



Sales Engagement Platforms

**WHAT THEY ARE AND WHY THEY ARE ABSOLUTELY
CRITICAL TO MODERN SALES PROCESSES**

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SALES ENGAGEMENT PLATFORMS

What They are and Why They Are Absolutely Critical to Modern Sales Processes

As we began building and promoting the Yip Yip platform, we were pretty consistently asked if we were either a [CRM](#) system or [Marketing Automation](#). People would ask if we were similar to [Salesforce](#), [Hubspot](#) or other popular CRM or Marketing Automation platforms. We expected to be confused with [Sales Enablement](#), but we did not hear too many of those questions.

We believe that Yip Yip has made significant progress in its development and is moving into its maturing stage, as we have revenue, existing clients and are moving quickly towards profitability. It is time to more openly discuss our vision, the path we see in this space, and the massive hole in sales engagement and sales enablement that we believe we can fill.

From our vantage point, we saw incredible technology advances that developed out of Web 2.0 and the financial crisis that began in 2008. Through these major disruptions emerged numerous competitors trying to help companies become more efficient in their sales and marketing efforts. Essentially, necessity called for technology to help companies do more with less.

[FORRESTER](#) DEFINES SALES ENABLEMENT AS:

...a strategic, ongoing process that equips all client-facing employees with the ability to consistently and systematically have a valuable conversation with the right set of customer stakeholders at each stage of the customer's problem-solving life cycle to optimize the return of investment of the selling system.

Sales Enablement, from Forrester's perspective, is about empowering sales personnel with the right information and strategies to efficiently move prospects to clients. It is a guided selling tool and system. As we understand it, Sales Enablement focuses on closing strategies, case studies, custom solutions and other tactics, so that sales teams can be efficient and prepared.



“Sales Departments never use 65% of content created by marketing”

Source: SiriusDecisions

WHAT IS SALES ENGAGEMENT?

In September 2016, [Roger Kay](#) of [Endpoint Technologies Associates](#) wrote [What is a Sales Engagement Platform anyway](#), for CIO and made some clear deductions. He concluded that the marketing-sales conversion process is still full of leaks and many activities are simply not getting done. Neither CRM nor Marketing Automation help sales engage with prospects, and that leaves a big hole for Sales Engagement Platforms (SEP).

We believe that Sales Engagement is a category within the Sales Enablement process. But, we are not exceptionally picky about a perfect definition. We are most concerned with filling a hole we believe adds exceptional value, increases sales and shrinks sales cycles by contributing to the sale team’s daily duties. Sales teams need and want SEP tools to engage more consistently with a wider group of their existing relationships. Sales are more connected now than ever before and need tools to help them be seen as experts in their industry.

Inbound Marketing Companies have clearly explained to marketing departments (and the entire business community) why continual content creation effectively promoted via social media and email is the key to finding and nurturing prospects. We will not go into those details because we believe they have been sufficiently proven and discussed.

However, an individual sales professional that has spent his or her career developing relationships and the key activities that lead to long term sales success does not have any tools to help them in a similar manner.

To clarify, marketing automation via an inbound marketing philosophy puts a huge premium on the value of consistent, strategic content to attract, engage and convert prospects into paying clients. But, those current systems only offer this at the central, corporate level.

At best, companies are using their CEO or a key team member as the perceived “sender” of information to establish them as a thought leader; this can be very effective.

But again, the individual sales members are left out of these activities. Yet, they have spent their careers in sales training, learning that long term sales success starts and ends with developing great and widespread relationships.

Companies tell their sales reps that they should use social media (like LinkedIn) to develop relationships and research their industry. But, they are not given tools to help them personalize corporate content and share it directly with their existing relationships. It is not enough for the sales staff to rely on the company’s brand to help them gain credibility,

capture attention and book appointments. They must be known, and that only comes with tools to help them always be present with quality digital content and engage the prospects that they have existing relationships with.

Aragon Research identifies “the core elements of Sales Engagement Platforms, of which Content, Communications, Analytics and CRM integration are all core elements”; we couldn’t agree more. We believe that sales teams need SEP to engage better, faster and more consistently in order to close more deals and close them faster. We also believe that content, specifically personalized messages for all members of a sales team, promoted in their social media fit in the SEP arena.

90%
of B2B sellers don’t use marketing content because it is irrelevant and difficult to customize

Source: Forrester

EXAMPLES OF SALES ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

Our goal is not to write an exhaustive report on the entire industry. The chart on the left represents key categories and players in the Sales Enablement space. Our intention is to provide information on the existing players in the Sales Engagement space and the function that each player represents.

Sales Enablement & Engagement Space

<u>Analytics</u>	<u>Engagement</u>	<u>Lead Management</u>	<u>CRM/ Marketing Automation</u>
Insight Squared	Outreach	Velocify	Hubspot
Power BI	Yesware	Lead Data	Pardot
Tableau	Adroll	NewVoice Media	Oracle / Eloqua
Salesforce Analytics Cloud	Madison Logic	Salesforce	Microsoft Dynamic CRM
Domo	Infer	Salesforce Community	Salesforce
			Marketo

Aragon Research predicts that the market for Sales Engagement Platforms will grow from \$700 million to \$5 Billion in the next five years. That is why we believe it is important to know who is currently serving clients, what they are providing, and how they all create the landscape for this emerging sector.

YIP YIP

Yip Yip focuses on personalizing and distributing content for every sales rep or team member of an organization; Yip Yip is an efficiency tool. The platform allows a single user to create, brand and publish company approved content on behalf of all of the company’s team members simultaneously.

The platform easily allows for segmentation. Administrators can determine which members require a personalized “Pagesite”. A “Pagesite” functions like a personalized, digital brochure that is automatically updated every time new articles or content is centrally created. The personalized Pagesite is designed for members, like sales reps, who need to stay top-of-mind and require credibility as thought leaders and experts in the industry. Simply put, it keeps the sales person’s name and picture in front of readers while they are engaging the content.

The general concept is as follows: if someone clicks a link to read an article promoted by someone they

are connected to digitally or socially, they should remember who shared the article by reading it on a page branded for that individual from the company with whom they have an existing relationship. It supports their relationship, allows the sales member to be perceived as more knowledgeable and as a potential value-adding partner for the reader.

Members who do not require their own branded Pagesite can simple use a feature that amplifies the corporate message through their personal social accounts, but lead readers to a central, corporate page, like a blog or specific landing page. The admin determines and manages which team members utilize which feature.

“Sales Reps who use social selling strategies find an average of 45% more opportunities than sales reps who don’t use social selling strategies”

Source: Aberdeen Group

CLEARSLIDE

If volume sales is important to you, Clearslide could be a good tool for you. There is a greater emphasis on sales and tracking than the presentation and creation side of the software. After going through a series C \$50 million round of funding, the company is more broadly focused on Sales Enablement and less on presentation. Clearslide has functionalities including screen sharing sales content, viewing metrics on emailed content, staying connected with your audience via mobile devices, and the ability to manage content and the analytics behind it. Clearslide presents some opportunities from a sales engagement perspective.

CUSTOMSHOW

CustomShow enables sales professionals to create personalized presentations for corporate approved libraries. Their platform allows reps to share presentations and view real time analytics like open rates and views by audience segmentation.

BRAINSHARK

BrainShark focuses on sales productivity. Directly from BrainShark: *BrainShark arms your salespeople with the solutions they need to sell smarter, sell better and sell more effectively – closed deal after closed deal. With more powerful content, training, coaching, engagement and analytics, we help take your sales organization to new heights.*

Brainshark has different tracks, including coaching, training and engaging:

Content : Make it easy for reps to access the most relevant content for any selling situation anytime, anywhere – even right from Salesforce.

Readiness : Onboard new reps faster and keep existing team members up-to-speed with continuous learning, online training and interactive coaching.

Analytics : Monitor how your reps' knowledge and behavior affect sales outcomes and identify the best practices to promote information across your organization.

INFER

Infer focuses on predictive forecasting and account-based marketing. They refer to themselves as “the #1 Predictive Sales & Marketing Platform”. Infer adds predictive analytics into real-time sales and marketing workflows. They integrate with a variety of other software companies that provide additional analytics, engagement services like email and advertising, lead management and CRM.

YESWARE

Yesware is email and auto dialer for salespeople. It gives insight into how recipients interact with email messages and tells salespeople the appropriate next steps to take based on the recipient's actions. It offers one-click dialing to make sales reps more efficient and integrates with other CRM and email software. The predictive data helps focus efforts and target high quality leads.

Conclusion

Aragon Research predicts that the market for Sales Engagement Platforms will grow from \$700 million to \$5 Billion in the next five years. We believe that SEP tools and strategies will become the standard way of thinking for companies who generate revenue through sales reps. Providing personalized messages and consistently publishing and promoting these messages to their digital networks via personal social media accounts is wise and should be a requirement. It helps ensure that sales reps are top-of-mind, trusted and perceived as thought leaders and influencers in their industry. In such competitive and global environments, this is quickly becoming a must-have for success.

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