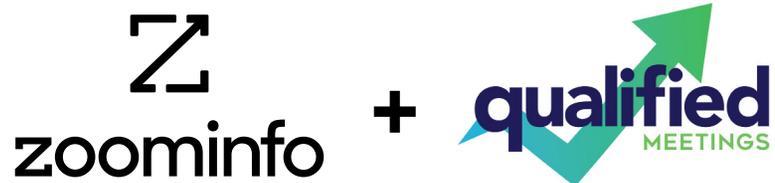


How to Adapt Your B2B Sales Strategy

and **Thrive** in the
New Normal



Introduction

With the recent COVID-19 crisis, companies find themselves in an unprecedented situation: forced to close offices and quickly transition employees to work remotely. And as a result, we've seen shifting market trends, budget cuts, and for some, furloughs and layoffs to preserve much-needed capital in a bid to keep the company alive. With so much disruption, how can (and should) your sales organization adapt? What does the new remote selling look like?

The good news is while some sales organizations are surviving—others are thriving. Let's take a look at the most effective sales strategy trends we're seeing to help you adapt your “new normal” selling approach.

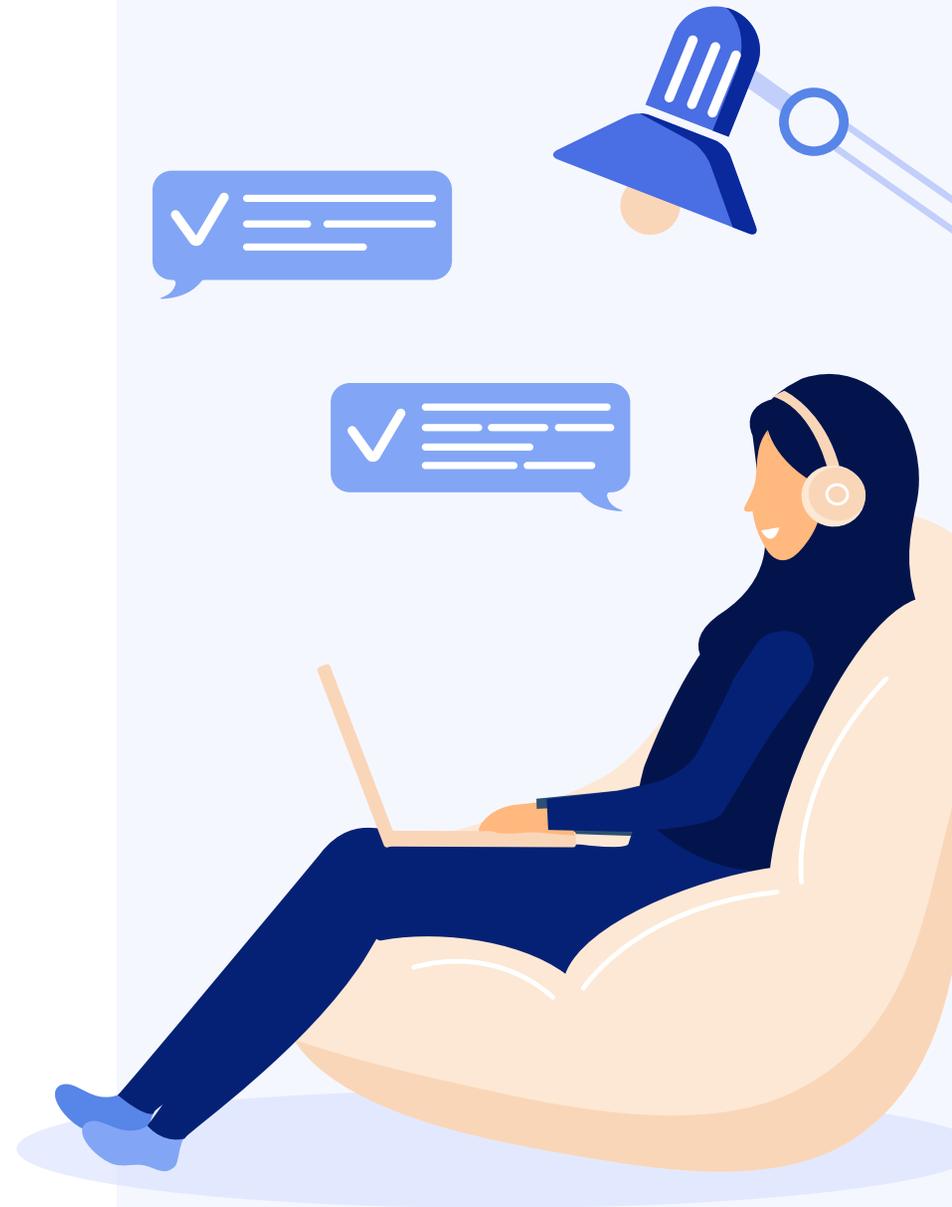


Focus on (Distraction-Free) Purposeful Activity

In crisis mode, it's normal to follow the Kübler-Ross model for the stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and, finally, acceptance. But for sales organizations that have quickly made the transition to work from home, there's an opportunity to maximize productivity—and business growth. In fact, according to a [recent BCG study](#), 14 percent of companies were able to increase profitability during the last four economic downturns.

Without many of the distractions inherent in office environments, sales professionals have the opportunity to turn in record-setting performances, including increased outbound sales activity. The most successful sales organizations that will thrive in the “new normal” are more likely to:

- ✓ Take a long-term perspective, and focus on growth.
- ✓ Never lower quality standards.
- ✓ Maximize digital communication to keep teams functioning.





Shift Your Selling Strategy

Adjusting to the new work environment is only part of the game. Getting the sales workforce focused on the right priorities and changing the selling approach are mission-critical for thriving sales organizations. Given shifting demands, it's likely the ideal customer profile (ICP) from last month might not be the ICP today.

Take action, and review your ICP and consider expanding your outbound capabilities by outsourcing sales development representatives (SDRs). They can help audit sales triggers and monitor new buying signals so you can focus on customer retention without sacrificing new customer acquisition.

Expand Your Target Accounts

While a recent ZoomInfo poll shows forecasting pipeline in uncertain times is a challenge for about 20 percent of sales teams, shifting priorities and consumer behaviors mean tapping into buying signals to target the right accounts. Certain industries, such as cleaning services, delivery services, landscaping, and e-retailers, saw significant, unforecasted increases in demand. Capturing all the sales opportunities under the huge increase in demand requires a change in approach.

And let's not forget the industries that suffered a sudden near-total cessation of sales—the travel industry, tourism, oil and gas, traditional retail, and entertainment—that will need help emerging from the ruinous spring.

Here is where the marketing and sales professionals will earn their stripes:

- ✓ Look at traditional markets and identify subgroups your message, products, and services can help.
- ✓ Reach out and listen to the market, and consider establishing a feedback loop with your SDRs for information intelligence.
- ✓ Be prepared for the successful re-opening of markets.





Demonstrate Empathy—and Most Importantly—Listen

To connect with prospects in a meaningful way—this is your greatest advantage—it’s more important than ever to do more listening than speaking. It’s time to change your overall tone and approach when selling. A ZoomInfo poll found sales reps are currently focused on sending prospects personalized messages to convey greater empathy (53.5 percent), and another 30 percent are laser-focused on developing longer-term partnerships.

As you look to personalize correspondence and demonstrate short-and-long-term business value, consider incorporating these three R’s into your selling approach:

1. Re-examine Messaging

In uncertain times, listening to your customers is a simple, yet effective way to keep your pipeline full. And with the shift to remote, your target accounts may have more capacity to start meaningful conversations. That said, make sure you’re reframing your message to target your customer’s present needs.

Consider adopting this mindset: “What is the problem I can help solve? How can I add value? How can my products or services help?”



2. Readjust Outreach

Rethink your standard sales outreach process, and consider how you can adapt to streamline messaging (both in quality and quantity) to reflect the truest needs of prospects. Instead of continuing with previous messaging, consider pausing planned campaigns and fine-tune your sales approach to address concerns such as disruption to business or supply chains, improving cloud security, or adapting to a remote workforce.

Since transitioning from in-person selling to remote selling, a ZoomInfo poll found sales organizations have either adjusted or increased prospect outreach using personal channels (58 percent) such as mobile phone or personal email, social selling (53.5 percent), or coordinating closely with marketing teams (41.3 percent).

3. Remain Patient

It's time to take a back seat and let your prospects take the lead. According to [buyer research](#), listening to their needs (69 percent), not being pushy (61 percent), providing relevant information (61 percent), and timely responses (51 percent) are the top ways to create a positive sales experience. The takeaway? Build in more time for listening, education, and connecting with prospects on a human level.

Looking Ahead: What's Next?

While most companies are focused on the crisis itself, some are looking ahead at the inevitable rebound. The majority of markets will likely return to something similar to pre-COVID-19 conditions, with a few exceptions. During the recovery phase, we can expect successful sales teams to:



Stock up on new business leads early (start now if you haven't already).



Focus messaging on helping businesses ramp up (return to a pre-COVID posture or pivot in a new direction) after the "Great Pause."



Prepare for pent-up demand. Cutting back too much during the crisis may leave you unprepared for the demands of the recovery boom.



Scale quickly and align with outsourced SDR capability early.



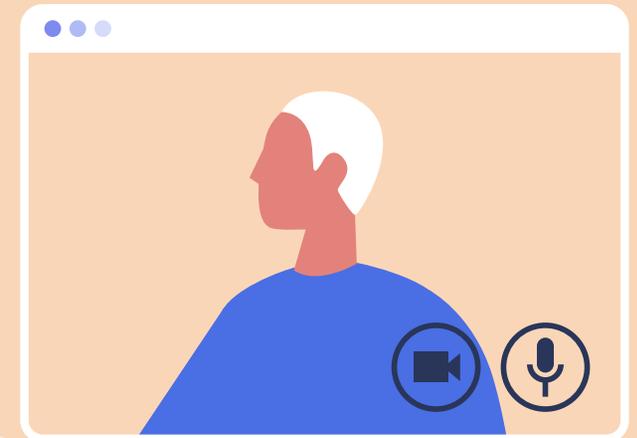
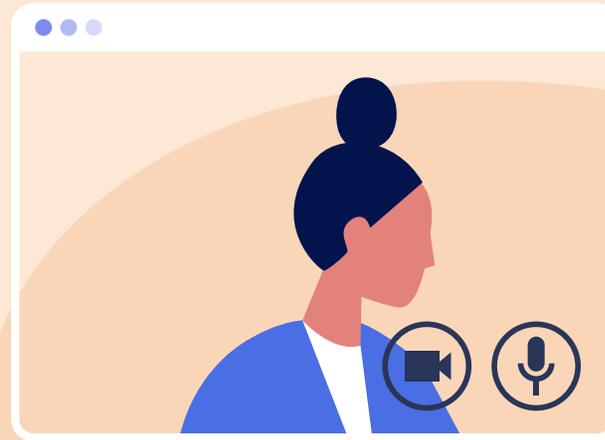
Ready your team for a resurgence.



Conclusion

While the term, “the new normal” is more commonplace, there is, in fact, nothing normal about what is happening to the markets and businesses. Accepting the current condition as the new status quo suggests that society, the economy, and markets are done adapting to changing conditions.

While the future remains unclear, one thing is certain: adaptability, agility, and preparation will be mission-critical to your sales organization’s success. Will you thrive?





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