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THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Achieving Balance
in Hybrid Selling





MORE SALES PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH HYBRID SELLING

Since March 2020, nothing in sales has been the same. Sales has undergone major changes and evolved rapidly. Before the Corona pandemic, online visits were almost unthinkable; now they have become the norm for salespeople and customers in many areas. Will everything be reset to zero in the future to get back to the good old days before Corona?

Or will much of what has already been learned and practiced in the meantime be adopted? Does the crisis triggered by Covid-19 create a new situation, or does it act as a catalyst for rapid change? Before, the motto in many cases was, "Why dare to try something new when the old concepts still work?" And now? Mercuri International set out to discover the answers.

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WHY EVERYTHING WILL CHANGE IN SALES



77%

Over **77%** of the companies were affected by the COVID shutdown in 2020.



97%

Although on-site visits to customers were not possible or severely limited for sales in 2020, companies were able to reach **97%** of their sales targets



171%

Customers were **171%** more virtual via online visits during the shutdown. This has significantly increased the use of digital channels (eg. MS Teams, Zoom, Skype).



Acceptance of online visits is significantly lower for B and C customers than for Global Accounts and Key Accounts. **More B2B online visits** occurred after the COVID shutdown, especially for existing customer care.



+8,5

In 2019, the weekly travel time per sales representative was 13.1 hours. Only 35% of this could be used for customer telephony, appointment coordination, etc. Calculations by the Ruhr University Bochum promises **8.5 hours** of additional capacity per employee if the Hybrid Selling approach is used.



-28 min

In addition, the duration of online compared to on-site visits is **28 minutes** shorter.



The vast majority (over 60%) of companies expect that in the future the number of on-site visits will decrease significantly for all customer groups and that online visits will increase strongly. Consequently, a **hybrid model** will be used in which both formats are combined.



51%

51% of executives say that the competence of their sales staff for online visits must increase significantly.

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2 Guard rails for the B2B sales setup of the future

The results of the study imply that on-site visits will be reduced in the future and online customer visits will increasingly be used. The capacities freed up by the time savings can be used, for example, for more intensive market cultivation. In addition, office staff can be actively involved in the support through online visits, in order to support small customers more frequently, actively, and personally in the future. As a result, the expensive resource of sales can be used much more productively.

The management of the companies has long questioned the sense and purpose of the many on-site visits to customers, but now there are concrete, feasible solutions.

- The future of B2B sales is hybrid, because the leverage of online visits on sales capacity is 4 times higher. There will be no going back to the traditional sales model.
- On-site visits will continue to be necessary in the future, particularly in order to strengthen customer relationships in the acquisition of new customers.
- The number of total visits will be decisive in the future. Every online visit saves and creates time for on-site visits. This increases the support capacity in the field sales force, which in turn can be used for more intensive market cultivation.
- Online visits will also help internal sales to deal with customers more effectively and achieve better results. Smaller customers, who have been rather neglected so far, can be actively looked after.
- The use of social media will become even more important in the future, especially for the acquisition of new customers.
- The competencies of sales staff, office staff and managers are changing significantly and must be developed and increased consistently and sustainably.
- The use of online customer visits, in addition to increasing sales capacity, helps reduce the carbon footprint of sales.

3 What's next for you?

If you want to realign your sales and seize the opportunities of hybrid selling, you should seriously consider the following recommendations:

Analyze which customer groups and contacts are willing to engage in online visits and where on-site contacts can be reduced. Differentiate between new and existing contacts and the individual phases of the sales process. Define the smaller customers that can be serviced by selected office staff.

1. **Design of the Sales Setup:** Based on the buying journey of each customer, develop your future sales process, taking into account the Hybrid Selling approach and the new inside sales options. It will turn out in many cases that not only is the "field sales force" decisive for the customer's buying decision, but also other players and sales channels. More and more, the orchestration of other channels or touchpoints that the customer draws on in their buying journey will become key to leading the customer to purchase. All this requires you to modernize your own organization. With market development teams, you should move away from departmental silos and towards synchronized market development. Synchronization will be the new selling!
2. **Implementation:** The key to success with these changes are the managers, who have always been the decisive impulse generators for their employees. In addition to the familiar challenges, they are also faced with new tasks; for example, they will increasingly lead "remotely". Hybrid Selling requires them to lead by example and with detailed knowledge if online offers are to be used by the team. Define time slots for managers to invest in leading their employees. Support employees who will be conducting hybrid selling in the future with targeted training. The companies surveyed in the study see a great need here.

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CONCLUSION TO THE HYBRID SELLING STUDY

Companies must change radically to remain competitive and sustainably successful. In the new normal/future, much of what has already been learned and practiced during the crisis will be adopted, even if the personal visit to the customer will certainly not be completely replaced by the digital one from home.

Overall, there will be much closer scrutiny of which format makes sense and when. Considerations to realign sales are not only important but becoming urgent. To remain competitive and sustainable, companies must learn now to adopt new ways of doing things, to improve and evolve. Traditional tools and attitudes will make it difficult in the future. Convincing employees of this and taking them along with you will thus become the decisive success factor!

This sounds simple, but it is by no means banal.

165

companies
participated in
the survey..



The detailed results can be found here:

<https://mercuri.net/hybrid-selling/>



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To learn more about how Mercuri International can help your organization achieve sales excellence, please contact us for more information.

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