

BLT SALES

BIGGER (Deals) in LESS TIME

BY

ROBERT E. GELINAS

Your practical guide and playbook of how to organically grow and dramatically scale your business' revenues by achieving BLT Sales: Bigger (deals) in Less Time.

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by
ROBERT E. GELINAS

ISBN 1-59507-288-8
ISBN 978-1-59507-288-7

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www.genidyne.com



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First Edition



ROBERT E. GELINAS

Robert E. Gelinus is an information technology executive, who has been recruiting, training and leading world-class enterprise B2B sales and marketing teams since 1995. He is a cybersecurity and software development expert, and has served as CEO of two global software development organizations and one cybersecurity software firm.

Mr. Gelinus is also a decorated Veteran of the United States Air Force, a professional musician (drums, guitar, keys), and a published novelist.

BLT Sales: Bigger (deals) in Less Time is Bob's first non-fiction book. He makes his home in Florida.

Other Books by Robert E. Gelinus

The Magician's Guide

The Mustard Seed

Dead Man's Run

Touch of a Stranger

Players

Dead of Night

Anticipation

Acknowledgements

My own journey into and through the world of BLT Sales thus far in my career certainly wasn't accomplished by the efforts of a single individual (me alone); rather, by the hard work, creativity, ingenuity, intelligence, cleverness, daring, courage, and perseverance of a cast of many.

In so many ways I've been influenced, mentored, coached, instructed, and valiantly fought alongside so many great souls throughout my life and career.

To all those listed below (and with my sincerest apologies to any that may have slipped my mind) – Thank You.

To: Chuck, Mike, Juan, Al, Stan, Dave, Walter, Randy, Sue, Al, Earl, Mark, Barbara, Scott, Chris, Gerry, Kelly, Debbie, Chip, Beth, Mark, Peter, Bill, Sam, Trevor, Hezi, Mark, Tony, Peter, Ralph, Ron, Natalya, Mike, Charles, Laurel, Melissa, Howard, Randy, Kris, Tony, Evgeni, Victor, Ilya, Rick, Serhiy, Vasil, Andriy, Dimitry, Liuba, Sergey, Bob, Hawk, Barbara, Dave, Sara, Prudy, Tina, John, Sandy, Drew, Mike and many more to come.

God bless you all!

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INTRODUCTION

For whom is this book intended?

It's for you – if you want to see your sales team *finally* start producing much bigger deals in a lot less time.

Practically speaking, this book was written primarily for the benefit of business owners and senior executives, and for sales and marketing leaders in particular, as well as for individual sales and marketing practitioners – i.e. all those who would dearly love to see their company's revenue performance dramatically improve sooner rather than later, specifically in the enterprise B2B (Business-to-Business) market.

However, let me stipulate: A little, or maybe even more than a little, of what you're about to read you might be tempted to think, "I already know that." And that may very well be true. That's because I deliberately bothered to include many familiar elements of Sales and Marketing process both as a common frame of reference; but more importantly, to put many other things which you might *not* know into a new context and a new light, with the expressed design of putting it all into a completely new conceptual framework, articulated from a fresh perspective.

I offer you this counsel because you may not yet realize that quite often the failure to produce the revenues you desire isn't necessarily a function of

what you're doing *wrong*. Perhaps everything you're currently doing might be just fine. The real impediment to your success is that you're just not doing *everything else* that also needs to be done. It's what is *missing* that is the problem. And until you come to clearly understand the complete solution to the entire puzzle, your problem will never get solved.

For example, I like to play golf. I started playing as a kid, started taking it a little more seriously in my 20's, and have subsequently played golf off and on pretty much all of my adult life. I certainly don't claim to be a golf expert by any stretch of the imagination, but I do have a certain volume of knowledge and experience that allows me to play the game and have fun doing so. I know a few basic things like:

- Get a strong grip but with soft hands.
- Keep your head still. Proper spine angle. Knees slightly bent.
- Keep your eye on the ball¹.
- Keep your left arm straight on the backswing (if right-handed).
- In order to generate maximum power, shift your weight onto your right leg during the backswing and then transfer your weight to your left leg as you swing through impact, clearing your hips with a smooth turn toward the target.



If you play golf, then most, if not all, of those little pointers above should sound very familiar. Except maybe that last one, the one that most amateur golfers often need to work on most. But once mastered, it can completely revolutionize your game. And that's a good analogy for the core intent of this book – to give you those missing pieces to your Sales game, which will reveal to you many fresh insights on how the game of BLT Sales is really supposed to be played.

Well, how long does it take to enjoy the fruits of BLT Sales?

Quite simply, this revenue performance transformation can happen, and *will* happen, just as soon as any capable organization makes the decision to break the cycle of a purely REACTIVE and opportunistic sales

¹ Actually, I focus on a very small point on the back of the ball where the club actually makes contact.

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process (one that is more often based upon dumb luck and happenstance rather than upon a foundation of meticulous planning and skillful execution) and then replace it with a PROACTIVE sales process that yields continuous growth and predictable results.

BLT Sales: Bigger (deals) in Less Time is just such a *proactive* process.



However, this book isn't for everyone.

This book is not intended for the environs of the multi-billion dollar Fortune 500 world, per se.

Rather, it's more for all those small- to medium-sized organizations out there who perhaps have made it past that first difficult milestone of \$1.0 million a year in revenue, but somehow have plateaued in perhaps the \$3.0 million to \$5.0 million range for several years.

It's also for some of the more established companies, perhaps in their second decade of operation, who still haven't yet reached \$20 million a year in revenue.

Or, it might also speak to a variety of the multitude of the little to no revenue startups who are still working on achieving that first \$1.0 million per year of revenue who don't wish to plateau in the \$3.0 million – \$5.0 million range and then languish there for many, many years.

Thus, from startup to early-stage to small- or medium-sized businesses who all want to see their revenue curves take off – all of this is for you.

FROM HIGH-TECH AND BEYOND

The primary context of this book is gleaned from my own first-hand experience in the information economy, i.e. the Information Technology (IT) industry. Specifically, – computer software and hardware, Internet services, telecommunications and data networking, both project-based and recurring professional services, managed subscription-based and Software as a Service (SaaS) services, sales and marketing consulting and much more that I've been involved with over the years.

Nevertheless, you may very well find that many of the concepts, lessons, and insights we'll discuss in this book can also be universally applicable to many other industries and a wide variety of market sectors. So, if you're in the healthcare industry, the finance world, manufacturing, transportation, etc. there still may be plenty of nuggets of truth to be enjoyed by all. It's not all about IT.

On the other hand, the lessons and insights of this book really aren't about the sales paradigm in some specific sectors such as the vast Retail world, Real Estate, or anything specifically consumer or commodity related – i.e. notwithstanding the fact that many of the businesses and the market sectors that you might wish to sell to are, in fact, Retailers themselves or sell commodities to consumers. Therefore, this book is about the proven sales success dynamics I've learned throughout my career with respect to B2B (Business to Business) and/or B2B2C (Business to Business to Consumer) selling, not pure B2C (Business to Consumer) selling.

THE UNIQUENESS OF B2B SALES

B2B sales is a distinct business universe where the dollar value of individual sales transactions and contracts are typically in the high-five to six-figure range, with the occasional seven-figure deal that comes along every now and then to keep it all interesting and fun.

A hallmark of such sized deals in the B2B world are those with much longer sales cycles (usually measured in months if not years), made all the more complex by the need to navigate labyrinths of organizational red tape, which can be a formidable obstacle course in your path, both in terms of a target Prospect's decision-making process and with respect to their budgetary/funding approval process. And that reality doesn't even begin to address the battlefield of your competition and how to deal with them, although we will get into that part of the discussion in some detail.

B2B-type deals also typically have a much heavier education and consulting burden than does the B2C market, where B2B sales teams need to be able to educate and inform their Prospects as a major element of the sales process.

What is critical to understand from the very outset is that the overall complex reality of B2B selling requires a special and somewhat unique caliber of sales professional – i.e. truly talented and seasoned sales executives, not order-takers and clerks. It also requires an advanced state of organizational and sales process *maturity*. Thus, **organizational maturity** for a sales team is at the very core of what this book is really all about.

Specifically, I want to share with you how to:

- Get the right people for your sales team
- Train and equip your sales team for success

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- Develop a viable and effective market-penetration strategy
- Execute your sales plan with excellence
- Remove obstacles to your team's success
- Get out of the way
- Enjoy the results

But does BLT actually work?

The Simple answer: Yes it does.

How can you know that?

Well, without having read this whole book yet and heard what I have to say, it's reasonable that you don't know yet what to make of what you're about to learn. I'm not assuming you're going to give me the benefit of the doubt just yet that what I seek to share with you is gospel. All I'm asking of you to do at this point is simply to hear me out and see if what I have to say passes the sanity test. If it does, then I'm going to encourage you to give specific measures a try at your own discretion and see if you observe any direct benefits first-hand. Your very own first-hand observations of the results of your own efforts will be the best validation of my message to you. Fair enough?

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT

From my perspective, I believe emphatically in the BLT Sales Process because I've personally built and led many world-class sales and marketing teams in my own career spanning three decades, inclusive of being a part of numerous successful startups that led to multimillion dollar exit events. In other words, I've personally seen it all work first-hand.

I've served as a CEO three times thus far; VP of Sales and/or Marketing many more times than that; and ran a marketing agency for several years, specifically dedicated to helping many aspiring entrepreneurs (primarily technology companies) to develop their business plans, Go-to-Market (GTM) strategies, and to obtain startup funding.

I was also recruited on one occasion as a VP of Sales to try and execute a strategic turnaround of a struggling software company. It was a publicly-traded company that was in deep trouble. Specifically, it was a company

that was losing millions of dollars per quarter and whose stock was in the toilet. Through the implementation of the types of measures of what's contained in this book, I helped them make it to cash-flow positive and saw their stock rise in value tenfold. Oh, and was able to do all of that in only six months.

That's the power of what we're talking about here.

What you're about to read is what I regularly teach my own sales and marketing teams. And to give you a little more quantifiable context, my typical Sales Rep, on average, generates somewhere between \$1.5 million to \$2.0 million or more in net-new revenue per year, some doing a lot better than that. This revenue target is comprised of average transaction sizes in the \$50,000 - \$250,000 range, with sales cycles of roughly 90 to 180 days. So, hopefully that gives you a little more concrete parameters of what we're talking about. I'll endeavor to give you plenty of real-world examples as we go, so you can best get your head around all the math.

Yes, there will be math on the test! But in the grand scheme of things, it's really not that hard.

So I ask you: Are potential annual net-new revenues of \$1.5 million to \$2.0 million or more per Sales Rep, on average, a desirable outcome for your company? If so, then read on.



Let's hope that even from the beginning of our discussion together, that depending on your company's percentage of recurring revenues per year versus one-time purchases, and your containment of churn (i.e. limiting the loss of recurring payment customers), that such levels of new sales productivity that I'm referring to would make your journey upward on the revenue curve a pretty straightforward and entirely predictable process.

That would be a good thing – right?

Said another way – I have no ivory-tower academic theories, untested abstractions nor motivational puffery to blow up your skirt. All I have to share with you in this book are the proven elements, processes and tools of what I know works, and what has allowed me to enjoy a very vibrant and rewarding career in Sales and Marketing leadership.

Candidly, much of what I am going to share with you was learned the hard way, hands-on, by virtue of a lot of skinned knees and bloody noses. Some of it came through a bit of formal training, some of which you might recognize and therefore may already be somewhat familiar—so as to give us a little common ground to work from. However, I can attest that most of it was learned through diligent and perseverant experimentation

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and refinement, hands-on trial and error, of what was discovered to be most useful and effective.

All in all, my insights, concepts, and complete system of BLT Sales are an amalgamation of the **best of everything** I've ever come across and found to be of value in actual practice. Yet with that said, it's also a process that is in an ever-changing state of continuous improvement.

Yes, it's all dynamic, not static.

That is Lesson #1: You don't know it all. I don't know it all. No one does. No one person ever will. And therefore, to stay proficient in the game and to keep winning you need to continuously hone and upgrade your skills, add to your knowledge, and leverage your ever-expanding experience and expertise. No exceptions, no excuses.

Perhaps, at a bare minimum, what you're about to learn here may help you avoid a few potholes in the road ahead. But hopefully, my most sincere desire is that what you learn here may finally show you how to escape from Einstein's definition of insanity – i.e. doing the same things over and over and expecting different results.

It's time to try something new.

Real-World Application

By way of a real-world example of what I'm talking about, the following conversation is a generic illustration of a common situation that I've seen in a consulting-type scenario more times than you'd probably believe, which typically goes something along these lines:

A CEO of a technology company tells me, "Bob, we're doing around \$3.0 million a year right now. We did a little over \$2.0 million the year before, so we're really starting to grow now. But what we really want to do is to get to \$20 million a year or more over the next five years."

"I'm sure you do," I reply, noting that this company is in an industry with many direct competitors with similar products and services generating tens of millions and some of them doing hundreds of millions of dollars per year.

I then ask, "So, how many years has your company been in business?"

"Ten years," the CEO replies with a genuine smile of pride in their longevity.

My first thought is: Really? It took you 10 years to get to \$3.0 million in revenue a year?

On the bright side, it sounds like they had a significant growth bump last year, at least percentage-wise, essentially growing by 50% over the prior year. But was that a fluke, or just the result of one or two big deals? The company's very own long history of much lower levels of revenue production would argue quite convincingly for an anomaly.

My next question: "How many sales people do you have?"

The CEO says, "Two."

Wow. Two Sales Reps, combined, did around \$1.0 million of new business in one year, or an average of only \$500,000 each—and that's a best-case assumption that doesn't include any monthly recurring revenue from prior year's sales.

Not very impressive.

And I'd wager those same Sales Reps are probably the first ones to complain loud and long of how slow business is these days and the perpetual dearth of any new marketing leads².

"Who manages your sales team?" I ask.

"I do," the CEO replies, but then is quick to add, "But you have to understand, I'm not really a sales expert. My background is in engineering, not sales."

Explains a lot.

You're probably wondering: Can an organization like this, who took ten years to make it to only \$3.0 million a year in revenue suddenly take off like a rocket and organically grow their revenues to \$20 million in the next five years?

Amazingly, the answer to that question *can* be Yes. It's doable.

But how *probable* is it?

Well, the truth is, their likelihood of achieving that level of success entirely depends on how much *change* the organization is willing to sincerely embrace – for they are going to need quite a bit of change, which won't be free, but will require some strategic investment. Clearly, if they keep doing what they're doing the way they've been doing it with the people they have, they'll be lucky to hit \$20 million a few *decades* down the road, if ever.

² Pro Tip: Any salesperson who expresses such a sentiment is basically telling you they are a low-level order-taker/clerk who wants business teed up for them on a silver platter, not someone who knows how to hunt and bag big game themselves.

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Sadly, more often than not, a genuine willingness to institute major organizational change simply isn't there. That's especially true in what's known as a "Lifestyle Business."

That is, a Lifestyle Business is a business owned by an individual or family or small partnership that produces enough profit per year to afford the owners a comfortable, if not somewhat luxurious, lifestyle—maybe pocketing a few hundred grand a year.

Sure, they'll tell you they'd love to be making millions, but when faced with what it would really take to make that happen, the genuine will and commitment that is necessary to see it through just isn't there. Any attempts to effect change will be resisted by everyone from the safety of their comfort zones, chanting in unison, "That's not how we've always done it here!"

The exception to this scenario is a Lifestyle Business person who is ready to cash out (sell their company) and then semi-retire if not retire completely. Many of them are very open to a lucrative acquisition. If they've been around for a number of years, have a good-sized customer base, and solid MRR³ (Monthly Recurring Revenue), they could very well be an attractive acquisition candidate.

However, to be successfully acquired requires a target organization with the right fundamental financial (math) profile, an expected financial business model, a demonstrable historical revenue curve, desired EBITDA levels, etc. In this context, the BLT Sales process may actually be needed for implementation on an accelerated basis to make all the numbers work and look good. It can readily serve this purpose as well.

Yes, just like selling a house, selling a business can benefit from a healthy dose of "curb appeal." And nothing makes a business look better than a great P&L statement and Cash-Flow report. Granted, getting the numbers to where they need to be doesn't happen overnight. But with BLT Sales, they have a better chance of getting where they need to be a whole lot faster.



To be crystal clear, discovering a slow or stagnant revenue growth curve isn't just a small-sized company problem. It can happen to more established companies as well.

³ Some organizations use the abbreviation of RMR instead of MRR, with RMR standing for Recurring Monthly Revenue, instead of Monthly Recurring Revenue. It's the same thing. MRR is used as a standard convention in this book.

Here's an actual case I was involved with:

I met with the Chairman of the Board of Directors of a technology company.

At the time, this Chairman told me that his company was fifteen years old and was doing around \$20 million in total revenue a year. On first blush, like in the previous example, I wasn't terribly impressed that it took them fifteen years to grow to \$20 million a year. However, that \$20 million was almost all in monthly recurring revenue (MRR), and it came from less than fifty of their primary accounts. So that wasn't too bad.

Their main challenge, however, as the Chairman went on to explain, was that they had been treading water at \$20 million a year in revenue level for the last four or five years. They were stuck on a plateau, and despite their best efforts, couldn't seem to figure out how to grow past that level of revenue performance.

I asked, "How many sales people do you have?"

Answer: Four.

A few questions later I learned they were enjoying little to no new business, and what new business they actually landed was often negated by churn. The existing sales team was mostly doing post-sales account management work, primarily endeavoring to service and to retain their existing paying customers.

I asked about their marketing capabilities, their market penetration strategy, new lead generation plans, etc.

Answer: Virtually non-existent.

Basically, their entire sales and marketing strategy was: "If the phone rings we'll answer it." That was about it. Historically, their primary source of leads was word-of-mouth referrals, and there wasn't a whole lot of that happening at the time.

Long story short, the basic Sales and Marketing fundamentals (i.e. blocking and tackling) simply weren't being done. Nor did they even know *what* to do in that department. It therefore came as no surprise to discover yet another engineering-led organization, not a Sales and Marketing-driven organization.

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Engineer-think: “If we built it, they will come!”⁴

The happy ending to this story is that I did help them, and in less than a year they’d added an additional \$10 million in net-new revenues per year.

How did that happen? By doing what needed to be done.

BLT Sales isn’t easy. But neither does it have to be excessively hard, especially if you know what you’re doing and are willing to hold people accountable – even if occasionally it hurts a few feelings, and sometimes means that some ineffective and/or unqualified players have to be cut from the team.

That’s real life.

In my experience, success in business all boils down to adherence to one simple axiom:

DOING ALL THE RIGHT THINGS RIGHT

That concept has two absolutely critical elements:

- 1) Knowing exactly what **All the Right Things** are that need to be done; and
- 2) Doing those Right Things with **Excellence**

Most organizations falter or experience slow to non-existent revenue growth due to simple ignorance. Many of them simply don’t know everything they really should be doing in order to experience exponential revenue growth. Whereas, other organizations, much to their chagrin, *do know* much of what they should be doing, but, unfortunately, they just aren’t very good at it. Both elements must be true in order to get the results you want.

And that’s the punchline to this introduction of this book: You have to do all the right things right.

Are you willing to do that?

⁴ PRO TIP: No they won’t – especially if they don’t even know you exist.

If you *are* willing to embrace some fundamental change in light of some new perspectives, then this book can potentially serve to detail what you always wanted to know (but were maybe afraid to ask?) about achieving and enjoying exponential, high-velocity revenue growth, as well as the requisite systems and processes you will need to put in place to ensure that everything that needs to get done, gets done, and is done right the first time – and in the right *order* (that’s an important concept, too).

However, what might surprise you is that you may learn more than you ever dreamed with respect to the true inner-workings of B2B sales. That is, learning about strategic economic *buying psychology*, competitive strategies (i.e. encouraging you to become a chess master in a figurative sense), how to painstakingly aspire to the true detective work required to close key sales, and also perhaps a little bit of how master spies apply their tradecraft.



Throughout it all, our entire discussion will center on one key common denominator: People.

Yes, *people* are the secret.

More specifically, a great deal of what I have to share with you delves deep into the depths of human psychology and the complexities of human motivations and their resulting behaviors – for both your sales and marketing teams, as well as your business prospects and clients, and even that of your competition.

The whole process starts with the realization that you begin by hiring your success.

Next, if you don’t know it already, you’ll soon learn that all of those sales professionals who are most successful at B2B selling, those golden geese who produce a couple of million dollars each in net-new business for you every year, just happen to be those highly intelligent souls who are experts at reading other people, empathetically understanding other people’s thoughts and emotions, and ultimately have a talent for persuading other people to take decisive action specifically designed to foster the desired outcomes of their real-world needs.

•

True SALES is fundamentally about the art of *persuasion* – i.e. convincing people to take specific behavioral actions, actions that they were not

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predisposed to do before the sales professional applied their skills. But don't misunderstand. Effective sales is not any kind of coercive manipulation.

No, pure sales is the art of *enticing* and *convincing*.

It starts with building rapport and trust through value-based education and counseling, and then upon that foundation of trust it becomes all about cultivating buying desire, overcoming objections, and channeling emotions into the direct influence of distinct behaviors.

You already know this to be true.

Because if it wasn't true, and major economic buying decisions and subsequent large business transactions just happened as a matter of course or dumb luck, then elite sales people would be nothing more than mere cashiers and/or order-takers.

They're not.

They're your deal-makers, the rain-makers. And that's why they make the big bucks, and often work for companies that enjoy 100% or more year-over-year revenue growth.

Isn't that what you want?

If so, and if you're ready, then let's take an in-depth look at exactly how BLT Sales is done – built from the ground up.