

Leading the Sales Force of the Future: The Ultimate Guide to Agile Sales Management



Sponsored by

 AMBITION

 Base

 *leadGenius*[®]

 LearnCore[™]

Sales is changing – and fast.



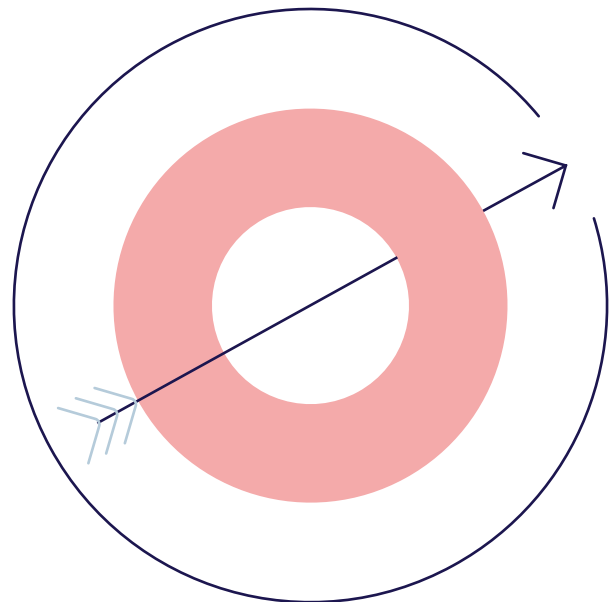
The tools and tactics that got the job done just ten years ago don't stand a fighting chance of enabling sales or closing deals today.

Consider these three major market shifts that are reshaping sales as we know it

Millennials in the Workforce

Millennials will comprise more than [75% of the workforce](#) by 2025. A generation that has grown up with the real-time, always-on benefits of social networks, smartphones and Google search thinks and works much differently than a generation that remembers using actual maps and visiting the library.

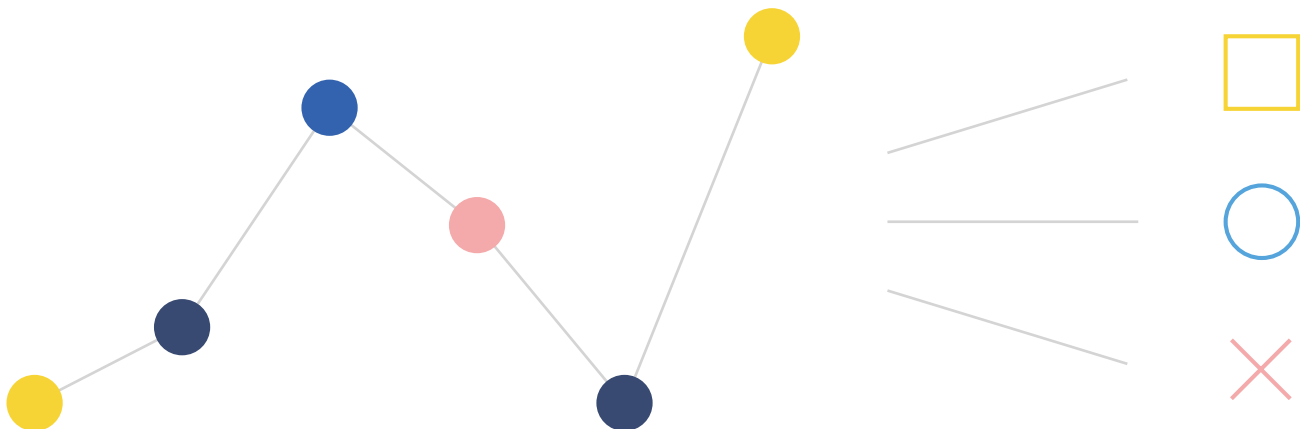
As experts Morley Winograd and Michael Hais put it, “The distinctive and widely shared attitudes and beliefs of this generation will slowly, but surely, reshape corporations in its image and end the confrontational and bottom-line oriented world that Boomers and Gen-Xers have created.”



Data-Driven Decision Making

The digital world has produced masses of data that can be used to track interactions, measure success and optimize performance. What's more, these processes are continuously being refined and automated to power faster, smarter decision-making in the form of artificial intelligence (AI).

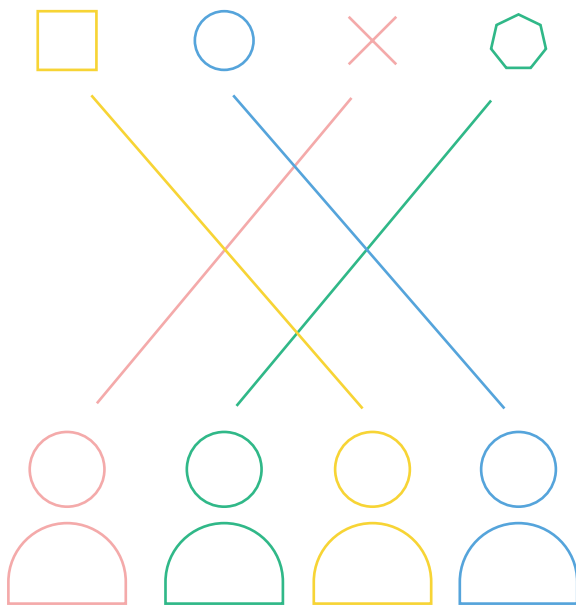
Just as marketers no longer gauge success by the cleverness of an ad campaign but by data-driven metrics like associated cost per lead and conversion rate, sales is realizing that the traditional "art of sales" approach is no longer a viable way to outsmart the competition.



Account-Based Selling

As the market grows increasingly saturated and competition hits a new high, sales teams are wasting more and more time on widespread, unproductive prospecting. To cut through the noise, this time would be much better spent wooing a few select, high-value prospects.

To help reps focus and close better deals more quickly, many companies are turning to account-based selling, or ABS. ABS refers to assigning reps a specific list of accounts to convert using more targeted and personalized messaging and tactics.





Despite these new trends and pivotal drivers, many sales teams are still being managed using the “same old” values, frameworks and methodologies. Tracking a sales process in Excel simply won’t cut it when data should be aggregated and analyzed in real-time. Similarly, asking a Millennial to repeat the same call script time and again without giving him the power to make adjustments probably won’t go over so well.

As is often the case with sales, a solution to this challenge can be found within the highly progressive approach of another department - in this case, IT and its use of Agile Development.



An alternative to traditional linear development approaches, the agile movement provides teams with a flexible, collaborative framework for solving problems and meeting goals. The iterative agile process expedites learnings and discovery to support the release of rapid, data-driven optimizations, making it an obvious choice for managers tasked with surmounting the changes and challenges brought on by the sales force of the future.

Although the term “agile sales management” does not yet have the same traction with B2B sales teams as “agile product development” has with programmers and engineers, it soon will. In fact, a [recent agile survey](#) reported that nearly ¼ of respondents came from industries outside of software development and IT. What’s more, 87% of survey respondents agreed that agile methodology is improving the quality of work life for their teams.

So what’s it all about?



Agile Management Explained

According to agilemethodology.org, “The Agile movement seeks alternatives to traditional project management. Agile approaches help teams respond to unpredictability through incremental, iterative work cadences and empirical feedback. Agilists propose alternatives to waterfall, or traditional sequential development.”

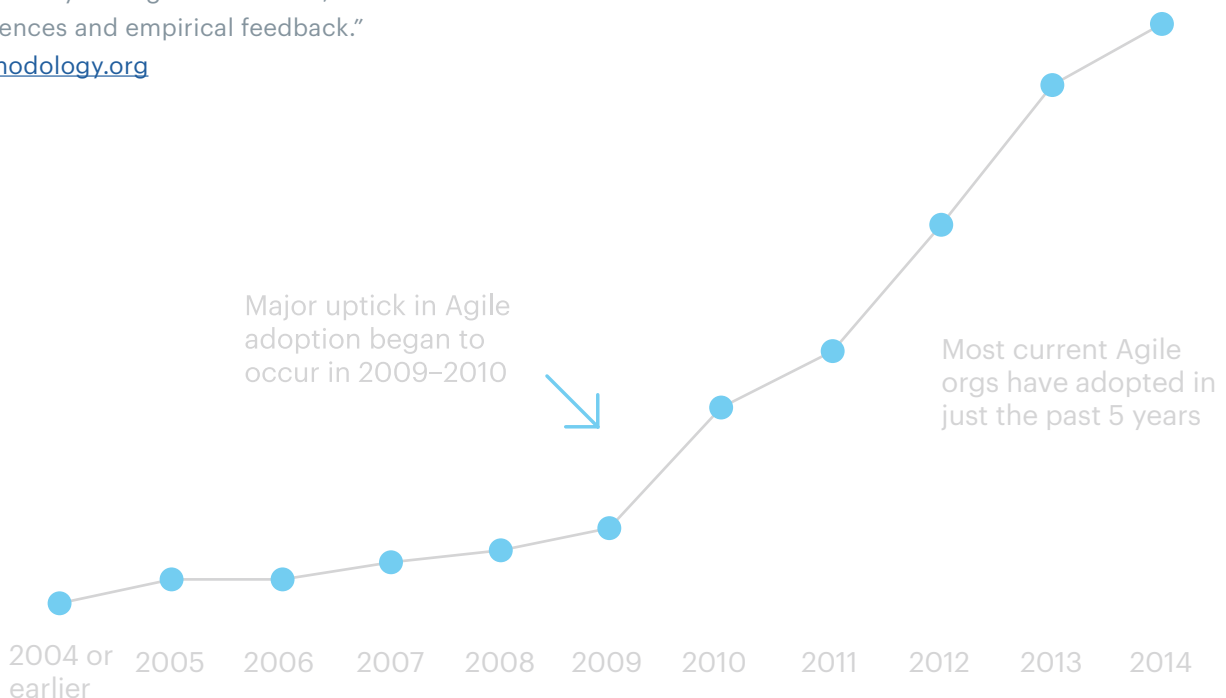
WHAT IS AGILE?

“Agile approaches help teams respond to unpredictability through incremental, iterative work cadences and empirical feedback.”

agilemethodology.org

Incremental software development methods [date back to 1957](#), but agile was first discussed in-depth in the 1970s. In 2001, [the agile manifesto](#), a “formal proclamation of four key values and 12 principles to guide an iterative and people-centric approach to software development,” was published.

Since that time, agile has grown rapidly in popularity amongst IT teams, as shown in the graph below.





Agile Management Explained

CONTINUED

When compared against the traditional waterfall development methodology, it's not hard to see why agile has taken root.

WATERFALL PROCESS	AGILE PROCESS
Projects are viewed as a whole	Projects are viewed in increments, or "sprints"
Focus on achieving one single, ultimate goal	Focus on hitting milestones that lead to an ultimate goal
Exact steps and requirements needed to complete the project are mapped out ahead of time	Each sprint is adjusted based on the discoveries, feedback and results of previous sprints
Development is approached in a linear, step-by-step fashion	Development is approached in an iterative manner
Team meetings are held infrequently	Short team meetings are held daily
Problems and feedback are taken into account post-completion	Problems and feedback are addressed throughout the process

Agile Management Explained

CONTINUED

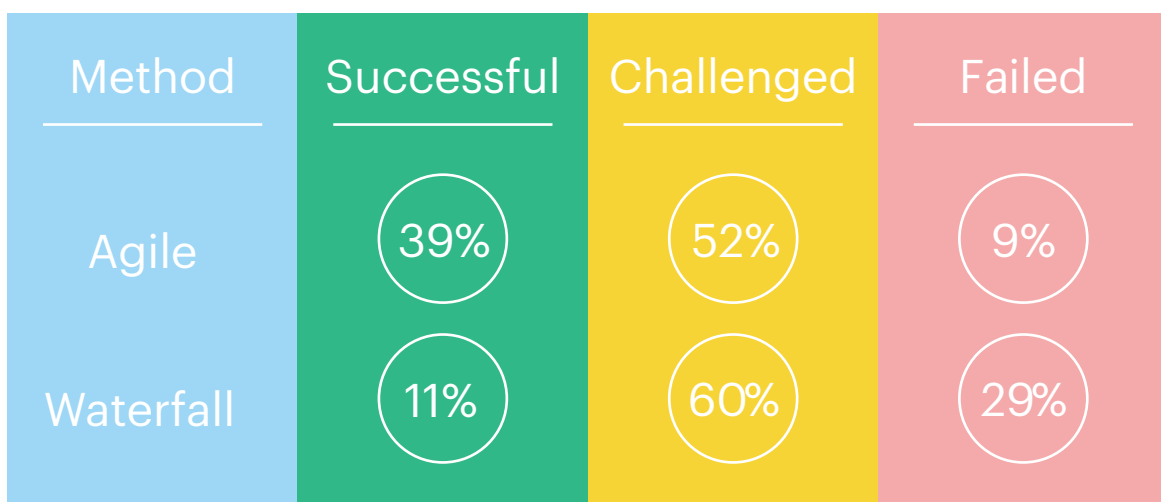
The ability of agile teams to zero in on smaller, more immediate goals, address feedback and issues in real-time and adapt projects to evolving needs enables them to work more quickly, minimize waste and deliver better products.

Ultimately, the results speak for themselves, with data showing that agile projects are [3X more likely to succeed](#) than those managed using waterfall approaches.

IN GOOD COMPANY

The agile approach has been adopted by a number of leading organizations, including State Farm, Airbnb, Google, Microsoft, Bank of America, Xerox, Amazon and McKinsey, just to name a few!

PROJECT SUCCESS RATES - AGILE VS WATERFALL



Source:
<http://vitalitychicago.com/blog/agile-projects-are-more-successful-traditional-projects>



A Few Words You Should Know

The agile movement has spawned its own system of terms, as well as a slew of new vocabulary words. Here are a few keywords that are important to know and understand when discussing agile.

FAIL FAST

The concept of identifying any problems or issues as quickly as possible to avoid wasting time on what will ultimately become an unsuccessful project.

INCREMENT

The working product functionality at the end of a sprint or iteration.

ITERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Breaking the development of an application into small segments that build on top of one another and culminate to a finished project.

PRODUCT BACKLOG

A prioritized list of tasks and requirements that still need to be accomplished to finish a project.

RELEASE

The cumulative result of multiple sprints or iterations that has been deemed customer ready.

SCRUM

A highly popular agile framework wherein small teams work together in sprints to accomplish a larger project.

SPRINT OR ITERATION

A short cycle of development (typically 1-4 weeks) in which increments of an overarching project are produced.

STAND-UP

A short, daily team meeting where progress updates are shared and roadblocks are addressed.

References

1. <http://www.dummies.com/careers/project-management/agile-project-management-for-dummies-cheat-sheet/>
2. <http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Agile-glossary-Words-2-Go>
3. <https://blog.taiga.io/agile-terms-you-must-know.html>

How Agile Applies to Modern Sales Management

By now you may be wondering: how does any of this translate to sales? Sprints, scrum and iterative development make sense for software, project management and even marketing teams, but they're not even close to being aligned with how an elite sales team works, right?

Not exactly, if we're to take advice from today's top sales management minds. For example, Jason Jordan, partner at Vantage Point Performance and author of *Cracking the Sales Management Code*, [talks constantly](#) about the need for sales managers to stop focusing on quotas and instead zero in on measuring and managing the activities that *lead* to revenue. In other words, scrum.

Aaron Ross, founder of the predictable revenue movement, subscribes to using a systematic, feedback-driven process for [successful outbound prospecting](#) - a.k.a. iterative development. Sandler Sales Management trainer Marcus Cauchi [advises starting each day](#) with a quick team huddle, where everyone shares their top 3-4 behavioral goals... which is essentially a stand-up.

Finally, [Mike Weinberg](#), speaker, consultant and author of two #1 Amazon bestsellers, [Sales Management Simplified](#) and [New Sales Simplified](#) says, "The move to agile means that accountability and transparency are back in and talking trendy nonsense etherial sales concepts is out! Today's managers must be laser-focused on results and regularly meeting 1:1 with their people to review results against goal, overall pipeline health, and what I call 'additions' and 'advances' within the pipe. This regular meeting quickly reveals who needs helps and which reps need to be either coached up or coached out, and it provides management insights necessary to be agile in decision making."



"If sales managers could directly manage revenue, then every sales force in the world would exceed its target. [...] Sales Activities are the metrics that can actually be managed. Want more sales calls each week? Make it happen, sales force. Want more account plans completed? Make that happen, too."

— [Jason Jordan](#)



How Agile Applies to Modern Sales Management

CONTINUED

At the end of the day, agile sales management is simply the core tactics and strategies that define elite, modern-day sales leadership packaged into a single philosophy. In fact, the opposite of agile sales management looks a lot like the discombobulated chaos we see in many sales organizations today:

- Inconsistent processes
- Poor CRM and sales tool adoption
- Little team collaboration
- Ineffective coaching
- Quota-obsession versus shorter-term goals
- Zero rep accountability for daily behaviors
- One-size-fits-all sales cycles
- Unpredictable, inaccurate forecasts
- Lack of KPI and pipeline visibility
- Poor performance measurement

Agile sales management solves for all these via a synthesized framework and straightforward philosophy. It sets forth where to apply flexibility in your management strategies, where to set hard-and-fast ground rules and where to test, measure and refine for lasting improvement.

At the end of the day, your people, processes and platforms do not operate in a vacuum. They all affect and influence one another - for better or for worse. Agile sales management gives you the micro and macro-perspectives to organize these pieces so that they fit together coherently, the strategies to ensure they complement one another and the overarching philosophy to create long-term success.

Implementing Agile Management in Your Sales Organization

While not every component of agile may work for your sales organization, it's worth investing the time to identify ways that agile values can move your sales team forward. Let's explore 10 key agile management principles to help guide you when adapting and implementing this methodology across your sales force, and some strategies you can put into place to facilitate the transition.

1. Accountability
2. Adaptive Planning
3. Collaboration
4. Continuous Iteration
5. Functionality
6. Measurement
7. Organization
8. Predictability
9. Recognition
10. Transparency

Accountability



In traditionally managed teams, reps' days are often planned out down to a T - use this exact email template, call during these specific time blocks, etc. - all in the name of "hitting quota." Poor performance is typically pinned on reps failing to follow these rules, when in reality, following the rules often fails reps by forcing a one-size-fits-all approach to sales.

In contrast, agile sales management practices leave room for case-by-case optimization by establishing clear milestones and fostering rep-level accountability. Of course, this doesn't mean turning your reps loose and letting them run amok; fostering accountability within your sales team requires extreme clarity around processes, metrics and goals.



Accountability

CONTINUED

Here are a few ways to provide clarity and promote accountability in your sales org:

ADOPT AN “IF IT’S NOT IN THE CRM, IT DOESN’T EXIST” POLICY.

The only way for reps to be held accountable, both independently and by their managers, is by keeping consistent track of activities and outcomes. With [74% of sales teams](#) that use CRM reporting poor adoption rates, this may be more of a challenge than you realize. Choose a CRM that’s easy to use and supports your sales needs, and make sure that reps and managers alike are using it every day.

DEFINE AND PRIORITIZE SALES TARGETS.

This is where account-based selling comes into play. Rather than handing your team a list of hundreds of leads to follow up with, generating smaller segments of specific, high-priority contacts gives reps a more clear target. As the agile experts at [Blue Monkey Dev](#) put it, “Allow each sales representative to define their top opportunities, it might be 2 or 5 or 10, but it needs to be manageable for your sales process. These are the top opportunities that each sales representative will touch every single day and push harder to the close than the others.”

ESTABLISH A REFINED SALES PROCESS.

A good sales process outlines the steps that reps must take to move a lead all the way through the sales pipeline to close. Examples of sales process steps include visiting a prospect on-site, creating a proof of concept, identifying all decision-makers, and much more. While they tell reps what needs to be done, they don’t tell them exactly how to make it happen, leaving room for optimization. Sales processes also provide clarity by indicating exactly where one team member’s responsibilities end and another’s begin - i.e. SDR to AE.

CHOOSE A CORE SET OF PERFORMANCE METRICS.

These should be metrics that reps can take action against on a regular basis - not metrics like pipeline value or quota. For example, you should know the ideal number of calls a rep must make to reach a certain quota based on historical conversion data. Providing reps with their expected number of dials, emails, meetings, etc. establishes a set of activity metrics that they can independently monitor and use to benchmark performance.

Adaptive Planning

There's nothing a Millennial hates more than hearing "this is the way we've always done it." And rightfully so, because this phrase is most often heard in attempt to defend a process that isn't working as well as it should be.

While having a defined sales pipeline and process in place is 100% necessary for running an organized and accountable organization, refusing to adjust these guidelines to meet the requirements of a particular prospect or situation is the fastest way to get clobbered by the competition. Waiting to figure out what could have been done differently until after a deal is lost is too late.

The agile practice of adaptive planning empowers sales folks to be flexible and quickly adjust to meet prospects' needs throughout the sales cycle. As such, it's helpful to think of your sales process as a series of guardrails designed to keep reps on the path to closing, rather than a rigid framework that must be followed exactly at all times.

One way to do this is by leveraging multiple sales pipelines for different types of customers. Another is by baking if/then logic into your sales workflows. Perhaps the most important is for managers to meet consistently 1:1 with reps to evaluate and address any issues or bottlenecks.

For instance, if you notice that a deal has been sitting in a particular pipeline stage for far too long, don't wait to see what happens - analyze existing outcomes and adjust your plan accordingly. Perhaps this prospect needs an extra on-site, or requires a customer reference a little earlier in the process than others. Don't let "the way you've always done it" get in the way of winning new business. The same goes for onboarding new reps, sourcing prospects, communicating with leads and so much more.





Collaboration

Think about it: when was the last time you heard a rep ask his or her counterparts for help or advice closing a particularly difficult deal? The answer is, probably a long time ago, if ever. For some reason, many sales teams have adopted a lone wolf culture where it's every closer for him or herself, rather than taking the opportunity to learn from one another's triumphs and trials to make the team more successful as a whole.

WHY COLLABORATION IS KEY

A [recent study](#) by CSO Insights reveals that sales organizations using a formal collaboration approach saw a 21% improvement on quota attainment compared to organizations using an ad hoc approach.

To start fostering collaboration and facilitating discussion among your sales team, try beginning each day with a quick stand-up meeting where you talk through a win or a loss. Or, have each person on your team come prepared to the weekly team meeting with a story to share or a question to ask. And don't lose these valuable data points and responses; instead, capture and store them in an online library that can be continuously referenced and expanded, and even used for new employee onboarding.

Finally, try utilizing social forum technology to enable easy communication through the ability to ask questions, and share insights or other ideas through real-time message boards. You'll start to notice problems being resolved more quickly, as well as peer-coaching taking place.

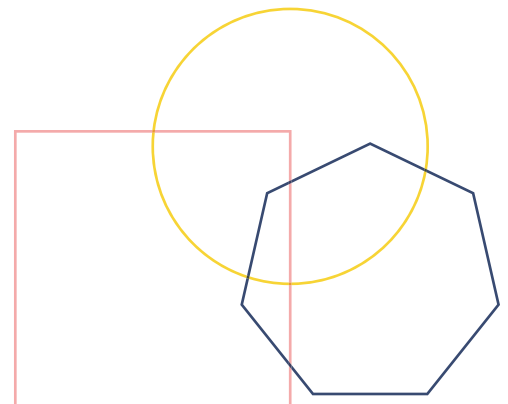
Collaboration

CONTINUED

In addition to encouraging reps to collaborate with one another, agile sales management also fosters alignment between departments. While sales shouldn't lose focus on areas of the business that it can't control, we all know that sales doesn't happen in a vacuum, and that there are certain pieces of cross-departmental information that can be highly valuable for reps.

One of the best ways to ensure that your team is effectively collaborating with other parts of the organization is to integrate your CRM or sales platform directly with your help desk system, marketing automation solution and other key business platforms.

For example, most marketing automation systems give each lead an engagement score, or rank them based on the level of interaction they have with emails, landing pages, etc. For sales, knowing this score is a major indicator of how hot a lead is and can aid in prioritizing outreach. And this isn't a one-way street: receiving information back from sales around the lead sources and channels that generate the best deals enables marketing to more strategically invest in lead gen programs.

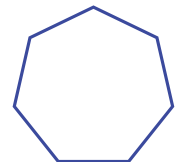
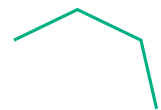


Continuous Iteration

You've probably heard the philosophy "move fast and break things," as preached by many successful Millennial-driven companies like Facebook. At the heart of this notion is the belief in "failing fast," taking what you've learned and doing better next time.

Unfortunately in sales, teams often work tirelessly toward quota over the course of an entire fiscal year, only to realize their "failure" when they come up short of their forecast. A breakneck analysis is done and a few major changes are put into place to try and do better the next year...and the cycle continues.

To avoid this trap, break your goals into shorter, more manageable segments. Think of these blocks of time as your "sprints." At the end of every sprint, evaluate your sales process, outcome or strategy and make small, incremental optimizations. This iterative approach allows you to both fail and succeed more quickly, as well as promotes continuous data-driven decision-making.





Continuous Iteration

CONTINUED

To continuously iterate effectively, there are a few important rules of thumb to keep in mind:

- When choosing a timeframe for your sprints, be cognizant of the amount of time needed to collect enough data around a process or strategy to make statistically accurate and impactful optimizations. A quarter is usually a safe bet for larger projects like evaluating a new customer segment or trying out a new pipeline, while a week or two may be long enough for smaller changes like editing an email template or call script.
- Don't do anything too drastic in a single sprint. Jumping too far ahead and skipping important steps may lead you to miss important discoveries and misattribute success.
- If you are planning to monitor and optimize a particular long-term outcome, choose a couple of key metrics for consistent benchmarking. This will help you keep your original goal in mind and more easily identify what exact iterations are responsible for performance improvements.

Here is a high-level example of how an agile sales team may continuously iterate to gain traction with a new target industry:

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Test the success of specific email templates and call scripts against industry challenges	Identify company sizes gaining the most traction within new industry and narrow outreach	Analyze decision-maker titles and adjust contact title targets to reach them more quickly	Add and test additional pipeline stage needed to accommodate these new decision-makers



Functionality

As consumers, we absolutely refuse technology or applications that fail to make our lives easier and our days more productive. But as salespeople, we are often dependent on software that not only fails to make our lives easier, but actually makes them harder. As such, reevaluating the functionality of your team's sales tools is a great place to start when making the transition to agile sales.

With personal access to user-friendly applications like Uber, Venmo and Spotify, today's Millennial sales force has zero interest in wasting time decoding the idiosyncrasies of unintuitive sales tools that were built before they were even born.

One of the most glaring failures of many sales platforms is a lack of mobile capability. Not only is this a nightmare for traveling or field sales reps, but being desk-bound simply isn't conducive to modern customers' real-time expectations. What's more, [65% of professionals](#) think they could be more productive if they had mobile access to work applications like CRMs, while [research shows](#) that 65% of sales reps who have adopted mobile CRM achieve their sales quotas, compared to just 22% of reps who have not.

When evaluating your current sales solutions or purchasing a new sales tool, ask yourself these five questions to make sure that you're getting the functionality that your team needs:

1. Would you use this platform if you didn't have to?
2. When compared to consumer apps, how intuitive is it?
3. Is it fully functional across all mobile devices?
4. Can it be customized to meet the needs of your sales team?
5. Does it provide context and visuals, or just tables of information?

MILLENIALS AND MOBILE

One in five Millennials [have gone mobile only](#) and don't even use desktops anymore!

Measurement

To put it in the words of famous sales guru [Jason Jordan](#), “As much as we talk about it, you can’t manage quota and you can’t manage revenue.” Think of it this way: revenue is to sales what a finished product is to developers. Just as agile suggests that focusing on a development project as a whole is more difficult than breaking it down into smaller parts that build to a finished product, sales should do the same with revenue goals.

Jordan continues, “The most important data is the data that informs you of what’s actually going on in the sales force and helps you manage reps toward higher performance. The most useful data is around sales activity.” Rather than aiming to hit a revenue

goal, agile sales managers focus on empowering reps to excel at the activities that lead to revenue. So how do you know which activities are truly making a difference in your sales growth and performance?

Start by determining the average number of emails or other types of activities required to book a meeting or move a deal to a new pipeline stage, and set goals that will keep your team on pace to complete the number of activities needed to ultimately generate a sale.





Measurement

CONTINUED

Now, it's important to note that simply making a certain number of dials doesn't mean that they were productive or successful. As such, you must also focus on the outcomes of these activities. Only then will you be able to continuously iterate your team's approach and optimize performance.

For example, if you're noticing that an excessively large percentage of your phone calls is being bucketed under "not interested," it could be in your best interest to provide the sales team with a prospecting script. Or, if a large percentage of calls are being marked "future interest," your reps may need some coaching around how to convey urgency to prospects. Regardless of the outcomes you observe, you come away with a recommended action or follow up analysis that will lead to improvement.

And don't forget to provide reps with a fast and easy way to keep track of both their activity and their outcome goals. Any modern CRM or sales platforms should have one-click, visual reports that allow reps and managers alike to quickly and effectively track performance.

WORKING BACKWARDS TO DEFINE YOUR ACTIVITY GOALS

Sales goal ← Number of new customers needed to hit your sales goal ← Number of deals needed to reach customer goal ← Number of leads needed to hit deal goal ← Number of demos or meetings needed to generate leads ← Number of calls or emails needed to secure demos or meetings



Organization

Similar to functionality, organization is another basic yet often overlooked tenet of agile. Organization is vital to the ability to move quickly and make sound, data-driven decisions. However, staying organized typically requires a lot more thought and effort than anticipated. Think about it: if just one rep abandons your CRM and starts keeping notes in Excel, or oversteps the boundaries of his or her role, organization begins to suffer.

To help keep your sales org on track, leverage these proven organizational tactics:

- Conduct a review of all of your existing custom and mandatory CRM fields, and remove any that are duplicative, outdated or unnecessary. Then, appoint a single CRM admin or owner who can govern what is added going forward.
- Establish a refined sales process that outlines the steps that reps must take to move a lead all the way through the sales pipeline to close, as well as defines exactly where one team member's responsibilities end and another's begin.
- Training is key, not just to teach reps how to use your sales tools and processes, but also to teach them the importance of leveraging them on a daily basis. Build a training program to teach your team the ins and outs of data entry, list building, pulling reports and more.
- Limit the number of sales tools your reps have to use on a daily basis, and integrate them whenever possible. This helps eliminate friction throughout the sales process, as well as stops data from getting siloed across disparate platforms.
- Whenever possible, automate data collection, especially for repetitive and mundane tasks like call logging. This has two benefits: it will ensure that this information is always captured, and it will also help you avoid data entry errors.
- Avoid free-text fields. Instead, use drop-down and multi-select fields wherever possible to avoid typos and missing information.
- Keep data standardized. Clean data makes reporting easy. Watch out for the same information listed multiple ways, like "NY" vs "New York" vs "NYC."

Predictability

With [less than 1/3 of businesses](#) classifying their sales forecasts as effective, it's easy to see why many sales teams regard forecasting as a guessing game that they're bound to lose. When you compare this dilemma to that of dev teams trying to foresee potential setbacks in a project or predict a product release date, it's even easier to see how agile can help.

To effectively predict what will happen in the future, you need to understand what has happened in the past. And whether you're charging through a development cycle or toward your revenue goal, this type of tunnel vision doesn't leave much room for analyzing outcomes, absorbing insights or identifying areas for improvement.



FORECASTING FAILURE

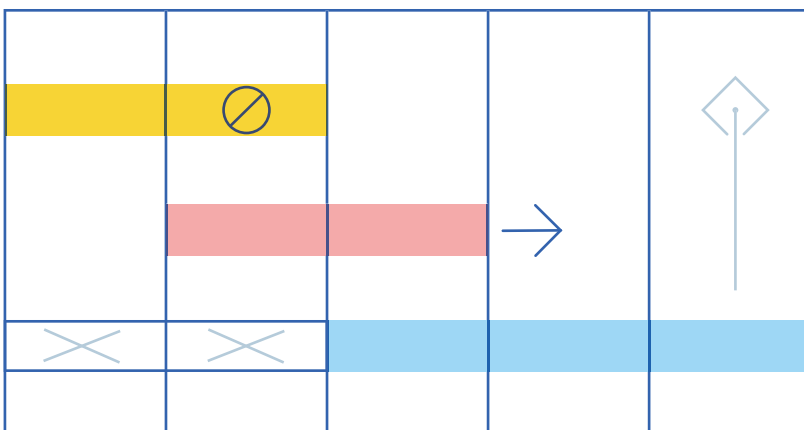
Just [31% of businesses](#) consider their sales forecasts to be effective.

Predictability

CONTINUED

In contrast, the incremental and iterative approach of agile projects enables predictability in three key ways:

1. Breaking larger projects into smaller, more concrete and controllable objectives, like activities, enables more precise planning.
2. Shorter term goals provide the ability to more accurately attribute certain outcomes to specific activities or adjustments, whereby longer term evaluation can make it difficult to pinpoint which small changes made large impacts.
3. Continuous evaluation as you come closer to your ultimate goal gives you the foresight to adjust predictions and set reasonable expectations ahead of time.



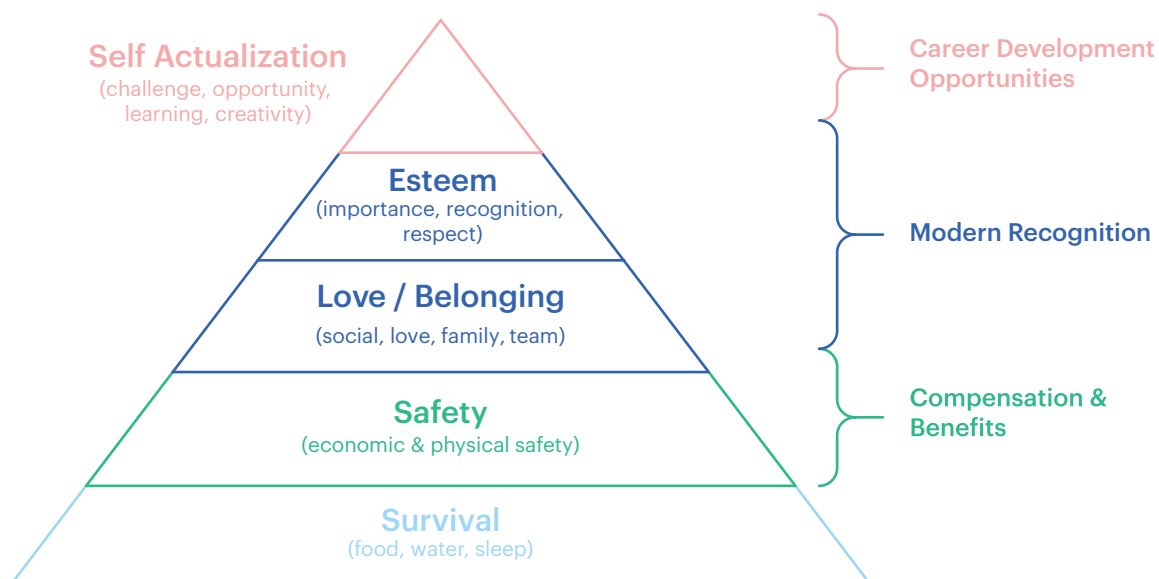
While it may seem to be a bit of an oxymoron, the ability to more accurately predict your sales forecasts actually makes it even easier to drive toward them - because it's better to deal with the devil you know than the one that you don't!

Recognition

Experts cite that [38% of Millennials](#) would like to see the recognition program at their current employer improved. And Millennials aren't alone: the need for recognition can actually be correlated to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs by fostering feelings of esteem, love and belonging.

The daily stand-up meetings, constant feedback loops and focus on accountability in agile methodology foster a culture of recognition that can be easily emulated by sales teams. Not only do consistent check-ins result in inherent acknowledgement, but they also make it easier to benchmark success levels, as needed for promotions.

HOW RECOGNITION WORKS – MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



Recognition

CONTINUED

For sales teams, there are four key ways to give recognition. The first (and most obvious) is by increasing compensation and other monetary-related benefits like bonuses or spiffs. The second - and surprisingly most important - is by providing reps with the opportunity to develop their skill sets and advance their careers.

Yes, monetary incentives are a must. But it's important that business leaders go beyond just throwing dollars at their top performers. In fact, [a recent study](#) found that career progression is the top priority for ambitious Millennials, with 52% admitting that this was the main attraction in an employer, compared to 44% citing competitive salaries.

Even providing positive, constructive feedback has a bigger impact than you may realize. In fact, there is now [scientific](#)

[evidence to support](#) that delaying feedback makes employees “nervous, suspicious, and generally less productive.” A simple pat on the back for a job well-done goes a long way in providing reps with the recognition that they crave.

Finally, as a sales manager, you have the ability to provide your reps with what every salesperson loves the most: bragging rights. Place key reports on a screen or monitor somewhere highly visible in your office, and play music, sound an alarm or find some other way to cause a commotion whenever a rep turns a call into a meeting, or moves a deal from one stage to the next. Being set apart from the rest of the team will not only boost rep morale, but it will also generate a level of friendly competition that drives results.



Transparency

You can't follow directions or pinpoint your location on a map with a blindfold on - just like you can't effectively make progress, analyze outcomes or reach your goals without the proper visibility. That's why scrum, stand-ups, product backlogs and other agile tactics work to increase transparency among dev teams.

Increasing transparency in your sales org means helping reps understand where the team stands in its journey to quota, as well as where they rank individually in relation to their peers. Only then can they have the context needed to strategically navigate challenges and optimize performance.

Providing this level of visibility must be a conscious, ongoing effort, but here are a few tips to get you started.

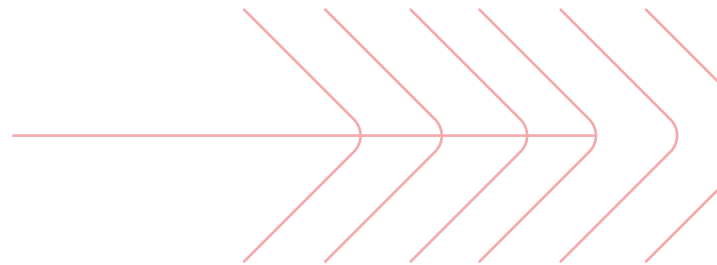
- There can be no transparency if information doesn't live in a centralized and accessible location. Ensure that your CRM or sales platform of choice has all of the fields and functionality necessary to capture the information that your team needs to track your sales process and make smarter decisions. Then, make sure that they are all using the platform to enter and access this data on a daily basis.
- In addition to daily stand-ups and regular one-on-ones with reps, have weekly team meetings where any major successes or failures are brought to light, and all participants have the opportunity to get their questions answered.
- Pipeline visibility is a major struggle for companies of all sizes and industries. In fact, [44% of sales execs](#) believe that their org is ineffective at managing its sales pipeline. To increase transparency, make sure that your entire team has access to reports that provide a crystal clear view of your sales pipeline: conversion rates, which stages each deal is in, how long deals are in these stages, etc.

Embracing the Era of Agile Management

Today, the average sales leader needs to be familiar with a wide range of formerly compartmentalized sales functions that now work together to contribute to a more successful and competitive sales org: social selling, sales automation, sales enablement, etc. Given the success of agile among the development community and its recent expansion into other, non-technical functions, agile management can now be added to that mix.

As the B2B sales landscape grows increasingly complex, and trends like Millennials, data-driven decision making and account-based selling present new challenges and opportunities, agile simply offers far too many benefits for sales leaders to overlook.

While not every component of agile may be a good fit for your business, investigating and adopting just a few of the agile principles covered in this document can help your sales org move past the “same old” values, frameworks and methodologies and into the future of sales.





About the Authors



Ambition is an agile sales management platform that powers fast-paced, data-driven sales organizations. Companies like Aerotek, UPS, Wayfair, and Clayton Homes use **Ambition** to get 360° sales performance insights, elevate sales culture and drive revenue. See why the Harvard Business Review, AA-ISP, and other industry experts endorse **Ambition** as a must-have vendor for today's millennial-driven sales teams and call centers.

[Contact Ambition](#)



Base offers an all-in-one solution that increases rep adoption rates and data capture across devices. With the ability to analyze big data trends in real-time, **Base's Apollo** provides sales leaders with the prescriptive insights they need to accelerate performance and grow revenue. Founded in 2009 and headquartered in Mountain View, California, with additional offices in San Francisco and Kraków, Base fuels sales growth for more than 7,000 companies across the globe.

[Contact Base](#)



LeadGenius provides enterprise sales and marketing teams with premium B2B data, market intelligence, and lead generation analytics. **LeadGenius** uses a unique combination of machine learning and real human researchers to maximize the efficiency of any B2B sales or marketing process with quality-assured contact and account information.

[Contact LeadGenius](#)



LearnCore is a video coaching and training platform for sales and customer success teams. Companies use **LearnCore** to ensure their teams are certified and up-to-speed on new or existing messaging at a company-wide or product level. **LearnCore's** methodology develops both knowledge and skills using educational content, testing, and virtual role-play to help teams practice, coach and socialize best practices.

[Contact LearnCore](#)