

# Re-energizing Field Sales Staff



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I was recently at an Indian wedding, a vibrant celebration that lasted two days. By the end of Day 2, I met 20 different people, whom I connected with on Facebook and other social networks. Surprisingly, we communicated more meaningfully by using apps on my smartphone than we had face-to-face.

Mobile and social tools are transforming personal connections and the world around us, particularly field sales. Connecting customers and sales reps through a shared experience can create meaningful and lasting connections. Rather than spending hours in the office researching customer lists on paper, field sales reps prefer to view customer information on smartphones while they're grabbing coffee or on the metro. Taking notes on paper is a thing of the past; these days we rely on mobile apps to keep track of our thoughts and our customers' needs. If my calendar has six customer appointments, I would prefer to have the latest pricing information and promotion details while I am in the field, rather than digesting this information back at the office. We respond quickly to our customers when all the necessary information is at hand.

Reps today need the tools to automate prospecting, email proposals, capture electronic signatures on contracts, collaborate with sales teams and keep their managers informed – right on their mobile device. An interactive mobile experience paves the way for greater productivity, with team members spending more time proactively addressing the needs of their prospects and customers. It also leads to greater satisfaction in the workplace.

Using mobile apps more efficiently also matters to supervisors. Sales managers are always looking for innovative ways to coach their team and help individual reps exceed their goals. Having clear visibility into the group's activities and the ability to measure customer engagement are integral factors to their success.

Too often, a sales manager's expectations of visibility into their team's performance surpass the capabilities of legacy mobile applications and systems.

## The Solution

Acumen Solutions has extensively researched field sales cases across a variety of industries – including telecommunications, healthcare, government, home security and insurance – to design and build an enterprise-class mobile solution accelerator on the Salesforce suite of products. This accelerator rapidly improves field sales productivity in a mobile-first world.

Within the first six months of moving legacy applications to **salesforce.com**, our clients quickly noted the cohesiveness of the sales teams and their adherence to streamlined processes.

Rather than using a dozen mobile apps to manage customer data and the end-to-end sales process, the mobile solution accelerator integrates all of these features into one mobile experience. This seamless interface – available on iPhones, iPads and a host of other devices – helps field sales reps achieve substantially greater productivity.

## Acumen Solutions mobile solution accelerator gives reps easy access to a broad range of features, such as:

- 1 Mapping capabilities to plan their day;
- 2 Access to real time customer data;
- 3 Secure quote generation with up-to-the-minute pricing and promotion information;
- 4 Collaboration tools that help managers and colleagues resolve customer issues and build a truly **interactive customer engagement experience.**

## The Approach

Mobile strategy has become vital to enterprise sustainability in today's mobile-oriented world. Cloud enablement is a key component of the strategy and helps CEOs, CIOs and CMOs expedite their go-to-market plans for enterprise mobile applications. Acumen Solutions has helped several large cable MSOs, government agencies, home security providers and CPG-based clients with cloud-enablement, by implementing the Salesforce product suite. The result? Sales, marketing and customer engagement efforts are significantly improved.

Within the first six months of moving legacy applications to salesforce.com, our clients quickly noted the cohesiveness of the sales teams and their adherence to streamlined processes. They are better informed about their customer issues; able to collaborate internally to resolve conflicts faster; and now share best practices across the board. Field sales teams

have also used salesforce.com to work with retail partners and dealers to share customer information and address problems at a faster pace, thereby improving close rates.

Our expertise with the salesforce.com infrastructure enabled us to design and develop customized mobile applications that automate sales activities in the field.

## Customized Functionality

A memorable mobile app delights and engages the customer. By always keeping the end user customer's needs in focus and creating a rich, user experience for sales reps, we drive the client's business objectives. The approach to developing code for mobile can be very similar to web-based applications. Building intuitive, easy-to-navigate user experiences is the challenge – and the key ingredient to greater productivity and higher adoption rates.

That's why Acumen Solutions follows a user-centric approach in designing the mobile experience. During the project discovery phase, we shadow sales reps out in the field to experience their typical day. We've discovered that sales professionals are incredibly mobile-savvy and willing to define how the app should work for them. Our experts incorporate this feedback into a mobile user experience definition. The end users are engaged throughout the development cycle to ensure continuous feedback. This approach has helped us design and build enterprise mobile applications with higher utilization rates and greater satisfaction levels.

As an example, a client with our Small and Medium Businesses (SMB) Channel required a quick quote tool to help them capture current customer services and present buyers with multiple service options. This feature required real time pricing information, the ability to generate multiple quotes on a mobile device and and trigger an email with the quotes to a customer.

Another example comes from a client's Residential Sales Channel. We learned that a client's field sales reps required a quick and easy way to disposition up to 50 customers in a day and keep track of follow-up tasks from each customer engagement. Since the reps spend most of their time in remote locations – for example, in the basement of an apartment complex – they needed a mobile application that worked seamlessly even in places where cellular data services were unavailable.

Automating the order submission process through our mobile solution accelerator saved each sales rep up to three hours a day. When you multiply that across thousands of reps, the cost savings is staggering.

Building these features into a mobile platform involved designing a fluid user experience that helped reps complete sales activities as they progressed from door-to-door. We enabled the client to securely store large volumes of customer and sales data on the mobile device and sync this information offline. Automating the order submission process through our mobile solution accelerator saved each sales rep up to three hours a day. When you multiply that across thousands of reps, the cost savings is staggering.

One of the features of the mobile solution accelerator that we're particularly excited about is the GPS tracking capability. The app captures sales rep "breadcrumbs" that are sent to salesforce.com and marries them to sales activity in the system. This data is then presented to sales managers in a map-based view. Sales managers use these views to identify successful sales trends and areas for improvement. The information also facilitates coaching and mentoring opportunities with sales reps. Field personnel also have with the ability to turn the GPS off.

# Measurable ROI

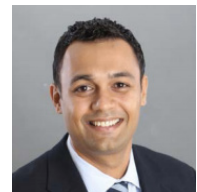
Pulling together the functionality of multiple applications doesn't just mean happier salespeople – it also translates into a tangible return on investment for our clients.

Sales teams who have used the mobile solution accelerator are becoming more efficient in targeting prospects and using their time more effectively. For instance, reps reduced their average research time from three hours a day to just 30 minutes. They can also do much of their paperwork remotely rather than returning to the office. Their newfound time is now spent on high-quality prospects and managing relationships with existing customers.

Of course, spending more time on value-generating tasks ultimately leads to better sales numbers. Our mobile clients achieved a 12% gain in sales simply by using our integrated approach to mobile technology.

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By Les Ponneri  
Senior Manager, Global Services



## About Acumen Solutions

Clients choose Acumen Solutions for one simple reason: our experience delivers success. Joining forces with our clients, our teams of strategists, subject matter experts, and engineers solve problems that can't be fixed by technology alone. As a Salesforce Global Strategic Partner, Fortune 500 companies trust us to build solutions that grow revenue and strengthen customer relationships. Our groundbreaking solutions in the public sector streamline operations and improve productivity.

We apply the same expertise to our unparalleled social responsibility program, generating sustainable impact across our local communities.

Engage with us at [www.acumensolutions.com](http://www.acumensolutions.com) or follow us on Twitter @AcumenSolutions.