

Anticipate and block competitors

Strategies to improve sales team effectiveness

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In a survey of global executives, McKinsey Quarterly reported that only 23% said they learned about an innovative move by a competitor with enough time to plan a response before it hit the market. About 77% and 88%, respectively, learned about the move too late to preempt it or when it had already hit the market. These results clearly suggest that competitive intelligence efforts at most companies are not effective.

“Tough Times and the Competition: Making a Case for Competitive Intelligence,”
Paul Kinsinger, Thunderbird School of Management

Anticipate threats in context

In this noisy and dynamic marketplace, staying a step ahead of competitors is crucial yet tough. Many companies lack resources to **collect and analyze a steady stream of insight about competitors** across all categories in which they operate. So they focus on feature comparisons and market share data for major players only.

But that data won't combat **emerging players with scrappy tactics and momentum-stealing** that keep you off-balance and provide bargaining power to your prospects.

Make your intelligence **deliver real-time insight about the sales strategies that are working for competitors in the specific customer contexts** that your reps will encounter— such as by industry, buying center, or solution category.



Uncover customer preferences

Probe on your customers' **perceptions about their alternatives as well as their preferences** for or against your solutions. Remember that the options they are considering may include companies you see as **direct competitors as well as DIY** (do-it-yourself) alternatives that you might dismiss as inferior but which may be attractive to customers when budgets are low or customization requirements are high.



UNCOVER

the points of
resistance



PROBE

on underlying
beliefs/biases

With an understanding of the customer's **attitudes, loyalties, and possible blind spots** when it comes to your competition for a given opportunity, your sales reps will be better prepared to understand how their pitches must be framed to win the deal.

Reframe the conversation

Once your reps are armed with context about the competitive set and customer mindset, give them actionable talking points that guide them through the process of **unpacking individual objections and attacking competitive strengths and vulnerabilities** systematically. But don't take an aggressive stance that may be off-putting to customers.



Instead, ask questions that **broaden the customers' thinking** about their requirements and provoke doubt about the long-term downsides of the alternative. **Reframe the conversation** beyond what current competitors can offer and influence criteria for future purchases with aspirational messages about your roadmap to come.

We develop contextual selling tools and content marketing programs that are considered best in class, with messaging that sharpens differentiation, playbooks that improve sales performance, and content marketing programs that deliver results. We help companies harness sales leader knowledge and apply rich insight about customer drivers and market realities in tools and programs that drive measurable change, often in less than 90 days.

If you want to equip your field, call Jenee Gatto today at 408-540-5305. Or, if you'd like to explore additional best practices, visit us at www.contextual-selling.com.

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