SALES ADVENTURE

Know your client. Score points in the room. Win the deal.

GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT v0.1

A sales simulation game by Danu Poyner and Bo Alroe

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Title	Sales Adventure [Working Title]
Target Platforms	Web-browser
Audience	Real-world salespeople
Genre	Text-based RPG adventure
No. of Players	1
Development Engine	Twine
Estimated Release Date	1H 2022

HIGH CONCEPT STATEMENT

'Sales Adventure' is a learning game that puts the player in the role of a salesperson who must execute a long and complex software solutions sale from the first inbound lead through to closing a deal.

The game simulates the solution-selling experience by having the player gather information, understand the client's needs, interact with stakeholders and skillfully prepare and execute meetings and presentations, while navigating complex social and psychological dynamics.

Sales Adventure is designed to be both a fun and enjoyable role playing experience, and an educational and coaching tool that produces 'playable insights' for real-world salespeople and sales managers.

Inside the game world, players are provided with feedback on their choices through gameplay consequences. Outside the game world, players receive an individual report that breaks down the points they scored and how this led to the outcome they received, as well as tips for improvement. Sales managers receive an aggregated and anonymised report on the whole team's results. These reports can then be used to set up a tailored team sales coaching workshop session facilitated by the game designers.

TEAM ROLES

1

NAME	TEAM ROLE
Bo Alroe	Story writer Go-to-market strategy Designer - Reporting and Insights
Danu Poyner	Game designer Game producer Game developer

FEATURES

1. Carry a complex B2B sale from beginning to end
2. Win or lose the deal depending on your choices
3. Impress or annoy clients with your personal and professional skills
4. Use your smarts to discover what the client really cares about
5. Prepare and present demos and presentation that will score points with your client
6. Keep your bosses happy

DESIGN INFLUENCES

The gameplay in 'Sales Adventure' is inspired by classic choice-based text-adventure games and RPG elements. To succeed, the player must gather information by exploring and interacting with characters, leading up to boss-level encounters (i.e. meetings and presentations) that succeed or fail based on how well-equipped the player is and how well they have mastered the key moves.

Like the best choose your own adventure stories, the game is designed to make the player feel the weight of their choices. Ambiguity is a key aesthetic (a la Stanley Parable, The Witcher). Consequences are real but not always obvious in advance, and there is often no clear right or wrong answer. However, the player is eventually shown the consequences

of their choices through the gameplay.

Pacing follows the classic RPG dungeon crawler format where the player first spends time in the town to equip themselves for the upcoming encounters, before plunging into real-time 'combat-style' encounters.

STORY

You are a salesperson at a company that sells research management software to universities. You open your laptop to find a promising but ambiguous new lead in your inbox: "Hi there - we've heard about your product and would like some information".

What will you do next? And how will you find out the client's driving needs, generate interest, build rapport with relevant stakeholders and ultimately ensure that your product is the one selected at the end of a long process?

Story Sequence

The game has five chapters, each built around a key action set-piece where the player's choices in the arena make all the difference.

CHAPTER	WHAT HAPPENS	GAMEPLAY AND LEARNING
1	Get a new lead Find out what the client wants	Applying momentum Information gathering Prepare and execute first meeting
2	Pre-tender meeting	Information gathering Prepare well for a good demo Score points with client Influence the shape of the tender
3	Tender submission	Influence the shape of the tender Show your product in its best light Outshine your competitors
4	Tender presentation	Think like you're producing a performance Put on a show that's a cross between a TED Talk and a prosecutor's closing arguments Leave nothing to chance

5	Sales outcome	Debrief and next steps Understand how your choices led to this result

Endings

There are three overall possible outcomes, depending on your choices:

- You win the deal
- You win the deal, but you nearly lose to a competitor
- You lose the deal to a competitor

The exact flavour and circumstances of the ending are influenced by how long you take, the quality of your sales process and your reputational standing with key stakeholders.

CHARACTERS

NAME	ROLE	DESIGN NOTES
YOUR COMPANY		
[Player]	That's you, the player. An account manager working at Elsevier, selling the Pure research management system. You are fairly new to the role.	Player chooses a name at the start. If no name is chosen, defaults to Willy (as in Loman).
Amy	Your colleague and best friend at work.	
Jeorg	Your boss. A no-nonsense guy who expects results.	
Valerie	The executive team's executive assistant. A powerful office figure who is both loved and feared. She will help you out from time to time as a favour.	
Maria	A product specialist for Pure. Will support you in the sales process with additional expertise.	

THE CLIENT		
Sean	The client's Project Manager for the new research system project. He is fairly new to the organisation. He has been tasked by the Research Director to review the various software options available and report to Research Committee. He doesn't know that much about the research business and just wants to be efficient.	The player's first contact is with Sean. The player has no context at the start of the game and must skillfully gather information to understand what's going on.
Keith	The client's ICT representative on the Project Board. Defensive and lazy, but highly knowledgeable and usually right.	
Hilmer	The Dean of the Health Faculty. A very accomplished professor with a Napoleon complex. He thinks he **is** the university.	
Alison	The Research Director sponsoring the project to put in a new research management system at the university. Calm and pragmatic, but impatient and does not suffer fools.	
Maude	The Library Director. Is on the project board due to her position but is hostile to the project as the library team has already built a research management system that they think works perfectly well.	
Lindsay	A representative from the PVC's office who is on the project board to keep the PVC informed of progress. His sycophantic bravado masks a deep insecurity about his place in the world.	
Roger	The PVC Research. Nominally overseeing the project but in practice is close to retirement and not interested in mundane technical matters. Is busy building himself a portfolio of board director posts and speaker's fees for his exit.	

GAME WORLD

There are three major game environments and settings where action and gameplay take place.

CLIENT MEETING ROOM

AT YOUR DESK

- NOTEBOOK
- COMPANY INTRANET
- DESKTOP RESEARCH
- EMAILING THE CLIENT

COMPANY MEETING ROOM

GAME SYSTEMS AND MECHANICS

Reputation

This is the key game mechanic that determines the overall outcome of the game. Sales is a points-scoring exercise with clients. In this game that truth is expressed quite literally. Each of the characters on the client side holds a reputation score, which is increased or decreased through the player's actions.

In the game, the outcome of the sales process is a decision by committee, determined by the weighted reputation scores of the client characters. The overall reputation points scored determines which one of the game's three ultimate outcomes occurs. Individual reputation scores determine the narrative variants of each outcome.

TOTAL REP SCORE*	GAME ENDING
> 75	You win the deal
51 - 75	You win the deal, but nearly lose to a competitor
=< 50	You lose the deal

*Concept only. Actual values TBD.

The player receives visual feedback on individual reputation at key points during the game and a reputation score summary is reported to the player after the game for learning and coaching purposes.

Notebook

As the player discovers useful information during the game, this is stored in an array as 'inventory'. The Notebook screen allows the player to check inventory at any time, and at key points in the narrative the game will also report the contents of the inventory to the player.

Certain actions and options in the game are only possible when the player has an item in Notebook inventory. For instance, in Chapter 2 the player has the option to demo features to the client that are relevant to their needs, but this is only possible if the player discovered the client's needs in Chapter 1.

Sales Cycle Counter

The reputation system expresses sales quality. The Sales Cycle Counter expresses sales efficiency by tracking 'game days' since the original lead came in. The player makes many choices during the game that increment the sales cycle counter to a greater or lesser extent. Too much time taken (i.e. loss of sales momentum) can also cause the player to lose the deal.

Like 'Lifeline', the game unfolds in real-world time, compressed to mimic game time as expressed by the sales cycle counter. For instance, if the player emails the client, a reply may come in three days of game time, which could be three hours later in real-world time.

The sales cycle counter is displayed to the player during the game and a breakdown is included in the individual post-game report.

Meeting Preparation

Client meetings are the action set-pieces that serve as the 'boss fights' of the game. Analogously, the player must come well-prepared to do battle. The key mechanic for meeting preparation is selecting what topics to discuss at the meeting.

The player can only choose a preset maximum number of topics from a range of equally plausible options, so careful thought is required. Certain options function as 'traps', while others are only available depending on the player's previous choices.

The gameplay for meeting preparation is presented as a list of checkboxes, of which the player must select no more than x options.

'Combat' Moves

During client meetings from Chapter 2 onwards, the player has several actions available. These are analogous to 'combat moves' in a turn-based JRPG-style combat game.

PLAYER ACTION	DESCRIPTION
Attempt to stimulate interest	Try to get the client interested by introducing a new topic (options for topics are previously selected through the Meeting Preparation mechanic). Depending on the choice, a client character's reaction may be positive (+Rep), negative (-Rep) or neutral.
Match solution to need	Match one of your product's features to one of the client's needs you have previously identified (i.e. combine two items in your Notebook Inventory) Depending on the choice, a client character's reaction may be positive (+Rep), negative (-Rep) or neutral.
Overcome objection	A client character may introduce an objection. This overrides the player's previous action and the player then has a time limit to respond. If the player has the right item in their Notebook Inventory, they can counter the objection (+Rep). Otherwise they will have to promise to come back later (neutral Rep) or bluff (random +/- Rep).
Ambush	Raise a topic that will create additional needs, concerns and possible objections in the client's mind. The player does this in order to demonstrate concern and prowess in addressing these needs later. Skilful players who can execute this move well can score additional points.
Landmine Competitor	A difficult to execute 'finisher' move, designed to create additional needs, concerns and objections in

	the client's mind that will create difficulties for your competition (-Rep to competitor)
Stall/Defer	React to a client character's action by deferring the response to post-meeting follow-up or proposing a separate conversation.

SCOPE MANAGEMENT

SCOPE / STAGE	DESCRIPTION	TIMELINE
Minimum Lovable Prototype	Chapter 1 and 2 are fully playable Simple insights report can be generated Minimal design and production values	By end Q3 2021 Pitch to Elsevier for a paid pilot
Crawl	All chapters fully playable Simple insights report can be generated for both player and manager Basic design and production values	Q4 2021 Test with small pilot group - iterate
Walk	Multiple player classes (e.g. account manager, PSM, sales manager) Additional story flourishes and variation Enhanced production values	Q1 2022 First version for launch with Elsevier
Run	Multiple story variants Advanced configuration options Enhanced reporting capability	Q2 2022

Chapter 1

Story

The player is at the office and it is nearly time for the All-Hands meeting. A new lead arrives in the company's generic inbox. The player decides whether to give a quick answer now or write a longer and more thoughtful answer and risk being late to the meeting.

The player schedules a meeting with Sean to find out what he wants and more about what drove him to reach out. It turns out Sean's university has set up a project to implement a new research management system and they are reviewing options before sending invites to selected suppliers for a pre-tender presentation.

After meeting Sean, the player's company is selected as one of 8 suppliers invited to give a pre-tender presentation to the project board in two weeks time.

Gameplay

The player decides how to prioritise and handle the incoming lead, including how much information to send Sean and whether to interact by email or suggest a meeting.

The player has the chance to find out as much information early on as possible by having a 'qualifying' meeting with Sean. The player gets to choose how to spend the time in the meeting. How much useful information the player finds out depends on how skilfully they prepare and execute the qualifying meeting.

At the end of the chapter, the player will review what they found out so far and receive a notification to present their solution at the pre-tender meeting in two weeks time.

Outcomes

At the end of Chapter 1, the following overall outcomes are possible:

- The player found out as much as possible from Sean
- The player found out some useful information from Sean, but missed some important points
- The player wasted their time and found out nothing useful from Sean

- The player did not have a qualifying meeting with Sean at all

Regardless of the outcome, the player will next have to give a pre-tender presentation on their company's software solution as the focus of Chapter 2. The player's performance in Chapter 1 heavily impacts their ability to score points in Chapter 2 and beyond.

Chapter 2

Story

Having received an invitation as one of 8 suppliers to present to the pre-tender meeting in two weeks, the player now needs to prepare for the meeting. Building on what they learned in Chapter 1, the player will do more information gathering, either from the client, colleagues, the company intranet or by doing desktop research.

Once the player is finished information gathering, they will prepare for the presentation by deciding what features to demo and which topics to cover. As in Chapter 1, choices made here matter deeply. The client characters' reactions in the meeting will depend on how relevant the presentation is to their needs and how much confidence they have in the player's knowledge and trustworthiness.

Finally, the player will give the pre-tender presentation to the client's project board, deciding what to present (based on previous selection) and how to read and respond to client character's reactions in the room. Depending on how it goes, the player will be invited to give a full tender submission, or not. This is the player's major opportunity to influence the shape of the upcoming tender.

Gameplay

There two distinct gameplay phases in Chapter 2. The first phase is analogous to spending time in the town in an RPG adventure - stocking up on supplies and equipment (ie information) and interacting with the townspeople (ie colleagues or the client). Once the player feels they have everything they need to give a successful pre-tender demo, they can 'enter the dungeon' for the second phase where the meeting will take place and unfold in real-time.

Before the meeting, the player selects what they want to present in the meeting. When

11

the player gets into the meeting, they can choose what to do next, based on this selection. Each item unfolds as a mini-scene within the meeting.

For each mini-scene, the player attempts to stimulate interest by demoing something. The client characters will react positively or negatively, then the player has a choice how to respond to their reaction. This will lead to discussion, more demo or objections. The player's choices will directly impact each client character's Rep points. After each mini-scene, Rep points are calculated and the player is given feedback through the narrative.

If the player scores enough Rep with one or more of the client characters through the mini-scenes, they may unlock the option to use power moves like Ambush and Landmine Competitor. Conversely, if they hit a minimum Rep threshold with any client character, they will briefly lose control of the meeting and lose the opportunity to present one of the items they selected to present.

During the meeting, all choices are on a timer. If the player doesn't choose an option in time, the game will choose what happens next.

The pre-tender meeting is a major action set-piece in the game and should feel dynamic, real and exciting for the player.

The player's performance in the meeting will determine if and how they progress to Chapter 3 - the tender submission.

Outcomes

At the end of Chapter 2, the following overall outcomes are possible:

- The player impressed most of the client characters, while influencing the shape of the tender both in their favour and against competitors
- The player impressed most of the client characters and influenced the shape of the tender in their favour
- The player impressed most of the client characters and will be invited to the tender
- The player impressed some of the client characters and will be invited to the tender, though it will be slightly favourable to competitors
- The player annoyed some of the client characters, but will still be invited to the tender

- The player annoyed most of the client characters and will not be invited to the tender. Game over.