

The Other Customer? Your Own Company.

by Art Wilson

Extraordinary sales organizations focus on “the other customers” too—those being the other functional areas within their own company. A substantial challenge for sales leadership is effectively selling *internal, non-salespeople* effectively on selling organization objectives. Sales leaders need share of mind from their colleagues to get their commitment and participation so that which is sold is delivered with excellence.

If the fundamental premise for your business is to profitably serve customers, your company's internal constituencies must be customer-focused. Non-salespeople—finance, marketing, technical support, manufacturing, delivery, customer service, and others—need to clearly understand what they are expected to do, and why, to advance a customer opportunity, engagement, or relationship.

Just like with a good customer, the best-of-the-best salespeople proactively develop relationships with their colleagues in their company's supporting organizations. They share their organizational and personal agendas, and enroll them in jointly creating a strategy that focuses on optimally serving the customer.



Making Time for Internal Relationships

In this day of empowered employees and virtual teams, “the other customers” have more latitude in how they prioritize what they do and when. We have observed that successful salespeople share common best practices in their interactions with “the other customers,” which contribute to their success. These best actions persuade them that cooperating with the selling organization on key sales initiatives is in their best interests.

- >> **Communications.** They demonstrate respect for their colleagues—for their role, their intelligence, and what they contribute to the customer experience—in their communications and in the manner in which they communicate.
- >> **Organization Mapping.** They do their work to identify the right person to talk to within the appropriate functional organization.
- >> **Value Proposition.** They take time to understand their colleagues' organization—their personal objectives, key initiatives and pains—and then enroll their colleagues by relating their “requests” to their colleagues' needs and competencies.
- >> **Enrollment.** They sell their colleagues in a passionate and professional way by jointly creating a value proposition that is a win-win-win.



ABOUT CPS. Critical Path Strategies helps clients improve the effectiveness of their sales organization. Our portfolio of services addresses the strategic, organizational, and relationship issues that impact selling performance. Our powerful processes enable clients to transform their sales culture, enhance their competitive position, and accomplish strategic business initiatives. Our clients—emerging companies and members of the Fortune 500 alike—typically measure 100 to 500 times their CPS investment in revenue growth.



- >> **Listening.** They are keen to understand issues and take action to resolve immediate issues, decreasing the likelihood of future issues arising.
- >> **Relationship Building.** They invest time in building relationships with their colleagues and the people important to them.
- >> **Consultative.** They share strategic thinking and offer coaching when appropriate.
- >> **Project Leadership.** They demonstrate virtual-team leadership best practices.
- >> **Negotiations.** They make sure that their colleagues feel like they are getting something in return for their efforts on behalf of the customer.

What is the payoff for those who treat everyone in their company in much the same manner as they treat customers? Their reputation, their most valuable asset, takes on an added dimension—one admired for serving customers well, creating value for them, and making them the focus of all targeted actions, both internally and externally. And equally important, the whole company considers itself part of the selling team.

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