

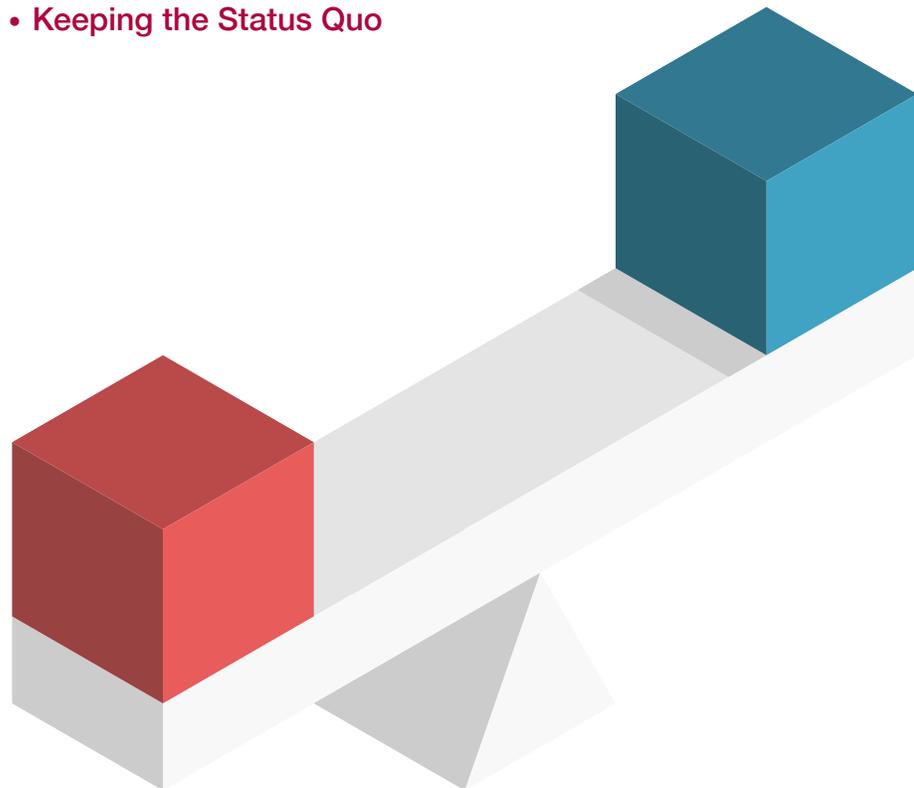
IN THIS ISSUE:

Win Strategies for 3 Different Side-by-Sides

You are always in a side-by-side evaluation when selling. Side-by-sides is a Procurement term where they put their ratings of sales offers side-by-side and determine who wins. Even if you're not dealing with Procurement, your customers are still making side-by-side evaluations.

They're looking at your sales offer relative to:

- **Multitudes of Competitors**
- **1-2 Similar Competitors**
- **Keeping the Status Quo**



Here are win strategies to follow for any of these side-by-sides.

Multitudes of Competitors – Change the Conversation

Imagine the sales noise, the bogus claims and hyperbole that customers waded through to make intelligent buying decisions. Therefore, when there are many offers, change the conversation.

Make your strategy to connect your offer to a higher level. That higher level can be the impacts on your customers' business or their place in society or in the public's eyes or even self-actualization of the individual decision makers.

This is about making the connection between solving customers' problems with how their company will be more profitable or sustainable or more loved by their customers or how they'll become better examples of humanity (oh, it's true).

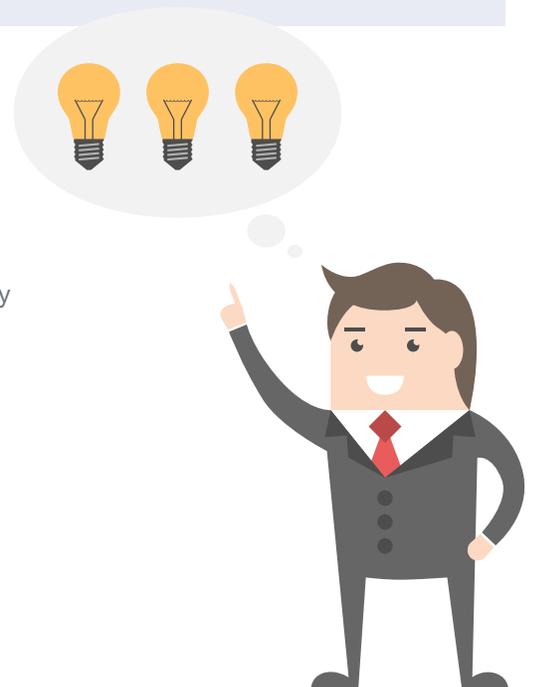
This is more than touting benefits alone. All your competition will be doing that. This is more; it's about articulating that direct connection between your offer and customer success. For example, hiring a better janitorial service and the customer's stock price going up. Sound far-fetched? Read this sales offer using this strategy:

Hire my cleaning company and your offices will be clean consistently, they'll look better, smell better and, most importantly, your employees will feel better about working there. Your employees will know that you, as management, care about them and the conditions you've asked them to work in. As a result, they'll be more productive, more willing to work late on strategic initiatives – to commit to your success because they know you have committed to them with a cleaner, more welcoming and attractive work place.

Increased employee productivity and creativity will lead to more successful initiatives, which will increase profitability and revenue. It's only a matter of hours after signing my company to clean your office that your stock price will rise.

**Yes, that last part is a joke,
but you get the point.**

Lastly, in the mêlée of self-aggrandizement that comes with multitudes of competitors, beware of "me too-ism". Either through arrogance or lack of self-awareness, you may believe your offer is unique and extremely valuable, when in the eyes of customers, it's the same as the competition. Go one louder. Get an outside view of your offer, and then change the conversation with customers.

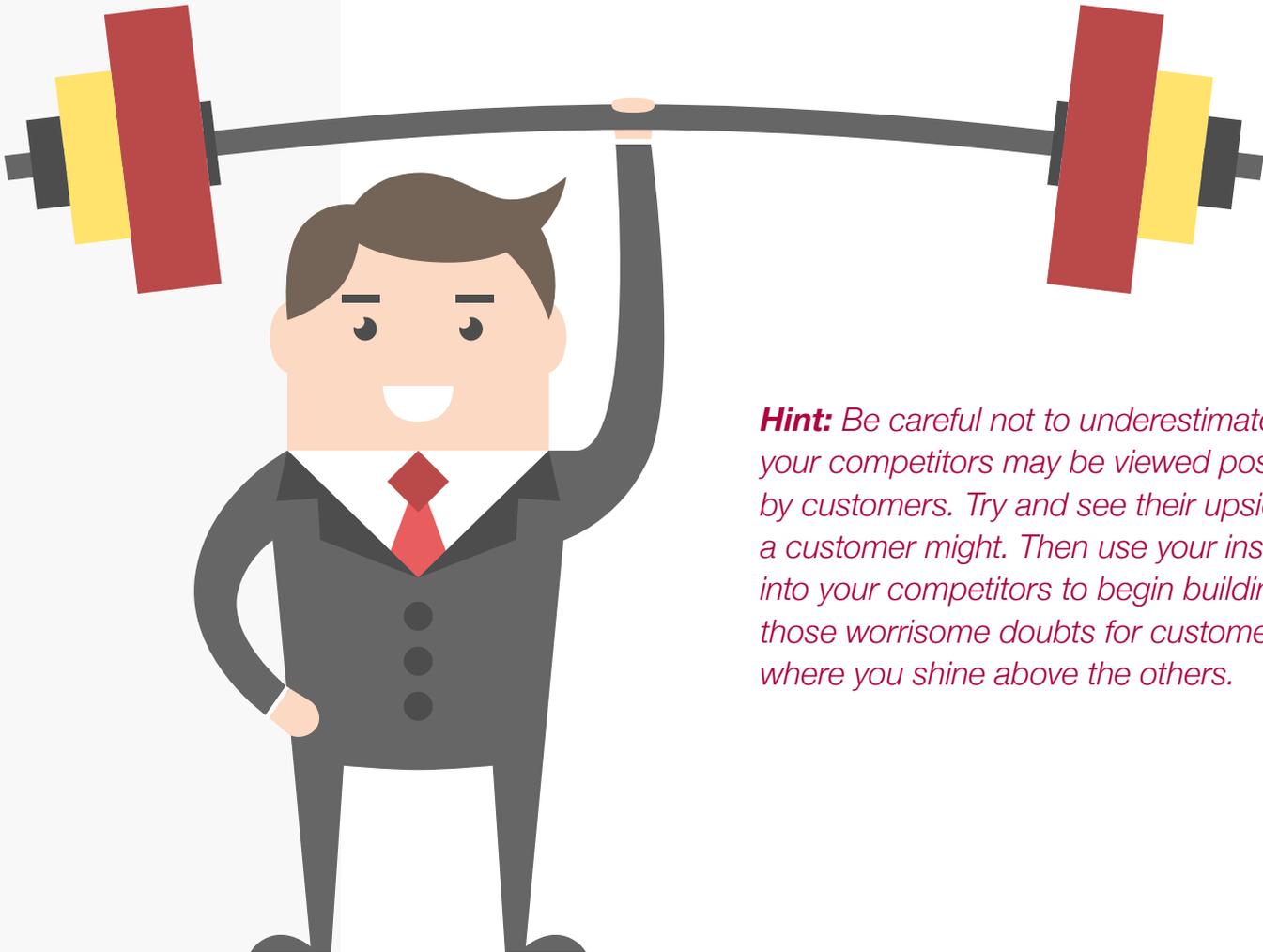


1-2 SIMILAR COMPETITORS – SPEAK STRENGTH TO WEAKNESS

In this situation, you're fairly certain the race is between you and one or two competitors. The win strategy here is to attack your competitors' weakness with your strength.

This means you must know your competitors' weaknesses as customers may see them, and then set out landmines in the proposal process. Once you bring up those areas where competitors are weak, you must show customers why they matter.

This isn't about slinging accusations at competitors. It is about identifying important aspects of what customers get when buying various solutions and how some might have unknown and detrimental effects. Either way, you'll need to have analyzed yourself and your competitors for strengths and weaknesses.



Hint: Be careful not to underestimate how your competitors may be viewed positively by customers. Try and see their upside like a customer might. Then use your insight into your competitors to begin building those worrisome doubts for customers – where you shine above the others.

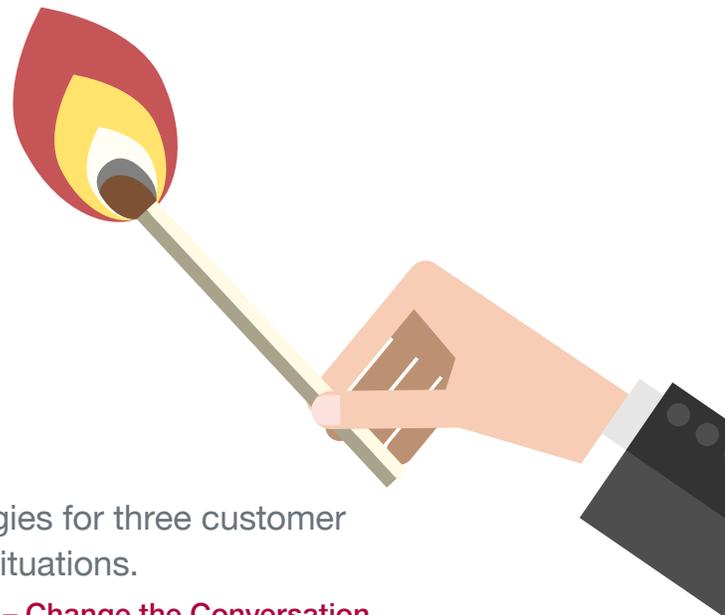


Keeping the Status Quo – Light the Burning Platform

Whether you're proposing a new initiative or asking a customer to change their incumbent supplier, your competitor will be the status quo. The win strategy is to build a business case for change, a burning platform that has negative consequences for keeping things the way they are.

This strategy focuses on the pain customers may experience in the future or are feeling now to some degree. In either case, you need to get inside information to be clear on exactly what this pain is or may be.

Get it right, and your business case motivates customers to fix problems they didn't know they had and receive valued benefits they weren't aware of. Get it wrong by overstating the danger or choosing an inconsequential pain, and customers will say you cry wolf instead of speak truth.



Summary

Here they are: win strategies for three customer side-by-side evaluation situations.

- **Multitudes of Competitors – Change the Conversation**
- **1-2 Similar Competitors – Speak Strength to Weakness**
- **Keeping the Status Quo – Light the Burning Platform**

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