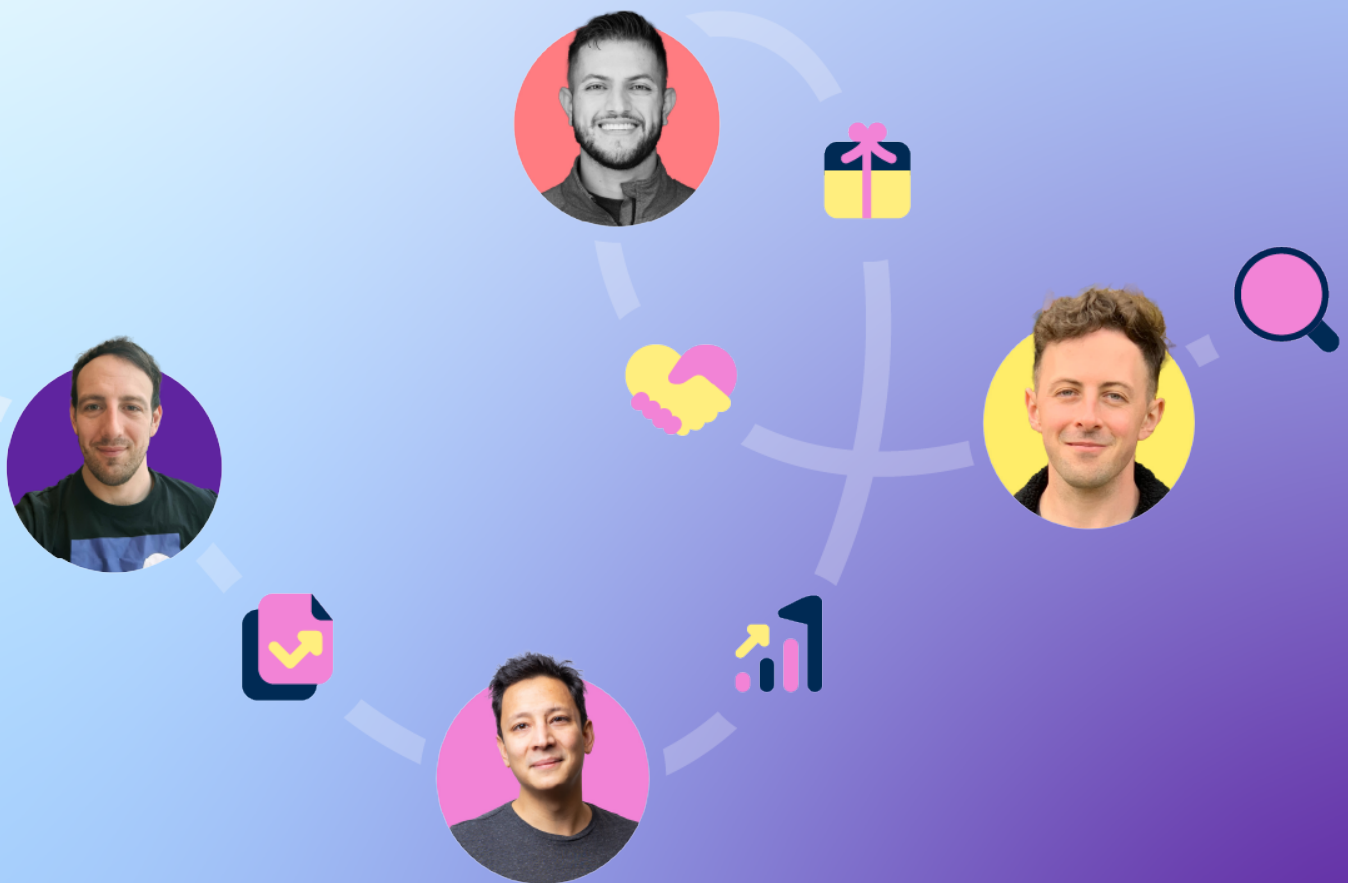




# Sales under pressure:

How to hit targets in a challenging market



# Introduction

As economic uncertainty continues, companies worldwide are shrinking their budgets, leaving many marketing teams unable to invest in new partnerships or even renew existing contracts.

For sales teams, this competitive market has led to a severe pivot from a grow-at-all-costs mentality to promoting efficiency. This requires a significant shift in mindset, strategy, and execution in order to achieve success - a shift that will inevitably take time.

Luckily, there are actions that salespeople can take now to flourish in this economic climate. For this guide, we've spoken to top sales professionals to hear their expert tips and techniques for approaching sales conversations with confidence, optimizing strategies, and hitting targets in a challenging market.



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## Focus on effort, not outcome

This can be a difficult task in sales, which is by nature an outcome-focused field. But if you go into a meeting with a specific outcome in mind, this can inhibit your ability to be fully present, personalize your interactions, and address the needs of the buyer effectively.

Instead of approaching a conversation with the sole intention of selling to a buyer, it can be far more rewarding

to see yourself as a partner. Focus on understanding the person you're talking to, the different challenges they're facing, and how you can support them.

Think of it this way: if you were shopping at a clothing store, would you rather interact with a sales assistant who outright tells you what you need to wear, or someone who asks the right questions and helps you find what you're looking for?



**If I'm focused on the deal closing and my commission, I can't be present in the conversation in the same way, ask the right questions, uncover the person's pain points, and find good moments to personalize.**




# Build robust outbound sales pipelines

Hearing the words “thanks, but no thanks” or having a sales process stall is never ideal. But in a competitive and high-stakes market, it can feel like a daunting setback.

Even in the face of rejection, knowing you have multiple conversations to pursue can be highly reassuring. One way to relieve this pressure is by actively building your own outbound sales pipeline. We spoke to our sales experts to hear their strategies.

## Never miss a chance to reach out



**One way to break the ice with a buyer is by congratulating them on a recent achievement. They often appreciate the gesture and it can help secure a meeting. If I'm on LinkedIn and I see someone start a job or earn a promotion at a target account, I'll message them directly to connect, say congratulations, and add them to my pipeline.**



When reviewing your target accounts, keep an eye out for any company news or press releases, and tailor your outreach accordingly. This can include

funding announcements, award wins, product launches – any reason to reach out with a warm message or even a gift.

## Make long-term connections



I like to maintain relationships with everyone I've sold to previously. We've already established a sense of trust, which is important, because if a buyer invests in new software and it doesn't add value to the business, then they'll be held accountable.



When a buyer already trusts you and has first-hand knowledge of what your product can do, this can be a huge advantage. It's always worth nurturing these long-term connections, even if the

person moves to a different company, as you never know when your paths will cross again. Then you can simply pick up where you left off.

## Pursue quality over quantity



**In the outbound sales function, there are two main things within our control: understanding who we want to target and the strategies we'll follow to win the account. Right now, the focus should be on building quality pipeline, rather than simply building more pipeline.**



Invest your time wisely and pursue high-quality accounts. One of the best ways to do this is by understanding your customer in detail and becoming

customer-obsessed – even from the prospecting level – so you can use your resources with maximum efficiency.

# Tailor your strategy around what's happening in the market

The best salespeople have an innate passion for what they're selling. They know their product inside and out, and they're always ready to explain its many virtues with serious gusto. But they also recognize that, across the world, there are trends and events that are undoubtedly more important.

Over the last few years, we've seen a steady stream of disruptive and unprecedented world events dominate news cycles and conversations – including (but by no

means limited to) economic pressures, a pandemic, military conflicts, and environmental disasters.

As a salesperson, it's important to be aware of world events and be prepared to discuss them with sensitivity. Depending on who you're speaking with, they could be a top priority for a buyer and impact your selling strategy significantly. Even if they're not currently in a position to pursue your product, they will appreciate your compassion.





## Do your research (and reap the rewards)

Preparation is paramount in sales, so it's no surprise that [76% of top-performing salespeople](#) say they “always” research their prospects before getting in touch.

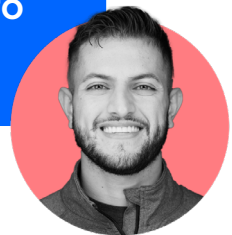
When trying to personalize your outreach for a particular person, browsing their social media profiles can yield a goldmine of inspiration. Prior to reaching out, browse your buyer's profiles across LinkedIn, Twitter, and

Instagram to build a picture of who they are, their interests, and how they like to communicate.

Do they come across as extroverted or introverted? Do they post about work-related topics, or is their social media more like a personal journal? All these details will help you tailor your conversations effectively.



**You can learn so much about a person on social media. I use these platforms as a way to do discovery before the actual discovery.**



## Stay top of mind for target accounts

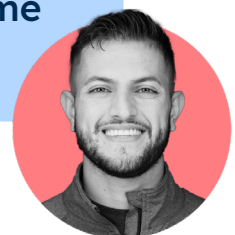
Anyone who has ever posted a “story” on Instagram will understand that unique feeling of morbid curiosity as you browse the list of accounts who’ve viewed and engaged with it. Over time, you make note of your most frequent viewers and potentially engage with their posts more, too.

The same psychology can be applied to LinkedIn activity, especially when interacting with your buyer’s posts.

Making a habit of reacting and commenting is an easy way to stay top-of-mind for your prospect. When you do eventually reach out for a moment of their time, they already have a positive association with your name.



**I regularly leave friendly, positive comments on a prospect’s posts. Referencing a point they made in a specific paragraph can help communicate that you’ve genuinely taken time to read the post.**



## Help customers to contextualize content

Not too long ago, the expectation was that a salesperson would essentially hold a customer's hand and walk them through their company's messaging, product offering, and promotional material in order to shape their understanding of the brand.

Nowadays, buyers often shape their own understanding by browsing your website and social media and speaking to your existing customers.

The job of a modern-day salesperson is to help the buyer contextualize the information they already have. You should be able to tie the value of your solution back to the buyer's specific goals and challenges.



## Build career-enriching habits, not goals

From career progression to learning new skills, it's great to have a goal to work towards. But sales is a fast-paced field, and unless you're setting time aside in your busy schedule to focus on that specific goal, then it's more likely to be put on the backburner.

For example, early on in his career, Seyar's ambition was to optimize his sales strategy, but he realized that he wasn't implementing habits that would

help make that happen. His solution? Setting up a bi-weekly reminder in his calendar to brainstorm ideas that would move deals forward, such as creative gifting.

Years on, Seyar says he no longer needs that reminder, because he made a concerted effort to make gifting a habit, and subsequently, a vital part of his sales strategy.



**If you don't actively think about gifting, then you won't do it. Even if you do use gifting, you're more likely to do it in an impersonal way because you're not considering how to make it special.**



## Think of rejection as a long-term opportunity

Rejection is never a pleasant experience for a salesperson – but it often puts the person saying “no” in a difficult position, too. They could be a huge fan of your product and appreciate the relationship the two of you have developed, but are unable to sign up due to reasons beyond their control.

In these situations, it’s important to make your buyer feel at ease and to not take it personally. Seyar believes that how you make the buyer feel is more

important than what you say, especially if you’ve been in contact with them for a significant period of time.

Instead of expressing disappointment or frustration, Seyar remains understanding and grateful for the buyer’s time and honesty. He’s found that when these conversations go well, he’s often rewarded down the line when those same people re-enter his sphere – either as a returning prospect, an advocate, or a connection to another opportunity.



**I pride myself in relationship building, and the best relationships are forged in moments of disappointment. When a buyer says they can’t work with me, for whatever reason, I don’t get upset. Instead, I thank them for their honesty and for getting on a call with me.**



# Send the right gift at the right time

Gifting works best when it feels natural and intuitive. That means there are no hard and fast rules for when to give gifts during the sales process, but our sales experts shared their thoughts...

## The first stage



Surprising a buyer at the initial outreach tends to stick in their mind the most and can help secure that first meeting.



Prospects get bombarded with outreach, every day. So when they receive something creative and bespoke, it really stands out. That initial impact can be a great way to start off a conversation.



## The pre-proposal stage



I think the best time to send a gift is when buyers are trying to decide on the final purchasing decision – so the pre-proposal or scoping stage. These are periods where you can start to multithread, get people from different departments involved, perhaps the economic buyer and key influencers, and get them excited.



## Whenever feels right

Seyar says that it's best to give gifts instinctively – whenever you feel compelled to say “thank you” for something. When someone at a target account becomes your champion,

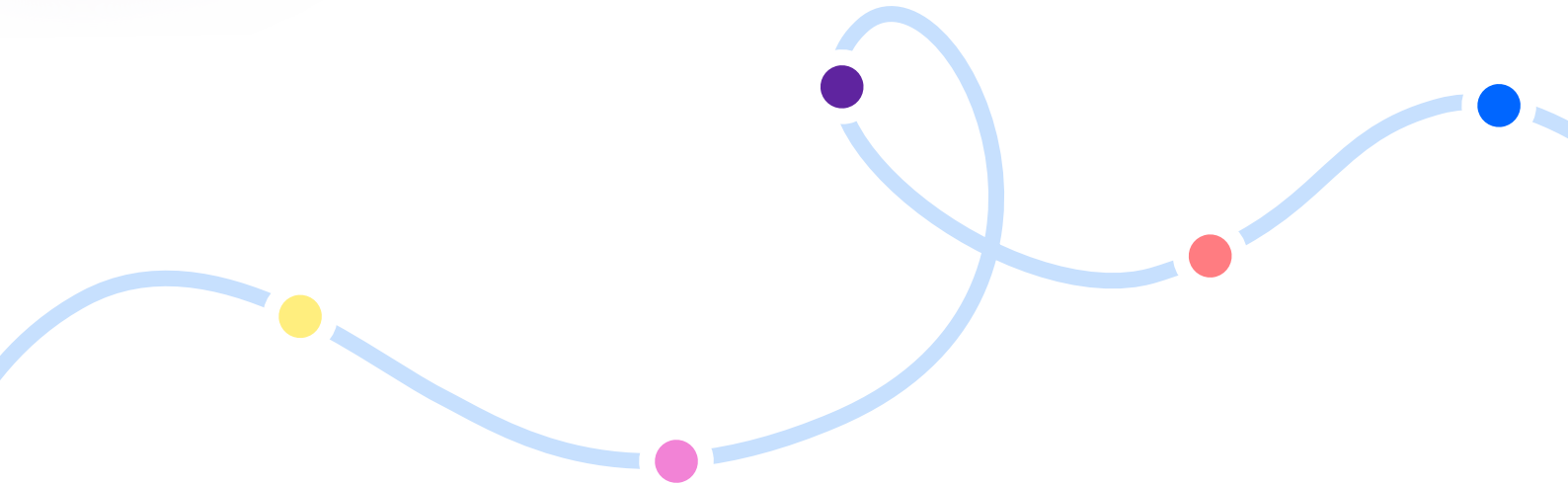
that's a “gifting” moment. When you meet someone in person and you can physically hand them a gift, that's a big opportunity to make an impression.



I recently caught up with someone who I had connected with a year ago. She said, “Me and my mom have been thinking about you every single day”. I asked why, and she told me how she was looking at the plant I handed to her when we met for dinner in Toronto the previous summer.

I assumed the fancy dinner was what she would remember, but it was actually the plant that cost about \$60. It's still living and growing with her and her mother. They love it. That's the power of gifting.





## Conclusion

Despite the many challenges facing salespeople in the current economic climate, there are a number of actions you can take to elevate their strategy – and an initial shift in mindset can yield big rewards.

The most successful salespeople often see themselves as a partner to a buyer. By focusing on the effort you put into conversations, rather than the desired

outcome, you can become more attuned to your buyer's needs, ask the right questions, and provide truly helpful solutions.

We hope you've found some pearls of wisdom in this guide. To learn more about how Reachdesk can help you create and deliver unforgettable outreach, [book a call with one of our gifting experts](#).





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