

10 Sales Strategies to Close the Year Strong

HOW TO MAKE MORE MONEY AND HIT YOUR GOAL IN Q4





Dear Sales Superstar

(Yes, that really is you),

It's Q4, and you only have a matter of weeks to make your target. The pressure is on. Are you up to the final push or are you giving up?

For me, quitting in Q4 to look ahead to Q1 is akin to a football team walking off the field in the fourth quarter of a game so it can rest up or prepare for its next game. Have you ever seen that happen? Yes, you want to prepare for a great start in Q1 but not at the expense of Q4.

Throughout the years, I've consistently coached business owners and salespeople to recognize all is not lost if you aren't on target to make your annual goal. Even if it looks as if there is no possible way you can sell that much, there probably is a way. But if you stop pushing, of course you'll miss your goal.

You've still got time to find and close more sales, achieve your target, and make more money.

To do that, you need to commit 100% to the next few months (just like you do at the beginning of a new year), be persistent, and get creative. Start by diving into this eBook. Sift through my many strategies for finding last minute opportunities, shortening the sales cycle, and boosting your sales. Choose the ones you want to use.

Then, do it. **Right now.**

You could sit back and do nothing, focus on your Halloween costume, baste the turkey, drink hot cocoa, and play endless rounds of office games for the next few months. Or — you could end the year with a bang.

What's it going to be? The countdown is on.

Kendra



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3 Excuses for Abandoning Sales in Q4 — Debunked

I've heard every excuse in the book for why Q4 is a dismal time for salespeople. And I will call out every single one of them for what they are: self-defeatist malarkey.

Here are 3 classic excuses, debunked:

"It's the holiday season — nobody is in the office. If they are, they don't want to talk business."

Good grief. Are these companies shuttering their doors in November and December? Then most likely, they're still experiencing the same pain points that they do the rest of the year. In fact, it might be much easier to get in touch with a prospect. As the quarter progresses, they're a little more relaxed, open to chatting and possibly committing final funds to solve problems before things take off again in the new year.

"I'd have to offer a deep discount to close at the end of the year, and I can't do that."

B2B transactions are not typically expected to mimic the Black Friday madness — unless you create that expectation for your prospects. Change the tone of your emails and phone calls to be confident and revolve around a clear business case. When you sound desperate or frantic, prospects smell blood in the water and take advantage of the situation.

"There isn't enough time left — our sales cycle is too long."

Most of the businesses we work with have average sales cycles of 60-120 days, sometimes up to 6 months, for net new clients. So, yes, there are some opportunities that just won't close before year-end. After all, we clearly don't have 120 days left in the year, let alone 6 months. But, there are sales you can close in plenty of time — 90-day opportunities, 60-day opportunities, even 30- to 45-day opportunities. Start with the strategies in this eBook and get moving. (Then remember: what doesn't close in December sets you up for a fast start in January.)

Companies
don't stop doing
business — you
shouldn't stop
selling.



Changing your Strategy with 6 Simple Questions

In the fourth quarter, it's all about quick wins. First, you need to examine your gaps, opportunities and solutions.

Answer these 6 simple questions to determine what your Q4 strategy needs to be:

1. What's your sales gap? How many more sales or how much revenue do you need to close?

2. How many prospects do you need to close your gap?

3. Who in your company could help you close sales faster?

4. Do you have technical consultants, system engineers, or help desk staff who could help you identify clients who could use your assistance in a new way?

5. What's one thing that's getting in the way of you closing more sales?

6. How can you fix it?

Now, let's look at some strategies that will move you toward achieving your year-end target!

Trick or Treat at the Right Houses

Kids today are pretty strategic. You can hear it when they start planning for trick or treating on Halloween. They identify which neighborhood has the spookiest and coolest houses. They talk about which neighbors have the best candy. They don't waste their precious few trick-or-treating hours in an unknown neighborhood.

And, in the fourth quarter, your sales strategy needs to be the same. Go to the houses you know. Sales prospecting traditionally means finding net new business — new clients you've never worked with before. In Q4, focus on trick-or-treating at the prospects who already know you.

They've spoken with you in the past. They know the quality of the work you do. They understand the value you bring.

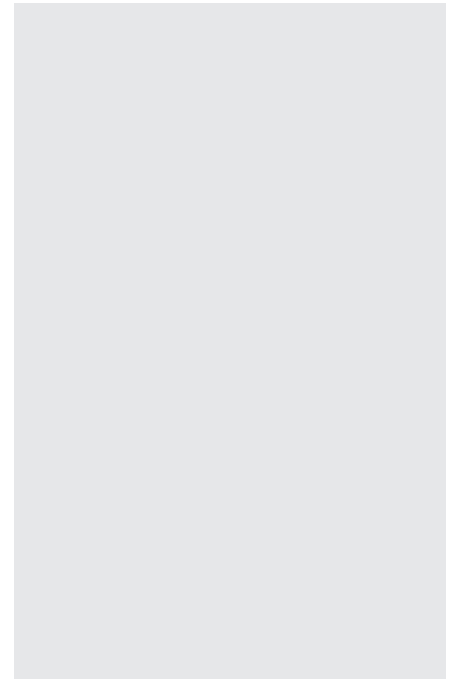
Equally important, you know them. And that means you understand their business. You have a good idea what issues they may be struggling to address. You know who to talk to, who makes decisions and what hurdles you might need to jump to close an opportunity.

In short, you cut through a lot of the getting-to-know you red tape and shave off some time from the sales cycle — time you don't have in Q4.

Don't get me wrong, you still need to do your prospecting (nice try!) to set yourself up for success in the new year, but this is not where your sales are likely to come from in the short term.

Go where the good candy is.

What 10 “houses” should you be “trick-or-treating” at?





Think Stocking Stuffers

When you do your holiday shopping for someone close to you, you put a lot of time, thought and money into that one special gift. A romantic getaway for your spouse, a new flat screen TV for your dad, a cell phone for your teenager. You spend hours researching, planning and shopping for the best deal. A lot goes into that decision.

When it comes down to stocking stuffers, they're much more impulsive. Likely, you do your stocking stuffer shopping at the last minute without much thought or planning. When all's said and done, you could easily spend a good chunk of change on stocking stuffers.

So, what's the difference in the decision-making process?

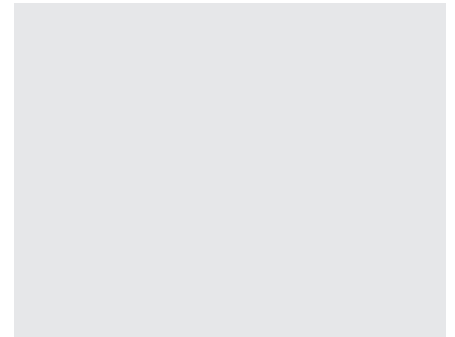
The smaller the dollar amount of each purchase, the quicker the decision process.

It's the same in business. It's much easier for a lower-level manager to approve a \$3,000 sale than it is to get approval to spend \$30,000.

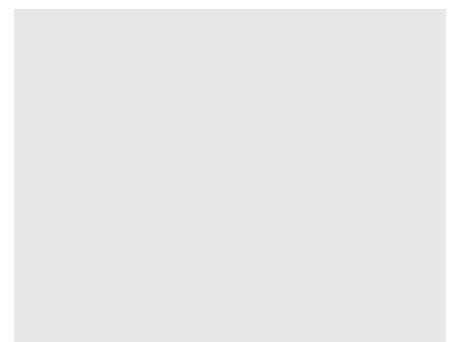
It may seem counterintuitive, but at the end of the year, **many smaller sales are your best strategy**. Small sales really do add up. They can make the difference between making or missing your target.

The smaller the dollar value, the quicker the decision process.

1. What solutions do you have that are "stocking-stuffers?"



2. What solutions can you offer that won't require higher level approval?



Who You Gonna Call? Your Customers.

There's no better time of year to contact your clients than Q4. Clients are in a more relaxed and approachable mindset, and all of the holidays give you an easy ice-breaker. Plus, the approaching year-end has them (and you) thinking about how you can help them meet their year-end goals and get a jumpstart on their goals for the new year. It's not just about being warm and fuzzy. You want to seize this opportunity to contact clients with real sales potential.

In addition to the unexpected year-end revenue these calls generate, they also help you secure new referrals. After all, your clients are spending more time with family, friends, colleagues and their own clients this time of year.

It's not just current clients you need to reach out to right now. Customers who haven't worked with you in a while are due for a check-in call. These are win-back sales opportunities who know you, and you know them. They might need your help or you might find that your company is a better fit for them now. This is the best time to win them back.

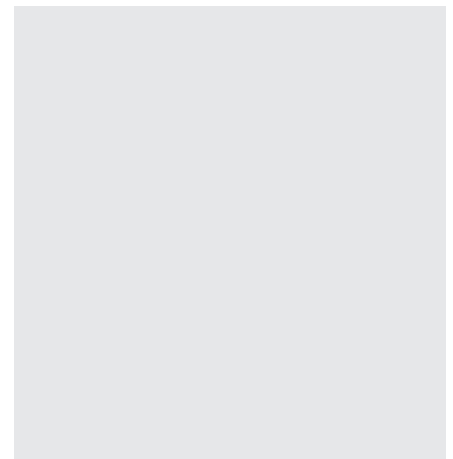
You don't have to wait until December to show clients some warm and fuzzy holiday attention, either. Opportunities abound as the fall weather starts to approach. Think:

- Early October golf outing (weather permitting!)
- Email or phone call for Halloween
- Treat a client Veteran to lunch around Veteran's Day
- Volunteer together around Thanksgiving

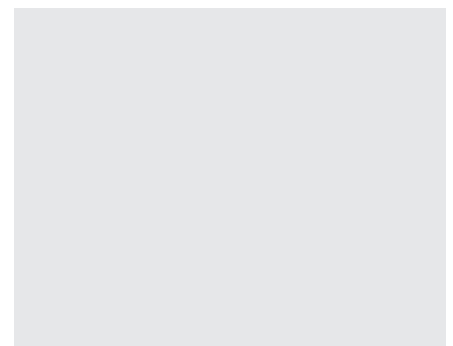
The list of options is endless. Get creative.

Seize this opportunity to contact clients with real sales potential.

1. How can you use the holidays to generate outings and contact with top clients?



2. What low key but personal contact will you initiate with other clients?



Find the Buried Treasure



Once you've identified the clients who are good targets, it's time to do a little homework. You want to uncover new opportunities that might be hidden in their organization and you haven't heard about yet. You might be thinking you've sold them everything you could possibly sell them, but I'll bet you you're dead wrong.

Look into your customers' organizations.

Notice who you are not working with. Check in and find out what departments or offices would benefit from your services. Ask your current contacts for referrals and schedule introductory meetings. You may find last-minute opportunities for this year while identifying new opportunities for next year.

Review all of your proposals.

What proposal items did your clients decide not to move forward with that might be useful to them now? They might have declined certain proposal elements thinking they didn't need them or because it didn't fit their budget — but they might sing a different tune when you follow up with them on it now. You can uncover quite a few opportunities this way.

Identify underutilized offerings in your solution portfolio.

If it's the right fit for your customer, you can approach them with these solutions. Alternatively, you can look at which solutions have sold well. Consider extended warranties, training, small projects and service contracts. Bring these as part of your recommendations when you meet with your clients for your Q4 Review. (Don't know what a Q4 Review is? See Strategy #5).

1. What proposals have you presented but didn't close this year?

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2. What underutilized solutions could you sell?

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Turn season's greetings into new opportunities.

'Tis The Season to Be Meeting



Conduct a Q4 review

Schedule a fourth quarter review with your most active clients. Debrief the year's progress on their initiatives and at the same time, look for gaps they have yet to fill. If they aren't in retail, discuss projects they may want to complete in December during the "slow" time so they're ready for the new year.

Schedule a year-end review

For your other clients, set up a year-end review. Share what you've done together over the past year and plan for their initiatives in the coming year. Try to identify any gaps that can be filled immediately. During the meeting, be sure to mention your solution areas. I wish I had a dollar for every time I've heard, "Gee, I didn't know you did that."

Schedule executive briefings for your top 10 accounts

These are strategic, high-level meetings with key account executives. Set up the meeting by telling them you want to get the ball rolling for next year. Highlight a few ways you've helped their company over the past year. Recommend a C-level planning session where you meet to discuss their initiatives for the coming year and offer strategic recommendations. Share your company's plans for new offerings, programs or directions and see if there's a fit with their initiatives for next year. Identify end-of-year projects they'd really like to squeeze in before Dec. 31.

1. What didn't your clients invest in this year that they planned to?

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2. Who are your top clients that you want to have strategic top-level meetings with?

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Practice Spotlight Prospecting



As year-end approaches, there are three very effective sales prospecting strategies you can use to find immediate opportunities that will close quickly. The trick is to put a spotlight on only those types of prospects and opportunities that have the ability to close quickly.

Ferret out end-of-the-year budget spend.

It's not just enterprise-sized companies that look to spend their remaining budget at the end of the year. Even small companies will frequently have budgets to unload. If there's money left in the budget, they may be looking for ways to use it.

In SMBs, they don't lose the budget they don't spend. In those companies, they just can't be certain that the next year is going to be as good as this year. They want to spend the money now to get long-anticipated projects complete, in a year that is flush, versus taking a chance to see if the money will be available next year.

Steal from January.

Look for clients who are planning to kick off projects in Q1 but may be interested in getting a head start during December. They may experience a slow down when it's perfect to make some strategic changes.

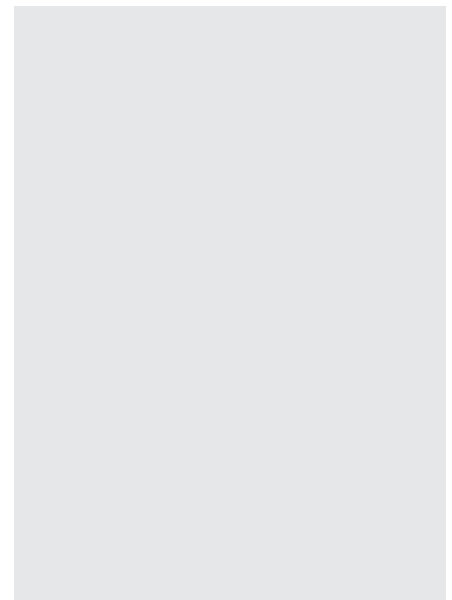
Payment timing may throw some prospects off. Consider if you can invoice in December but get paid in January — and still have it count toward your current year's target. If so, you both win.

Call all prospects who are on hold.

Remember all those prospects who told you they had to hold off for whatever reason? Call any of them you haven't spoken with in the past 60 days to see if anything has changed.

Now is a good time to check in to see if maybe they do want to do something before the start of the next year, or if they want to set up a call in January. Either way, you could have a revitalized opportunity.

Which prospects do you want to check back in with?



Give the Gift of a Lower Tax Burden



Throughout Q4, savvy financial managers are watching their bottom line closely. As good as a high net income sounds in theory, it comes with a significant tax bill. And no company wants to see all of their hard-earned dollars go down the tax tube.

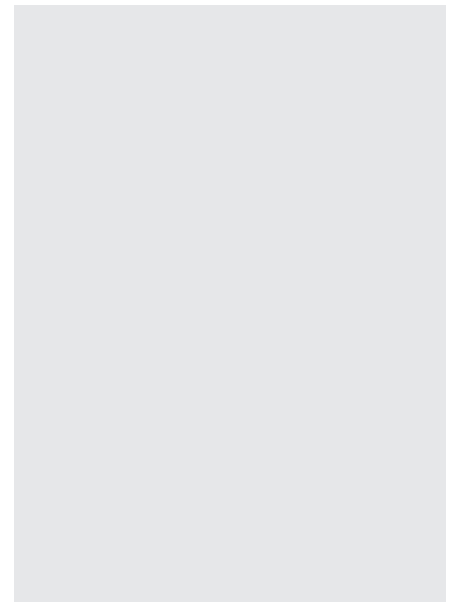
In privately held and small corporations, business owners will take actions in December to reduce their tax liability and avoid a higher tax bracket. That means they're looking for spending opportunities – which creates revenue opportunities for you.

Many managers will look for projects that can be completed before the end of the year. They are on a fast track to not just spend their money, but to get the work related to it completed. This is where selling products, managed monthly services, and small projects can be very successful.

Some executives will invest in projects that can be started and paid in full in December, even if they can't be completed until January or February. So, even if the project you recommend is bigger than the amount of time left in the year, you may still be able to move forward. Just have a good plan with a solid timeline.

**Make it a thoughtful gift.
The gift of money well spent.**

What projects, products or services can you offer that would best take advantage of year-end tax spend?





Wrap Up More Sales

Monitor your pipeline. The rule of thumb is to maintain 3 times your quota in your pipeline at all times. If it's looking thin, fill it up! It may mean putting in more hours, but it will get you closer to your Q4 number while preparing you for a fast start in January. Check your pipeline weekly — daily if you're an accountant by trade, like me!

Align with 6 people who can bring leads. Review your LinkedIn connections and identify 6 people who interact with your target micro-segment and network with them. Maybe they know someone who is looking to spend money this quarter. Remember to listen for leads to pass in return, too.

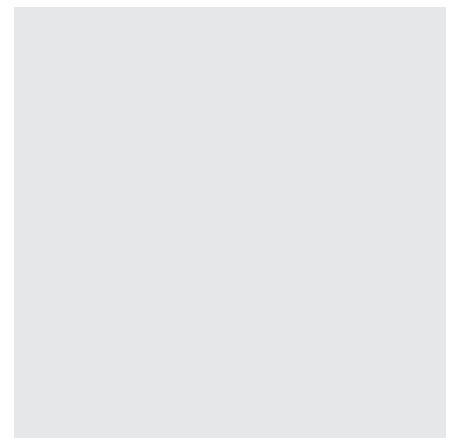
Ask for 2 more referrals. Referrals are the easiest way to get more business, yet the most frequently ignored prospecting strategy. Set a goal for yourself to ask for 2 referrals a week. That's a pretty easy goal to achieve.

Don't accept the first "no." Too many sales people have lost their persistence. Stay fully engaged with every prospect and client you've presented a proposal until you get a definitive "no thank-you." Then set an activity to check in with the contact again next quarter. You'll be shocked to see how this simple activity will improve your close ratio.

Be consistent. Regardless of your sales role, you need new opportunities. Schedule at least 2 hours every week to prospect and don't allow anything to keep you from it. Following up on marketing qualified leads, prospecting in a large account, and drop-by cold calling all count.

Have fun. Life is too short not to, and the more fun you're having, the more your prospects and clients will want to work with you. If selling isn't fun right now, step back and examine what's not working. (See Strategy #10 to liven things up with some Reindeer Games!)

Who are your top clients that you want to have strategic top-level meetings with?





Close the Year Strong

Even When It's Already December



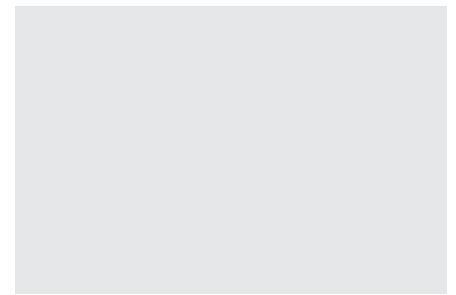
Don't toss in your stockings just yet. If it's December (or pretty darn close) and you're just picking up this ebook, or you're nowhere near your quota, don't panic. There are plenty of ways you can close end-of-year sales by New Year's Eve.

These are my favorite 5.

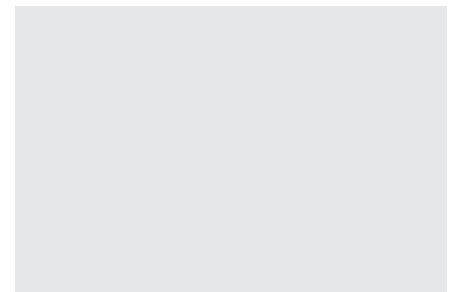
(Read through the rest of the ebook as some of the other strategies will apply, too.)

- 1. Check your forecast.** Identify the steps required to close every open proposal — then execute. Identify the hurdles holding any of your clients or prospects back from buying. Enlist your manager's and/or team's support if you need it.
- 2. Add just one more.** Look for opportunities to sell one more of something small or simple: one more PC, one more project, one more software licenses. Sell a bunch.
- 3. Make a list.** Review all the proposals you closed this year and make a list of things clients decided to "wait to do." Revisit and close them now.
- 4. Call your top 7 clients.** Conduct an annual review meeting with them. Identify your successes and look for last minute projects or products they could squeeze into this year.
- 5. Call every client you haven't talked to within the past 90 days.** Find out how they're positioned to start next year. Do they need your services now to be prepared for a fast start in January?

1. Who can help you close proposals and meet with more clients?



2. What's one more thing you can sell easily in December?



You can make Q4 a huge success — even if it's December.



Get Motivated with “Reindeer Games”

Everyone loves playing games during Q4, much more than working, so gamify your Q4 prospecting to get motivated. The objective of the game is to uncover new prospects with opportunities you can close quickly (or to jump-start January with a healthy sales funnel). So, make it fun.

These are a few of my favorites. Get creative and add some of your own!

Candy Jar. Every time a prospect tells you “no,” put a piece of candy, a nickel or even a small trinket in a jar. When you get to 10, the odds are on your side that you’ll reach a contact soon. You can watch the jar fill up and know that you’re getting closer to reaching someone who wants to talk with you.

Whiteboard Willy. Create a fun whiteboard chart with columns for the days of the week and rows for sales reps’ names. Each day, insert the number of people talked to and see who has the most. Give daily prizes to the winners — whether it’s dollar-store baubles or Starbucks gift cards.

Connections. Track all prospecting calls for a week and determine who made the most calls, connected with the most people, or set the most appointments. The loser buys coffee, doughnuts, or lunch for the team. Or, if the team achieves a specific number, the manager buys for everyone!

Luck of the Draw. On the back of several index cards, write the number of prospects you want to speak with. Mix up the cards, place them face down, have everyone choose one. Now, call until you reach that number. When you get to your number, you get a reward.

Leverage the season spirit and make prospecting fun.

1. What games will make prospecting fun and motivating for you?

2. What prize will you award yourself or your team that will be motivating?



7 Tactics That Will Jump-Start Q1

Put your eggnog down for a minute. We need to talk.

With all the focus on meeting your quota for Q4, it might be really tempting to put off thinking about January until next year. I can almost hear you thinking it, and I'm here to tell you:

Don't. Putting off Q1 is a big, huge mistake.

You start January with a new sales goal and a big, fat 0. If you start falling behind your sales goal in January, then, it can take months to catch up on your target. I don't know about you, but playing catch up on a sales goal doesn't sound like a fun way to spend the next year.

If you want a successful Q1, it starts in Q4, well before we flip our calendars to a new year.

A lot of what you do to get ready to have an awesome Q1 works well with the activities we've been talking about for closing the year strong in Q4. In fact, there are several strategies you use in Q4 to start building sales opportunities for January, and you can use them with the strategies we've already talked about to have a holly jolly Q4 and a happy new year.

Don't just wish for a Happy New Year — make it happen before Q4 even ends.



Here are 7 things you need to do in Q4 so that when January comes around, your pipeline is teeming with goodies.

- 1. Send holiday greetings.** Send an email to wish clients a happy holiday and set a meeting to plan for next year. Whether the meeting takes place now or in January, you're looking ahead for new sales opportunities. And, maybe there's one last thing they need help with this year.
- 2. Identify 25 companies you want as new clients next year.** Plan a targeted sales prospecting campaign to launch in January. Send LinkedIn invitations now to the key contacts in those accounts so you're already connected when you begin prospecting.
- 3. Set appointments now** for the last week of December and first two weeks of January to uncover first quarter opportunities. You'll be on your contacts' calendars when they arrive back from the holidays raring to go, and your calendar will already be fully booked.
- 4. Make a list of 10 people in your personal network** who can provide you exposure with your target market. Strategize together on how you can help each other next year. Make specific plans that you can each act on and set a joint revenue goal.
- 5. Identify the top one or two solutions** your new prospects find most interesting. Plan your first quarter prospecting and lead generation activities around them. Refresh your value proposition and set yourself apart from other sales reps.
- 6. Call 3 of your best clients and get testimonials** to use in lead generation, email campaigns, on your website, and in sales proposals. Drop by to get their approval and snap their picture — or even a video testimonial on your phone. You'll be starting the new year with fresh, new material for prospecting.
- 7. Learn from your biggest losses.** What happened? How can you turn it around for next year to avoid similar outcomes? Is there an opportunity to win them back? While losses are painful, there's valuable sales data to be had from them. You might also uncover new opportunities.

1. Which strategies are you going to use to set yourself up for success for Q1?

2. When will you do them?

KLA Group and 'Sales Magnet' Kendra Lee



Under Kendra Lee's direction, KLA Group has assisted business owners, marketing teams, and sales teams to:

- Drive new client acquisition more than **31% year-over-year**
- Penetrate small-medium business markets in just **6 weeks**
- Increase referrals more than **328% in just 7 weeks**
- Move from solution selling to consultative selling in only **9 months**
- Engage technical and non-sales people in uncovering new opportunities and **increasing annual revenue**

Established in 1995, KLA Group is a sales and marketing agency focused on helping small- and mid-market business companies generate more revenue by leveraging its expertise in lead generation, sales prospecting, and sales and marketing hiring and onboarding. KLA offers many ways to work with you from laser coaching and training on sales and marketing strategies to Do-It-For-You Lead Generation and Campaigns.

Kendra Lee has built a successful career as a top sales leader by consistently exceeding sales goals. She is a prospect attraction authority, sales expert, speaker, author and a business owner who knows how to shorten time to revenue in innovative ways.

After starting her sales career in accounting with IBM, Kendra founded KLA Group on the philosophy that sales is not an art, but a science that can be mastered.

Companies come to KLA because they trust our knowledge, guidance and strategies to increase revenue and grow their business. Through our unique Revenue Generating System, we provide you premium, white-glove solutions designed to create high-impact results.

Visit
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lead generation
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