A Comprehensive Guide to Essential Sales Tools

for B2B
Enterprises 2020

by REVENUEGRID

REVENUEGRID

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A word to salespeople:

Analysis paralysis. You might not recognize the term, but chances are it's lost you a deal or two at some point in your career. Buying is hard (and nowadays it's probably harder than selling).

First, a buyer needs to study the market to know what it has to offer. Then they have to go through seemingly endless product or service details to understand if it's a perfect fit for their company. Should we mention that most of the products share similar features?

Next, buyers have to see if the solution is within their budget. Finally, they should help members of the buying team reach consensus. Sometimes it's easier to leave things as they are...

When it comes to purchasing sales tools, there's a great risk of becoming paralyzed by the necessity to assess all the available options, sift through them and leave only the best ones.
This guide is here to help you navigate the sea of buying torture right into the safe harbor of the best sales tools of 2020.

In May 2020, we surveyed 27 remote sales teams from enterprises about the best sales software to use. Additionally, we asked the sales leaders for their opinions on purchasing tools during the recession. We also checked the G2Crowd reviews to make sure that the included tools were highly rated by the sales community.

B2B sales in 2020

Let's be frank. We didn't see a lot of significant changes to the B2B sales process in 2020.

The shift to remote work was hard but not revolutionary, as many sales teams had operated remotely before the lockdown. Furthermore, many experts had warned about the upcoming economic recession and resulting budget cuts long before the virus took over the world.

The level of uncertainty has indeed increased due to the shutdown of several industries like tourism. But regardless of the impact, we weren't forced to reimagine funnels or pipelines or introduce new steps to the selling process.

> **B2B sales are getting more difficult -** this trend has remained unchanged for over a decade.
>
> The crisis of 2020 only reinforced it, it wasn't the cause. Severe competition isn't to blame either.

77%

of B2B buyers state that their latest purchase was very complex

The true reasons are the changes that took place in the buying process back in the 2000s.

1. The digitalization of the buying journey and easy access to information about products, services, companies, and competitors
2. Greater responsibility for the purchase (both career and reputational)
3. An increase in the number of people on buying teams, especially in enterprises
4. The resistance of buyers to sales tactics, and reluctance to talk to salespeople (from negative past experiences)
5. Buyer's negative associations with a vendor after purchasing without complete data

To tackle these challenges efficiently, sales teams introduced sales specialization and began utilizing software tools.

Sales Automation 2020

For a long time, sales departments were reluctant to adopt digitalization and automation. Largely, it's because "the magic of sales" lies in the rep's unmatched ability to communicate with potential buyers face-to-face.

The best salespeople are distinguished speakers. They're passionate, confident, persistent, and stress-resistant. They're capable of enduring daily rejection from potential customers and handling inevitable objections.

Finally, they're great at finding the unique, individual value of their product or service for each customer, and using it to persuade them.

78%

of salespeople say that listening has an extreme or substantial impact on converting a prospect into a customer

71%

of salespeople say that building personal rapport has an extreme or substantial impact on converting a prospect into a customer

In short, the most critical tools for salespeople are personality traits - either inherent or trained. Obviously, no computer program can bestow such gifts upon a human being.
These traits are still necessary in 2020, but they aren't enough.

As we mentioned in the previous section, the B2B buying process is much longer and more data-driven than ever before. Buying decisions in organizations are the result of an uneasy consensus between multiple deal stakeholders who take various aspects of the purchase into consideration, from usability, to budget, to ROI, to reputational effect.

75%

of customers agree or strongly agree that their purchase involved people from a wide variety of roles, teams and locations

For salespeople, this means that they have to keep in mind a significant amount of data pertaining to one single potential customer for an extended period of time. Furthermore, they need to efficiently manage multiple workflows at once.

Sales teams often spend disproportionately large amounts of their time on low-return prospects, reducing the ROI of eventual deals and overlooking more profitable opportunities in their pipeline in the abundance of daily tasks.

82% **of decision-makers want the same experience for B2B purchases that they get when buying for themselves**

Digitalization brought new means of communication such as email, SMS and social networks. Leveraging them is in sales' best interests. Emails, for example, enable reps to reach out to a greater pool of potential clients at once. Unlike phone calls, they never catch you at a bad time.

On the other hand, decision-makers are harder to get in touch with. More communication channels means more contact attempts per day, and more data to process. Brain capacity, however, is still the same as it was before the internet.

54% **of high performing sales teams have increased their SDR headcount since 2015**

With prolonged sales cycles, specialization becomes a necessity rather than a privilege of a large budget. But it also increases the risk of data loss.

Finally, social distancing in 2020 forced the majority of sales teams to go digital whether they were ready or not. According to a McKinsey survey, approximately 90% of sales went remote in April 2020. Over 50% of respondents believed it was equally or more efficient than real-life sales. The companies that saw efficiency improvements might consider keeping the WFH format beyond the quarantine, especially considering the necessity to cut expenses.

This complex sales landscape calls for sales tools that will help teams process information promptly and without losses, run communications successfully across multiple channels, automate time-consuming, routine workflows and even give hints on how to sell better.

Tools for B2B sales by stage of the sales process

Lead Generation

Lead generation is the first stage in the sales process, in which the vendor acquires the contact data of potential buyers. Its goal is to create a database of high-quality leads and pass them on to SDRs for prospecting.
The importance of this stage can't be overestimated since the quality of leads impacts the whole pipeline.

Key challenges of lead generation:

1. Lead quality:
   - Data accuracy,
   - How current they are,
   - How closely they fit the Ideal Customer Profile
2. Data capture (the transition of data to your CRM)

A large enterprise can reach out to hundreds of leads per month. With manual input, data inaccuracy or loss is inevitable and can have a severe impact, both on the sales process and the company as a whole:

- Reputational damage
- Loss of time and money
- Waste of sales team effort and demotivation of reps
- Domain punishment as a result of email deliverability issues

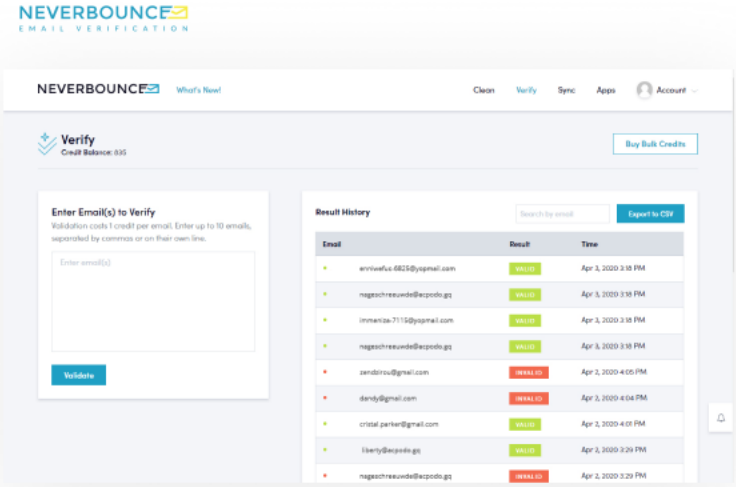
Leads can be generated manually. Individuals in charge of sales-search spend hours researching leads and adding them to the CRM, but software can do tedious work like this much more quickly.

Tools:

1 Contact database

Sales tools like LinkedIn Sales Navigator help sales teams acquire up-to-date and accurate data on decision-makers within certain companies. The data is collected from various open sources, such as LinkedIn profiles, official websites, and email signatures.

LinkedIn Sales Navigator



2 Email checker

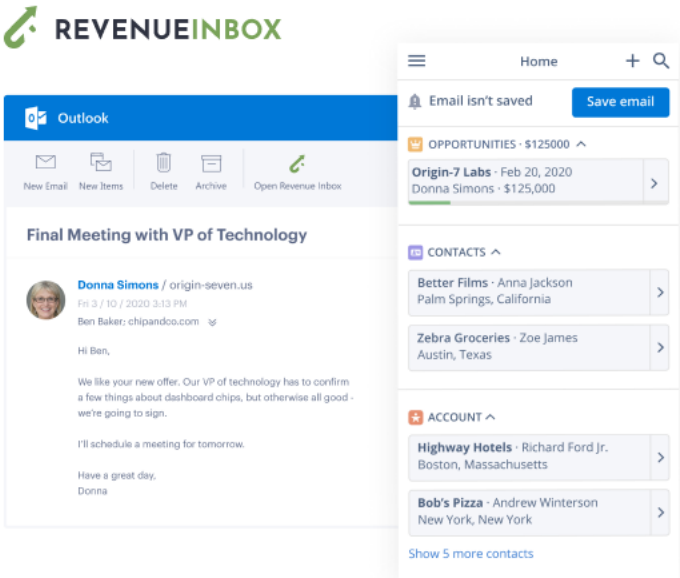
When generating leads, it is crucial to make sure that email addresses are correct. Otherwise, bounce rate will be high and it will compromise the sender's domain.

Neverbounce

3 Data Capture

Tools to transfer data from your Inbox to CRM and vice versa. On avarage, members of enterprise sales teams spend 10 hours per week on manual data entry. Data Capture tools complete these tasks automatically.

Revenue Inbox



Prospecting

At this stage, vendors reach out to potential buyers via multiple communication channels, including email, phone calls, voicemail, SMS, social networking websites, and direct mail. Most sales teams nowadays have a separate role for prospecting - SDR.

The key goal of this stage is to make initial contact with decision-makers in a company, get them interested in your solution, determine if they're a good fit, and pass them to sales managers. SDRs don't sell anything, they start business-to-business conversations and collect sales intel.

Four important aspects about an SDR's work in an enterprise:

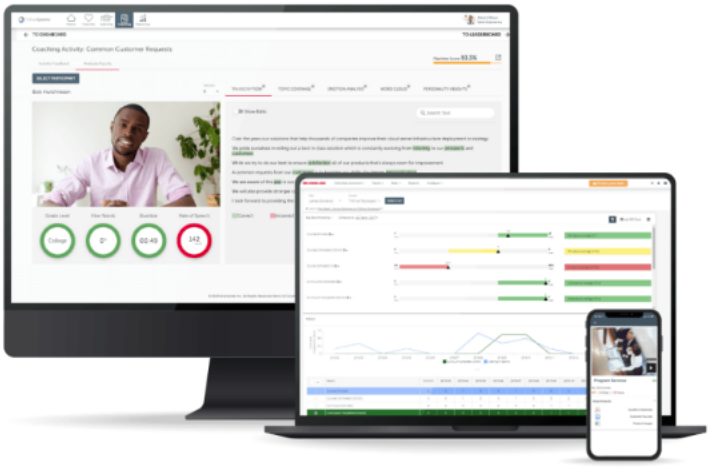
- They process an overwhelming amount of data and perform 300-400 tasks per day
- Reps have to work with multiple tools such as CRM, inbox, and Calendar, to name a few
- SDRs manage communications with multiple prospects in many channels at once
- SDRs often forget about follow-ups and miss opportunities

The main challenges of this stage are:

1. Onboarding and training issues
2. Reluctance to work in CRM
3. Writing copy efficiently (emails, SMS, phone scripts and messages)
4. Creating an optimal level of prospect engagement
5. Data loss when prospects are passed down the pipeline to sales managers

Tools for this stage:

BRAINSHARK

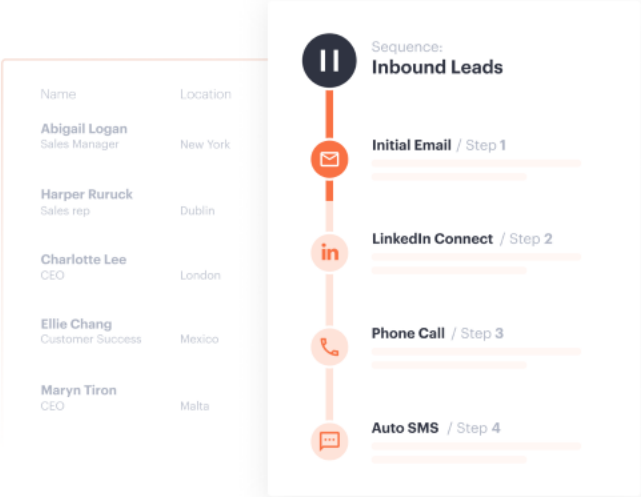


1 SDR onboarding and training software

Use it to shorten ramp time and help your reps succeed in their role.

Brainshark

REVENUEENGAGE



2 Sales Engagement software

It enables sales teams to manage outreach more efficiently, share best practices, and monitor reps' work.

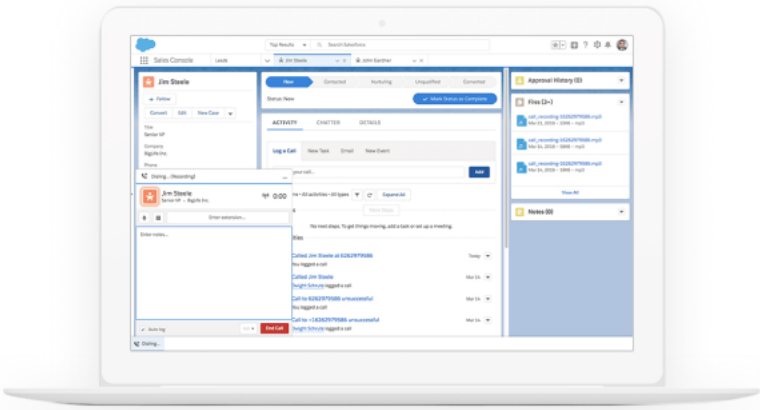
Revenue Engage

3 Dialers

They save up to 30 seconds per lead and prevent mistakes that are inevitable in the case of manual dialing.

Salesforce Lightning Dialer

salesforce



Tools for this stage:

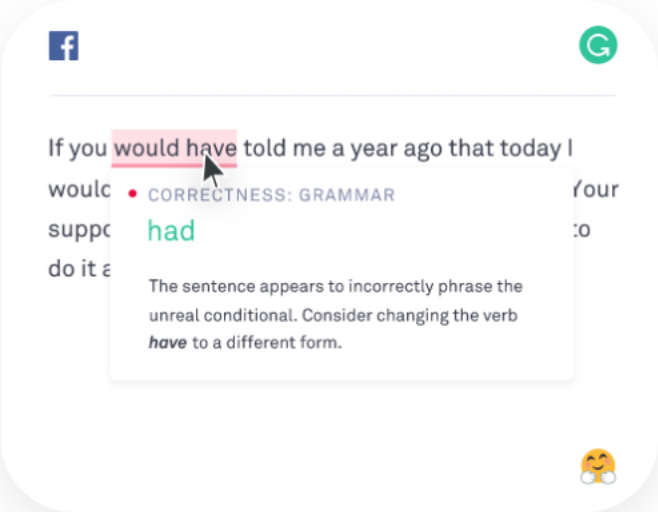
vidyard

4 Email video tool

Standing out in C-levels' inboxes is challenging. With this software, a rep can create a personalized video and embed it in their email.

Vidyard

grammarly



5 Spellchecker

Imagine you've written the perfect email: personalized and nailing a prospect's pain points. Nothing can ruin it more easily than a grammar mistake or typo.

Grammarly

Discovery

This is the first stage where your sales reps meet potential buyers. There are two types of discovery based on what you sell: a sales pitch and a product demo. It's also the time to do sales intel and ask as many questions about the customer as possible.

> **Reps pursue several goals:**
>
> - They need to present the vendor's product/service.
> - They try to get the buyers to the next stage of the sales process.
> - Salespeople learn more about the buyer (unique challenges, needs, goals, work process, etc.) in order to craft an individual proposal and present it at the next stage

The challenges of the discovery stage:

1. Closing the gap between the most and least successful reps' performance
2. Creating efficient pitches and demos
3. Determining best practices and implementing them within the team
4. Knowing the right questions to ask potential customers
5. Setting adequate KPIs and reporting. Pipeline visibility
6. Show-up rates
7. Technical issues during video calls
4. Providing sales materials and other content to educate your buyers

Tools:

1 Video conferencing software

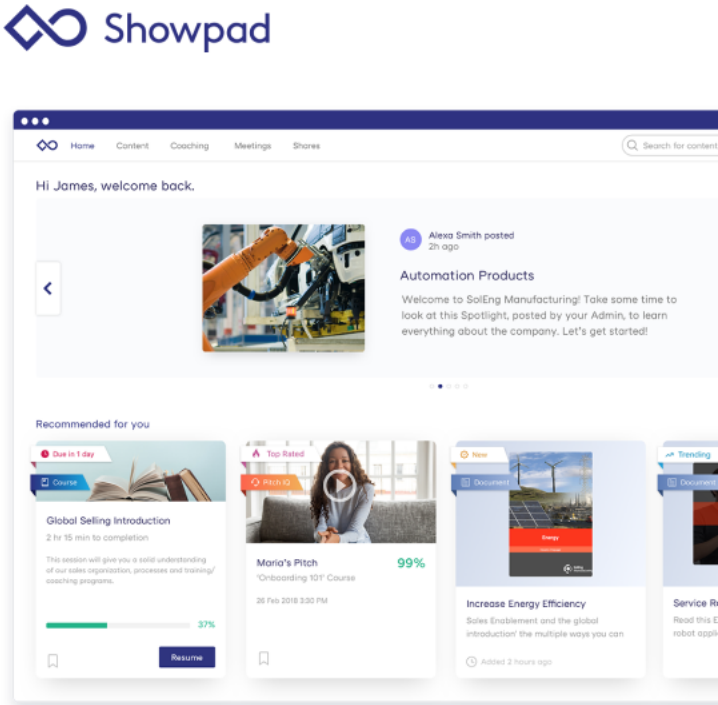
After the lockdown, people still perceive face-to-face social contact as potentially dangerous (which is a feeling that will most likely linger). Still, non-verbal communication remains a huge source of information about our interlocutors. That's what makes these tools crucial for the sales process.

Zoom

2 Sales&Marketing Content hubs

An informed buying decision should be the ultimate goal of any seller. The times of pushing sales deals down the throat of potential customers died with the rise of the Internet and the data accessibility that came with it. Furthermore, with the economic recession, buyers will be more picky and cautious. Salespeople need to augment their demos and pitches with great content that educates buyers and guides them through their stressful buying journey. Unfortunately, in many organizations, a divide remains between marketing teams that develop content and the sales teams that need it. Content hubs help bridge the gap.

Showpad Content



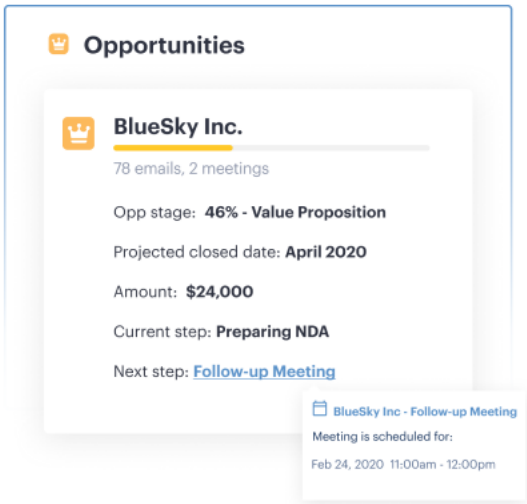
Tools:

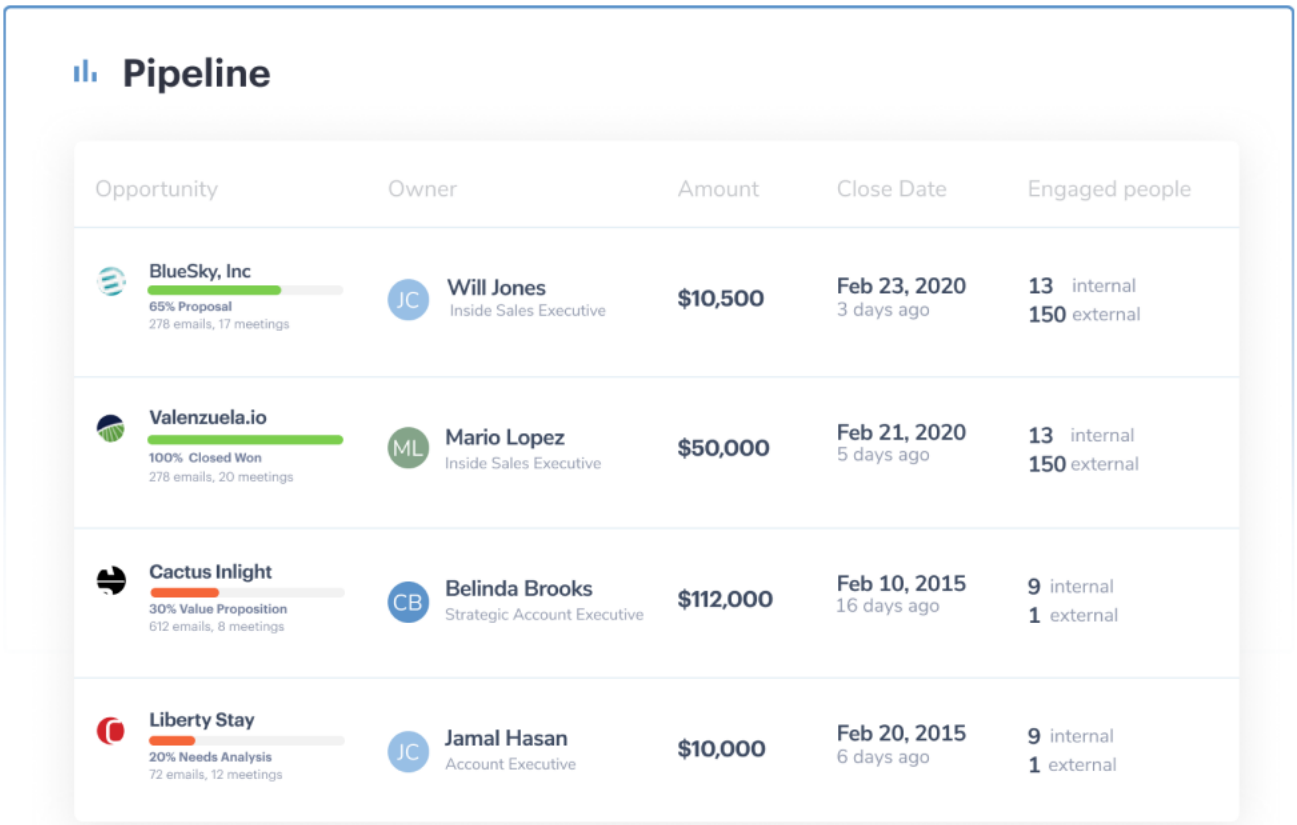
3 Sales enablement platforms

This software helps teams monitor their pipeline, set goals, automate routine tasks and obtain notifications on key events.

Revenue Guide

REVENUEGUIDE





Negotiations & Proposal

Remember the “magic of sales” we talked about in the Sales Automation 2020 section?
We’ve finally reached the stage that depends more on the communication skills of a rep than anything else.

That’s why, similar to the Discovery stage, the Negotiations and Proposal stage requires a good video conferencing tool that will provide a place for salespeople and buying teams to discuss the terms of a purchase in detail. However, salespeople shouldn’t be the only ones contributing to this stage.

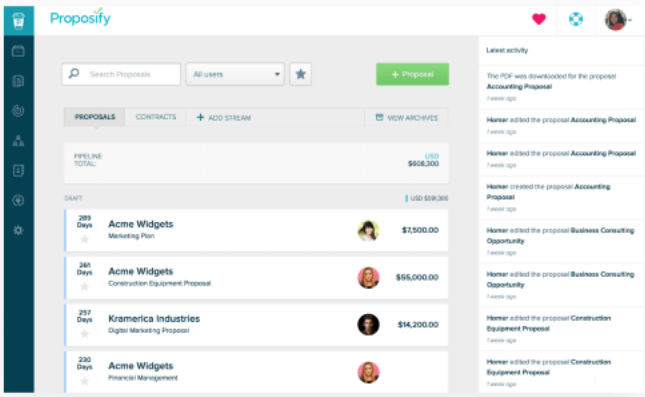
Usually, B2B enterprises sell complex products or services that are customized to fit the individual needs of a certain buyer. That’s why it’s important to collaborate closely with your product team at this stage to tailor a proposal. More often than not, potential customers will require amendments to the initial proposal, involving a lot of back-and-forth multilateral communications.

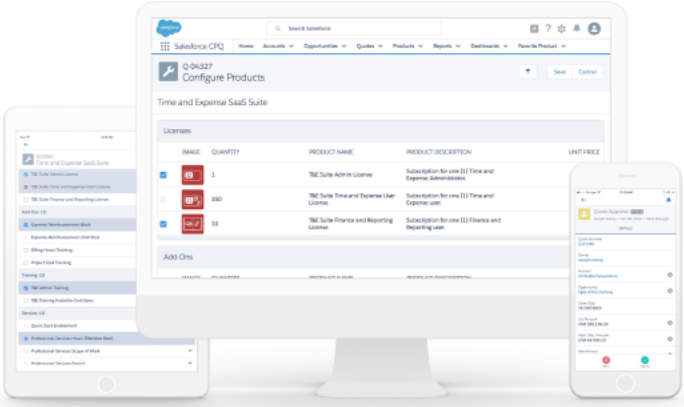
We suggest using tools that facilitate the process:

1 Proposal Tool

These tools help various departments in company colaborate on a sales proposal.

Proposify





2 Configure Price Quote Software

Use it to collaborate on your product configurations and their prices in real time.

Salesforce CPQ

Closing

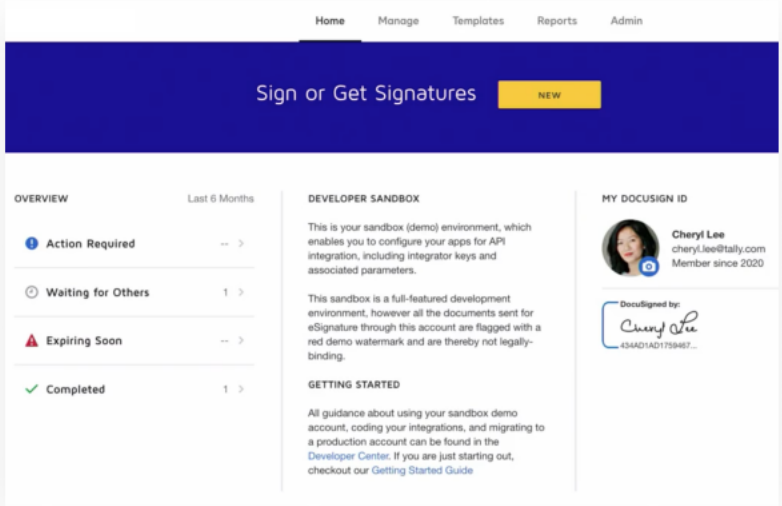
Finally! The last step on the way to your goal. At this point, little depends on sales or any other person in the vendor's team. They've done everything they can to make it happen. Now it's up to the buyer to sign the contract.

There's one tool

1 E-signing software

These tools are used to sign agreements online.

DocuSign



Many stages. One solution

Though beneficial, the adoption and use of sales automation provides new challenges to a sales team. Juggling multiple tools puts more on a sales team's plate.

That's where Revenue Grid comes in. It's a sophisticated solution for large organizations with multi-level sales teams. The platform enables seamless integration between the most essential tools, such as CRM, Inbox and Calendar, and helps sales team perform better at virtually every stage of the sales process.

Here's how:

1. Lead Generation

- Capture data from your inbox easily and automatically create leads in your CRM.
- Leverage your network to get warm introductions instead of buying contact data from a platform.

2. Prospecting

- Your CRM, inbox and calendar are fully integrated, which means your data is automatically captured and/or updated inside of each tool.
- Create multi-step sequences, run multichannel outreach, and get notifications on the next steps you should take.
- Monitor the engagement level of your prospects and receive notifications when they interact with your emails or links.
- Monitor the work of your reps. Share successful practices across your team and eliminate practices that don't work.

3. Discovery

- Increase your show-up rate with smart automated follow-ups to your prospects
- Update your CRM easily during sales pitches or demos

4. Negotiations & Proposal

- Analyse the level of engagement with potential clients
- Stay up to date on each deal's probability of closing
- See how much time each member of the selling team invests in each account
- Compare engagement between accounts for different tactics, teams, and reps
- Be certain that each deal remains ROI-positive for time and resources spent
- Get notifications whenever you haven't interacted with an account for a certain period of time

5. Closing

Implement sales playbooks and make it easy for your team to take the best next step toward closing

Conclusion

The sales process was slowly evolving throughout the decade prior to the 2020 crisis. Many enterprises were reluctant to adopt new sales software for a variety of reasons—the complexity and time-costs involved in adoption and a fear of wasted resources in the case of investing in less-than-ideal tools primary among them.

The absence of automation was compensated with person-hours. However, the great 2020 lockdown made such compensation impossible. Offline channels of lead generation and sales communication were cut (no more conferences, no more meetings over a cup of coffee to talk about the deal, no more flights for face-to-face negotiations with important accounts).

All your sales rep has now is a PC in a house full of screaming kids, a cup of very black coffee, a white office shirt, and tons of patience.

To help her or him to meet these new challenges and keep up with new trends, sales organizations have to rebuild the way they sell. They need to come up with new roles and new methodologies, updated workflows, and software.

Luckily, the market for sales tools has much to offer. Modern software can help automate daily workflows and provide more time to focus on the key goal of any sales team - communication with potential buyers.

Tools for B2B sales by stage of the sales process

Lead Generation

- Contact Database
- Email Checker
- Data Capture

Prospecting

- SDR Onboarding and Training
- Sales Engagement Platform
- Dialer
- Email Video Tool
- Spellchecker

Discovery

- Video conferencing
- Sales&Marketing Content hubs
- Sales enablement

Negotiations & Proposal

- Sales Proposal
- Configure Price Quote

Closing

DocuSign

E-signing

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