

[How to Maximize the Value of Inside Sales](#)

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Seven years ago, Forrester predicted that by 2020, a million B2B salespeople in the United States would lose their jobs to digital, self-service e-commerce.

Today, two years since the COVID-19 pandemic forced a shift in sales activities—fewer face-to-face meetings, less travel and greater reliance on digital resources and virtual meetings—you may be exploring your B2B sales options. For example, customer-centric websites that include chatbots, calculators and rich content are helping B2B buyers to research and purchase without the help of sales reps.

But before you declare death to your salespeople, consider the big picture and all the possible sales scenarios. Maximizing the value of your sales reps—especially inside sales—may represent a true competitive advantage.

Even as you continue to upgrade sales strategies and implement digital, virtual and e-commerce solutions, you can better use your reps. Rather than diminish their role, elevate them to serve as consultants, trusted advisors and tech-savvy experts, especially if you are selling complex products or solutions. Maximizing the role of inside sales reps can help improve your customer relationships, boost return on investment and grow your bottom line.

Not All Sales Are Created Equal

For all the high-tech tools—email, podcasts, teleconferences, mobile apps, videos and webinars—there's still value in the high touch of one person engaging with another. There's a level of human connection and mutual understanding that no AI (at least not for the foreseeable future) can provide. Only people build trust and relationships.

Knowledgeable salespeople can uncover needs and shape an offering that delivers value. Doing so often leads to new sales, up-selling and cross-selling opportunities, repeat business and, thus, greater customer lifetime value.

Rather than limiting a buyer's understanding of what you sell to a white paper or video, salespeople often can simplify complex subjects. They can turn a buyer's needs into solutions. Sometimes, they can uncover needs that even the customer didn't realize.

Finally, not all sales have the same level of complexity. Some are simple transactions or reorders that a business e-commerce application can easily handle. Others require some level of engagement—most often by inside sales but sometimes face-to-face. This need to cover the full spectrum of transactions will drive your sales strategy decisions.

Anatomy of a Sales Person in 2022

So, where does this leave your salespeople today?

B2B salespeople need to be a lot more than glorified order takers, human product brochures and trade show hospitality hosts. They are business consultants, problem solvers and product and industry experts. They can become trusted advisors to their customers.

Inside salespeople working digitally and virtually can cover a lot more territory than a traditional field rep—and for a fraction of the cost. It's estimated that an inside sales call costs about one-sixth of an outside sales call.

Also, inside sales reps are in the perfect position to orchestrate the sale. Working digitally, the inside sales rep can pull together members of a customer's buying team on the same conference call, regardless of where they are located. Similarly, they can bring in experts from anywhere to address issues, explain complex products and answer questions.

And on those special occasions or in those industries where reps need to meet face-to-face, there's still a role for your top field reps. They have invaluable skills and expertise. They already know how to build solid relationships with customers. Also, suppose they are no longer needed in the field. In that case, you can help them transition to inside sales—or at least a hybrid role where they learn to rely more on digital communications such as phone, email, voicemail, video and webinars.

And since field reps' sales experience can be invaluable to inside salespeople, consider teaming digitally-savvy inside sales reps with top field reps. Both will benefit from each other's expertise.

How to Maximize Contributions of Inside Sales Reps

As you build up your inside sales, think about what you can do to sharpen their skills, improve their customer insights and align their work with marketing tactics:

- **Invest in general sales skills:** It's not enough to be tech-savvy. Inside salespeople need traditional sales skills, including engagement, relationship building and listening skills. They need to understand the buyer's journey and how to recognize intent and buying signals and, more importantly, what to do at each point in the buying cycle.
- **Teach email and voicemail techniques:** Knowing how to leave a voicemail or email message that gets a response is critical. Arm inside sales reps with content and tactics that will boost their conversion rates and help them connect with prospective buyers.

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Build up their product knowledge: Your inside sales reps need to be conversing from a position of knowledge and expertise, and not reading from a script.

- **Take an account-based approach:** Few major companies today rely on a single point of purchase. They have teams of buyers, and inside salespeople need to know how to approach prospects as an account and find and cultivate members of a buying team.
- **Align marketing and inside sales:** The two departments should be working closely to coordinate campaigns, content and lead generation. At the same time, help reps curate content on their own by showing what to look for and where they're likely to find the information they need.
- **Provide tools and data:** Inside sales reps need the information and insight to work smarter. Data-driven decision-making (over gut instinct) is as important to inside sales as field sales.
- **Leverage digital platforms:** Inside sales reps are not phone jockeys. They need to be recognized as product and industry experts. With your help and training, inside sales reps can engage in social conversation, post articles and host webinars and podcasts.

As the sales environment changes, make smart moves, look for a competitive advantage and maximize the value of both inside sales and field sales.

Call us at +1 813-320-0500 (US) or +39 06 978446 60 (EMEA) or contact us online for help meeting your sales goals.

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