

THE BIG PICTURE: INFORMATIONAL SERIES

SALES AND MEANING MORE TO CUSTOMERS - ASSESSING SOURCES OF VALUE

The concept of meaning more to customers is about creating consistency of approach when engaging buyers in the sales process. How you conduct yourself in the process of delivering exceptional value at every interaction defines your relationship in the eyes of the customer. But before you can deliver value, you need to come at value from the customer's point of view. At ProDirect, we look at customer value in four basic areas:

Contractual Value: These customers are interested in price, quality, value, speed, and ease of doing business with you. Forget idle chitchat and a list of open-ended questions - these buyers are busy, and they have a job to do. Your job is to help them do it: on their terms.

Analytical Value: Analytical buyers can't get enough data before they make a decision. So give it to them. Create an information delivery strategy with this type of buyer, the

components of which might include white papers, third-party testimonials, research, trade articles and product reviews. In a way, you're selling comfort to these buyers so they can make an informed decision.

Affinity Value: These buyers value a relationship-oriented approach that goes beyond tickets to a show or a round of golf. They value your insight and guidance. For them, it's about giving you access to their organization so you can add greater value in constructing a solution. When a customer lets me walk the halls and meet their colleagues, I'm fairly certain I'm working with an Affinity buyer.

Joint Venture Value: Many relationships are also characterized by partnership-oriented relationships. This is about sitting elbow to elbow in the conference room, working things out together and taking joint accountability for results. These relationships typically take longer to

cultivate and can be very rewarding. The key is to know which customers qualify for this level of involvement from you and your organization.

The key for salespeople and the organizations they represent is to assess their own value orientation to ensure it's in alignment with the buyer and not in conflict with how they choose to interact with sellers.