

Five proven ways to cut through the noise of digital- first sales

Sales leaders' top tips for connecting with
customers digitally



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Introduction

The great thing about our connected world is that you can reach anyone, anywhere, at any time.

The bad thing? Your sales leads are tired of being found anywhere, at any time.

Sales has never been harder, largely because of how easy it is to do the bare minimum and fire off a cold email. Modern sales leaders are competing against a barrage of low-effort, impersonal outreach tactics that struggle to convert leads – when what you actually need is a highly relational approach.

Digital-first sales are here to stay: **three out of four B2B decision-makers** prefer remote interactions, according to McKinsey. But just like the old days, selling successfully still requires you to do the legwork of genuinely getting to know your customers, understanding their pain points and identifying solutions.

Here's how to get started.

Watch top sales leaders share [how to connect digitally with customers](#).

Webinar hosted by Slack's former VP of Sales, **AJ Tennant**.



Set yourself apart with bespoke solutions



Sahil Mansuri
CEO
Bravado

When he was still a new sales manager and one of the early employees at Glassdoor, **Sahil Mansuri** was tasked with landing enterprise accounts. He set his sights on Facebook.

Instead of talking up Glassdoor's brand in a navel-gazing email, Mansuri focused on how he could help the social media giant to improve its reputation as a top destination for engineers. He analysed all of the reviews by Facebook's software developers over the previous six months, compared them with the competition, and sent the report to Facebook's vice president of talent.

Just 12 hours later, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg emailed him back. She invited him to present his findings directly to the company's CEO, Mark Zuckerberg – who proceeded to include Facebook's Glassdoor rating in the company's weekly leadership huddle meetings from then on.

'We ran the same play and signed up Amazon, Microsoft and Google, all in one month. All of a sudden, we had the four biggest tech employers as customers because our approach was different from anything else on the market.'

Sahil Mansuri
CEO, *Bravado*



Invest in the quality of your outreach

Outreach is much more than a numbers game. You can spam prospects with generic LinkedIn messages, which typically results in a low response rate. Or you can invest more time in fewer, but more effective, personalised messages.

Not sure where to start? Our experts recommend zooming in on specific product features, anticipating objections and leading the conversation with curiosity.

Tactic 1: Zoom in



Samantha McKenna
CEO
#samsales Consulting

Use a magnifying glass – not a satellite – to show what you can do. The point of your first message shouldn't be to hawk your general product; it should spark interest by offering your leads tangible, practical help with a specific problem that they're dealing with.

'Buyers are really discerning. It's tough to get their attention, let alone stand out. Frankly, just do a little research. Instead of sending a hundred touches a day, send 20 emails that are highly personalised to the buyer and the challenge in front of them.'

Samantha McKenna
CEO, *#samsales Consulting*



Tactic 2: Anticipate objections

You've done your research. You've zeroed in on one aspect of how your product can help your soon-to-be customer. The problem is, they're already using a tool that they think is serving them just fine. Too often, salespeople forget to anticipate their prospect's existing solution, and the conversation fizzles.

To get a response, you have to think about your lead's situation from all angles and connect the value that you offer back to them – despite their potential objections.

'Let's say you're selling a CSM. You have to think about what the immediate response is going to be and say, "I realise you probably already have a CSM; here's why mine is different"'

Samantha McKenna
CEO, #samsales Consulting

Tactic 3: Be curious



Kathy Gereau
Regional Vice President of Sales CLM
DocuSign

Once you've got in the door, offer a point of view that signals your sincere interest in your client.

Your goal as an empathetic, curious salesperson? Become a trusted advisor who's interested in helping your customer to solve a problem, not a seller pushing a product.

'Curiosity is the number one thing I look for in a salesperson. I've managed more than 500 sales professionals in my career, and that's the single skill I haven't been able to teach. But it's the key to truly connecting with the client.'

Kathy Gereau
Regional Vice President of Sales CLM, DocuSign



Harness the relationship-building power of text and Slack Connect

Let's face it: cold-calling is dead.

Not only are office phone numbers increasingly difficult to track down, chances are high that the person you need to reach is working from home anyway. Plus, there's **strong evidence** that out-of-the-blue calls are ineffective and could actually be damaging.

'If you're in B2B tech sales and you are still cold-calling, you're missing the mark. I have never once made a cold call because there are smarter plays that keep your character and reputation intact.'

Samantha McKenna
CEO, #samsales Consulting

The sales leaders that we interviewed are finding success with **Slack Connect**, which allows sales reps to engage with prospects where they're working: in Slack. It's a more professional alternative to texting, without being as formal as email.

Mansuri and his team use Slack Connect to maintain real-time communication with all clients – whether they're sharing watercooler talk to build the relationship, short articles that might be helpful, or the nuts and bolts of the sales agreement.

'Our entire business runs in Slack. Why are people still communicating with customers via antiquated mediums like email and phone calls? If you aren't texting or messaging your customers in Slack, your competitors will – and they will steal your business. Relationships matter.'

Sahil Mansuri
CEO, Bravado



Know your product inside and out

Too often, reps can deliver the sales pitch in their sleep, but have to call in a solutions engineer when a prospect starts asking for more context. Phoning in a colleague often leads to a loss of credibility and leaves customers feeling like they're wasting their time.

It's essential that you develop an intimate knowledge of the following:

- **Your product:** Understand the use cases most relevant to your prospects
- **Your competitors:** Make sure that you know the features and benefits that set your product apart
- **Your customers:** Be clear on their pain points and the problems that they're trying to solve
- **Your product's concrete value:** Come ready with proof points on how your product has helped similar customers to achieve their goals

Remember that a good offence is the best defence when it comes to retaining customers.

'Either you're doing a deep dive into how you can solve problems, or you're going to get replaced by someone who can.'

Sahil Mansuri
CEO, Bravado



Use a human approach

Sure, we're in a digital-first world, but on the other side of the screen, we're all humans.

So pay close attention to the small talk: those moments at the beginning and end of conversations with your leads. Maybe they're under pressure to achieve ambitious OKRs, or perhaps they're frazzled from rushing their children to music lessons. Ask questions and listen actively; it's a huge opportunity for real connection.

'If you've done the work to build a genuine relationship, you can avoid insincere tactics, like "special" end-of-quarter pricing. I actually go the other way and say, "We're behind on the quarter and could really use this deal. If we can make it a win-win, can you help me? Or should I go knock on someone else's door?" Once we have a level of rapport, you'd be surprised at how many people say, "You know, I can probably make something happen".'

Sahil Mansuri
CEO, Bravado

In the end, the secret sauce to selling digitally comes down to simply being human – and establishing a level of trust and camaraderie that can lead to real results.

Ready to take your sales relationships to the next level?

Get started with [Slack Connect](#) and [Sales Cloud for Slack](#).



About Slack

Slack is your digital HQ – a place where work flows between your people, systems, partners and customers. Slack breaks down communication silos inside and beyond your organisation by bringing teams and tools together around common goals, projects and processes in channels and in Slack Connect. It removes the limits of physical walls, giving people the flexibility to do their best work where, when and how they prefer with huddles and clips. And it empowers everyone to automate common tasks with apps and workflows. In the digital-first era, Slack makes work simpler, more pleasant and more productive.



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