



It's that time of year again: your SKO is on the horizon, and it's coming up fast! You're looking for ways to make your 2025 SKO stand out in everyone's memories, achieve your sales goals, and energize your teams, so that 2025 is the best sales year ever.

Whether you're a seasoned SKO planner or you're just setting out to plan your first SKO, you're getting ready to sit down and prepare for an awesome event. It's time to draw on all your skills for your upcoming SKO. You want to exceed everyone's expectations and make this year a smash hit. After all, you've got plenty to talk about!

You might be making adjustments to your messaging and pricing to reflect lingering turmoil in the global markets. You want to prime your sellers with strategies for selling your solution in today's backdrop of uncertainty. Customer demands are changing all the time, so you'll need to make sure that all your salespeople are fully up to date. What's more, remote work never went away, so you still need to plan an SKO that's just as effective digitally as it is when delivered in person.

The big question is: how can you use your SKO smarts to accomplish your sales goals? With careful preparation and dollops of creativity, 2025 can be your big year.



Here are 8 tips for making 2025 a banner year

O CLEARLY DEFINE THE EVENTGOALS AND KPIS

- Pivoting your strategy?
- Retraining to sell into different industries?
- Launching a new product or updating an existing one?

Each of these is an important consideration, and each demands different approaches to the SKO. For example, if you've spent the past year expanding into new geographies, you'll want plenty of bonding activities to welcome your new sales teams.

But if you've had to rethink your direction, revamp your solution, and pivot to new industries, you'll prioritize communicating you new messaging instead. Define your KPIs up front, based on your event goals, which will allow you to measure the success of your SKO.

Are you looking to reach a certain level of sales for a new product post-SKO? Expand into a new market? Ensure that sales reps are using a particular tool or sales methodology? Identify what is important to achieve and then determine how you will go about measuring it. For example, if your goal is to train reps to sell to organizations with shrinking budgets, you can measure their expected success by using Second Nature's realistic, diverse Al-powered role play personas, and then after the event measure percent increase of new bookings.



CLARIFY YOUR BIG VISION

Are your salespeople just selling point solutions, or do they have a bigger vision to offer? One of the ways to keep salespeople engaged and prime them to close sales is to share a broader picture of the company. Use your SKO to remind sales reps that they aren't simply selling a single tool, but an entire suite of solutions that bring specific benefits to customers. Promoting your overall value proposition instead of a handful of individual features is always more effective for closing deals, but it's also frequently more challenging for sales reps. You need to give them the tools and capabilities to meet this higher bar.

Additionally, it might be time for you to roll out new messaging or pricing at your SKO, so you'll need to make sure that these get communicated accurately.





O3 TRANSLATE THE VISION INTO PRACTICAL TACTICS

As important as the larger vision is, it's useless without execution. Sellers who are struggling to make sales are likely to find it even harder during a recession, so they'll need more than just a pep talk - they need practical help to turn your marketing-speak into actionable advice. Think of it as helping someone who's trying to quit smoking. Knowing all the benefits isn't enough to help them make the leap; they need practical ways to change their habits too.

If you're asking your salespeople to change the way they sell, you need to help them make that shift on a tactical level. Think about the top changes in behavior that reps need to make to meet your targets. Boil your new vision down to 3-5 key initiatives, such as new market, new message, and new pricing, and assign concrete goals to each one.

Break down your high-level strategy into detailed tactics, tools, insights and talk tracks, so that your SKO is all about driving change. Once your executive team lays out the big vision, your enablement team must be ready with the tools to execute it.

TWILIO leveraged their SKO to certify their sales team on the solution of a company they had recently acquired. They knew that while it was important to present the new company vision, what their sales people really needed was practical guidance and actual practice. During the SKO, they were able to train and certify more than a thousand salespeople, who underwent hundreds of hours of role plays. The team measurably improved in their sales conversations by 41%



000 Salespeople trained

& Certified

41% Improvement in sales conversations



SKO's need to include practical experience as well as top-down instruction and inspiration. So keep your lectures short and include more interactive tasks. Gamification, quizzes, Q&A sessions, and challenges all have their place in this year's SKO.

You want to prepare your reps to hit the ground running, so help them refine every phrase, call, and sentence for maximum impact with role play practice with Second Nature's authentic, knowledgeable AI sales coaches

Interactive sessions also offer more chances for your salespeople to share their concerns and anxieties and to give each other support. It's not surprising that sellers feel nervous, especially if they need to master new messaging or product/pricing details. Plan sessions that allow people to talk and bond, to enhance the feeling that you're all on the same team and help everyone to feel safe.

() 5 WIDEN THE CIRCLE OF ATTENDEES

Today, everyone expects a hybrid experience with both in-person and remote options, which makes it so much easier to include more people. It's not just about beaming in celebrities to add a bit of glitter - companies saw the impact of bringing in clients to share their experiences and promote the virtues of your product.

Whether your SKO 2025 is in-person only or hybrid, there's every reason to include a client. You could find someone local to attend in person, or invite a distant client to "virtually" lead a session to boost morale and help salespeople understand the customer's point of view. They're the best people to teach sales teams about changing priorities, and to remind them that ultimately, giving clients the tools to improve their businesses is why they plug away making sales.

It's possible that you've continued to include more employees since your SKO first went virtual, like product people and R&D personnel who don't traditionally attend. Maintain this new tradition, whether you plan a hybrid spin-off event or invite them to join for just one day. Keeping sales, marketing, product, and development closely aligned is key for ongoing success.



While hour-long lectures might have been the norm once upon a time, the last few years of remote events have shown that it's easier to stay focused in shorter sessions. That being the case, why not consider spreading the event itself out across a longer period of time with more breaks?

You might want to plan a shorter in-person core event that has all the flash and sparkle, but spin things out beyond the usual closing ceremony with a mix of in-person and virtual experiences, such as by planning mini bonding events for each team every week during the month after the main event.

It's also a great way to maintain flexibility over messaging and sales tactics. Keeping the SKO spirit burning means that you can update and refresh your messaging on a quarterly basis, if that becomes necessary. Second Nature enables you to roll out new learning modules or messages every month or quarter for your sales reps to learn and perfect, and then you can hold a mini-conference for teams to compare their results and share tips.



7 PLAN LEARNING REINFORCEMENT

Did you know that students forget 75% of the material they have learned after a single day? This is known as the forgetting curve. It's particularly problematic if you're using your SKO to introduce a new set of messaging or to change your pricing.

The good news is that repetition over time improves retention. Ongoing pitch practice throughout the quarter and the rest of the year becomes easy once you've introduced your sales reps to the AI avatars offered by Second Nature's coaching software.

Reps can log in and brush up on skills whenever they have a free moment, or choose practice modules specific to their upcoming sales calls. They can refresh concepts they have already learned (at, say, the SKO), improve their listening and objection handling abilities, and work on improving their skill level and upping their scores. This ongoing, individualized pitch practice helps your reps retain more and feel confident about making sales.

OS DON'T FORGET THE FUN!

An efficient SKO is always crucial, but don't overlook the fun. It's just as important to engage sales reps, inspire them, and excite them about your product, your org nization, and their sales prospects.

Using an interesting theme can take you a long way. The extent to which you invest in it matters a lot more than which theme you use, so don't be scared of being cheesy. Whatever theme you choose, take it, run with it, and apply it to every detail. You could have your CEO or CMO dress up in a costume that matches your theme for your opening session or grand finale, for example.

Run guessing games and competitions, because people will do anything for prizes. Celebrate wins on an individual, team, and company level, and bring in more ways to help bolster enthusiasm and excitement among your sales teams.



Make SKO 2025 your best yet!

Don't let the pressure to deliver an awesome SKO get you down. With a little planning, creativity, and the right tools, you can pull it off and make 2025 an SKO to remember.

Ready to discover what Second Nature can do for your SKO?

Contact us for a demo.



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