

Differentiating by Making a Difference

While I admit the numbers are few, I have at times come across someone embarking on a new career outside of the traditional “rat race.” They have spoken of their desire to make a difference in the world as the impetus for this change in career path. They may be tired of pushing paper, dealing with overly demanding customers, or working for a company that just doesn’t “get it.” They’re often heading off to try to make the world a better place with the hope of clearly seeing the results in some quantifiable way. For others, the most rewarding part of their lives is the time they spend after work—volunteering in their communities with a similar hope of making a quantifiable difference. Whichever the case, they saw a need and determined they had some resources to make a difference.

What would be the result if we brought that same commitment to making and quantifying a difference to our jobs? I’m not talking about charitable giving or donating a certain amount of time in our day to worthy causes. Though both are commendable, I’m talking about matching our resources to the needs of our prospective clients. We do it every day (I hope). It’s called sales. But most often we get it backwards. The traditional sales method is one of trying to find a willing listener to hear about our products. The reality of that technique is one of a wish and a prayer—a hope that the value proposition of our product will meet their needs. The result of a productive sale and long-term client relationship usually does come with our products making a difference for the client. However, by first defining the client’s need and then co-creating the value proposition of our solution, we take the guesswork out of the sales equation. The salesperson becomes a difference-maker.

Transforming our company’s sales force and encouraging the adoption of “solution selling” practices takes an organized approach. IPA has just such an approach.

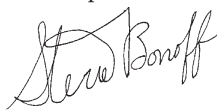
Our new program, **10 Steps to Solution Selling**, is now available at ipa.org/SALES.

Commissioned by IPA and developed and delivered by Patrick Morrissey, the program is a video guide and resource center for implementing solution selling specifically in a graphic solutions sales organization. This program is definitely NOT Sales 101. Developed under the auspices of IPA’s Solution Selling Team, the innovative program consists of 10 power-packed (but concise) videos; implementation tools including worksheets, homework and templates; an online solution selling discussion forum; other solution selling resources; and monthly live chats with Patrick Morrissey.

Who is Patrick Morrissey? For the past two years, he has been the most highly rated speaker at IPA’s Business Development Conference. An industry veteran of 25 years, he advocates one overriding best practice—*help clients make more money*.

The cornerstone of the IPA Solution Selling Program is a video series that focuses on the consultative sale and a process for implementing solution selling in your sales organization. A great advantage of this program is that participants are not restricted to any certain schedule—videos are available online 24/7.

Transforming a sales culture is a daunting task. It takes a serious will by senior leaders and a clearly defined process such as IPA’s **10 Steps to Solution Selling**. But what are the possibilities for our companies if we succeed in shifting the focus from our products to the needs of our prospective clients? Like in our after-hours activities, I submit we’d be reaping far greater profits from the experience.



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