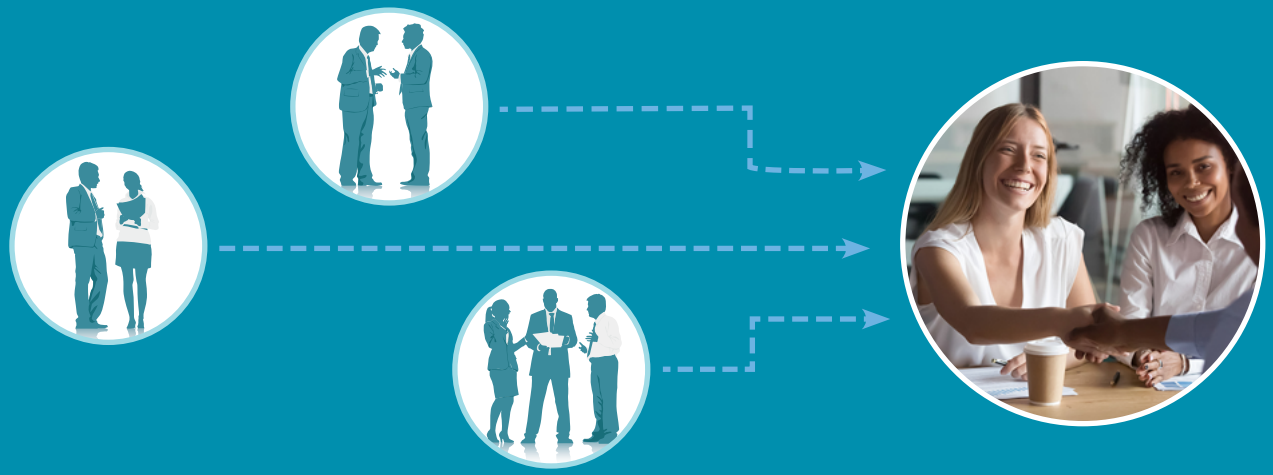
From Prospect to Customer: Earn the Right to Sell



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Three Marketing Quick Guides for Revenue Building

1. **From Stranger to Prospect – Break the Ice**
   Before you can engage in demand-building conversations with prospective buyers, you must first persuade them to identify themselves and give their consent to talk about your solutions. Find that Smart Partner Marketing quick Guide *here*.

2. **From Prospect to Customer – Earn the Right to Sell**
   Once you've got their interest now its time to start learning more about your prospects by mapping out the data you need and how you're going to get it. *This Smart Partner Marketing Quick Guide gives you that recipe.*

3. **From Customer to Champion – Mentor Customers for Life**
   The customer journey is a loop, not a line. To gain the most from customer relationships and assure their support in gaining the next customers, marketers must focus on life-time value – the job doesn't stop with a lead or a sale. Find that Smart Partner Marketing Quick Guide *here*.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU??

- **Improved customer experience:** Help your teams deliver outstanding customer experiences from marketing to support.
- **Better leads and higher conversion rate:** Quickly find high potential leads and accelerate their buying journeys.
- **Improved ability to measure marketing:** Get greater insight into marketing performance and contribution to the business.

Earn the Right to Sell *[at-a-glance]*

At this stage your customer relationships will go from acquaintances to friendships - or not. You've attracted enough interest to convince an unknown prospect to provide you with some form of identity (e.g., a social handle, an email address, possibly a name and title). Now facilitate the buying motion.

Buyers will trade insight for expertise.

Your job: Plan content to support value exchanges

Buyers will start and stop and start.

Your job: Enable self-paced paths that reveal intent

Buyers have a tipping point.

Your job: Identify the key purchase indicator(s)

Buyers are taking a risk.

Your job: Build trust in your products and people

Great Ways to Earn the Right to Sell

Assess — *What do you know about each other?*

Once you identify a prospect, assess everything you know about them and their interactions with you so you can start the relationship off on the same page.

Plan — *What else do you need to know about each other?*

Map the missing pieces on both sides of the relationship. You need to know about buyers to understand what level of effort to invest in closing them. They need to know about you to make a purchase decision.

Engage — *Trade content for insight*

Once you know where each buyer is starting in their journey with you, it's time to plan how to baby-step them through a learning process with your content.

Enable — *Does your customer data keep up with your customer?*

Design your infrastructure to deliver data to where ever the customer goes across channels and departments.

Metrics — *Measure and manage success*

Choose the right metrics for measuring the journey from prospect to customer based on your business model and the behavior of your buyers

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Assess: What Do You Know About Each Other?

Once you identify a prospect, assess everything you know about them and their interactions with you so you can start the relationship off on the same page.

Map Your Customer Data Needs

Modern marketing and CRM systems capture massive amounts of hyper-detailed data about digital buyer behavior. You can track every web click, social post, and @mention. Use this detail to fine-tune your marketing efforts in specific channels. But don't let the systems dictate how you model your customer data. Plan what data you need to answer the basic questions:

Are they a buyer or a bot?

Filter bot activity from your digital properties. Bot traffic can be a significant portion of web traffic, which results in a lot of wasted marketing and sales resources. Use Captcha, IP databases, and drip campaigns to reduce bot traffic. Use analytics to detect anomalies on visit times, page views, etc., to further clean lead lists.

What are the best next steps?

Once you know their starting point you can guide them to the next part of the learning journey. Doing so in a timely way is critical. Buyer attention changes rapidly once they disengage, so you'll need to be as responsive and relevant as possible.

Are they a qualified buyer?

Compare the details with your ideal buyer profile. Are you looking for a large enterprise or local business? Are they in the right vertical? Are they the right role and level in the buying team? Are others from their company engaging at the same time on the same topics?

Where are they in their journey?

You have a social handle and/or an email address. Can you link them to past interactions? Can you associate them with others from their company or social networks? Are they engaging with an intensity that suggests intent based on others like them? How familiar are they with your offerings?

Voice of the Partner

"We're using artificial intelligence and machine learning to understand a user's journey and set them off on a different journey based on behaviors.

We're continually educating our customers, learning from where they've disengaged and using that data to send them off on different journeys."

– Red Pixie

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Plan: What Else Do You Need to Know About Each Other?

Map the missing pieces on both sides of the relationship. You need to know about buyers to understand what level of effort to invest in closing them. They need to know about you to make a purchase decision.

Be as explicit about what buyers need to know before they can make their best decision. Getting to "no" is just as important as getting to "yes". You want to focus your resources on the most promising leads and limit your investment in low potential relationships.

Map Your Customer Data Acquisition Moments

Turning buyers into customers requires increasingly sensitive data. Plan how you are going to get this data on each and every buyer. Much of the data is obvious: company, location, title, role, etc. Some is harder to get like budget, authority, need, and timing (the ubiquitous BANT factors.) You might also need data unique to your offerings such as: current technology infrastructure, regulatory changes, personnel changes, corporate restructuring, and other events.

Map Your Customer Learning Moments

On the flip side, customers need increasingly sensitive information about your offerings. Plan how they are going to get this from you. Much of the data is easy for them to get: what you sell, who your customers are, how you are rated and reviewed. Some of it is harder for them to get, like: product pricing, roadmaps, customer references, configuration and integration requirements. Quid pro quo! Exchange this kind of sensitive information for the data you need.

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Plan: What Else Do You Need to Know About Each Other?

Buying Stage	Customer Learning Moments	Partner Data Acquisition Moments
Explore	Fit a solution to a business challenge. Could include lowering cost, raising capacity or productivity, creating or responding to competitive threats or regulatory changes.	Get an identity: social handle, email, phone number, etc. Establish key interests and needs. Filter out the bots with captcha, IP databases, drip campaigns. Use anomaly detection analytics to further clean lead lists.
Evaluate	Validate and compare vendor claims through demos, references, and product trials.	Gather data for your ideal buyer profile. Use your own data and other services to validate the account and understand the buying team, timing, and budget.
Purchase	Commit to deploying the solution and negotiate terms and conditions.	Build trust and accelerate the path to purchase with demos, proofs-of-concept, and trials. Provide pricing, RFP and ROI tools, case studies, customer references.
Expand	Master the solution, consider adding functionality and users.	Drive use and business value. Training is key to adoption and success, as well as provides key insights into the resource and skills levels of each customer. Coordinate marketing, sales, finance, services, and support.
Renew	Review satisfaction with the solution and provider; assess performance and potential; decide whether to continue the relationship	Expand the business. Conduct quarterly business reviews to monitor success and communicate new use cases for upsell and cross-sell.
Advocacy	Develop a strategic partnership with the supplier, become a reference account, and actively promote their success.	Make your customer the hero. Recruit and coach references, arrange appearances. Provide PR opportunities, speaking engagements and press interviews.

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Engage: Trade Content for Insight

Once you know where each buyer is starting in their journey with you, it's time to plan how to baby-step them through a learning process with your content..

Design Content So That It Retrieves Data

Here is where the rubber hits the road. Much of your content will have multiple uses. Customers will choose what and when to consume it. By laying out specific learning milestones, you will identify when to ask for the next level of information you want. Your map can be as simple as a set of customer gets and gives (other than click tracking).

Customer Gets (Examples)	Customer Gives (Examples)
Website, social feeds, video channels, buyer's guides, blogs, infographics, podcasts, summary case studies, checklists, etc.	Nothing. (Click tracking)
Newsletters	Email address
Mobile app	Phone number, device ID
Webinars, events, free product trials	Individual data such as: name, title, company, role, email
White papers, detailed case studies, tech/industry reports	Company data such as: size, location, industry
Product demos, ROI tools, proofs-of-concept	Summary project information
Configuration, pricing, quotes, customer references	Detailed project and BANT information
Provisioning, training, implementation, support, etc.	Payment
Quarterly business reviews	Details on: product adoption, project success, challenges, new use cases
Publicity, speaking engagements, VIP invites, etc.	Advocacy

Voice of the Partner

"The editorial calendar is the metronome for the entire team. It lets people know what their peers are doing, and also looks for intersection points where we can get the most bang for the buck about what we're investing in from a content perspective, and how we can use that to drive people down a content learning journey."

– Chef.IO

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Enable: Does Your Customer Data Keep Up with Your Customer?

Design your infrastructure to deliver data to wherever the customer goes across channels and departments. The buyer's journey has become an integral part of modern marketing. They move freely and unpredictably. That means the data you use to interact with them must be equally agile. However, the buyer's data journey inside your organization is often badly designed or worse, non-existent. Bad things happen to customer experience when the two journeys get out of sync.

To prevent this, you need to pay as much attention to the journey your customer's data goes on as you do to the journey the customer takes. The customer experience you provide is only as good as the accuracy and agility of the data supporting it. Basic rules to keep in mind when designing your customer data journey:

1. Common customer data model:

Identify core attributes and standardize them across systems. Identify departmental data needs and coordinate them across systems, so shared fields remain standard and unique fields remain unique.

2. Both journeys are end to end:

Your customer data must move as freely across points of interaction as your customers do, in accordance with regulatory requirements and your brand policies with respect to privacy.

3. Data should flow:

Design your systems so data from each interaction can be used to enhance the next interaction with that customer, where and whenever it takes place.

Mapping out the data journey will enable you to understand which fields are important to share across functions and which cannot or should not be; where key breakdowns are in the availability of customer data; and help you innovate and personalize the value you offer each contact and account.

An ideal infrastructure will have a publish-and-subscribe capability that enables each separate application to alert others when specific events occur such as a customer logging a complaint in your call center right before a happy customer email is scheduled to go out to them.

Voice of the Partner

"A lot of the work for the last year of the organization has been focused on making sure customer data models are tightly aligned. We're doubling down on investing in seamless integration so that we can both punch above our weight and have a foundation to grow."

– Chef.IO

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Metrics: Measure and Manage Success

Choose the right metrics for measuring the journey from prospect to customer based on your business model and the behavior of your buyers.

Metrics Come in Two Flavors

To get the full picture of marketing's performance at converting prospects to customers, you'll need to look at data in several ways.

Point-to-Point: These metrics measure conversions between a marketing action and specific performance outcomes. Examples of valuable point-to-point metrics:

- Marketing influenced pipeline
  (How much of the sales pipeline can be associated with a marketing touch?)
- Customer journey progressions
  (How many customers moved from one stage to the next?)
- Marketing channel mix
  (How much did we invest or use one channel vs. another?)
- Lead acquisition costs
  (How much did it cost us to get this lead?)
- Attribution
  (How much value did a specific marketing action contribute?)

Holistic: These metrics are key performance indicators (KPIs) that measure the health of the marketing function. Examples of valuable holistic metrics include:

- Customer lifetime value (CLV)
  (How much has this customer cost us and earned us over the relationship?)
- Marketing contribution to revenue
  (How much revenue have marketing activities influenced or initiated?)
- Return on investment in marketing (ROI/M)
  (How much marketing investment did it cost us to generate this revenue?)
- ROI on campaigns
  (How much marketing investment did it cost us to generate this revenue from this campaign?)
- Marketing budget ratio to revenue
  (How much do we spend on marketing overall?)

Measuring Customer Experience

In addition to internal operational KPIs and contribution metrics, marketers are increasingly being tasked with understanding customer experience.

This can be tricky because **over-measuring** can be annoying and degrade customer experience, especially when customers are upset.

As you plan and observe the journeys your customers and their data take, **start to weave in assessment questions, but do so sparingly.**

In many cases, you can use **analytics for insight** into whether a specific interaction or piece of content was effective based on its popularity and the how leads perform in the sales cycle.

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Metrics: Measure and Manage Success *(continued)*

You will use a combination of these metrics, but as the table below shows, business model factors tend to influence the metrics that are more attainable and useful.

- If you have short sales cycles for a few low-cost offerings and your marketing is focused on lead generation, you are more likely to be able to measure an end-to-end process from first touch to transaction.
- When more time, touches, and complexity are involved, you may only be able to measure segments of the buyer's journey — for example, from an ad click to a web registration, or from an event to the top of the sales pipeline.
- It's important to base your metrics on business factors to set expectations of how marketing should be measured in your business.

Business Model Factors	Holistic Metrics	Point to Point Metrics
Sales cycle	Short	Long
Cost	Low	High
Product lines	Few	Mang
Go to market	Direct	Indirect
Revenue mix	Product	Services
Marketing mission	Demand	Awareness

Voice of the Partner

"In theory, we measure everything. But it's difficult because a lot of what we've done up until now has been creating awareness. That's difficult for us to measure in a lot of ways, but it's critical. When there is a campaign or an event that we budget, we measure the most relevant KPIs, visits, leads, and engagement."

– Qorus

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