SBI Growth Advisory

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Transform the SKO

How Market Leaders Repurpose the SKO To Drive More Value

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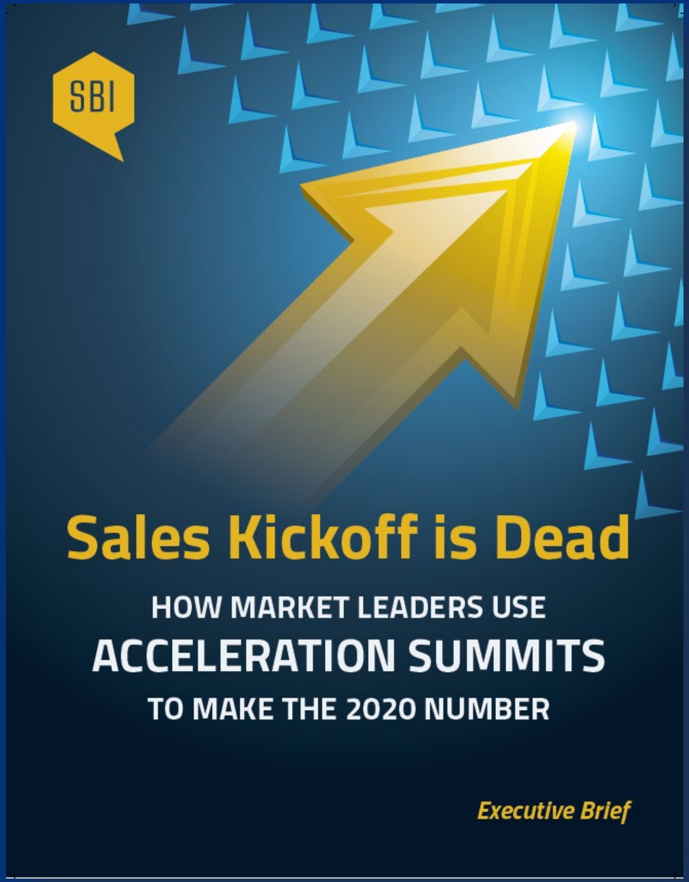
Executive Brief



Deep Dive

Seven deadly sins of SKO

Sales reps often leave the sales kickoff (SKO) without knowing their territory, quota, or compensation plan. When they return to the office, nothing about their day-to-day has been optimized, and they are paralyzed upon arrival.

Reps are talked at for three days and forced to sit through a parade of speakers, missing out on opportunities for participation and collaboration.

The keynote speaker is often expensive and knows nothing about your business or how you sell.

The CEO's message focuses on the successes of the previous year; however, they fail to address the three big bets that will drive growth for the current year.

There is no direct feedback from customers on how your company generates value for them.

Marketing and product teams spend time justifying their existence instead of showcasing the two to three things they are currently doing to drive the sales reps' productivity in the year to come.

Collaboration between reps is sidelined. They don't get to hear from each other about the top wins and losses nor are they given the chance to learn from each other.

What makes an acceleration summit different?

Market leaders have a different mindset when it comes to their SKO. Instead of organizing a generic set of events, they understand the acceleration summit as part of their firm's overall revenue growth program.

Dimension	Sales Kickoff	Acceleration Summit
Attendees	All hands stay on deck through Q4 to ensure the firm makes its number, even though sales managers close the C-players' opportunities at the end of the year.	Invite only the right people to your acceleration summit. Make faster decisions on C-players and be proactive about next year's impact by hiring A-players earlier on.
Agenda	Agenda is typically overcrowded with speakers presenting on all different topics. The previous year is summarized in 20 minutes as part of the sales leader's address.	Include orchestrated sessions that emphasize interaction with the commercial team. Focus on two to three big bets as well as specific actions reps can take on a weekly and quarterly basis. Internal presenters should listen and learn as much as they speak and teach.
Planning	Attendees arrive without any fundamental preparation or context.	Have reps complete assigned pre-work to make the most of their time together. The goal is to have them return to their territory with clear measures of success.
Speakers	The product team overwhelms the sales team with an overview of everything being launched in the coming year. As a result, reps tune out and share war stories during breaks and plan for the night's festivities.	Ask your customers to attend the summit and tell stories of how solutions have generated value for. Collaborative and structured breakout sessions can be set up to share best practices across geographies and markets.
Participation	SKO participation is limited to the salesforce. Other functions come in as stragglers and are met with sales speak.	Engage the entire commercial organization, including marketing, pricing, and customer success teams, so they all share responsibility in driving organic revenue growth.

Acceleration summits have a different mindset

This communication architecture will align the commercial organization cross-functionally. Priorities for the 3-to-5 year and annual timelines are cascaded to each function, and they each include key deliverables.

3 to 5 Year		Annual		Q1	
Big Bets		**Key Initiatives**		**Priorities**	
1	Deploy inside	1	$5M revenue through inside sales channel by 12/31/20	1	**Sales:** Hire inside sales leader. **Marketing:** Execute plan to build pipeline for inside sales. **HR:** Compile slate of candidates based on job profiles and scorecards.
2	Launch three new products by 6/30/22	2	Product X campaign in market by 5/15/20	2	**Product**: Complete design of Product X. **Marketing**: Develop marketing campaign for Product X. **Sales**: Provide customer insights for positioning Product X.
3	Drive go-to-market effectiveness	3	Improve pipeline coverage rate to 3.5 times	3	**Marketing**: Develop account-based marketing strategy for top 10 accounts. **Sales**: Execute new prospecting cadence. **Customer success**: Create account plans for top 10 accounts.

Execution phase 1 — pre-summit planning

In advance of the summit, plan for the following tasks across your seven different workstreams.

Tasks	Owner	Due Date Prior to Summit
Purchase intent modeling: Understand which customers and prospects are most likely to generate the most revenue for the coming year.	Revenue operations	4 months
Routes to market: Use the output from your purchase intent modeling to ensure your most effective routes to market reach the highest value customers, while the most efficient routes reach lower value customers.	Chief risk officer (CRO) and chief marketing officer	3 months
Coverage plan: Use the output of your purchase intent modeling to determine the number of people you will need for each type of role in the coming year.	CRO	3 months
Organizational structure and design. Given the understanding of where revenue for the coming year will be generated, ensure you have the right organizational design model. Refresh your headcount and productivity model to ensure you have the right number of people.	CRO	2 months
Talent assessment: Assess whether you have potential future leaders within your organization or if you need to seek them externally. Identify the A-players you need to retain and build a plan to transition C-players' accounts to them. Market leaders make these moves in advance of the acceleration summit so the right attendees are present.	CRO with HR	2 months
Territories, quotas, and compensation plans: At the beginning of the acceleration summit, ensure that every rep understands their territory, quota, and compensation plan.	CRO with HR and chief financial officer	1 month
Accelerate the employee lifecycle: Develop an employee lifecycle management plan to improve bookings per sales rep through key inflection points in rep tenure.	Revenue enablement and sales leadership	1 month

Execution phase 2 — value creation agenda

Follow a basic summit agenda to maximize value creation.

- Fewer but Longer Sessions
- Cross-Functional Presentations
- More Interactive
- Collect Real-Time Insights from the Team
- Activate the Strategy

Win/loss reviews are conducted by the revenue enablement team, who summarizes two wins and a single loss based on customer interviews. These insights are then presented by the deal teams. The enablement team then facilitates these sessions to ensure the insights can be effectively leveraged at scale.

In deal clinics, reps should be encouraged to bring their win strategies for one to two active opportunities. The session involves breaking into groups of five to 10 reps, led by an A-player rep from a different region. Learning from a peer who's from a different region fosters a safe environment and provides emotional distance from the opportunity, enabling the scaling of best practices.

Customer interactions hold tremendous value as they provide direct insights. It is crucial to design these sessions thoughtfully, including feedback from promoters, neutrals, and detractors. Market leaders prioritize constructive criticism over praise, aiming to improve continuously. The sessions are most effective when facilitated by someone close to the field who is capable of asking contextual questions about the customer experience, both positive and negative. It's important that these sessions are well designed.

Solution theaters should be limited to 60 to 90 minutes and involve a product leader presenting a high-level yet concise roadmap of what's coming out. Don't give into the egotist who dominates the main stage *launching* products. Direct the product management team to structure the time so that reps can interact with the offerings that will be available in the near term, addressing their questions individually.

During the leadership session, allocate half a day at the beginning of the agenda for frontline leaders. Aim for these sessions to provide critical information that'll support team scaling. This includes:

- **Hiring best practices:** Reinforce with managers how they should complete a top-grading interview, refresh the hiring profile, and ensure they understand any key competencies that have changed.
- **Preview of the compensation plan:** Managers should be given a one-page summary of the plan and FAQs, as they are the first point of contact for reps.
- **Coaching techniques:** Ensure that the majority of sales managers' time is spent coaching, since it's a skill that must be practiced and reinforced.
- **Sales methodology:** Align your methodologies to the buyer's journey. And take this opportunity to showcase the recent updates your revenue enablement team has made based on customer feedback.

Execution phase 3 — post-summit execution

Once the summit has finished, keep the momentum up with your revenue growth program.

- **Clearly articulate priorities**
- **Aligned to big bets**
- **Clearly measured via KPIs**
- **Management team tracks and adjusts weekly**
- **Every level of leadership engaged**

3-5 Year		Annual	
Big Bets		Key Initiatives	
1	Deploy inside sales channel	1	$5M revenue through inside sales channel by 12/31/20
2	Launch 3 new products by 6/30/22	2	Product campaign in market by 5/15
3	Drive GTM effectiveness	3	Improve pipeline coverage rate to 3.5X

VP - Sales

Q1		Week of 1/20	
Priorities		Goals	
1	Hire inside sales manager	1	Identify candidates in my network and send to HR
2	Sales team to provide insights to marketing team for campaign	2	Secure 2 buyer interviews per team for product x
3	Develop account plans for each reps top 2 accounts	3	Inspect top 10 account plans

VP - Marketing

Q1		Week of 1/20	
Priorities		Goals	
1	Execute marketing plan to support inside sales team	1	Benchmark digital messaging vs. competitors
2	Develop campaign plan for Product X	2	Develop v0.5 packaging/pricing
3	Deploy ABM to top 10 existing clients	3	Review account plans completed by Sr. CSMs

VP - Customer Success

Q1		Week of 1/20	
Priorities		Goals	
1	Deploy inside Customer Success to cover lower potential accounts	1	Determine which accounts should be transitioned to inside based Customer Success Team
2	Drive cross-sell revenue through Product X	2	Review list of Customers for whom Product X is expected to be a fit, and assign opportunities to team
3	Generate up-sell Revenue	3	Identify 10 up-sell opportunities in book of business