

Inside Sales 2.0 Trend Talk 2010

Whew! We're all glad that 2009 is over. Everyone has their own survival stories, and we've gotten through the best of and worst of 2009. Most important, it's gone — and will go down as a dismal decade.

We re-emerge dazed and confused, but we've built character and learned to make lean choices and patiently watch our sales cycle grow longer. This recovery will be slow, but wait! Today's sales landscape is impatient: new quotas, bigger sales funnels, and panicked managers want a big piece of revenue, and the Power of Now confirms the new sales mantra, Nowism.

As we crack open a new time capsule, inside sales comes prepared to make sales history. They are in the hot seat, with bigger numbers to meet this year and more pressure to produce in this fragile economy.

Today's skittish buyers still value innovations that are pragmatic, exciting, and cost efficient. Be prepared! Bring your new smart-selling attitude as you shift into high gear and start a new year with the courage to do some seriously smart selling.

1. **Know Your Customers Intimately:** Given the glut of web-based information available, inside salespeople must come to the table equipped with a depth of information and knowledge about their target customers that proves their research and interest and attracts the prospect's attention.
 2. **Multi-Touch Strategy:** In an era where content is king, frequent distribution of varying content (such as. trend reports, webinars, articles, and the like) is a must. Sending "contagious content" that follows prospects throughout the sales cycle shows buyers you understand and can solve their pressing challenges.
 3. **Synchronize Email and Voicemail:** In order to increase response rate dramatically, email and voicemail messages must work together. Today's salesperson needs to create a consistent communication in vocal and visual messages.
 4. **Determine Power Buyer Worthiness:** More people today are involved in the decision-making process, but fewer have the power to make a purchase decision. Learning to recognize the Power Buyers and push their hot buttons will quickly take you out of the No-Po zone and put you into position for closing the deal.
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5. **Get Good At Online Presentations:** Web conferencing tools have replaced in-person meetings, but holding audiences captive through a Death by PowerPoint presentation guarantees a lost sale. Taking the time to organize, design, and build strong online presentations will quickly convert prospects into buyers.
6. **Practice Prospecting 2.0:** In order to engage a prospect's attention, it is essential for salespeople to insert themselves into the prospective buyer's social network by participating in the client's social media outlets, such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook, and the appropriate blogs.
7. **BANT Is Dead:** Today's prospects have lost patience with vendors. They are tired of hearing the same questions and annoyed with outdated sales tactics. It's time to stop asking meaningless questions of the wrong people or putting prospects in a headlock with a barrage of questions that sound scripted. Ask us for a copy of our Qualification Criteria for a more robust questioning plan.
8. **Get Out of Self-Selling Utopia:** Time to come down from this comfortable, familiar, and safe sales place that is all about YOU. Now that you've got the pitch down, it doesn't mean you can just slobber it over anyone who says "hello." Remember: your delicate, risk averse, distracted and busy prospects need to be heard more than ever.
9. **Green Renaissance Is the New High Tech:** Green is not just about banning plastic bags and eating sustainable foods or driving a hybrid. It's about becoming more efficient in everything you do. Everyone wants a piece of green, so learn to transition your high-tech experience to green space.
10. **Real-time reviews:** Today's buyers tap into a live stream of firsthand experiences from their peers and colleagues. The sheer mass of opinions will lead to a real-time stream of info. Prospects are much more receptive if they receive a recommendation to watch a webinar, listen to a podcast, attend a demo, or download a trial if they hear it from their peers. Become part of the conversation!

About Josiane Feigon:

Josiane Feigon is the founder of TeleSmart Communications and is recognized as one of the world's leading experts on sales. For over 20 years she has provided consulting, coaching, and training solutions for hundreds of Fortune 1000 companies, including Cisco, EMC, Genesys, Oracle, Hewlett-Packard, and VeriSign. Her recent book, ***Smart Selling on the Phone and Online (AMACOM, 2009)*** was chosen by 800-CEO-READ as one of the best sales books of 2009.

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