THE **FUTURE** OF SALES:

Insights for the Best Sales Teams In the Galaxy

Lessonly

SALES AT THE SPEED OF BUSINESS

The pace of global innovation isn't just increasing—it's increasing exponentially. Every week and month, new products hit the market, processes shift, and consumer expectations increase. At the bleeding edge of this perpetual change are sales reps.

Sales teams across the globe must stay ahead of the speed of business if they want to succeed in the market. In fact, the modern sales rep doesn't succeed by increasing the volume of their interactions—they succeed by wholeheartedly and empathetically caring about and listening to their buyers.

Lessonly exists to help teams learn, practice, and perform like never before, and that's why we created this ebook for sales teams. With the input of nine, battle-tested industry veterans, we explore the future of sales and consider how forward-thinking teams can win the market in 2018—and beyond. We hope it inspires your team to do better work.

—*Max* *CEO and Co-founder, Lessonly*

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"The buyer has changed more in the past 5 years than in the past 50, more in the past 10 years than in the past 100. Sales needs to change because buyers are changing."

"

Jill Rowley

MEET THE
CREW

The best advice comes from experience, so we gathered a crew of seasoned sales experts, practitioners, and thought leaders:

DEB CALVERT **President**
People First Productivity Solutions | peoplefirstps.com

Deb has been named one of "The 65 Most Influential Women in Business." She is a UC-Berkeley instructor, field researcher, trainer, instructional designer, speaker, and author. Her newest book is *Stop Selling & Start Leading*.

JEFF HOFFMAN **Educator, Speaker, and Leader**
MJ Hoffman and Associates | mjhoffman.com

Jeff has presented on the topics of sales, sales management, and sales operations to thousands—both in the Fortune 500 and at top universities. He is the author of the award-winning *Your SalesMBA™ and Why You? Why You Now?™*.

OLIVIER L'ABBE **SVP of Sales**
G2 Crowd | G2crowd.com

Olivier has 15 years of sales experience in Silicon Valley, most recently at Fliptop, a predictive scoring platform for B2B companies. He was an integral part of the first enterprise team at Glassdoor working with such accounts as Facebook, JP Morgan Chase, McKinsey, & more.

MICHAEL MANNE **VP of Sales**
Namely | Namely.com

Michael leads sales at Namely, the HR, payroll, and benefits platform built for today's workplace. He comes from a business development background, and holds a Masters in Business Administration from NYU's Stern School of Business and a BA from Georgetown.

MICHELLE PIETSCH
Senior Director of Sales
Drift | Drift.com

Michelle has overseen sales orgs of 50+ people, including directors, managers, account executives, and business development representatives. Previously, she was Associate Vice President at Datadog.

KYLE PORTER
CEO and Co-founder
SalesLoft | SalesLoft.com

Kyle founded SalesLoft, which enables sales teams to deliver an authentic, human sales experience. He is integrally involved in building the Atlanta startup community and is also the President of the Atlanta chapter of AA-ISP.

LORI RICHARDSON
CEO and Founder
Score More Sales | scoremoresales.com

Lori founded Score More Sales and speaks across the globe to help companies grow revenues through strategic sales efforts, using lessons learned from 20 years in B2B sales and leadership roles.

JILL ROWLEY
Chief Growth Advisor
Marketo | Marketo.com

Jill is a social selling evangelist, keynote speaker, and strategic business advisor. She also serves as Chief Growth Officer at Sales for Life, the largest social selling and digital sales training organization in the world.

MARKO SAVIC
CEO and Founder
FunnelCake | GetFunnelcake.com

Marko helps sales and marketing teams identify their roadblocks to growth, increase their pipeline health, and close more deals by optimizing their processes. Previously, he was the Creative Director at Igloo Software.
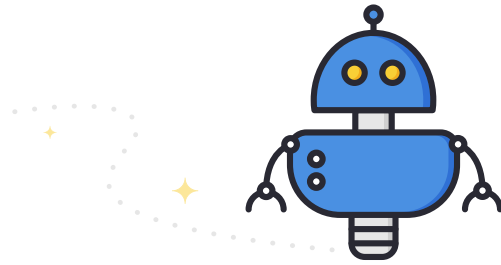
TRENDS OF THE **FUTURE**

Astronomically successful sales teams are always learning and practicing—and they're also looking towards the future for insights that will help their team perform at the highest level. Here are a few trends that will affect the sales universe in 2018.

"Everybody's talking about **artificial intelligence, machine learning**, and the fact that **the simplistic tasks salespeople have done in the past will eventually be gone**. In some companies, they're already gone. The salespeople of 2018 and beyond will be focused on more valuable interactions— looking to better understand the buyer and serving up ideas that are different than something that the buyer could find on Alexa."

— Lori Richardson

"We would be foolish to not to at least consider what **the role of AI in sales** will be two or three years down the line. It's going to impact everything from prospecting to territory planning—maybe even into some levels of negotiation. As an industry, we've got 15 years of CRM data. How that gets applied, and what artificial intelligence applications might be available—that's something everybody needs to be considering."

— Jeff Hoffman

"The sales industry will continue evolving to engage and empower buyers and to dignify customer input. B2C is ahead of B2B in this regard. B2C experiences raise buyers' expectations for what will happen in the B2B buying process. Over time, **the sales industry will be more receptive to buyer demands** and more nimble in meeting them.

— Deb Calvert

"I'm very focused on buyer intent—leveraging the behavior of buyers online to help the sales team be more effective at the account-base level. This is crucial given that B2B buyers are acting like B2C buyers now—a lot of millennials are turning to the web to do research. So the next step is for sales and marketing teams to **engage with buyers based on their behavior."**

— Olivier L'Abbe

"The big trend for 2018 is **conversational selling**. And that's built on a couple different things. It's everyone using tools like Drift and Intercom, to move their lead generation over. But then also thinking how salespeople approach conversations with their prospects—Trying to **treat them more like a human**, really engaging with the prospect on a **one-to-one basis**, and **tailoring the message** to who they are and their needs at the time."

— *Marko Savic*

"The massive proliferation of sales tech vendors has created insane amounts of noise to buyers. These vendors want to 'automate', 'accelerate', and 'replace.' Reps must be weary of this and rise above the noise with their buyer. **The best way to do that is earning trust through sincerity and a human experience.** 2018 will be the year that 'focus on the sales stack' will transform to 'focus on the sales experience'."

— *Kyle Porter*

"Account-Based Selling continues to have a major impact on the profession and overall success of great teams. It's essential to **identify the ideal, high-value target profiles and decision-makers** then communicate with tailored messages and content."

— *Michael Manne*

"Account-Based Marketing is a beast that no one's really been able to tackle, but I'm seeing it more and more with Account-Based Selling, where sales teams have dedicated accounts and they're actually taking the time to write personalized messages to individuals in those accounts. **People don't want to be hounded or mass-emailed anymore.** And it works—I get probably 20 to 30 sales emails a day, and I'll respond if it's a personalized one."

— *Michelle Pietsch*
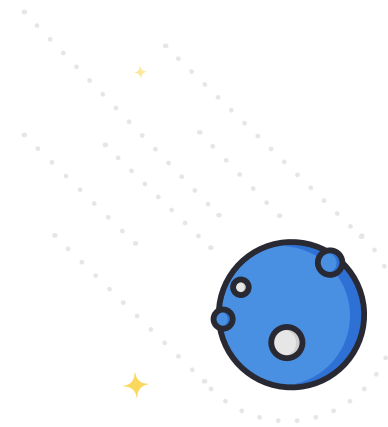
BRACE FOR **IMPACT**

These sales trends will radically change the sales profession for the long haul. Here are some of the seismic shifts that every sales leader with their eye on the horizon should consider.

"In the next 5-10 years, the sales industry will continue to become **more data-driven.** There are many different areas including demand generation, pipeline management, forecasting, and numerous others where improved data analysis can have a positive impact. The companies and sales organizations that measure and execute best will increase the efficiency, productivity, and overall success of their sales organizations."

— Michael Manne

"Jeff Bezos says that he often gets the question, 'What will change in the next ten years?' His response is, 'What's more important is what *won't* change in the next ten years—because that's how you build a business.' What won't change in the next ten years is **B2B buyers with business challenges will want to do business with those they trust**—and trust comes from human interactions of value and customer-first solutions."

— *Kyle Porter*

"Reps will need to become better at **finding out the customer's pains without having to get on the phone** to run a discovery call. Many vendors already expect the salesperson to know a considerable amount about them and their business before the first call. I expect this will only keep growing with all the available information already published online."

— *Olivier L'Abbe*

"More progressive businesses are moving towards a **unified view of the customer life cycle,** where you have sales, marketing, and customer success under a single leader, which might be a chief revenue officer or chief customer officer. Where this alignment exists between sales, marketing, and success is going to blur even further than it has already and will really change the entire go-to-market strategy."

— *Marko Savic*

"**Sales training will change.** There will be a lot more virtual, just-in-time training and more ways to get knowledge as you need it. We don't run into longer training sessions and things like that anymore. It's really about immersion on the job—through peers, an onboarding program, ongoing coaching, and just-in-time learning."

— *Lori Richardson*
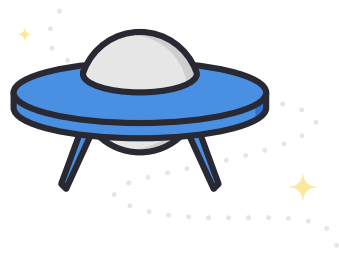
TOOLS FOR THE **VOYAGE**

The rapid pace of technological change has flooded the market with hundreds of software tools to help sales teams do better work. Here are a few things to consider before purchasing your next sales tool:

"Enablement tools are extremely useful when they inform sellers and help them stay organized. Like any tool, knowing when and how to use them is essential. It takes practice. **Being good with tools does not replace being good with people.** Over-relying on tools is what makes them detrimental...Sales success comes from the right balance of quality human interaction and appropriate use of supplemental tools."

— *Deb Calvert*

"I think the most important thing about purchasing sales tech is to find out if **the product is already fully baked.** Oftentimes, companies come up with great ideas, get a Series A round of funding and then start selling software to customers, when in fact, the product is not ready for prime time. It's crucial when buying new software to do two things: First, ask to speak with customers who are using the software and have them share their advice on how to best implement it. Second, it's imperative to understand how you will measure the ROI."

— *Olivier L'Abbe*

"I love technology. I love tools. I love being more efficient. I love having greater real-time insights. I love all of that, **but if I don't have the right mindset about buyer-centricity,** then I'm going to use these tools in the wrong way."

— Jill Rowley

"The sales industry is headed towards people using more of a chat and conversation mechanism to get in touch with their prospects in real-time. **It adds that human interaction** that most people are looking for when they're looking to purchase or they have qualifying questions that they want answered. It puts a face to a product instead of just a sales rep hounding someone via email with the same email or cold call."
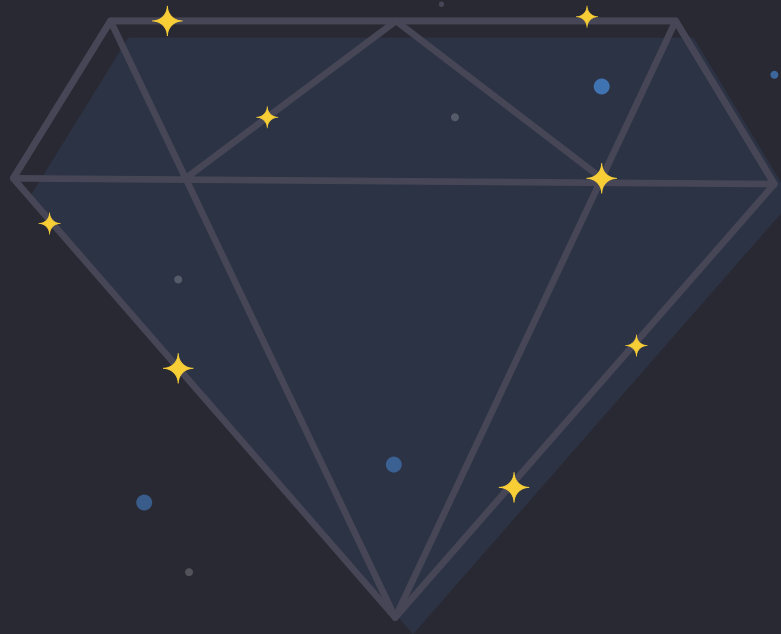
— Michelle Pietsch
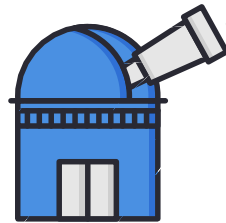
QUALITIES OF
ALL-STAR REPS

The sales rep of the future needs new skills to address new challenges. With higher pressure and busier prospects than ever, cultivate these traits to help your sales reps soar.

1 QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

"I hear reps saying all the time, 'I sent 300 emails.' Okay, well, were those emails personalized? Were they customized? We don't want the spray and pray model. For reps to be successful, they have to listen and tie information into the prospect's pain points."

— *Michelle Pietsch*

2 **BUYER-OBSESSED**

"Nobody wants to be a target in your database; nobody wants to be prospected with call, email, call, email, call, email. So a salesperson who wants to succeed needs to do research on her buyer. What is my buyer trying to achieve? What is their current situation? We need to be customer-obsessed and always look at things through the eyes of our customer."

— *Jill Rowley*
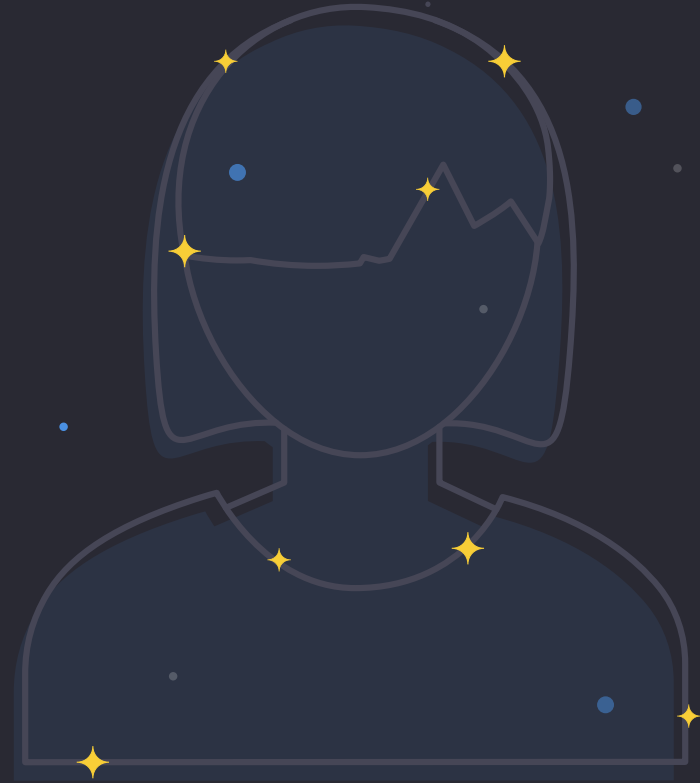
3 CURIOUS

"The idea that you're going to be ultimately prepped before every call, demo, or trial is impossible for a sales rep to achieve. So the rep has to become a far better listener and far more curious when talking to customers, because their opportunity to qualify has shrunk."

— Jeff Hoffman

4 **CONNECTORS**

"The most important ingredient in sales success is the ability to connect with people. You can't close sales until you open relationships. No enablement tool can replace the human-to-human factor. Sales trainers and sales enablement specialists should focus on helping sellers build soft skills that engage, inspire, and enable buyers."

— Deb Calvert

5 **COMMITTED TO LEARNING**

"Sales reps need to be coachable— willing to learn new things and improve every day. We have to always look at what we're doing and shift and morph it a little bit...Really listen to what your buyer is saying and don't just assume that you know what their problem is. If you know your buyer's customers' challenges, you can really help your buyer."

— Lori Richardson
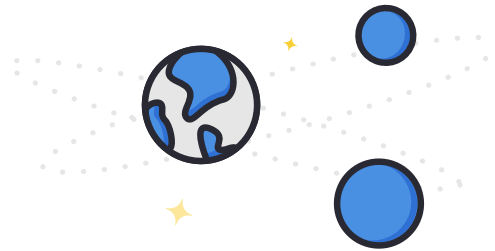
WANT AN
OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD
SALES TEAM?

To push a sales team to success, sales leaders, trainers, and enablement professionals should focus on the following ideas:

PEOPLE

"Structured mentorship programs provide major benefits to both sides through increased collaboration, learning, and skill development. For the new team member, the overall chance of success is greatly enhanced by the guidance and insights from a more experienced team member. For the experienced team member, it's an opportunity to enhance their coaching, communication, and management skills. For the organization, it's a great way to accelerate the path to productivity for new hires."

— *Michael Manne*

PRACTICE

"The ability teach your reps, then quiz them right away—and do that continually—is crucial. You can have a kick-off meeting or sales training where you unload a bunch of stuff—but people aren't going to remember 75% of it 2 weeks later. So the important thing here in sales is continuously training. Practice is important to make sure that reps keep learning every week. So you've got to feed them knowledge so that they learn and get better as professionals."

— Olivier L'Abbe
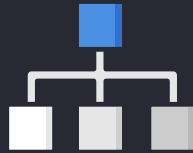
PROCESS

"To build repeatable enablement and training, **we need a defined process that people know how to follow.** It's about eliminating the roadblocks in your funnel, identifying what information is required at each point, and making it super simple and easy to use so that reps can follow it. Understand why sales people are losing deals or why deals are stagnating, and solve those recurrent patterns. Be proactive and ask, 'Where are the real issues we should be solving?' and 'How do we remove those roadblocks from the team?'"

— *Marko Savic*

PACING

"The expression I use is, '**patience with people and impatience with pipelines.'** You want to build an environment that's rabidly impatient with the book of business and the velocity of opportunities at the top of the funnel, but at the same time is incredibly patient with the people that they're managing the process with. Most organizations are completely inverted—they work under the assumption of incredible impatience with every deal, but lots of laziness in stewarding the pipeline."

—Jeff Hoffman

LESSONLY IS TRAINING SOFTWARE FOR SALES TEAMS

Reinforce Best Practices

The best sales teams constantly improve their skills through dedicated practice. Lessonly's easy-to-create lessons—with Video Response—enable reps to practice and hone their sales skills.

Accelerate Rep Performance

Quickly create lessons based on new products, services, procedures, and best practices. Deliver knowledge in bite-sized, modern lessons to bring reps up-to-speed faster and keep them sharp.

Close More Deals

Measure the impact of learning and practice on actual performance. See metrics from completion data and scores to actual revenue added in order to more accurately quantify the return on investment for each sales rep.

Launch team training with Lessonly.

Learn More

Lessonly