware of how you are currently selling by taking our [natural sales evolution test](#). Find out how much of what you are doing still works from five years ago, and how much you think needs to be changed.
- Download our FREE Sales Maker worksheet – perfect to help determine the type of profile you need in today's selling evolution.

To access the Natural Training sales resource centre for your 29 FREE resources, [simply click here](#) to buy the full version of the book

CHAPTER **2** In Chapter 1, we established that selling has changed and how vitally important it is for the modern day sales professional to evolve with that change. Today's buyers have essentially changed the rules – particularly the 'how', 'why' and 'where' they buy. In this chapter, we look at the modern day buyer and help you to get inside the head of the type of buyers you will be targeting. Without this information, how can you possibly evolve your sales process and approach?

## Understanding the modern day buyer

Let's start with an adage and 'walk a mile in your customer's shoes'. You see, to understand your customer you have to ask yourself a series of questions. Only then can you add value to them and sell effectively.

**Take an example of a typical buyer or decision maker you deal with and answer the following questions:**

1. What does an average day look like for them?
2. What are they saying, thinking or feeling?



3. What are their key objectives when buying?
4. What are their key business objectives and goals?
5. What challenges, issues or problems do they currently face?
6. What do they really want to achieve?
7. What changes have taken place within their industry, company or status that could affect their ability to make a decision to buy?
8. Are they under any time or budget pressures?
9. How do they measure success?
10. What will they need to achieve to see that buying your product or service has been a wise decision and is providing the ROI they wanted?
11. What are their greatest fears in making decisions?
12. What are the possible risks they could be concerned about?
13. What is their buying process?
14. Does your buyer have the autonomy to make a decision or do they have to involve others in the process. If yes, who do they involve?

Asking yourself these questions and then answering them will help you to 'walk a mile in your customer's shoes' because you'll truly understand their perspective. You'll also be far closer to understanding the modern day buyer.

**Key Question:** Have customers changed in comparison with five or 10 years ago?

Well, for the most part, yes, they have. Buyers and decisions-makers today are under immense pressure – this is normally driven by time and money constraints. Due to these pressures, buyers have less time for cold calls or spontaneous meetings. The decision makers you need to talk to are dedicated to key business priorities, meaning if buying your product or service isn't

aligned to their goals and objectives, then you'll struggle to get their time.

## **ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS SUFFERING FROM 'ANALYSIS PARALYSIS'?**

Time also affects the buyer's ability to concentrate. The customer wants to get things done as quickly as possible without missing any important information. Remember, most buyers today suffer from what we like to call 'analysis paralysis' - too much information overwhelms them. So keep it simple and to the point.

A lot of buyers who previously had the autonomy to make a decision alone are now forced to involve others in the process – people who will be privy to the analysis paralysis too! What does this mean for you? Well, it means a longer and more complicated route to closing a deal. Today's buyer may also be scared of making a decision through fear of personal retribution. As a consequence, they will consider risks a lot more carefully, and will need to see proof of value and results before buying.

**In the majority of cases, they will want to prove to others in the decision making team that they got the very best deal available.**

Due to all of these pressures, they also subscribe to the "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" philosophy, which means winning competitor business is a tough game. Unless you can demonstrate that it **MUST** be a business priority to switch to your product or service (because there is suitable value in doing so), it's going to be a real challenge.



## THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Once you truly understand your buyer, your next step is to understand the decision maker's buying process. Consider for a moment that there's a sudden role reversal, and you were the decision maker, as opposed to the seller. Get in their shoes for a second...

What buying steps would you go through?

**Based on our experience in dealing with today's decision makers, here's an example of key buying steps:**

1. Identify they have a need.
2. Research online.
3. Select a shortlist.
4. Engage with sellers offline.
5. Go through Procurement or decision making team.
6. Buy from a supplier they like, trust and feel they can work alongside.



Figure 2.1: Customer Buying Cycle

Let's look at the research stage. If you believe that during a sales conversation, you automatically know more than the buyer, you have a traditional view of sales.

Ignore the knowledge of today's buyer at your peril! Usually the buyer is equipped with just as much information as you, so never underestimate their knowledge.

### **WHAT'S THE MAIN CONSEQUENCE OF MAKING THIS ASSUMPTION?**

If you think you know more than the buyer, consider how you'll feel if you lose all credibility as a sales professional because you get caught out by the buyer's superior knowledge. Can you think of anything worse? A prospect asks you a question. You're caught off-guard but manage to respond with what you hope she will accept. But she doesn't. In fact, she catches you out and starts telling you about the products you sell. You've just taken 10 paces back from making the sale. And the customer is walking out the door.

### **MODERN DAY BUYERS HAVE ARRIVED**

And they don't have much time! They are pounding up and down the virtual high street at this very moment, searching for products on the internet. Dependent on the complexity of your offering, some buyers will complete the entire buying process online whilst others use it as a research tool to arm themselves with relevant information before contacting the seller.

#### **Consider this modern buying cycle:**

1. Visit coffee shop and buy coffee.
2. Drink coffee and log onto Wi-Fi via smartphone.
3. Search for product recommendations.



4. Assess product features and latest reviews.
5. Search for best possible price online and buy  
or
6. Visit store armed with more knowledge than ever before.

When you think about it, often we (as customers) don't actually come face to face with the salesperson until we have to make a pretty important purchase.

In the same way that the recession has put salespeople under pressure to squeeze everything from encounters with the customer, technology exerts further pressure on the sale. Technology has effectively reduced the amount of time the salesperson gets to sell.

## Customers will only have patience for those salespeople who can give them exactly what they need – there isn't any time to waste!

**Key Question:** If customers are time-sensitive, intolerant of poor service and demanding, how should selling strategies adjust to this trend so that they remain relevant?

Let's look again at the modern day decision makers' buying process. The first three steps are now happening online: Identify need, research online, and select a shortlist.

## ONLINE

It's the move from online to offline (you!) which is critical.



Figure 2.2: Customer buying cycle online influence – customers may not be on your radar until stage 4

In later chapters, we provide some great insights into exactly what information you should be displaying online to get to the opportunity to engage with more decision makers offline. We have also included information on how to be better equipped to provide customers with exactly what they want to see and how to navigate your way through the decision making process successfully, moving from being shortlisted to winning the deal.

## TODAY'S PERSONALITY ANALYSIS

Buying and selling has changed. Gen Y buyers are in management, and they grew up with the technology that you are selling with and sometimes against.

Here is a simple personality analysis that will help you to be more aware of your buyers and, importantly, how to sell to them:

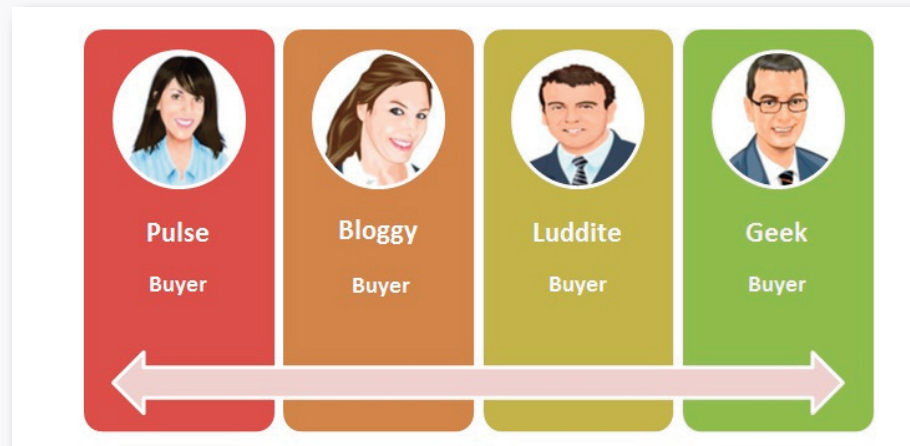


Figure 2.3: Buyer Personality Analysis

### The Pulse Buyer

- **Personality:** Restless, aggressive, quick to click, and quicker to buy; you really need to be on your A-game to close this impulsive buyer.
- **They say:** “Give me a proposal by 3pm and I will let you know in the morning.”
- **Selling to a Pulse:** Be assertive and confident. Be ready! Your window seems to be about three minutes! They will call you, having done their research, and they will be hot to buy.
- **Sales tip:** Sell the way they want to buy! Cut out meaningless steps, and have your close ready.

### The Bloggy Buyer

- **Personality:** The type of buyer who loves to socialise and interact. They are chatty and like to see and feel your product. They will contribute to your blog and offline forums. They will be friendly and go off-topic – and like to talk about themselves!
- **They say:** “Let’s have a meeting. I would like to introduce you to a few of my colleagues.”
- **Selling to a Bloggy:** They like people so make friends! Set aside some extra time to socialise. Be aware that they need to be focused back to the sale, if you are going to make a sale happen!
- **Sales tip:** You can go off-topic with them, but focus them back to your product with a favourable blog review, or invite them to ‘join the conversation’ and offer their opinion. They can even write something for your company, or be the hero of a case study.

### The Luddite Buyer

- **Personality:** This buyer moves slowly. In fact, they are so far beyond the curve they are thinking of joining Facebook “one day” and believe that Twitter is a Ronald Dahl book. So, you need to cater for this.
- **They say:** “I’m not sure we are ready yet.”
- **Selling to a Luddite:** While sales has evolved for many people, there are some for whom it definitely has not. They want to meet, stare you in the eyeballs, and ask you questions about your company (nope, they haven't been to your About Us section!).
- **Sales tip:** Trust is very important to the Luddite. Don’t feel the need to pressure them, because they will run a mile. Be patient, clever and transparent.

### The Geek Buyer

- **Personality:** Detail, detail, detail! Analytical by nature, this person has just done a Master’s Degree on you! They know more about your company, product and your team than you do. So be prepared.
- **They say:** “Give me evidence!”
- **Selling to a Geek:** Know your world, and theirs, as best you can. Miss a statistic, or make up a number, and you will get found out. Did we tell you to be prepared?!
- **Sales tip:** Recognise their genius. Be natural, authentic and believable. Let them know that they are in experienced hands.

## SUMMARY

- Walk a mile in your customer's shoes by asking 14 key questions.
- Customers want quick, accurate advice.
- Customers may have to involve more decision makers due to the tight economy.
- Customers have a six-stage buying cycle; however, they might not be on your radar until stage 4.
- Know what modern personality your buyers have: Pulse, Bloggy, Luddite, or Geek.

## TIME TO EVOLVE! YOUR SALES TOOLKIT:

1. Download our free **Customer Decision Making Cycle Worksheet**. Use this in your next sales meeting to determine how you can influence the customer at each part of the cycle.
2. During our training we explore buyer personalities and preferences. Receive a 20% discount voucher for our Complete Telesales Skills Open Workshop.
3. Receive a free sales training worksheet on Customer Personality Analysis. Spend two weeks marking which customers appear in which quadrant. That way you can analyse who you spend the majority of your time selling to.

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