



...solve thorny business challenges in the time it takes to drink a cup of tea

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# How do you turn the value dial up so that more customers say yes to you more often?

It's rare to find a business owner with complete clarity on the value they provide to their customers.

Even rarer to find one who has good enough customer conversations to communicate the value they provide.

A bit like Morton Grodzins.

Grodzins could have been well known the world over, instead, someone else recycled his 43-year-old idea and made it famous.

Grodzins was a university professor and published an academic paper in 1957 introducing the phrase 'the tipping point'.

However, his inability to use a conversational style to show the value of his idea left his now-famous phrase hidden, until Malcolm Gladwell showed up. Gladwell described the idea in a very conversational and engaging way and created the best-selling book *'The Tipping Point'* - 2.5+ million book sales have made Gladwell a household name in the business community and enable him to charge £100,000 for an hour's key-note speech!

This business breakthrough isn't about Gladwell (even though his strategies around the tipping point are extremely helpful), instead we're



focusing on *building your value* in the hearts and minds of your customers.

It's clearly not enough to be able to deliver value, you also need to communicate your value too.

## IN A NUTSHELL

**Your success is determined by your ability to communicate your value to your customers.**

**It pays to get absolute clarity on how to show the value of your business and your business's products and services in a conversation.**

## First – how clear is your value?

Facts and figures matter.

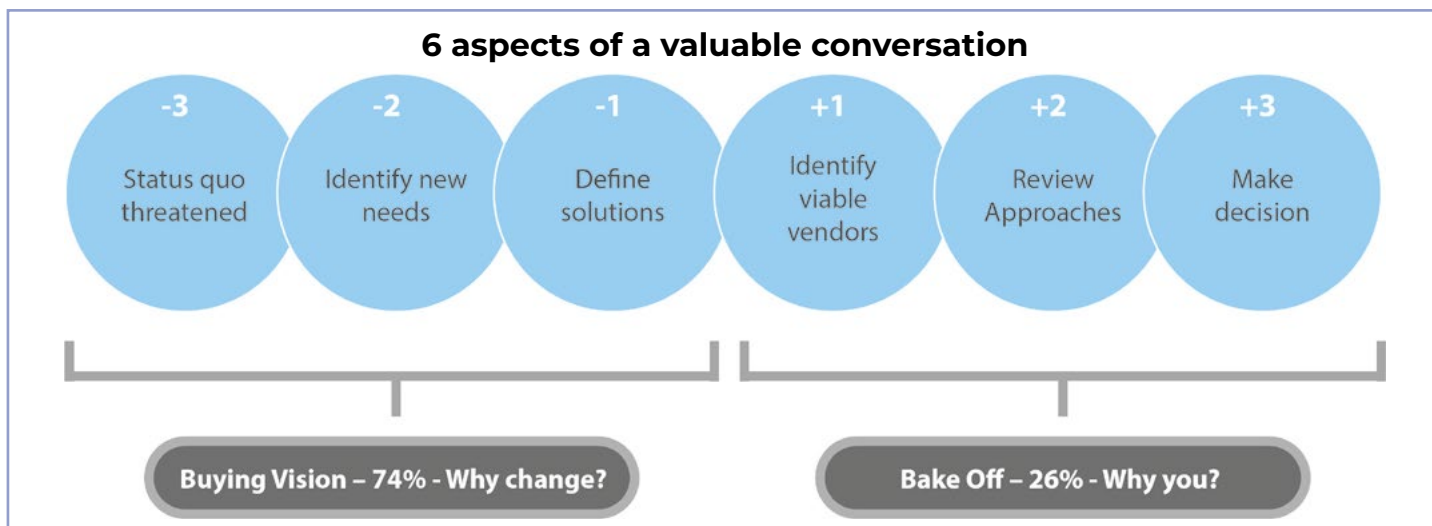
But facts and figures are not enough – Grodzins proved that for sure.

The way you *communicate your value* matters more.

To be valuable to your customers, you need to show them how to assess the value of your products and services.

This applies to your existing customers as much as it does with prospective new customers.

And it's your *customer conversations* that dictate the value your customers see and experience.



## One challenge matters most...

Know what you're really up against:

1. You're up against your competition of course – and it's easy to get side-tracked by this challenge!
2. But more importantly you're up against your customers' deep-rooted desire to maintain the status quo – they would prefer to stay as they are!

**STOP** thinking that you're only competing with other businesses in your field.

**START** seeing your real competition is your customers' attraction and commitment to their status quo.

## 3 times more valuable

World-renowned research firm **Forrester Research** has ongoing studies into the buying habits of director-level decision makers. Forrester results show that **74%** of business executives choose to buy from businesses that *help them clearly see the need to change*. Forrester call this a 'Buying Vision'.

In contrast, only **26%** of director-level decision making relies on a side-by-side competition comparison of suppliers or 'Bake-Off'!

The graphic above shows 6 aspects of a valuable conversation from your clients' viewpoint according to Erik Peterson et al in their powerful book 'The Three Value Conversations'.

So how can you be chosen 74% of the time by your buyers?

Build a 'buying vision' rather than a 'bake off'!

## HERE'S THE PROVEN SOLUTION FOR YOU...

**Help your customers see beyond their existing status quo by engaging in a conversation so they realise the status quo is unsafe for them.**

**Help your customers uncover needs they have not yet considered.**

To begin with *it is not about you, your business or your products or services.*

It's about your genuine concern for your customer's business, the challenges and dangers they are facing, the threats, problems and other issues that challenge the status quo and their future success.

## Become an empathetic ally...

Of course, your buyers know you have an ulterior motive aimed at helping them buy from you.

And so, showing them that their status quo is unsafe, and that you can help them, is what they expect. To help prevent this mistrust, here are 3Cs you can use to communicate your value:

- **Curiosity** – be genuinely interested
- **Care (or concern)** – for their wellbeing and success
- **Commitment** – to their interests, feelings and results

This positions you perfectly as a partner on their side (to help) not a salesperson to be held at arm's length.

## Time to challenge their sense of safety...

Nobel Prize-winning research by Daniel Kahneman helped build a new understanding into human behaviour.

Kahneman's 'Prospect Theory'

shows how people's **attitude to risk** and their **willingness to change** is different when facing a potential gain or potential loss.

Here's how Erik Peterson and the team that created the book 'The Three Value Conversations' neatly describe Kahneman's insights:

### RISK SEEKING

*"...people are far more willing to seek risk to mitigate (avoid) a potential loss than to achieve gain."*

### LOSS AVERSION

*"...people are twice as motivated to change a behaviour or make a decision to avoid loss as they are to achieve gain."*

In short, your customers are more likely to take risks and make changes if they see a potential loss in their status quo.

Helping your customers to understand that they risk a potential loss will make them feel a real and present sense of urgency about making a change.

## Also, value is relative...

Erik Peterson points to another part of Kahneman's research into human behaviour – the contrast principle – that helps show even more value.

*"...the decision-making part of the brain sees value only through contrast."*

*"...the greater the contrast you can create between your customer's perception of how unsafe the world is and what a new safe path looks like, the greater the perception of value you create."*

So how do you help them feel 'unsafe' with 'things-as-they-stand' whilst maintaining or building your customer's trust in you and your ability to deliver for them?

## Ask them questions about the unknowns!

If you ask questions about 'stuff' your customers already know about, you'll fail to talk about enough value for change.

Diagnostic questions are powerful and valuable, but only if they uncover something new, unconsidered, unexpected, unknown.

A conversation about known problems, issues and challenges is what your competition are already doing – so you sound the same as them. Sound the same as them and, at best, you can charge what they charge – if you can get the customer to change to you. Customer change, as we now know, is highly unlikely if they are tied to what they already know and understand!

Daniel Pink in his book *'To Sell Is Human'* says that your products and service:

*"are far more valuable [when your prospects are] mistaken, confused, or completely clueless about [their] true problem..."*

*...your ability to get prospects to do something different, choose you, and pay a premium, hinges less on your problem-SOLVING skills and more on your problem-FINDING skills."*

As Peterson et al point out:

*"If your prospects know precisely what their problem is, they can often find the information they need to make a decision – with limited assistance or input from you.*

*"(Instead) dig hard to find the unknown, undervalued, or unmet challenges that your prospects and customers aren't even thinking about."*

## Where do you look?

- Undervalued challenges** – issues they know about but are bigger than, and coming faster than they are expecting
- Unmet needs** – resolving unnecessary work-arounds customers are using – masked or hidden issues – challenges they have been seeing as 'normal' eg. why go out for a takeaway McDonalds or gourmet meal when UberEats or Deliveroo are on-hand at the click of a few buttons online?
- Unknown challenges** – longer-term

issues – unanticipated global trends (political; environmental; social; technological; economic) – challenges from unknown competitors or new entrants

## Seek out valuable insight...

To provide insight that's of real value to your customer you have 3 sources:

- Share insight and ask about **third-party evidence** your customer has seen or not seen (like we have referenced research by Forrester, Pink and Kahneman in this report)
- Share insight and ask about **something your customer doesn't know** (like we have shared and challenged you on the power of status quo bias here)
- Share insight and ask about a **problem your customer isn't aware of** (like asking questions about unconsidered customer issues rather than known issues so that you build enough value to overcome their status quo bias)

## Evidence is your best friend

You are less believable than independent evidence. Therefore, it pays to put the power of proof to work for you.

Share customer stories, independent analyst claims, industry statistics, your customer's own data and use guarantees and any other relevant and trustworthy sources of proof to help you help your customers see the value of change and moving away from the status quo.

## Important: Uncertainty rather than certainty helps...

It's likely that there's a time and place for absolute confidence and certainty.

However, research by a Stanford School of Business professor clearly suggests that providing 'source certainty' about the insights you provide can undermine the value of your conversation. Instead, here's what Peterson et al point out to explain this idea:

*"...in order to create a more receptive audience, consider launching your big idea initially as something with a lot of POSSIBILITY, instead of stating it with ABSOLUTE positivity."*

'Possibility' rather than 'absolute certainty' promotes openness and interest – because with some uncertainty you and your customer are working on the insight together, as partners.

## GET YOUR BITESIZE SUPPORT TOOLS NOW

<https://businessbreakthrough.online/customer-value-counts-tools-and-resources/>

## 4 helping hands for you...



Because your customer's willingness to change (and buy from you) depends on your ability to challenge their status quo, you'll need to put these 4 helping hands to work for you:

- Be **COMMITTED** to being an empathetic ally (to your customer)
- With **CARE**, challenge your customer's status quo
- Be **CURIOUS** about unconsidered customer needs and challenges
- Use **relevant evidence (with uncertainty)** to build valuable customer conversations

As always, it's not knowing about a business breakthrough that works, it's about putting it to work! Use the downloadable support tools to help you build your knowledge and skill in communicating your value.

## TIME TO DISAGREE:

*"How am I supposed to know something my customers don't know about their business?"*

Yes, this is difficult and because it's difficult it means your competition are mostly not seeking out the unconsidered needs and challenges of their customers. This creates a potential competitive advantage for you and your business.

Researching and planning customer conversations using the 3Cs (Curiosity; Care; Committed) means you'll position yourself as an empathetic ally who is worth doing business with.

Check out the downloadable tools section and you'll find more guidance on likely sources of challenge or difficulty your customers have not yet considered.

*"This preparation work for customer meetings takes time and skill we don't have available."*

The first time you approach a customer conversation with a focus on unconsidered challenges will be tough and you may stutter and stall! But the more you do it, the easier and faster it will become. And challenging the status quo by discussing issues your customer hasn't considered clearly demonstrates your value.

## ULTIMATE ARGUMENT:

*"Isn't every one of my competitors also wanting to build value?"*

Yes, they do.

However, mostly what happens is an obsession with product and service, features and benefits, focused on existing known issues and challenges in the buyer's experience.

## YOUR 'CUSTOMER'S PERCEIVED VALUE' CHECKLIST:

In getting customers to change (and buy from you) you must tackle their status quo bias. To tackle their status quo bias, you must ask them about their unconsidered needs and challenges. Compare and contrast their status quo with the downside of doing nothing and the upside of change and your business will be seen as much more (3 times more) valuable.

- 1. Share and ask about an unconsidered insight** – using the 3Cs (Curiosity; Care; Committed) to position yourself as a genuine empathetic ally, share customer examples, numbers, trends and other relevant evidence to tell a story about a challenge/difficulty your customer has yet to see or experience (unknown to them)
- 2. Show how unsafe the status quo really is** – ask your customers about the problems and consequences of remaining the same considering the new insight being discussed
- 3. Contrast the unsafe current situation with a new safe situation** – ask about an alternative view, based on positively dealing with the new insight and how that helps your customer secure their business future
- 4. Prove it** – share evidence that backs up the new insight. Use customer stories, independent analyst claims, your customer's own numbers to prove your claims.

**As always, it's not knowing about a business breakthrough that works, it's about putting it to work! Use the downloadable support tools to help you build your knowledge and skill in communicating your value.**

If the evidence shared by Forrester is to be believed, and 74% of business executives choose to work with the business that helps them clearly see the need to change, then this new focus on unconsidered needs is a competitive advantage for those that put it to work.

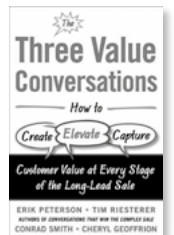
Are you ready to give it a go?

Check out the downloadable tools for extra videos, resources, and a few exercises you can use to help fully review your knowledge and skill around unconsidered needs and challenges.

## Want to know more?

**Erik Peterson et al**  
– **The Three Value Conversations.**

This book offers a range of tools and methods to help businesses differentiate themselves from the competition, pushing value to the right decision maker and maximising all sales opportunities across the entire buying cycle. It draws you in by delivering insight after insight – a must read!



## GET YOUR BITESIZE SUPPORT TOOLS NOW

<https://businessbreakthrough.online/customer-value-counts-tools-and-resources/>  
Use these tools and resources to discover how to build your knowledge and skill, enabling you to have value driven conversations with your customers.

FOR MORE EDITIONS OF BUSINESS BREAKTHROUGHS, PLEASE GO TO:  
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**Anthony Russel**