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# Empowering Your Sales Force

It's Not Just Automation. It's Personal.



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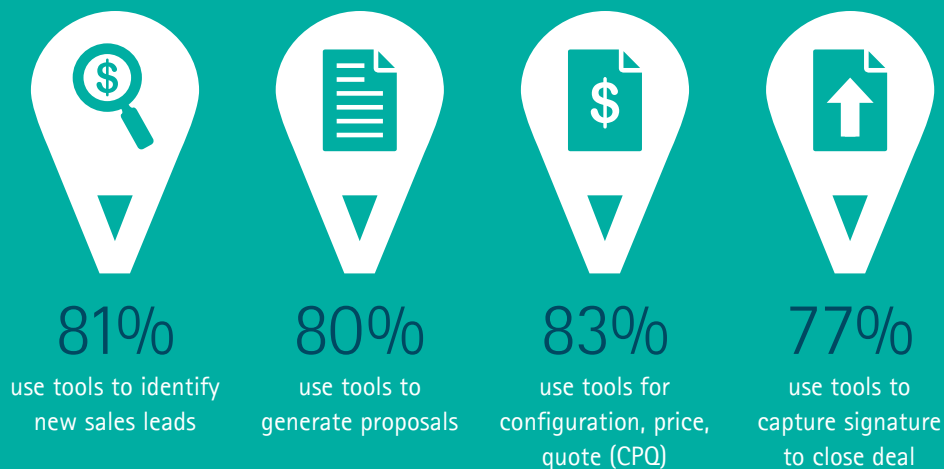
# Empowering Your Sales Force It's Not Just Automation. It's Personal.

Digital is completely reshaping customer engagement. It's also redefining sales organizations as they strive to fuel the growth engine by delivering an engaging experience, whenever and wherever the customer needs it, fulfilling the omni-channel promise. Companies have invested heavily in digital technologies and sales tools to help their sales organizations improve sales effectiveness and optimize cost to serve.

In fact, 2015 Accenture In-house Analysis found that global 2000 firms spend \$2.4 trillion on digital sales channels and services with the expectation that these investments will yield a return on investment for the organization.<sup>1</sup> In most organizations today there is no shortage of tools available to assist sales representatives (sales reps) in their day-to-day performance—80 percent of companies have adopted a core Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and a large majority has deployed tools across the entire sales process.<sup>2</sup>

However, key metrics from the Global CSO Insights: 2015 Sales Performance Optimization Study show that revenue target achievement is falling after three years of forward progress.<sup>3</sup> Sales organization confidence in achieving revenue targets is also low with 60 percent concerned over whether they can achieve their goals.<sup>4</sup> Further, the ability to retain and engage top sales talent is slipping. Turnover rates of sales reps increased from 2014 to more than 22 percent in 2015.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, despite companies' broad investment in sales tools and automation, all indications are that the return on investment from these tools is falling short.

## A Large Majority of Companies have Deployed Tools Across the Entire Sales Process



# Striving to Improve the Effectiveness of Sales Tools

To gain deeper insights on this conundrum, Accenture conducted research with sales reps globally to examine their usage and perception of sales tools (see 'Our Methodology'). We specifically tested the differences in perception between the sales force, who use the tools, and the executives (primarily Chief Sales Officers [CSOs]) who procure and develop the tools, typically with a focus on the needs and objectives of the enterprise.

Our research identified a significant gap in sales priorities between CSOs and the sales teams on the ground. Measured by top line growth and quarterly performance, CSOs' top sales objectives include capturing new accounts, improving sales effectiveness and increasing penetration in existing accounts.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, sales reps indicate a move away from transactional selling to a proactive focus on customer engagement and influence-focused sales dialog for

building lasting relationships. The top sales objectives of sales reps are improving customer satisfaction and loyalty and improving sales effectiveness as they move to a more collaborative, team-based and influence-centric selling approach. This fundamental disconnect in objectives impacts many aspects of sales operations, from goal setting and coaching to day-to-day sales activities, use of sales tools and actionable information bundling.

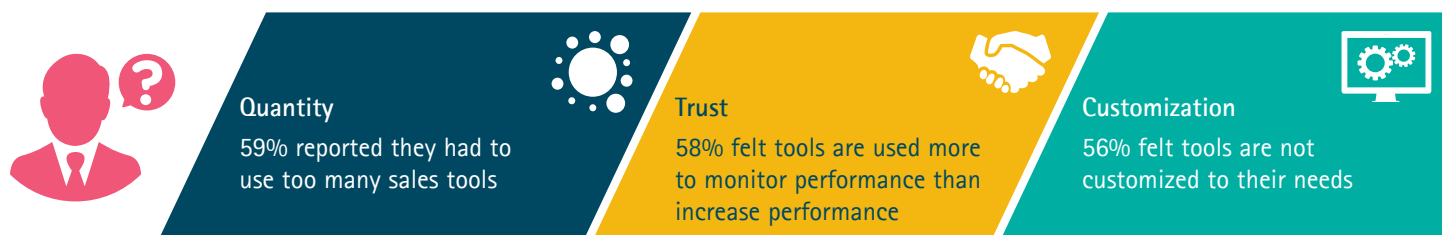
## Top Sales Objectives



Our research further identified that, while sales force tools have evolved, bringing more features to reps, many of them see sales tools as a barrier rather than a performance enhancer, and the majority are not fully leveraging their sales tools' capabilities. Just 13 percent are using the full capabilities of the tools and 15 percent describe their

sales tools as very effective. Further, while 75 percent of reps understand that the sales tools provided are an integral part of their sales process, more than half (55 percent) of reps found the usage of these sales tools to be more of an obstacle than a facilitator of sales performance.

## Challenges with Sales Tools



## Getting Personal

Enhancing selling performance and quota attainment are strongly related to adoption and usage of sales tools in the sales process. However, it is no longer a question of sales reps being afraid of, or unfamiliar with, technology as was the case a decade ago.

Sales reps have embraced technology in their everyday lives and the use of smartphones is truly universal. With pervasive deployment of sales platforms in organizations, it is certainly not about the lack of tools or the number of features... something is truly missing.

The central issue is that sales reps' expectations of sales tools are highly influenced by the simple, seamless and relevant tools they are using in their daily life outside of work. Whether they are using their car navigation system, shopping online, tracking their personal fitness, posting to social media, or playing a game on their favorite app, sales reps are accustomed to intuitive and ubiquitous

access with little or no need for training. Companies that serve the digital consumer in these capacities know that tools will only be used if they are relevant and simple to use.

So, the challenge facing sales organizations is how to transform their sales force performance by making the enabling tools simple, effective, personalized and relevant to specific selling moments and the needs of the individual rep. A new approach is required to enable engaged customer conversations and enhance sales force performance, and ultimately to magnify the sales talent resident within each individual.



# Rethinking Sales Tools Through the Lens of Service Design

When designed through the eyes of the sales rep, sales tools can match the way salespeople sell and engage in the customer dialog—they are no longer just providing features that are largely reporting and tracking focused. They are personalized, and as easy to use, as the tools reps are using in their everyday lives. And, they are dynamic and flexible enough so that sales reps can

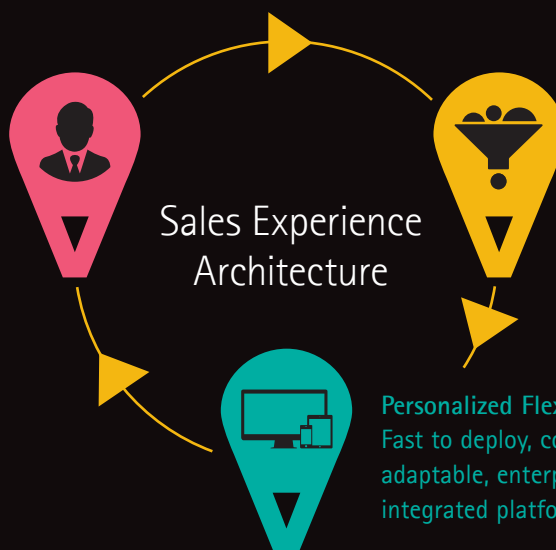
customize them to their specific needs. The optimal customer engagement is supported by data that, like an engine room, serves up the package of information and insights to influence and engage the customer at each stage of the conversation. How the tools deliver the personalized service, or which technology is used, is irrelevant to the sales force.

Accenture believes there are three key dimensions to transforming organizations' approach to tools to put salespeople first and increase adoption: following a human-centered design, identifying the critical data to measurably improve the guided sales experience, and leveraging highly flexible platform technology.

## Digitized Selling

### Engagement Experience

Ideate, design, and architect an interface that amplifies individual sales talent with a simple, intuitive and adaptive experience



## Data Identification

### and Prioritization

Identify, prioritize and visualize data that empowers salespeople to personalize the customer selling experience

## Personalized Flexible Selling Platforms

Fast to deploy, configurable, multi-device, adaptable, enterprise- and channel-integrated platform

## Following a Human-centered Design to Digitize the Selling Engagement Experience

Rather than taking a traditional management-focused or technology-centered approach to tool development, design is tailored to the services provided by the salesperson and the needs of reps as they engage with customers. Every sales rep works differently. Characteristics of the service design include an east-to-use, easy-to-access user interface; an ability to customize tools to personal needs; and a seamless ability to move across channels to progress toward closing the sale.

## Identifying and Prioritizing Data

In most organizations increasing volumes of data are available from a multitude of sources, but the sales rep has just a few seconds to call upon that information when engaged with a customer. Organizations need a method of identifying and making available the data that is most useful in the context of a particular selling engagement including highly personalized product information, customer data, and recommendations. Analytics are a critical enabler of these guided selling conversations by powering the right package of information and insights at the right stage of the conversation to impact and influence.

## Building Personalized Guided Selling Platforms

Supporting personalized guided selling requires a migration toward digital platforms that are adaptable to different devices, able to be deployed quickly and flexible to accommodate individual profiles. Agile and scalable platforms enable salespeople to personalize their own tools (think "mysalestool.com"), engage with customers and influence conversations. The configurations of the platforms also take into consideration ease of integration with back-end systems.

# The Payoff

Improving sales force performance continues to have a strong value proposition—delivering 5-10 percent in sales/revenue lift.<sup>8</sup>

Salespeople are motivated and excited to have enabling tools that can enhance their performance, but are looking for a pull-based tools strategy to help them in specific guided selling situations, rather than a push-based strategy. As they shift focus away from sales transactions to building long-term, loyal customer relationships, reps want tools that facilitate and influence the personalized interactions they have with their customers.

By rethinking the organization's approach from the needs of the individual sales rep, tools become engaging, which can increase rep productivity and success, which, in turn, helps to drive greater and more efficient revenue generation for the business.

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## Our Methodology

Accenture conducted primary and secondary research to gain insight into the usage and perception of sales tools and the differences between the perception of the sales force, who use the tools, and the C-Suite (CSO), who procure/design and develop the tools but are not users of the end product.

We surveyed more than 800 sales staff across seven countries and seven industries regarding the key challenges faced in meeting sales objectives, satisfaction with job areas,

current availability and usage of sales tools, opinions on tool usage and expectations related to sales tools. A mix of agent roles were surveyed from field to branch to call center, and tenure in the role ranged from one to more than 10 years. We also leveraged the CSO Insights: 2015 Sales Performance Optimization Study to understand global sales challenges from the executive perspective and engaged in regular dialog with Accenture professionals on digital engagement, sales and customer service.<sup>9</sup>

## References

<sup>1</sup>Accenture In-house Analysis, 2015. <sup>2</sup>CSO Insights: 2015 Sales Performance Optimization Study. <sup>3</sup>Ibid. <sup>4</sup>Ibid. <sup>5</sup>Ibid. <sup>6</sup>Ibid. <sup>7</sup>Ibid. <sup>8</sup>Accenture In-house Analysis, 2015. <sup>9</sup>CSO Insights: 2015 Sales Performance Optimization Study.

For a deeper discussion on Accenture's digital sales research and how to help empower your sales force, contact:

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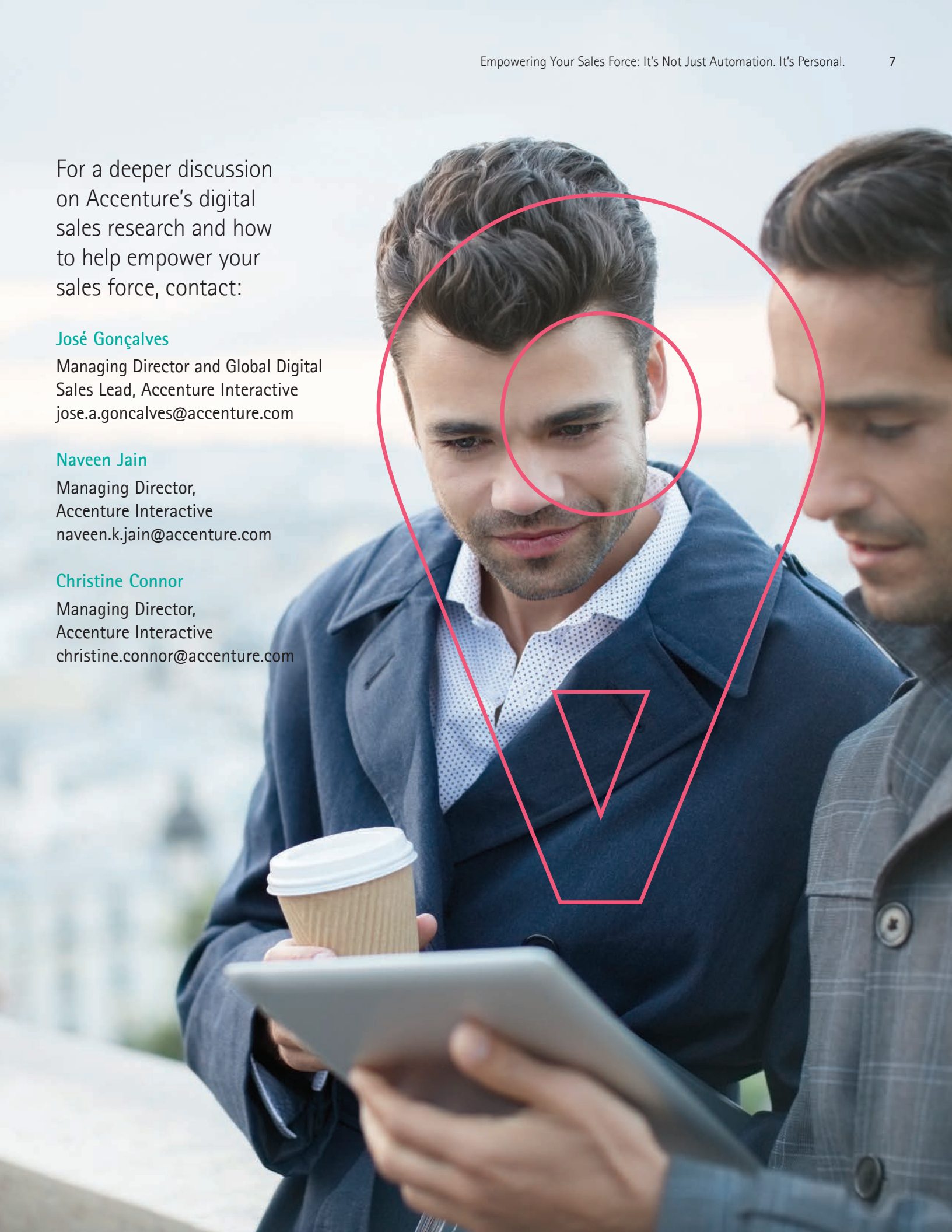
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