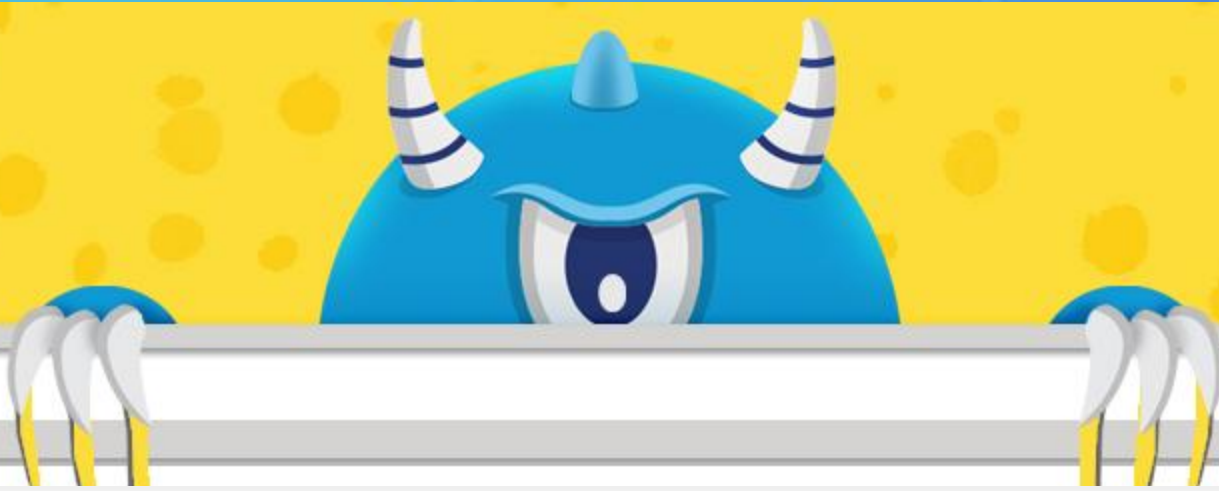


“The Challenger Sales Method” | 

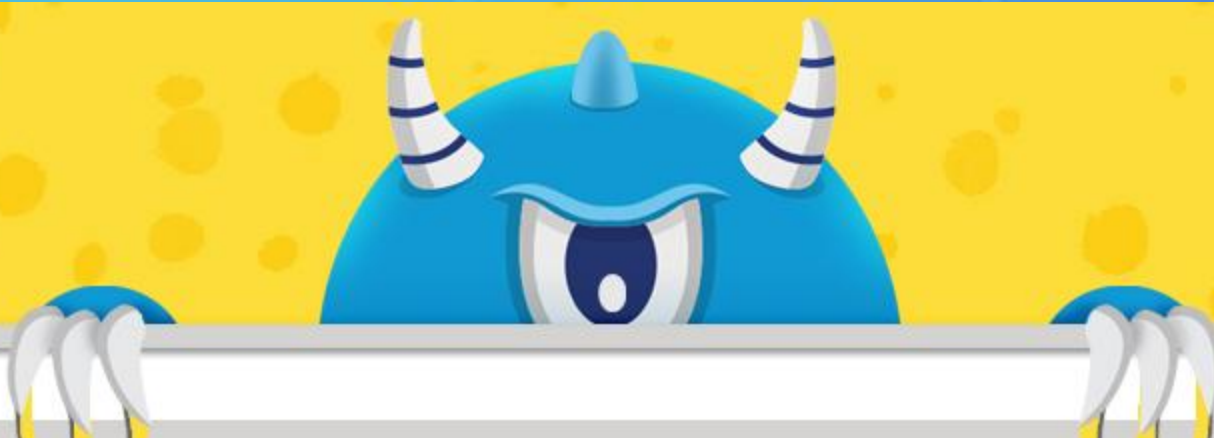
**THE
MEDIABEAST**



What is the Challenger sales model?

The term “Challenger sales” was coined in 2011 when Matthew Dixon and Brent Adamson published the book [“The Challenger Sale: How To Take Control of the Customer Conversation”](#).

The Challenger sales model and methodology is built around a sales process that focuses on teaching, tailoring and taking control of a sales experience. Using the Challenger sales methodology, Dixon and Adamson argue that with the right training and sales tools sales reps can take control of any customer conversation.



Dixon, Adamson and their colleagues researched the attitudes and behaviors of thousands of sales reps and discovered that they fall into one of five distinct profiles:

- **The Hard Worker:** Goes the extra mile, doesn't give up easily, is self-motivated and likes feedback and development

THE
MEDIABEAST



Dixon, Adamson and their colleagues researched the attitudes and behaviors of thousands of sales reps and discovered that they fall into one of five distinct profiles:

- **The Hard Worker:** Goes the extra mile, doesn't give up easily, is self-motivated and likes feedback and development
- **The Relationship Builder:** Builds strong customer advocates, is generous with giving their time to help others and gets along with everyone

**THE
MEDIABEAST**



Dixon, Adamson and their colleagues researched the attitudes and behaviors of thousands of sales reps and discovered that they fall into one of five distinct profiles:

- **The Hard Worker:** Goes the extra mile, doesn't give up easily, is self-motivated and likes feedback and development
- **The Relationship Builder:** Builds strong customer advocates, is generous with giving their time to help others and gets along with everyone
- **The Lone Wolf:** Follows their own instincts, is self-assured and independent

**THE
MEDIABEAST**



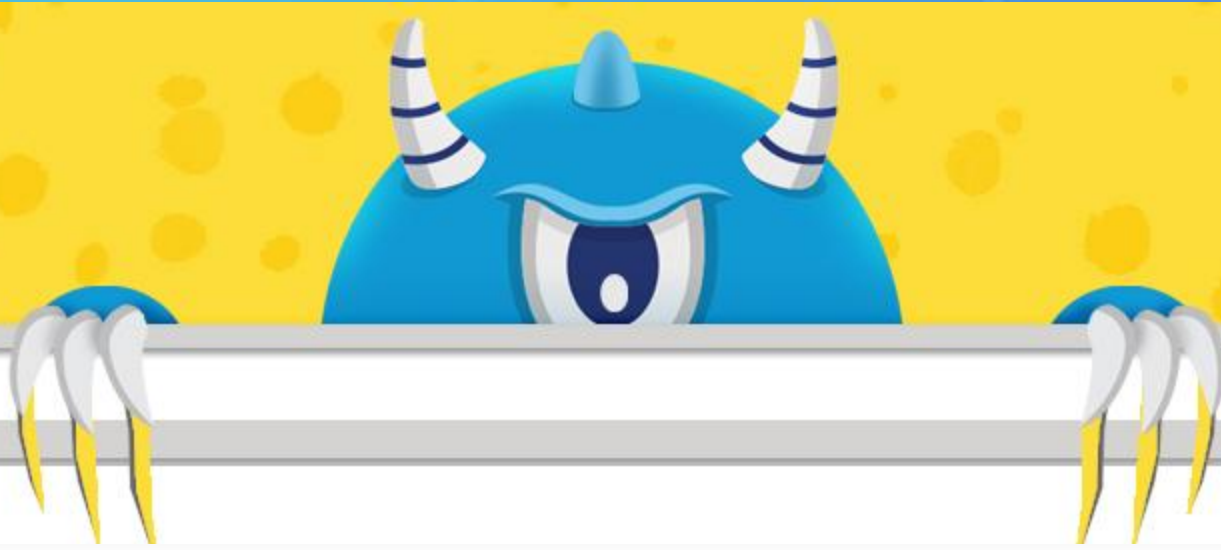
Dixon, Adamson and their colleagues researched the attitudes and behaviors of thousands of sales reps and discovered that they fall into one of five distinct profiles:

- **The Hard Worker:** Goes the extra mile, doesn't give up easily, is self-motivated and likes feedback and development
- **The Relationship Builder:** Builds strong customer advocates, is generous with giving their time to help others and gets along with everyone
- **The Lone Wolf:** Follows their own instincts, is self-assured and independent
- **The Problem Solver:** Is reliable, ensures all problems are solved and is detail-oriented



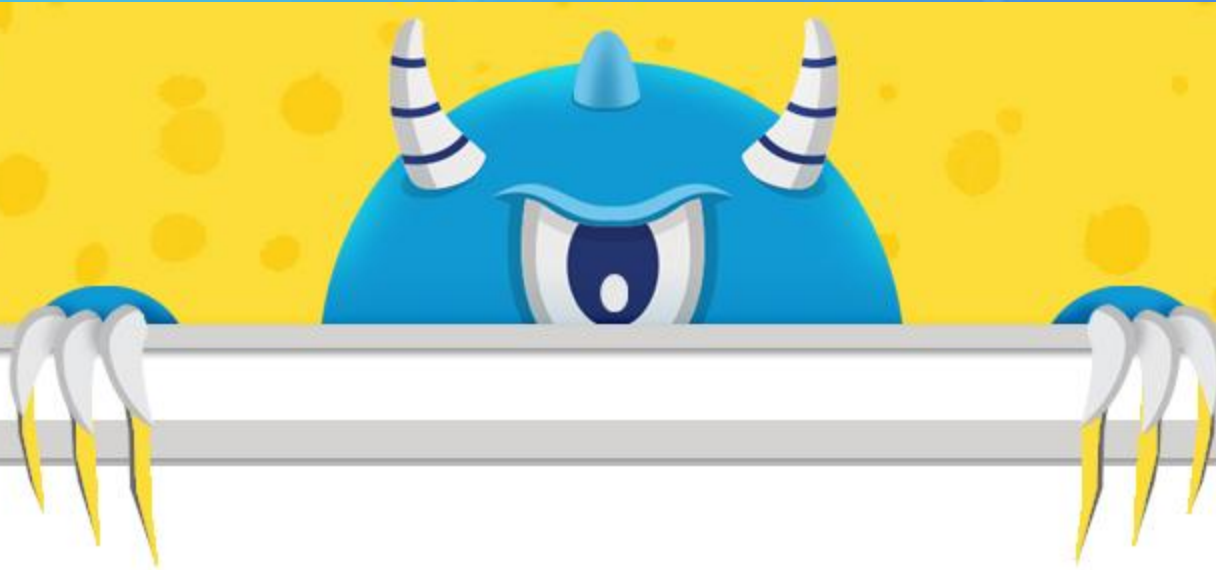
Dixon, Adamson and their colleagues researched the attitudes and behaviors of thousands of sales reps and discovered that they fall into one of five distinct profiles:

- **The Hard Worker:** Goes the extra mile, doesn't give up easily, is self-motivated and likes feedback and development
- **The Relationship Builder:** Builds strong customer advocates, is generous with giving their time to help others and gets along with everyone
- **The Lone Wolf:** Follows their own instincts, is self-assured and independent
- **The Problem Solver:** Is reliable, ensures all problems are solved and is detail-oriented
- **The Challenger:** Has a different view of the world, understands the customer's business, loves to debate, pushes the customer to get out of their comfort zone



The Challenger profile allows reps to build up to a sale by creating constructive tension. Challengers intentionally dispute their customer's way of thinking and force them to contemplate a new perspective. This creates some slight tension in the form of a casual debate. By encouraging their customers to consider new opportunities, the Challenger can begin to offer an alternative way forward.

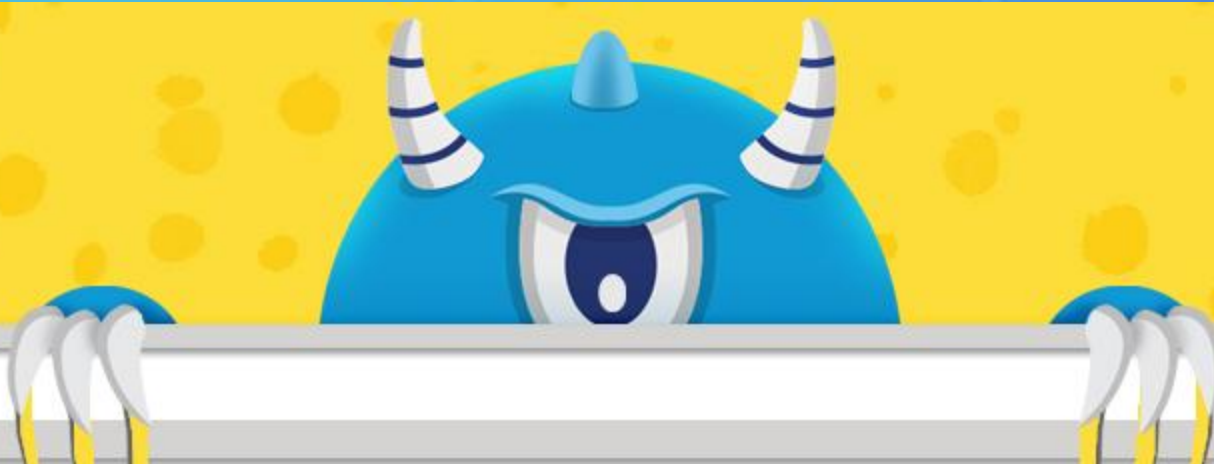
The Challenger sales method relies on delivering insight about an unknown problem or opportunity in the customer's business that the supplier is uniquely positioned to solve.



It captures a prospect's assumptions or beliefs, pinpoints flaws or untruths in them, and then makes room for a sales rep to offer a better solution.

[Research has found](#) that challenging customer assumptions, disrupting their thinking and teaching them something new can help boost sales. Here's a relevant quote from the book.

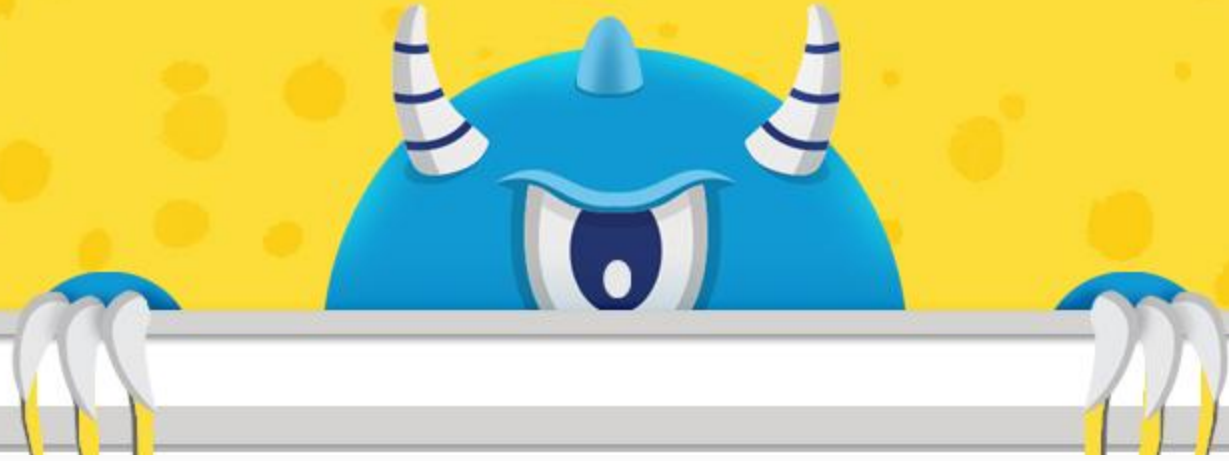
**THE
MEDIABEAST**



“

"Challengers aren't so much world-class investigators as they are world-class teachers. They win not by understanding their customers' world as well as the customers know it themselves, but by actually knowing their customers' world better than their customers know it themselves, teaching them what they don't know but should."

**THE
MEDIABEAST**

A blue cartoon monster with horns and claws is peeking over the top of a browser window. The monster has a large eye and a small horn on its forehead. The browser window has a grey title bar with red, yellow, and green window control buttons on the left, a search bar in the middle, and refresh, download, and share icons on the right. The background is yellow with a pattern of small yellow circles.

[A further study](#) that involved interviewing more than 6,000 sales reps uncovered some interesting findings:

- 40% of top sales performers primarily used a Challenger sales selling style
- Top performers were more than two times likely to use a Challenger approach than any other approach
- Over 50% of all-star performers fit the Challenger profile in complex sales
- Only 7% of high sales performers took a Relationship Building approach (the worst-performing profile)

A blue cartoon monster with horns and claws peering over a browser window. The monster has a large eye and is looking towards the viewer. The browser window has a grey title bar with red, yellow, and green window control buttons on the left, a search bar in the middle, and refresh, download, and share icons on the right. The background is yellow with a pattern of small yellow circles.

How to adopt the Challenger sales methodology in 5 steps

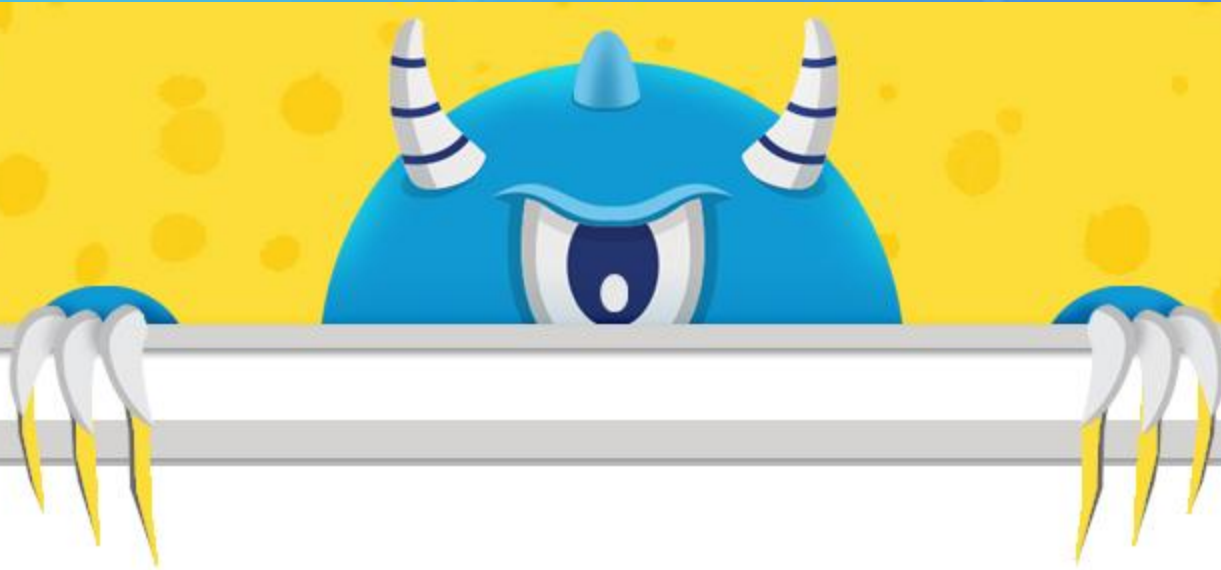
The backbone of the Challenger sales methodology is teaching prospects as opposed to building a relationship with them.

Your sales reps must be equipped to take control of the sale and nudge customers into making purchase decisions. If done right, the selling style mirrors a ride on a rollercoaster. It taps into a prospect's fears by showing them what will happen if they don't act and eventually raises their hopes by positioning your product as the solution to these alarming scenarios. This emotional rollercoaster ends on a high—with the prospect eager to purchase your product.

The Challenger profile allows reps to build up to a sale by creating constructive tension. Challengers intentionally dispute their customer's way of thinking and force them to contemplate a new perspective. This creates some slight tension in the form of a casual debate. By encouraging their customers to consider new opportunities, the Challenger can begin to offer an alternative way forward.

The Challenger sales method relies on delivering insight about an unknown problem or opportunity in the customer's business that the supplier is uniquely positioned to solve.





STEP ONE



**THE
MEDIABEAST**

A blue cartoon monster with horns and claws is peeking over the top of a browser window. The monster has a large eye and a small horn on its forehead. The browser window has a grey title bar with red, yellow, and green window control buttons on the left, a search bar in the middle, and refresh, download, and share icons on the right. The background is yellow with a pattern of small yellow circles.

Step 1: The warm-Up

The first step of the Challenger sales process is to build credibility with prospects. It's crucial that your sales reps show their prospects that they understand the challenges they're facing. To do this, your reps need to thoroughly research and investigate the prospect's pain points, challenges and needs.

While other selling techniques require reps to talk about what your product does, the Challenger sale method demands reps talk about their prospect's needs instead. Your product is never mentioned at this stage, but rather the entire discussion should focus on the prospect's problem.

A blue cartoon monster with horns and claws peering over a browser window. The monster has a large eye and is looking towards the viewer. The browser window has a grey title bar with red, yellow, and green window control buttons, a search bar, and navigation icons. The background is yellow with a pattern of small yellow circles.

Sales reps should:

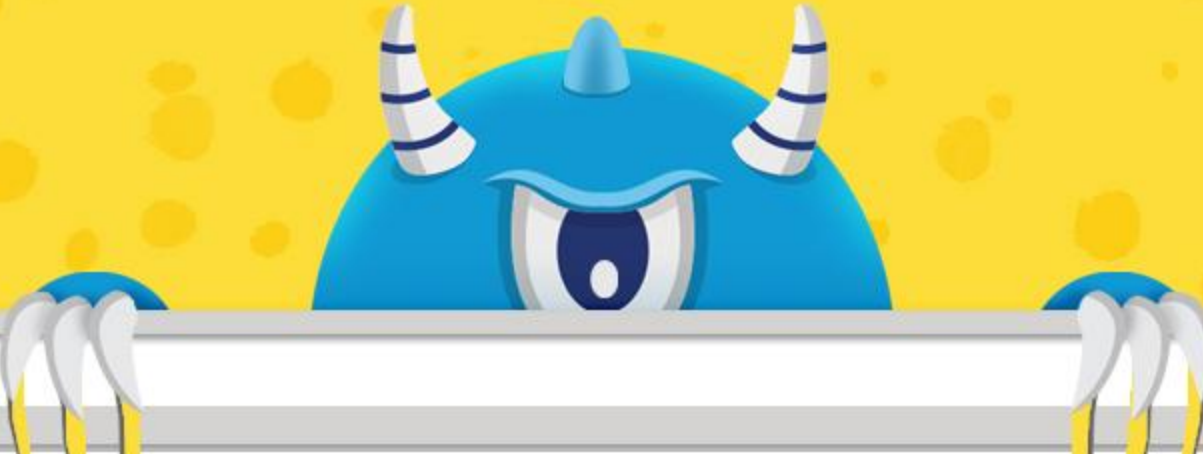
- **Show prospect's why they're contacting them:** Talk about typical issues the prospect might be dealing with to show that they understand and can empathize.
- **Prove they're an expert:** Demonstrate that they have the necessary experience to understand their prospect's problems and what they're dealing with.
- **Get them feeling curious:** Introduce any facts or research about the problem that might pique interest.
- **Get interactive:** Use visuals and interactive content to get the prospect involved in the discussion and uncover crucial pain points they are facing.

Step 2: Reframe the conversation

During the warm-up, the prospect might've said that their biggest problem is landing customers. Or, that their marketing costs are too high. This next step focuses on finding the root of the prospect's problems and reframing them as growth opportunities.

Once the sales rep digs a little deeper, they can begin to break down any misconceptions the prospect has about how they will solve their problems. By forcing a new perspective into the conversation, the prospect should slowly begin to shift their mindset away from what they perceived to be the answer to their problems.

By the end of the conversation, the sales rep is essentially telling the prospect that the problem-solving solution they had in mind isn't going to work. After challenging the prospect to accept this, even only hypothetically at this point, they can begin to reframe the conversation around better solutions. They can do this by:

- 
- A blue cartoon monster with horns and claws is peeking over the top of a browser window. The browser window has a grey title bar with red, yellow, and green window control buttons on the left, a search bar in the center, and refresh, download, and share icons on the right. The background is yellow with a pattern of small yellow circles.
- **Staying on topic:** Address the concerns the prospect talked about in step 1 and reiterate understanding, knowledge and expertise.
 - **Surprising the prospect about their misconceptions:** Challenge them to shift their focus away from how they thought they could solve their problem to the new more effective methods they could use.
 - **Addressing the problem with confidence:** Turning the conversation around like this requires a certain level of fearlessness and assurance. The more confident and relatable the rep can be, the more the prospect will trust them to present alternative solutions.

Once again, the goal of this step isn't to sell. All the rep should be trying to do is evoke a sense of curiosity in the prospect and get them to think in new ways.

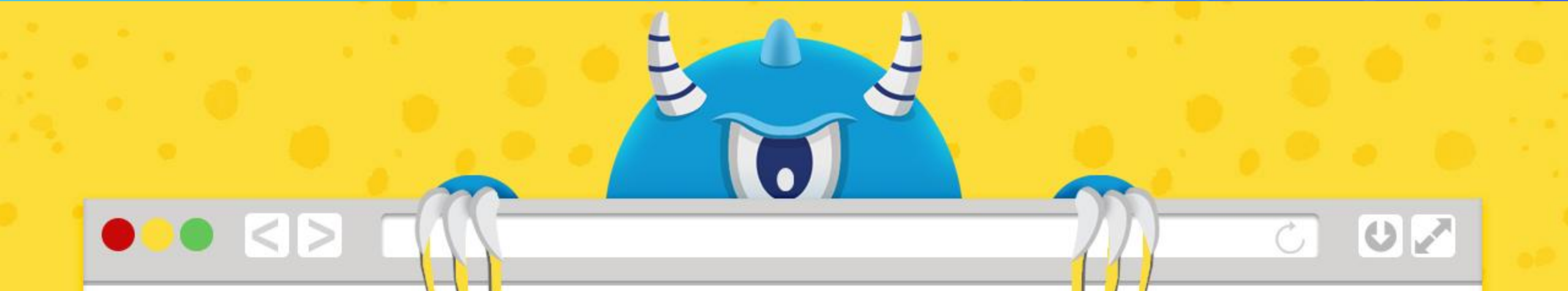
A blue cartoon monster with horns and claws is peeking over the top of a browser window. The monster has a large eye and a small horn on its forehead. The browser window has a grey title bar with red, yellow, and green window control buttons on the left, a search bar in the center, and refresh, download, and share icons on the right. The background is yellow with a pattern of small yellow circles.

Step 3: Use emotions

No matter how good your product is or how many features it has, emotions will still play a key role in B2B buying behavior. Up to 95% of our decision-making is subconscious and usually driven by our emotional reaction, according to [professor Gerald Zaltman](#).

“One firm with a very ‘tired’ brand explored consumers’ hidden thoughts and feelings and discovered a relevant, basic emotion that had been overlooked by all brands in the category. They were able to connect this emotion with their brand giving it a major sales boost.”

The more that a prospect can personally relate to a product, the more likely they are to buy it.

A blue cartoon monster with horns and claws peering over a browser window. The monster has a large eye and is looking towards the viewer. The browser window has a grey title bar with red, yellow, and green window control buttons on the left, a search bar in the center, and refresh, download, and share icons on the right. The background is yellow with a pattern of small yellow circles.

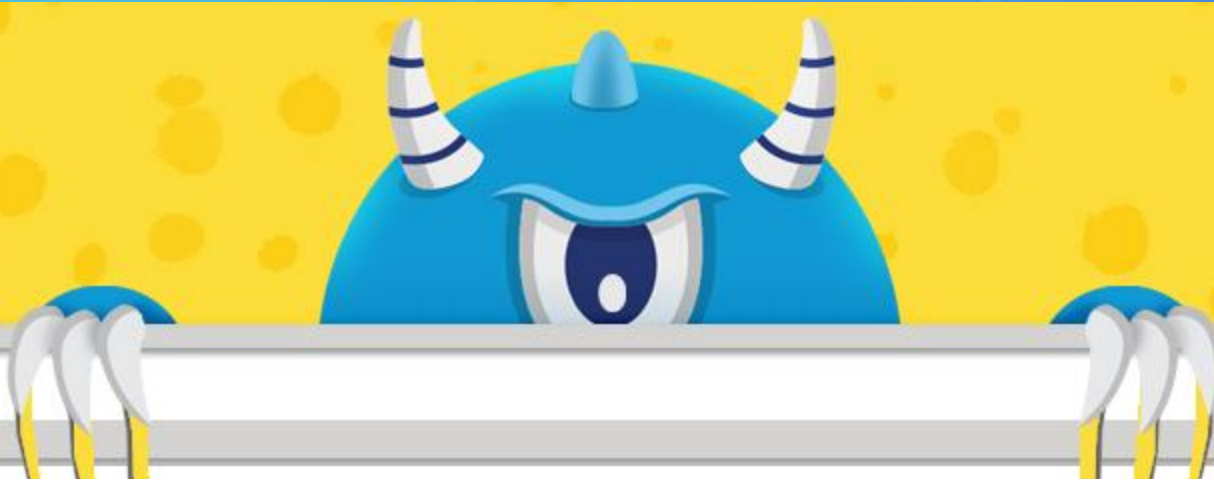
A great way to get prospects to see personal value is by presenting them with relatable customer stories. By telling stories of customers that have similar problems, the prospect can begin to see themselves as the main character. And by showing the prospect how these other customers benefited from a new solution, you're forcing them to picture how they could benefit, too.

Once a prospect realizes that an alternate solution could, in fact, solve their problem, it's harder for them to go back to their old ways of thinking.

Now that the prospect is happily picturing themselves using a new solution, reps can take the emotional rollercoaster a step further by showing prospects what will happen if they don't change their outlook. They can do this by:



- **Telling a story:** The emotional impact will come from storytelling. Reps should tell a story that paints a picture of what will happen if their prospect continues down their familiar path. They should make the story relatable by addressing their prospect's pain points, challenges and failing solutions.
- **Using customer stories:** Then, replace this fictional unhappy ending with real-life success stories. The stories should be backed by case studies of people who have solved their problems using these alternative solutions. Sales reps should use visuals when telling the stories, as [pictures stick in people's minds](#) more than words during a [sales pitch](#) or [sales presentation](#)—or even when shared over email.
- **Doing research:** Now is the time to provide invaluable insight in a way that resonates with the prospect's concerns and aspirations. As soon as the prospect begins to picture themselves using a new solution, reps should back up their argument with data to rationalize their statements.

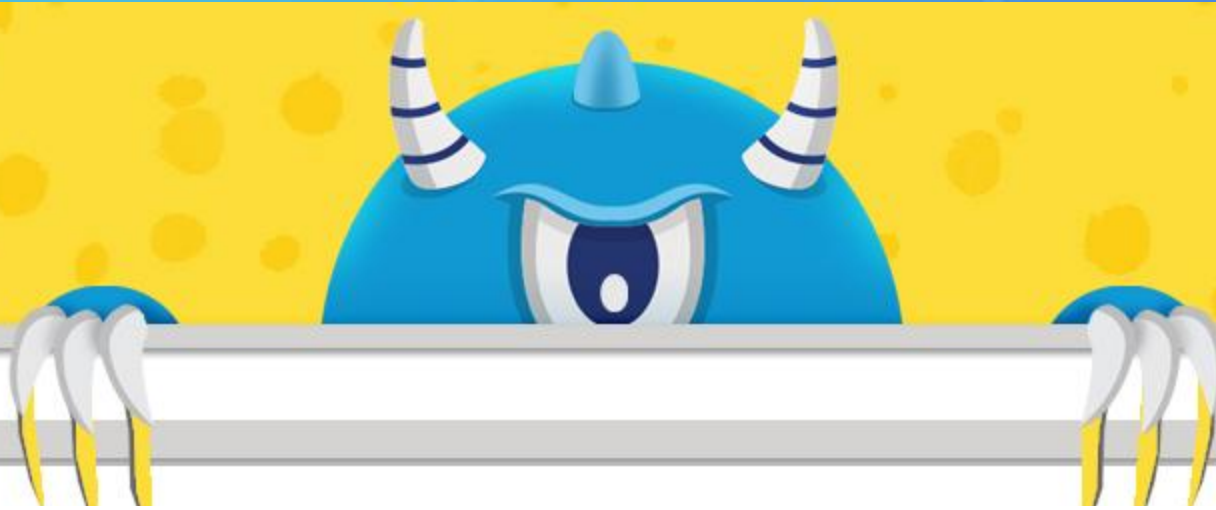


Step 4: The value proposition

It's now time to show the prospect the possibilities of a better future if they choose the new path laid out in front of them.

Reps should still not introduce your product as the solution just yet. Instead, they should focus on showing the prospect that their problem can be easily solved.

Reps can frame these solutions by:



- Painting a picture of a positive future: In the last step, reps told a story with a bad ending. Now, they should flip this story to show their prospect what the future will look like if they decide to take action.
- Focusing on solutions: And nothing else. The prospect needs to start connecting the dots themselves.
- Running a marathon, not a sprint: Reps should take their time to explain anything the prospect is unsure about. They can help the prospect connect the dots, if absolutely necessary.

A blue cartoon monster with horns and claws peering over a browser window. The monster has a large eye and is looking towards the viewer. The browser window has a grey title bar with red, yellow, and green window control buttons, a search bar, and navigation icons (back, forward, refresh, download, share).

Step 5: The product

The hard work is done. Reps have taken the prospect's problem, reframed it, gained their trust and offered up a solution to solve it. The only thing left for reps to do is fill in the blank and show their prospect that they have that exact solution.

If reps follow all the steps in the process correctly, this final step should be painless and quick. How they introduce your product will depend on what you're selling. If your company is a SaaS product, reps might offer their prospects a demo. If you are a web development agency, reps may provide a detailed walkthrough of what working with your company would look like.



How to apply the Challenger sale methodology

Let's look at how using these five steps could play out in a fictional scenario.

For example, if a rep is talking to a business owner that is struggling to acquire customers, she may have uncovered that the root issue is misguided digital marketing efforts. By digging further, the rep may discover the prospect's misconception that the only way to solve their problem is to spend money on social media ads to boost reach.

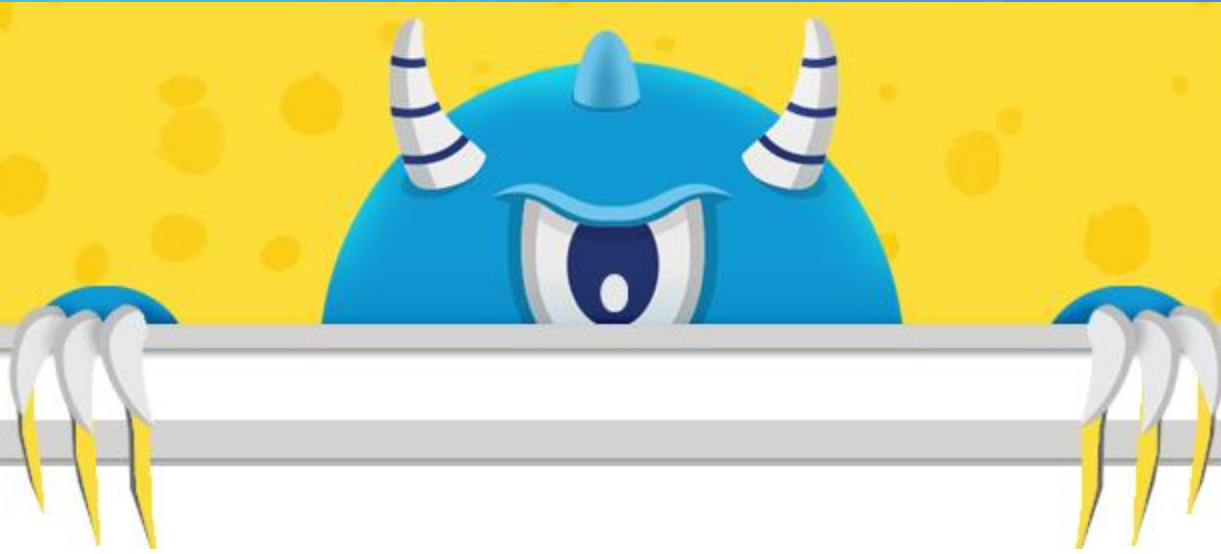
Armed with this knowledge, the rep can position herself as an authority on the subject, using facts and data to present compelling reasons for why the problem exists. She can reframe the problem in a new way by explaining that paid ads work best in x, y and z scenarios and that her target's business doesn't fall into them.



By shocking the prospect into this realization, the rep can begin to outline several more effective methods that are better solutions to their problems. By doing this, the rep begins to shift the prospect's mindset about how to improve their digital marketing efforts and boost curiosity in how these new solutions work.

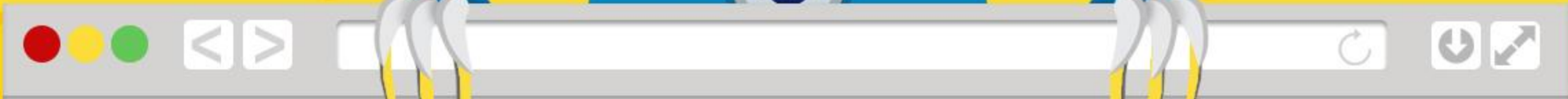
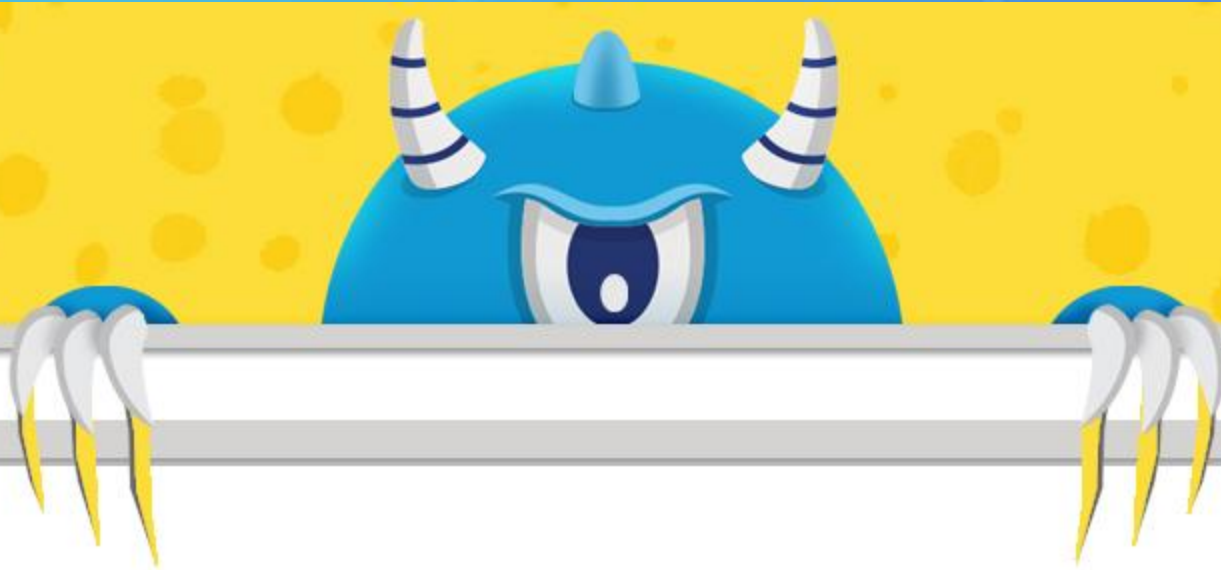
Next, the rep can begin sharing compelling customer stories to open up the prospect's eyes. The prospect will now begin picturing themselves using these new solutions and relating to the stories the rep is telling. In a final emotional rollercoaster, the rep can tell a story with a negative ending, forcing the prospect to picture what will happen if they do not stray from their current path.

The rep can then present case studies backed by real data that show how other people with similar problems chose a new solution. By now, the prospect is beginning to see these solutions as the only sensible next step and is eager to hear how to get started.



Finally, the rep can present her company's solution, which is an analytics tool that captures data and provides actionable insights for how companies can save money and boost reach through digital marketing efforts other than paid social media ads. The prospect's company is young and has not yet ramped up its content marketing, organic customer outreach through storytelling, cleverly crafted campaigns based on smart data, and so much more.

The idea is that by the time the rep presents their solution, they will have positioned it as the obvious choice and the prospect will be ready to buy.



Search Categories 

**THE
MEDIABEAST**

BEST INDUSTRIES TO TARGET FOR ONLINE

- Home Services:
 - HVAC
 - Plumbing
 - Garage door repair
 - Arborist
 - Home Remodeling
 - Kitchen remodelers
 - Bathroom remodeling
 - Roofing
 - Damage restoration
 - Pool companies / Spas
 - Pest Control
- Florist
- Fitness Gyms (seasonal)
- Automotive
 - New Car Sales
 - Used Car Sales
 - Service
- Carpet Cleaning
- Cleaning Companies / Janitorial Services
- Events (Concerts, Sporting Events, etc.)
- Home Inspections
- Legal
 - Personal injury
 - Family law
 - Bankruptcy
 - Estate planning
- RV Sales/Rentals
- Boat Sales / Rentals
- Facial Plastics & Surgery

- **Expertise** - Does your VBR show your specific expertise on why the prospect should “need” to see you?

Valid Business Reasons

Valid Business Reasons

- **Expertise** - Does your VBR show your specific expertise on why the prospect should “need” to see you?
- **Empathy** - Does your VBR show empathy with the client/prospect?

Valid Business Reasons

- **Expertise** - Does your VBR show your specific expertise on why the prospect should “need” to see you?
- **Empathy** - Does your VBR show empathy with the client/prospect?
- **Client Need** - Does your VBR show why the client needs you?

Valid Business Reasons

- **Expertise** - Does your VBR show your specific expertise on why the prospect should “need” to see you?
- **Empathy** - Does your VBR show empathy with the client/prospect?
- **Client Need** - Does your VBR show why the client needs you?
- **Call to Action** - Why does the prospect need to see you...now?

Questions?

support@themediabeast.com

Matt Nelson
President

**Joe
Brugeman**
Senior Account
Manager

Maggie Mull
Executive Assistant

**Thank You
For Your
Time Today!**

