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**WRITING**  
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with Pat Iyer



C-SUITE  
Radio

## Creating Radical Value in a Business-to-Business World

### Mark Boundy

Successful business leaders are always looking for ways to increase not only sales, but more importantly, profits. Mark Boundy, who has a rich and varied background as a product manager, product marketing manager, and sales leader, organized what he'd learned into a coherent and practical approach to achieving this essential goal. He presents this focused and accessible in his book, *Radical Value*.

Check out Mark's *Writing to Get Business* podcast where he covers these topics:

- What inspired Mark to write a book.
- How Mark chose a topic.
- The key criteria to consider in writing about a complex subject
- If you can persuasively express your principles, you will build your consulting practice.

Patricia: Hi. This is Pat Iyer with *Writing to Get Business*. And I have with me today Mark Boundy, who is the author of a book in the area of sales and focusing on the value that your company's products and services offer their customers. Mark and I connected through the C-Suite Network. We are both connected to that organization, and they are the ones who are providing the Megaphone platform, which is the biggest business podcast platform in the world. Mark, welcome to the show.

Mark: Pat, it's really great to be here. Thanks for having me on.

Patricia: I'd like to talk with you about your background, so we have some context about your book and what it provides to the listener. Tell our viewer your area of expertise, and then we'll talk about your book and why you wrote the book, how you wrote the book, and what the book is about.

Mark: Yeah. Well, my area of expertise is to be much more of a generalist than people get to be typically in mid to late career. I was lucky. It turns out that I was lucky, it didn't feel like it at the time, to have been a product manager for a company. And then the telecom industry blew up and I couldn't get another job anywhere in telecom. And then I was in finance, commercial real estate finance, so financial services until

the financial system blew up in 2008. And then I was in sales training and sales performance consulting. And now I've left that.

I have this wide experience as a product manager, product marketing manager, and sales leader. I'm one of the few salespeople and sales experts who's actually had profit and loss responsibility. That gave me the perspective that when a sales manager tells their salespeople, "Sell the value, so you don't have to discount," I had the P&L responsibility. So, I felt the pain when the salespeople weren't good at that.

I was also lucky enough to work at some companies that were maniacal about understanding customer value, understanding the customer business, understanding how our product, our service, affected the customer's business, how we were growing the customer's business by being enough of an expert in the customer's business to be able to get at all the detail. And it turns out that that's a much rarer thing than I thought when I was coming up. And so, I decided to write a book about that.

Patricia: All right. That certainly sounds like it's a concept that applies to multiple businesses, whether they're small or whether they're multimillion or multibillion-dollar-a-year businesses.

Mark: Yeah, it is. During this last phase, when I was a sales performance consultant, we had clients in product services, professional services, big manufactured products, capital equipment, electronic components, and all kinds of different businesses. And I was able to see that common thread of what's missing on all of those. And it was, ironically, what I had learned at this first job about understanding customer business, understanding the outcomes that your customer is buying. And so, I kind of acid-tested what I thought I knew through all of these different client engagements in a lot of different industries.

Patricia: I think you're unusual in the respect that you've combined the leadership management role with the sales role, and you can see both perspectives. But sometimes individuals who don't have that background can only look at the problem from one lens instead of both lenses.

Mark: Yeah. I have seen salespeople and heard salespeople actually say this, “It's the company's job to make a profit at the price I sold.” I've also heard sales leaders, maybe not in that same person or in that same company, but I've heard sales leaders who aren't rigorous about resisting discounts or selling the value or getting the right price. They're leading the only department in a company that doesn't seem to care about profitability, all they care about is revenue at any level of profitability.

If you lead the only department in your company that doesn't care about profit, and you're complaining that you don't have a seat at the management table, maybe the first is the reason for the second. And as you said, Pat, a lot of times the sales leader gets frustrated that they aren't taken seriously and, oftentimes, that is a contributor to why. And if you're a CEO, CFO, and that salesperson has been, for years, building their reputation inside the company of taking any deal no matter how drastically unprofitable, do you think that you can have an insightful leadership strategic conversation with somebody who thinks that way?

Patricia: Yes. I see the dilemma.

Mark: And so, one of the subtitles of my book is to grow your company and your career. If you're a salesperson, you're going to be more successful when you sell value. If you're a sales coach, you're going to be a much better coach. If you're a sales leader, and you lead a sales organization that sells value and gets the right price, you'll still have a lot more headroom in your career versus the sales leader who's ... I almost said ... who's undisciplined about price. I'm going to keep your podcast clean.

Patricia: Yes, otherwise, there may be complaints. We haven't had any guests who have crossed the barrier, and you won't be the first one.

Mark: Yes.

Patricia: Something led you to write this book. Let's talk about your motivation. Because to think in terms of writing a book means you're going from no books to your first book, and that can be a steep, uphill battle for many people who never get to that point.

Mark: Yes. I started writing this book, and when I was writing it, it was during the time I was a sales performance consultant. So, I started writing this book around the principle of helping salespeople sell value more effectively. And then I got to the part where it was a salesperson's job to understand their customer's business, and to be a consultant, and to develop some business acumen.

And while I was writing that chapter, I wrote a blog post. A bunch of my colleagues at this big sales training company, Miller Heiman, shared this, and even some of the top performers said, "This is the biggest thing. Among my clients, this is the biggest complaint I see from, say, vice presidents of sales, that they don't have business acumen. Here's an article that talks about the thing that you're complaining about." So suddenly, I thought, well, geez, business acumen. That kind of opened my eyes.

And as you said, I was in this sales training, sales management, sales consulting, and somebody opened my eyes to all the things that went on outside of the sales silo, outside of the sales department. That was when I decided that this book shouldn't just be another sales book. I was struggling about writing the sales book, and it was just another sales book, there's a million of those.

But as soon as it became about business acumen and connecting the sales function to the rest of the organization, and feeding insights that sales gathers to marketing so marketing can do better and so that product leaders and product strategy can be better, I saw there is not a book out there that does that. And so, it's a bigger, wider, more holistic book, which is an advantage because it's unique, but it's a disadvantage in that a vice president of sales only enjoys two-thirds of the chapters, and the CEO enjoys one-third of the book.

And it's also kind of tilting at windmills a little bit, isn't it? I'm asking corporate leaders to admit that the siloed organizations that they've built have a failing, have a disadvantage. And so, I'm asking them to relook at how they've organized and how they've siloed. And that's a big ask of a CEO, in how to de-silo your organization. But I decided that's my purpose, that's what I'm going to do. And I'm sorry, it turns out that there are enough CEOs and enough leaders of companies that kind of get that and kind of want to do better and definitely want to do

better that it's turned into a great consulting practice around doing that.

Patricia: I've been ghostwriting a book that's just about finished now with a man who comes to the area of helping companies with dysfunctional executive teams. He's an organizational psychologist and provided therapy for years and then switched over to working with corporations. And he has been brought into multiple situations where those silos that you're describing cause this intense breakdown in communication and a lot of dysfunctional behavior until he works with them and helps them see, "Hey, there's a better way to manage this."

Mark: That's a huge thing. When I was in that telecom portion of my history, I worked for Lucent Technologies, who was the former Bell Labs, who was the former Bell Company. So, you can't imagine a more hierarchical, command and control, multi-layer organization. There were 12 layers of management. And so, it was very hierarchical, very siloed.

And during the telecom contraction of 2008, everybody in that entire organization was desperate to keep their jobs, and so it became super-dysfunctional and super-siloed because everybody was trying to justify their job at the expense of yours. If I can do that, then you're going to be on the layoff list and I'm not. And so, I got to see that siloed dysfunction raised to an exponential level.

And in retrospect, what a valuable experience to seeing how bad it can get and just how dysfunctional it is. And so, you can kind of see the dysfunction in siloed organizations where it isn't that bad, very few companies are that bad. But you start to see all the dysfunction and all of the waste of money. This isn't a political statement, but any time somebody tells me, "Private enterprise can do it better than government," I kind of roll my eyes or silently say into myself, sometimes I will say out loud, "You must never have worked at a big company." Because big companies really aren't that much better than government.

Patricia: I don't know if Lucent was headquartered in New Jersey, but as you were talking about them, I have a vision of driving past their headquarters, and my son worked there for one of his college breaks,

so I have some familiarity. I was living in New Jersey in 2008, and I can picture the headquarters. I even have the building in my mind.

Mark: Yes, they were they were headquartered in New Jersey. And Bell Labs had like the highest per capita population of Nobel Prize winners in private enterprise in the world. You couldn't swing a cat without hitting a Nobel Prize winner in some parts of those buildings. And the transistor was invented there, satellite communication, radar. And so, so many inventions came out of Bell Labs because of the brilliant people, but they couldn't market their way out of a wet paper bag. I actually had a telecommunications company tell us, "Oh, Cisco, they give us great slides, but they can't do what they say. But you guys at Lucent, you can't say what you do."

Patricia: And when you think about it, Mark, there's so much wasted potential when you've got brilliant people who have those barriers. My husband is from India, and there's an expression in our family that if you are really bright in one area, and I'm raising my hand like the scales of justice, there's got to be some piece that's missing somewhere else, that you just can't typically be bright in both areas. So, you need other people in your life to help compensate for the things that you don't do well, or departments in companies, or managers. Just the brilliant scientist can't always function completely.

Mark: This whole discussion sounds like it might be a little bit of undirected whining. Let me take this back to your listeners to give you an example. And let me ask you this question and tell you a scenario that I run into regularly.

I'm older than I care to admit, but maybe 30 years ago, a company would have five different departments or roles that touched the customer, two of which were sales, and then there might be customer service and one or two others. And what we used to tell them when there were five customer-facing roles was sales, those two, inside sales and outside sales, those will sell the value. The other three of you just stay in your lane, do your job and come back to the office. And it was maybe suboptimal, but it wasn't too harmful.

Today, especially in the SaaS software and in some other industries, there are twelve. And I have one client that has 15 roles that regularly touch the customer. That customer interface has grown and expanded

and become siloed and sub-siloed and so distraught. So now there are 15 roles that touch the customer, and we still tell them, here's the two roles, now there's three roles in sales, not just two, but the three roles in sales, you concentrate on value, and you other 12, stay in your lane, do your job and come back to the office.

Those 12 roles have relationships with counterparts at your customers' businesses that sales will never have. They will never meet those people. Those 12 roles have trusted relationships at a trust level that your salespeople can never hope to have. As a matter of fact, if you rank the 15 different roles from top to bottom in terms of how much trust the customer has in them, your sales are in the bottom third.

And all of those other people that you tell, stay in your lane, do your job and come back to the office, don't talk to the customer about their business, don't talk to the customer about their outcome, stay in your lane and come back to the office, you're wasting a huge resource in terms of customer relationship, customer insights, understanding the customer business, because you're still telling them to stay in your lane.

When I explained that to leaders, they say, "Yeah, you know what, you're right." And it's just one of those things that when you explain it, it becomes obvious. And so, this siloing that we have allowed to take place was that proverbial frog boiling. It was okay 30 years ago when there were 5 roles, now there's 12 or 15, and you're still doing the same thing, and it's sucking the competitiveness, sucking the customer insight, sucking the performance out of your customer relationship.

Patricia: As you were talking about all those 12 roles, I was also thinking about the coordination and the communication crosswise and how easy it is for that not to occur with people who are staying in their lanes who might identify, "Hey, we see this problem, but we're not going to tell the other people in the company because that's not our job. They've got to figure it out themselves."

Mark: That's exactly right. We've been told to stay on our lane. I've been told essentially not to share that insight. That's Sales' job. And if I tell

sales, they say, “What are you doing trying to find that out? That's my job.”

Patricia: When you see companies that are built on a different model, the striking difference is evident.

Mark: It is. I was very lucky, one of my first jobs kind of got me on this whole journey about understanding customer value. Everybody in the company knew, had a straight line of sight between their job and customer value. The guy who swept the floors knew that he was making the workplace safe so that we could serve the customer.

My manufacturing people, when I would come with a semi-custom design and say, “We’ll make it just like this standard product, but we need to change the color here or add one more conductor to the cable here,” whatever, the manufacturing folks said, “That should be an easy prototype to make, but before I invest the time in doing that, tell me what's the customer's business? What's the value? What do they get when we make this change? Why do they value us? Why do we think they are going to pay us a 20% price premium over anybody else?”

I could not get a prototype built without answering that question to the manufacturing folks. I couldn't get that drawing approved if I didn't tell the process engineer that exact same thing. Everybody had the license and the discipline to challenge everybody else in what's the customer's value. And if we didn't know the customer's value, it probably was going to be a piece of business where we didn't capture our usual accustomed price premium, and the discipline was killing it before we invest too many resources on it. What a gift to have at the beginning of your career to inform so many other experiences in your future.

Patricia: We talked a little bit, and I know that you included in the book, before we started recording, that traditional sales speak talks about features and benefits, and I asked you to help me differentiate between benefits and value. I know that that's a key focus in your book. For our listener, how would you tease those two apart?

Mark: Well, features are what you do well, and it's usually listed in your product. So that is described in seller centric terms, it is our feature.

Benefits attempts to start to turn that into what the customer derives from that. I like to go beyond simple benefits to a whole array or network of benefits, and I want to call them customer outcomes because sometimes that first tier benefit gets a second tier.

An example that's really easy for anybody in any industry is: I had a client that sold commercial carpet. So, we all know what carpet is and we all know what an office building is. So, they sold carpet that goes into office buildings. And among their carpets, one of these models of carpet lasts longer, 20% longer, say. Theoretically, they should be able to price it 19% higher, because on a dollars per year standpoint, you should be able to price your carpet 19% higher and your customers should prefer you, at least until your competitor drops their price by 2%. Right?

But that dollars per year benefit, there's a whole series and a whole cascade of other customer outcomes. And one of those is, for instance, that there's fewer replacement cycles. Now, if that carpet is in your conference room, that's no big deal. You just replace it over to a two-day weekend.

But if that same carpet is underneath your 24/7/365 customer service operation, the cost of the interruption, removing all the furniture and computers, finding a new place for your people to work for 48 hours, reconnecting the computers after the installation, and having Facilities listen to the complaints of, “You lost my university of whatever mug,” and, “my grandchild's picture is missing,” and, “my computer still isn't working right,” or, “this isn't my chair. This is somebody else's chair.”

All that business disruption has a monetary impact on the company that is worth more than the entire price of the carpet. So where on a dollars per year, the competitor simply has to drop their price until the dollars per year math works in their favor, when it's that business disruption underneath the right department, there is no discount that your competitor can give that overcomes fewer replacement cycles and the business disruption.

So, we want to talk about, “Yeah, it lasts longer. And now what are the other outcomes?” And so, then there's the point that the carpet looks shabby towards the end of the life. And that happens less often.

There's more cleaning of a semi-worn carpet towards the end of its life. And you have to do that less often, and you can cavalcade a network of other outcomes that stretch all around the company.

And so, for any advantage, any feature where you're differentiated, I work with customers to find out all of the cascade of customer business outcomes that accrue from that differentiated feature, and then who cares, which departments care. And so, we work through that. And so that's the difference between features and benefits and a whole array of customer outcomes.

Patricia: I've been smiling while I've been listening to you, Mark, because when I bought an office condo with my husband in 1995, one of the things that we noticed was that the carpeting looked really new. And by the time I sold the company in 2015, the carpeting did not look new any longer. And there were lateral filing cabinets on top of it and desks. And the new owner said, "You know, we're going to have to invest some money in the physical plant when we take over your company."

Well, I think six years later, it's still the same gray carpeting throughout because they did that whole calculation of, "My God, just changing the carpeting in a small business is not an easy undertaking when it's on every floor surface in 2,400 square feet." And that's just a tiny space compared to what you would do to disrupt a company to change something like carpeting.

Mark: Sure. And it gets really complicated. As a trained nurse, you understand, I've got another client that sells lab equipment to the hospitals. So, think of the equipment involved when a nurse takes away the little blood vial and does all the different blood tests.

One of the vendors has a reputation for their equipment lasting longer. Within the hospital environment, when you replace that big piece of equipment, it's not just the cost and it's not just the dollars per year. All the lab personnel have to get retrained on the new equipment. You actually have to allocate double the lab equipment so that while the old equipment is still working, you're qualifying and getting people trained on the new equipment, because you can't be down that lab equipment. So, you have double the lab space, you have double the training. That new equipment operates differently.

And you have to examine all of the sample gathering SOPs for all the nurses in the entire hospital for what has to change, and how the reports get changed, and how that thing interconnects to the electronic patient records. And it just goes on and on and on. So that longer life, whenever a client says, “We last longer,” I know it's really it's a relatively straightforward exercise to understand that client's customer's business so that they can turn last longer into a huge, almost competitively insurmountable advantage in their markets.

Patricia: I spent seven years in staff development, responsible for all of the training of nurses in a hospital and had a taste of what you're talking about. Changing all the procedures, doing all the education on all three shifts, making sure the patients were being taken care of while the nurses were in a conference room learning about the new technique, thinking about the people who worked weekends, working for agencies, worked part time, how do we train them in the new technique? Lots of implications.

Mark: Pat, you hit on something that's really important. A customer, when they hear, “Yes, it lasts longer,” the customer, by themselves, will easily think about that dollars per year, sort of cap expense and so forth. Because the party with the budget responsible is the lab manager, and so they may think about the training, but they don't think beyond the lab into what happens on all the nursing staffs, and all the shifts, and all the training, and all the education, and all the socialization, and all the SOPs, they don't naturally think about those until a great salesperson says, “Tell me what happens outside of your lab when you change one of these things.”

And then they usually know, but unguided by a great salesperson, they will not think about that. They will not calculate that into the ROI of this purchase. And so, part of the exercise in working with clients is understanding how to not only what those impacts are, but now you have those conversations so that those outcomes start to exist in the customer's mind. They're always going to exist, but until the customer uses them as part of the decision, they don't exist in the buying decision.

Patricia: You know, Mark, I think we could uncover nuances of this topic for the next two days without stopping to take a breath and we wouldn't exhaust what you know about this topic. Your challenge, I think, was

to put together a book that would not be a two-volume set of a thousand pages, but to condense down the key concepts. Was that a challenge for you when you were writing the book?

Mark: Well, yeah, it was a challenge. And I'm that guy that when you ask me what time it is, I tend to tell you how to build a watch. And so, it was really easy for me to get too detailed. And the work was shortening it down to explain enough about the concept, so people understood what they were getting, but you're just not able to do that. And so, I'm happy to talk with people and help them realize what these are and put the operational detail behind that. And so yeah, it was very difficult to boil it down into 230 pages.

Patricia: Tell our listener the name of the book and how they can find out more about you and the services that you offer.

Mark: The title of the book, and it's available on Amazon, the big A, it's called *Radical Value* by Mark Boundy. And Boundy is B-O-U-N-D-Y, almost like the paper towels. And you can get a hold of me at [boundyconsulting.com](http://boundyconsulting.com), [B-O-U-N-D-Yconsulting.com](http://B-O-U-N-D-Yconsulting.com), or at [mark@boundyconsulting.com](mailto:mark@boundyconsulting.com).

Patricia: Perfect. Thank you so much, Mark. We've covered a lot of territory today, from focusing on features and benefits and values, to the hazards of having highly siloed organizations that fragment communication and make it difficult for a company to coherently provide its value to its customer bases.

I think your book would be a great asset for anyone who is focused on business-to-business selling and marketing and thinking about their company from the perspective of what are the outcomes that they help their clients achieve, and also what are the costs, as we've touched on, of innovation or associated with a product that lasts X amount of time versus one that lasts 2X.

We've talked about training challenges, and personnel changes, and all kinds of costs that come with the innovation, also benefits of course, but the implications of making changes in your company are sometimes hidden and not considered when companies are thinking about changing or purchasing new products. And if your salespeople

understand the customer's perspective, that has a huge impact on how well a company is going to perform.

Mark: Yeah, very true. I like to say that your differentiation delivers customer outcomes, and those outcomes have tentacles that spread widely and deeply throughout your customer's company. And most sales organizations do not understand any of the tentacles. And truly selling and understanding your product or your service's impact to your customer is understanding all those tentacles and aggressively just going out and discovering how deeply, and how widely, and how strongly those tentacles extend throughout your customer's company.

Patricia: I'm envisioning a tree with roots.

Mark: Yeah.

Patricia: Perfect. Well, thank you so much, Mark, for being on the show. I appreciate that.

Mark: Pat, thank you so much. It was really a pleasure.

Patricia: And thank you to you who is either watching this on the Pat Iyer YouTube channel, or listening to this on our audio platforms. We appreciate you, your attention, the fact that you've devoted the last 30 minutes or so to listening to Mark Boundy and myself discussing his book. Be sure to come back next week for a new show, new topic, and subscribe to the channel so that you get notified about updates.

Patricia: Hi, this is Pat Iyer with *Writing To Get Business*. I have been talking with Amber Wynn, W-Y-N-N. Amber Wynn is deeply experienced in the nonprofit world, and she created some books to address the knowledge that she has the ability to share with others. Amber, what are some of the key points that you would like your listener to get from listening to your podcast?

Amber: Thanks, Pat. I think I'd like for them just to really understand that nonprofit doesn't mean no profit. I'd like for them to understand that nonprofits are businesses. And during our conversation, they can expect to learn things like the reasons why nonprofits fail. We talked a little bit about some of that. And, lastly, some of the challenges that our nonprofits are dealing with right now, they can find some of the

solutions, at least some logical processes that they can explore in the e-books that I've written.

Patricia: Thank you, Amber. We had a dynamic conversation. You will learn a lot about nonprofits that you might not know. Be sure to come back to *Writing To Get Business* to hear Amber's Wynn's podcast. That's A-M-B-E-R, last name W-Y-N-N. Amber Wynn and I talked about her area of expertise and some of the surprising insights that come out of working in the nonprofit world. Amber is an expert on that and you'll learn a lot from her podcast. Thanks, Amber.