



21 Reasons Your Strategic Account Sales Don't Scale



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To satisfy all our customers equally when not all customers are equal neglects those that do deserve more of your attention. You might have heard of Pareto principle or the 80/20 rule. 80% of your sales come from 20% of your customers. This 20% is what I call your most valued strategic customers, without them your company will not thrive.

You must know which of your customers qualify as your top 20% and have a clear strategy to secure, maintain and grow these valued customer accounts if your business is to gain significant and consistent growth in sales.

- Do you know which of your customers create disproportionate value for your company?
- Do you know which of your customers return low profitability?
- And which customers cost money, so how much and why?

Want to insert a picture from your files or add a shape, text box, or table? You got it! On the Insert tab of the ribbon, just tap the option you need.

“Not knowing these three critical customer analytics will drive your business into a black hole.”

The most effective way to scale revenue is to increase volume or value with your top 20% existing customers. Because these are your most valued it is critical to do that is possible to keep and accelerate these customers relationships. Your most valued customers deserve special personalized attention. Strategic customer accounts will not scale if you do not pay due care.



There are many reasons why strategic customer accounts don't scale:

1. Your most valued customers are not feeling valued the most! You might think your product benefits will stand for itself. However, it is the service experience that turns a customer into a defector. Sales professionals must continue work on the relationship and customer experience. To ask insightful questions, matching the buyer's language and addressing their concerns. Moreover, to stimulate debate and thoughtful innovation. Sales reps must lead the discussion to disrupt the status quo, challenge perceptions and bring new insight to your valued customers. Suppliers must demonstrate their invested interest in their customers competitiveness and growth.
2. An influencer takes a dislike to your company or sales representative. Even minor infringements can cause a communication gap. If this happens then, your cards can be numbered and without you knowing your most valued customer is shopping for your replacement. Communication gaps may be ego, personality or service or product based or any number of reasons. A minor infringement can escalate into a severe loss, so attention to detail and open communication is critical.
3. You spend more time and energy in handling 80% of your customers who are just giving you 20% of your revenue. I am not proposing you spend 80% of your energy on your most valued 20% of customers that give you 80% of revenue. However, your time and energy must be disproportionately allocated to those most valued segments that give the greatest return on investment.
4. You spend more time and energy in nurturing 20% of your customers who are giving you 80% of your revenue. I know this is crazy logic. If you identified four strategic accounts and you lost one to a competitor, where is your replacement pipeline? For this reason, you must also nurture the customer relationship that has the highest potential to grow into your top 20% most valued customer segments. The process of value segmentation will help you identify the most significant potential accounts.
5. Your key account management and account-based sales are sales issue. However, it is a company issue. Strategic accounts require a whole company approach. There is no point sales and marketing making promises that finance, operations or legal cannot or will not fulfil. Commitment from senior management is the only way to align these valued key relationships with your business processes and engage your most valued customers with the best your company can offer.



6. You apply short-term thinking to top-line revenues and do not invest in creating customer lifetime value. Creating lifetime value is the total worth of a customer to a business over the entirety of the relationship life. There are many benefits of building lifetime value partnerships into your business strategy. You create meaningful insights on how to maximise campaigns that improve customer interactions and satisfaction. Lifetime value helps you decide how much to invest in retaining your most valued customers and growing other opportunities. Lifetime value is a strong indication of your company's health over the long-term.
7. You do not act like a partner. A business partnership is also likening to an elevated professional relationship. Helping your customers attend to their customers' issues. Partnerships put their partners first. Knowing them so well that you can anticipate their needs even before your partner is aware of the need. You must focus on and engage the buyers where there is the most significant opportunity to develop the relationship into a partnership. Creating strategic alliances with industry partners will allow you to build and consolidate your strengths. Partnerships help you enter new markets and creates competitive advantage. The elevated relationship to a partnership is an investment in the trusted relationship that is hard to break and easy to sustain.
8. A lack of two-way communication. If you engage with and educate your customer and ask for regular feedback on how you can improve your customer's situation and your internal processes, you align yourself closer to your most valued customer. To educate buyers and build trust, you need to develop good, old-fashioned human interaction and connection. Social is a conversation whether online or offline, conversation gives your prospects, buyers and decision-makers the assurance of a trustworthy person and business, especially if you seek ways to improve.

9. Your service is undifferentiated. Do you provide your most valued customer with authentic value in each interaction? You need active listen and searching questions with transparency and trust so that you can speak to your customer specific need. You must be able to differentiate the buyer's options, explain the risk, sell the value and consult on the negotiables. This will separate you from your competitors. Offering value and a superior experience rather a product. Asking challenging questions and helping the customer to discover new opportunities. If your buyer is to see you as the 'go-to person' and an authentic source of insightful information, after each conversation, you must leave your buyer with added value, if not then question why a buyer would continue the conversation because this is what they are asking. How you sell or serve is now the real competitive differentiator.

10. The customer relationship has little breath. It is unlikely that one person decides to invest and buy. The decision-making unit contains gatekeepers, users, initiators, influencers, users, buyers and decision-makers. The buying process is more complex that sales reps must establish many relationships within an account or company because services are becoming personalised and bespoke.

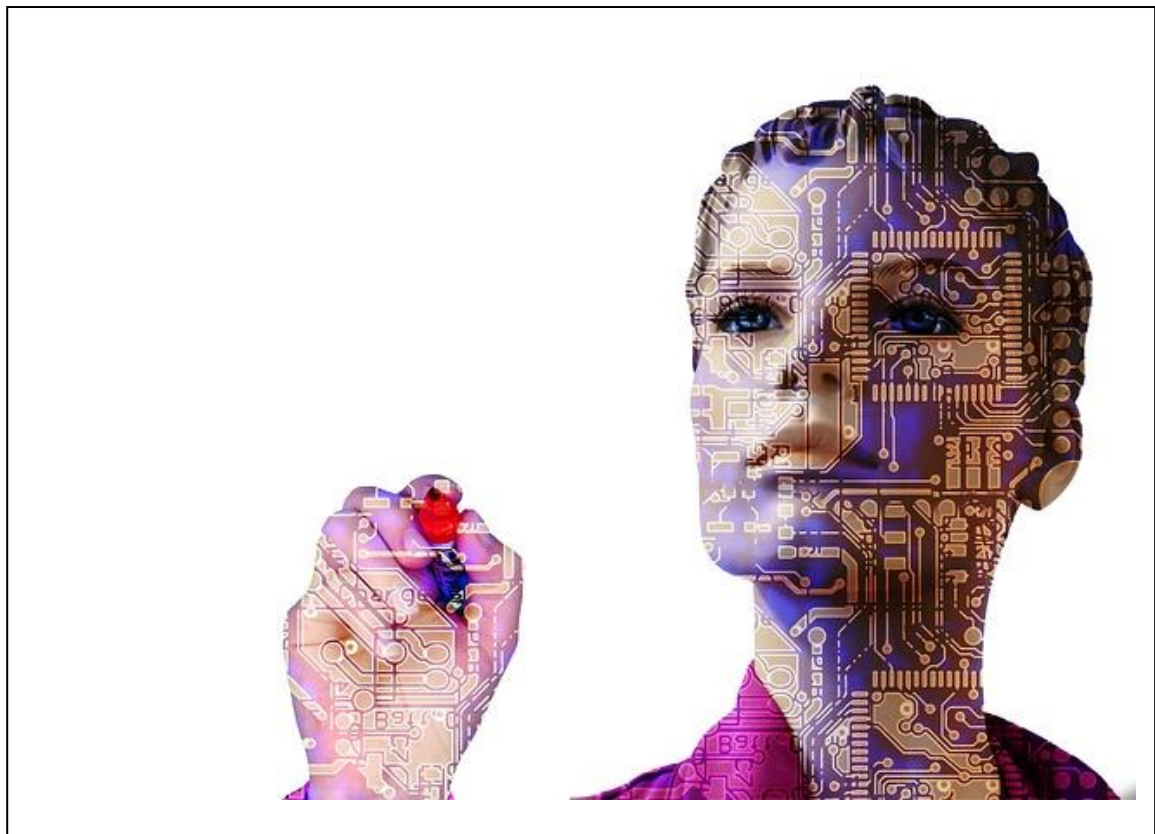
CEB's research shows that the average B2B opportunity has 5.4 decision makers involved. Today's purchasing decisions need greater discussion and due diligence. Buyers are careful to choose whom they allow on to their shortlist. Sales reps, not just the sales company, must now be searchable by the buyers. Buyers are searching for insight, and the sales rep must have a visible profile and an authoritative opinion. Buyers will look at your LinkedIn profile and your online reputation must reflect your expertise and experience to advise. Personal experience and customer stories are more credible than the corporate story.

11. You are not hanging out where your buyers are. The 2014 IDC report, found that 3/4 B2B buyers and 8/10 executive buyers use social media to make purchasing decisions. Buyers who use social media are more influential, have larger budgets, and buy frequently. Since these are the buyers you want to engage with, it makes sense to engage with them on social platforms and bypass the gatekeepers. Engaging decision-makers, sales professionals must personalise their engagement, decision-makers are people, and even in B2B relationships, people buy people.



12. No efficient referral and relationship building process. Only 4% of decision-makers have a favourable impression of sales representatives when reaching out cold. However, when sellers reach out through a mutual connection, favourable impression rates jump, to 87%. If you want to be recommended to decision-makers, you must create a favourable impression. Salespeople must develop trusting advocates and partnership relationships. Sales reps must build account-based relationships and trust. They must create customer advocates within each customer organisation. Buyers must become advocates for the sales professional to recommend them to their colleagues within and outside of their organisation. Recommendations shortcut the relationship building process and reduce sales cycle, ensuring sales reps do not miss out on new opportunities.
13. Make deposits not withdrawals. This is a great leadership quality that will help you grow your deposits. If you can make someone smile or if you can educate and show them something new, you will be remembered. Humans are driven to make connection research shows, the less we feel connected, the more we perish. Are you leaving conversations making your buyer feel connected, empowered, motivated, knowledgeable, energised and inspired?
14. Not invested in attracting decision-makers. Accessing decision-maker is not impossible if you persist with an engagement strategy. You must continually engage new and existing connections. Teach something new of value, introduce connections and create new opportunities demonstrating your unique perspective and value. Education solidifies you as the right and credible connection. Giving make you memorable, valuable, recommendable and trusted.

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15. Not on your buyer shortlist. Buyers are on average 70% through their research process before contacting you. Whether you are buying a car, a holiday or a training programme you ask Mr Google first to help refine your shortlist. Your buyers are no different. when buyers have their shortlist that they are ready to talk to the relevant sales rep or shortlisted company. For this reason, 99% of businesses that have something to sell or someone to influence, must have a social footprint and consistently show-up online with relevant and engaging insights.
 16. Your leads are not qualified. Your sales team waste time with unqualified leads. What is your qualifying question or process? Your marketing process must be aligned to qualify that your buyers and decision-maker match your companies requirements and are actively interested. Active interest means either identified in the buying process as ready to buy or poised to buy.
 17. Your sales team does not reflect your customer diversity and culture. B2B sales have the added complexity of influencing decision-making units in the purchasing process, made up of a variety of perspectives, cultures and technical abilities. The more your sales reps and the team reflects of the culture, values and language, is connected personally and able to nurture strong relationships with this diverse customer base, the more secure your pipeline and revenues.



18. Sales representative are selling. You might think, that is what should happen! The difference today is that buyers buy. Buyers do not like to be sold, and they have the balance of power to select whom they choose to buy from, no longer can buyers be sold to. So, sales reps must re-think the buying process if they want to continue to hit quota and succeed in their ambitions to serve. The buying process is now of engagement, education and elevation. To get the opportunity to engage in the buying process with the buyers; the sales rep must get on the buyer's shortlist. The job of the sales professional is to help buyers navigate the options, helping buyers feel them comfortable with the risk and to solve their specific problem while taking them through the buying process.

19. Your customer is not the right fit. The B2B buying process is complex, and this takes time to nurture all the stakeholders in the decision to buy. To be sales productive, it is critical to intelligently select for the best fit customers. You will do more damage to the potential relationship if your sell without evidence of best fit. Knowing your customer macro and micro challenges, their business objective and technologies is vital information to

identify their needs, uncovered areas of value-added and established best fit. If you know that your offer is the right fit for your customers specific need, you will confidently approach the buyers with this evidence and surety. You can confidently offer helpful advice and guidance through the buying process, solving the specific problem with solutions based on your internal supplier strengths.

20. Not a trusted advisor. Sales professional must become trusted advisors. Sales rep must do what is right for the customer first and for their company second. If you see your role as serving rather than selling, then you become the trusted go-to person. Trusted sales advisors must do the right thing for their customers. If this means passing the connection to another competing company because it is the best fit, then so-be-it. There is no benefit to anyone to shoe-horn a square peg into a round hole. This will be avoided with thorough research to establish best fit before moving into the buying process.

21. supplying company and not the other way around. Your customer comes first always. Sales reps humbles to serve their customers specific needs. This relationship is mutually beneficial to both the supplier and the customer company. There is no barrier to developing trusted relationships and creating mutually beneficial competitive partnership but there is a competitive advantage in having customer relationships built on trust. If you continue to evidence what is best for your customer, provide unquestionable service levels and experiences that excel, then this creates a barrier for competitor and creates competitive advantage. If both parties have an invested interest in the relationship, competitor will it difficult to break apart this trusted partnership.

B2B sales have become more complex and competitive. This new paradigm demands businesses to utilize a focused process to create opportunities for future returns.

If you would like to discuss this report further:

Contact Us to schedule a consultation or to discuss your project

Why Scale Your Sales?

In the face of global economic, social and technological change, it is not about being a better seller. Traditional sales training will not reverse the systematic global change. Buyers do not want to be sold, but they do want to buy. We recognized WHAT many sales teams were missing! Which is, how to adapt their sales approach to the current economic, social and technological challenges.

This led Janice to create Scale Your Sales, the account-based sales enablement process for building new and existing strategic relationships and delivered through consultancy engagement and our masterclass training program. With value lead social selling, perspective-taking sales enablement and key account management strategies, Scale Your Sales is a proven strategic sales framework, that will help you:

1. Understanding your customers (buyer and decision-maker) unique perspective of what keeps them awake, so you do not waste time giving them what they do not want.
2. Understanding how to priorities and engage your buyers and influence the decision-makers, this will focus your stretched resources on achieving the highest return on investment
3. Understand how to elevate your customer relationships with strategic partnerships, so you will predictably achieve quota.

“What would happen if your sales team were focused and motivated, productively enabled and believed they could access decision-makers?”

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Janice B Gordon

Janice helps key account and account-based sales teams develop trusted relationships and grow profitable partnerships to create predictable increasing sales. A Visiting Fellow at [Cranfield School of Management](#) for the last four years consulting and training in Key Account Management. One global sales team she worked with, increased their sales by £6million in less than one year, doubling revenue. Janice works with growth-driven CEOs, executives and sales consultants who want to actively Secure, Maintain and Grow their top 20% most valuable customers.

Janice is an authoritative Speaker and Author; she is referred to as a 'whirlwind of inspiration' motivating thinking into positive and immediate action.

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