While the sales cycle itself hasn’t changed much over time, the context for selling and who does what and when absolutely has. In the training and consulting that we conduct, we are continually surprised by one simple observation:

*Salespeople do not understand or take advantage of their position of power.*

This is partly due to the changing face of business and how the role of sales has evolved in the past 15 years. Whereas in the past all salespeople would write, create, and produce the end-documentation (e.g., proposals, e-mails, and various other types of content) delivered to their customers—and, most importantly, adding their own personality and passion to their work—this is no longer the norm. In many cases, the lead is generated by marketing, and the proposal is generated by the same department or by a
customer support department without much, if any, input by the salesperson.

In this chapter, we discuss the convergence of sales, marketing, customer service, and technology, and also remind you that as a salesperson you have much more power—and responsibility—to influence, control, and indeed make the sale happen than you may realize.

Let’s consider a few examples of how you can effect your power as a salesperson. Difficult economic times, coupled with the continuous drive for efficiency that has dominated business behavior for more than a decade, can often fuel decisions that make sense on paper but not in practice. Let’s look at some of these “paper decisions” that appear to promote efficiency but can actually reduce top-line sales.

**Paper Decision One: Marketing Controls the Brand**

Far from promoting efficiency, putting all the power into one department can have the effect of narrowing the sales pipeline.

**Example: Brand Confusion**

We recently conducted sales training for a FTSE 50 organization. Part of the objective for this training was to enlighten and motivate the various sales teams to the challenging—and changing—world in which they were operating. We wanted to get them to build their thinking around what mattered to their customers, to help them evolve from commodity selling to consultative selling.

One of the many things we presented was a simple and highly effective approach to e-mail communication: We suggested that they themselves run a mail merge to their own prospects (in this case, using Mailchimp). We didn’t expect the shocking response, a staggeringly needless example of siloed behavior:

Sales:

- “We can’t send prospecting e-mails!”
- “Are we even allowed to use this Mailchimp thing?”