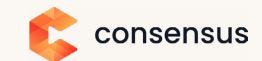consensus

Growth Without Hiring:

How AI Can Maximize Sales Efficiency

By now, you've certainly heard of the AI revolution in sales. AI is rapidly becoming an integral part of successful brands' sales strategies, particularly in the SaaS sales segment. AI offers new ways to take your sales team's output to the next level, allowing you to scale your operations efficiently without the costs of additional hiring.

To boost your sales efficiency and volume, you may consider adding AI and sales automation to your team's toolbelt. However, to optimize your results, it's essential you first understand the role, uses, future, and limitations of these digital solutions. While these tools may be the next step in your brand's future, understanding how to leverage AI solutions without overlooking the value of your employees is of equal importance.

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Understanding the Role of AI and Automation in Sales

AI offers the opportunity to accelerate your sales output by empowering your sales team with an AI assistant that minimizes the repetitive, low-value work every rep is required to complete. This reduced workload allows your sales reps to improve productivity and redirect their time to high-value tasks.

With a higher sales efficiency rate, salespeople can focus their efforts on:

► Optimizing win rate

► Increasing overall sales output

► Accelerating deals

► Addressing customer concerns

► Building long-term buyer connections

Optimizing your team's sales efficiency with AI allows you to shorten sales cycles, move sales pipelines more quickly, and empower your salespeople to do what they do best — build strong, lasting customer relationships. Not only does this create better business outcomes for your brand, but it also keeps team morale high and enriches their daily work lives.

Just remember that **AI is not meant to replace your current employees** and is often only as effective as your team allows it to be — as these solutions learn from your data. Your team must actively engage with and influence your AI tools for them to elevate your sales effectively.

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Balance Sales AI With a Human Touch

As AI and automation continue to advance, it's important to remember that these solutions are not intended to replace your sales team. Even with all the things AI can do, reps bring important human elements that can never be replaced, such as relationship building and intuition. Getting buy-in from your team is crucial for balancing AI and human contributions.

To get your team on board with adding AI to your sales process, you may have to address some concerns, such as:

► How will AI directly affect sales reps?

► Does AI produce accurate customer insights?

► Is what AI creates better than what the sales rep would deliver?

► Is AI secure?

► How difficult is it to get started with AI?

Answering these questions transparently will help you reduce pushback from your team and build trust in the AI-assisted sales process. It's important to reiterate that AI acts as an assistant to your sales team and relies on your employees — not the other way around. Positioning it this way will help you encourage the adoption and implementation of these solutions.

On the buyer side, many customers are also wary of the ongoing AI revolution. While AI may be useful, buyers still want to interact with human beings when it comes time to make purchasing decisions. Maintaining a human touch in your sales process is vital to producing the best results for your brand.

While AI may be capable of a wide range of functions, customers still rely on salespeople to:

► Build relationships.

► Answer questions on the fly.

► Address complex pain points.

Keeping your team at the forefront of your strategy will inform how and when you should use AI to your advantage. Use your sales team as a guide for what functionality would be most helpful in terms of increasing output. Implementing this feedback will help you build an effective strategy for both your brand and your team that will reduce the strain that low-value tasks place on your team's capacity and improve your employees' overall sales efficiency.

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How to Use Sales Automation to Improve Output

AI has the potential to improve productivity, boost your sales, **and empower your team to operate at the next level.** However, the difference between excelling and surviving in the modern sales industry is understanding how and when to use sales automation. Finding the ideal use cases for sales AI and automation can fully optimize your workflows and accelerate your brand's growth.

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Minimize Low-Value Tasks

One of your team's biggest obstacles when it comes to scaling is the impact of low-value tasks on their daily workloads. Salespeople are highly trained professionals who provide value through complex tasks, which makes wasting their time on less essential tasks detrimental to your team's sales efficiency.

Keep your sales team ahead of the curve rather than catching up by using AI and automation to reduce administrative tasks, such as:

- ► Data entry
- ► Email drafting
- ► Slide content updates
- ► Reporting
- ► Scheduling
- ► CRM-related tasks

While implementing AI and other automation, identify which tasks unnecessarily use your team's time. Include your team in the process of identifying where automation can help them most effectively. This is an excellent way to pinpoint how these solutions can boost productivity without reducing the value of your employees.

Pro Tip:
Check if your automation tools feature **integrations** for the other tools in your tech stack. Without these connections, you may counterproductively create additional work for your team through data migration tasks.

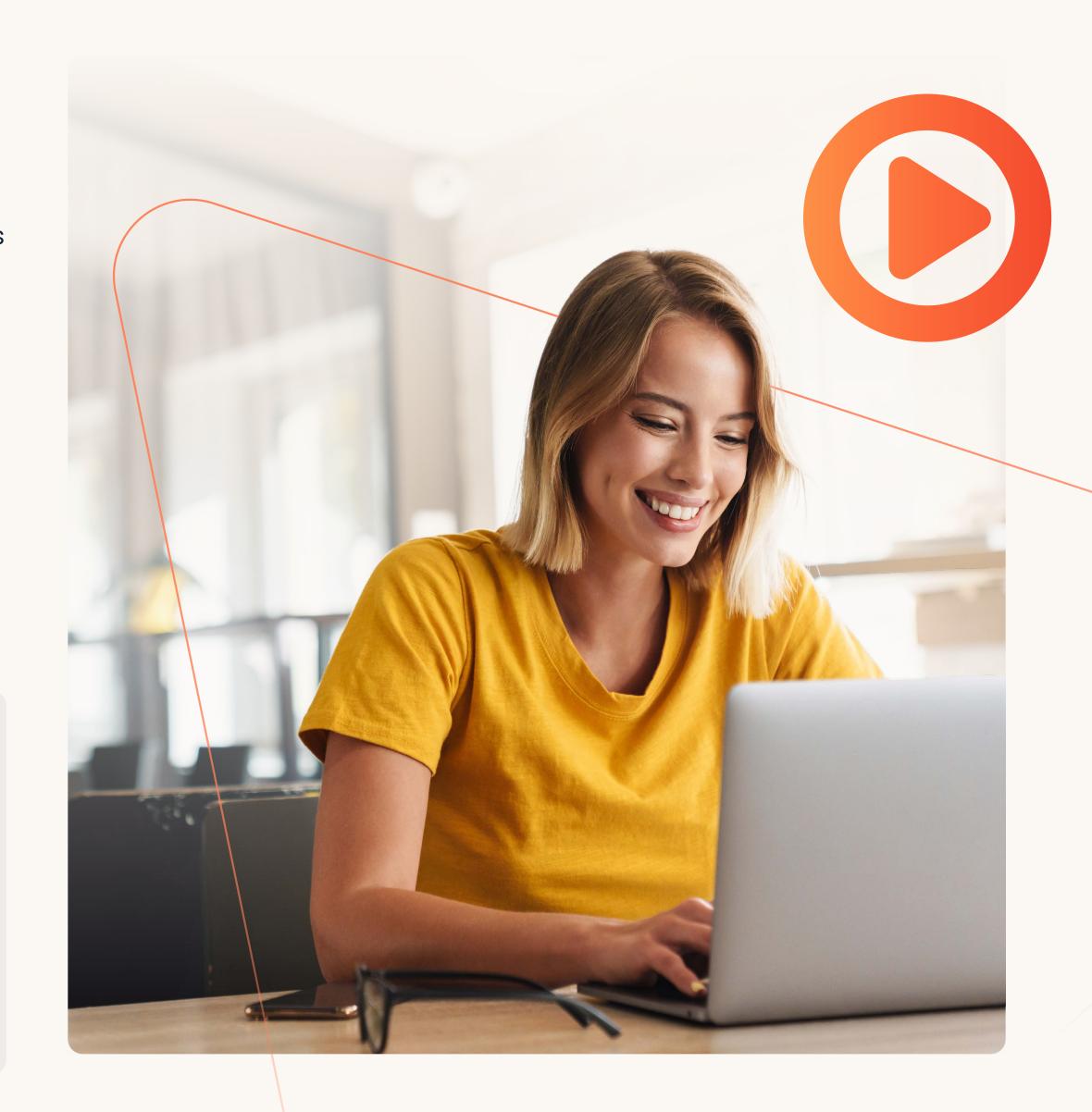consensus

Automate the Demo Process

According to the Consensus **2024 Sales Engineering Compensation & Workload Report**, the misallocation of salespeople's time has increased by 50% over the last year. A main driver of this misallocation is repetitive demo presentations. Although essential, SE report respondents found a disparity in value gained versus the time required to complete these demos.
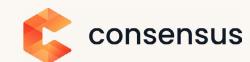
This is why **demo automation** is such a powerful tool for optimizing sales efficiency. Demo automation offers a convenient and powerful way for customers to access product information without inconveniencing your sales team.

Automated demos can help qualify leads and create more informed customers who are closer to closing by the time your team interacts with them. Using these demos to pre-qualify leads and educate customers provides your sales team with 30% shorter sales cycles, doubled close rates, and an increase in products sold per initial sale.

Pro Tip:

Cover more ground without the need for direct sales involvement using **interactive video demos**. Delivering repetitive demos multiple times to different stakeholders in the same buyer group burns precious time on a single client. Giving stakeholders the power to run their own intro demos can save time while boosting sales efficiency.

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Improve Discovery With AI-Powered Analytics

Discovery is one of the most essential steps in the sales process, but it is often difficult to master. Sifting through customer data and searching for clues on how to sell to each stakeholder can be a burden on your team.

Using automated data solutions like Consensus Demolytics, your team can reduce the time required to find valuable insights and boost the usefulness of your data. These solutions offer benefits such as:

- ► Identifying key stakeholders in buyer groups
- ► Pinpointing top concerns and solutions for high-value stakeholders
- ► Building stakeholder maps
- ► Enabling earlier discovery
- ► Analyzing buyer intent data

Data is the lifeblood of modern sales, which is why using sales AI and automation to improve how you use data can boost your team's ability to sell and expand your business opportunities.

Pro Tip:
Use automation to analyze both internal and external data to pinpoint which employees may need help improving their performance and which tactics work best for other team members.

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Answer Customer Questions With AI Chatbots

Not every customer question requires your team's direct involvement. Your brand can address buyer concerns without taking away time from employees by leveraging AI chatbots. These tools can act like an assistant to your team by offloading simple customer information requests from salespeople's plates so they can focus on closing instead.

By training AI with your data, your brand can offer real-time answers and resources for customers with questions without making them jump through hoops. Customers who are easily able to find the information they need are more likely to convert later on in the pipeline and remain engaged throughout the buying process.

This combination of time savings and buyer education allows your team to accelerate their sales, leading to higher output, shorter sales cycles, and improved sales efficiency.

Pro Tip:
Track customer interactions with AI chatbots so, when it comes time for your sales team to get involved, they have a clear picture of which customer concerns to address and which resources your buyers may have already seen.

Dynamically Customize Demos

Integrating AI into interactive video demos can create a more natural, personalized demo experience for customers. AI utilizes large language models to generate content based on user engagement data to dynamically build automated demos personalized for each buyer's needs.
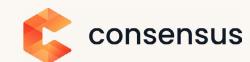
This allows customers to get the relevant information they need to close and adjust demos to fit each viewer's preferences — even when shared with new viewers in the buyer group. When a demo is shared, each new buyer can customize and interact with the demo in a way that fits their needs. This generates high-quality user intent data that enhances your team's sales capabilities and capacity.

Pro Tip:
Find the ideal balance between AI assistance and employee expertise to supercharge your demo experience. While AI can help customize demos, your sales engineers' knowledge is still pivotal in content creation.

While these sales AI capabilities certainly can keep your team on the cutting edge, AI is ever-evolving. This makes keeping an eye on the future of these tools vital to staying ahead of the competition.

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The Future of Sales Automation

Part of AI's appeal is that, as powerful as it is, it's still in its infancy, with tremendous potential for growth as a solution. The truth is that the AI solutions of today could quickly become obsolete compared to the capabilities AI may develop in the future. To best prepare your team and optimize your growth potential, you should consider the possibilities that await and how they may boost your brand's sales output.

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Using Generative AI to Create Sales Materials

As AI continues to advance, sales teams may be able to use data collected during discovery and demos to enhance the customization of sales materials. Generative AI can also assist in streamlining content creation for demos, with features that assist in editing, adding subtitles, and translation. **However, you will still need to leverage your team's expertise to ensure sales materials are accurate and effective before sending them to buyers.**

Leveraging Sentiment Analysis to Prioritize Leads

Using advancing AI's deep learning capabilities, your sales team can analyze buyer sentiment in written communications to identify which leads are most likely to close. This can potentially improve win rates and boost output, including detecting upsell opportunities.

Your sales team can also use various AI capabilities to filter out leads based on date, lead source, salesperson, keywords, and more. This can add an extra layer of organization to your sales process that will help you as you scale operations.

Gathering Data to Analyze Your Competitors and Industry

Through solutions like ChatGPT, you can use prompts to quickly gather information on competitors and the sales landscape. Asking the right questions with AI can create a full picture of other brands' messaging and allow you to build unique value propositions of your own.

This information can then be used to inform and build a strategy designed to differentiate and elevate your brand. Keep in mind that your employees should always double-check data gathered using AI to ensure its accuracy before use — **another reason why balancing your sales team with AI is so essential to maximizing efficiency.**

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Improving Demos With Viewer Data

As buyers view your automated demos, you will collect data that AI-powered analytics can translate into actionable insights. Analytics programs infused with automations like AI can synthesize your viewer data to improve your demo performance and boost your sales efficiency.

Recommending Customer Content Based on Inquiries

Modern customers are looking for brands that speak directly to their needs, especially early in the buying process when they want to do their own research. AI allows your sales team to accelerate the buyer learning journey by transforming common customer searches and frequently asked questions into customized content recommendations.

Once you have a clear picture of how you might use AI to your advantage, you'll need to build a plan to introduce it to your team and implement it into your workflows.

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Adding AI to Your Sales Strategy

Before you introduce AI into your sales process, it's important to know what steps to take to ensure your success. A well-thought-out strategy can help your brand grow, while a rushed strategy can lead to errors, unexpected costs, and lost trust from buyers and employees alike.

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Consider these guidelines when implementing, adjusting, and evaluating AI in your sales strategy.

1 **Keep your team informed.** Adding AI to your strategy will directly impact your team. From day one, they will be hands-on and may be faced with unfamiliar territory. This makes collaborating with your team pivotal to your success. **Take the time to reassure your team that AI is not here to replace them but to make their lives easier.** A well-informed team has a better chance of implementing AI tools correctly, scaling efficiently, and finding ways to improve your strategy even further down the road.

2 **Establish KPIs early on to measure performance.** Setting clear goals is an essential element of a successful sales strategy, especially when using new solutions like AI. If your performance begins to suffer after adding AI to your workflow, it's important to know why. Whether it's a lack of employee understanding or misuse of the tool, using the right KPIs can help you identify problems and address them accordingly.

3 **Listen to employee and customer feedback.** Your greatest asset in improving your AI sales strategy comes from the people who interact with it directly: your employees and buyers. Offering these users opportunities to provide feedback helps you build an AI strategy based on real-world results. This allows you to improve the effectiveness of AI for your brand and boost your growth potential.

4 **Add AI and automation gradually.** One common mistake to avoid when implementing AI is going overboard from the start. Relying too heavily on AI solutions from day one can lead to costly errors and make it difficult to track performance. Testing what works and what doesn't incrementally can help you find the best ways to use AI in your sales strategy without overwhelming your employees.

5 **Learn from industry trends.** Read thought leadership articles, watch webinars, and learn more about AI in sales. Staying informed about what innovators in the sales industry are doing with AI can help generate ideas on how to improve your team's strategy.

6 **Customers still come first.** However you use AI to help grow your business, don't forget that your buyers are still the priority. Even the most technologically savvy brands can still be ineffective in addressing customer pain points in their sales strategies. Listen to customer feedback, personalize your content, and maintain a human-centric mindset in your sales approach.

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Ready to drive more efficiency?

At Consensus, we're excited to share our vision for the future of buyer (or buying group) enablement and demo automation. Watch a Demo to see how our product experience platform helps sales teams like yours crush their revenue goals.

Have more questions? Get in touch with us and let's talk about how Consensus can transform your buyer's journey.

Learn More

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