



The Future of RevOps

We're two experienced RevOps leaders and we're here to say that RevOps as we know it is going away for good.



Brad Smith & Jacob Shmukler

Table of Contents

01

THE STATE OF REVOPS

Facing the Identity Crisis

02

THE HISTORY

How RevOps Got Here Today

03

DEATH BY 1,000 CUTS

Growing Pains and Challenges

04

CLARIFYING THE ROLE

RevOps Responsibilities

05

ACTION PLAN

What Does This Mean for My Business?

06

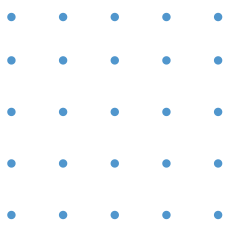
LOOKING FORWARD

Thoughts From the Authors

07

CONCLUSION

Where Do We Go From Here?



01

The State of RevOps

Facing the Identity Crisis

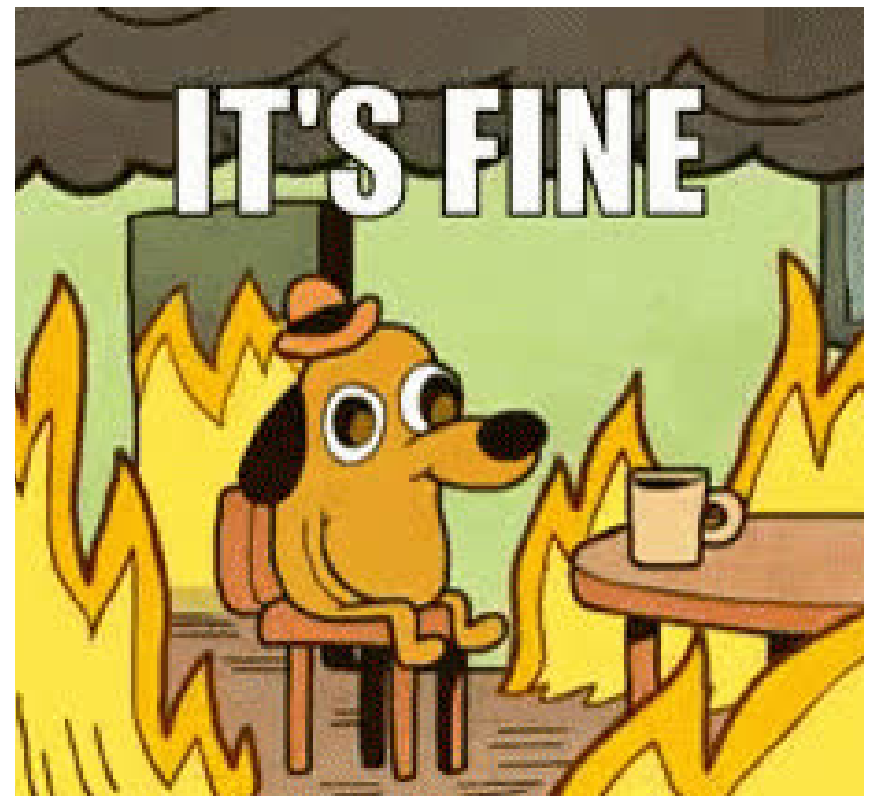
The State of RevOps

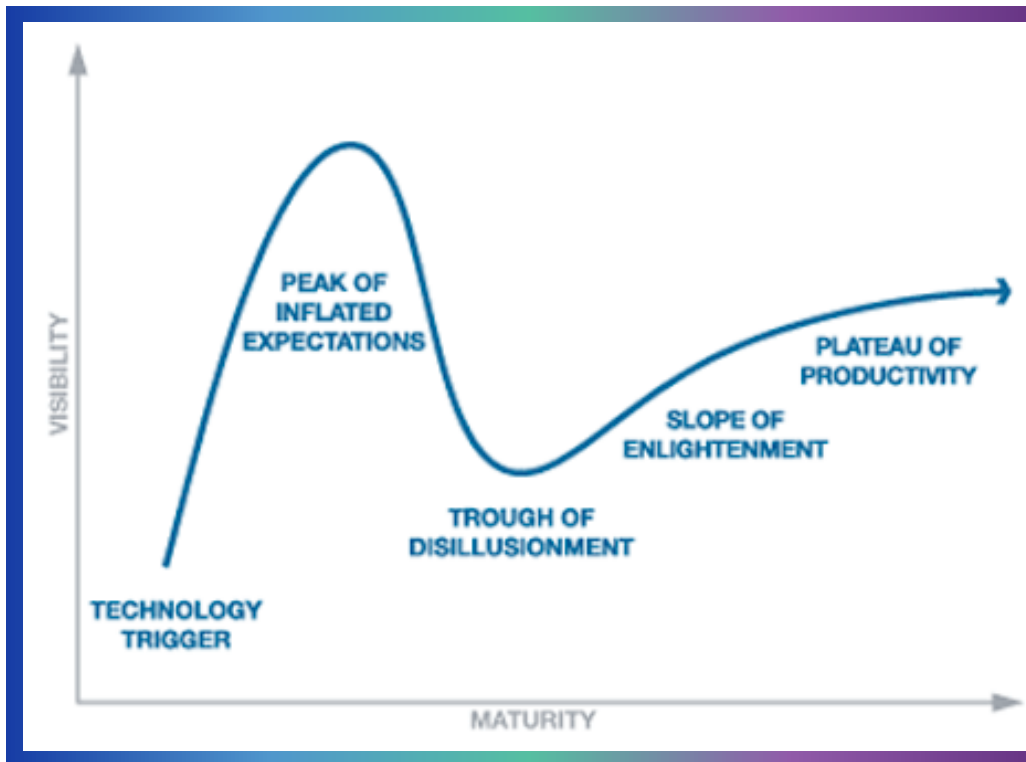
We love RevOps. Really, we do! We've built careers and businesses around its framework and benefits. **Yet, it's clear RevOps is facing an identity crisis.** For every success story, there are many more where RevOps falters, not delivering the value expected. And that's okay.

(Deep breath. We're in this together.)

RevOps is a young, evolving field that's encountering typical growing pains. There's ambiguity about its role, placement within the company, ownership, budget, and ROI measurement. Confusion surrounds its terminology and whether it's a tactical or strategic function.

Moreover, we're seeing the next phase in the RevOps hype cycle. Following its boom in the late 2010s, the rapid expansion has slowed, leaving many professionals, especially in junior and mid-level roles, with unclear directions and career paths.





- **Bottom-up:** RevOps veterans and newcomers alike see value in the role but are often frustrated by vague job definitions, low company perception, and unrealistic expectations. Early-career professionals face barriers due to "limited experience," while senior counterparts, promised strategic roles, end up as systems firefighters with no leadership influence.
- **Top-down:** Executives are disappointed by unfulfilled RevOps promises, inefficiencies, and high costs with limited returns. CEOs and CFOs see growing investments in RevOps with stagnant top-line numbers and declining sales efficiency, making budget increases hard to justify.

The past five years have taught us what RevOps can and cannot be. Let's delve into its history and explore what the future holds for RevOps.

02

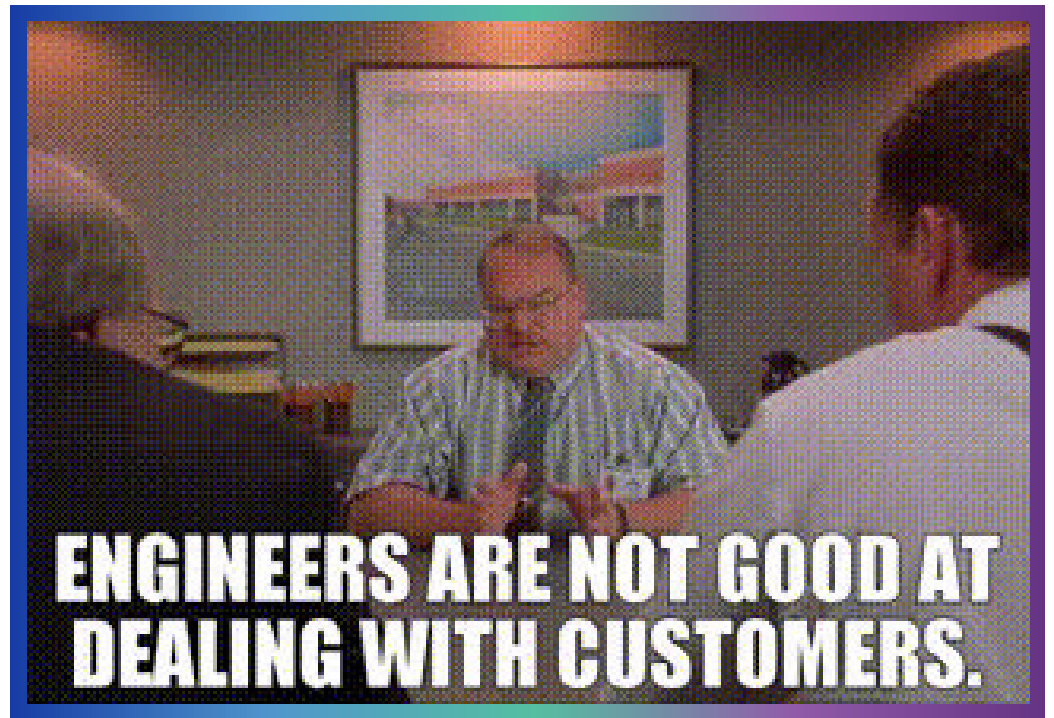
The History

How RevOps Got Here Today

How RevOps Got Here Today

Sales Operations has been around for decades, but its role has evolved. Initially, limited technology and primitive buying processes required Sales Ops to handle proposals, calculate price books manually, compile fragmented reports, and act as administrative support for sales leaders. This mindset persists, with many CROs believing Sales Ops should handle time-consuming tasks so revenue generators can focus on selling. This view frustrates many in RevOps, as it undervalues their strategic potential.

We've seen similar transformations in other tech areas, like Product vs. Engineering in SaaS.



Evolution from Tactical to Strategic

Early software engineers did everything: understanding customer needs, building roadmaps, and creating solutions. This mix of strategic and tactical tasks caused distractions and inefficiencies, as the skills required for customer understanding and product building are distinct.

The solution? Split responsibilities into Product and Engineering. This allowed Product teams to focus on strategy and customer needs, while Engineering teams built solutions. This separation leveraged specialized skills and created a balance between strategy and execution. It worked—Product and Engineering have thrived under this framework for decades.

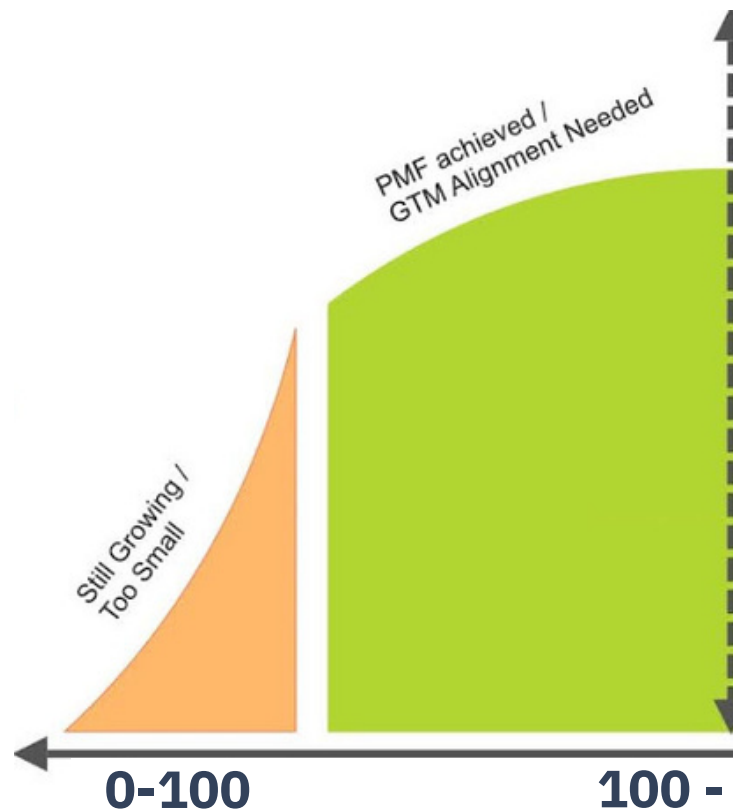
RevOps is now experiencing a similar shift, moving from a tactical to a more strategic role. By learning from these historical transformations, RevOps can find its footing and deliver greater value.

The Rise of RevOps

The SaaS boom in the 2010s reshaped RevOps, transforming it from traditional Sales Ops into a dynamic function. While some CROs saw RevOps as merely a rebranded version of the old model, innovative leaders recognized its true potential. They understood the need for a new skill set to support the rapid growth promised to investors, realizing that traditional functions within Finance, IT, or Sales lacked the necessary expertise.

As companies moved from founder-led to sales-led models, the demand for RevOps surged. The VC boom drove many startups to scale rapidly, pushing them into the “I need RevOps” category as they grew beyond 100 employees and built commercial teams of 30+ people.

How RevOps Got Here Today



There was a sheer explosion of companies from the “0 to 100” range to the “100+” range within an extremely short amount of time, relative speaking. Along with it, came the overnight need for “RevOps” thousands of times over.

The Promise

RevOps was meant to blend diverse skills into a single team, driving rapid top-line growth. It aimed to streamline processes, remove bottlenecks, measure performance, and introduce automation, promising results that legacy departments couldn't achieve. This vision appealed to founders, CEOs, CFOs, and CROs.

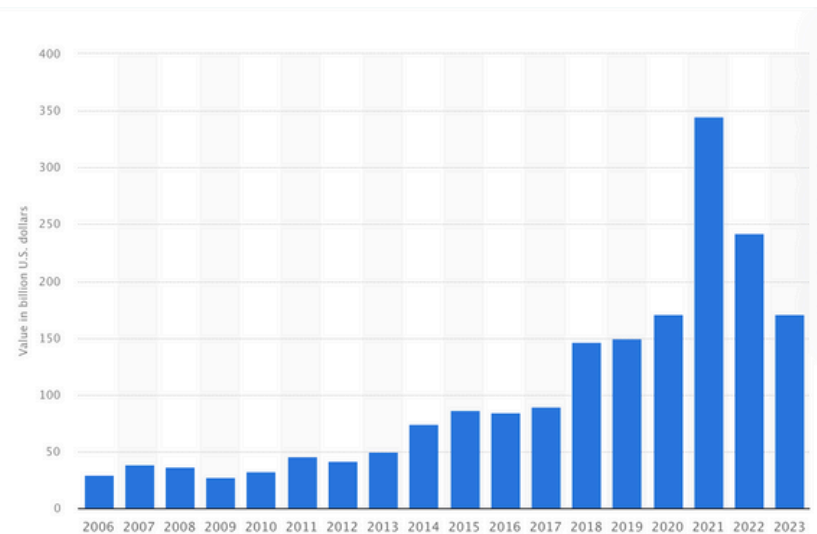
However, the reality often fell short. Widely endorsed by experts, consultants, and investors, RevOps' effectiveness wasn't questioned until the market downturn in 2022. Under scrutiny, many goals weren't met, and efficiency sometimes worsened, leading to downsizing and layoffs.

As a new function that had to adapt quickly to numerous companies with different goals and leadership styles, RevOps faced chaos and frustration. This brings us to the next phase: responding to the 2022 market correction.

The Market Correction

In 2022, the era of endless growth abruptly ended. Funding dried up, sales slowed, and cuts became inevitable. Founders, CEOs, and CFOs scrutinized every part of their business, including RevOps. RevOps leaders, often scapegoated for underperforming commercial teams, faced harsh scrutiny.

Many found bloated RevOps departments with unreasonable support ratios and multiple management layers—ironic for an efficiency-driving function. Junior team members, often in over their heads, held leadership positions they couldn't manage effectively. Additionally, the tech stack was cluttered with redundant tools, low adoption, and user frustration due to poor implementation and training.



As the good times ended, cutting RevOps teams and their tech stacks became an obvious way to save on commercial budgets without reducing revenue-generating roles.

03

Death by 1,000 Cuts

Growing Pains and Challenges

Growing Pains & Challenges

Up to this point, we've outlined why RevOps grew rapidly over the last 5-10 years. This growth, coupled with the function's ambiguity, led to several inevitable outcomes:

- Ever-changing definitions of RevOps and its role within each company
- An increase in tech and services aimed at supporting RevOps
- Ambiguity in reporting structures, leading to biases
- Common frustrations among RevOps professionals due to the lack of role clarity and career direction

Let's look at each of these in turn.



Symptom 1: Inconsistent Scope, Role, and Position

RevOps means different things at different companies, leading to inconsistency in:

- **Seniority:** Should RevOps have a senior leader or report to a VP/SVP/C-suite with a legacy title like CFO, CIO, or CRO?
- **Focus:** Should RevOps tackle tactical day-to-day operations or strategic issues like GTM strategy, financial planning, and performance management?
- **Location:** Where does RevOps report? Typically:
 - CRO: Supports sales, providing rapid solutions but with limited control over SFDC.
 - CFO: Supports FP&A and Accounting, serving as the "source of truth" for data, reporting, commissions, invoicing, and collections.
 - CIO: Manages systems with limited influence on business decisions like team structure, GTM process, and compensation.

Why This Happened

RevOps was envisioned to support high-growth commercial teams. However, execs with limited experience in managing a strategic RevOps team often hired junior members to address immediate needs, placing them in existing departments. This approach was cheaper and more flexible, avoiding the need for a new Org structure.

Initially, junior hires solved specific problems, but as new issues arose, the role expanded incrementally. Promises of strategic leadership faded as the team continuously tackled urgent issues. Over time, this led to a fragmented and inefficient structure, a common experience among mature RevOps leaders.

Growing Pains & Challenges

Symptom 2: Overwhelming Investment in RevOps

In the last 10 years, there has been an explosion of offerings that were meant to enable and empower RevOps teams to own and accomplish more. Consider the two broadest categories of offerings, software and services:

- **Software:** There are TONS of statistics about the growth of RevOps platforms. The RevOps platform market has seen substantial growth, with a projected CAGR of 17.3% between 2023 and 2033, up from 15.2% between 2018 and 2022. This growth reflects the increasing demand for RevOps solutions.
- **Services:** The list of “RevOps as a Service” providers is massive and growing. The founding years for each of the 8 listed providers are all within the last ten years. Even these origin years somewhat overstate when the businesses started to boom. More new players like Kicksaw, Active the Magic, Carabiner Group, Go Nimbly and others were started in the last decade as well. Nearly all were founded in the last 5 years.

It can feel like there are now as many consultants in this area as there in-house professionals!

The Problem

This growth has come hand-in-hand with the number of buyers on the RevOps side, accelerating the explosion. The issue prior to the market correction in 2022 is that selling more solutions into RevOps was relatively easy and companies bought too many solutions that could not possibly have been adopted effectively, again reducing departmental and company efficiency and frustrating end users, specifically Sales and tech-savvy leaders who sponsored the purchases to glean insights that never came. Each point solution was linked to an ROI story that rarely materialized because the totality of tech to implement was too overwhelming for the RevOps teams and the users they're supposed to support.

Symptom 3: Career Uncertainty for RevOps Professionals

After the market correction, RevOps professionals faced significant career challenges, stalling even successful teams and shifting focus from company support to career survival.

1 Job Market Challenges

- **Supply and Demand:** With entire teams laid off, there's a surplus of RevOps professionals and a scarcity of open positions.
- **Skills Gap:** Companies now seek specialists rather than multi-pronged RevOps hires. Most RevOps professionals, experienced in various areas but not specialized, struggle to fit these new demands.

2 Internal Career Challenges

Inside current companies, the situation is equally dire. To put it bluntly, there is no path to a C-level role within RevOps and often barely a VP-level title.

So without a ladder within the same department, where can one move to find upward mobility?

- **Sales:** Sales leadership roles require frontline sales experience, which most RevOps professionals lack.
- **Finance:** Finance leadership requires technical skills in accounting, investing, or financial analysis, which are uncommon among RevOps professionals.
- **IT:** IT roles require advanced technical and system management skills, making it a challenging transition for most RevOps professionals.

Growing Pains & Challenges

3 Lack of Defined Path

To date, there is no defined or carved path for middle and rising RevOps leaders into senior management roles. Some RevOps leaders have certainly used their prior experiences and/or internal credibility to move into lateral roles in adjacent functions, but the vast majority are either stuck or somewhat lost when it comes to what's next. You don't need to speak with more than a handful of RevOps veterans to hear this story/frustration all over the place. Every time I (Brad) post a new Sr. Level Opening, I get at least 10 (usually many more) people reaching out to me about the opportunity. Their typical sentiment is, "there's nowhere for me to go/grow at my current company". As we all know, this is not a strong starting point for a new job search.



04

Clarifying the Role

RevOps Responsibilities

Clarifying the Role

Before we move forward, you might be wondering, "Brad & Jacob, why the sudden shift to 'anti-RevOps' when you've been successful RevOps leaders?" Trust us, we still see the value in RevOps, but we need to be pragmatic about where and when it works. It's not a one-size-fits-all solution.

Now that we've outlined the context and contributing factors to the current frustrations, let's explore what RevOps actually does, how your managed functions and learned skills translate to future success, and what's needed to ensure a commercial organization can succeed and grow, whether the title is "RevOps" or something similar.

1 Business Operation Planning

As teams grow and sales cycles become more complex, new roles are introduced to specialize in specific GTM functions. This boosts efficiency and output quality but also increases complexity and requires greater coordination. Once sales teams expand beyond a few contributors, process experts are needed to:

- Build, train, and monitor customer-facing sales processes
- Organize internal reporting and processes
- Ensure efficient coordination and escalation of issues to leadership

2 Financial Reporting, Analytics, & Commissions

Finance teams rely on accurate reporting to understand the productivity and output of commercial teams. RevOps often takes on this responsibility, providing a "source of truth" for:

- Day-to-day pipeline management and longer-term performance metrics
- Key conversion rates and success against quotas/targets
- Costs associated with GTM functions

Additionally, RevOps handles commissions processing, using automated systems to ensure accurate calculations based on specific compensation plans.

3 Commercial System Administration (Systems)

This classic RevOps role involves overseeing commercial team systems, primarily Salesforce and/or Hubspot, but also other tools used by Sales, Marketing, CS, and customer-facing teams. Proper implementation and adoption of these tools drive:

- Coordination through centralized information
- Efficiency through automation
- Accountability through transparency

These systems provide rapid insights and analytics for leadership to monitor and respond to commercial progress.

05

Action Plan

What Does It Mean for My Business?

Action Plan

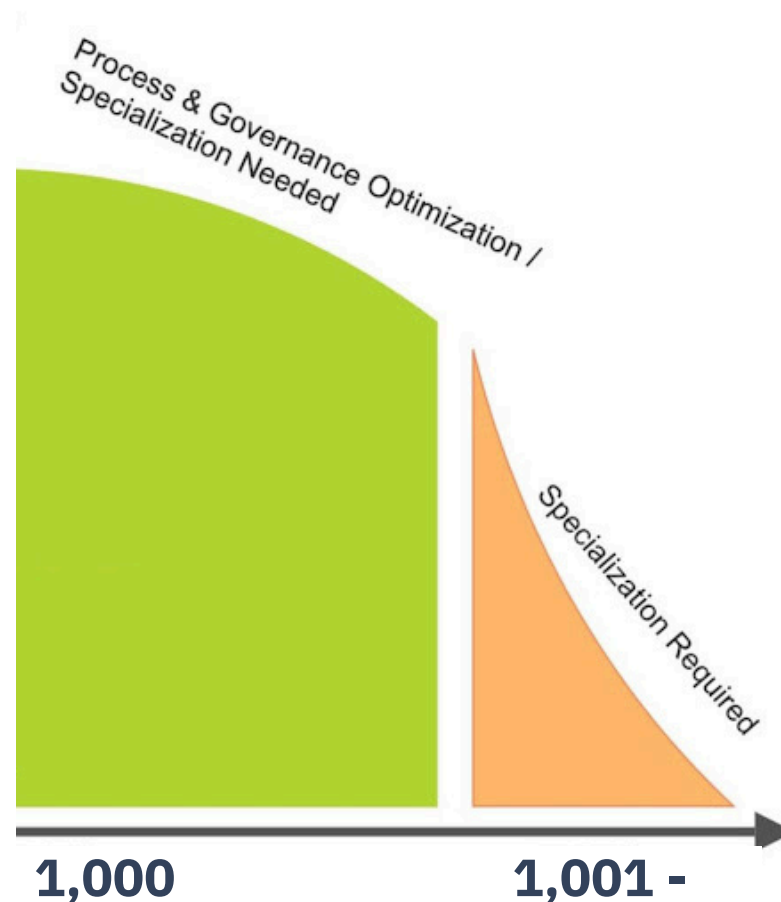
CEOs and C-level leaders need to evaluate their existing RevOps teams and decide whether to rebuild the old model or try something new. Instead of a binary decision, consider RevOps through a segmentation lens:

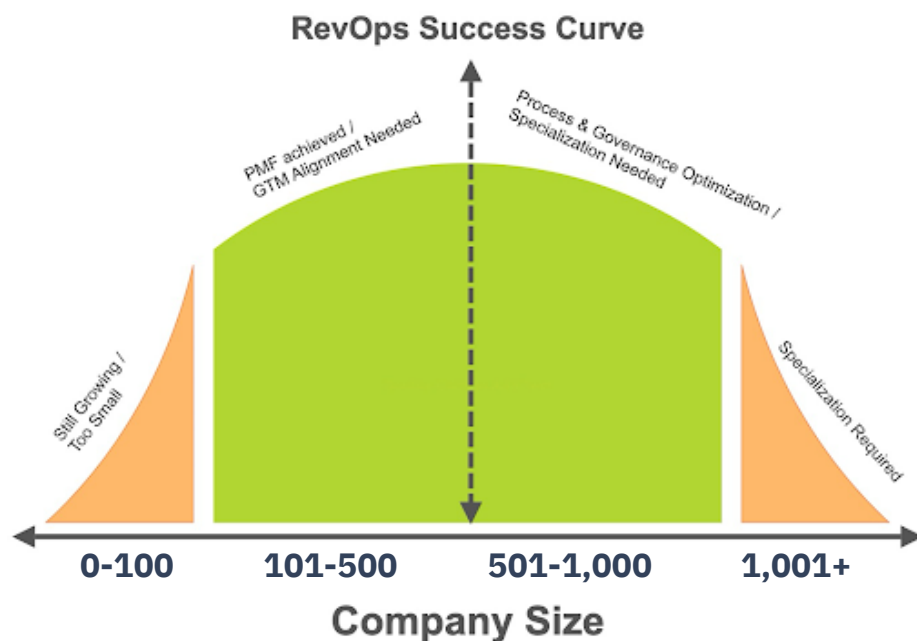
1. Where is my business today?
2. What key functions do I need RevOps - or other functions - to solve.

As your company scales, the need for specialization and governance around technology and business processes grows, typically around the 500-employee mark.

At this stage, PMF is established, and the focus shifts to optimizing the product offering and GTM strategy, requiring specialized skills.

We'll label each of these phases one to four (1-4), and our recommendation for how you think about and structure your RevOps teams should follow suit. Keep in mind, the exact employee thresholds below can shift based on the history, complexity, and type of business. Don't let the exact numbers be a hard division but rather a proxy for where the business is at the time.





1 Phase 1: Roughly 0-100 Employees

As the graphic makes clear, companies at this scale are often too small to require a RevOps team and should be setting the groundwork for product building and founder-led sales that inform PMF until you're ready to scale. Typically, Series A/B investment comes at the end of this phase to fund growth.

2 Phase 2: Roughly 100-500 Employees

At this stage, RevOps is introduced into the organization. Typically, the team consists of 1-3 people, depending on the complexity of the business. The structure includes:

- **Leadership (Manager/Director)**
 - Understands the bigger picture of how RevOps supports the business.
 - Builds, documents, and owns processes within each commercial team (Marketing, BDR, Sales, CS).
- **Analyst**
 - Performs reporting, data analysis, and technical functions like commissions.
 - Ensures systems support data collection and reliability, partnering with Finance for accuracy.
- **Systems Expert**
 - Manages CRM and other commercial tools.
 - Handles technical buildout, documentation, and basic user training.

Action Plan

Because the work is more focused on building the foundational inter-team processes (rather than the need for intra-team specialization), we find it beneficial that the team at this point reports into the C-level functional owner who is most familiar with the day-to-day work of the team. Since even the leader of the team likely tops out at Director, the type of work you'd expect the team to own would look something like:

- **Sales:** Territory planning, quotas, CRM management, sales processes, reporting, and commission structures.
- **Marketing:** Lead management processes, BDR territories, reporting, and commission structures.
- **CS/Account Management:** CSM territories, CRM management for CS, and reporting.

Notice the need for intra-team reporting is not quite introduced yet though leaders who own RevOps should have one eye toward this end goal. The earlier this can be introduced, the better, but your team physically may not be big enough or handle enough pipeline for this to be needed yet.

3 Phase 3: Roughly 500-1,000 Employees

In this phase, RevOps reaches full maturity, requiring

advanced thinking, senior leadership, and specialized skills. This structure is how most envision their RevOps team, suitable for this stage of growth.

At this point, you need a more mature function that requires:

- **Senior Leadership:** More mature function necessitating senior leaders to guide the team.
- **Specialized Teams:** Teams become more specialized to handle critical work efficiently.

At this stage, the RevOps team needs to expand but should remain lean, ideally with 4-6 members, including the VP. A smaller team is possible with a solid foundation. To maintain efficiency:

- **Advanced Technology:** Implement well-built, highly-adopted tech (e.g., CRM, prospecting, quoting, market intelligence) to automate processes and empower end users.
- **Decentralized Accountability:** Establish thorough processes, provide training, ensure transparency, and promote team-level ownership of performance and data hygiene.

3 Phase 3: Roughly 500-1,000 Employees (continued)

Generally speaking, the organization will evolve its specialization matrix should look something like this:

Action Plan

Level	Operations	Reporting & Data	Systems
VP/Senior	End to end process ownership within teams and across commercial teams	Executive-level insights from the data and proactive recommendations to broader GTM changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System strategy including vendor selection • Enterprise deployment • Ownership of budget and ROI
Manager or Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day-to-day policing of process and team management • Working directly with end users to referee and resolve conflicts • Specialization in specific commercial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad knowledge of reporting tools and processes • Ability to execute or direct junior team members as needed • Optimize processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project ownership and identification of new needs/gaps with solutions for solving • Direct all day-to-day systems work relevant to GTM
Analyst/Junior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of processes and ability to escalate as needed • Ownership of inter-team processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to run reports • Support end users, • Manage reporting processes setup by senior team members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execution of tools • Implementation and documentation

Phase 3 Reporting Structure

The team should report to an enterprise-wide leader like the CFO, COO, or CEO to avoid a Sales-first bias and ensure balanced focus across all GTM functions. Keeping the team at this level of maturity under a CRO/CCO or Sales-only leader is dangerous for a few reasons:

- 1. Neglect Other Functions:** Overemphasize Sales, neglecting Marketing and CS.
- 2. Biased Metrics:** Drive success metrics for Sales only, not the entire GTM motion.
- 3. Resource Allocation Issues:** Crowd out investments in other operations areas.

These issues aren't due to bad actors or intentional misdirection but result from a misaligned structure that doesn't cohesively address operations across Lead to Sales to Account Management. Even with effective collaboration, these outcomes are almost inevitable.

The challenge for most RevOps professionals is their generalist nature. Specializing in territory planning, system integration, process development, and strategic financial planning is tough, especially in a company with 500+ employees and a 200-300 person GTM team. Thus, building out the RevOps organization is crucial at this stage.

4 Phase 4: Roughly 1,000+ Employees

At this point, companies have scaled to a point where you need true experts in each of the areas outlined above. Because the level of specialization is so high, ownership of each component should begin to organize under the C-level leader most adept at building, training, and developing team members in those areas:

- Operations fit naturally under a CFO/COO who owns enterprise-level performance
- Reporting/Data fit naturally under Operations or a CFO with dedicated GTM units
- Systems fit naturally under a CIO/CTO who owns enterprise-wide system management

For what it's worth, the Operations role by this point should go beyond purely GTM teams (Sales, Marketing, CS) and sit across the enterprise. Others have written on this topic and we'd recommend an overview [like this one](#) to explain how you can build processes given the right philosophy that connect Sales, Marketing, Finance, and Product.

06

Looking Forward

Thoughts From the Authors



Jacob Shmukler's Thoughts: What Does All of This Mean For You As a RevOps Professional?

Breathe. You've gained valuable skills that remain critical to growing businesses, even if your department's name changes. RevOps professionals must adapt to current realities and future needs. The good news is that RevOps experience is:

- Broad-based
- Commercially and technically focused
- Aligned to evergreen company needs and functions

Assessing Your Next Career Step

The challenge for each individual will be recognizing their strengths and experience and picking the right direction for their next career step. For example:

- **Sales:** Should I start over at a Sales org and use my operational/enterprise experience to be the top seller because I see the big picture?
- **Finance:** Should I learn more financial and analytical skills and use my understanding of Sales organizations to be the most commercially-savvy Finance leader in the company?
- **Technical Systems:** Should I invest in more technical systems experience and use my practical knowledge of how systems are used and adopted to become the best administrator/designer possible?



Looking Forward



Jacob Shmukler's Thoughts: What Does All of This Mean For You As a RevOps Professional?

Key Questions to Consider

The question to ask yourself is what part of this broad-based, multi-functional role comes naturally to you and provides the most opportunity for growth.

- What part of RevOps excites you and offers growth?
- Which CXO leaders do you align with?
- What tasks do you look forward to, and which do you dread?

Think about the matrix outlined in the previous section (pg. 24) that comes to life in “Phase 3” of a business and consider which of those speciality areas comes most naturally to you. By the time a business has reached (roughly) Phase 4, your path will be clearer as your new team will now roll into a defined C-level role.

Said simply: Do you want to focus more on business strategy or technical execution? (Unlike the Matrix, this is NOT a one way door. And your path and journey can change anytime. But it is important you dedicate your focus on one side more than the other).

Communicating Your Value

Once you’ve figured out where you want to go, the challenge for nearly all RevOps professionals will be communicating to non-RevOps experts how your current skill set, experience, and aptitude will translate to existing functions and job titles. Here are a few things to consider in those discussions:

- What are the business needs/challenges that you’ve solved (rather than the specific work that was done)?
- Who are the senior leaders that you’ve most effectively supported and how did you make their lives/work easier? Why would your past VP/CXO hire you again?
- Given the broad type of work you’ve done, what is your superpower?
 - Learning and executing business systems
 - Gathering and interpreting data
 - Envisioning and mapping out a cohesive and reliable process
 - Thinking through overall commercial/GTM challenges and direction

These can each lead to different career paths, so it’s important to consider these questions as you approach the changing job market.



Brad Smith's Thoughts: Closing Note

RevOps has profoundly impacted my life. Starting a company from scratch, I gained invaluable experience working closely with Sales, Marketing, Customer Success, and Finance. This broad exposure gave me a superpower in building a business, a privilege not all founders have.

What To Do When Your Company Faces RevOp Challenges

If you're asking, "Brad, what would YOU do in my position and YOUR company is experiencing this pain?" Glad you asked! First, take a deep breath—this adjustment doesn't have to happen overnight. This process should be methodical, intentional, and well thought out. Ensure executive alignment and clearly articulate the reasons for the change.

Next, grab a big ol' glass of water and take that red pill, Neo! Let me be very clear here... at a certain point, it's time for your company to begin structuring operational responsibilities back into departments. Apologies to all the "breaking down silos" advocates, but this is needed for true scalability and governance.

1 Step 1: Decide Ownership of Responsibilities

- Use the matrix from Phase 3 to classify responsibilities into Operations, Reporting & Data, and Systems.
- Assign these responsibilities to the most fitting departments. If there are no natural fits, work with your leadership team to find the best temporary ownership.
- Keep this structure for 2 to 3 quarters to evaluate how leaders manage their new responsibilities and how the company adapts. Ultimately, aim for C-level owners for these classifications by Phase 4.

2 Step 2: Communicate With Your RevOps Team

- Have an honest conversation with your RevOps team about the transition. Enroll them in your vision and ensure they know they have a significant role in the company's future.
- This change can offer growth and advancement opportunities, addressing the career ceilings many RevOps professionals face.
- Skipping this step will lead to a lot of internal problems, so make sure you don't gloss over it.

Looking Forward



Brad Smith's Thoughts: Closing Note

Final Advice

While these steps don't need to be taken in this exact order, I suggest following them as outlined. If you have a senior RevOps leader who will head a new department (e.g., VP of RevOps to VP of Systems), you might reverse the order. However, with a more junior RevOps team, decide on the departmental structure first, then address personnel changes.



07

Conclusion

Where Do We Go From Here?

Conclusion

We want to hear from you and any feedback you have on this topic. Here are a few questions we have for everyone reading this article.

- Have you felt any of these pain points on your RevOps Journey, as a professional or business leader?
- Have you seen the role plateau or stall in a growing organization?
- Where is your company on this maturity curve? Have you successfully transitioned from an earlier phase to later one? What did you learn from that experience?
- Do you see RevOps evolving in a different way in the future? What other models would work, and why? What else needs to be in place for an alternate model to work?

Thanks for attending our TED Talk!



Join the Community

Join the largest Slack community of Ops professionals in the world today.

[BECOME A WIZARD](#)

