

# Inside

## BUSINESS

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## The Canterbury Sales®

### Changed selling behavior and the controlled burn

By Andy Gole

In one sense, the easiest way to grow sales is through changed sales behavior. We can increase sales 10-20 percent (or more) without substantial investment in new products/offices/facilities/employees.

The catch – salespeople must change their behavior.

This is very challenging and generally entails a three-paradigm shift:

1. Underlying value code
2. Process – A strong standard sales call
3. Strong visionary messaging

The hardest change is the underlying value code. Too many salespeople sell on social values – they want to make friends versus profitable customers. Successful business development requires we sell on business values – taking a “do-or-die” approach to business.

In parallel with the change in value code is adopting a best practices sales process, embedded in a standard sales call – a step-by-step procedure to remedy the three fatal flaws in the selling process:

1. The belief you are in a serious conversation
2. The belief prospects believe what you say
3. The belief prospects know how to make a decision

Achieving changed behavior usually entails the skills of sales training, change management and sales system design. Top management generally expects sales leadership to have and implement

these necessary skill sets for achieving changed sales behavior.

Unfortunately, it is unlikely a strong sales manager has the skills to lead the sales team through a difficult three-way paradigm shift. Sales management’s job is to manage an existing system. Achieving changed behavior requires a specialist skilled in model building – conceiving and implementing paradigm shifts.

Usually, the change process requires a “controlled burn.”

The controlled burn is discussed in Kathleen Eisenhardt’s book, *Competing on the Edge*, in the context of creating a wildlife preserve in an urban area. Trying to replicate all the factors found in a rural area was ineffective – until leadership realized there are fires periodically in the wild. Instituting controlled burns catalyzed growth and allowed the urban nature preserve to flourish.

Analogously, corporations invite “out of the box” change leadership to perform a controlled burn, to revitalize the sales organism. Essential to a successful controlled burn for the sales team is:

- Unwavering top management support. The change process will take at least 16 weeks of seminars and coaching. There typically will be resistance to change. Management should exhaustively learn about and vet the change agent – then commit to the change agent’s program.

- Mandatory participation in the program by the sales team. Some sales team members may consider themselves “above” change, or consider the program “flavor of the week,” to be endured until it fails. All sales team members must know this is mandatory.
  - Top management participating in the seminars and embracing the changed behavior in their work. Nothing is as compelling as the leadership doing the program themselves.
  - Training of sales management to ramp up the new program and then run the program when the change process is finished.
  - Consequences. There must be consequences for non-compliance. Rome wasn’t built in a day and change doesn’t take place instantaneously. However, if a sales team member is being non-compliant after two-to-three months, there should be a consequence.
- How do you know there was an effective controlled burn? When the process is complete, we observe:
- Effective new behaviors in place
  - Increased sales
  - A happier sales team
  - A belief “we always did it this way”



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Andy Gole has taught selling skills for 17 years. He started three businesses and has made approximately 4,000 sales calls, selling both B2B and B2C. He invented a selling process, *Urgency Based Selling®*, with which he can typically help companies double their closing or conversion ratio. Learn more about Andy’s method at [www.bombadillic.com](http://www.bombadillic.com) or by calling him at 201.415.3447.