The Sales Forecast Checklist

4 Areas to Verify Before Committing an Opportunity to Your Forecast

PAGE 1 — Evaluate Your Opportunity

How Confident Are You in Your Sales Forecast?

When opportunities slip or deal values change, the impact extends beyond Sales. Unreliable forecasts make it harder to plan staffing, capacity, and finances.

Use these four areas to identify risks before committing an opportunity to your forecast.

Instructions: Select an opportunity. Mark Yes, No, or Unknown for each question.

1. Authority: Are You Working With the Decision-Maker?

A supportive contact may not have purchasing authority. Confirm who makes the decision and who else needs to be involved.

What to Confirm	Yes	No	Unknown
Have we identified the purchasing decision-maker?	☐	☐	☐
Do we understand the decision process and any additional approvals?	☐	☐	☐

2. Financial Authority: Is the Purchase Approved?

Customer interest doesn't always mean the expenditure is authorized. Understand who controls the funding and what approvals remain.

What to Confirm	Yes	No	Unknown
Have we identified who approves the expenditure?	☐	☐	☐
Do we know the approval status and any remaining requirements?	☐	☐	☐

3. Timing: Is the Close Date Realistic?

Start with the customer's desired go-live date. Work backward through implementation, contracting, and approvals to establish a realistic close date.

What to Confirm	Yes	No	Unknown
Have we confirmed the customer's target go-live or implementation date?	☐	☐	☐
Have we worked backward to establish a realistic close date?	☐	☐	☐

4. Budget: Is the Forecasted Value Supported?

Confirm that funding and the proposed scope align. Consider any changes that could affect the final purchase amount.

What to Confirm	Yes	No	Unknown
Have we confirmed whether funding has been allocated?	☐	☐	☐
Does the proposed scope align with the budget and expected costs?	☐	☐	☐

PAGE 2 — Turn Your Answers Into Action

1. Identify Missing Information

Review any No or Unknown answers.

Determine what needs to be confirmed, who is responsible, and when you'll have the information. An opportunity can remain in your pipeline even if it isn't ready for a committed forecast.

2. Evaluate Your Forecast Confidence

Consider whether unanswered questions affect the expected close date, value, or likelihood of closing.

Example: A customer wants to go live in December, but financial approval won't happen until January. The sales team should revisit the expected close date and confirm whether the implementation timeline is still realistic.

Use your organization's criteria to determine the appropriate forecast category.

3. Understand Why Forecasts Change

When an opportunity changes, keep the original forecast and ask:

- What changed in timing or value?
- Why did it change?
- Could we have identified the risk earlier?
- What should we do differently next time?

Look for recurring issues that may indicate weaknesses in your forecasting process.

4. Build a Consistent Work Routine

Use this checklist during regular sales forecast reviews.

- Apply the same criteria across opportunities.
- Review missing information and potential risks.
- Compare original forecasts with actual results.
- Use recurring issues to improve the process.

Before Your Next Forecast Review

Apply this checklist to your three largest opportunities.

Identify unanswered questions, evaluate the risks, and assign next steps. If the same gaps appear repeatedly, consider what needs to improve in your forecasting process.

Not Sure Where to Start?

The **Work Excellence Method** helps organizations establish consistent processes, measure performance, and build routines that support better decisions.

Explore how **Work Excellence** can help improve your sales processes.