

## The 6 Biggest Changes in Today's Sales Environment You Need to Know About

Published on March 23, 2017, by **Jim Keenan** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jimkeenan>

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Sales environment is changing. There are a number of changes in sales today that impact our ability to be successful and make our numbers. These changes are changing the way we connect with prospects, differentiate ourselves from the competition, and position our products and services. The sales people, leaders, and organizations that understand and embrace these changes will be far better positioned to meet their numbers than those who don't.

### The 6 Biggest Changes in Today's Sales Environment

#### **Customers are super busy and don't have time for you:**

Customers and prospect are in constant priority mode, continually and know it determining what is important. Customers and prospects are so busy problem needs to be fixed, can band-aid it they will & don't have the time to address it.

To sell in this super, fast-paced environment it is critical to do as much of the work for your [buyer] customer as possible. [eg Strategic Selling methods still spot-on relevant to create time-based customer urgencies as means to navigate {them} into opportunities, then follow up closings] [aka The New Strategic Selling / Stephanie Hieman].

It takes heroic creativity to capture their attention; a [mindset] to consider yourself their sales Sherpa, an indispensable sales resource.

**BOTTOM LINE:** Customers and prospects are busier today than ever.

#### **Relationships matter less (less than they did before):**

According to the Sales Executive Council, sales reps fall into five distinct profiles:

- hard-workers ([hard-workings](#))
- lone-wolves ([lone-wolfer](#))
- reactive problem solvers [no one wants to write on; but, prevalent daily fire-of-the-day approach]
- relationship builders ([on life support?](#))
- challengers ([salesforce CA's version](#))

According to the study [relationship builders represent only 7% of high-performers](#) [Harvard Business Review Septmeber 2011 (eg, dated)]. Traditional relationship builder characteristics of being generous, agreeable, supportive, available and service oriented prohibits the discovery of new, unique and transformative solutions. Relationship building is a circuitous route to the sale. **Primary is to identify & solve problems.** Customers don't have the time nor inclination to take a circuitous route. **They want ideas [results] now.**

"Friendship" buying is dead. All sales are becoming more complex. Customers are super busy, (see #1.) Achieving results → drives everything. Dinners, golf, lunches, boondoggles, and casual conversations don't get the customer any closer to their goals. **Relationships only matter now [when] they allow you to teach and get customers to their goals.**

**Customers [without time & too busy] want to be taught; they want experts:**

[I had a customer explicitly tell me this a few years back and I never forgot it.](#) Customers want experts. They want their sales people to educate them on what is happening in the space. They want guidance in how to execute their strategy and how your products and services can help with that strategy. Customers and prospects are too busy (see #1, again) to do it all themselves. **Too Much Information (TMI) is coming at them, even to try {& may cause critical paralysis} [need for clean simple differentiation, message & converging on solutions].**

Today's best sales people need to be "*trusted filters*" helping customers and prospects cut through the noise and provide them with the relevant information they need to achieve their goals.

Today's sales environments require sales people come to the table WITH ideas, ideas the customer may never have thought of. Sales reps need to lead their customers and the sale. This is done by being the expert and having information and knowledge customers and prospects don't have.

**The customer no longer leads the sale, salespeople do [B I N G O]:**

Once upon a time the customer or prospect led the sale. Sales people built a strong relationship, pitched their wares, provided support, and the customer made choices. Today customers and prospects are too busy they don't have the time do all the work. [Customers] expect sales people to come to the table with new ideas, approaches, and techniques to solve their problems. Leadership is a critical skill for today's salespeople. **They must be comfortable making customers uncomfortable.** Sales reps need to be provocative. They need to take control of the sale for the customer. Today's sale is led by the sales team. The customer is expecting it. Customers want and expect their sales people to lead the sale.

**Social media matters [oh well . . . time allocated to Social media is time deallocated from sales]:**

Salespeople need to understand the value of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Gist, Yammer, blogging and more as real selling tools. Social media is about information, collaboration, and engagement. For today's salespeople, social media is a must in today's selling world as a prospecting tool, a selling tool, a cold calling tool, a sharing tool, a research tool, etc. Embracing social media is no longer a nice to have, it's a must in selling.

**Technology matters: [selling into millennial crowd, not so w/ top dogs investor/developer \$\$ bucks]**

Don't confuse technology with social media. Applications and tools available to salespeople are massive. Rolodex / client based CRM as the tools of the trade are far from over, [asserting] technology is reshaping sales: Cloud computing, the Internet, CRM applications, and mobile apps. [Technology] gives salespeople more tools to accelerate the sale, connect with customers, and prospects than ever before. Technology is touching every aspect of the selling process, from prospecting emails with [yesware](#), to customer and prospect research with [Gist](#) and [Rapportive](#), to demonstration tools like [Glance Networks](#) and [iMeet](#), to commission management systems like [xactly](#). The list of sales, sales enablement, and sales productivity technologies is immense. How many of these technologies are you familiar with; [Echosign](#), [KnowledgeVision](#), [Lattice-Engines](#), [Qvidian](#), [WhiteBoard Selling](#), [IntroMojo](#)? There is more technology designed to make selling more effective and efficient than ever before. The key now is to know what the technologies are and how to use them. **[Sales technology buyer beware: will lead to dependence on feel-good productivity at the detriment of actual results.]**

Sales is changing. We have to lead. What once worked, works no longer [hmmmm]. Relationships are no longer enough. Social media matters. The tools of the past are no longer efficient. Our customers and prospects worlds are different, and they expect more from us. Do you see the change? **[Tried & true sales still works: sales should lead the sale cycle.]**

Original article, not annotated or abbreviated, can be found at:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/6-biggest-changes-todays-sales-environment-you-need-know-keenan->