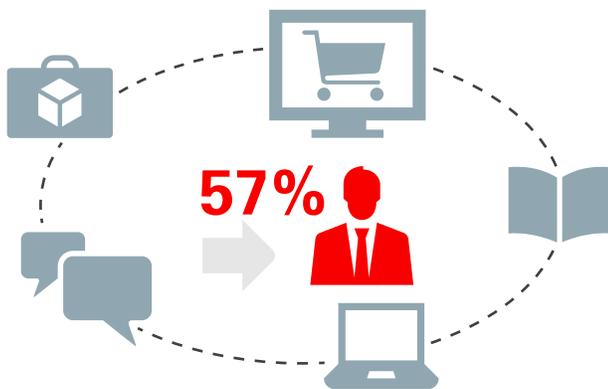


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The Five Drivers of the Successful Modern Sales Force

How to Sell More and Sell Better in the Age of the Empowered Customer



“The age of the customer is upon us. Buyers are more demanding, informed, value-sensitive, and have more choices available to them than at any other point in history.”

Forrester, *The Selling System in the Age of the Customer*,
March 2014

It's not news that the way your customers buy is changing.

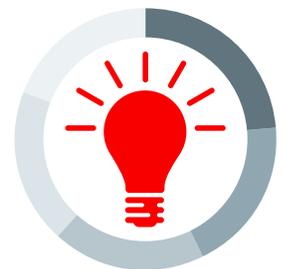
Everyone knows the infamous “57%” figure—that today’s B2B customers get 57 percent of the way along the buying process before they engage with a salesperson. It’s common knowledge that customers are using the internet for researching purchases; browsing vendor content, asking peers for advice, and paying close attention to ratings and reviews.

Sales Has to Change

And every Sales VP knows their sales organization has to change to keep up. That change means moving from a traditional “go-to-market” model, in which reps are primed to sell product according to their own agenda, to what Forrester Research¹ calls a “go-to-customer” model, in which sales teams are capable of understanding customers’ real needs—and providing valuable advice and insight to help them succeed.

Five Drivers of the Successful Modern Sales Force

But what should Sales VPs be doing to change the culture and tactics of the sales team? This short guide looks at five drivers of the successful modern sales force—from working more collaboratively across the organization, to making smarter use of data and analytics.



We hope it gives you food for thought. And, if you’d like to know more about how Oracle is helping modern sales forces to be successful, you’ll find a wealth of tips, resources and case studies [here](#).

¹ Forrester, *The Selling System in the Age of the Customer*, March 2014

The Five Drivers of the Successful Modern Sales Force

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DRIVER #1: BE MOBILE AND PRODUCTIVE

“Less than one-half (48.5 percent) of firms are currently providing access to critical sales and customer information on mobile devices”

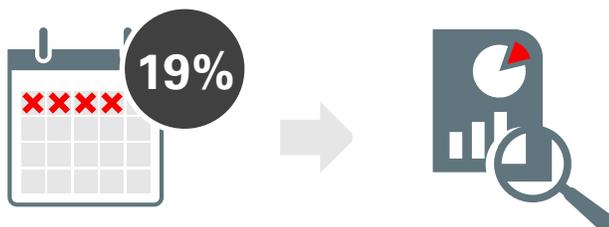
Accenture, Top-Five Focus Areas for Improving Sales Effectiveness Initiatives, 2013

Sales has a dirty secret: the average rep spends only one-third of their time actually selling. That means they spend around *three and half days each week* engaged in tasks that don't contribute anything to top-line revenue generation.

Why Is This Happening?

What sort of tasks are those? McKinsey & Co has found that “reading and answering e-mail” and “searching for information” collectively take up 47 percent of the average working week.

For a sales rep, that's time that could be spent engaging with customers and closing deals. Yet so many reps have to cut their customer-facing time short to go and look for information they've promised the customer, or to enter data into the CRM system.



19 percent of the average working week is spent searching for and gathering information

McKinsey & Co

Become a Mobile, Productive Sales Team

Imagine the difference if every one of your reps could make just two more calls or visits a day, every day. It's completely achievable if you give your reps the tools and information that enable them to spend more time in front of customers.

Devices like tablets and smartphones let your reps stay connected to systems and coworkers when they're on the road, but these devices are even more useful if they can also provide up-to-the-minute insight into the customer they're about to visit.

If a rep knows which web pages the prospect recently viewed, what they've been posting on LinkedIn lately, or what they've been asking peers about in industry forums, they'll be much better prepared for the conversation ahead.

And, in a world where 60 percent of buyers say reps are poorly prepared for meetings², that can make the difference between a great customer experience and a frustrating one—or between a closed deal and a lost opportunity.

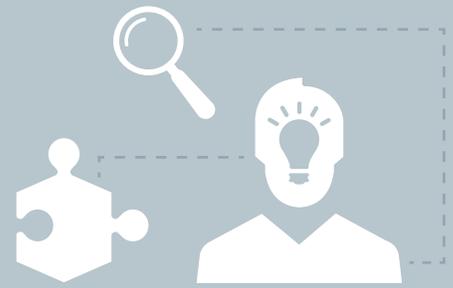
Find out More

Get tips, resources and case studies on improving sales team productivity [here](#).

² IDC, Sales Enablement and the Year of the Sales Rep, 2013

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DRIVER #2: BE INSIGHT-DRIVEN

“In 2012, the percentage of forecast deals that went to No Decision (23.7%) and were Lost (27.9%) was 51.6%.”

CSO Insights, **How to Sell in a Buying 2.0 World (Answers to Webinar Q&A)**

CSO Insights has found that in both 2012 and 2013, less than half of forecast deals were actually won. If you can't rely on accurate forecasts, then everything from your organization's bottom line to your own professional credibility can suffer.

Why Is This Happening?

With an estimated 27 percent of customer data set to change this year, you need to be sure that your insights—and your actions—are based on complete, accurate and up-to-date data, otherwise your ability to identify and focus on the right opportunities will be severely limited.

Stay Ahead of Competitors with Actionable Analytics

In theory, your sales team has access to more information about prospects and customers than ever before. It's there in their social-media activity, in the way they browse your website, in previous purchase experience, and in the conversations they have with other parts of your organization. The trick is learning how to use it.

Leading sales organizations are making smart use of data to gain visibility into the areas that matter. They're using white-space analysis to identify gaps in the market, explore customers' buying habits and mark out future opportunities. They're also working with Marketing to decipher lead behavior, to understand when customers' buying intentions are serious—and to engage with them earlier in the buying process.

The most advanced organizations are using predictive analytics to reveal where future opportunities lie, and to deploy resources and training accordingly. Analytics that can predict a customer's next likely purchase—perhaps by uncovering and aggregating the buying patterns of other customers—are gold dust for reps who want to know where they need to go to sell more.

At a time where the onus is on you to understand the customer like never before, and to engage with prospects earlier in the buying process, these are the kinds of insights that can set your sales organization apart from your competitors'.

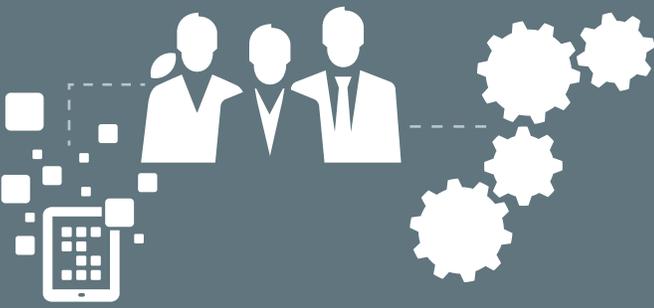
Find out more

Get tips, resources and case studies on improving your analytical capabilities [here](#).



Best-in-class companies use customer analytics
20 percent more than all others

Aberdeen, State of the CEM Market, 2014



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DRIVER #3: BE COLLABORATIVE

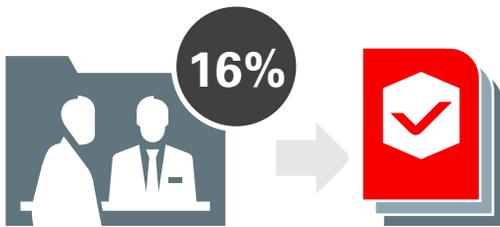
“31% of sales reps are not prepared with even a basic level of web-available information before taking a buyer’s valuable time.”

IDC, Sales Enablement and the Year of the Sales Rep, 2013

If reps don’t have the right information to hand when they’re face-to-face with a customer, there’s a good chance the deal won’t close. Yet IDC finds that only 16 percent are “extremely prepared” for a sales meeting.

Why Is This Happening?

The reps who are extremely prepared are highly likely to have adopted a “go-to-customer” model. They know what prospects have been doing and saying online, and they’ve deciphered their digital body language to understand their real needs. They are also excellent collaborators, using all the tools at their disposal to call in experts from around the organization to help close a deal.



Only 16 percent of sales reps are extremely prepared for a conversation with a buyer.

IDC, Sales Enablement and the Year of the Sales Rep, 2013

Collaborate Across the Enterprise to Close More Deals, Faster

In the age of the customer, very few reps have enough information, insight, expertise, and authority to negotiate a complex sale on their own.

They need to enlist expert help from across the organization, at the right points in the sales process, to ensure momentum is not lost.

Essentially, that means your sales force needs to be able to collaborate like never before. If a customer has a query about a contract term, the rep needs to be able to pull an attorney into the conversation. If the prospect doesn’t have the budget upfront, the rep should be able to call on the Financing team to agree a payment structure. This kind of on-the-spot collaboration—ideally done through the rep’s mobile device—can make the difference between a deal lost and a deal won.

With true collaboration, you can not only get instant advice from your company’s experts when it’s needed, but also share ideas and successful approaches. Imagine how performance would soar if you could capture the approach of your top-performing Challenger reps and share it across the sales force, for example—turning those winning techniques into standard procedure for everyone.

At the VP level, closer collaboration with the heads of other divisions can also transform performance—working with Marketing to agree a common definition of a sales-ready lead, for example, or with Service to coach service agents in identifying cross-sell and up-sell opportunities.

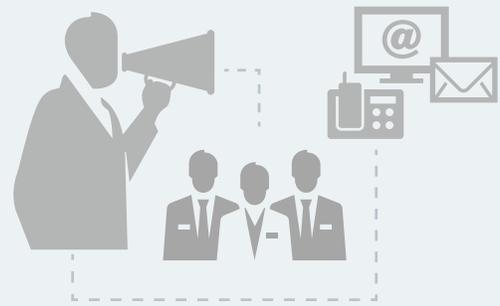
With everyone working together and pulling in the same direction, efficiency is improved, sales increase, and revenues soar.

Find out More

Get tips, resources and case studies on improving collaboration [here](#).

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DRIVER #4: BE EFFECTIVE PIPELINE-BUILDERS

“In this age of the customer, the only sustainable competitive advantage is knowledge of and engagement with customers.”

Forrester, Competitive Strategy in the Age of the Customer, October 2013

In most sales organizations, pipeline-building is deeply flawed. Fewer than 50 percent of leads result in an initial discussion with a customer, and up to 50 percent of forecasted deals never close. That not only means a lot of wasted effort—it also casts doubt on the sales organization’s credibility.

Why Is This Happening?

In the age of the empowered customer, reps are almost the last person a customer turns to for advice on a purchase. Instead, they are researching your products—and your competitors’ products—online, talking to peers on social media, and reading ratings and reviews.

The buying cycle—not the sales cycle—now dominates the agenda. And unless your reps can find a way to engage appropriately with customers throughout the buying process, it’s likely that prospects will evaluate and reject your brand without ever discussing it with you.

How many of your potential leads have discounted your brand before you even knew they were looking?



Fewer than 50 percent of leads result in an initial discussion with a customer

Accenture, Top-Five Focus Areas for Improving Sales Effectiveness Initiatives, 2013

Work Together to Build a Bigger, Better Pipeline

To do that, organizations need to completely change their approach to lead generation and nurturing. Reps are still getting poorly-qualified leads from Marketing teams who still consider a business card picked up at a trade show as a sales-ready lead.

In this new world, Sales and Marketing need to work together to develop new ways of generating and scoring leads. They must analyze data to understand where and how prospects are conducting their research, and be in those places with genuinely useful information that will guide the buying decision. They must understand the prospective buyer’s behavior, and thus gauge their readiness to buy. They must use social selling techniques to engage with prospects—and the people who influence those prospects—to understand their needs and help them make the right decision.

A successful modern sales team will also work with Customer Service to identify and act upon cross-sell and up-sell opportunities with existing customers. They will also work with coworkers across the sales force to pool knowledge of potential customers and collaborate to address their needs better than competitors can.

Building pipeline in the age of the empowered customer may seem harder than ever, but the right tools, skills and behaviors can provide unprecedented levels of insight into what customers are really looking for—insight that can be turned into a healthy, credible, and growing pipeline.

Find out More

Get tips, resources and case studies on improving pipeline-building [here](#).

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DRIVER #5: SELL FASTER AND MORE EASILY

“44% of individuals involved in a CRM project reported user adoption as a key reason for the failure of CRM initiatives”

Forrester, **How To Succeed With CRM: The Critical Success Factors, Part Three, 2013**

Why Is This Happening?

For sales teams to be successful in the age of the customer, they need tools that help them close more deals, faster. Some CRM tools are underused because they're not geared to helping reps sell in the modern era. This may be because they're complicated to use; because they're isolated from the apps your reps use every day; or because they don't give reps the information they need.

Today, sales automation is not (just) about managing accounts, contacts, and activities. It's about gaining insight that provides a competitive edge, having access to predictive information, being able to collaborate in real time, creating quotes in front of the customer, updating forecasts. All at any time, from any place, using mobile devices—all helping to drive sales and pipeline. This satisfies the “what's in it for me” dilemma other solutions have not solved.

Look to the Cloud for Modern, Success-Enhancing Sales Tools

Smart sales leaders are equipping their teams with the latest cloud-based tools for fast and successful selling. The advantages of a modern, cloud-based sales system are huge.

Quick to get going: Cloud-based tools can be up and running in a fraction of the time of old-style systems that your IT department has to buy and install.

Latest marketing automation features: Sales reps can see prospects' latest online activity and digital body language, so they're better prepared for every call and meeting.

Easy collaboration: The best tools make it effortless to bring experts from around the organization into the conversation, in real time, to help close the deal.

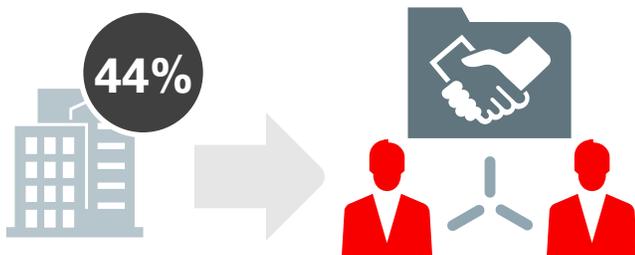
Mobile-first: When reps are out on the road, the last thing you want is for them to head home at 3pm to update the CRM system. With full mobile access, they can spend more time selling.

Powerful analytics: Reps can update pipeline information and forecasts as they go, giving sales managers and VPs unprecedented, real-time insight into progress against targets.

When your reps can collaborate with coworkers, build pipeline, and access useful customer data—from wherever they are—you'll instantly see your team selling more, and selling faster.

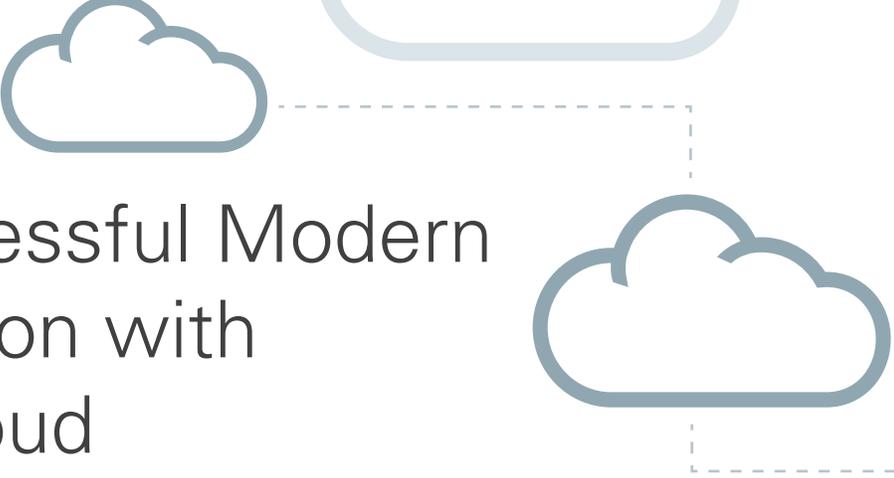
Find out More

Get tips, resources and case studies on using modern, cloud-based sales tools [here](#).



44 percent of organizations reported user adoption as a key reason for the failure of CRM initiatives

How To Succeed With CRM: The Critical Success Factors, Part 3 2013



Become a Successful Modern Sales Organization with Oracle Sales Cloud

We hope you've enjoyed these five drivers of the successful modern sales force. Around the world, leading sales organizations are succeeding in the age of the empowered customer with Oracle Sales Cloud.

A complete suite of modern, cloud-based sales tools, Oracle Sales Cloud lets you and your reps:

BE MOBILE AND PRODUCTIVE

with complete mobile access to all the tools and functionality you need to spend more time selling and less time doing admin.

BE INSIGHT-DRIVEN

with access to accurate, real-time data on pipeline, deals won, lost and in progress, and individual rep performance—as well as up-to-the-minute information on each prospect.

BE COLLABORATIVE

with social collaboration tools that provide instant access to help and expertise from across the organization.

BE EFFECTIVE PIPELINE-BUILDERS

with deep insight into prospects' online behavior, their previous interactions with your company, and their digital body language—helping you engage at the right time.

CLOSE DEALS FASTER AND MORE EASILY

with all the tools you need in one place, accessible anytime, anywhere, from any connected device.

Find out much more about Oracle Sales Cloud at our resource pages [here](#).



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