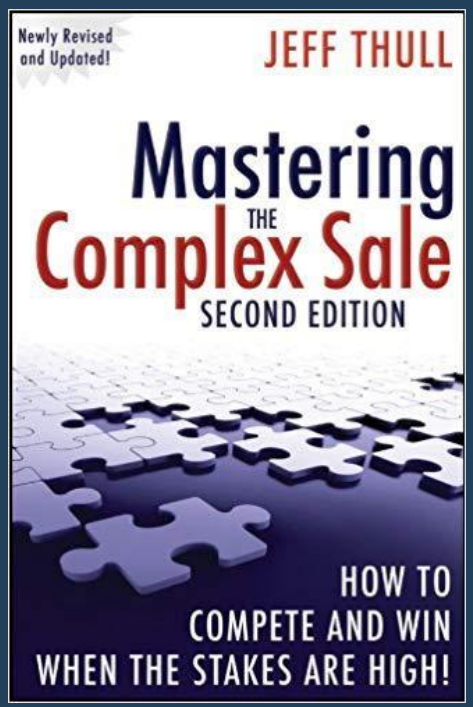

Mastering the Complex Sale

Year of publication: 2010
Author: Jeff Thull
309 pages
Link for purchase: https://amzn.to/2RKBRxW

The book Mastering the Complex Sale from Jeff Thul's(2010), teaches how to develop complicated and high-risk sales strategies.
This book is distributed by Wiley editor and has 271 pages divided into three parts and nine chapters.

Score

9

9 Aplicability
8 Inspiration
7 Innovation
9 Impact on results
10 Structure

Main ideias of the book

- Selling is more challenging in this era of complexity;
- Selling means managing decisions, changes, expectations and relationships;
- Do not focus on transactions - focus on relationships;
- Selling with a system - organized steps;
- Make the ideal consumer profile and combine real consumers with the profile;
- Asking questions is more powerful than telling stories;
- Put yourself in the consumer's shoes - would you do what you're proposing ?;
- Sales systems derive the best from a selling personality;
- Analyze and measure performance;
- Learn from your mistakes and be flexible when circumstances change.

Let us present this summary divided into parts: "The eras of sales", "Change together with the world", "Methodical sales" and "Identifying and involving the customer".

For whom is this book suitable?

This book is suitable for all people who work in sales and want to expand their skills, or for those who would like to work with sales.

Overview of the book

Part I - The eras of sales

During the last 60 years, the practice of sales has gone through three eras, of which we will speak in this overview.

I. The script era

In the 50's, the salesman worked with techniques to manipulate the consumer to do what he wanted.
Sales training was focused on creating the case, learning to defend against objections, and moving on to the agreement. Except for telemarketing and used car sales, this approach to selling is virtually gone.

II. The problem-solving era

Companies try to compete by offering more complicated, customized and targeted products, which has increased the complexity of the market.

In the 1970s, sales training materials began to emphasize listening, building trust, and developing a relationship.
Instead of a persuasive manipulator, the seller has become a problem solver. This approach survived and was the foundation of many contemporary sales strategies.
As many sales representatives continue to use this technique, it is not a differential. His emphasis on asking questions and listening to the answers implicitly assumes that the client knows exactly what he wants; which does not always happen.
However, problems are often so complex that consumers can not fully understand them.

III. The consultants era

In our contemporary era, the seller presents the client with solutions and ideas that he would not be able to develop without help. The sales representative solves problems for both the customer and their own organization.
The person in charge of the negotiation must take into account the cost benefit for his company and for the consumer.

Part II - Change Together with the World

In the second part, we'll talk about the changes in the world and how to follow them.
The present world is constantly changing. The business is increasingly competitive, while products and services are losing their uniqueness and becoming commodities.
Companies try to compete by offering more complicated, customized and targeted products, which has increased the complexity of the market.
The good news is that excellent sales people have career security as they are needed to understand and explain increasingly complex products and services.
Nowadays, the model for sale is online, with consumers customizing their systems and doing searches for better prices.

Meanwhile, the corporate environment becomes increasingly complex. Broad and decentralized organizations make it difficult to identify the decision maker. Financial issues are often as important as technical issues.
Globalization places more countries and cultures in this mix. Consumers are stifling supply chains and demanding closer relationships, though they do not seem willing to pay a higher price for it.
The world is becoming more and more complex and competitive. Still, many organizations remain tied to old ways, as many of their salespeople are nostalgic about the "era of the script" of the last century.
Making use of these techniques can lead you to fall into three pitfalls:

I. The guessing trap

Conventional approaches assume that a salesperson can learn the goals, priorities, needs, and criteria of the consumer just by asking questions. This also means believing that the consumer has a sound and solid decision-making process.
This may be far from the truth. Some consumers may not be able to analyze, evaluate, and compare features and benefits of complex products and services that they do not buy often.

II. The Presentation Trap

Organizations focus on presentations, but often they are not very effective: they amount to unilateral lectures that attract little customer attention and often look very much like one another.

III. The Trap of Discussing with the Customer

When consumers object, sellers usually try to counter them, which was a key component of the script era.
But countering objections in a complex sale can present itself as a dangerous terrain that subsequently leads to difficulties with the client. Frustration over complexity, misunderstanding, and, inevitably, miscommunication means dangerous dynamics.

Part III - Methodical Sales

The best performing salespeople have a sales methodology that consists of system, skill and discipline. In this overview, we will talk about this methodology.

> *challenging market, when so many of our customers are struggling to control costs, our engineers have been reconfiguring our portfolio into industry-leading suites of cost-reduction technologies and services.*

Invest time in learning everything you can about the finances, problems, challenges and opportunities of the client organization. Then build a proposal that can strengthen your company.

- System means an organized approach with well defined steps and procedures;
- Skill is a combination of knowledge, tools and techniques;
- Discipline is a mental and emotional attitude.

Of these three elements, discipline is most important for the following reasons:

1. Recognize that you are asking customers to change

Every solution to any problem requires some modification. And a transformation requires a personal or organizational decision to do things differently.
A sale is not just a matter of analyzing the features and benefits. A sale is about change, which is difficult and risky.

To sell a change to the customer, you need to guide him through a series of psychological and emotional steps called "the progression to change."
This progression goes from a feeling of full satisfaction with the current situation to a state of crisis when a change is inevitable.

2. Focus on Developing Customer Enterprise

Invest time in learning everything you can about the finances, problems, challenges and opportunities of the client organization. Then build a proposal that can strengthen your company.
If you have nothing that can help, do not waste time trying to sell to that customer. Run to where you are needed.

3. Build Trust

Be a combination of doctor, best friend and detective. Doctors prescribe therapies based on a patient's needs, acting professionally with the problem, how it should be done.
Best friends put your interests first, and detectives pay close attention to detail and ask questions.
After discipline, skill is crucial. This element is based on the following tripod:

3.1. People

Success in sales depends on reaching the right people and putting them together. Consumers may not have an effective decision-making process and it is the seller's job to help set one up.
As a film producer, an efficient professional brings together a cast. Include people from the customer organization who can help clarify the problem and specify the solution.

3.2. Questions

Questions are real diagnoses: they reveal the client's situation regarding references, concerns, alternatives and assumptions.

3.3. Sequence

A complex sale requires a series of decisions, not just one. Efficient sellers guide consumers along the way with less resistance through a sequence of decisions.
When the client objects, it means that some step has been left behind.
The process, called the "bridge to change," sets out the objectives, responsibilities, criteria for success, and therefore specific concerns and consequences for the client.
From this, you offer an authentic expectation that your product will solve consumer problems.
Finally, the system, also called the "primary process," is what puts skill and discipline into practice:

- Homework

Identify the consumers who are most likely to change. Not every prospect is a potential customer. Select the most likely consumers based on your searches.
Develop a strategy based on the client's specific circumstances and needs.

- Detection

Drive customers through a self-examination to identify and diagnose their needs. Research shows that this is the most important part of the sale because it is in it that consumers make decisions while they detect their problems.
Follow the pace imposed by the customer. Do not rush, do not ask obvious or merely rhetorical questions.

- Architecture

The seller and the interested party cooperate to find the best solution to the problems identified during the detection phase. The best solution is one that presents the lowest risk and the highest possible return.

- Delivery

As the customer helped set up the solution, the purpose of the delivery step is to increase consumer confidence and appeal to the seller.

Their customers' business environments are more competitive than ever, technological advances are radically altering their industries and markets, and their margin for error is always shrinking. The increased complexity of their environment translates directly to increased complexity in the problems they need to solve

Part IV - Identifying and Involving the Customer

The best sales professionals carefully invest their time and effort, focusing on sales resources where the likelihood of a return is greater. In Part IV, we will cover the most critical points.

Understand what you are proposing

Know the value of your proposal: it is critical to identify the greatest interested. Build a profile of your ideal consumer and then build a plan to connect with those who best suit your profile.

Search about the interested one

Use technology resources. Pay attention to the financial, quality and competitive goals of the customer. Read your tax reports and meet the CEO. Learn the culture of the company.

Do not focus on your first phone call to get a meeting. Instead, give the customer the information that you know in advance that he or she needs.

Be atypical

People do not usually trust sellers, so try not to look like one.
Find the best place to enter the client organization: this place is through the person who is experiencing the problem. Learn all you can about this person, their career, responsibilities and concerns.

Provide customer information

Do not focus on your first phone call to get a meeting. Instead, give the customer the information that you know in advance that he or she needs.

Build the basis for the detection phase

Concorde to garner value by helping the client to better understand the problem so that together you can work to find the solution.
Effective salespeople achieve customer cooperation in identifying, analyzing, quantifying, and seeking a resolution to the problem they face.

What other authors say about it?

In Spin Selling, author Neil Rackham points out that the quality of the questions asked is crucial to the success of the negotiation.
Jeffrey Gitomer in The Sales Bible leaves his message: be honest with customers. If you want to help them, the feeling will be reciprocal, as this helps the process of creating trust and even fidelity to their service.
In the book The 25 Sales Habits of the Most Successful Sellers, Stephan Schiffman points out that one should not use tricks such as stating that the person has just won a lottery. Successful salespeople inspire confidence, the brand of a good leader has vision, deserves respect, is responsible, has a clear sense of direction and confidence.

Okay, but how can I apply this in my life?

At all stages of the sale, let the customer know that you will step away if the value you are presenting does not meet the needs of the interested party.
Remember that a request is not a relationship. Be consistent and trustworthy. After all, selling is not a creative art: the results appear consistently when the methodology used is correct.

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