

Executive Summary: Keynote by Pascal Persyn – May 14, 2025

Event Theme: *Winning with Existing Customers – Commercial Excellence in Complex Buying Dynamics*

A New Commercial Mandate

For most companies, existing customers hold the greatest opportunity for profitable growth-at a far lower cost of sales than acquiring new ones. Yet commercial teams often focus on new logos while overlooking untapped value sitting in plain sight. But this shift isn't tactical-it's transformational.

Pascal Persyn opened with a decisive call:

"We must stop extracting value and start enabling outcomes for our customers."

Sales organizations must fundamentally rethink their role, structure, and behavior to remain relevant in an environment where buyers are more informed-but not better informed-and decision complexity is at an all-time high.

What's Changed-and Why It Demands Urgency

Buying cycles are 52% longer than in 2012, due to stakeholder fragmentation, internal indecision, and misaligned seller engagement.

60% of deals end in 'no decision'-not because buyers are indecisive, but because salespeople make proposals based on limited input, engaging too soon with too narrow a view.

A key myth debunked: Customers don't change their minds 3.1 times per deal.

Instead, sellers misdiagnose the situation by proposing, sending quotations, before the full stakeholder ecosystem is understood and aligned. It's not indecision-it's incomplete discovery and alignment.

Legacy sales frameworks like BANT and FAB are no longer fit for purpose.

They were built for transactional models in which sellers enter too late in the buyers' journey. In today's reality, these methods only accelerate confusion and disqualification from complex buying processes.

Sellers are overloaded.

Sellers are not short on time-they're short on *the right time*.

Only 30% of their day is spent on core selling activities. The remaining 70% is consumed by internal meetings, CRM admin, and tool complexity. But even more critically, it's filled with wanted or unwanted tasks that neither contribute to a sale nor improve performance-many of which could be handled more effectively and cost-efficiently by others in the organization.

The Mindset Shift: Outcome-Centric Selling

Customers don't want a drill-they want to improve their environment in a way that advances their goals.

In Pascal's analogy, the real solution wasn't the drill at all-it was the mounting strips that made it easy to adapt the room to a toddler's development needs, without damaging the wall.

This shift in thinking is crucial. It's not about selling features or even benefits. It's about helping customers create the *conditions* in which they can realize their ambitions and overcome strategic challenges. That's where true commercial influence begins.

To do this, sellers must stop promoting relative advantages and start enabling measurable impact. They must translate the customer's aspirations into required capabilities, which in turn define the buying criteria.

This is the psychological trigger that influences buying behavior-not persuasion, but alignment. When customers see how your offering transforms their context, the decision becomes obvious.

Popeye's Lesson: Spinach is just a product. Its iron content is a feature. Muscle growth is the capability. But winning the fight against Bluto-that's the outcome.. Sales must learn to uncover the real 'battle' each stakeholder is trying to win-and align messages to help them succeed.

The Commercial Engagement Blueprint

To operationalize outcome-driven selling, Pascal introduced the **Commercial Engagement Blueprint**-a two-dimensional model mapping:

- **Business Model:** Recurring vs. Project
- **Buying Complexity:** Low to High

This matrix defines four distinct engagement zones:

1. **Streamlined Transactions** – Recurring, low complexity
2. **Embedded Lifetime Value** – Recurring, high complexity
3. **Familiar Investments** – Project-based, moderately complex
4. **Mission-Critical Projects** – One-off, high-stakes, highly complex

But this is more than a segmentation tool-it forms the foundation of an **operating model**. It guides how to organize roles, responsibilities, collaboration, and messaging to align with customer journeys **at the lowest possible cost of sale**.

Organizational design must adapt-not just for scale, but for agility. Teams need to optimize how they work together, determine who leads at each stage of the

buying cycle, and adjust how they steer, coach, and support execution. This includes:

- Assigning ownership across the engagement cycle
- Aligning commercial and technical roles to buyer complexity
- Enabling message orchestration by buying stage and stakeholder persona
- Simplifying internal coordination to reduce selling friction

As buying complexity rises, many companies are confronted with a challenge: **They must combine diverse engagement models**-yet lack the size or scale to dedicate full teams to each. Without a clear framework, this creates internal tension, poor trade-offs, and diluted commercial impact.

That's where the blueprint helps: it clarifies what each engagement type requires and how to organize accordingly-without losing strategic focus or company DNA.

Even in recurring revenue models, organizations now need structured pipeline thinking and team-based selling-practices once reserved for project-driven environments. **Complexity is no longer the exception-it's the new baseline.**

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Five Accelerators to Build Pipeline Momentum

1. Adopt Team Selling

Distribute responsibilities and product-market combinations across specialized roles-maximizing productivity through focus and minimal task diversity, while balancing cost of sales and return on effort.

2. Enter Buying Cycles Earlier

Earlier engagement requires updated qualification logic. Move beyond outdated criteria like BANT and focus on signals that reflect decision-making context and momentum.

Research shows that 83% of buyers purchase from the vendor who helped shape their buying vision.

3. Detect Buying Readiness at Every Interaction

Use explicit detection techniques to identify the buyer's position in their journey. This enables better alignment of actions and messages-reducing cycle time and avoiding no decisions.

4. Engage More Stakeholders in Parallel

Don't just build relationships with the sponsor or procurement. Expand your impact by aligning value with the priorities of all stakeholders simultaneously.

5. Implement a Shared Language Across Commercial Roles

Establish a common language, embedded in CRM and shared by sales, marketing, and customer-facing teams. This is essential to align human and digital touchpoints and meet the multi-channel expectations of today's buyers.

Two Enablers for Sustainable Impact

6. Package Outcome-Based Messaging Linked to Stakeholder KPIs

Frame value around customer and business outcomes-not benefits-and tie them to each stakeholder's challenges, aspirations, and KPIs. Support sales with conversation-ready content and equip marketing with scalable, stakeholder-relevant messaging.

7. Use CRM to Lead by Example and Build Balanced Pipelines

Stop coaching sellers on closing dates and target gaps. Instead, drive behavior change by using CRM to model opportunity and pipeline reviews that build momentum, balance pipeline risk, and shift focus from deal timing to deal and pipeline quality based on customer verifiable outcomes.

Conclusion: From Best Practices to Next Practices

Pascal's keynote ended on a practical yet ambitious note:

There are no universal best practices-only good practices we can tailor, implement & measure, and evolve into next practices.

Winning commercial organizations move beyond static, step-by-step playbooks. They design buyer-aligned activities and messaging, activate role-specialized teams, and balance structure with agility.

What drives momentum isn't more effort, but orchestration across stakeholders, aligned messaging, and a healthy pipeline rhythm.

This is not just a better way of selling. It is a smarter way to scale with increased profitability.