

# Double Your Sales in 2011



Super Charge Your Sales Engine in 5 Steps that  
Don't Cost a Dime

Craig Klein

[www.salesnexus.com](http://www.salesnexus.com)

**salesnexus**  
> MANAGE CONTACTS. ANYTIME. ANYWHERE.



### Introduction

Double Your Sales in 2011 was originally published as a series of posts beginning in January of 2011 on SalesNexus founder, Craig Klein's, blog **Sell, Sell, Sell!** This e-Book combines all 5 posts.

The theme for the "Double Your Sales in 2011" series came from years of work with small and medium sized businesses in developing sales processes and building sales and marketing automation systems around those processes. We developed a detailed approach that consistently yields amazing results for businesses of all shapes and sizes.

- **This should not take 6 months or bust your budget!**
- **You don't have to spend any more money.**
- **You don't have to fire anyone.**
- **You don't have to hire anyone.**

The approach essentially consists of re-ordering the sequence of what sales people do with leads and prospects. In some businesses of course, certain steps are missing or under emphasized. However, what amounts to minor changes in the approach give sales people more time to focus on truly valuable, close-able opportunities and yield valuable insight into marketing and sales performance that fuel increased volume of quality sales leads and larger pipelines of upcoming business for a given sales team.

- This should not take 6 months or bust your budget!
- You don't have to spend any more money.
- You don't have to fire anyone.
- No, I came in for a

All you have to do is tune up the engine, measure performance and optimize the fuel you're pouring into the engine.

The process is outlined in the chapters included here. 2x current sales is attainable in the next few months. We hope you'll try. Of course, we're here to help. Reach out to us as described in the final section if you'd like to discuss your unique challenges and opportunities.

**Qualify Early and Often**—define questions that indicate the "qualification" of any lead and ask every lead right up front before you invest lots of time and money in them.

**Timing is Everything**—create guidelines for what makes it worthwhile to take each step in the sales dance with each prospect.

**The Law of Attraction**—teach everyone on your team to say no to prospects unless they are sure that the investment of their time and your money will yield the desired result.

**Set the Mustangs Free**—make it easy for sales reps to track what happens with each lead, the answers to your qualification questions and the sales activities invested in. Hold them accountable for following the process by sharing the results of this tracking with the team.

**Pour in the Jet Fuel**—track the source of each lead and redirect marketing efforts and investments toward the lead sources that generating the most frequently qualified and close-able leads.

**About the Author and SalesNexus.com**

To really super charge your sales performance, you have to take a close look at WHO your team is spending their time on.

### Qualify Early and Often

- How not knowing the difference between a lead and a qualified prospect is costing you big bucks!
- Free up days and days for your sales team to focus on their best prospects and clients.
- Improve your bottom line immediately!

Your sales people's time is valuable. You've probably have hired sales assistants to take paper work and other stuff off your sales staff's plate. Because you want to help them focus their time on what? Selling of course! Working with customers, whether on the phone or in person, is where you want their time spent.

But it's not that simple. If you're in the food service business and I gave you a list of Realtors to call on, would you want your sales reps spending their time on the phone and meeting with those Realtors? Of course not.

To really super charge your sales performance, you have to take a close look at WHO your team is spending their time on. Don't worry! This is not a sales pitch for changing your lead generation. This is much simpler than that.

The fact is that virtually every sales person spends too much time on leads that are not at all likely to purchase. They just don't know how to tell the difference.

Qualifying leads is not a new concept. You've probably already spent a lot of time preaching to your team about it. But can you say that your team is good at qualifying leads? How many



of your proposals go nowhere? How many of the face to face presentations your team gives lead to a long series of put-offs and no sale?

Why does this matter? Because just like you wouldn't want your sales team wasting time with paper work and administrative tasks, you also don't want to waste their valuable selling time on leads that aren't going to buy! The key is to know the difference—QUALIFYING.

If you qualify well, or better said qualify accurately and do it up front, as a first step in your sales process, then you can minimize the time your team spends on leads that won't buy and maximize the time they spend on leads that will.

So first let's consider how big an impact better qualifying could have on your business first. Here are a few questions you'll need to know the answer to:

- What are the crucial steps in the sales process? Examples: Set appointment, presentation, proposal, close
- How much time is typically spent on each step?
- How many new leads or prospects does each rep typically go through this process within a given period (week, month, quarter..)?
- How many of them buy?

If you don't have this information, ask your team to start making a list of every presentation, proposal, etc. that they do for about twice the length of your typical sales cycle. Then just crunch the numbers.

**If you qualify well, or better said, qualify accurately and do it up front, as a first step in your sales process, then you can minimize the time your team spends on leads that won't buy and maximize the time they spend on leads that will.**

## Double Your Sales in 2011

### Here's an example:

Let's say a sales person typically works with 50 new leads each month and each decent lead typically gets a 30 minute phone call, a one hour presentation and a proposal that requires 30 minutes to create. Add to that all the calls and emails that go into coordinating meeting times and following up, trying to close and you're easily up to 3 hours per lead or 150 hours per month. We'll assume that you have a 20 % overall close rate so, that means 10 out of 50 leads buy. So it takes 15 (150 divided by 10) hours of sales time to get a purchase.



So, 80% of the folks that your team spends all this time on don't buy. That's 40 leads getting 3 hours each or 120 hours of sales time spent on leads for no return, every month. What if you just started asking the right questions up front and decided not to go on appointments until you get the right answers or at least to hold off on the presentation and proposal? Imagine that

you could filter out 20% of the leads up front with a solid, simple series of questions that you use as the "bar" that leads have to get over before they "earn" your sales team's expensive time?

Now, 20% of 50 leads is 10 leads x 3 hours amounts to 30 hours freed up each month! That's almost a week of each sales person's time! Obviously that's significant. It lowers the time spent per sale from 15 hours to 12 hours. That can't help but improve your bottom line!

We'll focus on this specifically later in our "Double Your Sales in 2011" series but, clearly the real win is in what your sales team does with this freed up time.

But first, how can we teach your existing team to ask the right questions up front and refrain from delivering time consuming and expensive presentations and proposals to leads that don't pass the test? The good news is that it's not really that hard to do. The hard part is being consistent. It's easy to "fall in love" with a lead. They have a way of telling you what you want to hear. It's up to you to hold your team accountable. When they fall in love with the wrong leads, it costs you and them money.

### Here's how we do it:

We decide upon a set of questions that must be asked of every lead and the answers that are "qualified answers". Some are obvious like *"Are you the decision maker?"*, etc. In fact that is the most important and most often neglected question. It's easy to excuse the sales team. They'll say *"We can't get in to see the CEO initially. We have to start with someone else and earn their trust so they'll help us get the CEO's attention."* Maybe so but, a staff engineer is not the decision maker. If you haven't spoken with the decision maker, then there are many things you should be very careful about delivering during the sales process.

One way to identify these questions is to look at your customers. What do they have in common? Maybe they're in a certain industry or region. Maybe they're of a certain size. Maybe they all shared a similar challenge when they purchased from your business. When I talk to clients, I like to ask them *"What are the 5 or 10 questions you ask every new lead?"*.



Once you've identified the questions, you'll need to work on responding to the lead's questions and requests when they aren't giving you the answers you want. Develop low cost, simple ways for your team to give the lead a data sheet or brochure or price list that answers most of their questions. Most importantly, you'll need to teach your sales team to say NO. The lead thinks she's qualified. She's going to ask "Can you send me a proposal?", "Can you come in for a demonstration?" and you'll need to break some bad habits. Most sales people see it as their role to please the customer. It's tough for them to say no.

There will be a period of trying things, learning and adjusting but, if you start trying, you'll get better and better at it. The absolute most important step is to hold everyone accountable.

**I'M NOT SPEEDING...  
I'M QUALIFYING!!!**

Of course, there are "softer" ways to say no. The best thing you can say is something like "Before I waste your time on a presentation, I'd like to find out more about your needs to be sure we're going to be able to help." Most importantly, you'll need a strategy to respond to these requests from leads that aren't decision makers. "Who will make the final decision on this purchase?", "Before I waste your time on a presentation, can we arrange to meet with the CEO to understand their needs?", etc.

There will be a period of trying things, learning and adjusting but, if you start trying, you'll get better and better at it. The absolute most important step is to hold everyone accountable. Ask sales reps about the presentations and proposals they produced recently and ask them the qualifying questions.



When they don't have the right answers, tell them so. Keep a record of business trips, presentations, proposals, etc. done by each rep and sit down with them and decide which were really qualified and which weren't. Remember, we're talking about freeing up  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{3}$ , maybe even  $\frac{1}{2}$  of their time to focus on closing the best prospects and finding more prospects like them. This is in everyone's best interest.

As I write this I realize it probably doesn't sound simple or easy. I think it's like taking the training wheels off your bike when you were a kid, once you get the hang of it, you can't believe you didn't try it sooner.



## Using Online CRM to Make Qualifying Easy

Asking the right questions consistently is the blocking and tackling of sales. You and your team will need to practice and they'll need encouragement.

Using a contact management or CRM solution can allow you to put fields in each prospects record that allow the sales rep to easily enter the answers to the qualifying questions and quickly retrieve that information the next time they call.

MANAGE CONTACTS. ANYTIME. ANYWHERE.

Marketing	
ID/Status	<input type="text"/>
Lead Source	Outdoor Ad
ReferredBy	<input type="text"/>
Referrer ID	<input type="text"/>
Lead Quality	Qualified Level 2

Sales / Qualification	
Stage	<input type="text"/>
Call Result	<input type="text"/>
Role	<input type="text"/>
Business Pain	Adding To Staff
Personal Pain	Comp tied to Perform
Current Supplier	<input type="text"/>
Proposed Solution	<input type="text"/>
Potential Units	0

This also serves to remind the rep visually which questions they've gotten the answer to and which they haven't.

Finally, you can track this information too.



Double Your Sales in 2011

---

### Timing is Everything

You don't send a proposal to a new lead you've never talked to right? You wouldn't try to schedule a presentation with a company that just signed a multi-year contract with your competition either. Some things in selling are obvious. Many more are not. In fact they can be completely counter-intuitive.

Are you using a shotgun approach to selling? If a lead can fog a mirror, does your team run after him with all the artillery they've got?

In the first installment of our *"Double Your Sales in 2011"*, we discussed the art of knowing the difference between a lead and a truly qualified prospect that is worthy of your sales time. [Click here](#) to read *"Qualify Early and Often"*.



Of course, the reason that knowing a "tire kicker" lead from someone who has a need and budget for your solution gives you the ability to focus your efforts in the right places and should lead to higher close rates and bigger deals. Plus, your sales team can manage a larger pipeline with better opportunities since they're not wasting time chasing bad leads. Talk about improving the bottom line!

Clearly, the challenge is that it's not always as simple as deciding that a lead is a qualified prospect and then breaking out your shotgun.

Like in any sales organization, your sales people probably spend too much time in the beginning stages of the selling process. Don't believe me? Take 30 days and track what they do and how much they spend on various activities. It might look something like this for a week:

Cold Calling or Initial Response to New Leads—8 hours

Interviewing the Lead to Understand Needs—8 hours

Phone/Email Work to Schedule Presentations—6 hours

Preparation of Proposal—8 hours

Phone/Email Work to Schedule Negotiation Meetings—4 hours

Additional Rounds of Meetings for Presentations and Negotiations—4 hours



Of course, we'd all love to have so many hot deals in final negotiations that things flip over. The thing is that there is a cause and effect relationship here that is not always obvious.

### Here's an example...

Many companies use some sort of presentation as a "hook" early in the process. A new lead comes in and the sales rep's primary goal is to get the lead to see the presentation so they'll get excited about your solution and company. The problem is that this is very time consuming and doesn't always work. In fact in most companies, only 10 or 20% of these presentations lead to closed sales. At that rate, they HAVE to be focused on doing presentations shotgun style in order to get one or two that actually buy.

By making sure your prospects are truly qualified before you do the presentation, it frees up a bunch of time for the sales rep. It also allows the rep to focus more on prospect's needs and strengthen those relationships. And, when your reps do make a presentation it's much more targeted and ultimately they'll win more deals.

By making sure your prospects are truly qualified before you do the presentation, it frees up a bunch of time for the sales rep. It also allows the rep to focus more on prospect's needs and strengthen those relationships. And, when your reps do make a presentation it's much more targeted and ultimately they'll win more deals.

### *Calculate the Cost & Return of Your Sales Activities*

What if you took your list of sales activities and asked yourself what information about the customer or "qualifying characteristics" do you need to see in order to effectively take that next step?

Every discrete step in your sales process requires time that you can never get back, and generates some sort of return, sometimes big, sometimes small.

Ultimately, your customer will work out his own unique way of quantifying the benefits they'll expect to receive from the purchase. The trick is for you and your sales team to begin doing the same thing. At each step in the process, ask yourself *"Is my investment of time and money in this activity likely to pay off for me?"* Example: If the decision maker cannot attend the presentation, then you hold off until he can.

Here is a road map I've used successfully myself and with my clients that may help you start to think along these lines...

- 1) List the most common business benefits that motivate your customers to purchase from you.

- 2) For each of these potential benefits, imagine how the customer would expect to see that improve his bottom line.
- 3) Establish a "typical" calculation that the customer could use to estimate the ROI for purchasing your product solely to reach that one business benefit. An example of this follows.
- 4) Create questionnaires for your sales team to use to get the facts in order to make this calculation for each of these potential benefits.
- 5) Create a simple spreadsheet that let's your rep run this calculation quickly and easily for the customer.
- 6) Calculate the minimum thresholds your customer must meet in order to make the ROI workout well. This will allow you to draw a box around the type of customer that is really a fit for your company, so you can focus on the right ones.
- 7) Develop presentations and proposals that take advantage of this information.
- 8) Train your sales people to talk about "typical" ROI experienced by other customers early in the process. This becomes the "hook" that your presentation previously provided.
- 9) Identify the most time consuming and expensive steps in your process.
- 10) Reorder the steps so these costly things happen only when the benefits the customer will experience have been identified and the ROI for each calculated.



Sales people can be stubborn and you'll need them to buy in and believe. It's probably not a bad idea to take a couple of key prospects and lead by example.

Hey, no one said this was going to be easy! But like anything, just start and take one step at time. It will get easier as you go. You could probably spend a couple of Saturdays on this and have it down.

### *Getting Your Sales People to Change Their Ways*

Sales people can be stubborn and you'll need them to buy in and believe. It's probably not a bad idea to take a couple of key prospects and lead by example.

One of the fundamental and very counter-intuitive techniques you'll need to employ is to learn to establish a different kind of rapport with the prospect up front. You're more of a business consultant when you sell this way. Your sales team may currently be more like "chasers". They chase the prospect and essentially beg them to take the next step in the process.

I've found it helps to explain the process to the lead right up front so they'll know immediately they're not dealing with a typical sales rep. Here's an example: *"I know your time is valuable and so is mine. Our solutions typically deliver an increase of x% in whatever your solution impacts for most customers."* Would that type of improvement be considered significant in your organization? The companies that see this type of improvement typically fit into a certain profile. In order to be sure that neither of us is wasting our time, do you mind if I take 5 minutes of your time to ask you a few questions to determine if our solution is likely to make good sense for your business? If you're willing to provide a few details about your business, I'll be able to show you a specific estimate of the return you should expect from our solution. Would that be worth your time?"



Your customers are hearing the same old Sales 101 pitches from your competition. If you open up with a version of the approach above, you are immediately in a class by yourself!

### *Making It Stick*

The final piece of this puzzle is to hold your sales team accountable. You need to know whether the presentations and proposals and meetings they're spending time on have been cost justified by the type of analysis we're talking about. Have them turn in the ROI calculations for each prospect they spend time on every week. No doubt they'll try to find excuses for rushing ahead with time consuming presentations, etc. It will take time but, if you're consistent in drawing the line, they'll get the idea.



The idea is simple. Qualify the prospect aggressively early in the process. Then conserve your sales resources for the prospects that have a real shot of buying. But it's a big switch. Most sales people use presentations and proposals as their initial hook. Of course putting those presentations together and coordinating the meetings is where most of their time goes.

## The Law of Attraction

- You're paying expense bills for lunches, meetings, flights and hotel rooms. It's the cost of doing business right?
- How many of the clients you're spending all that time and money on are buying anything? Not enough right?
- Your artillery is firing at any target they can find. There is no other way is there?
- Yes there is!

In the last chapter, "*Timing is Everything*", we covered how timing your presentations and proposals so they're not wasted on the wrong prospects can increase your close rate and boost your bottom line.

The idea is simple. Qualify the prospect aggressively early in the process. Then conserve your sales resources for the prospects that have a real shot of buying. But it's a big switch. Most sales people use presentations and proposals as their initial hook. Of course putting those presentations together and coordinating the meetings is where most of their time goes.

If qualifying is about figuring out how the customer will cost justify your solution, then if you don't have the answer yet, how do you decide what the best next step is?

What if you start by asking yourself what's in it for you? I don't mean the obvious size of the potential deal. I mean what do you get out of the next step? That's the counterintuitive part. We're talking about selling something here. You don't get paid

until the deal is closed. So, it's not always clear how to quantify the return on the interim steps in the sales process. No one's going to pay you to show up and give a presentation.

The classic sales advice is "*ABC—Always Be Closing*". But in a complex sale with several steps in the buying process, you're always happy to dish out the next step in the process just so you can get closer to the closing step.

If your sales process is demo, needs analysis, proposal and close, then first of all, it should be needs analysis, demo, proposal and close (see *Double Your Sales in 2011* chapters 1 and 2). When you're finishing up the needs analysis, you first decide if their needs justify your solution, then you ask yourself what the prospect can do to ensure that your demo has the desired effect. What's that desired effect? THEY ask YOU for a proposal!

So what does your client need to do for YOU to be sure the upcoming demo is a home run? In the case of a demo, they need to be sure that all the right players are there and they need to tell you what they need to see.

### ***Each Step is an Agreement***

What if you "close" on an agreement with the prospect that all these things will take place? Better yet, what if as a part of your needs analysis, you determine what their "must have" requirements are? What if when you're scheduling the demo you ask the prospect, "*If during the demo I'm able to show you that our solution meets all your primary requirements, will you allow me to present a proposal directly to the CEO?*"



**In other words, there should be a quid pro quo for every step in the process. You do something for me and I'll do something for you. If not, then you're just the chaser. You're begging them to keep dancing with you without any guarantee that they're going to leave with you.**

In other words, there should be a quid pro quo for every step in the process. You do something for me and I'll do something for you. If not, then you're just the chaser. You're begging them to keep dancing with you without any guarantee that they're going to leave with you.

So each next step in the process has a reality check—Is the prospect willing to invest in the next step themselves? Are they investing their own time, political capital, money, information, etc. that equals the investment you're making in that next step.

It can seem daunting to decide what the appropriate "investment" by the prospect is. A good place to start is to imagine the ideal prospect. The one that needs what you have to offer and is the absolute perfect fit for your company. This prospect wants your solution more than you want to close them. What would they do at each step in the process? They're in a hurry to buy from you but, they have to follow their standard process. They're going to try and help you. They'll offer to get the decision makers and influencers together for a demo. They'll offer all the cost information about what not having your solution is doing to their bottom line. These are the kind of things that you want to ask of each prospect.

So they ask you if you can do a demo for the marketing department and you ask yourself, *"hmm, what would make that worthwhile? The CEO won't be there so no decision can be made. What can the marketing department do to help you?"* Perhaps you ask them if the marketing department would be willing to share the details of their current advertising spending and return on that spending. That's the key information that you

need in order to show the CEO it's a no brainer! That would make your hour long demo well worth it!

Sales people are negotiators by nature. So they'll naturally take to this type of give and take.

- Take the list of things you do for prospects that take time and money.
- Then make a list of things your prospects can do for you to make the process easy and show themselves to be highly qualified and likely to buy.
- Now pair the two lists.

### *The Law of Attraction*

The tough part is to resist the temptation to say "YES" immediately when a prospect asks you to do the next thing in your process. Work on saying "*Well, I may but, would you do THIS for me?*" Clearly, that's going to be a big change.

What makes this approach difficult is precisely what makes it so powerful! Prospects are not used to hearing no or maybe from sales people. When you respond to their requests with questions about what they're willing to do in turn for you, it completely sets you apart from your competition. It creates the impression that you're someone who values their time. That makes you attractive to them!

- Take the list of things you do for prospects that take time and money.
- Then make a list of things your prospects can do for you to make the process easy and show themselves to be highly qualified and likely to buy.
- Now pair the two lists.

## Set the Mustangs Free

- How many sales management books have you read? I'm sure each of your sales reps has a couple of sales guru books that they keep on their desk.
- Have you invested in sales training for you team?

A lot of time and money have gone into refining the skills of your sales team.

But somehow, you have a feeling in your gut that when they hit the streets and start pressing the flesh, they fall back on instinct more often than not.



In the first 3 chapters, we've covered setting the "qualification bar" high enough that sales time is focused on the highest value customers and knowing the return on your investment in sales time and expense at each step in your process.

Following the guidelines laid out in the first three chapters of *"Double Your Sales in 2011"* will result in stronger and deeper relationships with genuinely qualified buyers and produce more time left in the day so you can increase your sales pipeline. The problem is that you can talk about it in sales meetings 'til you're blue in the face but old habits die hard. You're not going to get seasoned sales reps to practice and refine new and sometimes counterintuitive techniques with nothing but a suggestion.

You have to hold them accountable. A baseball coach doesn't just describe how to swing at a curve ball in the locker room. He goes out to the field and watches the swings and provides

detailed suggestions on the minutest of mechanics. In sales, its not usually possible to spend a lot of time "in the field" with each rep. You need a way to track what happens in the field and digest that information in order to identify trends, both good and bad.

If you know what my day job is, then I know you're thinking, *"Oh boy, here comes the CRM sales pitch"*. Well, the truth is you really don't need to buy a thing to at least begin tracking sales activities and practices so that you can steer your team in a new direction. Whether you have a CRM or Contact Management System or not, the first step is to figure out what needs to be tracked and how you'll collect the information.

### **Track It**

Obviously, you need to have some way to objectively "grade" each prospect. In chapter one, we discussed the type of questioning of a prospect that goes into this grade. So that's where you'll start. Even if it's a hard copy "lead sheet" that each sales person fills out for each lead they talk to, or maybe a simple excel spreadsheet, you need to know the prospect's answers to each qualifying question. The idea is that we need to move away from listening to every sales rep's "story" about each prospect which usually ends with the rep saying they "feel" good about this one. Having the prospect's answers to the questions let's YOU decide if they're qualified, even if you never speak to them yourself.

I know, you're already saying *"My sales reps just won't fill the lead sheets out. I don't even want to hear all the complaining I'll get."* Be patient, we've got the secret sauce to overcome the push back coming up dead ahead.

The idea is that we need to move away from listening to every sales rep's "story" about each prospect which usually ends with the rep saying they "feel" good about this one. Having the prospect's answers to the questions let's YOU decide if their qualified, even if you never speak to them yourself.

## Double Your Sales in 2011

First though, let's refine our lead sheet idea a bit. All we really need to do is add the sales actions or steps that have been taken with every lead. No need to get overly detailed here. The priority is to track the sales actions that cost you and your sales team large amounts of time and money.

Here's an example I mocked up in excel in 10 minutes. This doesn't have to be difficult or expensive. Simple is good!

Employees	250		
Workstations	150		
Current Supplier	ABC Corp		
Annual Budget	\$40,000		
Decision Role	Decision Maker		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Onsite Meeting	Presentation	Proposal	Proposal Review Mtg

Now all you have to do is work out some guidelines for which of the sales actions you're willing to invest your time and money in depending on the answers to the qualification questions. This isn't going to take too much time for your sales team and you'll easily see the trends. When the lead sheet shows you the customer is

doing business with your lowest priced competitor and is currently spending only \$5,000 per year but, your sales rep has made the two hour drive to their office twice (once for the 1st meeting, then again for the presentation) and invested two hours in preparing a proposal, you know something needs to change. Of course, these guidelines are going to be unique to your business and market. Remember that this is a process of refinement that is on-going. You don't have to have all the answers up front. In fact, once you start collecting the information, the most important guidelines will present themselves.

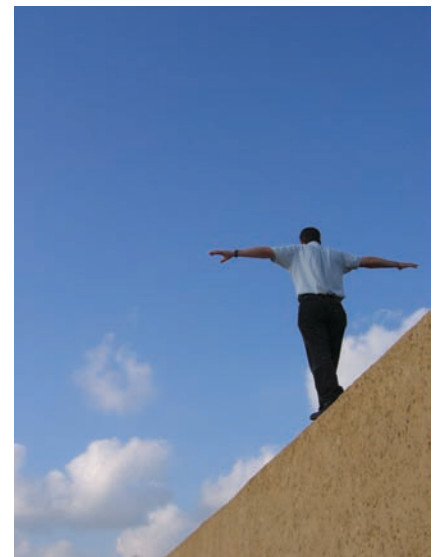


OK, now for the shameless plug—Clearly, an investment in a contact management system can make this easier for the user and add value to the effort. If you're collecting information like this, it just makes good sense to have it in a database that allows you to search against those qualification fields. Just imagine what you could do with a list of all leads you've encountered that are working with a certain competitor and spending a large amount of money. You may even be able to leverage email marketing capabilities to "drip market" to the smaller ones instead of investing all your sales resources on them. The point here is to start tracking the information somehow. If paper makes the most sense in your organization, that's fine. Just get started!

### *Take the First Step*

And that's where most businesses fail in sales management. They just won't take that first step. And of course, it's usually largely due to the push back you get from your sales team. They tell you they feel like you're micro-managing them. They tell you it's too time consuming and keeps them from selling. Then they wait until 15 minutes before the sales meeting and just fly through a week's worth of lead sheets and basically make it up.

Clearly, you have to sell the concept to your sales team. Read through all 5 chapters of *"Double Your Sales in 2011"* and you're bound to find 4 or 5 direct benefits to the sales team that fit your world. Of course, it's a great idea to let the sales team be part of creating the lead sheet in the first place. My favourite suggestion is to get the superstars of your sales team to put it together. This way the rest of the team sees cooperation as a way to learn from the masters!



**The most crucial ingredient in your sales pitch to your sales team is resolve. No matter how well you've sold it to them, you have to be willing to say it's an absolute job requirement. No ifs, ands or buts...**

The most crucial ingredient in your sales pitch to your sales team is resolve. No matter how well you've sold it to them, you have to be willing to say it's an absolute job requirement. No ifs, ands or buts...

Then you have to follow through and collect, digest and provide feedback on the information regularly. Believe it or not, what I have found to be the most effective way to jump start this process with your sales team is to simply start collating the information and sharing a comparison of all reps with the entire team. You can start that immediately. You don't have to have all the answers. You don't have to have worked out all the guidelines for when to do a presentation or proposal. As discussed above, sometimes you need to see a bit of data to answer those questions.

So just start putting the #s on the whiteboard during the sales meeting or email them out once a week.

### **Example:**

For each rep, show the number of leads identified as decision makers with a current budget of \$10,000 or more. Again, your questions and the important points to track will be unique to you but, sales people are competitive. As soon as they see themselves being compared to others based on this information, they'll start collecting it and getting it to you. You may hear some grumbling about certain circumstances creating an unfair comparison but, that's the beauty of starting out simple like this early in the process. You're not saying this information is going to affect their compensation, quota or territory. You're just looking for trends.

And then after a month or so, you're seeing trends and the sales team is starting to talk about the guidelines themselves. Information is powerful. Your sales team has been driving around without a dashboard in their car. They're not usually analytical folks. This information will show them how full the tank is, what the oil pressure is and how fast they should go. This is the feedback they need to begin to self adjust. With some guidance from you, in a few short weeks they'll all be focusing in on the same concepts and practices. You heard of cats just became a heard of mustangs charging out in front of the competition!



The leads your sales team pursues is the fuel in your sales engine. Right now, you're pouring all sorts of different types of fuel into the tank. Premium, Plus, Regular, Diesel, etc.

## Pour in the Jet Fuel

There are good leads and not so good leads. Many times, you instinctively know the difference. Other times, you're completely surprised by the results.

You spend a lot of money and time to generate these unpredictable results.

The leads your sales team pursues is the fuel in your sales engine. Right now, you're pouring all sorts of different types of fuel into the tank. Premium, Plus, Regular, Diesel, etc.

No wonder the results are unpredictable. No wonder it seems like parts of the sales engine just aren't performing the way they should.

In the first 4 chapters, we've covered setting the "qualification bar" high enough that sales time is focused on the highest value customers, knowing the return on your investment in sales time and expense at each step in your process and holding your team accountable for following the process you design.

When you're pouring all sorts of different types of leads into the engine, it just makes good sense to try and filter out the bad ones before they go too far. Making the adjustments described in the earlier instalments of *"Double Your Sales in 2011"* will increase sales. No question about it.

What if you could ensure that you're pouring only the best kinds of leads into the tank in the first place? That's what I call

Turbo Charging Your Sales Engine. Now that you've tuned the engine for high performance, let's stop putting in "regular" gas. Let's pour in some jet fuel and really take off!

Obviously, you would have already done this if you could. What's holding you back? Most often it's the fact that you get sales leads from multiple different sources and the results vary widely from lead to lead even within one single lead source. In other words, you're cold calling, you're going to trade shows, you do some direct mail and you promote your website and the quantity and quality vary widely from month to month as well as the cost. It's very difficult to measure each source of leads objectively. Especially if you're not following a system of qualifying each lead consistently as discussed in our earlier chapters.

However, if you ARE qualifying or disqualifying each lead consistently, tracking those results lead by lead and holding your team accountable doing it all as you have designed, then you are only one last step away from putting that jet fuel in their engine!

In our last chapter, we talked about setting a simple means for your sales reps to easily record the answers to their qualification questions for each and every lead.

If you're collecting this information, you can analyze it from the standpoint of things that matter most in your business. If you're asking each lead how many widgets they purchase each year, then in a few weeks you'll begin to see exactly where your sweet spot is... Your close rate will be highest for leads that purchase a certain number of widgets.

**If you're collecting this information, you can analyze it from the standpoint of things that matter most in your business. If you're asking each lead how many widgets they purchase each year, then in a few weeks you'll begin to see exactly where your sweet spot is... Your close rate will be highest for leads that purchase a certain number of widgets.**

## Double Your Sales in 2011

All you need to do now is add one more piece of data to the puzzle. For each lead, track where it came from. That's it. Too simple right? Well the trick here is that you're combining the information about where the lead came from with more specific information gathered by the sales team when qualifying the leads.

### Now you have all the information you need to do three very powerful things



- 1) Find your sweet spot—# of widgets, # of employees, current supplier, etc. and find sources of leads that better match that sweet spot.
- 2) Redirect your marketing dollars and cold calling efforts toward leads that are more often qualified and purchase most often.
- 3) Create low investment means of responding to and nurturing leads from sources that aren't the best match for you.

You may feel like you have a pretty good feel for your sweet spot and which lead sources perform best instinctively. The difference here is that by truly measuring the information, you'll KNOW. And I probably don't have to tell you how wide the gulf is between a gut feeling and knowing. All of a sudden, you're empowered to make decisions confidently. This is very important because some of your gut instincts are wrong. It's tough to go against your instincts unless the facts are overwhelming. In addition, your sales team has their own instinctive feel for what's working and what's

not. You're going to need to convince them too. Nothing works better than the unequivocal facts.

Here are a couple of things to expect: Almost without fail, I've seen companies blown away by how poorly some of their most costly marketing efforts perform when measured objectively. It could be your website, it could be the trade shows you go to or it could be your cold calling. You will be surprised to find that one of the sources of the most leads, and maybe even the most sales, actually provides a lower percentage of leads that are truly qualified and purchase than most of the others. In addition, some of the sources of leads that you feel are "less important" will turn out to be providing a much higher rate of qualified, close-able leads than most of the others.

This is where the jet fuel comes from! You're going to stop spending money and time on the poorly performing lead sources and start spending more money and time on the high performance lead sources. This won't be an easy transition but, you'll be armed with the facts to confidently move forward.

It still amazes me how huge the amount of marketing resources that can be retargeted usually is. All you've got to do is take that first step and start tracking what happens. The facts will begin to speak for themselves. Your total marketing expenditure doesn't have to change at all. You're going to sell more without spending an extra dime. Now that's an offer you can't refuse!

You can **Double Your Sales in 2011!** You don't have to increase spending at all. You just have to start managing your sales process in a more systematic way.

**You're going to stop spending money and time on the poorly performing lead sources and start spending more money and time on the high performance lead sources. This won't be an easy transition but, you'll be armed with the facts to confidently move forward.**



Let's go back to the beginning and review the entire process from start to finish:

**Qualify Early and Often**—define questions that indicate the "qualification" of any lead and ask every lead right up front before you invest lots of time and money in them.

**Timing is Everything**—create guidelines for what makes it worthwhile to take each step in the sales dance with each prospect.

**The Law of Attraction**—teach everyone on your team to say no to prospects unless they are sure that the investment of their time and your money will yield the desired result.

**Set the Mustangs Free**—make it easy for sales reps to track what happens with each lead, the answers to your qualification questions and the sales activities invested in. Hold them accountable for following the process by sharing the results of this tracking with the team.

**Pour in the Jet Fuel**—track the source of each lead and redirect marketing efforts and investments toward the lead sources generating the most frequently qualified and close-able leads.

This process does not have to take months. If you start today, within 30 days you'll begin to see improvements in relationships with the most valuable sales prospects and you'll begin to see where your marketing investments should be realigned.

There is no reason that 2011 can't be the best year you've ever had. Your selling process is about to turn into a high performance selling machine. Wasted time and money will be minimized and your sales team will be focused on the best possible opportunities more often.

Best of luck!



## About the Author

Craig Klein brings his engineering training and his sales management experience together to build measurable, consistent sales processes for his clients. As CEO of [www.SalesNexus.com](http://www.SalesNexus.com), Craig works with small startups and Fortune 500's to create systems that give sales people more time to sell and more leads to sell to while giving management the accountability that is so elusive in sales.

Craig spent 10 years selling multi-million dollar, multi-year contracts to energy companies such as ExxonMobil, BP, Shell and Chevron. The long, complex selling environment within these energy behemoths gives Craig a keen sense of the risk of mis-allocated sales time.

Craig has developed lead acquisition and selling systems for major financial firms like Wachovia and Countrywide.

Craig's superior ability to discern a business owner's goals, challenges and needs stems from his strong belief that listening skills are far more valuable than speaking skills.

Craig has written many articles on sales, lead acquisition and nurturing and entrepreneurship. His blog, <http://sellsellsell.salesnexus.com> has provided advice and insight to thousands of readers.

## About SalesNexus

[www.SalesNexus.com](http://www.SalesNexus.com) offers hosted, web based contact management and CRM solutions to small and medium sized businesses in all industries, around the world.

SalesNexus' focus is on helping customers affordably tailor their solution to each business' unique processes and needs.

To learn more about <http://www.SalesNexus.com>.