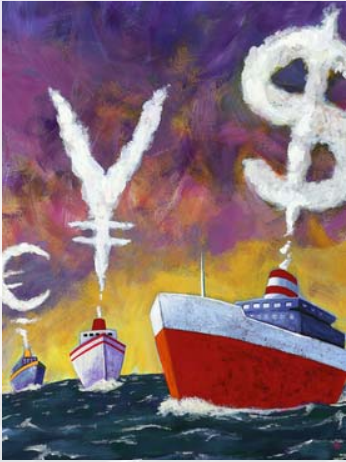


Delivery Teams as Sales Leaders

by Anna Marie Cwieka



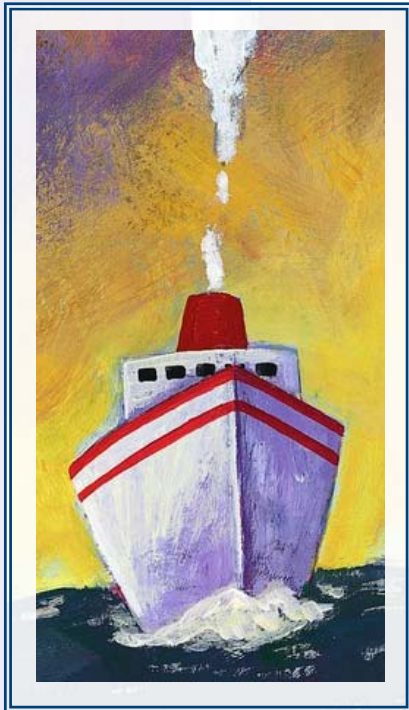
Effectively utilizing the total resources of an organization for the benefit of the customer can be one of the most challenging and rewarding aspects of sales leadership. The days of the single salesperson representing a company are gone. To quote a salesperson from Eric Baron's *Selling is a Team Sport*, "I love to go head to head with those "lone rangers" out there...As long as they go it alone and I'm backed up by a whole bunch of powerful, viable resources, I see no way that I can lose. It's not even a fair fight."

The Technical Team

In many organizations today, it is the technical team, a project team, an implementation team, a customer service team—that really "owns" the customer relationship. Teams such as these are in the best position to understand the customer's problems.

Team members typically work in the customer's environment and experience first-hand the industry and competitive issues. The team members have the insight to proactively develop and propose creative, out-of-the-box solutions that deliver high value to the customer.

So, why not let them lead the sales team? Usually, delivery team members do not see themselves in a selling role. They feel that they do not understand the "selling process" because they have had no so-called "selling experience." However, when these team members are put in a position to brainstorm solutions and solve problems, they are very effective and demonstrate that they have skills very relevant to sales leadership. Herein lies the paradox, because *effective selling is creative problem solving*.



Implementing a Project-Based Approach

An effective way to budge this paradox is to implement a [project-approach](#) to sales, incorporating both selling and delivery people in the project approach. When non-sales professionals take a project planning approach to selling, the gap between the non-sales and sales professional closes. The key is utilizing a methodology that focuses the brainstorming process within the customer's context. The customer's industry, competitive issues, client requirements, long-range strategies, problems, and pains are the starting point. If the team is able to fully immerse themselves in the day-to-day reality of the customer, they will be in a position to effectively package the capabilities of your organization. The result is a solutions offering that is clearly relevant and of value from the customer's perspective. This "out-of-the-RFP-box" thinking creates unique opportunities in which price and competitive bidding are not the key success factors.

Project-approach selling communicates customer issues and needs across a broad cross-section of your organization. In these days of virtual, cross-functional teams, internal communication is an obstacle. Project-approach selling ensures that customer interactions will be more internally aligned. Team members will each understand their respective roles and have a clear message that can be repeated to the customer consistently at all levels.

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