LIGHTHOUSE PARTNERS

The Buyer Archetype Field Guide

Five customer types. Five completely different sales systems.

Most Indian businesses sell to two or three of the archetypes in this guide at the same time — and run one sales process across all of them. That single mismatch produces more unpredictable pipelines than any skills gap ever has. A tender committee, a procurement head, an owner-operator, a kirana proprietor and a consultant do not share a definition of the word ‘qualified’. Averaging their behaviour into one pipeline is why the forecast does not hold.

What is inside

- A full profile of each archetype: cycle, decision unit, what they decide on, and how they pay
- The specific failure mode that kills deals in each
- The leak we most commonly find, by archetype
- What each archetype actually requires from your sales system
- A diagnostic to run on your own business this week

How to use this guide

Work out roughly what share of last year's revenue came from each archetype. Read the profiles for anything above 15%. Then ask one question of your own business: does our sales process actually distinguish between these buyers, or do we run the same motion at all of them and hope?

> **THE TEST THAT MATTERS**
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> Ask three of your salespeople what makes a deal 'qualified'. If you sell to more than one archetype and they give you one answer, your qualification standard is wrong for at least one buyer type. If they give you three different answers, you do not have a standard at all — you have three.

B2G

Government & PSU

Tender committees, government departments, PSUs and municipal bodies. There is no single decision-maker — there is a process, and the process is the customer.

SALES CYCLE	6 to 24 months. Budget cycles, not buying cycles, set the pace.
DECISION UNIT	A committee of 5 to 15 people, none of whom individually owns the outcome.
DECIDES ON	Lowest compliant bid. Technical qualification is decided first; price is decided second, among those who survive.
MONEY	60 to 180 day payment. EMD, bank guarantees and retention money tie up working capital long before revenue arrives.
WHAT KILLS DEALS	Technical disqualification on paperwork. Not price, not product, not relationship.
MOST COMMON LEAK	Bidding on everything. An unqualified bid consumes the same effort as a winnable one, so win rate collapses while the team works harder than ever.

What this archetype requires from your system

- A bid / no-bid gate applied before any effort is spent — written criteria, one named approver.
- A compliance checklist owned by one person, not distributed across whoever is free.
- An empanelment pipeline tracked separately from the deal pipeline. They are different games with different timelines.
- Cash-flow planning that assumes 120-day payment. Businesses do not fail on B2G because they lose bids; they fail because they win them and cannot fund delivery.

> **IF THIS IS YOU**
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> If B2G is above 30% of your revenue and you have no written bid/no-bid gate, that single artefact is usually worth more than any other change available to you this year.

B2E

Large Enterprise

Corporates and MNC subsidiaries with formal procurement functions, vendor onboarding and multi-stakeholder approval.

SALES CYCLE	3 to 12 months, extending sharply at the procurement stage.
DECISION UNIT	Typically 5 to 11 stakeholders: end user, economic buyer, technical gatekeeper, procurement, legal, sometimes information security.
DECIDES ON	Consensus plus a defensible internal business case. Vendor risk weighs as heavily as product fit.
MONEY	45 to 90 days. Master agreements, rate contracts and annual renegotiation.
WHAT KILLS DEALS	Single-threading. Your champion changes role and the deal dies with them, usually without anyone telling you.
MOST COMMON LEAK	Deals stall at procurement because nobody mapped the buying committee in month one. The work was done on the wrong person.

What this archetype requires from your system

- A stakeholder map completed before the second meeting — names, roles, and what each one is measured on.
- A mutual action plan agreed with the buyer rather than written at them.
- A vendor-onboarding pack prepared before procurement asks: certifications, insurance, security posture, references.
- Multi-threading enforced as a stage-gate requirement. A deal with one contact does not advance, however warm that contact feels.

> **IF THIS IS YOU**
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> The single highest-return discipline in B2E is refusing to advance a single-threaded deal. It feels harsh in month one and saves the quarter in month six.

B2SMB

Formal Small & Mid-Sized Businesses

Registered companies of roughly 10 to 500 people. The owner, or one function head, decides — often in the room.

SALES CYCLE	2 to 8 weeks. Short enough that momentum matters more than technique.
DECISION UNIT	One to three people. Frequently the founder alone.
DECIDES ON	Return on investment, and trust in the individual selling. In that order publicly; often the reverse privately.
MONEY	Advance or 30 days. Personal guarantees are common and personal relationships carry real weight.
WHAT KILLS DEALS	Silence after the proposal. They rarely say no. They stop replying.
MOST COMMON LEAK	Slow follow-up. In this archetype deals die of neglect far more often than of rejection — and neglect is entirely within your control.

What this archetype requires from your system

- Qualification completed inside the first call. The cycle is too short to spend a week discovering the deal was never real.
- A proposal turnaround commitment measured in hours, not days.
- A follow-up cadence that is system-driven and never memory-driven.
- A defined disqualification trigger, so reps stop spending months chasing prospects who have already moved on.

> **IF THIS IS YOU**
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> Measure one thing first: median hours from meeting to proposal. In most B2SMB businesses this number is the difference between a good quarter and a bad one, and almost nobody tracks it.

B2M

Informal Merchants & Traders

Kirana stores, traders, unregistered retailers and small distributors. The proprietor is the business, and decides in the conversation.

SALES CYCLE	Same day to two weeks.
DECISION UNIT	One person. No committee, no procurement, no delay.
DECIDES ON	Margin, credit terms, ease of return or replacement, and how long they have known you.
MONEY	Cash, UPI or informal credit. Recovery is part of the sales job, not a finance function.
WHAT KILLS DEALS	Credit risk, and a competitor offering two more days of credit.
MOST COMMON LEAK	Coverage and frequency — not persuasion. This archetype is territory mathematics wearing a sales costume, and most firms staff it as though it were consultative selling.

What this archetype requires from your system

- A beat plan with defined route coverage and call frequency per outlet.
- A written credit policy with exposure limits, enforced rather than negotiated deal by deal.
- Scheme communication that survives being explained in ninety seconds at a counter.
- Productivity measured per route and per outlet, not per person.

> IF THIS IS YOU
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> If you sell to merchants, your sales problem is almost never a skills problem. Count calls per day, outlets covered and lines per bill before you spend anything on training.

B2PRO

Individual Professionals

Doctors, chartered accountants, architects, lawyers and consultants, buying for their own practice.

SALES CYCLE	1 to 8 weeks, dictated entirely by their availability.
DECISION UNIT	One person — extremely time-poor and highly sceptical of being sold to.
DECIDES ON	Peer proof above everything. Then credibility, then time saved.
MONEY	Practice or personal spend. Price-sensitive on paper, but will pay for status and for time returned.
WHAT KILLS DEALS	Arriving cold. Without a referral you are competing against their inbox, and losing.
MOST COMMON LEAK	No referral loop. Most firms treat professionals like small businesses, use the same outbound motion, and get ignored.

What this archetype requires from your system

- A referral engine: who introduces you, and what they get for doing it.
- Peer proof that is named and specific. Logos do not work on this audience; named peers do.
- Access through associations and peer communities rather than cold outreach.
- A first meeting worth their time in under thirty minutes, with the value delivered inside the meeting.

> IF THIS IS YOU
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> One well-handled referral into a professional community outperforms several hundred cold approaches. Build the loop before you build the list.

Run this on your own business

Four questions. Answer them honestly and you will know within ten minutes whether your sales system matches how your customers actually buy.

- What share of last year's revenue came from each archetype? Write the five numbers down. They should total 100.
- For every archetype above 15%, do you have written qualification criteria specific to it — or one set of criteria for everything?
- Can you state the median sales-cycle length for each archetype separately? If not, your forecast is averaging incompatible behaviours.
- Does your team's weekly activity differ by archetype, deliberately? Or does everyone do the same thing regardless of who they are selling to?

WHAT USUALLY COMES BACK

Most businesses discover they sell to three archetypes, have written criteria for none of them, and cannot separate cycle length by type. That is not a failure of effort or of people. It is a missing system — and it is the most fixable problem in commercial life.

What we do about it

Lighthouse Partners installs sales systems for growing Indian businesses. We do not train your salespeople into a system that was never written down. We document what your own top performers already do — per buyer archetype — and install it as a sales operating system your company owns.

SALES SUCCESS PLAYBOOK	The install. Eight weeks. ICP and qualification, the deal path, the conversation kit and the operating rhythm — built per archetype, reverse-engineered from your own winning deals.
SALES ACADEMY	The embed. Certification of every seller and manager against that standard, plus a ninety-day ramp for each new hire.
SALES LEAK AUDIT	Two weeks. Every leak found and valued in rupees. Fixed fee, credited in full against the Playbook.
START FREE	The Sales Engine Scorecard at lighthousepartners.in/sales-engine-scorecard scores your system and your results separately, and tells you which of the two is lying.

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