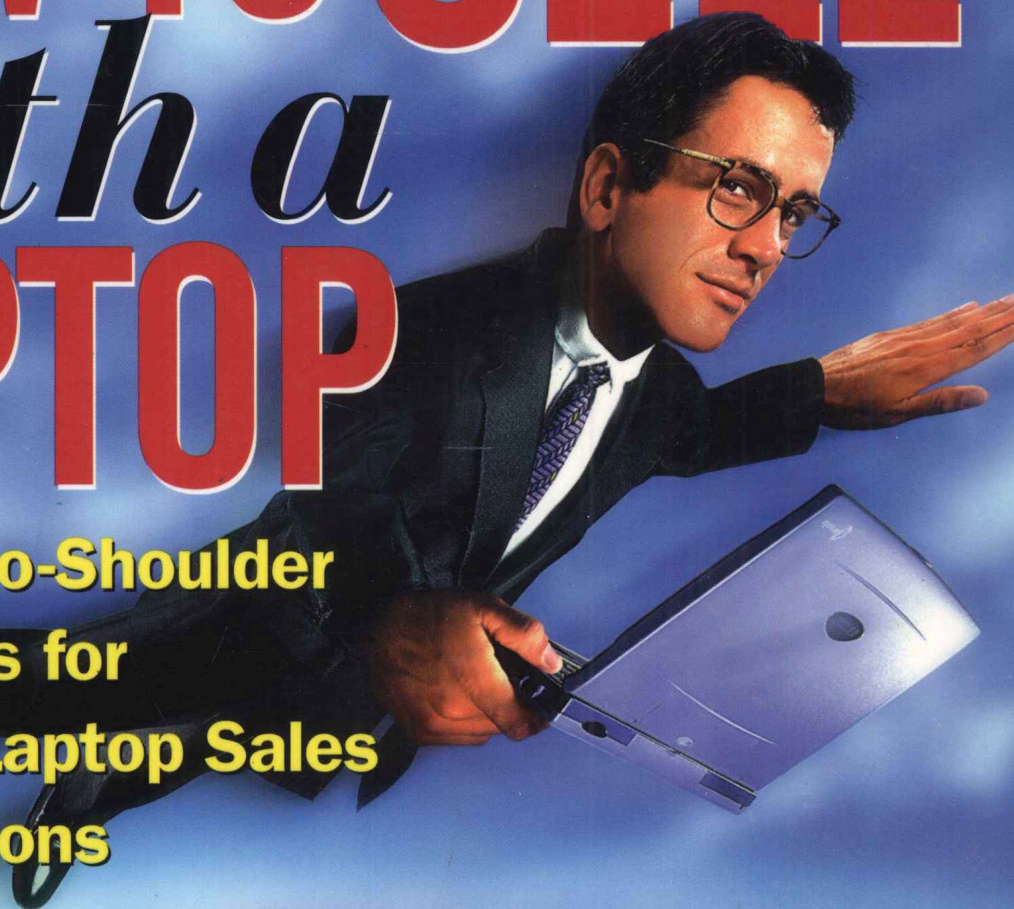- Customize a laptop presentation for your next client in minutes
- Tips and traps for using PowerPoint, the Web, and multimedia projectors

HOW TO SELL
with a
LAPTOP

Shoulder-to-Shoulder Techniques for Powerful Laptop Sales Presentations

ANDY JENKINS • DICK ELDER • DAVE THOMAS

How to Sell with a Laptop

Shoulder-to-Shoulder™ Techniques for Powerful Laptop Sales Presentations

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McGraw-Hill

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Acknowledgments

How to Sell with Your Laptop helps sales professionals turn their laptop computers into the single most powerful sales tool available to them. With a laptop, they can tell their sales story, show sales information, and demonstrate product capabilities in ways never before possible. In writing *How to Sell with a Laptop*, we are privileged to be a part of this critical sales revolution.

Throughout the creation of this book, we have been blessed with a number of people whose knowledge, competence, enthusiasm, and sheer will have made the book possible. We would like to recognize these people, without whose interest and support the effort could not have been accomplished.

First, our customers at TEAM Marketing Group. It is these corporations and their management teams with whom we work who have continued to raise the crossbar of sales competition and innovation that we aspire to achieve and exceed.

Second, we acknowledge the support of the many colleagues in the selling and training industry who have encouraged us at TEAM to develop the book based on our experience living and working in the trenches with thousands of America's best salespeople for more than 25 years.

Every great effort takes a team of people whose target is focused, whose target is measured, and whose target is achieved. Our great team of Cassy Heller, Marci Finkenbinder, Renee Joseph, and a host of contributors are the people whose attention to detail, technical expertise, and constant "push" helped in bringing you this book. One member of our team, however, must be singled out for her outstanding contribution. That person is Carolyn Dunbar, our senior writer and editor. From the beginning of the project, Carolyn has rolled up her sleeves, researched,

written, edited, proofed, and touched every page, every sentence, every illustration. Her professionalism, competence, and sheer determination have created a significant impact on *How to Sell with Your Laptop*. For her efforts we are eternally grateful.

And last but not least, we acknowledge our families, who have put up with our crazy schedules throughout the project.

ANDY JENKINS
DICK ELDER
DAVE THOMAS

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Introduction

Salespeople live for the next sale. You know this from your own experience. As a salesperson, nothing in your professional life is more challenging, satisfying, or exciting than making the sale—hearing your prospect say, "Yes."

Getting to "yes" is becoming more of a challenge all the time as markets, customers, distribution channels, manufacturers, laboratories, sales managers, product managers, marketers—even accounting departments—demand more out of those of us in the sales profession. Add to those demands the evolution of sales automation (at revolutionary speed!) and you've got the ultimate challenge: blending technology into the most human-interactive of the business professions—*selling*.

How do you sell with a laptop? That's a great question. It's not the same as, "How do you keep up your account information?" or "How do you e-mail someone from a laptop?" or "How do you map your territory?" or "How do you submit your expense reports via computer?"
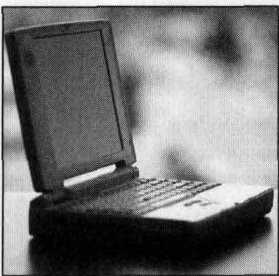
The question is, "How do you *sell* with your laptop computer?" The answer to that question involves both of the challenges salespeople face: closing the sale and using sales automation effectively.

In this book, you'll find the answer to how to sell with a laptop in a new mode of selling called *Shoulder-to-Shoulder Selling*: positioning the buyer at your shoulder—not across the desk—and allowing you to sell with your laptop or notebook computer!

What Is *Shoulder-to-Shoulder Selling?*

Simply put, *Shoulder-to-Shoulder Selling* is a set of commonsense techniques that will help you use your laptop to maximum effect

as a sales tool to present your products and services. Regardless of what "sales process" you use (consultative selling, strategic selling, etc.), at some point you'll need to explain how your products, services, or ideas can best meet the customer's needs.

When you sell *shoulder-to-shoulder*, you need a presentation that can capture the customer's interest or get your prospect excited about what you have to offer. If you use an interactive multimedia presentation loaded on your laptop, you can:

- Explain the details about your products or services with pictures, audio, video clips, and animations.

- Show examples of how your products can be used in real-life applications.

- Demonstrate the features, benefits, and competitive strengths of your offering (Figure I-1).

- Review technical specs or test results with charts, graphs, and pictures (Figure I-2).
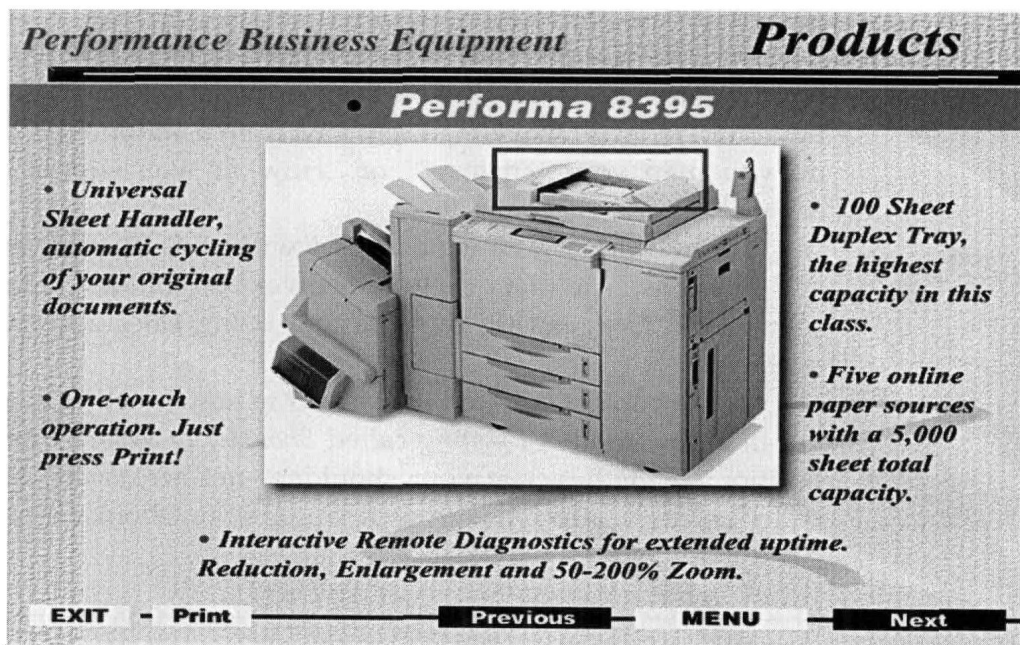
Figure I-1. A well-designed content screen can showcase the features and benefits of your products.
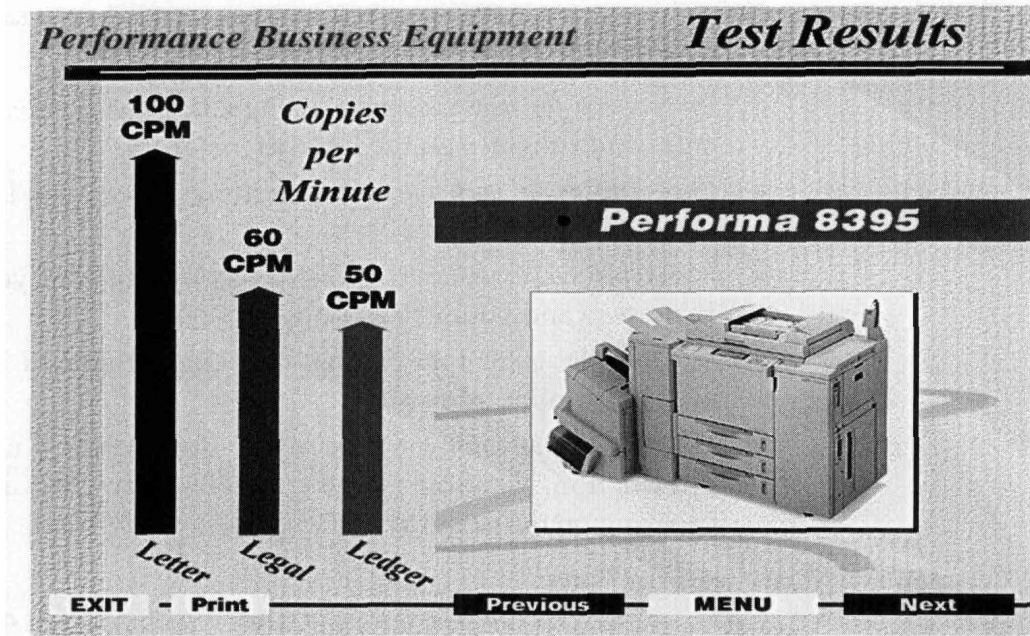
Figure I-2. Use artwork, tables, and graphs to display test results or technical information about your products.

- Share audio or video testimonials from satisfied customers.
- And the list goes on and on!

Best of Both Worlds

In the past, salespeople have typically relied on brochures, overheads, slides, and videos to communicate these details. Today, you can combine the power of all these formats into a single multimedia presentation and never need a slide projector, VCR, or stack of brochures. Now you can use your laptop as the primary sales tool for delivering the message and use printed brochures solely as your "leave-behinds" with customers.

The term *shoulder-to-shoulder* means to eliminate the desk, table, or sales counter as a barrier between you and your prospect or customer. When you sell with your laptop, you sit side-by-side, or *shoulder-to-shoulder,* with your prospect and explore your products in a consultative discussion.

You can use your laptop in many ways to support your sales activity, for example, by:

- *Prospecting for new customers*, using CD-ROM databases and search engines on the Internet.
- *Communicating with customers*, writing letters, sending faxes, and creating proposals.
- *Managing your customer database*, keeping track of your customers and your call activity.
- *Maximizing your time*, using calendar programs for scheduling appointments.
- *Communicating with the home office*, downloading new information, sending letters/expense reports, and checking on order status and product availability.

Maximize Face Time

All of these are important uses for your laptop, and you will find some of these activities explained here, but they are not the focus of this book. *How to Sell with a Laptop* concentrates on how to maximize the most important asset you have—"face time" with customers! That's where your laptop can best help you accelerate your sales process.

What's in It for Me?

The "old school" of veteran salespeople can produce many reasons why they don't use a laptop in front of customers. Do these sound familiar?

"I can use a brochure and explain it faster by myself."

"I don't like computers. I'm not comfortable with how to use them."
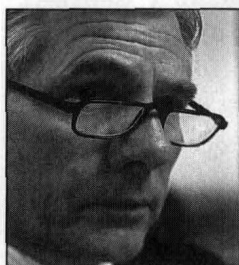
"I can't find the information and don't want to look foolish in front of my customer."

"Computers aren't dependable. I'd rather rely on myself."

"I have my own unique style of selling that doesn't lend itself to using a computer."

"My customers are low-tech. They would be offended if I used a computer during the call."

"I'm already successful without it. Why should I change?"

Perception is reality. It's true. If you're not confident and comfortable during the sales call, your chances for success are greatly reduced. Change is difficult and often resisted. If you're convinced that you can't sell with a laptop, then you will probably fail.

Maybe you've never had anyone show you how to sell with your laptop. Maybe you've never seen the look on a customer's face when he or she watches a fun, interactive presentation. Or maybe you're like the majority of sales reps who received a laptop, an owner's manual, and a brief introduction on how to communicate with the home office. No one has really trained them on how to create a basic sales presentation or use it in front of a customer.

The bottom line is simple: As salespeople, we can be the most perceptive, open-minded people in the world if we see a reason to change. If we see value in using a new tool that will help us sell more, we'll try it . . . once. But we'd better have a positive first experience right off, or we'll never try it again.

That's why we created *How to Sell with a Laptop*. We've taken years of experience in selling with a laptop and boiled it all down into a series of *best practices* so you can feel more comfortable and confident the very first time you try it. We know that it works; we've done it ourselves, and we've seen the results.

To keep it simple, we've boiled down hundreds of reasons why you should sell with a laptop into five main benefits for you.

1. Selling with a Laptop Accelerates Your Sales Process!

Multimedia presentations consistently get people more excited and generate more interest than static brochures or overhead presentations. Laptop presentations combine the best of all worlds—sight, sound, motion, and graphics—coupled with your valuable presentation skills.

The results are clear: You will accelerate the sale if you can visually demonstrate and verbally explain why your products/services are exactly what the customer needs to solve his or her problems!
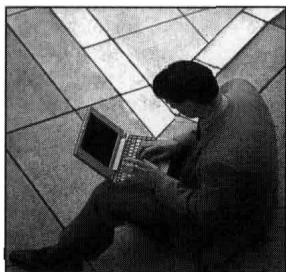
2. Selling with a Laptop Makes You Look Great!

When you know your presentation, you can quickly answer questions and objections with more than just your verbal skills. When customers can see it (visually) and hear it (verbally from you), they will feel more comfortable with your response.

Another advantage—you can stop worrying about memorizing every detail and specification. Let the computer be the keeper of the knowledge while you master using the knowledge. Your laptop allows you to stay focused on understanding the customer's needs (qualifying) and to visually demonstrate how your products/services can solve customer problems.

When you learn how to master your laptop to visually impress your customers, your professionalism and expertise will be truly enhanced. Showmanship still plays an important part in your sales success, and good laptop skills will definitely improve your showmanship and style.
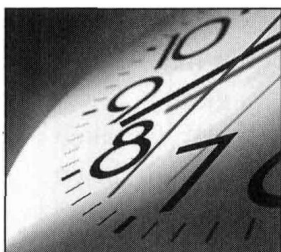
3. Selling with a Laptop Saves Time and Money

How many times have you found yourself in front of a decision maker without the brochure, product sample, or data page you need at your fingertips? You left it in the car or back at the office.

When you sell with your laptop, you will have ready access to all your product information, features and benefits, spec sheets, test results—and even your brochures—*during* your sales call! You don't have to worry about forgetting support material. Everything is always with you. Just open your laptop and show the decision maker exactly what he or she needs to see—right now!
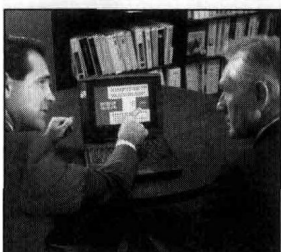
4. Selling with a Laptop Keeps You in Control

With your laptop, you control what the customer sees and when you want the customer to see it. You choose the approach and content screens that best support your sales approach.

Conversely, when you sell with a brochure, invariably your customer picks it up and starts paging through it. Now he or she is in control, and you're reacting to the customer's quick-scan approach to reviewing your product line.