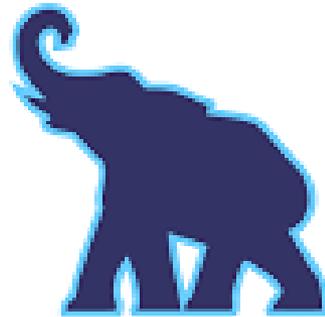


2018 Alumni of the Year Award

Finalist Information – Katie Braesicke



memoryBlue

Katie Braesicke

Director of Sales Development
Ceros
memoryBlue Exit Year: 2015



2017 Opening Highlights:

- ▶ Managed and grew sales development team 900% in size (from 3 people to 30), given no framework beyond 'teach them how to be you'. Katie took full ownership and implemented a regimented training, mentorship, podding (1 AE to 1 SDR, verticalized) and career advancement program.
- ▶ Sales team sourced over 400 SQLs, \$3M in sales at a \$40K average deal size (including companies such as Under Armour, GEICO, Capgemini, McKesson, NetApp, and the Boston Celtics) and is the top performing team in the company.
- ▶ As part of those figures, the team generated \$1,300,000 in closed annual recurring revenue.





memoryBlue

Katie Braesicke

Finalist Application -- Q & A

#1: Explain why you deserve to be memoryBlue's 2018 Alumni of the Year. Expand on information from your initial application (where possible).

When I started at memoryBlue in Austin I was instantly enchanted by the friendly, casual atmosphere, yet everyone hustled so hard. Nimit Bhatt (Managing Director, Austin) was an incredible, supportive manager and for the first time made me realize that bosses could be fun, kind, and respected all at the same time. He inspired me to take the leap into management and I feel like he is the one person who inspired me to become a manager myself.

Although I got hired out by my client, Ceros, there was a time when we had little hope for that account. Ceros was a dream come true for me. I was ready to tackle any account I was given, but the fact that I was with a design software company with the mission "Unlock Creativity," and having been a creative my whole life, it couldn't have been any more perfect for me. Nimit stayed positive and supportive the whole time, encouraging me to hustle hard and turn things around. I did!

I have been at Ceros since I left memoryBlue 3 years ago and have moved from SDR, to Sr. SDR, to Sales Development Manager, to the Director of Sales Development. I came in as the first real SDR and now I oversee a team of almost 30 reps.

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memoryBlue

Katie Braesicke

Finalist Application -- Q & A

#1: Explain why you deserve to be memoryBlue's 2018 Alumni of the Year. Expand on information from your initial application (where possible).

Ceros is a startup, so I had to learn a lot quickly. The hustle mentality memoryBlue instilled in me made it much easier. I was proactive, headstrong, and passionate, making myself known in the company as someone who truly “Gives a Shit” (pardon my French-- that’s one of Ceros’ core values!).

- ▶ During my time as an SDR, I sourced over \$1.3M in sales, including companies such as Universal Music, NFL, AIG, General Electric, McKinsey, Spectrum, and Toyota.
- ▶ The growth has been incredible the 3 years I’ve been here (from 25 people when I started to 130 now). And just in the past year, I have grown my sales development team 900% in size (from 3 people to 30), given no framework but ‘teach them how to be you’. I took full ownership of this and implemented a regimented training, mentorship, podding (1 AE to 1 SDR, verticalized) and career advancement programs. I am in charge of interviewing and hiring SDR candidates that fit the high culture standards set for the team and the company, identifying new markets and companies as targets and assigning these accounts to all of the SDRs, along with setting team and individual quotas, compensation, and bonuses.

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memoryBlue

Katie Braesicke

Finalist Application -- Q & A

#1: Explain why you deserve to be memoryBlue's 2018 Alumni of the Year. Expand on information from your initial application (where possible).

- ▶ I've had to wear so many hats and I've learned more than I ever thought I'd have to in a sales job...but that's the start-up life!
- ▶ My CEO actually just spoke about my memoryBlue-Ceros story to the whole company at a recent Town Hall meeting and said "Let Katie serve as a beacon of hope to some of you, if work hard you can you can accomplish great things too." I love what I do, the company I work for, and I'm so grateful for the opportunities I've been given. It may sound cheesy, but I truly believe finding memoryBlue was fate because I wouldn't have this without them.
- ▶ It's crazy to think that in the past 3 years, I went from almost losing the Ceros account while at memoryBlue, to now being the Director of Sales Development at Ceros overseeing nearly 25% of one of the fastest-growing start-ups in New York City... Now that's HUSTLE!
- ▶ In 2017, my sales team sourced over 400 SQLs, \$3M in sales at a \$14k average deal size (including companies such as Under Armour, GEICO, Capgemini, McKesson, NetApp, and the Boston Celtics) and is the top performing team in the company.



memoryBlue

Katie Braesicke

Finalist Application -- Q & A

#2: What is one thing you do that differentiates you from other sales professionals?

Disclaimer: The tactics below may not be successful with every ICP, but I've seen a great response from marketers and creatives:

- ▶ I've always had a 'find a way' attitude and, mixed with my innate creativity, I am constantly finding inventive ways to get the job done. I think a lot of sales professionals follow their guidelines to a "T" and may get bogged down with their productivity numbers and quotas. They don't take the time to put themselves in their prospects' shoes and think 'what would I like to get in my inbox?' or 'what would I like to hear if I was on the other end of the phone?' To me, that's not something that even requires a second thought... in my opinion, practical creativity is necessary for sales success.
- ▶ When I first started my sales career, it didn't take long to realize that dry, impersonal scripts and novel-length emails weren't working and that it was time to ditch that approach. Those emails weren't ME, those call scripts weren't ME, so I thought about the things that make me ME: my quirks, my musical talent, my expressive nature, my casual down-to-earth attitude, the poetry and songs I write, my knack for empathy... I had an epiphany: Why was it that I valued these very human things, yet I was selling myself as a robot?

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memoryBlue

Katie Braesicke

Finalist Application -- Q & A

#2: What is one thing you do that differentiates you from other sales professionals?

- ▶ The first thing I experimented with was writing haikus to prospects. I have always loved writing funny haikus, limericks, and acrostic poems but I had only sent them to friends and family. I decided to give it a shot and it ended up being a tactic that was so wildly successful my entire sales and marketing teams used it (and my copy) as a permanent touch in their cadences and sequences. It has helped book more meetings for my company in the last 3 years than any other email we've used. Later came limericks and acrostics, which have just resulted in just as much engagement.
- ▶ Another thing I did was email a recording of me singing and playing a guitar cover of a popular song, only changing the words to fit the company or prospect. I love writing music, singing, and playing guitar in my spare time anyway, so being able to bring that into the workplace was not only successful but really fun.
- ▶ A less attention-grabbing tactic I've used is adjusting my email persona to be as casual as I am in real life. I type as though I was talking, making my pitch interesting, relevant, concise, and easy to understand. When I coach new SDRs, I find this is sometimes the hardest concept for them to grasp. Making yourself a person to your prospects is a huge advantage, there's no need to be formal.

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memoryBlue

Katie Braesicke

Finalist Application -- Q & A

#2: What is one thing you do that differentiates you from other sales professionals?

- ▶ In a similar vein, I found a lot of success with being absolutely transparent with my prospects and clients. Did you see the prospect clicking the link in your email, so now you're going to give them a quick call? Tell them that! Again, I've sold to marketers most of my career, they know all the tricks because they use them too. Make that into a joke and they'll appreciate the candor.
- ▶ These are not only tactics that I find valuable in business, but in life as well. Be expressive, creative, and true to yourself and good things happen!



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Katie Braesicke

Finalist Application -- Q & A

#3: What key things did you do to develop professionally in 2017?

- ▶ As a new manager of a fast-growing team, I had to learn so much in such a little amount of time with very ambitious targets to hit. I had to learn everything from general management to sales operations to finance, but learning the ins and outs of training a team was my favorite.
- ▶ I had to learn how to effectively train and maintain a team of SDRs, given no internal instruction or guidance besides 'teach them how to be you'. I revisited my old teaching textbooks, developed a solid curriculum, created the necessary content based on my experience and strategies along with industry best practices and vetted a learning management software for all of it to live within. I attended workshops on training teams, sat with HR regularly for feedback, and utilized books, blogs, articles, LinkedIn Learning (Lynda), and Coursera.
- ▶ My training program is the most effective training program in the company. So much so, that the AE, Account Management, Customer Support, and Professional Services teams have all adopted it. The numbers speak for themselves: in 2017 my team sourced over 400 SQLs, \$3M in sales at a \$14k average deal size (including companies such as Under Armour, GEICO, Capgemini, McKesson, NetApp, and the Boston Celtics) and is the top performing team in the company.



memoryBlue

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Finalist Application -- Q & A

#4: How are you serving as an ambassador for memoryBlue?

- ▶ I talk about memoryBlue any chance I can! It's a household name at Ceros, and I always tell my memoryBlue-Ceros story when I interview candidates. I have referred 2 friends to memoryBlue after I left, they got hired and loved it. I've even referred another memoryBlue Alum to work with me at Ceros because I know the hard work and hustle attitude he will bring the company (Devin Cushing... and he's crushing it!).
- ▶ Having designed Ceros' SDR program in its entirety from scratch, a lot of that is based on memoryBlue's coaching. The SDR Career Advancement Program I created for Ceros was mB inspired, along with the SDR Mentorship Program, and Sandler Sales training.
- ▶ Not only is memoryBlue a name I often mention at Ceros, but a company I recommend to other organizations. I belong to a national Sales community called Modern Sales Professionals where sales leaders from great tech companies can ask questions, give advice, and give recommendations. Every time someone asks about outsourcing SDR work, I recommend memoryBlue, telling my story and speaking of memoryBlue's amazing HUSTLE culture.
- ▶ When I came into Ceros, people immediately treated me as an expert. They respected my knowledge and training received at memoryBlue and were eager for me to teach them what I knew. From all that I've learned, to the great network of friends I've made through memoryBlue, I feel compelled to spread the word! mB helped shape who I am today and hustle is a way of life.



memoryBlue

Katie Braesicke

Finalist Application -- Q & A

#5: What one piece of advice would you give to someone that is brand new to sales?

- ▶ Something I see time and time again with the new SDRs I manage is a period of frustration and discouragement right after they are fully ramped, when they are expected to hit their numbers but they haven't quite figured out their personal 'secret sauce' yet. They see the senior members of the team consistently hitting goals and although the new members are working hard, staying late, and doing all the right things, they are coming up short. I coach them to stick with it and continue doing all those things, because it's building up their pipeline, it just takes time. The previous no's will become yes's and last month's "bad time" will become this month's "good time." Be diligent and always follow up.
- ▶ In a similar vein, I tell each of them that sales is a numbers game: the more calls you make, the more thoughtful emails you send, the more effort you put into it, the more meetings you're going to get and sales you're going to make (something I actually learned from Nimit!). Do everything in your ability to make sure you're getting there and if you need help, ask! Being vulnerable and admitting you need help isn't a weakness, it's a strength. You have to own your number, own your responsibilities, and never make excuses. Be proactive, find a way, HUSTLE, and do everything in your ability to get there. A hard-earned victory feels really good. Always remember: the difference between a good day and a bad day is your attitude. You're going to get a lot of no's, but the more no's you get, you're that much closer to a yes.

Katie Braesicke

Finalist Application -- Q & A



#6: Give an example of how you exhibited mentorship or leadership in 2017.

- ▶ I started as an SDR at Ceros and worked my way up to the Director of Sales Development overseeing an extremely fast-growing team of SDRs (from 3 reps to almost 30 in 1 year's time). I know from first-hand experience as an SDR that it's so motivating to feel like progressing my career is within reach, but recognized that with such growth but no structured program in place my team may start to feel like getting a promotion was unachievable.
- ▶ I took initiative before this became an issue and proposed an SDR Career Advancement Program to my executives. Getting executive buy-in is not an easy feat, but given their trust in me and my passion about this, they approved my plan.
- ▶ My Career Advancement Program includes metrics to hit, certifications to pass, and skills to master for transitioning or promoting to: Senior SDR, New Business Director (AE), Sales Development Manager, Marketing Roles, and Account management. Each role has its own specific projects, but a special one to note is the presentation on the Sandler Sales Methodology-- thanks for the inspiration, memoryBlue! It is so exciting to see this carried out in my new organization and for the SDRs to be so pumped about it.
- ▶ By taking the initiative to implement this Career Advancement Program, I have empowered all of Ceros' SDRs to promote and transition to other roles, giving them a clear outline and criteria of what success looks like. Getting promoted is no longer just an idea, but an achievable goal (with hard work!). By doing this, I have seen an increase in performance from every member and have promoted 8 members of my team: 3 Senior SDRs, 2 New Business Directors (AEs), 1 Content Marketing Manager, 1 Account Manager, and 1 Sales Development Manager.

Katie Braesicke

Finalist Application -- Q & A

#7: Share a specific example of how you exhibited HUSTLE in 2017.

- ▶ Back when my SDR team was very small, it was easy to divide up accounts and assign verticals with little overlap, although I knew this wasn't scalable. As the team grew much larger in such a short amount of time, I had to quickly adapt and solve the problem, which resulted in an entire sales team restructure.
- ▶ What used to be a group of SDRs and a separate group of NBDs (AEs), where the SDRs would prospect into whatever companies they wanted to and assign those companies to NBDs in a round-robin fashion, was about to completely change. I felt it was necessary to have strict verticals so that there would be no accidental overlap, and each SDR had a set of target accounts within that vertical. I had to learn a lot about sales operations, digging into the data and distinguishing which verticals were the best and which could be scalable, and restructure the team based on my findings.
- ▶ I divided my large team into 3 Pods: 2 verticalized and 1 training (which my newly promoted SDR Manager would oversee). The first Pod would be a group of 6 SDRs paired up with 6 NBDs, all working in the B2B Tech space and accounts would be divided up based on sub-industry. The next pod would be a group of 8 SDRs paired with 8 NBDs, each pair having different verticals (Publishing, Finance, Healthcare, Professional Services, Entertainment, Insurance, Brands, and Travel). On top of that, each paired SDR would now be responsible for helping their NBD nurture opportunities post-SQL.

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Katie Braesicke

Finalist Application -- Q & A

#7: Share a specific example of how you exhibited HUSTLE in 2017.

- ▶ It was not only demanding in that I had to work many nights and weekends with our operations team to get this done, but the chaos throughout the team added another layer. Such a big change was bound to cause chaos, and I feel very fortunate that my team was honest and upfront with me about it. What's a startup without a little chaos to keep you on your toes, right?
- ▶ This added layer of their frustration from having to switch processes gave me an opportunity to really step up to the management plate and pacify the mass of SDRs. I was there to listen to their concerns, give supportive feedback, and help them fix their problems. This solidified the trust my SDRs had in me, especially now that the new sales structure is a well-oiled machine.
- ▶ It was hard and at times seemingly impossible, but the perseverance paid off. It's a project that has been invaluable to the organization, resulting in a 540% increase in outbound SQL generation and 250% increase in Pilots won.

Katie Braesicke

Finalist Reference: Kevin Croxton

Relationship: VP of Sales, Ceros(Direct Manager)



Although I'm sure there are some qualified finalists, I'd have a tough time thinking any of them have had as big of an impact on their organizations as Katie has had on Ceros and our success since her arrival three years ago.

From the start of 2016, Katie has grown the SDR team from 4 SDR's to 11 by the end of the year. They generated 260 Sales Qualified Leads which resulted in \$680,000 of annual recurring revenue closed. In 2017, Katie grew the team again to 19 people. They generated 820 SQLs which generated \$1,300,000 in closed annual recurring revenue. Currently in 2018, in just the past five months, Katie has already added another 9 people who have amassed 610 SQLs resulting in \$1,000,000 of closed annual recurring revenue.

As you can imagine, this growth has been a huge jump for Katie and her efforts have fueled a large portion of the ARR our company is counting on. Katie has grown from an individual contributor in her previous role to directly managing a team of close to 30 individuals. She's also taken on managing her first manager! All said and done, Katie has been responsible for hiring, training, and motivating the most important team in our organization when it comes to sales pipeline generation.

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Katie Braesicke

Finalist Reference: Kevin Croxton

Relationship: VP of Sales, Ceros(Direct Manager)



On stats alone, Katie is more than qualified to win this award, but I'd be doing her a disservice if I didn't mention the intangibles she brings to the table, which I feel align directly with our company culture (see more here: <https://www.ceros.com/about/meet-the-team/>).

- ▶ We Give a Shit - Katie is constantly going above and beyond to make our company better including things that stand outside of her role. She's helped create a mentorship program, she's constantly organizing cross-team events to promote company wide camaraderie, and she's always looking for ways to help the company succeed as a whole.
- ▶ We Wear our Chicken Suits - Never one to take herself too seriously, Katie is quick to see the lighter side of stressful situations. Even when trying to hit aggressive goals, Katie has been able to turn end-of-quarter stress into fun team events where everyone can share a laugh while coming together to achieve targets.
- ▶ We are Brutally Honest - As a first time manager, Katie has been working hard on this piece as it's often the most difficult. Direct feedback is not always easy to give especially if it's not positive. At Ceros, we pride ourselves on dealing with things head-on and Katie has come a long way in not only doing this in her day-to-day management responsibilities, but also in coaching the manager who reports to her to do the same.

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Katie Braesicke

Finalist Reference: Kevin Croxton

Relationship: VP of Sales, Ceros(Direct Manager)



memoryBlue

- We Respect Each Other - Not only does Katie command a lot of respect around the company, given the tremendous job she's done, but she's also quick to lend a hand to others. She's a naturally empathetic person which makes it easy for her to truly respect the challenges others face in different departments. She's never one to judge, and always keen to lend helping hand wherever possible.
- We Find a Way - As someone who runs the largest department at Ceros and hits their goal on the most consistent basis, Katie wouldn't be able to do that without an extra dose of FIND A WAY (our version of HUSTLE). From getting creative with her approach to prospects, to rallying the team for late night "crunch and munch" towards the end of the month, Katie is constantly finding new and innovative ways to get the job done.
- Although Katie is Ceros through and through, she'll always be memoryBlue at her core. Everything she's accomplished here has been on a base of knowledge she honed while at memoryBlue and she's sure proud to tell people that - so much so that she's even recruited fellow memoryBlue alumni to add to our family!