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**100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment**  
**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**

**4C The Future**

**By Beverley Hamilton**

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4C THE FUTURE

Foresee the future, that's what your customers expect, that's what you need to deliver.

In an ever increasing global marketplace, the degree to which companies can deliver ongoing value to their customers' evolving needs, determines their continued success. Value is a personal thing and successful companies discover what value means to their customers quickly, effectively and continuously. The challenge is great and meeting that challenge requires companies to recruit, train, develop and reward their people to deliver current and future value. Skills, knowledge, behaviours and thinking need to be uncovered and honed to enable people to deliver their best for the company and their customers.

If that is true, what implication does that have for leadership and senior management teams? The strategies that enable a company to gain and maintain customers are only as effective as the people that implement them; so recruiting, training, developing and rewarding those people effectively, is crucial. A phrase commonly used is the war on talent; but should it be a battle? What if a company's talent strategy was such that the right people were attracted to rather than fought for?

At the frontline of any company is its salesforce. The salesforce of the future will need to reconsider the way it "sells". "Tomorrow's customers won't just be looking for products they'll be looking for solutions and services. In order to deliver them, companies will have to know everything about their customer's organisation and how their products and services touch them... not only will companies have to figure out their customer's current needs but they will have to work hard to anticipate their future needs as well....it will mean changing people's mindsets from product centric to customer - service-centric" (1)

Building relationships to sell products is no longer enough. The salesperson of the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs to be a solutions provider and business partner for their customer. The increasing availability and usability of technology by companies means that there is greater transparency of price and product, so companies looking to develop and maintain long term customer loyalty need to transform their salesforces into

customer advocates.

Traditional selling methods and their associated skills, will be less relevant, and more emphasis on building trust and rapport, creative thinking, needs analysis and partnership management will deliver the value customers expect. In a global context, these skills are even more critical as there are added dimensions of managing global strategies in local markets, understanding cultural differences and dealing with location, time and technological variations. One person may live in UK, have their HQ in Germany and their client base in EMEA, another may live in USA have their HQ in France and their client base in Asia. Effectively managing people and strategies in this context increases the need for having the right people in the right jobs to best serve those differently located customer bases.

"Companies will have to burst out of their traditional habits to become true learning organisations." (1)

To prepare customer advocates of the future and evolve current salespeople into customer advocates, there are 4 key areas that companies should focus on

**CAPABILITY, COMPATIBILITY, CONNECTIVITY AND CREATIVITY.**

### **CAPABILITY**

"Skills, knowledge and talents are distinct elements of a person's performance. The distinction being, that skills and knowledge can be taught whereas talents cannot... Talents are recurring patterns of thought, feeling or behaviour that can be productively applied." (2) They are a person's mental filters. This has implications when recruiting and developing salespeople. In order to identify the skills and knowledge a customer advocate needs may mean approaching recruitment and training in a different way. If you can't train talents e.g. being proactive, you need to select for it. Assuming you have selected salespeople with talent and potential how do you determine the training, and development that will optimise their talents and uncover their potential.

Firstly identify the business outcomes you need your salespeople to achieve. Without business orientated outcomes training and development becomes a "so what?" activity adding no value to the individual, the company or the customer. Secondly, create individual learning paths to optimise current skill and knowledge strengths, minimise weaknesses, develop potential and utilise talent. This may mean no more "sheep dip" training programmes. This may mean no more performance reviews constantly telling someone they need to be more proactive.

The insight of great managers is that "People don't change that much. Don't waste time trying to put in what was left out. Try to draw out what was left in. That is hard enough" (2)

### **COMPATIBILITY**

Sales managers or directors need their teams to deliver for their company and their customers. They need their teams to collaborate effectively. Often this is interpreted, as we need people who are XYZ and who can do ABC i.e. a team of like minded individuals equally capable and equipped. Great managers say, "excellent teams are built around individual excellence. The manager's role is to make sure that each individual is positioned in the right role...to balance the strengths and weaknesses of each individual so that they complement each other" (2)

Having a team with diverse skills and talents adds strength, as there are opportunities for flexibility and adaptability. As markets change, a company's speed of reaction becomes paramount to maintaining competitive advantage. This may mean creating ad hoc teams or to use a military term "rapid reaction forces" These teams may consist of people who don't know each other, aren't located together and have no experience of the task/market or product they are being asked to deliver. However, through their diverse capabilities, talents, nationality and cultural awareness, as a compatible team, they can collaboratively determine their goal, plan and implement a strategy to deliver successfully much quicker and effectively than could a like minded group, who all think and act the same. Imagine a soccer team with 11 goalkeepers!

### CONNECTIVITY

"...the reason for virtual team failure is directly related to the difficulties of building trusting, positive relationships across the three boundaries of geographical distance, time zones and cultural differences." (3)

Where a company is a global player, the nature of its sales teams is different. A salesperson may have to manage a multi-site and/or multi-country customer and become a global account manager. They need to manage a global strategy in local markets and deal with the differences of time, location and culture. They need to think and communicate differently to ensure their customer, their team, their manager and their HQ and support areas are kept informed and aware of what they are doing for and with their customers. Providing and using appropriate resources to manage this connectivity issue will often be a key factor in effectiveness. To truly share information and learn from it to benefit the customer e.g. develop new products, takes well developed communication structure and processes.

"If one part of the company learns something important about a process or market or customer, it has to be communicate to all...Sharing knowledge avoids re-inventing the wheel and with all players up to speed, less explanation is required to make changes and become more nimble in the market. That is the core of a learning organisation" (1)

As such sales managers will take the role of conductor and orchestrator ensuring that all the players keep in time, play the same tune and complete on cue together to give an unforgettable performance for their audience.

### CREATIVITY

Inside the successful organisations of the future, product developers must translate the customer's changing needs onto new products and services. Tomorrow's corporate leaders will have to discover new ways to make sure that everyone in the organisation... keep their eyes on one thing; the customer" (1) If they don't their competitors will.

If a more intimate relationship between company/salesperson and the customer is needed, the traditional selling methods of "selling" features and benefits won't work. A more consultative/partnership approach needs to be adopted. This will involve salespeople being industry, market and customer specialists. Only then can innovative or creative solutions be discovered.

Maintaining the edge is crucial to succeed. Taking this one step further, means that companies need to create processes for dealing with change and having the will, resources and structure to exploit it ahead of their rivals.

Delivering global value to customers has a variety of implications for salesforces. To keep ahead of the competition requires capable people, compatible teams, connectivity networks and creative solutions. The task for company leaders is to provide the structure and resources for managers to deliver these for their people.

1 - The Great Business Challenges of the New Millennium - HR Chally 2002

2 - First Break All The Rules - Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman

3 - Grovewell – [www.grovewell-global.com](http://www.grovewell-global.com)

Beverley Hamilton, a professional coach and facilitator and owner of One Step Further, works with senior sales executives and international and global teams to improve personal and team effectiveness and deliver increased business results and customer loyalty. She has worked with clients in the public and private sectors both in the UK and overseas including British Airways, Lloyds TSB, oneworld

alliance and Surrey and Carmarthenshire County Councils

### **Focus on your future vision!**

**By James Winston**

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Unfortunately, most people will never develop a strong future vision for their lives. They will never admit to themselves, or anyone else, what their dreams really are, and they won't put a deadline on those dreams and transform them into goals. Thus, most people will never even begin to harness their true potential. What they don't realize is if they are not focused on their futures – if they are not consciously creating their lives – then they are living accidentally, not intentionally. They are merely reacting to life. When you have faith in your future vision, it creates resilience: when things do not go your way, you will be able to pick yourself up because your future vision will be stronger than your setbacks. Doing the particular things you need to do to move toward that future vision will become automatic, a habit. It is close to the certainty of religious faith – the comforting, assuring feeling that whatever happens will happen, but in the end, you will succeed. It helps me to surround myself with photos and reminders which keep my future vision and goals on my mind. This is another simple yet powerful strategy. Remember that everything we experience in the 'real world' is merely an external manifestation of what has already happened in your mind. That is where the relatively well known maxim, "If your mind can conceive it, you can achieve it" comes from. And it is true. In your mind, you see, anything is possible. So nourish your mind with positive uplifting images... it's worked wonders for me!

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