Yesware

SALES PROFESSIONAL TRAINING GUIDE

How to Source, Manage and Win More Deals

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Preface

This guide is intended to serve as a baseline and should be tailored to what works best for your team and business.

This guide will walk you through best practices, tips, and techniques when it comes to sourcing your prospects, managing your pipeline, and winning more deals through persuasion and building relationships.

Here's a framework for this guide and what each section entails:

1 SOURCE

This section walks through prospecting tips and techniques as well as how to effectively qualify your prospects that will help you separate hot leads from time-wasters through a series of questions.

2 MANAGE

This section walks through managing your pipeline, what metrics to pay attention to, and how to keep your pipeline healthy to promote growth and decrease the length of your sales cycle.

3 WIN MORE DEALS

This section instills persuasion tactics and how to build rapport with your prospects to differentiate yourself from competitors, as well as handling objections to win more deals.

INTRO

- Sales Pipeline
- Main Stages of The Pipeline
- Build Your Sales Pipeline
- Adopt Sales Enablement

Sales Pipeline

A thorough and effective sales pipeline streamlines your sales process and allows your sales team to visualize where all potential customers live in the buying process. Keeping your pipeline healthy and controlled will boost sales velocity and revenue outcomes.

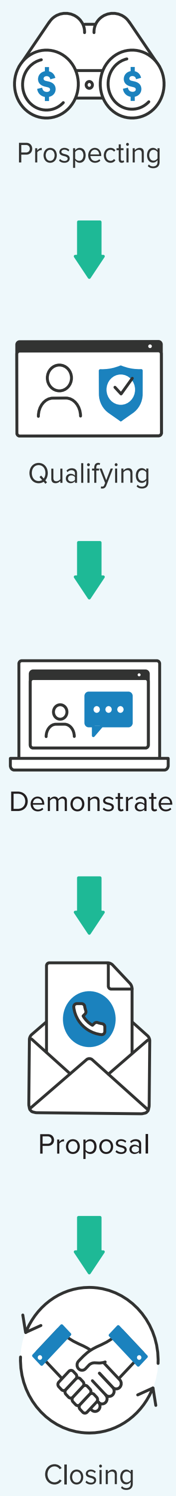
Think about it – if it takes three weeks for any given deal to make it through your sales pipeline instead of four, then by the end of any given period, you'll have closed 33% more deals. The key is building out a successful pipeline and consistently managing it.

What is a sales pipeline?

A sales pipeline is the sequence of steps you lead a prospect through from the beginning to the end of a sale – the pipeline helps to visualize where prospects are in the sales process.

A sales pipeline helps your sales team identify which stages need more attention so your team can focus on improving those stages to increase sales velocity. Your pipeline also helps forecast results and revenue by viewing which stages the prospects are currently in and how many will make it through the pipeline by a given time.

Main Stages of a Sales Pipeline



1. Prospecting

The pipeline begins with Prospecting (or Lead Generation). Prospecting is the process of identifying potential customers that your product or service will benefit, and then systematically communicating with them. Lead Generation is the process of attracting and engaging prospects through marketing activities such as campaigns, events, and content marketing.

2. Qualifying

Before taking the prospect through the pipeline, make sure they're a good fit. Through research and conversation – dig into their pain points, buyer persona, company size, budget, etc. This will also help establish who your high-value prospects are and prioritize deals based on the likelihood of them leading to a sale.

3. Demonstrate

This is where you demonstrate the product or service to the prospect to make sure it resonates with them. This will differ according to your product or service, but it's important to demonstrate all the features and capabilities, emphasize the advantages of implementing your solution, handle any objections, and answer all questions.

4. Proposal

Once you've qualified the prospect and demonstrated your solution, your proposal will be much easier to personalize and tailor to the specific prospect. Your proposal dives into the details of your solution such as price and length, all while staying personalized and directed towards their pain points and why your product or service will benefit them specifically.

5. Closing

Whether the prospect becomes a customer or you lose the deal, closing for both is important. If you've won the sale – follow up, get them the paperwork they need, provide onboarding steps if necessary, and make the transition as smooth as possible. If you have lost the sale – do your best to maintain a relationship for the future, ask for feedback, and reflect.

SALES TIP

Once the sale is closed, salespeople can still follow up with the customer to make sure they're happy. This helps with loyalty but also remaining in contact with the customer for future sales. Loyal customers can come back to the sales pipeline by repurchasing additional products or services such as upgrading their accounts.

How to Build Your Sales Pipeline

1. Define your sales process
2. Break down the sales process into defined stages for best visualization
3. Identify the amount of opportunities that typically move to the next stage
4. Determine how many opportunities you need at every stage to hit your revenue goal
5. Indicate common trends of successful opportunities for each stage
6. Refine your sales process accordingly

Adopt Sales Enablement Software

- Which sales techniques are working and which are not?
- What stages are taking longer than others?

It's important to regularly review your pipeline and the progress of your sales team.

Indicate barriers and what is slowing down the momentum, then work on and improve your sales techniques accordingly.

A great way to stay on top of your metrics and what is/isn't working is adopting a sales enablement software that allows you to see your activity and make data-driven decisions, all while automating your sales process to save you valuable time in the day.

Yesware syncs your email and calendar activity automatically so that you no longer need to manually input your messages into Salesforce. With our activity dashboard – you can compile this data into informative reports to help forecast your sales and keep your pipeline activities accurate. These centralized dashboards help managers understand how sales activities are contributing to the pipeline and what to work on with the sales team.

LEARN MORE

SOURCE

- Prospecting 101
- Prospecting Techniques
- Qualifying

Prospecing 101

Finding the right people affects your long-term business success and revenue - get the customers who will find long-term value rather than churn after closing.

Modern day prospecting has blurred the line between inbound and outbound prospecting. The traditional conundrum of inbound versus outbound prospecting no longer cuts it. Salespeople are required to dig deeper into these umbrella terms to cherry-pick the best techniques.

Most sales experts will agree that the best way to approach sales prospecting in this consumer-savvy age is to combine elements from both inbound and outbound selling.

Before we discuss prospecting techniques, it's important to keep keep in mind these elements.

1 Always Put Value First

No one wants to hear your two-minute spiel touting the intricate details of your product or service straight off the bat. They want to know how you can help them enrich their lives or find a solution to a nagging problem they have.

Before you start selling your offering, it's important to sell the idea that the prospect's time will be well spent by talking with you.

2 Consider the Stages of the Sales Cycle

Not every prospect is equal - while one might have recognized they have a problem that needs solving and be in the process of researching solutions, another might be further through the sales cycle and be comparing two solutions that their research has boiled down to.

These two prospects will need different information and a different approach.

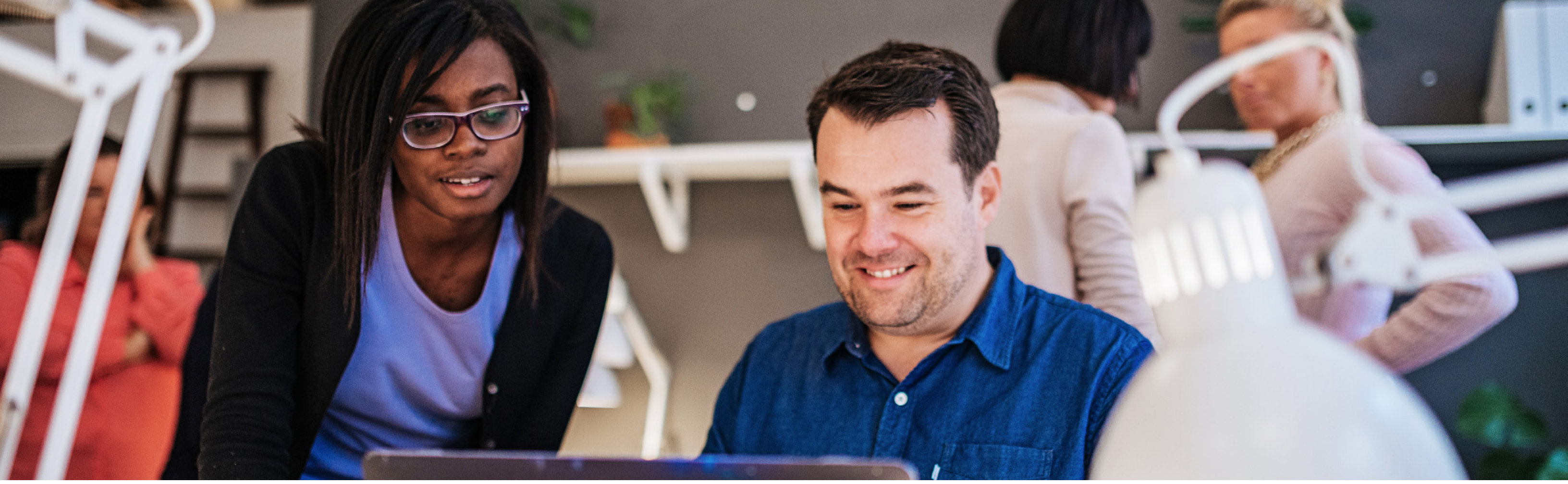
3 The Seven Touchpoint Rule

Research shows that it takes around seven touchpoints with a brand before someone will consider investing in them. "Touchpoints" refer to any interaction between brand and buyer, including a post on social media, a mention from a friend, or a phone call.

What's important to remember is that trying just one technique on each prospect and then giving up isn't enough. Instead, you'll likely need to roll out a number of different points of contact to get through to your targets.

4 Block Out Time

For many teams, the sales prospecting process is one of the biggest struggles they face. It helps if you block out a designated time each day or week to work on identifying and qualifying new prospects to keep your pipeline in motion.



Prospecing Techniques

Pick Up the Phone - But Keep It Warm

According to [research by Rain Groups], calling warm prospects is the most effective sales prospecting method with 51% of the 489 sales teams surveyed agreeing.

For many salespeople, this feels a lot more comfortable than cold calling because a connection has already been established.

In order to turn cold prospects into warm ones, they need to have a prior idea about who you are and what you're offering. To do this, you might ask to get recommended by a shared connection or interact with them on social media to create that initial spark. It's then up to you to keep that fire burning.

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Show Off Your Expertise

The term "thought leader" isn't just a buzzword doing the rounds.

Instead, it refers to someone who is looked up to as an expert in their field and the go-to person for quality information related to that industry.

When you are seen as a thought leader, you instantly become a trusted resource that keeps prospects coming back for more - and nothing is more valuable than trust in today's selling landscape.

Some ideas for doing so:

- Write regular articles that tackle a key pain point your target prospect has
- Share valuable advice on social media
- Speak at relevant conferences and events about a topic you're passionate about

Be Social On Social Media

Take heed of the "social" part of social media and get involved in discussions about your industry and product. Research shows that sales teams that regularly tap into social selling are 40% more likely to hit their revenue goals than those that don't.

You can make use of social media groups (like Facebook Groups and LinkedIn Groups) to access factions of your target prospects at the same time. Within these groups, you can engage with members, answer questions, and share useful information, which helps establish you as an expert.

To find relevant groups on LinkedIn, simply enter your keywords into the search bar and filter the results to show "Groups".

For example, if you sell software to financial advisors, search for groups that focus on that target market.

Go Behind the Scenes

Consumers today crave a human connection with the brands they invest in. This might seem contradictory when you consider that most purchases are made on a computer behind the anonymity of a screen, but it's the truth.

We're social creatures, and we're far more likely to buy from someone we like and can relate to than someone who's stuck on the sell, sell, sell carousel like a robot.

The key to this is showing your human side - one great way to do this is to use video to create as much of a human connection as you can behind the veil of a screen.

This can include going Live on social media or simply creating short, useful videos and sharing them on YouTube.

Don't worry about making your videos look professional - your prospects are far more interested in seeing you and what you have to say.

Get Involved At Networking Events

The rise of using the internet to carry out sales prospecting has meant a lot of salespeople forget that in-person selling is always best.

Actively standing in front of someone and having a real-life conversation can often be far more valuable than a cold call or email.

[This is reflected in research] that shows that in-person prospecting has a 40% higher closing rate.

Create Engaging Email Nurture Campaigns

Keeping yourself fresh in the minds of your prospects is important, particularly if you're selling a service or product that has a long lead time.

If you're not constantly showing up in front of prospects, providing them with value, and catering to their needs, they're going to go and find someone that does.

This is why it's so important to retain an email list of your sales prospects and deliver quality, useful content to them regularly via email.

Use Yesware Campaigns to set up an email campaign that warms up colder prospects when they sign up for a webinar, a downloadable, or a demo. This usually consists of about 5-7 emails over a week or so, with a pitch for your product at the end.

LEARN MORE

Qualifying

Studies show that at least 50% of your prospects aren't a good fit for what you're selling.

That's where BANT comes into play.

BANT is a sales technique that separates hot leads from time-wasters through a series of questions. Instead of putting effort into a lost cause, you identify deal-breakers right from the start.

This formula is used to determine whether it's the right time to sell to a prospect. It stands for: Budget, Authority, Need, and Timing.

This sales acronym was introduced by IBM as a simple opportunity identification to tell if your prospects qualified as leads based on the following criteria:

B: Budget
A: Authority
N: Need
T: Timing

1 Budget: is your solution a priority for your prospect

Your first concern in finding qualified leads? Budget.

When your prospect doesn't have the budget for your product/service and there's no way around it, the deal won't pan out.

It's a fundamental deal breaker in the sales qualification process.

Questions to ask:

- How much would you spend on similar products/services?
- Who is in charge of financial decisions?
- How much money is budgeted for this solution?

2 Authority: understand their decision-making process

When it comes to decision-making, most companies don't have a top-down approach. Today, there are two different groups involved in the decision-making process: The **Decision-makers** (will make the call and sign paperwork) and **Advocates** (will do the research, take calls, and pass information on to decision-makers)

And that's not all. Decision-makers and advocates often defer to end users to make decisions because this group's buy-in drives adoption.

Instead of focusing on one person, find the advocates and end-users, too.

Questions to ask:

- What is your decision-making process?
- How can I help you meet your expectations?
- Who on your team would be using this solution? What are their values? Obstacles?

3 Need: how to gauge their pain level

When it comes down to it, you're not selling — you're solving problems. If you're wasting time pitching your product or service to a customer who doesn't really need it, it won't end well.

A simple way to gauge your prospect's need for your solution? Get medical. Ask them how much their pain points bother them on a scale of 1 to 10.

Prospects who rate their pain between 7 to 10 are your most qualified.

Questions to ask:

- What does your current process look like?
- Where do you run into hurdles?
- What problems are you trying to solve by looking at solutions like ours? How often do you run into those problems? How much do they bother you on a scale from 1 to 10?

4 Timing: find out how soon they're willing to act

Knowing your prospect's timing helps you estimate your timing for first-touch to conversion.

If their timeline is longer than your average sales cycle and the revenue isn't worth the wait, you'll want to revisit the opportunity when the timing is right.

To gauge this, you need to understand their buying stage: Have they already passed through Problem Recognition, Information Search, and (at least begun) Evaluation of Alternatives?

Questions to ask:

- Walk me through the evaluation process. How long have you been looking for a solution?
- What types of time constraints are you working with?
- What are the implications if you don't meet the timeline?
- Are there any contracts you're already signed to? Until when?

If the qualifying questions around Timing doesn't go as planned - you'll want to revisit the opportunity when the timing is right. Use Templates to follow up with all prospects who you need to loop back with later. In our Templates feature, Yesware provides you with sample templates - use these such as "Circling Back With A Case Study" or create your own.

LEARN MORE

MANAGE

- Keep Your Sales Pipeline Healthy
- Monitor Pipeline Metrics Dashboard
- Reflect, Improve, and Update
- Keep Your Sales Cycle Short

Keep Your Sales Pipeline Healthy

Always keep track of your sales pipeline and monitor its growth and health. Your pipeline should always be growing or at least staying consistent with new deals leaving and entering simultaneously.

Another indicator of a healthy pipeline is to consistently have prospects at every stage. Make sure these opportunities maintain momentum – don't let a good lead slip through the cracks!

1 Prioritize top deals

Monitoring the length of the deal to estimate the closing period can help with prioritization and sales activities. Certain deals move through your sales pipeline differently than others. And some deals you need to prioritize.

A tip is to have certain qualification criteria for each stage to determine the top priorities you need to work on first. If you're consistently monitoring your pipeline, you'll begin to understand patterns of length and likelihood of dropping depending on the kind of deal.

1 Drop deals that aren't progressing

Deals that aren't moving and are stuck at a particular stage are in most cases not likely to make it through the pipeline. These are a waste of time – so make sure to clean up your sales pipeline regularly to avoid clutter.

When a prospect is at a standstill, either decide to remove them or focus on picking up momentum with this particular deal. A key indicator is if they've surpassed the average sales cycle length.

Monitor Pipeline Metrics

Monitoring your metrics is a key indicator of the growth and progress of your sales initiatives.

Focus on metrics that indicate pipeline health such as the number of deals in your pipeline, the average lifetime of a deal, the average size of deals, and the percentage of deals that make it through the pipeline.

It's also important to monitor your pipeline to identify opportunities or areas in the sales process that need improvement.

Your sales pipeline can also indicate barriers and identify blockers that your sales manager needs to address.

Sales Pipeline Metrics:

- **Number of deals in your pipeline**
- **Percentage of deals that make it through the pipeline**
- **Average lifetime of a deal**
- **Average deal size**
- **Pipeline value**
- **Sales velocity**

Reflect, Improve, and Update

Which sales techniques are working and which are not?

What stages are taking longer than others?

It's important to regularly review your pipeline and the progress of your sales team. Indicate barriers and what is slowing down the momentum, then work on and improve your sales techniques accordingly.

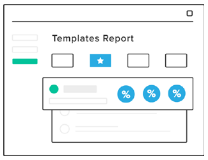
Establish your pipeline, execute, measure, and reflect.

Establish what each stage of your pipeline entails and your team's plan and techniques for each. Use the data and metrics your sales pipeline provides to improve your sales process.

From prospecting to closing – keep the stages in a sequence and maintain a process-oriented visual dashboard of your pipeline to avoid any opportunities from slipping through the cracks.

EMAIL ACTIVITY REPORT

Dig into all of your outbound sales activity – send rates, open rates, reply rates – to better understand where you're succeeding and what to focus on next.



TEMPLATE REPORT

Understand what's working and what's not with your email Templates so you can drive more business smarter and faster.

Use your Email Activity Report and Template Report to see what's working and not working across your team. Get clear insights into your sales process and the information you need to make data-driven decisions.

LEARN MORE

> The engagement insights we get from Yesware are invaluable ... It's shortened our sales cycle by at least 20%"
>
> **NATE CASTRO**
> **Director of Enterprise Sales at General Assembly**

Keep Your Sales Cycle Short

Sales cycles can be incredibly long, but this is a huge barrier. The longer your sales process - the more time your prospect has to change their mind. Here are some ways of shortening your cycle.

1. Be straight up from the get-go:

Data shows that 50% of your prospects are not a good fit for what you sell, so be transparent right off the bat. Directly tell them what they will and won't get from your product or service.

Address any objections from the beginning. This not only builds trust with your prospect but saves you time pursuing opportunities that weren't a fit from the beginning.

2. Stay on top of your speed of response time:

When asking our Head of Sales here at Yesware, Ian Adams, what some of his top tips are for shortening the length of your sales cycle, his immediate response was the speed of response time.

Adams states: "From the time the lead comes in, follow up as fast as possible- ideally within 5 minutes, and maintain that sense of urgency throughout the sales cycle."

Lead Response Management conducted a study that shows just how powerful this 5-minute rule can be - the odds of contacting a lead if called in 5 minutes versus 30 minutes drop 100 times & the odds of qualifying a lead if called in 5 minutes versus 30 minutes drop 21 times.

3. Map out the process to your prospect

Remember – you're the expert, they're not.

Map out the process to your potential customer and offer guidance. Guide them through the buying process by identifying the next steps, addressing possible obstacles, and offering suggestions.

If you're transparent with them about the whole process, you're much more likely to convert them to a customer. You know the sales process and steps to come, make sure they're aware of them too.

4. Book your next meeting efficiently

Many sales reps waste time going back-and-forth trying to schedule that next meeting. Don't waste your time doing this and shorten the length of your sales cycle with some of these time-saving tips.

One tactic is making it a goal to schedule your next meeting at the end of your prior conversation, this sense of urgency can help you move through the process quicker.

5. Make information accessible to your buyers

Our Head of Sales also believes this tip is fundamental in shortening the length of your sales cycle.

If it's easier for buyers to get their questions answered and understand the value, they'll be much further down the sales cycle by the time they talk to you, which ultimately speeds up the process. If your marketing team can get clear and concise information available to your audience about your product or service, this allows your prospect to be a step ahead before the process begins.

6. Make the signing process as easy as possible

In the digital world we live in today – signing on a physical sheet of paper is a thing of the past.

Waiting around for your prospect to print, sign, scan, and send – is a waste of time.

This will increase the length of your sales cycle and waste yours and your possible customer's time. Avoid this hassle and take advantage of electronic documents. Here at Yesware, we use Hello Sign, which allows our customers to electronically sign our documents.

Speed up the process by using Yesware's Book a Time. With this feature, you take control of the scheduling process by integrating your calendar into your inbox and sending your recipient an easy-to-schedule selection of times.

LEARN MORE

WIN MORE DEALS

- Build Rapport
- Handling Objections
- Persuasion Techniques

Build Rapport

Trust is essential to every sales equation. Developing trust isn't the easiest process, but if you work on it and follow these five key strategies, you're going to be considered far more trustworthy in the eyes of your prospect.

Sometimes you need that extra boost to differentiate yourself from your competitors - if you can leverage these strategies to easily build rapport with your prospects, you'll be winning more deals in no time.

1 Establish credibility

It's proven that humans naturally fear the unknown. Psychology research suggests humans like the ability to anticipate the consequences of situations. This is compared to the act of falling; we are scared of falling because we don't know how it will end. Establishing credibility is vital to gaining comfortability.

A way to establish credibility is by providing hard data about the results to your prospect or customer. Give them helpful advice and information so they will count on you. But first, you need to establish yourself as an authoritative figure.

2 Show empathy

Show genuine concern in your prospect and be a person. Unlocking empathy in sales is a tactic all salespeople should know. Here are essential steps for leveraging empathy in sales:

- Step into the buyer's shoes
- Identify their problem and offer solutions
- Ask questions that exhibit genuine curiosity
- Remain in your customer's shoes until the end

3 Provide nonverbal cues

Your nonverbal communication is just as crucial as your verbal communication. Scientific studies confirm that body language is all-important when it comes to forming relationships.

The 7%-38%-55% rule, hypothesized by psychologist Albert Mehrabian, points to three elements that inform first impressions:

1. Words are 7% of the message
2. Tone of voice is 38%
3. Body language is 55%

4 Be consistent

A customer or prospect is much more likely to trust you if your behavior is consistent over time. Studies show that when a customer can predict your behavior, they are much more likely to trust you. If you are consistent, this reduces fear, which ultimately increases the trust molecule of oxytocin.

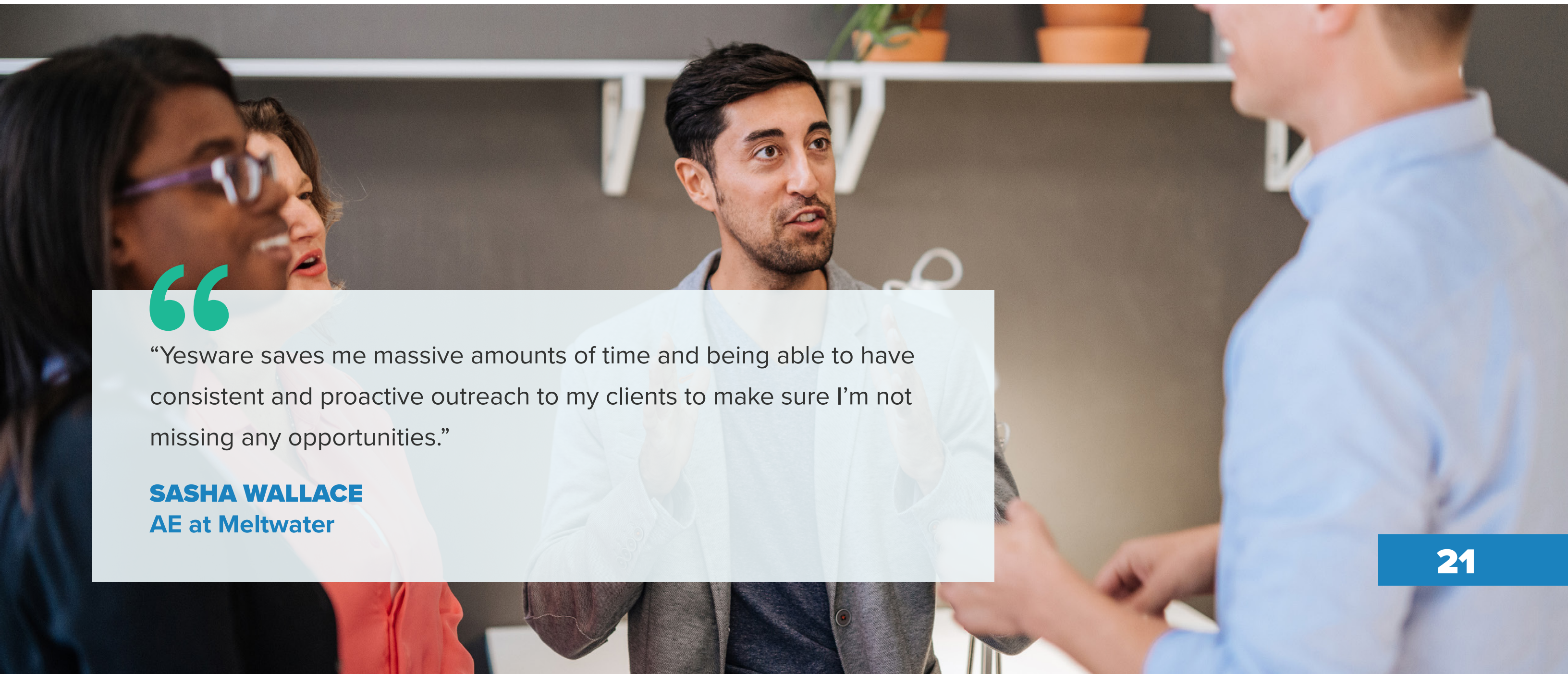
Our key tip to remaining consistent is to follow a process – consistent activities deliver consistent results. Also, make sure to follow through with your client and keep your promises. You have to not only gain their trust but maintain it. And remember, trust can be broken.

5 Make a connection

In order to gain trust in sales, a connection needs to be made. To start this connection, implement a great conversation starter that will engage your prospect in seconds.

Some ideas for doing so:

- Shared Interest: According to the similarity-attraction effect, people want to be around others with common attitudes, values, and preferences. This is because of social reinforcement; similarity attracts because people enjoy when someone possesses opinions and worldviews that validate their own. Social reinforcement increases oxytocin levels, allowing the person to form a social bond.
- Mutual Connections: Making a mutual connection is a great tool for conversation starters and building a connection with the person. Finding a mutual connection can be as simple as looking on LinkedIn.
- Ask for their opinion: By asking for their opinion, you will show you care and respect their views. When someone feels as though you care about their point of view, trust is more likely to occur earlier.



“Yesware saves me massive amounts of time and being able to have consistent and proactive outreach to my clients to make sure I’m not missing any opportunities.”

SASHA WALLACE
AE at Meltwater

Handling Objections

Sales objections are inevitable, but how you handle these objections is key to mastering your sales strategy.

Many times these common sales objections mask an underlying issue – your job is to uncover the deeper meaning behind the objection by understanding the prospect's needs. The best way to do this is by asking questions.

Psychology studies highlight the power of questions. When you ask someone a question about themself, there is a strong neurological incentive for them to answer. Your role is to carefully listen and dig into the objection by getting your prospects to talk.

The more you understand why they're shutting you down, the better equipped you are to disarm their objection.

1. "I need to talk to my team"

If you have correctly qualified your prospect, then you will be fully aware of whether you are speaking to the decision-maker or not.

If you understand the decision-making process early on, you know to present your solution to all of the people involved in making the decision. But if this problem does present itself later in the sales process, the best thing you can do is offer to present your solution to the rest of the team.

Getting all decision-makers in one room will help you have more control over the sale and facilitate the decision.

- "I understand. If it makes it easier for you, I can hop on a call or come in for a meeting to explain the solution to your team. When would be the best time to do this?"

2. "It's too expensive"

The number one tactic to avoid this objection from arising in the first place is to never begin the conversation with discussing price – focus on the prospect, their pain points, and how your solution will benefit them.

Their opinion on your price all comes down to perceived value. Make the value of your solution known, and you will minimize the likelihood of this objection arising.

But sometimes it's inescapable. When presented with this objection – emphasize any free trials and state that they do not need to make any decision off price just yet, bringing the conversation back to your solution. The more you can talk about your solution and its benefits, the more they will instinctively justify the price.

You can also ask the prospect why they think your solution is too expensive. The prospect then has to break down their reasoning which gives you another insight into their perspective.

- "We don't expect you to buy anything from us right now. We are just looking to show you our solution and see if it is of value to you and your business."
- "Can you tell me a little more about why you think the solution is too expensive?"

3. “We already work with [competitor]”

This is a best-case-scenario objection. Why? Because the business has already recognized a need and seeked a solution.

You can reference a customer who used the same product or service and transitioned to yours, what advantages they saw, along with social proof. You can also get them talking about their experience with the competitor and use any complaints to your advantage.

- “We’d love the opportunity to show you how we are different and how customers have found additional value with our solution in regards to using [competitor].”
- “Can I share a case study with you that shows how a company similar to yours was able to reduce/increase _____ by switching from [competitor] to our solution?”
- “I understand. May I ask you how your experience has been so far with [competitor]?”

4. “I don’t have time right now”

This sales objection is another way of saying “this isn’t important to me right now.” This could be a sign you haven’t translated enough value of your solution.

You can politely ask the prospect if you are calling at a bad time or if there is a current business problem they’re dealing with. If the problem has to do with their business, show how your solution could help ease their pain.

Also, if your solution helps with productivity and making their lives easier – this is a great time to emphasize that.

- “Totally understand. If you don’t mind me asking, what are your company’s other priorities right now?”
- “I hear you, it’s a crazy time of year. What other time would work best for you? Just looking for 5 minutes to show you how we can help reduce your stress and give you more time in the day.”

5. “Just send me some information”

The earlier this objection comes up in your conversation – the less likely they are to follow through.

A tactic for handling this objection is to ask them what they are looking for in this information – which gets them talking more about their needs. Then you can fine-tune your proposal so it’s personable and catered to this particular prospect and their business.

Another way of handling this objection is to offer a demo so they can see your solution hands-on.

- “I’d be happy to send you some information, but may I ask you a few questions to make sure I send you the most relevant information for you and your business?”
- “People tend to find it more valuable seeing the solution hands-on, would you be interested in a quick demo?”

Persuasion Techniques

1 Reframe their mindset

It's the classic half-glass of water game. You need to show them it's full.

How to do it: Take a piece of information someone can't argue with being true, and use it to adjust their view.

If someone uses a competitor, position your offering as complementary or unique.

2 Storytelling

Did you know that you can get the people you're talking with to make oxytocin, which promotes feelings of connection and empathy, by telling them a story?

Donald Miller lays out a framework for doing so: bring customers into your story and make the customer the hero, not your brand.

The story goes like this: A character has a problem, they meet a guide who gives them a plan and calls them to action, and this helps them avoid failure and achieve success.

3 Repetition

In an experiment of 100 participants, repeating selective information changed opinions.

Students first decided which of two job applicants were better qualified. They were given equal positive and negative attributes to help decide. Then, they were paired face-to-face with someone who repeated information supporting the opposite candidate. When asked to decide again, 70% of students revised their decision.

"In two experiments we demonstrate that selectively repeating information in favor of a particular decision alternative changes preference ratings in favor of this alternative and makes a decision for this alternative more likely."

4 Specificity

Read the following: Repeating information changes opinions.

Now read this alternative pulled from the section above: In an experiment of 100 participants, repeating selective information changed opinions.

Which version makes you more confident about the effect of information on opinions?

Behold, the power of specificity.

Precise details and concrete facts help convey that you are telling the truth.

SALES TIP

If you're sending someone a case study, make sure it has a quantifiable measure of success in it. Pull that number into the descriptive text that you hyperlink.

"In sales situations, stories allow the subconscious mind of the prospect to truly 'get' and see the valuable application of the solution."

ERIK LUHRS

5 Social proof

Instead of tooting your own horn, let your customers do it for you. It's easier, and it's more effective. We trust our peers most.

Think about canned laughter. Sitcoms build it in because they know it makes viewers laugh harder themselves.

We base our judgments on other people. This is also why customer names and testimonials from people similar to us make us more likely to buy.

6 Shared commonality

We like, trust, and listen to people who are similar to us.

Commonalities create fast friendships, but you can also use them to create persuasion. Bonding with someone with a unique similarity to us helps us fit in and stand out — two things humans crave.

Life is full of finding shortcuts, and this is how the Similarity Principle works. We jump to assuming that someone's similarity makes them as trustworthy as we are. The alternative: taking the time and effort to decide bit by bit whether this person is honest and reliable.

6 Emphasizing that they're in control

We don't want someone to tell us what to do — especially if we don't agree with it.

Science proves that removing the pressure in an offer makes us 2 times more likely to say yes. This is why we do things like volunteer and donate.

It's called the But You Are Free (BYAF) technique.

Phrases that do the trick (and keep it conversational) :

"No pressure"
"It's up to you"
"Whatever you prefer"
"If you'd like"

FINAL THOUGHTS

There are many strategies and techniques discussed in this guide. Our final recommendation is to try new techniques, look at your metrics and your engagement reports, and fix/change any strategies accordingly.

The best thing you can do in sales is to look back, reflect, and learn.