



Sales Reps Are Distributors' Difference Makers

Your sales reps are your value proposition

By Jim Peduto

U.S. Census Bureau data shows that the number of independent jan/san distributors has atrophied from more than 24,000 in 1991 to 4,142 in 2012.

Why the precipitous decline? The most persuasive reason is that distributors of all types, and jan/san in particular, have failed to upgrade their sales force capability to meet the needs of the modern buyer.

reps have the required skills to succeed in the modern business-to-business sales environment.

The disconnect between the buyer's expectations of a salesperson and the salesperson's capabilities results in buyers either moving business away from independent distribution to an e-tailer or big box store, or finding a jan/san distributor whose sales team can deliver.

The distributors that succeed understand the new reality. Growing faster than the industry and more rapidly than your competitors begins by having the courage to evaluate your sales force's capability. Diving deeply into the capabilities of your sales team to determine how well



Modern buyers expect a sales representative to be a trusted business advisor. They demand a high degree of collaboration and insight. They are looking for salespeople to address business issues and to propose solutions that impact their bottom line.

Rarely does a company have a clear price or product advantage. There is also increasing parity in "value-added" services. Buyers tell us that differentiation is no longer based on price, product or service. The salesperson makes all the difference.

Salespeople's behaviors and actions have two to three times more impact on sales success than any other factor. However, only two in 10 sales

it is suited to selling in 2017 is the first step and the foundation of everything that needs to be done to succeed.

I grade sales teams based on a 22-question survey. In less than five minutes, I can tell you how effective your team is and how it compares to others in the industry. You can download this free Sales Force Grader at www.knowledgeworx.com/knowledgebase.

Beating well-capitalized foes with ubiquitous market presence — like Amazon Business or Staples — is not easy. However, there is a tremendous opportunity for those who understand that the market has changed and are willing to adapt. 

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