



How to Have an Amazing Q4 without Sacrificing Q1



My son says I'm a dream-killer. I prefer realist.

Which is exactly why I respond, "That's great, but what are you doing to back-fill your pipeline?" when reps boast of the deals, they "just know" they're going to close this quarter. Because *realistically* I know that the end of quarter push to close deals, when not balanced with funnel-filling activities, leads to starting Q1 way behind the 8 ball.

With the end of the year near, I'm sure you've

been huddling in Zoom rooms with your reps trying to separate the players from the posers, hashing out deal strategies, and debating the age-old question "to discount or not to discount." All in an effort to ensure that every possible deal is closed, including the big whale you've been working on all year.

I feel you and I've been there. Working every angle with each rep to ensure that they, and you, start January with a big fat commission check. But I'm also having a flashback to January 2, 2017.

I was still basking in the glory of a record breaking Q4 when it hit me -- 2017 is over and I'm starting 2018 at ZERO. I can still feel the chill that ran through me as I logged into the CRM system and hesitantly hit the opportunity tab. My greatest fear

instantly became my reality. I had fifty percent fewer deals in the pipeline than I had started Q4 with, and Q1 was the second biggest quarter of 2018.

If you've been around a while, you shivered too just now. But history doesn't have to repeat itself. You still have time close 2021 with a bang and set your team up for success in 2022. But you'll need to act NOW, as well as enlist a few other departments, to ensure that 2021's hero, YOU, doesn't become 2022's villain.

While your team is working to crush Q4, you can work with other departments to provide you the air cover you need to kick 2022 off with healthy pipelines.

1. Marketing - You need marketing's help to uncover prospects that could be Q1 customers. Here are a few of the campaigns marketing can run for you.

- **A "closed lost" campaign** - Have them reach out to prospects that didn't have the budget to purchase in 2021 to make sure they are putting you in the 2022 budget. Add value by having marketing send them content on topics like, "Building your Business Case Internally" or "Gaining Internal Support for your 2022 Initiatives". Then make sure those leads are sent to an SDR for follow-up.

- **A competitor campaign** - Hopefully your CRM data includes information about prospects that are currently under contract with a competitor and the date that contract will expire. (HINT!) Ask marketing to build a campaign around those prospects whose competitor contract is up in Q1 and offer them an opportunity to compare your product or service to their current provider.

2. The SDR Team - It's hard for SDRs to book

appointments this time of year as prospects are busy trying to close the year out themselves. But, now's the time for your SDRs to start warming up prospects for conversations with AEs in early 2022. This is my favorite "talk track" when I hear the objection, "Call me in January".

"I'm happy to call you in January, but if I could ask you a couple of questions now, I should be able to determine if there would even be a reason for us to speak next year. Would that be okay?" This strategy will not only disqualify non-ICPs, so you don't waste time with them in 2022, but it will give your SDRs a warm way to open the call in January and a greater chance an appointment will be set.

“But I’m also having a flashback to January 2, 2017. I was still basking in the glory of a record breaking Q4 when it hit me -- 2017 is over and I’m starting 2018 at ZERO.”

3. Customer Success / Account Management - If you don't have a formal referral strategy, now is the time to get on it! Have your CSMs reach out to your best customers asking for referrals to other companies who would benefit from your product or service. Ask them to make a warm introduction to an SDR who can then pick up the ball and work to get an appointment set.

The next 45 days will be exciting and nerve-racking for you and your team.

As the sales leader, it's your responsibility to help ensure that your reps don't walk into 2022 set up to fail. Take steps right now to enlist other departments to help you build your dream funnel, for next quarter, while your team is focusing on finishing this year strong! ■

Kristie Jones is the Founder of Sales Acceleration Group. She specializes in helping Founders and Sales Leaders improve process, hiring, and accountability to accelerate revenue growth. Learn more [Here](#)