

EBOOK

GROWTH GUIDERS

GTM Alignment & Collaboration

6 Tactics For Predictable Revenue Development in 2024



Budgets are drying up.

Funding has all but disappeared (unless you're an AI company).

Sales reps are losing deals left and right – on price, because they stall out, or because they get ghosted entirely.

So what's a revenue leader to do?

Tom Slocum, Darryl Praill, and Matt Toy join up to talk about how you can individually make a positive impact on your company's growth **and** how you can (and should) collaborate with other departments to align on shared goals and expectations.

Their advice can help any department head weather the bad times. And it can also set up strong systems and communication lines that are effective during the good times.

Read on for the 6 most impactful insights they delivered during our Growth Guiders event.

Haven't watched that yet? You can access the event and recap below.

[Growth Guiders: The Pipeline Show](#)

BE A PROBLEM SOLVER

Deals are stalling out in reps' pipelines for a few reasons. The macro environment is certainly one of them - budgets are drying up and VC funding is a fraction of what it was in 2021. But the other big reason is your sales reps are likely only **going through the motions**.

Nobody wants the “dog and pony show” demo. Buyers want to feel like they have control during the sales process - they don't want to be pushed through your pipeline like everyone else.

So here's what you can do:

1. **Seek to understand.** Good salespeople don't just run the same canned demo for each prospect - they really listen to what issues the prospect is having and tailor that presentation to those specific needs and challenges.

Yeah...we already know that.

But the best salespeople are marrying that approach with data and insights from their marketing and CS teams. They sit down with CS leaders and ask them what current customers are doing, why they renew, and the impact your solution has on their business.

That ammo - how people like your prospects are benefiting from your solution - is what you can do to take your solution from a “nice to have” to a “need to have.”

Speaking of which...

2. Illuminate potential challenges with your buyer to get additional buy-in from other departments. Sure, the sales team’s budget might have dried up, but what about the marketing function? Getting together with your CS and Marketing leaders to understand how customers are using your solution might illuminate use cases for other departments - and that can be your ticket to furthering a deal.

Trying to secure a collective budget from multiple departments not only increases the total deal size (who doesn’t like a bigger commission?), but it also drives alignment and unity because you’re getting buy-in from multiple stakeholders.



If they say we don't have budget, I'm like, okay, **what else are you working on?** Where do the other departments need help? Because you may not have it, but I know your other peers do. Marketing might have it, but CS doesn't have it. You know, **what if we get the tool together for the two of you?** Would that make sense for you?

TOM SLOCUM

FOUNDER & CEO, THE SD LAB

FEEDBACK LOOPS

If you want to be a problem solver, you need a pipeline of information. Go-to-market (GTM) leaders all hold data or insights that could benefit one another - but unless that information is piped back and forth, it's functionally useless.

Sales, Marketing, CS, Product, Leadership... everyone needs to know what the customer wants and how they use your product. And feedback loops allow you to uncover that information and relay it to the necessary stakeholders in a way that makes the most sense for them.

Use them to create or reinforce your ICP. Use them to update product features and value propositions. Use them to change your targeting strategy.

GTM leaders need to agree on one shared customer profile truth to build strategies around, and that doesn't happen if information about said customers is stored away in department silos.

We see this most clearly today in the form of Sales Development Reps (SDR) and Account Executive (AE) alignment. Over the past 3-5 years there's been a really strong movement towards aligning the goals and expectations of SDRs and AEs - why?

Alignment mitigates the passing of unqualified or lower-quality leads from the SDR function. Primarily because when their goals are tied to their AE counterparts, the incentive to pass leads that convert is much higher. But secondarily, alignment allows for **transparency** between the two functions. When a lead isn't qualified and the discovery call goes awry, the SDR has a front-row seat to what happened, and they presumably use that information to better target or qualify future leads.

The same process can be used to help align AE and CS teams. Oftentimes those two departments don't communicate. AEs are hyper-focused on finding net new business, so as soon as an account is signed and handed off to CS the communication channel dies down. That leaves CS to pick up some of the pieces around expectations, challenges, and goals that could have been alleviated or called out by the sales rep who signed the deal.

Focusing on alignment and transparency between the two departments can help a ton. Time to value gets shorter, retention is higher, and revenue goes through less ebbs and flows. CS gets a head start on adding value when they have the context from Sales, and Sales can create more focused messaging when they have the stories from CS. Anytime you can uncover those win-win scenarios where both you and your customers benefit, you have to take them.

And this won't just help you out during the tough times - feedback loops are valuable when times are good as well. The ability to extract information - from your current customers, from your SDR function, and from your marketing data - will make everyone's lives easier.



Have feedback loops regularly and everywhere. Whether it's in Slack with your department leaders, going out for drinks and chopping it up, having your teams collaborate with/shadow each other...get them thinking about **'one team, one mission - revenue.'**

TOM SLOCUM

FOUNDER & CEO, THE SD LAB

THINK CRITICALLY

In 2024, there are going to be two clear-cut skills that department heads and revenue leaders will need to master. One of them is problem-solving, which we talked about already. The other is critical thinking.

In tough economies like this, you need to know how your organization wants you to make your numbers. Yes, they want net new logos - but at the end of the day what companies want is to **hit their revenue targets**. Most teams have been trained to do that through new logo acquisition, but if you can pivot and start to drive revenue through channels like upsells and cross-sells, you'll be an invaluable resource.

That's where critical thinking comes into play. Up to the point of being a department head, most people are focused on individual growth - moving forward and upward and their careers. Now as a department head, you have to start thinking about how to work with other stakeholders to move the business forward, not just yourself. It's not just "how do I do the best stuff for me" anymore, it's "how do I do the best stuff for *us*."

Here are some tactical things you can do today to extend those feelers and start thinking beyond just your individual contribution to the revenue goal:

1

Marketing and CS should partner up to create lookalike audiences based on your best customers (best meaning high retention, high (Lifetime Value) LTV, frequency of referrals, etc.). Marry that information from CS with the firmographic data from Marketing to create a targeted list of accounts, and then loop in Sales to run outbound campaigns in tandem with

2

Sales and CS should partner up for a proactive referrals campaign. CS provides the data for which customers are the happiest and most likely to give a referral, and sales work in tandem with that account's CS rep to ask for referrals.

3

Lean into the competitive steal campaigns. You know that the prospect already has money budgeted, and they've already convinced themselves and management that the product is a 'need to have' item. With those two checkboxes already ticked, you can go heavy on feature comparison and pricing. This requires a really solid knowledge of your competitors, and that means bringing in stakeholders from Product, Marketing, Sales, and CS together to run the campaign.

When you can start thinking critically about how to hit your number, you start acting more like a department head and less like an Individual Contributor IC. And your company starts working more collaboratively and less in silos.

SACRIFICES MUST BE MADE

When the economy is down and that impacts the success of your Go-To-Market (GTM) function, you have to start thinking about where you can make cuts. And not just for you personally (more on that later), but for the types of campaigns you're running.

For example, any marketer worth their salt is going to know the Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) for each of their channels and their associated conversion rates. If you can tell that Google has a high CAC and lower conversion rate than other channels, it would make sense to cut budget there and reallocate it to something like a campaign mentioned above (competitive steal, for example).

But when that marketing leader connects with their CS and Sales counterparts, they can make even more informed decisions.

Let's say that Google has a high CAC and low conversion rate, but CS tells you that those customers are the least likely to churn. You'd probably keep that channel and look for another 'sacrificial cow' to siphon budget from. Similarly, if the webinar series you put together has a higher CAC and mid-level conversion rates, but sales tells you that it's one of the best channels for them to build up a long-term nurture account and pipeline, you'd probably keep it around.

We're using marketing as the main example for this section because when the economy is down, everyone starts to naturally scrutinize marketing's budget. Other departments have headcount - marketing has discretionary spend (or, as Darryl said, they all "have an opinion on your money"). So it's imperative that department heads work together to understand where they can shift budgets around to keep all Revenue Development teams happy. Otherwise, if Marketing takes a big hit that impacts Sales and CS in the long run - less money to build awareness and nurture leads means less sales which means fewer accounts to manage.



If you haven't already, you need to have a conversation, not only with the CEO and the CFO and the investors, if they're there, but also your executive colleagues, to **manage expectations.** '

Boys and girls, we're in a tough economy - **what do you want from me?** Do you just want revenue numbers? If so, I'm going to work with CS. Do you want new business? I'm not going to work with CS or I'm going to get new business. Or do we just want to survive? You want to reduce churn so we can survive this little blip? **Get alignment.'**

DARRYL PRAILL
CMO, AGORAPULSE

DITCH THE EGO

Making those sacrifices means you have to do one critical thing: ditch your ego. When the whole company is suffering, you have to start thinking about what you can do to help the company's bottom line - not your individual/personal/teams bottom line.



I think what happens often in these times of trouble is everybody kind of **puts up their four walls and they're like, how do I protect me or my team?**

MATT TOY

VP OF CLIENT SERVICES, YORK IE

This is part of being a department head versus an individual contributor - the mentality that the company and its goals are your main focus, not just your main goals. And that can be a tough pill to swallow for a lot of people. But in the long-run it'll benefit both you and the company to think this way.

And you didn't hear this from us, but realistically your company's leaders (CEO, CFO, the Board) are going to be watching their GTM leaders like hawks. They'll try to 'divide and conquer' and find out whose budget is the easiest to cut, which team can handle layoffs the best, and who's job is least crucial to the overall growth or sustainability of the company.



The best thing you can do is take your two colleagues out for drinks and say, 'Kids, let's talk. What can we do to collaborate and be aligned? Let's manage expectations. Let's keep the lines open. **No surprises. We need to be a single unified team.** When times get better. I'll go back to saying F you on a regular basis, but right now we need to be tight.'

DARRYL PRAILL
CMO, AGORAPULSE

So don't curl up in a ball and wait for this to blow over, and don't go for glory and try to be the hero that makes up the lost revenue. Park your ego and talk with the other department heads to figure out a division of labor. Maybe Sales and Marketing can work the cross-sell angle while CS spins out their reps to work on upsells? Maybe CS reps slide into outbound sales roles to help drive new logos? Maybe sales drops their entire conference budget and pours it into demand gen to run dozens of digital events during the year?

Whatever it is, putting your ego (and your own ass) to the side and thinking critically about how you plan to drive revenue is the answer.

THINK LONG-TERM

All the other points we've made lead up to this one - if you want to survive the lows and thrive during the highs, your team needs to take a long-term approach to everything.

That doesn't mean they should divest their shares of winning in the short-term, but it does mean that focusing on only the short-term will lead to problems. Having a healthy dose of short-term strategy coupled with a long-term mindset is the ideal approach.



We get so **desperate** as marketers to go and just give them anything...sales gets pissy because they're wasting their time, and then they're missing their number so they're blaming us, and **CS sits back and they're watching the Gong Show.**

DARRYL PRAILL
CMO, AGORAPULSE

We've seen this a lot in the form of unqualified leads being passed from Marketing to Sales. We've seen it in misaligned customer expectations being passed from Sales to CS. And both of those problems (underqualified leads and poor expectation setting) are a direct result of focusing on short-term gains.

Marketing cares more about hitting **their** number than doing a good job at targeting and qualifying leads for sales.

Sales cares more about hitting **their** number than setting CS (and the customer) up for success.

But if you focus on problem-solving, use your feedback loops, think critically, make sacrifices, and ditch your ego, you can mitigate the "me me me" mentality and start to work towards collaborative growth.

If Sales is constantly being held up by a particular objection during discovery, Marketing should think about how they can better qualify leads and address that objection before it gets to them.

If CS is dealing with a lot of misaligned expectations and longer time-to-value, they can hop on late-stage calls with the sales team to ensure that everyone knows what success looks like and the handoff process is as seamless as possible.



I know we've all worked at places where it's like, **just close the deal**, we'll figure out how to implement it. We'll figure it out...the product will come later. Like, by the way, **that's churn 101 right there, right?**

MATT TOY

VP OF CLIENT SERVICES, YORK IE

Thinking ahead - about how your actions have ramifications for other departments - will only help.

Because when you just think about yourself and your own goals, the company suffers. Total revenue goes down - and when that happens, budgets (or personnel) get cut. And when that happens, you have to sit through the whole "more with less" speech again, and we're pretty sure that everyone is sick of hearing that by now.

CONCLUSION

While the challenges for GTM leaders are only going to increase, adopting the right mentality sets the stage for success.

Simply doing “more” isn’t going to cut it in 2024 (hey, that rhymed!).



If you spend all of your time pitch-slapping like, ‘hey, I’m Darryl, buy my wares,’ someone like me or Tom or Matt are going to ignore you. **They’re going to block you.**

DARRYL PRAILL
CMO, AGORAPULSE

You have to start **thinking critically** and **being a problem solver**. You have to **ditch your ego** and **make the necessary sacrifices**. You have to build and leverage **feedback loops**. And you have to **think long-term**.

Do that, and you’ll not only be able to weather the bad times, you’ll be more than equipped to grow during the good times.