



# Measuring Success in Sales Activities vs Motions in CRM



There's more to tracking the performance of your sales organization than measuring the number of leads qualified and calls being made. If you want to see the entire picture, you also need to consider how motion impacts your sales results. In this whitepaper, we'll discuss the differences between these two categories of metrics, as well as the best practices for integrating these concepts into your CRM.

## COMPARING MEASUREMENT TOOLS

Business processes don't exist in a vacuum. Eventually, better ideas, technology, and systems come along. Then a workflow that was once effective may seem slow, antiquated, and inefficient.

Unfortunately, once a practice has become entrenched in the organization's workflow, it's not always easy to change, because so many other pieces are dependent on it. Implementing a new CRM solution provides your business with the rare opportunity to fix these long-neglected issues in your company's sales funnel, workflow, and other processes.

The benefits of CRM are more evident in reports than anywhere else. The right reporting tools can shed new light on even the most opaque processes. To take full advantage of the insights that a well-designed CRM system can provide, it's important to understand two important elements: activities and motions.

Historically, sales have been measured in terms of activity. When VPs of Sales want to gauge the productivity of their departments, they generally track specific tasks and actions (such as the volume of calls made, or the number of in-person meetings). That way, they can get some indication of the overall performance. If an employee or team is meeting their target number of assigned tasks, it's reasonable to believe that the job is getting done.

In the context of CRM, these kinds of tasks are referred to as **activities**. Typical examples of sales activities include:

- Sales-related emails
- In-person and phone-based sales meetings
- Proposals and bids

Activities can also include tasks, such as sending out whitepapers, inviting potential customers to attend webinars, or even updating account records.

The other side of this equation are actions that move the sales process forward. What's the point of a salesperson making 50 calls a day, if none of those conversations result in a sale? What about a rep who only makes 10 calls a day, but moves 5 steps closer to a sale?

These **motions** aren't always as easy to track. And it's completely impractical to even attempt to track them without a modern CRM system. But they are hugely important to the overall workflow.

In terms of results, motion is far more important to the success of a company than activity. It's important to track both activity and motion, but the best way to make money is through motion. If you want clear, informative insights into how your company is performing, you need a CRM solution that can generate exceptional reports from both vantage points.

## UNDERSTANDING MOTION

Why is it important to track sales motion across your CRM system? The answer is simple: To see how many potential customers your sales team has successfully moved further down the sales funnel. Instead of viewing performance in terms of a specific set of actions, tracking motion allows you to see it in terms of the progress of these opportunities—over the course of weeks, months, and quarters.

To understand the benefits, let's consider this situation from the perspective of a VP of Sales:

Does the VP know how many viable opportunities have become stuck in some stage of the company's sales funnel?

Does the VP know how long those opportunities have been lodged there?

Are those opportunities stuck there because the deal has stalled? Or is it due to the fact that reps don't have the knowledge or resources they need to move them onto the next stage?

What actions can the VP take to change these results?

By tracking motion with CRM, these questions are much easier to answer. It's even possible to see the parts of the sales pipeline where opportunities tend to get stuck. By examining the sales process, it's even possible to eliminate these logjams before they happen.

As you design and implement your CRM solution, it's extremely important that you incorporate tools for measuring motion. These tools allow you to identify systemic and workflow issues, which are completely invisible to activity-based reporting.

For example, a sales-activity report could show you that a specific sales rep or team is underperforming. But only a motion-based report can show you the stage in the sales pipeline where those deals lose momentum. At the individual level, motion-based reporting can also indicate that a salesperson needs help at certain stages, that they're overloaded with tasks, or even that their overall job performance is poor.

# GATING

Motion-based reporting can also detect flaws in a poorly designed qualification process. If opportunities are consistently getting stuck in certain stages, the gating between those stages may not be optimized. How many sales has your company lost, simply because opportunities were pushed forward after being incorrectly vetted?

Gating can be a complex process. So, to improve it, a deep analysis of both activity and motion is required. For instance, when a large group of opportunities is moved from the analysis stage to the proposals stage, the gating process could easily require 15 different tasks, which take place across a team of six different people in two or three different departments. It's not hard to see how a poorly optimized gating process could result in a disproportionate number of those opportunities getting stuck.

By using motion-based reporting, finding the problematic stage in the gating process is almost trivial. Nevertheless, this problem can be fixed by allowing opportunities to move through them much more quickly. This solution reduces costs, improves close-date projections, boosts conversions, and increases the overall efficiency of the sales pipeline.

## UTILIZING MOTION-BASED REPORTING IN USE CASES

One of the most powerful benefits of including motion-based reporting in your CRM is the ability to test the accuracy of assumptions in your sales process. If your predictions don't match your real-world results, you now have additional tools for revising your core assumptions.

A good example of this kind of tool is the **expected close date of an opportunity**. This tool is a core part of the sales workflow. It dictates the amount of time that's allotted for each segment of the process, the intensity of the qualification process, and even the point at which an otherwise viable opportunity is no longer worth the effort and cost to close.

Optimistically, the expected close date would only need to be pushed back during exceptional circumstances. However, if your company is consistently pushing back close dates across all opportunities, something is clearly wrong with the methodology you use to calculate the close date. If you only track activities, it may not be possible to observe the root causes.

To see the whole picture, you also need to track motion. Let's say your sales cycle anticipates a 20-day close date, but for some reason, the actual results are usually an average of 29 days. Tracking activities won't reveal the cause of this delay. However, tracking the motion could reveal that most reps are hitting their 20-day goal, while 15 percent are lagging far behind and taking an average of 35 days to close.

More importantly, underperforming reps are all getting stuck at the same stage. After some investigation, it may turn out that the root cause isn't the reps at all. Instead, it could turn out that poorly qualified leads get passed along by the business development team. No matter how well-trained those reps are, they will always perform more poorly if they get lower-quality opportunities.

If the company solely relies on activity-based reporting, those reps would simply appear to be underperforming. Then the company might invest significant amounts of money on additional training, or even replace those reps entirely. And yet the underlying problem with the close date would still exist.

What if all the reps in the sales organization are consistently missing their close dates? Would that mean that there's a systemic problem in the sales pipeline? Or are those close-date projections based on inaccurate, outdated, or otherwise bad assumptions? Something as simple as revising the gating process between two key stages in the pipeline can completely change these results.

## CONCLUSION

As you design and implement your CRM system, it's important to build tools for tracking both activities and motion into your sales reporting. Both are absolutely vital for establishing a high degree of transparency in the operations of your sales processes.

The benefits of this new level of insight include:

- Better management of your sales pipeline.
- Enhanced communication between your marketing and sales teams.
- Optimized demand for your lead-generation efforts.
- Greater insight into your sales operations.

If you have any questions about CRM implementation—from the benefits of specific modules to the costs of developing a solution for your business—contact us at [fayebsg.com](http://fayebsg.com).

# About FayeBSG

Faye Business Systems Group is a technology consulting and software company that helps companies grow by working with them to implement, customize and integrate innovative and effective financial and business systems. As a SugarCRM Elite partner and awarded the 2018 SugarCRM Global Reseller of the Year, FayeBSG is also a leading partner with Sage, Zendesk, Acumatica, Ytel, Hubspot and a variety of custom software solutions.

FayeBSG is known for their SugarCRM integrations with Sage 100, Quickbooks, NetSuite, Acumatica, Intacct, Constant Contact, Authorize.Net, HubSpot, Ring Central, Box, Jira, Ytel, and more. Services include project management, software implementations, consulting, training, custom development, and support.

Specializing in software implementations for a variety of industries, FayeBSG has customized successful CRM and ERP platforms for a variety of mid-market and enterprise businesses.