

SALES PIPELINE MANAGEMENT PROCESS MADE EASY



How To Generate More Sales. More
Consistently. In Less Time.

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WHAT IS SALES PIPELINE MANAGEMENT?

The Sales Pipeline Management Process starts when a new lead has been qualified and is considered an opportunity or a "live sales deal". A journey starts where through a series of pre-defined stages, the prospect is guided towards the ultimate goal. A Sale. To fully understand this process, you must first fully understand your prospect's buying process.

Sales pipeline management is really about creating forward momentum. Every sales opportunity must have a "next action".

Every "next action" is a coordinated step to move the sales opportunity forward.

The key is to map out a repeatable, proven set of steps that systematically create forward momentum. You then build these steps into your CRM systems and hold your sales team accountable to the system. We will teach you how to do this.

Why have a Sales Pipeline Management process?

- To manage your sales team more effectively
- To improve your sales effectiveness
- To enable you to coach your sales team more effectively
- Better well managed sales pipelines transform forecasting.
- You can focus your efforts on the most attractive opportunities.
- You can improve your closing rates
- You can "move the dial" more effectively, with hard facts NOT gut instincts

WHAT IS A SALES PROCESS?

Think of your Sales Process as a series of steps you have mapped out in detail. You start with your target list of "Sweet Spot Prospects". You decide on your sales tactics to generate interest and leads. You employ a lead qualification process, to sort the best qualified leads from the unsuitable.

You are now entering the Sales Pipeline Management Process. The Sales Pipeline Management Process is a component of the overall Sales Process. This process, which we will go through a little later is a set of pre-defined stages you will guide sales opportunities through in order to get to closed sales deal.

But the Sales Process continues after you have made the sale. It involves managing the sale, managing the customer, account planning. It covers areas such as generating referrals and testimonials. It can also involve client surveys.

You MUST have your Sales Process mapped out, before you design you

Sales Pipeline Management Process.

Here is a basic Sales Process

Stage1 Prospecting

-Identifying and targeting leads among potential 'sweet-spot' clients.

Stage 2 Qualification

-The start of the Sales Pipeline Management Process. Identifying key criteria to qualify these prospects as a good fit (i.e. a Sweet Spot Client) or a poor fit (which are qualified out).

Stage 3 Value Proposition and Presentation

-Identifying a problem that your business can solve for a prospect? Defining your value proposition for that prospect's problem.

Stage4 Contract

negotiation -Preparing your business case. Reviewing your proposals. And negotiating. Having a "no deal point"?Stage 5

Account Management

-Managing the client / project. Liaising with the implementation team.

Managing all stakeholders. Creating account plans.



HINT

Map Your Sales Process first before you design your Sales Pipeline Management Process

DEFINE YOUR SALES PIPELINE MANAGEMENT PROCESS GOALS

Running a professional, world-class sales pipeline management system requires clear-cut goals for sales and sales activities.

Below is a copy of a sales goals workbook tool using it will help you

- Achieve clarity on your key sales numbers.
- Introduce more science into your sales planning process and to make it fact-based, building more

accountability

- To reach a clear understanding of the sales activity levels, you will need to achieve your goals.
- To measure the effectiveness of your sales tactics.
- To focus your sales coaching on specific areas and behaviours your team need to improve.

PEARSON'S LAW STATES

“What gets measured grows and what get’s measured and reported grows exponentially”

Take your overall Sales Goal and break it down into specific measurable monthly numbers.

	Annual	Quarterly	Monthly
Revenue			
# Deals			
# Opportunities			
# Qualified Leads			
#Proposals			
# Meetings			
Average Sales Value			

Mapping Your Sales Pipeline Management Process

Define A Sales Lead

You cannot afford to have a loose definition of a sales lead if you are serious about mastering Sales Pipeline Management Process. Most CRM systems use both terms, lead and opportunity, we too have opted to follow suit.

Leads are potential targets or prospects you have identified. At this stage they are targets. They have yet to be qualified. To qualify a lead, you must define the characteristics that make a prospect desirable for your business.

Once you have qualified your lead, it becomes a Qualified Lead or Sales Opportunity.

DEFINE YOUR SALES LEAD CRITERIA HERE



HINT

Ensure you have **WRITTEN** documentation specifying what leads, qualified leads and sales opportunities

Using VANT to Qualify Leads

Here is a simple and effective way to qualify your leads.

V is for Value Proposition

- Your prospect has clearly articulated that they see value in your offering.

A is for Authority

- You are talking to a Decision Maker

N is for Need

-Your prospect has confirmed that there is a definite NEED for your product or service.

T is for Timing

- You expect this "live sales deal" to close within the next 180 days.

Use VANT to qualify leads into Sales Opportunities (or live Sales Deals) and achieve

- Clarity amongst your team on what opportunities you should pursue.
- Less time wasted on low value, undesirable opportunities,
- Less cost as you focus on fewer but more valuable opportunities

Value is confirmed by our prospect confirming these criteria

Authority; we will be talking to who?

Need; we will identify a need by

Timing; our timescale is

Our organisation's definition of a LIVE SALES DEAL is

ACCELERATE

YOUR SALES PIPELINE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Before you move
on please confirm

1. You have a clear written profile of your Sweet Spot Client/Prospect
2. You have clear sales goals and sales activity metrics in place
3. You have defined what a sales lead is
4. You have defined what a qualified sales lead is
5. You have an agreed process for converting qualified sales leads into sales opportunities (a live sales deal that is likely to close in the next 3 to 6 months)

ACCELERATE

Sales Pipeline Management Questions

- How do you develop a consistent methodology for improving your sales forecasting accuracy?
- How do you hold your sales team accountable to creating momentum in their sales pipeline?
- How do you design a simple system that enables you to coach your sales team on pipeline management?
- How can you equip your sales team with a powerful tool that guides them through the Sales Pipeline Management Process?

The answer? By using our ACCELERATE Pipeline Management Guidance Questions

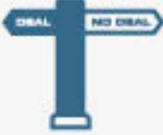
- **They provide clarity**
- **They ensure consistency in sales behaviours**
- **They provide guidance to the sales team**
- **It is a system for planning your next actions**
- **It provides accountability**
- **It is simple to use**
- **It is repeatable and systematic**



HINT

Make sure you involve your Marketing team in all of the above. You must have a clear company wide definition for each criteria

ACCELERATE Pipeline Management Process

-  Access To All Decision Makers 
-  Clear Vision Of Success 
-  Clear On The Buying Process 
-  Established The Pain Point 
-  Level Of Priority Is High 
-  Earmarked Budget 
-  Red Flags Identified and OK With Us. 
-  Advantage Over our Competitors 
-  Tangible Impact and ROI 
-  Endgame Plan In Place 

A

Access To All Decision Makers. Do you have FULL access to the key influencers and decision makers that will make the buying decisions?

C

Clear Vision Of Success. Research proves that sellers who meet the buyer's Vision Of Success are twice as likely to close deals. Are you 100% clear on the buyer's Vision of Success, their 5 out of 5?

C

Clear On Their Buying Process? Are you crystal clear on their procurement processes? Do you understand all of the key people involved and how they influence buying decisions?

E

Established The Pain Point. Do you have a thorough understanding of the prospect's pain point. And the impact the pain point is having on. Them. Their Team. Their organisation

L

Level Of Priority. Do you know how high your potential solution is on their priority list? The higher their priority rating, the more likely you are to see momentum. Is the priority aligned to a business or project priority? What makes it a priority?

E

Earmarked Budget. Is there a budget allocated and earmarked for your product or service?

R

Red Flags Identified and OK with us. Do you know all of the potential FIREWALLS, preventing you from moving forward? What are the barriers to progress? Can you deal with them effectively?

A

Advantage Over Your Competition. Do you have a competitive advantage over your competition? Do you know, your prospect knows it? Have they told you?

T

Tangible IMPACT and ROI. Is there a tangible impact for your prospect by using your product or service? Have they confirmed that they understand the impact. Has it been quantified? Have they acknowledged the value you deliver?

E

Endgame Plan. Do you have a deal closing plan? Do you have a "walkaway point"? Is your plan well thought out?

USING ACCELERATE

Allocate 6% to each fully answered question. For clarity you get 6% if you can answer each question in full.

If you can't answer a question in full. Give yourself 0%.

Go through each of the ACCELERATE pipeline management guidance questions and answer each honestly. It is not a test.

Your total score should be 60%. Which means you are leaving 40% for gut instinct. All sales deals have an element of subjectivity to them. The guidance questions are designed to focus the sales team on specific behaviours that prove we are progressing through the process. But there is no 100% guarantee that you will close a sale deal.

40% of it is up and down the subjective intangible non-measurable criteria.



Write your existing score here

Write your score using the ACCELERATE pipeline management guidance questions here

Write your specific next actions here

EXERCISE

Take an existing sales opportunity that you are working on in your current sales pipeline. Now analyse that sales opportunity against our ACCELERATE pipeline management guidance questions.



HINT

Use ACCELERATE as your guide for your NEXT ACTION to progress a sales opportunity

Using the ACCELERATE pipeline management guidance questions

By now I hope you have seen the value of our ACCELERATE Guidance questions.

Here is how I suggest you use them

1. As a scoring system for all of your sales opportunities in your pipeline.
2. As a guide to your sales team for "strategic next actions".
3. As a coaching tool for sales leaders to help salespeople learn the winning behaviours of sales pipeline management



NURTURING LEADS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Why nurture your sales opportunities? Quite simply, you will grow your sales faster and more consistently.

According to Forrester Research companies that excel at lead nurturing:

- Generate 50% more sales-ready opportunities
- Lower cost per leads by 33%

These by themselves are evidence enough of the power an opportunity nurturing strategy can have on your sales performance. But when you factor in that up to 80% of sales leads get lost in the Sales Process.

Yes that's up to 80% (the lowest is 29%) there is staggering potential for you to improve your sales performance.

(Forrester Research 2009)

Your objective is to nurture these opportunities so that when the time is right for them your company's name is on the top of their list. They will start to approach you at that right time.

Consider the following

- 5% of your market is ready to buy now. The timing is right.
- 20% will never buy from you
- 75% need to be nurtured and educated. Relationships have to be built to win business from them in the future.

1) Develop marketing materials or content which educates and informs prospects about you and your business.

These can include some or all of the following,

- Case studies
- Testimonials from clients
- Email newsletters
- Demonstration or tutorial videos
- White papers
- Blogging
- Professional website
- Coordinated linkedin profiles
- Social media content
- Direct mailing pieces.

2) Systemise and if possible automate the use of these tools throughout the nurturing phases.

What is done routinely becomes a habit and anything that can be done to facilitate this is to be encouraged. It fits perfectly with a CRM based pipeline management system but can also be done using calendar reminders if no CRM is being used.

PHASE OF PROCESS	TOOLS	BENEFITS
Qualification	Email templates Professional website LinkedIn profiles Scripts for sales calls	Give you an opportunity to warm up a cold prospect before you try to talk to them. They give a professional image of your company. They ensure a common message is delivered to prospects at the qualification stage.
Discovery	Case studies, reports and clients testimonials	They can be tailored to the particular problems or needs that the prospect has. Reinforces in written form that your company has an offering to solve this problem/address this need.
Value proposition		Talk to the client in a language that is relevant to them. Focus on how your company's product and/or service offering has a particular value proposition.

PHASE OF PROCESS	TOOLS	BENEFITS
Meeting arranged	Issue an agenda Address the 'fears'/concerns of the attendees	Take control in a way that is sensitive to their needs/wants/fears/concerns. This stage gives you the opportunity to be seen as an expert in a field - reputable, knowledgeable, trustworthy.
Demo/site visit booked	Issue an agenda. Issue technical specifications Video of facilities/product demonstration Structured/professional	Use items such as agendas and technical specifications in a much more targeted way. Continue to build a positive picture of your company in a professional way.
Quote Sent	Professional quotation. Case studies, testimonials. Technical specs. ROI/Usage data.	Do not undo your earlier good work by issuing a quotation or offer that looks unprofessional and impersonal. Reinforce the offer with appropriate supporting documentation that will be relevant for their decision making
Contract Signed	Implementation plan Quality agreements, etc. Thank you note	You want the professional approach taken through the whole sales nurturing process to continue now into the operational activities.

WHO DO YOU NURTURE?

Who you nurture is just as important as what you use to nurture. You must clearly define the key Decision Makers you want to engage with before you create nurturing pieces or content. Remember it is no longer good enough to focus on one person only within your target prospect's organisation (what we refer to as the spider's web approach to nurturing)

Think of your prospects business as an interconnected system, like a spiders web. When someone moves /challenges a decision. Everyone else on the web, or in this case in the system, feels those reverberations. The impact can be enough to halt a sales deal in its tracks.

How many times have you had sales deals stall, even when you have been given the go ahead by a Key Decision Maker? The change of heart has most likely been caused by some internal issue, challenge or person.

You must nurture all of the stakeholders involved in a decision. It could mean multiple people from your organisation engaging with multiple people from your client's team.

Try to ensure that you match people, for example, finance talking to finance, or marketing talking to marketing.



EXERCISE DEFINE WHO YOU WILL NURTURE BELOW

WHAT IS THEIR TITLE?

WHAT IS THEIR ROLE?

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Sales Pipeline Management Process is a numbers game. And the reality is that we cannot improve unless we have a benchmark to measure ourselves against.

Leading vs Lagging Number

We want you to view numbers (the right numbers) as invaluable sales and business management tools. They give you clarity and guidance on performance. They allow for better business forecasting, and they give focus to all stakeholders.

Here is what most organisations focus on.

- Monthly or quarterly sales
- Sales per salesperson
- Sales per territory
- Sales per product
- Closing rates
- Gross margin per sale

“Lagging numbers only tell us about the outcomes

They do NOT tell us how we got there and how all of the elements of your sales team are performing”

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

You must identify a set of numbers that will give you an insight into the mechanics of your sales team and your sales pipeline.

What you are looking for are indicators that give you visibility into current activities that will directly affect future sales performance.

For instance, a declining level of prospecting activity by your sales team will directly affect your sales pipeline in the months ahead. If you only become aware of this in 6 months time as your sales dry up it is too late.

The challenge, therefore, is to identify numbers that can indeed act as indicators for the performance of your sales team and sales pipeline.

Hence the need to measure Leading Numbers.

Lagging Numbers

They are outputs and results that are measured

afterwards. These are the sales figures that most of us commonly use and focus on

- Monthly sales figures
- Monthly gross margin performance
- Sales and margin performance per sales person
- Number and value of new clients

Leading Numbers

These metrics are activities and actions that can be measured and tracked and are essential to the successful development of your sales pipeline. Numbers like;

- Number of sales calls per salesperson
- Number of sales meetings held per sales person
- Number of opportunities created
- Type of opportunities created
- Number of opportunities advancing through pipeline stages
- Type of opportunities that

- are developing % of opportunities closed per sales person



HINT

Focus on Leading Numbers weekly. Capture your NUMBERS on a single, visual, real-time report. It is a powerful tool to have in place for weekly sales meetings, monthly management meetings and quarterly reviews.

The Sales Pipeline Audit Process

If you want to generate More Sales. More Consistently. In Less Time, it is important that you perform regular sales pipeline audits. An audit process will ensure that you are maintaining a sales pipeline that is

- Realistic (no fluff)
- Accurate (to forecast better)
- Timely to progress opportunities quickly through the stages
- Accountable (to hold salespeople accountable to their goals and actions)

A simple 4 step sales pipeline audit process

So let's take you through our simple 4 step sales pipeline audit process. I suggest you have a weekly summary review of the sales pipeline, but have a very detailed audit on a monthly basis.

Stage 1 - Check your highest rated opportunities

Start your pipeline audit by focusing in on your highest ranked opportunities first. These are your most likely

to close opportunities, and it is important you check that the ACCELERATE process has been adhered to.

What is at 60% or higher?

Focus in on these opportunities first.

- What stage are they at in the ACCELERATE process?

- What was the last action taken?

- Who took it?

- What is the next action scheduled. And who needs to take it?(It is the most important question)

- Have we followed our Sales Pipeline Management Process properly?

- Have we recorded all of the steps and activities involved?

- Are all prospect related communications clear?

- Are all of the right people involved to ensure it progresses to sale agreed?

- Is this really at 60% or higher stage?

(We would expect that an opportunity at 75%, to close in the next 90 days? Will this opportunity?)

Focus on the next actions.

1.Are they scheduled?

2.Are they meaningful?

3.Are they relevant?

4.Are they timely?

5.Are they moving the opportunity forward?

6.Are the right people involved?

7.Are they building value?



HINT

If your team have followed ACCELERATE then they should have achieved the highest score of 60%. Have they?

The Sales Pipeline Audit Process

Stage 2 - Check your next highest ranked opportunities

In order to generate More Sales. More Consistently. In Less Time you need a continuous flow of new leads and sales opportunities. You need a continuous flow of new opportunities at 5% that progress to 10%, 25%, 50% and beyond.

For now we'll focus on the next highest band 50%

In much the same way you analysed the 60% or higher, you analyse 50% with one main difference.

Those 60% or higher should convert to sale agreed in the next 90 to 180 days. You have a short-term picture of what's likely to convert to enable you to gauge this month's performance.

Those at 50% or higher may not convert this month. And you'll need to ensure that there are enough in your pipeline to ensure you will meet the goals for next month, and the quarter.

Stage 3 - Check overall opportunity volumes

One of the key advantages of using a CRM is that you can create performance dashboards that let you easily see key information quickly. Whether you have a CRM system or not the key questions as you work your way through your audit are

1. What is the trend in our pipeline, up, down or flat ?

2. How do we compare against our goals for this quarter and the next. Will we achieve our sales volumes based on the current information?

3. How long is an opportunity on average taking from qualified to sale agreed. (A CRM system will give you this information easily). Is the time shortening or lengthening?

4. Is your sales velocity increasing or decreasing. In other words are your sales progressing more quickly or slowly through the pipeline?

5. What is the gap. Probably the most important

question to ask. Identify the gap. Get detailed on the why? Why is there a gap. What is leading to this gap.

6. What risks are there due to the gap?

7. What corrective action can you take? The audit is always about "next actions", so what is the next action?

Stage 4 - Check sales activities and dissect one opportunity;

The devil really is in the detail. And during this phase of the audit you will get granular with one sales opportunity. Remember you will conduct a more detailed analysis of all sales opportunities with your team on a monthly basis. .

You have also established the sales activity levels needed, like numbers of sales meetings, numbers of sales calls. Now you need to ensure that the activity levels are being met.

For example

- Are sales activities high enough to reach sales goals?

- Are we meeting our sales appointment goals?



Hi, I'm Ronan. If your definition of a sales consultant is someone who analyses your business, makes recommendations. And leaves. That is NOT me.

I get involved. I DO. I focus on execution. And I'll help you implement a world-class selling system our PRESENT SOS (Sales Operating System).

I am the guy who will challenge you and offer you a different angle. I help you augment your sales leadership skills. I try to see what we can do better as a team. I love to drill down into the numbers and the detail. The data rarely lies. Numbers can be fun when you use them to drive performance improvements.

I can partner with you to free you up to do what you do best. Run your business.

◆ Hard = Easy

I believe that in sales you do what is hard. I mean since when was Sales Pipeline Management sexy? Who says forecasting and planning are fun? I will hold you and the team accountable for the actions that get sustainable and repeatable success.

◆ MY SUCCESSFUL CLIENTS

"We increased and improved focus on the things that matter. Year on Year increase in company turnover and profitability resulting in a high double-digit return on sales " Paul Synnott - Country Manager ESRI Ireland.

"Ronan helped us define and implement a Sales Pipeline Management Process. Our forecasting accuracy and pipeline quality have demonstrably improved. Our sales growth has been averaging 70% per annum" Brian D'Arcy Commercial Director Anam Technologies

"It is definitely having a positive impact on our sales figures. I just wish we had started it 10 years ago! Thank you again for all of your help" Mike Glanville, Sales Director Dorteck Ltd.

"The results speak, as we have been able to achieve our goals to date with an increase in turnover by 10% in the Irish market and 20% in the UK". Shane O'Carroll Co-MD. Chemstore

More Profitable Sales. More Sustainably. In Less Time.

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Call Ronan On +353 86 7732201



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- One-off workshops and Programmes of workshops
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- Minimum six month engagement

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<h3>Implementation And Management</h3> <p>Here is where we excel. We become part of your team. And we work hands-on with you.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) We complete the Sales Infrastructure Diagnostic. 2) Make recommendations. 3) Then we move to execution phase. <p>We will help you implement a full sales performance management system. Our PRESENT SOS.</p> <p>Including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weekly sales reviews - One-To-One sales manager training - One-To-Group sales coaching and development <p>MONTHLY ENGAGEMENTS €2,500 PER MONTH PLUS VAT</p>				

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