

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO CSM COMP PLANS



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Introduction

One of the most important tasks for a customer success leader is building the right CSM compensation plans to reward and incentivize their team. An integral part of finding the right plan is understanding who owns revenue-generating KPI's and milestones.

In this eBook we'll explore several topics that will help you know best compensation practices for existing and new CS teams and what roles your team should be responsible for.

Here are some of the items we'll explore:

- CSM compensation best practices
- Compensation plans for Customer Success Managers
- 3 Ownership models around renewals
- How CS teams are being compensated today
- Insights from CS Leaders around compensation

3 CSM Compensation Best Practices

Understanding CSM compensation is a critical responsibility of any customer success leader. After all, your CSMs are working with customers daily to grow your business and they should be compensated in relation to their goals and output. When it comes to CSM compensation plans, there isn't one "right way" to structure things. Successfully executing a well-planned CSM compensation strategy depends on who owns revenue-generating KPIs and milestones related to a customer account, such as renewals, upsells, and new user expansions.

As you structure your CSM compensation plans, here are three best practices to keep in mind:

1. Get input from sales, marketing, product, and your executive team when deciding on your CSM engagement model.

The role of a SaaS industry CSM has become increasingly complex because it covers so many different parts of the customer lifecycle. These days, CSMs are brought in during sales conversations to answer questions and map out customer journeys, but they're also heavily involved during onboarding, implementation, ongoing support, and expansion conversations. Because the CSM role touches so many parts of a customer relationship, building the engagement model requires input from other departments and leaders.

If you're setting up a new compensation plan (or simply evaluating your current one), meet with your counterparts on other teams, including sales, marketing, and product. This conversation is especially important to have with your sales leader counterparts. While sales reps might receive a commission for new logo bookings, many customer success organizations are set up to pay out commission or a bonus for expansions and renewals. It's important for both sides to be on the same page early on so there is no confusion down the road when actual compensation is at risk.

2. Make sure outside client metrics are clearly defined for all CSMs, if applicable.

Sometimes, CSM compensation plans involve account metrics that fall outside the typical revenue-generating numbers like renewal or expansion. If your team rewards CSMs financially for completing customer projects on time, reaching NPS goals, or other more qualitative metrics, make sure these are clearly defined and understood by your entire team. Team members will oftentimes work harder to meet goals for which they are rewarded financially, which can help increase customer satisfaction over time. Additionally, you should try to keep all of your CSMs on the same compensation plan, if their roles are similar. This will help avoid confusion and bolster team mentality.

3. Be transparent with CSMs, always.

It's okay for compensation plans to be dynamic, changing strategies. Customer success leaders should be constantly evaluating and grading current plans to see where changes should be made. Just remember, however, that when changes are made there should be complete transparency between leadership and CSMs themselves. This includes any new measured KPIs and metrics, any changes to compensation or bonus structure, and the reasoning behind why these changes were made. Having transparent, honest conversations with CSMs shows them that you are in their corner and are making decisions that will benefit both them personally and your customers in the long-term.

Stay on top of CSM compensation with data

When it comes to building a successful CSM compensation plan, organization, data, and honesty are key. Having frank, open conversations about metrics and compensation fosters strong relationships and a sense of honesty on your team.

No matter how you structure your CSM compensation plan, you'll need the data to back it up. With the ClientSuccess platform, customer success leaders have access to the right data and insights to inform compensation strategy, retain customers, and increase renewals.

Learn from the Experts:

Christine Vienna Knific has built three customer success teams from the ground up. In this webinar she talks about how she evolves her compensation plans over time. Watch the webinar by clicking on the link below:

A graphic for a webinar series. It features a dark background with a faint grid pattern. At the top, it says "CUSTOMER SUCCESS WEBINAR SERIES:". Below this, on the left, is the title "Lessons Learned from Building 3 Customer Success Teams from Scratch" in blue and white text. In the center is a large white play button icon. To the right of the play button is a circular portrait of Christine Vienna Knific, a woman with dark hair wearing a patterned top. Below the portrait, her name "Christine Vienna Knific" is written in white, followed by her title "VP of Customer Success" and "Wiser" in smaller text. At the bottom left, it says "brought to you by" followed by the "client success" logo in white and blue.

Who Owns the Renewal? – 3 Ownership Models to Guide Your Decision

Two of the most common questions that customer success leaders ask are:

1. Who should own the renewal, sales or customer success?
2. How should I compensation my CSMs?

Here are some frameworks you can use to answer these questions:

Who should own the renewal?

Typically you will see three renewal ownership models in SaaS, see the image below. These models will help you clearly define ownership between sales and customer success. [Learn more with our Sales, Marketing & Customer Alignment Toolkit.](#)

Renewal Ownership Models

	Sales	Customer Success	Account Manager
MODEL 1	New Logo Sales Expansion, Renewals	Value, Usage/Adoption	
MODEL 2	New Logo Sales	Value, Usage/Adoption, Expansion, Renewals	
MODEL 3	New Logo Sales	Value, Usage/Adoption	Renewals, Expansion

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Model 1: Sales owns new logos, expansion and renewals

In model one, [the core sales team maintains ownership of all sales](#) (or “commercial”) aspects of the relationship. The Account Executive (AE) that closed the initial – new logo – sale continues to collaborate with the CSM throughout the relationship and owns any expansion opportunities and the renewal. The CSM manages the day-to-day relationship and is primarily responsible for driving value for the customer and broad adoption of your product. [If the right collaboration is fostered](#), the CSM should be the best expansion lead gen source for the AE, surfacing many opportunities from her assigned customer base.

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Model 2: Customer Success owns expansion and renewals

In model two, the customer success team is not only responsible for driving value and adoption, but they also own all expansion opportunities and renewals. The sales team is focused primarily on new logo sales and may get credit for any expansion within a period of time (first quarter, 6 months, year, etc.), but they transition out after that period of time and the customer success team takes over from there and only draws on the sales team as needed for complex expansion deals or renewals.

Model 3: A separate customer-focused sales team owns expansion and renewals

In model three, the core sales team handles all *new* logo sales, the customer success team drives value and adoption, and a separate customer sales team owns expansion and renewals for the *existing* customer base. I've seen several titles associated with this role – Account Manager (AM), Renewals Specialist, Customer Account Executive, Client Executive, etc.

So, which renewal ownership model is best for your company?

It depends on the complexity of your sale and the experience-level of your CSM team.

Benefits of Renewal Ownership Model 1

For enterprise SaaS with complex solutions, gnarly negotiations and large price tags, you'll want to go with model one, keeping your core sales team involved and owning all sales transactions (new logos, expansion and renewals). Enterprise-level Account Executives have mastered the art of sales negotiations, tactics and strategies. These AEs can successfully navigate procurement processes, RFPs, CxO negotiations, and extremely competitive situations. CSMs certainly play a collaborative role in identifying new expansion opportunities and ensuring the customer will renew, but the AE leads all sales/expansion/renewals discussions and negotiations, and closes the deals.

According to Dave Blake, CEO of ClientSuccess and former CS leader at Adobe he says:

“At Omniture and Adobe, we leveraged this model and it worked very well. Our CSMs partnered closely with the AEs to surface expansion opportunities and tee up the renewals, and our AEs negotiated and closed those opportunities successfully. Our clients clearly understood the respective roles and responsibilities and appreciated having two advocates representing them within our company.”

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Benefits of Renewal Ownership Model 2

If your product, pricing and sales processes are fairly straightforward and simple, you may consider just having the CSMs own expansion and renewals. This model will allow your AEs to focus on net new logos and CSMs can easily handle expansion and renewals. Blake continues, *“We’re currently using this model at ClientSuccess and have found it very successful so far. Our product and pricing is very simple (a strategically deliberate decision) and so are our expansion and renewal discussions, so this model works great for us.”*

Many customer success leaders shy away from having their CSMs handle sales discussions, fearing it will taint their “trusted advisor” status. We tend to disagree. If a CSM has developed the trusted relationship, focused deeply on understanding and driving value against the customer’s key business objectives (KBOs), and is clearly seen as the customer’s advocate, the customer will feel completely comfortable with the CSM handling the expansion and renewal process. According to Tomasz Tunguz @Redpoint Ventures, *“At some point in the not too distant future, new bookings from [customer success will exceed](#) new bookings from the sales team.”*

Benefits of Renewal Ownership Model 3

If you are an Enterprise SaaS company, and you feel your sales team spends too much time focused on expansion and renewals and not enough time closing net new logos, you may want to split the team into a new logo sales team and client sales (or Account Management) team. This will ensure the focus on driving net new logos while also focusing additional experienced sales reps on managing expansion opportunities and renewals.

We generally see several challenges with the third model. The old saying “two is company, but three’s a crowd” seems to ring true for most customers. More from Dave Blake, *“From my experience, customers prefer to only deal with one or two primary contacts. In this case, a primary sales contact (AE) and a primary post-sales contact (CSM). Adding a third person (AM) to handle expansion and renewals can cause additional confusion on roles and responsibilities and requires the customer to develop a new relationship of trust beyond the original AE and the CSM. I prefer to keep things simple for customers and reduce the primary contacts to one or two.”*

As you explore these scenarios within your company, adopt the model that best fits your product set, sales complexity and team experience. Regardless of the model you choose, remember to simplify the experience and clearly define roles and responsibilities for the customer. Doing so will align to your customer’s needs and drive high expansion revenue and successful renewals.

Learn from the Experts:

Jay Nathan, Founding Partner and Managing Director of Customer Imperative, shares insights into “Who Owns the ARR Number”. Watch the webinar by clicking on the link below:

A dark-themed graphic for a webinar series. It features a large white play button icon in the center. To the left of the play button, the text 'CUSTOMER SUCCESS WEBINAR SERIES:' is at the top, followed by the title 'Where Should Customer Success Live? (and who owns the number?)' in blue and white. Below the title, the date and time 'Tuesday, April 23rd 11:00 AM (MST)' are listed. To the right of the play button is a circular portrait of Jay Nathan. Below his portrait, his name 'Jay Nathan' is written in white, followed by his title 'Founding Partner & Managing Director Customer Imperative'. At the bottom right, the text 'brought to you by' is above the 'client success' logo, where 'client' is in white and 'success' is in blue.

CUSTOMER SUCCESS WEBINAR SERIES:

Where Should Customer Success Live?
(and who owns the number?)

Tuesday, April 23rd
11:00 AM (MST)

Jay Nathan
Founding Partner & Managing Director
Customer Imperative

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Compensation Plans for Customer Success Managers (CSMs)

Now that we’ve addressed *who* owns the revenue, the conversation should turn to the ideal compensation model. The prevailing logic typically involves these three models:

- Base Only – pure base salary with no bonus or variable component
- Base + Bonus – base salary with a small bonus structure, usually in the form of a Management by Objective (MBO) bonus
- Base + Variable – base salary with a variable component to not only reward for performance, but also to provide more upside for over-achievement against targets.

Dave Blake says, “I’ve tried all three models over the years and prefer the third model: *Base + Variable*.” More detail on Dave’s recommendation below:

[If you are looking to build out your Client Success team, read these helpful tips here.](#)

Customer Success Compensation Models

MODEL 1	Base Only	
MODEL 2	Base	Bonus
MODEL 3	Base	Variable

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Model 1 - Base Only

In my opinion, a CSM compensation plan that is 100% base salary is a mistake. Base only compensation plans do little to align CSMs to company objectives and also provide no additional incentives (other than personal pride and work ethic) to achieve or overachieve the expected performance standards. CSMs are neither impacted by severe under-performance, nor rewarded for over-performance. A base-only plan typically leads to mere status quo across the team. -Dave Blake

How to Transition Comp Plans

If your CSMs are currently on a 100% Base Only compensation plan and you'd like to switch to another model, what's the best way to migrate your current CSM team to another comp plan with the least disruption?

For new employees, it's easy. Just start them on the new plan. But for current employees, you need to migrate with care and consideration. Some may consider just ripping the band-aid off, lowering their base, and implementing a bonus or variable plan. Doing so will be a hard pill to swallow for the CSMs as they are used to (and rely on) their current base salary.

Instead, consider adding a bonus or variable comp on top of the base salary (if you have the budget to do so) or using annual pay increases as a way to slowly migrate in the direction you'd like. Instead of increasing the base salary, put all the increases into a bonus or variable plan for the CSM. While this tends to be a viable option, it will typically take time for the annual pay increase cycle to complete the transition.

Model 2 - Base + Bonus

The Base + Bonus option is a great step in the right direction. As stated above, usually the bonus is in the form of an MBO plan (Management by Objectives) in which the CSMs are measured against a handful of key objectives – individually and/or as a team. Ideally, most objectives are quantitative and aligned to the important KPIs of the business (retention, upsell, cross-sell, NPS, # of case studies, etc.). However, many times MBOs also have one or more qualitative objectives as well, such as contribution to the team, leading a special project, etc.

Adding the bonus structure is a step in the right direction as it aligns performance to company objectives and rewards accordingly. However, a bonus structure still has a few shortcomings.

Shortcomings of Base + Bonus Model

More from Dave, “Let me highlight one challenge by sharing an example.

“At Omniture, one of our Strategic CSMs in EMEA was assigned to a strategic account that was a Global Fortune 100 company. The CSM worked tirelessly the entire year to successfully manage this customer and drive value across their global entities. For most of the year, the CSMs counterpart on the sales side of our business was nowhere to be seen, only occasionally popping into the equation to see how things were going.

At the end of the year, the strategic customer signed a multi-year, multi-million dollar renewal that significantly changed the trajectory of our relationship with that customer, largely due to the tremendous work of the CSM. At the time, we were compensating our CSMs on a mere bonus structure and this CSM probably made \$2,000 on the renewal. You can imagine the frustration of the CSM who came to me and said, “Why is it that I did all the work throughout the entire year to ensure this strategic account renewed (and they renewed in a big way), and yet I get a \$2,000 bonus and the sales rep (who did nothing all year) bought a new yacht with his commissions?” And he was right. That is when I became converted to at Base + Variable plan.”

[For more info on hiring and compensating CSMs, read here.](#)

Model 3 - Base + Variable

As we mentioned above, we tend to recommend the Base + Variable compensation plan because it tends to provide the best alignment with the core objectives of the CSM team, drives clear accountability for performance (or lack thereof), and generously rewards CSMs for achieving or over-achieving their targets.

Variable on Retention and Growth

When it comes to comp plans, simplicity is a super power so our advice is to focus on two main objectives: retention and growth (expansion).

You may have other secondary key performance objectives you’d like your team to execute against (NPS, adoption goals, [DELTs](#), quarterly team projects, etc.) and that’s just fine. But our advice is to track those separately and focus the compensation plan on 2-3 KPIs, in this case, retention and growth. One way to still keep those secondary metrics top of mind for your team is to include them as components of a CSM promotion path. For example, in order to be promoted to the next level you need to achieve XYZ threshold on your secondary metrics.

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Building Out Your Variable Compensation Model

When building a variable compensation plan for CSMs you should keep things as simple as possible and focus on 2 or 3 (max) KPIs. With that in mind, let's break down the key elements to consider when designing a variable compensation plan for your CSMs.

4 Key Variable Compensation Elements

1. On-Target Earnings (OTE) Split

First, determine the ideal base-to-variable compensation split for your CSMs. This will designate the portion of the on-target earnings (OTE) that will be allocated to base salary vs. variable compensation.

Typically you will see companies using a base-to-variable split anywhere from 70/30 to 80/20 against the total on-target earnings (OTE). If the variable comp is greater than 30%, it starts looking like a sales compensation plan; however, if the variable is lower than 20%, the variable portion isn't large enough to drive the added motivation and starts looking like a simple bonus plan.

A good compromise is a 75/25 base-to-variable split. In that case, CSM with an OTE would have 75% (\$75,000) allocated to base, and 25% (\$25,000) allocated to variable compensation.

2. KPI's for a Variable CSM Comp Plan

Next, identify the KPIs that will be the basis of your plan.

Again with simplicity in mind, focus on the two main objectives of a CSM:

1. Revenue retention,
2. Revenue expansion (including cross- and up-sell)

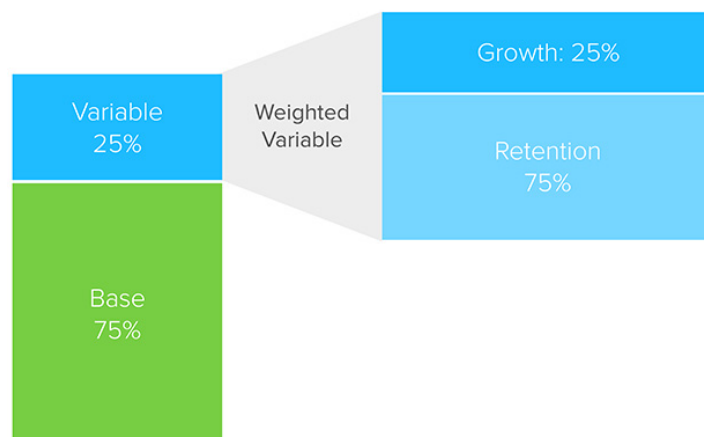
Some will disagree with measuring CSMs on retention and growth, preferring to measure them on customer satisfaction or other objectives (NPS, adoption goals, DELTs, quarterly projects, etc.).

However, ultimately your business is expecting your CSMs to retain and expand your customer revenue so don't beat around the bush and just measure them against those metrics. They are aligned to core business KPIs and aren't "[squishy](#)" as Jason Lemkin would say.

3. Variable Split

Now that you have your 2 KPI's identified, you need to determine how much of the variable portion will be paid against each KPI. Dave Blake suggests you mirror the OTE split ratio (keep it simple) and use the same percentage split for retention vs expansion. Focus the majority of the variable on retention to reinforce the fact the the CSM's primary responsibility is retention.

CSM Variable Compensation Structure



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Variable Split Example

Referring back to our example above, with a 75/25 OTE split you will then mirror that with a 75/25 retention-to-expansion split for the variable portion of the comp plan.

OTE Variable Split to Achieve OTE

OTE = \$100,000

OTE Split = 75%/25% base-to-variable

Base = \$75,000

Variable = \$25,000

OTE Variable Comp with % Weight

Variable Split = 75%/25% retention-to-expansion

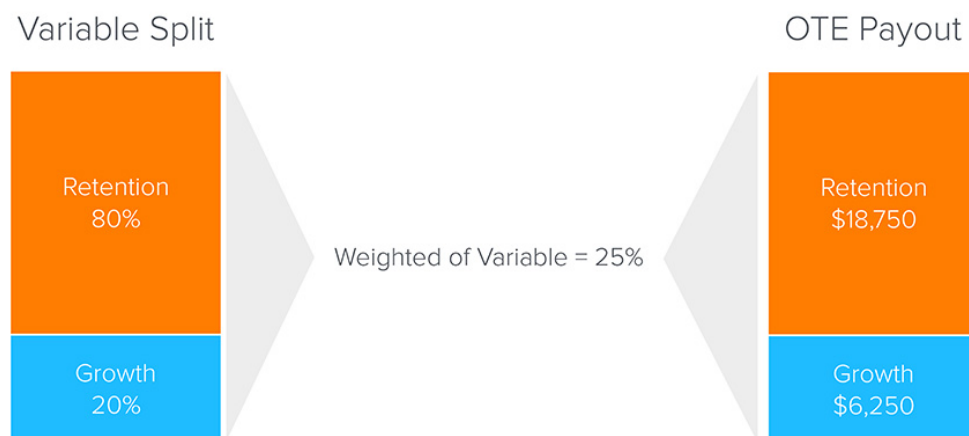
Retention = (\$25,000 * 75%) = \$18,750

Expansion = (\$25,000 * 25%) = \$6,250

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CSM Variable Compensation



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4. Variable Targets, Payouts & Accelerators

Now the final component of the variable comp plan is setting the targets, payouts and accelerators for the team. (Note, use the word “target” and “payouts” vs. “quota” and “commissions” to distance – or differentiate – this plan from a sales plan.)

For each KPI, determine the target retention number and expansion number you want the CSMs to hit in order to receive 100% of their payout for each period (month, quarter, or year). It’s important to work with your CFO to ensure that the combine targets for the team are completely aligned to the targets for the company, otherwise the misalignment can be costly.

Once the target has been set for 100% payout, then determine the sliding scale for under performance as well as over-achievement. This is where you can experiment with giving CSMs accelerators to reward over-achievement and monetary upside for extraordinary results.

Here is an example of a sliding scale for each KPI.

Revenue Retention Target = 90%

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Sliding Scale for Variable Compensation for Revenue Retention

% Revenue Renewed	% of Payout	Dollar Payout
100%	150%	\$30,469
95%	125%	\$23,438
90%	100%	\$18,750*
85%	75%	\$14,063
80%	50%	\$9,375
75%	25%	\$4,688
<70%	0%	\$0

*75% of Variable Compensation

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Revenue Expansion Target = \$50,000

Sliding Scale for Variable Compensation for Growth/Expansion

Achievement	% of Payout	Dollar Payout
\$70,000	150%	\$10,156
\$60,000	125%	\$7,813
\$50,000	100%	\$6,250*
\$40,000	75%	\$4,688
\$30,000	50%	\$3,125
\$20,000	25%	\$1,563
\$10,000	0%	\$0

*25% of Variable Compensation

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One way to simplify the expansion variable compensation payout is to just pay a small percentage of all expansion dollars which will naturally reward higher for over-achievement.

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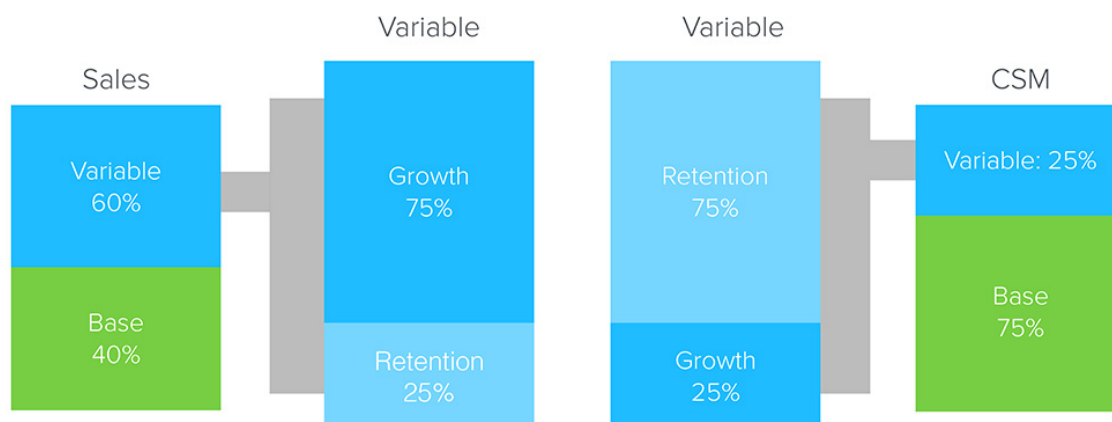
Percentage of Expansion Revenue Variable Compensation Model

This model has the following advantages:

1. Incentivizes the CSMs with a small variable compensation plan while still keeping them clearly differentiated from a more leveraged sales compensation model which is typically closer to 50/50 or 60/40.
2. Focuses the CSMs on their primary responsibility of retention while rewarding their efforts that result in growth (expansion, upsell, cross-sell).
3. Rewards the CSMs with upside as they exceed their retention and growth targets.
4. Aligns sales and customer success to ensure they are collaborating effectively to drive retention and growth across their shared book of business.

On this last point, consider a reverse comp model for sales with their variable comp focused 75% on new business growth and 25% on retention. This ensures the primary responsibilities of sales and customer success are reflected in their respective comp plans and aligns them in a complementary way to drive growth and retention.

Sales and CSM Variable Comp Structures



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I hope this helps guide you as you build out your customer success compensation plans.

Learn from the Experts:

Mark Bissell, former COO & SVP of Customer Success at Jibe, shares ideas on how to make sure all of your proposals get green-lit by your CFO! Customer success leaders often get frustrated when their proposals get shot down by finance. Mark has a unique view because he's been on both sides of the finance & customer success fence. Watch the webinar by clicking on the link below:

A dark-themed graphic for a webinar series. It features a large white play button icon in the center. To the left of the play button, the text 'CUSTOMER SUCCESS WEBINAR SERIES:' is at the top, followed by the title 'Help! My CFO Won't Let Me Grow Customer Success' in large blue letters. Below the title, the date and time 'Thursday, 28th May 12pm Mountain Time' are listed. To the right of the play button is a circular headshot of Mark Bissell. Below the photo, his name 'Mark Bissell' is written in bold, followed by his title 'Former COO & SVP of Customer Success Jibe Inc.' and the phrase 'brought to you by' above the 'clientsuccess' logo.

CUSTOMER SUCCESS WEBINAR SERIES:

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Mark Bissell
Former COO &
SVP of Customer Success
Jibe Inc.

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Examples of Comp Models Used by Customer Success Leaders

Chrisy Woll – Former VP of Customer Success at CampusLogic, Currently VP of Customer Success at Whistic



Chrisy Woll was the VP of Customer Success for CampusLogic, and has spent a tremendous amount of time developing her team, learning about compensation and bringing on new tools, and fostering an incredible culture focused around CampusLogic's customers.

How do you determine salary for your CSMs?

For Chrisy and the CampusLogic team, the salary and bonus structure is still a work in progress, probably always will be to remain competitive. "We are very competitive with our salaries and we are still trying to figure out the bonus structure," explained Chrisy. "Right now we have a base salary and we are still trying to figure out how we want our bonus to be structured, we will most likely have a 90/10 split - the CSMs total earning potential will be 90% salary and 10% bonus. I spend a lot of time identifying the metrics to motivate and encourage the right behaviors. It is very important to me that the bonus goal is a stretch but not unattainable, which would cause a defeated mentality. I also need to provide my team with all the resources necessary so they feel empowered to hit their goals."

How do you determine quotas for your CSMs?

The CampusLogic team uses the "WIG" (wildly important goal) and leading measures that help them to hit their WIG. Chrisy explained, "The WIG methodology is from the book '4 Disciplines of Execution'. The WIG is a lagging measure and the leading measures are the daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly targets that will help us hit our WIG. The CSM's goals are based on leading measures." These leading measures are:

- Decrease support response time
- On-boarding in 30 days or less, and
- Increase Success Score

The CSMs at CampusLogic have targets and goals based around their quarterly goals, which are broken down to daily and weekly goals for the leading measures. The team has weekly WIG meetings to talk about what was accomplished the past week and what the goals are for the coming week. Chrisy advises that this meeting, if others choose to adopt it, should be very focused and only talk about the WIGs.

Jackie Golden – Former CEO at LandNExpand, Current SVP Customer Success at CoreView



As Founder and CEO of a company that focuses on Customer Success as their business service, Jackie leads with a customer focus at the front of everything her consulting firm does. From hiring the right candidates to growing the team at the right time to determining the right way to compensate, Jackie has thought through every aspect of Customer Success.

How do you determine salary for your CSMs?

For Jackie's company, there are 2 scenarios for determining the salary, which include:

For a consulting background, the base will be higher and the commission lower. "However, you can get these resources at lower bases with a highly leveraged plan as well with stock options," explained Jackie.

For a sales background, Jackie explained, "You can get a lower base and much more highly leveraged comp plan."

Jackie explained that for her company, the ranges have been wide based on experience and background required to execute a successful CSM program (\$55k base - \$105k base) with commission and bonus plan (\$25k – \$150k), which can sometimes include end of year accelerators.

How do you determine quotas for your CSMs?

When determining quotas for her CSMs, Jackie explained that they build it into their overall company financial model. "This is based on growth rate planned and the mix of net new and expansion. Finance should create several scenarios in which the expansion and renewals goals deliver the financial results approved by the executive team and board."

Jackie concluded that, “From these values, it is easy to create the quotas for renewals, expansion and customer health metrics for the CSM team. The use of a capacity model will help you determine the right number of accounts to assign based on market segment and size in determining their quota with a named account list.”

Ursula Llabres – Former VP of Customer Success at InsideSales, Current Head of Client Success, Workplace by Facebook



Ursula owns the Customer Success Management & Success Programs functions, so she is very ingrained in the company’s processes, hiring, and metrics. She’s also a big believer that success for their customers should be the driver of the entire company.

How do you determine salary for your CSMs?

“This is something that is developed in conjunction with the Finance team,” explained Ursula. “I believe that whatever the model, what CSMs value most is knowing how they can succeed. This means having clearly communicated and understood objective and success measures and a transparent performance assessment process. Without this, you can have great compensation, but little commitment or motivation.”

In Ursula’s experience having worked at Salesforce.com, Microsoft Office 365 Division, Box and InsideSales.com, she has seen 3 different CSM compensation models, which can each be effective in their own right. These include: 1. Base/CSM KPI-driven bonus of 70/30 2. Base and Business Unit/Company performance bonus of 85/15 3. Base only (no bonus)

Learn from the Experts:

Megan Macaluso, VP of Strategic Development at ESG, and Mark Stoddard, VP of Sales & Marketing at ClientSuccess, discuss “Why Customer Success Should Embrace Owning Revenue”. Watch the webinar by clicking on the link below:

A dark-themed graphic for a webinar series. It features a large white play button icon in the center. To the left of the icon, the text 'CUSTOMER SUCCESS WEBINAR SERIES:' is at the top, followed by the title 'Why Customer Success Should Embrace Owning Revenue' in large blue letters. Below the title, the date and time 'Tuesday, January 28, 2020 12:00 PM (MST)' are listed. To the right of the play button is a circular portrait of Megan Macaluso, a woman with blonde hair and glasses. Below her photo, her name 'Megan Macaluso' and title 'VP of Strategic Development' are written, followed by the ESG logo. At the bottom right, the text 'brought to you by clientSUCCESS' is displayed, with 'client' in white and 'SUCCESS' in blue.

CUSTOMER SUCCESS WEBINAR SERIES:

Why Customer Success Should Embrace Owning Revenue

Tuesday, January 28, 2020
12:00 PM (MST)

Megan Macaluso
VP of Strategic Development

esg
Customer Success
as a Service

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Compensation Insights from The State of Customer Success Survey

The State of Customer Success in 2020 survey provided many revelations about growing trends, and who is involved in customer success.

What does the average customer success team look like?

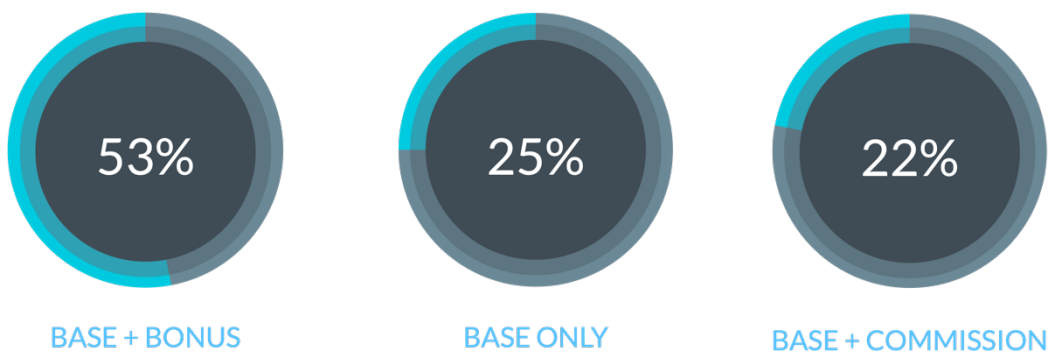
Our survey revealed that customer success has become a large and influential team in most companies. The average CS team had 18 members, and 71% of teams reported to C-level executives. Only 12% of respondents said their CS team shrunk in the past six months. At all other companies, CS teams were either holding steady or growing, even during the pandemic.

A few of the highlights:

- The average CS Team has 18 team members. The median size of a team is 8.
- For smaller companies (< 100 employees), CS represents about 13% of the workforce. For companies with more than 100 employees, the CS Team represents about 6% of the workforce.
- 58% of CS Teams have grown over the past 6 months, while 12% have seen a reduction in staff. 30% had no change.
- 41% of CS Leaders report directly to the CEO.

How do companies pay for customer success?

The first question most executives considering a customer success team will ask is how they'll pay for it. The vast majority of customer success professionals work on either a 'base plus commission' or 'base plus bonus' basis.



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Linking the performance of customer success to the salaries of those who work in the field means that the cost of this function will always be in line with its benefits. This is a factor that could tip the opinions of CEOs who are hesitant to make an investment.

Top insights:

- 53% of CS Teams are paid on a “Base + Bonus” structure
- 25% of CS Teams are “Base Only”
- 22% of CS Teams are paid on a “Base + Commission”

How much does customer success cost?

Among those who know, customer success costs provided a good return on investment. These efforts cost about 10% of revenue per year while, according to other survey records, providing strong value in customer retention. Because retained customers are, in general, more profitable than new ones, customer success provides a great return on investment.

Top insights:

- 60% of respondents said the customer success costs were around 10% of revenue.
- 40% of respondents did not know the cost of customer success.

Learn from the Experts:

Watch and download the full report on the “2020 State of Customer Success” survey, by clicking on the link below:



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In Conclusion

When it comes to selecting a compensation plan for your CSM team, you'll want to have a data driven approach. As a CS Leader, you'll need to ability to search through the compensation models and find the best fit for your organization.

We hope these resources help you to build a foundation you can use as you evolve your customer success compensation strategy.

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About ClientSuccess

ClientSuccess is a customer success management software that helps companies build relationships that last™. Revolutionizing the way SaaS companies manage, retain, and grow their existing customer base ClientSuccess provides customer success leaders actionable insights, rich customer analytics, and best practices to proactively manage success throughout the customer lifecycle. ClientSuccess helps SaaS companies increase renewal and expansion revenue, reduce churn, and maximize the lifetime value of the customer. For more information, visit <http://www.clientsuccess.com>.



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