

:copper

not your uncle's crm.



the Impact of crm in the
relationship era.

The Case for Customer Relationship Management

- There are a plethora of CRM platforms, each claiming more benefits and perks than the last. Every day brings with it a new tool that's designed for sales teams.

From giants that have seemingly been around ever since CRMs have existed, to new and nimble players that are easy to set up in weeks or even days, there is no shortage of CRM options for ambitious businesses to choose from. But what are the actual tangible benefits that CRMs can offer? And how do these benefits play into a sales (or marketing, or customer success) team's day-to-day work?

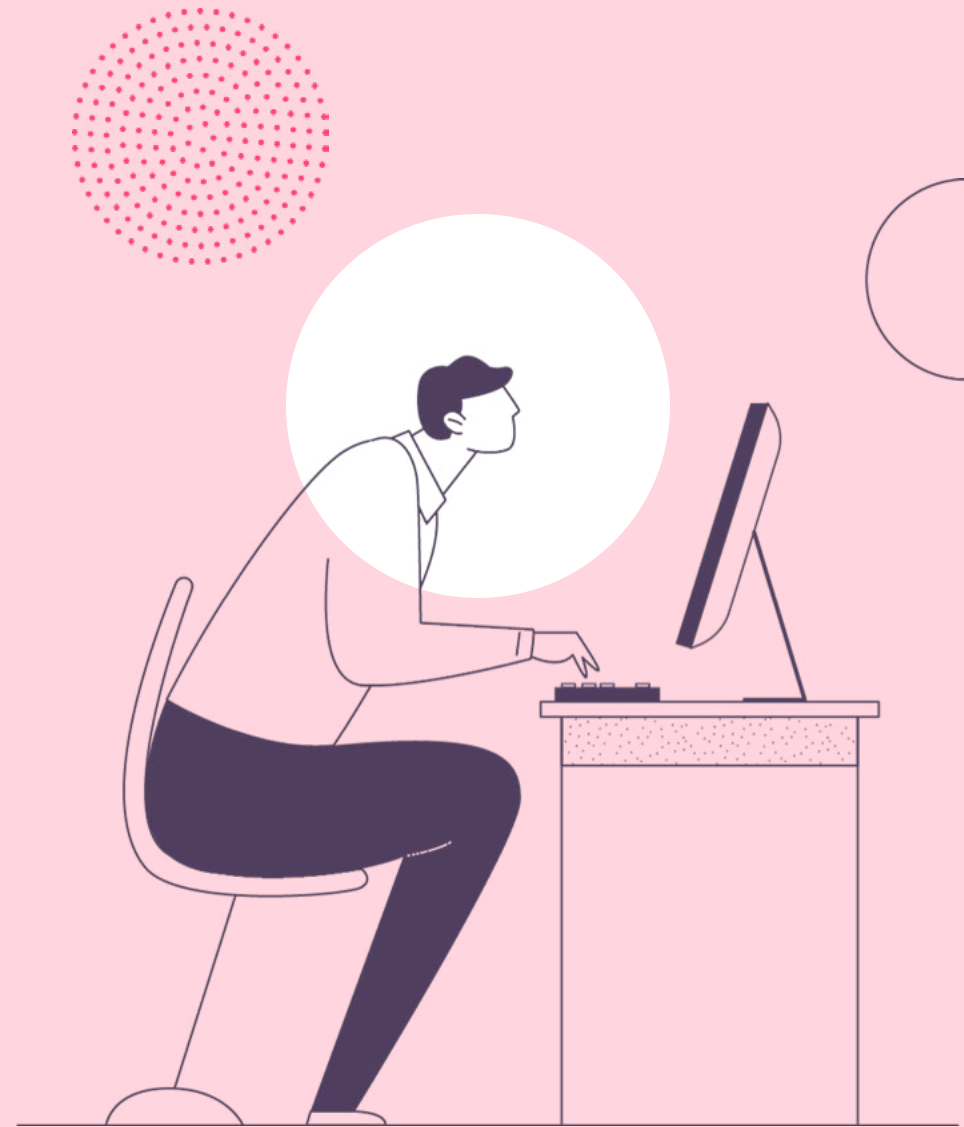
Based on a survey of Copper's customers and also external research, this ebook will explore how CRM tools have evolved beyond contact databases to have a huge impact on organizations' abilities to collaborate, be productive, build customer relationships, and forecast sales accurately.

SECTION 1

How Data Entry Kills Productivity

Unless you have an extraordinarily high words-per-minute typing speed, you are probably not a huge fan of having to type things out at work.

We're not talking about typing out the odd email—we're talking about hours of repetitively typing out contact information for everyone you met at an event to follow up on later.



Among the many inefficiencies that plague teams from different departments, the one that is perhaps easiest to fix is manual data entry.

According to the [National Association of Sales Professionals \(NASP\)](#), three of the top ways that sales teams waste their time are: multiple lengthy client meetings; data entry; and waiting for approval.

The good news is, compared with the other time-wasters, data entry is relatively easy to eliminate—or at the very least, minimize.

How to reduce data entry: typing faster is not the cure.

For most sales (and non-sales teams), the amount of time spent on data entry every week can add up. According to an email survey sent out to Copper customers, teams saved on average 13 hours per week per user (compared to when they weren't using a CRM at all before).

What is interesting to note is that teams that were previously using another CRM saved even more time with Copper: 14 hours per week per user.

By eliminating data entry, teams can be freed to perform high-value tasks that they can't do when they're busy typing. With a good CRM, executive assistants can spend more time on planning events because they no longer have to enter business card information into a contact database.

The other perk of having a good CRM tool: no longer having to spend hours on typing, copying, and pasting.



The (data) search is over

Spending hours typing out data manually is one downside of having a large amount of data (that also isn't intelligently organized). Another is wasting time on finding information.

According to Copper's email survey, customers saved on average 10 hours per week per user compared to when they were previously using another CRM to find contact information. If customers were not using another CRM before, they saved 14 hours per week, per user with Copper. Were they using a Rolodex? Who knows...

Time spent searching for contact data can add up—especially when multiple people across teams are interacting with agencies, vendors, and other partners.

How will you help your team get rid of data-related tasks?

Pace Productivity's questionnaire to sales reps found that the vast majority of them believed their most important tasks were to generate sales and orders (41%), and build relationships and meet customers (36%). Not only are these high-value tasks, they also require a high level of concentration—searching for information or doing data entry while having a distracted conversation with a customer is probably a bad idea.

A proper CRM is more than a glorified digital contact list. Not only should it be able to help you save time, it should also make it easier for you to focus on work that you enjoy—and equally importantly, makes you look good to your manager. (Because when did “I typed all this out in only 20 minutes!” ever get someone a promotion?)



How will you give yourself
(and your team) more
time to do the work that
really matters?

How to Improve Cross-team Collaboration



Collaboration. It's difficult within teams, between teams, and across time-zones. Mostly, it's because of the processes and tools that we're accustomed to. "It's just always been that way."

But "that way" isn't a great way of doing things. In fact, it's pretty inefficient.

The **Harvard Business Review (HBR)** reported that in a detailed study of 95 teams across 25 leading corporations that were chosen by an independent panel of academics and experts, almost 75% of the teams were dysfunctional. They failed on at least three of these five criteria:

1

Meeting a planned budget

2

Staying on schedule

3

Adhering to specifications

4

Meeting customer expectations

5

Maintaining alignment with the company's corporate goals

While only the last one is explicitly about different groups staying aligned, all of them are impacted by good (or bad) collaboration across teams. Working in a company is, after all, a team sport.

But as you can guess, it can be hard to find team players. **HBR did further research** across over 300 organizations and found that in most cases, 20% to 35% of value-added collaborations come from only 3% to 5% of employees.

Do people just
not want to play
nice together?

Debatable.

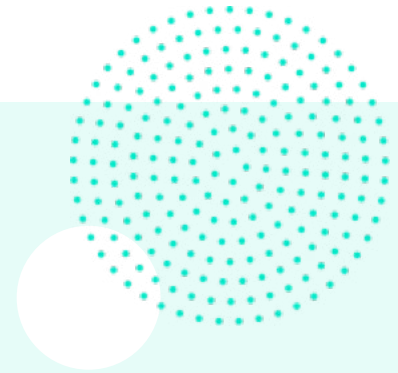
A **Stanford study** found that just the perception of working together on something can boost performance. Research participants who were primed to act collaboratively persisted at their task for 64% longer than people who were primed to work alone—and also reported being more engaged, less tired, and more successful. This impact lasted for several weeks.

It's probably safe to say that people not only enjoy working together, but also recognize that it's beneficial too.

Maybe they just need a little help getting on the collaboration train.

“Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships.”

– MICHAEL JORDAN



There are four essential elements of improving collaboration across teams like Sales, Marketing, and Customer Success.

1

Structure

Make sure that everyone has clear roles and responsibilities. No one wants that kid who doesn't do any work in the group project on their team. Not in school, not now in the office. Having clear roles and responsibilities makes it possible for everyone to see how they can work together effectively, and just as importantly, to keep each other accountable. If that sounds scary to you, you just might be that kid that everyone avoided during group project time.

2

But... not too much structure

Structure is good, but when it's overly rigid, it can make your team feel stuck. You need to find the balance. According to [Wharton management professor Matthew Bidwell](#), "collaboration has increased in response to a need for greater flexibility by businesses. The alternative to collaboration is rules and processes, and 'the problem is those rules don't allow you to change what you are doing. They're very rigid.'" There are no rules and no guidebooks for inspiration. We're still human. We still need to make split-second, sometimes unexpected decisions that can result in something awesome. Make sure that's room for that.

There are four essential elements of improving collaboration across teams like Sales, Marketing, and Customer Success.

3

A common vocabulary (and platform)

Empower your teammates by getting everyone on the same page. In the HBR research piece above, the researchers actually recommended using a CRM to improve team collaboration: “CRM programs can provide valuable data on the volume, type, origin, and destination of requests, as can more in-depth network analyses and tools.”

Forbes agrees. In their [12 habits of highly collaborative organizations](#), one of the recommended habits is to integrate collaboration right into the team’s flow of work: “instead of having employees use multiple usernames, passwords, and log-in sites; create a “front-door” to the enterprise accessed through your collaboration platform.” This collaborative platform sounds pretty familiar—like a CRM, almost...

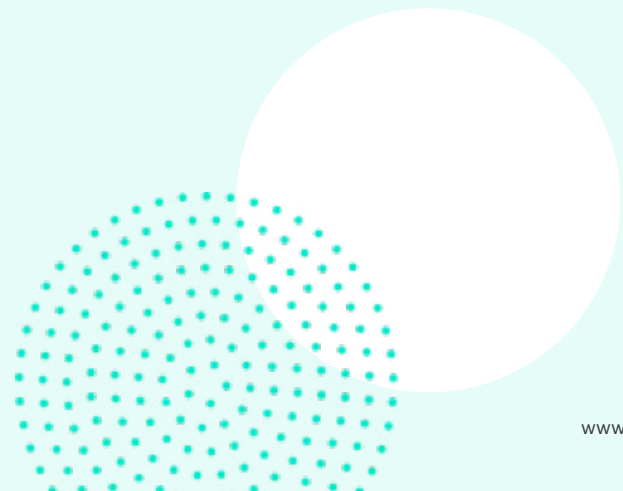
In an email survey sent to our customers, those who were using another CRM before switching to Copper estimated that they increased team collaboration while closing deals by 42%, while customers who weren’t using a CRM at all before using Copper improved collaboration by 45%.

4

Credit where it’s due

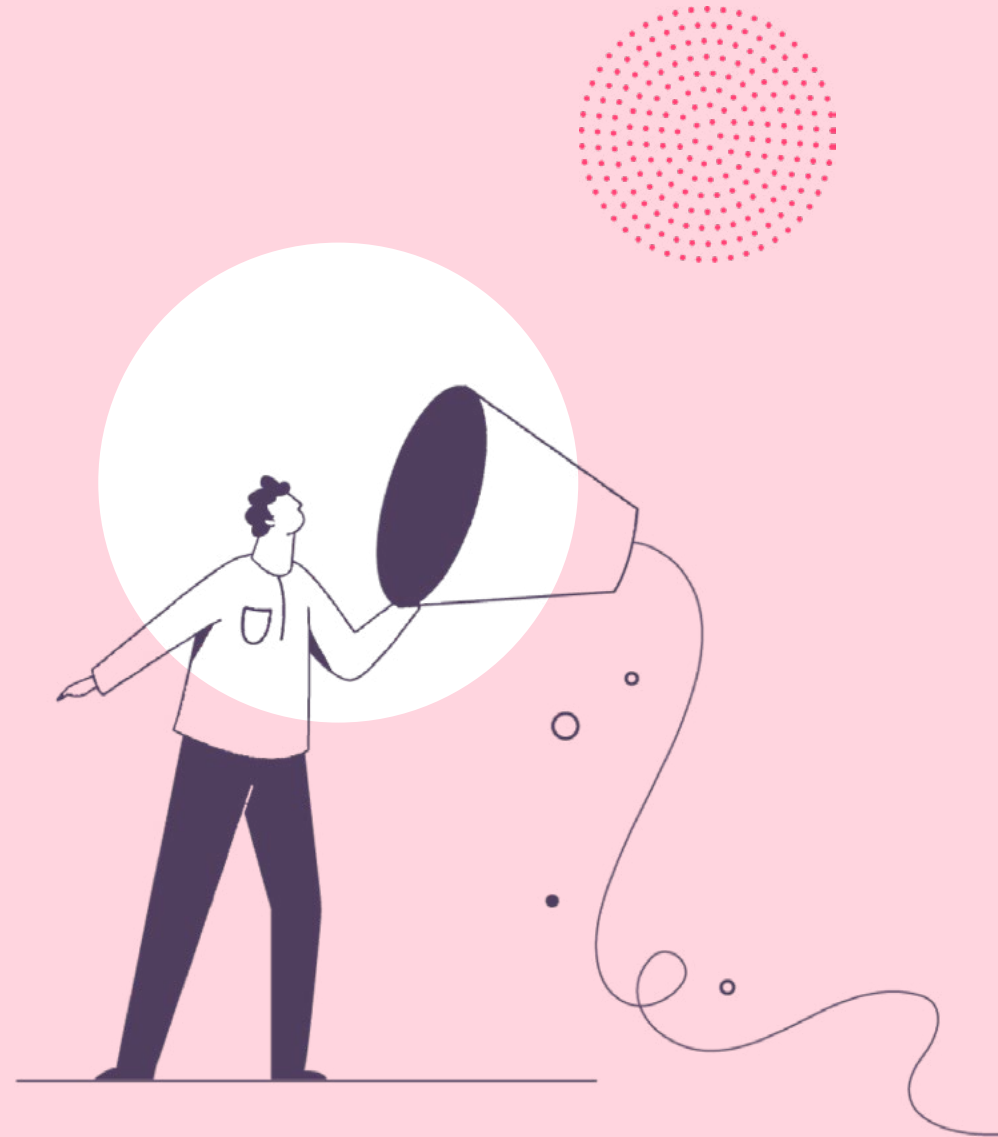
This is something that’s often overlooked because we just assume that teams know who was responsible for what—which is often not the case. Whenever you can, reward positive behaviors. Sure, a team celebration or actual gifts will make teammates feel good, but these perks also encourage everyone to look for opportunities to collaborate. Even if you’re not a manager, you can still give shoutouts and share the spotlight after a well-executed project. You made it this far as part of a team—don’t go solo now.

There are a whole range of ways to get your team to work together more. They already know the benefits, and whether you're on a sports team or in the office, **collaboration just feels good**. Whether you're in Sales, Marketing, or Customer Success, it's valuable to look for ways to work with people outside of your own team.



How to Build Customer Relationships and Win Over Prospects

The obvious: building customer relationships is important. The not-so-obvious: businesses are literally losing money by neglecting customer relationships—and it's quantifiable.





A [Harvard Business Review study](#) found that “when a tweet is answered in five minutes or less, the customer will pay almost 20 USD more for a ticket on that airline in the future... After 20 minutes had elapsed, customers were only willing to pay \$3 more, a decrease of 85% in value compared to customers who received responses in five minutes or less. After an hour, customers were only willing to pay \$2 more.”

Other than timeliness, the actual quality of the responses has to be good as well. According to [American Express’s 2017 Customer Service Barometer](#), 33% of Americans said they’ll consider switching companies after just a single instance of poor service, and over half have scrapped a planned purchase or transaction because of bad service.

So, customer service matters. But customer service is only one part of forming good customer relationships. When services go down, as they inevitably do, the relationship can sour. The good news: poor service can be (temporarily) remedied without harming the relationship—with timely and empathic customer communication.

Here are six tangible, useful tips for building awesome customer relationships, whether you're on the phone, emailing, live-chatting, or talking to someone face to face:

1

Don't make them wait

There are few things worse than calling your internet company for help, only to be put on hold with dull, inoffensive music and the occasional 10-second promo clip for company. If you have a live-chat option, your response time should be even shorter—[McKinsey's 2017 Customer Experience Compendium](#) found that three-quarters of online customers expect help within five minutes.

2

Let them self-serve

Sure, having a good self-service system in place will help you save money. Many customers even prefer helping themselves out. [\(86% of B2B executives prefer using self-service tools when they're reordering.\)](#) The catch is, you have to be strategic about it. Not all tasks are a good fit for self-serve. If it's possible—and easier—for a customer to do something without waiting to talk to your team (like depositing a cheque), then self-serve is probably a good option. If not... read on to #3.

3

But be available

If your self-serve system isn't great, or you're finding that people always get stuck at a certain point in your product experience, then you need the human touch—at the very least, while your team is figuring things out. Don't force your customers into an endless self-serve loop with no one to talk to. "As the complexity of the issue increases, such as with payment disputes or complaints, [customers are more likely to seek out a face-to-face interaction or a real person on the phone.](#) The concept is simple: don't make life harder for them.

Here are six tangible, useful tips for building awesome customer relationships, whether you're on the phone, emailing, live-chatting, or talking to someone face to face:

4

Use your data

Knowing things about your customers can come in handy. If you know that they've been a loyal customer for over six years, that they're based in Japan, and that they've been offering product feedback and giving you shoutouts on social media regularly... you'll probably want to make sure that your interactions with this customer are very personalized, that you're mindful of time-zone and cultural differences, and so on. Of course, you must first have and be able to access that data easily. Which... isn't always possible. This is where using the right tools comes in.

5

Use the right tools

You don't need a huge customer support team on the phones. But you do need an organized, well-supported team. The tools they're using will have a huge impact, and yes, you guessed it, one of the most touted customer relationship-improving tools is the CRM. [Forbes even wrote an entire article about it.](#)

With a CRM, you have all of your customers' and prospects' information at your fingertips, not to mention records of your past conversations with them, relevant files, and docs. And the really good CRMs will help you respond faster to their questions, answers, and complaints—which, if you remember, is one of the keys to building good customer relationships. In an email survey sent out to Copper customers, those who weren't using a CRM before estimated that they responded 37% faster to prospects and customers. Interestingly, even those who were using another CRM before reported a 35% faster response time. Yes, using the right tool matters.

6

Balance knowledge & empathy

Knowing how to solve problems is great—well, it's a necessity. But it's only one part of the equation. [American Express's study](#) found that “68% of customers said a pleasant representative was key to their recent positive service experiences, and 62% said that a representative's knowledge or resourcefulness was key.” In other words, more people would rather have a nice person helping them out than someone who knew what they were doing.

Essentially, if you want to create a truly positive, ongoing customer relationship, you have to also genuinely care about that interaction, whether it's centered around a great new product feature or a frustrating day at your customer's office that was exacerbated by your service being down. You have to balance sharing useful information while making someone feel like this is a personalized experience. (This is where that CRM data would come in handy.) Make sure your team is empowered to go beyond the standard "Hi, how can I help you today?" Customers have finely tuned apathy sensors; don't just offer a canned response, unless you want your indifference to be spotted a mile away.

Improving customer relationships is something that should be on every team's mind, whether it's Customer Success, Marketing, or Sales. (Often, by the time someone is a customer, they've interacted with all three—or more—teams at some point.) The way that you interact with them, from the greeting to the actual conversation to the goodbye, is everything.

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How to Improve Sales Forecasting Accuracy (and Why It's a Big Deal)

The fact that sales forecasting is important is no secret.

There are tons of stats out there reinforcing this, boasting all the different reasons why sales forecasting is critical for incremental business growth.



The Harvard Business Review has done particularly extensive research on sales pipeline management (of which sales forecasting is a major part). For example, they found that on average, companies with **effective pipeline management had a 15% higher revenue growth rate** than companies that reported having ineffective pipeline management.

Despite this, many sales managers struggle to produce accurate sales forecasts that hold true when the actual results come in at the end of the year. (Sound familiar?)

We've put together some pointers on how to forecast sales more accurately, using a fine balance of data and educated "guesses"—not dreams and wishes. After all, if you wanted to learn how to make a dream board, you'd be on Pinterest.

So let's get right into it.



Here's why sales forecasting is a big deal

Sales forecasting is a huge deal because it's what tells you how much revenue you can expect to generate in a given amount of time.

The information gained from sales forecasting can be used to make proactive, informed, and intelligent decisions about your sales process. It's important that your sales forecast is based on facts, or at least the closest thing to it. For example, past experience and sales data make for a great starting point when forecasting for an upcoming time period as they back your sales forecast with facts, not just wishful thinking.

Sales forecasting lets you see potential problems that could impact your sales quota before they have a chance to happen. This information is crucial as it will allow you to strategize accordingly based on these potential problems to ensure that their impact isn't negative (or at least, mitigate their impact). Recognizing and addressing a potential problem in its early stages can save you a lot of time and money in the long run.

Similarly, sales forecasting can also highlight potential opportunities to increase your sales, in which case you can proactively plan your sales process to maximize this advantage. For example, if your company sells home alarm systems and there's been a record trend of home invasions in a city your company services, there's a good chance that your sales for home alarm systems will go up from prospects residing in that city. Accurate sales forecasting empowers you to project things like this ahead of time and align your sales process accordingly.

Long story short, accurate sales forecasting is a need-to-have, not a nice-to-have.

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Copper customers reported having increased the accuracy of their reporting by 44%, and sales forecasting accuracy by 35%.

Qualitative vs. Quantitative sales forecasting

Sales forecasting is a pretty broad term, so let's break it down a bit.

There are two primary types of sales forecasting methods: qualitative and quantitative. It's important to know what each type is and when to use it, to ensure your sales forecasts are as accurate as possible.

Qualitative sales forecasting is mainly opinion-based. Generally speaking, qualitative forecasting isn't as accurate as quantitative forecasting because the latter is based on actual data. Numbers. If you're just starting your business, however, or if you're launching a brand-new product or service offering, qualitative sales forecasting is probably the method you'd go with as you wouldn't have past sales data to look back on.

Quantitative sales forecasting is data and numbers-based, making it a lot more accurate than qualitative forecasting methods. You should perform quantitative forecasting when you have past sales data, and when the overall sales environment is predictable.

The best part of quantitative sales forecasting is that with the right tools, most of it can be automated. An effective CRM tool should be able to generate the necessary reports to give you all the data you need in just a few clicks. For example, **Copper** has built-in reporting functionality, allowing you to pull custom reports and assemble accurate sales forecasts. In fact, according to a customer survey, Copper customers reported having increased the accuracy of their reporting by 44%, and sales forecasting accuracy by 35%, compared to CRM software they'd used in the past. Those who hadn't used a CRM before reported an even higher 57% improvement in reporting accuracy and a 46% improvement in sales forecasting accuracy.

Pulling reports is great, but you've got to know which data is going to be the most valuable in putting together accurate sales forecasts. We've got tips that cover both qualitative and quantitative forecasting methods next.

How to forecast sales accurately like a champ

1

Look at past data

If you're lucky enough to have sales data from the previous year, use it. Last year's sales numbers make for a great starting point when drafting a new sales forecast for the coming year.

Use your previous data as a base, then list all the factors that could increase sales this year. For example, are there new trends relevant to your business offering? Are there new opportunities in the market? Is there a rising demand for your product or service? If yes, increase your sales forecast accordingly.

Next, list all the factors that could decrease your sales. Is there new competition in the industry? Are there any upcoming regulation changes that could affect your business offering? If yes, decrease your sales forecast accordingly.

Now that you've put together an accurate sales forecast, you can look at the individual factors that will affect your sales and plan your sales process to proactively address them.

2

Consult an expert in the field

Consulting an expert is always a smart thing to do, but is especially impactful if you don't have a lot of (or any) past data to work off of because you're just starting out, or you're launching a completely new product or service.

An expert in your field, whoever it may be, is someone who knows the nature of the market, has insights on competitors, and has industry-specific experience. You can research something all you want, but no amount of research is equivalent to the first-hand experience an expert possesses. This is someone who can make "educated guesses" that you can trust.

The best experts aren't always outsiders. Often, the biggest experts are your most seasoned front-line sales staff. The accuracy of your sales forecasting definitely warrants a team meeting with these experts!

3

Focus on demand, not supply

When forecasting sales, don't focus on the supply of your product or service. Focus on the demand, then account for supply accordingly. This will ensure you don't under- or overestimate how much supply you'll need, ultimately saving you—or making you—money. For example, if you can supply 100 TVs a month, but data shows that your demand is actually 150 TVs a month, forecasting this demand ahead of time will allow you the time needed to figure out how you're going to expand your production and meet this projected demand, maximizing sales.

That's the power of sales forecasting.

How to forecast sales accurately like a champ

4

Keep your forecast up to date

A lot can happen in a year. It's important that your sales forecast stays up to date so it maintains its value.

Your sales process goes hand-in-hand with your sales forecast, so if your process changes, your forecast inevitably needs to change with it. Remember that the impact of your sales process is not exclusive to your sales team. Any major change in your company, like a new marketing direction, reprioritization of milestones, or a shift in company OKRs, can affect your sales process. These things would also then affect your sales forecast, and you'd need to update it to incorporate any new factors accordingly.

By keeping your sales forecast updated, you're ensuring you always have the most accurate numbers at hand—and that your corresponding sales process is operating at maximum efficiency.

5

Make sure teams are on board

Ideally, your CRM is going to be where you pull your data from for your sales forecast, so it's important that your CRM has all the facts. To ensure this, all teams should be using the CRM—even if they're not in sales.

Your CRM should be the one source of truth when it comes to your client and sales data. This means that all teams that use that data including Sales, Product, Marketing, Finance and so on, are using the CRM and inputting their data accordingly.

Again, a CRM like Copper makes it easy for all teams to work together with unique **collaboration** features, seamless integrations, and a central location for housing client data and interactions. The benefit of a CRM is that it can encompass the needs of multiple departments, making it easier for everyone to contribute to accurate sales forecast reporting.

6

Never underestimate the power of relationship-making

Having good, solid relationships with customers and prospects can also help you forecast sales more accurately.

Consumers are now more critical than ever when it comes to making purchases. An attractive product with a decent price isn't good enough anymore. Consumers seek positive relationships with the companies they do business with. To add to our previous tip, this means it's also now more vital than ever to have a strong CRM in place (notice a trend?) that can handle the modern-day sales pipeline of this new Relationship Era. It truly pays to know your audience.

The Path to Stronger Customer Relationships

- Strong relationships with both customers and prospects are the key to success—and a great bottom line. The hard work of nurturing those relationships will take up both time and considerable effort and resources. How will you empower your team to make time and work efficiently so that they can focus on building these bonds?

See if a CRM is right for your team with a free trial of Copper. (If you're using any of G Suite's apps, even better.) Or, get a 1-on-1 demo for a walkthrough of the different ways a CRM can make your team more productive!

[Free Trial](#)

[Request Demo](#)

Copper is the CRM that works for you.

Copper is the leading CRM for G Suite and recommended by Google. It works instantly through a seamless integration with G Suite, has a beautiful user experience, and is designed to help teams and business build long-lasting relationships. Copper services more than 15,000 paid businesses in more than 110 countries. Headquartered in San Francisco with over 200 employees, the company has raised \$87M in venture capital financing to date. For more information or to sign up for a free trial, visit copper.com

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