

# Journal of Sales Transformation

IN OUR LARGEST-EVER EDITION: OVER 50 PAGES OF ORIGINAL RESEARCH-BASED CONTENT, INCLUDING: PEOPLE-CENTRIC TRANSFORMATIONS, CROSS-CULTURAL SALES IN CHINA, BOOSTING CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAM PERFORMANCE, RELATIONSHIP-BASED GROUP COACHING, B2B BUYERS' CONSONANCE AND DISSONANCE, THE SCIENCE BEHIND MEMORABLE ONLINE PRESENTATIONS + SALES RESEARCH ROUND-UP

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# On-screen selling

 Dr Roy Whitten

*Exploring the surprising benefits of remote selling by video.*

**C** OVID-19 has suddenly changed the dynamics of selling. Salespeople who normally see prospects and customers in person are scrambling as they explore how to sell remotely. It may be a problem now, but could this be an unforeseen opportunity?

Up until nine years ago, we sold our sales consulting services exclusively in person. But then enquiries began to come in from beyond the UK, from Asia, Africa and North America. Faced with the choice between extensive travel or learning how to sell remotely, we opted for the latter. Now, some 330+ sales transformation projects in 36 countries since then, we sell almost exclusively via video.

Quite frankly, we were surprised to learn that the human process of buying and selling works as well through remote technology as it does in person. We found that the key to making the transition is to keep focused on the customer experience and executing practices that make it warm and connecting.

## Creating connections

The following steps will create solid connections with customers as you to move into remote selling:

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## 1. Go all the way with video.

Most salespeople feel relatively comfortable with using the phone, but they may hesitate using video due to lack of experience. If they only try to sell by phone and email, they will be at a distinct disadvantage without video. That's because studies by Birdwhistell, Mehrabian, Pease & Pease and others indicate that non-verbal signals are more important than the spoken word. These non-verbal cues help your salespeople make immediate adjustments to their efforts and be more responsive to the customer.

It's okay that some clients may choose not to turn on their camera. They may feel uncomfortable using video as well. Regardless of what the customer does, we suggest that you keep your camera on. This will give the customer a chance to observe you, which helps to warm up the call and build trust. Our experience has been that many reluctant customers eventually come around and try video with us, which is always a good sign.

There are many video conference platforms available today. We've tried several over the years, but we're dedicated Zoom users because of its rich features and simplicity. Some customers will insist on using their own system, so be sure to download and access their application of choice well in advance. Be sure to familiarize yourself with how it functions before you get on a call.

## 2. Practice to get confident.

Selling via video is likely a new experience for your people so they may feel less confident in using it. They may talk more to carry the conversation and resort quickly to pitching instead of connecting with good conversation.

We strongly recommend that your salespeople pair up and roleplay various client meetings on video. They should record these practice sessions and then share them with their manager. Reviewing the video with the salesperson will afford the sales manager accurate data upon which developmental feedback can be given, which is an added benefit.

## 3. Use slides sparingly.

Consultative conversation is what makes video work, so minimize the use of slides. When you use slides, be sure to keep things moving by asking for questions or comments. Our practice is to stop sharing the screen, re-establish eye contact and say: "Let me pause here to get your thoughts..." Remember, people don't buy because of fancy slide decks and snappy presentations; they buy because they like and trust the salesperson.

## 4. Think of your customer first.

On video, salespeople need to learn basic production aspects that promote a good customer experience. Here are three key practices that we follow:

- **Sit close to the camera** – Be sure you are sitting close enough to the camera so that your image fills the frame and your head is just above the middle of the screen. This practice conveys a presence and confidence to the customer that feels like you are in the room with them. If more than one person from your team attends a meeting, each person should sign in on their own device, even if it requires them to go to another room.
- **Get the lighting right** – There is nothing worse than looking at a darkened image with bright light in the background. Instead, turn so that your image is lit up either by natural light or by a lamp. Good lighting on your face helps give it life and brings you into the room visually.
- **Minimize or eliminate background noises** – Dogs barking, children screaming, television on in the background, and so on are terribly distracting and annoying. It may happen but do your best to make arrangements so you can avoid these noises. And be sure to use a good headset and learn how to use the mute button.

## Benefits of video

Learning how to sell via video requires some change; however, based on our experience, we think it is well worth the



prize.

First, the time efficiency it affords the sales team is significant: zero travel time and no nights on the road allows for maximum time in front of customers.

Second, it is low cost: all you need is a reasonable Internet connection, a reliable video platform and some practice.

Third, you can visit customers in multiple locations, who are separated by hundreds or even thousands of miles, so you can increase your reach as a business.

If ever there were a time to give it a go, now would be the time. Just as we did, you may find it to be the best thing that has happened to your business in a long while.

**Covid-19 Guide:** To support sales leaders and their teams through the COVID-19 crisis, Whitten & Roy Partnership has also launched a new free guide and an accompanying online workshop series. More details are available here: [www.wrpartnership.com/booklet](http://www.wrpartnership.com/booklet)



### About the author

W Roy Whitten PhD is the co-founder of Whitten & Roy Partnership, an international sales consultancy that helps leading businesses and organizations transform their sales results. He is an expert in attitude and its role in human performance and sales management. In 2004, he earned a PhD for his work in transformative learning and change. In over 40 years as a trainer, consultant and coach, he has personally coached and trained over 100,000 people.

## Snapshot 2



### COVID WINNERS – CONSUMER

CONSUMERS ARE ADOPTING NEW BEHAVIOURS, BRANDS AND CHANNELS THAT ARE LIKELY TO STICK AFTER LOCKDOWN.

#### ONLINE AND VIRTUAL SERVICES:

McKinsey reports seeing an **UPTICK IN FIRST-TIME DIGITAL USERS** and in established customers' usage across several categories, such as **ENTERTAINMENT STREAMING, E-SPORTS, RESTAURANT AND GROCERY DELIVERY, ONLINE EDUCATION, and ONLINE FITNESS.**

Source: <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/leading-with-purpose-how-marketing-and-sales-leaders-can-shape-the-next-normal>

Demand for commercial **VIRTUAL PRIVATE NETWORKS** in the **US** jumped by 41% between 13 March and 23 March, and 35% in the **UK** since 17 March. Privacy and security are the main reasons for VPN use, especially with more people working from home. **BRAZIL** has seen the biggest jump in demand at **121%**, followed by France (80%) and Germany (71%).

Source: LearnBonds: <https://learnbonds.com/news/vpn-demand-in-the-us-jumps-more-than-40-amid-coronavirus-outbreak/>

**HOME ENTERTAINMENT** – of all countries surveyed by McKinsey only consumers in **BRAZIL** anticipated a **DOWNTURN** in spending: down by up to **15%**. In contrast, India consumers anticipated extra spending of up to 15%. while in **KOREA** consumer spending was expected to rise by up to **50%**. Meanwhile demand for **STREAMING VPN** jumped **85% GLOBALLY, UP 90%** for **NETFLIX, 154%** for **DISNEY+, 86%** for **HBO, 38%** for **AMAZON PRIME VIDEO, and 21%** for **HULU**; by contrast VPN demand for **BBC IPLAYER WAS DOWN 2%.**

Sources: McKinsey & Company COVID-19 Consumer Pulse surveys, data collected 15 March to 19 April. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/a-global-view-of-how-consumer-behavior-is-changing-amid-covid-19>; <https://learnbonds.com/news/vpn-demand-in-the-us-jumps-more-than-40-amid-coronavirus-outbreak/>

#### AT HOME DELIVERIES:

McKinsey reports that **CONSUMERS ACROSS THE BOARD** anticipate maintaining spending on groceries over the following two weeks with **SIGNIFICANT INCREASES** of **15-30%** in **BRAZIL, INDIA, JAPAN** and the **US** (data collected 15 March to 19 April).

Source: McKinsey & Company COVID-19 Consumer Pulse surveys, data collected 15 March to 19 April. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/a-global-view-of-how-consumer-behavior-is-changing-amid-covid-19>