



INSTITUTO
UNIVERSITÁRIO
DE LISBOA

Building a successful sales strategy plan for Shiptimize

Sara Vera-Cruz Quintas

Master in International management

Supervisors:

Prof. António José Correia Vieira da Silva, Associate Professor, ISCTE Business School, Department of Marketing, Operations and General Management

Prof. Álvaro Augusto da Rosa, Associate Professor (w/ aggregation), ISCTE Business School, Department of Marketing, Operations and General Management

October 2020



BUSINESS
SCHOOL

Department of Marketing, Operations and General Management

Building a successful sales strategy plan for Shiptimize

Sara Vera-Cruz Quintas

Master in International management

Supervisors:

Prof. António José Correia Vieira da Silva, Associate Professor, ISCTE Business School, Department of Marketing, Operations and General Management

Prof. Álvaro Augusto da Rosa, Associate Professor (w/ aggregation), ISCTE Business School, Department of Marketing, Operations and General Management

October 2020

*I dedicate this thesis to my fiancé, Pedro Ferrer Catarino,
and to my mother, Analena Vera-Cruz.*

Resumo

A Tese de Mestrado apresentada, cujo título é “Construindo um plano estratégico de sucesso de vendas para a *Shiptimize*”, representa o trabalho desenvolvido no último ano na empresa *Shiptimize*.

O Desafio foi identificar os principais problemas existentes nos departamentos de vendas e atendimento ao cliente, que não tinham nenhuma estratégia traçada nem indicadores de performance estabelecidos (KPIs). O plano envolveu os departamentos de marketing, vendas e atendimento ao cliente, tendo como objetivo aumentar as vendas e a taxa de retenção de clientes.

A estratégia de vendas foi desenvolvida com base em conhecimento académico, através de revisão da literatura da área científica de gestão e marketing e com base na opinião de profissionais das áreas envolvidas. Por outro lado, a estratégia apresentada foi desenvolvida conjuntamente com o CEO e equipas da empresa, por forma a obter dados precisos sobre a empresa, assim como a compreender os desafios de cada departamento e compreender também a razão das falhas do processo implementado em cada equipa. A partir das respostas de alguns clientes a um questionário que disponibilizámos, conseguimos obter uma amostra das opiniões dos clientes sobre o serviço prestado.

A estratégia de vendas criada divide-se em três partes: *pipeline* de vendas, atendimento ao cliente e KPIs, seguida de um plano de implementação com as soluções a desenvolver a curto e médio prazo em cada departamento.

É uma estratégia que pode ser aplicada a qualquer empresa Start-up que necessite de desenvolver uma estratégia de vendas e aumentar o nível de satisfação dos seus clientes.

Palavras chave: Sales leads, Key Performance Indicators, Customer Retention, Sales Funnel, Customer Happiness
JEL: M10, M310

Abstract

The present Master Thesis named “Building a successful sales strategy plan for *Shiptimize*”, represents the work carried out last year in cooperation with the company *Shiptimize*.

The challenge was to identify the main problems within the departments of sales and customer service which, at the time, had no strategy implemented or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor the activity and workflow of the teams. The designed plan involved marketing, sales and customer service teams with the purpose of increasing effective sales and customer retention rate.

The sales strategy was developed based on the expertise of scholars, on literature review from science, management, and marketing areas, and on professionals’ insight from the areas involved. On the other hand, the present strategy was also developed in cooperation with the company CEO, in order to obtain accurate data from *Shiptimize* sales, with customer service and data science teams so that we can perceive what challenges we are facing and how the processes were being executed, thus getting to the source of those handicaps.

Customers were also enquired so that we would have relevant customers insights.

The sales strategy was divided in three key parts: sales pipeline strategy, customer service and KPIs, followed by an implementation plan with solutions to be implemented in short and medium-term, always identifying the departments involved in each recommendation.

It is a strategy that can be applied to any Start -up business which requires a sales strategy, and which needs to increase the customer satisfaction rate.

Keywords: Sales leads, Key Performance Indicators, Customer Retention, Sales Funnel, Customer Happiness

JEL: M10, M310

Table of contents

- Resumo..... i
- Abstract iii
- 1. Introduction 1
 - 1.1. Exposition of the topic context..... 3
- 2. Literature Review 5
 - 2.1. How to systematize sales strategy to improve sales effectiveness? 5
 - 2.2. Research Process: Where to look to generate new leads? 8
 - 2.3. Classifying Leads 8
 - 2.4. Customer Loyalty and retention equity 9
 - 2.5. How to measure sales performance through Key Performance Indicators? 10
- 3. Sales strategy proposed framework..... 13
- 4. Methodology 15
- 5. Competitive assessment and diagnosis of Shiptimize’s current position 17
 - 5.1. Diagnosis of Shiptimize 17
 - 5.1.1. Overall Shiptimize business performance 17
 - 5.1.2. Sales process diagnostic 19
 - 5.1.3. Customer service diagnostic 20
 - 5.1.4. Management control and KPIs diagnostic..... 21
 - 5.1.5. Conclusions of the diagnostic..... 21
- 6. SWOT Analysis..... 23
- 7. Competitive landscape in Portugal..... 25
 - 7.1. Direct Competitors 25
 - 7.2. Indirect Competitors - Carriers..... 26
 - 7.3. Indirect Competitors – Marketplaces 27
- 8. Proposed Solutions: Re-Build the sales strategy of *Shiptimize* 29
 - 8.1. General considerations regarding Shiptimize’s value offer 29
 - 8.2. Create a structured approach for the sales process 29
 - 8.2.1. Marketing and Sales: Leads Inbounds and Outbounds 30

8.2.2.	Classifying Leads/Proposals.....	31
8.2.3.	Deal	32
8.2.4.	Delivery	32
8.2.5.	After Sales and Customer Retention	32
8.2.6.	KPI'S for control management.....	33
9.	Implementation Plan	35
10.	Conclusion.....	37
11.	Bibliography.....	39
12.	Appendix	43
	Appendix A –Shiptimize Organogram.....	43
	Appendix B – Sweezi SWOT analysis.....	43

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to enhance the sales strategy for a logistic company named *Shiptimize*, that has established in Portugal three years ago and that offers digital supply chain management solutions to other companies.

Shiptimize was initially founded in the Netherlands in 2017 by two Dutch entrepreneurs, Mark Bastiaanssen and Jorn Spiertz. In 2014, before creating *Shiptimize*, they created an eCommerce business to sell fishing products online through a marketplace. Despite the reasonable business success, Mark and John struggled with the logistics to ensure the delivery of their products to the customers in due time. As the marketplace grew, this issue became very time consuming. Faced with these difficulties, the two entrepreneurs realized that other companies certainly would also be struggling with the same problems. Motivated by this thought, they decided to develop a new software which would offer a digital solution to optimize the supply chain management. This is what led to the creation of *Shiptimize*.

Shiptimize's digital solution consolidates all the logistics carrier's information in one single platform, thus eliminating the time usually spent by companies in the search for logistics services and prices. *Shiptimize* then aggregates all the information from all the customers and plans the pick-up and delivery schedules with their logistic partners, providing a direct link between customers' orders and the logistic carriers. In one hand, this solution allows customers to save time, enabling them to focus solely on their business, avoiding worrying about the supply chain operations. On the other hand, operating through *Shiptimize* also provides a cost advantage, since the contracts signed with the carriers are for the total volume of their shipments, they offer a clear price advantage when comparing with the purchase of logistic services for each order/customer individually. Finally, when the order is processed, the customer receives a tracking number that enables them to follow the shipment. When a problem with the shipment is detected, *Shiptimize* will be the one to contact the carriers, to perceive what went wrong and finally to find the solution.

Customers can choose whether to integrate *Shiptimize*'s software on their website, or to have it separately, manually scheduling and planning with their own carriers' contracts.

Shiptimize market position distinguish from other logistic intermediates because they target micro businesses with an online shop. Typically, because of their size, these small companies are not interesting enough to generate attention and effort from larger supply chain companies, thus creating a gap that *Shiptimize* aims to fulfill.

In the Netherlands, the company started to grow very fast but faced a market with strong and well-established competitors. As they were trying to gain scale, *Shiptimize* decided to expand their business into other markets.

By then, Mark and John won an Acceleration Program in Portugal which created the perfect opportunity to settle in Lisbon, as it granted them the access to funding from one of the major Portuguese investment funds. They also received funds from Dutch private investors. *Shiptimize*'s leaders also saw Portugal as an ideal opportunity to take a first step into other larger markets to target in the future, such as Spain and Brazil.

Presently, the goal of the company is:

- generate predictable market growth, particularly on the early-stage micro-business segment, which represents their key market segment.
- capitalize from the growth of eCommerce, especially in markets where this phenomenon is still in an introductory phase, such as Portugal.
- create carrier lock-in, meaning procurement/purchase loyalty from their carriers' suppliers.

- create customer lock-in, meaning being part of their customer's business growth, creating loyalty and trust to keep them in the future.



“By now, the company that started in the Netherlands years ago turned into a Portuguese tech startup that helps almost 500 businesses daily to be more efficient and effective in their delivery and logistics.”

Mark Bastiaanssen, Co-Founder of Shiptimize, September 2019

1.1. Exposition of the topic context

After a long period of economic stagnation, in the last couple of years, Portugal faced an unprecedented increase in the number of new businesses. In fact, while in 2014 only 36 thousand new companies were created, in 2019 this number reached 49 thousand (+36%). This economic dynamism has brought to Portugal several international start-ups, such as *Shiptimize*, which are struggling to transform the Portuguese business landscape and to challenge local incumbents.

While the strength of these international new businesses often relies on their global culture and mindset, it is also true that many of them fail when entering a new country, having difficulties to adapt to the local idiosyncrasies. Indeed, it is estimated that only 50% of the start-ups survive for more than three years. Long term success relies not only on a successful business idea, but also on the ability to build a complete business model.

This Thesis aims to find strategies and methodologies to help *Shiptimize* to achieve long-term success and, hopefully, to help other companies which are struggling with the same challenges in their business.

The idea is to develop new paths to solve the major challenges that we identified in this business with a focus on the sales strategy, customer service and key performance indicators.

We will present our recommendations based on scientific research, expert opinion, professional experience, and personal insights.

2. Literature Review

To be accurate and assertive in the strategy that will be defined in this Thesis, it is critical to depict the scientific knowledge regarding the best tools and frameworks to manage the sales cycle, from lead generation to customer retention, customer service and key performance indicators. The following chapter will cover these topics, providing valuable scientific insights whose applicability will be then analyzed according to *Shiptimize*'s current context.

2.1. How to systematize sales strategy to improve sales effectiveness?

To improve a company's sales strategy, we must find a structured approach to break it down to smaller pieces that can be addressed sequentially. In that sense, one common approach to depict the sales process is by characterizing it as a funnel.

Hourigan (2011) sees the sales Funnel as "a business model where the leads enter at the top and filter down to become customers at the bottom. To increase the number of customers it needed to always fill in the top with new leads. The goal would be generating leads: first by analyzing and qualifying them in terms of being of interest for the company and then by selecting the ones which could turn to effective sales". (Hourigan, 2011)

According with Williams (2011), a sales funnel is "a way to depict the sales process flow stage by stage. Leads are placed into the wide art at the top and percolate down through the various stages of sale to the results, new customers, and revenues". For Williams (2011), even though the goal is always the same (to generate new leads and attract/convert them into new customers), the sales funnel can be represented in two ways (*Figure 2.1*). The main difference between the two approaches is the time spent in each phase of the funnel. In that sense, while in the traditional wide-open funnel the focus is on maximizing the number of sales leads to attract new customers; the upside-down funnel focus on creating a deeper relationship with the customer base.

The wide-open funnel relies on hunters whose role is to generate leads and opportunities. This funnel works for companies that are focused on growing their customer base, and whose actual in-house customers demand less attention. On the other hand, in the upside-down funnel the sales team should be composed by both hunters and farmers, where the hunters are composed of an outside sales team capturing new customers and the farmers by an inside sales team whose responsibility is to be key account managers of in-house customers.

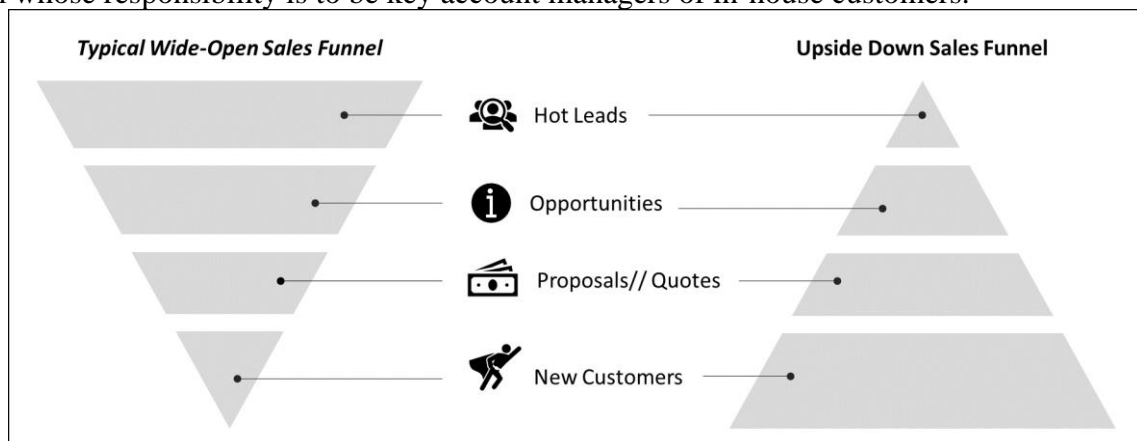


Fig. 2.1 – Different approaches to depict the sales funnel

Source: Williams, S. (2011): "Help! My "sales funnel" is upside down and I need to turn it around". *Inside Tucson Business*

Comparing the two models, Williams (2011) argues that is important to incorporate a concept of "sales hour funnel", which helps to calculate the number of hours spent in each task/stage of the funnel. In the end, the author concludes that both sales funnels can work, and

that their applicability will always depend on the type of business, number of sales representatives and, ultimately, on the companies' growth objectives.

Another expert, Ball (2018), states that the top part of a sales funnel should be the most consuming time part as it is also one of the most important steps that companies should pay attention to. Ball (2018) defines the sales funnel through a customer perspective in four different stages: interest, education, opportunity, and sale (Figure 2.2).

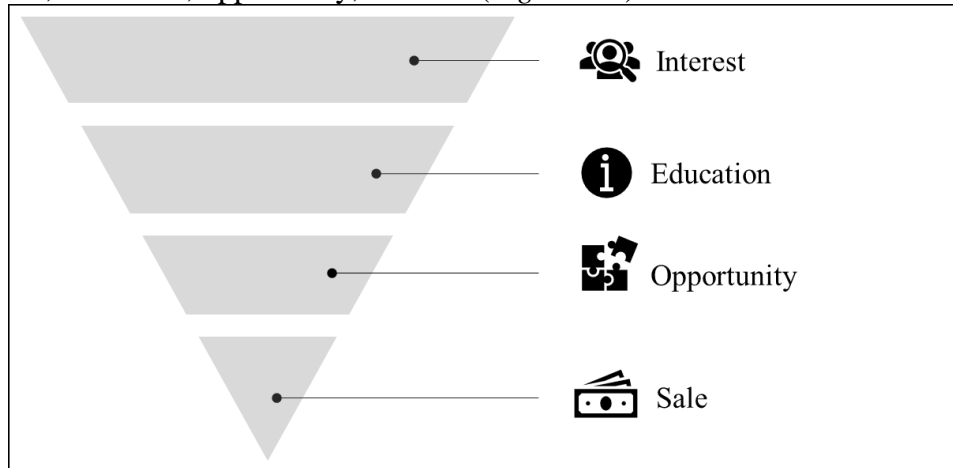


Fig. 2.2 – Elaine Ball's sales funnel

Source: Ball, Elaine (2018) "Understanding the sales funnel: It's time to nurture leads and start selling some surveying services" – Point of Beginning

The first phase goal is to build brand awareness, placing the name of the company on people's minds. Ball (2018) presents social media as a good engagement tool to use and the contents of which are to be shared with everyone. The author considers Instagram and YouTube as ideal tools to promote brand image, while LinkedIn should be used to develop networking and to create brand reliability for new partnerships. According to Ball, after generating interest, companies should then start to share knowledge and relevant information with the customers, which she calls the education stage. Hourigan (2011) shares Ball's perspective on the importance of providing relevant information, concluding that if the company does not provide it, the customer will quickly find the answers that he is looking for through the competitors, which eventually will lead to losing a prospect.

On the third stage, opportunity, Ball (2018) defends to crop up when the customer wants to know more about the company business. The key is to listen to customers and give them answers to their problems. Questionnaires and forms are presented as good tools to generate customers insights. For Hourigan (2011), providing Web forms inquiries allows companies to obtain immediate feedback and information from their customers. In these inquiries it is essential to give a quick response. If companies are not able to do it, they will lose a possible qualified lead. Hourigan (2011) considers that this could be the key aspect in a performing sales funnel for a business with eCommerce and digital activity.

Finally, after the online interaction, in Ball's (2018) fourth stage, companies need to create opportunity to meet face-to-face with their customer. In this phase it is vital to create empathy, engagement, and trust. These attributes will be important to make a deal and win a new customer.

For Patterson (2007), to build a healthy sales funnel, companies need to start understanding their customers' needs and their purchase processes. Companies should not conduct their sales funnel solely from the way a sales representative operates to create more businesses opportunities, but, instead, they should conduct the sales funnel from their customers perspective and needs, to afterwards attract new customers and sales.

Patterson (2007) argues that the approach should be customer-centric to improve effectiveness. Additionally, Patterson (2007) states that both sales and marketing teams, should

be responsible for the company revenues. If companies do not combine these two areas, the result will be longer sales cycles, missed quotas, lower productivity and sales deficiency.

Patterson (2007) suggests that companies should adopt two steps to improve marketing and sales effectiveness. The first step is to change from a transactional focus to a customer focus, understanding customer’s point of view and expectations during the whole customer relationship lifecycle and tracking the customer behavior from the first contact until the effective sale (Figure 2.3). This information is fundamental for the effectiveness of the sales and marketing department.

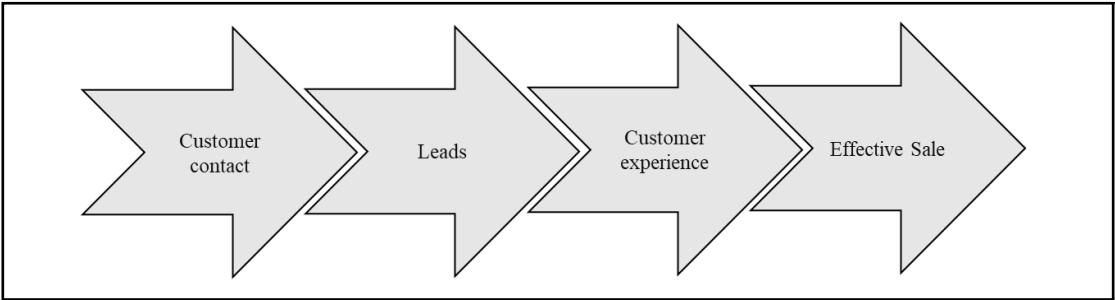


Fig. 2.3 – Customer centricity flow

Source: Patterson, L. (2007). “Marketing and sales alignment for improved effectiveness”. *Journal of Digital Asset Management*.

The second step is to transform the sales funnel into a customer buying pipeline process where the information is shared by marketing and sales department. (Patterson, 2007). The Marketing team identifies and segments potential customers which are then worked by the sales team (Figure 2.4).

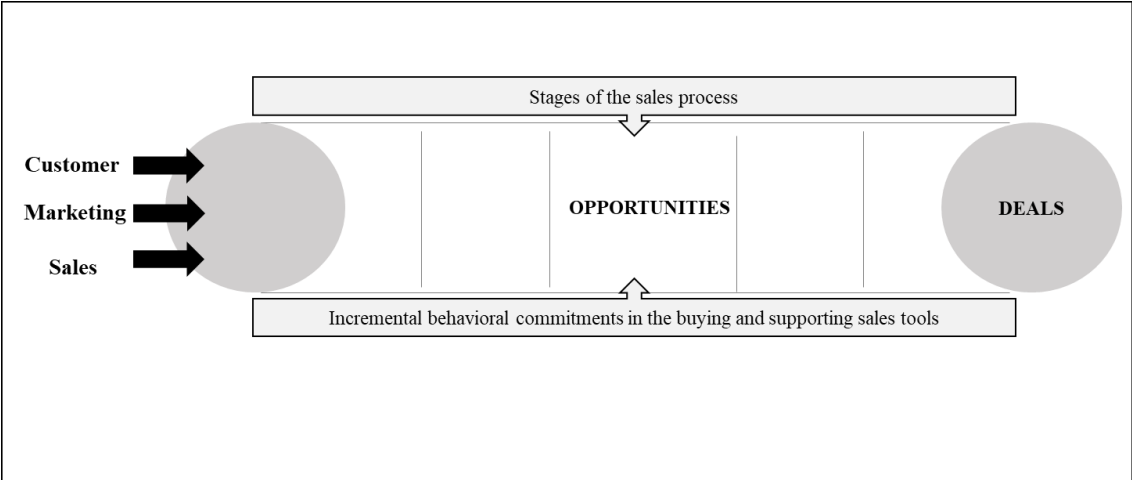


Fig. 2.4 – Laura Patterson’s sales pipeline

Source: Patterson, L. (2007). “Marketing and sales alignment for improved effectiveness”. *Journal of Digital Asset Management*.

In the end, this pipeline aligns marketing and sales inputs and develops an insight of the customer lifecycle. This kind of processes can only be implemented with the help of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. It allows companies to create an incremental behavioral commitment and to understand and define all the behaviors that should be expected from the customers. With this information in place, companies are prepared to define the stages for the customer buying process and to create a pipeline with opportunities where they can track their effectiveness. (Patterson, 2007)

All in all, we can conclude, from this literature review, that several authors adopt a schematized approach to depict the sales process to improve the effectiveness of their sales

team. Whether it is presented as a funnel or as a pipeline, we can find key common aspects that are critical:

- Generate leads with quality.
- Classify the leads.
- Convert the leads into effective sales and generate customer loyalty.

The following chapters cover in more depth the literature review in each of these stages.

2.2. Research Process: Where to look to generate new leads?

Lightsey (2001) argues that before starting to generate shotgun sales leads, it is important to segment and understand: what kind of customers to target, which type of needs they have and how to reach the customer's decision-maker and generate interest. After defining and understanding the customer segmentation, the quantity and the quality of data is a key success factor. (Lightsey, 2001). Private and public access databases, such as the ones that belong to state organizations or institutions, can be an important tool. Additionally, companies should search online for updated news about new marketplaces and eCommerce companies.

Gregory (2019) also presents a sequential approach to generate sales leads. First, companies should identify a target audience, which means to understand and define the customer segmentation which are looking for. When identifying the target audience, companies must gather as much information as they can, namely about customers' behaviors, time spending to purchase, and preferred approach. The second stage is to choose the channel to promote the products/services and to communicate with potential customers. The third stage is to create a Sales Funnel and to adopt it to a Customer Relationship Management tool (CRM). Both tools allow undertaking the segmentation of all the information regarding each customer, comparing it, adding a score to each lead and creating customize solutions to attract new customers. Finally, in order to create customer touchpoints, a Marketing email is presented as an effective tool to create awareness through the company's full contact list. Social Media can be useful in engaging existent customers and in creating proximity with potential new customers. Attending public events and fairs is also presented to generate new leads. (Gregory, 2019)

At the end of the day, according to Plastkoff (2003), companies need to keep tuned and be present to create curiosity, to gain recognition and to spread the word of their company. The presence in social media networks and having an updated Website will extend the scope of the company, thus reaching customers that could not be reached otherwise and arousing curiosity about the company. In the research phase companies should be patient. According to Plastkoff, (2003), it takes an average of three months for a lead to turn into an effective sale. For this reason, it is crucial to have a healthy balance between the leads and the in-house customers.

The importance of improving sales leads and finding the right research tools is not only present in scientific literature. Several industry professionals and prestigious consultancy firms share this reasoning. According with Bain & Company (2013), a continuous search for new customers is vital to generate business growth. In this process, companies should have a coverage model regarding the leads to generate. It is also important to motivate the sales representatives by adding value and difficulty to their goals as well as a certain compensation premium for new accounts. This will motivate them to hunting new customers instead of only counting on the existing ones.

2.3. Classifying Leads

"The world of selling is divided into two groups: prospects and suspects. Companies need to know how to make this division and distinguish the two types of sales leads to have a solid database and effective sales on it". (Lightsey, 2001)

Gregory (2019) argues that when the company starts to turn leads into prospects sales, it is possible to start to quantify those leads better and analyze the action and strategy to be taken.

Gregory (2019) believes that the analysis starts by combining the research with marketing, customer service and pricing, resulting in the awareness of the turnover margin of each lead. In fact, it is important to understand how much it is possible to generate with each sale lead to obtain a predictable profit and measure sales' success rate.

All that information regarding sales leads needs to be aggregate in some software system (ex. CRM tool), where companies undertake a correct follow-up and score each lead. When scoring a lead, a high score should correspond to a more probable lead to become an effective sale and a lower score should be applied when the sale is less likely to occur. (Lightsey, 2001)

Another tool that can be used to classify sales leads is the Customer Insights (CI). This tool/research helps companies to know the customer well just as their needs. With valued information is it possible to make a benchmark with competition, purchase patterns and customer behavior and needs.

By knowing the customer needs and desires, companies will win a competitive advantage over their competition, by showing the customer that they care and that they treat him as unique. After completing this analysis, the company will have to focus on building a strategy in accordance with the customer insights. (Gordon, Gruntges, Smith & Staack, 2016)

According with McKinsey, "companies that leverage customer behavioral insights outperform peers by 85 percent in sales growth and more than 25 percent in gross margin" (Brown, Kanagasabai & Pinto 2017). For an effective use of customer data, it is important to update the information with the use of advanced analytics to get customer clusters, target assumptions and preferences. In the end, it concludes that data is right now the most powerful tool that a company can have as an asset.

2.4. Customer Loyalty and retention equity

Customer retention equity is a cost-effective and profitable business datum that is crucial in today's competitive environment. It represents the ability of the customers to remain loyal to the company. (Chahal & Bala 2017) Companies look at customer equity as an important and determinant long-term value of the company success. (Lemon, Rust & Zeithami, 2001).

To understand the importance of customer retention equity it is essential to understand that an in-house customer will always cost less than a new customer. The in-house customer will have a lower cost when compared with a new customer and, also, they can be a positive promotor of the brand, buying increasingly more. Once they know the service, the time spent in building a relationship and trust will not be so necessary comparing to a new customer. (Chahal & Bala 2017) This relationship can provide market advantages by increasing market influence and revenues and lowering costs. (Russo, Confente, Gligor & Autry, 2016) If there is no customer loyalty, the business will probably be failing in a short-term life cycle.

More than ever, it is important to know the customer well and to provide fit solutions that will encourage him to continue being a customer. (Chahal & Bala, 2017) When the service/product is tendered, the sale is generated. But the work needs to continue after the sales. It is important to ensure a good customer service that will create a relationship of trust with the customer. By doing so, companies may influence customer's decision to purchase again. (Ball, 2018)

In a world that is moving so fast, with new companies, products and services being created every day, companies need to have a clear competitive advantage to encourage their customers to stay with them and to attract new customers. Some Scholars argue that companies can achieve relationship equity with their customers by implementing loyalty programs, special recognition and treatment, affinity programs, community-building programs, and knowledge-building programs. (Lemon, 2001; Chahal & Bala 2017)

Loyalty programs are intended to reward customers for having specific behaviors. The reward should have tangible benefits and should be led by the marketing team. This desired

loyalty is highly related to the increasing of customer satisfaction and returns. (Russo, Confente, Gligor & Autry, 2016) Creating interactions based on customers profiles attaching activities, undertaking call-center queries (surveys), adding personification into their own pages, will add value to the customer experience.

According to Chahal & Bala (2017), affinity programs are made to create an emotional bond between the customer and the company, as for example, knowledge-building programs which will increase the relationship equity. In this kind of programs, the companies use data from the customers purchase process to know what their preferences are, how do they purchase and the time they take to lock a purchase. (Lemon, 2001; Chahal, 2017) These programs will help understand the customer and their purchase habits better, which will help you to build an improved customer service workflow.

Knowing the customer well will help building the business model and customize the offers to each customer preference. These data can be divided into internal data (with sales lead and prospects) and external data (getting information from the company suppliers, partners). These data should be worked with the information technology team (IT) to avoid duplicate information.

A tool that companies are starting to use more often to develop and implement in their marketing and customer service strategy is gamification. (Yang, Asaad & Dwivedi, 2017) This new trending tool is facing a gap between the understanding and the application of gamification in how it will influence consumer behaviors. (Hsu & Chen, 2018)

Gamification is defined as “the use of elements of game design in non-game contexts”. (Deterding, Dixon, 2011) The approach can be used to help and improve engagement, as well as to motivate and encourage the customers participation in specific programs. (Yen, Mulley & Burke, 2019) It creates a direct value for customers, by motivating them to change their behaviors (Eisingerich, Marchand, Fritze & Dong, 2019), and increases customer engagement and loyalty. (Hsu & Chen, 2018; Hofacker, Dubois & Tamburrelli, 2013) It can also help to increase the marketing effectiveness in customer markets. (Hsu & Chen, 2018; De Ruyter, Lurie, Manchanda, & Donaldson, 2016)

It can have positive results on customer retention and loyalty in case the customers are already engaged in games experiences. It is important to understand if the customers are willing to gamble if they are receptive to new experiences. (Hsu & Chen, 2018) The difference from loyalty programs is that in loyalty programs there is an economic compensation. Gamification is built to add value to the service and to engage your motivations and intentions with the product. (Hsu & Chen, 2018; Huotar & Hamari, 2012)

It is a phenomenon that will probably grow in the next few years and have better literature review to support the definition and application of this new tool that companies are starting to be digging in.

2.5. How to measure sales performance through Key Performance Indicators?

Lagodiienko, Malanchuck, Gayvoronska & Sedikov (2019) defend that the “Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are indicators of the unit activities, which help organizations to achieve strategic and tactical (operational) goals. The KPIs reflect both the business performance in general and the business processes”.

The KPIs are relevant for management control in a company and they are intended to guide the company governance and growth, to evaluate departments and professionals’ sustainability and goals achievement during a certain period of time. (Lagodiienko, Malanchuck, Gayvoronska & Sedikov 2019) To be valid, these indicators must be measurable, must reflect the performance and be aligned with the organizational goals. (Tsai & Cheng, 2012)

Several metrics can be defined as KPIs and it can be set at different levels, such as, for the company, for the department and/or at an individual level. These performance metrics are usually defined in two major groups: a finance-based group, such as return on investment, and a non-finance-based group, such as customer retention, productivity, and employee development. (Sqwang, 2009)

According with Quirin (2015), there are four steps that should be considered when defining the set of KPIs:

1. Identify the company activities that the team can carry out and that are in concordance with the business strategic objectives and obligations.
2. Define the variables and assembly them in logical groups, according with the company business and value chain.
3. Set targets and tolerance ranges.
4. Benchmark your competitors and your KPIs to measure the real performance vs. the expected performance.

3. Sales strategy proposed framework

Based on the literature review and on the examples of different types of sales funnel and pipeline, we have developed a conceptual framework that summarizes the topics covered in the previous chapter and that we believe to be the most appropriate ones to revamp *Shiptimize's* sales strategy. This framework takes into account three key elements that we consider to be crucial to obtain an effective sales strategy: i) sales pipeline in order to have a structured approach to generate effective sales; ii) customer service as an enabler of post-sales retention; iii) management control tools through KPIs. (Figure 3.1).

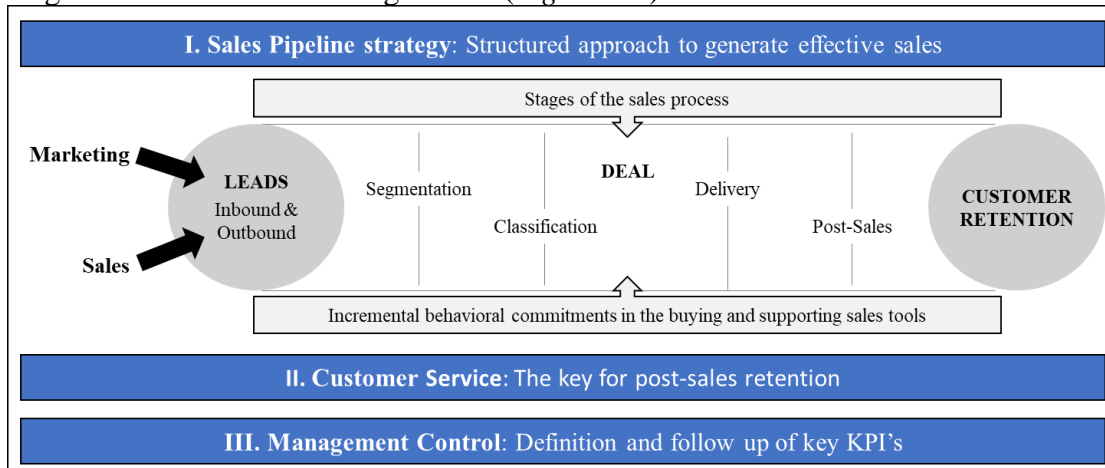


Fig. 3.1 – Proposed sales strategy framework to Shiptimize

Source: Elaborated by the author

Regarding the first topic, sales pipeline strategy, our framework defines a staged approach from lead generation to customer retention. As a first step, marketing and sales teams should be responsible to generate both inbound and outbound sales leads. The leads are then segmented according to the companies' customer targets and classified, taking into consideration the probability of sale. After both the deal and the delivery are done, it is key to have an effective post-sales service to generate customer retention. All these processes should be supported by some sales/service tools, such as, CRM and customer loyalty programs with gamification features (if appropriated).

The second topic, customer service, although it is transversal to the whole sales process, it is particularly important in the last stages of the sales process. We consider this topic to be critical to *Shiptimize* to generate customer retention and, consequently, long-term sustainability.

The third topic, management control tools, is a key enabler to implement a new sales strategy. Both the sales pipeline and the customer service goals should be summarized in clear and concrete KPIs that are regularly followed by *Shiptimize* with the purpose of understanding the evolution of the sales performance and of establishing corrective actions when needed.

This framework will be our basis to assess *Shiptimize's* current positioning and to define the proposed solutions to revamp the sales strategy.

4. Methodology

In order to develop the recommendations to *Shiptimize*, this thesis follows a four-staged approach: i) diagnostic of *Shiptimize* current position and competitive landscape; ii) development of an initial set of proposed solutions to *Shiptimize*; iii) validation of the recommendations with *Shiptimize* leadership; iv) definition of a high-level implementation plan.

For the first phase, diagnostic, we have obtained both qualitative and quantitative inputs. Quantitative inputs were obtained through *Shiptimize*'s internal data. For qualitative inputs, four main sources were used:

- Meetings with *Shiptimize*'s CEO and with Sales and Customer Service teams, to obtain insights regarding the company's strategy and internal processes.
- Customer Survey that was sent to the *Shiptimize*'s clients that have not purchased within the last 3 months (from October 2019 to January 2020). 27 customers were contacted by e-mail and by phone and were asked to answer 8 open questions regarding the service of *Shiptimize* and the reason why they stopped making new shipments orders through the software.
- Online search for relevant information regarding *Shiptimize*'s current and potential competitors.
- *Shiptimize* dashboards and internal data of management control.

The second phase, Proposed Solutions, was developed by using, primarily, the knowledge obtained from the literature review in scientific papers, from professional experts and from major consultancy firms. This information was used to understand the different types of solutions available and how they could be potentially implemented. Additionally, the author professional experience and network were used to obtain valuable insights.

The third and fourth phases, Validation, and Implementation Plan, were carried out by means of interviews with *Shiptimize*'s leadership and professional experts.

5. Competitive assessment and diagnosis of Shiptimize's current position

5.1. Diagnosis of Shiptimize

When *Shiptimize* established in Portugal, they used funds from Portuguese and Dutch private investors to improve their value offer, to develop the company image/brand and to increase the human capital by investing in stronger customer service, sales, and IT teams. Despite this initial investment, the results in the Portuguese market have not achieved their expected potential yet.

To analyze *Shiptimize* current position through a structured approach, we will first analyze the company overall performance and their sales strategy, according to the sales strategy framework previously presented. In that sense, we have segmented the diagnostic into four different chapters: overall commercial performance, sales pipeline, customer service and management control KPIs.

The objective of the following chapters is to identify *Shiptimize*'s main gaps and challenges, which will later lead to the proposed solutions.

5.1.1. Overall Shiptimize business performance

By January 2020, *Shiptimize* counted 496 active customers in Portugal. While the current pandemic Covid-19 harmed a multitude of businesses, *Shiptimize* faced a significant growth in customers during the last few months, due to the acceleration of eCommerce. In September 2020, the company counted 614 active customers.¹ (Figure 5.1)

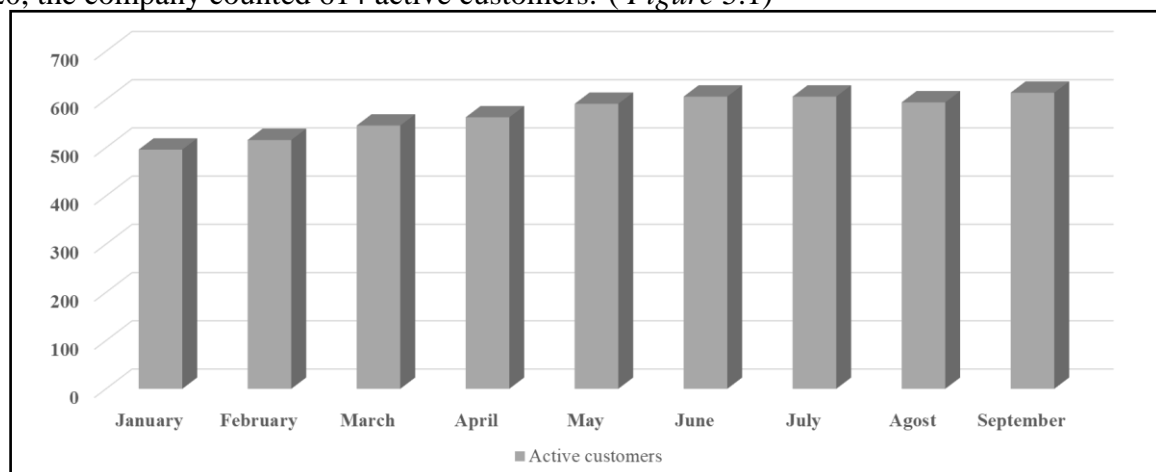


Fig. 5.1 - Landscape of the evolution of active customers from January to September 2020

Source: *Shiptimize* data, collected in September 2020

This growth in active customers had an automatic direct impact on the company evolution of revenues. (Figure 5.2) The 20 top customers of *Shiptimize* represents 24,9% of the total revenues. It means that the company has a good distribution of revenues sources, not relying only on the top customers purchases.

Regarding the number of shipments, the company increased over than 48% (figure 5.3), starting this growth in March of this year.

¹ Active Customers are the ones who had purchase at least one time in last month.

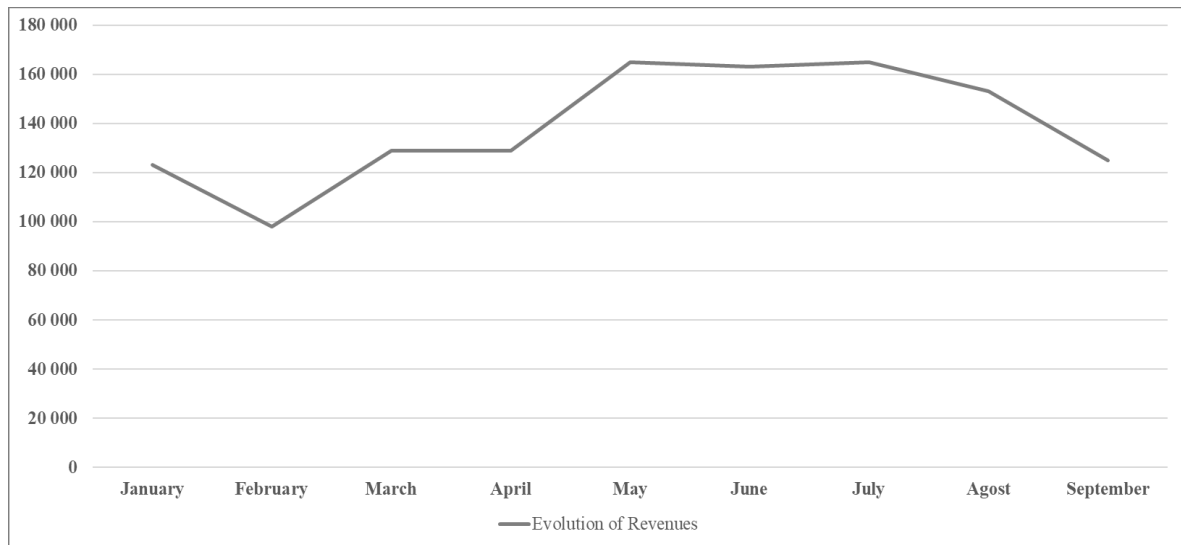


Fig. 5.2 – Evolution of revenues from January to September 2020
Source: Shiptimize data, collected in September 2020

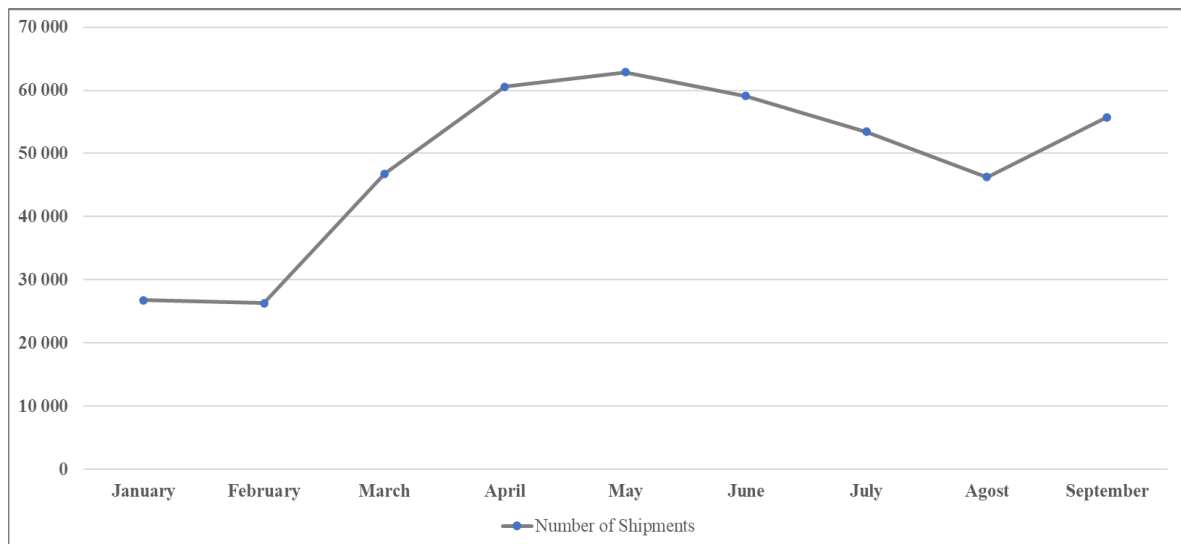


Fig. 5.3 – Evolution of the number of shipments from January to September 2020.
Source: Shiptimize data, collected in September 2020

The shipments operated by *Shiptimize* took place mainly in the domestic market, representing 86% of the total orders, being 14% regarding the international shipments. Even though the domestic market is most significant than the international one, the company can grab the opportunity to increment the international solutions in order to attract new customers with different cultures and market targets.

As per *Shiptimize* service quality, on-time delivery rate represents 75% of all shipments. Shipments not delivered on-time represent most of the customer complaints. It is important to perceive why 25% of the shipments are not being delivered in due time and, consequently, to define corrective measures to improve customer service.

Shiptimize organization chart is composed by a board of directors, which includes two investors and the two company founders; by the executive board of directors, which includes the two company founders and four operational departments: (detail in *Appendix A*)

- Sales department – the team is composed by five employees divided by countries. One of the five employees is dedicated to the Portuguese sales.

- Customer Service department – the team is composed by four employees divided by countries. One person is responsible for the customer service of both Portugal and Spain markets.
- Marketing department – the team is composed by two employees that render services for all countries.
- IT department – the team is composed by four employees that render services for all countries.

5.1.2. Sales process diagnostic

The Sales team dedicated to Portugal is composed by only one person who works with the leads that are generated solely from a database owned by the company.

However, the indicated leads were not developed according to the company customer target. This will make it harder for *Shiptimize* to achieve a strong market positioning and to draw the maximum rentability out of these leads. In addition to that, *Shiptimize* does not have neither a tool nor an established process to classify their leads.

The sales executive accesses the database from a Dropbox shared document, not knowing the origin of these leads nor the chosen customer segment. This lack of information makes it difficult for the sales team to perceive how they should generate more leads and where to look for. Hence, we conclude that the information should be better structured from top management to the sales team.

Besides the in-house data, the sales executive also looks for new leads by doing some online search and looking for partnerships that could create value and visibility to *Shiptimize*.

This process is carried out without following a guideline regarding the number of leads they need to generate, the conversion rate or even the sales effectiveness, making the sales executive job harder, more time consuming and with no clear objectives.

As per the lead's classification, as mentioned before, the sales team does not have any mechanism or tool to accomplish that. Basically, they start working on every lead they acquired and try to develop them the best way possible. However, the classification by rate and interest does not exist. Without the information about the whole operation and their sales performance and accomplishment, the sales team seems to be lost about their goals.

The contact with the prospects is done by telephone or by e-mail. The salesperson usually sends first a presentation by e-mail and then tries to contact the same lead, up to three times per day, to get a response. If there is no answer from the customer, the sales executive registers in the CRM system that the potential customer is not responsive. If the answer is positive, an e-mail with the proposal of *Shiptimize* services is sent to the potential customer. For Miguel Gonçalves, the sales representative of *Shiptimize*, one of the reasons why that process is not working is probably because the origin of the leads and the communication channel used to contact the potential customers are not the most appropriate ones.

The conversion rate of the leads is under 50% in all the countries where *Shiptimize* is operating. Portugal has a conversion rate of 25-35% for the inbound leads, and a conversion rate of 2,5-7,98% for the outbound leads. The same discrepancy can be verified in other countries with ongoing operation. The inbounds produce better results than the outbounds, as it can be analyzed in *Figure 5.4*.

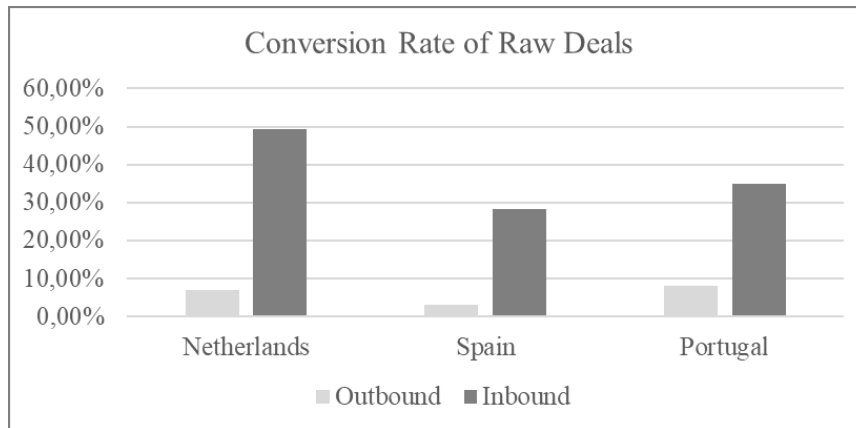


Fig. 5.4 – Conversion Rate of Leads Inbound and Outbound
Source: Shiptimize data, collected in September 2020

The retention rate is also low. Customers can acquire the software, but the percentage of users is low comparing to the number of customers existing in the pipeline. The churn of the company in Portugal is 2.4% per month. This number is similar to *Shiptimize*'s performance in other markets.

In the end, we can conclude that *Shiptimize* has been struggling with their sales management process. It is not an organized process and the information is not receiving a proper follow-up. They need to create a complete sales process, starting from the generation of leads up to the effective sale. The generation of leads should be part of the sales and marketing teamwork. They must know what profile the company is searching for, as well as their customers' needs and ambitions.

In our advice, the company should reinforce its salesforce in order to meet the needs of the Portuguese market. The fact that there is only one person dedicated to Portugal in the sales department limits both the action and the opportunity to generate market growth. They should also create the inside sales position to work as a backup for the outside sales, both operating as a combined team. The inside sales would be responsible for the classification of leads and the outside sales would focus on generating more leads for the company and on having a key account approach to the in-house customers. This would certainly improve the customer retention rate and satisfaction.

5.1.3. Customer service diagnostic

Mark Bastiaanssen, CEO of *Shiptimize*, points out that one of the main difficulties they are facing in Portugal is to satisfy the Portuguese customers. In his perspective, the Portuguese customer is very demanding when it comes to logistics' operations, not only because they always expect a very high-level service, but also because they demand that their complaints are immediately replied to.

These complaints are, in general, answered in the same day, except for the complaints made during the weekend, which are only replied by Monday, thus delaying in two days the feedback from the customer service team. According to the CRM reports, around 46% of the tickets (complaints) are replied from 0-1hour; 25% from 1-8 hours; 9% from 8-24hours, and the remaining 20% takes more than 24hours to be replied. The reply rate does not guarantee that the complaint is solved, as they usually are not solved by the first reply.

The main reason for the customers complaints is, 50% of the times, due to packaged delivery delay. Most of the time the customer is the one who informs *Shiptimize* that the shipment is delayed. This kind of information must be provided by *Shiptimize* to the customer and not the other way around. The customer needs to rely on the company information.

Solving a complaint is the hardest situation that the department must deal with, because the company is always dependent on the carrier service. They provide the carrier services for the customers, but they do not control the carrier's deliveries.

In these cases, the resolution of the complaint can take days and sometimes months, thus generating a feeling of frustration among the customers.

However, *Shiptimize*, has no specific compensation plan for this kind of failures. They should compensate the customer with some cost reduction and/or a free service, depending both on the situation or on the customer. These interactions would certainly add value to the customer experience and stimulate the customer to purchase again.

In our advice, it is imperative to assign a dedicated person to Portugal only. The company should separate the Portuguese market from the Spanish market. The needs of each country customers are different, and they should have a different approach as well as a different person responding to all the complaints and rendering the service support. This would create a more dedicated, more customized and with attention to detail customer service.

5.1.4. Management control and KPIs diagnostic

Shiptimize does not follow up all the leads and customer interactions. The lack of KPI's is also frustrating because there are no specific goals defined.

As we mentioned on the literature review, Quirin (2015) believes that to define KPIs there are four steps that should be taken into consideration:

- i. Identify the company activities that can be carried out by the team and that are in concordance with the business strategic objectives and obligations.
- ii. Define the variables and assembly them in logical groups, according with the company business and value chain.
- iii. Set targets and tolerance ranges.
- iv. Benchmark your competitors and the KPIs to measure the real performance vs. the expected performance.

The setting of goals and achievements is fundamental to know if the teams are working in an adequate way, according to the company guidelines. Those goals need to be measured (quantitatively or qualitatively).

The sales teams need to have at least one annual goal defined. That goal can be for effective sales, for profit share and even for generation of leads. After the general goals of the company are set, they can start to create KPIs for each department, by setting each department goals.

In what concerns the customer service and support department, the company should set qualitative KPIs. The company must know the customers opinion about the service. Therefore, it is important that this department has its goals well set, in order to guarantee satisfied customers and a better word-of-mouth marketing, which usually succeeds in this kind of small businesses.

5.1.5. Conclusions of the diagnostic

From the diagnosis that we have done, we can conclude that there are three handicaps in the sales pipeline strategy: Leads, Classification and Customer Retention. As it can be analyzed in the *Figure 5.5* in red, these three handicaps need to be improved and enhanced.

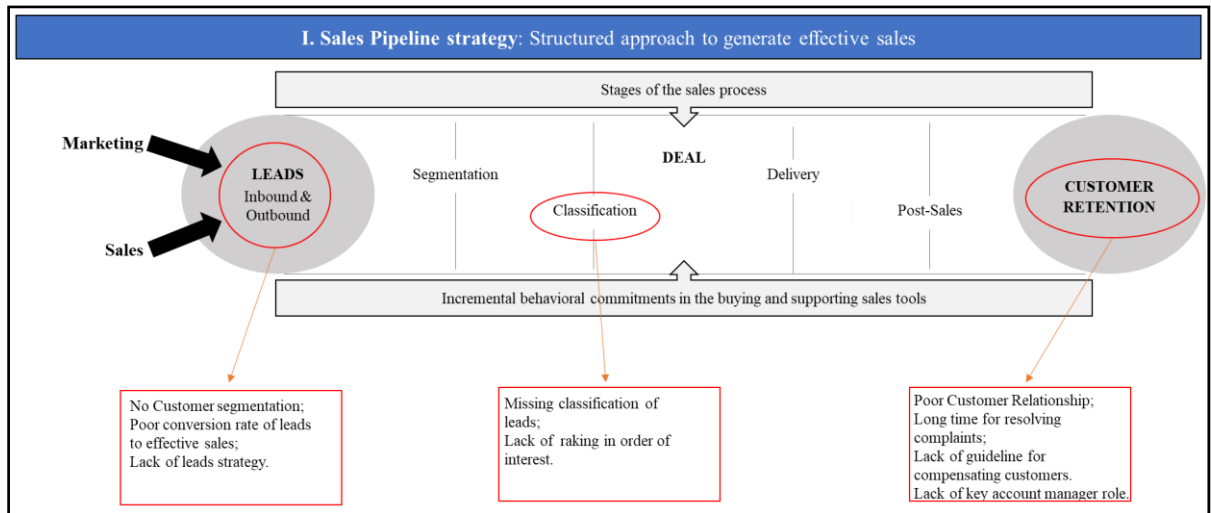


Fig. 5.5 – Main gaps in Shiptimize’s sales strategy
Source: Elaborated by the author

6. SWOT Analysis

To achieve a better overall performance of *Shiptimize*, we conducted a SWOT analysis of the key points of the company. This analysis will enable us to define a framework of what should be improved as well as the characteristics that should be sustained in order to make *Shiptimize*'s project distinctive from its competitors. (Frame 6.1)

Frame 6.1 – SWOT Analysis of *Shiptimize*

Source: Elaborated by the author

Strengths	Weakness	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Mover • Carriers Agreement • International Growth • Simple and easy deployment software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service • TaylorMade solutions for different customers • Not focus only in Portugal • Lack of a Key Account Manager • Long time to solve complaints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of other partnerships • Covid-19: growth of eCommerce and Digital • Share more Information with the customers • Help the businesses as a provider and solution partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New players. • Standard service and solutions • Lack of innovation in the service

Shiptimize must invest in attracting new Strengths to the business. There is call for a better product solution for the customers, and a need to provide a better service in order to achieve a higher customer rate and to attract customer attention.

Regarding Weaknesses, there is a need to offer TaylorMade solutions to the customer. Standard service does not complete the customer needs, which could be one of the reasons why customers leave. The team also needs to grow, including the creation of one team dedicated only to Portugal. It is not recommended to share the dedication of the team with other countries. Treat different what is different, countries are different and have specific needs which cannot be handled the same way.

With the Pandemic scenario we are living in, companies are forced to go digital and *Shiptimize* can help them to accomplish that. This year, there was an increase of eCommerce companies that will need help to implement a delivery system for their customers. *Shiptimize* can be the partner they need. So, the company should develop new partnerships, share more information with customers and use media to increase brand awareness and reliability.

Once eCommerce is a new reality, new companies will start to consider this scenario as a new opportunity for business. Currently there is only one direct competitor to *Shiptimize* (see in competitive landscape in Portugal), but, in a short-term, there will be more competitors trying to fill this gap of the market. *Shiptimize* must be the most accurate and a highly reliable partner so that the customers will not consider changing to another competitor.

7. Competitive landscape in Portugal

Shiptimize provides their customers with a software solution to manage their supply chain activity in a simple and intuitive way, focusing on the small businesses operating through an online shop. These businesses need an integrated supply chain logistics management software in their online shops to offer a better purchase experience to their customers. This will help them to concentrate on their product development, leaving the logistics management for *Shiptimize* software.

Shiptimize approach is quite distinctive and innovative because they offer a full website integration with a supply chain management software, including the carrier's options with different services/prices/preferences.

To understand the market dynamics of *Shiptimize* in Portugal, we prepared a competitive landscape analysis identifying, as direct competitors, companies that could offer:

- Digital supply chain management solution;
- Customer target directed to small businesses;
- Integration of the software with the customers' online store.

Considering these criteria, we realized that there are not many companies in Portugal that can be classified as direct competitors. However, there are some indirect competitors that we need to take into consideration. Even though these indirect competitors operate nowadays as partners of *Shiptimize*, we believe that, in the future, they could become a threat to *Shiptimize* business.

We have divided the competitors in three categories: direct competitors, indirect competitors as carriers and as marketplaces. (Frame 7.1).

Frame 7.2 – *Shiptimize* competitive landscape

Source: Elaborated by the author



		Digital Solution for Supply Chain Management	Target Customer: Small Businesses	Integration with customer website
Direct Competitors		✓	✓	✓
Indirect Competitors - Carriers	  	✓	✗	✓
Indirect Competitors – Market Place	  	✓	✓	✗

Table legend:
 ✓ Available service ✓ Available with restrictions ✗ Not available

7.1. Direct Competitors



Sweezi, SA, powered by Alfaloc, was the only company that we identified as a direct competitor. (detailed SWOT analysis in *Appendix B*)

Sweezi offers a software that is implemented in the online shop of their customers. By using this software, the customer accesses to an automatic system of supply chain management. *Sweezi*, just like *Shiptimize*, is focused on offering a software that entrepreneurs can use automatically in their businesses, directly managing their orders to be shipped in Portugal as well as worldwide.

In what concerns the revenue model, *Sweezi*, such as *Shiptimize*, charges the customer per purchase order. However, they have different types of service packages available to the customer, from standard to premium. The fee is set according to the service level chosen by the customer. This possibility creates another revenue model and gives the customer an opportunity to tailor the service level to his specific needs.

On the other side, *Shiptimize* still operates with a standard service, which means they do not have a fit solution for each customer profile or different revenue models. Besides that, contrarily to *Sweezi*, *Shiptimize* offers the opportunity to customers to buy only the license for the usage of the software, without any carriers' agreement. This means that *Shiptimize* will provide sell the software, but the customer keeps its own carrier contracts and logistics' management. This solution is very profitable for *Shiptimize* once there are no costs related to the sale of one additional software license.

Regarding the strategy in the markets, they operate in, *Sweezi* only operates in Portugal, which means that the customer service and sales teams are focused solely on the Portuguese market. This creates a closer relationship with their customers. In turn, *Shiptimize* operates in different markets with a global operations team, which means that their focus is wider. (Frame 7.2)

 		
Target Customer	Small Ecommerce Businesses	
Product features	<p>One standardized offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No minimum purchase value ▪ No KAM ▪ Free per company / no limited users ▪ Users can use their own carriers contracts and/or contracts of Shiptimize 	<p>Four different packages available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Easy & Free</i> – Free for 1 user; No KAM; 10% discount per order; No minimum purchase order; ▪ <i>First Step</i> – Free for 3 users; Virtual KAM; 10% to 20% discount per order; No minimum purchase order; Tracking system available; ▪ <i>Getting Big</i>: Limited to 5 users; Virtual KAM; 15% to 30% discount per order/packaging; Minimum purchase per month of 50€; Tracking system available ▪ <i>Big Market</i>: Limited to 999 users; Virtual or real KAM; 25% to 40% discount per order/packaging; Minimum purchase per month of 100€; Tracking system available; Insurance included
Pricing	Price per purchase order or license for software use	Price per purchase order and service level
Digital platform	Possibility to integrate software with the customers' online shop	
Suppliers	Different agreements with different carriers	
International presence	Portugal, Spain, Netherlands, Belgium and Brazil	Portugal

Frame 7.2 – Comparison with direct competitor Sweezi
Source: Elaborated by the author

7.2. Indirect Competitors - Carriers

The carriers, which are partners of *Shiptimize* today, can easily become competitors tomorrow. With the world becoming more digital, the companies need to change the mindset when offering their services to their customers.

In this regard, we consider carriers as indirect competitors. They offer a digital supply chain management, and, in some cases, they provide the construction of an online shop with an integrated supply chain management software. A good example is *CTT*. During the second trimester of the current year, they developed new digital solutions for their customers. They

started offering the service of building the online shop for their customers who still did not have it, with a fit integration of their services (supply chain solutions) in the online shop. In this case, their strategy was to, first, develop the online shop, later integrating their software in the online shop with the *CTT* logistics solutions. It seems to us that offering only the software without first creating the online shop can soon become a reality.

The biggest difference between carriers and *Shiptimize* is that, for carriers, it is more interesting to have bigger customers, with regular shipments, than small businesses. This difference can add a competitive advantage to *Shiptimize*. The small businesses need a partnership that will help them grow and that will give them the support they need when they start their activity, building a trustful and reliable relationship to be sustained in the future.

7.3. Indirect Competitors – Marketplaces

Marketplaces are a strong platform for companies that want their products and brands to get more visibility. The marketplaces aggregate all kinds of products that customers may be looking for. They are generalist and do not differentiate products or brands.

Small businesses with an online shop can look at these marketplaces as a good mechanism to get publicity. However, if a company decides to be present only through a marketplace, then it loses visibility of their own online shop. As a result, some customers decide to have both solutions at the same time. In this situation, *Shiptimize* will help them manage the online shop by providing the automatic logistic service and marketplaces will help them to have more market visibility and reliability. The entrepreneur will beneficiate from two partners to help with the logistics operations.

Despite they can work as partners, with the growth of marketplaces, *Shiptimize* should pay attention to the threat that these indirect competitors may create if they start to substitute the companies own online shops.

8. Proposed Solutions: Re-Build the sales strategy of *Shiptimize*

8.1. General considerations regarding *Shiptimize*'s value offer

Before presenting solutions for the sales strategy, we consider that *Shiptimize* should further develop its value offer by creating new alternatives to its customers. As we have concluded in the last chapter, the lack of flexibility in *Shiptimize*'s offer is today a handicap when we compare to its direct competitor.

The product marketing team and the company board should be able to develop new solutions to get more competitive advantages and to create engagement with their customers. These solutions should be chosen by the customer. Additionally, the use of gamification to encourage new behaviours should be considered in order to increase the purchases:

- Make a new shipment for free and/or offer discounts for the purchased shipments. It will increase customer interaction and willingness to promote *Shiptimize*' product, and consequently increase their sales.
- Use gamification features. Create gratification reward-mechanisms that motivate customers for each lead they can provide to *Shiptimize*. Word-of-mouth is the best publicity when it comes to microbusinesses, which are *Shiptimize*'s key customer segment.
- Create different types of service level, from Standard to Premium. The premium service level should offer different fit solutions for the customers, like, for example, a software layout solution upgrade, or/and having a dedicated Key Account Manager (KAM) to help the customer with their shipments. This KAM representative would be the prior contact between the company and the customer and would be responsible to assist the customer in any issue regarding their business relationship. The KAM would work together with the sales department to share information and would be held responsible to update de CRM system. The premium service should have a monthly or annual fee. This would create a new fixed revenue model and, consequently, generate more stability and predictability to the company regarding its expected revenues.
- Use On-line chat. Taking into consideration that *Shiptimize*'s customers are online businesses and very active in social networks, *Shiptimize* should adopt online communication channels, allowing real-time customer interaction. Besides turning the communication with their customers easier, it can also help to engage new customers and interact with curious entrepreneurs (prospects). Communication is never too much.
- Offer free access to newsletter, news, and curiosities related with the company. This solution should be available to all the customers, in order to increase brand awareness and to generate customer curiosity.

8.2. Create a structured approach for the sales process

To create a fit solution for the company, we would like to recommend the implementation of a sales pipeline strategy. *Figure 8.1* represents the sales pipeline developed for *Shiptimize*.

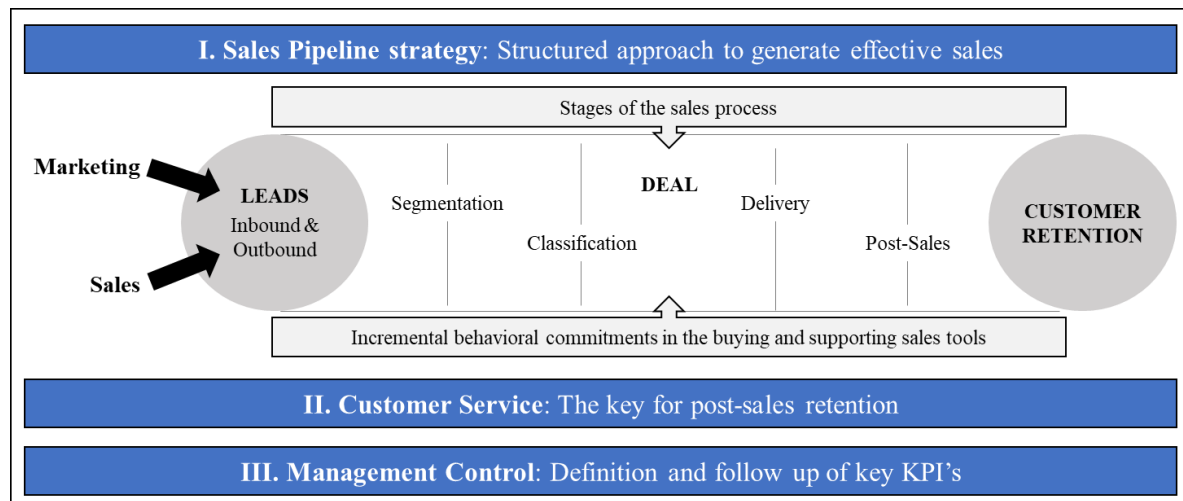


Fig. 8.1 – Shiptimize’s proposed Sales Pipeline Strategy

Source: Elaborated by the author

As justified in the literature review, the company should first be re-organized from a transactional focus to a customer focus. The goal is to attract more new customers but also to build a loyal relationship with the existing ones.

This focus should be sustained throughout every step of the sale, from the customer first contact/approach, until the effective sale. The sales team needs to be focused on the customer needs and to work as a partner or a logistics’ consultant. They will assist the customer with whatever purchase he wants to make and will build a strong relationship with him. The after sales follow up should be held by the customer service. This department should have an active role in developing and sustaining the relationship with the customers, in order to increase customer satisfaction and to achieve a better customer retention rate.

8.2.1. Marketing and Sales: Leads Inbounds and Outbounds

The first step of our sales pipeline strategy is to attract new customers through the efforts of both marketing and sales teams. With the aid of CRM and an inside sales team, both departments can work together to define the best approach to attract new customers. It will be necessary to implement guidelines for the type of research and communication to be adopted. The strategy should include the implementation of some solutions, such as:

- The use of social media networks to engage proximity with potential customers and to share important news about the company. The marketing team should have an important role in developing these leads and in creating contents to attract the attention of these potential customers.
- Developing a marketing email (newsletter) to keep customers updated and motivated to reuse *Shiptimize*’s software. The newsletter would work as a reminder for customers about the company purpose to assist them to grow.
- Publish customers’ feedback in online channels. This would increase *Shiptimize*’s brand reliability among the audience. It is very common for companies that provide services to rely only on the customers’ feedback, and the customers tend to trust more in a service that has received positive recommendations from other customers.
- Implement satisfaction surveys to know what the customer needs are and to have their feedback on the services they use.
- Search for leads in institutional organizations databases; Ex. Portuguese Chamber of Commerce; AICEP - Agency for Investment and Foreign Trade of Portugal; ACEPI – Electronic Commerce and Interactive Advertising Association, etc.

- Buy databases from IT and consultant companies. It is possible to order a database with filters that will enable the company to create TaylorMade data.
- Attend to public events and fairs. This will create brand awareness and will increase the company's networking.
- Create partnerships with other companies to get a win-win agreement/relationship. For example, the Portuguese company, *Paga Aqui*, offers small businesses a digital payment tool, giving these small entrepreneurs the opportunity to start selling online with an appropriate offer to the customers, which is, the possibility to automatically pay for the product/service they want to purchase. If *Paga Aqui* started a partnership with *Shiptimize*, they could offer an all-round package service: *Paga Aqui* would offer the payment tool and *Shiptimize* would offer the supply chain tool. With this solution, the customer could start the online business without facing any barriers or problems. Additionally, *Paga Aqui* and *Shiptimize* could also share customer leads. Ultimately, we believe that this creates a win-win situation for both companies.
- Create partnerships with marketplaces. This will give more visibility to the company and will help to increase leads. These platforms are growing and starting to become more popular among private customers. In a near future more marketplaces for all types of products and customers will be developed.
- Look for new trends of online businesses. The online purchases are growing, and different products are becoming appealing to the customers. For example, the business of biological fruits and vegetables baskets. Nowadays people are looking for a functional solution to receive the best products at their home. From north to south of Portugal, this kind of businesses are growing every week. Some of these small businesses cannot deliver their products every day of the week. If *Shiptimize* started a partnership with them, it would help them with their deliveries, and it would create the opportunity to develop regular shipments around Portugal.
- Consider reaching medium size companies instead of only targeting micro businesses. In Portugal, the number of medium companies with digital presence is low. The necessity to go digital will increase in a near future, so it is becoming imperative for these companies to become part of that channel.

We believe that these solutions would increase number and the quality of the leads. Those leads should then be analysed and classified by the inside sales team.

Do not let the customer forget about you. The teams, from marketing to customer service, need to occasionally contact the customers and perceive if they need any assistance, like, for instance, an update of the product.

8.2.2. Classifying Leads/Proposals

The literature review shows that every lead will take approximately three months to be converted into an effective sale. With that in mind, it is essential to a company to have a fixed number of regular customers. They will represent predictable revenues and will add value to the company. The same will apply to the leads. To estimate the value of the generated leads, it is essential for a company to have a Lead-Scoring CRM tool to aggregate and classify all the customers information. Each lead will add a certain value for the company that could be immediate or somewhere in the future. With that in mind, the company should assign a score of interest to each lead. This leads classification should be complemented by the inside sales team, who will be responsible to search and analyse leads that will, further on, be developed by the sales representative. The classification will distinguish each lead by a rate of interest, from the highest to the lowest, to establish which ones should be addressed first. It is mandatory to always update and document the information of each lead and customer in the Lead-Scoring CRM tool. That information should be made available to all the teams, from sales, to marketing and customer service. Each team will feed up each lead with all the information they have.

The Lead-Scoring CRM tool can be acquired/ purchased or even developed by the IT team of *Shiptimize*.

Another tool which should be taken into consideration is the CI – Customer Insights. It basically allows the company to follow the customer purchase journey, his behaviours and patterns. It can be interesting to create some clusters of customer behaviours. For each cluster, the company can provide different information and follow-ups. This tool is very used in companies such as Sonae MC or Jeronimo Martins. They create unique opportunities and discounts customized to each customer, with the purpose of stimulating the customers to purchase more and of improving the customer experience and brand loyalty. Even though it is developed to B2C businesses, it can be adapted to B2B, as *Shiptimize*. This CI can be use on in-house customers as well as on prospects. Even without a purchase historic it is possible, with the help of CI, to know what their needs are and how to create opportunities for them to purchase.

Follow ups will always be an essential step to fulfil the CRM software and to have the purchase cycle of the customer well documented. This kind of task can be assigned to the inside sales team. This team will undertake the in-housework of classifying the leads that the sales representative will work on, bringing new customers to the pipeline.

By having an inside sales team, the hours funnel of the sales department will be well distributed. The inside sales will be responsible to expand the sales leads, to classify leads and to enrol a key account manager figure.

8.2.3. Deal

During the proposal phase the sales representative should take into consideration the type of prospect he is attracting. The proposal should fit the customer.

At this stage, the company should be able to point out the services to engage the customers with different solutions.

8.2.4. Delivery

The delivery is the finalization of the sales team relationship with the customer. Only when the service is completed, the sales team can leave the operation to the customer service team to handle. Around 75% of the shipments delivered with *Shiptimize* are delivered on time. However, 25% present problems related with shipments that need a special attention. To deal with these issues, the sales representative needs to play the peacemaker role. The responsibility to deal with the customer and to assist him to overcome any operational question should be assigned to the customer service department.

The customer should be informed by *Shiptimize* of any issue with the shipment. With this in consideration, the customer service and sales teams should be proactive and create shipments follow-ups to know in advance if everything goes as planned. It will give them time to inform the customer about any issue and to solve it as quickly as possible.

8.2.5. After Sales and Customer Retention

Customer equity represents the value of the company success in the long-term. For a company to remain in the market, it is of the utmost importance that they have a loyal and trustful relationship with the customers.

Another aspect to be considered is the fact that the in-house customers will cost less than a new customer. They are positive promoters of the company. They promote the word-of-mouth marketing, which increments the reliability of the company. Satisfied customers promote the brand that they trust in. These positive insights help to increase market share, notoriety and, automatically, the company revenues.

Also, another point to consider is that for the sales representative, the first purchase that the customer does is not the unique goal. The customer needs to come back and purchase again. The work of after sales, led by the Customer Service Department, adds value and is relevant to increase the customer retention rate. They should be responsible for:

- Follow-up the customers and let them evaluate *Shiptimize*'s service.
- Receive customer insights and feedbacks, as they are the best review that a company can get.
- Create a Customer Service of Excellence – Promotes the relationship between teams and customers. Know the customers and let them know all the persons in the company to strengthen the relationship.
- Implement loyalty programs and premium services to make them feel “special”.
- Promote a “service score”. For example, after each shipment is completed, generate an automatic message for the customer to evaluate the service. This satisfaction queries can also be measurable and added as a KPI's.
- Know the customers preferences. The customer is always right, so it is possible to have customers that will appreciate, for example, a direct approach through emails while others will prefer phone-calls or personal meetings. Know their preferences and respect that.
- Create compensation guidelines to overcome any customer dissatisfaction. Each case should be analysed separately by the customer service team. The compensation can be translated into different types of solutions. From a free shipment to a discount, a voucher, or a software upgrade. That should be discussed between departments according to the company strategy and goals.
- Have a dedicated customer service team for the Portuguese market. Different countries have different cultures and therefore require a different treatment and perception. The customer service agent must be focused on the Portuguese customer needs. The company already knows that the Portuguese customer is more demanding when comparing to other markets.

This advice on resolutions can create a better customer/company relationship and increase the customer retention rate.

8.2.6. KPI'S for control management

The KPI's must be measurable. That is the first consideration to have when creating any performance indicator. *Shiptimize* needs to organize those indicators by categories. Today, the company has problems in monitoring the teams, in knowing what is being done and what is the customers opinion about the service and the about company in general.

For each department, KPIs need to be settled to have a better management control and to define goals and metrics of service:

Sales KPIs:

- Number of leads generated. – Number of inbounds and outbounds.
- Create weekly reports to know what contacts have been done and what leads have been created. That will enable the company to know week after week the customers' expectations, as well as their reaction to their first contact with the service of *Shiptimize*.
- Number of effective sales – new customers and in-house customers.
- Churn follow-up.

With the ratio between leads and effective sales, it is possible to measure the work undertaken and whether there is a need to change any action in order to win more customers or to concretize more sales. Work with tangible goals but also with challenging ones.

Customer Service KPIs:

- Add a “service score” on the email, so customers will be giving the opportunity to rate the service by a satisfaction scale.

- Measure the time spent with each answer. For this KPI to be effective there should be a specific metric regarding the response time to the customer. For each complaint that is answered or solved after the estimated time, the customer service agent needs to justify the reason for that delay.

- Evaluate the costs spent in each customer compensations, when applied.

This kind of measures will allow the management team to have more control over everything that is being done by the team and to make the necessary changes to achieve a higher-quality service.

9. Implementation Plan

In sum, we propose structural solutions to be implemented in Sales, Marketing and Customer Service departments. We also give recommendations on how to treat the KPI's in each department. These recommendations and solutions can be organized by rate of interest which will be defined as short and medium-term solutions. (Frame 10.1)

Frame 10.1 – Implementation Plan

Source: Elaborated by the author

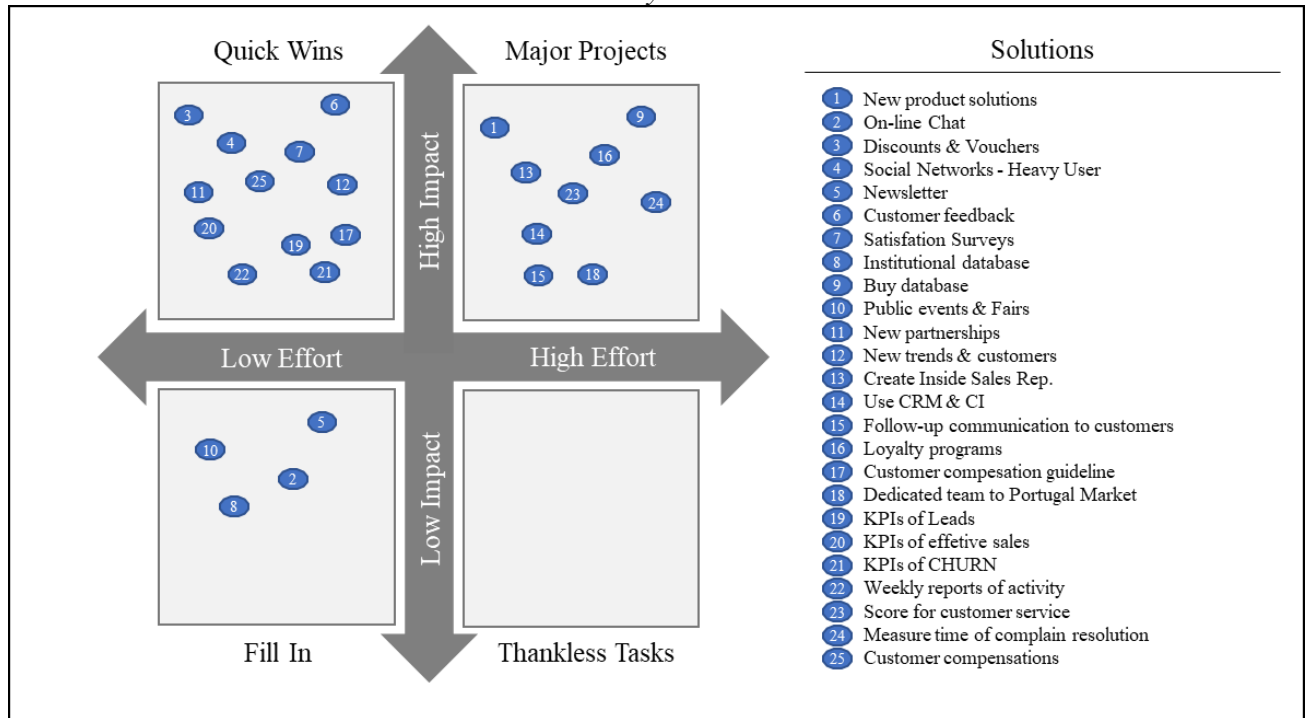
Proposed Solutions		Timeline of Implementation		
		Short-term	Medium Term	Departments Involved
PRODUCT	1 New type of product solutions		✓	IT
	2 On-line chat		✓	IT
SALES PIPELINE STRATEGY	3 Discounts & Vouchers	✓		Marketing & Sales
	4 Become a Social Networks Heavy User	✓		Marketing
	5 Create a newsletter	✓		Marketing
	6 Publish you customers' feedback	✓		Marketing
	7 Development of satisfaction surveys	✓		Marketing
	8 Use Institutional database		✓	IT
	9 Buy database from IT firms		✓	IT
CUSTOMER SERVICE	10 Attend public fairs and events		✓	Sales
	11 Develop New partnerships	✓		Sales & Marketing
	12 Hunt the new trends of customers in online purchases	✓		Inside Sales
	13 Create an Inside Sales representative		✓	Management
	14 Aquire CRM & CI tools for classyfing leads		✓	IT
	15 Keep a follow-up communication with your customers	✓		Customer Service
	16 Create Loyalty programs to engage your customers		✓	Customer Service
KPI'S	17 Create a customer compensation guideline	✓		Customer Service & Sales
	18 A dedicated team for the Portuguese market		✓	Management
	19 Number of generated Leads		✓	Management
	20 Number of effective sales	✓		Management
	21 Number of CHURN	✓		Management
	22 Weekly reports with the overall activity	✓		Sales
	23 Score the service provided by the customer service	✓		Customer Service
	24 Measure the time spend for each resolution complaints		✓	Customer Service
	25 Evaluate the cost spent in customers compensations		✓	Customer Service

We have analysed these solutions in an effort-impact matrix to define the priority of each solution. By doing so, *Shiptimize* can understand which of the solutions could be implemented as quickly as possible, and which of them would require more time and costs. We have assessed each of the 25 proposed solutions according to this effort-impact matrix.

The matrix is divided in quick wins, which are considered to have a higher impact with a lower effort; the major projects, which are considered to be the ones which will need more time expended and more costs associated, causing a higher impact and a higher effort; the fill in activities which are the ones that will add value to the company, requiring a lower effort and causing a lower impact; and, finally, the thankless tasks, which are the ones that will call for a higher effort and will cause a lower impact. We believe that none of the 25 solutions are considered to be a thankless task, so the respective square will be left empty. (Frame 10.2).

Frame 10.2– Impact-Effort Matrix

Source: Elaborated by the author



Regardless of this classification, the company should analyze internally which solutions they would like to implement, having in consideration the time and costs that will have to be spent, not compromising the operation activity and the quality of the service.

10. Conclusion

The objective of the present thesis work is to present a successful sales strategy to *Shiptimize*, a company which provides logistic software to small businesses with an online shop.

To achieve this goal, and based on the scientific literature, we have prepared a structured approach to define the whole sales process, that we named sales pipeline strategy. During the preparation of this thesis, we have made a diagnosis of *Shiptimize*'s current status and, according to this framework, we have proposed our improvement measures based on it. The *Shiptimize* workflow has shown a need for a better management control, as well as a need for additional qualitative and quantitative measures.

We expect that this framework, mentioned in *Figure 15* and *Figure 16*, can be applied to other businesses and sectors, since it is our belief that a structured sales strategy is a mandatory step to increase sales. It will help companies to create a forecast of tasks to be implemented in the company organizational strategy.

The lack of internal KPIs and customers insights have been our most relevant handicaps. In one hand, we believe that *Shiptimize*, just like other businesses, needs to improve their internal management control and to monitor their commercial performance and sales effectiveness. On the other hand, it would be important to obtain customers insights that would help *Shiptimize* to improve the services provided and to know the customers preferences and needs. This is critical to build a customer centricity strategy.

All in all, we would like to have had more time to see how the company will implement the plan that we are suggesting so that we could attest the final results. Nevertheless, some of our considerations have already started to be implemented. For example, evaluation of the service and overall company brand reliability in social media and in Google or even the development of new partnerships.

Overall, the goal has been achieved and we expect to have helped the company in this journey of growth.

11. Bibliography

- Ball, Elaine (2018) "Understanding the sales funnel: It's time to nurture leads and start selling some surveying services" – Point of Beginning.
- Beugelsdijk, S. & Welzel, C. (2018) "Dimensions and Dynamics of National Culture: Synthesizing Hofstede With Inglehart" Vol 49 (10) 1469-1505 Doi: 10.1177/0022022118798505
- Brosan, F. (2012) "Business Intelligence: What works where in B2B digital marketing", Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice, Vol.14 154-159. Doi: 10.1057/dddmp.2012.29
- Chahal, H. & Bala, R. (2017). "Role of Customer Retention Equity in Creating and Developing Brand Value". Journal of Relationship Marketing, Vol. 16, No. 2, 119-142 Doi: 10.1080/15332667.2016.1242397
- Deterding, S., Dixon, D., Khaled, R., Nacke, L.E. (2011), "Gamification: Toward a Definition" – CHI, P.1-2
- Eisingerich, A.B., Marchand, A., Fritze, M.P. & Dong, L. (2019). "Hook vs. hope: How to enhance customer engagement through gamification", International Journal of Research in Marketing, No. 36 200-2015, Doi: 10.1016/j.jresmar.2019.02.003
- Gordon, J., Gruntges, V., Smith, V., Staack, Y. (2016): "New Insights for new growth: What it takes to understand your customers today. Marketing & Sales – McKinsey & Company. Hyperlink;<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/new-insights-for-new-growth-what-it-takes-to-understand-your-customers-today>
- Gregory, A. (2019) "How to generate Sales Leads in your small business"; Hyperlink: <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/how-to-generate-sales-leads-in-your-small-business-2951792>
- Grubljesic, T. & Campa, N. (2016) "The Impact of the IS on the effectiveness of the Sales Funnel Management as a part of CRM in an automotive company" International Institute for Applied Knowledge Management, Vol. 4. Issue 2.
- Holl, A. (2004) "Start-Ups and relocations: Manufacturing plant location in Portugal. Papers Regional Science. 83 649-668 Doi: 10.1007/s10110-004-0218-y
- Hsu, C-L. & Chen, M-C (2018) "How gamification marketing activities motivate desirable consumer behavior: Focusing on the role of brand love. Computers in Human Behavior, No. 88, 121-133 Doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2018.06.037
- Humphrey, B. (2005) "More Tips to keep sales funnel full, your "hit ratio" high" – Tailgate Talk
- Kotler, P, Kartajaya, H & Setiawan, I. 2017. Marketing 4.0: Moving from Traditional to Digital. Coimbra: Conjuntura Actual Editora
- Lagodiienko, V., Malanchuk, M., Gayvoronska, I. & Sedikov, D. (2019). "Selection of Criteria for Key Performance Indicators by the Matrix Method" International Journal of Mechanical Engineering and Technology (IJMET), Vol. 10 1303-1311 ISSN: 0976-6359
- Ledingham, D., Kovac, M., Heric, M. & Montaville, F. (2013): Is complexity killing your sales model?: How to build a repeatable, high-return sales model for Business-to-Business markets:
Hyperlink:https://www.bain.com/contentassets/8a595ecad22f4fba9af742b8f6a436c3/bain_20brief20is20complexity20killing20your20sales20model.pdf
- Lightsey, Ken (2001). "Make Contacts Count by Qualifying Leads: Generate more sales with proper follow up, and by asking the right questions". Impressions, 25,1. ABI/INFORM Collection
- Mahamoud, M. A., Hinson, R. E. & Adika, M. K. (2018) "The effect of Trust, Commitment, and Conflict Handling on Customer Retention: The Mediating Role of Customer

- Satisfaction. – *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 257-276 Doi: 10.1080/15332667.2018.1440146
- McKew, H. ((data) “Client Maintenance: Keeping in touch with customers means keeping their needs in mind” *Engineered Systems Magazine*
- Neubert, M. (2017) “Lean Internationalization: How to Globalize Early and Fast in a Small Economy”. *technology Innovation Management Review*, Vol. 7. Issue 5
- Offenbeger, B. (2020) “3 Ways to Generate Sales Leads” – *Security Distributing & Marketing*
- Otar, C. (2018) “What Percentage Of Small Businesses Fail - And How Can You Avoid Being One Of Them?”. *Forbes Magazine*,. Hyperlink: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesfinancecouncil/2018/10/25/what-percentage-of-small-businesses-fail-and-how-can-you-avoid-being-one-of-them/#5997fdee43b5>;
- Patterson, L. (2007). “Marketing and sales alignment for improved effectiveness”. *Journal of Digital Asset Management*. 185-189 Doi: 10.1057/palgrave.dam.3650089
- Plaskoff, M. (2003). “Sales and Marketing Metrics” *Professional Builder*, 68, 7 ABI/FORM Collection
- Poyry, E., Parvinen, P. & McFarland, R.G. (2017). “Generating leads with sequential persuasion: should sales influence tactics be consistent or complementary?” – *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*. Vol 37, No. 2, 89-99. Doi: 10.1080/08853134.2016.1275973
- Preda, O. (2012) “Hofstede’s Dimensions in Portugal” *Romanian Economic and Business Review*, Vol. 7, No.4, 62-69
- Quirin,R. (2015) “Linking KPIs with Business Strategy”- *Metrics*
- Russo, I., Confente, I., Gligor, D. M. & Autry, C.W. (2016). “To be or not to be (loyal): Is there a recipe for customer loyalty in the B2B context? *Journal of Business Research*, No. 69 888-896 Doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.07.002
- Sabnis, G., Chatterjee, S. C., Grewal, R. & Lilien, G.L. (2013) “The Sales Lead Black Hole: On Sales Reps’ Follow-Up of Marketing Leads”, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 77 52-67, ISSN: 1547-7185
- Sammut-Bonnici, T. & Galea, D. (2015) “PEST analysis” *Wiley Encyclopedia of Management Vol 12 – Strategic Management view project* Doi: 10.1002/9781118785317.weom120113
- Sqwang, S. (2009) “Key Performance Indicators for Innovation Implementation: Perception vs. Actual Usage” *Asia Pacific Management Review* 16(1), 23-29
- Toterhi, T. & Recardo, R.J. (2013). “The Talent Funnel: How to Surface Key Human Resources”. - *Wiley Online Library* 22 – 44 Doi: 10.1002/joe.21501
- Tsai, Y-C. & Cheng, Y-T. (2012) “Analyzing key performance indicators (KPIs) for e-commerce and Internet marketing of elderly products: A review”, *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, No. 55, 126-132 Doi: 10.1016/j.archger.2011.05.024
- Williams, S. (2011): “Help! My “sales funnel” is upside down and I need to turn it around”. *Inside Tucson Business*
- Yang, Y., Asaad, Y. and Dwivedi, Y. (2017) „Examining the impact of gamification on intention of engagement and brand attitude in the marketing context“, *Computers in Human Behavior*. Elsevier Ltd. Doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2017.03.066.
- Yen, B.T.H., Mulley, C. & Burke, M. (2019). “Gamification in transport interventions: Another way to improve travel behavioral change”. *Cities*, No. 85 140-149 Doi: 10.1016/j.cities.2018.09.002
- Yu, Y., Wang, X., Zhong, R.Y. & Huang, G.Q (2016) “E-commerce Logistics in Supply Chain Management: Practice Perspective”. *Procedia CIRP* 52 179-185. Doi: 10.1016/j.procir.2016.08.002

Webography:

<https://advisory.kpmg.us/content/dam/advisory/en/pdfs/2020/future-sales-redefine-connected-economy.pdf>

https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/1624046/WP_CustomerEngagement_2018_online.pdf

<https://www.acepi.pt/>

<https://www.bain.com/consulting-services/customer-strategy-and-marketing/>

<https://www.bain.com/contentassets/40a5560da7204bb4a5c8e65705a109c3/6708-infographic-empowering-sales.pdf>

<https://www.bain.com/contentassets/87f9ec27796b4b4783f9cc6df4a2713f/sales-recession-infographic.pdf>

<https://www.bain.com/contentassets/8a595ecad22f4fba9af742b8f6a436c3/bain20brief20is20complexity20killing20your20sales20model.pdf>

https://www.bain.com/globalassets/noindex/2019/bain_brief_do_this_not_that_prescriptive_analytics_in_sales_and_marketing.pdf

https://www.bain.com/globalassets/noindex/2019/bain_brief_do_this_not_that_prescriptive_analytics_in_sales_and_marketing.pdf

<https://www.bain.com/insights/sales-excellence-the-marathon-podcast/>

<https://www.bain.com/insights/social-media-works-for-b2b-sales-too-hbr/>

<https://www.bcg.com/publications/2016/center-customer-insight-marketing-sales-why-companies-cant-turn-customer-insights-growth.aspx>

<https://www.coursera.org/lecture/customer-insights-orientation/steps-in-customer-insight-research-bospy>

<https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/Marketing%20and%20Sales/Our%20Insights/Advanced%20analytics%20can%20drive%20the%20next%20wave%20of%20growth%20for%20travel%20and%20logistics%20companies/Advanced-analytics-can-drive-the-next-wave-of-growth-for-travel-and-logistics-companies.ashx>

<https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/Operations/Our%20Insights/Elevating%20customer%20satisfaction%20and%20growth%20through%20service%20to%20solutions/Elevating-customer-satisfaction-and-growth-through-service-to-solutions.ashx>

<https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/Operations/Our%20Insights/Supply%20Chain%2040%20the%20next%20generation%20digital%20supply%20chain/08b1ba29ff4595e9987344dcbc.ashx>

<https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/Customer%20Experience/Creating%20value%20through%20transforming%20customer%20journeys.ashx>

<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/what-matters-in-customer-experience-cx-transformations>

<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/operations/our-insights/bringing-agile-to-customer-care>

<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/operations/our-insights/how-to-capture-what-the-customer-wants>

<https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/consumer-markets/consumer-insights-survey/2019/report.pdf>

www.alfaloc.com

www.ctt.pt

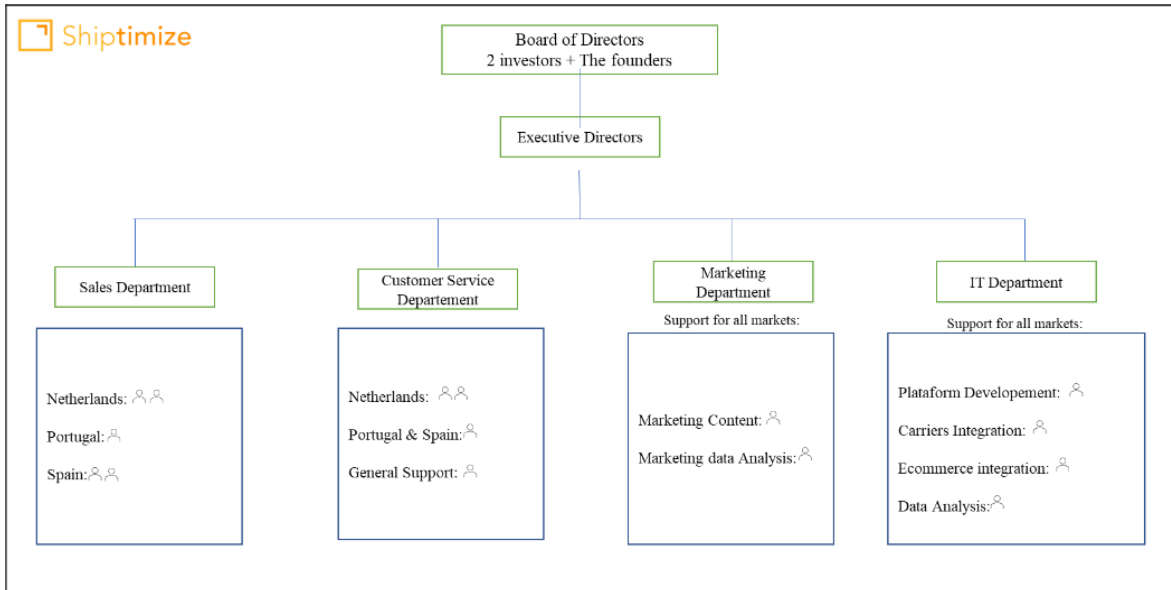
www.dott.com

www.shiptimize.com

www.sweezi.com

12. Appendix

Appendix A – Shiptimize Organogram



Appendix B – Sweezi SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weakness	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple and fast implementation software Access to all the service Information in the Website Powered by Alfaloc Know the market Different services availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing plataform Lack of Information about the company Not the first mover Brand reliability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share more Information and social media presence Covid-19: growth of eCommerce and Digital Learn from the first mover mistakes Help the businesses as a provider and solution partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast growth: Lower quality Competitors: need to own the market