

Best sales practices: Build lasting relationships

Sales operations have plenty of challenges before them today, but the main focus of sales managers is developing relationships with customers that go beyond selling them a single product. It's a customer-centric, rather than company-centric, approach that's gaining adherents

By [Pam Baker](#) 27 Jan 2009

Perhaps the new slogan in this merciless economic downturn should be "All Hail the Salesman." For it is the salesman that brings home the bacon upon which all other jobs will feed. It is key, then, to see to it that salespeople are equipped with the very best technologies and that they are supported without restraint. It is also crucial that salespeople adopt and use these tools to their full advantage lest they go all "Willie Loma" on us and wallow in a rant against the times rather than embrace the urgent call "to shape an uncertain destiny" issued by President Obama and trumpeted by company execs everywhere.

The best practices in CRM these days are crafted as a means of sheer survival; they are proactive rather than defensive. Begin with the understanding that sales is not a loner's game, nor a one-way street.

"You have to be proactive and structured about how you engage with your customers," Brad Wilson, general manager of Microsoft Dynamics CRM, told CRM Buyer. "The pool of people considering purchases is dwindling, so you have to make smart decisions about how you connect with them."

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