

# The Competition Isn't Your Biggest Enemy. It's the Status Quo.



Any number of factors can cause deals to go south.

Factors like misaligned timing. An irrelevant pitch. A lack of budget. A prospect who chooses to go with the competition.

Salespeople get geared up for competitive deals because they seem like the ultimate challenge. It's one thing to sell to a prospect who has a defined business pain and is a good fit for your solution. It's quite another to sell to a prospect who's also evaluating three similar products, one or more of which might have feature parity with -- or even be able to objectively do more than -- your product.

But I'm going to let you in on a little secret. Competitive deals aren't such a big deal after all (pun intended). That's because while you won't win every competitive deal you work, the presence of competitors indicates that your prospect is serious about adopting a new solution. This is a very good thing.

If your prospect has done the work of choosing several vendors to evaluate, they've already recognized they have business pain. They've probably had several internal meetings to discuss how to address it, come up with a solution, then gone out and sought out vendors with that offering.

This means the hard work is already done. You don't need to convince your prospects they have a problem, or that they need to change. You don't need to create a sense of

urgency or send relentless follow-ups to get your prospect to respond. They've already decided they have a problem.

When you hear that you're the only vendor in the mix, it's easy to get happy ears. You're not up against anyone! You can take your time qualifying and advising!

But don't relax so fast. Not being up against any vendors isn't a sure sign you're going to win the deal. **That's because your biggest competition in a sales deal isn't another vendor -- it's your prospect's unwillingness to change the status quo.**

Let's face it -- change is hard. It's even harder when the change will be costly, whether in terms of time or money. It's even harder when the prospect hasn't accepted that they need to make a change.

Decision making is fraught with difficulty. The more choices your prospect is responsible for, the more likely they'll choose to change nothing about their current situation unless they're really sold on its necessity.

That's the scenario you're up against when you're the only vendor being considered. Yes, you're the only contender, which means you won't have to address damaging claims from competing sales reps or price-match a company that's trying to undercut you.

But it also means that the entire sales process from start to finish is on your shoulders. You have to be the one to diagnose business pain. You have to be the one to lead your prospect to recognize the same problems you see. You have to be the one to convince them to do something about it.

All this before you're even able to broach the subject of your product and how it can help.

So don't relax the next time you hear your prospect isn't assessing anybody else. It just means you'll have to do more work upfront to educate your prospect about how their current situation could be improved and why you should be the one to help them.

As long as you're your usual consultative self, though, this shouldn't pose too much of a challenge. Remember to always be helping and the sale will take care of itself.