Five daunting sales and marketing *gaps*

And how to overcome them.

What this guide will do *for you.*

What sales and marketing gaps are you defending? How are they impacting your ability to hit your numbers? We'll examine five massive gaps that could be costing you time, customers, top-line growth, and profit. And we'll show you how to transform your business by closing those gaps so you can get back to growing.

- **Discover how to transform your business** by connecting sales and marketing with a shared set of practices that have been proven to grow brands, grow revenue, and increase profit.

- **Get expert advice from leaders** who have walked in your shoes, leaped over the gaps, and unleashed sales and marketing to drive growth—together.

- **Watch insight-packed webinars** from Forrester Research, Microsoft, and Adobe.

B2B organizations with tightly aligned sales and marketing operations achieve

24[%]

faster three-year revenue growth.

27[%]

faster three-year profit growth.

58%

of the companies surveyed rate their alignment of sales and marketing as poor.

THE OBSESSION GAP   Obsess about me, not you.

Connect sales and marketing around a shared vision that transcends their individual goals. Companies that follow the approach we introduce in this chapter were twice as likely to report 10 percent or greater annual revenue growth.

THE CONNECTION GAP   It's my journey, I'll buy if I want to.

Tackle the infinite complexity of the buying process by aligning your sales and marketing teams, processes, and technology to serve the buyer and effectively connect with the buying committee.

THE HAPPINESS GAP   It's personal, not business.

Discover why 94 percent of consumers will leave a brand and find out what to do about it. Then get insights about how you can anticipate customer desires and create the kind of personalized brand moments they crave.

THE GOALS GAP   They say leads, you say revenue.

It's no secret that sales and marketing have had their fights over the years. This chapter is all about bringing them together around a shared goal that helps sales hit quota and has 75.6 percent of marketers looking forward to a year-over-year budget increase.

THE TRANSFORMATION GAP   Can you see the gap in the process?

Companies that eliminate this gap generate an average of $100 million more in additional operating income each year. Get practical guidance on how you can close this gap and hit your numbers with fewer headaches.
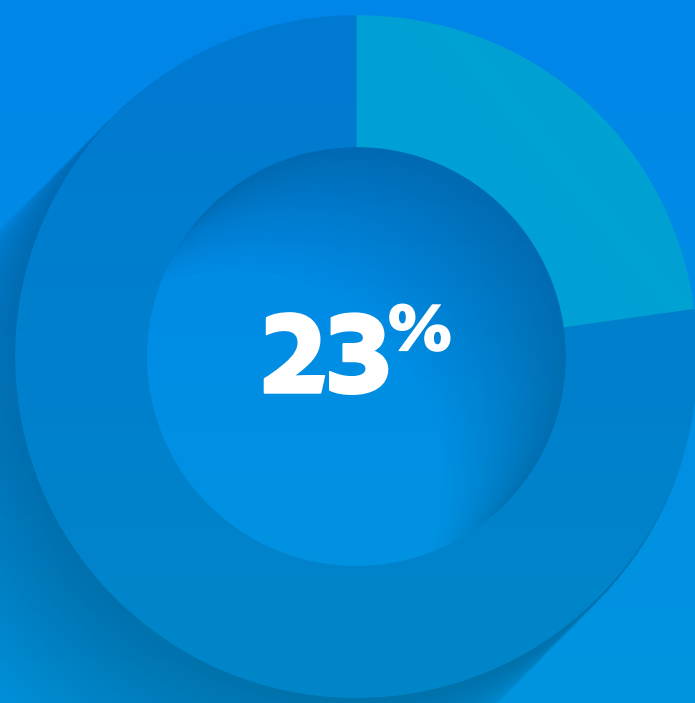
Obsess about <u>me</u>, not *you.*

As a consumer, you've likely endured countless bad experiences driven by business-centric marketing and sales practices. Well-meaning sales reps and marketers are working hard to hit their numbers, and you're a necessary casualty along the way. They fill your inbox with irrelevant emails, chase you around the Internet with poorly targeted banner ads, and call you countless times to sell you something you've already purchased. These are all signs that a company is business-obsessed, rather than customer-obsessed. And they're also signs that you're probably going to take your money elsewhere.

<u>Customer-obsessed</u> B2B firms are 2X more likely to report *revenue growth* of 10% or more in the last fiscal year.

Source: SiriusDecisions

23%

Only 23% of B2B marketers claim to have a customer-centric organizational structure versus a *channel-* or *product-centric* one.

Source: SiriusDecisions

FJURI

"Aligning marketing and sales around the customer experience is paramount to shortening the sales cycle and increasing win rates. Without a tight connection between marketing and sales activities at the prospect and customer level, the debate on quality of leads versus sales effectiveness will continue to create distraction and confusion. CMOs who get this are taking increasing ownership of growing leads, opportunities, and revenue targets with a relentless focus on customer experience."

Thom Gruhler
CEO, Fjuri

Grow by focusing relentlessly on the customer.

Business obsession is indefensible because top-line growth begins and ends with the customer. We can talk all we want about funnels and pipelines, campaigns and KPIs, technology and process, but at the end of the day the customer has the money, they expect you to be obsessed with their needs, and the decision is theirs.

The challenge for many businesses is that while they give lip service to the customer, their disconnected organizational structures, funnels, campaigns, content, technology systems, and goals are business-centric. This creates experiences that may serve the business in the short term but fail to delight the customer in a way that drives long-term growth. What's needed is an all-up focus on customer experience that will drive the long-term revenue growth your company needs to stay in the game.
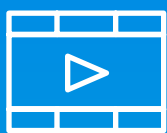
Transforming customer experience, or CX, requires a deep commitment across the entire enterprise to align every touchpoint to the customer. A key part of an all-up CX transformation is the buyer journey map, a customer-centric framework that will enable you to deeply engage customers by aligning your people, processes, and technology to your key buyer personas so that you can serve and nurture your current and future customers with the right content throughout their journeys.

Critical questions for reflection:

- As a marketing or sales leader, what kind of experiences are you creating for your buyers?

- How well do you understand these future customers?

- Are you helping them meet their goals on their buyer journeys, or are you trying to force them down the funnel?

- Do your sales and marketing teams work together to serve buyers, or do they work against each other?

- Do your processes and technology support the buyer journey or disrupt it?

ACTION STEP

Watch the Microsoft Dynamics 365 webinar, "*Modern Selling Revolves Around the Customer*," and get actionable insights from Forrester Research analyst John Bruno on how to align the seller process to the buyer journey.

It's my journey, I'll buy if I *want* to.

Failing to connect with the buyer is indefensible for obvious reasons. The buyer is in control and they will decide their ideal path based on millions of potential contributing factors that you likely have little influence over.

What is the optimal engagement path for your buyers and how can you connect with them as individuals? The simple answer is that there isn't one. Each buyer's journey is unique, and that introduces extraordinary complexity for the marketer who is trying to connect with them and their data across online and offline touchpoints—all while trying to nurture the buyer and accounting for their ever-shifting emotions, company politics, budget constraints, and interactions with the buying committee.

The buying committee for a technology purchase is made up of an average of *16 decision makers.*

Microsoft

"Businesses often make the mistake of hyper-focusing on role, but in our B2B marketing at Microsoft, we've found that identifying a lead's unique job skills can provide a much richer picture of who they are. It can also highlight previously unseen opportunities to connect with them through personalized content and experiences. This is where LinkedIn, coupled with data science, can help you create a clear picture of who your audience is, based on their organization and skills, along with who the social network is that surrounds them. It can also give you insights into how you can influence them by creating personalized experiences."

Gaurav Jeet
Senior Manager Marketing Analytics & Data Scientist
Microsoft Cloud and Enterprise

Align to the buyer journey.

To increase your top line, you need to find, connect with, and nurture a limited pool of prospects, each of whom could travel down an infinite number of paths that may or may not result in a buy decision. The buyer journey map is the key to arriving at your destination in a way that serves the buyer, builds your brand, and increases revenue.

FORRESTER®

"To guide the buyer through the buying journey, you need answers to a lot of questions about that journey: What are the key stages of the buyer journey? Which stakeholder yields what influence at each stage? Which channels do buyers use to research, compare, and transact? What questions do they have? And what content will provide the answers? The process of understanding the buyer's journey in such intricate detail is called buyer journey mapping."

Lori Wizdo
Vice President, Principal Analyst
Forrester

It's impossible for a finite business with limited resources to address every possible buyer dynamic, but you can build content, campaigns, and experiences—supported by connected marketing automation, CRM, and analytics— to address the interesting moments, our key inflection points, that are common across your personas and buyer journey maps.

You'll never identify a unique person or social network if you focus on the infinite path. Instead, you need to find a way to create a rich picture of the actual human being behind a lead. When you're sitting there staring at a valid email address, realize that it's connected to a real person and decide to create the best possible experience for them, regardless of how much you know about them. If it's the right person, they're connected to a social network that influences them, as well as to the buying committee that will make the decision whether or not to buy from you.
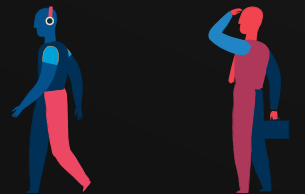
ACTION STEP

Start building your buyer journeys.

Read Forrester Research's
"B2B Buyer Journey Mapping Basics."

It's personal, not *business.*

We can learn a great deal from consumer brands that treat us like humans, brands that excel at personalization, brands that make us happy. These companies create seamless customer experiences that surprise and delight us because they meet us wherever we are. As consumers, we take for granted how ingrained these brands are in the moments of our day, and when they don't show up at the right moment, or fail to deliver the right customer experience, it's jarring.

94% of consumers will discontinue their relationship with a brand because of *irrelevant marketing.*

Source: Adobe

Create better experiences through personalization.

Whether you're a B2B or a B2C marketer, your buyer has been trained by today's market leaders to take these experiences for granted. And if you want to earn their trust, you'll have to leave generic mass marketing behind and embrace personalization. It's indefensible for brands to continue creating experiences and content that don't make customers happy because of the havoc this wreaks on customer perceptions and buyer decisions.

HEINZ
MARKETING

"Your prospect pool is finite, and when you fail
to deliver personalized experiences and content,
you can splinter your list and create significant
collateral damage. Perhaps this marketing campaign
drove more opens and clicks than the last, but
at what cost? How many potential customers
didn't respond and walked away with a negative
perception of your brand based on the impersonal
experience you created?

"On the flip side, if you can track, analyze, and
accurately interpret why leads progress, stall,
or regress, you will have the foundational
knowledge you need to create personalized
experiences that resonate with individual buyers."

Matt Heinz
President, Heinz Marketing

The reality for many marketers, however, is that personalization is far out of reach because they lack the knowledge, the budget, or the people. This has led to a widening gap between the mass marketer who still operates in the world of email blasts and "spray and pray" delivery of the same ads to everyone, and the customer who expects—and takes for granted—personalized messages, content, and experiences delivered in just the right place at the right time.

FJURI

"Netflix is a great example. They're using data science to run predictive models around what first and third-party content customers are likely to want to watch that night, and optimizing content across the web, messaging apps, mobile apps, and e-mail. The impact of data science to hyper-personalize these kind of experiences is becoming more important than SEM and SEO optimization, especially when you consider how saturated search has become."

Thom Gruhler
CEO, Fjuri

Connecting marketing automation with CRM and predictive analytics can create, deliver, measure, and optimize personalized experiences. Added to tools using artificial intelligence and machine learning, marketers are able to anticipate customer desires and create custom experiences that are truly predictive.

The necessity of predictive marketing

Sizmek

"In a world full of choices, we're drawn to experiences that anticipate our needs and wants...Because these experiences are built to make our lives easier and more enjoyable, they can make the world feel like a pretty magical place...If brands serve up a generic, one-size-fits-all experience, we're left disappointed and frustrated.

When marketing predicts a consumer's need before it arises, and delivers content which then exceeds expectations, real magic can happen. This is called predictive marketing and requires marketers to rethink how they interact with desired customers, moment-to-moment. The new approach allows marketers to garner greater return on advertising spend, achieve greater depth of engagement, drive increased conversion, and inspire greater consumer loyalty and evangelism. Dated strategies around assuming customer response, instead of anticipating it, are no longer effective."
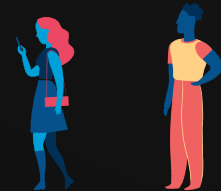
Eric Duerr
Chief Marketing Officer, Sizmek

Become a predictive marketer.

Read Sizmek's "*5 Components that Usher in Modern, Predictive Marketing.*"

They say leads, you say *revenue.*

The quarterly business review is looming, and you haven't hit your quota. Marketing is throwing a party because their campaigns have exceeded their goals for leads. You, on the other hand, are stressed out and working overtime because most of those leads are failing to convert to revenue. What should you do?

The gap between sales and marketing is most evident when everyone is under pressure. It becomes painfully obvious in arguments over how many leads there are, how good the leads are, who gets the credit, and who gets the blame. And this gap is indefensible because these conversations are a distraction from your primary goals: transforming the customer experience, increasing your top line, and driving profit.

20–30% of an average salesperson's time is wasted pursuing *improperly qualified* leads.
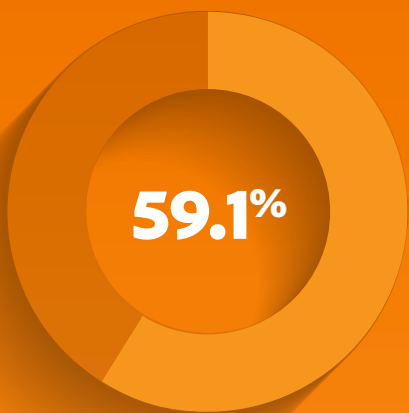
Source: Nucleus Research

Focus on qualifying leads that will convert to revenue.

You can begin to close the distance between sales and marketing by focusing on the same goal—revenue. Most companies are so focused on getting short-term wins at the bottom of the funnel that they fail to fill their pipelines with long-term prospects. Instead, marketing should address the entire funnel with accountability for driving revenue. In short, marketing is responsible with delivering prospects to sales that are qualified and ready to buy.
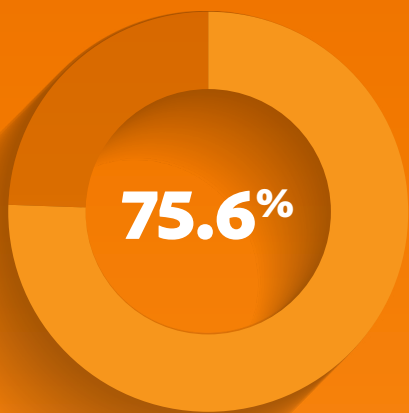
If leads aren't ready to buy, you should nurture them with high-quality content and communications—delivered in the right place at the right time across the entire buyer journey. This will ensure that when they do become active opportunities, they'll be ripe for that first conversation with sales.

Leads vs. revenue.

59.1%

*of marketers who use **leads** to plan their marketing expect bigger budgets next year.*

75.6%

*of marketers who use **revenue** to plan their marketing expect budget increases.*

Source: Bizible

xerox

"These days, the question for marketers is all about
revenue growth. The cold reality: The C-suite
couldn't care less about your content strategy
or your influencer program, your Snapchat reach
or your app adoption. Their question today
is, 'How are you specifically partnering with sales
to drive revenue?'

Marketers can't just dwell in their caves and fuss
over creative, and sales leaders can't complain
about marketing non-responsiveness without
sharing insights from the customer or aiding
in the creation of Sales Enablement content. While
they are very different teams culturally, marketing
and sales must work together as equal partners,
rather than operating according to 2005 narratives
about their role in the business."

Eric Weaver
VP, Communication & Marketing Services
Xerox

If you buy into the importance of a unified focus on revenue
growth, where should you start? Change doesn't come
easy, and a highly creative marketing organization that's
used to focusing on impressions, opens, clicks, and lead
volume might feel threatened. You can start by getting
sales and marketing in a room and exploring how a shared
commitment to revenue responsibility can free up both
teams to do more of what they do best.

HEINZ
MARKETING

"It's important to understand the difference between marketing-sourced and marketing-influenced pipelines. Marketing often generates the same leads over and over again, but according to SiriusDecisions, the bigger a deal, the more likely it was sourced by sales. That doesn't mean it's easier to close, which is the perfect opportunity to bring sales and marketing together to help close those deals. Sales can provide insights on what the buyer needs, and marketing can create more effective content that is personalized to the target account's buying committee and their journey stage."

Matt Heinz
President, Heinz Marketing

Go from chasing cookies to tracking marketing-influenced revenue.

Once sales and marketing have agreed on revenue as a goal, how will you track progress and success? Because of the technology and process silos that often exist across a business, it's incredibly difficult to chase a cookie across systems and then attribute it to a specific deal. In addition, because the buyer's journey is infinitely complex, it's impossible to track and measure all of marketing's impact across all of the online and offline interactions each buyer has with your brand. Instead of trying to directly connect cookies with dollars, we recommend implementing a framework that measures influenced revenue.

Microsoft

"At Microsoft, we center our process on creating value for customers. We measure marketing impact in a way that helps us deliver a richer customer experience. Through advanced analytics, we create insight from each customer interaction that enables us to further personalize their buying experience. As we gain clarity from these patterns of engagement across individuals and organizations and combine additional data from sources such as our sales systems and LinkedIn, we can increase marketing impact and our ability to quantify how effectively we are generating new demand and growing revenue with existing customers."

Stephanie Ferguson
GM, Cloud and Enterprise Integrated Marketing
Microsoft

ACTION STEP

Adopt a framework for marketing performance management.

Read Heinz Marketing's "*Marketing Attribution, Performance, and Revenue: 5 Must-Ask Questions.*"

Can you see the gap in your *process?*

What is the single largest breakdown between your sales and marketing teams? Chances are, it's a process gap. And it's indefensible because of the negative impact it's having on customer experience, revenue, and profitability. Leaders in digital transformation understand how to close this gap, bringing together people, process, and technology across the entire enterprise—and it shows. According to Keystone Strategy, these companies generate an average of $100 million more in additional operating income each year. What gaps in your process are keeping you from achieving this kind of growth?

The buyer says:

"What is this company thinking? Their ads say one thing, their content says another, and the sales rep says yet another. Do they have any clue who I am? Do they even want my money?"

Marketing says:

"I created all of this great collateral for sales, but they can never seem to find it. And I have no idea if it's meeting buyers' needs, let alone helping sales win deals."
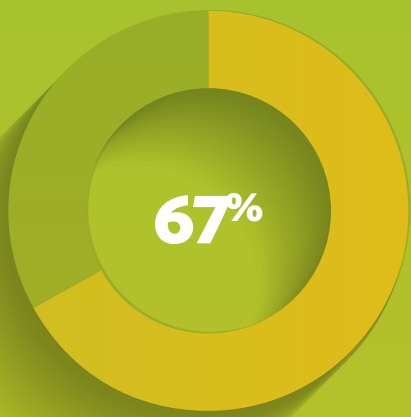
Sales says:

"Our marketing and sales systems are so disconnected that I can't see or predict my pipeline. How am I supposed to hit an invisible target?"
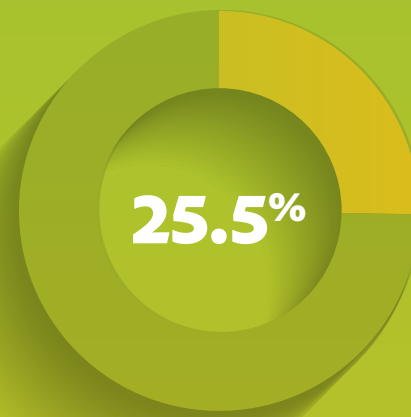
Close the gap through process improvement.

Technologies such as marketing automation, CRM, and AI have rapidly accelerated the capabilities of the enterprise to improve customer experience and drive top-line growth. Despite these gains, businesses struggle to harness this technology to drive growth because of breakdowns in their marketing and sales processes. For example, organizations don't generally buy the same CRM for sales, marketing, or customer service, which can create disconnects in process across the enterprise. And every breakdown in process can result in a negative impact on customer experience.

67%

of marketers claim to have limited or no visibility into their coverage and gaps across key attributes like persona, buying stage, and product line.

Source: Kapost

25.5%

of marketing-generated leads, on average, are assigned to the wrong account owner.

Source: LeanData

Sales <u>failed to close</u> forecasted deals 52.2% of the time in 2016, up from 51.6% in 2007, demonstrating a *decline in visibility* across the pipeline despite an increase in technology capabilities.

Source: CSO Insights

slalom

"We had a lot of issues when we had a marketing system that sat separate from our sales system. Now, our customers only exist once in our database. And that was kind of the vision that our CEO had: a contact is a contact, a lead is a lead, and a person is a person, and they are only viewed one way. That kind of grounding theory, with buy-in from senior leadership, forced our sales and marketing teams to work together. It's really hard to change how you do things without a system that forces you to do it differently."

Todd Sink
Managing Director, Slalom Consulting

Barry Trailer, partner at Sales Mastery and co-founder of CSO Insights, has spent decades researching sales productivity in the enterprise and helping sales leaders transform their sales processes. He recommends looking to manufacturing as a model for process improvement.

CSO Insights
The Research Division of Miller Heiman Group

"Over the past 10 years of research, the data has consistently shown that companies that improve their sales processes improve their sales performance. But the sad fact is that companies often refuse to improve their processes despite this truth.

"Manufacturing provides a great model for success. If an automaker wants to output high-quality cars, they will focus relentlessly on everything from the inputs to the production process, with testing and continuous process improvement all along the way. If there's a broken valve stem at the beginning of the process, the car won't roll off the line and fix itself. That manufacturer has created processes to weed it out before it enters the system.

"The key to process improvement, whether you're a manufacturer or a sales or marketing leader, is closed loop feedback. If you're responsible for top-line growth, CRM and marketing automation give you the tools to provide closed loop feedback, but that technology can't replace a unified process that spans the organization with a commitment to continual improvement."

Barry Trailer
Sales Mastery, Co-founder, CSO Insights

Three tips to transform your processes

1   **Use the same terminology.** Align your sales and marketing teams around a common definition of a lead, and then relentlessly create content, campaigns, and workflows that enable sales and marketing to collaboratively drive leads that yield revenue.

2   **Establish SLAs.** Close the loop between marketing and sales by establishing SLAs for how sales will address and report back on each and every lead that marketing delivers so that marketing can continue to refine their contribution.

3   **Stop losing track of leads.** Restructure your lead processing, qualification, and routing processes to get leads to the right reps and the right territory in a timely manner to preserve a good buyer experience.
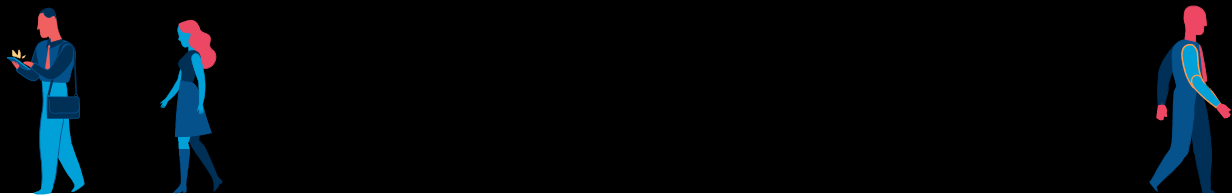
ACTION STEP

Build a customer-centric lead routing process.

Start using B2B Lead Blog's *"Lead Management Checklist."*

Closing the *gaps.*

What indefensible gaps have you been defending? How can you increase your top line? How will you transform your people, process, and technology to better serve the customer? Regardless of where you begin, don't let these insights sit on the shelf.

You might consider taking one of these practical steps:

- Schedule a call with a customer to find out how you can serve them more effectively.

- Connect with your CTO/CIO to see how you can partner to connect your systems and processes in a way that transforms the customer experience.

- Meet with your sales or marketing counterpart to see how you can help them do their job better.

IDC

"IDC believes that the integration of digital experience delivery and digital marketing, ecommerce, and customer support systems is paramount. This expanded partnership seems poised to capitalize on that requirement."

Melissa Webster
Program Vice President, Content and
Digital Media Technologies, IDC

constellation ™
RESEARCH

"Coordination on data models by two significant players will improve standardization of data sets which power the future machine learning and AI services. The overall news is positive for customers and prospects."

Ray Wang
Principal Analyst, Founder, and Chairman
Constellation Research

BUSINESS INSIDER

"As a big added bonus, with the Microsoft Azure partnership, it makes it easier for Adobe's customers to use Microsoft's considerable investments in artificial intelligence around their Marketing Cloud data."

Matt Weinberger
Business Insider

Adobe Marketing Cloud empowering Dynamics 365 for sales can help you drive top-line growth with connected sales and marketing automation that will enable you to do the following:

- **Create a unified view of your customers** across their unique journey and deliver personalized customer experiences across all touchpoints and channels.

- **Unify sales and marketing** around shared goals and provide them with actionable insights so they can work together more effectively.

- **Connect your content, data, and processes**, and unlock the intelligence in your data so you can make better, faster decisions.

Find out how Microsoft and Adobe can help ›

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