



winning the
*five value
conversations*

science-backed strategies
to win your most critical
sales conversations

the best *story* always *wins*

You know who Malcolm Gladwell is, but have you ever heard of Morton Grodzins?

If not, you're not alone. And that's the point of this story.

In 1957, Grodzins, a political science professor at the University of Chicago, wrote an article for the *Scientific American* that explored how large metropolitan areas tended to self-segregate based on race. Grodzins wanted to determine the point at which neighborhoods' racial/ethnic compositions began to change. He hypothesized that whites' exodus to the suburbs occurred when the number of non-white families moving into certain neighborhoods hit a critical mass—what he called a "Tipping Point."

Sound familiar? That's because Malcolm Gladwell wrote a highly successful book based on the same premise!

Morton Grodzins did the research, published the findings, and coined the phrase "Tipping Point" 40 years before Malcolm Gladwell's book. But Gladwell made millions of dollars, wrote five more books, and now commands six figures for a one-hour speech—all on the back of a 40-year-old, unoriginal idea.

Poor Grodzins toiled and died in academic obscurity. Gladwell's career exploded. What made the difference?

People remember Gladwell and not Grodzins because Gladwell told a better story. He took a compelling core idea and developed it into a broader narrative that was more engaging, more consumable, and more relevant to the buying public.

Despite Grodzins' 40-year head start, almost no one knows him as the father of the Tipping Point.

Here's the lesson for sellers: **The best story always wins.** Having the best solution doesn't guarantee that people will buy it. The better story, told best, will win.

In this e-book, you'll learn how to have memorable sales conversations across the entire customer lifecycle to ensure your stories perform more like Gladwell (and less like Grodzins).



Tim Riesterer

Chief Strategy Officer
Corporate Visions

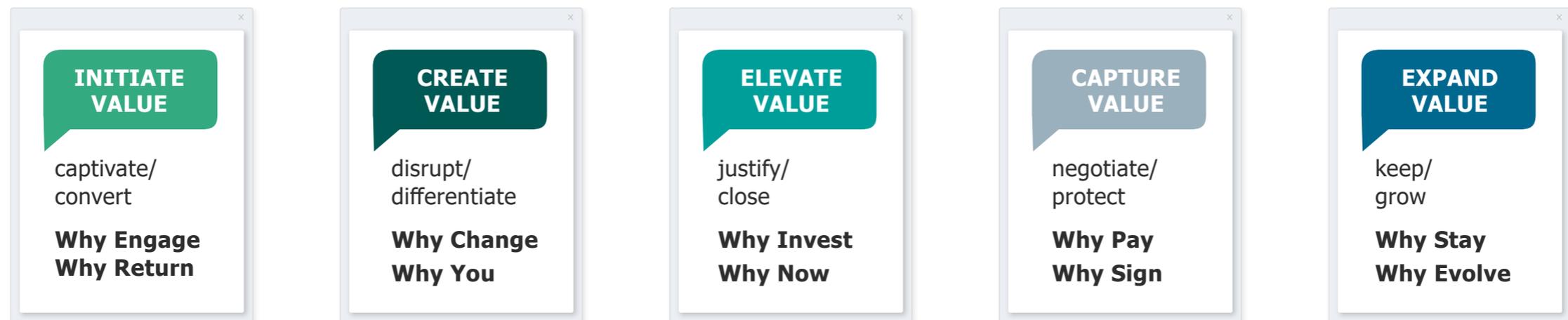


the *customer deciding journey*

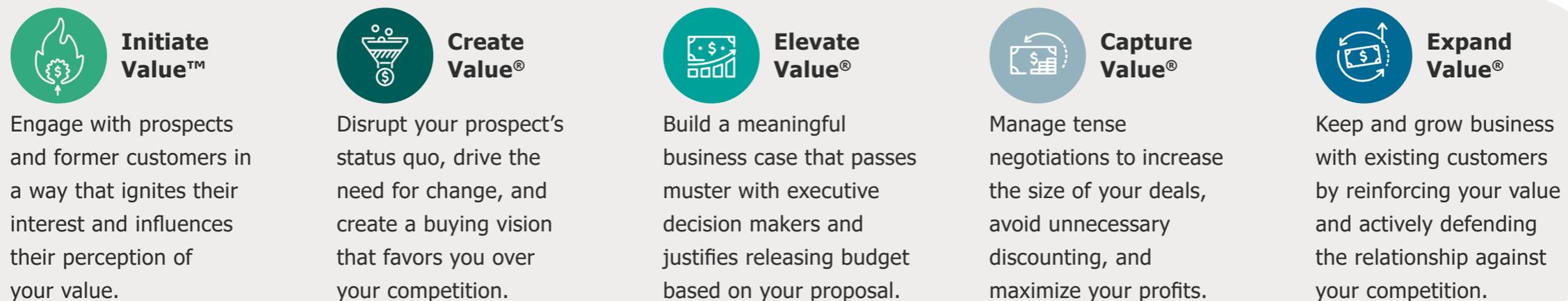
It's tempting to believe that prospects and customers will all follow a set of repeatable steps that eventually lead them to choose you. But in reality, your buyers are asking weighty questions that are specific to their current situation. Together, we call this collection of situationally-specific questions the Customer Deciding Journey.

The Customer Deciding Journey includes five Value Conversations—pivotal moments for both you and your buyers. In each of these conversations, your buyers are asking difficult questions that you must answer to win their business.

customer acquisition



customer expansion



The Customer Deciding Journey reflects what's happening in your buyers' minds—how they think and behave while they're deciding whether to buy from you. When you understand their underlying motivations and behaviors in each conversation, you can tailor your approach to match the situation and win.

win the *five value* *conversations*

One-size-fits-all messages and skills won't hold up across the range of buying decisions you need to influence in the Customer Deciding Journey. Your buyers' questions, behaviors, and motivations change from one moment to the next.

To win all five Value Conversations, you need to master a diverse set of messages and skills, sharpened with the situational awareness to know when and how to adapt to each situation.

▶ **INITIATE VALUE**

▶ **CREATE VALUE**

▶ **ELEVATE VALUE**

▶ **CAPTURE VALUE**

▶ **EXPAND VALUE**



win the five value conversations

▲
Your prospects are being inundated with contact requests, robocalls, and irrelevant sales messages. To secure a sales meeting, you need to get their attention, ask the right discovery questions, and ignite their interest in the potential of your solution.



Initiate Value

| Ignite your prospect's interest and build qualified pipeline



understand your prospect's problem

When you can accurately identify your buyer's problem during discovery calls, it smooths out the sales process, boosts your buyer's confidence in your solution, and you win more deals.

Yet, sellers only get it right less than half the time, according to a recent study from Dr. Leff Bonney and Florida State University Sales Institute.

What's more, our buyer feedback data shows that **the biggest misstep sellers make when they lose a deal is poor needs discovery and a lack of solution alignment.**

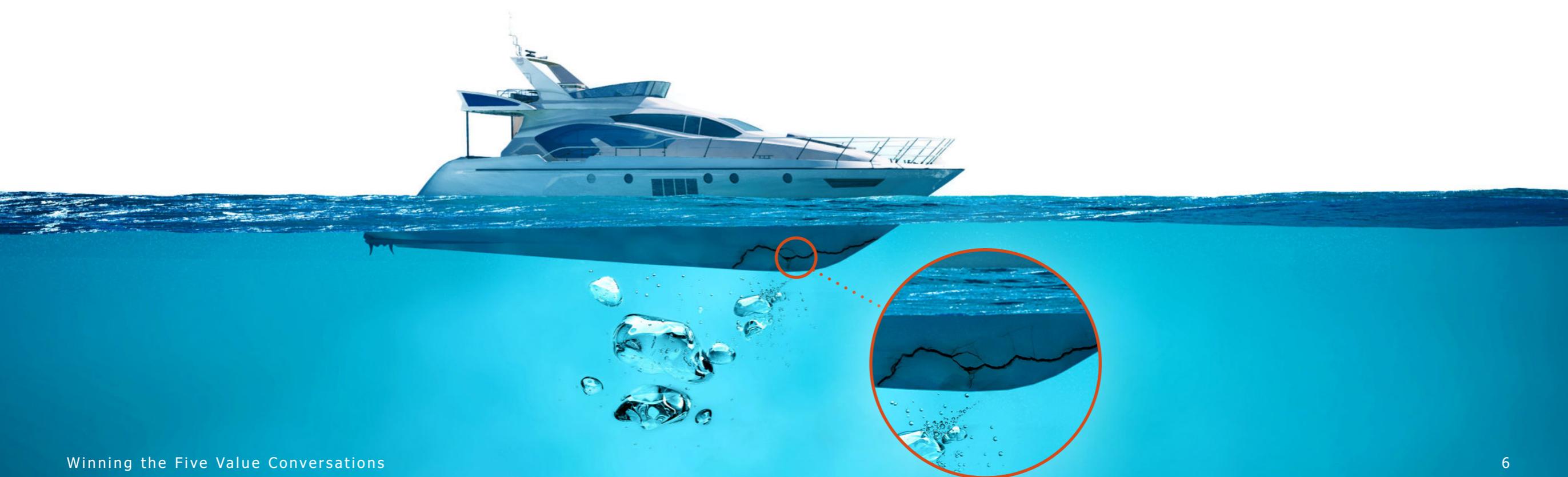
The problem is, most sellers approach discovery from a solution-fit frame of mind—they ask a few light questions to surface identified needs, and then introduce a product to match those needs. They don't spend enough time learning about their buyer, and they don't tailor their presentation or solution to the buyer's needs.

When it comes to problem awareness, prospects typically fall into one of four categories. They:

- Don't know there's a problem
- Know something's wrong, but don't know why
- Have a clear goal but don't know how to get there
- Understand the problem and are trying to fix it

During discovery, it's your job to gauge where your buyer is on this continuum, make sure they're solving the right problem, and then instill confidence that your solution can match their needs.

It's not enough to ask your prospect what problem they're trying to solve—you need to understand their problem better than they do.



establish

confidence and alignment

The B2B buying journey has become self-directed. Buyers aren't reaching out to sales to help guide their decisions—they're doing their own research, comparing vendors, and narrowing their options using all the content available online.

This changing behavior has profound implications for how sellers should approach discovery calls.

Many sellers assume that since the buyer has done some research, they already know what problem they need to solve. But that's not the case.

Your prospect might think they understand the problem, but research shows that **buyers change their problem statement an average of 3.2 times before they make a purchase decision.**

You can't rely on your buyers to tell you what the problem is. You need to identify the problem, establish confidence and alignment, and guide them in favor of your proposed solution.

You do this by taking a problem-minded approach to discovery.

When a prospect talks about a problem, be prepared to test its correctness. Ask:

- Do the symptoms and causes align?
- Is that really the root cause or is there something else?
- Is there a chance of the pain spreading?
- If they have a solution in mind, can they justify it?

Research shows that problem-minded sellers are 30 percent more effective than sellers who take a solution-minded approach. And **when sellers and buyers are both confident in the problem statement, it improves your chances of winning the deal by 38 percent.**

problem-based discovery



Dr. Leff Bonney
Research Director

According to a research study led by Dr. Leff Bonney, solution-minded sellers—who focus on matching their product to the buyer's stated needs—are 30 percent less effective than sellers who take a problem-minded approach to discovery.

Problem-minded sellers spend more time understanding their buyer's situation by using problem scoping, problem clarity, and solution clarity questions. It's the most effective approach, but less than 13 percent of sellers use this method.

Discovery approach focus and effectiveness

	The "skimmer" (30.2%)	Solution-minded (28.4%)	Problem-minded (12.9%)
Win/loss ratio	18% / 82%	31% / 69%	42% / 58%

► [Read the full research study here](#)

offer *unique insights*

When you ask the right questions, you gain a better understanding of your prospect's problems. But you don't want to spend the entire call playing 20 questions—you need to offer them unique insights about their situation.

Our behavioral and neuroscience research studies have found that **presenting an insight before asking a question can improve your persuasive power.**

When you prompt your buyer with a question after sharing a provocative insight (and not before), their brain starts connecting the insight to their situation and they take ownership of their challenge.

So, in your discovery calls, use a precise choreography called Data, Insight, Question (DIQ).

- 1. Data** – Start your dialogue with a piece of data that's related to an external factor that's important to your buyer's business.
- 2. Insight** – Turn that data into an insight by placing it in the context of your buyer's business and current situation.
- 3. Question** – Then, and only then, do you ask a question that will provoke a dialogue. This transfers ownership of the insight and initiates the process of self-persuasion.

Data is just information unless it's accompanied by a relevant and provocative insight. And the best insights demonstrate an inconsistency or uncertainty with the buyer's current situation. They encourage your buyers to think differently about how they're doing things and prime their brains to be more receptive to your solution.

Use the DIQ framework to get your new prospect interested, keep them engaged, and increase your persuasive impact.

avoid the hammock



Catherine Alexander
VP Training Services

Your buyers will pay the most attention to the beginning and the end of your presentation. But in the middle, their attention wanes, and if you don't spike their attention and focus, they might not remember the most important part.

► [Learn more in this video:](#)



Lure back lost customers

Whether it was due to a service failure, a competitor relationship, or they were lured away by a better price; your once-loyal customer decided to leave.

These former customers represent an enticing opportunity to recoup lost revenue. But it's not an easy conversation. They aren't motivated by the same messages as existing customers. But these buyers also aren't quite new prospects.

So what's the best approach?

Our behavioral research shows that **your customer's motivations for leaving will affect their willingness to return.**

For customers who were **pushed away** by a service failure or inventory-related issues, use an approach that shows you've learned from their feedback and that you're taking steps to prevent those issues in the future.

For customers who were **priced away**, approach them with a "check-in" to see whether their current vendor is meeting expectations and whether there's an opportunity to help fill in any service gaps.

For customers who were **pulled away** by a competitor, use the same approach as new prospects—a disruptive Why Change message that introduces the cost and risk of their previous decision to change.

You'll learn more about the Why Change message next.

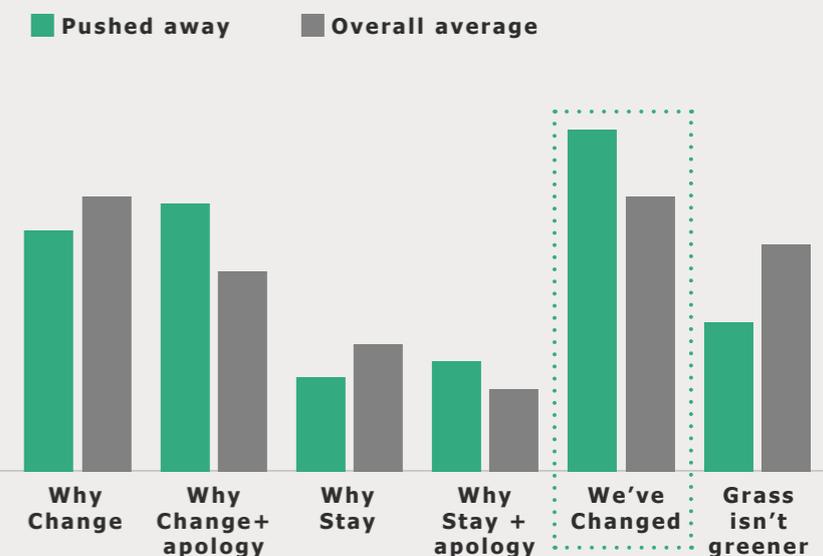
the research behind Why Return



Dr. Leff Bonney
Research Director

According to a behavioral study from Dr. Leff Bonney, customers who were pushed away by a service failure or inventory issue were more motivated by how the vendor—thanks to the customer's feedback—has taken steps to fix problems that might have caused the customer to leave.

Meetings booked: pushed away vs. average



► [Read the full research study here](#)

win the five value conversations

Selling to new prospects is more about change management than sales. As the outsider, you're fighting inertia—your buyer's natural tendency to stay with their current situation. To persuade them to change and choose you, you need to disrupt your prospect's status quo, drive the need for change, and create a unique buying vision that differentiates you from your competition.



Create Value

| Break the status quo and differentiate your solutions



disrupt

your prospect's status quo

When acquiring new customers, many salespeople assume their prospects will ultimately decide between two choices: their solution or a competitor's solution.

But the truth is, **at least 40 percent of deals in the pipeline end in "no decision."** Prospects don't see a compelling enough reason to change from their current situation, so they decide to do nothing at all.

In other words, **your biggest enemy is not your competitors—it's the status quo.**

Over the years, psychological studies have shown that people have an innate aversion to doing something different than what they're doing today. This cognitive bias is known as Status Quo Bias, and it causes a level of subconscious inertia that you need to overcome in your acquisition conversations.

Know why your prospect's status quo is always lurking, ready to put the kibosh on your deals no matter how compelling you make your presentations? Because the status quo hasn't killed them yet. Dissatisfied as they might be, your prospects have adapted to the best of their abilities and forged ahead in the face of gaps and deficiencies.

Inertia is powerful. To overcome it, you need to tell a powerful, disruptive story that makes your prospect's current situation seem unsafe and unsustainable. And you do it by introducing what we call "Unconsidered Needs."



it's what they
don't see coming

If you base your approach on what your prospects tell you their needs are, whether through voice of the customer research or solution-minded discovery, you're inclined to connect your solution's specific capabilities to those identified needs.

The problem is, your competitors are responding to those same inputs from *their* prospects and customers. So, you end up delivering commodity messages that won't differentiate you.

When prospects hear very similar messages from you and your competitors, they see no contrast between their choices. There's no compelling reason or urgency to change, so the buyer opts to stick with the status quo.

To disrupt your prospect's natural preference for the status quo, you need to venture beyond known problems and stated needs and introduce them to their **Unconsidered Needs**.

Unconsidered Needs are potent tools to disrupt and defeat the status quo. But where do they fit into a Why Change story?

how do you build a buying vision?



Rob Perrilleon
SVP of Delivery Services

To convince new prospects to change from their status quo, you need to tell a powerful, disruptive story that makes their current situation seem unsafe and unsustainable.

► **Learn more in this video:**

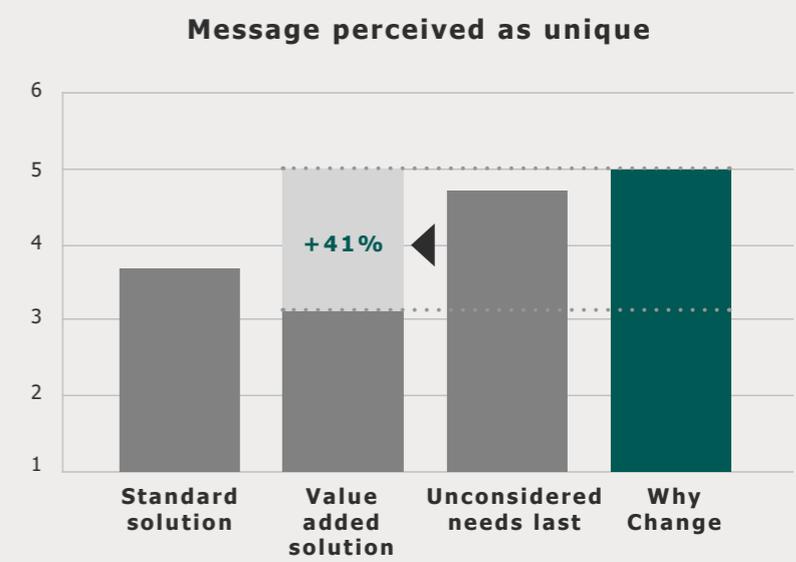




Dr. Zakary Tormala
Social Psychologist

According to a research study led by behavioral expert Dr. Zakary Tormala, this Why Change message significantly outperforms other sales pitches.

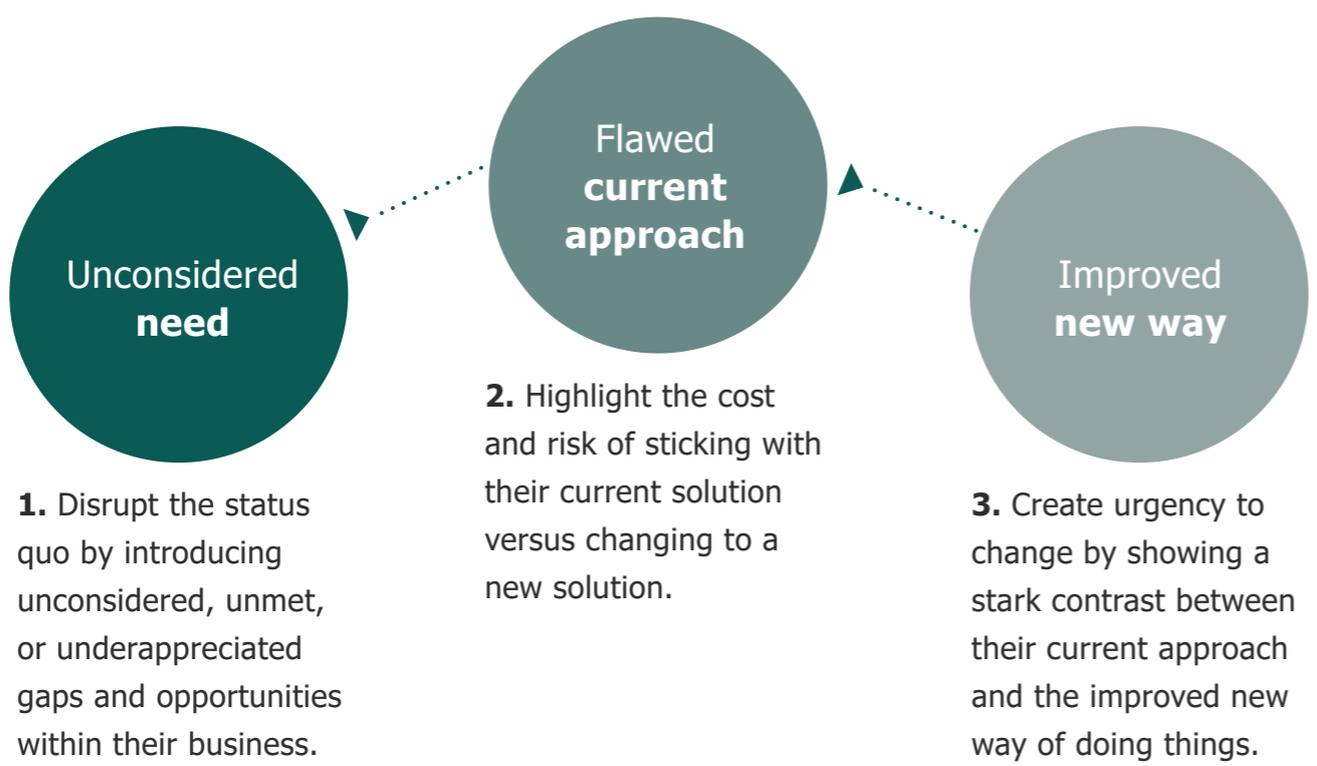
B2B decision makers perceived the pitch as **41 percent more unique and 11 percent higher quality**. Participants were also **10 percent more likely to purchase**, compared to other groups in the study.



[▶ Read the full research study here](#)

deliver the *Why Change* message

In the beginning, your prospects are asking, "Why should I change?" To answer that question, challenge their status quo with the Why Change message.

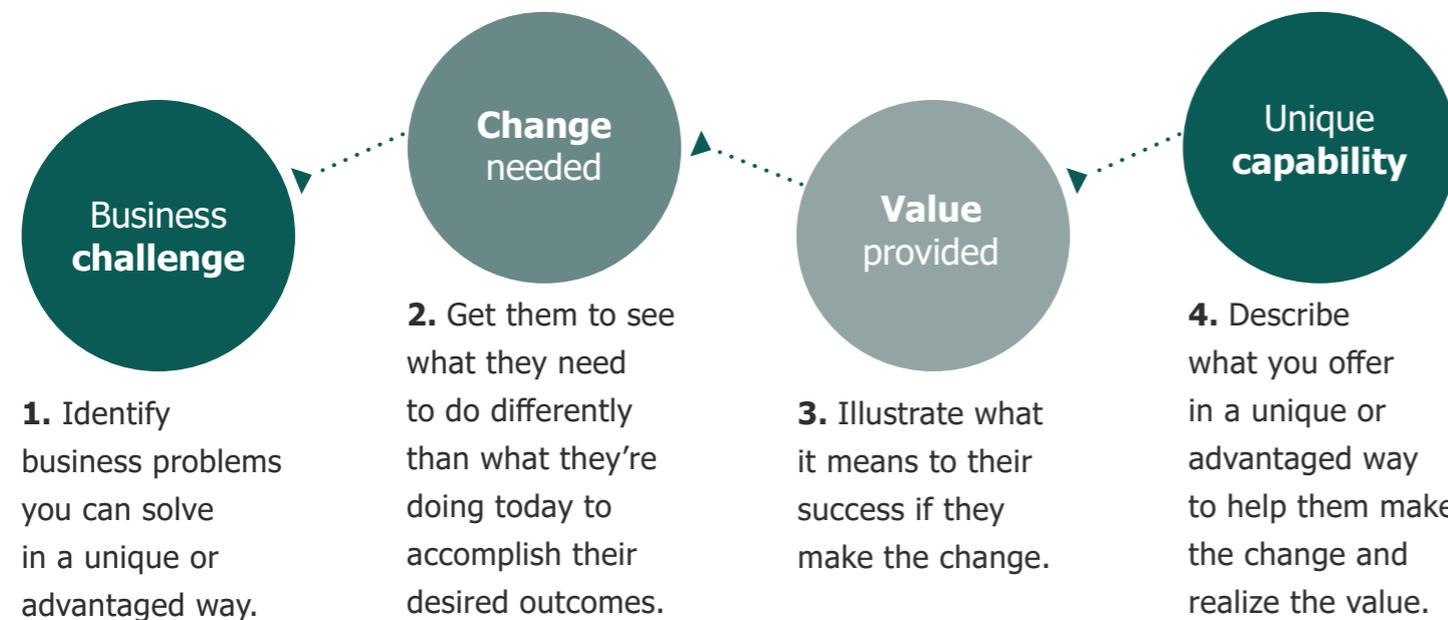


Now, your prospect has a reason to care about your solution's strengths and capabilities—they go from not adding any value to being invaluable! You've set the stage for a differentiated Why You story.

deliver the *Why You* message

While the Why Change story is about offering a distinct point of view, the Why You story is more of a traditional value proposition.

Even though you want to highlight your capabilities with the Why You message, don't be too quick to launch into a feature dump. You first need to put those capabilities into the context of your prospect's business problems. Then describe what they need to do about those problems.



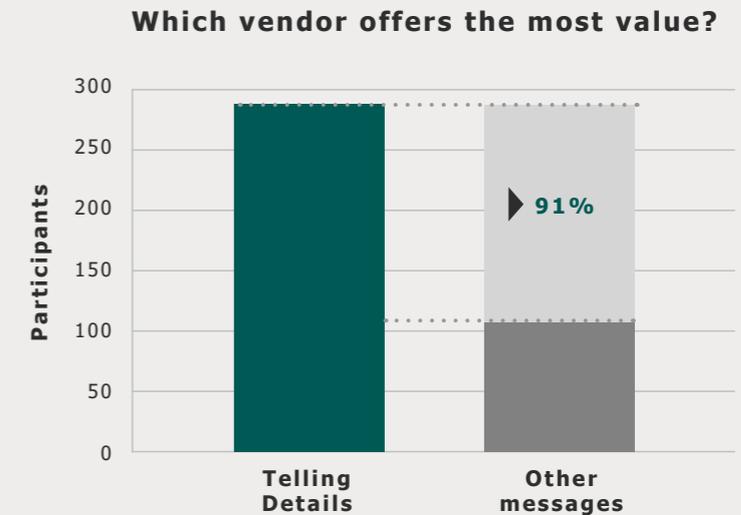
By following this choreography, you make your message more believable, increase your impact, and avoid the parity trap.

avoid the parity trap



Dr. Nick Lee
Behavioral Scientist

In a research study led by behavioral scientist Dr. Nick Lee, we found that including rich, detailed, and value-based language when describing your capabilities makes your Why You message far more believable and impactful.



► [Read the full research study here](#)

win the five value conversations

How do you justify the value of your solution to executive decision makers? In these conversations, your goal is to create the urgency for change by highlighting the risks affecting their situation, introducing previously Unconsidered Needs, and providing a solution that will have a positive and tangible impact on their business.



Elevate Value

| Build a more effective business case to justify executive decisions



overcome your fear of heights

Our research has found that most companies aren't satisfied with their ability to tell an executive-level story.

- 67 percent say they're underperforming at getting executive-level prospects to buy now rather than later.
- Only 39 percent are confident in their ability to build a meaningful business and financial case to justify a decision.

These are significant issues, considering that **80 percent of deals will require a VP or higher-level signoff**. Without executive buy-in, your deals stall, you lose momentum, and your close rates plummet.

Stalled proposals and lost deals are symptoms of a value communication problem. When you're sitting across from a CXO, you only get one shot to pique their interest. If you don't come to the table with enough confidence, knowledge, and insight, they'll shut you down without a second thought, and you won't get another opportunity.

When sellers lack the competence and the confidence to elevate the conversation, create enough urgency, and show enough business impact, executive buyers won't take action.

To overcome your "fear of heights" when selling to executives, you need to understand what motivates them to make decisions and how to get them to decide now, instead of later.

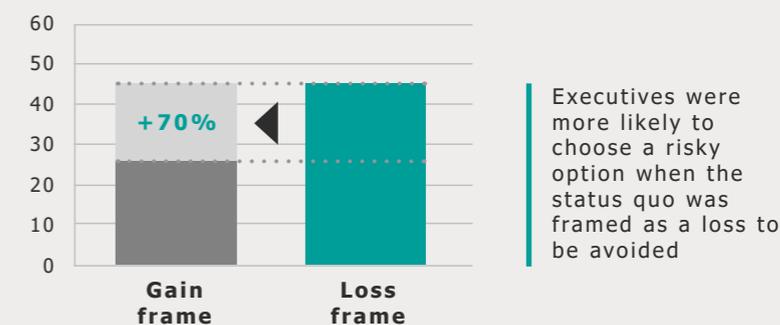


Dr. Zakary Tormala
Social Psychologist

In a research study led by behavioral expert Dr. Zakary Tormala, executives chose between two recovery plans after an economic downturn. The messages were mathematically identical but they framed the status quo as either a gain or a loss.

- **Gain frame message:** This plan has a one-third probability of saving all three plants and all 6,000 jobs but has a two-thirds probability of saving no plants and no jobs.
- **Loss frame message:** This plan has a two-thirds probability of resulting in the loss of all three plants and all 6,000 jobs but has a one-third probability of losing no plants and no jobs.

Executives who chose gain vs. loss messages



► [Read the full research study here](#)

it's not just a *numbers* game

Loss Aversion, a behavioral concept coined by Nobel Prize-winning researchers Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, refers to the idea that losses loom larger (psychologically speaking) than gains. Even when losses and gains are of equal magnitude (losing \$100 versus winning \$100), people tend to weigh the loss more heavily than the gain.

Kahneman later conducted research exploring what he called "risk-seeking"—when people actively seek risk instead of avoiding it. The findings of that research validate those from his Loss Aversion study: People are far more willing to seek risk to mitigate a loss than achieve a gain. Together, the concepts of Loss Aversion and risk-seeking are known as **Prospect Theory**.

What does Prospect Theory have to do with executive-level selling?

One damaging myth about executive buyers is that they're strictly rational decision makers, relying solely on math and analytical calculations to inform how they buy. But our research shows that's not the case at all.

Adding an emotional element to your message will sway executive buyers to make risky choices—even when the math is the same. Don't tell them what they stand to gain by switching to you—show them what they stand to lose if they don't.

the research behind the message

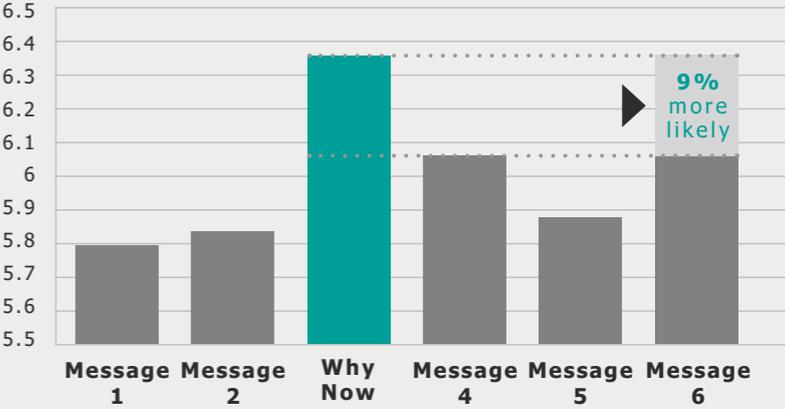


Dr. Nick Lee
Behavioral Scientist

According to a research study led by behavioral scientist Dr. Nick Lee, the Why Now message drives more urgency to act than other sales pitches.

Executive decision makers viewed this message pitch as **four percent more important to their future success** and were **nine percent more likely to purchase now**, compared to other groups in the study.

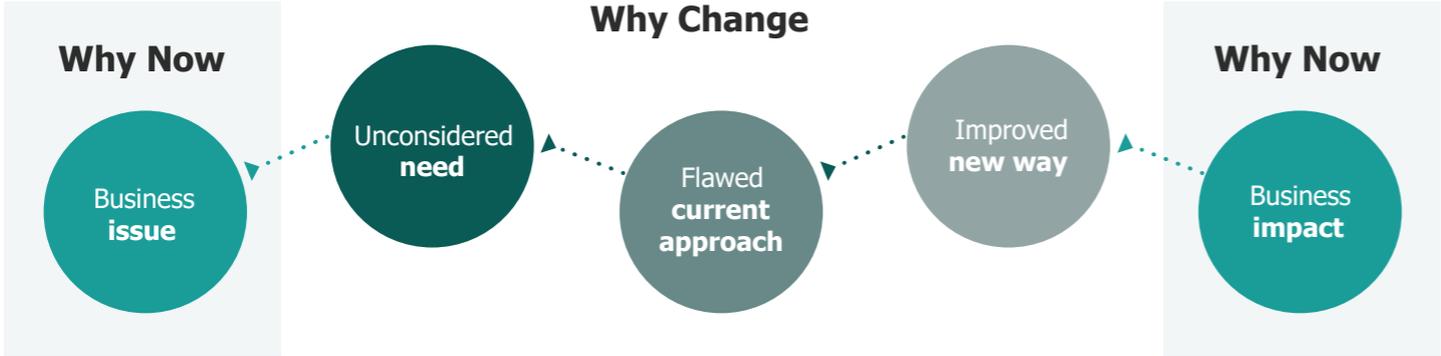
How likely to purchase right now



► [Read the full research study here](#)

deliver the *Why Now* message

Even at an executive level, people make decisions subconsciously before the brain's rational and analytical part takes over to justify the decision. The Why Now message choreography introduces risk, illustrates the need to change, and provides financial proof to underpin that buying vision.



1. Identify external factors in the industry and connect those trends to major strategic initiatives of the company.

5. Justify the business impact of the decision by telling a customer story with contrast and quantifiable results.

Risk is one of the few subjects that doesn't get delegated down. When you introduce risk and then create a buying vision for the executive to solve that risk, you light up their brain to think and act more urgently.



justify the decision

One of the critical aspects of the Why Now conversation is your ability to communicate business impact.

Economic justification isn't just about numbers. When building a business case for executive buyers, use Hard Returns, Strategic Returns, and Soft Returns.

- **Hard Returns** are the direct benefits that your buyer acknowledges and quantifies. To come up with projected Hard Returns, follow the flow of money and identify as many impact areas as you can. Then you can take these insights to your buyer and be ready to defend the numbers with references.
- **Strategic Returns** are based on the decisions that companies need to make for regulatory or compliance reasons. They might also be decisions the company makes in favor of strategic directions it wants to pursue, even though money might be at risk.
- **Soft Returns** are more nebulous. They might include customer satisfaction, better communication, and better data security. They're valuable, but Soft Returns are difficult to translate directly into financial impact.

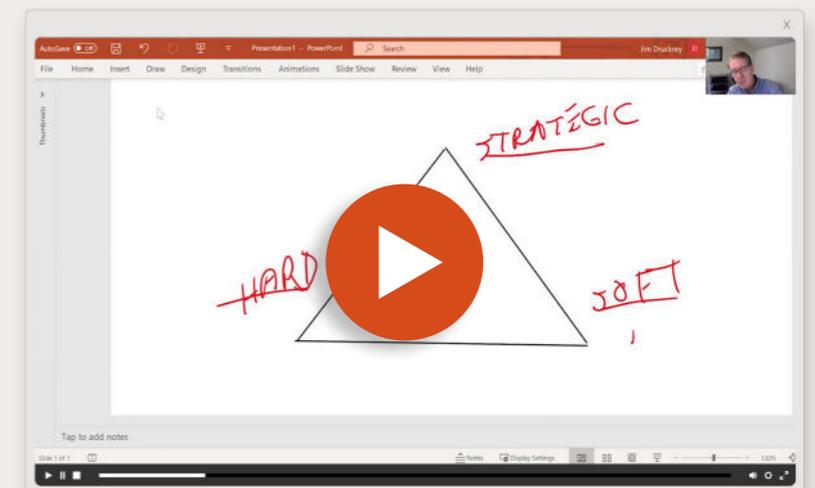
how do you quantify business impact?



Jim Druckrey
Leader, C-Level Practice

Quantitative results don't drive executive decisions—emotions do. Still, ROI is useful as a tool for the decision maker to justify their decision to others (and themselves in the process), priming them for action.

► [Learn more in this video:](#)





win the five value conversations

As deals advance, it becomes harder to handle pricing pressures and avoid unnecessary discounting. In tough negotiations, you need the know-how to deal with that pressure, protect your margins, and close deals profitably. In complex selling scenarios, you also need to learn how to guide conversations through multi-party buying committees and avoid any “last mile” challenges to reach an agreement.



Capture Value

| Maximize the profitability of every deal

buyers have *all the power*

Traditional sales negotiation training teaches salespeople to “power up” or seize the upper hand in a negotiation. But that approach isn’t as effective as it used to be.

Your buyers now have all the power. They approach negotiations armed with the confidence to demand discounts—and walk away when they don’t get them. So, how can you leverage your low-power position and protect your value during tough negotiations?

One way to reframe your buyer’s perception of your value is to introduce Unconsidered Needs.

If your buyer believes they already know their needs and your capabilities, there’s no differentiation between you and other providers in their mind. You end up trapped in a commodity conversation competing on price—*their price*, based on their presumption of your value.

To break out of that commodity conversation, you need to introduce Unconsidered Needs and create price uncertainty by disrupting their perceived value of your solution. You increase your value in your buyer’s mind by bringing to light insights and opportunities that they didn’t know were important to them.

Creating price uncertainty is the first step. But what happens when your buyer starts making demands and asking for discounts as negotiations drag on? How can you embrace the natural tension of the moment and *exchange* value, rather than give it away?



protect your profitability

As deals get increasingly complex, late-stage negotiating tactics become increasingly irrelevant.

Now more than ever, your ability to create profitable outcomes depends on how deftly you navigate crucial moments of the sales process—moments that have the potential to change the nature of your opportunity and recast the buyer’s perception of your influence.

You have a clear goal in mind: close the deal. You probably have a well-defined structure of key steps to follow to achieve that goal. But your buyer has their own wants and needs that you need to respond to along the way. And if you’re not careful, you could begin to make concessions that erode your margins and give away your value.

To avoid value leaks and protect your pricing throughout the buying cycle, consider the concept of “Pivotal Agreements.”



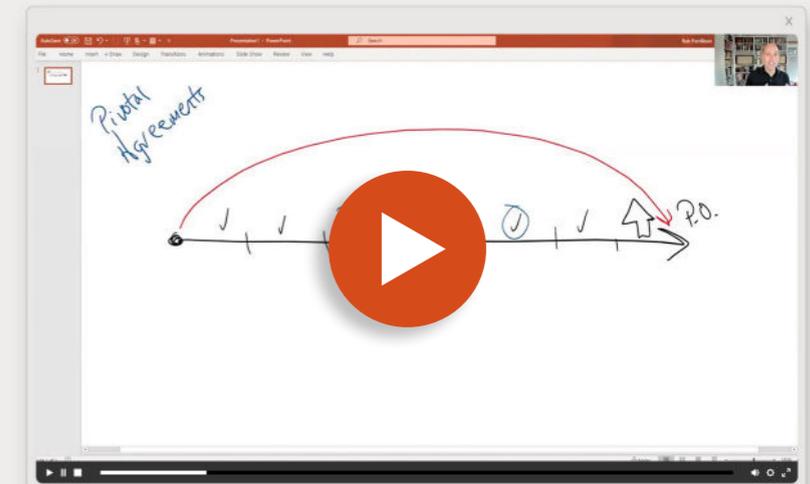
what are pivotal agreements?



Rob Perrilleon
SVP, Delivery Services

Pivotal Agreements are value-based exchanges that you can use to advance your deals while protecting your margins.

► [Learn more in this video:](#)



manage the tension

When the decision-making process involves multiple stakeholders, there's bound to be tension. During critical negotiations, there are two kinds of tension at play:

- **Competitive tension**, caused by your self-interest and the buyer's self-interest.
- **Collaborative tension**, driven by the desire to create or preserve the relationship.

In these situations, you may be tempted to avoid tension. But **tension can be a positive force during negotiations**. When you find the balance between protecting your self-interest and building the relationship, you move the conversation toward a creative breakthrough.

Tension is a powerful tool for driving negotiations forward. And it's essential for maximizing your profitability.



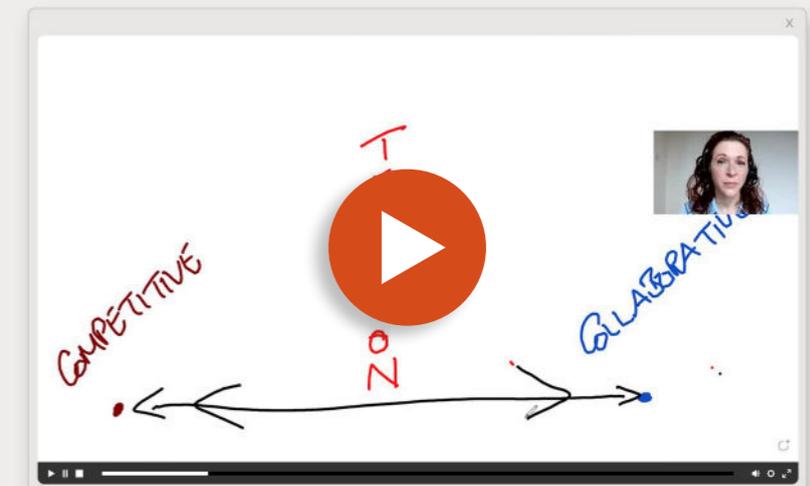
how can tension help
your negotiations?



Catherine Alexander
VP of Training Services

When you learn to use the natural tension of negotiations as a force for good, you'll be able to guide the conversation and break through to a creative resolution.

► [Learn more in this video:](#)



win the five value conversations

When your prospect becomes a customer, you become their status quo. And you won't win these conversations by using the same disruptive approach you use to win new business—customer retention and expansion require entirely different messages, content, and skills.

To keep and grow business with an existing customer, you need to reinforce your value early and often, and actively defend and protect the relationship against your competition.



Expand Value

| Keep and grow existing customer revenue



defend your *insider status*

According to analysts, as much as 70–80 percent of the average company's revenue comes from existing customers.

Yet, **most sales and marketing leaders (nearly 60 percent) see no need to take a different approach between customer acquisition and customer expansion.** More than half believe the same provocative messages they use when communicating with new prospects are still applicable in a renewal scenario.

Despite this pervasive belief, our research shows that customer retention and expansion conversations require an entirely different approach.

When you're the outsider, engaging new prospects, it makes sense to use a provocative, challenging message that introduces Unconsidered Needs, disrupts their status quo, and persuades them to choose you.

But when you're the insider, defending your incumbent position with existing customers, you need to reinforce your value and highlight the reasons why you're still the safest choice.

Because you're now the status quo, your customers are naturally more inclined to stay with you rather than change to a new solution. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't make every effort to defend your Incumbent Advantage.



what is the incumbent advantage?



Doug Hutton

EVP Customer Experience

leverage your *incumbent advantage*

Every customer-vendor relationship boils down to value over time. After your customer signs the deal, they should start receiving some initial value in terms of business impact and results. That's progress that your customer should be loath to give up by making a change at the wrong time.

Your customer invested time, money, and political capital to implement your solution. In their mind, these are sunk costs—investments they've made that they'll never have to make again, provided they stick with you.

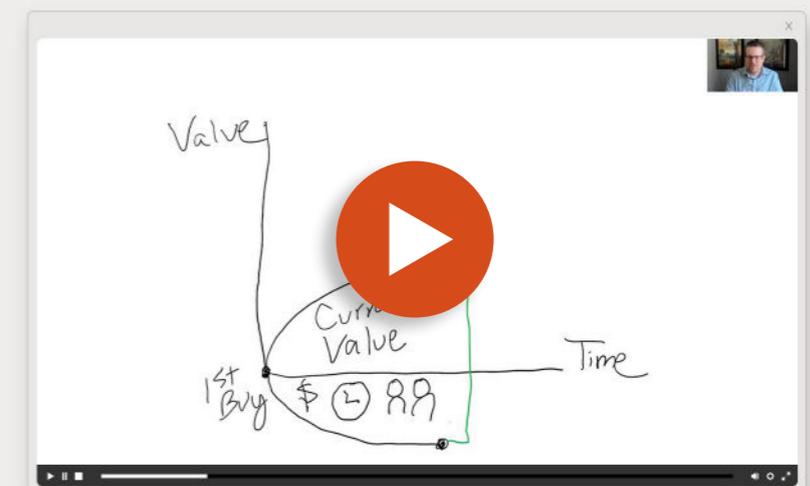
So, when a competitor shows up promising additional value, it's only *potential* value. Your competitor's solution is still unproven, the cost and impact are both unknown, and change comes at the risk of losing their initial progress, as well as any future value from your solution.

That's a lot of uncertainty compared with your documented value and the customer's sunk cost. And that uncertainty is what gives you the Incumbent Advantage.

Just like in politics, it can be very challenging to displace an incumbent because of all the advantages they have.

Because you're now the status quo, you can leverage your incumbent status when selling to existing customers.

► [Learn more in this video:](#)





show them what *you're worth*

After the deal is signed, most companies start tracking success using metrics like utilization, adoption, etc. But while you're reporting on usage metrics and project status, that same customer's name is moving through your competitors' sales funnels.

Your competitors are actively trying to disrupt your customer's status quo (you!) and woo them away with new strategic insights. And when your relationship is under siege, you won't win with project-level metrics because they aren't what decision makers care about.

Your customer (and all the decision makers involved in the deal) approved the expense of working with you because they believed you would make a meaningful contribution toward their strategic business goals. And to protect and defend the relationship, you need to maintain executive-level altitude when you're reporting results.

Your ability to document results by connecting project-level metrics to executive-level strategic outcomes is a cornerstone of every commercial conversation you'll have with your customers.

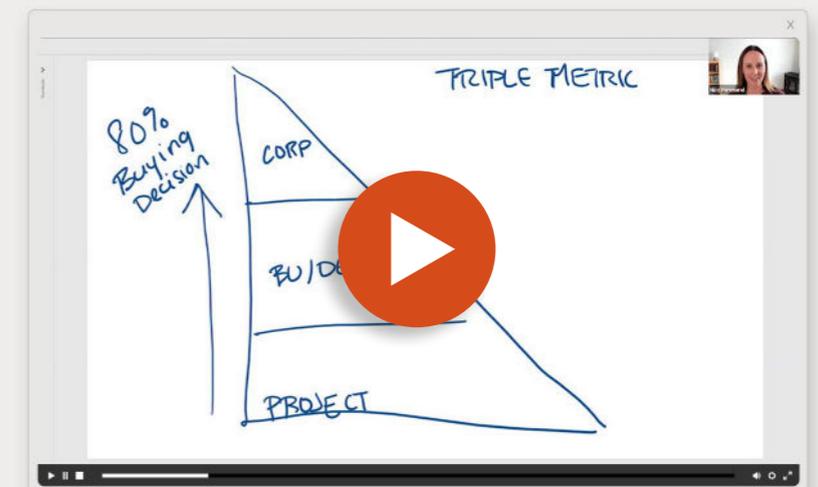
how should you document results?



Nicci Nesmith Hammerel
GM Research and Advisory

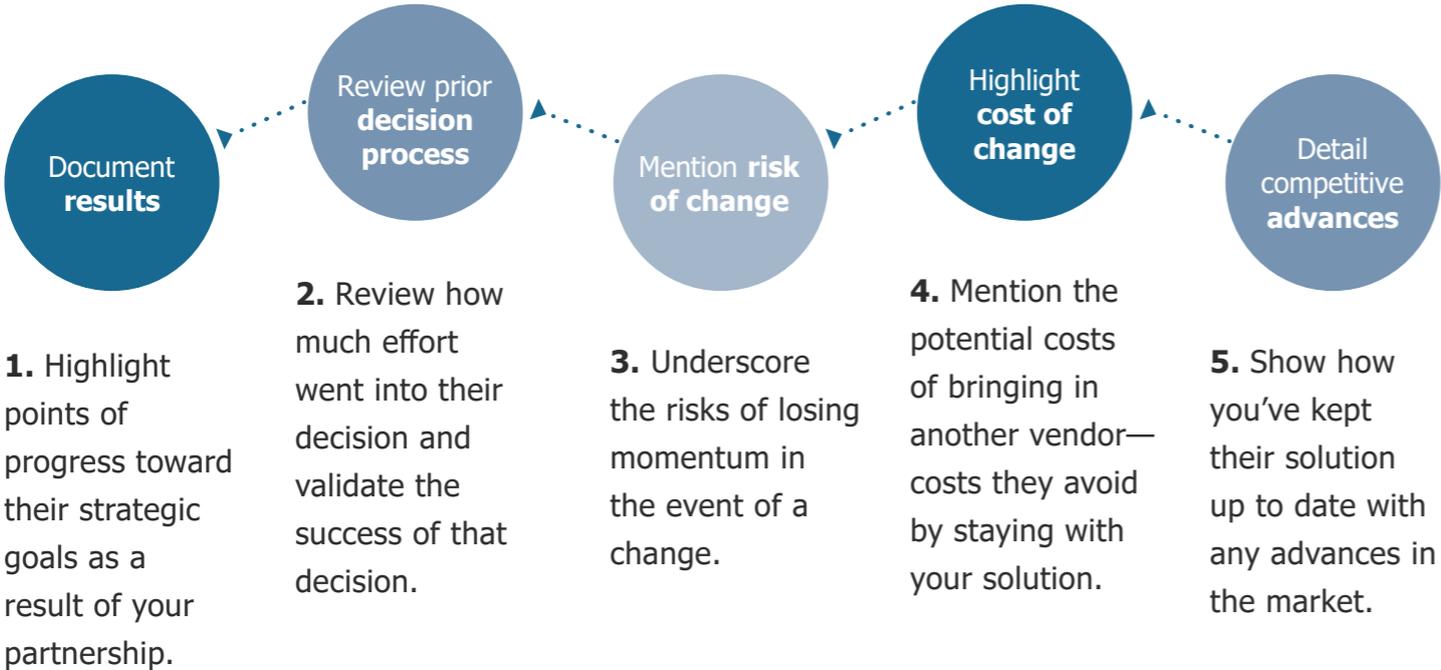
The Triple Metric is a useful framework to connect your project-level metrics to strategic outcomes that decision makers care about.

► **Learn more in this video:**



deliver the *Why Stay* message

When you're trying to persuade an existing customer to renew, the Why Stay message shows them the progress they've made with your solution while reinforcing your value as their status quo.



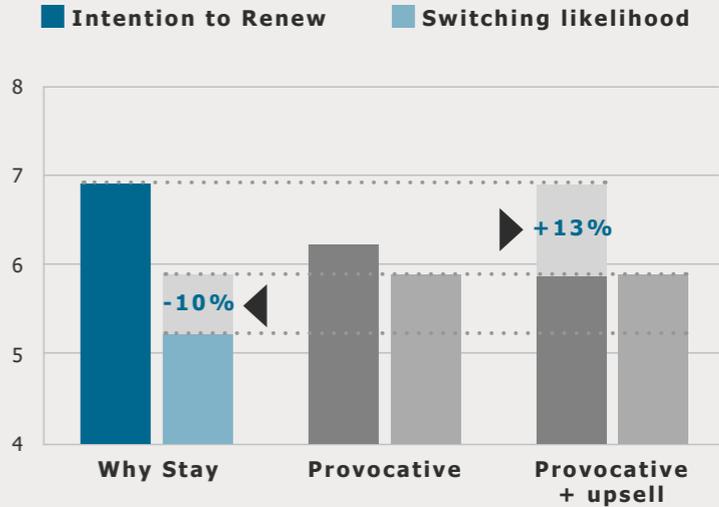
Notice the difference between the Why Stay message and Why Change? Instead of disrupting the buyer's current situation, renewal conversations require an approach that reinforces your position as the customer's status quo.

the research behind the message



Dr. Zakary Tormala
Social Psychologist

According to a research study led by behavioral expert Dr. Zakary Tormala, a Why Stay message that reinforces the status quo led to a **13 percent boost in intention to renew**, and buyers were **10 percent less likely to switch or shop around**, compared to more provocative messages.



[▶ Read the full research study here](#)

anchor your *price increase*

According to our market survey, **69 percent of companies describe their price increase conversations as "50-50" or worse** in terms of how well they go over with customers.

It's not surprising that most price increases aren't received too well. After all, no one enjoys spending more money just to stay with the same solution. But for companies with aggressive growth goals, this is an essential conversation.

How do you persuade a customer to pay more without disrupting the relationship so much that they start to shop around? The Why Pay More message follows the Why Stay framework with one important difference: a sixth step that broaches the price increase by anchoring a higher price before introducing a loyalty discount.



6. Provide a high anchor for the price increase before offering a justification-based discount.

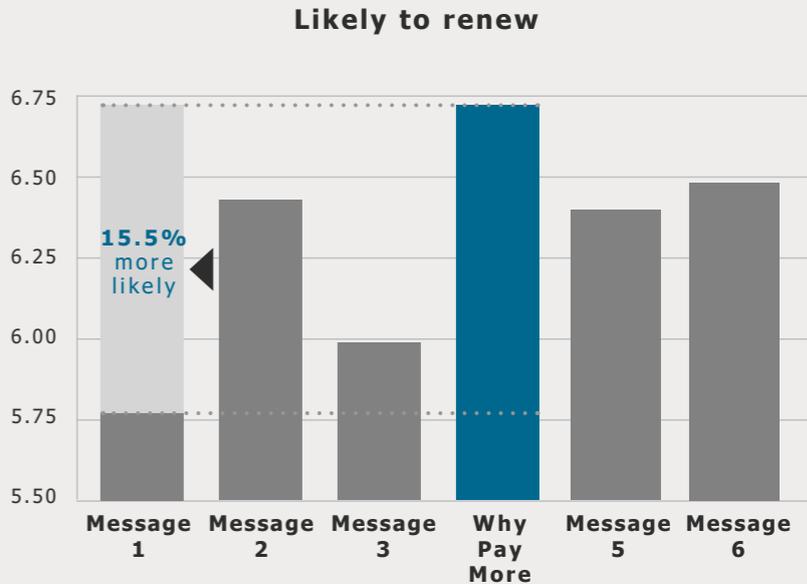
This approach works because of a cognitive bias known as the "anchoring effect." When people face a decision that involves uncertainty, they'll anchor on a reference point and ascribe value based on that. By setting the anchor as a reference for your customer, you're better able to influence their perception of your price increase.

the research behind the message



Dr. Nick Lee
Behavioral Scientist

According to a research study led by behavioral scientist Dr. Nick Lee, participants who heard this Why Pay More message were **15.5 percent more likely to renew** and felt **19 percent more favorable attitudes**, compared to a disruptive price increase message.



[▶ Read the full research study here](#)

create new opportunities

Persuading your customer to keep buying the same solution from you is one thing. But sooner or later, you're going to want to sell them something new.

Convincing customers to buy more should, theoretically, be easier than selling to brand-new prospects. Existing customers know you. You have a history together. They're more likely to pay attention to your marketing and meet with you to hear about new offerings.

But this conversation can go sideways without warning, surfacing hidden challenges and complexities that could scuttle any chance to forge that higher-value relationship. It could even set the relationship back.

If you succeed, you lay the groundwork for stronger, longer-lasting relationships. If you stumble, these relationships stagnate. And plateauing revenues aren't your only problem.

If you aren't continually supporting your customers with remarkable experiences and relevant solutions, they're even more vulnerable to your competitors' disruptive messages. It's not about merely stalling out—it's about losing them entirely.



what is the messaging void?

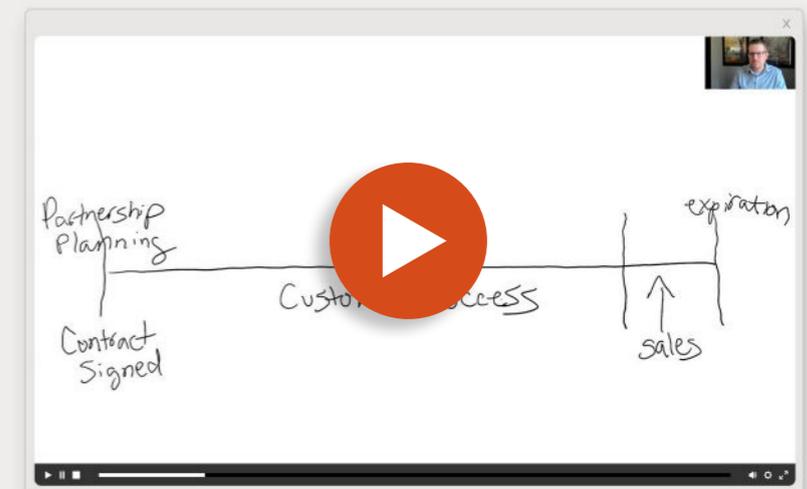


Doug Hutton

EVP Customer Experience

If you're not bringing new insights and opportunities to your customer regularly, the relationship could get lost in the messaging void.

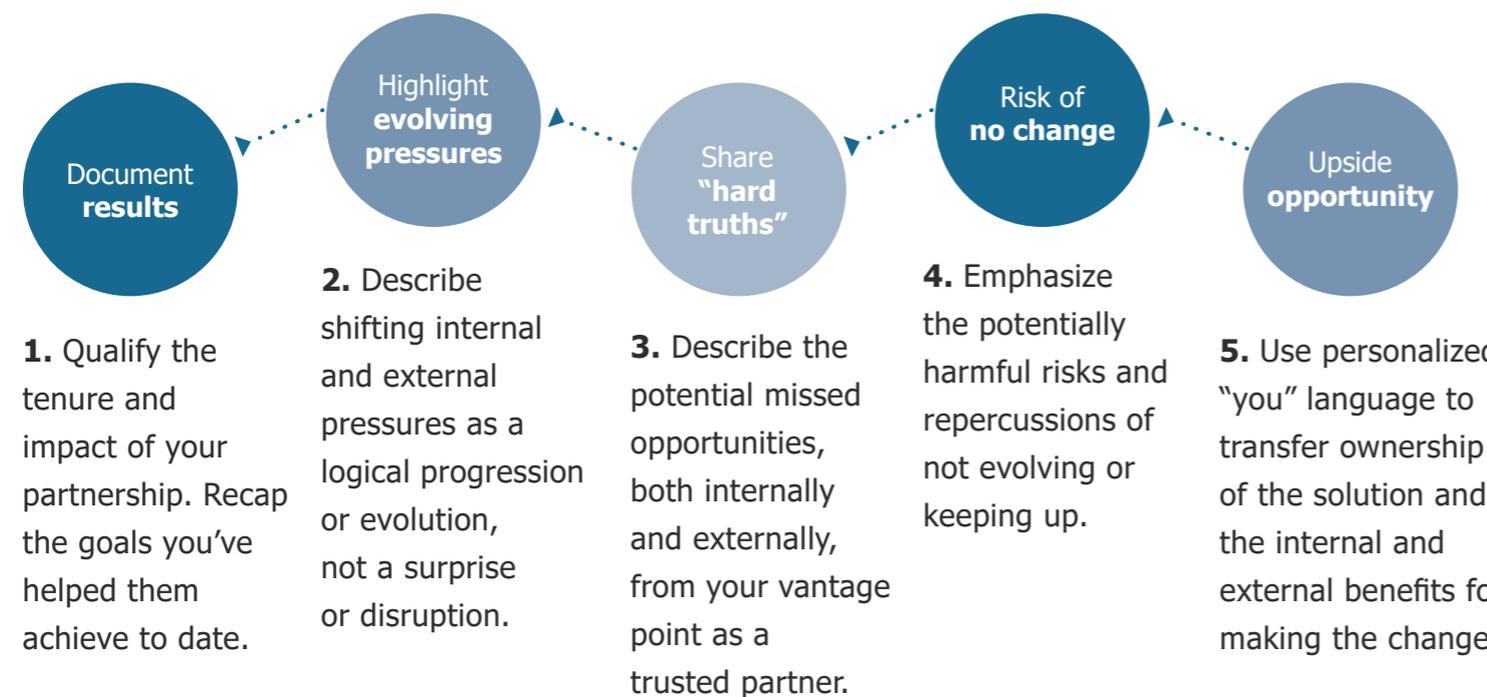
► [Learn more in this video:](#)



deliver the *Why Evolve* message

The goal of the Why Evolve message isn't to drive a big change, nor is it about getting your customer to renew an existing solution. It's about getting the customer to evolve—embrace change, but only as a logical progression of the ongoing pursuit of their goals.

This "controlled change" message ensures they won't stagnate and inspires them to embrace your innovations with confidence and enthusiasm.



Why Evolve is essentially a hybrid message that includes elements of a provocative new customer acquisition story (Why Change) and elements of the more protectionist customer renewal story (Why Stay).

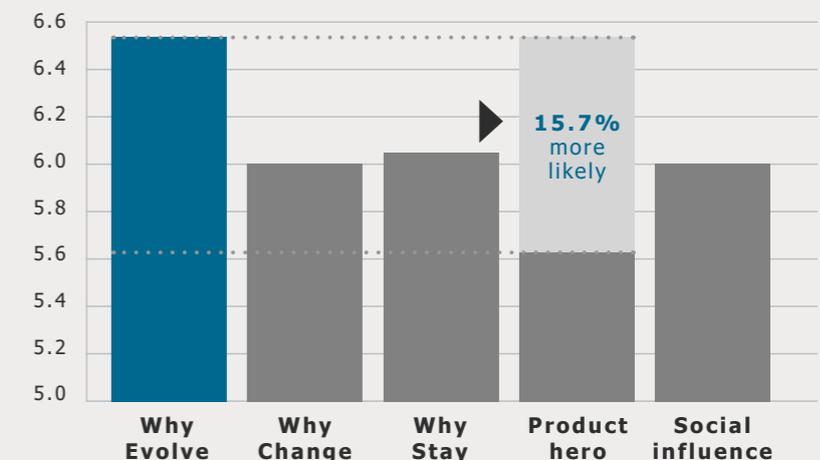
the research behind the message



Dr. Nick Lee
Behavioral Scientist

According to a research study led by behavioral scientist Dr. Nick Lee, this Why Evolve message significantly outperformed other messages when trying to convince existing customers to purchase a new solution.

Likelihood of purchasing new software



[▶ Read the full research study here](#)

recover

when things go wrong

When you're able to point to specific performance gains directly related to your customer's original goals, it's much easier to keep and grow the relationship.

But what if something goes wrong? And what if you're the one who screwed things up?

No matter how you phrase it, apologizing for a service failure is never easy.

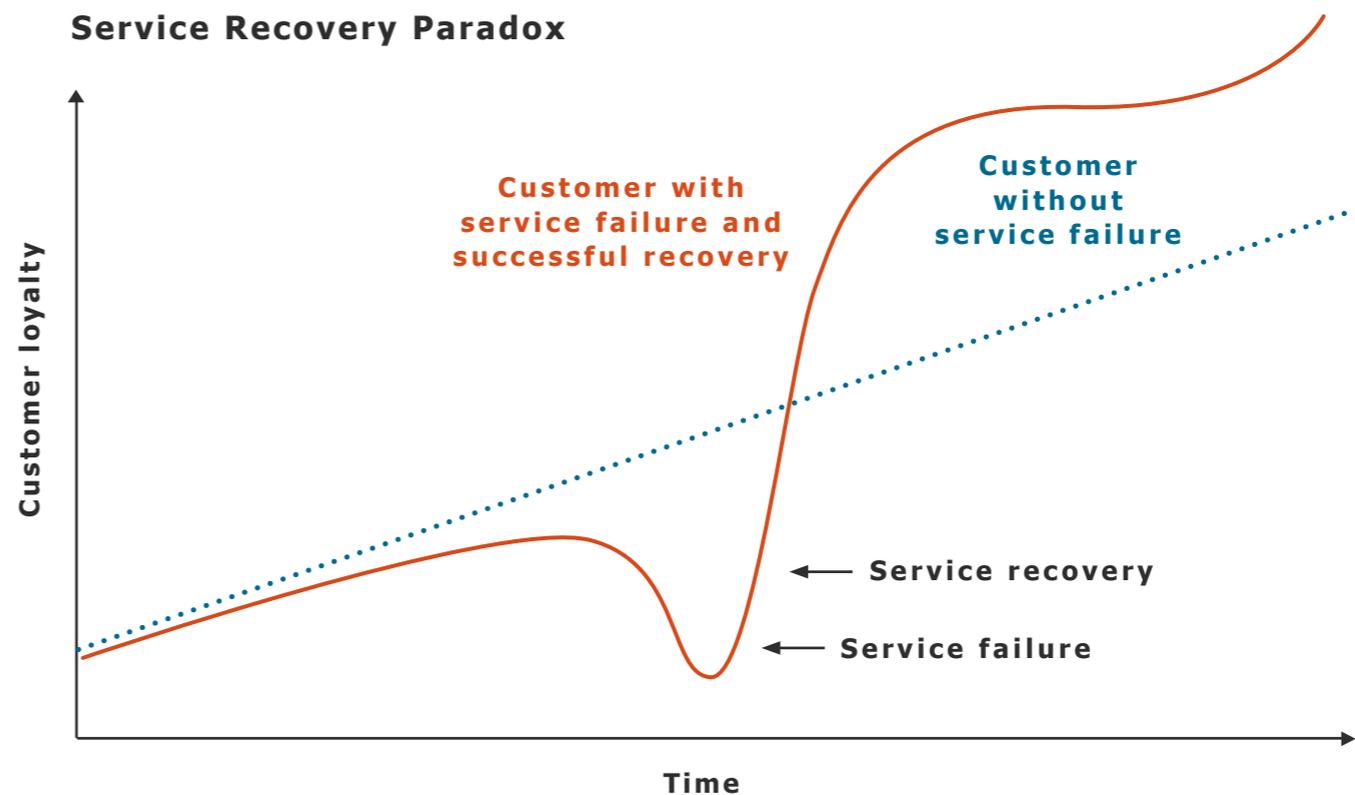
If you don't phrase your apology the right way, you not only risk losing the customer you've wronged, but you also risk all future revenue from that relationship. Losing that customer also means losing the opportunity to grow or expand within their account.

Regardless of what went wrong, both the way you handle that failure and the conversations you have along the way are vital to managing your customer's feelings about you later in the relationship.

In fact, **handling a customer crisis the right way will not only rescue the relationship; it can advance it to an even higher level.**

Researchers call this phenomenon the **Service Recovery Paradox**: a situation in which your customer thinks more highly of you after you've corrected a problem than if they'd never experienced the problem to begin with.

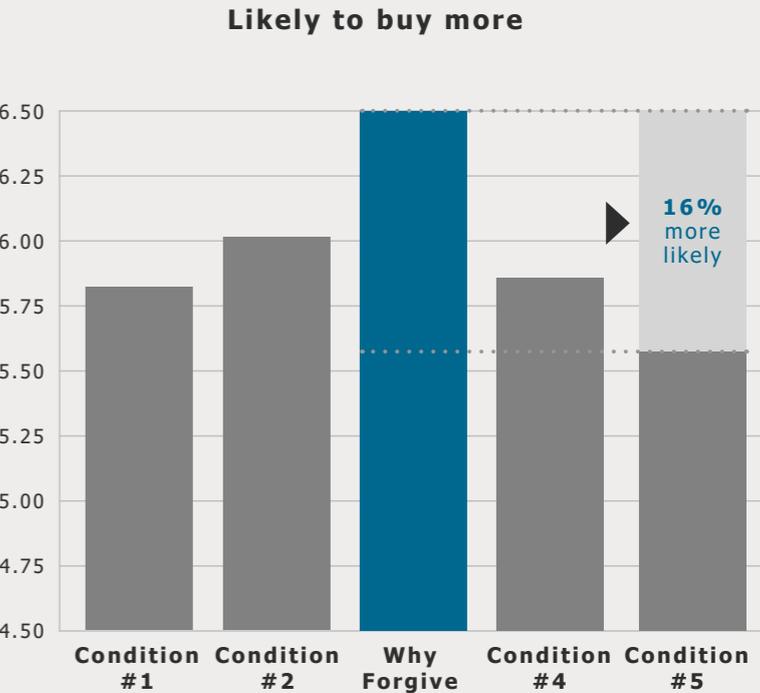
In other words, a service failure is actually an opportunity to *increase* customer loyalty!





Dr. Nick Lee
Behavioral Scientist

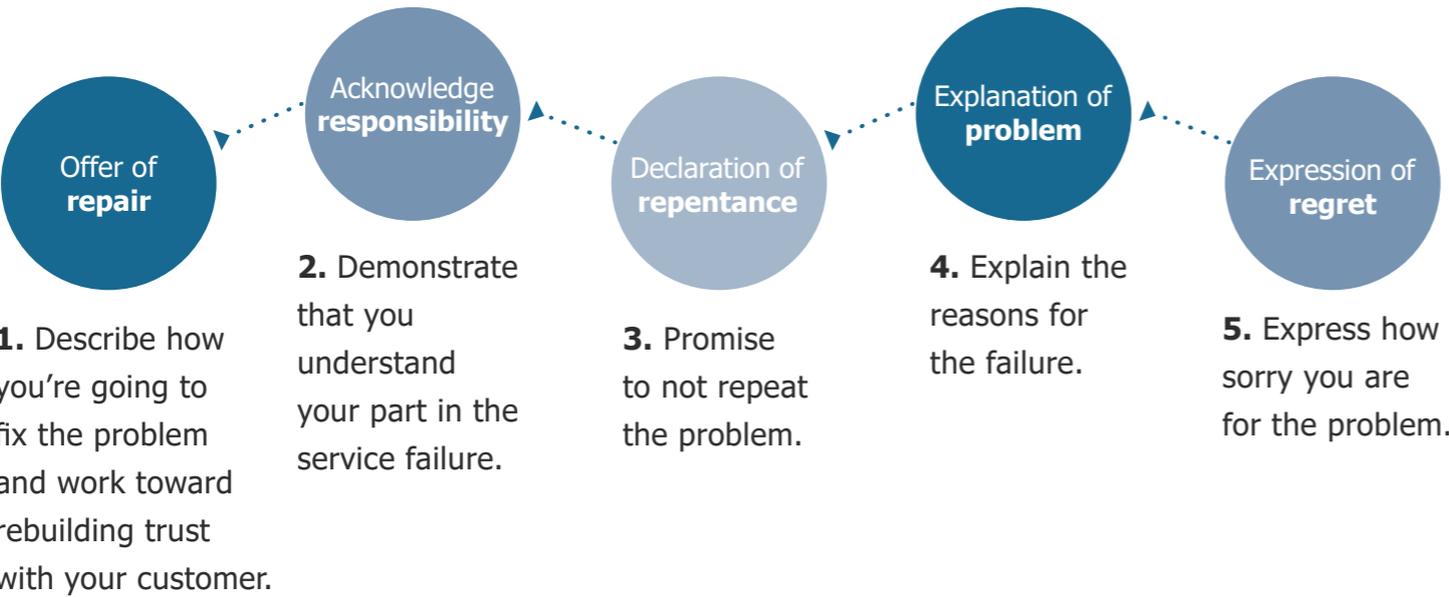
According to a research study led by behavioral scientist Dr. Nick Lee, decision makers who received this Why Forgive message were more likely to recommend the vendor and even buy more after a service recovery.



► [Read the full research study here](#)

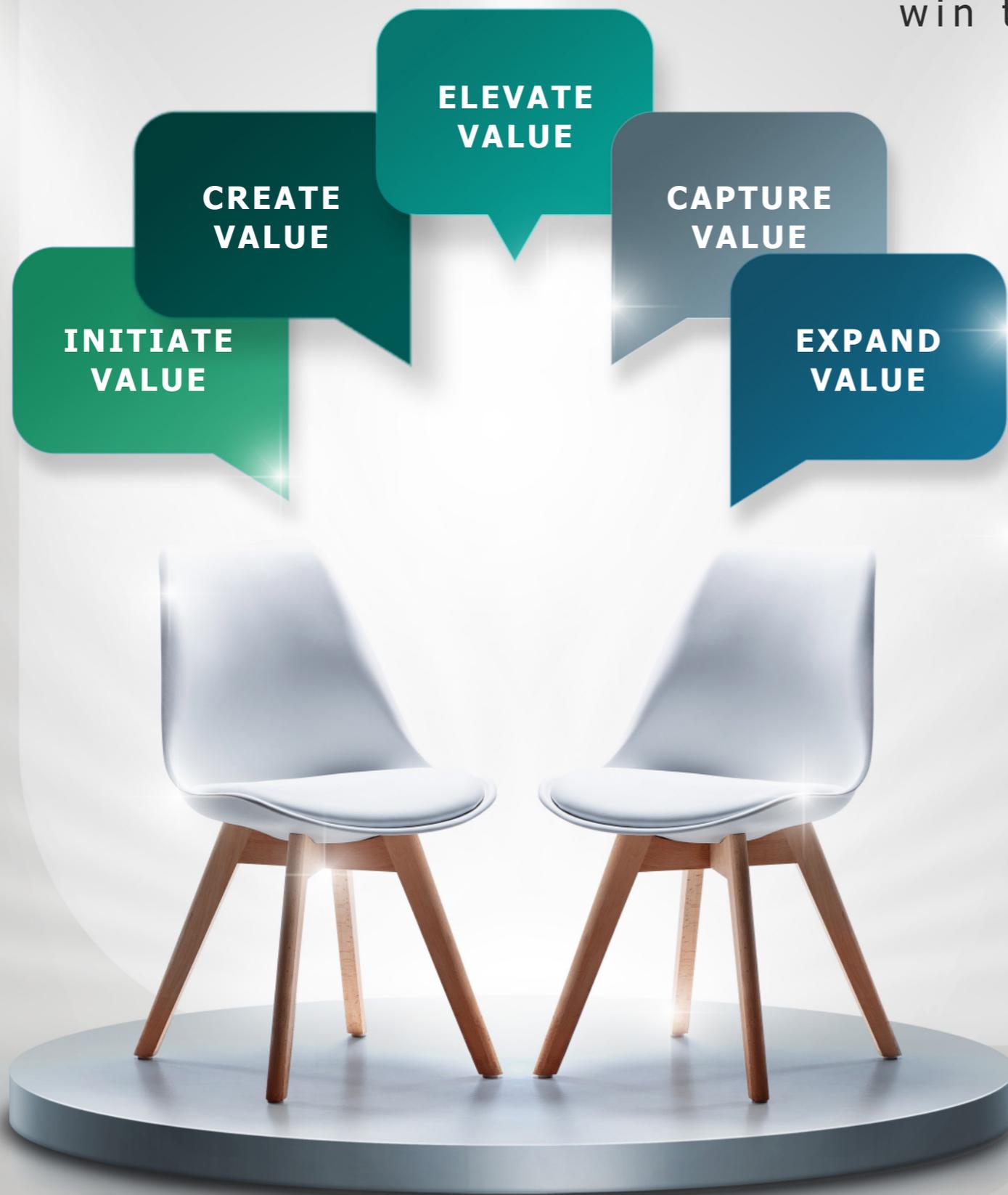
deliver the *Why Forgive* message

The Why Forgive message measurably improves your ability to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, even after a service failure.



As with all the message frameworks in this e-book, it's not just what you say—it's how and when you say it. Our research shows that the order in which you present these components makes a big difference in how your message is received.

win the *five value conversations*



“I sell by being a trusted advisor.”

You’ve probably heard someone say it. You might have even said it yourself.

It seems like a fine enough selling mantra on the surface. But probe a little deeper, and you’ll discover that when people say this, they mean that they ask their buyer a lot of questions, use those questions to diagnose needs, and then present a solution that fits the criteria.

This approach does you and your buyer a disservice—and it’s the antithesis of what it takes to master sales conversations today.

It’s no longer enough to say, “Tell me what you want; I’ll get it for you.” Buyers want you to tell them what they *should* want. They don’t want to sift through all the information—they need you to deliver insight into what they’re missing that will improve their performance.

To do that, you need to understand your buyers’ underlying behaviors and motivations, develop scientifically-tested messages, and respond with situationally sharpened skills.

By learning and applying the strategies in this e-book, you’ll have what it takes to win all five Value Conversations.

about Corporate Visions

Corporate Visions is the leading provider of science-backed revenue growth services for sales, marketing, and customer success. Global B2B companies work with Corporate Visions to articulate value and promote growth in three ways:

- **Make Value Situational** by distinguishing your commercial programs between customer acquisition, retention, and expansion.
- **Make Value Specific** by creating and delivering customer conversations that communicate concrete value, change behavior, and motivate buying decisions.
- **Make Value Systematic** by equipping your commercial engine to deliver consistent and persistent touches across the entire Customer Deciding Journey.

Only with Corporate Visions will your revenue teams get science-backed training to articulate value in every critical conversation with prospects and customers.

[CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE](#)

author



Tim Riesterer
Chief Strategy Officer
Corporate Visions



Tim Riesterer, Chief Strategy Officer at Corporate Visions, is dedicated to helping companies improve their conversations with prospects and customers to win more business. A visionary researcher, thought leader, keynote speaker, and practitioner with more than 20 years of experience in marketing and sales management, Riesterer is co-author of four books, including *Customer Message Management*, *Conversations that Win the Complex Sale*, *The Three Value Conversations*, and *The Expansion Sale*.

contributors



Rob Perrilleon
SVP Delivery Services
Corporate Visions



Doug Hutton
EVP Customer Experience
Corporate Visions



Jim Druckrey
Leader, C-level Practice
Corporate Visions



Catherine Alexander
VP Training Services
Corporate Visions



Nicci Nesmith Hammerel
GM Research and Advisory
Corporate Visions



Dr. Leff Bonney
Research Director
Corporate Visions

