**NOTE: This is a high level syllabus and not specific to any particular semester. For a full syllabus corresponding to a specific semester with correct lessons, readings, homework, and other matters please reach out to Professor Brown.

Please see the FAQ at the end of this document for answers to all common questions.
Administration

Overview:
Selling is a life skill that goes far beyond the business world. Building The Sales Machine is a course in three acts focused on teaching students the foundational basics of selling then higher level concept involved in managing and running sales teams and closing with sales at the executive level of running a business. This course is designed to push students out of their comfort zones so that they not only learn important selling tools, but also learn how to apply these tools in the real world. Students will be taught and tested throughout the semester with a series of guest lectures and projects that aim to immerse them in the world of selling. Outside of the curious, students interested in starting their own companies or entering fast growing businesses in sales, marketing, or customer success roles should take this course.

Students will leave the class with:
- Tools needed to become a professional seller of anything (ideas, products, etc.).
- Understanding of the higher level concepts involved in selling including management, tooling, training, and forecasting.
- Deep knowledge of how they can use what they learned to better whatever enterprise they may find themselves in in the future.
- Comfort level in approaching potential customers that is rare to find in inexperienced sellers.
- Bravery to accept rejection and grow from it so that they may continue to be fearless in approaching leads and selling their products.

Course Materials
Canvas contains everything you need for the course, including class readings and assignment overviews.

Grading
This course requires individual effort as well as teamwork. In groups of three to four students, you will need to partake in various projects throughout the semester, splitting up work and collaborating efficiently

- **Class Participation** 20%
  - Attendance
- **Individual Work** 40%
- **Group Projects** 30%
  - Company Summary Project
  - Company Sales Plan
  - Sales Pitch Project
- **Peer Reviews** 10%

For all group projects, every team member will receive the same grade.

Every individual project will be graded with equal weight in the 40% individual grade
All students will be required to turn in all assignments, and late assignments are never permitted – **NO EXCEPTIONS**.

- To prosper in this class, you must attend every class and complete all assignments before the start of class on the due date.

**A Note on Class Participation**

We will be spending a considerable amount of time in class discussions. Everyone should contribute over the course of the semester. Here are some points to keep in mind regarding classroom participation:

- More than one unexcused absence will result in a grade decrease.
- You can’t be shy in selling. Ask questions, participate, and most importantly, what you take from this class will be what you put into it. This will allow you to get the maximum amount out of this class, and will help you in the future.
- Work together. On group projects, get together and discuss the best course of action for the project. It will get you used to working as a team within selling, which can be crucial for being successful. **However**, when you are working on an individual project, do not collaborate with your team or other classmates. This is never worth it, and if you get caught it will land you in a world of trouble
Lesson Overview & Details

**NOTE: We do not include specifics on dates and times. Lessons are meant to be high level. For a full syllabus corresponding to a specific semester with actual lesson dates please reach out to Professor Brown.**

Lesson 1: Becoming an Individual Contributor – Making A Sales Call

In these classes, we will learn some strategies about how to effectively make a sales call. This can help you with your sales success, as a cold calling strategy and script tailored to the customer gives them a higher chance of investing in your product. Students will learn how to accept rejection properly and build a narrative for their product. We will follow most basic concepts in the consultative method of selling with these classes.

Lesson 2: Becoming an Individual Contributor – Sales Prospecting

Students will learn how to find qualified leads and leads that are the most interested in a certain product at a certain time. This presents a better chance for sales prosperity, and minimizes time wasted by calling people who do not need your product. Students will understand how to build an ideal customer profile, buyer personas, and sales qualification frameworks that work. We will again follow most basic concepts in the consultative method of selling with these classes.

Lesson 3: Becoming an Individual Contributor – Sales Differentiation, Methods, & Strategies

Selling two different products effectively may take two completely different sales strategies. In these classes, students will learn how to differentiate their sales strategies based on the actual product they are selling, to help them be as effective as they can within their sales strategy. We will again follow most basic concepts in the consultative method of selling with these classes.

Lesson 4: Becoming an Individual Contributor – Sales Technology Stacks

Early classes taught students how to do things using minimal technology, but now they will learn how to make a business more efficient by using revolutionary software developed just for that purpose. Students will learn about CRM, marketing automation software, and other types of efficiency software many businesses use. We will again follow most basic concepts in the consultative method of selling with these classes and this will conclude our first grouping of classes focused around learning sales at the individual contributor level.

Lesson 5: Growing into A Manager – Sales Forecasting & Pipeline Basics

Moving beyond the individual contributor level it is important to have realistic sales expectations within a company. It gives a good estimate of where the company aims to be after a period of time as a whole, while also setting goals for individual team members. Then, after the time is up, the company and team can evaluate their past performance to see what needs to be improved. Students will learn about all of this and more.
Lesson 6: Growing into A Manager – Sales Training

As students they move away from selling themselves they will need to understand how to build on these basics and train others. Sales training can be the lifeblood of repeatable success in any company. Students will learn about sales training concepts and ideas in use at small, medium, and large companies.

Lesson 7: Growing into A Manager – Manager Presentation Basics

A large component of building success as a manager of an organization is understanding how to manage up and down. Students will start to understand presentation of higher level sales concepts and how to organize thinking for executives and boards of companies. In particular, students will begin to grasp what works and what does not work within different organizations. Beyond this, students will understand how to interpret data from their individual contributors and presentation down through their organization.

Lesson 8: Growing into A Manager – Hiring & Managing A Sales Team

Hiring and managing is an important component of sales that goes hand in hand with training. In these lessons, students will learn the elements of success for hiring individuals and managers. Students will understand the process from creating a job spec to scoring candidates and picking specific elements and attributes that make a successful sales person. In addition, students will understand how to run basic processes for hiring. The lessons will close with management, incentive structures, and terminations.

Lesson 9: Running A Company – Organizational Design In Sales

After nine lessons, students will have been immersed in becoming an individual contributor as well as a manager for their organization. We will move to the highest level of sales in this lesson and think through the various types of selling models of organizations. Students will learn about concepts like transaction, inside, outside, and channel sales organization and how to distinguish what works and does not work for companies. Students will also learn how organizations change depending on the stage of the business.

Lesson 10: Running A Company – Sales, Marketing & Customer Success Alignment

Key to the success of any organization is the alignment between marketing, sales, and customer success. Students will begin to learn how these organizations interact and work together. Concepts like SLAs and alignment documentation as well as thinking around hand offs between business units will be key to learnings in these classes.

Lesson 11: Running A Company – The Sales Velocity Equation

As a company grows, the sales velocity equation takes shape and becomes the lifeblood of any organization. Success is quite simply measured by this set of metrics. Students will build on their
forecasting classes and begin to learn the details of the sales velocity equation. They will see fast growing companies in consumer and business landscapes that are relevant to their lives and how they stack on the sales velocity equation continuum.

**Lesson 12: Running A Company – Closing Concepts & Lessons Learned**

We will pause in advance of the final classes and walk through everything learned throughout the semester. Students will have the chance to also ask questions and discuss any additional concepts they would like to cover before final projects.
Assignments

**NOTE: We do not include specifics on dates and times. Assignments are meant to be high level. For a full syllabus corresponding to a specific semester with correct assignments and pacing please reach out to Professor Brown.**

Formatting Guidelines

All assignments should be double spaced and written in 12-point font with one-inch margins.

Cold Calling Assignment

Call businesses in the area and ask them questions about their company. You should ask about their successes, means that they use to help them sell their products, and some things that hinder their success (competition, location, etc.). Call as many as it takes until five answer the survey, and take account of their name, phone number, company name, and time you called them. Organize the information clearly in Microsoft Word, and submit it in an orderly fashion. This is not a participation assignment, you will be graded based on the content of your questions, as well as your organization and script.

Company Summary

In a group of 3-4 students, write up a summary of a company of your choice. The summary should be a page long and should cover the company’s major products and how you would sell them. In addition, your summary should have if the company sells to consumers or businesses, and some of the successes or hardships the company has seen in its history. **Be aware:** You will be using this company and will be working with this group on and off throughout the entire semester. Make sure the company is one in which you believe you can do good work. This will represent 5% of your final grade.

Sales Prospecting Exercise

Now that you have your company and know a little about it, do some research on which customers you think would be the best for your company. This should be based on the company’s product, location, pricing, and any other relevant information. Next, create a buyer persona on a typical customer your company would have. The write-up should be a page, with the buyer persona on the next page. This should be done individually and without collaboration.

Company Sales Exercise

Using the same company from your last project, pick two products they sell and compare and contrast the way you would sell them. Write a page about why you would sell these products similarly or differently. This should be done individually and without collaboration.

Sales Tech Stack Project
Pick your favorite CRM, marketing automation tool, and two other sales software programs that you believe could help your potential business and are the best in their respective fields. Make this decision based on price, features, potential upgrades, and overall quality of product. Write a three-page review on why you believe the products could be good for a company.

**Sales Forecasting Exercise**

Pick a company with a new product coming out soon. Then create a sales forecast for the company, predicting their change in revenue and the overall impact the new product will have on their success. Review the product and the reasons you think it will be successful or unsuccessful given the company you chose, and write a page on your findings. This should be done individually and without collaboration.

**Sales Training Exercise**

Using your company, create a two-page sales introduction for a new employee. This should be able to teach them your entire sales plan and thesis, and they should be able to effectively be a salesperson at your company after reading it. This should be done individually and without collaboration.

**Group Company Sales Plan**

With your group and company, create a sales plan on how you want to sell your product. Choose a sales strategy based on the market you are operating in, and write about what the positives and negatives of that strategy are. Then write about why this strategy will work better for your company than any other given strategy. This strategy should include all of the projects you and the other group members have worked on individually, and you should all work together to combine the best of your ideas. The whole thing should be three pages. Each group submits one. This will represent 10% of your final grade.

**Individual Sales Plan**

Choose a company outside of your group company and do the same thing for them. You should not collaborate on this, and it will also be two pages (Double Spaced).

**SLA Exercise**

Using your company, create a two-page SLA for use between sales and marketing teams. This should be able to teach your entire sales and marketing teams what qualifies as an accepted lead and what does not. It should also include rules of the road for each organization. This should be done individually and without collaboration.

**Sales Velocity Equation Modeling Exercise**
Using historical and estimated test data provided as well as the brief given, build a sales velocity model in excel. Write up your findings and in particular a high level on what you observe as well as where the company should focus based upon the four levers within the sales velocity model.

**Sales Pitch Project**

Using what you have learned about sales pitches, go back with your team and create a 10-minute sales pitch for the class to watch next class. Every member must participate in the pitch, you should have some sort of visual document to show (PowerPoint, Keynote, etc.), and you must keep it to 10 minutes so that there is time for questions. This will count for 15% of your final grade.

**Peer Reviews: Due One Week Following End Of Class**

Review each member of your group that you have worked with throughout the semester. The reviews should be honest and fair, and represent the overall quality of their work, as well as their attitude and effort toward the class. You will grade students out of 10, and will write half a page on each of your group members as to why you are giving them that grade. Your peers’ reviews of you will represent 10% of your final grade.
**NOTE: We do not include specifics on dates and times. Reading material is meant to be high level. For a full syllabus corresponding to a specific semester with correct reading and pacing please reach out to Professor Brown.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Post-Class Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Becoming An Individual Contributor – Making A Sales Call</strong></td>
<td>Read syllabus</td>
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| **Becoming An Individual Contributor – Sales Prospecting**       | Ideal Customer Profile Mapping Basics  
KMBS Case Study (HBS)  
Value Based Founder Stories |
| **Becoming An Individual Contributor – Sales Differentiation, Methods, & Strategies** | Developing Qualification Criteria (SPC)  
Social Selling Case Study (HBS)  
Popular Sales Methodologies |
| **Becoming An Individual Contributor – Sales Technology Stacks** | Implementing Sales Automation (HBS)  
2017 Startup Sales Stack Report  
Pitfalls Of Sales Personalized Sales (Bain) |
| **Growing Into A Manager – Sales Forecasting & Pipeline Basics** | Anticipating Demand & Forecasting Sales (CU GSB)  
Time Series Sales Forecasting (HBS)  
Forecasting Methodology & Basics |
| **Growing Into A Manager – Sales Training 101**                  | Role Playing As Sales Training Tool (HBS)  
Sales Training Manual Outline (Brooks)  
Keys To Successful Coaching & Training |
| **Growing Into A Manager – Manager Presentation Basics**         | Visualizing Sales Metrics  
First 100 Days As A Sales Director  
Successful Sales Meetings (Entrepreneur) |
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<td>The Sales Performance Wheel (RAIN)</td>
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<td>3 Models Of Effective Sales Team Org</td>
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<td>CSO Insights Report</td>
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<td>How Fast Can Your Company Grow (HBS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Running A Company – Closing Concepts &amp; Lessons Learned</td>
<td>No reading this class</td>
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Additional Reading Material

Roberge, Mark. *The Sales Acceleration Formula*

Dixon, Matthew. *The Challenger Sale*

Brafman, Ori. *Sway*

Johnstone, Keith. *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre*


Cialdini, Robert. *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*

Cespedes, Frank. *Aligning Strategy and Sales: The Choices, Systems, and Behaviors that Drive Effective Selling*

Hughes, Tony. *The Joshua Principle*


Peterson, Erik. *Conversations That Win the Complex Sale: Using Power Messaging to Create More Opportunities, Differentiate your Solutions, and Close More Deals*

Baumgartner, Thomas. *Sales Growth: Five Proven Strategies from the World’s Sales Leaders*
Frequently Asked Questions

*Can I audit the class as a student of Columbia University?*

Yes. We take a small number of auditors each semester. The only requirement is that you show up to every class and leave a review at the end of the semester. Email Professor Brown and he can get you set up.

*I am a GSB alumnus can I audit the class?*

Yes. MBA alumni are allowed to audit courses as long as there are open seats in the class after enrollment and it is OK with Professor Brown. The only requirement is that you show up to every class and leave a review at the end of the semester. Email Professor Brown and he can get you set up.

*I am a spouse of someone going to GSB can I audit?*

Yes. Spouses are allowed to audit courses as long as there are open seats in the class after enrollment and it is OK with Professor Brown. The only requirement is that you show up to every class and leave a review at the end of the semester. Email Professor Brown and he can get you set up.

*I did not go to GSB but want to audit the class can I do this?*

No.

*Do you allow companies to work with the students on sales related projects throughout the semester?*

Yes. We enjoy this work and have done it many times. For more information, please reach out to Professor Brown.

*I was unable to get into your class due in bidding, and I am not on the waitlist. What should I do?*

There are no guarantees, but adding yourself in during the add/drop period has worked for some students. Email Professor Brown for details on class location and syllabus so you can be prepared.

*Am I allowed to do the assignments and project work if I'm an auditor?*

Yes.