

SALES PLAN CHEAT SHEET

Use this cheat sheet together with our [in-depth guide on creating a winning sales plan](#).

SALES FORECASTING AND GOAL-SETTING

This is all about getting your numbers right and being able to measure your progress against a goal.

- your metric of success? # of customers? \$ revenue? % YoY growth?
- Reality check:
 - Wishful thinking fallacy:
Confirmation bias leads to overoptimistic predictions. How accurate were last years forecasts? Factor that in.
 - Factor in market developments
Will the market decline? Will you lose market share to competitors?
 - Moving goalposts:
Don't make adjustments—even if two months in you discover you were off.
 - Devising your plan in a vacuum
Involve your team in the process of creating the plan. Ask for their input, and eventually run it by them to see what they think of the plan.
 - Expert check
Who can challenge your plan? Accountant / senior sales person / qualified friend / ...
- Define clear deadlines and milestones
 - Break your metric of success down on a timeline
 - Are the milestones both challenging AND achievable?
 - Gather insights from your sales team
 - Set individual goals that take into account differences among sales people that set them up for success

MARKET AND CUSTOMER RESEARCH

This is all about pinpointing who you're doing this for. Who can you create the most value for? Who is the best fit for your company?

- Pick a niche
 - How big is the market?
 - Is there a built-in demand for what you're selling?

- What's your current market position: Including any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats
- Who are your competitors? What are *their* strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats?
- Understand your target customers
 - [Define your ideal customer profile](#)
 - Does your offering add value to them?
 - Do they offer value to your company?
 - How can you best reach them?
- Map out your customer's journey
 - What do you want our product to do for you?
 - What features are important to you? Why?
 - What's your budget for this?
 - How are you currently solving this problem?
 - Ask about past buying experiences:
 - When was the last time you bought something similar to our service or product?
 - Was that a good or bad experience? Why?
 - How did you make your decision back then? What was the decision-making process like?
 - How did you evaluate different offers?
 - What were the deciding factors that made you chose that particular solution?
 - Virtually close them: "*What needs to happen to make you a customer?*" – "*ABC*" – "*Ok, and then what's next?*" *Keep asking until they buy.*
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- Define your value props
 - Identify your competitive advantage by asking:
 - Why do customers buy from us?
 - Why do customers buy from our competitors and not us?
 - Why do some potential customers not buy at all?
 - What do we need to do to be successful in the future?
 - Is your competitive advantage:
 - reflecting the competitive strength of your business
 - unique
 - clear and simple
 - supported by ongoing market research
 - able to change over time as competitors try to steal your idea
 - remember: focus on value, not features

PROSPECTING AND PARTNERSHIPS

How do you get your offer in front of the right people?

- Build a prospect list
 - a solid sales plan should *almost* [qualify your prospects](#) before you even spend a minute talking to them.
- Leverage current client relationships
 - How can you foster word of mouth?
 - [Ask for referrals](#)
- Identify strategic partners
 - Who serves the same audience without being a direct competitor?
 - What other businesses do your best customers buy from?
 - Identify complimentary businesses
- Track, measure and adjust
 - While you shouldn't adjust your goals, you *should* regularly compare your plan against real-world results
 - Adapt to changes in market, new features, new team members, etc
 - Align activities across teams
 - Learn from mistakes and victories

Finally: Does the plan create a clear path to an agreed upon goal, that removes ambiguity and creates alignment across different team members?