

# Interested in iPad for Selling?

By [Ira Haimowitz, PhD](#)



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*10 things you should consider before taking the leap*

## **1. WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE WITH THE IPAD?**

Sure, the iPad is the coolest new gadget around. Yes, everyone seems to be jumping on the bandwagon. Success, however, depends on thoughtful planning and measurement. You must get clear on what your objectives are for rolling out iPads to your sales force. The iPad has numerous features that make it attractive to sales reps. At only 1.5 lbs, it's easy to tote around. Battery life is excellent. It's intuitive to use, and apps load quickly, making it easy to access information at the flick of a finger. In addition to being appealing to sales, the iPad is a compelling tool for marketing, as consumers and healthcare providers are flocking to adopt iPads. Consider this: In the world of professional relationship management, a sales rep might begin with a short presentation to the doctor, supplemented with iPad apps; physicians can use apps for patient education. The iPad opens whole new realms of possibility. What are your specific and measurable goals for selling with an iPad?

## **2. WILL THE IPAD BE THE ONLY COMPUTING DEVICE FOR THE SALES FORCE?**

What functionality does your sales force require? Do apps already exist, or will you create them? What role does cloud computing play? For starters, consider contact management, SFA/CRM, eDetailing, email and calendaring, and expense reporting.

Some other questions to consider: Are iPad audio and video projection capabilities sufficient for group presentations? Is 3G connectivity available in all the areas of the country where your reps work? If not, are critical apps available offline?

## **3. WHAT TRAINING WILL THE SALES FORCE REQUIRE? HOW WILL IT BE PROVIDED?**

Consider building into iPad apps training, including product training, that can be accessed on demand at home or at district meetings. Reps will need practice in order to integrate the iPad into their day-to-day routines. How will they hold the iPad during presentations? What mechanisms are in place to prevent the screen from reorienting? How should they hold it when obtaining a physician signature for samples? How

will they connect it to a projector for group presentations? This instruction can be easily built into an app for the iPad. Product training can also be extremely effective leveraging the full capabilities of the iPad.

#### **4. CONDUCT A PILOT FIRST AND APPLY KEY LEARNINGS TO THE FULL ROLLOUT.**

Consider conducting conference room pilots, followed by a small field force pilot to test ease of use and physician or consumer response to form and content. Learn from these pilots and make adjustments to sales and marketing materials, processes, and training.

#### **5. ENSURE YOUR DIGITAL STRATEGY IS ALIGNED WITH YOUR BRAND GOALS, AND THAT THERE IS CONSISTENCY ACROSS DIGITAL AND TRANSITIONAL CHANNELS.**

Yes, you need a digital strategy, and ensuring that it is well orchestrated, aligned, and consistent with your brand goals is critical to success. It is not sufficient to have a branded website, develop a presence on Facebook and Twitter, and call it good.

Consumers and healthcare providers demand information in new and evolving ways that they specify. It is more important than ever to reach your audience in their own context, on their own terms. Use research to determine your audience's preferences, and carefully craft the experience that will reach them on that platform.

#### **6. MEASUREMENT PLANNING—IMPROVE YOUR SELLING OVER TIME.**

Design a measurement plan that is rooted in business objectives. Communicate measures of success with stakeholders to ensure alignment. Then, measure and report operational metrics to all stakeholders to inform future brand engagements.

#### **7. CAPTURE THE “CLICKS” ON THE INTERACTIVE VISUAL AID.**

Sales force operational metrics will supply leading indicators of success for your marketing campaign, and the interactive detail in particular. Is the interactive content being utilized by the sales force as you anticipated? What is the HCP's reaction to interactive content—are they engaged? Does the sales rep perceive the interactive content as impactful?

#### **8. DESIGN A FEEDBACK LOOP.**

There is a lot of data available to collect, but that data is meaningless unless you analyze it and supply it to those who will act on it! Provide appropriate insights to each group of stakeholders to inform future brand engagements.

## 9. IS YOUR ORGANIZATION READY TO FULLY EMBRACE THE IPAD AND ALL ITS FUNCTIONALITY?

Selling with an iPad represents a cultural shift. It is critical to ensure processes are in place to rapidly respond to changing market needs and keep content fresh. Interactive content is only “new” once. Stale content is a sure way to alienate your target audience, not to mention your sales reps. This kind of agility will require the commitment and active participation by several groups of stakeholders: sales and sales leadership, sales operations, sales training, marketing, marketing science and market research, IT, medical/legal/regulatory, and potentially sourcing and vendor management.

## 10. READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP?

Contact your CementBloc account director to schedule a half-day workshop. The CementBloc will help you assess how to best leverage the iPad to meet your brand goals, set priorities for iPad tools and content development, define measures of success, and build a road map for the transition to selling with an iPad.



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Dr. Haimowitz received his PhD in computer science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1994, and his MPhil from Cambridge University in computer speech and language processing. He has spoken and published extensively, and has also served for 7 years on the board of the Pharmaceutical Management Science Association, including a term as President in 2006. Dr. Haimowitz recently authored the book *Healthcare Relationship Marketing*, from Gower Press, and has a blog by the same name (<http://healthcarerm.blogspot.com/>).

**About The CementBloc:** The CementBloc is a leading multichannel health and wellness creative agency based in New York. Founded in 2000 by Susan Miller Viray and Rico Viray, The CementBloc is also a founding member of Indigenus, an independent global network of entrepreneurial healthcare creative agencies.

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