



HOW TO INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY OF SALES & SERVICES

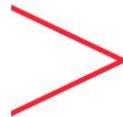
Many companies have reacted very flexibly to the digitalization push, which can be observed for both B2B and B2C business since spring 2020. Most firms have significantly increased the degree of digitization in sales and services within a few months. For example, traditionally oriented retailers have strengthened their e-commerce businesses and insurance companies have equipped their brokers with optimized digital packages. Video calls with additional technical features are likely to replace business travel, especially in the B2B sector, by 25 to 50% in the long term.

HOW TO STRENGTHEN PRODUCTIVITY OF B2B SALES & SERVICES **#systemizing**

Key facts

Digitization push

Productivity increases
by 30 to 40% possible



Starting points

1. Establish sales & service staff as multi-channel experts
2. Optimize performance management/CRM/account plans
3. Integrate B2B platform & partners into ecosystem
4. Categorize offer & pricing from client's point of view



How to achieve a productivity boost without neglecting excellent client relationships?

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Sources: McKinsey, BCG, Roland Berger, Harvard Business Manager, brains

Considering these diverse operational changes, the question arises how productivity & digitization in sales & services can be strengthened in a targeted manner. Based on our experience, we see four quickly effective and efficiently implementable starting points for B2B business in particular:

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- 1. Establish sales and service staff as experts and "hubs" for multi-channel customer approach:** Digitization is one of the major drivers of efficiency for B2B sales and services. To realize this potential an almost complete integration of sales, information and marketing channels between customer and supplier or service provider is needed. This cross-channel task can usually only be successfully managed by the key account sales or service staff. Also, it requires flexible and customized IT solutions, optimized sales support, and a finely tuned organization of the interfaces to the central units, which, for example, control product platforms or information material/services. This is particularly challenging in multi-level organizations, e.g., in insurance companies. In addition, smooth interaction of sales and service units will become even more essential.
- 2. Set up, coordinate, and implement tool-supported performance management and flexible account plans:** High productivity is the result of maximum efficiency in sales and service efforts combined with a high success rate. Accordingly, account plans must be able to be adapted quickly to changing conditions. Large amounts of relevant data and information must be made available to the sales and service teams systematically and with little effort via easy-to-use tools (e.g., Microsoft-based or via CRM systems such as Salesforce etc.). A tailor-made performance management system, which balances the components "demand" (via KPIs) and "support" (e.g., via business intelligence), is becoming increasingly important in complex B2B business. Especially for medium-sized manufacturing companies, there is often great potential here.
- 3. Integrate B2B platforms and partners into ecosystems, using diversity and maintaining focus:** For years, platform models have been performing around 100% better on the stock exchanges than classic e-commerce models (on average). Compared to B2C, B2B marketplaces are still in the early stages of development. Although the volumes via them processed only correspond to 2-3% of the market volume, they already sum up to a total volume of well over EUR 1 trillion, depending on the source. Mercateo, Amazon Business, start-ups of various industrial companies, also F2C and other innovative approaches should be considered. Current demands for more flexible supply chains will accelerate the complex and industry-specific developments. Together with the orchestration of essential partnerships offline and online, this will result in another important building block for increased sales and service productivity. This applies to manufacturing companies and retailers, as well as banks and insurance companies.
- 4. Categorize offer & pricing from the customer's point of view (e.g. "good, better, best") and systematize it innovatively:** Recessions often make it impossible for customers to purchase a top offer with all additional services for economic reasons. Accordingly, innovative offers that promise customers more quality and increased efficiency are becoming increasingly important. The first step is often an optimized categorization of offers and services, e.g.,

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similar to a (simplified) three-part division into "good, better, best". This helps to strengthen trust, retain existing customers, and win new ones.

Since in sales and services both additional revenues and cost reductions have a direct impact on P&L, this area is particularly relevant for productivity increases in times of recession.

Successfully implementing projects to increase productivity in sales & services is a challenge: classic hurdles such as lack of time and high complexity require highly professional project management with a great deal of knowledge of the industry as well as optimal interaction between sales, marketing and services. According to our experience, in addition to these general requirements, four levers are essential:

1. Sufficient capacity for intensive work on the most important topics
2. KPI project management with leading indicators and clarification of priorities
3. Clear role definition of the project manager(s)
4. Simplification and acceleration as an overarching guideline

As managers and employees, we should therefore ask ourselves:

1. With which innovations regarding structures, processes, platforms & partners as well as offers & pricing can we use the crisis as an opportunity?
2. Who is driving which productivity levers with which measures?
3. How can we achieve a strong impact with efficient effort and the right expertise in sales and service?

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brains is a leading consultant network with >500 top project managers for growth and performance projects. We work for large corporations (EURO STOXX 50 & DAX), small and medium sized enterprises and private equity investors in the sectors

- Industrial Goods & Services
- Insurances, Banks & Stock Exchanges
- Life Science & Healthcare
- Automotive & Transportation
- Consumer Goods & Retail
- Private Equity & Investments

Through our competence matching, our clients leverage the consultant(s) with the relevant industry and technical expertise for the specific project. We are known for tailor-made project approaches with lean teams and single solutions.

With our consultant network we help our clients especially in the implementation of strategic projects. Core topics are business expansion, sales & services, transformation & performance, and operations & IT. Through our product platform, we support our consultants with best practices on project approaches and tools. Together with our consultants, we pursue our guiding principle of "Excellent value for money" for the benefit of our customers.

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