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Ways to Differentiate Yourself from Your Competitors

What every CEO and sales leader needs to know



Are you wondering why your sales teams struggle to stand out in crowded markets?

Do conversations with prospects keep getting dragged into cost debates instead of value discussions?

If so, you're in the right place.

In this guide, you'll learn how value-based consultative selling, when executed well, enables teams to uncover more value than competitors. That deeper discovery sharpens the client's understanding of what truly matters and creates clear space to **differentiate** your organisation.

By the end, you'll be able to decide how to apply these principles so that your teams can win earlier, win faster with stakeholder alignment, and win more by anchoring every decision on validated client value.

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According to Ebsta data*, 78% of sellers missed targets last year.

In a world of rapid innovation and competition, sellers face a single, recurring challenge: How to differentiate themselves from competitors in a way that matters most to the client or prospect.

When selling high-value, complex solutions, it's easy to sound just like everyone else. The difference between top performers and the rest? They unlock genuine business value in every conversation.

*Data based on pipeline and survey results across 2,000+ CROs and sales leaders, and 655,000 opportunities worth \$48 Billion. <https://www.ebsta.com>



01

Welcome to value-based consultative selling



Introduction

Our vision

Imagine a sales process that is sharper, faster and more effective. A process where proven skills and frameworks are used in every client conversation to set your teams apart from your competitors and increase win rates. That is the vision behind this guide.

Who are we?

We are a specialist partner in sales consulting, training and coaching, focused entirely on complex B2B selling. Our team has supported hundreds of leaders and thousands of sellers worldwide across discovery, qualification, differentiation and deal execution.

Our role is to help you create measurable client value in every interaction. The result is complex opportunities turned into predictable growth through proven consultative methods that teams can learn, use and sustain.

Our mission is simple: build the mindsets, skills and systems that help you win more of the right deals.

You are welcome to reach out to us with any questions:

E: team@thesalescoachnetwork.com

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Our approach

Lasting change only comes when mindsets and behaviours shift in a sustained way. We equip leaders and teams with a shared language, straightforward frameworks and practical tools. The goal is consistent, value-based conversations that uncover what clients truly care about and connect solutions directly to validated outcomes.

The opportunity

When used effectively, value-based consultative selling allows teams to work in a far more client-centric way. You learn more, faster than competitors, differentiate from the very first interaction, and design solutions that realise the value your clients are seeking.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is designed for leaders and sales professionals working in businesses that sell high-value solutions and services in competitive markets.

If you are operating with multiple stakeholders, long cycles and heavy scrutiny on cost, risk and outcomes, these insights are for you.

What is in this guide?

You will find the key elements of client value that top performers explore in their daily interactions to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

You will also see the common misconceptions we encounter most often about client value, and how to avoid them.



What is value-based consultative selling?

The concept

Value-based consultative selling is not just a buzzword. It's an approach that brings you closer to real differentiation. By deeply understanding what your client values, shaping your proposition around it, and guiding them to realise those outcomes, you become memorable and win more. Client centricity, genuine curiosity and well-developed conversational skills are critical for success.

The misconception

Most sellers start with **what they believe makes them different**: their solution's features, track record or methodology. The problem is that **your view of value often misses the mark**.

Sellers tend to impose their version of what matters on prospects, creating noise instead of impact. Clients don't want you to tell them what should be important. They want you to understand **their** world, their priorities and **their** ambitions. Projecting your value does not differentiate you, it makes you forgettable.



The theory

The most effective way to differentiate is to see value through the client's lens. Business value is multi-dimensional: it can be logical or emotional, objective or subjective. The task is to dig deep with every stakeholder and discover what matters most to them, not just the company as a whole.

Clients value sellers who invest the time to mine for what's truly important, then validate those findings across all stakeholders.

When you do this, you create a unique advantage. You can connect on multiple levels (business, individual, solution and provider) and give clients a compelling reason to act.

The practical

With clear structure, proven frameworks and the discipline to mine for value, differentiation becomes much simpler and happens earlier. You earn the right to define the problem, shape the solution, and anchor every decision on outcomes that are both validated and measurable.

The result

Top performers who master this approach build stronger business cases, develop supporters and advocates, and differentiate themselves in ways that truly matter to clients or prospects.



02

Value Myths: What should you ignore?



Value Myths

1. “We know better than clients what they want”

Experience does not equal insight. Too many sellers assume they already know what clients should want. In reality, priorities shift with strategy, leadership and market conditions. Only mutual exploration uncovers what truly matters today.

When you impose your view, you create resistance. Share your insights and challenges by all means, but use them only as a catalyst to explore the client’s thinking more deeply. By exploring their perspective, you build trust and differentiate.

2. “We already know how we are different”

Your differentiators don’t count if clients can’t explain them in their own words. Real differentiation must be visible, provable and relevant in the client’s world. Without validation, what you think is unique is just more noise.

3. “If prospects don’t see the value, tell them more”

More information doesn’t make you more valuable. Buyers are already drowning in data. Bombarding them with slides, case studies and jargon only dilutes your message.

Real value emerges through co-discovery: asking sharper questions, framing insights in their context, and letting them connect the dots.

4. “You just need to be dogged and determined”

Persistence without relevance is wasted effort. Repeating the same pitch doesn’t show commitment; it shows you aren’t listening. Progress comes from adapting, reframing, and finding new ways to be relevant to evolving priorities. Determination only works when paired with empathy and insight, otherwise persistence simply lengthens the “no” and burns calories, time, and goodwill.

5. “Price wins in the end”

Price only becomes the deciding factor when value is unclear or unproven. In complex B2B decisions, stakeholders justify investments when outcomes are tangible, risks are managed, and success is measurable.

When you help them identify, validate and realise value, price becomes just one part of the decision, not the deciding factor.



03

Value Fundamentals



Value Fundamentals

Successful value-based consultative selling always plays out in two phases.

Firstly, sellers work with clients to identify value: clarifying the problems, goals and outcomes that matter most to them.

Secondly, they collaborate with stakeholders to design a solution that delivers that value in measurable, validated ways. This creates ownership, accelerates alignment, and positions you as a trusted partner, not just another vendor.

Value is also your best defence against the price trap. When conversations anchor on cost alone, sellers are forced into discounts and compromises. By focusing on outcomes that clients want and proving the value that will be realised, you shift the dialogue from cost to impact. Price becomes just one factor in a broader value equation.

Top performers explore value through four distinct lenses:

1. **Business value:** Clarify strategic goals, commercial drivers, and measurable outcomes that matter to the organisation
2. **Individual and people value:** Understand motivations, risks, and wins for decision makers, users, and influencers at every level
3. **Solution value:** Connect capabilities directly to client outcomes, showing how features translate into results
4. **Provider value:** Prove why you are the safest, smartest choice to realise value, using evidence, process, and partnership

Finally, remember that differentiation only matters when it matters to the client. The VALID framework keeps you honest. Differences are valuable only when they are:

- **Validated** by the client
- Easy to **Articulate** and repeat inside their organisation
- Backed with **Legitimacy** through evidence and proof
- Tied to clear **Impact** that delivers outcomes
- Truly **Distinct** from competitors or doing nothing

This approach transforms abstract claims into meaningful reasons for clients to choose you.



100

**areas of value to
explore to enable you
to differentiate yourself**



100 areas of value to explore

Based on our experience coaching complex opportunities, we've pulled together a list of 100 areas of value that top performers consistently explore. These help them identify more value than their competitors and make the task of differentiation simpler and more effective.

1. Strategic growth priorities for this year and next
2. Revenue mix targets by product, segment or region
3. Market share ambitions and competitive moves
4. Customer acquisition cost and payback goals
5. Expansion and retention targets for existing accounts
6. Pipeline health and sales velocity constraints
7. Pricing power and discounting controls
8. Gross margin improvement levers
9. Cost to serve and service level trade offs
10. Operating model simplification and efficiency
11. Working capital and cash conversion
12. Compliance and audit priorities
13. Risk exposure tolerance across security, legal and brand
14. ESG or sustainability commitments driving projects
15. Digital transformation milestones and dependencies
16. Data strategy, quality and governance gaps
17. AI adoption objectives and success metrics
18. Time to value expectations for new initiatives
19. Executive sponsorship and decision cadence
20. Procurement policy for value assessment
21. Total cost of ownership compared with alternatives
22. Impact on revenue enablement and productivity
23. Change management capacity and readiness
24. Talent capability, hiring plans and skills gaps
25. Board level outcomes that define success
26. What a win looks like for the executive sponsor
27. How the decision maker's goals are measured
28. Personal risk if the initiative fails
29. Career upside if the initiative succeeds



30. Cognitive load and complexity reduced for users
31. Time saved in critical workflows
32. Stress removed from recurring problems
33. Confidence to make faster, better decisions
34. Control and visibility gained across teams
35. Credibility earned with peers and leadership
36. Recognition for delivering strategic outcomes
37. Onboarding speed for new team members
38. Skill development and enablement needs
39. Collaboration friction between functions
40. Political dynamics and informal influencers
41. Champions' ability to retell your story internally
42. Executive access and alignment on priorities
43. Risk appetite for innovation versus stability
44. Support burden on already stretched teams
45. Change fatigue and stakeholder saturation
46. Safety, wellbeing and morale improvements
47. Inclusion of front-line voices in design
48. Decision rules used when trade-offs arise
49. Who will say no and why?
50. What happens if nothing changes?
51. Problem definition and scope accuracy
52. Measurable outcomes your solution can influence
53. Leading indicators that prove early progress
54. Integration with existing systems and data
55. User experience fit for real world contexts
56. Automation that removes low value work
57. Decision support that improves quality and speed
58. Analytics that reveal root causes not just signals
59. Security posture, privacy and compliance fit
60. Reliability, availability and performance needs
61. Implementation complexity and resource demand
62. Phased implementation or release options
63. Training, coaching and adoption enablers
64. Governance, roles and clear ownership
65. Support model and SLAs that matter to users



66. Total cost over the full lifecycle
67. De-risk strategies and contingency planning
68. Ability to adapt when priorities change
69. Compatibility with future roadmap and scale
70. Evidence, references and case outcomes
71. Calibration of value metrics and baselines
72. Executive narrative that links to strategy
73. Impact on client experience and NPS
74. Competitive alternatives and trade off analysis
75. Clear exit criteria for success and closure
76. Credibility in the client's market and domain
77. Proof of delivering similar outcomes at scale
78. Financial stability and long-term partnership fit
79. Cultural alignment and ways of working
80. Governance cadence and executive access
81. Collaborative design approach and responsiveness
82. Risk sharing mechanisms and incentives
83. Transparency in pricing and assumptions
84. Implementation playbook and resource depth
85. Quality of project management and communication
86. Data stewardship and security certifications
87. Ecosystem of partners and integrations
88. Innovation roadmap relevant to the client
89. Commercial flexibility tied to outcomes
90. Post sale success and renewal practices
91. Enablement for client teams to self-serve
92. Speed and quality of support interactions
93. Executive references and advocacy strength
94. Thought leadership that teaches new perspectives
95. Local presence or global reach as required
96. Contract simplicity and time to signature
97. Scalability of services without loss of quality
98. Ethical standards and sustainability stance
99. Escalation paths that resolve issues fast
100. Fit with the client's future state vision



Why these ideas are useless on their own and what to do next



The Reality: Why these ideas are useless on their own

We often see average performers try to impose their view of value on clients, then lose to competitors or to indecision. Ideas alone do not change results. What does change results is a shared method, manager-led coaching, and consistent execution across the entire opportunity journey.

While these 100 ideas might spark new thinking, using them mechanically will not deliver impact. Here are three reasons why:

1

Your intent may not be clear to the prospect or client

Clients are quick to question motives. Sellers often assume their good intentions are obvious, but clients filter everything through the lens of “what’s in it for them”.

If your intent looks self-serving or biased toward closing the deal rather than helping the client succeed, trust evaporates.

Clear intent is shown by listening deeply, prioritising their outcomes, and making recommendations that are genuinely in their best interest. When clients believe you are there to help them succeed, engagement rises and collaboration gets easier.

2

Effective value-based selling is more complex than simply asking questions

Discovery is not a checklist. Great sellers don’t just ask, they frame, test and build on answers in ways that uncover hidden priorities. They introduce perspectives that expand client thinking and connect problems to measurable outcomes.

This requires preparation, business acumen and the ability to engage multiple stakeholders. Without that, questioning feels scripted or interrogative. The real skill lies in blending what clients share with market insight, experience, and creativity, turning discovery into a dialogue that uncovers, validates, and builds a compelling case for change.

3

Differences only matter if they matter to the client

In the same way you can’t impose your view of value onto your prospects or clients, you can’t research or guess it either. Their values and beliefs are personal and need to be surfaced and validated.

Differences only matter if:

- Clients confirm the differentiator solves a priority problem
- They are simple for clients to explain inside their organisation
- Evidence and social proof back the claim
- They create measurable outcomes that matter
- Your proposed solution is clearly different to competitors or doing nothing

Without client validation, differences are just decoration.



Ready to Act?

Differentiation does not happen by accident. It happens when you and your teams focus on value, apply proven methods, and turn every client interaction into an opportunity to stand apart.

If you are ready to help your teams win earlier, win faster and win more, start the conversation with us today:

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Les is the creator of The Sales Accelerator Method and founder of The Sales Coach Network. With over 30 years in sales and leadership roles, he has sold and coached transformational deals worth hundreds of millions. After selling his second consulting business to Accenture in 2006, Les went on to advise global organisations on how to win and deliver their most complex opportunities. His focus today is on helping sales leaders and their teams 'sell less and win more' by putting client value at the centre of every conversation.

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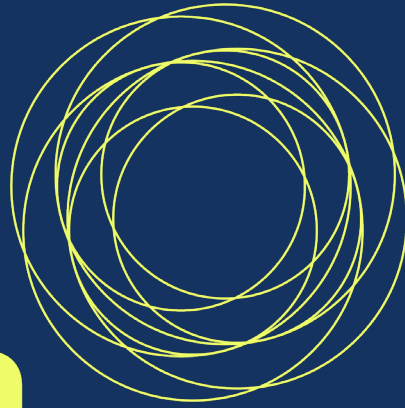
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Jonathan has led and coached sales teams across scale-ups and global enterprises in consulting, technology, SaaS, professional services, financial services and more. His experience ranges from frontline business development to coaching board-level pursuits. Known for turning theory into practical action, Jonathan helps leaders and their teams embed the systems, habits and conversations that win complex deals consistently.

Together, Les and Jonathan bring decades of experience, a proven methodology and a practical, human approach to transforming sales performance.



The Sales Coach Network



Adapt. Accelerate. Achieve.

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