

The Technology Salesperson's Handbook

114 World Proven
Lessons and Tactics

Ken Wax

Praise for Ken Wax

“Ken Wax has a keen teaching ability, and is an inspirational speaker and motivator as well.” – *John Dragoon, Novell*

“Ken has deep insight into what it takes to be a successful salesperson in the high tech industry, and is also a phenomenal trainer and mentor. – *Joyce Maroney, Kronos*

“Ken’s teachings were instrumental in winning more than 120 new accounts.” – *Greg Lazar, ATG*

“I cannot think of anyone who knows more than Ken Wax about working with salespeople – from teaching them basic skills to figuring out ways to overcome the most challenging set of sales obstacles.” – *Wendy Stone, IBM*

“Many of our channel partners became millionaires because of Ken Wax.” – *Don Bulens, IBM*

“Ken Wax is a salesman’s salesman. His expertise and vast experiences in different industries helped my teams exceed our sales targets even during difficult economic times.” – *Brian Corey, Monster Worldwide*

“I’ve hosted over 10 training programs in my career and Ken Wax is the most effective sales trainer I’ve ever worked with.” – *Darren Johnson, Adobe*

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The chapters have been organized in a very specific way.

While you can open to any page and find useful tactics and tools, the chapters are arranged to start with the customer's point of view and how selling has changed, then the best ways and tools for selling to that customer.

Our last chapter is different; it is about personal growth and reaching higher levels.

Chapter 1: **Inside the Mind of the Customer**

Chapter 2: **The New Reality of Selling**

Chapter 3: **It's Called the Sales Process**

Chapter 4: **The Technology Salesperson's Toolkit**

Chapter 5: **Mastering the Meeting**

Chapter 6: **It's All in the Presentation**

Chapter 7: **Advancing to a Higher Version Number**

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Introduction

As of last month, I've led 220 workshops in fourteen countries and consulted with dozens of high technology companies. No two were exactly alike.

My clients include industry giants like IBM, Monster.com, Microsoft, Accenture, and Oracle. Others are much smaller; mid-sized and even startups. Each had the same reason for bringing me in: A key executive knew their team could be winning *more often and faster*.

But that's where the similarity ends.

Some need to outsell larger, well-known competitors. Others *are* those leaders, looking to become more nimble or bring higher performance and consistency across geographies.

Some must get beyond selling to early adopters, others must move up to sell enterprise-wide. You'd be surprised how many need to transform the sales team – their marketplace has become more competitive and now demands new skills.

As I write this, it's impossible to know about you and your specific goals and challenges. That's okay. Whatever they are today, we can both be pretty sure they will be different in six or 18 months. Selling technology is like that.

So in this book I've selected hundreds of specific items from my workshops, magazine articles and keynote speeches. We'll let you choose the ones that are most valuable to you today.

Open this book anywhere to find a chapter that explores some aspect of selling technology solutions. Whether you have hours or just a few minutes, you will find ideas, insights and specific tactics.

Uniquely – and perhaps most importantly – you will also find Words That Work. These are conversations really, ways to put a tactic to work in your interactions with customers. Salespeople around the world have found these remarkably valuable.

In my career I've carried a bag for startups, been a sales manager with a hundred million dollar quota, and held senior executive positions. Open these pages knowing these words, lessons and ideas come from front line, real-world experiences.

If there's one thing I've learned from my work with technology salespeople and executives, it is about leverage. A single change to how one handles a sticky situation can mean the difference between losing or winning a very lucrative sale. Speeding up the sales cycle can literally change a company's future.

It is my hope this book brings you the same sort of impact and results that my direct work has brought my clients.

Ken Wax

Boston, Massachusetts January 2011 www.kenwax.com

How I Got Here

I didn't set out to teach salespeople how to sell technology. I had no choice.

My technology start was in software sales^{*}. I rose into sales management and several of my companies were acquired. When one was bought by Lotus/IBM, I eventually found myself in charge of large sales team responsible for a third of the US with an annual team quota of over \$100 million dollars.

My sales team, while a sharp bunch, had limited experience launching and growing into the new markets the company was targeting. That was when I needed to bring in some training. Everything out there, I found, was generic. Every sales training company had models with boxes that prospects were expected to obediently progress through. They offered thick three-ring binders and days full of slide watching.

The closest those generic courses came to addressing my company's goals and challenges was to insert our name in their one-size-fits-all workbooks.

To my amazement, even the group exercises were generic – 'selling' a fictitious product from a non-existent company to an equally non-existent prospect at a fictitious corporation.

For this I was supposed to remove my people from the field for days? Thanks, but no thanks.

So at IBM, I began working directly with my salespeople over lunch and in weekly meetings to discuss our specific situations and to

^{*} Before that I was on the other side of the table, as a buyer for Macy's and then

figure out the best approaches for them. It wasn't just talk – we would rehearse real life situations complete with words that would work in those situations (we'll come back to those words in a moment).

This approach led to giving presentations at industry conferences and writing articles about the most effective ways of creating customers. Over the years, as my sales team members moved on and up at new companies, they often invited me in to help advance their teams.

IBM has also brought me back numerous times to train their salespeople and channel partners, give keynotes at their conferences, and to teach executives advanced presentation techniques.*

In addition to industry giants, I've also been fortunate to work with many smaller companies. They often have the advantage of being nimble and can seize opportunities quickly; several are used to illustrate lessons in this book.

I ended up teaching thousands of salespeople in seminars, workshops, conferences, web TV and executive meetings in 14 countries on five continents. But as I said at the beginning, it all started because I had no other choice.

It's what I still do today.

* Many of which I share in Chapter 6.

How to Use This Book

Notice I didn't say 'read'.

If you enjoy reading, you've picked up the wrong book. Let me recommend John Grisham, Steven King or anything by Malcolm Gladwell.

If you enjoy *selling*, we're both on the same page.

This is the book I wish I had when I was in sales and sales management. It's not a scholarly tome with abstract theories to ponder. Just the opposite – each chapter is filled with real-world approaches that can be used immediately. Each has been field-proven by thousands of technology salespeople at companies of all sizes.

The chapters are short. No lectures, no buzzwords, no modeling what the ideal customer should do. Instead, you'll find page after page of practical ideas and tactics.

Many chapters have Words That Work – examples that you can tailor to your personal style and selling situations. They are clearly labeled.

While most of the topics come from my workshops (a few are from my speeches and magazine articles), there is one thing we do in those workshops that isn't possible in a book: We practice. In no-pressure small groups, each salesperson gets to 'try on' the new approaches and tailor them to his or her own style.

So when you find a topic that is particularly relevant to your next sales call, it's up to you to practice. Bring your own personality to it

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In over 100 practical and tactical short chapters, this complete guide has a wealth of immediately-useful ideas and tactics for every technology salesperson. These include ‘*Words That Work*’ – real-world examples that you can put to work for you immediately.

Beginning with ‘Customer Vision’ and why selling has changed, to tactics for reaching ‘unreachable’ prospects and handling the most challenging selling situations, you will benefit from insights and world-proven techniques for becoming an even more successful sales professional.



Ken Wax has led technology sales teams ranging from startups to industry giants. He has trained salespeople from Microsoft to Monster.com, from IBM to Accenture, and has been the keynote speaker at dozens of conferences on five continents. Ken has also written over 120 magazine articles published around the world. www.kenwax.com

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