



CONNECT THE DOTS (PART II OF II)

People don't invest in technology to be able to say they have it...they invest in technology for what it will do for their business. There must be a functional purpose. Investments must be justified. What is the impact? Prove it! Arguably, there are 6 areas, within any business for which an investment in technology is considered or justified. They are profitability/expense control, competitive advantage, client relations, employee efficiencies, management tools and company image. Proving validity of your solution must link functionality to the impact in these areas.

A professional salesperson must take the responsibility to deliver this proof. This is not a chance we want to leave up to the end-user. Connect the dots for them. Failing to do so is a disservice to the buyer and the salesperson's employer. Refer to the Value Wheel diagram below. This identifies six areas of a business that generally any solution will need to address in order to be justified. Our objective is to work with the buyer, building the case, in order to link our product/solution capabilities to the impact it will have for their business.

Theoretically, if a feature cannot be articulated to where and how it will address one or more of the six areas in the Value Wheel it is meaningless. You can bet that the buyer/president/owner /board of directors are concerned about:

- * Delivering higher profit margins or conversely reduction of expenses? Where can your solution effect this and how?
- * Their competitive advantage or ability to create additional advantages and differentiate themselves? How can your solution provide that? How much profit does the buyer's typical client represent to them over the term of their relationship?
- * Their client relations...customer base retention/erosion rates? What is the current level of client satisfaction? Are client expectations being met? What is the cost of a lost client? What is the benefit of a saved client? How can your solution assist and provide better client experience?
- * Employee efficiencies? Is turnover an issue and if so what is the cost? What is the "happiness" factor of the general employee as related to stress in the workplace? How can you address work stress and efficiency issues? What is the value to the end user?
- * How does the company validate their performance against service level expectations and accountabilities? How is their consistency measured? If you can improve that, what is the impact to the company?
- * The image the company projects to the marketplace? More important, what image do they want to project to their marketplace and how can you help? So what if you have more features.



So what if you have more buttons. So what if your widget is prettier and smaller. What does it mean to the buyer as related to the Value Wheel? You can bet that behind closed doors the buyer's management team is talking about elements of the Value Wheel rather than features/buttons, etc.

Connecting your solution to elements on the Value Wheel means we must understand the goals, objectives and challenges of the buyer's business. Furthermore, it means that the buyer must be willing to share information with us in order for us to create. Connecting the dots can be particularly important in challenging economic times as vendors are otherwise likely to experience delayed decisions or hypersensitive price driven decisions. By effectively connecting the dots, a buyer will often conclude that in spite economic conditions, they can't afford not to invest in your solution.

Don't microwave sales! Let's say you are having a group of friends for dinner and will be cooking some nice steaks. You return from the store, prepare and marinate the steaks for two hours. The friends arrive and of course, you want to spend as much time visiting with them as possible. How long do you microwave the steaks?

Oh, you wouldn't microwave your steaks? Why not, it's much faster? The obvious fact is that the outcome...the taste of the final product is far better if grilled. In fact, to microwave a nice steak would ruin it.

Don't try to microwave sales! Don't rush it. Don't cut corners. Take the time to cross the T's and dot the I's. Then take more time to connect the dots, earn the business and earn a client for life.



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