

# “AGILE SELLING” BY JILL KONRATH

Published by Portfolio/Penguin

<http://amzn.to/23g4PES>

## *A SUMMARY*

### **Buyers expect you to understand their business –**

They want ideas, insights, leadership & guidance. According to a survey by Forrester Research, only 15% of buyers say their first meeting with sellers met their expectations. Only 7% of buyers scheduled a 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

Aberdeen Group state that sellers who used online resources to learn about prospects saw revenue jump over 21%. In CEB studies, sellers who challenged buyer’s thinking and brought fresh insights significantly outperformed their colleagues.

### **Who we are and how we sell is more important than what we sell -**

According to Korn/Ferry International, learning agility is a more reliable indicator of leadership than IQ. People who can get up to speed quickly are in high demand. Learning agility is your main competitive advantage. According to Lee Salz, it can take at least 8 months for a new seller to perform at the same level as existing sellers. Aim for situational credibility in 30 days.

Start with the big picture – an overview –

- 1) Primary products/services.
- 2) Target markets.
- 3) Customer outcomes.

Determine your priorities – the “need to knows”.

**Research from the Sales Benchmark Index states that 60% of forecasted opportunities are lost to no decision.**

Ask your colleagues –

- 1) How do our targets do things without us?
- 2) What problems might they have?
- 3) What impact would those problems make?
- 4) How well are they achieving their objectives?
- 5) What’s the business case for change?
- 6) Study the status quo.

**According to the Edelman Trust Barometer, only 8% of buyers trust what companies say about themselves.**

You need to articulate your value proposition. What's your business case for change? To get a handle on a prospect's offering, print out product/service descriptions from their website. Also check customer's challenges (use content from competitor sites if necessary). Seek out stories about buyer's issues and what difference you can make.

**Interview your recent customers.** They can tell you how things have changed since using you. This is best conducted over the telephone, for example –

- a) How's our application helping (whatever)?
- b) How much time (or whatever) is it saving?
- c) Are you getting the results you hoped for?
- d) Is your company growing? Have you added more staff?
- e) I appreciate your insights. You've helped me understand our value much better.

Buyers are happy with the status quo until something either piques their curiosity or changes their priorities. Trigger events can shift buyer's priorities and loosen their status quo. These can be internal changes, bad number, legislative changes, competition, the economy, new technology or the cost of borrowing. You must help them reach their new goals. Try Google Alerts for "new heads of sales in (industry sector) companies".

**Check out fellow forum members for –**

- 1) Their number one priority this quarter.
- 2) When's the best time to change?
- 3) Their most important decision criteria.
- 4) How are they improving efficiency & effectiveness?
- 5) What issues are preventing them reaching their goals?

**Stay involved in the discussions.**

What kind of companies do you help? What do you offer them? Why should your prospects change? (Use stories about how you have helped customers move from their status quo.) Have you worked with companies like our before?

You need to aim to be able to –

- 1) Give an overview of your products/services.
- 2) Describe your prospect's typical status quo.
- 3) Identify the DMs and their goals & issues.
- 4) Express your value proposition.
- 5) Share stories of real customers who are benefiting from you.
- 6) Identify trigger events that change your prospect's priorities.

**Sales process –**

- 1) Prospect acquisition needing networking, prospecting, targeting & researching.
- 2) Opportunity creation - questioning and creating value.
- 3) Winning the business - presenting, differentiating and negotiating.
- 4) Account management - customer service, problem solving & opportunity identification.

**Connect questions –**

- 1) In researching your company I noticed (whatever). What impact is this having on your area?
- 2) What are the biggest challenges your sales people are having with prospecting?
- 3) What have you done so far to help them improve their prospecting skills?

**Ask existing salespeople –**

- 1) How do you identify which companies to contact?
- 2) Who are the primary DMs you want to meet?
- 3) What kind of research do you do?
- 4) What's your typical prospecting process?
- 5) What do you say over the telephone?
- 6) Can you show me sample emails?
- 7) How do you deal with rejection?
- 8) How do you engage people in a discussion?

Check out new presentation software. Check out GoToMeeting and WebEx. Try video tutorials. On Google, enter “tutorial + (name of the technology)”.

Prioritise first thing in the morning. Chunk your time into 30,60 & 90 minutes. Conduct only one activity per chunk. Learn in chunks, not all at once.

Nearly all job titles have related associations. Check out the websites. Nearly all industries have their own magazine.

**Multitasking –**

According to Dr Glenn Wilson of UL, if you multitask, women's IQ drops by 5 points and men's IQ drops by 15 points. Harold Pashler of the University of California states that when people multitask, their intellectual capacity drops from that of a Harvard MBA to an 8 year old. According to the American Psychological Association, it takes you 20-40% more time to complete your work if you're multitasking. Multitasking is out, monotasking is in. Only check email two or three set times a day.

Seneca wrote “By teaching we learn”. Therefore, always be learning.

If a prospect objects to what you tell them say, “That’s interesting, tell me more”.