



# Covid-19: Business Survival Guides

## 3: *Sales and selling during this crisis*

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V1: April 2020

# Set the scene:



- No sales = no orders = no cashflow = no business...
- ...2020 is the time of greatest uncertainty in modern history. No-one knows for sure how events will unfold. No-one knows for sure what the new 'normal' will look like...
- ...Business survival means responding to change as it happens – and some things are already evident – so do not “wait and see” – plan and respond. Then track and respond again, and again, and again...
- ...During previous crises, some leaders proved better than others. When a former British Prime Minister was asked what drove decision making during a global crisis, he replied: “Events, dear boy, events...”

# Shifts in selling strategy needed:



1. Assess, plan something new, put into action, respond to results...assume that no customers will coming to your office during this crisis;
2. This pandemic - as yet with no cure or vaccine - has already led to measure shift in customer sentiment: *“Fear”, “Worry”, “Concern”, “Panic”, “putting off buying for now”, “overwhelmed”, “drawing in my horns”...*
3. In the last 4 weeks, major shift from buying on price to “value”;
4. They don’t care about your perception of “value” they only care about their own;
5. Buyers are human, and right now people need to talk about their concerns – not listen to your sales pitch;
6. Listening, questioning and understanding the issues through dialogue - is the only way to create value;
7. Identifying with customers’ problems and showing them a solution they can use is the only way to close a sale;
8. Questions don’t just happen. You cannot follow a script right now. Plan and prepare conversational questions around a problem you know you can fix;
9. Every email has to be a call to action and focus on solutions to problems;
10. Absolutely no “let me read you our brochure” cold calls

# Things to focus on during this crisis:



1. Ensure potential customers have just the right information at the exactly the right time;
2. Differentiate like never before – this could be your attitude, your compassion, or your understanding;
3. Dump all your jargon – speak the customers’ language;
4. Communicate the value of your proposition;
5. Demonstrate the value of your proposition in fixing this customer’s problem or need...
6. ...ask more questions and spend more time listening than talking
7. Get online – now!

***Customers value “insight”***

# Check your approach and timings:



	<i>% time</i>
<i>Step 1 – Questions:</i> about problems you know you can fix	10
<i>Step 2 – Questions:</i> about the impact of not fixing the problem	50
<i>Step 3 – Solutions:</i> prove that you have a fix (not a product)	20
<i>Step 4 – Questions:</i> this time customer driven – but deal with objections	20
<i>Step 5 – Close:</i> agreed concrete next steps with timing *	10

**PURPOSE - PROCESS - PAYOFF**

*It's not news that 80% of meetings end in nice words and no closure...  
..."it looks great, but let us think it over and get back to you"*

# Things to avoid during the crisis:



1. “Wait and see” – things aren’t ever going to be ‘business as usual’ ever again;
2. Discounts – it’s not about the price right now;
3. Advertising more – no-one is listening;
4. Advertising less – customers need to know you’re still there;
5. Working harder at doing the same things – it **IS** a numbers game, but target your efforts

# Bob Etherington's "2 Golden Rules":



1. Customers place 10 times more importance on the words that come out of their own mouths compared to anything that comes out of yours

2. Customers place 10 times more importance on the things that they request - compared with anything unrequested, even if it's free

***Bob Etherington: "The Professor of Professional Persuasion"***

# Practicalities:



Dear Reader,

this deck is clearly generalised...and I'm sure that you have lots of examples of good and bad sales experiences...

...however, if you would like some practical illustrations of good and bad approaches, techniques and wording, please feel free to contact me...

...oops!

John S.