



First Avenue
Ventures

The Structured Start-Up

WORKBOOK



**MODULE 8:
DISTRIBUTION, THE
BUYER'S JOURNEY,
AND THE SALES
PROCESS**

TOPICS COVERED:

The importance of affecting the sales channel to change purchasers' behavior.

**LEARN WHAT
MATTERS
MOST**

The Structured Start-Up from First Avenue
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HOW ARE YOU GOING TO INFLUENCE OR DIRECT THE SALES PROCESS CHANNEL?

“There is no sale without the story; no knockout without the setup.”

— Gary Vaynerchuk, author of *Crushing It!: How Great Entrepreneurs Build Their Business and Influence—and How You Can, Too*

“We need to stop interrupting what people are interested in and be what people are interested in.”

— Craig Davis, Co-Founder of Sendlle

Having figured out who the customer is and what the market is, the question now becomes: how do we reach the customer and affect the buying system?

To start, you have to figure out two things: what is the sales process for the customer and what role do you play in the process? In the consumer context, think of this conversation in terms of the buyer’s journey. For example, a car buyer may do research online, go do a test drive, do price research online, then come to the dealership to buy a car. That is a simplified version of a buyer’s journey. For other products, you may have distribution channels, value-added resellers, and similar influencers (networks, aggregators, platforms, etc). And to further complicate the matter, your own company might also play one of the aforementioned roles.

So, step one – figure out what the sales process is for you and, if applicable, where in the process you sit.

Then, step two – figure out how you can affect the sales process.

If you are doing something new, by definition you will have to affect the sales process in a new way. This requires a keen understanding of exactly how everything works together. Oftentimes, entrenched competitors are more influential than imagined. People in decision-making capacities do not get fired for making the standard blue-chip recommendation, so how do you get them to recommend you instead? In order to be successful, you have to be able to influence the sales channel toward your process.

Think of the sales process like water rolling downhill in a stream. Left unchecked, it will continue to roll as it has before, doing the same thing it always has done, just as the market will continue as it has been if you never enter with your new product. Now, how are you going to change that stream? Are you going to dam it, divert it, catch some overflow in a new channel, or carve off a little side pool? And then, of course, do a reality check. Make sure you're not trying to boil the ocean.

The way you affect the sales channel is what you are doing or going to do to get people to purchase or use your product. This module, then, is about more than just why people are going to choose you. This is about how you are going to change purchasers' behavior.

A key component of all sales and marketing is branding. Branding is about storytelling and trust-building. The core principals of branding usually focus on purchasers in a broad sense, not necessarily focusing on how branding influences buying and decision-making. Branding is key to marketing, but it has to be balanced with and backed up by the basic blocking and tackling of sales and marketing efforts.

CONFLICTING DYNAMIC

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

The Structured Start-Up Module 8

1. What is the sales process for the customer and what role do you play in that process?

2. How are you going to influence or direct the sales process channel?
