

Why the “Sales Hunter” Strategy Will Not Create Sustained Revenue for Your B2B Company

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If you are with a consultancy, software company or agency with a world-class, well-managed sales department that is performing at the level you demand, you won't need to read any more of this perspective paper. If you're still reading, it's because you are not entirely satisfied with revenue and/or future growth prospects.





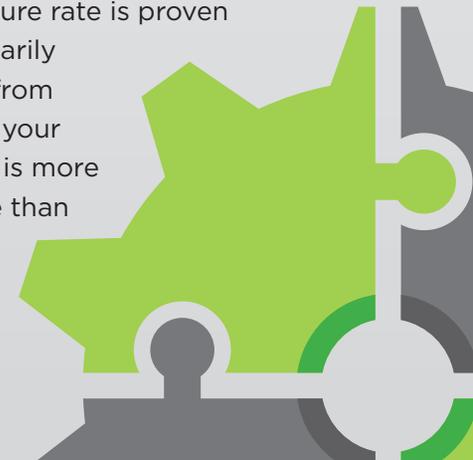
The Sales Hunter Fallacy



I want to speak in particular to a common strategy many companies have deployed in an effort to generate a healthier sales pipeline and close their best clients — bringing on a hired gun or “sales hunter.”

**The short version:
It very rarely succeeds.**

In our experience, the chief reason the sales hunter approach doesn't work is that it's completely talent-dependent. For the most part, great salespeople are not available on a freelance basis — they're usually happily at work inside great sales organizations. If you choose to directly hire a new sales/business development “expert,” the failure rate is proven to be extraordinarily high. We know from experience that your “fixed cost” risk is more a roll of the dice than it is laying the groundwork for real payback.



Shortcut to Nowhere

The logic of the sales hunter approach is totally understandable on the surface, as it seems like the shortest and most prudent path to create the new revenue you need to either “stop the bleeding” or add to your legitimate growth pipeline.

But let’s review the critical activities and operational components that must be in place for you to fill the pipeline and consistently land the right clients:

- Formulation of sales strategy and industry research
- Development of prospect lists and management in CRM platform
- Sales campaign design
- Integrated outbound campaigns
- Email deliverability optimization and rationalization
- High-end prospecting, phone qualification and opportunity creation
- Consultative selling and training
- Follow-up opportunity management
- Closing strategy and account penetration

If you find a single salesperson (or two) who can do all this effectively, they’re not going to be yours for long because they’ll be elite performers and subject to jumping ship for better money. Once they’re gone, so is your whole sales process. So, the problem is twofold:

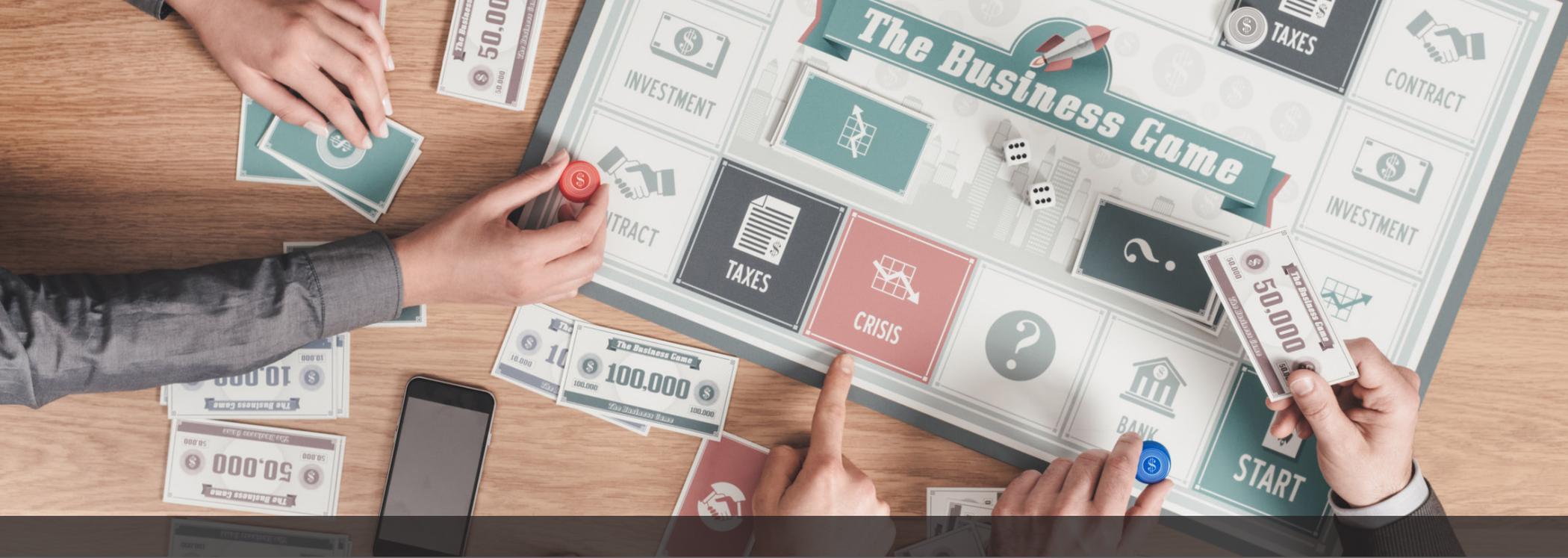


The person who can do all this by him or herself is exceedingly rare.



If you’re lucky enough to find this person, your sales process grinds to a halt when they leave and you’re back to square one.

The sales hunter approach looks seductive when you face the money and effort necessary to put repeatable processes and proper operational support in place. But it’s an expensive and risky shortcut to nowhere.



It Takes a Sales Machine, Not a Sales Hunter, to Succeed

Relying on a sales hunter is a low-return game that generally costs you sales opportunities and lost time as you divert efforts to recruit replacements. Guiding yourself around this pitfall means engaging with an outside provider to create and deploy an approach that maximizes your opportunities — or building an effective internal structure yourself.



The key thing here is how well (and how fast) that outside provider can integrate with your team and existing processes, understand and refine your value proposition and leap into action to deliver opportunities and new clients. This is where the game is won or lost. If you have to invest considerable time teaching them your business or if they can't efficiently and expertly fill your unique gaps — such as integrating a portion of the sales machine (such as lead generation) with your own capabilities to close business — it's time to reevaluate.

If you do it yourself, you must know what best practices will work for your company, as well as how to hire and manage staff or freelance inside/outside salespeople, campaign strategists, writers, coordinators, email deliverability technicians, list development teams, sales coaches, researchers and CRM/ESP/list software experts.



Perhaps you've tried the sales hunter approach and have experiences different than our own. If so, I would love to hear about them.



About the Author

Larry Kaul is founder and CEO of Kaul Sales Partners (KSP), which specializes in helping B2B companies with or without sales teams generate more quality opportunities and revenue. Larry has spent decades refining his experience on the front line of new customer acquisition and founded KSP to help clients acquire new customers at a more rational cost and cut through the clutter of expensive and time-consuming prospecting, recruiting and sales operation struggles.

Larry's experience spans virtually all industries and most marketing, consulting and software products and services. He has BA in History from The George Washington University. He was a graduate student at large at the Booth School of Business and is certified as an expert Toastmaster.



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