Zara Consulting1

STRATEGIC MARKETING & SALES ADVISORY

A clearer market position.
A stronger commercial model.

Customer choices, sales execution
and the economics of sustainable growth.

From strategic focus to practical commercial action

01 **Choose the market**

02 **Define the value**

03 **Enable the sale**

04 **Improve the return**

Marketing connects the market with the way the business earns money.

We help companies decide whom to serve, what to offer and how to turn those choices into commercial results.

Marketing begins with understanding customers and choosing a competitive position. It continues through product and service design, pricing, distribution, communication and the customer experience. Sales contributes information and executes the commercial relationship within that wider system.

When these choices are disconnected, companies can spend more on promotion without solving the reason customers do not buy. ZaraConsulting1 helps management examine the complete commercial model, identify where it loses effectiveness and define a coordinated response. The work connects market insight with the practical ability to sell, deliver and earn an acceptable return.

The client’s benefit

A shared commercial direction that links market choices, sales activity, operational capability and financial outcomes.

Strategy sets the choices. Operations make them work.

Marketing and sales remain connected through a shared customer proposition and a coordinated operating plan.

Business question	Strategic choice	Operational application
Which customers?	Priority needs and target segments	Account selection and qualification
Why choose us?	Positioning and differentiation	Proposals, messaging and proof
What do we offer?	Products, services and price logic	Range, terms and discount approvals
How do we reach buyers?	**Channel and relationship model**	**Campaigns, selling and follow-up**

WHAT WE CONNECT

Market analysis, strategic choices, commercial routines and delivery requirements in a practical plan.

Growth needs a sound economic and financial foundation.

Higher sales can bring thinner margins, more complexity and a larger requirement for cash.

A business may win additional orders through discounting, extended payment terms or demanding service commitments. Revenue rises, but the company may need more inventory, staff and customer credit while earning less on each sale. The resulting growth can place pressure on both profitability and liquidity.

We evaluate which types of growth are worth pursuing and which may weaken the company. Sometimes the appropriate choice is to focus on a profitable segment, improve pricing or simplify the offer before expanding. Sustainable development means choosing a commercial path that the organization can deliver and finance, including situations where rebalancing is more valuable than indiscriminate expansion.

Practical output

Commercial priorities evaluated against contribution, delivery capacity and working-capital requirements, rather than revenue alone.

The real competition includes the customer’s alternative.

Companies compete for a purchasing decision, not simply against firms selling a similar product.

We identify direct competitors serving comparable customers, but also substitutes, internal solutions and the choice to postpone a purchase. These alternatives can explain lost sales even when management believes its product is technically superior. Price is one factor alongside reliability, convenience, risk, availability and the effort required to change supplier.

The analysis considers the customer segment and the criteria that matter in its buying process. We then compare the company’s offer with the alternatives on those criteria, looking for strengths that customers value and that the business can sustain. This replaces broad claims about quality with a more specific explanation of where and how the company can compete.

Practical output

A competitor and alternatives assessment linked to customer decision criteria and defensible points of differentiation.

The company may contain several different businesses.

A single sales total can conceal segments with different customers, economics and development prospects.

We map business areas by customer need, product or service, channel and geography where relevant. The purpose is to identify activities that require different commercial choices, rather than reproduce the organization chart. A consumer offer and an industrial service may share capabilities while facing very different buyers, sales cycles and support requirements.

For each area, we examine demand, competition, revenue quality, contribution and the resources required to serve customers. We also consider future needs and whether existing capabilities will remain relevant. This provides the basis for deciding which areas to develop, repair, maintain or reconsider, including activities whose importance is hidden by their current size.

Practical output

A business-area map and a structured comparison of attractiveness, competitive position, economics and resource demands.

A useful segment leads to a different commercial decision.

Customers should be grouped by needs and buying behavior, as well as by size or industry.

Two customers with similar revenue may require different service levels, decision processes or delivery models. Conversely, customers from different industries may share a need that the company can address with the same offer. We look for groups where the differences justify a specific approach to pricing, channels, support or sales effort.

Target selection then considers both market potential and the ability to compete profitably. We examine access to buyers, the length of the sales cycle, concentration risk and the cost to serve. The result is a clear view of whom to prioritize, whom to serve differently and which opportunities should not absorb scarce resources at the present stage.

Practical output

Priority customer profiles and segment choices translated into practical commercial rules and resource allocation.

The analysis starts with customers and actual commercial behavior.

Internal beliefs become more useful when they are compared with evidence from the market.

We combine available market information with the company’s sales history, customer feedback, lost opportunities and service experience. Customer interviews can reveal why an offer wins, where buyers experience friction and which needs remain unmet. Research methods are selected for the business question, rather than used as an end in themselves. [1]

We distinguish a recurring signal from a small or unrepresentative sample. Findings are documented with their sources and limitations, then translated into hypotheses that can be tested through a revised offer, a targeted campaign or a commercial pilot. The objective is to improve a decision, not to create an impressive research report without an operational consequence.

Practical output

An evidence-based view of customer needs, buying obstacles and opportunities for differentiation, with clear gaps for further validation.

Commercial focus means making explicit choices.

Trying to serve every customer with every product can dilute both the offer and the organization’s capabilities.

We examine whether the company is competing across more products, channels or customer groups than its resources can support. The question is not simply whether an opportunity exists, but whether it is attractive relative to the alternatives and the company’s strengths. A weak position may justify redesign or a pilot before a decision to withdraw.

The strategic discussion sets priorities and identifies activities to reduce, simplify or defer. Management can then concentrate investment and attention where the company has a credible advantage. We also consider dependencies between business areas so that a local decision does not damage an important customer relationship, shared capability or source of future opportunity.

Practical output

A focused commercial strategy explaining where to compete, how to win and what the company will stop or postpone.

A strong position explains why this customer should choose you.

Differentiation must be meaningful to the buyer and consistent with what the company can deliver.

We translate capabilities into customer outcomes: reduced downtime, simpler purchasing, reliable delivery, specialist support or another benefit supported by evidence. Broad statements such as “high quality” become more useful when the company explains what the customer experiences and why the offer is better suited to a particular need.

The positioning also needs consistency across pricing, proposals, sales conversations and service. A premium claim can be undermined by continual discounting or an unreliable delivery process. We help define the proposition, the evidence that supports it and the implications for the organization, so that differentiation shapes the business rather than appearing only in its promotional materials.

Practical output

A positioning statement, value proposition and supporting proof points that sales and operations can use consistently.

The product, price and route to market must work together.

A commercial strategy becomes tangible through the design of the complete customer offer.

We review the core product or service together with packaging, support, warranties, delivery options and contractual terms. The customer may value convenience or reduced risk more than an additional technical feature. An offer can also become unnecessarily complex, creating sales friction and costs that do not generate a corresponding benefit.

The marketing mix connects these choices with price, distribution and communication. We assess whether the proposed combination fits the target segment and can be delivered at an acceptable contribution. Where useful, we simplify the range or develop service tiers so that customers understand the differences and the company can manage the economics of each option.

Practical output

An offer architecture and marketing mix linked to customer priorities, competitive position and the cost of delivery.

Pricing decisions deserve the same discipline as cost decisions.

Discounts and extended terms can change the economics of a sale more than the headline revenue suggests.

We examine realized prices after discounts, rebates, returns and channel charges. We also look at service commitments, payment terms and exceptions that create additional cost or cash absorption. Differences between customers may reflect a deliberate strategy, but they may also reveal inconsistent negotiation or outdated agreements.

The work combines customer value and competitive context with contribution economics. We help define pricing boundaries, discount authority and the evidence needed for exceptions. Sales teams gain a clearer framework for negotiating the whole commercial package instead of relying on price reductions to close an order. The following example shows why a small discount can require a substantial increase in volume.

Practical output

A pricing and terms review, an exception-approval framework and a clearer view of the margin consequences of commercial choices.

A 5% discount needs 25% more volume to preserve contribution.

Single-product illustration. Variable cost per unit remains $75. Fixed costs and capacity are unchanged.

Measure	Original price	After discount
Selling price per unit	$100	$95
Variable cost per unit	$75	$75
Contribution per unit	$25	$20
Units sold	1,000	1,250
Total contribution	**$25,000**	**$25,000**

COMMERCIAL IMPLICATION

1,000 × $25 ÷ $20 = 1,250 units. Additional capacity, service cost or credit exposure would increase the challenge. This is an invented example.

The right channel reaches customers at an acceptable cost.

Direct selling, distributors, partners and digital channels create different economics and responsibilities.

We assess how target customers discover, evaluate and purchase the offer, then compare the channels available to reach them. A partner may accelerate access while reducing margin or visibility over the customer relationship. A direct channel may preserve control but require more sales capacity, marketing expenditure and service infrastructure.

The plan considers coverage, incentives, channel conflict, support and the information needed to evaluate performance. Channel choices are connected to the sales process and the operating model, including who owns the account and resolves service issues. We recommend testing material assumptions before expanding a channel whose conversion economics or delivery requirements remain uncertain.

Practical output

A channel strategy with roles, economics, target customers and a practical approach to evaluating performance.

More activity is useful when it creates relevant opportunities.

Campaigns and digital tools should serve a defined customer and commercial objective.

We connect messaging, content and channel selection with the customer’s decision process. An awareness campaign, a product demonstration and a referral program address different needs and should not be judged by the same measure. A campaign brief clarifies the audience, offer, intended response, budget and follow-up responsibilities.

Automation and AI may support research synthesis, content preparation or lead handling where appropriate. Their use still requires reliable inputs, human review and approved treatment of customer information. We assess the commercial result through qualified opportunities, contribution and customer development rather than relying only on impressions, clicks or the volume of generated contacts.

Practical output

A demand-generation plan and test briefs that connect spending, customer relevance and the sales team’s ability to follow up.

A clear sales process turns strategy into consistent action.

Commercial effectiveness depends on how opportunities are qualified, developed and followed through.

We map the steps from initial contact to purchase and define the evidence required to move an opportunity forward. The process should reflect how the customer buys, including decision makers, budget, technical evaluation and approval requirements. Sales activity without a clear next step can consume time while creating little additional confidence in the forecast.

The review examines qualification, proposals, negotiation and follow-up, as well as the reasons opportunities stall or are lost. We identify where coaching, better materials or a change in the offer may help. Opportunity stages, owners and dates provide a shared management language while leaving room for judgment in complex sales. [3]

Practical output

A sales-process map, qualification criteria and opportunity-review routines adapted to the company’s market and sales cycle.

A pipeline becomes useful when stages have a clear meaning.

One completed cohort of 100 initial leads. All stages and outcomes are illustrative, not a benchmark or a forecast.

Stage / result	Count	Conversion / interpretation
Initial leads	100	Contacts entering the defined cohort
Qualified opportunities	40	40% of initial leads
Proposals	20	50% of qualified opportunities
Won orders	5	25% of proposals; 5% of initial leads
Order value at $20k each	**$100,000**	**Bookings, not automatically recognized revenue**

ECONOMICS TO INVESTIGATE

At 35% order contribution, $100k produces $35k before campaign and other selling costs. A $20k campaign leaves $15k before those other costs, without proving causal ROI.

Shared definitions make the handoff between teams work.

A CRM system supports the process when responsibilities and data quality are already clear.

We define what constitutes a relevant lead, an accepted opportunity and a completed handoff. Marketing and sales agree on the information required, response expectations and the feedback needed to improve targeting. Lost and disqualified opportunities become a source of learning rather than disappearing from the discussion.

The CRM records the essential facts: customer need, stage, value, expected timing, owner and next action. Historical outcomes help test conversion assumptions, while regular reviews identify stale or duplicated records. We distinguish pipeline, forecast, orders, recognized revenue and cash collections so that commercial management does not treat them as interchangeable measures.

Practical output

Shared definitions, a practical CRM data standard and a reporting framework connecting marketing, sales, operations and finance.

The customer relationship continues after the first order.

A development strategy should consider both acquiring customers and earning the right to retain them.

We examine onboarding, delivery, support, complaints and repeat purchasing to identify where customers experience value or frustration. For recurring relationships, renewal or repeat-order patterns can reveal whether the initial sale is becoming a durable source of business. The relevant measure depends on the model, rather than assuming every company operates a subscription.

Account development then focuses on customer needs, service performance and the economics of the relationship. Cross-selling or additional services should address a relevant problem rather than create unwanted complexity. We also assess concentration and payment behavior, so that protecting a large account does not mean accepting unlimited commercial concessions or unmanaged credit exposure.

Practical output

A retention and account-development approach linked to customer experience, contribution, concentration and appropriate service commitments.

The company must be able to deliver its chosen position.

A commercial promise creates requirements for people, systems, service and operating capacity.

We assess whether the organization can support the priority segments, channel strategy and expected volumes. A proposition based on rapid response needs available expertise and a clear escalation process. A low-price position requires a cost structure capable of sustaining it. A broader offer may create training, inventory and coordination demands.

The implementation plan links commercial changes with operational responsibilities, capacity and investment. Incentives and reporting should support the desired behavior, including margin and customer outcomes where relevant. This helps prevent a situation in which sales promises a benefit that operations cannot reliably provide, damaging both the customer relationship and the financial return.

Practical output

A commercial operating model defining responsibilities, delivery requirements, resource needs and the changes required to support the strategy.

The commercial plan must also be financially supportable.

Growth absorbs resources before all of the related receipts become available.

We translate the commercial choices into forecasts of contribution, sales and marketing expenditure, staffing and working capital. More sales may require inventory, customer credit and additional delivery capacity. Extended payment terms can support a sale but postpone the cash needed to fund it.

The analysis tests whether the company can support the growth path and where financing or phasing may be necessary. It also distinguishes one-time launch spending from continuing commercial costs. These calculations help management compare opportunities on their economic and financial consequences, rather than selecting the initiative with the most impressive revenue forecast.

Practical output

A commercial budget and financial implications assessment, including contribution, resource needs and the timing of cash absorption.

A useful dashboard explains results and points to a decision.

Commercial reporting should connect customer response, sales execution and financial outcomes.

We select a small set of measures relevant to the business: qualified opportunities, conversion, sales-cycle time, realized price, contribution, repeat purchasing and collection performance. Each metric needs a definition, a responsible owner and a comparison period. Targets should reflect capacity and the available evidence.

Campaign reporting also requires care. Attributed revenue does not prove that all of it was caused by the campaign, and advertising return is not the same as profit. Where feasible, controlled tests or suitable comparisons improve the assessment. Reviews should lead to a decision about targeting, offers, spending or execution, rather than adding numbers without changing how the business operates. [2]

Practical output

A commercial dashboard and review cadence connecting activity with outcomes, while making measurement limitations visible.

The largest revenue segment may not create the largest return.

Illustrative annual amounts in $000. Segment service costs are incremental to the contribution costs already deducted.

Measure	Segment A	Segment B
Revenue	1,000	600
Contribution margin	25%	40%
Contribution before segment service costs	250	240
Identified segment service costs	180	90
Contribution after segment service costs	**70**	**150**

DECISION USE

Review pricing, service design and customer mix. These figures exclude shared overhead. Assess avoidability, dependencies and future potential before reducing a segment.

The strategy becomes valuable when the company changes its actions.

ZaraConsulting1 can support the diagnosis, commercial choices and implementation work as one connected engagement.

We begin with the company’s business areas, market evidence and commercial economics. Working sessions with management identify the priorities and compare alternatives. The resulting strategy sets out the target customers, positioning, offer, channels and sales approach, together with the operational and financial implications.

The client receives a practical action plan with owners, budgets and review dates. Where included in the scope, we help pilot changes, refine commercial routines and assess progress. This can support a growth initiative, a repositioning or a rebalancing of activity. The objective is a commercial model that the company understands, can execute and can improve through evidence.

The deliverables

A strategic diagnosis, segment priorities, positioning and commercial plan, supported by a budget, action roadmap and management measures.

Sources supporting the commercial planning framework.

Selected external guidance supports the approach. Numerical examples are invented and do not represent client results.

[1] U.S. Small Business Administration	Market research and competitive analysis.	**OPEN**
[2] U.S. Small Business Administration	Marketing and sales plans, budgets and performance review.	**OPEN**
[3] Salesforce	Sales-pipeline stages, opportunity management and conversion.	**OPEN**

SCOPE

Sources checked October 15, 2026. Service scope, deliverables and implementation responsibilities are agreed for each engagement.

Zara Consulting1

Which commercial choices will strengthen your business?

A market to develop, a position to rethink or a sales process to improve.
ZaraConsulting1 helps connect the strategic decision with practical action.

LET’S DISCUSS YOUR COMMERCIAL PRIORITIES

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