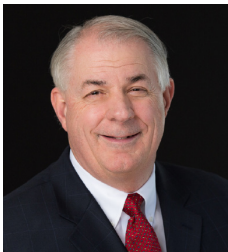




# Time to Rethink Your Sales Process



## 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.

The global pandemic rapidly accelerated change in the behavioral patterns of both buyers and sellers. Now it's time to rethink your sales process.

The "2022 Insights Report" from Epicor, a software solutions provider, showed that 78% of businesses surveyed (manufacturing, distribution, building supply, automotive and retail industries) changed their core business competencies over the last year to better compete. In addition, 85% agree that they achieved growth by diversifying their offerings. The primary strategies behind that growth include direct-to-consumer sales and delivery (47%), e-commerce (40%) and configure-price-quote (39%). (Distribution Strategy Group, "How Do B2B Sellers Need to Adapt to Modern Buyers?" by Mike Kunkle, Aug. 1, 2022).

## The Virtual Sales Call

When I transitioned from executive sales management to consulting in 2019, developing clients was still about getting on a plane to meet with prospective distributors. This is an expensive and time consuming business practice. The pandemic changed our ability to make sales calls in person and led to the rapid adoption of virtual calling. My first virtual sales call in early 2020 was an immediate success. Now I use that application 10 to 15 times per week for business. In fact, most of my customers prefer video to phone and in-person calls.

## Change to Survive

History has demonstrated that those who adapt to change are the ones who survive. The failures of corporate giants like Kodak, Nokia, and Blackberry are examples of what can



# Time to Rethink Your Sales Process

happen if you miss the signals. The pandemic accelerated the need for changes that already were in process. According to research by Sales Management Association, by late 2020, 52% of the organizations polled had experienced “significant to extreme” impact on their sales organizations as a result of the pandemic. (Sales Management Association, “Executing Hard Pivots in Sales Strategy,” Oct. 27, 2020).

McKinsey & Company finds that the changes wrought by the pandemic are not temporary. The company reports that 70% of B2B decision makers say they are open to making full-serve or remote purchases in excess of \$50,000, and 27% would spend more than \$500,000 (McKinsey & Company, “These eight charts show how COVID-19 has changed B2B sales forever” Oct. 14, 2020).

## Rethink your Sales Process

In their new book, “Agile & Resilient,” authors Richardson & Sharer (Richardson, M. and, Sharer, R. 2022. Agile & Resilient. Brooks Group.) recommend considering these four points when rethinking your sales process.

1. Buyers are more sophisticated – A growing number of today’s decision makers are Latchkey (Gen Y), Millennials (Gen Y), and Internet Generation (Gen Z). They research vendors, products, and

services online and view live sales interactions as time wasted. Make sure you are web savvy.

2. Digitalization is here to stay – Distributors need to implement a robust ERP system. Failure to do so will lead to continued erosion of market share and decline in customer/supplier relationships.

3. Transparency is expected – Quoting Richardson and Sharer, “Transparency is achieved when a customer has information on your revenue operations and supply chain so they can make better decisions and, simultaneously, your internal team has the same information to effectively service customer requests.” It is still a major advantage to provide 24/7 telephone support manned with knowledgeable product and application experts.

4. Buyers often want to avoid you – The days of unplanned sales calls are over. Today’s buyers will only connect with salespeople who provide resources, can clarify complex information and processes, and will collaborate with them to arrive at solutions.

## The New Dynamics

The dynamics of the seller-buyer relationship have changed as never before. Learn the ways of today’s customer, go digital, be transparent and provide resources for your clients. The time to change your sales approach is now!

---

## 5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

---

1. Businesses have changed their core competencies since 2020.
2. The pandemic closed the door on in-person selling and led to the rapid adoption of virtual calling.
3. History shows those who adapt to change are the ones who survive.
4. Today's buyers will only connect with salespeople who can clarify complex information and are collaborative.
5. Learn the ways of today's customer, go digital, be transparent and provide resources for your clients.