**[Status Quo: How to help the Buyer change?](http://insightdemand.com/poor-sales-growth/status-quo-how-to-help-the-buyer-change/" \o "Permanent Link: Status Quo: How to help the Buyer change?)**

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**Status Quo:** With 150 e-mails a day, 30 voice-mails and 60-80-hour work weeks thanks to Corporate Re-Organizations, Buyers are so busy today that in order to survive they have learned that they can’t do it all. Unfortunately, Buyers now often stick with the status quo- even when it hurts the company.  
**Wrong Approach:** Product Pitches, Value Propositions and Logical Arguments do not convince a Buyer in denial to change. In fact, the Buyer needs you to be wrong to protect the status quo and survive.  
Even if the Seller makes a brilliant logical case for their offering, the Buyer’s counter arguments to protect the status quo will always win because the final judge is in the head of the Buyer. Most important, the problem the Seller is trying to help the Buyer overcome isn’t a logical problem, it’s an identity problem. So, using logic is like throwing a drowning man a fire extinguisher, it doesn’t work because the Seller is using the wrong tool.  
So what does work?

**Right Approach:** Provide your Salesperson with the right message delivered through mini-stories to help the Buyer discover that the status quo is no longer acceptable. These stories work because they present a scenario that allows Buyers to develop awareness through their own sense of discovery. Buyers trust this discovery because they made it and they begin to trust the Story Seller for telling it. When the Buyer can picture the issues in the real world scenario, it helps them see how the results may apply to them and they start to make sense- they gain insight. Stories transport the Buyer from the role of critic into the role of participant.  
In short, Stories allow the Buyer to take your offering for a virtual mental test drive: Could you ask for more?  
**Value Map:** Stories are easy to tell but they need to be short, simple and insightful to sell.

Stories need to be short and simple so that the Buyer has time to tell their story, and insightful, so that the Buyer discovers that they want to change.

**Story Example: Head of Engineering Top Drive**

**Goal is Efficiency. Constraint is Wasted Power. Capability is “Less is More”**

David, the head of Engineering of a Top Drive manufacturing client of ours, was frustrated that the duty cycle of the critical path was being compromised because Purchasing was requiring his department to work with too many vendors. Sure purchasing had to try to get the best deal yet this was the critical path! It also represented only 10% of the total spend of $500k. So, a 10% reduction in price was worth only a 1% reduction in overall spend or just $5k savings. Was $5k worth potentially compromising the critical path?

David didn’t think so. Having so many suppliers using different quality testing criteria that were not designed to work together must surely create a sub-optimal duty cycle. It seemed logical to Dave that it could result in pressure drops and power wastage. Dave figured that he could save 10% in power by working with only one quality supplier. And 10% was a lot of money. $72k he figured based on total power costs pa of circa $720k. So all the client needed to do was spend 1% more on the purchase price or $5k to save $72k. Even Dave could sell that and he hated the thought of selling.

Dave also wasn’t convinced that going with one supplier would result in paying more to get the same quality. He wanted to check if volume discounts could net the same price or lower. Yet that was a battle with Purchasing he didn’t have time to pursue.

That’s why Dave was glad to explore this opportunity with XYZ Corp. We went to Purchasing and through volume discounts were able to get a similar price. More important, Dave concluded that by having one integrated quality supplier provide a total critical path solution, his customers could be able to reduce power by 12-14%. The VP of Sales was over the moon as he had something tangible to differentiate their offering.

Phrase that Pays: Dave concluded that less is more. Less suppliers equals more power.

**Leading Question: But that’s Dave story, what’s yours?**

Quant Question: Is it possible that having different vendors for critical path is adversely affecting the optimal duty cycle and thereby creates pressure drops and power leakage? By potentially how much?

The challenge is that for the stories to be insightful, they need to be relevant to the Buyer. Creating the relevant messaging is the heart of moving the Buyer off of the status quo. Help your team create a Value Map so that the Salesperson is better able to help the Buyer see the problems and costs to their operations in the absence of having the Seller’s capabilities (cost of status quo) and then how the Seller’s capabilities could help the Buyer solve their problems and achieve their goals (benefits of change). When necessary, the Seller follows up on the Buyers story with a few simple quantification questions so that the Buyer may cost justify their decision to change.

This is nothing new, just look at the Bible, it’s all about stories. Stories are how we make sense of the world. We know how to tell stories; we just have to make sure we tell the right ones.

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