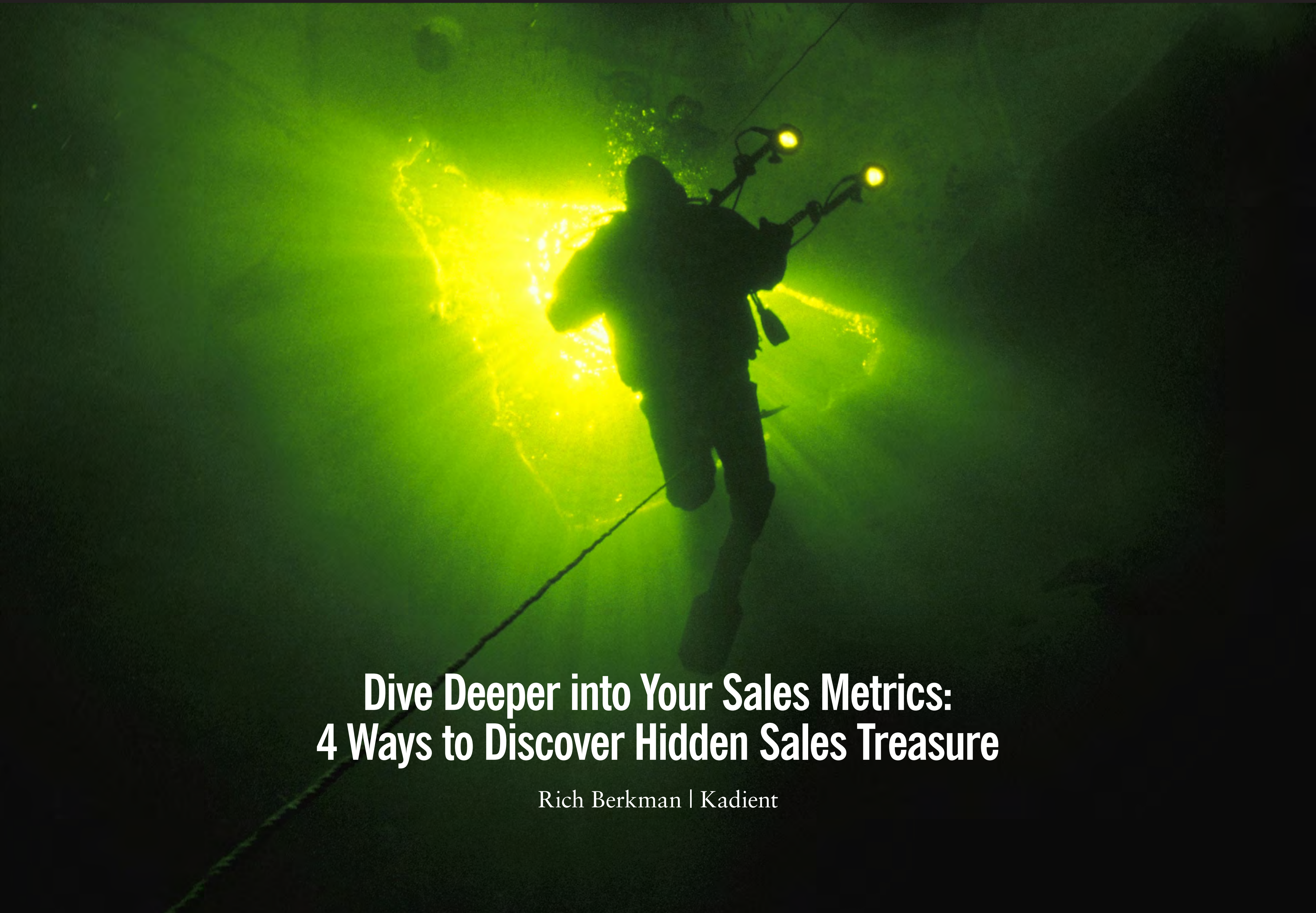


Dive Deeper into Your Sales Metrics: 4 Ways to Discover Hidden Sales Treasure

Rich Berkman | Kadient

What you can't see may be killing your sales. It's time to uncover what your current measurements won't show you.

If you're like the many sales and marketing leaders I work with, you naturally have a strong desire to optimize your sales team's performance.

But regardless of the current performance strategies being applied, execution is *still largely based on gut instincts rather than hard facts*. Here's the ugly truth: According to CSO Insights, "for the fourth year in a row, of deals forecasted to close, less than 45% are actually won and only 52% of sales reps achieve quota."

Managers can't be involved in every deal and have low confidence in sales forecasts. Worse, the typical metrics used to gauge opportunity progress do not provide the necessary depth and granularity that instill greater confidence in sales and marketing leaders. Many rely on KPI's, reports and dashboards that yield fuzzy insights.

The end result? You simply don't know what's real and what's not in the pipeline, or where to focus sales enablement efforts. It's like looking through coke bottles when what you need is a magnifying glass. And you're left with inaccurate forecasts, poor visibility into deals and no sense for where the choke points are or how to make improvements to your sales process.

Let's get our scuba gear and take a deeper dive into your team's sales performance.

Almost every sales organization I speak with has a goal of achieving a more accurate forecast and improving sales execution. Marketing organizations I work with want to know what marketing efforts work to drive leads and opportunities through the funnel to close. A genuinely effective sales and marketing analytic effort should give you actionable insights that allow you to:

See deeper into your pipeline and sales process to generate more accurate forecasts, by answering the questions:

- What key milestones have been completed across the pipeline?
- What are the choke points in the sales process?
- How efficiently are reps moving through various stages of the sales process?
- Where are the opportunities to intervene or provide situational coaching?
- Are sales reps following the sales process relative to quota attainment?
- Are reps confident they are focused on the next best activity to advance or win a deal?

Determine what sales content, tools and messaging are most effective in moving and winning deals by understanding:

- How to identify and proactively deliver the information reps need to advance and close deals
- What sales resources can be improved or eliminated
- How to effectively scale expert resources
- Where are the opportunities to improve productivity
- How to discover and replicate the “ah ha” moments across different buyer situations

How can you answer these questions?
With the knowledge that interactive sales playbooks provide.

Interactive sales playbooks align situation-specific sales and marketing strategies, content, tools, and coaching with the customer's buying cycle. Integrated directly into the CRM system, these playbooks arm salespeople with proven tactics for advancing deals, and provide sales leadership with a deeper level of insight into their reps' deal-making activities.

CRM reports aren't bad; they're just incomplete. To get a true picture of what's really happening in the field, you need insights based on the plays your sales reps are (or in some cases, are not) making.

That's where playbooks come into the picture.

When the information about the activities and milestones completed or not completed by salespeople is correlated with sales performance data, visibility is enhanced for more accurate decision making, which gives sales leadership, marketing directors and executives a more realistic view of what's going on inside the pipeline and gives sales reps the feedback that will increase their win rates.

In this eBook, you'll discover four ways you can leverage the unique data insights that interactive sales playbooks provide. With this additional knowledge, you can drive significant improvements in win rates, deal sizes, sales velocity, productivity and overall sales performance.

Happy sales!

Sincerely,

Rich Berkman
Vice President, Sales Enablement Strategy
Kadient

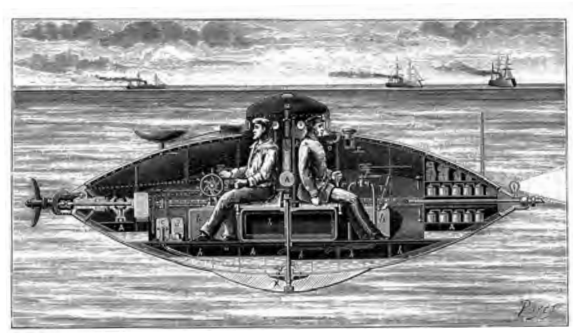
Meaningful Metric #1 ::
Pipeline Depth
What's the real deal vs. the phony baloney?

Many sales organizations try to leverage CRM systems for forecasting, but most often "probability" assessments are based more on subjective judgments ("I've got a good feeling about this"), rather than on objective facts. In many cases, sales reps will highlight the stage they believe they are in with a prospect, which is good, but still not helpful for identifying the true deal status. Sales managers need more key data insights about the activities reps have completed or not within a stage of a given opportunity.

The first meaningful metric, therefore, correlates what's been stated in the CRM system's "probability" and often related "sales stage" fields with the activities that or have not been completed in the associated sales playbooks. The embedded playbook acts as a sales workbench for a rep's specific selling situation and allows an organization to continually evolve their strategy and tactics.

The activities within the playbook can represent key sales milestones, content, tools or other sales resources that sales reps execute throughout the sales process. The completion of activities identifies what's been done within an opportunity and correlated with CRM opportunity data - yielding tremendous insight.

Comparing the stated "probability" to the actual actions executed gives reps, managers and executives much deeper insight into where an opportunity really stands and the ability to take action.



One effective way to visualize the progress of each opportunity is to chart it as OVERSTATED, UNDERSTATED or ON TRACK and link these assessments with key actions associated with a sales opportunity. These assessments, in turn, act as leading indicators for what action, if any, needs to be taken next. By aggregating all of the playbook progress data, highlighting which deals are truly "On Track," you end up with a much clearer indication of what deals should or should not be included in your forecast.

Without the ability to gain deal insight quickly at the "50,000 foot view" and instantly drill down into the details of an associated playbook, the information remains fuzzy, achieved milestones are not clear and forecasts get missed. But when sales managers gain visibility and situational access into the progress across all the opportunities, they can focus on the ones that are OVER- or UNDER- stated. They can then drill down to the "street view", with one click, to see the associated reports and sales playbooks and to better understand where they should focus their attention and intervene to provide coaching to put opportunities back on track.

DEFINING REAL-WORLD SALES PROGRESS USING AN INTERACTIVE SALES PLAYBOOK

An opportunity's probability to close should not be based on gut but on details such as the **percentage of required activities** a rep has completed within the *associated interactive sales playbook*.

For Example:

If a rep states that a deal is at 70% probability in their CRM system, but has only completed the required activities associated with the early stages in their associated playbook, then the opportunity is **OVERSTATED**. (The rep hasn't finished the work required for the reported stage of their opportunity)

If a rep completes the required activities associated with the stage they state they are in within their CRM and no activities beyond or below the current CRM stage have been completed, then the opportunity is **ON TRACK**.

If a rep states they are at 20% probability in their CRM system but has completed the required playbook activities associated with the opportunity at a higher CRM stage, then the opportunity is **UNDERSTATED**.

Meaningful Metric #2 :: Milestone Markers

Do your leading indicators suggest progress – or a need for intervention?

Sales managers and executives continually look for "ah ha!" moments that occur during the buying cycle:

- When did the buyer qualify?
- When did we get access to the key decision maker?
- What was the key event or pain point addressed that advanced the deal?
- Have the budget and the buying process been identified?
- Have we started red-lines on the contracts?

These milestones or achievements in the sales process can and should be monitored; they represent leading indicators that are used to identify where an opportunity stands. This is further evidence on whether or not a deal should be included in a forecast or if intervention is required.

This takes sales managers and other key stakeholders deeper and provides more granular insight about where specific deals stand. Sales event depth metrics monitor critical process steps, behaviors or achievements within the buyer's cycle, such as a Web click-stream report that highlights the key events or milestones (click-throughs) a Web visitor makes before conversion. The data captured through the use of integrated sales playbooks spotlight these key activities and their completion status. As described in Metric #1, this information can again be correlated with your CRM data for deeper analysis and analytic views.

CHALLENGE: A leading consumer and business-credit reporting company wanted to find the most effective way to close deals, expose choke points, and see which milestones took the most time for sales reps to achieve, to help them focus on critical points to improve sales execution.

SOLUTION: This company embedded their interactive playbooks into its CRM system to help reps be more productive, to understand how a rep or team's time is spent, and to evaluate specific sales process activities. They also saw playbooks as an opportunity to roll out a new sales process accompanied by relevant tools and messaging.

With this integration in place, sales managers, field effectiveness teams and those responsible for sales process can look across multiple opportunities that use the same playbook, or apply A/B testing to compare playbook performance. The more successful activities are then applied and communicated to the entire sales team. Improvement is focused on shrinking the average sales cycle time and optimizing processes based on evaluation of successful deals.

RESULTS: By delving deeper into their sales activities and spotlighting areas for improvement, the company continues to streamline their sales process and evolve their playbooks by line of business and geography to reduce sales cycle time and increase win rates.

Meaningful Metric #3 :: Sales Asset Impact

Which sales and marketing efforts have a favorable impact on wins and losses?

Product marketing, management, sales operations, sales process and product training, SME's and other content and knowledge managers across an organization spend a great deal of time creating content, tools, messaging and other resources to support sales.

While it might not be too difficult to determine *how often* a piece of content is used, it's much harder to know *when* it's being used in the sales process and whether it's effective or not. Why? Because there's no system in place for determining:

- Where that content, tool, activity or milestone was aligned with the sales process
- How it related to closed wins and losses
- What, if any, impact it had on stage advancement or sales process achievements
- How much time it takes to execute and if there is opportunity for improvement

By directly relating sales and marketing efforts to real-world sales actions, sales managers can:

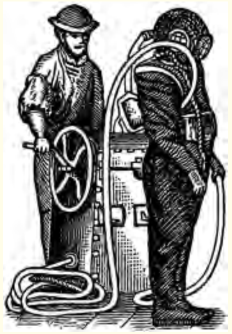
- Determine where to focus their energy
- Identify what's working in the context of the sales cycle
- Get hard evidence and feedback to revise the future work they put into sales enablement efforts
- Automate or enhance time consuming activities

LEADERSHIP THROUGH LEADING INDICATORS

CHALLENGE: An enterprise financial company had a strong sales process in place, but was dropping promising opportunities and costing the company significant revenue.

SOLUTION: The company applied a reporting system leveraging interactive playbooks that identify potential obstacles as they emerge. As reps follow the sales process, their activities are captured as "milestones" that are tied to forecast updates in the CRM. Completion of key activities – such as demo deliveries, discovery sessions, proposal and/or quote submissions – provide important insights into each opportunity and its forecast status. This in-depth information allows experienced sales managers to intervene and salvage deals before they sink.

RESULTS: In just one quarter alone, the company saved several sales opportunities ranging in value from $30,000 to $320,000.



Interactive sales playbooks embedded within the CRM system are the perfect medium for reinforcing these efforts, providing insights into activity effectiveness and on opportunities for optimizing their impact. Sales and marketing process mavens, content contributors, tool owners, and training resources can identify those activities, coaching tactics and other resources that advance deals to close. And most importantly, eliminate those activities that are not used, stall deals, or need to be further enhanced or automated.

In today's selling environment roles have shifted. Up until recent times sellers had the information prospects wanted and could influence requirements – buyers had to interact with sellers. Today, due to the Internet, buyers have more control of the sales process and salespeople have less influence on requirements.

—**John Holland**, co-founder and co-author of Customer Centric Selling®

Today, a buyer's early interactions with salespeople have been replaced with education gathered through web searches, webinars, blogs, social media or other online resources. Your salespeople need to understand where the educated buyer is in the buying process and be ready to engage in a meaningful conversation. Proper questioning becomes a critical element in aligning with buyer needs.

To fully equip salespeople to be the trusted advisors buyers expect, marketing, sales operations, training and others need to constantly evolve their knowledge transfer capabilities and ensure they provide the right information at the right time to the right rep for a specific selling situation. The best sales enablers are those who get directly involved in the sales process and enhance their craft and sales support through these experiences. Interactive sales playbooks scale these resources and allow them too to have more time for high quality, meaningful interaction with prospects and customers.

By including interactive sales playbook activities that contain situational questioning, messaging or other sales assets, you can deliver the information reps need, when they need it. Once you begin, the use of those activities can be analyzed in the context of the sales process to see how they help move the buyer along. With these results in hand, you can proactively prepare reps to have informed conversations with potential buyers and evolve your sales playbook activities to match buyer needs and optimize your selling process.

Meaningful Metric #4 :: Sales Velocity Depth

How quickly are you moving deals toward a close and where are they stalling?

A key goal for most sales and marketing organizations is to consistently improve the average sales cycle time. Without deeper visibility, this goal can't be easily achieved. But most CRM data is limited to "age" metrics or "days since last modified date." That doesn't go deep enough – in order to get a more complete picture, you need to be able to measure the time spent across and within sales stage and key sales activities. An integrated sales playbook delivers just that.

By integrating interactive sales playbook data with your CRM data, you gain visibility into:

- Time spent between key events/sales activities
- Time spent between sales stages
- Time spent across multiple situational playbooks (comparison)

This data can also be aggregated and analyzed across opportunities, verticals, territories and sales teams. With this information, you gain a clear understanding of:

- Where the choke points are in the sales process
- Which playbooks or stages need further optimization
- Which activities should be optimized, automated or eliminated
- Where you need to educate sales reps on better methods to improve overall efficiencies

CHALLENGE: A global provider of communications equipment needed to respond effectively to competitive market pressures. Their goal was to fend off competitive inroads and ensure retention of existing customers, increase sales rep productivity and drive a more consistent sales process.

SOLUTION: Within six weeks, the company launched 12 vertical-specific interactive sales playbooks, integrated with their CRM system, to their 700-person sales force. They saw that there was tremendous value in having their reps work directly within their CRM, where information they needed to sell can be contextually pushed to them. Of equal importance they recognized the value of the analytics they could obtain and insight they could derive through the use of interactive sales playbooks.

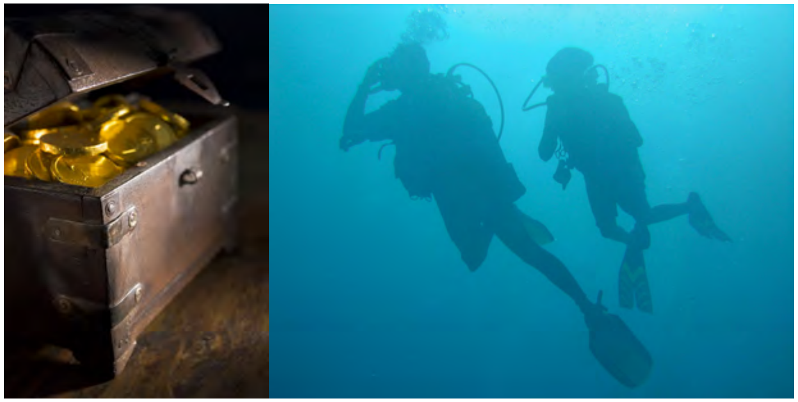
RESULTS: Armed with the ability to monitor sales performance at a much more granular level, the sales enablement, marketing and training teams can monitor what sales assets are used by vertical, solution and target stakeholder to continually evolve and optimize their sales playbooks, process and associated content, tools and messaging to ensure that sales reps have the information that's proven to work for specific selling situations.

Playbook velocity in action

What happens *between* sales stages can be a big blind spot for sales managers. That's why it's important to get inside these stages, to dig deeper to see where improvements can be made, to target process steps that can be optimized and determine which non-value activities can be automated or eliminated.

By looking deeper into the stages, a manager can see how much was time spent to execute key activities and the time that elapsed between completed activities. This allows a manager to spotlight chokepoints within a particular stage of a playbook and identify what improvements can be made to specific playbook activities. When you get visibility into the amount of time salespeople spend on or across executing activities, you can use these insights to improve your sales process, reduce sales cycle time and help reps to work more deals.

Finally, by understanding sales stage and activity velocity, you can concentrate on areas that require readiness attention or general improvement and remove obstacles to improve overall sales process speed.



You can only manage what you measure

Numbers aren't just for the bean counters. As you've read on previous pages, having the right metrics at your disposal can mean all the difference between frustrated efforts and executing successful sales strategies.

When you draw upon sales performance analytics derived from interactive, CRM-based sales playbooks, you gain the insights you need to:

- Improve forecast accuracy far beyond CRM probability
- Identify choke points by understanding the activities within each sales stage
- Measure sales and marketing effectiveness – what content, tools, messaging and other sales activities actually contribute to wins
- Optimize your sales process by focusing on the repeatable steps that work for each selling situation

If a company is not working to formalize it's sales processes, they are simply being negligent. It is critical to identify (and learn) what the successful, repeatable sales activities are and what the quota-achieving reps do to succeed in specific selling situations – this information is what will help drive improved sales results across the board. Sales managers need to be better equipped to provide their reps with targeted coaching, and reps need to be prepared to respond to a buyer's situational needs if they expect to become a trusted advisor.

Whether you have a sales methodology in place or not, outlining your processes in an interactive sales playbook will help you compete at a higher level, driving significant improvements in sales productivity, sales process optimization, forecasting and overall sales and marketing effectiveness.

FREE expert brainstorm session

This ebook is just the beginning. To get a richer understanding of how these depth metrics can improve *your* sales machine, email **showme@kadient.com** for a **FREE** sales brainstorm with me or one of my expert associates at Kadient.

Together, we can accelerate the deals in your sales pipeline!

Kadient is an on-demand sales enablement platform that arms your salespeople with the proven knowledge, messages, and strategies they need to win. Kadient combines three core capabilities needed to drive meaningful improvements in sales performance: **Sales Playbooks, Sales Performance Analytics and Dynamic Sales Content**—all served up within your CRM system, so your salespeople have everything they need to move a deal forward.

Learn how Kadient Sales Playbooks can help you get the most out of your sales team.

call: **877.523.4368**
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