

# So Now You're a Sales Manager



## Let's Plan the Future

Often, a new Sales Manager for a small to medium manufacturing business finds themselves in this position almost by accident. They are promoted into this new role because they are good at sales, consistently hit their quotas and are effective at account management. Their ability to execute within a defined process has allowed them to excel at selling, but now they are in charge and have never been given that level of training.

**UNDERSTAND  
YOUR  
CUSTOMERS**



**DEFINE  
YOUR  
PROCESS**



**FROM  
PLAYER  
TO COACH**





# Sales management

Sales management is about more than just managing incoming opportunities, customer needs or tracking the activities of the field sales team. A successful sales manager needs to know how to develop an overall sales strategy and be able to translate that into the actions that will guide their team to generate sales velocity. They should also know how to go about making hiring decisions, how to perform on-boarding, training and coaching for long term success, as well as the tools needed to help drive accountability.

This begins with a strong understanding as to what makes your customers choose you over the alternative options, the implementation of a sales process that defines how you operate and the evaluation criteria used to understand how your team is functioning which will in turn guide how you coach each member of your team.

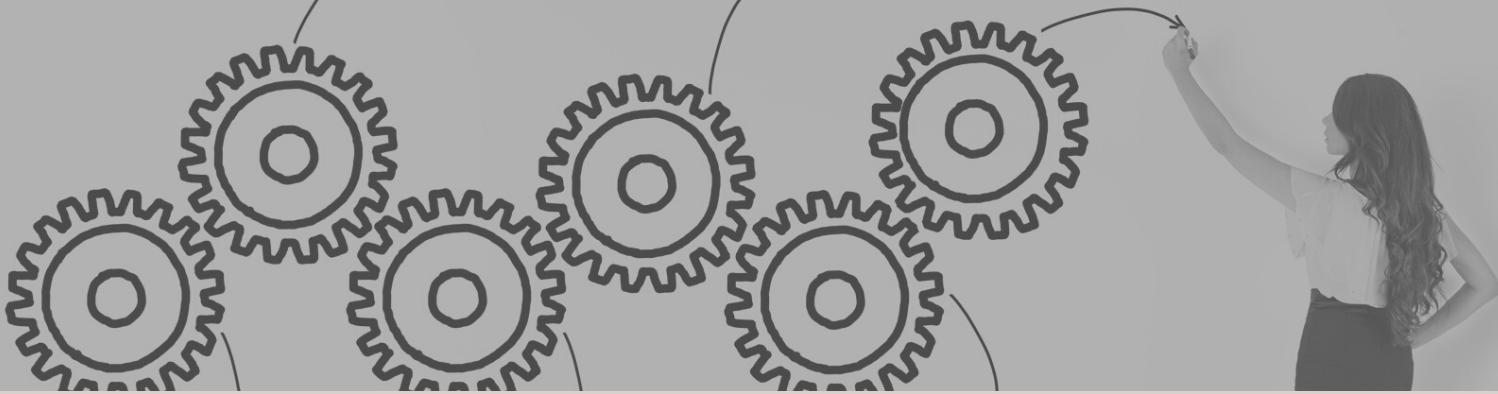
## Understanding Your Customers Needs

Part of your organizational sales strategy is the development of an effective sales process, which starts with understanding the motivations behind why your customers are buying your product or service. As we have learned selling in about buying. Once you understand the "Why" behind your prospects buying decisions, and the "How" they prefer to buy, you can determine the framework of a process that best aligns your sales team with the needs of your prospects.

A good place to begin understanding buyers motivations is with Clayton Christensen's theory of [Jobs To Be Done](#). In summary, he explains here that prospective customers buy not based on the product or service itself, but based on a job they need to have performed.



An example he provides in his writing is about a prospect who needs a hole, not the drill they were intending to buy. This is extremely relevant theory when working to understand the motivations behind why a customer is looking to acquire a product or service. Once you understand the motivations of your prospects, determine what it is about your organization that aligns with their needs.



## Keys to Defining your Sales Process

Next, you must come to the realization that a sales process needs to be thought of as the foundation of everything you do, not just how your sales team functions.

As a newly appointed sales manager you have to ask yourself, is my process defined? Before you define your process, understand who your selling to. It is very important to make sure your team is following an effective sales process that takes into account the buyers journey as you lay out each process stage.

- **Awareness:** When your prospect is defining their problem, challenge or opportunity.
- **Consideration:** Evaluating the ways to solve the problem (What are they looking for in a product or service)
- **Decision:** What are they basing their decision on ( Lowest Price, Market Leader, Most Experience)

Once you have a better understanding of why and how your customers buy, use that to define how sales will interact. Every step should guide your prospect to the next stage. It is worth noting here that like any process, too much structure can derail your team, so make sure there is enough latitude in your process to allow each team member to operate with some autonomy and provide the ability to nurture each target uniquely within the defined process.

## Transition from Player to Coach

Now ask yourself, does everything tie back to the sales process? When evaluating the staff you have or are looking to hire, the method in which you on-board and the way you coach for desired performance needs to be in alignment with the culture and behavior you are trying to create. Also, do you have the metrics and [dashboard tools](#) in place to measure progress toward objectives.





Once you have defined and implemented a structured process with visible metrics you can measure, look for performance related areas that are in need of improvement and this will highlight opportunities for training and coaching.

Being a sales manager can be a rewarding experience that will allow you to develop professionally and provides the opportunity to help others be successful as well. With the proper tools in place, and continued guidance, you can make an impactful contribution to your organizations overall revenue growth.

Over the coming weeks we will be revisiting each of these topics in further detail to provide additional insight into the individual steps and guidelines required for successful implementation.



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