3 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR SELLING WITH NEUROSCIENCE
You’re a deep listener, a problem-solver, and you help customers navigate the future. Have you ever considered yourself to be a “therapist” of sorts? If not, pull out the chaise lounge. Viewing your customer relationships from this lens could make you a more effective sales professional.

Sales is often referred to as an art. And while there’s no doubt that effective sales requires masterful execution and creativity, that perspective is only one piece of the puzzle. This field is also a science. It can be systematic, methodical, and objective. Marrying the art of sales – relationship-building, communication, and empathy – with the science – human behaviors, patterns, and frameworks – will drive repeatable success.

The way in which sales professionals help customers undergo their digital transformation has many parallels with a psychotherapist treating a client. In both scenarios, the client has a significant challenge they need help unraveling. The customer may need help to see the potential value – to understand how evolving their processes today will benefit their future.

It takes time, deep reflection, and perhaps overcoming some emotions and hesitations to break through and unlock progress.

There’s so much sales people can learn from behavioral science – the study of human behavior and how people make decisions in society. More specifically, neuroscience – how the brain impacts behavior and cognitive functions.

In this ebook we’ll walk through three actionable ways to apply neuroscience in your sales approach to drive customer satisfaction and impact.

Neuroscience: how the brain impacts behavior and cognitive functions.
Did you know that in many countries, mental health professionals are required to receive therapy themselves?

While there are many benefits of this practice, one is eliminating countertransference – a phenomenon in which a therapist transfers their own emotions to a client in therapy. Each of us carries things into our interactions with others, but sometimes we need to park our emotions, concerns, and past experiences in order to genuinely listen and help others.

For every three hours of listening to clients, many psychologists take 30 minutes to process with a professional themselves. This same formula could be applied to sales – perhaps instead taking 30 minutes of self-care to replenish.

Salesforce Regional Vice President, Sales Zach Ciliotta-Young says, “Self-care and reflection have been key for me as both a salesperson and a sales leader. As a salesperson I try to take a step back after every call and assess what went well, what I would like to improve on the next call, and what feeling the customer or prospect could have on the other end.”

Monitoring your emotions can be especially important after a challenging situation with a prospect. You may find yourself feeling flustered, or notice your adrenaline beginning to kick in. This is your body’s natural physiological reaction to confrontation – also known as the fight-or-flight syndrome.

Zach says, “After a really challenging call or meeting I will take time to make sure I don’t let any negative feelings creep into my next interaction or meeting.”

This reinforces the recommendations of President and Chief Selling Officer of Salesleadership Inc. Colleen Stanley, who suggests sales team members must be self-aware and recognize when their body is approaching an emotional response.

You can practice mindfulness and prioritize your wellbeing with these tips from Tara Brach, Ph.D, psychologist, author, teacher of meditation, and Dreamforce presenter:
1. PAY ATTENTION
Observe your moment-by-moment experiences deliberately and pay attention to the experiences of others around you. Dr. Brach says a critical comment of this is the “sacred art of pausing.” She recommends deep breathing exercises to anchor yourself and become fully present.

2. DEVELOP AWARENESS
When we get stressed, our amygdala is hijacked by cortisol and adrenaline – two hormones that prepare our bodies to flee or fight. Our attention is commandeered by the primitive elements of our brain and we begin to operate out of fear. If you notice this occurring, take a moment to name your emotions and describe your experiences – either aloud or to yourself. Naming these things takes away the control they hold.

3. EXERCISE COMPASSION
When we bring attention and awareness inwardly, we activate the parts of the brain that help us tune into others. We become more empathic. This compassion for others helps us act intentionally in order to alleviate their suffering and connect deeply, while also boosting our own happiness.

One way we can pause and practice compassion is through volunteerism. Salesforce employees enjoy 56 hours of volunteer time off (VTO) a year. And for employees like Account Executive Martina Mahady, this can be a cherished way to protect one’s own joy while also making an impact in the world.

To learn more about bringing mindfulness into your daily routine, explore our Trailhead learning module: Mindful Living with the Plum Village Monastics.
3 Ways to Improve Your Selling with Neuroscience

Chapter 2

PRACTICE EMPATHY FOR THE HUMAN BRAIN AND BEHAVIOR

As brilliant as humans can be, we’re also irrational creatures. Our brains don’t operate like computers. Rather than relying just on algorithmic thinking – as computers do – we often use heuristic thinking. A heuristic is a mental shortcut that allows people to solve problems and make judgments quickly and efficiently. But heuristics all have “blind spots” – situations where they don’t actually yield the right, or most rational, answer.

Cognitive biases are examples of the downfalls of heuristics. These are systematic errors in thinking that affect the decisions and judgments people make. And over the years, research in psychology has uncovered over 180 different cognitive biases.

What does this have to do with selling solutions to customers? In order to truly empathize, understand their perspectives, and lead customers on a journey to meaningful change, we must be aware that these blind spots will impact decision-making. As Salesforce Innovation Senior Director Ann Hintzman advocates, we must account for human behavior to enable change.

Not convinced? Let’s play a little game of The Price is Right. If you’re wondering how this is related – don’t worry – we’ll connect-the-dots soon.

Do you think a typical trip around the globe costs more or less than $65,000?
Jot your answer down – no Googling or phoning a friend.

Now, what do you estimate is the average cost to travel around the world?
Write your answer before you turn to the next page.
Before we go on, what we’re demonstrating is a bias called anchoring. Whatever number is shared first will have an undue influence on the estimate that follows. The first question primed you to think about the cost of a trip at $65,000. When we asked you the specific cost, you were naturally inclined to think of it in terms of that number.

The actual cost of a round-the-world trip is $20,000 – $30,000, according to Airetrek's research. What was your estimate? Statistically speaking, you probably estimated a higher cost because we anchored you to an amount that was more than double the actual price. Had we anchored you to $25,000, your estimate would have likely been more accurate.

We’d venture to guess you have rationale to support the number you estimated. Perhaps you thought about the most recent trip you took, and multiplied that by the mileage needed to circle the globe. Whatever reasons we might tell ourselves, the reality is that our logic is flawed, and impacted by our cognitive bias.

We must account for human behavior to help enable change. Let’s dive into some specific challenges our biases create for sales teams, and share actionable frameworks to overcome them.

**BRINGING FUTURE POTENTIAL TO LIFE**

Promising our prospective customers better tomorrows is rarely sufficient to motivate change. When presenting new solutions, we must consider their perception of loss and time.
THE CHALLENGES

Rationally, customers may recognize that technology will benefit their business. But – as we’ve already established – humans aren’t purely rational thinkers. The customer will undoubtedly face two roadblocks:

Now Versus Later: Harvard Professor of Economics Daniel Laibson explored the hyperbolic discounting of time. Simply put – we steeply depreciate exerting effort now versus later. For example, we don’t want to get out of bed to go to the gym at 5 a.m. today, but we’ll sign up for a 5K next month without much concern of the effort it will take.

Loss Versus Gain: We value loss twice as much as we value gain. This means that the pain of giving something up is twice as salient as the joy of receiving it. That sentiment is derived from prospect theory, a model that demonstrates how people decide between options that involve risk.

THE SOLUTIONS

Once we are aware of the customer’s roadblocks, we can become more empathetic and start to balance the equation. To begin, deconstruct the challenges and make them visual. This process of dimensioning and diagramming helps us align and get more actionable. How is the new solution perceived? What is being gained, and what would be forfeited? As these elements are articulated, we should bear in mind that present losses are most valued by individuals, while the future gains are felt the least.

Move gains to present: Consider establishing short-term goals so progress can be measured and celebrated earlier. If we reframe this to a situation in our personal lives, saving money for retirement may seem abstruse, while saving for vacation is tangible.

Defer present losses: Credit cards are an excellent example of this concept – they allow us to gain what we want without giving up cash in our pockets. Apply this concept with your prospect, perhaps offering a trial so they can see benefits without incurring the expense.

Relate to the individual: Consider positioning the solution in terms of something the prospect can relate to personally. For example, rather than focusing on technology boosting efficiencies for the company, showcase how it will enable them in their career.

A balanced equation will help your prospect or customer invest in the meaningful future gains that will transform their company.
Reaching the Dream State

Construal-level theory (CLT) suggests that a common vision is necessary and exciting, but rarely enough to align an entire organization.

CLT is a concept in goal-setting that explores how psychological distance impacts thoughts and behaviors. The further away an object is from our direct experience, the more abstract it becomes. Often, distance keeps us from adopting common goals as personal goals. Distance is considered from many lenses:

**Social:** Self versus others.
Example: I am very close to myself, but very far from Beyoncé.

**Temporal:** Present versus future or past.
Example: I am very close to my next birthday, but very far from my first birthday.

**Spatial:** Close versus far away.
Example: I am very close to my home, but very far from the North Pole.

**Experiential:** Experiencing versus imagining.
Example: I am very close to my commute, but very far from a science fiction movie.

Construals that are further away from our experiences are considered the most desirable, however they are also less feasible for us to achieve.
THE CHALLENGE:
Let’s say your customer sets the following vision for their company:

“By 2030, we will reach $20B in revenue by delivering customer value, no matter the channel, by harnessing the power of technology and insight-driven operations.” - Board of Directors

While an admirable goal, this vision is difficult for your point of contact to relate to and strive for.

For example:

**Social:** Your contact doesn’t know the Board well.

**Temporal:** 2030 is a long ways away.

**Spatial:** The vision was created by someone in another country and emailed to them.

**Experiential:** $20B is more than your contact has ever personally had.

**The Solution:** To overcome psychological distance, help your point of contact translate those corporate goals into tangible personal objectives you can help them achieve.

Salesforce creates organizational alignment through an annual planning framework called the V2MOM. In asking the following questions, we translate large abstract ideas into attainable goals for each employee:

**Vision:** What do you want to achieve?
Example: I will improve the customer experience to drive brand loyalty.

**Values:** What guiding principles and beliefs are most important as you pursue your vision?
Example: A single source of truth for data, customer-centricity, empathy, and innovation.

**Methods:** What actions will you take this year to achieve your vision?
Example: I will implement Salesforce to drive digital transformation.

**Obstacles:** What can get in the way of achieving your vision?
Example: Obtaining budget approval by our deadline.

**Measures:** How will you know when you’ve been successful?
Example: Our candidate net promoter score will increase 100%.

Not only does this empower your connection to see the influence they can make, but also how the solution you’re presenting can play a significant role. Focus on setting attainable and measurable goals.

**WHILE THESE ARE A SAMPLING OF EXAMPLES, THE KEY TAKEAWAY IS THIS: PAIRING EMPATHY WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR WILL POSITION YOU TO ENABLE CHANGE.**
Customers expect it, shareholders demand it, and employees need it. What are we talking about? Transformation.

“Our sales teams focus on the impact to the customer, the end users, and the executive teams,” shares Zach Ciliotta-Young. “Focusing on the impact of the transformation rather than the product itself leads to much more meaningful conversations. Some of our best presentations and customer interactions didn’t once mention a Salesforce product.”

Salesforce has an in-house design thinking consultancy that helps customers consider transformation with the end-user in mind. This group, called Ignite, is a part of our Office of Innovation and comprised of movers and shakers who infuse customer success early into the sales process.

Their work with leading brands has sparked many learnings that they’re sharing with the world. In fact, Ignite synthesized data from their interactions, as well other sales programs, to develop a playbook on customer transformation.

A key learning was that CEOs generally have one of three mindsets that will shape the path forward. Take the quiz on the next page to determine which framework your customer’s business is likely operating from.
Discover Your Customer’s Mindset

Select the response below that most aligns with your customer’s business outlook.

1. Regarding innovation in their company, it is:
   a. Not a priority
   b. Something that occurs only at leadership levels
   c. Encouraged of every employee

2. Compared to competitors, they are differentiating themselves through:
   a. Marketing
   b. Quality
   c. An entirely fresh approach

3. They view their customers as:
   a. The market that buys products and services
   b. Valued partners
   c. The inspiration for products and services

4. Their typical response to customer feedback is:
   a. Replying to the calm the customer down
   b. Resolving the issue, but it takes a long time
   c. Pivoting quickly to respond to concerns

5. Their approach to technology is:
   a. Every department leverages their own systems and software
   b. Some departments use the same systems and software
   c. They work cross-functionality on the same systems and software

6. When they hear data, they tend to think:
   a. Lines in a spreadsheet
   b. Something to review in an annual meeting
   c. Real-time feedback that shapes their business

Scoring Guide

Record the number of times you responded with “A,” “B,” or “C.” Multiply by the number of points for each response, and add the total together. Based on your total score, the company’s mindset is likely:

0 – 3: Renovate   4 – 9: Evolve   10 – 12: Transcend
THE THREE MINDSETS SALESFORCE UNCOVERED INCLUDE:

1. **Renovate**: This group is seeking to optimize their existing business. They hold a product-centric view of the world, and generally take a tactical approach. Their hope is to patch challenges and resume “business as usual.”

2. **Evolve**: You can think of this mindset as a bridge from Renovate to Transcend. This group recognizes the reality of where their company is today, but seeks to move to a customer-centric approach.

3. **Transcend**: In this category, a disruptor’s mindset is fully embraced. These leaders and their companies, often startups, are reinventing industries and imagining new ways to create customer value.

True transformation occurs within the Transcend and Evolve mindsets. Many businesses need guidance determining which stage they are at, and offering realistic steps to move teams from a Renovate approach.

Those in sales can probe customers to identify company mindsets with smart questions like:

- **What are your most ambitious competitors doing?**
- **How have you automated your processes to simplify the customer or employee experience?**
- **What are your customers’ pain points?**

If you’ve diagnosed a company as being in the Renovate framework, it’s time to help them move to Evolve.
Just as diet, exercise, and rest are all needed to maintain health, the next four steps are each essential in transforming a business. Coach your prospects and customers with Renovate mindsets to align to these.

1. BUILD CUSTOMER-CENTRIC BUSINESS PROCESSES

Gone are the days of “if you build it, they will come.” Today’s disruptors are building business processes that target a sweet spot that minimizes effort for both customers and employees. Consider ride sharing services, which simplify the effort of finding transportation for the passenger, while also providing convenient instructions and a steady work flow to the driver.

2. ALIGN THE COMPANY AROUND THE CUSTOMER

In traditional hierarchical structures, companies are organized by department, and decisions filter from leadership to individual contributors. This architecture poses a challenge when a customer provides feedback – siloed departments find it difficult to turn around and serve the customer. Let’s say for example a complaint about product functionality is reported to a sales account executive – that feedback has to filter up the chain, where it’s passed off to product development for resolution. By the time the issue is resolved, the customer may have moved on.

Companies who can capture feedback on the front lines, listen, and respond with the support of the whole company are differentiating themselves in the market. And for these businesses, employees on the front lines are armed with tools to serve the customers.

As an AE, you can illustrate the effectiveness of this model by inquiring about your customer’s experience with you. Are they assigned a Success Specialist? Is there a 24/7 “Live Chat” on your website? Point out the tools they’ve used and how it’s empowered them to succeed.

3. CHOOSE A LEAN TECHNOLOGY STACK

Technology can bring experiences to life and supercharge employees to act as one team. When technology is consistent across departments and leveraged more fluidly, businesses can achieve true customer-centricity. What does this look like? Through no- and low-code solutions, employees on the front lines can optimize the customer experience themselves – rather than always leaning on developers to overhaul systems on the backend.

Companies that adopt a lean technology stack are also enabled to spend their resources on innovation – rather than maintenance of multiple technologies. At Salesforce, AEs feel confident promoting one technology that can solve many customer needs, and serve as a single source of truth for data.
Overcoming a Renovate mindset requires creating new habits — it’s not something that is cured once and forgotten. Businesses need to monitor data in real-time, and make decisions based on insights which build better experiences. These new experiences help companies earn new data from customers, and the cycle of improvement repeats. For a technology company, this might mean continuous releases based on the features the market is asking for. Tools like Salesforce Einstein help deliver benefits as limitless as customer data.

When companies adopt the four best practices above, they feel a ripple through the entire organization. Everyone is encouraged to experiment, innovate, and impact positive change for the customer. And as their sales connection, you can deliver real value by guiding them to a framework for innovation. This will establish a meaningful relationship and develop trust, influence, and credibility.

Remember: it all starts with understanding the customer’s mindset and acknowledging how that mentality will impact their thoughts and behaviors. Change is hard. These four best practices, though effective, can be met with hesitation. Behavioral science gives us the map to influence change.
Applying neuroscience to your sales approach will help you connect deeply with prospects and customers. When you truly understand their needs and challenges, you can guide them on a journey that mitigates roadblocks such as biases, stress, and psychological distance.

Remember these three key steps:

1. Start from within: Be self-aware
2. Practice empathy for the human brain and behavior
3. Diagnose mindsets and prescribe a path to transformation

Stay hungry for knowledge as you continue on your journey to leverage behavioral science and become more effective in your sales approach. Surround yourself with new inspiration, resources, and growth opportunities.

At Salesforce, we’re constantly evolving. Because we don’t want to just sell products – we consult and challenge the status quo to help businesses transform.

If you’re eager to make an impact on the industry – and our world – come find your next sales opportunity with Salesforce.
Founded in 1999, Salesforce is the global leader in Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Companies of every size and industry are using Salesforce to transform their businesses, across sales, service, marketing, commerce, and more by connecting with customers in a whole new way. We harness technologies that can revolutionize companies, careers, and, hopefully, our world.

Salesforce is built on a set of four core values: Trust, Customer Success, Innovation, and Equality. By making technology more accessible, we're helping create a future with greater opportunity and equality for all. This has taken our company to great heights, including being named one of the FORTUNE “100 Best Companies to Work For” 2020 – 12 years in a row.

There are those who choose to work with the best and brightest. And then, there are those who want to do more than just a job. They are the ones improving lives, not only their careers. Having an impact now instead of later. Doing something that’s so much bigger than themselves, an industry, and their company.

We believe everyone can be a Trailblazer.

Join Salesforce and discover a future of new opportunities.

Transform your everyday.