

You can't cross-sell without understanding customer needs

Any channel sales professional will know the benefits of upselling, which is fundamentally offering a customer an upgrade on what they originally agreed to. Cross-selling is an equally powerful bullet in a salesperson's bandolier and has become even more valuable in equipping customers to work remotely. Headsets, monitors, enhanced microphones – even software that reduces background noise – can be added to connectivity sales.

Cross-selling is not rocket science. How many times have you thrown in a packet of sweets or batteries at the supermarket checkout strategically placed in front of you as you load your purchases onto the conveyor belt?

In the ICT industry everyone knows that cross-selling is effectively bundling products into more profitable sales that pleases customers who feel they are getting added value from a deal.

These sales usually come about through the relationship a salesperson has with his or her customers. Put simply, it's all about earning more revenue from existing customers. It's important to bear in mind that it's five to 25 times more expensive to acquire a new customer than it is to retain an existing one. And when you do retain a customer, they're more likely to spend more and purchase more frequently.

Seasoned channel salespeople are usually in a great position to cross-sell and upsell successfully because they already have an in-depth knowledge of their customers. The key is making an offer that's appropriate for where the customer is at that time and salespeople or CRMs with a pulse on the customer will know what extra solutions they need to achieve their goals.

And it's a well-known fact that existing customers are easier to sell to. You are 60-70% likely to sell to an existing customer, compared to the 5-20% likelihood of selling to a new prospect. At the risk of stating the obvious, if your sales teams aren't cross-selling and upselling, you're just leaving money on the table.



RICHARD BETTS
CHARTERHOUSE
VOICE & DATA

"It's all about developing meaningful relationships with our clients! A consultative approach based on trust where you proactively listen is key, and using an engaging mix of communications tools – video of course, but don't forget email, webinars and a simple phone call – makes for a much more engaging and rewarding relationship. Underpinning this is the right support where salespeople are nurtured to develop an in-depth knowledge of the products that transcend their own specialist area. It's about having a sales team that has more than a superficial understanding of a product portfolio, that truly understands how those products complement each other and how they make a difference to clients. Charterhouse weighs heavily on training and has set up a sales and product training academy which underpins our claim of a consultative approach. By leading with knowledge, we can be the trusted advisor first and watch our relationships grow."



JOHN IGOO
CITYFIBRE

"The most important aspect to successful up/cross selling is understanding the customer's specific situation and not presuming it's just the same requirements as the last customer you spoke with. We've had most success where we have provided bespoke solutions, specifically moulded to match the needs of the individual customer. But it's important to remember that all the value-added services you promote are critically reliant on the core infrastructure being fit for purpose. It always comes back to the quality and performance of the underlying connectivity. When using full fibre connectivity, this enables our partners to confidently propose complete solutions with various value-added opportunities, all delivered across a solid and reliable connection, providing the customer with a complete solution and the wholesale partner with a profitable recurring income."



ROB MUKHERJEE
EVERYCLOUD

"At EveryCloud we believe in building a people-led future fuelled by technology (never technology-led). This means our sales teams are focused on understanding their customer's world first – and our solutions second. Once we have onboarded a new customer, we are constantly assessing – how has their world changed? How are we reacting to that change? We sell a range of cloud communications and cloud security solutions. Our sales team's success in cross-selling and upselling comes from understanding each customer's industry and the opportunities and risks that their industry is facing, understanding the company's goals and objectives and how they as a salesperson can help, and understanding each person's role and individual priorities. That understanding comes from widening your network and broadening your conversations. Don't predict the outcome and avoid the temptation to lead with your strengths. Do it well and the customers will be led to your strengths."



ANDY SMETHURST
GAMMA

"The key, as ever, is to start with the customer. Whether it's a cross-sell or an upsell, you put the customers 'requirements' and 'needs' first by understanding how, in an ideal world, they would like things to work. It's not up to the end-customer to be aware of what solutions might exist to enhance their ways of working. These days, most channel partners would consider themselves to be 'Managed Service Providers', therefore they need to 'sell' in a much more consultative fashion. At Gamma, we use new product developments and innovations, as well as existing data, to try and generate cross or upsell opportunities. An example being the uptake of our UCaaS service, Collaborate, which massively matched the needs of many UK businesses that were forced to work remotely through COVID-19. We went to great lengths to assist our partners with end-user facing collateral and video content to assist the easy roll-out and adoption of Collaborate."



GRAHAM ROGER
HIGHNET

"HighNet's advice is to stick very close to and be available for your customers. Account Managers should of course know the 'white space' in their customers and arrange review meetings where they can discuss these areas. Getting the customer to open up about their challenges is essential, and right now the language should be about flexibility, making sure the customer can adapt at speed without feeling pressure to sign long term contracts. Finally, don't just send a proposal out! Get face to face over video to take the customer through your proposal, adjust as required, and then send it out – shorten the sales cycle! HighNet is helping customers 'flex' their business by being creative financially. Examples include 30-day Mobile SIMs, no contract, offering collaborate homeworker solutions four months free then pay monthly, no installation fees on ethernet 12-month terms, and even agreeing payment holiday options in advance."



DAVID HUGHES
INCOM CNS

"We have used the opportunity presented to us during this extraordinary year to re-focus the entire team towards our existing customers, concentrating on how we can serve them better, enable their success and drive new sales and upgrades. Our sales team has made use of the plentiful online training available to us via partner portals to increase their knowledge of existing products and services and glean new expertise. Empowering our team with the right training has given us the edge when aiming to introduce value add services to our customers. Over the last three decades we have thrived by periodically introducing new products and services to our loyal customer base. Adding cyber security, and more recently energy, to the portfolio has created continued cross-selling success for our team over the last six months, as customers see us as their trusted advisor for not only comms, but all of their utilities."



NICKY BUTLER
NICE

"As the world is reacting to the COVID-19 epidemic, organisations and employees are trying to adapt to a new and demanding reality. Customer Service employees must adjust to a work from home environment, as they are facing higher customer demands than ever, while at the same time considering health and safety aspects. Organisations must respond to the changing needs of both customers and employees, while complying with government mandates and navigating through volatile economic conditions. More than ever, resellers are required to support their clients and guide them through the challenges they face. Our three key tips would be: Be proactive, don't wait for customers to ask you for solutions to fix their problems; enhance your product portfolio to include a wider range of solutions; stay up to date on key messaging and solution positioning as this helps you to identify cross-sell opportunities."



MICHAEL O'DONNELL
(JNR) - OPUS

"Cross-selling starts with delivering exceptional service and demonstrating the value of your partnership with a customer. It's important to take a genuine interest in your customer's organisation, understand its business goals and objectives with regular account reviews and ask the right questions to uncover pain points and identify opportunities to add further value. It's then a case of aligning technology solutions with those customer needs and making them aware of the benefits on a one-to-one basis. Our core strategy is only to partner with organisations where we can genuinely add value, and this applies equally to cross selling as it does new business. It's important to be able to fully integrate and support any additional services, not just sell for the sake of it and risk damaging a good relationship. Taking this approach has resulted in more than 70% of our customers taking three or more services from Opus."



BETHANY HOOPER
UPLANDS

"One size doesn't fit all. Being a specialist, doesn't mean you can't be extensive in your offering and providing a wide range of solutions will open countless opportunities to speak to your existing customers again and again. The more you have to offer, the more conversations you can have, and don't be afraid to ask, you never know what tech requirements a business may have. Most importantly, it's about getting the delivery right. If you deliver exceptional service from day one, your existing customers will want to buy more. As a traditionally mobile-first provider, that has adopted a unified communications offering in recent years, our traditional customer base is mobile centric and since the development of a wider product set we have been able to continually increase ARPU by simply having a more holistic conversation with our customers, enabling us to cross-sell a broad range of telecoms and technology solutions."



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