

Technology - an evolution

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To remain relevant in a high-tech world, your team needs the right business technology. Here's how the modern workplace gets work done through tech, and why you can't be left lagging.



Business technology's evolution has shifted the way we work. Or, it could be that the way we work has been the driving force behind business technology's evolution. Whatever the reason for it, it is safe to say that tech is no longer the bumbling idiot it was in the '80s.

From landlines to cell phones, fax machines to VR, rolodexes to data-driven leads, door-to-door sales reps to door-to-door delivery, and manual data capture to automated CRMs, we've come a long way, baby.

The advent of enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems and customer relationship management (CRM) packages means tech has not only enabled greater productivity, but it has also reshaped the sales approach entirely.

Why do I say that? Well, for one, the data analysis it does in a matter of moments allows sales reps and support staff to personalise their approach that much better. This means more deals are closed and with way fewer resources.

To understand what the future might look like, let's unpack the brief history of sales and enterprise tech over time.

The digital revolution: 1950–2000

The digital revolution changed the world. It saw companies move away from mechanical and analogue technology and start deploying digital sales technology. These 50 years see incredible inventions, disruptions, and innovations. We're talking mobile communications, the personal computer, laptops, voicemail, and the internet! All in the space of five decades.

[Office software suites and spreadsheets](#) for digital record-keeping really picked up in this era. I mean, this was already leaps and bounds ahead of the pen-and-paper we'd been using for centuries. Mind-blowing stuff.

Customer relationship software was born shortly thereafter. [ACT! \(automated contact tracking\)](#) launched in 1986 as one of the first customer relationship management software tools. This spawned a flurry of CRM tools. [SalesForce](#) launched in 1999 and quickly became the world's largest vendor of CRM, and even offered storage in something called '[the cloud](#)'.

At this point, ERP systems were massive, clunky, wildly expensive, and unimaginably difficult to work with. So much so, that they were only viable for the very big companies who needed a unified system to run their businesses.

However, by the early 2000s, software companies were experimenting with more [agile, flexible ERP and CRM systems](#) that were user-friendly, cloud-based, and would enable sales and support teams for companies of all sizes.

The world wide web and the first video conferencing platform, [WebEx](#), further enhanced sales and support staff's ability to connect with customers from anywhere, and at any time.

The mobile revolution: 2000–present

The past two decades have seen an evolution in smart technology and automation at breakneck speed. The rise of Facebook (2004), YouTube (2006), and Twitter (2006) changed marketing and customer-engagement forever. iPads and tablets became useful tools for presentations and working on the go.

Smartphones and mobile apps made it possible for customers to become well-informed, well-researched experts. This technology allows managers to track their teams in real time – at least, if they have an [ERP or CRM](#) system enabled. It also means sales reps can quote clients immediately, check live stock levels, and do [digital deliveries](#) through their digital tech.

Improved [storage in the cloud](#) means massive amounts of data can be accessed quickly. Advancements in ERP technology and automation have largely reduced the manual administrative work required in sales, admin teams, accounting, and more, thus freeing staff up to focus on more productive work.

The evolution of technology has essentially allowed companies to optimise their sales opportunities, [streamline finance and accounting](#), [manage projects efficiently](#), catch prospects as soon as they are ready, and [improve their service](#). The impact of these advancements can still be seen in how companies run their businesses to this day.

The benefits of business technology

Considering how quickly business technology is evolving, I clearly see how companies that have not adapted to the new technologies are lagging behind. This resistance to change results in a widening gap between the front runners and those who are falling behind.

While some businesses may not want to use new tech because of the cost, the discomfort of introducing a new system, or the skills acquisition required, the proven reality is that technology saves time, resources, money, and administrative labour. More than that, it improves productivity and efficiency, which translates to increased sales profits.

Here are some significant benefits of adopting enterprise and customer support technology:

- Synchronises all touchpoints of the business
- Enhances account personalisation
- Improves strategic lead generation
- Real-time production tracking
- Enables digital delivery and signatures
- Graphic display of data in dashboards
- Improves data-based decision making
- Reduces manual administration and thus, human error

- Decreases administrative labour costs
- Eliminates hard copies and printing costs
- Faster proposal and quote turnaround
- Sign and deliver products anytime from anywhere
- Sales reps can access data and account information while travelling
- Improved communication between departments and customers
- Improved audits
- Interactive, instant management reports
- Unlimited, safe cloud storage

The revolution is here, time to upgrade your tech stack

To remain relevant and handle the demands of the modern market, teams need the right tech. They need tools to help them maximise productivity while fostering personalised customer relationships. Data analytics and automated insights are no longer nice-to-haves. These form the backbone of effective decision making and training.

With the right software, digitising your process doesn't have to be complicated. You just need to find the right partner who has the experience and industry expertise to implement enterprise and CRM software in your company. Look for an implementation partner with a solid [implementation methodology](#) as well as proven track record.

By digitising processes, your teams can use a mobile device to generate quotes, check inventory, and issue orders. It is time to get on the bandwagon, so that the next decades see you expand with ease, as you reach your customers where they are.

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