

S.P.E.A.R. Sales Operating System

The sales operating system for SME founders, sales leaders and sellers

The Challenge: Four Sales Goals

Every SME seller is fighting on the same four fronts: **generating quality leads** rather than just more activity; **winning more** of the deals they go after; **shortening sales cycles** to bring in revenue sooner and move to the next opportunity quicker; and **growing contract values** without conceding margin. But these levers are becoming even harder to pull. Ebsta's 2023 B2B Sales Benchmark Report found cycle times rose 32% year-on-year; deals running beyond twice the average cycle converted at just 3%; buying groups now average 6.8 stakeholders per deal (Rox, B2B Sales Engagement, 2026).

SMEs and business founders are typically very product and feature-aware, but not sales trained - and even less frequently coached. This results in deals lost that could have been won, to the detriment not just to them but to potential customers who could have benefitted; and delivers blows to their confidence which has them doubting their product or service when the issue is more likely to be sub-optimal sales skills, processes and/or support.

The Ambition: Control, Confidence and Compounding Gains

Founders and sales leaders clearly need to make sales and targets, but their business wants more. A reliable sales **forecast**; **control over deals** rather than surprises; a team that wins consistently without relying on one or two "heroes"; and no **"hospital-pass"** contracts handed to delivery.

The prize is bigger than it looks - the four goals above compound: a 5% improvement in each of lead volume, win rate and contract value, combined with a 5% shorter cycle - lifts revenue by around **22%**, with no extra headcount.

How S.P.E.A.R. Delivers It

S.P.E.A.R. is built on nearly 30 years of enterprise selling at Microsoft, BT and Siemens, and over £1bn of business won. It's been adapted for SMEs - flexing to suit the deal complexity and business size.

Engage sits at the centre, running the seven-stage **P.L.A.N.N.E.D.** pursuit process: Prepare → Lead Generation → Assess → Nurture → Negotiate → Execute → Develop. The four S.P.A.R. pillars surround it, so every stage has the direction, structure, tools and feedback it needs:

Pillar	Sub-framework	How it supports the P.L.A.N.N.E.D. stages and the four goals
Strategy	G.R.I.P.	Goals, Resources, Ideal Client Profile and Propositions focus Prepare and Lead Generation on winnable, high-value deals: better leads, larger contracts.
Plan	S.P.R.I.N.G.	Structure, process, incentives and governance cadence give Assess and every deal review rigour: sharper qualification, more accurate forecasts.
Engage	P.L.A.N.N.E.D.	The seller's playbook from preparing a first contact to account growth: qualify hard in Assess, build trust in Nurture, trade value in Negotiate, close smoothly in Execute.
Assist	T.A.C.T.	Technology, Assets, Coaching and Techniques equip sellers at every stage, so the process becomes habit rather than theory.
Refine	L.O.O.P.	Learn from wins and losses, orchestrate sales, marketing and delivery, and optimise KPIs monthly, so each of the four goals keeps improving.

AI: Governed, intentional and supported by human-to-human coaching

AI gives SMEs a real chance to compete with larger rivals, but only when it makes a working process better, rather than accelerating poor work practices. **Time saved by AI and spent on coaching means sellers enhance and practice their skills to make them "stick", not just chase more deals they still end up losing.**

I believe this combination of sales coaching and AI-enabled support delivers the greatest value for sellers. I created SPEAR sales to help SMEs achieve a 5% gain in the four key levers described. Through the SPEAR and PLANNED frameworks, SMES can achieve those relatively small incremental gains **that compound to a 22% revenue gain**, without the expense of additional recruitment and onboarding time. A big prize and one that my many testimonials from SME sellers and business owners show is possible.