Grow your pipeline and gain market share during a downturn

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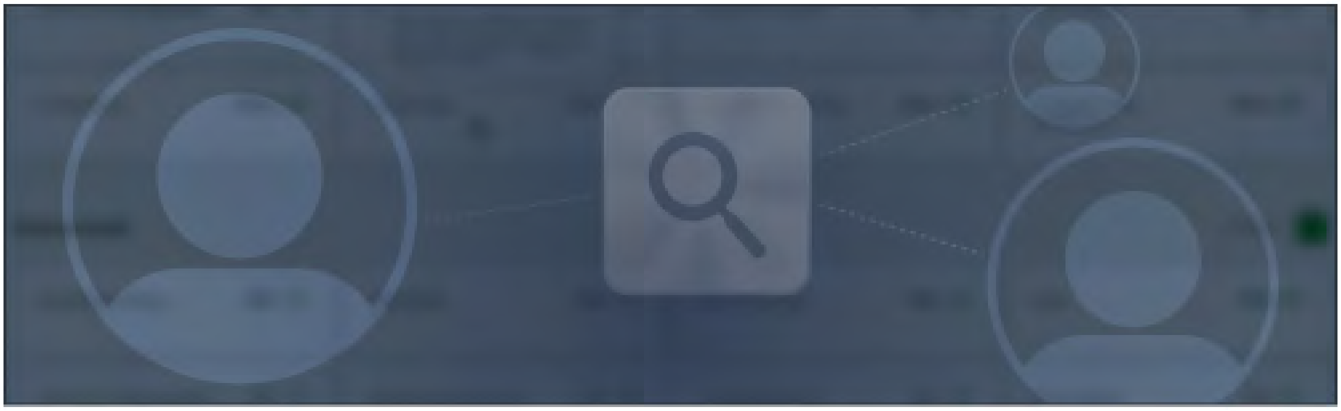


Revenue growth is easier during economic boons—just ask anyone from the .com bubble. It's how companies maintain themselves during economic hard times that defines their sustainability. And more than just maintaining, downturns can actually be revenue growth opportunities for forward-thinking organizations.

Of course, that's tricky. Customers (and our own businesses too) no longer have much tolerance for luxury items. Companies get more exact with the ROI they need to see on their purchases. That's why so many businesses often focus more on protecting their existing revenue base than on expanding within existing accounts or acquiring new logos—at the peril of declining growth.

Preventing churn is essential. Absolutely. But reacting to churn is about as conservative an approach as a revenue team can have. By being proactive to recognize churn—and actually emphasizing account expansion over simple account retention—you can take advantage of the current economic climate to continue mattering to your current customers.

Expanding revenue during economic hard times requires extreme efficiency. Precision in targeting new prospects—knowing you are focusing your resources on the companies most likely to engage—is where companies win.

This tough economic climate is your organization's chance to re-evaluate your plans for growth, starting with how you build your ICP.

Build a better ICP with exegraphics.

Ideal customer profiles are a staple of B2B sales strategy. And they make sense: if you can identify the traits that make your best customers your best customers, you can target the same traits in your best prospects.

Too often, an ICP fits in four or five bullets on a PowerPoint slide. These are usually firmographic indicators of a prospect's industry, size, location or revenue—and are often ineffective ways of describing your actual best targets.

In fact, it was so ineffective that the B2C world developed psychographics to understand customers far more meaningfully than with demographics. The B2B world lacked that same sort of insight, so we at Rev developed [exegraphics](): in short, pieces of information or characteristics that convey how a company executes its mission.

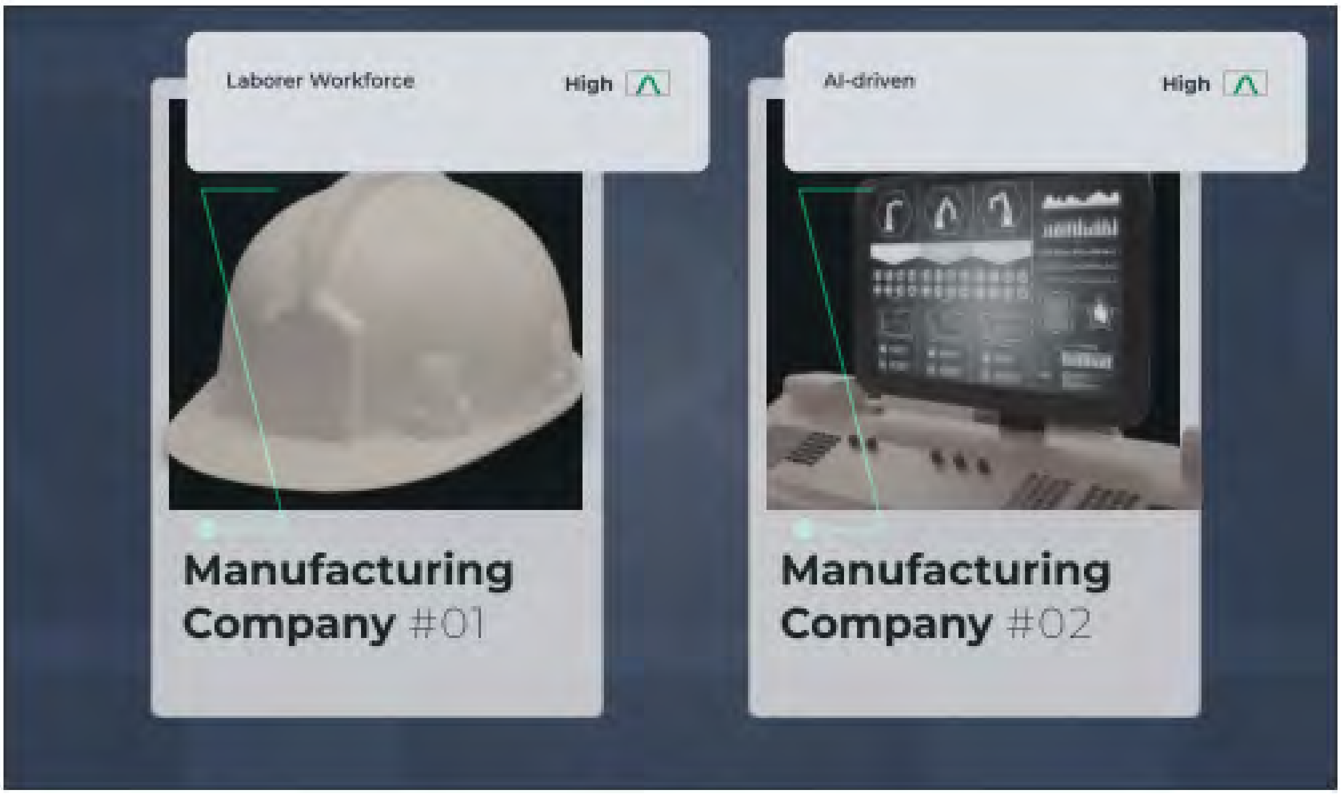
Examined by the millions, these exegraphics build an AI-driven ICP (we call it an [aiCP]()) to draw a clear picture of what makes your best customers your best, in order to improve your aim at target accounts—net-new, expansion and retention opportunities.

These revolutionary capabilities facilitate B2B sales teams looking to expand in a downturn. Once you're able to analyze the deep characteristics your best customers share, you can uncover a deep roster of new targets that have those same traits.

Improve your targeting aim above the funnel.

Above the funnel is where exegraphics and aiCPs get to work. Traditional strategies function more like casting a wide net to see what you catch. With greater targeting focus, you're using specialized bait to land the right fish.

What the right fish is for your company depends on... well, on your company. But exegraphics and aiCPs equip your outbound teams to go after the best-fit targets, reducing the time spent on fruitless cold outreach.



Let's say two manufacturing companies create equivalent amounts of output in the same lane. One employs a hundred laborers on the factory line. The other employs five developers to maintain an AI-driven factory. On the outside, they look alike—but if you produce, say, HR solutions, the first company is likely a much better fit. And if you produce AI solutions, the second company is your better prospect.

That's an oversimplification, but it illustrates how you want to aim your outbound teams at prospects that operate much like your best customers to maximize leads they can convert into sales.

Expand into new markets with a SWAT-style strategy.

Tapping into new market segments—particularly if your company is already well-established in its current segments—opens up a world of new potential customers. It's an aggressive strategy in times when many competitors are more conservatively protecting their existing revenue base.

It appears to be a risky strategy, too. What if you invest marketing resources in a market segment for 12 months only to fall flat?

First off, finding companies in a new segment that have the same "fit" and "ready" characteristics as your best customers minimizes risk and maximizes the potential for gains. It's the same exegraphic reasoning as above: companies in very different market segments might have very similar internal operations that make them a great candidate for your product or service.

Analyzing companies for shared characteristics uncovers a deep roster of new-segment targets that behave very similarly to your current best customers. And that primes your revenue team to test out these new best prospects.

Key word there is test. We recommend resisting the urge to over-rotate (and over-invest); instead, we advocate for a SWAT-team approach: lightly staffed with strong expertise, able to pivot and adapt on the fly. Think something like one business development rep, two AEs and light marketing support.

After all, if you're using the power of exegraphics and aiCPs, you already have rigor in your process: you know you're sending reps after prospects most likely to bite. You can develop a few good pieces of early messaging and simple collateral to test the market.

Then see what happens. Do you get engagement? Are the reps able to close deals? If not, what needs to happen differently?

This approach accelerates the information-gathering period and helps you assess, quickly and definitively, whether a new market segment is actually viable. This approach manages to get you answers in 3-6 months, not the more typical 12-18 months needed to determine market fit.

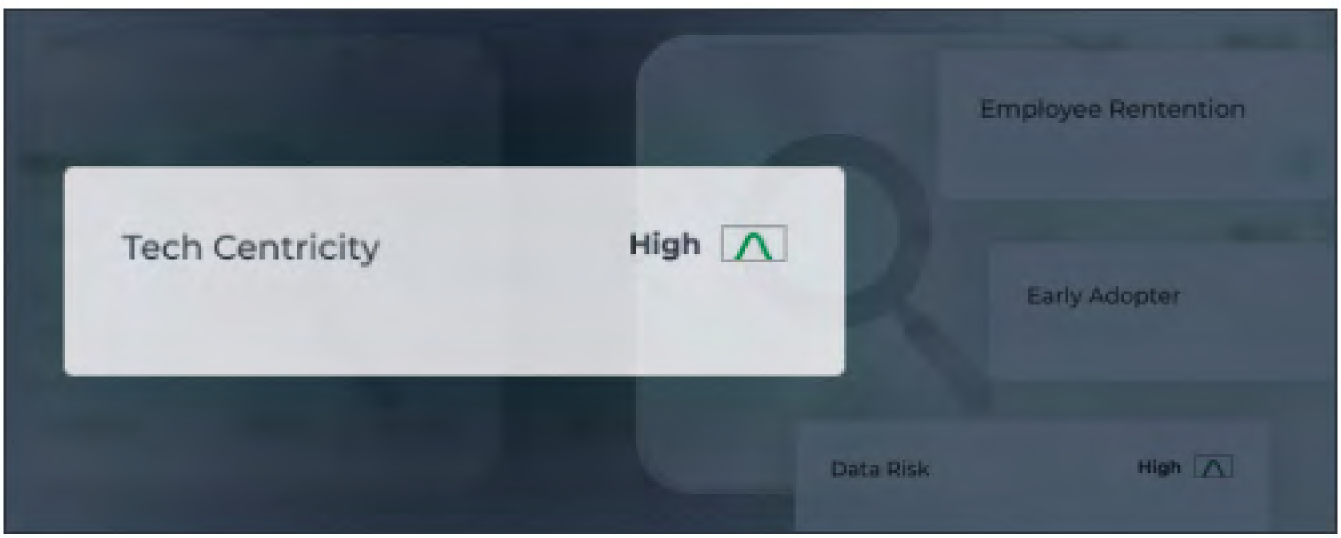
Optimize your approach to account expansion.

In tough times, customers are often tightening their belts, and upselling is not always a strategic move. But exegraphic data can demonstrate the trends for the accounts that have already expanded, looking behind the curtain at information that may not be apparent to human eyes.

For instance: an account manager can see a new CTO as an opportunity for that organization to adopt some new technology. But that account manager likely won't know what's happening with staffing at other levels, and it may be that a tech team scaling more rapidly than the rest of the organization is a much better predictor for adopting new tech than a recent executive hire.

A natural tendency for account expansion is to simply target accounts that are "most friendly," "highest spending" or "high activity," but those labels don't address whether the customer has other problems that your product suite can solve. (Many customers don't even know what all your offerings are!) Identifying exegraphic predictors for adopting new tech among your current customer base is far more likely to bear fruit than these more superficial indicators.

It also makes sense to create an aiCP for each one of your products or services. Getting granular about not only who is ripe for expansion, but who is ripe for expansion in which direction, keeps your aim centered and results in more successful targeting.



Depending on the size of your customer base, it might also be important to segment existing accounts into 1:1, 1:few or 1:many engagement plans, according to their exegraphic matches. This segmentation enables account managers to spend the most time with customers that are high-fit for expansion opportunities.

No matter the scale and complexity of your offerings, the granular insights provided by exegraphic data are wildly useful for identifying which current accounts are ripe for upsells and expansion—because on an operational level, your product will address a need that your current customers are likely already experiencing, whether they realize it or not.

Identify early signals to stay ahead of churn.

Likewise, it's critical to stay alert for the inverse—changing exegraphics that signal a company's likelihood of moving away from your product or service.

Churn happens for a whole plethora of reasons. Companies downsize in tough economic times; they also pivot in new directions and evaluate what products and services to keep on board as they scale.

Unless your company is a real unicorn, you have experienced churn. Use that experience to your advantage! Examine the customers you've lost before. This exegraphic data, which inherently changes as a company evolves, can reveal traits common to your lost accounts—as well as early signals that you can now anticipate in your current account base.

Of course, you cannot keep every account forever. But imagine the power of your revenue team being able to connect with changing companies and address their needs and pain points before they even consider shifting away from your products. Perhaps they need expansion; perhaps they need to convert to a different offering, or to turn particular features on and off.

At the very least, these accounts experience your team engaging with them as they grow, responding to both internal and external changes, attempting to tailor their engagement with their product to reflect their current reality. That alone can retain certain businesses, and it also makes them more likely to trust in your ongoing responsiveness.

Being proactive in this way is a powerful approach for reducing churn and sticking with companies as they transition.

Be responsive rather than reactive.

In economic downturns, we often hear (and use) terms like "tightening the belt" or "battening the hatches." It's a defensive approach. But these ideas don't have to be restrictive—tightening up can also mean optimizing and calibrating our revenue operations.

Companies all over the world are scrutinizing everything right now: their people, their systems, their processes. And you should too—especially your current approach to identifying target accounts. There's less money flowing out there, and it's flowing less easily, so it's imperative to get more precise if you want to continue growing and expanding your revenue base—without waiting for times to get good again.

With so many competitors playing defense, you can go on the offense. This can be a big break-out moment for you. It's a matter of being responsive instead of reactive. You recognize that resources are tighter for everyone right now, so offer the expansions that make sense to your customers (whether they realize it or not), and provide value for the customers you want to retain.

After all, every dollar matters in this and other hard times—so make yourself count now, for the benefit of your customers, and you'll still matter to them when times turn around again.

Spark growth during an economic downturn.

Get a free aiCP and discover the exegraphics behind your best customers.

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