



A GREENER CONSULTING WHITE PAPER

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH,
THE TOUGH KEEP SELLING.
HERE'S HOW...



EVERY CLOUD ...

For the last 15 years, in fair economic conditions, enterprises have generally been able to move forward, achieving adequate revenues, and using new technologies and processes to cut costs. It couldn't go on indefinitely, of course. Toning up to get rid of fat is one thing, but cutting into muscle is quite another. The time was inevitably approaching when an equally strong effort would be required to improve revenue generation.

Then it happened. In the summer of 2007 the term sub-prime entered the world's vocabulary, prefiguring the present economic downturn. The now-prevailing conditions, including high oil prices, mean that there can be no more prevarication. In the harsher climate of the next two or three years, survival will go to those who are able to generate revenue. That means selling successfully.

How does that reality feel for you and your organization?

Try this game. Put ten £10 (or €10 or \$10, or whatever) notes on the desk in front of you – that's a total of 100 units of currency. Now answer the 10 questions in the list below. Every time you have to answer "No" to one of the questions, put one of the banknotes in an envelope.

	Yes	No
1 Are you certain that the competency and quality of your sales and client-facing people is all that it should be?		
2 Are you confident that the processes within your Sales and Marketing functions fully support the making of sales?		
3 Is your sales opportunity conversion rate acceptable or good: say, better than one in three?		
4 Are you able to close sales as quickly as was possible a year ago?		
5 Is your cost of sales acceptable to your boss?		
6 Are you confident that your sales recognition and reward systems are organised to best motivate and recognise sales efforts?		
7 Do you fully understand the Value Proposition your organisation is able to deliver?		
8 Do your sales tools and materials acknowledge and reflect the needs of your prospects, rather than cataloguing the features of your service?		
9 Does your organisation have a professional sales effort, rather than a few rainmakers?		
10 Are Sales, Marketing and other enabling functions in your organisation working fully in sync?		

Think of the units of currency left in front of you at the end as your company's Sales function percentage score. If it is less than 80%, things need to improve if you are to maintain competitiveness and profitability.

What about the banknotes now in the envelope? Well, you might just as well write your main competitor's address on the front and mail it to them. Oh, and by the way, the amount you've just given them is not some part of one hundred. In the real world it could be part of a hundred thousand, a million, or maybe more.



If the environment is so hard, why head this section “Every cloud ...”?

Because, in these tougher times, there is the potential for a greater payback from effort put into Sales and selling than when things are easier. Get it right, now, and your organization can take the high ground in opportunity-rich but hotly contested marketplaces.

This paper looks briefly at some of the ways to do just that. First, however, a short explanation of how the sales environment has changed recently, and why selling – for most organizations, at least – needs radically to change in response.

THE WORLD CHANGED ...

We all recognize the fact that, over the past few years, new technologies have enabled – and are still enabling – fundamental changes in the ways we live and work, but most of us are too busy being busy to take time out to think through the implications in detail.

What many of us **do** experience are new sales challenges that seem to come out of thin air:

- For instance, generally, it's getting harder to close sales: buyers seem to be more demanding than in the past, and are sometimes downright intolerant. All they seem to be interested in is cheapness. It all has the effect of extending sales cycles, diluting sales conversion, and forcing up the cost of selling.
- Then there are problems between Sales and Marketing. All too often, Sales complains that Marketing isn't producing materials that 'work' with buyers, so they have a go at creating their own collateral. This sidetracks the sales people away from prospect contact, and wastes huge amounts of time and money.
- No-one is happy. Buyers complain that selling organisations don't understand their needs. Marketing complains that sales people undermine their strategies and brands. And Sales feels misunderstood, put upon and demoralised. No wonder the churn in sales forces is so high.

The fact is, the world in which business-to-business sales now take place is very different from the equivalent of ten years ago ... and it maybe takes a downturn – or will it be a full-blown recession? – to focus the mind on the Sales issues that are raised.

... AND SO DID SALES AND SELLING

Because new technologies enabled globalization, and globalization empowered new competition (tipping the balance so that there is now a surplus of supply over demand), and new competition gave customers vastly more choice and tended to force down prices, enterprises have experienced an inexorable pressure towards commoditization.

But if you are a service or solutions provider, you certainly don't want to be commoditized. Quite the contrary. You want to *give value and be properly valued in return*.

How can you achieve this desirable outcome?



First, recognize the fact that, if you are a services or solutions provider in a business-to-business space, you need to embrace Consultative Selling, as compared with Transactional Selling. Here are the key differences:

	Buyer behaviour	Buyer motivation
Transactional	"I understand your product. What's your best price?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands the product• Perceives it as substitutable• Cost focus• Resents time 'wasted' with salespeople
Consultative	"I need help to identify the best solution to my challenge: help me analyze and solve the issue."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on how the product is used• Interested in solutions and applications• Values advice and help• Needs the sales person

Based on Rackham and De Vincentis

Consultative Selling is all about **Value Creation**, rather than value communication, which actually translates into big differences in the way that successful sales are conducted. Here is brief glimpse at those differences ...

WHAT?

Successful organizations know what they are selling. That may sound blindingly obvious, but it's surprising how many times organizations are unaware – or, at best, confused – about themselves and their offers.

Because the world has changed around them, many organizations find themselves clinging to ideas and propositions that are fuzzy and / or past their sell-by date:

- Take, for example, a building society, that has, for maybe 100 years, sold mortgages. Recently, in response to increased competition, it rationally broke with tradition and used securitization as the basis of raising finance ... only to find that has gone sour. Now the building society finds itself struggling to counter threats from big banks that have the savings and deposits resources to ride out the storm. What is it to do?
- What about the telecommunications company that is no longer sure where its best value lies, or how best to deal with up-coming developments like WiMax or general convergence? Should it be a distributor, or a content provider, a hybrid, or some other kind of sector player?
- Then there's the accountancy practice that finds itself forced to be a jobbing contractor providing commoditized services while some of its competitors are successfully positioning themselves as high value consultancies. How can it fight back?
- Or the direct marketing agency that was so highly regarded in the 1980s and 1990s, but that now finds itself isolated and dwindling in the age of integrated marketing and broad spectrum agencies. Where is the value it offers?

So, first, services and solutions providers of all kinds need to get clarity around their **Value Propositions**.



HOW?

Then there's the 'How' of Consultative Selling. Success in consultative selling comes from a different process than has traditionally been used.

Gone is much of the world of AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) with its paraphernalia of objection-countering and closing techniques. Try using these techniques in a Consultative sale and your sales person is quite likely to be unceremoniously booted out.

Consultative selling requires a new approach, based on the **value creation** that can only come from understanding the prospect's issues and co-creating a solution together.

Oh, by the way, this largely explains why Sales and Marketing so often find themselves at loggerheads.

WHO?

Self-evidently, because the 'What?' and the 'How?' of selling have changed, so has the 'Who?'. People trained in, and accomplished at, the old rules of Transactional Selling find it hard to make the change to Consultative Selling. Not only are the techniques fundamentally different, they call for different personality types.

This is not to say that people cannot make the switch (although some categorically cannot), but there is a need to carefully assess individuals in order to determine suitability and training/coaching requirements.

You'll appreciate, too, that in the context of Consultative Selling situations, the sales role does not just apply to those traditionally labeled 'Sales': equally involved are those in account management and other customer-facing areas.

Finding out if you have the right people in the right jobs is one of the most dramatic ways to identify problem areas and start rectifying sales performance.

WHAT NEXT?

If any of the points in this document give you pause for thought, it will likely repay you to find some time to think at greater length about the issues involved, and actions that need to be taken.

At Greener Consulting, this entire Consultative Selling area is our remit, and we have some of the most advanced tools and methodologies in the world for helping our clients define their Value Propositions, and deal with the 'What?', 'How?' and 'Who?' of successful selling.

That said, we don't know the ins and outs of your organization. And until we do, we are not in a position to say whether or not we can really help you and your business. But we'd



welcome the opportunity to find out. So, if you request an initial meeting to discuss these issues in more detail, it will be our pleasure to come and talk with you, without obligation.

Then, if we mutually decide that we could **create value** for you, we'll present our Value Proposition for helping you find your Value Proposition. After all, it's a feature of Consultative Selling that a Value Proposition clearly and truthfully states the benefits and costs of any proposal.

Sales success in the tough economic conditions that now prevail will be based on **value creation** for clients. We're happy to be held to that standard.

SOME OF THE ORGANISATIONS THAT WE HAVE WORKED WITH:

Microsoft	Airbus
EDS	Nestle
InTechnology	BAE Land Systems
The Royal Bank of Scotland Group	Norwich Union
BDO Stoy Hayward	avantage capita
Halian	FirstCo

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