



The 8-Armed Sales Rep



Using Technology to Get More Done
in Less Time



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Thanks to the growth of the internet and mobile technology, today's world of business is moving faster than ever. IBM says that 2.5 quintillion bytes of data are created each day. Not only is there a vast quantity of information online, we also have round-the-clock access to it on our smartphones and laptops.

For sales professionals at small businesses, this situation presents a challenge. Salespeople are facing pressure to get more done in less time, with the same 8-hour day we had 50 years ago. How is it possible to overcome this challenge and find success in the information age?

It all comes down to using technology as a facilitator for productivity. Here are some of the best ways to use modern tech to create processes that will help you get the work done faster and more consistently:

CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION ---

Email templates

If you use email for sales with any frequency, you probably send a few similar types of emails. Sometimes you're opening a brand new prospect, trying to get their attention with a unique introduction. Other times you might be following up on an outstanding proposal.

It's a good idea to create a template for each type of email and store them in a single document or email draft. You can start small with just a few different kinds of templates, and then gradually increase the amount you use.

Integrate phone tools with sales tech

The phone can still be an excellent sales tool if used properly. It's difficult to maximize your telephone efficiency if you don't have a plan going into each call. While you don't want to sound overly scripted and contrived, it's still important to have an idea of what to say if you reach a prospect and how to answer common responses.

It's okay to rely more on prepared words if you are leaving a voicemail, but you still don't want to sound like you are reading from a script. Practice a few different voicemail messages so you have one that will work for different kinds of buyers.

Once you're comfortable with your phone prompts and voicemail scripts, you should store them in your CRM. This helps you streamline their use and lets you take notes about what worked and what didn't.

Repurpose your sales content

Every asset that you use to sell with can potentially be applied in a different format. If you've got a great blog post on your company website, why not email it out to your list and see if it is well received there? Also think about converting customer testimonials into case studies that you send out in your monthly newsletter. If you think creatively, you can come up with dozens of different ways to apply what you've already got on a different channel.

USING SOFTWARE ---

Take advantage of your CRM

Today's CRMs are built to help their users handle much more than just logging customer data.

Once you've filled in the necessary customer information and have started to use it to log calls, you can then set important automated reminders with your CRM.

These reminders help you keep track of critical events that help with your sales efforts. A few ideas on what to track with your CRM:

- Customer birthdays
- Quarterly check-ins
- Subscription renewal dates
- Meeting followups

With reminders, you can effortlessly keep track of important dates related to multiple accounts. When you consistently check-in with them about different subjects, it will help improve your customers' and prospects' opinion of you.

Use a cloud storage system

Thanks to technology, there's no reason for your work to be limited to a specific place or device. With the prevalence of cloud storage systems today, it's easy to set up a filesharing system that allows you to access important files and data from anywhere.

Imagine leaving the office early for a business trip and getting stuck at the airport or having to wait on a train or bus longer than you thought. If you have a cloud server set up, you could pull out a tablet or smartphone and update some of your work as you wait.

Google Drive and Dropbox are two of the most popular cloud file sharing services for business. Both vendors have small monthly fees, but they are well worth the extra productivity that you stand to gain from syncing your files across devices to access them anywhere.

Take advantage of social media utilities

Every modern sales rep knows that social media is a critical place to be selling. But social media can also be a huge timesink. Besides the many distractions waiting to ensnare you on these networks, it can be tedious to execute the actual work you do on social media. Posting updates every day, messaging prospects, and visiting the profiles of potential leads could be a full-time job. How can you find time to consistently handle all of this and still get your other work done?

The answer is in social media utilities. Tools like Buffer, Hootsuite and Edgar can help you schedule posts in advance so you can increase engagement without investing time in creating social posts every day. There are also programs that will automatically visit people's profiles and collect data about them, which helps automate a great deal of your prospecting on social media.

PRODUCTIVITY TIPS

Use 2 monitors

It sounds relatively simple, but there are many salespeople who still aren't aware of the huge boost in productivity they could gain just from adding an extra monitor to their workspace. There are many different ways to configure monitors in your workspace. Bill Gates wrote a famous blog post describing how he uses three monitors to streamline the way he answers emails. It might seem difficult to get used to at first, but with some effort and time to adjust, you'll find that having an increased screen area helps improve your productivity.

Sequence your work

Sales people in every field have a variety of tasks to complete – posting on social media, cold calling leads, researching prospects, creating proposals, etc. With all of these different things

to do, how do you decide when to do each thing?

Other than the drop-everything emergencies that need to be handled right away, it can be challenging to decide how to prioritize your day. To ensure you get as much done as possible, maximize your time by bundling different tasks together in the same period.

For example, you might do your cold calling in the morning, then make follow-up calls to existing prospects right afterwards. In the afternoon, block out time to send emails and post on social media. Before the end of the day, catch up on administrative tasks and CRM organization. Schedule different tasks based on personal preference, but always try to group similar items together.

GROW AN EXTRA SET OF ARMS WITH TECHNOLOGY

Let's face it: the demands of the competitive business world mean that you will always face pressure to be as productive as possible as a salesperson. But if you can take advantage of technology to make life easier and squeeze a little extra juice out of your day, you can give yourself a measurable edge over your competition.

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