



Hiring Salespeople? ... That's The Last Thing You Should Do!

Description

A few years ago, I sat down with my friend Paul Reddy and gave him an update on my business. I was excited – the travel technology company I was running was finally ready to break-out and grow. We had survived the great recession, fought through numerous business model pivots and had just completed the integration of a complicated merger that positioned us well with an attractive product with demonstrated fit in a large market. I couldn't wait to get started.

Like many CEOs, I associated the act of growing revenue with hiring sales people. When I told my friend that I was looking to hire some great B2B salespeople, he hit me with the thought-provoking statement: "Hmmm...that is usually the last thing you want to do."

Huh? What do you mean? I thought we were ready to go. My board wanted growth – and I didn't have any sellers outside of myself and my COO. How could we scale growth without adding sales people?

The answer, of course, was more nuanced. We would certainly need salespeople. The point my friend was making was that salespeople, hired too early, or in isolation, without the benefit of a fully defined Go-To-Market strategy, aligned marketing and sales structure, productivity tools and processes are often wasteful hires. "Do salespeople generate their own leads?" he asked – I immediately thought of Alec Baldwin in Glengarry-Glen Ross ([The Leads!](#)) "Do salespeople define your value proposition and write your sales pitch?" "Do salespeople onboard your customers?" "Do salespeople ensure your customers are having great success with your products?" The point of the discussion was that salespeople were a necessary, but insufficient, condition for scaling growth. Just like you can't hire a bunch of construction workers at Home Depot and expect them to build the home of your dreams. You need them, but they are only one important piece of a multi-functional puzzle.

That conversation turned into a productive business collaboration as I hired Paul as a consultant ([GiantLeap](#)) and Michael de la Torre as a strategic CRO and together we built a comprehensive Go-To-Market program that allowed us to grow our account base by over 100%, double our revenue growth and establish strong market leadership over the next 18 months. For Michael and I, that effort was one of the most exciting and rewarding episodes of our careers. Recently, we began reflecting on some of

the keys to our success during that time and comparing notes on other business situations where we successfully scaled growth rapidly and conversely – situations where we saw companies struggle with the challenge. These conversations led to the development of several frameworks and lessons that we now share with clients when we are working with them to scale growth. We decided to start this blog to share some of these thoughts and observations in the hopes that they can help others who are scaling the growth mountain, just as we have benefitted from all the great sales and marketing content shared by other thought leaders in the industry.

A quick point on that... Neither of us claim to be splitting the atom in terms of ground-breaking new growth algorithms and concepts in sales and marketing, and we are not publishing this blog with the intent of doing so. As voracious readers and learners, we delight in discovering new perspectives, rules, heuristics and lessons shared by others. We utilize many of these along with our own experiences to form a custom quilt of problem solving frameworks to apply to the specific growth challenges of our companies and clients, and it is these frameworks and lessons that we intend to share in this blog. We plan to cite references when appropriate, but will undoubtedly miss some. Our goal is to share constructive observations that may be helpful to others, not index the world of thought leadership in this vast field. We look forward to constructive feedback and the continuing dialogue with others interested in these topics.

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