Is the Pipeline Better than Salesforce Alone?

A few reviews from Pipeline Manager clients

Craig Lund at Patient Education Systems:
If you are looking for a tool that your sales people will use - this is it. Pipeline Manager makes it very easy for a sales team to see exactly what's in their pipeline and what they need to do to advance the opportunity to the next stage. Sales people can accomplish more than 90% of what they need to do on 2 screens. Updating an opportunity takes a matter of minutes. This is the best pipeline management and sales process management tool I've ever used.

Chuma Ofoche at Allied Soft Ltd.:
This App in my opinion has the most significant improvement to the SFA functionality of Salesforce.com. It combines a functional sales methodology with the ease of performing almost all SFA tasks from the Pipeline Mgr screen. It's a must have for SFA users.

Brian Pritchard at ContractXChange:
Recently when doing some maintenance/change work Pipeline manager was down for a few days....we got calls from Sales right away asking when it would be back up as it was faster and easier than going back to the old SF tabs...:-) They love it.

Richard Terry at Sogeti UK:
We came from a typical legacy situation in Salesforce - we were using about 10% of it's capabilities, and were struggling to get it to be a sales enabler instead of a marketing database. Having started using Pipeline Manager as an overlay to Salesforce has helped transform the way in which we manage our opportunities through the pipe.

Norman Auerbach at GetAbstract:
Initially Sales reps were unhappy when concept demonstrated . Task team then developed the custom solution. It looked terrific. Sales team then became very enthusiastic about Benefits of PM and committed to using it daily.

Exec team also delighted with increased level of transparency into Pipelines and ability to focus on problem areas early.

Jessica Cellini at MedApps:
SUPER easy to use, makes SF bearable and not feel like such a chore! So much more efficient than the standard way of doing things. Everything is all in one place - no more waiting for pages to download so you can make a few changes, in fact: you can do 10 updates in as much time as it takes you to do 1 the SF way! You don't even need any other Tabs on SF! Pipeline Manager has it all!

Will Bokan at ContractWorld:
Salesforce initially comes across as very difficult to use, and requires a large amount of time and training until properly understood. The Pipeline Manager is easy to use and takes a small amount of training to use effectively. Also, there are many luxurious features that allow sales to observe their pipeline in many different valuable ways only from the click of a simple button.

Cheryl Donahue at Pointserve:
We found Pipeline Manager because we were struggling with an easy, intuitive way to manage and report on our sales pipeline. With the Pipeline Manager not only can we accomplish capturing the right data, in the right place and in a fast way but we now can report on it easily and quickly. Not only can we report on it, but the pipeline manager is fast, no more creating reports/dashboards and hoping for the best.

Jeffrey Althaus at CarrierIQ:
An aspect of Pipeline Manager that I found useful is the user interface, which has a graphical user design. Because of this, I can easily move through the user interface and gather information without drilling down into the data for each account. It is also easy to create reports to provide insights into the data from a variety of perspectives. That was especially important to me, as I am also the system administrator. So when I need reports, I have to be able to generate them myself.

Daniel Pritchard at Dynamiq:
Pipeline manager presents sales opportunity information in a way that makes it easier for people to do their job well... The app is easy to use, the visual interface presents a large volume of complex data in an intuitive format and opportunities are no longer managed in isolation!

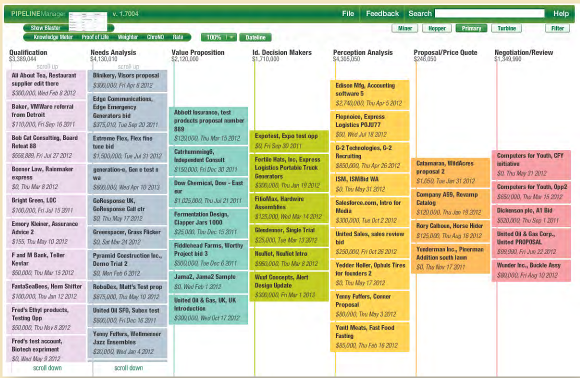
The support for Pipeline Manager is the best I have experienced of any product of this type, the team have a wealth of industry knowledge and have a collaborative, proactive and helpful approach.

Pipeline Manager

The Pipeline Is For **Sales Professionals**

Ever hear "What's In It For ME?" The Pipeline puts each pro on their own six-sigma path toward Sales Mastery

Where Am I?

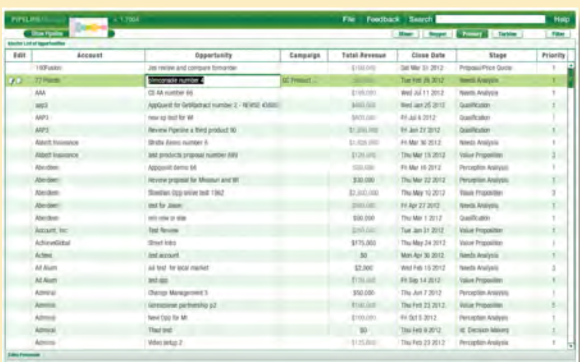


The Pipeline is shorthand.

It's the full book of business on display. Spot the low-hanging fruit and the early warning signs.

Control the constantly shifting priorities that every Sales Professional deals with.

Less CRM Time. More Selling Time.



To be organized you have to put your information somewhere. The less time you take to organize, the more time you have to sell. In-line editing is a nice start. The Pipeline is in-line on steroids - it's a full spreadsheet. Updates take seconds, not minutes. It's also a comfort zone where people can be productive instantly and then learn to do more on the Pipeline at their own pace.

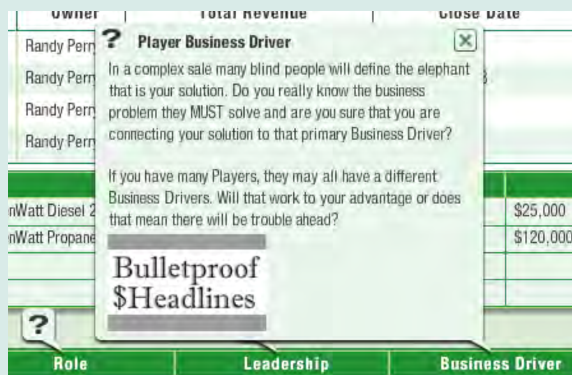
What's the Story?

Salespeople have always told stories. Jumping among Acccount, Contact and Opportunity isn't telling a story. It's no wonder reps don't use CRM.

They need to know what's been happening, what happens next and what they should expect to happen as a result.

The Pipeline is where they tell the story step-by-step. They use built-in story templates to save time - while executing every step consistently.

A Little Help Here?



No matter how seasoned the sales professional, we all need some help. Maybe it's about how to do something or why.

Maybe it's an explanation within the context of what has to be done. Maybe it's a big-picture strategy laid in with one click and ready to adapt to the customer's situation.

If sales ain't happy, nobody's happy

CRM is sold as a management reporting tool.

Except...

Our customers tell us most reports aren't worth much. It's not just that the reports can be confusing. The big problem is that the team is entering data that can't be trusted.

We ask: Why would they?

CRM is a thief that robs them of time they need with customers. It gives nothing in return.

The best way to get good data is to give the people working with the system a clear payoff for their effort. Busy salespeople need help. They need clarity and a way to remember everything that needs doing. They need help making sure they don't forget to ask the critical questions.

And guess what? Good data happens when the right questions are being asked at the right time. By everyone. All the time.

Good data happens when the people in the field see that the right questions are helping them to close deals faster.

Good data only happens when the goals and the guidance are baked into the workflow. The workflow only works when it is supported by a full ecosystem of tools that have minimal impact on time - and when **the workflow actually helps the person doing the work.**

The Pipeline Is For **Sales Managers and Coaches**

Coaching is a critical skill for managing successful teams. The Pipeline is a great assistant coach.

Clear at 10,000 feet

Compare and contrast.

Who's in trouble? Who's a great example for others?

By person or by team.

Process: Cure for the Common Forecast

Sorry IT. The customer is the only one who can tell you what's going to happen. Not probabilities, not analytics, not big data.

When forecasting is a problem, process is the answer. Process is how you drain the opinions from the forecast. It's how you ask the right questions in the field. Answers to the right questions translate to knowing what's on the customer's mind.

When nothing moves in the Pipeline unless the rep and the customer have done the right things to move it forward, more accurate predicitions are the natural result.

Best of all - this changes the forecast from a punitive ritual into a critical tool for strategizing key deals. The forecast helps you make those mid-course corrections that win more deals.

Less Quant, More Qual

94% of sales managers were promoted up from sales. Managers know the Art and the Science of selling. CRM today does an okay job with the Science. Where is the selling Art in CRM?

Where are all those qualitative issues that turn a commodity purchase into a multi-year high-trust partnership? The Pipeline is designed as a learning tool to move every user toward mastery. We take the Art seriously. The story is laid out clearly, not just for sales to use as a guide, but also for the coach to review and add their experience and insight.

That coaching advice isn't just verbal. Verbal can be forgotten even with the best intentions. In the Pipeline the coaching tips are added to the process. Each tip can have a due date and an expected outcome.

It gets a lot tougher for the sales pro to rely on 'I forgot' When the advice is hard wired to the story of the opportunity.

Lagging or Leading

How many reports at any given organization are devoted to lagging indicators? How much time is spent to create and then review them regularly? How many charts and dashboards focus on numbers that are too late to affect any outcomes?

Put your biggest efforts into things that sales, management and marketing can use to get the sale.

The Pipeline is all leading indicators. The ecosystem approach gives coaches a way to look from many angles, comparing against other people on the team and other regions. Now you can see where there is a problem with one opportunity, a sales pro, a whole team, a vertical or a region.

And the tools to make change are the same ones you used to analyze.

Managing Up

Whether your're the rookie salesperson explaining your first month's results to your manager or the CEO reporting to the board, chances are that you're adjusting your month's results to manage the perception of that information by your peers and superiors.

People use terms like 'Massage' and 'Spin.' The next layer up knows they're being massaged and spun - so they do the same thing for (to?) their boss to 'fix' the numbers from below.

And so on. Week after month after year. All that time to 'fix' numbers.

All this 'data' - awash in layers of opinion and manipulation.

All that time spinning the numbers is lost time. Suppose instead it were spent fixing problems.

And what's the best way to deal with a problem? Do you want your bad news 'spun' or do you want them to see the problem before you do and set out a plan to address it? Do you want to review the plan before the meeting so that you can discuss the strategy and suggest improvements?

The Pipeline doesn't offer many spinnable reporting tools. The crystal-clear Pipeline puts the truth on display for everyone up the chain. With a sales process, that PIpeline shows the work that's been done as well as shortcuts and stalled deals.

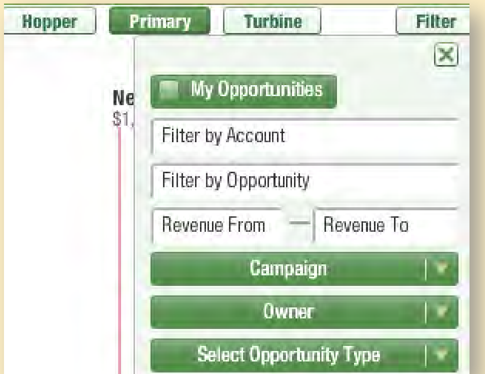
See a problem? Drive right into the story. See if the plan is in place. Add ideas to the story of the opportunity to improve the chances of the plan.

And when managing up stops sapping your time, maybe you have a few minutes to give some customers a call just to say hi.

The Pipeline Is For **Marketing**

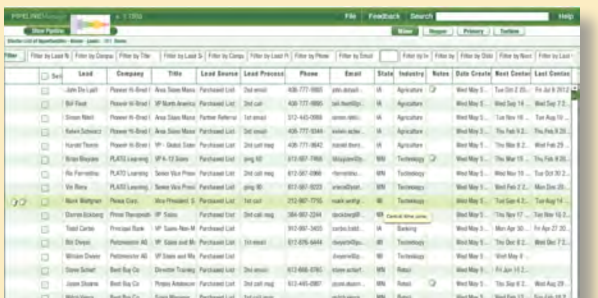
The world is way past aligning Sales with Marketing. Marketing **is** Sales. Sales **is** Marketing.

Beyond Conversion



Watch campaigns to see what happens post-conversion. See beyond the first stage and learn what more can be done with the conversion process to have the highest impact on overall sales.

Find the Pulse



Campaigns in salesforce are good. The Pipeline does campaigns better. They are instant campaigns designed to specify data subsets.

By typing in a few filter fields you get instant reports. Start calling right away to see if you get traction.

If you do, maybe you want to convert the whole subset so you can qualify properly.

In the Pipeline that's just a couple minutes. In 'normal' CRM that could easily take an hour or more.

To Maximize, Guide

How much money is spent on materials that never get used? All those brochures, white papers, videos, landing pages, etc. Often sales just ignores them. Or they get surprised by a customer who refers to them.

Or worse, the customer engages nearly ready to buy, and the rep pitches them almost like it's a cold call. The farther we go into the 'Sales 2.0 world, the more often this happens.

The Pipeline's Sales Processor goes to the heart of the problem. Sales often isn't sure which marketing tools to use when. A note in the processor - maybe just tacked on to an existing action or added to the hoverbox help - guides a busy salesperson right to where they need to go to provide a critical document or video to their customer.

Surveys that Matter

More and more surveys with decreasing response rates.

Suppose you wanted real information that could drive much better marketing insights. You could do more surveys on the web, add some more using random calls and then bring in the statistical modeling. You could do some focus groups or hire outside agencies to do research.

Or you could use the Pipeline.

Add a step to the Process. Guide the rep's conversation to address a specific complex, qualitative issue. Use the Pipeline's Result box to capture exactly what you want. The rep will be dealing with customers who are actively engaged. The answers will have muxch more meaning and relevance.

A good rep might add follow up questions to provide more insight.

Multiple regressions are cool - but wouldn't you rather work with what the customer is really thinking?

And the rep just might learn something critical, too.

Alignment

Another decades old buzzword. We know how the dysfunction started. We're working Sales 2.0 now. There just isn't room for that dysfunction anymore.

Is alignment even the best word now?

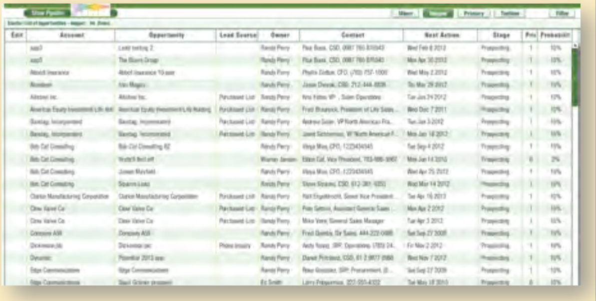
Marketing, inside sales, field sales and account management are really all one continuum. Special skills are needed at different points along the cycle but driving revenue is a team sport where the customer controls the handoffs.

The more visibility marketing has into the impact of their efforts, the better they can react with messaging that smooths and shortens the selling cycle.

The Pipeline Is For **Inside Sales**

The first voice your customer will ever hear about your company. Is Inside Sales be hard-wired to your processes today?

Full Circle: Call Sheets



They used to be pretty handy. Simple, clear, fast and flexible. A lot of work can be handled quickly. Done wrong, the call sheets lead to good information that never gets to field sales.

The Pipeline takes the best of calling sheets and integrates the sheets right into salesforce so the insight from the first conversations become part of the permanent record.

Calls are quick, updates are instant.

Time to Productivity

Training is critical. People forget. How can you stay ahead of all the forgetting that happens every day?

The PIpeline gets people productive as soon as they log in. The Pipeline is aligned to all selling methodologies. Training really pays off when the rookies start working the embedded processes.

The best of the training and the current practices are always available. When a star hits the ranks, their best work is captured real time where it can be reviewed and then tried out across the whole team.

Managing the Breakdowns

It's one thing to complain that inside sales is pushing unqualified leads to the field. It's another to address the entire cycle to position inside sales as an integrated partner in the revenue process. Is it possible that this resource is underutilized? Could they handle more than qualification and actually move the customer through the first stages of the Pipeline before handing off to Field? Could they handle all the phone work throughout the cycle ?

Today Marketing, Field, Account are siloed. This makes it difficult to analyze ways to shorten the sales cycle. Everybody owns their own piece and may have trouble embracing new ideas when those ideas come from outside the silo.This is a normal human reaction. That often leads to silos being more protective of their data.

The Pipeline changes the game.

By putting the entire selling continuum on display, big, cross-functional ideas have the data out there and ready for discussion and argument. Even better, new ideas are on display where the results can be viewed for better or worse. If an idea works everybody wins. If not, the visibility will allow people to pull the plug before anything goes out of control.

We've all heard you can't manage what you can't measure. The Pipeline gives you a measuring stick that's big enough to manage all of sales.

Turnover in the Boiler Room

Inside Sales can be a high burnout job.

The Pipeline relieves some of that stress. Autonomy is a proven motivator but there aren't many tools that give the inside seller ways to control their own workflow.

The Pipeline gives them a way to create mini-campaigns to focus on what they think is the hottest target. They can manage their own mini processes and see what's working to help their conversion rates.

Just to make sure they don't get lost, all their activities are laid out by how the job needs to get done.

Autonomy, control and speed with a great way for coaches to keep an eye on the work as it happens.

The Pipeline Is For **Account Management**

Sales Process: It ain't over till it's over.

Visibility

We've all heard it costs 5 times as much to find a new customer as to grow an existing client.

Shouldn't you be able to see all your customers in one place? Don't you need processes to work with those customers? Wouldn't account management pros like easy access to all the info that sold the opportunity? Don't forecasts need to include that repeat-business information?

The Pipeline says yes.

Project Mgmt

Often there's a defined system for onboarding new customers. It might include documentation and signoffs.

The Pipeline does that, too. Just use the first few stages of the Turbine Pipeline to show the key milestones of the Project. Use the Sales Processor to track all the important tasks that define the milestones.

Now your support team is integrated into the selling cycle. Not a bad idea, really.

Plan for Account Growth

Penetrating a large organization is almost as challenging as getting in the door. A good account manager will strategize the account, dividing and conquering with a set of clear goals with a timeline.

Is that how all Account Pros do it? With the Pipeline it's going to be much easier to guide the struggling 'farmer.' The coach can help them to rethink the Account relationship that exists and then set clear expectations, broken down by tasks and processes.

The result is clarity, accountibility and professional growth.

Process is Just as Important

Upselling and cross-selling customers call for unique processes. The customer thinks of you very differently than they did when they were just prospects. Their buying processes will be different.

The Pipeline's Sales Processor manages these process seamlessly. Just mark an opportunity as Won and it moves to the Turbine Pipeline where Account Managers have full visibility across the stages that define the 'farmer's' sales cycle.

Once again, the processes are listed and ready to apply to this unique aspect of the sales cycle. Is the second year any different than the first year with a new customer? Then create a second-year process.

The Client Remembers. Do You?

It's tough to be a salesperson and be human at the same time. When you manage scores of opportunities, it can be very difficult to remember everything that happened. When you pass it off to Account Management there may be some old nightmares that were fixed, but were not made part of the permanent record. Again - it's easy to forget.

Unless you're the client.

The Pipeline lays out the whole story. Problems, solutions and fallout and triumph aren't just accessible. They're logical. Chronological.

That's the power of the story.

The Pipeline Ecosystem

To improve any of them you have to improve **all** of them

Visibility	Account Management
Ease of use	The Story of an Opp
Forecasting	Qualification
Data Quality	Sales/Mktg Alignment
Sales Process	Sales Coaching
Workflow	Adoption/Compliance
Change Mgmt.	Investor Relations
B Players to A	Selling Time
Efficiency	Sales Training
Sales Effectiveness	Management Training

Jeffrey Althaus

As Senior Vice President of Operations and Worldwide Sales at Carrier IQ, Jeffrey is responsible for growing the company's global market position and delivering carrier-grade solutions through professional services, hosting services, and customer support, while managing the worldwide sales organization's expansion throughout the global markets. Most recently, Jeffrey helped lead the Self Service team at Siebel Systems to a record year, prior to being acquired by Oracle. Previous to Siebel, he helped eDocs accelerate revenue from $15M to $50M in three years. Jeffrey led the top team at Pivotal Corporation, helping to drive revenue from $10M to $110M in three years. He was also a top contributor at Bankers Systems, helping grow the company from $30M to $100M in revenue. Jeffrey earned a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of Wisconsin.

–Jim Dickie

Visibility into the sales pipeline is critical if you are going to have a predictable business. But when getting the information you need starts to take days or even weeks to obtain, you need to find a new way of doing pipeline management.

Carrier IQ is the world's leading provider of Mobile Service Intelligence solutions. They were founded in 2005 by a management team steeped in the mobile telecom industry. They are a privately held company that is funded by some of the leading players in the venture capital industry. They are headquartered in Mountain View, California, with additional offices in Chicago, Boston, London (UK), and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). Carrier IQ's mission is to provide mobile carriers and device OEMs with unprecedented insights into service performance and usability to enable them to deliver higher quality products and services to their customers.

With the proliferation of mobile devices (cell phones, smartphones, tablets, etc.), ensuring these devices are working properly is a key goal for all of the solution providers in the mobile solutions marketplace. To support this, Carrier IQ analyzes thousands of parameters that are taking place on these wireless devices. For instance, let's say you call into your cell phone service provider's customer care group. Our technology can tell the support person everything from poor signal strength, problems with battery life, issues with streaming data, or trying to download a new application. The information provided can dramatically shorten the time spent to solve problems and reduce the number of follow-on calls by dealing with multiple issues on a single call.

To take our solutions to market, the primary sales focus is calling on wireless operators. In addition, we do business with the manufacturers of mobile devices, chip set manufacturers, and consumer survey firms that are in interested in understanding mobile usage patterns.

SALES FOCUS

From a direct sales perspective, something that is very important to me is *focus*. For example, while there are well over 1,000 mobile operators in the world, we have identified 221 that are really important to us. We realize we can't be all things to all people, so we want to spend our time and energy working with firms that are a great fit for what we sell and to whom we can bring value. To support the rest of the market, we have partnerships with other firms that can concentrate on representing us on a regional basis.

We have a fairly complex sales process. Our average opportunity size is in the 10+ million dollar range, and we have to deal with many requirements and questions to close an account. In the early days of the company, the length of the sales cycle was 24–30 months. In that type of environment, as the VP of Sales, I was very keen on optimizing two things: visibility into the pipeline and predictability of moving deals through the process.

As a venture capital (VC) backed firm, I wasn't the only one interested in those two items. Over the last seven years we have raised four rounds of funding. Our existing and potential investors weighed our sales performance heavily in deciding how much to invest in us and at what valuation. As each VC firm has different ways of assessing businesses, I needed to be able to slice and dice the pipeline data a number of different ways to meet their needs.

THE ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

Initially, I relied on Salesforce.com as the primary engine for monitoring account management and sales activities. When our business expanded and moved into Asia and Europe, our CRM application alone didn't provide the functionality to quickly and easily get to the information I needed to have, and the required visibility into all the deals we were working on. This started to cause challenges in terms of managing the day-to-day business, as well as meeting the expectations of our investors.

I found myself investing an incredible amount of effort getting ready for our monthly board meetings. It was literally taking me the better part of two weeks to pull the necessary information out of our CRM system, and a variety of Excel spreadsheets and reports we were using to monitor and manage our business. This was in addition to my normal job—driving revenue for the company.

Visibility wasn't the only challenge I had. As the company grew, so did my role in the company. On top of worldwide sales and business development, I took over management responsibility for presales support, cloud based SaaS operations, internal IT, and worldwide professional services and consulting organizations. What was going on in sales had a huge impact on all of these functional areas both during the sales cycle and after we closed an account. For those areas to effectively manage their resources and budgets, they needed sales to provide accurate information on the status of all opportunities.

IMPLEMENTING SALES ANALYTICS

I knew we had to do things differently. In 2010 I started researching new approaches for tracking our business. In looking into sales management analytics solutions, I came across a company called Pipeline

Manager and started working with their CEO, Michael Bonner, to replace the way we were managing accounts with something more efficient, effective, and comprehensive.

The first thing I did when implementing Pipeline Manager was to implement our detailed sales methodology into the system. At Carrier IQ, we have a direct sales team, channel team, and strategic partnerships team that all have unique sales processes. Within a few days I developed multi-stage sales processes and rolled them out to each group. This contained 50+ steps that manage both the internal and external activities needed to efficiently complete each opportunity.

The reason I drill down to this level of detail is that I need to get to the data necessary to understand and measure what is happening at each step in the process. For example, if an account is in stage 3 of the process, I want to know how many days it will take sales to get to and complete stage 7. Are we 30 days away from closing the deal, or is it 60, 90, or 180 days? Also, based on system history, I am able to determine that when an opportunity reaches stage 5, we have an 87% confidence rating of closing the deal. This is critically important information in terms of resource planning—not just in the areas I directly manage, but also in other areas such as finance, engineering, and customer support.

An aspect of Pipeline Manager that I found useful is the user interface, which has a graphical user design. Because of this, I can easily move through the user interface and gather information without drilling down into the data for each account. It is also easy to create reports to provide insights into the data from a variety of perspectives. That was especially important to me, as I am also the system administrator. So when I need reports, I have to be able to generate them myself.

IMPROVED VISIBILITY

As we analyzed the data from our selling efforts, I looked for areas to improve the process, which became evident. For example, in the original sales methodology, we conducted a trial in stage 3 of the process. Historically, that was what prospects expected vendors to do, and we followed their lead. However, in analyzing our performance, at a minimum it was taking 9–12 months to complete stage 3.

It became clear we had to stop doing trials and replace them with other ways to meet the customer's expectations.

That became the springboard for creating our proof-of-concept program. Pipeline Manager was a very useful resource in this process. As we were navigating deals through the old sales process, we were collecting a lot of specifics as to what customers were trying to learn during the trial (e.g., what types of tests they were running, how they were calculating the ROI, and what functionality is commonly critical).

Through that analysis, we developed a platform that had all of the major evaluation tasks customers wanted to accomplish in a prebaked trial system. This provided us with a repeatable process that we could take the customer through that delivered answers to all of their questions in a fraction of the time and at a fraction of the internal cost of doing a trial.

After having the proof-of-concept process in place for several months, we had a baseline of real-world metrics that we could leverage to predict the length and resource requirements of our future selling efforts. Today, when an account moves into stage 3 of the process, the professional services and hosting operations teams know the workload that is coming. Therefore, they can effectively plan and allocate resources to support the customer during the proof-of-concept efforts.

This enhanced level of visibility—knowing we are 90, 60, 30 days away from closing an opportunity with a confidence level of X% to close—allows us to manage our business more effectively than we ever could doing account management the old way. We can ensure we have the system capacity to handle those accounts, that we have the right number and type of resources to support prospects and customers.

If you remember, I said when we started the business, our sales cycles were 24–30 months. With the emphasis on detailed account management and Pipeline Manager in place to manage the process, we were able to reduce the sales effort to closer to 12–14 months. This resulted in the company having the best year in our history and we were able to manage to our first profitable quarter.

Another thing worth sharing is that we were then able to drill into each deal and get insights into what product capabilities produced the best return on investment for specific types of companies. This has helped us further improve our ability to target the right companies and deliver a value proposition that supports justifying higher margins. Because of this, we have seen the length of contacts and the dollar size of the deals increase.

ANNUAL PLANNING/TRACKING OPTIMIZATION

What we have accomplished has transformed how the entire company works. For example, our annual planning process is now driven off of Pipeline Manager. When all of the functional areas of the company meet, we look at the business that existing customers have done with us and determine if it is repeatable and multiples of growth. We also have greater visibility into what new business should close. This enables us to make more educated decisions during the planning process.

This is something that is very important to our existing and future investors. They want to know what our projections are for growth and have the confidence that these are based on metrics rather than guesses. Let me share with you the impact this has on a company. I mentioned that we have had four rounds of funding. Our valuation from the third round to the fourth doubled. That increase was not the result of our sales doubling during that time period. While revenues went up, it wasn't by that multiple. What justified that increase in valuation was that we were able to show investors that we could, with confidence, predict the lifetime value of an account. This was a key metric in how the investors based their future valuation.

At a recent board meeting, one of our VCs asked a question regarding the strength and depth of our company pipeline. I walked the board through our version of Pipeline Manager—everything from the graphic display of our seven-stage pipeline to the 50+ steps required for every opportunity to pass through. The VC commented that he now had a better understanding of why we have great visibility, predictability, and consistency in our business.

ADVICE TO MY PEERS

Based on the experiences we have had, I have a few things I would want to share with others who might want to go down a similar path. The first is don't let business drive your behavior. It should be the other way around: your behavior should drive your business. For that to happen you must make a commitment to obtain the metrics you need to understand the specific activities that need to be done in the sales process to complete a sale, and you need to continually monitor and measure that those activities are consistently occurring.

Second, you need to understand which metrics are important for driving a successful outcome. In the start-up world, that successful outcome could be a next round of funding, an acquisition, an IPO. For a publically held company, this might revolve around increasing shareholder value and improving the price that the markets value your stock.

My third recommendation is to, sooner rather than later, develop the ability to measure the state of your business. A sales management solution such as Pipeline Manager is a must-have. It is the difference between driving your business off of the key metrics that determine your success versus sitting back and wishing and hoping for a successful outcome.