Digital Commerce and CRM Sales Technologies Primer for 2021

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The modern sales organization is a digital-first, multichannel sales organization. Application leaders supporting digital commerce and CRM sales should guide their organization’s efforts to make technology investments that go beyond commoditized commerce functionality and analog sales processes.

Scope

Use this initiative to integrate digital commerce and CRM sales technologies to jointly deliver rich, unified buying and selling experiences for any sales model from transactional to long-cycle sales.

In addition to application and software engineering leaders, other roles involved in this initiative are:

- Enterprise architecture and technology innovation leaders
- Chief information officers
- Chief marketing officers

Topics covered by Gartner’s research in 2021 will include:

- **Digital commerce**: We will describe strategies and technology platforms that support customers’ plans to purchase goods and services through an interactive, self-service experience.
- **CRM sales**: We will identify tools that support the direct and indirect sales processes used by sellers to influence buyers to purchase products and services.

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Analysis
COVID-19 has been a transformational event for all sellers, suppliers and producers on many levels. Most notably, the pandemic has forced sellers in all industries to transform their traditional go-to-market models. Disruptions in demand and supply cycles add to the strain on traditional selling practices. Companies engaged in transactional sales have to pivot to use online selling to augment or replace physical channels with rapidly evolving models like curbside delivery. Companies with long-cycle sales find that their sellers no longer have in-person access to buyers. This means that they lose the ability to...
maintain frequent synchronous conversations with decision makers and have to adapt and use alternative mechanisms such as web conferencing or risk sales cycles losing traction.

Transforming to address these changes is not easy. Companies with long-cycle sales are finding it difficult to change their legacy processes and to introduce new digital engagement channels. Companies with transactional sales face customers with higher expectations for consistent experience. This puts pressure on their digital commerce stack. And companies that have not updated their digital sales channels are finding that they have expensive legacy technology that does not scale to support new commercial models, like recurring revenue management.

The implications are significant for application leaders. Organizations have to immediately implement or scale their use of digital channels, particularly for virtual selling, unified commerce and experience, and digital payments, in order to support customer experience objectives. And they need to consider new technology approaches, such as composable technology architectures and hyperautomation.

**Topics**

Organizations face challenges to retain and engage existing and prospective customers in a dynamic, buyer-centric environment. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbate these challenges. To ensure revenue growth and longevity, organizations need to introduce transformative technology that supports a buyer-centric model. New engagement channels, such as digital channels, and new customer experiences are critical. There are many tools, platforms and services available to support these objectives. Determining the appropriate alignment of requirements and available resources is key to a strong program.

Our research in this area addresses the following topics:

**Suggested First Steps**

- Industry Vision: Commerce to You
- How to Develop a Digital Commerce Strategy
- Evolve Digital Commerce Portfolios by Leveraging the Application Ecosystem
- Rationalize Your CRM Sales Investments Using Gartner’s Sales Technology Stack Model
- Best Practices for Developing a Pace-Layered Roadmap for CRM Sales Applications

**Essential Reading**

- Magic Quadrant for Digital Commerce
- Magic Quadrant for Configure, Price and Quote Application Suites
- Market Guide for Digital Commerce Payment Vendors
- Magic Quadrant for Sales Force Automation
- Magic Quadrant for CRM Lead Management
- The Future of Sales in 2025: A Gartner Trend Insight Report
- Mitigate Coronavirus (COVID-19) Business Impacts With Digital Commerce
- Virtual Selling Emerges as a Priority for CRM Sales Technology Programs
- Infographic: AI Use Case Prism for B2B Sales
- Pandemic Recovery: Key Sales Roles and Technology Impacts for B2B Sales

Tools and Toolkits

- Toolkit: RFP for Digital Commerce Payment Solutions
- Toolkit: RFP for Digital Commerce Platforms
- Toolkit: RFP for B2B Price Optimization and Management Solutions
- Select the Best-Suited CRM Solution With Gartner's Evaluation Model
- How to Select a Configure, Price and Quote Vendor
- Toolkit: 2021 Strategic Roadmap for Sales Analytics
- Toolkit: Choosing the Right Partner Relationship Management Vendor

Related Priorities

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<th>Initiative Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>CRM Strategy and Customer Experience</td>
<td>CRM and CX are critical priorities, but strategies must adapt as the organization, its customers and its environment evolve. Failing to get the fundamentals right puts the organization at risk.</td>
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