



The New World of Competitive Selling

In Healthcare Industries

Table of Contents



The New World of Competitive Selling

3



Resilience to Win

4



Competitiveness is Relative

5



No More Siloed Selling

6

Healthcare Systems
7

Information Technology
8

Digital Docs
10

Med Rep Access
12



Don't Just Survive... Thrive!

14



The New World of Competitive Selling

Being competitive is more than a mindset. It is a discipline. It is a way of being. It is a passion to be the best, to win all the time.

When one doesn't win, one is not defeated. One uses it as a learning experience to be better the next time, and the next, and the next...



Jacques M. is the top salesperson in a pharmaceutical company for 6 years. His secret?

I'd call on the doctor every month for 6 months. Each time he'd agree that my drug was best. Yet, I learned he was prescribing something else.

*The 7th month, I'd ask, **"Doctor, you say our company's medicine is best, but still don't prescribe it for your patients. I honestly want to know what I need to do to convince you to use our medicine instead of the ones you are prescribing."***

Whatever the doctor says will only be good news. It will help me to strategize, to respond to this doctor's needs, until I AM successful.

Resilience to Win

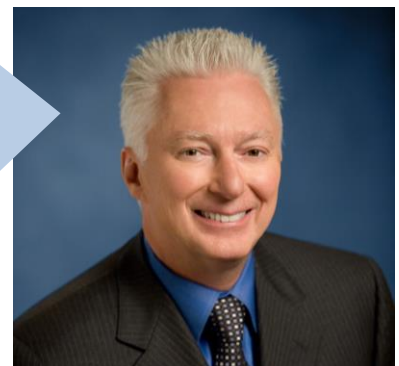


To the successful medical representative, having great medicine is not good enough. It takes knowledge, and lots of it – from medicine and science to knowing one’s customers, healthcare systems and so much more. Beyond knowledge, it takes skill, using that knowledge to drive value. It takes resources and time. It takes motivation.

And the magical ingredient of motivation is competitiveness – an amazing, resilient, will to win.

Jacques epitomizes the very essence of being the competitive med rep in the healthcare industry. He is not only prepared for the challenge, but embraces it. He wants to be better than other representatives both inside and outside of his company. That’s his yardstick. That’s what drives him.

It’s not about just playing the game. It’s about winning, and you need to be very clear about what winning means. In our view, it means three things – uniquely positioning a firm in its industry, creating sustainable advantage and delivering superior value vs. the competition.



[AG Lafley, CEO Procter and Gamble](#)

Image Credit: commons.wikimedia.org



Competitiveness is Relative

The FIFA World Soccer Cup competition is held every four years. The final two competitors are best in the world. Getting a goal is nearly impossible. In the last two championships, final scores were each 1-0. That one point was all it took to be the best.

In Tom Rath's StrengthFinders 2.0, he says, "Competition is rooted in comparison."

What does this really mean?

Competitiveness is not absolute. It is relative. People who are competitive judge themselves relative to others' performances.

This is the heart of being competitive – the ability to measure, the desire to compare, and the drive to be better.

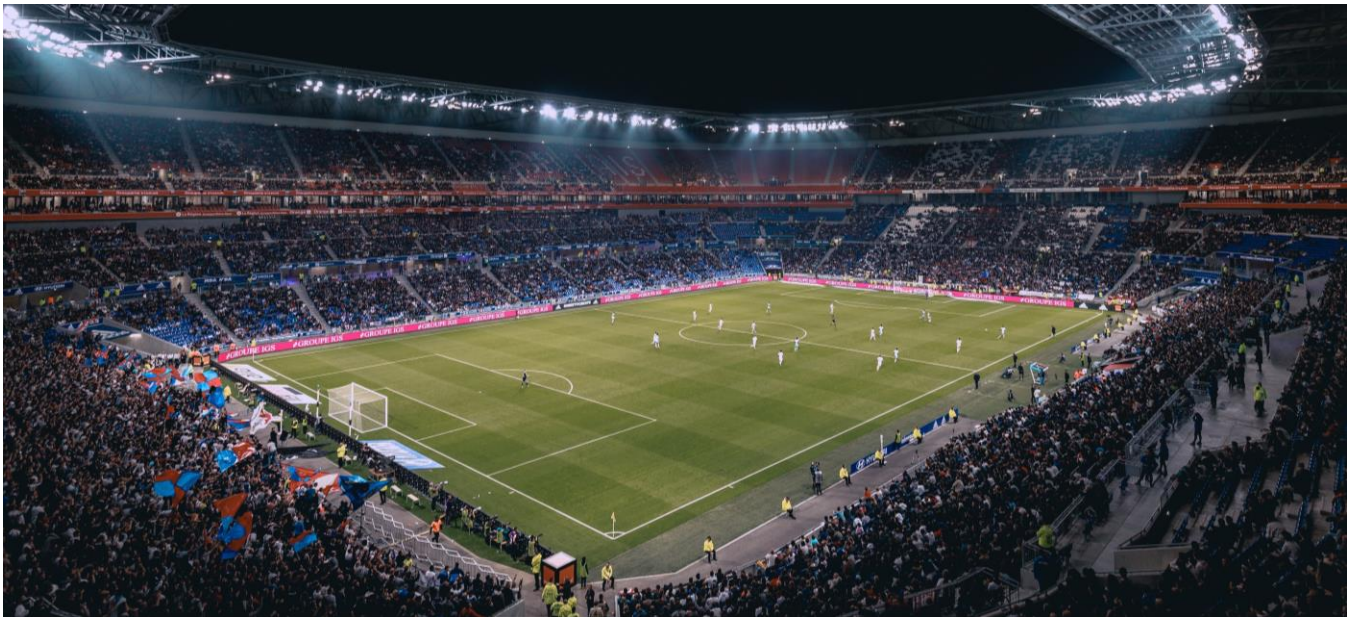


Image Credit: unsplash.com

No More Siloed Selling



Psychologists say that humans are competitive by nature. Some are more competitive than others – whether by nature or nurture. And none are more competitive than salespeople. Healthcare medical representatives are like salespeople in any industry.

They continuously strive to be better or best – it's in their DNA. It is also what they have been hired and trained to do.

However, unlike other industries, healthcare is a minefield for the med rep. Med reps are taught from day one to be compliant. While compliance is intended in a legal context, the word compliant to a salesperson means, “Do as others would have you do”. That inherently dampens competitiveness. Being non-compliant also fosters a fear of accountability. The result is a sales culture of med reps working in silos, not striving to be competitive, but to be safe.

Siloed healthcare selling no longer works. Why not? Four reasons:

1 Healthcare systems

3 Digital docs

2 Information technology

4 Med rep access



1. Healthcare Systems

Today, most providers are not autonomous decision makers – they are part of healthcare systems. Successful med reps learn to work in very sophisticated ways across these systems. They are highly effective at working collaboratively, externally and internally. They form and leverage networks to get the job done, without creating more burden for the customers.

Most importantly, they keep their customers informed. In this way, their customers appreciate their continuous work and value them more than other reps.

The turning point for Marianne B was a discussion with a customer.

She proposed an educational program to a doctor, who responded...

I'd like to, but I can't do what you suggest. Our group would have to agree. And the patients...that would depend on their insurance. Then we have to educate and monitor the patients. Who's going to manage that? We don't have time, nor the staff!

Shall I arrange a meeting to discuss it?

Why don't you just meet with them, and let me know how it goes?

She finally realized what the doctor was saying. Her customer needed her to make their jobs easier, not more difficult! She needed to make adopting the program easy by managing a virtual, not physical, collaboration. Most importantly, her job was to keep them informed, all along the way.



2. Information Technology



Sales force effectiveness – a trend that began more than 20 years ago – was slow to take effect. Med reps hated it - it made them feel like robots. Productivity was measured in rep equivalence, visits per day, and bricks. Innovation and the joy of competitive selling gave way to efficiency and reactivity.

Today, IT is part of every sales job. And med reps who know how to harness and leverage it proactively are winning.

Competitive med reps thrive especially on evergreen dashboards. Why?

Augmented by AI (artificial intelligence) these dashboards give the med rep the very thing they need to be motivated—the opportunity to see how they are doing compared to others, in real and forward times. If you see green, great. Turning to yellow or red? It's a stimulus to improve, not to feel defeated.

Competitive salespeople are learning from AI when, what and how to better serve customers. AI also enables med reps to shape their personal learning journeys.



Philip S. was a busy account manager who shared access to a team of med reps. He needed them to learn key account management (KAM), but was not their manager. His company had a KAM course, but the med reps did not have access. He definitely did not have time to teach them himself.

Coordinating their efforts also was a huge problem. Nothing was worse than meeting with one of his customers only to hear, “I just met with your representative. Don’t you two know what each other is doing? I don’t have time to see two of you!”

His company used a virtual coaching platform. “Hmm,” he thought, “I can leverage that to communicate, monitor, and coach the med reps!”

He met with the district manager, who agreed that Philip could use the virtual coaching platform to coordinate visits with customers. It also would auto-link med reps to key account management workshops, track their progress on eLearning modules, and alert Philip when his help was needed.

Electronic Health Records (EHRs) may not be accessed by salespeople, but more and more today, blinded data are being shared. These resultant population health data present med reps with unique insights and opportunities, if they know how to leverage them.

In the US, the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) publishes its data – some of it freely. A med

rep can go online, enter a zip code and see how hospitals and providers are performing in health metrics, safety, and patient satisfaction. From there the savvy med rep can connect the dots between hospitals and their providers to help them to better manage diseases in those patients taking the company’s medicines.

<https://data.cms.gov/>



Anya F. learned about a doctor-patient engagement method called Shared Decision Making (SDM).

Anya was a med rep for a company in COPD, a highly competitive field. She learned that SDM was one of the most impactful ways to gain patient commitment to a diabetes management plan. She thought, if it works for diabetes, why not COPD? Together with her manager, and with those from Marketing, Managed Markets and Medical Affairs, they developed a highly successful COPD program leveraging SDM and CMS data that top insurers quickly adopted for high-risk COPD patients.

3. Digital Docs

Another challenge under the broad theme of IT is selling to the digital doctor. There are two types.

The **digital influencer** is the doctor who is highly engaged in social media. She blogs, links, tweets, and Whatsapps. She likes to be followed and shared. Texting? Some. Emailing? Painful. She sees social media ultimately as a patient generator. She may not do research nor care about what academic thought leaders

think. She's all about leading practice in the trenches.

Companies struggle to manage the digital influencer. And this really scares them, particularly how to handle when the doctor or a patient mentions an adverse event. Roche took this on first, by giving sage guidance to its med reps on engaging with customers using social media, as well as how to handle (or not handle) adverse events. Today, they lead digital communications globally.

**Terry T. works for a company that sells products used in ERs.**

He calls on a doctor who is a huge blogger. When the doctor's not with patients, he's tweeting, chatting, and posting. In the most recent visit, the doctor asked him to share. Terry mumbled a response. The doctor promptly ended the meeting. "Share what?" Terry asked a friend later. The friend said, "Share his tweets! His blog posts! Help him expand his digital footprint."

With the rise of telehealth comes the rise of the second kind of digital doc: **the virtual provider** (also sometimes referred to as the *teledoc* or *doc in a box*). What may have started as a part-time income supplementation for some, has become a vocation for others. In fact, the virtual provider is one of the fastest growing professions in the healthcare industry.

How do med reps manage the teledoc? They don't. Here's why. Telehealth companies' main customers are insurers, governments and investors.

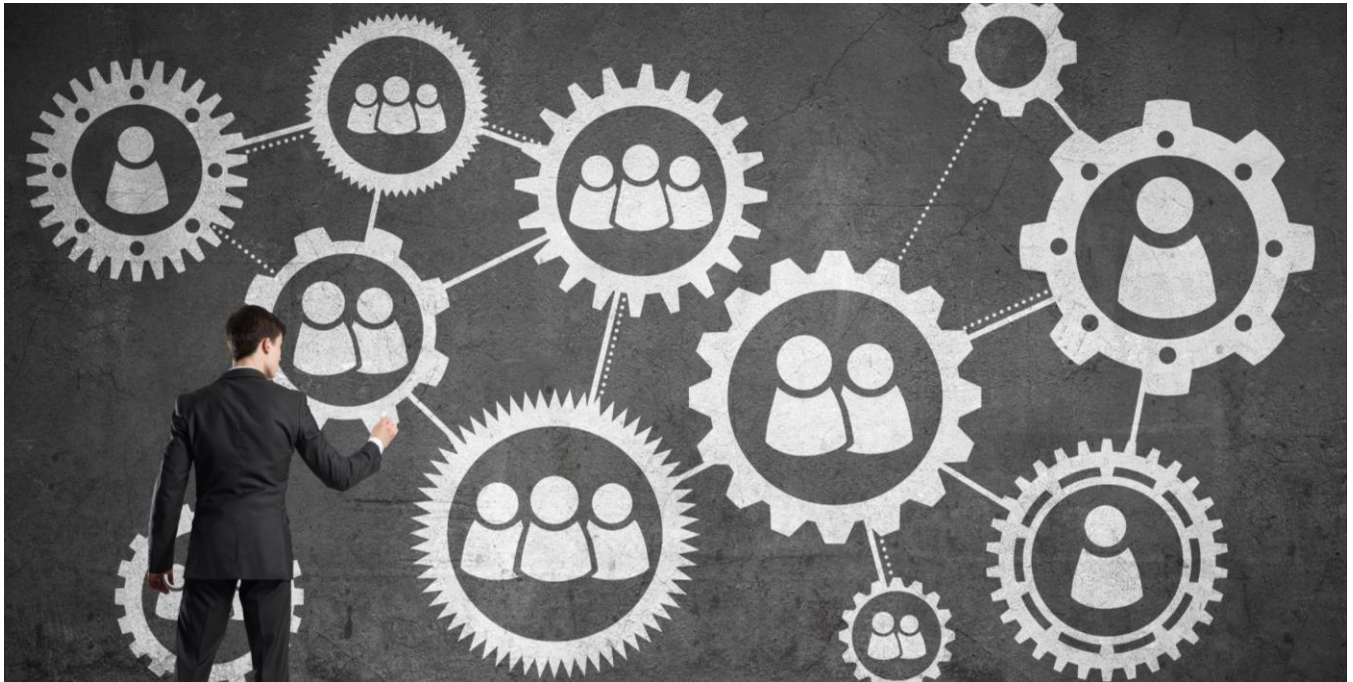
Companies such as Ashfield understand how to contract with telehealth companies, to leverage this new model of virtual providers with virtual med reps and virtual Medical Science Liaisons (MSLs).

Sara Y. became a med rep out of college. She was hard working, smart, and on the company's radar screen.

One day she walked into a busy community hospital ER. There was a sign: *Want to talk to a health professional now?* The door was open; she peeked in and glimpsed a doctor on a screen speaking to a patient. She quickly turned away. But that moment hit her hard. Here is the future. If docs are going virtual, so should she.



4. Med Rep Access



As we saw in Anya's, Terry's and Sara's examples, med reps are part of an omnichannel world, not the other way around. This requires a major change in most sales organizations.

Traditional med rep access – the ability to meet with doctors face to face – is an increasing problem for most...

But not the most successful and competitive ones. Why not? Because they know that the med rep job is no longer all

about doctor visits. It *is* about redefining qualified customer engagement.

Engagement can take many different shapes and forms. So competitive sales organizations are redefining what med rep access means, matching it with times and modes in which *their customers* like to engage. Then, they give med reps the means to find or create those engagement opportunities.

**Most of Amani H's physicians belonged to a major healthcare network.**

Relatively new to the company and the job, Amani H. worked in a highly-competitive territory dominated by three major integrated hospital networks (IHSs). Amani rarely could meet with the doctors and certainly not in the hospitals. The IHSs had policies forbidding visits except by pre-approved appointments with specific doctors. Amani's company also had other restrictions: no evening visits and no social meetings with customers.

Amani attended a company-sponsored course on digital marketing and sales. She learned how to responsibly mine open source information including public announcements by the IHSs about presentations or topics related to the company's field of medicine. She received permission from her manager and from the institutions to attend those events to listen first-hand to questions asked by her doctors, and to learn with and from them.

She continued to attend the open educational events whenever her doctors were presenting or likely to be in the audience, paying particular attention especially when they asked or answered a question. During breaks, she'd ask them more about their questions or what they thought was most interesting about a colleague's presentation.

She found out that some of her doctors had their own websites or landing pages on the IHS's website that were rich with information about their research or projects. She poured over those, and did PubMed and ClinicalTrials.gov site searches.

From these combined efforts, with approvals from her manager, and from marketing and medical affairs, she developed innovative and compliant ways to engage with her customers, relating their interests to her brands.

Slowly, her customers began to recognize her, then they began to talk with her, and finally, they were regularly engaging with her, seeking her help and collaborating with the company in ways they had never done previously.

Don't Just Survive...Thrive!



Whether they win by a mile, or only a meter, competitive med reps all have one thing in common – they still want to win.

The med reps described in this book all are highly competitive and successful. What distinguishes each of them is their will to win. Where their competitors see barriers and problems, they see opportunities. They stand out by differentiating themselves from the competition. They dare to challenge the status quo.

Jacques M used multiple “no’s” to drive the courage to ask, “Why not?” in order to learn how to get to “yes.”

Marianne B turned a doctor’s group too busy to have a meeting into an informed, virtually collaborative network.

Philip S aligned a med rep team that didn’t report to him into a well-tuned, well-trained key account support team.

Anya F adapted a successful method from a different field of medicine to the company’s main therapeutic area of focus, with the help of a cross-functional team.

Terry T developed the skills to be able to support his digital influencer customers’ interests in connectivity.

Sara Y saw how telehealth was transforming patient care, and transformed herself into a successful virtual med rep.

Amani H learned what her customers wanted her to learn. By being seen engaged in that learning, she gained their trust.



The business of being a medical representative in the healthcare industry has never been tougher, nor more challenging. When highly competitive, successful med reps win one goal, they quickly set themselves a new goal that will continue to challenge and motivate them to be even better.

We've seen from our examples of successful med reps that they all are driven by wanting to be the best. That doesn't mean "doing more", but "doing differently".

Ultimately, they are motivated to win not against any competitors, but against the most worthy competitors.

It is this drive to be the best of the best that truly distinguishes and ultimately satisfies the successful med rep's competitive essence. Importantly, the most successful med rep expects that to be competitively best requires continuous learning and improvement, and proactive commitment to self-development.

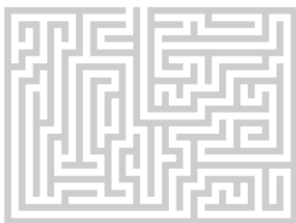
For over 30 years, Innovara has been measuring and teaching competitiveness. Related courses include:



Competitive Selling



Selling to Specialists is Special



**Key Account Management
& Planning 2.0**



Selling to the Patient Journey



How competitive are you? Contact us to schedule your competitive selling assessment:

Contact Innovara HQ



105 Middle Street
Hadley, MA, USA 01035



Innovara@Innovara.com



+1 (413) 387-6188



www.Innovara.com



+1 (413) 687-6772



[Linkedin.com/company/Innovara-inc.](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Innovara-inc)

Contact Innovara MEGNA



Villa 190, Axis 77
New Cairo, Cairo, Egypt



Hassan.Elanany@Innovara.com



+20 002-02-2564-5090
+20 002-02-2760-7774



www.Innovaramena.com



+20 002-011-4392-9089