VIRTUAL SELLING HITS A TIPPING POINT

Virtual selling is on the rise, but how fast is that rise, and how can you position yourself to take advantage of it? To answer these questions, Salesforce interviewed 2,900 sales professionals. Here are their answers.

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Despite being overloaded with tasks, salespeople are making a big effort to spend more time with customers and prospects.

In an era of constant connectivity, the biggest gains are in time spent connecting virtually. In fact, 60% of reps report an increase in virtual meetings over the last three years. What's more, there are three times as many sales reps who now spend less time with customers in person than there are those who spend less time with them virtually.

This shifting dynamic coincides with a general trend toward screen time, in general, among salespeople.

SALES REPS HAVE INCREASED THEIR TIME CONNECTING VIRTUALLY WITH CUSTOMERS AT A RATE 3X GREATER THAN CONNECTING IN PERSON.

TOP 5 REASONS
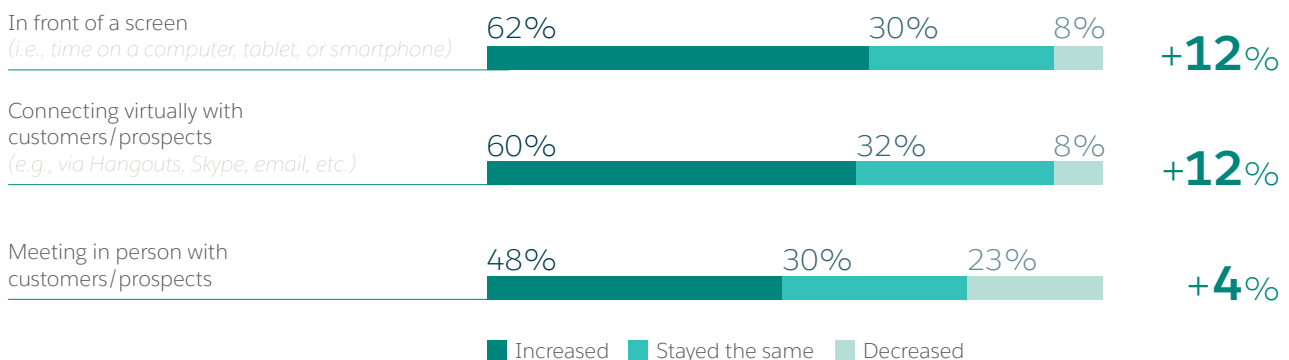### Given For Hiring More Inside or Sales Development Reps

1 Improved technology that makes inside reps more effective

2 Better opportunities for rep specialization without a larger field territory

3 Improved team dynamics/cohesion

4 Better suited to our dispersed customer base

5 Lower business costs

Selling Has Gone Virtual

Time spent meeting with customers virtually has increased at a rate over three times that of meeting in person.

Percentage of Sales Reps Who Spend More or Less Time on the Following Compared to 2015

Net Change Since 2015

In front of a screen
(*i.e., time on a computer, tablet, or smartphone*)
62%   30%   8%   **+12**%

Connecting virtually with customers/prospects
(*e.g., via Hangouts, Skype, email, etc.*)
60%   32%   8%   **+12**%

Meeting in person with customers/prospects
48%   30%   23%   **+4**%

■ Increased   ■ Stayed the same   ■ Decreased

Base: Sales representatives

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As selling goes virtual, hiring practices are reflecting this trend. On average, staffing of inside sales roles has increased by 7% since 2015, and sales development reps have increased by 6%.

Sales performance and inside staffing trends march in lockstep; high performers are 2.3x more likely than underperformers to have hired more inside reps, and 2.7x more likely to have hired more sales development reps.
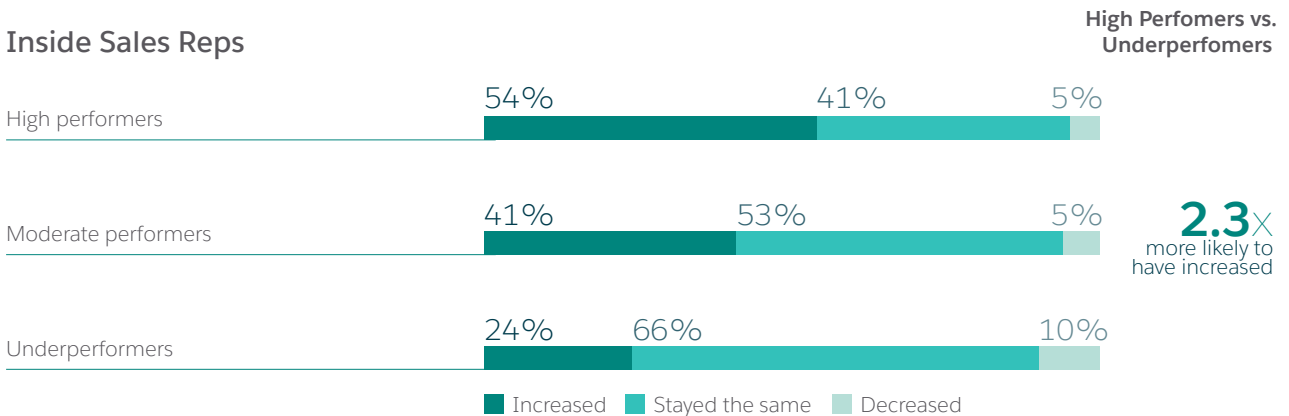
While sales leaders cite a variety of reasons for shifting to an inside sales staffing model – including better opportunity for rep specialization and lower costs – improved technology ranks as the top motivator.
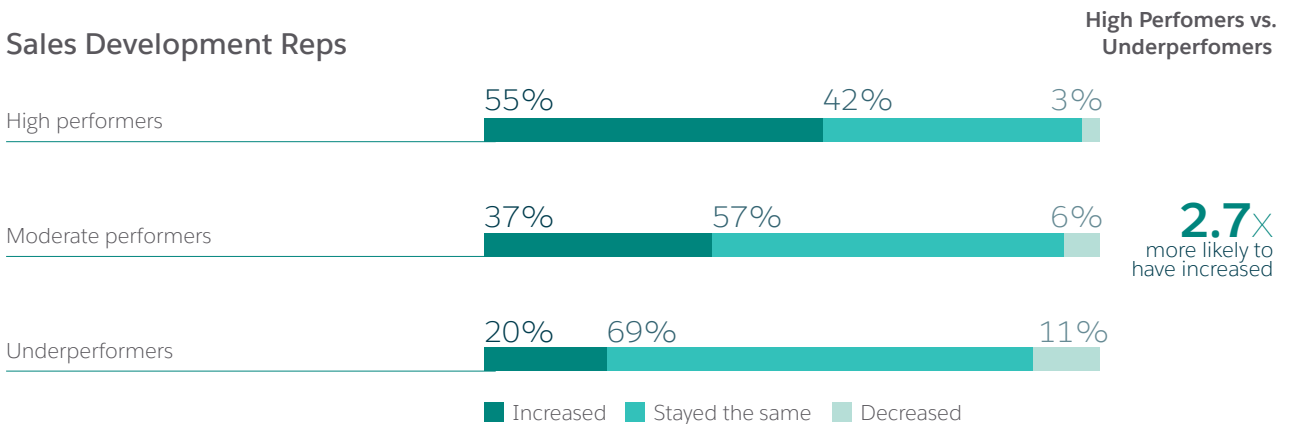
Inside Roles Take Center Stage

Since 2015, the average sales team has increased their inside sales rep headcount by 7% and their sales development rep headcount by 6%.

Percentage of Sales Teams Whose Staff Levels Have Changed
as Follows Over the Past Three Years

Inside Sales Reps

High Perfomers vs. Underperfomers

	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased
High performers	54%	41%	5%
Moderate performers	41%	53%	5%
Underperformers	24%	66%	10%

2.3x more likely to have increased

Legend: Increased · Stayed the same · Decreased

Sales Development Reps

High Perfomers vs. Underperfomers

	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased
High performers	55%	42%	3%
Moderate performers	37%	57%	6%
Underperformers	20%	69%	11%

2.7x more likely to have increased

Legend: Increased · Stayed the same · Decreased

Base: Sales executives and managers

Salesforce Research

Virtual selling is on the rise – is your team ready?
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