

Writing “The Winning Sales Plan in 2021”

In 2017, I was doing some research for my new course, “*The Art & Science of Sales*”, at Tufts University, where I’m a Professor of the Practice, and at that time had been teaching a unique course in Marketing for 14 years. Maybe because I’m passionate about everything that’s Tufts, maybe it was that I had just accepted an offer to become the Director of the Entrepreneur Center the following academic year, or most probably, it was because, more and more I was convinced that the profession of Sales was actually a science. At that time, I didn’t have enough real data about the science of Sales. Now, the science, the research and the data about the profession of Sales has significantly advanced, and I’m gearing up for the fall, 2021 semester in a new course which I’ve simply titled, “The Science of Sales”, and I thought that there’s no better a time to update this ebook last done back in the old days of mid-2020.

I’ve now been editing this book for each of the past three years, so at any time if you want to edit or add anything to this document, I would greatly appreciate it and, of course, give you attribution. Based on a foundation of using Hubspot’s marketing and sales technologies, processes, tools, and metrics, my Sales course, and therefore this ebook, follow the same requirements and rigors of my Marketing course.

- The “teaching content” is wrapped around projects from real companies
- The end-of-semester deliverable is a fully developed tactical
- The companies come from a purposefully broad cross-section of industries
- They range from tiny startups to large public corporations
- The majority of the businesses have annual revenue between \$5m and \$50m.
- 40% of the course grade is decided by the senior management of the host company

By the way, if you’re interested in participating in either the Sales or the Marketing course, just connect with me, and I’ll send you an example of a recent syllabus and the instructions as to how to apply.

When I was creating the Sales syllabus, it seemed to be the correct balance of content, complexity and creativity. As with any new course, during the first couple of weeks, the complexity side of that equation seemed to be out of balance with everything else, which led me to search for solid examples of winning sales plans that I could demonstrate to my 30 or so undergraduate and graduate students.

As I often do every week, I rebalance my time from being a Tufts professor to running our management consulting firm, where we are focused on tactical business planning especially in our unique expertise in dramatically improving productivity in both Sales and Marketing. Sure, there are tons of consulting companies who do the same things with different cute names for what they do, but, in reality, what every business leader...*and every salesperson*...really cares about is improving the efficiency of their own productivity while improving the effectiveness of their direct work with customers and prospects.

In 2021, there's never been a time that this requirement of having more efficient and more effective selling processes has been as critical as seen from the customer's side of the table. 2021 is clearly a year of ***"Market and sell to me in the way that I want to be marketed and sold to!"***

During the 2021 updating of my Sales course (now simply titled "The Science of Sales") given all the sales work that Derby Management has done for years, I thought that it would be an easy task to take a selection of a few good sales plans, redact the specifics of company names and anything else that could be considered confidential, and then use those plans as part of my teaching during the new semester. At least that process would serve to provide some level of real examples and potential templates to fill out the structure and content that I provide in the classroom.

What should have been an easy and quick search actually turned into a desperate and depressing realization that in 90% of my search, complete sales plans did not exist. What did exist in our files by the hundreds were "pieces" of sales plans...

- Quarterly action plans
- Monthly activity plans
- Playbooks
- Battle Cards
- Skills Training plans
- Waterfall Sales & Marketing math

...but very few solid examples of fundamental, foundation-setting annual sales plans.

- Annual Sales plans that should have been written in November and December, as part of the annual company planning and budgeting process for the following year.
- Annual Sales plans that would have included longer term strategies and the detailed tactics that had been directly integrated into those strategies, forecasts, metrics, KPIs and budgets.
- Annual Sales plans that would have set the foundation for everyone in Sales from regional managers to individual account execs to define their own personal quarter-by-quarter selling plans
- Annual Sales plans that would have been discussed in detail at the kickoff sales meeting in January.

Bottom line here is that in every company, of every size, and especially now in 2021 (*The Year of the Customer*) looking ahead into the unknowns of this year and into 2022, there needs to be a very different approach to creating sales plans of any kind.

Simply said: the world of Sales has changed forever as a result of the pandemic chaos and the major financial impact-in some cases positive and in most negative-the virus has caused in every market. Very specifically, as salespeople, we had to adapt very quickly in the first quarter of 2020 to a world that was locked down, did not permit any travel and was in a state of suspended activity as management attempted to figure out how to survive, how to “go-to-work” and how to communicate with employees, shareholders, existing customers and new prospects. Now, early in 2021, we’ve figured it out for the most part and are now actively piecing together the sales planning processes for this year.

Before, we jump into the construction of a sales plan, I want to level set the world of sales in 2021:

A few 2020-2021 “factoids” ...

We’ve gathered these between December 2020 and March 2021 by talking with hundreds of professional salespeople and sales managers at every level from a wide and very diverse cross section of B2B companies:

- Total ecommerce is at a record of \$690B in 2020 with forecasts of \$890B in 2022
- Given the 2020 digital-first experience for everything, B2B Sales is moving rapidly to the same
- For salespeople, they have discovered a major gain in efficiency of their time
- For prospects and customers, 2020 has also taught them to be very time efficient
- 95% of salespeople say that they have no intention of going back “in the office”
- 62% of salespeople noted that their selling process has “changed substantially”
- 33% of salespeople have created an entirely new sales process
- 65% report that they are more productive from the top of the funnel to the close.
- Most corporate remote work policies now allow full or hybrid remote work for salespeople
- Benefits stated by salespeople: 21% no commute, 60 % flexibility in schedule and location
- The antiquated terms of “field sales” and “inside sales” no longer apply
- CAC, LTV, MEDDICC, GPCT, and renewal and retention rates have become the new currency

A few 2015-2019 “factoids”...

- On average, B2B salespeople across industries only achieve 53-68% of their committed quota
- For a 60-hour week, (approximately 3,000 hours) the “effective” sales hours are only 1,100
- Historically, all attempted sales productivity improvement programs have had negative returns
- 70% of a buying process occurs internally before talking to a sales rep of any kind
- For first meetings, 56% of the sales reps defined those meetings as very positive
- For the same meeting, 79% of the prospects stated they would not do a follow up meeting
- #1 differentiator between “A” & “B” salespeople is ability to deliver effective value propositions
- #1 most important step in any sales funnel is the Discovery step conducted early in the process

Back-in-the-day (*in the “old days” of 2019*) in a normal sales planning cycle, we would be developing both annual and quarterly sales plans in the fall that would then be tweaked up in early January and rolled out at the January national sales meeting with strict requirements to have regional, district and then quarterly individual plans developed to be reviewed and approved within the following week. Pretty standard stuff since that’s the way that I grew up as a salesguy, and what I was required to do, but more importantly, it was what I have always considered to be a “normal” building block for any business and in any sales department at any level from national to regional to territory plans right down to individual quarterly selling plans at the street level.

All of what we regarded as “normal” and “standard” in both our Sales and Marketing planning requirements has now changed forever as have the tactics used by both Marketing and Sales.

- We will simply not be returning to many of the old sales practices of 2019.
- The majority of salespeople and managers are not going “back to the office”...ever
- We have already realized huge gains in time and in effectiveness by using Zoom/Teams
- Both customers and prospects appreciate their time savings with more efficient meetings
- Internal meetings are much shorter and much more effective
- We will continue to be very cautious of any air or train travel even post-Covid
- Physical trade shows (the least-cost effective lead generator) are most likely gone forever
- Internal virtual meetings are much shorter, much more effective and at almost zero cost.

Add to this the fact that we are still at the infancy stages of tech communication tools such as Zoom and Teams and the camera and audio tools that come with them. As a result, we are anticipating even more significant gains both in time efficiency and customer and prospect effectiveness during the balance of 2021.

Looking back to *the old days* of 2019 and prior years, there’s been no real “invention” in the sales planning processes for decades. The requirements and the timing have been the same that salespeople and their managers were required to complete every year. And yet, what I learned from reviewing hundreds of prior “sales plans” was that fully complete annual plans simply do not exist in the majority of cases. Through that process of assessing all the sales plans in our files, what I did discover were....

- Hundreds of engineering and product plans
- Hundreds of excellent marketing plans
- Gigabits of sales financial plans with forecasts by month, by quarter and by year
- Terabytes of commission and bonus plans
- Hundreds of “big bullet” PowerPoints that were mostly high-level strategies.

Bottom line was that there were very few real quarterly or annual sales plans.

When I use this phrase “real quarterly and annual sales plans” I mean definitions of...

- ...what the overarching sales model will be: direct, indirect, partner models?
- ...account sizing: same or changed? National accounts?
- ...territory management: same, consolidated or expanded?
- ...lead management: what % from marketing, what % self-generated from salespeople?
- ...primary personas of decision makers
- ...common messaging of value propositions tied to the principal personas as part of the plan
- ...hiring and compensation and bonus plans
- ...training, retraining and certification plans
- ...CRM and related tech changes
- ...the highlights of the tactical activity planning on a quarter-by-quarter basis.

Where I discovered that pieces of real, mostly complete sales plans did exist, correspondingly I assessed that the performance of the company overall was “excellent” to “very good”. Where I discovered that only financial expense budgets and annual sales forecasts existed as the primary planning documents, not surprisingly, the overall past performance had been weak or marginal, at best.

As a sales manager and a management consultant, for me there was no real surprise in the performance results. The big surprise for me during this process was the lack of real 12-month sales plans incorporating both longer range strategies and most importantly, tactical monthly and quarterly activity plans with real metrics and applicable training.

It was General Eisenhower at the invasion of Normandy who said...

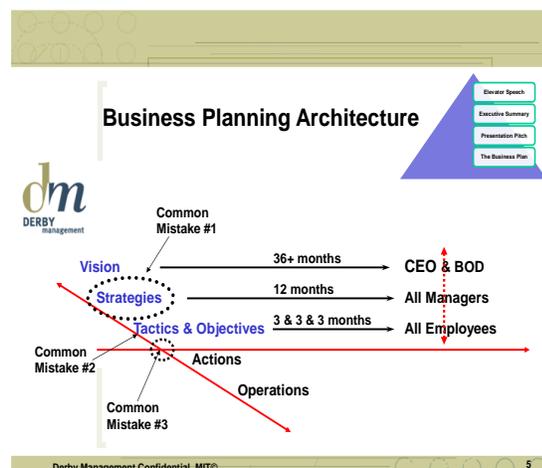
“In preparing for battle, I have always found that plans are worthless, but the planning process was indispensable”,...

...and he was absolutely correct since that thought process that applies to battles in war also applies to our annual and quarterly sales plans we achieve as we advance into new territories, we defeat our competitors, and we win more customers. Ideally, as a result of the planning process, we get to surpass our quota and margin objectives, but, at the very least, given the detailed thinking that goes into any sales planning process, we are much more prepared to deal with the realities of the market and with our prospects and customers when their plans change.

At a very different level, it was Mike Tyson, the controversial boxing athlete, who simply said...

“Everyone has a plan, until they get punched in the mouth”

Somewhat by definition an annual sales plan constructed in November of any year during the annual budgeting process, which looks out on how prospects will be thinking and what existing customers will be doing 12 and 18 months into the future is “*somewhat*” useless. That having been said, the critical component is the actual process of bringing the plan together with the sales team and all the related departments to work through future products, personnel hiring and training decisions, lead gen plans from Marketing and while figuring out what fits into the actual budget.



As to where Sales Plans “fit” in the completion of your company’s annual Business Plan, the one that is officially approved by your Board of Directors and therefore becomes the yardstick against which all sales activities and results will be measured, please note the graphic here to the left.

This is a slide from our Sales Management Boot Camps, and it is meant to provide you with a possible architecture to keep in your head when you’re going through your annual and quarterly sales planning process.

The words that go with this slide above point out that your Sales Plan should be a mix of...

- **“Vision”**. Forget about any definition of “Vision” or “Mission for any Sales Plan. Not important!
- **“Strategies”** (“strategy” = “longer term primary *directions*”) that you plan to follow in the year.
 - **“Strategies”** could be sales models of direct sales or distribution or partnerships
 - **“Strategies”** could be geography
 - **“Strategies”** could be selling into national or local locations of a large company
- **“Tactics”** are where your sales plan is focused. These are the playbooks and the battle plan
- **“Activities”** are the details of individual playbooks and the play-by-play model.

Prior to 2020, we would have defined *strategic* plans as those that project out for 12 to 18 months and *tactical* plans as those that embody four quarters ahead. Today, even though we are much more settled in the first half of 2021 than we were in Q3 of 2020, we are once again strongly recommending you focus your sales planning only on the tactics you will employ and not on any longer-term strategy. From where we are today in 2021, your primary focus needs to be on very tactical quarter-by-quarter 90-day tactical and activity planning. Plan out each quarter this year, and when you’re 60 days into that plan, begin the process again for the next 90 days. This simply is the reality of sales and of marketing planning in the yet-not-totally-understood world of 2021.

Mistake #1 In the graphic above refers to the fact that many companies just skip over the setting of the strategies part and jump right into tactics. As noted above, that's ok, for where we are right now in 2021, but not in general, and certainly not in 2022. Setting strategies, better defined as “the primary sales directions for the business” is very difficult. For example, “strategic decisions” might include incorporating a distribution channel or a decision to add in a corporate partner channel with a similarly aligned company who will be selling your products or services as part of their offerings.

Actually, coming up with those strategies is the easy part; making decisions on a small number of priority strategies that are going to produce increasing revenue is the tough part. It's for this reason in a Covid and even in a post-Covid-world in 2021, we're just saying “forget strategy!” for now until we've figured out how to deal with the consistent distractions of the virus even given the probability of large percentages of the U.S. population being vaccinated by early Q3. Right now, in the first half of 2021, we are very heavily focused on tactical execution ! If we can get that down, make our planned numbers for the first and second quarters, then there's time to take a deep breath in July and August and take a longer-term view into the first half of 2022.

“Mistake #2” identifies that too often the actual tactics are not backed up with detailed objectives, activities plan, metrics or KPIs. Planning out the tactics that fit directly into and give detailing to the primary strategies that have been agreed on is critical, and nowhere is that tactical planning more critical than in the world of Sales in 2021. This is absolutely the most critical time for detailed, short term quarter-by-quarter tactical playbooks!

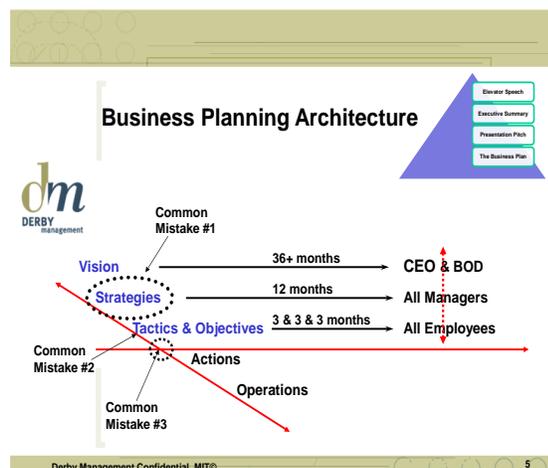
That having been said, let's just say that there is a longer-term sales strategy that the management team has worked through and agreed to invest time and money into and that is to add to the current sales model by changing the way that the company strategically sells to a national account at their headquarters and while also selling tactically at separate locations into in a regionalized territory.

For instance, let's say that the national account is Tyson Foods, a highly respected national and international brand. The strategic question is whether your company will at a national level, setting prices and figuring out marketing and sales tactics at the national level of headquarter for each region or do you do that on a region-by-region basis or even at a plant-by-plant local level? Depending on the definition decided in most cases by the customer, your sales plan for that year details...

- Does your company follow just one model or is there another model or it is a hybrid?
- What are the required communications practices among the salespeople involved ?
- What does the customer want to do and what would provide the value best for them?

The answer to these complex and very common sales strategy questions then becomes a series of well-researched and planned-out management decisions. Those decisions are “strategies”. The corresponding sales tactics that tie into those strategies both nationally-and especially at the individual customer locations themselves would then constitute the sales tactics and the detailed activity planning of the salesperson on that account.

“Mistake #3”, which I am sure will never happen with you, is that too often sales management and the salespeople themselves do not take time out of their very busy schedules to actually plan out the sales “Actions” or “Activities” below the red line.



In our work with sales management, we like to recommend that a sales team should be spending 75% of their time below the red line actually selling and 25% above the line, both as sales managers and as salespeople, planning out what is going to take place.

We created this graphic just to quickly visualize the differences in the words- “Vision”, “Strategies”, “Tactics” and “Actions”.

Sales management’s primary responsibility is to create a totally integrated balance within this architecture. Too many strategies, and there will be chaos since the actual tactics that produce the revenue would not tie together. On the other hand, too few strategies or poorly planned tactics will not create enough growth.

Key points:

- All **Tactics** have **Objectives**.
- All **Objectives** have dates and metrics.
- **Activity** planning is where the rubber hits the road
- **Quarterly sales plans** outline your tactics and primary activities that get you to your objectives.



Note in the paragraph above the phrase which states “*a totally integrated balance within this architecture*”. That was the goal in a pre-2020, Covid-free world. This year in 2021, with large percentages of people already vaccinated, we do know that at some point this year, we will return to a business world which is more balanced. Today, all we know are the following:

- Today there is no “new normal”, nor will there be one until 2022.
- We are never going back to many of the pre-2020 sales and marketing tactics.
- We have evidenced the benefits of selling virtually and are not “going back into the office”
- Our primary sales and marketing messages need to be 100% focused on selling customer value.
- U(sing specific Value Propositions tied to specific personas are critical to closing deals.
- Creating empathy and trust in our sales and marketing tactics is foundational.

All that any salesperson or sales manager can manage are “Activities”.

Often, in the heat of a very busy sales month, we realize that all that can be managed are planned activities at that particular snapshot in time. Don't overthink this reality, and just totally focus on what you can manage in a short timetable which everyone cares about, and that will always come down to activities against the plan for the month.

The rest is all “just” a framework. There are only general timelines for the implementation of strategies for example, but here are a few guidelines that we have found useful over the years in our conducting of 30 to 40 sales planning sessions every year. We've now updated this for a Covid world.

- Do not waste your management time with strategies right now in the first half of 2021. Still too many unknowns, too many market and economic changes, plus you have a sales number to reach this month and this quarter, so just focus on the now. Start thinking about Q4 and 2022 strategies in September.
- Tactical game plans will work perfectly if you now lock them into your quarterly operating playbook
- Activities are the most critical element in your Sales plan and should come down to where your salespeople need to be spending the majority of their time in developing monthly and quarterly activity plans looking out no more than 60 and 90 days.

There may be long term strategies somewhere for some companies in 2021. One of our customers, Steinway & Sons, in business for 165 years, clearly has very long-term plans. At Reiser, where I'm chairman, we have an underlying strategy of adding customer value defined in our company logo-“Built on Trust” that serves us well, but today, sales strategies and tactics will change significantly over the next year.

Today, keep focused on the short term of quarter-by-quarter. There will always be a 2022.

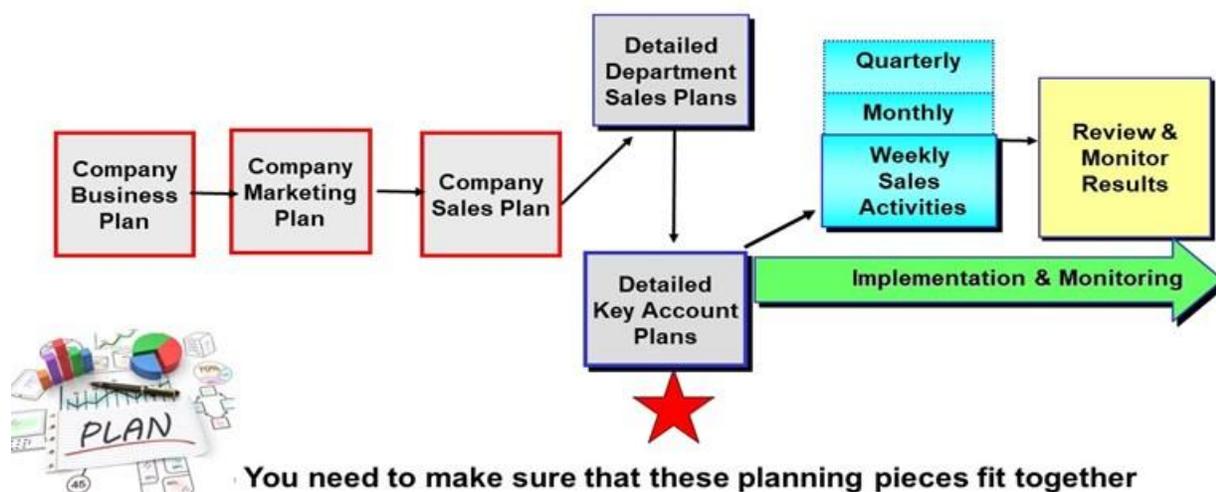
Let's take another look at this word, “architecture”, since at various times as a salesperson or a sales manager, you need to balance your time, your planning and certainly your energy between planning and doing, which is the purpose of the graphic above.

The graphic below-borrowed from one of our recent Sales Management Boot Camps-provides you an opportunity to think through just where your sales plan fits in the scope of planning for the business overall.

- There is the annual company sales plan detailed in quarters
- There is a sub plan based on regions or key accounts if the company is larger
- There are the most important Key Account Plans that bring planning to a rep level



A Sales Planning Architecture (Everything must be detailed and fit together)



- Most importantly, the business plan for the company provides the overview of what the current status is and where the company is headed over the period of the next four quarters refreshed every quarter to look out for the current and the following quarter. Since this is a consistently updated document, quarterly sales plans and consistent quarterly performance reviews are mandatory to get full buy-in from all the salespeople, management and from Marketing and Customer Success. Remember, this is a team effort!
- Next in line is the company’s Marketing plan since it will set in place the market opportunities, the prospective customer needs, the ever-present competition, the future product and service requirements and an outline of the primary marketing tactics and accompanying budgets which will be required. Most importantly, the quarterly Marketing action plan provides the lead gen plans, timetables and coordinated SLAs between Sales and Marketing.

All of which brings me to why we wrote this guide. Is the guide perfect? It’s getting there, but not yet, plus it is also being heavily revised now given selling and marketing in a post-Covid World. My expectation is that we will go through another major revision in July 2021. Even our award-winning 20 year old ebook, **“Writing the Winning Business Plan”**, with tens of thousands of downloads and used repeatedly at MIT, underwent three major revisions between February 2020 and February 2021.

In this edition of **“Writing the Winning Sales Plan”**, our intent is to provide you with a guide, perhaps an outline and maybe a template or three, but the real intent is to get you to think, to bring together your sales team and the salespeople from other teams and work through the process of planning out your primary tactics for at least these remaining months of 2021. Sometime during Q3, we will know enough to be able to take a longer view into 2022. Right now, step forward and fill in the details of all your tactics, your quarterly activities and the required operational technology and tool support details that you will need to reach your quota plan this year.

Therefore, if you find that all of the levels of plans identified here are too complex or simply too many, then eliminate what you don’t need and just focus on two sets of plans:

- your overall quarter-by-quarter sales plan for the year in terms of your objectives
- your individual quarterly Key Account Plans for your salespeople

At any time, if you have comments, questions or want to add your own content to this, just connect with me by email or through Linked In, and we will set up a time to talk in the short term.

Best of Success in your sales planning,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jack', is positioned below the text.

[Head Coach, Derby Management Site](#)

-Sales & Marketing Productivity Experts
-Business & Strategy Planning Specialists
-Senior Management Coaches

[What We Do & the Value We Add](#)

Professor of the Practice, **[Tufts University Center of Entrepreneurship](#)**
Prior Director of the Center and the Cummings Professor of Entrepreneurship

The 8 Step Sales Plan Outline

1. Analyze Sales Performance” by District/Region/Territory
2. Identify “Opportunity” (High Potential /Low Performance) Territories
3. Establish total company and regional Quarterly Sales Objectives
4. Establish Regional Quarterly sales objectives
5. Develop Sales Tactics and Activities for each Customer Segment
6. Develop a Quarterly Regional Action Plan (The 30-60-90 Day Plan)
7. Identify National Key Accounts and Develop Key Account Plans
8. Develop a Key Account Plan for each of your Key Accounts

The process I want to bring you through is one of creating these various plans and doing the thinking old school, piece-by-piece, whether that’s on paper, on a whiteboard, in the architecture of a PowerPoint deck or worked through online using the sales planning templates and tools in your CRM.

First get your ideas down in any manner that you want. Think it through by yourself or with a peer-whatever’s the best way for you to work through your own planning whether you’re the head of sales or an individual salesperson. For me, I think better using a whiteboard, and my first step is just to whiteboard-out my key objectives and timetables. As I am doing that, various tactical ideas will come to mind, and I just find a place on the whiteboard to start jotting those down. What I have at the end of that exercise are most of the basic components of what will need to be put into my plan, once I figure out the architecture.

Once those foundational objectives are at least written down and the foundation begins to take shape, and perhaps the primary tactics are identified, and you’re starting to think through the actual activities, then we can transfer all of this over to your CRM and any other apps that integrate into your CRM.

I just want you to think all of this through first before you start moving through filling in the blanks on your CRM templates. I am a strong believer in CRM platforms, and the more useful apps that tie in that make my life easier and save me time, the better it is for me! Having said that, I recommend that you first work through the baseline planning, then move those planning details and tools over to the structure required in your CRM.

Definitions

An important tactic when you are developing your sales plan is to make sure that everyone uses the same language on the Sales and on the Marketing teams and in their respective tactical plans. That language is totally up to you, and the language definitions are whatever you say they are. Once they are established, enforce the use of those terms everywhere. Formality and discipline are key components of your sales plan, and *no one* should be allowed to color outside the box. The profession of Sales is just that, *a certified profession*, and whether it's the profession of being a Navy Seal, a certified electrician, a member of the New England Patriots, the certified auto mechanic who works on your car, or most importantly the pilot or the surgeon that has your life in their hands, there are specific rules, processes, tools and measurements that become customized for your specific company.

Quite frankly, why would you allow your salespeople to do anything differently? Every profession has playbooks that require training and typically certification; salespeople need to have the same. They will become "certified" to "*Your Way of Selling*", or they simply won't be allowed to stay on the team. Common language is a very basic part of that discipline, and the following terms are our own. You should develop your own vocabulary and then insist that it be used everywhere from the streets in the field to the directors in boardroom.

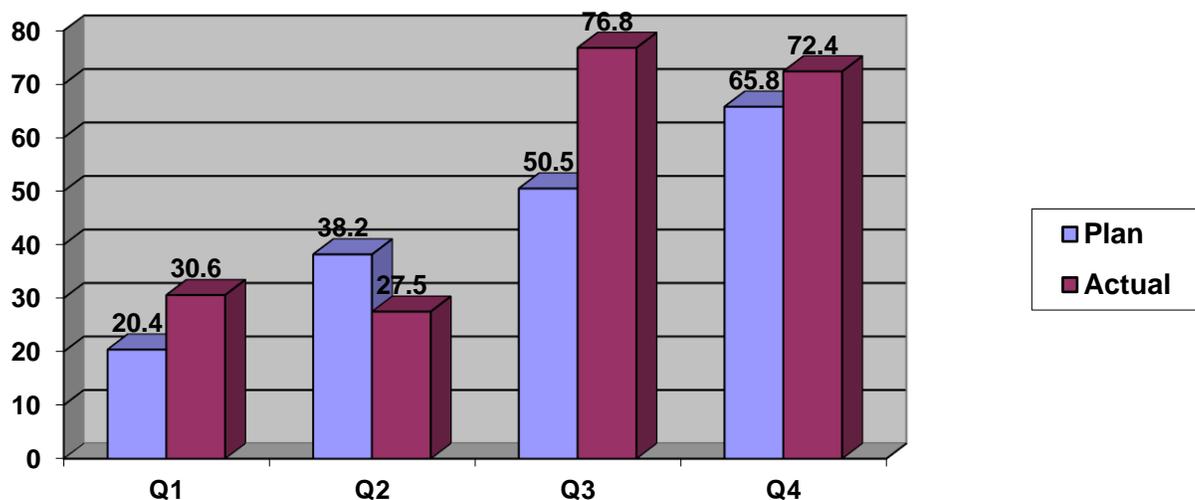
For what it's worth in our own vocabulary...

- We use "**Objectives**" rather than "goals".
- We use "**KPI's**" for Key Performance Indicators.
- We use "**Business Plans**" for officially approved plans by the Board of Directors
- "**Sales Plans**" for annual/quarterly plans from the head of Sales to the senior team
- We use "**Quota**" for revenue or bookings volume.
- We want quota to be a minimum of 15% more than the Business Plan number.
- "**Tactics**" are fundamental quarterly plans, and "**Activities**" are the action items.
- "**Customers**" & "**Prospects**". We mix the terms since tactics can apply to both.
- "**Personas**" define in human terms the real buyers and decisions makers
- "**Calls**" or "**Connects**" refer to calls, emails, Zoom/Team meetings and F2F visits.
- "**Regional**" encompasses "Regions", "Districts" and "Territories",
- "**Key Accounts**" follow the 20%/80% or the 10%/90% rule.

Step #1: Analysis

Analyze existing Sales performance by region by salesperson – (use graphics)

- Utilize charts, graphs or bullets to analyze sales performance to the quota plan.
- Analyze sales detailing at the level that makes sense for you as a Sales Manager.
- Use examples from your company’s toolbox or your own graphs from your CRM.
- Analyze sales performance compared to Quota.
- Analyze sales performance compared to primary competition.



For an existing company, your graphics should be generated from your CRM. If this is a startup or a small business where the past performance has not measured or you do not have a CRM, define, as best you can some measurement just to give yourself a baseline. If there is nothing in real detail, don’t overthink this step. It is what it is, and that then becomes the baseline. What you do want to put in place is a *real* CRM that has the necessary tools, apps and easy-to-use templates. There are literally hundreds of choices, and while we can easily state that your only choices *should* be the following three, we can definitely provide advice on products you should not use.

1. SFDC-Salesforce.com
2. MSCRM-Microsoft CRM
3. [Hubspot CRM](#)-our personal preference.

Just connect with me at jack@derbymanagement.com, and we can talk about this.

Step #2: Focus on your “High Opportunity Regions”!

First identify your “High Opportunity” regions

In 2021, since we want to be deep into tactical planning, what we want to do is to follow the 80/20 Rule and focus 80% of our effort on the 20% of the accounts that will lead to the highest probability results...month-by-month and quarter-by-quarter. If you were to spend your time, which is your most valuable resource, trying to take in the entire region whether that was Greater Boston, New England or Mid-Atlantic, it simply couldn't be done. Too much territory, too much travel (even in a Zoom Sales time) and too much defocus.

For example, if I were to take a look at selling medical equipment, and I had the entire region of New England, I would plan on the following:

- Vermont-either never call on anything or limit it to the University Medical Center in Burlington.
- Maine-limit my focus to the Maine Medical Center
- Massachusetts: focus 80% of my time in Greater Boston and UMass Medical in Worcester
- NH: focus in Concord and in the five hospitals on the seacoast, all owned by larger systems
- RI: focus only in Providence
- CT: focus my time in Hartford. The salesperson who owns NYC can have southern CT.

Even in a Zoom environment where travel doesn't really matter, there is an affinity for “selling locally” among the hospital systems, and when travel again becomes standard, then I need to severely cut back on windshield time. A trip from Boston to Burlington VT will take six hours back and forth with most of the time in non-existent cell coverage.

At the same time, you're analyzing historical sales analysis and researching the high opportunities geographies, start noting down the specific high potential accounts in those same regions.

Objective: Identify those territories that are underperforming but have *large* potential to grow market share and sales revenue. In the medtech equipment example above, this may narrow down to the cities of Boston and Cambridge. Large opportunities, but difficult to crack into.

Planning Tips: You should also utilize this format to identify the “**Middle Performing Regions**” where you can grow the business through standard blocking, tackling and solid execution plans. Do the same especially for the existing “**High Performing Regions**”.

These tactical plans need to be very detailed and in text. They are three month written plans which are metric-heavy and graphic in detail. There is nothing general or fluffy, and the “hope” word is never used. These documents are full game plans for each of the high performing regions, and they also include your Key Account Plans for the specific high potential accounts. Yes, this is hard work, but in any sales environment and especially in a recent Covid world, this is a battlefield with lots of direct and indirect competitors including the reality of the prospect who would rather “do nothing!”; therefore, there’s simply no allowance for fluffy plans without detail.

Ideally, there should be three types of Sales Plans within each Region, but if this is your first or second time going through the rigors of this process, I recommend that you focus only on creating Sales Plans for your “**Key Accounts**” for which you’re going to apply the 80/20% or better yet, in which 80% of your results will come from 20% of your accounts.

Four types of account game plans:

1. “**High Opportunity Plans**” are for “High Potential Accounts” in low performance regions.
2. “**High Performing Accounts**” are your “**Key Accounts**”.
3. “**Grow-the-Business-Plans**” are for existing customers which have expansion opportunities

These can be both pure expansion account or “**Affiliated New Accounts**” which are other divisions or other locations in that same company. If you are doing business with one department or division within Tyson or Fidelity or Alcoa, for example, and that business is going well, then getting into another division should be a much shorter sales cycle with a reference from your currently satisfied buyer in a sister division or location.

4. “**Customer Retention Plans**” are for existing large customers, which although there may be little in the way of expansion opportunities, you cannot afford to lose. Your strategic question for these accounts is how you plan to build your “customer success” model in these accounts. Ideally, they should be handled by a separate “**Customer Success Rep**” (titles typically given to support people focused on satisfaction and retention metrics) and not by the primary salesperson. Different skills, different compensation, different metrics

Given this outline, now you, as the sales manager, *just* need to figure out where you're going to spend your time as a manager working with which salespeople, in which regions, and for which accounts. Here's a bit of advice based on 30 years of doing it both the right...*and the wrong* ways.

People

- Focus your time on your best "A" level salespeople. They will always produce more.
- Focus your time also on your B+/A- level salespeople. Your coaching will pay off quickly.
- Train, challenge and recertify your B/B- players to become B+/A- in six months.
- Terminate and upgrade the rest. You simply don't have the time as a Player/Coach/Leader

Regions

Focus your time on the **High Opportunity Regions** but be very careful if they represent major logistics challenges in terms of difficult distances to travel in or have heavy competition. Better to walk away from a region than to waste your time travelling there even in the new normality of mostly zoom meetings.

Use the sales operating strategy of "**Streets not States**". There is not much rationale that a \$10 million business, with a total of six salespeople for example, should have their salespeople divided into the regions of the Northeast, Canada, the Southeast, the Midwest, the Southern California and Northern California. That might look good on a wall map, but you need to think through geography strategically, and most importantly, tactically. A better alternative could very well be from the standpoint of your sales efficiency and the customer's support effectiveness to have one person in NE, one in NY City through Albany, one in North New Jersey/Midlantic, one in the Carolinas and one in Atlanta and one in Chicago or LA.

One of our most successful businesses and investments was in a company that grew from \$8 to \$120 million in eight years with a highly commoditized product and only sold in three states in New England. Given the carefully researched and very tight geographies of the Merrimac Valley of Massachusetts, two cities in southern New Hampshire, one location in southern Maine and the city of Providence, Rhode Island, the ability to focus specifically on these territories and these Key Accounts was excellent with high penetration and satisfaction levels.

Step #3. Set quarterly objectives for the entire year.

This example below is for New/Affiliated New Business. A different plan would be developed for existing business (expansion and retention). For each product, select one or two Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure on a quarterly basis. Basically, the primary metric will be your quota plan, which will usually be revenue. Having said that, other examples could be gross margin, unit volume, bookings, retention or any combination of these. If you are using revenue or bookings, and there could also be other terms such as “ACV” (Annual Contract Value) or “MRR” (Monthly Recurring Revenue), both heavily used in the subscription business, then define those exactly in your quarterly sales plan. You just want common language to be used everywhere from the streets to the boardroom

3.1 This table example is by Product/Quarter/All Customers

KPI Measurements sales metrics	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Product #1					
[Detailed text here with explanations of what the metrics mean]					
Product #2					
[Detailed text here with explanations of what the metrics mean]					
Product #3					
[Detailed text here with explanations of what the metrics mean]					

3.2: Establish Quarterly New Customer Objectives

This example of a table is for both “New Logo” and “Affiliated New” accounts but is not for expansion business from existing accounts. The reason for this is that we like to keep the primary selling focus on “New Logo Business”. Having said that, this table could very easily incorporate what is here plus existing customers if there are subscriptions or maintenance revenue monthly. It could also have a row for upsell and expansion revenue or bookings.

What you want to achieve in this process is one clear dashboard of where you want to strategically focus for these monthly / quarterly time periods, and maybe another snapshot for everything in total.

Customers	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q1	Apr	May	June	Q2	July	Aug	Sept		Q3	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q4	Total
Prior Year Reference Point																		
New Logo																		
Affiliated New																		
Total																		

This table should be in dollars, and there could be a separate table for units depending on the ASP and the importance of the metric. A high ASP, for example, might also be defined in terms of units just to sharpen the focus, but ultimately everyone is going to be measured by quota dollars for either bookings and revenue and/or margin or all of these.

“New” is a new logo customer.

“Affiliated New” is an added division or added department from an existing customer where a totally new sales process needed to take place. This is not an “upsell”, but it could be “an expansion” as long as it represents a new sales process with a separate decision maker, but that the process took place because the sales rep had used their existing relationship with a key decision maker at the existing customer location to ask for a proactive reference point or an actual introduction to an affiliated division or business location within the same corporation.

3.3 Establish customer objectives” by product

This table would be used if you or your company set a strategic objective that selling a new product was critical to the longer-term success of the business. This could be shown for both new logo customers and for expansion into existing customers.

Region #	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total Yr.
Product #1 Objectives					
[detailed text here]					
Product #2 Objectives					
Product #3 Objectives					

3.4 Summary Results by Region

Once the objectives by product by quarter have been detailed, which is both critical and tough work, you want to take a snapshot of what this means to you as a manager or as a salesperson in terms of dollars and maybe units.

This table's value is to provide an overview of dollars or units (if it makes sense, and especially if you have a relatively high ASP and relatively low unit sales), or both, in order to merely take a snapshot of the growth required for a 12-month picture

Customers	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q1	Apr	May	June	Q2	July	Aug	Sept	Q3	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q4	Total
Prior Year																	
Existing Baseline if any																	
New																	
Affiliated New																	
Expansion & Upsell																	
Total																	

In a tech company, for example, it would not be unusual to see 30% to 60% annual growth numbers in units and in dollars. Just as one example, the impact of that visual is important in terms of hiring criteria since it takes 90-120 days just to recruit and hire experienced sales reps, then another 90 days to formally onboard individual reps and another 12 to 18 months before that person is fully ramped up to top productivity. Yes, that's correct-12 to 18 months to get and average sales rep fully ramped up such that they are consistently hitting their quarter-by-quarter quota.

Other examples of the potential use of this table would be for adding personnel in Customer Success or in Operations, but the key use is for the salesperson and the manager to have a visual for planning and for impact.

Step #4: Establish monthly & quarterly sales objectives.

This table provides a different way of looking at your region

Territory by Product	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q1	Apr	May	June	Q2	July	Aug	Sept	Q3	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q4	Total

Step #5 Identify sales strategies and tactics for each customer segment

Example: Customize what is below to meet your individual requirements

Segment	Strategies for Segment	Sales Tactics/Action Plans for each Segment
This could be by product or market sector or customer or persona	Strategies would be ... - "Primary Directions" - "Major Initiatives" - "Fundamental Building Blocks" in markets, geo, customer focus, persona shifts or products	Tactics are quarterly and annual plans Activities are monthly action items in the plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase call frequency to 8x/month • Send to National Speaker training program
	Strategy examples: -add distributors to sell with direct salespeople -sales both through salespeople and online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

Step #6: Each Sales Rep develops their own quarterly activity plan

Planning Tip: This template will, of course, be customized by the VP of Sales, and the same template will be used by each Regional Manager and by each sales rep in the territory. There will be an overall annual Sales plan, but the most critical component, which will get detailed later will be **“The 30-60-90 Plan**, which is your Quarterly Action Plan. This is where the rubber hits the road, and without it, there’s just words. big ideas and lots of talk and arm waving.

This is an example of a Sales Plan Template

The 5 Steps to Creating a Winning Regional Sales Plan

Step 1	Analyze the territory or defined geo
Step 2	Analyze & set objectives for all “Key Accounts”
Step 3	Identify a minimum of 10 Key Accounts that require individual Key Account Plans (Use Template)
Step 4	Set region objectives and activity plans
Step 5	Take action & measure results At the beginning of each new quarter look back and formally review the results for “What were the Best Practices” that we can use again?

Beginning of a Written Region Action Plan Template

Region Action Plan
Name of District/Region
Name of Sales Rep

Region Name & Location

Date

Step I: Analyze Territory

At various places in this written sales plan, for the purpose of providing an example, we have used a medical device product sold to hospitals of various sizes of bed capacity.

Summarize the following regional information in two to three concise paragraphs. Make sure that this is detailed and write it as if you needed to hand it off to your replacement because you were promoted to another position in the sales organization. My point here is just to put down as much detail as is possible since this is going to be a living plan, and it just may be that you get promoted, and there should be solid history in your CRM for everything you have done.

- Sales Potential
- Geography/Size of Territory
- Account Analysis: Retained, New, Lost, Recaptured
- Treatment Protocols used in Territory
- Market & Competitive Information
- Demographics
- Number of Accounts by Segment
- Reimbursement/Payor information
- Overall Company Product Usage
- Perceptions

Step #1: Record the territory sales history for the prior year.

Total Year Sales Results	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total
Quota Plan					
Actual Results					

Also, provide at this point all the market research data on this region or at least what it is on a national scope. This data always exists somewhere, or there will be data of a similar product or service.

Step 2: Analyze & set objectives for your Key Accounts

Analyze & set objectives for the top Key Accounts that represent 80% of Sales (the most profitable) or have “High Sales Potential” for the upcoming year. Again, use the 80/20% Rule here. It depends on your revenue volume of course, but my expectation is that this number of actual accounts will be 25ish for a salesperson. By definition, it needs to be more than 10, and correspondingly, it cannot be 100.

You will note the word “connects” here, which might be a F2F when some travel returns, a phone call, an email, a text, a Zoom/Teams meeting or a LinkedIn InMail. Whatever it is, you want to count frequency. Why? It’s the only way that you can plan, use your time and then forecast accurately!

Examples of criteria used to define a Key Account:

Key Account Classification Criteria	Key Account Screening Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers responsible for 80% of revenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to sustain long term profitable relationship (\$X net over Y years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer with over \$ 1.5 million of sales. [\$1.5m is an arbitrary number on my part] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Account values Company products and services to be distinct from competition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer with potential of (an example) of \$1.5 million of sales over 2 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship has strategic value or adds to quality of the company
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer generates \$800,000 profit [\$.8m is an arbitrary number on my part] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company can create differential advantage by serving the customer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer responsible for of x% of the market in units or value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company can create considerable barrier to entry by serving the customer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion leader influences 20% of prescribers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for growth is greater than the current major customers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer with contribution of > 5% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer relationship based on more than price negotiation.

Key Account Name Min: 10 Go for 25	Potential Sales by Quarter	Competition Market Share Ideally in %, but can be very general	Our Market Share	Quarterly Sales Objective	% Sales Contribution	Segment Current Objective	Current Connect Frequency	Connect Frequency Objective
1.								
2.								

Step 3: Identify the 10-25 Highest Sales Potential Accounts

These would be “Key Accounts” that require complete written Key Account Plans (KAPS)

Key Account # 1: _____

Sales Potential: _____

Company Share: _____

Don't get hung up on the exact % if you don't know; guessing is better than nothing

Competitive Share:

Don't get hung up on the exact % if you don't know; guessing is better than nothing

% Territory Sales Contribution: _____

Sales Objectives for this year: _____

List the primary objectives here

Connect Frequency Objective for this year: _____

Note this in monthly averages and in a total

Step 4: Set Region Objectives

- ✓ Establish Monthly Sales/Market Share objectives for the region for this year
- ✓ Measure Actual Results on a monthly and quarterly basis

Total Year	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Quarter
Sales Objectives				
Actual Results				
% Attainment				

Develop a “Connection Plan”

This plan is developed by customer segment where you will measure actual results against your quarterly objectives for every one of your key accounts. Here also, your ‘connection’ can be calls, emails, text, video, LI, or anything else. LinkedIn is preferred by us, but anything used must be directly tied into your CRM as a direct connection. Connects must be measured as a two-way connection- *“I sent something, and I received a response”*-not just *“I sent”*

Sample Connect Plan:

Note: The Sales Rep calculates available connects to make sure the Connect Plan is realistic.

Total Available Connects = Days available x Daily Connect Average: _____

Example: 20 working days in the month X connect average of 10/day = 800 available Connects. The monthly Connect Plan then requires 800 Connects. The Sales rep will need to increase their Connect average to make their total targeted Connect plan realistic. It is recommended that the Sales Rep develop a Connect Plan for each Key Account they plan on talking with or traveling to at the beginning of each month.

Obviously, most of their time should be spent with the high volume or high potential accounts. In parallel with these Connect Plans, travel or Zoom/Team time plans need to be laid out in rolling 30, 60 and 90-day time blocks.

Customer Segment	# of contacts to connect with at each KA	Target Connect Frequency	Total Targeted Connects/ Month	Actual Connects Month 1	Actual Connects Month 2	Actual Connects Month 3
"A" Accounts	6-10	4-6 month	20-60 for example			
Next priority Key Accounts	4-6	3-4 month				
Next priority Key Accounts	4-6	2-3/month				
Next priority Key Accounts	4-6	2-3/month				
Next priority Key Accounts	4-6	2-3/month				
Next priority Key Accounts	4-5	2-3/month	8-15 for example			
Totals						

Establish Region Action Plans- Medical Product Example

Step 4: Set Action Plans	Develop Strategies	Develop Action Plan	Budget \$ Planned Date	Take Action \$\$\$ Date	Step 5: Measure Results/ROI
<p>1. Develop 1 new Thought Leader/Speaker</p> <p>Potential Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Smith • Dr. Jones • Dr. Grant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Slide Deck • Speaker Training • Provide latest abstracts & reprints • Become accredited 	<p>Have Smith, Jones, & Grant attend the Training Program in Orlando and meet with Director of Engineering to review the latest publications.</p>	<p>Budget: \$2,500 May</p>	<p>Actual Cost: \$2,250 plus \$2,500 T&E</p> <p>Held May 20th</p>	<p>Incremental Sales = \$100,000</p> <p>ROI =200% (\$100K/\$5,000)</p>

(End of Territory Business Plan Template).

The next few pages, taken from our Sales Management Boot Camp programs, provide you with an example of “another view” of a sales planning process using a series of PowerPoint templates that provided an easy-to-do, easy-to-review, common methodology within a sales team. Although seemingly easier to accomplish and display, the homework and the detailing necessary to get to this view requires the same amount of planning effort, discipline and detailing.

These are merely visuals. In actual practice, we would use the templates in Hubspot, our CRM.

Examples from our Sales Management Boot Camps



Start Writing...

What you need...



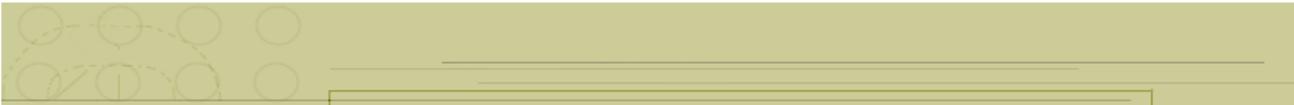
- 2 to 3 half days
- End of quarter or first 2 days of new quarter
- A quiet place and time.
- All of your data easily available.
- Get your ideas and content down quickly.
- Write draft after draft

Let it air out for a day

Share an almost final draft with others

- Someone else on the Sales Team
- Your boss, definitely the CFO





Example #1

- Business system software & services
- Sold to hospitals
- Very rapid growth
- Value proposition: ROI, billing
- Your planning format: **Only 5 sections**
 1. Segment customers
 2. List Key Accounts
 3. Assess competitors
 4. Detail quarterly objectives
 5. Detail monthly and quarterly tactics



Quarterly Plan Example -Step #1-Segment

1. Segment Your Customers

1. There is not much to do here.
- This is a listing of the specific market segment types which are available
- It should begin every Plan since it is a strong visual reminder as to your sales focus for this period.

Segment Name	Segmentation Characteristics	No. of Beds
Teaching	Major urban teaching hospital in one of the key 18 cities	750
Large Urban	Large urban hospital, but not affiliated with a university	500-750
Community#1	-Located outside of the urban geography, but directly affiliated with a university	300-500
Community#2	-Located outside of the urban geography, but not affiliated with a university, but part of an IDN	300-500
Large Group >10 docs	-Large Group Practice directly associated with a Teaching or Large Urban	NA
Small Group	-5-10 physicians	NA

Territory Plan Example -Step #1-Segment

1. Segment Your Customers Focus Your Plan

- What you would do here is to fill in the % of your your bookings or sales that you have achieved YTD and **highlight** the segment or two that you are focusing this plan on. It may be the exact same for the past period or you may be changing your focus to an added segment

Segment Name	Segmentation Characteristics	No. of Beds	Current YTD %
Teaching	Major urban teaching hospital in one of the key 18 cities	750	9.1%
Large Urban	Large Urban hospital, but not affiliated with a university	500-750	12.8%
Community #1	-Located outside of the urban geography, but directly affiliated with a university	300-500	29.7%
Community #2	-Located outside of the urban geography, but not affiliated with a university, but part of an IDN	300-500	48.4%
Large Group > 10 docs	-Large Group Practice directly associated with a Teaching or Large Urban	N/A	0%
Small Group	-5-10 physicians	N/A	0%

In this example, the account manager is going to continue to focus on Community #2, but they have also decided to make inroads into the Large Group Practices

Territory Plan Example -Step #2- Key Accounts

2. List Key Accounts

- Use simple language
- Use clear definitions
- Use metrics & data
- Who is the targeted prospect or the existing customer?
- What are their key needs for this time period?
- What would be the expected dollar value if you were able to close them during this period?

Prospect or Customer	Key Needs	\$ Value to

**Key Accounts should follow the 80/20 % Rule
Maybe even 90/10%**



321

Territory Plan Example -Step #2-Key Accounts

Prospect or Customer	Key Needs	\$ Value to
Winchester Hospital	Their existing Meditech system is ancient and not integrated to their billing and coding system. They are looking at both replacing their entire enterprise or doing so on a department by department basis. Their biggest pain point currently is their Orthopedics Department where they are losing patient data. Orthopedics currently is the busiest department in the hospital due to their heavy marketing campaign last quarter	\$ 100K for an Orthopedic module only. Sales cycle would be 180 days.
NE Ortho	This would be a new account and a new entry into the Large Group Practice segment where I have a quota requirement of opening two accounts per quarter equaling \$25K for the 1 st quarter and \$50K/quarter for the balance of the year.	\$10-\$15K for a standalone. \$7.5K if tied to Winchester Plus \$10k in training.





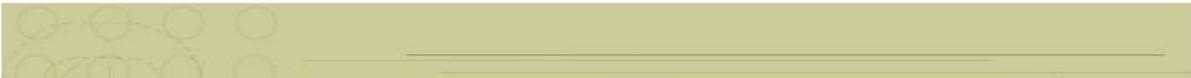
Territory Plan Example -Step #3-Competitors

3. Assess Competitors



- Who & Why?
- Must detail both the Strengths & Weaknesses
- Need to be very objective and detailed

Competitor	Strengths	Weaknesses



Territory Plan Example -Step #3-Competitors



Competitor	Strengths	Weaknesses	Our Value
Meditech	The 800 pound gorilla. Installed everywhere.	Poor service reputation Antiquated technology	Excellent quality and proven track record in service gets them up and running within 30 days
eClinicalWork	•Web-based •Lots of market buzz •Easy to install •Excellent Marketing	Not many except price is at the top of the market.	Same as above • We have a 20% price advantage. Do not want to discount, but could "throw in" our training package if they buy in this quarter.

This would be a listing of the primary competitors that you are seeing in the market during that time period of that quarter.

You need to make sure that you keep this list fresh and that you are very objective in your comments



Territory Plan Example -Step #4-Objectives

4. Primary Objectives (simple, easily defined)

– Annual, Quarterly, Actual to Plan -both MTD & QTD



Top 3 Primary Objectives	Plan 2018	Actual YTD QTD	30-60-90 Plan	Comments
• Objective 1:				
• Objective 2:				
• Objective 3:				

SALES

Territory Plan Example -Step #4-Objectives

4. Primary Objectives (simple, easily defined)

– Annual, Quarterly, Actual to Plan -both MTD & QTD



Top 3 Primary Objectives	Plan 2018	Actual YTD QTD	30-60-90 Plan	Comments
Objective 1: Bookings Achieve \$1.8m by 12/31/18 Q1:\$350K, Q2:\$450, Q3:\$400K, Q4: \$600K	\$1.8m Bookings Quota \$2.2m Bookings for Club	Q1: \$4000 Q2: \$0K Q3: \$625K	Q4 Plan is to get \$775K \$325K-\$200K-\$250K	Q4 is going to be the critical month. Need to maximize the focus into new/new accounts. Forget about existing accounts for this quarter. Discuss with Inside Sales.
Objective 2: Need to move focus to new accounts: 60% new, 40% existing	Today: 50%/50%	Q1: 50/50 Q2: 50/50 Q3: 75/25	Need 6 new accounts	Need to spend time with Mary in Marketing to have her focus on new lead gen in western MA, CT and RI. Must break into Yale affiliated hospitals.
Objective 3: Open a minimum of 6 Large Group Practice accounts for >\$250K for 2018	\$175K quota \$250K Stretch	Q1: 1 Q2: 1 Q3: 3		Winchester is up and running. Need to use their testimonials for referrals to their partners in CT.

SALES



Territory Plan Example - Step #5-Tactical Plan



Tactic	Expected Outcome (Detail Benefits or Return)	Time-Start -Finish	Cost
1.			
2.			
3.			

SALES

Territory Plan Example - Step #5-Tactical Plan

Tactic	Expected Outcome (Benefits or Return)	Time: Start to Finish	Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target Orthopedic departments in all non-Customer Community #2 Hospitals for White Paper Download results achieved at Baptist in Q4, 2017. • Work with Marketing for November launch. Must work existing new leads-need content 	30 Qualified leads as a result of campaign.	Q4	<\$1,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase travel to 10 days per month with principal activity for Large Community Hospitals in Providence and in all CT. Bring the head of our Medical Advisory Board, Dr. Smith, to Yale New Haven and to Stamford Memorial for one symposium in each by end of November. • Research Maine Medical Center for need. • Travel with clinical specialist, Jan Olmstead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve 60/40% split for New/Existing. • Must get out of MA territory and focus on the CT geography. • Stop wasting time in VT and NH. - 	Immediate	\$12,000 Increased travel and hotels for CT. Run symposia at \$3,000 each
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus majority of MA time on getting into the Large Group Practices affiliated with existing MA hospital customers using their networks. • Spend 30% of October targeting 10 new practices. • Use the Brainshark module on testimonials from New England Rehab Center featuring improvements in customer satisfaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open minimum of 6 new Group Practices. • Demonstrate specifically that "Meaningful Use" can be impacted as a result 	October & November	<\$1,000

↑
SALES

Again, what's been directly supplied above is just another template example shown here to provide you with a different view of a Sales Plan structure. The key takeaway is to have the sales rep...

- Take a quarterly detailed view of their territory and their high opportunity key accounts
- Define the activities for both the quarter and the month into 30-60-90-day periods
- Identify metrics
- Focus on the one thing they can totally control, which is always activities.

As you will note, the key to success in this is getting the results that you want for each quarter detailed down into 30-60-90-day activities. Very simply, you can never get results without detailing the activities. All plans get sidetracked, and often, *"it's the actual planning process that is most important."*

Process-Tools-Technology-Math & People

This phrase of ***“Process-Tools-Technology-Math & People”*** is one that I and my partners use many times every day when working with customers, and I use all of the time in teaching my courses at Tufts in Marketing and in Sales. We apply the same exacting principles of bringing operating processes with individual steps, tools that tie into those steps and technology always integrated into the company’s CRM platform. All of this thought process of applying systematic processes which use specific tools along with required training have been used in manufacturing, engineering and quality control systems for decades. Finally, the world of Sales has caught up and are reaping the same rewards of shorter time periods and dramatically increased win rates.

When properly introduced and bought into by the sales team, success has been measured by increasing the productivity of the salespeople by a minimum of 25% and the effectiveness of increasing customer value also by 25% plus.

For the purpose of this document, which is primarily to provide you with an overview of how to construct sales plan, what we have done below is to provide a slide from our Sales Management Boot Camp in order to give graphic representations of what a typical Sales Process would look like.

Each sales process would be customized to the requirements of the individual company and the market requirements of the customers.

Typically, the initial steps of “Qualify”, “Discovery” and “Validate” will always be in place although they may be titled differently, and then there will always be a “Close” step. What lies between these two groups would be heavily customized by the sales management of the individual company.



SALES

funnel example with primary tools



Derby Management Proprietary Content, 2021©

522

- Our Sales funnels will typically have 5 to 7 steps
- They will always start with a “Qualify” step
- They will next always move to a “Discovery” step, which is the #1 most important step
- They will always have a “Validate” step, which confirms the Discovery meeting results
- They will always have a “Close” step.
- The other steps between “Validate” and “Close” are customized

After working through the development of the steps and their accompanying tools that go into each step, a Sales would then be embedded directly into your company’s CRM platform which would then be used to provide the planning and performance metrics that move from step to step.

What is outlined in the simplified graphic above are basic examples of some of the most critical tools identified here as a “Discovery Checklist” and a “Business Use Case”. Again, each company would come up with its own vocabulary to be used by everyone since then the use of these tools will be measured as KPIs through the sales process.

Taking a look at the sales process and the vocabulary used by Colleen Honan, one of the most experienced and successful heads of sales we know, she has designed her sales process as shown below. Each of these six steps is very specifically defined in terms of their meaning, the tools that are to be used in each step, and of course, the technologies that are required to be used. All of that information along with the integrated use of technology stack is embedded in their CRM.

Sales Stages

STAGE NAME	FORECAST CATEGORY
1 - Needs Assessment	Pipeline
2 – SA* - Discovery	Pipeline
3 - Value Confirmed	Best Case
4 - Proposal	Commit
5 – Negotiation	Commit
Pending Final Approval	Commit

* “SA” stands for Solution Alignment

BRAINSHARK

If you want to learn a lot more about Sales processes, just connect with us, and we would welcome the opportunity to schedule a [Whiteboarding Session](#) with you to explore what you currently are doing in Sales and suggest additional opportunities for this still-complex year of 2021.

You may also want to think about attending one of our virtual Sales Management Boot Camps this year or talk to us about developing a specific boot camp for your team.

Thanks very much for reading and thinking through our fifth edition of this ebook, [“How to Write the Winning Sales Plan”](#). It’s getting better with each edit and considering the now very rapid changes that are occurring in Sales, we would expect that we will do another edit sometime in early Q3. Keep in touch, and if you have ideas as to what you would like to see in an enhanced editions or comments about what is here, just email me with your ideas, or we can set up a call to discuss what you have in mind.

Best of Success in your 2021 sales results!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jack', written in a cursive style.

[Head Coach, Derby Management Site](#)

- Sales & Marketing Productivity Experts
- Business & Strategy Planning Specialists
- Senior Management Coaches

[What We Do & the Value We Add](#)

Professor of the Practice, [Tufts University Center of Entrepreneurship](#)
Prior Director of the Center and the Cummings Professor of Entrepreneurship