# Sales strategy template

A sales strategy empowers you to accomplish two important objectives: Translate company goals into sales and align your sales team's day-to-day actions with the company's priorities.

However, developing a sales strategy can be confusing and frustrating, especially since there are no one-size-fits-all solutions. Use this template to create a custom, scalable sales strategy.

## ❏ Develop SMART goals

A successful sales strategy begins with solid goals. Goals should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely (i.e. deadline-based).

**Bad goal:** "To grow sales."

**Good goal: "**Hit $100k in revenue by the end of the 1st quarter. "

- ❏ Write your organization's or team's goals down.
- ❏ Each goal is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely.

## ❏ Create an ideal customer profile

An ideal customer profile describes an organization which receives value from your solution & provides value to your company. Read [How to create your ideal customer profile] for more tips.

- ❏ Contact 10 customers for whom the value of your solution outweighs the cost.
- ❏ Identify the traits those 10 customers share.
- ❏ Write a description of your ideal customer based upon the traits they share, which may include:
    - ❏ Their industry
    - ❏ Their location
    - ❏ Their job title or responsibilities
    - ❏ Their pain points
    - ❏ Their buying process

## ❑ Study the competition and create a value proposition

How does your product create value for customers, especially compared to your competitors' products?

- ❑ Identify your top competitors.
- ❑ For each competitor, compare your product and their product's features, prices, and ability to solve customers' pain points.
- ❑ Identify how your product uniquely solves customers' pain points or provides value.

## ❑ Create your minimum viable sales documentation

Establishing & improving upon a sales strategy means documenting your process. These documents aren't meant to be perfect; they're meant to get your team selling ASAP. Read Minimum viable sales documentation for more tips.

Gather your entire sales team and spend an hour *at max* on writing:

- ❑ A sales phone script
- ❑ Email templates
- ❑ An objection management document
- ❑ Each week or month, the sales team updates each document with any new insights.

## ❑ Hire, onboard, and organize salespeople

Invest in hiring and training the right people. Read The ultimate sales hiring guide for B2B startup founders! for more tips.

- ❑ **Establish hiring criteria for sales reps**
  - ❑ Create an ideal sales rep profile, or  list of traits and attributes your sales reps must have to succeed.
  - ❑ Develop a process to assess candidates' traits and skills.
  - ❑ Grade each candidate on how well they match the ideal sales rep profile.
- ❑ **When to hire sales reps**
  - ❑ Download the Sales hiring checklist.
  - ❑ Use the Sales hiring checklist to determine how many/which sales reps should be hired at the different stages of growing a sales team.

- ❏ **Onboard sales reps**

  A structured onboarding process is the difference between a successful and unsuccessful sales team. Read How to onboard a sales team in 4 weeks for more tips.

  - ❏ Assign sales managers to oversee the onboarding process.
  - ❏ Outline the skills and knowledge sales reps need in order to successfully sell.
  - ❏ Establish a timeline for training sales reps.
  - ❏ Create a daily schedule, broken down by the hour, that details what reps will learn.
  - ❏ Distribute the minimum viable sales documents to each sales rep.
  - ❏ Establish regular benchmarks to assess sales reps' skills and readiness.
  - ❏ Develop guidelines on when and how to provide additional support or fire struggling reps.

- ❏ **Organize sales reps**

  There's no right or wrong way to organize teams. What works best depends on the nature of your product, team, and sales process. Read 3 models of effective sales team organization for more tips. Select one of the following options:

  - ❏ The island: Individual reps work alone.
  - ❏ Assembly line: Each sales rep is assigned a specialized role such as lead generation, SDR (qualifier), Account Executive (closer), or Customer Success (farmer).
  - ❏ Pods: Each sales rep is assigned a specialized role in a pod, or group, that's responsible for the entire journey of specific customers.

## ❏ Establish benchmarks

Ensure the company, sales team, and individual sales reps are aligned.

- ❏ **Company-level: Determine how much revenue the company needs in the form of:**
  - ❏ New business
  - ❏ Upselling customers
  - ❏ Cross-selling customers
- ❏ **Team-level: Determine how much revenue the sales team must bring in each month, quarter, and year to meet the company-level benchmark, broken down by:**

- ❑ New business
- ❑ Upselling customers
- ❑ Cross-selling customers

❑ **Individual-level: Determine how much revenue each rep must bring in each month, quarter, and year to meet the team-level benchmark, broken down by:**

- ❑ New business
- ❑ Upselling customers
- ❑ Cross-selling customers

## ❑ Create a compensation structure for sales reps

A good compensation structure aligns sales reps' interests and activities with the company's goals. Read Startups: This is how you design a winning sales commission structure for more tips.

- ❑ Research compensation for salespeople in your industry.
- ❑ Establish a base salary (if applicable).
- ❑ Establish how much input salespeople will have over developing a commission structure.
- ❑ Create a commission structure. Select the factor(s) salespeople will be rewarded on:
  - ❑ New business
  - ❑ Upselling customers
  - ❑ Cross-selling customers
  - ❑ Low customer churn

## ❑ Decide upon a lead generation method/s

Where are your ideal customers? How do they prefer to be communicated with? What are your available resources?

Use these questions to decide whether to use outbound lead generation, inbound lead generation, or a combination of both. Read Inbound or outbound sales—which one should you focus on? & B2B lead generation basics for startups for more tips.

- ❑ Outbound sales
  - ❑ Buy lead lists

        - ❏ Use web scraping
        - ❏ Hire an outsourced lead generation team
        - ❏ Advertising
        - ❏ Other:
    - ❏ Inbound sales
        - ❏ Company blog
        - ❏ Social media
        - ❏ Email campaign
        - ❏ Customer referrals
        - ❏ Other:

## ❏ Distribute leads to reps

- ❏ Decide how many leads each rep will receive per day, week, or month.

How will leads be assigned? Select an option:

- ❏ By customer type
- ❏ By geographic region
- ❏ By deal size
- ❏ Randomly

## ❏ Track sales data

Tracking sales data for each rep helps you create accurate benchmarks and sales forecasts. Focus on three simple metrics. Read [Data-driven sales: The 3 cold calling and emailing metrics that matter] for more tips.

- ❏ **Track activity**
    - ❏ How many emails were sent
    - ❏ How many calls were made
    - ❏ How many in-person visits were made
- ❏ **Track quality**

- ❑ How many decision makers were reached
- ❑ How many decision makers were qualified

- ❑ **Track conversions**
  - ❑ How many decision makers moved on to the next step in the sales process
  - ❑ How many decision makers were closed

## ❑ Collect leads and sales activity data in one place

Leads and sales activity data should be easy to input and access for the best results. Select one of the options:

- ❑ For early-stage sales: A spreadsheet, whiteboard, or Trello
- ❑ For later-stage sales: A CRM

## ❑ Contact leads

Experiment to see which contact methods work for your team. Read Follow up like a champ for more tips.

- ❑ Decide which contact method(s) reps will use:
  - ❑ Email
  - ❑ Phone
  - ❑ In person
  - ❑ Other:
- ❑ Provide each rep with a sales script and/or email templates.
- ❑ Develop a schedule of how often prospects should be followed up with.

## ❑ Qualify leads

Qualifying is the difference between selling to the right customers or wasting time on the wrong ones. Read How to qualify prospects & leads for more tips.

At the end of a qualifying conversation, reps should know the following about prospects:

- ❑ Whether they're qualified, based on how well they match your ideal customer profile
- ❑ What their deal-breakers and nice-to-haves are (prioritize meeting deal-breakers)

- ❑ Who the decision makers are
- ❑ Their decision making process and timeline
- ❑ Other solutions they are evaluating

## ❑ Ask for the close

There is no "perfect moment" to close prospects—as soon as a lead is qualified, reps should ask for the deal. Read How to close a deal & 13 killer B2B sales questions for more tips.

- ❑ Establish guidelines on when reps should attempt to close the deal.
- ❑ Provide each rep a list of closing techniques.

## ❑ Manage objections

Manage objections as early as possible. Read 10 objection handling techniques for more tips.

- ❑ **Provide each rep with an objection management document.**

## ❑ Deliver the sales presentation (if applicable)

Based upon your team's sales style, decide which sales presentation(s) is needed to move the deal forward:

- ❑ Product demo (Read How to give product demos that sell for more info.)
- ❑ Meeting with all of the decision makers
- ❑ Trial sign-up
- ❑ Other:

## ❑ Negotiate

Empower sales reps to negotiate from a position of strength. Read How to negotiate like a pro for more tips.

- ❑ **Before any negotiation, each sales rep knows:**
    - ❑ Whether they can offer discounts and the maximum amount they can offer.
    - ❑ How often they can offer discounts or other perks to customers.
    - ❑ The prospects they can offer discounts or other perks to.

## ❏ Finalize the deal

Set customers up for long-term success while managing their expectations.

- ❏ Explain to customers how much time & resources onboarding may require.
- ❏ Explain to customers the results they may expect after implementing your solution.
- ❏ Assign each new customer an account manager or customer success representative (if applicable).

## Congratulations!

By investing the time into creating a sales strategy, you've set your sales team and company up for great success. Winging it is for amateurs; to create a predictable and scalable sales process, you have to define and measure the metrics and activities that matter.

For the best results, treat your sales strategy as a living, breathing document. It isn't the type of thing that's done once and finished forever. As you experiment and learn what works for your team, update and refine your sales strategy for continuous improvements.

Executing your sales strategy also requires the right tools. That's why we want to invite you to a free trial of our sales CRM. It was created by salespeople for salespeople for maximum productivity. Every call, email, and SMS is logged, allowing your sales team to focus on what really matters: Closing more deals.