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The Value Message and Technical Sales

Technical sales roles hold a unique power in the sales process. A survey from Mastering Technical Sales found that **39% of Middle Management** and **43% of C-Level Executives** considered the Technical team to be their most valuable resource in the buying process.

Technical roles like Sales Engineers are more trusted by buyers because they aren't viewed as sales-focused, but as a **subject matter expert and advisor**. This trust gives them a unique leverage in your deals. Yet, many sales teams fail to leverage the full power of this role, utilizing the SE only as a technician who builds demos and hashes out details rather than a core influencer in the buying process.

Uncovering Pain

Although SEs deal with the technical aspect of the sale, they should be careful to avoid the common pitfall of [addressing only technical pain](#). Technical pain is typically experienced at the individual level, where business pain impacts the entire organization and its outcomes.

When the AE and SE are aligned on a value framework, they can work together to execute a rigorous discovery process that uncovers the most pressing business issues and priorities of decision-makers. The Sales Engineer can then leverage this information to capture the business value of your solution's technical features in a way that directly impacts the customer's business goals.

When Technical Sales is viewed as a vendor or a stage in the sales process, there's a value disconnect.

The Account Executive promises business outcomes, and the Sales Engineer promises technical results, and they hope the buyer connects the dots. Or, the Sales Engineer promises outcomes without true, deep understanding of the buyer's pain to know whether those outcomes are relevant to them.

When Technical Sales is fully aligned with the wider sales process, they're able to create a new depth of value. They can paint the full picture of how exactly the technical specifications of your solution lead to the business outcomes promised by the AE. It's critical that Account Executives view the Sales Engineer as not just a resource, but a partner working in tandem to demonstrate how your solution is uniquely positioned to solve the buyer's problem.

Highly effective teams enable AEs to consult with the SE throughout the discovery and qualification process to share critical account data in a way that fortifies the value message across the technical and economic sale, building towards a [collective "Yes" from multiple decision-makers](#) and propelling deals forward at a premium price. **Leaders can improve this relationship** by positioning the Sales Engineer as a critical partner in the sales process and generating alignment between this role and the rest of the sales team.

2

Decision Criteria and the Technical Buyer

When selling SaaS, Cloud, or other Hi-Tech solutions, there's likely one or more Technical Buyers on the buying committee who are highly invested in the technical features and outcomes of your solution. The role of the Sales Engineer is to influence these stakeholders by communicating the features and differentiators of your solution, but also to make sure these technical components are aligned to the business problems and desired outcomes as identified by the Account Executive in discovery.



Sales Engineers are viewed by the buyer as technical experts, which provides them the unique authority to share your company's point of view on what technical capabilities are required to accomplish the desired outcomes.

Customers often enter the conversation with an idea of the required capabilities they want, whether gathered from independent research or competitors. Elite sales teams influence the decision criteria by presenting their differentiation as a core requirement to solving the customer's most pressing business issue.

This process begins from the beginning of the buyer journey with the AE - all of their conversations should affirm the SE's position and tee them up to position themselves as a trusted expert that will diagnose and triage the buyer's problem with a customized solution. Force Management Co-Founder John Kaplan shares how sales leaders can enable this ecosystem in this clip from [our podcast episode on Technical Sales](#).



While the Technical Buyer isn't the Economic Buyer and typically doesn't have access to discretionary funds, satisfaction of their required capabilities is a core activity to moving deals forward at a high value, as the technical win is a key step to achieving the economic win with the Economic Buyer. Failure to secure the technical win typically results in objections like "You don't have a feature that we want" or "We don't see the value of your extra features and chose a cheaper competitor." You don't want to lose on a technicality when your solution is the best option to deliver on the customer's desired business outcomes. Sales Engineers leverage their trusted advisor role to connect those dots for the buyer and **build visible alignment** between the technical abilities of your solution and the business value.

3

The Importance of the Demo

The demo is a critical moment in time in the sales process where the Sales Engineer can use their trusted advisor status to align technical pain with business pain to advance both the technical and economic sale. As a leader, you can support your team to have more effective demos by equipping [every customer-facing role](#), including the Sales Engineer, with a clear narrative on how your technical differentiation connects to your core value drivers. Consistency in messaging across the sales conversations and the demo allows the demo to validate the promises made by the AE.

Ensure your technical sales and sales team are aligned on the answers to these questions:

1

What are the key problems that our technology solves on a business level?

Every customer-facing role should be fluent in communicating your business value. Throughout the discovery process, the AE and SE should work together to qualify the prospect’s business pain against the pain your solution solves for and establish the value the SE will connect the technical pain to.

2

How specifically do we solve those problems?

The answer to this question should have both technical and business elements, and how it’s presented depends on the audience. From an SE to a technical buyer, this answer should get more specific than to a business leader. However, the key is tying the technical benefits back to the most pressing business problem and the desired outcomes.

3

How do we do it differently than the competition?

Aligning your technical differentiation to the required capabilities is key to unlocking repetitive wins. This process should start early in the customer engagement to ensure that your differentiation becomes a part of the decision criteria.

4

How have we done it in the past?

Equip your team to quantify the value of your solution based on the results you’ve had with other customers. Leaders can establish an operating rhythm for Customer Success and Account teams to share success metrics and case studies throughout the commercial team, enabling their use in the sales process.

4

The Right Time to Present a Demo



Buyers often push for a demo early in the sales process because that’s what they’ve come to expect from sellers.

If you want your team to successfully execute a value-driven engagement, it’s important to hold off on giving a demo until they have sufficient evidence of the customer’s business pains and desired outcomes. Brian Walsh explains why demo timing is so crucial in this clip from our webinar [Driving a Revenue Mindset](#).



A skilled Sales Engineer uses the demo to build towards a collective “yes” from all stakeholders – but they can’t do so without knowing what’s important to that buyer. The focus of the demo should be on tying specific technical features of your solution to the customer’s desired business outcomes. If your competitors are executing a demo-led process, taking the time to execute discovery and qualification of the buyer’s current state can provide your team with a new competitive differentiation: a differentiation of their process where the customer feels that their needs are validated and understood.

More Technical Sales Resources

The key to consistently winning complex technical sales is creating a collaborative customer engagement process. Check out [our guide for leaders](#) on aligning your team for a collaborative GTM motion, then share these resources with your team to get started.

PODCAST ▶

The Value of Sales Engineers in the Sales Process

VIDEO ▶

What Customers Want and Expect from Your Sales Engineer

PODCAST ▶

Avoid Getting Overwhelmed in Technical Discussions



The Right Partner for Technical Sales Growth

Force Management has worked with highly technical sales organizations for over 20 years, helping them to build a sales discipline that drives results. Our methodologies have resulted in bigger wins, greater quota attainment, more accurate forecasting and higher talent retention for hundreds of clients across industries including Cybersecurity, FinTech, Business Intelligence, and DevOps.

We partner with each sales organization to custom-tailor our signature methodologies to their solutions, helping them maximize their talent with a repeatable and aligned process that paves the way to growth.

START A CONVERSATION ►

“The [Force Management] process ensures that everybody is moving in the same fashion and that our alignment with customers is repeatable and scalable.”

- Craig Clay, President of Global Capital Markets, DFIN

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