

ASCENDING THE PEAK: HOW GONG HELPED NEW HIRES AT IRON MOUNTAIN HIT THEIR RAMP TARGETS



The challenge

Iron Mountain needed to adjust to a fully remote work environment, while properly onboarding new reps and keeping teams aligned and thriving. They also wanted to understand what was happening in sales calls, and more importantly, which actions to take based on their conversational data.



The outcome

Using Gong, Iron Mountain coached and developed their people, despite most of their teams working from home. An impressive 60% of Iron Mountain's new reps now hit their two main metrics (double club) within their first five months, versus only 9% of reps pre-Gong, a 566% improvement. They also shaved off 3 months of time for new reps to hit their first metric.

Company Info:

- Location of headquarters: Boston, Massachusetts
- Founded: 1951
- Company size: 225,000+ customers; 24,000+ employees
- Website: [ironmountain.com](https://www.ironmountain.com)
- Industry: Enterprise information management



It's become an all-too-familiar story: A large organization with a long history of doing business in person is suddenly — and without warning — forced to pivot to an entirely work-from-home, remote company.

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Christine Canfield, their Vice President, SMB, Inside Sales, faced several critical questions initially: How do we manage people remotely? How do we onboard new team members? How do we coach our staff with limited-to-no visibility?

“We really needed to evolve the organization... and quickly,” said Christine.

Gong provided Iron Mountain with the visibility and call insights it was missing.

“Gong was what we needed to take things to the next level and really grow and evolve with our customers in a rapidly changing environment,” shared Christine.

The payoff is clearly visible in their results.

Since implementing Gong, 60% of Iron Mountain's new reps hit their two main metrics faster a 148% improvement that translates into more sales, sooner. In addition, new hires were able to onboard faster, reducing the time to ramp by 3-months.

The Gong-Iron Mountain partnership was born out of an urgent need, and grew quickly thanks to near-immediate results.



HOW THE GONG-IRON MOUNTAIN RELATIONSHIP BEGAN (AND QUICKLY GREW)

Maria McNamara is the Director of Inside Sales at Iron Mountain. When she first joined the team, she asked her personal network for advice on coaching her team effectively.

But Maria wanted to understand more than just the “art” of selling. She wanted to learn about the science sides of sales... the data, the insights.

Eventually, Maria also needed to replicate the in-office experience as much as possible with a team that was 100% remote.

[SPOILER ALERT: Gong provided her with all the science-focused, reality-based data she needed.]

“Everyone in my network talked about Gong,” said Maria. And it didn’t take long for Maria to become a “Gong fangirl,” as she put it.

Before implementing Gong, Iron Mountain’s new reps participated in “physical ride-alongs,” sitting beside a seasoned rep, headphones on. In a working-from-home world, this wasn’t possible.

Additionally, trying to find the right call to listen to had always been a hit or miss exercise. As a result, Maria and her team couldn’t target specific behaviors, and that was something she wanted to correct.

With Gong’s Call Library, new reps now access the calls they need to hear — the “best-in-show” calls they should emulate across the sales process. They can also listen to calls that match their speaking style. This gives them an excellent opportunity to engage with more skilled sellers. “Hey, I just listened to your call. Loved it! Super helpful. Can you help me understand how you...?”

From Maria’s perspective,

Gong’s ‘trackers’ feature empowers her and other managers to hone in on specific types of calls (discovery, pricing conversations, etc.) to ensure that every rep implements the recommended coaching.

It sounds amazing. But adoption at Iron Mountain wasn’t quite smooth sailing from day one.



FROM SKEPTICS TO BELIEVERS

New reps were excited that the organization was investing in their development, and those who had used Gong before were all in. Still, the more seasoned reps were... skeptical.

The tides turned quickly as the vets learned that Gong helped them improve their skills and recognize when good things happened. The numbers spoke for themselves, and once reps saw those positive metrics (i.e., sales increasing), they got fired up about Gong.

Specifically, the reps loved three things:

- They didn’t need to take notes.
- They weren’t concerned about missing something important.
- They could focus on the conversation and active listening.

Early wins helped solidify Gong as the must-have solution for the sales team.

New sales reps began hitting their quota *during* ramp phase. Tenured reps who had been struggling, started to have more consistent success thanks to Gong and call coaching.

“When we looked at the data,” said Christine, “it became quite clear what reps could do to be more successful. We understood the value of next steps, for example, as a clear indicator of success.”



Additionally, Christine and the team were able to prove (again, with data) the importance of talk ratios. “Especially for new reps, there is a feeling that dead space needs to be filled,” shared Christine. “When you are talking more than the customer, you probably aren’t practicing active listening or learning what the customer really needs.”

With Gong, calls became more of a strategic consultation instead of a straight sale. Reps started solving customers’ problems rather than suggesting a specific product.

Overall, the team overall started “getting better together,” as Christine put it. “Today, during team huddles, managers often share one call and the team evaluates the good and the bad. This helps all the reps in the room learn and it brings them closer together.”



AUTONOMOUS LEARNING IS THE NEW REALITY

Iron Mountain believes strongly in empowering its employees.

As the Gong-Iron Mountain partnership grows, the sales team is digging into more ways to take advantage of Gong’s data and insights. Specifically, they are beginning to use Gong alerts to understand deal health. They looked for key indicators that each deal was healthy and likely to close — such as whether pricing was discussed.

This type of data helps reps become more autonomous. They can use Gong data to self-coach by detecting where they need to improve their sales process.

Christine explains that “As leaders, we are always preaching the importance of ‘owning your development, your career path.’ Gong helps reps understand where they struggle and where they excel... what their sales superpower is.”

Maria says Gong has enabled reps to view all trackers across their team and focus on wherever they want to make improvements. If they're unsure about what to focus on, they can ask for help from a call coach, a manager, or a peer. They've even found that reps regularly look at the Gong leaderboard, then listen to the leaders' calls to glean best practices.

Christina Mahurin, the Sales Training Manager at Iron Mountain, said it brilliantly:

"I CONSIDER GONG TO BE A PERSONAL ASSISTANT."

Previously, when she was in a sales rep role, Gong had taken a ton of work off Christina's plate by helping her track which deals were likely (or unlikely) to close and pointing out opportunities for growth in her conversations.

"GONG ALLOWS REPS TO BE FULLY PRESENT IN ALL OF THEIR SALES CONVERSATIONS."



CULTURE (AND COACHING) IS KING AT IRON MOUNTAIN

The culture at Iron Mountain focuses on continuous development and upskilling.

Establishing a culture of coaching is a really important aspect of this approach. It's critical to the success of inside sales. For many of Iron Mountain's sales reps, this is their first corporate job. “There are so many opportunities for growth and career development,” shares Christine. “We want them to start off on the right track.”

"OUR MAIN FOCUS IS ON FRIENDLY COMPETITION, COLLABORATION, AND COACHING — AND GONG HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE AT REINFORCING ALL THREE. WITHOUT GONG, OUR COACHING CULTURE WOULD NOT BE WHAT IT IS TODAY."

Interestingly, more people have been onboarded since the company moved to a working-from-home model than when everyone was in the office. Most of the team haven't even met in person! That can make it more, well... awkward to ask for help. It's much easier to be humble and ask for support when you're face to face, and able to read body language. Gong has smoothed the edges on this issue.

"GONG HAS REALLY ACTED AS A VEHICLE — A TOOL — FOR US TO CONTINUE GROWING AND MAINTAINING THE CULTURE WE WANT HERE AT IRON MOUNTAIN."

When it comes to coaching with Gong, the Iron Mountain sales leaders are quite methodical.

Managers aim to listen to 10 calls per week and provide feedback via comments, such as positive reinforcement and recommendations on how to approach situations differently. They've also built in group coaching by listening to calls during team huddles.

They've even invested in a new role: Call Coaches. These folks are dedicated to building one-on-one relationships with sales reps. They listen to Gong calls throughout the week, then host call coaching sessions where reps are asked to share Gong calls that went well and calls they need help with.

Call Coaches leverage Gong's scorecards feature to manage each rep's development. The sales process is tailor-built into a company's scorecard so the coach can score a call, leave notes, and create action items. This enables reps to see where they need to up their game, as well as track their progress over time.

Because Gong is engrained into the sales process through scorecards and business reviews, it's become the new norm, the right way of doing business.

"HAVING GONG DATA THAT SUPPORTS MANAGERS AND REPS DURING ONE-ON-ONES HAS PROVEN INVALUABLE. WHILE EVERYONE USES GONG SLIGHTLY DIFFERENTLY," SHARED MARIA, "GONG IS 100% PART OF EVERYONE'S DAY-TO-DAY ROUTINE."



IRON MOUNTAIN IS LIVING IN REALITY WITH FULLY ALIGNED TEAMS

Gone are the days of assumptions and guessing and hoping that reps will tune into the "right" call.

Thanks to Gong, Iron Mountain's coaching and training is always reality-based. Nothing runs on subjective opinions.

That has switched the conversation from managers saying, “I think you’re talking too much on your calls and should give your customer a chance to speak” to “The Gong data shows that you’re talking more than your customers, and that’s negatively impacting your win rates.”

Reps’ ability to see this data and its direct impact has led many of them to shorten their monologues (and close more deals).

From her days as a sales rep, Christina remembers having many customer conversations that “felt like everything went smoothly.” But the reality was sometimes quite different from perception.

"GONG HELPS SURFACE AREAS WHERE SALES REPS CAN MAKE REAL IMPROVEMENTS IN ORDER TO INCREASE THEIR CHANCES OF CLOSING DEALS."

With the help of Gong, Iron Mountain’s teams have also become better aligned. As Christine shared, “Sales and Marketing have always had a good working relationship; however, now that Marketing (and other teams) are also able to provide feedback on Gong calls, **the entire organization is better aligned.**

Maria echoes that sentiment: “Our Marketing, Sales Enablement, and Inside Sales teams around the globe all have collaborator licenses. This cross-team alignment around reality has been critical to Iron Mountain’s success.”

Before Gong, if someone from the Marketing team wanted to do a “seat ride,” it would be a two-day event. It involved coordinating people to sit with, searching out the right call to listen in on, and hoping the conversation would be rich and valuable.

With Gong, everyone in the organization can find calls that target whatever pain point, product, or solution they’re focused on.

Christine also loves how Gong data clarifies why the reps win deals. That data provides credibility and encourages other Iron Mountain teams to align with the insights found during sales calls. If you’ve never been a sales rep, it’s hard to fully appreciate the work and effort that goes into closing a deal. Per Christine, “Gong has created visibility so other teams can truly understand and respect the role sales plays in our organization.”



THE FUTURE OF GONG + IRON MOUNTAIN

“I’m so proud of my team and how they’ve risen to the challenge of selling from home. They’ve really stepped up their game, come together, and helped each other grow.

GONG HAS BEEN INTEGRAL IN FACILITATING THIS GROWTH, BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS IN A DATA-DRIVEN MANNER.”

Christine has also been impressed by how useful Gong is when she onboards people remotely.

Suffice it to say, Christine is happy with how things are going. Ask her about the future and she’ll tell you that she’s taking Gong’s data-driven customer insights and using them to launch the “next big thing” Iron Mountain offers to customers. Gong’s data will shape every facet of their next launch strategy.

Maria also loves the partnership between Gong and Iron Mountain. “It doesn’t feel at all like a typical vendor relationship. The entire Gong team is so responsive, so helpful.” She says it’s exciting working with Gong. “It’s really helped to reinforce collaboration, something that is especially challenging in a remote work environment. With Gong’s help, we’re tackling it brilliantly.”

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