

An abstract graphic on the left side of the slide consists of several overlapping, flowing shapes in shades of purple, red, and orange, creating a sense of movement and growth.

# **MANAGING GLOBAL DISRUPTION FOR YOUR **B2B** **SALES TEAM****

# INTRODUCTION

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It seems we've traded old pandemic-induced economic blows for new **Russo-Ukrainian War-induced supply chain disruptions**. Add to it **mounting global inflation**, and **fuel hikes**, and you get a B2B sales force that is thrown into the deep end.

Your sales team could be floundering!

Chief among those suffering from supply chain disruptions are wholesalers, distributors and manufacturers.

# Quick takeaways



## Stock challenges

Stock availability challenges - surplus and shortages - caused by disruptions in the supply chain, are often sudden and unplanned. This leaves sales reps high and dry in the field.



## Fuel price

Fuel price increases make travel budgets of logistics and sales staff more expensive.



## Inflation

Inflation and interest rate increases mean profit margins are narrower, and buying power is diminished.



## Isolated apps

Uncommunicative, isolated apps like spreadsheets, accounting software, and Whatsapp are still used by many B2B companies to manage teams, stock, budgets, and customers. This isn't effective anymore.



## CRM software

Sales operations and CRM software is the best way to mitigate these global fluctuations. However at start of last section read confusing at first, and suggested way above might draw attention to reading Integration section of readers glancing through



## Integration

Only use software that is available off-line, communicates with your ERP and accounting software, gives real-time stock levels to sales reps out in the field, tracks sales rep activity when they're on the road, informs managers which high-ROI customers need to be visited, and gives easy-to-action management reports automatically.

# The effects of these challenges on your sales and revenue

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The cost of stock, and its availability, is no longer a thing of certainty. This volatility in price and stock availability makes it difficult for sales teams in the trenches to close deals or deliver the promised goods.

If your **B2B field sales reps use spreadsheets** or manual processes in the field, they don't have access to the latest pricing data or inventory lists. This means they risk misquoting customers, with far-reaching results.



Cancelled orders



Poor customer experience



Obstacles to closed deals for sales reps



A drop in revenue



Potential damage to your brand reputation

**Sudden price increases, out-of-stock products, and delivery delays mean headaches for your salespeople and your customers.**



## How your sales team can be successful in these challenging times

Transparent communication, an understanding of the issues driving the instability, and the right sales tools are key.

## Use sales tech to communicate rapid changes in price

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Before delivering the news to your customers, the first step is to make sure your entire organisation is aware of your stock price adjustments. Your customers are likely to communicate with multiple people within your business, so everyone should have the most updated information to ensure there are no miscommunications that could damage your company's reputation and possibly the relationship with your customers.

This is especially true for field sales teams who might not be in the office regularly.





# Use sales CRM software

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Ideally, your B2B field sales team has mobile technology or a **sales CRM app** that is linked directly into your ERP or inventory software. This will ensure any changes made on the system are immediately reflected in their sales ordering app, regardless of where they are on the road.

As a B2B company, everyone is in the same boat and is likely feeling the same effects of supply chain disruptions and current global events as you are. Prices increase for unavoidable issues such as disrupted logistics, **distributor challenges**, fuel increases, and product scarcity. How you translate the value and service behind the price increase is as important as the communication itself.

Even though your customers are businesses, there are people who work within the business, so be sure to keep your humanity at the forefront when you communicate price changes. There's no easy way to tell paying customers that your company will be charging more for the same items, especially since the news could mean a hit to your customers' bottom line. Soften the blow by being upfront about the price increase and authentic about the reasons. Expect some negative reactions and be as supportive as possible while being clear that the increase is necessary.



# What if customers object to the higher price for your goods?

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Some customers may react negatively to the increased prices. They may believe your product to be out of their price range now, which could lead to frustration for them and lost revenue for you. There are several ways you can respond:

## Reassure your customer

Remind the customer your product solves theirs, and their customers', current needs and will continue to do so even as manufacturing and supply chain costs rise. It is also worth noting that your suppliers and your customers' competitors will likely be facing the same challenges, and the consequent knock-on effect on their prices.





### Offer a free trial or promotion

Consider offering a free trial, complimentary product, or promotion to help strengthen existing customer relations. It could also enable your prospects and leads to determine if your product adequately addresses their needs. If they are satisfied with your product, the price change will take a back seat to the exciting discovery of a solution.

### Mention other satisfied customers

If other customers already accepted the stock price increase, share this and their stories with your objecting customers. It may help hard-line buyers realise that others still have faith in your product, and they might infer that supplies may run out soon if others continue to buy.





## How to deal with sudden out-of-stock issues

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Sudden out-of-stock items might be more annoying for customers than stock price increases. Many orders are approved with the understanding that your product is available at the time of negotiation. When your B2B sales team suddenly finds an item is out of stock, or has longer lead times, it can cause frustration that will impact your client's customers as well. Empty shelves are bad for everyone.

The past two years showed **a record number of companies** who reported a lack of products on their shelves. Companies know a continued lack of available products to sell can lead to disengaged customers and a damaged brand reputation.

Many companies benefit from maintaining safety stock, a batch of extra goods that can tide a company over in case of sudden surges in demand and help stabilise prices. However, the cashflow required to bulk up on stock, and the risk of product expiry, often makes this option unfeasible.

### **Get sales rep apps that speak to your warehouse and ERP system**

It is vital that sales reps have access to the latest stock lists to reduce or eliminate this problem. The **right sales software** will empower sales reps in the field with a more accurate stock count of their products. **Your field sales team can breathe a sigh of relief** knowing they have up-to-date data on the items they sell.



## How to deal with fuel price hikes

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The effect of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on **oil and fuel prices** is everybody's problem. The primary, most tangible impact is on fuel costs, and thus, on the bottom line.

Fuel costs are resulting in higher logistics and supply chain costs. It also means that travel costs for sales reps that travel to B2B customers are rising.

### So, how do you travel smarter?

- Use **sales rep apps** to track sales rep activities and whereabouts
- Use **sales management software** that captures customer data that helps you identify and prioritise which customers are more likely to purchase from you, and so more profitable to visit
- Use **sales CRM software** to ensure the right customers are visited at the right time for the greatest ROI





## How to navigate rising inflation

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Inflation is climbing and the effect it has on businesses is felt in every sector, department, and level. For instance, raw materials are more expensive, salaries are climbing, the cost of living is rising, and people have less money to spend.

**Forbes** defines it this way: "Inflation is identified by a rise in prices and a decline in the currency's purchasing power over time."

When businesses have less purchasing power, they sell fewer products, potentially reducing profits. Business growth and investment are limited when profits are low.



# So what do you do?

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## 1 Streamline & automate processes

It can be as straightforward as reorganising your company's warehouse. Invest in new shelving, get an inventory management system in place, and see how you double productivity.

## 2 Analyse profit margins

Carefully examine your profit margins. The best place to start is by reviewing your costs and then assessing what margins you face in today's economy. Now that you have a base line, you can find ways to increase those margins, without compromising on quality and service delivery.

## 3 Improve productivity

A faster and more efficient workplace will result in higher profit margins. Make use of technologies and apps that track and improve productivity.

## 4 Reduce expenses

Cut back on expenses wherever possible. You may consider moving to a smaller premises, or adopt a remote or work-from-home model to cut overheads. Stay on the lookout for alternate products or ingredients that cost less, without foregoing quality.

## 5 Store core materials

You can insulate your company against inflation and also alleviate some of the supply chain issues we face by stocking up on core materials.

## 6 Raise prices carefully

Everyone is in the same boat. Avoid dramatic price hikes that might lose you many customers. Rather, increase your prices gradually and strategically in modest increments.

## 7 Look for new customers

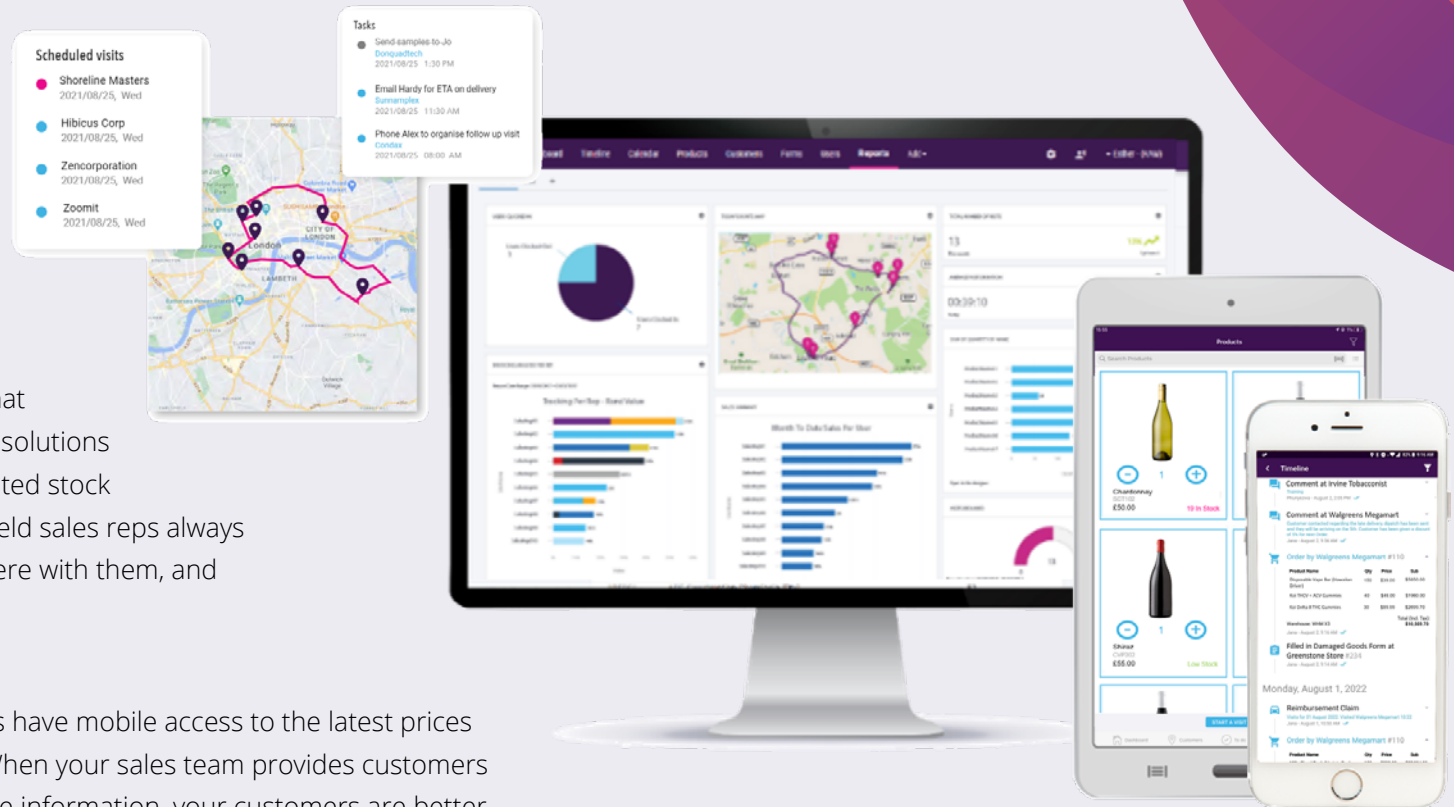
New customer segments are often generated by inflation, so focus on identifying them, and then capitalise on them.

# How the right sales app can help reduce the impact of these disruptions

Avoid miscommunications around product availability and prices by equipping your salespeople with software that keeps them informed.

Skynamo is the **all-in-one sales software** that provides powerful **cloud-based sales CRM** solutions to give your organisation continuously updated stock availability and price lists. This means your field sales reps always have the most accurate information right there with them, and can sell with confidence.

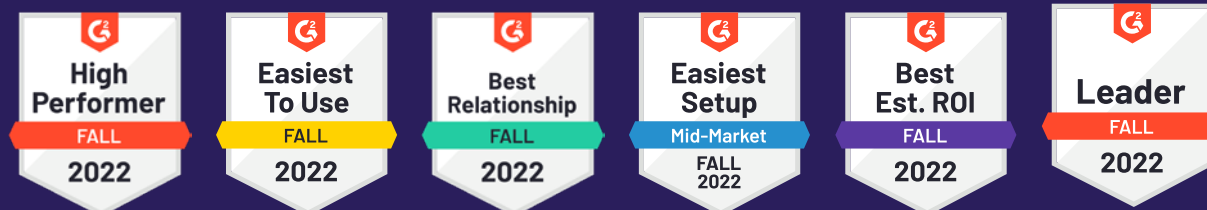
These real-time updates ensure sales agents have mobile access to the latest prices and stock levels for the products they sell. When your sales team provides customers with updated and accurate product and price information, your customers are better equipped to make purchasing decisions and feel more confident about investing in you, your product, and your business.





"Wonderful, efficient and commercially valuable"

Let's talk about how Skynamo can equip your sales team to provide your customers the most up-to-date information in an ever-changing economy. **Visit us** at Skynamo and we'll be glad to arrange a demonstration.



Give us a call:

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