



# SPROUT SOCIAL CREATES A CUSTOMER-FIRST CULTURE USING GONG

## THE CHALLENGE

Sprout Social wanted more than a call-recording solution. They were looking for a scalable, data-driven way to understand whether its sales teams were adopting new training methodologies, improving deal execution, and creating a seamless experience for prospects and customers.

## THE OUTCOME

Sprout Social now tracks the successful implementation of new sales training methodologies. It also leverages Gong's deal execution capabilities to ensure that deals in the pipeline are on a path to closing, and aligns cross-functional communication on customer accounts for SDRs, AEs, and CSMs.

## RESULTS:

# 40%

increase in sales methodology adoption on discovery calls

# 51%

average gain in closed-won percentage

 Headquarters  
Chicago, Illinois

 Website  
[sproutsocial.com](https://sproutsocial.com)

 Founded  
2010

 Industry  
Internet/Marketing

 Company Size  
700+

*"Help social leaders at every level extract valuable data and insights that drive their business forward."*

That's Sprout Social's mission as a social media management and optimization platform for brands and agencies worldwide. Sprout offers a single hub for social media publishing, analytics, and engagement across an organization's social profiles.

The team at Sprout believes that building a powerful brand means connecting with the people who love and trust it. Its suite of deep listening and analytics, social management, customer care, and advocacy solutions enable organizations and brands of all sizes to be more open, real, and empathetic on social.

As a company that helps its customers manage social media, Sprout wanted to better understand its own sales team's conversations with potential customers.

Before engaging with the team at Gong, Sprout used a call-recording tool that enabled sales managers to listen to calls as they happened, *but that was it*.

The team wanted more—more visibility, more insights, more analytics. Basically, it wanted a solution that does for its sales process what Sprout does for social media.

Marshall Hamilton, Sprout Social's Director of Sales Strategy, knew that the current solution wasn't cutting it, but didn't know which alternatives existed.

*"Our pre-Gong solution that allowed us to listen to calls was good, but there was no way we could hear every single call by every single rep. **The solution we had just didn't scale.**"*



When Sprout heard about Gong, the team was confident that its data would help identify areas to focus on and ensure better compliance with messaging. Sales managers wanted to be sure reps were highlighting key points about the product in their conversations with prospects.

Marshall was also excited about the opportunity to “sift through the noise” of all the sales conversations that were happening. The ability to be better organized was appealing as well, with more visibility into what customers and prospects needed and wanted.

But helping the sales team was just the tip of the [Gong] iceberg.

**Like so many Gong clients before them, what started as a solution for the sales team quickly spread to every customer-facing team in the Sprout Social organization.**

## INCREASE SALES TRAINING ADOPTION

Sprout's first use case involved implementing a sales training methodology, which focused on coaching the sales team to ask the right questions rather than jumping to provide answers. The time and money invested in any training program is enormous, so getting it right mattered.

Sprout wanted to understand how its new sales training methodology played out on the floor. And sales leadership wanted to know how each manager's coaching plan impacted their reps' results.

Pre-Gong, Sprout faced challenges in tracking both individual and team adoption rates. Specifically, it wanted to determine whether using questions about the prospect's pain points could positively impact the discovery process.

Marshall and his team created several Gong trackers for techniques that focused on revealing a prospect's challenges.

These trackers empowered the team to see who was—and more importantly, who wasn't—taking advantage of these techniques. Thanks to Gong's detailed reporting, leadership could identify the low adopters and provide mid-cycle coaching and immediate impact reporting.

In the first five months, this Gong insight and real-time coaching led to a **40% increase in sales methodology adoption** on discovery calls.

Even better, Sprout correlated this data to its closed-won percentages relative to the use of its sales training methodology and found a **51% average gain in its closed-won percentage**.



## DIAGNOSE DEAL HEALTH AND FUNNEL MOVEMENT IN REAL-TIME

Sprout benefits from a robust inbound funnel. With a high volume of inbound leads and trials, it's next to impossible for a sales manager to truly understand how each of those deals is moving through the funnel.

**Gong provides a great visual representation of how each deal is developing, how each conversation is changing and evolving.**

*"We can see the communication rate across the deal, both by email and phone. We can tell which deals are stronger, which ones have more back-and-forth, and which discussions are real conversations,"* says Marshall.

**Gong's deal execution capabilities allow Sprout to diagnose deal health and funnel movement in real-time. There's no more guessing.**

The team is already noticing some benchmarks for success ... like three to four interactions per week with a prospect after reps host a proper discovery, compared to just one or two when they don't.

Because of this data, *"we're able to coach that if reps go for five days without talking to a prospect, there's a good chance that person will forget much of the conversation. But if the sales rep and the prospect communicate every other day, there's a much better chance they will retain the bulk of the knowledge we shared,"* says Marshall.

## FOSTER MORE HUMAN INTERACTION

When it comes to moving deals through the sales team, Sprout operates like most other organizations: SDR/BDR > AE > Onboarding > Customer Success.

But as we all know, each stage of the typical hand-off process is fraught with inefficiencies.

The SDR takes notes during the first call, records them in the company CRM, and passes the lead (and notes) along to the AE. The AE takes the notes and asks many similar—if not *the exact same questions*—the second time around. (Yep, that feels like a colossal waste of time to the prospect.)

### **Gong helps unify teams around customer needs to create a seamless customer experience.**

Consider onboarding sessions. AEs don't always take the best notes (Sorry! True tho.), and often their notes may not be helpful to the onboarding process. Then the transition from onboarding to the CSM is also full of redundancies and inefficiencies.

*"It's like a huge game of telephone," says Marshall.*

With Gong, the SDR records their conversation and the AE can listen to that call before the transition. More importantly, the AE can hear how the conversation flowed. This helps **the AE provide the customer with the best experience because the AE goes into the discussion genuinely understanding the full context of past conversations.**

*The phrasing of how concepts are referenced is also important in a deal cycle," says Marshall.  
"Keeping the flow consistent throughout the whole cycle ensures a smooth hand-off the whole way."*

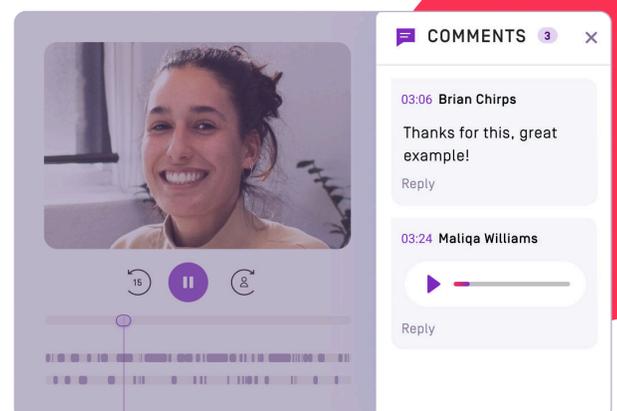
**Bonus: The entire conversation between sales/onboarding/CSM and prospect-turned-customer is accessible for teams to ensure the best possible support.**

## CROWDSOURCE FEEDBACK IN REAL-TIME

Sprout's growth is driven by its product. In fact, in the last few years, it has released more than 100 features *per year*.

When launching new products, Sprout balances customer feedback with prospect needs, all while predicting industry direction. **From design to marketing to roadmap planning, Sprout's entire product team is heavily plugged into Gong.**

If the team finds that customers are asking for "X feature," it can search Gong, then do a deep dive into the data to uncover what customers asked for related to that feature.

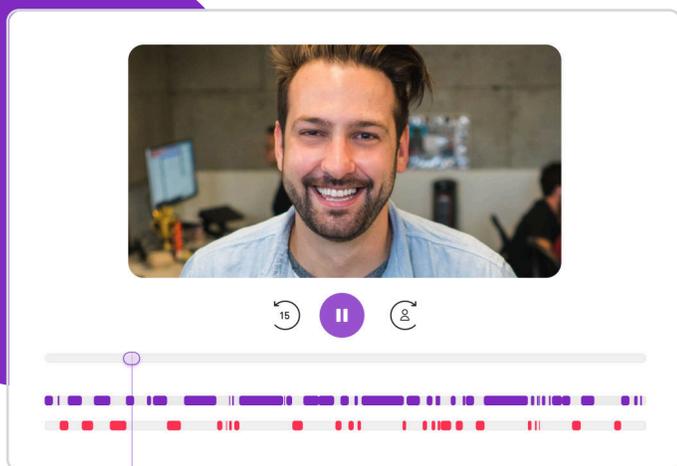


*“As we think about new product features,” says Marshall, “we consider how we are positioning that feature and how it should be designed to more accurately represent customer feedback. We ask, ‘Is this truly the way the customer described it in their product feedback?’”*

The data often reveal mentions of potential product enhancements that are not formally submitted as feedback. Using Gong, the product team can tease out *how often* these informal feature requests pop up. This, in turn, can lead to more in-depth, customer-facing interviews and market research.

## HOW EVERY SPROUT TEAM USES GONG

Sales. Customer Success. Product. When it comes to Gong usage at Sprout Social, multiple teams get in on the action. They use Gong for new feature development and adoption to create a more customer-centric organization.



### Adopt new features

Sprout Social recently created a “Gong Champions” group internally. They’re the truly “outrageous fans of Gong,” as Marshall puts it.

This cross-functional team even has its own Slack channel. When a new Gong feature is introduced, this is the group that drives the adoption.

*“Gong treats us like we’re part of the company,” said Marshall.*

There’s now a broad spectrum of individuals who better understand how Sprout customers describe themselves. This enables Sprout to move at a higher velocity than one-to-one customer interviews would permit.

Gong has enabled Sprout to iterate and improve upon its products, its messaging, its marketing, and so on. Additionally, it’s helped ensure that Sprout serves its customers by better understanding their needs and wants.

### Create a more customer-centric organization

Like so many clients, when Sprout implemented Gong, it was solely for its sales team. And like many other clients, **word quickly got out that Gong is a valuable asset for more than just sales.**

Marshall: *"We quickly started engaging our listening licenses for the rest of the company. Marketing wanted to use Gong to better understand the customer's voice. The product team wanted to get more engaged with customer-facing feedback. I started getting pinged left and right by other teams in the organization. **To this day, as new teams are formed, they ask to use Gong.**"*

Gong has helped Sprout to ensure that every team and every role within the Sprout organization is customer-centric.

No matter where you sit on the Sprout team, you support an end product that drives business, revenue, and value. In many organizations, employees don't see the impact they have on a day-to-day basis. They can't imagine how their work flows to the customer and how their efforts materialize into revenue.

Gong changes that completely.



**Gong enables the Sprout team to see and hear what customers say. They have access to the data, the metrics, and the actual voice of the customer. And it changes how they work.**

Now *that's* empowering.

## GET STARTED TODAY

See how Sprout Social uses Gong.io to achieve these results. Request your demo today.

See it live

