SALES GEEK · THE MASTERY PLAYBOOK SERIES

No. 14

The Pipeline Velocity Playbook

A practical toolkit for measuring — and accelerating — the rate at which deals turn into revenue.

40–60%

of the average pipeline never closes. This playbook is about the deals that do — and how to make them move faster

Who this is for

Sales leaders, business owners and anyone running a pipeline. Standalone — no prior listening required. A companion to The Mastery Podcast, Episode 14, and an extension of the Sales Geek Leadership & Management programme.

START HERE

What pipeline velocity is, and why it beats volume

Most pipelines are measured by size. How many deals, worth how much, sitting in the system. It feels reassuring — a big number at the top of the funnel looks like health. It usually isn't.

A pipeline is not a store cupboard you fill. It is a system that deals move through, and the only thing that pays the bills is the rate at which they come out of the far end as revenue. That rate has a name: pipeline velocity. It is the single most useful number a sales leader can track, and almost nobody calculates it.

The reason velocity matters more than volume is simple. Every deal you carry costs something — your reps' time, your attention, your forecast's honesty. A bloated pipeline full of stalled deals doesn't sit there quietly; it taxes your best people and crowds out the opportunities that could actually close. Speed, not size, is what you manage.

> ***Stop counting your pipeline. Start clocking it.***

TOOL 01 · THE MASTER METRIC

The Velocity Equation

Pipeline velocity is one equation with four levers. Three sit on top and multiply. One sits on the bottom and divides — which makes it the most powerful lever of the four.

The formula

$$\text{Velocity} = \frac{(\text{Opportunities} \times \text{Deal Value} \times \text{Win Rate})}{\text{Sales Cycle Length}}$$

Result: the revenue your pipeline produces per unit of time (per day or per month). Track it monthly, per rep and per team. The absolute number matters less than its direction of travel.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Take 50 qualified opportunities, an average deal value of £10,000, and a 20% win rate. That is £100,000 of won business moving through the system. Spread over a 100-day sales cycle, your velocity is £1,000 a day.

Change you make	What you did	New velocity
Baseline	50 × £10k × 20% ÷ 100 days	**£1,000 / day**
Add 10 more deals	60 opportunities, cycle unchanged	**£1,200 / day**
Halve the cycle	Same 50 deals, 50-day cycle	**£2,000 / day**

Adding ten deals lifted velocity by 20%. Halving the cycle — with no new leads, no price rise, no change to win rate — doubled it. That is why the cycle is the lever to reach for first.

> ***Halve the cycle and you double the velocity — without a single new lead.***

TOOL 02 · DIAGNOSTIC

The Velocity Self-Audit

Score each statement from 1 (never true) to 5 (always true). Be honest — the value is in the gaps. Add up your total out of 50.

Statement	1–5
1. We calculate pipeline velocity (or could, today) for every rep and the team as a whole.	
2. We qualify deals on the buyer's ability to decide, not just their interest or willingness to meet.	
3. Every active deal has an agreed next step with a date attached to it.	
4. We can name, for each open deal, the champion inside the buyer who is driving it.	
5. Deals that haven't changed stage in 30 days are flagged and forced to a decision.	
6. We distinguish 'no decision / status quo' losses from deals lost to a competitor.	
7. Our reps understand that activity (emails, calls) is not the same as a deal moving stage.	
8. We are comfortable killing deals, and our pipeline shrinks when we do.	
9. Our forecast reflects deals we genuinely believe will close, not deals we hope will.	
10. We review the sales cycle length as a managed number, not an accident of the market.	

HOW TO READ YOUR SCORE

40–50	Velocity-led. Protect it — keep forcing decisions and watch the cycle creep back up.	
28–39	Volume-led with good instincts. Your fastest gains are at the front door and the 30-day rule.	
Below 28	Graveyard risk. You are carrying stalled deals as if they were live. Start with the Forcing Function.	

TOOL 03 · FRAMEWORK CARD

The Stall Map

Deals don't slow down evenly — they die in three specific places. Diagnose where a stuck deal sits before you decide what to do about it.

Stall point	What it looks like	The move
The Front Door	Let in on interest alone. No real pain, no budget, no power to decide.	Re-qualify on ability to decide. If it fails, it never belonged in the pipeline — remove it.
The Middle	Real deal, but no movement between stages. No next step, no date, no champion.	Agree a concrete next step with a date the buyer commits to. No date = not advancing.
The Threshold	Verbal yes, no signature. 'Going through procurement' for weeks.	Make the cost of not deciding real. Arm your champion to win the internal argument.

Rule of thumb: deals with verified, active pain close at over 50%; deals with mild, manageable pain close at under 15%. Most slow pipelines are slow because they were filled badly at the front door — not because of anything that happened in the middle.

TOOL 04 · WEEKLY DISCIPLINE

The 30-Day Forcing Function

The habit that fixes velocity. Any deal that has not moved a stage in 30 days gets one of three verdicts — and only three. 'Leave it and chase next week' is not an option. That option is what builds the graveyard.

Three verdicts — nothing is allowed to just sit

ADVANCE — there is a concrete next step the buyer has agreed to, with a date. Name it out loud. If you can't, it isn't advancing.

SCHEDULE — real but genuinely not now. Set a defined re-engagement date and take it out of the active forecast until then.

KILL — no next step, no champion, no path. Close it. A killed deal frees your scarcest resource: your best rep's time.

RUN IT LIKE THIS

1. Pull every open deal that hasn't changed stage in 30 days.
2. For each one, the rep gives a verdict out loud: Advance, Schedule or Kill. No fourth option.
3. For Advance, the rep states the next step and the date the buyer has committed to.
4. For Schedule, set the re-engagement date and move it out of the live forecast.
5. For Kill, close it and reallocate the rep's time to a surviving deal the same day.
6. Recalculate velocity at month-end. A shrinking, faster pipeline is the goal.

TOOL 05 · READY-TO-USE

Templates

A · ABILITY-TO-DECIDE QUALIFIER

Score a new opportunity before you let it into the pipeline. Three or more ‘no’s and it stays out until they change.

Qualifying question	Yes / No
Is the pain active — is doing nothing now uncomfortable for them?	
Have we identified who actually signs, and have we met them or have a path to them?	
Is there a budget, or a credible route to one?	
Is there a compelling event or deadline driving a decision?	
Do we have a champion who will argue for us when we’re not in the room?	
Has the buyer described their own decision process to us?	

B · THE STALLED-DEAL MESSAGE

For a deal that has gone quiet. The aim is a decision — a yes, a no, or a real next step — not another ‘just circling back’.

Subject: Closing the file on [project]?

Hi [name],

We’ve not managed to find the next step on [project], and I don’t want to keep chasing if the timing isn’t right, your inbox is busy enough.

Can I ask directly: is this something you still want to move on in the next [timeframe], or has it dropped down the list for now? Both answers are genuinely fine.

If it’s still live, the next step would be [specific step], are you free [date]? If it’s parked, tell me when to come back and I’ll leave you in peace until then.

Either way, thanks for being straight with me.

[sign-off]

C · VELOCITY PIPELINE-REVIEW AGENDA (20 MINS)

Time	Focus
0–3	Velocity check. Did the number move up or down since last review, and why?
3–10	30-Day Forcing Function. Every stalled deal gets Advance / Schedule / Kill.
10–15	Front door. Any new deals failing the Ability-to-Decide qualifier?
15–20	Cycle compression. Pick one deal — what is the single fastest next step?

TOOL 06 · REFERENCE

The four levers — which to pull, and when

Lever	Pull it when…	Watch out for…
Cycle length	Always look here first — it divides, so it has the most leverage.	Cycle creeping back up once attention moves elsewhere.
Win rate	Deals are real but you're losing to indecision or a rival.	'Improving win rate' with no change to qualification — it won't move.
Deal value	You're under-pricing or under-scoping good-fit deals.	Chasing bigger deals that also carry longer cycles.
Opportunities	Genuinely starved of qualified demand — and only then.	Adding volume to mask a velocity problem. It makes it worse.

GLOSSARY

Pipeline velocity — Revenue produced per unit of time: (opportunities × deal value × win rate) ÷ cycle length.

No-decision loss — A deal lost not to a competitor but to the buyer choosing the status quo — 40–60% of lost pipeline.

Stalled deal — A deal that hasn't changed stage in 30 days. Treat as dead until it proves otherwise.

Champion — Someone inside the buyer who will argue for you when you're not in the room.

Movement — A change of stage caused by a buyer commitment — not rep activity such as a sent email.

> ***Subtract the dead weight, and what's left moves faster.***

This playbook is part of the Sales Geek Mastery series and extends the Sales Geek Leadership & Management programme. Use it in your own pipeline reviews, or share it with your team and clients.