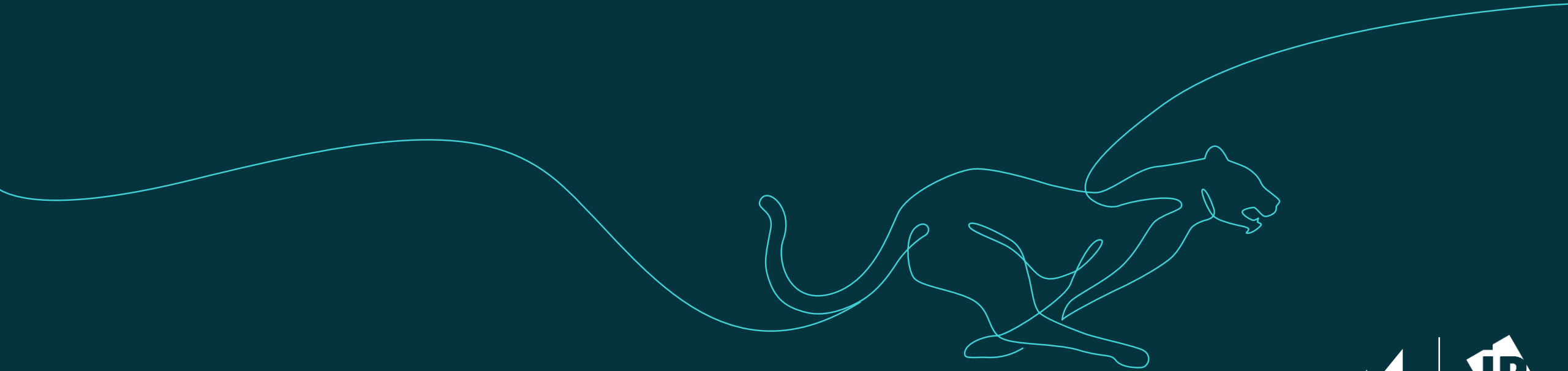


Keeping the sales pipeline moving

Why it's time to stop promoting "solutions" - and start achieving outcomes

The Marketing Practice & Inflexion-Point



Maintaining sales momentum in a risk-sensitive world



Paul Everett, Chief Innovation Officer at TMP, creating growth through Demand Generation, ABM & Partner Marketing



Bob Apollo is the founder of Inflexion-Point Strategy Partners, the UK-based B2B sales effectiveness consultants

Today's topics

1. Identifying your customer's Minimum Viable Problems
2. Why it's time to stop promoting "solutions" and start achieving outcomes
3. How the nature and objective of the 'first sales conversation' is changing
4. Five favourite ~~miracle cures~~ examples



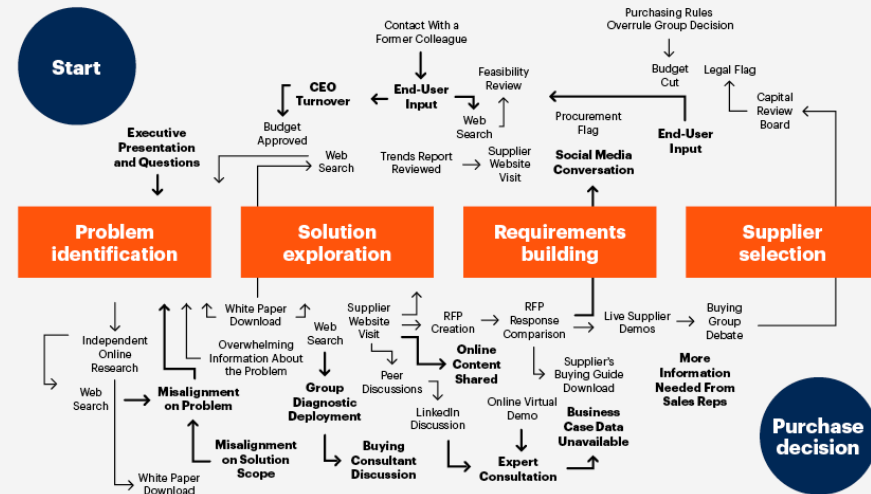
What's the challenge?

In this complex buying journey, marketing's job is to sell 'the next step' just as much as the end 'product/benefit'

So when the next sales step changes, we need to pay attention

B2B buying journey

Illustrative



Source: Gartner
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Gartner



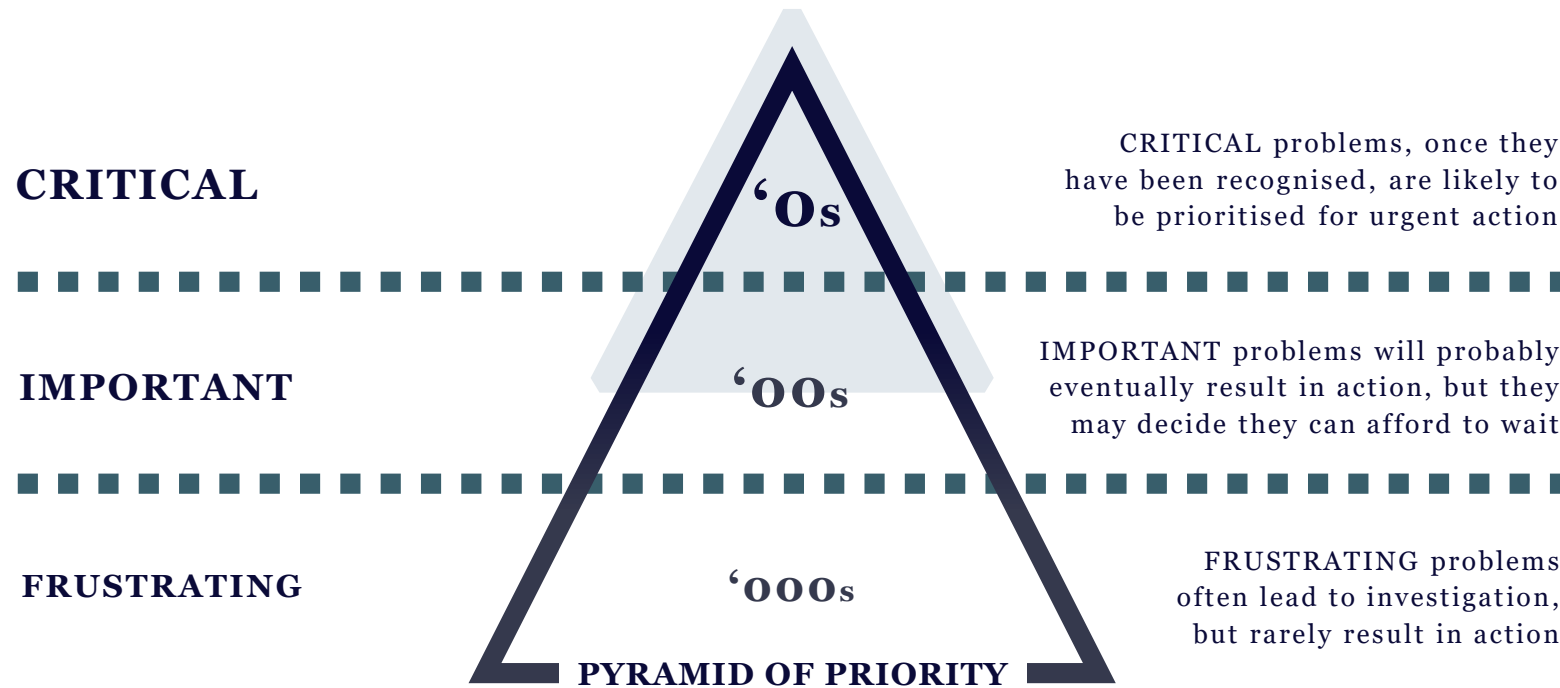


Finding the ‘Minimum Viable Problem’

Keeping up momentum in challenging times



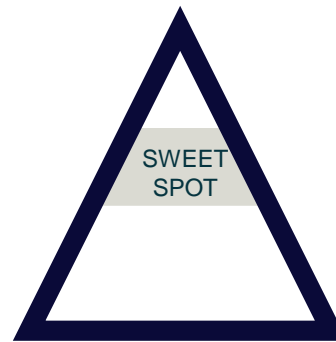
The Pyramid of Priority



Identifying their Minimum Viable Problem

a problem that is significant enough to justify taking urgent action...

(the problem is seen as critical in its own right - or important and closely associated with a key corporate initiative or priority)



...but which is small enough to allow a timely decision to be made

(the decision group is a manageable size and the investment required is within straightforward approval limits)

The Goldilocks Effect

When the problem is too small

- Insufficiently significant to justify action
- Drives investigation but not action
- Customer champions struggle to justify internally

When the project is too large

- Large number of stakeholders and vested interests
- Decision making process lengthy and bloated
- Investment approval often a challenge



When the opportunity is just right

- Important and urgent enough to justify action
- Decision process comparatively straightforward
- Higher probability of approval

“Land and Expand”
Approach





From selling 'solutions' to achieving outcomes

Are You Selling (and is your Customer Buying) Change or Continuity?

CONTINUITY

- Often (not always) existing customer
- Often (not always) required purchase
- Familiar buying decision journey
- Same or similar specification
- Preserve the status quo
- Low perceived risk
- Strongest competitor = similar vendor

CHANGE

- Often (not always) new customer
- Often (not always) discretionary purchase
- Unfamiliar buying decision journey
- New capabilities
- Disrupt the status quo
- High perceived risk
- Strongest competitor = “do nothing”



From Selling “Solutions” to Achieving Outcomes

“SOLUTION”

*A word that vendors **widely** and often **carelessly** use to describe what they are trying to sell, typically without particular regard to any specific customer problem or opportunity*



OUTCOME

*Something a customer is hoping to **fix**, **achieve** or **avoid** as the result of implementing a **change initiative**, typically in order to solve a **problem** or take advantage of an **opportunity***



Outcome-Centric Value Story Framework

WHY CHANGE?

CURRENT SITUATION

Briefly summarise their current situation

DESIRED OUTCOME(S)

Briefly summarise their desired outcomes, the date by which they need to achieve them, what needs to change, and how they will measure success

OBSTACLES

What are the obstacles that could prevent them from achieving their desired outcomes, how they have tried to deal with them, and with what results?

IMPACT

What are the consequences of failing to achieve their desired outcomes on the organisation as a whole, on the affected functions and on key stakeholders?

WHY YOU?

SOLUTION OPTIONS

What other credible solution options (both in-house and vendor-provided) are they actively considering?

DISTINCTIVE APPROACH

What sets your approach apart from all their other potential options?

UNIQUE BENEFITS

What unique benefits will your approach offer to the organisation as a whole, to key functions and to key stakeholders?

WHY NOW?

BUSINESS CASE/URGENCY

Briefly summarise their business case - including both the costs and consequences of inaction and the realistic projected return on investment, and explaining why action is urgent

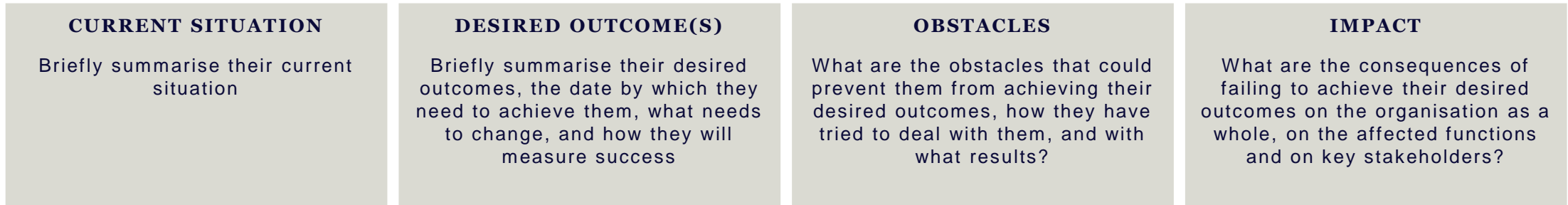
EVIDENCE/DECISION CONFIDENCE

What evidence can you offer to give them confidence in the need for change, the importance of urgent action and their choice of your company and your solution?



Outcome-Centric Value Story: Why Change?

WHY CHANGE?



- The larger the perceived gap between their current situation and desired outcome(s), the more they are likely to recognise the need for change...
- The more significant the obstacles, the more likely they are to seek external help...
- The greater the impact of failure, the more likely they are to accept the need for urgent change...

Outcome-Centric Value Story: Why You?

- We need to identify all their other credible options for addressing the identified issue - including both potential in-house solutions and competitive vendors...
- If we are to set ourselves apart, we need to base our differentiation on a distinctively different and provably better approach and not just on claims of superior features or functions...



WHY YOU?

SOLUTION OPTIONS

What other credible solution options (both in-house and vendor-provided) are they actively considering?

DISTINCTIVE APPROACH

What sets your approach apart from all their other potential options?

UNIQUE BENEFITS

What unique benefits will your approach offer to the organisation as a whole, to key functions and to key stakeholders?



- This distinctively different approach needs to lead to unique benefits to the organisation as a whole, to the affected functions and to the key stakeholders...



Outcome-Centric Value Story: Why Now?

- We need to build the strongest possible business case for the project - reflecting not only the projected return on investment but also the costs, risks and consequences of sticking with the status quo, and equip our sponsor to make the case for urgent and decisive action...
- Perhaps most important of all, we need to ensure that everybody involved in the buying decision is completely confident - not just about the choice of our company and solution, but also in the decision to change their approach...



WHY NOW?

BUSINESS CASE/URGENCY

Briefly summarise their business case - including both the costs and consequences of inaction and the realistic projected return on investment, and explaining why action is urgent

EVIDENCE/DECISION CONFIDENCE

What evidence can you offer to give them confidence in the need for change, the importance of urgent action and their choice of your company and your solution?

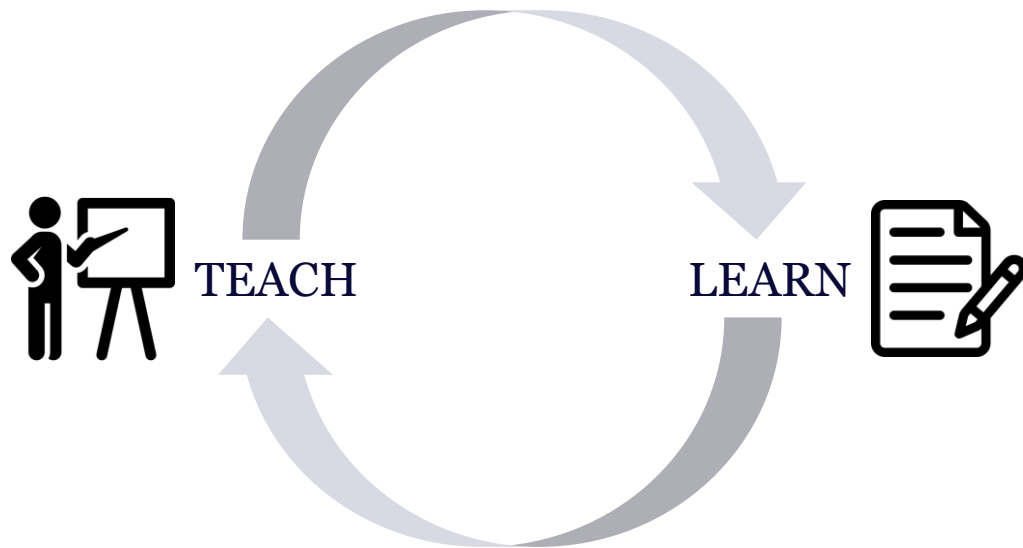




Focus on ‘the first sales conversation’



The All-Important First Sales Conversation



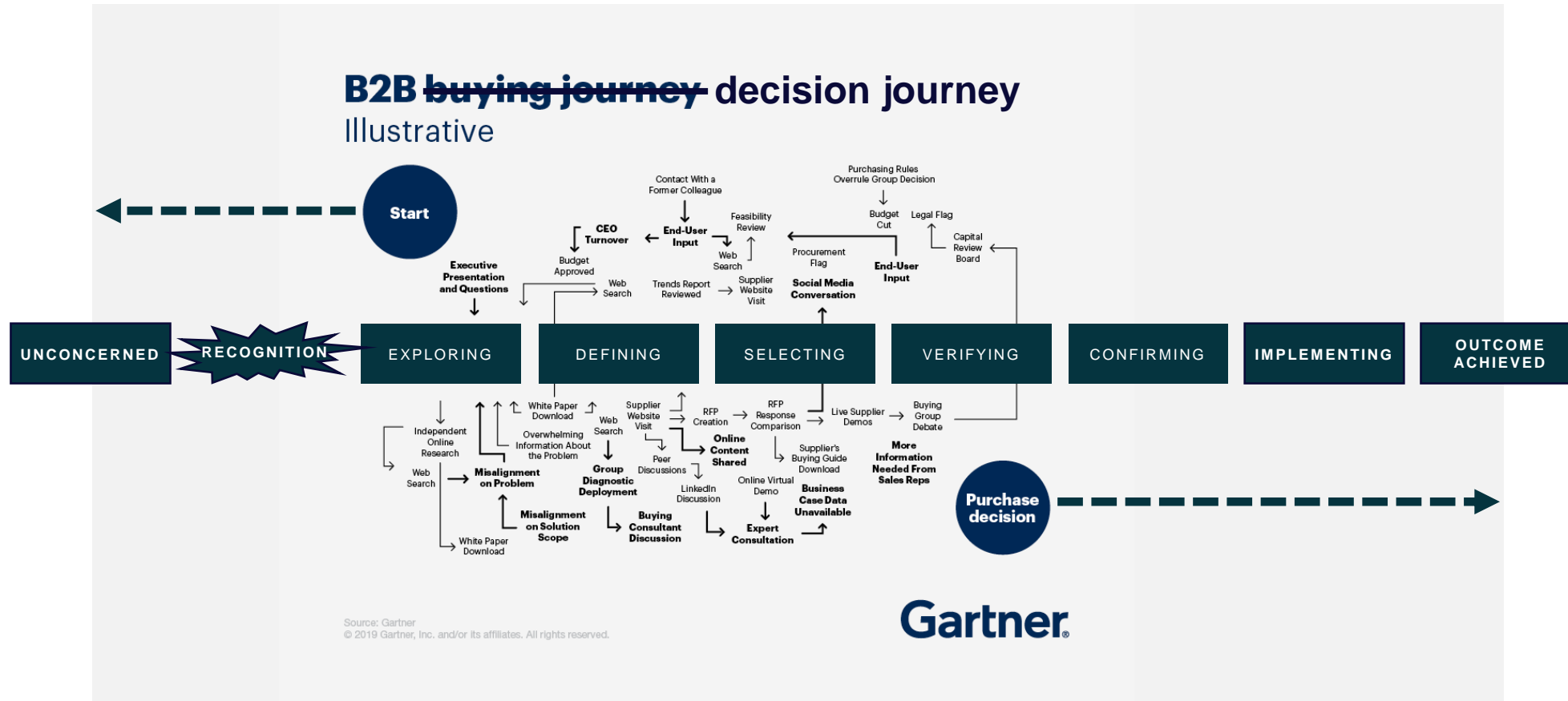
- Do your research
- Develop a hypothesis
- Empathise with their situation
- Share something unfamiliar and insightful
- Educate (teach) before you interrogate (learn)
- Maintain a give-get balance throughout the conversation
- Diagnose before you prescribe - resist the “itch to pitch”
- Leave them feeling smarter and wanting to know more
- Propose a clear next step...

Research and Preparation is Vital

SITUATION			PREPARATION	
What do we know about the customer's current situation?			Research, Logistics, and so on...	
THEIR KEY PARTICIPANTS			OUR KEY PARTICIPANTS	
WHO?	ROLE IN DECISION PROCESS	PERSONAL OBJECTIVE	WHO?	CONTRIBUTION
Name and Job Role	Specific to this project	What are their motivations?	Our Key Players	Role in the Meeting
AGREED PURPOSE		AGENDA	OUR BEST OUTCOME	
Primary reason for the conversation		Key topics and time allocation	"Pre-negotiated next step"	
WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO TEACH THEM?		WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO LEARN FROM THEM?	WHAT CONCERNS CAN YOU ANTICIPATE?	
Insights and Anecdotes		Situational, Problem, Implication, Need-Payoff and Commitment [SPIN+C] questions	Field-Proven Responses to Frequently-Asked Questions	
BUYING ENABLERS			SALES TOOLS	
Materials that support the customer's buying decision process			Materials that support the sales process	
RESULT/AGREED NEXT STEP				



Supporting the Entire Decision Journey



Take-aways

Food for thought

Foundations: proposition

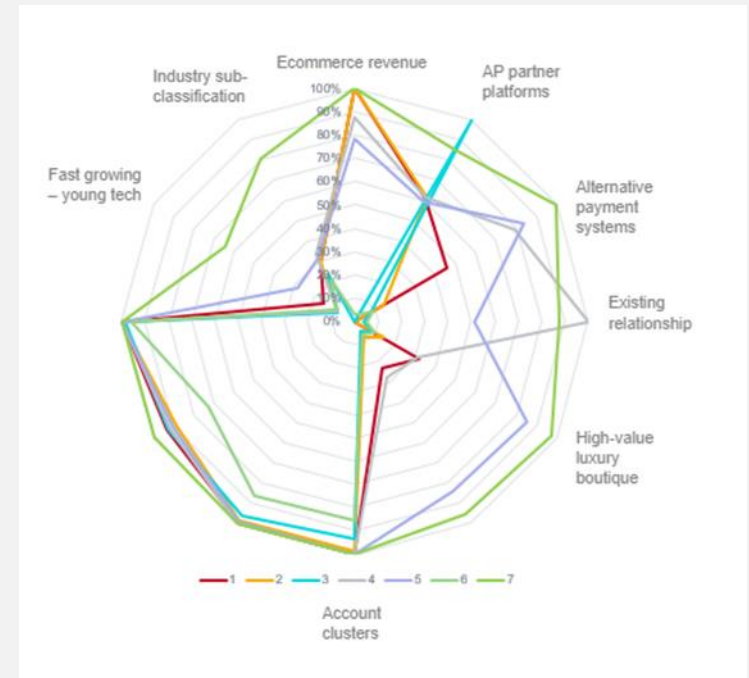
- Masterclass from Eloqua/Marketo post 2007/8
- At a time of budget cuts, built a story around cost savings & demonstrable value
- Built a self-identifying position of ‘modern marketers’ – where you couldn’t be one without marketing automation



Food for thought

Foundations: segmentation

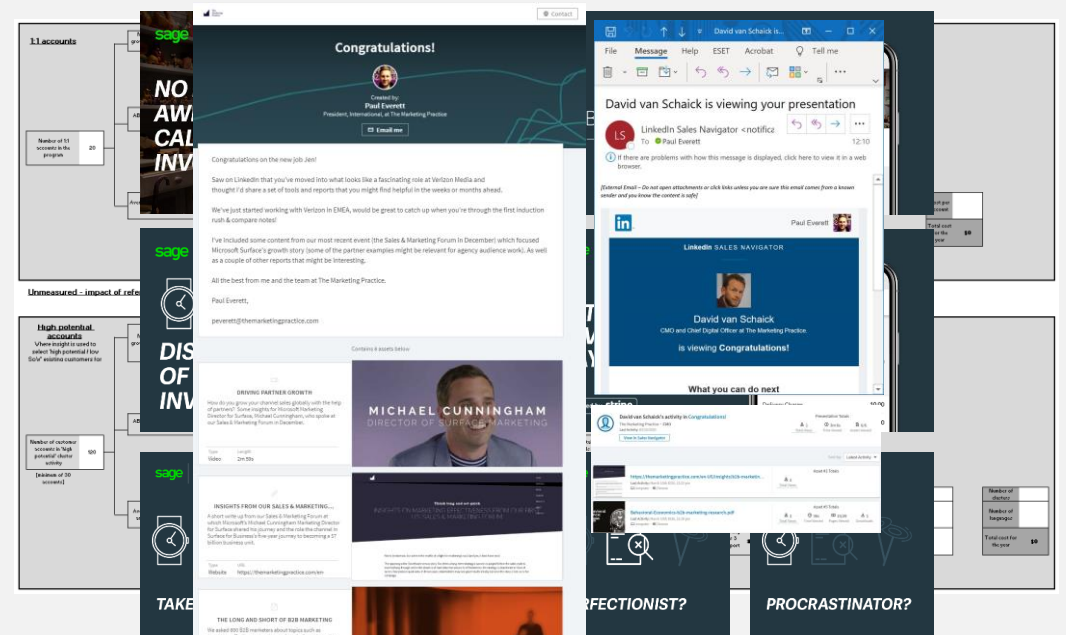
- Could other factors be more important in segmentation than ‘vertical’?
- Would a ‘born in the cloud’ telco have more in common with a challenger bank than with a 40 year old company from the same sector?



Food for thought

Selling the first meeting

- How an Excel template became the top downloaded website asset...
- Now more than ever, buyers keen to know how similar companies have built a business case, got approval, developed a payback model, designed an implementation plan & team...
- Marketing 'leaving something out' that sales can fill in at the first meeting



Food for thought

At the meeting

- Bringing to life the value of the next step
- For example... outputs of similar discovery exercises, or detail on inputs/outputs of workshop session



Food for thought

After the meeting

- Marketing's role doesn't end when the lead is handed over!



Indispensable Tools

CUSTOMER-SPECIFIC VALUE STORY

WHY CHANGE?			
CURRENT SITUATION Briefly summarise their current situation	DESIRED OUTCOME(S) Briefly summarise their desired outcomes, the date by which they need to achieve them, what needs to change, and how they will measure success	OBSTACLES What are the obstacles that could prevent them from achieving their desired outcomes, how they have tried to deal with them, and with what results?	IMPACT What are the consequences of failing to achieve their desired outcomes on the organisation as a whole, on the affected functions and on key stakeholders?
WHY YOU?			
SOLUTION OPTIONS What other credible solution options (both in-house and vendor-provided) are they actively considering?	DISTINCTIVE APPROACH What sets your approach apart from all their other potential options?	UNIQUE BENEFITS What unique benefits will your approach offer to the organisation as a whole, to key functions and to key stakeholders?	
WHY NOW?			
BUSINESS CASE/URGENCY Briefly summarise their business case - including both the costs and consequences of inaction and the realistic projected return on investment, and explaining why action is urgent		EVIDENCE/DECISION CONFIDENCE What evidence can you offer to give them confidence in the need for change, the importance of urgent action and their choice of your company and your solution?	

CONVERSATION PLAN

SITUATION			PREPARATION	
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BUYING ENABLERS			SALES TOOLS	
Materials that support the customer's buying decision process			Materials that support the sales process	
RESULT/AGREED NEXT STEP				

OTHER TOOLS WORTH CONSIDERING:

STRUCTURED QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

- Evidence-based initial and advanced opportunity qualification using consistent factors

STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT

- Establish role in decision, level of influence, attitude to us and attitude to project

MUTUAL SUCCESS PLAN

- Work backwards from Desired Outcome to establish key intermediate actions, owners and checkpoints





email: peverett@themarketingpractice.com

Recording & take-aways:
www.themarketingpractice.com/school



email: bob@inflexion-point.com
web: www.inflexion-point.com
www.linkedin.com/in/bobapollo/
<https://twitter.com/bobapollo>