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Struggle of the sales team

Shaping the pipeline funnel, meeting revenue targets, and maintaining margins have always been the pressure points for sales reps and CXOs. Sales and marketing teams are often busy hunting new prospects and nurturing opportunities through Personal relationships, digital presence, personalized marketing, and social selling. However, most of the time they lack following an integrated approach that improves sales productivity and effectiveness. Typically, sales and marketing organizations face below key challenges:

a) Sales Reps are spending significant time on managing sales operations

Sales representatives must maintain a chunk of documentation related to pipelines, meeting schedules, MOMs, lead management documentations, etc. This obstructs them from spending more time on the field, which can



earn them good leads and better outcomes of sales. As per a Forbes report, nearly two-thirds (64.8%) of reps' time is spent in non-revenue generating activities, leaving only 35.2% for functions related to selling.

b) Long sales cycle from hunting a prospect to revenue is a costly affair

To keep track of all the deals and proposals is essential and also a tedious task as the turnaround time (TAT) is higher, and they may get out of sight. Usually, follow-ups on these opportunities are not continued as it demands because of the long sales cycle; this creates a chance of losing the opportunity.

c) Disjointed sales and marketing teams lead to a lack of one voice

The sales and marketing operations are treated as different segments without interconnection between them. This creates much disruption in targeting the right audience and gaining prospective clients. Sales and marketing are two sides of the same coin, and they go hand in hand. However, the preferential treatment of both creates a sort of mismanagement while approaching clients and applying a localized strategy and communications with the same.

d) Lack of insights on prospects' behavior and connecting the dots

Each client is different from others, and it depends upon multiple factors like demography, industry, needs, etc. lack of insights on customer's buying capacity and trends may make efforts of the sales team less fruitful. The missing insights help in strategizing and analyzing the customer beforehand.

e) High spend on market outreach but no ROI visibility

The analysis of expenditure to returns is highly important as it gives a significant idea of ROI. The companies lack this mechanism, and hence they spend a lot on outreach programs without even prioritizing the spending efficiently. The clear visibility of ROI makes the companies come up with streamlined approaches and plans on expenditures.

f) Growing data protection laws limiting the reach out channels

There's no question that data can drive process efficiencies and spur revenue growth. However, it can also bring your company to its knees if you fail to protect your customers' data or respect your prospects' privacy. Growing concern over consumer privacy and the weaponization of user data prompted the enactment of sweeping regulations such as GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), which affects businesses who sell in Europe, and CCPA (California Consumer Privacy Act), which affects those who sell in California. Non-compliance to either of the two can lead to multimillion-dollar lawsuits.

Trends in Sales Transformation

Hunting in the dark never helps; cold calls are dead, and so the mass email marketing. The world is shifting towards personalization, value-based selling, and account-based marketing and all that with technology embedded.

i) Data-Driven Sales

Data has become the new sales fuel. Knowing your customer deeply and their behavior over time is critical to sales success. Companies are leveraging analytical tools, social media platforms, user personas, and secondary research to know the customer before they reach out to their potential prospects for the firsttime.

j) Relationship Beyond Revenues

Organizations are focusing on long term relationships as trusted advisors instead of one-time acquisition. Improving customer experience, nurturing more personalized relationships, and working as their extended team has become the key growth driver.

k) AI-Based Sales

AI has brought a paradigm shift nearly in all functions of the organization; Sales is no exception. From automatically reaching out to customers to smartly personalizing content to scoring your high potential leads to forecast your pipeline numbers – it does all, intelligently.



l) Account-Based Marketing (ABM)

Land and Expand is the new norm; the amount of investment that goes into sales function can be optimized through a targeted approach. Organizations are targeting their key customers through personalized campaigns and content. Engaging key accounts and helping them succeed in their journey is trending to drive more revenue from large accounts.

m) Success Based Models

The world is getting uncertain more and more, like never before. Customers wish to optimize their costs and reduce their operational risk of project delivery by opting for success-based fees models. Organizations are offering proof of concepts, followed by success-based fees models with defined KPIs of the project. While customers reduce the risk of delivery, organizations try to earn premiums with added % of success fees. – means a win-win model.



Solving the Sales Struggle

In today's integrated world, customers are in the driver's seat. Warranted by technology and equipped with more information than ever before, customers are shifting from being product and solution-focused to seeking value-laden experiences from start to finish. When customers engage with sales reps, they expect a smarter sales experience

one that is personalized, instant, and always on. With this ever-evolving and progressive dynamics, developing a marketing and sales plan becomes challenging. Researching and identifying the right mix of target audience, understanding the competitive position, messaging, branding, separating the business from the competition, and mapping out marketing mix becomes extremely crucial.

Therefore, solving this sale struggle is one of the most important things that an organization can do to ensure the success and sustainability of the business.

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★ Insights-Driven Sales

It has become pertinent to generate more business with fewer resources. So, there needs to be a pronounced leap forward in insight-led decision making. This necessitates accumulating, amalgamating, and leveraging information from a variety of sources, including internal data repositories, external databases, which tend to gauge the pulse of customer sentiment.

As per a study published in business wire:

Sales reps spend only 37% of time selling, according to research from InsideSales.com.

- Only 28 percent of sales reps follow a structured time management system.
- Only 37 percent of sales reps' time is spent on revenue-generating activities.
- Only 18 percent of sales reps' time is spent using their customer relationship management system (CRM).

Businesses can leverage recent advances in social media, mobile, analytics, and cloud (SMAC) to learn enough about their prospective clients and create differentiated experiences. For instance, Adobe Social and Adobe Media Optimizer can help you manage social content and activities across multiple social networks and profile pages. This will help the organization in connecting the dots between social interactions and business results.



★ Personalization

Personalization is changing the way the marketing and sales platform should look, which appeals to customers' unique interests. The rousing promise of personalization is not far off since personalization has been a top priority for marketers and sales representatives for some time now. Recent advances in data, technology, and analytics will soon allow marketers to grasp insight-driven decision making and leverage much more personal and individualistic experiences across channels, moments, and buying stages.

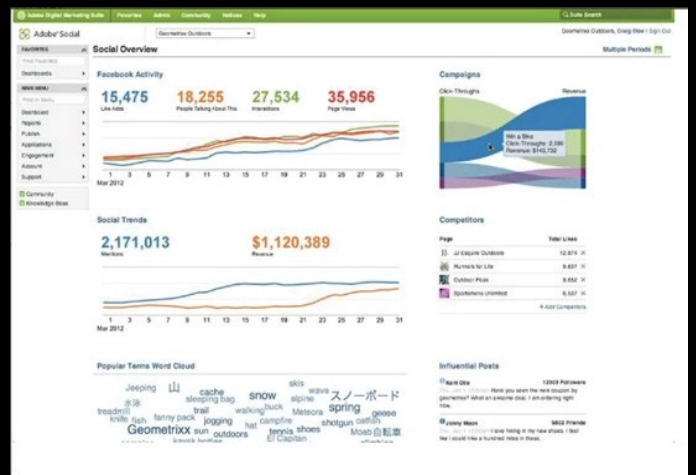


Exhibit 1: Adobe Social

Source: Adobe Stock



Empathy is the key attribute for personalization since it has the ability to relate to and understand another person's emotions, which is the sine qua non in building and nurturing relationships. By leveraging Adobe Experience Manager and Adobe Campaign, we can have personalized cross channel execution through email, web, social, mobile, or direct mail. And by using Adobe Audience Manager, the organizations can unlock the power of the data, both onsite and offsite, through strategic audience sharing and onsite personalization.

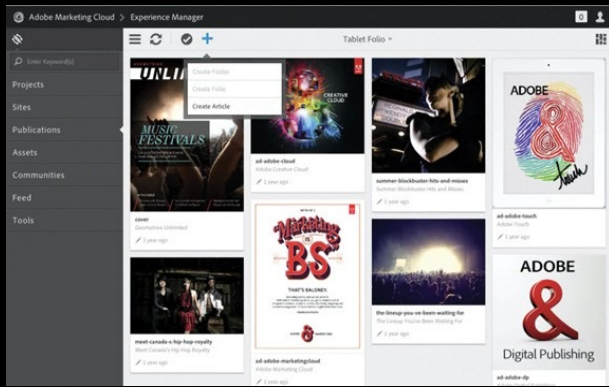


Exhibit 2: Adobe Experience Manager Source: Adobe Stock

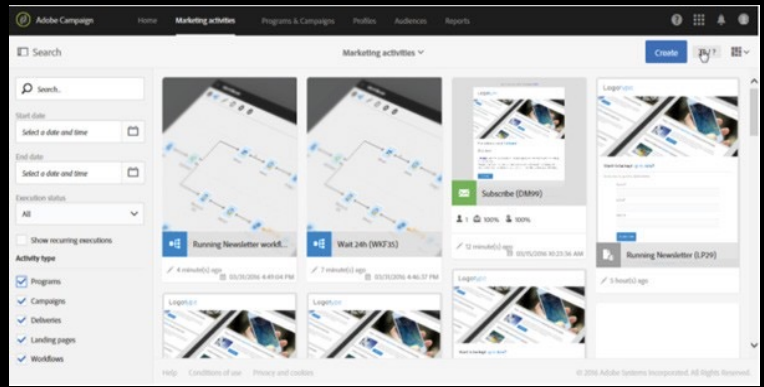


Exhibit 3: Adobe Campaign Source: Adobe Stock

★ Responsiveness

Customer responsiveness is key to customer success. It's a common psyche that customers, irrespective of individual or organization, want to feel like their needs are high at the list of important things. If one fails in actively fulfilling specific needs for their customers, they are leaving a door open to the competitors. Per common saying, if you don't take care of your customers, someone else will. The organizations have to weave a customer responsive business model, that counts customer centric action and build almost any strategy around it. It starts with engaging the prospects by providing them with value. This can be in the shape of expert advice, content, network connections, or anything specific they're looking for.

To manage customer communications, Adobe has products, namely, Adobe Campaign and Adobe Primetime, which help in lowering the cost of customer communication, at the same time, executing higher volume campaigns. They also understand and drive tune-in and loyal viewing behavior across digital and linear TV over time and help organizations drive maximum revenue from advertising sales in digital TV across screens.

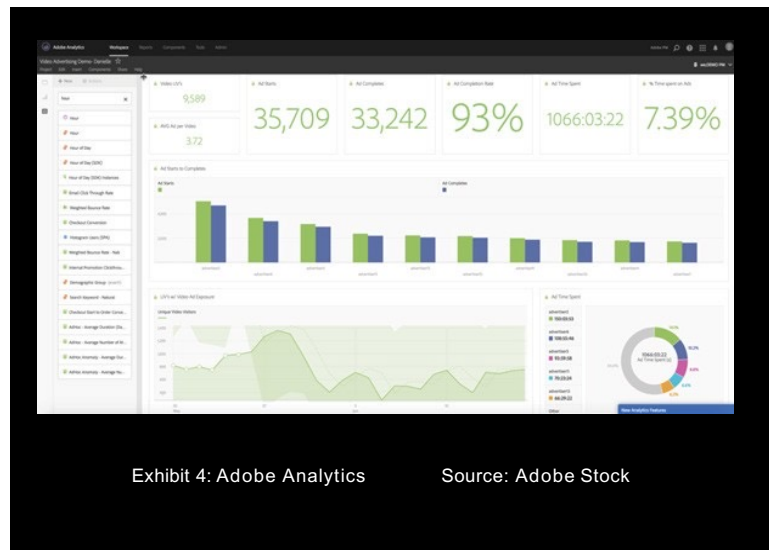
★ Long term Value than one-time ROI

To create a successful sales and marketing plan, the organization will first need to define their marketing strategies short-term and long-term. The company certainly need to plan for the future success of their business, but without a short-term strategy, the business may not be around long enough for those long-term strategies to come to fruition.



But short-term strategies should not be centered around one-time ROI. No longer is a sale a one-time “won and done” deal. The companies should focus on cultivating their incumbent relations rather than fishing a new prospect at a much higher cost. Since, with time and maturity of business relations, it becomes easy to perceive the pain points, prerequisites, and requirements of the client. With mutual trust, both organizations feel at ease to introduce overhauled processes and services. Thus, to help companies in cross-sell and up-sell, long term values generally harvest greater results.

Adobe Analytics can leverage its functional expertise in real-time web, social and mobile analytics, advanced ad hoc segmentation, and data integration with offline and third-party sources. This advancement in customer and marketing analytics can help organizations in predictive, attribution, and statistical capabilities to align marketing initiatives with business objectives.



★ Mix of organic and inorganic growth

It's a common dilemma with each organizational setup, whether to follow organic or inorganic growth. Organic growth can help avoid the high cost and risk of buying companies and the subsequent pain to assimilate their processes with the parent company. On the other hand, inorganic growth, unlike organic growth, is not too slow and avoids the risk of falling behind other companies that are aggressive acquirers. To find the right mix for defining the growth strategy, the team should focus on three different aspects; How can the organization stretch the definition of the target customer, add to the value proposition, and commercialize the best capabilities in new ways.



To unlock the correct mix of growth strategy, real-time data visualization, and pulse of the audience is required. Adobe Audience Manager can help organizations with real-time omnichannel audience activation, single view of users unifying crossdevice, offline, and digital data and analytics-driven audience optimization. This can further help companies with intelligent expand reach through a proportional amalgamation of growth strategies.

★ Expect sales reps to be SMEs in sales conversation

It is generally observed that if a salesperson is truly adept at their product or service, the discussion will be filled with quality content and not sales speak. Sales reps have a way of phrasing things that make them sound like an archetypal salesperson.

This virtually creates a barrier between the sales reps and the prospective buyer. If the sales reps want to be treated like an expert or a trusted advisor, then it is advisable to remove the sales speak from the meeting, and priority should be on the content.

This, in turn, becomes a great moment to express their views and thoughts about the marketplace, prospect's business, and even chance to share similar experiences from other clients.

Engaging in such personalized and knowledge exchange will lower barriers, and the prospect will share more about his business and challenges, thus proving additional chances for conversions.

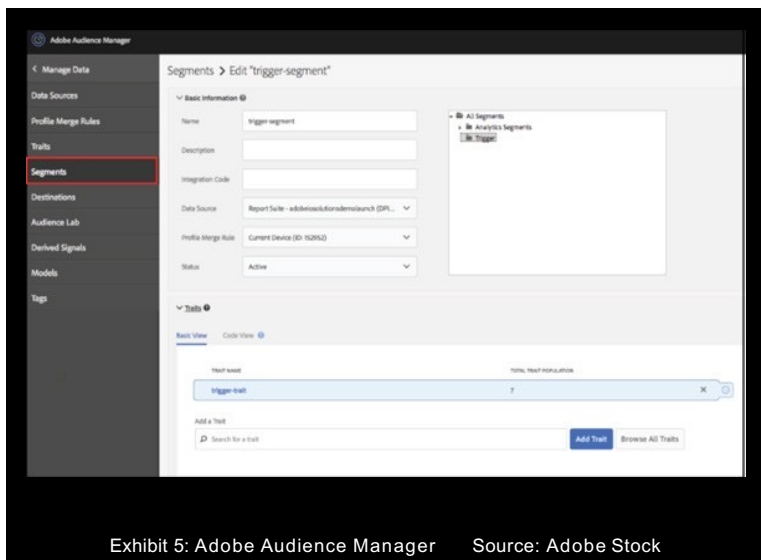
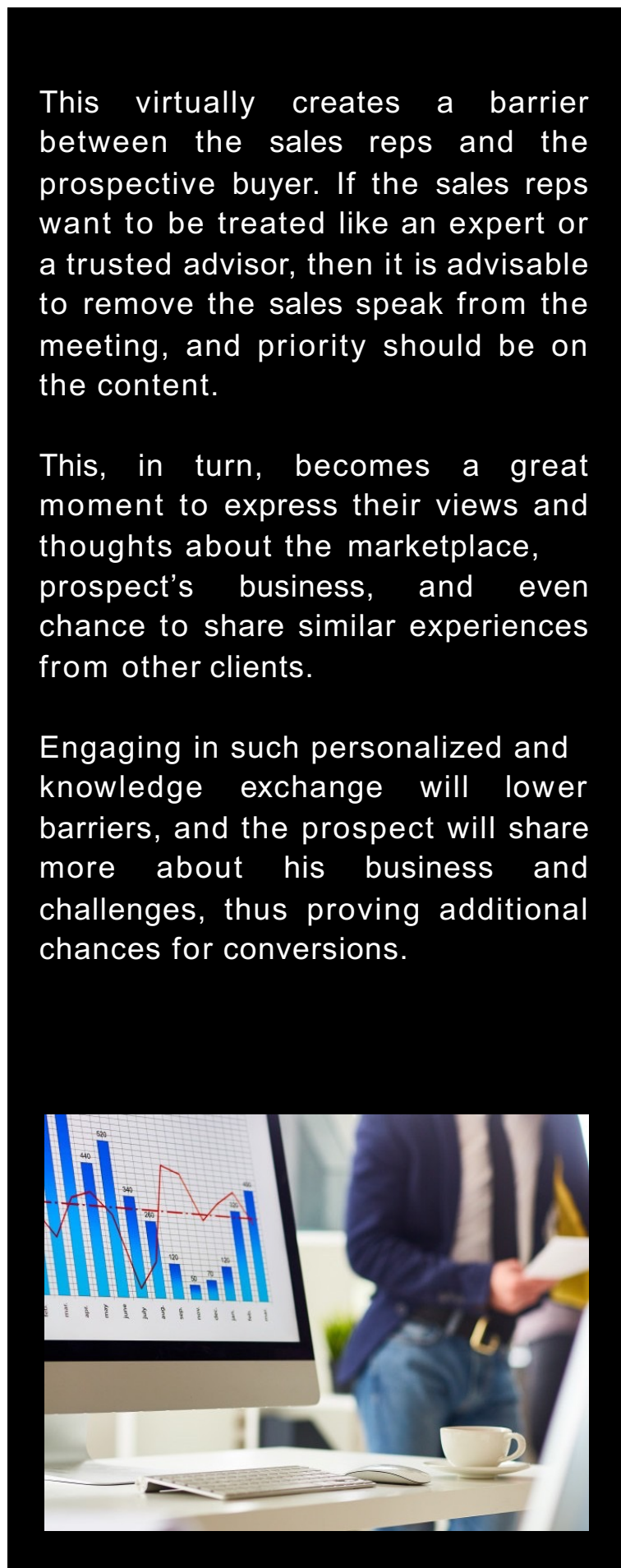


Exhibit 5: Adobe Audience Manager Source: Adobe Stock



This can be achieved with Adobe Target, which increases web and mobile site conversations and helps in customer engagement through valuable content. It can further help in grasping revenue generation through retargeting, remarketing, cross-sell, and upsell.

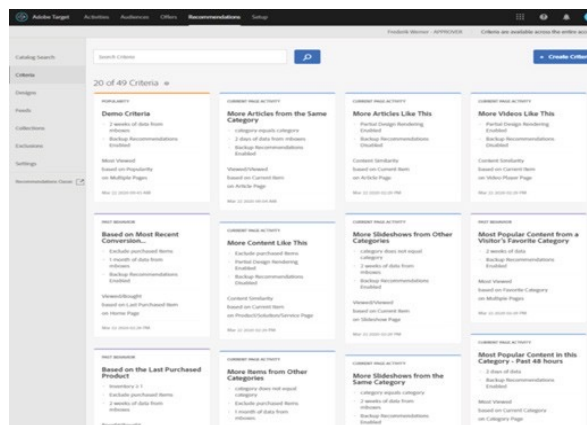


Exhibit 6: Adobe Target

Source: Adobe Stock

Sales Transformation Framework

If you're a marketer or a sales rep, one resource you don't have is "time"—time to customize, personalize, and perfect every last touchpoint before it reaches your audience. Customers expect highly relevant content that really shows you understand them, even if it requires all-nighters and working through weekends. Thus, no marketer or sales rep has enough hours in a week to do what customers expect. For this, you could invent a time machine, or you could explore Bids and Beyond's digital sales solutions. Our cutting-edge technology helps marketers plan, and sales reps engage and measure personalized customer journeys.

The solutions are power-packed with tools and features which are crafted by marketers for marketers. If you've got complex customer journeys to manage, you need tools to help you visualize what's going to happen at every step. Now you can try out every stage, channel, touchpoint to custom craft powerful experiences from acquisition to revenue through the customer lifecycle model.

BidsandBeyond framework addresses three stages of sales and marketing lifecycle – Customer Discovery – Customer Acquisition – Customer Experience.



Customer Discovery

Sales Signals - Leverage real time sales insights to understand consumer behaviour across channels

Customer Personas - Draw market segmentation and create customer personas through rule based targeting

Smart Ads - Automatically strategize and optimize your text and video ads to the relevant target audience with relevant content

Digital Enrollment - Display personalized and responsive forms to capture lead information

Social Selling - Manage social content across multiple channels and reach wider audience



Customer Acquisition

Lead Scoring - Based Upon sales insights, prioritize your leads automatically to invest efforts strategically

Personalization - Use AI and analytics to automatically display relevant content to what customers want to see

Targeted Campaigns - Run personalized and cross channel campaigns for specific markets

Account Based Marketing - Automatically prioritize key accounts, run customized content campaigns and monitor performance on dashboards



Customer Experience

Integrated Sales Cent-re
Leverage integrated sales applications from app. Creation to proposals to contracts to execution as automated workflow

Digital Proposals - Submit interactive web based, app based and video-based proposals for compelling storytelling

Digital Asset Management
Automatically and quickly source, adapt and deliver your assets across audiences and channels

Conversation Management
seamlessly manage customer communications, through bots, ticket management, auto answer of questions in database etc.

Exhibit 7: Digi Sales

Customer Discovery

How to digitize hunting of new prospects?

Customer discovery is the process needed to ensure that your time is not wasted on solutions that the market doesn't want. Like every good campaign, it all starts with a

plan. Our solutions make it easy to do all the thinking ahead of time, so your launch and workflow go smoothly. This may include a hypothesis that defines both the problem and the solution that your company is proposing.

★ **Sales Signal:** If figuring out “who the target is,” is a challenge, no problem. We help you seize crucial sales signal that the prospective customer leaves on different platforms, even if they are anonymous to understand certain consumer behavior. Once they become known, our digital solutions start listening for specific behavior like clicking a link on an email, filling out a form, or visiting a web page a certain number of times. This can further include sketching out a quick customer persona with detailed market segmentation, any prerequisites, and rule-based targeting.

★ **Smart Ad Campaign:** If you want to go deeper, paid media is built right in, so you can reach the exact right people in each account. You can search outside of your existing database to find your best targets. You have your amazing plan, here is where the fun really starts. Bids and Beyond has all the tools needed to delight your customers and get results. With a smart campaign, it is easy to connect with customers when where and how they want. You can also score leads, send emails, run marketing ops, and automate workflows with ease.

★ **Digital Enrollment:** Another major time saver is web personalization, which helps you be consistent and relevant across all your segments in digital touchpoints. You can personalize your web images, content, and offers in a fraction of the time. And with email marketing, you can extend your personalization even further because when you send out the right messages at the right time, your leads go warmer.

★ **Social Selling:** The insights are leveraged to achieve social selling by managing social content across multiple channels and reach a wider audience. And when you're ready to come face to face with customers at a live event online or in person, there are specialized tools to plan, scale and market events so that you can hear your attendance numbers.

★ **Digital Asset Management:** Bids and Beyond's digital solutions make it easy to spin up new events or programs by cloning a previous event, so you don't have to recreate every asset for every new program. Changing the content is as easy as changing what's known as the program tokens.

Customer On-Boarding

how to automate client's acquisition process?

The goal of the customer acquisition process is to create a systematic, sustainable acquisition strategy that can evolve with new trends and changes. It is important for businesses of any age and size. It allows businesses to make money to meet costs, pay employees, and reinvest in growth, and show evidence of traction for outside parties such as investors, partners, and influencers.

@ Sales and Marketing Alignment: Sales and marketing engineering is almost sine qua non because boosting revenue really is all about teamwork. So, with Bids and Beyond's digital solutions, it becomes easy to see marketing and sales as a bigger picture on a one-stop portal. Marketing sees sales engagement data, and Sales sees actionable marketing insights. It's a win-win. It enables sales reps to scale productivity and drive consistent engagement with lead insights, digital playbooks, and ~~pages~~ pre-approved by marketing. The sales reps don't need to rely heavily on the cold calling as they get a prioritized list of hot leads directly in

the CRM along with all the individual campaign activities.

@ Lead Scoring: You can have a lifecycle model move leads through funnel based on their score, which is affected by the buyer's interactions with all your channels, online and offline. The lifecycle model integrates with your CRM and listens for data value changes. For instance, if your lead is changed to an opportunity, in your CRM, they are moved to the opportunity stage in the lifecycle model. The digital platform has dedicated stages for lost, disqualified, and recycle leads.

@ Nurturing Through Personalization: By leveraging AI and analytics helps in automatically nurturing these leads and accounts through a combination of channels, such as personalized email, SMS, and direct mail over time. Lead scores are automatically updated based on these activities. If the lead doesn't convert with the end of this flow, they can be automatically placed in the next appropriate nurture program.

@ Targeted Campaigns: With smart and targeted campaigns, marketers can easily segment and target specific customer groups using a smart list. You can use a combination of triggers and filters to determine who makes up your list. For instance, you can target contacts who open your email, visit the website more than 4 times in a week, and also refining location by zip codes. Once the audience is defined, you can easily activate them into a specific campaign.

@ Account-Based Marketing (ABM): Use account-based marketing and account profiling to narrow down your choices to the

best accounts. It is automated, so you don't have to do the heavy lifting and focus on perfecting your strategy instead. It is perceived that ROI with ABM is more than 90% than other marketing initiatives since it enables the marketers and sales reps to monitor the activity of the leads and, subsequently, their performance on the dashboards.

@ Digital Proposal: To make sure that the proposal stands out from the crowd, one can add audio-video features to make it interactive, web-based, or an app-based digital proposal, so that message or content is communicated in the form of storytelling.

Customer Experience

How to enable seamless after sales experience?

The concept of customer experience may sound utopian or romantic, but anyone who banishes it as such is deplorably out of touch. It is the practice of scheming and responding to customer interactions to meet or exceed customer expectations and

thus, increase customer satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy. Customer experience has gained enormous importance since buyers are seeking input from peers and spending more time researching. Creating amazing customer experiences takes skill, but with Bids and Beyond's digital solutions, it doesn't need to take any turnkey.

Responsiveness: This can be ensured by frictionless buying journeys and enabling speedy self-service. The mainstay of a good buying experience is one that makes the process undemanding – and in B2B, this requirement takes on more meaning due to the complicated, non-linear internal processes. They have to cater to organizational policies, various stakeholders, and unclear budgeting and procurement processes.

On the other hand, they expect sellers to remove friction from the process by enabling their self-education journeys through relevant and easy to access online content that helps them manage their internal stakeholders. This should enable them to receive quotes faster and be able to manage contracting and ordering online.

Integrated Sales Center: The process doesn't stop even when your opportunity converts to a closed one. You can continue to upsell and cross-sell to them until they become the champion of your brand.

The lifecycle model gives great visibility in terms of how your leads are moving through the funnel, which allows you to focus on the right messaging at every stage of the buyer's journey.



Conversation Management: With the protective content feature, marketers can make sure that they are leading their customers down the optimal buyer journey. This content can take the form of a dialog box, an in-zone message, or a widget to ensure enhanced customer experience. It can be achieved through bots, ticket management, auto-answering questions in the database, etc.



Use Cases

★ Boosting the Lead

Management One of the major software companies was looking for a marketing solution that would enable them to better leverage their database to increase sales. They also needed a system that could integrate seamlessly with Microsoft Dynamics CRM. For this, they chose Salesforce to improve marketing productivity and drive new sales opportunities through a robust set of marketing automation capabilities. The major objectives they had were:

@ Maximize the existing lead database Simplify new lead generation with automation

@ Save time and improve Marketing productivity with automation

@ Increase opportunities through nurturing

@ Improve customer retention through increased engagement

★ Solution & Benefits

The company's typical sales cycle is several months long, and prior to Marketo, there wasn't a simple, automated way to keep prospects

engaged over the long buying cycle. But now, with Marketo, they can educate and inform prospects over the long-term. It also helps them ensure that leads don't fall through the cracks. With lead recycling, those not ready to buy can be further nurtured until they are ready to return to sales.

★ Simplified New Lead Generation with Automation:

Salesforce also enabled the company to leverage automation to increase new lead generation. With Salesforce, they can automatically qualify more prospects and quickly develop them into sales-ready leads. In addition, automated lead scoring helps the sales team prioritize follow-up activity based on multiple dimensions so they can pursue the most promising leads first. It also helped them increase productivity and efficiency through automation, generate more opportunities through prospect nurturing, better engage existing customers, and quickly and easily identify new prospects.



★ **Saved Time and Improved Marketing Productivity with Automation:** Prior to Salesforce, a simple email campaign would take two people a full two days to prepare and launch. The old process was very manual and required them to build an email list in the CRM, export data, cleanse the data, re-import data, and more. With Marketo's real-time synchronization to their Microsoft Dynamics CRM system, deeper automation capabilities, and easy to use campaign templates, it now takes one person less than 2 hours to create such campaigns.

★ **Improved Customer Retention through Increased Engagement:** Although the initial focus was on prospects, but after implementing Marketo, the company saw tremendous opportunities to more deeply engage their existing customer base. Their ability to use Marketo's automation capabilities to deepen their relationship with customers not only helps with retention but also provides new upsell/cross-sell opportunities that fuel revenue growth.

★ **Increased Opportunities through Nurturing:** The process of building relationships with qualified prospects, regardless of their timing to buy, is a critical part of the sales cycle. Marketo helped to create multiple nurturing programs that are based on segmentation and engage different types of prospects in a unique and therefore highly-relevant manner – something that wasn't possible with their previous marketing automation solution.



The Way Forward

The habitat, in which sales organizations operate today poses several new challenges, but also presents many opportunities. There are a bunch of new technologies, tools, and techniques available that if implemented judiciously offer great possibilities for decreasing sales cost, increasing sales reach, and driving differentiated experiences. Differentiated experiences at scale will require a comprehensive mix of process and technology capabilities, dexterous human resources, and a resolute, disciplined approach to execution. So where do you start? Bids and Beyond recommends three key steps to launch their digital sales transformations processes to nip their challenges.

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So where do you start? Bids and Beyond recommends three key steps to launch their digital sales transformations processes to nip their challenges.

Know Your Customer

First, the organisations should launch new efforts to understand their customer buying processes and sales and partner processes by conducting interviews, surveys, and field research through customer and partner advisory boards. They should invest their time to understand buyers internal processes as well as the sellers day-in-the-life to inform how they need to transform and define a vision for the interactions they want to create.

Refurbishing Operating Model

Secondly, they should seriously reconsider revisiting their operating models with a focus on bringing sales, marketing, and service closer together along with strategy and execution. For some organizations this means new organizational structures, while in others it means new cross-functional working groups with aligned goals, but the objective is clear – organizational silos are no longer acceptable.

Driving Tech-Savvy Talent Pool

Finally, they are changing talent models to build more agile and data-driven cultures that will drive the digital transformation in sales processes. This means changing talent profiles for existing roles and developing new roles. This involves recruiting more tech and data-savvy individuals comfortable with digital tools, but also sales teams that can engage with empathy, analyze root causes, and build solutions to create trustworthy partnerships with customers. Now you've got happy customers, higher sales, and more time under your hands. But proving the impact of all your hard work shouldn't be a whole lot of extra work.

Let's connect



Mohit | Partner
mohit@worxwide.com

Mudit | Manager – Growth & Marketing
mudit@worxwide.com
+91- 9742000951

W worxwide

worxwide.com