

UNDERSTANDING THE B2B SALES PROCESS

MARKET

FIT

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Read this guide - it will be worth your time.

If you work in complex B2B sales and you don't understand that what you sell is a high-stake purchase for the buyer...
... then you have a problem!

Imagine for a moment you are selling software that is deeply integrated into a customer's business. This customer is spending a substantial amount of money to implement the right solution. Furthermore, they are also likely investing further in building support processes around that solution, which they are planning to utilise for many years to come. From a business point of view it is pretty high stakes.

Now, I want you to imagine you are that customer, and you made the wrong decision - how would that feel? If they don't achieve the desired outcome, they wasted a large sum of money, time and valuable resources.

That's why B2B customers must do their due diligence and choose a solution and supplier that is right for them. And that is why the saying 'no one ever got fired for buying IBM'.

If you understand this, then you've won half the battle.

B2B sales isn't a quick set-and-forget transaction; it's a complex process that requires you to include multiple stakeholders and jump through several hoops to make it happen.

That's where things go wrong when B2B companies engage marketing agencies or inexperienced or junior in-house marketers. Think about how frustrating it is if you are a B2B business owner and you get to work with marketing agencies or teams that have come from other industries or B2C businesses. Usually, they do not understand the complex nature of the sales or marketing process or solution selling of B2B companies. So, I want to help.

In this guide, I'm going to explain some of the methods we use with our clients to help them win in the B2B arena. We will start with the **PACT** model, which will help you generate momentum in the market and then transition into exploring the **ACT ON** framework, which will help you understand the buyer journey.

By the end of reading this guide, you'll understand some of the critical tools we use with clients to market, sell and win in the B2B space. Even better, you will understand how to implement them in your business effectively.

THE DIRTY LITTLE SECRET NO ONE WANTS TO TELL YOU

Rome wasn't built in a day. If anyone tells you it was, they are either lying, or they don't know what they are talking about.

“Just build a VSL or a targeted funnel, and prospects will flood your business.”

“We'll run some ads and you'll have customers come running in”

“You can put them on a webinar, and then your calendar will be flooded with appointments.”

Nope! I hate to break it to you, but there is no one 'quick fix' solution. No simple tactic that will work for any business in any niche when it comes to complex B2B sales.

In a complex B2B service market, it doesn't work like that. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is! It's about building trust and authority in the market, which then creates momentum. Remember? Rome wasn't built in a day.

There are no silver bullets when it comes to B2B marketing. Of course, digital marketing plays an important role, but it's only one of the many things that you need to do.

I recently caught up with a good friend of mine who runs a successful software business. He built momentum in his business, taking it from \$3 million to \$5 million in revenue in a year. He plans to double it in the next two years.

The reason he can do this with confidence is he had a sales and marketing plan that built upon each validated stage, building confidence and momentum over time. Each stage of the plan was structured in a way so he could monitor success, and he subsequently knew when it was time to move to the next stage. He could validate if the money he was investing was taking him closer to the growth he expected and planned for.

If you want to build your sales and overall presence in a complex B2B market, then you need to build market momentum. Silver bullets and quick fix digital marketing initiatives might have a place to play in the overall marketing mix, but building momentum is more important.

**You build momentum
gradually; it takes time.**

What drove my friend's success was a very structured plan outlining what he was trying to achieve each quarter. In the first quarter, he was defining the market fit and customer insights. He tested messages and positioning on real customers to make sure what he was selling was resonating with them.

He did this offline because he wanted to **see** the reaction, as he was pitching. He wanted to know first-hand if customers bought into what he was saying and if it was resonating with them.

Once he had understood the insight, **only then** did he move into direct marketing and sales. Through face-to-face interactions, he refined the offer, and by understanding what customers really wanted and how the proposition worked, he had validated the product and the messaging.

By then, he had some runs on the board, and he had confidence and momentum. He then started implementing complementing solutions like digital, advertising, conferences, etc.

If you want to be as successful as my friend, ask your team or agency the following questions:

What steps are they taking to build momentum in the market?

How do they measure those steps?

What are the validation points before they move to the next stage and start accelerating and pushing hard into the market to win more customers?



THE PACT MODEL

This section PACTs a bit of a punch.

Please, excuse the terrible pun. To win in the complex B2B space, you need to build momentum and to do that you need to build trust and authority within the market.

In B2B, we're not selling low-risk goods like cans of baked beans or cat food; we're selling high stakes and often, high-risk solutions. Remember the beginning of this guide?

Often complex B2B purchases are high-risk for the customer because if they get it wrong, it can cost them hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars.

On the other hand, if they get it right, it can accelerate and grow their business, taking it to the next level. Usually, B2B services and solutions are complex sales that involve a lot of different stakeholders, and we need to really understand the mindset and build on that.

Building trust with our prospects and our customers is crucial, and a quick fix like a digital funnel won't do that. When marketing teams and agencies don't get this results in CEO's, MDs, CMOs and other business leaders being frustrated with their business growth and ultimately their teams.



But don't get discouraged - there is a way to accelerate your growth and to build market momentum. One of the models use when I work with my clients is the **P A C T** model, which consists of four parts.

P - Proficiency: As a business, you need to have competence in your space, and you need to be able to effectively demonstrate that to your potential customers. This can be an accreditation from a global vendor, or case studies of clients you have served. How do you demonstrate to the marketing that you have proficiency in what you are selling?

A - Authority: What is your authority in the market? Why are you the number one or a top player in the market? What makes you the best choice? As you start consistently communicating and demonstrating your proficiency to the market, you build authority. You need to do it day in, day out.

C - Consistency: You must be consistently present in the market, using the same consistent messaging. **Consistency** is key.

T- Trust: **P, A** and **C** will create **Trust**.

That's when buyers will start coming to you. That's when you start to build market momentum and start to win in the market.



As the saying goes, slow and steady wins the race. Market momentum doesn't just happen to you; you need to build it. To do that, get your marketing team or agency to utilise the **P A C T** model.

Make sure your team focuses on **Proficiency**. You need to be experts in the market, and you need to communicate that to your potential customers. For **Authority**, you need to be a top player, and you should be able to prove why. You want to be the go-to supplier customers seek out when they have a problem. To do that, you must be **Consistent** in your messaging and effort to build **Trust**.

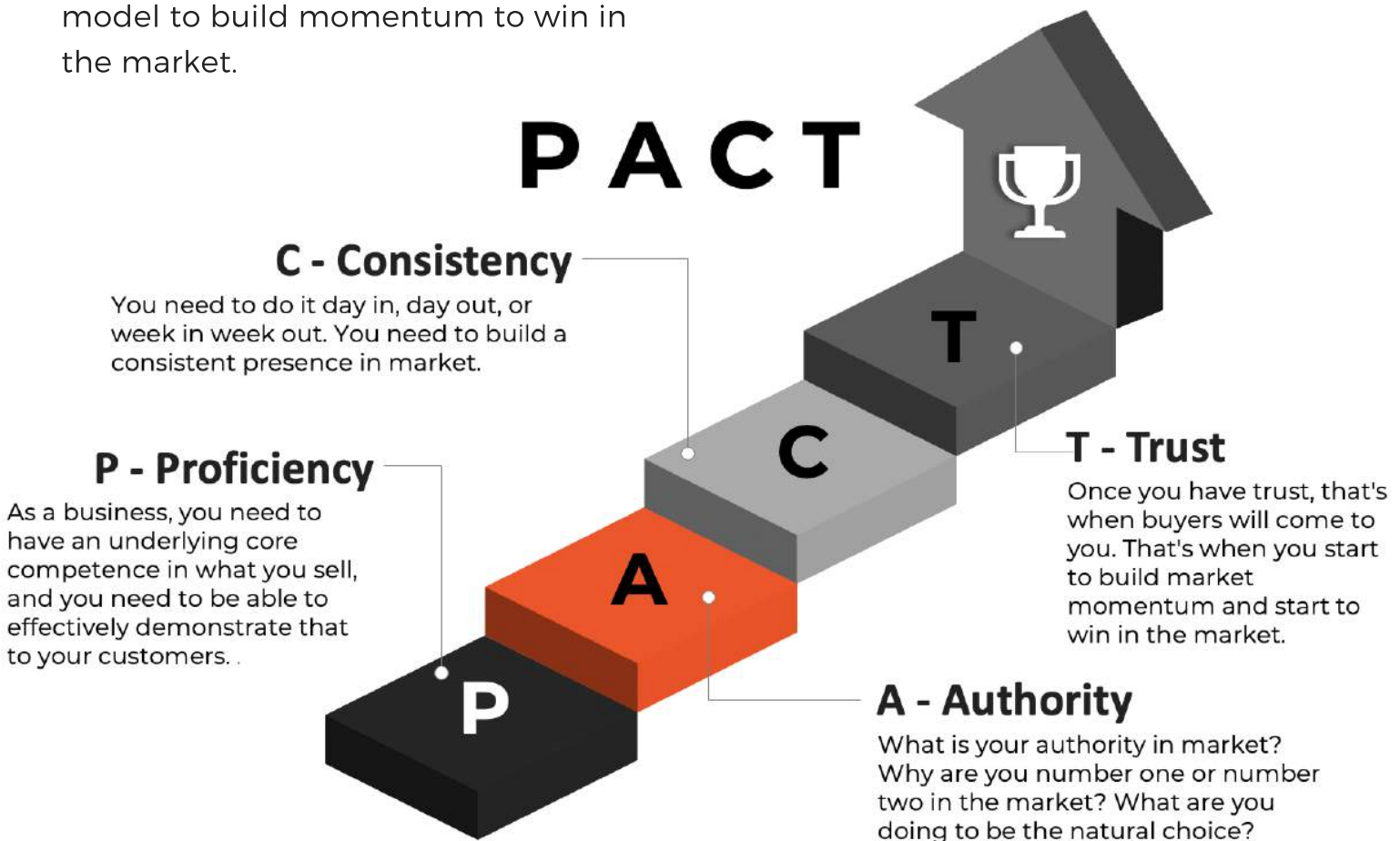
Leading companies use the **P A C T** model to build momentum to win in the market.

Once you've done that and achieved **P - Proficiency**
A - Authority
C - Consistency, you get
T - Trust.

Once you have trust, that's when buyers will come to you. That's when you start to build market momentum and start to win in the market.

Market momentum just doesn't happen to you; you need to build it.

And if you want to build market momentum, you need to focus your teams and get your marketing teams focused on the **PACT** model.



Make sure your team is focused on **Proficiency**. You need to be experts in the market, and you need to communicate that to your potential customers.

For **Authority**, you need to be number one or two. You need to be the go-to person or go to company customers seek out when they have a problem. To do that, you need to be absolutely **Consistent** and market similar messages, constantly reinforcing them.

Being consistent in delivering results to the market so you can really build the trust in your relationship with your customers. Finally, once you have **Trust**, you start to then have customers coming to you. You're the person or business they ring.

This is why it is so essential to have your team start focusing on the **PACT** model and on building that market momentum that you desperately need to win in market.

THE FLYWHEEL EFFECT

And how to use it to win the market.

Do you know what a flywheel is?

A flywheel is a big wheel that takes a lot of effort and momentum to get going.

But once it gets going, boy, it's going!

This is precisely how complex B2B sales work. You take small steps in the market; you push just a little, and the wheel doesn't move.

You start increasing your activity, and although you might not necessarily be seeing immediate results, you get the sense things are starting to move.

When you then push some more, you start to see subtle movement forward, and you're starting to gain momentum, but it's still a lot of effort.

Then, finally, it becomes easier, and it starts to leverage its own momentum.

That's when you get market momentum and that's how you do B2B marketing.

You've got to lay the foundations, have the **proficiency** to build that market momentum bit by bit to create the **authority** and ultimately keep pushing (stay **consistent**) to gain momentum and **trust**.

If you are looking for the quick fix, go ahead, waste your money.

The alternative is, you can work with a partner who understands B2B.

So ask your team, who are they working with, and how are they implementing the P A C T model?



ACT ON MODEL

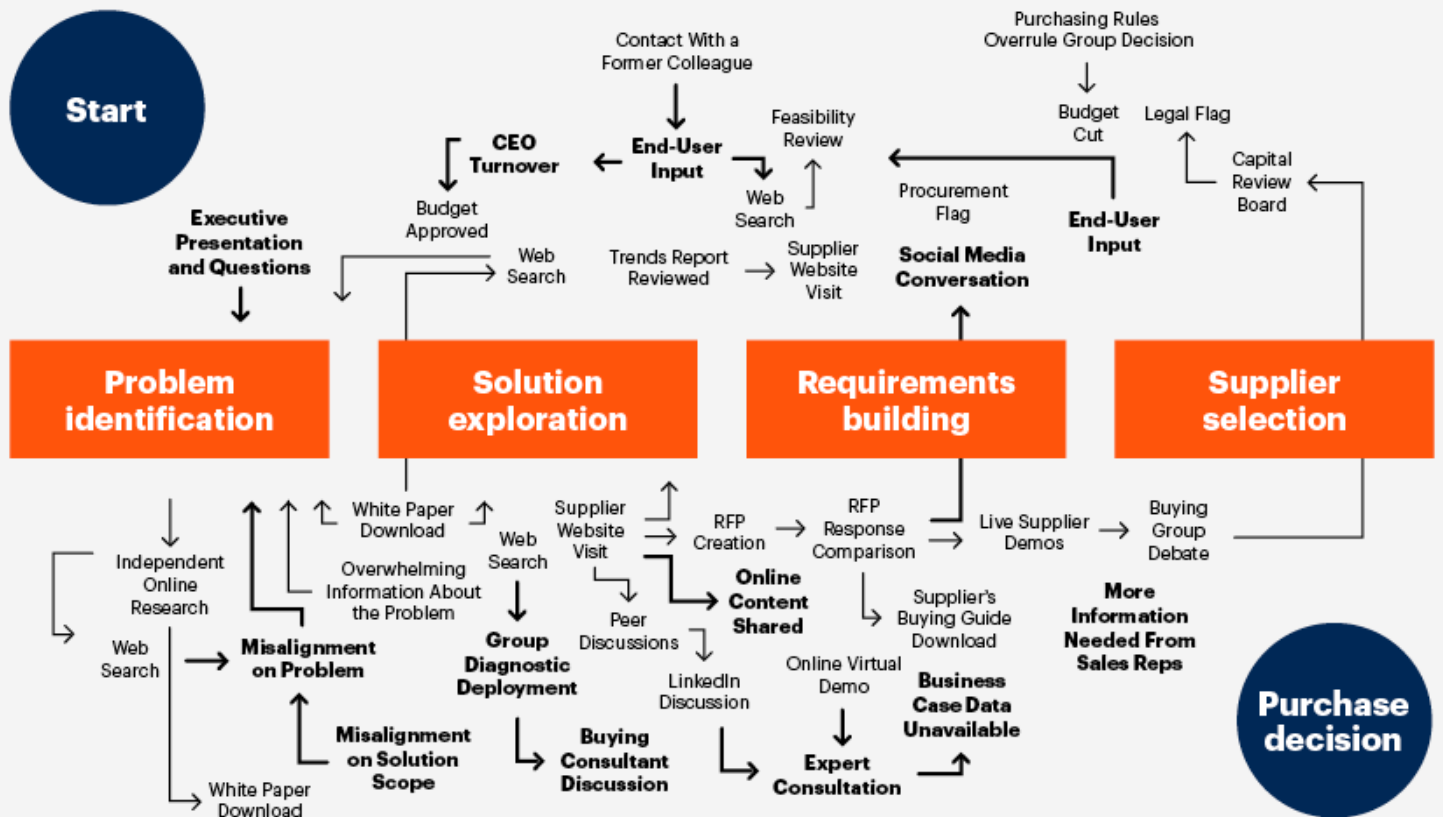
The sales and marketing conundrum.

Sales and marketing should work together. They should map out and understand the buyer's journey within complex B2B sales - TOGETHER!

Most marketers think that a 'one size fits all' strategy will work in every environment. A buyer's journey is broken into three stages: awareness, consideration, and decision stages.

Of course, when you spend some time in complex B2B sales, you know better.

If you look at this graphic, this is the Gartner view of a complex B2B sales process. As you can see, it's not a simple three-step process. Let's explore this a little further.



Source: Gartner © 2019 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Consider this:

Awareness - Who are you, and what do you do?

Consideration - What problems do you solve for your customers?

Tempt - How do you interest your customer in working with you? Why are you different? This is the first stage of the buyer's journey.

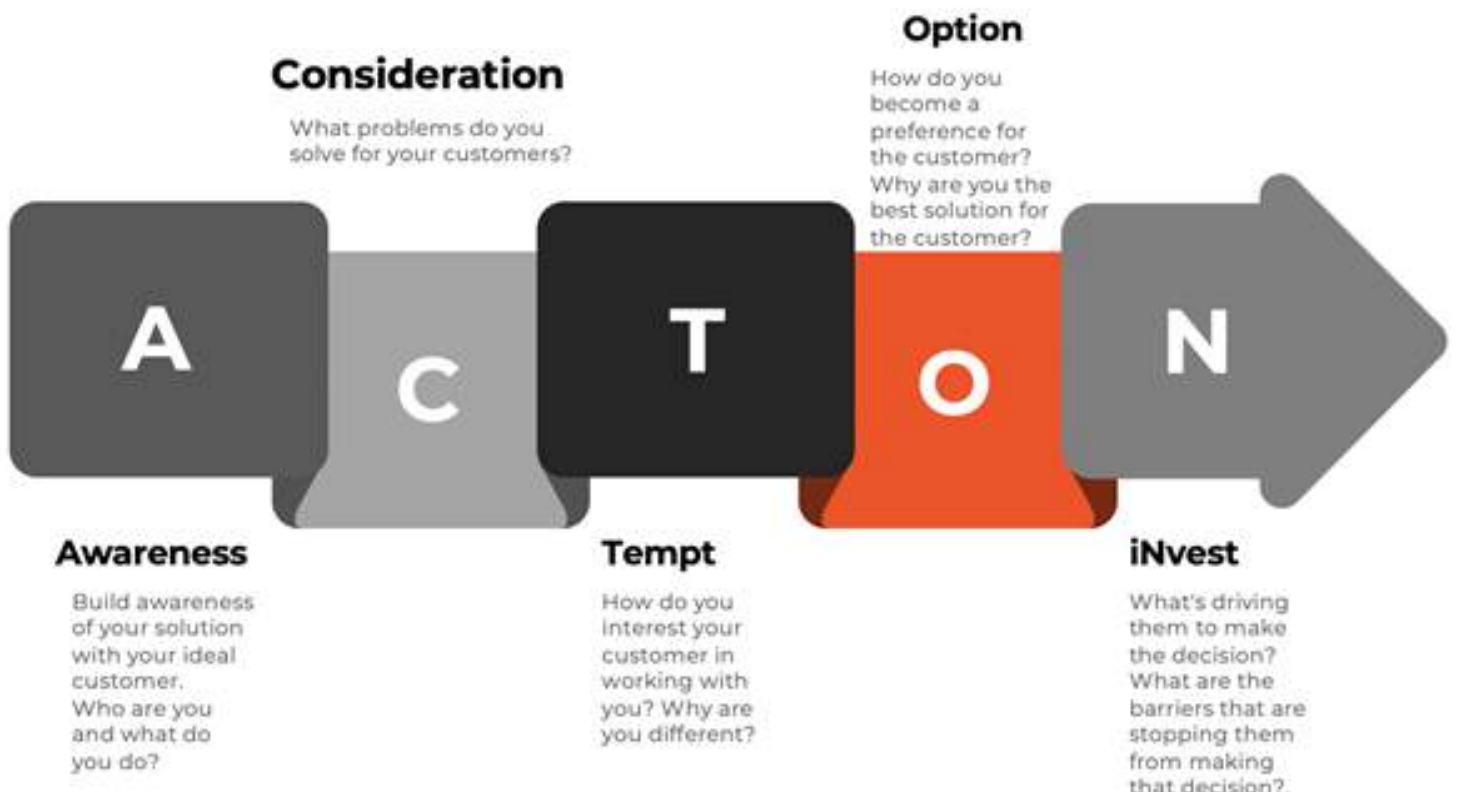
Awareness, Consideration, and Tempt. That's the marketing piece. The remaining part of the journey is where sales need to pitch in.

Option - How do you become a preference for the customer? Why are you the best solution for the customer?

INvest - How long is the decision-making process? Who are the key personas and stakeholders involved? What's driving them to make the decision? What are the barriers that are stopping them from making that decision? B2B customers tend to be in market for longer than B2C customers, they are more thorough during the research and evaluation phases.

You need to make sure you are talking to your potential customers before they even know they are in the market to buy.

So ask your team what framework are they using as a buyer's journey? Do they involve sales in unpacking the buyer's journey? Are they using the ACT ON model? Are they building momentum in the market for you?



HOW TO WIN OVER THE EGO IN THE ROOM

There's more than one persona in the B2B sales and buying process. You need to understand who the stakeholders and who the decision-makers are; then you can figure out their needs and how to meet them.

I often see examples of companies that get initial interest in a complex B2B environment, but the sales process ends up going nowhere. Why? Because they don't understand the various personas. Even worse, some teams don't understand the buying process from the customer's point of view.

They also don't understand who is involved in the process, so they leave out key stakeholders. Each sales process is different, which is why one of the first things you need to do is map out who your personas are and what drives them.

For example, you might have to deal with a user persona in your sales process. They might be an Operations Manager who has a problem and is looking for a solution. Then you might have a recommender, someone helping them articulate the problem, scope out the market and find the solution.

You may also have a gatekeeper or the ego (in a software case a solution architect or enterprise architect). This is someone you have to convince that your product or proposition will stay with the business for a long time. And then finally, you've got the approver who signs off the final request or the purchase order. You need to understand all those personas within the B2B environment. Understand what drives them, and which buttons to push. That's how you win sales.



Most digital agencies will focus on one persona, which won't get you anywhere. Here are the things I recommend for your team to focus on to understand your customers better and win more sales:

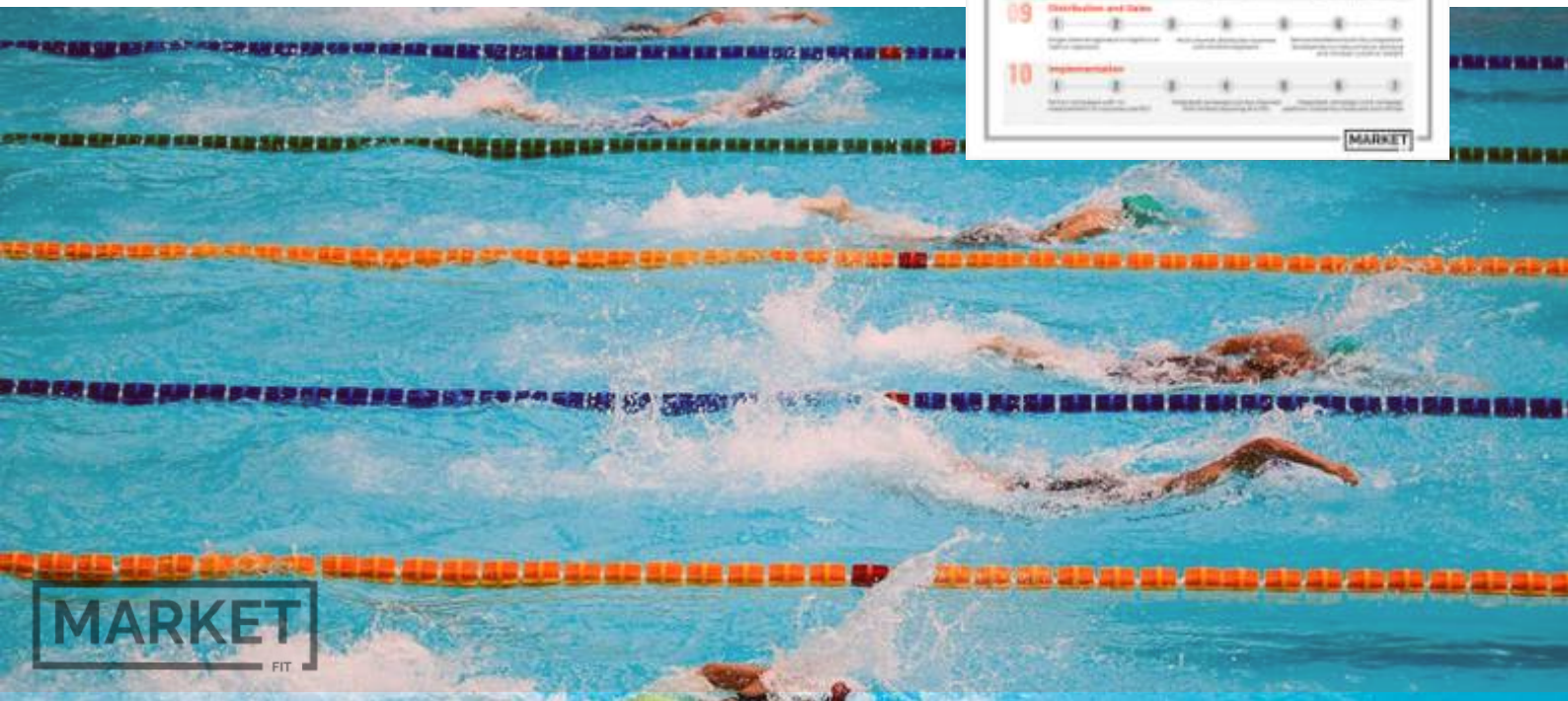
1. Map out the sales process?
2. How does it work?
3. Who's involved?
4. What are their needs and desires?
5. What are they trying to prove?
6. Who is actually involved in their purchasing process?

When you understand the above, then do a persona needs analysis for each of those people, and understand what buttons you need to push to close the sale.

As they say, knowledge is power. If you don't have a plan that fully identifies and understands all stakeholders, you're going to stumble in your sales process, and your competition will pick up the pieces, trust me.

You need to get your sales and marketing teams to work together. Get them to map out who the key stakeholders are, what their drivers are and how your solution meets and exceeds the competition. Get the two teams to do that collaboratively.

If you want to understand more about what your teams should be focusing on, **you can download my free marketing audit**. It will give you an outside view on your marketing and identify where you need to focus your efforts and to fix your marketing so you can grow your business.



STOP STOPPING

It's killing your business.

I see a lot of clients make one big mistake, that kills their momentum. It's usually not their fault, because what typically happens is one of two things:

One, they win some customers and get so busy with the delivery that they divert resources and budget to that.

Two, they try a tactic that doesn't yield immediate results, and so they throw it out, look for another strategy. Both will fall into a start/stop nature with their marketing and sales efforts. Both will end up killing their momentum and ultimately, their marketing success.

In a complex B2B sales environment, you need to be consistent in the market. You need to build trust and authority over time. There are no silver bullets; there is only trust and authority. Both the PACT and ACT ON models are all about consistency in the market.

With B2B sales, it is what you do in marketing today that will define where you are in the next six to 12 months.



So whilst it may be easy to stop, when you do not see immediate results, trust me, it will come back to bite when your pipeline dries up in a few months. Remember the flywheel?

Do not get discouraged if you don't see immediate results. If you have tested your messaging and offer face to face with customers you will know if you have the right insight, you now just need time. Keep at it!

Once you have momentum, that's when you really start to win. When your flywheel starts to slow down because you stop momentarily, it becomes more of an effort to get it up to speed again.

I need you to understand that what you are doing today will generate momentum and it will fill your pipeline in the next six to twelve months.

DO NOT STOP.



GREAT, SO WHAT'S NEXT?

Remember that building trust and authority in the B2B sales process takes time. It takes consistent messaging to build relationships and momentum and to win in the market.

Before you throw money at marketing and sales initiatives, ask yourself, how well do you know your buyer personas and the journey they take to complete a sale.

You will need your marketing and sales teams to work together to really understand your customer's journey – then you will be able to apply the **PACT** and **ACT ON** models effectively.

I get it; although the models are logical, the actual leg-work can be daunting.

Hiring an expert to guide you through the process to start to build momentum will pay off in the future.



THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR BUSINESS

USE AN EXPERT!

Understanding your B2B buyer's journey needs to be a collaboration of your sales and marketing teams. It takes time and consistency to start to build momentum.

This is how to grow your B2B business - slow and steady wins the race. One approach that can help is Inbound Marketing, but it's not a quick-fix. And it's not a just-add-water overnight solution. It's a methodology that pulls together a wide range of activities, skills and abilities in order to implement an overall long-term strategy.

It takes work, and it can be hard to find the time when you're working on the inside, dealing with distractions, disasters, and keeping the business running. That's where I come in - hiring an expert to get you started might be the best choice you make for your success. I'm happy to walk you and your teams through the above models and how inbound marketing might be one of the things in your marketing mix.

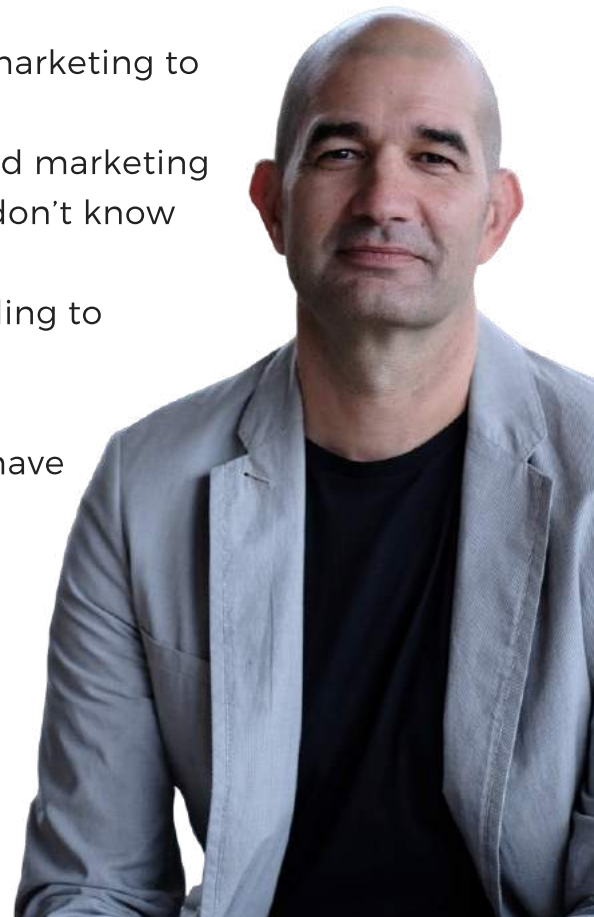
Who can benefit from my help?

- Business owners who want to switch to inbound marketing to grow their businesses
- Owners who want better results from their inbound marketing
- General Managers who are ready to scale up, but don't know how to take the next step
- Business owners who have the means, and are willing to commit to working with me

I will position your business for growth and help you have the business you deserve.

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45 MINUTE STRATEGY SESSION**

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THE PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING

JUST ASK THESE GUYS:

"Leverage and Revenue Growth"

Kursten's coaching helped me focus on where I could achieve the greatest leverage for my business. The result has been my monthly revenue has grown by 63% in twelve months and is on track to grow by another 50% in the next twelve. That's a game changer. Kursten challenged me from the very start of my journey, providing mentoring where it was welcome, and coaching where it was required. His simple strategies and techniques for dealing with problems helped me cut through the noise and fast-track business growth.

What I particularly enjoy about working with Kursten is his level of commitment to acquiring a deep level of understanding of my business, which means he's able to tailor his coaching and support to each specific problem I face. And his commitment and energy inspires me to match it. Best of all, he's always first to pick up the phone to celebrate wins.

JARROD BENNETT, Director, Luminate Ltd

"Understanding, Attracting, Securing..."

Kursten has played a vital role in not only helping us understand how to attract the right customers, but showing us how to secure long-term contracts that are meaningful for both parties.

CRAIG STEEL, Principle, Steel Performance Solutions

"Revenue and Customer Growth"

Digital Island have ambitious plans to accelerate revenue and customer growth. We have recently been investigating how to grow multiple new sales channels and concentrate in the areas that will provide the biggest return.

Kursten and his team helped us to evolve our strategic thinking and identified gaps in our approach. By better understanding our business priorities we have implemented a number of initiatives that are propelling our growth. If you are looking for a partner to help you boost your business potential I would recommend Kursten and Market Fit.

LEON SHEEHAN, GM, Digital Island

A person in athletic wear is captured in a starting crouch on a road. The focus is on their legs and a smartwatch on their left wrist. The background shows a hazy, mountainous landscape. An orange call-to-action box is centered over the image.

**Click to Book a Free
45 Minute Strategy Session**

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