10 favorite tools that frontline salespeople nominate as their favorites

Business

In sales, every minute saved is another opportunity gained. And for *busy* salespeople, time is a luxury. Fortunately, a plethora of tools exist to make selling fast and efficient. The only problem is that time-pressed people may have difficulty finding the time to experiment with different technologies.

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That's why my team at has stepped in to help. I asked several of these sales experts to nominate their 10 favorite time-saving tools. So, to help readers identify apps and software that may , here are their 10 favorites.

1. Conspire

For the longest time, LinkedIn was the easiest way to source . But, as users began accepting invitations to connect from professionals they hardly knew, the value of a LinkedIn intro became diluted. Currently, it is common to ask for an introduction on LinkedIn only to find out that your first-degree connection isn't actually familiar with your prospect. Sadly, a second-degree connection isn't what it used to be.

To get a high-impact intro, Patrick Hogan, our CEO, uses . Conspire is a tool that analyzes email data to identify how well your contacts know one other. It displays a " connection strength" among people in your network, and gives you access to professionals in their network who they have a warm relationship with.

Who else uses it: Companies such as Distil Networks, startup investors like Brad Feld and tech influencers, including Rand Fishkin, all use the service.

Currently, users can connect with more than six million people through the Conspire app.

Cost: Free for all users.

2. Calendly

Scheduling meetings is a nightmare. Often, finding a mutually agreeable time to speak with a customer is chaotic and unproductive. In fact, a 2010 survey that professionals waste 4. 8 hours each week on scheduling meetings.

To make easier, Xand Griffin of employs , an appointment-scheduling app. Calendly syncs with your calendar to show prospects when you are available so they may choose a time that works for them.

Who else uses it: Organizations that use Calendly include Betterment, the University of Georgia and Xero.

Cost: Free for unlimited meetings with one event type. $8 per month per seat for the upgraded plan.

3. Boomerang

Most salespeople juggle hundreds of opportunities at a time and own thousands of contacts. And to keep conversations fresh and relevant, many use , a Gmail app that allows users to schedule email sends in the future and create reminders to address incoming messages.

Aalap Shah of says he uses Boomerang to " pre-write notes, thank you notes, and other materials and schedule [emails] out one day a week. This allows

me to stay in touch, be consistent incommunication, and never forget to write a follow-up note."

Who else uses it: According toGoogleChrome, the company boasts 1, 042, 277 users for its Chrome extension.

Cost: The basic plan (free) offers 10 monthly credits. The personal, pro and premium plans cost $4. 99, $14. 99 and $49. 99 per month, respectively.

4. Rapportive

A quick snapshot of who your buyer is can reveal a world of information. According to Jeremy Boudinet of , saves salespeople loads of time by centralizing everything there is to know about an individual in one place.

Instead of manually searching for a person's Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter profiles, salespeople use Rapportive to surface personal details about a prospect including his location, interests and past work experience.

Who else uses it: So far, 422, 362 people use Rapportive's Chrome extension. Some 18, 188 users own the Firefox add-on.

Cost: Free as an add-on for Firefox and Chrome.

5. Kitedesk

For a more powerful alternative to Rapportive, Boudinet recommends , saying, " Our clients use it to automate putting data into their CRM and organize their daily sales outreach, which are both huge time savers."

Kitedesk pulls a lead's email address, phone number, social accounts, past interaction data and company size to give sales reps fast and reliable insights into and what happened in previous conversations.

Who else uses it: On G2 Crowd, companies rated Kitedesk 4. 8 stars out of 5.

Cost: Plans are a flat-rate $49 per month per user.

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6. QuoteRoller (now PandaDoc)

To save time at the proposal stage, Henry O'Loughlin of uses QuoteRoller (now) to create contracts instantaneously. With templates, O'Loughlin plugs in client-specific information before he delivers his proposals digitally. Using QuoteRoller's e-signature function, document analytics and in-line comments, prospects can request specific changes to the proposal and execute the contract from their desktop computers or mobile devices.

Who else uses it: PandaDoc is used by companies like FreshBooks, Panasonic, VentureBeat and Patagonia.

Cost: Plans start at $19 a month per user when billed annually ($29 per month when billed month-to-month) and go up to $49 per month per user.

7. Harvest

To , salespeople must first track how they spend their time. And O'Loughlin insists is the best tool for that. He says, " It provides reports of how we spend our time on the sales process, so we can cut out inefficiencies." Armed

with data, sales teams can begin to systematically improve how they sell and they may eliminate or outsource responsibilities that waste time.

In an article for *HarvardBusiness Review* , Bain & Company partners Dianne Ledingham, Mark Kovac and Heidi Locke Simon , " Companies that use a scientific approach to sales force effectiveness have found that reps in the lower quartiles show dramatic improvement, with productivity jumps of 200%." With Harvest, salespeople can monitor how long certain tasks take to complete and measure time spent against ROI.

Who else uses it: Multinational brands like Amnesty International, Kiva, Nike, and Volkswagen all trust Harvest.

Cost: Free for one user, four clients and two projects. Solo plan costs $12 per month, Basic $49 and Business $99.

8. Zoom

Last year, a study commissioned by Larato , " Salespeople spend 11% of their time traveling." Instead of being on trains, planes, taxis, and buses, sales reps can instead leverage video conferencing to host face-to-face meetings with prospects. To do that, O'Loughlin licenses , an online meeting software.

" We find that video meetings help build trust a lot more than simple phone calls. If you can't meet in person, a video call saves a ton of time and helps build rapport better than the phone," says O'Loughlin. In fact, sales execs prefer video calls over in-person meetings. Data from PGi that, " 70% of people would rather video conference than travel to a meeting."

Who else uses it: More than 140, 000 companies use Zoom including SolarCity, Texas A&M and Nudge.

Cost: Free plans limit video calls up to 40 minutes each. Paid plans cost $14. 99 for the Pro tier and $19. 99 for the Business tier. Enterprise customers receive custom quotes.

9. Leadcaster

Some 97 percent of website visitors engage with your business more than once. With tools like , salespeople can proactively discover customers' identity, interests and needs. Jason Brewer of uses Leadcaster to generate " a daily report on [which] companies are on our site and what pages they are viewing, which helps to identify potential leads and the services they are interested in."

Who else uses it: VisiStat boasts more than 60, 000 customers and 100 partners.

Cost: The Starter plan costs $350 a month for a single user. Pro plans cost $500 a month for up to five users. For bigger accounts, pricing is customized.

10. Datanyze

know granular details about their best customers. As VP of sales for , Kyle Hale says he believes that, " Marketing teams that use Hubspot or Marketo and at the same time run paid ad campaigns via Google ads or webinars have a higher likelihood of closing for my team." Knowing that, he leverages to find companies which fit his ideal customer profile to maximize his team's

sales prospecting productivity. With Datanyze, Hale can crawl millions of sites around the web to identify which technologies each employs.

Hale explains, " Getting to the right companies and contacts much faster than you could say even two years ago is important. When you multiply the hours saved in prospecting across my team of six, it adds up very, very quickly over the course of weeks, months, years, etc."

Who else uses it: 21, 110 users have downloaded Datanyze's free Chrome extension.

Cost: Standard licenses for the full product suite cost $600 a month. Pro licenses cost $1, 200. Enterprise plans come with custom pricing.

Final thoughts

Salespeople spend less than one-third of their time actually selling. And that's a shame. By using each of these tools, frontline sales reps can free up their schedules to have more frequent and higher quality interactions with prospects.

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