

Building a strong outbound sales engine

A guide by



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At a certain point in the growth journey of every organization, it's important to start building a solid outbound sales machine. While inbound is a great way to scale up and acquire new customers, it's important for you to build an effective outbound sales program as well. Why?

Because, inbound is passive toward sales. And if you want to scale your business and increase market share, you want to be proactive in sales. Outbound is a matter of incremental sales – it's driven by a growth logic.

Start your outbound sales with simple steps; don't overengineer the process.

- ▶ **In the initial phase, focus a lot on cold calling – the fundamental building block of outbound.** It's as simple as that. Then you can add up slowly to see what works and what doesn't – not the other way around. You can throw in automation of your processes as well, but don't try to automate everything from the get go for the sake of it – simply stick to the basics of cold calling.
- ▶ **So, how can you get your outbound sales machine up and running in the best way?**

Here are a few steps to follow:

1. Knowing whom you sell to

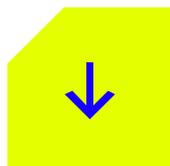
You need to know exactly whom you sell to, and here two steps are critical to follow .

First, what is your market segment?

Do you sell to startups or scaleups? This step is about defining the ideal customer profile (ICP). Configuring this profile includes defining characteristics like company size, and industry or vertical.

You should then identify the buyer personas (BP) within those ICPs. What are their job seniorities? Are they C-level executives or managers? What are their specific job areas? What are their needs and pain points which your solution can address – at both functional and emotional levels?

Once you have identified ICPs and BPs, it is important to define who should sell to them. What is the best profile of a salesperson to pitch your solution to the target buyer persona at your ideal customer profile? Remember that depending on your ICP market segment, you're not necessarily going to hire similar types of sales profiles.



Tip on what sales profiles to look for:

What kind of sales profiles correspond to the three typical market segments – SMBs, Mid-market and Enterprise?

- ▶ **SMBs:** The strategy of building an outbound sales team depends on annual contract value (ACV). If ACV is quite low, which usually is the case with SMBs and even sometimes Mid-Market, it's not worth the effort of hiring salespeople. For such clients, you can rely on self-service. The rule of thumb for profitability dictates that the prospect at this level is usually better off purchasing without the intervention of a salesperson.

If you plan to have salespeople on board for servicing SMBs, make sure you generate enough volume or order flow.

- ▶ **Mid-Market:** For the mid-market segment too, you should look at a short sales cycle. You might want to hire someone who is keen to generate a significant sales volume. This is usually a junior profile who does a lot of activities like cold calling and prospecting; someone who is proactive and hands on.

Extra tip for selling to C-level buyer personas: Don't hesitate to hire junior profiles for selling to C-level executives too. However, make sure you train them well on competition, and industry knowledge. They need to elevate their presentation skills to be productive and effective while engaging with C-levels.

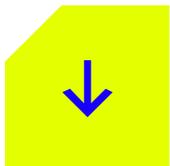
- ▶ **ENTERPRISE:** For enterprises, you will have to factor in a longer sales cycle most of the time. Here, the ideal salesperson profile is usually someone more senior and experienced, who can be more consultative while interacting with prospects. It would also be useful to hire someone who has sold to such buyer personas before; however, that's not mandatory, and should not be a blocker.

2. Defining the sales process

Once you have figured out which company and persona you are selling to, you need to define the right sales process.

The goal here is to maximize the conversion rates in the sales funnel. Organizations usually achieve this objective by shortening the sales cycle, without eliminating the main steps.

When you think about sales process optimization, you should think about getting maximum clients in the minimum amount of time.

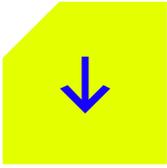


Beware of this pitfall in consultative selling:

Not including closing steps in the sales process is a very common pitfall, one that hides behind the concept of consultative selling. Your salespeople have to remain consultative, while being the owners of the sales process.

You should always be able to embed clearly defined steps in your sales process, while being consultative – and not aggressive – in your sales.

So, don't drag out the sales process with unnecessary steps, and don't forget about the closing part which can sometimes be the pitfall of consultative selling.



So how does a good sales process look like?

Of course, it's different for every company, based on their unique context.

Here is an example of how a successful sales process can look like:

First, your prospect interacts with a business development representative (BDR), whose role is to detect an opportunity, or in other words, identify at least one compelling event. In the discovery call, your BDR must ask questions that are precise and brief. BDRs should stick to the minimum set of open questions, and not ask too much. It should take only three to five questions, and one call, for you to gauge if the prospect is the ideal customer profile for your solution.

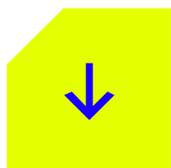
Next, the BDR transfers the prospect to the Account Executive (AE), who begins with negotiations, and finishes with the closing phase.

▶ A common pitfall to look out for:

We often find that the prospect-BDR interaction process is too long, typically involving two to three calls. That is not the job of BDRs, though. AEs should be the ones to engage and accelerate the prospect along the sales funnel. The job of BDR is to detect if and what a prospect could buy, and make sure the prospect is eligible.

3. Last but not the least: Define the right **sales org**, and hire the right people

You should consider building a sales organization around your outbound sales strategy and maturity. Here also, the best practice of starting with the basics, and not over-complicating things, holds true.



A common mistake many companies make in building their sales org:

Is to hire rather experienced people when they have just started outbound sales.

It is tempting to hire experienced high profile people to propel outbound sales. But more often, when you start outbound with cold calling, you need someone more junior. Why? Because a junior salesperson with the right motivation and self-drive can be really hands on to iterate a lot. In contrast, someone who has been managing teams for a long time won't be up for such rapid iterations and pivots.

Be careful about the first people you hire for the sales org. One option for launching the sales team is for you to hire an entrepreneur profile who can do sales, manage operations, rebuild and stay hands-on. You need to be in the mindset of iteration and improvement, until you configure a sales process and sales org that works for you. It takes time.

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Atscale is a team of ex-CROs and executives from Criteo, LinkedIn, Expedia, JobTeaser and more - teamed up to help start-ups scale revenue in the best way possible.



Book a call right now with:

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