

Inside Sales **Continues** **to Dominate**



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Popular and profitable

The inside or remote sales model is quickly becoming the ideal selling method for more and more organizations. According to PointClear, an outside sales call now costs a company \$308, while an inside sales call costs \$50. Furthermore, Forrester research has shown that inside sales roles are growing 15 times faster than outside sales. And it's no wonder, as it is becoming apparent that many prospects prefer to work with sales professionals through email and over the phone.

More and more inside sales reps are giving presentations, conducting demos, and performing most of the functions traditionally handled by reps in the field. InsideSales.com reports that for every one outside sales rep being hired, there are 10 inside sales reps being added. Outside sales reps are now spending nearly half of their time (45.4%) selling remotely, which is an 89.2% increase since 2013. The days of in-person, face-to-face meetings as the primary way of selling are quickly diminishing, if not coming to an end.

So, what have we learned from this rise of inside sales over the past few years, and what are we doing differently because of it?

*Forrester research has shown that inside sales roles are growing **15 times faster** than outside sales.*



Technology alters the landscape

As new technology is introduced into our lives, it has the power to drastically disrupt and change the way we live and work. What we once considered essential can easily become obsolete when the right technology comes along. Consider the number of homes without a landline phone since the introduction of wireless communication.

It's no different in the world of sales. New technology has altered the way customers want to be approached, thereby transforming the way sales professionals sell. According to Sales Benchmark Index, 70% of your customers don't even want an in-person meeting. Key decision makers are quite receptive to doing business remotely, if sales professionals have the right technology tools.

As new sales tools become available and prove their worth, inside sales teams begin embracing the idea of a technology sales stack. The ideal technology sales stack has three primary layers:



PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL NETWORKING PLATFORMS

*Cull crucial insight and build engagement
(e.g., LinkedIn and Facebook)*

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM)

*Build stronger and more productive relationships
(e.g., Salesforce and Microsoft Dynamics)*

COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION TOOLS

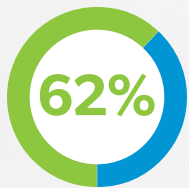
*Facilitate work between large or geographically dispersed teams
(e.g., email, Dropbox, and Google Drive)*

Social media speeds the process

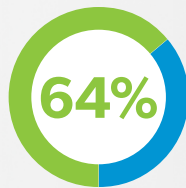
Over the past few years, social networks have quickly become an effective tool for unearthing valuable insights on customers and prospects, which lead to unique, focused ways to start conversations. Conversations that help salespeople identify true pain points they can solve.

In conjunction with Censuswide, LinkedIn produced a survey on the state of sales in 2017 that showed sales reps successfully employing social networks to customize sales experiences for their buyers. Seventy percent said they expect to invest more time utilizing social media techniques in the next year, which is a significant increase from the 48% who felt this way in last year's study. What's more, nearly all (94%) agree it provides them with valuable insights into trigger points like job changes, promotions, and news mentions, creating an organic way to connect with customers and prospects.

The importance of social networks is not lost on B2B decision makers, either.



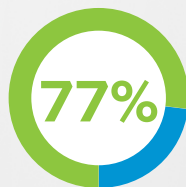
62% said they look for an informative LinkedIn profile when deciding whether to work with salespeople. ^



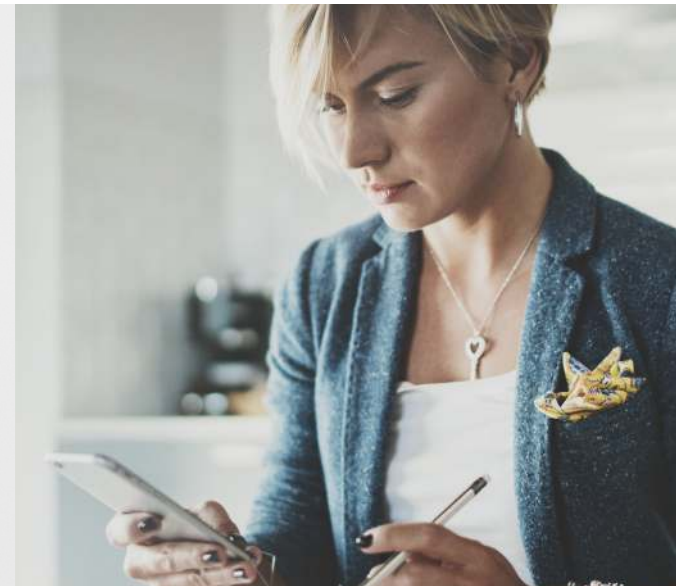
64% said they wouldn't engage with a salesperson if the communication wasn't personalized. ^



85% considered it important for salespeople to be connected to other people at their company. ^



77% admitted they wouldn't engage with a salesperson if he or she didn't do the necessary homework to know their business. ^



Source: The State of Sales 2017 (LinkedIn survey) ^

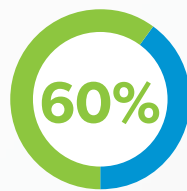
Introducing omnichannel

Allowing customers to move seamlessly from one sales communication channel to the next, also known as omnichannel, has allowed the customer a better buying experience. According to a Forrester business case, omnichannel customers are more active, spend more, and are less expensive to support than single-channel customers.

Forrester research has also shown that migrated customers are more willing to consider new products and reconsider mature brands than they were as offline-only customers. In addition, migrated customers are more open to making return purchases and becoming long-term customers. And isn't customer loyalty what all companies strive for?



of B2B digital professionals said their omnichannel customers increased spending with them.¹



of B2B executives said that their customers spend more overall when they touch multiple channels.²

Today, all customers want the omnichannel buying experience. It's a must for success, and the better yours is, the more selling you'll do. For example, it is extremely important to know which channels customers are using when they research and make purchases. It is vital that B2B sellers capture specific data from all channels and then make necessary changes or adjustments to how they disseminate information and sell in each channel.

However, if a channel falls short in meeting the customer's needs, it's imperative that a well-trained inside sales rep is available to quickly provide answers, help, or guidance to the buyer. With the right training and technology, inside sales reps can easily help move the sales process along. When a Forrester client, a computer maker, surveyed thousands of its customers regarding who understood its business better, inside sales reps scored higher than outside.

Sources: Forrester/Internet Retailer Q2 2016 B2B Sell-Side Online Survey¹; Forrester/Internet Retailer Q2 2016 B2B Sell-Side Online Survey²

How it's affected **business intelligence**

With the rise of inside sales these past few years, we've learned that success happens when the appropriate technology stack is paired with the ideal sales process. Inside sales reps have fewer challenges collecting customer data and harnessing business intelligence than their field sales counterparts. Their databases have become much more actionable, allowing them the ability to measure and manage engagement and tie it directly to sales and ROI.

Today's inside sales reps—and the ones necessary for an organization's success—are not reading from a script and supplying the customer with only a basic knowledge of the product or service. These highly-trained and skilled reps are using new technology and a wealth of quality information at their fingertips to measure effects and customer engagement, respond to business climate changes, gather data for marketing use, and develop defined strategies.

Because of the skills, training, and technology needed to maintain a qualified inside sales team, more companies are realizing the need to utilize a third-party organization for help. These organizations have done the research, gathered the data, and developed the processes to help you optimize sales expenses and maximize returns. The benefits include improved focus and productivity, continuous improvement capabilities, and increased speed to market and revenue. Combine it all with unprecedented access to business intelligence, and a third-party-managed inside sales team can be a game changer.



A final word

Buyers are evolving, and in many cases, this means inside sales is just a better fit. If buyers are choosing to begin communications with you, then they already know a lot about your products or service. To stay ahead, your inside sales reps need to have all the answers, the sharpest skills, and the latest and most appropriate technology. Building out a fantastic inside sales team is how you compete in the sales game and win with buyers.





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