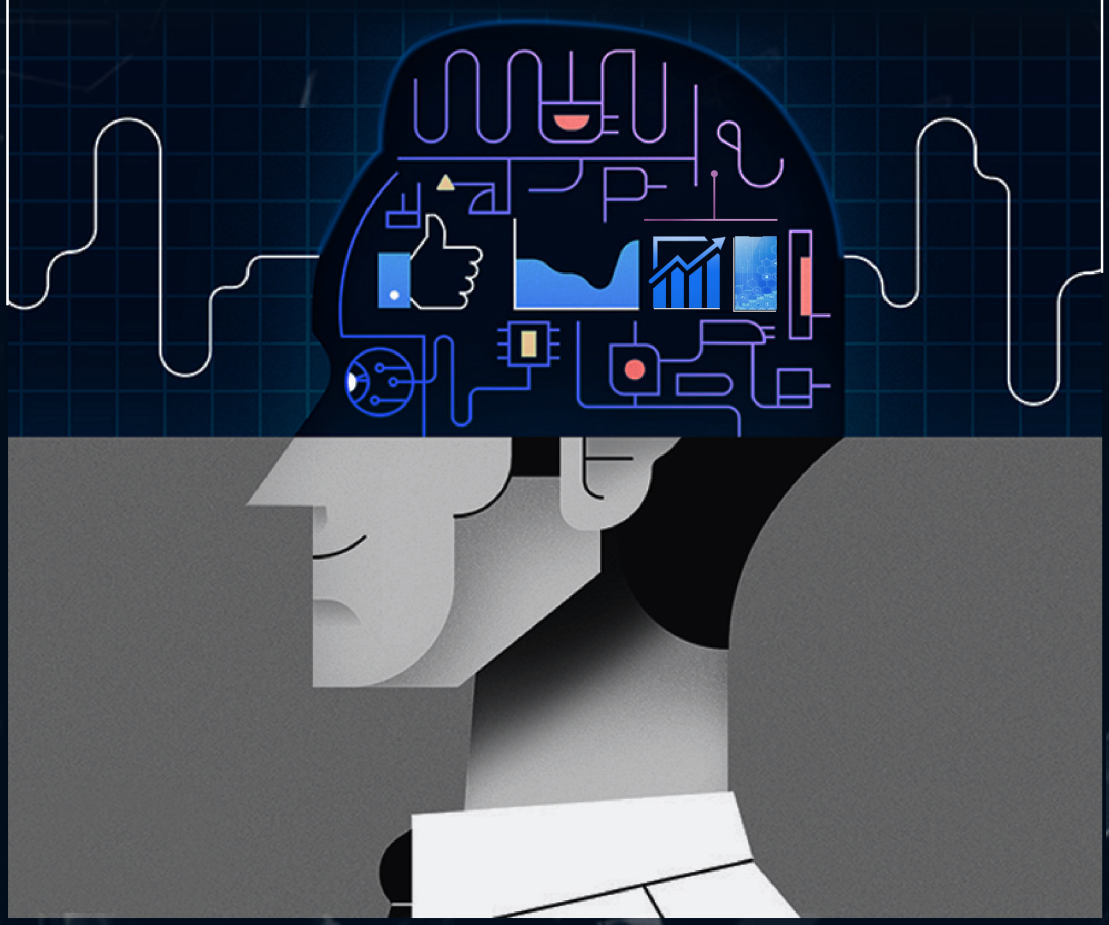
freshworks

Is your sales process HOLDING BACK your business growth?



At the crossroads of a new decade, a new-age sales leadership is fast emerging. It holds a fresh perspective that sales, always considered a function with hard performance metrics, is as much an art as a science.

Over the years, there has always been a single-minded focus on hard metrics, such as new account revenue, revenue attainment, and win rates. But what differentiates the successful sales leaders is one key mantra — what goes into the sales funnel is as important as what comes out of it.

This heightened importance of input variables as against an outcome-oriented view can be seen in three dramatic shifts happening in the sales environment today:

Prospect relationships trumping ROI

Context enabling great conversations

Rise of happiness quotient as a credible micro-goal

Together, they are the three key pillars required to build a high-performance sales team.

Prospect relationships trumping ROI

Changing buying patterns and fast-evolving technology has ushered sales into a new realm beyond the operational linearity.

With the twin forces of digital and data deluge knocking at your doors, your prospects are now able to see a clear distinction between ‘being sold to’ and ‘buying’. The former is interruptive and transactional, while the latter is about initiating a two-way relationship. According to Forrester study, 74% of business buyers today conduct extensive online research before arriving at a being ‘sold to’ stage. Due to this, your sales team is required to spend quality time on researching prospects, gathering insights about their role, business and their buying stage, and measure outreach results—all this to filter out low-quality opportunities and focus their attention on the ones most likely to close.

As a sales leader, you enable your salespeople to ace their pre-conversation research by investing in sales coaching and on a slew of enablement technologies. But according to Forbes, 64.8% of their time is spent doing non-revenue generating work? This arrangement needs a reset.

Screen time Vs. Face time. As a leader, ensure that you enable your sales team to do what they do best—sell.

Sales leaders who are successful in addressing this active/passive time investment eventually advance to developing a super-charged sales team and delivering outstanding business results. After all, nothing impacts revenue more than customer relationships based on trust.

Context enabling great conversations

‘Too much data, not enough use’ might even be the secret anthem of your sales team.

As we enter the post-digital era, most interactions between your prospects and your business will happen via various touchpoints that allow you to trace their footprints and get meaningful context. Each digital trail whispers the magical spell that could help your salespeople develop the right conversation with the right customer.

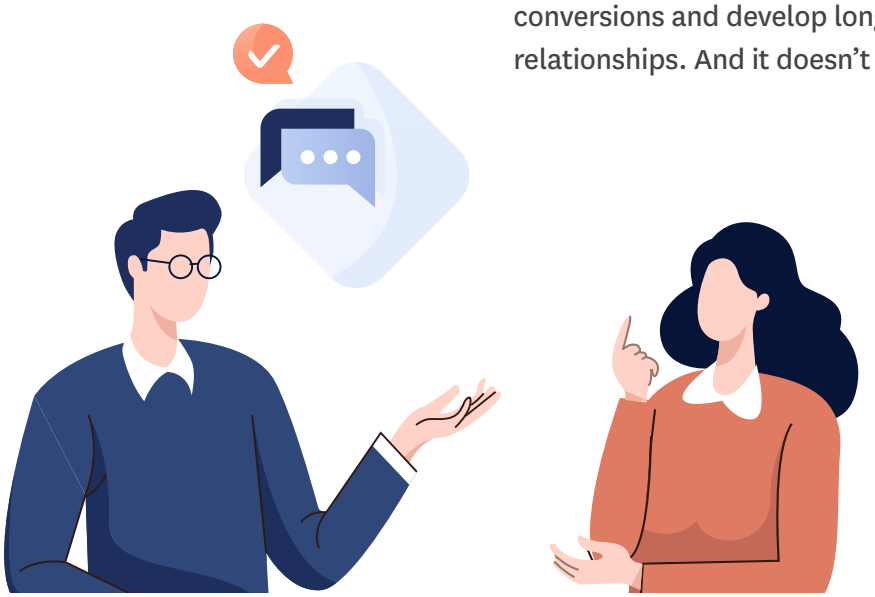
Behavioral data profiles of your prospects and customers around their interactions with your company—via the website, email, SMS, chat, call, and even your solution—can assist your salespeople in steering them swiftly from the consideration stage to a deal. But data alone is not sufficient; you need to have the right data and insights.

Two data types that can be most useful to your sales team are:

a) Prioritization data **b)** Urgency data

Prioritization data provides insights based on user interactions with your website and email, helping salespeople identify the right prospects. Urgency data provides real-time information, like desktop and mobile notifications, that help your salespeople take note and expedite the right response to speed-up the deal velocity.

Over the years, contextual data has become a key enabler of customer experience, helping salespeople across businesses to increase deal conversions and develop long-term customer relationships. And it doesn’t end there.



Rise of happiness quotient as a credible micro-goal

A happy sales team is a productive sales team

The sales environment is changing due to digital disruption, giving rise to two factors that ask more from the sales leaders of today:

Non-linear decision journeys of your prospects

Changing demographics of your sales team

Non-linear decision journeys of your prospects

Rather than following a linear path, most prospect journeys today go back and forth, always in danger of abandoning you mid-path. The presence of a buying committee within an account exacerbates the challenge for your salesperson. Despite this asymmetric advantage favoring prospects, your sales team, in every single interaction, tries their best to stay two steps ahead of their prospects. However, this often ends with an abandoned deal or the prospect going cold on them. This ambiguity levitates above them and builds a constant pressure.

Changing demographics of your sales team

Today, if you dont have a talent strategy to attract and retain your millennial sales team, you could lose the best talent to your competition. Millennials make for more than half the current workforce, and their peculiar traits demand some close attention. They seek a work environment that enables their growth, leaders who act as mentors, and technology that is adaptive and intuitive. For them, life is not about work-life balance, but rather work-life integration. One instance of expectations not being met, the whole engine could slow down.

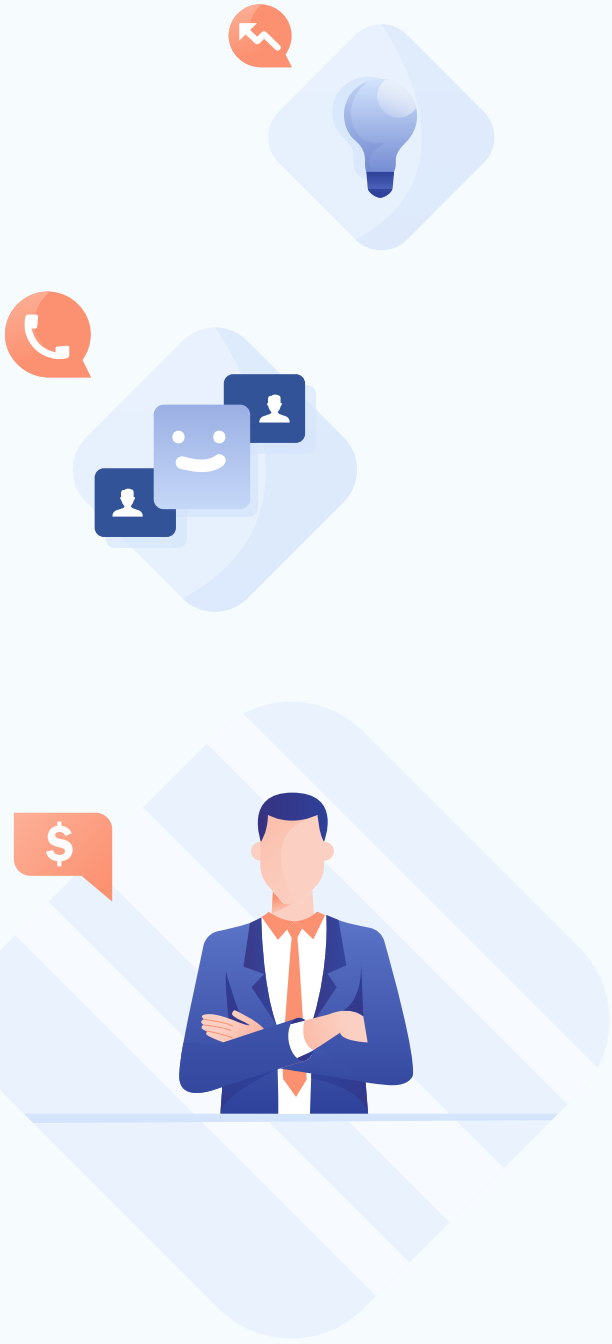
Isn’t this an HR issue?

Happiness quotient is important to not only retain salespeople but also boost their morale, and sales leaders often overlook it.

Two other pertinent questions that will ensure that your salespeople are happy are:

1. Are your salespeople spending most of their day doing their core job—selling?

2. As a decision-maker, are you investing in technology that listens to the latent needs of your salespeople?



Technology today has pervaded the sales environment more than ever. Your sales team views technology as a key ally which helps achieve their goals. These tools and automations make them more productive and smarter, and always has their back.

There is a new and updated alternative, each week, that promises to deliver even better. This leads to over-reliance on tools and technology, thereby impacting adoption and usage of business software.

Is your business software working for your sales team or is your sales team working for your business software?

Popular business software like CRM have become essential and synonymous with sales. But, have you ever heard your sales executive say that your CRM helped them close a deal? We bet not. In fact, a recent Forrester Consulting study commissioned by Freshworks, *Riding the Next Wave of SaaS CRM*, shows that a whopping 2 out of 3 businesses want to dump their CRM.

When you thought all is well with your most critical software, this comes as a surprise. CRMs were traditionally built for the most important person in the organization, the decision maker—and not for the salespeople, who are the end-users. These CRMs evolved to be large and clunky over time, with chock-full of features, requiring add-ons and integrations with other tools to make it actually work for your sales team. Over time, it made the entire CRM ecosystem extremely complex and difficult to use.

These legacy CRMs became akin to a multi-headed hydra that developed limbs and girdles of failing ROI and unjustified costs. Integrating them into your sales process started with your team learning their language, their rules and rituals, and adapting to their ways of seeing the business world.

So is your CRM working for your sales team or is your sales team working for your CRM?

The reality is that these large, clunky CRMs are so complex that instead of enabling your sales team to excel, they compel them to go back to using Excel.

You might ask, what are the essential pointers that will help you make an informed decision? What factors should you consider while choosing the Right CRM?

Easy to learn and use means faster time-to-value and lower barriers of adoption.

Disruption, downtime, or even low productivity is unacceptable for a modern organization such as yours. Taking a cloud-based SaaS approach, the Right CRM is virtually plug-and-play, and businesses are showing a distinct preference for this model. You need a CRM solution that requires minimum skill training and has a hassle-free no-pain installation.

So what does the Right CRM look like?

The Right CRM is built on the principles of democratic design, for both the emperor and the commoner in your organization. It does not merely help your teams manage their work, it also empowers them to carve out time to create long-term buyer-seller relationships, armed with capabilities that can help achieve their quota.

Why do we blame our sales teams for not using the CRM efficiently?

Your sales team wants to see the CRM more like a LEGO system that can reassemble itself as per their unique workflows, rather than a flat board game that's more of a pig in a poke. It appears that large, clunky CRM chieftains and legacy players have left businesses and their leaders with an extra mouth to feed instead of morphing into an additional salesperson for you and your team.

All-in-one solution: built-in functionalities to support sales

Businesses such as yours are looking for an effective CRM solution that goes beyond being a sales automation tool. You need your CRM to have built-in functionalities to support your sales teams without them having to juggle between multiple applications. It should integrate sales and customer support, while enabling data-driven optimization.

Personalized customer experience with a 360-degree view

According to Accenture's 'Personalization Pulse Check 2018*' report, 81% of the customers surveyed wanted businesses to understand them better and identify when to initiate contact and when not to pursue them.

Businesses such as yours need a CRM solution to create comprehensive records of customer interactions and effectively leverage that data to empower personalized communication. You'd want your CRM solution to respond to these, and to other customer needs through effective customer portfolio analysis. You'd also want enhanced value propositions for your customers and your operations.

Automation of routine tasks

Legacy CRM solutions have only added to the routine tasks of salespeople and this is a major cause of dissatisfaction. You need your CRM software to automate repetitive tasks reliably and painlessly, freeing up your salespeople to deliver exceptional and differentiated customer engagement.

In this age of collaboration and democratized decision-making within businesses, decision makers must evaluate their CRMs for their simplicity, affordability, self-reliance, and scalability. The questions you must ask to evaluate if the current CRM solution is the right one for your company are:

- What are the business goals I had wanted my existing CRM to achieve?
- Is my CRM taking me closer to my business objectives and goals?
- What business metrics is the CRM helping me improve?
- Does the CRM have all functionalities essential to boost my team's productivity?
- How well does the CRM integrated with my existing IT ecosystem?

From sales enablement to automation to compelling predictions and more, the advancement of AI is giving sales renewed vigor and vitality. The Right CRM blurs the line between futuristic and functional to adapt to the needs of your salespeople. It leaves us with a question for the sales leader—is your most critical business software empowering your sales team or is it black-mirroring them?

Freshworks provides customer engagement software to businesses of all sizes, making it easy for customer support, sales, and marketing professionals to communicate more effectively with customers and deliver moments of wow. Freshworks offers a full suite of SaaS (Software as a Service) products that create compelling customer experiences and lets businesses share a 360-degree view of relevant customer information internally.

Founded in October 2010, Freshworks Inc. is backed by Accel, Tiger Global Management, CapitalG, and Sequoia Capital India. Freshworks is a 1,800+ team headquartered in San Mateo, California, with global offices in India, UK, Australia, and Germany. The company's cloud-based suite is widely used by over 150,000 businesses around the world, including the NHS, Honda, Rightmove, Hugo Boss, Citizens Advice, Toshiba, and Cisco.

For more information, please visit *www.freshworks.com*.