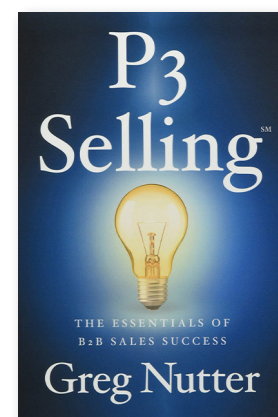


P3 Selling

The Essentials of B2B Sales Success

by **Greg Nutter**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

P3 Selling is an easy-to-follow framework that explains what you need to do and why you need to do it to achieve consistent B2B sales success. Over 30 years of experience as a salesperson, sales trainer, sales leader, consultant, and coach has given Greg Nutter the knowledge and wisdom needed to find the consistent, predictable, and comprehensive formula for success that he shares in his book, *P3 Selling: The Essentials of B2B Sales Success*. Navigate today’s complex B2B environment confidently as you win more deals, receive more referrals, make more money, and advance your way up the corporate ladder.

Stop hoping for lucky breaks, and take control of your sales results.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to navigate a complex B2B environment with confidence.
- How to win more deals, receive more referrals, make more money, and advance up the corporate ladder.
- Specific activities to help you tailor strategies and techniques to your unique situation.
- The three most critical predictors of B2B sales success (without jargon or complexity).
- A more profound sense of personal satisfaction resulting from having more control over achieving your goals versus hoping for a lucky break.

Introduction

For those new to sales, P3 Selling offers a practical and easy-to-follow selling approach you can use immediately to achieve results. For tenured sales professionals, it provides a refresher on the most critical selling success factors that made you successful earlier in your careers. And for sales leaders, P3 Selling offers a comprehensive sales methodology you can use to manage your sales teams more effectively through a consistent set of strategies and processes.

In reading this book, you'll develop a deep understanding of the three most critical B2B selling elements. Elements that you must consistently focus on to be successful. Each chapter will end with some activities you can use to apply these concepts to your unique selling situation.

Define "Selling"

To excel in any field, the starting point is to clarify the specific strategies and behaviors that lead to success. Selling is no different. However, B2B sales strategies are not always intuitive, leading sellers to do what comes naturally versus what will lead to the most successful outcomes. Here, I shared a few critical perspectives and a Sales Play as starting points for that clarity.

There are two different kinds of sales you are likely to encounter: the Simple Sale and the Complex Sale. If you are selling to businesses, you will almost always be involved in a Complex Sale. That means either the connection between your offering's features and the buyer's benefits is not very obvious OR multiple people and steps are involved in the buying decision. If you are ever in doubt, ALWAYS assume you are dealing with a Complex Sale.

Complex Sales require selling, not Clerking, where you just give people information and hope they buy. Selling involves creating or enhancing a prospect's awareness; the most powerful way to do this is by asking questions. And not just any questions but specifically those that create awareness in areas where you are trying to drive change.

Sellers who consistently follow a sound process win more often than those that don't. The P3 Selling method is just such a process that focuses sellers on the three essential elements of B2B selling success: Problems, People, and Processes.

The ASR Sales Play (Ask-Suggest-Recap) is a practical, non-manipulative technique to create and enhance awareness in each buying-cycle stage. It also increases your cred-

ibility by asking prospects what they think instead of telling them what you think.

P1: Problems

Businesspeople don't buy products or services. They buy solutions that resolve problems or provide ways to capture new opportunities. So, until you have identified one or more Problems that a potential customer wants to address, you cannot sell. You can only Clerk!

Just because you've uncovered one or more Problems, there's no guarantee your prospect will do anything about them. Your job is to understand and influence how the prospect perceives each Problem and the Importance of resolving them. And you don't do this by telling them what they should see as important. You do it by asking questions that create and increase awareness around the Problem's Impact and Urgency. Remember that Fact questions enable you to quote, Problem questions enable you to sell, and questions about Importance enable you to motivate. Resist the temptation to put together a proposal as soon as you have enough Facts. Sometimes it works, but it's not selling—it's Clerking.

Besides influencing the need to take action, asking good Problem and Importance questions helps prepare prospects to defend their actions to others. It also guides you on which aspects of your product or company to emphasize in your proposal.

This chapter includes a few Sales Plays to help you get the information you need to sell and motivate, such as a credible WIIFT, Sharing First, and Bracketing to get a ballpark answer. If none of these work, it's time to look for other Problems that might be less sensitive. If you can't find any Problems, put on your Clerking hat for a final try before moving on.

P2: People

More and more people are involved in corporate buying decisions, and each likely has a different perspective on what's important and what's not. But most salespeople focus their selling efforts on only one or two decision-makers, which is a high-risk practice. Studies show that connecting with more decision-makers increases the odds of winning a deal, while the sales-cycle duration shortens. To leverage the odds in your favor, try to get in front of as many decision-makers as possible.

You may need to make trade-offs on whom to meet, particularly in larger accounts involving many people. If so, you should prioritize them based on two factors: whether they are part of the buying-decision process and their degree of Decision Influence. You'll often include those with high Decision Influence even if they aren't part of the buying decision. These people tend to insert themselves into the process when you least expect it.

This chapter also discusses three strategies to get meetings with those on your target list. Generally, the best option is an introduction from someone who has a good relationship with the person you're trying to meet. For them to do so requires solid WIIFTs—one for the person doing the introduction and another for the target person you want to meet. You'll also need a high level of trust with the person introducing you—trust that the introduction won't reflect poorly on them. Other strategies include mapping others to key account contacts and leveraging social media. I also talked about some considerations if you simply can't get in front of certain people.

Always think through your objectives before any meeting to create an effective call plan. When conducting the call, your primary objectives will always be understanding and influencing problem or decision-criteria perceptions. Understanding each individual's perceptions allows you to address them in your proposal or develop a strategy to mitigate those that put you at a disadvantage. Other objectives, such as uncovering additional Problems, assessing other people's Decision Influence, or getting introductions to others, also require planning, particularly in using the ASR and objection-handling Sales Plays.

P3: Processes

The most important concept is that the buying-decision Process is the decision-maker—it acts as the framework that links Problems and People with Action. There are two different decision Processes: one that individuals go through and a second that the company has defined. Successful sellers must navigate and sell to both.

The individual Process starts when a prospect first recognizes a problem or opportunity and continues until they decide whether to resolve it. Time spent in earlier stages is essential, particularly when Problems are perceived to be complex or risky. Spending extra time here increases an individual's confidence as they approach a final buying decision. All Problem People must go through each stage, so it's wise

to avoid proposing a solution or asking for a purchase decision too soon. Sellers should structure all proposals or sales presentations to align with this Decision Process.

The Corporate Buying-Decision Process is similar to the individual Process but has two interconnected and parallel streams—the Consensus Stream and the Compliance Stream. The Consensus Stream is driven by Problem People and dominated by those with a high degree of Decision Influence. The Compliance Stream consists of subject-matter experts who review buying decisions against policies and criteria designed to reduce risk. People in both streams will scrutinize decisions more closely as their perceptions of complexity and risk increase. Unfortunately, easy access to an almost endless supply of product and supplier information has made buying decisions much more confusing than ever before. Sellers should avoid contributing to this situation by providing information laser-focused on solving the prospect's Problems and conforming to the compliance criteria.

Lastly, to maximize the odds of winning, a seller's primary role must change from a supplier of product information to an advisor in navigating the decision Process. By offering guidance, anticipating each person's needs, and working collaboratively to remove obstacles, sellers can elevate their relationship and help prospects move through the decision Process faster, easier, and with less buyer's remorse.

P3 Selling Playbook

Today's sellers rely on more than just their skills and activity levels to be consistently successful. They leverage repeatable, sound sales processes to keep them on track. While many sales processes help manage different aspects of the sales job, we focused on the four most critical ones:

1. Prospecting, done well and consistently, is key to most sellers' success. It's a process to create initial interest around problems or opportunities AND qualify a prospect's interest and ability to address them. There are four success factors to maximize the chances of establishing a viable sales opportunity, either for now or in the future: pre-call research and warm-up, a compelling and concise message, an engaging delivery, and a disciplined cadence.
2. Call Management is the process of planning and conducting a sales call to maximize the chances of moving a buying decision forward. Sellers first develop a high-level call plan followed by a more

detailed one that describes the call flow. The high-level plan defines the call's objectives, outcomes, areas to explore, and proposals to present. The detailed plan covers five steps that flow in the same order, no matter what kind of call you're having. Following up each call with an email summary of the discussion and agreed actions is a best practice to keep moving the buying decision forward.

3. Opportunity Management is a structured approach to maximize the chances of winning your most important sales opportunities. It involves assessing where you are in the buying-decision Process so you can develop the best action plans to move the deal forward. At the heart of opportunity management is the five-step P3 Selling Deal Review process, in which you ask yourself key questions to develop the best action plan. You should conduct a Deal Review, either individually or as a group, whenever you have a "must-win" opportunity that requires you to be more strategic instead of reactive.
4. Pipeline Management is a process that helps sellers prioritize their activities to ensure a steady flow of sales revenue. It tells you which activities to focus on, in what order, and what sales performance you should expect. Effective pipeline management requires a regular Pipeline Review to define, prioritize, and calendarize a seller's most important tasks.

solving problems, you should expect an almost immediate difference in how prospects perceive and value you. And by taking the time to plan and reflect on your progress, the P3 Selling concepts and techniques will eventually become second nature, enabling you to join the ranks of the elite professional sellers.

As your sales career progresses, there will be more advanced strategies and skills that you'll want to learn, such as key account management, contract negotiations, sales management, and even channel partner management. But proficiency in each of these will depend heavily on how well you have mastered the foundational P3 Selling concepts detailed in this book.

Conclusion

You can tell people how good you are, or you can show them how good you are. The hope is that by applying the strategies, processes, and techniques outlined in this book, you'll deliver on the latter. Make it so!

The Journey Beyond

Your journey to sales excellence will not happen overnight. But by changing your perspective from selling products to



Greg Nutter is the founder of Soloquent, Inc., helping business owners and senior sales executives solve revenue growth problems through direct, indirect, and multi-channel sales models. With over thirty-five years of experience, Greg has worked with a wide range of companies to develop strategies, programs, processes, and tools to grow revenues, enter new markets, increase sales consistency, maximize selling investments, and develop skilled sales, channel, and management personnel. Learn more at www.P3Selling.com.

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