



A SMARTER WAY TO SCALE A SAAS TECHNOLOGY SALES FORCE

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	01
How to Scale and How Not to Scale: Two Case Studies	
Case 1	02
Case 2	03
Three Lessons Learned from Failure and Success	
Lesson 1	04
Lesson 2	05
Lesson 3	07
Final Thoughts	09
About Janek Performance Group	10

Introduction

If you're reading this paper, then you're probably the CEO or head of sales of a fast-growing technology company. You may have just received a large round of venture capital funding and now, you are under pressure to grow. You know you have to meet or exceed some very lofty expectations that you set during the fundraising process.

So, what are you going to do first? When we encounter business leaders in similar situations, they're usually thinking about aggressively increasing spend on marketing to drive demand, and hiring as many salespeople as quickly as possible to turn that demand into revenue. If you think that's the right thing to do, I'm here to tell you to take a step back and reconsider.

How to Scale and How Not to Scale: Two Case Studies

I want to share two case studies from two different companies.

Case 1: Spend hard + Spend fast = Failure.

The first company sounds a lot like a company that I just described above. First, they aggressively increased their marketing spend. They had bought into the concept of “inbound” marketing and spent heavily on creating content, search engine optimization, and pay-per-click advertising. Then, they bought all of the latest and greatest sales and marketing technology and apps in an attempt to automate their sales and marketing activities. Salesforce.com, HubSpot, browser plug-ins, mobile apps, social apps—you name it and they bought it. Finally, they poached rainmakers from their competitors by offering rich compensation packages, options, and sign on bonuses.

As they did this, they encountered a number of challenges. First, accelerating marketing spend and activity drove significantly more downloads and “leads,” but few of those leads were qualified or sales-ready. Regardless, they flooded their salespeople with follow-up activity on leads that had little opportunity to close. Second, many of the tools they bought were either unused or significantly under-used because they were introduced haphazardly. Sales managers and salespeople chose what worked for them individually, and dismissed those where they saw little value. Third, the rainmakers they hired were not comfortable functioning in a high-growth, entrepreneurial environment. They were used to receiving highly qualified leads and focusing on closing the sale. Now, they had to work earlier-stage leads and be much more resilient and resourceful through a longer sales cycle. One last mistake was that the company did not provide management processes and support for the managers’ people.

The company did not meet its growth objectives and the CEO was replaced by an individual, handpicked by the VC Company who had committed most of the funds.

Case 2: Think Strategically + Invest Thoughtfully = Success

The second company took a much more thoughtful approach for how they would scale their business. Yes, they got their venture capital funding but even prior to getting that, they had thought very deliberately and strategically about how they would scale.

They took time to really understand how buyers identified the need for what they sold, how they sourced providers, and how they made their final decision. This enabled their marketing team to create content that stimulated interest with buyers and led to much more qualified opportunities. Then, they aligned their sales process with how their customers bought. They invested in tools, but did so to enable more efficient sales process execution.

They realized that since they were selling an innovative product, they did not need salespeople with several years of experience in the industry. Rather, they looked for people who had the passion and right mindset for the job, even if their skillsets weren't fully developed. This enabled the company to get good talent without overpaying, and allocate a portion of that savings to developing the required skills and knowledge through training.

In parallel, they created sales management processes to inspect progress and coach to the right behaviors. In the end, this company continued its rapid growth and went public.

They took time to really understand how buyers identified the need for what they sold, how they sourced providers, and how they made their final decision.

Three Lessons Learned from Failure and Success

There are some very valuable lessons to be learned from how these organizations approached growth and scalability. It's helpful to look at these lessons learned in three categories related to sales process, sales training, and sales coaching.

Lesson 1: Implement a Sensible Sales Process

Sales processes provide you with a foundation for repeatable success and efficiency.

As you scale your sales force and your business, it's very important to design and implement a standard approach to selling—your sales processes. Sales processes provide you with a foundation for repeatable success and efficiency. They also give your sales managers objective criteria to manage their forecast and coach salespeople to peak performance.

When it comes to sales process, it's important to focus on the customer first, keep things simple, and choose tools that will enhance and enable your sales process.

- **Start with the Customer.** You need to be outward and customer-focused. Take the time to understand your customer – who they are, why they buy, and where to meet them on their buying journey. Don't make assumptions and go beneath the surface to understand what's really driving the investment in the customer. Finally, focus less on product features and more on the customer's problems that your product solves.
- **Keep your Sale Processes Simple.** There's a tendency for technology-oriented companies to create very detailed sales processes—similar to what they would do if designing a production-type process. However, this is usually too much detail, making the processes very difficult to implement and too rigid to stay aligned with their customers. When sales processes are too rigid, salespeople develop workarounds and soon, the process isn't followed by anyone. Simplicity enables you to set the minimum required standards and provide guidelines that enable your salespeople to follow best practices without placing excessive burden or bureaucracy in their path. It also enables you to track the right metrics to measure success and correct course when needed.

- **Find the Right Tools.** Once you have established and understand your sales process, you need to find the tools that best suit your process. They should make process execution easier and better. Don't buy a tool and then build your process around it. Tools enable your sales process, not dictate it.

Lesson 2. Invest in Sound Training and Development

Even if you hire experienced salespeople, don't assume they know how to sell your solution. Every company and product is different. There are nuances that salespeople must understand to increase their odds of success. You also need consistency across your sales team so that you can manage them more effectively. Even experienced hires need training because each one working in a different way is a recipe for mayhem. Strike the right balance and don't micro-manage, but don't let things run wild either.

When it comes to sales training, it's important to keep in mind that trainers are not a training program, think process versus event, and to pay close attention to new hire onboarding.

- **Trainers are not a Training Program.** Many companies mistakenly believe that they can simply hire a sales trainer to take care of sales training for the team. However, there are two major pieces to this puzzle; the training program itself and the person who delivers it. You need both. And you should know that one is much more difficult than the other. With a quality sales training program, you should get a properly designed curriculum that is backed by sound sales performance research to ensure that the sales approach and methodology will meet your needs and deliver the results you expect. This is difficult, risky, time consuming, and costly to build from the ground up; therefore, most companies choose to license a proven program directly from a top sales training company. These programs are not only proven effective with many track records of successful implementations, but are also efficient, as they can be delivered in weeks versus several months or even years and at a much lower cost.

With a quality sales training program, you should get a properly designed curriculum that is backed by sound sales performance research to ensure that the sales approach and methodology will meet your needs and deliver the results you expect.

- **Think Process, Not Event.** Sales training and development should be viewed as a continuous improvement process and not a one-time event where salespeople show up to class, drown in information, and then go back to doing things as they always have. Salespeople need to continuously build knowledge and hone their skills and abilities. As you scale your sales team, it's important to enable this continuous development by providing the mechanism to identify and address individual developmental needs.
- **Pay Close Attention to Onboarding.** Finally, sales training is especially important in the onboarding of new hires. You need to help your new hires develop the knowledge and skills necessary for customer-facing situations. But you also have to help them understand how to function within your own organization as efficiently as possible. For example, they need to know how to access important tools, resources, and systems to create proposals, update their forecasts, and access support materials. Creating a standard onboarding program that covers all of these bases creates a strong first impression for the salesperson, and puts them on the path to success early. For successful onboarding, you also need to establish goals and metrics. You need a way to hold people accountable for the final outcome.

Sales managers are force multipliers that will help you scale your business successfully.

Lesson 3. Ensure Your Sales Managers Know How and When to Coach

Sales managers play a crucial role in the ongoing development and success of your organization. You need to set the expectation that your sales managers must be more than just super sales reps who swoop in to help a sales rep close a deal at the end of a quarter. They are force multipliers that will help you scale your business successfully.

As a fast-growing innovative company, it is likely that finding the perfect sales manager candidate will be nearly impossible. You will either need to promote a current salesperson who knows your business but has little sales management experience, or hire an experienced sales manager who doesn't know your business or culture. When it comes to sales coaching, it's important to find the right people, develop a coaching cadence and provide managers with coaching to coach better.

- **Find the Right Person.** The top performing sellers don't always make great sales managers. Sometimes, they do become great coaches, but you can't base that off of only their sales performance. You need to identify the necessary traits for a good sales manager and then, evaluate candidates to make sure that they possess those traits. Some of those traits include, leadership, coaching ability, and emotional intelligence. Also, expect to train sales managers to equip them with the skills to be an effective manager and coach.

Sales coaching is a skill that is developed continuously over time and it's easy to forget that your sales managers probably need help to develop their coaching skills.

- **Develop a Coaching Cadence.** Specify the type of coaching activity you expect and the timing at different stages of the quarter. For example, the sales managers should have a weekly standing meeting with every salesperson to troubleshoot challenging situations and work on developing new skills. In addition to this, every month, the sales manager and sales rep should do a comprehensive pipeline review to ensure that the sales rep has enough to make their number for the quarter and the year. Every quarter, the sales manager and sales rep should be reviewing the sales rep's progress and productivity in key accounts. The exact cadence will vary depending on your business, but it's essential to set the right expectation. Be strategic and develop a formal process that you can manage. This includes establishing coaching metrics, key performance indicators, and goals. You then use it to hold everyone accountable.
- **Coaches Need Coaching.** Finally, use professional coaches to help coach your sales managers. Sales coaching is a skill that is developed continuously over time and it's easy to forget that your sales managers probably need help to develop their coaching skills. Using professional coaches will help develop your sales managers into better coaches who can maximize the productivity of your salespeople. Coaching is also something that can and should be measured. Set up metrics within the business to measure how well they are doing and the quality of their coaching.

It's important to stay composed and start thinking methodically about how you can get from where you are today to where you need to be tomorrow.

Final Thoughts

Taking your sales organization to the next level is very exciting and always risky. The spotlight is on you and expectations are high. It's important to stay composed and start thinking methodically about how you can get from where you are today to where you need to be tomorrow. You can't do this by placing the entire organization on your back. You need to put in place the systems, processes, and talent for sustainable growth. Follow our guidance and you will eliminate a lot of risk while also increasing your odds of reaching your goals.

About Janek Performance Group

At Janek, we view performance as the product or measure of sales practices as a whole. From our proprietary sales training solutions to our relentless commitment to smart training-implementation plans, we strive to provide relevant behavioral change for each of our clients. Our perspective is fresh and our abilities nimble, enabling us to become long-term trusted partners with our clients. One size does not fit all and this mentality is woven into the core of our organization. We are prescriptive in our approach, which has guided the development of our completely tailored sales performance programs.

Janek Performance Group
1887 Whitney Mesa Dr, #3075
Henderson, NV 89014

info@janek.com
<https://www.janek.com>