



“Life begets life. Energy creates energy. It is by spending oneself that one becomes rich.” Sarah Bernhardt

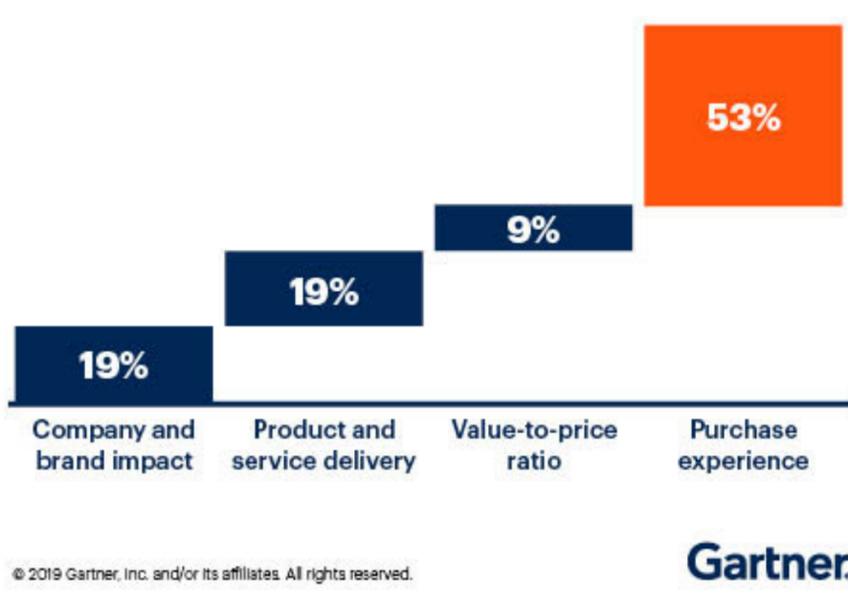


How do you like being sold to?

In a week of US Presidential debates, where [the two candidates are supposed to be ‘selling’ their future vision](#) to their electors, I’ve been reflecting on what makes me want to buy something. I recently signed onto the NBN with an ‘upstart’ company, [Aussie Broadband](#). After an entire lifetime with iiNet (since the [dawn of the internet](#) in 1993, I’d been with them or their predecessors) I was sick of the difficulty of getting help and, when I did, it was a person overseas with poor English, after a long wait. Aussie Broadband, by contrast, understand that customers prize a short wait, a local person to speak to, who’s empowered to solve problems, and follow up (in person) if the issue requires more than a single call.

This isn’t an ad for Aussie Broadband, but rather a comment on what makes us buy anything. Recent research by [Gartner](#) tells us, counter-intuitively, that we are not as price-sensitive as many salespeople believe. Most B2C and B2B relies on repeat — and referral — business (that’s how I knew about Aussie Broadband) and loyalty can be quantified. It turns out it’s the purchase experience that keeps us coming back. I can vouch for this during lockdown where [Cutler and Co](#), a local fine-dining restaurant has been offering [take-out meals](#), and with every 3 - 4 meals, we find a little gift inserted (a piece of cheese, a nice bottle of something).

Key drivers of customer loyalty



Also, on selling, a consulting colleague introduced me this week to a concept I hadn’t come across before, [“challenger selling”](#). Challenger sales people are different from “relationship builders” (who sell by getting to know you) or “problem solvers” (who rely on detailed response to issues) or “hard workers” (who stay in touch, and go above and beyond). Challengers are those who offer a different view of the world, who understand the customer’s business sufficiently that they love to debate, and they push the customer to see new things. And, more than half of all high performers in complex B2B sales are challengers.

Now, why would this be? It’s back to the purchase experience: we want to feel understood, and we like salespeople whom we believe have our interests at heart, and can show us how their success is linked to our own.

Question: How well do you understand what your customers define as success?

Moving while seated

True innovation often arises when someone successfully combines polar opposites. [W L Gore invented ‘Goretex’](#), a fabric that is both breathable and waterproof. “Eating out” in Melbourne over the coming post-lockdown summer is literally going to be that: [street eating will be the norm](#), instead of eating in beautiful (but crowded) dining rooms. And, take a look at this: [seating designed for children](#) that encourages movement, not actual sitting.



These are school chairs with multiple positions that encourage the children to regularly change their postures throughout the day in a bid to increase their "muscular diversity" as well as their concentration levels. I’d love to see these succeed wildly!

Question: What paradoxical elements could you combine to differentiate a service or product?

Iterative momentum

I’m working on several projects at the moment where, quite honestly, we don’t know the outcome at the outset of the project.

These are strategy projects where the brief is something like this: “Andrew, help us conceptualise a post-COVID future for our organisation that takes into account our new realities, many of which we can’t even predict”. I nearly always start such projects by formulating assumptions about the environment, and from that, using creative processes to come up with customer-centric, or business-centric, improvements, or even breakthrough ideas.

One of my clients, last week, said, “Andrew, I’m really happy with the iterative momentum we’re building, even though I don’t know exactly where we’ll end up”. I like the phrase, because it sums up how groups of people evolve their thinking in uncertain times. We move through three stages, I’ve noticed:

1. We resolve to do things differently, and formulate objectives accordingly.
2. We experience confusion during the process of addressing several lines of inquiry, some of which yield inconclusive, or unsatisfactory answers.
3. We also find one or more ‘lightning bolts’ of clarity, around which a combination of subsequent analysis and insight yields a testable forward direction.

In each stage, the energy, or momentum, feels different. Stage 1 is energised and dynamic, with a layer of anxiety. Stage 2 is frustration and uncertainty, with some ‘typical’ defence mechanisms playing out: blame, denial, justification being common. But, in Stage 3, the fog lifts, new energy is found, and the ‘lightning bolt’ galvanises enthusiasm and commitment.

Question: How tolerant are you of confusion before clarity is reached?

As always, please send me your feedback by email to ww@workwell.com.au. What topics or questions would you like me to write about in the future? Let me know!

Have a wonderful weekend, all.

Andrew



[Unsubscribe](#)