

SugarCRM: Sixty Second Sugar Snippets: Selling the Experience

Podcast Script: Outsiders Take of the Week for January 13, 2009: Selling the Experience in a Down Economy

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Hello and welcome to this sixty second Sugar Snippet, the latest installment of the CRM Outsiders Take of the Week. The Take of the Week is a weekly distillation of trends and events in the CRM world, an offshoot if you will from the CRM Outsiders blog myself and Colin Beasty write up every day at www.crmoutsiders.com.

First off, I'd like to wish everyone in the Sugar universe a happy New Year - and let's hope that 2009 sees some positive change in the economy and the business world at large.

To that end, I wanted to talk a bit about a trend I'm seeing in the sales and marketing world. It is one that started evolving even before the global financial meltdown. The trend is what I have dubbed "experience selling." This new paradigm is in contrast to the old B2B model of big, expensive sales forces selling based on the relationship model – treating prospects to dinner and rounds of golf, and so on. The idea was that, if the relationship between the salesman and the decision-maker was strong, the account was solid.

But this economy has changed all that. You can't simply rely on a personal relationship any more, there has to be more to the equation. And just having a lower price won't cut it either – this economy means price elasticity is a given, not a differentiator. Sales teams have to create a grater experience in the actual sales process – proving the value of your services and being a helping hand to customers. And taking the cue from B2C sales models, B2B sales teams need to be in more of a learning dialog with customers, not simply pushing the company mantras at prospects hoping something will stick.

What does this mean for CRM? For one thing, it presents a challenge to all CRM providers – SugarCRM included. The tools these new experience sellers need to rely on have to be flexible, and also incorporate the kinds of tools that enable experience selling. Integrated communications, cross-channel pre-sales support tools, and social tools to better enable sales agent and prospect dialogs that can be tracked in the CRM system, are all needed.

The latest release of SugarCRM brings a lot of these tools o bear, so if you haven't already, I encourage you to take a look at the cool Sugar Cloud Connectors features, that enable sales teams to build great experiences into their sales processes in a very cutting edge manner...

And that – my friends – is the CRM Outsiders Take of the Week.

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