Why You Shouldn't Build a Sales Team

And Why It Makes Sense to Get Expert Help Instead

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Introduction

There's a common misconception in business, and it's that having a sales team will equate to immediate growth and increased revenue. The truth is that not all sales teams are created equal, and that how teams are set up has a huge impact on whether they'll succeed.

The bottom line is that sales teams need the right systems in place to thrive.

As a business founder or owner, you likely know exactly how to sell to your customers and prospects. You've probably done it for years, but may find that your actual issue now is time. There's just not enough hours in the day to juggle a growing to-do list and be the sales face for your brand.

If you're struggling to get to everything done and handle selling, it may be time to hire a sales team.

Being able to better leverage your time is one of the key reasons founders and owners decide to build a sales team. As expert MetaGrowth Ventures co-founder, Joe Arioto, says, it happens when "you're in a position where you need someone else representing your company so you can extract to a higher orbital of leadership and focus on leading your team."

Building your sales team independently is one option. It's the way it's always been done, so you might not know you have others when it comes to tackling this stage of growth. The good news is that there's a better way to build sales teams, and it involves outsourcing to proven professionals.

Before you can grow, though, you need to position your business so you can build a sales team that converts. A good system matters, but most founders of small- and medium-sized businesses apply a fire-aim approach to their sales processes. This may work for them, but it makes it difficult for a new salesperson to come in and start making more sales right off the bat.

It can be challenging to find a setup that works for your business. There's no surefire way to go about sales, and no two plans are exactly the same. You need to find the perfect blend of scripts, training, and metrics tracking that works for your company, team, and goals.

This eBook will teach you how to set up a system that your sales personnel can easily plug into.

Here, you'll learn the importance of creating the right system for your organization, what a tech stack is (and why it matters), how to develop a personalized approach to supercharge your sales team, and why getting outside help from sales team-building experts might be the best option.

If you're a small- or medium-sized business owner looking to scale your company, this eBook is for you.

What to know about the fire-aim approach

The idea of building your own sales team can be tempting. You know your company's inner workings, everything about your target customers, and what makes your prospects tick, after all. So it makes sense to build your sales team yourself, right?

But you shouldn't, because it takes a lot of expertise and you likely already have enough on your plate.
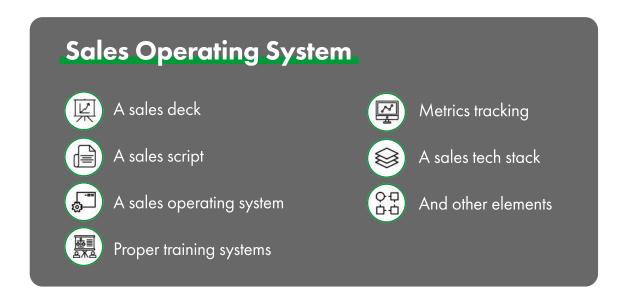
As the founder or a key stakeholder in your business, you're probably dealing with an ever-growing list of day-to-day operational tasks. There are legal issues, taxes, onboarding programs, trainings, HR, and other agenda items to think about. This makes it impossible to build a quality sales team on your own.

You just don't have the time.

Moreover, business owners tend to make mistakes when they put a sales team together. One major one is bringing in personnel without a pre-established system. To quote Josh Hirsch, they find themselves with "no foundation, no process, [and] no training in place, so the expectations are off."

This is the fire-aim approach. Your company is throwing its sales efforts into the world blindly before taking the time set up a system, prepare the materials it needs, and get its team trained and ready. That almost always results in lackluster or nonexistent results. Market without a plan to reach your target audience and your messaging gets lost in the ether. Likewise, sales efforts without a system means you can't give your team the guidance they need to be successful and repeat that success again and again.

Lacking a system could make your team take much longer than necessary to maximize sales. There are several items your company must have locked in before your team can thrive, including:

Sales Operating System

- A sales deck
- A sales script
- A sales operating system
- Proper training systems
- Metrics tracking
- A sales tech stack
- And other elements

Your incoming sales personnel simply won't be successful without a solid system in place. That's because they'll be guessing about how you'd like the sales process handled. Left to their own devices, no two reps will offer customers the same experience or shoot for the same metrics.

That is a potential company-wide disaster waiting to happen.

A good system means your team will:

- Have a deep understanding of your company's products and services

- Know the exact words and phrases you'd like them to use when selling for your company

- Have access to trainings that will help them refresh their knowledge and grow in their roles

- Get answers to questions through access to a library of company information and processes

- Access clearly stated company goals that will help them set and achieve individual ones

- Be able to track important metrics and KPIs

- Get regular updates on evolving processes and procedures

- Stay on a path toward advancement opportunities, bonuses, perks, or other rewards

There's more to it than that, though. Without a system, you may not even know who you want as part of your sales team – and hiring the right personnel is nearly as important as getting that system locked in. The best processes in the world will not function with the wrong hiring fits. Your company should be looking for personnel who will not only live up to your mission, vision, and ideals, but who are also willing to adhere to the system you've got in place.

Some of the key questions to consider when setting up your sales system include:

- What skill sets are essential to selling to your audience?
- What kind of experience should customers and prospects have?
- What tools will your sales team use in their sales processes?
- What does success look like for them?

All these questions will put you on a path toward a stronger in-house system, one that's created with the right current personnel and future hires in mind – and lets you get back to working on big-picture items.

Getting things off your plate

Let's face it, you wore all the hats in the early stagse of your business. You were the cook, dishwasher, host, server, the whole nine, and you did a great job wearing all those hats – while you had to. Once you reached a certain level in your business, though, it's time to bring in the experts to take over those roles.

If you're in a position to need a sales team, you may have also brought on or partnered with:

- Other managers for certain teams or departments
- Marketing personnel, content producers, and social media experts
- Packaging, shipping, and logistics experts
- Bookkeepers and other financial gurus
- Human resources personnel
- And other specialists in important areas

You likely handled all those roles yourself for a long time, managing each team and its meetings, delving deep into marketing, and staying on top of shipping and logistics while also managing the books and HR needs. The more your business grows, the less time you have in a day – and turning to the experts makes great business sense. Their expertise in their fields will keep your company growing and thriving.

The more your business grows, the less time it feels like you have in a day - and turning to the experts makes great business sense.

As with any other aspect of your business, the only way to truly scale is to outsource that task to an expert. That's not failure, by any stretch of the imagination. It's freedom.

Systems 101: Setting up a sales system

It will take a long time to produce significant returns if your sales team is operating without an in-house system. That's fine if you aren't in a rush to see growth or increased profitability, but most founders and business owners would like to see fast, measureable results.

The good news is that having a plan fast-tracks your sales team's productivity. Research shows businesses with clear sales processes attain about 73 percent of their sales goals. Moreover, sales personnel who are trained within an organizational sales system say it influences their engagement with customers.

So what is a sales system, and how does it look within an organization?

The short answer is that it is like any other system: It's a plan that puts everything your team needs into one place so they can achieve success. A great one typically involves:

Defining and memorializing your company's mission, vision, strategies, culture, product and services information, and other (often intangible) items

Memorializing training through digital libraries for easy access

Putting together sales decks and scripts your team can easily adapt for new customers

Setting up onboarding and training processes to keep all team members on the same page

Setting important goals and metrics to assess your team's success

Having processes in place for retraining as needed, whether to correct inefficient behaviors or to update the team as new system elements roll out

Creating hiring criteria and steps to ensure new members will fit your company's culture

Each of these steps requires significant time and strategy, but the result is a set of processes that any new sales team member can successfully hop into. Here's what to know about each:

DEFINING YOUR COMPANY'S INTANGIBLES

You know your business inside and out, but how easily could you describe it to an outsider or new hire? Your company likely has a mission and/or vision statement, but those words are idealistic without a plan in place to ensure your team is living up to them. Sit down and truly define what you would like an outsider to know about your company. What drives your team? What vision do you have for the culture? What do they need to know about each of your products or services and how those offerings can help a customer? They need to be able to quickly get up to speed on the who, what, when, where, why, and how of your company, and you need to have that information in a place where they can easily access it.

MEMORIALIZING YOUR TRAINING

The best way to achieve success is to have uniform practices. So, in addition to having all your company's intangibles defined, you also need to take the time to record every step you expect your team to take when working with customers or prospects. Your sales team members should be able to use the exact same language, descriptions, and cadence that you would use. Memorialize your processes from pre-call steps to initial outreach to follow-up – all the way through to how you interact with long-term customers – so your team can replicate your success.

CREATING SALES SCRIPTS AND DECKS

Some salespeople are hesitant to use scripts or pitch decks because they feel they already have the ability to win over a potential customer. Some might be able to wing it, but you risk unpredictable results. Having your sales team use the same elements you would in their pitches means you know your personnel are delivering top-notch presentations each time they have the opportunity. That same approach can be applied to follow-up strategies, onboarding practices, handling disgruntled customers, the occasional offboarding process, and every other facet of customer service-style interactions. Standardized questions early on can also vet or weed out potential customers that might not be a great fit for your company, saving your team from wasting exponential time, money, and other resources.

SETTING UP ONBOARDING AND TRAINING

How you onboard your new sales team members sets the pace for a seamless onboarding process for customers. Your team needs to feel that they have ample resources at their disposal, and that the have a clear understanding of what you need from them. They love knowing how to be successful members of your business, and how you'll define or monitor that success going forward. A robust onboarding and training system, as well as a library of digital resources they can revisit as necessary, is key in ensuring all your team members are on the same page. Regular in-house role playing sessions will help you gauge which members have the scripts and sales decks down to a science, and which could use more practice.

SETTING TANGIBLE GOALS AND METRICS

A team can be at the top of its game, but even the most well-oiled machines can fall apart without metrics to track success. Your company's goals should be easy for your sales team members to find so they can keep the end game in mind at all times. They can then use these goals to set their own personal ones to keep themselves on track.

CREATING PROCESSES FOR RETRAINING

A sales team member who seems to miss the mark should be reassessed for personalilty fit. If they have the right coachability and attitude, and are geniuinely working toward your company's best interest, then you'll want the option to retrain them on steps they're missing. Your digital library will be a great place to memorialize this training, which your team can then come back whenever they need a refresher.

DETERMINING KEY HIRING CRITERIA

Putting a system in place that encapsulates everything you would do when selling for your company enables you to hire the right personnel to take on those responsibilities. You'll know exactly the type of person and the right backgrounds needed to be successful in that role, and that will help you ask the right questions when considering new hires.

The process of setting up your sales system might seem daunting, but the result is a process that gives your business repeatable, measurable results. You'll quickly be able to tell which team members are underperforming according to the company standards and retrain them as needed. Similarly, you'll be able to reward great performance, or identify any system breakdowns so you can adjust accordingly. That last part is a lot easier when you have the right tech tools in place.

DIGGING INTO IMPORTANT SALES TEAM TOOLS

Having a system and hiring the right personnel are the first steps, but you'll also need to give them the right tools to make their jobs as easy as possible. This starts with the aforementioned company documents, training library, and goal setting, and it includes having the right tech stack.

Your current and incoming salespeople need an operating system and a sales tech stack they can plug into. When we say "tech stack," we mean a suite of software solutions that streamline the sales process. These solutions maximize productivity and empower your salespeople to dominate your market. There are several to choose from, and the most popular include:

- Sales enablement
- Customer relationship management
- People management
- Account planning
- Sales automation
- Proposals
- Contracts

A recent survey found that thriving sales teams have between four and 10 tools in their sales tech stack. Luckily, sales tech stacks are easy to build, and they require examining both what your team needs to best serve your customers and what your customers need from your company.

Here's are three tips to help you select the right sales stack for your team:

1. IDENTIFY YOUR CUSTOMER'S PAIN POINT

What are your potential customers' problems, and what are they looking for in a solution? How can your team best serve them? Where does your prospect's interest in your offerings diminish? Is it a communication problem or something else? How many tools do you need to solve it?

2. UNDERSTAND YOUR BUYER'S JOURNEY

Where does your prospect find you? What are the stages in your sales funnel? What steps are in place to push them down that sales funnel?

3. ALIGN SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS TO THE BUYER'S JOURNEY

There's a specific solution to every problem throughout the buyer's journey. If you face frequent cart abandonment, for example, you need tools that help reduce cart abandonment rates. One example is Mailchimp, which is a solution that allows you to create automations to email users who leave items in their carts on your website. You might use an email message to remind them that they forgot to check out or offer discounts if they return and purchase.

There are countless solutions out there to solve any problem that might arise for your business. The first step is understanding the value in these solutions and that they represent cost-effective opportunities to improve process for your team as well as your customers.

A third-party won't ever completely understand your brand or situation, or fully see things the way you – the business owner – will. But, building a high-functioning sales team goes beyond understanding your brand as a business. The most cost- and time-effective solutions require working with third parties, but there are a few steps involved in creating those partnerships.

You'll need to:

- Search for solutions that solve your problems
- Understand where those solutions will go in your overall strategy
- Vet providers through online reviews, case studies, testimonials, and free trials
- Request more information or conversations with those providers' sales teams
- Schedule product demos
- Install the solutions
- Train your team on how to use them (including updating your training resource library)
- And then work with those third parties and trust their expertise

Every third-party product and partnership should also be reassessed over time to make sure it is still the best solution for your sales team and its processes. Check in with your team periodically to see how the solution is working for them. Track any metrics tied to the solution on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual basis so you can gauge effectiveness. Encourage your sales team to be vocal with any questions or concerns about solutions' capabilities so your system can keep running as smoothly as possible.

See how it all trickles down to your sales system?

Every business goes about its sales process differently, but all successful teams have one thing in common: a specific approach that all members can repeatedly use to achieve success. The one thing they do not do is over-sell themselves or their solutions.

Selling without over-selling

One key aspect to remember is that customers and prospects can sense spam a mile away. They can feel a sleezy pitch coming on, or if something doesn't feel authentic to the brand they're trying to work with.

Today's customers value working with brands they know, like, and trust. Coach your team on how to speak with prospects in a way that will be conversational, authoritative, informative, educated, and, most importantly, personal. You want them to be viewed as trusted guides offering solutions to potential customers in need of said solutions, not as metrics-minded reps worried about making a dollar.

Your customers and potential customers want to know, like, and trust your brand, so they need to know, like, and trust your sales people.

Here's an easy way to make the best first impression with your target audience: Position your company's messaging in a way that shows you feel your customers' pain points, understand their needs, and want to help make their lives easier.

This may mean that sometimes you need to be honest and tell a prospect that your solution isn't the right fit for what they need. This isn't a lost customer, however. It proves how much you care about being the right solution, and that creates loyal followers who will be willing to refer others to you in the future.

How MetaGrowth Ventures helps strengthen your team and scale your business

It looks easy to build a sales team, but most business owners simply don't understand the process well enough to tackle it themslves. Those who do may not have the right system in place for a sales team to thrive, may not know how to create one, or that they should have a system at all.

One reason founders and business owners struggle to set up a sales system is that they're too close to their companies. They thus have a hard time taking a step back to recognize what others might need to know about their organizations to keep that success rolling.

That's where MetaGrowth Ventures comes in.

We're in business to help companies like yours achieve the sales goals and profit numbers you've always dreamed of, and we do that by ensuring you have a world-class sales team generating new business:

- We work with you to understand your company, what makes it unique, what makes your approach as a founder or business owner unique, and what you'd like to achieve.

- We ask questions that bring your brand and operations back to a transferable knowledge base that can be shared with your current and future sales personnel.

- We memorialize that knowledge and help you create training systems your sales teams can use over and over again.

- We help identify the right personnel for the job, vet them, hire and train them for you, and track their progress to make sure they're contributing toward your company's goals.

Our consulting program starts by helping you ask the questions that matter, but there's more to it. We teach you how to run your sales team for maximum impact, then help you get them there. Your top-notch sales team will do the selling while you shift your focus to big-picture planning.

Contact MetaGrowth Ventures today to let the experts guide your success.