How a Data-Driven Sales Strategy Boosts Revenue and Customer Loyalty

In the new era of next-gen business technology you need to ask and answer pertinent questions to unlock new sales opportunities and build relationships based on a deeper understanding of your customers' needs.

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In the post-Covid era, gone are the days of sales representatives "just dropping in with doughnuts." Travel restrictions and social distancing protocols have done away with much of the wining and dining, which previously provided savvy sales reps excellent opportunities to build relationships with clients and gain a deeper understanding of their needs.

Today, sales have gone all-in virtual, and sales teams need to pivot their approaches to cultivating relationships. What's more, they increasingly need to demonstrate their value with the right product and service offerings to best support their client's business and make the necessary pandemic pivots. And what distributors need more than ever is a way to find missing dollars and to garner an extra point in the margin game.

In a recent survey from McKinsey, B2B buyers indicated that they value three things above all from sellers: speed, transparency, and expertise. Therefore, sales leaders should take the time to revamp their sales operations to equip their salesforce to deliver on these needs and differentiate their offerings.

A data-driven sales strategy can help you meet these needs and build a different type of relationship than you've had with your customers in the past – one that drives improved revenue and customer loyalty.

This is the practice of next-gen business technology, driven by data that enables you to ask and answer pertinent questions to unlock new sales opportunities while bringing a greater value-add to your customers.

New Insights for Sales Reps

Many distributors have extensive amounts of data on their customer orders. Today, it's imperative that this data is harnessed to provide a 360-degree view of customers' transaction history – a "map of the world" with insights on top prospects for sales engagement.

Insights on the **top ten products a customer has purchased with corresponding data on order volume – up or down quarter-over-quarter and month-over-month** can provide a detailed picture of changes in buying behavior.

And with visibility on all accounts that have reduced their order volume, sales reps can ask probing questions to understand the "why" behind this buying behavior. i.e., Did a competitor step in and win on price? Did the customer buy too much inventory, which now they may need to unload?

Some of these questions will lead to actions that you, as a distributor, will need to resolve internally. If a competitor has worked their way into an account and undercuts your pricing, your business may need to look at alternative vendors to source that specific product at a lower price.


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Other questions, such as inventory levels, can lead to an opportunity to help that customer creatively find ways to unload that excess inventory.

Insights on **customers decreasing in overall sales order volume with no CRM activity over the last six to eight weeks** can present an opportunity to flag customers for win-back campaigns or special promotions. Is the customer dissatisfied with product quality, on-time delivery record, or the customer service they've received? These crucial conversations can reveal valuable insights and opportunities for improvement. There's a good chance that if one customer has an issue, others may be experiencing the same thing.

Insights on **customers increasing their purchasing volume over the last six months with no recent sales engagement** can identify customer accounts that are diamonds in the rough. These customers are happy doing business with you, which represents great opportunities for a courtesy call to thank them. Meanwhile, you can investigate if they know about new products or services you've added that may be of interest or if they have any open quotes that you can get a quick win from to continue growing and nurturing these accounts.

There are many more ways to slice and dice data to provide insights, and all help answer the quintessential sales question: What customers should I call today and why? With data-driven answers to this question, sales teams can ensure there's never any time wasted – every sales rep can now make calls with a purpose, empowered with insights.

Business technology platforms with solutions like Business Intelligence (BI), CRM, and Pricing can help sales reps optimize their time supporting their current clients to free up time to spend proactively looking for your next big account. It's been said that 60 - 80% of a distributor's business comes from their active customer base. Salespersons generally follow a time-honored strategy of focusing their time on their best accounts. But that was then, and this is now. After the onset of the pandemic and all its disruptive forces, the competitive landscape looks much different. To grow, you'll need to get outside your current client's comfort zone. After all, a new prospect or a customer that's not been active in the past could be your next big account. But if you're not calling on them, you may never find that revenue.
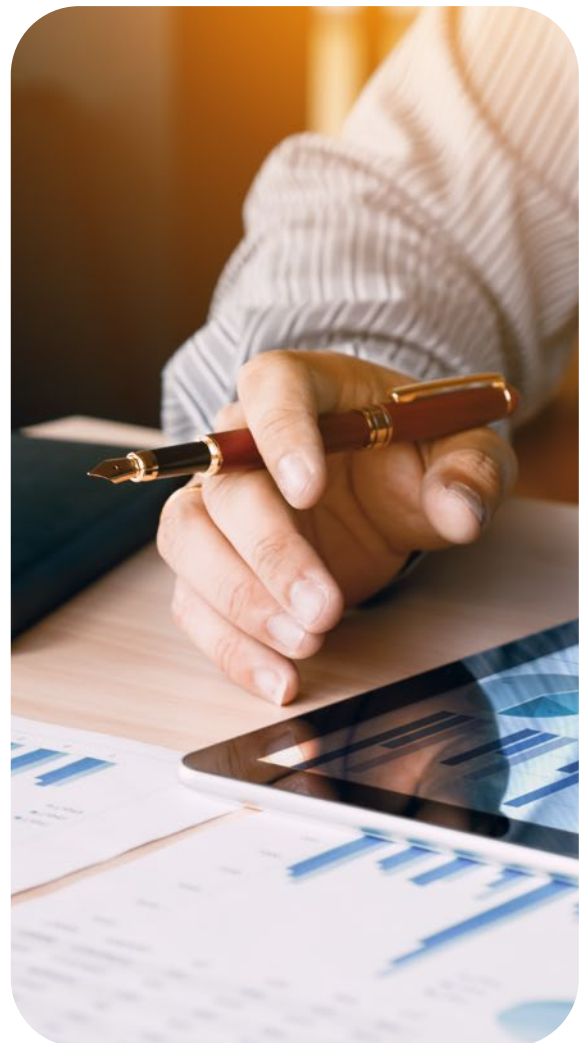
New Insights for Executives and Sales Managers

There's no doubt that business technology can shed light on crucial opportunities for sales reps, but what about executives and sales managers?

For sales managers, insights on **sales representative performance** are a valuable tool to help understand which reps are doing well and those reps that may need additional support or coaching. Sales performance is especially critical as organizations must ensure sales teams are successful in shifting to digital sales strategies and give their sales teams the skills and knowledge they need to succeed working remotely.

Additionally, insights on **profit and loss by product category** are precious. From here, you can discern areas of loss due to pricing overrides. Insights can provide insights into why you are losing out on margins – is there a legitimate pricing problem that may require turning to an alternate vendor that can offer better pricing? Or do you have sales reps who may need coaching around how to sell on a value-add proposition instead of solely price?

Breakthroughs in Usability

With this big wide world of data open to helping sales organizations perform better, why are so few organizations executing data-driven sales enablement strategies?

One reason is that many organizations have an outdated view and inaccurate perception of these tools. For sales reps, first-generation software tools were perceived as Big Brother tools – something management uses to look over their shoulder digitally. While management saw the value in these tools, their value was questionable for sales reps. The lack of value is primarily because the time and effort spent inputting data far exceeded the value that sales got out of them. Is it any wonder then that these primitive software tools have left a residual bad taste in the mouth of sales teams? Today business technology systems are built for purpose, giving sales reps a tremendous competitive edge.
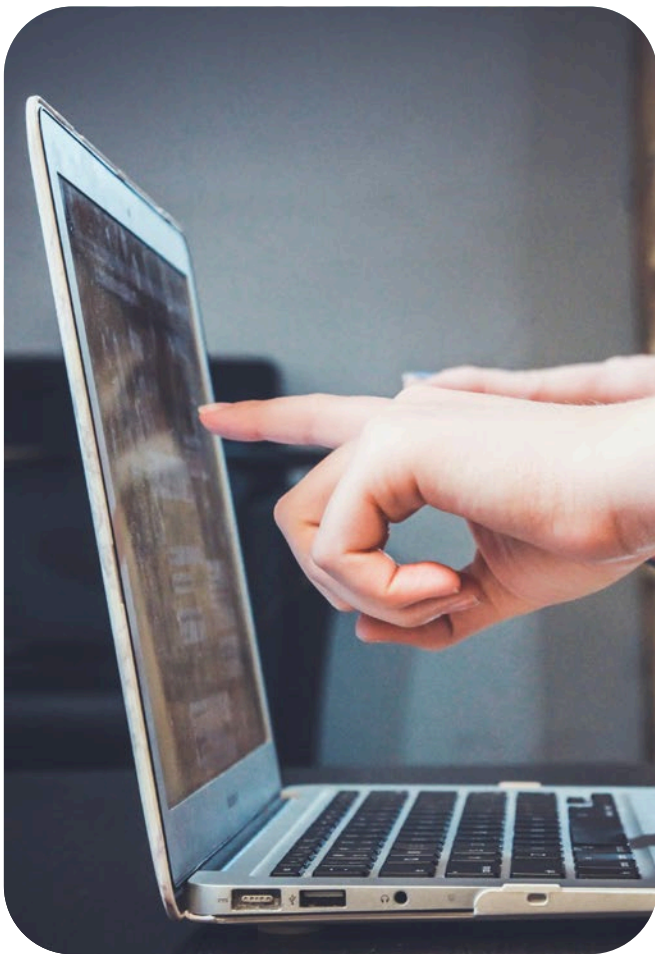
As well, there have been tremendous advances in user experience and data access. These advances are a quantum leap from the past process where sales reps would have to request custom reports and SQL database queries from a systems administrator, possibly waiting a week to get it. Today platforms with BI, CRM, and Pricing tools make data so fluid and malleable. They surface vital information sales reps can use to take action at regular intervals in an automated fashion or even on-demand via mobile phones or tablet devices.

Leveraging Data to Transform Your Client Relationships

Sales reps win when they leverage data to laser guide them to the best sales opportunities. Now, sales teams can operate not on a hunch or gut feel but driven by actual bona fide data. This data translates into improved sales efficiency and better use of salespersons' time and resources.

But the real payoff is the ability to transform your client relationships; data-driven sales strategies can go a long way in demonstrating your value as a partner committed to their success. Data provides the opportunity to have deeper conversations with customers. These data-driven conversations, in turn, help you earn the customer's trust by being more knowledgeable about their business issues and more resourceful.

Ready to get in the data-driven driver's seat? White Cup's platform consisting of BI, CRM, and Pricing enables distributors to make sense of their data and make business decisions that improve revenue performance. We can help you connect the dots of your data across critical business systems, reveal key insights via analysis, and provide the tools you need to take action for revenue improvement.

About Us

White Cup turns a distributor's sales pains into profit gains. Our CRM, Business Intelligence (BI), and Pricing software make it easier for you to sell more, keep more profit and beat the competition. With over 20 years of experience, White Cup is trusted by more than 1,000 customers globally.

To learn more, visit whitecupsolutions.com.

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