

THE BEST DEFENSE IS A STRONG OFFENSE

None of us gets the credit we deserve; we only get the credit we ask for. As most people are unaware of the air that they breathe, most customers are unaware of the value that they receive. Does your company get all of the credit that it deserves for the value that it delivers to your customers? I suspect not. Few do.

A key differentiator of Value-Added Selling from other sales approaches is the emphasis that we place on defensive selling—the sale after the sale. Defensive selling is about the retention and growth of existing customers. This presumes that you have satisfied customers. One way to ensure satisfied customers is to check on yourself and to remind the customer of the impact that your solution has on their business. How do you do this? Value reminding.

Value reminding is positive bragging. It is getting credit for your value-added and the effect that it has on the customer's world. You can document your value-added with no-charge invoices, delivery performance reports, or service level reviews. When you follow up to ensure that the customer is satisfied with the support that he has received, the conversation reminds him of your concern and offers the chance to brag about your service. When you conduct a value audit (a vendor performance appraisal), you discuss your performance relative to the customer's needs.

Documentation, bragging, and auditing reinforce in the customer's mind the value of your solution. It is working as hard to keep the business as you did to get the business. You do not wait for the customer to re-think their decision to buy from you or to second-guess their decision. Take the initiative in reminding them because the best defense is a great offense.

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