

Growing Sales and Marketing: Key Issues for Business Owners Growing from 5 to 20 Employees



John Scroggins

As a business evolves from a lean team of five employees to a more structured organization with twenty, the sales and marketing dynamics change dramatically. The shift requires a more strategic approach, systems thinking, and a deeper investment in brand and customer experience. While early-stage companies often rely on hustle and informal processes, growing demands standardization, delegation, and alignment across departments.

As Baton Exchange has continued to grow with the volume of mentoring matches and geographically (a national footprint), we've had to think about how to do it more efficiently while trying not to sacrifice a key success factor of mentoring (it's a relational model, which isn't about efficiency.) We continue to see the below issues play out.

Here are the key sales and marketing issues business owners should consider during this critical growth phase:

1. Clarifying and Growing the Value Proposition

In the early days, the founder often plays the role of chief salesperson, passionately communicating the company's mission and value. As the company grows, this message must be codified and consistently conveyed by others.

- **Key Actions:**
 - Develop a clear and documented value proposition.
 - Create sales and marketing messaging guidelines.
 - Ensure all team members understand and can articulate the brand promise.

A strong, consistent message increases trust and shortens the sales cycle, especially as new employees join the team.

2. Building a Scalable Sales Process

At five employees, sales efforts are often ad hoc. As you approach twenty team members, a standardized and measurable sales process becomes essential.

- **Key Actions:**
 - Define each stage of your sales funnel (e.g., lead, qualified lead, opportunity, closed deal).
 - Implement a CRM system like HubSpot, Salesforce, or Pipedrive.
 - Track key performance indicators (KPIs) like conversion rates, average deal size, and customer acquisition cost (CAC).

Documented processes allow new hires to onboard quickly and enable leadership to make data-driven decisions.

3. Investing in the Right Talent

Hiring becomes one of the most impactful aspects of growth. The right sales and marketing hires can accelerate momentum; the wrong ones can create costly setbacks.

- **Sales Roles to Consider:**
 - Account Executives to close deals.
 - Sales Development Representatives (SDRs) to generate and qualify leads.
- **Marketing Roles to Consider:**
 - Content marketers to drive inbound traffic.
 - Marketing managers to oversee campaigns, events, and partnerships.
 - Digital ad specialists for paid acquisition channels.

Clearly define roles and responsibilities to prevent overlap and inefficiency.

4. Creating Buyer Personas and Customer Segmentation

As your customer base grows, understanding the different segments becomes critical. A one-size-fits-all message or sales approach will no longer work.

- **Key Actions:**
 - Develop detailed buyer personas based on actual customer data.
 - Segment your audience by industry, company size, behavior, or pain points.
 - Tailor campaigns and sales pitches to each segment.

This targeted approach improves campaign performance and increases close rates.

5. Balancing Inbound and Outbound Strategies

Many small businesses start with inbound strategies—word-of-mouth, referrals, SEO, and organic social media. As you grow, adding outbound efforts can accelerate growth.

- **Inbound Tactics:**
 - Blogging and content marketing.
 - SEO optimization.
 - Email marketing and newsletters.
- **Outbound Tactics:**
 - Cold email campaigns.
 - LinkedIn outreach.
 - Paid advertising (Google Ads, LinkedIn Ads).

The key is to test, measure, and balance both approaches based on ROI and sales cycle length.

6. Establishing a Lead Nurturing System

At five employees, every lead might receive manual follow-up. At twenty, this is no longer feasible. Automating lead nurturing ensures no opportunities fall through the cracks.

- **Key Actions:**
 - Implement marketing automation tools (e.g., Mailchimp, ActiveCampaign, HubSpot).
 - Create email sequences and drip campaigns based on user behavior.
 - Use retargeting ads to re-engage cold leads.

Automation not only saves time but also improves conversion rates over time.

7. Brand Development and Positioning

As the company becomes more visible, its brand becomes more important. A clear, professional brand builds trust and separates you from competitors.

- **Key Actions:**
 - Invest in consistent branding: logo, typography, tone of voice, and design assets.
 - Revamp your website to match your brand's maturity.
 - Position your company based on unique differentiators, not just features or pricing.

Branding becomes a growth multiplier when done right.

8. Marketing and Sales Alignment

Growing companies often experience friction between marketing and sales. Marketing may claim they generate leads; sales may claim those leads are poor quality. Alignment is essential.

- **Key Actions:**
 - Agree on what qualifies as a sales-ready lead.
 - Hold regular joint meetings between sales and marketing teams.
 - Use shared metrics to track lead quality, conversion, and revenue impact.

When sales and marketing operate in sync, revenue grows more predictably.

9. Customer Retention and Referrals

New customer acquisition is expensive. As you grow, retaining customers and turning them into advocates becomes more efficient and profitable.

- **Key Actions:**
 - Implement a customer success program to ensure satisfaction and upsell opportunities.
 - Use surveys and NPS (Net Promoter Score) to gather feedback.
 - Launch a referral program to incentivize word-of-mouth growth.

Happy customers are your most powerful marketers.

10. Budgeting and ROI Measurement

With more resources comes more responsibility. It's easy to overspend on marketing experiments that yield little return. Every dollar should be tracked for effectiveness.

- **Key Actions:**
 - Set a clear marketing budget based on revenue and growth goals.
 - Track metrics like CAC, customer lifetime value (CLTV), and return on ad spend (ROAS).
 - Eliminate or optimize underperforming channels.

Establish a performance marketing mindset throughout the team.

Conclusion

Growing a company from five to twenty employees is a major transition that requires more than just hiring more people—it demands systematization, strategic alignment, and investment in scalable sales and marketing infrastructure.

Business owners who proactively address these issues are far more likely to see sustainable, profitable growth. Those who ignore them risk stagnation, internal confusion, and wasted resources. By focusing on structured

processes, smart hiring, brand clarity, and data-driven decision-making, companies can position themselves for the next phase of success—whether that’s 50 employees or 500.

ASK YOUR MENTOR

1. How is your sales and marketing set up now? How did it start?
2. What did you do to move it from where it started to where it grew to?
3. What are things you did well in that growth process? What do you wish that you had done differently?
4. Is there anything that you disagree with in the article? Why?
5. Can you see any gaps or things missing to what is mentioned above?
6. What sales and marketing tools have you found to be helpful? Not helpful?
7. How does one maintain integrity and quality as the drive to market and sell more increases?

Reflect & Respond/Self-Rate- MENTEE

Rate the degree to which you are doing these things in your business. 5 = In place or doing it well

	1	2	3	4	5
Clarifying and Growing the Value Proposition					
Building a Scalable Sales Process					
Investing in the Right Talent					
Creating Buyer Personas and Customer Segmentation					
Balancing Inbound and Outbound Strategies					
Establishing a Lead Nurturing System					
Brand Development and Positioning					
Marketing and Sales Alignment					
Customer Retention and Referrals					
Budgeting and ROI Measurement					

Go Do

1. Ask God, “What do you think I should prioritize the above?” Listen. What would it look like to trust God with this?
2. Practice. How I will practice or what I will do with this over the next month:

Sources & Resources

Ask your mentor what resources that they have found helpful for addressing the above areas.