

ANNUAL PLANNING GUIDE

for High-Growth B2B Companies

A Step-by-Step Guide for Planning a Successful Growth Year Leveraging RevOps

Executive Summary

Annual planning is one of the most important processes the B2B executive team engages in. The annual plan directs the activities of every team in the company for the coming year. Additionally, it sets the expectations of investors and Board members. Company executives will be held accountable for achieving the goals established through this process.

Given the importance of getting the annual plan right (one that is achievable and properly resourced), the historic reality of the process has been one of guesswork, spreadsheet estimations, data extraction and manipulation, and ultimately hard negotiations based on opinion.

Fortunately, we have entered the age of RevOps. Leveraging the discipline of revenue operations and RevOps automation, annual planning can be "I've missed 2 quarters out of 30. At the CRO level, to have that level of predictability, especially in a sales environment that has long sales cycles, is unheard of."

- Greg Jones, CRO, Bizzdesign

transformed into an efficient, fact-based, methodical process that produces a highly accurate and achievable set of targets. In addition, the process itself is a forcing function to validate budgets and investment areas to ensure success. How is RevOps doing this?

The governing philosophy of RevOps is that the growth function of a business is a repeatable process. A repeatable process can be standardized, measured, and optimized over time. If you have a standardized process, you can model the characteristics of that process and project its performance. Then you can measure how your process is actually performing in practice and detect deviations against the model. Negative deviations may indicate areas for improvement, positive deviations may indicate opportunities for increased investment.

Why does this matter during annual planning? Because using a RevOps model allows executives to confidently validate their growth targets against their current pipeline and performance. The model will reveal exactly what their pipeline at current execution performance will yield in the coming year. Beyond that, it will reveal where the performance gaps are if higher growth is desired and allow the company to prioritize resource investment to close those gaps.

In this guide, we provide a step-by-step guide to RevOps-based annual planning. We use examples from our RevOps platform, ayeQ, to show you exactly how it is done in practice. The process and the resulting foundation created in ayeQ creates a RevOps Command Center, upon which an executive team can direct its teams, monitor progress, and take action where course corrections are required.

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Introduction

In the B2B world, the annual planning process can be contentious, especially when sales targets and budgets are being negotiated. Often, a sales target is set by the executive team or board of directors based on a desired growth trajectory without metrics-based evidence that the number can be achieved. When companies don't have required performance metrics, CROs struggle to validate the number, negotiate alternatives, and sell the number to their team. CROs, along with marketing leaders, also have a hard time justifying additional resources that may be required to hit a stretch target.

Fortunately, RevOps Automation fundamentally changes the annual planning process. With a RevOps discipline, clear metrics and models are used to transform the discussions from opinion to fact. The result is a completely aligned growth function set up to succeed.

With a go-to-market plan based on RevOps, revenuegenerating teams (including marketing, BDRs, sales, account management) will be aligned with each other, as well as finance, strategy and operations. This alignment shifts the organizational culture to team-oriented support and success. Everyone knows exactly what they are doing and why, and individual participants are bought in to the plan.

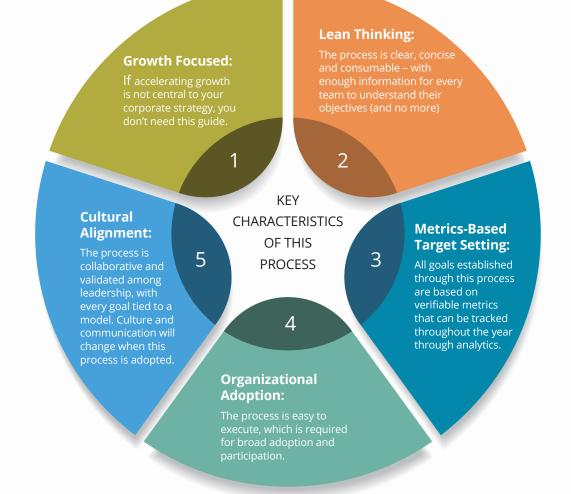
No more guessing at targets. No more spreadsheet estimations. No more "work harder and hope." No more "fire me now or fire me later."

This guide lays out 6 steps to creating a go-to-market plan underpinned with a metrics-oriented goal structure that will deliver on market and Board expectations. This "The predictability of our revenue was transformed. We moved from a "work and hope" approach to a data-driven, evidence-based approach."

– Eric Wilson, Verian COO

process has been proven among many leading B2B companies that have significantly moved the needle on growth, resulting in both strategic acquisitions and public offerings. It is also consistent with the findings of leading industry analysts that have coined the phrase "Revenue Operations," and are discovering the power of applying process-oriented management to the corporate growth function.





In this guide, we show examples of how we use the ayeQ platform to support and automate the annual planning process, creating a GTM, RevOps-based Command Center where everyone knows what's happening, all the time.



Step 1: Create your Go-to-Market (GTM) Plan

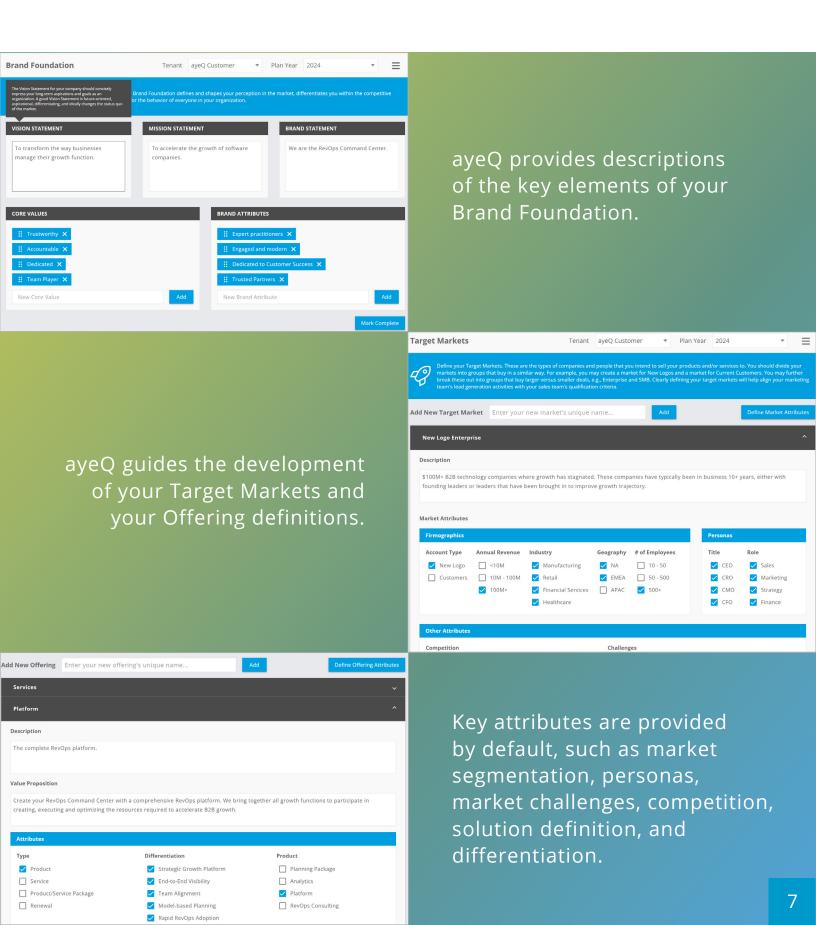
This seems like a pretty obvious step, but often executive teams leave the GTM plan in their heads and move straight to financial targets. Creating and documenting the GTM plan is not only helpful for the executive team to validate their strategy among leadership, but also to focus resources on what they WILL do (and refrain from expending resources on what they WILL NOT do). Importantly, it also lays out the plan for the entire organization. Alignment across functions is impossible if there is not a clear understanding of the company's objectives – why are we doing what we are doing? Every function should be able to answer that question.

For high-growth B2B tech companies, don't over-engineer this plan. You want something that is clear, concise, and actionable. Here are the critical components that need to be understood:

- Brand: Why is your company creating this solution, and how are you leading a team that will be successful?
- Market: What types of companies will you sell to?
- Stakeholders (Personas): Who cares about these problems, and who is responsible for solving them?
- Challenges: What problems are you solving?
- Competition: What alternatives do the stakeholders have for solving their challenges?
- Solution: How will your company solve the problem?
- Differentiation: Why will stakeholders choose your solution?
- Value Proposition: What will you say to each Stakeholder to pique their interest? (This should consider all of the above. You may write your value proposition first, and then test it against the challenges and differentiators. It will be an iterative process.

If you are able to answer all of these questions, every part of your organization will have enough direction to align their plans and resources towards the company objectives.

Example of ayeQ GTM Workflow



Step 2: Define your revenue streams

Revenue streams serve as the connective tissue between your GTM plan and your operating plan. They outline how your company will generate income, forming a crucial component of the Profit and Loss (P&L) statement. Typically, revenue streams are defined by a target market, a specific solution, and a deal type (e.g., new logo, expansion, renewal). These elements are derived from your GTM strategy.

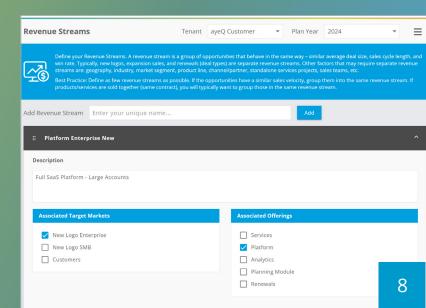
A revenue stream encompasses opportunities that exhibit similar behaviors, such as average deal size, sales cycle length, and win rate. For instance, selling large platform deals to new customers differs significantly from upselling add-on modules. New logo deals usually involve longer, more complex sales cycles, characterized by lower win rates and higher deal sizes, while upsell deals tend to move more quickly, have higher win rates, and smaller deal sizes.

It's essential to define your revenue streams to represent groups of opportunities with similar sales velocity. This consistency allows for effective modeling of revenue streams based on their characteristics. Revenue Operations (RevOps) models are essential for predicting and validating annual financial and operational targets, enabling alignment of goals across all teams.

When identifying revenue streams, consider dimensions such as geography, industry, market segment, product line, channel/partner, standalone service projects, and/or sales teams. Examples could include Enterprise New Logo, SMB New Logo, Upsell Product Line A, Upsell Product Line B, Partner Channel and Renewals.

ayeQ organizes revenue stream definitions

ayeQ organizes your revenue streams, allowing you to assign Target Markets and Offerings to each. These associations will allow your teams to understand how they should segment and position for each revenue stream.



Step 3: Create your initial bookings plan

For each revenue stream, set an annual bookings target and a desired year-over-year growth target. As you plan out your booking targets, take into consideration how you tend to close bookings quarter to quarter, e.g., if you close more in Q4 than in Q3. The result will be a complete plan for bookings across all revenue streams for each quarter.

Generally, it's advisable to start with the most predictable revenue stream, like renewals, and progressively work toward less predictable streams, such as new logo acquisitions in new markets or for new product lines. You may want to start by establishing an expected growth rate over your current year's expected exit.

Your first pass at your bookings plan will provide the framework for RevOps modeling. Your models will show you what each team must produce to hit target. Then you can see how these requirements compare to current performance levels, such as leads generated, opportunities worked, pipeline size, and win rates.

ayeQ simplifies bookings target calculations

ayeQ provides an easy tool to plan your bookings for multiple years. For each revenue stream, you may plan for bookings value or growth, and adjust the seasonality year to year. Your bookings, growth rates, and seasonality will automatically populate your RevOps models for each revenue stream so you can begin your validation process.

2024 Total: \$34,750,000		202 Total	5 : \$57,805,000		202 Total	6 : \$103,972,250			2027 Total: \$25,175,500		
Platform Enter \$8,000,000 (23% of		\$10,8	00,000 (19% of t	otal)	\$14,5	580,000 (14% of t	otal)	\$19, 6	i83,000 (78% o		
2024 Annual Bookings Tai	rget	2025 Anni	/ ual Bookings Ta	arget	2026 Ann	ual Bookings Ti	arget	2027 Anni	ual Bookings		
\$8,000,000	-	\$10,8	\$10,800,000			\$14,580,000			\$19,683,000		
Year Over Year Grov	vth Target	Year	Year Over Year Growth Target			Year Over Year Growth Target			Year Over Year Gro		
35%		35%	(Calculated: 35%	%)	35%	(Calculated: 359	6)	35%	(Calculated: 2		
🔿 Amount 🧿	Percent		Amount	Percent		Amount	Percent		Amount		
Q1 \$2,400,000	30%	Q1	\$3,240,000	30.00%	Q1	\$4,374,000	30.00%	Q1	\$5,904,900		
Q2 \$1,600,000	20%	Q2	\$2,160,000	20.00%	Q2	\$2,916,000	20.00%	Q2	\$3,936,600		
Q3 \$1,600,000	20%	Q3	\$2,160,000	20.00%	Q3	\$2,916,000	20.00%	Q3	\$3,936,600		
Q4 \$2,400,000	30%	Q4	\$3,240,000	30.00%	Q4	\$4,374,000	30.00%	Q4	\$5,904,900		
Total:	100.00%			Reset			Reset				

Step 4: Create RevOps models for your revenue

If you have a RevOps discipline in place, you will have accurate models for your revenue streams that will validate whether your current performance and pipeline size will allow you to achieve the desired bookings. Even if you don't have pre-existing models, you can create new models with estimated sales cycle characteristics. These models will give you a baseline to evaluate the potential bookings that can be generated from your existing pipeline, and how much additional pipeline you need to generate in order to meet your bookings targets.

- RevOps models require a few key pieces of information:
- Average deal size for the revenue stream
- Stage duration length
- Stage conversion rates

The RevOps model should generate the required pipeline and opportunity count for each quarter.

You may continue the modeling process for the BDR function to generate the number of new opportunities that must be delivered to sales, and continue for the marketing function to generate the number of leads that must be delivered to the BDR team.

> A good modeling tool will automatically accommodate growth targets, seasonality, and conversion rates to project pipeline required for future bookings goals.

Revenue stream modeling in ayeQ

RevOps Moo	del		Ten	ant ayeQ Cu	ustomer	▼ Plan Y	'ear 2024		× =	
Platform	Enterp	rise New						Сору То	Sandbox	
Opportu	nity Mo	del								
Annual booking \$8,000,000	gs targets (\$)		Ø	Estimate th pipeline	ne following o	opportunity	characterist	ics to model y	our sales	
Year over year 35% Bookings typic							Target sales si conversion rat (%)			
	QTR 2 20%	QTR 3 QTR 4 20% 30%			Contracts	30	95%	to Close		
Average deal siz	e (\$)				Plan to Close	30	90%	to Contracts		
\$100,000.00										
				1	Proposal/Pricing	60	80%	to Plan to Close		
				Va	alue Proposition	30	70%	to Proposal/Prici	ıg	
					Needs Analysis	30	60%	to Value Proposit	ion	
						180 days total	28.73% total			
	Mou	v Stage Counts	2024 \$8M a	nnual target at \$1	100K per deal		2025 \$10.8N	annual target at	\$100K per deal	
	_	v stage counts	Q1 30%	Q2 20%	Q3 20%	Q4 30%	Q1 30%	Q2 20%	Q3 20%	Q4 30%
Opportunity M		Closed	\$2.4M	\$1.6M	\$1.6M	\$2.4M	\$3.2M	\$2.2M	\$2.2M	\$3.2
Closed opport		Contracts	\$2.5M	\$1.7M	\$1.7M	\$2.5M	\$3.4M	\$2.3M	\$2.3M	\$3.4
Total pipeline v	zalue	Plan to Close	\$2.8M	\$1.9M	\$1.9M	\$2.8M	\$3.8M	\$2.5M	\$2.5M	\$3.8
		Proposal/Pricing	\$2.3M	\$2.3M	\$3.5M	\$4.7M	\$3.2M	\$3.2M	\$4.7M	\$6.4
		Value Proposition	\$3.3M	\$3.3M	\$5M	\$6.8M	\$4.5M	\$4.5M	\$6.8M	\$9.11
		Needs Analysis	\$5.6M	\$5.6M	\$8.4M	\$11.3M	\$7.5M	\$7.5M	\$11.3M	\$15.2

ayeQ's RevOps modeling tool carries over your bookings and growth targets from your plan and allows input of average deal size, stage age, and stage conversion. The model will generate your required pipeline, by stage and quarter.

You may continue the modeling process all the way through the BDR and marketing functions to calculate required goals.

		ation Moo hitles generated orr 2 50% QTR 2 50% 100%		QTR 4 50% QTR 4 50%	Convers	ion rate for eac SQL MQL	h step Inside Sales conversion rate (%) 85% 15%	Sales conversion rate (%) 85% 65%	to Needs to SQL	Analysis
	Qualificatio	n Model Project	ions	Exa	ct Sales Needs 🔻	Q1	Q2		Q3	Q4
	New Needs	Analysis opportu	inities accepted b	y sales (#)		56	56		84	113
Qualifiantian Dinali		del cele							50	67
Qualification Pipeli	ne for In	ISIGE Sale	S Ŧ						50	67
				01	03	02	0		View Q	ualification Pipeline

28

42

50

334

56.5

67

28

New opportunities generated for sales

New SQL opportunities generated New MQL opportunities generated

1	1

Step 5: Validate your bookings plan against resources and budget

With your initial bookings targets input into your RevOps models, you will probably see a difference between the pipeline required and your current pipeline size. This is when scenarios can be run to understand how current performance must change to hit the desired bookings, or if bookings targets should be adjusted to create an achievable plan.

Here are some examples of how bookings targets and resources must be aligned to create your plan.

Bookings targets require larger pipeline size than reasonably possible.

In the RevOps model, what impacts the required size of your pipeline is primarily win rate and bookings targets, with sales cycle length also playing a part. To reduce the required pipeline size, you must either lower the bookings target, increase the win rate, or shorten the sales cycle.

What is helpful in the RevOps model is to see which performance improvements could have the biggest impact on win rate. A point improvement to early-stage conversion rates increase overall win rate the most. How can you improve the quality of opportunities entering the pipeline, or the value proposition of the offering? For later stages, is there an opportunity to improve the proposal process, introduce compelling events to close deals?

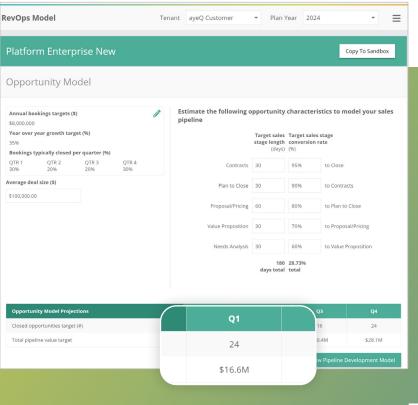
Lead targets required are higher than reasonably possible.

In the RevOps model, what impacts the number of leads or new opportunities required is the average deal size coupled with the pipeline size. If you have a case where the leads calculated in the model are far beyond your historic lead generation levels, you may consider ways to increase your average deal size (which results in fewer opportunities required).

This case also provides justification for increasing marketing investment or BDR resources.

This process enables a metrics-based discussion around setting achievable targets and drives investment decisions in marketing, sales, tools, and training. It also shows how various alternatives should be prioritized based on greatest impact on growth. With a validated bookings plan, the entire growth function can be confident that they will hit their goals.

Validation points using a RevOps model



ayeQ allows you to use RevOps models to validate your bookings targets. Is a \$16.6M pipeline size within range for Q1? If not, what can you change in the model – win rate, sales cycle length? If not, adjust bookings downwards.

	Qualification Pipeline for Inside Sales	*			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	New opportunities generated for sales	28	28	42	56.5
	New SQL opportunities generated	33	33	50	67
				334	447
New MQ	L opportunities generated		220		
					Close

Is it possible for your marketing team to deliver 220 Marketing Qualified Leads (MQLs) in Q1? If not, can you increase the average deal size, or improve the conversion of MQLs to Sales Accepted Leads (SALs) within your BDR team? Can you increase marketing investment to hit that level? If not, adjust bookings downwards.

Step 6: Operationalize your plan with aligned goals

Once your RevOps models have been validated for all revenue streams, you will have the required goals for each team participating in the revenue generating function. Marketing knows what they need to deliver to BDRs. BDRs know what they need to deliver to sales. Sales knows what their pipeline needs to look like at any given time, at every stage, and what they need to close.

This type of alignment changes the dynamic from separate teams to a single team – it is an end-to-end process where everyone must contribute to win together. This is when you begin to see a culture change that takes place through the RevOps journey. There is no more quarreling across marketing and sales. The plan is clear.

As you operationalize these goals, you will likely have strategic initiatives owned by members of your leadership team that support your growth objectives. Ensure these goals are articulated and clearly displayed to your organization. Scorecards are a great way to keep your most important KPIs front and center, providing transparency in goal achievement.



ayeQ operationalizes goals and supporting initiatives

	_						
	R	evOps Goals		Tenant	ayeQ Customer		=
Starting Year	2024	*					* *
Combined Go	oals						
			2024		202	.5	

			2021							
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Bookings	\$8,712,500	\$7,912,500	\$8,292,500	\$9,832,500	\$34,750,000	\$14,991,250	\$13,911,250	\$13,773,250	\$15,129,250	\$57,805,000
Closed Deals	94.8	86.8	86.9	102.2	370.8	161.4	150.6	147.9	164.2	624
Pipeline Value	\$76,658,879	\$74,526,972	\$83,753,717	\$130,473,779	\$91,353,336	\$126,933,826	\$122,904,053	\$165,561,752	\$218,960,492	\$158,590,03
Pipeline Multiple	2.21	2.14	2.41	3.75	2.63	2.2	2.13	2.86	3.79	2.74
New Opportunities	314	307	358	574	1,553	533	526	774	995	2,828
New Qualified Leads	1,206	1,206	1,399	2,133	5,944	1,967	1,967	3,671	3,552	11,157

Platform Enterprise New

			2024		2025							
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total		
Bookings	\$2,400,000	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000	\$2,400,000	\$8,000,000	\$3,240,000	\$2,160,000	\$2,160,000	\$3,240,000	\$10,800,000		
Closed Deals	24	16	16	24	80	32.4	21.6	21.6	32.4	108		
Pipeline Value	\$16,583,681	\$14,805,904	\$20,431,078	\$28,115,288	\$19,983,988	\$22,387,970	\$19,987,970	\$27,581,955	\$37,955,639	\$26,978,383		
Pipeline Multiple	2.07	1.85	2.55	3.51	2.5	2.07	1.85	2.55	3.51	2.5		
New Opportunities	56	56	84	113	309	76	76	113	153	418		
New Qualified Leads	246	246	373	499	1,364	335	335	499	670	1,839		

ayeQ's RevOps models calculate goals across every revenue stream for each team. These goals are viewable in the ayeQ platform and provide the foundation for RevOps execution through the rest of the platform.

Create your Annual initiatives. These are strategic priorities that you customer retention, operational efficiency, or other corporate impro	r company would like to accomplish c vements.		
Add Initiative Enter your unique name	Add		
ii Product Roadmap	INITIATIVE	INITIATIVE	INITIATIVE
ii Customer Retention	Product Roadmap	Customer Retention	Strategic Accounts
ii Strategic Accounts	97% - On Track	99% - On Track	2% - On Track
	Target: 90% On Time Dev Delivery	Target: 97%	Target: 20% Expansion
Description			
Create account management team to focus on growing strategic	Implementation Velocity	CAC	Add Custom Scorecard
	18 days - off Track	5% Reduction - At Risk	(+)
KPI Statement	Target: 10 days	Target: 20% Reduction	\bigcirc
Target: 20% Expansion	Sarah Taylor		
			Delete

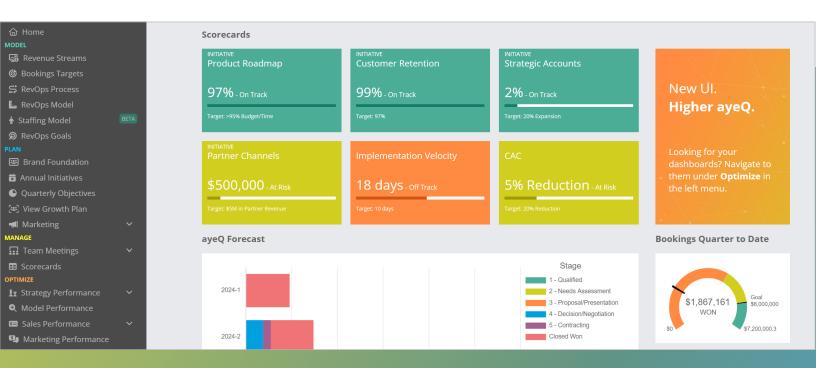
ayeQ also documents the company's strategic initiatives, generating scorecards for the most important KPIs.

RevOps-based annual planning delivers confidence

By using RevOps automation like ayeQ, your annual planning process will be transformed. The time and labor usually required is reduced dramatically – no more analysts running spreadsheets to estimate projections. Our models are accurate and proven, giving you confidence in your projections and validation for an achievable plan.

ayeQ was built for B2B annual planning after decades of experience with this process. ayeQ creates a single platform for creating your GTM plan, setting and projecting bookings and growth targets, automating RevOps modeling for all revenue streams, and running scenario analyses to understand performance gaps and prioritizing investments.

Find out how ayeQ can make B2B annual planning a strategic process that sets you on the path to success for the coming year. Visit aye-q.com to learn more.



"Our annual planning with ayeQ is an established process that aligns executives, sales and marketing with an executable, validated plan that we know we can hit in the coming year."

- Jolene Keeler, Director of Sales Operations, ValGenesis



ayeQ helps B2B enterprises grow faster by optimizing revenue operations – the process dedicated to corporate growth. ayeQ aligns leadership, marketing, sales, and operational teams around a deliberate, collaborative growth strategy, translates that strategy into an executable model, directs the activities of the growth teams, and measures performance in real time to rapidly optimize resources. Now you can see exactly what your sales and marketing investment is producing, and continuously improve the output.