

Then and Now in Sales

Ah, the good old days! Having sold in each of the past five decades, I am often drawn to the good old days, a time when life was simpler, kinder, and gentler. I love my trips down memory lane. Life was so much easier in those days than today. Or, was it? I call this then and now:

Then, it was pay phones and rolls of coins in your pockets.
Now, it is a cell phone.

Then, we researched our customers in the library or had to seek out others who knew something.
Now, we Google.

Then, it was three-piece suits, white shirts, and wing tips.
Now, it is business casual and ECCO's.

Then, our proposals were typed from scratch, every time.
Now, we cut and paste with word processing.

Then, we carried a business card file.
Now, we use LinkedIn.

Then, we had the grapevine.
Now, we have Facebook.

Then, our letters went snail mail.
Now, we email.

Then, we carried boxes of literature.
Now, we send PDF's.

Then, it was word of mouth.
Now, it is word of Net.

Then, it was real-time product demos.
Now, it is online videos and YouTube.

Then, it was three martini lunches.
Now, it is lawyers, liability, and substance abuse training.

Then, we talked to assistants to get information.
Now, we leave voice messages.

Then, people answered their phones.
Now, automated phone systems direct your call to voice mail.

Then, we talked.
Now, we text.

Then, your competition was down the street.
Now, your competition is on another continent.

Then, we sent handwritten cards.
Now, we send e-cards.

Then, it was FedEx.
Now, it is Amazon's drones.

Then, we had winners and losers.
Now, everyone is a winner—even the losers.

Then, rejection was part of selling. Oh well, on to the next call.
Now, rejection is cause for therapy and antidepressants.

Then, it was call reports.
Now, it is CRM.

Then, we had tickler files to rummage through.
Now, we have smart phone calendars with alarms.

Then, it was face time.
Now, it is videoconferencing.

Then, we read news stories about customers.
Now, we get Google alerts.

Yes, the good old days. On balance, I think these days are the good old days. Technology has made our lives better, and worse. Things may be easier today, and maybe that is good. As our culture changes, we adapt, or not. Selling is easier today in some ways. Selling is more difficult today in some ways. It is easier for those who adapt and more difficult for those who fail to adapt.

Here's wishing you and yours a prosperous and adaptable 2014.

Author byline: Tom Reilly is a professional speaker and author of twelve books. Tom is literally the guy who wrote the book on *Value-Added Selling* (McGraw-Hill, 2010), the book that started the value selling revolution. For more information on Tom's presentations, training, and products, visit his website www.TomReillyTraining.com or call his office, 636-537-3360.

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