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## And, Just Like That, Everything Changed

A global pandemic. Panic. Social distancing. Working from home. An economic crisis.

In a heartbeat, we went from happy hours to virtual happy hours. From conferences to virtual conferences. From the classroom to the virtual classroom. From selling to virtual selling.

To be sure, we've sought out and used virtual communication channels since the dawn of man. It began with smoke signals and then written letters. We've even used carrier pigeons.

Innovation in virtual communication accelerated in the nineteenth century with the telegraph—which was essentially very slow text messaging. The telegraph was soon disintermediated by the telephone.

In the 1980s, we fell in love with the fax machine, which was, likewise, disintermediated by email in the 1990s. In the ensuing decades, the online chat rooms of the 1990s morphed

into texting, direct messaging, interacting on social media, and then interactive chat.

As early as 1880, an inventor named George Carey proposed a video phone. His idea was published in *Scientific American*. Forty-seven years later, in 1927, Herbert Hoover stepped into a video booth at Bell Labs and made a video call.

By the 1960s, AT&T had developed video technology to the point that it went to market with the *Picturephone*, but it was a flop. For the next 30 or so years, video calling failed to launch.<sup>1</sup> Then, in 2003, Skype kicked off the modern age of video calling.

In 2007, the iPhone changed everything. This was quickly followed by FaceTime in 2010, Zoom in 2013, and then Facebook Messenger video calls in 2015. Finally, the convergence of broadband internet and inexpensive hardware made the video call accessible to all.

Today video calling, though underutilized by sales professionals, is the most powerful and effective virtual communication channel of them all.

## **Technology Meets the Moment**

The global coronavirus pandemic of 2020 accelerated the adoption of virtual selling much like the global financial crisis of 2007–2009 accelerated the emergence of inside sales teams and the division of sales labor into business development, selling, account management, and customer success (land, expand, and retain).

Except that this was faster, compressing what might have taken 10 years to fully actualize into a matter of months. In an instant, to remain relevant and competitive, salespeople, account managers, entrepreneurs, and business professionals had to shift the way they were engaging prospects and customers. Likewise, prospects and customers had to shift the way they interacted with vendors.

The evolution of virtual selling technology finally met its moment. Digital transformation, which for the past 20 years had been an inevitable yet slowly building tide, rolled over us like a tsunami. Suddenly, virtual selling became king.

Unlike so many other pivotal points in history, in which smart people were forced, out of necessity, to invent technology in order to meet the moment, this time the technology was ahead of us. We simply needed to catch up.

This is where we find ourselves. Virtual selling is the new normal. There is no turning back.

## **The Purpose of This Book**

My objective is to teach you techniques that turn virtual communication platforms into powerful and effective sales tools, no matter what you sell, the complexity or length of your sales cycle, or whether you are an inside rep, field rep, or hybrid of the two. *Virtual Selling* is the most comprehensive and practical resource on video-based and digital sales skills ever developed.

This book will help you:

- Become more effective with virtual communication tools so that you can connect, engage, and build deep and lasting relationships with other people.
- Leverage technology, digital tools, and virtual communication channels to increase the number of connections you make and accelerate the speed at which you make those connections.
- Blend virtual selling channels and tactics into your sales process to increase productivity.
- Master virtual techniques to allow you to separate from competitors and gain a distinct competitive edge.
- Make virtual selling more human.

As you dive into these powerful insights, and with each new chapter, you'll gain greater and greater confidence in your ability to leverage virtual communication channels and conduct successful virtual sales calls. And, with this newfound confidence, your success and income will soar.