



## SNAP Selling

### Speed Up Sales and Win More Business with Today's Frazzled Customers

#### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Selling is tougher than ever before. Potential customers are under extreme pressure to do more with less money, less time and fewer resources, and they're wary of anyone who tries to get them to buy or change anything. Under such extreme conditions, yesterday's sales strategies no longer work. No matter how great your offering, you face the daunting task of making yourself appear credible, relevant and valuable.

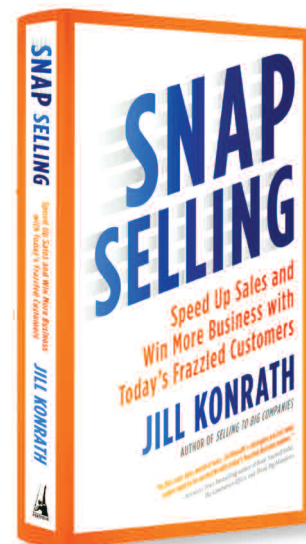
*SNAP Selling* shows salespeople how to overcome obstacles to win more sales with these short-fused, frazzled customers. Drawing on years of selling experience and the stories of other successful sellers, internationally recognized sales strategist Jill Konrath offers four SNAP Rules: Keep It **S**imple, Be **iN**valuable, Always **A**lign and Raise **P**riorities.

Once you're aligned with what your potential customers are trying to achieve and have focused on their top priorities, you'll start seeing a difference in your sales right away. When you start focusing on simplicity and personally bringing value, your business will really take off.

This summary offers an easy-to-read, easy-to-use guide for any seller in today's increasingly frenzied environment.

#### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to make things easy and clear for your customers.
- How to stand out by being the person your customers can't live without.
- How to make sure you're in sync with your customers' objectives, issues and needs.
- How to keep the most important decisions at the forefront of their mind.
- How to differentiate yourself from your competitors and speed up the decision-making process.



by Jill Konrath

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: SNAP SELLING

by Jill Konrath

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## Introduction

We're on the cusp of a new age in selling. It's a time to create new basics and let go of the old ones. For example, it's no longer a numbers game. You'll be much more successful making fewer high-quality calls, meetings and presentations. And having a great relationship with your customers is nice, but no longer sufficient. Today you need to personally bring value to each interaction you have with these people. Also, even if you sell commodities, your new role in working with these well-educated customers is as a "business improvement specialist."

These are only a few of the changes we need to make. If you commit to learning these new basics, you will be unstoppable. And your competitors won't have a chance.

There are distinct decisions your prospects make before they sign a contract with you — or with your competitor. With the first decision, they evaluate your approach to determine if it's worth their time to meet with you. With the second decision, they determine if making the change will be worth all the disruption it will cause. And finally, with the third decision, their primary concern is selecting the best option for their company.

### The SNAP Factors

There are four factors that need to be at the forefront of your mind when working with crazy-busy people. These are called the SNAP Factors:

- **Simple:** Your ability to eliminate complexity and effort from your prospects' decision-making process will improve your chances for sales success.
- **iNvaluable:** In a world of copycat products and services, the value you, personally, bring to the relationship

becomes essential.

- **Aligned:** You must stay relevant to your clients at all times; they don't have time for anything else.
- **Priority:** With an ever-changing business environment, you can't afford to have your prospects deem your services non-urgent.

Once you know your buyer inside and out, you can easily start applying what you've learned to create customer-enticing value propositions, messaging, presentations and proposals. Plus, this knowledge of your customer will be at the heart of all your best, most fruitful conversations.

## SNAP Decisions

The people you're calling on suffer from a severe case of Frazzled Customer Syndrome, a debilitating condition brought on by excessive workloads, 24/7 availability, information overload, lack of sleep and job-related stress.

You likely encounter these individuals on a daily basis. They're good people who are doing their best to survive in a crazy-busy workplace. Their calendars are overflowing and they're constantly falling behind, but they feel powerless to stop the unrelenting, escalating demands on their time.

Busy decision makers don't have time for things that aren't urgent. Their current way of doing things may even be draining massive amounts of money from their pocketbooks or their company. Even though it makes sense to change, they don't do it. It's too much work.

### SNAP Rules: Simple + iNvaluable + Aligned + Priority

When you figure out how to deal with frazzled cus-



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tomers, everything changes. They want to work with you. Sales cycles speed up. You have less competition. You'll be enjoying rich and rewarding collegial relationships, earning a good living and making a difference — all at the same time.

How do you turn this into a reality? Just follow the SNAP Rules:

**Rule 1: Keep It Simple.** Your goal is to ensure maximum simplicity in everything you do. That's going to require you to look at all aspects of your customer interactions at each stage of the decision-making process to see where complexity can be eliminated or minimized.

When you keep it simple, you make it easier for customers to buy from you.

**Rule 2: Be iNvaluable.** Today's crazy-busy customers want to work with sellers who "know their stuff" and bring them fresh ideas on a regular basis. Perhaps you've never even seen that as your role. But today it's essential to embrace the concept of being "iNvaluable" and turn yourself into the competitive differentiator.

When you become invaluable, customers choose you over competitors, are less price conscious and remain loyal.

**Rule 3: Always Align.** Frazzled customers demand alignment. At the onset of your relationship, they need to see an immediate connection between what you do and what they're trying to achieve. As they move through their decision-making process, they need to know that the alignment extends beyond the product, service or solution into core beliefs they value in their business relationships.

When you're aligned with critical business objectives, customers want to work with you.

**Rule 4: Raise Priorities.** It's an absolute imperative to work with frazzled customers on their priority projects. With their limited capacity, that's all they can currently focus on. Target prospects whose priorities you can address and focus on raising the priority level of initiatives that have dropped in importance to your prospects. Because customer priorities are constantly shifting, you need to be alert to what's going on with your customers.

When you raise priorities, your sales process goes much faster and you get the business with less competition.

Make the SNAP Rules your guiding mantra. Think of them every day and with every prospect. Integrate them into your planning and your customer interactions.

### Doing a SNAP Check

To ensure that you're on track with the SNAP Rules, it's a good idea to get in the habit of doing regular SNAP Checks.

Even something as simple as a voice mail message is evaluated on all four factors concurrently. Your product may provide exceptional value, but if your message is filled with gobbledegook, you'll be deleted. Or, you may have an easy solution to implement, but if there's no urgency on the part of the customer to act on it, your project will be delayed. Conversely, your service may have a huge impact on someone's business, but if it involves battling political agendas, your crazy-busy customer may decide it's too much work. Dismissed!

The sooner you can uncover any potential problems with a simple SNAP Check, the more time you have to take corrective action. Most important, you need to evaluate everything through the eyes of your prospects. It's their perception that counts, not yours.

### What's Going On Inside Your Customer's Head

Here are the steps you need to take to become effective at getting into your customers' heads:

**Step 1: Identify the key decision makers.** What are the primary roles of the people involved in your customers' decisions today?

**Step 2: Complete a Buyer's Matrix.** After you identify the primary roles involved in the decision-making process, the next step is to complete a Buyer's Matrix for each one. The word *matrix* means "the point from which something originates, takes form or develops" — which is exactly why it's necessary to do this exercise first. It will provide the core foundation for your sales strategies. Plus, it will enable you to get inside your customers' heads so you can better serve their needs. (You can download a blank Buyer's Matrix at [www.snapselling.com](http://www.snapselling.com))

**Step 3: Create customer personas.** When you're done with your Buyer's Matrix, create several prototypical customers who represent the decision makers with whom you interact on a regular basis. In short, create a persona for each, which will make it easier for you to think like these people.

**Step 4: Use a mind meld.** Once you've created the customer personas, step into each person's mind to test all your ideas before implementing them. Evaluate complexity, priorities, and personal and business value as if you were your prospects.

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## Your Customer's Decision-Making Process

Now that you know what's important to your prospects, you need to take a look at their decision-making process. With a deeper understanding of how they think about change initiatives, you'll be able to serve their business needs at the same time you increase your personal value to them.

Your prospects make three very different and distinct decisions in regards to working with you. In some cases, you are the instigator of these decisions. In other cases, you're called in for a conversation after your prospects have spent considerable time researching their options.

**First Decision: Allow Access.** At the onset of this decision, your prospects have minimal interest in connecting. As you communicate with them, they will be evaluating your message to determine if it's worth it to have a more in-depth conversation.

Getting your foot in the door is your objective in the first decision. Your primary job is to initiate a conversation with the appropriate people. In order to be granted some of their precious time, you need to **move them from oblivious to curious.**

**Second Decision: Initiate Change.** Helping your customers determine if making a change is "worth it" is the main focus of the second decision.

Your prospects must feel confident that working with you is the best use of their time and resources. And because they rarely make these decisions, they need help figuring out how to do it. Your job is to **move them from complacent to committed to a change.**

**Third Decision: Select Resources.** Your primary role in working with prospects at this stage of their decision-making cycle is to help them understand why working with you and your company is the best choice for them.

Your challenge is to **move them from being open to a wide variety of options to certain that you're the right resource.** ●

## The First Decision

Frazzled customers don't want to hear about your products or services. They will grant you access only if you pique their curiosity or provoke their thinking with relevant information, such as:

- How other companies address the same issues
- Business outcomes they'd like to achieve
- Information on industry and competitive trends
- Intelligence about their customers' wants, needs and trends

- Updates on topics they're interested in knowing more about
- Insights into a vexing problem or new priority.

To get a frazzled customer to grant you access, it's imperative that you convey all this information in a series of 20- to 30-second "touches" (via phone, e-mail or direct mail).

## SNAP Considerations

Here's how the four SNAP Factors impact your prospect's first decision:

*Simple.* Once you understand your customers' needs, this is a key factor. It's critical to pack just the right information into 30-second phone messages, 90-word e-mails or one-page letters.

*iNvaluable.* Your personal value will be assessed quickly by what you say in your message. If you demonstrate an understanding of your prospects' business, objectives and priorities, you'll differentiate yourself.

*Aligned.* If you are not aligned with your customers' needs, issues or objectives, you will not be granted access to the decision maker. Being ruthlessly relevant is the name of the game.

*Priority.* This is the trump card in the first decision. If you can tie the organization's or individual's priorities into your messaging, your odds of "getting in" will be increased exponentially.

## Aligned: Craft Winning Value Propositions

Let's start with the third, but probably most important SNAP Factor: Alignment.

Alignment starts with having a strong value proposition that's highly attractive to your targeted customer — one that answers his or her question "Why should I consider changing from my status quo?"

A value proposition is a clear statement of the tangible results a customer gets from using your products or services. It's outcome-focused and stresses the business value of your offering.

Your strongest value propositions become the foundation of your foot-in-the-door campaign. They're also used in marketing and lead generation programs, Web site copy, collateral, proposals and presentations. Being able to clearly articulate your value from your customers' perspective is foundational to your sales success.

Here is a formula for crafting a powerful value proposition:

*Value Proposition = Business Driver + Movement + Metrics*

You'll need to include all these elements as you develop your value propositions:

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**Step 1. Determine the Business Drivers.** Business drivers are what decision makers really care about.

**Step 2: State the Movement.** A strong value proposition always includes movement. Use words like these: *increase, cut, improve, save, grow, reduce, accelerate, shrink*, etc.

**Step 3: Add the Metrics.** Your prospects want to know how much you've improved something, the extent of the value realized and how long it took to get those results. That's why adding metrics — or numbers — makes your value proposition even more enticing, powerful and believable.

### Priorities: Capitalize on Trigger Events

While value propositions are the foundation of your sales initiatives, “trigger events” are the grand catalysts. They provide the context for irresistible messages to your targeted customers. Sellers who leverage trigger events outperform their colleagues and clobber their competition.

A trigger event is an occurrence that shifts an organization's priorities. It could be internal or external to the organization; it doesn't matter. What does matter is that when it occurs, new objectives immediately gain importance, while others get tabled until things settle down.

Trigger events shake the status quo to the core. New problems emerge that require resolution. Fresh strategic initiatives dominate the discussion.

What a perfect time for a savvy seller to get involved and help a frazzled customer.

Doors open wide for sellers who stay up-to-date on trigger events that are relevant to their sales success.

When you find out about a trigger event, you need to act on it right away.

### Simple: Messages that Matter

Here's a proven formula that works for both voice mail and e-mail messages — with only slight variations.

**1. Establish credibility.** You need to be taken seriously from the get-go.

**2. Pique curiosity.** After reviewing what you know about your targeted company and what's important to your prospective customer, determine what would pique their interest the most.

**3. Close for next step.** Voice mail messages should end with the quiet confidence of a peer, with your follow-up clearly stated: “Let's set up a time to talk about this. I'll give you a call tomorrow to see if we can get something on the calendar.” E-mails need to close differently. They should invite the recipient to engage with

you on a non-threatening next step. “Here's the link to an article on how we helped Generic Systems with that issue. You might want to check it out. I'll follow up in a couple days to answer your questions.”

### iNvaluable: Become Irresistible Right Away

When you initially go after an account, plan on approximately 10 touches (via phone, e-mail and direct mail) spread out over four to six weeks. This condensed time frame is a real switch from the past.

You don't have to worry anymore about being a pest! With crazy-busy customers, your message doesn't even make it into their short-term memory. That's also why you need to condense your account entry campaign. Good messaging combined with educational resources makes you memorable and sets the stage for a valuable discussion.

While it's tempting to follow up with a “just checking in” message, that's the worst thing you can do. Every single communication needs to provide value. Since many of your connections will be via e-mail, this gives you an opportunity to link to quality content or attach it to your message. ●

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## The Second Decision

Now that you've piqued your prospect's curiosity enough, he or she is willing to set up a meeting with you. But getting the prospect to accept the change you're offering is a whole different story, and depending on what you sell, it may take months.

Working with a prospect at this stage of his or her decision-making process *is all about change*. Your product or service is virtually irrelevant. The only thing that matters is whether your offering will help the prospect achieve his or her objectives.

### Aligned: Assessing Business Value

The easiest way to win more sales is to have a strong business case. Being able to clearly articulate the business value of your offering is critical for getting your foot in the door.

Your role during the second decision is to move your crazy-busy prospects off their sense of complacency with their current situation. You need to explore the potential effect your product, service or solution can have on their organization. If it's aligned with their business objectives and priorities — and if they feel it's “do-able” — they'll likely commit to making a change.

A major key to your success lies in your ability to co-develop a strong business case with your prospects so

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that they'll willingly go to bat for you with their management team.

That's why you must ask questions to assess the business value of your offering. When sellers learn to ask good questions, their prospects evaluate them as more caring and concerned, and more knowledgeable about the prospects' jobs, market and products.

Now that you've convinced your prospects that you are aligned with their goals, you must demonstrate that moving ahead is doable.

### **iNvaluable: Become the Expert They Can't Live Without**

In today's market, it's virtually impossible to maintain a sustainable edge over competitors. Even if you have one today, it could be gone tomorrow. Your prospects can easily locate a whole slew of options from which to choose.

There's only one thing that truly can be special and that's YOU! Absolutely no one can replicate you — your knowledge, your expertise, your problem-solving capability or your ability to create options that didn't exist before.

Remember, your prospects can get your products, software or services anywhere, and probably for much cheaper. But they can't buy your brain, your knowledge or your expertise anywhere else. When you focus on turning yourself into a differentiator, suddenly everything shifts. People who wouldn't give you the time of day before suddenly can't get enough of you. They rely on your know-how, guidance and advice for achieving their goals.

### **Simple: Cut the Complexity**

If you've piqued your prospects' curiosity enough, they'll make a change. Conceptual buy-in is the first step in moving them away from the status quo — and bravo to you when you've achieved it.

But now your prospects need to learn more. If it's their first time making a decision in this area, they'll need to understand the entire context of the change initiative. If it's been a few years since their previous decision, they'll also need to do a major immersion.

The sheer challenge of figuring it all out is daunting. And it gets even more overwhelming as your prospects see just how much they don't know. That's why it's imperative to always follow SNAP Rule 1: "Keep It Simple."

It's time to be the leader, the guide, the navigator. Once you've captured your prospects' attention, you need to move into this new role. In a figurative sense,

you offer them your hand and say, "Follow me. I can help you figure this out and get it implemented in your organization. I've done it before. C'mon, let's go." When you do this, frazzled customers will follow you.

### **Priorities: Maintain the Momentum**

After you've convinced your prospects of the need for change, you'll need to keep the momentum going to encourage the decision-making process. Even after you've brought them a solid idea — one that addresses a critical problem or achieves their objectives — things can get bogged down.

The best way to accelerate your prospects' decision-making process and keep it a priority is to remove those factors that bog it down. People don't want to make slow decisions. However, they don't want to make dumb, career-derailing decisions either.

Remember, the second decision is all about getting complacent prospects to act. In order to do this, you have to make sure they have the appropriate information to help them through the decision-making process: solid educational content that addresses whatever issues they're hung up on.

Identify all their potential sticking points. Do it from your prospects' point of view, not yours. Use their words, the way they'd say it. Then, once you've created that list of sticking points, figure out what type of educational content you can create or leverage to move them through these decision bottlenecks.

### **Success with the Second Decision**

When you pursue business with a company or an individual who hasn't been thinking about making a change, you take on quite a challenge.

To have success with the first decision, you needed to pique the interest of your targeted prospects. Your mission was accomplished when they agreed to an initial meeting.

Your role at this time has to shift. You have to stop "selling" — meaning make no pitches at all. You are now working with your customer. So get started by figuring out what to do to make that transition from the status quo. Operate as if you have already started the project.

At the same time, don't lose sight of the fact that the decision could still be derailed, delayed or even tabled forever. Remember, you haven't signed the contract yet. ●

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## **The Third Decision**

By now your prospects have committed to making a change. The status quo is no longer acceptable. They've discovered new ways to eliminate costly problems or to

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create new opportunities. Now they're looking at what it's going to take to get the approval for change.

Working with prospects at this stage of their decision making is all about choices and certainty.

### Selling to Hot Prospects

To be successful at this stage, you should go through these exercises with your typical customer's decision-making process. You've already identified the primary decision maker and completed a Buyer's Matrix on each one. You've created a customer persona for each of these positions, too. Now it's time to:

**Create a Decision Map.** Walk through the decision from their perspective — not yours. Map it out, detailing every likely step in their journey to closure.

**Landscape the Competition.** Once you've created a map, you need to factor in the competition, since it's highly likely they'll be vying for this same opportunity. Identify the primary competitors you'll encounter and do your research on them.

### Simple: Make the Decision as Easy as Possible

As architect and Zen gardener Dr. Koichi Kawana says, "Simplicity means the achievement of maximum effect with minimal means." When you examine everything you do through that lens, it shifts what you do and how you do it.

One of the best ways you can have "maximum effect with minimal means" is to take on the leadership role at this stage in the decision-making process. You've helped other companies make these decisions. You know what they struggled with. You are in the perfect position to become your prospects' guide — someone who helps them get to their desired destination. You must remain consultative and helpful — which will really differentiate you from your competitors and speed up the decision-making process.

### Aligned: Balancing the Value-Risk Equation

People make decisions because what happens in their company matters to them. Believing that they're dealing with a credible firm that's proposed a sound concept is the starting point. But as Chip and Dan Heath point out in *Made to Stick*, "For people to take action, they have to care."

Company executives care when you show them ideas on how to:

- Achieve their desired future or growth initiatives
- Create first-mover or sustainable competitive advantage
- Turn around failing businesses or stop the bleeding

- Maintain their current business more elegantly or with fewer resources.

They need a vision from you regarding what's possible — really possible, given where they are today.

### iNvaluable: Be the One They Want to Work With

Caroline Kirby, former top car seller and now technology rep, says, "I don't care what you're selling. People are in fear. Your job is to establish trust — which you do by being authentic, caring about your customers, engendering feelings of subject matter expertise and making the selection easy and pain-free."

Here are three strategies you can use to differentiate yourself from competitors and win the business with crazy-busy buyers:

**Collaborate "as if" they're customers.** To be most effective, drop the "sales" mentality and start working with your prospects as if they've already hired you.

**Make differentiation easier.** Because potential buyers don't know how to make an accurate comparison, educate them on what to look for.

**Act as the trusted resource.** Whenever your prospects consider the differences between you and your competitors to be minimal, it's up to you to change that perception by proactively being the go-to resource.

### Priority: Getting the Business

The end is finally in sight. Even this far into your prospect's decision-making process, it's imperative for you to ensure they have the information they need to make their final selections.

They've heard you talk about how good your stuff is, but you're in sales, so you're expected to strut your stuff. Now they need outside validation. If you haven't done this already, this is a good time for you to:

- Arrange conversations with existing customers.
- Showcase video testimonials of satisfied, similar customers.
- Highlight complimentary analysts' reports or articles.
- Set up site visits to other users' facilities or your own corporate offices.

### Make It Easy to Say Yes

There are many strategies you can use that can make it easier for your prospects to give you the go-ahead. You may want to consider some or all of these strategies to expedite getting the ink on paper:

- **Propose fewer options.**

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- Break your offering down into small pieces.
- Propose creative payment solutions.
- Make your contracts simpler.
- Offer payment over time.

### Success with the Third Decision

At long last, the decision is made! You've invested countless hours preparing and strategizing for each of the numerous meetings. You've given it your all, hoping you've done enough to come out on top.

Unfortunately, not everyone can be a winner. Should you lose, be gracious. Thank your prospects for the opportunity and wish them all the best.

If you win, it's time to celebrate. And it's also time to get to work. Your new customers need to know that you look forward to working with them. Your first official job is to tell them that you appreciate their business.

Then it's time to dig in. You are responsible for the success of this project, order, contract or deal. Pay attention to details, constantly monitor progress and check on satisfaction levels. Make sure your project comes in on time and within budget. Should any changes arise that could alter expectations, deal with them openly and honestly. Your customers don't want any surprises. Ultimately, your success is dependent on your customers' success. ●

### Wrapping It Up

Your prospects desperately want to work with smart, savvy people who bring them fresh ideas, insights and information on how to achieve their business objectives. They crave working relationships with competent, caring, trustworthy individuals who can guide them through the decision-making process, minimizing any missteps. Keep in mind:

- When you align your offering with their critical business objectives, you capture and maintain your prospects' interest.
- When you bring personal value and expertise, you get chosen over competitors, fight fewer pricing battles and increase customer loyalty.
- When you keep things simple, you make it easier for prospects to buy from you.
- When you raise priorities, your sales process goes much faster and you get the business with less competition.

Even in tough times, you can be successful when you master the skills, strategies and mindset of a SNAP seller.

### How to Win Their Business

To win their business, your customers must determine that:

- Your product, service or solution is the best option for their business needs.
- Money spent on your product, service or solution is the best use of corporate funds.
- Your company has the depth of expertise necessary to help them achieve their objectives without any glitches.
- Working with your company is the least risky decision of all their options.
- What they're paying for your offering can easily be justified and, even if it costs more, it's worth it.

These are the new challenges that you need to address in the third decision.

### SNAP to It!

Use the SNAP Check to evaluate prospects' perceptions of your phone messages, meeting plans, presentations, proposals and more. Have you made things simple enough or are they still too complex? Are you demonstrating your personal value or do you sound like every other seller? Have you aligned with their business objectives or is what you're offering irrelevant? Do you raise the priority status or is your offering still a nicety?

Be tough on yourself. It's how you eliminate this response: "We decided to stay with the status quo" or "We've decided to go with your competitor."

Better yet, when you rigorously practice SNAP selling you'll hear: "Let's meet," "We've decided to change" and "You're the one we want to work with." ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Snap Selling*, you'll also like:

1. ***Exceptional Selling* by Jeff Thull.** Leading-edge strategist Jeff Thull shows how to create a different kind of relationship with the customer and use powerful diagnostic principles to reframe the typical sales conversation.
2. ***The Perfect Salesforce* by Derek Gatehouse.** Derek Gatehouse argues that sales is about people and different types of people excel naturally in different types of sales jobs.
3. ***The Ultimate Sales Machine* by Chet Holmes.** Chet Holmes provides 12 key strategies to turn any business into what he deems "the ultimate sales machine."