

## Introduction: The Why?

Here's what nobody in sales wants to admit: the buyer journey we've built our entire industry around — the funnels, the stages, the CRM fields, the lead scores — is a story we told ourselves.

Because the real buyer journey? It's happening somewhere we can't see, in conversations we're not part of, driven by motivations our tools were never designed to measure.

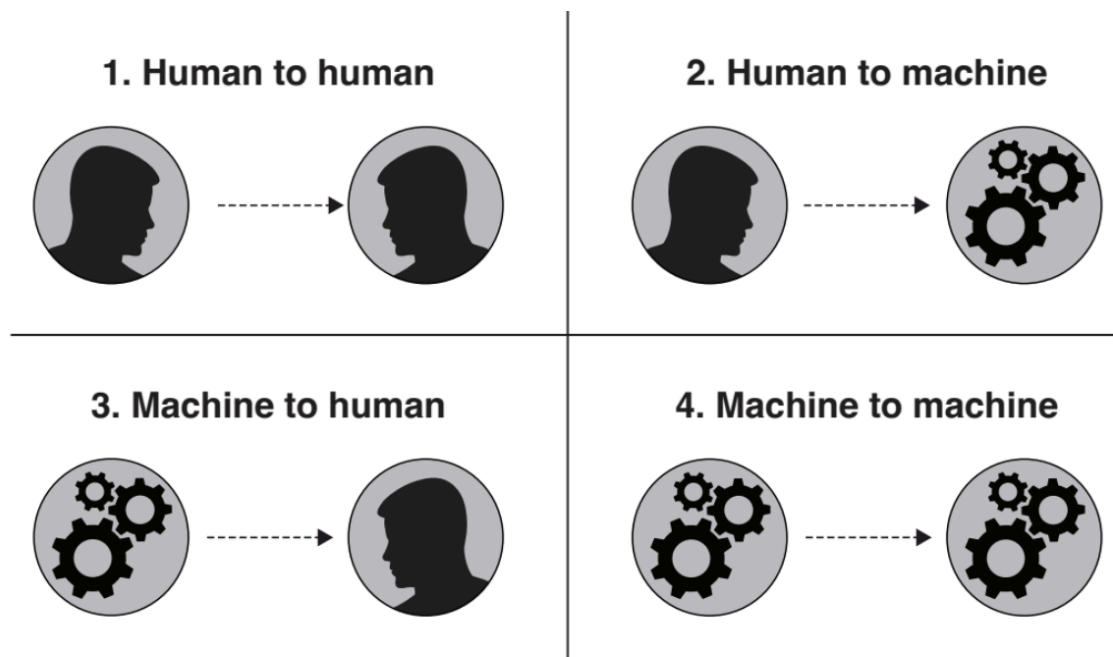
That's what this book is about. Not the journey you can track. The one you can't.

I'm not going to promise you a magic framework or a five-step fix. What I will give you is something more valuable — a clear-eyed look at why the system is broken, who the real players are in any buying decision, and what it actually takes to navigate the hidden side of the journey that determines whether you win or lose.

If you're reading this because you sense something is off and you're ready to find out what — we're already on the same page.

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### We Now Live in a World that Consists of Four Different Types of Selling Relationships



As AI integrates into every aspect of our daily lives, the way we buy and sell has fractured into four distinct relationships — each one more prevalent than the last, and each one moving further from the human interaction that built commerce in the first place.

Machine-to-machine: automated procurement systems buying software licenses, cloud capacity, and supply chain inputs without a human involved on either side. It's already happening at scale.

Machine-to-human: AI-powered chatbots, recommendation engines, and digital sales assistants engaging buyers before a rep ever enters the conversation. Most B2B buyers encounter this before they encounter a person.

Human-to-machine: a rep entering data into a CRM, configuring a pricing tool, or submitting a proposal through a procurement portal — selling into a system rather than to a person.

Human-to-human: two people, across a table or a screen, building the trust that actually closes deals. This is the relationship that has driven commerce since the first transaction was made. And it is the only one of the four that is quietly disappearing.

Everything else is scaling. That one is shrinking. And the most dangerous part? Nobody is building a strategy to protect it. This book is.

That brings me to my "why." If you are in sales — and that includes you, marketers, because we're all sellers — you should have two goals: harnessing the power of AI to enable yourself and your team, and elevating and protecting the human-to-human interactions that really close deals.

There is a fundamental gap in the literature on sales and marketing when it comes to the human-to-human side of the equation, backed by real data. This book fills it.

### **Why I'm the One Telling You This**

A little context. I've spent 30 years working at the intersection of sales, marketing, and human behavior — leading teams, advising companies, and watching the same preventable mistakes play out across industries.

In 2019, frustrated by the gap between what our tools told us about buyers and what was actually driving their decisions, my team and I began a research effort using AI to profile personality types across thousands of real buying journeys.

What we found was equal parts fascinating and sobering. The data didn't just confirm our instincts — it challenged assumptions the entire industry has accepted as gospel. This book is the result of that work.

At times the material will counter long-established beliefs about what is considered common knowledge. Some of it will feel completely logical — in fact, after certain chapters you will likely ask yourself: why aren't we already doing this? Part of this book will dig into exactly that question: why, even when we know something to be true, we are still reluctant to change our behavior.

That is ultimately what this book is about. Breaking down existing mindsets using data and research, and rebuilding them with a new way of thinking. The change itself will be up to you.

### **Back to Basics: Why the Simple Got So Complicated**

When you boil down the objectives of sales and marketing they are relatively simple — and remarkably similar. Both are trying to get someone to take an action. For marketing, that action might be getting a prospect to open an email, register for a webinar, or stop by a booth at a trade show. For sales, it might be getting a key account contact to agree to a conversation, watch a demo, or make a purchase decision.

To get someone to take that action, you need to understand what motivates them. Why would they register or attend? Why would they choose your solution over a competitor's?

The best way to answer those questions is to understand the person — because we are all motivated by different things. For some, it's career advancement. For others, it's reducing the risk of making a bad decision. For others still, it's something as straightforward as wanting to be seen as a good team player.

The best way to understand what motivates people is to understand their personality. That's what this book is about.

Where things get complicated is when you take that individual and place them inside a buying group, within an organization, within an industry. Now you have a collection of people — each with their own personal motivations — coming together to reach a single decision.

The organization layers on its culture, shaping how priorities get set and how decisions actually get made. The industry adds its own complexities on top of that.

There is a compass that can help navigate through that maze — but only if we choose to recognize and understand behavior. Organizational behavior. Group dynamics. The online and offline signals that reveal what people actually care about. By the end of this book you will have that compass.

What we have built instead are methodologies, processes, and tools designed to manage that complexity from the outside. Tools that pick up actions we interpret as interest without ever knowing the motivation behind them. Systems built for efficiency that treat every buyer as

interchangeable. Targeting built around roles and titles without any understanding of the people who hold them.

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Instead of simplifying the complexity, we have been adding to it — moving further and further away from understanding why companies and buyers actually make decisions.

Over the course of this book I'll lay out how we got to this point. Why the current approach isn't working. A game plan for moving forward with one simple goal: becoming more human again.

We've had evidence of the problem for decades. We just keep choosing scale over connection — and that choice has left a void that no tool in the stack has ever been able to fill.

Now, the machines are at the door — barbarians at the gate. The question is whether they help humans sell more effectively or replace them entirely. The more we treat buying as a rational, linear, repeatable process, the wider we leave that door open.

Let's get one thing clear before we go any further:

### **The buying process is not rational.**

It never has been. The books and frameworks of the past assume that we make business decisions without influence from our own personal experiences, motivations, and beliefs. That assumption is the single most expensive mistake in the history of B2B sales and marketing — because it means we have been building systems to manage a process that doesn't actually exist the way we drew it up.

The treasure trove of information that lies in that gap is the missing piece of our current sales and marketing practices. It's one of the reasons why, despite millions of dollars being spent on new technology, our performance has not improved. And it's why AI — trained on the same broken assumptions — will not fix it on its own.

### **What You'll Find in These Pages**

This book explains — with clear, data-driven insights — why things you believe about buyers are incomplete, or in some cases just plain wrong. It is organized in three parts, each one building on the last.

**Part One:** *How We Got Here* traces the history of selling and buying from the first industrialized sales force through the rise of enablement technology and the broken systems we've built around

it. If you've ever wondered why, despite millions of dollars invested in new tools, performance keeps getting worse — this is where the answer lives.

**Part Two:** *Building a Better Way* introduces the frameworks, research, and practical tools that make a different approach possible. Personality-based selling and marketing. The emotional reality of buyers. The hidden human inside every persona. This is where the diagnosis ends and the solution begins.

**Part Three:** *Making it Happen* is where everything comes together. Industry profiling. Corporate culture decoding. Buying group mapping. Late-stage buyer visibility. Each chapter builds toward a single practical capability: the ability to see the hidden buyer journey before it determines your outcome.

The B2B landscape has utterly transformed. At the dawn of modern selling, humans sold to other humans. Now machines sell to machines. Sales used to depend on proximity. Now we can buy and sell from anywhere. Information used to be controlled.

Now it has been democratized — along with the misinformation that travels with it. We know all of these things to be true. The purpose of this book is to answer the question that follows: what do we do about it?

## **Everyone Sells**

One quick thought before we dive in. Many years ago, the CFO of our consulting firm stopped by my office to say good morning. He was holding a coffee mug that said "Everyone Sells." I found it funny that a finance guy had a mug with that quote — but his mug wasn't wrong.

We all sell. We do it every day. Convincing a significant other to go to a movie, getting kids to do their homework, persuading a colleague to support an idea — we are constantly using our powers of persuasion, perception, and occasionally charm, to get others to take action. It's a natural part of who we are. But when we insert methodologies, processes, and technologies into that natural instinct, it becomes unnatural and incomplete.

The Hidden Buyer Journey exists to bring back the human side of selling, with the hard numbers to back up the value. It seeks to uncover where and how the truth of buyer intentions gets lost along the journey — and how to find it again.

If you're ready to have a better answer to improving your performance in the age of AI than "let's try adding another tool to the stack" — this book is for you.

To understand where we're going, we first have to understand how we got here. And that story starts in 1884 — with a cash register nobody wanted to buy.