

Tapping new sales potential with the solution selling philosophy

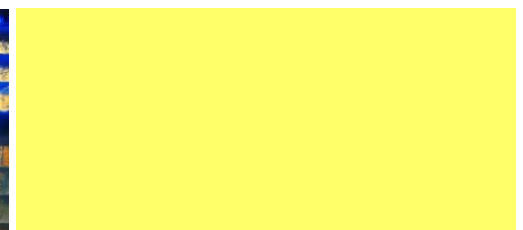
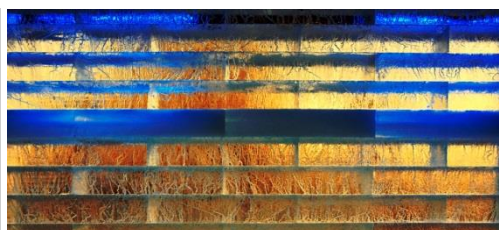
BENEFIT SolutionChamp®

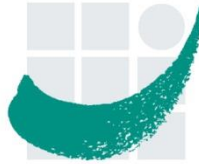
Sales organizations today suffer from the fact that they are reaching their limits with classical product selling through ,features/functions/benefits' and that they are rarely able to achieve their ambitious sales targets.

With the BENEFIT SolutionChamp methodology, BENEFIT conveys to its customers the philosophy and principles of solution selling focused on customer benefits and builds up the necessary knowledge step by step. Thus, the sales organization of the customer is enabled to perform the important task of proactive demand generation in addition to the traditional and more reactive demand fulfillment.

The BENEFIT customers enjoy the following advantages:

- Holistic approach with modular structure; the individual modules can be selected and combined according to customer needs
- Extension of the conventional product selling approach to the specialist level by means of solution selling at management level that permits differentiation and generates added value
- Transfer of the necessary knowledge for business case'-based discussions with decision makers as well as competence in sales-effective communication that is consciously geared towards the personality type.





FROM ‚ME TOO‘ PRODUCT SELLING TO PROFITABLE SOLUTION SELLING

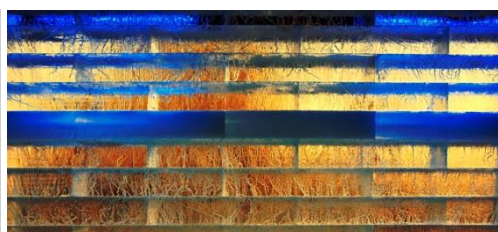
Today, mature customers increasingly evaluate and buy products and technologies without seeking extensive advice from local suppliers. This has been made possible by the high degree of standardization of components/products/technologies and simplified purchasing- and procurement processes. Suppliers find it difficult to convincingly demonstrate the uniqueness of their offer and the added value for the local organization, which results in a price- and margin erosion.

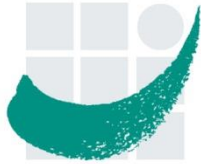
A proven approach to get out of this constantly accelerating downward spiral is the deliberate division of the sales potential into the two common schemes:

1. Demand fulfillment by means of the traditional sale of products/technologies, for which the customer's procurement process has usually already provided the specifications and the financial resources and is now just looking for the best offer. This sales behavior has a strongly reactive or serving character.
2. Demand generation by the supplier with customer contacts who are striving to permanently improve the services provided to their own customers. Such a proactive behavior that is focused on added value requires entrepreneurial and innovative thinking as well as early stimulation, consulting and coaching of customer contacts that are generally – at least initially - outside the procuring customer organization.

Experience shows that sales organizations primarily try to optimize the traditional demand fulfillment and only start dealing with the ‚consultative value selling‘ (CVS) stipulated in the second schema in case of need.

BENEFit supports its customers in expanding the traditional sales model towards this sales philosophy which is commonly known as ‚Solution Selling‘. The ‚BENEFit SolutionChamp Service Modules‘ that have been specifically defined for such a change project, are aimed at gradually making the BENEFit customers familiar with the requirements, the principles as well as the necessary processes, tools and forms of organization and at enabling the change towards higher contribution margins.





1 – THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOLUTION SELLING: FROM THE IDEA TO THE CONCEPT

The establishment of an additional sales philosophy such as ‚Solution Selling‘ first requires an analysis of the current sales forms, sales models and processes as well as the comparison with the future requirements (market, corporate objectives, portfolio development). The assessment of the consulting- and sales skills are of particular importance. BENEfit typically analyzes the situation of the customer based on the following questions:

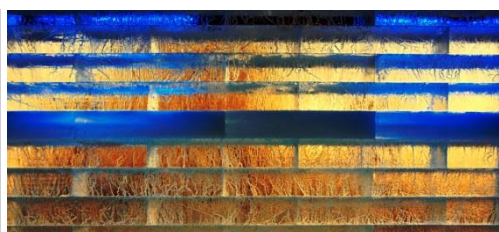
- How did the markets, the customer structure and the competitors change in the past years?

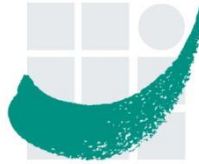
- What is the need for action with regard to the optimization of the current sales approach?
- To what extent is the sales philosophy ‚Solution Selling‘ a result-improving supplement?
- How good is the knowledge of the consultants and salespeople to cover the current and future sales model requirements?
- How good are the chances of adapting the usually rigid behavior patterns in consulting and sale to the requirements of solution selling?

For the necessary investigations the BENEfit consultants partly fall back on defined assessment techniques and modules (see service description ‚BENEfit Sales Effectiveness Check-ups®).



The project team of the customer will be involved both in the situation analysis as well as in the development of TARGET scenarios. Subsequently, BENEfit will develop a customer-specific concept as well as a project plan for the implementation of the proposed changes. Experience shows that this effort requires between 3 and 5 service days.





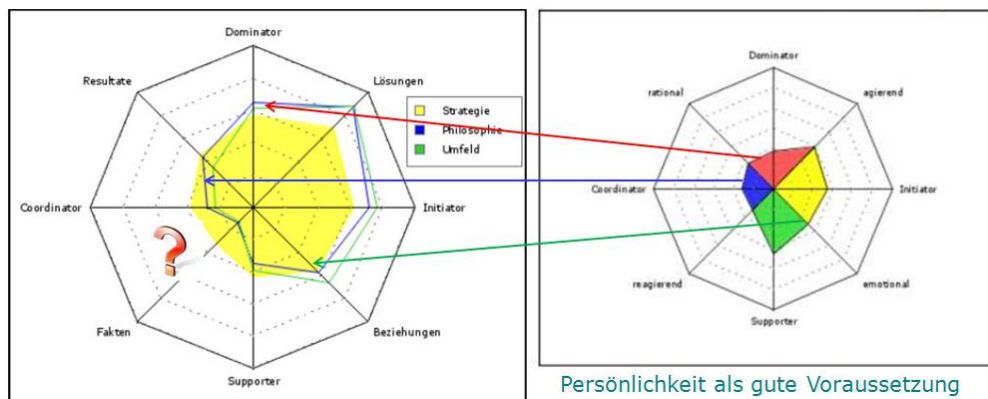
2 – BUILDING UP AN UNDERSTANDING FOR 'CONSULTATIVE VALUE SELLING'

In the interest of transparency and with the aim of informing the employees and raising their awareness with regard to the new or supplementary sales approach 'Solution Selling', a one-day seminar focused on the following topics will be held for the consultants and salespeople:

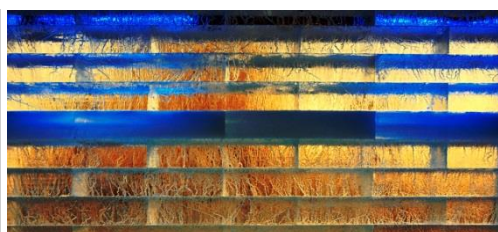
- Results and findings (specifically the need for action) from the situation analysis
- Objectives of the change project
- Philosophy and principles of 'consultative value selling'

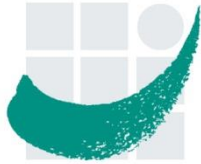
- Comparison of the models 'Product Selling' and 'Solution Selling', in particular the different requirements concerning the required knowledge and behavior
- Presentation of the assessment regarding the preferred consulting- or sales attitude
- Interactive interpretation of the individual assessment results and derivation of the personal need for change
- Initiation of one's own target-positioning and the personal competence development

Example: To what extent do the personal values correspond with the required sales style?



It makes a lot of sense for sales managers to play an active role as co-moderators and to thus demonstrate the required 'Sales Leadership'. In order to be able to ensure the individual support of the seminar participants, the number of participants shall be limited to 12 (this applies to all BENEFIT training courses).





3 – ENABLING CONSULTANTS AND SALESPEOPLE WITH REGARD TO BUSINESS DISCUSSIONS

Consultative value selling requires solid business management know-how in order to be able to explain the business benefits of one's own offer in accordance with the customer situation. Unfortunately, practice shows that most consultants and salespeople are ill-equipped for this and even account and sales managers find it difficult.

To eliminate these uncertainties and deficits, BENEFIT has designed a training module which brings about the transfer of the necessary knowledge for the assessment of a customer situation. The material is not taught by means of traditional dry classroom teaching, but in the form of (e.g. industry-specific) business games. On the basis of board games over several rounds, the participants learn how changes in the market have an impact on the key performance indicators and what the consequences are for the income statement and the balance sheet. Quite incidentally, the most important business terms are explained and clarified by means of concrete examples.

The seminar participants become familiar with the economic relationships of innovations and investments in a playful way. This will enable them to better emphasize with the mindset of decision makers, which in turn ideally prepares them for conversations at unfamiliar levels, such as division management or company management.

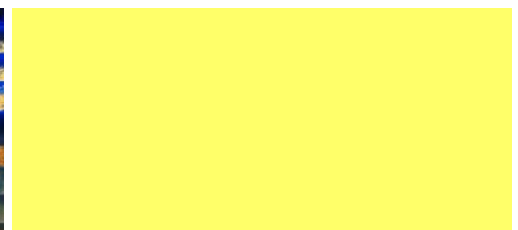
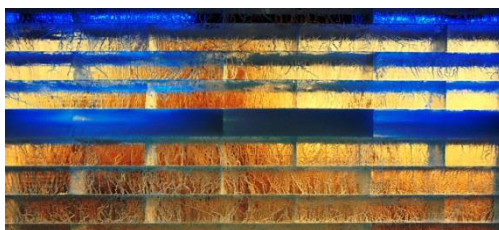


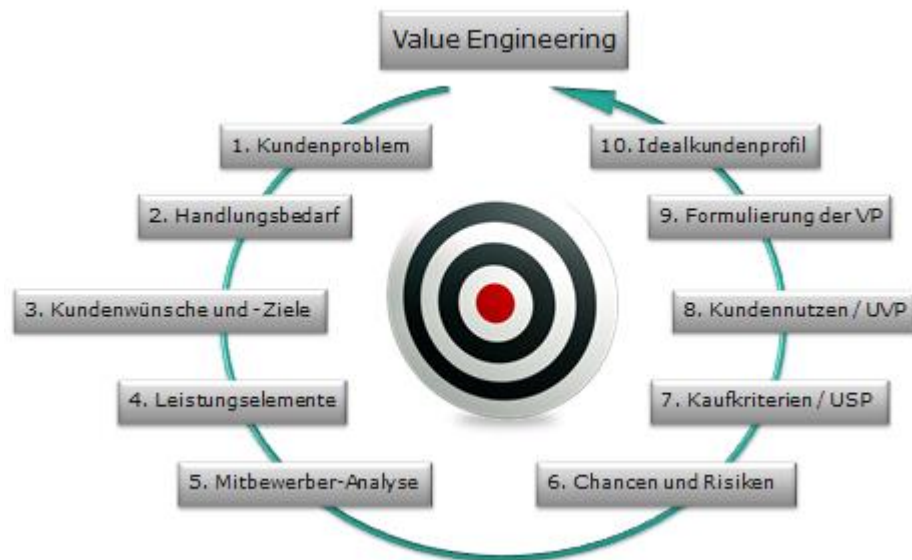
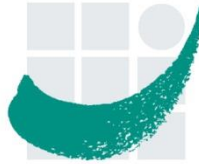
4 – PREPARING DIFFERENTIATING ‚DOOR-OPENER PROPOSALS‘ WITH ADDED VALUE

Solution selling in terms of ‚consultative value selling‘ places considerably higher demands on the target-customer-specific preparation of the sales material. The needs of the extended circle of contacts at the target customer have to be specially prepared with regard to the typical need for action and the expected business benefits.

The customer focus must be extended from ‚WHAT kind of products he may require‘ to ‚HOW can he make his business more successful‘.

For this important analytical and conceptual work, BENEFIT has designed a ‚Value Engineering Workshop‘ during which experts of the BENEFIT customers contribute their knowledge according to the BENEFIT 10-point structure and document it for the dissemination of knowledge. The topics to be covered include:





The workshop result ensures that the relevant content for the definition of an acquisition- and sales effective door-opener proposal is available, which enables the targeted training of suitable consultants and salespeople with regard to ‚HOW to sell‘ and substantially facilitates the addressing of target customer contacts.

5 – DESCRIBING SUCCESSES AND REFERENCES WITH TANGIBLE CUSTOMER BENEFITS

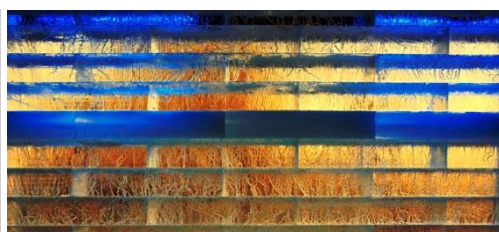
Documented proofs of success are very important during the acquisition phase. A description of successful projects („Reference Story“) without concrete benefit statements of customer employees or managers is usually interpreted as propaganda material by the target customer contacts. Accordingly, the description of measurable progress and quantified benefit is of great importance. Meeting this demand requires a clear reference-article concept and a process that involves the customer and/or salesperson in the development of a progress report already before the project starts. BENEFit teaches its

customers the necessary principles, approaches and checklists for the development of convincing reference reports.

On request, our specialized copywriter supports the customer’s marketing department in the design and formulation.

6 – ARGUING AND SELLING IN A RELEVANT CUSTOMER-TYPE-SPECIFIC MANNER

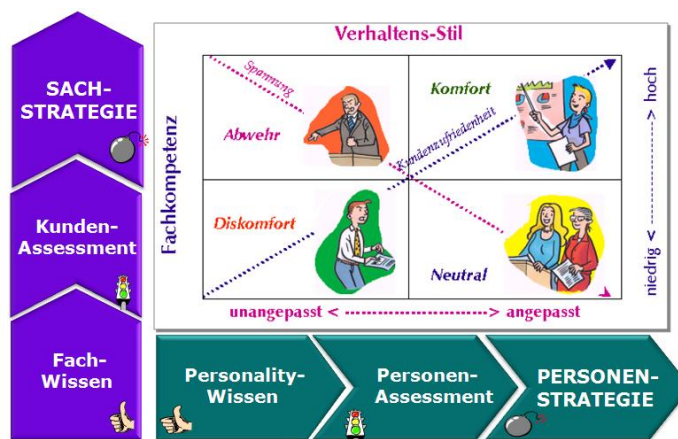
In order to achieve a sales effect, consultants and salespeople must be able to correctly position their business idea or offer with the different customer contacts and to address their motives for action in such a way that both the job goals as well as the personal values are optimally addressed:





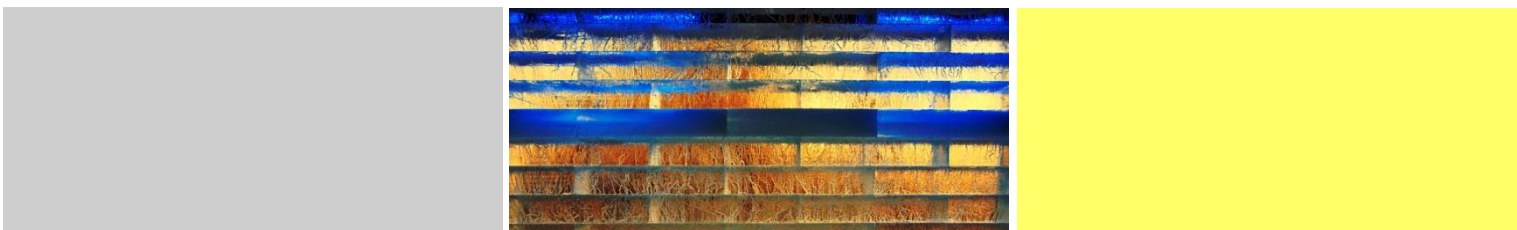
Job Level	Subject Matter	Measurement Criteria	Values	Perspective
Board of Directors, Management	Results, business benefits	Different depending on the personality type		Broad
Executive	Processes, system			Medium
Specialist	Functionality, advantages			Narrow
Argumentation	WHAT	WHY	HOW	

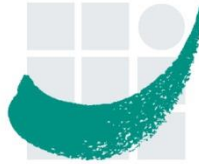
Everyday life shows that consulting and sales conversations are usually insufficiently prepared, are conducted from a personal perspective and are only focused on the subject matter. The level of argumentation primarily covers just the WHAT, the salesperson improvises when it comes to the WHY and HOW, instead of asking specific questions and communicating purposefully.



In the BENEFIT seminar 'Value selling by personality' the participants are taught how their own personality values and professional experience influence their thinking and action. The result is that they primarily argue from their own perspective instead of addressing the factual and measurement-criteria-relevant need for action of the customer contact.

The imparted knowledge as well as the role plays helps the seminar participants to systematically prepare for the conversation and to prevent, or at least substantially reduce, incomprehension and resistance on the part of the customer contact.





7 – ADDRESSING DECISION-MAKERS IN A CONVINCING MANNER AND BRINGING ABOUT AN INITIAL APPOINTMENT

The biggest hurdle in the acquisition of new customers or new areas at a major existing customer is the convincing approach and form of communication. While one type of salesperson picks up the phone spontaneously and somehow tries to convince the customer contact (trial and error), the other type of salesperson seeks refuge in the more fear-based written forms of communication. The fact that there is another way is a central topic of the two different BENEfit one-day seminars ‚convincing approach to decision-makers‘.

1. Ideally based on the modules 3 to 5 described above, the seminar participants are enabled to identify the main motives (need for action) of the respective target customer and to prepare them for a convincing communication. The seminar participants develop both an individual brief as well as a script for the targeted cold call.

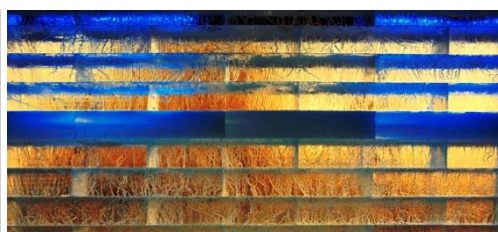
In the follow-up seminar the participants learn which typical resistance they have to reckon with when addressing the target person and how they can overcome such resistance. The participants run through these calls in small groups using different scenarios. The calls are assessed by the participant and by the small group according to a catalog of criteria, before the findings are exchanged in terms of possible improvements. On request, the phone calls are recorded in audio and video format and made available to the seminar participants.

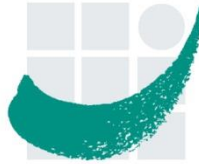
By using an address-approach based on customer motives with added value for the target person, the seminar participants benefit from substantially improved self-confidence in their acquisition activity and from a rising success rate in the acquisition of an initial appointment.

8 – SYSTEMATICALLY CREATING SALES OPPORTUNITIES

How often do consulting and sales talks end in non-binding statements with regard to the further procedure. This is usually due to insufficient preparation, unclear objectives and lack of knowledge with regard to the systematic determination and prioritization of requirements.

Within the scope of a one-day training course, BENEfit teaches the participants a very sales-effective questioning technique, ideally coupled with customer-specific content such as from the so-called ‚Value Engineering‘ (module 3 described above - ‚Door-opener proposals‘).





In compliance with the BENEFIT methodology, the conversation proceeds according to a result-oriented but flexibly applicable guideline based on questions that have been well-prepared beforehand for the determination and prioritization of requirements.



Especially noteworthy is the endeavor to actively involve the customer in the process of finding a solution after having agreed on a need for action or on procurement needs ('definition of the desired objective'), to encourage him in his willingness to take action via benefit questions and then to define the further procedure in such a way that it results in the definition of a joint project in which the customer contact (ideally the decision-maker) commits his organization to collaborate actively in a goal-oriented manner.

9 – ACHIEVING THE STRIVEN FOR ROI FASTER WITH TRANSFER COACHING

The approaches outlined above for the establishment of a sales philosophy that is geared towards solution selling clarify that – depending on the situation of the BENEFIT customer – required knowledge must be built up over several modules and supported by the methods of the so-called 'Change Management'.

It is very important to promote the use of the individual modules and to monitor progress.

Therefore, sufficient time should be scheduled between the individual modules and supporting transfer coaching should be budgeted for; depending on experience, aptitude and inclination, sales managers of the BENEFIT customers can perform this task themselves. On request, BENEFIT will specifically prepare the chosen sales coaches for this role by means of dedicated workshops.

Conscious and systematic transfer coaching ensures that the newly learned techniques are not forgotten in hectic everyday life. Furthermore, the consultants and salespeople can be motivated to gradually incorporate the new approaches into their working methods and behavior patterns.