

# 19 *in* 2019

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## 19 Inside Sales Trends in 2019

Welcome to the year of metamorphoses as we celebrate the new year with change, transformation, and uncertainty. Nothing stands still in today's fourth industrial revolution, and companies are bracing for the unexpected.

Salespeople in 2019 are working at all levels and in all modalities: Approximately 5.7 million professional sales people in the U.S. sell face-to-face or remotely, according to U.S. census data. Field sales makes up 52.8% of that number, and inside sales is expected to make up 45.5% in 2019.

One thing we know for sure is that this is the first time in history when five generations (Gen Z, Gen Y, Gen X, Boomers, and Traditionalists) will coexist in the sales workforce. This family of five brings diverse backgrounds and experiences that will change the face of our salesforce and customers. This collective consciousness will create new opportunities for sharing, collaboration, mentoring, and conversations.

- » Traditionalists—born before 1946
- » Baby Boomers—born between 1946 and 1964
- » Generation X—born between 1965 and 1976
- » Millennials—born between 1977 and 1997
- » Generation Z—born after 1997

We dedicate this year's **19 inside sales trends** to the **5 Generations in the Workplace** and look to explore multiple themes impacting this growing inside



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salesforce:

Ready for some future gazing? Drumroll, please!

## Recruiting and Retaining Talent

The talent wars and hiring frenzy continue to rage in the inside sales world, but finding talent has never been so challenging. While unemployment is projected to decline to 3.3% in 2019, one of the lowest rates in 50 years, talent is still in high demand but the pool seems smaller.

The increased complexity, ambiguity, and volatility in business coupled with shifting employee values means that career paths will unfold in unexpected ways. As people are reframing the entire meaning of work, exploring careers across different disciplines and functional areas, embracing their creative and entrepreneurial spirits, and finding what they are passionate about. Inside salespeople may become part of a transient culture.

1. Millennials are now the largest segment of the workforce, and they continue to dominate technology sales teams and reshape the workforce. But many in this “What’s Next?” generation are suffering from burnout. They struggle with high expectations of themselves, continually questioning and worrying about what they should be doing, what they really want to be doing, and if they are doing it well.
2. Boomers, along with the smaller Traditionlists, are thriving and projected to stay longer in the workforce than their predecessors, discouraging any thoughts of putting them out to pasture. As the wealthiest generation, controlling \$15 trillion in assets and income, they will redefine and transform our ideas about aging and challenge stereotypes. Based on their political, social, and economic standing, they should not be ignored or written off as “the new unemployables” – they don’t have any plans to slow down.
3. GenZ, the SnapChat generation – more than 23 million of them – prefer to communicate face-to-face rather than virtually. They value structure and predictability in life and work, with an emphasis on effectiveness over convenience. Their declining perception of the value of expensive college degrees will accelerate viable alternative paths to learning and occupations.



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4. Both Millennials and GenZ-ers are more selective job seekers than the older generations. They insist on choosing when they want to start and finish their workdays, and they want the option of working in the office, home, or some other location. They prioritize work-life balance over career advancement, even if it means working part-time.

### Buying Committee of Decision-makers

Studies indicate the global economy is projected to grow by 3.6%, and decision-making committees have never been so large and so rich. As many as ten stakeholders from a variety of jobs, functions, geos, and departments may all be involved in the buying journey, yet they may never reach consensus. Unfortunately, this “no decision” decision is very costly, both for your customer and for you: meetings, time, travel, effort, missed opportunities, missed forecasts, all leading nowhere.

5. As Millennials enter into mid-adulthood and become promoted to C-level positions, they are a major part of the buying process with serious spending power — \$200 billion annually. They want to flatten hierarchies, and they want fast, on-demand peer collaboration, often through digital channels, which means they might not always agree to in-person meetings.

6. Millennials are major influencers in the buying process but, having seen the 2000 dot-com bubble burst and the 2008 economic crash, they are jaded. With trillions of dollars of student loan debt plaguing this generation, their financial insecurity leads to poor mental bandwidth for making make “good” purchase decisions.

7. According to Forrester research, in the early part of the buying cycle, the sales rep's influence is much lower for “mobile devices, apps, platforms, and management software” than it is for “business intelligence and analytics.” During the first educational phase of the buying process, where people spend one-third of their time, we found that more than 60% of buyers received information from the sales representative of the winning provider. Conclusion? The winning vendors meet with prospects when the starting gates open for the buying cycle!



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## Productive and Motivating Workplace

It's essential to create a more dynamic, purpose-driven, and versatile workplace culture that motivates multiple generations and increases productivity. As the office becomes more decentralized, companies are no longer thinking about the workplace as a single location. Rather, it is becoming rather a network of spaces that employees can access based on what they are trying to achieve: brainstorm a new product, train a new sales team, make a presentation, or work quietly on their own.

8. Organizations are still unprepared for how flexible their generational workforce needs to be. Employees are spending less time sitting at their desks. Distance is officially dead, as more people want to work remotely, especially so they can live in affordable cities.
9. The open office is dead. More and more employees are running from the distractions of their open work space and ducking into the nearest conference room. Although open offices promised more collaboration and productivity, recent studies show decrease in face-to-face with emails and messaging rising. New research shows that employees need more private spaces for problem solving. Keeping Millennials engaged, inspired, and motivated is essential, so the number of co-working spaces will continue to grow, mostly because workers will prefer being with their tribe instead of stuck at their company.
10. The 40-hour workweek is a thing of the past. Good-bye 9-to-5 and hello four-day workweek, a solution that fits the times. Of note: the Japanese government has instituted "Shining Monday," which allowing its notoriously overworked workers to take Monday mornings off.
11. The life of a learned skill is merely five years, which means we have a growing skills gap. The current talent base lacks new skills, and the ones they have are becoming less relevant over time. Companies are investing billions to help upskill their employees to improve sales outcomes. The eLearning market is expected to reach \$49.9 billion this year. Self-paced micro-learning such as on-boarding and re-boarding will become part of the reps' job and responsibility. They will look for bite-sized chunks of information and educational opportunities that are easily digestible and can be easily retained.



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12.

Employers increasingly prioritize the holistic wellness of their people as the foundational way to improve their organization. With mindfulness and meditation set to become a \$2.08 billion industry by 2022, workplace mental health takes center stage. In our polarized world, with its unstable politics, terrorism, and climate change threat, mind management is vitally important. When 44% of employees are feeling burned out, workers are looking to meditation apps or breath work guides to train their minds and calm their emotions.

13.

Social media, ironically, has contributed to a loneliness epidemic that is costing employers up to millions of dollars annually. With 22% of workers reporting that are feeling lonely, organizations will struggle to help employees cope and thrive. They will invest in wellness programs and provide more off-sites, social events, parties, and team building activities to enable their employees to get to know each other and create a more relaxed and healthier environment for workers.

### Sales Stack

The new chief digital officers, who are socially educated and empowered, will become the new in-demand resource in companies. But digital prospecting (social media, email, LinkedIn) will not replace the phone or meaningful conversations as long as convenience, connectivity, and functionality are still included.

14.

For many Millennials, having a social media presence has become an integral part of obtaining and maintaining a job. They are branding themselves as they would a product, blurring the lines between work and play.

15.

AI adoption is set to sky rocket by 155% over the next two years. Salespeople and robots will cozy up and co-exist. Robots will take over mundane routine-based, repetitive, and rules-based tasks – especially the arduous tasks Millennials disengage from because the payoff to completing them is too small – helping deals close faster.

16.

High performing teams are 3.4 times more likely than underperforming teams to use AI. Intelligent apps and analytics will transform the structure of the workplace by delivering advanced analytics, intelligent processes, and new user experiences.



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17. With the tracking of steps, heart rates, and other bio-data through wearable devices and digital voice assistants part of daily life, we will also use wearables in place of traditional therapies, to diagnose and provide advice about mental and emotional issues. Apps for the empathy-challenged will help them understand others' emotions. AI will also be added to the human experience, providing digital coaching to managers who need to check on their emotional range and sentiments.

### Leadership and Customers

Digital leadership requires sales leaders to embrace a blend of entrepreneurship, social selling, and high-level financial discipline as they navigate corporate politics, leadership, and team building. Their top priorities this year are to grow revenue and improve customer experience and satisfaction (CSAT) by solving customer problems over promoting product.

This means that companies need to rethink the role customer service plays in extending a customer's lifetime value, since they sit at the epicenter of a company. Elevated customer service can, therefore, become a competitive differentiator as companies strive to keep customers coming back and buying more. Enabling customer service agents in the same way sales reps are enabled will go a long way to improving overall customer experience.

18. We'll be seeing an increase in mentoring, especially multi-generational mentoring to bridge the learning and generational gaps and cultural mentoring to address the growing global diversity in the workplace. Micro-mentoring, reverse mentoring, and group mentoring that goes beyond traditional face-to-face mentoring will all be in play.

19. Selling to today's savvy, empowered customer base is no easy task. They are more confused than ever because so much is coming at them, so they demand superior connected and personalized experiences across all touchpoints. They prefer unfiltered moments over perfectly orchestrated content. Whatever they want must be delivered fast.

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