A New Age of Selling:
Work Like a Network to Grow Your Business

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Microsoft

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Executive Summary

Technology has turned the sales function upside down. On the one hand, it has made selling more difficult because customers can often get most of the information they think they need online and tend to make buying decisions based on what they find. However, if used properly, technology can help sellers adapt by simplifying the sales process and making them more efficient and successful than ever before.

Information such as product descriptions, customer reviews, and competitive comparisons are now widely available on the Web or through social networks. Corporate buyers are using this information to form opinions and narrow buying choices long before engaging with vendors.

When buyers do engage with a salesperson they expect fast responses that are precisely tailored to their organization's needs. To respond effectively to these better informed and more demanding buyers, sales organizations and sales professionals need to change. They need to embrace social media to take advantage of relationships, and use technology to quickly respond to buyers. This paper presents the Microsoft vision for sales organizations to use technology to close more deals with less effort. It provides concrete examples showing how successful sales leaders are transforming the way they sell with their Microsoft solutions.

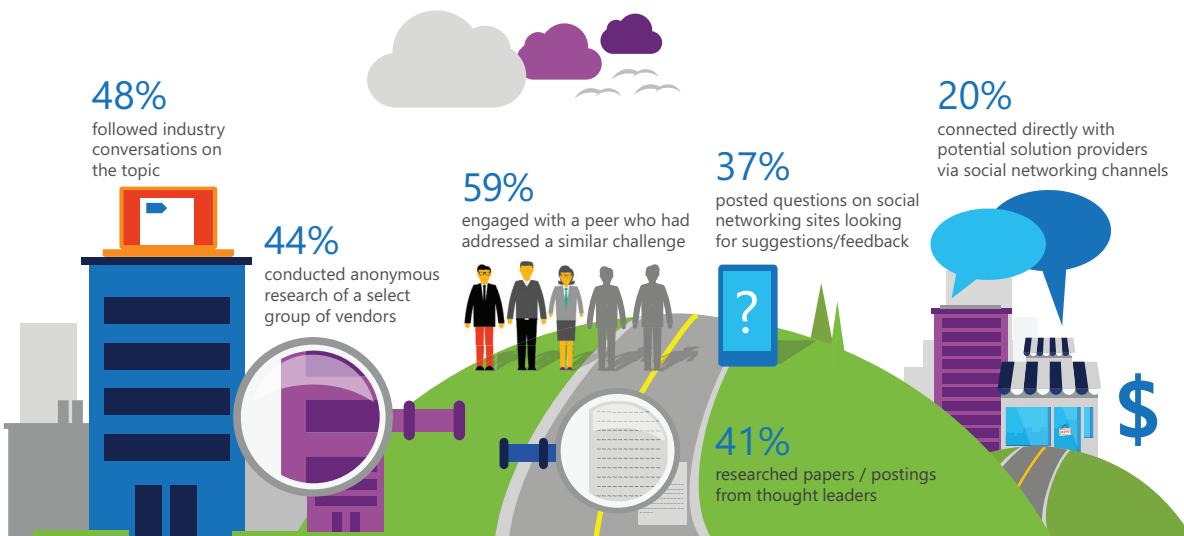**QuantaCRM**™

Today's Business-to-Business Buyer

Salespeople already know what doesn't work today: cold calling. A telesales representative has a 3 percent chance of getting a prospect to answer a call. A marketing email has less than a 3 percent response rate.[1] Calling on prospects without knowing exactly what they need is far too likely to be unsuccessful.

Customers have typically identified their needs and are actively seeking to find the best solution before ever engaging with vendors. To gather information they are researching vendor websites, questioning peers, and initiating and following conversations on social media.

Given all of the information customers can acquire on their own, it should come as no surprise that customers are 57 percent through the buying process before they actually make contact with the company they are researching.[2] In fact, 80 percent of buyers initiate first contact with their prospective supplier, and when they do reach out, they often have an idea of the solution they need.[3]

The idea of losing control over 57 percent of the buying process and waiting for prospects to call when they are interested should not make any salesperson happy. However, Microsoft has the solutions required to modernize sales teams to match this new reality.

On the road to purchase for a B2B buyer.[4]

48%
followed industry conversations on the topic

44%
conducted anonymous research of a select group of vendors

59%
engaged with a peer who had addressed a similar challenge

37%
posted questions on social networking sites looking for suggestions/feedback

41%
researched papers / postings from thought leaders

20%
connected directly with potential solution providers via social networking channels

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Selling the Microsoft Way

With the right sales solution in place, sales organizations can transform the way they sell. The Microsoft sales solution improves sales capabilities in five main areas: mobile, social, collaboration, process automation, and insights, giving sales teams the ability to zero in on targets before the competition, win faster by working as a team to create compelling and differentiated customer interactions, and ultimately sell more.

Microsoft provides a streamlined experience with Microsoft Dynamics CRM and its interoperability with Microsoft Office 365 and Yammer. Salespeople can go to one place for all of their tasks: viewing sales leads, researching companies, finding social connections, communicating with prospects, reviewing sales insights, and creating sales proposals. This eliminates jumping among applications by giving salespeople contextual information in a modern user experience.

The Microsoft sales solution meets the needs of the entire sales organization.[5]

Sales executives	Sales managers	Sales professionals
• True business insight and visibility • Ability to spot new opportunities • A team of "A" players who are customer-centric	• Tools to plan and manage against key KPIs • Insights to outsmart the competition • Productive salespeople who win as a team • High conversion and win rates	• Qualified leads • Insights to close more deals faster • Holistic 360-degree view of customers • More time selling, less busy work • Access to key business data anywhere

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Turn Social Insights into Sales

Your customers are using social networks to learn about you and your products. Shouldn't you also use them to gain social insights about your customers? You may learn that a prospect is dissatisfied with a competitor's product, or you may learn that they are dissatisfied with yours. You may learn that your customer has recommended your services to a contact, so you can get a new lead. Your sales team can now have real-time insight into the social activity of your contacts and accounts, and they can engage with their customers on LinkedIn and Twitter without ever leaving Microsoft Dynamics CRM.

With social network data from LinkedIn and Twitter integrated right into the Microsoft Dynamics CRM system, social insight becomes a natural part of the sales process. Microsoft Dynamics CRM delivers the latest market buzz and news along with corporate data, so that you are always up to date on your customer's activities. Getting this information in real time can make the difference between being ahead of or behind your competition.

In addition, Microsoft Social Listening helps salespeople gain early insight into issues customers are facing and connect with the most influential voices in the community. It also provides social buying signals. When people send a signal that they're looking for something, dissatisfied with their current solution, or need more information on a topic, that's an opportunity for a seller to engage. With the Microsoft solution, Social Listening capabilities are built in so they are available to all users.

Yammer provides a way to hold conversations with customers using a dedicated online workspace that keeps conversations off of the public Internet. With Lync and Skype embedded in Microsoft Dynamics CRM, salespeople gain a tremendous advantage. Now your customers are always just a click away.

> An email message sent by LinkedIn InMail that leverages a second-degree connection—meaning you know someone who they know and you reference that connection in the InMail—has a whopping 67% response rate![6]

Sell as a Team

In most cases, salespeople can no longer operate individually. Since buyers expect solutions to bridge sales, operations, and service, salespeople depend on the entire organization for their success.

Sales organizations need the right collaboration and communication tools to stay connected with the rest of the business. These tools must be mobile and should be integrated into the Microsoft Dynamics CRM system. Microsoft has integrated essential capabilities into Microsoft Dynamics CRM, including Lync and Skype, Yammer, and SharePoint, to enable the sales professional to work with a team from within one of these CRM applications.

Lync and Skype provide a powerful and simple way to interact with colleagues, partners, and contacts. Salespeople can quickly find subject matter experts or decision-makers and bring them into meetings to answer questions and get deals closed. Users see presence icons within Microsoft Dynamics CRM and can initiate an interaction in a single click.

Team members can also use Yammer to stay connected from within Microsoft Dynamics CRM. Yammer enables salespeople to tap into the organizational knowledge of the entire company from any location. Conversations can occur within contact, account, lead, or opportunity records, giving you the ability to get the information you need from the right people at the right time.

Managing documents and managing information is a big part of selling, so rather than forcing teams to use a different document management solution, Microsoft SharePoint also works directly within Microsoft Dynamics CRM, ensuring that any team member working on a sales document, such as a presentation, proposal, or RFP, will be able to utilize the powerful co-authoring and version control capabilities.

After implementing Microsoft Dynamics CRM to give visibility into the sales process and enable the sales team to work together on cross-selling opportunities, ISS Belgium was able to increase its sales conversion rate and decrease miscommunications from overlapping sales efforts by 90 percent.[8]

"It's all about integration. Microsoft Dynamics CRM caps the stack, but behind the scenes we make sure that Yammer drives the conversations within the business; we use SharePoint to drive our knowledge-management systems; we use Lync to surface the presence of our colleagues—Office 365 is the backbone of our office infrastructure."

— Paul Marriott-Clarke, Commercial Director, Metro Bank[7]

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Transform Sales Processes

Ideally salespeople would have easy-to-use tools that provide content relevant to where they are in the sales cycle. A well-defined process can help. Process flows drive best practices and consistency across the organization, while allowing salespeople to remain agile and deliver a great customer experience.

However, traditional CRM business processes, such as opportunity management, often used workflows that were cumbersome and difficult to understand. Therefore, they required a lot of user training and were often not widely adopted. Microsoft Dynamics CRM provides intuitive, visual process guidance using an outcome-driven user interface to help ensure rapid, widespread adoption by sales professionals. Because the solution tells you what to do next, the ramp-up time is fast and training costs are low.

"We looked at cost, ease of programming, and ease of use, and Microsoft Dynamics CRM was the winner in all those categories.... We also felt that, because the solution worked through the Microsoft Office interface, it would provide a familiar user experience, especially for our sales and marketing staff, who practically live in email, and really help us get the levels of adoption that we needed." — Vicki Burton, Director of CRM, CSX Transportation.[10]

Microsoft Dynamics CRM includes business process templates with industry-specific best practices. These process flows can then be customized, or new processes can be created using a simple point-and-click process. This allows sales organizations to be agile and responsive. If a trend is identified and the organization wants to react quickly, the business process could be changed almost instantly to reflect the newly desired steps or outcomes.

> "[Using Microsoft Dynamics CRM business processes] we have observed an increase in revenues by improving the lead-to-opportunity conversion rate by more than 75 percent and closing more sales."
>
> — Ashish Pandey,
> All India Sales Head,
> Godrej Infotech Ltd.[9]

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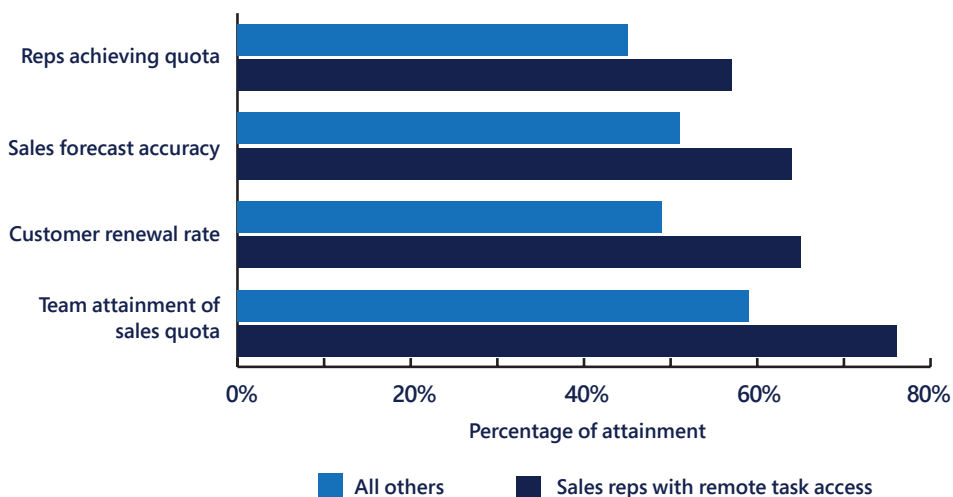
Your Sales Office – Wherever, Whenever

Customers are more demanding than ever. Competition is increasing. It's no longer acceptable to let things wait until you get back to the office. Because of these challenges, CRM applications on mobile devices are now indispensable selling tools. Steve Jensen, vice president of IT at Insphere Insurance Solutions, notes, "One sales agent went so far as to say that having access to Microsoft Dynamics CRM on their mobile phone was the best application in the insurance selling space."[11]

With Microsoft Dynamics CRM, sales professionals stay productive and agile wherever they are. They can get real-time information on the mobile phone or tablet of their choice through a user interface that remains consistent across devices. By receiving watch list notifications, salespeople know what's happening, right as it happens. They can see the question their prospect posted on LinkedIn as they are traveling to the meeting, so they know the primary concern that needs to be addressed.

When salespeople update activities, contacts, and opportunities on the go, they and their team get real-time insight and increase productivity while away from the office. Posting a question to Yammer during a meeting can result in an instant response and customer resolution. According to Gary Jones, sales training manager at Saia LTL Freight, "Mobile access to CRM helps reps answer on the spot…. Microsoft Dynamics CRM has helped us move from the middle of the pack to a leader position."[12]

With a Microsoft sales solution, salespeople can follow through instead of waiting until after the meeting to follow up. Key insights aren't lost, questions are answered immediately, and data is entered accurately.

Mobile access drives sales success.[13]

Chart — horizontal bar chart. X-axis: "Percentage of attainment" (0% to 80%).

Categories (top to bottom): Reps achieving quota; Sales forecast accuracy; Customer renewal rate; Team attainment of sales quota.

Legend: All others; Sales reps with remote task access

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Conclusion

Microsoft Dynamics CRM, Office 365, and Yammer deliver an intuitive, process-driven user experience that guides salespeople through the tasks and information they need to stay focused on closing deals. Microsoft has been a leader in productivity and collaboration for decades, and Microsoft Dynamics CRM brings that innovation together to enable salespeople to work with their teams online or off, across the office or around the world. With Outlook, Lync, Skype, SharePoint, and Yammer all part of the Microsoft Dynamics CRM experience, the people and information you need are only a click away. With a Microsoft solution, salespeople are no longer moving from application to application to perform all of their sales activities. All of their important information is presented contextually in a simple user experience:

• Integrated engagement with social tools including social listening capabilities
• Collaboration capabilities to speed responses and avoid overlapping efforts
• Process automation to ensure that salespeople are focused on selling and using best practices
• Data visualization to make it easy to understand the state of the business and each account
• Mobile access so salespeople always have access to their tools and teams through a consistent, familiar user interface

With these capabilities in place, sales organizations can zero in, win faster, and sell more.

For more information

QuantaCRM is committed to helping organizations transform so sales professionals sell more effectively and sales managers manage more intelligently. For more information on the Microsoft sales solutions, contact QuantaCRM at www.quantacrm.com

The solution described in this white paper includes:
• Microsoft Dynamics CRM Online Professional
• Microsoft Office 365 E3 SKU (includes Lync Online, SharePoint Online, Exchange Online, and Office 365 ProPlus)
• Yammer
• Power BI for Office 365

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