



## **What is a Fractional CSO? The Short and Long Answer:**

**The Short Answer:** A Fractional/CSO becomes a trusted advisor and business partner to the Chief Executive Officer of a small to midsize business, providing strategic sales and marketing support for the business on a less than full-time basis.

**The Longer Answer:** A [Fractional/CSO](#) becomes an interim or part-time Chief Sales Officer who is contracted for specific, strategic revenue support. I am highly skilled, seasoned senior executive with a background that spans multiple decades of sales, marketing and operational experience. I become an integrated part of the management team, bringing better sales understanding to everyone on the team in [virtually any industry](#).

Full time CSOs and Sales VPs usually command a salary that makes them unaffordable to most SMB companies. Throw in the benefits of an executive position and it can begin to make a significant impact on the bottom line. There are almost 30 million businesses in this country and most of those simply cannot justify hiring a full-time CSO. However, engaging a Fractional/CSO makes the benefit of having such an experienced CSO affordable for these companies.

Engagements can be as short as a project taking only a few days to a permanent monthly consulting agreement. Most engagements begin with a free assessment of the issues introduced by management, followed up by a proposal for what work is believed to be necessary. Long-term engagements are created when the company's executive leadership has determined that the knowledge and assistance of the Fractional/CSO will continue to benefit the company in perpetuity.



In other words, a company can utilize the full expertise of a seasoned, experienced CSO for a fraction of the cost by using them only as needed (i.e. a fraction of the time). Additionally, the Fractional/CSO can utilize the best sales practices developed at many different companies and industries to benefit his current client.

There are many other questions that could and should be asked regarding a Fractional/CSO. In order to gain a better understanding of the practice, I have included some of those here.

### **Who needs a Fractional/CSO?**

There are really four different answers to this question, with a global follow up:

1. A company that is **growing and/or changing** and needs strategic assistance with sales and business development, marketing insight and overall sound business judgment. The size of the company can be a very wide range. Typically, I engage with companies that have 12 or less sales professionals and revenue between \$2 and \$20M. The important concept here is that by utilizing the expertise of a highly skilled CSO, a small business can begin the journey towards becoming a large company.
2. A company of any size in **need of targeted sales skills** that it does not possess on staff. This might be related to the launching a new product line or initiative, or even understanding why a previously profitable business has begun to encounter financial struggles. Even the largest companies in the world hire short-term experts to analyze problems that they do not understand.



3. A **start-up or small company** who needs intensive sales and marketing assistance to set up marketing, as well as sales processes and procedures, but has not yet developed the business enough to require a full-time sales manager.
4. A company looking to **outsource critical sales processes**. This can become especially useful when a long-term CSO or VP is leaving a company. By using the expertise of someone trained to quickly assess and resolve issues, the company can continue to operate at full speed until it finds a new full-time sales executive or develops a sales structure that the Fractional/CSO can support as a permanent consultant and supervisor.

Given these parameters, any company in the country could use the services of a Fractional/CSO if they want to resolve problems and grow the business.

### **What are some specific tasks that can be accomplished by a Fractional/CSO?**

There are literally millions of businesses that could benefit tremendously from the services of a Fractional/CSO, but do not know they need the help, do not believe they can afford the help, or do not even know that the option exists. The lack of sales and marketing knowledge and expertise that can be employed by a CSO restricts the growth of a business and can doom it to eventual failure.

Although this is not everything that is possible, here are some of the typical services that a Fractional/CSO might provide to a business:



1. Support executive leadership to develop **Go-To-Market and Go-To-Customer Strategies** that can guide a business through the new business development jungle.
2. Support of **Merger and Acquisition (M&A) activities**. The growth of many companies comes as a result of combining with or purchasing other businesses. The expertise needed to be successful in this effort is not the same as that of handling the day-to-day activities of running the business.
3. Support owners in the planning and implementation of the **succession or sale of a business**. As more business owner baby boomers begin to consider retirement, this will become more and more of an issue in the business world. Properly planning and executing the succession or sale of a business is beyond the skill set of the average business owner or their accountant.
4. Support the effort to **optimize the capital structure** of the company. Understanding the required capital structure can be a difficult task. Consideration has to be given to cash flow, financing, asset acquisition decisions, human resources, contract negotiations, and the due diligence of management.
5. Support the **sales function** of the business with knowledge and expertise of sales and marketing issues; development of budgets; development of forecasts, design and implementation of CRM systems, processes and procedures; and the training, coaching and/or supervision of sales staff. There comes a time in the life of every growing or changing company that closing the books and reviewing the cash account is simply not enough.



6. Development of a **dynamic business forecasting model** that allows the management team a view of the future and the potential of answering “what if” questions before critical decisions are made. No one can predict the future with complete certainty but having the advantage of knowing the impact of multiple realistic and possible business scenarios before they occur is a powerful tool to help guide a company through this uncertainty.
7. Development of **sales management reports**. Management reports can be much more relevant and helpful to the executive team at a company than financial statements, since they are designed to answer questions that relate directly to specific revenue opportunities of the business. These reports can relate to business divisions or segments, products or services, as well as sales personnel. By receiving reports designed to assist managers with their decisions on a timely basis, the decisions will invariably improve.
8. Support of **business process and other intellectual capital documentation and improvement**. Most companies do not know what they know. I realize that may sound confusing, but the undocumented knowledge held inside an employee’s head is only beneficial to the company as long as the employee is still with the company. It is critical to a company’s sustainability for them to document all business processes and procedures, as well as create meaningful and measurable job descriptions for all employees, no matter how many or few. This can seem like an overwhelming task, but with the right champion for the project, it can become very manageable.



9. Support with **turn-around activities**. This can span from as little as determining why sales are down or expenses are up to as much as assistance with reorganization and developing a plan for future success.

The key aspects of the Fractional/CSO's value to a company are that they help solve problems that are not getting solved without them. The Fractional/CSO also puts the company in a position to grow and prosper in the future by much more than the cost they bring to a company.

### **Why use a Fractional/CSO?**

Although, this may have already been answered by the discussion above, the most critical reason has not yet been disclosed. The management team of a company is hired to run the business. If wrestling with sales and marketing issues distracts management, they cannot focus on running the business. This means that a Fractional/CSO can give the greatest gift of all to the management team: **TIME!** Time to do what they are supposed to do. Time to focus on the things that will improve strategic plans and operations. Time to focus on the things that will improve profitability and sustainability. Time to build a legacy that can be passed on to others.

Why would anyone struggle with activities that only serve to irritate and distract from their true purpose when they could partner with someone who can give them a boost up to the next level? Someone else will have to answer that one. I don't have the slightest idea why anyone would do that.



## **How can Suncoast Partners International help you?**

At Suncoast Partners, we can support you in every aspect of your [Go-To-Customer strategy](#). We bring invaluable experience to the table at an affordable cost. We will help you analyze and understand the business development aspects of your business and be your strategic partner to develop a plan for your future. We have access to tools that allow us to serve customers in an efficient and effective manner. These tools are used to provide budgeting, reporting, forecasting and many other tasks that make it easier for management to fully grasp the sales and marketing structure of a company. The bottom line is that we solve problems and help you achieve your goals.

I'd be happy to talk to you about your goals and how we can achieve them together. Feel free to contact me at **941.320.5277** or email me at: [Dan@Suncoast-Partners.com](mailto:Dan@Suncoast-Partners.com) or just click the link to schedule a no obligation [one-on-one meeting](#) with me. I look forward to speaking with you.