



THE CENTER FOR  
SALES STRATEGY

# Whale Hunting: Targeting Game-Changing Advertisers

Strategies to attract major advertising clients effectively

# Introduction to Whale Hunting



# Why This Matters

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## **Value of Strategic Deals**

Certain advertisers provide consistent spend and multi-platform engagement that can transform yearly sales results.

## **Chasing Small Accounts**

Focusing on numerous small, familiar accounts often leads to busyness without significant progress.

## **Whale Hunting Strategy**

Identifying and focusing on large advertisers stabilizes pipelines and elevates reputation for better opportunities.

## **Strategic Selling**

Shifting mindset from busyness to productive, strategic selling.

# Defining a Whale in Sales

# What Is a Whale?

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## Definition of a Whale

A whale is a strategic sales partner providing consistent, scalable revenue across platforms.



## Consultative Partnership

True whales value a consultative, partnership-driven approach, fostering collaboration and innovation.



## Long-term Business Impact

Whales transform businesses by scaling revenue sustainably, unlike big logos that drain resources.

# The Pitfalls of Small-Pond Selling



# The Cost of Small-Pond Selling

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## High Activity, Low Leverage

Focusing on small advertisers creates high workload but limits growth and leverage in sales outcomes.

## Unstable Sales Pipeline

Small-pond selling leads to an unstable pipeline with constant pressure and unpredictable results.

## Missed Large Opportunities

Focusing on small accounts causes missed chances for bigger, impactful deals and significant growth.

## Importance of Time Allocation

Reflecting on time spent reveals inefficiency and highlights the need to prioritize high-potential prospects.

# Adopting a Whale Hunter Mindset

# Identifying Whale Prospects

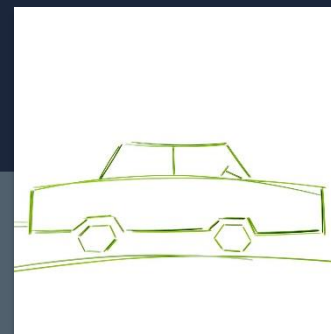
# Where Whales Live

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## Beyond Traditional Markets

Whales operate beyond traditional geographic boundaries, focusing on regional and national audience reach.



## Industry Examples

Healthcare, auto dealer groups, universities, and tourism boards exemplify advertisers investing in broad audience reach.



## Audience-First Mindset

Adopting an audience-first approach helps sellers find advertisers focused on scale and growth opportunities.



# Follow Growth Signals

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## Identifying Growth Signals

Monitoring expansion announcements and leadership changes reveals companies ready for bigger partnerships.

## Rebranding and Hiring Trends

Rebranding initiatives and aggressive hiring indicate increased investment and business momentum.

## Marketing and Digital Investment

Increased marketing and digital spending signal readiness for strategic media proposals.

## Proactive Market Research

Staying attuned to market changes helps sellers approach prospects with timely solutions.

# Quick Exercise: Spotting Whale Signals

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## Audience Engagement

Audience members actively participate by identifying advertisers showing growth or changes.

## Identifying Growth Signals

Participants spot advertisers

- Expanding into new markets
- Changing leadership
- Investing in growth
- Rebranding

## Change in Consumer Behaviors

A shift causing consumers to change the way they buy



# Qualifying and Selecting Whales



# Not Every Big Account Is a Whale

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## Size Does Not Equal Win

Large accounts may seem attractive but do not always guarantee success or strategic alignment.

## Critical Evaluation Factors

Access to decision-makers, alignment with offerings, and realistic timelines are key to account viability.

## Learning from False Whales

Sharing experiences of misguided large accounts helps improve discernment and resource allocation.

# Whale Qualification Criteria

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## **Top 10 Account Potential**

Assess whether the prospect has the potential to grow into a top 10 valuable account for impactful sales focus.

## **Access to Decision-Makers**

Evaluate the ease of connecting with key decision-makers to accelerate sales progress effectively.

## **Strategic Partnership Openness**

Identify prospects open to strategic partnerships for long-term collaboration and mutual growth.

## **Realistic Progress Timeline**

Consider a feasible time frame, typically 6 to 18 months, for significant progress with the account.



# The Three-Phase Whale Approach



# Approaching a Whale: The Three Phases

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## **Preparation Phase**

Conduct thorough research on the advertiser's business, growth pressures, and competitive landscape.

## **Access Phase**

Craft a Valid Business Reason that shows relevance and understanding of the advertiser's specific needs.

## **Persistence Phase**

Maintain consistent professional follow-up with a 'Don't Give Up' plan to build lasting partnerships.

# Phase 1: Preparation

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## **In-depth Business Research**

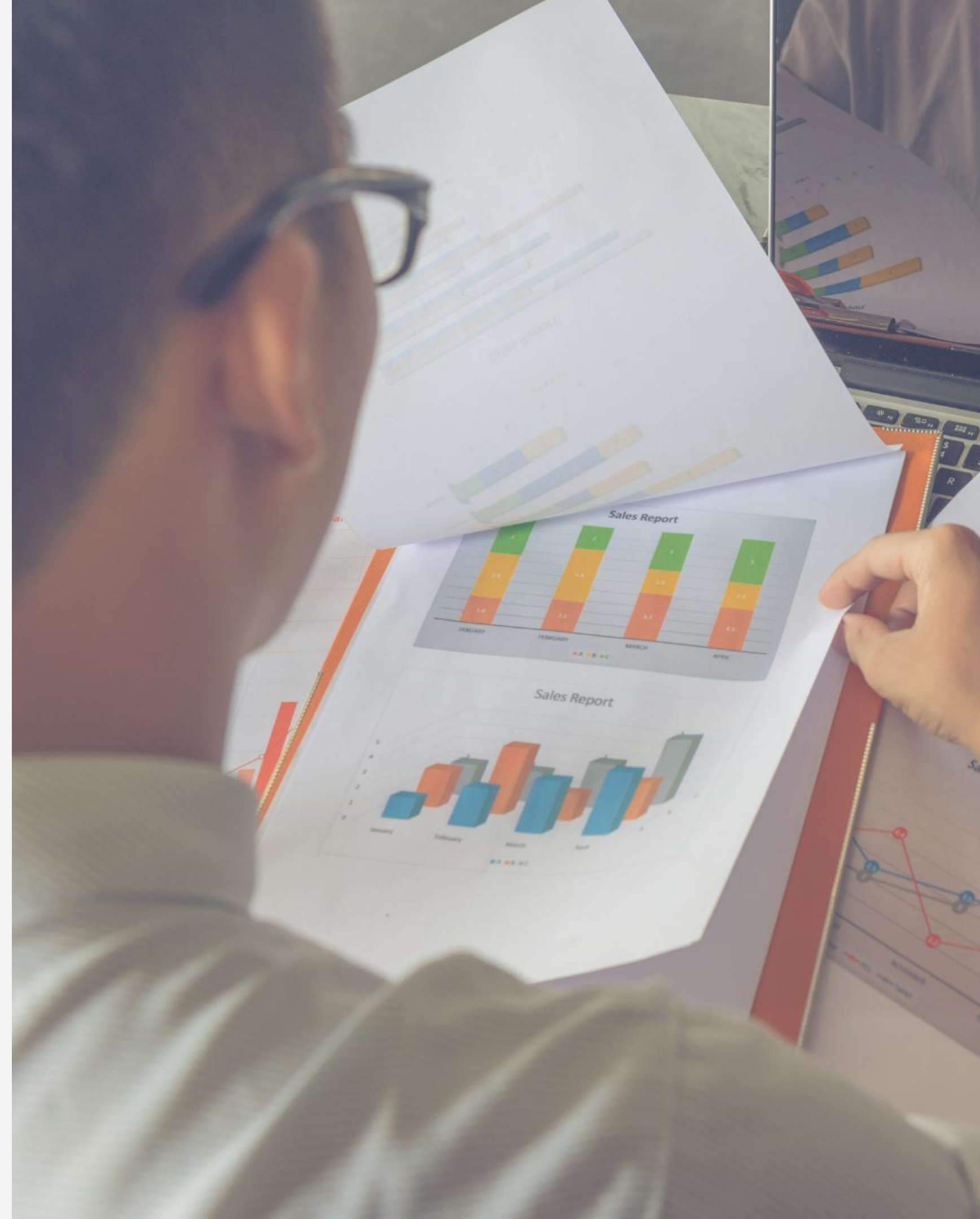
Successful preparation requires understanding the advertiser's business model and growth drivers beyond surface-level data.

## **Competitive and Market Analysis**

Analyze competitive pressures and recent market moves to grasp strategic priorities influencing the advertiser.

## **Strategic Outreach Readiness**

Outreach must be based on clear articulation of how the advertiser makes money and their growth positioning.





# Phase 2: Access

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## **Tailored Valid Business Reason**

Deliver a compelling VBR customized to the advertiser's unique challenges and opportunities.

## **Lead with Relevance**

Demonstrate clear understanding of the advertiser's situation to engage effectively.

## **Use Concrete Examples**

Showcase how solutions have successfully addressed similar client needs to build trust.

# Phase 3: Persistence

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## Importance of Persistence

Consistency in follow-up is crucial when engaging busy, high-value clients who may respond slowly.

## Value-Added Touchpoints

Each interaction should provide value, maintaining professionalism and relevance with potential clients.

## Resilience in Relationship Building

Silence is not rejection; staying visible and relevant fosters long-term client relationships.



# Action Planning and Conclusion



# Your Action Plan

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## Identify Top Prospects

Sellers should identify three whale prospects and rank them based on their chances of winning.

## Develop Valid Business Reason

Write a strong Valid Business Reason for the top target to justify pursuit and focus efforts.

## Create 30-Day Pursuit Plan

Commit to a focused 30-day plan to maintain accountability and drive progress in landing prospects.

## Intentionality and Persistence

Success depends on intentional actions and persistence through the pursuit process.

# Final Thought

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## **Impact Over Busyness**

Emphasize that making a meaningful impact is more important than merely being busy in sales efforts.

## **Intentional Targeting**

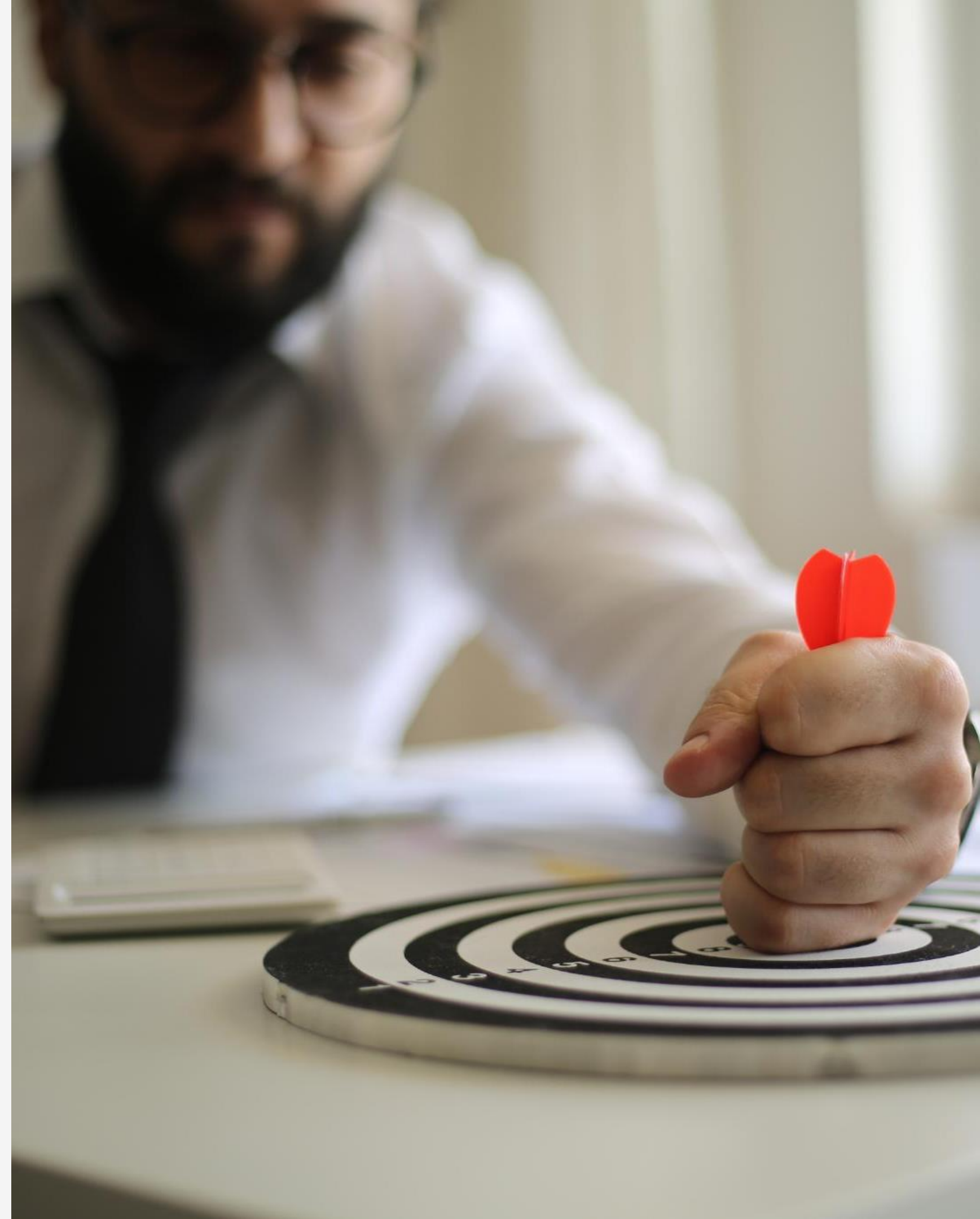
Sellers should choose their key opportunities, or 'whales,' intentionally to maximize success.

## **Persistence and Strategy**

Staying persistent and applying strategic approaches leads to transformational business growth.

## **Career Satisfaction**

Adopting the right mindset and strategies enhances career success and personal satisfaction.



# Questions

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