

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SELLING IN A ROBUST ECONOMY AND SELLING IN A FAILING ECONOMY?

*By Sharon Drew Morgan*

What is the difference between selling in a robust economy and selling in a failing economy? A lot but it's not what you think.

- \* Your product is the same
- \* Your pitch/presentation is the same
- \* The buyer's need is the same

What's different is the decision making process the buyers needs to go through. Do they have a problem that needs to be resolved now, and the economy has mitigated the types of solutions they seek? Do they have a problem that can be fixed with a partial, cheaper solution, or with internal resources that can be modified to create a solution? Do they wait until.....until they have some belief that their business won't be at risk?

### NEW BUYING CRITERIA

Your wonderful product data or needs analysis are moot here: they need you, they need your product, and they need a solution. But they now need additional levels of buy-in before they can spend money: it's no longer 'who' or 'what' or 'how much', it's 'when' or 'if'. 'Solution' is not their criteria, 'Preserving Assets' is.

There is a way you can help buyers decide to choose you now. But it will mean a shift in focus - from the problem solving/solution providing outcome that you are currently familiar with, to a decision-support focus that will enable a possible purchasing decision:

1. Until your buyer figures out what immediate needs must be addressed - whatever that means to them - they will take no action. In other words, getting their 'needs met' might include resolving the problem with a creative or temporary solution rather than a product purchase.

If you can help buyers actually figure out their immediate needs (i.e. staffing might be a priority, or outsourcing, or finding an alternate route to a problem resolution), and the appropriate choices using the criteria they must work from- separate from focusing on a product sale or the criteria you would prefer they work from - you will be in line as the first vendor they will connect with once they decide to purchase a product.

2. Until the buyer's entire decision team agrees to take action, no action will be taken. That means that your regular contact - who may have been the driver in the decision to purchase your product - now has a larger buying decision team: any decisions now must include corporate economic factors: the risk is too high for anyone to make decisions without agreement from the team.

If you help your buyer bring together their entire decision team so they can reach agreement - even if their ultimate solution cannot be to purchase your product at this time - there is a greater likelihood of a quick decision to act, although the action might not be the one you would prefer. But it puts you in high regard with the buying decision team.

3. Until the entire decision team recognizes that it would make economic sense to resolve the problem using an external solution such as your product, no action will be taken. After all, they have been resolving the problem in a

less effective way in their current daily activities, and there is a case to be made for continuing the status quo until the economy gets stable.

If you help the decision team evaluate the difference between the cost and results of continuing doing what they are doing vs. the COST (human, time, political, organizational) of reorganizing around a new solution that ensures the people involved with the status quo are stable, you will become part of the buyer's decision team. And, if the client sees that all COSTS can be mitigated, or seen in a way that overrides their economic concerns and leaves them better off, they will be able to choose to make a purchase now. But it would be vital for them to understand the full picture of 'givens' and include the human systems as well as the financial ones.

### A NEW APPROACH

If you can augment your job to include being a decision consultant, you can make good use of this time of economic uncertainty.

Buying FacilitationR is a model that works with the buyer's buying decisions and is a perfect add-on to the sales process at this time. In a world where buyers are inundated by choices, Buying FacilitationR gives the seller a new set of tools - different from selling methods - that provide a decision support capability for buyers to help them understand, manage, and regulate their new economic environment.

Use this time to differentiate yourself as a true consultant. You'll not only get more business (and faster as you help prospects shorten their decision/sales cycle) than you otherwise would in a gloomy economy, but you'll also gain access to the buying decision team, line up future business that will close once the economy turns around, and be seen as an important company resource.

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