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# Consultative Selling for the Materials Industry

EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE FOR MATERIALS GROWTH

## A conversation with Mike Griffiths

Managing Director, Consulting Skill Ltd.

June 2, 10 am EST

To see our Event Schedule and to Register:

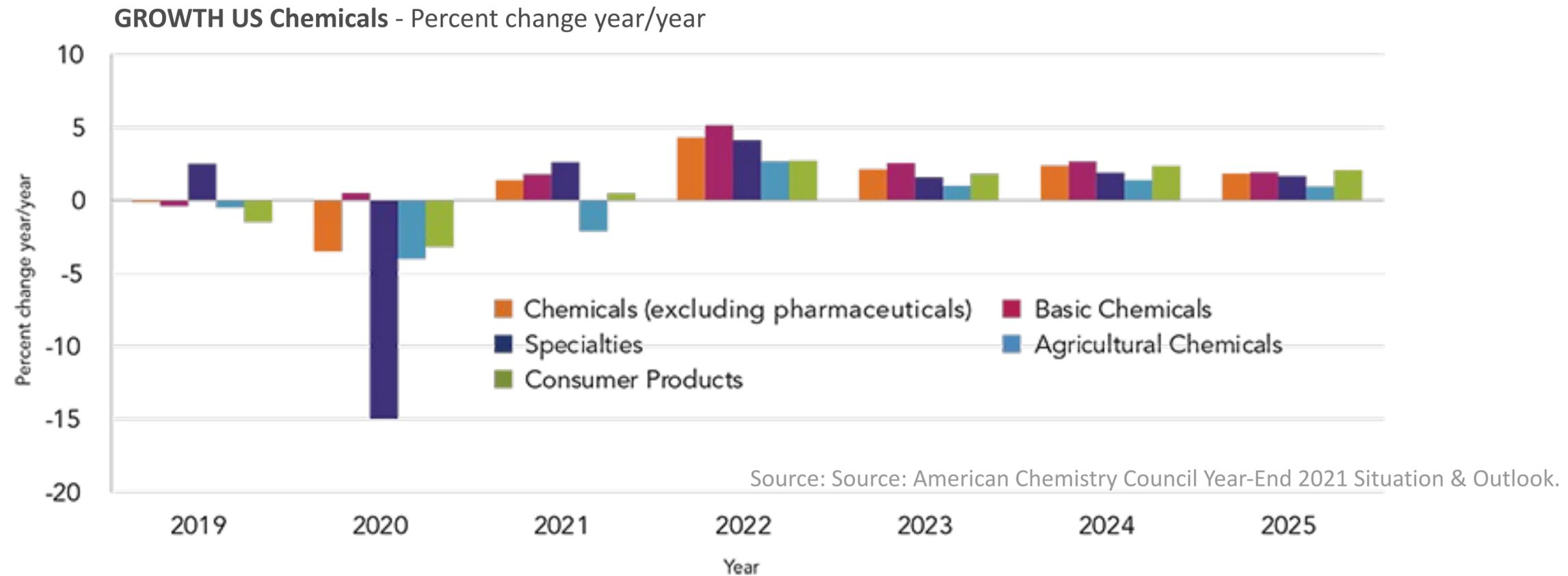
[Register for Roundtable Membership](#)

The Executive Roundtable is hosted by

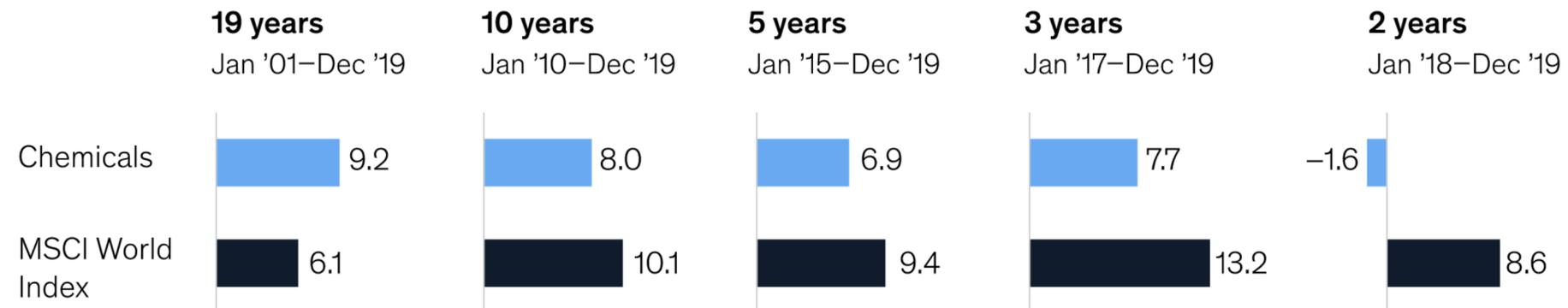
[Growth Arc Advisors LLC](#)



# Growth & Shareholder returns in chemicals are slowing



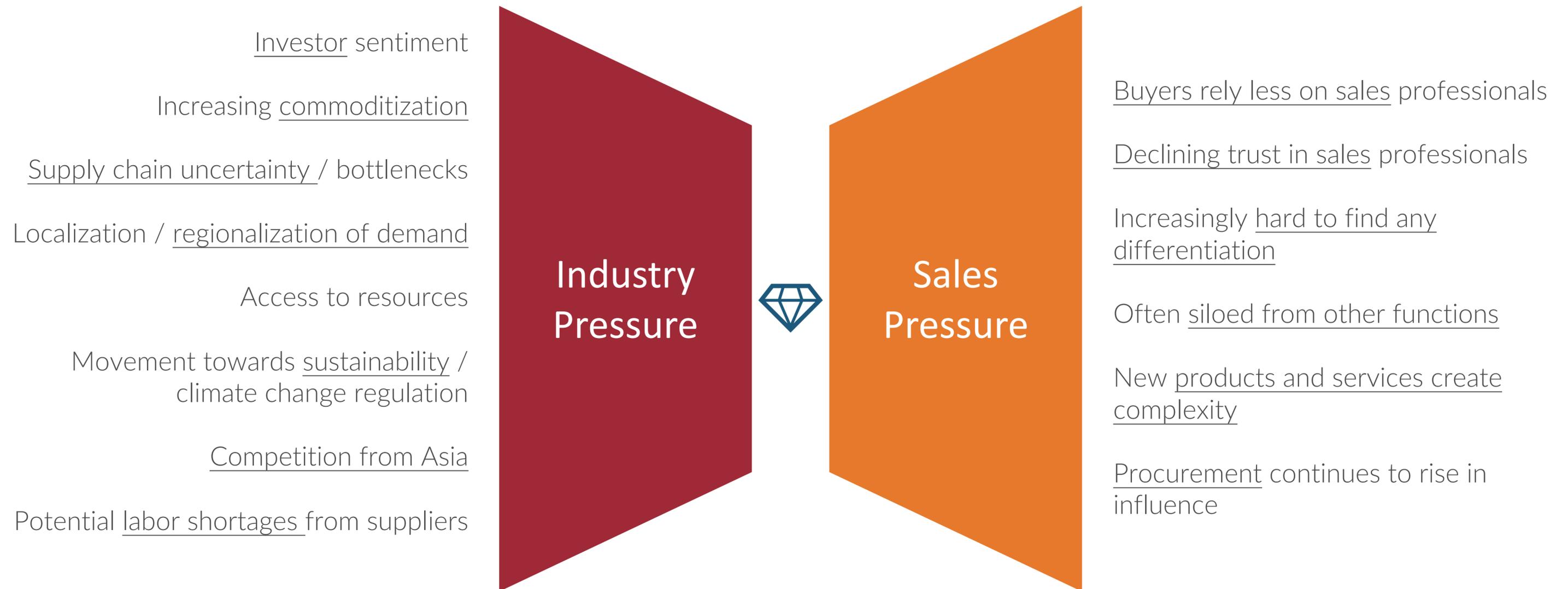
## Total shareholder returns (TSR), compound annual growth rate, %



<sup>1</sup>Excludes Bunge Fertilizantes and SABIC  
Source: Capital IQ



# Industry & Sales pressures require new thinking



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# Client Complaints

ABOUT SALES PROFESSIONALS

This is propaganda. This was not useful; it was all pitching. I am not interested in hearing how great your company or product is.

It was too focused on your product and not on my problem. Your questions were too simplistic.

There wasn't any sense of exploring options. You just had one answer.

Risks keep coming up during any implementation. You didn't help anticipate and mitigate risks?

There was no mention of how we need to work together. How should this partnership work? Beyond selling me a product, what is expected on both sides?

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# What Clients Want

FROM SALES PROFESSIONALS

Don't sell – start helping and create a case for why I should buy

Make the first investment in the conversation and keep looking for ways to contribute

Keep asking questions without giving your first answer and explore the situation together as equals

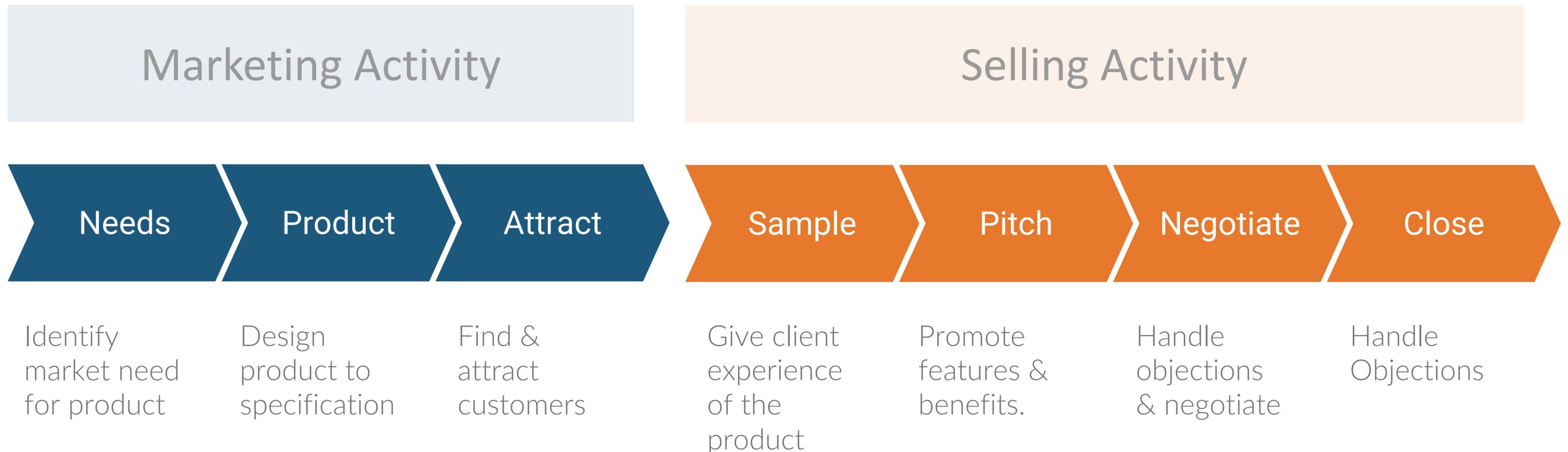
Neutralize your own inclination to be judgmental

Listen for what makes your client's situation different

Show interest in the person and how they feel about their situation

Illustrate – don't tell

# Most sales models are developed for products



Value selling upgrades a pitch-based approach by better qualifying and agitating the relevant problem solved by the product. In addition, business cases for the product are strengthened.

Fundamentally though, Value selling remains a product-oriented approach.



# Building long-term sales relationships is a cycle of trust

WRITE SOMETHING HERE

Generate Clients by  
Building Trust

Develop Clients by  
Sustaining Trust

Winning the  
Sale

**Proposition**

Creating the  
Value Proposition

**Delivery**

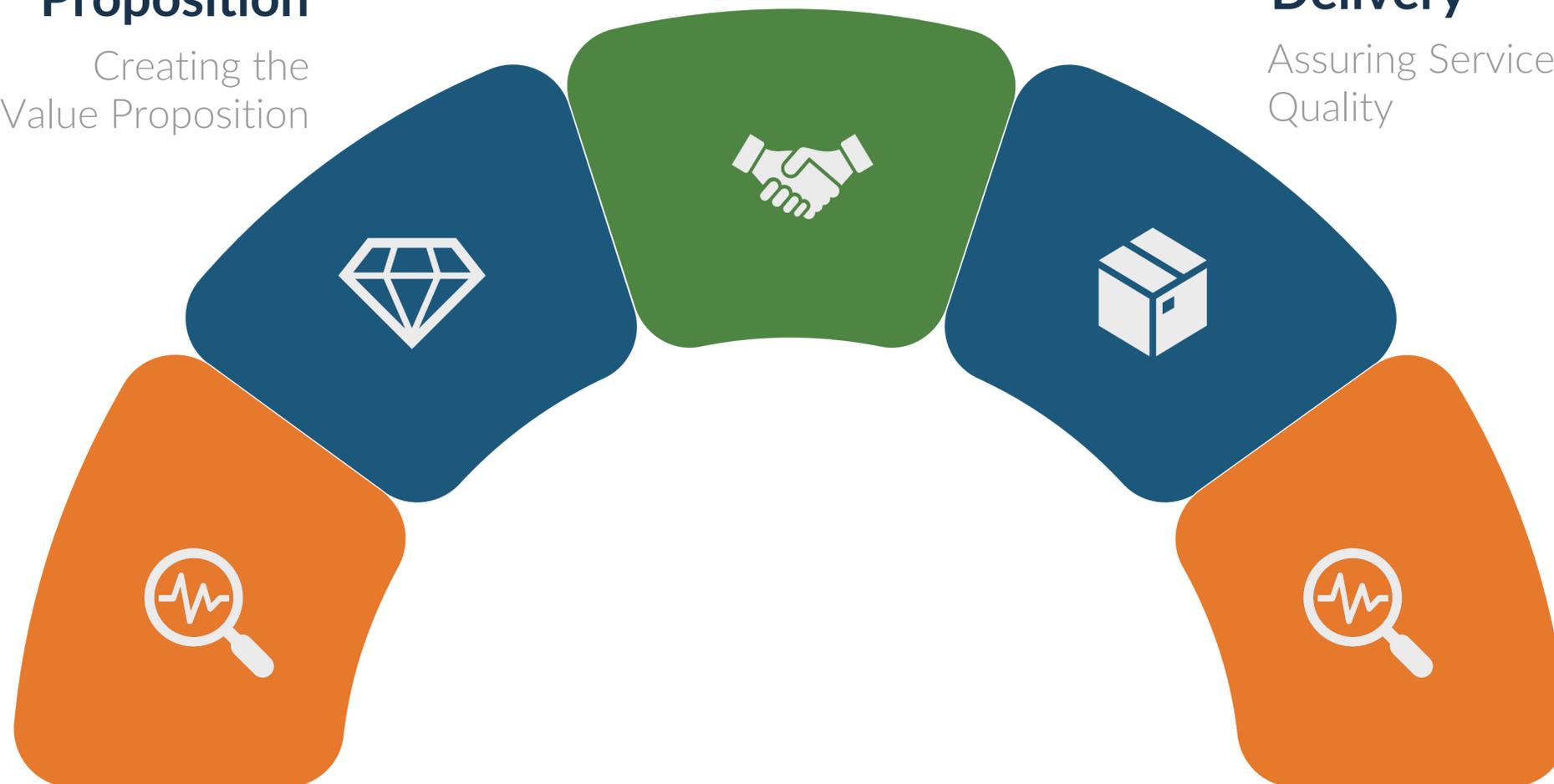
Assuring Service  
Quality

**Diagnose**

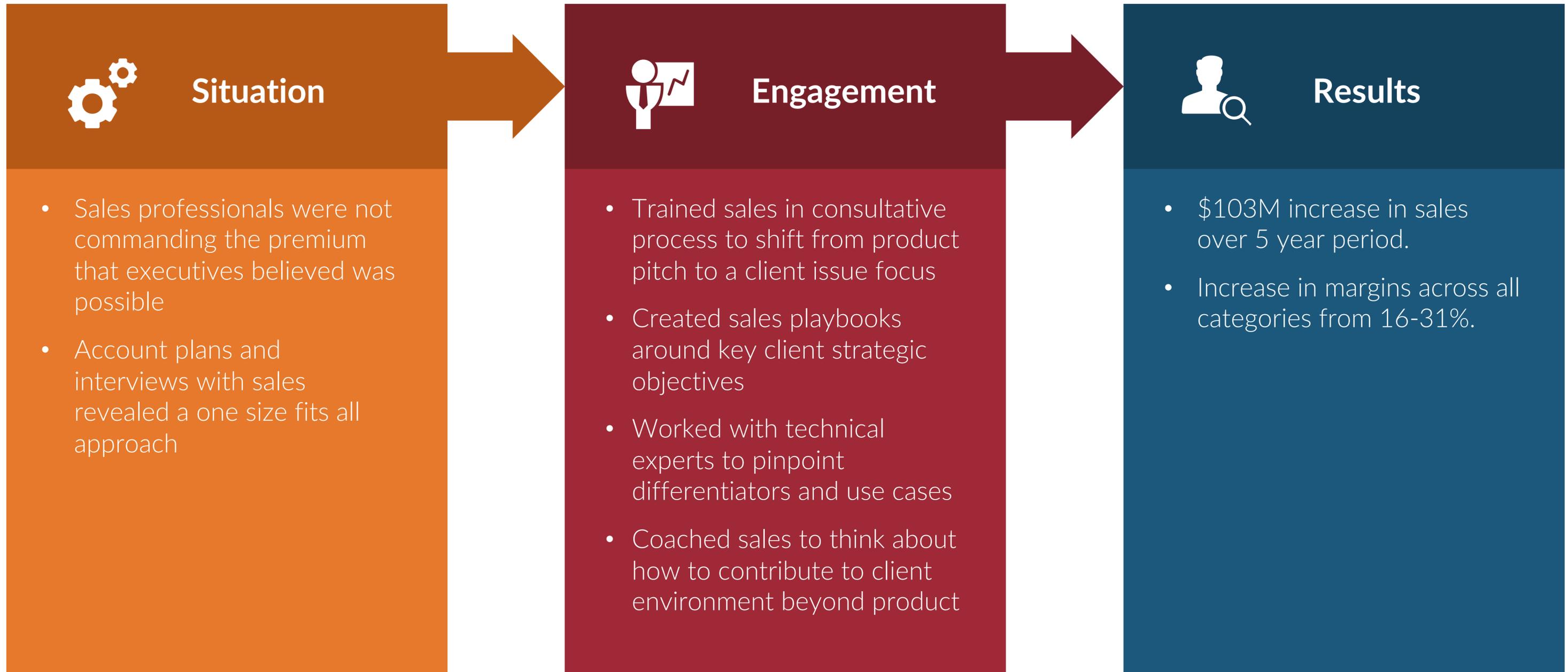
Diagnosing Issues /  
Framing the Question

**Diagnose**

Diagnosing New Issues /  
Framing the Question



# Case – Coatings, adhesives and agricultural chemicals leader



# Top sellers have mastered consultative approaches

WRITE SOMETHING HERE

Bottom 50%  
1x

Good understanding of product features and benefits  
Generally responsive and pleasant to work with  
Quick to pitch the product  
Reactive to client pressure  
Lacks compelling differentiators

Solutions Professional

Next 25%  
2x

Working *with* a person or company not *on* an account  
Operating on the client's personal and business agenda  
Putting the relationship above fees  
'Going to bat' for the client  
Personal or client solutions vs technical solutions  
Turns work away / finds alternative suppliers

Trusted Advisors

Top 10%  
14x

Disciplined client development and thought leadership processes  
Have greater span of connections across a client account  
Have 10x more reference stories  
Have 2-3x more conversations per week with decision  
Listen very actively for emotions  
Intuitively read the perspective of the counterparty  
Very emotionally intelligent.

Rainmakers

**The acid test:** The advisor is allowed to operate inside the client's personal/commercial network without control. When asked why do you use this consultant, Clients say "I can trust this person to support my agenda"

Source: Cambridge University *Møller Institute Des Woods* Differentiating skills and practices of rainmakers and Trusted Advisors



# 6 Essential Elements of a Sales Conversation

## 1 - Stakeholder analysis



Who are our clients?  
What shapes their decisions?

## 2 - Scope



What does the client want?  
What's critical to their success?

## 3 - Hypotheses



What are the potential problems /  
opportunities and their root causes?

## 4 - Inquiry Strategy



How will we know?

## 5 - Point of View



What do we think is most important?

## 6 - Value Proposition (case studies, business cases)



Where and how can we contribute?  
What is our distinctive value?



# Maximize ROI from the training and coaching

1. **Psychological safety** – Unless leaders make it safe for sales professionals to make errors and learn, nothing changes
2. **Personify** – Leaders must be role models and exemplify and coach consultative behaviors
3. **Personalize** – Translate the sales targets into behavioural objectives for each sales professional
4. **Practice** – Sales professionals need to practice immediately after training on live opportunities. Use or lose it.
5. **Psych up** – Keep the purpose and vision alive for each person. They need to know that you care about their growth.
6. **Peer review** - Encourage consultants to review and coach one another at least monthly.
7. **Praise** - Look out for leading behavioral indicators before you get the lagging business indicators. Recognize and reward those who apply the tools, capture the insights and adopt the skills and behaviors.



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# Critical Success Factors to Implementation

- 1. Sponsorship needs to be proactive and ongoing.**
- 2. Other functions need to be involved.**
- 3. Sales Managers must learn the approach and coach their teams.**
- 4. Don't declare victory too soon.**
- 5. All external messaging needs to be consistent across channels.**
- 6. Sales need to operate as an agile team.**
- 7. The process will spark innovative ideas which need to be recognized.**



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# Are you seeking Growth?

OFFER: complimentary half-day strategy, design & planning session

PURPOSE:

- discuss your organization's specifics
- Assess barriers to implement

## Contact Information

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[kendall@growth-arc.com](mailto:kendall@growth-arc.com)

## Next Event

### Sustainability Strategy

**Catherine Keenan,**  
Board member Agylix,  
fmr CSO, Trinseo

July 21, 10 AM EST

## Register

### Register Here

Roundtable Membership  
& Event Schedule

