

# Sales Tools: Using Technology

## To Enhance Sales Productivity

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One of the most popular topics at Profit Enhancement Group (PEG) meetings is sales. How to predict, measure, encourage, cultivate and increase sales comes up in casual conversations, during the critique of the company and as round table or seminar topics during the meeting. PEG members in the PRISM industry have discovered and put into use sales tools to improve the sales process and allow CEOs to better predict sales volume year to year and better manage the sales force to reach goals.

At a recent meeting, members shared their experiences with several sales tools. This article will feature a sampling of those tools: assessment tools for hiring sales people, tools sales people presented and salesforce.com.

### Assessment tools for hiring

Once a business grows to require more sales people, a CEO may benefit from using techniques and tools that allow them to capitalize on their successful sales hires and avoid some of the mistakes of hiring sales people who don't fit in the organization and/or don't produce. Mark Williams, Williams Records Management (WRM), [www.williamsrecords.com](http://www.williamsrecords.com), used a local consultant who tested potential sales candidates and interviewed candidates with them. Linton Bergsen of Leadership Management International, [www.leadershipmgmt.com](http://www.leadershipmgmt.com), has worked with WRM for the last two years. Williams made the final choice of candidates and Bergsen highlighted potential problems he would encounter with each candidate based on the test results. Williams found that the best hires surprised him. Without the evaluation, he would have chosen a different candidate if he had relied totally on his own informal interviewing techniques. The results of the hires Bergsen urged Williams to make have been successful both because of the test results and because Bergsen urged Williams to track the sales people, steer them when they miss goals and communicate with them frequently.

### Measurement tools

Tina Durbin, sales manager at The DataVault in Louisville, KY, presented the way she uses the Rule of 78 to calculate the revenue she will generate from her

sales. "Seventy-eight is the sum of the numbers 1 through 12, inclusive." The use of the Rule of 78 for loans allowed "quick calculations of interest in the pre-computer days. (wikipedia)" For Tina, once the spreadsheet is setup to continue the revenue forward from the month it was booked, she enters that revenue into the month it will first be realized. The spreadsheet then calculates the yearly revenue. She uses the spreadsheet to keep track of her own goals and the goals of her sales people. When a sales person is behind on goals, she and the sales person can see the long term effects of missing a monthly goal and take appropriate actions.

Many of the PEG members have set multiple goals for their sales people. They set weekly and monthly goals for number of cold contacts, number of leads from networking activities, number of appointments, number of follow-up calls or visits, number of accounts closed

### Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools

Many companies use tools like ACT! or Goldmine to manage the relationships of prospects and customers. Several of the PEG members use CRM tools to manage the leads that become customers and then have a detailed history when the company interacts with the customers.

The real advantage of tools like ACT! and Goldmine are the specific functions that allow sales people and sales managers to use a disciplined approach to sales by tracking leads and hammering home the importance of a sales funnel.

### Sales Management

Several companies reviewed and/or purchased salesforce.com to support their sales management. Mike Kephart, Adams Data Management (ADM) sales manager, gave a presentation of how ADM uses salesforce.com. The product provides CRM and the ability to customize the functions through its web-based architecture. The company information resides on the salesforce.com web site. Salesforce.com incorporates many of the key success factors of an effective sales program taking into account steps from marketing of products, to the sales cycle for each sales person and providing overall sales management and analysis tools. The individual sales person has tools for taking a lead from lead status to prospect status and on to a customer. The sales manager has additional access to analysis tools to aid in managing individual sales people. Once the sales team learns the system, the individual sales people have immediate information on their status



towards goals and tools to get the contacts from one stage to another. Kephart already has a wealth of information at his finger tips before asking, "How's it going?" An October 2006 IDC article "The Tale of Two Salesforce.coms: Application and Platform" by Mary Wardley (available on the salesforce.com website) describes the added benefits of customizing the system to better match with the company's specific requirements. Salesforce.com has made it possible for customers and/or developers to enhance the salesforce.com system by making information about the internal structure readily available and encouraging communication among users and developers.

PEG members also shared marketing materials, sales reports, sales management reports, and names of telemarketing and lead generation services and consultants they have used in support of their sales efforts.

#### **Profit Enhancement Group (PEG)**

Management Growth Institute, Inc. (MGI) ([www.managementgrowth.com](http://www.managementgrowth.com)) founded in 1961 created PEGs to give non-competing CEOs a group of peers and the opportunities to share ideas, ask advice and compare solutions to problems. Members develop long term connections with companies all over the country in their industry and use these connections between the regularly scheduled PEG meetings. MGI also runs PEGs in other industries.

**About the Author:** Kathi Barry Albertini is the second generation CEO of Management Growth Institute, Inc. and leads the PEGs in the records and information services management industry.