## The Marketer's Guide to Customer-Led-Growth



A framework, examples, templates and tools shared by Eran Livneh

## What's in this guide?

- Why Customer-Led-Growth?
- What can you do to drive Customer-Led-Growth?
- How to measure success
- Planning tools and templates

My goal in this guide is to provide you with a framework, not a recipe. I hope it helps you think about the critical milestones in your customer lifecycle and how marketing can add value at each stage. It should help you bring to the forefront the needs of the different customer personas and the ways you can help each of them achieve their goals using a range of programs that leverage data, content, community, and advocacy - all forms of engagement that marketing is uniquely positioned to deliver. And last but not least, I've included templates and tools you can use to analyze customer data so you can prioritize your plans and measure their impact on revenue growth. After all, this is all about Customer-Led-Growth!





Why Customer-Led-Growth?





## The next board meeting

Even if you are not part of the next board meeting, you can bet these two questions will be asked:

- 1. What are you doing to protect your revenue projections?
- 2. How are you cutting costs?

With valuations down, companies are under pressure to deliver not only growth, but also a path to profitability.

Sustainable growth is the name of the game today!





Image by wayhomestudio on Freepik

## Luckily, Customer-Led Growth provides a great answer to both of these questions by:

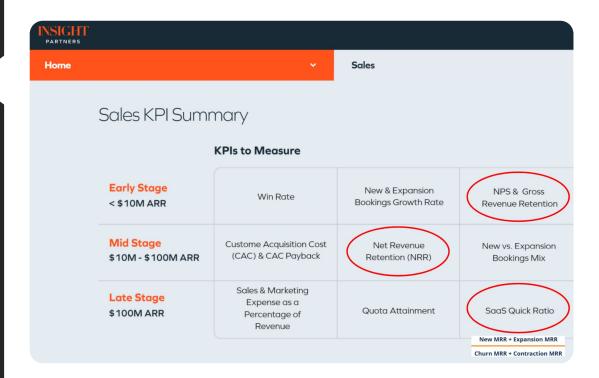
- Increasing customer retention
- Increasing upsell & expansion
- Leveraging customer advocacy to support new logo acquisition

Read on to see how!



## What do investors value?

Retention and expansion revenues are key performance indicators for SaaS companies.





## Why are retention and expansion so important?

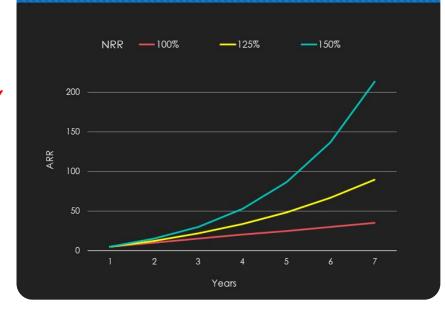
Acquiring a new customer is 5-7x more expensive than retaining one.

It's also easy to see how retention and expansion drive exponential growth.

For these reasons, each percentage point increase in NRR is worth an 18% increase in SaaS company valuation over five years.

#### NRR Impact on ARR Growth

Hypothetical scenario assuming flat new customer ARR





## Best-in-class inspirations

High-growth SaaS companies have higher than average NRR.

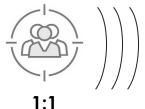
	NRR Pre-IPO	NRR Post-IPO
Bill.com	110%	121%
Blackline	112%	106%
Confluent	117%	130%
Datadog	146%	130%
Okta	121%	123%
Slack	143%	123%
Snowflake	189%	162%
Twilio	141%	135%
Zendesk	116%	120%
Zoom	130%	130%
Average:	133%	128%



# Marketing's role in driving retention and expansion revenues at scale

While the customer success organization plays a central role in driving value to customers, driving success at scale requires a different set of capabilities.

### **Customer Success**



Customer-Led-Growth Customer Marketing
can add scale to
Customer Success with
1:M programs, targeted
plays, and just-in-time
campaigns.

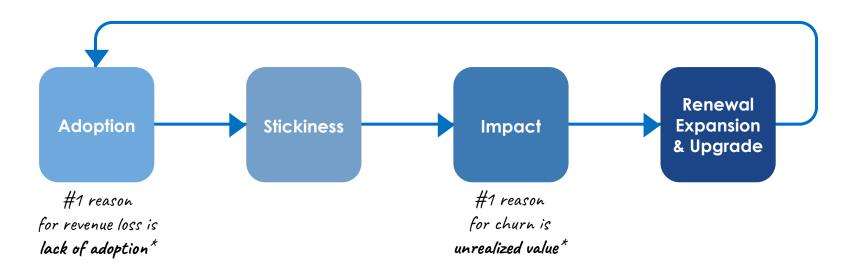
"We have a customer marketing organization specifically focused on our installed base and how we improve the experience for them.

Marketing is the orchestrator that ties together the success team and engineering and all the different functions that have to come together to make a great customer experience."

David Meredith, CEO, Boomi



## Retention and expansions are driven by the customer lifecycle experience





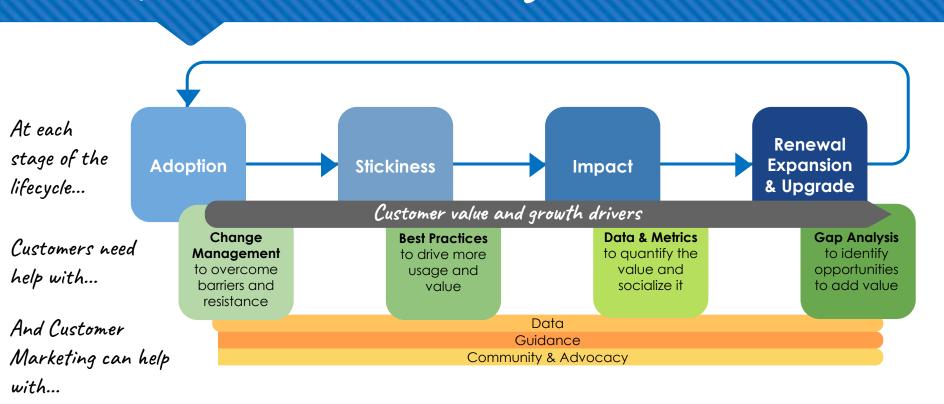


Driving Customer-Led Growth requires that we translate the "customer-first" North Star into actionable tasks and deliverables throughout the customer lifecycle.

Image by luis molinero on Freepil



## How can you drive value and growth throughout the customer lifecycle?



# Driving success at scale

## Three ways marketing can help customers be more successful:

**Data** Share data that helps customers

understand their usage and outcomes

and how they can improve.

**Guidance** Share content that helps

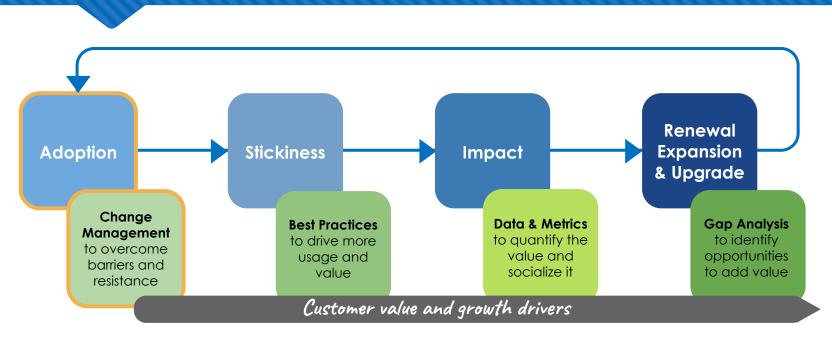
customers adopt best practices.

Community & Advocacy

Create a space and opportunities for customers to learn from their peers.



## Starting with Adoption

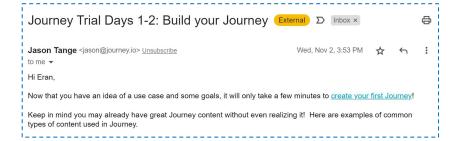




### **Onboarding**

"A poor onboarding experience is hard to come back from and the fastest way to lose a customer."

Paul Philip, Founder & CEO, Amity



Content

Guide the user to get value, quickly! Here's a good example



Communication

Utilize multiple communication channels, e.g. in-app messaging, email, slack, community.

Community

- Create a community zone for onboarding / new users.
- Setup a welcoming committee.
- Offer a mentorship program.



## If you think about adoption from the customer point of view, it is really a change management challenge.

#### Our view

- Implement
- Onboard
- Train
- Happy users!

#### User view

- The big picture: why are we doing this?
- What's in it for me?
- What is the transition process and timeline?
- What do I need to change in my day to day?
- What do we need to do differently as a team?
- What kind of support will I get?
- How will we know it's working?

plays, and community zones that help users understand the "why" and the "how" of the change they are going through.

Create content,



## Users, product champions, and decision makers need different types of tools to manage change.



Transition FAQ

WIIFM videos

Community onboarding



Adoption stats

Change management guide

Adoption case studies



How they are doing: Early adoption wins

How others are doing: Executive testimonials

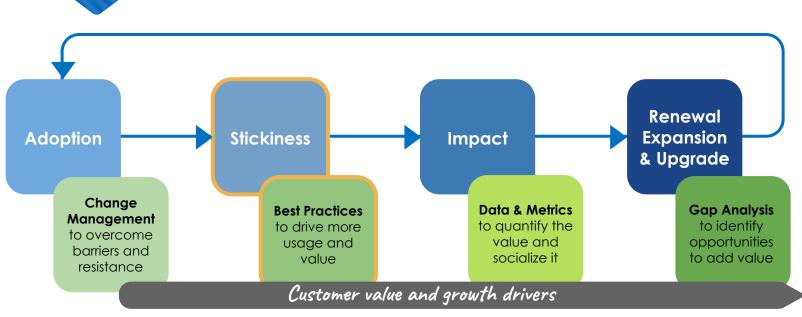
User

Champion

**Decision maker** 



## From Adoption to Stickiness





# Driving stickiness and value

Stickiness is about driving more usage and value.

First and foremost, you want to make sure you deliver maximum value to the customer.

Second, you want to make your solution such a critical part of their business processes that they cannot live without it.

Here are a few user behaviors that you can impact to increase stickiness.

Frequency of use

A solution that is used multiple times a day is typically more valuable and more difficult to replace than one that is used once a week or once a month, for example.

Integration

Integration with other systems can increase product usage and make it engrained in additional business workflows.

Feature utilization

Share best practices to help users adopt features that deliver the most value.



## Example: Using data to prioritize customer cohorts for stickiness plays

We analyzed the impact of using two features - in this case notification and integration - on user stickiness.

Daily Active
Users divided by
Monthly Active
Users (or DAU
over MAU) is a
common metric
for stickiness.

	l		<b>↓</b>	
	No notifications or integration	Notifications only	Integration only	Notifications + integrations
DAU/MAU	21%	45%	52%	58%
% of users	55%	12%	14%	19%

31% improvement —

Based on this data, we can see that we can make the greatest impact by **promoting integration to those that haven't enabled either of the two features** (+31% potential improvement for 55% of the users).

Our second priority would be promoting notifications to those that have not enabled either (+24% potential improvement for 55% of the users).

Only then would it make sense to promote the second feature to those that have already enabled one of them.

### Stickiness plays by persona



Did you know? Series

Integration nudges

Hero user stories



Stickiness stats

Integration guides

Product update webinars



How they are doing: Early wins updates

How others are doing: Executive testimonials

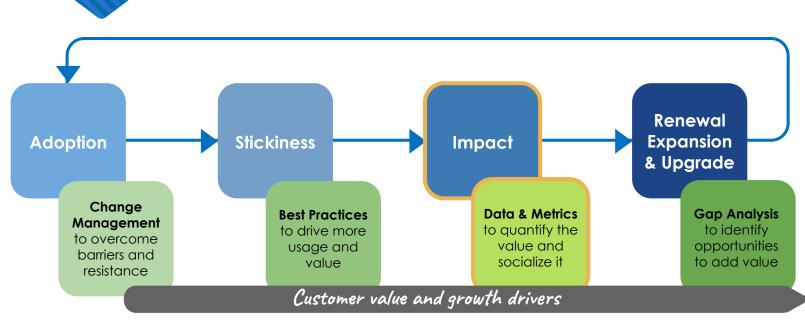
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**Decision maker** 





### Helping customers quantify the value of your solution

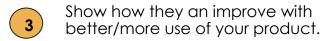


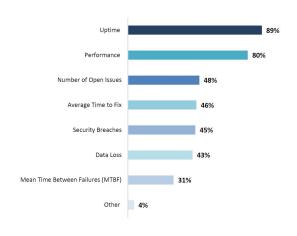


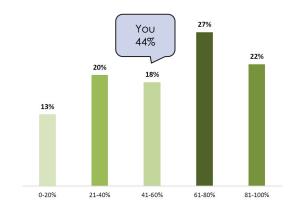
## Help customers understand how to measure the value of your solution and what drives greater impact

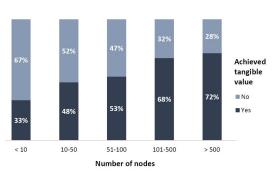
The better customers can quantify the value of your solution, the more likely they are to renew, grow, and become effective advocates.

- Survey customers and share common KPIs.
- Show how they perform relative to benchmarks.









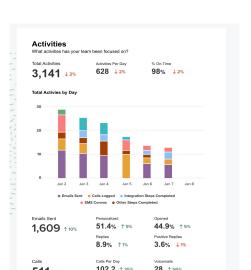
## Help customers recognize the value at all levels from users to teams and the entire organization

Seeing this data in their inbox helps customers visualize the value they get and use more quantifiable language when they describe the benefits of your solution, whether it's in a review, a reference call, or when they need to justify the budget for renewal or expansion.

#### **User Activity Summary**

#### 

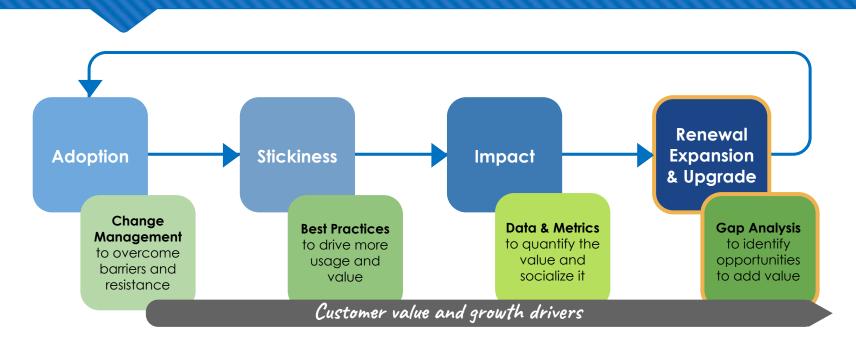
#### **Team Performance**



#### **Organization KPIs**



## Driving renewals, expansion, and upgrades





## Use ABM to structure segmented renewal, upgrade, & expansion programs

Renewals, upgrades, and expansions are sales-led activities. Since each organization has it set up differently, it could be led by account managers or account executives, but it could also be the customer success managers that are responsible for these revenue numbers in some organizations.

Regardless, customer-led-growth marketers can help in many ways to set these sales efforts for success. You can structure your activities along the lines of 1 to many, 1 to few, and 1 to 1 programs.



#### Internal advocacy expansion play

 Webinar/video/case study sharing success metrics for internal distribution within the customer account



### Grow and evolve plays for upgrades and expansion

 Highlight opportunities for gaining more value based on white space analysis



#### Renewal campaigns

- Share usage and value reinforcement data
- Customer success benchmarks
- Customer success stories

## Whitespace analysis: spot opportunities for growth

When it comes to upgrades and expansion, you can segment your customers based on which additional products and upgrades you can offer them.

You can then create targeted 1-to-Few programs that are focused on the opportunity for the customer to gain additional value.

	Product X	Product Y	Product Z	
Customer A	None	Team	Team	
Customer B	Free	None	Pro	
Customer C	Enterprise	Enterprise	Enterprise	
Customer D	Team	Enterprise	Team	
Customer E	Pro	None	Enterprise	

## Lifecycle programs wrap up

- Define the critical milestones that drive customer adoption, stickiness, and impact.
- Identify where customers may be stuck or need extra help.
- Design programs that leverage data, guidance, community and advocacy to help customers overcome these challenges at each stage.
- Tailor your programs to the customer personas that can best accelerate time-to-value.









## Measuring Customer-Led-Growth

### Three categories of measurement

Focus on the metrics that matter to the business to define your goals and measure the value you deliver. Use engagement and activity metrics to understand what can be improved in your content, the channels of engagement, and the mix of activities.

#### **Business metrics**

- NRR / NDR / GRR
- Retention
- Cross/up-sell
- Customer acquisition influence
- Adoption (MAU)
- Stickiness (DAU/MAU)
- Lifecycle NPS

#### **Engagement metrics**

- Account coverage
- Email metrics
- Community engagement
- In-app messaging engagement

#### Advocacy activity metrics

- Positive reviews
- Case studies
- Press announcements
- Media interviews
- Speaking engagements



### Revenue metrics

In addition to tracking overall progress, you can use these metrics to gauge the effectiveness of specific programs. For example, you can look at the average NRR per customer that participated in a program vs. those that didn't participate to measure the contribution of a specific program to Net Revenue Retention.

You can measure renewals, upgrades and expansions separately, or you can roll them up into the NRR metric. NRR, which stands for Net Revenue Retention, is commonly used to evaluate the company's growth performance, especially for subscription-based business.

- Retention
- Cross/up-sell

```
NRR = MRR at the beginning of the period + Expansion MRR + Upgrade MRR - Cancelled MRR - Downgrade MRR *100

MRR at the beginning of the period
```

Customer acquisition influence

## Look for the warning signs

Ideally, we want to see these indicators go up from the time of deployment forward. If you see a dip in adoption or stickiness, that could be a red flag that indicates a churn risk and possibly lower likelihood for an expansion.

Adoption and stickiness are leading indicators for retention and expansion. The more frequently your solution is used, the more value it delivers and the more difficult it is to replace.

#### Define high-risk cohorts based on:

- Adoption (MAU)
- Stickiness (DAU/MAU)

#### Watch for customers trending down on:

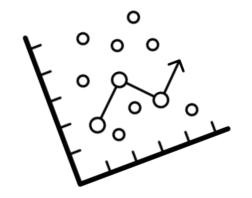
- MoM adoption change
- MoM stickiness change

### Track account coverage

Tracking engagement score by persona provides a good indication where you may be under-engaging with key players that could come back to bite you when the time comes for a renewal or expansion discussion.

Account coverage is an aggregation of engagement metrics by account instead of by activity.

Account	Users	Champions	Economic Buyers	Technical Buyers
Acme	42	47	99	68
Brilliant Minds	59	90	29	81
Copy Cats	30	95	25	82
Dog Walkers	55	33	43	19
Earth Movers	11	80	33	74
Funny Ones	71	66	72	56
Game Time	60	88	83	59



Optional

# Building a statistical model for Customer-Led-Growth

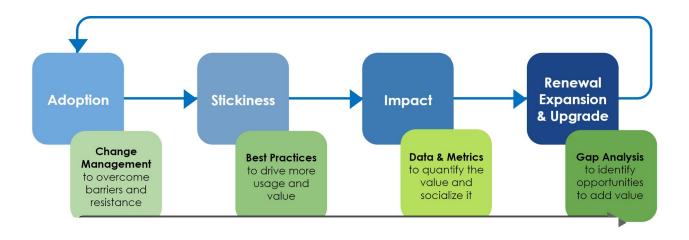


## This will get a bit technical, but I'm here to help!

We said that adoption, stickiness, and the ability to measure impact are stepping stones to retention, upgrades, and expansion. But how do we know and show how much they really drive revenue growth?

To do that, we want to turn our framework into a statistical model.

Don't get discouraged if you don't have the data to support this level of analysis. Use this as a guide to the kind of data you need, but in the meantime, work with what you have and trust your intuition!!



<u>Link to Excel spreadsheet</u> Link to video walk-through

### The data

We want to run a regression on the variables we are trying to drive - adoption, stickiness, and impact, and see how they statistically correlate with revenue growth.

	Adoption	Stickiness	Impact			Growth
				Last	Current	
	12-month	12-month	12-month	Year's	ACV	YoY
Account	MAU/LIC %	DAU/MAU %	Score	ACV (\$k)	(\$k)	ACV %
Acme	73	71	0	100	106	6
Brilliant Minds	59	90	0	100	101	1
Copy Cats	30	66	0	100	0	-100
Dog Walkers	77	33	0	100	0	-100
Earth Movers	91	80	100	100	130	30
Funny Ones	83	74	0	100	121	21
Game Time	92	88	100	100	170	70
H2O	73	71	0	100	108	8
Igloo Buster	59	90	0	100	103	3
Joke Is On	30	66	0	100	0	-100
Killer Instinct	77	33	0	100	0	-100
LOL	91	80	0	100	125	25
Mind Games	65	74	100	100	122	22
No End	92	88	100	100	180	80
Oh My!	73	71	0	100	110	10
Pitch Count	59	90	0	100	101	1
Que It	30	66	0	100	0	-100
Red Eye	77	33	0	100	0	-100
Salt End	91	80	0	100	144	44
Time Bound	83	74	0	100	117	17
U Too	59	88	100	100	150	50

Proxy for NRR

Reflects retention, expansion, and upgrades

We use YoY change in ACV for each customer as a proxy for NRR. The reason is that if we used NRR, the results would be skewed by the timing of contract renewal (e.g. last month vs. 11 months ago).

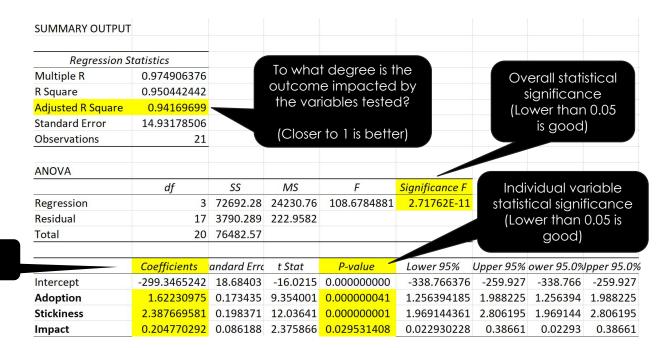


## Regression output

If we run a regression on these numbers, we'll see something like this.

The Significance F and P-values tell us if the model is statistically valid.

Variable Coefficients





### What does the model tell us?

The Adoption coefficient tells us that for every 10% change in adoption we can expect to get around 16% of change in YoY growth.

The Stickiness coefficient tells us that for each 10% change in stickiness we can expect about 24% of growth.

The Impact coefficient says that helping customers quantity the value of our solution can increase YoY ACV by an average of 20% per customer. This could mean, for example, that one of 5 of these customers that would otherwise churn would now be retained.

	Coefficients
Intercept	-299.3465242
Adoption	1.62230975
Stickiness	2.387669581
Impact	0.204770292



### There is much more we can test!

You can test the correlation of any data point to revenue growth, for example:

- How long it took to deploy the product
- Adoption after 2/3/6/x months
- Adoption of a specific product, feature, or integration
- Participation in advocacy programs
- NPS or other survey responses



## Revenue model wrap up

- Explore different variables in your analysis to understand what levers you can pull to drive growth.
- Let the data do the talking, don't try to force your narrative.
- If you don't have all the data you need, trust your intuition. Get your programs started based on your best guess, and work on getting the data to support it.





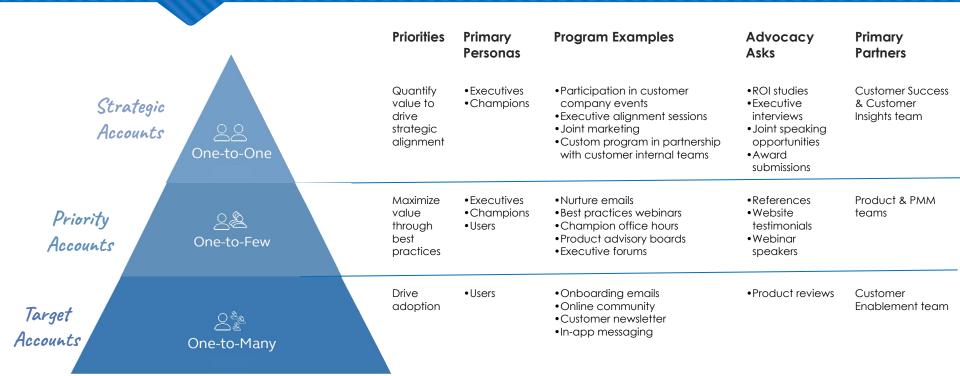




Planning tools, templates, and reports, oh my!



# An Account-Based Marketing framework can help you balance scale and personalization

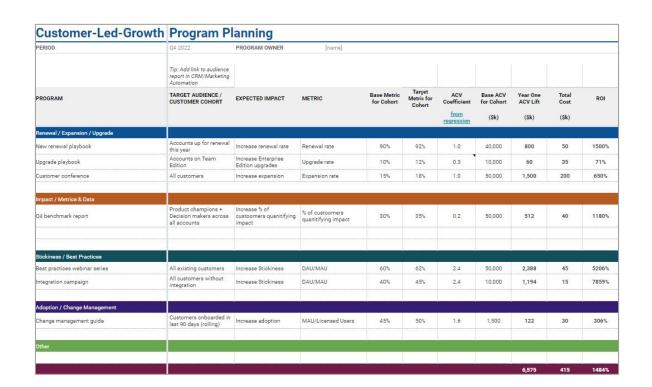


# A data-driven approach to maximize the revenue impact of your programs (using your statistical model)

Using your regression results to plan and track programs' impact on revenue growth

<u>Link to spreadsheet</u>



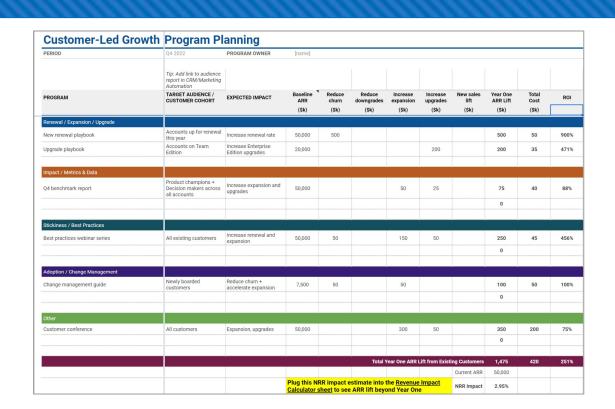


# A data-driven approach to maximize the revenue impact of your programs (without a statistical model)

If you don't have the data to support a statistical model, you can use an estimated NRR lift to plan and track programs' impact on revenue growth.

Link to spreadsheet





## Year One Plan (sample)

Q1

#### ACTIVATE

- Team
- Plan
- Budget
- KPIs
- Management buy-in
- Stakeholder alignment
- Initial content assets

Q2

#### LAUNCH

- Pilot programs launched
  - Identify quick wins
  - Single stage in the customer lifecycle
  - Single channel
- Additional content assets
- Success metrics tracked

Q3

#### EXPAND

- Impact additional stages in the customer lifecycle
- Add more channels
- Additional content assets

Q4

#### OPTIMIZE

- Evaluate and adjust existing programs
- Automate key activities
- Expand based on initial success
- Continue to experiment



# Getting started from the ground up: 30-60-90 Day Plan

#### LAND SURVEY

(0-30 days)

- Internal stakeholder interviews
- Customer interviews
- Customer data analysis
- Systems and channels review

#### FOUNDATIONS

(30-60 days)

- Strategy document
- Success metrics
- Persona analysis
- Messaging alignment
- 6-month plan
- Stakeholder socialization

#### FRAME

(60-90 days)

- Initial program plans
- Content asset buildup
- Channel & tools buildup



First deliverables in market

#### TRIM

(90+ days)

- Measure
- | Iterate
- Expand



## Start with the greatest revenue impact

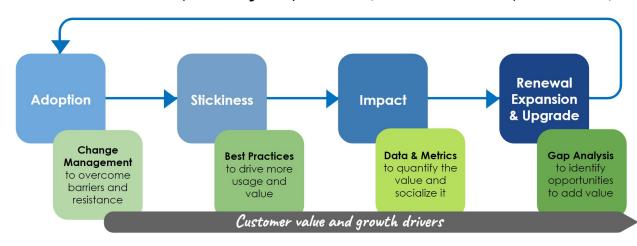
Start with the programs that can deliver the greatest revenue impact, which would typically be focused on upgrade and expansion campaigns.

This will allow you to show some early revenue-generating results and help you get more buy-in.

If you experience significant churn, fix that first. Trying to fix churn with last minutes efforts at renewal time is a losing battle, so take a close look at the critical milestones that drive adoption, stickiness, and impact to set customers for success at every stage of their lifecycle.

#### Work backwards for program priorities

With one important exception: If you experience significant churn, stop the bleeding first!



## Final words (almost)



Use this guide as a framework to create your own strategy and tactics, not a recipe.



Identify the critical milestones that drive customer adoption, stickiness, and impact.



Incorporate data, guidance, community, and advocacy to design programs that help customers at each stage.



Tailor your programs to the customer personas that can best accelerate time-to-value.



Use data to guide your priorities, but don't let a lack of data stand in the way.



Balance long-term impact with quick wins to get buy-in and secure additional resources.



## How can I help? Getting Started Packages

## Gap & opportunity analysis

- Analyze retention and expansion patterns
- Identify friction points
- Carve out high potential customer cohorts
- Quantify opportunities for improvement

## Strategy & planning workshop

- Define your CLG flywheel
- Create a business case
- Prioritize programs based on growth ROI
- 1:M / 1: F / 1:1 program mapping
- Define KPIs, reports, and dashboards

## Messaging & content review

- Craft renewal & expansion messages for relevant personas
- Review existing comms to ensure alignment with messaging
- Map existing content to support messages

## Program in a box

- Manage one program from A-Z
- Identify a quick win opportunity
- Work with your team or completely outsourced



## To learn more:

### Eran Livneh

<u>Email me</u>

MarketCapture website

Free online training course

