

# Bridging the Gap Between Service and Selling

**Every time your service professionals interact with a customer, they are influencing satisfaction and loyalty. Whether they drive future business or drive business away ultimately depends on how they view their job.**

Ask service professionals how they define their job, and they'll likely tell you it's about understanding and responding to customer needs. Ask them how they define selling, on the other hand, and you might hear something like, "It's about manipulating someone into buying something."

Sales is a word that comes with plenty of baggage. It's often seen as the domain of the slick, fast-talking huckster who uses carefully scripted techniques to trick people into buying things they don't even want or need. With that image in mind, it's no wonder so many service professionals can be completely put off by the suggestion their role involves selling.

Unfortunately, training and internal processes often end up reinforcing this mindset about what it means to sell. With a primary focus on traditional selling skills and processes that emphasize "pushing products" over solving problems and building relationships, the lesson learned is that sales is something you do *to* the customer, not *for* them.

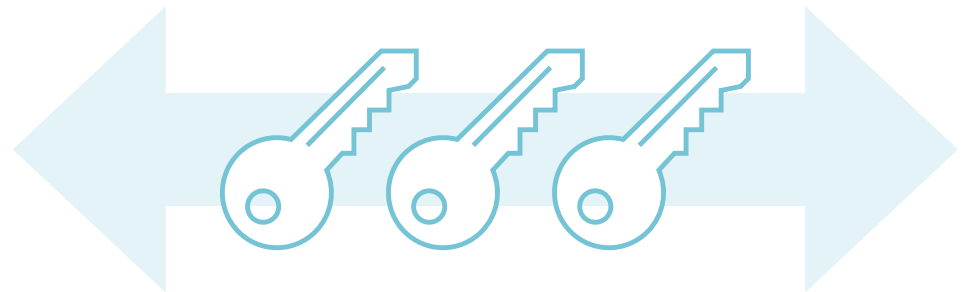
Why does this distinction matter? Your service professionals have the customer's ear. They have a unique vantage point for uncovering opportunities, building long-term loyalty, and reinforcing a strong competitive advantage. But to be successful, they need a new mindset about what it means to sell. Sales skills and product knowledge are helpful, but without a realignment of attitudes and beliefs, it will be an uphill battle.

### 3 KEYS TO BRIDGING THE GAP

Imagine if your service professionals described their jobs not just as, “I’m here to serve customers” but also as, “I can serve customers *better* by identifying additional needs they have.”

This extension of “what it means to serve” customers is something most people in service roles can get on board with. And it’s also the foundation for bridging the gap between service and selling.

Here are three keys for creating the mind shift that will unlock the potential of your service professionals to deliver a whole new level of value with every customer interaction.



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## *Selling:*

*Identifying and filling needs people have and creating value for them.*

#### 1. Selling: It’s Not What They Think It Is

Your best service professionals are focused on making sure customer needs are addressed in the most optimal way, and that’s the mindset they bring to the service function.

What they need to recognize is that selling is no different. It’s not the one-sided, manipulative process they may have experienced when they were on the receiving end of a “hard sell” tactic. Instead, it’s another way to understand and serve customer needs. In fact, it can be a way to serve their needs even *better*.

That’s why aligning “what it means to serve” with “what it means to sell” is the critical first step in bridging the service-selling gap.

#### 2. Attitudes and Beliefs Make the Difference

So selling is an extension of good service. But do they believe it?

You can’t just change the definitions and expect people to change their attitudes and beliefs. And attitudes and beliefs matter. When you look at all the qualities and traits that influence professional success, one of the most important—if not the most, considering its ability to increase success exponentially—is achievement drive. It’s something that’s developed experientially, not intellectually, and comes from a belief that not only it is possible to achieve your goals, but you really want to achieve them because they align with your own values.

## Selling Principles

1. Selling and service are a mutual exchange of value
2. Selling is not something you do to people; it is something you do for and with them.
3. Develop trust and rapport before any selling or service activity begins.
4. Understanding wants or needs must always precede any attempt to propose a solution.
5. Sales and service techniques give way to values-driven principles.
6. Truth, respect and honesty provide the basis for long-term success.
7. Ethics and values contribute more to sales or service success than techniques or strategies.
8. Pressure is never exerted by the sales or service professional. It's exerted by customers when they recognize the value of your products or services.
9. Negotiation is never manipulation. It's a strategy to work through concerns – when customers want to work through them.
10. Getting commitment is a victory for both the sales or service professional and the customer.

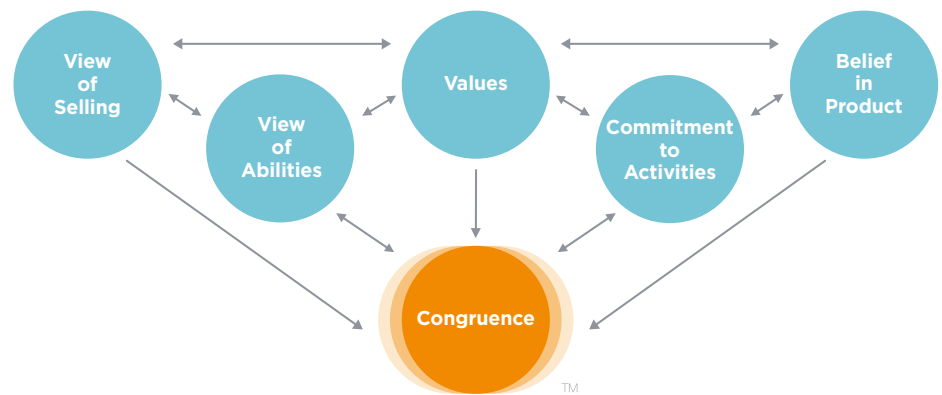
This is not a question of “you either have it or you don’t.” You can change attitudes and beliefs, but it’s a process that includes knowledge- and skill-building, practical tools, coaching and reinforcement. We’ve found the **10 Selling Principles** to the left are a helpful starting point. They give service professionals context for how the concept of selling doesn’t conflict with but instead complements and enhances what they’ve been doing all along.

### 3. Successful Service-Selling Comes From Congruence

So how do you bring it all together? The answer is *congruence*.

#### The Sales Congruence Model

A successful sales and service experience requires more than skills and product knowledge. It is also influenced by internal beliefs in the following dimensions:



Unique learning dynamics and a strong focus on customer-focused values and ethics help to bring these five dimensions into congruence or alignment. As this occurs, participants develop more confidence and commitment to practice needs-focused selling.

For example, if a service professional has high values and commitment but a low view of selling, something is going to suffer: either their satisfaction with the job, their success in selling or, more than likely, both. On the other hand, they may have a high belief in the product but a low view of their abilities to sell. Again, this lack of congruence, or alignment, will get in the way of their success and potentially their job satisfaction.

As these five dimensions are brought into congruence, your service professionals will have more confidence and commitment to do the activities that support both their own job satisfaction and their service-selling success.

# About

## INTEGRITY SOLUTIONS

Integrity Solutions, the performance experts, equips sales teams to rise up and lead by building trusted customer relationships with integrity at their core. As the partner of choice for values-driven organizations, the firm specializes in innovative sales, service and coaching training solutions that fuel performance, grow talent, lift up customers and elevate leaders. Our experience spans over 50 years, 130 countries and industries including healthcare, financial services, manufacturing, energy and utilities, agriculture and more. Integrity was most recently recognized with multiple Stevie Awards for sales training excellence in 2020 and 2019 and as a 2019 Top 20 Sales Training Company by Selling Power and Training Industry.



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## CHANGE THAT LASTS

There's no point making the decision to bridge the gap between service and selling if you don't also make the plans to ensure the change really sticks. These four best practices, which we've identified through our research, are the critical components for maintaining change and reaching breakthrough levels of performance:

- **Allocate the appropriate time** to develop the attitudes, beliefs and skills that align with the values and ethics of the organization. Short-change the process and your results will be short-term at best.
- **Use a disciplined learning methodology** that relies on spaced repetition and consistent feedback.
- **Implement a facilitated process over a period of weeks**, where employees are held accountable to apply what they have learned.
- **Make sure managers have the appropriate attitudes and skills** to coach and support your service employees. Don't discount the pivotal role they play in the process.



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