

# The Best Sales Books:

## Summarized

Including pieces from *Jill Konrath*,  
*Aaron Ross* and more.



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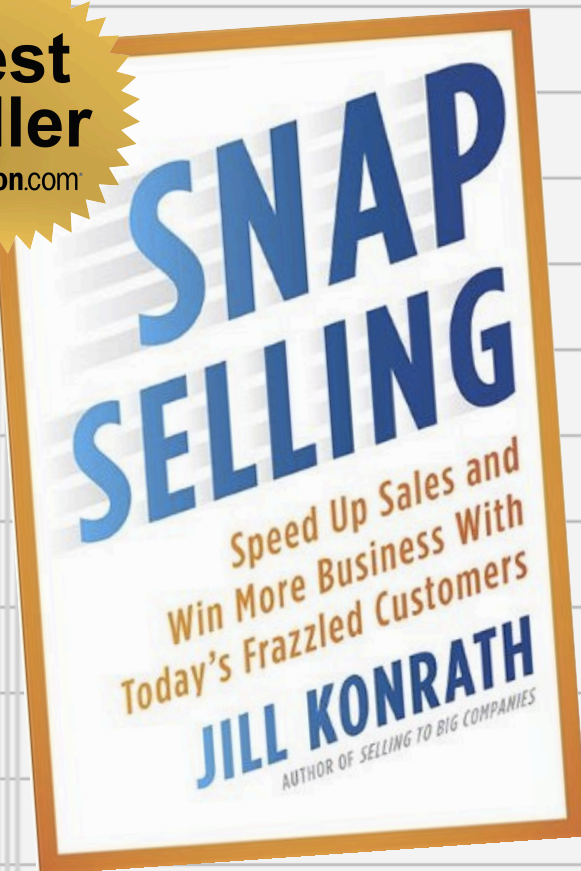
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# SNAP Selling

## Summarized

SOUND SMART. SAVE TIME. SELL MORE.

**Best  
Seller**  
amazon.com



A 15-page guide  
to the #1 selling,  
300-page sales  
book.

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# SNAP Selling by Jill Konrath

★★★★☆ on Goodreads

Published 2010

## Quick Synopsis:

Wherever you turn in the sales space, everyone has heard of Jill Konrath and her sales practices. Having a high-level understanding of her best-selling book will help you quickly show your understanding of the most important component of your job: Your customers.

Regardless of industry, today's buyers have access to endless information. They can learn anything and everything they want about your product or service, and as a result are quick to not trust salespeople. Jill writes SNAP Selling from the perspective of how these information overloaded prospects and customers are purchasing today.

This summary will walk you through her SNAP Selling framework, and how she educates salespeople to speed up their sales and win more business with today's frazzled customers.

We'll start with some key terms, jump into the full summary, and end up with sharable quotes to show off your latest reading.

# Key Terms

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**Buyer's Matrix:** A core foundation of your sales strategies that enables you to get inside your customer's heads to better serve their needs.

**D-Zone:** The dreaded space where your sales email or outreach gets deleted.

**Frazzled Customer Syndrome:** An understanding that today's salespeople are working with today's crazy-busy, impatient, easily distracted, demanding prospects.

**Go Zone:** A space where the SNAP factors are tightly addressed and your sales outreach results in a response.

**SNAP Selling:** A sales strategy that sellers need to win deals with today's modern buyers. The core factors are **s**imple, **i**nvaluable, **a**lign, and **p**riorities.

**The Three Decisions:** An understanding of the unique stages a prospect is in when deciding to choose your business. These stages are allowing access, switching from the status quo, and changing resources.

# Chapters 1 -6: SNAP Selling Defined

SNAP Selling is a framework for selling with an understanding of how customers make decisions. Jill's blog summarizes the concept quite well.

## SNAP

**“Keep It Simple.** Because crazy-busy prospects cannot handle complexity of any sort, savvy sellers will do whatever it takes to make it easy for make a change from the status quo.

**Be iNvaluable.** Overwhelmed buyers want to work with experts who continually bring them fresh ideas. You, the seller, are now the primary differentiator – not your products or services.

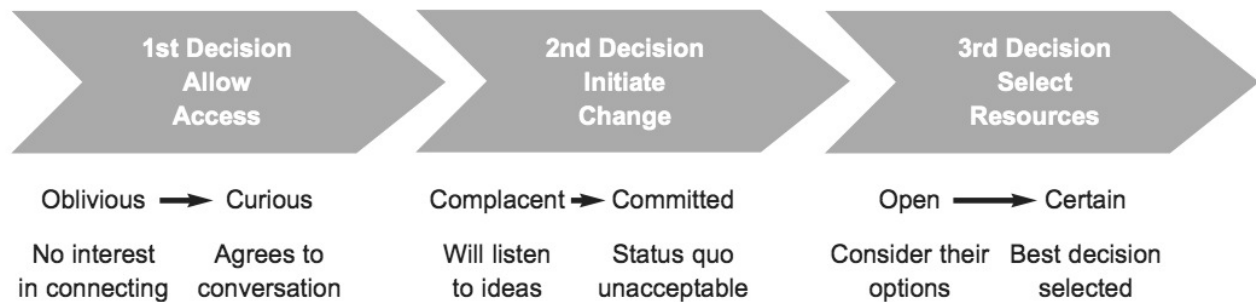
**Always Align.** This is all about relevance and risk. When you're aligned with their critical business objectives and core beliefs, people will want to work with you.

**Raise Priorities.** It's an absolute imperative to work with frazzled prospects on their priority projects. With their limited capacity, that's all they can currently focus on.”

We'll review the rest of this book through the SNAP framework so you leave with the key points of the book.

# Chapters 7 -14: The First Decision

Jill discusses three decisions a customer makes in choosing to work with you. You can see these outlined here:



Customers are already bombarded with interruptions and think of salespeople as a waste of time. In order to earn access to their time, Jill says it's critical to convey relevant information in a series of 20-30 touches -- via phone, email, etc. She frames this all within her own SNAP framework well.



**“Simple:** Once you understand your customers’ needs, this is a key factor. It’s critical to pack just the right information into thirty-second phone messages, ninety-word emails, or one-page letters.

**iNvaluable:** Your personal value will be assessed very quickly by what you say in your message. If you demonstrate an understanding of their business, objectives, and priorities, you’ll differentiate yourself. If you just give your “pitch,” you’ll be Ms. or Mr. Ordinary -- a person not worth meeting.



**Aligned:** This is essential. If you are not aligned with your customers’ needs, issues, or objectives you will not be granted access to the decision maker. Being ruthlessly relevant is the name of the game.

**Priority:** This is the trump card in the first decision. If you can tie the organization’s or individual’s priorities into your messaging, your odds of “getting in” will be increased exponentially.”

Jill goes on to describe how most sellers don’t pay enough attention to the first decision and describing tactics for improving your outreach. Here’s a brief review of the key concepts on what she recommends you do or don’t do.

Stop ...	Start ...
<b>Opening with:</b> “Hi. My name is Anum and I worked for Signals Team ...”	<b>Opening with:</b> “In working with other orgs in the sanitizing space ...”
<b>Using adjectives like:</b> Industry leader, buzz, groundbreaking, world-class	<b>Using verbs like:</b> Accelerate, reduce, enhance, revitalize, cut, save
<b>Leaving a voicemail with:</b> A lengthy pitch on what your product or service can provide.	<b>Leaving a voicemail with:</b> A trigger event that establishes credibility and piques curiosity.
<b>Sending:</b> Generic “just checking in” follow up emails.	<b>Sending:</b> An email of useful resources to educate and influence.

# Chapters 15 -25: The Second Decision

The next 10 chapters of SNAP Selling focus on the second decision: Initiate Change.

Once customers have allowed you access, salespeople need to begin painting a new story that exemplifies the value your business will bring them. At this stage, prospects are still thinking about if the ROI is there or if they have enough time to implement your solution.



Jill describes how the SNAP factors impact a prospect's second decision.



**“Simple:** Being able to deliver a sizable impact to your prospect's organization isn't enough. The complexity of any change initiative can grind a buying decision to a screeching halt. The easier you can make it, the better your chances of success.

**iNvaluable:** By provoking your prospects' thinking, showing them better ways to do things, and guiding them through the complexities of making a decision, you'll be seen as a valuable asset – and part of the team. If they decide to move ahead, you will be in the driver's seat.

**Aligned:** If what you're talking about isn't relevant to their business objectives, they won't waste their time. However, crazy-busy people are always interested in ideas, insights, and information that can help them achieve their business objectives. Their focus is also on the size and scope of your offering's impact.

**Priority:** Keeping the change initiative a high priority requires a rigorous commitment to rooting out all possible issues that could bog down the decision-making process.”

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The rest of the chapters on the second decision discuss how to handle the meetings and conversations you have with your prospects. Here are a few key components Jill addresses.

- 1. The Death of Consultative Selling:** While many modern sales techniques discuss a consultation-driven sale, Jill warns of being too consultative too soon. Buyers don't want to sit and answer all your consultative questions – they want to hear why you're worth their time.

Start by using general assumptions around what your prospects pains and needs are. Provide some examples of how you can help, and then, once curiosity is piqued, begin asking consultative questions to establish context and cater your sell to their specific goals and needs.

**2. You've Got Five Minutes – Talk!:** Oftentimes, in order to get a prospect's limited time, you can only sneak 5 minutes onto their calendars. Jill recommends using these mini-meetings as a foot-in-the-door strategy – the less time you ask for, the more likely you get a chance to speak in the first place.

**3. Finding Bigger and Better Business Value:** When listening to your prospects, listen for key words that should highlight problems you can dive further into and solve with your business solution:

- Dissatisfaction
- Bottleneck
- Challenges
- Issues
- Frustration
- Aggravation
- Headache
- Trouble
- Concerns

**4. Become iNvaluable:** Jill spends four chapters on how a salesperson can truly be iNvaluable. Her core ideas include:

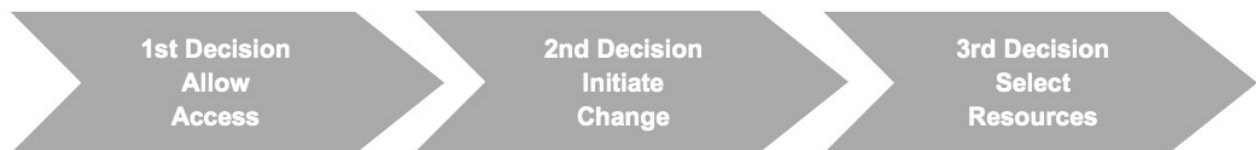
- What makes your business different than competitors is you. No one can replicate your sale.
- Create a \$500 customer experience – ditch PowerPoint and have real, valuable conversations.
- Continuously create value through sales cycle.

**5. Maintain the Momentum:** Even when things are going smoothly, a deal can go dark. Keep in contact and continue providing value until the deal is won.

# Chapters 26 - 32: The Third Decision

This final core section of the book reviews the third decision: Select Resources.

At this stage, prospects have to make a decision on which product to choose, how to justify their choice, and minimize risk. Let's look at it through Jill's words.



**“Simple:** Even hot prospects cool off when they start to realize everything they need to do to make a change in their organization. To prevent this, root out any complexities. Most of all, provide strong leadership to guide your prospect through the messy decision-making process.

**iNvaluable:** Unless you personally bring value, you're disposable. If your prospects don't sense that you bring any worthwhile expertise to the relationship, they will go with the most cost-effective solution.

**Aligned:** Having a solid business case is a start, but you also need someone to care. Companies are now looking for alignment with their risk temperament: Are you safe enough? They also want to be sure that you're a good fit with their corporate culture.

**Priority:** Newton's Law is now working for you. Usually a body in motion tends to stay in motion. But things can get bogged down, so you have to keep the momentum moving forward. The stronger you're aligned with corporate priorities, the better.”

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The rest of the chapters on the third decision ultimately discuss how to win the business you've been working. Here are the high-level chapter points.

- 1. Selling to Hot Prospects:** One of the biggest mistakes Jill says sellers make at this stage is being too nice to prospects. At this stage, Jill says how you sell is far more important than what you sell. So focus on helping the prospect make their decision versus eagerly pitching yourself repeatedly. This can be accomplished by creating:
  - Creating a decision map that maps out a prospect's journey to close from *their* perspective.
  - Landscape the competition to identify what you're up against and understand where you can combat objections.

- 2. Make the Decision as Easy as Possible:** As the expert in selling your solution to various businesses, help your prospect make a decision by being a leader in the conversation. Lead with questions that can help drive an understanding of why they need your solution. One way to make it extra simple is providing a roadmap.
  
- 3. Balance the Value-Risk Equation:** Help your prospects understand the value your solution will bring over the risk of using it. Ask questions that begin unfolding the true cost of inaction, such as:
  - How will staying with the status quo impact your business?
  - What about the cost of the continued problems?
  - What won't you be able to achieve? What does that mean to you from a business perspective?
  
- 4. Be The One They Want to Work With:** Collaborate with your prospects as if they're already a customer. That'll help them see how connected your relationship is. Act as the trusted source, and consider giving them a competitive checklist of how you fall on speed, cost, and the like against the other vendor options.
  
- 5. Getting the Business:** The end is near. At this point, arrange conversation with existing customers, create a SNAP-py presentation, and build a powerful proposal. Just be sure you help them say "yes" with an easy plan.

# STRUT YOUR SMARTS - QUOTES WORTH SHARING

“When you figure out how to deal with frazzled customers, everything changes.”



“Sales is an outcome, not a goal. It’s a function of doing numerous things right, starting from the moment you target a potential prospect until you finalize the deal.”



“Frazzled customers don’t want to hear about your products or services. They will grant you access only if you pique their curiosity or provoke their thinking.”



“Don’t wait around for your prospect to get in touch with you. Keep thinking of fresh reasons you can get in front of them, bringing them more ideas, insights, and information to help them achieve their desired business outcomes.”



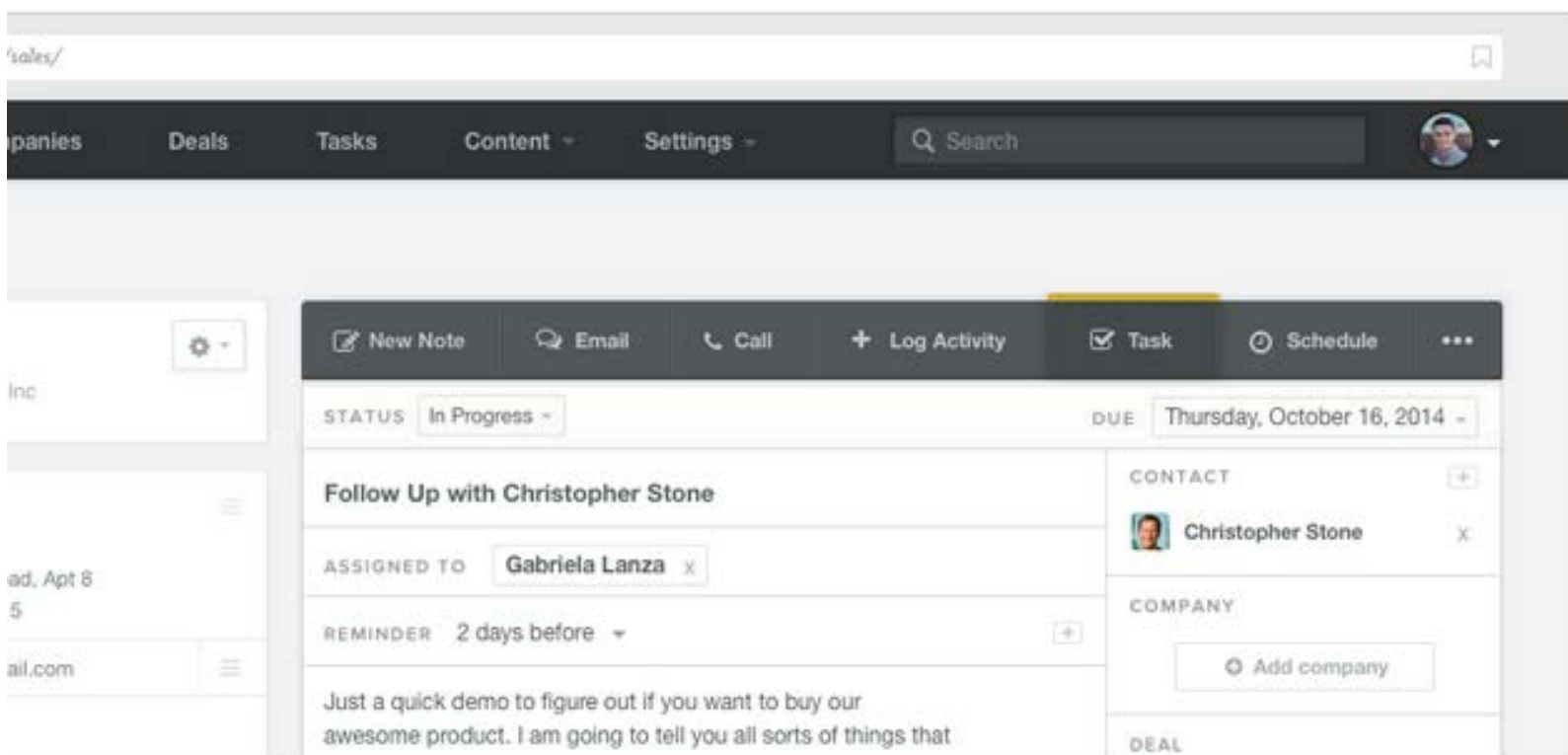
“You can’t ‘try’ to be successful at selling. It just doesn’t work. You have to commit to it and be willing to do what it takes to reach your objectives. Then, when things change, you have to go back to learning again.”





# Free Tool for Snap Selling

HubSpot's CRM allows you to visualize a prospects journey. The CRM keeps all of your contacts in one, customizable database that automatically logs every interaction.



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# Acknowledgements

When all your time is focused on selling, it's hard to find time to sit down and read an entire book. But that doesn't mean we should ignore the most talked about sales books. That's why I decided to sit down and do the reading for you.

Whether you're a pro salesperson or simply considering sales as a profession, I hope this summary was helpful in understanding what SNAP Selling is all about.



With sales love,

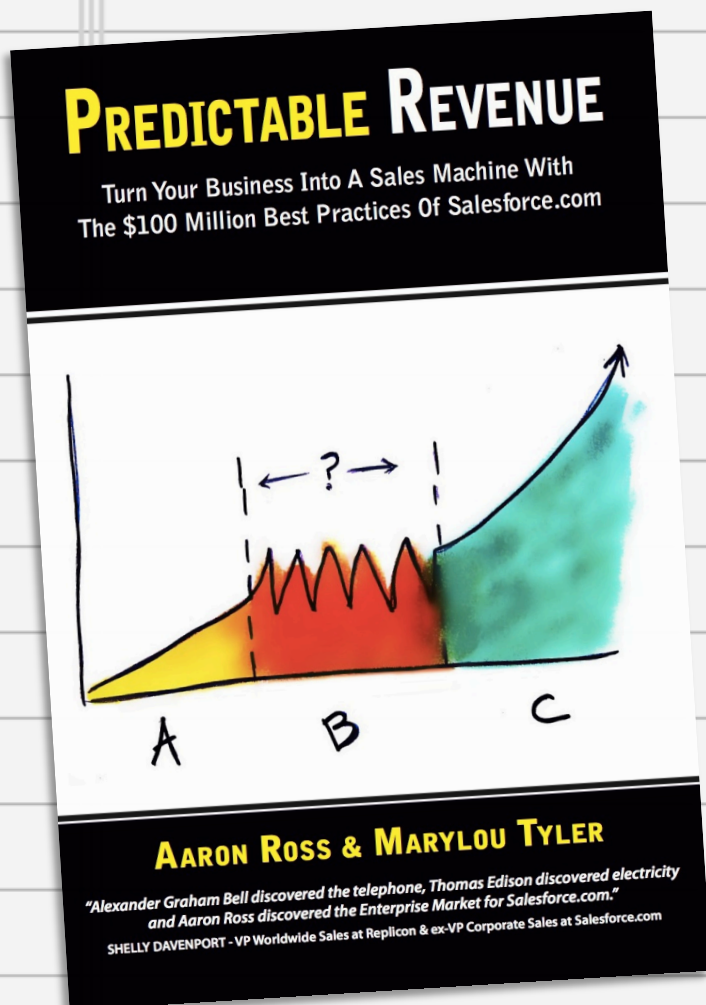
Anum Hussain

@anum

# Predictable Revenue

## Summarized

SOUND SMART. SAVE TIME. SELL MORE.



A 15-page guide  
to the 200-page  
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# Predictable Revenue by Aaron Ross & Marylou Tyler

★★★★☆ on Goodreads

Published 2012

## Quick Synopsis:

Anyone who knows a thing or two about Aaron Ross knows he helped build Salesforce.com's \$100 million sales machine. Having a high-level understanding of his highly acclaimed book, co-written with Marylou Tyler, will help you quickly understand the most important ingredients to a successful sales process: innovative outbound prospecting without cold calling.

Aaron and Marylou believe today's salespeople don't care for traditional cold calling and prospecting -- and buyers are more resistant to it than ever before.

This summary will walk you through their strategy for how sales teams can generate many highly qualified new leads, create predictable revenue, and meet financial goals.

We'll start with some key terms, jump into the full summary, and end with shareable quotes that you can use to show off your latest reading.

# Key Terms

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**Cold Calling 2.0:** Prospecting into cold accounts to generate new business without using “cold calls” -- most predictable and controllable source of new pipeline.

**Hot Coals:** The uneasy period of the sales cycle caused by a shift from organic growth to proactive growth.

**Layers of the Onion:** An analogy to help teams think through layering out their product / offers. Goal is to make it easier for prospects to choose how they get to know a company and its products, step-by-step.

**Market Response Representative:** A rep that qualifies incoming leads that reach the company through website or phone. They route qualified opportunities to the appropriate quota-carrying salesperson.

**Sales Development Representative:** A Cold Calling 2.0 or “outbound” sales rep specialized in generating outbound leads; don’t close deals or qualify inbound leads.

# Chapters 1 -3: A New Era of Lead Generation

Predictable Revenue is a framework for effective lead generation that contradicts traditional selling techniques. Aaron and Marylou break the process down into actionable steps, which we'll be sharing with you throughout this guide.

Let's start by looking at what where sales is today, and how Salesforce.com took a different approach.

## The Biggest Misconception

Most executives think adding salespeople grows revenue. However, the root issue is not on growing the team but on lead generation itself. Salespeople do not cause customer acquisition growth, they fulfill it.

## Salesforce.com's Transformation

Aaron discusses his experience at Salesforce.com starting a new group that used an innovative outbound prospecting approach (involving no cold calls) to create new leads. They discovered several breakthroughs, enabling them to add over \$100M in incremental recurring revenue in just a few years.



Next in the book, the authors begin to define the framework for achieving predictable revenue:

### Three Keys of Predictable Revenue

To achieve predictable revenue, they explain that you must: **(a)** understand your funnel, **(b)** determine the acceptable average deal size, and **(c)** define timeframes.

They also make it clear that everything must become a system. Without it, you have no predictability. Too many teams are dependent on the CEO and VP of Sales which is why a system should be put in place to create a self-managing team.

One of the core functionalities within the Predictable Revenue framework is Cold Calling 2.0. It differs from traditional cold calling in the following ways:

Cold Calling 1.0	Cold Calling 2.0
All salespeople prospect	Dedicated prospecting team
Attitude: “Always be closing”	“Is there a mutual fit?”
Measure activities (dials per day)	Measure results (qualified leads)
Cold calls	Research, referral calls
Manipulative techniques	Authentic techniques
“I hate this job”	“I am learning a valuable skill”
Long letters and emails	Short and sweet emails
Sales system hurts productivity	Sales system helps productivity



For Cold Calling 2.0 to be executed properly, the authors suggest that sales team should be divided into specialized functions. Further, due to the high cost of salespeople, the authors believe salespeople should not prospect.

To combat all this, the authors recommend you specialize your sales teams as follows:

Qualifiers	Closers	Farmers
Sales Development: Outbound Reps & Market Response Reps	Account Executives	Customer Success / Account Management

Next, they dive into outbound email campaigns, a very important Cold Calling 2.0 tactic:



### Effective Outbound Email Tactics

Emailing C-level Fortune 5000 executives with **specific** emails can generate 9%+ response rates. Aaron and Marylou recommend sending one short and sweet email (unscripted) in plain text simply asking for a referral to the right person.

Once you identify the right person, you must now focus on **selling the dream**. Help create a vision of their dream solution and then connect your product to that dream. Next, challenge them to decide how serious they are about getting it.

While emailing with prospects, it's important to remember that **“no” is not a “no”** unless you hear it from the CEO or decision maker. If they answer “no” in an email, find out why.

# Chapters 4-6: Breakthroughs for Cold Calling 2.0

The next section of Predictable Revenue dives into specific prospecting and sales tactics.

Aaron and Marylou explain how to solve the Top Six Prospecting Mistakes that reps make:

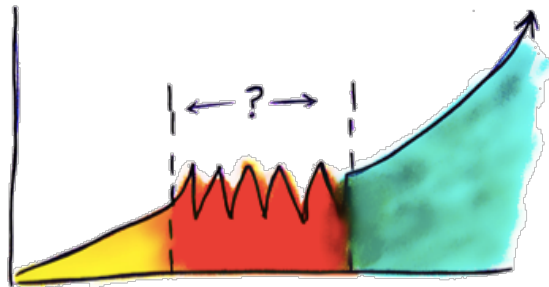
Stop Doing This	Start Doing This
Expecting instant results	Understanding it can take 2-4 weeks to develop new leads
Writing long emails	Making it easy to respond to by asking one question
Going wide, not deep	Hitting 10 accounts 10 times instead of 100 accounts once
Giving up too quickly at ideal targets	Being pleasantly persistent
Not giving up quickly enough at non-ideal targets	Weeding out prospects that just aren't a good fit
Depending on activity metrics rather than a proven process	Focusing on call conversations per day, not dials per day

To avoid these mistakes, you need to find the right people.

Hire and train salespeople who are completely committed to your company's vision and values (and can sell this vision naturally). Further, the sales process needs to be natural and customer-centric. Specific examples of how to do this are provided in the complete book.

The book describes the stages of the sales cycle as “layers of an onion.” Customers want to get to know you in small steps and want control of that process. Your job is to put out tempting morsels (i.e. free trials, ebooks) one after another to get them to take the next step.

But before giving something free to your prospects, you need to make them actually want it – and know where it fits in their buying process. While peeling back the layers, you need to discover your prospect’s decision process.



### **The Bottleneck In The Decision Process**

A breakthrough Aaron had at Salesforce.com was finding that the biggest bottleneck in prospecting isn’t selling the decision maker – it’s finding them in the first place.

And many times, the ultimate decision maker isn’t even the best person for your initial conversation, which is why it’s important to win over internal champions and coaches first.

While it’s now in your prospect’s hands to choose when the sale will ultimately happen, there are tactics under your control that can speed up the sales process.

Here is a scalable process:

### The 3-Hour-and-15-Minute Sales Process

In the book, they explain that you should take 15 minutes to qualify or disqualify an opportunity, one hour to understand the decision process with a few point people, and two hours to create a joint vision that will pull them forward in the process.

Within this time frame, there are two powerful questions you need to ask:

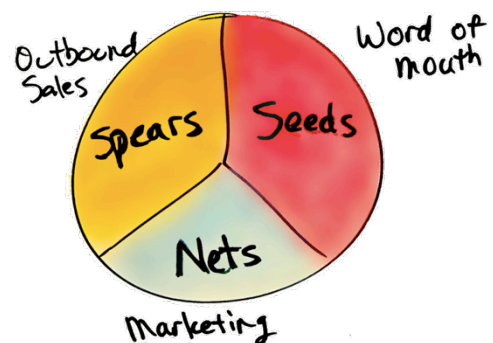
#### **“Did I catch you at a bad time?”**

Asking this is effective because you’re asking for permission to chat and putting them at ease.

#### **“Why”**

Killer salespeople are good at asking “why”. Many times, your prospects haven’t thought of the root source of their problems, so you need to help them determine what they are by probing.

The authors share how the most common mistake that executives make is lumping all leads together. Instead, break them into buckets based on where they came from. We explain these three buckets [in this post](#).



# CHAPTERS 7-II: Aligning Leadership and Talent

While most of this book is about what you should do to create predictable revenue through a sales machine, the final section explains how to set up your entire team for sales success.

To begin, the authors explain the top mistakes that CEOs and Sales VPs make all too often:

The Mistake	The Solution
CEOs not understanding lead generation	CEO educating themselves on lead generation
Thinking AEs should prospect	Start specializing sales roles
Assuming channel partners will do the selling for you	Build direct sales success before counting on channels
Hiring, training, and incenting fumbles	Get coaching on how to hire, train and incent
Thinking “product-out” not “customer-in”	Spend 25% of time with customers to know what you do for them, rather than how
Sloppy tracking and measurement	Track just 3-5 key results and review weekly
Command-and-control management	Stop treating employees like resources
Under-investing in customer success	Hold the hands of first 50 customers; give them love

To avoid the above mistakes, team alignment is important to get right from the start.

The authors dive into how to develop and specialize your team:



### How To Hire Great Salespeople

The best long-term source of salespeople is to grow and develop your own. Hire smart people who can figure things out, are organized, and know something about business. At Salesforce.com they created “Salesforce University,” a weekly meeting for internal training.



### Your Salespeople Are Your Internal Customers

To be an effective sales manager, treat your team like you treat your customers. Get their input on decisions early and often, build trust, make decisions together, and help them succeed. As long as you work for the successes of your salespeople, they will work for the team’s success and yours.



### When Should Companies Specialize?

Too frequently companies say, “We’re too small to specialize yet”. Aaron and Marylou explain that you need just two salespeople to begin specializing. After hiring a salesperson that can close, hire a sales rep dedicated to generating leads. A second rule of thumb is if a salesperson is spending more than 20% of their time on prospecting, break out that function into a new role.

# STRUT YOUR SMARTS - QUOTES WORTH SHARING

“Shorter sales cycles increase sales productivity.”



“Great companies know the sale is just the first step in an ongoing process of making customers successful over the course of years.”



“If it’s not intended to be repeatable, it’s not worth doing.”



“Building a highly-productive, modern sales organization requires increasing specialization.”



“One of the biggest productivity killers is lumping a mix of different responsibilities into one general “sales” role.”



“The quality of your people means everything to you and your team’s success.”



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# Acknowledgements

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Enjoy reading,

Kristin Dziadul

[@KristinDziadul](#)

# The Challenger Sale

## Summarized

SOUND SMART. SAVE TIME. SELL MORE.



A 15-page guide  
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# Challenger Sale by Matthew Dixon & Brent Adamson

★★★★☆ on Goodreads

Published 2011

## Quick Synopsis:

In the Challenger Sale, Matt Dixon and Brent Adamson lay out the ideas and strategies behind some of the most successful sales teams - and reps - today.

Neil Rackham, author of the mega-bestseller Spin Selling, called Challenger Sale “The most important advance in selling for many years.” Like Spin Selling, Challenger Sale researched 6,000+ salespeople and 90+ companies across different industries to determine the characteristics and approaches that successful sales reps take, and provide a roadmap for selling more effectively.

Matt and Brent believe that solution selling is no longer effective, and buyers are fed up with answering questions and probes from sales reps who deliver no value.

This summary will walk you through a new approach to successful selling - the Challenger model. We'll start with some key terms, jump into the full summary, and end with sharable quotes you can use to show off your knowledge (and impress your boss).

# Key Terms

**Challenger Sale:** A sale in which the rep teaches the prospect something about their business, tailors their pitch to resonate with customer concerns, and takes control of the sales process.

**Commercial Teaching:** A sales approach where the rep teaches a prospect how to think about commercial needs.

**Resonance:** An informal measure of how strongly a sales pitch or story maps to what a customer cares about. Reps should be crafting their pitches to resonate with each individual customer and address their biggest concerns.


**The PAUSE Framework:** A framework used in sales manager coaching, it consists of 5 elements:

1. **Preparation for the coaching conversation** - managers need to prepare for the coaching conversation
2. **Affirm the relationship** - create a safe situation for coaching to occur
3. **Understand expected behavior** - managers should understand what to look for in a meeting
4. **Specify behavior change** - managers should have objective standards for judging behavior
5. **Embed new behavior** - managers should give reps the tools to implement coaching suggestions. Tools like action plans and the like are useful here


# Chapters 1 -3: The Challenger Approach

The Challenger Sale is based on one of the largest sales studies ever conducted. One key finding was that **53% of customer loyalty is driven by the sales experience - not brand, price, service, or even the product.** This experience is largely dictated by a customer's interaction with a rep.

According to their research, every B2B sales rep falls into five different profiles that define the skills and behaviors they use when interacting with customers. These profiles describe a rep's natural mode of interacting with a prospect, and are not mutually exclusive –

 **The Hard Worker**

- Doesn't give up easily
- Self-motivated
- Interested in feedback / personal development

 **The Lone Wolf**


- Follows own instincts
- Self-assured
- Deliver results but difficult to manager

 **The Relationship Builder**

- Classic consultative rep
- Builds advocates internally
- Creates relationships with prospects

 **The Challenger**





- Different view of the world
- Loves to debate / pushes customer
- Strong understanding of customer's business

 **The Problem Solver**

- Highly detail-oriented
- Reliable responds to stakeholders
- Ensures all problems are solved

**MOST  
SUCCESSFUL  
OF ALL  
PROFILES.**

In the study the book is based on, what the authors call the “Challenger Approach” to sales is the one that’s most correlated with actual sales performance among high performers. In the study, they found that –

- **40% of high sales performers primarily used a Challenger style** - as opposed to one of the other four sales styles the book identified. 
- **High performers were more than 2x likely to use a Challenger approach than any other approach.** 
- **More than 50% of all star performers fit the challenger profile in complex sales.** 
- **Only 7% of top performers took a relationship-building approach** – the worst performing profile. 

As sales complexity increases, so does the success rate of the challenger approach. However, this Challenger approach only worked better among high performers. Among average performers, all profiles were roughly as successful as one another.

This is a disruptive finding, as most sales training and sales teams today are geared towards creating and encouraging the Relationship Builder, the least effective of the five profiles.

A challenger rep has six significant traits that distinguish them from the other sales profile types. A challenger rep ...

1. Offers a unique perspective to the customer
2. Has strong 2-way communication skills
3. Knows the individual customer's value drivers
4. Can identify economic drivers of customer's business
5. Is comfortable discussing money
6. Can pressure the customer

The above traits are not held exclusively by challenger reps, they're just more commonly used together by them. A rep with a "relationship builder" style will often have excellent two-way communication skills, but they'll lack other challenger traits - like the ability to pressure a customer.

According to the book, a challenger rep is defined by the ability to do three key things well –

1. **Teach** customers something new and valuable about how to compete in their market.
2. **Tailor** their sales pitch to resonate with the decision-maker's hot-button issues.
3. **Take control** of the discussions around pricing and challenge customer's thinking around the problem.

We'll dive into each of these activities in the next sections.



# Chapters 4-5: Teach for Differentiation

The authors believe that solution selling doesn't work as well anymore. Customers are less likely to spend time helping reps discover their needs. Their research found the seven highest-impact areas that make for a positive customer experience occur when –

- A rep offers unique / valuable perspectives on the market
- A rep helps the customer navigate alternatives
- A rep provides ongoing advice and consultation
- A rep helps the customer avoid potential landmines
- A rep educates the customer on new issues / outcomes
- The supplier is easy to buy from
- The supplier has widespread support across organization

The teaching approach they outline is called “Commercial Teaching,” where a rep teaches their prospect how to think about their needs. This approach must –

**Lead to your unique strengths.** Why should people buy from you over anyone else?

**Challenge customer assumptions.** How can you reframe the problem for your customers?

**Catalyze action.** Customers need to understand why they should take an action, and the urgency to do it now.

**Scale across customers.** Your sales team must have a core group of market or industry insights that scale across different kinds of customers.

Commercial teaching is an entirely new skillset reps will need to learn under the challenger framework. To make this easier, Matt and Brent broke down the six components that make up a world-class teaching pitch:

## The Warmer

Build credibility and show your prospect you understand their challenges. This serves as the introduction for the pitch.



## The Reframe

Connect those challenges to a bigger problem or opportunity they hadn't previously considered. Build credibility and show your prospect you understand their challenges. This serves as the introduction for the pitch.



## Rational Drowning

Next, show prospects the numbers behind why they should think differently.



## Emotional Impact

Then, create an emotional connection between the pain in the story you're telling and the pain they feel every day in their organization.



## A New Way

It's time to convince them of the solution. Show them the new way they should be thinking about their business.



## Your solution

Finally, demonstrate how your solution is the best one out there, and how it fits with the new way a prospect should be thinking about their business.

## CHAPTERS 6-7: Tailor for Resonance & Take Control

In any pitch, it's absolutely critical that your audience understands and relates to the story you're telling by tailoring to their problems and how they see the world.

Your pitch must get buy-in from an entire organization in order to win. Creating a pitch that resonates is a key factor in winning organizational support. And, as we saw earlier, a supplier having widespread organizational support is one of the strongest indicators of a positive sales experience.



To ensure resonance, the pitch should have messaging that's tailored to the decision-maker you're speaking with. Directors will have different concerns than VPs, and VPs different than a CEO.

Taking control is the last key ability a challenger rep must have. Taking control of a sale means that a rep demonstrates and holds firm on value - not competing on price - and keeps momentum going across the sales process. Reps must take control early on and veto prospects who are unlikely to move forward or get key decision makers involved.

This isn't easy! Successful challenger reps must be willing to deal with a bit of tension and pushback on price. Any price pushback can be mitigated by focusing on value provided.

# Chapters 8-9: The Challenger Sales Manager

Challenger Sale also conducted a study on sales management to determine what makes for an effective sales manager. In it, they found that –

- **Sales management ability (selling, coaching and owning) accounts for 73% of management effectiveness.** 
- **The last 27% of sales management ability is comprised of management fundamentals like integrity, reliability and listening.** 

Of all the skills a sales manager could have, the most important skill is being innovative: figuring out creative ways to help their reps move deals forward. The second most important is coaching their reps. An innovative sales manager does three key activities –

- 1. Investigate.** They identify obstacles in the way of a new sale, gather feedback in terms of what is / isn't working, and then identify how to resolve customer pain.
- 2. Create.** They innovate around new ways to position an offer, identify the ideal business outcome, and work with reps / customers to define and explore new sales solutions.
- 3. Share.** These managers also share tactics and best practices, develop and sustain cross-functional relationships with others in the organization, and filter news / information from elsewhere in the organization to their sales team.

The Challenger Sale team uses a PAUSE framework in their sales manager coaching that helps sales managers effectively coach their reps. PAUSE stands for:

**P**reparation for the coaching conversation - managers need to prepare for the coaching conversation

**A**ffirm the relationship - create a safe situation for coaching to occur

**U**nderstand expected behavior - managers should understand what to look for in a meeting

**S**pecify behavior change - managers should have objective standards for judging behavior

**E**MBED new behavior - managers should give reps the tools to implement coaching suggestions. Tools like action plans and the like are useful here

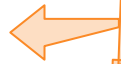
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After working with 10+ organizations to implement this process, Matt and Brent found that not every high performer is a challenger. It's very possible to have reps who fit other sales profiles and are still high performers. However, implementing the challenger process can maximize the performance of your sales force as a whole.

Unfortunately, **20-30% of reps won't successfully transition to the Challenger model for various reasons.** It's helpful to understand that this won't be a perfect transition and expect some number of reps drop out of the process.

# STRUT YOUR SMARTS - Quotes Worth Sharing

“How you sell has become more important than what you sell.”



Click an icon to share!

“Challengers aren’t so much world-class investigators as they are world-class teachers. They win not by understanding their customers’ world as well as the customers know it themselves, but by actually knowing their customers’ world better than their customers know it themselves, teaching them what they don’t know but should.”



“What sets the best suppliers apart is not the quality of their products, but the value of their insight—new ideas to help customers either make money or save money in ways they didn’t even know were possible.”



“The best sales conversations present the customer with a compelling story about their business first, teach them something new, and then lead to their differentiators.”



## Become a Challenger Rep

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The HubSpot CRM offers data enrichment so you don't have to manually search for and enter information about your prospects.



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# Acknowledgements

When all your time is focused on selling, it's hard to find time to sit down and read an entire book. But that doesn't mean we should ignore the most talked about sales books. That's why I decided to sit down and do the reading for you.

Whether you're a pro salesperson or simply considering sales as a profession, I hope this summary was helpful in understanding what Challenger Sale is all about.



Enjoy reading,

Justin Mares

[@jwmares](#)