

Three Considerations Before Putting the Pedal to the Metal and Accelerating Your Sales by Colleen Francis

Having a well-oiled sales team and a great product ready to launch can fill your head with a lot of tempting plans. Just like finding a shiny roadster waiting in your garage on a sunny day and that wide open road beckoning, the urge can be irresistible to turn the key, hit the accelerator and see just how fast that thing can go.

Don't start your engine quite yet. There's an important checklist you need to pay attention to first.

At Engage, we conduct ongoing sales research with businesses and with the professionals who work there. Among the issues we study include the challenges that executives, managers and sales staff face when trying to accelerate revenue and sales.

This is where the checkered flag comes in. We've identified three key critical points that you must address before you even think about putting the pedal to the metal and accelerating your sales.

Give your sales team a tuneup

High-performance machines work best when they're tuned regularly to meet current conditions. It's not all that different from how you need to look at your sales team.

A trend that we've noticed at Engage is how often organizations have been selling the same way for 10 to 15 years. Successful businesses are moving from a transactional, commodity-based way of selling and embracing a [value-based sales process](#). They're doing this to capture more market share, to sell more to existing clients, and to build a longer-term relationship with those clients.

It's lucrative and highly effective, but it requires a behavioral change in the way that you and your sales team do business.

As I remind my clients often, some of your best sales people have been with you for a long time. You can't expect them to change overnight.

It requires time and consistency that only sales coaching and mentoring can provide on an ongoing basis. Stay the course and invest in weekly group sessions with your team, and weekly one-on-one sessions with your team. Do this for more than months at a time: plan to do it over a period of years.

Some of our very best clients who are now leading the marketplace—taking millions of dollars of business away from competitors and earning the number-one position on sales teams—have been making this transition, too. They consistently make this investment over a two to three year period. That's why they are now really starting to see success.

Make sure you have all systems ready, built for speed.

The second challenge that we are seeing in the marketplace stems from the all-too-common need to get to market quickly with a new product or service and start generating revenue. You need to have all system ready to sell and capable of doing so from the moment you give the green light to go.

Your **sales team** has to be as ready and as refined as the product or service you're launching. You can't afford to have big lulls in revenue. Every month has to be a good month and the team has to be well trained to stay on target. That starts with having you as a leader to monitor and measure those results on a regular basis.

Your **client retention and support system** has to be ready, too. This is a vital part of reducing your sales cycle. You need to ready to flood the marketplace with social proof: case studies, testimonials, product-use scenarios—anything that showcases your value and that you have happy customers succeeding with your product or service. Do this because let's face it: your prospects believe your customers more than they believe you.

Your **internal systems** also have to be ready. Many times, my clients get bogged down in the selling process and capturing marketplace because their company structure can't handle a sudden, steady burst in sales. Don't be afraid to look at your internal processes and make sure that you can transact that business and serve your customers quickly and successfully.

Recognize that audience attention is a scarcity.

The third challenge that our clients are facing in the marketplace today is the fact that there is just too much noise out there. Buyers are easily distracted by competing messages, other projects, and a long list of bright, shiny objects.

It's not an easy thing to do, but you must invest in building high-level relationships across an organization. That's a first-order-of-business priority. Otherwise you'll be faced with trying to sell to single point of contact in a noisy, crowded marketplace.

The best way to keep an organization focused on your project or your priorities is to ensure that you sell top-down and bottom-up at the same time across multiple departments. If, for example, you are only selling to one department, it is easy for that department to get distracted by the other priorities. If you have three or four different departments all focused on your project it is hard for that company to get distracted.

You're building allies horizontally as well as vertically inside the organization and that is the best way to make sure that your priorities maintain or become the top priority in terms of what that company is doing to partner with other vendors.

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