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Leveraging your Sales and Marketing Software

Sales and marketing requires constant diagnostic tuning if you want to stay at peak performance. How do you maximize the use of your sales and marketing (SAM) tracking software to become more profitable and effective?

Here are a few tips.

Run reports and set benchmarks.

Reporting is your best tool for measuring for improvement. If you don't constantly measure for improvement, you can't determine if things are getting better or worse and identify if you're making progress toward your goals. It's amazing how a little time spent analyzing your performance statistics from different angles can form a completely new picture.

Only measure for relevant results.

Measure those activities or results that are most important to successfully achieving your organization's goals—

these are your key performance indicators (KPIs). A KPI will only be of value, however, if there's a way to accurately define and track it. One example could be: "Decrease cancellations by 0.05 % monthly until we sustain a 4% cancellation threshold", or "Increase VPG on married couples under age 30 by 'x' amount". With today's software choices, look for a solution that offers many sales reporting capabilities, so you can report on the life cycle of a tour from every perspective. Today's sales and marketing (SAM) technology can almost predict your agents' effectiveness for a day of the week and their best tour time of that day, based on historical patterns.

Measure activities you may have overlooked.

There is a ton of profit in the details. Analyze components of the

tour's life cycle you may not have considered before. Category by category, you can measure both success and failures by a far wider range of variables and criteria than previously available. You can filter by date range first and then run a report that shows trending. Daily, monthly, and week-by-week comparative reports should be grouped by as many measurable variables as possible that impact the tour, such as gift, OPC, liner, closer, VLO, tour times, product types, sale status (penders, cancellations, funded), and more.

Overcome your biggest obstacle: software avoidance.

Simplify your SAM reporting so that it is not overly complicated to use, or your organization will avoid it like the plague. Have the "report expert" train your staff on the simplest ones first, to acclimate them to running reports frequently. These reports will help them understand the impact of marketing decisions and increase the company's bottom line. Give them tools to achieve higher effectiveness they will actually use. Today's SAM software can permit every person in your organization limited access to measure themselves for performance while protecting sensitive data proprietary to the developer.

Measure twice, cut once.

Use your SAM reporting program to discover which actions or teams are effective and which are not, looking for patterns over time. Implement training sessions where you can use examples of this information to pose interesting questions and challenge the staff to use the software to identify

Starting Checklist

- **Designate staff to be your reporting experts.** These personnel will know your stats numbers from the inside out and will learn to notice the slightest changes instantly.
- **Implement beginner and advanced training sessions.** Feature/information overload can intimidate your users. Include as many people as possible on access lists and then teach them to use it. Help new users become comfortable with your SAM product. Experienced users should receive further training as well from the software developers, learning advanced tricks and tips.
- **Motivate your staff to use these tools—make it as easy as possible.** Technology-challenged staff need simple steps to get started. Use shortcuts and saved reporting queries to simplify the process for them. Recognize that everyone is capable of implementing improvements in obscure areas, and these too, are measurable. Acknowledge and reward those that discover new performance peaks and valleys.



a specific success or failure point. Examples would be: “Who can tell me what our strongest tour time is by VPG?” or “Identify the conversion rates of pending sales to processable by our two highest closers.” It then becomes easier to find a way to reproduce that desired result.

In today’s challenging economic times, we can take existing budgets and extract far more revenue from the

existing marketing dollar when we mine the data we already have to help us pinpoint and focus on our strengths.

Distribute this info to appropriate personnel.

Effective sales and marketing software is able to provide all this information and more, to everyone that wants to measure for improvement. A common pitfall and

obstacle to maximizing your SAM investment is failing to disseminate the gold mine to be found in your data to the right people. Many companies provide on-demand access to reports that are real time and Web-based, filtered by log-on. Certain information needs to be accessible to those most capable of affecting change. This might mean opening some of

(Continues on page 84)

Tip Overview

- Make sure you have a reporting system in place and develop some internal report-experts. This person should be training as many key personnel as possible to become experts also.
- Encourage all staff to have constant awareness of their numbers and provide access to that data. Spot-check their proficiency by asking for current statistics.
- Enforce policy that data input must be accurate—otherwise, it’s worthless. Encourage your resort industry professionals to challenge data that seems inaccurate, and then run alternate reports to determine validity of the claim.
- Ensure that sufficient permissions are assigned based on the role of each user.
- Look at your performance data from others’ viewpoints. Feedback on the results is crucial to improvement.

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Software

Leveraging your Sales and Marketing Software (cont)

the reporting from top to bottom in a limited way even for agents, rather than leaving it only for “C” level executives and directors.

It’s a highly competitive market out there. Using your sales and marketing software properly provides your staff easy opportunities to improve in specific areas that used to be hard to measure and track. If you’re not empowering your staff to use the software to its fullest capabilities, you’re leaving money on the table every time. Let’s raise the bottom line. ▀

Todd Rodgers is CEO of TrackResults Software. His e-mail is todd@trackresults.net.

Op-Ed

Travel & Tourism Development (cont)

In collaboration with partner, MMG Worldwide, a \$100 million full-service global advertising and marketing firm with more than 25 years experience in the travel, hospitality and entertainment industries, we built TourismROI.com. At its core, TourismROI is a global B2B information and networking service for more than 12,000 tourism destinations around the world, powered by Ektron CMS400.NET software. This unique technology will expand the opportunities for many on both sides of development—on one, investors and entrepreneurs seeking business opportunities and on the other, public and private entities looking to attract partners for development. TourismROI

brings these parties together, sharing a wealth of information and offering a wide range of tools that advance the entire business decision-making process and make it more efficient.

At this central Web source, investors and developers now have access to destination-specific tourism business information including strategy and master plans, operating plans and programs, tourism research and investment incentives, reports and analysis. The site www.TourismROI.com also hosts timely news and events and provides links to current publications, reports and statistics from local, regional, and global organizations, plus private consulting and research firms. This is all done through cooperation with EDAs, DMOs, as well as a myriad of public and private sector organizations, like ARDA, to help facilitate the flow of information.

Launched in March this year, TourismROI has already gained recognition from influential national and international public and private sector organizations including: Africa Travel Association (ATA), Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), World Bank, World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), and the World Economic Forum. We look forward to growing it with ARDA, too! ▀

Richard R. Miller is CEO & managing partner of TourismROI. For further information, visit www.TourismROI.com, e-mail info@TourismROI.com, or call 646/502-8763.



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Leveraging your Sales and Marketing Software (SAM) to the maximum

Working smarter instead of harder

by Todd Rodgers

It is said that a genius uses only 10% of his (her) potential brainpower. There is software that is far more capable than the average brain when it comes to reporting.

It can calculate faster, remember better, and predict accurately (most times) when used at maximum power. The problem was getting people to accept and learn to use the new technology available.

Fact: We all want to plug the leaks in our buckets, and then turn up production when the sales line is running at its most effective capacity. When mentioning to a friend once that she was "high maintenance"... she replied "true, but that's the cost of high performance!"

Sales and marketing requires constant diagnostic tuning if you want to stay at peak performance. Question: How do you maximize the use of your sales and marketing tracking software to become more profitable and effective?

Here are some things you can do to achieve maximum effectiveness:

A) Run reports and set benchmarks.

A benchmark is "a standard by which others may be measured". Run lots of reports. Initially it may sound tedious and overwhelming unless you have a numbers intensive personality. Reporting is your best tool for measuring for improvement. If you don't measure for improvement constantly, you can't determine if things are getting better or worse. Its amazing how a little time spent analyzing statistics from different angles can form a completely new picture of your organization budget.

Once an organization has defined its goals, and set benchmarks, it needs a way to measure progress towards obtaining or exceeding those goals.

B) Measure those activities or results that are most important to successfully achieving your organization's goals.

These are your Key performance indicators. Tracking Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are one of the major benefits of taking constant measurements. If a Key Performance Indicator is going to be of any value, there must be a way to accurately define and measure it. An example of a KPI may be "decrease cancellations by 0.05 % monthly until we sustain an "x"% cancellation threshold", or "increase vpg on younger couples under age 30 by "x" amount".

With today's software choices, look for companies, like TrackResults, that offers many sales reporting capabilities so you can report on the life cycle of a tour 12 ways from Sunday. All you should have to do is "Ask the SAM".

Today's SAM technology can almost predict your agent's effectiveness for a day of the week and the time of that day, based on historical patterns. (I had to add the disclaimer: "almost", since we can't control the weather, yet). This is an example of taking reporting to the next level, into analytics, for extreme effectiveness.

C) Measure those activities that you previously ignored. There is a ton of profit in those details.

Category by category, you can measure both success and failures at the click of a mouse by a far wider range of variables than old fashioned pencil grinding use to allow. Yesterday vs. today? Ask SAM. Last week, vs. last month, last quarter, last year? Ask SAM.

Week by week comparative reports. Grouped by gift, opc, liner, closer, vlo, tour times, product types, sales types, penders, cancellations, and another dozen options allows you to evaluate effectiveness to the smallest detail. Need to compare tour VPG from company "A" vs. "B", "C", or closing percentage on single female tours vs. Cohabiting gay couples? Ask SAM.

You thought Saturdays were your best day because volume was high, when Wednesdays, although typically slower in tour flow are far more profitable per tour.

D) Now all we have to do is figure out how to mimic the Wednesday tour environment on Saturdays!

It is truly fascinating the perceptions we have versus the reality of what is, when we run all the hard numbers. I mean ALL the numbers, not just the "standards". Just when we thought we knew the areas we had to improve most, bam! "SAM says" that our buckets have some additional leaks to be plugged or our system has a slight bottleneck somewhere that needs unclogging. These minor corrections, exposed by analytic tour tracking software add up to substantial profits. We are talking MILLIONS of dollars here. MARKETERS Hear this call: We are paying closer attention now. A \$30 increase in VPG, on 50 daily tours, multiplied by 360 days per year = \$540,000.00 additional annual yield without one extra dollar spent on marketing. Extensive reporting tools are worth the investment.

Your goal is to find successful patterns that repeat themselves, and then replicate it when possible until it begins to trend downward.

1. Make sure you have a reporting system in place, and develop some report experts. This person should be training as many key personnel as possible to become experts also. Expect to "discover" a failure point that is simple to fix, but was overlooked.
2. Ensure that sufficient permissions are assigned based on the role of each user to accommodate effective awareness.
3. Require all staff to have constant awareness of their numbers, and provide access to that data.
4. Look at your data from different person's perspectives. Discussion of the results is critical.
5. GOLDEN RULE!! Garbage in- Garbage out. (GIGO) If the data is not honest, and accurate, it's worthless. Encourage your resort industry professionals to challenge data that seems inaccurate, and then run alternate reports to determine validity of the claim. The Data is unemotional; it's only the people running reports that bring drama.

"The primary reason for acquiring SAM software is to have immediate access to accurate data. Identifying peaks and valleys in your organizations sales and marketing process will enable you to maximize your effectiveness on the fly."

E) Avoid the pitfalls of confusion

Your SAM software should be setup so it's fast, and easy to use. I repeat: Fast and Easy. Simplify your SAM software so that it is not overly complicated to use, or your organization will avoid it like the plague. Have the "report" expert train your staff on the simplest reports first, to acclimate them to running reports regularly. By regularly, I suggest DAILY, so they become very comfortable and familiar with numbers and the system. Proper use of your SAM software should free your staff from mundane reporting tasks, so they can concentrate on tasks that affect your bottom line.

F) Measure Twice, Cut once.

Validate or dispute assumptions via other reports. One report does NOT tell the whole story! Don't judge the accused without evidence. After running a report on..." Which T.O. closes best behind which front-line agents? , follow it up with a report on " how did they pair up last week, last month, etc.. to discover if its a trend, or a consistent pattern. Use your SAM reporting program to discover which actions or teams are effective and which are not. If a "replacement" room manager is hired, they need to know who's hot, and who's not... RIGHT NOW! Learn your SAM software well enough to utilize it effectively from a wide scope. Look at the big picture.

G) During training sessions, pose interesting questions and challenge your staff to use the software to identify a specific success or failure point, such as " Who can tell me what our strongest tour time is by sale type of " paid in full". Or "please identify the conversion rates of pending sales to processable status by our highest closer" (a.k.a. does writing penders pay off?).

In today's challenging economic times, we can take existing budgets and extract far more revenue from the limited marketing dollar when we mine the data we already have to help us pinpoint and focus on our strengths.

H) Who are the people most capable of effecting a positive change?

Effective sales and marketing software is able to provide information on demand, to everyone organization wide, while filtering out information and statistics on a "need to know basis".

Many companies, like TrackResults software, provide access to reports that are real time and available over the internet through secure log-in, 24/7. Web based solutions can even be viewed in an Internet browser or even your cell phone. Although the two approaches vary widely, Real time access to your needed reports is paramount. You shouldn't buy stock with yesterday's news.



An Obvious Obstacle

Many of today's software choices, permits every person in your organization limited access to measure themselves today against their own historical performance, under many different circumstances, while hiding sensitive data proprietary to the developer.

A huge obstacle to maximizing your SAM investment is failing to disseminate the gold mine to be found in your data. Certain information needs to be accessible to those most capable of affecting change. Let your staff "pan for gold". Your job is to open the window of "need to know" wide enough for the information to get acted upon.

Offer some form of reporting from top to bottom, rather than "C" level executives only.

Case studies show "Industry resort professionals are responsible, conscious about their stats, are not complacent with "average" performance, and want to excel". Give them tools to achieve higher effectiveness and they will deliver. To the developer, these are "the numbers". To the end user, it's their history, their career, their pride and performance monitors.

In closing, those of us here today have been stats conscious from our first days on the force. We tracked it all ourselves in a diary, a Franklin planner, or PDA. We knew what mattered. We still keep score. It's a competitive environment especially when we compete against ourselves. Using your Sales and Marketing software properly today provides your staff with a brain that can use 100% of its computing power on demand. SAM software doesn't get sick, need a day off, or ever miss a meeting.

There is an old joke in the computer industry among network engineers that "the only perfect network has no users". Trust is a serious issue here. If you can't trust your staff with appropriate reports, consider either changing your personnel, or changing your software. The bottom line is... if you're not using your software to its fullest capabilities, you're leaving money on the table every time. Let's raise the bottom line.

Here's a sample of issues to help you get started

- a) Identify staff to be your reporting experts. These persons will know your numbers inside out, backwards and forwards on the fly.

- b) Implement beginner and advanced training sessions. Feature overload and information overload can intimidate your users. Help your users become comfortable with the product and make sure it's easy to use. You don't need to teach someone how to use all the features of Microsoft Word to generate a simple text note.
- c) How do I make it easier and motivate my staff to actually use these tools? Technology challenged staff need simple steps to get started. Utilize shortcuts and saved reporting queries to simplify the process for them.
- d) Who takes responsibility for implementing improvements? Everyone. If it quacks like a duck....
- f) What permissions do you set by role, which gets to see it? Empower as many people as your SAM software will allow. If it's not broad enough for your goals, consider buying upgrades or purchasing supplemental software.
- g) What about security and data integrity?

Your IT dept is responsible for data security when the reports reside on your internal servers. If you really believe your IT dept is secure, consider hiring a Certified Ethical Hacker to challenge your system. This will allow you to identify the weakness in your security. Remember, legally you are responsible for the privacy of your client's information. Accusations of allowing identity theft is lawsuit liability. Paper is not the most secure medium.

Many companies these days, such as TrackResults Software offer a complete "hosted" solution, which means the software resides on private high-end servers off-site, and your reports are accessed over the internet using Internet Explorer or other browsers. This relieves your IT dept of any hardware or software maintenance, as well as enhances server integrity since the cost of maintaining state of the art security software and IT professionals is shared by all the clients together and best practices are always implemented. Examples of hosted solutions are Hotmail, Google docs, Airline reservation websites, and online banking. These companies host and protect your data, while making it available to you through an internet browser.

See TrackResults ad on page 41.



Todd Rodgers is a Microsoft Certified Professional and Co-Founder of TrackResorts Software. He started in the timeshare industry in 1982 with Consolidated Resorts as a liner and podium speaker at JVClub. Over the last 26 years, he has climbed the ranks, sold and marketed for other Timeshare tracks, learned the business, and his hands on knowledge helped develop a software product to run both the sales force and marketing depts. Even in this challenging economy, not a single client of TrackResults Software has shut its doors for business. Todd still makes the coffee too. www.trackresults.net

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New ARDA committee formed

Margit Whitlock, AIA, Principal of Architectural Concepts, Inc. (ACI) a San Diego firm regarded as one of the top hospitality-oriented architectural and interior design firms, has been selected to chair the American Resort Development Association (ARDA) Design and...



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Know Your Tours— Don't Just Track Them

Smart phone apps and sales and marketing compatibilities: "game changers"

Analytical database engines are changing the way marketing managers are doing business.

Justin Ogden, an OPC manager from Salt Lake City-based Parliament Marketing, says that this technology allows him to challenge assumptions about systems/processes and how he schedules his staff.

"It helps me see which employees create revenue for the company and which don't... The numbers are right in front of me. I can see how they did at a county fair versus a home and garden show," he said.

Sales and marketing software created by and for experts in the timeshare industry can offer powerful Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solutions for companies, and upgrades and innovations are constantly becoming available.

For example, sales and marketing centers can now be enabled with compatible systems that immediately update one another on tour flows. Also, smart phone applications on the market make report generation available anywhere, with Internet access.

An Application Service Provider (ASP)—another term for SaaS—means you don't need an IT department to have customized programs. ASPs do the work for you and give training and ongoing support. In short, these providers change the way you schedule and increase the number and quality of tours; increase your capacities to measure and track tours (improving profits); and ease the access-points of your program.

Change the Way You Look at Tours

When data is recorded in an analytical database engine, you can analyze past performance as well as track current trends in real time.

Ogden said that previously, he would select venues based on tradition. Now,

with proper business intelligence reporting, he has been able to track how his people perform at specific events. He can put people where they will do best and match them with the most profitable venues.

Scott Nichols, president of Global Travel Network, said advanced reporting allows him to increase efficiencies so he can spend more time with his family. With historical data reports, he discovered Saturdays during holiday weekends were surprisingly ineffective. Now, he and his employees relax more while making more.

Valentino Denchev, project director for Mayan Palace Resorts in Puerto Penasco (Rocky Point, Mexico), said he has used this type of reporting function to change how his staff reacts to "no-shows." Because everything is reported in real time, marketers can immediately see which tours missed appointments and then make follow-up calls. Tours are now rescheduled at a much greater success rate.

Drew Reynolds, creator of Track Results Software, said that this level of reporting (and thus follow-up) isn't even possible with spreadsheets—only engines designed for the timeshare industry can track cancellations and no-shows that effectively.

Denchev also takes advantage of new compatibility features to prepare his best salespeople. Data shared from the marketing team allow him to know something about every tour arriving the next day, so he can then match his closers with tours, based on personality and expertise. Employees also appreciate these features because they can track their own performance.

Measure—Then Improve

"People don't know what they're missing out on," Ogden said. "Just because things are working doesn't mean you're doing it the right way."

With new developments in software, Ogden said he's been able to track data that he would never even have thought to before. That has highlighted problems he didn't know existed.

"In a nutshell, you can't afford *not* to have this kind of software," Scott Nichols said. Nichols adds that sometimes he doesn't feel like learning about a new feature—it takes time and effort. But each time he does, the results are impressive.

Ogden said he also likes showing the companies with whom he does business how much money he is making them. Then, he shows the reports to prospective clients to gain business.

Easy Access

"The convenience of it is key for me," Nichols said.

No matter where he is, with wireless access and a smart phone, he can see monitor the companies whose contracts he manages. No matter where a key class marketing manager happens to be geographically, with SaaS they can know what's happening in remote offices.

"Real time is the key—I never have to wait until tomorrow for anything," he added.

ASP products are also easily customized.

"In the experience we've had, if you need something done or want to look at it differently, they accommodate," Ogden said. The technical work is left to the experts. **D**

Andrew Kirk is a professional business journalist in Park City, Utah. He specializes in reporting on the tourism industry, real estate, and small-town entrepreneurship.

It's a Brand New Ball Game

By Sean Nickerson,
Founding Partner, TrackResults

You don't have to be Billy Beane or Brad Pitt to play Moneyball in the world of timeshare or vacation club sales. The team to watch this year is ARDA member, TrackResults Software. They are the only Business Intelligence company specializing in timeshare and vacation clubs. Their analytical engine can easily be applied to any database, and the software can immediately produce an analytical report pinpointing the weakest or strongest links in a sales line.

The days of acting on a hunch to create a championship sales team just doesn't hit it out of the park any more. The vacation ownership industry has found itself in a whole new ball game. There are new rules and tougher competition. TrackResults algorithm has proven that the industry must change the way it looks at tours and the science of sales performance. In today's economy many companies are working on a tighter budget, and with smaller teams. TrackResults will show you how you can get maximum performance with minimum expense.

TrackResults makes it possible to operate without cutting costs. Their Business Intelligence shows clients how to widen margins by increasing sales effectiveness. With their Business Intelligence application for timeshares and travel clubs you can improve sales closing percentage, VPG, deal size, cash collection, and a reduction in cancellation percentages. And...it's as easy as checking your email.

In the last two years TrackResults Software has generated over \$100MM dollars in additional revenue for their clients. But you don't have to take my word for it. Ask your colleagues. Companies such as Vida Vacation Club, New Port Beach Side Resort, Villa Del Palmer Beach Resort and Spa, and Global Connections are all using TrackResults Software and have already discovered the benefits. These progressive companies have enjoyed double digit percentage increases in their positive margins.

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A Glimpse of the Future

“Information” in Embryonic Stage

BY SEAN NICKERSON



Sean Nickerson works with TrackResults Software, LLC. His e-mail is sean@trackresults.net.

What tech trends will we see in the coming decade? My money is on the information explosion and the Software as a Service (SaaS) revolution.

By the 1980s, the race to make technology smaller, faster, and more powerful was well underway, but the focus was primarily on the “technology” side of the IT equation. By the 1990s, computers and cell phones were getting smaller and more powerful—those who were looking glimpsed the future.

During the latter half of the previous decade, we have seen an expansion of our technological priorities. Now, in addition to smaller and faster, we require dynamic free flow of information. Today, there is an explosion of information. As Shane Robison CTO for Hewlett Packard* recently told me, “the ‘information’ side of IT is still in its embryonic stage.”

With recent innovations, the way we collect and organize data and access information has changed the way we do business. For example, a few years ago, most

The Cloud: What You Should Know

The “cloud” may still be an unfamiliar term or concept. Here is an overview of how it works.

The traditional way to approach computing is to pay for 100% of the power we may need. However, we are only using those assets 15% of the time. With the cloud, we are paying for the resources we need when we need them. To put it simply, the cloud offers scalability for one server or 5000 servers if needed. When the workload becomes more than the current configuration can handle, the cloud simply borrow resources from elsewhere in the server bank until the need for greater computing power has passed.

By borrowing resources from the server bank, you get as much computing power as you need while paying less than the traditional way of hosting your data. This kind of scalability has paved the road for true cloud applications that are now part of numerous data-driven software options on the market.

These dynamic cost-effective SaaS are the future of business computing. By delivering faster and better products at a fraction of the up-front and ongoing maintenance costs, the cloud is drastically decreasing and in some cases virtually eliminating your IT budget.



businesses realized they needed help with SEO (Search Engine Optimization), and an entirely new marketing industry was born. If you have a smart phone and a question, you can “Google” it and get an instant answer. Five years ago, social networking sites were an emerging trend—today, they are the norm. Now, every person and company has or is getting a Facebook page and Twitter account. The expectation of dynamic access to information has changed and will continue to change, so the way we view data and business practices will also need to evolve.



Still not convinced? Consider all the buzz a few years ago about Web 2.0 and how fast things have changed since then.

In the midst of this lightning-speed change, Amazon Web Services made the concept of a “cloud server” a reality in 2006. The cloud has paved the way for affordable business intelligence (BI). Ten years ago, it took a team of analysts to do what you can do in five mouse clicks today. In just a few years, the cloud has changed the way we experience the Internet, interact with information, collect and retrieve data and, most importantly, increase Web traffic. This created a much higher level of Web site sophistication for businesses, while lowering hosting and usage costs.

Enter the SaaS revolution. Here’s how it works. Instead of buying your software out of a box and installing it on your PC or network, you get a log-in. (True SaaS is not a new idea—you have been using SaaS programs for years, such as e-mail and on-line banking.) Combine the cloud and SaaS applications, however, and you get

streaming, seamless videos, TV shows, and movies that all allow rapid access to vast amounts of data.

So, how will these trends change the way your business operates? It’s simple.

SaaS platforms are powerful enough to handle your business needs, increase access to your relevant business information, and decrease costs. For instance, most resorts have multiple software systems to keep operations in place. They have software for reservation, software for inventory, software for programming key cards, software for sales and marketing, and so on. Most of these systems are very expensive and have to be installed somewhere on the complex and accessed via a limited proximity network or perhaps on a single PC. Then, there are license fees, interfacing, and compatibility to take into account.

With the SaaS platform, however, you only need an Internet connection. Most SaaS platforms require no expensive installation, no IT department involvement, and most important, no hassle. Most

automatically upgrade systems behind the scenes so there is no downtime or waiting for upgrades. Take applications like TrackResults Software. With this SaaS platform, the entire life cycle of your tours are recorded and reportable anywhere. You or your employee simply logs into the software via the Internet, performs the necessary tasks, and then logs out. The SaaS solutions on the market today are already available for most of the everyday resort needs.

There is an information explosion unfolding faster than ever before. Harnessing the relevant information for your business and making it work for you will empower you to make key decisions sooner and ensure continued success in this new age. ■

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The Differential: Success or Failure?

BY SEAN NICKERSON



Sean Nickerson works with TrackResults Software, LLC. His e-mail is sean@trackresults.net.

In your company, what are your core sales and marketing metrics? How do you determine overall success and failure within this structure? In other words, what do you measure to get quantitative results?

I'm sure you've heard that "knowledge is power." In the past, acquiring knowledge and converting that knowledge into power was easier said than done. We are lucky enough to be part of the fast-moving Information Age that created billions of dollars from information transactions each day. Recently, news broke of the upcoming IPO offering from the social media giant: Facebook®. In addition to connecting people via the Internet through status updates, check-ins, and photo-sharing, Facebook collects information about its users and monetizes this knowledge—not by selling this information but by selling the right to target advertising at its users. This model of collecting information then monetizing the acquired knowledge is a tactic

“**Want to increase margins and grow stronger sales teams?**”

that is expected to bring Facebook \$75-\$100 billion in the initial stock offering later this year. Using this example, the evidence is undeniable: financially speaking, knowledge is indeed power.

That's great news for Facebook and their shareholders, but what does Facebook have to do with the vacation ownership industry? Just as Facebook collects and uses marketing information from its users, so should you. And collecting invaluable information

from potential or existing customers and then reporting your sales and marketing statistics has never been easier. What's more, you can easily monetize the information you have collected—leading companies within the vacation ownership industry are doing this everyday with business intelligence software. With this technical layer, companies are able to convert their knowledge into revenue by creating efficiencies, increasing margins, and growing stronger sales teams.

Using spreadsheets and paying a staff to pore over mountains of data is a thing of the past when it comes to collecting and managing sales data to pinpoint key performance indicators (KPI). Today's technical applications can identify your KPI in seconds. Take the TrackResults Software's Business Intelligence for timeshare application, for example. Since no one wants to allocate funds to unnecessary outlets, developers and PDs are asking themselves (or should be asking themselves), "How can we shave a few points here and there to maximize returns?" There are now apps to generate business intelligence reports to keep you on the cutting edge.

It is universally understood that increasing efficiency is on the agenda of every business. So with maximizing returns, actionable business intelligence, and turning knowledge into revenue in mind, the question you should be asking is, "Am I able to quickly track the metrics that define 'success' for my business?" This begs a more important question, "Are we doing it?"

At the end of the day, it's all about improving your sales performance in both the short and long term. To help answer this final question, here is a list of important items that a sales center should be tracking as real-time reports, with numbers that can be accessed in minutes.

Marketing

- Marketing funnel: Inquires—marketing leads (both in-house & vendor)





- % of volume by team/plaza/rep
- % closed by day of the week/time of day
- % closed by rep by day/time of day
- % closed by rep paired with TO
- % pending by marketing source/rep
- Conversion % by country/state/city /zip code
- Gross VPG vs. net VPG
- VPG sorted by marketing source/rep/TO

Finance

- Revenues
- Profits
- Operating margin
- Cash flow
- % of deals CXL
- % CXL by marketing source/sales rep/ sales team/VLO
- % of deals saved by VLO

The fastest growing companies in the industry use these reports every day in their business plans. Maybe it's time for an upgrade? ■

What lies beneath the real-time report numbers...

- Incentive cost
- % tour show
- % tour Q vs. NQ
- Campaign success
- Customer demographics
- % Revenue by marketing source/rep/ vender
- % Outbound mail drops conversion
- Bookings/confirmed tours
- Q to NQ by marketing source
- Tour flow
- % of generated leads converted to qualified tours
- VPG by in-house vendor or referrals

Sales

- Bookings
- Cash collected vs. financed deals
- Average deal size
- Sales from qualified leads
- Sales from not qualified leads

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Are You Part of the Continuum?

A Story of Sales and Marketing Analytics

BY SEAN NICKERSON

Recently, I was reading *Forbes*' "10 Most Innovative Companies for 2012," and once again, Salesforce.com has been voted the most innovative company in the United States.

The Founder and CEO of Salesforce.com, Mark Benioff, said this about being voted the most innovative company, "Innovation is a continuum. You have to think about how the world is evolving and transforming. *Are you part of the continuum?*" This question requires in-depth self-reflection and a true understanding of the business you are in, where it has been—and most importantly, where it's going.

Are We Part of the Continuum?

Thinking about this question inspired me to contemplate the vacation ownership industry. It is an industry created from changing the public mindset and convincing people to rethink the traditional. Therefore, you may assume that because the vacation ownership industry was built on selling consumers an innovative concept, it would be on the cutting edge of embracing new innovations in technology and new business practices. Is the vacation ownership industry on the cutting edge? I am not so sure.

To provide you with an example of the industry embracing new business practices I would like to turn to the events of 2008, when the economy was experiencing a drastic downturn. Developers within the vacation ownership industry found that they must adapt in order to continue to sell their product. This adaptation reminds me of several years ago when I began a career in the vacation ownership industry. After only a few short months in the

marketing department of a well-known family of resorts, it quickly became apparent to me that there was a lot of room for innovation on the technology side of sales and marketing.

It's important to not only acknowledge how far innovative technologies have brought our industry but also be mindful of new challenges and solutions that technology provides. Today, due to the rapid dissemination of knowledge and information, remaining up-to-date and "part of the continuum" is crucial to a successful company.

Success and Analytics

As one of the co-founders of TrackResults Software, I often write about innovative technology. A blog post I wrote addresses a similar question: "How do you determine 'success' and 'failure' within your company?" The definition of "success" and "failure" can vary from day-to-day and from company to company.

One common way companies define success is increasing profitability and volume, but not all agree how best to achieve this success. Most want to know how to increase these things without increasing—or even lowering—their expenses. The place to start is intelligently collecting your data and then finding a way that allows you to efficiently report, analyze, and act on the information revealed. This process is called "analytics," and when utilized correctly it will help your business on a faster, more efficient path to success. You may have seen the latest IBM



ad campaign with the tagline, "Let's Build a Smarter Planet." They claim that intelligence and analytics create the most effective way to do business—this is part of the continuum.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

As sales professionals, we need to know our Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and all of the facets of the sales process. For example, what do you use that will tell you that profitability has dropped due to an increase in cancellations on new business in the last 30 days, 90 days, or year-to-date? How easy is it to display the data and then analyze it to determine the cause? That's just the beginning of how exciting and robust analytics can be. Take this as another example: what is the average deal size on timeshare owners vs. non timeshare owners, or a morning tour vs. an evening tour? How fast do you identify the discrepancy, and is there anything you can do about it?

It's time to move away from traditional methods of gathering and reporting on data. Just assembling enough data in the traditional format where it's usable is very labor intensive, not to mention less than cost effective. If your sales team doesn't have easy access to real time data that reveals things like what KPI are closing deals, who is and who is not closing deals, and what is causing

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ARE YOU PART OF THE CONTINUUM?

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cancellations, your company is not performing at its optimal capacity. There are solutions on the market that automate the organization of your data, create reports, and allow in-depth analytics that will change the way you make important decisions.

Now, ask yourself again, "Am I really part of the continuum?"

Sean Nickerson works with TrackResults Software, LLC. His e-mail is sean@trackresults.net.

LOOK WHO'S PLUGGED IN...

Continued from page 60

on the number of points you'd like to spend), so this would be a nice feature.

Do you have friends who own timeshare and book using the Internet?

I would say that our friends who own timeshare are bewildered by the system. They never have learned how to use it effectively, and as a result, they just go back to their same resort year after year in the same week in the same location. If the resorts and exchange companies emailed their owners a

"how-to" for booking on-line, that may help alleviate some of the confusion.

What's the best part about booking on-line?

The big point of a timeshare is to spend all of your time in a timeshare and not have to go to a hotel between week one, two, three, and four. You don't want to ever have to spend money on a hotel and that's the beauty of being able to book it on-line. After you book your weeks, you can see the plan and make sure your stays back up to one another. It's a challenge to book an extended vacation, but we think there is nothing really like travelling via timeshare. ■



Business Analytics

A Competitive Advantage
for Sales and Marketing
Executives / Part 1 of 5

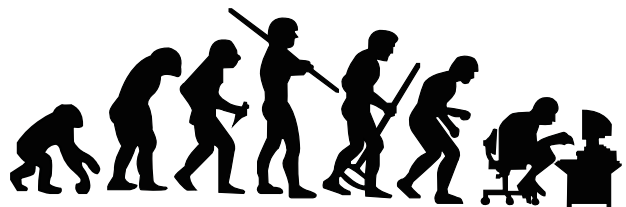
By Jesús Betanzos / Director Latin America Business Development and Consulting, for TrackResults Software.

These series of articles will explain, in simple terms, what the difference is between Business Intelligence (BI) and Business Analytics (BA). Most importantly, we will address how the vacation clubs and the Sales and Marketing (SAM) executives can use them, as a part of their arsenal of *competitive advantages*.

For the SAM executives, project directors and mid-level management, the battlefields take place in the following three sectors, which are the ones that impact the most to the generation of revenue (and keeping it). Each sector will have a dedicated article within this series, in which the best Business Analytics tools and performance indicators will be discussed:

- 1- Marketing (both In-house and Outside).
- 2- Sales strategies.
- 3- Member Services
(rescission prevention strategies).

A different set of skills.



Up to less than a decade ago, the main *competitive advantage* for the sales and marketing departments had always been their street-smarts marketing skills and sales closing skills, paired with effective management. These skills got backed up by experience, and that has been the winning formula for years.

That was until two major events changed the vacation industry marketplace: The quick evolution of the internet with its mobility and reach among the population, (smartphones, tablets, social media, etc.) and the great recession.

These days, both the technology and the economic challenges have called for the development of



a different set of skills: we're going to call them "geek skills", which are mainly skills in four groups:

- A) Online marketing skills.
- B) Web design and programming skills.
- C) Online reputation management skills (ORM).
- D) Business Intelligence and Business Analytics skills.

These relatively new skills cannot, and will never be able to, replace the skillset that will always be key to successful sales and marketing operations. These new geek skills are meant to complement and assist in the performance and continuous improvement of achieved results.

As the marketplace competition keeps getting tougher, it is survival of the fittest. Now the fittest companies are the ones investing in technology and in Business Intelligence tools (BI) – and in the people who can use them.

The first three groups are clearly web and technology related, and their main focus is on lead and branding marketing strategies. These are very

well known and most companies already have access to a pool of web development talent.

It is the last group, the Business Intelligence analytics that is commonly undervalued, misunderstood, and ironically, the group that can provide the most relevant information and most value (as in "money making" value) for the Sales and Marketing executives.

Business Intelligence vs. Business Analytics

Much hype and confusion has been spread over the past few years regarding these two terms. After comparing dozens of business and marketing technology sources, my research as a consultant in the analytics field has led to the following definitions as the most reliable concepts in today's business world. These are taken from Gartner's Glossary webpages, which is the world's leading information technology and advisory company for businesses (www.gartner.com):

Business Intelligence (BI) is an umbrella term that includes the applications, tools, and best practices that enable access to and analysis of information to improve and optimize decisions and performance.

Business Analytics (BA) are composed of all techniques that help build analysis models and simulations to create scenarios, understand realities and predict future states. Business analytics include data mining, predictive analytics, applied analytics and statistics, and are delivered as an application suitable for a business user. Compared with business intelligence (BI) tools, business analytics solutions come with prebuilt industry content out of the box that is targeted at an industry business process (for example, specific modules that would track a hotel's front desk check-in to Tour conversion ratios, or a purchase cancellation request module).

Business Analytics aims to answer questions related to what happened, how many, and how often (which is what traditional reporting does), it also answers questions like why is this happening, what if these trends continue, what will happen next (prediction), what is the best that can happen (optimization).



on the above, many remain complacent or limited to 20th century tools. Very few companies have established Business Analytics processes, in order to systematically achieve higher results. Those companies that place simple analytical tools directly into the hands of team leaders, have a distinct advantage over those companies that remain forced to rely on the pure intuition (guesses, hunches, theories, experience and tradition). Therefore, most companies are not being as competitive as they could be.


"An analytical competitor is an organization that uses analytics extensively and systematically to outthink and outexecute the competition."

Vacation Ownership Clubs are becoming Analytical Competitors

An analytical competitor becomes an organization that systematically and continuously improves its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and captures a larger market share by:

- A) Increasing the quantity and quality of the tours.
- B) Reducing cost per tour (CPT).
- C) Increasing Closing %.
- D) Increasing the Average Deal Size.
- E) Increasing the Cash Collection Rates.
- F) Decreasing the Cancellation Rates.

While some companies in the vacation ownership industry are continuously seeking an improvement



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Analytical competitors are found in a variety of industries: From professional sports to financial services and hospitality industries, Business Analytics is everywhere. Successful companies such as Netflix, Harrah's Casinos, Amazon, CEMEX and Google, they're all using the science of Analytics.

Interestingly enough, the vacation industry has been late in taking advantage of this Business Analytics field. Those who embrace this strategy and become Analytical Competitors, will certainly see a positive impact on their bottom line.

Business Analytics offers a proven path, a roadmap to integrate, extract, transform and access business transaction data and convert it into a competitive advantage. The goal of modern Business Analytics is to support better business decision-making by describing, predicting and optimizing results. ◀

In the next part of this article series, we will focus on how Business Analytics can help improve your Marketing programs performance.

After all, it's a jungle out there.



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TrackResults State of the Industry KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) for the third quarter of 2012:

- Average VPG (net processable) for Eastern Mexico, beach areas: **\$3,841.50**
- Average VPG (net procesable) for Western Mexico, beach areas: **\$4,381.35**
- Average net Closing % for Eastern Mexico, beach areas: **29.1%**
- Average net Closing % for Western Mexico, beach areas: **29.2%**

(in USD. , excludes Penders, Equities, Trade Ins).

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Today's Software: "Build or Buy"?

New emerging options make this ongoing IT question more complicated

BY SEAN NICKERSON & DREW REYNOLDS



Sean Nickerson and Drew Reynolds both work with TrackResults Software LLC—Sean directs their marketing initiatives, and Drew Reynolds is a co-founder. Sean's e-mail is sean@trackresults.net and Drew's is drew@trackresults.net.

After years of debate, the answer is in: **buy** software when you need to automate commodity business processes; **build software** when you're dealing with the core processes that differentiate your company. It is best to buy when you are using standard practices that you can then tailor to your competitive edge. However, with custom software comes the freedom to innovate and invent. That's why custom software is commonly created for new products and original projects. Both clearly have benefits and drawbacks, which makes the choice that much more difficult.

If you saw the keynote speaker Don Tapscott at ARDA World 2013 or read one of his many books on the subject of our changing digital world, you are already on your way to educating yourself. Sorting out what programs will give your business a better return on investment and support your goals is a worthy investment. Logic states that you should attempt only what you do best in-house and outsource the rest. This will allow you to focus on what makes you more profitable as a company. The tricky part comes if you're looking to leverage software for a common operation or management need (ERP, CRM, financial, compliance, etc.). Then, the choice is not so simple. If an existing viable software solution exists, you must decide whether to build or buy.

So what are the points to consider? Here are just a few below:

1. Cost
2. Custom fit vs. fit into a box
3. Time to market
4. The race to real-time information
5. Leveraging a mix of COTS, SaaS or Build

Cost

In the case of software development, the up-front cost of building your own software is going to cost you. Software engineers are expensive, and if they're any good, they are hard to keep in-house. But that's just the tip of the iceberg. What sort of problems could this cause for you? Don't forget that once your software is built, it has to be maintained. It also can be difficult to build additions and customizations—typically, 70% of software costs occur after implementation.

"Everybody knows that the more standardized you are and the more you buy off-the-shelf, the more cost-effective it will be for both implementation and ongoing maintenance," says Mark Lutchen, former global CIO of PricewaterhouseCoopers. With an existing solution, the software development cost is paid for across many clients. In addition, existing solutions are commonly sold on a recurring yearly basis, allowing an organization to spread out the cost. But keep in mind that different specs can become huge cost issues as well.

Custom Fit vs. Fit into a Box

Building software in-house will allow you to control all of the moving parts and truly make it your own. Custom solutions give you complete control over everything—from business rules and workflows, to integration with other software solutions that you're already leveraging. They can be built with a user experience that matches your business instead of conforming your business to fit the solution.



Nevertheless, existing solutions that have been tested and used by other companies will allow you to skip over some of the functionality mistakes that are found in the development process. However, there may be some software development that is not part of the company's core functions. Unnecessary features and project management might crowd the software.

Time to Market

Out-of-the box software solutions are immediately available for purchase. Most well-built custom solutions, on the other hand, are released iteratively over time and focus first on the highest-value features that fit your business.

When building these, it is critical to thoroughly understand the total duration during the software lifecycle. Custom technology can take years to completely integrate. If this is the path you choose, you must prepare for

a rigorous lifecycle analysis that realistically requires ongoing maintenance by in-house developers. This analysis often tips the balance in favor of buying.

The Race to Real-Time

Another important component in any business is clearly *time*. These days as a culture, we are so addicted to real-time interactions, we can't stand to wait. We expect to receive information instantaneously. The SaaS model can deliver information in real time. When considering buying vs. building, consider what impact real-time data flow will have on your spending or revenue generation.

Leveraging a Mix

If you have already built your system in-house, the good news is that your custom solutions give you the ability to select off-the-shelf technologies that seamlessly integrate with your existing

infrastructure. You must first ensure that your software system is fully integrated. However after this phase, you might find that some off-the-shelf software is better at certain pieces of your business. The large variety of software on the market allows for an infinite number of integrations with your existing technology.

Total Package

No matter what choice you make, remember that there is no "correct" answer when choosing the software that's right for your company. Every business has different needs and goals; therefore one solution is not superior to the other. However, by carefully analyzing the numerous options in software technology, you are one step closer to finding what will keep your business successful and current. ■

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Waves of Change

Analytics & the Mexican Timeshare Industry

BY JESUS BETANZOS, TODD RODGERS, AND SEAN NICKERSON



Jesus Betanzos is the TrackResults Latin American director of sales, and Sean Nickerson and Todd Rodgers are co-founders of TrackResults. For more information, please contact Sean at sean@trackresults.net.

In recent years, we have been hearing more and more about analytics in the business world and in politics. Analytics are everywhere! Just open a magazine, newspaper, or turn on the TV, and there's an ad or a supporting article for analytics. It's even happening in our industry.

Recently, AMDETUR or the Mexican Association of Tourism Developers (ARDA's counterpart in Mexico) teamed up with TrackResults Software to experiment and test a pilot program that will deliver limited state of the industry sales and marketing analytics to its readership base. AMDETUR will be publishing both online and in their periodicals specific statistics about the differences in the state of the Mexican timeshare market. This could lead to a broader expansion of analytics as applicable to other parts of the vacation ownership industry around the world.

Back Story

In recent years, AMDETUR noticed that Mexican timeshare companies were actually extremely versatile, investing heavily in technology to tap into every competitive advantage possible. When they sought a data solution, their ultimate goal was to ascertain what makes the Mexican timeshare industry tick, so as to help focus their efforts and make suggestions for overall industry improvements.

The technology we now have, which gives us real time empirical data, provides key insights and real-time snapshots on activity around the industry. Historically, many industry reports and interviews are based on voluntary surveys and estimated information—most often delayed and very general. The challenge is providing a developer or marketing executive a central source to inquire about the sales and marketing effectiveness. This newer suite of

Selectable criteria may be state, region, marketing channel, or buyer demographics such as city of residence. Specific trends of tour-type VPGs, average deal size, inventory trends, cash versus financed sales percentage, cancellation percentages by age group, and more...

data analysis reports on key metrics such as specific prospect demographics, marketing campaigns, and other such activity.

Moving forward, AMDETUR is exploring the possibility of offering on-demand, purchasable reports of the Mexican timeshare industry in segments (think slices of the pie, versus the whole enchilada). In this model, developers and marketers will be able to select segmented data, based on specific criteria, from which they can generate a real-time report. Selectable criteria may be state, region, marketing channel, or buyer demographics such as city of residence. They also may include specific

“ Today’s business is all about intelligence and reporting...”

trends of tour-type VPGs, average deal size, inventory trends, cash versus financed sales percentages, or cancellation percentages by age group.

As a trade association, AMDETUR has no hands on direct access to resort developer data, so this key technology in the form of real-time timeshare reporting provides benchmarking and trending information previously not accessible industry-wide. This can also help developers market more

effectively and compare their performance against averages relevant to their market segments. For instance, comparing efficiencies of tours generated on the streets of Playa del Carmen versus tour efficiencies of onsite in-house owners in Mazatlan is an apple-orange situation.

At the Curve’s Edge

AMDETUR is publishing some teaser statistics in their publication, NotiTur, to measure interest levels and track feedback. So far, it looks promising. The first reports were viewed in the November/December 2012 issue of NotiTur—be sure to check it out!

Moving forward, everyone from governments to individual entrepreneurs will be able to access data like never before. The methods and dissemination strategies are already forming. For instance, the keynote speaker at the upcoming ARDA World 2013, Don Tapscott, will be

bringing this kind of business intelligence message to attendees. Are you riding this wave of change? ■



like to keep my finger on the pulse of tech trends in the vacation ownership industry. I have even made a few predictions—it's time for another.

One of the hottest business topics these days is the role of the Chief Data Officer (CDO) and whether or not vacation ownership companies really need an “officer” to manage enterprise data. I would say yes. Most companies are in some sort of planning stage and will eventually be forced to create a data management position. There is an ever-increasing amount of data being captured from ever-increasing sources.

Someone needs to navigate through the software which captures that data and refine that insight into actionable information. Who is that person and what would be their title? CDO.

Typically, the CDO is a corporate officer responsible for enterprise-wide governance and utilization of data as an asset. Until recently, data management was relegated to a supervisory or management roll. However, as companies have become aware of the hidden value within data and information they are (or should be) collecting. Infonomics, business intelligence, data integration, and data

visualization tools will become more critical and beyond the scope of these traditional data stewards. The *modus operandi* of progressive companies is simple—the value of enterprise level data is an asset, but the management of that data and implantation of data visualization tools is crucial to unlocking its value.

Key Metrics & Data

Infonomics is the study and emerging discipline of quantifying, managing, and leveraging information as a business asset. As the “I” side of IT explodes, demand for increasing its transparency is ushering in a new wave of business management. Some leadership teams and members may resist this type of change and prefer to remain more traditional in their approach. Or worse—they may allow the shift to get lost in the details of politics within their organization.

For example, the late Steve Jobs said, “Older people sit down and ask, ‘What is it?’ but the boy asks, ‘What can I do with it?’” Would you rather be the old man or the boy? What can a CDO unleash in your organization?

What has unfolded is a new “traditional”—a traditional whereby progressive decision-making is being driven by information that has been collected and used to drive revenue.

Identifying new business opportunities data analysis is a key part of this new traditional, which brings with it new demand and visibility. As such, this information will need to be managed in a way that fits into a company's clearly defined strategic priorities; these sharply honed strategies can then yield high revenue opportunities.

Human Capital

You may wonder if it is really necessary to create an executive level manager to oversee

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Key Terms

Infonomics—The study and emergent discipline of quantifying, managing, and leveraging information as a business asset.

Big Data—The term for a collection of data sets so large and complex that it becomes difficult to process using on-hand database management tools or traditional data processing applications.

Business Intelligence (BI) —A software or theory that transforms raw data into meaningful and useful information. BI can handle large amounts of information to help identify and develop new opportunities; with an effective strategy in place, this can provide a competitive market advantage and long-term stability.

Data Integration—This process involves combining data that resides in different sources, providing the end user with a cohesive and useful view of those numbers.

Data Visualization—The study of the visual representation of data, or information that has been abstracted in some schematic form.

Decision Support Software (DSS) — Dynamic software designed to analyze and evaluate large quantities of data in a short period of time. A true DSS allows users to select sampling points, generate reports, and visualize data in a real-time model. They completely eliminate the time required for data processing and facilitate rapid decision-making.

KPI—Key performance indicators

this data. What you'll find is that this evolving new data is an untapped treasure trove of hidden revenue whereby data becomes an asset. Once this is understood, the role of a CDO becomes clear, for the traditional data stewards will no longer be able to handle the complexities of managing and formatting this corporate asset. These older data stewards are often tasked with defining their own KPI, data they wish to collect and view. The CDO, on the other hand, will help ensure that the data collection fits into the overall enterprise system and that all related efforts to populate key data are relevant, accurate, current, and actionable.

Information:

Facts provided or learned about something or someone:



Infonomics:

The study and emergent discipline of quantifying, managing, and leveraging information as a business asset:

Day's of the Week

Name	Q	CT	gS	gClose	Pend\$	gVol\$	gVPG	CXL+R	nS	nClose%	Cash%	AvgD	nVol\$	nVPG
Sunday	19581	1678	4450	23%	\$2,012,935	\$68,433,927	\$3,495	10%	3898	20%	30%	\$14,735	\$57,436,807	\$2,933
Monday	18820	2223	4942	26%	\$1,670,706	\$88,640,473	\$4,710	9%	4368	23%	32%	\$17,450	\$76,221,786	\$4,050
Tuesday	17876	2415	4532	25%	\$1,686,845	\$86,092,230	\$4,818	10%	3962	22%	32%	\$18,380	\$72,820,320	\$4,074
Wednesday	14829	2382	3848	26%	\$1,419,259	\$73,498,969	\$4,956	8%	3405	23%	32%	\$18,876	\$64,273,869	\$4,334
Thursday	13102	1911	3346	26%	\$1,611,138	\$62,226,416	\$4,749	8%	2977	23%	32%	\$18,088	\$53,849,389	\$4,110
Friday	11671	1265	2548	22%	\$1,136,969	\$42,230,462	\$3,618	10%	2269	19%	30%	\$16,264	\$36,903,464	\$3,162
Saturday	15148	1601	3459	23%	\$1,580,568	\$52,930,517	\$3,494	10%	3080	20%	29%	\$14,563	\$44,854,937	\$2,961
Summary	111027	13475	27125	24%	\$11,118,420	\$474,052,994	\$4,270	9%	23959	22%	31%	\$16,961	\$406,360,572	\$3,660

Wednesday AM vs PM

Name	Q	CT	gS	gClose	Pend\$	gVol\$	gVPG	CXL+R	nS	nClose%	Cash%	AvgD	nVol\$	nVPG
AM	11708	2165	3355	29%	\$1,089,010	\$68,499,010	\$5,846	8%	1946	25%	33%	\$20,260	\$59,686,905	\$5,099
PM	3121	217	493	16%	\$323,409	\$5,049,704	\$1618	8%	495	15%	17%	\$9,993	\$4,586,963	\$1,470

Saturday AM vs PM

Name	Q	CT	gS	gClose	Pend\$	gVol\$	gVPG	CXL+R	nS	nClose%	Cash%	AvgD	nVol\$	nVPG
AM	11374	1396	2843	25%	\$999,684	\$46,860,972	\$4,120	10%	2514	22%	31%	\$16,643	\$39,325,728	\$3,458
PM	2493	129	441	18%	\$410,081	\$4,487,550	\$1,800	7%	403	16%	13%	\$10,171	\$4,098,967	\$1,644

*This data snapshot is an aggregate of selected timeshare developers from North America for the second and third quarters of 2013. Data provided by TrackResults.

There are typically many traditional data stewards in a company who are responsible for collecting data. Whether in sales and marketing, housekeeping, HR, maintenance, or the collections side of the business—there is a great deal of room for improvement and a CDO can help fill that void. There can be a variety of different departmental systems or means of collecting data-points, which may lead to a lack of symmetry in results and the ability to analyze and track growth. But when you centralize all operations under one key manager, you can then successfully implement a data management solution.

This is the function of the CDO.

Finding this person will not be without its challenges. It will require a rare skill

set. First, it will require an individual capable of effectively communicating with all your department heads and IT or software architects. It will also require someone with a healthy balance of operational business knowledge, people skills, and tech savvy, so she or he can navigate the political hurdles and wrangle your corporate data into something that provides great returns.

Are you ready to put your investment there? ■

Sean Nickerson is a founding partner of TrackResults Software LLC, and works the marketing side of their business. His e-mail is sean@trackresults.net.



Executive Leadership with Business Intelligence for Progress

February 4, 2015 /by Sean Nickerson

Fast reporting that is vital to intelligent discourse and fact-supported decisions are now within reach. Anytime a group of company leaders meets to drive the progress of their business, it becomes an invaluable investment of time and money.

Limit Reporting Bottle Necks

Let's face it, company meetings often reach dead ends or postponements on important decisions merely because the necessary data to back vital initiatives isn't available at the moment it's needed most. Because of this, action is often delayed missed, or else someone ends up going with what their gut is telling them.

Both outcomes are unfavorable, of course, and they can cost a lot of money and opportunity in the end. Not a single CEO, Vice President, or manager would tell you that going with his or her gut is the best way to make business decisions, and likewise, none would agree that timing isn't imperative. So how can a company make fast, effective, fact-based decisions at the moment they need to be made? Well, often times they can't, and it's because they're using the wrong tools.

A Revolution for Results

Here's a typical example of how traditional business intelligence and analytical avenues can greatly hinder the progress of a company. Imagine this scenario: A group of executives gather for a meeting to discuss important matters directly affecting the growth of their business. The discussion turns toward a topic requiring supporting data to make the proper decision. However, the decision needs to be made by those in the meeting, and it needs to be made today, better yet—now.

Traditionally, the executives task their business analysts and engineers (IT) with finding out what data there is to support the idea being discussed. Once they've determined whether they may have the data they need, they then request the generation of a report that visualizes the information. Unfortunately, this report won't materialize before the meeting is over, or even in a couple hours. This is because traditional forms of data mining and reporting involve business analysts and engineers, even before any sense can be made of the data points collected. What's



more, it takes both teams to build, decipher and deliver reports that reflect the data in a discernable way. The report workflow is so complex and involving so many people and so much time. By the time the executives get any report back to support the concept, the burden of the delay may cost more than money. Meanwhile, they'll stew over how long it takes to get what they need.

The Defining Difference

Now imagine that the same group of executives meets to discuss the same sort of trends and topics related to their business. Only this time, there's one major difference. When the discussion reaches a topic that needs information to craft an informed strategy, each individual in the room can quickly access numerous sources of data to support the discussion and the inevitable decisions to follow.

The information is accessed in real time, with each concept tested in detail immediately. The discussion is led to a data-supported and logical conclusion, and it's all done through a convenient web-based application. This may sound like a stretch? Well, it's not. Such a solution actually exists, and it helps companies steer their business in the right direction faster and more efficiently than they ever could.



The ARDA Stars Vendors in Timesharing

April 1, 2015 ResortTrades

Everyone who is professionally involved within the timeshare industry knows that it is unlike any other business. Not only is the industry unique, so are the companies that service it. If you are seeking a vendor who is committed to our industry and qualified to fulfill your specific needs, we encourage you to review the companies below and stop by their booths at ARDA World. As experts in their fields, they are some of our most loyal vendors, dedicated to serving and supporting you and your business. These suppliers totally understand our complicated industry and are eager to help your organization.

forward to meeting attendees and new friends in the industry, working together to increase sales. They love Resort Trades because of its exposure to all industry decision makers.

us and respect the MasterCorp brand, ARDA World provides us with a forum for sharing our newest innovations for better housekeeping performance and management.”

RCI is the leader in vacation exchange with approximately 4,500 affiliated resorts in 100 countries. RCI pioneered vacation exchange in 1974, offering members increased flexibility with their vacation ownership experience. RCI's luxury exchange program, The Registry Collection®, is also the world's largest program of its kind with approximately 200 affiliated properties on six continents. RCI has attended ARDA conferences since their inception. RCI will be unveiling a series of new and enhanced innovations at ARDA World that support affiliates through each step in their business journey. Visit the RCI booth to learn more, and enter to win some fantastic prizes while you are there!

Resort Travel & Xchange (RTX) is a timeshare and vacation ownership exchange company based in Asheville, N.C. They work with a number of resorts and developers to provide the best exchange options possible to their 80,000 members. RTX offers a wide variety of opportunities for industry partners with multiple travel products and inventory exchange prospects plus travel benefits and discounts. This is their third year attending ARDA and second as an exhibitor. Their ads in Resort Trades provide additional brand awareness.

Sunday Vacations provides hassle free, professional equity trade-in service for any sales team. Founded in 2001, they conduct several thousand transfers annually, including timeshares, land lots, vacation clubs and RV/Camping memberships. Attending their first ARDA conference, they will be having drawings for free iPads and showcase sales services that provide higher VPGs, plus a developer tool to increase sales and exposure. They have advertised in Resort Trades for a couple of years, producing several sales and developer clients.

TrackResults Software offers business-intelligence solutions for the vacation-ownership industry. Their mission is to provide powerful tools for decision makers to access reports, graphs, and data visualization to identify trends, opportunities, challenges, and actionable information in order to boost business performance without waiting for anyone. TrackResults delivers users a uniquely fast, customizable view of figures right when you need them at the speed of business. This will be their 9th year at ARDA and an exciting year for new and existing users of TrackResults since they will be demonstrating their new custom dashboard builder and improved analytics. They have been advertising in both print and online with Resort Trades for years with great results.

