



## Adjusting to Changes in Sales Process Relationships



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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.

Digitalization has created significant changes in the space between salespeople and their clients. Sales process relationships were altered quickly during the pandemic, leaving little time for sales teams to adjust their strategies. **To help you make the appropriate adjustments to your sales process, let's examine the sales process relationship of today.**

### **Critical sales processes**

There are three principal areas of focus in sales.

**Outside sales** – Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and eCommerce have automated many functions of the outside sales team. For example, salespeople once personally handled order taking, stock checking, chasing backorders, and pricing errors. Now, these tasks can all be done electronically. Today's territory sales

manager needs to adjust his way of creating relationships with customers. This can be done by developing strong partnerships with those who provide your automated services. Showcase the insights of your suppliers, technology integrators, consultants, and other information providers. In your process, be sure to involve all of your client's primary decision-makers in operations, administration, finance, and marketing and sales. Also, personalize your sales. **Data generated by your digital applications, particularly those related to artificial intelligence (AI), make it possible to tailor your sales pitch.** Use the information generated from current and previous interactions to create proposals specific to your customers' needs. Doing so is an important adjustment to the sales process relationship.



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**Inside Sales** – Historically in-house service teams have handled inbound customer contact and sales development at distributorships. The inside sales group works to build existing personal relationships and find new accounts through phone calls, emails, and texts. With digitization, inside salespeople now have access to a wide array of customer account information to help accomplish this. For example, based on customer data, the inside sales team is in a position to recommend accessory product selection when a client calls or comes in for a regular purchase. **With this broadening of scope, inside sales are better positioned to support the outside sales team.** Make adjustments to your sales processes to take advantage of this. Enlist inside sales to help develop the top 10-15% of your business accounts and to penetrate the next 20% of your territory's clients.

**Retail outlets** – Your retail stores should look very different today than they did a decade ago. Today's walk-in customer expects more than a nice product display and selection. **Make adjustments to your retail space.** Consider the added-value opportunities associated with customer internet desks, hands-on product

training, and demonstration areas. Create larger showrooms for expanded product line offerings. Include 24/7 will-call digital lockboxes, and, of course, offer free coffee and soft drinks. Make your outlets a place where customers and prospects want to come and stay.

## **Total sales process relationship**

Distributors currently face an array of challenges including a labor shortage. According to a survey of 50 industrial distributors, 63% are looking to add staff in 2022. **To offset the struggle of hiring and other challenges, focus on adjusting your total sales process relationships to be in sync with today's digital marketplace.**