

Guide to Implementing Dynamic Book Management

**Transform your sales productivity
with more modern territory design**

This guide will walk you through everything you need to make the switch to dynamic books.

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Implementing dynamic book management

Dynamic book management is a modern B2B territory design model that continually matches available rep capacity with the best available accounts. It's a flexible alternative to traditional sales territories that helps companies react more quickly to market changes and increase attainment.

A dynamic books approach relies on books instead of territories. Every rep is assigned a book of accounts - based on an account's fit and timing and the rep's available capacity. When a rep converts or disqualifies an account, it moves out of the rep's book and a fresh new account moves in. Rep books are continually refreshed with new high-potential accounts, while cold or inactive accounts rest.

Not all prospects in your TAM are created equal. Some aren't a good fit. Others don't have the right timing. You need to focus on the highest potential accounts that have both the right ICP fit and are in-market for your solution. So how can you be sure reps are working the right accounts when they're ready to buy?

Dynamic book management ensures that all of your highest potential accounts are being worked, always. No more overlooked accounts. No more account hoarding.

This guide will take you through the steps of implementing a dynamic books model in your sales organization.

6 steps to implementing dynamic books

01

Audit current territory design.

Take the time to carefully evaluate your current territory design.

02

Design target books.

Plan what you want your ideal account books to look like, including book size, account criteria and more.

03

Clarify rules of engagement.

Define clear SLAs for sales reps, and establish or updates account ownership rules.

04

Implement.

Set up your CRM, core processes, and reporting structure for dynamic books.

05

Roll out.

Communicate the plan to reps and manage expectations.

06

Execute.

Establish an ongoing process cadence and optimization schedule.

Step 1

Audit Current Territory Design

The first step in implementing a new B2B territory design process is to evaluate the state of your current process. You likely have some ideas about what's working, what isn't, and where your gaps are, but a thorough audit will help you validate these things.

Start with a TAM Analysis

Figure out where the gaps are in your current territory design. Are you missing out on accounts in your total addressable market (TAM)? Where? Start by determining the following:

- **TAM size:** How many accounts matching your ICP currently exist in your CRM?
- **New Business TAM (NBTAM) size:** How many accounts within your TAM are eligible for new business to work?
- **Territory or ownership distribution:** What is the breakdown of NBTAM accounts in each territory now?
- **Coverage**
 - How many NBTAM accounts have reps engaged with in the last 30/60/90 days?
 - What's the breakdown of actively engaged accounts currently owned by reps?
 - How many accounts aren't assigned to reps or haven't been worked in the last year?

For these coverage questions, you'll want to start with some kind of defined SLA around timing. You may have some of this codified now, but you may need to develop some new guidelines as you go through this process (more on that as we go). How often are reps expected to engage with an account for it to be considered active? How long before an account is considered inactive? Most companies consider something like multiple touches within a 30-day period for an account to count as active.

Next, Examine Your Rep KPIs

Consider how you currently measure a sales rep's productivity and performance. What are the important metrics that help you determine whether or not a rep is being effective?

Let's use an SDR or BDR as an example. For each KPI below, determine your existing targets (if any) and look at the last six to 12 months of performance across all relevant reps.

- **Activity levels:** How many activities do you expect reps to perform on a daily/weekly/monthly basis?
- **Account penetration:** How many touches should reps do per contact? How many contacts should reps sequence per account?
- **Quota and pipeline creation:** For roles that are responsible for creating pipeline, what's their quota for meetings set and/or pipeline or opportunity creation?

The exact KPIs you evaluate will depend on the type of rep and the factors that are important to success in your sales organization.

Finally, Estimate the Impact of Rep Performance on Your TAM

Figure out if there are accounts you're not working that you should be. For example, if you've estimated that your TAM includes 5,000 companies, but you've only assigned 2,500 accounts to reps, then you have a big gap.

Also take a look at how accounts are distributed amongst your reps. Are there reps with way more accounts than others? How do the sizes of their territories correlate to their success?

For example, if you learn that a rep has 300 accounts in their name, but they've only engaged with 50 of them in the past month, what does that mean for the 250 untouched accounts? Does one rep have 300 accounts while another has only 75? You're looking for imbalances, and trying to understand how your TAM is distributed across your team.

Step 2

Design Target books

Once you've completed an audit and have a good understanding of where things stand today, the next step is to figure out what your ideal target books look like. A target book is a defined group of accounts to be owned (and worked) by a rep. The best book is one that ensures a rep has the quota coverage they need to achieve their goals.

This is where your initial audit is going to come in very handy.

Book Sizing

Connect bottoms-up capacity with quota expectations using a book productivity analysis to understand your ideal book size. A book should be sized based on the number of concurrent accounts a rep can be tasked with working at any given point in time.

- Use our free [capacity calculator](#) that maps activity levels and account penetration requirements to determine a workable number of accounts
- Figure out book segments (this is your target book design)

There are a few ways to think about this, but you'll need a few numbers, like:

- $\text{Rep quota} / \text{ASP} = \text{Closed-won deals}$
- $\text{Closed-won deals} / \text{close rate} = \text{SQLs needed}$
- $\text{SQLs} / \text{qualification rate} = \text{Total accounts needed}$

An example: Let's say a ramped rep's quota is 10 meetings per month. You have a 10% qualification rate. To hit quota, a rep needs to call on 100 accounts per month.

If you want more information about determining how many accounts a rep should own at any given time, [read this blog post](#).

Fit vs Timing Criteria

What makes an account high potential? How do you decide that an account in your pool is ready to work and should be distributed to a rep? You need to look for fit and timing signals.

Fit Criteria

What makes an account a good ICP fit? Often, companies have a scoring model they've already developed to determine if an account is a good fit or not. If you have one, just use that. If you don't, that's okay. You should be able to just look at individual criteria that fit your ideal customer profile (like employee count, annual revenue, or industry). You can even turn this into a simple score using an approach outlined in [this blog post](#).

What About Bad Data?

Dynamic book management starts from the assumption that some amount of bad data is a fact of life. Because, let's face it - your data will never be as clean as you want it.

But unlike static territory models that require high quality firmographic data and where data issues become a high stakes problem, dynamic book management is designed to be resilient. With dynamic books, reps are able to return accounts for review if they discover there's incorrect data. This alerts the RevOps team to an issue while allowing the rep to continue to be productive with a replacement account. The RevOps team can then resolve the issue and reintroduce the account into circulation or determine the account is invalid and retire it.

A dynamic books approach will actually help you with data hygiene, more consistently flagging bad data for review. So you don't need to worry too much about having perfect data to get started.

Timing Signals

Determine which indicators you have to tell you that an account is in-market for your solution. Which of those indicators would cause you to want to ensure the account is assigned to rep? Put another way, what would indicate a missed opportunity that you'd kick yourself about later?

Even the perfect accounts may not be ready to buy. There are internal and external signals you can identify that tell you how likely an organization is to buy now. Accounts are either ready and in market for a solution like yours (they don't currently have a vendor

for the problem you solve or their contract is almost up, they have budget, something's changing in their company that you can help with) or they're not (they just signed with another vendor, they've had to cut costs, organizational change isn't pointed in your direction).

Here are some of the timing signals you could incorporate in your model.

- **Inbound leads:** If an account raises their hand asking for a demo, that's a strong signal that they're looking to buy soon.
- **ABM or intent data:** If you use an ABM tool, you can get intent or buying stage data on prospect accounts to tell you when someone is likely to be ready to buy.
- **Point of contact (POC) changes:** If a company hires a new person in a key leadership role, this may indicate they're looking for a new solution.
- **Funding announcements:** When a company raises new capital, they often tend to scale business processes, and this may signal they're moving in-market.
- **Competitor renewal date:** When you know when a competitor contract is up with a prospect, you can use this information to reach out a few months in advance.
- **"Get back to me" date:** Sometimes prospects tell you they're not ready for your solution now, but they ask you to get back to them in a few months. Take a note of that in your CRM and use it as a timing signal.
- **Marketing automation scores:** If a prospect reaches a certain score threshold in your marketing automation platform (MAP), that may indicate they've moved in-market.
- **Scraping or proprietary data sources:** Other tools and firms purport to give you additional information about prospects to help you find the right accounts at the right time.

Summing It All Up

Since there are so many possible timing and fit factors, you need to filter and rank accounts on these dimensions. What criteria are most important?

Depending on how your sales team is set up, you may use multiple lead sources to fill rep books. If inbound leads are part of your equation, then be sure you have reliable and accurate lead-to-account matching in place to avoid rules of engagement conflicts.

Use your book size and fit and timing criteria to determine if you have enough capacity to support segments of a certain size. For example, if you want 25 accounts with late stage

intent in every rep's book, do you have enough accounts for reps to work that fit those criteria? Or do you need to expand your criteria to be sure you have enough accounts?

Match Supply and Demand

Determine if you have enough accounts for your reps to work based on your fit criteria, then determine how many of those accounts would be good timing candidates as well. The goal here is to make sure you have enough supply to fill your book segments across all reps. The amount of supply you need will vary based on things like rest period, rep count, amount of inbound, etc. "Enough" usually means something like 3 - 12 months of coverage for your reps. You can't work more than **year length / ("work period" + "rest period")** so you need at least that much coverage.

If you don't have enough accounts, you can:

- Shorten the rest period at the risk of being annoying
- Find new sources of accounts to assign
- Rethink what it means to have "enough" and assign smaller books for now.

The interplay of supply (how many accounts fit your criteria) and demand (size of each book segment x number of reps) will be how you decide if a target book is viable.

Finally, what's the role of inbound leads in your target books? If you have SDRs that are only focused on outbound, then there's no impact from inbound-sourced leads. But if you have a hybrid model, where reps work both inbound and outbound, then make sure you model in the expected amount of inbound leads and their impact on a rep's book.

Step 3

Clarify Rules of Engagement

Next, you need to define or redefine clear working rules of engagement for reps. This will be a cross-functional effort.

Since you're going to be retrieving accounts from reps that aren't actively worked, you need to establish a clear set of rules for what counts as working an account. This needs to be something that's objective, measurable, and can be defined in Salesforce. If this is unclear in any way, it will seem (and may actually be) unfair to reps.

Typically an account is no longer being worked if it's been some amount of time since the last meaningful activity. Depending on your sales cycle, it will likely be 15 to 90 days after the last meaningful activity before an account is considered no longer being worked. Whatever you decide on, write it down, communicate it to your reps, and evaluate it after a few months.

You also need to decide how many accounts should be in a rep's name at once. Your ideal book size will vary depending on sales cycle length, ACV, average touches needed, the number of contacts per account, and so many more factors. You may have different target book sizes for different segments or products.

A few RoE challenges to be on the lookout for:

Deal complexity. If your company has complex deal parameters, like channel partners, accounts with parents and/or subsidiaries, or multiple product lines, it inevitably leads to more RoE conflict. Who takes ownership of a parent company if one of their subsidiaries is already a customer? What happens when a rep who is tasked with selling Product A learns a prospect is talking to another rep about Product B? How do you handle inbound prospects from partners? The more complex your deal profile is, the more likely you are to run into RoE issues.

Attribution, especially as it relates to marketing. Attribution requires accurate lead-to-account matching to be sure inbound leads are always matched to existing accounts when appropriate. It also means you need clear rules about who gets credit when an outbound rep is working a deal that also inbounds around the same time. How do you keep your inbound and outbound efforts in sync?

Dishonest rep behavior. It's not common, but it happens, especially in larger organizations; sometimes reps will deliberately break the rules to get to the better deals. That includes things like:

- Reps hoarding lost or quiet opportunities, or changing opp dates to hold onto them longer than the normal ownership time. These are the Rick Astleys of your sales team (because they're never gonna give a deal up).
- "Salesforce surfers," which is what one revenue leader calls reps who try to attach themselves to a deal in progress for partial credit. You may also recognize these reps as fairweather fans, low-hanging fruit pickers, and the like.
- Reps changing account names or other data to hide an account or make it look like an account should be in their book even when it's not.
- Reps who work a deal through to close, and then discover a "mistake" in the data that meant that deal never should have been theirs. They should get credit since they worked it though, right? Right?!

If you need any help defining or codifying your rules of engagement, we have a [free toolkit here](#). That includes an RoE template and discussion guide.

Step 4

Implement

Now we come to the technical part of the implementation, where you set up your CRM and processes. If you're using software like [Gradient Works](#) to do this, then this is where you'll configure your setup. If you're doing this manually in your CRM, this is where your developers and admins will come in.

Prepare your CRM

These instructions assume you're using Salesforce. If you're using something else, the exact objects and actions may vary, but the general concepts will likely be similar.

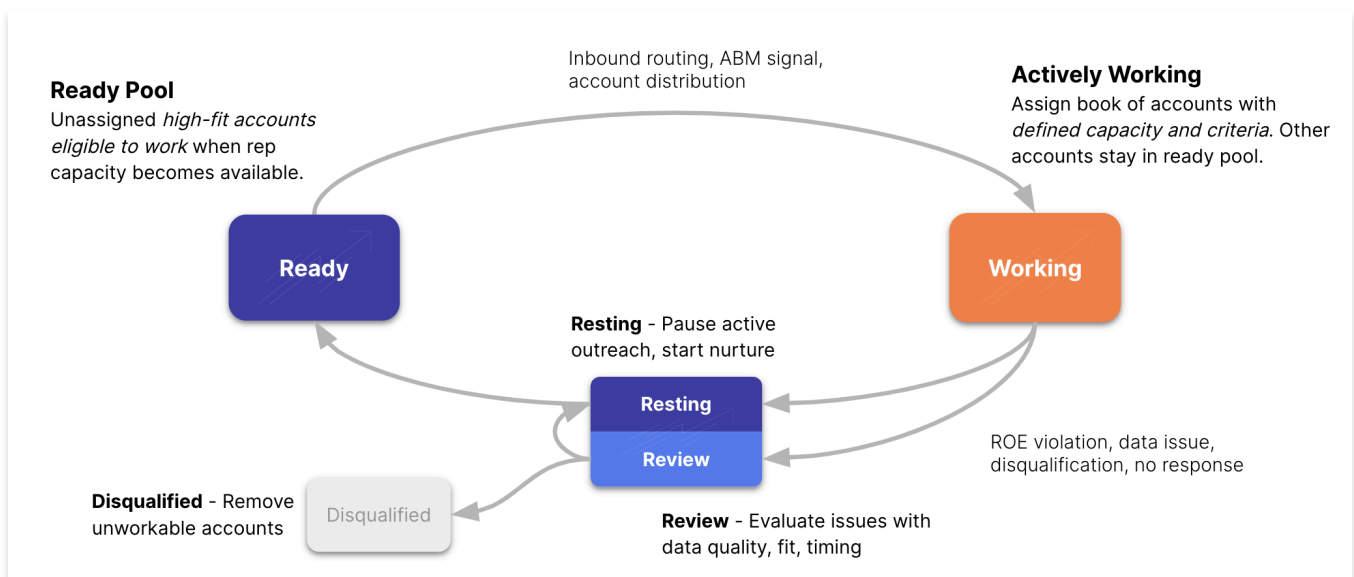
1. Establish an account "pool" user in Salesforce and put all unowned accounts in their name.
2. Establish a "last meaningful activity date" field (we recommend "Last_Touch_Date__c") on Account that you can use to determine if the account is being actively worked. The built-in LastActivityDate field won't do what you want because it'll get updated in a lot of ways.
 - a. You could also do this as "Ownership Expiration Date" that is recalculated every time a user does something to extend ownership.
 - b. If you're using Salesloft you can look at the SalesLoft1__SalesLoft_Type__c field on Activity. If the subject starts with "Sent Email" that looks like a reply/inbound email. If you're using another engagement platform, it'll be something similar.
3. Create Distribution Date and Return Date on Account so you can know when accounts are going in and out of the pool.
4. Consider Distribution Reason and Return Reason fields as well. Ideally these would be picklists you can use to allow reps to specify the reason.
5. Have some way of tracking history (Account History with Gradient Works or Field History), because you're going to need a way to report on this

Core Processes

There are a few main processes that make up dynamic book management. All of them form the dynamic books cycle that keeps rep books balanced, as accounts go from ready to be worked, to working, and then to resting, review or converted.

The core processes are:

- **Distribution:** Frequently distribute high-fit accounts to reps based on available capacity
 - **Top off distribution:** A specific distribution that assigns enough accounts to a rep to fill up any available capacity in their book
- **Return**
 - **Retrieval:** Automate retrieval of accounts not actively being worked per your rules of engagement
 - **User-Initiated:** Automate a process for reps to return accounts to the pool based on defined criteria
 - **Swap:** A return plus a distribution, or a swap
- **Signals:** Connect inbounds, fit and timing signals to automatically distribute high-potential prospects and ensure reps are working all high-intent accounts



We'll talk more about how often you should run these processes in step 6. For now, you need to define the criteria for each and set them up per those criteria in your CRM or dynamic books software.

Other terms you will encounter as you're setting up your core processes:

- *Pool*: A group of accounts that are unassigned and available to be worked
- *Target book*: A group of accounts currently owned (and being worked) by a rep
- *Segment*: A set of characteristics that represent the kinds of accounts you send to reps' books
- *Working*: An account is being "worked" when a rep is actively engaging (or at least actively trying to engage) with a prospect. An account is no longer being worked after some period of time after the last meaningful activity.
- *Rest*: A period of time when an account sits unworked in the pool before it is eligible to be worked again

Reporting

Establish baseline reporting for activity levels, account penetration and book productivity. You'll be coming back to these reports later, after rollout. Some of our recommend metrics are:

- Activity levels:
 - The number of calls, emails, touches reps are doing per day/week
- Account penetration
 - The number of touches per account worked
 - The number of contacts per account worked
 - The percentage of cadences completed
- Book productivity
 - The number (or percentage) of worked accounts in their books

Step 5

Roll out

First, you need to clearly communicate the plan to managers, and then reps. Just as you'd communicate any other change to a sales process, be thoughtful and deliberate with the rollout. Reps are particularly sensitive to any changes they think may impact their compensation (who isn't?!), so prepare for those kinds of questions.

Communicating the Changes to Reps

It's extremely important to bring in front-line sales managers early in the process, so they can take time to learn all about dynamic books and what their reps can expect. You may also want to set aside time for managers to provide feedback on the new process, because they're likely to bring up issues you hadn't considered. This also helps get their buy-in, which will make the rollout much easier.

Your managers may recommend a few reps from their team to provide additional feedback, from the sales team's perspective.

Next, share information about the new process with your team's senior reps and top performers a few days before the full team training. Again, this will help ensure their support and buy-in, which will make full implementation easier. These are also the reps who may have the most concerns about losing accounts from their book, so be prepared to talk about how this will help them focus on the best accounts, while also lifting up the rest of the team.

Ensure your documentation is ready to go and easily accessible. That could include any updates to your RoE and SLAs, a glossary and FAQ, even how-to videos for reps. Include the CRM reports the reps should know about, and details about the timing of how returns and replacements will work.

If possible, hold a full team meeting to announce the change and walk through the new process. Start by explaining why you're making this change. Show the team the reason why they're moving from static territories to dynamic books. Detail the positive impacts this new model will have for them. Record this meeting for later access.

Share the content in all relevant channels, such as Slack, email, and so on. Make sure the new guidelines and process are detailed in a place reps can access anytime, as well.

Finally, hold a Q&A session for reps to ask questions about the new process.

Updating Your Team's Mental Model

A quick note about your team's mental model of account ownership...

You may worry about how your team will feel about implementing a new process. It's a big change for some teams. Instead of reps owning a territory or large number of statically assigned accounts, reps will now only own accounts they're actively working. Accounts that reps aren't actively engaged with are kept in a pool for marketing nurture or future engagement. So reps need to work accounts to keep them.

You may need to address issues of account hoarding, and rep concerns about quota and compensation. Stress that while they may not have as many accounts in their name at one time, they will have higher quality accounts that have higher potential to convert. They won't need to spend time figuring out which accounts to work. And once an account is proven to be disqualified, they'll get a new account in its place. So they'll likely get more accounts over time, since new ones will be moving out to replace old ones. And they'll be more likely to hit quota this way.

This actually may end up helping with your CRM hygiene too - if a rep has to demonstrate that they're working an account so they can keep it, they'll have to update Salesforce!

On Launch Day

The main point person (ideally a sales leader or RevOps leader) should announce the day's plan in your main communication channels to the full sales organization.

Set a time for the first distribution to occur.

Provide a quick terminology refresher and review of your return reasons, as well as a link to a recording of a full walkthrough of the workflow.

Managers should have check-in meetings that afternoon to assist their reps in working the accounts. It's also a good opportunity for reps to ask individual questions and discuss any concerns.

Post-Launch

After the rollout, check in frequently with your team. You'll want to continue to address questions that come up as they actually use the new process, collect feedback on the process, and review the accounts they're receiving to see if you need to make any adjustments to your target books and distribution schedules.

A few ideas for check-ins:

- Weekly standups with teams for feedback and questions
- Manager 1:1s with direct reports to talk about account allocations, make adjustments
- Larger full group meeting 4-6 weeks after rollout

Instruct sales managers to check in with their team frequently for the first week. Our recommendation is to review the account return reasons at the end of every day. You'll want to provide corrective feedback as quickly as possible, since some reps may not fully understand when to return an account at first. And it's much easier to review returned accounts daily, in smaller batches. Plus, it gives the manager visibility into what reps are working and what they're not, and provides a feedback loop for RevOps.

Step 6

Execute

The final step is to start actually doing dynamic book management. Cycle accounts through rep books using the ongoing core processes we discussed in step 4.

Distributions: Assign high-fit accounts to reps based on available capacity

Signals: Route inbounds and accounts with timing signals to reps based on available capacity

Retrievals: Pull back accounts not actively worked per RoE so they can be redistributed after a rest period

Returns: Allow reps to return accounts to the pool based on defined criteria. Allow accounts to rest or permanently disqualify

Here are our recommendations for process cadences.

Process	Description	Timing
Distributions	Assign high-fit accounts to reps based on available capacity	Weekly or monthly
Signals	Route inbounds and accounts with timing signals to reps based on available capacity	Continuous
Retrievals	Pull back accounts not actively worked per ROE so they can be redistributed after a rest period	Weekly or monthly
Returns	Allow reps to return accounts to the pool based on defined criteria. Allow accounts to rest or permanently disqualify.	On-demand

You may start with a monthly cadence and move to something more frequent as you go, or vice versa. During the first few months, pay close attention to your KPIs and rep feedback so you can make optimization decisions and ensure this process is working for your team.

Optimization

Continue monitoring rep performance with the KPIs that matter to your organization. Look for patterns, and increases or decreases in performance.

Earlier, we discussed setting up reporting on activity levels, account penetration and book productivity. Check in on those reports regularly.

Ideally, you should see these within the first few weeks:

- Reps connecting with more accounts
- More touches per account
- More completed cadences
- More meetings scheduled

And as you continue with dynamic books, you should ultimately see an increase in opportunities created and overall pipeline, as well as more reps on target and increases in overall attainment.

Tie specific distributions back to outcomes. Can you measure a specific distribution cohort to see how it differs from previous account groups?

You may find that you need to adjust your target books after you initially set them up. Reps may be working through their distributed accounts more quickly than you envisioned, so you may need to make target books bigger. Or you may find that certain segments are better or worse fits than others, so you want to change the makeup of a target book. Monitor how reps are working their new books and adjust as you go.

Conclusion

A traditional territory design model forces you to get it right the first time. A dynamic model allows you to respond to changes in your team or market immediately, and adjust as you need to.

With dynamic books, you can cover all the prospects in your TAM, keep rep books balanced, and continually improve your CRM data.

Changing a sales process like territory design is never an easy task, but hopefully this guide helps lay out a clear path to successfully rolling out dynamic book management.

Finally, if you'd like to learn more about Gradient Works to automate the full dynamic book management process, we'd love to show you how it works.



**See how dynamic books can transform
your sales productivity**

Learn more about Gradient Works Bookbuilder

[Learn more](#)