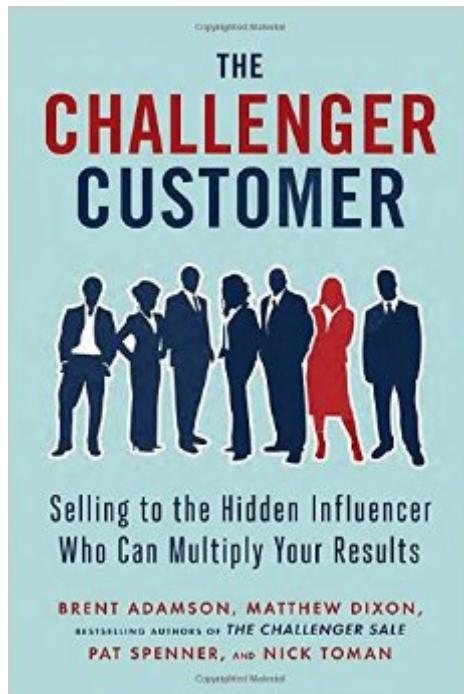


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The Challenger Customer: Selling To The Hidden Influencer Who Can Multiply Your Results



Synopsis

Four years ago, the bestselling authors of *The Challenger Sale* overturned decades of conventional wisdom with a bold new approach to sales. Now their latest research reveals something even more surprising: Being a Challenger seller isn't enough. Your success or failure also depends on who you challenge. Picture your ideal customer: friendly, eager to meet, ready to coach you through the sale and champion your products and services across the organization. It turns out that's the last person you need. Most marketing and sales teams go after low-hanging fruit: buyers who are eager and have clearly articulated needs. That's simply human nature; it's much easier to build a relationship with someone who always makes time for you, engages with your content, and listens attentively. But according to brand-new CEB research "based on data from thousands of B2B marketers, sellers, and buyers around the world" the highest-performing teams focus their time on potential customers who are far more skeptical, far less interested in meeting, and ultimately agnostic as to who wins the deal. How could this be? The authors of *The Challenger Customer* reveal that high-performing B2B teams grasp something that their average-performing peers don't: Now that big, complex deals increasingly require consensus among a wide range of players across the organization, the limiting factor is rarely the salesperson's inability to get an individual stakeholder to agree to a solution. More often it's that the stakeholders inside the company can't even agree with one another about what the problem is. It turns out only a very specific type of customer stakeholder has the credibility, persuasive skill, and will to effectively challenge his or her colleagues to pursue anything more ambitious than the status quo. These customers get deals to the finish line far more often than friendlier stakeholders who seem so receptive at first. In other words, Challenger sellers do best when they target Challenger customers. The *Challenger Customer* unveils research-based tools that will help you distinguish the "Talkers" from the "Mobilizers" in any organization. It also provides a blueprint for finding them, engaging them with disruptive insight, and equipping them to effectively challenge their own organization.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The gist of the book is as follows:
#1 Challenge buyers by showing them their status quo is not good enough and is cutting into profit, wasting effort, and/or increasing risk.
#2 Partner with and enable "Mobilizers" inside the buying organization to drive consensus around the problem, the solution, and vendor selection.

Like The Challenger Seller, I gave this book 5 stars for the quality of the overall insights. Of the two books, this one is better (and is inclusive of the content in its predecessor). Also, like The Challenger Seller, this one suffers from a LOT of redundancy and out of order content - a natural consequence of having too many authors without painstakingly meticulous editing. Unlike The Challenger Seller, the Challenger Customer does a much better job of justifying conclusions & recommendations by providing references to studies with decent sample sizes.

Here is a more detailed summary: Closing a complex deal requires collective consensus from, on average, 5.4 decision makers as they march through the three main stages of the buying cycle: (1) problem definition (2) supplier-independent solution identification (3) supplier selection.

On average, customers are 57 percent of the way through a typical purchase process prior to proactively reaching out to a supplier's sales rep for their direct input on whatever it is that they're doing.

- Successful reps:
 - a. Challenge customers' beliefs with a new and compelling insight to make money, save time, or lower risk. This insight must provide a compelling reason to take action now by explicitly laying out why the customer's current behavior is not a "good enough" • and is costing them time or money in ways they never realized.
 - b.

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