

THE COMPUTERWORLD HONORS PROGRAM

CASE STUDY

LOCATION:
Lenexa, Kansas, United States

YEAR:
2006

STATUS:
Laureate

CATEGORY:
Transportation

NOMINATING COMPANY:
Morgan Stanley

ORGANIZATION:

Freightquote

PROJECT NAME:

“Freightquote Sales Call Center”

Summary

Freightquote.com Sales Call Center is an integrated, open architecture sales technology platform that provides real-time access to critical business information, allowing our sales force to treat every prospect and customer like our best customer. Moving to a new, customer-centric sales platform, sales productivity improved by over 30% and revenue grew by 17% within the first ninety days of launch.

“Freightquote.com needed a cost-effective, powerful tool to boost sales productivity, streamline business procedures and provide better, overall account management.”

Pam Thrasher, Vice President of Information Technology

Introductory Overview

Entrepreneur Tim Barton founded Freightquote.com in August of 1998. After a successful career in telecommunications, Tim founded Freightquote.com based on the principle that customers like choices; and a company that can easily facilitate customer choice will be successful.

The first nine months were spent developing the company’s technology and carrier partnerships. The web site launched in May of 1999. Freightquote.com grew quickly and steadily. In just a few years, the company has grown from managing a few dozen shipments a day to managing a few thousand shipments a day; helping thousands of customers manage their freight transportation.

In 2005, Freightquote.com also made a significant acquisition with the purchase of Twin Modal, a truckload and intermodal transportation intermediary, which added approximately \$70 million in additional revenues.

Internally, the company continues to focus on growth driven by innovation and customer service. The struggle is to maintain those levels of energy, innovation, and service during a time of explosive growth. Faced with this challenge, Freightquote.com decided to build a sales technology platform that delivers real-time business intelligence across the entire customer lifecycle, recognizing that the competitive advantage lies in how we define the customer experience.



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Mirroring the sales workflow management of our most successful sales professionals, a robust customer contact center was created and launched in-house within six months.

Over 250 sales professionals engaged in telephone-based account management and new business development now enjoy:

Preview dialing capability from their desktop

·Seamless integration of customer impacting transactions across organizations

·A complete historical and real time view of their account base

·Comprehensive and automated sales workflow management

·Prioritized and auto scheduled customer touchpoints

·Effective management of sales leads, converting more leads to sales

·Real time sales performance and compensation updates with every transaction

"The platform is designed to optimize every customer interaction – tailoring each prospect or customer touchpoint to the customer's individual needs and preferences. Our sales reps now have instant access to the critical keys that build lasting relationships and grow the bottom line."

-Jason Beer, Vice President of Sales

Within the first ninety days of launch, sales productivity improved by over 30%, driving an increase of 17% in revenue and 12% in margins. One of the first programs to be tested was an integrated, auto email and outbound calling customer touchpoint adding \$1M revenue to overall early results.

Based in Lenexa, Kansas, Freightquote.com and their subsidiaries serve customers across North America. The company has over 500 employees and revenues exceeding \$200 million. Freightquote.com is a leading provider of web-based freight transportation management services for small businesses.

Benefits

Sales professionals now obtain everything they need to create an excellent customer experience from a single platform. In the past, they would have to access multiple data sources and manually construct a comprehensive customer profile. Time that used to be spent gathering intelligent data to best serve their customers' needs is freed up to focus on the customer and provide customized freight solutions.

Sales management now has real time access to individual, team and group goals and overall performance and productivity. They can easily identify successful best practices, areas of concern, or use other information to help coach and motivate their teams.

Overall platform benefits include:

·Provides seamless integration of up-to-date customer information and account history

·Improves customer relations, manages more prospects, and increases productivity

·Facilitates better communication and information sharing between departments, creating a seamless account team management approach



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- Tracks and reports information important to the sales process
- Presents an accurate picture of tasks, workload, goals, performance and compensation
- Highly scalable technology platform; friendly, adaptable, and expandable to meet future demands
- Easily accessible data; 96,000 man hours saved per year as a result of database consolidation
- Streamlined processes

Based on the overall early success of the new sales platform, plans are underway to customize and migrate the customer service team and other key operational areas to the new sales platform. Twin Modal is also targeted to move to a similar platform in 2006.

“Sharing information on all aspects of our business relationships, makes every employee a customer expert.”

ton, Founder of Freightquote.com

The Importance of Technology

Before the launch of the new sales technology platform, sales professionals managed their day in their own ways - based on training, experience, and tribal knowledge gathered from peers. Freightquote.com analyzed how the most successful reps spent their days. From this, they determined a set of best practices that all reps could adopt.

Training, communications and management could have been used to put the best practices in place. Instead, Freightquote.com used technology. They built an easy-to-use intranet application that determines the next best call for a rep to make and presents it with all of the information needed to make the call.

When reps come to work in the morning, they just click one button and start on a path of prioritized calls that help them optimize their day. They focus on making each call count for its best instead of figuring out which calls to make and what information to gather to prepare for the call.

Sales productivity improved by over 30% because the time between calls decreased dramatically.

Freightquote.com was also able to extend this solution to sales professionals in the field through the use of VPN and IP.

Originality

While many companies are arming their sales force with the increased ability to plan and manage their account strategies, Freightquote.com has moved to the next generation of sales force automation. The transition from a sales rep managed workflow to an automated solution based on best practices and lessons learned from their most successful reps has driven productivity and profitability to new heights. Sales reps spend less time planning their day and more time focused on value propositions crafted to a prospect's or customer's needs.



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"When you demonstrate to your customers that you have knowledge about their accounts, it shows them that you listen and care. Good relationships help you increase sales and grow your business."

Charles Burch, New Business Representative

Coupled with their rapid growth and the need to always improve the customer experience, innovative technology solutions will continue to be the focus of Freightquote.com's culture and thought leadership team.

Their new sales call center mirrors and automates the best practices of their most successful sales reps, driving productivity and profitability to new heights.

Success

Freightquote.com sales reps quickly and easily adapted to the new sales call center platform. The application is user friendly, fast and provides comprehensive account information from a single source. The convenience of planning and prioritizing their sales day - based on best practices of the most successful sales reps - made the platform believable and was readily embraced by their results-driven sales professionals.

Ease-of-use, preview dialing, real time productivity and compensation updates yielded an overwhelming, positive response from the sales reps. They now eagerly await the next phase of enabling technology and frequently offer sales call center enhancement recommendations.

Difficulty

The challenge was determining a set of best practices that would bring all Freightquote.com sales reps quickly up to speed without slowing down the productivity of their best sales reps. A lot of time was dedicated to conducting side-by-sides to see how their sales reps planned and managed their day, interviewing reps one-on-one and in focus groups, and collaborating with sales and executive management to align daily activities with their company's goals.

By moving the majority of pre and post sales call work from the sales reps to the system (preparing for calls, deciding which call to make next, etc.), Freightquote.com significantly increased the demand on their application and database servers. They quickly upgraded their database server cluster and focused on performance tuning to make sure key information was delivered quickly to their sales reps when they were ready to make their calls.

When the project started, they had some resistance from sales reps who felt that the new platform might take away their ability to manage their own work and potentially make them less effective. Since the launch, their sales reps applaud the time-savings and appreciate the customer focus the application provides. The new sales platform also allows sales reps and managers to make temporary exceptions to the best practices to meet their individual customer needs.