



# CHANGE OR DIE — IS IT FOR REAL?

The auto industry is riddled with people talking about change and how if you don't change, you will die. I think it's a little dramatic to take that view, but I do believe that there are some really good reasons to try new ideas and techniques if you want different results in your dealerships.

Let's start with how we communicate with our customers for many years:

Ding, ding, ding. The battle is on, with email in one corner and text messages across the ring. Which channel is best for your marketing efforts?

Some 74 trillion emails are sent every year, and "only" 8 trillion text messages, according to an infographic by Text Marketer that compares the two channels. On average, office workers receive 121 emails per day, whereas millennials on average receive 67 texts, the graphic says.

Email may win in volume, but, according to the graphic, email open rates hover around 20 percent, compared with 98 percent for text messages.

There are many types of communication that consumers prefer to receive via text, including appointment reminders, prescription refills and service outages. Now ask yourself, if my customers prefer text messages, why do I still do snail mail, email and use phone centers to talk with my customers?

It's interesting to think that we have a form of communication available to us that has an open rate of 98 percent yet we don't use it as the preferred method of communication. Do you even ask your customers what their preferred method of communication is?

Let's start today by asking the question and start using whatever form of communication our customers prefer and maybe we can change our results.

## Personalized Selling vs. Non-Personalized Selling

Salesforce.com reports that 79 percent of buyers say it's absolutely critical or very important to interact with a salesperson who is a trusted advisor — not just a sales rep. Customers demand smarter sales experiences, and they want sales reps who are personal consultants that help them address their challenges instead of treating them like another lead in the pipe.

So ask yourself this question now, if 79 percent of the buyers say it's critical to have personalized sales, why are you using outdated

BASIS FOR CUSTOMER	PERSONAL SELLING	SALES PROMOTION
Meaning	Personal selling is a marketing tool in which the salesperson presents the goods to customers based upon their needs and instigates them to purchase it.	Sales promotion is a range of non-personal marketing activities that are carried on to initiate sales of products and services.
Consequence	Long-term increase in sales	Possible short-term increase in sales
Communication	Face to face & personal	Indirect
Incentive scheme & offers	Not always present	Always present
Nature of product	Customized to their needs	Standardized
Method used for which kind of product	High Value	Low Value

## "If 79 percent of the buyers say it's critical to have personalized sales, why are you using outdated sales approaches.?"

sales approaches in F&I and in service? Let's start in those two departments today by trying to sell to a customer's needs on a very personal basis and watch the take rate go up.

Non-personal selling is considered by many today to be a form of gorilla marketing. Take a look at the chart above.

So the question to ask yourself now is, are you in it for the long haul to build long-term, repeat customers with high CSI? If so, doesn't it make sense to change to a personalized selling approach?

## Personalization Drives Consumer Engagement

According to one study, 63 percent of people wish brands would treat them like a friend instead of a consumer. Personalized presentations are perceived as more engaging,

educational, time-saving and memorable than general presentations.

To reap the rewards of personalization, your business must understand prospects and customers across different devices and marketing channels. When customers are engaged they buy more and they are happier about it as they are in control.

While no one is actually dying because they aren't changing processes, they are missing out on some fantastic opportunities. Change can be scary but good leaders force change when necessary to achieve the goals of their organizations and to get to the next level.

These two ideas above can have a dramatic change on your business and, as I always say, "follow the data" as it's generally pretty accurate. ○

