ParkerGale

HOW TO CLARIFY YOUR SALES PROCESS

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A PROCESS ISN'T A PROCESS UNTIL YOU'VE WRITTEN IT DOWN.

In order to build a sales process that sticks – one that's easily understandable and easily enforced - it helps to clarify and document "how you sell" from multiple angles.

This document outlines what we believe are the two documents every sales leader needs to build a consistent, predictable sales process.

They are:

1. THE BUYER'S JOURNEY
2. THE RULES OF THE ROAD

THE BUYER'S JOURNEY

BUILD YOUR SALES PROCESS BASED ON HOW YOUR CUSTOMERS BUY

"It is important to start the sales methodology design process with the buyer journey. **Starting with the buyer journey increases the likelihood that the buyer's needs will remain front and center during all aspects of the selling process.** It also allows the sales team to take a step back and reflect on how the buying journey can be accelerated or streamlined."

- Mark Roberge, The Sales Acceleration Formula

THE B2B BUYING JOURNEY

"To understand how to best help customers advance through a complex purchase, Gartner Research **identified six B2B buying "jobs"** that customers must complete to their satisfaction in order to successfully finalize a purchase."

Problem Identification → **Solution Exploration** → **Requirements Building** → **Supplier Selection**

"We need to do something to solve this problem."

"What's out there that can solve our problem?"

"What exactly do we need this product to do?"

"Does it do what we need? Is this who we want to work with?"

"Can we get everyone to agree?"

Source: https://www.gartner.com/en/sales/insights/b2b-buying-journey

ALIGN YOUR SALES STAGES TO THE BUYING JOURNEY

	Problem Identification	Solution Exploration	Requirements Building	Supplier Selection
BUYER'S JOBS	*"We need to do something to solve this problem."*	*"What's out there that can solve our problem?"*	*"What exactly do we need this product to do?"*	*"Does it do what we need? Is this who we want to work with?"* *"Can we get everyone to agree?"*
YOUR JOB AS A SALES + MARKETING TEAM	❑ Help the customer realize the problem exists, solving it matters, and that you may be able to help	❑ Compare customer needs vs. what we offer + determine initial sense of mutual fit	❑ Confirm that our solution fits the customer's requirements	❑ Agree on what they'll buy, how we'll work together, and other contractual details ❑ Help customer rally internal resources
EXAMPLE SALES STAGES	Initial Call Setup	Initial Deep-Dive Complete	Solution Fit Confirmed	Preferred Vendor
	Initial call complete (SQL)			Signed Contract
	Rejected by Sales	Derailed	Derailed	Lost

Source: https://www.gartner.com/en/sales/insights/b2b-buying-journey

ALIGN YOUR VERIFIABLE SALES STAGES TO THE BUYING JOURNEY

CUSTOMER MINDSET

What is the prospect thinking about?

Problem Identification	Solution Exploration	Requirements Building	Supplier Selection
"We need to do something to solve this problem."	*"What's out there that can solve our problem?"*	*"What exactly do we need this product to do?"*	*"Does it do what we need? Is this who we want to work with?"* *"Can we get everyone to agree?"*

STAGE DEFINITIONS

What needs to happen to be at each stage?

Stage 1 Suspected Opportunity	Stage 2 Sales-Accepted Oppty	Stage 3 Deep Dive complete	Stage 4 Solution fit confirmed	Stage 5 Vendor of choice	Stage 6 Signed Contract
• The initial sales call (live or phone) has been set up	• Sales has executed initial call, and based on what they have learned, believe this is a qualified oppty to close within next X months	• Completed a deep-dive call to begin mutual process of determining if we can meet customer requirements • Can include demo, but doesn't have to	• Customer has told us they believe we can basically solve their problem (excluding detailed concerns, price issues, or competition)	• Customer has told us that we are the vendor they prefer to work with	• We have received a signed contract from the customer

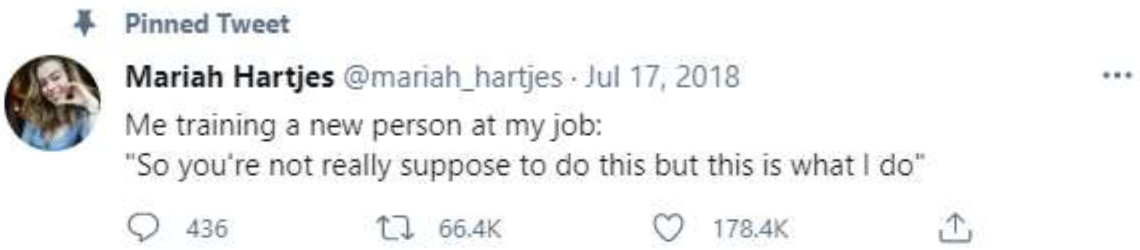
BUILD CONTENT FOR EACH SALES STAGE

	Problem Identification		Solution Exploration		Requirements Building	Supplier Selection
	Stage 1 Suspected Opportunity	**Stage 2** Sales-Accepted Oppty	**Stage 3** Deep Dive complete	**Stage 4** Solution fit confirmed	**Stage 5** Vendor of choice	**Stage 6** Signed Contract
EXTERNAL CONTENT *Stuff to share with customers*	• Whitepapers (ours + thrd party) • Use case series • Brochures • Intro sales presentations	• Whitepapers (ours + thrd party) • Use case series • Brochures • Intro sales presentations	• Product briefs and one-pagers • Sample output • Customer referral pages • ROI calculator	• Competitive materials • Product/company briefs • Exec-sponsor presentation	• Competitive materials • Product/ company briefs • Exec-sponsor presentation	• Competitive materials • Product/ company briefs • Exec-sponsor presentation
INTERNAL CONTENT *Stuff to make the sales team's job easier*	• Prospecting templates • Sales playbook	• Sales playbook – pain-based discovery questions + meeting planning • Account plan	• Sales Playbook – pain-based discovery, velocity P.L.A.N. • Account plan • Evaluation matrix	• Proposal template	• Close Plan	• Win / Loss request and script

THE RULES OF THE ROAD

GET CLEAR ON HOW YOU WANT YOUR TEAM TO MANAGE THEIR OPPORTUNITIES

DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?



DO YOU TRUST YOUR CRM DATA?

Your CRM can be an important source of insight and clarity, but only if it's used correctly. As Hilmon Sorey and Cory Bray, founders of ClozeLoop, say in the Sales Enablement Playbook, "GIGO – Garbage In, Garbage Out – is the fastest way to render your CRM useless and unused.

Preventing GIGO starts with **(i) writing down and (ii) training the team** on how you expect them to manage opportunities and use the CRM.

Most teams can create a near-final draft of this "Pipeline Management Rules" document in about an hour.

Here's some help to get you started.

HOW TO CLARIFY YOUR SALES PROCESS…

…so your salespeople actually use it.

Create, share, and reinforce a Pipeline Management document that covers…

CLOSE DATES

- ❑ Ask reps to use close dates "when they expect the opportunity to naturally close"
- ❑ Clarify when and how you want reps to pull forward dates as deals develop

SALES STAGES

- ❑ Use customer-verifiable sales stages – if you called the customer and asked them, would they confirm you "are where you are?"
- ❑ Include a stage for derailed/stale deals (and guidance on when to use it)

OPPORTUNITY VALUES

- ❑ Ask reps to input realistic oppty values + provide guidelines
- ❑ Include guidance for special cases, including:
  - *Multi-year deals*
  - *Very large deals*
  - *Dealing with discounting*
  - *Lost + derailed opportunities*

SCRUBBING THE PIPELINE

- ❑ Include instructions for when and how reps should scrub their pipeline (don't rely on "always be scrubbing")

FORECAST CATEGORIES

- ❑ Include definitions of your forecast categories + percentages if they differ from your sales stages (hint – they probably should)

SHARING FORECASTS

- ❑ Lay out how you want reps to share their forecast + what it should include (e.g., ARR vs. services vs. training, etc.)

EMAIL US FOR A STARTER DOC…

…and for some help making your own

EXAMPLE

Pipeline Management Rules

How to use Opportunities, Stages, + Forecasting in SFDC

Plagiarized from and inspired by Dave Kellogg

What's the purpose of this document?

The purpose of this document is to the rules for how we enter opportunities ("oppties") in Salesforce.com (SFDC) and for how we forecast our business. The intent is not to document every possible rule, but instead to define the key rules that will make the biggest impact in the predictability of our forecasts and visibility into our future business.

How do we manage opportunities?

Opportunity Timing: Close Date

Enter oppties with a close date in the quarter in which you think they will **naturally close**.

Do not pull up a 2Q natural oppty into 1Q because there's some tiny chance it might close in 1Q. Note that in making your rep-level forecast you can factor in the possibility of accelerating deals – but please do not change their natural close date, just to factor them into your forecast.

However, as the quarter progresses, if you think what was originally a 2Q oppty now has a more than 50% chance of closing in 1Q, then you should pull the close date forward.

Opportunity Stages

We place a lot of attention on the stage field, so please learn exactly what these stages mean.

Note that:

- Every stage has a number and we will generally refer to them by number in talking.
- "Call" can mean live salescall, telephone meeting, or webex. We are using the term generically.
- These stages are milestones that you pass[1]. So only put an oppty into stage 4 (solution fit confirmed) after the customer has told you that they believe we can solve their problem.
- Stages are stages. Do not think of stages as probabilities. (We use forecast category for that.) Think of them as describing the state of an oppty only.

[1] They do not explicitly refer to what you do next.

Email us at ops@parkergale.com and we'll send you a ready-to-go template with notes on how to customize it to fit your needs.

“The challenge here isn’t about how to make any particular sale, but **how to establish a process** by which a sales team of modest size can move the product to a wide audience.”

- Peter Thiel, Zero to One

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WE'D LOVE TO HEAR WHAT YOU THINK.

Email me – paul@parkergale.com