

A man with glasses and a beard is working on a laptop in an office setting. He is wearing a blue shirt and is looking at the screen with a slight smile. In the background, another person is visible, also working on a laptop. The office has wooden shelves and a blue light fixture.

HOW TO BE YOUR OWN MARKETER

PART 2 OF 2

 salesforce sales cloud

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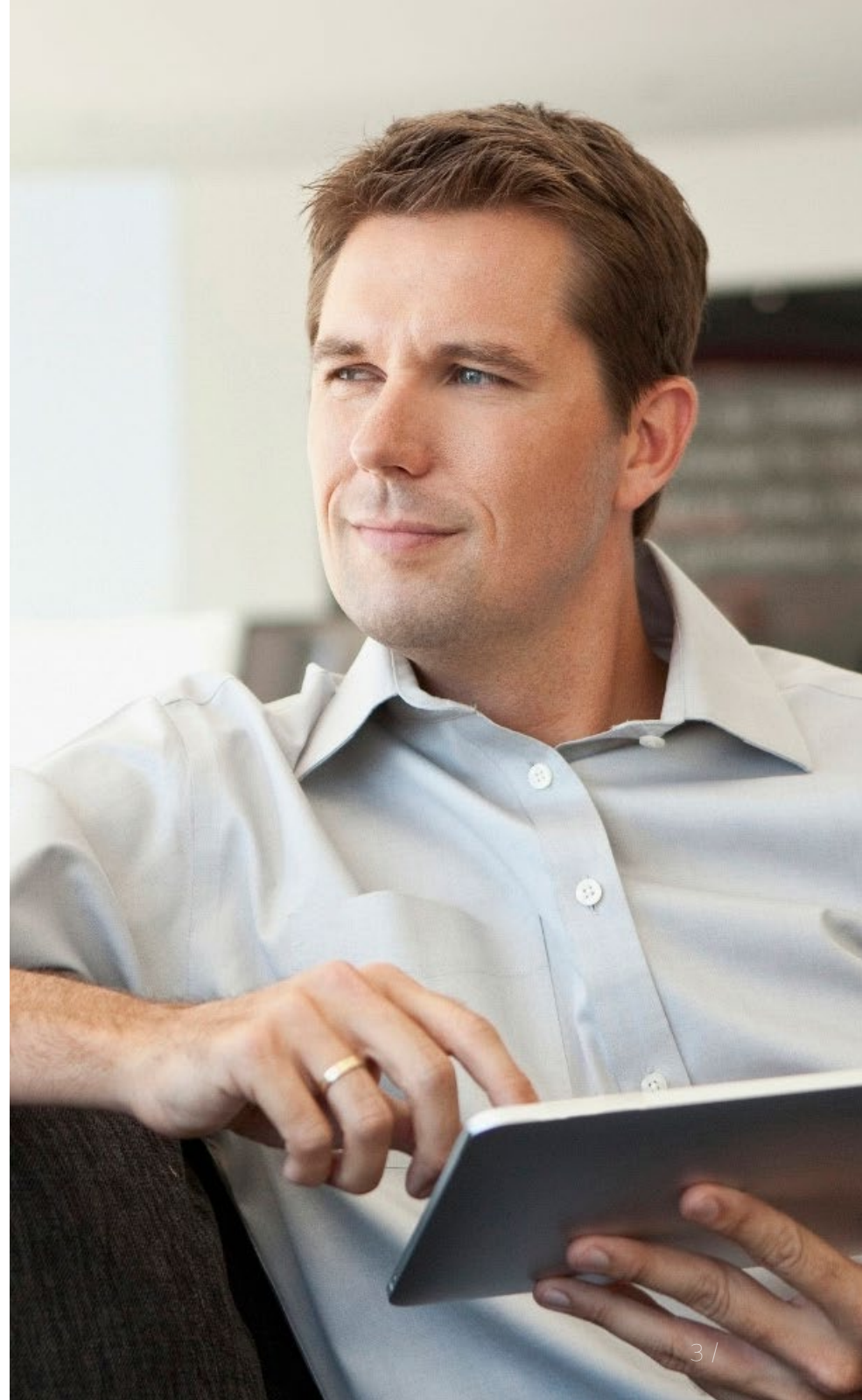
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INTRODUCTION

The best salespeople are becoming their own CMOs.

In Part 1 of this 2-part series, you learned how to use email and lead nurturing to market yourself in a way that facilitates a genuine connection with your leads. In Part 2, we will look at taking your game up a notch with social selling and content marketing. Both new to the sales scene, social media and content marketing provide an opportunity to establish yourself as an industry expert, strengthen relationships with prospects, and market yourself like never before. Let's take a look at how you can accomplish this.



CHAPTER 3

Social Selling

Today's customers are more sophisticated, educated, and connected than ever. They have vast amounts of data at their fingertips, and can crowdsource advice and recommendations from their peer networks in seconds. Today's consumers are social, and the most successful sales reps need to be social, too.

For years, we've heard that people buy from those they know, like, and trust. Social selling accelerates the process of gaining trust. That's why every salesperson should be tapped into social media, sharing relevant content and knowledge to establish themselves and their company as experts. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, forums, and blogs are all great places to monitor what prospects are saying and mine valuable insights. Let's take a look at how to master social selling.



Social Selling

Creating Your Social Platform

All the social strategy and flawlessly executed engagement tactics will get you nowhere if you haven't put thought and time into creating compelling social profiles. How you align your social media presence across these different platforms can have the same effect, so let's spend some time getting it right.

Twitter

Create a handle that's easy for your clients and prospects to find and remember. Include your role and company's Twitter handle in your bio, as well as a personal tidbit or two that showcases your personality and adds a human element. A clean template is "Personal fact, role at company, what you tweet." This clarifies your affiliation, shows some personality, and sets expectations for what you will share.

LinkedIn

If you're on LinkedIn, make sure you've completed 100 percent of your profile. Pick a professional headshot and headline that lets people know who you are, what you look like, and your area of expertise. LinkedIn provides a helpful gauge that shows you how complete your profile is and what you have left to add.

Facebook

Review your privacy settings and make sure only your friends have access to your photos and posts to your wall. It's OK to provide access to some of your photos, but make sure they showcase your personality in a way that does not hurt your credibility. Also, be sure to update your employment status to your current position and company—this shows that you have pride in your employer.

CHAPTER 3, CONTINUED

Social Selling

Listening on Social Media.

Social media represents an incredible opportunity for salespeople to get firsthand thoughts, concerns, and opinions directly from their target audience. It's like having a full-time focus group at your disposal—a rich source of insights, opinions, and research.

All the information a salesperson needs to close a deal is out there on social media already; it's just a matter of knowing where to look and having a strategy in place for putting that information to work for you.

Creating a social dashboard with social listening tools like salesforce.com's Radian6 can be an easy way to identify, at a glance, the social media information you should focus on. This means cutting the time you need to invest in social from hours down to minutes. Here are a few things you should consider listening for on social media:

Industry news: To serve your customers well and establish yourself as an industry expert, you need to stay on top of the latest industry news. This means filtering social results to return trending topics and industry developments that could have an impact on your prospects' companies or campaigns.

Buying signals: As we mentioned before, much of the sales process takes place long before a prospect ever contacts a sales rep. This means that this research stage often occurs on social media, where you can easily identify potential purchase behavior. You should be looking for any social posts that include:

- Negative sentiment about your competitors
- Frustration over a business problem you can solve
- Questions about your product or industry
- Recommendations for provider of your product or service



CHAPTER 3, CONTINUED

Social Selling

Social posts around these topics give you the opportunity to help potential prospects and develop a trusting relationship that will allow you to pitch your product later on.

Existing Leads: In order to be effective, you should also monitor the social activity of leads that are already in your pipeline. Keeping an eye on the types of content they are posting and sharing will give you a better sense of how to connect with them and how to position your product. According to CSO Insights, 42 percent of sales reps feel they do not have the right information before making a call. Social media can dramatically improve that percentage. Do you have a mutual connection or share a love for a certain hobby? Use this information to strengthen your connection and turn cold leads into warmer, more personal connections.

Your Competitors: Monitoring your competitors' social presence can help you identify potential prospects—and may give you an edge in competitive deals. Look for posts with negative sentiment from existing users. This will help you identify the potential shortcomings in a competitor's offering and opportunities for your product to gain an edge. Monitoring their corporate accounts will also let you know what features they're pushing and how you can plan to counter them in conversations with your leads.

“The modern consumer is digitally driven, socially connected, and mobile empowered. Sales reps need to adapt or be replaced.”

- Jill Rowley Social Selling Expert



CHAPTER 3, CONTINUED

Social Selling

Engaging on Social Media.

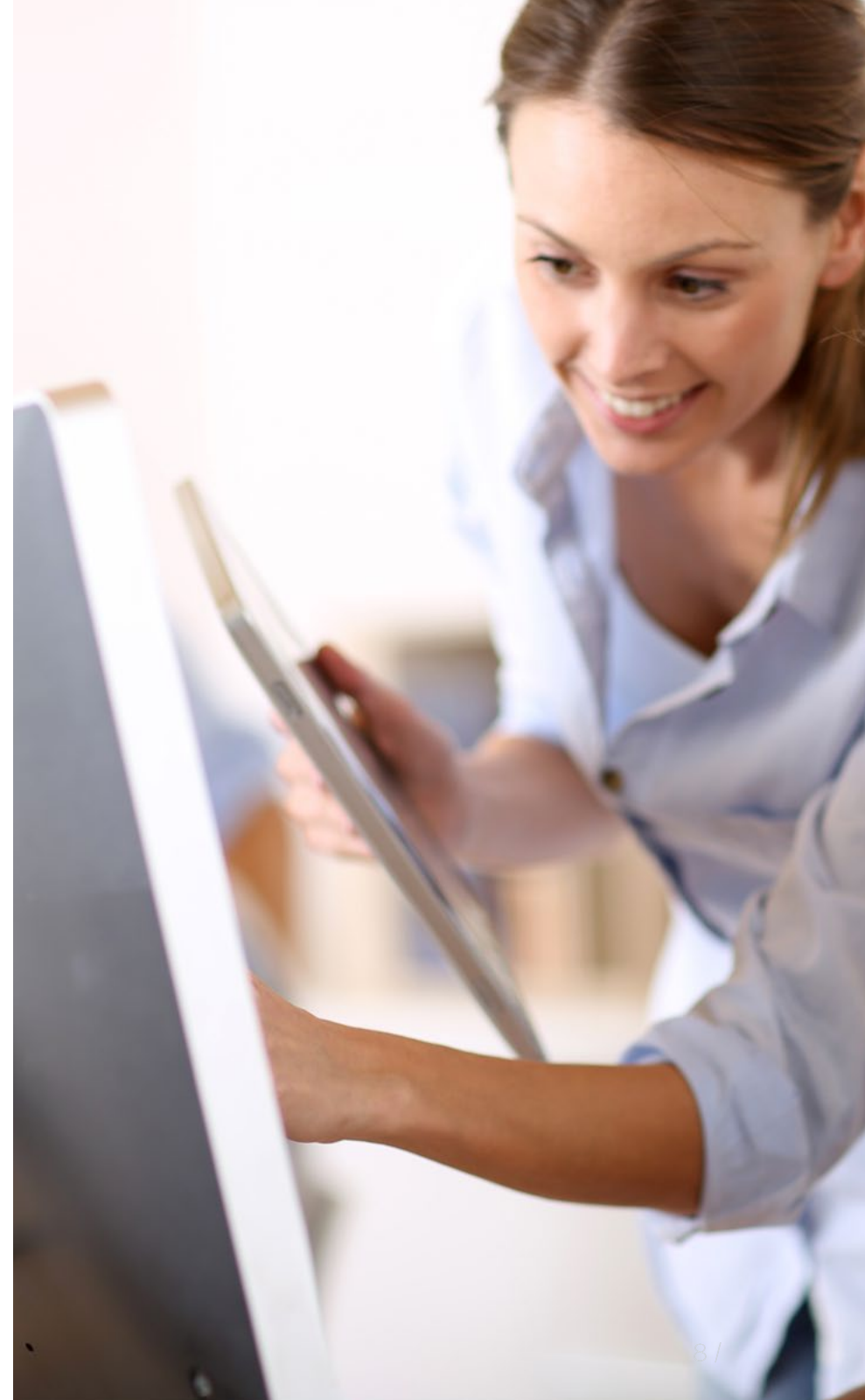
Engaging on social media is a fine balance. Come on too strong with a sales pitch and a hard sell, and your prospects will go running. Engage too little by casually following or visiting their profiles, and they'll feel like you are just doing reconnaissance. The easiest way to find this balance is to focus on delivering value. Social media is not the appropriate medium to close a sale, but it is certainly the right place to start one. By providing advice and helpful content, you can open a dialogue and establish yourself as a trusted resource.

Finding the Right Content

In many cases, your marketing team is already creating content that addresses common business problems and addresses your customers' key pain points. Great! That's exactly what you need to connect with prospects on social, but where do you find it? Subscribe to your company's blog and follow your company's social accounts, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. You'll be amazed at the content you find, and when you see something that might be great to share with a prospect, simply save it for later. The same applies to other relevant content, such as opinion columns by thought leaders in your industry. Whether you find these pieces on your company's blog or in a leading business publication, think of yourself as a personal curator for your prospects: your understanding of their needs enables you to select and share the content you know will resonate with them.

Sharing the Right Content

Once you've tracked down the right content, sharing it with your leads or potential prospects is the easy part. Just be sure to consider the following elements of your message.



CHAPTER 3, CONTINUED

Social selling

Watch the tone: Craft a message that is as far from a sales pitch as you can make it. Sounding overly friendly or “salesy” is an easy way to have your message ignored. Remember, you’re just a knowledgeable follower who can lend a hand or offer advice in a confident, thoughtful way. They don’t need to know how much effort you put into positioning yourself to make this sale.

Get the message right: Keep your message short and to the point—no sales pitch, just value. Let them know why you are reaching out and what you’re sharing with them. If you notice a prospect complaining about a common pain point for your audience, you might consider a simple message like “Hey [name], this blog post has some advice that might be helpful! [link].”

“We are going to see the application of social selling increase across every industry. It’s not a matter of if, but when it’s going to touch our company.”

*- Koka Sexton Social Selling Expert
Scale Your Business for Growth*



CHAPTER 4

Using Content Marketing

Sales representatives need more than good phone skills these days. The best reps are thought leaders, industry experts, and knowledgeable resources.

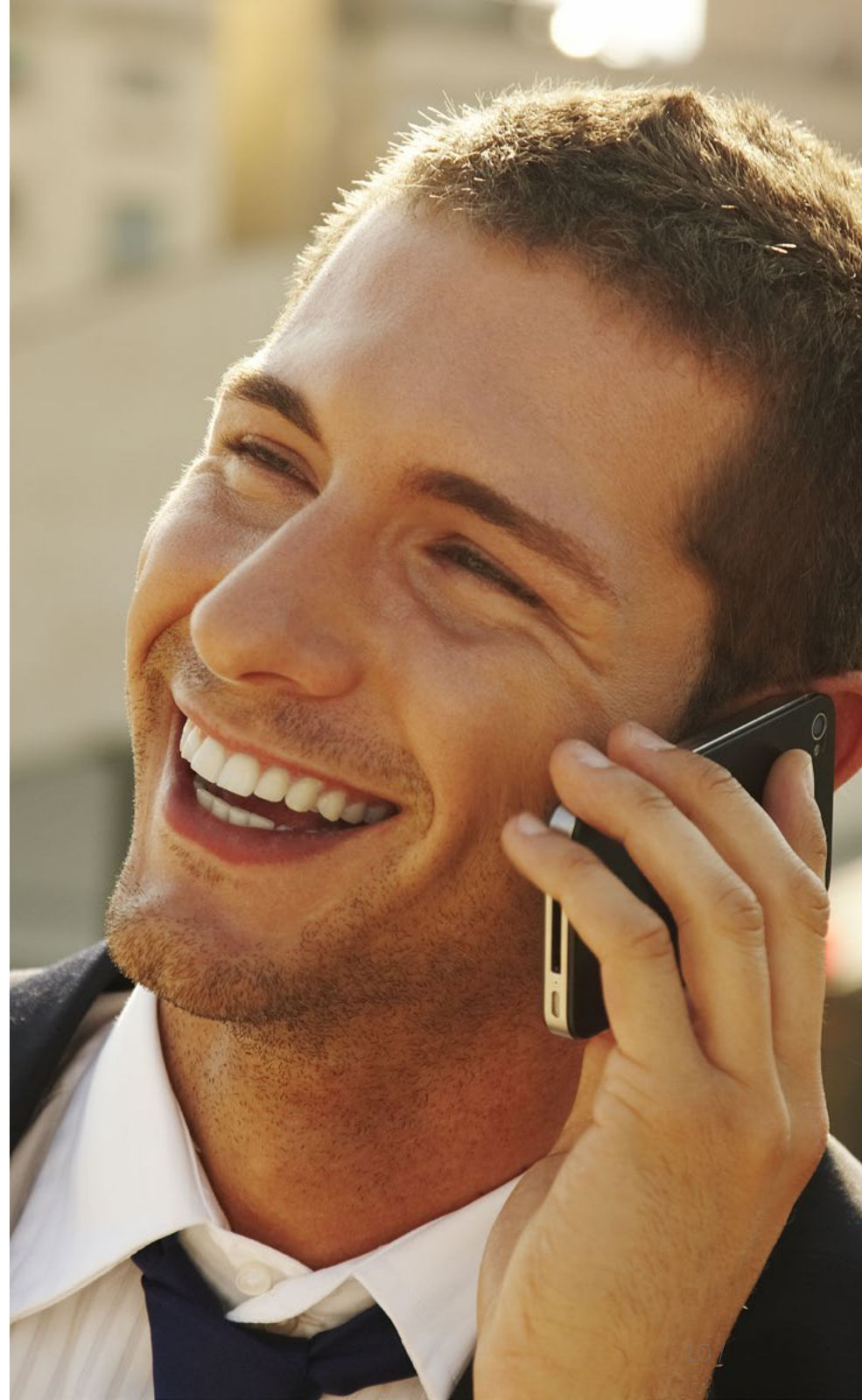
As the best-selling book *The Challenger Sale* notes, the sales rep who pushes buyers to think differently, educates buyers with new insights, and tailors conversations to their needs consistently outperforms the others.

Good content marketing helps achieve these goals. The content you share should deliver insights that engage your prospects. With it you can share thoughtful commentary through channels such as email, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+, making you a valuable resource for your prospects.

Share Questions, Comments, and Feedback

According to Mark Hunter, sales expert and keynote speaker, “Every question that a customer asks, every objection that a customer has...becomes a viable blog post and/or a viable e-book.” The conversations you’re already having with customers get at the heart of their challenges, and the best content marketing seeks to answer these questions.

Write down the most common questions you receive from prospects. Then use these insights to inform your prospect interactions, and share them with marketing so they can strategise the best way to address those topics with content.



CHAPTER 4, CONTINUED

Using Content Marketing

Share Your Content Needs

Do you need more testimonials? A case study for a specific industry? More support in explaining important processes or best practices? Share these needs with marketing, and tell them why these topics are important to you and your prospective customers. Providing marketing with that context will help them prioritise production.

Your insight can aid marketing in fixing holes in their content stockpile. “If you’re attacking the biggest problems and challenges, you’ll find you’re filling those gaps,” says Kyle Porter, CEO of SalesLoft.

Offer to Create Content

There’s no better way to get the content you need than to create it yourself. Your marketing team will likely welcome the idea of having your voice on the blog. If authorship on your blog is restricted, consider channels like LinkedIn’s publisher tools as a place to showcase your knowledge.

Public-facing assets such as blog posts, articles, and podcasts help your prospects see you as an industry expert and thought leader. By sharing your insights and ideas, you’re simultaneously helping out marketing and building authority in your industry.





CONCLUSION

Seize the opportunity.

Sales professionals must seize the opportunity to take control of their own marketing.

The digital revolution has transformed sales and marketing—and has brought them closer together than ever before. This means that while the challenges in gaining audience attention and engaging with potential customers are increasingly complex, salespeople are also uniquely equipped to meet this challenge. By employing these tactics to become your own marketer, you can deliver more value to your customers—and knock your own goals out of the park.



Sales solutions that will make your business more productive

Customers who use Salesforce report seeing, on average:



Salesforce helps you grow sales with a transparent and repeatable sales process. That's why it's the world's #1 CRM (customer relationship management) solution. See how we can help you grow sales – and business, faster.

Source: Salesforce Customer Relationship Survey conducted May 2015, by an independent third-party, Confirmat Inc., on 4,600+ customers randomly selected. Response sizes per question vary.

Note: Performance metrics are intended as a guideline based upon historical results from a sample set of customers. Results are dependent upon many different factors that are customer-specific. Therefore, actual results will vary.



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