Strive

'Strive Sessions' Roundtable: Boston

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Created by:

Strive

Powering Hypergrowth™

Executive Summary

In March 2024, Strive hosted our 'Strive Sessions' Roundtable event in Boston!

The aim of the event was to bring together Investment and VC Partners, as well as Sales Leaders and Founders from the Go-To-Market community, to share best practices, discuss current challenges and network!

The dinner was led by Strive, with hosts on the day being **John Hitchen**, **Dylan Hoyle** and **Naomi Walsh.**

Our special guest speaker at this event, was **Shai Horovitz,** who shared his experience and learnings from his impressive career in the SaaS start-up space, spanning across CRO and COO roles.

With the headline topic of the evening being 'Early-Stage Sales', some of the core areas covered over dinner, which will be discussed throughout this Key Takeaways document, were:

- Early-Stage Sales: VC Best Practices.
- What types of profile to bring into your business - and when?
- How to make a correct hire.

Guest Speaker

Our Guest Speaker, **Shai Horovitz** is CEO at **Jit.io**, a $40m Seed Funded Vendor in the Developer Security Space.

Beginning his career within Special Operations for the Israel Defense Forces before moving into the SaaS Sales world, he now has over 10 years of SaaS experience, spending much of his career at **Cybereason,** working in various senior sales roles, including Chief Revenue Officer.

An expert in developing strategic partnerships, GTM campaigns and corporate development, Shai's career has had a global reach, offering real invaluable insight to our attendees on the evening.

Shai Horovitz

"Strive were introduced to me via a mutual connection, whom they had supported in building an entire GTM function for. We were building out our Founding GTM team and needed a partner who had experience building hypergrowth companies.

Within just one Quarter, we had established a successful partnership, so when they approached me to be a Guest Speaker at one of their events, I was pleased to support.

The team put together a great evening, with an interesting selection of attendees, who could all share their experiences about best practices when looking to scale an early-stage business.

The conversations were relaxed, but also insightful and I'm looking forward to staying connected to the network I was introduced to on the night – when you are an Investor, Founder or CEO of an early-stage business, having a relevant network of industry peers is invaluable and I know attendees will be thankful to Strive for facilitating these sessions."

We asked our attendees for their feedback on the overall event as well as the content, post event:

Overall rating of the evening

5 out of 5

Overall content rating

4.9 out of 5

grip

Nexla

FLINT CAPITAL

NEW ERA CAPITAL

REZONATE

LEGIT SECURITY

GenesisAccel

GLASSWING VENTURES

SMARTBEAR

VENTURE GUIDES

TORIC

Latimer Ventures

boldstart >

POSTMAN

Testimonials

"Strive facilitated a cool event, which had a great mixture of Founders and Investors.

Whilst there was a topic to the evening, it was nice to keep the conversation fluid also.

Great format, thanks Strive!"

_____

Sergey Gribov
Flint Capital

"Great group size and diversity, leading to a meaningful and insightful conversation on the evening – accompanied by great food and service.

I would recommend future Strive events!"

_____

Ernesto DiGiambattista
Genesis Accel

"I was really impressed by the split of the attendees that Strive had invited, with representation from Partners, Founders and Sales Leaders - ensuring a variety of viewpoints represented in our discussions.

I particularly enjoyed the discussion around which profile to hire at which stage!"

_____

Ellen Chisa
Boldstart Ventures

"Making a strong first sales hire is akin to drafting a star athlete who has a unique blend of talent that can drive revenue.

Strive has the expertise to hire that initial startup sales athlete as well as the network to help build the team around them!"

_____

Michael Fox
Rezonate

"This was an excellent Roundtable with a great mix of people.

I would recommend Strive events to VC Investors, Founders and GTM Leaders alike!"

_____

Ali Mahmoud
Glasswing Ventures

Early-Stage Sales: VC Best Practices

Due to the attendees on the evening, a focus was around how VCs should support companies who are starting from zero - and what is important to consider from inception.

It was discussed that a Partner's involvement in this stage is managing expectations (or at times even "crushing dreams" as discussed on the evening). Founders, of course, believe they have a strong idea and Partners will need to manage their expectations and step in when needed to advise that certain things aren't possible.

Some ideas of how VCs can support their Founders were:

• Opening up their Network to the Founder - potential customers.

• Supporting with Hiring - some Founders can be reluctant to hire, so the VC should support with advising them when to bring in Key Strategic hires.

• Offering Strategic Advice and providing Guidance.

• Creating 'Centres of Excellence' - and bringing their Founders into these, enabling Best Practices to be shared across the Portfolio.

• Managing expectations when things are not working out.

Click For Further Info

Scale with Strive Podcast: 'Lessons from an Entrepeneur' with Philippe Humeau

What types of profile to bring into your business - and when?

A big topic of conversation on the evening was around Founder-led Sales versus a Founding AE / VP of Sales.

There was debate around which approach is best and at which point should you change your model.

The consensus on the evening was that the Founder should be leading most of the deals until at least $2m ARR.

Once hiring, the discussion leaned to whether this should be a Player-Coach VP of Sales or if a business should look to hire Founding AEs first.

The general feeling was that if a VP of Sales was to come in at below $1m ARR, they would probably not be the best VP, in terms of opportunity. A suggestion was made to hire this role once the business has hired 5 – 6 heads, to give them more for them to go after / a greater opportunity to succeed.

The different type of profile required at this stage, was also discussed and the analogy of the 'Artist versus Athlete' hiring profile was highlighted.

Some attendees discussed the benefit of hiring mature Reps who have already worked in a sub $1m ARR business and therefore have the 'battle scars' of a start-up world, but also have the balance of a strong network to discuss the product with.

It was discussed some of the key things to look for in a hire would be someone:

- With a large network.

- With battle scars from a startup.

- Who can create the process.

- Who can liaise with product teams and liaise with customers on what features they want the product to have.

Click For Further Info

When to Hire Sales Leaders Document

The Seven Traits of Successful Sales People

Scale with Strive Podcast: 'Emotional Intelligence' with Alex Pierrin-Neron

How to make the Correct Hire

It was discussed that the right hire will always consist of the **Right Person** in the **Right Seat** at the **Right Time.**

The 'cost of a mis-hire' was debated, with attendees keen to discuss whether a business should over-hire at this stage in anticipation of not all hires succeeding in role – an example give was to hire 3 Reps in anticipation of 1 (max 2) of them succeeding. If only 1 hire was made, there is a risk of potentially being behind budget if they don't perform?

A final conversation was around the importance of using your network to hire, but also being aware of when you require specialist agency support – an example on the evening was for a PMM role. When early-stage companies are hiring, every role is key, and the best route to market for those candidates should be taken.

Click For Further Info

Whitepaper - Creating for Scale: How to optimise your recruitment process for accelerated growth

Strive Solutions - How can we support you?

The Scale with Strive Podcast

The Interview Process

The interview process was discussed across the group and whilst everyone agreed it should be a streamlined experience, it was also agreed to not fall into the trap some Founders do of having two interviews with a potential hire and moving to offer stage, without adding some 'difficulty' into the process. Making the hire work for the role, can actually make them want it more, than taking them through a short easy process.

It was agreed across the board, that the process required structure and the use of Scorecards was heavily discussed. A suggestion an attendee had, was to get all those involved in the interview process on one call at the end of process, to discuss feedback using the

Scorecards as prompts and to remove any bias in the process. This structure should make internal decision making easier.

An example of a 'best practice' process was as per the diagram to the right-hand side and a perfect 'hiring equation' was discussed as being:

<div align="center">

Documented Process
+
Specialist Recruiter
+
Scorecard

</div>

Click For Further Info

Interview Questions and Quick Tips Guide

Google's Guide to Hiring
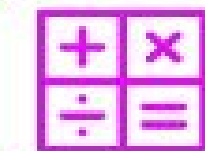
Strive Solutions - How can we support you?

Specialist Recruiter
Someone you are able to consult with about the type of hire required, to allow them to source the correct individual.
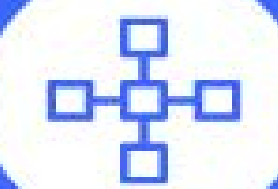
Discovery
High level overview discussion. Find out about candidate, sell the business and talk through the current status quo.
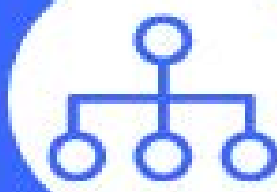
Product
Demo an example of how your product works / discuss existing customers.

Deep Dive
A breakdown into Sales Playbooks, previous success, characteristics and suitability.

Panel
Final stage including validation around their presenting and strategic skills.

Contact Us

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Book a Call   in

Founded in 2017, Strive is a specialist go-to-market talent partner whose network spans the globe.

With offices in the UK and US and a headcount of 30, Strive has the size to offer talent acquisition services at scale, whilst also the capability to deliver on strategic hires.

Working with leading VC's, Strive has helped scale their portfolio of B2B SaaS companies, placing key hires within the go-to-market function.

Scaling go-to-market teams for the world's leading, VC-backed SaaS companies.

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