



Stop Jumping through Hoops; Be the First Influencer

By Ron Snyder

Half of all business decisions fail, according to Paul Nutt, the author of Why Decisions Fail. The primary reason for decision failure, according to Professor Nutt, is that decision-makers jump to a quick decision and use the rest of the process to justify it. In his book, Nutt studied 400 decisions made by senior executives in medium and large companies. He defined a "failed decision" as one that either was not implemented or that was not still in effect two years after it had been made.

By contrast, the best decision makers did the exact opposite. They kept their minds open, resisted the temptation to make a premature commitment, and seriously considered other viable alternatives.

What does this mean to you?

When the desire to solve a problem arises, being the "first influencer" to articulate a solution that resonates with the decision maker has a huge impact on the criteria upon which the decision will be made. To do this, you must understand the problem driving the need for a solution and show how your unique capabilities solve the problem. This firmly entrenches your unique capabilities as key decision criteria. If you can show how your capabilities solve the problem better than other alternatives, you are positioned to withstand attempts by competitors to unseat you. This includes planting messages to counter likely competitive claims.

It also means you need to beware of being asked to "jump through hoops" for someone who has already made up their mind and is just using you to show that a reasonable number of options were considered. In this case, you need to:

- Qualify if the decision maker is really open to additional solutions,
- Identify what the current option will not do as well as yours and
- Make your incremental capabilities critical to the decision.

The take-away message is to have:

- A web presence and lead generation program with a clear target market and message that identifies potential candidates and begins influencing the decision criteria,
- Sales follow-up and nurture marketing that ensures you are top of mind when the need arises and
- Sales people who are very good at qualifying real opportunities and influencing decision criteria.

What do you need to do to ensure this is happening in your organization?



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Accelerating Revenue Profitably

About the Author

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As a sales and marketing consultant, for the past 19 years, Ron has helped companies dramatically improve their sales and marketing results in complex selling environments. Results include:

- ◆ Achieving sales targets
- ◆ Generating qualified leads
- ◆ Improving conversion rates
- ◆ Accelerating sales process velocity
- ◆ Controlling costs of sales and marketing

He has worked with industry leaders, such as HP, Cisco Siemens, Philips, Alliance Imaging, Synopsys, and rapidly-growing companies such as NetSuite, Zeus Technology and Zonare.

Prior to that, in his 11 years at HP, Ron was consistently recognized as a top performer in sales, marketing and management roles related to medical, computer and software solutions.