

TRIPLE YOUR SALES PIPELINE



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Talking with several of my customers, I've noticed a trend. Many don't know where to start when growing their sales pipeline. To fix this pain point, I've created the, Grow Your Sales Pipeline Book, which will help the entrepreneur, marketing and sales director (or associate) who is looking for different ways to fill up their sales pipeline.

- ▶ **How to target customers**
- ▶ **How to reach out to them**
- ▶ **How not to sell them**
- ▶ **How to land them**

Part 1

First. Setting up a realistic goal is needed. Don't worry about down the road-big picture, worry about the actionable and what you can grow immediately. To make things easy, nothing more than one week from today will be your basis. So, if you can't become an olympic athlete in a week, don't make that a goal. Three years ago, I was looking for ways to grow the agency, I was working with. I was as green as could be, but was willing to work and test whatever I needed to, I was looking for a trigger point or something that enthused others.

I was reading article after article, and several books. I came across Get Clients Now, and this was my trigger. The author talks about ways to create a community through your business when you do not have one. The idea I had was through events. Going to a few Chamber workshops, I was realized I was trying to make a sale when no one else was looking to be sold anything. You can't be that guy (or girl) who everyone looks at during an event and knows you are the business card fool, who does whatever they can to grab your card, even though you know you will never buy anything from them. Instead, you are nice and give them your card and they hound you worse than a Sallie Mae trying to refinance your student loans.

If I wanted to grow my sales pipeline, I was going to find the right customer.

What you are selling isn't your product, service, company, etc. it's that you are an authority in this field. You are looking to make friends, while creating a network of the top business people in your community and medium.

Guess what, I wasn't. I didn't even really understand what I was selling. Websites and custom development, but in Norfolk, the game was RFPs.

There had to be a different way. Your goal is to always funnel those you meet through. In this case, an event at our office was lead generation.

Events bring several positives

- 1. Prospects to your office**
- 2. Authority status**
- 3. Aggressive pipeline leads**
- 4. Room for growth**

Whether you are interested in events or not, don't count them out. And don't worry if you don't know how to start one. We'll go over that through this series.

Goal. To find companies that needed custom development work.

Problem. We were an unknown, new company. Zero authority status. Potential customers didn't know what they needed and was put through the RFP battle, instead of being able to speak with them in person.

Solution. Bring together business owners, exclusive content + curated guest list.

Topics. Growth of companies, Peer to peer mentoring with those who had been there before, Create the I have to be there club.

Achievement. Immediately become authority status. Solid sales pipeline.
Targeting customers. This is easily the hardest piece. Where do you find those prospects.

- 1. Exclusive invite group
- 2. Find a cheerleader
- 3. Create email invite.
- 4. Ask to join + bring a friend, but give specifics on who can attend.
- 5. Amazing content + your event can't suck

Create a spreadsheet and google search location + industry. What industry do you want to work with or have worked with in the past.

Take an inventory of your business cards, once you have decided what industry you are looking divide your business cards into piles of industries. Then set aside the ones you are not interested in and create three piles; likely, not-likely and not sure.

Other. You don't have to have an in person event. Instead create a Webinar and include the same type of people.

Make it as easy as possible for someone to say yes. Be different. The chamber was not our target. Dig deep. Ask.

Company	Phone	Email?	follow up	In or Out
Feedback		yes		no
Seventh F		yes	yes	emailed again
Simis		yes	yes	
EyePinch		yes	na	no
Grow		yes	na	
Artsmith		yes	yes	weighing optio
Ciniva		yes	yes	
Herman M		yes	yes	need to call
xTuple		yes	na	no
Towne Ba		yes	yes	
Slait Cons		yes		no
n Motion		yes	yes	
Cox				
Communic				
Maker Spa		yes	na	no
Concursiv		yes	yes	no
Opp Inc		yes	yes	
860 It		yes	yes	no
Cetan Cor				
PRA		yes	yes	No
Stedfeldt				

Part 2

I will be going over four ways to reach out to those you have recently met or may be associated with to grow your sales pipeline, categorized in these 4 elements.

1. Business Cards
2. Social
3. Email Campaigns
4. Make it super easy to say yes

Business Cards. So who do you have already in your existing network? Take an inventory of who you want to target and then breakup into separate groups. Only keep the ones who you can grow immediately in front of you. This way you don't waste you time by reaching out to people that you already don't think will convert. Under the business card inventory also look through your other online networks that you have relationships on. For example, I have found that my friendships on Facebook can convert higher than my followers on twitter so I will communicate more on Facebook. Be sure to make a record of the data you are researching, I typically create a spreadsheet and add columns such as name, email and how I know this person. This way, when I reach out to them, I can get a tab on specific encounters, to keep me up to date on communication with them.



The goal for this is to pinpoint those potential customers you have so when you communicate with them, you have divided them into relationships and opportunities. Example, if you are selling web marketing, you wouldn't want to ask another web marketing company for work, rather if they ever have overfilled their pipeline, that you may have some bandwidth to help out.

Remember everything is about relationships. Example of communicating with similar firms: 'Hey, I see you have been growing your business since 1995 and I think what you have created in awesome. I'd love to take you to lunch to learn more about how you were able to do so.'

Make each of these conversations about educating yourself or potential customers.

Use **SOCIAL** to your advantage. You have a network of people that you are friends with or follow and are likely to engage with you when you provide them with something of interest or education. For

example, post an image of a related topic on your page, give some background and then a link (CTA) and repeat with more content for best results.

In this post, I am looking for developers in the Norfolk region to sign up for a developer conference newsletter.

Problem: You need to grow your pipeline, but your stuck on how

Solution: Increase your network by learning from others who have already done so.

Goal: To grow an email list, that you will be able to communicate with. Create an effective Call-To-Action, and email campaign that you can ask your network to join plus those who share the campaign or are lead generated from a opt-in from you site.

According to Wikipedia, A call to action, or CTA, is a banner, button, or some type of graphic or text on a website meant to prompt a user to click it and continue down a conversion funnel.

Hey there!

I wanted to take a moment and introduce myself. My name is Kevin Griffin, and I'm the guy that's spearheading 757DevCon. Thanks so much for signing up for the list.

My goal is to determine how much interest there is for a developer event in the area. I don't care what "type" of developer you are. The fact that you sling code makes you awesome, and I want to provide a way for like-minded folks to network and learn from each other.

Right now, we don't have any dates picked or venues contracted. In fact, we're not even sure there is going to be an event. That will be dictated by the community.

Would you do me the smallest favor? I'd love it if you would pass our website (<http://757DevCon.com>) to your friends, coworkers, bosses, and even complete strangers. I know that's a reach, but let's do this: tell TWO people about 757DevCon. See if they'll register for this list, and I'll take care of the rest.

The more people that we reach out to, the better the chances of us being able to do something amazing.

The higher converted CTA's are ones that typically given information out (whitepaper, book or discount) for a piece of data in return (email, phone number, etc), with the goal to create enough 'deal flow' or interest that you can leverage this list to create education campaigns around and through several layers of discussion, become and authority and trusted enough, that these visitors or viewers will buy what you are selling. But not by selling immediately.

If you are selling online, which

Many of you are, the thought process must be changed. The world is filled with noise; billboards and ads everywhere we look. From the bumper of your car, laptop all the way to the stick of gum you chew. Many look at this noise and immediately turn the other way. This is exactly what you are trying to stay away from. You cannot expect to sell on your first interaction, instead, educate your potential customers and then hard sell at a later time. Typically six interactions later.

Example: My local shopping mall charges up-words of 7X's more for retail space than other spaces not in the mall. Why? #1, because they can but more importantly, #2 the psychology behind a patron in a shopping mall is one that is ready to buy.

You are not a shopping mall, so don't act like it! 'But Zack, this process takes too long!' Yea, sales sucks and isn't always immediate. So you have to convince your visitors that you are 1. trustworthy 2. credible and 3. the best damn product in the world that they can buy! All while not doing this immediately.

Collecting the email. What information are you willing to give up in return for your visitors email? That's the easy part, if you don't regularly communicate with current customers or peruse the web, you can ask questions to your networks or check out LinkedIn Groups to see what is discussed regularly. Then compile the findings into a report and create a catchy phrase to exchange data for data.

In Norfolk, Kevin is looking to launch a developer conference and before he starts doing all the hard work, he is looking to validate and grow his pipeline with potential attendees. He simply asks visitors to sign up and in return he will keep them posted. After I signed up for this list, I received an email.

In this message, Kevin introduces himself to the subscribers, briefs on what he is attempting and asks for help.

How easy have you made it for visitors to 1. Find You 2. Give You Data in Exchange for Data 3. Understand who you are and what you do Make your content easy to understand to those not in your field. Example, don't talk acronyms and accounting terms if you aren't talking to an accounting firm. Instead create a targeted landing page for those types of visitors. In Carry Norfolk's case, they deliver goods via bicycle and have begun branching out to deliver other items such as office supplies and documents.

When talking with potential customers, Ian (Carry Norfolk's founder) noticed he was sending visitors to his main page, which was confusing to understand if you were not ordering food. He instead built a custom landing page for document deliveries with text that was centered around the delivery of tax and legal documents.

To recap, take an inventory of your entire network, begin communicating and educating around your product, but without directly selling your product, rather exchanging data for data (email). And finally, be sure to make it beyond easy to sign up, understand what you are and how they can communicate with you.

Follow along for next week's element, How not to be a pushy salesman.

In part 3 of the series, I will talk about how to **Educate** those potential and current customers you have. Instead of pushing one to buy your product immediately, create ways to educate these visitors so you become the authority, trustworthy and credible.

Take a look around you, whether it is the computer or cell phone screen you are reading this on, to the billboard on your drive into work. Advertising is everywhere. Take an inventory of everything around you. You are being sold thousands of times a day. How can that really be the best way to convert someone into a paying customer. It's a

1/5,000 chance! Instead, be different, think out of the box and educate rather than sell.

When educating potential customers, this is where we really dive down the funnel and figure out who really is interested. Before I talked about ways to bring together a critical mass of people (events, etc) and leverage relationships. Now, we are getting into the nitty gritty and discovering who will likely become a client and who is engaged.

As with anything in business, you need to have a goal for everything you do. Like this series for an example, my goal is to educate you through a four part tour to build your sales pipeline so you can make more money for your company.

Getting people to attend your event, meetup or webinar is one thing, actually educating them is another. For example, my friend Ryan asked me a few weeks ago where I get my hair cut. Ryan was looking for someone more local and I told him that I go to Jake's Place, a Norfolk local business. Now, When I told Ryan that Jake's Place was great and specifically, Heather, my hair stylists, I am giving my approval. Approval on anything goes a long way, but it must be verified. If Ryan gets his hair cut by Heather and it sucks, he's not only going to likely not go back, but also loss credibility in me. I have to be selective in what information I give out if I don't believe in it. If you are reading this Heather, don't screw it up!

Same can be said for education, if people aren't learning from you, they won't come back. Since your end goal is likely to up-sell something, like a SAAS product, a paid workshop or consulting, you want to make sure that you do educate, while at the same time not giving away all of your special sauces for free. Instead, decide on a few topics that you can use as 'deal flow' and teach away. Think of the broadest amount of information that you can give away. For me, I tend to give away marketing tips, how to create an event and to build a community. Once I have established a critical mass of people for these topics, I then funnel them down into leads and encourage them to purchase my product once

I have educated them through an email campaign, blog posts or entry level events.

So, Zack, I'm not a teacher and I'm not really sure what I should or would teach and why would anyone ever listen to me?

Ever heard of the term, '**fake it, til you make it**'. In my case, I had no idea what to do, not only with events, but business and definitely not teaching it. So, I created a way for the type of people I wanted to work with to come together and basically acted as the moderator. I would do some quick google searches on business or ask those who attended what they wanted to learn, that way it would be very education instead of me thinking I knew what they wanted to learn. My goal was to create a group of past, present and future entrepreneurs to learn from each other through their experiences in business and in life.



To do this, you can't be afraid of the unknowns, rather be excited about the challenge, not only in teaching yourself something new, but the opportunity to bring in new business in ways you never thought possible.

How Can you educate potential and current customers?

- 1. Dummies Guide to <insert topic>**
- 2. Tour a project you just worked on**
- 3. Guest Speakers**

Remember, you are not selling anything at this point. Just bringing a collection of people together to educate them. You will bring them through the sales funnel in next weeks final part of the series, landing the client.

Dummies Guide. When educating in the dummies guide style, start from the bottom and move forward. This series is using this model, where I take a broad topic and break it down into several smaller parts and each part is split by giving even more examples. Creating a series on a specific topic for your visitors. If you do not know what to write about, do a quick google search using keywords associated with your industry and see what others are talking about, you can also request a topic from current customers or peruse through LinkedIn groups and see what others are asking and talking about. Then collect all the data and either create written whitepapers about or host an event on the topic.

Touring a project worked great for our developer meetups. Every Friday, we would invite the developer community to our office for a lunch and learn session, which we would showcase a new tool, feature or problem we solved on a current project. We used these project tours to educate our potential new employees. Because we were teaching our industry new tools, this organically made us the authority in web development in

Norfolk. Literally out of know where. We were an open book and shared the problems we were solving and how we went about each element. These meetups would average a dozen or so people from other agencies in town, we would also invite the companies we were working with to attend so they could learn the technical side of how we were making decisions.

Remember, it's not all about selling, its the proving that you are the authority, that you are trustworthy and are King of the Mountain in your industry.

Guests. So, you are still afraid to host an event or know what to do. Allow others to do the educating for you. All you have to do is be the moderator or give up the use of your platform. Example. Allow an SEO Expert to write a guest blog post on your site about ways to grow through organic SEO methods or host a panel discussion and invite three to four experts, local or national. The great thing about a panel discussion is you will be able to leverage 3-4 times more marketing alone from those who are speaking. Most likely they will promote the event because they will be speaking.

Tip. Don't forget to link back your events on your website, thus when the event is being shared, your website is the one being shared.

To recap, we went over three ways to educate your customers; through event and blog teaching; creating a series around a topic that many are asking about, showcasing your work with others in your community and finally leveraging other industry experts to grow your brand.

There is nothing scarier in the business world than needing to make payroll. You may be a growing company, your accounts receivable is high and the money just isn't there (yet). You cannot be timid in your continuing marketing efforts though. As other businesses will see you weakness and flock like vultures and take everything away from you in an instant.

I needed my pipeline to convert all while still filling it at the same time (and collect AR, over 100k a month). I've discussed how to target, communicate and educate potential customers, but its time to close the deal and bring in the money. As you know, money is the deciding factor in many decisions. Don't believe me? Do a quick poll on your facebook page about a new product you are thinking about selling and ask who would be interested? It will make you feel so good at the amount of positive feedback and willingness to buy your new product. But, once you develop and try to sell again, you won't have that same luck. Instead, add the pressure early on. Ask for a prepayment. You can incentive by only allowing a few people to buy or at a discount, but theres no reason to work on something that no one will eventually buy.

I wrote a book, which took me about 14 months and heard time after time, 'Once its ready I'll buy.' So I went on creating line after line and pinpointing what story I really wanted to tell. The basic concept is on Communities and how they can be created. About halfway through writing, I decided to create a launch page for the book and connected it to Gumroad, an online payment platform. I received a few orders and thought, 'Oh, this is great, people are pre-ordering.' As I got closer to the completion of writing and editing, I hit the marketing trail harder and sales grew even more. I launched the book and now see a few sales a month.

I learned a lot about writing a book. The number one thing I learned is that books won't make you rich BUT, they can give you credibility in your industry. I was able to interview a dozen other community leaders across the US and learn about what they were doing to make their cities better. When I now think about launching a new product or service, I create a landing page with an email opt in along, along with a strong Call To Action on purchasing now. This way I have two ways to track those interested. 1) Email opt in, which will turn into an educational series, similar to the 'Growing

Your Sales Pipeline Series' and 2) instant financial payment, which gauges the real interest or how to specifically target. If I was to say create an e-book for ways to market your business with tools around five bucks, who should I be targeting?

This is the final part in the 'Grow Your Sales Pipeline Series'

So, how did I get to this point. How did I take a case of beer and turn it into a six-figure gig? I became the Authority. I became trusted. I asked a lot of questions. And, I listened.

Right after the first entrepreneur meetup I hosted, I was introduced to Mike Fleck, who had been looking for ways to get engaged into the business world in Norfolk. I had been to a few networking events hosted by the HR Tech Council and made friends with the organizers. I don't think many people were interested in the 'startup world' locally, so when I pitched that and all that goes along with starting a business, a lot of introductions and business leads flew our way. The HRTC guys were at the first meetup.

Mike and I met for coffee one morning and told him about the meetups I was organizing. Mike thought it was cool as he had recently transitioned from an employee to a founder. I told him that I wanted to create a community of other entrepreneurs, so we could learn from each other. I asked him what his new company was, which is a cyber security startup, Cipher Point. I was unfamiliar with his industry and his company so I had a lot of questions to ask him about it.

Tip: Ask, Ask, Ask

After a good summary of what he was doing and what he was looking to do, the Golden Ticket happened. Mike asked me about what I was working on, or more importantly what put food on the table. Remember, up to this point, I have

yet to tell anyone about what I am selling or what I make money on. I wait for them and I always do.

Why, because everyone is constantly being sold something.

I've hosted events specifically targeting those who I believe will turn into customers, I reached out to them about educational opportunities or ways for them to win more business and never sold them once. Think about how much stronger my case is now. I have been introduced to someone, I am educating a group of people and I am easy to communicate with. Three strong cases that I am someone to be listened to.

I told Mike that we created custom software for early stage companies and larger corporations looking for a solution to fix their off the shelf needs. It clicked to Mike and he immediately thought of a friend who was starting a company and was looking for a custom web and mobile software solution. **BAM!**

Mike then introduced me to his friend and within six weeks a check was in the mail.

The case of beer that brought dozen of entrepreneurs together to learn from one another turned into an introduction, which then turned into a six-figure gig. I'm not exactly sure of the multiplier but I think its somewhere around 6,000X.

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