
THE 21 BIGGEST MYTHS IN SALES



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Contact us at info@thebrooksgroup.com or call (800) 633-7762.



The twentieth century saw a whole host of changes for sales organizations and salespeople alike. For example, salespeople now need to call on the right level of buyer, cut a wider path and penetrate accounts more deeply than ever before. They need to interact with customers more strategically and to position themselves as business professionals who provide effective, long term, beneficial solutions. The process has extended far beyond the face-to-face phase of the sale and into all that occurs before and following the sale.

However, even in spite of these new and encompassing demands, there remains a hardcore group of salespeople, sales organizations and even trainers of selling skills that are throwbacks to the early part of the second half of the last century.

The shocking result is that a lot of these overly simplistic and misguided practices are still woven into the fabric of even some of the world's most sophisticated sales organizations in spite of their best efforts to update and professionalize their sales forces. Unfortunately, a host of these misguided tactics are simple to memorize and recall, roll off of one's tongue easily, can lead to quick sales or are simply so easy to use that they have continued to clutter the landscape of sales even today.

Even though there has been over 50 years of concentrated effort to professionalize sales, the true growth of sales as a profession has stalled because of the stagnating presence of many of these practices. Now, into the 21st century, these practices have actually become counterproductive to meaningful selling. In fact, they are so out-of-step with the massive changes that have occurred in the marketplace since the target rich 90's that they have actually become the business equal of urban myths... purely outdated, counterproductive practices and beliefs that must be eradicated for the good salespeople, their profession and their organizations.

In fact, the massive changes that have occurred over the past few years are so all encompassing and pervasive that to knowingly implement these practices is a sure road to bankruptcy, both personally and organizationally. Smart companies and smart salespeople know that these practices need to be eradicated quickly. Marketplace changes that have occurred just in the past 3-5 years have clearly mandated it. And mandated it fast.

Let's take a look at just six significant changes that have rendered these practices not only worthless but counterproductive:

- Trust is more essential than ever to the sale.
- The marketplace has become more crowded, mature and competitive.
- Purchasing has become consensus oriented and based far less on relationships than ever before.
- The capacity to sell value rather than price has become increasingly more critical in pursuit of organizational sales success.
- Buyers are looking for advisors and business experts who deliver results that exceed basic expectations. They're not interested in salespeople who are positioned as salespeople.
- Buying decisions are being made at higher and higher levels due to the strategic ramification of purchases.



However, there is another group of more sophisticated myths that grew up in the latter part of the 20th century as well. They were the result of the proliferation of digital technology. These myths sprang from the false logic that through the application of sophisticated digital technology, the fundamental world of sales would be changed forever. And that in order to survive, every sales organization needed to invest immediately and heavily into that technology. The problem with that logic was that many of the most successful salespeople weren't ready for all of that to happen. The real truth is that technology has proven itself to be a media for generating leads, delivering information or speeding up transactions. Nothing more and nothing less. It was not a whole new way to sell or manage the sales process. It never fully replaced salespeople. And probably never will. It is just faster.

Myth 1: Good salespeople get more objections.

Fact: Good salespeople get no objections because they ask the right questions in order to avoid objections.

Myth 2: Persistence is the key to sales success.

Fact: Intuitive insight, careful qualifications and staying focused are the keys to sales success.

Myth 3: Warm them up with small talk.

Fact: 72% of all buyers find unsolicited small talk to be negative.

Myth 4: Closing is the key to selling.

Fact: Closing the sale through pre-call planning, building trust and qualifying the buyer is the key to selling.

Myth 5: Create a need... and people will buy your product or service.

Fact: People are more likely to buy if a product or service fulfills a need they already know they have.

Myth 6: It is easier to sell a tangible product than an intangible one.

Fact: Intangible products can be designed, restructured, described or visually created in ways tangible products can never be.

Myth 7: Selling systems don't work.

Fact: If a salesperson has a proven, tested selling platform and follows it, there is a 93% chance of making the sale. Without a system, it drops to less than 42%.

Myth 8: I don't need to prospect.

Fact: The secret to selling is not in the selling. It is in the constant, consistent act of prospecting. Most salespeople fail due to a lack of qualified prospects.

Myth 9: Our product is unique and will sell itself.

Fact: No product, ever again, will hold a significant differential advantage in price, quality or design. Also, all products or services can be sold through any principles-based, customer-focused system.

Myth 10: Hungry salespeople sell better.

Fact: Salespeople need to focus on customers' and prospects' concerns, not on their own need to eat!

Myth 11: A winning personality guarantees sales success.

Fact: A flexible personality will guarantee sales success.



Myth 12: Tie-down questions still work.

Fact: Tie-down questions (Example: “If I could show you a way to save money, you’d be interested, wouldn’t you?”) are manipulative, leading and, perhaps, even deceptive.

Myth 13: Only closers need apply!

Fact: Hard closing salespeople can easily suffer from product returns, unhappy customers, no referrals and an abrasive personality.

Myth 14: Motivation is the most important key to sales success.

Fact: Motivation is only part of sales success. Product knowledge, selling skills, interpersonal aptitude, intelligence and focus are just as important.

Myth 15: Good salespeople make great sales managers.

Fact: Far too often, good salespeople make mediocre or poor sales managers. The skills and mindset required for success are different... and they require different kinds of people.

Myth 16: Previous industry experience is a guarantee of sales success.

Fact: Previous industry experience could mean sub-par relationships, inadequate training and running from one industry job to another.

Myth 17: New products will improve sales.

Fact: Better professional selling will improve sales... plus, it takes time to learn how to sell any new product or service.

Myth 18: Sales is a volume game!

Fact: Sales is, and will always be, a margin game. Of course, the greater the volume and the margin, the better off you’ll be.

Myth 19: Cold calling is a good idea!

Fact: Cold calling is short-sighted, leads to salesperson burn-out, poorly positioning a company or product, and is like trying to find a needle in a haystack.

Myth 20: Most salespeople fail because they can’t handle rejection.

Fact: Rejection is not the problem. It could be a lack of self-starting ability, failure to enjoy sales, inadequate product knowledge, fear of embarrassment or more. Rarely is it the fear of rejection alone that causes failure.

Myth 21: Motivate me!

Fact: All motivation is self-induced. The secret is to discover what really motivates each person.

In Conclusion:

Because the 21st century demands a new science of selling and persuasion, it will prove to be a time characterized by a broad array of complex demands that will grow more intense daily for salespeople and their organizations. Intensified competition, reverse Internet auctions, spreadsheet buying and price driven decisions are just the beginning.

As we move forward it will be essential that great salespeople, enlightened sales managers and smart companies unshackle themselves from the myths of the past. To continue going forward with these same outdated and inaccurate strategies will be tantamount to performing sales suicide. And great salespeople and smart companies don’t want to do that.



About THE BROOKS GROUP

Since 1977, The Brooks Group has been dedicated to helping sales-driven organizations build top-producing sales teams with innovative, high-quality sales and sales management training that drives revenue. Brooks Group clients get the best available resources for screening, training, developing and retaining sales and sales management talent tailored specifically to the client-organization's needs. And with their world-class follow-up programs The Brooks Group's expert sales trainers, facilitators and coaches become strategic partners in developing a team's highest potential.

Selling Power Magazine recently named The Brooks Group the Number 1 Consulting Sales Organization of the Year and clients are consistently impressed by the proven ideas and tangible results they see as a result of their training.

For Example:

94% of The Brooks Group's training participants win new accounts as a result of the training

99% see increased sales volume

75% say they're better at building trust and rapport and more confident in approaching prospects.

For more information, The Brooks Group can be reached by phone at (800) 633-7762, by email at info@thebrooksgroup.com or online at www.thebrooksgroup.com.