

6 FUNDAMENTAL SALES STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU FORGET THERE'S A DOWNTURN

Discover how reps and managers keep their pipeline full and conversions high in tough economic times



HOW SELLING HAS CHANGED FOR BUYERS

Selling in 2023 is a very different game from what it used to be, especially in SaaS. It's no longer about getting a signature on a 10-year license and walking away with a big win. Three main shifts are driving this change:

- **Switching tools is cheaper and easier** — Moving from on-premise to cloud solutions have drastically reduced switching costs, making long-term contracts less of a “sure thing”.
- **There are way more options** — The internet has made it much easier for prospects to look for (and find) alternative solutions.
- **Prospects are focused on revenue** — Most companies have shifted priorities from unrestrained growth to profitability, so they are much more careful about spending.



HOW SELLING HAS CHANGED FOR SELLERS

The sales process hasn't just changed for buyers, it has also shifted dramatically for sellers. The customer doesn't just expect a pitch and a straight path to the dotted line. Today, the seller is expected to:

- **Be a digital concierge** — This means you need to help the customer come to the decision that works best for them and solves their problem efficiently, rather than pushing for a sale.
- **Be invested in the customer's success** — If the customer doesn't succeed, they don't renew. And if they don't renew, that's a problem. The SaaS sales cycle means sellers need to be actively invested in the success of their customers after the sale.
- **Be as transparent as possible** — A difficult market and tons of options have made buyers extremely risk-averse. The only way to make them feel secure is to convince them that you are being completely honest and transparent.

The bottom line is, buyers don't want to be sold to. They want to be supported and guided to the right solution. The best sellers do this by focusing on the fundamentals.

So what are these fundamentals? Let's take a look.



FUNDAMENTALS FOR REPS

INVOLVE YOURSELF IN THE PROSPECTING PROCESS TO STRIKE GOLD

It's time to get into the trenches. Buying committees are getting larger and more complex. The best sellers work closely with BDRs, marketing, and customer success to find and close more deals.

How do you nail prospecting in 2023? Here's what you need to do.



WORK WITH MARKETING LIKE A SINGLE UNIT

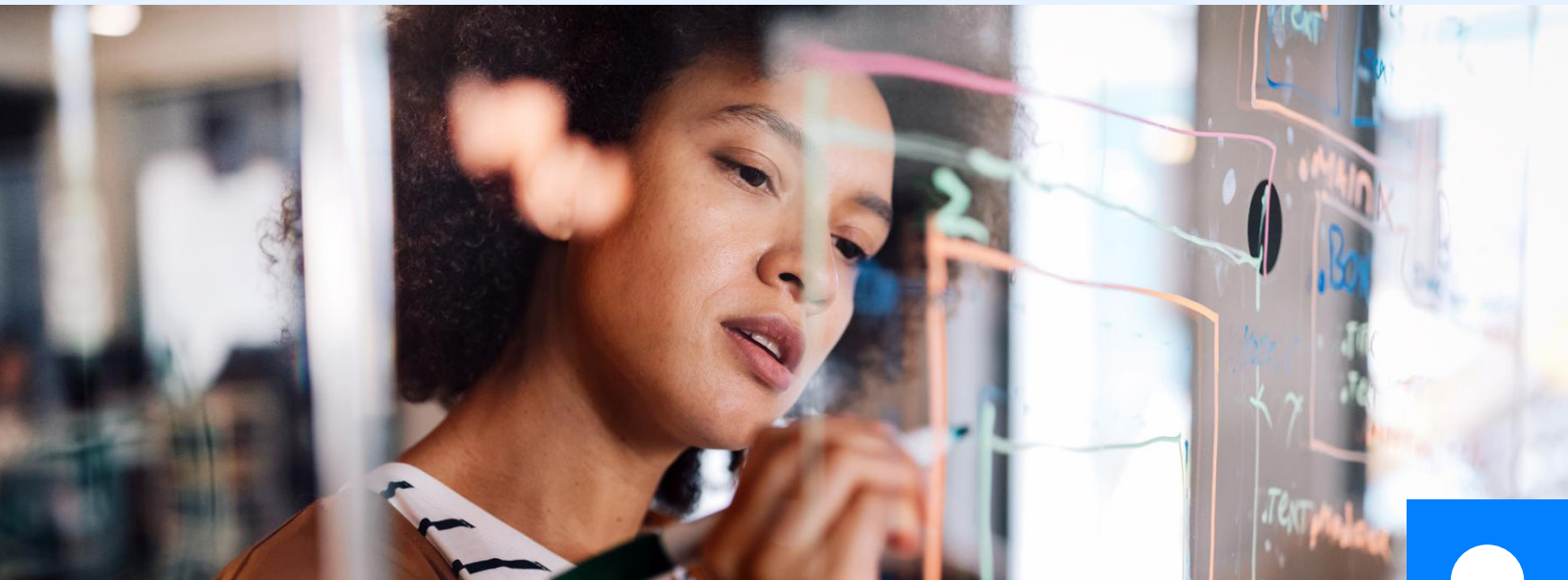
Forget the silos. Sellers who are killing it are working with marketing every step of the customer journey, right from discovery to that final meeting to make sure they have what they need. When marketing and sales believe that they are a single unit with a common goal, that's when the magic happens.

OWN YOUR FRANCHISE

It's not enough to just think about the next deal. Winners are thinking one to two quarters ahead. Is the top of the funnel full enough that when the leads slowly trickle down you will have enough of them six months later? You need to be in control of that.

OWN THE QUALIFYING STAGE TO STOP REVENUE LEAK

Wasted time is one of the biggest reasons businesses suffer from revenue leak. The better you are at qualifying, the less time is wasted chasing leads that never had a chance of converting. So when you qualify, remember to follow these guidelines.



ALWAYS BE QUALIFYING

Qualifying is not a one-and-done. You should be qualifying all through the sales process. As you learn more about your prospect, you get clarity on who your champion is, what their buying process entails, and who you need to get to say yes. A great discovery process is the basic building block of a [mutual action plan](#) that's actually mutual.

UNDERSTAND HOW YOUR CUSTOMER MAKES MONEY

A sobering truth in today's economic environment is that **most sellers are not chasing existing budgets**. This is especially true for large-scale purchases, which are essentially unfunded in most organizations. So a deep understanding of what drives value for your prospect is essential, because how else are you going to match it to your solution?

IMPLEMENT RIGOR AND DISCIPLINE WHEN DOING YOUR HOMEWORK

Ask yourself if you have done all you can to understand the customer. Have you gone through their 10-K with a fine-toothed comb? What are their leaders saying on social media? Are you speaking their language? These are all important questions to consider.

DEVELOP A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CUSTOMER

Developing customer relationships has always been important. But it's never been as difficult as it is now. Prospects are naturally more wary these days because budgets are tighter. So to develop real, meaningful relationships with prospects, you need to get three things right:

SUBSTANCE

Considering how stacked buying committees are, you are taking up a lot of people's valuable time when you want to sell to them. So when you do get that time, make sure you have something substantial to say. This means:

- You have relevant experience with the kind of problem they have. This means you have solved similar problems for relevant peers and have the evidence to show for it.
- You have an educated perspective on their industry that they will care about. So consider doing a crash course on the prospect's vertical, customer profile, and market conditions.



EMPATHY

You have to show that you are curious about their problem. That may mean delaying more technical conversations until you understand the human element of their issues and address their concerns head on. Ask yourself questions like:

- What are their aspirations?
- What are their fears?
- What's stopping them from achieving their goals?

Only when you know these things can you have a holistic conversation with your prospect about the real problem that is impacting their business.

TRUST

Finally, you have to deliver on your promises. That means making promises that you know you can fulfill. If your holistic understanding of the business has led you to the conclusion that you do not have the solution to solve the larger issue, it might even mean backing away.



FUNDAMENTALS FOR MANAGERS

MANAGE TO A CONSISTENT RHYTHM

There's a rhythm to how the best sellers manage and coach their teams. A cadence that everyone understands and agrees to follow. Team members are set up for success, regardless of geo or segment. This brings us to the question, what does it mean to manage to a rhythm and how do you do it?

MAP OUT YOUR CONVERSATIONS

You begin by asking yourself, "What are the conversations I need to have every day, week, month, quarter, or year?" Not just with your team, but with everyone across the organization. This will help you understand:

- The decisions you need to make for every conversation.
- The actions you take after each conversation.
- The information you need to have for each conversation.


Once you link all those pieces together, your coaching conversations become much more robust and insightful.

GUIDE YOUR COACHEES

One of the worst things a coach can do is to hand team members a bunch of tools and reports and ask them to figure it out. What you should do is take them through the process step by step. Here are the things you should coach your AEs on so they can have productive conversations with BDRs:

- How frequently they should have these conversations
- What topics they should be discussing
- What tools they should be using to have a richer dialogue
- How they should be interpreting the data from the tools

When you break down the process into its fundamental steps and guide your team on how to tackle each one, you set them up for success.



It's not just a question of are the meetings happening, but also whether they are high-quality conversations. This is where the importance of coaching comes in. It's not about checking the box. You've actually got to go in and inspect.



Jason Chapman
SVP of Commercial Strategies and Operations at Infor

ESTABLISH A CLEAR SALES PROCESS

Having clear, defined sales processes is critical for sales teams to succeed. It helps you move faster and sets the organization up for repeat success. It also increases collaboration and effective communication, giving revenue-critical employees the same vocabulary and definitions needed to get on the same page. Let's see how you do it:



STEP 1

Adopt an industry-standard sales methodology like MEDDIC and make it your own. Just remember to customize any methodology you adopt to match your organizational needs. Consider these:

- **Activities** — These are the jobs that need to be done throughout the sales process.
- **Assets** — The templates and tools you need to leverage for the sale. For example, your conversation intelligence tool
- **Artifacts** — These are specific to the customer. An example would be relevant case studies.
- **Agreements** — All the agreements you have to reach with the customer to move the deal forward.
- **Accountability** — A list of who does what and when.

STEP 2

Use the methodology as the first step to value selling. Take the information you have gathered about the customer and their industry and use it to articulate value in a way that is relevant to the customer's balance sheet.

STEP 3

Hand over your documented findings to the customer success teams so they know exactly what the customer expectations are. This helps them deliver exactly what the customer needs, which further establishes trust between you and the customer.

KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR PIPELINE EVERY DAY



Lack of pipeline is the root of all evil.



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When the pipeline dries up, people start making bad choices. Whether that is chasing deals that are unlikely to convert, or trying to push solutions that the customer doesn't need. So what can you do to make sure this never happens to you?



KEEP YOUR PIPELINE FULL TWO QUARTERS OUT

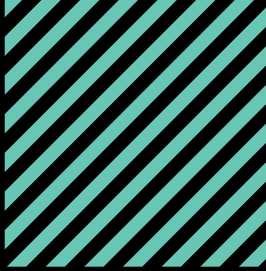
Sure, most sellers like to keep a full pipeline for the current quarter. But do you have enough leads in the middle of the funnel for the next? Or at the top of the funnel for the quarter after that? Ensure your entire pipeline is full, not just the bottom.

TRACK VELOCITY IN ADDITION TO VOLUME

The velocity of your pipeline is how fast deals move through it. If this is not quantified and you don't have a close eye on it, you can suddenly run into a dry patch without expecting it.

MAKE IT EVERYONE'S PROBLEM

Bring attention to at-risk deals, deals that are slowing down, and deals that have slipped to next quarter. When you keep a close eye on your pipeline every day, you can spot revenue leak and drive revenue precision quarter after quarter.



MORE RESOURCES

For more ways to create revenue impact, check out these resources:

- 01** | Download our [MAP template for de-risking deals.](#)
- 02** | Get advice from our CEO Andy Byrne via his weekly [RISE UP newsletter.](#)
- 03** | [Follow Clari on LinkedIn](#) if you want to stop leaving revenue on the table.

