Why the Number 385 Is the Answer to Building a Solid Go-to-Market Strategy



Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

What if I told you that the number 385 was the answer to building a solid go-to-market strategy?

Stay with me. I'm Paul Sullivan, author of *Go-To-Market Uncovered* (GTMU) and an expert in building B2B go-to-market strategy. I also created the ARISE Go To Market Methodology® for background and credibility.

So, here's the thing. The Arise GTM Methodology has five steps:

- Assess

- Research
- Ideate
- Strategize
- Execute

But to start solving your go-to-market strategy, you must answer the following three questions:

1. How do I convey the value of my product or service to my end user or customer?
2. How do I enable my buyer to buy from me?
3. How do I plan to onboard, retain and expand my buyer?

Related: How to Build a Solid Go-to-Market Strategy for 2025

To answer these questions, you must then understand these eight pillars of GTM strategy:

1. Discovery
2. Personas, Segmentation and Jobs to be done
3. Positioning, Messaging and Value Proposition
4. Pricing Strategy
5. Sales Enablement
6. Marketing Tactics
7. Onboarding
8. Product/Service Development

So, there you have it. Three questions, eight pillars and five steps. 385 is the magic number for go-to-market strategy.

Let’s get into it.

When I wrote *GTMU*, I first divided the go-to-market process into three questions to simplify your understanding of what is required. Whenever I explain it this way, people always get it. No more “sales is go to market” or “marketing is go to market.” One founder told me it was the first time they had clarified what “go to market” meant. In that situation, I explained that go-to-market is how the organization executes the business strategy. That is an explanation I stand behind, but 385 is how it becomes easy to remember.

Related: 6 Key Things to Consider When Bringing a Product to Market

The three questions that matter

Question one: How do I convey the value of my product or service to my end user or customer?

When you approach this question, I want you to consider your current situation. It requires brutal honesty and a long, hard look in the mirror. You must review your situation thoroughly and understand the factors currently impeding your success.

To start, assess the business and perform reviews on your content, website performance, personas, strategy, social media, technology stack, the team’s skillset, a CRM review, KPIs and product performance, notably attrition and retention rates.

Your next job is to perform a competitive intelligence assessment, SWOT analysis and Porter’s five forces analysis. You will also interview at least 7-10 current and former clients and reevaluate the size of your available market. Understanding how you fit into today’s market will significantly affect your pivot with a new GTM.

Once you understand your current situation and place in the

broader competitive landscape, you can generate new ideas for differentiating your communications strategy for your market segments. You do this by brainstorming, big-picture, blue-sky thinking, checking your positioning, value proposition, storytelling, messaging and rebuilding it all together.

Question two: How do I enable my buyer to buy from me?

Now, we get into the strategic element of your go-to-market strategy. Customer acquisition. This involves a series of processes, including content mapping, keyword analysis, segment hypothesis, customer content, SEO content, paid marketing strategy, sales and marketing asset requirements, sales enablement programs, website updates/redesign, goal and objective setting, KPIs, reporting requirements, lead scoring and the jobs to be done.

This activity will help you align marketing, sales and customer service, which all teams seek. It will also drive you into a revenue operations model as you consider the strategy and the technical requirements to help deliver it.

Sounds like a lot, right? It is – and if you want to win, you will do this comprehensively and not cut corners. Segmentation is critical at this juncture, and you'll be thinking about how you position your product or service to the different buyers in the internal buyer committee. We widely accept that there are multiple decision-makers in today's sales process, so your marketing team must adapt its strategy to incorporate content that engages them all.

Question three: How do I plan to onboard, retain and expand my buyer?

Your strategy needs to include an onboarding playbook or playbooks. You must map your complete customer journey through the business, from a stranger to an advocate. I first mapped this in an Excel spreadsheet back in 2023. My first row was about my brand marketing strategy. From there, I moved through

my pre-launch initiatives into sales enablement, marketing strategy and customer onboarding, and then my upsell and cross-sell strategy into my referral program.

Again, it sounds like a lot, but it profoundly impacted our bottom line and many clients.

Here, at the execution stage, that is a primary objective. Additional requirements will include a segment audit to ensure your new segments have a customer journey lifecycle mapped out for each. They will also include new copywriting, execution of web design/development, new social media production, revamped ad campaigns, updating/consolidating/removing older and underperforming content, new reporting, consistent quarterly reviews, new digital asset development, including sales enablement materials, new sales and marketing emails, CRM workflow sequences, as well as other automation and new KPIs.

Related: 5 Lessons to Follow as You Take Your Product to Market

Where are the eight pillars? As you can see above, I have addressed the three questions and five stages of the ARISE GTM Methodology®, which is transparent. But if you carefully read the eight pillars and examine the actions and requirements of ARISE, they are all there, entwined perfectly for you and your team to adopt and build a winning go-to-market strategy.

So there it is: 385 is the winning number for a successful GTM strategy. It involves three questions, eight pillars and five steps.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/whats-the-key-to-building-a-strong-go-to-market-strategy/485759