

The logo for 5000b, featuring the number '5000' in a bold, sans-serif font and a smaller 'b' in a blue, lowercase font to its right.

SALES ENABLEMENT REDEFINED

1 Reason Why Strategic Initiatives Fail at The Deal Level

how to supercharge time to revenue



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Consider the performance of an organization's functional groups. How long would executives and the board put up with manufacturing producing defective parts? How about financial reports delivered to Wall Street that were erroneous? What if your IT network was unavailable a few times a week? All of this would be **TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE**. But this doesn't happen in most companies. Why? Because companies have brought precision to manufacturing, finance, and IT. Now consider the performance of sales. Every year, in fact multiple times in a given year, companies introduce new products, attempt to access new markets, and roll out new value propositions all in an attempt to innovate and stay relevant. *We call this competing at the speed of change and now more than ever it is the speed at which we innovate and execute that determines our success.* Many of these newly designed initiatives are the responsibility of the sales teams to execute. How well did sales teams do? According to CSO Insights, year-after-year, only ~ 5% of companies exceed expectations in rolling out new initiatives; whereas, the remaining firms needed improvement. Why is the performance of the remaining 95% not **TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE**? And how exactly did the 5% of companies exceed expectations? Answer: They brought "precision" into how they connect strategy to sales tactics.



The Problem

To remain competitive, organizations must introduce new strategic initiatives (new products and markets, M&As, etc.) and these initiatives must quickly be implemented by sales at the deal level to decrease time to revenue. If poorly implemented — meaning these new initiatives aren't leveraged quickly enough by sales teams—then organizations will lose out on the competitive advantage they sought and also lose the investment made to roll out these strategies.

Salespeople are trained “how to sell” using any one of the generic methodology trainings commercially available. What methodology training does not teach sellers is “how to sell your new strategic initiatives.” In the software industry for example, in order to beat the competition, companies need to continually rollout new or improved products / features. A typical software company rolls out new major features each quarter. Generic sales methodology training does not give sellers skills or confidence to implement new innovations at the deal level in real time.

When new strategic initiatives are rolled out, everything changes, everything is new. How can sales possibly figure out what do to and how to do it with the necessary speed, confidence and competencies? Here's the problem:

1. New strategic initiatives, like M&A's, new products, are not being implemented by sellers at the deal level.
2. Marketing/product marketing's content and sales enablement's generic training is not cutting it.
3. Sales needs the confidence and competencies to have conversations reflecting the new strategic initiative. Marketing and enablement don't provide them what they need to be successful, so sales keep selling how and what they have always sold.

Examples of the Problem

One of Microsoft's largest resellers wanted to transition from simply delivering outsourced procurement services to adding additional value to its customers by providing consulting and implementation services.

A technology securities business had a strategic initiative to move beyond selling firewall protection to delivering a full-suite protection platform such as email protection, app and cloud security, data protection, and more. Seems simple, yes?

Results from Both Companies

1. Both companies' executive teams identified creating new products and services as their strategic initiative for improved growth, revenues, and margins.
2. Once identified, the requisite products, capabilities and services were designed, developed, and deployed.
3. Marketing and product management produced and delivered materials and playbooks for sellers to sell the new features and functions.
4. Sales operations designed new compensation plans.
5. At both companies' annual sales kick-off meeting, management announced the new product offerings with fan-fare. Methodology training was delivered en masse over the two-day kick-off and then...

Everyone went back to their offices where sellers resorted to selling what they were comfortable with; the old products, services, and solutions.

Why in the world did sales resort to their old way of selling when

- 1) the new initiatives were executive sponsored and
- 2) marketing and product marketing spent tons of money and time to create slick-looking brochures, presentations, data sheets, playbooks, and price sheets
- 3) at kick-off sales went through rigorous methodology training, and
- 4) compensation plans were rewarding?

What went wrong? Answer: *underestimating the confidence sales needs to roll out new products/initiatives*. Never did leadership consider using a selling approach that guides each seller through new conversations for both the sales process and the buyer's journey. They did what they've always done which is to have marketing and product marketing deliver broad-brushed content and to have enablement provide generic methodology training. Not helpful.

Sales teams' competencies and confidence are gained when conversations are mapped to each step in the buy and sell process. With this approach, *salespeople are able to practice multiple customer-facing conversations in line with the buyer's journey and sales process* instead of practicing on actual customers where the risk of error can result in losing a deal or losing face.

The result? The investments made in researching, designing, developing, and deploying new products and services—down the drain. Expected growth, revenues, and margins? They're with the investments—down the drain.



The Solution – Guided Selling

Guided Selling is defined as:

- *Management guiding sales conversations at every step of the sales process and*
- *Sales guiding customers at every step of the buyer journey*

Guided Selling is a solution that supports sales management's ability to enable and guide their selling team's decision making at the every step of the sales process—from qualify, to gaining access to the right stakeholders, to asking salient questions, to mapping value, to negotiations and close. At each step of the sales process, content*, tools, and skills development are aligned to management's strategic initiatives and are delivered to the seller. The same content, tools, and skills development helps the salesperson effectively guide the buyer through their buying journey—ultimately closing more deals than before.

* For content to be really effective and promote change within the sales organization, it needs to be granular, purpose-built, specific to each stage in the sales/buy process. It needs to give sellers the confidence and competencies to reach out to new stakeholders that they've never engaged, and it needs to provide guidance on what to say to specific stakeholders that adds value to them in their buying journey.

Guided selling is a system, not an event. Given the speed at which change occurs, companies need a system in place to accept ongoing changes and convert them to words that track with the sales process and buyer journey in real time. Each time your value proposition or go to market strategy shifts, or competitors introduce something new or customer needs shift, words that reflect these changes need to flow consistently out of salespeople's mouths as soon as possible.

Guided Selling in Action

A contract manufacturing firm that builds electronic parts was making the transition from being a simple contract manufacturer selling Electronic Manufacturing Services (EMS) to a more lucrative, less commoditized, integrated design and manufacturing service called Original Design Manufacturing (ODM). As a contract manufacturer selling EMS, the sales conversation was around “price per piece manufactured” and they were compared to other manufacturing vendors on that same simple criterion—price. Competing on price alone is a poor way to do business as manufacturing companies have to continually slash prices to be competitive. Because of this, the manufacturing firm wanted to get involved in the “stickier” and more strategic business of joint design and manufacturing (ODM) to differentiate from its global competitors. This required a significant change from how they sold in the past.

The huge challenge sales leadership faced was getting the entire sales team comfortable selling the new ODM solution where sellers need to have different conversations with new stakeholders at multiple, different steps in their sales process and they needed to align with the new digitally enabled b2b buyer's journey.

To make the transition, the organization (sales, marketing, product) built specific content, tools and the skills needed to sell ODM solutions to new stakeholders with new conversations. Once this was accomplished, managers then guided sellers one deal at a time, at each step in the sales process, and at each phase of the buyer's journey to provide them with practice that built competency and confidence.

Were they successful with this approach? Yes! Guided Selling advanced sellers through their sales process and engaged with new stakeholders at each step of their journey.

- It delivered specific insights on why buyers should purchase ODM given recent shifts in their industry and how it affects the buyer's company.
- It provided guidance on how to uncover new buyers and delivered messaging to get stakeholders to actually want to talk with them.
- It showed sellers how to lead buyers to uncover their own needs, their own pain points, and how to map their pains to the ODM solution.
- It modeled how to negotiate and close the ODM business with new commercial terms.

The contract manufacturing firm's results :

- Went from selling 0% of deals with the ODM solutions to 70% ODM and 30% EMS solutions
- Salespeople were able to continue selling EMS coupled with ODM solutions to meet the needs of each customer
- Time to revenue was weeks not months
- Their investment more than paid for itself by achieving the targeted growth, revenues, and margins

The Old Way of Selling vs. Selling with Guided Selling

The table below is an outline of moving from The Old Way of Selling that delivers broad-brushed content and generic methodology training to The New Way of Selling with Guided Selling where *sellers have purposeful, holistic and integrated conversations with stakeholders to execute their company's strategy initiatives at each step of the sales process and buyer's journey one deal at a time.*

	Generic Sales Methodology	Guided Selling
Identifying Opportunities	Generally, how to qualify opportunities	How to profile opportunities using a custom guide that shows the best characteristics of a customer that is most likely to buy ODM vs EMS.
Accessing Stakeholders	Generally, how to gain access to executives and other stakeholders	How to use custom executive insights to gain access to new stakeholders that are interested in ODM to solve specific pain points.
Questioning	How to ask generic, open-ended discovery questions	How to ask specific, custom guided questions to each new buying influences to uncover precisely how the ODM solution will solve their specific pain points.
Sell Value	How to generally sell value	Leveraging purpose-built, custom value maps that align the new ODM solution capabilities to the specific business impacts and desired results for each individual stakeholder.
The Customer's Decision	Understanding the buyer's existing decision making process	Leveraging custom decision support tools to guide the buyer's decisions on purchasing ODM vs. EMS.
Negotiations & Close	How to generally price and negotiate a deal,	How to price, package, negotiate, and close ODM business. Selling ODM solutions requires new commercial terms, new risk profiles in the Ts & Cs, etc. At this stage in the sales process and the buyer's journey, sales is fully competent and has the content, tools, and skills to negotiate and close ODM business.

The days of sustainable competitive advantage are over. We must now learn to compete on a series of short-term transient advantages. We need new systems in place to leverage transient advantages and supercharge time to revenue.



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