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The *INTELLIGENT GROWTH* E-zine

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How Do Your Sales Efforts Stack Up?

In our work over the last 20 years, having reviewed thousands of business development efforts, we have gained a tremendous amount of wisdom about what works and what doesn't work. We are now in a position to share this knowledge with you. To make this offer even more irresistible, we are making this available to you free of charge and with no obligation.

Simply go to our website www.ImagineLLC.com/consulting.htm and click on Diagnostics (

[or click here](#)) and complete The *INTELLIGENT GROWTH* Diagnostic™ online. When we receive your submission, we will provide you with a written analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of your business development efforts with some specific recommendations as to what you can do right away to improve

• **Successful Selling When Change Is Key** **By Douglas G. Davidoff**

Buying anything requires change. It may be as simple as buying a new refrigerator and having to change refrigerators, or buying a new car and having to deal with the hassles of selling an old one. While there is change, the new car and the new refrigerator are pretty much the same as the old ones. This type of change is called *continuous innovation*. The buyer is not required to change behavior to gain the benefits of the solution. Think about how long it takes to get the benefits of a new refrigerator that is twice the size of my current one, using half the energy? No time at all. As soon as I plug it in, I gain the benefits of the new refrigerator.

When the buyer *must* change behavior to benefit from a solution, this change is called *discontinuous innovation*. Most companies that

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Begin improving your best sales results by completing The *INTELLIGENT GROWTH* Diagnostic today!

provide value-added services require some form of change on the part of the buyer in order for the buyer to benefit from the solution. If your solution represents a new system (technology or otherwise) it requires behavioral change. If your solution requires training of some sort, it requires behavioral change. If your solution requires the buyer to see or understand a "new approach," it requires behavioral change. If your solution involves a "ramp-up" time for the buyer to experience results, it probably involves behavioral change. To determine if you provide discontinuous innovation, ask yourself: Can my customers and potential customers fully benefit from my solution if they do not change aspects of their behavior? If you answer 'yes,' you are probably providing continuous innovation. But if you answer 'no,' then your sales approach must be aligned with the buyer of discontinuous innovation.

WHY PEOPLE BUY DISCONTINUOUS INNOVATION

The process of selling continuous innovation is different from selling discontinuous innovation. With the former, the focus is on features, benefits and incremental improvement. The latter is driven by "pain" the buyer is experiencing.

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Imagine Consulting defines pain as: *an opportunity for improvement of an undesirable condition caused by something working sub-optimally.*

The decision to buy something that provides discontinuous innovation is driven by the level of dissatisfaction that potential customers are experiencing in some aspect of their lives. A company offering discontinuous innovation faces four major challenges when presenting its solution to potential buyers:

- First, potential buyers may not be aware of nor fully understand the problems they have;
- Second, potential buyers may not share the problems they do know they have with the selling company until they trust the company, and they won't trust the company until they believe the company understands the potential buyers' problems better than the potential buyers do;
- Third, potential buyers may be unaware of the cause of their problems - and if they don't adequately understand the cause of their problems, they may be unable to understand the value of the solution

your company provides;

- Fourth, potential buyers may be unaware of the costs associated with their problems, and therefore may be unable to adequately value the solution your company provides.

These four challenges are the primary reasons potential buyers, accurately qualified by your company, either fail to buy or delay buying. Having a process designed to enable your salespeople to lead potential buyers to understand their problems, the cause of their problems and the cost of their problems, will lead to buyers who are not only buying more quickly (thus providing your company economic benefit), but who are up and running faster (thus making the service experience better and easier to handle). An additional benefit is significantly increased referrals.

RISK IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE

There is relatively low risk when purchasing continuous innovation. Discontinuous innovation, though, involves risk on the buyer's part. Buying a value-added solution involves risk. Among other risks, buyers risk their financial investments, they risk the time they put into

implementing the solution, they risk looking bad to their company or their colleagues, and they risk the possibility that your solution won't work for them. The buyer (and/or the buyer's organization) may fail to make the change necessary to gain the benefits of the solution. Additionally, because of the change required, the buyer doesn't have any experience that indicates the solution will even solve the problem. The decision to buy your solution should be driven by a buyer's understanding of his/her problems – not by a buyer's understanding of your company's features and benefits.

HOW TO PREVENT COMMODITIZATION & INCREASE YOUR MARGINS

In today's hyper-competitive world, discontinuous innovation is a necessary ingredient in differentiating yourself, providing added value and increasing the profit you make for each sale. Discontinuous innovation is not something to shy away from – it is something to embrace. The challenge when building a business based on discontinuous innovation is developing and implementing a business development model designed to support it. If the sales side of your business has you frustrated, if you feel like your margins are being

squeezed because of commoditization, or if your sales cycle times are increasing, it is likely that your business development model is not adequately aligned to your value offering.

If you would like to learn more about how to shorten your sales cycle time, or you would like an assessment of your value offering to determine if your value offering is a discontinuous innovation, simply call or [e-mail](#) us for details and receive a free coaching session and learn how to improve your best results.

Imagine Sales Consulting enables companies to move their salespeople and business development processes beyond merely communicating value to truly creating value. This transformation makes companies valuable resources to their clients which leads to increased sales, increasing margins and shorter pipeline times.

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