N.E.A.T. Selling

Idea In Short

The N.E.A.T. sales methodology is a strategic approach to selling that focuses on understanding the customer's needs, assessing the economic impact of the solution, identifying the key decision-makers and influencers, and establishing a timeline for the sales process. This approach is particularly effective in complex sales situations where the decision-making process involves multiple stakeholders and a significant investment of time and resources.

The N.E.A.T. sales methodology is an effective approach to selling that emphasizes a consultative, collaborative, and value-based approach to the sales process. Developed by the sales training and consulting firm Richard Harris Consulting Group, was designed to replace outdated processes with a new era methodology., N.E.A.T. stands for:

- Needs
- Economic Impact
- Access to Authority, and
- Timeline

The N.E.A.T. sales methodology is unique as it builds on lessons learned from previous methodologies, such as BANT, ANUM, ChAMP, FAINT and NOTE to develop a process that addresses the modern customers.

Let's take a closer look at each component of this approach and provide real-world examples of how it can be applied to the sales process.

N.E.A.T. Selling™

N.E.A.T. Selling™ was developed to solve for the unpredictability of sales while also really getting to the root of how prospects will benefit from your particular solution.

Customers change with the times, so it's no wonder that sales techniques that may have worked just fine before now feel obsolete. N.E.A.T. evolved from a realization that the sales process is no longer linear. Right around the time when marketers were starting to realize that customers didn't follow a linear path to purchase, sales reps began to realize that a linear sales approach didn't address the nuances and variables of customer needs.

Need

This stage addresses the question: What does your prospect really need?

The first step in the N.E.A.T. sales methodology is to identify the needs of the customer. This involves gathering a deep understanding of the customer's business objectives, pain points, goals, and challenges though asking questions and actively listening. By asking open-ended questions and actively listening to the customer's responses, sales professionals can gain valuable insights into the customer's needs and priorities. By understanding the customer's needs, the sales professional can then tailor their approach and offer solutions that are specifically designed to meet those needs.

> A software company that sells CRM solutions to mid-sized businesses uses the N.E.A.T. methodology to identify the customer's needs. During the discovery phase, the sales team meets with key stakeholders to understand the customer's business objectives and pain points. They discover that the customer is struggling to manage their customer data effectively, resulting in lost sales and missed opportunities. By understanding the customer's needs, the sales team is able to tailor their solution to address the specific pain points and objectives of the customer.

Questions to ask:

- How is the prospect solving the problem today compared to my proposed solution?
- Who is affected by the problem? Are their several departments affected?
- What is/are the real need for the problem?

Economic Impact

This stage addresses the question: How are those needs impacting finances?

The second step in the N.E.A.T. sales methodology is to understand the economic impact of the solution. This involves calculating the potential return on investment [ROI] for the customer and demonstrating how the solution will generate cost savings, increase revenue, or improve efficiency. By focusing on the economic impact, the sales professional can help the customer understand the value of the solution and justify the investment.

> A consulting firm that specializes in process optimization uses the N.E.A.T. methodology to demonstrate the economic impact of their solution. During the discovery phase, the sales team learns that the customer is experiencing significant delays and inefficiencies in their manufacturing process, resulting in increased costs and decreased productivity. By quantifying the potential cost savings and productivity gains of their solution, the consulting firm is able to demonstrate the economic impact of their offering and justify the investment.

Questions to ask:

- What is the economic impact of the problem versus the financial opportunity of the solution?
- What are the potential financial chain reactions on my solutions?

Access To Authority

This stage addresses the question: Who has authority and how can you reach that person?

The third step in the N.E.A.T. sales methodology is to identify and gain access to the authority that can make the final decision. This involves understanding the decision-making process within the customer's organization and building relationships with the key decision-makers. By gaining access to the authority, the sales professional can ensure that their solution is considered and ultimately selected.

> A construction equipment company that sells heavy machinery uses the N.E.A.T. methodology to identify the key decision-makers and influencers within the customer's organization. During the discovery phase, the sales team maps out the decision-making process and identifies the key stakeholders who will be involved in the sales process. They build relationships with these stakeholders and understand their priorities and concerns, which allows them to gain access to authority and

influence the decision-making process.

Questions to ask:

- Who has authority?
- How can you reach that person?
- Who is making the financial decision?

Timeline

This stage addresses the question: What's the practical timeline of getting the deal?

The fourth and final step in the N.E.A.T. sales methodology is to establish a timeline for the sale. This involves setting expectations and deadlines for each stage of the sales process and working collaboratively with the customer to meet those deadlines. By establishing a timeline, the sales professional can ensure that the sale progresses smoothly and efficiently.

> A telecommunications company that sells enterprise-level networking solutions uses the N.E.A.T. methodology to establish a timeline for the sales process. During the discovery phase, the sales team works closely with the customer to understand their buying process and set clear expectations for each stage of the sales cycle. By establishing a timeline, the sales team is able to manage the customer's expectations and ensure that the sales process is efficient and effective, leading to a successful sale.

Questions to ask:

- What happens if the timeline is not reached?

Benefits of the N.E.A.T. Sales Methodology

The N.E.A.T. sales methodology offers several benefits for sales professionals and organizations. These benefits include:

- **Increased Sales Efficiency:** By focusing on the customer's needs, economic impact, access to authority, and timeline, sales professionals can streamline the sales process and close deals more efficiently
- **Improved Customer Relationships:** By actively listening to the customer's needs and building relationships with key stakeholders, sales professionals can establish trust and credibility with the customer, leading to long-term customer relationships
- **Better Sales Forecasting:** By establishing a timeline for the sales process and understanding the customer's buying process, sales professionals can more accurately forecast sales and manage their pipeline more effectively
- **Increased Sales Revenue:** By demonstrating the economic impact of the solution and justifying the investment, sales professionals can close larger deals and increase their sales revenue

Examples

A Software Company

During the discovery phase, the sales team meets with key stakeholders to understand the customer's business objectives and pain points. They discover that the customer is struggling to manage their customer data effectively, resulting in lost sales and missed opportunities. By understanding the customer's needs, the sales team is able to tailor their solution to address the specific pain points and objectives of the customer. They then demonstrate the economic impact of their solution by quantifying the potential cost savings and increased revenue. By building relationships with key stakeholders and understanding the decision-making process, the sales team gains access to authority and influence the decision-making process. Finally, they establish a timeline for the sales process and manage the customer's expectations, leading to a successful sale.

A Consulting Firm

During the discovery phase, the sales team learns that the customer is experiencing significant delays and inefficiencies in their manufacturing process, resulting in increased costs and decreased productivity. By quantifying the potential cost savings and productivity gains of their solution, the consulting firm is able to demonstrate the economic impact of their offering and justify the investment. They then identify the key decision-makers and influencers within the customer's organization and build relationships with these stakeholders, gaining access to authority and influence the decision-making process.

Finally, they establish a timeline for the sales process and manage the customer's expectations, leading to a successful sale.

A Construction Equipment Company

During the discovery phase, the sales team maps out the decision-making process and identifies the key stakeholders who will be involved in the sales process. They build relationships with these stakeholders and understand their priorities and concerns, which allows them to gain access to authority and influence the decision-making process. They then establish a timeline for the sales process and manage the customer's expectations, leading to a successful sale.

Summary

The N.E.A.T. sales methodology is an effective approach to selling that emphasizes a consultative, collaborative, and value-based approach to the sales process. By focusing on the customer's needs, the economic impact of the solution, access to authority, and establishing a timeline, sales professionals can increase their chances of success and close more deals. By incorporating the N.E.A.T. methodology into their sales process, sales professionals can build deeper relationships with customers and help them achieve their goals.