FOR VENTURE CAPITAL AND PRIVATE EQUITY INVESTORS

Seven signs a portfolio company needs to change how it sells.

Revenue numbers tell you a sales problem exists a quarter or two after it started. These signs show up earlier, in the board pack and in one conversation with the founder, chief executive or sales leader.

	SIGN	WHAT YOU WILL SEE	WHAT IT MAY MEAN	A QUESTION TO ASK
1	Deals slip	The forecast is missed and the same deals appear again next quarter.	Close dates aren't tied to steps the buyer has agreed.	"For our three biggest deals, what has the buyer agreed to do next, and by when?"
2	The pipeline ages	Coverage looks healthy, but deals sit longer in each stage.	Deals are being kept open after the buyer has gone quiet.	"Which open deals have had no action from the buyer in the last 30 days?"
3	Bigger deals stall	Small deals close and larger ones don't.	The team is selling a decision made by several people the way it sold a decision made by one.	"Who else at the buyer has to agree, and have we met them?"
4	Losses to no decision	More deals end with the buyer doing nothing than go to a competitor.	The buyer never had a strong enough reason to change, or the person who signs was never met.	"What does it cost this buyer to do nothing?"
5	One person closes	The founder or one seller brings in most new business.	What wins is in one person's head and hasn't been written down or taught.	"Could a new hire describe how we win a deal?"
6	New hires are slow	Sellers hired more than six months ago have closed little.	There is no standard to onboard against, so each hire works it out alone.	"What does a new seller get in week one that shows them how we sell?"
7	Late discounting	Price is cut in the final weeks and margin slips.	The value was never put into the buyer's own numbers early in the deal.	"Do we have the buyer's own figure for what the problem costs them?"

IF TWO OR MORE ARE PRESENT

Any one sign can have several causes. Two or more together suggest the problem is how the company sells, not how many leads it has.

Introduce the company to Closing Foundry for a free Revenue Workshop: 60 minutes on its live deals with a senior operator, and a short written report within two days. The company chooses whether to take it and owns the report.