



REVENUE DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

Achieve Your B2B Sales Goals

Updated 5/2020

Throughout my career I have been responsible for creating the direction and ultimate success of my businesses. As a Consultant, I now have the added responsibility of doing that for others. My Revenue Development Action Plan has been, and continues to be, the tool I rely on most heavily to grow profitable revenue and ultimately achieve success, even in times of crisis.

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Introduction

Throughout my career I have been responsible for creating the direction and ultimate success of my businesses. As a Consultant I now have the added responsibility of doing that for others. My Revenue Development Action Plan has been, and continues to be, the tool I rely on most heavily to grow profitable revenue and ultimately achieve success.

In times of crisis, be it a recession or pandemic, business goes on and it's even more important to have a revenue growth plan in place. This edition is up to date with information to see your organization through a crisis and continue on your path to growing profitable revenue.

Let's be clear – not all revenue is created equal. This tool is one that will help you create SMART Revenue, not dumb revenue.

SMART Revenue is:

- S** - Sustainable
- M** - Measurable
- A** - Achievable
- R** - Repeatable
- T** - on Target, i.e. Profitable

Strategic, profitable revenue development is a function of assessing your company's strengths and weaknesses; filling in the necessary gaps; and optimizing the alignment between core strengths, internal structures, people, products & services, revenue & marketing strategy; followed by ongoing measurement and plan adjustments.

The process of creating a Revenue Development Action Plan entails:

- Documenting essential business positions, philosophies, and goals
- Assessing a company's strengths and weaknesses by answering foundational questions
- Identifying the gaps, based on the answers, and thus determining future directions
- Creating and optimizing the plan by creating alignment between core strengths, internal structures, people, products & services and revenue strategy
- Documenting and communicating the plan to your team
- Measuring and reporting on plan success
- Ongoing, periodic plan updates and adjustments

If approached thoughtfully, intentionally, and authentically, the plan will maintain its relevance and be the instrument by which profitable revenues will grow.

Foundational Questions (FQ)

As the saying goes, “If you don’t care where you’re going, any road will get you there.” However, if you have a particular destination in mind, a map can be a useful tool.

By answering these **Foundational Questions (FQ)** you will be documenting and creating the elements required for your map.

In the discovery portion of my client engagements I answer each of these questions. Be sure to answer these questions for your company as completely and accurately as possible. This information is required to create your Revenue Development Action Plan.

Your Answers (to Foundational Questions – FQ)

FQ 1. What does success look like for your organization?

*Paint a mental picture of your ideal business state in 5-10 years.
Describe this vision as fully and with as much detail as possible.*

FQ 2. What is your Company Purpose?

*Why are you here? Why do you what you do?
(If it takes you more than 3 lines to write out, it's too long.)*

FQ 3. What is your Company Mission?

*Who do you provide your Purpose for? How do you do it? Where?
(If it takes you more than 3 lines to write out, it's too long.)*

FQ 4. What is your Company Vision?

What does your organization aspire to become in the next 10 years?

FQ 5. What are your Company Goals?

What are the annual milestones you must achieve to create your vision of success?

If a crisis has arisen since you originally wrote your goals, now is the time to revisit them.

FQ 6. What are your Company Values?

What are the guiding principles that are key to our success? If circumstances change and we are penalized for holding this value, would we still keep it? (Those with a "Yes" are your values.)

FQ 7. Describe what your company is in the business of:

Delivering... making... servicing... providing...

FQ 8. What is your company's Revenue Strategy?

For Revenue Development Action Plan purposes, this is a summary statement of the ways your company generates revenue.

FQ 9. What is your company's Unique Sales Proposition (USP)?

If everyone says it, it is not unique. Keep digging by asking & answering: Why is that important? To uncover your true differentiators.

FQ 10. Describe your company's Brand.

You have one whether you can describe it or not. Who are you? What do you stand for? How is it communicated? Do all employees know what it is? Do they describe it in the same way?

FQ 11. Who are your company's ideal clients?

Who are they, where are they, what motivates them to buy, when do they buy, why do they buy, how do they buy? For help use the [Resultist Ideal Client Persona Worksheet](#).

FQ 12. What is your company's Sales Process?

Is it defined? Documented? Communicated? Does everyone who is client facing speak the same language? Understand [the sales funnel](#)? To thrive in a time of crisis, updating your sales processes to match how, when, and why your customers buy from you today is essential. See FQ 16 for more.

FQ 13. List your company's available sales tools:

At a minimum this list should include: collateral materials, web site, e-tools (online meeting platform, etc.), [CRM tool](#), database, lead lists, [Resultist Ideal Client Persona Worksheet](#), [Sales Qualification Matrix](#), [Sales Funnel](#), [Pre-call Planning methodology](#), [sales methodology](#), pricing strategy, a focused [sales compensation](#) program, and sales management strategy.

FQ 14. What is your company's Marketing Strategy?

How do you create Brand awareness? Generate leads? Create demand?

FQ 15. Describe your company's digital footprint.

List all internal online communications and marketing platforms, and all external communications, engagement, social, informational tools and platforms. Where are your opinions, products, and services seen and talked about? How do you build online engagement?

FQ 16. How and when do your customers buy from you?

In a time of crisis, it's likely that their journey, from discovering a need to purchasing the solution, has changed. What does that journey look like now?

FQ 17. How has your company's reputation been impacted by the crisis?

Have you received accolades? Or taken direct hits?

FQ 18. What actions are you taking to leverage the accolades? To mitigate the hits?

How are you responding? Do you have any credible third parties sharing your successes or softening the blow of a negative hit?

FQ 19. Describe your company's process for assuring client satisfaction and success?

Be specific about the tools and methodology in use. How do you know if it's effective?

FQ 20. List your company's Industry Description & Size:

Reference your NAICS code and other relevant statistics

FQ 21. How many people does your company employ, listed by Location and Department/Type?

Details should include exempt, hourly, part-time, full time, etc.

FQ 22. What is your company's Training Strategy?

What ongoing training do you offer? Is it required? Who attends? How often?

FQ 23. What Geographic Regions does your company serve?

List all regions. Helpful Hints: include regions as product & service subcategories in accounting; and include categorization in CRM Company records.

FQ 24. List your company's Annual Revenue, SG&A, COGS, Profitability as compared to Industry Benchmarks:

Various resources are available for this information – your CPA, industry association or others online.

FQ 25. What Products (Lines of Business) does your company offer?

List all categories. Helpful hint: match accounting income and expense categories to these categories.

FQ 26. What Services (Lines of Business) does your company offer?

List all categories. Helpful hint: match accounting income and expense categories to these categories.

FQ 27. Which products and services are no longer feasible for you to continue to offer post-crisis?

Base this list on current supply chain and labor availability, as well as marketplace need. These products and services should be deprioritized or eliminated from your product & service offerings.

FQ 28. What Vertical Market Segments does your company serve?

List all industries. Helpful Hint: include industry categorization in CRM Company contacts.

FQ 29. Are there Vertical Market Segments that are no longer viable on your list?

Some industries and business segments are severely impacted in a crisis. Those verticals should be removed from your target lists.

FQ 30. What are your company's Distribution Methods, by segment?

What are your sales channels? Inside or outside sales, independent reps, etc.

FQ 31. Are there Distribution Methods you employ that are no longer viable?

Some sales channels may not be effective in a crisis or post-crisis environment, e.g. trade shows or conferences. These channels should be deprioritized or removed from your planned methodologies.

FQ 32. List your Clients, ranked by revenue, profitability, (\$ & %); and sub-sorted by vertical market segment.

This may require a bit of customized accounting data mining. It's worth the effort. For help use the [Resultist Best Client Identifier worksheet](#).

FQ 33. List your Products and/or Services, ranked by profitability (\$ & % of revenue); and sub-sorted by vertical market segment.

This may require a bit of customized accounting data mining. Again, it's worth the effort.

FQ 34. Who is your Competition, listed by size?

Include their USPs. (You should be able to find them on their websites.)

FQ 35. What are the “game changers” you know of from an internal perspective?

It is impossible to account for unknowns. But, what if your top salesperson leaves, etc.? What if?

FQ 36. What are the “game changers” you know of from an external perspective?

It is impossible to account for unknowns. But what if interest rates go up, etc.? What if?

FQ 37. What are your company’s Core Strengths?

What you do best.

Assessment Questions

Congratulations! If you have answered all of the **Foundational Questions** you are among the few who adequately prepare for creating a Revenue Development Action Plan that is effective!

If you have skipped to this section without answering all the questions your assessment will be inaccurate, leading to a Revenue Development Action Plan that won't help you much. Each of the answers to the Foundational Questions are like puzzle pieces. Go back now and finish answering the questions.

Once you are armed with the answers, it is time to interpret them and assess the current state of the business to determine the best strategies to implement and achieve your goals. A bit of advice here – do not rush through this section. Take your time. Answer the **Assessment Questions (AQ)** thoughtfully. Write a set of draft answers, let them sit (at least overnight), then revisit them.

The key to the best Revenue Development Action Plan is this simple statement:

Stop doing what is not working and start doing more of what is working.

But first, (you knew it couldn't be that easy, didn't you?) you must prove, not just “intuitively know”, what is working and what is not.

The assessment questions (AQ) will help you:

- Identify the gaps in your plans, process, and tools - so you can fill them
- Identify your best clients – so you can get more like them
- Identify new potential markets – so your business can grow

Along the way you'll also get insights into:

- Your least profitable clients – so you can stop doing business with them
- Your least profitable products and services – so you can make an informed decision about continuing them
- Internal organizational misalignments to overcome – to increase profitable revenue growth, reduce employee turnover, and increase employee engagement

Let's dive in.

Assessment Questions (AQ)

AQ 1. In general, how do you feel about the previous answers?

You may feel great (10), OK (5), or woefully unprepared (1). Don't over think this – your first response is usually the right one.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

AQ 2. Why do you rate your answers at this level?

AQ 3. Is there anything obvious that could be done to improve your answer rating level?

AQ 4. What is the biggest challenge your business faces?

AQ 5. What is the biggest success your business has experienced in the last 12 to 18 months?

AQ 6. Is there an area about which you don't feel like your business has enough information?

This is a gap.

AQ 7. Is there an area about which you don't feel like your business has good processes?

This is a gap.

AQ 8. Is there an area about which you don't feel like your business has the right tools?

This is a gap.

AQ 9. When you think of the internal groups in your company are there any that are consistently at odds with each other?

This is a misalignment.

AQ 10. Do your sales and marketing methods align with how your customers want to buy today?

- Refer to your answers to FQ 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16.
- List any misalignments.

AQ 11. Have you projected you cash flow runway to prioritize any needed resource investments to capture new revenue or maintain your existing customer base?

- A [Cash Flow Calculator](#) is available from CFO Selections.

AQ 12. When you think of the internal groups in your company are there any that consistently outperform the others?

This is both a strength and a gap.

AQ 13. Is there an area about which you think your business has best in class processes?

This is a strength.

AQ 14. Is there an area about which you think your business has best in class tools?

This is a strength.

AQ 15. When you think of the internal groups in your company are there any that excel at collaboration and consistently produce great solutions and results?

This is a strength.

Restate your company's Revenue Strategy here. (See FQ 6.)

AQ 16. Look inside your Revenue Strategy and your Foundational Question Answers to answer these questions:

- Do your company's core strengths, internal structures and people align with your products & services, vertical market segments and sales & marketing strategy?
- Are they fully supportive of one another? Or are there areas of conflict?
- How well are you prepared to address potential "game changers" (see FQ 35 and 36)?

AQ 17. List your Top 5 Clients with the following data: Revenue, Profitability, Primary LOB Purchased, and Vertical Market Segment

AQ 18. List your Top 5 Products and/or Services with the following data: Revenue, Profitability, and Vertical Market Segment

AQ 19. Do your Top 5 Clients match up with your Top 5 Products & Services when comparing revenue?

AQ 20. Do your Top 5 Clients match up with your Top 5 Products & Services when comparing profitability?

AQ 21. Do your Top 5 Clients match up with your Top 5 Products & Services when comparing vertical market segment?

AQ 22. Do your Top 5 Clients include any of your products or services that are no longer feasible? Are any of them in verticals or industry segments that are no longer viable?

- Be sure to remove these from your lists.

The answers to the Assessment Questions (AQ) contain the keys to creating a successful Revenue Development Action Plan that's customized for your business.

Interpreting the Assessment

Answers to AQ-1 through AQ-5 are general in nature to give you context, enable you to develop a sense of prioritization, potentially urgency, and to get the obvious out of the way. Continuing to ask, "Why?" and "Why is this important?" is a requirement for an effective Revenue Development Action Plan.

From Assessment Answers to AQ 6 through AQ 11, you now know the gaps and misalignments in your business's current state that you need to fill, the hurdles you need to overcome.

For instance, if you feel that your company doesn't have enough infrastructure around sales process or tools that's an area to fix by developing strategies in your Revenue Development Action Plan to fill that gap.

In Assessment Answer to AQ-9 you are hoping to find that "everyone is in the same boat, rowing in the same direction, at the same time". If they aren't, strategies to fix the misaligned areas you've identified should be included in your Revenue Development Action Plan.

As an example:

If your sales and marketing teams each accuse the other of not providing or mishandling leads, you have a misalignment. Your Revenue Development Action Plan needs to include a strategy to address this.

Answers to AQ 12 – AQ 15 are vital. These are areas of strength that you should build on, or at least do more of because these are things that are working.

Assessment answers AQ 16 – AQ 22 will tell you which clients, vertical markets, and products or services are your best ones. Your Revenue Development Action

Plan should increase your business's focus on getting more clients like your best ones, specific the verticals to focus on, and increasing sales of your most profitable products and services.

When combined with your answers to Foundational Questions FQ 11, 14-16, 23 these answers will also help inform you of the best options for additional geographic penetration and new vertical markets to pursue.

Optimization of Your Revenue Development Action Plan

The final format of your Revenue Development Action Plan is less important than the fact that you have one. You do need to document it, but it doesn't have to perfect.

Focus on your strengths. Overcome the gaps identified in your answers. Grow revenue strategically with the right people, products/services.

Optimization

List any identified gaps, or areas you need to change or improve to achieve alignment between what is working in the organization and what's not.

Create strategies and tactics around those areas you want to improve.

Utilize your executive team or advisory board to brainstorm possible strategies. Get feedback from your executive team to validate and select the best strategies

to implement, develop the tactics & implementation teams, and create realistic timelines.

Once you have gained consensus communicate the plan to your entire team. Transparency is vital if you are to achieve the results you want.

Implement the plan.

Be sure to give regular updates to your entire team. The more you communicate the plan and progress toward your stated goals, the more committed they will be to make the plan successful.

Measurement & Adjustments

Your Revenue Development Action Plan is your road map to growing profitable revenue, but you can only ensure its success by monitoring progress, measuring results, and making any necessary adjustments.

Revenue Development Action Plan Best Practices include:

- Document the plan
- Measure regularly (in most cases monthly)
- Communicate the plan and the results internally (quarterly)
- Revisit it annually to make any adjustments and updates for the upcoming year (or more frequently as the situation warrants)

Best Practices for Measurements are:

- Measure a critical few factors (in most cases 3 to 5 only)
- Make the report simple to generate and easy to read (in most cases the information required already exists within your organization).
Use a [SMART Revenue Report](#).
- Delegate the task of generating the report to others

To determine your measures:

Restate what success looks like for your organization here. (See FQ 1)

Restate your Annual Company goals here. (See FQ 4)

What do you need to measure to know you are successful?
Include both hard (quantifiable) and soft (indirect) measurements.

Your measurement report should identify the areas where you are meeting or exceeding your goals, as well as the areas where you are falling short. Use a [SMART Revenue Report](#).

Measure your progress monthly.

Review the report to assess the results of your Revenue Development Action Plan. Make improvements in those areas you are falling short and continue forward in those areas you are meeting or exceeding your goals.

Continue to monitor your progress monthly and adjust your plan to respond to changing conditions.

Summary

Congratulations!

By creating a Revenue Development Action Plan your company is now positioned to take advantage of the right opportunities, avoid the wrong opportunities, grow profitable revenue, and successfully reach your goals.

Be sure to take the next steps by documenting it, implementing it, communicating it, measuring it, and adjusting it as needed.

If you have questions, please contact me. I am happy to discuss the ins and outs of creating a Revenue Development Action Plan that works for your business.

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