B2B Buyers Want Leadership from Sellers

By Deb Calvert and Barry Z. Posner

Sales effectiveness depends mightily on the buyer experience, and yet many sellers struggle with how to meaningfully connect with buyers. This research investigates how leadership behaviors on the part of sellers may result in greater effectiveness with buyers. Research with 530 B2B buyers documents the leadership practices that sellers are currently using, and reveals the leadership practices that buyers indicate would make them more likely to meet with sellers, as well as purchase from them. The findings suggest that a critical shift in the selling mindset and in the sales role itself is needed for organizations and their sales teams that want to boost overall sales effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

There is little dispute that the skills and behaviors required of sellers are vitally important to enhancing sales productivity and improving the organization's overall selling effort (Arthur, Winston, Edens, and Bell, 2003; Deeter-Schmelz, Kennedy, and Goebel, 2002; Johlke, 2006; Rentz, Shepherd, Tashchian, Dabholkar, and Ladd, 2002; Powers, DeCarlo, and Gupte 2010; Powers, Jennings, and DeCarlo, 2014). However, these days with buyers being more informed, and often self-sufficient in making purchase decisions, many sellers are ill-equipped and floundering to adapt to intensified competition, pricing pressures, globalization and disruptive innovation (Cron, Marshall, Singh, Spiro, and Sujan, 2005; Honeycutt, 2001; Rosenbaum, 2001; Norman, Adamson, and Gomez, 2017; Zallocco, Pullins, and Mallin, 2009). The Conference Executive Board (2012) reports that buyers are more than half-way through their own buying process before even engaging with a seller. Buyers are increasingly turning to self-service options for completing transactions and to social media for information gathering and peer reviews. The reasons range from seeking convenience and speed to dodging an unwanted sales pitch and its accompanying pressure.

Unfortunately for many sales organizations, their managers and trainers are entrenched in antiquated

Deb Calvert (B.A., University of Missouri), President, People First Productivity Solutions, deb.calvert@peoplefirstps.com

Barry Z. Posner (Ph.D., University of Massachusetts, Amherst), Michael J. Accolti, S.J. Chair and Professor of Leadership, Leavey School of Business, Santa Clara University, bposner@scu.edu

sales philosophies and practices that alienate buyers (Shepherd et al., 2011; Norman et al., 2017). In their effort to course correct, sales professionals are accessing a plethora of "new" and repackaged sales models. While the debate rages -- for example, between Challenger Selling, Relationship Selling, Consultative Selling, Solution Selling, Needs-Based Selling, Insight Selling, and Collaborative Selling -- there are no clear winners. Some suggest these various strategies are but nuanced variations of the same approach (Calvert, 2018).

Genetic and neurological evidence shows that salespeople generally fall somewhere between the "customer" and "selling" orientations traditionally discussed in the sales and marketing literature (Bagozzi, Verbeke, van den Berg, Rietdijk, Dietvorst, and Worm, 2012). A large body of sales research investigates how managers and organizations can positively enhance salespeople's behavior, while also meeting customers' needs and increasing the bottom line. Many constructs have been studied in examining salespeople's job performance, including their orientations around goals, selling and customers, ability to adapt, and selling-related knowledge (Goad and Jaramillio, 2014; Franke and Park, 2006; Verbeke, Dietz, and Verwaal, 2011).

Another trend in the selling literature has been to examine how salespeople influence buyers and the effectiveness of various sales tactics (e.g., Gassenheimer and Scandura, 1993; Joshi, 2010; McFarland, Challagalla, and Shervani, 2006; Spiro and Perreault, 1979; Tellefsen and Eyuboglu, 2002). The argument is that personal selling is dependent upon the successful application of influence (Evans, McFarland, Dietz, and Jaramillo, 2012), and in so doing provides the behavioral

glue bonding the salesperson-customer dyad (Brown, 1990). Plouffe, Bolander, and Cote (2014) show that influence tactics impact job performance, although they demonstrate that the tactics are not equally effective.

Consistent with this perspective about how sellers influence buyers the purpose of this study was to investigate whether the behaviors identified of "exemplary leaders" could be applied to being more "effective sellers" in the eyes of business-to-business (B2B) buyers. Leading and selling are close cousins. After all, leadership, which a range of people – like American statesmen Dwight Eisenhower and Henry Kissinger, Hall of Fame football coach Tom Landry, futurist Joel Barker, and business executives Bill Gates and Danae Ringelman – have described as getting people to do something that they would not ordinarily do on their own (Giang, 2014; Daskal, 2015) is akin to persuading people to make a purchase decision that they would not necessarily be likely to make left to themselves.

CAN LEADERSHIP BY SELLERS INFLUENCE B2B BUYERS?

This study sought to determine if leadership on the part of sellers would make a difference to B2B buyers in their purchasing decisions. In exploring this possibility three questions were investigated:

(1) How often did B2B buyers perceive that sellers typically engaged in leadership behaviors in the sales process?

(2) Would engaging in leadership behaviors influence the decision of B2B buyers to meet with a seller?

(3) Would engaging in leadership behaviors impact the decision of B2B buyers to purchase from a seller?

SAMPLE

Working with a private research company, verified B2B buyers were identified and surveyed online. There were a total of 530 respondents, representing a variety of industries, company sizes, job functions, and ages. Respondents indicated their years of experience as B2B buyers, numbers of sellers they engaged with on a regular basis, the percent of work time they spent

with sellers, their actual role in the decision-making process, and whether purchasing decisions were made by an individual or a group. The purpose of collecting this demographic and job-related information was to determine if such factors might differentially affect the impact of leadership behaviors on B2B buyers.

In the sample 21 percent of respondents indicated that operations/production best described their job function, followed by sales/marketing (16%), information technology (13%), finance (9%), and human resources (7.5%); 14.5 percent in a chief executive officer or president role, with the remaining scattered across a variety of functions. In response to "what best describes what your company provides," the most frequent category was business services (18%), followed by technology and manufacturing (both 16.5%), transportation (5.5%), communications (4%), and other (39.5%). The company sizes represented by respondents were relatively equally distributed with 29.5 percent indicating 50 or fewer employees, 20.5 percent with 51-200 employees, 16 percent with 201-500 employees, 19 percent with 501-5000 employees, and 15 percent with more than 5000 employees. The B2B buyers' modal age category was 31-35 years of age (30.6%), with 19 percent between 36-40 years, 12.7 percent between 41-45, 8.2 percent between 46-50, 10 percent aged 51 or older, and 19.4 percent under 30 years of age.

Just over one-third of the B2B buyers had been involved in making purchase decisions in business for 2-5 years (37.3%), about another third from 6-10 years (30.3%), 13.3 percent from 11-15 years, 7.6 percent for more than 16 years, and 11.5 percent for less than two years. The majority of respondents (55.8%) indicated that they had "veto power and the final say in purchasing decisions" and 40.6 percent said, "There are two or more of us who make all decisions together and have equal say in decisions," and 3.6 percent revealed that they were "consulted about purchases but did not have decision-making authority."

Respondents were asked, "How many people, in a typical month, make an attempt to meet with you and sell you something?" Twenty-nine percent indicated five or fewer, 33 percent indicated 6-10, 25 percent said 11-20, and for 13 percent it was 20 or more sellers. To the question "how much of your job is focused on

making purchases?" about one-in-six (17.3%) said it took nearly all of their time, attention, and effort, and about one-third (28.5%) indicated that this involved the majority (over 50%) of their job. Another 22 percent said it consumed about a third of their job, 15 percent indicated that this was about one-quarter of their job, and 18 percent indicated it took some to very little of their time, attention, and effort. The majority of respondents (58%) indicated that most of their purchases were "simple and recurring. We frequently see the same seller to place new orders on an ongoing basis." The remaining respondents were on either side of this statement; either saying that most purchases are "simple and non-recurring, requiring little time and only one or two meetings with a seller" (21%) or "they are complex sales, requiring an extended time frame and numerous meetings with the seller and others in the seller's organization" (21%).

MEASURES

Leadership behaviors were measured using the Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes and Posner, 2012). The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) is conceptually based on The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership framework (Kouzes and Posner, 2017), and consists of six behavioral statements for each leadership practice. The focus of this framework is on the actual behavior of people, not their intentions nor their attributes. The Five Practices framework is consistent with transformational leadership models (Bass, 2008; Yukl, 2012), and has been widely used by practitioners as well as scholars (Bass and Riggio, 2006). While certainly not exclusive, Kouzes and Posner (2017) contend that these behaviors are most frequently associated with what real people are actually doing when they are their best as leaders, and what it takes to make extraordinary things happen in organizations. This is a brief summary of each of the leadership practices:

Model the Way. Effective leaders demonstrate the behaviors they want from followers by engaging in them personally. Leaders act in accordance with their stated goals and values. They serve as role models.

Inspire a Shared Vision. Leaders articulate a clear vision, which is future-oriented, and emotionally engage followers in that vision's achievement. To the extent that leaders link their visionary goal to followers' motivations and interests, the goal becomes a shared one. This shared goal receives greater follower support and commitment.

Challenge the Process. Leading always involves disruptions, so leaders are more effective when they are able to embrace and promote change. A leader who does not fear the uncertainty of new ways and who supports a climate of experimentation and discovery contributes to learning and subsequent higher performance.

Enable Others to Act. Leaders foster collaboration, build trust, increase self-determination, and develop competence in the people they work with. They share power, providing discretion to others about how to do their work. They promote a climate of teamwork.

Encourage the Heart. Effective leaders are cognizant of the socioemotional needs of their followers, providing support and reinforcing progress and success. They link rewards to desired performance so that followers' needs and collective goals are aligned.

There are six behavioral statements used to measure each of the five leadership practices. While a ten-point Likert-scale is typically used in the LPI to describe the frequency to which people engage in each behavior, for purposes of convenience in this study the following five-point scale was used: 1) Never does what is described in the statement; (2) Seldom does what is described; (3) Occasionally does what is described; (4) Frequently does what is described; and, (5) Always does what is described in the statement. The LPI has demonstrated sound psychometric properties (Posner, 2016), and in this study internal reliability coefficients (Cronbach alpha) for the five leadership scales were all above .80.

B2B buyers were asked to initially indicate, "How frequently do the salespeople you interact with in business exhibit each behavior?" They responded next to the question, "Consider the ideal. How frequently would you like the sellers who call on you to exhibit each of the following behaviors?" Respondents were finally asked, "Consider the decisions you make to BUY FROM salespeople who call on you. What impact would it have if these sellers exhibited the following behaviors?"

For this latter question, the response anchors were (1) Highly negative impact, (2) Negative impact, (3) No positive or negative impact, (4) Positive impact, and (5) Highly positive impact. *T*-tests were used in the various analyses; for example, determining whether the average scores on the leadership practices currently being used by salespeople and the frequency that B2B buyers would ideally like to have salespeople use the leadership practices were systematically different.

RESULTS

According to B2B buyers, the leadership practices most frequently engaged in by sellers were Enable Others to Act and Model the Way, followed by Encourage the Heart, Challenge the Process, and Inspire a Shared Vision. T-tests were used to compare the average scores on all five leadership practices between how B2B buyers would *ideally* prefer sellers to behave and how they were seen as *currently* behaving. All of the paired differences were statistically different (p < .001), with buyers preferring that sellers ideally engage significantly more often than they are currently in each of the leadership practices, as shown in Table 1. Similar statistically significant differences were found between the leadership behaviors currently being used by sellers

and B2B buyers' *likelihood of making a purchase decision* (results not shown). B2B buyers indicated they would be more likely to make purchase decisions from sellers who engaged significantly more often in each of the leadership practices than they are currently.

These findings are fairly robust. Comparisons between current and ideal leadership behaviors did not systematically vary as a result of the buyer's age, the number of years buyers have been involved in purchase decisions, the buyer's job function, industry, or company size.

The results were somewhat more nuanced based on how involved the B2B buyer indicated being in the purchase decision process. For example, the greater number of sales people that buyers reported interacting with on a monthly basis the more frequently they reported those sellers currently engaging in the five leadership practices, even while buyers wished that sales people would ideally use these leadership behaviors more often; and doing so would have a statistically significant influence on their decision to both meet, as well as purchase from, sellers. The same result was found on the basis of the amount of time that B2B buyers reported being involved in the purchase decision process. B2B

Table 1

Comparison between Sellers' Leadership Practices Currently and Ideally As Perceived by B2B Buyers*

LEADERSHIP PRACTICE	CURRENTLY Mean	IDEALLY Mean
Model the Way	22.50	24.53
Inspire a Shared Vision	20.74	23.19
Challenge the Process	20.73	23.40
Enable Others to Act	22.37	24.10
Encourage the Heart	21.44	23.94

* *T*-tests between mean scores "Currently" and "Ideally" on all five leadership practices were statistically significant (*p* < .001).

buyers involved in "complex sales" encounters" were interested in sellers engaging more often in these leadership practices than those buyers involved in "simple and non-recurring sales situations."

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

What B2B buyers in this study are saying to sales people is that they would like them to engage more frequently in the leadership behaviors associated with The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership (Kouzes, Posner and Calvert, 2018). Doing so, they report, would increase the likelihood of their meeting with prospective sales people, as well as increasing their probability of purchasing from them. These sentiments are especially true for B2B buyers who are most involved in, and experienced with, the purchasing process (that is, those who meet with many sales people and spend considerable amounts of their time, attention, and effort on purchase decisions). The more purchase decisions that B2B buyers makes, the more importance they placed on sellers demonstrating leadership. This finding is particularly significant for B2B buyers involved in recurring and complex sales versus one-time transactions.

When it comes to the impact of increased frequency, there is an interesting lack of substantive lift between responses being "more likely to meet" and "more likely to buy." It appears that leadership works equally well in both opening and closing the sale. As compared to the current frequency of leadership demonstrated by sellers that B2B buyers do business with, sales people who can increase how frequently they use these leadership practices will benefit because buyers will be more favorably disposed to both meet and purchase from them.

The leadership practices that B2B buyers would like sellers to engage in more frequently were Enable Others to Act and Model the Way. These two leadership practices focus on collaboration, treating buyers with dignity and respect, being trustworthy and following through on promises (credibility). For example, Schultz and Doerr (2014) studied more than 700 business-to-business purchases and found that being able to collaborate with buyers was one of the most important characteristics of high-performing sellers. Salespeople

who can demonstrate their trustworthiness by having both the buyer's best interests at heart and meeting their commitments will be most successful (Hedges, 2017).

The leadership practices that ranked as least important to B2B buyers were the two most often featured in many sales training programs. Challenge the Process is similar to "Challenger Selling" while Inspire a Shared Vision is akin to "Insight Selling" and both have been highly popularized in recent pasts. This finding implies that sellers may be missing the mark by not focusing more on the leadership practices of Enable Others to Act and Model the Way. These latter leadership practices would be fresh, new, and clearly welcomed by buyers.

Sales managers can certainly take actions to help develop and reinforce these leadership practices in their sales people; of course, starting by incorporating them into their own leadership approach. Or, in other words, by modeling the way themselves for their sales team members. They can help sales people see the need to place more emphasis on meeting the needs of their B2B buyer rather than meeting their own sales objectives. Following guidelines from Richardson (2014), sales managers can help their sales people identify insights that can provide value to B2B buyers. For example, raising the heat on an issue by challenging the status quo, creating urgency to change the status quo, providing a perspective the buyer has not considered, opening up strategic business conversations, positioning sellers as thought partners, and creating a compelling reason to alter any "if it ain't broke, why fix it" mentalities.

Sales managers, in addition, can make efforts to strengthen the empathetic listening, storytelling, vulnerability, and mindfulness skills of sellers as they pertain to selling (Brown, 2015; Gearhart and Bodie, 2011; Smith, 2012). Engaging in genuine conversation helps buyers feel that it's sufficiently safe enough to be open and candid with the seller. Emotional connections are formed through storytelling and listening in ways that show how sellers "get" their buyers. Calvert (2013) found that the number one word buyers assigned most to sellers who asked thought-provoking questions was "trusted," with "caring" and "partner" close behind. As buyers described the differences between sellers who asked quality questions and those who did not, they talked about how questions drew them out, causing them

to think and share more information. Buyers viewed the sellers who asked quality questions as more "insightful" and "understanding," and expressed a strong desire to work with these sellers over the long-term.

Buyers choose to do business with sellers who create value and memorable experiences for them. This intangible and undefinable experience dramatically differentiates sellers. It also trumps price and protects clients from competitor poaching. To create value, sales managers have to help their sales people learn how to step away from the comfort and convenience of generic sales presentations and rote processes. Each engagement with a buyer requires innovation and experimentation. Agile sellers will remain open to learning and will look for new ideas and approaches to suit the needs of each individual buyer.

CONCLUSION

The most effective sales people, as the results of this study find, are those most frequently using the behaviors associated with exemplary leadership. They sell themselves and their ideas, aligning them with the needs, hopes, and dreams of their constituents (Model the Way). They get people to believe that something other than the status quo is necessary, and a noble and worthwhile effort (Inspire a Shared Vision). They partner with others in experimenting, thinking outside the box, and taking a step-by-step approach to learning (Challenge the Process). They persuade the buyers they work with that they themselves are leaders, developing not just their competence, but fostering their self-confidence (Enable Others to Act). They close the sale through recognition and celebration about what they have been able to accomplish together (Encourage the Heart). Indeed, sellers, just like leaders, understand the need to build durable relationships that stand the test of time and keep bringing people back for more. Relationships are sustained over time because both buyers and sellers feel that they are better off in, rather than out of, the relationship.

The findings from B2B buyers suggest that sellers do not need so much a new approach to sales, but a shift in their mindset to be and do all that their empowered buyers expect of them as leaders. Sellers can make greater use of the behaviors that have been associated with effective leadership: Building trust through collaborative relationships, influencing others through shared aspirations, creating value that is personalized, listening empathetically, fostering innovation, and connecting on a human level (Kouzes, Posner and Calvert, 2018).

Sellers must start from the same point-of-view as effective leaders -- considering what others want and need from them; not the other way around. Buyers don't purchase from sellers because the latter need to make a quota, nor do constituents follow leaders in order to make the latter successful. Fundamentally, what defines leaders is that they have followers, which means that people want to go in the same direction as the leader, and this is similarly applicable for the most effective sellers. People want to be in a relationship with a leader (seller, partner, or even spouse) because it makes them feel good about themselves; indeed, it makes them feel better about themselves and more effective than they would otherwise be by themselves. What B2B buyers want from those who sell to them is clear and consistent. They want more than standard sales behaviors; they want leadership from their sellers. Engaging in leadership is likely to increase the effectiveness of sellers with B2B buyers.

REFERENCES

Arthur Jr., Winfred, Winston Bennett Jr., Pamela S. Edens, and Suzanne T. Bell (2003), "Effectiveness of Training in Organizations: A Meta-Analysis of Design and Evaluation Features," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88 (2), 234–245.

Bagozzi, Richard P., Willem J.M.I. Verbeke, Wouter E. van den Berg, Wim J.R. Rietdijk, Roland C. Dietvorst and Loek Worm (2012), "Genetic and Neurological Foundations of Customer Orientation: Field and Experimental Evidence," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 40 (5), 639–658.

Bass, Bernard M. (2008), *The Bass Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Free Press.

Bass, Bernard M. and Ronald E. Riggio (2006), *Transformational Leadership* (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Brown, Steven P. (1990), "Use of Closed Influence Tactics by Salespeople: Incidence and Buyer Attributions," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 10 (4), 17–29.

Brown, Brené. (2015), *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*. New York, NY: Penguin.

Calvert, Deb with Renee Calvert (2013), *DISCOVER Questions® Get You Connected: for Professional Sellers*. Morgan Hill, CA: Winston Keen James Publishing.

Cron, William L., Greg W. Marshall, Jagdip Singh, Rosann L. Spiro, and Harish Sujan (2005), "Salesperson Selection, Training, and Development: Trends, Implications, and Research Opportunities," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 25 (2), 123–136.

Deeter-Schmelz, Dawn R., Karen Norman Kennedy, and Daniel J. Goebel (2002), "Understanding Sales Manager Effectiveness: Linking Attributes to Sales Force Values," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 31 (7), 617–626.

Daskal, Lolly. (2015), "The 100 Best Leadership Quotes of All Time," *Inc. Magazine*, April 3. Retrieved at https://www.inc.com/lolly-daskal/the-100-best-leadership-quotes-of-all-time.html

Evans, Kenneth R., Richard G. McFarland, Bart Dietz, and Fernando Jaramillo (2012), "Advancing Sales Performance Research: A Focus on Five Under Researched Topic Areas," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 32 (1), 89–106.

Franke, George R. and Jeong-Eun Park (2006), "Salesperson Adaptive Selling Behavior and Customer Orientation: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 43 (4), 693–702.

Gassenheimer, Julie B. and Terri A. Scandura (1993), "External and Internal Supplier Influences: Buyer Perceptions of Channel Outcomes," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 21 (2), 155–160.

Gearhart, Christopher C. and Graham D. Bodie (2011), "Active-Emphatic Listening As a General Social Skill: Evidence From Bivariate and Canonical Correlations," *Communication Reports*, 24 (2), 86-98.

Giang, Vivian. (2014), "10 Women in Leadership Share Their Secrets to Success," *Fast Company*, June 17. Retrieved at https://www.fastcompany.com/3031922/10-women-in-leadership-share-their-secrets-to-success

Goad, Emily A. and Fernando Jaramillo (2014), "The Good, The Bad and the Effective: A Meta-Analytic Examination of Selling Orientation and Customer Orientation on Sales Performance," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 34 (4), 285-301.

Hedges, Nick (2017), "Establishing Sales Credibility in the Post-Fact Era," *Inc. Magazine*, February. Retrieved at https://www.inc.com/nick-hedges/establishing-sales-credibility-in-the-post-fact-era.html

Honeycutt Jr., Ed (2002), "Sales Management in the New Millennium," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 31 (7), 555–558.

Johlke, Mark C. (2006), "Sales Presentation Skills and Salesperson Job Performance," *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 21 (5), 311–319.

Joshi, Ashwin W. (2010), "Salesperson Influence on Product Development: Insights from a Study of Small Manufacturing Organizations," *Journal of Marketing*, 74 (1), 94–107.

Kouzes, James M. and Barry Z. Posner (2012), *The Leadership Practices Inventory* (4th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.

Kouzes, James M. and Barry Z. Posner (2017), *The Leadership Challenge: How To Make Extraordinary Things Happen In Organizations* (6th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.

Kouzes, James M., Barry Z. Posner, and Deb Calvert (2018). *Stop Selling & Start Leading*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.

McFarland, Richard G., Goutam N. Challagalla, and Tasadduq A. Shervani (2006), "Influence Tactics for Effective Adaptive Selling," *Journal of Marketing*, 70 (4), 103–117.

Plouffe, Christopher R., Willy Bolander, and Joseph A. Cote (2014), "Which Influence Tactics Lead to Sales Performance? It is a Matter of Style," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 34 (2), 141-159.

Posner, Barry Z. (2016), "Investigating the Reliability and Validity of the Leadership Practices Inventory," *Administrative Sciences*, 6 (4), 17. doi:10.3390/admsci6040017

Powers, Thomas L., Thomas E. DeCarlo, and Gouri Gupte (2010), "An Update on the Status of Sales Management Training," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 30 (4), 319–326.

Powers, Thomas L., J'Aime C. Jennings, and Thomas E. DeCarlo (2014), "An Assessment of Needed Sales Management Skills," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 34 (3), 206-222.

Richardson, Linda (2014), *Changing the Sales Conversation: Connect, Collaborate, and Close*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Rosenbaum, Bernard L. (2001), "Seven Emerging Sales Competencies," *Business Horizons*, 44 (1), 33–36.

Schultz, Mike and John E. Doerr (2014), *Insight Selling: Surprising Research on What Sales Winners Do Differently*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.

Shepherd, C. David, Geoffrey L. Gordon, Rick E. Ridnour, Dan C.Weilbaker, and Brian Lambert (2011), "Sales Manager Training Practices in Small and Large Firms," *American Journal of Business*, 26 (2), 92–117.

Smith, Paul (2012), *Lead with a Story: A Guide to Crafting Business Narratives that Captivate, Convince, and Inspire*. New York, NY: Amacom.

Spiro, Rosann L. and William D. Perreault Jr. (1979), "Influence Use by Industrial Salesmen: Influence-Strategy Mixes and Situational Determinants," *Journal of Business*, 52 (3), 435–455.

Tellefsen, Thomas and Nermin Eyuboglu (2002), "The Impact of a Salesperson's In-House Conflicts and Influence Attempts on Buyer Commitment," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 22 (3), 157–172.

Verbeke, Williem, Bart Dietz, and Ernst Verwaal (2011), "Drivers of Sales Performance: A Contemporary Meta-Analysis. Have Salespeople Become Knowledge Brokers?" *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39 (3), 407–428.

Yukl, Gary A. (2012), *Leadership in Organizations* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Pearson.

Zallocco, Ronald, Ellen Bolman Pullins, and Michael L. Mallin (2009), "A Re-Examination of B2B Sales Performance," *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 24 (8), 598–610.