

From ICP to Sales Pipeline:

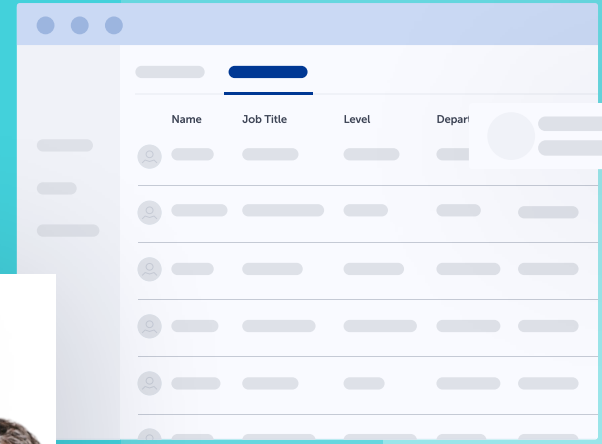
How Leaders Can Create a Winning Pipeline Generation and Sales Planning Strategy



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Introduction

Welcome to part three of learning how to utilize your whole team to generate your sales pipeline. We've previously covered how your RevOps team should take ownership of building out your ICP (ideal client profile) and how you can use your [ICP for growth marketing](#).

Now, we'll discuss the benefits of getting your ICP into the hands of your sales team. We'll cover how sales can understand and use your ICP to predict revenue, improve outbound sales efficiency, scale your sales team, and overcome expected challenges.

The big idea is to ensure you can accurately predict your revenue before you begin scaling your sales

operations. If you don't know how many opportunities and revenue a new sales rep or account executive will bring in, you don't know if additional hiring will be wise. But, once you know the expected output, you can rev your sales engine and start seeing your results multiply.

Using Your ICP to Predict Revenue

You want to put your best salespeople on the best deals to close. And you want to know how much revenue you can expect to make each quarter. The way to prioritize your sales team and have predictable revenue is to use your Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) and Service Obtainable Market (SOM) from [when you built your ICP](#).

TAM

Total Available Market

SAM

Sales Addressable Market

SOM

Sales Obtainable Market

A reminder that TAM is your Total Available Market, SAM is your Serviceable Addressable Market, and SOM is your Serviceable Obtainable Market.

- » [Start with Your TAM](#)
- » [Find Your Maximum Revenue with SAM](#)
- » [Set Expectations with SOM](#)
- » [Building Revenue with Your ICP](#)

Let's go over the process from a sales perspective.



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Start with Your TAM

Imagine you're renting out bulk orders of office chairs. You could technically rent to anyone in an office that needs 2 or more chairs. Your TAM would be calculated as follows:

TAM = (annual revenue per customer/contract) x (number of total possible customers/contracts).

But your sales reps don't need to spend hours on the phone to rent out 3 chairs to a customer. And

bigger customers have likely already bought their own office chairs, so they're a waste of time too.

Find Your Maximum Revenue with SAM

Here we move down to the SAM. Your SAM is all of the businesses that have a strong product fit for you at this exact moment. To calculate SAM, use company technographic and firmographic data to figure out how many companies would be a good fit for you.

So, how many accounts and personas fit your theoretical marketing product?

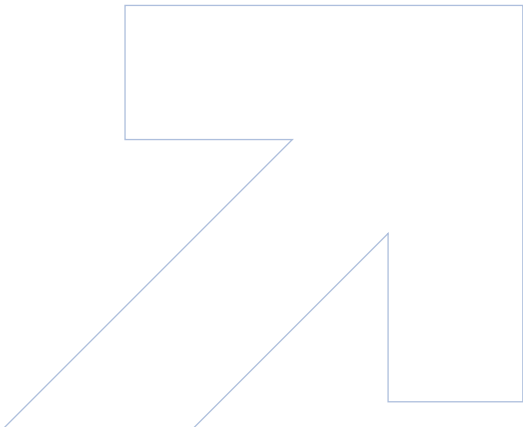
Let's say you want the US Market in certain states and 100 - 1,000 employees. If a new customer fits these criteria, they both have a chance to close and will produce enough revenue to be worth your sales rep's time. They're a good fit.

You can use SalesIntel, or a similar data provider, to filter the available data by firmographic, technographic, and other data points to find your SAM. Simply select the filters you need, and you'll receive the total

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number of accounts and contacts fitting your SAM. Expect this number to be about 1/15 of your TAM and the max reasonable number of prospects to begin considering.

Your total SAM is the max amount of revenue your company could dream of earning in a year with their current product and services.



TAM, SAM & SOM Explained: But where do I win efficiently?

TAM

How big is the largest possible market?

SAM

What portion of the market fits you?

SOM

What portion of the market fits you?

(Continued)

Set Expectations with SOM

How do we move from SAM to having a predictable level of revenue? Your SOM is what percentage of your SAM you can realistically grab. Sadly, you won't be able to sell to every possible client in your SAM. SOM is the part of the market that you can actively sell to, service, and retain today. Bigger companies naturally have a bigger SOM. They have more resources!

To calculate your SOM, multiply your market share by your SAM.

But, a better version can be calculated based on your SAM filters paired with your internal closed won, lost, renewed, churned, and expanded account data. You can also base your SOM based on your sales capacity. If you have 10 account executives working on deals and each one has a quota of 100 deals for the year, your SOM is the 1,000 deals they would be expected to close.

Your SOM provides your current baseline and expectation for pipeline revenue. Assuming nothing disrupts the market, you can expect to put in the same level of work as last year and receive similar revenue this year.

You're predicting how much of your SAM you can close with your current resources.

Your SOM is the minimum revenue you can expect, and your SAM is the absolute maximum. With the help of your ICP, you can aim to fall somewhere in the middle.



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Building Revenue with Your ICP

Here is where we get to your ICP. If you're using a data provider like SalesIntel, we can run your SOM calculation and provide your targeted account list. Every account will fit your criteria to be a customer and have a high likelihood of closing.

ICP is all about building a target list of accounts where you are most likely to win. You want every prospect that marketing and sales pursue to be an ideal option with the highest chance of closing.

Your SOM is based on expecting your resources to get the same output as they previously have (10 AEs close 1,000 deals). But your ICP is designed to maximize the output of your resources by having shorter days to close deals, higher deal revenue, and more deals won. So, instead of your 10 AEs closing 1,000 deals in a year, they could be closing 3,000.

By focusing your efforts on these accounts, you'll improve the efficiency of your pipeline and begin to see higher returns for each dollar spent on sales and marketing. After testing and improving your efficiency, you'll already perform better than

your previous SOM. Next, you can start to scale and build with the expectation that each new dollar invested into your pipeline will continue to have positive results.

Next, we'll cover steps to improve your efficiency.

Increasing Sales Pipeline Efficiency

Once a prospect is in your pipeline, sales teams want to close deals quickly with minimal loss. The standard metric used to measure this is "days to close."

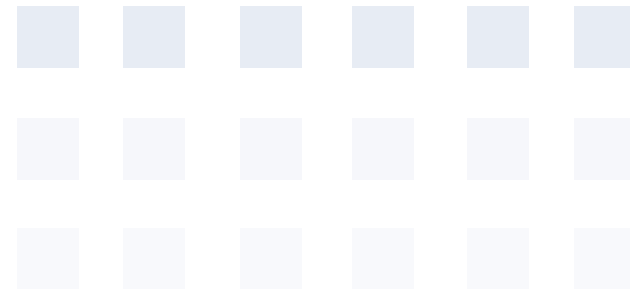
Better-qualified deals close faster and lead to quota achievement or - even better - over achievement, which is the holy grail for sellers.

Comprehensive, accurate account and contact data, buying intent signals indicating which accounts are in the market, and an easy way to build target account and contact lists are vital to improving sales efficiency.

Three things drive sales efficiency; if any of them break down, efficiency suffers.

1. [Account qualification](#)
2. [Account intent to buy](#)
3. [Access to account decision-makers](#)

We'll go over each part of improving sales efficiency.



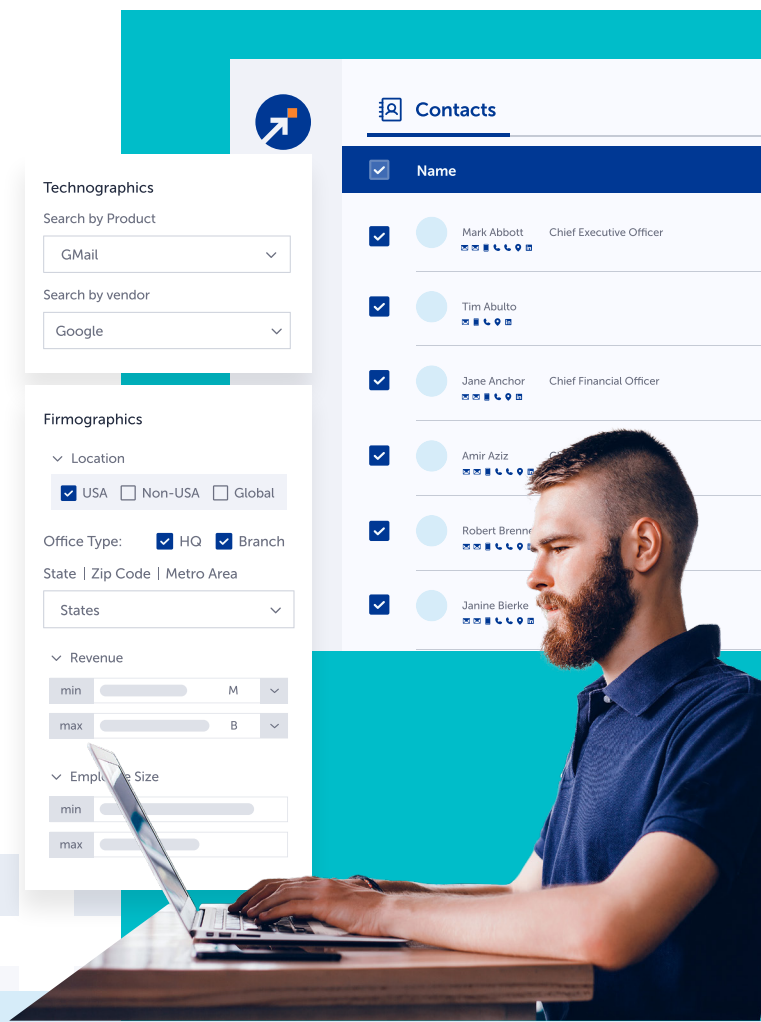
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Account Qualification

First, is the account qualified? The first thing you need to do to improve your sales section of the pipeline is to know that all accounts your sales team works on are qualified. When sales teams try to sell into poorly qualified accounts, win rates, and deal sizes suffer, impacting efficiency and costing sellers money.

By plugging your ICP into SalesIntel, and narrowing your target prospects by industry, company size, and related products and technologies that the target account already uses, you are going after accounts that fit your qualifications.

Even better than knowing these accounts are qualified, you'll know they are your ideal accounts and are likely to have shorter sales cycles and higher lifetime value. Nothing energizes sales reps more than knowing everyone they reach out to is a possible win; all they have to focus on is selling. No more wasting time only to discover a client can't use your service or having to spend the first part of the conversation asking qualifying questions. The sales team can jump right into helping each prospect understand how you can help them.



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Surfacing Accounts Ready to Buy

Even if the account is qualified that doesn't mean they're a great account to target today. Knowing which accounts are in the market greatly impacts efficiency. Sellers often get trapped in an opportunity that is not ready to buy for several months, and this lengthens "days to close" substantially. While spending time and energy on someone who isn't ready, you could instead be talking to someone looking to buy.

Having a target ICP is a great start, but more is needed. Sellers ideally

want to know if a target account has signaled an intention to buy. A data provider like SalesIntel includes Bombora Buying Intent Data, which identifies accounts that have signaled an interest in researching and purchasing for a given industry across 12,000 buying intent topics.

Instead of going after the biggest deals first or selecting ideal prospects randomly, intent data helps you prioritize. Your ICP list might be 10,000 companies, but [intent data](#) can direct you to the 500 of those companies currently in the market. You are once again making your sales team more efficient before worrying about scaling your team size.

The screenshot displays the profile for ACME Co. with 190,793 contacts. It includes sections for Firmographics, HQ Info, and Buying Intent. The Buying Intent section shows a timeline of activity from June 2 to August 8. Below the profile are three filter sections: Topics (with a list of topics like Applications Architect), Topic Threshold (set to 14), and Score Threshold (set to 85).

ACME Co. View 190,793 Contacts

FIRMOGRAPHICS

Industry: Telecommunications, eCommerce and Mail-Order Retail, General Merchand...
Sector: [Redacted]
NAICS Code: [Redacted]
SIC Code: [Redacted]
Annual Revenue: [Redacted]
Employee Count: [Redacted]

HQ INFO

1285 Alford St Dallas, TX 75202 - US
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

BUYING INTENT Powered by

News Press Funding Acquisitions

June 2 [Redacted]
July 15 [Redacted]
August 8 [Redacted]

Topics
Minimum number of topics that don't [Redacted]

- Applications Architect
- Automotive Compliar
- BCD Travel
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

Topic Threshold
Minimum number of topics that domains are surging on. [Slider] 14

Score Threshold
Minimum score for the selected topics a company must have. The higher the score, the more reliable the intent data. [Slider] 85

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Being able to talk to prospects already familiar with your market space and open to making a purchase is a huge boon. Instead of spending time educating the prospect as to why they need to invest in your product category, you only need to convince them that you're the best option. By using intent data, you'll be able to proactively reach prospects as they consider their options which means catching them before your competitors have started their own conversation. Being the first to start discussing a deal always carries an advantage and ensures you don't get left out of any competitor comparisons.

Intent data helps your team hit above their weight class, and consistently meet, and exceed, quota.

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Access to Account Decision-Makers

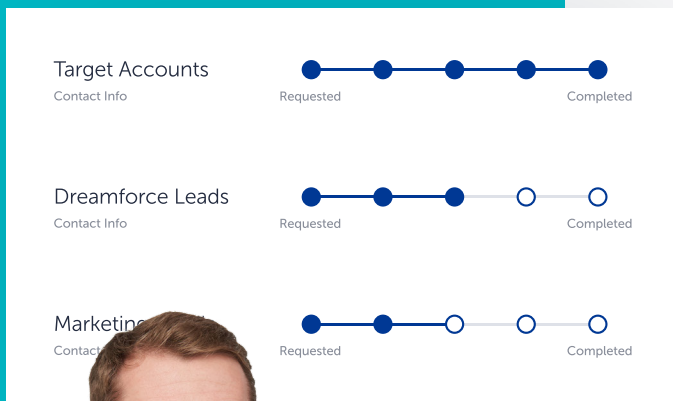
The account is qualified. They are in the market. What's missing? The last piece of the puzzle is contact data for decision-makers and rich information about the account. The sales team can't do anything without an email and phone number. When account or contact information is missing or of poor quality, it's an infuriating press

for sales professionals who know the deal is there - but lack the data needed to capitalize.

Data providers have always been crucial in bridging the gap between knowing which account to contact and reaching the right person.

[SalesIntel's database](#) has 24+ million 95% accurate, validated emails and 17+ million human-verified decision makers. To help out your sales team, we also have the largest database of mobile numbers at 54 million and growing.

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No matter which data provider you decide to use, you want to know they have a process in place to fill any gaps in contact knowledge. For example, our 2k+ member [Research on Demand team](#) will fill any data gap and/or fix data problems as an extension of your team.

Data gaps exist, and the market constantly changes, making quality a challenge for any provider. Your sales team shouldn't be the ones having to search for phone numbers and email addresses. Any minute spent having to search is one less spent on actually

selling. Your data provider is the one responsible for finding the data you want.

By feeding your sales team an accurate list of contacts at qualified accounts with the intent to buy, you are setting them up for maximum success. Once you hit the stage of high efficiency with each rep, you can begin to consider scaling your sales operations.

Scaling Sales Operations

A predictable forecasting model is impossible to build without foundational knowledge and accurate data. Inaccurate planning can lead you down a path to miss targets before you even start. The current wave of tech layoffs in the news is an example of scaling without an efficient and sustainable pipeline in place.

Before hiring more sales professionals, you'll want a consistent stream of qualified contacts, a sales playbook, and a balance between inbound and outbound prospects.

- » [Keep the Sales Team Fed](#)
- » [Create a Sales Playbook](#)
- » [How to Balance Time Inbound v. Outbound? Try the 70/30 Rule](#)

Keep the Sales Team Fed

Before rushing to scale your sales team after improving your efficiency, take a little time to be sure you can continue to feed qualified accounts to your team. Your first attempt at your ICP and usage of intent data might target too small a segment to keep your sales team consistently fed with fresh leads.

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Or, you might be contacting the wrong personas or verticals for success. You could be trying to talk to the CEO when you should be talking to the Director of IT. Maybe you've had success in healthcare previously, but there are not enough similar healthcare accounts to feed your sales team long-term.

Don't be afraid to experiment with new approaches if one well is drying up quickly. You want to have a priority list, so even if you hit a dry spell of top-qualified accounts with the intent to buy, you still have the next best contacts and accounts for your sales team.

Create a Sales Playbook

While you're still in the experimental and testing phase with your initial sales team, you also want to create your sales playbook. A sales playbook is a collection of materials that will assist your sales team in developing its sales process and methodology, outlining sales objectives, and providing a framework for closing sales.

A well-developed playbook enables your team to engage clients at every stage of the purchasing experience, increasing the likelihood of winning each deal. Record and combine the

best advice and techniques from across your team to help even new hires function similarly to top performers.

Instead of having to guess and improvise, your team should have a step-by-step process to follow. Throughout the sales process, everyone will repeat the same language to their prospects, giving clarity and avoiding conflicting messages and uncertainty. They'll be able to work faster and at a higher success rate.

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How to Balance Time Inbound v. Outbound? Try the 70/30 Rule

When scaling up your team, you'll want a process in place for divvying up outbound and inbound leads. If leads are given out only on a first-come-first-serve basis, everyone on your sales team will rush to grab the easiest leads to close first. Instead, you want to keep sales on a 70/30 model for their time.

Expect your sales team to spend 30% of their time on inbound. Inbound will likely account for 70% of your business. Then 70% of your sales time should be spent on outbound to acquire the last 30% of your business.

Healthy Outbound is Key.

The 70/30 Rule.

70% of the time

on Outbound driving 30% of the new logos

\$\$ ACV is often RICHER!

30% of the time

on Outbound driving 70% of the new logos

\$\$ ACV is often LOWER!



You don't want to spend too much time on outbound and leave inbound prospects waiting for a follow-up. You also don't want your team only chasing inbound leads and ignoring the results outbound can get. By following the 30/70 rule, you'll be able to maximize the results you can get from both inbound and outbound. ■

Once you have a sales qualification process, accurate contact data, a sales playbook, and a balanced plan between outbound and inbound, you can scale your sales team. As you do so, we'll cover a handful of common mistakes that can pop up.

4 Easy Mistakes to Make (and how to avoid them)

The best way to learn something is by experience. Once you make a mistake and see the consequences, you tend to remember it. But, the second best, and more convenient way, is to learn from the mistakes that others have already made. So, we're going to go over the errors we've made implementing the above process to help you avoid doing the same.

Scaling Too Fast

The worst-case scenario of scaling too slowly is leaving revenue on the table. Your team will still target and close the best deals, but they won't be hitting as much as they could.

But the worst-case scenario if you scale too fast? Sales reps are frustrated with time-wasting activities, team hiring and training

investments without returns, and eventually having to let go of team members.

Stick to your capacity primer and let your ICP and intent data guide how many sales reps you need to handle the demand for your product/service. Remember the 30/70 rule as well. If your team only has enough inbound to cover 10% of their time, you likely have

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too many sales reps. Everyone wants to move fast, but moving efficiently will always work out better in the long run.

Ignoring Your Forecasting Models

What if all the work using your data provider to map out your SAM, ICP, and revenue forecasts goes ignored? Tweak forecasts as needed based on your results, but don't forget about them. Other goals and motivations can be pushing on your team, but if you forgo your quantitative

assessments, you'll end up getting off track. Forecasts are never perfect, but you still need to follow a bottom-up approach to your expectations.

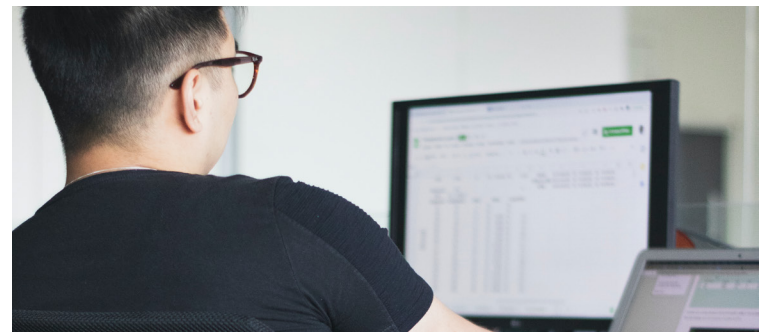
Available accounts matching your ICP, SAM, and SOM will be reliable approaches to what your sales team can do.

Skipping Documentation of Success

We always say your sales rep should be spending as much time as possible on actual selling. Not data management, research, or activity

logging, since you can use automation and other tools to handle all those tasks for them.

But you can't automate documenting and sharing your success with the rest of your team. Set aside time for setting up the playbook. The more you invest into the playbook early on and the more you document, the easier time any new hires will have and the less guesswork each sales rep will have to do.



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Mishandling Oversight of Outbound Activity and Quality

We've already covered needing to use the 30/70 rule to make sure inbound and outbound are balanced in their coverage. But you also need the right level of oversight for outbound work. Too much oversight and your team will feel micromanaged and lack

control over their work. Too little oversight and your team won't feel like their work matters and that they won't receive positive or negative results based on the effort they put in.

You also need to check the quality of leads your team is receiving. If everything is going smoothly with your data provider, RevOps, and marketing teams, your sales team should receive regular, high-quality inbound and outbound leads. If your team starts having trouble with the leads they're supposed to target, you'll want to find the source of the issue and solve it as quickly as

possible. Sales reps shouldn't be expected to make the best out of low-quality leads. If you put bad in, you'll get bad out.

Set reasonable expectations with your team for how much outbound activity they need to have each day and week. Reward team members who stay focused on hitting their numbers without overworking themselves and keeping to the efficiency processes already in place. As your team gets into a rhythm and knows you both have their back and keep track of their hard work, they'll find your company the ideal sales job.



Pulling it All Together

We covered a lot of information in this chapter!
To quickly summarize:

- ✓ Start with using your ICP, SAM, and SOM to predicate your revenue.
- ✓ Leverage account firmographic and technographic data to qualify target accounts.
- ✓ Use buyer intent data to narrow your sales focus and prioritize companies already shopping in your market.
- ✓ Source accurate contact information for decision-makers and your target personas.
- ✓ Don't scale your team until you can keep them reliably fed with strong leads, have a sales playbook, and have balanced your time between inbound and outbound 30/70.

Remember to stay on track, rely on your ICP, document your success, and scale at a sustainable rate. Your pipeline will be highly efficient, fast-moving, and reliable.

In our next piece of Pipeline Generation as a Team Sport, we'll discuss how you can align all parts of your go-to-market team for success.