

The Baron Group, Inc.

# "Let's Talk Selling"

## About this Newsletter...

Dear Friends:

For years many of our clients and partners have asked us why we haven't had a newsletter that we could send out on a regular basis. It would be a way to remind course graduates of concepts and skills they learned in our sales and sales management programs; we could highlight new approaches we developed; we could offer perspectives on the industry and we could promote our products.

There was never a good answer to this question. So, finally...here is our first edition. We expect to send this out four to six times a year. It will include the kinds of things you asked for listed above. We hope and believe that you find it useful.

Please let us know what you think. And if there are other people in your organization who you think would benefit from receiving the newsletter, please let us know. It will also be posted on our web site: [www.barongroup.com](http://www.barongroup.com).

2001 began as a challenging time for business and then became a truly painful year for all of us; I wish you well in the healing process.

Eric R. Baron



## Salespeople as Problem Solvers

"I want my salespeople to bring me solutions to problems I don't even know I have." That was a quote we heard from a focus group participant not too long ago. We will never forget it. It now drives virtually everything we teach.

Salespeople are very good problem solvers. The skills that make anybody good at problem solving are the same skills required to be successful in selling. Whether it is how you ask questions, listen for connections, generate ideas, manage resistance, gain commitment, take risks, think speculatively, demonstrate credibility and trust or even display tenacity, these skills and attributes are necessary to be both a good problem solver and a successful salesperson.

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The Baron Group, Inc.

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Editor- Lisa Solinga

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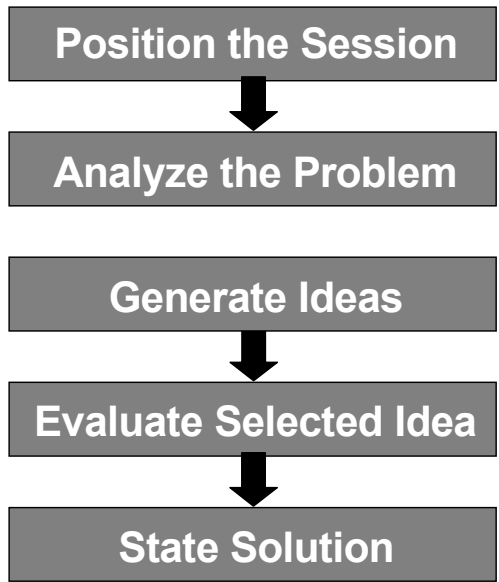


## Salespeople as Problem Solvers (cont'd)

When you compare a proven problem solving sequence and our consultative selling sequence (below) you see how similar these processes are. In both cases there is a need to position the meeting. In problem solving we analyze the problem and in selling we analyze the customer's situation. This is the critical part of each process. The third phase is the most fun for each because we get to talk – whether it's generating ideas in problem solving or making recommendations in selling.

The next phase – evaluation– is the most challenging part of the process. Turning ideas into solutions through evaluation is difficult, as is the ability to resolve a client's objections. And in both cases, closure is the ultimate objective– whether it is a solution in problem solving or getting an order in selling. Finally, action plans follow the use of each process as well.

### Problem Solving



### Consultative Selling



Because the sales process is in essence a problem solving selling process, people who don't think of themselves as salespeople, but are good problem solvers, can be extremely successful in the selling role. If they learn how to use process skills, if they think of themselves as facilitators, and if they display the behaviors that make them good problem solvers when they are in selling situations, they can impress their customers, differentiate themselves from their competitors and accomplish great things in their selling efforts.

Any time you see a client, customer, or prospect ask yourself how you can bring a problem solving mindset to the meeting. You will certainly be more successful and you will provide your customers with solutions to their problems – some of which “they don't even know they have.”





## Making Corporate Change Happen

Successfully implementing and sustaining any new organizational initiative or strategy— for example, team selling— involves much more than teaching the right people the right skills. Indeed, it requires a true *commitment* from the entire organization to pursue *a new business 'way of life'* every day. Such profound and permanent *changes in behavior can only grow out of appropriately changed attitudes and beliefs*. The process for doing this is *continuing and cyclical*, and it must begin at the top of the company. The leadership's visible, consistent behaviors, practices and mandated policies will overcome the staff's inevitable initial skepticism and, over time, also block the tendency to slide back into the old way of doing things.

While we can only scratch the surface in this space, here's a synopsis of the five steps which create and maintain corporate culture change:

**1- Craft the message.** Spell out the new vision and goals, and describe exactly what the various staff groups must *do* to achieve them. Who does exactly what, and why? Don't forget to stress the resulting benefits to the individuals as well as to the company.

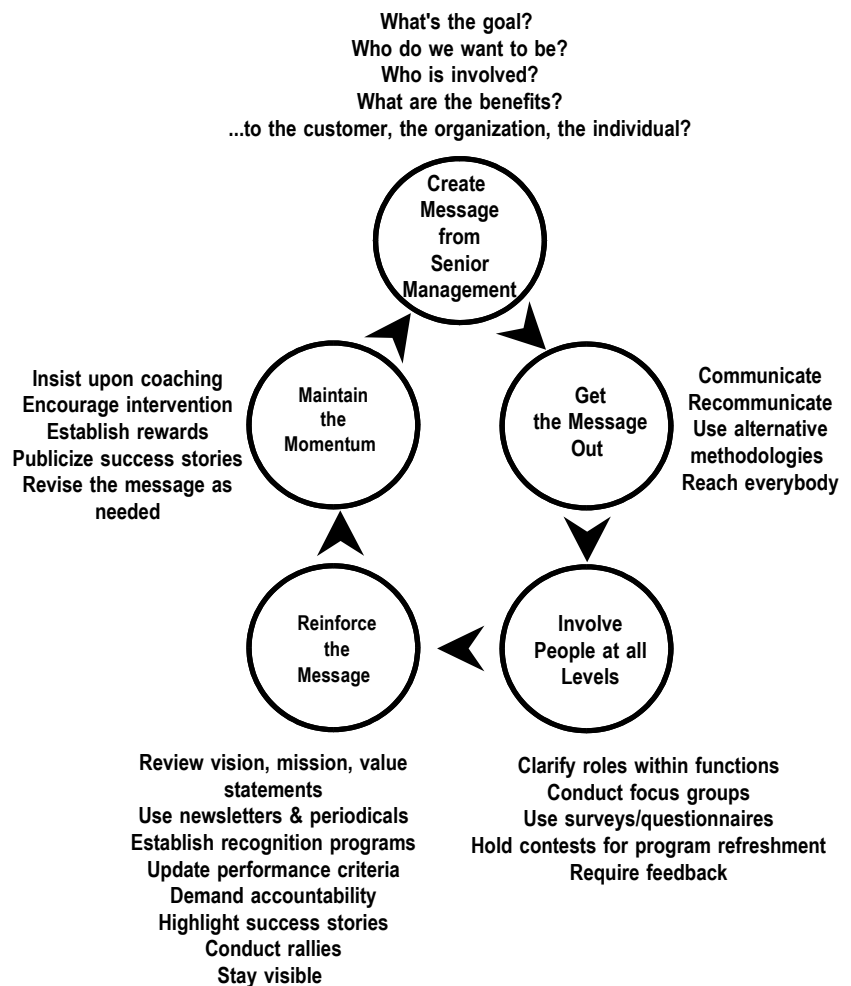
**2- Get the message out.** What are the best ways of publicizing your program: gatherings (off site?), teleconferencing, white papers, computer intranet, cascading through channels, etc.? *Say it loud, again and again; reach them all.*

**3- Involve everybody.** Involvement precedes commitment; assign roles and let cross-functional teams work them out. Internal research of all kinds, contests, etc., and requiring frequent feedback will keep everybody in the game and *playing hard*. Cosmetic things like parties, paraphernalia, etc., help, too.

**4- Reinforce the message.** *Keep it up!* Stay visible using the channels in Step 2 by reinforcing the program and publicizing the inevitable improvements, updates and refinements which will result from continuing feedback. "Praise in public; criticize (performance) in private." *Accountability* pays off here.

**5- Maintain the momentum.** That means *doing*, not just talking. Model the behaviors; *coach the staff*, provide refresher and *follow-up training*, run contests/solicit suggestions, conduct cross-functional ideation and problem-solving sessions. Make sure they're *still playing hard, and winning*.

If management is willing to make this concerted, continuing effort, its reward will be continuing, self-reinforcing and self-improving change for the better— worth the effort, for sure.





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## Who We Are:

The Baron Group is a consulting firm that researches and teaches the skills involved in the sales process, the sales management process and problem solving. Our primary focus is on the role of the salesperson as a problem solving resource to his or her customers. The salesperson who can help his or her customers solve their business problems by combining industry and product knowledge with proven problem solving skills will clearly become a valued-added resource to the customer.

We develop programs appropriate to your needs in creating a sales process for your organization and we provide the required training for your salespeople, sales managers and colleagues.

**The Baron Group and the Graduate School of Business, Columbia University--** Eric Baron teaches *Sales Action Planning* as part of Columbia Business School's one-week "Sales Management Program." It is offered in June and November at historic Arden House in Harriman, New York. In both 2000 and 2001, Columbia Executive Education Programs were ranked #1 worldwide by the Financial Times of London. For more information, contact Liz Schultz at Columbia Executive Education, 212-854-7613

### ◆ OPEN REGISTRATION PROGRAMS IN 2002 ◆

**The Baron Group offers an Open Registration Program in *Consultative Selling Skills* to individual participants** on a first come, first served basis. The diversity of the companies and industries represented in these programs greatly broadens perspectives gained in the learning situation.

We define **Consultative Selling** as the ability to work with clients and prospects to solve their business problems. True consultative salespeople understand how to *transform a sales call into a problem solving opportunity*. They know **how to listen** for ideas, for perspectives and for client needs during the salesperson/client dialogue. They understand the value of offering solutions, not just products and services. And they know how to **manage the resistance** they'll inevitably encounter when presenting ideas. This program teaches sales people all these "consultative" skills. Our facilitative, highly interactive training approach uses live videotaping extensively in extremely realistic simulated "sales call" role-play exercises.

**Six 2-day programs are offered in 2002:**

**January 10-11 ◆ March 21-22 ◆ May 23-24 ◆ July 25-26 ◆ October 10-11 ◆ December 5-6**

**For more information, fill out the form below and fax this page to: 203-221-8411, or email us at: [tbg@barongroup.com](mailto:tbg@barongroup.com)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone \_\_\_\_\_  **Call Me**  **Send me information on:**

**Consultative Selling**  **Needs Driven Selling**  **Problem Solving Selling**

**Innovative Team Selling**  **Sales Action Planning**  **Coaching**  **Negotiations**