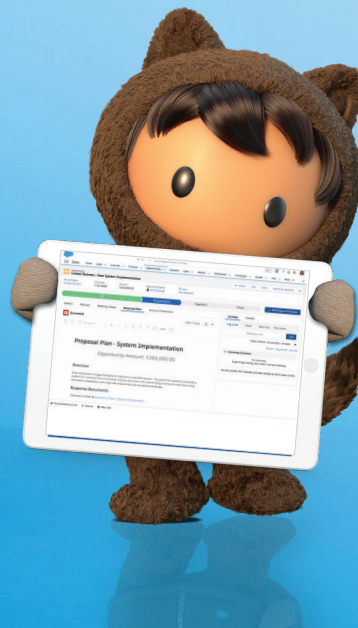




HOW *to* TRANSFORM CRM PROCESSES

Best Practices for Professional Services Organizations
to Optimize Quote-to-Cash Cycle and Drive Growth



INTRODUCTION

For independent professional services organizations (PSOs), the quote-to-cash cycle can make or break your ability to drive growth.

When your process is siloed and disconnected across disparate CRM, PSA, and ERP systems, you end up with a manual sales cycle that is extremely inefficient. That puts deals at risk.

To grow your business, you need to find ways to break down those silos and enable information to flow across departments and functions. When you create real-time visibility into every step of the process, everyone from sales to services delivery to finance gets a more complete picture of account-based operations. The result is faster, fact-based decisions.



But where do you start?

Look first to optimize your sales processes as part of the broader quote-to-cash business cycle. This guide describes actionable steps you can take to speed up sales cycles so you can close a higher percentage of deals and drive growth.

Quote-to-Cash Cycle:

Interrelated processes supported by Sales, Services Delivery, and Finance organizations. It starts with a client quote and ends once payment is received.

A CHANGING INDUSTRY

The professional services industry is changing quickly, putting new demands on PSOs to innovate & differentiate.

01

Skilled talent shortage

As Baby Boomers retire, they are taking valuable professional services knowledge with them as their expertise hasn't always been systematically documented. PSOs are struggling to find employees with specialized knowledge and skills to solve complex problems. Meanwhile, employee attrition has been climbing steadily since 2008 (13.9%).¹

Millennial and Gen Z employees stepping in also have new demands for how they work. They want ease of access and instant gratification.

02

Increasingly complex business models

PSOs are exploring new subscription, usage-based, and managed services pricing and billing models. While this is a viable way to secure annuity clients and predictable revenue streams, it also introduces further complexity into the quote-to-cash cycle.

03

Rising global competition

Faster, nimbler, more tech-savvy firms are challenging entrenched firms by focusing on specific niches, functions, and underserved constituents. PSOs must evaluate their markets and positioning now to seize emerging opportunities before they become commoditized.

04

New role of technology

The global size, complexity, and growth of today's service businesses have accentuated the need for specialized apps and real-time information. Yet the technology change, overlap, and interdependence has become overwhelmingly complex.



¹ 2019 Professional Services Maturity Benchmark, Service Performance Insight, LLC

DISPARATE TOOLS AND BROKEN CRM PROCESSES

Amid these industry shifts, sales teams remain focused on driving growth through satisfying existing clients and acquiring new ones. But success hinges on more than sales alone.

Success requires effective quote-to-cash coordination between cross-functional teams.

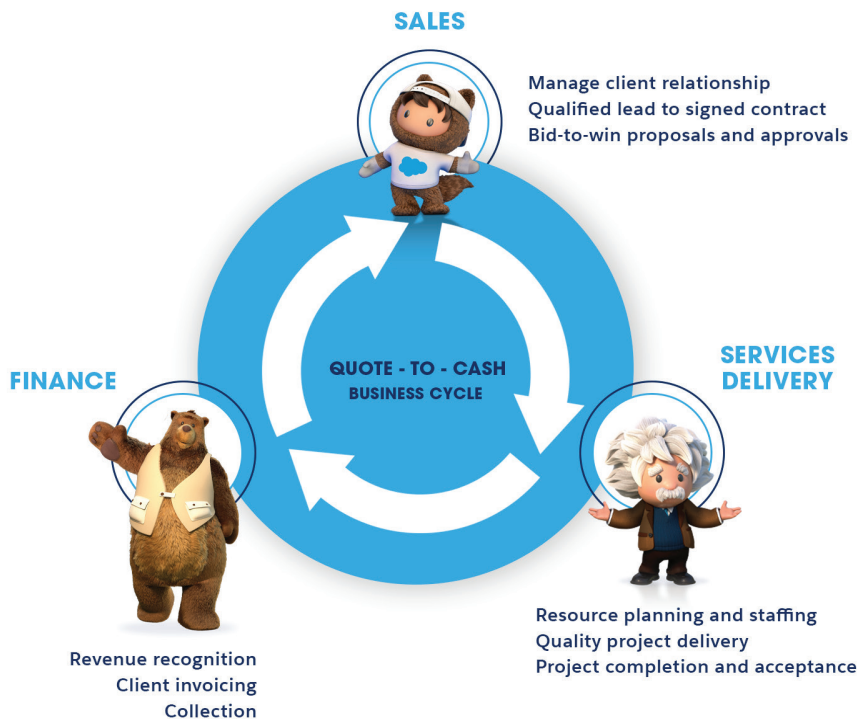
Revenue isn't recognized until the PSO delivers the final solution and the client accepts it. And start-to-finish, that involves multiple teams:

In order for sales reps to meet their quota and for the business to hit their forecasted targets, the sales team needs to quarterback this entire process.

Yet unclear strategy, organizational silos, and lack of alignment are holding everyone back.

When different teams work in siloed systems (e.g. CRM, PSA, ERP), it leads to poor handoffs that can complicate the strategy around how to execute and win deals, and how to drive repeat sales. The resulting lack of alignment can lead to an imbalance of resources.

As the lines between sales, delivery, and finance become blurred, PSOs need a new approach to create real-time visibility into the highly collaborative quote-to-cash process.



PUT YOUR TEAMS ON THE RIGHT PATH TO SUCCESS

If you're facing any of these challenges, the first step is to ask yourself the below questions. This will help you assess your current quote-to-cash processes and identify priority areas for improvement.

- How are your sales reps and implementation or services delivery teams working together on SOWs?
- What tools are you using to define, track, and measure your projects from start to finish?
- How are your sales team currently doing account planning?
- How are your teams currently creating mutual success plans for your customers?
- How much of your business is repeat clients versus new clients?
- What is the onboarding process for new reps? What is the ramp-up time frame?
How are you transitioning accounts?



BEST PRACTICES TO TRANSFORM CRM PROCESSES

Follow these best practices to optimize sales effectiveness and create a transparent, collaborative quote-to-cash cycle that drives growth.

01

Create a collaborative proposal process

Empower cross-team alignment early in the bidding process to land new clients:

- ✓ Gather the most knowledgeable and effective team members to develop and write the proposal, including Sales Program Manager, Delivery Consultant/Subject Matter Expert, Finance, Legal & Compliance.
- ✓ As a group, discuss resources and staffing. Confirm the key people involved are committed and aware of what is expected of them: roles, timelines, costs, etc.
- ✓ Get insight into customer requirements—including their procurement process, proposal evaluation methodology, governing regulations, standards, and laws—to gain competitive advantage.
- ✓ Incorporate team input on all story/technical/management details as a team. Combine those recommendations into the final proposal.

02

Focus on proactive relationship building

The easiest way to improve your win rate is to truly understand the needs of your customers and prospects:

- ✓ Identify the compelling reasons why customers buy and what attributes they most care about so you can build differentiating services for them. This will enable you to move from handcrafted projects that are highly dependent on individual team member skills to clear, client-centric, value-based sales.
- ✓ If you are trying to unseat an incumbent vendor, be proactive: e.g. set a goal of winning the contract when it is rebid in three years, and come up with a plan for how you'll do it.
- ✓ To win more bids, make the sale before the bid / RFP comes out. Establish trust by building good relationships with your buyer's department heads before the RFP comes.

03

Build repeatable sales processes and resources supported in CRM

Consulting excellence depends on harvesting knowledge and making it accessible.

Boost your sales rep productivity and accelerate your sales cycle by building an actionable account strategy that helps nurture existing client relationships with live CRM data. This will:

- ✓ Ensure real-time visibility into client data and account operations.
- ✓ Help reps uncover new opportunities, spot trends, and take easy corrective action to make sure clients are successful and more likely to return and refer businesses.
- ✓ Give services delivery teams all the context they need to act on and deliver timely, high-quality projects.



Transforming your CRM processes has a direct impact on your ability to optimize the quote-to-cash cycle and drive growth. A 360 client view empowers sales teams to know and anticipate their clients' needs, proactively propose the right solutions at the right time, and successfully grow their client relationships.