



AI and Your Sales Process



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In an uncertain world, we can be sure of one thing – change. How you adapt to that change influences your success. For professional sales reps, it is time to pay attention to what is new, particularly as it relates to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and your sales process.

Artificial Intelligence

AI is here and already influencing the way business is conducted. An article in *Forbes* (forbes.com) reported that OpenAI, the company that introduced the chatbot ChatGPT, is currently valued at \$29 billion. It has raised a total of \$11.3 billion in funding over seven rounds so far. In January, Microsoft expanded its long-term partnership with OpenAI and announced a multibillion-dollar investment to accelerate AI breakthroughs worldwide.

I recently asked ChatGPT, “How will sales be affected by artificial intelligence?” Instantly, I received a 377-word response noting seven categories of

change. How you handle these changes is critical. As Mike Marks of Indian River Consulting Group, says, “The one thing to ensure distributor success in 2024 is the ability to manage change, and to integrate your whole team into doing things differently.” (mdm.com/article) There is no question that changes in the hybrid sales model known as enterprise selling, which is powered by digital data analysis, will accelerate in 2024.

Adapting to change

As the digital transformation gains momentum, it is important to stay up to date on developments but not let technology replace personalization in your sales process.

Here are two important actions to keep in mind with adapting to change.

- Continuing education – AI is moving at a fast pace, but distributor sales have been slow to adopt it. You and your team must be constantly educating yourselves on emerging digital resources.



AI

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It is important for salespeople to recognize and access the growing field of AI-related resources. AI enables you to effortlessly handle data consolidation, hone customer profiles, and select content for leads with next steps. Time consuming tasks, like updating CRM data, generating quotes, and responding to proposal requests, are streamlined using AI programs. When you integrate AI applications in your sales process, you achieve faster results.

If you expect to be successful in sales today, you need to remain mindful of innovations as they are introduced. The highest performing sales teams learn and use emerging digital resources. Stay on top of these innovative solutions and continually leverage them to your advantage. Be willing to navigate applications as they gain momentum. Accept and adapt to changes.

- The balancing act – Although digital transformation is fundamentally reshaping sales, salespeople must avoid depending on it too much. You need to establish a good balance with technology and personalization in your sales process. The greatest advantage distributor sales have over online and direct channels is the ability to provide a personal relationship.

Sales is essentially an interpersonal experience. Success rests on your ability to build and maintain relationships. People buy from those they trust and can count on to meet their expectations. AI cannot replicate personalization and empathy. A hybrid enterprise sales model is necessary. It is enabled by digital and analytics integration combined with thoughtful and sound personalized communication with prospects and customers.

The personal touch and AI

Sales continues to be a job that requires you to function as a reliable, authoritative, consultative resource for your customers. Advanced product application, repair, and good customer service will always require a personal touch. It is good to know that while AI offers opportunities to enhance processes, sales skills and relationship-building remain critical. As Zig Siglar preached, “People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.”

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Pay attention to what is new, particularly as it relates to AI and personalized selling.
2. AI is here and already influencing the way business is conducted.
3. Salespeople need to recognize and access the growing field of AI-related resources.
4. Establish a good balance with technology and personalization in your sales process.
5. Product application, repair, and good customer service will always require a personal touch.