



For Immediate Release

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## **New analysis: Despite recession, top salespeople close deals by using 5 smart strategies**

Boston, MA – Contrary to negative economic news that suggests the recession makes selling nearly impossible, top salespeople know how to use tough economic times to close deals, increase revenue and strengthen long-term relationships, according to an analysis by The Forum Corp.

Forum, a global strategy execution consultant, studied research on past recessions to learn the most effective selling strategies for organizations and their salespeople in the current economic downturn.

“We found that top salespeople in a recession not only target the economic sectors that are least affected by the economic crisis but also find companies within those sectors that are the healthiest, are still spending, and in some cases are increasing spending,” said Ed Boswell, CEO of Forum. “We also found that top performers have a much sharper focus on certain selling behaviors, and are more attentive, rigorous, and frequent in applying them.”

Forum’s analysis suggests that there are five fundamentals in which top salespeople outperform their competitors in downturns. They:

**Continually reassess territories and re-qualify accounts.** It’s critical for salespeople to know how their products and services add value to clients whose strategies are frequently changing as a result of the recession. Top salespeople convincingly make a case that their product or service is essential to the customer’s business and cannot be cut.

**Manage customers’ risk sensitivity.** Customers’ heightened concerns about risk during a recession lengthen the sales cycle. Top sales performers identify and address customers’ key risk concerns early on, thereby shortening the cycle. They also counter competitors’ desperation pricing and steep discounting, which are potential warning signs of financial instability, by reminding customers of the risk of supplier failure.



**Build and expand relationships and networks.** In a recession, more people can become involved in buying decisions. Top salespeople move early to expand relationships upwards and across a buyers' organization, while still preserving their relationship with the original buyer and helping him or her readjust to shifting circumstances.

**Embrace bold moves.** Often, an economic crisis creates opportunity for salespeople to bring provocative proposals to buyers who, facing once-in-a-lifetime challenges, are open to unconventional solutions and new ideas. Top salespeople seize the chance to take bold stances and demonstrate how their products or services will help a client overcome obstacles quickly.

**Remain optimistic, and teach their clients to be optimistic, too.** Top salespeople learn to interpret negative events and circumstances as temporary and isolated. They also learn to distinguish what they can control from what they cannot. Moreover, they teach their clients this same skill by challenging them when they view negative events as pervasive or permanent.

"Our research suggests that salespeople who master these five fundamentals can succeed where competitors fail, even in the toughest of economic times," said Boswell.

To learn more about selling in a tough economy, visit [www.forum.com](http://www.forum.com) or <http://forumcorporation.wordpress.com>.

#### **About The Forum Corp.**

Forum helps business leaders execute their strategies through people. Using a combination of advisory and learning services, Forum accelerates strategy implementation, minimizes risk, and maximizes earnings for clients. Drawing on nearly four decades of experience and research-based insights in learning design, consulting, and facilitation, Forum brings about changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that enable employees to achieve and exceed the desired benefits of strategic change, to reduce time to improved performance, and to sustain the change over the long term. Forum helps organizations transform their sales force, refocus on the customer, shift to a performance culture, and develop leaders at all levels. Its work contributes not only to increased profitability, but also increased market share, revenue growth, and customer and employee loyalty for clients. Since 1971, clients worldwide have trusted Forum to bring their most important strategic initiatives to life.