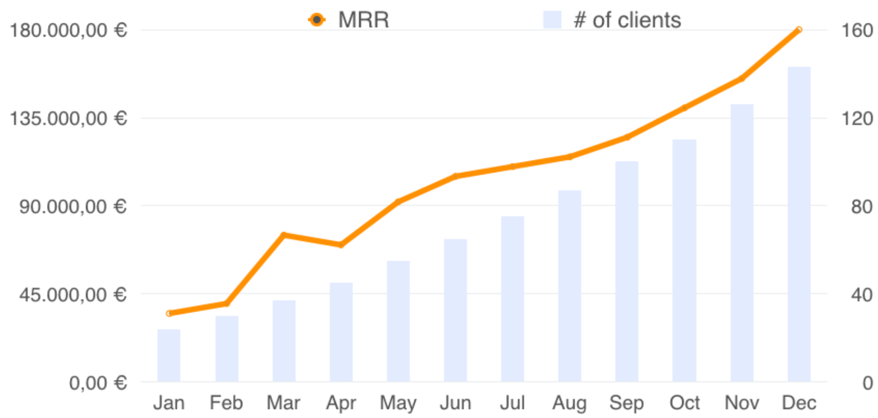
How to move your B2B New Business Revenue from 0 to 3.2 Million in 23 Months - without hiring a sales team, without working with growth consultants or agencies and without buying any ads or doing a single cold call.

This document is focused on helping B2B Tech and Service CEOs (Team 10 people +) with very explanatory products (Ticket 10k +) who do more than 100k annual revenue.

Written by
Philipp Alexander Ströhemann
of ComX.io www.comx.io/quiz

We are working with some of the fastest growing, most profitable B2B businesses in Europe.

Comx.io - Our Own Business

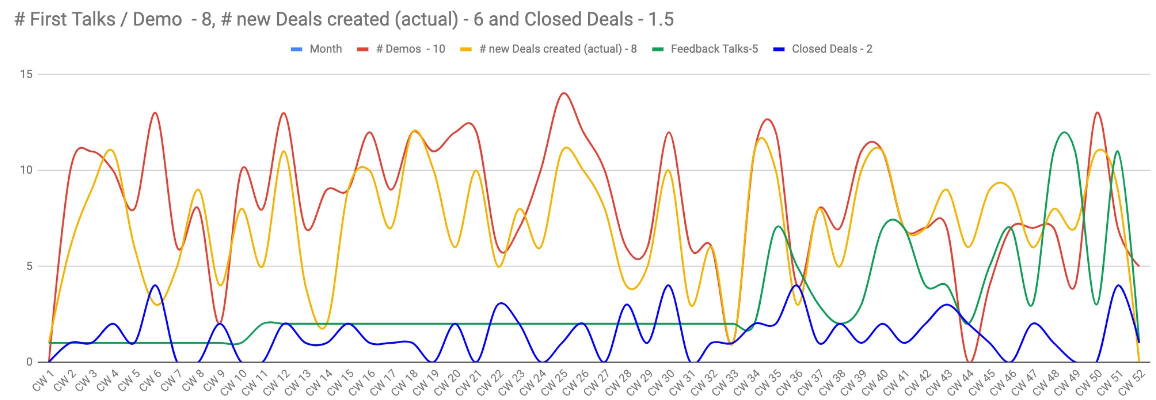


ComX growth trajectory from 2019 - MRR over clients added

We started out as a consulting business helping high-growth SaaS businesses to build, hire and sustain their inside sales teams. While we made decent revenues, we were struggling from project to project. Whenever we won a project, we got distracted delivering. Whenever we were able to invoice a lot of hours while delivering, we realised the dip in new business would hit us 3 months later.

We found ourselves in a hamster wheel, not being able to grow or scale and under constant pressure to deliver. One less project, and we would have to let people go.

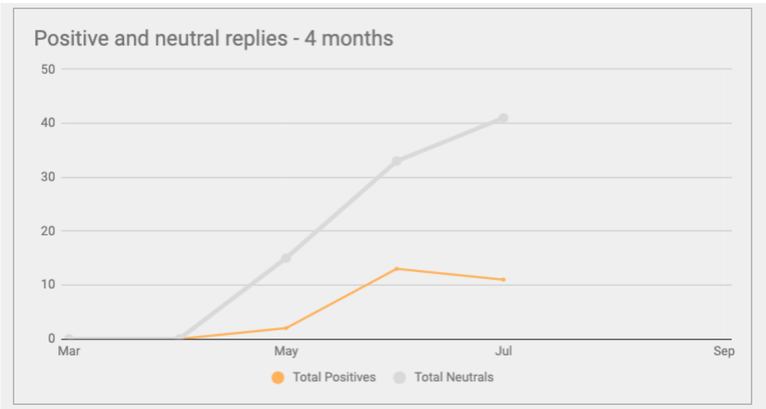
Our profitable hyper growth was unlocked after honing in on a message-market fit at the end of 2018 and building a scalable SaaS solution to create more results for more customers with less resources needed.



ComX weekly KPI tracking - Demos to Opportunities to Closed won deals from 2019

Africon - Management Consultancy from Bremen

4 Enterprise deals in less than 4 months and a founder redundant sales process



Marc, Africon's CEO is a seasoned management consultancy partner. He and his team help organisations conduct business in Africa. Marc found that he always became the bottleneck in new project sales. Between project delivery, attending conferences and managing his team, he only has so much time for new business development.

He engaged with ComX to build a predictable sales unit that doesn't depend on him for acquisition work. Due to their strength in presenting business cases and closing deals, they were able to generate 4 enterprise deals in less than 4 months.

Marc Zander - Managing Partner @ Africon - Management Consultancy from Bremen

"As with many consultancies, our sales process involved many activities. We did a lot of stuff, but with very little focus.

We started with cold emailing many years back, but we never reached any scale. It used to take us 10 -15 minutes per email, and we had to do all the research ourselves.

We have recently closed two deals via ComX.
Email accounted for about 25% of all sales before this point. We foresee that ComX will be the biggest sales source for us by the end of the year.

We will reduce the sales cost to a third of what it would take to get the same results without the assistance of ComX. If I had met ComX 3 years earlier, I would have gone with you guys straight away!"

Find the full Interview here: https://www.comx.io/case-studies-en/africon

Who is this document for?

*If you are a founder or C Level of a B2B business and deal with explanatory services and products that need **people** to actually sell them:*

E.g.

- IT Services
- Value Added Reseller
- SaaS (FinTech, HR Tech, Enterprise Tech, CRM, Niche, Legal Tech, Reg Tech)
- Management Consulting
- Marketing Agency / Services

- If you already have a track record, meaning your services actually work and provide value (10 clients +; 10 people +)and you like to understand what it takes to finally scale and make things move. Then stick around.
- If you see that sales is tough because sales cycles are too long, sales people are too expensive and your solutions can't be sold by juniors, then stick around.
- If you are trying to finally build a profitable sales operation;
- If you are trying to arrive at a predictable process for sales that just works and doesn't require you to pull in all the time;
- If you finally want to get rid of that sales team headache and start focusing on building a legacy

then this whitepaper is for you.

- If you are worried about sinking too much money into your sales and marketing teams with no return;
- If you are afraid to kick off a massive transformation project that only generates more work than anything;
- If you do not want to implement the NEXT TOOL or the NEXT CRM because it's all bullshit;
- If you are worried about adding even more sleazy sales people to your organisation that cost, but don't perform

you won't have to do any of that, when implementing these steps.

- You have tried with senior sales guys, nothing happened; tried with juniors, and they just don't have the stamina to lift hard over time (spend: 150 - 200k per year).
- You have seen the big sales talkers with massive egos come in, make a lot of noise, annoy your engineers and then fail because nothing was behind it.
- You have invested your own time and tried to onboard new people, spending 1000s of euros. You have tried to set up a new website, written whitepapers and done webinars for inbound.

- You hate sinking money into stuff that promises everything but creates nothing but headaches.
- You don't like being told by "consultants" that have never built their own businesses what to do.
- You have been told by sales people what your company has to do that your product is too weak and that it's not their fault if they don't succeed - and you know these for the excuses they are.

- You have a hunch that the answer lies somewhere else, other than adding one tool after the other or trying another fancy tech solution.
- You suspect that most of the "marketing" agencies provide jack shit in actual results, and that none of them can back up their claims with real evidence.
- You suspect that most sales teams are actually not successful or turning a profit, and that most sales people do not have the track record they claim. They probably could work with 50% less people and get the same results.

The truth is that:

- Everyone needs to build **an inside sales team** because of Covid-19 and where the world is going.
- Every entrepreneur has to figure out the **digital processes** of marketing their products in order not to fall behind.
- **Complex products**, however, **need personal interaction** and can't just be sold like any **simple startup product**. **It requires people with technical knowledge,** and that is not going away.
- **Everyone has tried a huge variety of methods and been disappointed** and lied to by call centres, marketing & SEO or inbound agencies and "sales superstars" that only cost, but never get the job done.

The Core Concept

So, here is the truth:

Complex B2B businesses do not struggle to grow and build scalable and profitable sales teams because they can't sell their product or their teams are not good enough or the market is too small.

It's because they are trying to ramp and scale their sales efforts too early, without the fundamentals being in place. Without the fundamentals in place and the unit economics (CAC vs. LTV) being under control, every funnel will break.

CEOs HAVE TO find a way first to build a reliable channel of high-quality sales conversations with the right people at the right time - without having to spend a fortune or becoming the bottleneck themselves.

By making the mistake of delegating this crucial task to employees and hiring marketing and sales people too early, before being able to build a predictable pipeline at the right cost, they create friction which is setting them up for failure.

The friction that is created **by premature hires, day-to-day distraction from other tasks** and the **high failure rate of sales failures adds up** to **such immense cost over time that**:

- Their sales pipeline won't turn a profit - which means their activities don't help but HURT the business;
- They end up not knowing where they went wrong, so they can't learn and iterate;
- They believe turning to funding, agencies, consultants or being the only person who sells is the only option.

All of the above issues are setting B2B CEOs up for more stress, losing grip over the competition, burning more capital and having a negative impact on the flourishing of the business.

The activities that commercially MAKE or BREAK your B2B organisation:

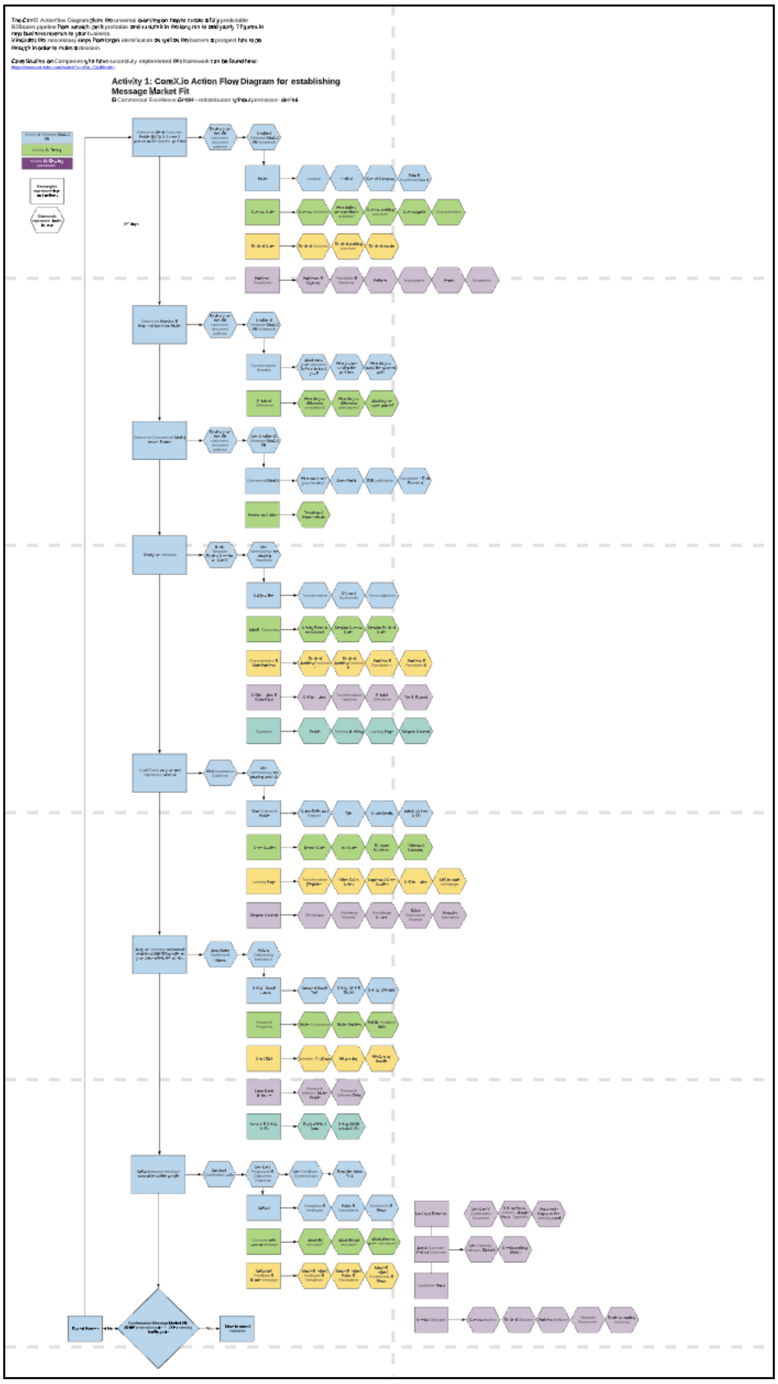
There are a couple of things that need to be in place to keep operating a fully profitable and predictable sales organisation and business. It's not much, however, if these steps are not in place, any attempt to scale or sustain sales will fail.

I’ve put together a summary - so let’s get started.

Activity 1:

You need to find message-market fit before you start selling or marketing on scale

To find message-market fit in the old days, the entrepreneur or business developer had to engage with 200 - 300 people to confirm his messaging. Normally, entrepreneurs do this at fairs, by cold calling, by engaging with people at meetups, or it just happens naturally through the hustle of the founding process. This is how they arrive at their first customers. When this happens, the excitement is so overwhelming that they can’t recall the details of the steps they went through to get the customer. Humans, and especially entrepreneurs, have a horrible memory.



The full Action flow on how to get to Message Market fit can be found here: https://bit.ly/comx-actionflow

With more clients, revenue and people, they get so distracted that they forget to keep their ears close to the market. They rather hire sales teams to do it for them. They let them cold call, reach out on LinkedIn and have them do the job on their own. Sales people, however, are not the founders. They lack the insight of the market's problem, and they have never been through all the iterations that led to services and products.

Basically, sales teams then struggle to get meetings. The meetings they are landing are not really pleasant, as prospects don't understand how they really can help - their communication is off from the start. Your market knows the difference between a salesperson and a CEO who is seasoned in actually providing solutions.

Ultimately, you will find yourself not being able to step out of sales, as constant input is needed. You end up having to take over from scratch and redo the process of finding message-market fit, while the business is running. This can take 6 - 18 months, because of the various business distractions taking place.

The advantage today is that the internet offers all you need to know about your customers.
With the right set up, today you are able to automate communication methods to scout for market sentiment and identify the problems worth solving quickly. You are able to use marketing automation tools and methods to arrive at feedback at record speed that can be leveraged into compelling offers, without having to hire an extra person, agency or copywriter. All you need to do is to listen carefully and spot the right keywords.

If you start to solve this research issue through the right tech and processes, you will observe how your target group is going from ignoring you and your team to wanting meetings with you. They will show up on time; they will be prepared and curious about what you have to say. You will see how your sales teams finally excel and actually come home with demos every week - because their first impression will be so strong. They won't have the frustration levels of cold calling, embarrassing LinkedIn engagements, and get ripped apart by their target group.

So, what does that mean?

Before you have anybody else just take over sales, the message-market fit HAS TO BE IN PLACE.

In order to find a message-market fit in record speed, you need to listen to your audience and find the tools that sum up the findings FAST, to get statistical certainty.

To find out more about message-market fit, check out this presentation from Dan Olsen:

https://youtu.be/CSil3p-vmag

Some common questions when trying to achieve message-market fit:

How do I know if I have a message-market fit?
We can determine statistical certainty of message-market fit once we see interaction rates from your cold prospects with your message of 15% - 30%.

What does interaction rate mean?
The interaction rate means that you get a reaction to your message. It determines the degree of attention your message gets. It can be a neutral, positive or negative reaction.

What tools can I use to determine message-market fit?
You can use LinkedIn direct message, direct email, newsletters, calls or snapshots from fairs. The most important thing is a direct channel with an individual approach and relentless tracking.

But our services are so complex, our offer always depends on the unique situation of the client. We can't just explain in one sentence.

- Your services and offers have been evolving because you have found a person with a problem that you helped successfully in the past. If you focus on the person and the problem, it's easy to nail down your message in one to three sentences.
- If you struggle with finding that summary, just phone up your existing clients and ask them: "Why did you choose us? What problem did you have that we took off your desk?"

I don't have time to focus on message-market fit; I have a company to run.
If you are a CEO, you probably work on message-market fit without recognizing it. If you ever speak to your customers (if you don't anymore, you should), the message-market fit is right in front of you. It's the reason you have customers in the first place.

Our market is way too small to talk to that many people - we only have 5 - 10 potential customers.
If your market is that small, but you run a B2B high-ticket business, it might be that you don't have many accounts, but multiple customers within one account.

Focus on all the stakeholders that are using your solution. All of them are relevant for your message-market fit

Activity 2: SHORTEN your sales cycle to control your profitability

Getting the attention of your target group doesn't automatically mean you have a deal. You know that complex B2B sales processes involve so much more. It's the qualification, the demonstration meetings, the stakeholder management, the proposals, right?

It's hard to find the lever that will make an impact. In a complex sales cycle, with so many micro-steps, it's difficult to navigate closing the deal when you don't have a blueprint. Don't worry, we will help you with this.

So, what's the NUMBER 1 thing that is responsible for poor pipelines, excessive cost of sales and poor closing rates?

It's not:

- Bad salespeople
- The wrong proposal
- Poor lead quality

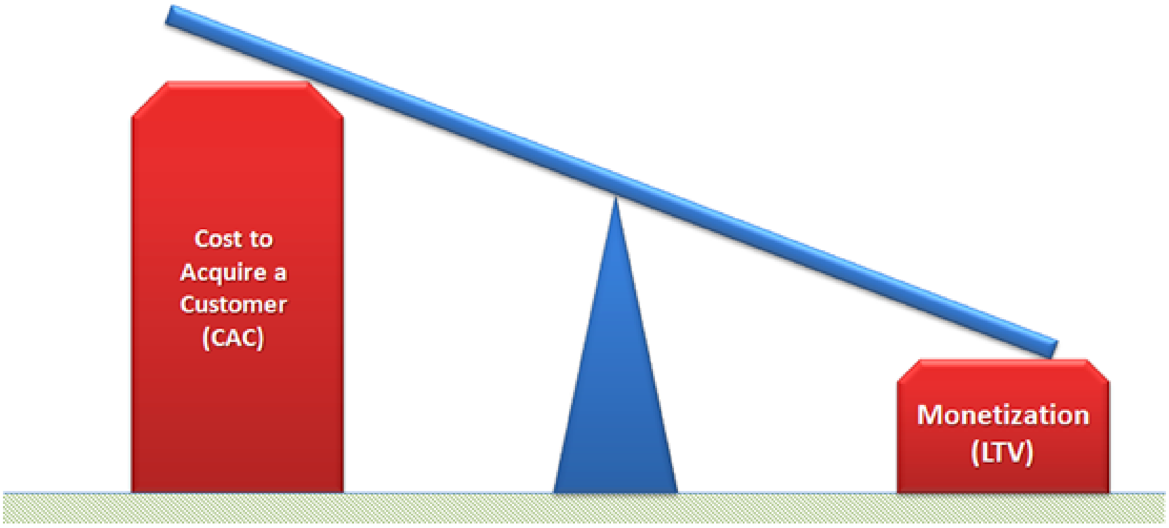
The number 1 thing that will make or break your funnel is the length of your sales cycle.

Why?

In order to address this, let's get into the economics of the sales cycle, a concept which B2B CEOs and founders should understand.

When looking to win new customers, you'll always need to weigh up the **Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) versus the Customer Lifetime Value (LTV).**

Gaining new B2B customers doesn't come for free: you have to sacrifice your own time, people and marketing. The return, of course, is the LTV, or the revenue that you can expect from a customer over the duration of your relationship. Naturally, you'll want your LTV to exceed your CAC for any given customer, to make it worth your while when closing a deal.



Unbalanced Business Model: Customer Acquisition Cost exceeds Customer Lifetime Value
https://www.forentrepreneurs.com/startup-killer

The last thing you want is your costs to exceed your revenue when it comes to acquiring customers, as this is a sure way to head for a meltdown. If you are not externally funded, your business will fail: you'll have to let people go and close up shop if you don't manage to get the situation under control. It's as simple as that - it's just math.

So, what can you do to get such a scenario under control?

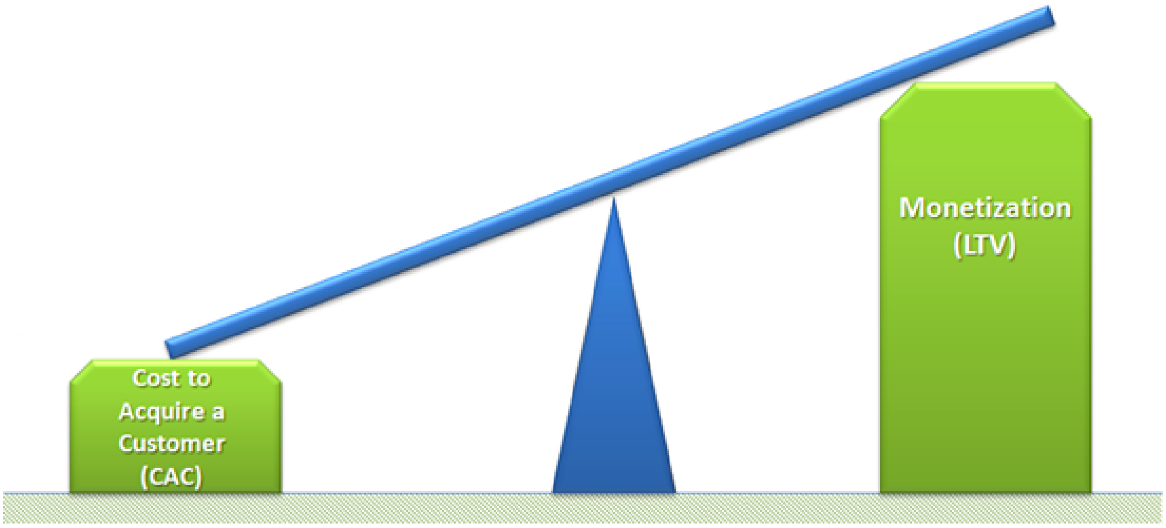
The CAC, among other factors, consists of the sales and marketing costs that are necessary to close a new customer. In B2B, the biggest driver of CAC is the salespeople.

Why is this relevant to my deal cycle?

Well, if your main driver of CAC in B2B is the salaries of your salespeople, and one salesperson takes 6+ months to close a deal, and you get through two deals per year, then your CAC simplified is: **12 months salary / 2 deals.** If that's the case, you better have at least upper-6-digit deals. Otherwise, you can kiss your sales efforts goodnight.

This is the reason why shortening your sales cycle is the NUMBER 1 factor affecting the success of your funnel. The amount of time your salespeople spend on deals that close, or deals that WON'T close, is the MAIN driver of your CAC, as every extra month to close a deal is an extra month of you paying your salespeople to do their job, pushing up the CAC. If you want to get your CAC under control, you need to get your sales efforts under control. If your salespeople take months to lose deals, it's time to sort that out. PRONTO.

Why? Because complex B2B deals take a lot of energy and a lot of time. They take multiple interactions, which need to be planned, prepped and executed. They always have multiple rounds of discussions, multiple pitches, and a whole lot of legal and procurement processes to follow, among other things.



Balanced Business Model: Customer Lifetime Value exceeds Customer Acquisition Cost
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So, what happens if your salespeople spend time on potential customer opportunities, and they don't close? You have just sunk 3 - 6 months of salary and wasted time that you can't get back.

Ultimately, for a successful funnel, you want your LTV to exceed your CAC because this translates to profits when you win a new customer.

This means you have to decrease your failure rate and stop sinking cash on salaries when your salespeople aren't closing or aren't closing quickly enough. So, how do you do this?

You need to know who to talk to and who to avoid. You need to understand where the timing for your services and products is a fit and where it is not. You need

salespeople who are capable of qualifying and closing during the first call or demo. You feel me?

Finding the right timing with a prospect in B2B is hard. After all, we are talking about highly complex solutions and services. How am I supposed to know from the outside when the right timing is? I need to call, right? I need to meet people in person and look them in the eye at a fair - only they can tell me.

The old way sales teams used to go about this was through trained senior sales teams that would engage decision makers one-on-one in person or over the phone. Teams had to cold call or hire cold calling agencies that would do it for them, so the core team didn't have to determine timing and first qualification. Senior sales people would travel to attend fairs to meet their target audience and hope they were ready for a project.

They would build a website and run Google Ads or SEO, then hope they can be found and that someone would fill out a form with a “Ready to Buy” attitude. They would start a blog or newsletter and would announce each new feature and “company achievement” on LinkedIn, hoping they would get attention and prospects coming to them.

As mentioned above, these activities relied on people.
And hence were crazy expensive, as CEOs had no other option but to rely on senior sales people (including commission, we are talking 6 digits each year - with no certainty of ROI).

Call center leads would be horrible quality, and you would fight every month regarding why the sales team couldn’t make something out of the leads you received.

The sales team grew frustrated, and so did you. Why can't they close like you can? Why are they complaining about low quality so much? You never had that issue.

At the end of the year, you looked at a couple of deals, but ROI? Or even growth? Nothing in sight.

But today is different. Because again, all of us got blessed with the web.

CEOs today can use its wisdom and public data sources to identify and target only the people who are relevant to speak to. All the information is already out there. We have LinkedIn and Xing that show us who works for what company. We can use these platforms to network on scale.

We have social media activity that shows what people are active, and we have automated communication channels that allow us to speak to hundreds of people per week without writing an email or making a phone call manually.

CEOs can stop spending time with people who don't want to speak to them altogether and can focus on those who are open to chat. Everyone knows what happens when a good product fits the right person at the right time.

Understanding that networking is possible at scale without actual human activity is extremely powerful. In fact, Christoph and I wrote our master thesis on this subject - using the Granovetter's Framework: "The strength of weak ties"

The Strength of Weak Ties

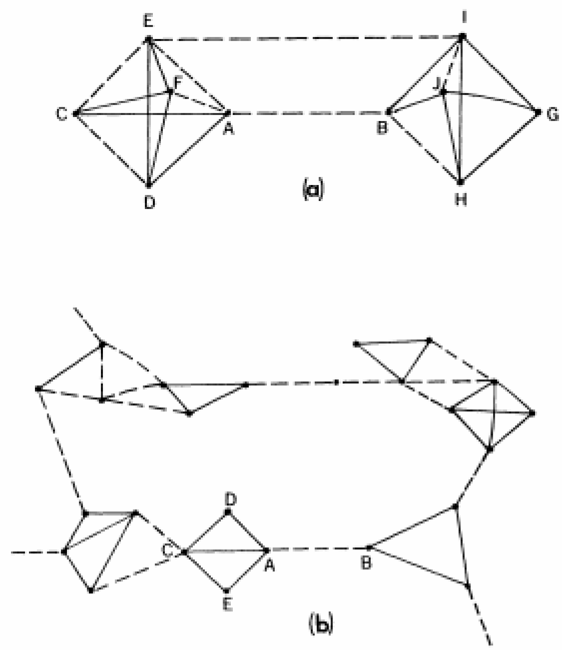


FIG. 2.—Local bridges. *a*, Degree 3; *b*, Degree 13. ——— = strong tie; – – – = weak tie.

https://www.cs.umd.edu/~golbeck/INST633o/granovetterTies.pdf

Granovetter argues that weak, loose ties, such as random connections, increase the amount of opportunity, however one needs to establish stronger ties in order to make transactions happen.

If one can increase the number of weak ties, more opportunities will present themselves. If one is capable of understanding these opportunities and predicting the right timing to establish stronger ties, transactions will happen at a more rapid pace.

Chris and I after we were done with our Master's Thesis

If you understand these principles and mechanisms and apply them to your business, you will see how meetings become pleasant and concrete projects emerge as people actually voluntarily speak to you and your reps. Sales teams don't disturb when prospects actually want a problem to be solved.

Your team will decrease deal cycles as a higher level of trust is established first thing during the engagement. Lower deal cycles mean less labor and a lower cost per deal, means lower failure rates.

You will feel the energy of buzzing sales colleagues who drive things forward on their own. You don't need to babysit or apply pressure.

You will see what happens when increased cash hits your bank account by getting to decisions faster. Before you know it, you'll go from struggle to scaling. Finally, there is no pressure in terms of cash flow. Sales and marketing turn from struggle to fun in the blink of an eye.

So, what should you take away from here?

Speaking with RELEVANT PEOPLE ONLY and ignoring the rest will flip your pipeline on its head. There won't be such a thing anymore as a cold lead, an irrelevant lead, or a demo no-show. The right qualification, demo and closing parameters will allow you not only to determine opportunities worth pursuing but also offering a value proposition that can be closed in less than 14 days.

Some common questions on how to shorten the deal cycle:

This all sounds very nice in theory, but what does that mean for my sales team? And how are we going to actually do it?

- It means you have to find a way to interact in person with 10 - 15 people per day. You can do this by spending time connecting on LinkedIn, using automated email spearing, or by cold calling. We recommend the automated solutions these days.
- In order to establish weak ties and capitalize on strong ties, you need to do so with fierce discipline, which means that a 7-digit pipeline takes about 3 - 6 months and at least 1 hr of pipeline building and qualification per day for the person in charge of sales.

This all sounds very nice in theory, but what does that mean for my sales team? And how are we going to actually do it?

- This is a common problem. But it's actually not a pipeline problem. If your pipeline is small, either a.) you have not been active enough (daily interactions with your target group) or b.) your niche is just smaller - which is not a bad thing or c.) your product is not offering actual value (It's important to recognize that).
  - If a.): you just need to get to work. Sorry to tell you buddy, but without daily interactions and effort, your pipeline won't be built.
  - If b.): small niches are great - as they get you super focused. Rather focus on 5 - 10 very promising deals that are ideal for you, than spreading yourself too thin. It will allow you to come up with the perfect solution for that specific niche, which will allow you to increase pricing as there is no competition.
  - If c.): especially at the moment, you should spend time with your target audience to find out why. Iterate around the reasons and come up with better solutions. Use [The Mom Test] to arrive at a questions catalog.

How should we find the time to do all this research? Our salespeople are already busy with existing customers.

- You can use LinkedIn Sales Navigator to get a first overview. You can use your existing CRM and sort for the contacts you have been in touch with over the past 12 months.
- You can hire a BDR team that takes care of this for you.
- You can hire an intern that does LinkedIn spearing for you in your account.

How do I know who is really relevant for me?

- You should use the message-market fit canvas to depict your relevant niche. https://www.lucidchart.com/documents/edit/ed18c120-2ab7-421e-ba0f-a65b2ceed82c/0_0?shared=true
- Your niche should have a concrete problem, and you should be able to define the person with that problem in your niche. You should be able to get access to your niche.
- For example, at ComX.io our niche is B2B founders and CEOs with very explanatory services and products, who already have customers and a working service or product.

Our business is very consultative. Finding opportunities is a process. If we do not dig and plant opportunities, we would never be successful.

- I agree. We started as a consultancy too. Who knows how the ultimate final project is shifting during the sales process. There are a lot of things that can happen that might deviate from the first offer. BUT You are not looking for the final project. You are looking for the organizations that are willing to meaningfully engage with you, which have the funds to invest, and that are a good fit. The best way to test is to create offers that can be decided on quickly. (14 days or less)
- For that, you just need to look at the criteria of your last 10 customers and sum up what problem you actually solved for them. Try to be as specific as possible. And voilà, with a couple of iterations you will arrive at message-market fit. Use our formula for that:

  [How to choose the right keywords for any industry through 20 phone calls]

<u>Activity 3</u>: You MUST have day-to-day interactions with your target group and keep going over months in order to scale a pipeline

So, you may wonder why those tiny steps would make such a big difference. After all, you have closed deals before without following these. Or you see plenty of businesses flourish that don't seem to pay massive attention.

Why would such a tiny part in the communication and framework have such an impact?

The reason is that Activity 1 and 2 are useless without relentless execution and day-to-day personal interaction with your target audience over a period of at least 3 - 6 months. Execution is hard and that is why people fail to scale up, even though they might have a nice message, the first 5 case studies in the books and some cash in the bank.

The goal you should set for yourself and your team are at least 5-10 qualified interactions with our target group per week (Phone-Calls, Webinars, Meetings)

There are multiple ways to do this and get those conversations in.

- You could hire a marketing agency and launch a campaign or event to generate as much reach as possible. Work through the collected business cards over the next months with your team.
- You could hire a BDR team. Onboard them, train them, manage them. Buy lists or let them prospect each day on LinkedIn and Xing. Have them call your CRM database. Have them penetrate your existing customers.
- You could start building lists and send newsletters on every feature you develop every month. Have people call and follow up the opened emails. And prioritize based on interaction levels with your newsletter (Clicks and Opens) then track this in the CRM.

All of these points are possible. I have done all of them plenty of times. They work - a bit.
But they come with significant downsides that are not sustainable for you or your

organization and that will prevent scale.

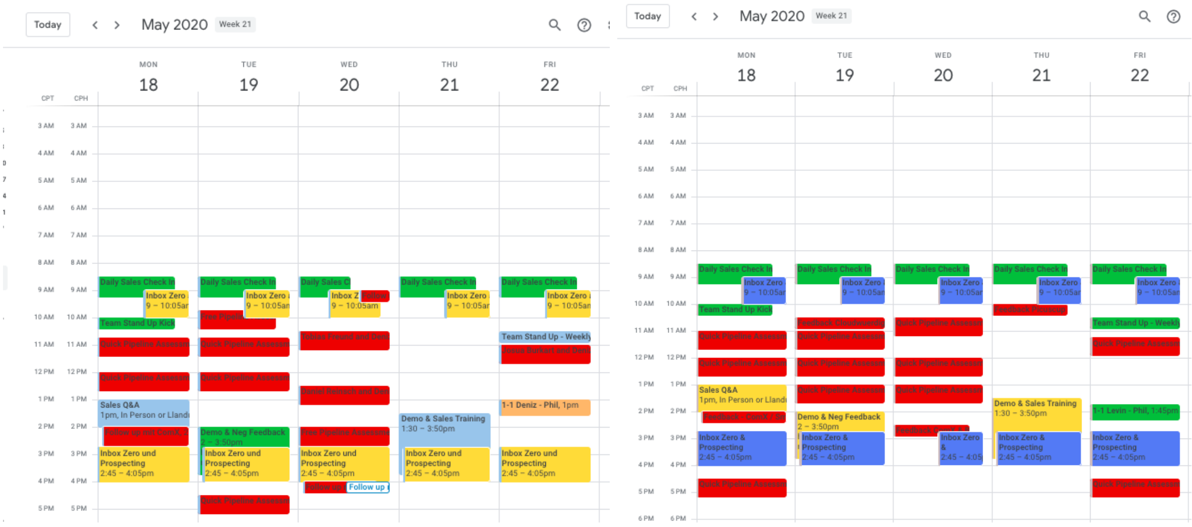
- One side effect is the rise of frustration in your sales team if tangible results take too long. Combine this with tough targets, and you are in for a ride.
- Overly competitive and toxic behavior are just around the corner and will kill any team and culture. People are not stupid. They will smell that their targets are based out of thin air and that they can't reach them with the given infrastructure and tools.
- As a next step, you need to look at your costs. 6 months go by fast. 6 months of an underperforming sales team go by even faster - at this point you have two options. Sink even more money and jump in yourself trying to save the shoe. Or retrench and send the signal to the organisation that the growth journey you had promised at the latest Christmas function is not going to happen.
- At the end of the year, you will end up with 150k € cash spent on marketing and sales and nothing to show for it, besides a couple of demos and pocket change.
- And the worst is that you won't have any point of reference as to why it is not working. You can ask yourself if you would like to repeat that journey next year all over again.

But it doesn't have to look that dark.

Today you have plenty of options to stay in touch cost-effectively with your target audience daily. It's just hard to set up.

- You can automate your one-on-one engagement with AI. Use email as the channel (best channel for B2B). People are available on these channels like never before.
- These tools also allow you to step out of the GDPR trap with mass email, as there are tools out there that allow for day-to-day one-on-one interactions.
- Moreover, mass email doesn't work in the first place and 20 - 30 touched prospects and follow-ups are more than enough. We are talking about touchpoints your sales reps should be doing anyway.

Here is the process you can use for implementing the above: https://www.lucidchart.com/documents/edit/ed18c120-2ab7-421e-ba0f-a65b2ceed82c/0_0?shared=true



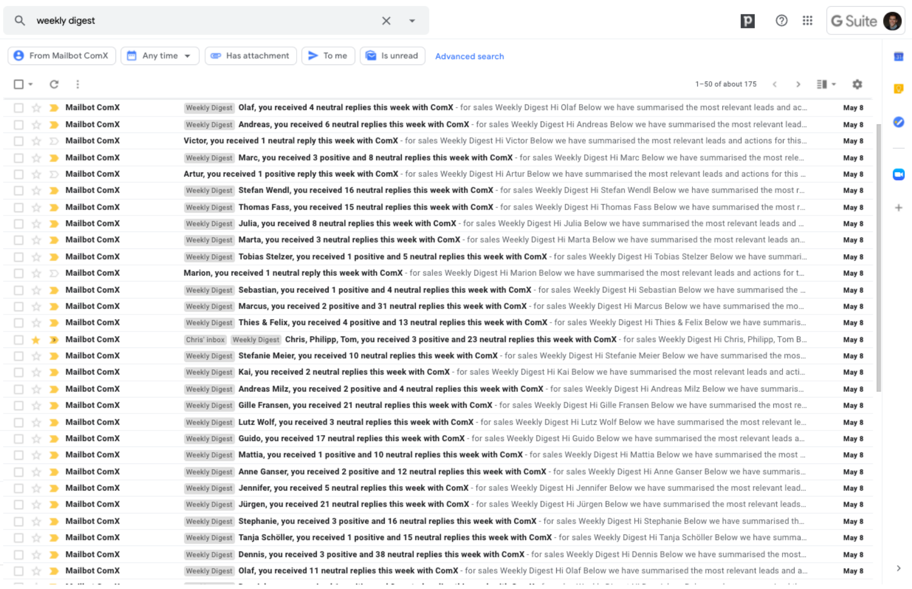
Calendars of our Growth Consultants in a normal week. (May 2020 - post Covid19 lockdown in Germany.)
No cold calls or email blasts - just day-to-day interaction as a result of consistent communication with the target audience.

Once this is done, you just need to stay at it for at least 3 - 6 months. Monitor closely and optimise for outcomes. Start doing this yourself, or select a colleague to start the process on your business's behalf.

We constantly see what happens if people just keep at it day by day.

- Just observe how an avalanche of prospects is built without you or your team having to pick up the phone once.
- Get rid of all the clutter and admin tasks, list buying and tools. Stop the negative environment of frustrated sales staff that did not generate results because they couldn't.
- Experience how one sales executive gets a fully jacked pipeline with less than an hour's work per day.

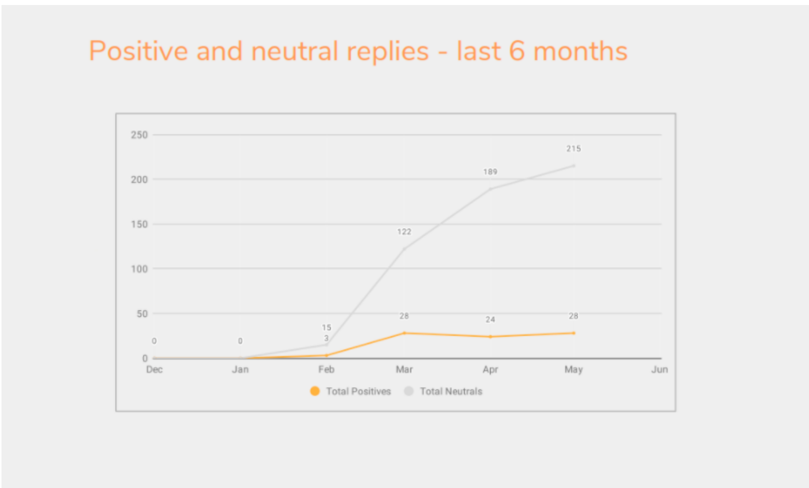
By creating daily interactions with your target group instead of blasts, the iteration on your message-market fit will become so specific that you will arrive at interaction rates between 15 - 30%. The daily interaction will make sure that you won't experience flat periods. This all happens without losing the navigation, and you will build a huge avalanche of relevant contacts in your database.



We track the sales performance of our clients closely. Here is a brief snapshot of our weekly digest - the summary of each of our client teams' sales weeks. Not a single one does not create conversations. This is what happens when you stay at it.

To create a compelling message and iterate over time, as well as to build the right quantity of meaningful interactions, you need to apply Activity 1 and Activity 2 for at least 3 - 6 months. While you will see the first meeting come in within only a matter of days, the discipline you apply in this field will pay off 10 times if you stick to it.

Here is an example of one of our customers that didn't stop iterating for months:



Kex is a management consultancy. They always had a compelling offer and message. However, when wanting to scale, they hit a plateau. In this graph, you see how quickly they were able to engage with positive prospects after one month. Instead of taking that for granted and stopping the iteration, they went even deeper. This allowed them to build a pipeline of hundreds of qualified leads per month (curve) that won't close straight away, but is building the foundation for months and years to come.

Activity 3: Q and A

What if we don't find the time to do this?

The fact is, you don't need much time. You just need discipline. Our clients and users spend a maximum of 60 minutes per day in actual meeting booking and pipeline clean up. The rest is done automatically. You will have to make the time, though. If you don't have 60 minutes per day to build a legacy, you better go home and stick to your current practices.

I am too busy. Who should be doing this?

There needs to be some involvement from you. However, we have successfully seen clients hire part-time people, have their senior staff help out or have their current salespeople do the task.

What people should we hire doing this?

We believe that you, as a CEO and founder, should be able to book meetings and close deals yourself. If you are not proficient in doing this, start with a part-time person. This could be a masters student from engineering or commerce, ideally someone who is playing sports and is naturally ambitious.

Our target group is very senior, and they can't be pushed - daily interactions are too much for them.

This is a widespread misconception. It's not about pushing the people that don't want to hear from you. It's about providing value to the people who are open to listen. While you cannot influence every step they take, you can influence the solutions that help them, and you can influence where you extend your focus. For example, we have lists of different lead statuses (Engaged / Not engaged / Interested), which allows us to prioritize who we speak to more and less often.

Activity 4: Clean up your database to set the right priorities and be fully GDPR-compliant by using public data ONLY

Most sales departments all over the world today are NOT GDPR-compliant. It leaves them, as it is incredibly hard to conduct business, acquire new customers and, at the same time, follow all the regulations.

It is mandatory to clean up your database since 2018, in order for sales teams to perform in an environment.

- Updating the CRM used to be done by the sales team, which was in touch with the leads.
- They qualified in person, in terms of whether leads are interested now, interested later or not interested at all.
- Sales teams were required to manually update the contact information, including setting a certain lead status in the CRM and then having a marketing person or whoever owns that process manually update the CRM on a continuous basis. You tell me how well this is working out for you when you look at your data set today.

Because this process is so resource-intense and humans are prone to error:

- Databases are never fully updated.
- Your salespeople are not paid to clean their data, and hence just won't do it accurately or spend the time.
- Your person responsible for the CRM is dealing with poor data constantly.
- Just deleting everything is not an option.
- Which is why there is a 99% chance that you have a non-compliant GDPR database in your CRM RIGHT NOW.

You would need to invest into people cleaning up your stuff full time and creating the right lists for your reps to work with.
This is either incredibly expensive or humanly impossible for a CEO to handle, on top of the other duties.

The result: your database is never clean, you keep sitting on a ticking time bomb, and marketing can't use any of your lists in the first place.

Today, there are technological solutions available using machine learning to help with this issue.

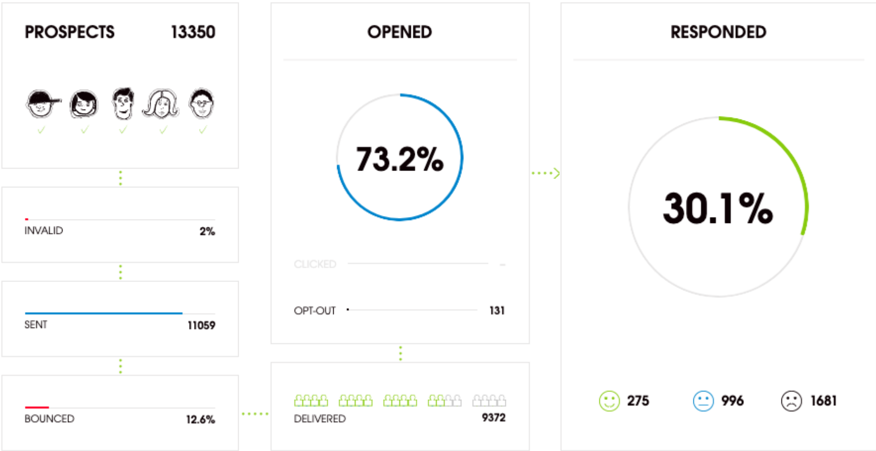
- Computers are capable of understanding your interactions with each prospect in your database and can tell you who to work with and who to delete.
- Priorities: understand, for every single contact in your database base, what their status is, who to prioritize and who to delete.
- Get to a fully cleaned-up database in only weeks, by having computers tell you who to delete and what contact data is out of date. Create a GDPR-compliant process and blacklist without having to hire a consultancy, do it yourself over weekends or having your salespeople be distracted by it.

So, in order to actually allow yourself to execute Activities 1-3, you better get an idea about your GDPR-compliant sales set-up in the first place.

By the way, even if you do not embark on a growth journey or decide to do inbound only, it doesn't really matter. Today, you need to have an idea about:

- Where each data set is coming from in your CRM
- Why it is there in the first place
- What's the next action for your data
- What's your legitimate interest in storing that data
- What are the rules for deletion and engagement

We use language processing as well as timestamp to determine what prospects should be engaged with and what needs to be deleted at some point. It's not hard to set up - but you need technology to keep it running effectively.



This is an excerpt from our own dashboard. See how each and every single client interaction is clustered into positive, negative and neutral. This allows us not only to draw conclusions, but also to create workflows that keep our CRM database up-to-date.

Here is an automated database workflow. Through the categorisation, our instruments kno, who is to be blacklisted, deleted or reengaged, without any sales or marketing person getting involved.

It is kind of crazy, but we are actually in favour of the new legislation. It will end a lot of shady marketing practices and, over time, create an even playing field for businesses.

Activity 4: Q and A

How do I find out if I am GDPR-compliant?

We can recommend some excellent lawyers and agencies who work on this. Just let us know and we can connect you.

How am I supposed to run this? I don’t even have a CRM.

That's an important question, and the first solution to get a grip of things is actually just to start working with one single data source and leave the rest out. This can be a CRM and Excel spreadsheet, or Trello / Asana. It doesn't really matter. The most important thing is to stop working with different sources and not knowing what's going on.

How are we supposed to be GDPR compliant if we need to do cold acquisition?

Of course it is still possible to win new customers and approach people while remaining GDPR compliant. Otherwise, the economy would come to a standstill. The only thing is that you have to follow certain rules, when engaging with your target group.

- 1. You need to document your target group with legitimate interest and stick to it. This means you define your target group based on existing clients or interactions and make the commitment to stick to the areas and industries where you can provide value.
- 2. You need to start documenting where the data came from and come up with a process on what you do with it, how long you keep it and that you will honour data subjects’ rights (e.g. to be deleted).
- 3. You need to stop spray and pray campaign approaches and start engaging one-on-one. One big thing that people should definitely stop doing is buying data from a source, blasting out emails and then just seeing what happens. First of all, that stuff has proven not to work anymore (see activity 3), but you are also probably in breach with any regulation on GDPR and competition law. You need to establish that daily and one-on-one interaction. It works better, helps iterate and avoids spam

We only only do inbound, so GDPR is not an issue.

You might be right with one part. You have consent to keep people's data, as on the whitepaper they want to download. So far, so good. But, what's next? Last time I checked, you don't sell whitepapers, but heavy B2B solutions. So, what's your process on follow-ups and eventual deletion? The truth is inbound is just another marketing channel. The GDPR doesn't care about the channel, it cares about your process on how you honour the interest of the data subject, for the duration of it being in your possession. You need to come up with a process, no matter where the lead came from.

Activity 5: Document all interactions per account. Not per person.

What people tend to forget is that we all are working in a field where companies will sign our checks. Not people. People make decisions. However, the organisations are our customers.

This sometimes leads to confusion. We need to make sure in B2B that we don't just blast individuals, but that we know for each account where we are. This makes things extremely difficult and prone to error. It is widely known, and sales teams have solved the issue in handheld..

In the old days, each salesperson was assigned a list of certain accounts in the CRM.

- They would then start to prospect inside these accounts, do LinkedIn research, call the switchboard, etc.
- Update and insert the contact data they would find into the CRM manually. Make notes for each contact they can find.
- Cold call them to find out more. Doing it all manually in their own writing style.
- They would then try to keep an overview when moving from one contact to the next to get to the right stakeholder.

The result was that your sales reps created a huge chunk of zombie data. Just let them go at it for a year - you'll be surprised how much they put in. Because of human error, all the CRM entries would have a different set-up.

Sales guys would lose the overview and not understand who they were in touch with last. They would just get frustrated and at some point, just let go of it. And say "f*** it, our CRM is garbage anyway." Double contacting on accounts from other reps creates fights in the team and angry prospects on the most important accounts. **You only get one shot at the C-levels of Fortune 1000s.**

Today, there are other options on how to get rid of this issue.

- You can use ML intelligence to keep an overview on who is the right stakeholder in an account, who you have talked to last and who is not relevant anymore.
- ML algorithms will tell you who to contact when and in what order, who to leave out and who to delete. On top of that, it will tell you what other people are potentially available to be spoken to.

The result is that your sales team will always find new angles to approach promising accounts without crossing each other or pissing people off. Double contacting is a thing of the past and creating zombie data that becomes a liability will not happen in the first place, as the system updates everything automatically and finds new people automatically by knowing who was contacted last and who has responded.

Once you start account-based selling using machine learning, your chances of closing the important account increase - the workload of doing this becomes less. Your cost of sales will shrink to a minimum.

Final Insights

Using a structured approach and AI for message-market fit can save you years and hundreds of thousands of euros and pain.

If you start working with message-market fit - MORE of the RIGHT people will be engaging with you. This leads to more pleasant, more productive meetings and clarity between you and your customer as to where you can help.

Speaking to the relevant people only will flip your pipeline, increase demos, offers and closing rates, while saving hundreds of thousands of euros on hiring and burning sales reps that get frustrated.

If you stop pushing to get attention from people that just are not the right fit or just don't have the time and start focusing on the right ones at the right time, you will decrease your deal cycle. This effectively reduces your cost of sales.

Our client Yaveon found, 500k in less than 3 months by tapping into a group of people they normally don't speak to and focusing on the ones that give back resonance to their offer.

You can create an aggressive, proactive sales team using the outbound method AND remain fully GDPR-compliant. If you are using ML algorithms that help you keep your database clean and take the workload off your team, this is achievable.

When having machines do the database work for you, you will not only create peace of mind, but also can use the newly freed resources to focus on what really matters in B2B sales - building client relationships. Once you save your team from these daunting tasks, their performance will increase, they will get happier and close more deals

Once you start account-based selling using machine learning, your chances of closing the important accounts increase - the workload of doing this becomes less. Your cost of sales will shrink to a minimum.

Focusing on account-based selling without having to track and keep an overview will allow your sales team to focus on the right stakeholder at the right time. Their pitches and effort will be focused. Your prospects will be impressed about that, and you will avoid unpleasant interactions.

Summary

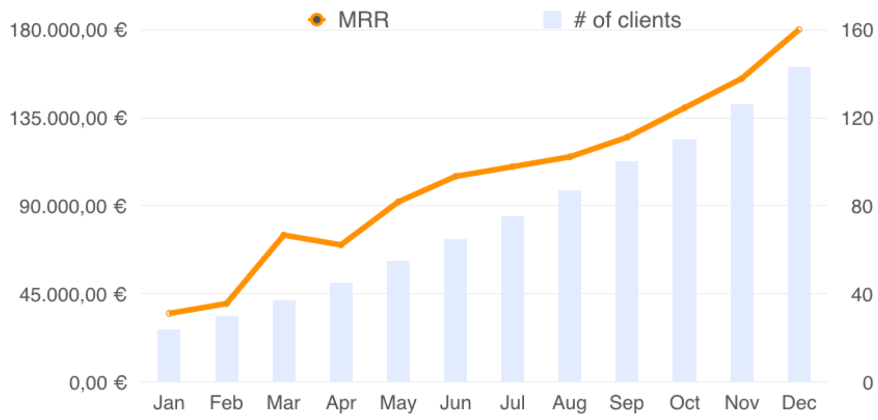
So, as you can see, all you need to do is:

- ☐ Find message-market fit ASAP
- ☐ Stop talking to people who are not relevant to you at this time
- ☐ Keep up daily interactions for 45-60 minutes per day etc.
- ☐ Keep your customer data GDPR-compliant
- ☐ And start to understand what accounts to target when

If you apply this over the course of 3 - 6 months, this will create the foundation of a profitable sales engine:

- Happy sales people with jacked calendars,
- Shorter sales cycles, and
- Profitable growth for your B2B business.

All without meeting booking agencies, online ads or sinking money on new sales reps.



ComX MRR growth over client count for 2019 - growing client by client profitably