STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

Customers easiest to talk to may not be the best to sell to. Find the optimal stakeholder profile to best progress your opportunities.

Today's customers move as far down the decision making journey as possible before engaging sales people; usually more than half way. When they do engage, they already have an abundance of information and are working to build consensus with a buying group.

Most sales conversations that begin at this late stage focus heavily on price and commodity comparisons. Organizations spend tremendous resources pursuing deals already unofficially awarded to a competitor.

Rather than wait and react, sellers must engage early in the customer's decision making journey and influence emerging demand. But doing so requires finding the right customer stakeholder to engage.

When part of CEB, we conducted profiling research, similar to that done on sales people, to find customer profiles most beneficial to engage early in the buying journey. We ultimately found seven profiles that segment into three general categories (Mobilizers, Talkers and Blockers).

A few interesting points stand out in the research.

First, a significant difference exists in the likelihood of a Mobilizer to drive organizational change vs. a Talker or a Blocker.
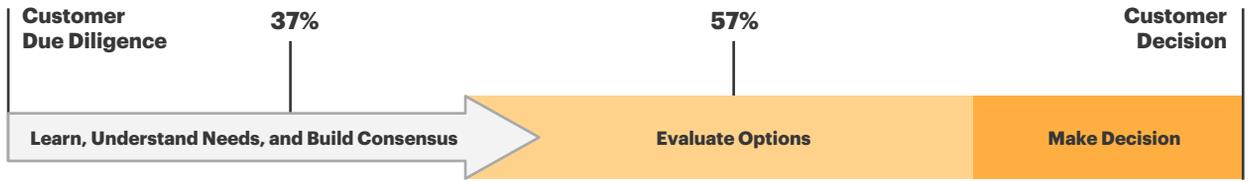
Second, Mobilizers may not always be the easiest customers to engage, particularly those who are skeptical. They ask hard questions and force sellers to make a compelling case.

Third, it should surprise no one that high performing sellers consistently engage Mobilizers, while core performers consistently engage Talkers.

If you're serious about transforming your sales organization around the Challenger concept and improving the quality of your sales experiences, we recommend you develop your team's capability to identify, flex to and work with Mobilizers, and to avoid, where possible, Talkers and Blockers.
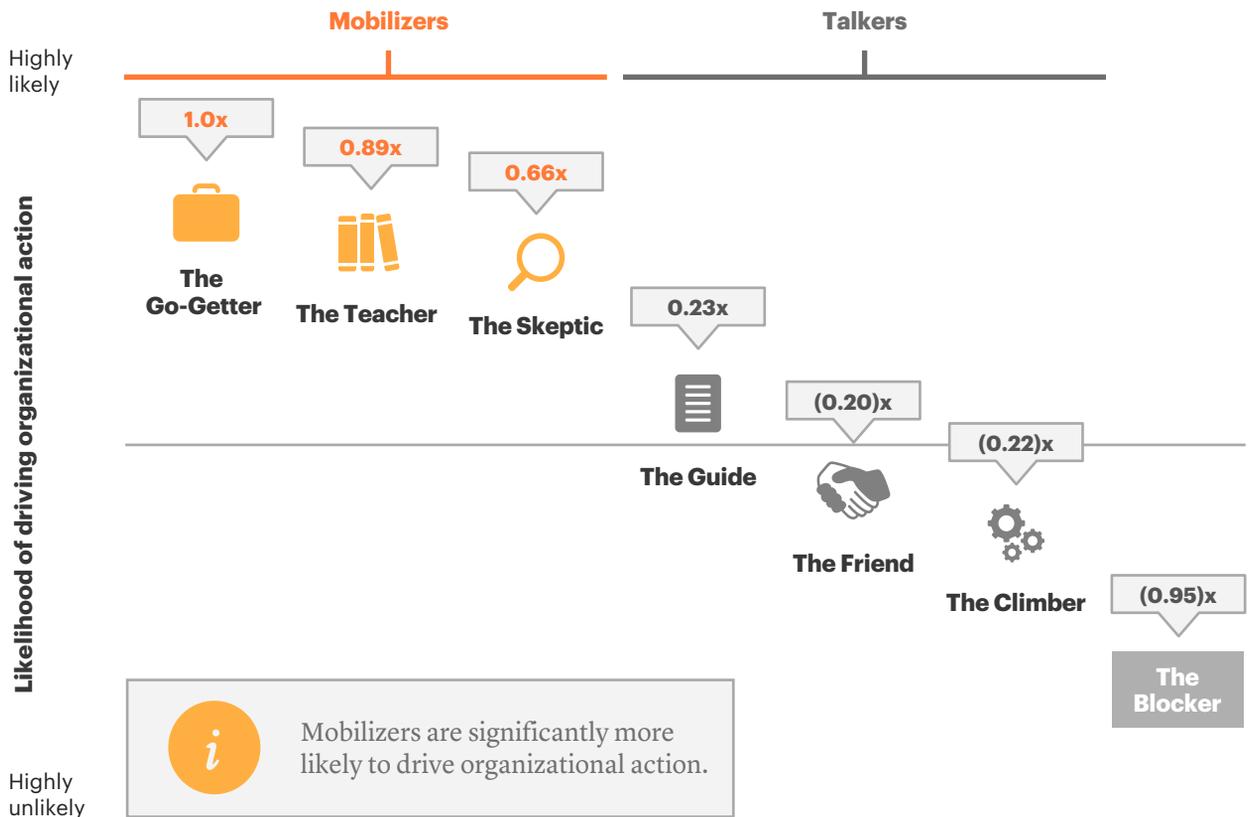
Customer Due Diligence	37%	57%	Customer Decision

Learn, Understand Needs, and Build Consensus → **Evaluate Options** | **Make Decision**

i Customers build consensus at 37% and engage sellers at 57%.

n = 1,460.
Source: CEB Research.

Mobilizers | **Talkers**

Highly likely

Likelihood of driving organizational action

- **1.0x** — The Go-Getter
- **0.89x** — The Teacher
- **0.66x** — The Skeptic
- **0.23x** — The Guide
- **(0.20)x** — The Friend
- **(0.22)x** — The Climber
- **(0.95)x** — The Blocker

i Mobilizers are significantly more likely to drive organizational action.

Highly unlikely

Source: CEB Research.