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## THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE

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Quick Summary: Customers are reluctant to make fundamental changes to use your product.

### Abstract:

*Asking customers to change how they currently do business to reap the rewards of purchasing your new product or service is very difficult. The more extensive the required changes are, the bigger the challenge becomes. With his three laws of motion, Isaac Newton unwittingly framed the challenge faced when asking prospects to change what they do.*

When Isaac Newton, the brilliant English physicist, developed his three laws of motion in the early 1700s, he probably didn't realize that they applied to sales. They specifically apply to attempts to convince prospects that they need to change how they do business to use the new product or service offered for sale. Even more challenging is the case in which there is a need for the prospect's customer to change the way they do business. Paraphrasing those three laws and applying them to this situation is as follows:

1. Bodies at rest tend to stay at rest, while bodies in motion tend to stay in motion. It is also hard to convince people to change what they are doing, especially if it is working well.
2. Force equals mass times acceleration. Or, the larger the embedded nature of an existing product or service, the more energy it takes to move it. Gentle "pushes" will have no effect.
3. For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Or, there will be a negative reaction that will occur for every suggested change. Some may be valid, while others are not. The negative reactions will occur and can easily derail the best plans.

Just as they occur in nature, these laws will always apply to selling something new and different. There is no sense in ignoring or trying to avoid them. The only option is to deal with them, hopefully, before they become so entrenched that the new offering is not even seriously considered.

Although Newton's Laws are not dependent on time, time is certainly a consideration in any sales process. Time can work for you or against you. Socializing the new approach among a number of people over time can help people slowly come around and avoid the knee-jerk resistance reaction. On the other hand, as time passes after the initial awareness, the enthusiasm for the new approach may wane. Both reactions can occur simultaneously.

Serious resistance commonly occurs when the new approach is "gently" proposed based on the theory that if the idea is "eased" into the organization it may not upset others or meet resistance.

Unfortunately, the opposite is likely to be the case. As a physical example, consider the result if you gently push on an automobile in order to move it. A slight amount of force spent over an extended period of time may never be able to overcome friction and start the car rolling. In the sales situation, unlike the car that remains stationary, quick and extreme opposition may occur when the initial notion of a proposed change first surfaces. In these cases, a “soft sell” results in hard resistance.

In approaching prospects, it simply is not enough to show them conclusively that the new offering makes the necessary business changes worthwhile. That approach would work if Newton’s Laws could be suspended. Unfortunately, they cannot. So, before the sales process begins in earnest, think through each of the laws and who will be directly or indirectly (often missed) impacted by each of them and develop strategies to address them. Be sure to consider the time element; it always takes some individuals longer to embrace new approaches than others. Remember, there are always far more people empowered to say “no” than there are people empowered to say “yes.” Your challenge is to win over the “no’s,” taking into account the realities of Newton’s Laws. It is said that Isaac Newton was inspired when an apple fell from a tree and hit him on the head. That incident led him to think about gravity, which led to his laws. The laws are already established; don’t get hit over the head with a resounding “NO” from the customer by ignoring his laws.