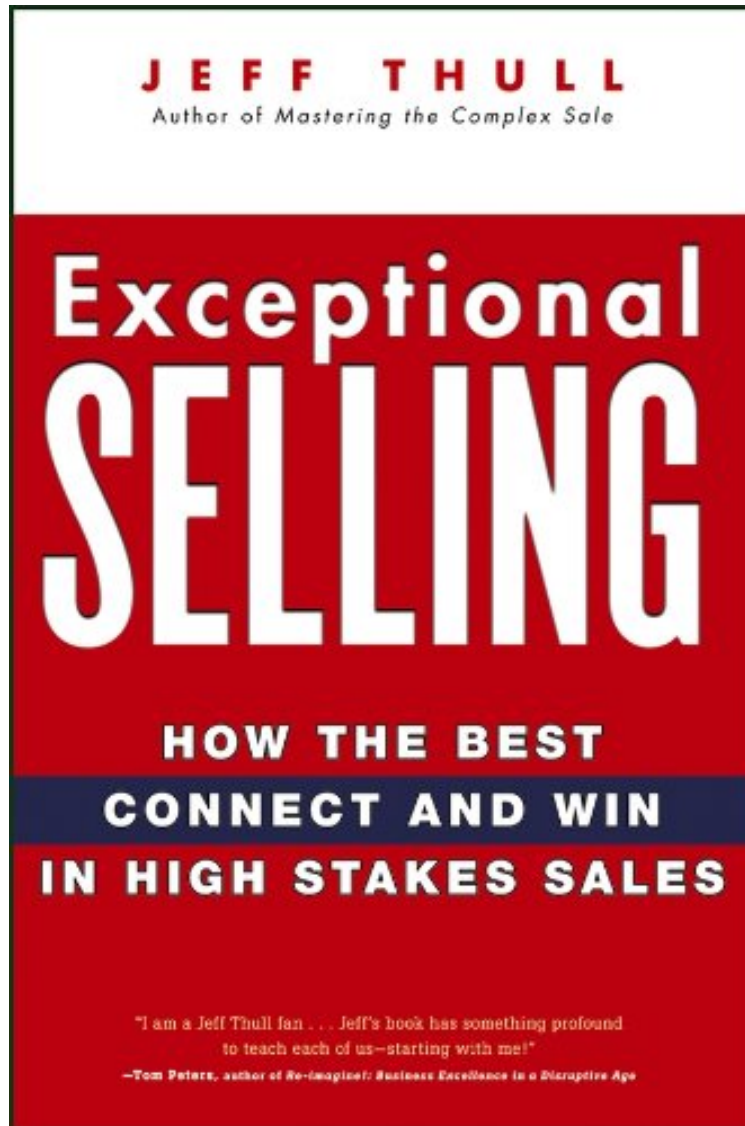


[Free] Exceptional Selling: How the Best Connect and Win in High Stakes Sales

Exceptional Selling: How the Best Connect and Win in High Stakes Sales

Jeff Thull

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Jeff Thull : Exceptional Selling: How the Best Connect and Win in High Stakes Sales before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Exceptional Selling: How the Best Connect and Win in High Stakes Sales:

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful. A practical guideBy Sahra Badou'Exceptional Selling' is a practical guide to sales success that shows sales professionals how to avoid the many traps of self-sabotage brought about by self, peer, and customer pressure and traditional sales approaches. It shows sales professionals how to create

a different kind of relationship with the customer and to reframe the typical sales conversation into open, honest and straightforward communication. The author says that by replicating the practices of top-performing professionals, you'll learn new, exceptional ways to sell that can set you apart and pull you ahead of the pack. Here are some notes I took while reading this book that might be helpful to you: Every salesperson must understand the customer's world. This is done by not only being a good listener, but by understanding the client's meaning system--the whole set of assumptions, experiences, values, and beliefs that create the context for their perceptions, judgments, and decisions. Before we can listen at this level, our customers have to be willing to talk to us as equals. We need to establish peer-to-peer relationships with them. How can this be done when everyone is competing for their attention? According to the author, establishing a mind-set of mutual respect is the secret to walking this fine line. We have to assume that our customers are experts in their businesses and, furthermore, that they know their own organizations far better than any outsider ever will. We don't have to insult customers by telling them everything we think they don't know (p. xiii-xiv). In the rush to sell something, as soon as the customer mentions a problem, the salespeople start talking about how to solve it with their solution. They make premature judgments, and in doing so, they shut down or change the direction of their conversations and miss the richness of insight, perspective, and depth of knowledge that the customer could provide. The usual outcome is a dissatisfied customer; or, dissatisfied because he knows that the salesperson has stopped listening and won't know enough about his situation to propose the best solution. The ideal sales conversation starts with actually hearing customers in their own terms and with their own meanings. As a conversation progresses, you migrate to a more structured discourse in which you are trying to make sense of what customers are telling you in light of the frameworks in which you are expert. You're situating your expertise inside the customer's world (p. xiv-xv). Sales professionals who are exceptional conversationalists as well as exceptional diagnosticians are like chess masters. They know the pattern of the board, the strategies of the game, and they know where they are, where they're going, and their options at every instant (p. xvii). Salespeople often have two strikes against them every time they engage a customer: they are relying on unconscious patterns that were already set in stone by the time they entered kindergarten; and they are working with a sales process that encourages an atmosphere of confrontation. These sabotage our relationships with customers (p. xxv). A study revealed that the number-one reason that patients change doctors was not based upon the doctor's competence, but on the doctor's bedside manner, that is, how well the doctor appeared to understand and respond to the patient (p. 10). When you're feeling pressure, you're doing something wrong (p. 19). Do not answer an unasked question (p. 11). When customers are engaged, they learn. When what they learn is compelling enough to make them want to change and take action, they will buy (p. 10). You may be sabotaging your own career. A very common scenario occurs when salespeople unwittingly play the parent with customers and alienate them at the very beginning of the sale. Many customers hear a parent or superior insinuating that they don't know their own business. Once the parent and the child manifest themselves in a business conversation, old patterns of reacting often kick in, and what's left of your connection and credibility with the customer quickly deteriorates. In the dialogue that follows, you'll see that salespeople often respond as the child to their customers: Prospect: Our Company is planning to purchase an integrated CRM software package for our marketing, sales and service staff. We would like you to demonstrate your solution to our management team by the end of the month. Salesperson: First, I need to get a better understanding of your company's needs and budget. I'd like to meet with several of the executives at your company. Prospect: We'd rather not take the time for that. We'd like to start with an overview first and if things look good, we can progress from there. Salesperson: It's very difficult to present such a complex solution without understanding more about your situation and budget constraints. Prospect: We don't have time to waste on meetings. Do you want to work with us or not? Salesperson: Certainly, when would be the most convenient time for the demo? What happened here was driven by emotion. The customer says he wants a product demonstration, a normal and often costly part of the complex sales process. The salesperson responds as an adult and seeks to ensure that a demonstration of his product can be tailored and is appropriate for the customer and his own company. The customer responds like a parent; it's going to be his way or the highway. The salesperson, overly anxious to please and scared to lose the sale, responds like a child by complying and, in doing so, commits to an expensive course of action that may very well have no chance of yielding a sale (p. 14-15). Just as it takes two to tango, salespeople and customers enter conversations with preconceived perceptions and expectations and distinct mind-sets. Customers tend to paint all salespeople with the same brush. To them, salespeople--no matter whether they sell advanced avionics or used cars--all come out of the same mold. And customers' negative perception of salespeople is often based on direct experience. To break these patterns and establish credibility and trust with customers, the author recommends the following: 1. Salespeople need to be professionally involved and emotionally detached in conversations with customers. 2. Salespeople must retrain themselves and learn new conversational processes and skills. 3. Salespeople have to confront their conditioning and establish themselves as valued business advisers. What is the one and only thing your customers really want to know? Value. You can't count on customers to recognize on their own the value you bring to the table, to calculate what it's worth or accurately determine if they should pay its price. You must help the customer connect the dots. The customer is the judge and jury in the sale, but you are the expert, the guide. The value proposition is nothing more than a capability, and your primary responsibility is to make it relevant.

Once you know how to translate value, you are on your way to regular and predictable success in sales. When a value translation is done properly, the pieces of the customer's puzzle come together and you get the credit (p. 39-40). Successful sales professionals maintain and protect their self-esteem and their customer's self-esteem at all times. What does self-esteem have to do with sales? When salespeople inadvertently damage their customer's self-esteem, they risk losing the cooperation and participation that are so important to the sales process. Some salespeople ask the customer questions like: "What's keeping you awake at night?" and "What types of pain are you feeling in your manufacturing process?" The danger is you are insinuating that the customer doesn't know what he is doing. If you "get to the pain" without being sensitive to self-esteem, you can easily alienate the customer and destroy the relationship. A sales engagement is not the right place to get our emotional needs met or give our emotions free rein. Salespeople should be professionally involved, but emotionally detached (p. 173). There are only two reasons why customers don't buy: 1. They don't believe they have a problem, so they don't have incentive to change. 2. They don't believe the solution proposed will work. Never be afraid or unwilling to tell a customer your price the moment the question is asked. The right question is not whether the price is reasonable or not. The right question is, "Does the customer's situation warrant our level of solution in financial terms?" You have competitors; your customers have alternatives (p. 143). In his book, 'Failure Is Not an Option', NASA Mission Control Director Gene Kranz described the necessity of having a mental map in the world of test pilots. Test pilots, he said, are always trying to stay ahead of the airplane; they are trying to get ahead of the power curve. They work hard to 'anticipate what could happen rather than just reacting to what was happening at the moment.' That is the mark of a professional in any field of endeavor (p. 79). This is a good book to read if you want to master the art of selling. It offers great advice and workable methods. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A great read in a complex environment!! By Chris Flangas Well write book! The book has lots of practical information, examples and solutions for every sales professional! A must read to get yourself thinking in a new direction and enhance your sales 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By KLH Good read

Praise for Exceptional Selling "Thull's leading-edge thinking makes this book extraordinary. This straightforward guide to communicating across all cultures with credibility and respect will give you a significant competitive advantage in a complex and crowded global marketplace." — Guenter Lauber, Vice President, Siemens Energy Automation, Inc., EA Systems "Exceptional Selling may be one of the most important books written on sales and marketing communications for high stakes sales. It shows you how to stand apart from your competition, communicate with great clarity, and position your solution as the most compelling choice for the long term." — Rob Mancuso, Senior Vice President, Investors Financial Services Corp. "Thull has taken consultative and collaborative sales to new heights. The knowledge in this book is priceless. The trust and respect created by the diagnostic process is a must-have for success here in Asia and around the globe. It enables us to differentiate ourselves early and achieve long-lasting success." — Tay Chong Siew, Major Customer Director, North Asia, BOC Gases "Having achieved exceptional success by working with Thull and implementing the strategy and process in his first two books, I'm astounded that his leading-edge thinking is captured in yet more detail in another brilliant book. The conversation examples of his powerful diagnostic approach will bring even greater success to our organization. Truly exceptional!" — Alberto Chacin, Director of On Demand Services LAD, Oracle USA "Exceptional Selling is a dramatic departure from the vast majority of sales books. It scares me to see all the ways in which we can self-sabotage our sales opportunities-but that's only chapter one. Throughout the book, Thull describes compelling examples of how to succeed in a cluttered marketplace." — Steven Rodriguez, Senior Vice President, Ceridian Corporation "Thull has again extended the concepts and thinking he developed in The Prime Solution and Mastering the Complex Sale. This is an essential read for anyone working to understand his customers in a complex world." — Wayne Hutchinson, Vice President of Sales Marketing and Consulting, Shell Global Solutions International B.V.

"I am a Jeff Thull fan...Jeff's book has something profound to teach each of us- starting with me!" - Tom Peters, author of Re-Imagine!: Business Excellence in a Disruptive Age In his book Exceptional Selling, sales expert Jeff Thull shatters decades-old assumptions about B2B selling and presents a new approach that he calls Diagnostic Selling. Thull delivers straight talk about the one-on-one skills that professionals need in order to set themselves apart, connect with their customers, and raise the bar for the competition. --CRM Magazine, October 2006 Exceptional Selling's approach extols the value of Diagnostic Selling: professional involvement and emotional detachment, not confrontation and persuasion. Author Jeff Thull breaks down complex business-to-business sales with clear, step-based directions, easy to understand diagrams and charts, and case studies of successes and failures. Exceptional Selling gently prods salespeople toward corrective strategies for errors that often go undiagnosed in the chase for the deal. --Sales Marketing Management Magazine, October 2006 Exceptional Selling focuses heavily on the actual processes of the diagnostic process Thull advocates and offers excellent advice and examples on such topics as protecting the customer's ego during the sales cycle, learning how to develop analyses of customer needs that are credible, and (perhaps my favorite topic in the book) why you should avoid those PowerPoint presentations the

industry is addicted to. --Rick Chapman, Managing Editor and Publisher of Softletter Many salespeople believe their sales are successes or failures based on emotional connections with customers who are either too involved or too distant. Author Jeff Thull sets out to change conventional thinking. Thull advises how to deal with all stages of the sales cycle stages. He breaks down complex business-to-business sales with clear, step-based directions, easy to understand diagrams and charts, and case studies of successes and failures. Exceptional Selling gently prods salespeople toward corrective strategies for errors that often go undiagnosed in the chase for the deal. --Tali Arbel, ManageSmarter.com

From the Inside Flap If you're one of the six million people who work in the fast-paced, high-stress world of complex sales, you want the latest strategies and skills for success. This practical guide gives you the tools to take your sales game, your communication skills, and your career to the next level of success. Exceptional Selling features street-level straight talk about the one-on-one skills that professionals need to succeed. In this prescriptive and practical guide, author Jeff Thull challenges conventional thinking and gets down to the key ingredients of sales success: the magic formula based on a powerful communication mindset, exceptional skills, and winning disciplines taken from the best in the business. You'll get the edge you need to set yourself apart from the competition, connect to your customers' hearts and minds, and clearly establish the value you offer. Exceptional Selling is about what works. Its focus is the most dynamic and challenging part of the sales process: the authentic conversation: what top sales professionals talk about with their customers as well as how they say it. Successful communication resides at the intersection of content and delivery, substance and style. It's your key to privileged access and privileged insight. Exceptional Selling is a step-by-step guide to the kind of critical conversations you must have to win the high stakes sale and build powerful relationships. From the crucial first call that sets the stage, to the critically important C-suite executive conversations that build your credibility, to the financial conversations that create a compelling case for your value (and all the important conversations in between), you'll find specific examples that will propel you forward and help you achieve greater success and profitability. This is the first book to apply powerful diagnostic principles directly to sales conversations. It shows you how to create a customer engagement in which the common barriers to success: limited access, ambiguous words, objections, and cutthroat negotiations: melt away. If you want to set yourself apart from the rest, connect with your customers, raise the bar for your competition, and win in the game of high stakes sales, Exceptional Selling is the book that will take you there.