URL: https://stvp.stanford.edu/blog/videos/seed-the-clouds-and-watch-the-sales-grow

There are typical ways to approach sales, but Kawasaki has three other ideas. These include the unintended users, allowing test drives, and the suck down theory – chances are the CEO is not going to be the one buying your product, but rather the people at lower levels.

Transcript

The tenth thing is to seed the clouds.. This is about rain-making, about sales.. These are the things I learned about sales.. First thing is "Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom." This I stole from Chairman Mao, although it's not clear to me he implemented letting a hundred flowers blossom.. "Hundreds of Flowers Blossom" means that at the start of the company you'll often see people who are not your intended customers using your product or service.. And they're going to be using it in ways you didn't anticipate.. Many entrepreneurs go crazy, "My God, the wrong people are buying our products in large quantities.. What are we doing wrong? Let's get marketing and sales in here.. We need to reposition the product because we know who should buy our product." Well, that's categorically stupid.. Fundamentally, when you see this happening, first of all take the money..

Take the money.. There's two theories in engineering for revising a product: One, is to go the people who aren't buying your product and you ask them, "Why aren't you buying our Macintosh, Mr.. Fortune 500 CIO?" And the CIO will say, "You don't have a letter-quality printer driver.. You don't have Lotus 1, 2, 3.. You come back to the lab and convince Lotus to do it." You get a lot of quality printer driver.. You go back to the Fortune 500 CIO.. You say, "All right, we listened.. Now, there's a printer driver.. Now, there's 1, 2, 3." They still won't buy it.. They still won't buy it..

The other theory in engineering is, you go to the people who are buying your product.. "Mr.. Desktop Publishing or Ms.. Desktop Publishing, why are you buying our product?" "Because it's WYSIWIG because it's high-resolution printing." So, you come back to the lab and then you say, "Well, people are buying our product to use for Desktop Publishing, not Spreadsheet Databasing and Word Processing like we intended.. And what do they need for Desktop Publishing System? They need bigger monitors.. They need higher resolution printers.. They need higher resolution monitors.. They need all these things to make Desktop Publishing better." That's my theory.. Fix for who's buying.. Ignore the people who are atheists..

Atheists are too hard to convert to your religion.. Go for agnostics.. Go for believers.. Forget the atheists.. Second point is, we need to enable people to test-drive your product.. That you're saying to them, "I think you're smart.. And because I think you're smart, I'm not going to bludgeon you into becoming my customer.. Take home my product.. Take home my servers.. Try my software..

Try my website.. Then you decide." The third point is, to suck down.. One of the fundamental shortcomings of sales training is that you think what many people think that selling a new product is about sucking up.. You need to suck up to CXO-level people, suck up to your CIO, suck up to your CTO, suck up to your CEO or CMO, sucking up to CXO-level people.. It has been my experience that particularly from a tech startup, the people who truly make the decision to try your product or service are not the people with CXO, Vice President, or Director-Level title.. They are the people who are administrative aids and database administrators and tech support people.. They're the interns, they're the seller hires.. They're people without titles.. They're the people who really do the work, however.. And so, if you want to be successful in sales, you have to understand something..

That in most organizations the higher you go, the thinner the oxygen.. And therefore the more difficult it is to find intelligent life, right? So, if you dedicate yourself in the sales effort to sucking up, you will be sucking up to the dumbest people in the organization.. You need to learn to suck down.. You need to learn to suck across.. Because that's where the

decisions are made for a high-tech startup.. Suck down, suck across, don't just suck up...