

Evolution of selling

[Science](#), [Biology](#)



The Evolution of selling The essay titled “ Evolution of Selling “ is based upon how selling has developed with the various key changes back into the industrial revolution era that has had an huge impact upon and led to the ways and approaches of selling today and looks into the ancient and modern methods, techniques and attitudes of selling which altogether has contributed to its modernization.

The age of selling has brought about many advancements and developments in the world of Marketing through the encouragement of improving technology and people’s hard working attitude towards it, although, the question that remains is how personal selling even started at the first place? For which, Williams et al. (2001) has said in one of his books, Sales Management, that a street peddler was the first person ever who made a door-to-door sale by collecting the produce from the local farmers and selling it to the townspeople.

Selling today would never have been so convincing if door-to-door selling was never introduced in the market because without understanding the customer’s needs and wants in detail by discussing with them, the company wouldn’t know what satisfies a customer, what products for whom and how they should be made according to their needs.

Salespeople who earned a living only by selling products did not happen to be many in numbers until the Industrial Revolution (mid 1700s) hit England as traders, merchants, and artisans used to fill in the selling function before this era and were treated with disrespect due to frequent use of deception in the sale of goods (Williams et al. , 2001).

The need for more salespeople was increasing since the local economies were no longer self-reliant and intercity and international trade began to flourish and therefore by the Post-Industrial Revolution Era (Early 1800s), personal selling was well recognized in England, whereas in the United States, it had just begun although eventually after the 1850s became a well-established part of the United States business practice. For example, sending out of 400 traveling salespeople in the 1880s was being reported by one wholesaler in the Detroit area (Williams et al. , 2001).

Furthermore, Charles W. Hoyt, 1912 cited in Williams et al. (2001; p19) as author of one of the first textbooks on sales management, records two types of salespeople “ The old kind of salesman is the ‘ big me’ species.... He works for himself and, so far as possible, according to his own ideas.... There is another type of salesman. He is the new kind. At present he is in the minority, but he works for the fastest growing and most successful houses of the day. He works for the house and the house works for him. He welcomes and uses every bit of help the house sends to him. Hoyt’s observations about the ‘ old’ and the ‘ new’ salesperson had woken up the managements of firms in the United States who were beginning to realize the incredible potential of personal selling. The two World Wars and the Great Depression Era had affected the United States badly during the 30 year period from 1915-1945. New sales methods did not develop quickly then as the economic activity had to concentrate on the war efforts and due to this depression, Business firms had to employ aggressive salespeople to produce badly needed sales revenue (Williams et al. 2001). This in turn may have led upon the corrosion of the customers because a salesperson without

the personal code of ethics and being aggressive can erode customers by pushing them into the product forcefully even if they are not willing to buy it. During the post- World War II era, Salespeople as employees were given more importance since many more firms were beginning to understand the benefits of research- based integrated marketing programs (Williams et al. 2001). Professionalism and the Marketing era begins in the late 1940s where Buyers became more intolerant of high-pressure putting sellers and instead preferred a well-informed, customer-oriented salesperson, for which, an article called ‘ low pressure selling’ was published by Harvard Business Review in the year 1947 helping the salespeople put more efforts in improvising their professional behavior and building a good rapport with the buyers (Williams et al. , 2001).

More organizations were beginning to realize that the salespersons are in a position to collect product, market and service information concerning and determining the target market’s needs and wants in order to deliver the desired satisfaction (Manning, Ahearne and Reece, 2012). Since the beginning of the modern era, Personal selling has developed through many distinctive stages such as the transactional selling era, the consultative selling era, the strategic selling era and the partnering era.

During the transactional selling era, the two forces namely, Psychology and Methodology was introduced in the 1950s which changed the whole selling industry and both of them adjoined to create a five step process called AIDCA, an acronym for Attention through sizzle, Interest aroused by describing the features and benefits, Desire by associating features and

benefits with the needs and wants, Conviction from the seller in overcoming objections and Action by actively closing in for commitment (Hughes, nd).

Transaction selling is the set of skills, strategies and sales processes that matches the needs of intrinsic value customers who treat suppliers as a commodity and are especially interested in the price and the convenience of the product (Rackham and Devincentis, 1999). In transactional selling, the buyers are mainly focused to a low-priced and a convenient product to buy, whereas the salesperson is focused into manipulating the buyer into buying it.

The marketers were beginning to adopt lower cost sales channels for such sale but the decline in transactional selling due to the rise in e-commerce, increasing the complexity of businesses, led to the rise of the consultative selling era (Manning, Ahearne and Reece, 2012). The consultative selling era began in the late 1960s and early 1970s which is more focused onto the customer's need-identification and is accomplished through effective communication between the buyer and the seller.

According to Neil Rackham and John Devincentis, in their book ' Rethinking the sales force', the consultative selling is linked with extrinsic value customers who demand more value and are willing to pay for any additional benefits outside of the product. The seller listens carefully to the customers' needs and problems and tries to come up with an appropriate solution to it, which also leads to the building of customer's trust for it. Manipulation is replaced by Negotiation in consultative selling as the seller look towards making long-term relationships with the customers (Manning, Ahearne and Reece, 2012).

Neil Rackham's, Author of the best-selling sales book ' Spin Selling ', SPIN selling method is the perfect example for this where S stands for Situation, P for Problem, I for Implication and N for Need Payoff. The strategic selling era began to evolve in the 1980s where the businesses witnessed a more complex selling situation due to the increase in global competition, wider product lines, and greater demand for more specific and custom-made products. A strategy is just more than tactics, it often involves analyzing the market and searching for information related to the customer's needs and wants before making the actual sale.

Its steps are to develop a personal selling philosophy, develop a relationship strategy, develop a product strategy, develop a customer strategy, and develop a presentation strategy (Manning, Ahearne and Reece, 2012). The Partnering Era was beginning to grab attention in the 1990s and turned into a business reality in the 2000s. It is strategically developed by skillfully applying the four major strategies of the strategic selling and also delivering a quality product and building a quality long-term relationship with the customer (Manning, Ahearne and Reece, 2012).

In modern selling, it doesn't always have to be on foot because most of the organizations apply a variety of other selling methods calling it ' the selling mix' in which, according to William C. Moncrief and Greg W. Marshall in their article " Evolution of the seven stages of selling", it includes methods such as teleselling, part-time sales forces, internet selling, national account representatives and selling through the use of partners.

The traditional seven steps of selling involves steps such as Prospecting- salespeople find their own prospects and potential customers, Preapproach-
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salespeople study customer's needs and wants prior to the actual visit, Approach-salespeople build rapport with customer's by applying strategies, Presentation- Providing sufficient information for the buyer to understand the products benefits, Objections- Customer objects and asks questions relating to the product and the company, therefore salespeople should answer in a positive manner to reveal customer's needs, Close- closing the sale with the commitment to buy the product, Follow up- After service to make sure the customer is happy with the purchase(Moncrief and Marshall, 2005). There were many transformative factors, which led to the evolution of these seven steps of selling, such as telemarketing, support staff, PowerPoint/multimedia, listening, team selling, identifying mutualgoals, increased effectiveness of communication through technology and many more (Moncrief and Marshall, 2005).

The evolved selling process then turns out to be the following: Customer retention and deletion- 80% of Business made from 20% of existing customers so company decides to retain the high potential and profitable customers rather than prospecting for new ones, Database and knowledge management- Technological advances such as email and mobile phones has helped salespeople create a customer database quicker than before, Customer relationship management- Requires the salespeople to maintain a long term relation with the customers, Marketing the product- Salespeople now have to market the product by using segmentation and targeting etc. , Problem solving and system selling- Identify customers problems and needs and implement effective solution, Satisfying needs and adding value- Stimulate need recognition for the customer to realize their needs (Jobber

and Lancaster, 2009). In conclusion, there still are some traditional techniques and methods used in the professionalism of selling today although there is one big difference that the selling before was company oriented and selling today is customer oriented. Reflection

The essay on the evolution of selling was very interesting as it has familiarized me with the history of selling before moving any further with the modern selling and it has enriched me with lots of quality knowledge by referring to quality sources I can trust. If I'm to make a career in selling, which I think I will since it has filled the gaps of my theoretical and practical knowledge and that I also find it very interesting, it will also help not to repeat the mistakes in future that have been made previously by other salesmen. It has made me think about the skills that I already possess and the ones that I need to work on like communications skills, presentation skills.

It did not seem interesting at first but then when I got to know the basics of the evolution of selling and what's this essay is going to be about, I was filled with enthusiasm and kick-started it with a spark. Although it was quite difficult to look for the appropriate sources and took a lot of time going through it, I was not the least bothered and was ready to go that extra mile and make the effort. References Hughes, T. (nd), The Evolution of Selling, Available from <http://rsvpselling.com/content/evolution-selling>. Last accessed 10th November 2012. Jobber, D. and Lancaster, G. (2009), Selling and Sales Management, 8th edition, Essex (England), Pearson Education Limited. Manning, L. G. , Ahearne, M. , and Reece, L. B. (2012), Selling Today: Partnering to create value, 12th edition, New Jersey, <https://assignbuster.com/evolution-of-selling/>

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