



Bridging The Value Gap

After decades of conducting lost sale 'post mortems' for clients, one fact stands out - prospects are overloaded with information. This fact is critical to understanding why prospects **do not** invest the time required to fully comprehend the "brilliance" of your product or service. Even if they try, they frequently map your promoted feature/benefit data points into their world incorrectly. The reality is prospects make better decisions when you translate your unique product or service capabilities into their world for them. That is where they live, work and, most importantly, make buying decisions.

To help prospects understand the value of your offering, there are two universal communication objectives for every sales call:

1. Bridge the communication gap between you and the prospect's world.
2. Communicate in a way that will help shorten the overall sales cycle.

The first objective starts by scrapping the stereotypical features and benefits data dump. Spending the entire sales call blathering on about features and benefits sends the prospect into screen saver mode and usually ends up with the dreaded dead-end stall, "I need to think it over." The best option can get lost in this process and the low-price alternative prevails more by default than by choice.

The communication gap solution is to introduce your products and services based on their *Differentiating Value*. Differentiating Value (DV) is what separates you from the competition. It goes beyond core competencies and all the generic quality, service and support taglines promoted by many businesses today. DV is what you deliver that is unique and /or better than the competition (aka – your unfair competitive advantages). More importantly, it is what prospects give up (i.e. lose) when they decide *not* to do business with your company. When prospects figure out life in their world without your DV, their decision process becomes focused more on

your solution and not solely on your price. This discovery can also move your product or service from the “nice to have” luxury to a “need to have” priority.

The Differentiating Value concept is the cornerstone of qualifying and has earned a place on our Top 10 Rules for CRO success.

*If you are not clear about what makes you worth more, you **will always** compete on price.*

The process for determining your Differentiating Value is based on viewing your offering from the prospect’s world and answering the following questions:

1. What value do you bring to your customers? Define what really matters to the customer. If the competition offers the same item, whatever that feature/service/product is, then that item is *not* your competitive advantage.
2. How does the absence of your value show up in the prospect’s world?
3. Where does the absence show up?
4. Who does the absence impact first/most?
5. When does the absence show up?
6. How does the prospect perceive or react to that impact?

The breadth and depth of your Differentiating Value platform determines the amount of traction your product or service has in target market segments. It also determines the level of premium pricing you can achieve.

Once your Differentiating Value is mapped into the prospect’s world, the most effective way to shorten the sales cycle is to base your qualifying process on your DV. Usually the consequences of life without your product or service aren’t horrible, they are just unknown. Therefore, when you translate the consequences of not being your customer into your prospect’s

world, they can start envisioning their own perceptions of new possibilities. The more their perceptions become compelling, the more traction your Differentiating Value has in their decision process.

To be clear, simply defining your Differentiating Value does not mean prospects will jump on board as soon as you introduce life without your DV. Prospects will work hard to convince you that you have no Differentiating Value - especially if you are dealing with the technical buyer (aka – the purchasing department) who is totally isolated from the decision consequences. The key to effectively leveraging your Differentiating Value is to connect with the person impacted most by *not* having your products or services. This person has a vested interest in understanding life without your Differentiating Value and in many cases can direct the technical buyer regarding the final selection decision.

Summary

The first Differentiating Value-based sales objective is to establish your unique product or service value platform with the prospect. The prospect must understand and see the new options, possibilities, and consequences your Differentiating Value addresses. As stated previously, if the consequences of not doing business with you truly don't affect your prospects, then they are not prospects. However, if they align with wanting/needing your Differentiating Value, you have a first-level prospect and the sales cycle has now officially started.

About the Author

Carl Moe is the author of “*Sales Revenue System 2.0/Your Chief Revenue Officer B2B Success Model*”, a popular book that details the revenue system processes he implemented in his corporate executive roles. He is also founder of CRO Success LLC – a Minneapolis-based corporate resource specializing in restructuring business-to-business **revenue systems** for sustainable growth and optimized performance. CRO Success is both the name of the company and its mission statement.

Moe has decades of executive experience (President, COO, EVP and CRO roles) in technology-based global organizations and has conducted business in 14 countries outside North America. He holds a BSE and MBA from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Carl can be reached at 952.232.6720 or cmoe@crosuccess.com.