

You are LEGAL TO DRINK

Maybe, in general terms, your entire sales and marketing operation right now is in the **LEGAL TO DRINK phase** of development.

The **LEGAL TO DRINK phase** is the phase of a mature business. **Your main challenge now is to find out how to really take it to the next level.**

You survived the startup state, and you balanced your rapid growth stage. Now you really need to get serious and accept that you are a grown business. You can still wear jeans and have Google-style relaxed entrepreneurship going on in the office, but you need an infrastructure that supports all this.

Deconstructing your sales and marketing operation into its building blocks and examining each building block will be an easy way to up your game. You will create new synergies, reinterpret your vision, and bring everyone on the same page regarding the priorities of your business.

WHAT TO DO:

You are in a very advanced state in your sales and marketing management. I am sure you already have a clear list of projects for this year. Please allow me to suggest a few projects that in my experience bring tremendous value to any organization, but in any case, it will be a great dialogue opener for your team.

- Re-examine your Lead to Cash Process
- Optimize your Lead Management
- Create your yearly, fun Promotional Calendar
- Optimize your Performance Management System
- Deconstruct your Client Management System
- Redefine your Customer Profile
- Brand (rebrand) your entire Customer Experience

- Introduce Individual Coaching program for yourself and your people

In stage of your organizational development, I suggest focussing on the following three power houses to shake things up:

- **Re-examine your Lead to Cash Process**
- **Deconstruct your Client Management System**
- **Introduce Individual Coaching program for your sales and marketing people**

Let me give you some a practical approach to them:

The Lead to Cash Process maps out the detailed itinerary of the customer journey throughout the buying process.

As you probably know, the **Lead to Cash process will help you see your entire sales and marketing operation, from a client perspective.** You will start with where your lead might hear from you, then what happens when they contact you until the sale happens. This is the most valuable exercise that I know of to optimize your sales and marketing operations. Seriously.

To map out your Lead to Cash Process, take a bunch of colorful post-it notes and on a big wall to start tracing each step of your customer from the moment that it is just a lead to the moment they become a client. **The trick is to write down the responsible, the timeframe that they will finish that step and use different colors to make a difference between email, phone, automated or in person contact with the customer.**

I suggest you get **the help of an outsider** that already has done this before because they will ask the right questions and make sure you follow every single step. If you cannot find anyone to lead this process, do it yourself with 3-4 members of your team. Just jump into it, I promise it will be not only fun, but your best trick ever.

You will be amazed that in one single hour how many ideas you will have to optimize your entire sales process. I have done this at many companies and, trust me, **it is every company's secret weapon.**

Whether at Nestle, a small boutique IT company, mid-sized company dealing with laboratory equipment they all had **"AHA moments"** going through this process.

Do this periodically - I would suggest around 8 months - and always have a clear action plan and deadlines after the mapping for the changes that you want to see implemented.

The Client Management System is an analytical process that focuses on increasing the efficiency of the relationship with the existing clientele.

When it comes to Lead management, I always say **your best leads are your happy customers. This trick has its own paragraph.**

Sometimes we tend to forget that **the easiest way to sell is to sell to those clients that already gifted us with their trust** by experiencing our quality products and services. They will be more likely to return and buy from us and to recommend us - if they have had a positive experience.

Analyzing the client portfolio in a structured way will reveal many opportunities to grow our business. What you need to know is simple: have a big excel file and start categorizing your clients by them

- Types (active, lost, return to active)
- Profitability
- The basket they buy
- The frequency of their buy
- Volume per transaction

- Transaction type
- Cost
- Sales for a specific period
- Etc.

I am sure you will find information that will give your ideas to optimize.

I have just worked with a small accounting company, and they found more than 10 ways to grow their bottom line. How awesome is that? This is the power of a detailed client list.

I remember working for an oil company and realizing that 70% of the transactions at our gas stations are between 15 and 20 liters of gas. I could not understand the reason for this behavior, but I immediately jumped on the opportunity. I was wondering if I could just convince these people to buy 5 more liters of gas at each transaction that would have a real impact on our top and bottom line. The idea was to implement a series of promotions rewarding customers fueling their car with a minimum of 20 liters of gas. The results were spectacular, having a real impact on our profit with very small investment.

Trust me, **analyzing your transactions will reveal multiple opportunities to grow.**

In this phase you would think you know everything about your client, but this exercise might even help you rethink your customer profile.

Introduce Individual Coaching program for your sales and marketing people

At this stage, lovingly named Legal to Drink, you already had multiple training programs for your sales and marketing people. What I would suggest is adding, if you don't have it already on a regular basis, individual periodic coaching. Let me explain my most pressing argument for it.

The sales management process has focused on the 3 Ss for years:

“Selection” - hiring the best people and offering competitive salaries. At this stage, HR contributes decisively to the sales process.

“Strategy” - creating a plan for customers and products to achieve the desired business results. To be effective, it is essential to develop a well-founded plan based on action and not intent.

“Skills” - the idea of continuous business training. Those with deep business experience individually teach sales representatives how to initiate and conduct effective sales calls / visits.

In a competitive market economy with a rapidly advancing technology for tracking customer behavior and the development of technology of data management, **the future of sales management we need to add 3Ms:**

Management - the supervision of front-line agents. Management is not only about the goal, but about step by step HOW. Management is about providing individual and ongoing help, as well as evaluating the activities performed, which guides them through dynamic processes to achieve their goals.

Metrics - Indicators that go beyond measuring financial performance because we add performance indicators to understand the effectiveness of everybody, take the emotions out of the conversation, and give a focus on solutions.

Methodology means taking a systematic and disciplined approach to achieve results. Methodology means creating and reinforcing dynamic processes, to build that flexible step by step guide into the HOW to achieve goals.

This is a clear shift in developing people. Group training can still have its place, but the individual coaching sessions are way more efficient at this stage. This concept goes for the marketing people, sales, managers, assistants – everyone that creates value in the organization.

Let's shift the conversation from WHAT to HOW.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

Expect to be surprised and challenged. You have amazing sales and marketing competencies and a solid business, but with these simple exercises, you will immediately see some opportunities for improvement.

In the case of the **Lead to Cash process**, you will be spotting some non-value-added steps that you might cut out or even reconsider some business value-added steps to optimize while they are not adding customer value. You might see parts of the process that bring real value to your customers, and you might focus on those parts in your next brainstorming session.

Analyzing your **client portfolio** with a new methodology could help you to redefine your customer profile, new promotional ideas, untapped partnerships to create more customer benefits, or even the optimization of your communication strategy.

The **individual coaching plan** can give a serious boost to employee morale and increase the efficiency of sales and marketing activities.

At this stage, you have nothing to lose to try these tips, but so much to gain. Good luck and enjoy the process of experimentation :).

Projects	Set- up Time	Implementation and Evaluation
Create a Lead to Cash Process	Av. 3 hours process mapping	2-3 months

Client Management System	1-2 weeks	1-2 months
Introduce individual Coaching for your sales and marketing people	1-2 weeks	Weekly one-hour sessions for each person

In my online course, at the Alternative School of Business, I dig deeper into each of these aspects of the sales and marketing operations with case studies, examples, and a more visual way to implement them with an easy step by step process.

Have fun changing,

Katalin