



Focus to Succeed in a Tough Economy How to make your numbers in the next Two Quarters

By Ron Snyder

In a tough economy, you have to do the exact opposite of what your instincts are telling you to do. Many will cut costs (i.e. in marketing, advertising, training and people) - hoping that they will survive until things get better.



The best defense is a good offense. As in a car race, the driver who passes on the turn is set up to win the race.

Those who choose to aggressively create new opportunities will be handsomely rewarded- generating additional revenue, cash flow and winning market share in the short term. When the market turns up, their increased market share will represent incremental revenue and profit.

Quick Assessment

Do you have:

Marketing

- Clear target market that the whole team is pursuing?
- Consistent, compelling value proposition?
- Product positioning that propels the buyer forward?
- Web presence enabling buyers to get what they need quickly, easily?
- Sales tools that really accelerate the buying process?

Sales

- Sales process that decreases the number of touches to produce a sale?
- Account strategy that drives your customer's results?
- Sales team that implements sales strategy effectively?
- Sales management that propels the team forward?

Product Development

- Product capabilities to sell new capabilities to current customers?
- Product capabilities that extend into new market segments?
- Development process that optimizes time to market?

Each missing element gives the competition an opening to win market share.



Strategy #1 Grab Market Share

Do this by fine-tuning your product offering and/or your target market...

▶▶ **Identifying a New Market Segment for current products**

The fastest time to market is bringing a current product/service to a new market segment. Is there a market segment that you are not addressing that can use your offering?

▶▶ **Making a Quick Product Modification**

You may be able to address the need of the new market segment by making a minor adjustment to your product/service. If you do this quickly, it can be the source of significant incremental revenue, cash flow and profit.

▶▶ **Adding Services around current products**

Is there a service that you can wrap around a current product that makes it more valuable to your current market or a neighboring segment? Look for services your customers are providing themselves or using others to provide.

▶▶ **Making your Offer more attractive**

Can you show that your offer has a better value vs. cost than the competition? What can you do re add-ons, upgrades, offers to make your product/service more attractive?

▶▶ **Fine-tuning your Sales Channel**

Are there new ways of selling your product/service that can accelerate your success rate? We helped a client revamp their partner program. The characteristics of the new partners made their partner program (their only sales channel) much more successful. Should you consider an adjustment in your channel strategy?



Strategy #2 Help Customers Succeed

Give your customers what they need in this tough economy, such as...

▶▶ **Minimizing Cash Outlay**

Look for ways you can help customers control expenses. For example, one of our clients offers a software-based product and their competitor's products are hardware-based. So, their partners do not need to stock inventory, thus saving cash outlay on the inventory and storage space. In addition, partners save on installation costs.

▶▶ **Generating Incremental Sales**

Identify how your products help your customers generate new sales in their current market or address a new segment of the market, thus providing an opportunity for sales growth. For example, the client above offers a new capability that dramatically speeds up response time for a certain class of websites so their partners can sell to this new segment.

▶▶ **Providing a New Differentiator**

How can your products/services distinguish your customers from their competitors? How can you use current products to address a new need in the current market or address a new market in a way that differentiates your customer's offering?

▶▶ **Responding to Unaddressed Problems**

Look for ways to solve persistent problems your customers have been dealing with. One of my clients brought to market a small, portable ultrasound unit which enabled ultrasound technologists and doctors to perform ultrasound exams in cramped hospital rooms. This made it possible to save the time and effort to move the patient (in their hospital bed) to the equipment.

▶▶ **Translating the Value you provide into Dollars**

Capture the actual impact your products/services have on your customer's critical business results. Use this data in regular business reviews to show the value delivered. Translate it into case studies and ROI analysis tools and use it in the sales process. Finally, look for ways to help your customers translate the value you provide into quantifiable results for their customers.



Strategy #3 Focus Sales and Marketing

Focus your Sales and Marketing efforts by...

▶▶ Ruthlessly pursuing your “Sweet Spot”

So many companies have a general notion of the target market. Lack of a clear, compelling value proposition for a specific target market leads to wasted effort and time- something you cannot afford! Use this to guide your direct marketing to generate new leads, online presence to funnel interested parties into your sales process and funnel management to ensure your people are pursuing only opportunities that meet your target market criteria. We helped one of our clients re-position their offering and fine-tune their target market. This propelled a 50% increase in sales over the next year.

▶▶ Demonstrating superior Value vs. Cost

In a tough economy, everyone is very careful to make the best use of their money. If you are the low cost provider, get out there and close sales while people are so price-sensitive. If you are a value-driven provider, you must shift the buyer's attention to getting the best value for the money they spend. Help them see the impact of not having your value-added capabilities. We have helped many companies dramatically increase their sales by doing this.

▶▶ Driving the Sale via Compelling Events

Do you identify compelling events in prospect accounts and use them to drive the sale? When a compelling event drives a buyer to become serious about buying a product, they are most open to influence re how to solve that particular need. Placing special attention on buyers who are just recognizing the need for your product/service is the way to reduce the number of "touches" required to win a sale, shorten your sales cycle and improve the perceived value of your solution, increasing your margin.

▶▶ Optimizing Human/Online Sales Interaction

Is your sales process set up to make the best use of both human and online interaction? This can enable you to most cost-effectively fill your funnel and usher prospective buyers through their buying process. Provide clear, targeted sales tools. How well do your sales tools assist buyers in moving through each stage of the sales process? This includes ROI tools, configuration tools, competitive comparisons, third party reviews, etc.



Breakthrough, Inc

Accelerating Revenue Profitably

Act with Urgency

» Identify the Vital Few

Review the options and identify the vital few strategies that will have the greatest impact in the next 6 months. Do not take on too many new initiatives. One to three is usually a good number.

» Create a Plan

Engage the key members of your team in developing a plan. It should be short and to the point. Do not take long creating the plan. Explain the objectives clearly and determine each person's role.

» Reward the Desired Behaviors

Make sure that people are rewarded for acting on the new objectives. Take special care that your top performers are appropriately rewarded.

» Monitor and Adjust

Have weekly or bi-weekly check points and adjust as needed. Give it a chance to work- so this is not perceived as the flavor of the month.

About Breakthrough, Inc.

We provide Sales & Marketing guidance to companies delivering high value products and services- Business to Business

We do this via:

- ✓ Direct Experience- in Sales, Marketing, Product Development and management
- ✓ Best Methods- an aggregate of best practices and tools
- ✓ Performance Management- to support of successful adoption of new objectives, methods & tools; track progress and fine-tune approach



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