

# Give Me Something I Can Use:

Sales Workstyle Management (SWM) as the Conduit to Higher Acceptance,  
Regular Use, and Increased Sales Among Salespeople.



## Sales Workstyle Management

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## I. Overview

### **Salespeople deserve a useful tool.**

Think about it. A company doesn't exist to make things. A company exists to sell things.

Take a look at the term, "Salesperson." Does it say anything about "data entry" there? What about "transcriptions" or "accounting?" No, it only says "sales." So why burden these people with so many other superfluous distractions?

Salespeople want to sell. That's why they get hired, that's what they're good at, that's what will move an entire organization forward. Salespeople don't want to have to file endless and time-consuming reports. They're ready to drive a speedboat, not a barge loaded with paperwork.

Salespeople will embrace and utilize a system and tools that actually help them to sell, by respecting the unique workstyle of the salesperson.

If the choices are to lead, follow, or get out of the way, would you settle for two out of three? Lead – by truly empowering salespeople with a workable, easy to understand software system that they'll actually use, then get out of the way and let them do what you hired them to do in the first place...**Sell!**

## II. Challenges for Companies

### **The world has changed, but not all sales strategies have.**

Achieving higher sales on a consistent basis may be easier said than done for companies these days, thanks to myriad global, industry-specific, and internal factors converging for the first time.

Obviously, companies operate today in a more competitive sales environment, as fueled by increased globalization of markets and higher Internet-driven commerce. A recent national study of sales organizations conducted by Forum cited "an overarching need to build more value into customer transactions and create strong, resilient relationships with existing customers" as companies' main requirement to increase sales. Targeting new customer segments and weeding out the underperformers must be done to increase overall profitability, as well.



That same report listed technology as having the most dramatic effect on sales effectiveness – but warned that the potential for improvement inherent in the applied use of technology only becomes tangible when the sales teams understand and embrace the technology. From the customers' perspective, technology represents another challenge for companies since expectations of timeliness, responsiveness, and instant solutions become extremely high.

### III. Challenges for Salespeople

#### **Buying/ selling cycles are out of synch. CRM/ SFA aren't useful or used.**

The job of selling keeps getting more and more challenging today.

Salespeople have to navigate ever more complex purchasing behaviors, thanks to processes and safeguards like committee-based reviews and approvals, mandated demonstrations of return on investment, required proof-of-concept trials, and more. Salespeople have to understand and address the buying needs and objectives of economic buyers, business buyers, technical buyers and end users – all to close one sale. In addition, companies' buying cycles are starting much earlier – usually before they have made contact with your salespeople - thanks to information becoming increasingly ubiquitous and accessible via the Internet and other forms of global communication. Bottom line? The buying cycle has become misaligned with traditional selling cycles, adding even more challenges for salespeople.

Well-intended sales managers have poured time, effort and money into technologies such as CRM and SFA to help their sales teams navigate these new challenges, but the results have been less-than-stellar, and for one simple and undeniable reason:

- These products were never really designed to help salespeople in the first place.

SFA and CRM systems find their strength in tracking and managing the sales process, not actually making sales. They are oriented more toward pre-sales planning and post-sales analysis. Relying on SFA and CRM may



make a nice donut, but you're left with a big hole in the middle where the sales are supposed to be.

#### IV. CRM/SFA Have Failed

##### **Ignoring salespeople's workstyle yields low adoption/ sales effectiveness.**

Salespeople have a unique workstyle, both as a profession and among individuals within that profession.

Sales tools that neglect or negate the importance of this workstyle waste an enormous amount of time for salespeople. Time that they'd rather be spending directly on sales-related efforts. A study by The Yankee Group showed that salespeople spend only 26 percent of their average day selling. Major League Baseball may be the only other profession in which a .260 batting average could be called acceptable – and for salespeople that .260 average only represents time spent on sales-related activity, not necessarily closing successful sales.

A Gartner research report found that 55 percent of sales technology deployments fail to deliver measurable benefits because of the inability to achieve user adoption. The study recognizes that traditional CRM tools that simply enable managers to receive reports, monitor salespeople and forecast sales do little to benefit the salesperson. According to the Gartner Group, more than half of sales technology introduced to salespeople fails, and most often for the following reasons:

- Lack of strong end-user salesperson buy-in.
- Focusing on management needs, with not enough emphasis on sales people and customers.
- Poorly defined or flawed sales process.
- Projects initiated with unclear goals, metrics, and expectations.
- Lack of commitment from senior executives, sales management, and channel partners.

Neither CRM nor SFA sprang from a desire to meet the needs of salespeople in the first place. Data-driven CRM evolved to capture all information about a customer. How the salesperson actually used that



information to identify, pursue and ultimately close a sale was left to the imagination. The essence of SFA came down to establishing a company's legacy system to retain account and opportunity data once a salesperson has left the organization. Both CRM and SFA concentrated on capturing data, not necessarily sales.

These facts virtually scream for the need for a workable software product to assist in the heat of the sale – the day-to-day, on-the-front-lines, basic work of identifying leads, tracking prospects, assembling useful intelligence, presenting solid information designed to alleviate a client's pain, accurately monitoring their interest and seriousness, and actually closing the sale.

It all points directly to a new approach to sales support, called Sales Workstyle Management (SWM).

#### V. Sales Workstyle Management (SWM) Breaks New Ground

#### **SWM: The first approach using salesperson's workstyle as its foundation.**

SWM represents just what it says – a focus on the workstyles of salespeople to support them and help them in closing more business. Salespeople like interacting with prospects, figuring out how best to relate and communicate with their buyers. And they absolutely, positively, indisputably, and unmistakably do not like entering data.

The salesperson's life encompasses traveling, managing the expectations of customers and the company, accountability to stark metrics of performance, confidently forecasting sales, a lot of talking, and deriving enjoyment from time spent with prospects and customers to help solve their problems.

Just as a person's lifestyle defines the way he or she likes to live, salespeople have a workstyle – the way they like to work. It's unique to each salesperson, but always grounded in a single-minded focus on achieving sales results. Broadly speaking, the workstyle of today's salespeople focuses on the following activities:





A salesperson's workstyle is made up of their traits, habits and activities needed to close deals.

**Strategic Selling** – understanding their prospects' needs, establishing value for multiple buyers, beating competition, and closing deals to meet ever increasing targets.

**Prospecting** – finding and qualifying a growing number of leads to decide which hold the most promise for actual sales.

**Communicating** – externally with buyers to differentiate products and offerings and win deals; internally with various departments such as engineering, marketing, accounting etc. to help bring competitive products to market.

**Networking** – building relationships to prospect as well as service clients.

**Reporting** – providing updates on sales and progress.



With such a full plate, salespeople need tools that help them manage their high-stress workstyles more easily. They readily adopt technologies that help them accomplish these tasks – witness cell phones, Blackberrys, Excel, PowerPoint – by helping them communicate better with prospects and customers. They actually help salespeople make sales. Keeping the focus on helping salespeople sell more, the SWM approach leads to products and services that provide direct assistance to salespeople. SWM includes any offering that helps salespeople do one or more of the following critical sales activities:

- Objectively map and measure buyer's interest levels...
- Identify "invisible" buyers who influence purchasing decisions within organizations.
- Outline questions for more effective conversations with senior executives.
- Define a proven and consistent selling process complete with what to do and how.
- Provide the ability to collaborate with buyers or prospects in a unique manner.
- And most important, increases selling time and effectiveness by reducing or eliminating data-entry requirements.

This represents the key difference and most striking point of appeal among salespeople for SWM – it does not burden them with extra data entry just for providing their managers with forecasts, activity monitoring, or visibility into the sales pipeline. The reduction in data entry can result from using an SWM technology that automatically updates a salesperson's selling progress on individual deals, or from off-loading data to an assistant for entry into the system.

Salespeople want to have as much time at their disposal as possible to sell. SWM gives them that time.

SWM improves salesperson effectiveness as well as the sales manager's results.



## VI. Incorporating SWM Yields Higher Revenues

By leveraging SWM, organizations can elevate the performance of their sales teams dramatically. While SWM also helps top sellers do better, it positively affects the performance of average salespeople the most, thus reducing the gap between the top performers and the rest of the sales force.

- Increasing the selling effectiveness and productivity of the existing sales teams helps companies scale and grow revenues without needing to hire more reps.
- Salespeople are not the only ones that win by adopting SWM. Sales managers and senior executives do too. Using SWM, the role of sales managers changes from that of 'big brother' to a guide and partner.
- Conversations in sales meetings change from status updates to strategic discussions about moving deals forward.
- Managers have complete visibility into the status of deals and know exactly where in the selling cycle a prospect is. This helps them guide the salesperson better as well as forecast with more accuracy.

In addition, because SWM focuses on defining and implementing common selling processes across sales teams:

- Companies can ensure consistency in messages being conveyed by their salespeople to prospects and customers.
- Senior management can operate with greater confidence in setting milestones and recommending activities to shorten the sales cycle and achieve results.
- New hires have complete clarity about the proven selling processes for the company leading to significantly shorter ramp-up times.

In one documented instance, in fact, a company using an SWM system cut its typical eight-week sales cycle in half and reduced the new hire ramp time by four weeks per sales rep.



## VII. Summary

**SWM: Finally an approach that focuses on helping salespeople sell more and managers manage better.**

CRM and SFA don't work in generating higher sales because they're just not used by salespeople. And they're not used because they're not developed from the salesperson's perspective.

As a result, salespeople operate independently from each other – even within the same organization – and with mixed results. At the same time, though, salespeople are held to the same rigid metrics of performance and success. Reach your quota, period, in other words.

Wouldn't it be better to arm salespeople with software and tools that have actually been developed to help achieve higher sales, instead of compiling pre-sale planning and post-sale analysis reports for managers?

Wouldn't it be better to respect the unique workstyle of salespeople and the inherently subjective nature of the sales process?

Wouldn't it be better to give salespeople a workable, flexible, easy-to-grasp, and simple-to-implement tool that they will actually use?

The SWM approach believes so, and offers all of these features to salespeople, their managers, and their organizations – enabling increased sales across the board.

