

# Q4: We're Not Calling it a Comeback, but...



The Leader in Lead  
Conversion

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# Introduction

## +52%

**up to 52% of teams do not end up meeting their sales goals.**

Fall is almost here and the pressure to close out the year strong is looming. Whether you have salespeople falling behind on their individual goals or your CEO is expecting a target revenue, closing deals is likely the main priority for the last quarter across the board.

For a majority of salespeople, Q4 is the most challenging quarter. With back-to-back holidays and the lack of budget remaining for the fiscal year, connecting with consumers and convincing them to purchase can be met with plenty of friction.

When looking at sales teams of all industries, 30% of teams admitted they were falling behind at the beginning of Q4. Who knows if this number is even higher? Many don't want to admit the possibility of failure upfront anyway. And yet, **by the end of the year, up to 52%** of teams do not end up meeting their sales goals.

Where many sales teams fall short is putting a plan in place... and no, it shouldn't be at the last second. There needs to be an attainable, strong strategy to not only motivate the sales team, but to ensure they capitalize on opportunities consistently. They're not going to do so without early pushes in September and October. As a sales manager, you need to be unwavering as you lay out the plan, especially in the beginning of the quarter. If your team doesn't think you're taking the strategy seriously, they will follow suit.

### **If your team is falling behind on sales goals, there is still hope.**

Oftentimes, sales teams are so busy in Q3 (Summer) with inbound inquiries that soft skills like cold outreach, appointment setting, and value building are pushed to the side of the road. Successful leaders are aware of this trend and actively work to retrain skills and focus on the daily habits that lead to long term wins. All salespeople are creatures of habit-- even the top 1% - the important part is making sure they have the RIGHT habits.

The goals you set for the quarter need to go beyond just "closing deals." Ultimately, the company wants to see growth and sustainability.

Make sure you are focusing on revenue goals, opportunity creation, and number of meetings. Use incentives to motivate your team outside of the black and white, "checklist" mentality of closed lost and won, and towards the soft skills mentioned above. This will help your team have alternative methods of drive and focus where they can feel the reward of meeting goals even deeper when they happen. Maintaining morale is a make or break for Q4.

Whether your final quarter runs through December or January, there are still opportunities to achieve your sales goals and capitalize on all internal sales and revenue goals without feeling burnout or lead fatigue.

## Examine

# your sales cycle.

# 01

Your sales cycle is likely already in place, but many sales teams can't figure out where their problems lie. You have your milestones listed already:



How many contacts does it take to connect with a prospect? How many demos to get a proposal sent? How many proposal adjustments and negotiations to get a deal? How many deals do you need to meet your goal? (1 deal on average is \$5000 in revenue and goal is to meet \$100,000 in revenue a month = 20 deals/mo.)



Yours may look different with more milestones. However, measuring it is what matters. Understanding your metrics is the first step to building a predictable pipeline that will carry you through a slow-moving quarter.

Remember, December is often a slow month. So if getting 20 deals in December has been unattainable in the past, you'll need to adjust to close more deals in the early months. Set realistic goals so you're not falling short and can celebrate any exceeded goals!

“What gets measured, gets done.”

## Map out

# your entire closeable funnel.

Your funnel needs to be broken down for the sake of being realistic with Q4 goals. Essentially your team will need to know where they can spend extra time investing in new efforts with potential customers. Break down the deals according to the likelihood of success and continue to push your team to catalog correctly after each and every demo. Here's a breakdown from The Sales Board:

- Deals you'll close with absolute certainty
- Deals that aren't guaranteed, but have a high likelihood of closing
- Deals that would be a big win, but might be ambitious
- Deals that are placeholders in your funnel.

Look at your first set of leads and see if that meets your quota. What about when you add in the second group and increase the odds of closing by throwing out resources and discounts?



Carrie Maslen, Gilroy Associates

**“Building and maintaining a pipeline requires time and effort - if there were a single magic bullet to create the perfect pipeline, it would have been discovered and patented by now.”**

+55%

# Align with your marketing team.

of marketers don't know which assets their sales colleagues are most likely to use.

Your marketing team is there to support you. And more importantly, the support is needed. 67% of buyers found the content provided by sales reps impactful on their buying decision. Yet, content created by marketing often gets underutilized and goes to waste.

Salespeople know consumers best as they are often working the most closely with them. Convey to your marketing team the kind of content or information that pushes the financial needle. Marketing should be meeting with sales on a regular basis to keep the content buyer-centric and revenue-driven.

If you want your sales team to actually use the content, then there needs to be some guidelines for marketing to give concerted efforts toward supporting sales:

- **Personalization** - Create content that sales can personalize themselves. Salespeople know that selling in general is as much of an art as it is a science. Personalized content builds trust and trust is the #1 way to close a deal.
- **Funnel-focused content** - Have sales contribute to ideas for various content at different stages of the funnel. Sales doesn't have to be involved every step of the way but consulting them on some of the whitepapers, webinars, and presentation creations will go a long way to staying buyer-centric.
- **Organization** - Sales should be able to easily access assets to provide their prospects. Have your sales team advocate for the content they wish they had or the assets they think would provide solutions for the potential buyer. Use an organized, easy-access channel so salespeople don't have to nag for assets when needed.

The alignment between sales and marketing is a big contingency on the success in a company. If your teams aren't able to link arms effectively, there will be leads and revenue left on the table. Ensure this doesn't happen by investing in the conversations and content ahead of time.

+80% of successful companies attribute success to aligned sales and marketing efforts

# Create better deals

## for consumers

The philosophy of good selling revolves around bringing value to the buyer. If the buyer is not convinced your solution will improve their quality of life, they will not commit. Sometimes a consumer is pretty convinced your solution is helpful, but can't seem to justify spending the money. When this happens, there are a few options your team can plan for:

1. **Discounts** - Every sales team knows there will be sacrifices in order to make quota or to get contracts signed. Plan ahead with the options you can offer a consumer when they express hesitation financially. And don't forget to protect your team from margin-eating discounts.
2. **Packages** - Package products do better with consumers and gives them the features they really want through packages with extra benefits. It's the famous "but wait, there's more!" tactic that typically leaves buyers feeling like they got more bang for their buck.
3. **Trial periods** - For those offering a product or service with annual contracts, figure out if offering a 90-day opt-out is feasible so consumers feel like they can see the value themselves before committing to anything the next fiscal year.

# Assess your team

Salespeople who struggled through Q3 will have an even tougher time in Q4. Definitely a tough subject to discuss, but as a leader spending 3X as much time on a team member that isn't committed or hasn't made progress can distract you from helping your top producers close more deals now and from helping your middle producers get better. Heading into Q4 is a great time to assess the entire team and decide where to spend your time coaching and motivating.

Here's a simple layout to accurately assess your team's ability to close on Q4:

**1. Map out your team into cohorts of top producer, middle producer, and low producer.**

**3. Assess your focus and the amount of hours/time you can dedicate to each cohort of your team**

**2. Assess the soft skills in each bucket as well as how much work/effort or adjustment they need to be even more successful.**

**4. Assess the soft skills in each bucket as well as how much work/effort or adjustment they need to be even more successful.**

Your team can leverage your expertise and knowledge, but only if you are balancing your efforts well. Staying aligned with your sales reps' strengths and gaps will help you better dedicate your time and investment to each one.

# Persistent follow-up

You've heard the phrase "the fortune is in the follow-up." And yet, so many teams fail to actually do the follow-up. Sometimes it's because new shiny prospects distract salespeople from nurturing and warming up the old leads. Other times, sales people just hate calling for the sixth time. Either way, Q4 is not a time to waste opportunities whatsoever.



To ensure the maximum conversion rates and appointments for your team, a 24/7 lead conversion platform & managed service can fulfill all aspects of the handoff and follow-up between marketing and sales including:

- **Speed-to-lead** - a lead is 21x more likely to buy when contacted 5 mins after an inquiry
- **Omnichannel communication** - offering SMS communication makes a lead more comfortable as 89% prefer it.
- **Nurture and follow-up** - AI-powered nurturing campaign that continues to follow up with leads who aren't quite ready to buy.
- **Maximum conversion** - Converts all qualified leads into appointments with the sales team.

A 24/7 lead conversion platform & managed service covers all of the nagging tasks regarding the middle of the funnel. Keeping your sales team engaged with hot prospects will increase the likelihood of meeting and crushing Q4 goals.

## Get your hands

### dirty



Be a leader. Teams appreciate strong leaders that are willing to get down and dirty with them in order to achieve goals and success. Join their demos to offer additional value and support on large deals. Work closely with your team on their closeable pipeline to strategize offers that would make sense for each customer, in order to give them a great deal.

At the end of the day, you can't help your team unless you are maintaining your skills and keeping your hands in the mud, too. Lead by example and jump in when your salespeople need you to help close a deal.

Q4 is going to be a tough one. But with the right tools and practices, you can create the best chance of seeing your sales team succeed. It comes down to consistency and efficiency-- and your team will look to you first. Again, if you aren't taking the new alignment strategies seriously, they won't either and they will struggle. If you do take it seriously and iterate the importance of consistency, they will see growth and reap rewards in the long run. And at the end of Q4 when you're celebrating that success, don't forget to buy them dinner.

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