A LIVING B2B RESEARCH PROGRAMME · SINCE 2009

Engineering Systemic Value in B2B

How suppliers can design, prove, realise and capture value when budgets tighten, systems become more fragile and AI makes information abundant.

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FUTURE OF SELLING RESEARCH PROGRAMME · WORKING PAPER · FUTUREOFSELLING.ORG
SEPTEMBER 2026

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About the authors and the research programme



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A living research programme

Future of Selling began in 2009 with a practical question: how can B2B sales continue to add value as technology changes what customers can do without a salesperson? The programme combines in-depth interviews, workshops, case analysis, field application and academic collaboration. Its purpose is not to predict one inevitable future, but to identify mechanisms that commercial leaders can test in real organisations.

WHAT THE PROGRAMME HAS ESTABLISHED	WHAT THE PROGRAMME IS NOW TESTING
Current finding: Systemic Value	Emerging hypothesis: Regenerative Value
Operating response: the Value Engineering Cycle	Research question: when does net-positive contribution become material, measurable and monetisable?
Organisational capability: Value Engineering	Next step: additional cases and cross-sector validation
Human role: the Value Orchestrator	

Executive summary

Customer needs are changing faster than many B2B value propositions

B2B customers are operating in an environment of geopolitical volatility, economic uncertainty, supply disruption and accelerating technological change. Across our research, one concern increasingly connects these pressures: resilience.

Customers are looking beyond efficiency and immediate financial return. They are asking how suppliers can contribute to the resilience of their operations, strategy, workforce and wider system. We describe this evolution as Systemic Value: value created across five interconnected dimensions — financial, continuity, strategic, workforce and planetary.

This creates a challenge for suppliers. As the external environment changes faster, customer priorities change faster too — and value propositions become outdated more quickly.

Yet when growth slows, margins decline or win rates fall, many B2B organisations still reach for a familiar response: improve sales execution. Train the salespeople. Strengthen negotiation. Increase prospecting.

Our research suggests that this can start with the wrong diagnosis.

Before asking whether your salespeople are selling well enough, ask whether your value proposition still addresses what your customers now value most.

Five demands signal how customer value is changing

Across the research, changing customer priorities translate into five linked demands on suppliers:

- **Make it worthwhile.** Address an end-to-end problem important enough to justify change.
- **Involve everyone.** Help align the wider coalition involved in the decision.
- **Make sure everyone benefits.** Create stakeholder-specific reasons to support the same proposition.
- **Show the evidence.** Co-create a business case the customer can defend internally.
- **Guarantee the results.** Extend responsibility into implementation, adoption and measurable outcomes.

Together, these demands suggest that the supplier's role is expanding from selling an offer towards improving the customer's wider system.

The supplier response is Value Engineering

If customer needs evolve faster, value propositions can no longer be treated as relatively static promises that salespeople simply take to market.

We propose a continuous Value Engineering Cycle:

Value Design → Value Selling → Value Realisation → Value Capture → Value Design

The return to Value Design is critical. Evidence from selling, implementation and realised outcomes must continuously inform what the supplier promises next.

Value Engineering is therefore an organisational capability for keeping the value proposition aligned with changing customer needs.

This also changes the role of sales. Rather than simply communicating a predetermined proposition, the emerging Value Orchestrator connects customer reality with the people, skills, evidence and organisational resources required throughout the Value Engineering Cycle.

Finally, our research points towards a further evolution. If resilience increasingly depends on the wider societal and natural systems in which companies operate, Regenerative Value may represent the next frontier of B2B value. We present this as an emerging research hypothesis rather than an established market norm.

> **Research basis and limits**
>
> This white paper draws on the longitudinal Future of Selling research programme and a current coded study of 33 interviews across 29 organisations. The evidence is predominantly European and practitioner-led. The findings are intended to identify emerging patterns and support theory building and executive action; they should not be interpreted as prevalence estimates for all B2B markets. The full method and the case evidence are described at the end of this paper.

1

Why value is changing

What value means in B2B has never stood still. Four trends, with one common driver, are now changing how buyers judge it.

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1.1 How the meaning of value has evolved

What value means in B2B has never stood still. Product performance, brand, fit, relationships, access and co-created outcomes all remain important. What changes is which layer becomes the minimum condition and which layer provides differentiation.

PERIOD	DOMINANT QUESTION AND VALUE LOGIC
1900	What does the product do? Product performance.
1950	What does the brand mean? Aspiration and identity.
1970	How well does it fit a specific target? Personalisation, fit and quality.
1985	What relationship does the supplier build? Relationship value.
1995	How easy is it to access and use? Frictionless access.
2010	How do supplier and customer create outcomes together? Co-created experience and outcomes.
2022	How resilient is the whole customer system? Systemic value.
2030+	What does the system regenerate? Emerging regenerative value.

The current frontier is systemic value. Since 2022, the programme's interpretation is that resilience, system performance and decision-grade evidence have become dominant differentiators in complex B2B. Co-creation has not disappeared; it is one of the mechanisms used to engineer systemic value.

Regenerative value is visible as a research horizon rather than an established buying norm. It asks whether the offer strengthens the wider social and ecological systems on which both customer and supplier depend.

1.2 How this builds on earlier selling models

The eras above describe how the meaning of value has changed. Selling models changed with it. Academic reviews of the sales function describe a sequence from order taking and persuasion, through consultative selling and knowledge brokering, to challenger and ecosystem approaches (Cuevas, 2018; CoVE Sales, 2026). Each step raised the skill required of the individual salesperson.

SELLING MODEL	WHAT THE SELLER ADDS	WHERE IT FALLS SHORT TODAY
Transactional selling	Availability, price and persuasion.	Customers serve themselves; e-commerce and AI handle routine orders.
Consultative and solution selling (Rackham, 1988)	Diagnosis of a defined customer problem.	Customers and AI now diagnose many problems without a seller.
Challenger selling (Dixon and Adamson, 2011)	An insight that reframes how the customer thinks.	Insight is easier to obtain, and one reframed buyer does not align a coalition.
Value-based selling (Terho et al., 2012)	A quantified financial case.	One ROI number is judged on price; non-financial value stays outside the case.
Ecosystem and holistic selling (Hartmann et al., 2018; Kalwey et al., 2025)	Orchestration of several parties around the customer.	Describes the role of the seller, not how the proposition itself is kept current.
Value Engineering (this paper)	A proposition that is designed, proved, realised and renewed across the customer system.	A proposed response, still under test.

Our contribution is to move the unit of analysis from the salesperson to the value proposition. Earlier models ask how the seller should behave. Value Engineering asks how the organisation keeps what it promises aligned with what customers value.

1.3 Four trends are changing how buyers judge value

Behind the four trends lies one common driver: geopolitical instability and the polycrisis it generates. Wars, trade conflict and fractured supply lines arrive together with price shocks, energy volatility and a fast-growing body of regulation. Climate change is itself one of the causes of this instability — a link we return to in chapter 6.

TREND	BUYER BEHAVIOUR	SUPPLIER RESPONSE
Inflation, cost pressure and budget scrutiny	Every investment must survive a hard financial challenge. Interesting is not enough; the case must show a material effect on cost, revenue, cash or risk.	Quantify the baseline, make assumptions explicit and connect the offer to a metric the executive team already manages.
Market volatility and disruption	Continuity, optionality and supply confidence can outweigh a small price advantage. Buyers often prefer fewer partners with broader accountability.	Show how the offer reduces exposure, creates alternatives, absorbs volatility or transfers risk under credible commercial terms.
Sustainability and regulation	Claims must be verifiable. Procurement becomes more formal and lifecycle effects move into the decision alongside price and performance.	Connect environmental and social impact to operational, financial and strategic consequences, and provide traceable evidence.
AI, commoditisation and transparency	Information, benchmarks and first-pass expertise are easier to obtain. Generic solutions are compared quickly and price differences become more visible.	Move from information provision to system diagnosis, adaptable propositions, orchestration, adoption and accountability.

These trends do not operate independently. Together they raise the standard of proof, widen the buying group and increase the cost of choosing badly. When suppliers fail to make the wider value case, the decision usually collapses to the most visible comparable number: price.

IN THE EVIDENCE · ONE CASE PER TREND

COST PRESSURE

A hospital wanted to keep investing in employee wellbeing. Its board released the budget only against a quantified case.

Source: Anonymised hospital HR director.

MARKET VOLATILITY

After the war in Ukraine, the port's industrial customers moved from climate solutions to security: "We would rather have reliability."

Source: Port of Antwerp-Bruges.

SUSTAINABILITY AND REGULATION

In complex tenders, ESG evidence is an entry ticket: "No ESG score, no bid." Yet customers will not pay a premium without a visible return.

Source: Delaware.

AI AND COMMODITISATION

Clients now check a consultancy's reports with an AI assistant. As facts become a commodity, value moves from advice to making change happen.

Source: Berenschot.

2

What customers now demand

Four trends translate into a sequence of five demands that customers place on suppliers, whether or not they state them explicitly. The sequence matters.

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FIGURE 2.1

From four trends to five customer demands

Together the trends raise the standard of proof, widen the buying group and increase the cost of choosing badly.



Reading the figure. The top row shows the four trends that change how buyers judge value. They translate into five demands, read from top to bottom. The order matters: evidence cannot rescue an offer that is not worth changing for, and a guarantee cannot rescue a buying group that never aligned.

The four trends translate into a sequence of demands that customers place on suppliers, whether or not they state them explicitly. The sequence matters: evidence cannot rescue an offer that is not worth changing for, and a guarantee cannot rescue a buying group that never aligned.

DEMAND	MEANING
1. Make it worthwhile	Tie the offer to a strategic, end-to-end process or system that justifies the effort and risk of change.
2. Involve everyone	Build the decision coalition across functions and, where relevant, external parties. Do not outsource internal selling to one champion.
3. Make sure everyone benefits	Give each stakeholder a legitimate reason to support the same decision using the relevant dimensions of value.
4. Show the evidence	Build a shared business case with an agreed baseline, explicit assumptions and evidence the customer can defend internally.
5. Guarantee the results	Put implementation, adoption, measurement, governance and proportionate risk sharing behind the promise.

2.1 Make it worthwhile

The evidence shows that customers do not switch suppliers, change processes or mobilise executives for a marginal improvement in a familiar service. The offer must be tied to a system that matters: a production line, recruitment process, IT operating model, energy community, water system or another end-to-end flow whose performance is strategically important.

What makes a change worth it has itself changed. Across the interviews, one word keeps returning: resilience. Customers find worthwhile whatever improves their ability to withstand shocks — in their finances, their operations, their strategy, their people and the wider systems they depend on.

This expands what counts as customer value. Financial return remains important, but customers increasingly judge a proposition by its contribution to the performance and resilience of the wider system in which that return is created.

We call this Systemic Value: the measurable improvement a supplier enables in the customer's wider operating system across five interconnected dimensions — financial, continuity, strategic, workforce and planetary.

FIGURE 2.2 Nested System of Value



Reading the figure. Each ring is one dimension of Systemic Value. Financial value sits at the centre; continuity, strategic, workforce and planetary value surround it, because each depends on the wider system around it.

Resilience is the common pressure behind these concerns; Systemic Value describes the dimensions through which a supplier can respond. Each dimension begins with a question the customer asks about its own system. When that concern turns towards a supplier, it becomes a question the value proposition must answer.

TABLE 2.2 THE FIVE SYSTEMIC VALUE DIMENSIONS AS CUSTOMER QUESTIONS

DIMENSION	WHAT THE CUSTOMER ASKS INTERNALLY	WHAT THE CUSTOMER ASKS THE SELLER
Financial	Who carries the financial risk?	How much of our price volatility will you absorb? Who carries the investment: do we pay upfront, or do you?
Continuity	Will the process keep running?	How does your proposition keep our process running, and what happens the day it breaks? How will you improve our end-to-end process, not just one step in it?
Strategic	Can we still change?	If our market changes next year, can we redirect, or leave you, without losing the value? How do you keep our access open: to markets, to customers, to finance? How do you help us improve our value chain?

TABLE 2.2 THE FIVE SYSTEMIC VALUE DIMENSIONS AS CUSTOMER QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

DIMENSION	WHAT THE CUSTOMER ASKS INTERNALLY	WHAT THE CUSTOMER ASKS THE SELLER
Workforce	Can our people carry it?	Does this reduce our dependence on people we cannot find? What does it do for our absence, retention and engagement? How will you make sure our people actually adopt it?
Planetary	Is the wider system still viable?	Does this help us stay compliant and viable in our market? Does it reduce our dependence on non-renewable resources? Does it reduce our footprint, measurably?

CASE · ACCENT

From another search-and-selection supplier to recruitment-system improvement

Most prospects already buy search and selection from an incumbent, so another supplier promising to find candidates slightly better or faster gives little reason to accept the disruption of switching. Accent re-anchored the proposition around improving the customer's end-to-end recruitment process.

Using data from its client base, Accent benchmarks the customer's recruitment system rather than only its own search activity. The diagnostic exposes slow candidate response, delayed manager feedback, weak onboarding and avoidable attrition. In one example, comparable employers responded within 24 hours while the customer took four days; in another, lower retention pointed back to onboarding rather than candidate supply.

The conversation becomes: "Let us improve how you attract, select, onboard and retain people." The benchmark creates urgency, opens a senior conversation and pulls the original recruitment services through as part of a larger improvement programme.

WHAT THE CASE SHOWS

A point service becomes worthwhile when it is re-anchored to an end-to-end process the customer is willing to change.	Cross-customer benchmarks can expose value leaks, create urgency and earn access to more senior stakeholders.
Suppliers must detect when the customer's definition of the problem has changed; doing the old job well may no longer be enough.	The ability to help build a board-defensible business case can itself be part of the value proposition.

Source: Future of Selling interview with Lien Byttebier, Accent.

2.2 Involve everyone

The move to end-to-end value changes the buying process. A proposition that changes a hiring system, an IT operating model, a production flow or a supply chain affects many more internal people. The number of stakeholders grows because the consequences cross functional boundaries.

Finance, operations, IT, HR, legal, risk, procurement, sustainability, line management and end users apply different tests. Regulators, certification bodies, unions, channel partners or downstream customers may also shape the decision. The commercial challenge is therefore not simply to persuade one buyer. It is to help the customer align a decision coalition around the problem, the scope, the trade-offs, the evidence and the responsibilities that follow.

Tendering as an alignment mechanism

Many customers use a formal tendering process to organise this complexity. Requirements are gathered from multiple functions, translated into criteria, scored and documented. Tendering is therefore not only procurement bureaucracy. In many large decisions, it is the customer's mechanism for coordinating a wider stakeholder group and making the decision governable.

CASE · EISO BLEEKER

Professional purchasing and the rise of tendering

Eiso Bleeker observed that tendering has become increasingly important in the daily sales process. The Sales Management Association created a Tender Manager of the Year award because tender management had become a distinct and strategically important commercial activity.

His practical conclusion is that suppliers cannot simply avoid the tender. They need to engage early enough to understand the customer's real decision criteria and help translate material value into requirements, within the boundaries of a fair procurement process. If they wait until the tender is published, the criteria may already reflect a competitor's logic or reduce the choice to cost.

WHAT THE CASE SHOWS

A tender often formalises an internal alignment problem that already exists.

Early stakeholder work matters because value must be translated into the criteria used to govern the decision.

One internal champion is not enough when the customer must document and defend the decision across functions.

Source: Future of Selling interview with Eiso Bleeker, Sales Management Association.

2.3 Make sure everyone benefits

A systemic value proposition is not one slogan repeated to every stakeholder. It is one coherent system change expressed as several stakeholder-specific value propositions. The underlying offer remains the same, but each stakeholder needs a legitimate reason to support it.

CASE · ACCENT

One workforce proposition, several stakeholder propositions

Accent describes a shift from filling individual vacancies to helping customers design a more stable and flexible workforce system. The proposition can combine permanent employees, temporary workers, students and flexi workers, supported by stronger onboarding, safety and process insight.

The same proposition resonates differently across the customer. Procurement sees total-cost improvement. Operations sees coverage for hard-to-fill night, weekend and peak shifts. HR sees retention, better onboarding and a future talent pipeline. Safety and legal stakeholders see stronger screening, induction, documentation and risk control. Permanent employees benefit when unwanted shifts are reduced and the workforce becomes more stable.

This is not a collection of unrelated messages. It is one value proposition divided into sub-propositions that allow different stakeholders to support the same decision for different reasons.

WHAT THE CASE SHOWS

Systemic value must be translated by each stakeholder without fragmenting the core proposition.

A proposition becomes stronger when it creates value for the people who fund, operate, govern and use the system.

Stakeholder-specific value also reveals trade-offs and resistance that must be addressed before the decision can be made.

Source: Future of Selling interview with Lien Byttebier, Accent.

TABLE 2.3 ONE PROPOSITION, SIX STAKEHOLDER PROPOSITIONS (ACCENT)

STAKEHOLDER	PRIMARY CONCERN	STAKEHOLDER-SPECIFIC VALUE PROPOSITION
Procurement / finance	Total cost and predictability	Use a more appropriate workforce mix, reduce recruitment waste and lower the cost of churn and unfilled shifts.
Operations / production	Continuity and shift coverage	Fill difficult night, weekend and peak shifts without repeatedly pressuring the permanent workforce.
HR	Retention, engagement and talent pipeline	Improve onboarding, retain permanent employees and create future inflow through students and flexible workers.
Safety / legal / risk	Screening, induction and accountability	Strengthen safety briefings, medical and document checks, evaluation, GDPR and security controls.
Employees and representatives	Workability, safety and fairness	Reduce unwanted shifts, improve onboarding and make workforce changes explicit enough to discuss and govern.
Leadership	Workforce resilience	Move from repeated vacancy filling to a more stable workforce-management system.

2.4 Show the evidence

Whatever resilience the supplier claims — financial, continuity, strategic, workforce or planetary — the customer will demand proof of it, often in the form of a formal business case. Once value becomes systemic, evidence must become systemic too.

Why better products still lose

CASE · KANEKA

Green Planet: environmental superiority compressed into a price comparison

Kaneka developed Green Planet, a fully compostable bioplastic, and invested in lifecycle analysis, reporting and regulatory capability. Yet customers often resist the premium even when the environmental performance is materially better.

The commercial problem is not that the product has no value. The problem is that much of that value remains outside the comparison used by procurement. When the offer is presented as one plastic versus another, the decision is structured as price against price.

The opportunity is to re-anchor the proposition to the customer's wider system: downstream brand value, waste and end- of-life exposure, regulatory risk, production efficiency, continuity and the customer's ability to defend the decision internally.

WHAT THE CASE SHOWS

Environmental performance does not monetise itself; it must be translated into consequences the buying group can defend.

Risk can create willingness to pay when the baseline and avoided exposure are credible.

A layered, co-created case is needed to prevent environmental value from being compressed into a price comparison.

Source: Future of Selling interview with Kaneka buyers Marc Van Genechten and Danny Beyltiens.

The need to provide evidence for each of the five Systemic Value dimensions is expanding the notion of value beyond the traditional financial dimension. A supplier's value is no longer only what it saves or earns for the customer; it is what it makes the customer able to withstand.

TABLE 2.4 EVIDENCE BY VALUE DIMENSION

VALUE DIMENSION	WHAT IT COVERS	TYPICAL EVIDENCE
Financial	ROI, total cost, cash, revenue and margin.	Baseline, unit economics, productivity, working capital and scenario ranges.
Continuity	Continuity, volatility, compliance and recovery.	Failure modes, downtime, source concentration, controls and contract terms.
Strategic	Position, capability, speed and future options.	Roadmaps, capability gaps, differentiation and time-to-value.
Workforce	Adoption, skills, safety, wellbeing and workforce stability.	Usage, proficiency, staffing, safety, engagement and change evidence.
Planetary	Emissions, water, materials, waste, land and biodiversity.	Lifecycle data, traceability, resource use and end-of-life evidence.

Financial value remains the entry ticket. The other dimensions expand the reasons a buying group can support the decision and make it harder for a rival to reduce the comparison to price alone. It is no longer enough to make claims: sellers need to prove them, together with the customer, in a business case both sides can trust.

Business cases are widely discussed in B2B sales, but the research repeatedly finds that few are built as a joint, decision- grade process with the customer. A supplier spreadsheet based on supplier assumptions is not yet a business case the customer can govern or defend.

The work is difficult for a reason. It requires access to customer data, agreement on the baseline, cross-functional involvement, explicit assumptions, confidentiality, credible scenarios and honest treatment of factors outside the supplier's control. Suppliers cannot do this alone. Only the customer can validate the current operating conditions, internal costs, constraints, priorities and decision logic.

Customer collaboration is therefore essential. When the customer co-authors the case, hidden blockers and dependencies surface earlier. Stakeholders become owners of the assumptions rather than passive recipients of supplier calculations. The resulting case is more defensible internally because it is the customer's reasoning as well as the supplier's proposal.

CASE · CGI

Proof of Value as a value proposition in its own right

CGI distinguishes a Proof of Value from a proof of concept. A proof of concept tests whether a solution works in a limited scope. A Proof of Value builds the business case for the full scope, often over six to eight weeks with a small joint team, confidentiality arrangements and access to the data needed to make assumptions explicit.

The important innovation is commercial as much as analytical. CGI has named, scoped and priced the activity. It is not presented as an informal request for the customer to help a salesperson close a deal. It is a defined service the customer can buy, co-fund or formally commit to.

Naming the work gives it identity. Scoping it gives it governance. Pricing it signals that both sides must resource it seriously. Because the customer helps build the case, the internal sponsor is better equipped and more motivated to defend it afterwards. The output also becomes the baseline for implementation and later value governance rather than a sales document that disappears after signature.

WHAT THE CASE SHOWS

A decision-grade business case can be a value proposition in its own right.	Qualitative and quantitative evidence both belong in the case.
The customer must co-author the logic, not merely approve supplier calculations.	The business case should become the baseline for later measurement and governance.

Source: Future of Selling interview with Frank Van Nistelrooij, CGI.

Productising the business case changes behaviour. Informal free consulting is easy to postpone, under-resource or dismiss. A named and visibly priced Proof of Value is easier for both sides to schedule, staff, govern and defend. The customer may pay fully, co-invest or use another commercial structure, but the value of the work should be explicit.

2.5 Guarantee the results

A guarantee is the strongest form of proof because the supplier puts something of its own at risk. Across the cases, that commitment takes different forms: outcome responsibility, bonus-malus structures, adoption commitments or broader operational accountability. Omexom’s customers hand over the outcome itself — "Here is a field to build a battery park; that is the output performance that has to come out of it. Make it." — Delaware ties bonus-malus terms to end-user adoption and behaviour of their ERP implementation.

The principle is not new. Earlier Future of Selling co-creation research distinguished value in exchange from value in use. A contract, product delivery or system go-live does not create the promised value by itself. Value appears when the customer uses the offer successfully and achieves the intended outcome.

What is new is the scope of the supplier's commercial commitment. Implementation, process redesign, change management, user adoption, training, governance and outcome measurement were traditionally treated as post-sale activities. They are now moving into the sales process because they determine whether the business case is credible before the customer signs.

This changes the offer. Sales must involve delivery, customer success and change expertise earlier. The business case must specify what the supplier will implement, what the customer must change, how users will adopt the new way of working and how both sides will respond when assumptions change. Guaranteeing the result is therefore not one contractual clause. It is the commercial design of the conditions required for value in use.

CASE · DELAWARE AND CGI

Implementation, change and adoption become part of the promise

Delaware's interview evidence shows that the largest implementation risk is often not the technology itself but the change process around it. Bonus-malus and outcome-linked models are credible only when adoption responsibilities, customer maturity and change activities are addressed explicitly.

CGI makes the same principle operational through outcome-based commitments and recurring executive reviews. The original business case is kept alive, tested against changing conditions and corrected when the customer's context changes. In some engagements, CGI also assumes broader operational responsibility, but only where it has the authority, data and resources required to influence the outcome.

WHAT THE CASE SHOWS

Implementation quality is necessary but insufficient; process and behaviour change determine value in use.	Change management and user adoption must be designed before signature, not added after the deal.
A guarantee must match the supplier's control, the customer's maturity and the quality of the baseline.	Measurement is a continuing governance process, not a one-time proof point.

Source: Future of Selling interviews with Bart Van Kerkhoven, Delaware and Frank Van Nistelrooij, CGI.

3

Is it your selling, or your value proposition?

Before asking how to sell better, ask whether what you are selling still addresses what customers value today.

Before asking how to sell better, ask whether what you are selling still addresses what customers value today.

If your sales results are disappointing, the problem may not be how your people sell. It may be what they are selling. Customers increasingly seek resilience, and they judge value across five interconnected dimensions. Test your value proposition against seven questions — and answer them the way your customer would.

THE SEVEN-QUESTION SELF-AUDIT

DIMENSION	ANSWER THE WAY YOUR CUSTOMER WOULD	YOUR ANSWER
Financial	**Does your value proposition take financial risk away from your customer: price volatility, upfront investment?** Or does the customer still carry all of it?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Continuity	**Does it improve the customer's complete end-to-end process, and keep that process running when things go wrong?** Or does it only optimise your own small part of it?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Strategic	**Does it strengthen your customer's position in their market and across their value chain, without locking them in?** Or would leaving you cost them the value they built?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Workforce	**Does it make your customer less dependent on people they cannot find, and improve the wellbeing of the people who use it?** Or does it quietly assume they will always have the staff?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Planetary	**Does it help your customer stay compliant and viable in their market, and reduce their ecological footprint?** Or is sustainability someone else's chapter in your proposal?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Evidence	**For every "yes" above: can you prove it with a business case built on the customer's own numbers?** Not on your assumptions.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Guarantee	**Would you put your margin behind it?** A claim you will not stand behind is a brochure, not a value proposition.	☐ Yes ☐ No

If most of your answers are "no", or "we have never asked", then your problem is not selling skills.

4

The Value Engineering Cycle

Value propositions can fall behind customer needs while the organisation keeps trying to sell them harder. The cycle keeps the promise current.

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The self-audit exposes a problem that traditional sales improvement cannot solve: value propositions can fall behind customer needs while the organisation continues trying to sell them harder.

In a more volatile environment, this gap can emerge faster. Customer priorities shift as geopolitical conditions, technology, regulation, costs and risks change. Yet in many B2B organisations, value propositions are still designed periodically and then passed to sales as relatively stable promises to take to market.

Suppliers therefore need a mechanism for continuously keeping what they promise aligned with what customers value. We call this Value Engineering.

Value Engineering connects proposition design, selling, implementation, customer success and learning in one continuous cycle:

FIGURE 4.1 **The Value Engineering Cycle**



Reading the figure. Four phases run from left to right. The arrow underneath returns from Value Capture to Value Design: evidence from delivered accounts tests whether the proposition still deserves to exist in its current form.

PHASE	CORE QUESTION
Value Design	Which promise is worth making before a named deal exists?
Value Selling	How do we build and prove that promise with this customer before signature?
Value Realisation	How do we make the promise appear in use through implementation, adoption and measurement?
Value Capture	What value does each side retain, and what evidence and learning improve the next promise?

The return to Value Design is what makes this more than a sales process. Evidence from customer conversations, business cases, implementation, adoption and realised outcomes continuously tests whether the proposition still deserves to exist in its current form — or needs to be redesigned.

The purpose of Value Engineering is therefore not simply to help salespeople demonstrate value. It is to prevent the organisation's value propositions from falling behind the customer.

> **A note on the term**
>
> Value engineering already has two meanings. In engineering and construction it is a method for achieving a function at lower cost (Miles, 1961). In software sales, "value engineers" build business cases for individual deals. We use the term more broadly: an organisational capability that covers proposition design, proof, realisation and learning.

4.1 Why shorter business cycles make the cycle necessary

In FMCG, product and brand managers continuously monitor an offer, compare it with the market and update its positioning. In complex B2B, value propositions often have no equivalent owner. The management team defines them, sales adapts them, and delivery executes them, but nobody manages the promise end to end. The proposition is revisited at a launch, during a strategy exercise or only after sales performance has already deteriorated.

That operating model breaks when customer priorities, technology and competitive criteria change faster than the planning cycle. A value proposition can become stale while the underlying product is still technically strong. The Value Engineering Cycle is therefore not only a way to improve deals; it is the mechanism through which the proposition is repeatedly re- engineered.

CASE · ROBOVISION

Shorter cycles forced a redesign of the value proposition

Ten years ago, Robovision sold well-specified point solutions against relatively fixed 18-month roadmaps. As AI cycles accelerated, customers could no longer specify the functionality they would need in the future. Robovision redesigned the proposition around a no-code platform — a flexible LEGO box through which machine builders and end users could create and adapt AI flows over time.

The move changed more than the product. It changed the promise, the buying conversation, the required sales profile, the customer relationship and the delivery model. Robovision moved from delivering a defined application to helping shape the customer's innovation roadmap and future capability.

This is the outer Value Engineering loop in practice: shorter cycles reveal that the old promise is losing relevance; market evidence triggers redesign; the new proposition is sold and realised; and learning from customer use feeds the next redesign.

WHAT THE CASE SHOWS

Value propositions can expire faster than products.	In fast-moving markets, proposition redesign must be a standing responsibility rather than an occasional project.
B2B suppliers need explicit value-proposition ownership, comparable in discipline — though not necessarily in job title — to product or brand management in FMCG.	Re-engineering the promise changes who buys, what evidence is needed, how sales sells and what delivery must guarantee.

Source: Future of Selling interview with Jonathan Berte, Robovision.

4.2 Value Design: choose the promise before the deal exists

The design question. Which customer system is worth changing, which outcomes can the supplier credibly influence, and what proposition architecture will make those outcomes visible? In B2B, this phase also requires explicit ownership of the proposition as a living asset, rather than leaving it distributed informally across marketing, sales and delivery.

ACTIVITY	PURPOSE
Select the system	Move from the product category to the end-to-end process, workflow or capability the customer depends on.
Diagnose value leaks	Identify waste, delay, volatility, downtime, missed revenue, adoption friction and external impact.
Engineer the value stack	Specify plausible benefits across the five dimensions and the causal logic that connects the offer to them.
Design proof and adoption	Decide what must be measured, what behaviour must change, which data is required and where responsibility sits.
Set commercial guardrails	Define pricing logic, risk limits, no-go conditions and the level of guarantee the supplier can support.

Outputs before sales scales the offer

- A clearly defined customer system and strategic use case.
- A five-dimensional value hypothesis and value-leak map.
- A reusable business-case template with evidence requirements.
- A proof plan, baseline logic and measurement architecture.
- An adoption blueprint and stakeholder map.
- Commercial models, guarantees and control conditions.

4.3 Value Selling: build and prove the value promise with this customer

Value Selling is the account-specific phase. The proposition provides the template; the customer supplies the context, data, trade-offs and stakeholder logic. The output is not a prettier pitch. It is a shared decision case, an implementation and adoption plan, and a baseline that can survive implementation.

A practical Proof of Value sequence

1. Sponsor and scope — agree the strategic question, total scope and decision owner.
2. Access and confidentiality — secure the data, people and protections needed for honest analysis.
3. Baseline and value leaks — establish what happens today, including hidden cost and risk.
4. Scenarios and assumptions — model credible ranges rather than one heroic number.
5. Stakeholder validation — test benefits, trade-offs and responsibilities with the full coalition.
6. Implementation and adoption design — define process changes, user behaviour, training and customer responsibilities.
7. Decision and measurement plan — agree commercial commitments, governance and how value will be reviewed after signature.

4.4 Value Realisation: make the promise appear in use

Signing the contract does not create customer value. Value appears only when the solution works in the customer's system, and people change the behaviours, decisions and routines required to use it. This phase closes the common handover cliff between sales and delivery.

WORKSTREAM	QUESTION	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
Technical implementation	Does the solution perform to specification?	Quality, availability, defects and milestones.
Process change	Has the customer changed the workflow around it?	Cycle time, exceptions, handoffs and standard work.
Adoption and behaviour	Are the right people using it in the right way?	Usage, proficiency, compliance and confidence.
Outcome measurement	Are the agreed benefits appearing?	Financial, continuity, strategic, workforce and planetary measures.
Correction and governance	What changed, and how must the plan adapt?	Decision log, revised assumptions, actions and owners.

The business case should stay alive. Recurring executive reviews should test whether the original case still holds, what has changed at the customer and which corrections are needed. In volatile environments, change is not an exception to the business case; it is a given.

4.5 Value Capture: retain value, evidence and learning

Value Capture is often misunderstood as extracting a higher price. In this framework, it is broader: the customer retains the promised outcomes, while the supplier earns a fair return and converts the engagement into evidence, insight and a stronger next proposition.

CUSTOMER CAPTURES	SUPPLIER CAPTURES
Financial and operational outcomes	Fair margin and outcome-linked upside
Lower exposure and greater resilience	Renewal, expansion and reference value
New capability and better decisions	Comparable evidence across accounts
Evidence for internal governance	Better pricing and risk assumptions
A system that keeps improving after launch	Learning that feeds the next Value Design decision

The two loops

- **Inner deal loop:** Value Selling to Value Realisation to account expansion and back to Value Selling. Its purpose is to keep value current within the relationship and create the next legitimate opportunity.
- **Outer proposition loop:** Value Capture to Value Design. Its purpose is to turn evidence from multiple accounts into a better proposition, stronger proof and smarter commercial guardrails.

4.6 Make value engineering an operating model, not a heroic sales act

No single salesperson can own proposition design, financial modelling, stakeholder alignment, technical delivery, change management, outcome measurement and evidence capture. The capability must be distributed across a cross-functional system with clear ownership and decision gates. Chapter 5 defines the capability model required to make that operating system executable.

PHASE	PRIMARY OWNER AND PARTNERS	DECISION GATE
Design	Proposition or product owner with sales, delivery, finance, customer success and sustainability.	Is this promise worth making and supportable?
Selling	Account lead or business engineering with the customer sponsor, finance, operations, risk, technical and adoption owners.	Is the case decision-grade and jointly owned?
Realisation	Delivery plus change or customer success with the customer process owner, users, data owner and governance team.	Is value appearing, and what must change?
Capture	Account, proposition and finance with delivery, customer, analytics and reference owners.	What did each side capture, and what will be redesigned?

5

The Value Engineering Capability Model

The cycle defines the work. The capability model defines what the organisation must be able to mobilise to do that work repeatedly.

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5.1 Capabilities and skills: the distinction that matters 36

The Value Engineering Cycle defines the work that needs to happen. The next question is whether the organisation has the capability to make it happen repeatedly.

No individual salesperson can continuously redesign propositions, diagnose customer systems, build decision-grade business cases, align multiple stakeholders, negotiate risk, drive adoption and capture evidence across accounts.

Value Engineering must therefore become an organisational capability, not a collection of exceptional behaviours performed by a few talented salespeople.

We define a capability as the repeatable ability of an organisation to produce an outcome by combining people and skills with shared processes, tools, data and organisational support. Skills belong primarily to individuals; capability belongs to the system.

The salesperson's role changes accordingly. Rather than being expected to master every activity personally, the salesperson increasingly becomes a Value Orchestrator: the person who connects customer reality with the expertise, evidence and organisational resources required to move value through the cycle.

AI reduces the value of generic information work. It raises the premium on orchestration, accountability and behaviour change.

> AI is not making human selling obsolete; it is making generic human selling less valuable.

AI-ASSISTED ADVANTAGE	HUMAN / ORGANISATIONAL ADVANTAGE
Search and synthesise market information	Earn trust and accept accountability
Compare alternatives and benchmark claims	Surface politics, fear and conflicting incentives
Draft requirements, proposals and stakeholder messages	Translate between functions in a live, contested decision
Model scenarios and surface inconsistencies	Negotiate trade-offs under ambiguity
Personalise first-pass content at scale	Drive adoption and behaviour change after signature

AI can support both sides of this table, but it cannot carry organisational accountability or independently resolve the social contract between supplier and customer. That is why trust moves from persuasive conversation before the sale to demonstrated behaviour across the entire relationship. That leaves a practical question: if generic selling skill is being commoditised, what should replace it? Chapter 4 answered this for the process. This chapter answers it for the person and the team — with a capability model.

> **Governing AI inside the cycle**
>
> AI now assists most of the work in the left-hand column. That raises governance questions the organisation must answer before it scales (CoVE Sales, 2026): who reviews AI-generated content before it reaches a customer; which pricing logic and commercial terms AI may propose, and who approves them; which customer data may be used, and under what protection; how account teams can challenge an AI recommendation they do not trust; and whether the data behind benchmarks and business cases is good enough to defend in front of a CFO.

5.1 Capabilities and skills: the distinction that matters

A simple test separates the two: if a strong individual could do it alone, unsupported, it is a skill. If it only works with a shared process and tooling that outlasts any one person's rotation onto another account, it is a capability. Measured against that test, none of the ten skills below qualifies as a capability on its own — they are exercised by the same people, on the same accounts, inside the same cycle. What does need a dedicated team, a repeatable process and shared tooling is the whole: running the Value Engineering Cycle end to end. That whole is the one capability this research identifies — Value Engineering.

TABLE 5.1 THE TEN SKILLS BY STAGE OF THE CYCLE

CYCLE STAGE	SKILL	WHY IT BELONGS HERE
Value Design	Customer Discovery	Understand the customer's end-to-end system and identify changing needs and value leaks.
	Value Proposition Design	Convert market and customer learning into a proposition worth taking to market.
Value Selling	Customer Discovery ↔	Continue diagnosis with the specific customer rather than assuming the generic proposition fits.

TABLE 5.1 THE TEN SKILLS BY STAGE OF THE CYCLE (CONTINUED)

CYCLE STAGE	SKILL	WHY IT BELONGS HERE
	Business Casing (Proof of Value)	Turn the proposition into a customer-owned, decision-grade value case.
	C-Level Framing	Connect the case to strategic priorities and executive decision logic.
	Multi-Stakeholder Alignment	Build commitment across the wider decision coalition.
	Workshop Facilitation & Co-Creation	Create the setting in which supplier and customer jointly develop the case and solution.
	Negotiation ↔	Convert value into commercial commitments, risk allocation and guarantees.
	Change Management & Adoption ↔	Design the conditions for value realisation before the customer signs.
Value Realisation	Negotiation ↔	Revisit commitments and trade-offs when conditions change during delivery.
	Change Management & Adoption ↔	Turn implementation into actual usage, behaviour change and outcomes.
Value Capture	Account Growth (Land & Expand)	Convert realised value and newly visible value leaks into legitimate further opportunities.
	Proposition Learning & Continuous Value-Case Update	Capture evidence and learning so the next proposition is better than the previous one.

These are not ten skills every salesperson must master. They are the human skills the organisation must be able to mobilise at different points in the Value Engineering Cycle.

The ten skills do not compete with AI in the salesperson's toolkit; they describe what remains once AI has taken over the drafting, search and first-pass analysis. Each one is exercised in front of another person who has to decide, in that moment, whether to trust the outcome. That is the work an organisation has to protect and develop deliberately, rather than leave to individual talent.

6

Regenerative value: the emerging hypothesis

If resilience depends on the wider social and natural systems around a company, the boundary of B2B value may expand again. We present this as a hypothesis, not a buying norm.

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6.1 Early signals: useful precisely because they are incomplete 41

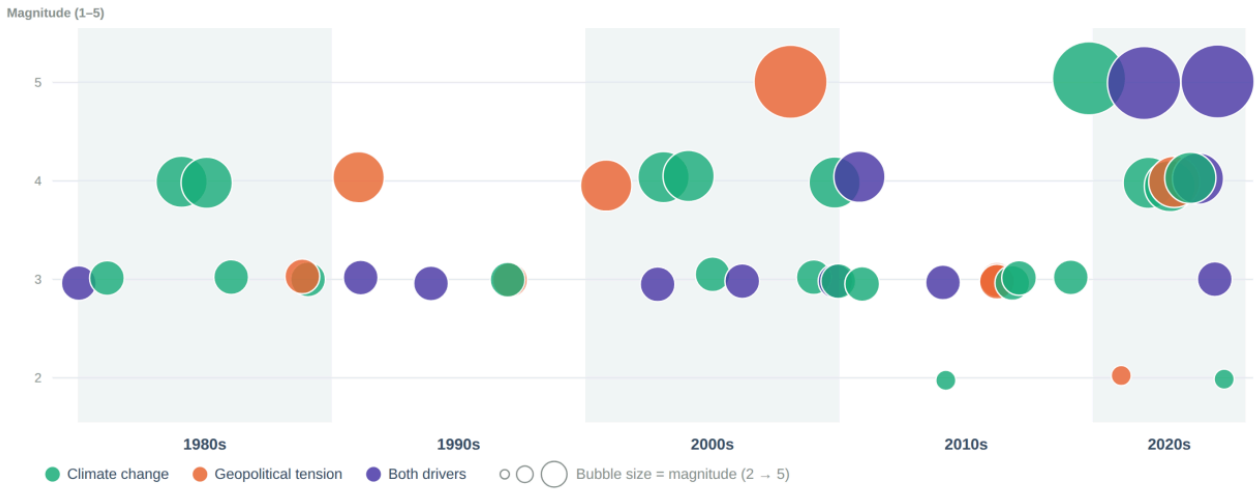
6.2 How to sell regenerative ambition without overclaiming 42

Our current evidence shows customers increasingly evaluating suppliers through financial, continuity, strategic, workforce and planetary outcomes, with resilience connecting many of these concerns. This is the basis for the Systemic Value framework developed in this paper.

The research also raises a further question. If the resilience of a company ultimately depends on the health of the social and ecological systems around it, will the boundary of B2B value eventually expand again — from improving the customer's system to strengthening the wider systems on which customer and supplier both depend?

We call this emerging possibility Regenerative Value. We present it as a research hypothesis, not as an established buying norm. Because the current trends are based on the current geopolitical instability businesses experience, we reviewed all major shocks since 1980.

FIGURE 6.1 **The acceleration of systemic risk, 1980–2025**



Reading the figure. Each dot is one of the 43 major global shocks in the research review, sized by magnitude and coloured by driver: climate change, geopolitical tension, or both.

This timeline traces the emergence of the polycrisis — the compounding of multiple systemic crises into a permanent feature of the global operating environment, not a passing spike — back to its two main drivers: climate change and geopolitical tension. Climate change as defined in the illustration also involves wider ecological pressures, in line with the Planetary Boundaries framework and the UN Sustainable Development Goals: it covers weather and ecology, but also pollution, ecosystem and biosphere disruption, and the extraction of and access to natural resources. All 43 major global events from the underlying research review are shown, each tagged by which of the two drivers it belongs to; many belong to both — access to resources such as oil, water, grain and energy is where climate pressure and geopolitical conflict meet most often. Our review illustrates the increasing interaction between geopolitical disruption and climate and wider ecological pressures. Many major shocks involve both, particularly where access to energy, food, water and natural resources becomes strategically contested.

FIGURE 6.2 **The Regenerative Value Ambition Ladder**



LEVEL OF AMBITION	CORE LOGIC
Extractive	Do harm: take value from natural or social systems without restoring their capacity.
Sustainable	Do less harm: reduce negative impact and improve efficiency.
Circular	Do no harm: retain resources in use and close material loops.
Regenerative	Do good: create measurable net-positive contribution to ecological and social systems.

Commercial reality

Most buyers today do not pay a standalone premium simply because an offer is labelled regenerative. A credible proposition must connect net-positive ambition to material customer outcomes, evidence and governance, and it must avoid moral claims that outrun measurement.

6.1 Early signals: useful precisely because they are incomplete

Emerging fields rarely arrive as finished models. They appear first as partial patterns. SunIsUp and CIRCL are therefore treated as design signals, not as proof that a regenerative value era is already established.

SIGNAL	WHAT CHANGES	WHY IT MATTERS	WHAT IS STILL MISSING
SunIsUp	A Brussels non-profit energy community shares locally produced solar power; producers receive a better rate and consumers pay less.	Local value capture, participation and decentralised resilience move beyond a conventional supplier-buyer relationship.	No clear evidence yet of systematic ecological restoration or deliberate social repair for the most vulnerable.
CIRCL	Modular construction using timber, bio-based insulation and recycled materials reduces carbon, waste and disruption.	The model demonstrates strong circular design and a pathway to transform a high-impact sector.	Published metrics focus on reducing impact rather than measurable net-positive biodiversity, water or community outcomes.

6.2 How to sell regenerative ambition without overclaiming

1. **Start with materiality.** Connect the ambition to a customer risk, strategic priority, resource constraint, talent issue or lifecycle economics.
2. **Expand the system boundary.** Make effects on employees, communities and the biosphere visible only where the supplier can trace the causal logic.
3. **Measure net-positive claims.** Define the baseline, time horizon, beneficiaries, trade-offs and independent evidence required.
4. **Redesign governance and value distribution.** Ask who participates, who bears cost, who captures benefit and how local systems become stronger over time.

> **Research stance**
>
> The right question is not “Can we label this regenerative?” It is “Which system becomes measurably healthier, for whom, over what period, and because of what mechanism?”

7

The Leadership Agenda

Value Engineering should not begin as a large sales transformation. It begins with one proposition, one account and ninety days.

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7.3	From selling an offer to engineering a value loop	45
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7.1 From diagnosing the gap to building the capability

The self-audit established whether the organisation's value proposition is keeping pace with what customers now value. The Value Engineering Cycle showed how that proposition can be continuously designed, proved, realised and renewed. The Capability Model showed what the organisation must be able to mobilise to make that cycle work.

The remaining question for leadership is practical: how do we start?

Value Engineering should not begin as a large-scale sales transformation. It should begin by testing whether one strategically important proposition can be managed differently — from customer need through realised value and back into proposition design.

A 90-DAY PILOT

PERIOD	FOCUS
Days 0–30	Select one proposition and one strategic account. Define the customer system, value leaks, five-dimensional hypothesis and evidence gaps.
Days 31–60	Run a structured customer workshop or Proof of Value. Build the coalition, baseline, scenarios, dependencies, adoption plan and decision case.
Days 61–90	Agree governance, measurement and commercial terms. Create the evidence-capture plan and assign ownership for the outer loop.

> **Start narrow**
>
> Do not launch an enterprise-wide value transformation first. Prove the cycle on one strategically important customer process, capture the evidence and then scale the operating model.

7.2 What this means for each reader

READER	WHAT TO DO FIRST
Executive team	Test the value proposition before prescribing sales training. Give each strategic proposition an owner. Run the 90-day pilot on one proposition and one account.
Sales leaders	Build account teams, not lone sellers, and give them access to finance, delivery and change expertise. Reward realised value and coalition quality next to bookings. Protect time for post-sale reviews and learning.
HR, learning and development, educators	Train business-case and stakeholder skills together, not as separate modules. Recruit for industry and business knowledge next to product knowledge. Treat the C-level conversation as a skill with clear standards.
Marketing and product	Treat the proposition as a living asset. Feed evidence from delivered accounts back into what is promised next.

7.3 From selling an offer to engineering a value loop

The B2B sales challenge is not that buyers have stopped needing suppliers. It is that they need suppliers for a different reason. Information is abundant; confidence is scarce. Products are comparable; system-level change is difficult. Promises are easy; adoption, evidence and accountability are hard.

FROM	TO
A product or solution pitch	A promise about the performance of a customer system.
One ROI number	A multi-dimensional, stakeholder-owned business case.
Sales ending at signature	A cycle linking design, selling, realisation and capture.
Customer success as follow-up	Implementation, change, adoption and measurement as part of the commercial promise.
References as stories	Comparable evidence that improves the next proposition.

> The future of selling is not about making salespeople better at explaining value. It is about organising the supplier to design, prove, realise and capture value continuously — with the customer and across the customer's system.

And beyond systemic value?

Regenerative value is the next research question. The commercial task is not to declare the era finished before it begins, but to investigate where net-positive social and ecological contribution becomes material, measurable and worth paying for. That is the frontier of the programme's next wave.

7.4 Research agenda and how to take part

The programme is a living one. These are the questions for its next wave.

1. When does net-positive social and ecological contribution become material, measurable and worth paying for?
2. Do the five customer demands hold outside Europe and across more sectors?
3. Who owns the value proposition in a B2B organisation, and how is that ownership organised?
4. How does the split between AI-assisted and human work shift as AI takes over more of the cycle?
5. How do supplier margins and pricing models change as the scope of the offer widens?

Join the research

We interview buyers and sellers in B2B organisations. To contribute a case or take part in an interview, contact the authors through FutureOfSelling.org.

Methodology and case evidence

The Future of Selling research programme has run since 2009 and now spans several hundred interviews and strategy workshops with B2B commercial leaders worldwide. This paper's analysis of the systemic-value shift draws on a coded subset of that base: 33 interviews across 29 organisations, selected and analysed in depth for this study. The findings are cross-referenced against independently sourced macro datasets: global systemic-shock records and international ESG disclosure tracking.

The programme follows grounded-theory logic: patterns and concepts are developed iteratively from the evidence, rather than tested only against a model fixed in advance. The wider base of workshops and conversations provides an additional practitioner sense-check, since similar themes have repeatedly surfaced in different settings over the years; because those conversations were not systematically coded, they are treated as contextual validation rather than formal research evidence for this study.

The coded interview base continues to grow as new cases are added; the company examples cited throughout this paper are illustrative, not an exhaustive account of the underlying research.

THE CODED SAMPLE: 33 INTERVIEWS, 29 ORGANISATIONS · NEW, TO BE COMPLETED BY THE AUTHORS

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTIC	BREAKDOWN
Sector	[NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS PER SECTOR]
Role of the interviewee	[BUYERS / SELLERS / COMMERCIAL LEADERS]
Country	[NUMBER PER COUNTRY]
Interview period	[FROM – TO]
Coding approach	[HOW THE INTERVIEWS WERE CODED, AND BY WHOM]

Case evidence

SOURCE	EVIDENCE USED
Kaneka: Marc Van Genechten and Danny Beyltiens	Volatility, risk, Green Planet, lifecycle value and the layered business-case gap.
Robovision: Jonathan Berte	Shortening business cycles, the shift from a point solution to an adaptive platform, and the need to re-engineer the value proposition continuously.
Sales Management Association: Eiso Bleeker	Professional purchasing, the rise of tendering and the need to shape decision criteria early.
Accent: Lien Byttebier	Re-anchoring from commodity recruitment to end-to-end recruitment-process improvement, cross-customer benchmarks and stakeholder-specific workforce propositions.
Anonymised hospital HR director	Board-ready wellbeing case; the incumbent supplier lost after failing to detect the shift beyond standard prevention services.
Delaware: Bart Van Kerkhoven	Outcome models, bonus-malus, risk sharing and the central role of change management.
CGI: Frank Van Nistelrooij	Proof of Value, C-level buying, outcome terms, negotiation and recurring value governance.
Omexom: workshop	Volatility shifting risk to the supplier, result commitments, and the regulation-driven energy transition.
SunIsUp: Simon Laffut. CIRCL: Wim Pieter and Peter Bertels	Early regenerative signals and the distinction between strong sustainability, circularity and net-positive regeneration.

Future of Selling research platform

- **Research:** futureofselling.org/research. Programme question, research waves, evidence base and limits.
- **Current Trends:** futureofselling.org/current-trends. Four trends, five customer demands, systemic value dimensions and the Value Engineering Cycle.
- **Value Eras Timeline:** futureofselling.org/value-eras-timeline. The evolution of B2B value from product performance to systemic and emerging regenerative value.
- **Future Trends:** futureofselling.org/future-trends. Regenerative value as an emerging hypothesis and the ambition ladder from harm to net-positive contribution.

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