NOTE

Idea In Short

The NOTE methodology is a sales framework used to identify and close new business opportunities. It involves focusing on the customer's needs, assessing the opportunity, assembling the right team, and evaluating the effectiveness of sales efforts.

NOTE is a newer technique pioneered by Sean Burke, then CEO of KiteDesk. A lot of companies have been adopting it because it solves the seller-centric nature of BANT by being buyer-centric.

NOTE

Sean Burke created NOTE as an alternative to BANT, ChAMP and other qualification methodologies during the discovery calls. He didn't like their seller-centric approach. Instead, NOTE is a buyer-centric lead qualification methodology used by salespeople during the discovery stage to determine the probability of closing deals with a lead.

In the era of buyer-centrism, sales managers needed a tool that helped them build relationships and articulate value in terms of buyers' understanding. This leads to more efficient B2B communication and faster, more accurate lead qualification.

NOTE stands for:

1. Need
2. Opportunity
3. Team, and
4. Effect

Instead of focusing on budgets and financing, it qualifies based on what the prospect actually needs.

Need

The first component of the NOTE sales methodology is Needs. The way NOTE defines Need is a little different from the other frameworks. This involves identifying the customer's needs and challenges and understanding how your product or service can help solve them. This requires active listening, empathy and asking the right questions to uncover the customer's pain points.

> Imagine you are a sales professional for a software company that sells project management software to small and medium-sized businesses. During a sales call with a potential customer, you ask them questions about their current project management processes and challenges. They mention that they are struggling to keep track of deadlines and timelines for different projects, which is causing delays and missed deadlines. You then explain how your project management software can help them better manage timelines and deadlines, and provide specific examples of how it has helped other customers with similar challenges.

By working with prospects that have an actual need for the solutions that you are proposing, it makes it easier for companies to be less reluctant with dealing with you. To master the Need stage, you should:

1. Learn to distinguish Pain Points (feeling that something's wrong) and Needs (knowing what should be done about that feeling)
2. Help your potential clients process their Pain Points into perceived Needs through open questions and education

Opportunity

The second component of the NOTE sales methodology is Opportunities. This involves identifying potential opportunities for your product or service and how it can add value to the customer's business. This requires understanding the customer's goals and objectives as well as demonstrating how your product or service can help them achieve those goals.

A perceived need isn't enough for a potential buyer to take action. You need to deeply understand:

- How urgent is the need?
- What are the outcomes of solution introduction or non-introduction?
- How much value will your prospect get if they decide to address their need?

This is what you discuss with a potential client at the Opportunity discovery stage. Think of opportunity as what the clients get when they work with you. This is reminiscent of the metrics stage of MEDDPICC as it deals with the opportunities that prospects get once they understand the solution that you're selling them.

Opportunity discovery is meant to summarize and scope how much a client stands to benefit from working together – in their words. It must be their opportunity (hence the buyer-centric nature of the methodology). Show every benefit for potential clients, especially if it's hard for them to get a full picture in their heads.

> Continuing with the same example of selling project management software, during the sales call with the potential customer, you ask them about their business goals and objectives. They mention that they are looking to increase efficiency and productivity in their project management processes. You then explain how your project management software can help them achieve those goals by streamlining processes and automating tasks, which can ultimately save time and money.

It doesn't really need to be quantifiable. Although that's always a big help in lead qualification, it has to provide prospects with a vision of great things to come for their organization.

Now that you've helped articulate and summarize and scope the benefits of making a change to the current status quo, it's the right time to find out who else needs to be involved.

Team

The third component of the NOTE methodology is to assemble the right team to close the deal. This involves identifying the key stakeholders involved in the decision-making process and ensuring that you have the right people on your team to address their specific concerns.

Whether it's the entire organization as a team or different teams inside departments, your

solution has to do something to make the lives of a group of people in your prospect's organization better. Make sure you know the members of these teams and the decision-makers.

The team stage is important for two reasons:

1. You will be working with actual people (this is especially true for complex solutions and services). It's vital to be on the same page about how things should work, especially for team members who will ultimately come at problems from entirely different angles
2. Any B2B buying process involves many decision-makers. For an entity to make an informed purchase, everyone on the buying team should understand what problems your service solves and why they need them. The "Team" is about the people in the company who will be affected by the purchase

To do this effectively, you might assign a dedicated salesperson to each stakeholder, or assemble a cross-functional team that includes representatives from IT, finance, and other relevant departments. This will ensure that you have the right expertise and knowledge to address the concerns of each stakeholder and close the deal.

> For example, if you're selling a complex software solution to a large enterprise, you may need to work with multiple stakeholders, including IT, finance, and business unit leaders. Each of these stakeholders will have different concerns and priorities, and it's important to have the right people on your team to address these concerns.

Effect

The final component of the NOTE methodology is to evaluate the effectiveness of your sales efforts. You want to talk about the effects of collaborating with the prospect. This involves tracking key metrics like win rate, average deal size, and time to close, and using this data to continuously improve your sales process.

To do this effectively, it's important to establish clear metrics and tracking mechanisms from the outset. This might involve using a CRM system to track leads and opportunities, or implementing a formal sales performance management system.

Understand what their vision of success is when the prospects buys into the solution that you're offering. For a lot of companies, this isn't just limited to financial gains, but also better functionality across teams, better systems, etc.

> For example, let's say you're selling a SaaS product to a variety of customers across different industries. By tracking metrics like win rate, average deal size, and time to close, you might identify patterns or trends that can help you optimize your sales process.

For instance, if you notice that your win rate is higher when you focus on a specific industry or vertical, you might consider targeting your sales efforts more narrowly. Or, if you find that deals are taking longer to close than expected, you might look for ways to streamline your sales process and reduce friction in the buying journey.

Examples

To illustrate the power of the NOTE methodology in practice, let's look at a few real-world examples of companies that have successfully applied this framework to their sales efforts.

Salesforce

Salesforce is a leading provider of cloud-based customer relationship management [CRM] software. The company's sales team uses the NOTE methodology to identify and close new business opportunities.

For example, when selling to a potential customer, the sales team starts by identifying the customer's specific pain points and challenges. They then assess the opportunity to determine the customer's budget, decision-making process, and timeline for making a purchase.

Next, they assemble the right team to close the deal, which might include representatives from IT, finance, and other relevant departments. Finally, they evaluate the effectiveness of their sales efforts by tracking key metrics like win rate and time to close, and using this data to continuously optimize their sales process.

HubSpot

HubSpot is a leading provider of inbound marketing and sales software. The company's sales team uses the NOTE methodology to identify and close new business opportunities.

For example, when selling to a potential customer, the sales team starts by identifying the customer's specific marketing challenges and goals. They then assess the opportunity to determine the customer's budget, decision-making process, and timeline for making a purchase.

Next, they assemble the right team to close the deal, which might include representatives from marketing, sales, and other relevant departments. Finally, they evaluate the effectiveness of their sales efforts by tracking key metrics like win rate and average deal size, and using this data to continuously improve their sales process.

Microsoft

Microsoft is a leading provider of software and technology solutions. The company's sales team uses the NOTE methodology to identify and close new business opportunities.

For example, when selling to a potential customer, the sales team starts by identifying the customer's specific technology needs and challenges. They then assess the opportunity to determine the customer's budget, decision-making process, and timeline for making a purchase.

Next, they assemble the right team to close the deal, which might include representatives from IT, finance, and other relevant departments. Finally, they evaluate the effectiveness of their sales efforts by tracking key metrics like win rate and time to close, and using this data to continuously optimize their sales process.

Summary

The NOTE methodology is a powerful framework for identifying and closing new business opportunities. By focusing on the customer's needs, assessing the opportunity, assembling the right team, and evaluating the effectiveness of your sales efforts, you can develop a strategic and effective sales process that drives results. Whether you're selling a complex

software solution or a simple consumer product, the NOTE methodology can help you close more deals and drive growth for your business.