

This 20-point guide will help you cut through the “spin” when trying to determine why the top line is stalled and how to get it back on track.

External Focus

1. When the business isn't performing, too often executives become internally focused, finding security within the four walls of their office, rather than engaging with the driving forces affecting their business.
2. When was the last on-site visit with the customer?
 - a. Do not rely on a single point of contact with your customers.
 - b. Deploying a “C” level manager will, open more doors, elevate meetings to a higher level, and yield more information.
3. When was the last face-to-face meeting with your channel partners?

Resources to Help Validate the Sales Forecast

4. Customer's Sales Organization
 - a. What products, platforms, and models are selling?
 - b. Are their products being accepted into the market?
 - c. Who's buying and why?
 - d. Where are they losing business and why?
 - e. What's their outlook on future sales commissions?
5. Customer's Marketing Organization
 - a. Where are they spending marcom dollars and why?
 - b. When will it impact products / services you sell into?
6. Customer's Purchasing Department
 - a. How are they splitting available business and why?
 - b. Are you employing tactics to increase your share of available business (reference) [KH Advisors Value Challenge](#).
7. Customer's Operations Management
 - a. What direction is inventory moving and why?
 - b. What changes are planned to current run rates?
 - c. Are purchase orders in house and have customers confirmed release dates?
8. Channel Partners
 - a. What percentage of their mindshare are you receiving?
 - b. What do the metrics tell you?

Customer Profile

9. How well do you understand your customer's end market? Is your customer a market leader or will they be squeezed out as the market contracts?
10. Do they have adequate funding to roll out the products you supply into?
11. Are there design, quality or regulatory issues that will delay the need for your products or services?
12. Is late delivery by other suppliers delaying the need for your products / services?

Sales Performance Metrics

13. Compare the rolling forecast vs. actual sales rates.
14. Review reasons for wins and losses.
15. Review new vs. existing customer inquires.
16. Review the impact of pricing policies.
17. Evaluate the sales process and controls for:
 - a. Lead generation and qualification
 - b. Pipeline management
 - c. Proposal and quotation review
 - d. Commission structure

Market Leadership & Competitive Impact

18. How large is the market and is it growing or shrinking?
 - a. Determine product positioning on the life cycle curve.
19. Where do you fit in the market, relative to price, quality, technology and service?
 - a. Are there disruptive forces in the market?
 - b. Businesses under stress will employ tactics to capture share...is your company proactive or reactive?
 - c. Has competition already had senior level meetings with your customer to lock up the next series of purchase order releases?
20. Is your company a market leader or a follower? Knowing how to leverage your strengths can result in a larger share of business, especially in tough times.

KH Advisors has extensive experience in analyzing sales forecasts and developing a crystal clear picture of a businesses situation. Our [*Snap Shot Assessment*](#) is designed to quickly determine whether the financial forecasts are supported by sound sales and operating plans. To learn more about navigating turbulent times contact Ken Hammer at (414) 350.6398 or at Ken@KHAdvisors.com.