GTXM

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8 Common SALES MISTAKES and how to avoid making them

1 SALES MISTAKE: NOT FOCUSING ON WHAT REALLY MATTERS FOR SALES

Not every opportunity will be a good fit, so it's essential to maintain a sufficient number of early-stage prospects. Understanding your funnel's ratios is crucial—for instance, if a business finds that 40% of sales opportunities are worth quoting and they win 40% of those, they can determine the necessary sales activity to generate the desired outcomes.

With too much focus on the short term the funnel loses its V shape and eventually you find that you don't have enough well-developed, qualified opportunities moving through.

THE KEY TO FIXING THIS?

Have resources that have a continuous and sustainable focus on business development with a goal to find and develop longer term opportunities.

This is an investment, But an important one for a company's **LONG TERM SUCCESS**

2 SALES MISTAKE: FAILING TO GATHER ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE

Gathering the **right intelligence** should be at the heart of the sales process

RELEVANT ACTIONABLE

TIPS TO HELP YOU GET ORGANISED:

- **Create a checklist** of key information to gather early in your customer relationship. Regularly review your progress against this checklist to guide your actions and refine your plan.
- You won't uncover everything, but recognise the gaps in your knowledge and address them effectively in your tender response / proposal.
- Be creative in gathering and connecting intel. While direct relationships with key stakeholders are ideal, other third-party organisations involved can also provide valuable insights.

- Understand whether the opportunity is a good fit
- Identify the decision makers
- Understand the issues that really matter to the consumer
- Understand the competitive dynamic
- Differentiate yourself against competition
- Engage the customer with the right message at the right time

WITHOUT INSIGHT AND INTELLIGENCE, YOU ARE ESSENTIALLY BIDDING "BLIND"

3 SALES MISTAKE: NOT LISTENING TO WHAT YOUR SALES PIPELINE IS TELLING YOU

The first step to being able to understand your sales pipeline is to have a pipeline that accurately reflects the different stages of your sales process. For each stage there should be agreed actions which need to be completed before an opportunity can be moved to the next phase. This will help you to categorise and assess each opportunity.

- Ensure you sales pipeline is up-to-date
- Understand what opportunity drops out at each stage
- Understand the dynamics of individual deals
- Evaluate how many sales opportunities really are a good fit
- Plan and track the expected close dates of your opportunities - is there a shortfall?

Understand your sales pipeline at a macro and micro level

The **Rate** at which you are identifying new opportunity

The **Volume** of opportunity at each stage

Conversion rates at every stage

The **Speed** that opportunities move through your pipeline including which ones are stuck and why

Anticipated timings of when deals will close vs your revenue projections

4 SALES MISTAKE: NOT FOCUSING PROPERLY ON YOUR VERTICAL MARKETS

- Define your market focus and understand why
- Understand the needs and challenges of the market
- Research who your potential customers are
- Know what you need to compete
- Understand your strengths and weaknesses, and differentiation
- Develop a focused marketing plan
- Make the engagement systematic
- Finally, take a business wide approach

5 SALES MISTAKE: NOT ENGAGING WITH YOUR KEY PROSPECTS

The extended sales cycles should be seen as an opportunity and not a frustration

The classic mistake is to identify a good opportunity, do a bit of work on it, and then simply wait for the tender to be released. In the meantime a great chance to influence and build relationships has been lost.

That intervening period between the identification of a sales opportunity and release of the tender should be seen as a period where it is possible to not only build an understanding of the customer (see mistake no 2), but to also build credibility.

- Collect the right intelligence about the opportunity
- Identify the competitive landscape
- Build a communication plan
- Engage in relationship building activities
- Add value at every opportunity

For **effective business development**, companies need a clear focus and dedicated resources to build opportunities. It's essential to engage in relationship-building activities prior to the formal bidding phase.

6 SALES MISTAKE: NOT KNOWING WHO YOUR POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS ARE

LOOKING FOR A DEAL

Transactional approach to business

LOOKING FOR 'RIGHT FIT' CUSTOMERS

Provides you with a solid foundation for building strong long-term relationships

What makes a **GOOD CUSTOMER?**

By deciding upon the criteria of a good fit customer you can create your target list of prospects and will also be able to qualify any new opportunities against it

Tap into other information sources that can help map customers and markets, such as:

- The **knowledge** that already exists within your organisation
- **Contacts** in other organisations active in your selected sectors
- **Partner** companies
- The use of third parties **(like us!)**

Mapping target customers, identifying decision makers and using situational intelligence are valuable tools for planning and measuring future market development efforts

7 SALES MISTAKE: NOT UNDERSTANDING YOUR CUSTOMER'S DECISION MAKING PROCESS

WHO Who is making the decisions?

WHY Why do they make those decisions?

Map out the Decision Making Unit – to identify exactly who you need to be influencing and what your approach should be. By understanding the process and the people involved, you will be able to get a handle on the drivers for decisions taken, the concerns about your solution you will need to overcome and likely timings of buying decisions, enabling you to align your own sales process accordingly.

Mapping out key individuals involved in the decision making process is a key activity in business development

You may not always be able to engage key decision-makers directly. Instead, work through others or influence them indirectly by understanding the customer's decision-making process. Identifying key moments to engage helps you maximise your impact.

REMEMBER

Not understanding your customer's decision making process could benefit your competitors

8 SALES MISTAKE: NOT BEING SYSTEMATIC AND CONSISTENT WITH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Companies often engage in sporadic business development which can lead to missed opportunities with new customers. This inconsistency can stem from several factors:

- Opening doors into new customers is hard work
- A lot of sales people simply don't enjoy doing it
- It takes a lot of time, and other activities can easily get in the way; servicing existing customers and on-going projects for example
- Focusing only on current sales can lead to neglecting new opportunities for the sales pipeline

NEW BUSINESS PROSPECTING NEEDS TO HAPPEN CONSISTENTLY

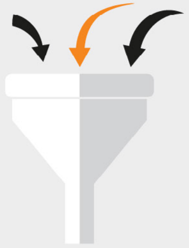
It is vital that time is allocated each week to finding new customers and making new contacts and relationships. Measuring your prospecting activity will help. Focus on measures that track engagement with new prospects, the interest levels of these prospects, and any new opportunities identified.

DEVELOPMENT

SALES MISTAKE:

NOT FOCUSING ON WHAT REALLY MATTERS FOR SALES

Early Stage Opportunities



Immediate Opportunities

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