

# The Arrow's Point

Issue 3, January 2016



## Welcome...

...to the latest issue of 'The Arrow's Point', the newsletter of Arrosam Ltd.

### ***New Year and new format for the newsletter***

Hope you all had a peaceful Christmas and are looking forward to a prosperous 2016.

One of my New Year's Resolutions is to be more consistent with this newsletter! As you can see, I've also mixed up the content a little - the old format just wasn't achieving very much.

I've also changed the delivery format – The Arrow's Point will now be delivered as an e-newsletter with the pdf version only available via the website.

Hopefully, these minor changes will appeal to you. If not, let me know.

Wishing you a full order book for the coming year!

*Neil Fletcher*

Director

## ***Sales Predictions (or Wishful Thinking) for 2016***

There is a long-held tradition of looking both backwards and forwards at the turn of the year. Although I've done a little in the past, I've never been particularly fond of crystal ball-gazing. As Tibor Shanto says in [this article](#), predictions tend to be “wild ass unrealistic, and never to be validated or reviewed.”

Instead, I thought I would pull together other peoples predictions as to what changes are expected in the world of B2B sales in 2016.

## Contents

[Welcome...](#)

[Sales Predictions \(or Wishful Thinking\) for 2016](#)

[References](#)

[Sales Tips](#)

[DO's and DON'T's of Twitter for B2B Sales](#)

[Newsletter Subscription](#)

[Feedback](#)

[Contact Details](#)

[Final Word](#)

### ***References***

If you're interested, here's the list of the dozen or so posts gathered for the 'Sales Predictions' article:

[2015 Sales Predictions: How They Affect Your 2016 Sales Strategy](#)

[The Ghost of Sales Future: 3 Predictions For Sales in 2016 and Beyond](#)

[Insights from the Experts: Sales and Marketing Trends for 2016](#)

[Two Timely Marketing and Sales Trends for 2016](#)

[Trends that could boost sales performance in 2016](#)

[Sales Trends 2016: 4th Quarter is the New 1st Quarter](#)

[What are the latest 2016 trends in inside sales?](#)

***Sales and Marketing Excellence for***

***Science, Engineering and Technology Companies***

It turned out to be a rather dispiriting task! Whilst Marketing seems to fare well in expecting change, Sales barely figures at all in searches for next years trends.

You could argue that this is a good thing. "Sales works as it is so it doesn't need to change." If that's the case, why are there so many sales thought leaders and consultants (myself included) saying that the world of buying has changed and sales people need to catch up?

No, not just because we want to generate business! The fact is that a lot of what worked 5, 10 or 20 years ago is not fit for purpose now.

Don't believe me? Then answer these questions:

- How many cold calls do you take in which you personally are prepared to talk to the sales person?
- How many sales people do you allow to sit in front of you just so that you can learn about their products?
- How many cold e-mails do you open, let alone reply to?

I'm willing to bet that the answers are all extremely low numbers. I'm also willing to bet that, as a buyer, you will find out as much as you can before you ever speak to a salesperson. You'll trawl the internet for information, talk to existing customers, gather as much comparison information as you can and decide exactly who you want to talk to before you ever pick up the phone or send an e-mail.

But what tactics do you and your team use in your attempts to generate new business?

### ***What did I actually discover?***

Across the dozen or so articles I reviewed, the overwhelming feelings were that:-

- The Customer is King and we need to focus more on doing what the customer wants.
- Sales Automation tools will make everyone's life easier.
- Content Marketing is important because buyers want access to information without sales being involved.

Sad to say, not a lot of new thinking going on.

Haven't we always tried to do what the customer wants (as long as it fits in with what we want!) I think that's the point that is being made. It's long past the time when we as salespeople convince the customer that our product or service is the perfect fit for them even when it isn't.

Funnily enough, most of the predictions regarding sales automation tools came from people employed in companies

[Infographic on Sales Trends for 2015-16](#)

[Predictions to Results](#)

[No Debate on These Sales Technology Trends for 2016](#)

[4 Top Sales Trends for 2016](#)

[How B2B Sales Will Change in 2016 2016?](#)

## **Sales Tips**

### **Exhibition Do's and Don'ts**

- ◆ Don't ask 'How may I help you?' (Closed question.) Do ask 'What brings you to the show today?' (Open question). Qualify everyone.
- ◆ Do ensure your 'message' can be understood in the time it takes to walk the width of your booth. Remove the clutter!
- ◆ Don't create barriers across the front of your booth e.g with tables, desks, plinths etc and DON'T stand there with your arms crossed!
- ◆ Do understand why you are there – to meet existing customers, to generate new business, to launch a new product. Don't just go 'because our main competitors are there.'
- ◆ Do take notes! You won't remember everything said in every conversation after the show.
- ◆ Do follow up promptly! It's cost a lot in money and time to be there – don't squander it.

### ***DO's and DON'T's of Twitter for B2B Sales***

The following guidelines have been developed over five and a half years of tweeting, both personally and for business.

**DO** get a business account, even if you have a personal one. No-one is interested in the intimate details of

producing them! (See previous paragraph!) Yes, I do accept that there are very many tools that are a great help but a fool with a tool is still a fool. The underlying sales principles and processes have to be sound for any sales automation tool to be effective.

There's also a limit to what we can reasonably expect salespeople to do. In 2015, Quora published a list of [31 software tools for sales teams](#). The use of one or two might help but thirty one!

I'm a big fan of content marketing, particularly of how it can help at all stages of the sales process. However, it really isn't anything new. Way back in 1999, thesis 75 of the [Cluetrain Manifesto](#) said:

*If you want us to talk to you, tell us something. Make it something interesting for a change.*

That's a plea for valuable content, right there. Why has it over 15 years to recognise that content marketing is important?

Do I have any predictions for what will happen in Sales in 2016?

I don't, as a matter of fact. What I do have is a list of wishes for what I would like to see happening in 2016.

### **Formal Sales Process**

Without such a document to provide a consistent road map, companies have no choice but to depend on the creativity, work ethic and luck of individual sales reps and their managers. Can you guarantee that every person on your sales team wants the same things as you? Everyone has their own agenda unless you provide one for them!

At the beginning of 2015, Harvard Business Review said: "there was an 18% difference in revenue growth between companies that defined a formal sales process and companies that didn't." You know your figures and how they change year-on-year. That sort of growth attractive to you?

### **Wider Adoption of Social Media**

I should also add 'and better use of social media'. In a B2B context, I'm primarily talking about blog posts, Twitter and LinkedIn.

What I'm NOT talking about is news items masquerading as blog posts. If everything you post is a variation on the theme 'look what we can do / have done' it's a newsfeed.

IMHO, company blog posts, LinkedIn posts and tweets should not be product or service-based but should offer something of value. A summary of issues faced by your target market and a range of solutions to overcome them; the impact of new legislation; the disruptive effect of emerging technologies.

your personal life – leave that for your friends. If you are selling across different sectors, you could even set up an account for each sector.

**DO** have a plan. Before you start, it's vital to have a clear idea of what you want to achieve. Do you want to be seen as an expert in your field? Do you want to introduce people to stuff you find useful? The answers to these (and other questions) should guide what you are tweeting.

**DON'T** just tweet about your company and your products. It gets very dull very quickly. The 70/20/10 rule is a good guide. 70% of your tweets should be useful to your followers, 20% should be engagement – retweets, replies etc. and 10% should be about you and your company.

**DO** be consistent, polite and respectful. Remember, you are representing your company. Once you've posted a comment, it's there for good - you can't take it back. A good rule of thumb is 'Don't tweet what you wouldn't want your mother reading in the Sunday papers'

**DO** start tweeting before you start following people. You are trying to connect with people and offer them something of value. If you haven't tweeted anything when they become aware of you, what reason are you giving them to follow you back?

**DON'T** allow your ratio of people you follow to people who follow you to get too big. The temptation when you open your account is to follow as many people as possible as quickly as possible. Do this and you risk looking like a spammer and you know how popular they are! You will also run into issues with Twitter if the numbers are radically different.

**DO** recognise the limitations of Twitter. It's a great way to keep you 'top of mind' by raising awareness and for positioning and nurturing (the 'I saw this and thought of you' stuff.) But that's it – it's extremely unlikely that you will close any sales through Twitter.

Anything relevant that isn't a stream of 'it's all about us'.

### **Better use of intelligent content**

Carrying on the theme, I would like to see a wider variety of relevant content being used throughout the sales process.

As technical companies, we are very good at producing content like data sheets, product guides and other detailed 'features' stuff. These answer the question – What should I buy? This is content that helps with the final decisions. Yet, so often, it is one of the first things we send to the prospect.

Instead, at the beginning of the process we should be producing content that answers the Why questions.

- Why should the customer care in the first place?
- Why should the issue (let alone the product) get on their crowded radar?
- Why should they buy anything?

Content here should mainly focus on business issues and you can use things like checklists and whitepapers to get the customer thinking.

In the middle of the process, content needs to walk a line between focusing on the business issue and the products or services you offer to solve it.

You've already attracted them but now need to woo them so content should answer the How questions.

- How can I best meet these challenges?

Content here can include case studies, videos and initial consultations

The key to effective use of content as a catalyst is to use the appropriate piece at the appropriate time. It's tempting to throw everything at the customer as early as possible in an attempt to hurry things along. Don't do it, you'll just overwhelm them.

So there we have it; my wishlist for Sales in 2016. Why don't you [drop us an e-mail](#) with you sales-related predictions or wishes for 2016?

**DO** scour the lists of members of your LinkedIn discussion groups. When you find someone who is on Twitter, follow them. Some will automatically follow back, others will follow you because they like what you are tweeting. Now you are appearing in two 'streams of consciousness' (because you are commenting in those discussion group, aren't you?)

And, finally, the bad news.

**DON'T** expect miracles to happen overnight! Using Twitter to develop leads is a long-term game which should form only a part of your lead generation activity.

### **Newsletter Subscription**

If you would like to receive The Arrow's Point on a regular basis, [click here](#) to subscribe using the form on our website.

### **Feedback**

A newsletter is only useful if it provides some value to you, the reader!

[E-mail](#) us to tell us how we are doing and to suggest topics you would like to see included in future issues. It's your newsletter, after all!

### **Contact Details**

Don't restrict yourself to telephone and e-mail addresses shown at the bottom of the page and dotted throughout the newsletter!

We welcome comments on our regular **blog** posts, found [here](#).

We are active on **Twitter**, posting links to interesting and useful information [here](#)

Why not drop by our **LinkedIn** Company page, found [here](#)?

**Arrosam Ltd**  
1052 Christchurch Road  
Bournemouth  
Dorset  
BH7 6DS

**Tel: (01202) 882997**

**E-mail: [news@arrosam.co.uk](mailto:news@arrosam.co.uk)**  
**Web: [arrosam.co.uk](http://arrosam.co.uk)**  
**Twitter: [@ArrosamLtd](https://twitter.com/ArrosamLtd)**

