

2019

SALES ENABLEMENT AND DIGITALISATION: WHAT COULD YOU BE DOING BETTER?



INTRODUCTION

Digitisation and digitalisation of business processes and workforce are now upon us. But as some companies look to make transformations, what is the best way to approach change?

"A truly digital business requires not only the conversion of its processes to digital, but also the adaptation of its business operations to exploit the possibilities which stem from new technology."

When it comes to transforming sales organisations, many companies have already made the switch to using tools such as CRMs and sales enablement platforms. But just digitising your activities may not be enough. By looking at digital transformation not just of organisations, but of the people within your organisation you may find you are better able to harness the true power of digitalisation.

In this e-book, we take a look at what the sales of the future are, digitalisation of the sales process and sales enablement, how to evaluate the effectiveness of sales digitalisation, and review what you could be doing better.

SALES OF THE FUTURE

When looking to the future of sales trends and technology, we often have an idea of “smart” stores, cool gadgets, or chat bots that make the customer sales experience unique, dynamic and exciting.

But is this really the only focus for achieving the sales of the future? How do we translate customer expectations to the actual sales process and how our organisations operate in relation to how we sell, and how our sales people work?

What does this mean?

So what does “sales of the future” really mean when it comes to sales enablement, and how should we actually be thinking about it in terms of labor force and staff digitalisation? To get to the root of it, we should start by answering a few questions:

1. How is sales changing based on consumer demand?

The ever present question when it comes to sales is how do we adapt to customer behaviors, needs, and expectations? It's crucial in a digitised age to work in the ways that are more common to our targeted customers, and as consumers become more accustomed to digital tools, it should make sense that our sales methods, process, and staff become digital as well.

In fact, consumer demands and expectations are at the highest they've ever been. This puts a lot of pressure on businesses of all kinds to excel at the customer experience in every aspect of the sales process in order to compete in competitive (or downright overcrowded) markets.

This often means increased personalisation, more availability (in terms of responsive support and also choice), and connected sales processes that feel streamlined and easy. This poses significant challenges to all types of sales organisations in order to continue to grow and win customers.

80 %

Of businesses surveyed said they would make at least some changes towards digitising their business

3%

Compared to the amount that said they did not find digitisation is relevant to them

“The change pressure in the market is shown by the fact that 1 in 10 companies want to change their business to become completely digital.” - Björn Alberts, Partner Curamando

Sales of the Future

Continued

2. How is sales changing based on technological advancements?

Similarly, sales is changing because of technology and the increasing speed of industry-specific innovation. But, there's a caveat: Using tools for sales does not automatically mean your organisation is digitalised.

For example, using a CRM, or having actionable insights and data analysis means changing your analog processes to using technology, or digitisation. But this does not necessarily mean you change your system or activities to adapt to the technology, or actual digitalisation.

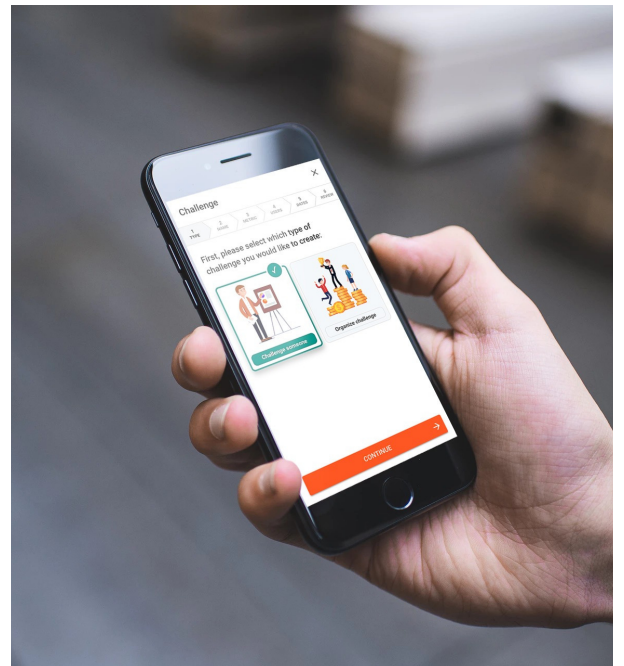
But, there's a caveat: Using tools for sales does not automatically mean your organisation is digitalised. For example, using a CRM, or having actionable insights and data analysis means changing your analog processes to using technology, or digitisation. But this does not necessarily mean you change your system or activities to adapt to the technology, or actual digitalisation.

For you to implement digitalisation of your staff, you need to consider how you are actually approaching your day-to-day sales process and the activities that your employees engage in, but also how they are being measured and activated in their roles.

In other words, a truly digital business requires not only the conversion of its processes to digital, but also the adaptation of its business operations to exploit the possibilities which stem from new technology.

3. What will sales look like for B2B and B2C industries?

While traditionally sales for B2B and B2C businesses have been quite different, there are an increasing number of overlaps when it comes to expectations of consumers and the execution of sales. For instance, B2B customers wish to increasingly have an experience that is more like retail, while every day consumers in some industries expect the concierge services that have typically been reserved for high touch enterprise sales processes.



Sales of the Future

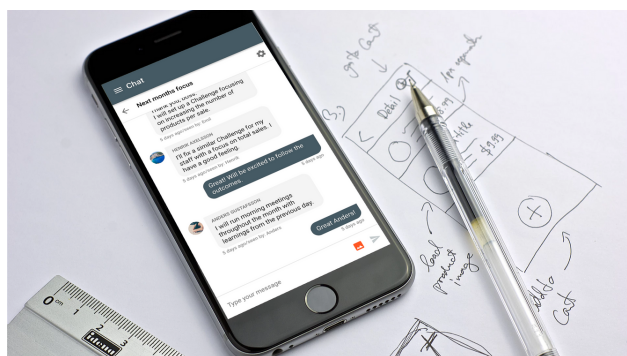
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The biggest discussion points in both B2B and B2C sales include:

Technology and Automation - In cases of B2C and traditional retail settings, customers are more likely to expect processes, especially online, to be automated. Personalized recommendations are becoming commonplace, and in-store retail experiences include more options for comparison shopping, trials and tests.

In the case of B2B sales organisations, the entire process itself is becoming more inbound, with a fair amount of leads now coming through organic search, paid advertising, online content, and even social media - methods previously thought only useful for retail companies. Buyers now interact with a company online, through the website, email newsletters, or other methods, perhaps before being ready to talk to a sales representative.

In this way, it is crucial for sales people to know what those interactions have been, before first contact. Now, much of the marketing and sales funnel is automated before sales staff speak to the prospect directly.



Remote Teams - Large retailers have long been distributed, but now all types of businesses are becoming spread out and discovering the benefits of remote teams. However, as there are benefits of distributed teams, there are also challenges for sales and regional managers, and executives, who cannot be in all places to oversee the daily sales processes. This presents new issues in ensuring consistency in the sales process amongst teams, improving sales performance across the board, effective internal change management, and quality customer experience always.

For any B2B or B2C sales organization, autonomy, transparency, accountability and personal leadership are crucial aspects that need to be in place for a sales organization to excel. These four necessary qualities can be extremely hard to secure while having remote sales teams. Autonomy may be possible, but autonomy without direction or support can result in disorganisation and inconsistencies across teams.

Transparency can become an issue when management can't have "eyes" everywhere at once. Accountability can be a challenge when you don't have methods or processes in place that measure performance and review individuals continuously, and personal leadership only comes from being able to give staff the right tools, resources, and actionable insights for growth.

DIGITALISATION OF THE SALES PROCESS AND SALES ENABLEMENT

Where sales has first seen changes in digitisation and moving away from typical analogue and manual tasks has been in the sales prospecting itself. In B2B, instead of only traditional cold calling, we've moved to lead generation, network and affiliate marketing, and the inbound methodology to deliver more qualified prospects to the sales teams who can spend more time on fewer prospects that are more likely to make a purchase.

Sales organisations across all industries have then moved to equip their sales people with tools such as sales enablement platforms to digitalise their sales process for identifying and contacting potential buyers, and making deals. But the problem is, just because the sales process becomes digitalised, doesn't mean sales become easier or more effective.

Your sales staff are still human and handing them a shiny new tool to use isn't always the best or complete solution. Remember that people aren't predictable; we need technology that takes that into consideration, especially when in sales not everything can be 100% digitized. But, we can actually augment people, and empower our sales staff through digital means that include smart measurements and machine learning.

More companies are moving to digitalising their sales process and other business activities,

but there is still much to be learned and understood to make the transition effective.

A survey conducted in October 2018 of Swedish CEOs and leaders of companies which exceeded annual turnover of 300 million Swedish Kroner (SEK), found that half of the companies surveyed do not have a budgeted plan for digital conversion, and almost 30% do not have one completely formalized plan for digitisation.

This is problematic, as it can lead to companies struggling to implement new practices, and adapt to changes that are necessary for continued growth and success.

Additionally, the survey found that when it comes to leadership roles in digital transformation, only 20% of responsibility control is put into increasing sales.

Predominantly, the key figures that the person with digital responsibility are controlled on are customer experience (47%) and cost savings (33%).

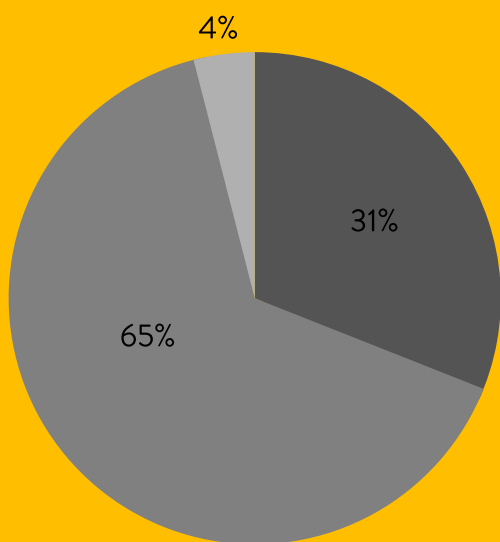
When we see these figures we can understand why there may be a lag in organisations truly being able to leverage digital tools in the sales process, and monitor and promote better sales performance.

Facts and Figures on Digital Transformation

A recent study of CEOs and other leaders of Swedish companies with at least 300 Million SEK in turnover and their outlook on digital transformation

Do you have a Chief Digital Officer, Head of Digital Transformation or another similar dedicated role on the company responsible for driving or accelerating is digital transformation?

31% - Yes
65% - No
4% - No response

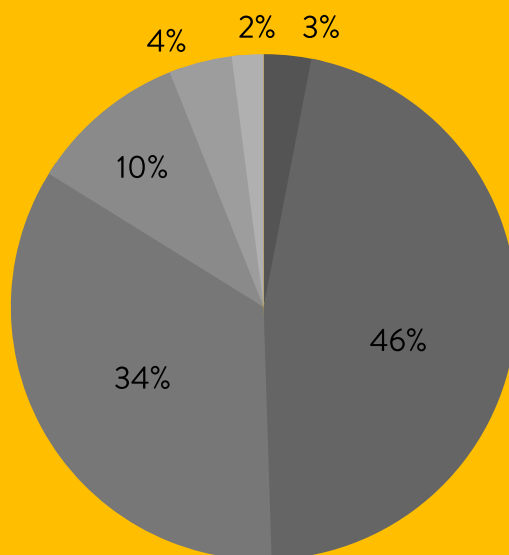


TO THE LEFT

While it may not be necessary for companies to hire or dedicate a person specifically for digital transformation, the survey does indicate that although a majority of companies are looking to digitise in some way, a minority are prioritising creating an organisational structure and leadership mechanism that directly supports it.

What are your digitalisation ambitions?

3% - Do not experience that digitisation is relevant to their market
46% - Want to get better with digital but not in an overall way
34% - Experience that they must change their way of thinking and put digital first
10% - Want to change their business to become completely digital
4% - Have always had a completely digital business
2% - No response



TO THE RIGHT

The majority of large Swedish companies surveyed see a need to be looking to the future of digital business. In order to stay competitive, large companies are going to need to adapt to the changing times and markets in order to compete with newer agile companies, as there will be an increase across industries for businesses who start as completely digital.

Digitalisation of the Sales process

Continued

How can sales organisations implement digitalisation effectively

In order for teams to become truly digitalised, there needs to be a distinct and efficient process for onboarding. Sales staff need to be able to understand and visualize the benefits of the new tools together with the new processes, in order to fully adapt in ways that make the implementation successful. Then, you should have ways of supporting staff in their new process, while offering coaching and training, and finally, be measuring progress, the effectiveness of your sales process, and how your sales staff are performing.

Change management

Concepts in change management often play a big role when adding or altering the technology that teams use. This is especially important when not only digitising your organisation, but digitalising it, since not all people's skill with learning and using tech is the same. Since digitalisation means more than introducing a tool, but also changing processes and how things are done, you will need plenty of preparation, support, training, and follow-up to ensure success.

It can make sense to roll out new tools and sales enablement technology slowly, with plenty of preparation beforehand where sales staff can get used to the new tools and process before actually beginning to use them 100% of the time.

Sales performance management

Crucially, sales enablement does not necessarily evaluate the performance of salespeople. While it can work to assist them in making sales, your organisation should deploy a method for actually tracking progress, ensuring delivery of aids for learning, and allowing managers to view results in real-time.

Using a sales performance management tool ensures that your sales enablement platform is actually working as it should. If you are to digitalise your sales process, you need to know if it is, in fact, effective. Where a sales enablement tool can help staff have the resources they need to make a sale, a sales performance management tool will ensure that staff are hitting targets, improving their methods, are on par with their teammates, and are receiving the support they need from management.

Productivity measurements

"Productivity" has long been the buzzword surrounding new tech, especially since there are so many tools promising to ensure we can be more productive in business. When we can do more, with less time, we're guaranteed more profits - right? But increased profits doesn't actually always mean increased productivity. So how do you measure productivity, and does it mean the same thing for every company?

HOW TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SALES DIGITALISATION

The first step in knowing if the digitalisation of your organisation is successful, is figuring out how to actually measure success. Depending on your company, what market you're in, what types of products or services you sell, and whether or not you have high rates of recurring revenue, your sales process will look different and measurement won't always be the same.

Benchmarks and KPIs

First establish appropriate benchmarks for the progress of implementing digitalisation, and have solid Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in place to measure against. Without knowing what you're aiming for, it can be difficult to ascertain if you have effectively digitalised your sales staff. While KPIs are different for different companies, there are some things to keep in mind and take a look at, no matter if you are a B2B or B2C company, or what industry you're in.

Some KPIs that digitalised sales forces can take a look at include:

CAC - Customer Acquisition Cost. Ideally, your CAC becomes lower through the use of automated processes, sales enablement tools and true sales performance management.

APV - Average Purchase Value can indicate your salespeople are more successful in upselling, or closing deals that are worth more.

Conversion Rates - Conversion rates can be measured by how many leads visit your store or are contacted by sales people and actually become customers. With effective sales performance management, you should see where you have issues in the sales process that may lead to lower conversion rates.



How to evaluate the effectiveness of sales digitalisation

Continued

Are you using too many tools? - It's ironic, but sometimes using too many productivity tools actually hinders productivity. Look to see where you can consolidate, and which tools have the most integrations with your native platforms or existing processes, at least in the beginning.

If you overhaul your sales process and implement a sales enablement platform, but your sales staff still need to use separate CRMs, plus loyalty program, plus you use separate metrics platforms, internal communications channels, and learning management systems, chances are many of your activities are still manual even though you are digitising your tasks. This is not, in fact, digitalisation of your sales team.

Measure how much time your team members are spending on average in each platform, and how much time is spent switching between them. You could be losing an enormous amount of productive hours in your sales activity due to lack of a streamlined, consistent process.

Ramp up time versus output - Sometimes the amount of time it takes to implement new tools, onboard staff, and get new programs working at their full capacity is not worth a minimal change in output. Be realistic in what you hope to gain from digitising your tasks and digitalising your sales staff.

Understand what it is that your team can use to actually do their jobs well, and listen to their desires, wants and needs. Often it can be that good leadership through clear communication and supportive management is what makes a big difference in the output of your sales staff.

Making a decision about digitalisation investments

Large companies especially should understand what a lack of quick action towards digitalising processes can mean in the long run. It's better to take the first step in adapting to these customer expectations, otherwise it may be that a newcomer is able to service your customers in a faster and better way, sufficiently killing your business. If you take action now to not only digitise your activities, but digitalise your processes and especially your staff, you will be able to keep up with competition from companies who are built from the start on digital methods.

If you need to evaluate what the investment might look like, take into consideration what you are willing to spend on improving your existing sales staff. When employees feel that their company is investing in their development and ways to make their job easier and better, they can become more satisfied in their jobs. This can motivate internal growth and employee loyalty that ensures your investment in your staff is worthwhile.

WHAT COULD YOU BE DOING BETTER?

Sales organisations are always looking for ways to improve sales, be more competitive in the marketplace, and ensure the effectiveness of salespeople. But when it comes to sales of the future, and how to modernize and digitalise sales teams, some don't know how to actually ensure the success of implementing new technology and processes.

In order to truly ensure your sales staff are adapting to the digitisation of their activities, but also understand how digitalising their roles benefits them and the organisation, there are a few areas of focus:

Improve change management

One of the first issues many companies have when transitioning to new tools and processes, is that they don't properly implement change management. Change management takes a lot of preparation and forethought, because helping all your staff through the process, or leaving them to their own devices can be extremely challenging and costly when done after the change has already been introduced.

Create a plan of action, guides, and designated workshops or question and answer sessions to help your staff understand and get used to the new process. Consider having a trial run period where staff can test out the new tools before transitioning to full time usage. Ask your sales staff what their concerns or fears may be, and come back with ways to address them, ease their insecurities, and show how they'll benefit from changes.



"Without Goalplan, it would not have been possible to have control. No doubt, the app solves collaborations across country and store boundaries. If I didn't use Goalplan, all my time would have been spent driving and flying around to host individual one-to-one meetings with employees, now most of the dialogue can be handled in the app. It saves me valuable time." - Anders Fjäll, Nordic Sales Manager, Sony Mobile

What could you be doing better?

Continued

Encourage learning and development

We often discuss how important learning and development is for sales in general, but it's especially true when digitalising your sales team and introducing new processes for sales. Learning and development shouldn't be treated as something that is only necessary when an issue arises or a gap in knowledge is detected. Learning and development should be a continuous part of your organisation's support and staff management, especially when needing to be agile in adapting to changes in technology and consumer trends and expectations.

For sales staff in particular, coaching and training should be a regular part of sales performance management, as it improves employee engagement, and enables staff to do better in their roles.

Invest in communication and support

Lastly, for a truly digitalised staff, you should use tools that encourage an efficient and consistent sales process, starting with target setting, and distribution of the sales budget. Follow up with employee check ins, to make sure each of them feel on track to hit their targets, or if the budget should be reallocated. Review performance in real-time by comparing to previous time periods, as well as the employee performance statements, implement coaching where need be, and encourage sales competitions between staff members and teams to motivate them.

To ensure delivery and consistency of these activities, a proper communications tool is necessary. Employees should have direct lines to their managers and other staff in order to ask questions, seek help and assistance, or relay timely information.



CONCLUSION

Key takeaways in understanding sales of the future, digital transformation, and digitalisation of staff

- **Make a plan**
- **Don't look to optimise only your processes, but your staff as well**
- **Give as many opportunities for support and communication as you can**
- **Monitor performance to ensure implementation is successful**
- **Continuous review of your activities**

Sales enablement has become a crucial part of organisations looking to streamline processes, equip staff with resources and tools to help them in their roles, and increase productivity. But this just scratches the surface of what it means to digitise and digitalise your sales organisation.

Sales of the future will likely not look exactly like what we think, but in order to be prepared for the changes to come, we need to harness the power of our people. Look to see how your digital transformation can be more effective through the use of better change management practices, and sales performance management to truly gain insights into your activities, and digitalise your staff.

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