

DREAM
BIG.

NOW

IS THE TIME TO
ENSURE A
STRONG Q1
HERE'S HOW TO DO IT



Q1 will be here before you know it! While you may be looking forward to a fresh start, that doesn't mean that your whole company is as enthusiastic. And a dispirited team will practically ensure that you'll hit the dreaded Q1 sales slump.

To make sure that everyone is 'drinking that 2020 Kool-Aid', you'll need to do a little planning ahead. So here are some ways that you can start planning now to get everyone primed and ready to hit the ground running in the new year.

Start with a dose of inspiration

After the mad dash of Q4, it's common for Q1 to start with a sigh rather than a bang. So get the troops excited for the year to come. Have a Q1 summit with your team to get everyone on the same page and ensure you all share a big-picture focus.

And don't just dictate your orders from on high. Get your team involved in the formation of the plan instead of just the execution. They'll feel more invested in the outcome through the first quarter and the entire year.



Create a content calendar

Building a content strategy in advance will let you hit the ground running after the holidays. Provide clear milestones and tasks for the content team, so you don't end up with weak content for the start of the quarter. For Q1, it's all about new beginnings and getting hyped up for the year to come. Keep your content upbeat and enthusiastic.

This may also be a good time to revisit old content and give it a refresh if it's outdated. Instead of completely re-writing your article about trends for 2019, can you just give it some tweaks to re-purpose it for 2020? Updating old pieces is a great way to get a spike in traffic with minimal time investment.



Plan something big

The first quarter is often treated as an afterthought — the downtime between the rush of the holidays and the summer season. Be unexpected and plan something big and exciting for Q1. Depending on your industry, it could be a good time for a new product or marketing campaign. Less competition in Q1 could actually help your strategy to stand out. Or it could be something internal, like onboarding new software or shaking up the org chart. But don't put off big events just because it's Q1. Dive in headfirst to start the year off right.

Focus on prospecting

After the end-of-year push, your sales funnel may be looking a little empty. Make sure your prospecting team is hunting down new leads for the new year.



Your prospectors and salespeople should have clear Q1 goals right out of the gate. If they have to wait until the middle of January for product specs and KPIs, they've missed out on two valuable weeks due to your lack of planning.

Finally, help your prospectors to prepare responses to common Q1 objections, like “We don't have a budget yet,” or “We're not bringing anything new until Q2.” Provide an incentive to the prospects for sitting down with your sales team now, instead of putting it off.

Look for changing industry trends

It may sound counterintuitive during a hectic Q4, but it's time to stop and take a look around. How do the past three months compared to the three before? How about the past 12 months to the year before?

Before your company settles on initiatives or goals for 2020, make sure those goals reflect today's market — not Q1 2019's market. Things can change quickly. Is there a wealth of new competition that you didn't face a year ago? New technology? Increased prices due to the new tariffs?

Spend a little time doing an industry analysis now, so you can meet with your team to address any changes to the market. If you wait until Q1 has already begun, you'll be behind.

Conclusion



In the end, a successful Q1 is all about planning ahead. Ever heard that phrase, “Failing to plan is planning to fail”? Well, that certainly applies here. A strong Q1 will set the tone for the rest of 2020. Don't put yourself in the position of scrambling all year to make up for a lackluster beginning.