

Today's Essential Inside Sales Technologies

Thursday, September 7, 2017 - Written by: [Jeff Kalter](#)



- **Marketing Automation — Act-On**

Marketing comes with a sea of data and a glut of repetitive tasks. Yet keeping that data organized and mining it for insights can provide a competitive edge in the market. And those day-to-day tasks aren't going anywhere.

Rising to the challenge are marketing automation solutions which can provide you with a central marketing database and information on how leads and prospects are interacting with your company. They also empower you to automate marketing processes, magically handling the busy work so that reps can spend more time interacting with prospects.

While many confuse marketing automation with email marketing, it goes a lot further, enabling you to track, orchestrate and optimize all campaigns whether they are on the phone, direct mail, email or via social media.

Because it's cost effective and easy to use, we chose Act-On as our marketing automation solution. Also, it allows us to use some techniques essential for optimizing marketing initiatives, such as drip campaigns, segmentation, lead

scoring and A/B testing. Finally, it integrates well with Salesforce.com.

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Customer Relationship Management — Salesforce.com

You need a customer relationship management (CRM) system to manage customer data as well as your interactions with each client on the phone, live chat, social media or via your website. By having all the information about customers in one place, you can conduct relevant conversations, provide seamless service and drive sales growth.

For CRM, we like Salesforce. It provides excellent visibility into all contacts, enables you to streamline your sales process and thus close sales more rapidly. Because it's cloud-based, business development reps (BDRs), field sales people and other sales personnel can all access the same information at the same time. Plus, you can customize the dashboard to run reports that help with opportunity management, sales forecasting and more.

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Market Intelligence — InsideView

Market intelligence software provides information on markets, the companies within them and the people who work for them. It allows you to approach prospects armed with the insights you need to connect with the right people and have relevant conversations.

InsideView makes it easy to stay on top of what's happening with prospects and customers. All you have to do is set up a Watchlist, and you'll find out about their stock information, speaking engagements, news releases and more. Plus, it's perfect for building lists of contacts within target companies. And, of course, it integrates well with Salesforce.com.

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Business Directory — Hoover's

Business directories are a must-have tool for inside sales because they list companies within various categories such as industry, location and size. They include pertinent data, including business names, addresses, phone numbers, the number of employees and more.

Hoover's is useful when you need the details — what a company does, the revenues they generate and other financial data, phone numbers and addresses and, of course, key contacts. Also, it provides business news to keep you up to date.

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Automatic Dialing

Auto-dialing is a fundamental tool for increasing inside sales' efficiency by increasing productive time on the phone. The dialler does the busy work (dialing numbers), and when voicemail or a live person answers, it connects the call with one of your reps.

This technology eliminates dialing time, wasted time on calls where no person or machine answers and dead time between calls. As a result, reps spend up to 40 or 50 minutes an hour talking on the phone. How does this compare to manual calling? When reps dial the phone themselves, they only spend 10 to 15 minutes an hour talking to leads, prospects and customers, making auto-diallers a no-brainer for inside sales departments.

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Local Dialing SIP Providers

SIP trunking enables you to operate your business phone system over an internet connection. It costs less, is easier to scale up and is more reliable than traditional phone lines. Also, there's one other reason we use SIP providers. If you're calling another country, there's no way for the call recipient to determine on Caller ID that it's an international call. Thus, it gives a local feel to international calls.

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Virtual Conferencing – Join.me

Virtual conferencing has changed the face of sales today. It has empowered salespeople to connect and communicate with people around the globe, sharing their computer screen so all participants can view the same presentation, website or documents. Inside sales reps can now do demos from their desks, saving time, money and making it easy to set up meetings with prospects.

We use Join.me because it's easy to use. It seems to work well with any browser or operating system. If you don't want to waste time on technical issues, that's a huge advantage. Meeting participants just call a phone number or log in via their computers and they're ready to collaborate. Also, it's reliable, allows us to conduct unlimited international virtual conferences, and gives us 5GB of cloud storage.

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Online Learning Management — TalentLMS

Training inside sales people is an ongoing challenge for organizations, but online learning platforms make it easier by allowing you to set up an e-learning portal quickly.

We chose TalentLMS for online learning because its course builder is simple to use, and you can present classes in a visually appealing way. Even if you have no instructional design experience, you'll find it to be a powerful tool. Also, your reps will find it to be user-friendly and straightforward to navigate.

To set up an efficient and successful inside sales force, you need to empower them with technology. That should include marketing automation software, a customer relationship management system, solutions for doing research on markets and businesses, auto-dialling, virtual conferencing and, last but not least, online learning management.

You may have noticed a recurring theme in the inside sales technologies we chose — they are easy to use. With so many solutions necessary, you can't afford a long learning curve for each of them. If you follow that guideline and fill all the technology buckets above, your inside sales reps will have the tools they need to do their jobs successfully.

Published in

[Tele-Services](#)