



# Sell Smarter, Not Harder

## A modern approach for the office technology industry

by: Samuel Mascato, Sandler

Earlier this year, I had the privilege of leading a breakout session at the 2025 BTA National Conference in New Mexico titled “Sell Smarter, Not Harder.” The title was not just for show — it captured a message that the office technology industry needs now more than ever.

We are in a market where our buyers are changing faster than many sellers are adapting. The days of leading with features, functions and glossy brochures are over. Today’s decision-makers have already researched you, your competitors and maybe even your client reviews before you have stepped into the room. The game has changed — and those still playing by old rules are burning time, losing deals or both.

### The Buyer Has Evolved — Have You?

Let’s get real: Buyers are smarter, faster and more independent than they were even five years ago. They have seen the sales tricks. They have heard the pitches. What they have not always experienced is a salesperson who makes them feel heard — someone who asks the right questions, listens with intent and then maps a solution directly to their business pain.

During my BTA National Conference session, I asked a simple question: “What’s the most frustrating part of your sales process right now?” It is no surprise that the most common answers were:

- Prospects ghosting after demos
- Getting stuck in pricing games
- Struggling to get to real decision-makers

These are not “sales problems” — they are symptoms of misalignment. When you focus on what your product does instead of what it solves, you lose leverage. Features do not close deals — outcomes do.

### Features Tell. Outcomes Sell.

During my session, I dissected what I believe is the single most important shift in today’s sales conversation: moving from product-based selling to outcome-based advising. Instead of selling faster speeds, better backups or tighter firewalls, we practiced uncovering what those things enable:

- Lower risk of downtime
- Stronger compliance posture
- Scalable growth with fewer headaches

That is what your client cares about. He (or she) does not want a “better server.” He wants to never have to worry about servers again.



### The Trusted Advisor Advantage

One of the exercises we did in New Mexico was a self-check on what it means to be a trusted advisor. I asked the attendees: “Raise your hand if you believe you’re a trusted advisor to your clients.” Then I followed up with: “Would your clients say the same? Unequivocally?”

Trusted advisors do not show up with a pitch deck — they show up with perspective. They come prepared with insight, challenge assumptions and help clients solve problems they have not fully defined yet. That is where Sandler’s methodology becomes a game changer.

We teach sellers to stop “presenting” and start “investigating.” We slow down the process to speed up the outcome. And we build trust by asking the hard questions others are afraid to touch.

### The Three Questions That Shift the Conversation

If you remember nothing else from my national conference session — or this article — remember these three questions. They will change the way you sell:

- (1) **Why this?** Why does this problem matter now and why does it need to be solved?
- (2) **Why us?** What unique perspective or experience do we bring that others do not?
- (3) **Why now?** What are the costs of inaction and what is the risk of doing nothing?

These questions help you shift the narrative. They move you from being a vendor to becoming a problem solver — and that is when you gain influence in the deal.

### Stop Selling Like It Is 2010

If you are still trying to “wow” your buyer with specs, you

are already behind. In today's world, average is automated. Artificial intelligence (AI) is writing scripts, bots are doing outreach and competitors are one click away.

But here is what cannot be automated: real connection, relevant insight and trusted relationships. Those are the currency of the modern seller.

### Final Thought

The next time you step into a sales conversation, do not ask yourself, "How do I convince them?" Instead, ask: "How do I help them decide for themselves — and feel confident in that decision?" That is how you sell smarter — not harder.

### Let's Continue the Conversation

If this article resonated with you — and you are ready to equip your team to sell smarter, not harder — I would love to connect. Whether it is a deeper conversation, a team session or a fresh look at your current sales process, I am here to help. Let's build stronger teams, drive better outcomes and

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raise the standard for how sales are done in our industry. ■

*Samuel Mascato is a highly respected business growth advisor with Sandler, bringing more than 20 years of experience in sales, leadership development and strategic growth. He has worked extensively with organizations in the technology sector, helping them navigate industry-specific challenges and drive significant growth.*

*Recognized as one of the best in the industry, Mascato specializes in optimizing sales processes, enhancing leadership capabilities and delivering measurable results. His expertise in coaching executives and sales teams allows businesses to unlock their full potential.*

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