

## 5 Winning Fourth-Quarter Plays



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Time is running out on 2013, but you can still score -- and prepare for 2014.

### 1. Help clients use it, not lose it

Suggest that your customers pay for a first-quarter 2014 pilot initiative or test program in an area they care about, using unspent money from this year's budget. It's a good way to open the door to a larger project, and helps them protect next year's budget, says sales expert Caryn Kopp, author of *The Path to the Cash*. Proposing this idea to inactive customers may help reignite those relationships.

### 2. Show them you care

Chances are many customers are facing a performance review before holiday bonus season or vying for a promotion. Put in a good word with their bosses -- or the top brass at the company -- by mentioning the bang-up results they've achieved when working with you, advises Kopp. The more job security your key contacts have, the better for you -- and they're certain to find out that you've been raving about them to higher-ups.

### 3. Trim your budget now

If you overspent -- or overestimated revenues -- this year make the decisions needed to lower your overhead immediately! Waiting until after the holidays to reduce your spending, as so many companies do, will leave you in a serious cash-flow crunch that is hard to reverse. Position yourself to start 2014 with a focus on growth so you don't spend the first quarter undoing the mistakes of the past.

### 4. React to growth quickly

A sudden surge in sales can sometimes be as dangerous as a dip in revenue, so if you're having a banner year, make sure you "resource up." Get a jump on hiring now -- and beat your competition by snagging the best people. A lot of companies push off this urgent need to the beginning of the next year at their peril, crushing their teams with too much work during the holiday season.

### 5. Keep the pressure on

Haven't hit your revenue goals for 2013? Companies often give up too soon and revise sales targets downward. Let your team show its mettle with a half-court shot in the last quarter. Post a public scoreboard to show each salesperson's daily progress in closing deals, says Chad Carden, president of sales leadership-training firm the Carden Group in Jefferson City, Mo.: "It creates the environment of a close game."