

## **DISRUPTIVE SELLING**

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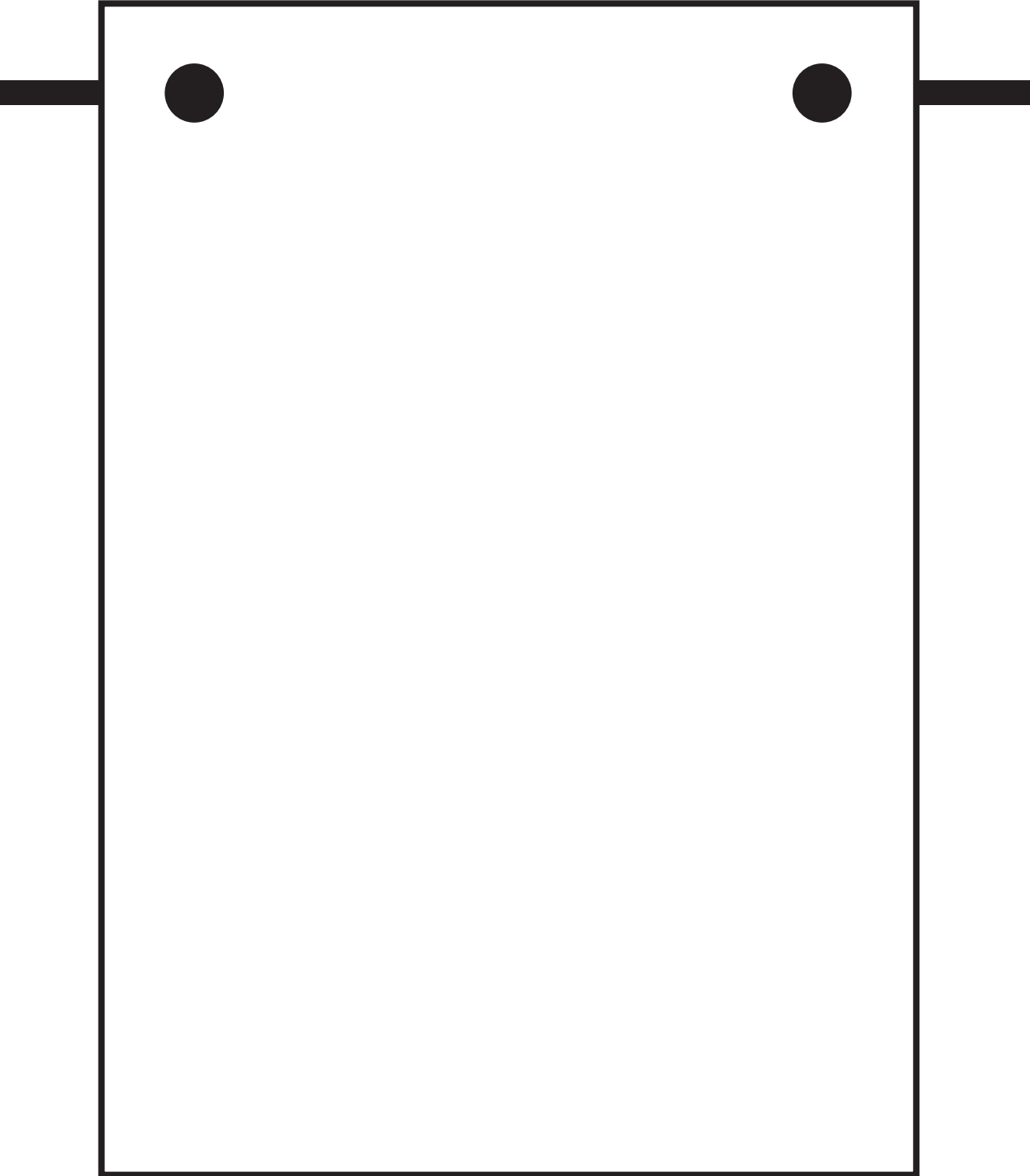
*Patrick Maes*

**DIS  
RUP  
TIVE  
SELLING**

*A new approach to sales,  
marketing and customer service*



LANNOO  
CAMPUS



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**I DON'T WANT  
TO WORRY YOU,  
BUT YOU'LL  
NEED A  
BLANK SHEET  
OF PAPER.**

# INTRODUCTION



'The empowered customer  
does all the work, and  
will be grateful for doing it.'



## INTRODUCTION

Has it ever crossed your mind that when you place an order with Zalando, or book a room with Airbnb or pick up a package from Coolblue, you are functioning as a free worker in a disruptive business model?

These three companies simply serve as examples. There are an increasing number of other companies who are matching supply to demand in a similarly innovative manner. Everyone is interested in the way these companies are changing our industries. They do this by overturning most of the existing conventions relating to the ownership of capital goods, the use of technology and the definition of business activities. However, their disruptive business models also have something else in common: they let their customers do most of the work. Tasks that were previously carried out by an expensive sales apparatus are now pushed on to the consumers. What's more, these consumers are thrilled and enchanted to get the possibility to be empowered. Their free work results in immediate gratification via 24/7 information, order facilities and tracking services and these are rated highly by the 21<sup>st</sup> century empowered customer.

Disruptive selling calls into question all existing wisdom about commercial organization and the deployment of people and resources in sales, marketing and customer service. Taking it one step further the traditional sales force seems destined for oblivion in the years to come. Sales reps, call-centre workers and other intermediaries will become optional, if not wholly unnecessary.

Zalando, Airbnb, Coolblue and the other disruptive.coms are leading the way in new thinking about sales. Their examples are rapidly gaining ground in traditional companies and in many industries.

And this is only the beginning. With the internet of things, products and machines will pass on information about anything relevant to marketeers and service people. Companies will increasingly base their predictions about future customer behaviour on artificial intelligence. Predictions will be translated into automatically triggered offers and deliveries.

## DISRUPTIVE SELLING

We are living in an era in which we are switching from ownership to use. Customers share their experience of a product or service with other customers, and set-up parallel networks of customer care. This creates numerous options for companies that want to drastically reinvent their business model. In almost all cases these reflections are leading to organizations that are significantly more efficient and significantly more customer-oriented than the traditional sales/marketing/service model.

At every level, customer expectation is increasing in respect of the availability of information, access to support services, reaction speed and delivery time, also in B2B.

Companies who fail to appreciate this – and fail to act accordingly – can expect to face an increasing lack of understanding from their customers. It is therefore high time to look critically at your own organization and your commercial interaction models. The good news is that you can achieve much through the use of smart software and affordable technology. People now look at their professional careers in a different way. And social legislation is increasingly focused on the flexible use of human resources. This gives plenty of scope for creativity.

This book will help you with your transformation exercise. It gives you a clear framework and practical guidelines that will allow you to make a start immediately. I will tell you all about the technology and software that can help you. But be warned: you cannot expect to solve all your problems with technology alone.

Successful disruptive selling concepts will be based on the right combination of a series of factors. These include an understanding of what motivates your customers, a corresponding value proposition, appropriate organizational structures and processes, and the right culture. This must ensure that every contact with your company contributes towards greater *customer advocacy*.

The ultimate objective is to make customers happy, by allowing them to work with your company in a rewarding manner. As a result, they will pass this on to other people. Of course, you must always bear in mind the financial viability of your operations.

For this reason, considerable attention will be devoted to matters such as cost to sell and cost to serve. ROMI – return on marketing investment – will never be far from our thoughts.

Technology will continue to evolve. Each year in January, the press and other media channels give an overview of the latest state-of-the-art developments introduced at the CES – the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. This will give you some idea of the speed at which new technologies can be transformed into usable solutions, in



## INTRODUCTION

almost every conceivable field: from wardrobes that automatically clean and iron your clothes to robots that can replace your company receptionist.

Companies need to accept that change is now a constant in business life. Consequently, it is not enough to question your business model on a single occasion, in the hope that you can continue with it for the next ten to fifteen years. The realities of the market and the demands of your customers will ensure that you need to reassess it continually. The coolest practices in terms of service and customer interaction will be determined by the initiatives of the mainstream disruptors, like Bol.com and Amazon. You will have little option but to adjust and follow – even if you are active in business to business or industrial capital goods.

What you need is a state of mind, an organization and a series of processes that will allow you to respond flexibly to new technological developments and the constantly changing expectations of consumers. Making the right technological choices is crucial. But it is equally important to have the right culture and dynamism within your company.

I would like to share with you how we at CPI assist companies to radically renew their commercial organization and value propositions and help them to remain competitive in both domains. Irrespective of whether we are talking about financial services, raw materials, machine manufacture, alcohol, cosmetics, chocolate, accounting or insurance.

In recent years, we have successfully applied the principles contained in this book in each of these sectors. It is also pleasing to be able to report, not without some pride, that the ideas and practices that we developed here in Antwerp are gradually finding their way into boardrooms throughout Europe.

With our disruptive selling approach, we have elaborated a system that can be used universally and on an international scale.

The purpose is to create value for companies and their customers.

The whole concept of disruptive selling is based on the radical improvement of efficiency, linked to an equally radical improvement in customer-friendliness.

Traditional ways of selling will become the exception. The role of marketing will switch from branding to the generation of qualified leads and the development of brand ambassadors. Customer service will become the hub of relational management. Taking this to its logical conclusion, the traditional profiles of the marketeer, seller and cus-

customer service operative will all be called into question. This means that it will become necessary to train these people in a different way.

In this book, I will tell you how you can introduce the concepts of disruptive selling into your company. I will show what impact this will have on your customers, your technology and your organizational structures. I will explain how your commercial organization can continue to create value for your customers, before, during and after every interaction. I will demonstrate precisely what marketing automation involves. I will provide a series of handles that will enable you to make the correct choice from the wide selection of marketing toolkits that are available on the market. I will discuss not only the transformation of the sales process, but also the remodelling of your operational structure and your manner of leadership, based on objectives and agreements relating to key results.

In this way, I will draw up a blueprint for a new commercial organization that will offer your customers an authentic, respectful and valuable experience. To make things crystal clear, I will illustrate every aspect of the change process with models and examples.




I hope that the concepts put forward in this book will later find their way into your company, your management team and your staff. I hope, too, that they may also be a source of personal inspiration for your own career development.

For future updates, please refer to my blog [disruptive-selling.be](http://disruptive-selling.be) and [disruptiveselling.nl](http://disruptiveselling.nl), where every Tuesday morning I post the latest developments relating to sales, marketing and customer service, as well as associated research, metrics and technology matters.

I wish you enjoyable and informative reading!

Patrick Maes



**DISRUPTIVE SELLING**    HOME   ABOUT PATRICK   BLOG   DROP ME A LINE      

**LEAD. FOLLOW.  
OR GET OUT OF THE WAY**

Never stop innovating. Never stop dreaming.



OUR DISRUPTIVE SELLING BLOG.

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IT'S  
THE END  
OF THE  
WORLD  
AS WE  
KNOW IT

ZERO LEVEL

TAKEN  
FROM  
REAL LIFE





# TAKEN FROM REAL LIFE

With a blank sheet of paper you begin at the zero level.

And that is what you need to do. Start from scratch.

Why? Because consumers are constantly changing the boundaries of their expectations. You can see examples of this everywhere.

We begin with a story taken from real life. And an example of a company that would also be well advised to conduct a zero level exercise, to see what it can do better.

