# Mark Goldberger: The Ultimate Guide to Enterprise Sales | E1003

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SUMMARY

*Mark shares his journey from the wine industry to leading Ramp's Enterprise sales team, emphasizing the importance of understanding product-customer fit over product-market fit. He discusses key sales strategies, including the significance of mentorship, the four H's of hiring (hunger, hustle, humility, heart), and the necessity of deep qualification in sales processes.*

- *The difference between winners and losers in sales is the level of practice and preparation.*
- *Mark transitioned from a wine sales background to SaaS, ultimately leading Enterprise sales at Ramp.*
- *Product-customer fit is crucial for early sales success, even before achieving product-market fit.*
- *Effective sales qualification requires digging deep into customer pain points and understanding the implications of those pains.*
- *The four H's for hiring successful salespeople are hunger, hustle, humility, and heart.*
- *Mentorship is vital for developing junior sales reps and helping them recognize their blind spots.*
- *Multi-threading within organizations and identifying deal champions are essential for closing Enterprise deals.*
- *Sales leaders should focus on pipeline generation and avoid relying solely on discounts to create urgency in sales cycles.*

there's a great quote from John McMahon who was a tremendous sales leader the difference between winners and losers is that losers practice until they get it right winners practice until they never get it wrong Mark I am so excited for this I had so many great things from so many former colleagues of yours and current colleagues of yours so thank you so much for joining me today Harry my man it is so good to be here

thanks so much for having me on the show now we have a lot to dive into but I want to start with actually the move 2 ramp and leading Rams Enterprise sales team so how did you make your way into the world of Enterprise sales and how did you most recently come to lead ramps Enterprise sales team yeah it's a great question Harry I came to the world of Enterprise sales from the world of wine I recognize that's not the typical

Journey one makes but it is my own story so I was working in in Massachusetts as a salesperson for a wine distributorship while I was going to business school and upon graduating it was the Great Recession not a great time to leave a good paying job for an unpaid internship somewhere so I actually founded my own company I bootstrapped a SAS business back then knowing nothing about SAS mind you but built a cloud-based company with with tools in the cloud specifically for for the wine industry bootstrapped it we had paying customers it was a wild incredible experience after a few years ultimately I did decide to wind down that business my wife and I moved out to Silicon Valley when she took a role with a little startup in Mountain View called Google I don't know if you've heard of them and so so I found myself out here in Silicon Valley and I said okay I'm going to be an account executive now again for

for SAS companies and I I sent my resume out to about a hundred companies and the response was well there was no response literally could not get an interview more than a hundred resumes sent out I had founded my own company that was a SAS company I had always been a top performer in sales and yet no one was interested in even interviewing me it was a frustrating experience it was a humbling experience but ultimately as

someone who has already had a giant chip on my shoulder it drove me to to go out there and and perform how how are you you look like you've got a question man yeah I mean you're the master of also being a cold outbound being the Enterprise leader you are you must also self-analyze say what was wrong with your approach and why did that happen yeah you know it was I we can talk more about why it happened and I think

there's there's fault on both sides I think there's a challenge from software companies and sales leaders thinking too small inside of a box in terms of the profile of who they're looking for and there was also a a challenge on on my Approach not having an habit lived in this world it was a world that was foreign to me and I needed to find my way in ultimately after a couple of months I I connected with a terrific

recruiter David hipperson at bats at the time and and I ended up interviewing and ultimately taking a position with a a video conferencing company called high five was backed by General Catalyst and and Lightspeed I was competing against zoom and this was before the pandemic when when selling video conferencing was maybe a little bit harder and and I had a great run there for two years ultimately ended up getting recruited by trip actions now called navon and and

was their first Enterprise account executive and really built the Enterprise go to market there I I have to touch on that you mentioned the time at Navan in such a transformational and kind of hyper growth time for the company what are ones two of the biggest takeaways for you from that time and from being the first Enterprise sales leader there what have you taken with you to your time now as ramp there were so many lessons across the the four and

a half years that I spent there and working with with great mentors like Rich Liu and Carlos De la Torre the first lesson that I really took away and this comes from from when I was in ic an Enterprise account executive there I built up in a massive amount of pipeline the the first six to nine months I had 87 opportunities in my name Harry and if you know anything about Enterprise sales that's way too many opportunities but I

started to to close deals about month six and what I recognized was you don't need product Market fit in order to sell an Enterprise especially as that first seller what you need to find is product customer fit and so when you have a huge amount of pipeline like that you can really prioritize it and focus on the accounts that match best with the vision that you're building toward and where their required capabilities match with your core competencies so when you focus

on that 20 percent that's going to drive 80 percent of your outcome amazing things happen and I closed about 13 million dollars of Revenue that first year I mean wow but let's just kind of 13 minutes into the revenue for one rep alone I wish you'd work in some of my portfolio companies my question is you said they're about kind of product customer fit I love it I get it but we have those 86 companies what do we do then what does product

customer fit actually mean help me and help sales leaders and Reps understand that yeah so it goes down to to something that I that I built later on a qualification methodology I called lean pivot walk and essentially what you're trying to do is understand hey if the boxes that they're looking to check are the boxes that we check really well you should lean in you should be going after that opportunity full force if what they're looking for is something

that is not even on your roadmap and and wouldn't be on your roadmap for the next five years you need to be honest with yourself so many reps out there have happy ears and just because someone wants to meet with them they think hey they've got an opportunity you need to be honest and and be able to walk away and qualify that deal out and then there are other opportunities where maybe you check some of the boxes and not others

and is there a world where they're willing to have two different solutions one for the rest of the world and maybe one for North America and so you start to understand these Dynamics and you can play off of them and ultimately close a lot of business that way you said that you can get product customer fit without having product Market fit I'm really intrigued does the sales person need to be the one to create the sales book

Playbook or does the founder need to be how do you think about that question in terms of the product Market fit question as well yeah for product Market fit I think that that is driven more by by the founder being out in the field talking to customers talking to prospects really understanding their pain points and being able to to dive in at that level but when you think about sales and a sales Playbook I think that's

originating from the sales person and in some businesses the founder is that first seller in other businesses I would say you you want to hire a junior salesperson to go out there and figure things out but in no circumstances do you really want to bring in a VP of sales before you have a seller because they're going to come in with the preconceived notions that ultimately might not mesh with with your particular business model I always think higher the

more senior because then they can build the team around them rather than hire the Junior and then bring in a more senior who then adopts a team that they didn't actually hire how do you think about that challenge I think about it a lot but where I come from ultimately if you have a sales leader who's coming in they have a playbook in mind they have processes in mind they have sales tools in mind and those that

Playbook might not mesh with the product that they're actually selling it might not mesh with the people in that organization and so when you try to to jam that square peg in the round hole You you ultimately create thrash and for an early startup you can waste a lot of cycles and a lot of time having the wrong people in the wrong position I I do agree with you and it has a really good point I think you know you

said that that sometimes for a Founder where they need to leave the case when it is the founder leading the case what are the signals that they need to hire the first junior sales rep often it's like a million in error is touted as kind of the number which I think is kind of because it means little what are the signals that the founder needs to make that first hide you think I I think they should make that first hire

as soon as they have a product that they really want to be testing out in the market and so I I think it's a lot sooner than a million ARR to be honest though those first sales I don't think about Revenue as being important the revenue or the currency that matters in those first sales are the logos you you need to be acquiring logos you need to be able to say hey this company works with us that gives you credibility when

you're trying to make that sale for Revenue you want their feedback you want the case study you want them to be a reference for you that matters a lot lot more than Revenue in those early days and I absolutely love that in terms of the focus on logos in terms of kind of going about that single sales rep higher Jason Lamkin says about the importance of hiring two at a time so you can really determine quality and compare do

you agree with that or do you think one works just as well the way that I think about it is I'm looking for sales people who can provide 10x growth not 1X or 1.5 x and when you find someone who can provide that 10x level of growth they're a rare find to find two at the exact same time and to be able to recruit them and have them join at the same time is an exceptionally rare opportunity if you do

find them by all means you should hire them you should hire them as fast as you can whenever you can but ultimately I I think if you are at scale it's easier to hire hey two sales people at a time you're going from 20 reps to 30 reps to 40 reps great hire an incoming class but in those early days where each additional player is going to have so much impact you need to be grabbing the

best talent when you can I I totally agree with you and I spoke to the best talent when I could who worked with you and so I have a lot of information about well you're so brilliant Mark so I want to dig into some of the areas where your tanks and I want to start with deal Champions and multi-threading in particular I think it's something that people universally still do badly actually how do you confirm you have a deal champion in a

cycle it's a tried and true method when it comes to thinking you have a champion there is only one way to know if they really are a champion for you you have to test them and the way that you test them is asking them to take you to the executive buyer now that can result in two things one they have the power and influence to be able to take you to the EB typically that's a CFO especially

today if they have the power and influence to do it and they're willing to take you there and and help present with you you need to be in that meeting on your be on your behalf they're selling internally you've got a champion if they say no to you for whatever reason it means one of two things either they don't have the power and influence to take you to the executive buyer in which case you're dealing with a coach

or just a stakeholder in the organization who really is not going to be meaningfully important for you or you haven't earned the right yet to have them take you to that CFO or to that EB in which case you have more selling to do can I ask what is the right way to ask without seeming slimy or like you're asking for too much you need to set that expectation from the start literally in the first meeting where I walk through a

pitch deck I I share with them why we exist what we're solving for and what it's like to be working with us in from everything from implementation and onboarding to hey part of our sales process is we're going to want to have an open dialogue between your executive team and our executive team this is not a typical vendor customer relationship but it's a partnership and so we want to make sure there's that open dialogue so that what your CFO cares about our CEO

listens to do they want Partnerships I know that seems stupid but CFO is underwater right now managing books trying to find Runway wherever they can whether it's early stage or growth or you know later stage companies and public companies do they want Partnerships or do they just want you to do your job I think it depends on on the the tool or service or platform they're they're buying in the case of what I do at ramp

we're literally selling a platform that provides Financial automation for the office of the CFO they care pretty deeply about that because it actually affects their bottom line we're driving cost savings and Time Savings for them I think if you have a a tool or a solution that you're selling that is maybe less meaningful for them you need to figure out how you're tying to value and if you're ultimately able to tie to the most important value to them they're

going to listen when's the right time in the deal cycle to us to go to the executive buy because you don't want to do it too soon where it's like whoa we've just met Mark and I'm not quite ready for that but then you don't want to do it too late when's that time it's different in every deal if if you are are doing a transactional sale obviously that's going to happen a lot earlier in the process than than a large complex

Global Enterprise deal you need to be able to get to the executive buyer there's a lot of different ways you can get there too it's not just through a champion you can leverage your network you can leverage your board members you can leverage your executive team to back channel into that executive you want to be able to get there and understand what they care about listen to the YouTube videos they've posted listen to when they joined you Harry on on your podcast

right all of these are going to provide you insight and information that's going to allow you to be more effective in in asking for that meeting in an Enterprise deal typically you want to be able to to get some kind of a business value assessment where you're agreeing on what the value is that we can provide for an organization and at that point you're gonna you're going to go with your champion and present those findings to the CFO or to the executive buyer what should you provide your Champion to make sure that they're equipped to sell your case best to the executive buyer on on your behalf but when you're not there the phrasing of that question scares the out of me Harry and the reason why is that you need to be in that meeting there is not a world that I would ever be comfortable living in where I want to Outsource my job to a

champion at a prospect that is that is living very dangerously on the edge I know a lot of sales people who will take you know completely wholesale what a champion says hey my CFO doesn't meet with anybody my CFO is too busy I will be the one to to talk to them on your behalf no no no no no no we we can't have that because what happens when the CFO asks you that question Mr or Mrs

Champion that you don't know the answer to what happens when they question these numbers or they ask about implementation or have you talked to these different stakeholders and you don't know the answer we have to be in that room with you yeah Mark what a terrible question gosh it's silly no I I thank you for clarifying that and by the way do you ridicule any questions I love this you mentioned kind of the importance of multi-threading there and bringing

the executive buyer it's important that sales reps and sales teams see around corners what are some ways that sales reps can get better at seeing around corners during a deal cycle I think that a lot of people tend to wear rose-colored glasses they get happy ears as I mentioned before people are meeting with them they're excited rose-colored glasses people are great fun at parties but they make for sellers you need someone who who's a lot more skeptical who

questions everything the way that you see around corners is you ask the hard questions you run toward the danger and what scares you not away from it so Harry what are the reasons why you're going to lose this deal what happens if your Champion leaves what happens if the CFO says this that or the other if you ask yourself all of these questions and and any possible way you could potentially lose this deal well now you

have a map of all of the things that you potentially need to overcome and in a worse case your overcoming objections that that might not actually take place and in the best case you're really prepared for when that punch inevitably comes I I think it's also actually incumbent a little bit on the founders to create an environment of safety where people feel they can ask the tough questions and then bring that information back and not be terrified

because I think often it's fear that makes happy is multiply I I do want to ask you I think kind of sales qualification is a big problem and people still suck at it when you look at sales qualifications day how do you coach and train young sales reps and what do you see as the biggest mistakes that people make in sales qualification today I think the biggest mistake that people make from sales qualification standpoint is really not going deep

enough they'll ask Discovery questions and then that first level of Discovery question has has been completed and they're already selling their solution you need to go deep you need to do some significant Discovery where you get to secondary third level pain and really let someone stew in that pain I'll give you an example Harry you know maybe you you're on a run this weekend and you scratched your arm right so I asked you about that and find out hey you know

yeah it kind of stings maybe you need a Band-Aid I don't know did you know is there blood there right we start to dig in and find out hey you you've got some serious pain what happens if you don't address that pain right now well maybe it'll get infected and now instead of a Band-Aid maybe you need antibiotics and you know if you don't do that what what's the risk to you well maybe my arm's gonna fall off or or you know I'm

gonna have to get it amputated well now this little scratch that you know you weren't really thinking about is a painful festering wound that you really need to address hey turns out I've got a Band-Aid Harry and I can I can solve this for you right now you have to be able to go deep on that pain and qualify what is it that this person or this organization needs from a solution standpoint to solve their pain and if what they need is what

you have great you've got that match you should lean in but if what they're looking for is something that's completely different than what you provide you need to be able to walk away again it comes down to that lean pivot walk you can do med pick medpic is is incredibly enlightening from a qualification standpoint you know it's it's me and my team and I don't want a med pick filled out I actually want you to come in and we're going to

do an active Discovery together and I'm going to ask you about your deal I'll ask you about this opportunity what's going well Harry yeah what's medpic what's medpic are you kidding me medpic is is is an incredibly important qualification methodology it's really how you understand the deal Dynamics so you can look up the definition afterward but but basically it's an acronym and what we want to find out are you know what are the metrics that are

important the economic buyer the decision criteria the decision process paper process implicated pain not just pain we want we want to understand the implications of it your your competition as well as your Champion right so these are that's what medpic stands for and ultimately it's an act of Discovery Harry what do you like about this deal what what are what gives you pause are there any red flags you've encountered okay if I could give you a

magic wand Harry what are the five things you you would want to know or see happen here that that you don't know or haven't happened yet great well now we've got an action plan for what to do let's go out there and do it I love that and I'm also very very ashamed that I haven't heard of this before I love any acronym you know as a VC it's what feeds my soul but I do want to ask okay so we're

going through this qualification process and I am leaning in okay I'm excited for what you've got to sell but I'm not quite converting what do you do to create a sense of urgency in a sales cycle to get someone over the line it comes down to pain Harry if you don't have enough pain there's not a world where I can get you to have the urgency you need short of discounting and that kind of cheapens what we what we all do and so what I would suggest is you've got to go back to First principles you've got to go back to Discovery and if you Harry don't have enough pain I need to find someone else in the organization who has that burning pain I need to find other people and build Groundswell again this comes down to multi-threading and pipeline generation you want to get as high and as wide as you can in an organization because the only thing better than having a champion

is having multiple Champions does that mean that you advise Founders not to do discounting think that discounting is an expectation that's sort of built into procurement teams it's built into the way that sales operates today I I think some organizations lean on it very heavily whereas others are able to to sell the value and really Hold the Line more the more pain that you find and the more Your solution matches with with the pain that you're solving for the

less you need to discount can I ask a lot of people say like you know hey we'll give you the discount or you know we'd love for you to give us a customer referral and allow you to use your logo how do you as a startup ask a prestigious company hey can we use your logo for validity what's the right way to do that without sounding kind of needy in startupy yeah so one I don't I

don't ask for it it's something that's a requirement so I I think just the the assumed close there is really important you know as part of working with us we we're excited by we want to support our customers we love to show off the great companies that are working with us and so we're going to have your logo on our sales materials on our website that's that's part of what we do oh well we don't we don't we don't

allow companies to do that okay well it was it was great chatting with you you know good luck finding a solution that that is going to solve for the pain that that you have today you have to have confidence around it Harry do you feel enough people do have confidence in sales today no not at all why is that it's a great question I think when you're when you're a junior sales rep when you don't have as many at bats you

see things all the time that are new to you and that's scary as a as a as a junior salesperson hey I'm encountering something I've never seen before I don't know where this path will take me when you've done hundreds of deals like I have and you don't have that much hair left on on your head and what is there is is graying quickly you have what what one of my mentors Carlos De la Torre he had a great colorful phrase for

it it's called scar tissue and scar tissue is also known as pattern recognition and the more pattern recognition you have the better you're able to combat that because instead of living in your head and having to analyze every single decision and every single thing you do you can actually live by Instinct because you know and you've seen it before what the the proper response is you mentioned mantle that being Carlos what do you think sales leaders can do to better Mentor

this younger less confident cohort to be their best selves I spoke to some of your mentees who said amazing things what does great sales mentorship look like in required stage you think I think the key to mentorship is helping people see their blind spots right so I'll give you an example I I know you spoke to to a founder of a YC company who who I Mentor he actually reached out to me in a cold LinkedIn

message and and it cut through the noise and I responded to him and I've been excited to to work with him and and his team but he's not a sales professional and so he's going through this deal cycle and and you know I shared with him what what are his blind spots well he thinks he's got an opportunity here what happens if you know it doesn't work out well does he want to have all of his

eggs in that basket no you got to build more pipeline right so I'm helping him as an example to see around his blind spots and ultimately to to be able to to close more opportunities with other reps with other people the Dynamics can change the buttons you need to push will change but ultimately you're helping to to make them more well-rounded and I've again been fortunate with with Rich Lou with Carlos De la Torre to have some great mentors

who helped me to to see my blind spots before they before I got into a wreck and ultimately it's allowed me to be a better manager as well I do want to talk about kind of hiring this young Talent which as we said needs more confidence and needs a lot of mentoring but can still be brilliant in terms of like hiring it we need to know what great looks like and you said to me before that it's about the four h's success in

sales is the four h's I'm loving the acronyms today Mark it I'm gonna go for it what are the four h's the four h's is something that I came up with that really is about saying the intangibles matter more than the tangibles so First Age hunger you need to want it more than anyone else if you don't have that burning desire to succeed that deep need to win that insatiable yearning to compete you probably won't win or

compete or succeed hunger is an incredible motivator to get you through the inevitable challenges hustle it's not enough to just be hungrier than everyone else you need to be prepared to outwork them too there's a great quote from John McMahon who was a tremendous sales leader and and it sums it up well the difference between winners and losers is that losers practice until they get it right winners practice until they never get it wrong such an incredible quote from you know

absolute sales genius and also applies to sports I always think about Tom Brady when I hear that someone who was not the most gifted athlete of all time but certainly the greatest professional athlete of all time because he outworked everyone else watched more film than everyone was in the gym earlier than everyone no one would outwork him and so he was able to rise when it mattered the most third H humility this is one that I will grant you a lot

of sales people don't have they come in with bravado but I actually think humility is the approach you need to know that no matter how much success you've achieved there's always someone who's done more and there are always areas you can improve none of us are perfect certainly not me you need to recognize and embrace that you need to use that to fuel your growth the last H is heart it should be table Stakes but instead it's more like Special Sauce think of it like grit what it takes to be a champion to be able to take a punch and keep fighting there's a great book by Reed Hastings called no rules rules where he talks about Talent density I actually think as important or potentially more important than Talent density is grit density to have a team that just has a massive amount of grit you mentioned there about hustle and the ability and desire to work hard and

anyone else and put the hours in you said before to me you need to think outside the horse when it comes to hiring sales teams think outside the horse I kind of repeated this to myself and it didn't become clear to me so can you help me out here what did you mean by this and how does that impact how you think about what you look for in the people you add to your sales teams yeah

I I love this it's a little bit of a mixed metaphor but but let me tell you so from a product standpoint at ramp we think of the Legacy State as a horse and Bucky and do we want to build a faster horse and buggy or are we going to build an automobile on a slightly different vein I've heard guests of yours talk about the expression in sales recruiting that fast horses run together right a players

attract a players but if you want 10x productivity you need to think outside the horse you need a race car not a race horse let me give you an example here if you have a 10x better product and I hope you're investing in companies with 10x better products because they're amazing but if you have a 10x better product and a good traditional sales rep the best you can achieve is a 10x outcome it's a pretty good outcome but if you have a

10x better product than a 10x better sales rep you can achieve 100x outcome and the best sales people in my experience rarely fit the mold of what great sales people should look like and I'm not even talking about myself and my challenge getting into Silicon Valley the best sales people I've seen in the last several companies I've been in none of them would be hired today based on the rubric that sales leaders have you need to think outside the horse why what

were they what did they have what did they not have that made them not fit in the rubric what made them that way so for one thing they didn't come from the the right companies or they didn't have the right LinkedIn profile or something about them would have canceled them out from even getting into the funnel from a hiring standpoint but the best salespeople will will have those four h's but they're also going to have creativity can you take duct tape

chewing gum in a zoom link and MacGyver a seven figure closed one deal right like that takes creativity I've seen people do it it's extraordinary not everyone has that are they adaptable the two first sales people at ramp the first one now leads half the sales and SDR teams the second one is Chief of Staff to our CEO right they're adaptable you're hiring people not for what they can do today but people who have enormous growth

potential that's how you get a 10x outcome okay so I I love that in terms of the focus on 10x and thinking outside the horse but how do we determine whether they're 10x if we go to the interview process say we've let them into the interview process despite not being the traditional fed but they're in we're sitting down with them what questions do we ask how do we know if they're 10 axes yeah you you need to get really intimate you need to go deep in your interview questions get at the why not just the what so many so many interview questions are what did you do next why you know what were you doing at that company what deals did you close I want to know the why I want to know the how I want to know and and get I want to know them and get really deep to understand what makes them tick what was the reasoning

behind decisions they made not just the performance and a great way to test this is is with a challenge so I know different organizations think about this differently I want them to sell to me not what they're selling today but I want them to sell my solution back to me because it shows if they can do research it shows if they can synthesize that information I know if if what they're saying is correct or not I can see

all of the gears turning and I can test them as well in that setting and say hey I'm a CFO we schedule this for 45 minutes I actually only have 10 go are you adaptable right can you take a punch can you pivot really quickly go that's that's harsh Mark I I it happens in real life though I much rather it happen in an interview than with a real Prospect I've I've had many sales leaders on the show say before I like

them to sell a product that they've sold before and they know because if they sell mine back to me there's this massive asymmetric knowledge one and then two like if you have any form of like you know hiring committee who are involved they'll naturally kind of respectfully intellectually look down on them because they just know way more given your experience compared to theirs how do you think about that pitch yours product versus pitch something they know

much better I don't want you to be comfortable in that interview process selling me something that you could talk about with you know your eyes closed while you're while you're sleeping I want you to have to think I want to challenge you it's called a challenge for a reason I want to see if you can rise to that occasion Enterprise sales is hard I want to see if you have what it takes to rise up and and be able to

perform in that setting would you rather a rep that you're hiring has experience selling that level of ACV or has experience selling to that like segment of market in terms of like Finance tools for me I think it's about selling Enterprise deals so that value telling selling to organizations that size because the scale is so different I've seen mid-market account Executives get promoted into Enterprise in my past

and and flame out pretty quickly and the reason is usually they're used to a certain level of multi-threading hey I need you know three or four people in the deal well now all of a sudden everything is magnified by an order of magnitude can you play 20 simultaneous games of Chess you know it's great that you can play chess but can you play 20 games at the same time it's much harder to what are you stand do you handhold

younger apps in these large deal Cycles you because you can't just let them run free to what extent do you do the kind of mantle mentee going to all together so you need to create space for them to fail when the stakes are low so they can succeed when the stakes are high you have to be in the boat with them right first of all as a sales leader my quota I've got a quota and my quote is a roll-up of my reps so number one I'm in the boat with you because your performance is going to matter for my performance putting that aside I want to see everyone on my team succeed but I can't do the job for them right I can't be in every deal in every place and every call at the same time no matter how much gong gives me visibility into all of it I can't do it so I need to

give you the tools to succeed when I'm not there and I need to be in the boat with you and and teach you and Mentor you throughout that process but what I've also found and I and I I helped build enablement in my in my former company as well what I found is no matter how much you say the stove is hot people still want to touch it in order to find out that it's really hot and so

it's my job to make sure the burner's on simmer and not on high so it's not a catastrophic wound I I love that they'll always want to touch it my friend that boy they do they don't believe you can I ask should we if we're a startup hiring what is that process look like is it like first interview get to know you the why second the case study so what is that process look like a step-by-step do

you think so for me I want to be able to qualify quickly is this person of the right caliber have they closed the right level of deals do they have the right experience do they have the right gravitas to be able to hold themselves in an executive meeting that you know is a is usually like a 30 minute sort of getting to know you call assuming that goes well you want to go deeper you want to spend an hour with

them you want to really go deep you want to ask those why questions those how questions really get to understand what makes them tick you want to have other stakeholders meet with them as well typically an Enterprise you're a quarterback you're you're working with other people internally and externally so how do those relationships form are you able to play off those Dynamics and then ultimately yeah you want to do a challenge with a panel of of

interviewees all the way up to your c-suite leadership I think we will learn a lot from making mistakes I know I've made many in my time one of the biggest mistakes you've made in terms of hiring for Enterprise sales teams and how did that change how you think I've certainly made mistakes I think sometimes when you assume their experience if you assume they're fit based on where they've been or what they've accomplished in their career you you put yourself in a in a very

risky situation where when they come in if you haven't tested for that they may fail I've seen people who are extremely accomplished join organizations I've been a part of and within six months they're no longer in the company because they weren't able to cut it the fit was wrong and so you really need to test for that because the last thing you want is to waste six months of their career of their time and six months of of your

runway in six months of your time on someone who who isn't a fit before we dive into kind of that integration with the existing team which is so important doing the onboarding right I do just want to kind of close we go through that process and we get to the deal itself of kind of the package what are some of your biggest lessons and pieces of advice to Founders on giving the right comp structure for those early sales rep hires I think when it comes especially to early sales hires there's not enough emphasis placed on on equity in sales they give out equity for for other roles and I think Equity is is often something that Founders don't really think of when it comes to sales people they they really only think about cash compensation and I think that's the wrong approach if you're hiring a 10x salesperson someone who's going to be with you for a long time and drive an

inordinate amount of impact in the organization you should want to keep them for a long time and they're going to be able to see the impact of their revenue generating Act activities on the company all the way up to raising funds I'll give you an example of this in my last company in May of 2020 there was something called the covid-19 pandemic that had started a couple months earlier yeah if you were selling Zoom at the time it

was a pretty easy job but if you were selling business travel when no one was traveling for business Harry that was a headwind like no other and I was transitioning from an IC role to a sales leadership role at that point I had two opportunities left in my name and I managed to close both of them the last week of May 2021 was the biggest deal in company history one was within the top ten as well and I remember very

clearly really vividly sitting in my backyard is on the All Hands call that's what we're all doing at the time on on a massive zoom and I remember feeling this incredible Pride about not closing the deals and pride for myself and what I was able to accomplish but I was proud for my teammates I was proud for the people that are other stakeholders in the organization on other teams I was proud for our leadership I was proud for our

investors who were messaging me all day congratulations and and thanks and all of that because what it did was it gave us a path forward and saying hey yeah the road ahead is going to be tough but we can accomplish anything there's not a world where business travel will never come back as an example and we just need to get more creative and we need to find a path forward and so when you have people who

can drive an impact like that and put an entire team or company on their back you want to reward them like cash is great we all like cash sales reps are coin operated I get it but you want them to be bought into the long-term Vision as well and it needs to be aligned with what the company cares about to hit those targets they need to have Targets in the first place I know prize to me

for intellect how do you advise me on setting quota especially in a year like this here where it's so uncertain I said a quota for the media company and we're like 250 percent over Target now like but in whatever four months in clearly I was just at setting quota to be honest I didn't know what was going to happen how do you advise Founders on how to set quota accurately and efficiently yeah you you need to in the early day

days figure out what is the goal that the board is setting for you or that you're you're sharing with the board number one is it realistic is it achievable work backward from that goal so working backward is something that I often teach to my teams okay here's the goal that we're trying to get to if we're just driving toward it in a forward direction we may drive off a cliff and if you don't want to end up like Thelma and

Louise then what you need to do is work backwards so you know where the cliffs are you know where the landmines are you know where the traps are and you can find hey is there one path is there no path are there multiple paths to get there and then you can move forward so if you work backward from that goal regardless of how lofty it is you can figure out the way to achieve it the other thing that's really critical here

is pipeline generation if you have a massive amount of pipeline you're able to qualify deeply and make sure that you're going to hit the goals that you've set for yourself this is something that I instill in my teams and I'm proud to say that this quarter the Enterprise team at ramp is trending to hit more than 300 percent of their quota which is pretty insane do you think traditional sales outbound is dead and why does no one in sales want to do

traditional outbound anymore traditional outbound is the most important thing Harry and if you're not doing it you are doing sales wrong and the reason why is because pipeline is the most important thing if you want to hit your quota as we just established and the way that you build pipeline is through Outreach the founder that I mentor he pg'd into me he cold messaged me without that I wouldn't be mentoring him we have so many opportunities that are in our

pipeline because we did the hard thing we picked up the phone we sent out an email we were persistent with it because usually it takes about five messages before someone is going to respond and ultimately we feel good about it because we're providing a solution for them that helps them we're not trying to you know to sell them something that they don't need we're actually helping them and so if you think of it from that standpoint

what you're doing when you're picking up the phone is is something that's good for you and it's good for the people that you're calling oh so glad to hear it's also like you know people run away from things that are painful and outbound can just be continuous punches in the face and so I think it's nice to stay in the warm and cozy environment that is you know warm inbound so I I totally agree with you

there going back to the kind of integration into the team I think onboarding is just chronically poorly done how do you think about the right way to onboard new sales reps into your team and how do you do it today I think it needs to be a mix of structured learning and unstructured learning so asynchronous learning I think there needs to be a fair amount where they're going to be shadowing the best reps on calls I think you need to dig in with

them and and go deep on a daily and weekly basis so one-on-one coaching as well and you need to make them drink from the fire hose I know we try to to limit that as as companies get larger where hey we're going to give them this nice cushy ramp up period but you're going to find out a lot those first few weeks about their ability to run at PACE if they can drink from the fire hose and

start to synthesize that information so I I'm a big believer that the training wheels need to come off quickly I do think there's benefit as well to giving them what I'd call t-ball opportunities so if you're an Enterprise you don't want to risk some massive deal by giving it to the to the guy who just or or the woman who just started you need to be able to give them a smaller opportunity that's safe that's a safe place for them to iterate and figure out the motion before they're getting into these really large complex deals what are the biggest red flags that you traditionally see in the first 30 days I think you know people often say higher fast Fire fast I think we probably agree higher slow Fire fast if we agree with that what are the big red flags of the lake okay you need to step in and do something yeah I recognize that not

everyone is a is a type A personality and gregarious even in sales but if someone is not asking a lot of questions if they're not vocal in that in that first month or two to me that's a red flag that I want to at least dig into it's not a sign hey we need to fire them because they didn't ask questions it's a matter of hey are they not asking questions because they understand everything Bravo brilliant go forth and

prosper or are they not asking questions because they don't actually even know what questions to ask and is it an aptitude issue or an attitude issue you need to understand that if you want to try to fix it and in in some cases you're you're right it's it's higher slow and Fire fast if someone can't make it the the merciful thing to do is is to let them go so that they can go to a place where

they can be really you know powerful efficient and and grow their career how do you see the real quality of a candidate what I mean by that is like I've had the sales leaders on the show say before you know the person that sold twilio to Uber when they were a tiny startup it's probably the best deal in Enterprise history now and it transformed obviously from a startup to an Enterprise deal but at the time it was a nothing deal

and it was probably stunned by a credit card almost how like how relevant is deal attribution to you and determining quality of candidate I'm just too interested there it's why you need to ask those why questions Harry some companies are are great at product-led growth and they're selling to an organization when it's an SMB at what point did you sell to that organization was it a 10 person company that grew to a 10 000 person company or

did you sell to them net knew when they were 10 000 people did you sell wall to wall across the entire organization or was it a land and expand motion who else was involved with you in selling that deal right you need to dig in to understand you know did they do all of the work did they generate that deal themselves was it self-sourced or did an SDR make a cold call and that's how it happened or did marketing generate the

lead and it came inbound in terms of digging in on the deal and the deal Dynamics there I think deal reviews are so important whether successful or not successful how do you do deal reviews how often do you do them who's invited who sets the agenda I'm an early stage founder educate me I think you should do a Deal review for any deal that is going to be impactful towards you hitting your goal for that quarter or that year

period and that means that you're probably doing more deal reviews than than you're typically anticipating you need to give time for that if you're not digging in with your rep and understanding the deal Dynamics what could go wrong what needs to happen the various stakeholders have you map the organization and getting really really into the details then you're putting yourself at risk because that deal could slip that deal could end up as a closed lost and if you were counting on that if you were committing that opportunity man that is an unpleasant place to be I can tell you it's it has happened in my career a long time ago when you commit a big deal and and then it doesn't come through that's a painful experience for everyone you don't want to be living like that can I ask you and tons of product reviews what are the biggest reasons that you lose today honestly at at ramp we're we're not really losing

I know that sounds that sounds self-serving we're we're growing so fast we we have an incredible product and I'm blessed to be able to you know to sell this transformational platform that we have in my experience when when deals when you do lose to competition you can lose for a variety of reasons one it could be price and and if you're selling something that's to someone who's really price sensitive and you haven't sold the value and

articulated it well you can have someone come in and offer a product for free or offer it for a really low price and that company May grow to regret that decision but ultimately they might make that decision you could get out flanked you have a champion but you know what they've got a champion that's more senior and so the more senior person who's got more influence in the organization is potentially going to win there are a variety of reasons you could

lose but you need to map the organization you need to understand the Dynamics at play when you look at and I'm sorry I'm going on schedule but I'm too interested when you look at ramp and and Brax bluntly the two biggest players in Market in traditional mindsets they sell to startups I know this is not true but like they sell the startups and they're fantastic at doing it what have been the biggest challenges for you in taking

that and transitioning it from a primary startup sales base to an Enterprise hay with also for some of the biggest companies in America what's really interesting is I I think I came to ramp at an ideal time there was an incredible amount of inbound interest from large Enterprises when I when I started at ramp so the market very much wants a solution like ramp that hasn't really existed up Market before you're right traditionally modern spend management

players have focused on smbs but when you think about the size of this Market payments alone B2B payments are 115 trillion dollars so if you get a very small slice of that market that is a huge huge Tam that you are going after so number one there's a lot of space for the different players number two they're used to using really god-awful UI and ux from companies like concur sorry to pick on them but if you walk into a room and you ask people

raise your hand if you enjoy doing an expense report how many hands do you think are going to go up I I'll give you a hint it starts with z and ends with row right there's there's not a world where people enjoy doing expense reports why are we using dumb pieces of plastic and manually coding transactions and having employees front money for their multi-billion dollar companies versus automating that entire flow from transaction all the way through to Erp taking the time that

someone would waste on an expense report on submitting it and reviewing it automating all of that and allowing the company to get a form of of rebate or benefit for the spend that they're making right it's just a more sensible world final one I promise I'm just firing like interest questions I love it but it's like when you do Enterprise sales really well it's this tailored Boutique feeling for the customer how do you do the handoff between sales rep and Enterprise

sales leader to customer success team customer experience Team without it feeling like oh good luck off tomorrow yeah if you're doing it badly it's hey I'm handing you off over here see ya that's not the way it should go you need to be introducing that implementation and that CS team before the deal is ever closed right implementation onboarding how we're going to make you successful as a customer is part of the

sales process and so you want to bring them in to be able to walk them through what the implementation plan looks like what does success look like what are you trying to solve for where are you at today and what does good look like what are your goals and once we're aligned on all of that at and the stakeholders there's some overlap here between the sales team and NCS now you feel more comfortable moving forward with us and

when you do you already have this relationship formed with the team you're going to be working with to make you successful should CS also get commission if they're brought in pre-sales being concluded and a part of that closing mechanism that's a that's a great question I think that typically they end up being compensated in a in a slightly different way which is that CS often in most organizations are going to be compensated based on adoption so at

least in in companies that are based on usage so you know are you seeing that adoption curve are you seeing full adoption so that's that's how they're going to get paid and and so ultimately by helping to bring in a deal and and seeing that adoption happen they are going to be compensated for it Mark I've just so enjoyed this I'm going to do a quick fire around with you now so I'm gonna fire questions at you very much

like I have been doing for the last hour to be honest but you know I'm gonna call it a quick fire around because I'm good at marketing and you're going to give me Immediate thoughts so let's start with what sales tactics have not changed over the last five years the fundamentals cold calling cold emailing that pipeline generation qualification Champion building getting to the the it'll never change what sales tactics have died of death it pains me to say it

but I think in-person meetings and it's not that it's died but I think it's on life support video conferencing digital whiteboarding sales intelligence tools they're they're all built so we can collaborate and be productive in a remote first world but it can sometimes create this soul-crushing reality where human interaction becomes transactional instead of deep really so even for large six-figure Enterprise deals human interaction in person is not required it hasn't been required the last few

years I I miss it I love it I will take every opportunity to meet clients where they are but I think it's a dying art does the CEO always have to be involved in sales to some extent if you have Amazon moving to you know that's a bowl one but Amazon moving to ramp with 500 000 employees does Eric still need to be getting on a jet I think so I think with any kind of really large company trajectory changing deal you want not just the CEO but you want the entire executive team to be involved what would you say is the biggest mistake Founders make when hiring sales teams I think again it's it's about trying to hire people who fit inside a box with their preconceived notions I think every time that's going to end up biting you in the butt one piece of advice on the flip side of the table would you give to a sales leader

starting a new role today recruit well always look to raise the bar don't settle for B players I've made that mistake myself I now have a rule which is that each subsequent hire has to raise the bar for the entire team if they don't have the potential to be as good or meaningfully better than everyone else in seat why are you hiring them what would you mostly to change in the world of sales today Mark the perception

of it there's science behind great sales it's not some parlor trick sales is often deeply misunderstood by those in other roles and I think if you step back and look at all of the process behind it there's real science how do you maintain morale when goals are missed in a sales team it's tough because you you want to maintain morale but you don't want to create a culture of accepting failure you have to start with understanding why it happened who's

responsible how do you ensure it never happens again and the answer inevitably is pipeline coverage and whose responsibility is that Harry everyone's yeah no totally agree with you final one my friend what one company sales strategy have you been most impressed by recently it's a little bit self-serving but honestly we're we're executing and and firing on all cylinders at Ram from from SMB through Enterprise the company was recently named the most Innovative company in North America by

fast company we just announced for the last year we hit 400 Revenue growth I think what we're doing is is really extraordinary and and I hope more people will take a look other than ramp Mark nice try oven ramp who are you impressed by I think anyone who's executing right now and exceeding their goals outside of generative AI which I think has a very unique Tailwind they're doing something right starlink's performance has been especially impressive given they fly

under the radar which is kind of odd for a company that dots the skies I I love that and I totally agree with you also the most miraculous sales technique that my friend this has been such a joy to do thank you so much for doing this and I've loved having you on my pleasure Harry thanks so much