SLACK SALES ELEVATE

A VALOIR REPORT

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Sales teams are challenged to close more deals and enter data in customer relationship management (CRM) systems, but siloed tools and manual and inefficient processes limit their productivity. Salesforce Slack Sales Elevate integrates the collaboration capabilities of Slack with Sales Cloud to provide one centralized, connected workplace for sales teams. Valoir found the prebuilt sales dashboards, opportunity lists, deal alert notifications, and mobile capabilities enabled sales teams to simplify data entry and improve real-time deal visibility, driving increased productivity, improved forecasting, and better data capture and management for decision making.

Sales teams are under pressure to deliver results every quarter. However, despite the investments in modern sales force automation (SFA) and customer relationship management (CRM) applications, siloed data and tools, lack of integration of sales-related collaboration, and the need to manually enter data limit the productivity and effectiveness of sales teams.

Although advances have been made in the usability of SFA applications, getting sales people to keep data updated and accurate is the perennial challenge, with sales people reporting they spend 20 to 40 percent of their time on manual data entry.

SFA friction is not just a tax on sales people's time: it handicaps effective team selling and limits managers' ability to effectively plan and forecast pipelines. At the same time, incomplete or incorrect data in SFA systems mean the SFA can't be trusted for sales analysis or planning, let alone for the training of artificial intelligence models.

To address these challenges, Salesforce developed Slack Sales Elevate. To better understand the current opportunities and challenges for sales people, the potential benefits from Sales Elevate features, and best practices for maximizing benefits, Valoir conducted in-depth interviews with a number of Sales Cloud and Slack users and early adopters of Sales Elevate.

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Slack Sales Elevate

Slack Sales Elevate integrates the collaboration capabilities of Slack with Sales Cloud, artificial intelligence (AI), and automation to streamline entering data into Sales Cloud, supporting sales-focused collaboration in the flow of work while reducing the friction of switching between applications.

Major features of Sales Elevate include:

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- Role-based customizable sales dashboards enable sales people and managers to easily track and progress deals.
- Real-time sales alerts and reminders prompt sales people to take action and inform managers when progress on a deal hasn't happened as expected.
- Opportunity lists enable sales people to rapidly update multiple opportunities directly in Slack that are automatically synched with Sales Cloud.
- Mobile access enables users to access, update, and monitor the progress of deals on any device.
- Customizable key performance indicators (KPIs) enable users to easily track individual and team progress.

Why Slack Sales Elevate

Valoir found that there were three main reasons why Sales Cloud customers choose to adopt Sales Elevate over other tools:

- Sales Cloud integration. Because Sales Elevate is built leveraging both the Slack and Salesforce platforms, it is tightly integrated with Sales Cloud. Bi-directional real-time synching capabilities mean Sales team can reduce the time spent switching between applications and have their collaboration around deals happen in the same place as their deal data entry and updating.
- Embedded best practices. The dashboards, templates, and KPIs within Sales Elevate encourage even inexperienced sales people and managers to follow sales best practices, focus their efforts, and track progress in a more data-driven, scalable way.
- Streamlined updating. The opportunity list capability within Sales Elevate enables individual to update multiple opportunities in one screen rather than having to toggle through individual opportunities in Sales Cloud and enables teams and sales leaders to receive real-time notifications when a deal has not progressed according to plan.
- Ease of use. The mobile capabilities of Sales Elevate enable the rapid updating and reviewing of deal progress from anywhere, driving more complete and up-to-date sales data.

Key benefits

In our analysis of Slack Sales Elevate, Valoir found companies achieve three main benefits: increased productivity, improved forecasting and visibility, and increased data capture and management.

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

Valoir found that the connected and centralized data and collaboration, intelligent automation, and data-driven efficiency gains driven by Sales

Slack Sales Elevate can increase sales productivity by 6 to 12 percent.

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Elevate enables individuals, sales teams, and managers to increase productivity while reducing the burden on sales operations teams.

For individuals, the ability to update multiple opportunities at once with opportunity list filters, reduce the time spent switching between collaborative applications and Sales Cloud, and access and update Sales Cloud easily from anywhere reduces the time spent entering data while increasing the completeness, timeliness, and accuracy of data in Sales Cloud.

The resulting increase in productivity will obviously depend on the level of automation and integration companies have already introduced before adopting Slack Sales Elevate, average deal size, and the relative complexity of the product and sales process; Valoir found the average sales person could increase productivity by 6 to 12 percent. Users said:

> We've cut down on internal e-mails. The only time I get an e-mail from a peer is them forwarding an e-mail they sent to a customer. With my customers that are on Slack, I generally Slack them before e-mailing, particularly if I want a quick response.

> I use Elevate mainly for forecasting and updating opportunities quickly and easily [with opportunity list filters]. It's cut the time I spend updating opportunities by at least 20 percent.

Sales managers can also expect productivity savings from Sales Elevate. However, the greatest benefit for managers will come from more effective sales management. Because they can set alerts to be notified when opportunities don't advance as expected, they can more quickly intervene when a particular opportunity stalls and help sales teams to prioritize their efforts. Rather than spending deal review meetings identifying opportunities that are in jeopardy, they can focus their conversations on more strategic coaching and collaboration. Users said:

> If I want to wake up and figure out what's happened in Asia overnight, I don't have to go to my desk – I can look in Slack, I can see the insights and alerts in Elevate that give me what I need… I don't have time to phone every sales guy every minute and say, 'where is this?' and Slack gives me visibility.

> My manager uses [Sales Elevate] to see all our updates and make his own manager notes.

> Communication is up, and e-mails are down to nothing. We're so much more connected and more transparent, and the speed of communication is instant. I can clear what used to be 200 e-mails in the morning in an Uber ride.

Valoir found that Sales Elevate features such as deal insight notifications and KPIs can increase manager productivity by 12 to 18 percent.

Companies considering an investment in Slack Sales Elevate should also consider the potential productivity benefit for sales operations teams and business analysts currently tasked with updating sales forecasts and

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verifying or cleansing data in CRM systems. Better, more complete data entered by sales people will reduce the need for data cleanup, and Sales Elevate's prebuilt dashboards and KPIs will further reduce the burden on business analysts to build and update sales reports and forecasts.

IMPROVED FORECASTING AND VISIBILITY

Beyond the savings in staff time to review and verify forecasts, Sales Elevate users will benefit from more accurate and timely sales forecasts and greater visibility at every stage of the sales cycle. Because sales people can update their forecasts more rapidly, and from any mobile device, teams can move from end-of-week forecast updating to more regular, near real-time updates.

At the same time, automated alerts will inform teams when opportunities don't advance as expected so they know immediately when deals are pushed. As one sales manager said, "*Elevate will go way beyond pipeline and give me ticker-tape headline numbers on how the business is trending. If a big deal pushed before I could see 8 million dollars evaporate from my booking of projects. We just didn't have the visibility or the correct data.*"

INCREASED DATA CAPTURE AND MANAGEMENT

Valoir also found that reducing the friction typically associated with data entry in Sales Cloud will enable companies to capture more complete, accurate, and timely data on opportunities for three main reasons:

- Collaboration and CRM data updates are integrated in one application, so sales people can reduce the time spent switching between applications.
- The ability to update all opportunities quickly without toggling between opportunities in CRM will reduce the likelihood that details are forgotten or omitted.
- The mobile capabilities enable sales people to enter data from anywhere, so they're more likely to update data at the time of interaction with a prospect when it's fresh in their mind.

As one sales manager said, "*When you grow from a small organization to a large one you can't run it on feel. You need people to have information at their fingertips to guide them to move a deal forward or kill it off, and alert us to the things that really need attention and what attention it needs. Last week my funnel went up 10 million in one day, but it didn't sound right. In the list view [in Elevate] I saw two 5-million-dollar opportunities – and it was two sales people talking to the same company. Because Slack is pulling through opportunities in Sales Cloud, I can see that it's a duplicate rather than a parent-child relationship.*"

Increased data capture better positions companies to take advantage of advanced analytics and AI capabilities in Sales Cloud and Data Cloud that wouldn't have been possible before because of incomplete, out-of-date, or inaccurate data. Valoir found that opportunity list filters can

Opportunity list filters can reduce the time spent updating CRM by 20 to 30 percent while improving data capture.

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reduce the time sales people spend updating CRM by 20 to 30 percent while increasing completeness and timeliness of data.

Best practices

Valoir found that companies could achieve the most benefit from Sales Elevate when they followed a few common best practices.

BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT USERS

Turning on Slack and Sales Elevate isn't about rolling it out to everyone as one application; instead, leaders are most successful when they target specific groups with different uses and plan training and communication efforts accordingly.

For example, enterprise account executives have different needs from midmarket account executives, and are likely to benefit more from new opportunity alerts that give them visibility into activity in their key accounts. Midmarket executives may benefit more from an initial focus on the opportunity dashboard that enables them to update multiple opportunities in different accounts at once.

BE SELECTIVE ABOUT NOTIFICATIONS

Rather than creating a lot of notifications – which can rapidly become noise that is easily ignored – the most successful adoption strategy involves setting a few notifications for specific groups of users and letting users configure their own as they become more familiar with Sales Elevate's capabilities.

For example, giving sales leaders automated notifications of pushed deals, those on extended selling teams new opportunity alerts, and everyone notifications on deal wins over a certain threshold can help drive effective use of Sales Elevate and help individuals see what's in for them without being overwhelmed.

SET FLEXIBLE RULES FOR CHANNELS

Determining early on how channels will be structured and named for team selling will ensure everyone's on the same page and the channel structure in Slack is easily understandable and repeatable. Although teams will want some flexibility for adjustment as usage evolves, using initial criteria such as deal size or stage as the trigger for creating a channel can ensure consistent use and visibility.

Taking advantage of the archive feature to automatically archive channels after a deal closes, or after a certain period of time with no channel activity, can help reduce the number of active channels users have to scroll (and they're still available for searching).

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LEVERAGE INTEGRATIONS TO REDUCE CONTEXT SWITCHING

Organizations deploying Sales Elevate as their first exposure to Slack should also look beyond sales operations to see how Slack can be used to reduce context-switching and friction in other areas.

For example, identifying things sales people hate to do – such as submitting expense reports and paid-time-off (PTO) requests – and enabling them to complete those tasks from Slack will deliver quick wins for users while reducing the number of tools users have to touch on a regular basis.

EXPLORE CANVAS AND VIDEO CLIPS TO EXTEND SLACK VALUE

Although Slack is often thought of as a one-time asynchronous text communication tool, taking advantage of its short-video capabilities and long-content canvas spaces can help sales teams work together more effectively.

For example, for companies that have a weekly pipeline review, having users record their updates as they happen and get feedback asynchronously can reduce the need to coordinate lengthy real-time meetings, create a sense of urgency, and provide more persistent content for coaching. Similarly, Canvas can be used to share successful account planning templates and other sales enablement collateral related to specific types of deals directly in deal channels.

FOCUS ON QUICK WINS

Although the ultimate benefits of successful Sales Elevate adoption are greater pipeline accuracy and faster deal velocity, leaders waiting to measure the downstream impact of Sales Elevate on those factors are looking at lagging indicators – and may miss the opportunity to shift adoption and training efforts until they've missed a critical window. Instead, focusing on early indicators – such as usage, frequency of pipeline updates, and other tactical areas where you can start small and track success – can help identify power users and areas where you can promote the greatest short-term tactical benefits from Sales Elevate.

Giving early adopters easy quick wins – such as time savings from using the opportunity dashboard to update multiplate opportunities – will lead to longer-term, more strategic outcomes.

Looking ahead

The pressure on sales managers teams is not going away – and neither is the age-old challenge of getting sales people to enter data in CRM. However, as accurate sales forecasts become more critical for supply chain and resource planning, companies need to reduce the friction associated with effective data entry and forecasting. Slack Sales Elevate delivers on the promise of the Salesforce Slack acquisition by providing

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Sales Cloud users with a single view of deals and deal-related collaboration in one place, reducing that friction.

The short-term benefits for sales teams will be in increased productivity and effectiveness. The longer-term opportunity is to move away from the practice of once-a-week CRM updates that mean a forecast is only close to accurate once a week. By leveraging Sales Elevate for more real-time and automated, trigger-driven updates, sales teams can have more real-time pipeline accuracy – enabling more effective deal remediation, business planning, and data-driven decision making across the organization.

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