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The Science of Signal-Based Selling

How Top Sales Teams Drive Efficient Revenue Growth



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Getting From Signal to Sale

In a hyper-competitive market, B2B sellers are constantly looking for an edge with their ideal prospects. Buyers are doing the same: most come to the table with extensive research in hand, and nearly all of them buy from a company on their “day one” list.

But all of that activity isn’t happening in a vacuum. As prospects define their problem, search for solutions, and even change jobs, they’re generating high-value signals that the best go-to-market teams can leverage to close more deals.

This is where signal-based selling comes into play. Signal-based selling is a sales strategy that leverages buying signals to identify and engage with high-potential prospects. These signals provide insights into a prospect's intent and readiness to purchase, allowing sales teams to tailor their approach and increase their chances of closing deals.

ZoomInfo CEO Henry Schuck recently broke down specific ways to put four key buying signals into action with ZI Labs’ Millie Beetham and 30 Minutes to President’s Club. Here’s how your GTM team can capitalize on high-value buying signals to sell smarter and win faster.

Signal #1: Key Account Visits to Pricing Page

An account on your team's high-priority target list is suddenly showing a spike in purchase intent by registering 50 visits to your company website's pricing page. This is a prime example of signal-based selling, where a specific action indicates a strong interest in your product.

How to Take Action

This account is ready for a conversation. It's time to use your highest-profile internal advocates to secure a meeting — and do it efficiently.

The first question, Schuck says, is "Who do I know, and how do I get introduced there?" And remember that, even if they don't have solid existing relationships with the prospect, the C-suite is still your biggest lever.

"I want to use my relationships to get into that company. But if I don't know somebody there, I'm still a very powerful prospector," Schuck says. "Your founder, your CEO is a very powerful person for you to use, to reach out to the C-Suite and broker a conversation with your team."

Key Signal-Based Selling Steps

- **Ghostwrite an executive email:** The sales team can tee C-level officers up for success by drafting key outreach messaging for them — an open-ended ask for help with the account becomes one more to-do on their already busy calendar, but a compelling outreach draft makes approval and sending easy.

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Henry Schuck
Founder and CEO,
ZoomInfo

- **Keep it short:** Keep your email short and only include the essential points: I understand you're looking into solutions, some of your competitors are already customers, let's book an intro call. "Why am I here, how do I add value, and what's my ask?" Schuck says.
- **Multi-threading:** The C-Suite can't do this job alone. Add outreach down the org chart with counterparts who would be potential end users and valuable champions, involving the rest of your GTM team and their relationships or research.
- **Aircover:** Meanwhile, you can use account-based marketing software to surround the prospect with valuable messaging that aligns with their position in the buyer's journey.

Bonus Points

Automate this motion for the next time. When another key account hits the pricing page, the team-wide coordination you set up to triage the first account should click into action more or less automatically — you've done the work, now put it on repeat.

Signal #2: Project Initiative News

Uncovering that a prospect is initiating a significant project, like a master data management transformation initiative, signals a pivotal opportunity. This intelligence could emerge from several channels, such as a public company's earnings release, press interviews, or exclusive research surveys. For ZoomInfo users, this data is available in the Scoops feature. In signal-based selling, identifying these initiatives early can give you a significant advantage.

How to Take Action

A major corporate initiative like this will involve a broad swath of users, decision-makers, and champions. So should your prospecting, from the very start.

"I want to start prospecting efforts all across the board. I'm not just going to reach out to one or two people," says Nick Cegelski, founder of 30 Minutes to President's Club. "I've got a signal here that tells me a potential customer is dealing with a problem and has an initiative that I think we can help with."

And while executives are likely best deployed with their counterparts, frontline sales professionals can clearly help move a conversation forward below the executive level. "If there are other salespeople, I'm going to contact them too. In my experience, salespeople are often very willing to help other salespeople," Cegelski says.

You also want to prepare the team with the necessary resources and expertise for meaningful discussions, beyond just basic discovery questions. Be sure to highlight the relevance of your solution to the specifics of their project. By doing so, it positions your team as a strategic partner — not just as vendors. Involving key executives and product specialists also conveys a deep commitment to their success.



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Nick Cegelski
Founder, 30 Minutes to President's Club

Key Signal-Based Selling Steps

- **Show, don't tell:** Reference customers are worth their weight in gold. Executive stakeholders (and everyone on the team, really) should be armed with specific customer proof that shows your team and product have done this work before. It's not just about showing off what you know — you want to make it easy for clients to see your value and build confidence in your solutions.
- **Create custom content:** Take the time to learn how internal conversations with the client are going and consider how your messaging might be evolving. Do you have the right case studies in place? Do you have content that speaks directly to your decision-makers across the sales funnel? Focus on assets that directly address their needs as the long sales cycle unfolds and new needs are discovered.
- **Engage your specialists early:** CEOs and other top executives should bring in the company's top domain experts early in the project. This shows the breadth of assistance available to the project, and signals a deeper commitment to customer success. "Early on with a big enterprise company, I'm just giving you resources," Schuck says. "I want to give you my best, smartest people who can help you figure out the solution to this problem."

Bonus Points

Don't just book a meeting for your CEO or other top executive. Tell them what they need to achieve from this call: Nailing down a specific meeting with someone else? A detailed understanding of budget and timeline? "What I ask from my sales reps going into these meetings is: What do you want me to get for you?" Schuck says. "If you don't know the answer to that, I really shouldn't be going in for you. I'm not the AE."

Signal #3: Customer Champion Job Change

A key individual who has been a satisfied customer of yours announces they've been hired into an exciting new role at a different company. This buying signal is a valuable component of signal-based selling, indicating a potential new opportunity.

How to Take Action

If you've sold them once and they've seen value, you're playing with house money at the new account. But first, you want to simply celebrate this champion.

A personalized gesture of congratulations, like a handwritten note or a thoughtful gift, without immediately segueing into a sales pitch, sets your approach apart as genuinely memorable. You have to act fast, though — speed will help differentiate you that much more.

"The moment someone steps into a new role is an opportunity not just for them, but for us to reaffirm our value in their professional journey. It's about more than just maintaining a connection — it's about enhancing it," says Armand Farrokh, founder of 30 Minutes to President's Club.

"Using technology to stay informed about these job change signals allows us to act quickly to show we're committed."

Key Signal-Based Selling Steps

- **Train your team on deal forensics:** Track the history of customer interactions to tailor how you engage with the client. With a job-change signal, figure out who their past contacts are — your customer success manager (CSM) or your head of customer success, for example — and get them to play a role in reaching out. On future deals, you won't have to start from scratch with this decision-maker.

"Using technology to stay informed about these job change signals allows us to act quickly to show we're committed."



Armand Farrokh
Founder, 30 Minutes to President's Club

- **Stand out before you ask:** "You can't be perceived to be better unless you are first perceived to be different," Cegelski says. Sending that bottle of champagne with congratulations goes a long way. Sellers should also dive deep into what's happening at the champion's new company, showing that you not only appreciate their past commitment, but understand what they need to succeed in the future.
- **Don't forget the frontline users:** A large company, like ZoomInfo, may have hundreds of thousands of users. Being able to monitor job changes among the broader user base at scale is incredibly valuable information, even if each of those moves doesn't rise to the level of personalized gift.

Bonus Points

Enhance your CRM with job-change tracking integrations to activate immediate, personalized outreach. By automating this at scale, no important job change goes unnoticed. Having a customizable "congratulations kit" for efficient, yet personal, gestures can save you time. "I want to know every time one of my champions changes jobs. That's an incredibly valuable signal," Schuck says.

Signal #4: Spikes in Relevant Search Term Volume

You're recording a noticeable uptick in search volume for terms relevant to your core value proposition, indicating growing demand for your solutions. The interest is broad-based, encompassing several distinct industry sectors. This signal can be effectively leveraged in signal-based selling to tailor messaging to meet the specific needs of different sectors.

How to Take Action

"It's essential to dive into the root cause of this spike. Only by understanding the 'why' can you effectively tailor your outreach and solution presentation," Beetham says.

Discovering the underlying reasons for an initial spike in interest enables you to segment and target your list with highly personalized interactions. But first, you have to have the right data.

It's also critical to refine and differentiate your pitches to fit the needs of each specific vertical or industry, rather than rushing into a one-size-fits-all pitch that simply sells your broad-brush value proposition.

"To set up an automated motion here, what you want to start thinking about is: how does my message differ from industry to industry? And potentially even between buying committee levels," Schuck says. "Maybe VP and director have one set of communication, and managers have a different one."



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Millie Beetham
Senior Director, ZI Labs & GTM Innovation, ZoomInfo

Key Signal-Based Selling Steps

- **Use multi-part intent analysis:** Ideally, you want to layer additional intent signals around your initial surge of broad interest. Check for additional data that could enhance your understanding of the business dynamics across each specific sector.
- **Enrich data for targeted outreach:** Enrich your database with the freshest data to focus your sales efforts where they're most needed. With enriched territories on hand, you can confidently start testing sales and marketing campaigns to learn more about your prospects.
- **Orchestrate sales and marketing motions:** Make sure every part of your campaign, from the ads to the landing pages, right down to the content behind those sign-up forms, speaks directly to the industry and the specific persona you're targeting. Create personalized messaging that resonates across all platforms to set the stage to warm up your audience.

Bonus Points

Your messaging should focus on the prospect's position in the buyer's journey, not your ability to perceive their interest. Saying that you saw they've visited your website is a little too aggressive many times — instead, say you understand they're trying to solve a problem, and describe how you can help.

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Signal-Based Selling: Data Makes the Difference

Signal-based selling is not a silver bullet — it's the starting gun in an often complex, nuanced sales process. By mastering the signals that deliver the most value, the entire go-to-market team can be confident that they're equipped with the right data, tools, and playbooks to turn signals into actions, and prospects into closed-won deals.

Incorporating signal-based selling into your strategy can enhance your ability to connect with prospects at the right time with the right message. Find out how ZoomInfo helps more than 35,000 businesses worldwide sell smarter and win faster.

Book a Demo ↗