How To **COMPETE** Against The Big Boys And **WIN**
Here’s a really interesting question that was sent by email to me a couple of weeks ago:

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Hi Sean

Hope you can help me!

We are a minority supplier (about 5% in the UK) in a market dominated by two global suppliers who have a combined market share of about 70%. Today’s modern buyer moans and groans about our competitor’s power, attitude and domination of the market. They also complement us on attitude, product range and even sometimes price. However, Sean, despite all this they won’t move OR if they do they always go back as there seems to be a comfort with size and scale and working with the industry “big boys”.

What are we doing wrong or how can we create the confidence with our customers and prospects that they can be safe with us?

Look forward to your ideas.

C

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

The Comfortable Old Shoe
This is a great question and a very astute observation. You are absolutely correct in your assessment that many buyers, even in the face of all reason, sometimes stay with the ol’ big boys or go back to them.

It’s as though they get used to the old comfortable shoe and fear change. There are a few steps you can take that will help you make more inroads into this obstacle and increase your overall market share.

The following four sections need to be a part of your entire sales process and continually stressed throughout the life of the relationship. Take these issues, this way of thinking, this philosophy and make them the primary points during your prospecting stages: during the sales interaction, presentation and proposal stages and most importantly, after the sale in customer service and retention. Make these issues part of your entire plan and you will help more modern buyers step out of the old comfortable shoe for a new MORE comfortable shoe!

How To Help Buyers Change Their Shoes:

1. Remember that it is emotion that creates action, not logic
2. Keep Selling! Even after the sale
3. Build the value of your people and processes
4. Stress the value of the customer to YOU vs. their value to Them

These explanations can get a bit lengthy, so I am going to put them into four separate sections, beginning with:
The Comfortable Old Shoe

#1 – Emotion over Logic
Remember that it is emotion that creates action, not logic

You want to keep in mind that people make decisions based primarily on emotion and back up those decisions or justify them with logic, although it seems the reverse. People make buying decisions; that is, take an action to make a purchase or change suppliers or even to remain with a vendor, due to how they FEEL and not how they THINK. Hence the problem you raised: Even though you may have better prices, more value and everything else, they may stay or go back to the BIG Corp only because it FEELS better.

Your sales model needs to use and invoke enough emotion to get people to take action, yet have enough logic to keep the decision sold. If you use too much emotion and not enough logic, you get impulsive decisions that later rescind. Or when someone sneezes, the customer runs back to the old comfort zone.

On the other hand, if you use too much logic and not enough emotion, you educate a lot of customers who still stay in their comfort zone.

So how do you push the emotion and seal it with logic? Concentrate more on the PROBLEMS.

As you know, to sell anything, any solution, you must first have problem. Hence the ABC’s of selling anything are that you must:

A. Uncover a problem, which exposes the need
B. Present the solution to the problem, which satisfies the need
C. Give the prospect an additional motivation to act now

Uncovering problems and exposing the need is the emotional portion and you want to concentrate more on this throughout the life of your sales cycle. In other words, do not sell benefits; sell problems that expose need and that invokes emotion.

Now stay with me here. I have not forgotten about the issue of the big company and you will see how and why this is important.

Remember also that the fear of loss is far more powerful an emotion than the desire for gain. If you come and tell me that if I get your Widgets that I will save a few pounds or I will make some extra money, that’s great.

However, if you tell me that without your Widgets that right now I will lose money that I already have; that’s another story. I may not act today to gain a few extra quid, but I will go to great lengths not to lose what I already have.

Take the benefits, then turn them around and sell the problems.
Let me give you an example:

Let’s take a sales person who sells the latest and greatest video conferencing systems. The product and service provides some huge benefits and the sales person sells the benefits:

“Mr. Modern Buyer, with our new X5000 VidCon unit, all of your staff will be able to meet just as if they are right in the same room, although they are in five different locations around the country! You will save a ton of money and time.”

Ok, that’s nice. Those are good benefits, right?

However, instead of selling the benefits, reverse engineer it and sell the problem.

“Mr. Modern Buyer, right now every time your people meet, as we discovered, it’s costing you about £625 just in travel expenses. On top of that, we found that when you total the travel time for these executives, it came to a total 22 man hours and at the salaries you pay them, it comes out to around £4,300! Mr. Buyer, right now you are LOSING nearly £5000 every time you hold a meeting!! Every meeting! That’s coming right out of your pocket.”

Whoa!!

You see the difference?

Now, let me bring this back to why it is so critical when dealing with the big old shoe complex.

With this approach, you make that old shoe become a little LESS comfortable! Instead of you jumping up and down talking about YOUR great shoe, you simply showed that there are a few holes in the shoe they have.

You also do this without bashing the competing shoe ---- you just uncovered the problems and exposed the need to get a new shoe.

Does that make sense?

Uncover the problems and use the emotion and it will help people to begin to FEEL a little less comfortable staying where they are. Also, think about this; if you expose big problems which create emotion for that old company, will the customer want to go back?

You see, once you properly uncover the problem with the old shoe, then going back also brings back the old problems.

Help the buyer see the problems and they will FEEL less comfortable about the old shoe -- no matter how big it is!
The Comfortable Old Shoe

# 2 - Keep Selling! Even after the Sale

*Look at this scenario:*

One of your sales people finally locates the Decision Maker (DM) of a company your firm has been trying to get to for years and it’s “a whale of a client”. If she can close the account, not only will it mean a huge commission, but what a feather in her cap too!

So, even before she makes the first phone call, she begins to send literature.

She sends the finest, most sophisticated and well polished pieces of information. She sends things about herself as well as her company. She is promoting her company and services like never before.

She then gets the DM on the telephone and continues to sell her company and sets the appointment. She goes to the sales interaction with every piece of ammunition she can find and makes the biggest most powerful presentation ever.

While in the proposal stage, she continues to sell; she takes the DM out to dinner and plays a round of golf with the purchasing manager.

Finally the sale closes, the product’s installed and the cheque is in the bank.

Now what?

Ok, she shows up every once in a while and sends an occasional email asking if she can be of service. But what happened to all of that excitement? What happened to all of that selling and hype?

Does this sound familiar?

Now listen, I’m not saying that you can afford to spend the same amount of time with every customer that you do in gaining new business. But there needs to be a balance.

You have to continue to **SELL** just like before you got the sale.

Keep selling your product even though they already own it! Keep selling your company even though they are already a customer.

In short, treat your customers like **PROSPECTIVE** customers and less of them will go back to the old shoe.
The Comfortable Old Shoe

#3 - Build the value of your people and processes

Here is an important tactic to help ward off the big guns and gain more market share.

Build and promote the value of your people and processes.

Let me explain:

The more important your people are, even those behind the scenes, the more important the customer will FEEL.

Imagine this: you walk into a software retailer to pick up a Microsoft Office program and the sales assistant says, hold on a moment. He picks up the telephone and says, “Yes, I have Mr. Gordon here to purchase some software.” The assistant hangs up the phone and tells you to hold on for a moment.

A minute later, Mr. Bill Gates himself comes down and says, “Mr. Gordon, I’m so glad you decided to choose our software and I thought it best that I handle your account personally.”

Whoa!! Come on; you’d have to be impressed! Now, does that actually change the value of the software? No. It is the same program whether it was a part-time kid who sold it to you or the main honcho. However, it FEELS like it is worth a lot more because of the importance of the person you dealt with.

Make everyone in your company a high-level important person. Anyone who deals with the customer has to be a valuable and important player. One of the biggest mistakes companies make today is they outsource (or more aptly put, down-source) their telemarketing and their front line tasks to the lowest level and least qualified people they can find. This of course is in effort to save money, but it is a critical mistake.

Think about it: if you know that the company that is calling you to try to get YOUR business, sends the lowest paid, most expendable person they can find to handle your account and to make contact with you, how does that make you feel?

Make everyone be important. Now this does not mean that your can’t have a telemarketing crew to set appointments or you have to pay them more than you can and things like this, but don’t skimp in this area! It is the most important part of your sales process.

And here is the key: it is a thousand times easier for a small company to do this than for the larger ones. I mean the smaller company can have Director of Sales make the first contact or the Regional Director whereas a multi-national would probably never be able to do that.

Imagine you receive a cold call from the big conglomerate. You know the call: it’s the big boilerroom smile and dial child, who can barley speak English and is reading from a script. You know the image it creates in your mind and you know how it makes you feel.
Now imagine you get a call that sounds like this:

“Yes, Mrs. Buyer, Graham Stevens here, I am the Regional Director at ABC Widgets and I thought I would give you a call **personally**. Do you have a moment?”

**Listen, this is one area that the smaller guy has the advantage. Use it!**

Also, make your people and processes behind the scenes more valuable as well.

“Mr. Educated Buyer, there is one major difference with our customised accounting software has than that developed by the big companies. As you may know, the big corps hire graduates right out of University with no real world experience to do a lot of what they call the more rudimentary programming. And, of course they save a lot of money doing that and hence they can produce many more programs than we can.

However, at ABC Software, we only hire high-level expert certified programmers with at least 10 years experience. In addition, Mr. Buyer, anyone who even touches a keyboard on our development team also has real world experience in accounting!! That's right. Our programmers are not just computer geeks; they all have practical first hand experience in accounting!! Our people know exactly what challenges and problems you face. Now of course, it costs us a lot more, but being a smaller firmer, we have to concentrate more on quality than quantity…”

That’s powerful. Raise the value of your people and processes and the big boys will not be able to compete on your level.

**The Comfortable Old Shoe**

**#4 - Stress the value of the Customer to YOU vs. their value to Them**

Lastly, let the customer know how much more important they are to you **BECAUSE** you are a smaller firm than they are to the big boys. Look, a £100,000 account to World-Wide Widgets is nothing; they’re two for a penny over there. But to you, they could be the biggest account you have. What does that mean to the customer?

Let them know that they are so much more important to you by virtue of the fact that you are smaller. You have to do everything possible to make sure they stay happy. Hey, you can’t afford to have them leave. On the other hand, to the big guys, “Hey Mrs. Customer you ain’t such a big deal to them!”

Now, those four issues are not meant to be closes or answers to objections.

They are ways of thinking.

They are issues that you need to make part of your entire sales process from prospecting to repeat orders.

**Just remember, the bigger they are, the harder they do indeed fall!**
About Sean McPheat

“The LEADING AUTHORITY on how to sell and market to the sophisticated and sales savvy consumer of today”

Sean McPheat is recognised as one of the leading authorities in sales and marketing. Sean founded the MTD Training Group back in 2001 and has built a training and consulting empire that is at the forefront of sales and management development.

Today, MTD has over 30 trainers and consultants that help small and medium sized businesses, entrepreneurs and the “Big Boys” to improve the ways in which they market and sell their products and services to improve their profits.

Sean has been featured on CNN International, ITV, BBC, Arena Magazine, Winning Edge, Marketing Week and over 250 different media publications.

“Today’s buyer is more sophisticated and sales savvy than ever before. With a click of a mouse they can find out information about you and your products in less than 2 minutes. They’ve also read the same books as you have and they’ve been on the same courses too! They want more for less and loyalty is a thing of the past….so when it comes to selling and marketing to them you’d better be pretty damn hot!”

Sean McPheat

Being an award winning entrepreneur himself Sean has earned millions by focusing on leading edge marketing and sales techniques - both online and offline.

Sean is also a much sought after speaker and his talks and speeches on how to sell and market to the modern buyer are a real eye opener for those who are fortunate enough to hear him speak.