Secrets of the
Most Productive
Salespeople

**BLAZE YOUR TRAIL TO
THE TOP OF THE BOARD.**

salesforce

Introduction

When it comes to self-motivation and drive, salespeople have it in spades. It's in your DNA to push a bit harder each day to make that last call or log those final critical activities to ensure you boost results quarter after quarter. That's why the best sales reps are always on the hunt for new ways to work, not just harder, but smarter, too.

Consider that the average sales person only spends about one-third of his or her day selling. The other 66% of the time is mostly eaten up by research, admin, and reporting tasks. Sound familiar? It's no wonder that demand is high for new tips and better tools to supercharge productivity and help you sell more, faster.

In this e-book, we share advice from trailblazing sales leaders on the best ways to improve productivity and collaboration. Read on to find out how you can maximize time spent selling and focus on what matters most: connecting with your customers.

GET EMPOWERED TO SELL FASTER

Start your day off smart –
Map out your path to success.

The most successful salespeople don't let the day happen to them; they show the day who's boss. To close more deals and beat your quota, map out exactly where you want your day to take you. Think of it as your trail to achieve your daily goals, from the first steps you take each morning to wrapping up an uber-productive afternoon.

Set your morning in motion.

The first thing you should include in your list of daily must do's is to get enough sleep. According to sleep expert Daniel Kripke, 6.5–7.5 hours of sleep is the ideal amount each night. Your individual needs may vary, but research says this is the range that allows us to stay alert and productive.

Once you've logged your Zzzzs, it's time to get amped up and sell. Many successful reps start off their mornings with exercise to boost their energy, attention, and stamina levels. According to recent research, people who exercise during the workday were 23% more productive than on those days when they did not exercise. Another study found that after just 30 minutes of mild physical activity, subjects could complete a cognitive test faster than they could before exercising.

So consider hitting the trail for a morning jog, riding your bike to the office, or just walking your dog around the block a few times before you leave for work. Studies show it really will help you sustain your momentum throughout the day, from the moment you open your laptop to your last sales call.

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Keep up the pace.

Most people can only concentrate for 90 minutes on a given task before their mind begins to wander and productivity wanes. It might sound counterintuitive, but the best way to stay alert and efficient is to take a break every 1.5 hours. In fact, underperforming salespeople are 1.5x more likely than high performers to report a lack of "down time" in an average week.

Schedule breaks between meetings or try setting a timer on your phone or smartwatch to remind yourself to step away from your desk. Doing so will help you refocus and get that second, third, or fourth wind of productivity you need to blaze through the rest of your day. Another tip from the sales pros: consider testing 90-minute work cycles versus longer or shorter blocks. Everyone is different. The trick is to find the formula that works best for you.

It can be tough to stay focused if you're hungry! Your body is an engine that needs fuel to keep running. But make sure you give it the high-octane kind if you want to be your best. A busy workday isn't the ideal time for a deep-dish pizza lunch (or a beer, but hopefully that's obvious). Check out these tips for healthy eating, and aim to regularly include protein, fiber, and plenty of water to stay hydrated and alert.

Last but not least, spend the last few minutes of your day mapping out your plan for tomorrow. Top sales performers swear by it. Jotting down a prioritized task list gives you a clear vision of your path forward, so you can start the next day's journey at full speed.

"You'll never waste more time than attempting a task that is neither urgent nor interesting, even if it's a top 'priority.' And you'll never do anything as well as something that you're actually interested in doing. Trust me on this one. ... Follow your energy."

JASON JORDAN, PARTNER AT VANTAGE POINT PERFORMANCE

How high-performing salespeople sell smarter, faster.

Looking to take your productivity even further? We combed through performance patterns and trends from over 3,100 global sales professionals to bring you insights into the tools and techniques that today's top-performing sales teams say are critical to their success.
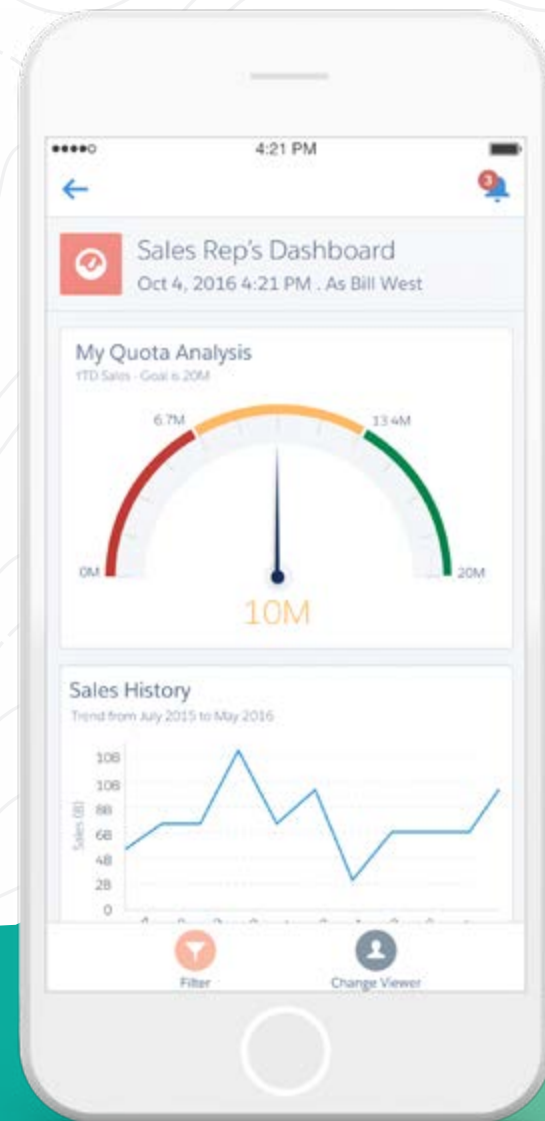
SECOND ANNUAL

State of Sales

Insights and trends from over 3,100 global sales trailblazers

Stay productive on the go.

Don't leave your sales behind when you hit the trail. It's more important than ever to have the mobile tools you need to access customer information in the moment, so you can work anywhere, from any device.

Set yourself up for on-the-road success.

Salespeople are on the road a lot, often enough that most consider their "office" to be anywhere they are. In fact, **72%** of high-performing salespeople say that being able to run sales activities on their phone is very important to their sales process. And in order to make the most of their time spent on the go, the best reps know how to configure their smartphone – and their day – so they can optimize every minute.

The first tip is to make sure you download important documents, maps, and presentations for offline use. Connectivity can be unreliable (as any hotel guest or conference attendee knows), and you never want to be caught unprepared. Some of the **most popular sales apps** are also available offline – so be sure to double-check beforehand to make sure you're covered.

When gearing up for a long plane ride, make sure you have your favorite heads-down-and-focus playlists on hand for those flights when you end up sitting next to a chatty neighbor or an unhappy baby. Download a few **industry podcasts** so you can learn something new while you're waiting in traffic or for a meeting to start. Also consider investing in a mobile SIM card from a different service provider than your usual carrier, in case of a dead zone. And don't forget to become very familiar with your phone's "do not disturb" features. The last thing you want to do is derail your closing meeting with a buzz or ringtone.
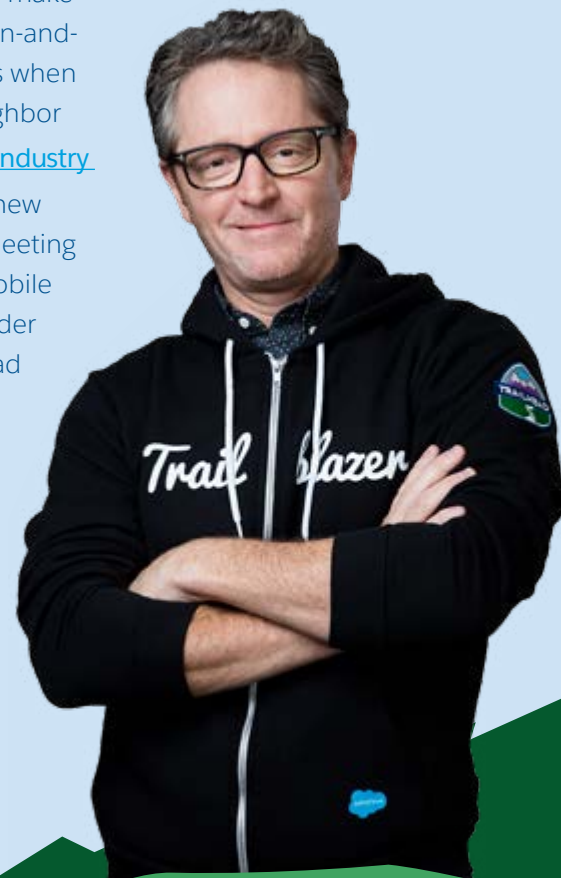
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Making modern design accessible.

Design Within Reach (DWR) makes authentic modern design accessible by offering iconic furniture designs (think Eames and Noguchi) that are stylish and built to last a lifetime.

Early on, company leaders realized that consumer expectations were changing rapidly. Customers were already doing most of their shopping and buying on their mobile devices, and to stay competitive DWR needed to offer a more seamless, personalized experience. That meant integrating systems so sales and service reps could instantly show presentations, place orders, or update information from any device, anywhere they found themselves assisting a customer. Discover how Salesforce helped DWR go mobile overnight and transform its customer experience.

WATCH THE VIDEO

Conquer small but mighty time wasters.

Often, it's the smallest time wasters that eat up most of your day. To take control of your productivity, you must first take control of your time. That means eliminating those seemingly benign, insignificant tasks that keep you from making that phone call or sending that important email, so you can focus your energy on connecting with your customers in a way that will actually move the needle.

Track your time.

Research shows that 41% of salespeople say they spend too much time on administrative tasks in an average week. Are you one of them? If so, consider tracking your activities for a few days to get a view of of the tasks on which you're spending the most time. Then compare that to where you think you should be spending the most time. How long does it really take to research a lead, send an email, or check LinkedIn? There are plenty of apps out there that can help you track just how many hours and minutes you spend on various activities. Test one out to pinpoint specific ways you can start managing your time better – the results might surprise you.

A few helpful tips to start pruning out those little time wasters: Schedule 20-minute meetings instead of 30, check your email only at preset times, and mind the clock. For example, if you wanted a task to take you 45 minutes but it's dragging into an hour, move on to something else and return to it later with fresh eyes and renewed energy.

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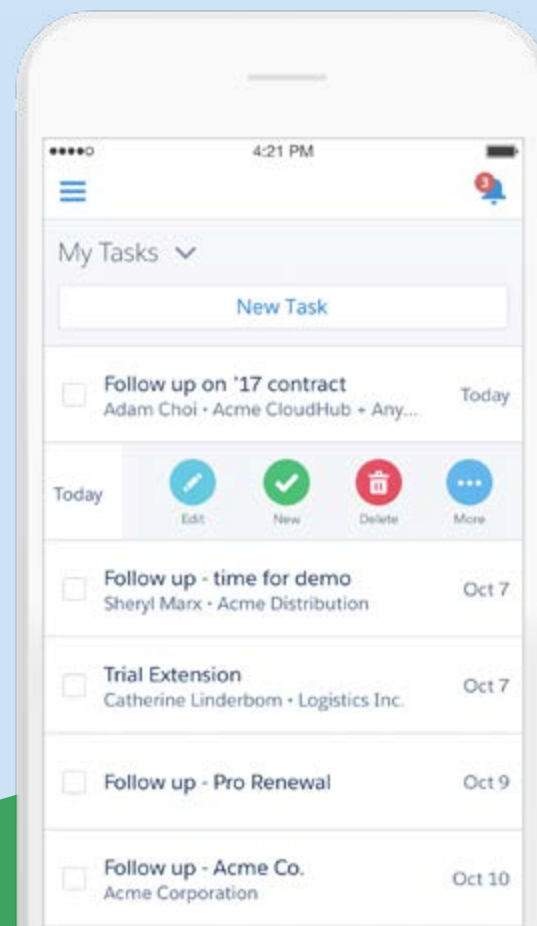
"Salespeople try to be more productive in myriad ways: Get up to speed faster on product updates, integrate their CRM with their email, buy a faster laptop, or upgrade to the latest technology. These approaches are fine and can definitely boost performance. But the biggest time waster of them all is personal disorganization. If you don't have good workflow and personal time-management systems, you'll waste hours each day fiddling around with your emails, to-do lists, pending items, and incoming information. And you often don't know you don't know how to improve until someone shows you a better way."

LAURA STACK, AWARD-WINNING PRODUCTIVITY SPEAKER AND BEST-SELLING AUTHOR

Blaze new trails by selling the way you want to.

If you really want to sell smarter and faster, you need to be able to sell the way you want to – finding and following the process that best suits your company's unique needs. No two organizations work in exactly the same way, so why should you have to conform to a one-size-fits-all sales process? Yet that's exactly how most selling tools work today.

Luckily, there are solutions out there that will let you be you. Flexible cloud technology tools now let you chart your own course with drag-and-drop workflows and adjustable dashboard views. So you can spend less time trying to work around a clunky sales process and more time closing deals.

Learn from the best. Sell like the best.

Looking for more exclusive tips and wisdom from proven sales leaders? Quotable is a weekly online magazine featuring helpful, thought-provoking, and entertaining articles written by closers, for closers. Sign up for our free newsletter to get insights sent right to your inbox.
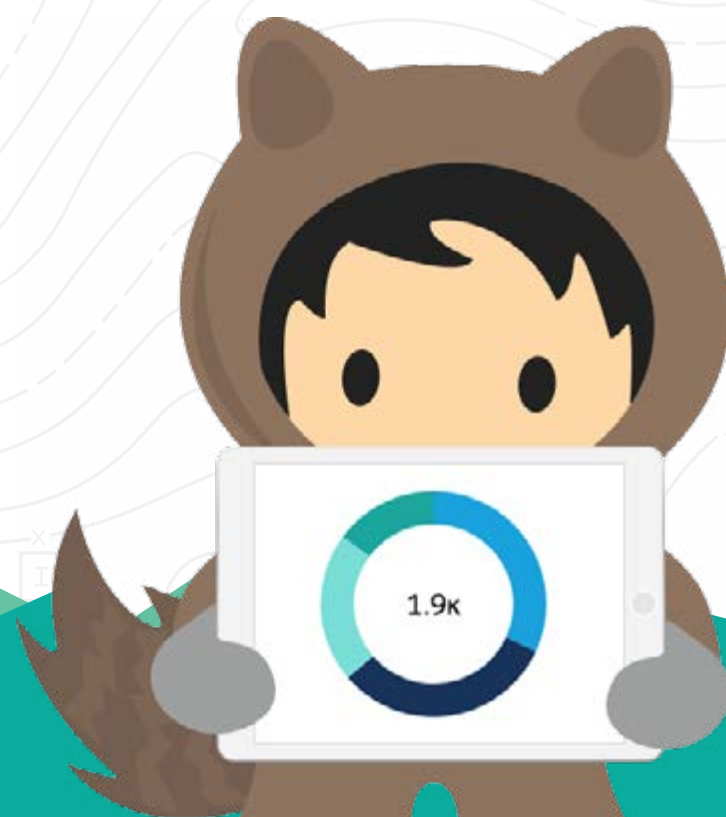
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Quotable

7 Sales Skills That CAN Be Taught

By Dan Ross, SR AVP, Commercial Sales, Salesforce

"Sales is a process. To be great you need to master each step, otherwise your efforts will not lead to results."

The 7 Sales Skills That CAN Be Taught,
by Dan Ross, Sr. AVP, Commercial Sales, Salesforce

Use insights to prioritize next steps.

Having access to sales performance metrics and data insights – in a format that's easy to understand – is now fundamental to the success of any sales team. But just as Google Maps has made the glove box fold-out map obsolete, customizable sales dashboards that give you real-time, actionable insights from your phone or tablet are replacing the clunky, static reports of old.
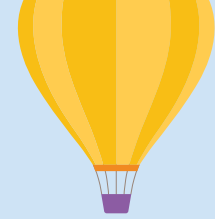
Get empowered with actionable insights.

Dashboards aren't just a way for sales leaders to keep tabs on team performance anymore. New sales tools include intelligence and analytics capabilities that transform dashboards from simple reporting mechanisms into interactive guides that pave the way to success. Individual reps can use them to analyze whitespace in their customer base to sell in a more targeted way, or keep a close eye on their deals and renewals. Need proof that access to great dashboards matters? High-performing salespeople are 11.3x more likely than underperformers to rate their team's analytics and insights capabilities as outstanding.

With the latest reporting capabilities, anyone from a business development rep to the VP can forecast deals and keep an eye on pipeline, track the right behaviors like meetings and calls, or identify when activities aren't getting done or deals are getting pushed. The right dashboard tools can give you the insights you need to make quick decisions on how to prioritize tasks for maximum impact, whether you're in the office or waiting in line to board your next flight.

High-performing salespeople are **11.3x more likely** than underperformers to rate their team's analytics and insights capabilities as outstanding.

Automate everything.

Manually checking off every task or moving leads throughthe pipeline? Nobody's got time for that. The most productive salespeople use technology to automate everything – from high priorities to small tasks – to save time and get back to selling.

Yep 100%

Automate the small stuff immediately.

Many tasks start small but end up consuming a ton of time (see Secret #3). Many of these activities can be automated and taken off your plate. For example, use keyboard shortcuts on your computer or mobile device to automatically type frequently used words or phrases, like your email address or personal intro. To save the time and hassle of making constant phone and computer backups, try automating your security with automatic updates to your company's system or a paid service.

Another little secret: the most successful salespeople also automate the majority of their sales process – all those small but time-consuming updates, reporting, and notification steps that make the sales engine run. High-performing salespeople are 7.2x more likely than underperformers to say their team has outstanding process automation. Coincidence? Not likely.

With the right tech solutions, you can automate email alerts for deals over a certain size, auto-assign tasks as a deal moves through the different stages, and more. It only takes a few point-and-clicks to set it up. The result is more time each day thereafter that you can devote to actual selling.

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Close faster with automated approvals.

Picture this: You're ready to close a deal you've been working for months, but at the last minute the customer requests a discount. You're pretty sure it will go through, but the person who normally approves these is out of the office, and no one is sure where to turn.

Make sure your deals stay on track by automating every approval, so you know your requests will get routed to the right person every time, no matter what.

Think some approvals are just too complex to get automated? Think again. From the simple (travel expenses) to the complex (pricing and discounting), the tools are out there that will let you automate the process – and ensure that each proposal, quote, and contract is consistent and accurate. Better yet, flexible templates let you customize automation flows to your team's unique needs and preferences.

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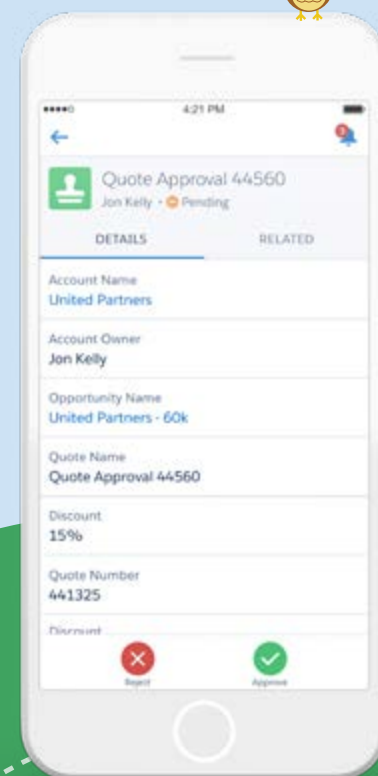
Personalized outreach made easy.

It takes time, attention, and energy to juggle dozens of accounts, manage countless meetings, and respond to dozens of follow-up emails and tasks every day. Ever wish you could wave your magic wand and someone – or something – would automatically do all that for you?

Innovative new technologies are now making that more realistic than you might think. They combine your inbox, calendar, and CRM data together in one place and automatically surface relevant contact data on every email, making it easier to send personalized messages, update your pipeline, and log sales activity. All it takes is a few swipes of the finger on your phone between meetings, and you've done in two minutes what used to take you two hours.

"Salespeople spend hours every week on back-and-forth communication around calendaring. The most productive salespeople are now using tech to automate that entire process and make it a one-click-and-done situation."

TRISH BERTUZZI, INSIDE SALES EVANGELIST AND AUTHOR OF THE SALES DEVELOPMENT PLAYBOOK

Smarter sales at your fingertips.

Imagine being able to blaze new sales trails with artificial intelligence (AI) tools that take your productivity to whole new levels. Solutions that use predictive lead scoring to prioritize opportunities and pinpoint your next best steps. Where real-time client updates are automatically surfaced, and it even schedules calls and sends reminders for you.

No, this isn't science fiction – it's AI for CRM technology that's changing how sales teams operate. How's that for working smarter?

"You could say to your phone, **'Show me leads I'm supposed to talk to today,'** and it does those operations for you: analyzes which ones are at which stage, finds the hot leads, and gives you a ranking of which ones you should talk to first, a probability of converting, and the expected monetary value when converted."

CHALENGE MASEKERA, DATA SCIENTIST, SALESFORCE

Conclusion

No matter how much you prioritize and plan ahead, the sales professional's to-do list can still feel overwhelming at times. But by adopting a few secrets from the pros, you can increase productivity substantially and focus more of your time on what counts.

To be successful, sales teams need to not only work harder than their competition, but also work smarter. To learn more, discover how some of our most successful customers have dramatically improved the effectiveness of their sales teams across industries and audiences.

Get empowered with sales solutions built for productivity.

Want to sell smarter, faster, and the way you want to? Salesforce helps reps optimize their efforts and win every deal with productivity and collaboration tools that maximize time spent selling – from anywhere and on any device. Discover the cloud-based tools that will give your sales team the power to close deals like never before.

Sales Cloud Einstein

salesforce inbox

Salesforce Inbox

Sales Cloud Lightning

Salesforce1 Mobile App for Sales

LEARN MORE

**CONNECT TO YOUR CUSTOMERS
IN A WHOLE NEW WAY**