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Mobile Sales Force Effectiveness

Strategies Beyond Mobility Utilization

March 2007

Executive Summary

Sales teams are under constant pressure to meet customer expectations, while bringing in revenue for the company. As globalization brings the world closer together, these pressures increase. A recent Aberdeen survey revealed; **companies that implement mobile sales force automation solutions are 1.5 times more likely to see an improvement in sales force productivity versus those that do not.** Sales teams are looking at Mobile Sales Force Automation (SFA) technologies to arm their field reps to be able to handle the ever increasing customer demands on a global basis.

Key Business Value Findings

- Fifty-nine (59) percent of respondents cite customer demands for real-time sales decisions as the number one reason to adopt a mobile SFA strategy.
- One-third of Best-in-Class companies' measure SFA performance on at least a monthly basis, versus 21% of average and none of laggards who do the same.
- Forty-seven (47) percent of Best-in-Class (BIC) companies cite user interface design on mobile devices as a key challenge, to deploying a mobile SFA solution.

"We needed to make our customer data available to the entire sales organization, in real-time."

CEO
Software Company

Implications & Analysis

- Ninety-five (95) percent of BIC companies report an increase in revenue, as a result of implementing a mobile SFA solution, versus 68% of average companies and 19% of laggards.
- Ninety (90) percent of BIC companies report an average year-over-year improvement of 25% in sales force productivity versus 50% of average companies and 5% of laggards.
- Ninety-four (94) percent of Best-in-Class companies reduced downtime for field sales reps, versus 77% of others who have seen similar results, after deploying a mobile SFA solution.

Required Actions

- Stop measuring mobile sales force utilization and start measuring sales force effectiveness using these key metrics: reductions in sales cycles, call reporting completeness and speed of resolution for customer inquiries.
- Provide access to enterprise data, such as customer contact information, sales history, pricing and inventory levels on mobile devices to expedite decisions and arm field reps with information.
- Measure mobile SFA performance on a weekly or real-time basis to gauge effectiveness and ensure productivity.

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Chapter One:
Benchmarking the Best-in-Class

Key Takeaways

- Seventy-four (74) percent of BIC companies improved Customer Satisfaction compared to 16% of the other companies
- Ninety-five (95) percent of the BIC companies improved sales force productivity while only 36% of the others have reported similar improvements
- Thirty-seven (37) percent of BIC companies measure mobile SFA performance on a weekly basis, versus 9% of others who measure at the same frequency

Customers are demanding faster sales decisions. Best-in-Class (BIC) companies are addressing this pressure by re-aligning the sales force to meet customer demand and arming them with the necessary technologies to gain access to data in the global marketplace. The World Wide Web has provided information access to customers who at one time had no access at all. Customers are looking for responses to their inquiries in hours not days and location can no longer be used as an excuse for lack of responsiveness. The need for mobile SFA solutions has never been greater.

> *"Real-time data and improved data quality helped us manage our business and our customers more efficiently."*
>
> *Director of Sales*
> *High-Tech Industry*

Competitive Framework Key

The Aberdeen Competitive Framework defines enterprises as falling into one of the three following levels of practices and performance:

Best-in-Class (20%) — practices that are the best currently being employed and significantly superior to the industry norm

Industry norm (50%) — practices that represent the average or norm

Laggards (30%) —practices that are significantly behind the average of the industry

- **The critical differentiator between Best-in-Class companies and others deploying Mobile SFA solutions is that BIC is focused on the maximizing the effectiveness of their mobile sales force, while others are still promoting utilization of these tools throughout their organizations.**

59% of BIC companies are improving the efficiency of their existing sales force by providing field service reps with access to quality data from backend systems and mobile CRM solutions to paint a 360 degree view of the customer. This access to data in the field provides a single-point of resolution for customer questions (47% in real-time), thus being able to respond efficiently and effectively to customer demands.

Best-in-Class companies attain this level of efficiency effectiveness by taking strategic actions based on their capabilities as an organization and their use of technologies provided by their Mobile SFA vendor partners.

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The BIC PACE framework (Table 1) highlights the key pressure BIC companies face, and the associated actions and capabilities they undertake to this end.

Table 1: Best-in-Class PACE Framework

Pressures	Actions	Capabilities	Enablers

• Customers require a faster decision making process by the sales force	• Service the customer using a 360 degree view
	• Enable a single point of resolution for sales executives on the mobile device
		• Address customer requirements at the point of interaction
		• Access to real-time data
		• Ability to access end-to-end content
		• Develop internally back-end integrations to customer, product and CRM data
			• Real-time access to customer, product, CRM and transaction data
			• Mobile devices
			  ○ PDA
			  ○ Smart phone
			  ○ Tablet PC
			  ○ Laptop
			• Wireless network
			• SFA
			  ○ Opportunity management
			  ○ Account and Contact management
			  ○ Activity management
			  ○ Product catalog
			• Order management/entry
			• Data integration tools
			• Security measures

Performance Excellence Defines Best-in-Class

The BIC mobile adopters have well defined metrics which they track on a regular basis. Thirty-seven (37) percent measure mobile SFA performance on a weekly basis. Aberdeen defines its BIC companies as those who achieve the highest performance results in the areas of Customer, Operational and Financial business categories. BIC companies are defined by a composite of these KPI's which include:

- **Customer** – 74% of BIC demonstrated year over year Customer Satisfaction Improvements
- **Operational** – 95% of BIC demonstrated year over year improvements in Sales Force Productivity, 42% reported year-over-year improvements in User Adoption Rates
- **Financial** – 74% of BIC reported year over year increases in Revenue as a result of their Mobile SFA implementations

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Companies that exhibit BIC characteristics are outperforming their peers in each of these categories. Table 2 illustrates the delta between Best-in-Class metrics and their average and laggard counterparts.

Table 2: Companies With Top Performance Earn "Best-in-Class" Status:

Definition of Maturity Class	Mean Class Performance
Best in Class: **Top 20%** of aggregate performance scorers	• **95%** increased Sales force productivity • **74%** increased Revenue • **74%** increased Customer Satisfaction
Industry Norm: **Middle 50%** of aggregate performance scorers	• **50%** increased Sales force productivity • **28%** increased Revenue • **23%** increased Customer Satisfaction
Laggard: **Bottom 30%** of aggregate performance scorers	• **5%** increased Sales force productivity • **0%** increased Revenue • **16%** increased Customer Satisfaction

Source: AberdeenGroup, March 2007

Strategy in Action

BIC companies are focused on building a higher level of efficiency within their existing sales organizations.

- Fifty-nine (59) percent of BIC companies will provide a 360 degree view of the customer to the sales rep, including customer purchase history, product information, on a mobile device – to provide a quick response to customer queries and improve customer satisfaction
- Forty-seven (47) percent are integrating data with backend pricing and quoting systems, through an in-house solution, to provide an end-to-end view of product information, availability and pricing – to enable a single point of resolution

The others are focused on improving the adoption and utilization of mobile SFA solutions (Figure 1):

- Fifty-one (51) percent are improving the user-interface on the mobile device in an effort to increase usability
- The sales force historically, has been slow to adopt new technology. Fifty-

PACE Key — For a more detailed description see Appendix A

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:

Pressures — external forces that impact an organization's market position, competitiveness, or business operations

Actions — the strategic approaches that an organization takes in response to industry pressures

Capabilities — the business process competencies required to execute corporate strategy

Enablers — the key functionality of technology solutions required to support the organization's enabling business practices

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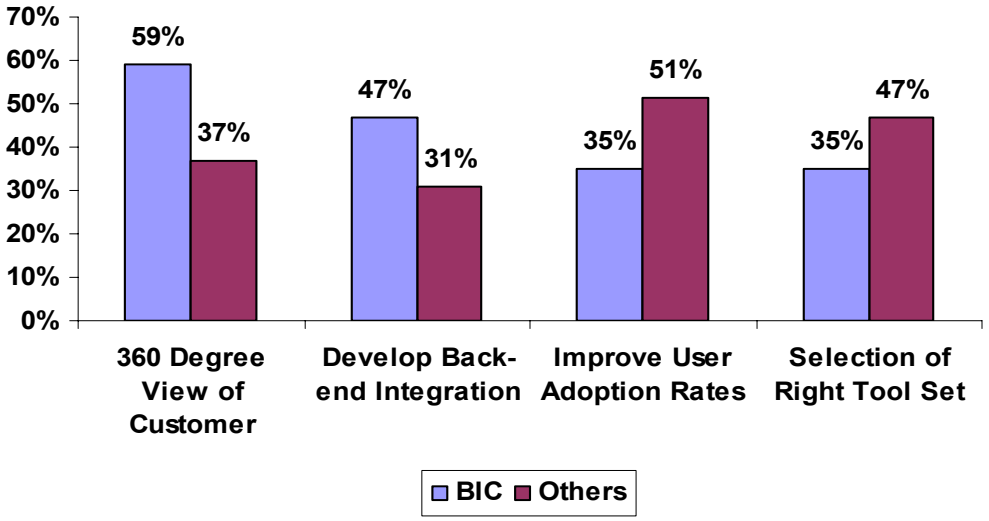
one (51) percent of other companies are trying to increase user adoption rates and drive mobile SFA technology through the sales force

- Forty-seven (47) percent are focused on selecting the appropriate tools to implement a mobile SFA strategy

In order for companies to derive the maximum value from their mobile SFA solution they must ensure it is integrated with their backend systems and provides a real-time 360 degree view of the customer.

Figure 1: Strategic Actions to Implement a Mobile SFA Solution



Source: AberdeenGroup, March 2007

"Our revenue forecasting and materials management improved significantly with the implementation of a mobile SFA solution."

Kevin Shabow, Sr. Director of Sales, Gateway Computer

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Chapter Two:
Benchmarking Requirements for Success

Key Takeaways

- 53% of Best-in-Class companies have executive level support for their mobile SFA initiatives as compared to 69% of laggards that have not been able to build a successful business case for a Mobile SFA solution.
- Best-in-Class companies are beyond adoption and implementation hurdles, with 63% of sales management and 68% of field sales reps using mobile SFA "All the Time".

As shown in Table 3, survey respondents fall into one of three categories – Laggard, Industry Average, or Best-in-Class — based on their characteristics in four key categories: (1) process (status of mobile SFA implementation); (2) organization (corporate focus/philosophy, level of collaboration among stakeholders); (3) knowledge (mobile SFA usage, and dissemination of data); (4) technology (devices currently used within organizations); and (5) performance metrics (results achieved after mobile SFA implementation).

> *"We wanted the ability to look up contact information in our CRM system through a web enabled device – such as a smart phone."*
>
> CEO, Software Industry

In each of these categories, survey results show that the firms exhibiting Best-in-Class characteristics also enjoy above average financial performance (Table 1).

Table 3: Mobile SFA Competitive Framework

	Laggards	Industry Average	Best–in-Class
Process	**Measuring Sales Force effectiveness is a critical component to ensuring successful ROI and customer satisfaction.**		
	65% do not have a measurement process in place	36% measure on an ad-hoc basis	52% measure sales force effectiveness on a regular basis
Organization	**Successful Mobile Sales Force Automation programs have support from corporate executives.**		
	25% have executive level sponsorship of mobile SFA initiatives	38% have executive level sponsorship of mobile SFA initiatives	53% have executive level sponsorship of mobile SFA initiatives

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	Laggards	Industry Average	Best–in-Class
Knowledge	**Best-in-Class provide access to real-time content via Mobile SFA applications -- leading companies rely on mobile access to accomplish their jobs.**		
	25% of Field Service reps and 29% of Sales Management staff use mobile SFA **"Never"**	39% of Field Service reps and 43% of Sales Management staff use mobile SFA **"Occasionally"**	68% of Field Service reps and 63% of Sales Management staff use mobile SFA **"All the time"**
Technology	**Mobile SFA technologies and devices currently in use:**		
	• Smartphones21% • Wireless LANs 67% • Role Based Security 21%	• Smartphones 35% • Wireless LANs 64% • Role Based Security 38%	• Smartphones 63% • Wireless LANs 81% • Role Based Security 50%

Source: AberdeenGroup, March 2007

Mobility Impact

According to 65% of Best-in-Class respondents, mobile SFA solutions will have a "Significant Impact" on the way they conduct business over the next five years. Only, 38% of Average and 25% of Laggards felt it would have a significant impact on their business.

Capabilities that differentiate Best-in-Class companies using mobile SFA solutions from others range from:

- Improving communication and collaboration (59%)
- Increasing revenue (95%).

Improving communication and collaboration has an impact on field service reps availability. After deploying a mobile SFA solution, 94% percent of BIC companies reduced downtime for field sales reps, versus 77% of others who have seen the same results.

> Using a mobile SFA application is a cost of doing business. Mobile SFA provides rapid access to data and the ability to respond quickly. If my sales reps can't do this they lose the deal.
>
> Rafael Costa
> EVP, Marketing, Vis.align

Ninety-five (95) percent of Best-in-Class companies report an increase in revenue, as a result of implementing a mobile SFA solution, versus 65% of others that achieved increases in revenue as a result of mobile SFA deployments. Thirty-nine (39) of BIC reported that Mobile SFA solutions will shorten sales cycles allowing these companies to close deals more quickly. In contrast, only 14% of non-BIC companies recognize the value of shortening the sales cycle as a result of successful mobile SFA deployments.

Companies that develop internal business processes around their mobile SFA deployments such as: identification of customer requirements will achieve benefits of shortening the sales cycle time and reducing operational costs.

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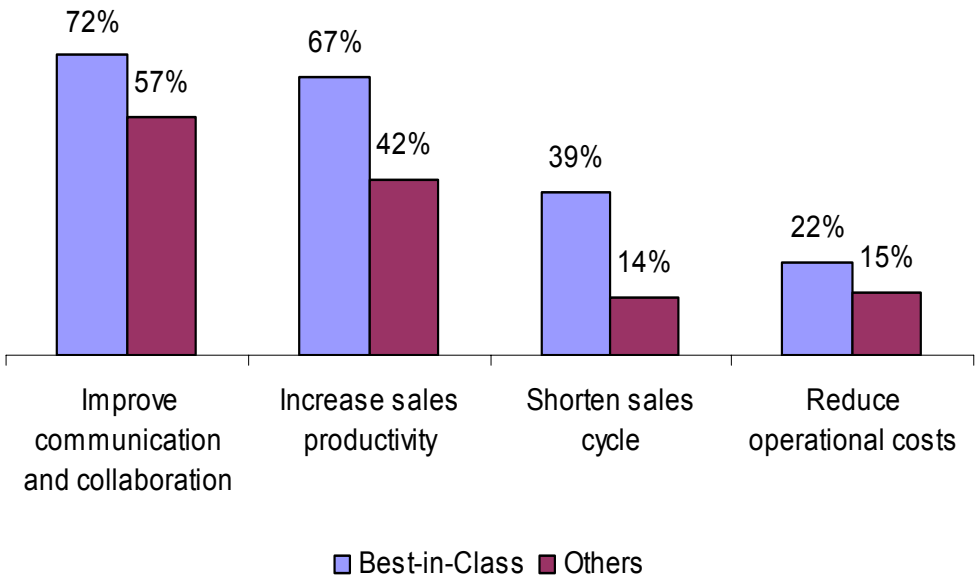
Figure 2: BIC Focuses on Internal SFA Processes



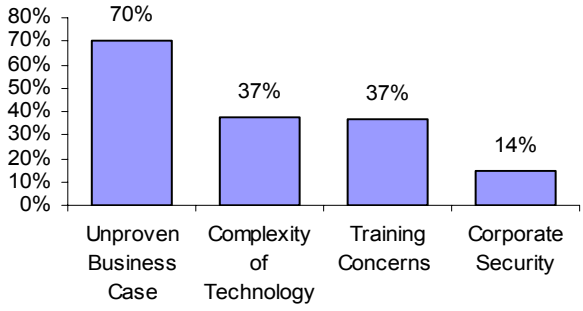
Source: AberdeenGroup, March 2007

Playing Catch-Up

Laggards who plan to implement solutions based on competitive pressures to compete in a global environment are doing a disservice to their customers by relying on the technology rather than the process to improve operations. As a result, only 17% improved call completeness and only 13% improved customer retention.

Companies attempting to bridge the divide between Laggard and Average and Average to Best-in-Class continue to struggle with corporate adoption of mobile SFA technologies. As shown in Figure 3, failure to establish a business case for mobile SFA is the number one impediment to adoption. Additionally, technology, training and security concerns weigh on companies and inhibit the development of mobile solutions. Further, 51% of non-BIC fear user adoption penetration and 47% still grapple with tool selection thereby preventing mobile solutions to get off the ground.

Figure 3: Non-BIC Mobile SFA Impediments to Adoption



Source: AberdeenGroup, March 2007

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Chapter Three: Required Actions

Key Takeaways

- Measure frequently and effectively: track sales force productivity using key performance indicators such as sales cycle time, dispute resolution and call reporting completeness to benchmark improvement on a daily, weekly, monthly and annual basis.
- Integrate backend data sources and make them accessible to the sales force via mobile devices for immediate access to customer histories, product inventory and sales management tools

The keys to a successful mobile deployment revolve around executive sponsorship, well-designed applications, quality data and measuring progress and status. Industry Average and Laggard companies have significant work to do in these areas as they attempt to become best-in-class.

Laggard Steps to Success

1. *Measure sales force productivity and build a process for managing success*

   Start measuring key productivity metrics such as sales cycle time, speed of resolution for customer inquiries, and call reporting completeness immediately. Establish goals for performance across these metrics and create a baseline for evaluating the success of mobile SFA solutions.

2. *Sell senior executives on the benefits of a mobile SFA solution using the benchmark metrics to build a business case*

   Leverage the metrics collected on current sales force productivity and effectiveness, to enlist senior executive sponsorship of mobile solutions. By creating a baseline and establishing performance goals a small-scale pilot program can be effective in demonstrating company wide adoption.

3. *Create corporate awareness of mobile SFA initiatives and address concerns early on in the implementation process*

   After enlisting executive sponsorship of the mobile implementation, begin training employees, address technology complexities and educate staff on data security measures. Training procedures must ensue before field service reps are required to master mobile devices in the field.

Industry Average Steps to Success

1. *Integrate backend data for single point of resolution*

   Provide access to enterprise data, such as customer contact information, sales history, pricing and inventory levels on mobile devices to expedite decisions and arm field reps with information.

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2. *Implement and maintain security procedures*

   Develop internal security governance policies to ensure that procedures are in compliance, implement network data encryption to maximize security, identify and deploy role based security restricting access to sensitive data to only those that require it.

3. *Measure key metrics and measure often*

   After establishing key metrics for tracking sales force effectiveness and productivity, companies must measure often. Expectations of improvements in productivity may be gradual at first, but daily or weekly tracking will illustrate a spike in benefits once users are trained and adoption is complete.

Best in Class Next Steps

1. *Put the customer first and address their concerns in real-time*

   Purchase or develop tools which directly impact your ability to deal with customer inquiries in the field. This includes customizing applications to foster collaboration with sales management and implementing real-time alerting systems to trigger action by sales and support teams.

2. *Improve user interface design by interacting with the human factors and design teams to increase efficiencies*

   Understanding and addressing the challenges of using a software application on a smaller device before deployment is extremely important. Mobile applications can not be just a mirror image of their desktop cousins. The functionality often needs to be streamlined to make it fit and be usable on mobile device.

Conclusion

BIC companies are deploying mobile applications successfully because they started small by focusing on a single application and department. This allowed them to reduce the complexity of the deployment and ensure success. They also involved the expertise cross-functional teams during deployment to ensure the success of the program.

The BIC company's focus on sales force effectiveness as opposed to content and sales team utilization. BIC companies also measured and tracked their progress religiously with 100% of them measuring sales productivity at least monthly.

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Appendix A: Research Methodology

Between February and March 2007, Aberdeen Group examined the sales force automation efforts of over 100 firms.

Responding executives completed an online survey that included questions designed to determine the following:

- The scope of SFA implementation.
- Factors and strategies driving SFA.
- Key SFA challenges, strategies and impact.

The study sought to identify best practices for SFA implementations and provide a framework by which readers could benchmark their own SFA plans.

Responding enterprises included the following:

- ***Job title/function**:* The research sample included respondents with the following job titles: CIO (4%), Consultant (10%), Director (20%), Manager (19%), Senior Management- CEO/COO (25%), Staff (8%) and Vice President (10%).
- ***Industry**:* The research sample included respondents predominantly from High Technology (22%), Distribution (13%), Telecommunications Services (12%) and Consumer Packaged Goods (12%).
- ***Geography**:* Fifty-nine percent of all study respondents were from North America, 24% from Europe, 8% from Asia/ Pacific, 6% from the Middle East/Africa and 3% from South America/ Caribbean.
- ***Company size**:* Fourteen percent of respondents were from large enterprises (annual revenues above US$1 billion); 23% were from midsize enterprises (annual revenues between $50 million and $1 billion); and 63% of respondents were from small businesses (annual revenues of $50 million or less).

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Table 4: PACE Framework

PACE Key
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: *Pressures* — external forces that impact an organization's market position, competitiveness, or business operations (e.g., economic, political and regulatory, technology, changing customer preferences, competitive) *Actions* — 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) *Capabilities* — the business process competencies required to execute corporate strategy (e.g., skilled people, brand, market positioning, viable products/services, ecosystem partners, financing) *Enablers* — 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)

Source: AberdeenGroup, March 2007

Table 5: Relationship between PACE and Competitive Framework

PACE and Competitive Framework How They Interact
Aberdeen research indicates that companies that identify the most impactful 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.

Source: AberdeenGroup, March 2007

Table 6: Competitive Framework

Competitive Framework Key
The Aberdeen Competitive Framework defines enterprises as falling into one of the three following levels of SFA practices and performance: *Laggards (30%)* — SFA practices that are significantly behind the average of the industry, and result in below average performance *Industry norm (50%)* — SFA practices that represent the average or norm, and result in average industry performance. *Best in class (20%)* — SFA practices that are the best currently being employed and significantly superior to the industry norm, and result in the top industry performance.

Source: AberdeenGroup, Month 2007

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Appendix B:
Related Aberdeen Research & Tools

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

- The Real Cost of Enterprise Wireless Mobility Benchmark Report (January 2007)
- Mobile Voice over IP: Fixed/Mobile Convergence in the Enterprise Benchmark Report (February 2007)
- Retail Contactless Payment Systems: Improving Customer Retention & Loyalty Benchmark Report (December 2006)
- Mobile Sales Solutions Benchmark Report Benchmark Report (August 2006)

Information on these and any other Aberdeen publications can be found at www.Aberdeen.com.

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