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What is Sales 2.0?

By Mary Gospe

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There's lots of buzz these days about Sales 2.0. Articles and blogs on the topic are posted daily; webcasts and videos are prevalent and even books are hitting the shelves. And this month, the 2009 [Sales 2.0 Knowledge Share Conference](#) was held in San Francisco. However, many of my sales and marketing colleagues are unsure of what Sales 2.0 is all about. In this article I'll offer definitions and examples that will help answer the question "what is Sales 2.0?"

Sales 2.0 Definitions:

Nigel Edelshain, CEO of Sales 2.0 LLC, coined the term "Sales 2.0" in 2007. He describes the concept as "using Internet tools to boost sales performance" and "taking sales to the next level." According to Wikipedia "Sales 2.0 is a term describing changing trends in the use of World Wide Web technology and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) applications that aim to improve the speed, collaboration, customer engagement and accountability of the sales process."

In the newly-published book [Sales 2.0 – Improve Business Results Using Innovative Sales Practices and Technology](#) by Anneke Seley and Brent Holloway, the authors describe Sales 2.0 as "the use of innovative sales practices focused on creating value for both buyer and seller and enabled by Web 2.0 and next generation technology." The authors also point out that Sales 2.0 is not just about technology, but about a movement "which centers on a measurable, customer-centric sales process, strong and aligned relationships, and the strategic application of sales resources for maximum profitability."

Sales 2.0, then, is an approach to selling that leverages Web 2.0 technologies (which allow end users to publish content and enable collaboration) to build long-term, engaging relationships with prospects and customers while driving sales process efficiencies.

Sales 2.0 Benefits Buyers and Sellers:

Consumer and B2B buying processes are changing. With the wealth of instant information available on the Internet, buyers are well informed of products and services before engaging with a sales rep. When they do engage, it's when they are ready and on their terms. Buyers are comfortable with having sales

conversations via phone, participating in web-based demos and in many cases making purchase decisions without even meeting a sales rep face-to-face.

Sellers welcome the fact that prospects get educated and self-qualify until they are “sales ready”. This shortens the sales cycle and increases conversion rates. Sellers also benefit from the cost efficiencies of selling via the website and inside sales teams. Field visits can occur only when needed, driving down travel-related expenses and increasing productivity.

Sales 2.0 Tools:

Many of the tools that fall under the Sales 2.0 umbrella have been around for some time. They include hosted CRM systems such as [Microsoft](#), [Netsuite](#), [Oracle](#), [SAP](#) and [Salesforce.com](#) as well as company and industry information resources like [Hoovers](#) and [InfoUSA](#). Using inside sales and sales development teams that rely on telephone, email and web conferencing platforms like [Gotomeeting.com](#) and [WebEx](#) are also considered Sales 2.0 techniques.

Some of the newer Web 2.0 technologies that drive efficiencies in the sales process include:

- Prospecting tools
 - [Jigsaw](#) for user-generated contacts and targeted lists
 - [Zoominfo](#), [Spoke](#) and [Xing](#) for profiles on people and companies
 - [InsideView](#) – an on-demand sales intelligence tool that mashes up information from editorial sources and social networks
 - Social Media sites such as LinkedIn and [Facebook](#)
- Productivity Tools
 - The use of sales portals, internal wikis, blogs, podcasts and videos to update and reinforce sales knowledge and training
 - Website visitor tracking – [LeadGenesys](#) and [genius.com](#) inform sales reps when prospects are visiting their website
 - [Xobni](#) – an Outlook plug-in to organize Outlook inboxes
- Sales Operations
 - [Xactly](#) – an on-demand sales compensation solution
 - [LucidEra](#) and [Birst](#) - on-demand business intelligence platforms
 - [TerrAlign](#) – sales territory/resource optimization

Check out Chad Levitt’s blog [New Sales Economy](#) for a more comprehensive list of Sales 2.0 vendors and resources.

One way to get a sense of what Sales 2.0 is about is by comparing it to traditional sales methods, which I’ll call “Sales 1.0”.

Sales 2.0 Top 10 List:

Sales 1.0		Sales 2.0
1	Forcing a sale to make the	Guiding the prospect through their

	quarter	buying process based on their needs and timing
2	Field sales reps work as “lone-rangers” and keep contact and account information to themselves	CRM systems like Salesforce.com are used to share information across sales, marketing and support teams
3	Informing Sales of new products and competition at kickoff and quarterly sales meetings	Sales receives frequent podcasts, microblogs, emails, and videos from marketing to gain a competitive edge
4	Sales makes cold calls to yellow pages and rented lists	Sales identifies target segment contacts with Jigsaw and leverages social networks like LinkedIn to connect
5	One-way communication with prospects and customers	Collaborating with prospects and customers via online forums, blogs, and customer advisory boards
6	Ignoring prospects who aren't ready to buy	Nurturing prospects over time and establishing a trusting relationship
7	Making prospects speak with a rep to get collateral and pricing information	Educating prospects with demos, case studies, videos and pricing via the web so they can “self-qualify”
8	No strategy for prospect follow-up; leads fall through the cracks	Applying lead qualification criteria and lead scoring to prioritize follow-up activities
9	Sending the same message and offer to all prospects, regardless of where they are in their buying cycle	Using integrated campaigns to deliver relevant messages and offers to specific market segments; respecting how and when people want to be contacted and what content they want to receive
10	Field sales reps travel to meet face-to-face with prospects before they are qualified	Inside Sales or Sales Development teams use web conferencing for the 1 st (and possibly all) prospect meetings

Conclusion:

The timing is right for Sales 2.0. Buyers hold the power position these days and want to learn all they can about solutions via the Web and then, when they are ready, engage with sales reps. Sellers are looking for ways to shorten the sales cycle, improve sales productivity, drive down costs and retain customers. In this economy, we all win by building and nurturing trusting relationships and helping each other grow sustainable businesses.

About the Author

Mary Gospe is principal and co-founder of KickStart Alliance. She helps B2B tech and clean tech companies build and nurture their sales pipelines through integrated marketing campaigns, sales development programs and inside sales

operations. [Mary Gospe](#) can be reached at 650.941.8970.