

# Nurturing an effective sales culture in an increasingly remote world

**From communication and visibility to tools and celebrating the wins.**

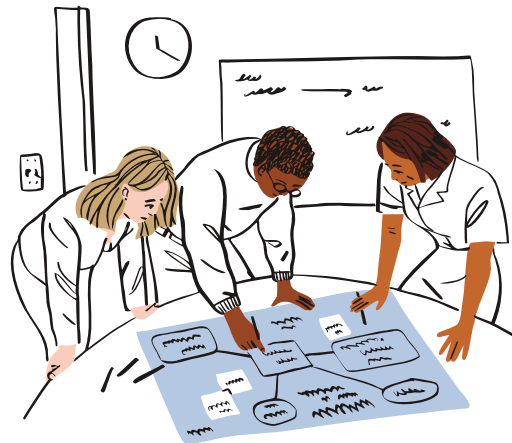


# Existing remote sales operations are a band-aid solution

While the world is slowly emerging from a global pandemic, the changes that propelled our new remote ways of working are, by all accounts, here to stay. Perhaps it's why most executives believe the changes brought on by the pandemic will transform the way they sell forever.

While bootstrapped remote tools and processes got sales teams by in the short term, there's a stark difference between a makeshift solution and a process that's designed specifically to enhance and propel remote sales effectiveness.

And it's beginning to show: uncertainty, changing buyer behavior, and new ways of working have sliced sales productivity by 20% since the start of the pandemic as executives struggled to adapt to managing and measuring remote salespeople.



To establish a truly productive and engaged distributed sales force, remote ways of working must be re-tooled to fit new, at-home ways of working and then ingrained into company culture — not just bolted on via a new tool or device. And that means nurturing a productive remote sales culture that:

- Communicates effectively
- Improves visibility over team operations and buyer activity
- Focuses reps' efforts through clear prioritization
- Adopts new technology that's both cost-effective and impactful
- Maintains morale from a distance by celebrating goals attained and milestones reached

It's a big task for any sales leader. That's why we've built this guide to walk you through **how to nurture an effective remote sales culture.**

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## Precision, not volume is the key to remote communication

Open communication is a win-win for sales reps and leaders. On the one hand, sales leaders gain visibility into their team's work and progress. And on the other, reps know you can see the hard work they're putting in.

But improving communication isn't just about communicating more. It's about communicating more effectively.

In fact, over-communicating can be harmful to reps. We've all heard about 'Zoom fatigue' but over-communicating has an even deeper impact with 88% of remote workers struggling with inconsistent working practices and miscommunication, while 83% feel overwhelmed by emails.

This makes the clarity and precision of sales leaders' communications critical. Because when you assume reps will "figure it out" or are unclear about a certain critical detail, things can go wrong fast. Taking an extra minute to reread an email or Slack message can save a lot of time, confusion, and wasted effort.

## Communicate with clarity and precision

There's no denying the way we communicate is different.

And while technology has helped teams collaborate remotely, it is no substitute for clear communication. Sales leaders can no longer just hope reps will absorb information as they did in an office. Instead, they must work to get their message across.

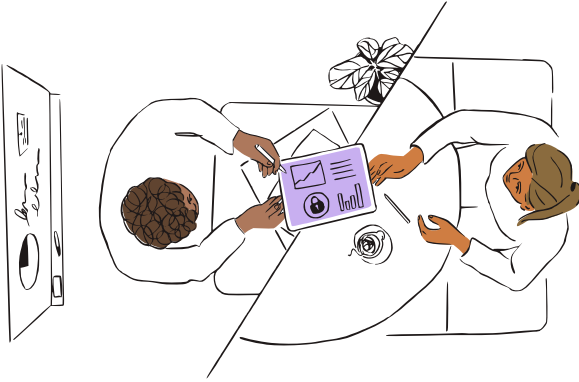
In essence, remote sales teams must communicate better—not more.





### A few ways to boost at-home sales teams communication

- Make time for daily check-ins with reps. This doesn't have to be a daily 30-minute call, a quick message or email keeps you and your team members in the loop.
- Create a shared calendar so the whole team can see when people are free.
- Collaborate on daily or weekly priorities in a shared doc.



## Make visibility a priority

Visibility is the backbone of any effective remote operation.

Why? Because it helps sales leaders better manage their reps' performance and it helps reps understand how to sell to customers effectively.

So any way sales leaders can give themselves and their reps more visibility is a huge win for team performance.

## Conduct strategic pipeline reviews

Running effective pipeline meetings requires collecting and collating information from several apps and tools—CRM, email, calls, notes—then thinking strategically about next steps..

For reps to get the most out of these meeting, sales leaders need to give them access to this information. That means upgrading permissions, creating new dashboards, and distributing information that reps are used to getting by walking across the office and asking.

But it's a two-way street. Reps need to actively update opportunities, too.

And when information does flow freely throughout sales teams, pipeline reviews become about strategic guidance like spotting at-risk deals and planning evasive action, not tripping over which opportunities need to be updated in pipeline meetings.

# Arm reps with valuable customer insights

Just as your team has adjusted to working from home, customers' sentiment, priorities and preferences have adjusted too.

As Dailius Wilson, Head of Sales Research at Sales Research Labs explains "On average 23% fewer SMB buyers want to talk to salespeople. The operating assumption is that people want to do things themselves as they're more into free trials than ever before. However, it's really strange, despite them not wanting to talk to sales, SMB buyers are actually 35% more likely than the average to think that salespeople will still be relevant in 10 years. So SMB buyers see the value of salespeople, but they don't necessarily want to talk to them. So I think it's an unusual paradox that the data shows."

Analyzing this kind of buyer activity is essential information when reps are presenting a tantalizing offer to prospects. Because the more you know, the more you can tailor your pitch. And that means reps need more information about how to engage with them.

Keeping track of which landing pages, messaging, and deals are resonating with visitors and sharing that information with reps by updating sales scripts and email templates, gives sales teams an edge in a changing environment.



## Buyer insights shouldn't end with pitching

Your team's job isn't done when a proposal or contract is sent, so why should visibility end there?

Maintaining visibility throughout the contract signing process helps reps know when's a good time to follow up or when it's just pestering.

eSignature tools like Dropbox Sign give sales reps insights into exactly when a contract has been sent, opened, signed, and returned. Plus with automated reminders, sales reps don't have to pester customers and have more time to focus on hot leads.

## Focus reps' efforts

It goes without saying - a focused sales team is more productive. But when a sales team is out of sight and potentially distracted by any number of household chores or activities, keeping that focus becomes even harder for sales leaders.

As Dailius points out, "Self-regulation is more important than ever. We need to give sales reps the autonomy to manage their own time and to be accountable for it. That's quite a change from the standard format, where KPIs and metrics can be measured inside the office. In the remote world, we've shifted to the employee having that balance of power in terms of their day and how they legislate and use their own time."

Unfortunately, human nature is working against remote sales teams. Psychologists have found the human mind is wired for this state of continuous distraction and spends around 47% of every waking hour "mind wandering." And these distractions become especially appealing when things are hard, unclear, or complex.

So while distractions are an unavoidable part of remote sales, sales leaders can aid their team's productivity by eliminating complexity and uncertainty from the process.

## Tidy your CRM data and prioritize leads frequently

A pipeline full of leads that never progressed and deals that fell apart is a distraction that can pull your sales team's focus away from higher value leads.

It's why regularly cleaning your CRM data is so important. It helps salespeople hyper-focus on the right deals that have the highest chance of converting.

But even with clear information, deciding which leads are most important can be a time-suck for sales reps. Sales leaders can help here too, by helping team members prioritize which leads to chase first.

Even a rudimentary lead scoring system that separates leads into high- and low-quality opportunities can greatly focus sales teams and increase their close rates.



## Be smart about new technology adoption

By now, most sales teams have the basics covered: a CRM to track contact and deal status, team collaboration tools that connect employees, and video conferencing for prospect meetings.

But these are the bare minimum for running a remote sales operation. There are hundreds of other tools like analytics, email automation, and data enrichment that give teams an extra edge.

However, new tools can eat up your budget fast. And as 98% of organizations have no additional funds to make changes, sadly investing in every piece of new sale tech isn't exactly an option for most teams.

That's why sales leaders must be smart about the benefits they're getting from the tools they choose to invest in by constantly asking two questions:

- Does this tech benefit the entire team?
- Is this flexible enough to keep serving the team regardless of whether operations remain remote, return to the office, or operate on some sort of hybrid model?



One behind-the-scenes tool that sales teams use to both increase deal speed and team productivity is eSignatures, which automate mundane and tedious contract admin.

## Combat admin inertia

Sales admin like preparing contracts and individually emailing them out—or worse, manually mailing them—is an absolute momentum killer for sales reps and deflates motivation.

And when on average 66% of salespeople spend their day on administrative tasks, that's a massive amount of time spent not focused on generating revenue.

eSignature technology is just one of many tools that can remove pesky admin from your sales team's day. Easy-to-use interfaces, customizable templates, tracking updates, and automatic reminders to signers when they haven't signed a document all make the contract-signing processes easier for reps and customers.

## CUSTOMER STORY



# CGIA saves 700+ hours and closes sales 17% faster with Dropbox Sign

For CGIA, selling insurance has traditionally relied on a print-sign-scan-fax-or-email workflow to generate final policies.

"HelloSign's [now Dropbox Sign] seamless signing experience has allowed us to deliver evidence of insurance in real-time and we've seen a reduction in the time it takes to close a sale. HelloSign [now Dropbox Sign] has become a necessity for our business as online shoppers demand a hassle-free way to buy," says Bob Negrey, VP of Information Technology at CGIA

And by eliminating the manual signing processes through electronic signatures, CGIA saved over 700 employee hours per year.

"With HelloSign [now Dropbox Sign] we're able to close sales about 17% faster compared to the manual signature process," says Miguel Huizar, producer for CGIA



## Maintain morale from a distance

What many organizations overlook when creating remote sales teams is the camaraderie that comes with being around a group of people all doing the same tough job. Without daily interactions, finding the motivation to keep calling and

emailing customers in the face of potential rejection is just that much harder. That's why it's so critical that remote sales leaders work to maintain a sense of morale amongst remote sales teams.



## Conduct regular one-to-one check-ins

Regular face time with each team member lets sales leaders check in on their work, but also on team members' emotional health.

These meetings help to build trust with your team, keep tabs on the health of their work situation, and see when it may be time for you to step in and help. Creating specific agendas that both managers and reps can adjust and add to also allows time just to chat.



## Celebrate achievements and milestones

Sales offices used to be all about celebrating the wins: closing a big deal or reaching a quarterly target — remember the sales bell or gong, top seller of the month awards, and so on?

And just because sales teams are remote doesn't mean these important rituals should end. There was definitely less success in March last year and throughout those hard COVID moments. So making sure we celebrate opportunities and wins when they do come through the door keeps morale high for remote sales teams," says Dailius.

Celebrating milestones and achievements keeps teams motivated and united even when working remotely. It also lets your team know that you recognize all the hard work they're putting in.



# Rebuild your sales operation around remote work

With such rapid changes, it can be hard for any sales leader to know exactly what the best path forward is.

That's why it's critical to step back and assess your sales team's processes and performance and be open to new ways of working that will bring the best out the best in your team—now and in the future.

Putting in the work to instill an effective and flexible sales culture that can operate from anywhere—office, remote, or hybrid—sets your sales team up to thrive no matter what the future holds. And one of those changes is removing unnecessary motivation-killing admin. This includes getting new customers to sign contracts to close deals.

So if your current contract-signing process is slowing your team down or requires unsightly third-party signups and websites, check out how we can help at Dropbox Sign.



## About Dropbox Sign

Dropbox Sign simplifies work for millions of individuals. Companies all over the world rely on us to power their applications, making it easier to close deals faster, send documents out for signature directly from your CRM, and eliminate manual tasks that slow down your sales team. For more information visit the [Dropbox Sign](#) website.