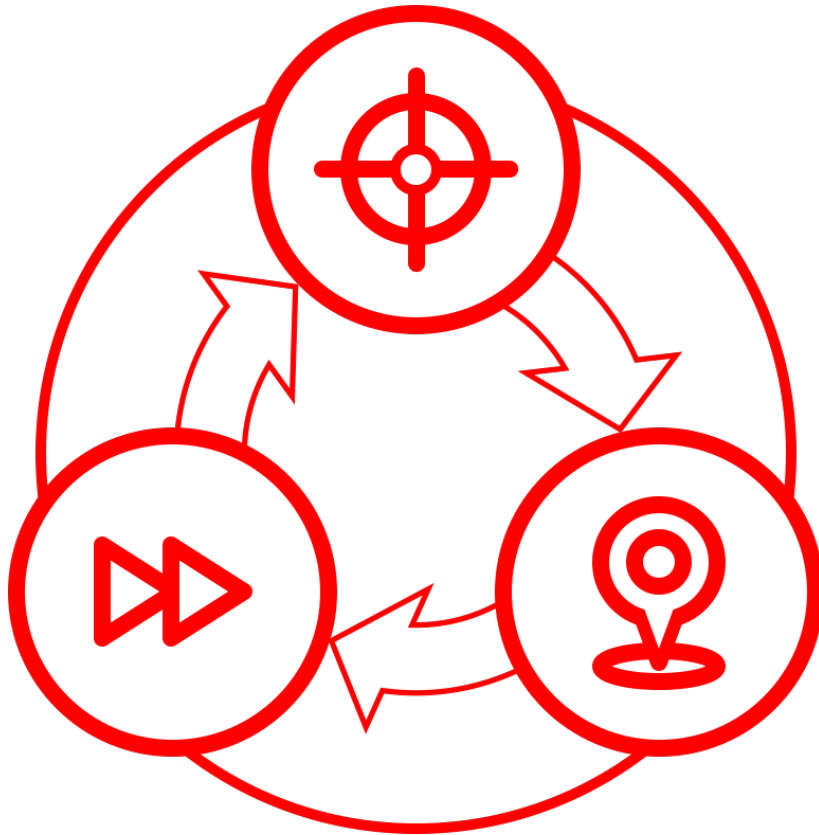


extensively  
revised for 2018

# introducing the value selling system®



inflexion-point strategy partners



extensively revised for 2018

## introducing the value selling system®

*“We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Today’s B2B buyers are wrestling with potentially risky decisions and often-confusing options. It’s become common, often after months of consideration, for buyers to decide to simply **stick with the status quo** or (if and when they do eventually decide to act) to take the easy option and choose what appears to be the least expensive offering from a set of apparently similar solutions.

This is a current and urgent problem for everyone involved in **complex B2B sales**. Hardly a week goes by without yet another new study confirming a troubling pattern of lengthening sales cycles, declining sales win rates, increasing price pressures, and a growing performance gap between the best sales people and the rest.

It’s no wonder that B2B CEOs and sales leaders are asking: *how can we do a better job of targeting, identifying and engaging the right people in the right organisations, differentiating ourselves from all their other options, and persuading the prospect to commit to our solution?*

### a fresh perspective

Einstein famously observed that “*we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them*”. Many organisations have attempted to implement “better” sales process, with varying degrees of success. It’s hard to avoid the conclusion that we now need to turn our attention to doing a more effective job of **facilitating our prospective customer’s buying journeys**.

A fresh perspective is clearly required - one that focuses on understanding what each of the key stakeholders in each of our key prospective customers values most highly, and what we can do to help them achieve it. And that is exactly what the value selling system® is designed to achieve.

### focus on complex sales

Our typical clients are B2B-focused tech-based businesses in “**scale-up**” mode with fast-growing sales organisations, although our value selling principles have also been very successfully applied to well-funded high-growth start-ups as well as the more entrepreneurial business units of well-established organisations.

Our value selling system® is **optimised for complex B2B sales environments** with lengthy multi-step customer buying journeys that involve significant numbers of actively engaged stakeholders. The system aims to equip every member of your sales organisation - from your most experienced veteran to the most recent new recruit - to progressively create, capture and confirm your **distinctive value** through every customer interaction.



## establishing your distinctive value

For years, sales and marketing organisations have promoted “value added strategies” in an effort to justify premium pricing tactics, but the harsh reality is that many of the so-called benefits turn out to be utterly irrelevant for most of their intended targets. In practical terms, these ineffective “fake value” strategies have simply served to conceal or falsely justify **unnecessary cost and complexity**.

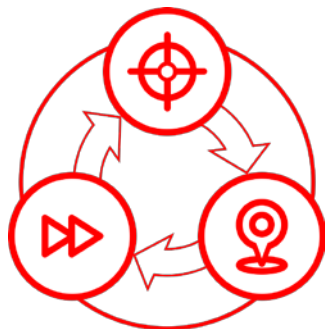
When we talk about “establishing your distinctive value” we mean that every interaction between the buyer and the seller must help to create, capture or confirm some tangible and useful exchange of value (no matter how small) between **all the involved parties**.

It also means that over the lifetime of any successful buyer-seller relationship everybody involved should feel that a reasonable balance has been achieved between **value given and value received**.

This is, we believe, the fundamental foundation of any win-win buyer-seller relationship (and the philosophical basis of the value selling system®), and it has a number of **critical implications** for every B2B vendor:

- It reinforces the need to do **thoughtful research** before every customer interaction, so that we can anticipate what we could do that is likely to be of the greatest value to the prospect
- It implies that every sales person needs to go into every call or meeting with a prospect or customer with a **clear plan** for how they intend to make the interaction valuable for the customer (and a worthwhile use of their own time)
- It puts a stop to unbalanced “solution selling” style **discovery meetings** during which the prospect is asked a series of qualifying questions which are useful to the sales person but of very little interest or value to the customer
- It requires that sales people get into a habit of “**paying it forward**” by sharing valuable insights and information with their prospects before expecting them to offer valuable information in return
- It means that both the sales person and the prospective customer should always feel able to politely disengage at any point if it becomes obvious that continuing the conversation will not result in an exchange of **mutually relevant value**

Over the next few pages, we’ll explain how the key elements of the value selling system® have been designed with the critical core objective of equipping sales organisations to progressively create, capture and confirm their distinctive value through **every significant customer interaction**.



## the building blocks of value

So - if our goal is to progressively establish our **distinctive value** through every customer interaction and create a balance of respect in the process - how specifically should we be aiming to guide the efforts of everyone in our sales and marketing and other customer-facing organisations? We believe there are three critical building blocks:

### [1] target

Our value selling system® helps you to systematically and intentionally target the **critical business issues** you are best at solving, the **organisations** that are most likely to suffer from them, the **roles** that are most likely to be able to champion the case for change, and the **trigger events** that are most likely to cause them to take action.

### [2] position

Our value selling system® helps your prospective customers recognise that they have a **reason to act**, establishing the widest possible **value gap** between where their current direction is taking them and what they could accomplish in the future with your help, positioning your solution in terms of what it means to each of the key **customer stakeholders**, and establishing **compelling differentiation** between your approach and all the other options they may be considering.

### [3] advance

Our value selling system® enables you to accurately diagnose where your prospective customer is in their **buying decision journey**, guiding every member of your sales organisation in what they need to **know** and **do** to qualify the opportunity and make it easy for the prospect to decide to advance to the next phase of their journey, and equipping every sales person to develop **clear action plans** to maximise the value of their territories, their accounts, their opportunities and every significant customer interaction.

It's likely that your current top sales performers will probably have worked out (often in an "unconsciously competent" way) how to do these things through a combination of innate talent, constant curiosity and an ability to pro-actively learn and adapt to what actually works in practice in your market. But can you imagine the impact on revenue if you could equip every sales person to **intentionally** do the same?

One of our critical roles in helping you implement your own value selling system is to extract this accumulated learning, identify key winning habits, combine them with the latest industry best practice, and package it all up in a way that makes it easy for every member of your sales team to think correctly under pressure and to make the **best possible choices** at every point in the development of every sales opportunity.



## [1] target

B2B sales and marketing organisations have an unfortunate habit of **wasting significant resources** pursuing prospects that are unlikely to ever turn into good business, in part because there is no common consensus about which opportunities everybody should be targeting.

The “target” module of the value selling system® is designed to establish **company-wide alignment** about the issues, organisations and roles you have chosen to focus on, and the trigger events that signal that your prospects may be ready to actively evaluate their options.

### critical issues

Our value selling system® helps you to recognise the handful of **critical business issues** that you are uniquely good at addressing together with their symptoms, causes and consequences - enabling you to showcase the value of your unique capabilities, advantages and outcomes.

### target organisations

Our value selling system® equips you to establish ideal customer profiles that reflect the common demographic, structural, behavioural and situational characteristics of your most valuable prospects - allowing you to **target the right organisations** and disqualify the wrong ones.

### key roles

Our value selling system® enables you to identify and engage with the **key roles** in these target organisations: the people within your prospective customers that are likely to recognise the need for change and to have the authority and ability to drive the change agenda.

### trigger events

Our value selling system® helps you to define, monitor and recognise the **trigger events** that are likely to cause your potential prospects to realise that sticking with the status quo is not going to allow them to achieve their future objectives, and that they need to take action now.

### clarity of focus

In the immortal words of US sports coach Yogi Berra, “*if you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll end up someplace else*”.

Our value selling system® enables you to establish absolute clarity about these four critical factors - issues, organisations, roles and triggers - and ensures that your entire sales and marketing organisation is aligned in the same direction and that everybody understands where they need to focus their individual energies in order to ensure that you achieve your **collective objectives**.



## [2] position

Targeting the right issues, organisations, roles and triggers is a solid foundation and an excellent start, but it will only take you so far. If you are to successfully engage your most valuable prospective customers, you need to position your approach and your solution in a way that clearly **stands out from the crowd** and sets you apart from all the alternative options your prospect may be tempted to consider.

The “position” module of our value selling system® is designed to ensure that you tailor and deliver marketing messages and sales conversations that create, capture and confirm distinctive value for every key stakeholder in every every prospective customer.

### compelling reason to act

Our value selling system® equips your sales people to persuade their prospective customers that sticking with the status quo will not allow them to achieve their future objectives and offers a powerful framework for establishing a clear and **compelling reason to act**.

### wide and growing value gap

Our value selling system® enables your sales people to progressively establish a **wide and growing value gap** between your prospective customer’s current situation and the better future destination that your organisation is uniquely positioned to help them achieve.

### personalised value messages

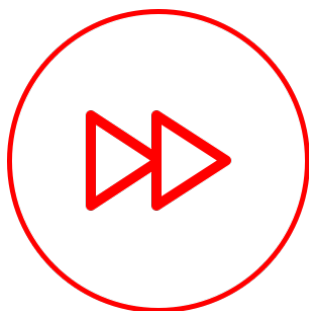
Our value selling system® equips your sales people to identify, assess and engage all the key stakeholders that will be involved in the buying journey, and to create and deliver **personalised value messages** for everybody involved in the decision process.

### competitive differentiation

Our value selling system® equips your sales people to establish clear **competitive differentiation** against all the other competing options that your prospective customer may be considering and enable you to emerge as the obviously superior choice.

### unique value position

These four elements of our value selling system® - a compelling reason to act, a wide and growing value gap, personalised value messages and clear competitive differentiation - will enable your sales people to create, progressively capture and confirm your **uniquely distinctive value** for every prospective customer.



## [3] advance

Most traditional “sales processes” are expressed as a linear series of steps that sales people are expected to follow in order to drive an opportunity towards closure. But **complex B2B buying journeys** aren't like that - they are often non-linear and frequently involve stakeholders with different - sometimes competing - priorities and perspectives.

The breakthrough idea behind our value selling system® is that instead of following a single rigid and often inappropriate sales process we should instead be focusing on understanding and **facilitating** our prospective customer's often-convoluted buying journeys. This radical new perspective has several significant consequences:

### buying journey not sales process

Rather than enforcing an over-rigid and inflexible sales process, our value selling system® focuses instead on your prospective customer's progress through their **buying journey**, and how your sales people can facilitate their prospect's movement through each phase of that journey.

### simple actionable plans

At every level - territory, account, opportunity and individual interaction - our value selling system® includes templates for **simple actionable plans** that guide your sales people's actions and enable them to make intelligent choices about where to focus and prioritise their energies.

### customer knowledge [need to know]

Through a combination of intelligent research and thoughtful questions, our value selling system® identifies the **customer knowledge** your sales people will need to acquire if they are to accurately qualify the opportunity and facilitate their prospect's buying decision process.

### essential actions [need to do]

Based on an analysis of your critical sales success factors and proven best practices, our value selling system® guides sales people on the **essential actions** they need to complete to maximise their chances of winning during each phase of the prospective customer's buying journey.

### moving forward together

Unlike many no-longer-effective traditional sales methodologies, our value selling system® is not about finding clever ways to manipulate your prospects: it's about finding constructive ways of collaborating with them and moving forward together in a spirit of **mutual value and shared commitment**.

*“Sales leaders report that their biggest challenge lies in the inability of their sales people to connect their offerings to the business issues of buyers”*

SIRIUS DECISIONS

## our approach

We follow a **well-proven, simple and straightforward process** when working with clients to implement their own unique customised version of our value selling system®.

### benchmark

We'll start by quickly analysing and benchmarking your current performance, materials, messages and processes against the latest industry best practice, and then we'll present you with a concise set of **prioritised recommendations** and use your current data to predict the range of performance improvement you can realistically expect to achieve after implementing your value selling system®.

### co-develop

Following a series of 1:1 interviews and workshops with your top performers and nominated subject matter experts, we'll work with you to co-develop a **customised version** of your value selling system® that reflects your particular situation, circumstances and priorities.

### enable

We'll introduce your version of the value selling system® to your sales, marketing and other customer-facing staff in one or a series of highly **interactive training sessions** that will harness the participants' knowledge and experience to further refine the materials.

### refine

From that point on, we'll be available whenever you need us as a **flexible resource** to help you continue your value selling journey, and to work with you to regularly measure, monitor and refine your organisation's value selling programme.

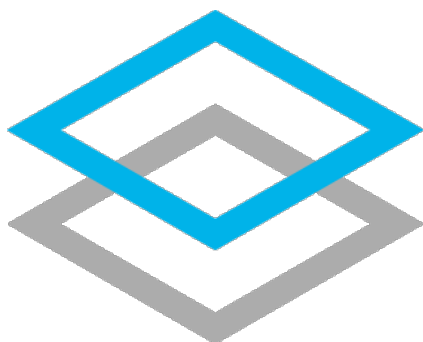
### coaching and mentoring

In addition to helping you continuously refine your value selling approach, we'll also be available to deliver further training, as well as to provide **coaching and mentoring** resources that can help to support the continual growth of both your team and key individuals.

### inflexion-point on-demand

You can continue to work with us on an ad-hoc basis or like many of our clients you may prefer to subscribe to **inflexion-point on-demand**, which provides guaranteed access and a structured programme of on-going support.





INSIGHT**SQUARED**

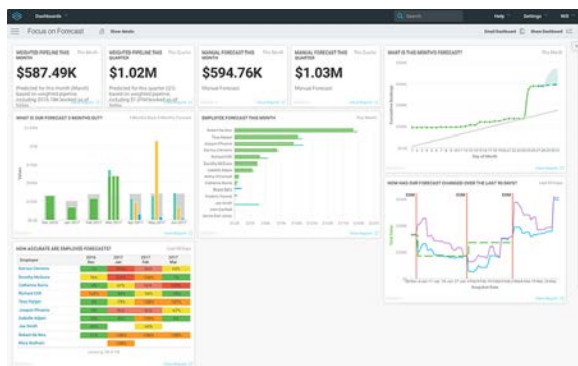
## harnessing the power of analytics

There's a good reason why **sales analytics**, according to a number of recent analyst reports, is one of the fastest-growing areas of technology investment for B2B sales organisations.

The complexities of today's B2B buying and selling processes mean that spreadsheets can no longer provide the rich insights that today's sales leaders need if they are to identify where their forecasts and opportunities may be at risk, or where the most significant opportunities for **sales performance improvement** can be found.

Fortunately, analytics are no longer the exclusive preserve of the IT department - in fact the latest generation of specialised sales analytics require no IT involvement at all, and can be generating **powerful insights** into both historical and future performance in a matter of hours.

Even better, they come with a rich set of ready-to-run dashboards and highly visual reports that represent the **cumulative learning** and best practice of hundreds of sales leaders who have been asking exactly the same questions you have of their sales pipelines and processes.



That's why we've chosen to establish a close partnership with InsightSquared.com, the leading provider of ready-to-run **sales analytics solutions** for the salesforce.com user community.

If you're a salesforce.com user, we'll offer you the opportunity to trial InsightSquared as part of our **initial benchmarking process**. We think you'll be amazed and impressed with the amount of information this exercise will generate about the strengths and weaknesses of your current sales process and pipeline.

Then, as we work with you to develop, enable and refine your own customised version of the value selling system®, we'll help you to turn analytics into a core element of both the day-to-day management of your sales processes and your longer-term **continuous performance improvement** efforts.

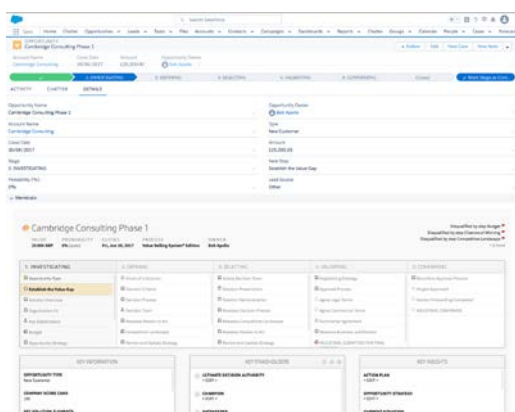
You can learn more about our partnership with InsightSquared here: [www.inflexion-point.com/sales-analytics](http://www.inflexion-point.com/sales-analytics).



## embedding value selling in CRM

One of the reasons why so many investments in CRM solutions end up being regarded - at best - as only a partial success is that **traditional CRM systems** are designed to operate more like sales accounting systems.

Many sales people see these old-fashioned CRM systems as an unhelpful diversion of their valuable selling time - providing management with ever-increasing detail about their activities, but contributing very little to their **personal sales effectiveness**.



Fortunately, a new generation of **sales-process-focused** CRM applications has recently emerged that not only provide a much better user interface than traditional CRMs but also guide the sales person in what best practice suggests they need to know and do at each stage of the process in order to maximise their chances of winning.

Until recently, this was an **either-or choice**: implement an industry-leading but not very process-centric CRM platform or go with one of the new generation CRM providers but lose the benefit of the established vendor's well-developed ecosystems.

We're delighted to report that this uncomfortable compromise is no longer necessary. We've partnered with **Membrain**, widely recognised as the the **#1 sales effectiveness platform** for complex B2B sales, to offer a pre-configured version of our value selling system®.



With the introduction of **The Value Selling System® Powered by Membrain**, our clients now have the the choice of implementing value selling as a **complete stand-alone CRM solution**, or as a directly integrated opportunity management module within their existing **salesforce.com** instance.

Whichever option you choose, your sales organisation will benefit from a guided value selling approach that makes it easy for sales people to **make smart choices and implement best practices** at every stage in every sales campaign.

To learn more about **The Value Selling System® Powered by Membrain**, visit [www.inflexion-point/membrain](http://www.inflexion-point/membrain).

## about inflexion-point



I'm Bob Apollo, founder of UK-based Inflexion-Point Strategy Partners and creator of the value selling system®. I've had the good fortune to work for and with many of the world's leading B2B technology brands and most successful entrepreneurial tech-based businesses. I'm grateful for the opportunity this has given me to keep up to date with the latest B2B sales and marketing strategies and techniques from some of the smartest brains in the industry.

I'm now spending my time as a consultant to a **new generation** of forward-thinking B2B-focused organisations, helping them to implement value selling principles that are enabling them to outperform their less progressive competitors and win the battle to engage, acquire and retain the most attractive customers.

Over the years, I've progressively developed what is now known as the value selling system®. It's a **structured yet flexible approach** to systematically improving sales performance that - as you might expect - has been continuously evolved to incorporate the latest industry best practices and research into B2B buying behaviour.

Our clients are typically B2B-focused tech-based businesses in "scale-up" mode with fast-growing sales organisations, but we've also successfully applied the principles in well-funded high-growth start-ups as well as in the entrepreneurial business units of more mature organisations. The common pattern is that our client's solutions are almost always carefully-considered strategic purchases with a **lengthy and complex buying journey** that involves multiple stakeholders.

If you match any of these profiles and are keen to implement value selling as a way of taking your organisation to the next level of sales effectiveness and beyond, **we should find the time to talk.**

I look forward to learning more about what you are seeking to accomplish in 2018 and beyond - and to helping you achieve it.



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