# Audio file

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# Transcript

00:00:02 Greg Reffner

This is Greg with the abstract podcast and today we have Jake Dunlap, CEO of Skaled. Jake, if you can take a moment to introduce yourself, Sir.

00:00:11 Jake Dunlap

What is going on man? Excited, thank you. I'm looking forward to this conversation. It's very near and dear to my heart as I get up there as well. So I'm the CEO Skaled consulting. We're leading, I think the leading modern sales consulting firm. Really what that means is we're working with a mix of growth stage organizations, enterprise organizations, helping them to modernize components of their sales process and methodology. Sales technology stack and sales infrastructure. So really, just how do you think about scaling? Post this kind of New World that we're in and the different ways that we've kind of ignored for a long time. How do you optimize all this? You know, technology that you've invested in and then how do you invest in a sales methodology? That's not, you know, 25 30 years old?

And so we're partnering with leaders to implement those processes and really are kind of secret sauces. Is the tactical man. I work with consultants in the past I got sick of getting handed a pamphlet of like 500 pages and saying good luck, and you know, our team our team and our team gets really tactical and in the weeds and help with the execution. So that's what we're up to.

00:01:17 Greg Reffner

That's awesome. Yeah, I'm a big fan of Skaled and hopefully one day. You know maybe can afford you guys to come on board and make sure we're optimized. So here we go. We're going to be talking today about teaching old dogs new tricks. So with the reality of the world we live in today, there's an entire portion of our workforce that is having to kind of rethink how they go about selling.

I was trying to do some research and it wasn't too long ago that indeed had 10s of thousands of job postings for outside field sales week ago they had 2000. That's 60 + 1000 roles that are now no longer being filled. And then there's people that need to fill those roles and they they're excited about those opportunities. They have to rethink their livelihood, right? So we're going to be talking about how those people can transition into a world that most of our listeners are probably going to be.

Maybe a little bit more familiar with, you know I've only had inside sales in my in my life and so I don't know what it's like to go from outside to inside, so I'm hoping you can provide some tips and tricks that our listeners can go through so. First one to set some guardrails. Anybody not familiar with outside our field. Sales talk to me. Just let's set up a quick definition. What is inside sales? What is outside sales? What is field sales? Let's just make sure we're on the same page in the language we're using there.

00:02:41 Jake Dunlap

Yeah, I mean I'm just going to say inside sales is centralized or now it can be a decentralized sales motion. We'll call it primarily non face to face sales motion. Some people call sales development reps inside sales reps, but for the sake of this, I'd say let's refer to this as people that are closing deals. Usually, they are of a certain size, you know, let's say 2050, you know. But again, this is changing, so we'll get into that. Yeah, and they're never meeting the customer face to face or in a, you know, maybe a very, very rare instance of meeting a customer face to face. They're closing a deal 100% virtually and hosting. Most of their meetings that way.

I think that's a good, maybe a good high level where a field sales organization is usually in a local market or traveling to a local market consistently in doing, you know, let's call it. And again, I want to talk about, you know, before most recently and then where we go. You know it was probably 30 to 40% of their meetings face to face, maybe 50-60 if they were actually, if they're in market is probably 70-80%.

Or if they are traveling to market, maybe it's 30 to 40%, so I think a lot of it's just how often you're actually interacting with the customer face to face, and I think a lot of times we also have equated there's a difference in skill or experience level between those groups as well, where one has been in the game for 2030 years. The other's been in the game for, you know 5 to 10 an and I think that that's probably at least a high level. I don't know if you'd add anything to it, but that's kind of how I like to do it.

00:04:08 Greg Reffner

Yeah, so it's interesting you say face to face and I think of zoom calls nowadays like face to face to mean something different so that I think that's accurate. I think of like “Glen Gary Glen Ross” like that's an outside sales Rep in my mind going and kind of meeting with people in person.

00:04:26 Jake Dunlap

Yeah, but there. I mean you guys sound like swampland and otherwise but no. I mean I think that there's different levels of outside field for this. I mean yeah, but I think of an enterprise seller. I mean these guys these are, you know, men and women have closed, you know 78 figure deals. So 1% there's a sophistication to that deal that. That that exists, I would say too.

00:04:47 Greg Reffner

It's almost like the pinnacle of a sales Rep's career, right? That's what your strive for is to be that person out closing those deals. Those just $1,000,000 deals. Yeah, absolutely perfect. So when I say you today I'm talking about you personally or scaled as an organization just so we're clear on that. Other companies you guys are talking today? How many are being tasked with or coming to you asking for help on transitioning either their entire sales team or a large percentage of their sales team to this new inside sales world?

00:05:22 Jake Dunlap

Well, this has been a trend for a while and I think that's an important call out like I remember like Salesforce had a state of sales report from like 2016 or something or 17 and it already showed like I think it's like it was in the 40% is like 40% of teams are moving more and more inside sales. So this has been a trend. We've seen more and more that people are willing to makes. 5 6 7 figure purchases never meeting somebody.

Yeah, and so we were already moving this way. Really, what Covid did was just accelerate that an it actually did. One thing that, that I think we I don't hear people talking about, but it's the real reason why I think will continue to accelerate this even further. It trained a older generation. How to use virtual technology. Interesting, OK, that buyer behavior change, not the seller behavior change the buyer behavior that CHROwho's like I like my emails printed out or whatever. She had to learn how to use Microsoft Teams.

Right that that CIO, whoever, everybody has had to learn how to use virtual conferencing now before they would like. Yeah, well, fine, we'll set up a face to face meeting etc. Now they've seen holy crap we can get stuff done. We don't need to meet everybody face to face there was a there was a belief that you know face to face was. A like the only way that things can happen, and that's I think, I think covid has proven that that's just not the case, so I think we're going to see you know, maybe half at least know in the in the near-term percent reduction in enterprise sales, enough field reps if not more overtime, where again, because we're seeing people who are closing six and seven figure deals. And never meeting in person. And guess what? My friends like and again, no matter when this error is, I guarantee we're probably still not doing face to face meetings right? And guess what in in 12 months? We're still not really doing. We're going to be doing them a little bit.

And so this trend is not going anywhere for some time, and so I think that's just an important mindset. Like, you know, you can hire people more and more people are more and more used to this virtual experience, and that's an OK thing. Which means you don't need to hire those people that you know are only the ones out in the field making it happen. Now they do have a different skill set, and that's a different component. But I think more and more companies are going to move toward A and maybe that's it. Maybe we need to stop saying inside an enterprise and just say virtual right? Like because it's not the skill set still needs to be there right? Like just because there you know.

00:07:55 Jake Dunlap

Not meeting face to face doesn't mean they don't need to also have the skill. They still need to have the skills so it's more about like your level of virtual selling. It needs to know you're going to have different teams with different skill sets around. That is, is maybe what I get at.

00:08:08 Greg Reffner

So that's an interesting point. I'm going to go just a little off my questions that I had, and so when I think of some of the tools that a seller has in a field sales role or a face-to-face role. You have a lot of tools that you have in your back pocket, such as being able to read body language, facial expressions, being able to read a room as it's called. Those things sometimes aren't available to you in an inside sales model. You might not be able to read body language if they don't have their camera on. You might not be able to see everybody in the room and so. That's something I might want to dive into a little bit later is does the training that we need to take reps through. Need to change? Is it? Psychology is a body language training or focusing on tone of voice as opposed to body language. We might need to rethink.

00:08:58 Jake Dunlap

Yeah yeah yeah we can go deep on that man. I mean I'm in and I'll give you a high so for me look I started you know I was doing telemarketing in college, right? And then you know my first few jobs were in, you know where inside sales role. Those are the skills you learn dude; I can just close my eyes and hear it. This is interesting. OK, that person is not sold right? I can hear that priority, but that pause, I can hear that. So maybe it's more of a sharpening of their skills that I developed as someone who learned how to sell on the phone.

00:09:33 Jake Dunlap

That for me I don't need to see your face, I just need to hear you talk and as soon as I hear you talk, I've I have enough years of experience. Where I, I've gotten direction on where your head is. And I'm not, and I'm not afraid to ask the question if I can't figure it out. Say hey Greg, tell me where we’re at right now, you know, so yes. There are skills. I think they are going to need to be either retaught. Or remembered that maybe they have the luxury of face-to-face affords you.

00:09:59 Greg Reffner

Let's talk about those skills. Has this workforce been transitioning? As you've gone through the process of engaging with companies over the past few years, are there ways to accelerate the way that companies have been making this transition? We've talked about Covid kind of being a catalyst to move from field, outside to inside sales. I feel like companies are having to make that change quick, like it's not something that they can take a couple years to do. So what did.

00:10:28 Jake Dunlap

I don't know, man. I see a lot of them still holding on. Dude, I was on a call and I won't get into the details, you know, but I was on a call with a whole bunch of big-time enterprise sales leaders from big companies, Workday, etc. And they're just waiting. Count the days till her back in the field, then tell her. But really, we're traveling. Dude, I'm telling you we're not ready so we're not there yet and let me tell you why. Job security. Who do you think makes the most money in the sales organization, the field sales VP?

Well, if that person's skill is virtual, whatever they ain’t paying you $500,000 a year, dude, 750, a million come on man like? Why the value that you know you're paying the sales guy to go out and hunt you know, hunt, go take it down? If that goes away, well, maybe you're only worth 250 now.

I don't know, so I don't think we're fair yet by any stretch. I think a lot of leaders are still holding on. They think we're going to be back at it again if I'm being, you know, perfectly candid, and I think we will to an extent we will face to face, will be back. There's no there's no there, there truly is no substitute for it. With that said, just now I don't think that's what buyers want that much anymore. Especially now. People are going to be cautious for the next two years, probably a year and a half for sure. And so I don't think most companies are ready yet, Greg. If I'm being perfectly honest, I think there's still a. Yeah, yeah, we're going to continue to hire remote etc, but no, of course no. Well we have to have that field team.

00:11:57 Greg Reffner

It's interesting about buyers. I see it's almost every week that I see an announcement of a major company making work from home a permanent thing. How are you going to meet these people in person if they're always remote, always working from home? Like how you going to go meet that.

00:12:11 Jake Dunlap

Don't need to have a coffee and a dinner and go on the golf course and you know it's going to be the same type of thing. I mean to some extent you know I don't know. Maybe as commercial real estate takes a massive hit, and maybe we’ll reimagine the way that offices are built in shared spaces. I don't know. So it will still happen, of course, yes it will happen, and I think it'll just happen less frequently, like let's say in a big enterprise deal. Maybe I will go out and visit this company four times. I think now will happen once, right? Maybe it'll be that big meeting. Or maybe it'll happen twice. I think there still will be plenty of in person elements. I just think the necessity for the volume of in-person is astronomically lower and I don't think it's ever coming back.

00:12:57 Greg Reffner

Right, I agree.

00:12:58 Jake Dunlap

I ever because people don't want it. Dude, do you really think a buyer needs another friend if you know Omaha, right or wherever like no? Like they're not. They don't care about you, they don't like you until you do business with them. And like there's a lot of value in your network. And so I don't want to. I'm not demeaning that at all, but what I am saying is that most buyers need business value. They need people who can help them with their business. Not another friend and I feel like.

That generation would grew up, his relationship builders and ROI calculators, and that's just not what buyers already come to the table like. Hey Glenn, yeah I know I was on G2 and I know every single thing about you and your competitors. Let's cut the wine and dine and help me to understand how this is different and Glenn, I think is screwed. Because Glenn doesn't know how to have that conversation because he's used to relying on relationship building as a primary way to build rapport verse business acumen. And I was talking to a sales leader friend of mine. He called, I wrote this down. It's at enterprise sellers. I think the other big issue is they're going to have to have bigger conversations and they've ever had before as we come out of this. Because more and more executives are going to be involved like, Whoa, wait, what are we going to spend $2,000,000 on? What are we like so they're going to have to up their game? There used to “wine and dine” the mid-level managers and directors. Now they have an SVP coming in. I also think that he's going to talk about other skill sets that I think that these field reps need to brush up on executive presence. It's how to have an executive, because executives definitely do not want to go have a steak dinner with you. The very first thing, no. Hey, definitely now Linda, who's you know, trapped at home with the kids, Linda’s pumped, pumped, through type like for her and her team to go out, you know, and with for you guys entertain and like.

But executives require different levels of acumen and that kind of goes to, you know, kind of hand in hand with what I'm saying here. And so I feel like there are definitely some major gaps that I see you know, coming down the pipe here around that level of conversations, we're going to have to have and what customers really want from a seller.

00:15:08 Greg Reffner

Interesting, so companies that I'm hearing need to. Reevaluate, maybe put ego aside in terms of what customers want from the buying experience. So not what we want as the selling experience, but how are buyers changing? We need to be. We need to acknowledge that we need to. Maybe look at our training in terms of are we training some type of like psychology? Body language component. Into our training, we also need to work on executive presence. You know how we have an executive-level conversation?

That typically you might not be used to having and. So when I came up with the idea of when I talk with you in this podcast, my immediate thought was like toolsets. How do I teach someone to use Salesloft? Yeah, exactly, but what I'm hearing is we need to. There's a couple of more really fundamental things that companies need to start addressing with this transitioning workforce.

00:16:04 Jake Dunlap

But but the tools are a part of it, that they're a perfect example of it. You know where?

00:16:10 Jake Dunlap

Ok well, how am I going to follow up with Jennifer and this one and Todd and this one and like of course you're going to use, you know, Salesloft outreach. You know, like, why wouldn't you like the issue with those tools and the perception will change. And obviously, I think you know like we do.

You know Will complete well over 100 sales engagement implementations this year, right? So I feel like outside of those companies like we know more about this space than anyone and these are just containers of activities and I think enterprise sellers have never quite understood that that you could put 12 whatever is the first touch point can be connect on LinkedIn. The second touchpoint can be mailed them a handwritten letter.

The third touchpoint could be make a phone call. The 4th touchpoint could be sent a Starbucks gift for it. The problem is we people think of these tools as like email call. It's like no dude that was like the one and two and 3.0. Now the sequences were developing or like way more complex than that and so enterprise sellers need to really embrace sales engagement in particular in Sales Navigator because Sales Navigator you know just think about I can sort in every day. I can have my prospects I can sort in my home feed by lead shares. I can see if they shared a piece of content. I can go comment and interact. I can send a DM. Hey John, I just want to let you know I really enjoyed this. Actually I saw Sue Smith over at Honeywell. She put out an article like this. I thought you might enjoy it. Boom, instant value.

And so it's about it's about what these enterprise sellers have to use is it's digital, whether it's learning the digital tools or how to create relationships digitally. That is what I'm terrified for. The 55 year old who's been carrying a bag for 30 plus years, who you know, is it on Facebook or Instagram? And I'm not doing Tik Tok or whatever the hell it is. And they don't get that LinkedIn is it is the modern networking event. It is a networking event in your city, in your industry every single day. And if I went to you, Mr/Mrs. Enterprise seller and I said, hey, guess what in Albuquerque I've got 200.

Directors of customer success in your territory that I sell to you. Will you fly to Albuquerque for a 5-minute speaking spot? Of course you are OK. Well, you just connected with 200 directors of customer success. Why would you post an article on LinkedIn? To them it's the same thing you're establishing yourself as a thought leader. All these enterprise sales leaders need to get and managers and leaders VP's and rats got to get out of their head that LinkedIn is a social platform. It is a credibility establishment platform. It's thought leadership. It's a staff. It's just like how everyone knew Tim was the go-to guy for payroll in Austin. Right? Guess what?

LinkedIn gives you an opportunity to be the Tim around payroll in whatever the thing is, and I think too many people just have not connected the dots here and this whole social selling 1.0 s\*\*\* people rolled out was a massive mistake because they just DM people and they didn't talk about adding Brandon building a reputation on the platform in your space.

And that's where the real value is. That's where that's where the inbound starts to come in.

00:19:10 Greg Reffner

So I've talked with sales reps shaken and they go well. That's marketing job, Linkedin's marketing job. And So what I'm hearing from you, and I completely agree with is there's I feel like the lines between sales, sales, and marketing is.

Is gone like to be in successful in sales? You have to be a good marketer on LinkedIn like you have to put out valuable content.

00:19:33 Jake Dunlap

You have to actually industry by industry company about being you're not trying to be sales famous dude. Yeah that's the issue. Yeah, it makes absolutely not like that mantra. I mean it's almost foreign to me. Like it like the whole core of sales is as a salesperson professional. You need to be an expert in the industry that you serve. It is required to be all time. If you want to be an all-time sales person, it is absolutely required that you know the challenges that your buyers face in the industry and what they do.

Again, when you sit down and have a one to one with someone and you talk about the industry and what's happening. Why wouldn't you share those same insights and then people think you know what you're talking about in the industry? Why wouldn't you take that 5 minutes speaking spot at the trade show? That's all LinkedIn is. It's not about being famous. Does it? Forget marketing man for who cares what marketing is doing? It's about Jake Dunlap man. OK, it markings doing. I'm trying to establish myself as an expert in IoT and facility operations right or whatever it is you sell into.

Right, this is about me because guess what that goes with me for my life. Yeah, nobody will ever take this away from you right? And I think what it could do, which is which could be really interesting right now. People just kind of hot jobs all over the place like this sass company that says company well look man, you spend a time. You got a network of 4000 HR professionals. Might think twice about getting outside HR.

Yeah, I might think you might. You might actually end up thinking you know, maybe I'll stay in this because I got a network of people and then guess what then you actually have a real Rolodex. It's not that fake stuff of like I did business with Tonya. Once these are people that interact with your content on a regular basis, you know. There's just a lot of opportunity right now and we're still early. Early days on LinkedIn early days.

00:21:25 Greg Reffner

So understanding how to leverage. Thought leadership platforms like LinkedIn and so there's a component of.

00:21:33 Jake Dunlap

The other ones too, depending on where your market is. Yeah, it totally is, so you just do the research. They look at your last 50 current customers. Go see where they're active now and not just active in posting, but lurking right like where they?

00:21:45 Greg Reffner

Commenting like comments like yeah.

00:21:47 Jake Dunlap

You know, because that's only I think it's likely. I think it's 3% of people on LinkedIn. Post something like that. They used to be 1%. It's went up since Covid. Yep, you know. It's so most people are lurkers. So there right there, lurking the watch your content, you know? They might not just put out their own content and that's fine.

00:22:05 Greg Reffner

OK, so I'm hearing a couple different things here, so I had one of my good family friends. He was in RV like parts and equipment, door to door sales would go from RV shop to RV shop and he called me a couple of weeks ago. He's like you know I want to get into inside sales. I know that's where I need to be. He's like 58 years old. And he's like what do I need to do to be an inside sales? And I had my perspective, but I've all I've ever known as being an inside sales. I went from SDR to an account executive.

00:22:37 Jake Dunlap

what did you tell him?

00:22:38 Greg Reffner

So I said the thing that I see as the main differentiator between successful inside reps, an unsuccessful inside reps are the ones that listen more than they talk. I said you have to get good at listening and every person who's ever talked to me and said I love talking to people that help me get into sales. I say please don't get into sales right? I said you need to enjoy listening more than you talking and.

I think that was a very different answer than the one he was expecting, right that that to me being able to listen like we talked about earlier and pick up on verbal cues and hear what people are actually meaning beyond what they're just saying is is the thing for me that people need to focus on, but I was curious from your perspective, you've had much more experience in sales. What's the one thing you would give somebody's as advice as to what they should focus on to make that transition late in life?

00:23:37 Jake Dunlap

It's a good one man and I think it's so different between like that example and maybe someone again. He's been like an enterprise sales at Oracle or something like that. You know, with that person I would remind them of the skills that ability to. Knock on a door and someone shows up and you say hey what's going on and then you got to build that part. You got to build report instantly. That's universal. That skill transfers 100% to the inside sales, so remember that. Two is.

Go into that you got. You got to have a little bit of a beginner's mind and not be harder on yourself. You know you got to be able to say, look, this is just the way it is. You know, I'm sure there's probably some skill that I have right now that in 15 years I'm going to have to retrain myself on is what it is right? Whether it's about how to be a leader today, you know and how you need to be a different style of leader then maybe you did 15 or 20 years ago. The world changes and I and I think just having a growth. You know it's tough at that age, but not judging yourself. You know? Honestly, man, that's the number one skill.

If the number one skills in enterprise rep is, you cannot judge yourself for not being grayed out of the gate and think about the things that ability to build rapport upfront. That's universal. That's universal. You hear the smile on the phone. You hear excitement. It's the same. You close your eyes you can picture. I can. I can picture this person's mood in front of me by the speech cadence.

How they talk or tone? You know all this stuff, right? Take what you know and then just think about. OK, well, I've been doing this door to door. What's the difference? Well, I guess I could need to call them OK well.

I'm going to talk to some gatekeepers. OK, what did I do in an office manager showed up and the last time. Well, I usually tell him this. OK, well, can I just do a version of that again? OK, there's probably a lot more similarities than you think. Honestly, I don't think it's do. You still make a little small talk upfront? Absolutely yeah. Do you talk about the kids in the weather? Absolutely, it's all the same, yeah?

I think the key is it's not as different as you think in the tech might just be take a little bit of time to get used to that. Like you know, managing your day-to-day with Tech first. You know maybe other tools.

00:25:40 Greg Reffner

Yeah, absolutely. I think technology nowadays like.

You know I have Salesloft Salesforce Navigator Vidyard Zoominfo. They're also integrated, and they all work so well together that it's really. If companies set it up correctly, it makes it pretty easy to go in and understand how to interact with those tools.

00:26:01 Jake Dunlap

That's right, that's right, and I know a company that can help with that. Actually, Greg. Called Scales, but that's it dude. If I went into sales today, I think about this, I'm like, I would destroy everybody if I had tools that would allow me to remember to follow up with people that were people and I could put in nurture sequences of like this person is a follow up every once a month. This person is a follow up every two months. This works is are you kidding me? I can send an there's LinkedIn exists now.

You know, like it would just be too easy, I would think I could probably work one hour a day. I think I think an average Account Executive job. I could work one to two hours a day and be ruthlessly efficient with how I manage my pipeline, especially as an SDR. No doubt is an SDR. Yeah, I just looking at the data I've always looked at my own data, you know, so again, that's something that's always been hardwired in me. I look at my sales cycle, I look at where I get stuck. I look at my conversion percentages. That's always been hired. Hardwired in the. And so, now that there are tools that can help you to do that even easier. It's just like there's no excuse for not getting better frequently.

00:27:08 Greg Reffner

Love it well want to wrap up here so main takeaways from me. We need to maybe rethink some of the things that we're training, right? Let's not just focus on the specifics of the sale or the product, but are we? How are we addressing things like tone of voice and picking up on body language eye contact? How do we read a room? On a zoom call, right? What are we doing when we have that situation?

How do we use LinkedIn not as a social channel, but as a thought leadership in your space, right? Not talking about your product. How are you adding value as a thought leader, we have to consider what the buyer wants in a sales cycle. Nowadays it's not about how we want to sell, and I know this has been talked about for awhile, probably past 10 years. Buyers, journeys changed.

Like the buyers journey is really changed now, right? Buyers want something different and we have to acknowledge that. And then, finally, like are the companies that if you're going into interviewing a company, you should be asking about their tech stack. You should be figuring out absolutely. Do they have the tools that you're going to need? You need to do some self-education around what successful companies are deploying to help new sales reps manage their day. Did I miss anything that you think would be important?

00:28:24 Jake Dunlap

I think you nailed it man. That was one of the best recaps I've heard in one of these, so I think he got it and I think for everyone out there. So it's all good. It is what it is. Let the world change. Yeah, deal with it. It's time, it's time for us to stop worrying about like we're all dealing, we got our kids, we got to put on zooms, we got to do this stuff. It's time to start making progress forward, right? And so I think for a lot of people it's just accept, there's a little bit of acceptance that needs to happen to.

00:28:47 Greg Reffner

Yeah, love it. Well I appreciate your time today Jake. We're excited to share your words of wisdom with the. The rest of the sales world and keep kicking \*\*\*. I love what you're doing on LinkedIn and it's awesome seeing your Nuggets wisdom, you put out.

00:29:01 Jake Dunlap

awesome man. Looking forward to it.

00:29:04 Greg Reffner

Thank you.

00:29:06 Jake Dunlap

Alright thanks everyone.