

RIGHT PEOPLE, RIGHT ROLE

IMPROVE SALES EFFECTIVENESS BY
UNDERSTANDING SALES PERSONAS



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What You Will Learn

Not all sales are created equally. The skills needed to sell cars differ from what will make you successful in selling consumer electronics or telecommunications products and services. Building materials are in a category all by themselves as well, and sales in this industry are in more of a transition period than ever before. Today's customers have new expectations around deliverables and personalized experiences. Plus, leads are now largely digital, requiring a different qualification process than the older face-to-face models salespeople are used to employing.

Even though this ebook is specific to the building materials industry, it has something for everyone in any sales field. As someone who manages, trains, or leads a sales team, you need to understand what type of salesperson each team member is. With the proper training, tools, and guidance, your sales team will transform into an efficient and highly profitable engine that drives growth like never before.

You will learn:

- Traditional sales types
- A new persona in sales
- Why specialization is so important today
- How to optimize digital leads to increase conversion

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- How to develop and nurture different sales types
- What you want to look out for – babysitters
- How to work and win as a team.

Traditional Sales Types

We've all seen the movies with your stereotypical salespeople. Depending on the industry and point of view of the director, these salespeople can take on many forms. They are depicted in a three-piece suit, fast-talking, and wheeling and dealing. Think about the door-to-door salesman of old, walking up and down the block with a briefcase full of sales literature and possibly merchandise to demonstrate. Then you have the person sitting behind a desk pounding out hundreds of cold sales calls, hoping to get anyone on the other end of the phone. While many of these depictions may be accurate in one fashion or another, no one ever defines what separates one type of salesperson from another. So, we will take that opportunity here to do so.

Hunters

Hunters are the quintessential salesperson. When people imagine a salesperson, they usually picture a hunter. Hunters are the ones who make sales look and feel exciting. They're the type of salesperson you either

love or love to hate. Hunters are witty, charismatic, and incredibly confident. They're cold-calling machines who crush quotas and make great business developers. That's why every salesperson you see in a movie is a hunter. In *Glengarry Glen Ross*, Alec Baldwin's character Blake coined the infamous phrase "ABC" – always be closing. It's easy to make their work look dramatic and exciting when portrayed on the screen, and that is only one example. Other movies include *Boiler Room*, *The Wolf of Wall Street* (old and new versions), *Tin Men*, and countless others. However, replicating their results in the real world is not always so easy.

Hunters also tend to be the lone wolves of the office. A hunter is a self-starter who likes to pursue opportunities of interest to them and is strong-willed, which can make them difficult to manage. On the other hand, they're also extremely effective at what they do and tend to need less micromanagement than other employees. Often, hunters can close on big contracts that other salespeople assume are unattainable.

What makes a hunter so good at what they do is the ability to always see an upside when they hit a setback. They see every challenge as an opportunity instead of an obstacle. This resilience, coupled with hunting skills, equips them to deliver results. That level of optimism contributes to their resilience and persistence, not to mention how their customers perceive them. Buying from somebody who stays calm under pressure and always maintains a calm demeanor is more comfortable.

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The real superpower of a hunter is that they are allergic to losing. When they hear the word “no” five times in a row, they see it as progress toward getting a “yes.” They also have a very high figure-it-out factor. They’re addicted to self-improvement and know how to turn every failure into a learning opportunity instead of accepting defeat when they might have been one step away from a sale. They love the thrill of the pursuit and push boundaries to catch their prey, but that doesn’t mean they’ll waste their time chasing dead-end leads.

Hunters aren’t afraid to ask potential customers many direct and precise questions about everything from budgets to timeframes. As soon as they find out they’re not dealing with a decision-maker, they hand them off to the farmers on your sales team and go looking for a lead they can sell to. They operate under the assumption their most valuable asset is time, and they quickly disqualify leads that are not ready to close.

The jury is still out on whether hunters are born or made, but what is certain is that not every seller on your team will be cut out for hunting. My belief is each salesperson will naturally gravitate to one sales persona. The goal is to ensure we have the right person in the right role with the right skills.

Look around your own office and try identifying the hunters. The exercise should be fairly simple because if you have to question whether or not someone is a hunter, chances are they are not! But that’s ok. A

successful team is cohesive and balanced with all three sales personas. The other personas have skills and traits that can prove useful, which the hunters do not have, and vice versa. The key is identifying who is who on your team and then implementing the best way for them to work together.

With that said, now is the perfect time to hunt. The building materials industry, like many others, has been shaken from the ground up. Every company has been forced to go digital much faster than planned. You might be one of the many companies that weren't ready for that transformation and are now dealing with more orders than you can handle because of it – inarguably, a better problem to have than no sales coming in.

It's tempting to put sales on the back burner while you catch up on pending orders, but that would be a mistake. Growth doesn't go on forever. The orders you're struggling to fulfill now will slow down if you don't actively maintain the momentum. When sales slow down, you'll need a healthy supply of prospects ready to buy. That's why your hunters are so important right now. They can line up new customers for the future so you can keep growing and sustain your success.

Right now, a large supply of customers are all looking for help. Their businesses are facing unprecedented challenges, too. They need the right solution, even if they don't know what that looks like yet. Customers are reluctant to try new products or switch from their existing supplier. When the industry returns to normal, many will be eager to try something different. Your

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hunters are the perfect people to offer them the perfect solution to their new problem.

Several of our clients share their businesses have slowed down and some report their segment of the building industry is down by as much as 20%. One of the main causes of this is that salespeople became transactional, just filling orders because they had inventory. Their sales skills, or sales muscles so to speak, became weak. We are currently helping several sales teams to improve their hunting skills based on the markets of today.

Farmer

Think about the farmers on your sales team as the Account Executive types. Farmers are excellent at building relationships and have a great rapport with their customers. It's simple to differentiate a farmer from a hunter. The hunter is often alone in the office with no time for socializing, while the farmer is likely the salesperson who is friends with everybody. A key reason for this is that farmers naturally excel at holding conversations. They can carry on a discussion, actively listen, and provide thoughtful feedback. As a result, it's easy to trust a farmer because you feel like you're being heard, and you are.

A farmer isn't a wheel-and-deal salesman. Instead, they take the time to discover their customers' pain points. Then, they go to work on problem-solving these issues. What's more important is that farmers are

involved in their customers' businesses. They spend so much time with every account that they're treated like family. This takes a level of care and focus that does not come naturally to a hunter, but it serves the farmer well in ways that complement the hunter's efforts.

What drives value for your business are the farmers who have an eye for opportunity. A good farmer can find new ways to solve problems for their customer. They can look at a customer's business and match solutions to their needs. This opportunity is where farmers work their magic by cross-selling and upselling – sometimes both.

A good farmer will never negotiate on price. They're value-driven salespeople. They understand the key to growing accounts is not by lowering rates but by adding services. Loyalty discounts are a race to the bottom, and they want no part of it. Farmers know customers want someone who will listen to them and understand how they make money. Customers need innovation and trusted advisors to grow their bottom line, not vendors who drop 1% off the price yearly.

Leveraging data across different channels is an essential skill for a farmer. Farmers make huge returns on customer accounts by taking information from one resource and applying the learning to another. A farmer can walk into a showroom or a warehouse and speak directly about the issues they're seeing and how to fix them. And, the solutions they provide are backed by proof.

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To drive the success of your building materials sales team, emphasis must be placed on closing deals and growing your existing accounts. We help farmers grow their share of wallet by strategically improving their business relationships across the organizations they serve. We help them upsell, cross-sell, and build strategic account development plans. Hunters are focused on the new opportunities, and farmers want to grow the old. An outstanding farmer can take your company from good to great by maximizing the lifetime value of your customers. Plus, it's more expensive and harder to get a new customer than to maintain a current customer and grow that account. So, your profit margins increase with an effective team of farmers.

Building trust with your existing customers is how you exponentially grow order sizes by 10x and more. Selling more products is how your company grows its market share. A larger market share is how you rise to the top. Therefore, the more trust you can foster with your customers, the better your company performs – and there is no salesperson better suited to building this trust than the farmer.

A New Persona in Sales

In response to the pandemic, several companies increased their investments in digital marketing. Without the ability to have face-to-face meetings or cold call prospects in the market or at trade shows, these companies invested in digital marketing to create virtual conversations that lead to revenue. The role of the fisherman emerged to take these virtual conversations and reel them in to become revenue. A fisherman is neither a hunter nor a farmer. They are patient with a keen eye for detail. The fisherman studies the customer and understands the need for the right tools to hook the fish. A fisherman knows the difference between a nibble and a bite. He knows how to reel in his catch at just the right pace.

A hunter will likely yank the hook out of the prospect's mouth or give up too soon. A farmer may misread the prospect and fail to close the deal with a customer ready to buy, and they wiggle off the hook. The fisherman truly understands their prospect and knows when to strike. They are best suited to long-cycle sales that require finesse and tenacity. Two vital functions allow them to excel in this department.

The first is discovery. The biggest challenge with a digital lead is that it's such an unknown. We are less likely to interact face-to-face with customers, meet a contractor, or meet an architect hunting for specific

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building materials. A fisherman has to discover who the lead is and what they need. That means being able to ask excellent questions for the persona they are communicating with while demonstrating competence and building trust. The fisherman is adept at conversational marketing, using strong messaging tailored to the customer.

The second function is qualification. A fisherman knows his waters. He knows exactly where to go and at what time if he wants to catch his prey. In the building materials industry, a fisherman knows their organization from end to end. They can ascertain the approach that best suits the prospect at the end of the line. They know when a nibble turns into a bite.

If a lead exhibits strong buying signals, they know to bring them to a close quickly. They have been trained in closing skills or know to hand the prospect over to hunters to close. If they're only at the beginning phase of their buying journey, they hand them over to marketing for lead nurturing or the farmer who owns the account who can then nurture those leads into customers. They continue to catch everything else in between by understanding the customer and their value.

Why Specialization is So Important Today

There is an old adage that says, “The burden is to have the right people in the right seats with the right skills.” This statement has never been more accurate in a business landscape that is changing faster than ever. Customers have all the information needed at their fingertips, sales cycles are shorter, and margins have been reduced, so paying the wrong salespeople to perform the right activities or the right salesperson to perform the wrong activities is just money flowing off your balance sheet.

To become trusted advisors and win more business, we want to improve the overall buying experience for our customers. This cannot be done without having the right people in the right roles at the right places as they engage. Each of the sales personas we mentioned previously share common skills like building relationships, asking great questions, and encouraging customer feedback and concerns, but they also have specialized skills. Just as a farmer will have strong project management skills and a hunter will have a very low fear of rejection, a fisherman will have exceptional communication skills and abilities at navigating sales technology.

This is important because having the right people in the right roles with the right skills will improve your win rate. When your sales team wins more business, your

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revenue and gross profit margins also increase. One of the worst things you can do in sales is ask someone to be something they are not. If a fisherman is forced to be a hunter or a farmer is forced to be a fisherman, the customer experience will suffer. The salesperson will feel like a fish out of water, and the customer is likely to mistake that for incompetence or disinterest.

Salespeople will gravitate towards one persona, and it is the job of leadership to lean into those specific skills and ensure we are setting our people up for success. Using some of the sales assessment instruments we will talk about later, we can gain a better understanding of who each person naturally is and put them in a role where they can maximize the return on the investment we're making in them by way of increased sales effectiveness and revenue generation.

How to Optimize Digital Leads to Increase Conversion

Just about anyone who has ever been in business understands the numerous struggles surrounding lead acquisition. Sales do not just grow on trees. Just because you offer a great product or service does not mean customers will immediately start beating down your doors. There is a multi-step process that takes a total stranger to your company or brand and transforms them into a paying customer. Generally, it starts with marketing, progresses to lead generation, and

culminates with winning or losing the sale.

Digital marketing has revolutionized how most businesses advertise by offering significantly more channels to reach your ideal customers and, in many cases, reducing the costs. However, you will still need to allocate marketing dollars to generate these leads, so it would only make sense to want to maximize the percentage of closed business. With that in mind, ask yourself this question: Do I have the right structure in place to close the leads coming in from digital marketing? Fishermen have the role of engaging with digital inquiries while casting out their lines to target net new customers.

Hunters

Even a highly skilled hunter won't be able to get far without the right tools. Sure, they can land some customers with nothing but a call sheet and a phone – hunters thrive off that challenge. But, they will convert a lot more leads if they have access to your ideal customer persona, how they buy, their decision-making process, and what criteria they use to buy. I explain this in detail in my book *Voice of Customer: A No Smoke & Mirrors Approach to Profitable Growth*.

Digital marketing tools haven't just given you new ways to reach customers. They have also given you a wealth of new information about current and potential leads. All that data becomes the top-performing hunter's secret weapon if they know how to use it. In fact, it's never been easier to learn what a customer needs and what kinds of problems you can help them solve. Give

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your hunters access to that information and watch them close quickly and close often. Remember, their specialty is having conversations that discover opportunities and closing them. If you're handing them lots of marketing-qualified leads that are not sales-qualified leads to sift through, you'll be wasting their time and costing yourself money in the form of lost potential sales and wasted compensation on paying them to perform the wrong activities.

Some of our clients often ask us what the difference is between a sales-qualified lead and a marketing-qualified lead. In an ideal world, all the leads sales teams receive would be sales-qualified leads, but the business development process often lacks the qualification process and leaves that to the salesperson. A sales-qualified lead is a lead who expresses an interest, has a problem we can solve, possesses the funds needed to invest in solving the problem, and is willing to invest in solving it. A marketing-qualified lead is, unfortunately, in some cases, someone who has expressed an interest by visiting some content or downloading an ebook or white paper, but we have not qualified them. They have an urgent problem to solve and the budget to invest to solve it. Use your digital tools to funnel qualified leads to them so they can start working on turning them into new customers.

Farmer

If the digital inquiry is made by a current customer, we send that opportunity to the farmer, who is the account

manager assigned to grow that customer's revenue and gross profit margins. Farmers are good at their jobs for several reasons, but the main attribute they have that sets them apart from hunters is patience. A farmer is not in a rush to close business and is perfectly okay nurturing a customer until they are at the point of making a decision.

This patience allows the farmer to build rapport with their customers. Instead of only brief interactions where business is closed and then the sales representative moves on to the next opportunity, a farmer tends to stick around for the life of a relationship. They live inside their CRM and make it a point to know as much as possible about each account assigned to them using a routine follow-up cadence you might not find with a hunter.

Farmers have been extensively trained in various sales skills such as discovery and qualifying, but also understand how to leverage social platforms to continue learning more about their customers and deepen relationships. No piece of information is too small or irrelevant to a farmer if it opens the door to a conversation they might not have had otherwise. Think about making happy birthday phone calls, sending holiday postcards, or remembering what particular sports team a customer may root for and using that to make small talk or celebrate a significant win. The farmer is patient but calculated, an important distinction from the babysitter we will discuss shortly.

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Fishermen

The issue with digital leads is that they're unknown entities. Like fishing in the ocean, you do not know what is on the other side of the line until you have engaged with them for a while. Sure, with new software, CRMs, and widgets, we can track the lead's interactions with our company, but how do we know which salesperson to deploy when the lead makes contact?

This is where the need for a new salesperson has arisen: the fisherman. The fisherman is constantly reviewing your digital nibbles and, once qualified, sending these opportunities to the right salesperson or closing them themselves. For net new logos, the fisherman uses their sales skills of building digital relationships, discovery, and qualifying to determine the opportunity size of this catch. Fishermen are trained to distinguish small inquiries that just steal your bait from large opportunities that, once reeled in, deliver huge value to your bottom line.

Fishermen take an omnichannel approach to communicating with prospects and leads. They know each social platform and how to use each to create conversations that lead to revenue. Fishermen know all the sales and marketing digital assets and know when and where to use them in the formal sales process. They quickly determine where the customer is in their sales process. Are they educating themselves? If so, the fisherman provides digital assets to help their education. Have they finished their education and are now looking for the ideal vendor? Have they picked

three vendors and are now in the process of narrowing it down to one? Or, have they picked your firm, and now you need to handle objections and negotiate the terms of the deal?

The fisherman is a master of determining how and when to pull on the line to land the fish effectively. They also know when and how to cut bait on nibbles that do not match your ideal customer profiles.

How to Develop and Nurture Different Sales Types

No two customers are the same, so we have extensive research and tools available for determining personas, personalities, communication styles, and everything else that can help a salesperson be more relatable. Even so, we cannot lose sight of the fact that no two salespeople are the same. Yes, it would be impossible to run a business by catering to everyone's specific needs, but that does not mean we should avoid setting each overall persona up for success. A hunter will likely not want to be nurtured the same (or at all) as a farmer, and vice versa. We owe it to our sales team and our company to upskill them based on their strengths and styles.

Hunters often have the most energy to manage, as they're high-energy individuals and often very competitive by nature, but it would be a mistake to fight

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fire with fire and use strong-arm tactics in an attempt to curb their enthusiasm or micro-manage them into your way of selling. We want them to use a formal sales process proven to drive the greatest results. What they want and need is coaching and sales tools. A competent hunter knows their worth to a company and isn't afraid to put their goals first. They'll jump ship if they feel mistreated or under-utilized or are simply fed up with conflicts in management.

Often, we find a salesperson with a high hunter drive and competence but a poor cultural fit. Some companies call these folks competent jerks. If you find you have a top sales performer in any role that is a poor cultural fit, we must coach them to do business the way your culture dictates or coach them out of the organization. Many business leaders struggle when they have a top performer who creates chaos and destruction of team morale. When we encounter this, the first thing we need to determine is if they are coachable. If they are, we can coach and train them to conduct themselves in ways that conform to the cultural expectations. However, if we find someone who is delivering results but in a way not comfortable to our customers and is not willing to be coached, we coach them out of the organization.

The best practice for leading a hunter is akin to sharpening a blade. Like a whetstone gently gliding over an edge repeatedly, you must be patient in your management of a hunter. However, you must not be a

pushover. We must coach, train, and empower our hunters to close more revenue. If you have a salesperson who is naturally resilient and has a history of overcoming adversity, you have someone you can develop into a hunter. And yes, you can develop those traits. If you have the right salesperson, hunting is a teachable skill.

The reward for your efforts is considerable. With a salesperson who can close deals you might not even think were possible, you could tap into the kind of deals that steal market share and take your business to the next level. Remember, it's not just the revenue from the initial sale that is important. The ongoing opportunity these newly acquired customers provide to the farmers on your team, who need their own form of development and nurturing, is also critical to the success of your sales team.

After assessing and training over two million salespeople, the data shows that a farmer's best friend is their knowledge base: their product knowledge, the inner workings of their customer's business, their multiple relationships with each customer (of which being a trusted adviser is paramount), project management, strategic thinking, data analysis, and discovery. Like their work for customers, farmers need to be nurtured.

What farmers want to do is help their customers' businesses. Therefore, to help your farmers succeed,

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you must provide them with the support they need to provide the best service possible to help their customers achieve their goals. It takes an investment of time and capital to develop a strong farmer. The farmer loves to learn and will benefit greatly from workshops, on-the-job training, time away from their customers, and market reports. While these can be costly, the investment in training your farmers compounds returns over time.

Be careful not to fill their plate, though. Hunters may thrive with abundant to-dos, but farmers prefer to take their time and prioritize customer satisfaction. They are skilled at gathering data, identifying trends, and project management. This mindset can produce the kind of high-quality work that retains accounts and prompts them to increase wallet share with your company. So, you don't want to pressure your farmers to increase their output beyond what is considered optimal. Otherwise, you risk your accounts becoming jaded with their executive who never seems to have time for them.

Plus, farmers tend to skew towards favoring a work-life balance. They are often parents or active socially and won't appreciate being pushed to work overtime, even if it means the opportunity to close more business and earn higher incentives. Be warned that you cannot be a pushover with farmers either. Being too soft can promote inertia and hinder growth. The balance is a fine line that's different for each team member, and it is your job to figure out how to achieve it.

Then, we have the fishermen. A fisherman is a skilled salesperson who can turn digital conversations into revenue. The conversation may start as an inquiry or someone downloading an ebook or white paper. Often, the customer inquires on the Internet and contacts your company for assistance. Not surprisingly, over 75% of the sales process is over by the time a prospect speaks with a salesperson.

Fishermen are excellent communicators and very skilled in sales technology. They have high situational awareness and demonstrate their ability day after day to turn conversations and inquiries into revenue. They are very similar to a hunter, except for their digital literacy. They have strong digital communication and project management skills, often living in the CRM. They have a formal sales process and are content to use it at each stage.

One outcome from the voice of customer (VOC) research is that we often restructure the sales organization to drive explosive growth in revenue, profits, and customer satisfaction. In VOC, we gather insights based on how customers desire to be served. The roles of farmers, hunters, and fishermen will need the skills to deliver the total buying experience we discovered in the VOC interviews. When we couple VOC research with a net profit by customer analysis, where we determine net profit by customer after adding the cost of sale, we help our clients develop sales structures based on sales skills and the ideal terms of trade for each customer.

What You Want to Look Out For – Babysitters

While you will benefit from having a combination of the various sales personas on your team, what you don't want to have is a babysitter. A babysitter is a salesperson pretending to be a farmer. They are reactively conversing with customers or reaching out to make small talk but are not attempting to grow their accounts, or they may be underperforming in a booming market. Collecting high fives for increasing revenue by 20% when the overall market is up 60% is not a win.

When business is really good, you don't need great skills to capture orders and place transactions. During the pandemic, we saw some clients experience rapid growth. Their salespeople then transformed into transactional sellers. They weren't flexing their sales skills muscles anymore. They sat back and just babysat their accounts, waiting for the phone to ring. As Warren Buffett says, "You can tell who was swimming naked when the tide goes out."

Today, what we're seeing in several markets I serve is that business has slowed down. Customers are now sitting on unsold inventory because their business has also slowed down, which means they do not need to buy as much as they once did. Babysitters should have never been in a sales role, but the impact is felt much

greater when times are bad. Unfortunately, when we assess teams, the data typically shows that at least 20% of sales quota-carrying roles shouldn't be salespeople. They don't have the will to sell, are not driven by goals, and are not motivated to sell. No matter what compensation program you throw at them or training and coaching delivered, all they're going to do is wait for the phone to ring.

Luck can play a huge role for a babysitter masquerading as a farmer, and it is your responsibility to figure out which is which – as quickly as possible. If the tide has not gone out for your company, it may not be quite so easy to tell who is who, though. Some simple questions you can ask your salespeople to differentiate between a babysitter and a farmer all start with “Why?”:

- Why did this account grow?
- Why did you offer this product instead of that one?
- Why do you think this solution is the right one?

If a salesperson can't answer these questions, they're babysitting. They're not finding the needs of their customers and working to solve problems. When a customer feels their needs aren't met, they will begin shopping around. The worst part is, your customer likely won't tell you they are unhappy either, and it won't be until they defect that you find out. If you read my book, *Voice of Customer*, you can learn ways to prevent this from happening.

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A babysitter will have a higher turnover of customers than a farmer. Look at your sales team to find out who is losing customers at the highest rate, and that person is your babysitter. Once you know who they are, you have to determine what to do with them. Typically, we want to allow them to transition into a customer service role instead of just terminating them. However, the person must be coachable and willing to admit they are in the wrong role. If they can't or won't, we do not have much choice but to coach them out of the organization.

That may come as a big “ouch” to many of you reading this because you either have known this all along and didn't want to acknowledge it, or I just blindsided you with a harsh reality you will now need to face. It was like that for a pharmaceutical company I recently worked with. They had a fairly large sales team with over 170 reps, but our assessments found that 27 had no desire to be in sales roles. Considering all sales reps were earning the same base salary, from the top performers down to the babysitters, this company was squandering a ton of money.

A growing disturbing statistic we are finding is that some of your most senior salespeople slip into babysitting roles if we don't hold them accountable. They want to do the least amount of work to hit their revenue targets. They just babysit their accounts while counting down the days to retirement. When we uncover a situation like this, we need to have a strategic discussion with the sales leader because it becomes a business decision on the best way to move

forward.

Often, we allow them to have this role, but we don't expect them to be growing and prospecting. We assign those prospects to someone else with hunting and farming skills. Other options would be coaching this person up into a different role that does not require sales or letting them think they are still doing what they have always done on their journey to retirement, or what I call "glider syndrome."

One company I was serving said, "Look, Tom's been with our company for over 35 years. He served my dad. I'm going to take care of Tom for the rest of his career, even if he can no longer achieve the results he once did." And that's great because there was strategic thought put into it without delusions of grandeur. If they were mistakenly expecting Tom to grow his sales 20% year over year until retirement, it would have been a poor move. The only time it is okay to have a babysitter masquerading as a farmer is when you are aware of it and intentionally choose to allow it, knowing the business can survive without their contribution.

How to Work and Win as a Team

You cannot win as an organization unless you can first win as a team, and you cannot win as a team unless everyone can work together. The first step in working together is assessing the overall effectiveness of your

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sales team. This is key to ensuring you have the right people in the right roles with the right skills. Ultimately, everyone needs to take ownership of the sales process and work with leadership to figure out how to contribute to the best of their ability.

If we discover someone is in the right role but has skills gaps, we can close those gaps with training and coaching. Sit down as a unit and talk about your sales team's strengths. Define and discuss the skills of each role (hunter, farmer, fisherman) and their relevance to your building materials company in detail so everyone is on the same page. Then, it's about understanding when to think and act differently. Leverage the available data to define when you need to hunt, farm, or fish.

It's one thing to have a strategy; it's another to believe in it. Therefore, you must emphasize the virtues of switching mindsets to close sales or nurture customers. Your team will be more inclined to adopt the new approach when given a reason. Include your team in the decision-making process. Subtly guide the discussion towards the virtues of each sales type and listen as your team connects the dots themselves. Understand that for many on your team who have never had this kind of emphasis put on their persona before it will feel as if their competence is in question. Switching a babysitting sales representative to a customer service role may feel like a demotion, but if explained properly, that employee should welcome the change to a position where they can be more at ease

and thrive.

A successful sales organization needs all four types of sales personas in one capacity or another. Hunters can and will close new business, but they are unlikely to nurture past customers. Farmers will masterfully farm past customers for additional sales but will not venture out to secure new business. The fishermen are in the middle of both, feeding new business and offering more farming opportunities. Lastly, while a babysitter has no place in *sales*, they can be a crucial asset to account management and customer service by leveraging their extensive product knowledge.

The significance of having a hybrid sales model like the one described above cannot be understated. Lead generation remains one of an organization's biggest expenses. Advertising, websites, software, and dealer locators all cost money. According to research, acquiring new customers is six to seven times more expensive than retaining existing ones. The hybrid model provides the lowest cost per sale of all the potential models you could employ, and your customers have come to expect as much. The need to excel is only going to grow.

If you're not turning leads into customers, you're on a sinking ship. Why? The growth of any business is mainly dependent on repeat customers. Any customer who purchases with your company has a 60% chance of becoming a repeat customer. By not closing new leads, you're not putting yourself in a position to

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acquire repeat customers. For simplicity, just keep reminding yourself about this chain of events and how quickly a similar scenario in your business could cause catastrophic results:

- If you're not building relationships, you're not understanding your accounts.
- If you're not understanding your accounts, you're not solving their problems.
- If you're not solving their problems, you're losing their business.

Sales starts with having conversations with your ideal customer profiles that ultimately lead to revenue.

Do you have the right salespeople in the right roles delivering high customer satisfaction as well as profitable growth to the bottom line?

Do you need to add the fishermen's role to your sales team to create digital conversations that lead to revenue?

Do you plan to keep hiring more salespeople, or will you assess your sales team and identify the babysitters who are not delivering the ROI on their compensation?

You can train and coach them up or out. We recommend not adding more salespeople until we have a plan for the 20% of salespeople who should not be in a quota-carrying role. We help teams identify and replace these babysitters with hunters, farmers, or fishermen who deliver value to the bottom line.

Mark Allen Roberts

When we engage with sales teams, the process starts with a sales effectiveness and improvement analysis. Within 10 days, we will share a report with you identifying your sales teams' strengths, the skills gaps negatively impacting their results, and if you have any babysitters. In addition, we have a pre-hire sales assessment instrument we can leverage to help replace babysitters with future top-performing salespeople for each role.

If you would like to assess your sales team, please contact us and use the promotion code: **ImproveSaleEffectiveness** to receive a **10% discount off the sales skills assessment and your first sales skills training course.**

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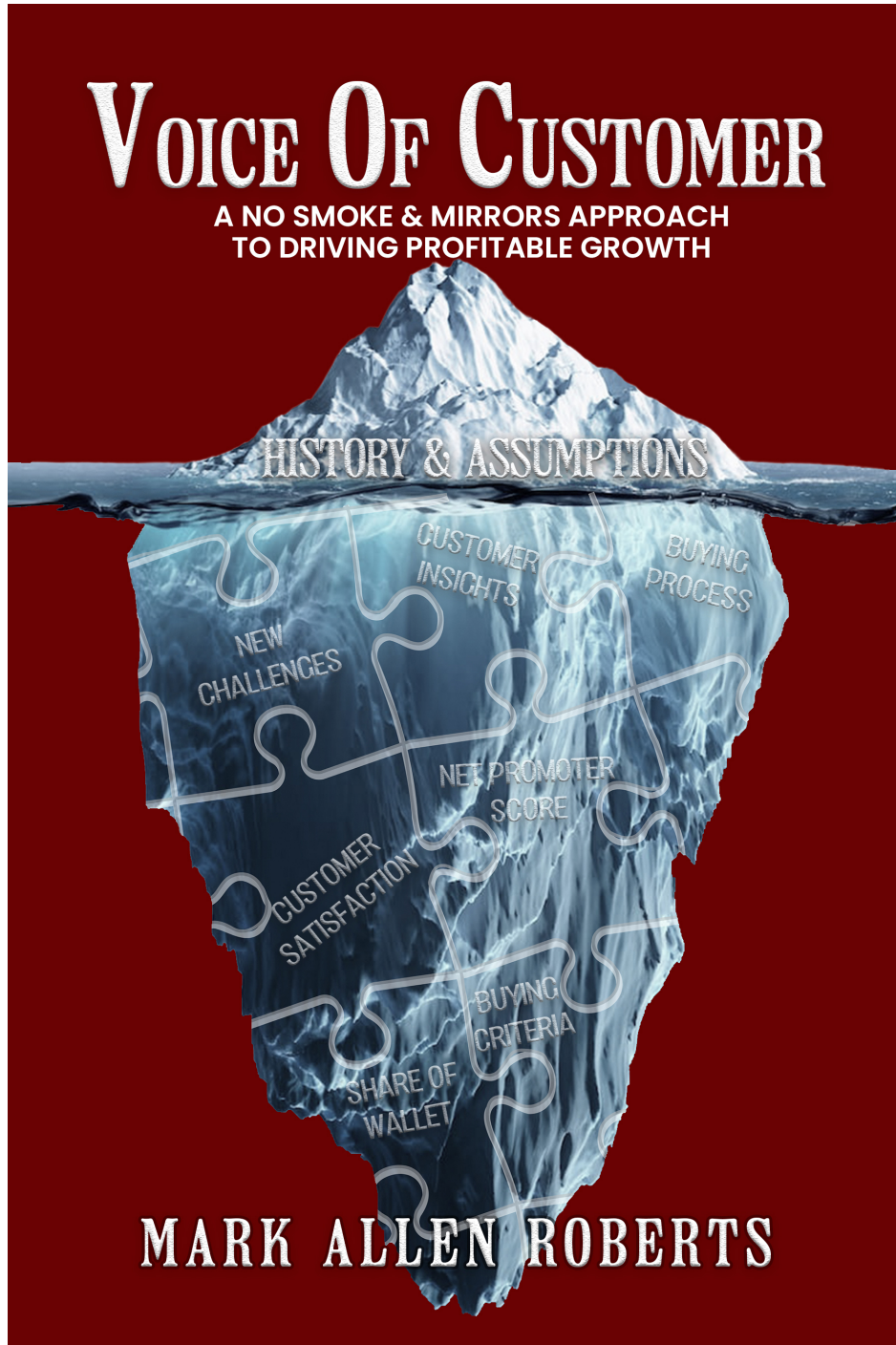
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Right People, Right Role

Other Books by Mark Allen Roberts



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DRIVING EXPLOSIVE GROWTH

A No Smoke and Mirrors Approach
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