Salesflow

Fast Track Your Lead Generation and Outbound Sales. The refreshingly simple, and remarkably effective, LinkedIn Lead Generation platform.

Find out more

The top 50 insights from the best 15 sales books

The fundamental tips from the best sales books out there, with actionable steps you can take to sell better today.

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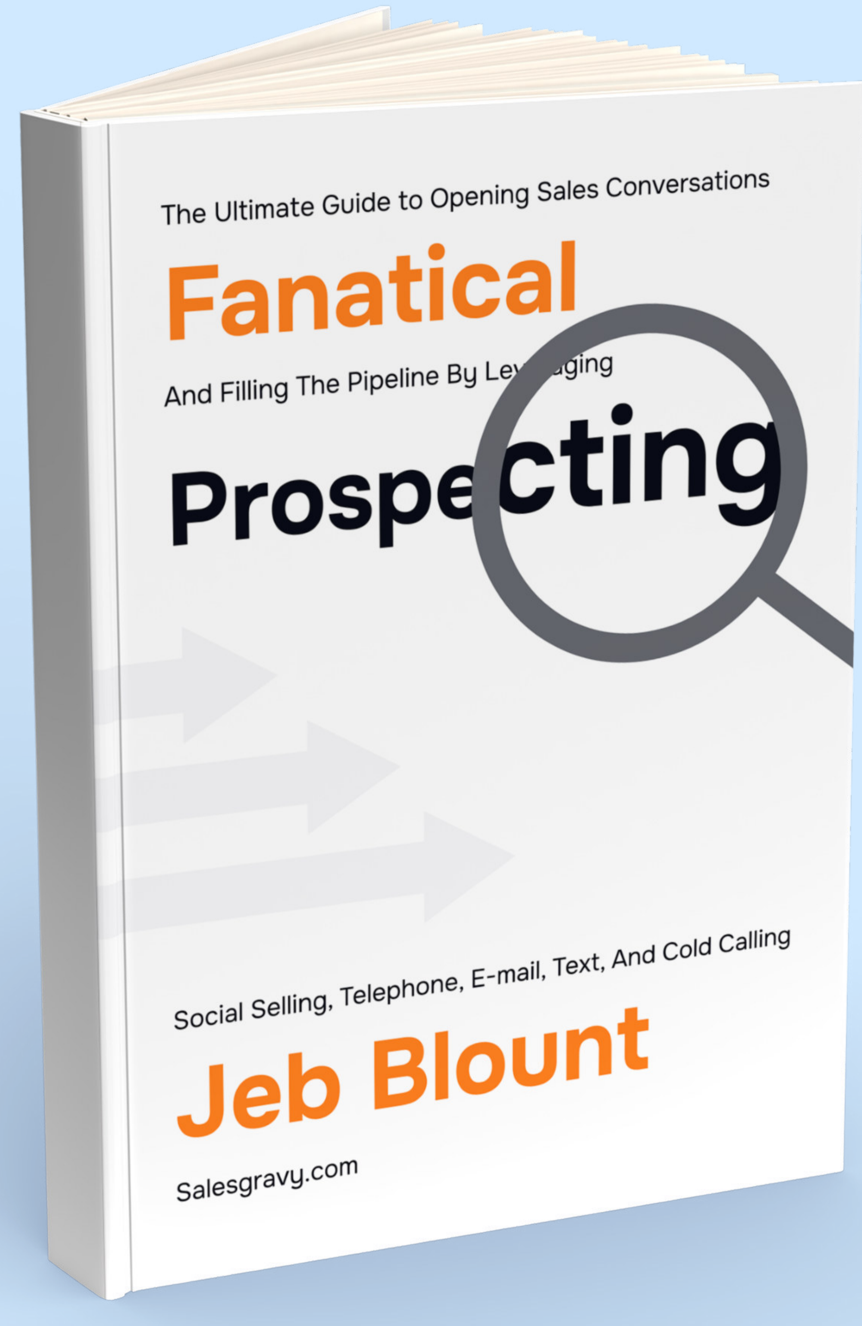
An ICP is key for effective cold calling

Contacting the wrong prospects wastes everyone's time. For effective lead generation, create an ideal customer profile (ICP) to understand who is most likely to benefit from your product and create the largest deals.

How you can use this idea

Do the work to develop an ICP upfront. Think about what pain points your service or product best addresses, which areas of the market have the biggest need for this and the most lucrative budgets, and which roles within the organization have buying power and are responsible for the problem area.

Once you have an ICP, you can easily find more prospects that fit it using LinkedIn and LinkedIn Sales Navigator filters. Using Salesflow, you can create automated outreach sequences at scale, so you're always following up with good-fit prospects.



Fanatical Prospecting

Social channels can provide key insights into prospect behaviors

In the current digital age, there's more insight into prospects than ever. Yet prospects are being bombarded with cold outreach from all corners every day.

To reach through the noise, use the social channels available to 1) assess fit and 2) create more effective outreach.

"Through the social channel, we gain glimpses into our prospects' behavior, desires, preferences, and triggers that drive buying behavior and open buying windows."

– Fanatical Prospecting, Jeb Blount

How to use this idea.

With the wealth of channels out there, and direct communication made possible through platforms like LinkedIn, there's no longer any excuse for not understanding your ICP.

Dedicate 15 minutes a day for the next week to researching your prospects on LinkedIn or Twitter. (Using LinkedIn Sales Navigator, you can get these updates sent to you in real-time for your lead and account lists).

When you see something interesting, draft an outreach message and use it as a hook. A LinkedIn automation tool like Salesflow can help you save and queue up these messages as a sequence, so you're always able to produce effective cold outreach at scale.

Being perfect isn't as important as putting yourself out there.

Perfectionism is risky in sales: getting in your own head can stop you from prospecting at scale, and in the long run, not being afraid to get messy and get going is what will get you consistent results.

"Messy success is far better than perfect mediocrity"

– Fanatical Prospecting, Jeb Blount.

How to use this idea.

Stop being scared of your prospects. Pick up the phone and start calling. It's better to fail and learn as you go than to wait around for the best approach to fall into your lap.

Quality is important, but without quantity it means nothing. Try focusing just on numbers for a week, and see what you get back.

If nothing else, you'll quickly learn exactly where you need to improve (much more effectively than stewing over getting it perfect in the first place!).

Data and tracking are key to prospecting success

Our gut impressions are often off base. Accurate activity data can show you if what you're doing is successful.

Database insights are incredibly powerful: they allow you to prioritize prospects based on the size of the opportunity and the probability of conversion.

"Once you are tracking your numbers consistently, the door is open to an honest assessment of both the efficiency and the effectiveness of your sales activities"

– Jeb Blount, Fanatical Prospecting

How to use this idea.

It's time to get nerdy with your CRM. First, look at your own stats. How high is your call rate? What's the click-through rate on your messages? Are you losing lots of prospects between discovery and proposal?

Once you have these insights, you have power. See them as a friend rather than something to avoid, and put effort into improving the areas you're not seeing results.

To pitch effectively, tell your prospect what's in it for them

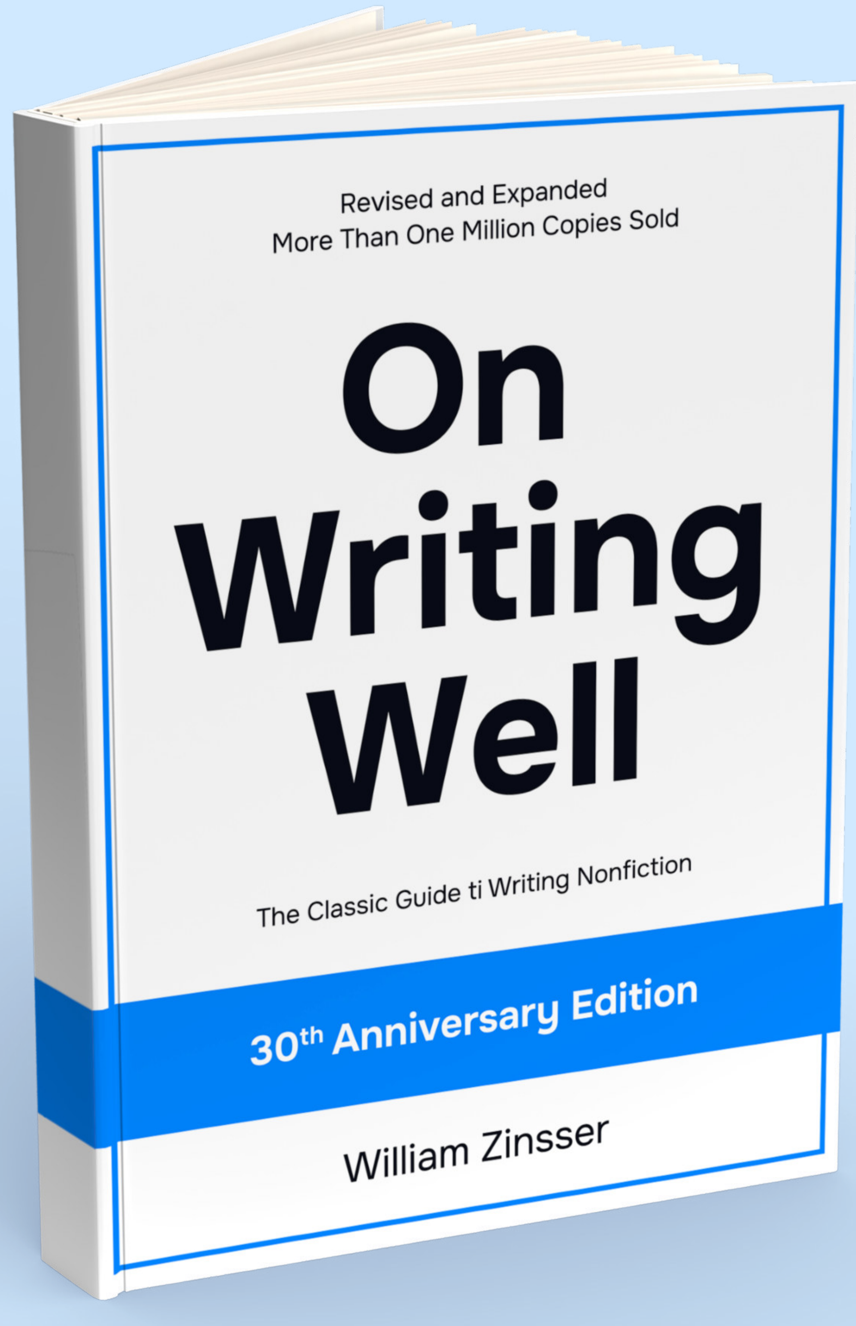
A prospect doesn't care about your company's amazing features or impressive brand recognition.

When you first reach out, they want to know one thing: how will this solution solve my problems or help me achieve my aims?

Centering your prospect is a powerful way to produce results, and this simple question ensures you always keep them top of mind.

How to use this idea.

- Go through your most recent outreach messages.
- Pretend you're a prospect. Do you understand how you could benefit from engaging? Do you feel compelled to act?
- Every time you mention a company feature or statistic, ask, so what?
- Rewrite your message to show your prospect why a feature or statistic can help them specifically.



On Writing Well

To write well, strive for simplicity.

"The secret to good writing is to strip every sentence to its cleanest components."

– William Zinsser, On Writing Well.

Make your writing as clean as possible. Remove any elements that could add confusion for readers, and distill your message into its purest form. Get clear on exactly what you want to say before you start, and evaluate your message with this in mind once done.

"Clear thinking becomes clear writing; one can't exist without the other"

– William Zinsser, On Writing Well

How to use this idea.

- To catch fluff, read your message aloud before sending it.
- Are you using filler words? Hedging language, such as ‘could’, ‘maybe’, or ‘some’?
- Once you’ve got to the meat of your message, make it as easy to read as possible. Use short paragraphs and bullet points, and bold the key ideas.

Prospects are time-poor and are being targeted by sales reps every day. A message that’s as direct and dynamic as possible can cut through the noise and make a difference as to whether they respond.

Make your message resonate, but always be yourself

How formal, informal, humorous, or direct you are should always be determined by your audiences’ demands and the content type.

However, don’t get so caught up in crafting the perfect message that you stop sounding like yourself. The most important thing is to seem human – it’s the person prospects will respond to.

“Readers want the person who is talking to them to sound genuine. Therefore a fundamental rule is: be yourself.”

– William Zinsser, On Writing Wel

How to use this idea.

Read back over your recent outreach messages. Do they sound like you? Do they have a real voice?

Yes, there are best practices, but prospects will always respond best to those that sound human. Do some upfront work to discover audience expectations, but beyond this, let your expressions and tone of voice onto the page.

Take particular care with beginnings and endings

The right opening will hook or intrigue the reader. The right ending will create an impact and stay in your prospect's mind. Both are needed to create writing that captures the attention of your audience and compels them to pay attention.

> "The most important sentence in any article is the first one. If it doesn't induce the reader to proceed to the second sentence, your article is dead."
>
> – William Zinsser, On Writing Well

How to use this idea.

- Look at your recent subject lines. If you got them in an email, would you open it? Check your open rate statistics (find them in your CRM). If they're low, you need to be punchier and more compelling.

- A common problem? Failing to make the reader curious. Think how you could tease insights/information to make a reader read on.
- Other good tactics include bold statements, questions, and short phrases.
- Look at the cold messages you've recently received, and mine the best tactics. Which ones made you open them despite yourself? What are they doing that you can emulate?
- Similarly, the right CTA will make or break your prospecting. A/B test your options and track your click rate to find what works. Always keep in mind: why would your prospect want to take that next step with you?

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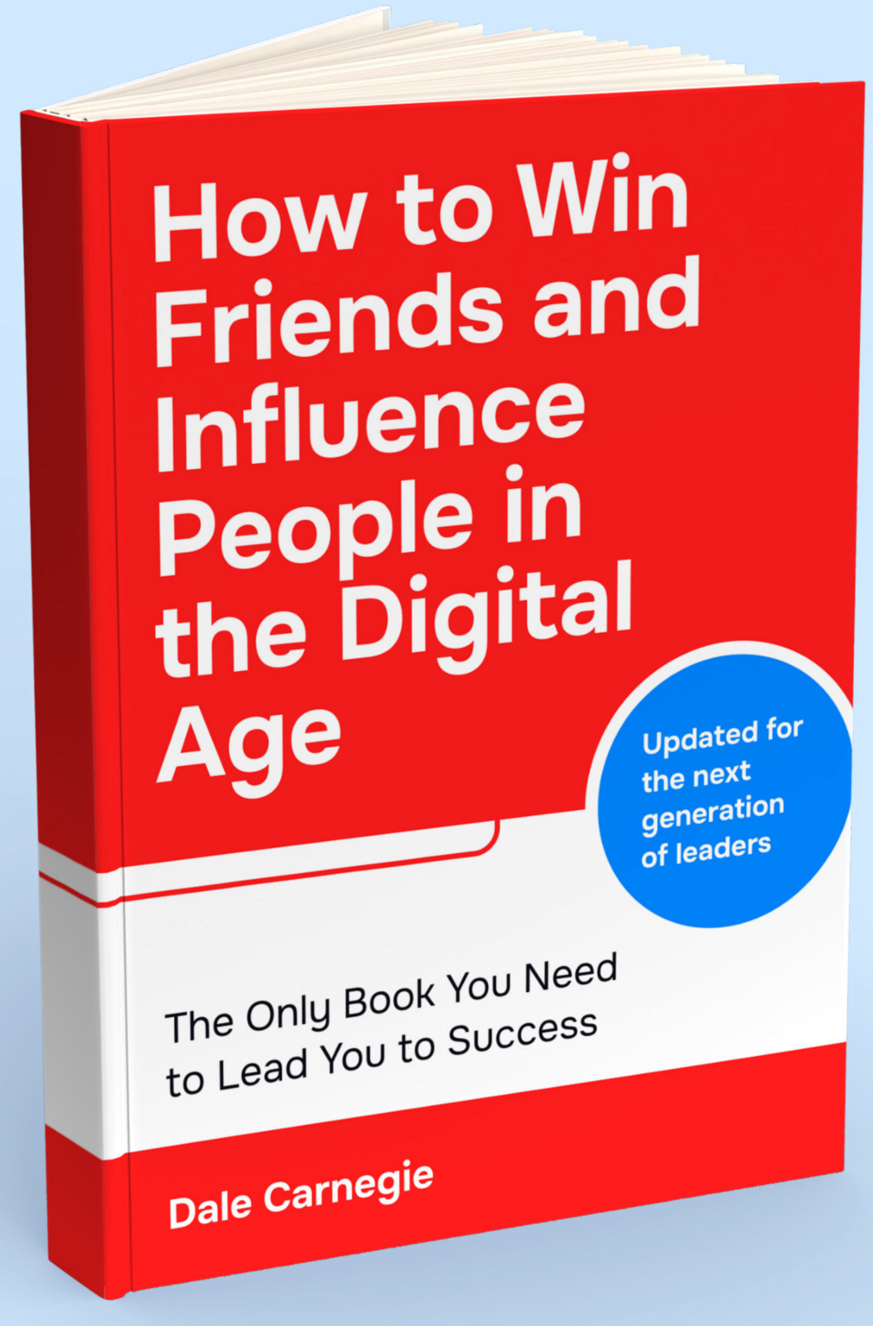
Sales Tactics



How to Win Friends and Influence People in the Digital Age

Influencing people requires finding common ground

People dig their heels in if they feel criticized or attacked. To persuade someone with a different perspective and influence their behavior, it's necessary to look for common ground. Instead of seeing conflict as a battle and trying to win, see points of friction as opportunities for shared problem-solving, which will deepen trust and de-escalate the situation.

"Don't criticize, condemn, or complain."

– Dale Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People in the Digital Age

How to use this idea

The next time you're on a sales call and need to persuade someone on your perspective:

- Don't threaten their initial position. Reassure them first: tell them you can see why they'd think that or empathize with their concern.
- Ask probing questions to identify where their concern is coming from and find the real issue.
- Use language like 'us' and 'we' to create a feeling of cooperation and shared objectives. Highlight your role in supporting and helping them.
- Once you've lowered their guard and have a better understanding of their perspective, brainstorm solutions with them that meet both your needs.

This openness will help you get to the heart of your prospect's wants and needs and help you advise on a solution they're most likely to find appealing.

Build 'yeses' to improve connection and influence

Use social media to create soft yeses and create buy-in to you and your perspective.

Without realizing it, people take themselves down a path of initial yeses and interest by doing things like following your accounts or listening to your opinion.

To build greater influence, try and build more yeses into the connection process.

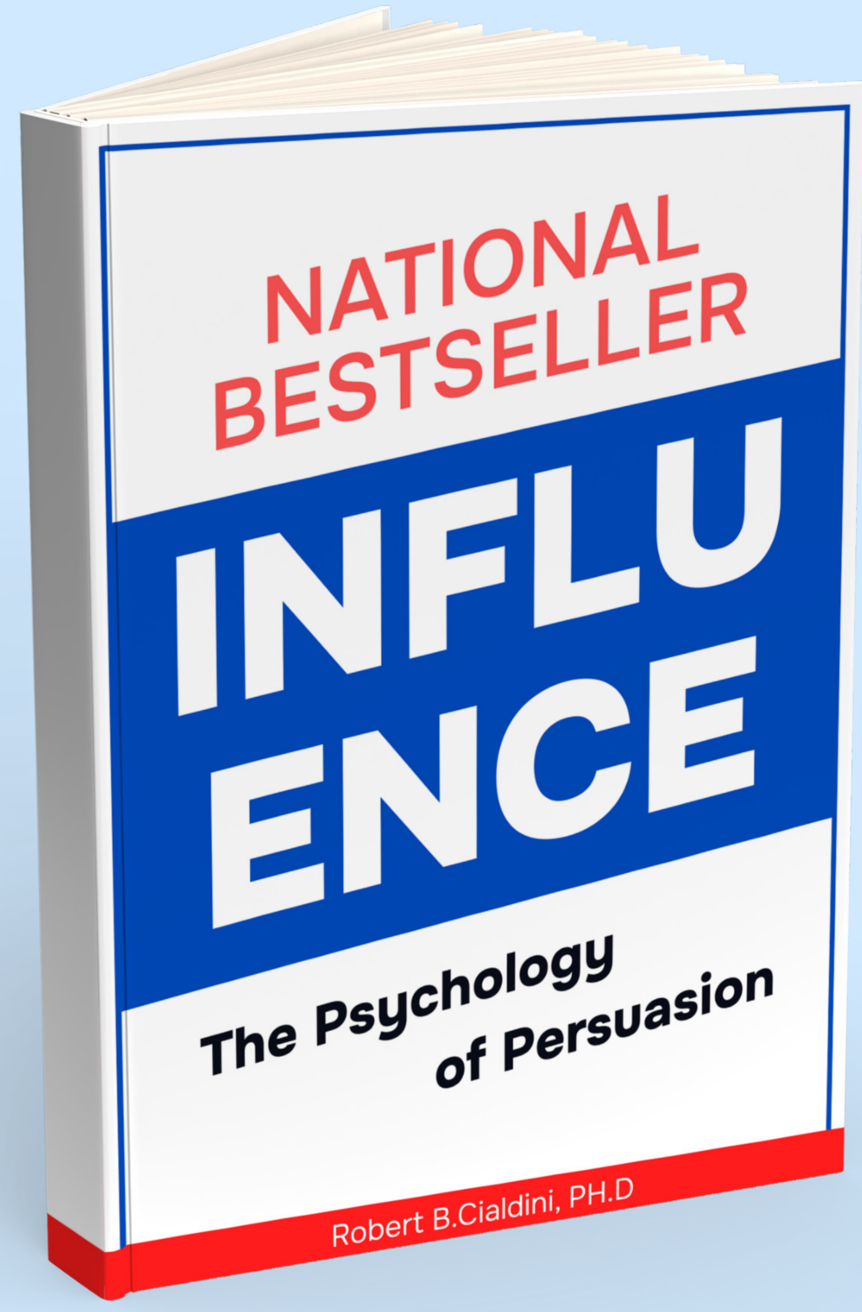
"The more yeses you can get at the outset of an interaction, even if they have little to do with the ultimate proposal, the more likely you are to put the person in a mood to agree with you."

– Dale Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People in the Digital Age

How to use this idea.

- Warm your prospects up by building in as many yeses as possible early in the buying cycle. (This is an area where lead nurturing can pay dividends).
- Invite prospects to attend demos or webinars, connect with you on LinkedIn, and sign up for your email marketing.

Social selling can be powerful – people build a relationship with brands they see consistently, and have closer identification with them.



Influence

Introducing an outrageous request and then backing down makes someone more likely to agree.

"The rule for reciprocation ... says that we should try to repay, in kind, what another person has provided us."

– Robert Cialdini, Influence.

Humans have an overpowering need to return favors.

If you know you want a particular outcome from a sales call, pitch, or negotiation, starting with an offer you believe they'll reject, and then showing a willingness to adapt to their needs, can increase the likelihood of getting the outcome you desire.

Because you've shown a willingness to bend to your prospect's needs, they often feel obliged to adapt similarly to yours.

How to use this idea.

Use this tip carefully: it’s powerful, but remember, you want your prospect to trust you and your company, and unskillful use of negotiation tactics can test that connection. If you go too extreme in your request, it can alienate a prospect completely and ruin a sale.

Instead, pick and choose where this is best to deploy. Prospects that come across as hardened negotiators would be one type to test this out on, or those that seem to appreciate a discount.

We want something more when it’s rare

This tactic uses the scarcity principle: the notion that we’re more likely to buy something if we think it’s rarer or harder to access.

This is especially true if something has recently become hard to get -- it's why so many companies use limited-time deals or sales.

How to use this idea.

Consider how you can create time limits around the next steps or deal length. You don’t want to jeopardize trust, so make sure these limitations are true. For example, you could:

- Offer price reductions before the end of a quarter, or make prospects aware pricing will go up after X date, to get them to sign earlier.
- Note the limited spaces on a webinar.
- Instead of limited time reductions, promote limited value adds (an additional add-on feature, adjusted pricing plans, or extra training from an internal expert, for example).

We look to social proof when we're not sure

Others' approval tends to always influence our actions, but this is especially the case with unsure outcomes.

In such situations, we often decide what to do based on what those around us are doing.

If a prospect is unsure about elements of your solution, showing similar companies have chosen you as a provider can be a good way to influence the sale.

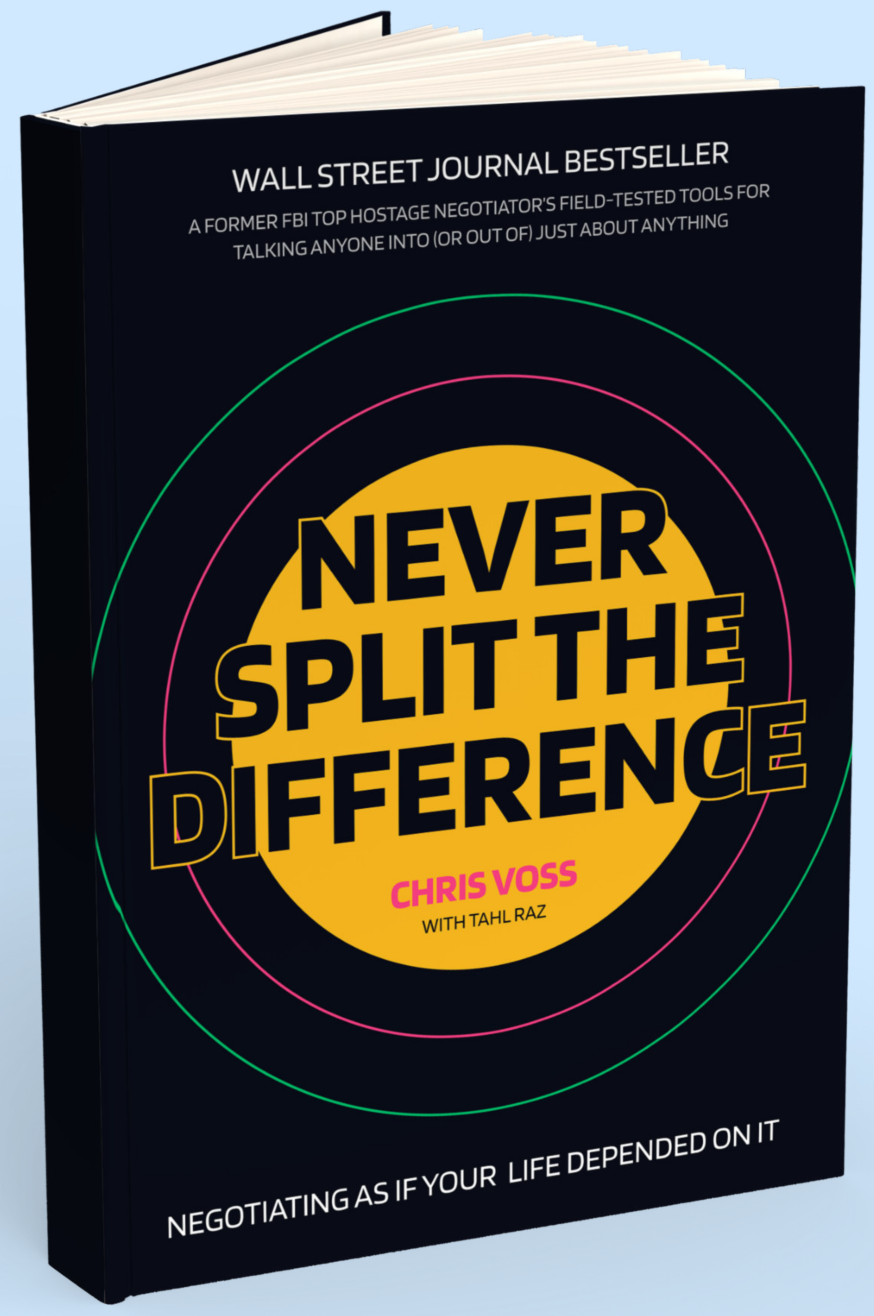
How to use this idea.

Consider how well you're currently using social proof.

- Do you have case studies to hand when talking to a prospect?
- Is there data for the results other customers in the same space have seen from your product?
- Are you name dropping big logo clients in your messages, calls or emails consistently to increase trust and signal your reputation?

Compile a sell sheet for each sector you work with, so you always have these points to hand.

Sync with customer success to get reviews and quotes from happy customers that you can share earlier in the buying cycle.



Never Split the Difference

Active listening is essential to building trust

People can tell whether you're really listening to them or if you're caught up in your own internal monologue.

Active listening helps people feel heard and lowers their defenses. They're more likely to listen to what you have to say and be persuaded by your input.

An easy way to convey active listening is to mirror the language or actions of your prospect. This increases trust unconsciously and makes you seem more congruent.

How to use this idea

Try roleplaying sales calls with colleagues to practice your mirroring skills. After the role-play, ask them how they felt.

- Did they feel tense? On guard?
- Was there any point they felt completely relaxed?

How to use this idea.

- Did anything you did help them trust you?
- Are you also selling the company vs just the solution/ product/service?

Even if you're distracted by a million other thoughts, once you enter a call, find a way to tune this out and listen only to your prospects. You could consider a pre-call ritual, like a breathing exercise, or add a sticky note reminder to your desktop if you're really struggling to stay present.

Make your empathy tactical

Empathy is essential for effective negotiation. But if this empathy is blind, you lose your negotiating position. Instead, aim to make your empathy tactical.

Try and put yourself in your prospect's shoes, but don't lose sight of the outcomes you want from your conversation. The trick is to combine empathy with a strategy and use what your prospect is feeling to move them through the sales cycle.

How to use this idea.

One tip Voss recommends is labeling or verbalizing your prospect's emotions. This can encourage your prospect to open up about their real issues and motivations, rather than hiding behind defenses.

Build opportunities for ‘Nos’ to give the illusion of control

Letting your prospects appear to control the early stages of a conversation can lower their defensiveness and get them to a point where they’re honest about their needs.

The trick to this is asking a question that will create a “no” but still keep the conversation flowing.

Prospects are so used to pushy sales reps gunning for a “yes”, they’ll trust and respect you more for allowing them their “no”. This tip can help you unearth more about a prospect’s circumstances while also building trust for better results.

““No” helps people feel safe, secure, emotionally comfortable, and in control of their decisions.”

– Chris Voss, Never Split the Difference.

How to use this idea.

Build small opportunities for prospects to feel control early in cold calls or pitches. For example, Voss recommends asking “Is now a bad time to talk?” rather than “Do you have a few minutes to talk?”. Since yeses are more reflexive, you can easily end up in a situation with someone who’s just waiting to hang up the phone, getting more uncomfortable by the minute. “No” puts them at ease, allowing you to continue with your pitch.

Compromise is good for no one

The core idea of this book? ‘Never split the difference’.

It might sound stubborn, but Voss argues that meeting someone halfway results in outcomes that are dissatisfying for all parties.

Question why you’re agreeing to a compromise with a prospect or when closing a deal. You might not want to take such a hard line as Voss, but there will be areas where fudging details and pushing through a sale that’s not right will be bad for both you and your potential future dissatisfied customer.

How to use this idea.

Evaluate where compromise will get you both acceptable results, and where you need to stand firm to get what you want.

Before you go into a sales call, note down the level of discount you’re prepared to give, or the extras you’re allowed to include (if any).

Remember to consider why you’re doing this: don’t get dragged into a race to the bottom on pricing.

If something doesn’t seem to be working, call it out and bring it into the open. You might be able to solve the problem together and avoid compromising on the outcome.

Telling someone they’re wrong only makes them feel more right.

When overcoming objections, it’s best to take a soft approach rather than stubbornly launching into an argument.

Even if your argument is logical and backed up with sound evidence, the soft skills of objection handling are the most important to landing a deal or meeting.

“When you try to resolve an objection with logic, without first considering its emotional origin, it’s like arguing with a wall.”

– Jeb Blount, Objections.

How to use this idea

Remember that a key part of sales is soft skills. If you notice prospects getting riled up, shutting down, or closing off from you, consider whether you’re blinded by the logic of your argument and avoiding engaging with their emotions.

Ask other reps to review your call recordings and give you honest (but constructive!) feedback on your soft skills. Often, they'll spot things you don't.

If you do struggle with objection handling, take the steps in the next two tips to master the situation.

Preparation is the key to overturning objections

Instead of arguing with prospects in an attempt to assuage their doubt, you'll get the best outcomes if you prepare responses to common concerns.

Planning effective responses, especially ones that include pattern-interrupts, can help you progress a sales conversation and will make you stand out from other vendors.

How to use this idea

First, find out what the common objections are for your company. Listen back to old customer calls, look through CRM notes, and speak to other members of your team.

Then, together build a list of these objections. Sort them by type - for example, whether they relate to pricing, competitors, or certain features.

Brainstorm responses. Listen to what's worked in the past for other reps. Compile these into a battlecard on each point, so you're prepared with answers as to why your solution is the best value, what you offer that a competitor doesn't, or why certain features are obsolete and others are absolutely critical.

PAIS (Pausing, Acknowledging, Ignoring, and Saving) can keep you clear-headed in the face of objections

Rather than trying to answer a prospect's objectives immediately, you want to remain in control of the conversation and assess what's really going on. PAIS does two important things. It gives you a framework for engaging with tricky ad-hoc objections, and it keeps you in control of your emotions and confidently selling.

The framework can stop you from worrying about prospects' questions derailing your next call or demo, making you a better seller who's likely to get that prospect to the next deal stage.

How to use this idea

Pause. Take a breath after a tricky question or rude objection.

Acknowledge. Instead of answering outright, show your prospect you've heard them. 'That's an interesting question', or 'I see your concern' can help lower defenses and get you to the next stage.

Ignore. Remember, the prospect isn't always right. Gently guiding the conversation at this point can save the situation. Plan a response you can use as a general template. 'I'd be happy to address your concerns once we've gone through the offering, but I see many companies worried about [X point] before they've seen the workings of the solution. I think if we continue, you'll see why that isn't an issue with [product]'.

Save. Prospects might have the cart before the horse if they're trying to start a battle on pricing before you even know their situation. Reassure your leads that you'll come back to their point in the flow of the discussion. Try something like this: 'I find clients often want to hear pricing first. But, that often stops us from addressing your specific situation, and I want to be sure I'm suggesting the right solution. Let's come back to this later in the call.'

Build micro-commitments with clear next steps

It's vital to agree on the next steps before you end a sales conversation. If you leave these to the prospect, they have no motivation to keep the ball rolling and it's trickier for you to move them through the funnel.

By ending every meeting with clear next steps, and getting your prospect to agree to these, you introduce micro-commitments that keep the process running.

How to use this idea

Build a practice of always agreeing on the next steps before the end of a call, so it becomes a natural part of your process.

Leave time at the end of each call to wrap up and reiterate commitments. Include specific actions with a timeline for each.

Offer trials for the whole team instead of just single users. Companies are more likely to commit to using your solution as a team. By giving more individuals access, you build a network of champions with a greater consensus on the value of your offering. This increases your chances of success for particular users.

Buying choices start with emotions

Salespeople start from logic and progress toward emotions when making a sale. But buyers begin emotionally and only consider product features and practical issues once committed to the exploration process.

"Answering your stakeholder's question "Do I like you?" is way deeper, more complex, and far more important than most salespeople consider."

– Jeb Blount, Sales EQ.

How to use this idea

Remember to focus on building an emotional connection with a prospect, rather than relying on just the positive benefits of what you're selling.

Try not to get frustrated if a prospect isn't convinced by hard evidence, and work on your soft skills to build rapport and put new leads at ease.

Account for the role of emotions in early pitches and discovery calls, and remember, right now, you're a stranger. You need to put your prospect at ease if you want results.

Manage your emotions to keep control of a sale

Buyers want to feel like they're engaging with a rep who can support and hold them through the buying process: to do so, sellers need to recognize what emotions come up for them and skillfully manage them, especially early in the buying cycle.

Don't let emotions get the best of you and go in too hard, too quickly.

How to use this idea

Really be honest with yourself about how you feel as a sales rep. What are your insecurities? What do you worry about before or after a client call? What do you beat yourself up about at night?

Be compassionate about these areas. Recognize you're only human, and that most of these thoughts are unhelpful.

Check how you respond to things going wrong in the process, or prospects who make things hard. Do you immediately get angry and berate them in your head? If you can work on introducing space, you'll move past short-term frustrations and win a better pipeline.

There are no shortcuts: building trust takes continued consistency

There are no quick wins to building immediate trust and keeping it. Adopting the advice of this book instead requires a shift in how you view the selling relationship: by seeing it as collaborative and aiming to support your buyer rather than dupe them, you'll see the best results.

"You must patiently lay the foundation, one brick at a time."

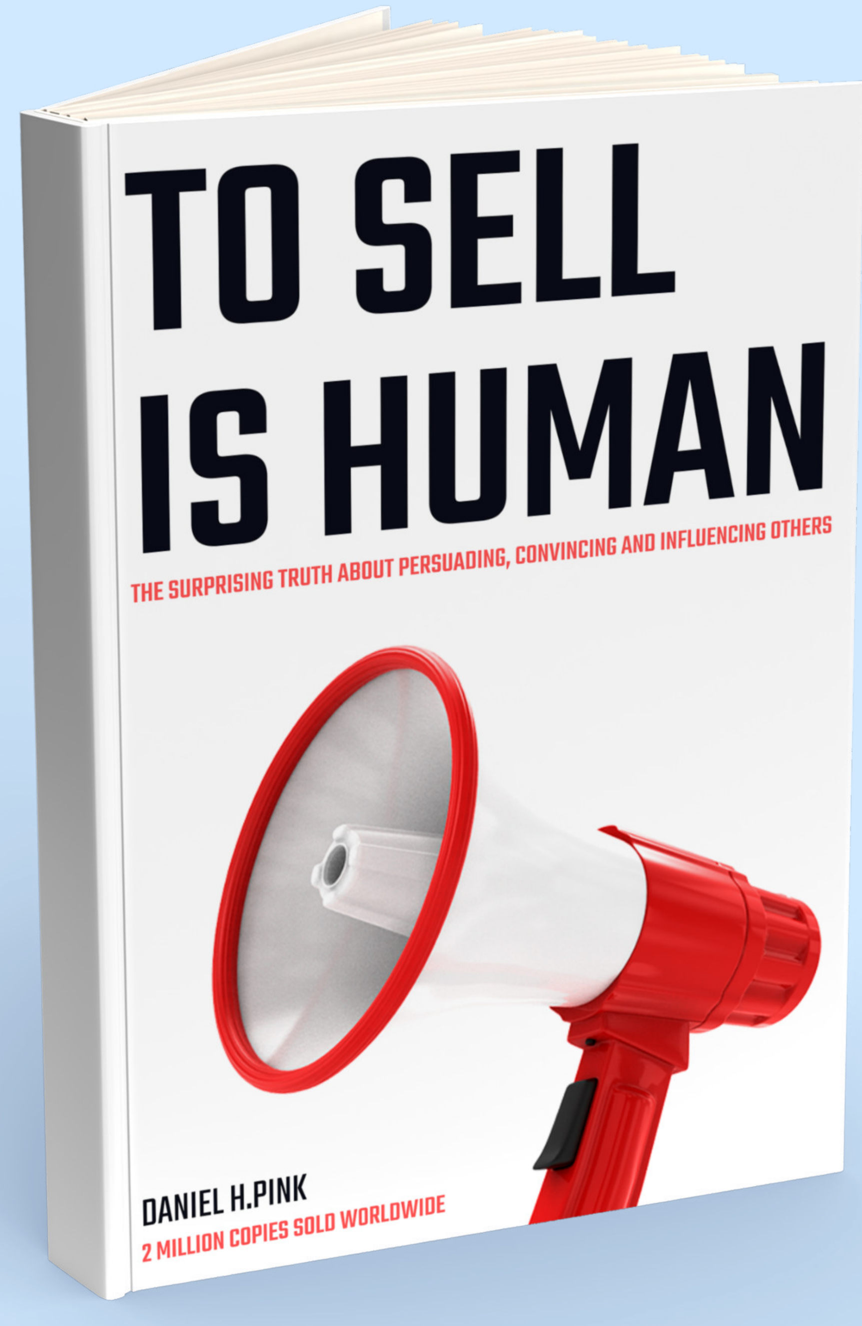
– Jeb Blount, Sales EQ.

How to use this idea

Rather than looking for quick wins, embrace the fact that trust is slow to build. Don't ask for too much too quickly from prospects. Let them be cautious, and lead them slowly over time through a series of greater buy-ins.

For big deals, try and increase contact time with the buying team: greater familiarity increases trust.

Also consider if you're sufficiently demonstrating your trust in your product by offering break clauses, longer trials, proof of concepts (POCs) or money back guarantees. Depending on what you or your company offers, effective use of these trust tactics can improve conversion rates.



To Sell Is Human

With power now with the buyer, sales must be service-led

Sales has changed over the last decade or so. Especially for B2B services, or products with longer sales cycles, forceful or slick tactics no longer work. Salespeople who see themselves as offering a service can align themselves with the buyer's wants and needs.

How to use this idea

Shift your mindset to one as a helper, rather than a closer. It helps if you can see the prospect as being on your team. After all, you both want this deal to succeed: they have a problem your solution will solve, and you have targets you need to reach.

Provide a good level of service along the way: reply to messages promptly, address their questions or concerns with empathy, and show they can trust you by doing what you say you will do when you say you'll do it.

Always Be Closing is outdated. The new ABC? “Attunement, Buoyancy, Clarity.”

“Always Be Closing” no longer works. Instead, salespeople need a new ABC: “Attunement, Buoyancy, Clarity.”

Attunement, or how well you appear to recognise and respond to prospects’ emotions, helps to develop trust between buyer and seller and helps the seller understand what the buyer needs.

Buoyancy, or resilience in the face of adversity and setbacks, helps salespeople to keep going despite pushback or frequent rejection.

Clarity, or how clearly you understand your prospect’s situation and how well you articulate your solution, is essential to getting buy-in and closing the deal.

How to use this idea

Really listen to prospects to show attunement. Mirror or reflect their answers, label their feelings and ask probing questions to discover their pain.

Work on your own mindset towards rejection to develop buoyancy. Look to teammates or other areas of your life to give you resilience. Try to reframe rejection as positive: it’s taking you one step closer to where you need to go. Remember, a no is very rarely about you, and there are lots of things you don’t know about the situation.

Treat the selling process as a service to add clarity. Keep on top of industry insights, and look out for the deeper problem behind a prospect's presenting concern. Practice asking questions one level deeper with each prospect you speak to each week. Find the question behind the question, and reveal the angle they've not considered.

Don't script everything: improvise to find the best solution

Pink suggests sales reps learn to go with the flow of sales conversations. Rather than sticking to a pre-set agenda, improvising can help you find solutions you wouldn't otherwise consider.

> "Behind the apparent chaos of improvisation is a light structure that allows it to work. Understanding that structure can help you move others."
>
> – Daniel Pink, To Sell is Human

How to use this idea

Keep a script, sure, but try to relax into the process. Take a breath before replying to any questions, so you have time to really think about your response. See the process as a dialogue: there's a lot that depends on the prospect. Prospects will sense your ease and authenticity and their trust in you will skyrocket.

To be seen as the go-to person for your industry, make sure you know your solution, the industry you're selling into, the problem they face and even their overall process in depth.

Ask questions to gather more information. Are there things they haven't told you that paint a bigger picture? Get curious to come up with the best responses to their objections.

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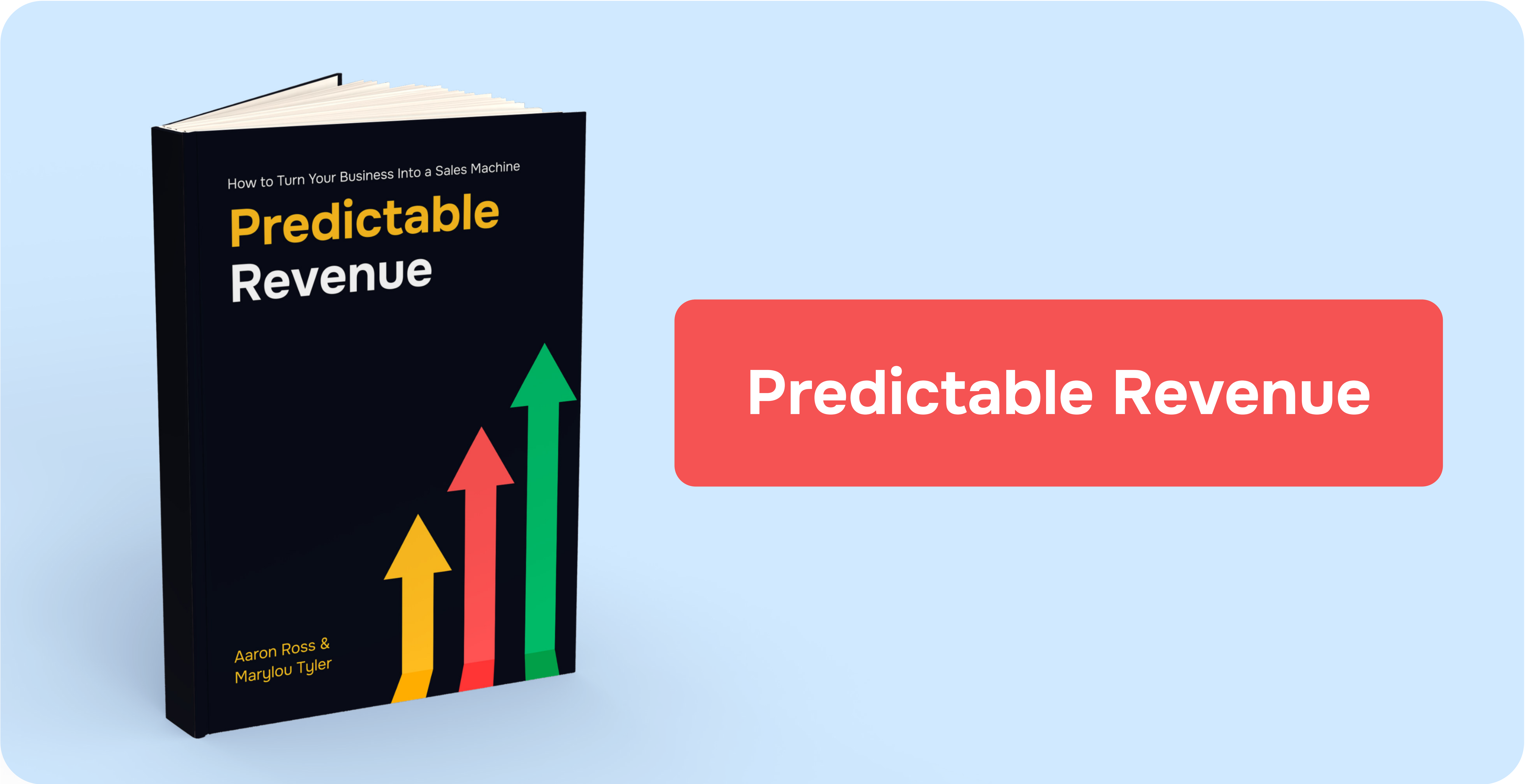
Sales Strategy



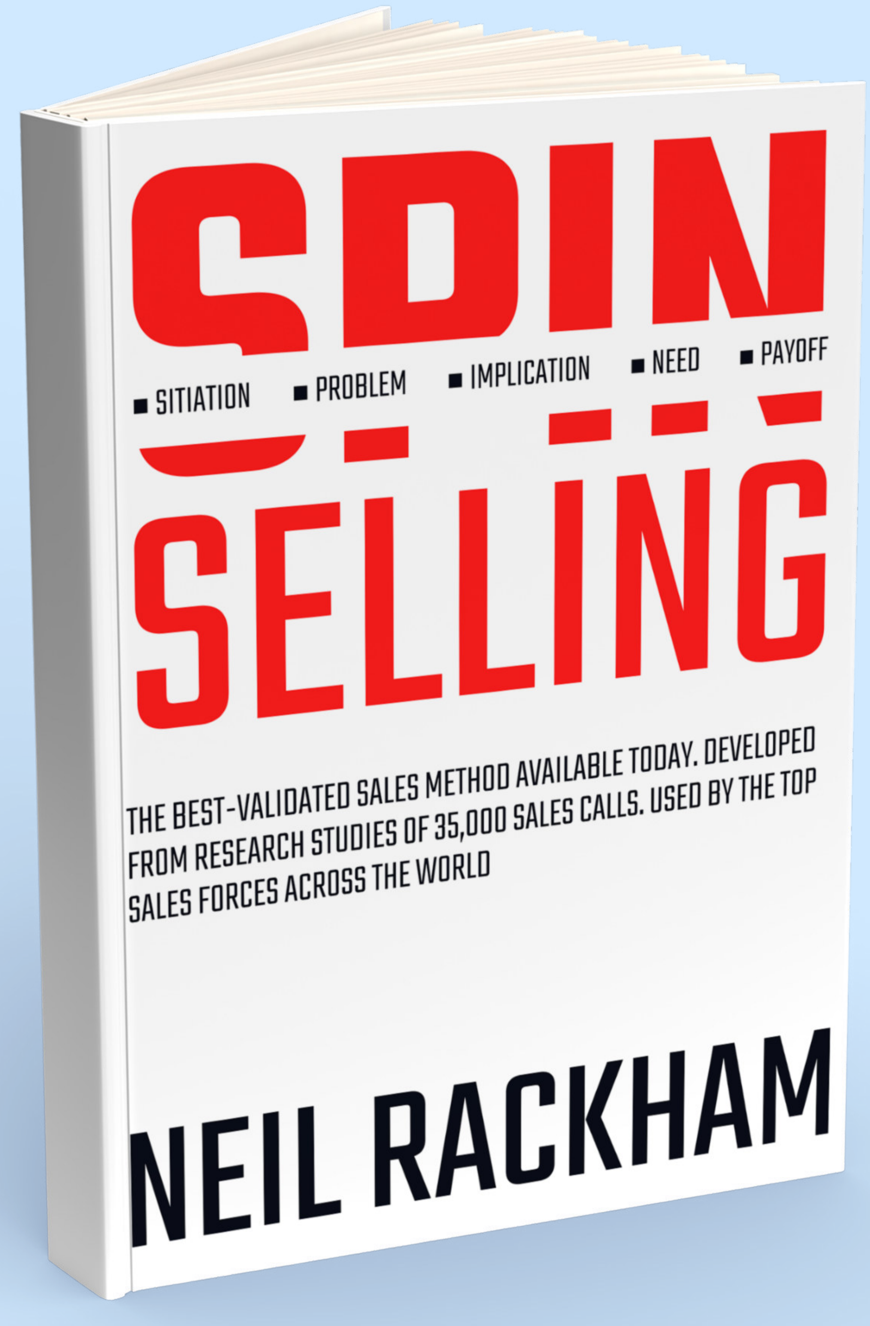
Emphasize strong relationships over closing

Closing is important, but in today's climate, the best way to do so is to build strong relationships with good-fit prospects. A blind focus on the outcome removes necessary attention from the process – which is actually the important part to get right.

How to use this idea

When speaking to prospects, keep closing in mind, but always keep the core attention on building relationships. Remember, the aim is to actually make this person like you, so show a genuine interest in them as an individual.

If you're a sales leader, make sure sales targets are actually attainable to avoid reps going for the hard sell and scaring a customer off. Try and create a culture that doesn't just celebrate immediate customer wins, but recognizes the value of the long play, too.



SPIN Selling

Prospects don't always know what they need and need sales reps to educate them.

The core revolutionary idea of SPIN selling is that it blew away the notion that prospects always know what they want or what service would be best for them. Instead, Rackham realized it was up to sales reps to ask questions that unearthed true pain points and then educate prospects on the right solution to their problem.

This idea helps reps unearth potentially lucrative problems in clients who might otherwise only have purchased small solutions. Focussing on implied rather than explicit needs ensures sales reps truly learn what's happening underneath the tip of the iceberg, leading to better outcomes for both the buyer and the seller.

How to use this idea

Don’t take prospects or customers at face value when they communicate a problem. Instead, probe further. Ask open-ended questions about ‘why’ and ‘how’ to understand where their concerns are coming from.

Begin sales calls with a discovery period. And really listen to what a client is and isn’t saying – it’ll give you a better idea of what’s really going on.

Use the SPIN strategy for sales success (Situation, Problem, Implication, Need-payoff)

Rackham packages up the exact technique to dive into, discover, and address implicit pain points in a neat 4-step acronym: SPIN, or Situation, Problem, Implication, and Need-payoff.

How to use this idea

When engaging with a prospect, make sure you cover all four areas.

First, **situation**. Ask for context on the prospect’s company, role, and how they’ve approached this service to date.

Next, **problem**. Dig into the issues with the current solution (or lack of solution). Ask what challenges users face, and think about how impacts business needs.

Then, **implication**. Tying problems to wider business issues helps hammer home the prospect’s pain and gives you insight into what will really make them move.

Finally, need-payoff. Show the prospect what a good solution could do for their business. Use questions, rather than presenting your offering as a solution. Instead, ask what difference X process would make to their day-to-day operations. Or, if they could do Y if that would help them meet Z.

Benefits > advantages > features

The features or advantages of a product aren't the same as the benefits.

Features tell you what a product has, but not why you should care or why it helps you.

Advantages show you ways a product can help, but only genetically.

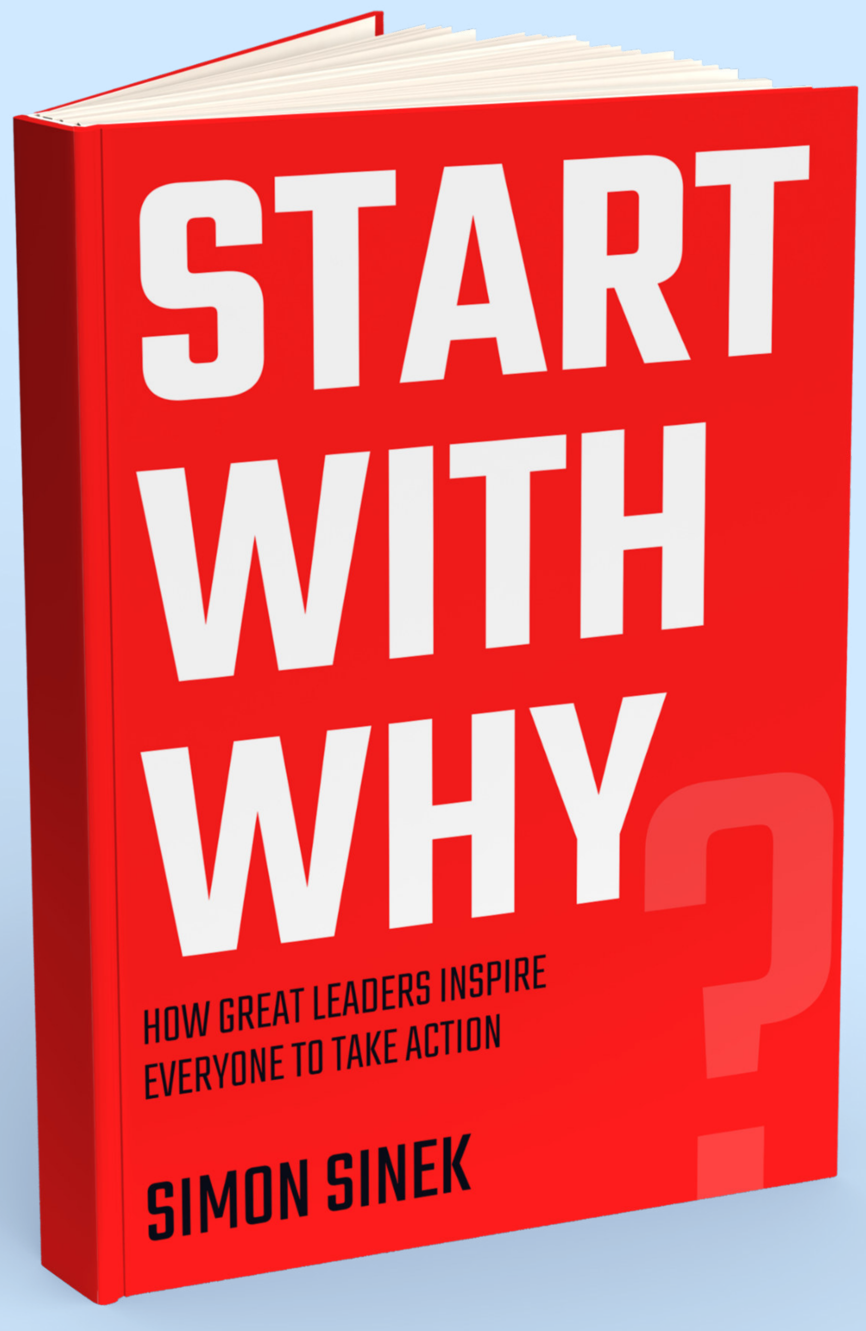
Benefits, however, show how your product can specifically meet the needs or solve the pain of your prospect.

To sell effectively, you need to show your prospects you've thought about exactly what will solve their problems.

How to use this idea

It's all too easy to confuse features with advantages or benefits but to make a sale you have to speak to your prospect's needs.

Whenever you're about to pitch a product or send an outreach message, check to see if you've described the generic features of your product or the generic advantages of these features. If so, take the time to consider your prospects' needs and reframe these as benefits to increase the likelihood of a sale and potentially even the deal size.



Start With Why

Inspire customers instead of incentivizing them

Try not to get into a race to the bottom with customers: get them to like you and understand your mission, and they won't just stick with you in good times or when you offer the best deals. The takeaway of Sinek's books is that your customers have to care about your company or product in particular: they have to understand why you do what you do, and how that impacts their vision of themselves.

"For those who are inspired, the motivation to act is deeply personal. They are less likely to be swayed by incentives. Those who are inspired are willing to pay a premium or endure inconvenience"

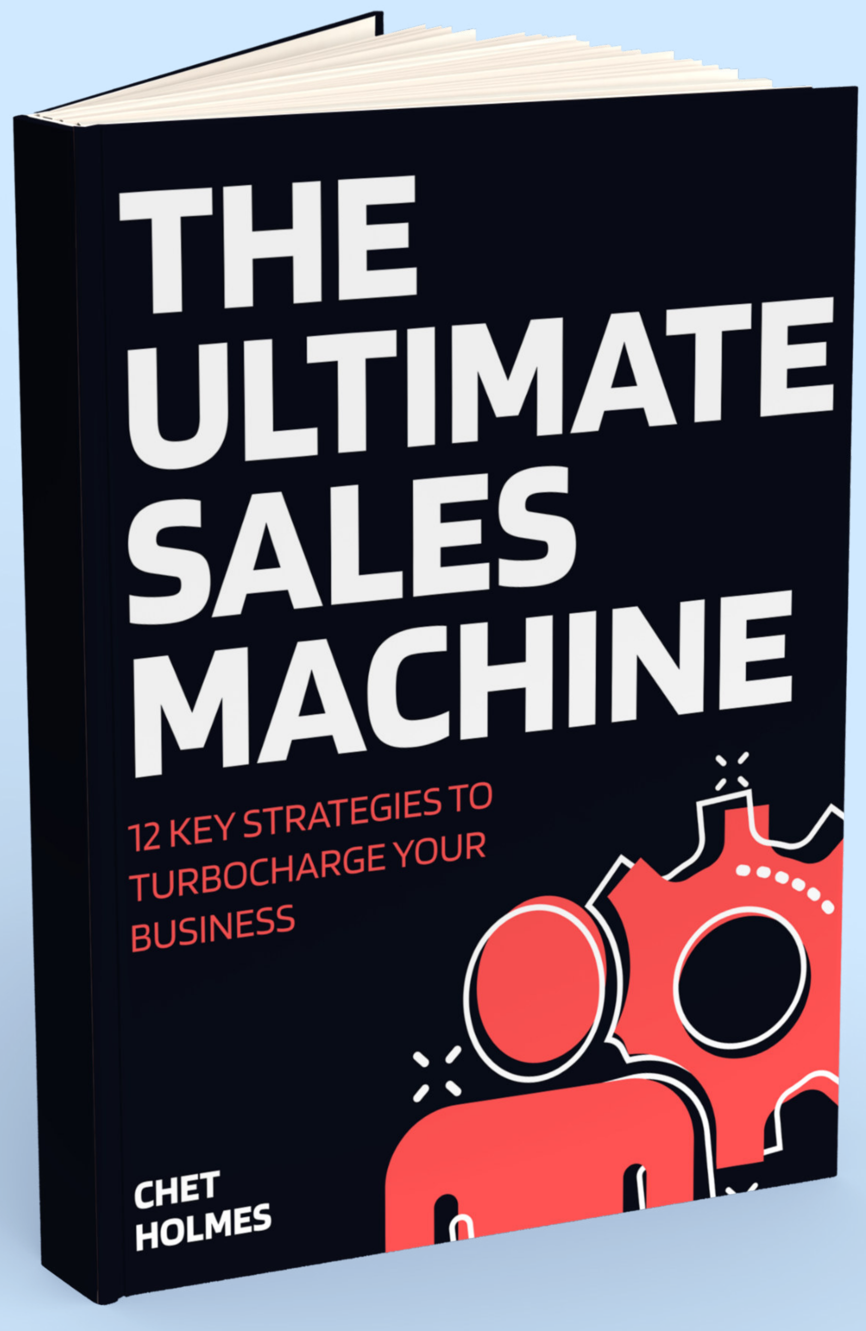
– Simon Sinek, Start With Why

How to use this idea

When pitching to customers, emphasize your unique brand and vision, as well as the results you'll get for them.

Don't get stuck haggling at the bottom of the market. Instead, look for ways to attract the customers that will be most compelled by your ethos.

Often, this will come down to company values. Are you obsessively customer-centric? Do you gel best with customers who are also open, innovative trailblazers? Get customers on board with your outlook and you'll gain a loyal base of clients.



The Ultimate Sales Machine

Target decision-makers in big companies.

For an effective sales strategy, you can’t just go after everyone. You want to prioritize best-fit companies that will respond well to your offering and also have the money to buy sizable packages.

Holmes suggests one way to do this: target the decision-makers in big or well-funded companies. It’s a good place to start – but remember to iterate results to find the right target market and ICP for your offering.

How to use this idea

Look at your current target list. How many accounts are you reaching out to? Is everyone receiving the same attention and messaging?

Identify your top 10-20% of prospects - the ones that, if you closed a deal with, would transform your pipeline

Change how you approach these accounts. Automate outreach to your less important prospects so you can scale your efforts while still personalizing your top few targets. Instead, spend your time honing your strategy for getting through to decision-makers at these companies. Do you need to do some account mapping? Build a champion in the organization? Work on your skills at getting past gatekeepers.

Prioritizing the highest-value accounts will set you and your business up for success. And with automation, there's no reason why you can't prospect at scale, too, for the best ROI.

Use visual aids in pitches

Visual aids – especially ones that are eye-catching, or make an emotional impression on the viewer – are a great way to get prospects to remember your pitch.

"We human beings remember 20 percent of what we hear, 30 percent of what we see, but 50 percent of what we both see and hear."

– Chet Holmes, The Ultimate Sales Machine.

How to use this idea

Think outside the box about ways to present pitches.

- If you're using a PowerPoint, look for ways to hyper-customize it for your prospect. Use their company images on your slides.
- Work with design or marketing to create compelling assets you can use over and over again for results. Some ideas: a wall of customer logos, a graph of results, or gifs and humor if they suit the target company.

Find your Dream 100

For the best results, find your best dream clients and be ambitious to make them yours.

Send letters or gifts to them personally with offerings they'd value. Phone decision-makers. Adopt account-based marketing. Whatever you have to do to make your top-tier dream clients yours.

"The Dream 100 ... is your program for targeting your 100 (or whatever number is appropriate) dream clients constantly and relentlessly until they buy your product or service."

– Chet Holmes, The Ultimate Sales Machine.

How to use this idea

Instead of going for volume, focus additional, personalized efforts on a dream 100. It's a big compliment for these companies and can increase the likelihood of engaging your best-fit clients.

To do so, check sales and marketing are aligned – this might require a group effort, but it's essential for strategic initiatives that work.

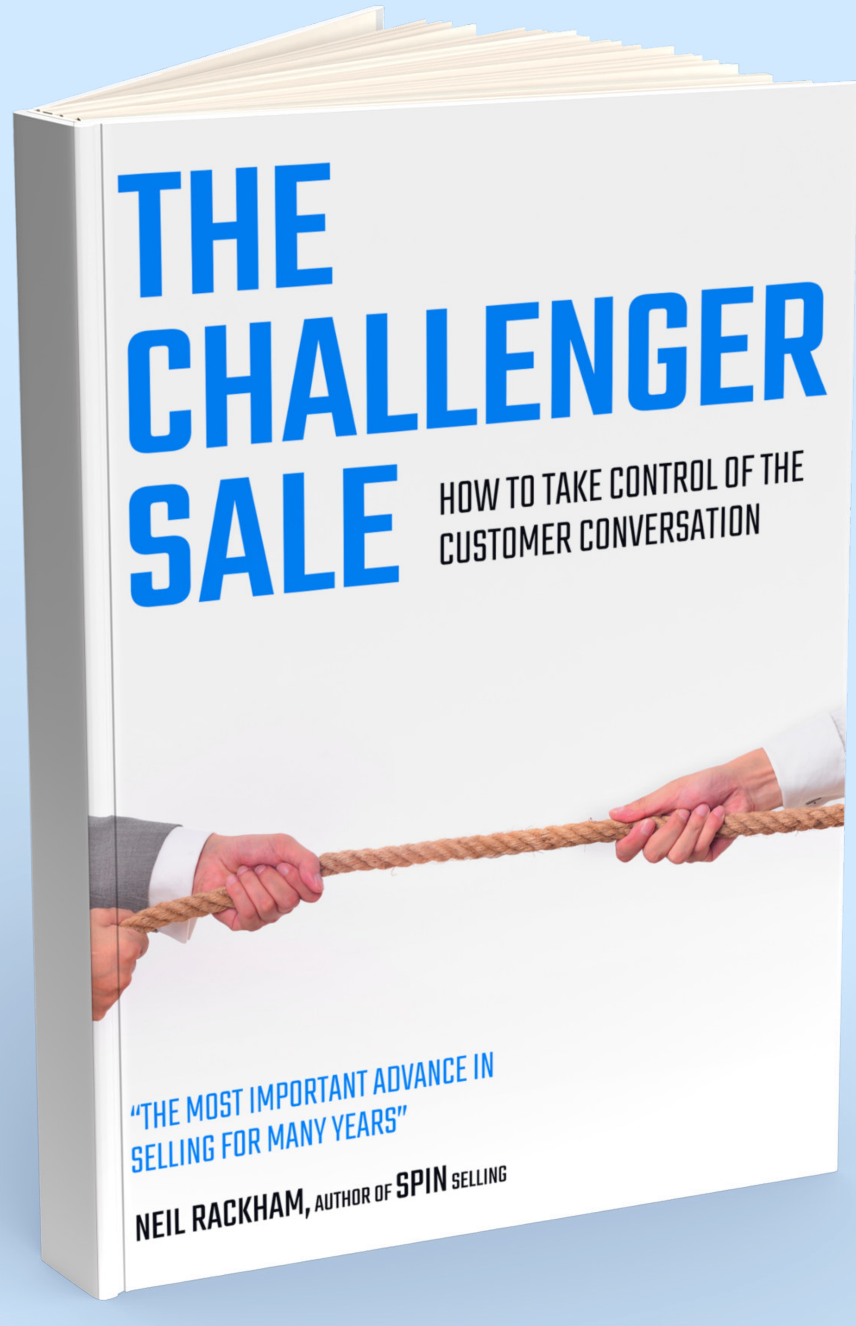
Keep your clients forever

An effective sales strategy isn't just about acquisition. Pay attention to retention if you really want to improve the bottom line.

How to use this idea

- First, look at the data. What is your churn rate? How often are accounts growing once onboarded?
- Once you know where there are gaps, it's time to get strategic. Identify the upsell opportunities for products, and read reviews or solicit customer feedback using surveys to learn where to focus attention.
- Does there need to be a better handoff between account managers and customer success? Do sales reps need training on additional features they can sell to existing accounts?
- Have you asked your key customers with whom you have a strong rapport about referring you to their network?

Get it right and you're optimizing results from the market already most likely to evangelize your product.



The Challenger Sale

The Challenger

The key concept of this book is the introduction of a new type of salesperson: the Challenger.

This individual is comfortable taking control of the sales process and educating the buyer. Rather than being service-led alone, they're able to offer expert input into what solution will best meet an organizational need and why.

"A Challenger knows that the average sales rep will seek to take control only at the end of the sale … Challengers differentiate themselves by taking control from the start."

– Matthew Dixon and Brent Adamson, The Challenger Sale.

How to use this idea

When done right, the challenger sale can produce great results for a company by directing the sales process and getting more out of clients. However, reps often struggle with confidence and authority.

To build reps' confidence:

- Address rep concerns in 1:1s
- Run regular role plays
- Get sales reps to give each other constructive feedback
- Celebrate all the wins along the way – Challengers aren't built overnight. Make sure reps see how much progress they've made with industry knowledge and client management.

Teach prospects to reach solutions

Challengers influence a sale by teaching. They can really make a difference by knowing lots about their prospects' business (ideally more than the prospect knows themselves!).

How to use this idea

There's no shortcut with this one: Salespeople and team leaders have to take the time to educate themselves deeply on an industry or customer challenge before they can reap the benefits of the challenger sale.

To use this tactic:

- Look to the longest-serving reps – they have lots of industry knowledge.
- Get it out of their heads by having product marketing or a manager interview them and record the call.
- Show the call to other reps.

- Keep teams up to date with industry developments. Dedicate 5-10 minutes of a stand-up or pipeline review to any developments, or new challenges heard from prospects or current customers
- Build out and consistently update sales enablement materials that cover industry pain points and developments, so even newer reps are experts.

Share insights and solutions across sales teams for an effective challenger strategy

A successful challenger strategy requires a rollout that scales across the company. Dixon and Adamson recommend:

- Teaching and sharing sessions to disperse insights into different industries across the whole sales team,
- Resources like cheat sheets for different personas
- Behavioral training on how to control the conversation to help more passive reps.

How to use this idea

The challenger sale requires real authority and expertise: it's inefficient to adopt on a per-rep basis, but using the insights a company has gathered across all prospect interactions can make it a feasible approach to take in no time.

Some ways to increase adoption:

- Create a learning culture across your organization. Encourage reps to learn from each other.

Create banks of resources on key concepts or industry-specific challenges. Make sure reps know how to access them, and update them regularly.

Consider call-recording software so your reps can assess their own performance and increase in confidence over time.

To roll out the challenger sale effectively, get manager buy-in

The devil's in the implementation details when it comes to the effective use of the challenger sale. There's no way to roll out the technique across a company without managers understanding its value, and wanting to help train reps on its adoption.

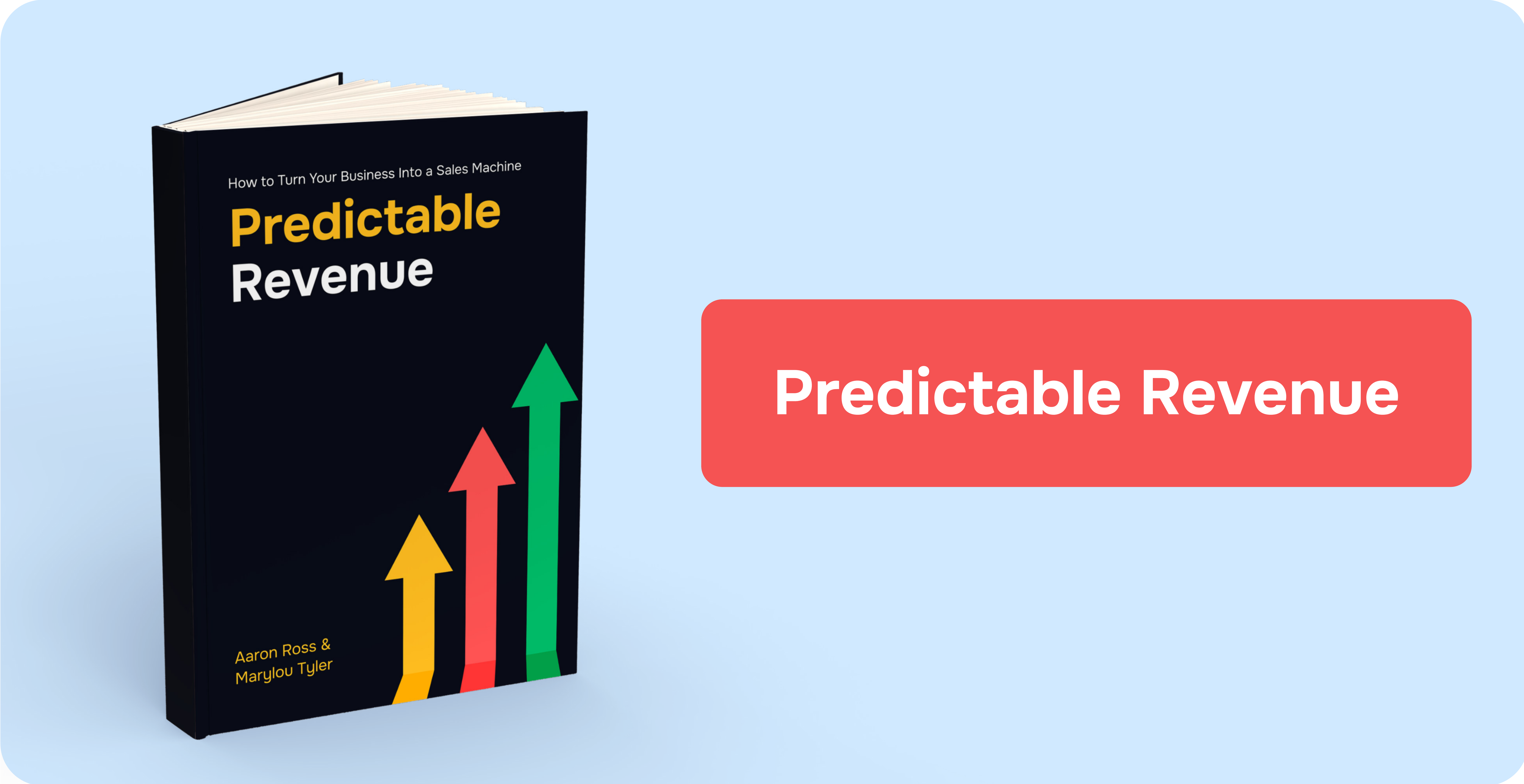
How to use this idea

It's a crucial point in general: when introducing a new strategy, get managers on board.

- Start with manager training. This could be via an update meeting or a workshop, depending on the scale of the change.
- Ask about any concerns managers have with the new system, and address them attentively. Don't just brush off concerns at this stage, as you may find your big changes go unimplemented.
- Once you've made the change, follow up with managers a few months later. How are they finding implementing the new strategy? Have new problems or questions arisen? Support your managers, and the rest of the organization will follow.

Salesflow

Leadership



Create specialists, not generalists, to improve productivity

One of the core ideas of this book is that the key to predictable revenue is well-oiled systems. And the key to efficient systems? Specialized sales teams.

Ross and Tyler advocate sales leaders split teams up into different roles: prospecting for Sales Development Reps, discovery and negotiation for Account Executives, and onboarding and upselling for Account Managers.

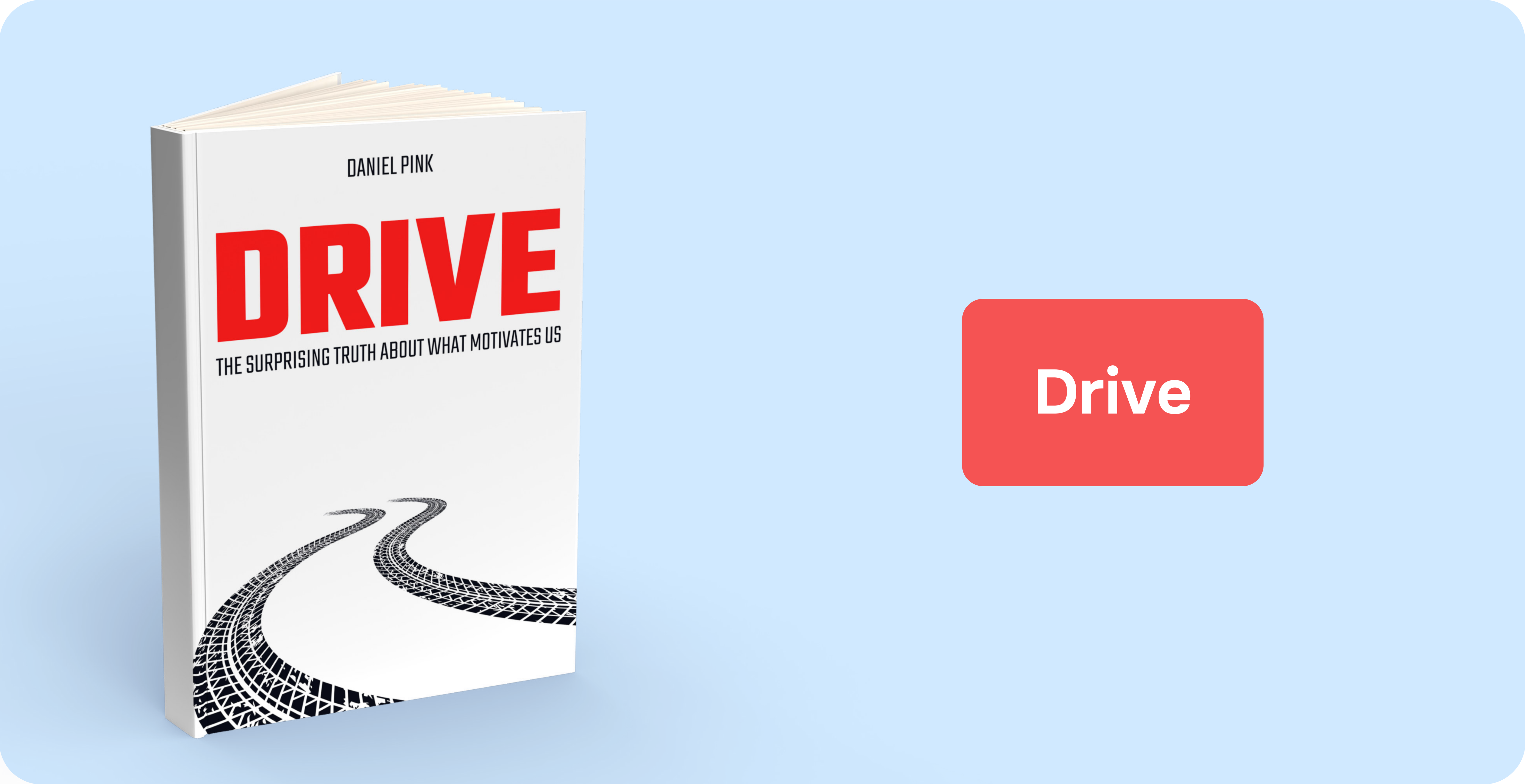
How to use this idea

Look at your current sales team. Are reps doing it all, or do you have a healthy split of prospectors, negotiators, and account managers?

If your organization is growing and reps are constantly context-switching, with never enough time to pay attention to all things, consider splitting out teams into SDRs, AEs, and AMs.

Start small: with your next hire, take on a specialist in one area, and begin offloading the responsibilities of other members of the team.

Creating specialists will increase the expertise within your organization and give sales reps a chance to develop and get promoted into different role types.



Get better results by motivating employees' intrinsic vs. extrinsic desires.

Drive's Daniel Pink advocates for "Motivation 3.0", a system "fuelled more by intrinsic desires than extrinsic ones." He argues that intrinsically motivated employees take more responsibility and are more committed to what they're doing. Extrinsic motivators, like money, actually destroy motivation rather than acting as long-term incentives, reducing employee performance.

"Motivation 3.0 ... concerns itself less with the external rewards to which an activity leads and more with the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself"

– Drive, Daniel H. Pink

How to use this idea

To reduce churn and employee turnover, think about how you can motivate employees intrinsically. Other than money, what is attractive about the job?

Start to add intrinsic motivators into each rep's day. Show them the impact their work has on the company or customer, praise them for adaptability, or encourage their ideas or suggestions.

Aim to create an environment that makes sales reps excited to be part of the adventure. These are the people who will transform your pipeline and organizational results.

Build intrinsic motivation using Mastery, Autonomy, and Purpose.

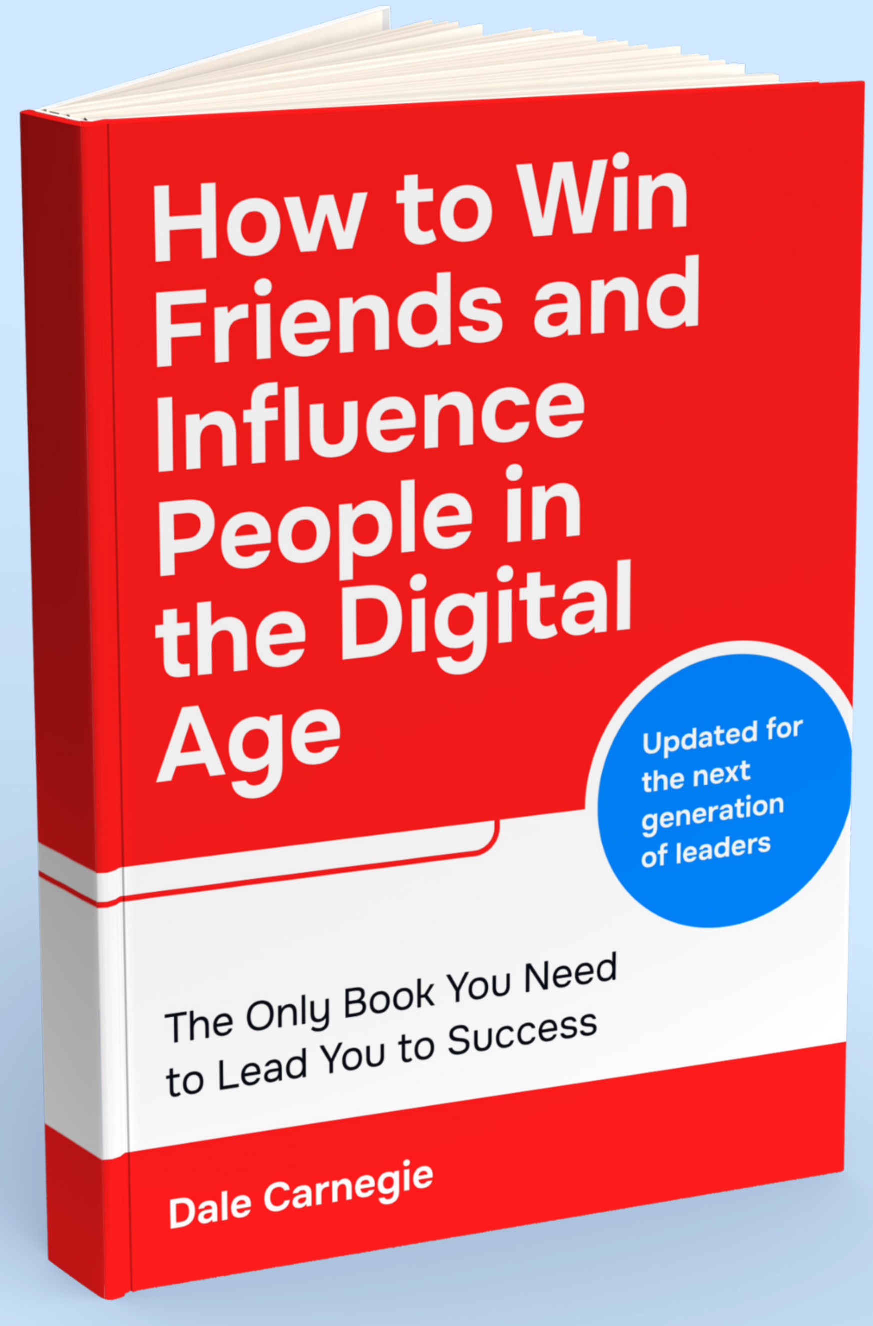
How can you build intrinsic motivation in employees? Pink recommends a three-step process: Mastery (let people strive for perfection), Autonomy (allow them to make their own decisions), and Purpose (create meaning in the work).

How to use this idea

Use the three-step process as a checklist to assess how intrinsically motivated current employees are.

Notice any areas that are consistently lacking. Even if employees seem happy now, without these elements, they won't remain that way.

Work to change these areas. Adapt your management style to allow greater autonomy in efforts, and show employees the wider meaning of their work where possible.



How to Win Friends and Influence People in the Digital Age

Use positivity and acknowledge failures to improve team performance

Sales is ever-changing and requires reps to be bold to get results. But reps won't take risks if failure isn't an option.

To get the best results from your teams, acknowledge failure is sometimes inevitable and talk about attempts positively.

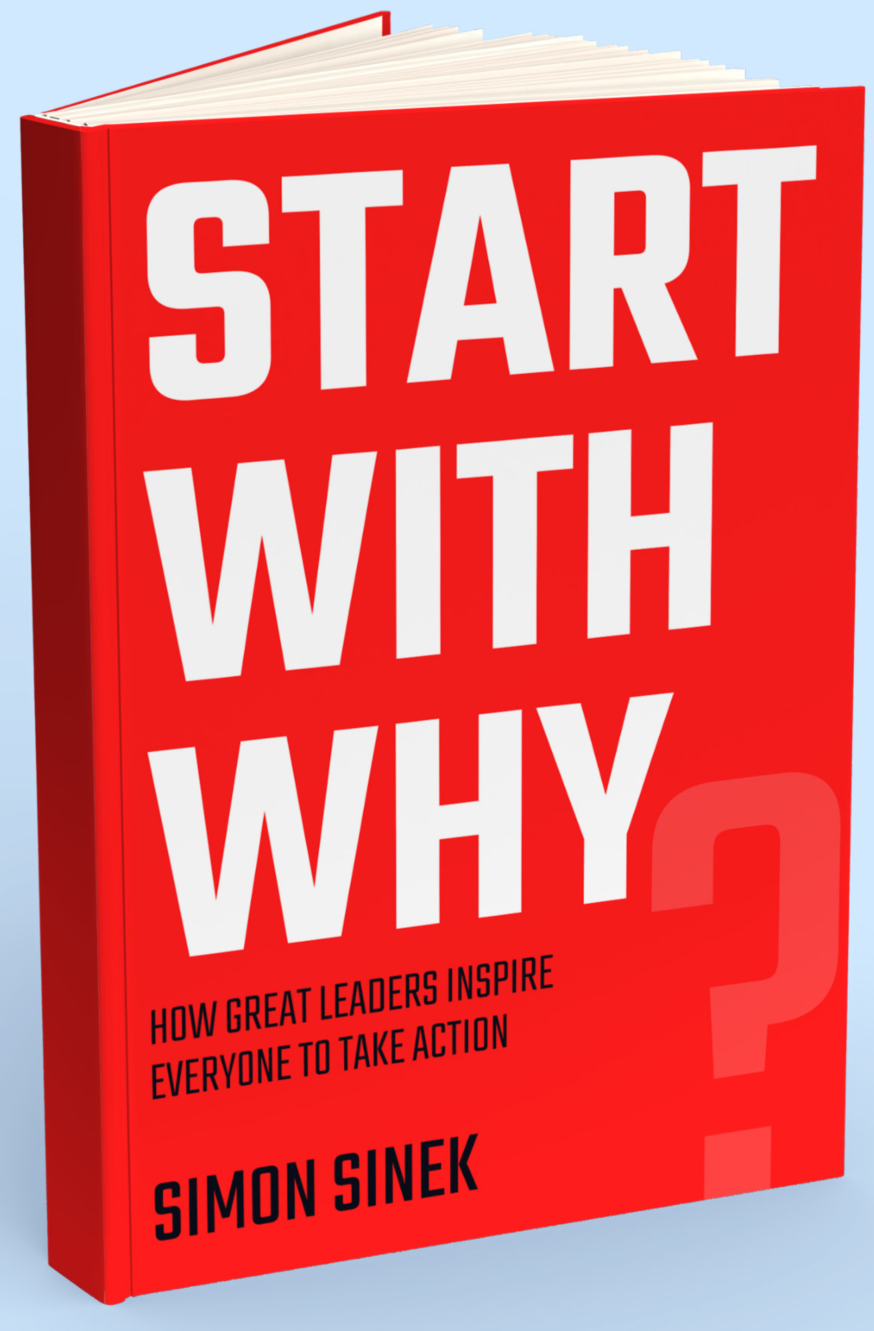
Sales is already a brutal profession, and those in it need thick skin and the toughness of nails. You want to create a supportive environment within your organization to keep performance strong.

How to use this idea

Acknowledge mistakes are human and accept them in the workplace. Own up to your own mistakes in front of direct reports to show them it's okay to fail.

Rather than perfection, aim for experimentation and innovation. Let team members try new things and praise them for the idea, whether or not it works.

Talk failures through with team members and aim for an open culture. Employees will be less likely to hide failures, and you can address them together for better results.



Start With Why

People are drawn to organizations with clear, inspiring core values

The first customers you acquire will be innovators and early adopters. These portions of the market care about what your company stands for. If you can articulate a clear vision and show them why you matter, you'll increase sales.

"When the WHY is absent ... uncertainty increases for buyers, instability increases for sellers and stress increases for all."

– Simon Sinek, Start With Why

How to use this idea

Look at your existing company values. Are they clearly communicated to employees and customers? Do people buy into your big-picture idea about the difference your product makes in the world?

Getting clear on your values will make it clear how to act in certain circumstances, such as when faced with an unsure client, hiring decision, or dilemma.

Inspiring leaders can clearly communicate their why.

It's not enough just to have those values, however. To truly motivate and inspire your employees, you need to be able to articulate your company's why yourself. Sinek recommends leaders start with the why, then communicate the how, and finally explain the what.

How to use this idea

Do you know why you do the work you do? If someone asked you, could you answer succinctly? Get clear on your motivations as a manager and this will naturally trickle down to your direct reports.

A good way to check your 'why' is to look at whether employees are generally engaged and enthusiastic or if motivation drops over time. If it wanes, try to incorporate opportunities for your sales team to see the bigger picture of their efforts: whether through customer success stories, any major company wins, or the difference you're making in the world.

Coaching is how you empower a team

Effective leaders are always in coaching mode, looking for ways to guide employees to make autonomous decisions and grow. Rather than micromanaging, they increase motivation and foster innovation.

It doesn’t have to be a huge overhaul, either: Stanier recommends just 10 minutes a day of informal coaching for the best results.

How to use this idea

Take an honest look at how you interact with employees. Are you showing them how to do a task, or overseeing every element?

If the latter, you need to take a step back and build reps' self-sufficiency. Often, this requires trust.

If employees aren't delivering on a task, ask yourself if they have all the knowledge they need upfront. Gradually built their confidence by starting small and trusting them with low-stakes projects, then ramping up the complexity over time.

Learn to identify employee needs and wants.

Not sure how an employee is feeling, or how best to coach them through a scenario? The answer is simpler than you think. To cut to the chase in 1:1s, if an employee seems confused, ask "what do you want" and "how can I help you?".

Knowing more about your employees' wants can help you effectively motivate them to reach business goals.

How to use this idea

Your employees might not have thought to ask themselves what they need. By forcing the question, you can help them work more effectively and improve 1:1 efficiency.

Create a 1:1 template that asks reps what they need and how you can support them. Show employees you value them and want to improve their situation, if possible.

Build time for reflection into coaching sessions

It's important to make time at the end of coaching sessions to give your employees a chance to reflect. Rather than constantly rushing from one thing to another, you want them to be able to reflect on new strategies and insights.

[Author] suggests managers do this via ‘learning questions’.

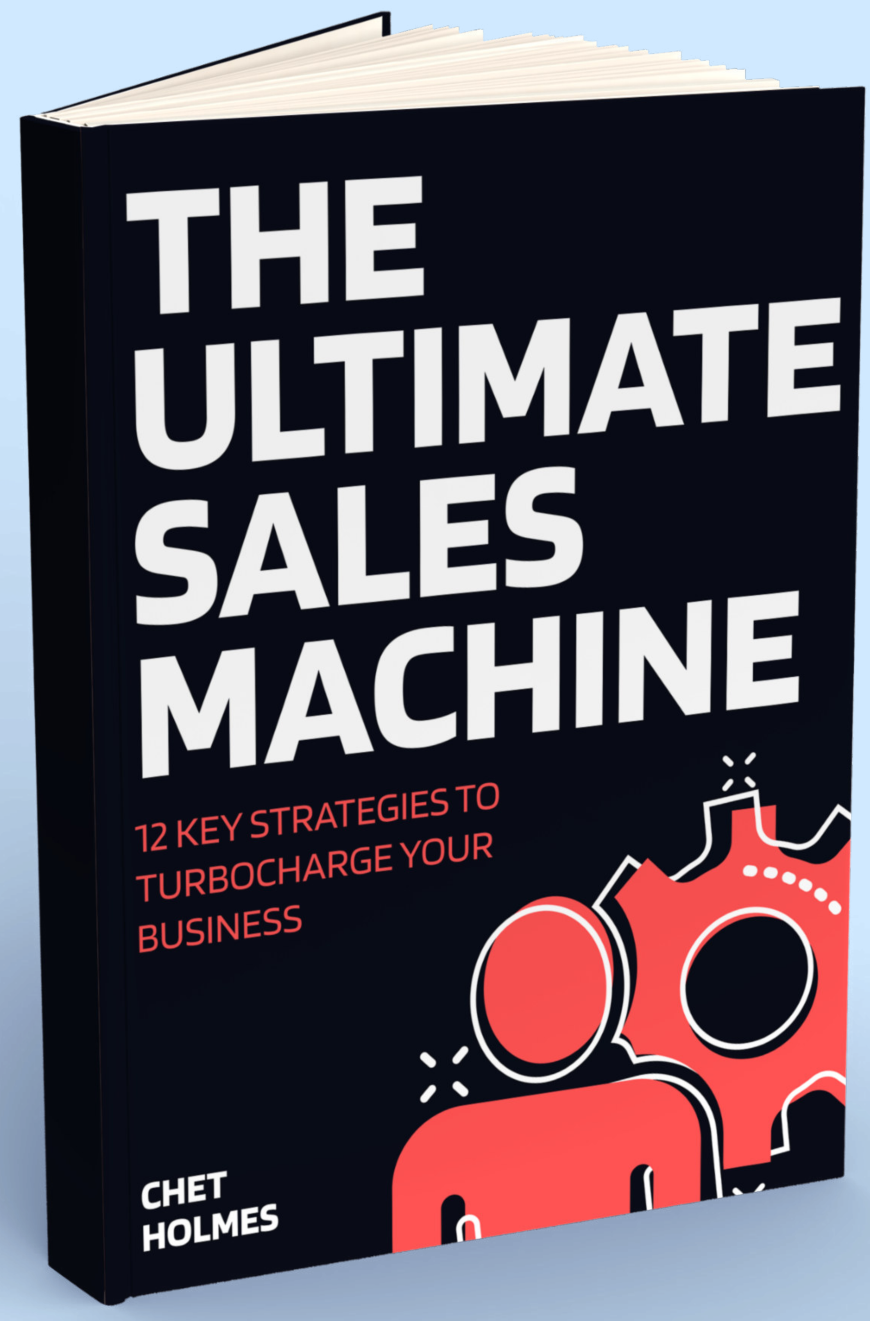
‘“What did you learn?” “What was the key insight?” “What do you want to remember?”’

– Michael Stanier, The Coaching Habit.

How to use this idea

Don’t rush to end 1:1s. Use time management to keep them to schedule, and save 5 minutes at the end for reflection and absorption.

If you find yourself covering the same thing with employees week in and week out, start asking learning questions. Encourage employees to see 1:1s as things that can be iterated and improved, too, just like a sales call.



The Ultimate Sales Machine

Train, then train again.

Training is important to equip employees with the skills they need to succeed but it takes repeated training for concepts to stick.

Repeated training also keeps employees up to date with advancements, improving performance and business outcomes.

How to use this idea

When planning training, don’t just see it as one and done. Instead, come up with a training strategy that upskills employees and spreads learning and insights throughout the company.

The key is creating a training cadence, and using a mixture of formal and informal techniques. Reps can learn as much from practicing with each other as they can from outside experts.

The best training is workshop training.

The best way reps can learn from each other is workshop training: this lets you see exactly how employees are selling through roleplays and can be a great testing ground for reps to gain confidence in their pitches, try things out with others, and share what works across the company.

How to use this idea

Consider the last time you ran sales training. Is this a regular part of your sales culture, or could reps use more coaching?

Even if you have other training initiatives, consider setting up informal workshops every few weeks or months so reps can learn from each other. It's fun for reps, lets you see how they're selling, and keeps learning practical rather than theoretical.

Plus, introducing regular workshops makes sure reps are practicing the skills they've just learned.

Salesflow

Congrats!

We hope you've found this ebook valuable for building out your sales strategy and tactics. Now you've got all the insights, where to next?

- Fast-track your LinkedIn lead generation by trying us out for free
- Improve your LinkedIn outreach with these guides
- Access digestible tips and tricks to level up your sales and marketing
- Learn what works from our success stories.