

Two Things Customers Want

by Tom Reilly

The Yin and Yang of business are the dynamic forces of contraction and expansion. Contraction is tightening and expansion is growth. These forces translate into the two things every customer wants: efficiency and traction.

Efficiency is streamlining, eliminating fat, and shedding waste. This means controlling costs. Buyers who want greater efficiency must expand their fields of awareness to consider all the ways their companies spend money. This transcends buying things on the cheap. They must consider inbound logistics costs, maintenance, energy, downtime, outbound logistics, etc. Buying something that is merely cheap may not translate into greater efficiency. In fact, buying something cheap may ultimately create additional costs as it fails to perform.

Traction is gaining—market share, profitability, or increased sales. When a seller helps a buyer gain traction, the focus is top line and bottom line. When a manufacturer helps a distributor penetrate new markets, that is traction. When a company that provides data analytics helps their customers make better decisions in their go-to-market strategies, that is traction. Gaining traction can also mean helping customers gain ground on solving a problem with which they have struggled.

So, as a value-added salesperson, your task is to determine how you can help your customers operate more efficiently and gain traction—whatever those mean in your business.

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