

COB Review by Julie Johnson

Title “The New Solution Selling: The Revolutionary Sales Process That Is Changing the Way People Sell”

Author: Keith M. Eades

Copyright: 2004

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

ISBN: 0-07-143539-5

Price: \$29.95

Length: 299 pages

Reading time: 5-6 hours

Reading Rating: 5 (1 = very difficult; 10 = very easy)

Overall Rating: 4 (1 = average; 4 = outstanding)

“The New Solution Selling” by Keith Eades is definitely worth reading. This book is destined to become a classic and will be sitting on my bookshelf next to Neil Rackham’s SPIN Selling. If you are a seasoned sales professional, this book will help you examine your existing sales process and look at areas that could be refined in order to increase your sales productivity. If you are new to sales, this book provides an excellent process that will help you “ramp-up” quickly. If you read Eade’s original Solution Selling book, you will find that this book is updated and supplies some new concepts.

The New Solution Selling states that the formula for success is: Pain x Power x Vision x Value x Control = Sale. While the formula is deceptively simple, the implementation can be rather complex. This book helps salespeople focus on the customer’s “pain” and stresses the importance of providing a solution that not only stops the pain, but also adds value. Eades makes this process manageable by providing readers with a logical, well thought out plan, supplemented with many “real-life” and fictitious examples. This is accomplished through by a method that consists of (1) a philosophy (the customer is the focal point), (2) a map (getting from where you are to where you want to be) , (3) a methodology (with tools, job aids, techniques and procedures), and (4) a sales management system (process to increase productivity).

Eades maintains that salespeople often “say” they provide solutions, but in reality, they simply provide a product. The New Solution Selling focuses on understanding the underlying causes of customer problems, instead of the symptoms. Consequently, a correct “diagnosis” must be made before the salesperson “prescribes” a solution. Solution Selling provides several models to help salespeople isolate the “pain” by examining the interdependence of the key players within the buying organization.

Once salespeople understand the pain, they must explore the impact of that pain and create a buying vision. One problem in developing needs and creating a vision is that salespeople often do not know what questions to ask. Eades provides a “Pain Sheet” to help salespeople develop situational knowledge of customers and their business. This is accomplished through investigating three key areas: (1) diagnose reasons, (2) explore

impact and (3) visualizing capabilities by asking open questions, control questions and confirm questions.

In the past, Solution Selling focused on strategies dealing with opportunities for buyers who were not actively looking for a solution. Now, it has been enhanced to assist salespeople dealing with customers who are actively looking. Eades maintains that when a customer is actively looking, but you are not the one who helped create the vision, your chances of winning that sale are only 10%. He provides strategies to deal with these types of customers and also stresses the importance of being willing to walk away from the opportunity.

Overall, *The New Solution Selling* is an excellent book for both the novice and experienced salesperson. It provides a road map for the sales process and helps ensure that the path the salesperson takes is the one that leads to a sale. I'd highly recommend reading this book.

Dr. Julie Johnson is an Associate Professor of Marketing at Western Carolina University. She spent 7 years in sales and marketing with AT&T prior to joining the faculty. Dr. Johnson teaches introduction to professional selling and consultative selling at WCU. For previously reviewed books, visit our Web site at www.wcu.edu/cob/.