SALES OPERATIONS

SUPER POWERS

HOW TODAY'S MOST SUCCESSFUL COMPANIES ARE

BUILDING INVINCIBLE SALES TEAMS

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Intro

The Amazing Power of Sales Operations

If you work in sales operations or aspire to, congratulations. You're at the forefront of what is quite possibly the most exciting area in technology today. Sales forms the lifeblood of virtually every business. And as a sales ops superhero, you get to make the critical decisions that often determine whether the entire sales organization fails or prospers.

It wasn't always this way. Sales operations managers were once tacticians that simply provided day-to-day support to sales reps. But sales operations managers have now taken on more responsibilities and a far more strategic role, working in tandem with sales leaders and other departmental leaders to help maximize the sales team's effectiveness and overall productivity.

According to Jen Schlueter, who manages sales operations at Cvent, "Sales Operations has increasingly become a more proactive vs. reactive role in our organization. We are now expected to contribute data-driven recommendations to our Sales Team. We have earned a seat at the table with Sales leadership, and leadership seeks our opinion and execution expertise. We have gone beyond just providing tactical day-to-day support to Sales, and moved toward leading sales transformation initiatives."

As a result, the sales operations role has become elevated. They often help make key decisions in an organization including:

- Which tools to purchase

- How to structure compensation plans

- How to measure sales effectiveness

- How CRM should best be used

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Intro Continued

"In the past, sales operations was looked at as a cost center, and now it's really moved to be a profit center, a driver of additional revenue that VPs of sales are extremely reliant on."

Ben Sardella
CO-FOUNDER & CRO
Datanyze

Why Sales Operations Evolved

So why has the role evolved? Today's sales ops pros have more responsibilities than ever before because they have far more power to influence success.

MORE POWERFUL TOOLS

First of all, sales tools are becoming more powerful and proliferate. There is virtually no limit to what can be added to a sales stack. And sales operations is often given a budget to choose the tools that will make the greatest impact.

ACTIONABLE, CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL DATA

Another reason that sales operations have more power than ever before is data. There was a time in the recent past when buyers had a great advantage over sellers. Buyers could visit a company's website and learn all about that brand, while sellers had little-to-no information about buyers. But data has revolutionized the sales process.

Sellers now have the power to gain access to multiple tiers of prospect data including:

- Demographic – about the prospects themselves

- Firmographic – about specific companies

- Technographic – about the tools in a target company's technology stack

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Intro Continued

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"You've got these different parts of the organization feeding data into this conduit.

And so sales ops starts to get this holistic vision of what's going on in the company as a whole, and can be a very effective sounding board or even an early warning system."

Franco Anzini

SR DIRECTOR
OF SALES OPERATIONS
Xactly Corp.

As data populates in various tools, originating from disparate departments, sales ops can serve as a conduit for that data, analyzing it and placing it in the right context for salespeople. After all, data without context will never help your sales team close deals.

The following primer will detail various superpowers that sales operations teams can wield. We'll also reveal tips from highly successful sales operations leaders about how they are helping their companies build sales teams that are virtually invincible.

Read on to learn how to:

- Build a sales technology stack and implement it successfully

- Automate the right sales tasks (and not the wrong ones)

- Hire a winning sales operations team

- Exponentially increase sales productivity at your company

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SUPERPOWER #1

Giving Your Sales Team More Time to Sell

What if you had the power to control time? Imagine if you could snap your fingers and give each rep on your team an extra five hours a day to sell. Think how much more productive they'd be. According to CSO Insights, sales reps only spend 33% of their time actually selling. The truth is that sales operations superheros can—in a sense—control time. By automating key processes and tasks, you can eliminate the time that reps spend on tedious manual processes and give them more time to do what they love: sell.

Provide Sales Time Through Automation

Make no mistake, sales reps' most valuable resource is time. According to Franco Anzini, Senior Director of Sales Operations at Xactly Corp., "The most valuable resource that a sales organization has is its number of selling days. And the productivity within those selling days should be maximized. The question sales operations has to ask is 'how

do I continue to give my salespeople more time to sell?' And the answer is: automating sales processes whenever possible.

"To give reps more selling time you can look at the top of the funnel, where you're leveraging lead management and prospecting tools to automate the flow of data into your applications, reducing the time reps have to spend manually inputting data. Or you can look at the bottom of the funnel, where you can implement more automation tools like a CPQ solution that helps reps spend less time making sure they've got the right product or discount approval and more time conveying the value of the quote to the customer."

While automation is crucial in order to compete in today's ultra-competitive business landscape, it's important not to take automation too far. Unfortunately, there are a lot of sales organizations that go way too far with automated sales emails. They just send out generic blasts without adding

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Giving Your Sales Team More Time to Sell

any context around the email or providing any value. Chances are, you have probably received an email from a sales rep who didn't take any time to uncover your unique drivers or pain points. While some amount of templatization can be beneficial for sales teams, emails should always be personalized with a clear reason for reaching out. If you are creating email templates for your sales reps, coach reps to personalize emails in order to add context.

According to Ben Sardella, Co-Founder and CRO at Datanyze, "When we hire an SDR we actually do not give them any tools for automation for the first couple of months. They have to earn it. And what we found is that by doing that, reps are writing their own emails; they're doing their own research; they're understanding the use cases and how to position a certain email to a certain persona. If they just had a tool and they were clicking the button, they would never really understand the context."

Here are some examples of things you can mention in order to personalize emails:

- A past meeting

  A recent event they attended

-

  Their alma mater

- A content download

- A form they filled out

- A blog post (or another piece of content) they authored

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Giving Your Sales Team More Time to Sell

"I think you hire salespeople to close deals and build relationships and if you're not giving them all the tools to go and focus 99% of their job on that, then you're doing them a disservice."

Ben Sardella
CO-FOUNDER & CRO
Datanyze

The Power of Specialization

Another way to give salespeople more time to sell is through specialization. When salespeople can laser-focus on the specific role they were hired to do, they are often far more productive. As a sales operations manager, you can then seek out tools that cater to reps in specific roles. As an example, say you have a team of sales development reps (SDRs) that spend much of their day calling prospects with the goal of setting up demos. They might benefit greatly from a tool that automatically captures call data in

CRM, but they might not need a tool that automates quotes. Whereas your team of account executives (AEs) might benefit more from configure price quote (CPQ) software. Since many SaaS solutions operate on a per-seat basis, specialization not only saves time but can reduce cost when assembling a sales technology stack. But we'll speak more about how to assemble a winning sales technology stack in a bit.

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SUPERPOWER #2
Prioritize Accounts

In B2B sales, we're largely living in an account-based world now. One of the most important sales functions is selecting the right accounts, that is to say, the accounts most worthy of your sales team's time. If left to their own devices, some salespeople (usually the A-players) will intrinsically choose the right accounts to target. But those middle-tier reps (i.e. most of the reps on your team) will not just hemorrhage time deciding which accounts to target, they'll also waste time trying to contact low-priority accounts, when they could instead be selling to prospects that are far more likely to buy.

As a sales operations superhero, one of the most powerful ways that you can influence sales success is by providing them with lists of accounts and/or prospects to target.

These lists can be prioritized based on a variety of factors including:

- Marketing lead score

- Account size

- Funding details

- Industry

- Similarity to existing customers

Data tools such as Datanyze, and even sites like LinkedIn and Crunchbase provide data that can help you prioritize accounts. Some of the most successful sales operations managers go the extra mile by leveraging tools that can help reps prioritize leads in real time. Alerting reps to changes in status, content downloads, form completions or other important factors can help ensure that no sales-ready leads unnecessarily slip through the cracks. This is especially crucial for inbound sales reps, since inbound leads have a notoriously short shelf life.

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SUPERPOWER #3

Assemble & Implement a Tech Stack

Place the right tools in the hands of a great rep and they will seem superhuman. Just look at heroes like Batman and James Bond. They never had any superpowers, just the right tools to get the job done. As a sales operations superhero, you can provide your reps with a technology stack that maximizes each rep's productivity and selling power. But first, you have to assemble the right tool stack.

How to Evaluate Sales Tools

Step onto the showroom floor at any large-scale technology conference and you're bound to see hundreds or even thousands of technology vendors offering competing solutions. Each promises to be the magic bullet that maximizes productivity and drives exponential revenue for your business. But the truth is that all companies have a limited budget. You don't have the resources (money or time) to try a fraction of the solutions available. So how should you decide which tools to invest in?

STEP 1: IDENTIFY WHICH PROBLEMS NEED TO BE SOLVED

We asked sales operations leader Franco Anzini how Xactly Corp. evaluates new tools. For Anzini, the process begins by asking some key questions:

- What problem are you trying to solve?

- Why do you want to solve it?

- Can the problem be solved with existing technology or processes?

- What's the cost of not solving this problem?

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Assemble & Implement a Tech Stack

STEP 2: IDENTIFY PRIORITIES

After you've identified which problems need to be solved, it comes down to setting priorities. According to Anzini, "The priority ranking is something that always gets in the way. You say, 'all right we need a CPQ solution, and we need an incentive comp solution and we need a firmographic solution', and all of a sudden you have about 12 things on your shopping list. And so you've got to stack-rank those solutions by which ones will give you the most bang for your buck; which ones are your users ready to adopt; and which ones have the highest opportunity cost of not implementing?"

STEP 3: SET SCALE

Another important concern is scale. How long does a solution need to last? According to Anzini, "A lot of people, when going down the path of evaluating a tool, first ask 'is this going to last me five years?' But it may not have to last you five years. If it solves a practical problem now it may be worth implementing."

STEP 4: ENSURE USER ADOPTION

After selecting a tool, it's crucial to ensure that reps will actually want to use the tool. Far too often, resources are wasted on tools that simply aren't adopted. In order for tools to get adopted, reps need to clearly see their value. After using a tool, reps should be left wondering how they ever did their job without that tool.

One way to help augment user adoption is to find champions in your sales org. If A-players are excited about a tool, then you better believe that other reps are going to follow suit. Try to involve key team members in the evaluation process. Let them attend the demo or participate in the pilot program. Listen to their feedback, and make sure that a tool will be adopted before deploying it to your entire team.

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Assemble & Implement a Tech Stack

Howard Brown

FOUNDER & CEO
ringDNA

"If my reps don't love the tool, if they aren't willing to use it, then it's a waste of money, time and energy. If my sales enablement or sales acceleration tool is actually slowing my sales team down, it could cost them a quarter or a month, and that can affect their entire sales year.

"Sales reps have to love the tools they're using, otherwise they're going to be miserable people. And if you're a miserable person doing the same job 8-10 hours a day, you're not going to have great interpersonal relationships, which is key to driving sales."

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SUPERPOWER #4

Motivate Reps to Succeed

One of the most important roles that sales ops can play is building a sales culture that fosters success. As a sales operations manager, you should be constantly vigilant for new ways to remove reps' stumbling blocks. It's just as important to make sure that reps are positioned to succeed. Here are some ways that sales ops can help inspire salespeople to perform at their best.

Compensation Plans

Sales compensation will probably always be unequivocally linked to sales performance. It's through sales compensation plans that you can provide reps with the recognition they deserve. But building the perfect comp plan—the one that drives reps to perform at their best—can require some tweaking.

According to Xactly Corp's Senior Director of Sales Operations Franco Anzini, "I think that sales comp planning and sales performance are completely intertwined and they forever will be, because it's really the ultimate cat and mouse game. In sales operations, you're constantly doing comp planning exercises to maximize selling time and revenue. And then, on the flip side, the reps are constantly trying to game the system and so you're getting the performance metrics coming around the back. So it's this constant circle. It's the never ending tweak."

When building comp plans, most experts agree that simplicity is key. According to sales leader Chael Banks, "Less is more. The Winchester Mystery House of trapdoors in your comp plan is not good for two reasons. On the rep side, you're never going to know how to get paid. But also, complex comp plans are difficult to administer and are often focused on driving the wrong activities."

Motivate Reps to Succeed

For many reps, simple comp plans deliver the best results. A simple comp plan can be structured as follows:

- Base: The amount reps see in their paychecks that is unaffected by performance

- Bonus: The additional amount reps receive based on meeting various goals

As an example, here is a sample comp plan for a sales development representative (SDR):

BASE MONTHLY SALARY: $2K

POTENTIAL BONUS: $1k monthly payout

GOALS: 16 appointments, 8 opportunities

PAYOUT: $25 per appointment, $75 per opportunity

One of the most important aspects of building a comp plan is to never limit the amount that reps can make. Once your rep meets their goals to attain their bonus, the sky should be the limit on how much they can make if they do a fantastic job.

Harness the Inspiring Power of Competition

In the sales world, one of the most powerful motivating forces is competition. Salespeople tend to be competitive by nature. It's no secret that a lot of salespeople have a background as an athlete. Everyone likes to take home a nice paycheck. But many reps care more about "winning" than getting paid. Smart sales operations managers are leveraging the power of a leaderboard to inspire competition. When reps not only see how they're doing, but how they compare to their colleagues, it really motivates reps to perform at their best.

A leaderboard can motivate reps at all tier levels. A-players will duke it out for that top space. Middle-tier reps will do everything to remain in that top half. And underperforming reps will be far more likely to seek additional guidance and coaching in order to get out of those bottom slots.

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CONCLUSION

How to Hire an Amazing Sales Operations Manager

We've discussed the amazing superpowers that are available to sales operations. But in order to leverage these superpowers to transform your sales team, you'll need the right sales operations superhero or heroes on your team. We reached out to some successful sales operations leaders and asked them to reveal which qualities to look for when hiring a sales operations hero.

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How to Hire an Amazing Sales Operations Manager

Jeff Lamb

SR MANAGER,
SALES ENABLEMENT/
STRATEGIC PROGRAMS
Salesforce

"Whether it's someone currently on your team or an outside hire, look for great problem solvers. Sales operations managers need to be really tactical, but to also understand the overarching strategy. I often act as the middleman between executives and sales reps.

When executives bring up a problem, it's up to me to actually solve the problem by not just understanding their strategic objectives, but also how to implement them."

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How to Hire an Amazing Sales Operations Manager

"A great sales operations manager is collaborative, proactive, and deeply understands their organization's sales processes. Managers must be data-driven and analytical in their approach to solving problems."

Jen Schlueter

DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC
PROJECTS & PMO
Cvent

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How to Hire
an Amazing Sales
Operations Manager

Franco Anzini

**VICE PRESIDENT OF
REVENUE OPERATIONS**
Malwarebytes

"You've got to hire smart, driven people who are good communicators. They need the ability to communicate with people with various different skill sets across various departments.

They also need to be able to keep asking questions. Asking those second and third-level questions is the key to effectively analyzing data and discovering new trends."

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Why **ringDNA**

Improve rep productivity, increase sales opportunities, and close more deals with the leading AI-powered sales engagement platform.

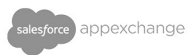**Hewlett Packard Enterprise**

—

296%
more sales opportunities

twilio

—

100%
of sales activities logged into Salesforce

cvent

—

13%
instant increase in demos booked

TOP RATED FROM | G2 | salesforce appexchange | JMP SECURITIES HOT 100 | AS SEEN ON | Bloomberg | BNN Bloomberg | Forbes | FOX BUSINESS

Drive Better Sales Outcomes

Prioritize

The perfect touchpoint for every contact, every time.

Engage

Every tool you need to fuel smarter sales conversations.

Optimize

AI-powered insights to make every rep a top performer.

Accelerate

Close more deals with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Thank You

Check out more free resources at
ringdna.com/sales-strategy