

Powering Massive Sales Success for Energy Storage Innovator Stem

Introduction:

The way energy is distributed, stored, and consumed is changing — and Stem is at the center of that evolution. Through renewable energy and storage-as-a-service offerings, Stem enables businesses to optimize their energy use. However, that rapidly changing landscape meant both opportunities and challenges for Stem.

Because Stem's offerings were complex and the technology was new to many prospects, the company needed a sales team that could effectively communicate the products' benefits to potential customers. Stem also faced challenges in maintaining an internal team that could pursue the right opportunities. **When Stem won a contract with a large utility, Stem needed an outsourced sales development team that could ramp up quickly and speak intelligently to its prospects.**

Business Challenge:

As market demand increased for a more strategic, holistic approach to energy management that supported enterprise corporate objectives, the demand for Stem's energy storage products and services began to grow, as well.

Stem needed to expand its sales development function quickly enough to support that growth. While Stem had an internal sales development team in the past, it couldn't scale fast enough to drive the right type of qualified leads. "They would chase the wrong types of leads," explained Chris Baker, vice president of strategic partnerships at Stem. "They were busy, but they weren't effective." Stem made the decision to eliminate the SDR team and asked the account executives to generate their own leads. But after a year, leadership realized that model was not sustainable.

About Stem:

Stem creates innovative technology services that transform the way energy is distributed and consumed. Athena™ by Stem is the first AI for energy storage and virtual power plants. It optimizes the timing of energy use and facilitates consumers' participation in energy markets, yielding economic and societal benefits while decarbonizing the grid. The company's mission is to build and operate the smartest and largest digitally connected energy storage network for its customers.

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Faced with that twofold challenge, the company knew it needed an efficient alternative to an internal team.

"Our offering is generally a complex sale involving multiple stakeholders," explained Baker. "The most effective way to sell it is through an account executive with 15 to 20 years of industry experience. Unlike many other industries, there's less of a progression from an internal SDR to an account executive carrying a multi-million-dollar quota."

To scale an effective sales development operation, Stem needed a team that could be brought up to speed quickly and equipped to speak intelligently about complex technology. For Stem, that meant pursuing an outsourced sales development function.

 **The Solution:**

Before bringing on memoryBlue, Stem worked with two other outsourced sales development providers. However, after finding that the companies didn't provide an acceptable level of customer satisfaction in their outreach and communication, Stem chose to partner with memoryBlue.

"They provide the benefits of an actively managed team," said Baker. "They had enthusiasm and high morale, and we could stand them up quickly."

memoryBlue understands the importance of time to market, especially in high-tech industries. "memoryBlue gives companies like Stem the ability to quickly and efficiently deploy a sales development team — without going through the hassle of interviewing, hiring, and

training," said Marc Gonyea, cofounder and managing partner at memoryBlue. "We provide our sales professionals with extensive training and top-of-the-line sales technology tools, so they're ready to hit the ground running."

The partnership began with two employees assigned to Stem campaigns, and quickly grew from there. As the company entered new markets and introduced new service offerings, Stem brought on and trained additional reps. Eventually, the memoryBlue team grew to four SDRs.

The collaborative nature of the partnership made working together easy and productive. "Our internal sales goals became the goals of the memoryBlue team," said Baker. "When we had a deadline or a particularly important campaign, the memoryBlue team adopted that urgency."

 **Results:**

Because Stem offers a high-tech, AI-driven solution — and because many internal sales team members have been in the industry for 15 to 20 years — it can be easy for internal team members to use industry jargon, rather than language that will resonate most with potential customers. The memoryBlue team worked closely with Stem to test and hone its messages, resulting in more effective communications and more opportunities.

The consistent, incremental improvements in messaging produced significant results — totaling \$11 million in bookings from 17 opportunities sourced by the memoryBlue team.

"They've helped us tailor the outreach based on how customers are reacting," said Baker. The memoryBlue team tests messaging ideas, provides real-time feedback, and then adjusts the communication accordingly.

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The Stem team was so impressed with one of the memoryBlue reps, Connall Pettit, that they moved him to their California office to bring him on board.

"He was performing at the top level within memoryBlue and had a great attitude," said Baker. "When we decided to bring some SDR functions in house, Pettit was a natural fit."

"The Stem team was essentially able to try him out before they hired him," explained Gonyea. "That's a critical element of the memoryBlue model. Our sales reps become so well-versed in our client's products and messaging that it only makes sense that they eventually join that company as an employee."

Since joining the Stem team, Pettit hasn't lost any steam. "He's been performing at the high level that we expected," said Baker. "Sometimes, when you leave such a competitive environment, you can lose your edge. But if anything, he's increased his output."



The partnership has succeeded largely because of both sides' commitment to open communication.

"Our communication has always been transparent and blunt," said Baker. "When things are going well, the team keeps firing on all cylinders. When you need something to change or aren't getting the results you want, you have a responsive team manager you can go to."

At one point, Stem brought on an additional sales development company to compete with memoryBlue. "We wanted to validate that memoryBlue was still the best of the best," Baker explained. The companies faced off head-to-head, and memoryBlue quickly proved itself. "The other company did not match memoryBlue," said Baker. "It was a night-and-day difference."

 **The Future:**

Stem is growing quickly and plans to expand into new markets and new offerings for storage as a service. It's important for Stem to maintain flexibility in its sales efforts, and memoryBlue allows the company to ramp its sales team up or down, depending on what's going on in the market and how Stem structures its sales team into the future.

"As we expand into new areas, it's helpful to know we have the option to use the memoryBlue team to help supplement our pipeline growth. To have that as another tool in our toolkit is always reassuring."

— Chris Baker, vice president of strategic partnerships at Stem

 **About memoryBlue:**

memoryBlue is a sales development consulting firm based outside of Washington, D.C., that specializes in helping a wide range of high-tech clients accelerate new business growth. With nearly two decades of proven results, businesses trust the firm to help gain a competitive advantage in the reach and effectiveness of sales development efforts. The company has worked with over 850 high-tech companies to provide outsourced sales development services, sales management expertise and strategic sales talent acquisition assistance.

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