



# Driving Pipeline Growth During “The Great Reset”



The last few years have brought irrevocable change to the B2B business world. Nowhere is that clearer than the SaaS industry, where the mantra has always been “growth by any means.” Growing fast and breaking things has long been a staple in SaaS, and up until now, industry leaders have had the luxury of spending indiscriminately to achieve these results.

But the shifts in the B2B landscape have changed that, too. Dubbed, “The Great Reset,” this rapidly changing period has spurred an evolution in business mindset and operations from the top down. As Kate Hammit, CMO at Splash says, “In terms of leadership teams, we’re shifting from growth at all costs.” Andrea Kayal, CMO at Electric agrees, saying, “There has been a massive belt tightening in that investors see growth isn’t coming at all costs, but in a well-optimized and thoughtful, predictable, scalable way.”

As Hammit says, “The B2B buyer has changed, and the way we approach the market is different. The sales-led growth and heavy headcount is in the middle of a transformation.”

SaaS companies no longer have the luxury of being reactive. This shift reprioritizes the importance of pipeline generation, now the number one goal of every CMO. The old tactics for finding and nurturing leads won’t work anymore, so companies have to adapt or get left behind. Businesses that don’t personalize outreach, use intent data, or optimize their funnel for a digital-first world won’t survive.

In this book, we include insights from revenue team leaders about how to keep up with the changes brought about by the Great Reset and how they are adapting their business process to optimize revenue generation.

# Can You Keep Up With the Changing Landscape of Modern Business?

The business landscape of the last decade or so has shifted in more ways than one. Customers no longer buy the same way, brick and mortar-based transactions see a low return, and employees no longer accept the bare minimum from their jobs.

In fact, 2021 saw an unprecedented number of people leaving their jobs for new ones or to strike out on their own during [The Great Resignation](#). Almost 50 million people left their jobs last year alone, a trend that continues into the middle of 2022. Allison Munro, Chief Marketing and Ecosystems Officer at Vena Solutions believes that, “As a result of the global pandemic, people’s values have shifted. What was more about the hustle and grind is now more about balance and lifestyle.”

Shortly after, the economic decline had tech companies laying off as many as 40,000 workers as of the beginning of September 2022 and cutting their spend on technology. There has been a paradigm shift all around to focus on employee efficiency and productivity to do more with less and ride out the downturn.

According to Dina Otero, Head of Demand Generation and Growth at Aprimo, “In the Great Reset, SaaS companies have an opportunity to rethink and reshape aspects of their organization to retrain employees while proving to their clients, employees, and prospects that they are producing critical innovations that are ‘recession-proof.’”

As a result, companies have realigned the way they do business.. The buyer journey now prioritizes the way consumers buy rather than the way businesses sell, and revenue teams are forced to be more innovative in the ways they appeal to potential customers.

Consumers now prefer to do their own research, make remote purchases, and receive personalized attention in their buying experience. According to [Gartner](#), buyers only spend about 17% of their time meeting with providers. The rest of their time is spent researching possible solutions on their own. What’s more, [McKinsey](#) posits that 70% of B2B buyers are willing to make self-serve or remote purchases, with 27% willing to spend more than \$500,000 online. [McKinsey further states](#) that 71% of consumers expect companies to deliver personalized interactions, and 76% get frustrated when they don’t.

Yet, despite this shift to personalized online transaction experiences, some companies are still relying on the old ways of doing business. They struggle to meet the customer where they are, to deliver targeted interactions, and to embrace the digital.

Ultimately, they fail to deliver value and drive pipeline growth.



We see this clearly in the numbers. According to [Hubspot](#), 40% of companies failed to meet their sales goals in 2020. Likewise, according to [Pavilion’s August Benchmark Survey](#), sales-driven pipeline was lower than target for 57% of respondents, and 51% reported month over month declines. Even more, revenue growth was lower than expected, with 68% of respondents reporting missing their monthly target for July (compared to 56% who said the same for June).

In this new world, companies have to cut through the noise to stand out and be more strategic in how they engage with potential clients. And it’s obvious that the old way doesn’t drive results like it once did.

# Why Pipeline Generation Is Lagging More than Ever Before

While [91% of marketers](#) say that lead generation is their most important goal, it remains one of the biggest challenges for modern marketing teams. According to [Sales Insights](#), around 50% of prospects aren’t a good fit for what you’re selling. To make things worse, [75% of leads](#) that marketing passes over to sales are not ready to meet with a sales rep. Poor lead quality is a leading cause of lagging pipeline growth and subpar deal execution.

Here are a few other reasons you’re struggling with pipeline generation during the Great Reset.

## You’re focused on the wrong things

The temptation to do it all is strong. You are trying to give your team better chances of success, so you throw a ton of tactics against the wall and hope something sticks. However, unless these tactics are based on key business data (like KPIs and customer data) and are aligned with how the modern consumer makes purchase decisions, your efforts are probably in vain.

As Munro says, “Don’t be shortsighted. Hustle culture is reacting to every mole and whacking at what comes.”

Hammit agrees. Her advice is to focus: “Focus on what works and put the appropriate efforts in place for those programs to meet your buyer where they are. Don’t worry so much about the glamorous marketing play.” Instead, focus on what works: “Go back to your storytelling, stay close to your metrics, stay close to where the buyer is still buying instead of trying to boil the ocean,” says Hammit.

## You’re ignoring your existing customer base

If you focus entirely on generating pipeline from net new buyers, you miss the forest for the trees. Revenue teams tend to look to new accounts to generate business, but these deals take longer and can be harder to



close. Existing customers are often overlooked as a source of pipeline, but upsell and cross-sell opportunities can help generate new business from an already engaged pool of buyers.

This includes customers that have switched companies. “Track customers that are changing jobs at new companies,” says Jess Bahr, Head of Performance Marketing at metadata.io. “The best growth you can have is having that customer move roles.”

According to Hammit, part of engaging your existing customer base is implementing a “rich voice of customer program and making sure you’re getting feedback on the product and what’s happening in the market. Staying close to what the customer wants and needs is mission critical.”

### You’re reactive instead of proactive

If you find that your revenue teams are responding to market stimuli rather than anticipating your buyers’ needs, then you will always be behind the curve when it comes to generating pipeline. As Hammit says, “If you’re not preparing for the shift (tightening your belt and going back to efficiency metrics) to hit on the voice of the customer, there are certain challenges for your ICP in this marketplace that you won’t be dialed into.”

Being proactive means being aware of the landscape and planning your strategy accordingly. According to Bahr, “When I hear ‘doing more with less’ it sounds to me like we think things are going to go back, so how can we plan now for a turbulent economy [in the future]?”

It’s clear then that generating new pipeline requires focus, attunement to customer needs, proactive strategy, and investing in the existing customer base.

But how can you do this while still being lean and getting a return on your investment?

# Generating More Pipeline Without Breaking the Bank

Fighting against the current makes your job as a revenue generator that much harder. So, your strategy and tactics need to be aligned with the general direction of modern business. This means abandoning things that used to work in the past and embracing innovative ways of converting users into paying customers. Whether your go-to-market motion prioritizes inbound or outbound lead generation, it’s important that **you bend to the expectations of the buyer and meet them where they are.**

These new strategies don’t have to break the bank. In fact, these new strategies should be so zeroed

in on your ICP, website user intent, and user-specific messaging that each conversion-focused activity can immediately prove value.

Here are some tips for generating pipeline and quickly proving ROI.

## Focus on and align metrics

Work smart, not hard. Part of working smart requires understanding your industry and company benchmarks for performance, and using those metrics as your northstar. For example, the stats change depending on variables like industry and business model, but the typical lead to opportunity [conversion rate](#) is 13% and opportunity to revenue is 6%. How does that influence which prospects you approach and what tactics you use to move them down the funnel? How do you measure the success of these activities to know which ones to keep using?

Bahr agrees. “Align your metrics with revenue metrics. Ultimately, things that produce money get funded. [Saying] ‘our metrics is this because of this’ is more impactful. Work towards those to make sure whatever you’re doing internally gets tied back to revenue.” Likewise, Hammit suggests that teams “figure out where you can better articulate the demand for the buyer. Be sharp about what industries, ICPs, and use cases are successful, and stay close to those metrics.”

Munro has put this to the test at Vena Solutions. “Building a marketing plan based on high level KPIs (leads vs revenue) via our CFO, we’ve been able to show how dollars in will drive dollars out and in what segment.”

Remember, now is not the time to try to do everything all at once. As Otero says, “Leaders need to remember that less is more and encourage that mindset. It’s far easier to hit success KPIs when you are laser-focused on a few pieces rather than spread thin.”

## Optimize tech tools to reach the right buyer at the right time

Use software technology that can help you digitalize your lead generation and prioritization process. Understanding user intent can be key to figuring out which website visitor or VIP buyer to engage with and when. Understanding buyer readiness is key in focusing your time on where you are more likely to get results. Your customers are online, so invest in literally meeting them where they are.

Chatbots are a powerful way to do just that. As Kayal advises, “Optimize your tools. Make the most of your conversations and give them a person to talk to.” Tools like Qualified, for example, have influenced \$2.9M in revenue a year after implementation, highlighting the value of being in the right place at the right time.

For the tools that already exist, make sure they are providing their intended value of driving conversions. Otero advises businesses to start your assessments with use cases that drive pipeline and revenue. “I would also recommend scheduling KPI reviews or QBRs. These calls will uncover areas for improvement, current ROI, and prioritize action items based on recommendations, changes in the company and new objectives.”



## Invest in community

Your customer base is an existing pool of potential advocates. They’ve seen first-hand what your company and product can do. Investing in them can help increase not only customer advocacy, but also generate new pipeline for upsell opportunities.

According to Otero, “Customer marketing and ABM will be the demand driver and will allow companies to continue to grow during a recession. Customer marketing is about maximizing the value of customers through adoption, loyalty, advocacy, and even growth. ABM is all about knowing your audience and tailoring marketing touches within these accounts. When executed correctly, ABM will allow teams to prioritize their budgets and time to drive business with customers and prospects alike.”

Likewise, Bahr advises businesses to “increase investment in your community, your customer base. That is what will make your customers more successful [...] Continue to invest in your main contacts, make sure they are getting that same value.” According to Hammit, you can do this through informal advocacy or customer advocacy boards (CAB) or focus groups. “In creating demand, you want to be leaving your customer or prospect smarter, faster, and stronger than when you brought them into a community.”

It’s crucial that you understand your buyers, users, and customers well. Being keyed into their needs and their intentions can help you be more effective in outreach and engagement and in building pipeline.

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# Reset Your Revenue Generation

The old ways of doing business will no longer serve your bottom line. The workforce demands more balance because, as Otero says, “Employees found their voice to demand what they’ve wanted for a long time—higher pay, better benefits, real work-life balance, flexible schedules, and remote work.” And customers have very little patience for poor customer service that doesn’t speak to them specifically.

Companies can no longer afford to be reactive to market changes. Instead, to survive and thrive, they need to be proactive and strategic in their outreach to new prospects and engagement with existing customers. When it comes to filling your pipeline during the Great Reset, spreading yourself thin and trying to do it all are the quickest ways to fail.

Meet your buyers where they are, be intentional and focused in your pipeline generation tactics, and align your metrics with your revenue. Adapt to new buyer expectations and engage with them based on their intentions. Don’t ignore existing customers, as they are already invested in your product and provide great opportunities for upsells.

Use the right KPIs and metrics to measure the return on your pipeline generation tactics. [Calculate your ROI](#) with the Pipeline Cloud or [request a demo](#) with the Qualified team.

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