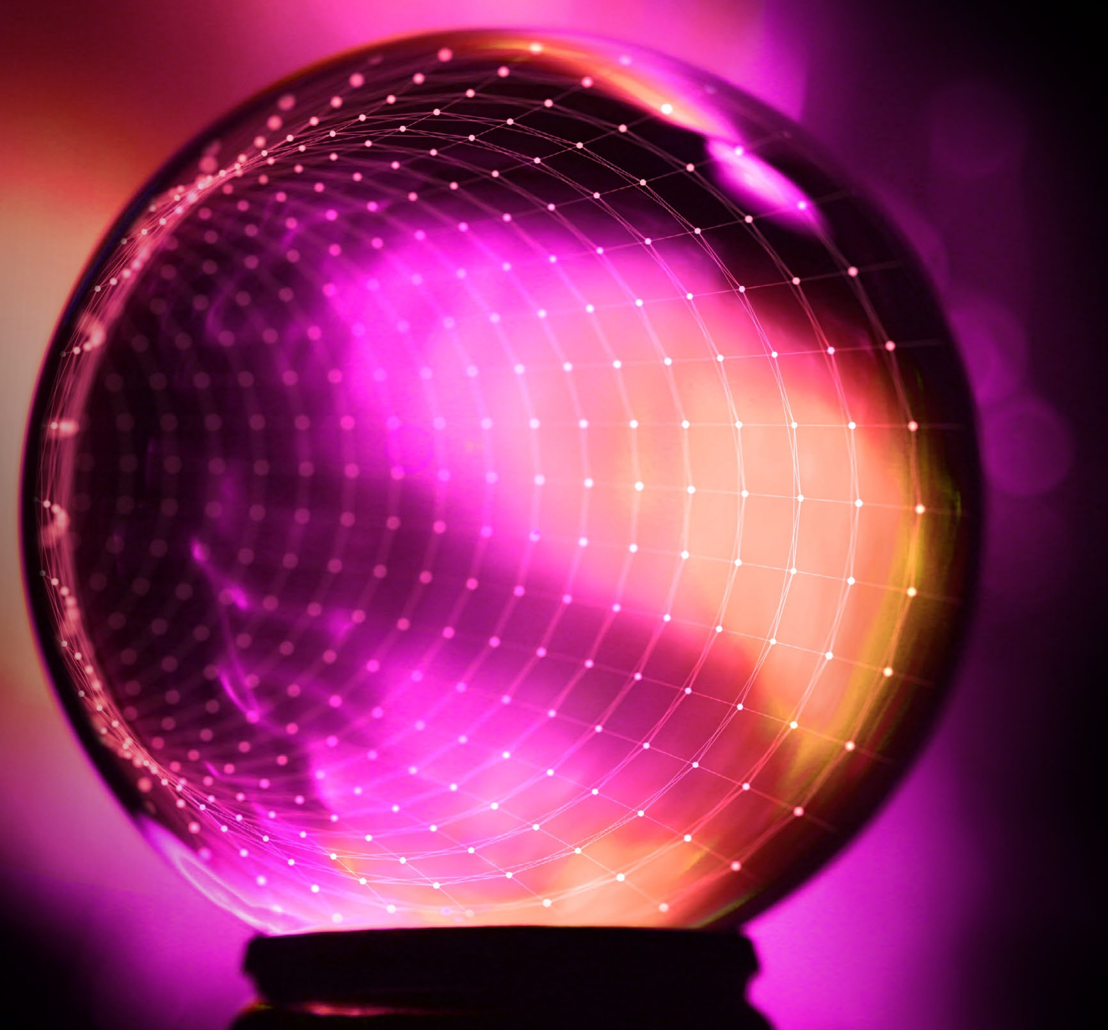
The revenue leader's guide to more accurate forecasting

How to create a data-accountable revenue team



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Introduction

The foundations of more accurate forecasting

The stakes couldn't be higher for hitting your quarter or your year when it comes to sales forecasting. The predictions your revenue team makes will guide decision-making for your entire company. It's essential to make forecasts as accurate as possible.

Yet one report found that **98% of revenue leaders struggle with formulating accurate forecasts**. The same study found that a majority of respondents had missed the mark on forecasting at least twice in the past year. This guide will help you build a system for more accurate forecasting with less manual effort. The complete system looks like this:

Accurate forecasting starts with trustworthy, comprehensive data. That data relies on your sales team using their CRM and other internal software properly. A culture of accountability is essential to promote responsible software use.

Creating that culture starts with empowering reps by making it easy to pursue data accuracy. It's crucial to give them an efficient, streamlined workflow that promotes accuracy while still getting them back to selling as quickly as possible. Essentially, it's ensuring that the right thing to do is also the path of least resistance.

Pendo is the software experience management (SXM) platform that connects experience data across the software you build, buy, and use, whether internal or customer-facing. It employs tools to help revenue departments get the data they need for better forecasting by understanding the health of your accounts and ensuring data accuracy.

This book will cover tips that anyone can use. It will also show how companies use Pendo to make forecasting quicker, easier, and more accurate.

The root cause of bad data for forecasts

Every sales rep sets out to hit their quarter's growth goals and to help support overall forecasting accuracy. Inevitably, many reps fall into bad habits when crunch time hits. We've seen it across the thousands of customers we've helped improve their CRM accuracy. These reps might think they're *helping* the company's overall health by speeding through the data entry that supports the forecasting process. After all, it gets them back on the phone with the next client more quickly.

But in reality, inaccurate data habits hurt more than they help. There are a host of bad CRM habits that can lead to unreliable data:

- Speeding through deal stages without accurate data
- Ignoring fields that don't seem immediately relevant
- Failing to enter or update pricing data

All of these pitfalls have two things in common: **consistent communication and employee experience.**

Without clear and consistent guidance, your team will naturally seek out less labor-intensive workflows. It's just human nature.

Experience is key, too, however. If your team isn't helping to make the right course of action the easiest course to choose, that's part of the problem. The rest of this guide will show how to address this root cause and nurture improvements, from your team's data hygiene to a more accurate forecast.

Create a culture of accountability

The first step to ensuring your sales team meets your expectations is making those expectations crystal clear. Your reps should know what they're responsible for at a fundamental level. Once you establish those best practices and norms, you can give your reps goals that will help them become top performers.

But start with table stakes issues like:

- Updating the CRM on a regularly scheduled basis
- Inputting data in the right format
- Filling out all fields with the best available data
- Taking personal responsibility for data accuracy

Addressing these issues will help create an overarching culture of data awareness and responsibility. In the early days, it will be essential for management to support the effort.

Start top-down with consistent communication—and make sure leadership is following best practices, too.

Some organizations go as far as making data accuracy a KPI for the sales team. This makes it easier to keep the topic at the forefront of your reps' minds. You can then reinforce the idea of personal data accountability in any sales meeting since it's part of expected performance.

This step is the "broadcast" phase, in which you give your reps a set of instructions that need to be followed. It's important to note that this is just the first step; your reps will resist following these ground rules if they don't feel ownership in the process.

Listen to your team

As you begin to develop a culture of accountability, it's important not to neglect management's accountability, too. Management should focus on making it easy and intuitive for reps to manage data properly. Your team should feel *empowered* to do the right thing, not *forced* to. Start by listening to your team to see where, when, and why processes are breaking down.

The problem might be training:
"We're unsure what the right outcome looks like."

It might be a lack of information:
"We don't know why this particular field is so important."

It might even be a problem with the software itself:
"It's complicated and time-consuming to do this properly."

To get these answers, you can:

- Ask for team feedback via email
- Send out surveys
- Encourage feedback in team meetings

However, these traditional methods are time and labor-intensive. This is especially true for enterprise organizations that have hundreds of reps in different verticals, some of which might require even stricter data hygiene.

How Pendo helps

Pendo makes it easier to collect feedback from the right people at the right moment. **Pendo Listen** allows you to ask for feedback directly in the apps your reps are using, in the exact spots you're curious about. Then Listen uses AI to generate summaries of all the feedback, making it easy to spot common issues.

To get an even clearer view of where your reps are struggling, **Pendo Analytics** processes quantitative data from each session. You can see where people might be abandoning a process or how a workflow leads to frustration. Analytics is augmented with Pendo Session Replay, which captures video of reps' activity in your apps and creates AI summaries of common issues.

In short, Pendo brings the *what* and *why* together so you can fully understand how your reps experience your software. This knowledge is essential for driving change in your CRM's usability.

Turn feedback into fixes

Once you have a better understanding of where reps are easily following data accuracy protocol and where they're getting stuck in a cumbersome CRM experience, you can work to remove roadblocks and empower your reps to do the right thing.

This process might include:

- Training for parts of the workflow that are unclear
- Education on how each part of the workflow contributes to data accuracy
- Workarounds for burdensome procedures

How Pendo helps

Pendo saves reps hours of training and gets them back to selling more quickly. In a profession where onboarding and ramping can take over a year, any reduction in training time or increase in training effectiveness is critical.

It takes three months for sellers to be ready for interactions with buyers, nine months to be competent, and 15 months to become a top performer[1].

Instead of covering a mountain of information in a three-hour training session, use Pendo Embedded Guides. These in-app guides appear right where people are getting stuck. They can even be targeted directly at a subset of users (like new reps versus veterans).

These guides can link to external resources, like videos or documentation. Or they can be simple signposts: "The most successful reps use this field for..." or "Pay extra attention to rounding in this field because..."

With Guides in place, your reps don't have to remember every single best practice and why it matters. They can get a timely and useful reminder exactly when and where they need it.

[1] https://www.rainsalestraining.com/blog/sales-rep-onboarding-how-long-does-it-really-take

How Essity improved accuracy and empowered their sales team

With Pendo, Essity achieved improved forecast accuracy, improved compliance, and more revenue predictability.

"Pendo is helping us turn our software into something our users can really value, that can help them do their job on a daily basis–not just another tool they have to use."

Debbie Wiggins, Business Systems Director
Personal Hygiene Division, Essity

Pendo in action

The client

Essity is a globally leading hygiene and health company with over 36,000 employees worldwide.

The challenge

The sales team struggled with workflows in their CRM (Salesforce). Issues included using the latest version of the price book, properly identifying leads, and documenting closed deals.

The solution

Pendo Guides and tooltips provided in-context instruction that proved more efficient than extra training sessions.

Now, sales reps are closing their deals more efficiently. More importantly, managers have the tools to observe and quantify how their reps are using the software. This detailed insight makes it easier to see what the top-performing reps are doing and duplicate it across the team.

How Ferguson cut Salesforce training costs for 2,500 employees

Some of the sales team had never worked in a CRM before, and none had substantial Salesforce experience. Ferguson had previously used out-of-app channels to share updates, reminders and best practices, with uneven success.

Now, sales reps have timely and thorough information right where they need it. They don't have to spend time searching for a solution, and they're not tempted to make their own workflows.

FERGUSON®

Pendo in action

The client

Ferguson is a leading provider of HVAC, plumbing, and industrial services.

The challenge

Historically, Ferguson's sales team worked without a CRM. As the company scaled, management decided to adopt Salesforce for their team of over 2,500 sales reps.

The solution

The team turned to Pendo for in-context, in-the-moment training through In-app Guides.

CONCLUSION

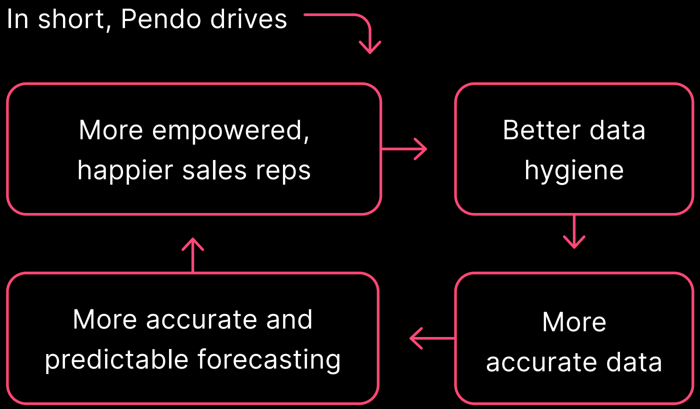
Increase your forecast accuracy with Pendo

Accurate forecasting requires data integrity. And data integrity requires motivated and informed sales reps.

Pendo can help empower your sales reps to take ownership of data integrity:

- Insights identifies friction and failure points
- Pendo Listen makes it easier for reps to tell you where they’re struggling
- Pendo Guides provides in-app, in-context advice that improves compliance

In short, Pendo drives



Get a demo to see Pendo for yourself, or explore Pendo for Revenue right now.

877.320.8484   **Email sales**