



# The Ultimate Sales Operations **2020** Report



As sales operations manager, you're the eyes and ears of your company's sales team; keeping up to speed on the latest trends in your field, keeping tabs on each deal's progress, reaching out a helping hand when needed, and analyzing sales data so that you can guide your team and advise management.

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**But that's not always enough;** you've also got to keep up with the demographic shifts that shape economic growth and to figure out how these developments can affect your sales opportunities and processes. And when it comes to technology, you've got to sort through dozens of products, zeroing on the ones that will boost your sales and ignoring the ones that won't.

This whitepaper provides a detailed understanding of current sales performance and technology trends, the best tools and techniques for driving sales, and best practices for integrating tech into sales environments.

**The 10 minutes** you invest in reading this whitepaper will help you powerhouse your sales operations, strategize your activities, and close more deals in future.

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# The Sales Ops Role Has Never Been More Challenging

Being a sales ops manager often feels like you're walking through a minefield. You've got to balance long-term company goals with immediate sales needs, and there's the complexity of working with other teams without having real clarity around specific goals and responsibilities. Besides being stressful to you, this confusion has financial ramifications for your company.



Studies show that companies in which marketing and sales are aligned grow **19% faster**, with **15% higher profits** than those that don't. Unfortunately, this alignment happens in only **46%** of all businesses.

In addition, since you manage your company's sales processes, you're the critical point where salespeople and company bureaucracies intersect.

It's up to you to ensure that procedures don't slow sales while having a solid approval process to safeguard the company.



Finally, you need accurate data about sales forecasts and deal progress. Getting the right information captured consistently across an enterprise is a challenge. If your data is off, then everything downstream is meaningless, so it is essential for your success that your team has a system in place that makes your work easier, not harder.

# The Current State of Sales



LinkedIn recently published its 3rd annual State of Sales report. The report stressed the importance of both technology and the ability of successful salespeople to illustrate deep knowledge of their product and their customer's actual needs.

Among the report's key takeaways:

## The most successful salespeople use sales technology.

**73% of sales professionals use high-tech tools in their work**, with CRM usage at **64%**, a **113%** increase since 2016. Salesforce and Microsoft Dynamics are particularly popular: they're accessible 24/7, supply contextual details about customers, and automate tedious tasks.

## But the human touch still matters.

Decision-makers expect understanding and human connection. **96%** of decision-makers say they're more likely to consider a product offered by a person who understands their company's business needs, and **93%** respond better to personalized communication along with material related to their specific position.

## Marketing and sales alignment helps close deals, but it doesn't happen enough.

The top sales professionals report better results when they work with marketing, but only **20%** report cooperation between marketing and sales in targeting leads. If your team is one of the **80%** that are not working with marketing, you might want to change that.

## Millennials use marketing insights at higher rates.

Millennials (ages 21-38) make up **43%** of the US workforce (25% of the population) and are quicker to implement new approaches, like marketing and sales alignment. **62%** of them plan to use even more technology next year, compared to **56%** of Baby Boomers and Generation X. Note that millennials are doing much better at beating sales targets than other groups (54% beat their goals by at least 25%, compared to 41% of "Boomers" and 36% of Generation X). And roughly **30%** credit CRMs and other sales technology for their success.

## Trust closes more deals than charisma.

Not only do salespeople rank trust as the No. 1 factor in closing deals, but so do customers. **40%** of sales professionals cite "trust" as the key factor in making sales (ahead of price and customer's expected ROI). But it's even more important for customers, with **51%** of decision-makers calling it the key factor. By comparison, only **32%** of customers consider charisma as an important factor.

*The bottom line is clear; the most successful sales teams use CRMs, in cooperation with marketing, to identify the correct customers and learn enough about their needs to build trust.*

# Current Performance and Technology Trends

In most organizations, sales ops managers are responsible for choosing, managing, and integrating sales technology. As you do that, keep your eye on these trends:

## The Benefits of CPQ

Configure Price Quote (CPQ) software is revolutionizing sales operations; it gives personalized quotes to customers on the spot and streamlines billing. **60%** of high-tech leaders are more likely than others to use automated CPQs, and their results are impressive: A **48%** growth rate in revenues, with a **57%** growth rate in margins, while speeding up sales processes by **13%**.

## In other words, More Money, Quicker.

CPQ users also execute day-to-day tasks faster. **71%** report completing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) “rapidly” vs. only **42%** of non-users. And you know how time-consuming and frustrating RFPs are. CPQ software also helps with demonstrating product knowledge, generating complex quotes, and even leads to a **16%** better retention rate for top salespeople. Need we say more?

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# More Money, Quicker.





## Consolidation of Tools and Digital Transformation

To keep your digital consolidation and transformation going smoothly, pick tools that are easy to use and play well with industry leaders like Salesforce and Microsoft Dynamics. Also, pay attention to training: A major study found that over half of all salespeople felt the training they received on sales tools was inadequate. Remember, successfully integrating new technology will help you and your company do better, but adding too much too quickly won't.

## Capturing Value from Collaborating with Marketing, Finance and Legal

Automated CPQs and other sales technology make it easier to align with marketing by simply sharing the same data. Not only does alignment pay off for companies, as we saw above, but it makes salespeople's lives easier. Companies with a shared CPQ have a **17%** higher lead conversion rate. That's right, for every 100 leads, 17 more pay off.

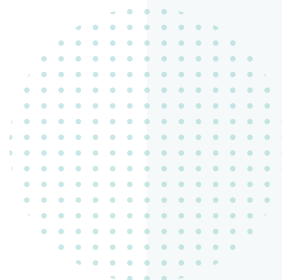
Sharing data also helps finance, which needs reliable sales data to make accurate forecasts. An Aberdeen study shows that over **70%** of companies using Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) software and shared data can produce real-time updates for financial metrics compared to only **18%** of companies without this software.

Technology can even bring legal and sales together. These departments have different cultures; legal, urging caution and

avoiding risk, while the sales department is interested in closing deals and cooperating with customers. Despite such differences, having an online repository of pre-approved contract clauses and sharing data about sales progress can bridge the gaps.

## Adopting Automation and AI

McKinsey found that automation and AI are having a significant impact on sales. For example, Digiday uses AI to create sales targets for its B2B salespeople. In predicting the impact of AI over the years 2018-30, McKinsey found that "early adopters" of AI are likely to double their cash flow by 2030, even after retraining employees, whereas late adopters can expect a **20%** loss. In short, be sure you and your team are on the right side of the AI adoption curve.





# 5 Best Practices for Sales Ops Success

Adopting technology wisely is only one step in creating an excellent sales op team. Based on our research and experience, here's our list of the 5 best sales ops practices.

## 1

### Define a Mission Statement

First and foremost, define a clear and concise sales operations mission statement. It's probably a good idea to add to it a "how" statement that offers more details.

For example, the sentence "We ensure that sales technology makes it easy to generate accurate quotes" supports the mission statement "Our mission is to use empathy and data to drive sales." Work with your VP on the final text and then circulate it to the company, so they know exactly what to expect from you and your team, and that you're on the ball.



## 2

### Identify KPIs and Sales Metrics

Be sure your team knows which metrics you focus on and why. Two of the most widely used sales metrics are:

- **Percent To Revenue**, which measures how close you are to reaching your goal. Formula:  $(\text{current revenue} / \text{target revenue}) \times 100$
- **Sales Velocity**, which indicates how "fast" your sales are. Formula:  $(\text{number of leads} * \text{average deal size} * \text{lead conversion rate}) / \text{average conversion time}$

#### Important KPIs include:

- Total revenue
- By product, area, salesperson
- From existing customers, from new customers
- Year-to-year growth
- Cost of selling/revenue
- Average customer lifetime value (LTV)
- Net Promoter Score (NPS)
- Number of deals lost to competition
- Percentage of salespeople meeting their target



### 3

## Champion the Right Technology

Choose the software that is best for your team now and for the foreseeable future. If you're new to the company, talk with people about what worked before, and what didn't. Be sure to test out any tool or platform before recommending or purchasing it. Once you select software, be sure to learn it well before your team does; they will most likely turn to you before they contact support.

If you bring in an outside trainer, help them develop examples that are relevant to your team. As previously discussed, choosing the right software will help both you and your team succeed.

### 4

## Collaborate with Other Departments

We've discussed the growing trend and benefits of sales aligning its data with marketing, finance, and legal. Whatever steps you take to collaborate with other departments will improve the company's bottom line and establish you as a "big picture" person.



Let's take a closer look at finance. Patrick Kellenberger, former Finance Director of Base CRM, recommends that sales and finance take these 4 steps to generate more accurate forecasts:

### 5

## Invest in Future Growth

As the aforementioned McKinsey report indicates, we are at a crossroads. The sooner companies invest in automation and AI, the more likely they are to grow and prosper.

AI has the potential to add \$13 trillion to the global economy, with the first to switch over likely to make the most money. As sales ops manager, part of your mandate is to choose the right technology for your company. New technology is not always popular; many people are intimidated by it, but your task will be infinitely easier if you help your team see this change as an exciting opportunity to learn skills that will make them more valuable to the company.

01

Align expectations, focusing on the current sales cycle

02

Integrate sales and finance data with a CRM

03

Choose a single forecasting method; preferably the "pipeline methodology"

04

Hold monthly leadership meetings, using a shared email list, and other means of increasing interaction



# Putting It All Together: The DealHub Advantage

Knowledge isn't power; applying knowledge is. To succeed as a sales ops manager, you need to have the right tools to make informed decisions based on actionable data, and metrics that reveal at a glance the health of your sales efforts. Crucially, you need software that lets you leverage your company's knowledge into target-beating sales figures.

DealHub's award-winning CPQ solution has everything you need to reach your goals. Winner of 6 G2 Crowd CPQ awards for 2019 including Best Usability, Best Support, and Easiest to Use, DealHub CPQ:

- Is up and running within a few hours, operating natively from Salesforce and Microsoft Dynamics
- Simplifies your quoting process by generating error-free quotes in any format (Web page, link, Excel, Word, PDF)
- Automatically synchronizes with your CRM so current, accurate information is always available to marketing, finance, and legal
- Includes guided selling aids (playbooks, scripts, triggers for suggesting upgrades, up-sells and cross-sells)
- Ensures consistent pricing and discounts while streamlining processes
- Supports exception pricing as needed
- Includes built-in document generation, support for e-signatures, forms, dashboards and analytics



Contact us today to see DealHub in action and schedule a free demo.

BOOK A DEMO



Empowering sales teams  
to close deals faster