



E-BOOK

Reinventing Sales Teams:

# Shifting from Road Warriors to Digital Warriors

RECORDING ●



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Sellers are having to learn new ways of working in order to adapt to a primarily digital environment. That is not by choice. The saying generally attributed to Albert Einstein states: every crisis brings opportunity. And the current shift to remote selling can be an opportunity. **Now may be the perfect time to build a stronger digital sales organization—one that not only survives these challenging times, but thrives well beyond them.**

Lessons from previous economic disruptions illustrate that businesses with the right balance of defensive and offensive moves find themselves in a stronger position when they come out the other side. Among the key actions taken by these successful companies is an increased focus on operational efficiency.

Sales teams are losing the in-person interactions that both build connections and make them more successful. Still, they can gain long-term viability by embracing that change and making operational improvements to capture what has been lost in new ways. Sales leaders have a responsibility to look for innovative approaches and new ways to compensate for the sudden lack of in-person interaction. It's their job to turn forced change into opportunities for improvement. **Enter digital storytelling.** Content is key to this new approach. Digital storytelling requires solutions that enable sellers to discover relevant, personalized content targeted to their buyer's journey, as well as the ability to share that content easily with customers. Digital storytelling provides sellers an effective way to continue to meaningfully engage with buyers, virtually.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://hbr.org/2010/03/roaring-out-of-recession>

**A Harvard Business Review study of how businesses weathered economic downturns<sup>1</sup> found that companies which performed well after recessions deployed “a specific combination of defensive and offensive moves.”**

**These high-performing companies fared better by reducing costs in a targeted manner and focusing more on operational efficiency than their rivals did, even as they continued to invest in the future by spending on marketing, R&D, and new assets.**

# Forced Changes

For most sales teams, the greatest loss from the recent, rapid changes to the way we work is the in-person interactions they heavily rely on to engage customers. Gone are the regular face-to-face meetings with long-term customers or the countless opportunities to make connections with new potential buyers at trade shows or conferences.

Field sales teams know the value of in-person contact:

- You go for drinks with your main customer advocate the night before the big on-site meeting and take the temperature of the organization...
- You chat with a new stakeholder before the meeting starts, making a personal connection while stirring your coffee...
- At lunch, you're able to answer more detailed questions that only come up because of the informal nature of the conversation.

When you are on site all day, you are likely to meet additional, influential decision makers and you gain a much deeper appreciation of their pain points and objections. Confined to a set hour for a virtual meeting that is scheduled for a specific purpose, you lose those informal conversations—which makes it more challenging to build the relationships that may lead to a sale.



# Challenges Extend to Inside Sales

It's not just outside sales suffering from the loss of in-person interactions. While inside sales has historically done much of their work through digital communications, they did much of their training, information sharing, and team building in person. This has disappeared for now.

BDR (Business Development Representative) and SDR (Sales Development Representative) teams have a tough job: cold calling and trying to engage customers earlier in the pipeline. In many organizations, inside sales is a close-knit team and spends a lot of time socializing together, sharing knowledge and experiences over lunch or dinner, and participating in ongoing in-person training. These activities keep their enthusiasm up, bolster morale, and help them to support one another in sales efforts.

Now, BDRs and SDRs are largely left with the most challenging part of the job. The fun part, the social aspects and the joy of being part of a physical team is largely gone.





# The Opportunity

Companies that quickly adapt during challenging times are also well-positioned for success when the business climate improves and will need to:

- Move to a digital-first culture
- Enable broad sharing of best practices
- Replace non-verbal cues with data cues
- Leverage technology to reinvent operations

## Digital First and Foremost

Digital has been an important method of sales for a long time. Now, it must be the primary method for sales, marketing, meetings, and work. With more and more companies declaring their plans to continue remote work for the long run, connecting online is likely to remain 80% of the 80-20 rule.

When it comes to sales, your goals and metrics for success haven't changed, but how you achieve them has. You still have to keep the pipeline full, but now you have to do that primarily with digital approaches. So, evaluate the customer journey, understand how you used to move deals through the pipeline, and consider how to replace in-person methods with online ones. Then use the opportunity to consider new solutions to optimize the journey.

Digital storytelling is now front and center. You must sell on value and convey that value effectively. Your organization and sales teams will need to make the extra effort to engage with customers and understand how changes in the market are impacting their business and needs. Then adapt your marketing messages and your approach to address those changed needs.

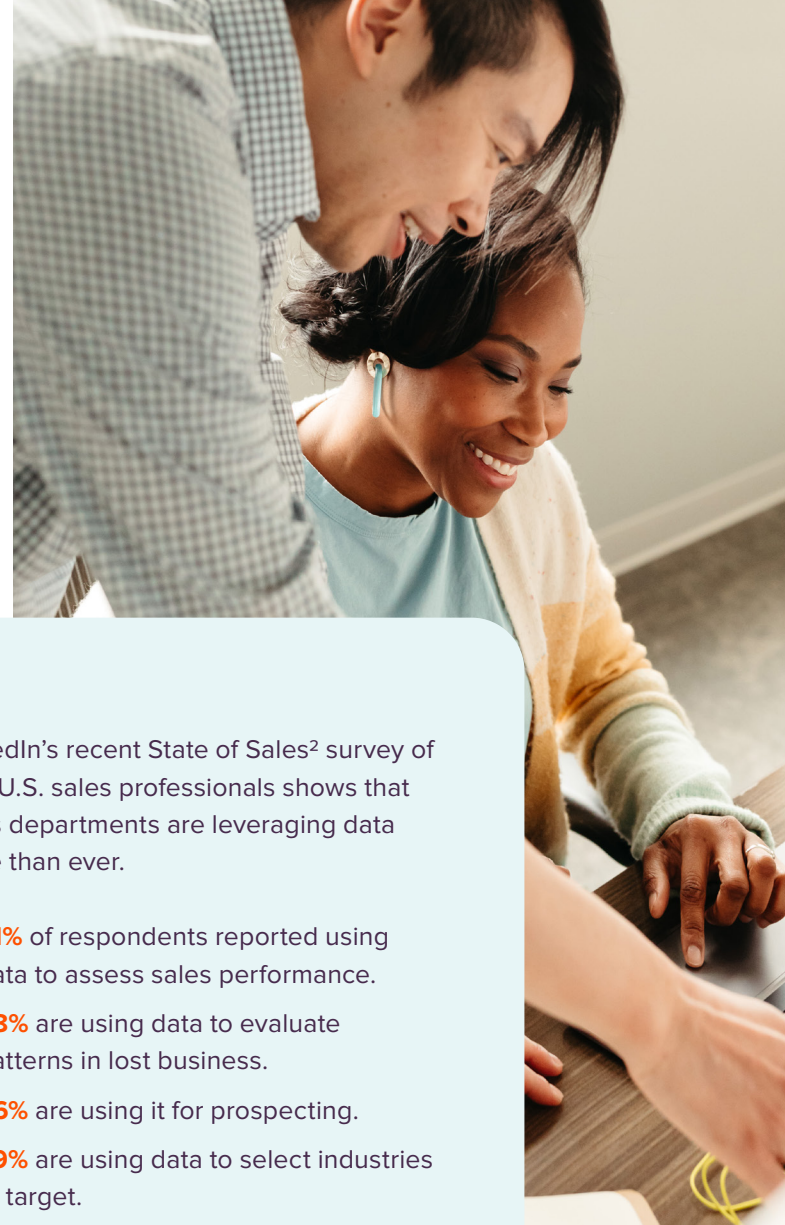
At the same time, your product and company story have to stay consistent and on brand. That means sales and marketing alignment. Align on how to move prospects through the pipeline and stay consistent in your digital storytelling. The right sales enablement solution can help by serving as a single source of content and making it easy for sellers to discover, personalize, and deliver the right information for their buyers, and then measure impact.

## Share Winning Strategies

Sharing best practices is critical now. The good news is that with less time spent traveling, your field sellers—who often have the most experience and knowledge—have more time to share their expertise.

Take the time to build processes and virtual events to connect sellers and, especially, your inside and outside sales teams. To replace those in-person interactions within your BDR and SDR teams, consider a mix of formal meetings and informal communications. Use your chat tool and web meeting tools to create social “events” and threads, initiate fun discussions, and offer online happy hours and team building exercises.





Build incentives to encourage people to share best practices and reach out to one another for advice, information, and expertise. The fundamentals of selling are the same: understand the buyers needs and challenges and sell the value of your product to help them. As sellers work to understand what's changed for customers in different industries and of different sizes, make sure the information they gather is captured and used throughout your organization, particularly as it relates to messaging and content.

Ideally, your marketing and sales enablement solution has intelligent content management capabilities that use insights to measure content effectiveness and serve the best-performing content to sellers throughout the organization.

## Data Is the New Feedback

Let's face it, seeing someone's face in a web meeting just isn't the same as being in the room with them. You can't pick up on the non-verbal cues as easily, which is unfortunate since 55% of communication is non-verbal<sup>3</sup>.

Instead of those cues, you'll need to rely more on data to gauge customer engagement based on digital body language. For example, what and which parts of the content you send is the customer spending time on? Which pieces of content and information are resonating in specific industries or geographies?

For a given persona or buyer at a specific stage of the customer journey, what information are they seeking?

LinkedIn's recent State of Sales<sup>2</sup> survey of B2B U.S. sales professionals shows that sales departments are leveraging data more than ever.

- **51%** of respondents reported using data to assess sales performance.
- **48%** are using data to evaluate patterns in lost business.
- **56%** are using it for prospecting.
- **49%** are using data to select industries to target.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.zdnet.com/article/salespeople-navigating-digital-transformation-data-virtual-selling-in-new-normal-says-linkedin/>

<sup>3</sup> Silent Messages (1971), Albert Mehrabian





**Make it easier for your sellers by **integrating systems** so that this kind of engagement information surfaces in the tools your sellers use daily.**

Data is only useful if you have access to it when you need it. Make it easier for your sellers by integrating systems so that this kind of engagement information surfaces in the tools your sellers use daily. Today's more powerful sales enablement solutions use machine learning to better analyze data and even make recommendations for sales actions based on that analysis.

With so much competition for attention, buyers need a good reason to take your call. They need even more motivation to spend a half hour in a web meeting with you. Knowing what information the buyer is seeking out and engaging with helps by highlighting the buyer's particular challenges and pain points.

## **Increase Front-Office Operational Efficiency with Technology**

Companies that succeeded in previous economic downturns balanced cuts with investments, focusing in particular on improving efficiency in front line operations, not just back-office processes. Increasing workforce productivity of go-to-market teams can have a pivotal impact on business performance. Implementing the right tools and processes ensures your business is ready to take advantage of economic upswings, while other companies are left behind still trying to build those systems.

Sales enablement is central to increasing efficiency. Long before the current shift in selling, leading companies were using sales enablement and marketing automation to improve business performance and operational efficiency.



In fact, a recent Seismic-commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting<sup>4</sup> found a direct correlation between sales enablement maturity and a company's ability to meet and exceed revenue goals. Customers that use the Seismic Storytelling Platform™ have seen:

**350%**

increase in  
content usage

**275%**

boost in  
conversations

**65%**

more revenue  
generated by new reps

These organizations have adopted two strategic approaches to drive greater levels of efficiency in their go-to-market teams:

- Centralizing content in one system to surface the right content to the right people, anchored by in-depth engagement analytics.
- Using content automation and personalization at scale to free up precious time, budget and resources to focus on revenue generation activities.

An advanced system with built-in analytics and intelligent content management ensures a virtuous cycle of continuous improvement. With visibility into what content potential customers are engaging with, including specific segments and personas, marketing teams can retire content that isn't working and create more effective content based on the data Seismic provides. By optimizing that content based on analytics—from both the marketing and sales sides of the house—your organization gets the most value from your content, optimizes marketing spend and leverages content in the best way to move prospects through the pipeline and towards making purchases.

<sup>4</sup> <https://learn.seismic.com/analyst-report-forrester-the-state-of-enterprise-sales-enablement-2019>





## Conclusion

Many of the changes that have taken place in the business world are likely to remain. These changes have downsides for sellers, but they also present unprecedented opportunities to transform sales and marketing for the future. The shift to a predominantly virtual selling model will be permanent in many sales organizations. Those businesses that take advantage of the shift to spearhead investments in tools and processes for the future are likely to be the winners in the ebb and flow of the modern business climate.

# About Seismic

Seismic is the global leader in enablement, helping organizations engage customers, enable teams, and ignite revenue growth. The Seismic Enablement Cloud™ is the most powerful, unified enablement platform that equips customer-facing teams with the right skills, content, tools, and insights to grow and win. From the world's largest enterprises to startups and small businesses, more than 2,000 organizations around the globe trust Seismic for their enablement needs. Seismic is headquartered in San Diego with offices across North America, Europe, and Australia.

To learn more, visit [Seismic.com](https://www.seismic.com) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Interested in learning how Seismic can help you make the shift from road warrior to digital warrior? [Request a Demo](#).

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