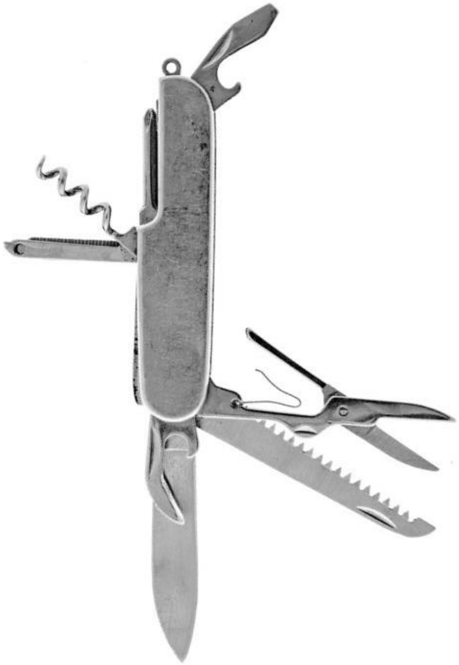

Sales Manager Survival Guide

Sales Execution Framework V1.1

Sales Execution Framework

Increasingly salespeople and managers struggle to make sense of all the things they are being asked to do, and how these activities fit with each other.

They are asked, and expected to do territory planning, account planning, deal planning, execute a sales process aligned with the customer buying process, call planning, prospecting. Then they also are responsible for pipeline management, forecasting, value creation, email marketing, cold calling, delivering insight, developing relationships, nurturing accounts/people, and on and on and on.

Too often, they don't understand why they are doing these things and how they fit together. They do account planning because management says account planning is important. But they don't understand how account planning relates to the sales process, opportunity management, call planning, or pipeline management.

Or they focus on prospecting activities without connecting the prospecting or volume of prospecting to each other element.

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Too many sales people are blindly executing all these things, without knowing how they are interconnected or which might have the biggest impact on their results.

Alternatively, they do these things just because managers are telling them to do it, or it's what salespeople in their organization have always done.

But they can't connect the dots between these disparate activities, all of which are critical to sales success. As a result, they can't maximize their effectiveness and impact in executing each and leveraging the interconnection between the pieces/parts.

Alternatively, we see them concentrate their activities in a few narrow areas—often doing what they enjoy most and avoiding those things they struggle with. For example, too often, they focus on pipeline deals, avoiding prospecting. They fail to recognize they have to do the "whole job."

<u>What Are The Interconnections?</u>

Think of some examples or even challenge some of your own traditional thinking.

I often encounter good salespeople wondering, "Why do we have to do territory planning or account planning?" Is it just because that's what sales people have always done, or what "guru's" say is fashionable now?

At the simplest level territory and account planning is a structured approach to prospecting. We need to keep finding new, qualified opportunities, to achieve our goals and to keep our pipelines healthy.

Most of the time, when we speak of account/territory planning, we focus on how to do it, but not on why (other than we've always done it or "I bought training on it from some vendor because they told me organizations doing it win more business.").

The "why" is very simple, it's to find more opportunities!

Or think about pipeline reviews. Salespeople don't think in terms of pipeline. They tend to say, "It's just my manager's way of checking on me and seeing what I'm doing."

But salespeople need to constantly assess, "Am I pursuing enough deals to make my number?" Or, "How can I improve the results I'm producing?"

The pipeline is the tool to help them identify the answers to those issues and helps point them to what they need to do to get back on track.

For example, if the pipeline is anemic, they need to find more qualified deals. This points them directly to territory and account planning/execution.

Alternatively, they need to win more of the deals they are working, or they need to accelerate the buying cycles. This points them to the sales process and opportunity planning.

Effective sales execution means salespeople must be working all dimensions simultaneously. They must constantly be working on demand generation, driving deals to closure, and achieving their goals.

Since all of these are connected, failing to execute in one area will eventually ripple through and impact each other area.

Gaining Leverage:

As salespeople and managers gain proficiency in leveraging the Sales Execution Framework, there's a huge opportunity to identify where the salesperson might get the greatest leverage.

For example, if the pipeline doesn't have enough volume, the normal reaction might be to prospect. But with the Framework, the salesperson might consider alternative strategies.

It might be more effective to raise the average deal size, or to look at how the win rate might be increased.

As we assess alternative strategies, we can determine the strategy that provides the greatest leverage and impact.

Sales Execution Framework Components:

The Sales Execution Framework is an attempt to start showing how the various pieces/parts of what salespeople need to do, fit together.

There are 4 components (see the subtitles in the model):

1. Demand generation: This focuses on finding new opportunities. Typically, this is a combination of territory and account planning. (Remember, the definition of a territory can be a geographic area, an industry or market vertical, a certain collection of customers that fit the ideal customer profile.)
2. Solving Our Customers' Problems: These are the things we do in helping customers, who have committed to making a change (i.e. they are qualified), execute their buying process. The key tools we use to execute this are our Sales Process (aligned and driven by the customer buying process) and our Opportunity or Deal Strategies.
3. Being In Control Of Our Business: Stated differently, "Am I going to make my numbers?" The key tools for this are the pipeline and forecast.
4. Designing High Value Meetings: The way we execute our territory/account plans, sales process, opportunity plans is through high value meetings with our customers (or even internally). These meetings can be face to face, voice to voice, or virtual. We design our meetings to maximize the value we create for the purpose for which they are intended. For example, prospecting, facilitating the buying process, and so forth.

Within each of these, we have ongoing efforts and iterations. For example, we continue to refine and execute our territory/account plans, to find new qualified opportunities.

With those qualified opportunities, we execute our sales process and opportunity strategies. As the customer progresses through the buying process we iterate through the sales process/opportunity strategy, leveraging them to think of "what should we be doing next."

We track the progress of all our qualified opportunities in the pipeline, using the sales process to locate them correctly in the pipeline.

We assess the pipeline for quality/integrity, volume and velocity. Pipeline metrics give us an idea of the health of our pipeline (are we going to make our numbers), and help isolate what we need to do to maintain a healthy pipeline—find more opportunities, improve execution of our deal strategies.

And we execute those strategies with high value/impact meetings.

Again, the purpose of this framework is to show the interrelationships between each aspect of a sales person's job. We constantly iterate between each component and within the components based on where we get the most leverage.

It's important to note, **this Framework is methodology agnostic**. If your organization has a specific sales methodology or approach, the Sales Execution Framework accommodates any methodology.

Likewise, the Sales Execution Framework is **independent of the CRM and other tools** your organization has in place. As you put the Framework in place, you may want to define some standard reports, making it easier to identify the most important things you should be doing.

A critical issue for managers and sales people is to think of, "How do I balance my time/activities across each?" "What is the right cadence of prospecting, deal management, and so forth?" "Where do we get the most leverage with the activities we engage in?"

Where Do You Start?

Crassly, wherever you are at, or whichever is the most pressing area. Since these are interconnected and we are constantly cycling through all these components, you can start anywhere. One leads to the next and to the next, and so on.

The key issue is not to get stuck in just one area, but to recognize sales people must be executing each, simultaneously.

A less crass response, and, perhaps, a more natural starting point is with the pipeline/funnel.

The pipeline is our tracking tool, it helps answer the question, "Am I pursuing enough of the right deals to make my number?"

Pipeline metrics and analysis help us identify specific problems in achieving our goals, suggesting areas where we need to focus and address those problems.

It's important to understand, "we don't fix pipeline problems in the pipeline!" We fix the problems in territory/account planning, or sales process/deal execution.

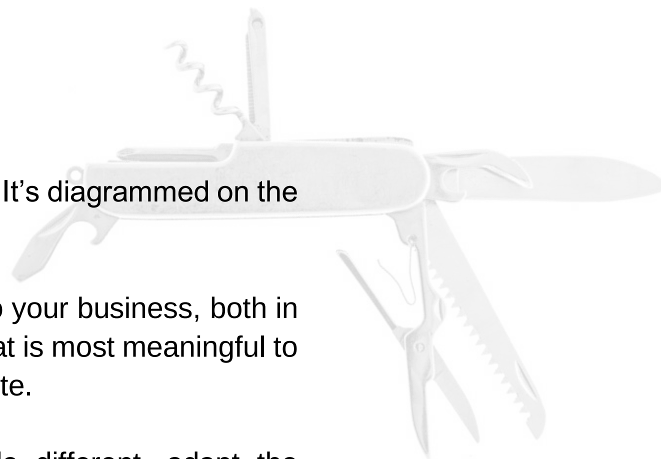
While the pipeline may be a starting point, it quickly points you to one of the other areas of the Sales Execution Framework.

Alternatively, the real centerpiece of the Sales Execution Framework is the Selling/Buying Process. It is the core of everything we do—it drives our deal strategies, our pipelines, even our account and call plans.

Start with a deal, look at where it is in the Selling/Buying Process—this leads you immediately into discussions of Deal Strategies or Pipeline positioning.

Again, whatever your starting point, the important thing about this Framework is that it leads you to all other parts of the Framework.

<u>The Sales Execution Framework:</u>



By now, you are wondering what is it? It's diagrammed on the next page.

Study it, but then take it and adapt it to your business, both in the terms you use and the structure that is most meaningful to the jobs your sales people must execute.

Your business model may be a little different, adapt the framework to your business model.

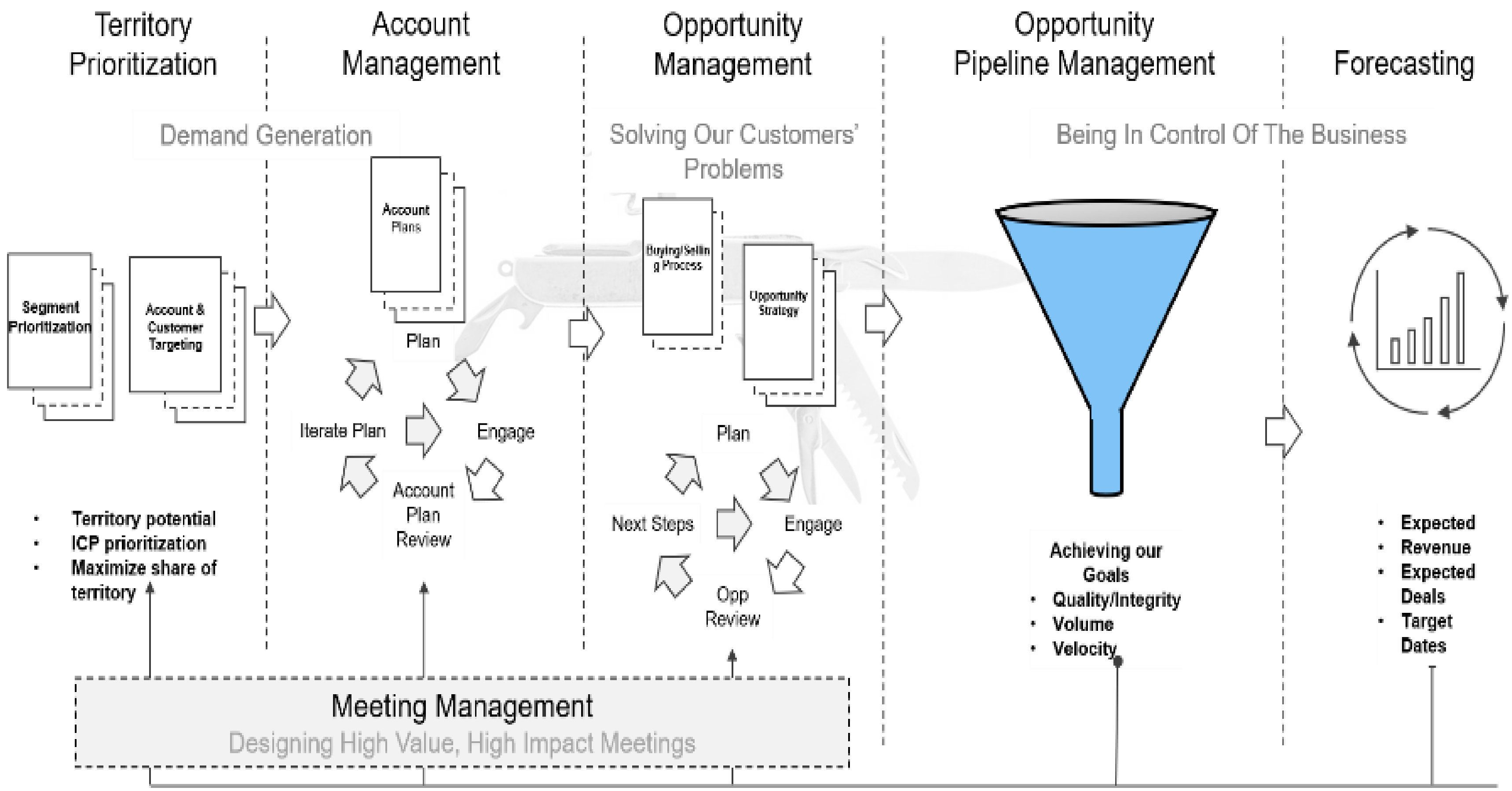
Your concept of "territory," or account planning may be different, use your language.

You may have SDRs focused on demand generation, moving qualified deals to sales people to manage. Map the roles/responsibilities for each to this framework. (Though I have a problem with sales people that don't prospect.)

You may be going to market through channels or partners. Look at how you might divide roles and responsibilities between your organization and your partners.

At the risk of repeating myself, this tool becomes most useful when adapted to your business model, methodologies, and processes.

Sales Execution Framework/Ecosystem



A Guide To Coaching/Skills Development:

From the point of view of a sales manager, this framework also provides a guide for systematic coaching.

If our sales people constantly struggle with filling their pipelines with the right deals, we need to coach them on prospecting, leveraging our territory/account planning tools.

If the win rates are too low or deals are getting stuck or are too slow, we need to coach them in the execution of the selling process and building stronger deal strategies.

The manager can leverage this framework to develop a systematic approach to coaching and skills development, again, positioning each of them into how they contribute to the overall Sales Execution Framework.

Sales managers may want to refer to my book, **Sales Manager Survival Guide** (Available on Amazon). The Sales Execution Framework was developed as a specific response to managers who wanted to know how to apply the principles outlined in the book, particularly those outlined in Parts 2, 3, 5, and 6.

Caveat: This Is About Sales Person Execution!

This framework is a tool to helping sales people better understand what the components of their job is, and how they interrelate to each other.

Stated differently, it focuses on individual performance.

There are other frameworks that help sales executives and managers look at overall organizational performance and excellence. I've packaged some of these models in my work on the **Sales Management Ecosystem**. If you want the parallel document on that, please reach out.

Conclusion:

The Sales Execution Framework is a starting point. One can drill down into much deeper detail with each of the elements outlined in the framework.

But it's a grounding point for sales people and sales managers to begin to understand and make sense of how the various pieces/parts of what we expect sales people to do, fit together.

Most importantly, it's a reminder that we have to do the whole job! Focusing only in one area, will inevitably create execution failure in all areas.

About Sales Manager Survival Guide:

These materials are supplementary materials provided to purchasers of the Sales Manager Survival Guide. For more information and resources, visit **salesmanagersurvivalguide.com**

About Dave Brock:

Dave is the author of Sales Manager Survival Guide and is CEO of Partners In EXCELLENCE, a global business strategy, sales, marketing, and customer experience consulting company.

For more information about these resources, how to implement them in your company, or to get Dave to speak, coach, or consult, contact Dave at dabrock@excellenc.com. More resources are available at:
partnersinexcellenceblog.com and **excellenc.com**