



WHITE PAPER

Forecast 2011 - Thirteen Truths of Pipeline Management



THE SALES PERFORMANCE AUTOMATION COMPANY

ABOUT THE TAS GROUP (www.thetasgroup.com)

The TAS Group® is a Sales Performance Automation company that helps you sell smarter, and manage your business better. Our industry-leading TAS® methodology has helped more than 750,000 sales professionals find and close more deals, and our proven sales process shows you what you need to do to move opportunities through the pipeline. The result is increased revenue, accurate sales forecast and pipelines, and timely information to make better decisions. It all gets delivered through our on-demand Dealmaker® technology that integrates with your existing CRM system to produce sustained, measurable results. And to ensure that your sales teams get the full benefit, Dealmaker virtual learning delivers on-the-job training worldwide – reinforced by expert coaching.

Dealmaker solves these problems:

- **We have a revenue problem.** Is your pipeline weak? Do you find yourself saying, “I don’t have enough deals in the pipeline, and I’m not sure about the quality of what I do have?” Or maybe it’s “We’re losing too many deals”, or “Our sales cycle is too long”. Companies like Xerox, Bluecoat and Kodak use proven sales methodologies and process from The TAS Group to improve pipeline quality and size, increase win rates, and shorten sales cycles. And with Dealmaker reinforcing and measuring best practices across the sales team every day, you get a revenue boost that lasts and actually improves over time.
- **I need to improve the effectiveness of my sales team - consistently.** Are all of your sales people working on the right deals? Are they customer-focused and can they identify and build relationships with the real buyer? Our proven TAS sales methodologies solve those problems, and show your team how to gain control of the sale and build an opportunity plan to win. TAS workshops are supplemented by Dealmaker virtual learning for pre-workshop knowledge transfer, and post-workshop reinforcement. This eliminates the average 87% drop in retention typical within 30 days of learning in traditional classroom sales training. Post-training, our Dealmaker Sales Performance Automation platform integrates with your CRM system so that the sales person applies what they learned – where they need it – on every deal.
- **Forecasting is time-consuming and isn’t accurate.** Sales people spend on average 2.5 hours per week on sales forecasting – and in most cases deals do not close as forecasted. The sales process science in our Dealmaker software takes the guesswork out of forecasting by removing sales people’s subjectivity and guides them to truly understand when a deal will close. Accurate sales forecasts result because of Dealmaker’s objective in-depth analysis of the team’s actual performance and knowledge of what it takes to close deals – based on your business.

FORECAST 2011 – THIRTEEN TRUTHS OF PIPELINE MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

To the cynical onlooker the terms Forecast Analysis and Pipeline Analysis can seem like an oxymoron. There doesn't seem to be too much analysis in areas which are the product of subjectivity, conservatism or misplaced optimism. As you look historically at the last quarter or year, and towards the next year, the one thing you need to help you run your business and make your decisions is predictability, and that's the one thing that proves so elusive when you compare what you said you'd do with what you ended up doing. Sometimes you're pleasantly surprised, when the bluebird comes in, but usually you're left trying to explain what happened, and why there's a shortfall.

It's also true that the most successful sales individuals, teams and organizations are the ones who usually get their forecasts just about right, and also seem to have what they need at each stage in their pipeline. These are the ones who look with confidence to next year and are investing and preparing accordingly. It follows that if we could bottle what they do and standardize on those best practices throughout the organization, then everyone wins.

This White Paper began life in late 2009 with 10 truths of pipeline management. We have updated it to 13 truths, to reflect the impact of social networking practices on the buying process. We will start with some definitions of forecast and pipeline, offering some insights on what makes forecast and pipeline analysis difficult. Then, we introduce the thirteen truths of pipeline management. We bring the thirteen truths to life visually by showing examples of how you can get confidence and accuracy in your forecast and pipeline analysis. The confidence comes from the accuracy, or predictability, of the data that you run your business on. Finally, we make recommendations on what you need to do now if you want to be in a happy place later.

As with any of our White Papers, there will be a big variance in the seniority and experience of the readership. Some of you will perhaps be in your first managerial role, looking to focus on what's really important in the deal. Others may be more seasoned sales leaders at Director, or VP level tuning in to make sure you're in step with the latest thinking and technologies. This White Paper aims to provide something for the complete range of requirements, since the ideas and recommendations have applicability right up the leadership hierarchy. However, if you want to dig deeper or move wider, we urge you to get in touch with us individually. You can do this via email to: marketing@thetaskgroup.com.

FORECAST AND PIPELINE DEFINED

We can define the forecast as the probabilistically determined revenue that a company will achieve in a given time period. What is the selling organization likely to close within a time period determined by the selling organization, typically by their reporting monthly or quarterly period? It's the near term, concerned with the last sales stage. Pipeline, then, is the totals of potential revenue against target revenue at each stage of a defined sales process, looking further into the future, the mid- to long-term usually, depending on the selling organization's typical sales cycle.

Subjectivity is a major threat to forecast and pipeline accuracy. Some of your sales people will be more conservative, giving strong deals a low probability of closing and a far-out close date. Others will be overly optimistic, with the opposite result. And you as the sales leader have to give a number to your executives based on this information, which is sub-optimal at best.

Also, can you be sure that all the deals are in the system, counting towards the total number? Are the deals that are in the system fully up-to-date? Poor system compliance by your sales force is another wrench in your calculations.

Lack of a defined sales process, standardized through your organization, and followed by your sales teams, will also make predictions difficult for you. If people differ or disagree on what sales stage they're at, how can you accurately plan your revenues?

One of the hardest things to get a sense of is what the passage of time is doing to your numbers. Exactly what has changed between your Q3 forecast last month and this? If you print the two forecasts off, or two pipeline snapshots from last month and this, can you tell what has changed, what has come into which stages, from where, which deals have progressed, or gone backwards? Furthermore, which deals are healthy, being worked on, and which are dormant, possibly dead, clogging up your pipeline? What percentage of your pipeline is composed of deals that should be weeded out, to give you a real sense of what's in there?

So, taking all this into account, sales leaders have to make subjective allowances for their individual members' subjectivity, some pessimistic, others optimistic, to arrive at a team number for the period, and this subjectivity then gets magnified through each layer of the hierarchy, to the point where companies are issuing forecasts to investors or the markets that have had a number of subjective operations performed on them. It's no wonder that forecasts can be seen as a bit of a lottery.

THIRTEEN TRUTHS OF PIPELINE MANAGEMENT

Truth #1: The first truth of pipeline management is, as you might expect, that a strong pipeline avoids the quarter end crunch. You need enough qualified opportunities at each stage. One of the important things about a pipeline is its shape. Imagine two funnel shapes, one with a broad top and one with a narrower top. The same number of leads are at the top of the funnel, the same number of deals come out of the bottom. Which is the better pipeline? The funnel with the broad top appears to have more coverage, and if you answered this one, you would be wrong. When it comes to this idea of coverage, '3 times', '4.5 times' and so on is not relevant. It doesn't help you. The broad-top funnel shape means you're spending more time on the opportunities you're going to lose, and you're not deploying your more expensive resources on the later stages of the funnel where you really need them.



Truth #2: This leads to the next truth, that pipeline velocity is more important than pipeline volume. Sales effectiveness is about how quickly you move business through the funnel, or the speed you move sales through your business. You can have all the coverage in the

$$\text{\$} = \frac{\#Deals \times \$Value \times \%Close}{\text{Length of Sales Cycle}}$$

Sales Velocity

world, but it's no use to you if it's not moving, or if you don't know if it's moving, or in fact how it's moving. A useful thing to focus on is The TAS Group's 'Sales Velocity Equation'. We define sales velocity as a function of the number of qualified deals you work during a defined period, the average size of them, the percentage of them that close, and the average length of time it takes you to close them.

Velocity is all about time. Let's illustrate this with an example. Your goal is to travel 1 mile in 60 seconds, that's an average speed of 60 miles an hour. If you hit traffic and only do 30 miles an hour for the first half mile, how fast do you need to travel to make up the time and get to your destination in 60 seconds? 90 miles per hour? 120 miles hour? If you only go 30 miles an hour for the first half mile, that's your 60 seconds up, you can't do it. In sales, if your deal hits the roadblocks, you can't close it in time, you miss the deadline. Velocity is key.

Truth #3: Pipeline is a better predictor of the medium-to-long term health of your business than forecast. Don't forget that forecast and pipeline are two different indicators. Pipeline looks at the sales cycle in total which should map to your customer's buying cycle, and is therefore truer. Forecast is based on your timeline - not your customers' - and has artificially imposed time constraints.

Truth #4: Having too many stages in the pipeline is counter-productive. This will depend on your customers' buying process and some of The TAS Group's customers have more than one sales process to reflect the different buying processes of their customers. In our experience, and that of our customers, we have found that 5 or 6 sales stages is the optimum number for complex deals.

Truth #5: You can't measure pipeline using 'weighted average' or 'expected revenue'. It is futile to determine the value of a pipeline by multiplying the value of each opportunity by the probability of it closing. You rarely get a percentage of a deal. You'll get either 100% of it or none of it. It's much better to calculate which deals should close in the period, sum the value of those and ignore the ones that won't close.

Truth #6: Marketing can't fill the funnel for you. Maybe you feel they don't fill it for you anyway, but there is no bad time to be prospecting; you need to be doing it all the time. In our experience you should expect marketing to contribute to about 50% of your pipeline, but this can vary by industry, deal size and in a host of other ways. The rest is down to you. If you don't look constantly for new opportunities, you lose control over where you're going.

Truth #7: A healthy pipeline has the right balance of deals in terms of size. If you want to fill a barrel with rocks and maximize the usage of the capacity of the barrel, you have to fill the gaps between the rocks with stones or pebbles. It's the same with your pipeline. The right balance means you're not on the one hand hoping a couple of elephants are going to drop, and on the other hand, you're not chasing your tail trying to close too many insignificant deals.

Truth #8: Pipeline sales stages have no value in and of themselves. It's only the customer-related actions tied to each stage that give meaning to the progression of deals through the pipeline. Clear deliverables (based on evidence of customer actions), what we at The TAS Group call 'qualifiers', must be linked to each stage.

Truth #9: You need an algorithmic measure for each stage of the pipeline to determine whether you have enough opportunities at each stage. Consider the time to close, the probability of closure, and the target revenue to calculate the value you need. At a macro level you can do this using your average deal size, your quota and your average sales cycle length.

Truth #10: Deals that are inactive, meaning they have not been worked on for more than a defined period of time, again depending on your typical sales cycle, should be cleared out of the sales funnel and sent back to marketing for rekindling. Otherwise you're given a false sense of the value of your sales pipeline. You need to know where you're really starting from.

Truth #11: Customers (or prospects) are entering the sales cycle further down the funnel now as they are using Social Networks to research solutions before they invite sales people into the conversation. They are qualifying themselves before you get a chance to do it. As we have discussed in Part 4, you need to be listening and contributing where they are playing.

Truth #12: Unless you've established yourself as part of the 'recommendation chain', many of these opportunities will never enter your funnel. In the new paradigm, you won't even have the chance to build your unique business value around their requirements. Buyers will find other people in their recommendation chain and the resulting opportunities will be closed by other people before you get to find out.

Truth #13: Networking has always been the best way to fill the funnel – now with Social Networks you can use OPM (other People's Money) to generate buyers – not just opportunities. While marketing can't necessarily fill the funnel for you – see Truth#6 above – inbound marketing in the form of social networking, can.

THE THIRTEEN TRUTHS UPHELD IN A SALES PERFORMANCE AUTOMATION SYSTEM

What should you expect from your CRM system or sales performance automation system, to uphold these thirteen truths, and to gain some accuracy and predictability in your forecasts?

Accurate sales forecasts come from all your salespeople following standardized, repeatable best practices so that you know that 31% closure probability and sales stage 2, for example, means the same to everybody in the organization. Systems like The TAS Group's, which is called Dealmaker, should be built around the needs of the sales person, keeping them on track while making them as productive as possible, and at the same time providing the sales leaders with the intelligence they need to make sound business decisions. In this screenshot we can see two of the thirteen truths upheld:

- #4, Too many stages in the pipeline is counter-productive, and
- #8. Pipeline sales stages have no inherent value

There are 5 stages to this particular sales process, which is good. Also, for each sales stage an opportunity is at, there are a number of customer-focused qualifying questions that the sales person must satisfy before they can progress the opportunity. Systems like Dealmaker should be flexible enough to accommodate your own sales process, your specific qualifiers for each sales stage, and which of these are essential, ie they must be addressed before you can proceed.

The screenshot displays the Dealmaker CRM interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Assessment, Competitive Strategy, Political Analysis, Decision Criteria, and PRIME Actions. The main view is titled 'Assessment View: Qualifier Assessment'. It shows account details for 'ABC Trucking' with a value of \$650,000 and a stage of 'Evidence'. To the right, there are progress bars for 'Pipeline Qualifications Status' (100%), 'Requirements' (100%), 'Evidence' (79%), 'Acquisition' (0%), and 'Verbal Order' (0%). Below this, there are 'Dealmaker Opportunity Status' options: 'Open' and 'Close Opportunity'. A 'Save' and 'Add Action' button is visible.

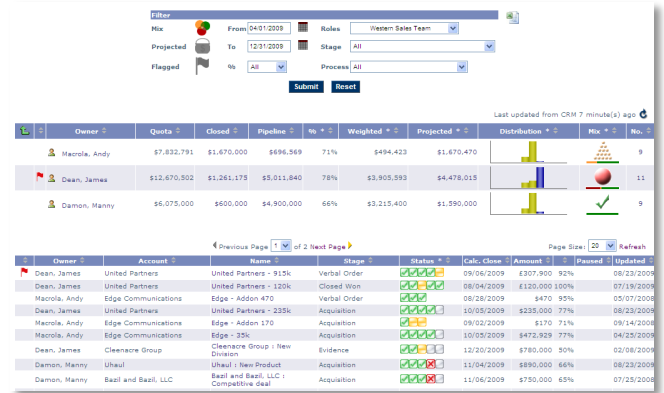
The 'Evidence' section contains a table with the following data:

Qualifier	Status	Date	Comments	Flag	Help
Has the customer confirmed that your solution approach is acceptable?	✓	06/10/2009			Related info
Are the requirements, expected value and success metrics determined and agreed to?	✓	07/30/2009	Trying to get these are documented in the ROI document and success criteria spreadsheet, need help.		Related info
Have you assessed the competition and developed a strategy to win?	✓	06/24/2009	We are the sole provider who can move with degree of speed.		Related info
Has an executive to executive relationship been established?	✗	mm02/yyyy			Related info

All the data is presented to the salesperson by Dealmaker from the CRM system, so there is no need for rekeying, and they have to do the minimum of keying to advance the opportunity. Once they do this, and save their changes, the calculated close date and the closure probability are updated. This means the opportunity plan is automatically updated, their forecast is updated, and the sales leader is drawing on accurate up-to-date information.

Here is an example of an ideal sales forecast screen, where we can address 3 more of the thirteen truths:

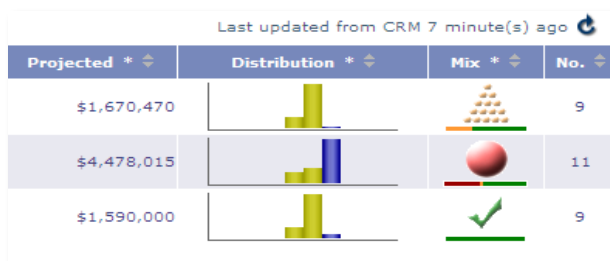
- #5. You can't measure pipeline using weighted average
- #7. A healthy pipeline has the right balance of deals, size-wise
- #9. You need an algorithmic measure to truly determine if you are going to make the quarter



Dealmaker is deeply integrated into the CRM system, and it pulls all the opportunity, account and contact information from the CRM and then builds on this with a full opportunity management system, where the organization's sales processes have been optimized and configured. The roll-up facility and managed permissions means that anyone from the individual up can study the forecast that relates to them.

In the summary area there is the percentage confidence in the pipeline, giving a weighted forecast. The confidence percentage is calculated by Dealmaker based on the progress that has been made through each of the opportunities. Based on the rules that the organization has determined, Dealmaker also calculates the projected revenue number for the period. Instead of applying the percentage confidence as a multiplier across the entire pipeline, as was done to determine the weighted forecast, Dealmaker looks at each of the opportunities in the pipeline and picks out those individual opportunities that Dealmaker thinks the organization can close in this forecast period. The projected revenue number is the full value of all of those selected opportunities.

	Pipeline	%	Weighted	Projected
0	\$696,569	71%	\$494,423	\$1,670,470
5	\$5,011,840	78%	\$3,905,593	\$4,478,015
0	\$4,900,000	66%	\$3,215,400	\$1,590,000



Sales leaders are also concerned about the mix of deals in the forecast. A green tick-mark represents a good balance of deals. A red ball signifies a number of large deals that represent a large proportion of the forecast number. A yellow pyramid similarly indicates that small deals represent a large proportion of the forecast number. Leaders want to know when there is a risk to the forecast, either because of a few abnormally large deals which could

make or break the forecast, or because the sales people won't have sufficient time to close a sufficient number of the small deals that they have in their pipeline to reach their forecast.

Dealmaker takes subjectivity right out of the forecast equation. Because it is a rules-based system, and uses algorithms tailored to the specific organization's sales process, it can objectively calculate the forecast. This

means that the organization knows that 35% closure probability is exactly that, rather than being 20% in one salesperson's mind and 70% in another. What this brings to the organization is the value of predictability in the forecast.

The Pipeline Snapshot is the first part of the Dealmaker Performance Coach component which provides detailed pipeline analysis and reporting. This relates to 3 more of our thirteen truths:

- #1. A strong pipeline avoids the quarter-end crunch
- #3. Pipeline is a better predictor of the medium to long term than forecast
- #6. Marketing can't fill the funnel for you

Organizations need to know what the pipeline is in absolute terms and also in relative terms, relative to targets over time. A system like Dealmaker is able to calculate the target stage value needed in each stage of the pipeline as deals move through the funnel. Dealmaker technology helps the organization do what they need to do to advance the deals. In this example, the red at the very top of the pipeline indicates there's going to be a long-term revenue shortfall problem unless it is fixed now. The near-term bottom sales stages look vulnerable too unless the organization acts quickly.



This snapshot view is a pretty common one, but it's a snapshot of a point in time, so what does it tell us? What has moved, and from where, to where? This screenshot below is from the What's Changed screen. We're not offering any of the thirteen truths here, but it answers a vital question posed earlier in this Paper, namely how do you get a sense of what's changed to your pipeline since you last had a look.

	Baseline	New	Target Selected	Requirements	Evidence	Acquisition	Virtual Order	Won	Lost	Total
Target Selected	\$12,373,048	\$2,818,688	\$12,094,787	\$1,949,000	\$44,480	\$214,050	\$59,958	\$58,781	\$14,886,968	
Target Qualified	\$12,296,824	\$4,719,382	\$765,600	\$15,877,114	\$221,000	\$60,000	\$257,105	\$77,411	\$192,983	\$548,988
Requirements	\$6,478,878	\$1,185,248	\$24,940	\$5,334,458	\$15,200	\$27,485	\$55,000	\$8,887	\$6,886,317	
Evidence	\$4,174,958	\$388,888	\$1,344,600	\$246,400	\$2,155,300	\$450,000	\$43,200	\$17,188	\$8,888	\$4,674,418
Acquisition	\$2,725,815	\$448,158	\$11,400	\$22,105	\$2,463,200	\$21,600	\$218,813	\$8	\$2,878,818	
Virtual Order	\$224,492	\$168,888		Increased \$30,000	\$225,659	\$182,888	\$8	\$168,322		
Won	\$6,432	\$1,493,818	\$12,812	\$51,600	Decreased \$30,000	\$1,493,818	\$1,557,428	\$188,881	\$188,881	
Lost	\$108,881				This is the increase or decrease of the opportunities over the time period.	\$1,136,928	\$2,881,492	\$1,248,382	\$68,832,882	

The What's Changed screen allows the organization to look at what's happened to a series of deals over a period of time, and see what's changed at each stage in the pipeline. The value of this is that the sales leader or professional can see, even if he or she's been focused on one large deal the last few days, exactly what has changed in the whole of the pipeline.

Let's explore an example of why this is important. Your organization had \$20m in stage 4, and you were expecting this to move down to become \$15m in stage 5, but when you come to look there's only \$10m in stage 5. As a sales leader you really need to know what happened to the other \$5m. Dealmaker can tell you exactly what happened, and it can only be one of four things for each opportunity: deals were lost; deals fell out; deals went backwards; or your sales team discounted heavily during the period. This gives you valuable insight, pinpoints your coaching for you, and increases your chances of making the number.

The full picture of whether the individual deals are moving along is about the health of your opportunities and speaks to another of the thirteen truths:

- #10. Inactive deals give a falsely rosy picture of your pipeline health

Deals never stand still, they either go forward or they go back, and Dealmaker displays for each stage in the pipeline which deals are being actively worked on, in green, which are stalled, in amber, with no work done on them for a certain period of time, and which deals are inactive, in red, since they've not been touched in an even greater period of time.



So if the sales leader sees deals that are in the latter stages of the pipeline, and they're not being worked, then he or she really has to wonder whether they've been over-progressed in the first place, and in effect are now moving backwards. Forecast analysis focuses on the latter stages where you would expect to see the deals coming in, whereas the Healthcheck screen can paint a different picture, allowing you to raise the alarm bells early.

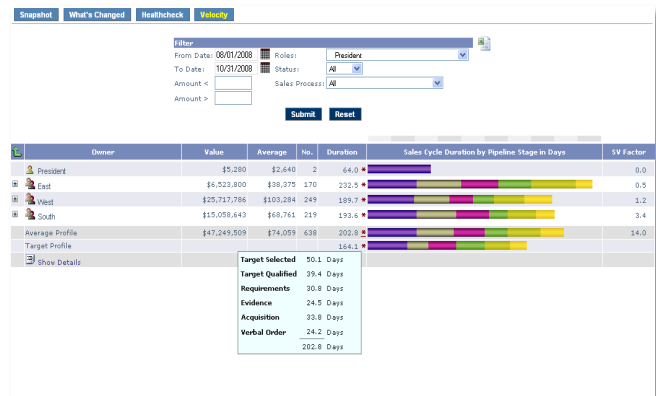
Name	Stage	Health	Days Idle
Abbott Distribution : Upgrade	Requirements	●	1
ATB Financial : Competitive deal	Qualify	●	151
Bell Labs Inc. : Maintenance Renewal	Qualify	●	1
Burlington Textiles Corp of America : New Division	Qualify	●	1
Butler Inc : Maintenance Renewal	Qualify	●	1
Butler Partners : Competitive deal	Qualify	●	106

You don't really want to see any red inactive deals the further down the sales process you go. Conversely, deals that are inactive at the top stages of the sales process are not good either because it means leads are not being followed up and marketing expenditure to get them there in the first place is being wasted, or else opportunities are being created that should have been filtered out by telemarketing, for example. Deals that are not 'real' deals can therefore be weeded out of the pipeline, giving the sales organization true pipeline value.

Velocity speaks to the last of the thirteen truths:

- #2. Pipeline velocity is more important than pipeline volume

Individual sales professionals will all have different velocities through different stages, and the Velocity screen allows leaders to compare and contrast, and also gives valuable pointers on where to focus coaching. Exactly the same holds true at a team level, where for each team you see the total value of deals each team is working on, the average deal size and the number of deals being worked on.



Sales leaders can ask themselves why there are levels of discrepancy between certain teams or individuals.

They can look at the sales cycle lengths and see what coaching they need to do so that, for example, enough time is being spent at the early stages, doing the homework and qualifying the deals to go after, followed by shorter sales stages as the deal progresses. If the later sales stages are long, they can see evidence that the individuals are not spending enough time understanding the customer's requirements and so end up proposing a

range of solutions which results in a drawn out or lost purchase. Alternatively, their people might not be spending enough time presenting the evidence of their solution and moving too quickly to the purchase, the customer is not ready, hasn't seen the value and then it becomes all about the price, terms and conditions.

DEALMAKER PULSE

Dealmaker Pulse is part of the Dealmaker Sales Performance Automation platform and speaks to the last 3 truths:

- #11. Customers (or Prospects) are entering the sale cycle further down the funnel
- #12. Unless you've established yourself as part of the 'recommendation chain', many of these opportunities will never enter your funnel
- #13. Networking has always been the best way to fill the funnel

Dealmaker Pulse provides intelligent social networking for sales, with instant objective deal alerts. By following sales opportunities, accounts, and users as well as integrating feeds from Twitter and LinkedIn, Pulse lets you keep your 'finger on the pulse' of critical sales events and customer sentiment. Pulse is the answer to the problem of instant information flow within the sales organization.

In Dealmaker Pulse, messages and activity from your social networks, and opportunities, accounts and users you follow, are displayed in the Pulse bar.

Pulses are generated when someone updates information on any of the entities you're following.

In a selling organization, knowledge is everything – knowledge about your opportunities and your accounts – but also about your customers in the social network landscape. Dealmaker Pulse harnesses social network technology to make this a reality, so that you can make good decisions based on total and instant knowledge.



The Dealmaker platform applies objective and scientific standards to sales methodology and sales performance activities. This makes Dealmaker Pulse different to other 'social media' formats because the built-in intelligence means pulses are based on objective, scientific and reliable information.

WHAT TO DO RIGHT NOW

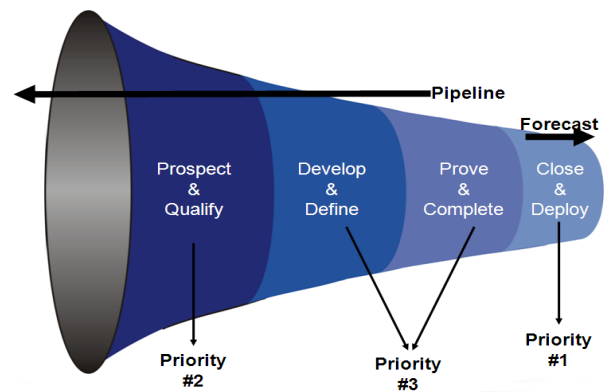
There are some practical things that your teams can be doing to make sure you have a strong, accurate pipeline. Firstly, rather like the adage 'always be closing', ABC, your organization also needs to always be qualifying. You need to prospect and qualify all the time, especially in your busiest periods when you're closing deals. Even the

best sales people have peaks and troughs to their revenue lines. Don't leave it to the troughs to start the prospecting, otherwise that trough is going to be longer and deeper than you hoped.

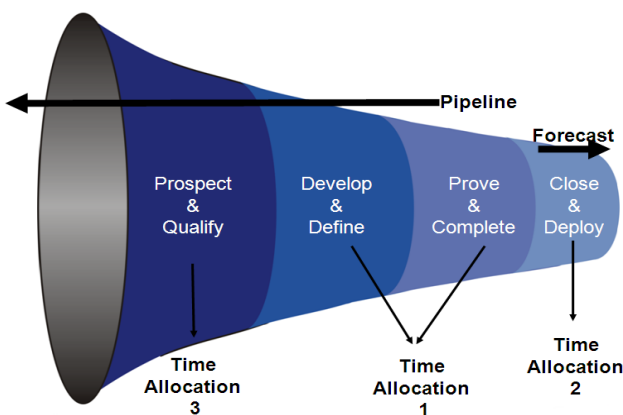
Second, make sure your organization clearly understands your customers' buying process, or processes. How can you sell until you understand how your customers want to buy? Your sales process should be mapped to the ways your customers buy, not the ways you want to sell. Change the names of your sales stages to your customers' buying stages if it helps, but you have to get the mindset right and have everything revolve around buying, rather than selling.

Third, your teams need to understand the differences between selling activities and time management. These are not the same. Priority 1 selling activity is to close the deals that are forecast to close in the near term. Second priority activity is to prospect and qualify your opportunities, and qualify the opportunities from marketing, at the top of your funnel. Priority 3 is to advance the opportunities in the middle stage of your pipeline. You need, however, to balance these activities with the time it takes to cover them.

The most time you should spend is on the middle stages of your funnel, your priority 3 activity. It's simply more time-consuming to develop these opportunities and you can't neglect them. The second amount of time you should spend is on closing your forecast deals, your number 1 selling activity. There's still work to do on these to get them over the line and you can't neglect them. The least amount of time should be spent on filling the top of the hopper. They don't take as long as opportunities elsewhere in the pipe, but you can't neglect them.



Fourth, you need to focus on pipeline velocity, not volume. Time is the killer metric when it comes to velocity. If you're an organization that in a given period works on 40 deals, at an average of \$200K, and close 25% of them in an average of 2 months, your velocity is \$1m per month, that's how much business you put through in a month. If you improve each of the 4 factors 10%, so increase the ones above the line by 10% and reduce the sales cycle below the line by 10%, your velocity grows by 48%, you're putting half as much extra business through with no extra cost. But, in the same scenario, if you let your average sales cycle leak out to 3 months, you more than lose all of your other gains, and you're business is slowing.



Fifth and finally, you have to be able to measure accurately in order to forecast with confidence, and to do that you need to record the activity of your sales people doing the same things in a best practice, standardized and automated way, to allow them also to maximize their productivity. You can do this with a system like the

Dealmaker sales performance automation system, and if you move quickly, you can have it working for you before it's too late.

CONCLUSION

Forecast Analysis and Pipeline Analysis is difficult. The Thirteen Truths of Pipeline Management will help you see what's important to focus on in this vital area. A Sales Performance Automation system like Dealmaker will help you be true to the thirteen truths and bring confidence to your future through accurate and predictable analysis.

We'd be delighted to discuss your specific needs further, and explore how our unique sales methodology, sales process, and Dealmaker technology can be combined to drive sustained sales performance improvement in your organization. If you wish to find out more about The TAS Group's sales performance automation offerings, or anything else discussed in this White Paper, please contact us at marketing@thetasgroup.com.