Reinventing sales

How sales teams are using Slack to unlock greater revenue in the new world of work

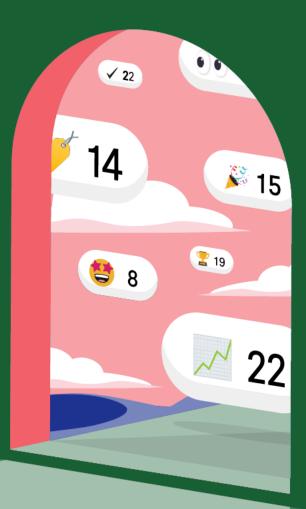




Table of contents

| Introduction: Finding a better way | 3 |
|---|----|
| 1. Employee engagement breaks free of the 9-to-5 mindset | 5 |
| 2. Culture and alignment are the next source of advantage | 14 |
| 3. Customer-led disruption forces the new CX convergence | 18 |
| 4. A new ecosystem economy demands a new partner playbook | 24 |
| 5. The winners are accelerating work through automation | 27 |
| 6. The digital-first way to reinvent sales | 33 |
| Conclusion: Talk to us about supporting your new way of working | 35 |

Finding a better way



The upheavals of 2020 will have a long-term impact on the way we work. They've created an opportunity for every organization to find a better way of working one that combines the best of what was done before with efficient new ways developed during the work-from-home (WFH) period.

For sales leaders, it's meant finding new ways of operating in a hybrid work world ... new ways of connecting with clients, forging customer relationships, building loyalty and trust with prospects, generating leads, educating prospective buyers, negotiating deals, motivating sales teams, rallying account support and meeting targets. And all that in a world where more people—both internally and on the customer side—work remotely more of the time.

Five themes dominate the new world

To get a better view of the new world of work, we talked to business and sales leaders across industries and countries about what comes next. Five big themes emerged from our discussions (explored in our e-book "**Reinventing Work**")—and they apply to just about every organization:

- 1. Employee engagement is breaking free from the 9-to-5 mindset
- 2. Culture and alignment are the next source of competitive advantage
- 3. Customer-led disruption is forcing rapid CX convergence
- 4. A new ecosystem economy demands a new partner playbook
- 5. The winners are accelerating work through automation

In this guide, we'll look at what these themes mean for sales leaders and show how sales organizations at some of the world's most successful companies are adapting to the new world of work with Slack.





Employee engagement is breaking free from the 9-to-5 mindset



Sales—especially B2B sales—was in a state of transformation even before the WFH era. Customer buying patterns were changing, with buyers doing a lot of their own research before engaging with sales and involving more people in the final purchase decision.

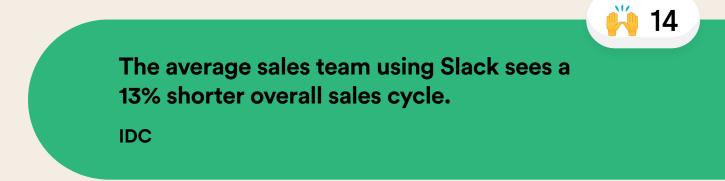
Smart sales organizations responded by moving from "lone-wolf" selling to teambased selling. Rather than reps handling opportunities alone, they formed crossfunctional teams to craft tailored propositions, answer prospects' questions and provide credible advice. And it worked.



Now sales leaders must reinvent the team-selling approach for the hybrid work era and embrace both synchronous connections and asynchronous work. They need a way to bring remotely based reps and functional experts together virtually to coordinate around opportunities and close deals fast. And with people working increasingly flexible hours, that has to happen efficiently even if everyone is not available at the same time.

The emergence of the "digital sales floor"

Remote work and flexible hours call for the introduction of a "digital sales floor," where reps, managers, cross-functional experts and exec sponsors can unite to close more deals, faster. For some of the most effective sales organizations worldwide, that digital sales floor is Slack.



Sales teams that work in Slack are 5% more likely to win a deal than those that don't, according to IDC research. That's because Slack has unique features that align with the way the most effective sales teams operate:

Channel-based collaboration: In an email-dominated world, sales teams don't have an efficient way of pulling in the right people at the right time on a deal. Getting Legal sign-off on a contract or approval from Finance on a discount can take hours or even days—impacting credibility with the customer and slowing down sales cycles. In Slack, you can create a dedicated channel for each prospect, where sales teams work with colleagues across the organization to develop a winning proposition, respond to the prospect's questions and navigate the deal to a successful close.

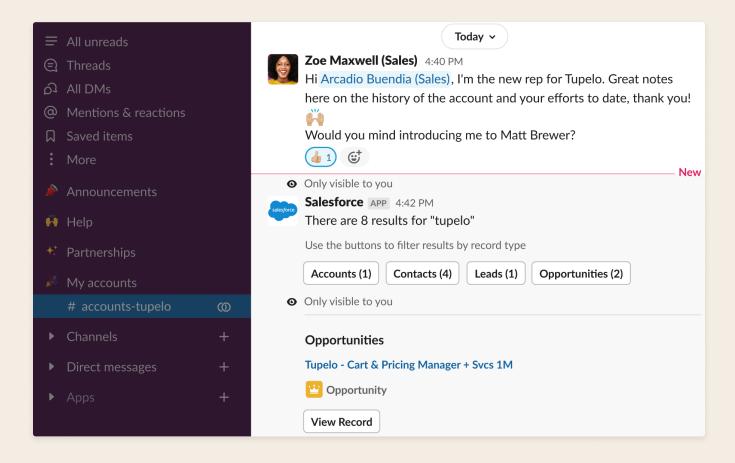
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"I think about opportunities we may have missed before Slack because we didn't have the ability to communicate cross-functionally."

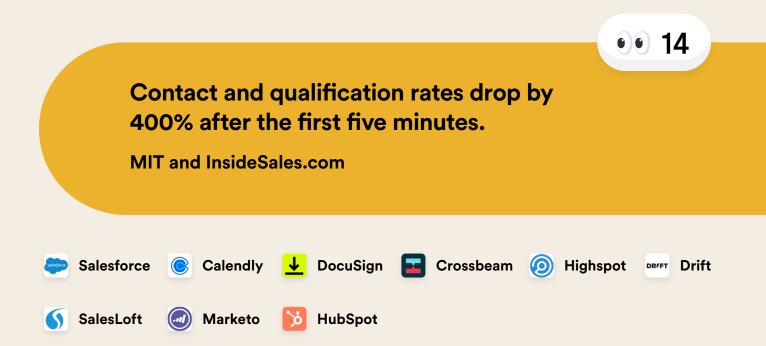
Samantha Lutz

Employee engagement breaks free of the 9-to-5 mindset

Instant context: Each channel preserves a record of previous interactions and key documentation relating to activity in that channel. That lets people get up to speed fast on what's already been done and discussed, enabling remote teams to work asynchronously to win the deal. A key sales rep leaves? A complete history of all of their interactions and strategies for their accounts are in-channel—and not locked in their dead email inbox. And for new sales hires, it means they can come up to speed quickly on an account and build credibility with customers from day one.



App integrations: Slack integrates with more than 2,300 other apps and tools, including Salesforce, Calendly, DocuSign, Crossbeam and Highspot. And it's not just sales tools integrations that are important. Sales reps can check stock inventory levels from ERP systems, pull an account's billing status from finance tools and receive deal updates when they need them. Notifications from core apps can be piped straight into the relevant Slack channel—rather than being sent by email—where they can be seen by the whole team and actioned immediately. Most importantly, leads from Drift, SalesLoft, Marketo, HubSpot and other tools are streamed to a central place for follow-up. That's key, as research by MIT and InsideSales.com found that responding to a lead in the first five minutes has a critical bearing on sales success.



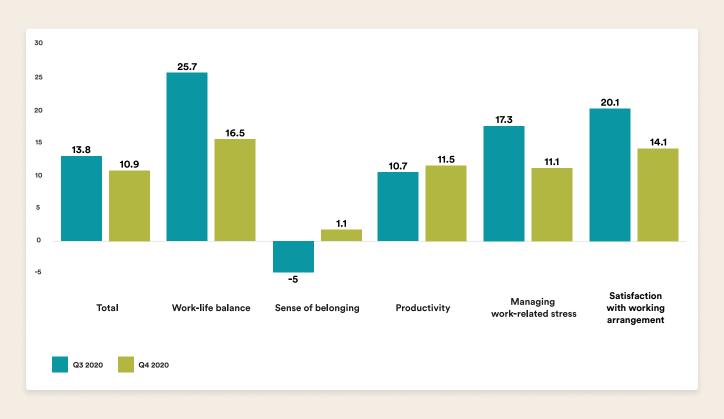
Personal connections forge employee engagement

In the age of remote and flexible working, Slack isn't just a place to get work done. It's also a place for sales teams to connect on a personal level, sharing their ups and downs, bonding over out-of-work interests and celebrating wins together.

That has an impact not just on team morale but also on talent retention. The quarterly Remote Employee Experience Index surveys we've been running since the start of the pandemic showed that WFH initially led to a sharp downturn in employees' sense of belonging. One year on, it was still the area of least satisfaction.

That's a red flag for sales leaders, because reps who don't feel part of the organization are less likely to give their best and more likely to leave.

Employee engagement breaks free of the 9-to-5 mindset



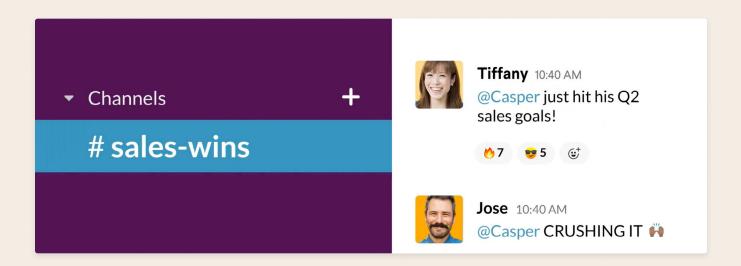
Note: The highest and lowest potential scores are +100 and -100 respectively. Higher scores indicate higher satisfaction with remote work compared to office-based work; lower scores, a lower satisfaction. See footnote for detailed methodology.

Source: Future Forum

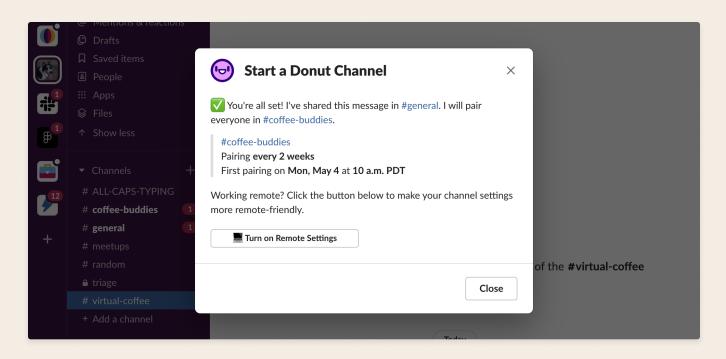
A greater sense of belonging

With Slack, sales leaders can create opportunities for team bonding that can be missed in a WFH world, leading to a greater sense of belonging. Some things we see sales leaders doing in Slack channels include:

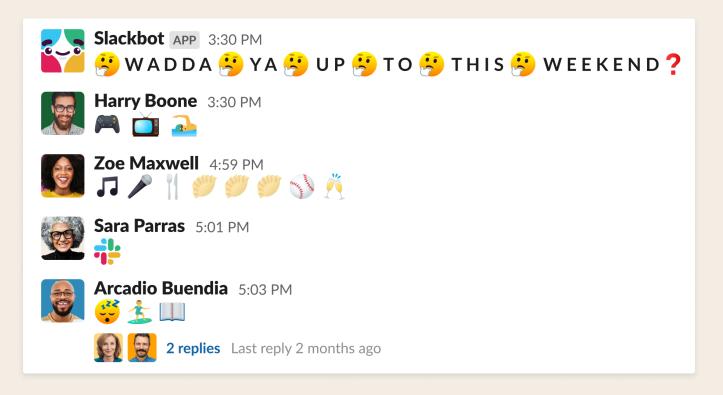
• **Celebrating wins:** Slack makes it easy to give kudos to team members on closing a deal. Everyone is automatically notified and can join in the celebrations with comments and reacjis.



 Creating a virtual water cooler: Slack integrations like Donut and RandomCoffees set up "coffee date" encounters between random pairs of colleagues—great for helping new remote hires make valuable connections across the sales team and wider organization.



• Bringing people's "humanness" into team communications: Sales reps are social beings—and when you can't get together in person, connect in-channel. Slackbot reminds our Slack team to share its weekend activities, but the answers can be only in emojis! It's a fun insight into people's worlds ... you'd be surprised how creative sales teams can be.



Bringing people together at Limelight Networks

At digital content delivery company Limelight Networks, Slack is a core part of the culture. The sales team has a channel that announces deals won, as well as regional-based channels for employees to collaborate on prospecting efforts. Limelight also has a channel for employees to discuss industry news and exchange notes from industry events.

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, Limelight created a companywide **#copingwithcovid19** channel, where employees shared jokes and videos.

"It's been a wonderful resource, even our CEO is in it," says Nivedita Mehra, vice president of sales operations at Limelight. "It's brought in engagement across departments that normally would never talk to each other, since we typically remain in our own channels. It's been a really nice way for us to bring the company together."

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[Slack] has brought in engagement across departments that normally would never talk to each other. It's a really nice way to bring the company together."

Nivedita Mehra, Vice President of Sales Operations, Limelight Networks

Ramp new reps up faster

A hybrid working model can make it tough to get new hires up to speed so they can start selling. With a central collaboration platform, new reps can connect with the right people and get access to organizational knowledge much faster, so they can start building credibility with customers from day one.

At data analysis platform company Splunk, this is where Linda Page, area vice president of global field enablement, has innovated. Her team facilitates onboarding and sales training programs, as well as creating sales enablement tools and driving their adoption.

"If you're new to the Splunk team, one of the most important things is to get connected to the ecosystem of historic knowledge and cross-functional partners in Slack," Page says.

"We bring new team members into Slack channels so that they can ask questions, see their colleagues' questions and just have contact with the ecosystem. Engaging with the right Slack channels can really accelerate the learning period."

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Linda Page, Vice President of Global Field Enablement, Splunk

2.

Culture and alignment are the next source of advantage



In any time of upheaval, keeping teams aligned, engaged and focused is challenging. It's doubly so when team members are dispersed both geographically and temporally.

> 76% of sales managers say their capacity to navigate change is more important than it was five years ago.

LinkedIn

A time of cultural change in sales

To add even more pressure, sales leaders must manage remote teams in a time when customer budgets have been cut and investment priorities have changed dramatically.

It's why some sales organizations are replacing "quota met" with a new metric: customer satisfaction. LinkedIn's State of Sales 2020 report found that sales culture was shifting to focus on loyalty and retention, rather than revenue at any cost.

43% of global respondents selected "Customer Satisfaction" as the top metric for measuring sales performance, beating out "Team Quota Met."

LinkedIn



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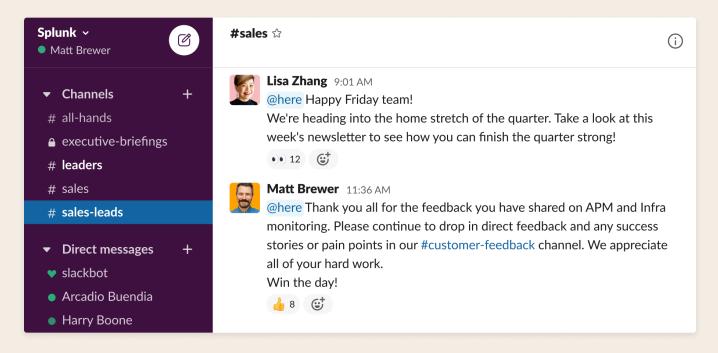
As LinkedIn notes, focusing on customer success is a good way to head off sharp practices that can emerge when reps are targeted simply on numbers. "While pursuing business goals is forever important," LinkedIn says, "it's more valuable and useful to emphasize the actions and techniques that lead to our desired outcomes than simply the outcomes themselves."

But in a world where more people are working remotely with less direct supervision, how do you make sure values like this are upheld across the whole sales organization?

Creating alignment in a hybrid work world

Frequent leadership communications and two-way feedback circuits are great for keeping everyone aligned around values—but only if they include everyone, get read and actioned, and don't take time away from selling.

At Splunk, Quentin Packard, the area vice president of new product sales, manages hundreds of field sales professionals. He and his teams use Slack to collaborate, usher in prospective deals and grow their sales organization. That includes using a **#sales channel** to foster transparency and alignment between Splunk's global sales teams.



Splunk uses Slack channels to keep global sales teams aligned and engaged.

Culture and alignment are the next source of advantage

Before weekly leadership calls, Packard asks his managers to share their "three down, three ups" as threaded replies in Splunk's **#leaders** channel. Each manager outlines the three key things they said they were going to do the week before and the three things they plan to do in the week ahead.

"These updates offer a hyperfocused view on where we're spending time," Packard says. "Leaders can skim through threads to look for commonalities and to hold each other accountable, creating transparency and focus where it's needed most."

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Quentin Packard, Area Vice President, New Product Sales, Splunk



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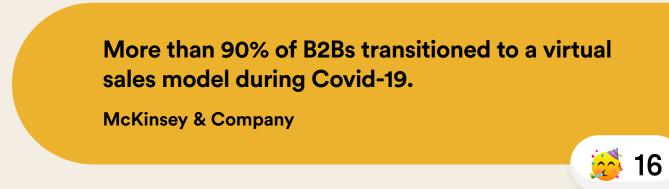
Customer-led disruption forces the new CX convergence



Customer-led disruption forces the new CX convergence

Customers were increasingly in the driving seat even before 2020. Studies showed they were becoming less inclined to take meetings with sales reps, preferring to do their own research and reach out only if they had a question.

Then the shift to remote swept away the traditional ways of engaging with customers for everyone. Face-to-face meetings, in-person demos, networking at trade shows and conferences—all had to be replaced with virtual ways of connecting.



The most effective sales teams saw the need to connect virtually with prospects not as an obstacle, but as an opportunity to improve the buying experience for customers and forge deeper and longer-lasting relationships.

They achieve that by collaborating internally around the customer to provide a more consistent, informed and efficient buying experience. And increasingly, they're doing it in Slack channels.

Collaborating around the customer

Today's buyers expect companies to know who they are and remember key information about them. Yet 54% of customers surveyed for Salesforce's 2021 State of the Connected Customer report said they feel like sales, service and marketing don't share information.

•• 14

76% of buyers expect consistent interactions across departments. 54% say it feels like sales, service and marketing don't share information.

Salesforce

Slack makes it easy for customer-facing teams to work together to create a consistent and informed experience for each customer. Imagine, for example, that a customer contacts Support to complain that a product lacks a specific capability. The support agent raises a ticket in a tool like Zendesk, which is automatically piped into the Slack channel for that customer account.

A product exec sees the ticket and replies in the channel to say that the feature is planned for the next version, with a link to a workaround. The support agent responds to the customer with the workaround, while a sales rep follows up with the customer to offer an early demo of the new version. Meanwhile, a marketing exec dips into the channel to check with Sales and Support whether the customer is happy, before using their testimonial in a new campaign.

Without this kind of immediate collaboration, the customer could easily have received an unhelpful reply from Support or had a long wait for an update. Sales might have missed an opportunity to upsell the customer to the new version, and Marketing might have published a customer testimonial at a time when the customer was frustrated, increasing their irritation.

Provide a better buying experience

In the complex world of selling products and services, it's rare that an individual sales rep has all the answers a customer needs to go ahead with a purchase. It's one reason why prospects have been less keen to take meetings with sales reps, preferring to do their own research.

But if a rep does have the means to get instant, informed answers to prospects' questions, they can quickly cement a reputation as a trusted advisor. That in turn leads to faster deal closes, higher value sales and greater customer loyalty.



Suppliers that make buying easy are 62% likelier than other suppliers to win a high-quality sale.

Harvard Business Review

Sales teams that use Slack for collaboration can get those informed answers to prospects fast, because they have instant access to experts from across the organization.

If the customer wants to see a demo, the rep can quickly loop in a sales engineer. If they have a question about a clause in the contract, the rep can @mention someone in Legal to get a quick, expert answer. And if the deal relies on a discount being approved, the rep can seek immediate sign-off from Finance—all in the same channel and without a single email being sent.

> Customer success teams using Slack saw a 60% decrease in turnaround times for customer responses.¹



Connect with customers in a new way

Sales teams that use Slack are finding it makes sense not just to collaborate with other functions, but to bring the customer or prospect directly into those discussions too.

It's something we've made possible with Slack Connect, which allows sales teams to invite customers or prospects directly into Slack channels. By cutting out email communications, it makes business flow faster and helps to forge close and lasting customer relationships.

Slack Connect enables 4x faster deal cycles.²

14

At cloud data platform company Snowflake, for example, account executives (AEs) work with customers throughout the full sales cycle—from contacting prospective leads to helping new customers choose the right Snowflake plan for their organization.

Since they started communicating with prospective leads through Slack Connect, they've been sealing more deals with greater speed. One AE, Michael Westra, told us Slack Connect helped him increase his deal size threefold, year over year.

"If a lead has a question, we can get them an instant response from an engineer or other Snowflake team member, setting us apart from the competition," says Cedric Dageville, another Snowflake AE. "Customers feel like we're all working on the same team."

Channels also make it easy to close deals without ever leaving the Slack workspace. When it's time for new customers to negotiate contracts and sign up for Snowflake's services, Dageville and Westra send a direct message in Slack to key decision makers on the customer side to work out the details and share documents.

Customer-led disruption forces the new CX convergence

"I'd say 99% of my communication with leads and customers happens in channels with Slack Connect. We rarely ever communicate in email," Dageville says. "I think every corporate sales team should be using Slack Connect 100% of the time."



16

Cedric Dageville



See how more organizations are collaborating with clients using Slack Connect.





A new ecosystem economy demands a new partner playbook



Sales models can be transactional and straightforward. But they can also be highly complex, involving ecosystems of distributors, resellers, integrators and consulting partners. Now many companies are moving toward an ecosystem model for product sourcing too, expanding the universe of partners involved in any given sales conversation.

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It is less and less likely that single firms can offer all the elements a customer needs. And so ecosystems, especially designed ones, are on the rise."

Harvard Business Review

The more effectively internal sales teams can collaborate with partners, the faster deals can be closed. But partner collaboration has typically been conducted by email, resulting in slow response times and potentially lost deals.

Imagine, for instance, that a reseller is close to signing a deal with a customer but needs confirmation that a particular capability that's not available today is in the product roadmap. In the past, she might have emailed her channel account manager to ask the question. However, that person might not see the email for a while—and it might take even longer for them to get the information from product development. In that time, the deal might be lost.

Accelerate partner collaboration with Slack Connect

With Slack Connect, sales teams can work directly with partners to close deals in a collaboration environment that's geared around openness and speed.

At Zendesk the company's manager of technology alliances, Mike Yakovlev, is focused on building partnerships that can help sales reps to turn conversations into opportunities.

Before Slack, juggling 50 or more partnerships at a time via email proved to be exceptionally challenging. "It may as well have been a carrier pigeon," Yakovlev says. Now, whether he's organizing co-marketing activities or discussing a joint

solution for a prospective customer, Yakovlev relies on Slack channels to share messages, tools and files.

He's acutely aware of the fact that easy and efficient communication can make or break a deal. "Sales reps are all about speed and making sure that they get the answers to their questions as soon as possible," he says.

With channels, reps can pull partners into discovery calls with prospective customers within five minutes of the original request. "Having all of the information about a specific partner available at once is super important. We have a direct line of communication to our counterparts at the companies we work with most frequently," he says.

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Sales reps are all about getting answers as soon as possible. [With Slack] we have a direct line of communication to our counterparts at the companies we work with most frequently."

Mike Yakovlev, Manager of Technology Alliances, Zendesk



5.

The winners are accelerating work through automation



The final big theme dominating the new world of work is automation. By automating routine day-to-day processes, sales teams can free up hours of time for more valuable work—like selling. Think of any task that takes sales professionals away from interacting with customers, and there's a good chance that task can be automated.

Slack offers several ways for sales organizations to automate routine tasks and maximize sales team productivity.

App integrations

As mentioned earlier, integrating Slack with core sales apps like Salesforce, Troops and DocuSign removes the need to switch between different systems, not only giving teams access to key information from multiple systems but also saving valuable minutes each day.

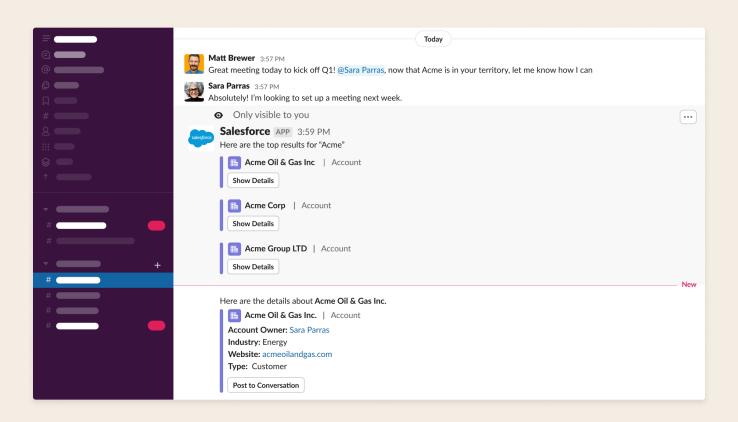
> Australian workers estimated they are spending on average 22 minutes a day navigating between workplace apps. That's almost two hours a week and 95 hours a year—or 12 working days of lost productivity.

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The Remote Work Tech Effect

With Salesforce integration, for example, sales teams can get lead notifications, claim them, and log calls and quick voice-recorded notes in Salesforce—all without having to leave Slack. They can pull account records into Slack with a simple /salesforce [account name] command, making it quick and easy to share context and history with cross-function partners.

A new ecosystem economy demands a new partner playbook



Opportunity stage updates can also be automatically piped into the Slack channel for managers to see, so reps don't need to stop what they're doing to provide an update.

At the ground transport division of ride-sharing company Lyft, integration with Salesforce makes sales more efficient. Using Troops, an integration that connects Salesforce and Slack, reps can update deal stages and their pipeline dashboard right in Slack.

The benefits are twofold: A rep doesn't have to update each individual deal in Salesforce, and key stakeholders get better visibility into pipeline and customer data.

"We're spending more time prospecting and less time on the administrative work updating deals in Salesforce," says Tyler Lefeber, senior strategic account executive at Lyft Business. "There's no doubt reps are able to source more business and close deals faster."

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Tyler Lefeber, Senior Strategic Account Executive, Lyft Business

Browse more than 2,300 Slack integrations in the App Directory.

Automated workflows

In sales more than anywhere else, time is money—and the less time reps spend on admin and documentation, the more time they can spend selling. Slack makes it easy to automate routine tasks using bots and process automation, without even having to involve IT.

We've seen sales teams use Slack automation to do things like:

- Pull account details from the CRM into Slack for everyone to look at
- Log calls and call notes in the CRM without leaving Slack
- Create update reports for leaders using data pulled automatically from the CRM
- Instantly alert managers and account teams on changes to deal stage
- Generate customer slide decks on-demand with customized account data from multiple sources

A new ecosystem economy demands a new partner playbook

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| + | Priority accounts-acme-corp M Projects # # # # | Current challenges: global team, disparate tools used across departments Roadmap excited them, upcoming Q2 features alleviated their concerns about security Budget set aside, RFPs have been sent out to two other vendors, but we are their top choice Salesforce IPP 17:22 Opportunity stage has changed Acme Corp Opportunity Owner: @paul Account: Acme Corp Amount: 15,249.95 Customer status: Existing customer - Upgrade Opportunity stage: Proposal/Price quote Probability: 75% Recommended subscription: Plus Edit alerts for this record | Đ |
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And **Slack Workflow Builder** lets teams quickly build automated workflows in Slack using a simple drag-and-drop interface—no need for coding, no need to wait for IT help.

Workflow Builder even has a library of pre-built workflows ready to implement in Slack, from providing new hires with links to onboarding materials to sending a request to senior leadership to meet with a customer.

Read more about automating workflows with Workflow Builder.

Custom apps and bots

Sales teams that have a good relationship with IT—or access to another source of developer talent—can also integrate their own custom-built apps into Slack. If there's a process that takes up valuable selling time, building an app to automate it can massively increase team productivity.

One of our favorite examples is an app we built for our own Slack sales team, which we've called Midas Touch. It saves our sales reps literally hundreds of hours every week by automating the process of creating sales decks for specific accounts.

Midas Touch leverages Slack integrations with Salesforce, Looker and Google Slides to automatically build an on-brand stylish deck and populate it with charts and data relevant to the prospect. Rather than spending hours combing through data to build a deck from scratch, a rep has to spend only a few minutes getting the Midas-built deck ready for presentation to the customer.



Midas Touch Bot APP 3:35 PM Hello, I'm Midas Touch. I can build a customized gSlides 🗖 sales deck with just a few clicks. Learn more ...

Hooray! I'm working on your slides for Acme Corp 🤹. I'll send you a OM when they are ready! Most accounts should only take a few minutes but some large ones can take 20 or more.

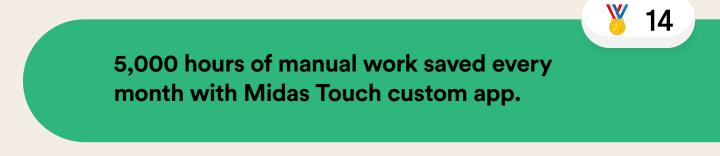
Your slides for Acme Corp are ready!

Acme Corp (2019-10-21)

Acme Corp has 1.6K weekly active users, 13.3M messages, and 224 installed apps across 34 workspaces.



Since we launched Midas Touch in October 2019, it's saved our sales org around 5,000 hours of manual work each month. That's time that can instead be used better serving our customers.

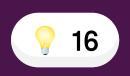


Read more about how we built the Midas Touch app for Slack.



6.

The digital-first way to reinvent sales



As a senior sales leader, you are working to meet customer expectations, engage sales employees, align partners, build culture and automate sales processes. Fundamentally, you are navigating the needs of the business with the rapid changes in buying preferences of your customers. The future of sales isn't just doing more. It's a shift to an aligned, multifaceted, automated (but still fundamentally human), digital-first way of engaging with customers. Slack can be the fast track to that shift.

Methodology

The Remote Employee Experience Index is based on data from a survey of 9,032 knowledge workers who identify as "skilled office workers" in the U.S., the U.K., France, Germany, Japan and Australia. It analyzes the key perceptual elements of the working experience for 3,480 of the workers surveyed who are primarily working remotely. The survey was fielded between November 25 and December 30, 2020, via GlobalWebIndex, a third-party online panel provider, and commissioned by Slack. Results were weighted based on sector and population.

To assess the impact of working remotely, each element is scored on a 5-point scale, from "much better" to "much worse" than working in the office, with the midpoint being "about the same as working in the office." The highest possible index score of +100 would indicate that, in aggregate, all remote knowledge workers feel much better about all elements of the Index. A neutral score of 0 would indicate no net change, and a score of -100 would indicate that employees feel much worse about working from home across each element.





Talk to us about supporting your new way of working

Far from being a barrier, the move to remote and flexible working creates many opportunities to improve the way sales teams communicate, collaborate and close deals. Sales leaders can play a leading role in making the right changes happen—and Slack is here to help.

Talk to us about how we've supported other sales organizations to operate with greater speed, focus and cohesion—and how we can support you too.

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This isn't some far-off future; this is now and next year and the year after that if we only embrace the opportunity to reimagine and the responsibility to reinvent."

Stewart Butterfield, Co-Founder, and CEO, Slack



About Slack

Slack has transformed business communication. It's the leading channel-based messaging platform, used by millions to align their teams, unify their systems, and drive their businesses forward. Only Slack offers a secure, enterprise-grade environment that can scale with the largest companies in the world. It is a new layer of the business technology stack where people can work together more effectively, connect all their other software tools and services, and find the information they need to do their best work. Slack is where work happens.



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