Sales Strategy

Tactics, Tools, and Techniques to Drive Startup Revenue

Startup Management, Aleš Špetič, 2025

🔁 Recap from Lecture 8

Where we left off

- ✅ A clear GTM strategy aligns your product, market, and message
- 🧭 Understand your customer journey and acquisition channels
- 🔁 Balance product-led and sales-led growth based on your model
- 🧠 Use onboarding to reduce churn of already won customers

🎯 Learning Objectives

What you'll learn today

- 🤝 B2B vs B2C Sales Approaches
- 📘 Building a Sales Playbook
- 📊 CRM Tools and Sales Metrics
- 🔐 Negotiation and Closing Deals

Why Sales Matter in Startups 💰

Sales as the Engine of Startup Growth

- Lifeblood of the business
- Validation of product-market fit
- Revenue generation and investor confidence
- Early feedback loop for product improvements

Nothing solves problems better than a lot of revenue!

B2B vs B2C Sales Approaches 🤝🛒

Understanding the Key Distinctions

Dimension	B2B (Business-to-Business)	B2C (Business-to-Consumer)
Sales Cycle	Long, multi-stakeholder decision process	Short, individual decision
Deal Size	High-value, fewer transactions	Low-value, high volume
Buying Motivation	ROI, efficiency, compliance	Emotion, experience, convenience
Sales Channels	Direct sales, outbound, industry events	Online ads, SEO, influencers
Relationship	Long-term, personalized	Transactional, fast-moving
Typical Product	Software, services, tools	Consumer goods, apps, clothing

Matching Sales Approach to Business Model

Aligning Sales Strategy with Product Type

- SaaS for enterprises → B2B consultative sales, direct
- Consumer mobile app → B2C, often indirect, viral growth
- Freemium often model bridges both worlds

B2B Sales Approach 🤝

Building Trust and Value in Complex Sales

- Account-based selling
- Consultative and relationship-driven
- Custom demos, stakeholder mapping
- Common roles:
  - SDR - Sales Development Representative (top of the funnel - lead generation)
  - AE - Account Executive (bottom of the funnel - deal closing)
  - Account Manager

Stakeholder Mapping in B2B Sales 🧭

B2B sales often involve multiple roles and decision-makers

Typical Stakeholder Roles:

- **Champion**: Advocates for your solution internally
- **Economic Buyer**: Controls the budget
- **Technical Gatekeeper**: Assesses product feasibility and integration
- **End User**: Will use the product day-to-day
- **Legal/Compliance**: Ensures contract and regulatory alignment

Stakeholder Mapping in B2B Sales 🧭

Tactics

- Use org charts or CRM notes
- Identify relationships and influence levels
- Customize communication for each role

B2C Sales Approach 🛒

Scaling Through Brand and Speed

- Funnel optimization: awareness > conversion
- Brand building, social proof, rapid iteration
- Omnichannel experience (website, app, social)
- High volume, low margin

Building a Sales Playbook📘

A Blueprint for Repeatable Success

- A living document that codifies your sales process
- Ensures consistency, scalability, training

Components of a Sales Playbook 🧩

Key Elements Every Sales Team Needs

1. Ideal Customer Profile (ICP)
2. Buyer Personas
3. Sales Process Stages (the funnel)
4. Discovery Questions
5. Objection Handling
6. Competitive Positioning
7. Proposal Templates
8. CRM Workflow

Slack Sales Playbook

Defining the Target Buyer - ICP

- Mid-sized tech companies (50–500 employees)
- High reliance on collaboration and remote work
- Pain points with email and siloed communication
- Decision-makers often in Engineering, IT, or Ops

Slack Sales Playbook

Understanding Stakeholder Roles - Personas

- **Champion**: Team lead or department head
- **Economic Buyer**: Director of IT or CFO
- **Technical Gatekeeper**: IT Manager
- **End Users**: Engineering, product, and marketing teams

Slack Sales Playbook

Steps from Awareness to Close - Sales Process

- Inbound signup or SDR outreach
- Discovery call
- Product demo
- Free trial account starts
- Track usage and identify champions
- Proposal and procurement
- Close and handoff to Customer Success

Slack Sales Playbook

Managing Pushback

- **Objection**: "We already use email or Teams”
  - Response: Emphasize real-time collaboration and integrations
- **Objection**: "Security/compliance concerns”
  - Response: Provide enterprise-grade documentation (SOC2, GDPR, etc.)
- **Objection**: "Too many tools already”
  - Response: Position Slack as a hub, not another tool
- **Competitive Positioning**: MS vs Slack - integrations and ease of use

Slack Sales Playbook

Proposal and Handoff

- Use templated proposals with clear user tiers
- Assign Customer Success Manager (CSM) at close
- Ensure onboarding milestones: active teams, integrations, channel creation
- Follow up at 30/60/90 days to ensure activation and adoption

Playbook as a Living Document 🔄

Evolving with Feedback and Growth

- Update with learnings and objections
- Collaborate with marketing and product
- Train new reps efficiently

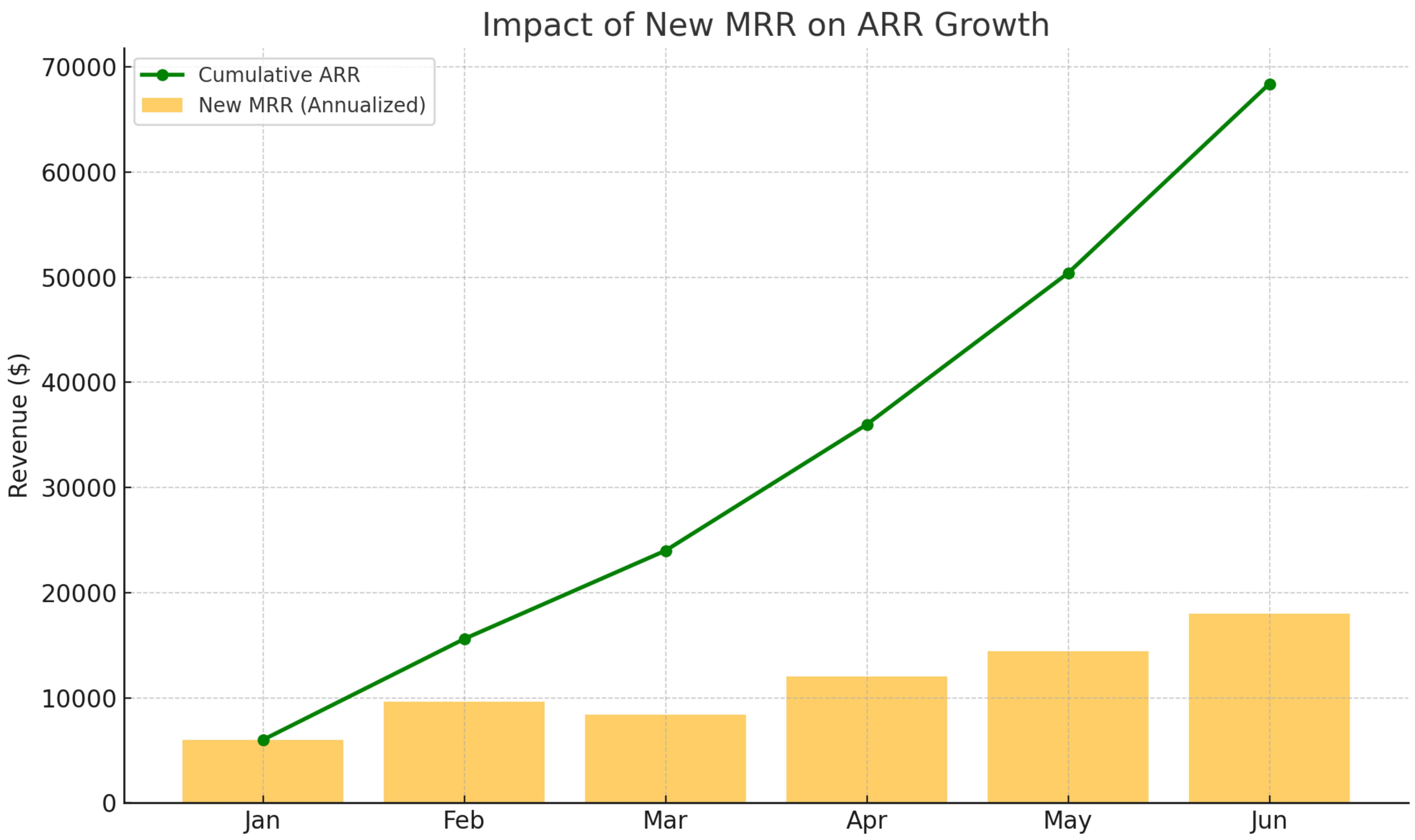
Key Sales Metrics 📊

Measuring What Matters

Metric	Description
Lead-to-Opportunity Rate	% of leads that become qualified opportunities
Opportunity-to-Close Rate	% of opportunities that convert to closed deals
Sales Cycle Length	Average number of days to close a deal
CAC (Customer Acquisition Cost)	Total cost to acquire a new customer
LTV (Lifetime Value)	Projected revenue from a customer over their tenure
ARR / MRR (Annual/Monthly Recurring Revenue)	Predictable revenue streams from subscriptions

ARR/MRR

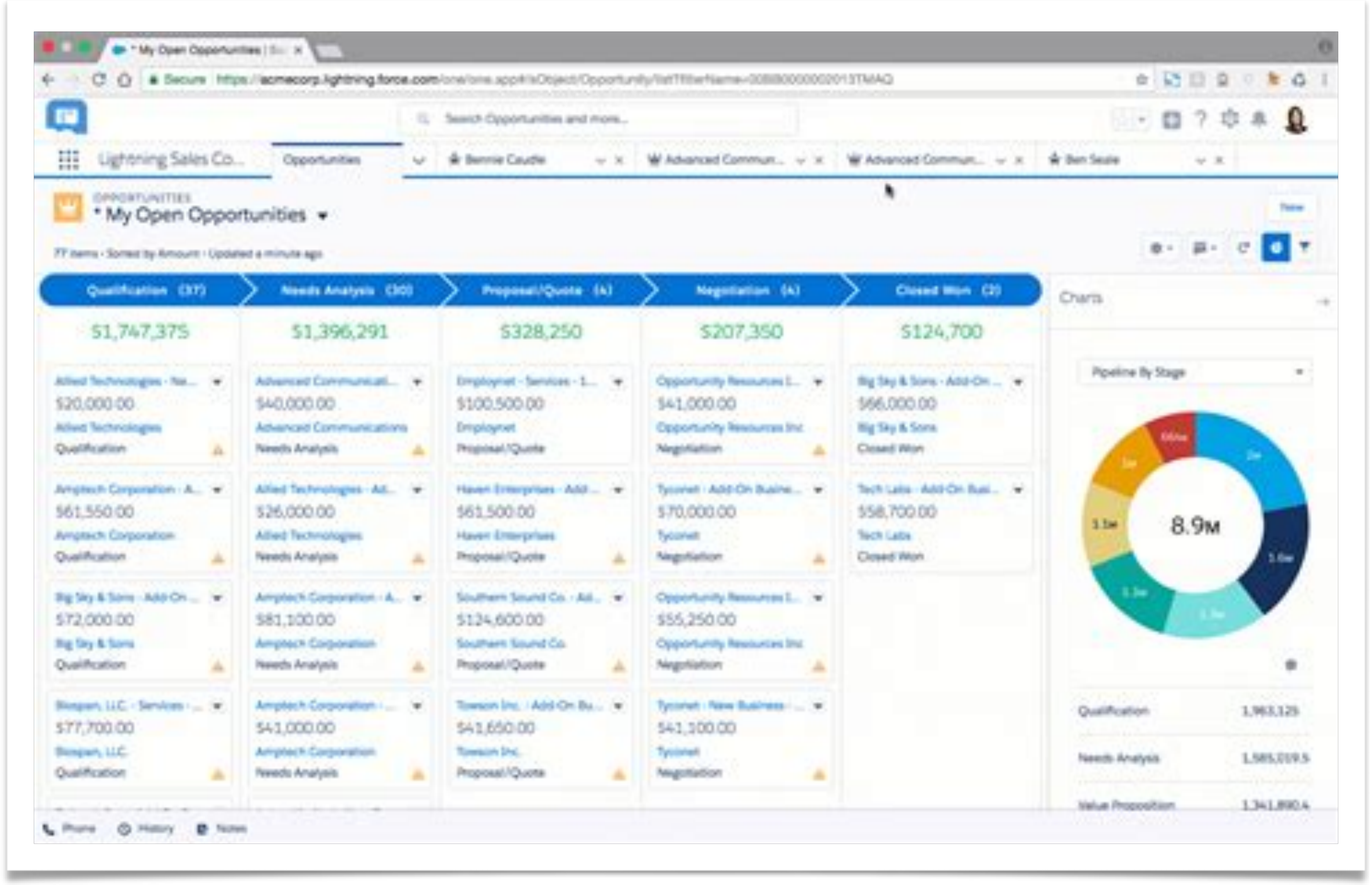
Understanding Annual Recurring Revenue

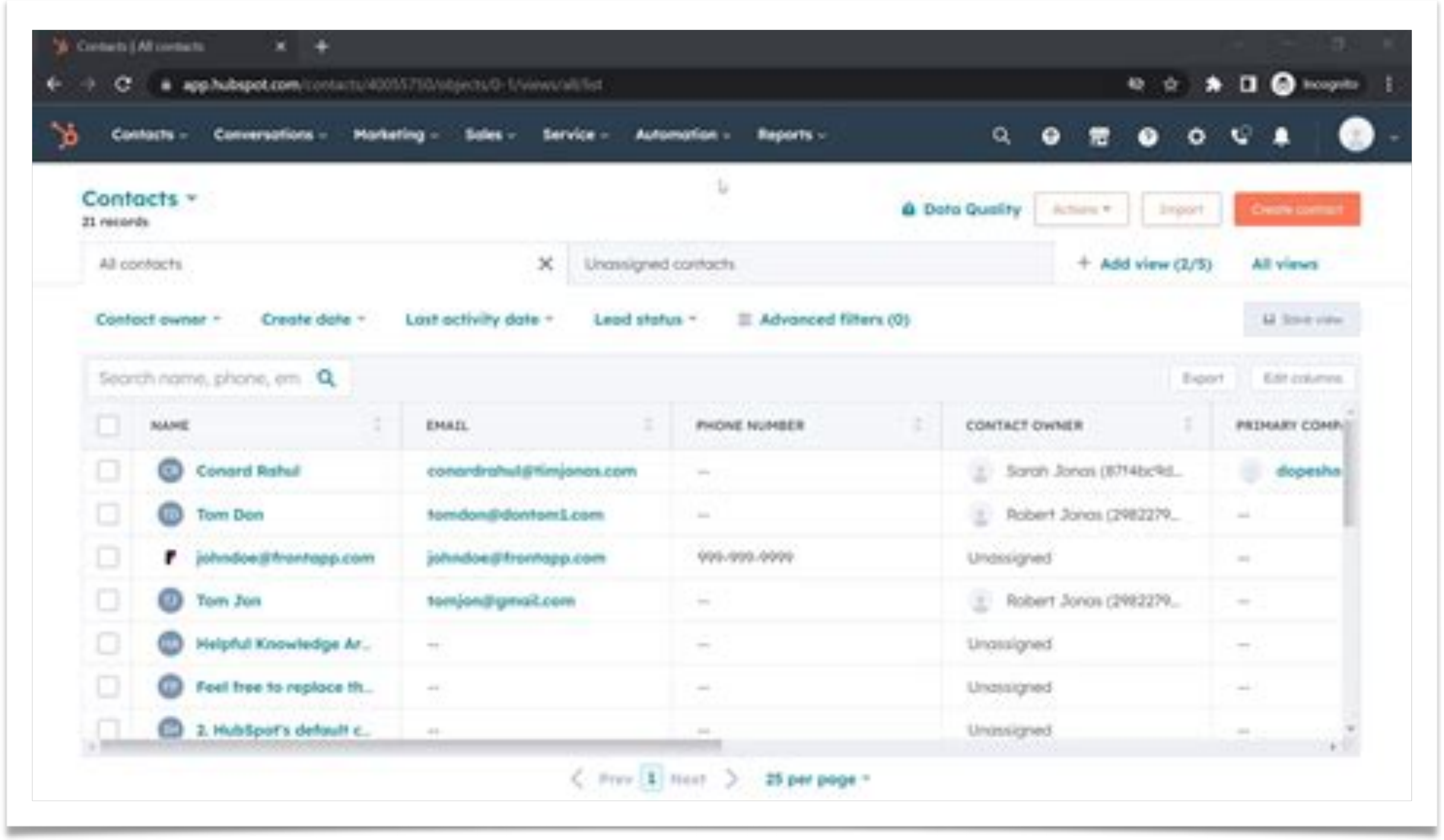


What is a CRM? 🧮

Managing Relationships at Scale

- Customer Relationship Management software
- Tracks interactions, deals, follow-ups
- Common tools: HubSpot, Salesforce, Pipedrive, Zoho





Dashboard Example 📈

Choosing a CRM 🛠️

Picking the Right Tool for Your Stage

- Consider: team size, integrations, ease of use, cost
- Start simple
- Scale with needs

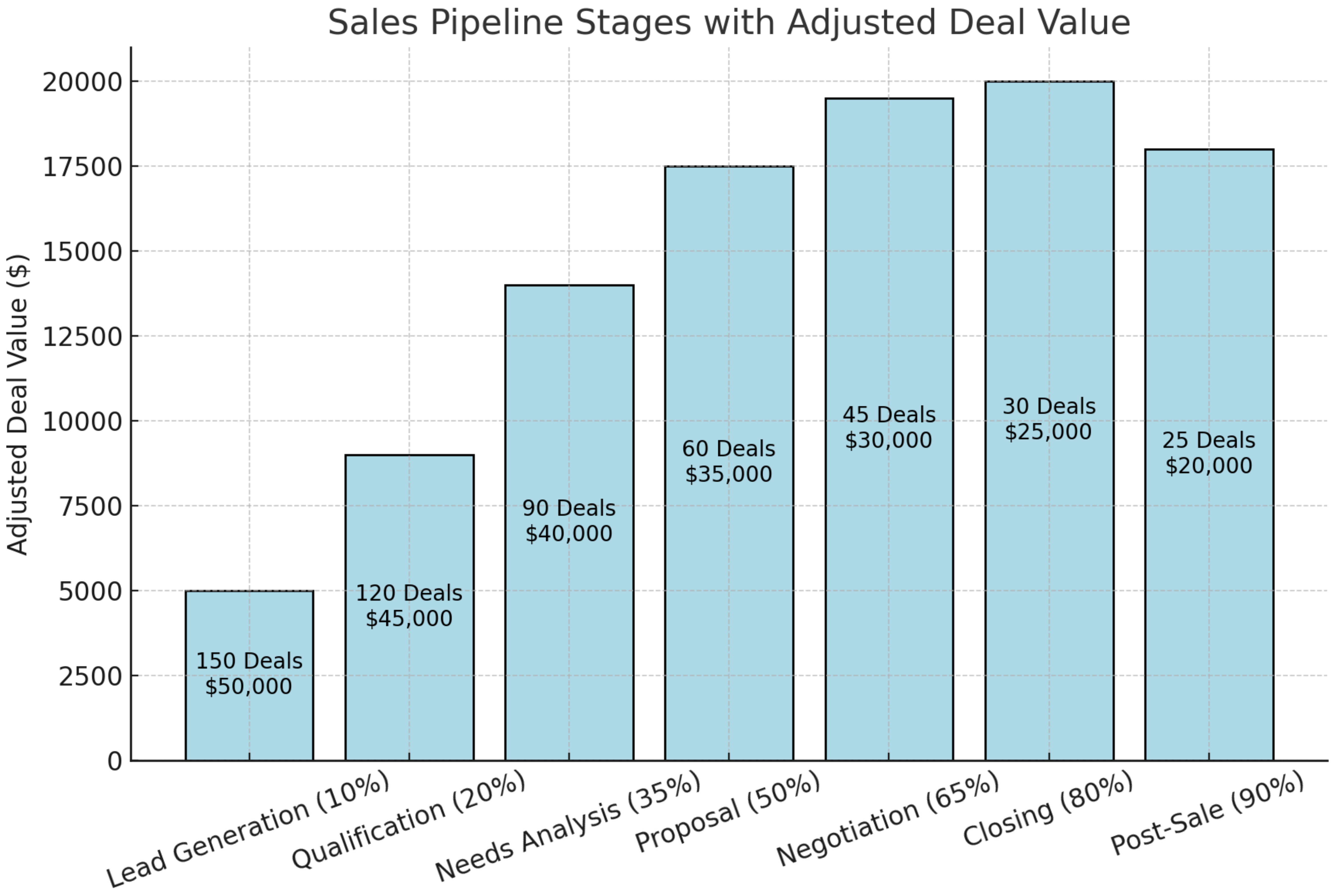
CRM Setup Best Practices ⚙️

Ensure Clean Data and Efficient Tracking

- Standardize data input fields - teach your team what means what!
- Define deal stages
- Automate follow-ups
- Set reminders and alerts
- Dashboard to view progress

Dashboard Example 📈

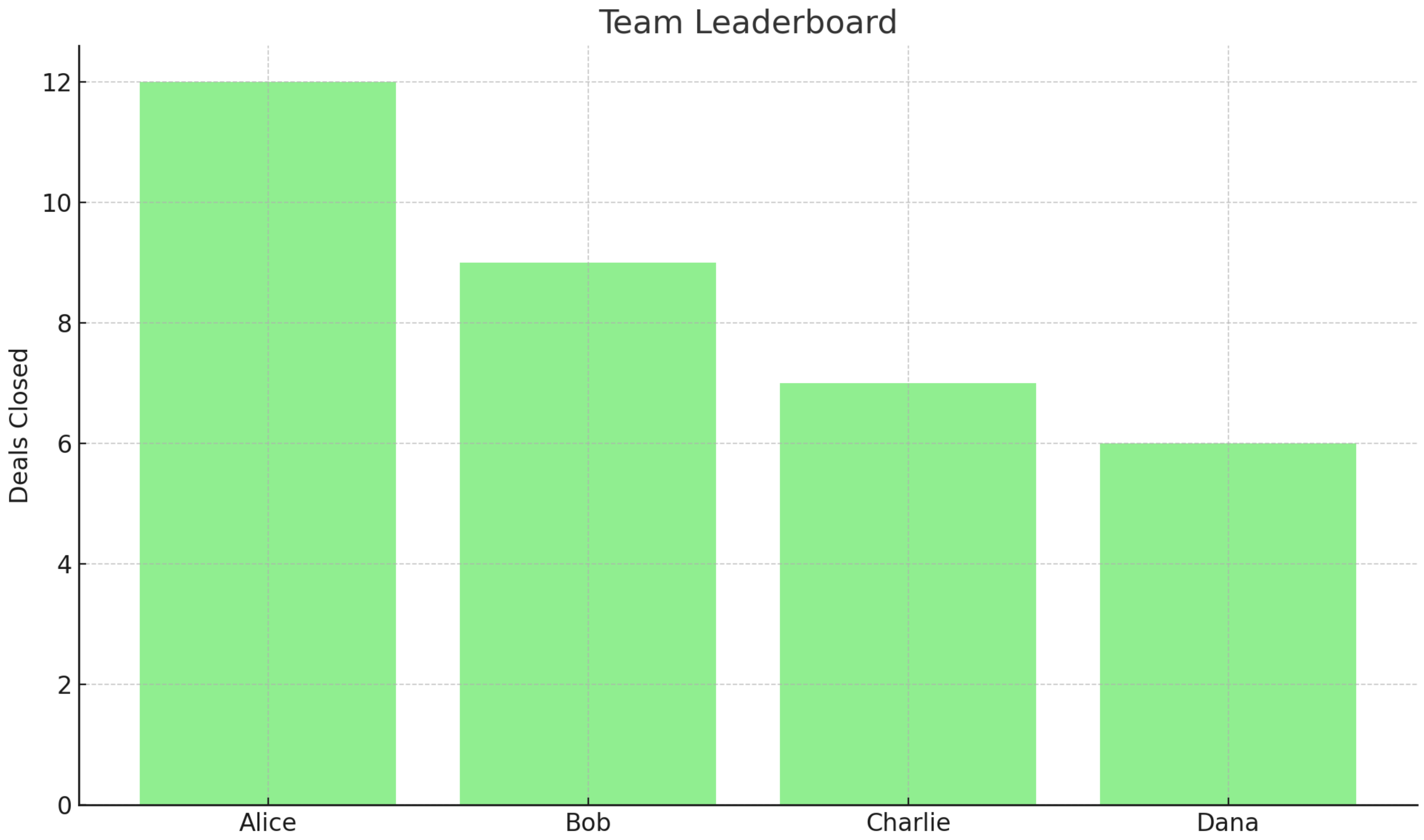
Visualizing Sales Funnel Stages



- Snapshot of the pipeline
- Visualisation of bottlenecks and overall health
- Useful for forecasting revenue

Dashboard Example 📈

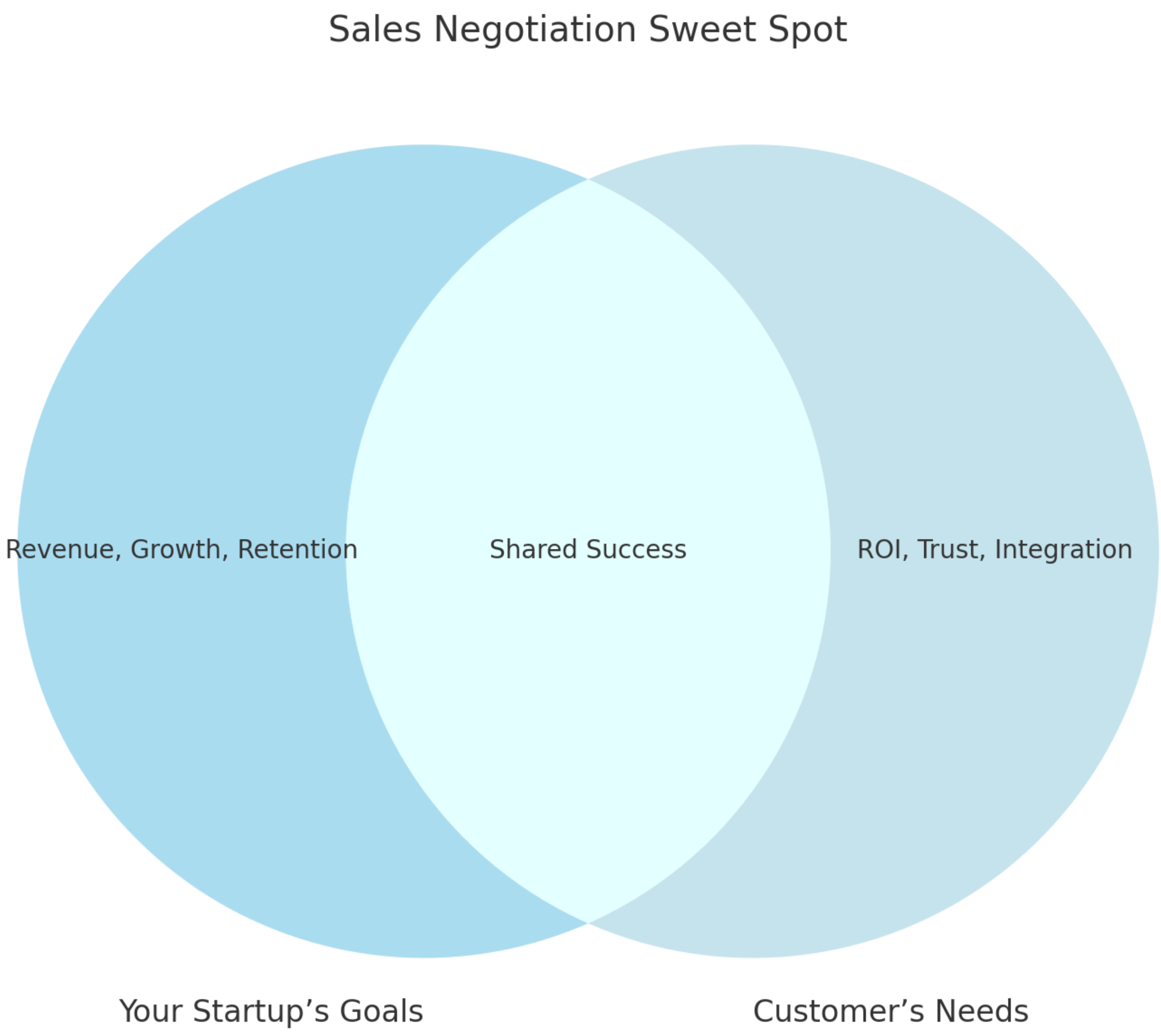
Tracking Individual Sales Performance



- Creates accountability and motivation
- It highlights top perfomance and objectivise the sales analysis

Sales Negotiation Basics 🤝

Creating Value in Every Deal



- Win-win outcome focus
- Understand and communicate value
- Know your BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement)

Sales Negotiation Basics 🧠

Influencing the Outcome Strategically

Tactic	When to Use	Risk
Anchoring	When setting initial expectations	May limit flexibility
Silence	When buyer resists or stalls	Can backfire if used aggressively
Bundling	To raise deal size by combining features	Overwhelming the buyer
Limited-Time Offers	To close slow-moving deals	May feel manipulative if overused

Handling Objections 🚧

Turning Pushback into Progress

Types of Objections:

- **Emotional**: “This seems risky.”
- **Rational**: “It’s over our budget.”
- **Strategic**: “We’re evaluating three vendors.”
- **Tactical**: “We need more time.”

Handling Objections - Emotional 🚧

“This seems risky.”

Build Trust and Reassurance:

- Show empathy
- Share customer success stories
- Offer guarantees or free trials

Example Response: “That makes sense. Other companies had the same concern until they saw how easy implementation really was.”

Handling Objections - Rational 🚧

“It’s over our budget.”

Showing Clear ROI:

- Quantify the value
- Use ROI calculators or case studies
- Emphasize cost of inaction

Example Response: “If this saves your team 5 hours per week, that’s a return of $X/month in productivity.”

Handling Objections - Strategic 🚧

“We’re evaluating three vendors.”

Win Against Competition:

- Differentiate your core advantage
- Use comparison charts or customer quotes
- Highlight time-sensitivity or early-mover advantage

Example Response: “One of the reasons teams choose us is our native integration with your existing tools.”

Handling Objections - Tactical 🚧

"We need more time."

Managing Delay Tactics:

- Ask what specifically needs more time
- Set clear next steps with deadlines
- Use urgency tactfully

Example Response: "Let's align on what you need to decide by next Friday so we stay on track."

Closing Techniques 🔐

Moving from Decision to Deal

Technique	Sample Line	Trigger
Trial Close	“Would this help your team’s goals?”	Testing alignment
Close	“Let’s set up onboarding next week.”	Confidence
Urgency	“This pricing holds until Friday.”	Scarcity

How people buy?

Rapping to the Yes…

Rapping to the Yes!

In Group Bias

“Now everybody from the 313, put your mother-f*cking hands up and follow me”.

Rapping to the Yes!

Herd behaviour

“put your hands up and follow me.”

Rapping to the Yes!

Availability…

“look, look…”

Rapping to the Yes!

Distinction Bias …

Now while he stands tough, notice that this man did not have his hands up.”

Rapping to the Yes!

Ambiguity Bias…

“this man …”

Rapping to the Yes!

"one, two, three, and to the four."

Rapping to the Yes!

Association

“who’s afraid of the Big Bad Wolf”

Rapping to the Yes!

Availability

"one Pac, two Pac, three Pac, four."

Rapping to the Yes!

Availability

“You’re Pac, He’s Pac,”

“You’re Pac, NONE”

Rapping to the Yes!

List objections …

“I know everything he’s got to say against me.”

“I am white”

“I am a fuckin bum”

“I do live in a trailer with my mom”

“My boy, Future, is an Uncle Tom”

“I do have a dumb friend named Cheddar Bob who shot himself with his own gun”.

“I did get jumped by all six of you chumps”

“And Wink did Fuck my Girl”

Rapping to the Yes!

Heroic Association…

“I’m still standing here screaming
“Fuck Tha Free World””

Rapping to the Yes!

Humor bias …

“But I know Something About You”
(smile)

Rapping to the Yes!

Outgroup

"You went to Cranbook."

"That's a private school."

"His real name's Clarence. And his parents have a real good marriage."

Rapping to the Yes!

Building up credentials….

“There ain’t no such thing as…”

“Halfway Crooks!”

Rapping to the Yes!

Scarcity…

“F*ck everybody”

“F*ck y’all if you doubt me.”

“I don’t wanna win. I’m outtie.”

How people buy?

Rapping to the Yes…

Wrap up

Sales Strategy Recap

- 🤝 Match your sales motion (B2B/B2C) to your product and customer profile
- 📘 Build and continuously refine your sales playbook
- 📊 Use CRM tools and sales metrics to track and optimize performance
- 🚧 Master the art of objection handling and negotiation
- 📃 Closing is not the end—focus on onboarding and long-term value

📄 Assignment

Apply what you've built

- 🧩 Create your sales playbook!

Use Google Docs or Slides to create your pitch deck and share it with ales@spetic.si by the day before the next lecture!

Further Reading & Resources

Books and Resources to Deepen Your Understanding

- 📘 The Sales Acceleration Formula – Mark Roberge
- 📘 Predictable Revenue – Aaron Ross & Marylou Tyler
- 📘 SPIN Selling – Neil Rackham
- 📘 Sell with a Story – Paul Smith
- 📘 The Challenger Sale – Matthew Dixon & Brent Adamson