



THE PRINCIPLES OF PIPELINE VELOCITY

INTRODUCTION

Due to the rise of revenue operations (RevOps) and a deeper focus on account engagement, B2B teams are pivoting from top-of-funnel, “activity”-based metrics to prioritize **revenue-generated opportunities (47%) over MQLs (37%)**.

Successful revenue teams are collaboratively tracking prospect engagement and advancing buyers through key funnel stages by tightening the lens on conversion rates and velocity. As more progressive organizations examine how long it takes key accounts to get to the opportunity stage, they’re leveraging a crystal-clear focus on the buyer’s journey, effective communication and well-defined sales processes.

“We’re at that point where we need a clear vision and the ability to articulate how we’re going to lead to operational efficiencies, successful customer journeys and all those other operating metrics,” said Mark Clark, Director of Revenue Operations for **RFPIO**, a request for proposal service. “Everyone likes to say they drive pipeline, but the fact is only the people actually making calls to customers drive pipeline — and that needs to change.”

Through case studies and expert insights, this special report will analyze the principles of pipeline velocity and examine how practitioners can make their revenue generation activities more efficient. Specific topics of discussion will include:

- The factors behind the shift to prioritizing revenue-generated opportunities, with a focus on the role content plays;
- How sales and marketing teams are working collaboratively to enable buying teams to easily access the tools and information they need, when they need it;
- The touchpoints and triggers that are accelerating accounts from consideration to closed; and
- An inside look at the tools and processes companies are leveraging to address pipeline velocity.



PRINCIPLE NO. 1: STRUCTURE CADENCES AROUND ALL POTENTIAL BUYING JOURNEY OUTCOMES

Mason Cosby, Director of Demand Generation for [Sales Assembly](#), a peer community for sales/revenue leaders, said marketers typically want to get as many buyers as possible into their pipeline, which ends with their ICP becoming anybody who wants to buy. But that's not the most efficient process, as there are no parameters in place to qualify accounts.

"When we just stuff anybody into our pipeline, we lose most of them and we're unsure why," he explained in his [#B2BSMX](#) session. "If we don't examine our lost opportunities, we're going to continue to lose opportunities and waste sales' time."

As marketers examine those lost opportunities to see where they went wrong, Amy Hawthorne, a Principal Analyst at [Forrester](#) who presented at [#B2BSMX](#), cited research that found more B2B decision makers are investing in and will increase their budget for sales engagement and marketing automation platforms in 2023.

However, she explained that “these tools have overlapping capabilities, which requires even more coordination than we’ve ever had before,” leading to a need for structured processes and cadences.

1. Marketing → BDR/SDR → Sales

When marketing hands a lead off to the revenue development team, Hawthorne explained that it typically means they filled out a form or demonstrated another hand-raising activity. This is where marketing should pass the opportunity to the BDRs/SDRs, who should enroll the individual into a cadence to help validate the signals they’re receiving.

Additionally, Cosby explained that the revenue development team also needs to focus on driving more signals by engaging additional buying group members.

“We’ve all been in the sales process where we had one internal evangelist that got us all the way to the decision-maker, but after a meeting with the decision-maker, we find out they’ve got a new job and we ultimately lose the deal,” he continued. “You need to get more people involved earlier, as it’s a great indicator of long-term success in closing that deal.”

There are two scenarios for exiting this cadence: A connection was formed, or there was no response. If a connection is formed, then revenue development can schedule a meeting with sales to start closing the deal. However, if there’s no response...

2. Marketing → BDR/SDR → Marketing

Oftentimes a lead gets routed back to marketing if they didn’t engage with the revenue development team, which means marketers should, “enroll them in a marketing automation program so they can continue to track the account, engage the account and leverage all interaction and signal capabilities to determine when they’re demonstrating intent again,” Hawthorne explained.

3. Marketing → BDR/SDR → Sales → BDR/SDR

Arguably the most frustrating hand-off, Hawthorne explained that this cadence occurs when SDRs/BDRs set up a sales meeting and the prospect doesn’t show up or goes dark. At that point, Hawthorne suggested companies examine what went wrong by asking why that appointment was scheduled if the account wasn’t ready to engage. The best move is to re-instigate communication, and the most effective form would be “rapid phone follow-up,” she continued.



PRINCIPLE NO. 2: SALES & MARKETING ALIGNMENT IS KEY TO EFFICIENCY

It's clear that those hand-offs require a tight collaboration between sales and marketing — and it's an issue both departments are keen on solving, as research revealed that **43% of practitioners** want to improve sales and marketing alignment in the upcoming year.

And the efforts of alignment are well worth it: Companies that align sales and marketing efforts focused on pipeline outperformed their peers by 20%, according to **Aberdeen Strategy & Research**.

For perspective, Cosby shared an anecdote about a CRO, who oversaw sales, marketing and customer success. When this CRO was launching his company's ABM program, he didn't focus on the source, because he didn't want a competition between sales and marketing. Instead, he primarily focused on marketing-influenced revenue (which, coincidentally, **72% of companies** want to better articulate).

"When the CRO actually had marketing and sales come together, not in a competition but to recognize the value that marketing can have on pipeline acceleration, marketing influenced 90% of their revenue for the year," said Cosby. "That's impressive — and all it took was bringing marketing and sales together around a set of target accounts."



PRINCIPLE NO. 3: CREATE CONTENT THAT ENGAGES, EDUCATES & DEMONSTRATES VALUE

The primary driver of lead and demand generation falls squarely on content's shoulders, making it an integral part of the marketing pipeline. But with content clutter spread across the internet, practitioners are tasked with crafting eye-catching assets while ensuring the content helps create brand awareness, build credibility and trust, educate audiences, generate demand and nurture people through the buyer journey, explained Michael Ruby, President & Chief Product Officer of brand, marketing and content agency [Park & Battery](#), at #B2BMX.

"Unfortunately, through the miracles of modern marketing and marketing technology, we often devalue the content that we make," Ruby noted. Someone in a meeting will yell, 'We need to juice our SEO or hit these MQL numbers,' and when we try to check those boxes, we forget why we started to make this content in the first place." Ruby noted.

He continued that most organizations are too focused on themselves and their product, and therefore need to shift the focus toward creating customer value. To craft content that will accelerate prospects through the pipeline, Ruby recommended practitioners:

- Take the length of the buyer's journey into account and map content accordingly to ensure prospects aren't overwhelmed or underwhelmed with the amount of assets they receive;
- Create content that speaks to all members of the buying group;
- Optimize content according to specific industries to ensure prospects receive the right depth and breadth of information; and
- Ensure the content tells a shareable story that will resonate.

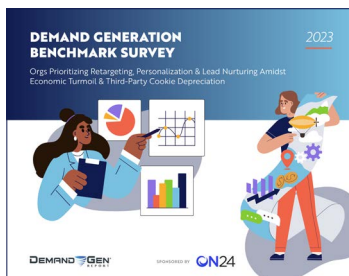


CONCLUSION

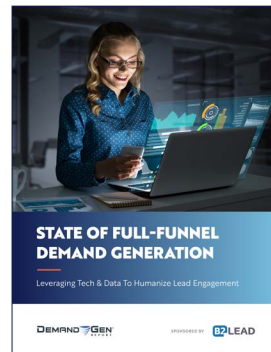
While there's no magic formula to accelerating pipeline, the principles are simple: Create an efficient system, align internal teams and ensure content speaks to prospects. Though the steps might seem simple, they all must work in unison to shore up existing processes and eliminate any productivity discrepancies.



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Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multichannel demand generation efforts.

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