

The Rise of Digital Sales

How B2B Sales Teams Are Redefining the Customer Experience & Winning in the Revenue Era.



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Welcome to the Revenue Era



// The future we imagined for 2030 has been pulled forward to the present.

Tobias Lütke, CEO
Shopify

Within a year, almost every industry made an untested transition to remote work environments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Salesforce's 2020 Edition of The State of Sales reports that 79% of sales reps say they've had to quickly adapt to new ways of selling as they seek to gain access to new buyers and support customer growth in a completely new environment, often across less familiar platforms and channels.

At the same time, B2B buyers have come to expect a level of personalized, consistent experience similar to what they get from leading consumer brands. Customized, tailored to their unique needs, and instantly available for on-demand support as needed. These types of positive, connected experiences happen when teams have meaningful context about each customer to **build a relationship that gets stronger with every interaction.**

79%

of sales reps say they've had to quickly adapt to new ways of selling.

Salesforce's 2020 Edition of The State of Sales



Digital sales roles are more in demand than ever. They can serve the needs of businesses across a wide span of the customer journey and add value at every inflection point with great agility. Yet delivering a connected, cohesive customer experience in this entirely remote sales environment is challenging for many B2B enterprises at various stages of their digital transformation.

There is significant friction in the buying process today. The average B2B sale involves seven different stakeholders, and they've likely done a considerable amount of research before coming to the sales conversation. **Sellers feel disconnected from the needs of buyers. And buyers feel like they are communicating with completely disparate teams. It's become simply too hard for prospects to buy.** Enter the Revenue Era.

// We are witnessing what will surely be remembered as a historical deployment of remote work and digital access to services across every domain.

Bob Swan, CEO
Intel

We see every business function responsible for revenue across a company combining their powers in the Revenue Era. In other words: a modern end-to-end revenue team. Marketing, sales, service, and support—all working together across a unified technology platform to acquire, retain, and renew customers using high-context engagements. This alignment is what truly builds a sustainable revenue model.

High growth start-ups have proven this model to work when focusing on both account acquisition and account penetration. And since COVID-19, all business types have, at a minimum, proven a hybrid model can perform as well as in-office for a majority of roles across sales, service, support, and operations.

But, what does this Revenue Era mean for field sellers? What will the new, in-demand skills and capabilities be across the entire sales organization in this contemporary, digital-first landscape? How can digital selling models scale to improve connections and add more value across the whole customer journey?

Before we dive into the future of digital sales or sales in general, let's take a look at where this all got its start and how quickly the needs of modern buyers have changed.



The Digital Sales Evolution

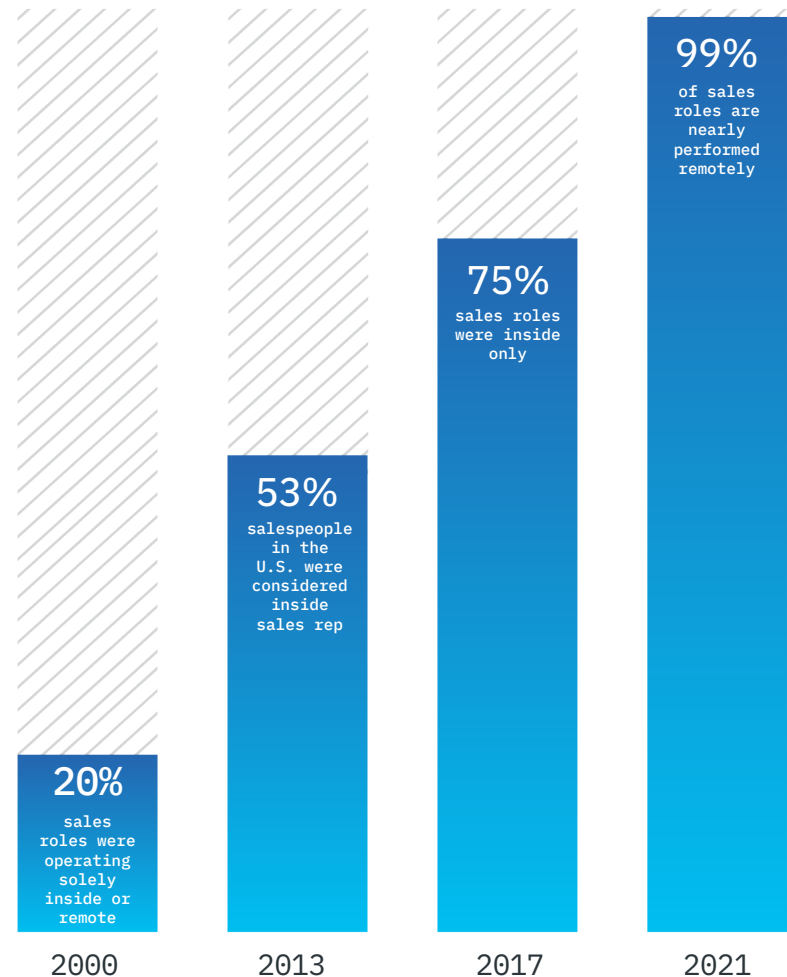
A man in profile, wearing glasses, is shown in a thoughtful pose with his hand on his chin. The background is a vibrant blue and orange gradient. Overlaid on the man's head and the background is a complex digital interface. This interface consists of numerous semi-transparent panels and icons, including world maps, bar charts, pie charts, network diagrams, and circular progress indicators. The overall aesthetic is high-tech and futuristic, representing the integration of digital technology into sales and business operations.

From 1950s Telemarketing to 100% Digital Selling

It began when we first moved from door-to-door or in-person sales to inside sales, starting in the 1950s with what's known today as telemarketing. Over the years, this field evolved to involve much more than merely placing calls to a long list of numbers, hoping to sell something over the phone. By the 1980s, there were catalog sales and the start of subscription services. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything, the role of inside sales and digital selling had emerged to become more prevalent amongst companies ranging from technology startups to the Fortune 100.

In the early 2000s, approximately 20% of sales roles were operating solely inside or remote. By 2013, an estimated 53% of salespeople in the U.S. were considered inside sales reps even if that designation was not in their title. Hubspot reported that by 2017, 75% of sales roles were inside-only. As of 2021, nearly 100% of sales roles are performed remotely, given strict travel restrictions during the pandemic. What trend will we see once safe travel is possible again? Only time will tell.

Perhaps the most significant evolution within inside sales, however, has to do with technological advances. Even **inside sales has been renamed by many industry leaders as digital selling**. A new technology-savvy breed of sellers who understand how to leverage emerging tools, channels, and strategies dominates the modern sales arena.



Stats collected from Salesforce's 2020 Edition of The State of Sales and Hubspot Ultimate List of Marketing Statistics 2021.



Digital selling has proven to be more effective too. According to Forbes, sales executives say the top benefits of digital transformation are improved operational efficiency (40%), faster time to market (36%), and the ability to meet customer expectations (35%). **With access to real-time data and the right tools to enable their workflows, reps will be better equipped to handle the day-to-day functions of an inside sales position.**

The role of inside sales has transformed significantly since its initial foothold in the 1950s. These changes will become even more pronounced in the coming decade and force organizations across all industry verticals to rethink their sales strategy and focus on their talent and resources.

Today's inside or digital sales reps can:

- › Connect with more leads in less time
- › Infuse conversations with more context
- › Work in-office or remote to reduce costs
- › Deliver a personalized, 1:1 buyer journey at scale
- › Accelerate the time between lead-to-revenue
- › Nurture relationships and build trust with prospects
- › Often close more deals, faster

Types of Companies Investing in Digital Selling Models

TechTarget reports that 63% of leaders said the pandemic made their organization(s) embrace digital transformation sooner. Beyond the global health crisis, several factors influence a company's decision to invest in digital sales, outside sales, or a hybrid model.

Both start-ups and high-growth companies know that with each year's success and quota attainment come bigger goals and more difficult growth challenges. Suppose a company is in its infancy and looking to grow fast. In that case, the leaders in that organization will typically utilize as many options as possible to improve its presence in the market, generate pipeline, and position it as a strong target for a significant acquisition. To compete with larger competitors, a new company often needs to pull as much efficiency as possible from a comparatively lean sales force.

More established companies are less about coverage in new markets and more about maintaining market share by optimizing account management and engaging current accounts effectively to continue expansion. **Minimizing costs to maximize revenue growth is also the main priority** for organizations with a strong market presence. The goal here is typically to develop a less expensive and more scalable revenue model.

63%

of leaders said the pandemic made their organization(s) embrace digital transformation sooner.

TechTarget - Search CIO
3 technology predictions for 2021

The typical elements that encourage a company to invest in setting up a successful digital selling motion are:

- › Company's maturity and stage of development
- › Costs associated with lead generation and revenue growth
- › The complexity of the product or sales process
- › The average size of deal and target account segments
- › Understanding how to best present a product or solution
- › Management perception of effectiveness in each sales model
- › Product margins and competition within the space
- › Coverage capabilities related to the Total Addressable Market (TAM)



The Divide Between Digital and Field Sales

Sales roles have historically been relatively static, with inside sales always considered a path towards a more prestigious field sales role. Then, digital selling mainly focused on lead generation, passing those warmed up conversations to the outside sellers to close the deal. This is not the case now, as buyers spend less time with sellers and more time on-line doing research. That's underlined when considering that **over 31% of the total available sales positions were completely remote roles**, even pre-pandemic.

Understandably, digital sales roles should be increasing since buyers gravitate to digital channels as both the preliminary and primary channels to find answers, gather recommendations, and read reviews. They're also educating themselves about your brand before your sales reps have even joined the conversation. As buyers flock online to solve their problems, sellers across the board are having a hard time keeping up — and this was even before COVID changed everything.

There certainly are substantial benefits of digital selling. But at the same time, there are some pitfalls to avoid. If you're not careful and thoughtful with your engagement strategy and cadence building, your marketing and sales technology tools can make your digital sales reps seem like "spam cannons." However, with **a well-thought-out plan and an engagement solution that is built as close to, or native inside your CRM, teams can systematize and operationalize the entire series of customer touch points** and recommend the best next steps within a single platform screen.



Why COVID-19 Wasn't the Only Factor Influencing the Digital Domination



For many sales leader, COVID brought to light something brewing under the sales waters for years. Teams quickly realized they didn't need to hop on a plane to ink a deal. It underlined how many of the associated sales tasks were actually unnecessary or frustrating the process. Business travel caused work-life balance challenges; customers didn't necessarily need (or want) all that face-time, it was overly expensive, difficult to track, and far less controllable.

Even before COVID, the rising cost of business travel and a lack of visibility into outside sales activities show there are many top-line advantages to inside sales or digital selling models over traditional outsid sales models. Teams are realizing what can be done remotely and what is possible to achieve with digital channels. Hybrid office environments are bringing about a new sales era, one that brings a holistic focus on the customer: looking at their entire journey across their experience with your company, from sales to service to support and back again through renewals and expansions.

Beyond the Digital Signature: A Context-Driven Customer Experience

Once a customer signs on the dotted line, there's a hurdle of customer engagement steps ahead. From onboarding, implementation, and training to ongoing support, renewals, and expansions — each stage of a customer's journey represents potentially hundreds of interactions across multiple team members and customer contacts and departments. More often than not, teams miss critical information at key customer hand-off points, and this causes a misguided and disconnected experience for employees and customers alike. Salesforce reports that 59% of B2B buyers feel like they're communicating with separate departments, not one company.

59%

of B2B buyers feel like they're communicating with separate departments, not one company.

Salesforce's 2020 Edition of The State of Sales

Every customer interaction represents valuable contextual information that can be extremely powerful when harnessed. But unfortunately, for most organizations, these activities happen in silos. **"If a customer interaction happens but is not tracked in CRM, does it make a sound?"**

With the tedious nature of manual data entry in CRM, it's no wonder so much valuable context gets missed along the way. Nuanced information like customer sentiment, interaction outcomes, and suggested next steps can be standardized and operationalized with the right revenue engagement tool.

With 82% of B2B decision-makers thinking sales reps are unprepared, this leaves a massive opportunity for digital selling teams equipped with the proper customer engagement technology and customer context. With a powerful enough stack, your **digital sellers can increase their productivity and effectiveness by more than 4x** when compared to traditional field sales counterparts.

"A more efficient sales cycle with even one fewer meeting than average has a massive impact win rate."

Jacco van der Kooij, Founder
Winning By Design



82%

of B2B decision-makers think sales reps are unprepared.

SiriusDecisions 2017 Buying Study

Just focusing on foundational capabilities like CRM automation, activity logging, and sales engagement can significantly impact your sales team's success. Studies have shown a positive relationship between how many conversations a rep can have in a day and how fast (or if) they reach their quota. Sales engagement, process automation, and conversational coaching abilities are far more accessible, from both a technology and usability standpoint, within a digital sales role instead of outside sales. This difference gives digital sellers core capabilities that are growing ever more critical to any sales organization.

Let's explore a few of these digital selling advantages in a bit more detail...

Digital Sales Trends and Redefining the Customer Experience



Most Customers Prefer Doing Business Online

According to CSO Insights, 65% of B2B buyers receive value in discussing their situations with salespeople, but most want to have that conversation online. McKinsey reports that approximately two-thirds of buyers prefer remote human interactions or digital self-service.

This growth in digital commerce is led primarily by shifting trends in buyer behavior. We see consumers prioritizing self-discovery and spending less time with sales overall. It's shown that 70% or more of the buying journey is now complete before talking to sales. Furthermore, only 17% of a buyer's total time investment is spent with sales. That means sales teams have less access, less visibility, and less time to influence the prospect's decision. With this challenge comes an opportunity for modern teams to capitalize on historical customer activities, interactions, and context to drive future recommendations and engagement paths.

We see that today's B2B buyers travel a new path to procurement, involving several different touchpoints along the way. The more places you can be along their journey to show the differentiated value of your offering, the more you will have a chance to win that customer. It's most important to meet your prospective customers in their process and add value to the journey by offering help and building trust. **The most successful B2B sales organizations position themselves as trusted advisors much more than sales representatives.**

“The rapid migration to digital technologies driven by the pandemic will continue into the recovery.

McKinsey: The COVID-19 recovery will be digital:
A plan for the first 90 days

17%

of a buyer's total time investment is spent with sales.

Gartner: The Future of Sales 2020 Report

Digital is also undoubtedly the more preferred channel for buyers, and only increasing in popularity and adoption. By the year 2040, Nasdaq estimates that 95% of all purchases will be through digital commerce. Moreover, 69% of B2B businesses say they expect to stop printing catalogs within five years. Digital selling is here to stay with advantages for both buyers and sellers.

It's vital that today's modern sales teams transition to the role of trusted advisors. To meet buyers on their terms and engage through a relationship built on trust and mutual respect, not swindles and side deals. Digital sellers need to come to each conversation, each prospect engagement, armed with detailed information and ready to add value unique to that contact's needs.

Digital selling benefits include:

- › More productive and cost-effective
- › Typically more preferred channel for customers
- › Increased collaboration across departments
- › Better access to tools
- › Increased visibility and data
- › Grow activities without adding headcount

A less cost-prohibitive form of selling.

The preferred form of communication by customers.

Allow better collaboration between departments.

Provide tools typically not used in an outside sales environment.

Increase visibility and business intelligence.

Allow scalability without necessarily increasing headcount.

Team Up to Stay Hyper Focused on Buyer Needs

The CMO Council reports that 9 out of 10 B2B buyers say online content has a major effect on purchasing decisions. To execute a successful, productive, and profitable online customer experience, you must learn how to digitally engage with your target audience effectively. A top priority for most Marketing teams remains a keen focus on improving the customer experience and outcomes.

Sales play a large role in this experience. Marketing must provide sales with reliable engagement information (context), accessible in a central place.. Then sales must understand how to sequence engagement around this context. This requires a firm grasp of buyer needs. By understanding how and why the buyer chooses to purchase and the ideal path to engage, teams can align the right content and the right channels to connect where customers most prefer. **In today's B2B landscape, the seller who has the context to anticipate buyer needs and the agility to respond and add value is the seller with the best opportunity for success.**



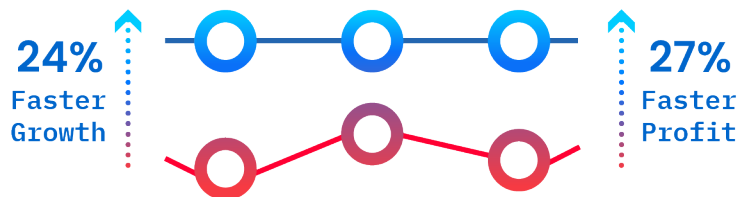
Digital-First Teams Are Creating a More Connected Buying Experience

Today's B2B buying involves more stakeholders than ever before. According to Gartner Research Group, in a typical firm with 100 to 500 employees, an average of seven people are involved in most buying decisions, each armed with four or five pieces of information they have gathered for themselves. Now, in a digitally connected world, sales reps have to work as a team to close such deals.

Coordinating with sales managers, the marketing department, and a business' other branches are the only way leads get moved efficiently through the funnel.

Gartner Research indicates "that customers don't buy in a linear fashion. Rather, they use both digital and in-person channels with nearly equal frequency to complete each of the six B2B buying jobs more or less simultaneously."

The importance of alignment cannot be understated; sales and marketing teams should be well-informed as to the customers we are trying to reach. 81% of marketers expect to compete primarily (or entirely) based on CX. This is up from only 36% in 2010 (Gartner). It's no longer acceptable to have sales and marketing running different playbooks or only seeing half of the story related to the buyer's engagement.



As digital B2B sales evolve, alignment must expand to include the ways Sales, Marketing, and Customer Success engage and convert buyers. All of this must be visible across the entire revenue team. A

study from Forrester proves that collaboration is the key to closing, noting that B2B organizations with tightly aligned sales, marketing & customer success operations achieved 24% faster growth and 27% faster profit growth over a three-year period.

Digital selling tools, more widely adopted by inside sales, such as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software and Sales Engagement solutions, give reps the ability to automate workflows, increase activity tracking, and quickly deliver a better understanding of each contact's position in the process.

This data can be leveraged in real-time, allowing sales and marketing to work together with other departments to **engage decision-makers throughout the buying process better.** Most tools in this category offer either sales engagement or customer service engagement. Still, even the market leaders in these respective categories aren't able to provide both in a single tool, and the platforms they offer require external integration points to sync data with CRM.

“Today's world of B2B buying, there is no handoff from marketing to sales (or digital to in-person). It's a parallel process, not a serial one.

Gartner: The Future of Sales 2020 Report

Digital Selling Capabilities Have Become Prerequisites

MIT Sloan School of Management reports that digitally mature companies are 23% more profitable than their less mature peers. The top performers deliver an agile and flexible experience that focuses heavily on executing a stellar customer journey through the use of advanced technology tools built into their workflows.

That increase is not just in roles like Sales Development or Inside Sales—it is across all levels and business units within the organization. Now we see a complete blurring of lines between inside and outside sales. No longer are they two separate and mutually exclusive roles. Instead, they both have their place. **Digital selling has become a way to go to market as opposed to a chosen career path.**

// Overnight, everyone became a digital seller. There are so many best practices that inside or digital sales can share with the broader organization, particularly around social selling.

Rakhi Voria, Director IBM Global Digital Sales + Development
Revenue Talks Podcast, Episode 2

How Modern Revenue Teams Are Fixing What's Broken





Launching a successful digital selling function within your organization isn't easy. Neither is optimizing the capabilities and outcomes of an established digital sales team. Both require a continual commitment because it's not that digital sales methods are broken—it's that sometimes they're incorrectly applied, not applied at all, there's no communication between departments, or the team's approach is all wrong.

Some trends showing up in the field of digital selling, beyond the core competencies of CRM and sales engagement, are:

- › Sales Enablement
- › Sales & Marketing Alignment
- › Sentiment Analysis and Coaching
- › A shift toward account-based selling
- › Video + SMS Messaging
- › Gamification

Keep Your Sales Team Engaged

Sellers today are operating in a completely new world—one that is experiencing change at a pace never seen before. At the same time, technology and channel structures are also evolving. Many teams struggle to keep pace with changing processes and tools.

Enablement and training are critical steps in creating a great sales representative. Today's **new tech means that coaches can make the training process more effective – and fun.** Gamification of daily sales activities and sales training can positively motivate your reps to enjoy learning while competing against other reps to book more meetings or close deals, if leadership centers training around the thrill of the hunt and the excitement of closing. Your reps are much more likely to care about your goals because now they are their goals, too.

Combining gamification into your sales engagement strategy allows you and your team to automatically track key performance metrics and KPIs that can benchmark rep performance and support a culture of accountability. Research from Aberdeen reveals that 31% more first-year reps achieve quota when supported with game mechanics. Increasing the volume of interactions is foundational. The next step is to **combine both coaching and enablement solutions so your reps can learn what conversations and content help support deal progression and closed/won opportunities.**

31%

more first-year reps achieve quota when supported with game mechanics

HubSpot's Ultimate Guide to Sales and Marketing

Capture Recordings to Optimize Coaching & Insights

Recordings play a critical role in this aspect of coaching. With the ability to legally capture and maintain customer conversations, sentiment, and outcomes, sales leaders have a database of real-life interactions that they can analyze and use for coaching. Marketing can even learn what buzzwords and phrases drive the most interest or engagement across calls to shape their content strategy better. Running call recordings through sentiment analysis and AI tools can help speed up the manual process of analyzing calls and give real-time feedback to reps looking to improve their effectiveness over the phone, and learn better ways to handle objections.

Alignment between sales and marketing is critical. Companies with closely coordinated marketing and sales teams are 67% more efficient at closing deals. Insights that pinpoint which cadence touchpoint produced the best (or worst) results and highlight effectiveness by time, region, rep, and business unit give revenue teams an advantage. Rather than a linear process where marketing only hands off leads to sales and then disappears, a collaborative strategy and connected feedback loop can drive better insights and decision-making across all teams.

67%

Companies with closely coordinated marketing and sales teams are 67% more efficient at closing deals.

Marketo Sales and Marketing Alignment Study



Align Your Teams Around Account-Based Sales



A focus on collaboration is fueling the shift toward Account-Based Sales (ABS) and Account-Based Marketing (ABM). When marketing and sales are aligned on target accounts and working together to develop awareness and engagement at a company, the individual strengths of each team become much more effective when combined in a well-thought-out engagement strategy. **A unified platform that can give all revenue teams visibility into the stage and status of target accounts** with their associated opportunities, contacts, and leads can help support more intelligent engagement and a better experience for the entire buying group.

Build Trust & Gain Access with Video & Text Engagement

Once aligned on the engagement strategy, many new engagement tools and channels like video, emails, and SMS capabilities have been opened up for easy application by digital sellers. Solutions have also been developed to monitor buyer engagement with shared content and suggest marketing content for sales reps to share with accounts based on their stage or status within the customer journey. They are putting underutilized marketing resources at the fingertips of sales professionals to expand the resources available for engagement. But beware, as video fatigue can arise thanks to the variety of video tools available.

Text messaging can be a powerful sales engagement channel, as it immediately means you've reached a new level of intimacy and closeness with your prospect. 61% of teams increased their text marketing budgets in 2020 — using text as part of a sales engagement strategy is helping teams engage customers with short and crisp informative messages instead of long, descriptive emails. Whether it's a webinar reminder or a demo follow-up message, sales engagement strategies can now incorporate text messaging as part of an overall sales cadence. Conversations accelerate and meetings are booked from text messaging. As many as 45% of people reply to branded text message blasts they receive.

All of these innovations have a spot in the modern tech stack of a digital sales organization. Aligned toward the correct strategy and adapted over time as the sales team matures, each of these tools can become a game-changer in the evolution and success of your digital selling strategy. So with all of this focus being put on digital sales, where does that leave us for the future growth of this role?



61%

of teams increased their text marketing budgets in 2020.

G2 SMS Marketing Statistics

Building the Business Case for Digital Sales



Digital Sales Models Are More Cost-Effective

Forrester Research reports that in 2020, 38% of businesses prioritized cost reductions, looking for increased value from end-to-end solutions. Businesses everywhere are looking to reduce costs and simplify platform management by consolidating their tech stacks.

Often when sales and customer engagement solutions are incorporated into a company's tech stack, there are overlapping features because some of the engagement needs remain the same across teams. Now, instead of replicating feature sets across engagement tools, **the key is to enable a solution for sales and customer service engagement within a single platform.**

// Sales tech consolidation will accelerate as buyers demand end-to-end solutions.

Forrester Analytics Business Technographics®
Priorities And Journey COVID-19 Recontact Survey, 2020.

Even without sales engagement technology, an inside sales rep can reach out to more leads, make more contact with decision-makers, and attend several more meetings in one day than the typical coverage model of an outside sales rep. This equates to increased productivity across sales teams, better account/lead coverage, and improved revenue efficiency. As a result, we see a shift toward digital selling and a change in B2B buying behaviors that support a digital selling model and rapidly increasing quotas for inside sales reps.

// Injecting digital technologies such as analytics, AI and digital platforms into business processes makes them 40-50% more efficient.

Forbes Council: Digital Transformation Benefits
Beyond Cost Reduction

The Right Digital Engagement Solution Drives CRM Adoption

As mentioned above, CRM is a tool that sales leaders typically see as central to performing both inside and outside sales roles and critical to making strategic decisions and reporting on business health. While outside sales roles have always struggled with the adoption of CRM due to mobility and time limitations, digital sales roles rely on CRM to perform their jobs and enhance their engagement.

Most field sellers see CRM as a burden or an additional task in their day—a file cabinet for outdated information and management-level activity tracking to keep an eye on their daily progress. Typically, CRM demands that sellers spend a lot of time updating and maintaining records – time they’d rather spend selling. According to CSO Insights, only 33% of businesses want these solutions to boost efficiency and enable their salespeople to spend more time selling and less time on repetitive and administrative tasks.

CRM is meant to unify our customer’s data and make our jobs more manageable, but ironically it’s become more of a pain than a help. As painful as it’s historically been to gather and maintain, the data housed in CRM can be beneficial to frontline sellers -- but not if it is out of date or missing an update across the various customer-facing teams working within it. Endless research proves the value of CRM, but why aren’t sales teams leveraging it to its full potential?

Most teams will tell you when a data discrepancy arises across platforms; they ultimately look to CRM for the answer. Whatever is in CRM is usually seen as correct. However, what happens when we know that data isn’t correct? The speed of business causes many to turn a blind eye and assume that sales operations will solve the issue. Sometimes the answer is to shift the mess to another platform or just accept the status quo and lose the valuable context that could’ve been at your fingertips the whole time.

“Only 33% of a sales rep’s time is spent actively selling.”

CSO Insights

This should not be the case. CRM implementations and digital transformation initiatives are critical and businesses continue to invest. By 2025, the CRM market has increased to \$82 billion, growing at 12% per year. Rather than accepting the reality that CRM is the necessary evil or shifting away from using CRM, sales teams should work to solve this challenge and consider adopting a native sales engagement solution within their CRM. Such solutions can help automate data capture and workflows, transforming their CRM from a data management platform to an engagement platform.

Leaders must take steps to simplify the process of using CRM the way it was intended. **The solution is not to add more platforms and more integration points but instead clean up and streamline your technology stack.** The goal should be to transform the system of record into your system of engagement.

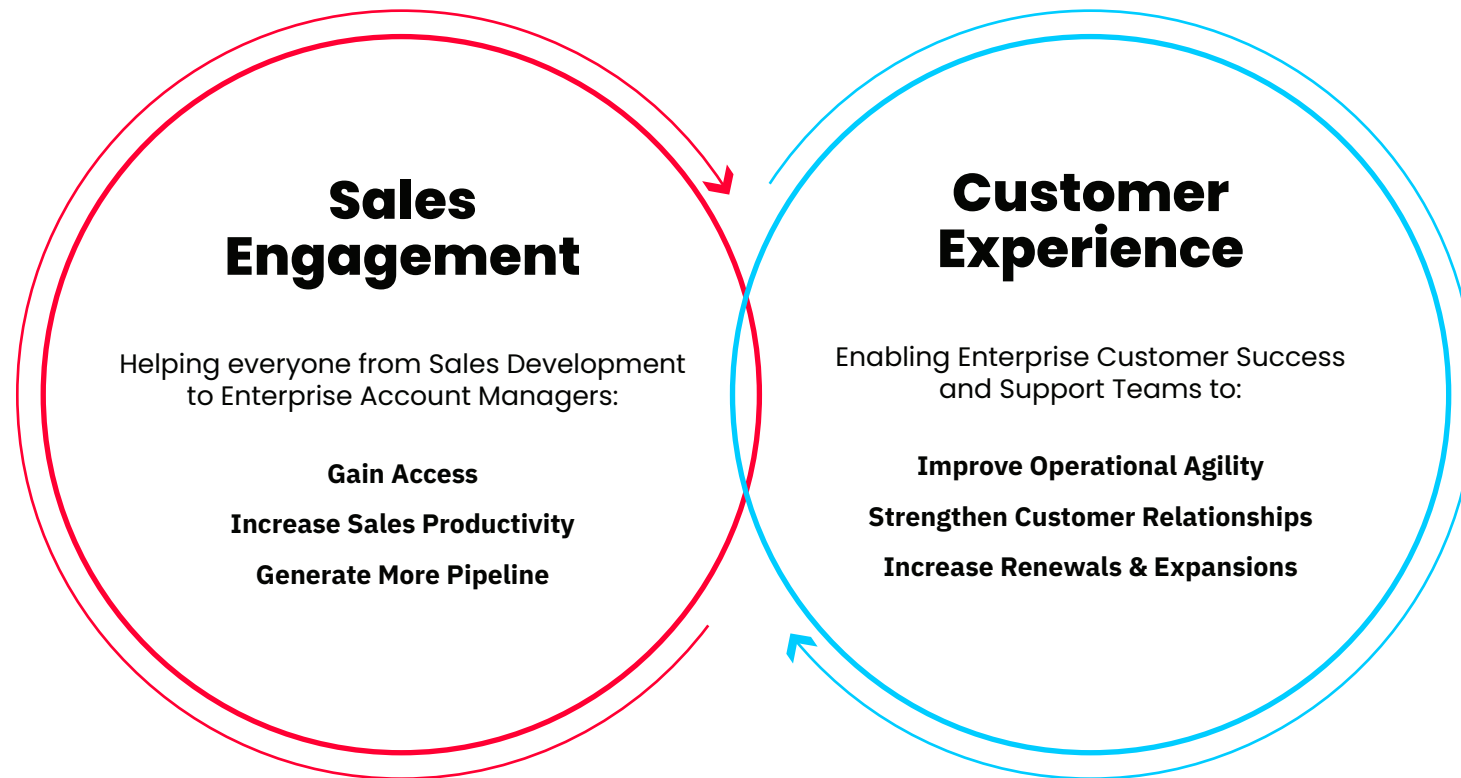
With the current functionalities found in leading CRM platforms such as Salesforce or Microsoft Dynamics 365, the ability to map the customer journey, develop processes, and accelerate prospects along their journey from lead to revenue is not only doable, but highly recommended as these platforms excel at bringing your entire sales organization to a central platform and allowing your reps to simplify their day to a single window.



The Future of Digital Selling is Revenue Engagement

Will digital sales continue to evolve? Given the nature of business, it would seem so. The future is inextricably linked to the shift in purchasing behavior, the rise of digital channels, and innovations in sales technology. Teams realize that to win in today's economic landscape and buyer behavior patterns, they need to reduce buyer friction, create value, and capture attention.

This is where Revenue Engagement comes in. Complete, end-to-end customer lifecycle management built directly within CRM. Such a platform makes it easy for every team involved in the customer's revenue journey to execute, track, and optimize every interaction. When you truly understand the role a digital seller can play within your organization, you can begin identifying the characteristics that make a successful strategy.



The digital sales role of the future will most likely require more and more specialization. Expecting such a salesperson to excel at research, prospecting, outreach, discovery, evaluation, presentations, negotiations, and closing will become a falsehood as processes and strategies mature. The entire lead-to-revenue process and buyer's journey will need to be mapped to a central platform, likely CRM, and be held together by several critical handoffs. Digital sales and marketing roles will become even more integrated throughout each step to support the buyer's journey. They will support revenue growth beyond just producing a mix of inbound and outbound sales leads. Sales researchers will use AI to map out account plans, conduct research and other pre-sale activities by leveraging big data effectively.

Specialized account executives and sales engineers will grow in their roles and undertake the actual conversations, discovery, account mapping, presentations, and closing of the deal. Customer managers (who may not be part of the sales team today) will implement what's been sold and provide customer service while also working in unison with the other departments within your revenue teams, such as sales and marketing, to help drive new opportunities from within critical accounts.

“Sales teams have evolved from autonomous agents with their own prospecting and closely guarded contact lists to co-equal members of a team sharing lead data, using automation to stay in touch, and using CRM to manage activities and reporting.

John McTigue, Sales & Marketing Stack Advisor
The MarTech Whisperer



The Takeaway

Currently, the digital sales market is growing 300 percent faster than traditional sales. While the size of this growth might catch your attention, the trend shouldn't be a surprise. Digital sales, defined by the sale of products and services by reps working remote from the customer, relies on engagement through a complete set of coordinated, interconnected digital channels, rather than just a few or meeting face-to-face. While relationships still play a critical role in winning new business and retaining customers, rapport building and communication will move into a digital-first strategy where sales professionals leverage digital content, social engagement, and unique strategies to build trust without ever meeting their prospects face-to-face.

Customers are more comfortable accessing buying information digitally, over the phone, or through video conferencing applications. Even complex B2B products and huge companies that have traditionally favored “facetime” are adopting a fully digital approach.

B2B buying behaviors have shifted with most of the buyer's journey falling into a self-discovery process across company websites and third-party reviews, making a consultative sales approach more beneficial and valuable to sales organizations. By giving in to the customer demand for more digital sales channels, businesses benefit from considerable cost savings.

There has been a shift in the necessary skills required to sell. The ability to coach and develop the next generation of sales professionals while leveraging technology to give immediate feedback and prescribe the next steps is on the rise. Advances in technology have reshaped the face of sales. Improvements in supporting tech can provide high-quality prospect data, enabling smarter conversations that help sales reps close more deals with less training and ramp time.

The right revenue engagement solution will be able to work directly from inside your CRM to deliver every point of the engagement journey, giving your reps the ability to choreograph touchpoints across all communications channels in an efficient and personalized manner. Native solutions allow your CRM to capture critical data and provide sellers the ability to engage with opportunities at scale and eliminate the manual tasks that hinder their progress. These solutions allow **digital sales teams to work from a single and shared platform and link their activities to other revenue team members, such as marketing and customer success, for a team-selling approach and increased visibility across the entire organization.**

An investment in developing your digital sales strategy should first start with aligned and shared objectives across your revenue team. From there, a well-defined process and customer journey will enable teams to collaborate at all customer interaction points in a more meaningful way. Shifting away from more expensive outside sales teams to a more scalable and revenue-efficient team of digitally-native sales professionals will change your organization's demographics and increase your ability to improve revenue growth. A balanced team of specialized sellers that includes some territory or outside sales reps is the ideal model for most organizations.

The right tech stack that integrates solutions for data, process, engagement, performance management, sentiment analysis, and enablement into a single platform across all revenue teams along with a technology strategy focused on:

- › Increasing visibility
- › Automating manual processes
- › Capturing and maintaining meaningful data
- › Enabling personalized sales engagement
- › Coaching and developing talent
- › Improving collaboration between departments

Additional Resources

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Conquer is the first end-to-end Revenue Engagement Solution for enterprise sales, success, and support teams. As a native application for both Salesforce and Microsoft Dynamics 365, Conquer works inside your existing CRM to make teams more effective at gaining access, growing pipeline, winning revenue, and strengthening customer relationships.

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