

# Your first 100 days in position



## How you can better approach your first 100 days

• <b>Introduction</b>	Page 03
• <b>Presenting yourself</b>	Page 04
• <b>Building your network</b>	Page 05 - 06
• <b>Meeting expectations</b>	Page 07
• <b>Setting Personal Objectives and Development Plans</b>	Page 08
• <b>Specifics for CXO level</b>	Page 09 - 10
• <b>Pre-requisites for Sales leadership &amp; senior sales</b>	Page 11 - 15



## Introduction

The first 100 days of employment within any business represents a golden opportunity to make a positive impact, cement your place in the organization and build a platform for ongoing success. By day 101 you could be sitting on top of the world.

Alternatively, in that first 100 days you could relegate your future career with the organization to 'catch-up' mode. Even worse, some people will manage to kill their future prospects with an organization even before they get their seat warm.

Some things in your overall to-do list will be more important than others, but by the end of the first week you should have a plan in place for the first 100 days that either captures all of the following elements, or allows you to cross any of them off for a well-founded reason.

In this article we outline what's considered best practice – derived from original research sourced from business leaders, management & leadership trainers and performance & career coaches. In addition, we have included an addendum for those people assuming sales leadership and senior sales roles in which performance can be more clearly identified – and some additional insight to maximise chances of getting off to a successful start and avoid placing yourself at early risk.

---

*This white paper should be beneficial both to the person into whom the new hire reports as well as the new hire themselves.*

---



### Presenting yourself - first impressions count

You are about to be introduced to more people than you can possibly remember the names of — colleagues (higher, lower and peers within the structure), team members, subordinates, internal customers, potential friends, future allies, possible critics and opponents, competition for promotion, supporters, external partners and clients.

The first impression you make will pass around the building and from one office to another a lot quicker than you will. Accurate or inaccurate, positive and negative, your picture can be painted oh so many times, and embedded into people's minds before you have had a chance to eyeball them and shake hands. It may only be personal perspective rather than the reality but perception counts!

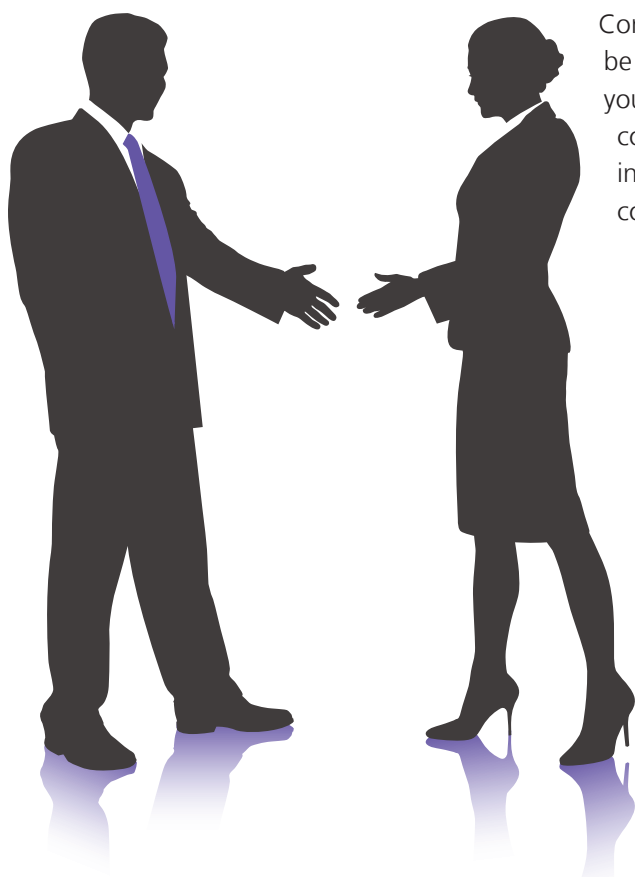
---

*Prepare for meeting and greeting. You need to fit in, you need to belong apart from being a trait of our personal make-up to seek affiliation and to feel wanted, you can only successfully build that all important internal network when you are really inside the organization.*

---

You can then make the critical decisions around, who you want or need as an ally, who is useful, who isn't, who is important in the chains of which you are a part, whose word counts, and who are the key decision makers. , etc.

Consider how others perceive you. At senior exec levels you need to be aware of your personal branding — "brand you". Dress to impress: you need to look the part. Do you know what the acceptable dress code is? What observations can you draw from people you saw whilst interviewing with the company? If you don't know, play it safe and be conventional (neutral), you can move style-wise when you are familiar.





## Building your network

The people who are responsible for your appointment are likely to be closely involved with you in the first few days. They will naturally be looking for confirmation that they have made the right choice. The more you can say and do that meets their expectations, and gives them confidence in having made the right appointment, the more relaxed they will be in their dealings with you.

The more you know about the organization before you go in, the more you will be able to engage with your new colleagues. Being introduced to a new colleague and saying, "Ah Sam, am I right to assume that you will be doing the procurement for XYZ project?" is a far better ice-breaker than asking how long Sam has been with the Company.

---

### *Plan introductions!*

*Be smart about how you engage conversations with key stakeholders.*

---

If a new colleague is going to be crucial to your team, getting them on-side with a comment such as, "Ali, I am looking forward to sitting down with you to talk about your ideas for the new budgeting process", or "Ali, I would be really interested in seeing your evaluation of the ABC proposal", is much more engaging than some banal generality. It also sets a tone for the working attitude — "let's get things done". The person walking you round for introductions, probably your own manager, is also more likely to be impressed. It's all in the preparation.

Over the first few weeks, there will be people internally that you need to engage fully with, whether they be your boss / superiors, team members / peer groups, internal customers, sources of important information or key operational interfaces.

---

*As you build your understanding of your own role and objectives, their significance to your successful achievement should become evident, so make tactical decisions about how to win them over to provide the core of your network.*

---

Like you, they are driven by their personality traits, values, motivation, competencies, etc. and will perform to their strengths.

If managerial accountability sits with you, the extent you will succeed with your agenda can be hugely impacted by your team.

---

*Investing in some analysis of these people and trying to get a level of understanding will inform your judgements and decision making.*

---

All the while others will be doing their own assessment of you. Your level of self-awareness will be crucial in getting things right, because like it or not, you are under a microscope.

Externally there will be a broader eco-system with which you interact, such as partnering organizations and clients who you will need to engage with early in the game. However, you need to be in a position of knowledge before you engage with them. You need to be clear about the nature of the business relationship – insofar as you can establish what they need from you and what you will need from them.

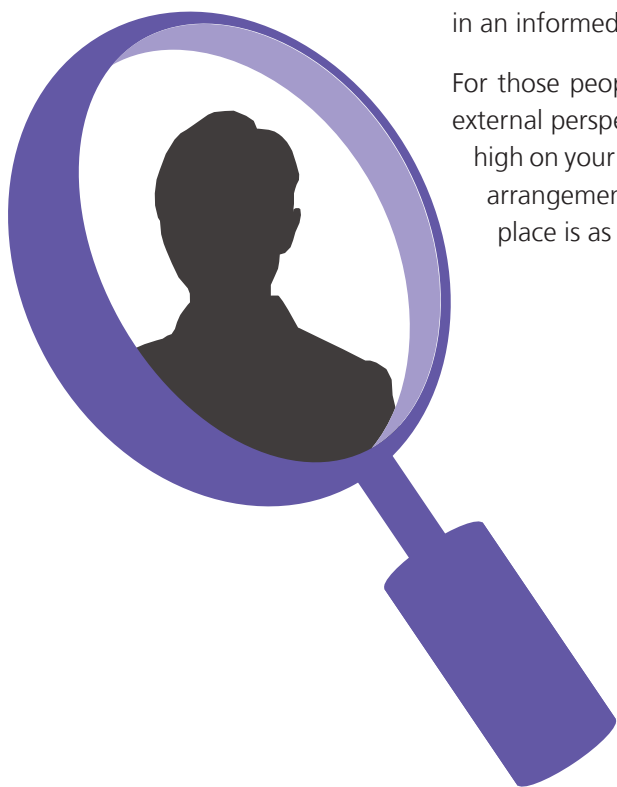
---

*It is very easy to go on a whirlwind tour of everyone that you will be dealing with but it is far better to have the introductory conversation when you are at least fundamentally equipped with an understanding of the key nature of the business relationship and any issues that exist.*

---

When you know what you need to achieve, you can then have a conversation with external stakeholders where any move beyond passing pleasantries would see you in an informed position, rather than caught flat-footed.

For those people whose role on behalf of the organization will have a significant external perspective, such as sales, getting to grips with your territory must feature high on your 100 day plan. For the Project Manager in a Joint Venture or partnering arrangement, understanding the commercial and contractual arrangements in place is as vital as appreciating the informal workings of the joint organization.



### Meeting expectations

At interview, it is most likely that you will have gleaned some perspective of the expectations of the organization for the role, both generalities and some key areas of focus.

The generalities may be found in the more day-to-day aspects of the role that typically would be found in a job description.

---

*There will also be the more transformational expectations of the business that often form the big challenges of the role.*

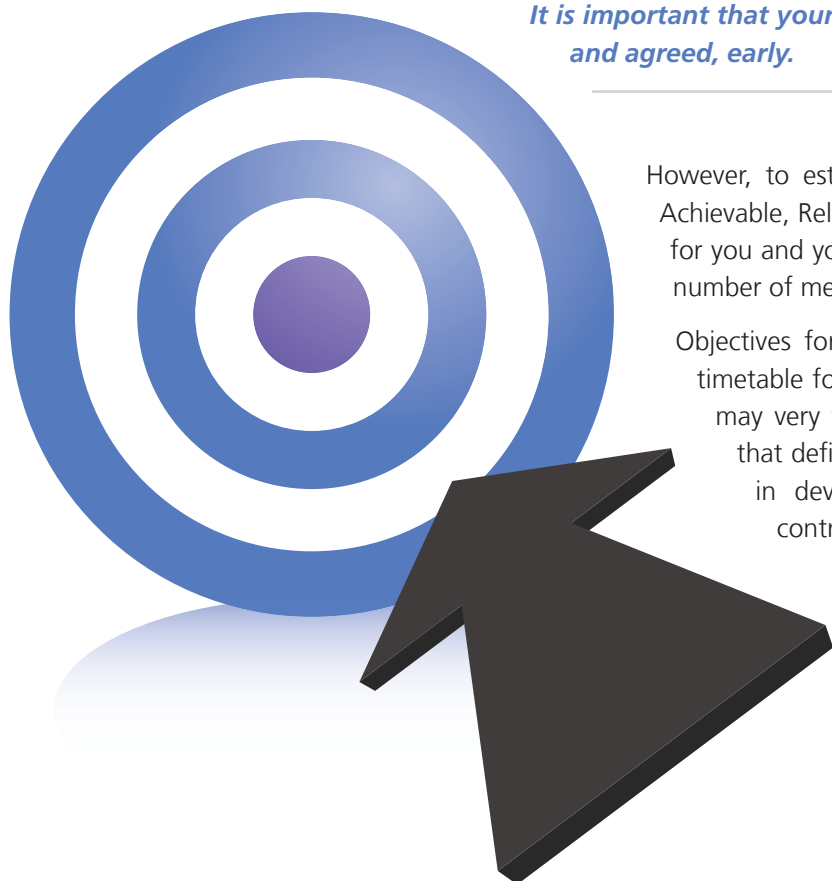
---

However, it is essential that you establish the real focus of the role. What is said or inferred at interview and the expectation that is created on either side can actually result in a lack of congruence when these things are discussed in detail. Such expectations need to be defined so you have a clear picture of what lies before you and what needs to be achieved. The key player in this will be your immediate manager.

---

*It is important that your personal objectives and targets are defined and agreed, early.*

---



However, to establish SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound) requires an informed position for you and your manager, and this may take some time and a number of meetings.

Objectives for all employees generally sit within a company timetable for the performance management process, so you may very well be starting your new role a long way into that defined period. That needs to be taken into account in developing your personal objectives and in any contribution to defined team targets.

### Setting personal objectives and development plans

Within your first week, have the first meeting to discuss your role and the business expectations of you.

---

*Agree some principles around the areas where your key objectives need to be so that their development and definition can begin.*

---

Aim to have them agreed within the first month but do not finalise them until you are sufficiently informed from your time within the organization to make them SMART and to know that they meet with the wider organization objectives.

## SMART

Specific | Measurable | Attainable | Relevant | Time bound

Their impact should be meaningful and visible to those that matter within the business that you are seen and acknowledged as a high performer within the bigger picture. If you have set the hurdles too low, what at face value may look like a great performance will do your credibility no favours — and that credibility is necessary to underpin your career advancement within the organization. Agreeing unrealistic targets will just set you up for a fall. That is why the whole exercise needs time and energy devoted to it.

Let us stay on the subject of personal objectives, as these will undoubtedly be used to measure your success and future potential, and also bring your personal development into the picture.

---

*Regardless of your role within the business, take a commercial perspective of the value you add to the business. If you can't articulate the difference you will make to the bottom-line, regardless of whether you are operational or in an enabling function, then you will not make an impact on the organization, no matter how much endeavour the activity requires.*

---

The fact of the matter is also that your personal objectives should stretch you in terms of performance, and help you develop and grow you as an individual and as a player in the organization. Be clear about the personal development you require and build it into a plan.

More and more organizations also measure you not just on what you achieve but take account of how you achieve it, so be clear about the cultural influences within the organization — understand how they play the game and ensure you play by their rules.

## Ten principal guidelines for “C” level executive leaders / senior managers

The people who appointed you, the exec team or the board, will be looking for you to produce results and once beyond the honeymoon period they'll be looking for those results.

They will be looking for a meaningful contribution. In the early days you will have cost them time and money and you need to determine what your break-even point is (consider impact / outcomes and timescales) and move beyond this, to become a significant net contributor.

### 1. Do not assume that your interpretation of what is expected of you is correct.

Immediately on starting clarify your purpose with the stakeholders and business owners by making a succinct list of objectives and an action plan. Remain in close contact with the stakeholders to ensure clarity over goals and expectations. Robert Tearle, Director at Arena Search & Selection, who has 20 years head-hunting experience into “C” level positions worldwide, says

---

*“If you ask bosses and employees what is expected of the job holder, all too often you get different answers. Focus on right issues from the outset before you’ve missed your chance to excel and before it’s too late.”*

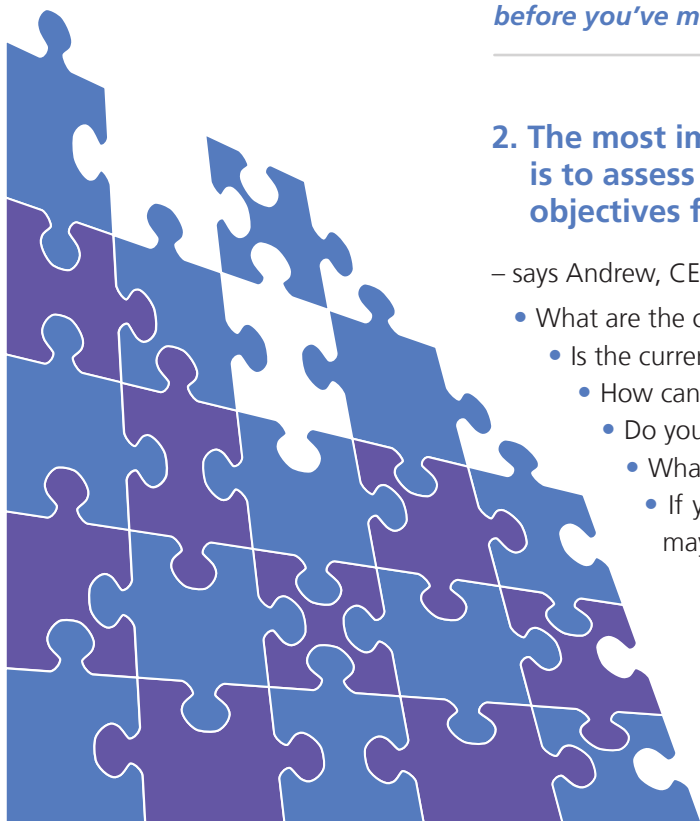
---

### 2. The most important thing (from an executive point of view) is to assess what needs to be done to achieve the corporate objectives for which you have been hired

– says Andrew, CEO, Fortune 100 corp. Consider the following:

- What are the critical financial objectives to be realised?
  - Is the current strategy correct and effective?
  - How can you close the gap on any shortfalls?
- Do you have the right people — who do you need to retain or replace?
  - What changes do you need to push through and why?
- If you do not set your agenda here in the first 3 to 6 months, you may end up dancing to somebody else’s tune and this could lead to failure.

### 3. Connect officially or unofficially with your predecessor to gain insight.



## 4. Meet the management team as a group and individually and look for any common themes

— says Stephen Branley, Founder, Branley Consulting.

- Try to get them on board by sharing information about yourself with the team, and telling them how you like to manage.
- Then meet people individually to find out what they like and dislike about their jobs as well as finding out ways they think the business can be run better — establish any common themes.

## 5. Ask for “state of the nation” presentations from your management team.

Ask them to list their top 5 business issues and to propose solutions to these. Synchronise objectives in terms of short term goals i.e. 30, 60 and 100 days, and discuss 1, 2 and 3 year business plans with the senior leadership team.

## 6. Stop the practices that are not working and carry on with those that are. Initiate new practices to fill any gaps.

## 7. Look for quick wins with maximum business impact.

Start considering what major changes could have a transformative effect — but be careful to avoid jumping to conclusions too soon on big issues. Consider the McKinsey way - a deep root cause analysis underpins their approach to projects and re-engineering. Make sure you are addressing the right issues.

## 8. Synergize the team and with the team.

Build a culture of collaboration and develop lines of communication. Take plenty of time to listen and connect with your team and staff.

Empower your team and create opportunities for others to lead – distributed leadership can be a wonderful thing. At executive management level the decision that you make affects people around you so it's important that you let them know that you care. Do not alienate yourself and don't get fired because you've failed to fit in.

## 9. Meet your top 5 customers or business partners.

## 10. Mind the gap.

It's not unusual for those changing their environment to bring with them perceptions which are incorrect, or out-dated. There's a difference between similar and same. Ask the people who hired you, including HR, what perceptions you may need to change and what knowledge gaps you need to bridge — says Jez Moore, performance coach at zoomcow.co.uk who has coached business leaders at such organisations as Tesco, TNT, DWP and national rugby & rowing teams...

---

*To get off to the best possible start, the ideal is to start planning your approach to the role in advance of your start date. At senior levels it is not unusual for the new hire to have discussions in person and or on the phone with their boss/s prior to officially commencing in the position.*

---

## Ten principal guidelines for Sales leaders / Sales managers in their first 100 days

### 1. Do not assume that your interpretation of what is expected of you is correct.

Immediately on starting clarify your purpose with the stakeholders and business owners by making a succinct list of objectives and an action plan. Remain in close contact with the stakeholders to ensure clarity over goals and expectations. Robert Tearle, Director at Arena Search & Selection, who has 20 years head-hunting experience into "C" level positions worldwide, says

---

*"If you ask bosses and employees what is expected of the job holder, all too often you get different answers. Focus on right issues from the outset before you've missed your chance to excel and before it's too late."*

---

### 2. Do not get distracted – it's all about revenue.

100 days of focus on deals will not be wasted; nothing sets out your expectations to your sales people more clearly than deal and pipeline scrutiny – says Jim Close, SVP of Software AG.

### 3. Establish what needs to happen to hit the targets.

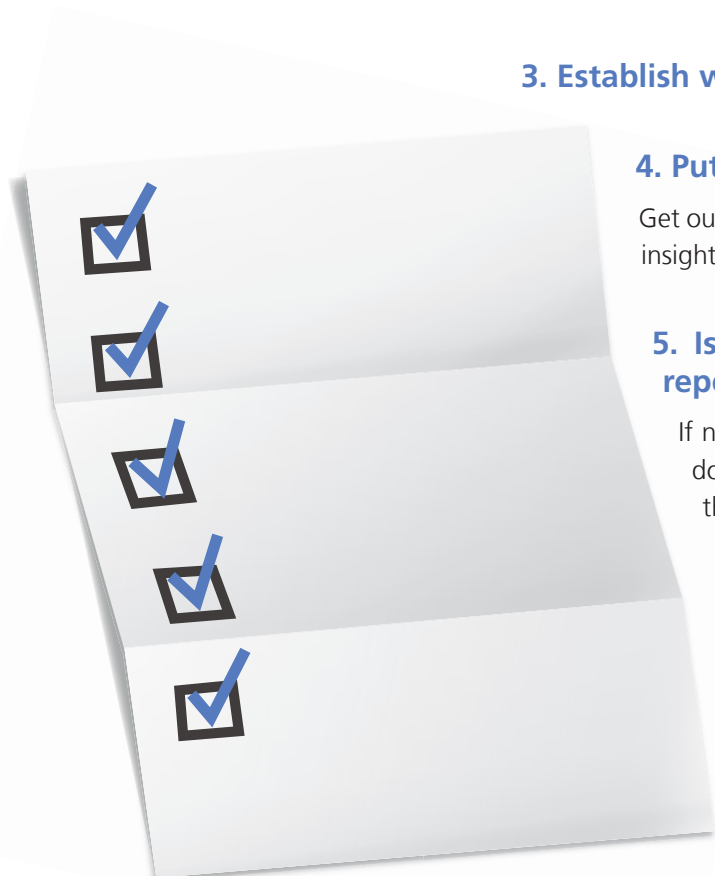
### 4. Put yourself out there!

Get out and meet customers with salespeople to develop better customer insight and understanding of your sales team members.

### 5. Is there a winning formula and if so, is it being repeated?

If not, put it into action. Whilst doing this, go in with open eyes and don't jump to conclusions. What you are being told, or what you think is happening, may not be 100% correct. Too often plans are built on the wrong assumptions. Identify your SWOT situation.

Revered management consultants McKinsey always dig deep, right to the root cause, to make sure actions are taken on the right foundations. In start-up mode focus on actions to drive the numbers and keep your eyes open.



### 6. Establish who are the winners and losers on the team.

Which salespeople on the team are the real contributors and who's not pulling their weight? Determine who can be turned around and who cannot and formulate a plan to remove dead weight fast!

---

*Who are the "A" players (top 20%), who are the "B" players (majority) and who are the "C" players (bottom 10%).*

---

When determining who the good people are and those who are not — seek broad opinions.

Some poor people may have got lucky and, conversely, unlucky ones may be those with the best potential. Seeking broad views (inside & outside of your dept.), may help you identify how you can get the best out of your team and develop a process to make them and the business perform better.

### 7. By the end of your first 100 days, you should be able to understand the whole picture.

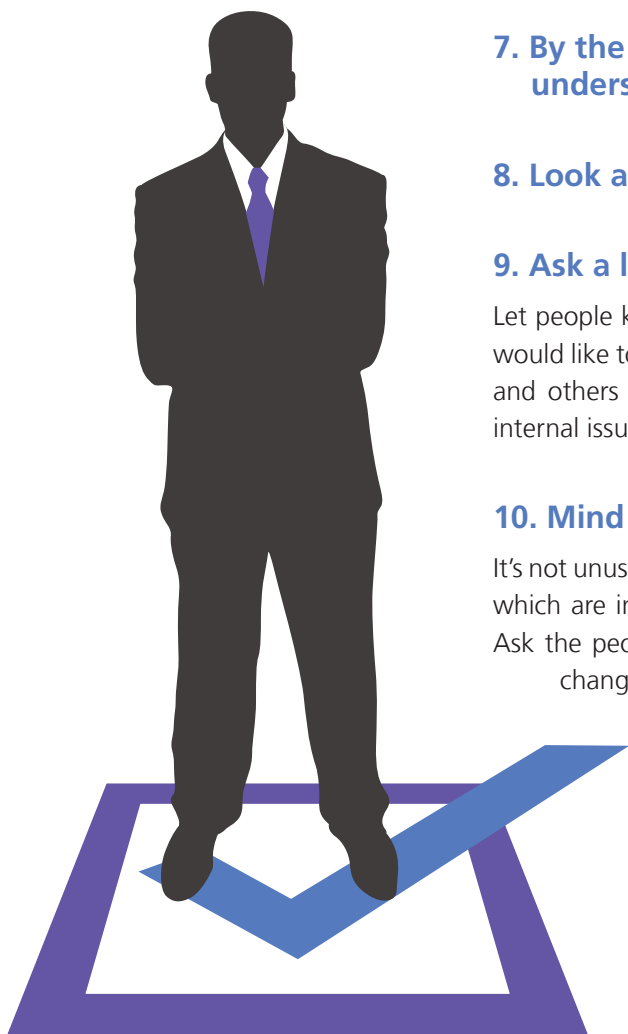
### 8. Look at current operations.

### 9. Ask a lot of questions within the group.

Let people know what you are thinking, and most importantly, ask staff what they would like to see improved. Your curiosity should extend beyond sales. Talk to heads and others in aligned business units, to find out what they see as external and internal issues – and consider SWOT analysis.

### 10. Mind the gap.

It's not unusual for those changing their environment to bring with them perceptions which are incorrect, or out-dated. There's a difference between similar and same. Ask the people who hired you, including HR, what perceptions you may need to change and what knowledge gaps you need to bridge — says Jezz Moore, performance coach at [zoomcow.co.uk](http://zoomcow.co.uk) who has coached business leaders at such organisations as Tesco, TNT, DWP and national rugby & rowing teams...



### Ten principal guidelines for senior salespeople selling complex / big ticket solutions in their first 100 days.



#### 1. Do not assume that your interpretation of what is expected of you is correct.

Immediately on starting clarify your purpose with the stakeholders and business owners by making a succinct list of objectives and an action plan. Remain in close contact with the stakeholders to ensure clarity over goals and expectations. Robert Tearle, Director at Arena Search & Selection, who has 20 years head-hunting experience into "C" level positions worldwide, says

---

*"If you ask bosses and employees what is expected of the job holder, all too often you get different answers. Focus on right issues from the outset before you've missed your chance to excel and before it's too late."*

---

#### 2. Develop and maintain a sense of urgency

— says Nick Holbrook, RVP EMEA at The Complex Sale. This applies to creating/generating selling opportunities and to moving them through the sales cycle. Complex sales involve long selling cycles. In a world with quarterly objectives, in many cases quarterly targets and an ever watchful management eye, the salesperson needs either to be doing the numbers or at minimum must be seen to be taking the right initiatives.

This is particularly important for the new hire, who has not yet proven himself or herself. A smart salesperson should look to be ahead of the game, taking the initiative and doing things early not late. This should include looking for ways to bring actions, events and decisions forward both externally and internally. Not only will this maximise their chances of early success during the period in which the eyes are most likely to be on them but it will also help them counter any unexpected delays.

#### 3. Few salespeople fail because they have too many opportunities,

however, many fail because they have too few.

## 4. Is there a winning formula and if so, what is it and can you replicate it?

- Who are the most successful salespeople in the team and why?
- Which customer types have seen the most value from your solutions?
- What have been the compelling events which have brought about sales?
- What are the reasons customers have not gone ahead?
- If you have not done so already, now consider your ratios.

What is your annual target?	What is an average order value?	How many proposals tabled are converted to sales?
How many 1st meetings progress to a proposal stage?	How many customer meetings do you need to get?	How can this best work for you?

## 5. You need to understand your company's propositions.

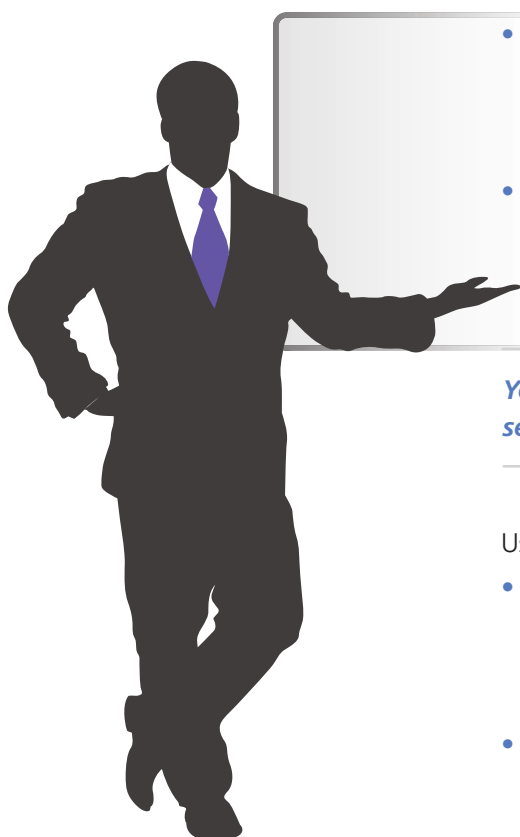
Bear in mind that, at interview, it's unlikely you were told the story "warts and all". Work out what your employer does best and target your team to sell that. Less successful people sell what appeals to them or what customers want. This may not be something their company is unable to deliver easily.

- **Go back to basics.** Consider the needs and issues of the marketplace you are selling into, and in turn, the marketplace they are selling into. What are the driving factors now and what will they be downstream?
- **What's your value proposition?** Consider the value you believe you may be bringing to them, the benefits and what magnitude these may be, and how they may be calculated. What would an ROI look like and why, and what evidence is there to support this?
- **You need to develop industry and proposition knowledge** — consider breaking down these topics into sections and sub sections, and look to build knowledge accordingly.

*You may wish to brain-storm this using a mind map and a tree or indeed several trees (tree, branch, stem, leaf).... Or perhaps a table.*

Using this approach you could determine your knowledge and any gaps in it.

- **Present your understanding of the company's offerings in the next sales meeting.** Presenting is one of the best ways of learning plus it will get you thinking more. When giving the presentation, the team are likely to give you support and constructive feedback.
- **Map out the sales cycle and check around to see how this plays out in reality.** Speak with your boss, peers and people in other departments such as sales or bid support, marketing, or customer services etc.



### 6. Develop your toolkit.

- What elevator pitches do you need and what do they look like?
- Develop a question bank. What key questions will you, without exception, ask the customer or prospect and in what order?
- What case studies and return-on-investment can you offer up?
- Bring the best people internally on-side so that you can field an “A” team when bidding. You need to know the process of your organisation, what they can handle (how and how quickly), and also, importantly, what they are unable to do.

### 7. Mind the gap.

It's not unusual for those changing their environment to bring with them perceptions which are incorrect, or out-dated. There's a difference between similar and same. Ask the people who hired you, including HR, what perceptions you may need to change and what knowledge gaps you need to bridge — says Jez Moore, performance coach at zoomcow.co.uk who has coached business leaders at such organisations as Tesco, TNT, DWP and national rugby & rowing teams...

### 8. You will be more successful if you understand the competition

— says Yvonne, #1 salesperson globally at a Top 3 comms vendor. Who are your competitors? What are their strengths and weaknesses? In addition to asking colleagues, ask people who have worked for the competition – the answers are not always what you might expect.

### 9. When meeting existing customers, listen hard, find out first and avoid jumping to conclusions.

Be aware that they may know more about your company and your propositions than yourself. They may have historical complaints or old promises that have been made but not delivered on. Both represent an opportunity to establish a new relationship.



### 10. Develop a support network in the management team.

In big ticket sales it's not unusual for sales cycles to take upwards of 9 months, so in a start-up period you may have sold very little. In the event of your immediate manager leaving, or of a review or re-organization, you may need management level sponsorship if your position becomes at risk because you may not yet have proven yourself.