

FOREWORD

I've always wanted to start a company. I grew up watching my father build a chain of apparel stores, and I started my first business, Liberty Software, when I was 15. A friend and I wrote computer games (*Crypt of the Undead* was one of our first), my grandmother wrote the music, and we sold them to Atari. In college, I ran the company out of my dorm room; I studied entrepreneurship, and interned at Apple, where I wrote code for the Macintosh and became enamored with the "Think Different" mind-set that permeated the organization, from the revolutionary products the company built to the pirate flag flying on the roof. Early in life, I knew I wanted to create new products, encourage revolutionary ideas, and build a distinctive culture in my businesses.

So it came as a great surprise when, upon college graduation, my entrepreneurship professors told me not to start my own business but instead get "real-world experience." Specifically, they urged me to take a sales position that focused on building relationships with customers. They called it "carrying a bag."

I was less than enthusiastic. A career in sales wasn't anything close to the path I had envisioned for myself. Yet this turned out to be some of the best business guidance I've ever received. It certainly changed my life and deeply influenced the company I ultimately did create.

After graduation I accepted a job at Oracle answering its 1-800-number. I didn't want to be a 1-800-number operator, but soon I discovered that working with the customer was a lot easier and a lot more fun than writing code. It also taught me the value that guides everything we do at Salesforce today: nothing is more important than customer success, and sales is the entry point to learning how to make the customer successful.

Anyone on the front line has incredible access to information about the customer, the competition, and the changing market. Sales gives us the intelligence necessary to know our customers, deliver the right products, and compete. It's really the heart of an organization, the vital connection to the customer—and far too often it's overlooked.

During my career, I've had a chance to see sales from every angle. Early on, through my work as a salesperson, I understood the value of a program that would allow people to track leads, manage contacts, and keep tabs on account information. I also knew the traditional systems we had, which were expensive to buy, time-consuming to implement, and difficult to use, could be vastly improved. Observing the trends that were happening in the consumer world, I thought that sales-force automation and customer relationship management products could better serve customers if they were sold as a service and delivered over the Internet, which would make these pivotal products faster to implement, easier to use, and far less expensive. So, in 1999 I founded Salesforce with a new technology model, the cloud; a new business model, pay-as-you-go subscription services; and a new philanthropic model, donating 1 percent of Salesforce's product, 1 percent of Salesforce's equity and 1 percent of employees' time to help nonprofits fulfill their missions.

At the time, I had no idea that we would ultimately evolve our service to other areas, such as customer service, marketing, and analytics, and also develop a platform on which others could build new applications. But that is what our customers showed us they needed.

Today, we are leveraging the cloud, social, mobile, data science and Internet of Things technologies to help businesses connect and collaborate with their customers in new ways. Companies like Unilever, State Farm, and Mattel are using our technologies to transform themselves into customer-centric enterprises that can go faster, better align their organizations across business groups and functions, and be more innovative.

This technology shift is more profound than anything we've seen, and is transforming the way we sell. Buyers are engaging with brands in ways never before possible. We are now working in a world in which everyone is trying to determine how to best leverage technology to sell, but this does not mean that technology replaces sales. Too many companies have cut sales departments or neglected to nurture them.

This is not a time to diminish sales; it's a time to reassess and reinvent it. As technology evolves and the world becomes more interconnected, companies need to implement the right strategies and right services to get

better at selling. Having a dedicated, enabled, and passionate sales team is the way companies grow. By managing and motivating sales to develop trusted relationships with customers, and by using tools to make the process more transparent, collaborative, and strategic, companies can deliver sustained and consistent growth.

As the CEO of Salesforce, which has more than 150,000 customers, I meet with thousands of CEOs every year. In my own business as well as those of our customers, I witness how sales is being transformed. In this digital era, sales reps aren't lugging around briefcases full of purchase orders—they are closing deals on their phones and tablets in real time. Companies are creating one-to-one journeys for their customers that traverse sales, service, and marketing. And every part of the selling process is more intelligent, data-rich, and quantifiable, allowing sales teams to connect with their customers in entirely new ways.

Given the critical value of sales and how the digital revolution is transforming it, one would assume that business experts and business school professors would be cranking out reams of rigorous research and filling journals with insights on sales topics. Surprisingly, this is not the case. The topic of sales management is sadly underresearched, especially compared with the massive amount of material available in other business disciplines such as marketing, operations, or leadership. It's incredible to consider that business students can earn an MBA without ever attending a class on sales. Top journals devote less space to sales than to other management areas, and few, in fact, recognize sales for the important management practice that it is. There has been no great business book that offers a comprehensive, scientifically grounded analysis of sales as a discipline today—until now.

Sales Growth: Five Proven Strategies from the World's Sales Leaders leverages the leading minds and data of McKinsey & Company to fill the gap in sales-management research. It puts sales management back where it belongs—at the center of management thinking about what makes businesses successful.

McKinsey is a trusted adviser to the world's leading businesses and institutions, and reading this book is like walking into a room where more than a hundred of the world's sales leaders are openly sharing their perspectives on the most pressing issues they face. In addition to the stories and case studies woven through the text, there are exclusive interviews with sales visionaries from some of the very best sales organizations.

From finding opportunities ahead of the competition to making the best use of multiple channels, boosting sales performance, and providing real

sales leadership—this book covers all the bases. For each topic, the authors share insights, examples, and case studies that are instantly adaptable to any business. Readers gain access to McKinsey's network to learn how other sales executives have found hidden pockets of growth in geographies and sectors where they thought they knew all the possible leads. They can see how sales leaders manage channel partners to represent their brands as well as their direct reps do. They can learn how to adjust their sales strategies to win in emerging markets or find the best way to develop sales DNA in their organization.

In this second edition of *Sales Growth*, the authors have built on strong foundations with new research and additional interviews. The new edition also incorporates some of the changes in the field over the past few years, such as the impact on sales growth of increasing automation and outsourcing. But the underlying message of the book remains the same. Sales is both science and art, and the knowledge, research, and expertise in this book will help sales leaders make sense of what's happening in the rapidly changing business world and equip them to build organizations positioned to succeed in the next decade and beyond.

Marc Benioff
Chairman and CEO
Salesforce

One of the pioneers of cloud computing, Marc Benioff founded Salesforce in 1999 with a vision to revolutionize the enterprise software world with new models for technology, business, corporate philanthropy, and management. Under his visionary leadership, Salesforce has grown from a groundbreaking idea into a Fortune 500 company and the number one customer relationship management platform. Salesforce has been ranked by Forbes as one of the world's most innovative companies over the past several years, and by Fortune as the world's most admired company in the software industry for three years in a row.