

MARK DONNOLO

THE  
**INNOVATIVE**  
SALE

Unleash Your  
Creativity for Better  
Customer Solutions  
and Extraordinary  
Results

# THE INNOVATIVE SALE

Mark Donnolo

**AMACOM**

**AMERICAN MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**

New York • Atlanta • Brussels • Chicago • Mexico City • San Francisco  
Shanghai • Tokyo • Toronto • Washington, D.C.

Bulk discounts available. For details visit:  
[www.amacombooks.org/go/specialsales](http://www.amacombooks.org/go/specialsales)  
Or contact special sales:  
Phone: 800-250-5308  
E-mail: [specialsls@amanet.org](mailto:specialsls@amanet.org)  
View all the AMACOM titles at: [www.amacombooks.org](http://www.amacombooks.org)  
American Management Association: [www.amanet.org](http://www.amanet.org)

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional service. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

TK

© 2014 Mark Donnolo.  
All rights reserved.  
Printed in the United States of America.

This publication may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of AMACOM, a division of American Management Association, 1601 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.

The scanning, uploading, or distribution of this book via the Internet or any other means without the express permission of the publisher is illegal and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions of this work and do not participate in or encourage piracy of copyrighted materials, electronically or otherwise. Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

#### **About AMA**

American Management Association ([www.amanet.org](http://www.amanet.org)) is a world leader in talent development, advancing the skills of individuals to drive business success. Our mission is to support the goals of individuals and organizations through a complete range of products and services, including classroom and virtual seminars, webcasts, webinars, podcasts, conferences, corporate and government solutions, business books, and research. AMA's approach to improving performance combines experiential learning—learning through doing—with opportunities for ongoing professional growth at every step of one's career journey.

Printing number

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

## CONTENTS

Introduction	v
<b>CHAPTER 1</b> The Sales Innovation Dilemma	1
The Dilemma of Perception	6
The Dilemma of Constraints	12
The Dilemma of Personality	19
How Sales and Innovation Work Together	23
<b>CHAPTER 2</b> The Innovative Sale Principles	27
Principle One: Pattern	31
Principle Two: Variety	38
Principle Three: Unity	43
Principle Four: Contrast	49
Principle Five: Movement	54
Principle Six: Harmony	61
<b>CHAPTER 3</b> What's Your Problem? Laying the Foundation and Gathering Insight	67
The Innovative Sale Process: An Overview	71
Step 1: Define the Challenge and Constraints	85
Step 2: Gather Insight	88
<b>CHAPTER 4</b> Breaking Down Barriers	99
Breaking Down Brainstorming	102
Step 3: Create Initial Approaches	108
Step 4: Destroy False Constraints	110

<b>CHAPTER 5:</b> Where Are All the New Ideas?	119
Step 5: Combine Parallels	122
Step 6: Explore Horizontally	134
<b>CHAPTER 6:</b> The Attraction of Rejection	143
Step 7: Develop Vertically	148
Step 8: Implement and Communicate	156
<b>CHAPTER 7:</b> The Innovative Sale in Practice: Delivering a Better Value Proposition	169
Working Through the Innovative Sale Process	170
<b>CHAPTER 8:</b> The Innovative Sale in Practice: Designing Your Sales Process and Customer Experience	197
Working Through the Innovative Sale Process	198
<b>CHAPTER 9:</b> The Innovative Sale in Practice: Coaching Your Team	219
The Innovative Sale Assessment: Understanding Your Sales Team's Creative Quotient for Sales	222
Putting It into Action	239
<b>CHAPTER 10:</b> What's Your Creative Quotient for Sales?	245
Get Your Creative Quotient for Sales	246
Building Your Innovative Sale Muscles	247
<b>APPENDIX:</b> Your Revenue Roadmap: A Powerful Left-Brained Approach for Connecting the Sales Effectiveness Disciplines	259
Index	267

## INTRODUCTION

# From Art School to MBA

CREATIVITY HAS ALWAYS COME EASILY TO ME. From an early age, I was the kid who could draw just about anything. I took all the art classes I could, starting with Saturday morning instruction from a television cartoonist and later progressing to regular classes at a local art museum, sitting among students who were two to three times my age. So going into a design profession was natural for me. To get there, I had to battle my way through a top art school where the level of talent and intellect initially overwhelmed me. It taught me that, despite any innate abilities we may have, there is much to be learned in order to be competitive.

A few years later, I had worked my way into a highly regarded design firm in New York and later progressed into a design role with one of the top branding agencies in the world. Working there, I crossed over the creative line and learned about how design integrates with marketing and sales to help

companies grow. Fascinated with the intersection of business and design and inspired by my Wall Street stockbroker roommates who had decided to enroll in business school after a few years in the work world, I wanted to learn more. Instead of furthering my design education through a master of fine arts degree, I, too, went to business school to get a master's degree in business administration (MBA). My artsy friends thought I was nuts. My Wall Street friends agreed. At the time, the business schools accepted a few of what they called "dance students" into their rigorous programs to bring some innovative thinking to all the left brainers with engineering, finance, and other business backgrounds. As a hybrid right and left brainer, I got my shot . . . and it worked.

I discovered that the practice of sales demands creativity and innovation. After earning my MBA, I did the straight business thing by playing down my design background. Most companies that recruit newly minted MBAs can't see the relationship between creativity and business. It was safer to play by the left-brained rules. But over the years, working with leading sales organizations around the world, I noticed an interesting pattern in the solutions we were developing in highly competitive sales environments. The work we were doing on sales strategy and sales process design was different than the companies that were making decisions simply by the straight analytics or by copying industry practices. The analytics and industry practices provided a foundation for the next level of creative thinking. We were bringing together the analytics of

sales effectiveness with the creative processes I had learned and honed in the design field. And something new was happening. We were coming up with solutions the teams wouldn't have otherwise found, and we were getting performance results the teams hadn't seen before. We were essentially teaching sales leaders and salespeople to think differently . . . to think as sales innovators. We were unleashing the creativity they had within themselves and applying it in ways that helped them differentiate from the competition.

As sales organizations, we can track leads and dollars sold until our pipelines burst. But the sale happens when we connect to the buyers and offer something they need in a way that our competitors cannot. And often, that sale is ultimately made through thinking that is more difficult to measure. It includes listening, understanding the customer, gaining new insight, getting beyond our standard offer, creating divergent ideas, pushing the customer's thinking, and coming up with an answer that leads the customer ahead rather than simply meeting a requirement. Without creative thinking, salespeople are reduced to the roles of order takers and replicators of the competition. Sales creativity is not an elusive quality. It's not for the few with natural talent—we all have it. It's not only for salespeople working in companies labeled by the business press as innovative. It's not about eureka moments. Sales creativity follows a clear approach to get results.

In *The Innovative Sale*, I share some of these approaches for how you and your team can become sales innovators to



create new ideas you wouldn't have normally conceived and to improve your sales performance. And since predictability and results are keys to sales success, I share a thinking method to develop ideas, not just in moments of inspiration, but through a predictable process that you and your team can rely upon. I've also drawn upon the experiences of a range of innovators from the world of sales to the world of design, and shared a few stories from the front line, to illustrate creativity in action.

The first six chapters of the book explain the Innovative Sale principles and process. Chapters 7 through 9 include a few examples of the Innovative Sale applied to developing a value proposition, improving the sales process, and coaching the sales team. Chapter 10 gives you a glimpse of the Innovative Sale assessment to understand your Creative Quotient for Sales. We also have a comprehensive version of the Innovative Sale assessment that provides a detailed profile and actions for you and your team on six dimensions of sales creativity that you can request at [SalesGlobe.com](http://SalesGlobe.com).

I hope you enjoy the book and put the Innovative Sale approaches into action. As you make them a natural part of your work, they can change the way you think and the way you create sales strategies and customer solutions. I believe you'll find the results very rewarding.

Mark Donnolo