

Easier to Buy and Easier to Sell

5MetaCom's approach to advertising technical and scientific products
Part III: Making products Easier to Sell



We looked at how to make technical and scientific products easier for potential customers to buy in Part II of this three-part series. In Part III, we'll look at how to make products easier for companies to sell. While "Easier to Buy" focused on the customer's point of view, "Easier to Sell" describes the seller's perspective. That means you. While these two concepts represent two different points of view, "Easier to Buy" and "Easier to Sell" really work together. By making technical and scientific products easier for customers to buy and easier for your company to sell, you increase your chances of boosting product sales.

What is "Easier to Sell"?

The premise seems simple. If you make your products easier to sell, your people will sell more. Most companies agree with this idea. But they don't know how to put it into practice.



Sometimes there's something about your product that makes it "Easier to Sell". Maybe you have an innovative feature or competitive advantage. While these types of things make your products "Easier to Sell", you can't always count on having them. With that in mind, "Easier to Sell" considers the marketer's point of view. It examines the role of your sales reps and distribution channel. And looks for ways to efficiently and cost effectively equip them to make an impact in the marketplace.

What makes products "Easier to Sell"?

"Easier to Sell" emphasizes efficiency, success, and implementation of your sales process. The end result: a selling method the entire sales force can use to consistently deliver product messages. So what makes your products and services easier to sell?

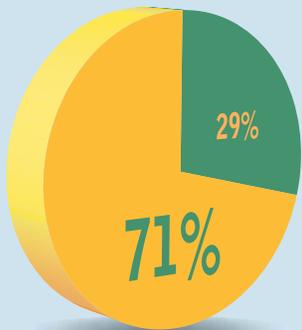
Simply arming your sales reps with consistent, appropriate sales tools can make your products easier to sell.

- **The sales force is equipped to address common scenarios.** "Easier to Sell" arms them with relevant, compelling and consistent messages and sales tools to deliver to prospects. When sales materials lack relevancy and consistency, prospects must synthesize key messages on their own to understand important product benefits. Some will, but many won't bother.

Do incentives make your products “Easier to Sell”?

Coupons, rebates and other pricing promotions often entice new customers. This can make it easier for your sales force. But a study of 300 new bank customers reports incentives don't always attract long-term customers. Although the majority of new customers were gained as a result of an incentive (71%), this didn't translate into ongoing, profitable business for the bank.²

Incentives may not bring the customers you want



- Became customers as a result of an incentive
- Became customers on their own (self-determined)

In the study, people who became customers on their own initiative (without responding to an incentive) were twice as profitable for the bank and 80% less likely to leave for a competitor.²



- **Prospects want to and are ready to buy.** Awareness sets the stage for potential buyers being more receptive to hearing from your sales force. Customers with some degree of awareness travel a shorter path through the stages of product adoption. This makes the job of your sales force faster and easier. So how can you increase awareness? By communicating your key messages again and again. And then again, using other methods in addition to the sales force. Why? It takes frequency to build enough awareness for potential buyers to remember your distinct product benefits.
- **You constantly give the sales force something new to talk about.** Buyers tend to have more interest in something new. And sales people like having new things to take to their customers. This doesn't necessarily mean a new product. Maybe it's a communications piece about a new product use. Or an article citing a study on product performance. It could be a new way of explaining how something works or a new way to use an existing product.

- **You have a selling method everyone can uniformly use.** When products are “Easier to Sell,” each of your sales people can use the same cohesive sales process. Ideally they'll adopt the process, follow it, and won't veer off track. Without a formalized process, sales reps invent their own messages and methods which may not consistently or accurately deliver your product brand messages. “Superstar” sales people can communicate the brand without a formalized sales process. But there are not a lot of “superstars” out there. Finding and keeping stars is difficult and expensive. Studies suggest supporting the people already working for you offers a more efficient and cost effective approach than to recruit the “stars” from other companies.¹

- **The sales force stays focused on selling.** This means the marketers take care of the marketing strategy, messages, product communications, marketing materials and sales tools. Without marketing support, it's common for sales people to create their own marketing materials. Do a quick PowerPoint for a meeting. Or create a product detailer. This makes the sales force wear two hats: sales and marketing. How is it easier to sell if they only spend part of their time selling?

To find out more about how 5MetaCom creates advertising that makes technical and scientific products easier to buy and easier to sell, contact us.

Stages of Product Adoption



Customers in any industry move through five stages from initial awareness to product adoption.

¹ Groysberg, Boris; Nanda, Ashish; Nohria, Nitin. The Risky Business of Hiring Stars, *Harvard Business Review*, May 2004.

² Dholakia, Paul. The Hazards of Hounding, *Harvard Business Review*, October 2005.