



BUSINESS-FIRST MINDSET

For B2B Solution Providers

Part 2

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B2B Selling - Know Your Customer!

When it comes to selling to the retail industry, knowing your product inside and out is essential. But if that's all you're relying on, you might be missing the bigger picture. Retail decision-makers want salespeople who understand not just their products but also the ins and outs of the retail business itself. Without this understanding, sales conversations can become frustrating and ineffective for everyone involved. Let's dive into why adopting a business-first mindset is crucial for success in B2B retail sales.

Understanding the Retail Business

Retail isn't just about keeping a well-stocked store and ringing sales. It's a highly dynamic industry where consumer behavior, market trends, and technological innovations can change the game overnight. As a B2B salesperson, it's easy to get caught up in the features and benefits of your product. However, if you don't understand how these elements fit into the retailer's business landscape, your pitch might fall flat.

Take, for example, a technology solution designed to reduce theft and fraud. You might know all about how your product can mitigate transactional fraud and identify internal theft, but if you don't grasp how theft and fraud impact the retailer's bottom line, customer trust, and store operations, you're missing the context that matters to retailers. Decision-makers need to see how your solution fits into their bigger picture and how it addresses specific challenges they face.

Recognizing Retailer Pain Points

Every retailer has unique challenges, whether it's tackling theft, enhancing customer experiences, or juggling the demands of an omnichannel environment. If you don't understand these specific pain points, you might find yourself offering solutions that feel generic and out of touch.

Imagine you're selling a security system to a retailer focused on reducing loss. If you don't know whether the losses are due to theft, operational errors, or supply chain issues, you might propose a one-size-fits-all solution that doesn't resonate. Retail decision-makers appreciate salespeople who understand their specific struggles and can offer tailored solutions that truly address their needs.

Understanding Company Culture

Retailers aren't just focused on today; they're thinking about tomorrow too. They're setting goals to expand their market share, enhance brand loyalty, and reduce customer friction. To connect with retailers, you not only need to align your product with their short/long-term strategies but also fit into the internal culture of the company.

A product that aligns well with the culture can unlock side benefits that may not be immediately apparent but can be incredibly valuable. For example, introducing a visual security provider isn't just about preventing theft; it can also create a safe and friendly shopping environment. This positively impacts customer perception, leading to improved customer sentiment and increased loyalty. Customers feel more at ease when they know they're shopping in a safe environment, which can enhance their overall experience.

Additionally, such a product can lead to improved employee engagement and satisfaction. Employees are more likely to thrive in an environment where they feel secure and supported. A security solution that integrates seamlessly into the workplace culture can reduce workload and increase efficiency, allowing staff to focus on delivering excellent service instead of worrying about potential threats.

Moreover, there might be benefits to other areas of the company infrastructure that weren't initially realized. For instance, a security provider could also aid in streamlining customer service operations or managing inventory more effectively, providing a more holistic benefit to the company.

Side Benefits to Consider

- **Customer Service Benefits:** Improved perception of safety can lead to better customer interactions and increased sales.
- **Employee Engagement:** Employees working in a secure and positive environment are more likely to be engaged and productive.
- **Operational Efficiency:** A strong visual security presence upon customer entry, leading to workload reduction and improved efficiency just by answering questions and wayfinding.
- **Positive Branding:** A company known for providing a safe and welcoming environment can enhance its brand reputation and attract more customers.

For a company that provides security protection, selling the vision of creating a safe and welcoming environment is much more appealing than one that merely emphasizes a stern, intimidating presence. It's about transforming security from a necessary deterrent into a positive force that supports the company's broader goals.

The Decision-Maker's Frustration

Let's face it: when a B2B salesperson doesn't understand the retail business, it can be frustrating for decision-makers. They expect B2B sales professionals to be a trusted partner, speak their language, grasp their challenges, and offer solutions that make sense in their complex world.

When a B2B salesperson can't align their product with the retailer's needs, strategies, and culture, it can come across as disconnected. This not only stalls the sales process but can also damage the overall B2B company's

credibility. Retail executives want trusted partners who offer insights and solutions that truly drive success. If they can't meet these expectations, decision-makers might look elsewhere for those who can get the job done with the least amount of friction.

Final Thoughts

Selling to retail is about more than just showcasing a product. It requires a business-first mindset that includes understanding the retail industry, recognizing pain points, aligning with strategies, and fitting into the retailer's culture. B2B salespeople who adopt this approach can create meaningful connections, build trust, and ultimately close more deals.

By prioritizing the retailer's needs and showing how their product fits into the bigger picture, salespeople can transform from being just solution providers to becoming trusted and valued partners. In the competitive world of retail, this mindset isn't just an advantage—it's an absolute necessity for success.