

## **Sales Mobility**

Quotas Untethered

November 2010

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~ Underwritten, in Part, by ~



## Executive Summary

For years, the promise of the truly mobile salesperson has enticed reps and sales operations professionals alike, yet a true pay-off has often been elusive as interface and bandwidth limitations conspired to lower industry expectations of success. With the lines now being blurred between handheld and desktop devices, and wireless access and GPS intelligence growing more universal, is sales mobility now a reality whose time has come?

### Best-in-Class Performance

In September and October 2010, Aberdeen surveyed 269 end-user organizations to learn about their deployments of sales mobility. Aberdeen used the following three key performance criteria, among only the 217 companies currently supporting sales staff with mobility initiatives, to distinguish the sales teams within Best-in-Class companies:

- An average of 65% of their sales reps are achieving their annual sales quota, compared to 54% for Industry Average and 22% among Laggard companies
- 5.2% average year-over-year increase in customer retention rates, compared to 0.7% and 2.8% decreases among Industry Average and Laggard companies, respectively
- 3.3% year-over-year increase in sales lead conversion rates, versus a 0.2% increase for the Industry Average and 3.8% decrease among Laggards

### Competitive Maturity Assessment

Survey results show that the firms enjoying Best-in-Class performance share several common characteristics, including:

- 87% enable synchronization of calendars, contacts, events and/or tasks
- 78% support remote viewing and modification of key CRM sales information (accounts, contacts, leads, opportunities, forecast)
- 58% provide instant messaging or chat on mobile devices

### Required Actions

In addition to the specific recommendations in Chapter Three of this report, to achieve Best-in-Class performance, companies must:

- Provide sales team members with unfettered access to, and the ability to amend, both CRM-based and other relevant corporate data
- Adopt additional enablers such as instant messaging, chat, sales trigger notification and electronic signature capture
- Collaborate with their technology support colleagues to provide security, availability and seamless synchronization of time-sensitive sales data

#### Research Benchmark

Aberdeen's Research Benchmarks provide an in-depth and comprehensive look into process, procedure, methodologies, and technologies with best practice identification and actionable recommendations

#### How Does Your Performance Compare to the Best-in-Class?



- Compare your processes
- Receive a free, personal PDF scorecard
- Benefit from custom recommendations to improve your performance, based on the research

**Take the Assessment**

Receive Your Free Scorecard

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## Chapter One: Benchmarking the Best-in-Class

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Sales Force Automation (SFA) access via smart phones has been available for some time - indeed, mobile CRM access has been proven to increase team attainment of quota by 26% ([Sales Intelligence: Preparing for Smarter Selling](#), February 2010) - but to what extent are Best-in-Class sales teams utilizing mobile selling solutions?

Aberdeen research conducted for [Sales Forecasting: Analytics to the Rescue!](#) (June 2010) found that Best-in-Class companies (criteria in bulleted items below) were 79% more likely than Laggards (25% vs. 14%) to deploy mobile-enabled access to real-time sales forecast details. Providing their field sales force with the ability to understand their performance-versus-quota attainment on an “anywhere, any time basis” allowed these top performers to promote a culture of coaching, self-assessment and transparency that helped them out-perform Laggards across a number of key metrics:

- 83% vs. 44% current sales forecast accuracy
- 12.6% annual increase in team attainment of quota, vs. a 7.9% decrease
- 9.1% year-over-year increase in revenue per sales rep, vs. a 4.8% decrease

Moreover, much as the Best-in-Class companies from the sales forecasting study were 42% more likely than Laggards (37% vs. 26%) to deploy mobile CRM access, the performance of all mobile CRM adopters represented measurable benefits over other companies. They reported that 50% of their sales reps achieve annual quota, versus 40% for non-users; a 26% vs. 17% lead conversion rate; and a 2.1% year-over-year increase in team attainment of quota as opposed to a 0.5% decrease among other firms.

### Business Context of Sales Mobility

Given the rapid development of both personal computing power and mobile technologies in general, a number of cultural and technological trends have a direct impact on the potential value of sales mobility:

- Dramatic changes in workplace norms have brought industry to the point where Aberdeen research conducted for [Sales Performance Management: Getting Everyone On the Same Page](#) (August 2010) shows that 53% of Best-in-Class companies (those with strongest quota attainment, growth in average deal size and reduction of sales cycle) employ more than 50% of their sales staff remotely, versus 41% and 34% of Industry Average and Laggard firms, respectively. Indeed, in Aberdeen research for [Mobile HCM: Workforce and Talent Management on the Move](#) (June 2010), 57% of respondents who track the impact of their mobile recruiting efforts report improved

#### Fast Facts

- √ 53% of the Best-in-Class support channel partners with their sales mobility initiative, vs. 42% of Industry Average companies and 29% of Laggards
- √ 44% of the Best-in-Class consider sales mobility initiatives “absolutely vital to the health of our company, regardless of cost,” vs. 26% of other companies

"The keys to mobile success are the measures to track the adoption and the adherence to them by sales management. Salespeople concentrate on two things: behaviors that close deals and what their managers watch them do."

~ Jimi Barker, Sales  
Operations Manager,  
Enterprise Networks,  
Corning

quality and/or size of their talent pool as a result of their efforts.

Does attracting and retaining a quality sales force require a corporate technology and process mindset influenced by consumer trends and cultural sea changes? Moreover, are there benefits to the enterprise if it enables their sales team to work 24/7?

- With an ever-increasing percentage of the workforce in general, and sales professionals in particular, having grown up with wireless technology, the blurred lines between personal and business computing are amplified by the opportunity to use the same devices for both types of activity. The convergence of web activity, mobile and desktop computing has further muddied the traditional categories of when, where and how sales reps perform their duties. Does this create new opportunities for CRM adoption and sales force productivity by mitigating the traditional aversion to technology use long associated with sales professionals?
- As feature phones have mostly given way to smart phones, the technology access for remote or traveling sales staffers has grown from basic voice and messaging communications to advanced visibility into corporate data housed either on-premise or in the cloud, such as CRM-based contacts, companies and forecasts, as well as email use. Now, as the new generation of tablet PC's arrives with the gesture-based interfaces and multi-touch displays initially popularized by Apple's iPad – and soon to be replicated by other manufacturers – will remote sales activity morph from passive “see” to active “do” computing? Will sales reps no longer have to wait until day's end to begrudgingly enter CRM data if the chance to accomplish – and measurably benefit from performing – the task is enabled by the same device hosting their email, Facebook, gaming and proposal generation applications?

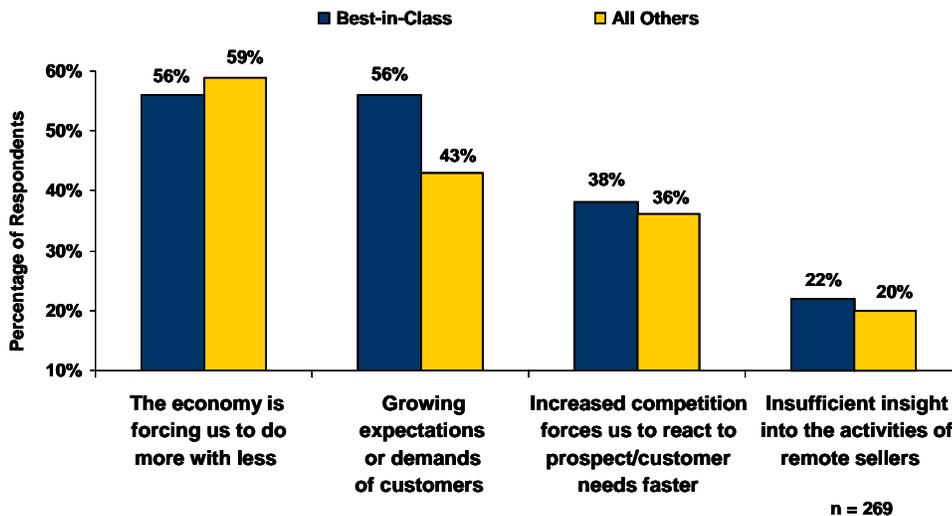
## Identifying the Business Pressures Addressed by Sales Mobility

In terms of the business challenges motivating sales organizations' mobility strategies, it should be of no surprise that the business community is still wondering if the clouds of economic recession have been lifted only temporarily. Indeed, the leading concern among survey respondents is the business climate as a whole (Figure 1), along with the difficulty of attempting to close more deals, at higher win/loss rates, and faster – but with resources often limited by budget cuts and other economy-driven constraints. Allowing sales staff to work effectively anywhere, any time, is one way in which managers can ensure that their best performers will capitalize on this flexibility to eventually sell more and reach quota more regularly, particularly if they are supported with processes and technologies that enable this activity with ease.

The second most cited business pressure driving sales mobility efforts is "growing expectations or demands of customers," though the Best-in-Class

companies within the research consider it equal to economic concerns and, more significantly, are 30% more likely than others to focus attention here.

**Figure I: Business Pressures Associated with Sales Mobility**



Source: Aberdeen Group, November 2010

This is because with ongoing economic uncertainty, the best sales organizations understand the value of maintaining strong relationships with existing customers, seeking to up-sell, cross-sell and increase each client's net value, while simultaneously endeavoring to land new accounts and close net-new business. The old adage "it's easier to keep a customer than find a new one" certainly has added meaning here.

## The Maturity Class Framework

The 82% of the 269 organizations that participated in this study indicated their organizations support sales mobility. It was these 217 organizations (269 x 82%) were used to calculate the maturity classes below. Aberdeen used three key performance criteria among responding sales organizations around sales mobility, to distinguish the Best-in-Class from Industry Average and Laggard organizations:

- Current percentage of sales representatives achieving sales quota
- Year-over-year change in average customer retention rate
- Year-over-year change in average sales lead conversion rate

Organizations with top performance based on these criteria earned Best-in-Class status, as described in Table I. For additional details on the Aberdeen Maturity Class Framework, see Table 7, The Competitive Framework Key, in Appendix A.

**Table 1: Top Performers Earn Best-in-Class Status**

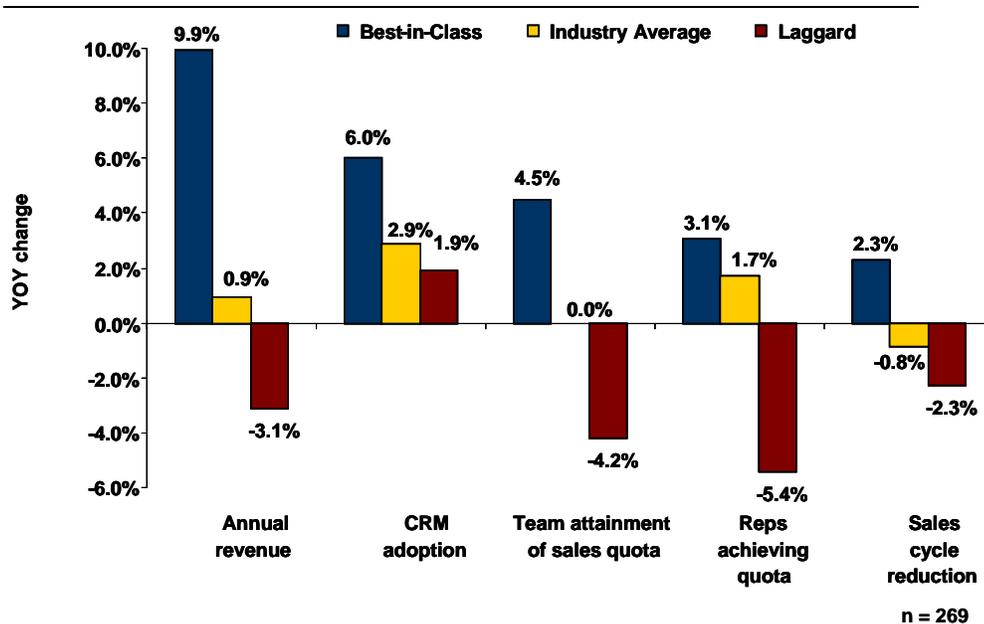
Definition of Maturity Class	Mean Class Performance
<p><b>Best-in-Class: Top 20%</b> of aggregate performance scorers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 65% of sales reps, on average, are achieving their annual sales quota</li> <li>▪ 5.2% average year-over-year improvement in customer retention rate; 44% showed improvement</li> <li>▪ 3.3% average year-over-year increase in average sales lead conversion rate; 27% showed improvement</li> </ul>
<p><b>Industry Average: Middle 50%</b> of aggregate performance scorers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 54% of sales reps, on average, are achieving their annual sales quota</li> <li>▪ 0.7% average year-over-year <b>decrease</b> in customer retention rate; 16% showed improvement</li> <li>▪ 0.2% average year-over-year increase in average sales lead conversion rate; 14% showed improvement</li> </ul>
<p><b>Laggard: Bottom 30%</b> of aggregate performance scorers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 22% of sales reps, on average, are achieving their annual sales quota</li> <li>▪ 2.8% average year-over-year <b>decrease</b> in customer retention rate; 3% showed improvement</li> <li>▪ 3.8% average year-over-year <b>decrease</b> in average sales lead conversion rate; 5% showed improvement</li> </ul>

Source: Aberdeen Group, November 2010

While not all companies deploy sales mobility, those that do outperform those that do not across myriad measures, including: overall team attainment of quota (62% vs. 57% respectively), lower sales turnover (12% vs. 19% respectively), as well as better year-over-year growth around revenue, customer renewals, deal size and CRM adoption. A breakdown of the 18% of survey respondents not deploying sales mobility shows that 5% have specific implementation plans in place for the next year, 6% are open to doing so in the future, and only 5% indicate that “we only allow sales staff to perform their duties when on-site.” The most commonly cited reasons for this last response are *concerns about data security* and the simple fact that *no sales reps need to work outside the office*, and are employed in more traditional inside sales, nine-to-five job roles and the like.

Among those that do support a mobile sales force, however, the Best-in-Class also handily out-perform their counterparts in year-over-year improvement in key measures such as revenue, sales cycle time, and quota achievement, as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: The Best-in-Class Demonstrate Significant Year-over-Year Success**



Source: Aberdeen Group, November 2010

Now, let’s take a deeper look at not just whether the Best-in-Class support remote selling activity, but the extent to which sales staffers take advantage of process- and technology-enabled mobile activities.

### The Best-in-Class PACE Model

Using sales mobility to achieve corporate goals also requires a combination of strategic actions, organizational capabilities, and enabling technologies and services that are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2: The Best-in-Class PACE Framework**

Pressures	Actions	Capabilities	Enablers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The economy is forcing us to do more with fewer or the same resources</li> <li>Growing expectations or demands of customers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable sales reps to input and access customer/account data from handhelds or other mobile technology - when on-site at a prospect or customer</li> <li>Deploy mobile applications that support key sales processes or workflow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remotely view and modify key CRM sales information (accounts, contacts, leads, opportunities, forecast)</li> <li>Access, perform and modify all business tasks (communications, data entry, scheduling, etc.) remotely from the field</li> <li>Enable synchronization of calendars, contacts, events and/or tasks</li> <li>The sales organization collaborates with corporate IT to ensure security regarding mobile access to corporate data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared team calendars</li> <li>Instant messaging or chat on mobile devices</li> <li>Real-time messaging between wireless device and enterprise applications</li> <li>Bi-directional synchronization of all data between remote devices and on-premise data warehouses</li> <li>Click-to-email</li> <li>User-configurable mobile user interface</li> </ul>

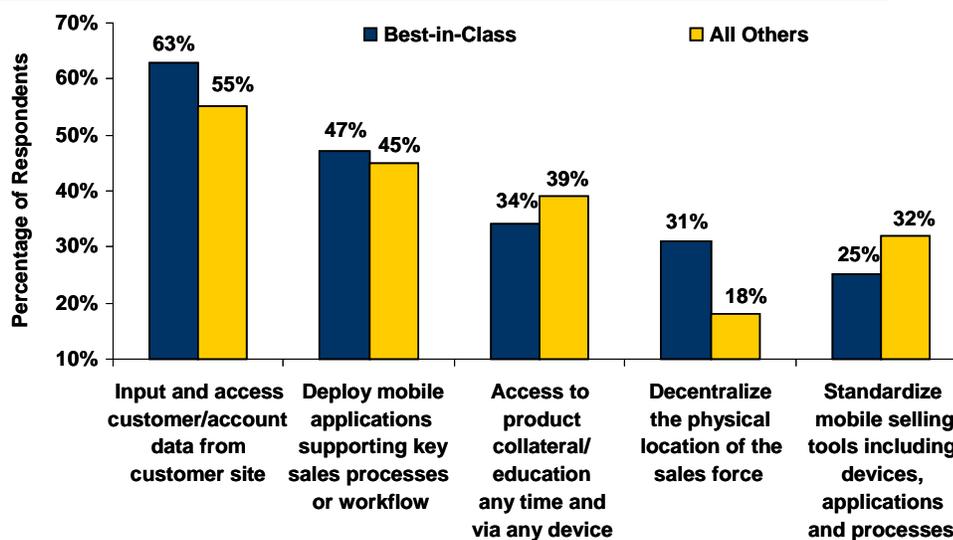
Source: Aberdeen Group, November 2010

## Best-in-Class Strategies

The most popular strategies among Best-in-Class organizations to improve sales effectiveness in the context of sales mobility (Figure 3) are remarkably well-suited to the type of sales functions most commonly supported by the same group, as seen above in Table 1. Much as CRM/SFA access and input lead the other activities in popularity, the most frequently cited strategic action that sales teams take to alleviate economic and customer demand pressures is the ability to enable this kind of communication. However they do so specifically from the physical location of the customer or prospect, with Best-in-Class firms out-pacing others by a 15% margin (63% vs. 55%). The benefits to sales teams of implementing this strategy are clear. Whether a bandwidth-challenged rep needs to look up key customer data in those precious few minutes before a meeting begins; or if during a discussion they want to support a selling/servicing conversation with accurate data accessed via their mobile device in real-time; or perhaps in a post-meeting rush the placement of an order will benefit both month-end quota attainment and customer satisfaction; the ability to work in an “anytime, anywhere” fashion around account-specific data can increase overall sales effectiveness.

Other strategic actions nominated by the Best-in-Class help support the more advanced functions of remote selling, which we have seen adopted at lower overall percentages by survey respondents, but are indeed used more commonly by the better performers. Deploying mobile applications associated with sales workflow helps enable access to sales training content, as is viewing product collateral in an on-demand fashion to support live selling with conversation-specific, customized examples of product features, advantages or benefits.

**Figure 3: Best-in-Class Strategic Actions in Response to Pressures**



n = 269

Source: Aberdeen Group, November 2010

Finally, the largest gap that Figure 3 shows us between Best-in-Class and other firms focuses on a specific corporate strategy of de-centralizing the sales force, an action that supports a wide variety of mobile sales activities, allows reps to provide more personalized customer service, and even enables more potential labor by them given the lack of rigid office-based attendance requirements. Indeed, in Aberdeen's benchmark report on [Sales Performance Management: Getting Everyone on the Same Page](#) (August, 2010), 53% of the Best-in-Class respondents (as measured by team attainment of quota, annual increase in average deal size and decrease in sales cycle) support more than half of their sales team in a primarily remote role, compared with 41% of Industry Average firms and only 34% of Laggards.

As Table 3 reveals, the vast majority of Best-in-Class companies within this research study actively support access to, and interface with, the CRM or SFA data repository among their sales team members from remote locations. This is true whether the staff is engaged in business-related activity (traveling, on-site with customers) or merely blending professional and personal time from the home, the beach, the soccer game or anywhere else they choose to get work done.

"Keep the mobile data entry/gathering system as easy to use as possible."

~ Gary Ertel, Director,  
Mortel Limited

**Table 3: Mobile-Enabled Sales Functions among Best-in-Class**

Type of Sales Activity	Percent of Best-in-Class
Access CRM/SFA data	81%
Input CRM/SFA data	68%
Access product collateral or specs not stored locally	68%
Access to sales training content	58%
Access the sales forecast	52%
Update the sales forecast	52%
Perform fully-featured product demo	45%

Source: Aberdeen Group, November 2010

The differential between "seeing" and "doing" is noteworthy in these findings. While more than four out of five top-performing sales organizations provide mobile CRM access, the percentage supporting active data entry is lower, at about two-thirds. The latter is still a significant percentage – the rate is 66% among all survey respondents – but considering that the following three most popular mobile sales activities in Table 3- collateral, training and sales forecasts - are also passive "access" rather than "input" or "update" tasks. The clear take-away is that more remote selling technology is currently used for "seeing" than "doing." Nonetheless, considering that roughly half of the Best-in-Class are actively supporting forecast updates and web-enabled product demos on the road, it is clear that both active and passive functionalities are popular and valuable. In contrast stands the least-nominated activity: using GPS-enabled devices to monitor sales reps' whereabouts, with only 3% of the Best-in-Class

considering it a worthwhile practice; this will be discussed below in more detail.

**Table 4: Mobile-Enabled Sales Support by the Best-in-Class**

Type of Sales Support	Percent of Best-in-Class
Company-provided laptop, netbook or tablet computers that can connect to email, internet or corporate applications from remote locations	94%
Web-based portals providing remote access to content, communications or corporate applications	77%
Company-provided communications devices other than PCs: feature/cell phone, smart phone, etc.	71%
Corporate voice mail accessed from remote locations	58%
Technical support for personally-owned computers used from home or other remote locations	42%

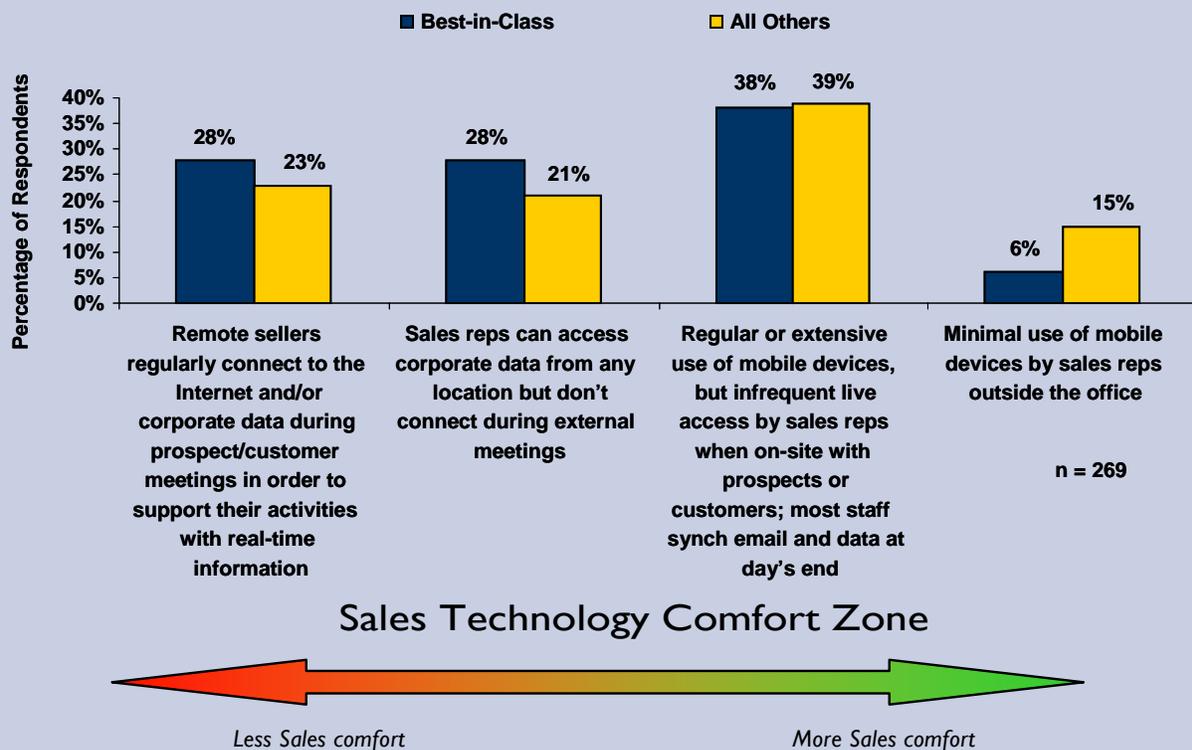
Source: Aberdeen Group, November 2010

With so many sales professionals interfacing and accessing corporate data from outside the office, what are the physical devices and support systems being used? Table 4 summarizes the trends Best-in-Class companies report, showing that nearly all of them provide computers and 71% add handheld feature/cell/smart phones to the mix, with three-quarters of them rounding out the devices with web portals supporting easy access to and security for the data they need to close deals and service customers effectively. Interestingly, voice-mail is a popular item, with more than half of the top performers providing access, but at significantly lower levels than computing support, despite a much lower cost level. This trend supports the concept of a steady de-centralization of sales activities, business environments in general, and the rise of mobile communications over traditional land-lines in society at large. Indeed, corporate voice mail is deployed 9% more often by Industry Average and Laggard companies (a combined 63%, vs. 58% for the Best-in-Class), a data point that associates the somewhat older technology with unimpressive business results around quota attainment, customer retention and lead conversion metrics. Of note in the mobile sales support data is the fact that “technical support for personally-owned communication devices” was the lowest mentioned by the Best-in-Class, at 23% of these firms. This represents a likely trend among corporate IT departments toward shying away from the security risks associated with sales reps’ own equipment, and a preference for supporting only company-owned devices.

**Strategy Insight**

As Figure 4 reveals, the majority of survey respondents' sales team members use their devices extensively when out of the office, but for the most part still focus their utilization on the basics: email, scheduling, CRM and forecast updates. Analyzing where the Best-in-Class stand in contrast to other companies, however, showcases a modest trend toward how they capitalize on more complex and cutting-edge connectivity options. By a 22% margin (28% vs. 23%), sales reps for these companies support their live customer interactions with web-based demos, searches for inventory and other real-time data access to help seal deals and maintain customer satisfaction. Conversely, the "minimal use of devices" selection by more than twice as many Industry Average and Laggard companies as Best-in-Class points further to the performance benefits of capitalizing on the mobile access available to field personnel.

**Figure 4: Extent of Real-Time Sales Mobility Use by the Best-in-Class**



Source: Aberdeen Group, November 2010

The "sales technology comfort zone" graphic within Figure 4 adds a layer of definition to these findings: that while professional sellers are generally thought of as technology-averse, the best performers nevertheless embrace the benefits offered to them, while the safe comfort zone of non-adoption is associated with poorer performance around quota attainment, customer retention and lead conversion efficiencies.

## Chapter Two: Benchmarking Requirements for Success

Effective sales mobility deployments play a critical role in an organization's ability to turn these strategies into profit. The following sections provide an analysis of how top performers distinguish themselves from other companies through the implementation of capabilities and enablers that support excellence in deploying sales mobility best practices.

### Competitive Assessment

Aberdeen Group analyzed the aggregated metrics of surveyed companies to determine whether their performance ranked as Best-in-Class, Industry Average, or Laggard. In addition to having common performance levels, each class also shared characteristics in five key categories: (1) **process** (the approaches they take to execute daily operations); (2) **organization** (corporate focus and collaboration among stakeholders); (3) **knowledge management** (contextualizing data and exposing it to key stakeholders); (4) **technology** (the selection of the appropriate tools and the effective deployment of those tools); and (5) **performance management** (the ability of the organization to measure its results to improve its business). These characteristics (identified in Table 5) serve as a guideline for best practices, and correlate directly with Best-in-Class performance across the key metrics.

**Table 5: The Competitive Framework**

	Best-in-Class	Average	Laggards
<b>Process</b>	Remotely view and modify key CRM sales information (accounts, contacts, leads, opportunities, forecast)		
	78%	64%	62%
	Access, perform and modify all business tasks (data entry, scheduling, etc.) remotely from the field		
	63%	59%	48%
	The sales organization collaborates with corporate IT to ensure security regarding mobile access to corporate data		
	77%	54%	44%
<b>Knowledge</b>	Technical support for team selling when members are not co-located		
	73%	50%	35%
	Enable synchronization of calendars, contacts, events and/or tasks		
	87%	87%	87%

#### Fast Facts

- √ 94% of Best-in-Class field sales staff spend at least 25% of their time in a remote setting, compared to 87% for other firms - however, only 3% of the Best-in-Class work 100% remotely, vs. 4% and 13% for the Industry Average and Laggards
- √ 56% of Best-in-Class companies' sales reps regularly connect to the Internet prior to or during prospect/customer meetings in order to support their activities with real-time information; 46% and 41% of Industry Average and Laggard firms do so

	Best-in-Class	Average	Laggards
<b>Enabling Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 62% Shared team calendars</li> <li>▪ 58% Instant messaging / chat</li> <li>▪ 53% Real-time messaging</li> <li>▪ 50% Bi-directional synchronization of all data</li> <li>▪ 47% Click-to-email</li> <li>▪ 43% User-configurable mobile user interface</li> <li>▪ 41% Offline functionality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 59% Shared team calendars</li> <li>▪ 49% Instant messaging / chat</li> <li>▪ 34% Real-time messaging</li> <li>▪ 30% Bi-directional synchronization of all data</li> <li>▪ 39% Click-to-email</li> <li>▪ 23% User-configurable mobile user interface</li> <li>▪ 33% Offline functionality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 51% Shared team calendars</li> <li>▪ 34% Instant messaging / chat</li> <li>▪ 21% Real-time messaging</li> <li>▪ 27% Bi-directional synchronization of all data</li> <li>▪ 21% Click-to-email</li> <li>▪ 21% User-configurable mobile user interface</li> <li>▪ 30% Offline functionality</li> </ul>
<b>Performance</b>	Current performance: overall team attainment of sales quota		
	101%	74%	19%
	Current performance: customer renewal rate		
	69%	59%	39%

Source: Aberdeen Group, November 2010

## Capabilities and Enablers

Based on the findings of the Competitive Framework and interviews with end users, the Best-in-Class demonstrate that a highly identifiable set of corporate capabilities and enablers can lead to measurable business success through the deployment of specific sales mobility-oriented methodologies and technologies. Additional Aberdeen research is cited to further support these positive trends.

### Process

As we have seen, the opportunity to **remotely view and modify CRM data** has widespread support, and more so among the Best-in-Class. Regardless of how technology-friendly or allergic a sales staff may be, the most common technology foundation in the contemporary sellers' daily existence remains the CRM or SFA solution. The rise of mobile enablers has created a mature, healthy return-on-investment that is validated by the high level of popularity of this process enabler. Indeed, Aberdeen research for [\*Providing a 360° View of the Customer: Better Service - Higher Sales\*](#) (March 2010) saw fully 80% of Best-in-Class companies (measured by customer retention, satisfaction and increased spend) formally capturing customer history and data, compared to 45% of Laggards. These same top performers were 70% more likely (34% vs. 20%) to include mobile access to this same data.

A second key process capability, **accessing/performing/modifying business tasks remotely** benefits nearly two-thirds of Best-in-Class sales teams adopting it, while fewer than half of Laggards agree. These abilities do not simply pop-up on a remote a salesperson’s menu, and certainly are not enabled by a sales-led purchase of a contemporary, web-based CRM deployment. They require investment, support and maintenance from the Corporate IT function. In [Enterprise Mobility Management: Optimizing the Full Mobile Lifecycle](#) (May 2010), Aberdeen research highlighted a set of Best-in-Class performers that provided an average of 84% of employees with secure mobile access, while other companies did so less than half as frequently. In the world of professional selling, marrying this technology support to this process capability is clearly a winning tactic.

Finally, the Best-in-Class are 35% more likely than others (42% vs. 31%) to provide **remote access to sales quotas and compensation plans**. This helps the best performers self-regulate in real time, identifying any quota shortfalls or bonus income opportunities whenever they want, wherever they are – without management needing to prod them near month-end.

## Organization

Capabilities that support better organization and workflow amplify this value of IT-enabled selling, as illustrated by the tremendous gap between Best-in-Class and other firms regarding **technical support for remote team selling**. Consider the fact that among all survey respondents, the average deal size of \$308,220 and sales cycle of 4.75 months speak to a landscape of highly complex selling scenarios involving multiple team members who may work in disparate locations; hence the 109% difference (73% vs. 35%) between the top and bottom performers in formally supporting team sales – especially when inside/outside/engineering sales staff are linked together for mutual account pursuits – from a technology resource perspective.

Even higher on the Best-in-Class list of essential organizational capabilities is the **synchronization of calendars, contacts, events and/or tasks**. Much as [Sales Intelligence: Preparing for Smarter Selling](#) (February 2010) defined Best-in-Class companies in part by a 9% annual reduction in non-productive time spent by sales reps looking for customers, accounts and contacts – compared to a 5% increase among Laggards – the current crop of top performers mobilize this same capability in order to, simply enough, “get salespeople selling” by minimizing the back-and-forth communications required to schedule meetings, update account information, etc.

## Knowledge Management

Digging deeper into Aberdeen’s research for [Providing a 360° View of the Customer: Better Service - Higher Sales](#) (March 2010), a key knowledge management capability deployed by more than half of the Best-in-Class but only one-quarter of Laggards was **“all internal stakeholders share a technology-based common view of the customer.”** Top-performing companies were more than twice as adept as Laggards at using tools to ensure that at all levels of the company share a common technology-based

"Hold your sales force accountable for entering their daily activities, regardless of location. We report weekly on the activities and review the types of activities conducted by our team."

~ Michael Saferstein, Sales  
Operations Manager,  
Cambria USA

view, but still, almost half (48%) of those top performers had yet to achieve this, indicating significant room for improvement. In the current sales mobility research, similar trends support these findings, in the context of using the same technology to ensure access/modify abilities in any remote context.

A related best-practice capability regarding knowledge management is identified as a **360° view and modification of all relevant customer data from remote locations**, supported by 44% of the Best-in-Class and only 31% of other companies. If sales staff are expected to keep prospect and customer records up-to-date in the CRM or any other system, easing their ability to do so remotely will likely promote more accurate and timely entry of the data.

Finally, the availability of **sales training content via mobile devices** is adopted by 38% of Best-in-Class sales teams, as compared to 25% of other firms. Following up traditional instructor-led sales training with bite-size chunks of reinforced content via mobile-friendly modalities – podcast, video, text or email – can enhance the likelihood that sales reps will continue to evolve and refresh their skill sets. Indeed, in [Sales Training: Deploying Knowledge, Process and Technology to Consistently Hit Quota](#) (September 2010), the Best-in-Class companies (achieving the best quota attainment and yearly growth in both revenue and average deal size) were 52% more likely than Laggards (38% vs. 25%) to support active mobile learning initiatives.

### Technology Enablers

Among the many technologies represented in Table 4, a number of them showcase significant adoption rate differentials between the Best-in-Class and other sales teams, and represent strong enablers of success:

- Using instant messaging or chat functionalities on mobile devices as simple, speedy communications tool that doesn't require any storage or infrastructure
- Ensuring that wireless devices and enterprise applications are capable of seamless, location-agnostic communication, as well as of real-time synchronization between remote devices and on-premise data warehouses
- Supporting full functionality of all mobile applications when offline, such as on an airplane, though continuing all business process while disconnected

As we have seen thus far, the basic use of CRM and SFA functionality is aggressively utilized by contemporary sales teams to support mobile effectiveness. What other technology aspects can be added to the mix? Table 5 showcases a number of enablers where the Best-in-Class lead other companies in the adoption of best practices that support the resulting quota attainment, customer retention and lead conversion success that define their maturity classes. From shared team calendars and data synchronization, to the communications-centric enablers of instant

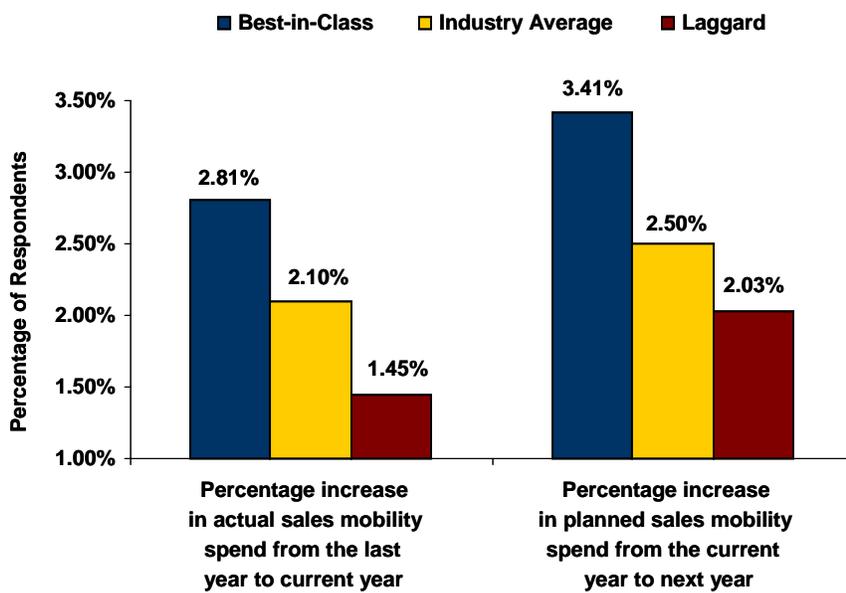
"What's most important is to do whatever it takes to get the sales team into the field, seeing customers and having meaningful discussions."

~ Hans Walter, CEO, Great Dane Consulting

messaging, chat and click-to-email, the best performers are enhancing their basic CRM investment with bells and whistles that pay off handsomely.

In terms of the actual spend on overall sales mobility technology support, Figure 5 reveals two relevant trends: that in recent budget cycles, the Best-in-Class have increased their relevant dollar allocations at a faster pace than other firms, and that moving forward, they – and all companies – will be increasing their sales mobility spend even more. Both the relative and comparative directions here speak strongly to the return on investment in this area.

**Figure 5: Year-to-Year Sales Mobility Budget Trends by the Best-in-Class**



n = 269

Source: Aberdeen Group, November 2010

**Technology Insight – Mobile Device Ownership**

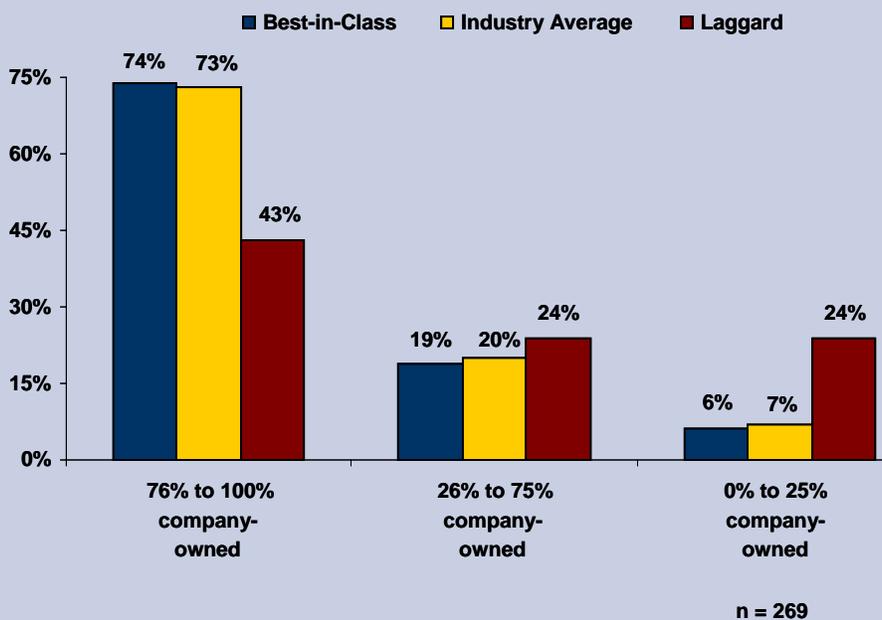
As Figure 6 indicates, the vast majority of devices used by sales organizations are company-owned, though a telling trend is revealed regarding the differential between the maturity classes. In short, better business performance is associated with company ownership, control and security behind PC’s, tablets, smart phones and other devices used by the sales team to communicate, connect and compute, with a dramatic 72% delta (74% vs. 43%) between the Best-in-Class and Laggards around predominant company device ownership.

*continued*

### Technology Insight – Mobile Device Ownership

Similarly, the poorest performers out-pace all other companies in reporting environments where fewer or no sales-carried phones or PC's are corporate-supplied. The lesson here is that security, compatibility, adoption and effectiveness are all better enabled by enterprises rather than individuals, regardless of the cost involved.

**Figure 6: Mobile Device Ownership by the Best-in-Class**



Source: Aberdeen Group, November 2010

### Performance Management

The dramatic performance gaps between the all three maturity classes within this research data set are well-illustrated in Table 5. Yet in terms of implementing performance management capabilities, an interesting set of results ensues. When asked about the following options, the Best-in-Class supported them more frequently than other companies, by an average of 27% vs. 18%, but in no instance were these top performers adopting them at more than a four-in-ten rate:

- Monitor productivity of mobile employees
- Track location of remote staff to ensure their effective use of time away from the office (using GPS)
- Track and manage time entries of remote staff
- Remote access to sales coaching content related to current quota attainment or progress-versus-goal information

The conclusion regarding performance management can be reached that a “Big Brother” mentality – such as the proverbial mounting of GPS devices on

snowplows to ensure the drivers are not spending too much time at the donut shop – is relatively unnecessary in the world of professional, B2B-oriented sales professionals. After all, the typical measurement of these individuals' performance – degree of quota attainment – is generally the simplest of all the various employees within the enterprise, and as transparent as any performance metric could be. Any sales professional not spending their time wisely is considered likely to self-destruct in terms of hitting their number. This kind of result, in the current economy featuring near 10% unemployment is therefore an effective deterrent to any widespread, unprofessional behavior that would require more intense, GPS “spying” or oversight. Sales executives, in conclusion, trust their staff to act in appropriate Darwinian fashion: survival of the fittest.

### Case Study — Aon Canada

Aon Canada is a leading provider of insurance, reinsurance, risk management and human resources consulting services to numerous clients located throughout Canada and has more than 500 members within its combined sales teams. With changes in the economic landscape and changing needs of customers, Aon recognized that in order to better serve its clients, it needed to enable its sales force with access to key information regardless of their location. “Ensuring that mobility was a component of our sales strategy, to support our teams in the field with access to information, was crucial for narrowing the gap between customers / prospects and ensuring customer satisfaction,” says David Cliche, Senior Vice President, National Director, Affinity Canada at Aon.

Recognizing the role of mobile technologies, Aon provides each sales rep with a laptop and Blackberry to support their selling efforts. The company also provides sales reps with access to its customized web-enabled CRM system, to connect to customer/account information anywhere they need, through their mobile devices. “Use of a web-enabled CRM solution allows our sales team to have greater insight into customers/prospects, as the accumulated information within this database enables them to determine existing business relationships with customers, their specific needs, and products/services available to satisfy them,” reports Cliche.

“Ensuring that mobility was a component of our sales strategy, to support our teams in the field with access to information, was crucial for narrowing the gap between customers / prospects and ensuring customer satisfaction.”

~ David Cliche, Senior Vice President, National Director, Affinity Canada at Aon

## Chapter Three: Required Actions

Whether a company is trying to move its performance in sales mobility from Laggard to Industry Average, or Industry Average to Best-in-Class, the following actions will help spur the necessary performance improvements:

### Laggard Steps to Success

- **Use the tools available to support multi-channel communications.** The technology enabler of “click-to-email” is adopted by only 21% of Laggards, as opposed to 39% and 47% of Industry Average and Best-in-Class companies respectively. Strong sales performers understand the value of communicating with their customers or prospects in a variety of modalities, and the opportunity to send an email from a mobile device through the CRM interface, for example, is an enabling best practice worthy of increased adoption. Further, “click-to-call” – the ability to auto-dial a phone number by clicking your mouse – is adopted by only 16% of Laggards, compared with 27% of Industry Average and one-third of the Best-in-Class; the same lesson applies.
- **Make friends with IT** so that team-based selling initiatives are supported by the corporate technology resource or team. Only a third of Laggards (vs. half of Industry Average and 73% of Best-in-Class firms) take advantage of this organizational capability, through which colleagues as disparate as inside sales, sales engineering, field marketing and “closers” can efficiently co-sell and co-service accounts, regardless of place-and-time constraints.
- **Act like a teenager** with instant messaging or chat on mobile devices, to access colleagues, suppliers, partners and even customers using this most basic of mobile technologies, which can often be a quicker, more efficient tool than dialing a number, crafting an email or leaving a voice mail for a business-related associate. Nearly half of the Industry Average are thumb-driving their way to quota attainment, in contrast to one-third of Laggards.

### Industry Average Steps to Success

- **Get plugged in** with mobile-enabled notification of marketing “trigger events” such as downloads, event registrations or click-throughs so that sales reps can take action in real-time, rather than too long after a prospect has been actively – but perhaps only temporarily – engaged with your solution offerings. Industry Average firms are 76% less likely than the Best-in-Class (37% vs. 21%) to have this enabling best practice in place
- **Ignore the realtors: location no longer matters** to top-performing sales organizations that support their remote staff with

#### Fast Facts

- √ The average annual sales quota among Best-in-Class firms is \$1.26M, compared to \$1.19M for the Industry Average and \$957k for Laggards
- √ The “fully loaded” annual cost of a field sales rep is \$144k for Best-in-Class performers, \$122k for Industry Average and \$61k for Laggards
- √ Regardless of location, Best-in-Class sales reps spend an average of 3.1 hours per day working in their CRM or SFA system; the number drops to 2.6 hours per day among other companies

“You must empower your sales force to be in front of customers. This is achieved by providing the mobile tools, internal support and process streamlining to accelerate the velocity of the sales pipeline.”

~ Christopher Carey,  
General Manager – Canon  
Business Imaging Small &  
Medium Business, Canon  
Australia Pty Ltd

the knowledge management capability of a 360° view and ability to modify all relevant customer data regardless of where they are. While the Industry Average typically out-adopt Laggards in most best practices, they trail both the bottom and top maturity classes in enabling their sellers with this basic support mechanism.

- **Synchronize data** all the time, anytime, with bi-directional flow between remote devices and on-premise data warehouses. The Best-in-Class are two-thirds more likely than Industry Average companies (50% vs. 30%) to realize that it's hard enough capturing CRM and other data input from busy sales team members, and that burdening them with manual synching data at day's end is the easiest way to reduce CRM adoption and overall team collaboration. Ideally, every piece of mobilized data a salesperson needs – contacts, accounts, pipeline opportunities, marketing campaign results, inventory, pricing, demos, collateral – should represent the up-to-the minute “version of the truth,” regardless of whether the information sits behind the corporate firewall, in the cloud, or on their smart phone.

### Best-in-Class Steps to Success

- **Go green** through more paperless processing of forms, applications or contracts by implementing electronic signatures, a young but growing technology enabler often highlighted in Aberdeen research. The Best-in-Class use e-signatures more than other firms (27% vs. 15%) but would benefit from the ever-growing capabilities of smart phones and tablet PC's that support this simple, secure way to shorten the sales cycle by “sealing the deal” either in person or via electronic communications.
- **Enable disconnects** by increasing the opportunity for sales reps to continue all business processes on their mobile devices, even when out of range on an airplane, in a train tunnel or at the kids' soccer game. Only two in five Best-in-Class companies currently enable remote staff to read or create email, enter forecast data or conduct other time-sensitive activities when “off the grid,” which are then immediately synched when their connection returns. While 94% of Best-in-Class sales teams are aggressively using their mobile devices, fewer than half of them fully enable all business processes all the time.

### How Does Your Performance Compare to the Best-in-Class?



- Compare your processes
- Receive a free, personal PDF scorecard
- Benefit from custom recommendations to improve your performance, based on the research

**Take the Assessment**  
Receive Your Free Scorecard

### Summary

While current cultural and business trends are not inexorably moving all knowledge workers into an “anywhere, anytime” working mindset, the fact remains that the most mobile among us – sales professionals – have been on the road since long before cell phones or internet support arrived to make their jobs both easier and more complex. Today’s top-performing sales teams are consistently enabled with the latest in basic remote support – CRM- and SFA-based abilities to view and make basic changes to corporate data regardless of time of day or physical location. Fewer of them are taking advantage of the many “bells and whistles” heralded by solution providers around creating a richer flow of communications, better productivity, and ultimately superior selling results. This research study validates this point: while mobile CRM is nothing new in 2010, the opportunity to embellish its tried-and-true functionality with more contemporary enablers – electronic signature capture, web browsing, instant messaging, click-to-call and the like – is also a worthwhile consideration. At stake is the opportunity to sell more, hit quota more consistently, retain customers and convert more leads: all the hallmarks of Best-in-Class mobile-enabled sales effectiveness.

## Appendix A: Research Methodology

In September and October 2010, Aberdeen examined the use, the experiences, and the intentions of 267 enterprises using services and technologies that impact the results from their sales mobility practices.

Aberdeen supplemented this online survey effort with interviews with select survey respondents, gathering additional information on sales mobility strategies, experiences, and results.

Responding enterprises included the following:

- *Job title:* The research sample included respondents with the following job titles: Director (24%), Manager (21%), CEO / President (20%), Staff (10%), EVP / SVP / VP (9%) and other (16%).
- *Department / function:* The research sample included respondents from the following departments or functions: sales and business development (52%), corporate management (12%), information technology (10%), operations (6%), marketing (6%) and other (14%).
- *Industry:* The research sample included respondents exclusively from software (13%), IT consulting and services (10%), financial services (9%), telecommunications equipment/services (8%), education (8%), industrial product/equipment manufacturing (6%), health/medical/dental devices & services (6%), wholesale/distribution (5%), insurance (5%) and other (30%).
- *Geography:* The majority of respondents (76%) were from the Americas. Remaining respondents were from the EMEA region (15%) and Asia-Pacific (9%).
- *Company size:* 14% of respondents were from large enterprises (annual revenues above US \$1 billion); 28% were from midsize enterprises (annual revenues between \$50 million and \$1 billion); and 58% of respondents were from small businesses (annual revenues of \$50 million or less).
- *Headcount:* 28% of respondents were from large enterprises (headcount greater than 1,000 employees); 22% were from midsize enterprises (headcount between 100 and 999 employees); and 50% of respondents were from small businesses (headcount between 1 and 99 employees).

### Study Focus

Responding executives, primarily in sales management roles, completed an online survey that included questions designed to determine the following:

- √ The degree to which sales mobility is deployed in their organization and the impact it has on achieving their business goals
- √ The structure, effectiveness and satisfaction with existing sales mobility implementations
- √ Current and planned use of sales mobility tools to achieve desired changes in revenue, quota and deal size
- √ The benefits, if any, that have been derived from sales mobility initiatives

The study aimed to identify emerging best practices for sales mobility usage, and to provide a framework by which readers could assess their own management capabilities.

**Table 6: The PACE Framework Key**

Overview
<p>Aberdeen applies a methodology to benchmark research that evaluates the business pressures, actions, capabilities, and enablers (PACE) that indicate corporate behavior in specific business processes. These terms are defined as follows:</p> <p><b>Pressures</b> — external forces that impact an organization’s market position, competitiveness, or business operations (e.g., economic, political and regulatory, technology, changing customer preferences, competitive)</p> <p><b>Actions</b> — the strategic approaches that an organization takes in response to industry pressures (e.g., align the corporate business model to leverage industry opportunities, such as product / service strategy, target markets, financial strategy, go-to-market, and sales strategy)</p> <p><b>Capabilities</b> — the business process competencies required to execute corporate strategy (e.g., skilled people, brand, market positioning, viable products / services, ecosystem partners, financing)</p> <p><b>Enablers</b> — the key functionality of technology solutions required to support the organization’s enabling business practices (e.g., development platform, applications, network connectivity, user interface, training and support, partner interfaces, data cleansing, and management)</p>

Source: Aberdeen Group, November 2010

**Table 7: The Competitive Framework Key**

Overview	
<p>The Aberdeen Competitive Framework defines enterprises as falling into one of the following three levels of practices and performance:</p> <p><b>Best-in-Class (20%)</b> — Practices that are the best currently being employed and are significantly superior to the Industry Average, and result in the top industry performance.</p> <p><b>Industry Average (50%)</b> — Practices that represent the average or norm, and result in average industry performance.</p> <p><b>Laggards (30%)</b> — Practices that are significantly behind the average of the industry, and result in below average performance.</p>	<p>In the following categories:</p> <p><b>Process</b> — What is the scope of process standardization? What is the efficiency and effectiveness of this process?</p> <p><b>Organization</b> — How is your company currently organized to manage and optimize this particular process?</p> <p><b>Knowledge</b> — What visibility do you have into key data and intelligence required to manage this process?</p> <p><b>Technology</b> — What level of automation have you used to support this process? How is this automation integrated and aligned?</p> <p><b>Performance</b> — What do you measure? How frequently? What’s your actual performance?</p>

Source: Aberdeen Group, November 2010

**Table 8: The Relationship Between PACE and the Competitive Framework**

PACE and the Competitive Framework – How They Interact
<p>Aberdeen research indicates that companies that identify the most influential pressures and take the most transformational and effective actions are most likely to achieve superior performance. The level of competitive performance that a company achieves is strongly determined by the PACE choices that they make and how well they execute those decisions.</p>

Source: Aberdeen Group, November 2010

## Appendix B: Related Aberdeen Research

Related Aberdeen research that forms a companion or reference to this report includes:

- [\*Sales Training: Deploying Knowledge, Process and Technology to Consistently Hit Quota\*](#); September 2010
- [\*Sales Performance Management: Getting Everyone on the Same Page\*](#); August 2010
- [\*Sales Forecasting: Analytics to the Rescue!\*](#); June 2010
- [\*Optimizing Lead-To-Win: Shrinking the Sales Cycle and Focusing Closers on Sealing More Deals\*](#); May 2010
- [\*Providing a 360° View of the Customer: Better Service - Higher Sales\*](#); March 2010
- [\*Sales Intelligence: Preparing for Smarter Selling\*](#); February 2010
- [\*Inside Sales Enablement: "Let Them Drink Coffee!"\*](#); December 2009
- [\*B2B TeleServices: The 2009 Buyer's Guide\*](#); November 2009
- [\*The Carrot or the Stick? Competing Strategies for Sales Effectiveness\*](#); July 2009

Information on these and any other Aberdeen publications can be found at [www.aberdeen.com](http://www.aberdeen.com).

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