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Think of those
days as Sales 1.0.

WE'RE NOW IN THE ERA OF SALES 2.0

Your bottom
line may never
be the same

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REMEMBER THE BAD OLD DAYS of sales-oriented technology? Customer relationship management systems that cost a fortune to install and crashed easily. Downloadable lists of sales leads filled with old or bogus data. E-mail marketing tools that targeted the wrong consumers. And on and on.

Fortunately, software firms that target small companies with sales tools have been getting smarter and smarter. Following pioneers such as Salesforce.com and NetSuite, a new generation of companies is offering easy-to-use, cheap (indeed, often free) technology that can supercharge the performance of your sales force—with minimal training and virtually none of the heavy-duty installation associated with the CRM systems of the past. With lead-generation and networking services, e-mail marketing products, relationship managing tools, and other bells and whistles, it's now possible to turn a sales operation into a gleaming high-tech machine. Here's a quick tutorial on some of the new tools and a nine-step guide to launching your sales force into the future.

7 | GET MORE OUT OF YOUR SALESPEOPLE

◎ THE PRODUCTS *Landslide, ShareMethods*

HOW THEY WORK

Managers have long sought to manage their salespeople. And salespeople, being an independent lot, have tended to dismiss such efforts as meddling. Indeed, that's been a huge problem with CRM systems, which require salespeople to spend too much time entering data into cumbersome and crash-prone systems. But new so-called guided selling is now adaptable enough to automate and provide a flexible script for the sales process while making the lives of salespeople easier. These guided selling programs incorporate elements of traditional CRM and contact management but also add some new tricks to make the sales process run more smoothly—giving sales staffers what they need, when they need it, to close a deal. Key players include Landslide, which runs \$100 per user per month, and ShareMethods, which costs \$25 per user per month.

CASE IN POINT

Peter Seiff is a vice president of sales at Aethon, a Pittsburgh-based vendor of robotic devices designed to push carts around hospitals. Needless to say, the decision to lease a robot to roam hospital corridors is not undertaken lightly. Closing a deal means convincing a range of people—the directors of nursing, food service, maintenance, and technology, not to mention the financial executives who sign the \$1,500 monthly lease checks. And each group requires a different sales pitch and process.

That's where automation comes in. Seiff turned to a sales process management system from Landslide. The system allows Seiff to create sales scripts, white papers, graphics, and other sales tools that reps in the field can access when speaking to different kinds of decision makers. "If the vice president of nursing is so excited that she wants a sales guy to talk to the CFO right now, he can easily pull up the proper documents showing what a CFO would want to know," Seiff says. But the really interesting part:

Seiff can track how different salespeople progress through the process and identify things they are doing wrong or right. "I can figure out what works and what doesn't far more quickly and help improve sales performance on the fly," says Seiff, who says Landslide has cut sales training time for new hires from seven weeks to three and reduced the typical sales cycle from six months to four. Seiff has done this while expanding the sales force from six reps to 20 within a year.