ringDNA

Navigating the SalesTech Marketplace

A PRACTICAL BUYER'S GUIDE

"You can give reps more tools, but that won't necessarily make them better."

Howard Brown Founder & CEO, ringDNA

There's Too Much SalesTech!

"It's time to stop settling for sales tools that only solve one problem.

The best solutions will break down barriers between your revenue teams and help your company reach its full potential."

Have you looked at a list of sales tech vendors recently? Right now, there are over a thousand companies offering SalesTech solutions (1,078 to be exact). And it's not going to stop there -- many experts in the space have likened this to the MarTech boom, which experienced 1,776% growth in just the last four years.

To narrow down the search in this overwhelming marketplace, I've developed five questions that I use to test every new solution that I come across. It's simple, effective, and makes shopping for new SalesTech a lot easier. I hope that it will help you too in the quest to build the perfect sales stack.

Jordan Henderson
Director of Revenue Operations
ringDNA

The Top 5 Tech Stack Considerations

1. Does it automate manual processes?
2. Are the integrations thoughtfully designed?
3. Does it give you actionable data in the moments that matter?
4. Does it enable Revenue Operations alignment?
5. Is it worth a long-term investment?

CONSIDERATION #1

Does it automate manual processes?

If a solution can automate certain parts of your workflow, then it's definitely worth considering. But if it can't automate anything or will create more work in the long run, then eliminate it as an option.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

WHY AUTOMATION?

- Less work for you and anyone else on the Ops team.
- Automated processes lead to more accurate data, since you don't have human error.
- If you rely on other teams to input data (ex. sales reps), you can relieve them of this burden.

BUT WATCH OUT FOR...

- Poor automation, which is worse than no automation.
- If it breaks or messes up your data, it will take you longer to find out about the issue than if you'd been doing it manually.
- Poor automation can lead to a lot of clean-up work.

Are the integrations thoughtfully designed?

Plenty of sales technologies these days tout lists of integrations with other products in your tech stack. But it's important to understand that not all integrations are created equal. When you're looking at a product, ask what sort of integration they use so that you can better understand how it will fit in with the rest of your tech stack.

These are the four main forms of integration, from least to most desirable:

MANUAL OR 3RD-PARTY INTEGRATION

This requires you to import and export CSVs, or use a 3rd-party system like Zapier.

UNILATERAL INTEGRATION

This works with a one-way sync (A → B), where certain types of information can go from one system to another at certain times of day.

BILATERAL INTEGRATION

This offers a two-way syncs between platforms (A ↔ B), which solves the issue of inconsistent data. It still has a preset sync schedule and some limitations on what you can send.

NATIVE INTEGRATION

This gives you full access to all the data between two or more systems, and whatever's in one system can exist in the other. It's constantly updating and syncing in real-time.

Does it give you actionable data in the moments that matter?

Data is only useful if you have it when you need it. If a system keeps your data stuck in a silo or makes it inconvenient to access, then it's not serving its purpose. The right tools make the most up-to-date information available in the most important moment: now.

For example, let's say that you're buying a dialer for your sales reps. If the dialer gives you actionable data at the point of decision, then that means it's presenting your reps with the data they need to have meaningful conversations on calls.

Data like: what time zone the person they're calling is in, what their title is, what company they're in, etc. If it can give them information on past emails or phone calls with that person, then so much the better.

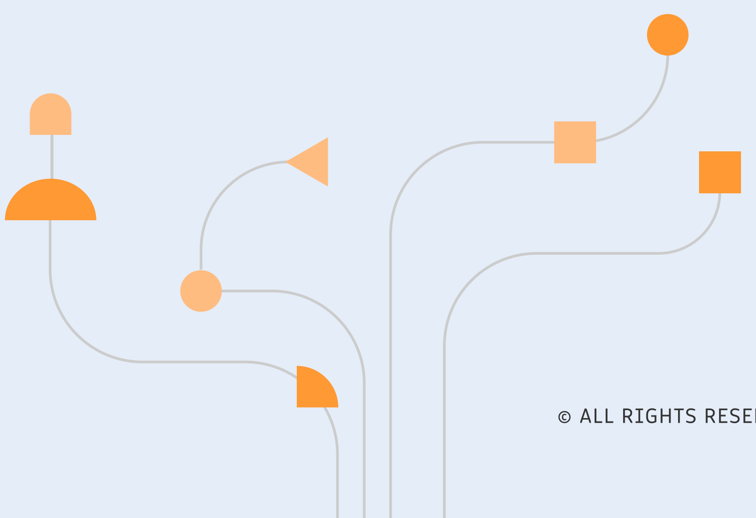
This is all information that you're probably collecting right now, but by giving it to reps right when they need it (rather than making them seek it out in other systems), you're able to gain a lot more value from it.

The point of the story is that any tools which make your current data more valuable are worth considering.

CONSIDERATION #4

Does it enable revenue operations alignment?

To ensure that a product will enable Revenue Operations alignment, stick to this rule: no single-use technology. Every product you buy should be able to solve more than one issue for more than one team.



To do this, it's best to look beyond whatever initial issue you're trying to solve with a particular purchase. For instance, let's say that your reps need a source of contact data so that they can get accurate phone numbers for prospects. In addition to solving that issue, it should also be able to provide contact data to marketing to enrich their send lists, or offer value in other ways.

Whatever you do, make sure that the data can flow easily between departments, and that it can help at least two groups of people. By doing this, you'll be building a strong Revenue Operations tech stack that can operate throughout the entire company.

WHAT IS REVENUE OPERATIONS?

Revenue Operations, often referred to as RevOps, brings together all the operations of revenue-generating teams (think: Marketing, Sales, and Customer Success) and makes sure they're aligned. Companies run more smoothly when these teams are looking at the same data and metrics, because it means they have the same view of the business.

Revenue Operations can be run by a designated RevOps person or team, or it could be a principle that you subscribe to as a SalesOps professional. It simply means that you prioritize the flow of data (and revenue) throughout your company, not just in sales alone.

CONSIDERATION #5

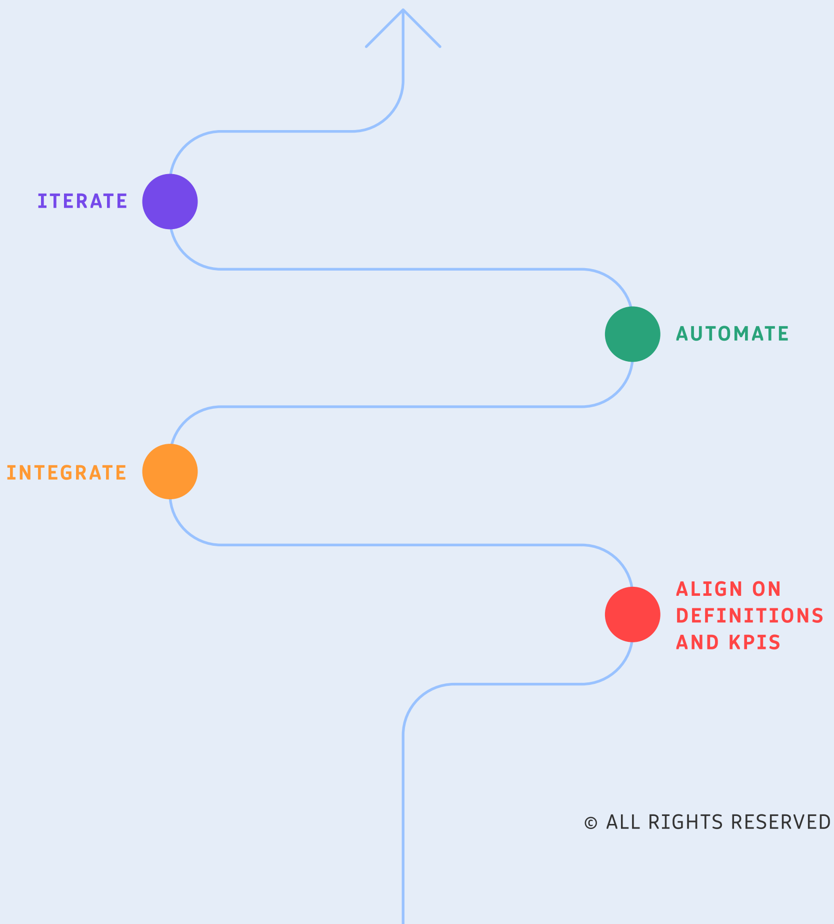
Is it worth a long-term investment?

Don't quickly buy a product to fix a short-term problem, thinking that you can always rip it out later and replace it if something better comes along. It's best to put in the time and research up front, because the truth is that implementing a new product is expensive both in terms of time and money.

Implementations of products that integrate with your tech stack take time, usually a few months (although there are some products out there that only take a few minutes, they're rare). And once it's implemented, you'll need to take the time to drive adoption across your company with orientations, trainings, and troubleshooting.

Also, if you've already followed the other four steps in this eBook while assessing your purchase, then the chances are that this technology is going to be deeply embedded in your go-to-market plan. So look at all your options with the long-term in mind, and take your time with the purchasing process.

The Roadmap to Alignment



Let's assume that you've decided what you need, assessed what's out there, and bought a new product for your tech stack. What now?

ALIGN ON DEFINITIONS AND KPIs

If you're going to be using this technology across multiple departments, make sure that they agree on the definitions of key metrics (ex: qualified opportunities).

INTEGRATE

Connect your tech stack to your new purchase, and test the connection to make sure that it works the way you need it to.

AUTOMATE

Prioritize automating data entry and processes into your system of record for the most important data points (such as ones that show up in company-wide KPIs).

ITERATE

Whenever you have new KPIs, or roughly every quarter, revisit your technology to build new automations and improve old ones.

"Aligning Sales, Marketing, and Customer Success around your tech stack's data isn't a nice-to-have. It's a must."

Jordan Henderson Director of Revenue Operations, ringDNA

Learn More

Curious to see what other people are buying for their tech stacks this year?

Dig into the latest research on what your peers are investing in, upgrading, or replacing in the 2021 Revenue Operations & Customer Acquisition Benchmark Report.

Or visit us at ringdna.com