



Boardroom Advisors

SCALE UP YOUR BUSINESS: STRENGTHEN YOUR SALES

Make Sure Your Sales Team is Prepared for Scale-Up

While your marketing department is all about attracting interest towards your business, it's the job of sales to turn an interested individual into an actual customer. Therefore, getting your sales process right is just as important as ensuring sustainable growth.

If you can't convince a potential customer that they should buy from you, it doesn't matter how attractive your marketing makes you seem. How you secure sales will vary from business to business, but some common elements exist.

This eBook looks at some connecting ideas you can take on board for your business's development. Whether B2B or B2C, mass market or client based, scaling up your business means ensuring your sales team has what it takes.

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Master Your Pitch

At the heart of a sale is the pitch. So what are you going to say to make it convincing? Why should people pay for what you sell?

The nature of how you deliver this pitch and the people who deliver it will change, but the core is there. There are techniques you can use across the range of sales opportunities. Included below are some of the most common and important.

Doing these well involves getting to know your potential customer and understanding how they tick. Building a rapport means they'll trust you more and give you information about themselves. From there, you can decide on the best tools to use with them.



"Scaling a business is hard work. One of the biggest barriers to growth is often the absence of a defined sales strategy and operational plan that can be executed on.

You can't copy a sales strategy. It needs to be defined and bespoke to business goals."

- Vinit, Board Advisor

What About Me?

Everyone cares about themselves. Not selfishly, just at a fundamental level, it's impossible not to.

When presented with information, you will almost always contextualise it around yourself. If you can see how something is relevant to you, it will engage you a lot more. Sales require engagement, so you need to focus on the customer.



Your pitch should centre on the customer, their needs and wants. Using 'we' language is a common trap people can fall into, but you should use 'you' language.

Instead of saying, "we provide this," "we have that," or "we specialise in," you want to frame the statement around the customer.

For example, say, "you gain access to," "you'll be able to find," or "your needs are well in hand."

You can see how this catches the attention more. The customer isn't being told all about your business. Instead, they're being told what your business can do for them.

Emotions Make Sales

As much as we like to think we're logical creatures, people are primarily driven by their feelings. So how something makes us feel will change our perception of it for the better or worse.

Trying to make a sale based purely on cold hard facts is hard. Making a sale by focusing on emotions is much easier. You can explore the emotions you want the facts to bring out.



Facts bring up emotions. Use hard facts to motivate your target audience to make a purchase.

A business provides a solution to a certain problem. For example, a service solves the problem directly, while a product provides them with what they need to do it themselves.

The problem will be attached to negative emotions such as anxiety, boredom, and stress. The solution is attached to positive emotions, such as relief, excitement, and satisfaction. Figuring out which pairing best suits you will help your sales.

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Businesses offer solutions to problems. Problems are attached to negative emotions, while solutions are attached to positive ones.

Consider a working parent. They're worried that they won't be able to get dinner ready in time without sacrificing nutritional value. You have the negative emotion there from their worry. If they had a quick but healthy solution, it would be a relief. Focus on that feeling of relief.

Then, to make the sales pitch, you would want to establish this sense of worry before presenting them with the relief your business can provide. They'll associate that relief with your product or service and will be more inclined to purchase.



Benefit-led Pitches

Considering the importance of making things about the customer and their emotions, the differences between benefits and features are something to consider.

- **A feature** is something intrinsically true about an object. It's what defines that item or service. When designing a product, it's the things that you designed into it.
- **A benefit** is how an object can positively impact someone's life. What does your feature do for them? Why did you make it part of the product or service?

You may be able to see why benefit-led pitches are so useful. Benefits answer the question: "what about me?" They're also much easier to work emotions into.

Your quick but nutritious meal takes 5 minutes to prepare and has a certain list of nutrients. These are its features. The benefits are that they can make help you make dinner quickly but still give their children a healthy meal.

Unless you understand the technicalities of something, just being told the features with no context won't create much engagement. Instead, it's the benefits that draw the customer into the sale.

Benefits still need backing up with features, so don't only use benefits.

For example, if something usually takes an hour, then taking 20 minutes or 40 minutes can be called quick, but one is much more impressive than the other.

Features are evidence to support your claims and quantify how impressive they are. Present the customer with a couple of features and then summarise with the benefit.



Involving the Customer

Although it's harder in certain sales environments, getting the customer involved is a strong learning technique. Getting to a point where the customer has been sold on the benefits of their product makes it hard for them to justify not making a purchase.

Asking the customer a leading question can be a great way of doing this. Ask them a question that will lead them to suggest something that is a feature of your product or service will make it much easier to sell to them.

Example #1: How would you like to have around-the-clock computer security?

Example #2: Would you like to lose 20 pounds in 20 days?

Example #3: Interested in having all your online purchases discounted?

Another way of involving the customer is challenging them. Many people will want to prove themselves to you when faced with a challenge. Suggesting a challenge involving using your product means they'll need to purchase to prove you wrong.

When it's clear it's something they love, just letting them talk about it can often be enough.

This is easier in hobby-based businesses but can work elsewhere. Being someone who'll listen to them as they get excited is often enough to win them over to you, especially if you genuinely share that interest.

These techniques do take some practice, as they need a measure of subtlety. You don't want to be too obvious, which can put them on their guard. But, on the other hand, you don't want the customer to doubt or distrust you when making a sale.

Master Your Sales Team

The nature of your sales team will change depending on your business. Obviously, a bricks-and-mortar shop will sell differently from a fully online store, but the team will have similarities, just like the pitch.



You want to make the most of your sales team and the kinds of people that find themselves working in them. You may not have much of a team at the moment, or you may already have a team established.

This chapter can be useful in either situation. If you're hiring in a team, it's useful to know what to consider in candidates. If you have a team, are there ways you can manage them better?

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Motivating Your Team

The best sales personnel still need something to drive them. A team can be motivated with the right rewards. It can take time to find a balance, but it's worth trying to motivate your team.

Many teams operate performance-based bonus systems. The more they do to help your business, the more direct reward they get. The nature of this reward needs to be carefully considered.

Obviously, you don't want to give away too much. There's no point in getting more sales if you don't see a net benefit from increased employee costs. However, you also want to ensure that those doing satisfactory but not exemplary levels still feel appreciated.

A bonus doesn't always need more pay, so long as it's something your team would appreciate receiving. It's also worth making sure it can be given in different quantities. A better seller receiving a bigger bonus creates a sense of appreciation and healthy competition.

If there's a clear star player, recognise it. They will feel appreciation while everyone else has a goal to strive for. They can also act as a role model to learn from.



Understanding Their Ambition

It's not uncommon for specific kinds of people to end up in sales. These are highly motivated people who work for their feeling of success. However, problems can arise when their targets don't align with your business's needs.

For many, what matters is making the sale. So when negotiation is possible, they'll work until they convince the customer to purchase. Often though, the only thing they have to play with is price.

If they're allowing the price to be negotiated below cost, that's a loss to the business, but it's a personal win. They made the sale and got their sense of satisfaction.



When managing a sales team, you want to find a midpoint between their motivation and your needs. Of course, you can establish rules for this, but you can also use your bonus scheme to help.

Bonuses based solely on several sales will encourage them to make sales no matter the cost. In addition, offering rewards based on team and individual profit will encourage more good sales.

Establishing Boundaries

When creating a sales team, it's a good idea to make sure they know what is and isn't ok. For example, to prevent them from lowering the price too much, you can give them a hard minimum they aren't allowed to drop below.

Many sales situations don't allow for flexible costs in the first place, but there are other ways problems can arise. For example, if they can't make a sale, a self-motivated person can get frustrated; you want to ensure they know how to handle the feeling of failure.

You don't want your team to become a toxic environment to work in. Too much competition can become unhealthy, causing your workers stress. It can also drive individuals to sabotage other team members, which is unacceptable.

Establishing the expected conduct of your team members early and being strict with enforcing your rules can be crucial to stopping such an atmosphere from developing. If something like this happens, you may need to rethink the structure of your sales department.

Maybe a team-based rewards system will be better suited. If it's in someone's best interest for their colleagues to do well, they'll hopefully support each other more.

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Support Your Team

You can help your team members by providing them with advice and support. Creating standard procedures can be a great way to limit more maverick sales while helping to support less well-performing people.

When someone's not having a great day, having a script they can follow can be a lifesaver. It also helps to provide a more consistent customer experience.

If your expertise lies in sales, join the team occasionally. Showing off your skills gives a good example to your team members. In addition, you give a target to strive for and show them how they can improve their skills.

Giving newer or struggling team members extra training and advice will help them with their personal development and help with their motivation. As a leader, your role is to keep them on track, recognise their successes, and help them grow.

Hiring Your Team

A salesperson needs to be great with people. Making a sale requires getting into the customer's head and figuring out what drives them. From there, you know what they need to hear.

The best will be great talkers who find it easy to hold a conversation that makes you feel important. They're able to get people talking about themselves and tease information out of them. They'll also be naturally persuasive people.

These skills are hard to show on paper, so test them before hiring them. You could give them roleplay scenarios, for example, and get them to sell to different characters you create. You could even get them to try and sell something to you directly such as the pen you are holding.

If sales aren't your expertise, ensure you have someone who understands it. In addition, you'll need someone with an eye for sales talent to make the best decisions.



Integrated but Individual

Sales and marketing need to work together, but that doesn't make them the same thing. Both work as separate teams that need good communication between them.

Your business's sales teams and marketing content needs to be consistent. For example, you don't want the customer to see one thing in an advert only to hear the opposite from the salesperson. That is why branding and consistent messaging is so important.

If your business always meets and negotiates with a client, you can rely on the sales team to do much of the work. However, there's little chance of talking to a customer if you're mostly online. In this case, your team must ensure that the web-store experience includes the important information.

The best marketing for each situation will be different, so you'll want to tailor it to match the sales process. For example, the more in-depth sales can go, the less marketing needs to be, and vice versa.

You can also make use of sales data to aid marketing. When your sales team converts a sale, they can pass the data back to marketing. If possible, this can include tracking how the customer found out about you. If not, marketing can chase them up.

Communication between the two means sales can help marketers understand which campaigns work best and which need rethinking. It also means that a recent customer's marketing can be scaled back. No one likes to be bugged with emails suggesting something they've already bought.

Manage Your Sales Team to Scale Your Business

Sales are about getting into a customer's head and presenting exactly what they need to hear. It's a game of conversation that takes skill and charisma.

Managing sales teams can be challenging, but getting it right means your business can become much more efficient. In addition, the more leads you to convert, the easier it is to maintain your growth.

If this isn't your area of expertise, it's worth finding someone to support you, the development of your sales strategy and the nurturing of your sales team. You might find that a part-time Sales Director is what your business needs.



Boardroom Advisors

Do You Need Help With Challenges Facing Your Scale Up Business?

Boardroom Advisors can help you with challenges your business is facing.
Examples of challenges you may be experiencing include:

Strategic Challenges

Financial Challenges

Management Challenges

Operational Challenges



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To explore the particular challenges your business is facing

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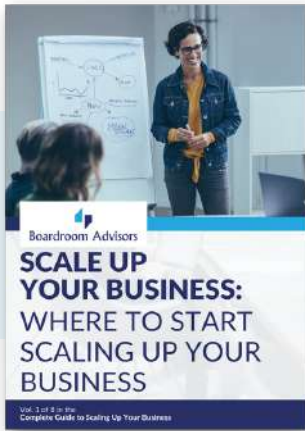
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