

Sales Models: The Bruce Lee Approach

■ By Scott Moldenhauer

Sales leaders should look at sales models the way that Bruce Lee looked at the martial arts

There is a reason we fall in love with sales models. It's because they are dressed up so nicely by authors and professional speakers. These people have a way of making them sparkle.

The reality, of course, is that the real world cannot be neatly compartmentalized into a five-step selling process. Things are not that simple, especially when it comes to selling in the healthcare space. So, if sales models are not a panacea, why use them? It's because they provide structure. They provide philosophy. They provide coherent coaching systems.

Two Types of Sales Models

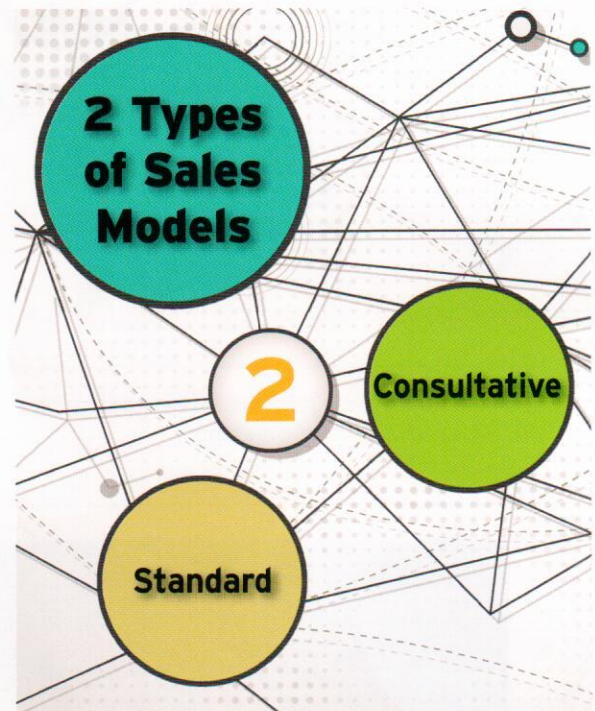
When thinking about sales models, it is best to break them down into two types. The first type is the standard model. It sounds like this: open, probe, present, handle objections, close. For beginning salespeople, it provides structure.

The second type is more insightful. The most recent "Challenger Sale" is a good example. Consultative selling models also fall into this category. These models are more philosophical. They make assumptions. They point out nuances.

Which type is best for your sales team? For novice salespeople, stick with the first type. Newer reps need structure. If your salespeople are at the advanced level, expand their thinking using more sophisticated models.

The Bruce Lee Approach

Ultimately, sales leaders should look at sales models the way that Bruce Lee looked at the martial arts. He treated each of the martial arts — Karate, Taekwondo, Jujitsu — as having its own strengths and weaknesses. He borrowed from Karate. He modified Jujitsu. He utilized the kicking movements of Taekwondo. He kept what worked. He blended. He perfected.



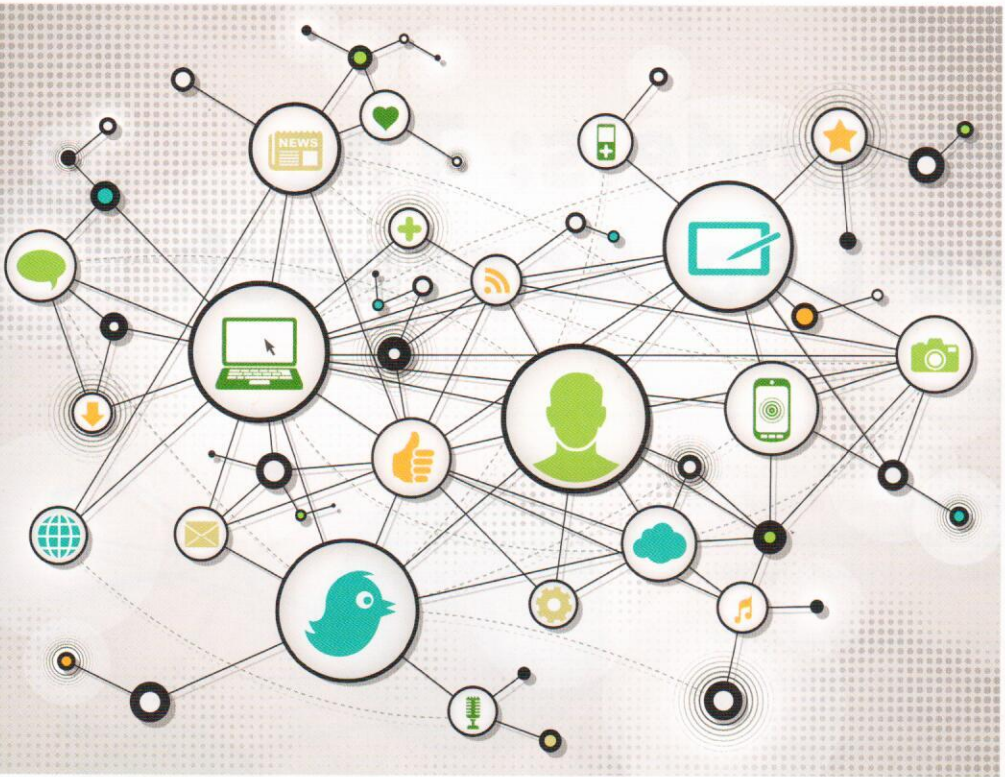
When you watch the best reps, they do the same. They are agile. They are flexible. They mix and match, but always in a way that works for them.

Only when coaches hold one particular model as dogma are problems created. The opposite approach should be taken: Strategically expose your more advanced salespeople to a variety of models. Let them decide what works best for them, always keeping an eye on sales results.

Get It Right

As you think about sales models for your team, here are a few guiding thoughts:

- **Different strokes, different folks.** There are no right and wrong sales models. In the end, sales models (and approaches) are like ice cream. If you like vanilla, so be it. Who am I

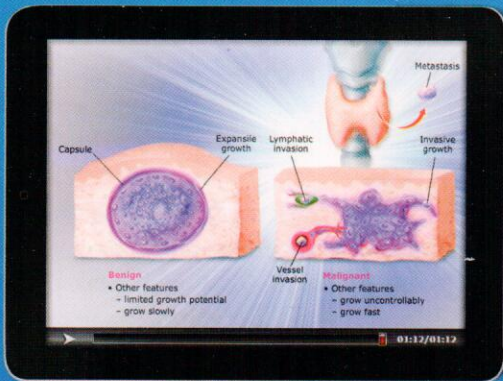


to say you are wrong? Keep an eye on results, but different strokes for different folks.

- **Loosen up.** The goal of sales training and leadership should be to keep the sales person's mind continually "bathed" in the idea of selling. The more ideas you can give your sales people, the better. The more time they spend thinking about selling, the better they will become at selling.
- **Combine, mix, and blend.** Do you remember SPIN Selling? Integrity selling? Consultative selling? All of those models had merit. They still do have merit. Help your salespeople to combine, blend, and mix. Then stand back and watch them sell. ■

Scott Moldenhauer is president of Persuasion Consultants. You can learn more at www.GreatMedicalReps.com or email him at scott@persuasionconsultants.com.

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