



## Opinion Piece

Business UN Usual - An Optimist's View

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Let's first get this out of the way. We all acknowledge it's bad out there and it's going to get a whole lot worse before it gets better.

We're also as against opportunistic and tacky marketing approaches that use virus-led messaging to shoehorn products and services in as the next guy. People are dying out there and we all need to respect that.

### **Facing facts**

For IT & Security Sellers, this next quarter is probably blown and most likely the one after that. Targets are being realigned mostly downward and that's going to knock-on throughout whole year.

If you're lucky enough to be selling something that's the IT equivalent of Golden Labrador puppies, fantastic, but it's likely projects are being put on the back burner. It's not the time to disengage, but if you don't have a puppy product, what's to be done?

### **Buyers and Sellers – united by challenges in common**

Businesses of all types and size are dealing with two things; protecting the here and now to come out the other side in some form of intact, whilst trying to hit something like the annual target that was originally projected.

As Sellers, doing the usual hard push on the quarter isn't going to cut it. If anything, you'll put Buyers off. In any case, Buyers don't want/aren't allowed face to face meetings, they've got no events to attend, and skeleton staff mean that most aren't at their desks for telemarketers to reach them.

It's not an option to do nothing, because waiting 6+ months to re-ignite the planned events and telemarketing is just time wasted when you could be building relationships in other ways.

One of the most dangerous phrases I ever hear is "we've always done it this way". It encourages complacency, stifles vision, creativity, and ultimately affects results. Now is the time to shake ourselves out of doing the same, tired, old things and take some action that will change the way you look at demand generation forever and build a far stronger business for it.

That doesn't mean change for change sake, more like being on the radar by finding ways to create positive outcomes when Buyers are ready for you.

## **From challenge comes opportunity**

Anyone that knows me will tell you I've been waxing lyrical for years about the lack of value and effectiveness in siloed, traditional sales and marketing approaches. These include "one and done" activities such as events and telemarketing. They're not invaluable at the right time, but they're still favoured right across the IT Channel as fast and "measurable" activities by vendors, through distribution and out to partners and seen as a great use of MDF. Throw in a few random social media posts and articles whenever someone remembers to do them and you may think you have plenty of value from spend, but what about the results?

These things used to work OK, 10 or so years ago, but not now and especially not today. We backed up our suspicions way before this outbreak by carrying out extensive research and Buyer focus groups in 2019. Sellers' standalone activities do not deliver the expertise-based engagements and relationships Buyers crave.

## **Waiting for your business to implode isn't an option**

Even if you have enough cash to ride out the immediate storm to re-ignite your traditional marketing activities, you'll be playing catch up well into the next financial year starting from zero. While your competitors are frantically revising marketing plans, delaying telemarketing campaigns and rescheduling events, take the initiative and do more.

## **Take control and activate your market**

Take the initiative and give Buyers what they want in the way they want it. Create communities around your brand where you can engage and inform, help and add value with information that is meaningful and engaging for them. Start to build relationships for the times ahead.

More to the point, start telling your story and engage at their pace. Most of all, don't try to force it – they'll come to you via peer to peer recommendations, or through something you communicate that's of immense value, rather than pure marketing speak.



## The future is in relationships, not quick flings

Friends made in times of adversity will stand the test of time. Become a trusted advisor and secure your future with sustainable relationships and not quick flings.

### About The Amigos Network

Our job is to bring the community of Buyers and Sellers together for mutual reward and where relationships are earned, not forced. It's not been changed or adapted to suit the current global crisis – it's what we believe and our customers endorse it.

Ours isn't to be considered a "soft" approach to demand generation compared to straight appointment setting because creating leads is what we're all about. We offer ambitious businesses access to professional, multi-disciplined resource and enterprise grade systems as a managed market activation service to engage buyers with a seller's brand. Individual SLA's offer guaranteed results and a bespoke analytics dashboard offers absolute transparency at every step of the way.

If you think being up and running in 4 weeks sounds appealing (all done remotely), or if you want to know how we can make the **service cost-neutral** - whether vendor, distributor or VAR, then we'd love to chat.

Please feel free to get in touch and start the conversation.

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