



5 Steps to Achieving Your Year-End Numbers

2020 has been a year of unprecedented turmoil on so many fronts. Faced with uncertainty, businesses have put the brakes on as deals stalled or vanished. Many companies have instituted layoffs, as priorities have shifted to maintaining revenue and/or just surviving. Others have faced incredible manufacturing and supply chain pressures.

The way people are now allowed to interact has fundamentally changed as well. Most direct sales reps have been sidelined from visiting their clients, and video calls have become the norm. For most, offices are now in unique spaces within homes, and the line between work and personal life is blurred.

But the one constant that has not changed, is the need to still drive numbers.

As we move through the fourth quarter, it's time to re-mobilize and push hard to drive to the year-end and be positioned for a fast start in 2021. Re-committing your teams and self to the basics of sales efficiency and effectiveness will help you realize your current milestones and better position for a fast start next year.

Step 1. Identify and prioritize your best opportunities...first.

Too many business owners and CEOs make the mistake of giving in to their sense of urgency as the year-end approaches, pushing their teams to try to close as many deals as possible. Always ineffective, this approach becomes even more unproductive as we consider the impact of selling in a virtual environment. Following a codified pursuit strategy and a more formal qualification process will yield a better outcome for all.



Step 1. Identify and prioritize your best opportunities...first, (continued)

What should be considered in developing an approach to prioritizing opportunities?

Whichever scorecard you use, it should focus on these universal qualifying categories:

- Solution Alignment
- Decision Making Process
- Buying Personas
- Competition
- Timing
- Budget

Step 2. Know the business issues that key customers want to address.

Examine each deal not only from your own perspective, but from your customer's point of view. Figure out how urgent their issue is to them. You can't prioritize an existing opportunity if you don't know the client's pain or need—what are they trying to fix, accomplish or avoid.

Trying to move ahead without this knowledge is a common mistake, especially during the year-end push. Salespeople sometimes push too hard too early, trying to close the deal while the customer is still trying to figure out the problem. You must address that issue first. You need to understand what exactly they are trying to do and why. If you can't quickly articulate the business issue they're trying to address, you aren't ready to close the deal.

Step 3. Align your sales process with your client's buying processes.

Trying to "rush" through a deal won't benefit you or the customer. Don't short-cut the sales process in attempts to expedite things. The sales process and the client's buying process must stay in alignment. If you lose the deal today, it also falls out of the future funnel. The [strategic opportunity quality scorecard](#) will highlight progress against this alignment.



Step 4. Always be creating new opportunities.

It's important to prospect for and develop new business throughout the entire year as opposed to pushing through existing opportunities in hopes of hitting great year-end numbers. Pipeline health must always be understood and actioned, regardless of the time of year.

Sellers should schedule time into their calendar for opportunity management and business development and business owners should have a good system in place for talking about those efforts. Don't let the time of year distract from the basics that yield good performance.

Step 5. Remember your existing customers.

Sales organizations should constantly assess the value they are providing to their best clients. As products and services are introduced and updated, existing customers should be analyzed for application. Suggesting additional solutions to solve client problems or help them achieve their goals is the path to becoming a trusted advisor rather than just a vendor.

In our virtual selling environment, much may seem different. Execution may have changed, but the things that drive excellence in performance have not. In fact, they are more critical than ever.

Utilize these five essential steps and you will improve the opportunity to reach your year-end goals and kick off a great 2021