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# The Seven C's of Selling

A deal-dynamics model for enterprise sales — the seven forces that decide whether a complex deal closes, and when.

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BY TODD YANCEY | Originated 2000 · Updated 2026

## THE PREMISE

# Most complex deals don't fail for lack of a framework.

Sales has never been short on methodology — BANT, CHAMP, MEDDIC, SPIN, Challenger, Solution Selling. Each promises to qualify faster and forecast more accurately. And in many cases, they help.

But the longer you spend inside large, slow-moving buying cycles, the more obvious the truth becomes:

*Deals fail because the team misunderstood the forces inside the account that determine whether anything actually moves.*

# Seven forces — plus the one role you can't ignore.

1

## Champion

*The advocate when you're not in the room*

2

## Critic

*The objection that doesn't go away*

3

## Competitor

*The alternative that sounds responsible*

4

## Compelling Event

*The moment the deal stops being optional*

5

## Consensus

*The hidden gatekeeper across stakeholders*

6

## Commercial Alignment

*Where deals get approved or quietly killed*

7

## Commitment

*The point of no return*

+

## Economic Buyer

*The role that funds the deal*

# 1

## Champion

### The advocate when you're not in the room.

Every sale begins when someone inside the organization believes your solution is the best path forward. But sellers often confuse a **Coach** for a **Champion**.

A **Coach** explains how decisions get made — but may stay neutral on the outcome, and may be guiding your Competitor too. A true **Champion** has influence, conviction, and a reason to act. They spend political capital to move the decision forward.

In complex deals, a **Champion** alone is rarely enough. You usually have to reframe the organization's view of the problem — what it's truly solving, why now, and what delay will cost.

**KEY MOVE** Equip the **Champion** to sell internally: a tailored business case, ROI and risk framing, and language that resonates across stakeholders. A **Coach** helps you read the map. A **Champion** helps you cross the line.

# 2

## Critic

### The objection that doesn't go away.

Where there is a **Champion**, there is almost always a **Critic** — often with equal or greater influence.

The **Critic** believes another approach is safer, cheaper, easier, or better aligned with internal realities. Sometimes they oppose you quietly. Sometimes publicly. Either way, they are rarely optional.

Ignoring the **Critic** is one of the fastest ways to lose a deal you thought you'd already won.

**KEY MOVE** Surface their concerns early, treat them as legitimate, and answer with specificity. The goal isn't to win the argument — it's to remove their ability to stall the decision.

# 3

## Competitor

### The alternative that sounds responsible.

Often the **Critic** doesn't simply resist change — they advocate an alternative. Another vendor, a new entrant, an internal build team.

But in many enterprise deals, the most powerful **Competitor** is far simpler: do nothing. "Let's wait until next quarter." "Let's extend what we have." "Let's build it internally."

In large organizations, inaction is rarely lazy. It's often defensible — and it wins when the problem stays undefined or the urgency stays optional.

**KEY MOVE** Don't badmouth rivals. Differentiate by framing the cost of delay and the risk of the status quo. Make the next step feel inevitable, not merely attractive.

# 4

## Compelling Event

### The moment a deal stops being optional.

A deal doesn't close because a customer likes your product. It closes because something forces a decision.

A renewal deadline. A security incident. A contract expiration. A cost mandate. A board directive. A regulatory deadline. A competitive threat.

**Compelling Events** come in many forms — but the effect is the same: they create urgency and make delay more expensive than action.

**KEY MOVE** Find the forcing function and put it on the calendar. If the **Compelling Event** is vague, the deal becomes vague. And vague deals don't close — they drift.

# 5

## Consensus

### The hidden gatekeeper across stakeholders.

Enterprise sales don't close on preference. They close on alignment.

Deals move forward when enough stakeholders agree the solution is right for the organization — not just for the person who started the search. **Consensus** is what turns interest into institutional permission.

Without **Consensus**, you don't have a sales cycle. You have a series of meetings.

**KEY MOVE** Build stakeholder alignment deliberately. Most buyers don't arrive at **Consensus** — they are guided there, one internal conversation at a time.

# 6

## Commercial Alignment

### Where deals get approved or quietly killed.

Even the best solution can lose on terms.

Procurement, finance, legal, and risk shape the final yes. If the commercial structure, pricing model, risk allocation, or contract mechanics don't work for the organization, the deal stalls — regardless of how strong the technical win.

Enterprise deals aren't won on product preference. They're won on commercial acceptability.

**KEY MOVE** Align value to economics. Quantify outcomes. Structure terms that make the purchase workable. This is where good deals become executable deals.

# 7

## Commitment

### The point of no return.

**Commitment** is the closing force. It isn't enthusiasm. It isn't verbal support.

It's a decision with a timeline, ownership, and next steps that pull the organization across the line.

**Commitment** is where a **Compelling Event** becomes a date on the calendar.

In enterprise sales, **Commitment** is what turns "we should" into "we will."

**KEY MOVE** Secure measurable commitments: stakeholder access, evaluation milestones, legal-review start dates, a mutual action plan. No shared plan means no **Commitment** — only polite momentum.



THE ROLE THAT FUNDS THE DEAL

# The Economic Buyer

Every enterprise sale collides with the same reality: someone must have the budget and the authority to approve the purchase.

They may not attend every meeting. They may not care about the feature set. They may not feel the pain personally. But they control the final gate — funding, authorization, and timing.

When teams fail to identify them early, deals die a slow death disguised as progress: "We just need to socialize it." "Procurement is reviewing it." "One more approval."

**KEY MOVE** Identify the **Economic Buyer** early, earn access, and align the purchase to what they protect: budget, risk, and priorities.

# Every enterprise deal contains all eight.

- a **Champion** driving the solution
- a **Critic** resisting it
- a **Competitor** offering an alternative path
- a **Compelling Event** forcing a decision
- the need for **Consensus** across stakeholders
- **Commercial Alignment** that makes the purchase workable
- a **Commitment** that turns intent into closure
- an **Economic Buyer** with budget and authority

Call them what you want. But if you can't identify and strengthen all of them, you don't have a forecast.

***You have hope with a slide deck.***

# TODD YANCEY

*Building Enduring Revenue — Founder-Led Sales to Repeatable GTM*

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[toddyancey.com](http://toddyancey.com)

[linkedin.com/in/toddyancey](https://www.linkedin.com/in/toddyancey)

todd@yancey.com