HubSpot

How to Scale a Sales Organisation in 2019

A guide to building long-lasting, sustainable growth

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Introduction

Introduction

As the sales leader of a growing organisation, scaling your business is likely one of your top priorities. Have you ever asked yourself, "How do I decide which new markets to enter?" or "How do I attract, hire, and retain the top sales talent?" Well, here at HubSpot, we obsess over these questions and are here to help.

First things first: business growth should not be viewed as a limited goal. Scaling your business is an ongoing process. Year on year, you have the opportunity to set the foundation for future growth, improve your strategy execution, and see continual expansion in 2019 and beyond.

Inside this comprehensive guide, you'll find all the resources you need to grow your business. From identifying effective team structures and recruiting the best talent, to moving into new markets and using the top tools to help you scale, you'll learn from our industry experts on how to use the lessons found in this ebook to implement effective tactics to make 2019 your most impactful year yet.

HubSpot is committed to helping businesses grow better with our full suite of sales, service, and marketing products. We offer solutions for teams of all sizes, in all industries. Plus, we were a startup once as well, so we know what we're talking about when it comes to scaling a sales organisation. With the help of this guide, you'll learn HubSpot's top advice for expanding businesses in today's modern environment.

Are you ready to make 2019 the year of growth for your business? Follow this guide to identify strategies that help you build, execute, and grow your business.

Chapter 2

Setting the Foundation for Growth

Team structures

Growing sales organisations face a number of significant decisions, from deciding on team organisation and hiring the best people, to moving into new markets and more. These challenges may not be unique to your particular company, but the solutions should be.

Deciding on the organisation of your sales team is a crucial first step to take when scaling your company. Starting off with a solid foundation will help you make smart decisions later on down the road as you hire more team members and expand into new markets.

There are three structures that you should consider, and the best-fit option will vary depending on your unique business and industry. Islands, The Assembly Line, and Pods are all effective ways to organise your team, each with its own selling points.

Islands

The island model is rooted in self-motivation and competition. This structure is made up of team members who perform a variety of tasks individually, including generating leads, qualifying leads, and closing deals. Each team member works to develop their own pipeline and follow their leads through all stages of the lifecycle.

By nature, this type of structure can be highly competitive because each representative is in control of their own pipeline. Healthy competition is an important factor in every sales organisation and helps teams achieve aggressive goals. Your team members will be empowered by this autonomy and can develop useful entrepreneurial skills as a result. However, a competitive landscape comes with repercussions. This sink-or-swim environment can also leave employees feeling unsupported and they may struggle against aggressive competition.

This model is most effective for businesses with a simple sales process. If your sales team closes deals with only a few calls, then this team structure will be most effective for your business.

The Assembly Line

While the island model creates multi-skilled salespeople, the assembly line focuses on developing specialised subteams that move leads through the sales process. In this model, developed by author Aaron Ross, sales organisations are broken into groups with specialised tasks. Business Development Representatives (BDRs), Account Executives (AEs), Customer Success Specialists, and more all work together to turn leads into lifelong customers.

This sales team structure also comes with pros and cons. On one hand, the assembly line model creates strong teams with advanced knowledge of their lifecycle stage. Plus, this team structure allows management to identify bottlenecks in the company's sales process. However, the assembly line can also add friction between stages as leads are passed from team to team. This narrow focus may create specialists who only know how to perform their designated role.

The assembly line structure is ideal for startups with a multi-stage sales process. This model is easily scalable as your business grows.

The Pod

The pod, championed by author Dave Gray, takes the individual contribution of islands and the specialisation of the assembly line to create small teams that work together to move leads through the sales cycle. These small teams of six, for example, would include BDRs, AEs, and Support Specialists who stick with their leads throughout every stage and work together to close deals.

Pods are great because they foster a collaborative working environment and allow leads to be managed by a single team. This removes friction and makes the pod team structure customer-centric. However, there is less individual competition and this structure can be difficult to start when at early stages of development.

This model is most effective for medium-to-large size teams working in established markets.

Leave room for creativity

These team structure models are important to consider and can be very helpful when scaling a sales organisation. However, it's important to give your teams the freedom to flourish as individuals. By instilling a culture of creativity and idea-sharing across your organisation, you'll get the most out of whatever structure you decide is right for your business.

Bake creativity into your organisation to allow members to go beyond hitting their targets and quotas. Allow them to experiment and try things differently.

– Christian Kinnear, EMEA Director & VP Sales, HubSpot

Chapter 3

Executing Strategies

Moving into new markets

Expanding into new markets is an effective way to scale your sales organisation. Once you have established your sales team structure and sold successfully in your core markets, it might be time to take your business to a new city, region, country, or industry. Here is a framework to help navigate the complexities of expanding your business in new markets.

1. Define your current market

Before expanding into new markets, it is important to clearly define the market you wish to enter. To do this, use internal data to dissect your existing market. Analyse your customer data to understand common wants and needs between your existing customers and potential customers in other markets.

2. Perform market analysis

Use demographic and economic information to create a list of potential markets to enter. Externally, use data such as location, population, market growth rates, demand, competition, and more. Combining this information across potential markets will help you identify where your company has the greatest opportunity.

External data is important to use when moving into new markets. For example, internal data can indicate fast and sustainable growth, however, external factors, such as political or regulatory changes, can negatively impact your growth success.

– Yves Bourgoin, EMEA Sales Manager, HubSpot

3. Assess internal capabilities

Deciding to expand into new markets is largely dependent on your business's internal resources. Analysing the capital you have available to expand your business will help you develop your go-to-market strategy. You'll also want to leverage your team's core competencies and select the best-fit markets. Keep in mind your existing channels, infrastructure, and strategic relationships when selecting new markets. Will you be able to extend these into new markets, or will you have to create new processes?

Before entering new markets, set up some calls with personas in your target market and discuss their problems.

– Kieran O'Flynn, EMEA Sales Manager, HubSpot

4. Prioritise and select markets

Now that you've conducted market research and analysed your existing internal capabilities, you can refine your list of new markets to enter. Prioritise these markets based on their fit with your solution and your ability to adequately serve the market.

Here are some questions to consider:

. Does my product or service fill a market gap?
. Can we perform better than our competitors?
. What value proposition do we offer this market?
. How much is this market willing to pay for our solution?

5. Go-to-market strategy

Finally, once you have identified the ideal market to enter, it's time to evaluate your market entry options: build, buy, or service. One way to establish a presence in a new market is through building a physical office or location. This investment will take some time, however, it is a great approach for businesses with enough resources and a long-term vision.

A faster solution is to acquire an existing company in your chosen market. This go-to-market strategy can yield faster results by leveraging your company's existing customer base, however, integrating another brand and solution into your own can take time and work.

Lastly, you may service new markets without setting up a physical presence too. This go-to-market strategy may involve a number of tactics, such as online promotion in new regions or setting up teams housed in another office specifically assigned to these markets.

Section 2

Recruiting

When making the decision to enter a new market, conducting research and developing a strategy for market entry is only half the battle. Before you take on a new market, recruiting the right people will help you make this expansion a success.

Attracting candidates

Your job description will influence both the quantity and quality of your applicants. Take the time to craft an engaging, well-written job description that accurately describes the role and sells your company.

Common mistakes people make when writing job descriptions

1. Cobbling together job descriptions from other companies

You might save time copying and pasting snippets from other job descriptions, but the finished product will be generic and boring. Look at your competitors' job descriptions to see how they're describing similar roles, their company culture, and benefits, but always write the actual description yourself.

2. Asking for unrealistic desired skills and experiences

Are you describing your dream candidate? You'll probably scare applicants off; after all, the 'perfect' salesperson probably isn't out there (and if they are, they'll likely want more money than you're willing to pay). Sort your requirements into several buckets: required, preferred, and bonus. Label them as such in your job description. This will ensure people who meet 60% or more of your requirements will apply.

3. Using vague terms and jargon

Terms like "motivated," "strong business acumen," and "self-starter" are so overused that they're essentially meaningless. Be as specific as possible. For example, if your sales team is driven by friendly competition, say you're looking for salespeople who "love to win". It's simple, straightforward, and most importantly, honest.

4. Neglecting to make the role sound desirable

Don't forget, you're trying to win over in-demand salespeople. Make sure to include several reasons why this role is a great opportunity. That might be your company culture, perks, the chance to get in on the ground floor of a hot company, an established career path, a competitive salary, access to coaching and training, or some combination of the above.

5. Being misleading

That being said, never misrepresent the job. Perhaps entry-level sales hires usually spend their first year calling prospects and booking appointments for closing reps. If you don't mention that in the job description, you'll end up with interviewees who aren't interested in the position you're hiring for – or worse, new employees who will quickly quit when they realise the reality of their job. Provide a brief summary of a typical day. Giving candidates a preview of their daily routine will help them decide if it's a good fit.

6. Excluding salary expectations

You may want to consider including salary information in your job description. Not only will it filter out the candidates who want more than you can reasonably pay. It also increases your percentage of applications by 30%.

People in sales work for incentives. Be transparent about how you pay people, how they will get compensated, and how and when they'll be promoted. That's something that really appeals to salespeople.

– Andy Stansell, EMEA Sales Manager, HubSpot

Interviewing salespeople

To build a strong sales organisation, it's imperative to find people who can hit quotas, handle rejection, and be persistent without turning aggressive. Sales isn't an easy job to hire for, and the wrong person can keep your company from meeting important business goals.

Recruiter-approved sales interview questions

1. How do you keep up to date on your target market?

Even if the candidate's last target market was totally different from the one they're interviewing for, this will show their ability to find and keep up with relevant trade publications and blogs. Dig deeper and ask for a recent piece of information they've learned from one of the publications.

2. Explain something to me.

While this technically isn't a question, it's important to assess whether the candidate can effectively walk someone through a concept or process. Listen to see how clearly and concisely they can explain the topic.

3. In your last position, how much time did you spend cultivating customer relationships versus hunting for new clients?

Certain companies and roles call for people who are better at farming or hunting but look out for a person who performs one of these tasks to the exclusion of the other. Both are vital to sales.

4. What are your favourite questions to ask prospects?

Good salespeople spend more time asking questions than pitching. Look out for open-ended questions that will help a rep thoroughly understand a prospect's needs.

5. What's your approach to handling customer objections?

Preparing to deal with objections – instead of winging it – is critical. Listen for evidence of a process.

Maintaining the talent pipeline

Once you have a plan to fill your sales hiring pipeline with quality candidates, the next step is to systemise the process for choosing and winning the right candidate time after time. Communicating an established process to all involved parties not only saves time, but sends a clear, unified message to candidates that this company has its act together, increasing their desire to join the sales team.

The following model is a great foundation for your sales recruitment process:

1. Identify and document each stage in the interview process, and who (at least three people) in your company will participate.

2. Perform personality testing on your top sales reps. This provides a benchmark for evaluating candidates in one-on-one interviews.

3. Distribute to all participants an outline of the interview process, the ideal sales candidate profile, the interviewing scorecard, a list of base questions to ask every candidate, and the candidate's resume.

Build a brand

Building a brand and managing consistent external messaging is key in attracting strong candidates. To do this, manage your recruiting pipeline just like you would your sales pipeline, with the help of the inbound methodology.

Inbound Recruiting is the process of taking your existing inbound processes and content to scale your hiring funnel. You create content and a conversion path on your site to drive potential hires into your recruiting funnel. Then, you nurture these candidates until the right position comes available or you use qualifying measures to disregard candidates who are not the right fit based on their actions.

Use email templates, one-on-one conversations, triggers, and resources to attract, engage and delight your sales candidates and keep your recruiting process on par with the rest of your company.

Section 3

How to work with the marketing team

Aligning your sales and marketing teams, commonly referred to as smarketing, will help your scale your sales organisation in 2019. The term "smarketing" refers to alignment between your Sales and Marketing teams created through frequent and direct communication between the two.

However, achieving this is easier said than done. Creating a strong smarketing relationship takes time and commitment from both parties. Here are HubSpot's best practices:

1. Meet regularly

There are so many opportunities for sales and marketing to work together face to face, but how do you optimise your time together? Pick the best opportunities that will benefit both teams. For example, allow marketers to attend weekly sales meetings, have monthly meetings between sales and marketing managers, and have a smarketing onboarding for every new sales hire.

2. Be involved in content creation

Marketers value insights from sales, so don't be afraid to throw ideas out there when meeting with your marketing team. Provide feedback on the quality of leads driven from previous campaigns, be involved in the creation of future campaigns, and give actionable advice to help marketers attract leads that will help you close deals.

It is encouraging for salespeople when they come up with an idea to see Marketing give it a go and come back with results on what worked and what didn't.

– Andy Stansell, EMEA Sales Manager, HubSpot

3. Align on campaigns and resources

Ask your marketers to create a shared location for campaign planning and sales enablement resources. By having access to a promotional calendar, your sales teams will stay up to date on the latest marketing activities and be able to engage with leads based on recent campaigns.

Campaigns need input from Marketing and input from Sales in order to succeed. Facetime between these two teams where they sit down and talk through campaigns and the overall strategy helps Sales understand the full picture and support the campaigns.

- Ollie May, EMEA Sales Manager, HubSpot

Continual communication

The ultimate goal of a smarketing relationship is to have measurable goals and mutual accountability. For instance, Marketing might have a mutually agreed upon leads SLA (service level agreement) to hit, and Sales must agree to follow up with a certain amount of those leads.

The first step to get Sales and Marketing to collaborate is promoting constant and open communication. Encourage the sales team to give feedback on lead quality each month. This process will help marketers better understand which types of leads are most likely to close so they can generate better quality leads. Just be sure to back this up with data.

You should also encourage marketers to sit in on sales calls and help close deals when called upon so everyone understands the value of each marketing generated lead. This action will make Sales and Marketing feel like they are fighting the same battle. Everyone in the organisation should buy into this notion of alignment; the sales and marketing executives at your company should be meeting regularly to discuss the smarketing strategy and communicate it to the rest of their teams.

Finally, try scheduling a weekly smarketing meeting to rally sales and marketing and celebrate their efforts as a joint group. Some topics could include smarketing wins, new product features, and lead flow and sales waterfall.

Tools to help you scale

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Your CRM, or contact database, is at the centre of all sales and marketing efforts. Any leads generated from marketing should be seamlessly connected, and synced, into your CRM so that your sales executives have all the contact details needed to talk to a potential prospect.

HubSpot CRM, for example, includes 1,000,000 contacts, users, and storage without an expiration date and all for free. A great resource to learn more about various CRMs is G2 Crowd. Check out the reviews to see what other people think and learn about the various CRMs available.

Templates and sequences give sales reps a formulated way to reach out to leads and prospects while still being able to personalise to the individual with smart content and tokens – all of which are found in our CRM.

- Ollie May, EMEA Sales Manager, HubSpot

Here are some tips for selecting and using a CRM:

. How does this CRM integrate into all your other software (i.e. CMS, marketing automation, etc.)?
. What information from my CRM needs to be imported from other systems, and how is this done? What information needs to be exported from my CRM and available other places?
. How are Sales and Marketing going to utilise the CRM we select?

Email templates and follow-up

Reaching out to leads with relevant and timely communication separates you from getting a response and being ignored. Your sales team should have an easy way of following-up with leads based on the product or services they are interested in. Sales is no longer about picking up a phone and working through a call list. Instead, email templates and follow-up help you provide relevant information at the right time.

Here are some tips for selecting and using email follow-up software:

. Does the sales follow-up software help automate the process of sending follow-ups, or does it require manually sending?
. Are the emails you are using today to schedule meetings effective? Ensure the software you select helps turn these high-performing emails into templates.

Meeting scheduling

Scheduling meetings can be a hassle. There's a lot of back-and-forth between your reps and the prospective buyers to find the right time. Meeting scheduling software can eliminate the hassle and let your prospects book time in your calendar when you're free.

Here are some tips for selecting and using meeting scheduling software:

. Ultimately your goal should be to reduce the back-and-forth of scheduling and book more meetings for your sales team. Based on this, make sure the tool you select integrates with the calendar application your team uses today.
. Let the individual rep decide when they're free for meetings, and when they're not. Allow your sales rep to manage their own calendar. They can set their busy working hours, conversations with leads, and appropriate time in-between for any notes, follow-up and a break.
. Give the prospect or lead multiple options. Ideally, your meeting scheduling software will display multiple options for times you can meet so they can easily find the best time that also works in their calendar.

With the right tools, your sales teams will be equipped to execute on your organisation strategy and help your company grow in 2019.

Chapter 4

Growing better

Reviewing your processes

Achieving long-term growth of your sales organisation requires reviewal processes to ensure that your strategies are effective. Here are a few ways you can introduce regular procedures to help your company scale in 2019 and beyond.

Offsites

For growing organisations with multiple locations, connecting face-to-face can be difficult for you and your team members. That's why offsites offer a great opportunity to take advantage of your time together. Offsites can include international team outings, brainstorms to solve a particular problem, and other team-building activities that will allow your employees to build strong relationships.

Team outings are also known to reduce employee stress and are a great way for salespeople across teams to get to know one another. Check out these over 25 team outing activities for some inspiration.

Whatever problems you see for the team or market, you should share some of those, the ones that are the most important for you to fix, with your team when it's something they are involved with and can influence. They're the ones most likely to find a solution that works.

– Kieran O'Flynn, EMEA Sales Manager, HubSpot

Six reports every sales leader needs

Long-term growth is reliant on great reporting. As a sales leader, however, there is a wealth of information to look at. Use these six reports to help you scale your organisation.

1. Pipeline

As a sales leader, you need to know exactly which deals are sure things, which might push, which you could lose altogether, and how much of an impact each deal has on your bottom line.

2. Sales benchmarks

Benchmarks allow you to understand typical conversion rates between each step of your sales process, average deal size, and average sales cycle length.

3. Rep process benchmarks

Even if your sales team is too large for you to dig down into individual performance when forecasting, these CRM metrics are also helpful from a manager's standpoint.

4. Marketing collateral

You can easily track what marketing content is standby in all your sales cycles, and which documents have sat untouched for months and communicate information to your marketing team.

5. Won and lost deals

Look for commonalities between these deals, and you'll gain valuable insight into your product's overall strengths and weaknesses. This is also a good way to spot under- and over-performers.

6. Churned customers

A churned customer is a sign that misalignment occurred somewhere during the sales process. Monitoring trends help you to provide direct guidance on fixing bad patterns.

The key thing is having all information in a CRM so that you can have a quick view of all of your KPIs on a daily, weekly, monthly basis.

– Karl Walsh, EMEA Sales Manager, HubSpot

Future markets

Growth isn't a simple step-by-step process. It's messy, takes time, and requires continual evaluation. As you look beyond 2019, keep your eyes open for additional markets to enter. Use your previous go-to-market strategies to benchmark your success and use this information to tackle new markets.

Use top-down thinking to identify the end goal, using industry leaders as a reference. Don't think bottom-up by aiming to improve what you've already done before in previous markets. Reverse engineering with a top-down thought process will help you identify the realistic portion of the TAM you can serve. Use this as your north star in scaling your business.

- Christian Kinnear, EMEA Director & VP Sales, HubSpot

Section 2

Planning in an uncertain business environment

During times of uncertainty, there may be many economic, political, or other factors that affect the way your sales organisation conducts business. The best thing you can do is be prepared for multiple outcomes. To help you position your business for success and see growth during times of uncertainty, follow this process:

1. Research the landscape

Regardless of what type of uncertainty your business is facing, do your research to understand what is happening and the potential outcomes. Whether you're trying to grow your business during an economic downturn or concerned about political unrest, researching the landscape will help you be prepared.

2. Predict how your business will be affected

Once you have an understanding of what is changing outside the confines of your organisation, use this data to predict how you'll be affected. Will new regulations force you to shift your business model? Will any of your target markets be affected more than others? Ask yourself questions like these to predict the outcomes of multiple scenarios as needed.

3. Prepare multiple strategies in advance

The last step is to use what you have learned about the uncertain environment and the effects it may have on your business to prepare strategies to help you prevent a slow or downturn of your business's growth. For example, it may be wise to prioritise other, more stable markets. If the outcome may cause a major shift in workforce or revenue, prepare your financial forecasting under multiple conditions and have contingencies in place for all scenarios.

While scaling an organisation during uncertain business environments can be a challenge, planning in advance can help you grow your company in even the most extreme circumstances.

Section 3

Trends and pitfalls to look out for

Trends

When scaling your organisation, leveraging industry trends can help you accelerate growth. Keep these trends in mind as you scale your organisation.

1. Video prospecting

Using personalised video to engage with prospects is a great way to connect with leads and provide high-quality information in an easy-to-digest way. Plus, getting started with video has never been easier with companies such as Loom and Vidyard.

2. Messaging

For salespeople, that means learning how to communicate with messages. Your prospects are increasingly less likely to pick up the phone when they have a product or pricing question – instead, they'll head to your website and look for a live chat option.

3. Bots

Qualifying potential leads is becoming easier thanks to bots. Bots can be programmed to asked sequences of questions to collect necessary information to cut down the number of questions salespeople need to ask. Instead, they can focus on engaging with their prospect.

Pitfalls

As you continue to scale your sales organisation, there are many precautions to take. Beware these top pitfalls sales leaders can make when scaling their business.

1. Overpopulating territories

If your sales team is growing fast, you may accidentally misallocate staff or overpopulate territories. Before adding headcount to a territory team, look at three things: The territory potential, existing accounts, and workload. Based on this information, make an educated decision about if and whom you should hire.

2. Hiring out of desperation

By the time you've determined you need headcount, received budgetary approval, posted a job req, and narrowed the candidates down to the top three, a great deal of time has passed and your team is probably hurting. This is not a good reason to hire someone you're not completely sold on. Keep the quality of your hires high and your team and business will benefit in the long term.

There is an excited urgency when we think there is opportunity ahead, which causes us to panic and places pressure on managers to hire non-ideal salespeople. This begins to erode the pillars that you have built your brand on and can cause customers to churn in the long run.

- Christian Kinnear, EMEA Director & VP Sales, HubSpot

3. Tracking the wrong metrics

To determine if it's time to hire, make sure you're evaluating the right metrics. Start by tracking your reps' base compensation. Then look at their variable compensation and the rate at which they meet their quota. Finally, review their average deal size and churn.

4. Not aligning with marketing

Before hiring three more salespeople, make sure your marketing team can deliver enough leads. Your sales team might be working at capacity, but so might your marketing team. Work with them to understand whether Marketing can meet the lead demand that an influx of salespeople will create.

5. Choking from overeating

Be sure to understand your limits as a startup or scaleup. With so many opportunities, it can be easy to take on more than you can handle.

When you're a startup, you can try to do 100 things at once and will fail at 99 of them. Over the years, you can find yourself drifting from your priorities. Identify omissions that you could do but won't do to help avoid this.

– Christian Kinnear, EMEA Director & VP Sales, HubSpot

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Conclusion

There is not a one-size-fits-all solution for business growth. Inside the guide, we've presented a number of strategies and tactics to help you along your journey as a scaleup. Now, it's up to you to decide your next steps.

Will you structure your teams in pods or as an assembly line? Does moving into a new geographic market makes sense, or will you go after a new persona in your current market instead? How will you decide to structure your smarketing meetings and team offsites?

No matter the path you take, make 2019 your best year yet by setting the foundation for long-term, scalable growth.