



The right side of the Chasm...

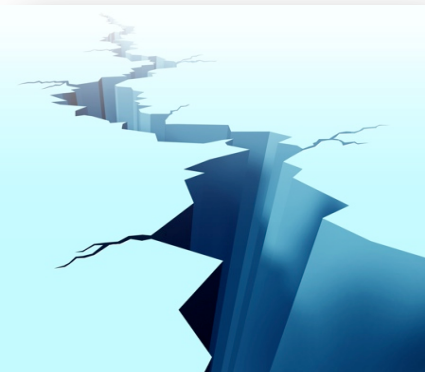


Understanding what motivates the buyer and role of sales

The Age of The Buyer Series | enable

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Sellers must acknowledge the risks facing buyers as they cross the chasm. Failure to do so just might result in the seller “falling in”, leaving the buyer to cross the chasm of your competitor. Do you know how to get to the right side of the chasm safely?

Enable. to the right side of the Chasm...

In Wikipedia, the word “Enabling” has a double meaning. One that is positive and one that is negative. On the positive side, to *enable* is to allow an individual to develop and grow. To help them reach their goal, accomplish a task and to be there for them when they need help. On the opposite side, it is often used in the context of someone who is described as an enabler. A person who contributes to a person’s behaviors and accommodates their conduct albeit a negative outcome.

We all know someone who is an enabler. In fact the term sales enablement is often part of the job description of the modern sales manager who’s task it is, is to improve the outcomes of a sales opportunity. Their job is to provide the necessary mechanisms that “enable” the seller to succeed. To enable is to provide support to the sales resource. So what about the buyer? Shouldn’t the seller be focusing on enabling the buyer too?

What is exactly is the role of marketing or sales in relationship to today’s buyers? Are they not charged with the task of enabling the buyer to make the decision in the vendors favor. Isn’t the role of the sales associate on the retailer floor’s job to provide the buyer with answers that will enable the buyer to make a decision? The assumption in both cases is.. the buyer is a willing participant. Are they? What if the buyer is not prepared to engage with the seller in a meaningful way? What should the seller be doing differently?

The Age of the Buyer has arrived and sellers must change their marketing and sales approaches such that they can enable the buyer to cross the chasm of fear, doubt and security. A buyer’s greatest challenge is to have confidence and know when they desire to engage with the seller. And until that inflection point, all of the interactions with the seller, be it a webinar, a download of a whitepaper or a product demonstration, have nothing to do with buying. It has to do with enabling. The gathering of information, proof points and validation that will enable a buyer to make a decision or recommendation to their stakeholders with confidence.

Sellers must respect the risks facing buyers as they consider crossing the chasm. Sellers must understand what motivates buyers to act, react or retract. Failure to do so will result in the buyer not being confident to “Cross the Chasm, and if the seller acts to quickly or without the right skillset, the seller just might “fall in”, leaving the buyer to cross the chasm with your competitor.



The phenomenal explosion of small form devices has changed the landscape of how buyers interact with sellers forever. In this Age of the Consumer, buyers hold all the cards... or do they?

What type of sales rep is best to enable the buyer?

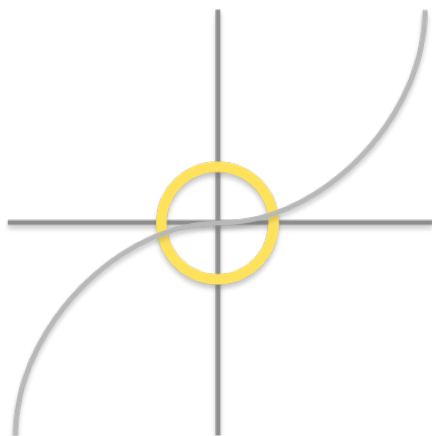
In a recent research study conducted by Corporate Research Board (CRB), their research with B2B organizations identified that there are multiple stakeholder “buyers” profiles in an organization. They concluded that *star* sales representatives filter out the less useful (buyer) types and target the ones who could help drive the deal. How do they accomplish this?

*In the book titled **The Challenger Sales** (Portfolio/Penguin, 2011) CRB assembled data from 6,000 salespeople across the globe and determined that reps fall into five profiles – the Relationship Builder, the Reactive Problem Solver, the Hard Worker, the Lone Wolf (we’ve all seen one of those) and the Challenger.*

The research concluded that the first step is to gauge the buyer’s reaction to a provocative insight. And that the rep was able to substantiate his or her claim, because **they possessed the knowledge that enabled the buyer to make a risk adverse decision.** The term “mobilizers” was used to describe how to find the right “allies”. They divided these into two categories, Mobilizers and Talkers. They reviewed their strategies for buyer engagement and determined that the role of the sales person is to coach the buyer, to enable the buyer with the necessary facts, figures and relevant data necessary to build the best business case

Engage. Enable. Empower

This paper is the second in a series of content focused on “The Age of the Buyer”. The second being “enable”. This is where the buyer crosses the chasm and engages the seller.



It is at the inflexion point of 1% that the buyers cross and it is up to the seller to enable that step

Traditional Sales Enablement is Dead.

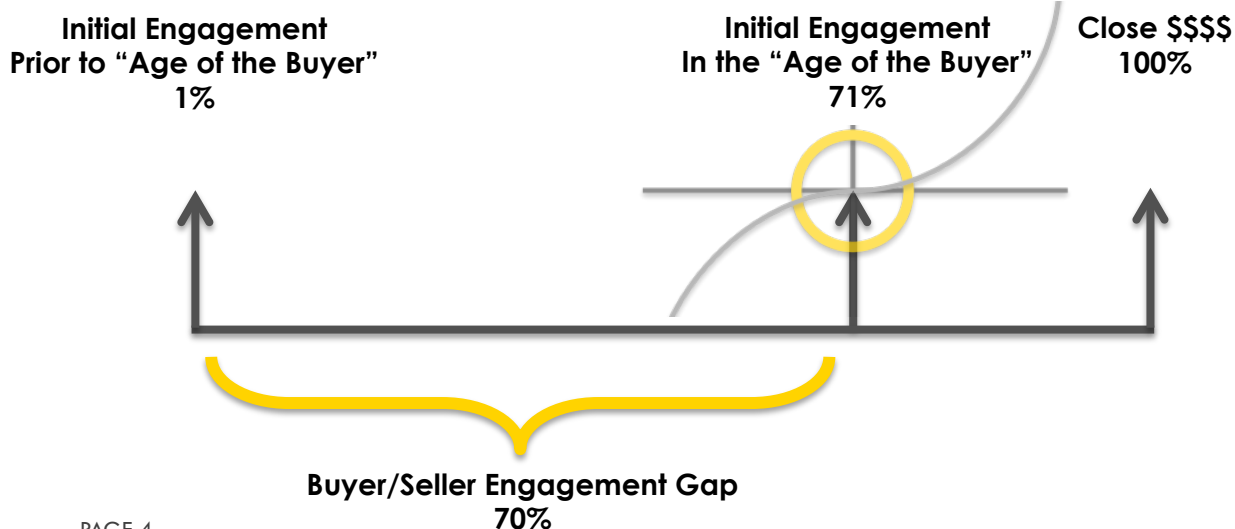
Do a Google search on the term “Sales Enablement” and you will see close to 2 million results on the subject. Forrester defines this often misused term to represent a “structured state” or a “fragmented” state where the sales enablement function is owned by the leadership and means different things depending on who you ask.

Sales enablement is often considered to be a “task” versus a “strategy, such that it is conducted in a reactive mode. Sales and marketing are “Charged” with the task of providing the sales teams with the necessary resources i.e. CRM, playbooks, customer objection handling and general sales training and the like.

The reality is, Traditional Sales Enablement is Dead.

Sales Enablement has nothing to do with the “Seller”. It has everything to do with the buyer. It’s all about being insightful, relevant and providing buyers with the ammunition that will mobilize them toward a decision. To act and be responsive with a sense of urgency. Everything else is just activity and all too often sales people think any activity mean productivity.

In the Age of the Buyer, Sales Enablement is all about knowing why and when the buyer is ready to engage. It’s the ability for the seller to provide the required messaging, information and proof points that enable the buyer to act. The Buyer/Seller Relevancy Curve “inflexion Point”, is the point in time when the buyer has been motivated to act in a substantial manner where they cross the chasm from being a “tire kicker” to being a “buyer”.





There are professional sales training and e-learning solutions designed to give sellers byte size salient knowledge they can apply such that they earn the right of the buyer to participate in the Buyer's Sphere of Relevancy.

Being relevant in the Buyer's Sphere's of Relevancy

In our first whitepaper in the Age of the Buyer series, we identified that the buyer is now in absolute command of first i.e. 70% of the traditional sales cycle. We further suggest that there is an inflexion point where the buyer sees the vendor as being relevant. That can only occur when the **gap between seller and the buyer has been bridged** by a moment of truth where the seller has enabled the buyer to act with confidence.

Marketing automation software vendor Hubspot recently conducted a survey about email marketing asking the question in a free form why they chose to subscribe to emails from some companies. One of the most common responses received was that they expected the respondents expected the emails were going to be relevant to their interests. **38% of the respondents specifically referenced the word "relevance", one especially well-worded response indicated that content should be "particularly and specifically" relevant to them.**

This data confirms that the Sphere of Relevancy spans multiple touch points with the seller such that buyers will so far as to sign up with those vendors they feel will be relevant to their interests. Why is this happening?

Today's buyers are human beings too. They have their personal lives and their business lives holding them hostage to obligations and responsibilities that steal precious time from their lives. They too feel overwhelmed by the volume of messaging that they are exposed to as the turn on the radio, drive on the highway, walk to their place of work or when they check their email in box. The dread picking up their voice mails for fear of a either a problem that needs their assistance or a call from a vendor who was contacting them as a result of a whitepaper downloaded the day before.

Buyers are annoyed by the disruptions they receive from self-serving sellers who lack the respect of the buyer's time. When the buyer answers a phone call, the seller launches into their sales pitch, with a blink. They lunge at them with full force, not even attempting be courteous and respectful that the seller has just disrupted the seller in some manner. These activities may be reserved for a select few of dates sales people who lack the ingenuity, skills and most importantly, the respect for the buyer. This further aggravates the potential buyer and destroys the prospects of a relationship in the first seconds. Why does this still happen today? **It still happens because the seller lacks the understanding of the importance being relevant is to today's buyers.**

Why should I buy from you?

The Age of the Buyer is about enablement

In closing, we have shared our observations and views of what has changed and why sellers must alter their approach with a buyer.

A Harvard Business Review article titled “The End of Solution Sales”



suggests that the old playbook no longer works. We agree. HBR.org drew conclusions from the previously identified CEB study that the best sales people are replacing traditional “solution selling” with “insight selling” and suggests a strategy that demands a radically different approach. **Is it really a matter of being radical?**

They further suggest that insight selling requires new thinking as to how you target, what information is needed to gather, when to engage, how to begin the conversation and how should you direct the flow of information.

Insight selling is really about enabling the situation such that the buyer responds, and acts. Is it radical? We feel term to use is.. it is a “logical” progression in the pursuit of being relevant.

There was a time when the seller would need to prepare for the Beauty contest. To sit in front of a team of buyers and “say the pitch”. The pitch deck was a complex whirl of dazzling slides the team painstakingly stayed up throughout the night to complete... You think you are ready to answer all the buyers questions... it's you and them in a room.

No more.. the buyers have their own deck and the are pitching to their internal stakeholders. Today's buyer is armed with product spec's, competitive pricing spreadsheet, telephone peer notes and social proof recommendations. And you are not there... or are you?

To be relevant to today's sophisticated, time sensitive and hurried buyer, sellers must alter their complete sales and marketing DNA. Buyer's are tired of “me too” sales pitches that focus on a “solution” that is not relevant to the underlying needs, wants and desires.

Buyer's seek compelling conversations that articulate both on-line and in person and enables them to act with confidence in the Sphere of Relevancy.

About the age of the buyer

engage^{2.0}

Today's statistics on buyers show they only value the salesperson when he or she can speak the language of the buyer. Why? Because everything else is a commodity that they can get via the Internet! To be relevant you must align your tailored sales programs using high quality interactive sales online and mobile services that include continuous learning processes for reinforcement and include content that teaches your sales team how to speak the language of their buyers and their buyer's customer.

Engaging in conversation with buyers is more than your product or service features, advantages or benefits. It's about knowing what today's buyer find of high-value and knowing how to engage in their sphere of relevance.



THE JOURNEY BEGINS...

The Age of the Buyer has arrived. On the dawn of 2010, a new decade was beginning to emerge. One that already has presented profound changes.

Top analysts from SiriusDecisions, the world's leading source for business-to-business sales and marketing best-practice research and data claim that as much as 70% of the buyers experience occurs without direct contact with the organization.*

- Will you be ready to engage them?
- How will you enable your sales team to turn them from buyers to customers?

**Source: SiriusDecisions*



About the age of the buyer

enable 2.0

Bridging the chasm between business strategy and field execution by implementing synchronized synergy-based engagements requires tremendous cross-functional alignment. A unified and scalable approach is necessary to enable Product & Marketing to keep sales and channel teams equipped with the latest competitive and product messaging assets that will deliver value to target buyers.

Drive improved conversations with buyers and shorten sales cycles by crossing the chasm.



...CROSSING THE CHASM

The Age of the Buyer has arrived. Crossing the Chasm requires marketers to align to buyers.

The internal pressures impacting sales and marketing gain more meaning when viewed in the light of the external forces at play. Macro economic uncertainty and increased competition reign; this data represents the “new normal” in which businesses operate. But the other forces are at work as well, including increasing customer demands, proliferation of new marketing channels and an accelerated pace of change.

The proliferation of marketing channels is both a pressure and an opportunity for sales and marketing leaders. It presents a challenge for sales and marketing because of the hidden sales cycle dynamic discussed above. Buyers are flocking to new sources of information and communities of interest for business advice, best practices, and learning and buying recommendations.

AberdeenGroup

About the age of the buyer

empower 2.0

Data has exploded on multiple fronts for sellers. The data is often unstructured, disorganized and very little is useful for discovering the buyer's intent. Minimizing the time your sales resources spend looking up information empowers them to do what they do best: SELL!

Re-engineered content that is developed from the perspective of the buyer and utilizes content delivery methods that efficiently distributes this information to sales teams, is the advantage being sought by today's organizations.



NAVIGATING THE LAST MILE.

The Age of the Buyer has arrived. Sellers must change their models to be relevant with today's buyers and navigating the last mile is what separates today's professional sellers.

Watch for the third in this series Empower 2.0 where we will focus on why sellers must provide buyers with the right information at the right time and at the right place.

Empower will show sellers how to better navigate the last mile of the relationship and convert that into a sustainable life long relationship.

Enable
Age of the Buyer Series
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About the Age of the Buyer series

Our digital strategy agency helps business owners attract new clients, retain profitable customers and predict marketing and sales investments. We can help define what motivates your priority prospects and what are the optimal engagement methods best suited to meet those prospective buyers. What content do you need to attract them to your brand, engage your marketing channels, convert and become sustainable revenue to the business. We are revenue performance advisors who create more meaningful engagement, buyer insight & forecasting intelligence.

The result } sales and marketing transformation that aligns to today's buyers. To find out more visit:

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