

## THINK AS CUSTOMERS THINK

Customerizing is a vital part of Value-Added Selling. It is learning to think as customers think. Customers want to buy from salespeople that understand their needs and design solutions that align with these needs. This understanding and design must come from an in-depth immersion into the customer's world. Immersion means fully assimilating into the customer's business and viewing it from the inside-out, not just the outside-in.

The core competency for salespeople that facilitates this in-depth understanding is probing and listening, but immersion runs even deeper than this. Immersion is "being" in the customer's world. It includes things like: introducing cross-functional teams; going high, wide, and deep in the account; talking with the customer's customers and suppliers; studying industry magazines and journals; visiting their websites regularly; and touring facilities. Immersion is more than asking questions; it means penetrating for the look and feel of things. This presumes a level of perceptiveness that escapes most people. This level of receptivity means that you must put the focus squarely on the customer. You are there to observe and process information, not just to pitch an idea. The payoff for this openness is significant.

By opening yourself to this immersion into the customer's world, you gain access to their needs, wants, and fears. Each of these influences how your buyer makes decisions. The more of this information you have access to, the more complete your solution, and the more desirable your solution.

When you make your calls today, don't just ask questions; immerse yourself into the customer's world. Open your eyes, ears, and mind to experience the customer's reality from his or her perspective.

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