

Value Wins: How to Build a Business Case That Actually Works

Cut through price objections, reduce risk, and show customers why your offer makes real sense.

The strongest tool in a salesperson's kit - one that builds real confidence and lifts your win rate - is a well-researched, properly built business case.

It's not a breakthrough idea. But you'd be amazed how few salespeople (or companies) actually prepare one well, and of those that do, not many really speak to the customer and address their pain in their language. You must learn to listen to your customer and find out THEIR key market and business drivers.

Value selling sounds simple. And yes, the concept is. But doing it well? That takes more work than most are willing to put in.

The good news, of course, is that it's to your advantage. Because when most of the market overlooks the value sale, it doesn't take much to stand out.

Value Selling: Why Customers Buy More Than Your Product/Service.

If you're still leading with features and even benefits, you're losing traction.

If you're competing solely on price, you're digging a hole.

But if you're selling *value* - clear, specific, business-changing value - you're doing what great salespeople do best. Because let's be honest: customers don't wake up thinking about your product. They wake up thinking about their day, their deadlines, and what keeps them from sleeping properly.

Your job is to show them how your offer makes that day easier, that deadline reachable, and that stress go away. And this is where your relationship with the customer is key, your ability to ask the right questions and discover their pain is key.

- 1. Ask better questions.**

Dig deeper than "What do you need?"

Try: "What happens if this problem continues?"

- 2. Quantify this pain.**

How much does it cost, how much time is lost, what are the indirect costs caused by delays, do you risk losing future business or customers?

- 3. Connect your offer to their world.**

Don't fall into the trap of listing your benefits and assuming a connection is made by your customer; link them directly to the business consequences.

- 4. Build a total value equation as per below.**

Include all the hard and soft value you can, dig deep, does your product also have a longer lifecycle or a sustainability impact for example?

Point out the hidden cost of cheap

- 5. Make the business case, not just the pitch!**

Although it almost pains me to admit this, the best sellers sound a little like CFO's.

If it saves time, convert that to money. If it avoids risk, what would a mistake cost?

It's Not Just Value. It's *Total Value*.

Let's go deeper. Selling value isn't just about pointing out a few benefits and hoping they resonate. It's about helping your customer see the *whole picture*—what they gain and what it really costs to get it.

Total Value = (Functional + Emotional + Financial Benefits) – (Total Cost of Ownership + Risk + Hassle)

This isn't just a formula. It's a way of thinking; it's how you should capture your business case.

Functional benefits are what your product actually does.

Emotional benefits are how it makes the customer feel - more confident, more in control, less stressed.

Financial benefits are the savings, the efficiencies, and the revenue gains that come with using your solution.

Then the deductions:

Total Cost of Ownership

It's not just the price tag, it is the full journey - from purchase to disposal.

That means many things depending on your offering but can include:

- Installation
- Training
- Downtime
- Maintenance
- Upgrades
- Repairs
- End-of-life removal

Often, this is where the real business case lives — and where you can win big.

Now layer in **perceived risk and hassle**.

Think of it as the day-to-day pain your customer is trying to escape; this is where the clever questions will deliver results. Here are the issues with some examples from our real-life case below:

- Stress – It is cheap but takes twice the time
- Hassle – It is cheap but needs frequent maintenance
- Delays – That maintenance causes delays
- Unexpected costs – Overtime to get tasks done
- Internal complaints – Planners cannot plan reliably

If you can show your offer removes friction instead of adding more, you're not just delivering value - you're becoming the safer choice.

Sidebar: It is on this side of the equation where the hidden cost of cheap lies!

The lowest price often hides the highest cost - missed revenue, strained teams, repeated work, reputational damage.

If you don't raise these, the customer probably won't. And your value goes unseen.

Your job? Stack the left side of the equation as high as possible while keeping the right-side light. Do that well, and price starts to feel like a detail - not a deal-breaker.

Real World Examples: When Cheap Costs More

Picture a port operator with a worn crane rail causing delays and increasing maintenance issues.

They get two quotes.

- **Supplier A** offers a low-cost manual weld repair. It's cheap but slow, labour-heavy, and disruptive to operations.
- **Supplier B** (you) proposes a semi-automated welding solution. It's more expensive up front, but it's quicker, safer, more accurate, higher quality, longer-lasting, and requires fewer people on site.

If the conversation stays on price, you're out!

But if you build a clear value case - less downtime, faster return to full capacity, improved safety metrics, and no overtime headaches - suddenly the higher price makes perfect sense.

Because they're not just buying a weld.

They're protecting crane availability and throughput.

They're giving their operations team a break from firefighting.

And they are buying peace of mind.

Supplier B won a National Award for sustainability from the industry association in this real-world example.

Final Words

You don't need to be the cheapest option when you can clearly demonstrate you are the most valuable one.

That's the power of the **Total Value Equation**.

It reframes the conversation around what matters, how you will help their key business drivers.

It builds confidence - for both **you** and the customer.

And it gives people a solid reason to say yes, even when your price is higher than they expected.

If you're stuck in the "Commodity Zone," don't panic — you're not alone, and you're not doomed. The next article tackles how to win when price feels like the only card on the table. Spoiler: value still counts... you just have to sneak it in through the side door.

Be the Most Valuable – Not the Cheapest