

..Predictive Forecasting

1 Siddhant Pratap: I'm excited. Yeah, okay, so thanks, Company B, for joining the interview. And this interview would be around a few company questions, your role questions mostly revolving around the sales forecasting process like how it is done at the company, how it is measured. and what do you get? How do you like realize the forecasting? And then what data and tools are part of it? And how do you like get the best out of it, and how it keeps on improving? So that the first question would be like, Could you please provide me an overview of your role within the company and your responsibilities related to the revenue operations process and more into sales forecasting?

2 Interviewee 5: Sure? Okay, yeah. My role at Company Bi is that I'm leading our GTM systems function. which means I have the responsibility, together with my team, to own and administer all the tools we use to effectively go to market. These tools include things like salesforce or gong, for example. And yeah, I'm I'm leading the team of a couple of Admins to to orchestrate this.

3 Siddhant Pratap: great, great and okay, so given you like, kind of handle on that. Most of the tools that are involved in the sales process, and also in, say, full sales forecasting. Could you tell me a little bit about which step of sales forecasting, or even if it's overall from like lead generation to like the customer experience like, what is your typical like role in the form of like in the process of the whole sales process?

..Predictive Forecasting

4 Interviewee 5: Umhm, so I would say, I'm not directly involved in the whole forecasting piece. This is probably where colleagues of mine are way more included. My role in this is rather, let's say, passive in setting up the infrastructure behind it. I would say so. We run our forecasting by now on a tool basis, and my responsibility within the sales forecast motion is to make sure that our sales team members have the right tools to forecast, and that those tools have the right data. Which is important for our forecasting at the end.

5 Siddhant Pratap: Great. Okay? So I think, and I think and like, how do you feel about how like different departments within the company, collaborate together in the sales forecasting process? Is this just your team or their different like just the salespeople? Or how do they go about like the sales forecasting even, we can say with the tool?

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6 Interviewee 5: Okay? So I think one thing to mention is that at Company B, we generally have a very decentralized approach within the company, which means that different departments work differently. So, for example, our go to market function, works pretty different than our CX function. even though both have teams included that are doing sales forecasting. So therefore, I think in terms of collaboration. It's it's important to note that the process within, the company works completely different, dependent on who you speak to in sales versus in cx. And in the growth teams we have a pretty different process. To tackle the forecasting where

in the sales motion in the go to market motion? Then the area we or I am working in we are pretty, let's say, kind of automated already, but definitely, with a heavy focus on tools supporting our our motion or forecasting motion, while other tools. Sorry. Other teams like our growth teams. They are responsible for managing upsells and renewals they use, as far as I know. Still, a lot of spreadsheets and manual input to track their forecasting.

7 Siddhant Pratap: Okay, so so it it would be fair to say, like, out of all the 4 teams the one which is Gtm has the most reliable forecasting, which is based on a tool right?

8 Interviewee 5: I cannot 100% assess whether it's the most reliable. But I would argue, at least, that the Gtm function has the most advanced process here, and advanced in a way that we use a lot of tools to support it, and even certain elements of AI already to support our sales forecasting, even though obviously to be fair, the whole process could definitely be improved and further, but compared to other teams within Company B, I would say that Gtm has the most mature set up already.

9 Siddhant Pratap: Great, amazing! Then I think, say, if so, like continuing from the process that G tm, follows to sales forecasting, I think. Could you tell me any specific tools or software platforms that Company B relies on for sales, forecasting and like? In which step of the process or like, how do these tools support the process of the sales forecasting?

10 Interviewee 5: Okay, so first of all, the foundation for it is, it's false. So we use Salesforce as the core and the heart of our sales motion, so everything that happens on a deal of an account executive should be represented in Salesforce. So every deal, potential deal we do is tracked in salesforce, including amounts and timelines, like close dates, for example, and context around it like stakeholders. Primary contact, buying personas, etcetera. So, therefore, salesforce is really the foundation. I would say additionally, we have an add on to salesforce called CPQ. which is general and is used to actually build our quotes later. Down in the sales process. With Cpq, we can automate our offering or our office, which means the AEs select. The products they want to sell to a client, and then Cpq automates the whole pricing calculation for them, which is also a small step to better data accuracy, and data foundation in the sales forecasting process, I would say so. These are the foundations, in my opinion. and then what we use? Rather recently, or what we implemented rather recently, is another layer to our forecasting. Which is with which is happening with gong is first of all in its core conversation, intelligence tool. which means gong can use the recorded conversations we have with clients to analyze them. and from that to give us guidance. So for example, gong can tell you what the talk ratios during a conversation are. It can tell you very nicely. Whether you already included enough stakeholders in your buying process, whether you had enough meetings with the clients recently. So therefore, gong in its core in its nature helps us to bring insights into our

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sales process. What comes on top is the forecast module of gong. where it takes all these analytics and insights and applies it to forecasting. So we use gong first of all to make use of the foundational data we have in salesforce. So all the opportunities basically. But then gong kind of enriches this. This raw data with their own insights from the different conversations you had during an opportunity, and with a bit of AI level as well. They are able then to give us recommendations and insights to make the forecast at the end as accurate as possible. Thus, gong under the layer of gong or the how do you say the user interface of gong allows also, a roll up hierarchy of the forecast. Of course, with manual adjustments. Possibility of both the individual account executives in our naming or their team needs. So therefore, I would say, there are 3 main tools. That play a very important role in our forecasting. Mechanisms.

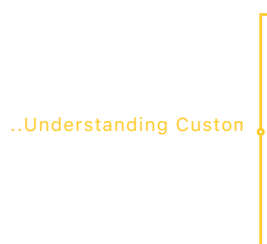
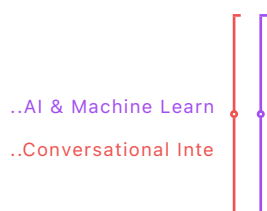
11 Siddhant Pratap: Amazing so talking a little bit more about the main sales forecasting tool that you use, which is gong, and, like you said, there are various metrics or insights that gong already uses that come from salesforce. But, like according to you, what would be the top. You know, metrics that gong uses that is able to focus like the coming quarter or the next quarter data for you. And like, how do you? How does like going from a perspective? How do they like analyze this data

12 Interviewee 5: so what I would like to highlight in the first place which is not necessarily about the the metrics, but rather on the user interface and user experience is that gong is very user, friendly. First of all, comparing to salesforce. There are several features of gong which makes it much much easier to get something out of it. In terms of insights. So, to give you an example. When you compare gong forecasting with salesforce native forecasting mechanisms, gong is very easily able to show an account, executive or team lead. What changes happened during an opportunity process in salesforce you, you would need probably a lot of understanding of the platform and maybe even certain other people to understand these kind of changes. But with gong you have a very nice overview where you can directly see whether, for example, a deal has slipped into the next month or whether the opportunity amount has changed something like this. So therefore, I think one thing I would like to highlight. First of all, is the the interface and the usability of it. Yup. then the next one I would like to highlight. Is that gong has a lot of Yeah, not necessarily metrics, but audit logs. I would call them so. Similar to what I described before. next to the interface, which is very and key advantage, in my opinion. It also shows you very nicely that the changes, whether the forecast has been increased since the last submission date, for example, whether it decreased, and what changed on an individual opportunity level. and then what you can also do. Is is directly add comments yourself. So if you updated your forecast manually, so you made an override then you can very nicely attract us as well. More on the on the metrics. perspective. What I really like is a metric they call pipeline coverage. So what gong is able to do. And it's it's it's actually

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simple math. But compared again to salesforce. It's very nice that you directly see it in gong. The pipeline coverage is basically metric where they compare what your target is to what you have open in the pipeline and gong, then tells you, look, your pipeline coverage based on historical conversion rates needs to be recommended is 3X, so you would need to have a pipeline which is 3 times bigger than your target to actually realistically be able to close the target at the end of the month. and this is a very nice metric, in my opinion. which makes it very, very visible to see on the first glance whether your current forecast or your current pipeline is realistic or not. Then I mentioned a couple of trends already, so you can. You have a very nice interface where you can track very nicely. How your pipeline tracked over time. Whether your pipeline is coming from deals that were in the in forecast for for quite some time already, or whether they have been added very newly at the beginning of this month, or even later. These kind of smaller things. those are probably, in my opinion, couple of different areas where why, I believe gong is very insightful on a high level. if you go a level deeper on individual opportunities. What I really like is that gong is able to give you. They call it warnings. So for example. This is similar to what I mentioned earlier already. If you have an opportunity that is supposed to close by the end of this month. But you haven't had any interaction with the client since 2 weeks or so. Then gong is telling you, okay. That it's rather unlikely that this opportunity is closing. or They have also certain metrics around the conversation. Conversion rate tends to be higher, the more stakeholders you include in your opportunity, and if gong identifies that you have only spoken to one person at the company. Then they also give out a warning, for example, that you should add more contacts or contact roles. Speak to more people to increase your likelihood, to actually close the deal. So therefore, couple of things and maybe this is helpful.

13 Siddhant Pratap: That's that sounds really amazing. So I think it is much fair to say, like gong itself as a tool is more holistic in its way to give sales forecasting just not based on the numbers, but in real time things like you said, like the warnings or saying the intent of how the conversation is going so that people can actually prepare themselves to go ahead in a certain way. So that leads to the closure of a deal. Right?

14 Interviewee 5: I would say, Yes, don't, don't get me too wrong. But I think at the end of the day you could also do something similar with salesforce. But I think what gong does really well is to present all of these insights. in a very user-friendly way on one screen. whereas with salesforce, you would likely need maybe even admin support and very sophisticated reporting skills to get these these kind of insights. And you would definitely not have everything on the same screen. So Leader, who usually doesn't have much time, they they want to have everything in one place. They want to see all they need on the same screen, and they don't want to go to 5 different places to gather all the information they need. So, therefore, in my opinion. gong in this case

definitely provides a lot of value for the sales teams.

15 Siddhant Pratap: Great, amazing! Then I think my next question would be more into the forecasting method. So like like you said Gong has one kind of function functionality that gives the focus which is based on a mathematical formula called pipeline coverage. But does it give you like flexibility to choose different kinds of models, and then compare them? Or is it just one forecast like this is how it looks like

Technological Advancer

16 Interviewee 5: so there is definitely a certain level of flexibility. I would say. so what you can do is, for example, categorize your forecast. So, as I said, the gong forecast is basically a layer on top of Salesforce, which means it initially takes all the information you have in Salesforce, all the close dates, the amounts, etc. What you can do with gong is to have, for example, a different grouping. Let's say so. You could completely customize the way you wanna group your forecast. So what we do is. I would say, pretty out of the box, which means you. You have a best case Forecast. You have a commit forecast, etc. things like this open pipeline, and then you can. You can map this out to the stages you have in Salesforce. Here we have a one-to-one mapping, which is again pretty out of the box. I would argue, however, gong lets you to lets you complete flexibility on this. So if you have a very, very flexible forecasting method in your company, you could literally choose any fields in salesforce to build these categories. So if you want to have a forecast by industry, for example, or by what? What? Whatever? Industry or any other fields. You can imagine you could do this with Gong. We. as I said, we are pretty standard. We. We map it by the opportunity stages, but gong allows definitely certain flexibility here. in terms of forecast period gong offers 2 ways, basically. So either a monthly or quarterly forecast. This is probably also pretty standard, in my opinion. With gong you can have certain reminders. By the way, this is also quite nice in comparison to salesforce, so gong is integrated to slack. So we have set up a reminder every Friday in the evening. 6 pm. That sends out a reminder to the reps that their forecast submission is due. So, therefore. This is also yeah. pretty flexible, in my opinion. yeah. And also all these warnings I mentioned earlier. They are pretty flexible, so you could set them up and customize them as well. So, for example, there's one warning which is called no activity. So per default. They say they give out a warning when there wasn't an activity for 2 weeks, but if your forecast or your sales motion is rather faster or others slower, then you could also adjust this. If you want

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17 Siddhant Pratap: great great of that. seems fascinating with all the old database, collective modeling like predictive trend analysis or historical data analysis that seems to be really new, but also having different layers of forecasting, not just with numbers, but also in different ways. Then, I think I'd like to go ahead with it. So like you said, like so like the prediction that it does for forecasting that gong does is from salesforce, and it gives you the freedom to choose different kinds of fields that you think matters towards the

forecasting. So like, how do you like determine which out of these fields, or is, are the most suitable for the prediction, and also like, is it different for different products that your company sells? Or is it the same, and like, similarly, for different regions in which a company operates? Or is it like just one source of this forecasting?

18 Interviewee 5: Okay, so I want to quickly come back to what I mentioned earlier. So, generally speaking, we have 2 different forecasting mechanisms here. So one forecasting mechanism within go to market function for new business, which means our go to market function. focuses only on bringing in new clients. While then our Cx and growth teams. They forecast separately, for upsells and renewals. So this is important to clarify. in terms of yeah, information. I think we use Salesforce, as I said, very heavily, but also here we don't have anything fancy in quotes. So we rely, most likely, on first of all, close dates of an opportunity. Opportunity amounts. And then I would say, we also give a lot of trust to the individual people. what we don't do is run at least in this forecast motion. Here. A lot of background insights. This is probably something where a couple of my colleagues can answer the question differently. But we in got to market, I would say we have 2 different forecast motions, one of which is kind of user-based. This is what I've described with gong. Where Gong takes the information. First of all, people submit in salesforce, and by submitting, I mean they add the information to Salesforce, and then gong aggregates this and enriches this a bit with a bit of intelligence. But there's a separate forecast motion where my colleagues can speak more about where we use more insights from the past. So historical conversion rates, activity, ratios, etc. Build up our own top-down forecast. So I think we differentiate between a bottom-up forecast, which is the one more focused on the user entry. And then a top-down forecast, which is more focused on yeah. raw data and aggregated data.

19 Siddhant Pratap: Okay? Great great. I think. Then, and what do you think about like like you said there are some different metrics also that is being captured like the usage and other stuff. But how like, say you using gong in this case? Right? So what has your experience been if a quarterly basis, or if monthly basis, if it is being dragged like the accuracy. How much was to be closed? How much did get close?

20 Interviewee 5: And yup this is the question I cannot answer. Really? Well, I think this is something where where my colleagues from the data function, can help much better. I would also. I would only like to stress something. That is it in our scenario at the moment. Obviously, gong provides value. That's no question. But ultimately, it doesn't matter too much which tool we use at the moment. because the forecast relies a lot on what the people submit, so I could imagine that gong, for example, in the future. will enrich their forecast module also with certain AI components, so that we are able to kind of remove the the human from the forecast process. A bit more and we are. Build the forecast more

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on intelligence. But this is the future. This is something they don't do at the moment gong has certain AI features more on the calls. Already, but not necessarily on the forecasting piece.

- 21 Siddhant Pratap: Okay? Yeah. No, indeed. Was there any other sales forecasting method that was being used before gong? Or was this the first one.
- 22 Interviewee 5: I think, for us. The process didn't change much to be honest over the last year, so I've been at Peasonia for 4 years, and I think when I started we used a lot of spreadsheets to forecast. Then we implemented Salesforce and we were able to centralize this further. And now with gong. I think we. We finally have also a centralized way or centralized tool, that is user-friendly. So therefore, I think this this helps also to to motivate the people, to use it and to centralize this. But I think in terms of forecasting method. We have these 2, bottom up and top down, which I described before. And from my perspective, at least, that didn't change much over the years. Okay, okay?
- 23 Siddhant Pratap: And now, talking about the impact on performance that sales forecasting for Company B. In this case gong has is like, would you give me just some examples that the salespeople, if you know of any like they like gong identified the real points out of a conversation and actually said, Okay, this is not looking good. and it actually closed. On the other hand, it looks, the conversation went really nice, and it got closed. One like the opportunity got one in the end. Is it like a usual thing, according to you, that this pattern is getting realized from conversational intelligence?
- 24 Interviewee 5: could you could you quickly repeat the the question. It didn't didn't get it completely.
- 25 Siddhant Pratap: So so like so how the gong works on conversation. Intelligence. Right? So if after conversation, it tells you the good points about the conversation and the bad points. so how often do you feel? It actually leads to the closure of an opportunity in the case it gives you like good points. Points like the conversation was good. They were good keywords being used in the conversation. And similarly, for, like bad ones, which is like conversation went bad. They were like bad keywords used. And then it led to like, lost.
- 26 Interviewee 5: Yeah, yeah, that's a very good question. I don't have an answer, unfortunately, to which I can back with data. Again. Here, this this might be something colleagues of mine in the data function can assess more. However, I'm I'm speaking more about mine. I definitely have the impression that the insights gong provides help us to to close a deal, or maybe also avoid a deal is lost always under the consideration that these insights are actually used by the team. So if I take a look at a deal or a conversation. That gong is able to an analyze gong will tell you, for example, things that that you spoke too much. So this might be

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a very simple thing. But if gong tells you that you spoke 80% of the time then It could mean that you didn't ask enough. The client about their pain points. and if you don't do this at the beginning of a conversation, then you might go nowhere. So if you change the motion and start asking more questions. This might have a positive effect on your part. while this seems to be a very simple feature. It's something. It's one of these things that will help you once it's transparent. You usually don't think about these kind of things. But in gong, if you go into a call of yours and you see, okay, you spoke 80%. Of the call. Then you might think differently about it. Or also. for example, if there are other things like a monologue, they analyze, for example, your monologue or how long a customer spoke so they can tell you, for example, How long was your how sorry? How long? No sorry! What was the time? Did you spend the longest in a monologue? And what was the time? The customer shared? most of them without interruption. So if you maybe bring a client in a in a talking mode, and they they really open up and share a lot of their pain points as well. This might lead again to a different outcome. And around this gong provides a few of these smaller features, in my opinion that are really helpful, because, what gong is able to do is connect this to industry best practices. So they use all the data they get to tell you. Look your talk ratio is 80% again. But actually, it should be sitting at 50, for example. So they give you a lot of insights there as well. And then on the track as you mentioned. So this is a nice feature of gong as well where you can create so called trackers, which are basically one tracker can include multiple keywords, and when a keyword is mentioned during the conversation. Then gong will pick this up. So again, coming back to the example, where? You have a deal closing at the end of the month. and today you have a call with them. And you never really talked about pricing. So therefore gong can tell you. Look, you didn't talk about pricing but again, you wanna close this deal. By the end of this month, maybe you should start speeding up the process a bit or maybe it's worth to to to postpone the deal, and by these little things, gong is able to improve the forecast accuracy in my opinion. and then ultimately again, a bit of good. Feeling definitely able to support the AEs and the leaders to steer an opportunity in the right direction, or to try to avoid it moving in a certain direction.

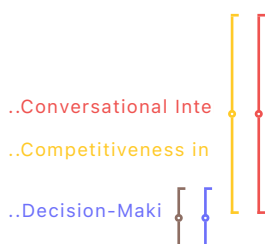
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Siddhant Pratap: Amazing nice! I so I think. My next question would be around like the adjustment and learning that comes out of it. So I think one thing that you said was, if, for example, there's a sales salesperson who just went through their call. one thing they learned right after that is okay. They spoke too much, or they didn't talk about this. So one thing is like this, they learn. But looking at this at a more, you know, higher, like one level up from the hierarchy level. Do, are there. People in the company like the leaders who actually go through these, you know, like, call analytics, the conversation analytics. And then they tell people, okay, this is how you should adjust the way you handle things. And like a change, ho! Like, ho! How does it change? Based on seeing the results?

28 Interviewee 5: Yeah, I would say, there are 2 main stakeholders using this coaching component of gong on the one hand, obviously the sales leaders. that use or should use. These kind of yeah, insights. So for example, here gong is also able to annotate or or allow comments. So let's say you, you have a leader, and usually the best practice would be that a leader listens to a certain amount of calls each week of their team members, and then they could use gong to yeah. Make comments, for example. when there was a part of the call which went very well, or which didn't? Can write a comment to their AEs and tell them, look you, you did it. Well, here you did these kind of points. Well, on the other hand, this is the area where you can improve So therefore, this is, in my opinion, definitely a very valuable feature. But then also not necessarily only from the leaders, but also from an individual perspective. gong. Allows you to take a look at the recording again. When you have a next call with the client maybe recap again. What's happened before? here, by the way, gong is having a nice AI feature that creates an automated summary of each call, and can give you time back, so you don't have to listen to the whole conversation again. Obviously, you can speed it up as well, but Gong is then able to create a 5 min transcript summary transcript of of everything important. So on the one hand on the sales leadership side. There are a lot of coaching possibilities within gong. But then, on the other hand. I think the the second stakeholders, our enablement team. Our sales enablement team and they can obviously also use gong to create best practices, for example. So what we are building or the sales enablement team is building out is kind of like a call library where? We try to summarize either whole conversations or parts of it as so-called snippets. Of conversations where we believe they should be available for everyone. Maybe also, especially for new joiners. That can then go into the gong library. To listen to these kinds of snippets and recordings. To just get a lot of best practices from it. So, therefore. to answer your question, I think there are 2 main stakeholders and the coaching aspect of gong is definitely very, very important.

29 Siddhant Pratap: amazing. So that sounds good, and then I think my next question would be more, you know, like, on a high-level basis of how like the sales forecasting or majorly in this case, the insights from gong is like collaborated within different departments, or communicated so going more towards that like, how is, you know, like the insights from the sale forecast is like. communicated to different stakeholders within the organization, such as the Gtm Cx customer growth team.

30 Interviewee 5: Yeah, I think this is an area where we are. at the beginning. So this is probably something we haven't explored too much yet. But first of all, gong is able to push back information to salesforce as well. So, therefore, in an aggregated way. Making certain outputs of a conversation applicable for reporting. To give an example. What we do is we have a field in salesforce called the main competitor and we use this field to update it from gong directly. So when Gong identifies a competitor in a conversation



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on an opportunity. It will push the information to Salesforce, and then we can use or leverage this kind of information. For our reporting so therefore, this is an insight definitely, or these kinds of insights are definitely valuable for our teams. Also our leadership teams. what we don't do, however, is. and maybe it is helpful if I split this up so on the one hand, these are more how do you say insights on a smaller scale. So more on an opportunity level, I would say, here we are. quite advanced already. So the competitor example I mentioned before is one example, but there are several others where we use information from an individual call to gain insights. On the other hand, though. I think what we are not doing well at the moment is to use the insights from gong on a global scale, let's say so. Aggregating insights from multiple calls to to identify certain patterns, for example, and and things like this. I can only say that Gong offers certain possibilities or opportunities here, so gong obviously has its own insights within the platform. But then gong also has a direct integration, for example, to snowflake. And I know that our Bi team is getting interested in these kind of things. But I would say on a more aggregated scale on a higher scale. This is something we don't really where we don't leverage gong at the moment as much.

31 Siddhant Pratap: So the bi team like you said, do they use any different kinds of forecasting methods for sales, or is it just the gong as of the moment?

32 Interviewee 5: What the Bi team do? I don't know. But they definitely don't use gong for forecasting at the moment. I think the BI team relies on the opportunity data, the raw opportunity data. At the end of the day. You could argue that it's the same as in gong but they rely mainly on the salesforce opportunity data for their forecasting purposes. Yeah, but that's what I meant earlier. So there's a bit of interest in the bi team as well now to explore gong, so might might change in the future.

33 Siddhant Pratap: Okay, okay, amazing, there is always the loading and collaboration happening in real-time. But is there any like initiatives or strategies that Company B uses to continue continuously like improving the sales forecasting methods within the whole revenue operation process.

34 Interviewee 5: Could you? Could you specify what you mean by sales forecasting methods?

35 Siddhant Pratap: So I mean, you say like, say, if your company predicts by your 2023, they will close just a random number for example like 10 million euros. And then you have a path. Okay, that you'll reach this way. But, like, are there any initiatives or strategies that you follow to actually get towards the goal?

36 Interviewee 5: Got it. I think there are multiple strategies. So this is probably where our roadmap within Gtm, strategy, and Operations team. Plays an important role. So there are obviously

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certain not certain, but a lot of different factors influencing the forecast accuracy, I would say so. On the one hand, you could argue. they are. The forecast accuracy is highly dependent on the data quality you have in the systems. So with better data quality, for example, also the accuracy would improve. Then, on the other hand, you could argue that there are that the forecast is highly dependent on the input of the reps. So they make sure that, for example, the close dates and the amounts are always accurate. And here I know that we have a lot of sales enablement efforts, and also our leaders are really pushing on this quite heavily. So I know that there are several things influencing this, but as of right now, I don't have a concrete plan in my head to know whether there are some 1, 2, 3 concrete projects. That leads to a higher forecast accuracy. This might be something that, again, can my colleagues from the data function answer a bit more precisely.

37 Siddhant Pratap: okay. Great, great, great. Then I think my next question would be about the challenges and sort uncertainties that you, as a leader, have felt like in this case, what do people face on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis while using gong in the sense like? If you consider this whole going, you know, like with the whole features it has towards the pipeline coverage? Or have been there any complaints or suggestions for any improvements?

38 Interviewee 5: Yeah. so where do I start? So Gong initially. and the whole category of conversation. Intelligence. in my opinion. being a German person and working in a German Germany-based company. It is sensitive. So what gong does is it's analyzing recordings and when we started using gong, there was actually a lot of pushback from our teams. They felt observed, and they were not really happy about it. So it took a lot of time initially to convince the team about the value of gong. I think not. Now we we've reached a point where I would say the organization is aware about the value. but this was definitely in the early stages, a huge road block. and again,, this might be different in other companies. So we are a European, a German based company. These kind of GDPR conversations, data, privacy. These are very, very sensitive in Germany. And this this might be more difficult. Here we also, for example, have teams sitting in the UK. Where the adoption of gong was absolutely no problem. So, therefore, but since the majority of our sales team is German based. This was definitely a challenge at the beginning. On the other hand, there are. There were also some legal challenges. So it's probably a bit related. But not only our sales team members but then also our our legal and HR Teams. They were, let's say, curious about GTM, so we had to answer a lot of questions before we were actually able to use gong and we also had to make sure that when we have conversations with clients that we are really, really strict with our content management so that we only record calls where we have 100 content proof etc. Things like this. once we have this setup. I would say the biggest challenge for us was not necessarily on the tool itself on gong, because, in my opinion, gong is very, very easy to to understand. So it's it's it's very I think I said it earlier. It has a very, very user-friendly environment. And so you understand it

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very fast, in my opinion. But I think the challenge for us was rather on the process. So Our company, Company B is is a bit of a decentralized company where we allowed until today, even though we are now 2,000 employees. We allow. since the beginning, actually a lot of freedom for individual people in a freedom in a way that they are free to choose how they want to operate. It didn't really matter too much how you reach. I closed one opportunity unless you did. And this was, or this is now that we are a bigger company, a challenge where? It's really difficult now in the scale where we operate to enforce certain processes, it takes a lot of yeah time to change processes. Not only that, but then also do change management and things like this. So therefore, I think what gong helped us with is that we unified the process. bringing everyone into one tool. but due to the nature of how Personuio operates as a decentralized company with a lot of individual freedom. independent of gong. But every other tool changes the process. It always takes a lot of time for us to adapt as well.

39 Siddhant Pratap: I think my last question would be around the future trends. So I'm pretty sure you would have, you know, like, so the first question here would be, would you be more like the choice would be more preferred towards a tool-based sales, forecasting method, or using like a more traditional way of like just going with the data making different models. And then. or like again, the I think this depends on like, what result do you get but like, what would be opinion on like tool forecasting versus database, approach or forecasting.

40 Interviewee 5: so I am coming from a systems, perspective of course, therefore, my answer is tool. On the other hand, a a tool should always only be a vehicle kind of to and enforce maybe a certain process. So even though, you add a certain tool, you, this will not only directly change the process behind it. So you, you also need to change the process and the mindset of the people. But I believe with tools, and therefore looking into the future with also AI. And I'm pretty convinced that Gong will introduce a lot of AI logic very soon. I believe there are a lot of benefits, maybe to automate the forecasting process further. So, as I said earlier. our forecast mechanism right now relies on a lot of manual data entry by the reps by the people. But what I could imagine is that with AI potentially, we at some point, maybe automate the whole forecasting completely. So that gong, let's say, takes the the data entry from from reps as the starting point. But then with AI this logic can take a look at historical conversion rates, historical activities, maybe even benchmarks from other companies, etc. Etc. To then tell you what your forecast will be. So, therefore I believe there's definitely a lot of potentials to streamline and automate this, this whole process in the future.

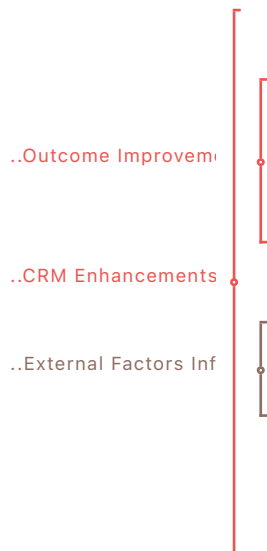
41 Siddhant Pratap: Oh, great! And any other tools that you think could be like apart from gong, because, like with this ever changing world of you know, AI, which I'm pretty sure you know about like things. Keep on changing. A lot of players come in the

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market. But do you have any specific tools in mind that you're aiming for? Or you've read about it? That could be also beneficial in the whole sales process, which has also, like a intelligent platform to itself?

42 Interviewee 5: Yeah. As you said, there are so many tools at the moment coming from nowhere that it's really really difficult to to keep track of them. So I know. And I'm aware that there is a lot of different tools that can support. Different parts of the sales process. So an area. We are looking at at the moment if it is earlier in the funnel where? We wanna use an AI tool to personalize or maybe automate outbound messages. But specifically, on the forecasting piece, I must say, this is an area where I have not really invested a lot of time to think about AI improvements yet. But, as you said. there is so much going on at the moment. Basically every every day a new AI tool comes and claims that it can support in the forecasting process. But this this was for us at the moment at least. Not necessarily a focus area. Also we are pretty happy with what gong delivers for us at the moment. So therefore I cannot name you a concrete tool at the moment.

43 Siddhant Pratap: Okay, okay, yeah, no worries. But I think that sounds good. And thank you so much for the time. I think that sums up all my questions. and I'll just stop the recording.