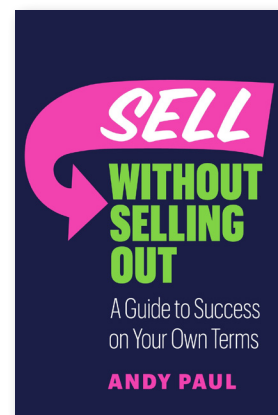


Selling Without Selling Out

A Guide to Success on Your Own Terms

by **Andy Paul**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Selling is all about persuasion, right? Or is it possible that ‘persuasion’ is no more than a blunt instrument that sellers use when they haven’t yet learned to harness the power of influence in their interactions with their potential customers?

If you feel as though you’re in danger of becoming a ‘sales zombie’ who has stopped learning, stopped improving, and who goes through the motions of sales in a mindless and uninspired way, you’re likely on the hunt for a better way.

In *Selling Without Selling Out*, entrepreneur, sales expert, and podcaster Andy Paul shares the tools, mindsets, and strategies that can help salespeople break free. The result is that you’ll take charge of your own career on the strength of the four Sell In pillars: Connection, Curiosity, Understanding, and Generosity. You’ll also become more human in your selling, speaking to the human being in each individual you sell to. Finally, you’ll forever escape the ‘salesy’ label that can mark the death of any sales career.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to stand out in a world crowded by salespeople trying to blend in.
- How to be more human at every stage of the selling journey, and why you should.
- How to consistently avoid ‘salesy’ language, techniques, and mindsets when communicating with customers.
- The four Sell In pillars that lead to dramatically more effective selling.

Introduction

This book starts by laying out how traditional sales behaviors work against you and against what you're trying to accomplish in sales. And in life. I'll teach you how to take control of how you sell in order to help your buyer achieve the thing that's most important to them, and help you achieve what's most important to you. All on your own terms.

At the heart of taking control are four core sales behaviors. These are the Sell In Pillars: Connection, Curiosity, Understanding, Generosity. Everything that I've accomplished in my professional and personal lives has stemmed from how I've embodied these four behaviors to help others achieve the things that are most important to them. Everything else is window dressing.

Stand Out or Sell Out

In *Atomic Habits*, author James Clear writes, "Every action is a vote for the type of person you wish to become." This statement begs the question: what type of seller do you want to become? A sellout who struggles to establish a firm footing in sales? Or a consistently good seller who sells in and stands out year after year? There's often a yawning chasm between how sellers imagine themselves professionally interacting with and helping their buyers, and how they sell in reality. There's also a wide gap between how their buyer perceives them and how they would like to be perceived, which is as a trusted advisor and source of value.

Pushy. Self-interested. Lazy. Uninformed. Clueless. Buyers often use these adjectives to describe salespeople. Unfair? Of course. But buyers' seemingly instinctive distrust of sellers didn't materialize out of thin air. Buyers' experiences with sellers continue to reinforce this negative perception. And sellers have helped perpetuate this problem through the salesy techniques and behaviors they're trained to use. It doesn't need to be this way. But the impetus for change has to come from you, the individual seller. It's not going to come from your bosses or managers. They're invested in the status quo.

Selling to Humans

Sales is a human business, but sellers aren't very good at selling to humans. More often than not, your customers make the decision to buy from you in spite of you, not because of you. If you're going to stop Selling Out, you have to take control of how you sell. Before you can do that, you first have to understand exactly what your buyers need from you.

According to a Forrester study, executives consider less than one fifth of the meetings they have with salespeople to be valuable. In other words, more than 80 percent of buyers earned zero return on the time and attention they invested in you. Buyers are figuratively holding their noses and buying from you in spite of your best efforts to sell to them. This happens primarily because you have been Selling Out.

Look at selling this way: every choice and decision a buyer makes during their buying journey is their referendum on you. And it's personal. Not in a "you're a bad human" sort of way. Personal as in "you don't really understand what's most important to me, so I don't have confidence that you can help me get it." If, to paraphrase Dan Pink, to sell is human, then we need to learn how to get much better at selling to humans. Because our buyers are moving on without us.

You're Not the Boss of Me

Step one in your transformation from Selling Out to Selling In starts with taking control of how That's why your sales boss will hate that you're reading this book. Selling In requires that you behave more independently, act more autonomously, and exert more personal control over how you sell. Sellers largely operate in environments in which too many sales bosses prioritize conformity and predictable mediocrity (or is it mediocre predictability?). They slap a few layers of new technology on outmoded sales processes and call them "modern." Sales processes that are enforced by data-driven metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) rob sellers of their autonomy and strip the soul out of selling.

But sales bosses are afraid to stray from what they know, afraid to stray from the playbook that sort of works. Adopting a sales approach that differs too much from the herd mentality, even if it makes sense, could be disruptive to their careers. However, that's their problem. Not yours. You have to do what is best for your buyers. Just so I'm clear: what's best for your buyers is also what's best for you.

Death to Salesy

The next step in taking control of how you sell is to refuse to act in ways that buyers automatically resist. Here's the thing. Selling is very simple. Don't confuse simple with easy. Selling is hard, hard work. That is never going to change.

Let's illustrate why salesy needs to go. The one question you can guarantee that your buyers will never ask you is, "Could

you be more salesy?” Let’s look at salesy from the buyer’s perspective. Being salesy is a way of acting that universally makes buyers squirm. Salesy is Selling Out. Ask yourself this question: Is “being more salesy” the answer to helping my buyer define the problem they need to solve make sense of the information that I provide, understand their options for achieving their most important thing, calculate the value of my solution, or make an informed decision? The answer is a resounding NO.

Influence Rules, Persuasion Drools

If you’re going to stop being salesy, then you need to have the right mindset and perspective about the interactions you have with your buyers. Despite the best efforts of various sales experts and sales trainers to conflate and interchangeably use the words influence and persuasion, they are not the same thing. There’s a reason Dale Carnegie didn’t title his classic book *How to Win Friends and Persuade People*.

To persuade means to prevail on someone to do something by argument, entreaty, or expostulation. To prevail is to gain ascendancy by strength. In other words, to coerce a buyer to do something, which just reinforces their negative image of sellers as sellouts. If your primary job in sales is to understand what the most important thing is for your buyer, and then help them get that, then what value does persuasion offer? Are you going to persuade the buyer to change their mind about what is most important to them?

The One Question Every Buyer Will Ask You

“Why should I buy from you?” This is the question that every buyer, every stakeholder in a decision, will ask you. After killing off salesy and putting the lid on persuasion, how you answer this question is the most important step in taking control of how you sell. It’s where you irrevocably move from Selling Out to Selling In.

Scan this list and you’ll see that hardly a day passes when you aren’t asked this question in one form or another.

- Why should I work with you?
- Why should I trust you?
- Why should I invest my time in you?
- Why should I collaborate with you?
- Why should I take advice from you?

- Why should I buy from you?
- Why should I risk my money on you?
- Why should I accept you?
- Why should I hire you?

At heart, these are all the same question. Scroll through that list of questions again. This time, delete all the words between Why and you. You see, the real question that people are asking is “Why... you?” This is why it’s so critically important to be in charge of how you sell. Because you are the difference between winning and losing.

The Sell In Pillars: Selling Without Persuasion

Your buyers can get product features, technical specifications, and pricing from the internet. What they can’t get from your website are the questions, context, insights, and other forms of value that help them fully understand their problem and visualize what success looks like. That comes from how you are Selling In: the Connection, Curiosity, Understanding, and Generosity they can only get from you, the human seller.

Connection

Look at your own experience buying products or services. Or your experience paying for advice. It doesn’t matter whether it’s for personal or business purposes. Think back to all the salespeople, real estate agents, doctors, financial advisors, therapists, and others that you have chosen to work with in your life. Before making that choice, how often did you say to yourself, “You know, I’m not sure I really trust this financial advisor. But what the heck, I’m going to invest my money with her anyway.” Or “This painting contractor kind of gives me the creeps. But I’m going to use him anyway.”

The answer is never. You didn’t. And your buyers ask the same exact question about you. Don’t believe anyone who tells you differently. Good things rarely happen in sales without that human-to-human connection. It’s possible. But not highly probable.

Curiosity

The late Anthony Bourdain used his food travelogue series to connect with people from all cultures in every corner of the world in order to learn about them and their stories. Bourdain said: “What I do is not complicated. Any stranger who shows an honest curiosity about what the locals think is

the best food is going to be welcomed. When you eat their food, and you seem happy, people sitting around a table open up and interesting things happen.” Think about this in the context of what we do as sellers.

If you meet a new prospect and default to the uninterested interrogation of them with your list of scripted questions, then that door will be closed to you.

If you meet a new prospect and show an honest curiosity in them, and the things that are important to them, then you will be welcomed. And when your buyers respond to your curiosity, opening up and talking about the things that are most important to them, that’s when interesting things happen.

Understanding

Behavioral scientist Kurt Lewin has been quoted as saying, “If you want to truly understand something, try to change it.” That’s what you do as a seller. You help buyers make a change. Understanding is essential. In fact, understanding may be the most critical source of value you can provide to your buyers.

Generosity

You’ve heard of buyer-centric selling, right? It’s one of the more commonly mentioned, and least utilized, modes of selling. The idea makes perfect sense: Place the buyer at the center of your sales efforts. Align how you sell with how the buyer buys. It’s something we should all aspire to do.

However, for most sellers, buyer-centric selling falls victim to the demands of the archaic, linear, stagebased sales processes that they’ve been trained to follow. The processes in which the buyer is merely an inconvenient obstacle that stands in the way of their getting an order. Sound familiar? Let’s try

something better. A new perspective to add to your selling. Selling, when done well, is an act of Generosity. If the prime objective of Selling In is to listen to understand what the most important thing is to your buyer and then help them get it, then Selling In is, at heart, an act of Generosity.

The “Secret” Sales Accelerator

Sales acceleration is a myth. However, there’s a hidden bonus when you’re Selling In. You can experience a kind of trampoline effect, a quasi-sales accelerator, that actually enables your buyers to make their decision sooner than they had planned. Meaning that you’ll help your buyers achieve their strategic objective of quickly gathering and making sense of the information they need to make their purchase decision with the least possible investment of their time, attention, and resources.

Conclusion

You can seize control over how you sell. Not only can you; you have to. Sellout zombies never change. But you are different. You can choose to take action. And make an immediate difference.

By Selling In.



Andy Paul has more than 30 years experience as a sales professional and Vice President of Sales with enterprises ranging from Fortune 1000 companies to technology start-ups. As Founder and Principal of the Sales Action Group he has consulted with numerous CEOs to help them discover the key to consistent sales success.

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