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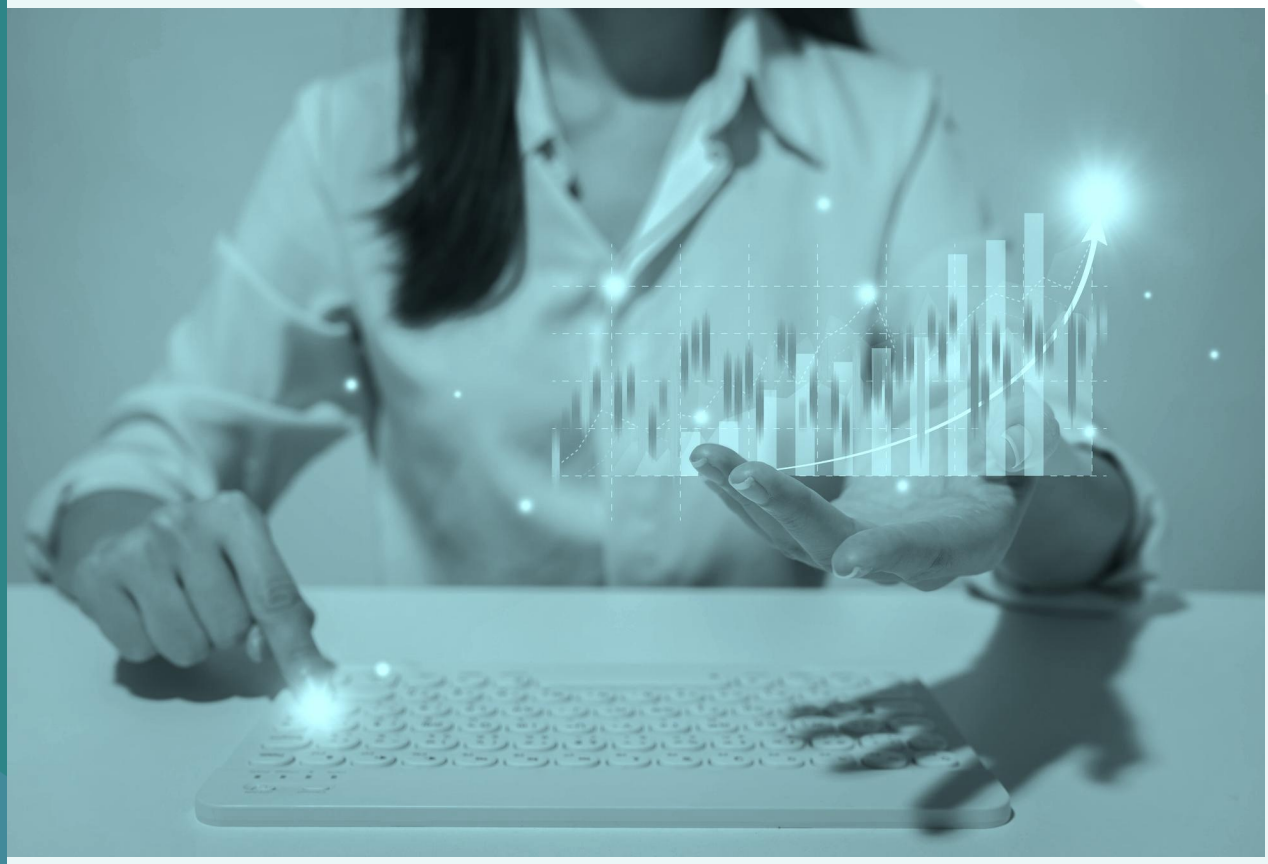

Ultimate Guide to Sales Acceleration Platforms

Sales acceleration platforms help people implement sales strategies, share information, and stay on top of client touchpoints. Learn more about how they work.

Digital-first sales approaches are a new hurdle salespeople have had to tackle in the past couple of years. A critical part of that digital-first approach (which replaces conventional dinners, events, and in-person meetings) is personalizing digital contact points as the foundation of a strong relationship. Salespeople also need to build trust and provide value early in the relationship — an arduous expedition in an online world where buyers can do their own research and are skeptical of complex sales techniques.

However, you can't let the difficulties of the process bog down your business and slow down the revenue engine. That's where sales acceleration and sales acceleration platforms come in; they represent the ways of thinking and digital tools salespeople can use to speed up sales in a digital-first or digital-only world without sacrificing the crucial human element of relationships. If you're new to navigating the sales acceleration ecosystem, keep reading to learn more about what sales acceleration platforms are, what different types of platforms they are, and why you should prioritize them in 2023.

What Is Sales Acceleration?

Sales acceleration encompasses the tools, processes, and resources organizations use to streamline their sales efforts to speed up the movement of prospective client accounts from the first touchpoint to closed-won deals. Sales organizations strive to achieve through three main methods, which they can use independently or all at once:

1. **Shortening the sales cycle:** The fewer "stops" there are along the way, the fast leads can move through the sales cycle and become paying customers. Many organizations achieve this by creating an abundance of easily-findable resources that prospective clients can access independently from a blog, user-generated search queries, email marketing distribution efforts, and other communication channels. This may delay the first moment of interaction with a salesperson but significantly shortens the timeline after that point. Companies can succeed with this approach if they strategically make their content easy to find, engaging, and valuable to the clients. This approach involves hefty content creation and ongoing SEO efforts to reach prospects.

2. **Removing obstacles in the sales cycle:** Sometimes, you can't streamline sales steps by eliminating stops. In B2B organizations, especially, there are procurement requirements that account managers must follow. Some buyers may require NDAs or special terms, while others may need detailed demos from different client stakeholders. Here, sales organizations see success by eliminating bottlenecks, roadblocks, and delays in meeting those needs. For example, salespeople can build relationships with multiple stakeholders in the client account organization, not just a single point of contact, to facilitate faster decision-making. Sales operations teams can also revise internal approvals and workflows so everything runs smoothly within your organization on signatures, approvals, or deliveries. The road is long, but interested buyers can move seamlessly through it with sufficient vendor prep work.
3. **Linking sales cycles continuously:** More and more organizations prioritize customer retention and lifetime customer value. After all, increasing customer retention by just 5% can ultimately increase your organization's revenue by nearly 30%. So instead of viewing sales as a linear pipeline, these organizations see sales as loops. They maintain continuous contact and stay abreast of likely customer developments and pain points, so the customers are always midway into the sales cycle.

Of course, focusing on faster sales isn't the totality of what 'sales acceleration' entails. Instead, the efforts involve continuous improvement, testing, and collaboration to make incremental changes frequently. This allows organizations to test new approaches with minimal risk and will enable them to stay flexible so they can change quickly in response to the evolving markets. Organizations with a sales acceleration approach don't look for a "tried and true" method of success. They focus on good relationship building and continually adapt their sales processes.

What Are Sales Acceleration Platforms?

Sales acceleration platforms are the digital software sales organizations use to fulfill this ongoing pursuit. Different platforms offer tools that support salespeople as they speed up processes, stay in step with clients, and personalize every step of the customer journey. Those tools include touchpoint trackers, strategy templates, training tools, and CRMs that provide a more holistic overview of client accounts.

Sales acceleration platforms also benefit sales managers and HR, not just the sales reps directly using the tools. Organizational leaders can comb through

activity data and client records to determine productivity metrics, forecast their monthly or quarterly revenue goals, identify star salespeople or those needing remedial attention, and spot strategies starting to pick up.

3 Types of Sales Acceleration Platforms

Sales acceleration is a multi-pronged approach. As a result, multiple different technologies are available, many of which align well and can be integrated into a comprehensive tech stack. Some of the most popular types of sales acceleration platforms are:

1. Sales engagement platforms

These platforms track all the different engagement points and communication channels salespeople use to make contact and build relationships. For example, a sales rep might use phone calls, email, video calls, and texts to speak to a client. Without a centralized hub that tracks all of these touchpoints and lets sales reps make helpful notes, you wouldn't have a comprehensive view of the customer relationship and the sales journey. You'd have, at best, disjointed records, and you may never see that salespeople won a lot of clients by completing Zoom calls or that 90% of closed won deals had at least five emails.

Not limited to tracking, sales engagement platforms allow reps to plan communication strategies and use AI or ML tools to see productivity and success trends.

2. Sales coaching and training platforms

High-frequency coaching is a vital part of sales enablement and, through that, sales acceleration. Traditional prospecting may be about the hard sell, but today's relationship-based approaches are all about conversations, soft skills, and building rapport. Smarter, AI-based coaching platforms can train salespeople through personalized courses and simulations. By tying this platform into your tech stack, you can even align training with the behaviors and approaches known to result in successful deals.

3. Sales enablement platforms

Marketing and sales teams need a space to collaborate and share information; sales reps also need a platform with the tools and assets to strategize. Sales enablement platforms bring behind-the-scenes sales enablement strategies and customer-facing touchpoints and interactions together by hosting client account

details, centralized product and marketing resources, sales training and coaching tools, and more. They also host tools and training functions so sales reps can grow their skills and plan upcoming customer interactions.

Along with these critical platforms, there are a lot of tools that fill in the gaps. Proposal management tools allow reps to instantly create proposals and ensure everyone has access to the records. Product configurations allow salespeople to help buyers create customized products with precise specifications. Email tools enable teams to personalize email campaigns that target specific accounts and pull from standard messages to create a customized feel. The exact combination of sales acceleration tools and platforms you use will depend on your business's unique needs. They can integrate to create a cohesive work and sales environment.

How Sales Acceleration Platforms Align RevOps Teams

Revenue Operations (RevOps) is a new way of organizing businesses. Rather than having strictly divided marketing, sales, and customer services or support departments, all of these roles are integrated into teams under the umbrella of RevOps: the direct revenue-generating arms of a business. Companies benefit from shifting to this structure, with reduced GTM expenses and up to 20% increases in customer satisfaction and sales.

Sales acceleration platforms are built to support this shift. For example, marketing, sales, account management, and customer service teams can use the same CRM. This gives all parties access to the account's exact details and in-depth history: Customer service teams know what combination of products a client has, marketers can create more targeted buyer personas for ideal repeat customers, and salespeople can see wins and frustration points customers have experienced with products in the past so they can be prepared for the following conversation. Everyone wins, and sales accelerate.

The Cost of Not Having Sales Acceleration Platforms

Every sales acceleration platform offers a unique suite of tools, dashboards, and automation capabilities that salespeople and managers otherwise wouldn't have access to. That lack dramatically alters the productivity of teams and the transparency of your organization's sales processes. Some of the costs of not investing in the right sales acceleration platforms include the following:

- **Less efficiency in data entry and other automatable tasks:** Without technology that can copy over client details and automatically fill in profiles with new information, it falls on employees to do the work. This costs a lot of valuable time. Hours of data entry and checking records add up, and employees can only fit so many tasks into their daily schedules. Even worse, because these efforts are entirely manual, there will be gaps or errors. Your business will lose out business because critical details are missed or wrong. You will also need to employ additional professionals or spend more time internally auditing records and chasing corrections.
- **Lack of interdepartmental alignment:** Without platforms like a CRM that share client details from all stages of their interactions with your organization, different teams will have different levels of insight on each account. An even more costly drawback is that the teams won't be able to collaborate on new strategies. Salespeople won't know which value propositions and pain points drove prospects to make contact (a vital detail for presenting products and solutions), and marketers may never learn the results of different campaign experiments and A/B testing in the broader customer lifetime value.
- **No clear data and reporting:** Strategic stakeholders, such as sales managers, CMOs, and sales directors, won't have the data and insights they need o evaluate ongoing operational workflows. Sales acceleration platforms hold clear records of data points like email engagement, help tickets initiated by different customers, and the close-win rate of other sales reps. But suppose these details aren't collected, let alone available and reviewed. In that case, your organization cannot train or promote salespeople effectively, recognize successes, or refine sales quotas to match probable results.
- **Poor customer relationships because of traditional prospecting practices:** In Dun & Bradstreet's annual report, *The State of Sales Acceleration*, they note that sales acceleration stands in direct opposition to conventional prospecting. You're forced to pick the latter if you don't choose the former. But rather than the collaborative, relationship-based efforts of sales acceleration, traditional practices are all about transactions. Nurturing steps are disjointed and performed without context or understanding of other teams. Without customer history, conversations are impersonal, ineffective, and unproductive.

4 Reasons to Prioritize Sales Acceleration Platforms

Knowing that sales acceleration is a practical approach is one thing. Prioritizing the adoption of sales acceleration practices and tools within your organization is another. Here's why businesses of every size should prioritize finding the right blend of platforms in 2023.

1. Build Processes That Help Your Business Scale Up

The most successful businesses are the ones that can scale their growth exponentially, not linearly. When all of your processes are manual, there's a ceiling to your revenue potential and profits. But when you build processes that include automation and focus on efficiency, you can start to grow up business without growing your expenses along the same course.

2. Approach Key Accounts More Strategically

In a relationship-driven world, key accounts matter most to your business. Think about the Pareto Principle: on average, 80% of your revenue comes from 20% of your client base. In many cases, that ratio is even steeper. However, holding onto those high-value accounts requires a lot of personalization and organization. Sales acceleration platforms give your reps the resources and tools to organize outreach plans, store vital account details, and ensure your key accounts get a white-glove experience.

3. Start Measuring What Works and What Doesn't

A/B testing, incremental experimentation, and rewarding salespeople who create strong customer relationships require data. You need tools that can measure comprehensive processes at a granular level, and manual efforts won't work. Sales acceleration platforms can track productivity, outreach efforts, training hours, and more, so you have an objective report of what is working and what needs more work. This removes guessing and bias — making your company culture less toxic while making strategic efforts more effective.

4. Train Salespeople on the Right Skills for Relationship-Based Business Growth

One area that businesses of all sizes and niches struggle in is sales training. Manual efforts' flaws and drawbacks are magnified here: in traditional sales

training, courses and lectures *aren't* personalized. They don't address sales reps' needs. One-on-one efforts are sporadic, infrequent, and have slow follow-ups. The results are also myopic, with potentially biased feedback from sales trainers that may be outdated, which becomes a liability for your business.

Sales acceleration requires your teams to navigate conversations, listen to customers, and build rapport. Modern AI sales coaches can do that by creating personalized learning paths and gathering hundreds or thousands of data points with every interaction.

What Do You Need Your Sales Acceleration Platform to Do?

You may already be thinking about how you can shore up your organization's current processes. You know what's holding your organization back, and you can see how a few integral changes can jumpstart better sales acceleration efforts. At Quantified, we provide organizations with sales enablement platforms and AI coaches that pave the way to successful customer interactions and conversions at every turn.

Contact the experts at Quantified today to learn more about how coaching your reps on conversational skills, providing sale enablement resources that realign your teams, and adding dynamic tools throughout your tech stack can pave the way to a more profitable 2023.