

Business Intelligence - **The key to optimising sales, marketing, and** **bottom line results**

A CRM Spotlight from Maximizer Software's Business Agility Series

CONTENTS

Introduction: Creating Actionable Business Intelligence - 3

The Opportunity - 4

Boost Marketing Efficiency - 5

Improve Sales Effectiveness - 6

Strengthen Customer Relationships - 8

Optimise Bottom Line Results - 9

About Maximizer Software - 10

Introduction: Creating Actionable Business Intelligence

Fly blind using “seat of the pants” navigation, or fly safe by relying on the latest instrumentation to help you reach your destination. The difference between these high- and low-risk techniques is a function of leveraging available technologies to create the actionable intelligence needed to map a safe course, avoid obstacles along the way, and arrive at the right destination securely and on time. While the “retro” approach can be interesting, it is also very hazardous, and creates unnecessary anxiety—this is the real reason navigational aides are favored by anyone who is concerned with reaching their destination swiftly, successfully, and safely.

Business operations are no different. Companies can continue in their established ways, using the old “gut-feel” approach, while never leveraging innovative strategies, processes, and technology solutions that may reduce business risk. Or they can empower themselves with newer proven solutions that help leverage best business practices to deliver the timely granular intelligence needed to create increasingly effective business strategies, continuously strengthen competitive positions, and steadily improve revenue streams.

When it comes to marketing, sales and customer service there’s no question that the second approach delivers higher value—especially in an age when companies are combating unprecedented competition while being forced to do more with less. The reality is this: choose the second example or risk being second best.

This white paper explores why actionable business intelligence is so critical in today’s business environment and how Maximizer Software’s customer relationship management (CRM) solution can be used to deliver actionable intelligence when and where it’s needed most.

The opportunity

CRM solutions are key to obtaining the actionable intelligence needed to close more sales faster, while also building stronger customer relationships. Why then haven't all companies implemented such a solution? There are two main reasons:

1. CRM solutions were originally designed for large Fortune 1000-sized companies, and the cost and complexity of these solutions have been prohibitive in the past;
2. Some companies resist change: "We've always done fine", they reason, so why fix what doesn't appear to be broken?

Here's the good news: CRM solutions are now available that have been designed from the ground up to meet the specific performance, functional, and budgetary requirements of small to medium sized businesses. Why make the effort to implement such a system now? Because this technology, like aircraft instrumentation, delivers actionable intelligence that companies can use to make and execute the best possible strategic decisions with the least amount of risk. By using solutions that include real-time dashboards, summary reports, and drill-down detailed reports, companies can arm themselves with actionable intelligence to improve your bottom line in the following ways:

- Make informed decisions about which marketing campaigns work best;
- Identify, by campaign, which leads are qualified opportunities and which are cold leads;
- Focus sales representatives' time on highest probability opportunities;
- Increase sales closure rates;
- Quantify performance of sales representatives and coach them by determining specific areas where improvements are needed;
- Increase customer retention and determine the best ways to cross-sell and up-sell existing customers;
- Capture customer insights into how products and services can be enhanced and create a feedback loop for customers.

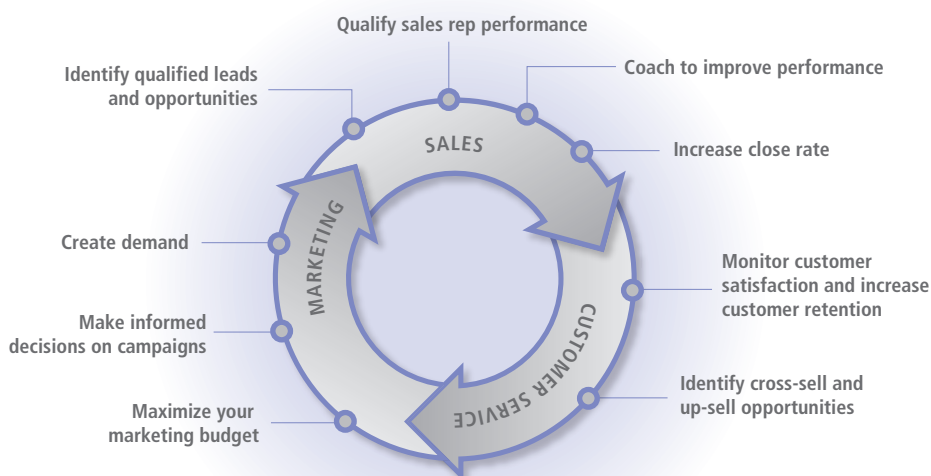


FIGURE 1:

Actionable intelligence is valuable throughout the customer lifecycle

Boost marketing efficiency

Unless marketing campaigns are closely monitored (on the basis of a wide variety of parameters), there really is no way to leverage the investment in them. For example, if a campaign involved sending out 1000 letters, knowing that you received 10 responses is just not enough information. There are many other factors that must be evaluated in order to ensure future campaigns are optimised and cost effective. For example:

- Did letter "A" with offer "X", yield more responses than letter "B" with offer "Y?"
- Did those who responded to letter "A" purchase more product than letter "B" recipients?
- How many leads received follow-up calls within a pre-defined period of time?
- If any lead requested additional information, was it sent to them?
- Were on-site visits requested, and if so, did these requests seem to center on specific sales representatives?
- Which sales representatives converted the most leads into sales, and who generated the largest sales?
- What were the expenses associated with closing sales for group "A" and group "B?"

Answering these questions delivers the actionable insight companies need to give their marketing campaigns a superior competitive advantage, thereby creating stronger demand for their products and services—and that generates solid sales while minimising associated overhead costs. But many companies are unable to tap into this information stream because they are not empowered with the right processes and tools, and cannot capture accurate, searchable data at the right time in the marketing process. As a result, subsequent marketing campaigns cannot leverage past experiences and precious marketing dollars are wasted without achieving optimal results, or knowing why the campaign failed.

A CRM solution can help solve this problem—if it is broad enough to gather any information required, flexible enough to adapt to changing needs for information capture and analysis, and scalable enough to handle data associated with marketing campaigns, and also with ongoing sales and customer support efforts.

Improve sales effectiveness

It is an obvious fact that increasing the amount of time sales staff spend working with highly qualified, high probability opportunities—and minimising the time they waste on leads having a low probability of sale—will result in improved sales effectiveness. But reaching this objective is often elusive for companies that lack the visibility into their sales processes required to answer these important questions like:

- What is the business problem a company is experiencing that drove them to contact you?
- Is the lead a decision-maker, or an information gatherer?
- Is the need immediate or long-range?
- Have other solutions been evaluated and if so, from which vendors?
- Has the lead made any previous purchases from your company and if so what is their payment/credit history?

Creating this kind of actionable intelligence allows you to define/refine qualification criteria before significant amounts of time are spent on the wrong sales opportunities. Your leadership direction will minimise wheel-spinning and help focus sales people on bona fide opportunities. But gathering the underlying data requires policies that instruct sales representatives to complete initial contact discussions in a repeatable and accurate way. CRM solutions can quickly capture and analyse this data.

This is definitely not a “navigate by the seat of your pants” activity. Discussions with your prospect should be conducted in a manner that defines the key information required to conclude whether your sales representative should invest more of their time pursuing the business. These discussions must be carefully scripted, with pre-established fields of information that enable the sales person to enter data (using either pull-down lists or text entry) into a central repository. This repository, which can also contain marketing data from campaigns, must be easily searchable so that data can be merged, sliced, and diced, as appropriate.

Being able to flexibly search a database of marketing, sales and customer service information to create actionable intelligence also enables unprecedented accountability. For example, a business process may be established that requires a response within 24 hours for any lead that responds to a mailing. When 20 hours have elapsed, an alert can be issued to warn a sales person that action is required. If the alert is ignored when the 24-hour mark passes, a workflow rule automatically issues an alert to a manager, places an outbound call to the lead in the call center queue, and logs the event in a real time dashboard that the vice president of sales and marketing monitors on a computer screen.

The vice president can then probe further, determining similar issues with the same agent, or perhaps with the specific campaign. This intelligence can then serve as the basis for subsequent management decisions regarding process and policies that help you gain competitive advantage.

What is the bottom line? Carefully defined policies, and a robust customer relationship management solution that automates compliance, ensuring that the integrity of these proven processes are never violated. Therefore prospects are always treated consistently, and marketing, sales and customer service people are accountable for the results of their actions as the results are very visible to management.

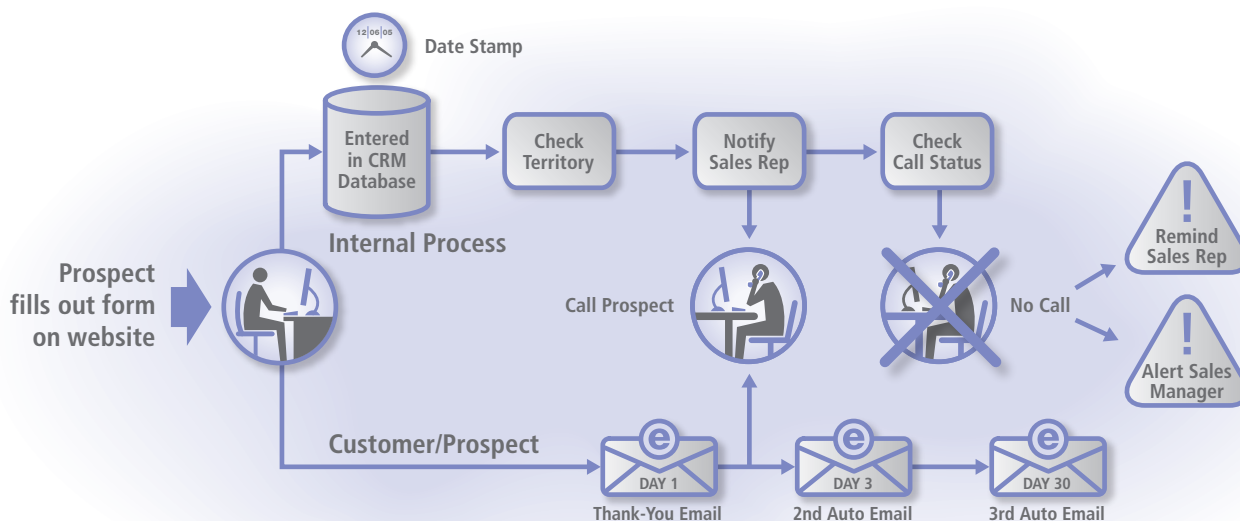


FIGURE 2:

Actionable intelligence applied to a lead management process enables unprecedented accountability

Strengthen customer relationships

Companies that seek long-term success understand that keeping customers satisfied is just as important as winning that first sale: A dissatisfied customer will never be a cross-sell or up-sell candidate and may harm the reputation and credibility your company has worked so hard to establish and maintain. Strengthening customer relationships requires a complete understanding of the customer experience with the company's products and services—an understanding that is just not possible without the right processes and tools in place. To gather the actionable intelligence needed requires careful training of support agents, sales representatives, and marketing personnel, strong management procedures, and a customer relationship management solution that can capture, analyse, and report on data such as:

- Call queue times;
- Problem resolution intervals;
- Rate of resolution by first line support agents;
- Percentage of customer inquiries that require escalation by agent;
- Frequency of repeat problems by customer and agent;
- Cost per support incident by customer and agent;
- Support calls that result in add-on sales;
- Customer requests for product enhancements.

This kind of information can be used on a daily basis by managers to fine-tune staff performance. But, equally important, by making this information available to executives in summary, rolled-up, formats, it can provide the essential intelligence required to make accurate strategic plans that reflect real conditions “in the trenches” and real customer experiences—no guesswork required.

A customer relationship management solution may also be able to offer valuable customer information in a proactive manner as well—if it is equipped with the ability to facilitate gathering of key information. This information is essential not only in figuring out where problems exist, but in determining what should be done in order to address the problem. Together with the data obtained reactively, through support calls and customer portal interactions, this body of intelligence can be essential in determining future product direction, for identifying insights regarding new product development, cross-sell and up-sell opportunities. And, by merging customer data with data about what originally brought the customer to the company, companies can gain the actionable intelligence they need to truly measure the success of past marketing and sales campaigns, and for determining how to optimise future ones.

Optimise bottom line results

While it is certainly true that profitability is possible without the hard data and insights achievable by implementing best business practices and a robust customer relationship solution, there can be no doubt that actionable intelligence is a key success factor for any company wanting to boost their bottom line performance to new levels. Companies of all sizes face cut-throat competition, and need every tool they can get their hands on to increase marketing efficiency, improve sales effectiveness, and strengthen customer relationships in a cost-effective way.

This is not to say that intuition or the experience of a highly skilled executive or manager is unnecessary, but without the competitive edge that is only possible through accurate information, quantifiable insight, and actionable intelligence, the ability of a company to quickly adapt to rapidly evolving market conditions is just not sustainable.

It all comes down to this one question: Do you really want to compete with a company that not only has a highly skilled executive and managerial team, but that also has full visibility into all information associated with its entire customer life cycle—when you are not equally armed? Perhaps now is the time to explore a CRM solution.

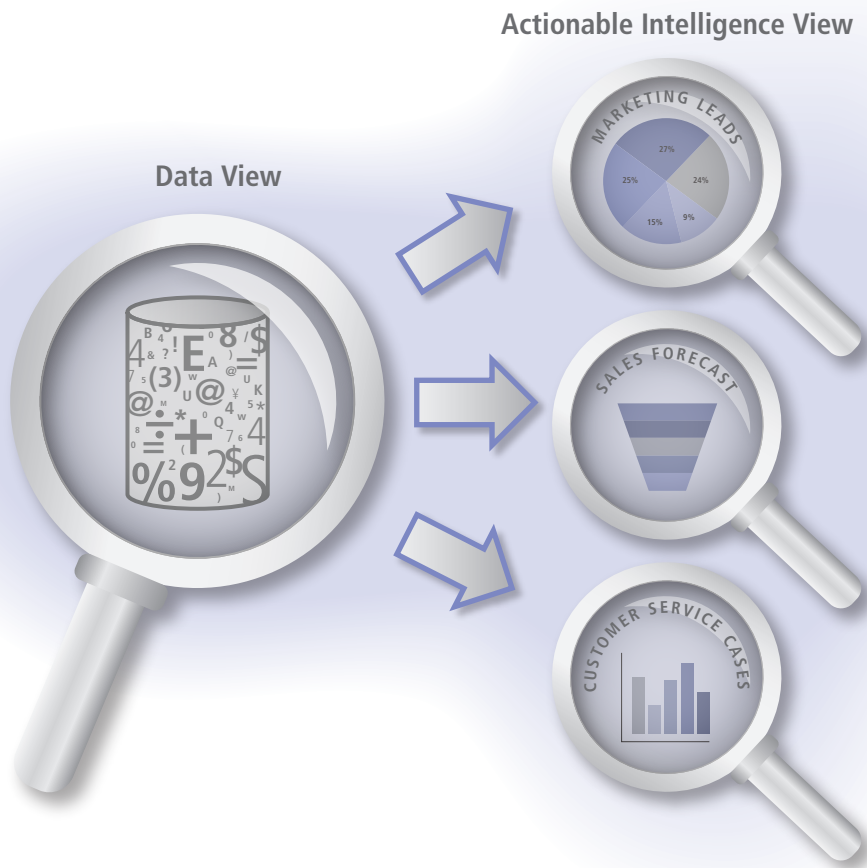


FIGURE 3:
Turn data into actionable intelligence

About Maximizer Software

Maximizer Software is the world's leading provider of affordable and easy-to-use customer relationship management (CRM) software applications. The Maximizer line of products help companies develop more responsive, personalised and profitable customer experiences. Built on a modern, Web-based architecture, Maximizer is easily integrated with existing corporate systems and features the latest in sales force automation, marketing automation, e-mail marketing and customer service technologies in a single mobile-accessible business management system. Maximizer Software has sold more than one million licences of its award-winning software solutions to companies ranging in size from entrepreneurs to multinational organisations. Customers include: Siemens, Société Générale, HSBC, TD Securities, Lockheed Martin, Brian Tracy International, Fisher & Paykel Healthcare, Oxford University Press, and Cathay Pacific.

Maximizer Software is a global business with an ecosystem of more than 8 000 corporate customers, 400 business partners and offices in the Americas, Europe/Middle East/Africa and Asia Pacific.

Awards



For more information

+44 (0)1628 587777

Email: info@max.co.uk

Web: www.max.co.uk

Europe, Middle East, Africa

+44 (0) 1628 587777 phone

+44 (0) 1628 587778 fax

info@max.co.uk

www.max.co.uk

Australia, New Zealand

+61 (0) 2 9957 2011 phone

+61 (0) 2 9957 2711 fax

info@maximizer.com.au

www.maximizer.com.au

Asia

+(852) 2598 2888 phone

+(852) 2598 2000 fax

info@maximizer.com.hk

www.maximizer.com.hk

Americas

+1 604-601-8000 phone

+1 604-601-8001 fax

info@maximizer.com

www.maximizer.com