



Truly

The Fix List for B2B Startup Sales Bottlenecks

Thank you for downloading this guide!

Neglecting your B2B startup sales process is the fastest way to ruin your business growth. In this guide we boil down the most common startup sales related problems into “the four horsemen of startup sales” – the most critical issues we’ve witnessed while working with over 200 startups.

We also share some practical solutions so you can prevent or start fixing them. Enjoy!

You don't have a sales process

What is this?

Your sales reps don't have one process to follow, they are all doing sales their own way. You haven't outlined the milestones that happen during the sales process.

Why is this a problem?

Milestones allow you to follow sales progress and improve sales performance. For example, you could agree that after contacting the lead, you always try to book a meeting for a demo.

From this point, you can use "demo booking" as a milestone and follow how many of them you did this month. You can also follow what % of contacted leads book a demo with you. If it's very low, you know this is a bottleneck and you need to do something to improve it.

How to spot this?

Spotting this is quite easy. Ask yourself and your sales reps if

there's a clear process everyone's following? If you are unsure - the answer is probably 'no'.

Possible reasons

Startup life can be chaotic and there's a lot to figure out in the beginning. The focus is on "getting out there and starting selling", so people tend to forget about making the sales process systematic.

Possible solutions

Sit down with your sales team and discuss what they have been doing and what has worked so far. Based on this intel, map out the steps that make sense, and are likely to happen with most leads. Agree with your sales team on the process to follow.

If you have a CRM, create a pipeline using the same steps and so sales reps can move deals to the right stage as they progress.

No pipeline visibility

What is this?

You have a sales process but you don't know if it's any good because you're not following what's happening.

Why is this a problem?

If you don't have visibility of what's happening in your pipeline, you can't find problems or fix them. Ultimately you're unable to make your pipeline more efficient.

How to spot this?

Some tell-tale signs include:

- Your CRM pipeline stages don't reflect the real life steps (or you're not sure if they do)
- You don't know your win rate, or you're not sure if the number is correct. You don't know if Sales is marking deals as won/lost.
- You don't know the conversion rates between each pipeline stage, or you're not sure if the number is correct.

Possible reasons

Your CRM pipeline hasn't been set up properly and you don't have reports set up to follow the conversion rates, reasons for lost sales and the average sales cycle.

Potentially, your sales team is not using the CRM religiously enough so you're unable to follow what they're doing.

Possible solutions

Make sure that your pipeline is set up accurately, so the stages make sense to your sales team – otherwise they will not use it and you'll end up with missing data.

Also, make sure your sales team keeps their deals updated. If needed, make reports to see how many inactive deals exist in the CRM.

You can also set up weekly meetings where you go through the ongoing cases – if someone is not updating their deals, it will become evident there.

Your sales pipeline is inefficient

What is this?

You put in a lot of work, but you get little results – you're spending time and resources on leads but the revenue is not coming in.

How to spot this?

If you're using a CRM where your sales team is updating their sales progress, you can calculate your win rate. **Your win rate = number of won deals / (number of won deals + number of lost deals).**

For B2B companies the average win rates hover around 45%, while top performers can achieve up to 60% or 70% win rates. If yours is way below 45%, e.g. 15-20% – your sales pipeline is probably not very efficient yet.

Embedding growth hacking into a startup organisation

All business growth challenges cannot be solved by working in one silo. Complete and effective growth work requires all departments to participate in data collection and testing, including sales. This is where growth hacking can really make an impact.

Learn more about the growth hacking process by downloading [The Startup Guide to Growth Hacking](#).



Possible reasons

The reasons fall under two main categories:

A) Bad lead quality

- It could be that sales and marketing are not talking to each other, and marketing doesn't know they're delivering bad leads.
- You haven't figured out your ideal customer profile (ICP) yet so you're targeting the wrong people.
- You don't have a criteria whom to put in the pipeline, so you're contacting people who are way too early in the buyer's journey or utilizing lists of people on a LinkedIn group.

B) Actions or lack of actions by Sales

- Inability to explain the product & its benefits well enough for the lead.
- No follow-up: after a demo or offer, the sales reps don't follow up with the lead, so the lead forgets about you and goes cold.
- Complicated offer or a bad offer format: the customer is unable to comprehend what are they're getting and for how much.

- KPI's are not set or not set right: your sales team doesn't have a goal to move towards, or the goal is not inspiring (too small or unrealistically big).

Possible solutions

If you have a CRM where you have a good pipeline set up and Sales have been marking their progress, you can analyze pipeline conversions (the % of leads who move from one stage to the next). If you discover that many people drop off after a certain stage, you've found a problem spot.

Most CRM's provide a field called 'lost reasons' where Sales can enter the reason for losing a deal. This is super valuable data!

Check the biggest reasons, those are the problems you need to dig into. For example, if you lose most deals because of being ghosted, you can check if your sales team is following up on deals, or if your marketing is converting leads who are actually interested in buying.

If you don't have a CRM, sit down with your sales team. Show them the overall win rate and uncover the reasons why it's so low.

Your sales pipeline is empty

Why is this a problem?

This one is quite self explanatory - there's just not a lot going on in terms of sales. You don't have enough leads to work on and turn into customers. Also, more ongoing opportunities mean more data - you can calculate statistics and see where are the pain points in your sales funnel.

How to spot this?

Check the number of ongoing deals in your CRM and ask your sales team if they have enough to work with?

Possible reasons

When it comes to early-stage startups, there's a good chance no-one knows about you yet. If you don't do conscious inbound lead generation, chances are the leads are not pouring in from your website. You're likely not spending enough time looking for leads for direct outreach, or you're looking in the wrong places.

Possible solutions

Start with the basics - clarify what kind of companies are ideal customers. Then, consider where you can find them and what message you want to convey.

From this, you can get started with setting up a systematic inbound lead generation machine that continuously feeds your sales reps with leads. If you can't fill up your pipeline with just inbound, focus on outbound sales as well. Figure out where your customers are looking for your service/product, and be sure you're there, actively engaging with them.

Truly

Growth hacking for Startups

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“

Truly’s growth team helped us build sales more efficiently. Their data-driven process was just the thing we needed.”

Sanni Juoperi / Head of Growth / Howspace

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