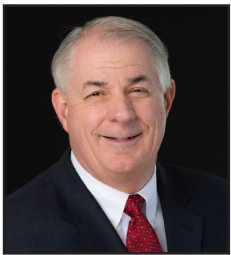




A Higher Level of Expertise



Art Waskey

Art Waskey is a speaker who truly delivers. In addition to a 45 year career in sales and marketing, Art is the author of multiple books on selling and a monthly column The Art of Sales. He shares these insights as an in demand event and conference speaker as well as leadership coach.

Changing customer expectations require adopting new approaches to sales that merge traditional relationship selling techniques with digital eCommerce solutions. Sales strategies like [Enterprise Selling](#) encourage the sales person to become an expert in each customer's needs. Using digital product information accessibility, reps learn to recognize problems that the client may not see himself. **By being better schooled in product knowledge and customer need, reps become trusted advisors.** In this way, they provide a higher level of expertise and can get customers to endpoints more efficiently.

Time is Currency

Today there is a heightened demand for better customer experience, one in which time is currency. Use technology to fill the knowledge gap and save time. Sales reps must be able to select, organize, and professionally present

digitally. Look for ways to take time out of this process by using the appropriate automation. In so doing, you provide a higher level of expertise.

The Right Technology Partners

When creating new sales strategies, set clear goals, and then challenge your technology partners to address them. Meet your consultants with defined expectations. Use other distributors as a sounding board. They may be able to recommend proven technology partners. Look at the early technology adopters and study their outcomes. Find ways to put necessary changes in place. The right technology partners can help you get user acceptance of newly introduced processes that your associates may find challenging.



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Up Your Technology IQ

In order to provide a higher level of expertise within your company, raise your technology IQ.

- **Don't be afraid to start.** New technology can be overwhelming but you need to dive in. When the company I was with built its first high pressure cylinder control system (a system for verifying cylinders at customer locations), it failed miserably. Our president complained about the time and energy wasted but I saw it as a valuable learning experience. Thirty years later that company has a cylinder control system faster than most of its competitors and developed for less money.

- **Focus on most needed areas.** Your technology IQ focus should be on those areas that promise the greatest return on your investment. Some companies start on the backend – inventory and accounting – with an ERP system. Others start with their CRM. The distributor I was with started with a CRM 30 years ago because it was available at an affordable cost. The company moved on from the original provider after a few years to a CRM that had a better understanding of its industry.

- **Find technology professionals to guide you.** You need to identify what kind and level of information drives your business and establish your KPIs accordingly. For some parts of the business, you may need to outsource your data

analytics. This can be done without spending large sums. In other cases, you will want the analytics generated in-house. Hire IT techs as needed and check progress against your KPIs.

Prioritize

In a world full of technology options you need to be able to prioritize. Look for what is most important to digitize in your company. Spend time and set aside budget for some experimentation so you can find the systems that will transform your business most effectively. Provide your customers with the highest level of expertise. In so doing you will make doing business easier for your suppliers, your employees, and your customers.

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Provide a higher level of expertise by becoming a trusted advisor to customers.
2. In today's digitized sales world time is currency.
3. Find the right technology partners for your business.
4. Raise your technology IQ.
5. Prioritize what is most important to digitize in your company.