



MAXIMIZE BUSINESS VALUE PODCAST - EPISODE 26 with Dean Ash Transcript

Announcer: 0:04

Welcome to the maximize business value podcast. This podcast is brought to you by mastery partners, where our mission is to equip business owners, to maximize business value so they can transition their business on their terms. Our mission was born from the lessons we've learned from over 100 business transactions, which fuels our desire to share our experiences and wisdom. So you can succeed. Now, here's your host CEO of mastery partners. Tom Bronson, [inaudible]

Tom Bronson: 0:36

Welcome to maximize business value a podcast for business owners who are passionate about building long-term sustainable value in their businesses. In this episode, I'd like to welcome our guest Dean Ash principal at 360 consulting. 360 is a consulting business that helps business owners define and execute sales strategy. I've known Dean and his business partners for several years. First is an introduction from a mutual friend. And then as a member of a Vistage group, we're both Vistage trusted advisors. And then as members of business navigators, a servant leadership organization based in balance. So in addition to his consulting practice, Dean is also our sales strategy master here at mastery partners. So, uh, if you're already a client of ours, you may have met Dean already. So welcome to maximize business value. Dean, tell us about three 60 consulting. All right. Thank you, Tom.

Dean Ash: 1:34

I really appreciate that, uh, that introduction, uh, we are a three 60 consulting we're, um, we're growth consultants and we work with, uh, CEOs, entrepreneurs, business owners to help them grow top line revenue through a lot of different engagement

models, all depending on what the unique needs of that business are , uh, you D and you do more than just the sales consulting piece. Don't you also have a sales recruiting, that kind of thing we do. We do. So we'll we like to say that we will assess your sales engine, build your sales engine, run your sales engineer , drive your sales engine and tune your sales engine. And so for sure, the recruiting piece and those kinds of things fit into the building, building the sales engine or building the sales infantry infrastructure for maximum performance. Wow . So you're like, you're like the carwash that also does the quick lobe you are . Exactly. That's exactly right. Sales quickly drive fast too. So let's see . So what's your background and why did you guys start three 60? Yeah. So , uh , I'm a career sales leader in the high technology industry companies like IBM Cisco systems, Polycomm Hewlett Packard. That was my corporate corporate career and I've run sales organizations , um , uh, locally or regionally, nationally And internationally globally. So , um , after flying 4 million miles on a map , just on American airlines in my career, I thought it would be kind of fun to , um, you know, to , uh , take some of that global knowledge and , uh , and methodologies that we , um, that we learned along the way and put them in play a little more, but a little bit more locally here in the Dallas Fort worth, North Texas area and , uh, and help , uh , uh , business owners and CEOs here. And so Chris and I, my business partner forum three 60 consulting about five years ago, he had a very similar experience in a different industry and , uh, and said, Hey, let's , uh, let's sleep in our own bed help , uh, you know, help , uh , folks like both of our dads who were entrepreneurs growing up , uh, be successful and put in place some of these , uh , strategies, methodologies, and capabilities , uh , in , uh , in, in, in businesses of a different

Tom Bronson: 3:57

That's awesome. That's a , it's always great to bring that level of expertise to , uh , to , to more entrepreneurial type businesses

Dean Ash: 4:05

And a little bit at times a little bit more on that we , uh, we really have two rules, right? Uh, we formed this from our, from the get go. We only work with companies that we know, we absolutely know we can help. And we only work with people we like , um, and that comes from our corporate.

Tom Bronson: 4:25

I'm glad I get a waiver on that. That's right. That's right. Yeah . You said 4 million miles out of America. You know, there was a time when people used to think that air travel was glamorous, of course, free COVID, but anybody like yourself, like me, who has spent that many miles in the air knows that it is absolutely no fun. So we're going to , we're going to focus on sales as it relates to improve business value. So of course the obvious place to start is sales growth. Why is it so important to have a strategic growth strategy?

Dean Ash: 5:05

Yeah. A great question, Tom, and for sure. And you know, this well in your business, if you're not growing, you're dying, if you're not growing, you're shrinking. Right. And , um, and so having a strategic growth strategy for us means that you know where you're going and you, you know, the direction you're , you're, you're taking , uh, the company , uh, you're solid on your business strategy. You have your growth strategy tied to that. And then all the decisions that you're making around what customer do I need to be focused on? You know, what do I need to be doing from a , uh , from a sales process perspective, what my unique selling proposition, all pivots off your, your growth strategy, the target that you're going after. And , um, and , um , and it emanates, you know, kind of from that, we'd like to say , uh , the old saying that, you know, if you don't know where you're go , where you're going any road, if you there. So your , your growth strategy is the one that is the map, the blueprint of where you're going to go. And the other key thing about it is not just having it, but sticking to it because we work with a lot of companies that have a strategy, does your, and , um , and, you know, let's , let's pick this approach this month and we're gonna, Oh , well, that didn't work. So we're gonna pick this one next month, pick a strategy and stick to it, put a lot of wood behind the arrow and , uh , and give it time to take root take seed. And you're not only in your sales department, but also letting it show up

Tom Bronson: 6:36

Your customers. You know, I find that a lot of times with , with not only growth strategies and that, that is a particularly profound point that, that you've got to define

the strategy and then relentlessly pursue it. Right. Too many people give up , uh , when they think that it's not delivering the results that they, that they are looking for. And you know, how many times do people give up right before that break ? Right , right.

Dean Ash: 7:06

Breakthrough. That's, that's exactly what the other thing too, on that time , and you help businesses with this , uh, that we benefit from as a consultant, but making sure your business strategy is solid and your business plan is solid, helps you be relentlessly focused on your sales strategy or growth strategy, because if your business strategy is moving around, you know, then it's going to be really, really difficult to peg a growth strategy or sales strategy off of something that's shaky.

Tom Bronson: 7:37

Yeah. You know, the, the, you're absolutely right. You've got to have all the underpinnings in order to have a reasonable growth strategy, but , uh , I would add to what you've said, that, that a, you know, you know what we do, and of course our audience does too. We help businesses prepare for , uh, their ultimate exit strategy. And the, the really the only way to maximize the value of the business is to have it growing. It is so very important to have growth. If you take two very similar companies with very similar outcomes , uh, say they're the roughly the same size, roughly the same EBIT da, but this one has been growing at 30% a year for five years. And this one has been flat for five years. This one will command a much higher multiple, because they've got the growth trajectory. Uh, you know, the, the worst possible scenario is to try and sell a business when the sales are declining. Uh , now the only exception to that in my opinion is if you're in a declining market, let's say that you're in a business that's declining and you're declining at a rate at a pace much slower than the market, then that by nature actually says that you've got to grow strategy, and you're trying to , uh, trying to milk the market for as much as you can. And so, so that would be the only caveat to that. But otherwise, I mean, a growing company always commands a higher, multiple on exit than a company that's flat or declining

Dean Ash: 9:15

To that consistent , consistent with growth is also important. That's proven year over year, over year. That means you have a system that means you, you , uh, you know, you have execution. That means you have the right people in place, the right processes in place, you're sharp from a , a knowledge of your customer and your market segment that you're serving. Um, that is , um, you know, that obviously I'm not telling you anything you don't know, but that drives business value , uh , tremendous .

Tom Bronson: 9:46

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. You know , that, that is a key, you know, we tell folks that if you want to be able to maximize the outcome at time of exit, and by the way, a hundred percent of every business will transition whether we want it to or not. I mean, it's , we have an expiration date. And so, so every business will transition. If you want to maximize the outcome of that transition, you've got to have demonstrable year over year growth. And that's why it takes a lot of time. You know, we get, when we engage with our clients , uh, we only engage with clients that have at least two years, and that's almost too short. You need to have at least a three to five year runway. Our longest term clients have, you know, 14 or 15 year runway . Uh , but at at least a three to four year, because you've got to have that, that year over year growth trailing 12 months and say that you've been flat for five years, and then you jumped 30% in the next year. Is that sustainable? That just asks that just begs all kinds of questions at closing time. And so a such a, such a great point, you know, you mentioned their execution is the key to sales growth. You know, you have to have the right systems, the right people, the right strategy. I see too many businesses where they have two out of three of those , uh, you know, systems, people strategy two out of three. Why is it so important to have all three of those things in order to fire on all cylinders?

Dean Ash: 11:15

Yeah . I mean, you , you , it's a great point. I mean, it's just like your car, right? If you have, you know, eight cylinders or six cylinders or whatever it is in your car, if one of them's not firing, you're , you know, you're kind of spitting and ,

Tom Bronson: 11:27

And , you know,

Dean Ash: 11:28

Even moving at a maximum capacity down , uh, down the road , um, you know, having, I mean, you know, I believe we believed that , uh, you have to have all, you have to have the people, you have to have strategy processes, tools, right? All of those things need to be a need to be humming to , uh, to create maximum performance in your, in your business. And for sure in the sales departments , you know, good people having good people is , uh , is, is super, super important. So recruiting , uh , hiring process, those kinds of things are important, but you drop them into a , an environment where there's no onboarding, there's no sales process, there's no sales age . Uh , you know, we're go, Hey, go figure it out kid. Right. Um, they're just not going to be successful. Right? You also may have all the right systems in place. Great sales process, great sales AIDS , great CRM, right. We know exactly what our unique selling proposition is for our clients, but we're dropping, you know , um, people, you know, people that are not true salespeople , not true business development , uh , individuals , um, you know, into that system, they are not going to be successful. So it takes all of those , um , ingredients working in tandem to , uh, to maximize the success of the , uh , of the, of your program .

Tom Bronson: 12:51

Yeah. You gotta have all three components. I mean, sometimes if you have a really great strategy and the right people, they can overcome some of the things , but , but if you really want longterm sustainable growth, you've got to take the time to make sure that you've got the right CRM. You've got the right sales process. You know , you nail this stuff down so many times, I see a business owners hire somebody from within an industry because they just know every of all they know everybody, this is perfect. Well, but if they know everybody and you, haven't given them a , a system to be able to sell your products or services, and you don't have a great strategy, it's just not enough. You might have a great salesperson , but if you don't have the other components, I just don't think that it's possible to grow.

Dean Ash: 13:39

Well . The other thing too is if you hire someone from, within, within the industry, and I'm not saying you shouldn't do that, but if you do that and you're hiring for their Rolodex,

right. Um, you know, once that role would X has done, you know, they, haven't proven that they have the skills to go out and acquire new customers and new customer acquisition, right. Is the, you know, is really the underpinnings of , of a good growth strategy for sure. A sustainable growth strategy. And so it takes more than, you know , hiring someone with a Rolodex, right. You have to have, to your point, all the processes, the lead generation engines, et cetera, to , uh, to new, to , to feed your , um, your , uh , new client acquisition engine.

Tom Bronson: 14:23

Yeah. You know, we had an , in my last business , um, we had three different sales teams. We have the key accounts, which these are the guys working on the big deals, right? Big restaurant chains, big , uh , water groups and whatnot. Then you had your, your hunters, the , uh , the new account guys. Then they were responsible for brand accounts in the door. But then we had our gathers , uh, which were folks that we call them our CR team. They were responsible for relentlessly cross into our base. And so we were able to drive growth with that selling to people that we know. But, but as you said, you got to feed these people cause eventually you've crossed, sold as much as you possibly can. You got to have new names coming in the door , uh , in order to , uh, to be able to have that sustainable,

Dean Ash: 15:12

That we would call it, you know, kind of a land team and expand

Tom Bronson: 15:15

The team . Right .

Dean Ash: 15:19

[inaudible] kind of getting away from what I think is, is sometimes net negative terms around, you know , uh, hunters and farmers, right. Um, you know, a land and expand is , is the way I like it. So you're , you know, you have, you have , uh , you know , have individuals that are uniquely gifted and skilled to , uh , to go, you know , uh , bring new customers into the fold, right. So land, and then we have other, you know, other teams or other individuals that are uniquely skilled to take that, that new customer and expand

the relationship over to your point, cross selling , um, you know, go going deeper from a share of wallet, point of view, those types of things. And , um, it's , uh , it , and those are two, oftentimes two different skill sets of individuals. So you have to hire, right, but you also have two different sales processes , uh, whether you're landing

Tom Bronson: 16:10

Expanding . I love that I'm going to steal that from you land appropriate credit . So you're right. I think that sales is part art and part science. So the art may come naturally to some people, you know, the gift of being able to assess a situation and read what's going on, but, but science needs to be learned. And there are lots of sales processes out there. Uh , and most of them that I've seen kind of have the same elements in one form or another, you know, you meet, you get to know 'em , you, you ask lots of good questions, you know, then you will , you know, whatever all the way down toward close . I mean, most of them have those. Are there any processes in your opinion that are better than others kind of across industries? Yeah .

Dean Ash: 16:57

Yeah. So we, we , um, work with companies that are mostly business to business oriented that have, you know , somewhat of a complex, you know , sell , right. So, you know, typically the sales process or sales cycle takes multiple months if not sometimes a year of loss . Right. And , uh , in situations like that, we ascribe to, you know , a consultative selling model, right? So that's a , a consultant that selling model goes through this many of the steps that you just, you just talked about, right. Where there's a rapport building, there's a great interview or discovery that , uh , that takes, that takes place to not only understand and find out the pain points, but what's underneath the pain points, the , the , the pain behind the pain, right. You know, the risk and consequences of stay in that pain or the benefits and rewards of , um, of migrating out of that pain to a, a new, a new situation, then we'll have more of a, a presentation or demonstration or a proposal type of phase. Um, there's typically a negotiation that , that goes on as well and a closed that's typically the consultative selling model that we will , uh , ascribe to all pivoted around the customer. Right? So , um, if we're focusing on the needs that our customers have and the outcomes that we through our products and services can deliver our customer is the hero of the story. Uh, always, and we're merely

a guide as a salesperson to navigate the customer through the terrain, to get them what they need. Right. We've see a lot of companies when we show up that , um, that are very product centric and not cut your customer centric from their sales process. So, you know, we see them and we call it the, a they show up and throw up. Right.

Tom Bronson: 18:50

So

Dean Ash: 18:52

Dan, let me tell you all about my products, my services, and how good we are, right. Oh , who are you? What do you need? The , uh , you know , it's the, it's the product centric , uh , approach, which Really all about me And my product and my, and who I am, and , uh , and, and not about the customer. And , uh , and we just believe selling in the 21st century selling in this day and age has to be customer centric cause everything else from an engagement model, point of view, as the customer at the center ,

Tom Bronson: 19:25

I love that the customer is the hero and you are, the guide are a stalwart listeners and folks who listen to this podcast regularly are gonna recognize branding in that I did. Exactly. Yeah . I did two podcasts on that and I'm happy to report. I went to a three 60 DFWs website the other day in preparation for this, and you guys have really done a great job of story branding your , uh , your website . So thank you. Thank you.

Dean Ash: 19:57

It's constantly improving. Right. And we have to constantly sharpen the saw.

Tom Bronson: 20:01

Yeah. So speaking of sharpening, that's it , what a great segue. Right . So talk a little bit about sales training and why it's necessary to, even if you have great salespeople that you should constantly be sharpening the saw. Yeah.

Dean Ash: 20:22

You know, there's an old saying , uh , if you had three hours to cut down a tree, I'm going to spend two hours sharpening my salt . Right. So, I mean, it's , uh , I can To attribute that to someone. I can't remember exactly. Wait, who said that? Right. But think about everybody that's at the top of their profession, right. Whether you're , uh , you're a professional athlete , uh , know football player or something like that , um, you know, what you do, right? You spend all week practicing, right. You all, all, all week, you know, running plays, you know, working out those kinds of things, all to have maximum performance on , uh , on the weekend or Saturday or Sunday, depending on if you're college football pro or whatever. Um, that's what, you know, from a sales profession perspective, we have to do the same thing. We constantly needed need to be updating our game. Sharpening the saw and sales training is a , is what is one element by which you , uh, you , you do that. And , uh, and I call that the tuning, the engine piece of, of , uh, of our process, if you will. So , um, uh, one thing we do see sometimes though, is , um, is , uh , some business owners think, well, all we have to do is train our train, our , uh , our people and , uh, and training is super and super important, but it's not the silver bullet at every, at every time, sometimes we need to work on the process, the , the messaging, the systems, everything else that we talked about earlier, but keeping that engine performing at a high, high capacity, that's where sales training comes in and needs to continue. That needs to be a continual part of , um, of a , of a business strategy or sales department, just like it is with your car, just like it is with professional athletes.

Tom Bronson: 22:11

Uh, I could not agree with you more completely. I , you know, too many times I've heard from business owners, well, my products are great. They should sell themselves. We just need people to take orders out there. And the reality is, is that , uh , sales is a learned skill. It's not necessarily natural. Uh, and, and the more you invest in education of your salespeople on processes on, on , uh, on customer needs on, on really kind of , uh, how your products solve customer problems. Um, and, and most importantly, relentlessly following them process is , is so very important. So, so I , I cringe every time I hear, Oh, our products are great, or we just need people a little take orders. That's always ask , well, how's that working for you? Right .

Dean Ash: 23:03

The other thing on this is going, having a solid , um, you know, a consultative selling process and a sales training, you know , methodologies and tools that underpin that gives you confidence to close , uh, something like 72 or 73% of sales professionals do not ask for the order. You're not asked to close. And , um , and so going through, you know , uh , an appropriate sales process, having the training that , uh, that , uh , that underpins that that's very customer centric gives you the con the , the, the, the mental framework, the mental fortitude, Right. The confidence to ask for the order, because you've earned it, you've earned the right to do that. And we believe it's your professional obligation as a salesperson to ask for the order. Yes. Yes. So, so very important. And you're right there , there, there are so many folks out there that get it all the way to the five yard line, and then don't ask for the order, you know, and , um , I I've, I've had the privilege of watching a privileged. Sometimes it's been a burden to watch lots of calls where I can then give feedback and whatnot, and I hear customers or perspective customers giving all the buying signals, and it gets all the way to the end and the, and the sales rep rather than asking for the order right now, going, well, let me , uh , let me make a proposal and I'll circle back with you , you know, sometime next week, what exactly you're buying it back. He's ready to write you a check. So we're talking with Dean Ash , let's take a quick break back to 30 seconds.

Announcer: 24:55

Every business will eventually transition some intermediate employees and managers, and some externally to third party buyers, mastery partners, equips business owners to maximize business value so they can transition their businesses on their terms. Using our four step process. We start with a snapshot of where your business is today. Then we help you understand why you want to be and design a custom strategy to get you there. Next, we help you execute that strategy with the assistance of our amazing resource network. And ultimately you'll be able to transition your business on your terms. What are you waiting for more time, more revenue, if you want to maximize your business value, it takes time. Now it's that time get started today by checking us out at www.masterypartners.com or email us at info@masterypartners.com,

Tom Bronson: 25:50

Having to humans should be allowed to have a, he is the sales strategy master here at mastery partners in principle at three 60 consulting, a sales confer consulting firm. And we're talking about sales is the driver for business value. So before the break, we talked about training and processes, uh, how important is it, uh, to really understand you mentioned this earlier, your unique selling proposition or USP and how you differentiate your products and services, how important is it to, to really understand that?

Dean Ash: 26:24

Yeah, well, you know what I mean, that you're knowing your unique selling proposition is how you create value or the products and services that you deliver to the, in, in the eyes of the customer, right? So that is how you differentiate yourself, how you create a margin between your Other options, Sort of dues. The other alternative might be doing nothing, your biggest competitor, right? And so your unique selling proposition helps you communicate the, uh, that differentiation, that reason to move the reason to buy and reason to buy with you. Um, and, uh, and it allows you to communicate that very succinctly, it starts with really identifying and understanding the needs that you, that you address, the issues that you address For customers right now Features and functions and things like that. It's really focused in, on the needs that you address. Once you understand that, and you understand who your targeted buyer is As the characteristic of the, of the You're, you're focused on, we call it your ideal client profiles. Then you could start, um, listing out and working through why you're uniquely equipped to be able to solve those needs in a way that maximize a client's values. And that's, that's the underpinning underpinnings of a, of a USP that's well-written. Yeah, it's funny. A lot of times a management team spend time to define what their differentiator is, and they might be able to articulate it. You know, it's one of the questions we ask when we do an assessment business is what is your USP? And then I always did. And if they can articulate it many times, they stumble through it, but if they can articulate it, I ask them. And if I walk out into your sales bullpen, how many people will be able to articulate that to me, and then they go, Oh, right. And so, so it goes back to that whole training thing. Once you find what that is, you know, every sales person in the business should be able to answer that without any hesitation. Right. Actually I would argue that everyone in the company should, should be because I'll sometimes We'll go into a business and it's, and then there's, and some of our onboarding, you know, there's, there's, um, uh,

representatives from all parts of the company, you know , Okay. Who's, who's who who's in sales. Right. And, you know, The , the five guys over here or whatever, you know, raise their hand. And I'm like, really, You know, everyone That represents this company is in sales, so they all need to understand the USP. Right?

Tom Bronson: 29:11

Yeah. So anyway, that's , that's, everybody's job is sales job is sales. And , you know, it's not all , like , you might not be actually selling something to a customer, but , but if you interact with that customer, you're responsible for retaining that customer. That's exactly right. And often times we have,

Dean Ash: 29:31

Yeah . Plant tours or site visits, or we're bringing subject matter expertise in from a , from another area of the company, another department, they need to how their records , Any of that , that expertise In a way that lands on , uh, on the customer needs and , uh, and supports and builds up and see mats are USB .

Tom Bronson: 29:53

Absolutely. Absolutely. I'm also a huge fan of KPIs or key performance indicators. I think they should be in every business. I know you're a believer in that. What types of KPIs do you recommend for sales?

Dean Ash: 30:08

Yeah. And I mean, clearly , um, you know, the ultimate, you know, is revenue and revenue growth and those kinds of things. So obviously that's, that's a , that's important, However, that those are You mirror a metric, if you will. Uh, and doesn't give you a lot of , um, uh, foreshadowing into how well we're doing. I like to say , uh, you know, from a KPI perspective or a metrics perspective, we need to be defining metrics Groups that are more leading indicators, more metrics that can Help us make decisions Faster before we run out a year And miss our , um , you know, miss our revenue plan. It's kind of like a , the, the , uh , the baseball team , uh, if they don't have , uh , if I know that I'm losing the baseball game in the third inning, I've got a lot more strategy moves as a manager to , uh , to move a mover maneuver around. Um, but if I only know, I'm , I'm, I'm , I'm losing

the game and the bottom of the ninth , right. I, you know, I'm , I'm relying on that one pitch hitter to maybe, you know, you know, knock it out of the park for me. And that's a , that's a, that's a big one. So leading, leading indicators, which are oftentimes , uh , metrics around activities that are early in the sales process , uh, that , uh , we know if we, if we performed well and In particular steps in the sales process That , um , we know our likelihood of closing those It's opportunities are closed closing that set of our pipeline. And the time , I mean , we've set out , uh , will , uh , you know, will drive the success we need from a , you know, from an overall business plan perspective. So KPI , Those are unique for each, each Company , I believe, but , um, our perspective , uh , and , and our approach would be, find , find , uh, several , uh, leading indicators , KPIs that , uh, are activity-based and , uh, and allow us to , um, to predict the , uh, success, our success rate, and , uh, evaluate our pipeline strength through those , uh, those Early indicators.

Tom Bronson: 32:21

Yeah. I buy a huge fan of that, you know, lead, lead, conversion rates, number of calls. I mean, even just number of calls, right? I mean, those are the things that you can look at. I can tell you that in my last business, you know, when we came into the last month of every quarter, um, I asked our sales to give me by person, what is the, what is the absolute commit number, you know, before the end of the quarter. And, and of course after many, many quarters of looking at that data and analyzing that data, I knew exactly to a person, what percentage they were going to hit of that when they gave their no miss, right. And everybody missed it by the way. But , uh, you know, I, I , one just stands out in my mind. Uh, he was so consistent. He delivered every time, 70%. And so, so I'm adding up the numbers and I can apply the percentage because I know what this guy does , but the only way to know that is to be relentlessly tracking that , uh , as a KPI and it never pissed me off because I knew how to really apply the metric to the number I was getting. Uh , and so, so if you're not measuring those things and you get to that point where it's critical and you need to drive a number, and you don't know how to apply what you've already learned, or you haven't gathered that data before, then you can be in a world of hurt because you missed by a big number. When an actuality, if you'd been tracking that you should be able to, to know where you're going to be .

Dean Ash: 33:54

The other thing on that very topic too , is you also know the historic Stan , sandbaggers the person that says, you know, I'm going to hit this number and they come in and double that, or 50% of that. And I, and a lot of some business owners go well, that's awesome. I'll take that. And I'm like, you really don't, you need to , we need to be in a pretty tight band, because if they're, if they're saying one thing and consistently delivering 50 to a hundred percent more , uh , what does that do to your, your, your resource planning, you know, your , your operational capabilities, et cetera . You're not able to actually accurately forecast and plan out what capacity you need, et cetera. You may either over capacity have too much capacity or not enough capacity. And it all depends on forecast .

Tom Bronson: 34:41

So I , I completely agree that , uh, you know, the whole capacity planning thing, we go through an exercise with our clients that we do a capacity analysis, you know, by department, what are we capable of? And if we did have this kind of growth that we're looking for, are we capable of actually delivering a product to the customer? So, so forecasting accuracy drives more than just sales. It should drive even the operating

Dean Ash: 35:06

All of your decision downstream decision , right ?

Tom Bronson: 35:09

Yeah. Some of those have long lead times as we all know. Right? Yeah . So let's get into one of those controversial topics, sales compensation, you know, always my favorite topics. I can't tell you how many times I have folks calling and asking me about how we need to overhaul our sales compensation or , uh, or it's just not working or what, you know , give me a standard. Are there any magic bullets sales compensations out there that you can share will be a first at all? I'm going to write this and you're going to hear it here. First folks, is there any magic bullet sales compensation that just works anywhere ?

Dean Ash: 35:48

Yeah. These are probably my two favorite, one of my two favorite questions, you know, what's the best compensation plan. Right. And I'm about to answer that question. The second most common question I get is what's the best CRM, right. And I'll tell you the answer to that. One is the one you use. Right.

Tom Bronson: 36:08

And that you can relentless relentlessly and force it to you. Exactly, exactly. Right.

Dean Ash: 36:13

So, you know, compensation models, um, and here's our guidance, a principle on compensation models. A good compensation plan is one where, um, when not if, but when a good sales person completely knocks it out of the park and exploited both the sales person and the business owner, or the CEO and business, or related in a static, right. So said another way it drives the right behavior that allows a company to, to, to hit the metrics, the business volumes, you know, the, the business plan that they are, they are driving, which means that unless you have a static business plan, you have to look at your compensation plan every year. Right. We, uh, we, uh, highly recommend and actually mandated in our infrastructure engagements that you have a written compensation plan that it's, that it's for a one year term and that the sales rep and the business owner, uh, or head of sales signs it, right. So it's very clear on what I'm on. What's laid out. We also are a big fan of, um, we would call 50, 50, roughly 50 50 compensation plans, right? So there's a 50, 50% base component and 50%, um, you know, variable compensation component to a component to get to your, uh, your target earnings. Um, and also, uh, a, um, a compensation model that is completely uncapped. Right? And, uh, anytime you put a cap on something you're going to lose your best salespeople, right? So those are some, some, some just high level principles that we would come in to, as we're thinking about compensation models. Uh, but every company that we work with, we would typically, depending on that season, that they're in and what they're trying to do, you know, we'll have, um, you know, some, some unique levers we pull and we'll put into place from a, uh, when we do this

Tom Bronson: 38:24

Compensation models or compensation plans. So,

Dean Ash: 38:28

So it's gotta drive behavior. It does, it has to, it has to drive behavior that think of that. Is this the way a business owner, entrepreneur CEO tells the sales department what's important,

Tom Bronson: 38:44

Right, right, right. Behavior that you want is really driven by that strategy. If we go back upstream behind it , if you know what you want to accomplish, and then the behaviors that are needed to get there, then your compensation plan should drive those behaviors. And that's it . There you go. It's the simple strategy. This is what we do is super simple. It's super easy by numbers exactly. By numbers. That's it. So let's talk a little bit about your business. What are different types of engagements that you offer depending on client need?

Dean Ash: 39:20

Yeah. So we kind of talked about the , um, the , the , uh, the , um, assess your engine, build your into , and , um, uh, run your engine and tune the engine. So ,

Tom Bronson: 39:31

Um, will you engage at any one of those levels or , yeah,

Dean Ash: 39:35

we, we, we, we know that all of those need to take place. Right , right. Um, you know , if a, if a company already has a really Solid sales infrastructure, they have a good sales team. They have, you know, a great CRM they have in place, good compensation plan , compensation model, et cetera. Um, and so we'd call the engine is, is there. Then , uh , we might engage with them on the , uh, on the drive, the drive, the engine piece, because just like you were, you know, you were saying, just go, you have a good compensation plan and good sales sales process does not mean the engine's gonna go to , um, run itself around the, around the track. It needs greatly sales leadership to go keep people on task clear, any objection, sometimes getting the sales reps out of their own heads and getting it back into, back into the game, holding people accountable, again, driving

the engine. And that's just really, really good sales leadership , uh, to be able to do that. Some companies, they need the engine bill . I mean, they really do. And most companies that we engage with it either needs to be completely rebuilt or , um, or built from scratch. And so , um, we'll lay all that in some companies just need another, an outside set of eyes on , uh, on the , uh, the growth engine, right on the sales department. And, you know, we'll come in and , um, and , uh, you know, go through a 16 point inspections of , uh, of the , uh, of the sales department and make recommendations that either they can employ us to go implement or they can do it themselves or whatnot. Um, and then , um, uh, and then on the , we talked a little bit about some of the training elements that we'll do, we call that the tune, the engine, right. Uh, and , uh , and sometimes that ongoing, just keeping , um , you know, keeping the saw sharp, right? Keeping people on point , uh , new people that abroad the business also need to be on boarded correctly in train correctly, You know, we'll , uh, we'll engage to do that as well. You also mentioned that Earlier, just a, we have a whole recruiting Engine B because, you know , putting, finding the right salespeople Well with the right behavioral profiles Or , um, that are , uh, keenly attuned to , uh , hunting Or , uh , or landing, if you will, like we talked about earlier or account management, you know, farming or expanding , um, you know, we'll recruit the right, the right people for you, You , and , uh, and put them in play and , um , you know, in our building , uh, building the engine process. So while you're, so while you're in your hiring process, you actually use an assessment tool. Yeah. Yeah. And we believe, I mean,

Speaker 2: 42:25

Hey, look, you're hiring salespeople , right. I mean ,

Dean Ash: 42:27

The , you know , um, you know, that they can sell it , Are you pretty, pretty good? That doesn't mean they're , they're good. That just means they're . And so we try to put as much science into the , uh, the , uh, the process as possible. And , um, and in that recruiting, you know , part we'll , you know, we'll define an ideal candidate profile and the behavioral styles that absolutely need to be in place for that particular job. Right. That particular role in the , uh, in the sales department. And then we will , uh, we will have candidates take an assessment and we'll line it up to that , uh, the ideal client profile .

And , uh , and that is that's part of the, you know, clearly we'll do the, you know, the, the , uh , the interview questions and all those kinds of things, but it's just one piece of scientific data that's , uh , added into the mix.

Tom Bronson: 43:21

Yeah. Back in 25 years ago , uh , when I was running a , uh, after our business was acquired by a big publicly traded company, I was running a sales group that had about 350 audits at its max , um, that we used to use a technique , uh , in the end, when we were absolutely convinced that we had the right person just before we made them an offer, we would, we would tell them that we were going decline hiring them . So I'm afraid you're not a good fit for this. Uh, and depending on how they answered that question was whether or not we would actually hire them. Cause if they, if they bucked up and defended and said, yeah , so what do you think of that technique? Wow. I hadn't heard that one. That's a 25 years.

Dean Ash: 44:09

It can , um , yeah , It's a, it's a great real world way Of how do you and subject Should handle it. Right. Yeah . So, you know, and so what's the, what's the last thing that happens before close objections. Right, right , right . So , um, so to me, I hadn't, I hadn't, I've never heard that technique before. Right. But that's a great Way for, to see how their objection handling student skills , uh, uh , look at a gauge of emotional intelligence as well.

Tom Bronson: 44:40

Yeah. Yeah. I , I , I used to love that the , uh, you know, we would say, yeah, I just don't think you're a good fit. So I think we're going to pass and then you shut up and let them react. And, and, and, and very rarely when we thought we had the right person, they would say, okay , well, you know, thanks for the time. Well, guess what, they, we were right on the cusp of hiring them. And that last thing that we ask caused us to not hire them.

Dean Ash: 45:06

Exactly. I'm now taking notes on that one. So that's a good, that's good.

Tom Bronson: 45:12

Excellent. I can't remember where it came from. It was a, it was a possibly part of a process that we were using back in the day. But, uh, but that was an interesting question. And I have used it, uh, uh, many times since. And so, so, uh, what sets 360 apart from other sales? If I, if I Googled right now, I guess I can go to the old Google box and, and, uh, and Google sales consultants, you know, there would be probably millions and millions of, of things. Uh, what sets three 60 apart from other sales consultants?

Dean Ash: 45:45

Yeah. No, thanks for that, Tom. It's a couple of things here. One, um, every one of us in our, our, for our 20 plus year, uh, sales leader, bedrooms. So we're not someone that has, you know, bought a franchise or, um, you know, um, um, you know, bought a, uh, got certified on a, some kind of technique and, um, and, or bringing, you know, bringing it into a, into a business, we've actually had a target on our backs. We've had to, you know, to deliver, roll up our sleeves and deliver results. Uh, and so that's now we approach every, you know, every engagement is, you know, it's our own, I mean, we, we own the number, we own the results. And, uh, and it's still telling you what to do. We roll up our sleeves and help you get it done. Right. And I think that, that is that's when Chris and I formed the company, that was a big, big, big part of what we wanted to do when, um, you know, as we started growing from, uh, you know, three 60 consulting, uh, adviser perspective, um, is that, uh, we're not just gonna tell people what to do. We roll up our sleeves and put our expertise into play with the company and own it, right? So we're, we're just super passionate about sales. We're super passionate about every business that we, uh, that we can get engaged with, which is why those are two guiding principles were so important, and we absolutely have to know we can help you. Uh, and, uh, we also just, we have to like you as well. So our, um, our, our buyer persona, if you will, for my ideal customer is a, um, is a CEO business or entrepreneur that has, uh, that has been humbled by trying to solve their sales department issues by themselves and are, are looking for, and ready for, and with accepting, uh, expert outside help that we can get them to the next level.

Tom Bronson: 47:49

Awesome. So if you're listening and paying attention to folks, you heard the unique selling proposition there, and , uh , I love your guiding principles, but I also love that it's one thing to teach kind of academically, right. But it's another thing to roll up your sleeves and get involved and live it daily. And I love that about you guys. And so, so one last business question, this podcast is all about maximizing business value. So what is the, if you were talking with a business owner, what is the one most important thing you recommend business owners do to build value in their business?

Dean Ash: 48:23

I'll tell you what is , um, uh, uh, build your , um, your organization or , or leadership team such that you can start elevating yourself to , uh , to a spot where you can work. You're working on the business versus being mired in , in the business, right? And so defining those, the functions of your business, clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of each one of those functions and bring in either a hire to , uh , um, uh, empower whatever that is, those individuals to operate those roles or in inside of those roles or responsibilities. So that the company, when you decide to , uh, to walk away from it in whatever shape, form, or fashion, the company will thrive and not miss a beat. So , uh , and Tom, I know that's , that's what you do, and you're , you're in your business to , um , to help companies and business owners get, get ready for that inevitable, you know , inevitable exit, but that's, that would be that, that , uh, that's , that would be my recommendation. And of course, us at three 60 consulting, we can take on your , um, your , your growth piece, if , um, if you don't have that one in place,

Tom Bronson: 49:39

All of that . Well , I expected to hear a sales role in there, but you're absolutely right on her dependency. And being able to reduce on her dependency on a business is, is one of the absolute keys to building longterm value. And whether it's in the sales department, or whether it's an operations or finance or whatever , being able to pull yourself away from that and hiring the right team. I love that advice. So, so our , our regular listeners know that I always ask a bonus question. And so that is what personality trait has gotten you into the most trouble over the years.

Dean Ash: 50:12

So , um, I am a eternal optimist. I mean, I literally , um , just, I love serving people. I love helping, you know, business owners and helping, you know, be successful right. Or take that next step in success. And so with that, I, you know, I guess that the , the, the trait that's gotten me in the most trouble is, you know , all over commit myself. Right. I will, you know, it's like I did, because I just see the potential and the business potential in the individual potential in, you know , what can be done. And , uh, and I don't like to say, no, I like to say, let's, let's roll up the sleeves, lock arms and get, you know, get it, get it done. Right. And , um, and so that's sometimes gets me, gets me in trouble at my, at our firm. It's like, you know, we've got another one, we've got another opportunity . So it's like, well, yes, we are. We're going to go, we're going to bring another, someone else said we're going to do, you know, whatever. But , um, you know, so that's, it's just that the terminal eternal optimists, and as a career sales leader, you have to be there . Right.

Tom Bronson: 51:24

Exactly. All right . So how can our listeners and viewers get in touch with you Dean ?

Dean Ash: 51:29

So w e're, our website is, u h, is, u m, u h, u h, three 60 consulting, d fw.com. And me personally, I'm Dean at three 60 consulting, d nw.com. U h, feel free to reach out anytime, obviously go to the master mastery partners website I'm listed on, on that as well. And, u m, and also, u m, on our website, there is a free of charge, a 10 question assessment that you can click on take, and you'll get an immediate, u m, response back, u h, as a benchmark in your company against 10 top, u h, sales, u m, u h, sales i n growth areas that we know need to be important and some suggestions of what you need to do. So that's all free of charge. U h, so jump on the website and benchmark your company for you. It takes you about 15 minutes. What a great bonus. That's awesome. G o a nd d o t hat. A nd that's an easy way to engage. So, man, this has been so much, I've really enjoyed having you on here. So thanks D ean for being our g uest today, you can find him, as he said, three 60 consulting, v fw.com or he's on our website. If you go to about us and you can find him,

Tom Bronson: 52:47

Send it to his LinkedIn profile, you can get in touch with him that way. And as always, you can always call me and I'm happy to take the next one . Then this is the maximize business value podcast, where we give practical advice to business owners on how to build longterm sustainable value in their business. Be sure to tune in each week and follow us wherever you found this podcast. New followers of me love comments, and we respond to all the comments. So until next time, I'm Tom Bronson reminding you to focus on sales growth while you maximize business.

Announcer: 53:29

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