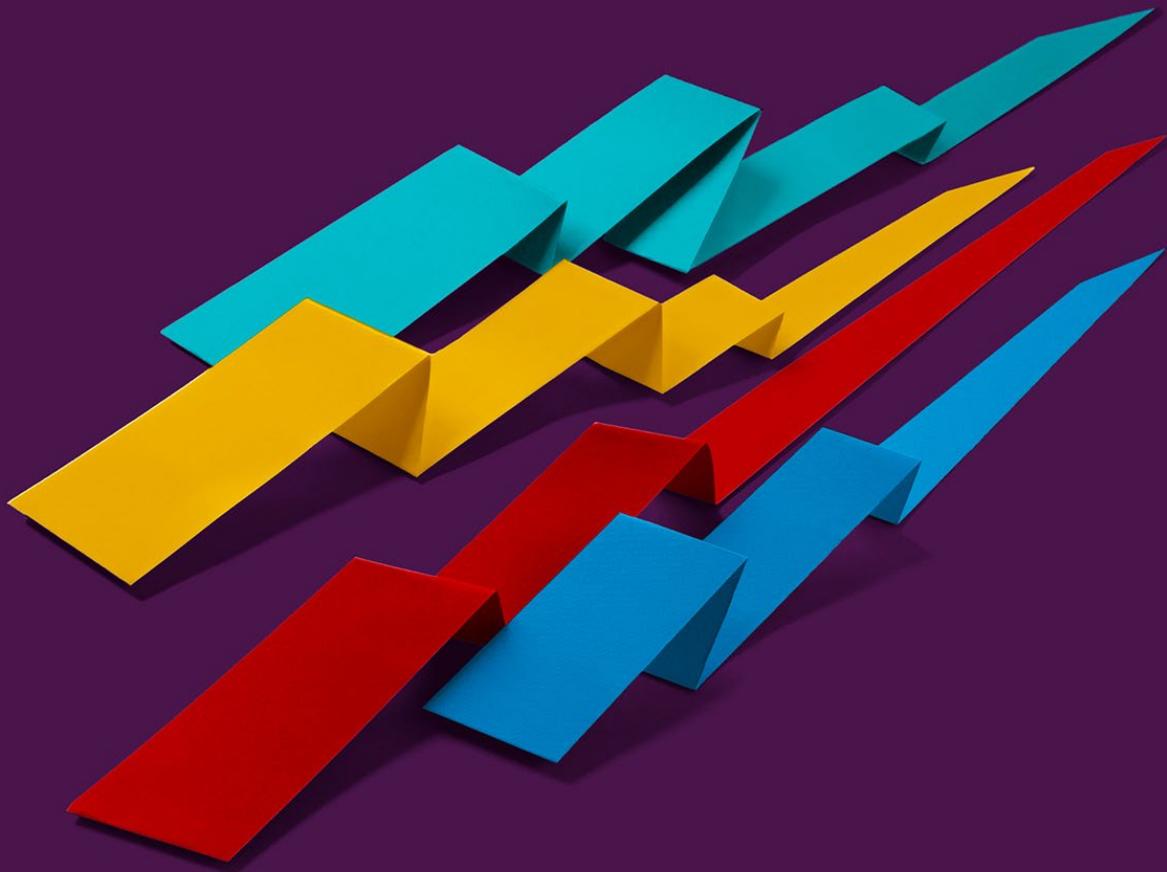


# Build stronger sales relationships faster with Slack



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# Build faster, stronger sales relationships with Slack

It's a new era, with new norms for business. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has shrunk budgets across industries as companies navigate an uncertain global economy. These conditions create new challenges that are particularly acute for sales teams.

In March 2020, a [survey by research firm TOPO](#) found a **150% spike** in buyers not booking meetings with sales. And while business might have stabilized slightly in some industries, this reluctance to buy is pervasive. The [LinkedIn State of Sales Report 2020](#) found that 44% of organizations anticipate **decreased responsiveness to sales outreach**, which correlates with 44% of companies also experiencing longer sales cycles.

Additionally, [Salesforce found](#) that **61% of customers** in 2020 say it's difficult for a company to earn their trust (up from 54% in 2019).

Decreased responsiveness and increased skepticism create a tough situation for sales teams. To overcome these challenges, sales teams must focus on providing a differentiated experience to prospects and customers—an experience that establishes your company as your customer's partner, not just another product.

The **majority of consumers** now give customer experience the same weight as

product quality in their buying decisions. This gives sales teams a great opportunity to differentiate your company from competitors by providing excellent experiences at every stage of the sales cycle.

But the sales team alone can't provide the fast, connected and customized customer journey that buyers demand. It takes a village to close a deal.

It's time to break through the barriers between your sales team and the resources it needs to do its best work—and the primary culprit is email. Email obscures information, slows response times and creates confusion around action items.

What if your sales team had instant access to experts and resources across your company without ever sending a single email? What if you could communicate with prospects in real time, instead of waiting days for an email reply?

Slack offers a transparent, connected collaboration framework that enables sales teams to effortlessly work with prospects and key partners in product, marketing, finance and legal. The result? Faster deal cycles, stronger customer relationships and more productive reps.



# Close deals faster by enhancing companywide collaboration

Sales teams are under more pressure than ever to provide a sales experience that builds trust and tailors solutions to a prospect's needs. The demand for this kind of sales experience isn't new, but it is heightened as buyers deal with scarce resources and scrutinize every investment. And in a Covid world where in-person sales isn't an option, reps must optimize for digital-first connections with their prospects and customers or risk losing deals to competitors.

Collaboration between teams is critical for these digital-first connections. **Seventy-eight percent of customers** today expect a consistent experience with a company, regardless of whom they speak with. This expectation creates an opportunity for differentiation from competitors, as 59% of customers say that they still feel "like they're communicating with separate departments, not one company."

Email tends to be the go-to tool for this collaboration, especially now that **82% of company leaders** plan to have at least a partially remote workforce moving forward. But email is a fundamentally flawed collaboration tool for something as time sensitive as your sales cycle.

Long, scattered email threads make key customer information inaccessible to reps

and the rest of the company—potentially leading to prospects receiving incomplete answers. And with information spread across multiple inboxes, reps might miss messages from new leads and deal-closing opportunities.

All these setbacks make it difficult, if not impossible, to create a cohesive, attractive sales experience for prospects. To achieve this goal, reps need cross-functional partnerships that provide easy access to internal experts and customer insights.

Team selling brings expertise from across the company into the sales cycle, allowing reps to leverage a wide range of collective knowledge and experience. With this knowledge, reps can deliver more value at each stage of the buying process while at the same time close deals faster.

Salesforce identified that high-performing sales teams are **2.3x more likely** (vs. other teams) to have more cross-functional work management involved in their sales operations.

True team selling isn't possible with siloed, traditional communication tools. But in Slack, cross-functional teams can collaborate easily within dedicated channels.



## Slack unlocks cross-functional team selling

Slack gives sales reps streamlined access to the information, experts and applications they need to close deals quickly, all in one place. With less internal back-and-forth, the entire sales process runs more efficiently—which is why sales teams that use Slack see a **13% shorter sales cycle** on average.

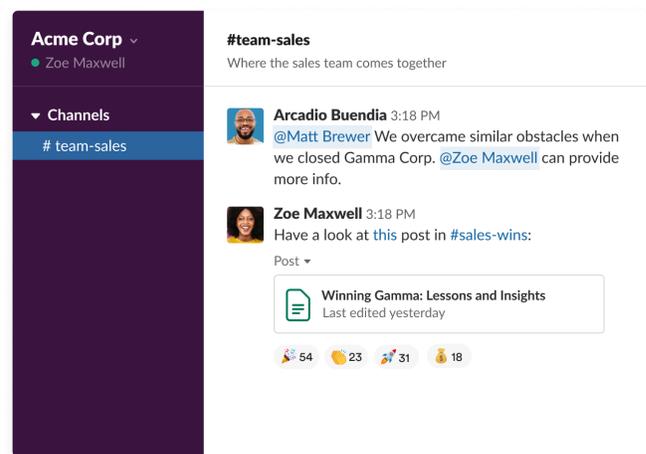
In Slack channels, teams can assemble files, stakeholders and application data in a single hub. These channels combine the power of email with the convenience of a meeting. Written communication in Slack makes conversations clear and archivable, but unlike email, these conversations are available to any relevant party—so you never have to worry about missing a key stakeholder. And instead of waiting to schedule yet another video meeting that may or may not be productive, teams using Slack work through issues in real time for faster solutions.

There are no silos in Slack channels. New team members can instantly join conversations, message history is easily searchable, and data from key tools like your CRM is available with a few keystrokes. Stakeholders can rally around the deal in real time, leading to much faster closings.

You can even set up custom keyword notifications that allow non-sales people to keep tabs on topics for which they can offer assistance. Take for example a product marketer who sets up keyword notifications for the company's biggest competitor. If that company is mentioned in a Slack channel,

the product marketer can jump in and help the sales rep shape their pitch to prospects considering that competitor.

It's no surprise that a full **100% of sales leaders surveyed by IDC Research** agree that Slack helps them collaborate with non-sales teams.



“For us, team selling is not just about the way sales and sales engineers work together, it’s the way we work throughout our product management team, our product marketing team, engineering, and obviously everything through customer service and customer success,” says Quentin Packard, AVP of global new product sales at Splunk. “Team selling is, especially now in these virtual worlds, critical and Slack is a massive ability for us to do that successfully.”

At **Splunk**, Slack closes the communication gap between teams, bringing hundreds of sales engineers (SEs) together to solve problems, provide support and eliminate



## Close deals faster by enhancing companywide collaboration

redundancies. Whether it's an integration with another product or a use case, SEs can easily find someone who's done the task before.

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**Quentin Packard**

*AVP of global new product sales, Splunk*

In just one example, a remotely located SE was looking for a **Tableau integration** in the **#se** channel. The team came together, best practices were laid out and now the conversation is searchable if somebody else has the same question in the future. Armed with a searchable bank of information, SEs can quickly surface the information they need to better articulate Splunk's vision and advise their customers.

“The fact that I'm able to respond to my customers much faster is helping me close deals faster,” says Kelly Kitagawa, a sales engineer at Splunk. Instead of waiting two or three days to get a response from a colleague or manager, she can turn issues around instantaneously.

With this fast, open collaboration, sales teams that use Slack see an average of **21% faster response times** and can **issue offers 16% faster**.

## Where Slack drives value for sales teams

### Objective

### Business Impact



Connect with customers in a new way

0.2%  Greater annual revenue<sup>2</sup>

60%  Faster customer responses<sup>1</sup>



Close deals faster

21%  Faster lead response time<sup>2</sup>

4x  Faster overall deal cycle<sup>1</sup>

5%  More likely to win a deal<sup>2</sup>



Maximize team effectiveness

100%  Find Slack helps them better collaborate with non-sales teams<sup>2</sup>

86%  Say it's easier to share key learnings with Slack<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Claims and figures based on specific teams using Slack Connect at their companies. Results may vary at your organization

<sup>2</sup> Source: “IDC research,” The Business Value of Slack, 2017



## Close deals faster by enhancing companywide collaboration

The sales team at **Limelight Networks**, an edge services platform, also uses Slack to directly collaborate with prospects. With **Slack Connect**, Limelight's teams work directly with external organizations inside shared Slack channels. Their sales team uses these shared channels for everything, from deal negotiations to implementation issues. By increasing mutual engagement, Slack has transformed Limelight's customer relationships and shortened deal cycles.

"Previously, we were using half a dozen different tools to collaborate with our customers," says James Kelsall, the vice president of operations at Limelight. "We were getting feedback from our customers that they wanted a better way to communicate with our account teams and to engage with our engineers directly."

Slack breaks the silos generated by email by providing the path to a faster, more satisfying sales cycle for everyone involved. But speed isn't everything—Slack also empowers your reps to build stronger, more lasting relationships with prospects.



# Forge deep relationships with prospects

As companies face tighter budgets and uncertain futures, more pressure rides on every purchase decision. To sell in this climate, you need to establish yourself as a trustworthy partner.

While building this trust takes effort, that effort always pays off. **Research by Gallup** shows that businesses see an average of **50% more revenue** when customers trust the company and are engaged with their contacts there.

This is even more important in current conditions. Salesforce found that **83% of sales reps** said that building trust before a sale is more important than ever in 2020. As many buyers face uncertain futures and new constraints, they need to know they can rely on your company to meet their needs in the long term—not just sell them on a short-term solution.

**The majority of business buyers** (86%) **expect a trusted advisor relationship** with sales reps. However, 73% of buyers feel that most sales interactions are only transactional. This gap between expectation and reality gives sales teams a huge opportunity to differentiate themselves from competitors.

**86%**

of business buyers expect a trusted advisor relationship with sales reps

**73%**

of business buyers say most sales interactions feel transactional

Source: “**State of the Connected Customer, 4th Edition**,” Salesforce, 2020

But remote work presents a challenge to sales reps who want to take advantage of that opportunity. In-person sales have traditionally been vital to building buyer relationships, but in light of the pandemic, the number of B2B companies leveraging face-to-face sales has **dropped by 61.8%**. This trend is likely to continue for some time, even when global recovery begins.

Many sales teams now depend on remote tools to engage buyers, which usually involves ad hoc video calls and convoluted email chains. Email and video can get the message across, but when it comes to connecting with leads on a human level, they’re no match for meeting in person.



## Forge deep relationships with prospects

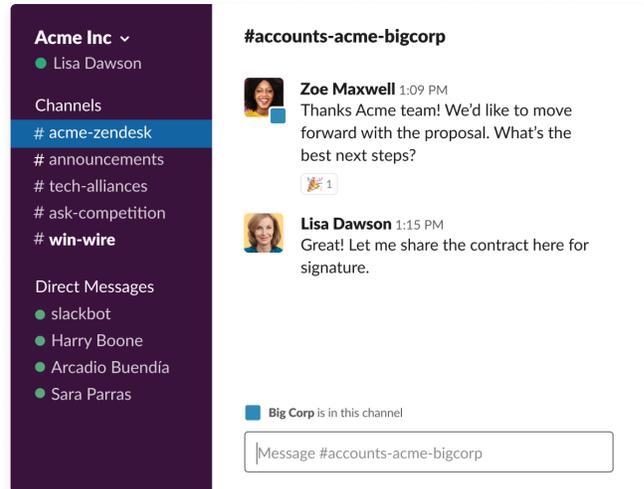
To forge meaningful connections with buyers—ones that translate to loyal customers—sales teams must find new ways to demonstrate partnership early and often in the sales cycle.

## Slack Connect enables real-time customer engagement

**Slack Connect** empowers your team to work side by side with prospects in a secure, shared virtual space. It effectively replaces email by extending the same channel-based messaging your team uses already to everyone you work with—both internally and externally—which increases visibility and alignment for all stakeholders.

With Slack Connect, you and your prospects can check in and exchange feedback without unwieldy email threads or unnecessary video meetings. It's a faster, more human way of connecting—one that allows you to **nurture deals in real time** and **proactively respond to deal blockers**.

By creating a more personal virtual environment for collaboration, Slack helps establish your company as part of your prospect's own team. You can demonstrate the full value you bring as a company, not just as a product.



We have seen staggering results already: Sales teams that use Slack Connect to work with prospects see an average of **60% faster responses** and **close deals 4x faster**.

Even teams with highly technical sales processes see big benefits. At **Splunk**, part of the sales cycle is a proof-of-concept stage. During this stage, the sales team deploys the Splunk application (specifically, Splunk observability solutions) so that a customer can understand and experience how the product works within their own environment.

Splunk executes this critical sales stage in a Slack Connect channel. Here, Splunk can stay interlocked with the customer, keep deals on track and make sure they can triage issues quickly during the proof of concept. They've found that this process shortens the duration of the proof-of-concept stage, so customers can accelerate their time to value.

“We want to be able to make it extremely easy for our customers to interact with us. And we need to be able to do that 24/7,” says Kevin Pura, the area vice president of global



## Forge deep relationships with prospects

sales engineering at Splunk. “If we try to use email or we try using the phone or standard communication methods, what we found was the fact that they either went ignored or just unanswered. Slack allows us to stay in sync and move at the pace that our customers want.”

Sales teams that use Slack Connect to work with prospects see an average of **60% faster responses and close deals 4x faster.**

Slack Connect doesn't just help you quickly close deals in the short term—it also helps you build relationships for the long term. The platform isn't a formal space, like email. It's a relaxed, free-flowing venue for conversations, much like lunch with a prospect.

Slack Connect is a faster, more human way of connecting—one that allows you to nurture deals in real time and proactively respond to deal blockers.

“Historically, I think a lot of folks in sales have known that the gold standard of a deep relationship is you get the person on text so that you can check in with them after a meeting and really get a sense for what happened. **Now we say the gold standard is we get them into a shared Slack channel,**”

said Jeanne DeWitt Grosser, the head of Americas revenue and growth at Stripe, an online payment processing platform.

At this year's **Slack Frontiers** virtual conference, DeWitt Grosser shared the story of how **Stripe**, the online payment processing platform, uses Slack Connect across all phases of the sales cycle. Often sales reps have to communicate with a variety of departments to seal the deal. Instead of emailing them separately and creating silos, Stripe's account executives and solution architects set up a shared Slack channel that includes key customer stakeholders, such as developers, the head of payments and a finance representative.

“In Slack channels, the dialogue with the prospect happens in real time, as opposed to the next time you align your schedules,” DeWitt Grosser says. “This kind of personal, persistent connection grows customer loyalty and retention.”

“The big difference [between Slack and email] is that Slack really lets you interact in real time so that people remain unblocked.”

**Jeanne DeWitt Grosser**

*Head of Americas revenue and growth, Stripe*

Working side by side with buyers in Slack allows you to offer a true partnership, not just a transaction.



# Automate busywork to maximize revenue per rep

Sales reps are under a lot of pressure to not only close deals but also build the foundation of customer relationships. Tasks like updating customer records, booking meetings and compiling customer feedback for developers all take time and resources away from the No. 1 priority: closing deals.

The burden of administrative tasks isn't a small problem. [Salesforce found](#) that sales reps spend just **34% of their time** on selling.

## The 8 things your reps do instead of selling

- Prioritizing leads and opportunities
- Manually entering customer and sales info
- Internal meetings and training
- Researching prospects
- Generating quotes and proposals
- Gaining approvals
- Preparation and planning
- Administrative tasks

Source: "[State of Sales, 3rd Edition](#)," Salesforce, 2018

In many cases, technology itself is to blame. With a siloed tech stack, reps lose precious time moving between applications to complete administrative work. Daily workflows for reps involve a lot of movement between CRM and inbox, especially—creating prospect profiles, updating customer records based on email conversations and staying on top of the pipeline, just to name a few!

According to the [LinkedIn State of Sales Report 2020](#), the key to getting the most out of your sales tools is integrating them into your existing workflow. But less than 30% of companies feel like they have mastered this crucial workflow integration—which isn't surprising given that **most sales organizations use 10 different tools on average**.

To get the most value out of your reps, you need a system that lightens the burden of repetitive work. Integrating your technology stack into more unified workflows allows agents to essentially outsource administrative work to automation. In fact, **97% of sales organizations** see improvement in the use of reps' time when they implement AI-driven solutions.

All these tasks are essential to the sales process, but two-thirds of your reps' time is a steep investment.



## Slack empowers reps to focus on high-value tasks

Slack saves reps hours of time in their inboxes, as we've already seen. But the goal isn't just to save time—the goal is to empower reps to make the best use of the time they have.

Think of Slack as the sales admin that never sleeps—one who works tirelessly among systems, files and applications so that your team can focus on high-value tasks. Slack's AI-driven features and hundreds of software integrations turn your sales technology stack into an integrated system.

The resulting productivity creates a **25% average increase** in potential deals won per year and a 5% increase in reps' likelihood of closing deals.

**5%**

likelier to win a deal

**25%**

increase in potential deals won per year <sup>1</sup>

**0.2%**

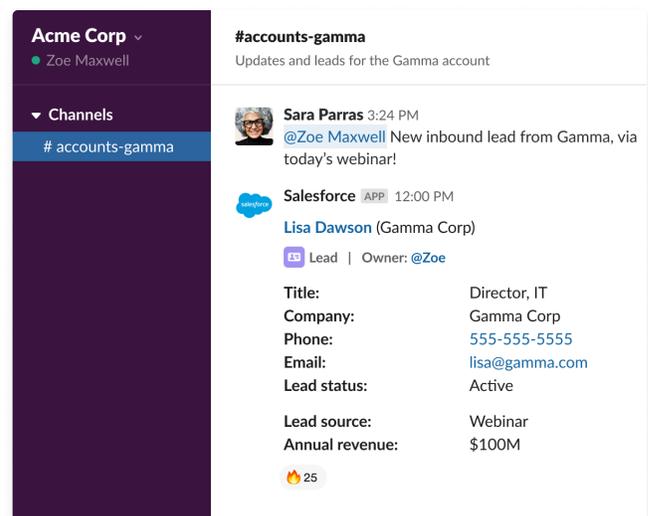
increase in annual revenue <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> IDC estimate based on average metrics of sales organizations using Slack that participated in this study that include: 3% more deals in pipeline with Slack, 5% higher deal win percentage with Slack, and 13% less time to close deals with Slack

<sup>2</sup> Average increase of \$904K in annual revenue; Analysis based on companies with average revenue of \$514M

**Source:** "Excerpted from IDC research," sponsored by Slack, The Business Value of Slack, 2017

The **Slack App Directory** is a big part of this enhanced productivity. Integrations with popular CRMs like **Salesforce** and **HubSpot**, as well as other key tools like **DocuSign** and **Highspot**, let you access and manage information in your critical systems without leaving Slack.



Rideshare and ground transportation provider **Lyft Business** uses **Troops**, an integration that connects Salesforce and Slack, to help make reps more efficient. With this integration, sales reps update deal stages and their pipeline dashboard right in Slack. The benefits here are twofold: a rep doesn't have to update each individual deal in Salesforce, and key stakeholders get better visibility into pipeline and customer data.



## Automate busywork to maximize revenue per rep

“We’re spending more time prospecting and less time on the administrative work updating deals in Salesforce. There’s no doubt reps are able to source more business and close deals faster.”

**Tyler Lefeber**

*Former senior strategic account executive at Lyft Business*

However, these out-of-the-box app integrations are just the start. Using Slack’s no-code tool **Workflow Builder**, sales teams can build custom workflows between Slack and the software they use every day.

Slack’s own sales team uses a custom workflow called **Approvals Bot** to standardize, automate and streamline the full cycle of deal approvals.

“We, of course, have all these sophisticated workflows in Salesforce, which follow our approval process,” says Kiona Davies, senior manager of sales operations at Slack. “We wanted to bring all that relevant information into Slack, where our approvers are already working, and have Slack be the platform where they can access all that information and facilitate their actual approval.”

When a Slack account executive is ready to submit a deal structure and terms for review, they simply click “submit for Slack approval” in Salesforce. Approvals Bot then automatically creates a private channel in

Slack for the specific deal support request and invites all the necessary approvers (based on the configuration in Salesforce).

An automated message posts in the channel outlining the deal structure, non-standard asks and justification for granting them, along with the relevant quote lines.

The bot then notifies each approver with an **@mention** in a message thread, where each person can approve or reject the terms with a single click. Questions can be asked within the same thread to keep things streamlined.

This chain continues until all the approvers have OK’d the deal or the quote is rejected. As a finishing touch, the original message updates with custom emoji to convey progress at a glance.

**ApprovalsBot Deals** APP | 2:51 PM  
@Sara Parras is requesting approval for Acme Corp. - Plus - ELA- 2020-10-30

👉 Approvals Required:

🟢 Submit > 🟡 Review > 🟠 Approve Details

👉 Proposed Structure:

Close Date:	2020-10-30
ACV (Churn):	\$10,000
Billings:	\$90,000
Total Contract Value (TCV)	\$180,000
Subscription Term:	24
Max Implied Discount:	10%
Payment Terms:	Net 45
Payment Frequency:	Standard

👉 Asks & Justification:

- 2 year renewal with discounts contingent upon "early" signature. Renewal due on 10/31 and they have agreed to sign by 10/9.
- Net 45 payment terms in line with prior year
- Publicity included

👉 Quote Lines:

Plus plan x 500 seats with implied discount **10%** Details

Deal Stats



## Automate busywork to maximize revenue per rep

Thanks to this custom workflow, more than 80% of our sales deals are being approved directly in Slack. Not only has that **sped up our deal cycles by 70%**, but the app's proposal templates and automation have saved our sales teams hundreds of collective hours.

By integrating your sales technology, your team can essentially outsource the bulk of their administrative work to Slack—giving them more time and energy to focus on landing and growing customer relationships.



# Transform your sales experience with faster, smarter collaboration

Your prospects expect you to engage with them, not just quickly but personally. **According to Salesforce, 66% of customers** expect companies to understand their unique needs—but only 34% think that companies generally treat customers as unique individuals.

Your company has an opportunity to fill this gap between expectation and reality. But if you want to deliver a five-star experience while also staying on top of your pipeline, you can't afford to rely on email chains and CRMs.

By taking information out of the old silos and putting it into the center of the action, Slack enables your team to close deals faster and deliver a better customer experience. When your team is empowered to do its best work, everybody wins.

To learn more about how you can use Slack to supercharge your sales cycle, **[contact our sales team](#)**.



## About Slack

Slack makes work simpler, more pleasant and more productive. It's a channel-based messaging platform for enterprise that brings the right people, information and tools together to get work done.

From FTSE 100 companies to corner shops, millions of people around the world use Slack to connect their teams, unify their systems and drive their business forward.



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