The 5 steps to developing your sales plan
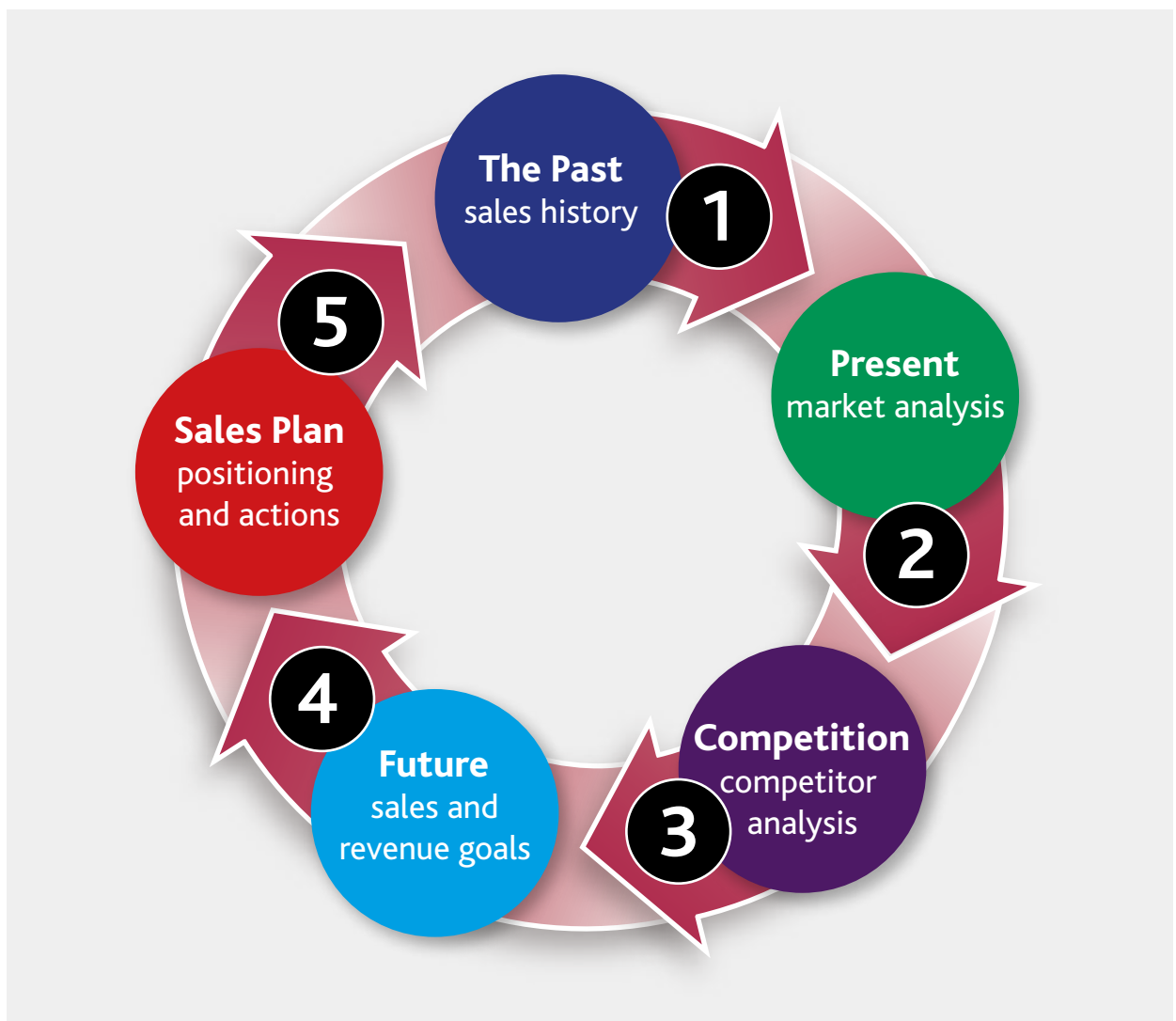
The planning and time you put into developing your sales plan is as important as the final written plan. Work through the 5 steps and you'll have a well thought out, focussed plan to drive sales. Each step is important - from looking at past sales performance to evaluating your business against the competition to allocating resources and measuring effectiveness.

1. The **past** - sales history

2. The **present** - market analysis

3. The **competition** - competitor analysis

4. The **future** - sales and revenue goals

5. The **sales plan** - positioning and actions

1. The past - sales history

1.1 Revenue	Use internal systems and reports to analyse revenue - rooms, activities, food, tickets, etc.
1.2 Sales mix	Which areas of the business perform best? Does the 80:20 rule apply? If you are too reliant on a small number of customers it can have a big impact if they contract.
1.3 Key performance indicators	Work out • average spend per customer • average room rate (ARR) • occupancy levels
1.4 Business mix breakdown	Which areas of the business mix generate the most and least revenue? • Overseas leisure markets: GB, US, Germany, France • Domestic leisure market
1.5 Cost of Sales	Do you understand the true cost of sale for? Direct bookings: • What costs does your business incur, for example costs for managing and updating your website including design, hosting costs, commission to booking sites, managing email, channel manager, PPC and SEO? OTAs: • Do you know your commission rates, channel manager and staff costs? Tour Operators: • Do you know your commission rates, costs of travel to market to attend in-market activity, promotional material, etc?
1.6 Seasonal nature of revenue	Determine weak and strong periods: • Are there trends? • What is forecast?
1.7 New/renewal/ existing business	New/repeat/existing business: • What new business is there and what is it worth? • Who are the business' top 100 customers? • What is the retention/renewal rate?

DEVELOPING YOUR SALES PLAN

2. The present - market analysis

2.1 Customer groups	Who are my customers? • Overseas or domestic? • Culturally Curious, Great Escapers or Social Energisers? • Where are they from?
2.2 Market size and share	Is the market growing? Analyse industry trends. What share of the market am I getting?
2.3 Changes and trends	What trends can be foreseen? • Where is the business now against where it is was? • What's happening to my customers that will influence sales? • What's happening in the market that will influence sales?

3. The competition - competitor analysis

3.1 Competitive advantages	Competition: • What makes my business different? • How do competitors' offerings and rates compare with my business? • Do I have a competitive edge?
3.2 SWOT	**Strength:** What does your business do well, that is beyond what your competition does? **Weakness:** What does your competition do better than you? **Opportunity:** Something outside your business that can be turned into a strength e.g. new infrastructure, a change in consumer behaviour **Threat:** An external influence that poses a threat to your business beyond your control e.g. reduced air access from a key market

4. The future - sales and revenue goals

4.1 Revenue goals	Set sales targets by segment and by market: • overseas leisure business • domestic leisure business
4.2 New/repeat/ existing	It's cheaper to sell more to existing customers than acquire new ones: • My top customers and type of business they generate • New business from new customers • New business from existing customers

5. The sales plan - actions

5.1 Acquiring new business	How will new business be acquired? • Digital sales strategy and own website • Tour operators • In-Ireland events and trade shows • Online presence with OTAs
5.2 Growing existing business	Review what you have done in the past - learn from mistakes and repeat what worked well
5.3 Sales Action Plan Template	Set out all your sales activities by: • Month • Detail of the sales action • Target • Resources (budget and staff) • KPIs • Responsibility