

The Roadmap To Scalable and Sustainable Sales Transformation

Insights Into How Leading Firms Are Re-Engineering Their Long-Term Strategies To Respond To Shifts In The Buying Process





TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE ROADMAP TO SCALABLE & SUSTAINABLE SALES TRANSFORMATION

Insights Into How Leading Firms Are Re-Engineering Their Long-Term Strategies To Respond To Shifts In The Buying Process _____ **3**

MAPPING TO THE NEW BUYING BEHAVIORS

Transforming Around the New Rules of Engagement _____ **5**

1) NEW MODELS OF SALES TRANSFORMATION:

Fortune 500 Firm Maps People, Processes to Changing Customer Needs _____ **7**

2) NEW MODELS OF SALES TRANSFORMATION:

High Tech Powerhouse Reengineers Sales Team To Focus On Business Value Rather Than Speeds & Feed _____ **8**

3) NEW MODELS OF SALES TRANSFORMATION:

Top Brand in the Agricultural Market Launches New Growth Plan For Sales _____ **10**

CONCLUSION:

Re-Engineering Sales Processes To Keep Pace With Changing Buyer Behavior _____ **11**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: _____ **12**

ABOUT RICHARDSON: _____ **13**

Buyers are now directing the purchase process and are dictating the terms of engagement.

One of the most pervasive challenges facing businesses today is the **fundamental change in buyer behavior**. Even the largest, most successful organizations in the world are struggling to respond to and keep pace with the dramatic shifts in buying patterns.

Where companies and brands have historically been able to control the dialog in engaging new customers –guiding prospects through awareness, consideration, assessment and selection phases – buyers are now directing the purchase process and are dictating the terms of engagement.

While the change has been more pronounced and dramatic in some vertical markets, such as high-tech, the reality is the way all consumers and companies buy products, solutions and services has been irreversibly altered.

This dramatic change in buyer behavior has forced companies to reevaluate the way they train their sales teams to engage prospects and existing customers. Once companies start down the path to **map their sales strategies around the new buyer**, they quickly realize this is not a quick or simple fix.

Buyers are now conducting much of their early phase research via the web and relying more on peer feedback collected via social media. This has resulted in sales representatives being brought into deals much later and missing out on the chance to assess and properly qualify prospects.

Because sales representatives are often missing out on these critical early stages of engagement and

education, their first point of contact is often fast-forwarded to the competitive pricing and proposal phases.

This new paradigm has been a complete game-changer for most companies because it has rewritten the rules for **how companies hire, train, measure and manage their sales teams**.


Where most companies have traditionally invested in training their teams on product specs and sales techniques, progressive companies are now molding their teams on **how to look through the customer lens** and bring business value to the table when and how the prospect wants it.


Realizing this transformation can't be accomplished on a region-by-region or team-by-team basis, leading companies have built ambitious sales transformation initiatives to rethink core areas such as **sales readiness** (talent assessment, onboarding and sales process), **sales development** (training, process adoption and change management) and **ongoing sustainment of the behavioral and process changes**—across their entire global organization.



The skill sets required of sales organizations are rapidly changing and evolving, making sales readiness a vital part of long-term growth.

To prepare for these fundamental market shifts, progressive companies are making a commitment to change how they **enable, develop** and **manage** their sales teams. These market leaders have recognized that in order to secure their market position for the long-term, a holistic approach to sales transformation is a necessity due to the following factors:

 The **skill sets required of sales organizations are rapidly changing** and evolving, making sales readiness a vital part of long-term growth;

 The **tools, tactics** and **processes** required to achieve predictable, long-term performance improvement are changing on a daily basis, making coaching and development a necessity to support sustainable growth initiatives.

In the following E-book, we will analyze the fundamental changes in buyer behavior and explore the challenges these changes are presenting for organizations of all sizes in all verticals.

In addition, the E-book will present **three separate case studies**, each providing different blueprints which illustrate how large, multi-national companies are embarking on sales transformation initiatives.

These enterprise companies are all taking the long-term steps necessary to **re-engineer their go-to-market models** to ensure their processes from engagement to close are as efficient as possible.

Exploring companies in three distinct industries, all with unique market challenges, the models will demonstrate how each firm is taking innovative approaches to **analyze and respond to the changing behavior of their buyers**.

The E-book will also highlight some of the common approaches these firms are taking to reconstruct their existing methods for recruiting talent, remodeling their processes for training and managing people and retooling their systems to better engage buyers.



SiriusDecisions recently estimated that by 2015, more than 70% of initial BtoB leads are going to be generated via the web.



MAPPING TO THE NEW BUYING BEHAVIORS-- *Transforming Around the New Rules of Engagement*

Historically, sales organizations have been trained to “identify, approach and assess” prospects in order to maximize their first contact. This traditional sales model was built around the notion that the solution provider was initiating the first contact and controlling the engagement.

However, one of the most profound factors influencing the change in buyer behavior has been the explosion of information available via the web and the growing influence the web has had on buying decisions, particularly in BtoB markets.

Illustrating this point, research analyst SiriusDecisions recently estimated that by 2015, more than 70% of initial BtoB leads are going to be generated via the web.

What is most alarming about this shift in buyer behavior is the fact that buyers are often **progressing into the selection process and developing solution preferences** before a company ever knows it is being considered. According to the 2010 “Inside the Mind of the BtoB Buyer” study presented by DemandGen Report:

- 44% of recent buyers conducted **anonymous research** of a select group of vendors
- 59% of buyers **engaged with peers** who addressed the challenge
- 48% **followed industry conversations** on a topic before selecting a solution provider

The **expansion of social media** as a resource has also dramatically heightened the influence of the web. Where a buyer traditionally started the search for a solution to a business problem by engaging directly with sales representatives from relevant solution providers, they are now turning to peers for insights and conducting their initial research anonymously via the web.

The survey also reinforced the fact that the buyer now drives when, where and how they want to engage. Illustrating this point:

- More than 80% of buyers indicated they either called the solution provider directly or were **contacted after they requested further information** on the vendor’s website,
- Less than 10% were contacted cold** by the solution provider.





48% of buyers said they took more time to research and compare solutions.

In fact, the DemandGen Report survey showed **less than 25%** of executives who had been involved in a recent purchase said they **followed a traditional path** where budget was established, buying criteria outlined and an RFP distributed.

In addition to the growing influence of the web and social media, there are other changes in the buying process that are presenting new challenges for sales teams. For starters, sales representatives are rarely working directly with one decision maker at a firm, but instead have to navigate around a “**sphere of influence**” that often includes input from multiple departments.

One of the effects of sales people having to meet the ROI and TCO requirements of multiple departments is that it often takes longer to get sign-off on deals. Illustrating this point, the DemandGen Report research found:

-  48% of buyers said they **took more time to research and compare** solutions,
-  30% said there are **more internal team members providing input** on purchase decisions.

Another change in buying behavior, which may present the harshest consequences for sales representatives, is the **emergence of procurement teams** handling the negotiations on major purchase decisions for large organizations. Motivated purely by finding the lowest cost for everything from servers to paper clips, these procurement offices threaten to commoditize the buyer/seller relationship if sales teams aren't properly trained to demonstrate value at all stages of engagement.

How companies respond to this sea change in the buying/selling process is already having a profound effect on whether companies are increasing their market share or losing out on deals because their sales teams weren't prepared to engage the new buyer on their terms.

According to CSO Insights' 2011 Sales Performance Optimization Report, 39% of companies said their ability to clearly understand their customer's buying process “needs improvement.”

In order to gain a deeper understanding of **buyer's needs and pain points**, many leading organizations are realizing it is time to seek new answers in regards to sales readiness, development and sustainment.



In addition to surveying its own internal sales team, the company is also incorporating the “customer lens” into the equation.



CASE STUDY

NEW MODELS OF SALES TRANSFORMATION:

Fortune 500 Firm Maps People, Processes to Changing Customer Needs

Serving millions of customers in hundreds of countries, a multi-billion dollar distributor is engaging with Richardson to actually help define its approach to a global transformation of its sales organization.

Taking a data-driven approach, the distributor of industry products identified two complementary goals of **improving sales productivity** as well as customer satisfaction.

The company started out by focusing on **sales readiness**, reevaluating their sales processes and methodology. Rather than jumping right to new training programs, the company brought in Richardson to conduct **skills surveys**, activity surveys and **competency profiling** to evaluate and benchmark its existing sales team and internal processes.

The company turned to the data and intelligence from those surveys to determine which levers to pull organizationally in order to **maximize sales productivity**, before they rolled out any training.

The goals of the evaluation and benchmarking phases were to drive structural **changes to the company's sales methodology**, which will also drive changes for the company's talent (recruiting and

retention) models going forward. The findings from the internal analysis will also influence new skills training, as well as guidelines for the new coaching and measurement managers will conduct long-term.

In addition to surveying its own internal sales team, the company is also **incorporating the “customer lens”** into the equation, by going out to customers and top prospects to gauge their perceptions and perspectives of their existing relationship with the brand. The company is using this customer feedback not only to learn what it will take to get and keep their business, but also the customers' expectations of world class service.





The company set out to transform its **processes for hiring, training and evaluating its team.**



CASE STUDY

NEW MODELS OF SALES TRANSFORMATION:

High Tech Powerhouse Re-Engineers Sales Team To Focus On Business Value Rather Than Speeds & Feeds

With sales in the billions and an aggressive growth plan, on the surface this high tech vendor had few problems with its sales organization. However, the company's chief sales officer was ahead of the curve in spotting a problem. Most of the company's sales people were still **talking speeds and feeds**, while their buyers wanted to discuss specific business issues.

Realizing a high proportion of their sales team was not well prepared to have conversations based on business needs, the company set out to transform its **processes for hiring, training and evaluating** its team.

Since the company's culture had been built around moving engineers and product development experts into sales, the company **recognized gaps in their sales team's ability to connect** with senior level executives. To address the void, the company engaged Richardson to transform their process for hiring and training sales people, and reengineer their long-term sales development.

In order to retrain the sales organization on **adding business value to all contact points**, Richardson is helping the company to refocus on the preparation stage of its sales cycles. The company had to

retrain its team to be more insightful—moving beyond reviewing a customer's website and their annual report to prepare for meetings. Richardson worked with the team on techniques to add more reconnaissance and preparation to each point of contact.

Because face time with their accounts is steadily shrinking, Richardson is retraining the company's sales team to be results-oriented by engaging in value-adding dialogues every time they have contact with a prospect.

Through these training exercises, the sales team realized basic homework on an account is table stakes in today's environment. In order to set the company apart in competitive environments the sales team now has a set of goals, agendas, expected outcomes and value that must be delivered to the client.

Richardson is helping the company map new processes, based on the successful models built around top performers within the sales organization. The company helped the tech giant establish a series of "verifiable outcomes," which help sales representatives and sales managers benchmark the steps necessary to engage and win business.

Working with Richardson, the company has been able to identify and map the logical steps in the sales process to develop common approaches to defining and qualifying opportunities.

Examples of some of the outcomes the team now tracks to map out key customer activities include documenting such questions as:

- What would it take to get the account to accept a meeting with you?
- Are they looking at competitive options?
- How can we preempt the RFP?

Working with Richardson, the company has been able to identify and map the logical steps in the sales process to develop common approaches to defining and qualifying opportunities. In addition, the company has improved its ability to drill down and identify commonalities in the customer's decision criteria. The improved visibility has provided their teams with common metrics to figure out their advocates and allies, and more effectively manage detractors inside key accounts.



Where the company once had 72 business units all operating with different sales approaches and measurements, it is now rolling out a single sales process.



CASE STUDY

NEW MODELS OF SALES TRANSFORMATION:

Top Brand in the Agricultural Market Launches New Growth Plan For Sales

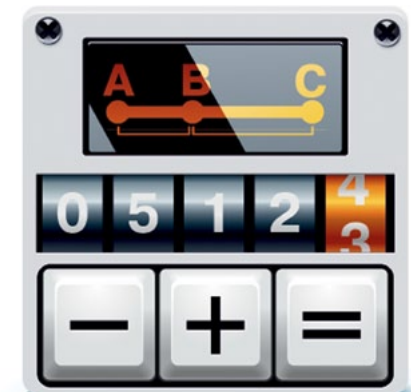
Following a steady stream of M&A activity, this \$100+ billion dollar conglomerate was operating with 72 different business units globally, and very distinct business approaches across all of the divisions. When the company first started working with Richardson on a sales transformation initiative, the idea of developing a single sales process across these different divisions was daunting.

However, once Richardson began analyzing their people and processes across different divisions and regions, strong patterns emerged. Through the analysis, the company determined there are similarities across its different product categories and divisions, in terms of the way its customers operate. Despite the wide variety of businesses the company operates, sales executives realized the approach taken by top performers, across all markets and customers, were strikingly similar.

With this in mind, Richardson has been able to help establish common sales processes and common measures, which have been successfully deployed across multiple business units. Based on this success, the company is planning to deploy the new processes and measures across all 72 different divisions.

By developing processes that were flexible, yet could be modeled for different regions and divisions, the company was able to establish new models that could be applied to businesses with a four-hour close versus a four-month close, and the common approach has brought tremendous efficiencies and better results.

Richardson helped the company analyze key stages, best practice activities, and “verifiable outcomes,” and is now using those insights to train thousands of sales executives to apply techniques “situationally.” Where the company once had 72 business units all operating with different sales approaches and measurements, it is now rolling out a single sales process and creating a common language, common measures and unifying their training and coaching for thousands of sales executives around the globe.



In an increasingly competitive business climate, where margins and loyalty are often shrinking, mapping sales processes around the changing buyer is quickly becoming a competitive necessity.



CONCLUSION:

Re-Engineering Sales Processes To Keep Pace With Changing Buyer Behavior

Over the past ten years, buyers in all industries have transformed their processes for researching and selecting solutions and products. Unfortunately, the sales processes and techniques employed by most companies have remained stagnant.

This dramatic shift in engagement dynamics has caught many companies flat-footed, as buyers are now basing their early-stage decisions more on peer feedback and web research than traditional RFPs or vendor pitches. Those organizations still relying on old engagement models to feed their pipelines are now operating at a significant competitive disadvantage.

However, progressive companies in a variety of industries are addressing this new buyer head-on with aggressive sales transformation initiatives. Some of the largest companies in the world, across a variety of industries, are re-engineering their people, processes and technology to keep pace with changing buyer behavior. These leading firms are re-evaluating the way they hire, **measure, develop and manage their sales teams.**

Remodeling their teams to view the engagement process through the customer lens, these companies are transforming their approach to **sales readiness, sales development and sustainment.**

A common thread among these innovative companies is the realization that sales

transformation is not a simple exercise. Rather than deploying these dramatic changes within a limited number of team members, regions or divisions, these companies are choosing to roll out new common processes and methodology across their global organization.

By analyzing their internal best practices, as well as feedback from customers and prospects, these organizations are identifying strong patterns that allow them to model a common set of processes and methodologies that not only improve pipeline performance and custom satisfaction, but also build internal efficiencies.

And the integration of cross-industry best practices, provided by their transformational partners, delivers true best-in-class processes and methodology that not only catches them up to deal with current buyer behavior, but effectively positions them in a leadership role in these new buying relationships.

In an increasingly competitive business climate, where margins and loyalty are often shrinking, mapping sales processes around the changing buyer is quickly becoming a competitive necessity. Those companies that fail to keep pace with the changing rules of engagement not only increase their odds of missing out on future deals, they are ultimately putting their long-term market position at risk.



Harry V. Dunklin

*Senior Vice President,
Sales Readiness Practice
at Richardson*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In his current role, Harry Dunklin leads the Sales Readiness Practice at Richardson, a leading global sales performance solutions provider. Richardson's Sales Readiness Practice utilizes a variety of technologies and methods to assess the sales organization's ability to deliver against a client's market promise, and recommend business relevant solutions designed to impact near and long term business objectives.

From 2001 to 2010, as founder and principal of Skillmeasure, Inc., he leveraged his knowledge and background in process design to develop and launch a wide array of skills diagnostic tools across multiple industries including heavy manufacturing, financial services, pharmaceuticals, high tech and services.

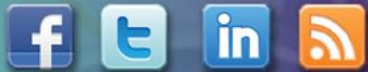
Prior to founding SkillMeasure, Dunklin served from 1997 to 2001 as Corporate Vice President with one of the largest training companies in the United States.

From 1990 to 1997, as a senior partner in a process consulting firm, Dunklin led process design and productivity enhancement efforts for corporate clients including AT&T, Bell & Howell, Heidelberg Druckmaschinen AG, ADC Telecom, Citibank, Times Mirror, Sprint and Johnson & Johnson.



1818 Market Street
Suite 2800
Philadelphia, PA 19103

■ tel 215.940.9255
■ fax 215.940.1086
www.richardson.com



ABOUT RICHARDSON

With a record of more than 30 years of successfully helping global Fortune 1000 companies worldwide improve sales skills, increase sales performance, and drive corporate results, we are the pioneers and innovators of **Sales Performance Improvement**.

Clients around the world choose Richardson for our “go beyond” approach and the depth and breadth of our customizable solution offering. For every business and budget there is a unique need. Richardson’s **Sales Performance System** (SPS) is a proven, end-to-end integrated process that Richardson uses to diagnose your needs and develop truly customized solutions that lead to sustained sales performance improvement. Our system enables you to focus on critical sales methodologies and skills that change behavior, improve performance, and drive results.

Our innovative support applications embed learning content and skill development into the everyday workflow of your sales people. As important as training is, bringing the learning and behavior change directly to the work stream closes the training loop by providing on-the-spot reinforcement and a strong ROI to your sales performance investments.

Companies select Richardson because they want a business partner, not a training vendor, who acts as an extension of their business. By focusing specifically on each client’s needs, Richardson has a proven track record of delivering exceptional client results. We continue to be on the front line of sales performance innovation in the development of leading edge solutions that help you generate sustainable revenue faster and more cost-effectively than ever before.

Partnering with us all begins with a dialogue where we can learn about your unique business needs. We would welcome the opportunity to have this dialogue and earn your trust and ultimately your business. To get started, simply visit us at www.richardson.com and contact us today.

Richardson’s Sales Performance System (SPS)

