

Cool Vendors in CRM Sales, 2007

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Sales applications involve more than sales force automation (SFA) and supporting transactions via e-commerce. The technologies that help sales professionals and that have the highest return on investment (ROI) are rarely the most widely adopted. This research will describe new vendors that provide innovative ways to help sales grow revenue.

Key Findings

- In recent years, pricing management and the software-as-a-service (SaaS) delivery model have been "cool"; but this year, sales intelligence, work style management and Web site customer reviews top the list:
- <http://www.insideview.com> — sales intelligence
- <http://www.landslide.com> — sales work style management
- <http://www.powerreviews.com> — Web services for Web 2.0 Web site customer reviews

Recommendations

- **InsideView:** Organizations in North America that aim to deliver better-qualified leads in less time by reducing the research time spent by salespeople on analyzing target customers should evaluate InsideView.
- **Landslide:** Potential buyers should consider Landslide for SFA if they've had user adoption challenges because of a lack of perceived value for salespeople and want to foster more-collaborative interactions with customers and prospects.
- **PowerReviews:** Business-to-consumer (B2C) sales organizations and B2C Web-based sales organizations that want to enable product reviews without having to develop the function internally should investigate PowerReviews.

What You Need to Know

Technology for sales professionals has traditionally focused on benefits to sales managers, such as better pipeline visibility and greater forecast accuracy. The result was low adoption on SFA projects and dissatisfaction among sales professionals. The new, cool technologies address these limitations. Likewise, consumers' use of e-commerce applications has changed during the past five years. Few consumers trust suppliers' claims on their Web sites and seek advice from friends, family and reviews from other customers.

Consumer reviews add value for confidence building in areas where people may not have traditionally turned to online shopping. Some more-progressive companies have deployed this on their e-commerce sites, but the majority has found that it costs too much; therefore, only a few companies with sufficient budgets were able to pursue this capability. The arrival of economical Web services that can be deployed with minimal effort to deliver these functions will accelerate adoption by a broader, more cost-sensitive market.

InsideView, San Bruno, California (<http://www.insideview.com>)

Analysis by Ed Thompson

Why Cool: InsideView is an on-demand sales opportunity information service that not only provides proactive alerts and account intelligence on managers at prospective accounts, but also information on strategic initiatives, corporate "pain points," business priorities, decision-making structures, contact relationship connections and competitors. InsideView delivers better-qualified leads in less time by reducing the research time spent by salespeople on analyzing target customers, thus enabling salespeople to be better prepared for meetings with pertinent information. It is "push" technology, instead of "pulling" generic company-profile databases and search engines.

Most enterprises locate leads by starting with a territory and then drilling down to find prospects that match the needs of the services or products they wish to sell. They then make outbound calls to find the contact details for a suspect — usually with limited success — and pass these to individual salespeople in the territories. InsideView addresses the second step. It takes the suspects and uses relationship mining to look for links with established reference accounts, executive directors and previous employers. It then prioritizes the suspects by the strength of the link and analyzes U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and public relations reports for more than 10 "selling triggers," such as a new product launch, an executive change or a merger and acquisition, and then reprioritizes the strength of the link. The salesperson gets a connection or link to the account to start the conversation and gains inside information about the lead.

Benefits: InsideView identifies the top prospects that match profiles receptive to value propositions and that demonstrate greater propensity to purchase; therefore, potentially shortening sales cycles. The company discovers prospects based on those who are connected to reference accounts, former employers and board of directors. InsideView also uncovers leads based on selling criteria. It is integrated with Salesforce.com and SugarCRM, reducing manual entry for new accounts and leads.

Challenges: Service is not available outside the U.S., and it does not cover some small businesses. InsideView only integrates with Salesforce.com and SugarCRM. The company was founded in 2005, so it has a limited track record and a direct sales model with few, if any, partners

and consultants with experience who can help with change management and training of the sales organization.

Who Should Care: Sales executives and sales professionals using Salesforce.com or SugarCRM, sales managers with challenges in maintaining adoption of SFA, IT professionals responsible for SFA project success, and sales organizations aiming to fix or improve substandard or broken lead management processes should look into InsideView.

Landslide, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (<http://www.landslide.com/>)

Analysis by Rob DeSisto

Why Cool: Landslide was launched in July 2006. The company has taken a different approach to SFA than traditional vendors. Rather than taking a top-down view of sales management needs, it has developed a SaaS solution focused on the work style of salespeople. Targeted at small and midsize businesses, Landslide's objective is to provide tools that improve the efficiency of a salesperson's work style. The company generalizes sales work style activities as selling, prospecting (managing opportunities), communicating to customers and reporting to management.

Landslide provides three modules: Sales Workstyle, io Channel for prospect tracking and VIP Assistant. All three modules are included for a price of \$130 per user per month. The Sales Workstyle software service integrates content and reporting into the selling process, providing greater context for salespeople to understand and respond to prospects' needs. For example, the smart conversation guide (a capability in Sales Workstyle) provides a sequence of questions (defined by the sales organization) that guides a salesperson through an executive conversation.

The answers to these questions are then categorized in the appropriate phases of the selling process and are available to salespeople when they reach each phase of the sales process. For example, when a salesperson inquires on and receives budgetary information early in the sales cycle, that information would be made available automatically in the quotation phase of the sales cycle.

The second module is io Channel for prospect tracking, which is a collaboration tool that facilitates communication among sales team members, customers and prospects. io Channel creates a dedicated portal for each one of a salesperson's customers and prospects. Customers and salespeople then use this portal to post documents, proposals and comments, and conduct Web meetings.

The last module is the VIP Assistant. Salespeople are not fond of data entry in their SFA system. The VIP Assistant offloads data entries via call center representative support or an e-mail response management system. A salesperson can call the VIP call center representative or send an e-mail to the e-mail response system to have it entered in his or her SFA application. This reduces the administration burden placed on salespeople.

Benefits: Landslide reduces the administration time salespeople spend on data entry, improves collaboration processes with customers and prospects, and increases the effectiveness of sales interactions through better content management.

Challenges: Although Landslide will provide value to salespeople, it must prove that it can also deliver on its core SFA capabilities for management, such as sales forecasting, to become the standard platform for a sales organization. Landslide does not offer marketing or customer service functionality. The company's price point is consistent with other SFA products, but is relatively high if a sales organization wants to combine Landslide with other SFA solutions for traditional sales management functions. For example, Salesforce.com Enterprise Edition is \$125

per user per month. A combined Landslide and Salesforce.com solution would be \$250 per month. This is expensive for small and midsize businesses.

Who Should Care: Sales organizations with adoption issues for SFA solutions, or those seeking to increase collaboration with customers and prospects, should consider Landslide.

Related Research: "Use Content Management as a Competitive Sales Weapon"

PowerReviews, Millbrae, California (<http://www.powerreviews.com/>)

Analysis by Gene Alvarez

Why Cool: Many enterprises, especially retailers, want consumer-based product reviews on their Internet sales sites because they want to be more like amazon.com. However, cost of implementation, unknown ROI and worries about lack of control over information presented from unknown sources and legal issues have prevented them from implementing reviews.

PowerReviews makes consumer product reviews accessible to sellers of all sizes by offering a free, private-label product review service. The sellers own the product reviews but allow PowerReviews to use them for its new consumer shopping research portal. The product review service is an outsourced offering to sellers. PowerReviews then aggregates the reviews from all the sellers to offer a new shopping research site for consumers called PowerReviews.com. PowerReviews.com monetizes these reviews through advertising and licensing, and sends qualified customers back to sellers.

PowerReviews provides the seller with two levels of moderation so that sellers can maintain full control of their site content. This includes an automatic check for profanity. PowerReviews handles first-level moderation via automated screening tools and human verification. The second level of moderation keeps sellers in control by enabling them to approve reviews before they are published, or by enabling sellers to moderate by exception. The intention is not to prevent bad reviews from being entered; it is more to ensure that inappropriate content does not get into the reviews. However, it requires sellers to accept that bad product reviews are allowed and should not be stopped.

PowerReviews provides Web-services-level integration so that site owners can integrate the product review service while still maintaining full control of the site. PowerTagsSM enables the capture of relevant information from reviews so that this information can be automatically tabulated into ReviewSnapshot. This enables consumers to see summarized product reviews in one location to improve their shopping experience. This is done by providing a view of products' pros, cons and best uses. In each of these sections, buyers see a count of reviews that have the same tag. For example, for an iPod nano, the summary would look like this:

- **Pros:** Looks cool (11), lots of storage (3), Lightweight (5) and so forth
- **Cons:** Hard to read (4), too small to handle (3) and so forth
- **Best uses:** Running (11), Bike (4) and so forth

This enables shoppers to read reviews by the tags of their preferences, such as "looks cool."

Benefits: PowerReviews enables enterprises to explore consumer-based product reviews without spending a lot of time or resources.

Challenges: PowerReviews is still in startup mode. If there is widespread adoption, challenges to scale could be a problem. Organizations must ensure that they protect themselves from outages. PowerReviews could be a possible acquisition target by a large e-commerce software, platform or SaaS provider.

Who Should Care: All business-to-business and B2C CRM sales e-commerce leaders who are interested in providing consumer-based product reviews should look into PowerReviews.

Disclaimer

This research does not constitute an exhaustive list of vendors in any given technology area, but rather is designed to highlight interesting, new and innovative vendors, products and services. Gartner disclaims all warranties, express or implied, with respect to this research, including any warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose.

This research is part of a set of related research pieces. See "Cool Vendors Amplify the User Experience" for an overview.

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