

# Inside

## BUSINESS

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## The Canterbury Sales®

### The Consultative Sell and *Angels and Demons*

By Andy Gole

Buyers have a job – to turn everything they buy into a commodity. It isn't personal, it's their job. They are meant to create new bottoms to the market, based on first cost – the initial outlay. If buyers succeed, we salespeople can't earn a profit.

As salespeople, we also have a job – to brand our product or service. From a selling perspective, we need to achieve the consultative sell.

Like a doctor listening to and solving the patient's symptoms, we need to be accepted and engaged as a consultant, as an expert in our space.

We must shift the prospect's attention from:

1. First cost – the initial outlay for our product or service to...
2. Total cost – the cost/savings/value of our product in use.

As consultants we must show the prospect our solution's value and persuade him or her to be fair – to share the value we create, allowing us a profit. As consultants we need information before prescribing the solution – information we get by asking great questions, including:

- "What keeps you up at night?"
- "What are the problems with your current supplier, what would you like to see improved?"

A key challenge is "earning the right" to the answers.

Why won't prospects answer these questions and embrace us as consultants? Reasons include:

1. They don't know us well enough to trust us
2. Bargaining
3. We haven't earned the right to the answers because they haven't accepted us as consultants

How do we achieve this trusted position? Certainly, a strong industry reputation helps. But prospects are more interested in what you can do for them. They want to know how do you make a material difference?

A material difference is so strong that the prospect will change their behavior. They will get to know you, give you inside information and treat you as a consultant.

What are examples of material difference? Think of how:

1. Ipods replaced CDs, which replaced records
2. Email replaced faxes, which replaced snail mail

However, a key challenge in consultative selling is avoiding being an unpaid consultant. This occurs when you teach something valuable to a prospect and he or she buys your solution from the incumbent.

A solution to this problem is establishing a defensible position – one that can't be easily emulated by our competition. Classic defensible positions include patents, trademarks, copyrights, branding and trade secrets.

Even when we make a defensible material difference obvious – perhaps by showing how

our product or service is free with all the value we deliver – a buyer is still a buyer. They still want to buy at the lowest first cost.

We need to remind them to be fair.

Just as Tom Hanks, playing Robert Langdon, asked the Vatican officials to be fair in the movie *Angels and Demons*. The Vatican invited and flew Langdon to Italy to prevent the expected murder of four kidnapped cardinals, threatened to occur on the day he arrives in Rome.

To solve the mystery, Langdon asks for access to the Vatican archives – to study ancient documents. Even with full cooperation, the task seems impossible.

Nevertheless, the Vatican administration is reticent to grant access. For an outsider like Langdon to enter the archives, permission is needed from the pope, who recently died. In conveying the situation's absurdity, Langdon amusingly remarks, "Come on fellas, you invited me."

When a prospect invites us to visit and we move the conversation to a consultative sale, we generally still must remind them we are here at their invitation, because of an urgent need. They have to act accordingly, despite the desire to buy at the lowest first cost.

Like Langdon, we need to remind the buyer, "Come on fellas, you invited me."



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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.bombadillc.com](http://www.bombadillc.com) or by calling him at 201.415.3447.