

A NEW PARADIGM OF PRODUCTIVITY TOOL FOR SELLING B2B

gives sales people feedback that helps the smart ones sell smarter

Sales productivity is a top business concern of CEOs¹. Something's clearly not working. Industry studies² show that quota attainment is down, Sales Reps are working harder, ramp times for new hires are increasing, win rates are declining, and more effort's required in the sell cycle to get buying decisions. Over 50% of all reps aren't making quota and turnover rates in the US are at an all time high. It's getting more and more expensive to sell business-to-business and everyone's patience is wearing thin.

There are increasing pressures from the executive suite for hard evidence that the information and tools given to sales people are used, affect practices, and impact results.³ New and better information on how to prospect smarter is becoming available.⁴ By itself, such new info is valuable. What's lacking, however, is feedback showing the sales impacts of sales investments in systems, information, and conversations.

Creating such smarter tools for selling is a tough challenge. Even if brilliantly designed, such tools must be used and used often to have any hope of having an impact. This requires broad user adoption from a profession that's notoriously disinclined to widely use *any* tools.

In this century there have been few tools that the sales profession has widely embraced as productivity improving – the telephone, and the automobile, and email are rare examples. The common bond that drove wide user adoption - these tools got sales people to their next sales conversations faster and, in doing so, made them more productive.

¹ IDC survey of CEO's priorities for 2008. See: <http://blogs.idc.com/ie/?p=124>

² See, for instance: CSO Insights, Sales Performance Optimization: 2007 Survey Results and Analysis, 2008 and Schmonsees, Escaping the Black Hole: Minimizing the Damage from the Marketing-Sales Disconnect, 2005. For more details, download a copy of our whitepaper via: http://amacus.innovativeinfo.com/request_info.htm

³ Just this past week, for instance, I received an email from a VP Sales whose company has invested \$5 million in their CRM solution. Despite this investment, sales productivity remains one of their main business concerns.

⁴ there's a growing abundance of new utilities that help sales professionals prospect smarter. For instance, tools like InsideView and Radian6 detect new opportunities to proactively offer unsolicited help to prospective new customers based on 'trigger events' in the marketplace. Such trigger events can take place in specific companies, in social media, or in the global economy as a whole. In addition, other tools like Sales Genius and Eloqua proactively detect new top-scored prospects worth reaching out to based on what website content they've consumed to date. These and other types of smart selling utilities are enormously valuable by themselves. They make parts of the sales process much more informed.

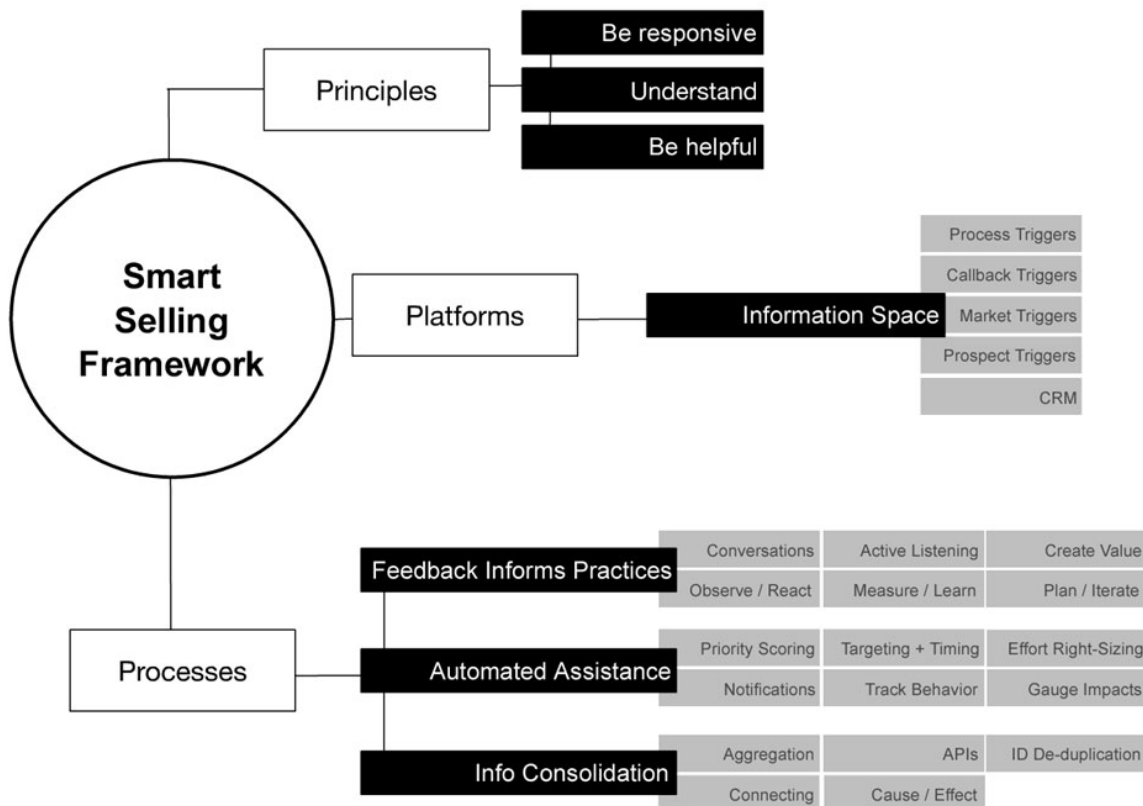
To achieve mass adoption, smarter tools must also get sales people to their next sales conversations faster. They, like phones and automobiles, must be simple to use, and not dangerous (so long as you're not talking or driving while impaired). They must also be so obviously helpful in improving sales productivity that they're used every day without any pressure for tool adoption from the boss.

There's an emerging new paradigm of smarter tool for selling that addresses these needs. This new type of tool is like a digital sales assistant, letting sales people be extraordinarily helpful, well organized, and efficient. The smart ones, especially, suddenly become much smarter.

Behind the scenes, such tools are based on a complex, inter-connected, framework of the principles, platforms and processes it takes to be really productive in sales. It gives sales people real-time feedback on what to do, next, to optimize their productivity. It does so in ways that simplify the user's choices. Its sophistication buries from view the underlying complexities of everything that's going on, making it easier to choose wisely. It's typically so easy to use, and obviously helpful, that sales people use it all the time.

A NEW PARADIGM OF SMART SELLING TOOL

lets sales people optimize their productivity with real-time feedback on sales impacts of their efforts + what to do, next



Produced by John Cousineau, CEO, innovative information inc.

Inspired by Antony Mayfield's 2009 WOMMA presentation on social web literacy: <http://www.slideshare.net/amayfield/womma-do-you-speak-social>

With this type of tool, sales people gain more than just a specific piece of needed information – they get a sense of ALL information at once with which they can then make smart choices on how to invest effort. It simplifies the user interface from something that feels like 747 dashboard to something that feels more like a joystick. It:

- Is constantly changing the info it presents in order to help sales people choose wisely how to invest their efforts and with whom, PLUS
- reveals in real-time how productively each sales professional is responding to the new feedback that they're getting (ie how productively have they gone on to invest their time and effort), THEN
- enables benchmarking showing how much more productive users could be (at each stage of the sales process) if able to match the productivity of top-performers

Sales people gain rapid, fine-grained, actionable feedback on the effectiveness of every action they've taken. The process of advancing prospects becomes a non-stop process of experimenting in new methods + tactics. Sales people discover and learn new things about their own best practices every day. They do so using real-time measures that make the impacts of their efforts obvious, quickly. For example, a rep might prepare a follow-up email with embedded hyperlinks designed to address prospects' questions arising from a first sales conversation, try it as a follow-up on 5-10 conversations, and then in the next few days see a report showing the customers' response to that specific message. If the response is good, the rep knows to keep using the email. If the response is less than desired, they know in very short term to rework it and try again. It is a new paradigm of smart selling in which users learn their own best practices based on their own experiences.

These new smarter tools for selling change sales professionals' behavior without twisting their arms or requiring that they spend hours in a classroom re-learning how to sell. They learn to detect + fix their mistakes quickly. They gain the confidence that if something's wrong, they can fix it. Sales people learn their own best practices, then practice them often. This allows what they practice to be best practices, mastered over time. Sales people become curious. They try new things. They make new mistakes. They discover new best practices and performance benchmarks they never thought achievable.

With this new paradigm, sales people are so equipped to sell productively that they develop the curiosity, work habits, and craftsmanship of true sales superstars. The end effect is much more than just smarter selling. It's smart business.

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To learn more, go to: http://amacus.innovativeinfo.com/sixth_sense.htm
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