

LinkedIn Chooses Xactly to Increase Agility and Drive Strategic Growth



“At this scale and stage of our business, it would be nearly impossible to do strategic sales planning without the agility that Xactly provides. Managing compensation effectively at this scale without an automated solution would limit our ability to make strategic decisions, because our time would be spent calculating comp on spreadsheets, which is unnecessary. We’d still be stuck in the mentality of ‘what can we do?’ versus ‘what do we want to do, that will drive results.’”

- Matt Sheppard, Global Sales Compensation Operations and Systems at LinkedIn

ABOUT LINKEDIN

Founded in 2003, LinkedIn connects the world’s professionals to make them more productive and successful. With more than 675+ million members worldwide, including executives from every Fortune 500 company, LinkedIn is the world’s largest professional network. The company has a diversified business model with revenue coming from Talent Solutions, Marketing Solutions, and Premium Subscriptions products. Headquartered in Silicon Valley, LinkedIn has offices across the globe.

CHALLENGES

As a continually evolving global company, LinkedIn needed an Intelligent Revenue solution to increase efficiency for its Sales Operations and Sales Compensation teams, provide visibility into sales team targets and performance for its executives, and to allow leaders to make quick and meaningful changes to sales plans that would drive the necessary sales behavior.

When we sat down with Matt Sheppard, Global Sales Compensation Operation and Systems Manager at LinkedIn, he shared his philosophy that “Every healthy growing company has to reinvent themselves every five years or so, or risk falling behind. LinkedIn has grown from 125 reps to 5000 reps using Xactly. It’s a natural transformation to reassess how things are working

and adopt a mindset of asking what will get us to and beyond \$30 billion. Xactly’s solution has supported our ability to do just that. You can’t drive a business forward with status quo thinking - you have to evolve from a “tactical do-er” to becoming a strategic thinker. That drives business forward.”

SOLUTION

Xactly Incent: LinkedIn has been a long-time customer of Xactly. Originally, the platform was rolled out to a small sales team and they have since onboarded close to 5000 reps onto Xactly. LinkedIn has consistently used Xactly Incent over the last ten years to drive growth, in addition to building out its holistic vision by adding in Xactly Insights, Forms, and Connect to increase operational efficiency, and expand visibility into sales data for its leadership team.

Sheppard shared, “As we prepare our sales plans, we want to make sure that all of our internal stakeholders are on the same page about our goals and how we will use compensation to align our business objectives to our sales results.” LinkedIn meets weekly with a tiger team made up of Sales, HR, Compensation, and Finance for planning. Then they lock in the design elements. They do this ten weeks prior to the roll-out of the new plan so that they can do the configuration and pay in a timely manner.

Industry: Media & Internet

Founded: 2002

Core Products: Xactly Incent, Forms, Connect



Xactly Connect: In the last year, LinkedIn switched from using Delta to using Xactly Connect to manage its sales data and sales compensation plans. Xactly Connect helps companies automatically integrate data from on-premises systems, as well as SaaS vendor applications, such as CRM, ERP, and HRIS platforms. One way to think of it is like a “communications bus” that transports data into the key areas of the business to inform better decision-making. Xactly Connect’s complete data integration platform supports everything from inbound data feeds to the creation of custom tables and data pipelines to perform complex ETL data transformations.

This change allowed them to realize greatly increased efficiency. Without Connect, LinkedIn would not be able to make the necessary changes to quota that the sales team wanted as a response to the pandemic. As Sheppard shared, “The first benefit we recognized with Xactly Connect is that we have a ton of control over our changes. It’s very nice to be able to try new things and remain flexible. During this year, we’ve needed to change rules and plans three times more than usual, tripling our efforts. Xactly is the reason we’ve been able to have this level of control and flexibility; without it we would’ve never been able to manage this unprecedented amount of change.”

With Connect, everything is automated, and monitoring and reporting bring increased visibility to LinkedIn. They also have been able to integrate new data sources in addition to Xactly and Salesforce. This move away from manual efforts and toward complete automation of the process has freed up Sheppard’s team immensely. Every night, the team is able to view any potential errors and then can immediately make corrections to assure that reps are paid both with accuracy with speed.

Xactly Forms: When we spoke with Sheppard, he shared that their initial plan for using Xactly Forms

will be for SPIFF approval and submission. The team hopes to save several cycles and see increased SOX compliance and audit capabilities as a result of using Xactly Forms. Forms will also help the team to seamlessly manage new hires’ onboarding period and supports the action required to hit their OKRs. Sheppard added that “With Xactly Forms, we hope to reduce the time spent on auditing from 120 hours per month to less than a few minutes for a quick process audit.”

“Xactly takes its customers’ needs and feedback into account when it comes to product development. When we ask for specific functionality, Xactly listens. That’s part of what makes Xactly a business partner and not just a vendor. We have tremendous support and experience new intelligence and innovations with Xactly.”

- Matt Sheppard, Global Sales Compensation Operations and Systems at LinkedIn

RESULTS

- ▶ Gained ability to pivot easily and make 3X more plan changes year over year.
- ▶ Improved executive visibility into sales team performance trends and plan effectiveness.
- ▶ Anticipate reduction in time spent on ICM processes like auditing, payment calculations, file sharing, and approvals from 120 hours/month to minutes.
- ▶ Remain SOX compliant and increased auditability to avoid costly penalties or irregularities.

Last and certainly not least, executives on the team enjoy the flexibility and control provided by Xactly. When LinkedIn made specific plan changes to help the organization respond to COVID-19, there was increased visibility into all of the benefits of using a solution like Xactly to manage sales performance. Sheppard added that “Having Xactly’s platform has helped the entire team’s career trajectory. There’s a whole team that would not be getting the level of kudos and recognition that we are currently if we didn’t have Xactly.”

