

You're Wasting Sales Training Dollars



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How much do you spend on sales training? Even if you're doing it all in house, someone is spending time preparing and delivering the training. And, the real cost is in the time that your sales team is not out working with prospects and customers.

How do you know if this investment is paying off? Can you measure the results of what the sales team has learned?

If you don't have a means for measuring basic sales behaviors and results, then you're likely throwing your sales training investment down the drain.

It strikes me as ironic that sales people so often resist new CRM systems. Management is faced with the task of "selling" the **CRM solution** to the sales team.

- As sales managers we're constantly searching for ways to help our sales team grow their selling skills.
- At the company level we all know that our competitors are growing and changing constantly,
- Every customer facing staff member has the responsibility to outshine the competition.
- AND, tracking sales behavior is the only way to know if sales training is working!

The point is that in business we're all always trying to get better at selling. I'll assert here that Sales Excellence has more to do with learning to serve our customers more effectively—than with learning better presentation skills or other sales techniques. So in that sense, Sales Excellence calls for knowing your customer thoroughly and using that knowledge to serve their needs. Most sales training is directed at product knowledge, presentation skills and sales technique rather than customer service and customer knowledge.

From an economic point of view, you really have 4 choices to increase sales:

- 1) Invest \$5 to 10k per salesperson in sales training.
- 2) Invest tens of thousands in additional marketing and ads.
- 3) Hire and train new salespeople at a cost of \$15k or more per salesperson.
- 4) Invest in a CRM to automate and manage your marketing and sales processes—roughly \$1,000 per salesperson.

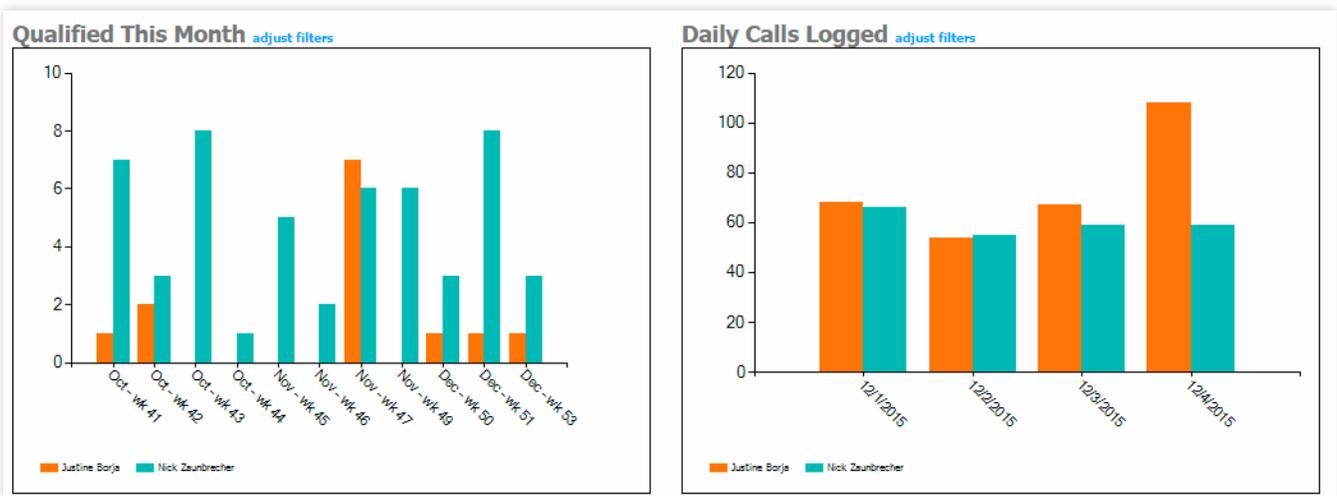
When you think about what we do in our customer interactions day in and day out, we have a ways to go. It's easy to get caught up in running from customer to customer to qualify and close.

And we have our reasons for this! We've got revenue goals to meet. Experience has taught us that it takes a few leads, presentations and proposals to find one real customer.

For a salesperson to improve, he or she must be able to look at what they're doing and find opportunities for improvement in the techniques, the sequence or the offering. That takes objectivity. Objectivity is not generally a common trait of sales people. By their nature salespeople are single minded, focused and determined.

Even a very basic CRM system can assist an individual salesperson in objectively analyzing what they're doing now to find areas for improvement. Just the simple act of writing down what happened in a sales meeting or presentation helps bring clarity. It also enables comparison.

I can see that I make more calls than the next guy but, he's closing more dollar volume. There's probably something to be learned there! Of course, there's the old axiom "You can't manage what you can't measure." It's true for salespeople for certain.



Even a salesperson working to improve their own game needs to be able to measure their activity and find bottlenecks in the process. Again, an individual salesperson can use a simple CRM solution to look back on the last quarter and work out how many new leads, new proposals, etc. it takes to generate an order and use that information to set personal goals for growth in the coming quarter.

And your **CRM software** can automate certain repetitive tasks and allow us to manage more prospects efficiently. Does this just lead to getting faster at doing the same old thing? Perhaps but, managing more prospects and closing more deals by virtue of implementing a new CRM technology can't be bad.

However, if the CRM solution also enables analysis of what we're doing to generate leads and prospects or where the new leads we're pursuing are coming from, now we're not just getting faster at the same old thing, we're really getting better at growing our business!

If **Sales Excellence** is identifying customer needs and meeting them, then CRM technology and analytics allow us to identify the market segment or lead source that provides our sales team with the prospects that truly need the unique offering your company has created. Now instead of making more calls, sending more proposals and closing more deals simply because we're faster with our new CRM solution, we're focusing specifically on prospects that are most likely to need and value our products and services.

The most common benefits of implementing a CRM solution are:

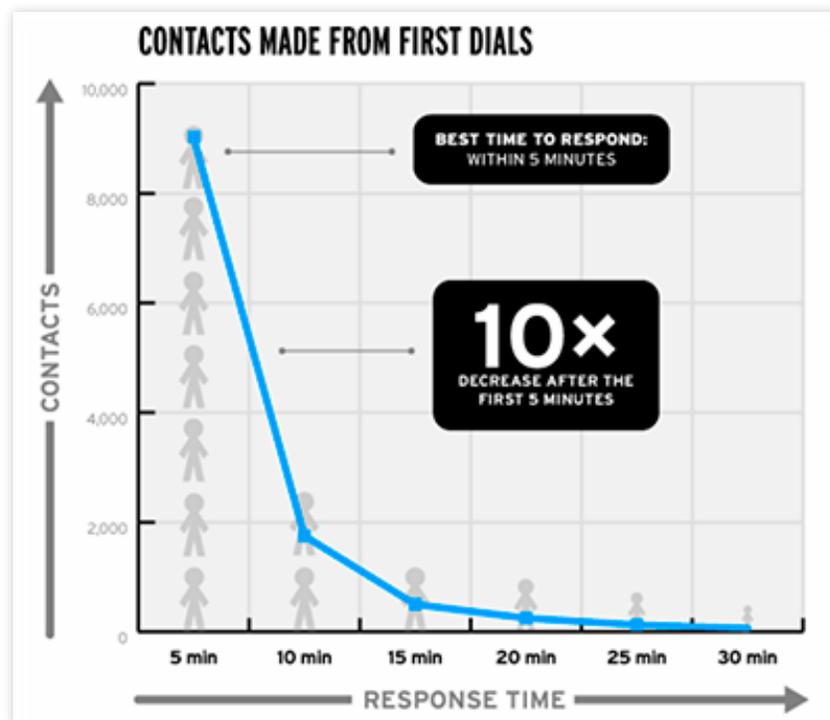
- Larger pipeline of deals per sales person which leads to more new business, sales and customers.
- Greater frequency of leads that want and need what we offer—which leads to a higher close rate
- And, increased return on investment in marketing and advertising because we can re-direct spending to the most productive venues.
- Allowing your entire organization to work as a team in approaching each and every customer as an individual.
- Automating marketing communications to increase leads and engagement of prospects and customers.

Many businesses still allow the salesperson to be the only person in the organization that really knows the customer. That means the customer cannot get help, pricing, specs or even place an order without talking to their sales person in many cases. What most executives don't fully appreciate is that your competitor is only a quick Internet Search away from your customer.

Pricing, answers, specs and ordering is readily available on your competitor's website. When your customer calls in for information and is told that their sales person is unavailable, do you really expect them to just sit there and wait for a call back?

Sure, in many situations the customer is not in a hurry or has a long standing relationship with your company. There is some room for error, often. But, not always. In fact, isn't the customer in a hurry to place an order the customer we all dream about?

Yet if you're entire customer facing organization can't jump in and assist your customers with their needs with the benefit of complete knowledge of the existing relationship (pricing, terms, unique specs, etc.), then when that hurried customer calls in, you're literally asking him to go search up your competitor!

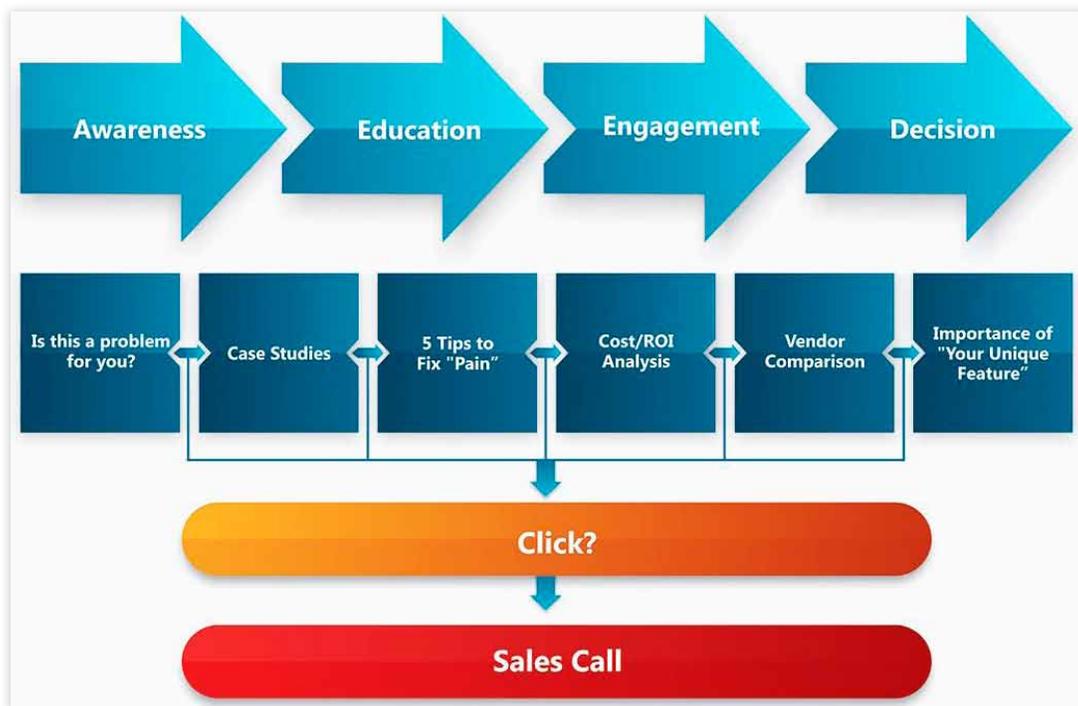


Source: Inforza.com

CRM solution enables this type of team work. As mentioned above, it is still unique, even in this day and age. That makes it a real strategic advantage. After all, if your CRM technology allows your entire organization to proactively serve your customers, you're much more likely to keep them. CRM systems enable Sales Excellence by making your whole company the sales team.

With no method to share up-to-the-minute customer knowledge with all of your customer facing staff, you're forcing your customer to have a relationship with your salesperson instead of your company. That leaves you vulnerable when personnel change with the customer or your team. You're also missing out on valuable intelligence that allows you to optimize marketing spending and approaches. In addition, you could be burning out your sales team by asking them to meet ever higher sales goals by doing the same thing over and over.

If prospects that contact you via your website end up as an email in someone's inbox, you're throwing away the dollars you're spending on your site and your ads. Most CRM systems can automate the process of ensuring the lead is responded to by email instantly and a salesperson is alerted to make contact immediately. In addition, some systems enable automated, on-going email "nurturing" of new leads and customers. These types of campaigns can drive 10 to 25% increase in sales without a single additional dollar invested in ads or salespeople.



The good news is that CRM solutions continue to get more powerful, more affordable and easier to get started with. When you weigh the risk of spending a relatively small amount of money on CRM against the risk of wasted marketing dollars, burnt out salespeople and alienated customers, it's a no brainer really.



But most importantly, implementing a CRM solution in your company says to everyone involved—your sales team, your marketing folks, your partners, your support team and definitely your customers—that you are committed to excellence in serving your customers as individuals and truly building a relationship with them.

If you're considering implementing a CRM solution, you may find our Guide to Selecting and Implementing a CRM helpful.

<https://www.salesnexus.com/assets/guide-to-crm-implementation.pdf>