

WHY SALES IS A TEAM SPORT

“In sales, we talk about what everyone else does. If they don’t do anything, we’ve got nothing to talk about.” VP of Sales, Food Processor

Humans are social creatures. We find meaning in being a part of something bigger and better than ourselves. The need-to-belong, to fit in somewhere, is a compelling force of human nature. To paraphrase John Donne’s famous line of poetry, none of us is an island; we all depend on something other than self to navigate through life. This is especially true in sales.

Salespeople depend on others to design, produce, and ship materials. No salesperson can satisfy the customer’s needs by himself or herself. The synergy of all pieces working together is what creates value for customers. This is why Value-Added Selling is a team sport—an integrated sales and operations model for designing and delivering value-added solutions.

There are four things that value-added salespeople can do to support this team dynamic:

1. Share information about customers with your internal team members. This includes information about the buyer’s needs, expectations, and metrics for success.
2. Engage other team members in the sales process. Make joint calls with customer contact and operations teammates to introduce cross-functional teams. The more levels on which you connect, the stronger your ties with customers.
3. Practice saying “our” customer, not “my” customer. If others hear you say “my” customer, they feel no ownership or accountability to serve “your” customer.
4. Share the glory with others on your team, and demonstrate your genuine appreciation for their efforts.

For more than a century, scientists have studied migratory birds flying in V-formation and determined that geese, flying in formation, can fly 70% longer than birds winging it alone. It seems that teamwork is for the birds.

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