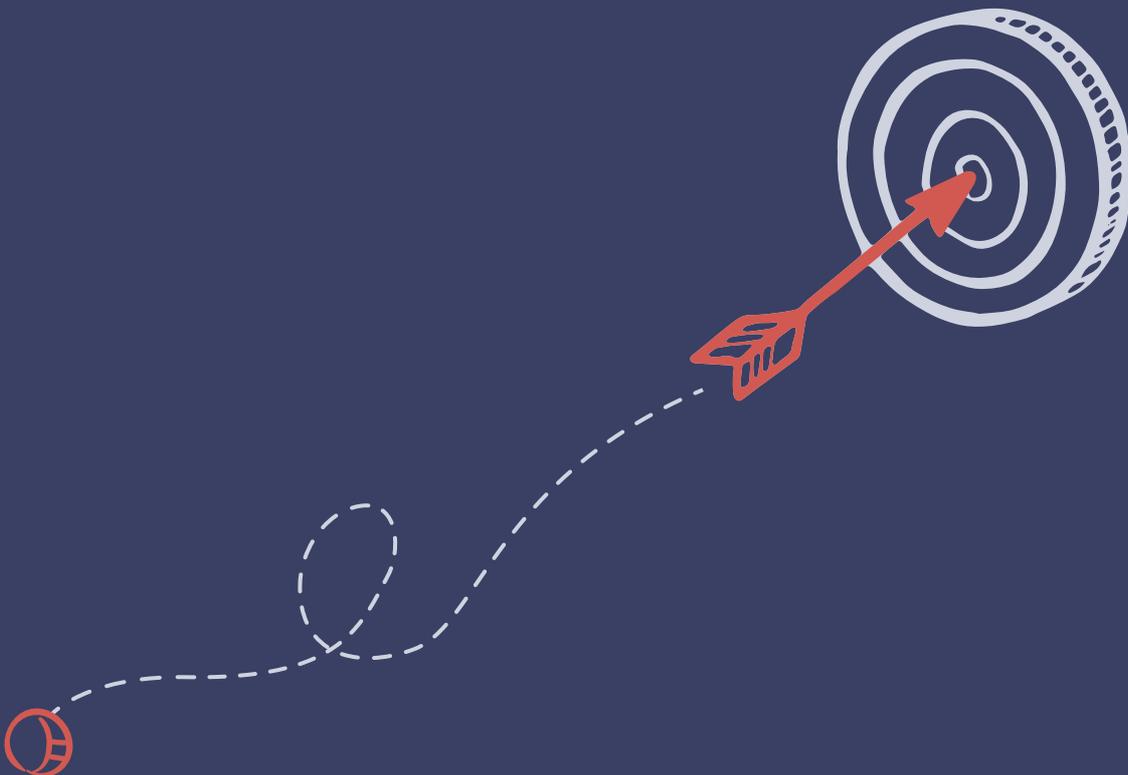




The complete guide to B2B sales strategies

A complete deep-dive into what sales strategies are, the different types and how to implement your own sales strategy.



Introduction

46% of B2B sales reps list lead quantity and quality as their top challenge, and one way to tackle that is to implement a killer sales strategy. But how you approach that will depend on your business and what works best for you.

This guide explores the ins and outs of sales strategies and how you can create and tailor one to suit your business.

What is a sales strategy?

A sales strategy is a plan of action that outlines the approach and tactics a business will use to achieve its sales goals and sell to prospective clients. It details the steps that a company will take to identify, engage, and convert leads. A successful sales strategy will help a business sell more.

Sales strategies work best when marketing and sales teams collaborate and align their processes and goals.

B2B vs B2C sales strategies

The main difference between B2B and B2C sales strategies arise from the different types of products and the different target markets. These factors change the sales approach used to reach and convert customers.

B2B sales are often more complex, which creates some differences in the sale, such as:

- B2B will be selling at a lower volume
- They also tend to be higher cost
- B2B sales tend to involve multiple buyers or decision makers
- B2B will have a longer sales cycle
- Which makes relationship building more important for B2B
- B2B will have long-term goals, whereas B2C will primarily focus on short-term goals

B2B	VS	B2C
Lower volume, higher price		Higher volume, lower price
Building relationships with customers		Transactional relationships
Longer sales cycle		Shorter sales cycle
Long term goals		Short term goals

Inbound vs. outbound sales strategies

Inbound sales aim to position your brand in front of relevant consumers by producing content specifically for them. The audience discovers you while they are researching a solution in your space.

Outbound sales aims to find relevant people as a first step and then initiate a conversation by contacting them directly.

← Methods of inbound marketing

- SEO
- Blog content
- Social media marketing
- Content marketing
- Events and webinars

These inbound marketing strategies focus on getting the leads to come to you. That sounds great, right? Sit back, relax and let the clients come to you. You could probably do that from the beach.

Well actually, there's more to it than that. Researching your customers, distributing content through the right channels, video production, keyword research... the list is endless.

→ Methods of outbound marketing

- Email marketing and prospecting
- Cold calling
- Direct mail
- Social media and content marketing
- Networking

An **outbound** strategy focuses on reaching out to prospects. An outbound sales strategy aims to identify and engage with people who would be a good fit for your business but who may not be aware of your product or service.

Directly reaching out to decision makers can be a game changer. Directly contacting your ideal customers with details of how you can help them is a pretty good way to start a conversation.

So, inbound or outbound sales: what's best? Like eggs and bacon, or gin and tonic – both. Mix for best results.

A combination of **inbound and outbound** is essential for making a thorough and effective sales strategy. And while we've spoken about the differences between them, inbound and outbound marketing actually go hand-in-hand.

Take events, for example. Having a presence at an event might build brand awareness and have people start talking to you, but without a strategy that has you actively talking to potential customers, it's an expensive billboard. A combination of the two can have lasting effects and be more successful.

What should a sales strategy cover?

Many strategy guides will just pick one method of selling – take social selling, for example – and that's it.

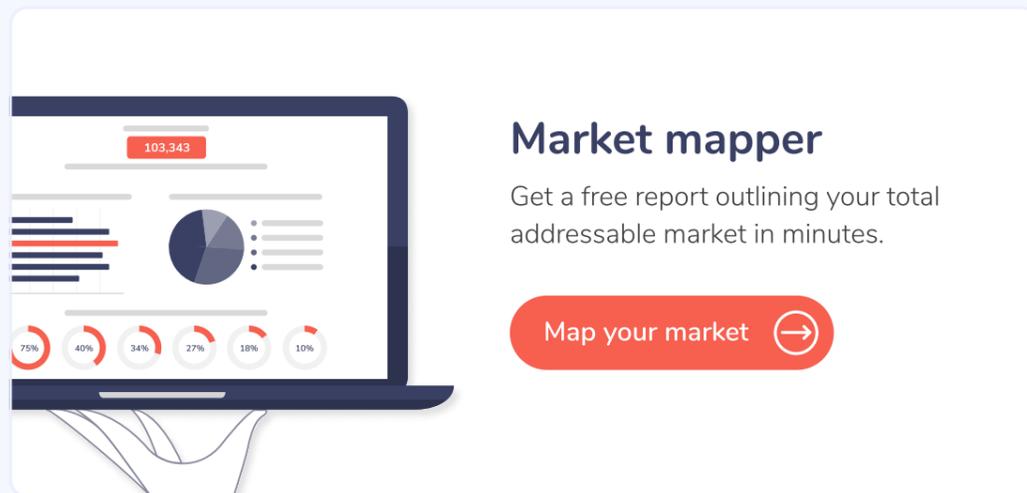
But we believe that you need to look at the whole picture to build a successful business, from the very start of the journey to the end, including after you've made the sale. So we've outlined our guide to building a complete, end-to-end B2B sales strategy below.

How to create a sales strategy (in eleven steps)

So why have you been reading this guide? Probably because you want to build your own sales strategy and you're not sure where to start. This is our foolproof how-to for a successful sales strategy.

1. Know the market

Any good business owner needs to know and understand the market they're selling in. Knowing your market is crucial because it helps you understand your potential customers' needs, pain points, and preferences. With this information, you can tailor your sales strategy to effectively address their specific challenges and provide valuable solutions.



Market mapper

Get a free report outlining your total addressable market in minutes.

Map your market →

The graphic shows a laptop displaying a dashboard with a total addressable market of 103,343, a pie chart, and several progress indicators: 75%, 40%, 34%, 27%, 18%, and 10%.

2. Creating your ICP and buyer personas

Once you know your market, it should help you to understand who you should be selling to. Using this information, you can create an ICP or Ideal Customer Profile. This is a fictional business that embodies the perfect company you want to sell to.

An ICP tells you who should sell to and who you shouldn't sell to. By working out your ideal customer, you can find the customers who don't fit your model and disregard them.

You may also want to create **buyer personas**, these lie under the umbrella of the ICP. These are semi-fictional representations of the buyers within your target companies.

Emails based on buyer personas have been shown to gain **18 times more revenue** than regular emailing. Buyer personas are created by looking at the most important decision-makers within your target businesses and understanding their behaviours, demographics, and characteristics.

To break it down, an ICP is the companies you want to sell to e.g. industry, size, technology, etc, and the buyer personas are the details behind that e.g. Sally the Marketing Director.

Using buyer personas can also help with content marketing. You can tailor specific content on your website to attract your different buyer personas.

3. Align your sales and marketing teams

Aligning your sales and marketing team is essential for a smooth sales pipeline. **60%** of sales and marketing teams said that misalignment negatively affected their financial performance.

More and more, we're seeing prospects choosing to deal with the sales team later into their sales journey. On average, **50-90%** of the sales journey is complete before a buyer interacts with a sales rep meaning marketing is more important than ever – and that aligning teams is key for building a sales strategy that works.

A monthly meeting where you discuss tactics and goals can be a great way to keep everyone in the loop. We understand this might be difficult for some larger companies, but consider meeting with the key players and recording it for the rest of the teams. Having shared sales goals means “everyone's in it together” – you're one team working towards one goal.

How to nail sales and marketing alignment in 2023

Read more →

4. Perfect your initial sales pitch

Writing a perfect sales pitch is the key to getting your prospect's attention. But where do you begin? A sales pitch can be through email, phone, or even social media, and yes, each one has its own specific way of being written. There are, however, some things to always include...

- Lead with your prospects pain point
- And offer them a solution
- Explain how your company can add value to their business
- Include social proof such as testimonials
- Include a call to action

Actually getting your customers and your sales team talking is, of course, vital to your sales strategy. Luckily, we've got your back with an [in-depth guide to sales prospecting](#).

5. Pick a sales method

Beyond inbound and outbound, companies will adopt a different approach depending on what works best for their business. There are **four** types of sales method that many companies adopt as a framework.

Account-based selling

An [account-based sales strategy](#) focuses on targeting and engaging specific "accounts" (target businesses) rather than casting a wide net to attract as many leads as possible.

An account-based approach is a collaborative sales strategy with sales and marketing teams working together. This type of sales strategy aims to **build relationships with key stakeholders** in target accounts, understand their pain points, and ultimately close high-value deals.

Social selling

Social selling uses social media to find and engage prospects. Connecting with prospects on social media builds brand awareness – you want to be the first brand they think of when they're ready to buy.

The Social Selling Index (SSI) measures your brand's efforts of social selling. Brands that excel in social selling generate **45%** more sales opportunities than those with a low social selling index. LinkedIn introduced SSI in 2014, and it's made up of four simple elements.

- Establish your professional brand
- Find the right people
- Engage with insights
- Build relationships

These key elements are important in any sales strategy, so if you don't know where to start, concentrate on these four things.

Strategic selling

Strategic selling, a sales methodology created by Robert Miller and Stephen Heiman, emphasises the **development of relationships with multiple decision-makers** and stakeholders instead of relying on one prospect. The idea is to make as many connections as possible at one company rather than just solely focusing on one person.

According to [Spotio](#), there's an average of seven decision-makers are involved in the B2B buying process. And having touchpoints with all of these stakeholders means you're much more likely to make a sale.

Solution selling

Solution selling means your approach focuses on selling a solution to a problem rather than selling a product or service. This type of sales strategy involves determining a client's pain points and using that information to sell your product as the solution.

Solution selling means you need to understand your customers and what your competitors offer. So while it can be an effective sales strategy, it involves a lot of research.

6. Define a sales process

What is the sales process? It's a structured set of repeatable actions that your whole sales team should follow. It details each step of the buyer's journey and ensures every salesperson knows what's needed from them at that step.

A [sales process](#) isn't the same as a sales strategy. An efficient approach to achieving sales goals is established by an effective sales strategy, which considers competition, opportunities, and obstacles and provides actionable tasks for all members of the sales function.

Meanwhile, the sales process, a component of the sales strategy, comprises a series of activities that salespeople must adhere to to achieve the specified objective.

7. Lead scoring

By now, you know your customers, have worked out how to get them interested, and know how you will sell to them. But how do you know who to focus on once leads are in the system?

[Lead scoring](#) is the process of ranking and prioritising prospects based on their level of engagement and likelihood to convert. According to [Sales Insights Lab](#), at least 50% of your prospects aren't actually a good fit for your product or service. Lead scoring ensures you aren't wasting time on leads that will never convert.



“B2B marketers who emphasise lead volume over lead quality reduce sales efficiency, increase campaign costs, and fuel the gap between sales and marketing. To generate qualified demand, marketers need technology and processes that: capture lead quality information; validate, score, and classify leads; nurture leads that don't yet warrant sales attention; define metrics that directly identify marketing's contribution to the sales pipeline and closed deals.”

Laura Ramos

Forrester Research, Improving B2B Lead Management

The process involves assigning numerical values or scores to various actions and attributes of a lead and can be based on implicit or explicit data (a combination of both works best).

Explicit data is personal information about the prospect, such as:

- Job Title / Role
- Company size
- Industry
- Location

Implicit data is based on buyer intent activities. These are usually online, such as downloading a whitepaper or visiting your a blog on your website. By tracking a lead's behavior and engagement with a company's marketing efforts, lead scoring helps identify which leads are the most qualified and ready to be passed to the sales team.

8. Lead nurturing

Once you know which leads to focus on, you can implement [lead nurturing](#). Lead nurturing focuses on building relationships with potential customers or leads to move them through the sales funnel and convert them into paying customers. According to a DemandGen report, nurtured leads produce, on average, a [20%](#) increase in sales opportunities versus non-nurtured leads.

Some primary examples of lead nurturing include:

Webinars

Host webinars that provide valuable information to leads on topics that are relevant to their interests and needs. This can provide an opportunity to engage with leads in real-time.

Content marketing

Create a variety of content that speaks to different stages of the buyer's journey, such as blog posts, ebooks, videos, and case studies. The content should be focused on providing value and solving problems for potential customers.

Social media

Use social media channels to share helpful content and engage with leads. This can help keep your company top-of-mind and create opportunities for conversation and relationship-building.

Personalised outreach

Reach out to leads with personalised messaging that speaks to their specific needs and interests. Personalised emails sound time-consuming, but with a service like [Sopro](#), you can reach out to clients in a way that feels 121 and makes prospects feel like you've spent extra time and care reaching out to them.

9. Customer retention

A great sales strategy doesn't just focus on getting new clients, it also includes how to keep clients. [Harvard Business School](#) came out with a study which showed upping your customer retention by just 5% could lead to 25-95% more revenue which shows that customer retention is absolutely vital for a good sales strategy.

One of the main ways to keep clients happy is with great customer service. Great customer service is important because it helps build customer loyalty, creates a positive reputation for the business, and, as we've said, can lead to increased revenue through repeat business.

10. Referrals

Great customer service isn't just about retaining customers and clients. It's also about getting those customers to recommend you. Referrals and word of mouth are by far the most trusted method of marketing. 92% of buyers trust referrals from people they know.

Build a relationship with your prospects and continue to do that after the sale. Send follow up emails: how are they enjoying the product or service? Is there anything more you can do for them? An open-line of communication is important to make that client feel valued, and in turn, they'll be more likely to recommend you.

Beyond this you can [launch a referral program](#). This will offer exclusive benefits or discounts to clients who refer you to someone else.

What's in it for me?

How to incentivise B2B customers

Read more 

11. Evaluate and optimise

Once you've created an effective sales process, it's time to document it. Creating a sales funnel that can be seen by everyone in your organisation shows transparency and ensures alignment between teams. It keeps things crystal clear. But that's not the be all and end all.

Nearly [60%](#) of salespeople do not change their process once they find one that works for them, and while it's great you've found a sales process that works, there's always room for improvement.

You need to make sure you're [regularly auditing your sales pipeline](#) to make sure you're getting the most out of it. This is another reason marketing and sales communication is key as it'll be easier to see areas for improvement.

How you can put your strategy into practice with Sopro

In conclusion, successful B2B sales strategies involve a deep understanding of the market, a focus on building strong relationships with customers, and a commitment to providing exceptional customer service. By implementing these strategies, you can increase your revenue, build brand loyalty, and ultimately achieve long-term success in the competitive world of B2B sales.

While creating and implementing your sales strategy is up to you, there are ways you can make it easier. Sopro is a B2B sales engagement platform that can take away the pressure of prospecting and sales engagement.

At Sopro, we integrate a state-of-the-art platform with top-tier data and unmatched expertise in prospecting. We locate your ideal prospects, interact with them through custom-tailored emails, and link them directly to you when they're ready for a sales conversation. The Sopro platform assists you in nurturing each lead until you successfully secure the deal.

[Sell more with Sopro.](#)



Sell more.