# The Definitive Guide to Selling Better and Faster

**By: Tony Cole, CEO of Anthony Cole Training Group**

In order to grow, sales leaders need to implement a repeatable, scalable process to turn a trickle of income to a steady, predictable stream. With all salespeople using the same systems and playbooks and adhering to the same process, the sales organization becomes a well-oiled machine instead of a Frankenstein-esque contraption stuck together with duct tape.

What's the secret to accelerating sales growth? While people and process usually precede systems, sales is somewhat of an exception. The right Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) can help empower people and define process. In this guide, learn how a CRM system can accelerate your business' growth, bring in profitable customers, and enable your sales team to sell better and faster.  Whether your organization has an existing CRM and needs greater adoption and effectiveness or if your firm is in the market for a new customer relationship management approach, please read on.

## Sell Better

Sales today is a far cry from what it was 20 years ago. The advent of search and social media means sales is now more about research and careful customization than knocking on doors and "spray and pray." But different doesn't always mean better. Even though changing times

necessitate new approaches, some salespeople merely transfer their old methods to modern channels. It's not totally their fault. Change is hard, and sometimes, scary. But not to fear -- in this bold, new world of sales, the right CRM system can not only enable salespeople to update their practices, but also give them a competitive edge.

**Contextualize Sales Outreach**

When a sales rep receives an inbound lead or decides to target a specific company or decision maker, they don't have to go into the initial outreach without researching and qualifying the prospect. Today, there's a plethora of buyer information at sales reps' fingertips. Before picking up the phone or writing a cold email, reps can research their buyers on:

Search engines

LinkedIn

Facebook

Twitter

Blogs

Company website

Industry-specific sites

Just one problem. None of these virtual spaces gives the rep context on what the contact already knows about their company, or provides evidence of an existing relationship.

CRM to the rescue. A CRM that integrates with your marketing automation system gives sales reps a comprehensive picture of the prospect's recent interactions with your company. And the value of this knowledge is hard to overestimate.

Let's say a prospect downloaded an e-book on a specific industry trend yesterday. Armed with this insight, the sales rep can then customize their cold email to mention this trend, and offer their expertise. Since the topic is evidently top-of-mind for the prospect, the sales rep stands a much better chance of grabbing their attention with this email and receiving a response.

On the other hand, the sales rep would take a much different approach if the same contact checked out the product's pricing page in the last hour. A demo or free trial is a much more appropriate and interesting offer in this case.

A tight bond between marketing automation and CRM enables sales reps to layer context onto their outreach. And this, in turn, helps their emails and calls to stand out amidst a sea of bland, generic pitches.

**Make Sure Nothing Falls Through the Cracks**

It's rare to get a prospect's attention on the very first outreach attempt. Usually, a sales rep will need to reach out again, and again … and again. Persistence is a virtue in sales. Most sales experts espouse making between six and ten attempts before giving up on a prospect. Abandoning prospects too soon could leave money on the table.

But how can a sales rep keep all their assorted prospects and outreach attempts straight? Depending on the number of leads a salesperson is working at any given time, trying to remember to call Company X on Tuesday, Organization Y on Friday, Business Z on Monday, and sending check-up emails on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday is all but impossible.

Wouldn't it be nice if the CRM took this memory game off sales reps' plates? With the right system, this isn't just a pleasant dream -- it's a reality. Many modern CRMs include task modules that automatically alert sales reps of who to follow up with and when. Salespeople can simply set a reminder, and forget it.

When the time rolls around to reach out again, reps also benefit from having all prior contact attempts at their fingertips, as well as any buyer interactions that have taken place in the interim. With the right context at hand, salespeople can tailor their follow-ups based on what the buyer's done and what's already been said. As outreaches becomes more and more personalized, reps become more likely to receive a response, not less.

Sign up now for a [Free CRM Demo and Discussion](#).

**Prevent Disastrous Sales Derailments**

Wouldn't it be great if your sales reps closed each and every deal they're working on during the last week of the month? They wouldn't just make quota – they would absolutely crush it. But this victory will likely be short-lived. With a totally empty pipeline, how would they hit their numbers the following month? Depending on the length of your sales cycle, they might not close any deals. Thus, a devastating bust follows on the heels of the boom.

If you're managing your deals with spreadsheets, it can be hard to grasp how close each is to closing and spot gaps in the funnel before it's too late. A CRM system can help salespeople avoid boom and bust cycles by visualizing their deal flow. Instead of trying to infer meaningful knowledge from a sea of identical rows and columns, reps can immediately recognize stages in which they have too many opportunities -- or too few. With this knowledge, reps have an easier time balancing and prioritizing prospecting with working active leads.

**Cement the Sales Process**

The sales process first lives in a founder's or VP of Sales' mind, and then on a piece of paper. But scaling the sales strategy through word of mouth and scattered documents isn't exactly effective. "To be the most useful, all that information must be built into a system that [documents] the stages, the activities, and when you're supposed to do them," according to Brent Leary, partner at CRM Essentials.

Defining the sales stages in a CRM not only helps to solidify the process for your current team, it also has implications for future hires. "This makes it easy for people who have no idea what the sales process is when they get hired to hit a running start," Leary added.

The screenshot below shows how sales stages are visually defined in the HubSpot CRM, and how deals are moved between them.
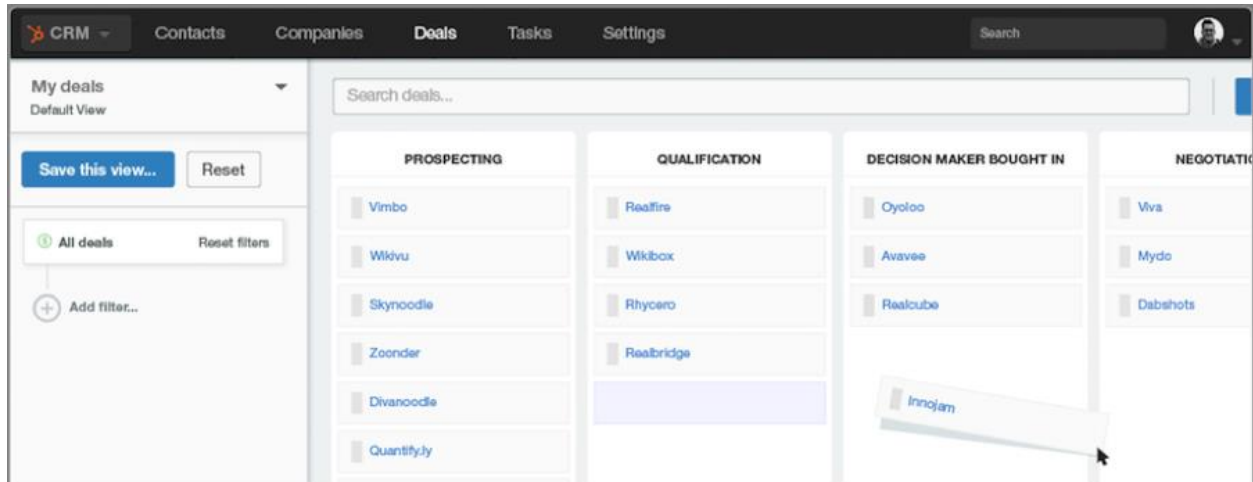
We can help you set up an effective sales process in your CRM.  Sign up for a free CRM Demo and Discussion.

# Sell Faster

As the last section demonstrated, CRM systems don't just allow sales leaders and managers to keep tabs on their reps. The right CRM can also empower reps to sell better. But what if I told you CRMs can also help reps sell faster? Historically "CRM" has been known as "the thing that slows me down" for most sales reps. However, modern CRMs can actually quicken the sales process. Don't believe me? Read on to learn how CRM can shave time off salespeople's day-to-day activities, facilitating a faster deal flow.

**Eradicate Time-Consuming Data Entry**

According to HubSpot's State of Inbound Sales report, manual data entry is sales reps' #1 problem with their CRM. Not exactly a surprising revelation. Even more alarming is just how much non-sales activities eat into salespeople's days. Docurated's State of Sales Productivity study found that more than 50% of reps' time is wasted searching for content, and working on

CRM-related and administrative tasks.

It goes without saying that this frustrates salespeople, who would rather be connecting with prospects than doing administrative work. Therefore, it's critical to streamline reps' non-sales tasks as much as possible to maximize active selling time.

We've already established that the right CRM system provides both sales managers and reps with actionable insights which benefit the entire sales organization. However, CRM is only as good as the data entered into it. And if data entry is 100% manual, there is always room for error.

In this instance, CRM is the problem, but it can also be the solution. Some CRMs today lessen the data entry burden on reps by automatically populating contact information from the web and marketing automation systems.

By using email productivity app HubSpot Sales in conjunction with HubSpot CRM, sales reps can live the dream of one-click prospecting. Simply by pushing the "add to HubSpot CRM" button, sales reps can auto-populate a new contact record directly from a company website. It doesn't get any easier than that and errors are eliminated as well.

These systems will help salespeople be quicker but they still must know how to effectively assess their pipeline for real prospect potential. To help with this, ACTG has developed a tool called the Emergency Pipeline Action System (EPAS) that helps salespeople evaluate how



qualified their leads are and then advises whether to move them to the next sales stage or out of the pipeline, further quickening the sales process.

Access the [EPAS here](#).

**Find Good Fit Prospects Fast**

Most sales organizations get their leads from a combination of inbound and outbound efforts. The specific mix will vary depending on the team, but it's rare to find a 100% outbound or 100% inbound organization.

Generating inbound leads is generally the responsibility of the Marketing team but outbound efforts require a bit more elbow grease on behalf of the sales department. Reps often use a combination of social media sites and search to find prospects that seemingly fit their company's ideal customer persona.

This process works … but not as well as it could. Traditional prospecting takes time. Reps often must hunt for each opportunity individually, and then do a fair amount of guesswork to classify a given company as a "good fit."

However, prospecting features in certain CRM systems turn prospecting into less of a hunting expedition and more of a one-stop shop. For example, HubSpot CRM collects sales relevant information from across the web on a variety of companies, and then compiles data into a searchable database. Reps can then conduct custom searches based on specific criteria, and the system returns a comprehensive list of prospects that fit the requirements, thus providing a qualified prospect list upon which to call.

**Prevent Reinventing the Wheel**

In today's world of selling, providing content is an expectation in marketing your company's products and services. However, providing buyers relevant content throughout the sales process fosters trust between buyer and seller which can position the rep as a trusted advisor who is knowledgeable about the prospect's business issues.

CRMs that double as content repositories can help salespeople get the right content at the exact right moment, saving them time they might otherwise waste searching. Need the latest

demo deck? A newly-released case study? The most recent pricing sheet? No need to go searching elsewhere -- just grab it from the CRM and send with a personalized email.

What about the emails reps send day in and day out? While every single email should be customized to the specific recipient, smart reps save templates of their most successful messages for reuse down the line. Too bad this doesn't save much time when they have to dig through their outbox each time they'd like to repurpose a template.

CRM can help here as well. By allowing reps to save email templates directly in the system, they can access their time-saving messages without even having to open a new tab.

**Answer Questions in Record Time**

Getting a straight answer to a prospect's question when there is no single source of truth can be frustrating. Often, it's only after being bounced around colleagues and departments that a sales rep gets a response ... and then it might conflict with another version they heard along the way.

Implementing a CRM that is acknowledged as ***the source*** makes these situations a lot less likely. "CRM puts all the information about your clients and your products in one place, so you never have to say "Let me get back to you on that."

**Your CTA (Call to Action)**

Are you ready to sell better and faster with the help of a modern CRM system? Anthony Cole Training Group can help you evaluate your needs and advise on the best CRM approach for your company.  If you liked what you read, sign up for an Inbound Marketing & CRM Assessment below.

[Free CRM Demo and Discussion](#).

Anthony Cole Training Group, LLC
Cincinnati, Ohio
www.anthonycoletraining.com
877-635-5371