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Eight digital best practices for Sales

Don't leave anything to chance when your Sales department goes digital.

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What does it take to "go digital" in Sales?

Industry experts predict that successful businesses will soon become 100% digital for all transactions. Sales organizations that leverage digital technology close more deals faster, improve the customer experience, and gain clear competitive advantages. Sales professionals are most effective when they're equipped with the best tools. A mobile-friendly digital workflow is becoming essential to optimize efficiency and provide teams with true flexibility. This best practices paper outlines eight important ways that sales teams can make meaningful progress in their digital transformations.

1/ Look for paperless opportunities in core tasks

Many sales leaders who have achieved the greatest digital efficiencies began the journey with small initiatives. A good place to start is to review customer touchpoints to determine which tasks would most benefit from digital transactions. In a recent survey, sales leaders identified the most common ways in which their teams are reducing paper-based processes using digital documents, modern agreement processes and automation. Here are examples of traditional paper-based tasks that can be made more efficient with digital capabilities:

Client-facing sales. NDAs, contracts, T&Cs, POs, financing, licensing agreements, and end-user agreements

Sales operations. Order authorizations, T&E policies, deal split requests compensation agreements, and event registrations

Partner and channel sales. Partner and reseller agreements, distribution agreements, channel partner scorecards, and referral agreements

Account management. SOWs, MSAs, contract renewals, corrective action reports, benefits reviews, and account change requests

2/ Engage across teams to identify revenue friction points and solutions

Up to 50% of a sales rep's time is spent on administrative tasks associated with closing, processing and fulfilling orders. Automating tedious day-to-day tasks allows for a greater focus on customer-facing sales and strategic relationship-building. By talking with your sales team, you will quickly identify the most time-consuming tasks that can be streamlined with digital processes. Using simple calculations of time saved per task multiplied against the hourly value of sales time, you can prioritize the processes that will deliver the best return. As end users in sales identify painpoints, it's also critical to bring in legal and IT teams to assess software options, compatibility with existing systems and security.

Common digital requirements across sales functions

Directors, sales operations

Drivers for going digital
Sales process automation, faster closing, and enabling salespeople to access all contracts and status in one location.

Key digital requirements
Ease of integration with other systems currently in use, intuitive for signers and salespeople, recognized brand, and mobile support.

Initial focus for going digital
Sales contracts and team's HR documents.

Directors, bids & proposals

Drivers for going digital
Proactive sales enablement and being a resource for the entire company.

Key digital requirements
Secure, clear ROI, cost-effective, and ease of use.

Initial focus for going digital
Internal signoffs and external purchase agreements.

Account managers

Drivers for going digital
Customer expectation to manage forms digitally rather than using paper and requiring a notary.

Key digital requirements
Cost-effective, complete support and training, and easy to learn.

Initial focus for going digital
Contracts and client account management forms.

3/ Increase visibility into your sales funnel

Businesses rely heavily on sales forecasts to make decisions about budgets, hiring, sales targets and broader corporate strategy. The key to good forecasting is good data that's complete. According to Forbes.com, the key to good sales forecasting is making sure your pipeline process addresses all key milestones. While customer data is often centralized in a CRM, certain opportunity stages can be a black box throwing off forecasts.

Adopting digital agreement technology can give you better visibility into the status of deals nearing completion, letting you see who has — and has not — signed critical paperwork at each step of the process. This lets you more accurately gauge your sales funnel and provide reliable revenue forecasts to the executive team. Automating the broader agreement process can also increase deal velocity through the funnel significantly. This can involve one-click contract generation, real-time redlining during negotiation, post signature workflows like entering key data back into the CRM, and searchable storage accessible to the right people.

4/ Learn from best practices in consumer services

Inc.com recently highlighted a study revealing that a 5% increase in customer retention can boost profits by 75%. The transactional experiences we have in our daily lives — online shopping, communication and support — are setting a new bar for expectations in professional services. Trends in the consumer realm that are fueling digitization include:

Increasing prevalence of mobile technologies

Demand for instant access to information

Stringent identity and authentication standards

Look for ways to mimic consumer services best practices. As an example, reducing the number of clicks required to sign and store documents, and providing automatic "you are here" progress tracking will mirror the customer-friendly aspects of e-commerce transactions.

5/ Fully embrace mobile technology and workflows

Fast response time is crucial to every sale. Equipping your sales teams with the best technology to do their jobs helps boost overall efficiency and effectiveness. A mobile-enabled digital workflow is essential to flexibility and on-the-go responsiveness. Enable your team to complete agreements from virtually any mobile device, almost anywhere in the world helps ensure that salespeople can stay on top of all opportunities as they arise.

"Major competitive advantages will go to salespeople who spot and sign on with the most powerful new platforms and applications, some of which deliver data-driven insights that are nothing short of awe-inspiring."

Dave Mattson
President of Sandler Training

6/ Understand geographic standards and regulations

It's a reality of today's economy for sales teams and customers to be located around the world. This creates challenges in managing document execution given strict national and international security laws and standards. You'll need to be certain that your agreement processes are legally binding, and comply with laws such as:

U.S. federal ESIGN Act and UETA

EU Regulation No 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services

Further, you'll want to know that your agreement process is compliant with leading privacy regulations and security standards such as:

EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

ISO/IEC 27001 Information Security Management

California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA)

It is important for teams to align with client processes and technologies. As an example, a digitized agreement process from document preparation to signature and storage is rapidly becoming the de facto standard in corporate transactions. Using this technology can help your firm more effectively conduct business.

7/ Digitize to improve sales team retention and new hire acquisition

Top salespeople are always in demand, with skills easily portable from one company to the next. In a study about retaining and motivating top talent, Entrepreneur.com cited a lack of modern tools enabling salespeople to do their jobs effectively as one of the key causes of sales team turnover. Sales & Marketing Management magazine also recommends adopting digital technologies to help improve rep onboarding and provide clearer insights into performance.

One success story is Salesforce, who digitized their offer letters using Workday and DocuSign to provide a better experience in a competitive job market. They also sped up offer letter completion from 5 days to less than 1 and reduced costs by 80%. It was a win-win.

8/ Make your new (and old) digital tools accessible

As more data is available to make decisions and new technology is purchased, ensuring adoption and buy-in can be a challenge. Making new tools easy to use is key to getting the expected ROI. To make the most of your digitally powered salesforce, be sure to:

Bring in sales ops to ensure data gathered is put to use

Engage with enablement and IT to train sales teams on new tools, resources and processes

Get sales leadership involved in the inner workings of the tech stack

Generally what's easiest for sales is staying in their CRM system, so that connection is a critical part of the success of any new technology that is rolled out.

Sales organization successes

Salesforce closes 90% of deals in less than a day with digital agreements.

As Salesforce has grown, closing deals quickly and onboarding new customers has become more and more of a priority with limited resources. By integrating the DocuSign Agreement Cloud into their CRM and CPQ platforms, they were able to streamline the sales process.

Today, when an agreement is signed, it automatically initiates a workflow to provision an account immediately. This allows the customer to access the Salesforce without delay and Salesforce can recognize revenue faster. Salesforce also automates the process of billing the customer by capturing purchase order information during the signing process.

With this whole process automated, 85% of sales agreements are "no-touch," meaning they get done far faster, at lower cost with fewer errors.

How Refinitiv transformed their sales process with DocuSign for Salesforce.

After numerous acquisitions, the sales process at Refinitiv, one of the world's largest financial data and insights providers, had become disjointed with manual, error-prone steps. Business customers said that they needed an easier, more consistent way to make their purchases.

By using DocuSign eSignature for Salesforce, reps are able to select products in Salesforce and auto-generate an order form in a single click. Sales turnaround time has dropped 95% and there's been a 20% uptick in positive customer experience.

"With DocuSign, you can generate your contract, deliver it to a customer, receive their signature, and fulfill the order in 15 minutes. That is lightning fast compared to what we could ever do in the past."

Alan Bronowicz
Head of Business Process Management & Quote to Cash Transformation, Refinitiv

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Ready for the next step?

For sales organizations looking to make a successful transition to digital, DocuSign can help accelerate the sales cycle, reduce the time sales reps spend on paperwork and deliver a better customer experience. For more information call +1-877-720-2040 or visit **DocuSign** to learn more and start a conversation.

Results

10
minutes saved per
agreement on average

90%
of deals closed in a day

71%
of deals closed in an hour