

## Meet Some Real-Life Decision Makers

We've compiled some thoughts from executives who set priorities for their organizations. Hear what they say about what gets their attention, and what they want from interactions with sellers like you.

 **Meet Our Decision Makers**

 **What's on Their Minds**

 **What Gets Their Attention**

 **What They Want in Their Interactions**

 **Other Things We Heard**

 **Conclusion**

## Meet Our Decision Makers

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Meet the following characters, based on real people we spoke with, for this project. While the names and likenesses have been changed, their positions, biographies and stories have not.

**DAVID**

**BETH**

**JAMES**

**DAN**

David is a Chief Information Officer for a regional healthcare organization. He oversees technology, security and collaboration across dozens of locations in a metropolitan area of the United States.



**DAVID**

**BETH**

**JAMES**

**DAN**

Beth is CEO of a medium-sized business that manufactures metal parts. She oversees a company of more than 200 employees that produces niche products for a specific industry where there are just four other companies in competition with each other.



**DAVID**

**BETH**

**JAMES**

**DAN**

James is a partner in a professional services firm. His role is that of a seller-doer – he develops business and serves the customers he brings on. He also is responsible for the direction of the company, along with his fellow partners.



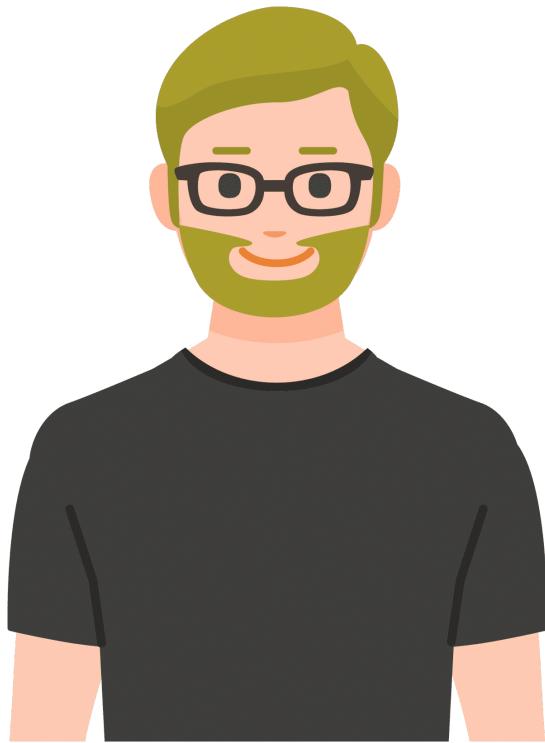
**DAVID**

**BETH**

**JAMES**

**DAN**

Dan invented a new software more than a decade ago, and has turned it into a profitable and growing company. What started out with three people in a garage, today employs hundreds, with tens of thousands of customers. Despite hiring a CEO and establishing a board, Dan is still very active in the daily operations as President of the company.



## **Priority setters are not a monolith.**

They are a diverse group of people. Yes, they help shape the identity of the companies they manage, but to a large degree, the company shapes them, too. Different industries may share a typical profile of decision-maker, but it's healthy to enter each new prospect account as a blank slate, expecting nothing.

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## What's on Their Minds

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**"What are one or two initiatives you're working on right now?  
What's on your mind on a daily basis, at the moment?"**



"I've been working on our people. It's hard to attract talent and keep them, these days. We've been really focused not just on getting people in the door, but once they're here, it's *How are they doing? What can we do to make you proud of your work, here?*"

Beth, CEO



"The usual things. Product: what are we prioritizing in terms of feature development versus performance improvement versus the cost and return of those things? Also, getting the entire team to work together efficiently on product is a big one, right now. Customer retention: what more can we do to reduce churn even further. Those kinds of things."

Dan, Founder & President

## **Think about what you sell.**

Could you pick up a conversation with Beth or Dan, based on what they said were some of their top priorities?

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## What Gets Their Attention

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**"What's the best way to get your attention? Let's say for something you aren't looking for, haven't researched, or don't know about."**



"Show me the 'trick.' There's a lot of innovation in our space, but when you can show me in two seconds what I'm missing, or what's going to change, or be better, I'll look and say *Okay, what's going on here?*"

David, CIO



[laughing] "I've certainly been accused of chasing shiny objects, so I'll probably say I get excited about things that are new and different. I don't think that's a bad thing!

Someone needs to, right?"

Dan, Founder & President

**"What is your initial reaction when someone comes to you with a new idea? Does it change if it comes from within our outside the organization?"**



"Let me tell you something. Good ideas are gold, okay? This business doesn't change much, but it needs new ideas. Now, I'm not saying all new ideas are good ideas. But if you don't listen, you miss things. It does not matter if they come from here, there, anywhere. I listen."

James, Partner



"Interesting question. We get a lot of ideas, around here. If I'm being honest, we might be biased toward things that come from outside [our organization]. Yes, that's probably true. We have so much internal discussion that new voices may receive a better reception around here." [pauses, reflecting] "Hmm, that is interesting."

David, CIO

### **Think about these responses.**

Could you help David see the immediate gain of working with you, in two seconds? Could you show Dan what's new and different? Do you feel that James or David would be interested in what you have to talk about?

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## What They Want in Their Interactions

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**"Think about working with someone who is responsible for selling something to you. What do you want from them? What makes a good interaction versus a bad one?"**



"If I sense that they are more interested in their own sale than in me, I can tell almost immediately. It will not work. You might have the world's greatest thingamajig. It does not matter."

James, Partner



"Oh, you know that thing that some salespeople do where they ask you questions from a script, and then kind of repeat your answer back to you? I can't stand that. I'm not a lab rat. It's not working. You sound like a robot. Just be real, get to the point, and let's just talk!"

Beth, CEO



"Tell me why I should care. Show me how it's going to work, for us. I don't need endless information. We'll figure all that out, later."

David, CIO

## **Think about how you interact with prospects.**

Could you have a conversation with James, Beth or David?

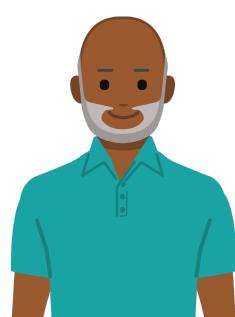
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## Other Things We Heard

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1

**"Does it matter whether the person selling to you is of equal stature, from a job-title standpoint?"**



"I never look at that."

"No."

"Stature is person-to-person,  
the way we interact. Not a  
job title."

"No, not at all."

2

## **"What's the last thing you bought from a B2B salesperson?"**



"We brought on a new staffing solution last month."



"I worked with a supplier to diversify our raw materials sourcing."



"We got some nice little gifts for our clients with our logo on them."



"This cool new thing that's basically a 'bring-your-own-device-as-a-service' for our employees."

3

## **"Do you believe someone selling to you can help you solve big problems?"**



"Yes."



"Yes."



"Most try. Some can, yes."



"Of course."

**CONTINUE**

## Conclusion

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### **You can reach real decision makers.**

They are real people, working on real problems, just like all of us. They don't tolerate sellers that waste time, or only care about making the sale, but that's not you, anyway.

Come to them with good ideas that can solve real problems, and you'll have success in gaining their attention and having good conversations with them.

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