

# Governing Energy

## Collaborative Selling

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From the perspective of this observer, the energy sector is about to undergo a significant digital transformation.<sup>i</sup> This era is not unlike the transformation made with ERP systems towards the end of the last century.

We have put forth the broader sales framework previously. That construct is designed to assure that organizations making CAPEX investments realize significant value from those projects. We also want sales reps reading this blog to close their deals as well. Win-Win!<sup>ii</sup>

One of the current buzzwords, often overused is the term, COLLABORATION. Fundamentally, there are two basic types of human interaction. We can participate in an *adversarial* relationship such as the stereotypical “used car sales” interaction. The other approach is to *cooperate* with others for the common good, i.e., oil well construction, building a bridge, etc.

If customers are “sold to” it can leave an uneasy feeling that can extend throughout the product lifecycle. However, if clients “buy” your product/service/solution, it is *their* decision and warm feelings may persist through difficulties throughout the lifecycle.

So how does the Type A sales rep move from selling to allowing her customer to buy? This seeming gap is easily breached.

There is a tendency on the part of some sales reps to pressure prospects with statements that are unbelievable, not demonstrable or defensible. This type of hard selling model rightfully belongs in the dustbin of sales methodology history.

Knowledgeable buyers are savvy and sophisticated. Moreover, they often have robust procurement process models in place.<sup>iii</sup> This suggests that multiple levels of constituent parties have some so called, “skin in the procurement game.”

When this is the case and it is for most CAPEX and many OPEX spends, the selling action plan has a significant level of complexity. Managing the selling process requires that these constituents be identified and engaged accordingly.

Moreover, they must all see the value to their Critical Success Factors. We have found over many years selling/licensing technology to industrial sectors that when this process is largely followed “closing the deal” is more likely than when short cuts are taken.

In our related [YouTube](#) video, we cut through the *sales myths* that are holding organizations back from providing their customers true value as well as increasing their own Top Line.<sup>iv</sup> The key to success is collaboration with buyer constituents!

At a recent meeting, one vendor was complaining that his competitors were effectively buying the business. Stating words to the effect that, “all they seek is cash flow to keep as many employed as they can.”

This despite his claims of significant value over his competitors along with his aggressive price point as well. This has been a similar refrain by many sellers for over two years—Value Propositions are not being understood/believed by buyers!

While there is no selling panacea during down business cycles, such times require sales reps to work smarter, not necessarily harder. The model described herein has a proven successful track record for over a decade of business cycles in multiple industries with critical infrastructure.<sup>v</sup>

## **Does Your Sales Organization Sell or Help Your Customers Buy?**

More details are available from the author.

### **About the Author**

Dr. [Scott M. Shemwell](#) has over 30 years technical and executive management experience primarily in the energy sector. He is the author of six books and has written extensively about the field of operations. Shemwell is the Managing Director of The Rapid Response Institute, a firm that focuses on providing its customers with solutions enabling Operational Excellence and regulatory compliance management. He has studied cultural interactions for more than 30 years—his dissertation; *Cross Cultural Negotiations Between Japanese and American Businessmen: A Systems Analysis (Exploratory Study)* is an early peer reviewed manuscript addressing the systemic structure of societal relationships.

### **End Notes**

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<sup>i</sup> Shemwell, Scott M. (2017, April 27). [Digitization Value Proposition](#). Governing Energy. PennEnergy.

<sup>ii</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (2017, May 11). [Selling in Today's Marketplace](#). Governing Energy. PennEnergy

<sup>iii</sup> [https://www.strategyand.pwc.com/media/file/Procurements\\_New\\_Operating\\_Model.pdf](https://www.strategyand.pwc.com/media/file/Procurements_New_Operating_Model.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> Shemwell, Scott M. (2015). [Making the Complex Sale](#). The Rapid Response Institute.

<sup>v</sup> Kuiper, Marcus A. and Shemwell, Scott M. (2013, February). Mitigating Operational Risk Using the Power of Social Media. [Petroleum Africa Magazine](#). pp. 28-31.