

It takes a disciplined process to produce an accelerated sales cycle.

## Better Forecast Probability from a defined Sales Cycle

By NvestNtech's Biz Dev Team

The most sought-after item across our blog and Web site is some form of related content to Sales Forecasting. Common terms are used to make reference to finding a better way to more accurately project when business will close. Often, "probability" is the root cause of missed forecasts; if you can refine the probability estimate for a sale, you are likely to have a better, more accurate sales forecast. Improving probability can be as simple as knowing your sales cycle.

To take the art out of forecasting and add a degree of science to the forecast effort, take some

time to develop ten steps of a typical sales cycle. The steps are milestones that someone can clearly see as an indication of getting closer to a sale. These milestones can take the form of a fully developed list of contacts, identification of competitors, a product presentation or demo, and as you near the close of business, a fully qualified price proposal.

To each one of these steps, assign a 10% probability of close; the ten steps will become 100%, with the last step being order entry. Each step is more than a brief word or two. You will need to describe the step in some



Sales forecasting is more than a sophisticated CRM software application and fancy charts and graphs.

detail, e.g., 10% - Makes use of a similar product or service, 20% - Demonstrates a well-defined use or need for an alternative vendor or product, 30% - Has determined there is value or is willing to consider a purchase/sale outside their own current vendor or products in use, and so on.

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## Cut the Sales Manager loose

By Peter Kusterer, President NvestNtech, Inc

When I first thought about this topic, I had just finished the book "Go Put Your Strengths to Work". In this book, Marcus Buckingham advocates working on your strengths and

put your weaknesses aside. The book seemed to run counter to the older adage of 'capitalize on your strengths and work on your weaknesses'.

As I read the example stories of what I will call 'right person

in the wrong job', I thought of the many sales managers—at a variety of levels—that I have met that should (or would like to) leave their positions. For the average small to medium business, they are probably an

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### Special points of interest:

- We have a completely new look this month as we move forward in 2010
- Our newsletter is now in an easy to read format that follows a more traditional appearance
- The new .PDF file type should make it easy for you to pass it along to others you know
- Take note of our featured blog Post on cochlear implants

# Industry Highlight: “Green building in the restaurant and hospitality industry”

**By Brent Francese, Lead Designer at Clean Living**

The restaurant and hospitality industry is keenly aware of their energy and natural resource use. Not only do they see it reflected in their utility bills, but as a whole, they make every effort to be socially responsible with the products they use and an overall reduction of waste.

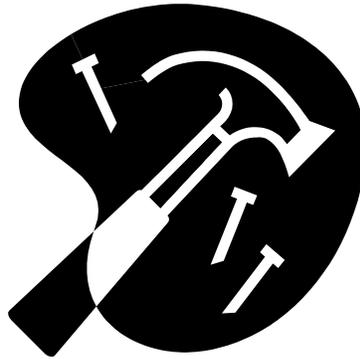
Recently, Dennis Quaintance - owner of the Lucky 32 restaurants and the O’Henry Hotel - was interviewed by Frank Stasio, the host of “[The State of Things](#)” (WUNC-FM). Quaintance talked about how he became recognized for his [green building efforts](#) (as certified by the [U.S. Green Building Council](#)) through the design efforts of the [Proximity Hotel](#), in Greensboro, NC. You can [listen to the March 15th “The State of Things” broadcast](#) on the WUNC Web site.

In the interview, one of the areas that comes forth is the struggle to find the payback in ‘Going Green’. In some cases it may not be the best overall choice. There will be instances where the better choice may be a traditional use item, or product, over its green counterpart. But, there are ways that today’s restaurant and hospitality veteran can make better, more informed decisions

*“You can carry the Go Green movement outside the confines of your establishment by helping your employees to think green.”*

in the choice to go green.

One of the first places to look is energy use. The simple and straightforward options are in lighting; numerous lighting options are available to reduce overall



When considering a green building effort, look at the long term effects across the entire project.

consumption of electricity and often provide a ‘cooler’ operating environment for a reduction in air conditioning use. Also, look for opportunities to reduce the duration of lighting by offering spot illumination, automatic sensors, or more efficient outdoor lighting in signage and parking lots.

When acquiring new equipment, something Dennis Quaintance conveyed in his interview as ‘first

use’, energy efficiency should not be the only consideration in your choice of equipment. By combining this purchase with a larger picture of reduction possibilities, you may find that going green in one area can help in the selection of another, e.g., greener landscaping or building material that lowers the overall temperature of the building may help reduce the amount of cooling/heating power needed for the building – you may be able to purchase a smaller HVAC unit.

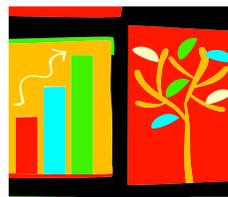
Another natural resource to consider is water. Our recent drought conditions in North Carolina brought a keen awareness to the patron and server when it comes to a glass of water served at the table. However, when the drought seemed to pass, in some cases, so did the effort to reduce consumption. Some of the good habits learned in the drought can be adapted for use on a permanent basis. Also, this carries over into washrooms and water usage. Beyond low-flow fixtures, and those with automated mechanisms, think in terms of products that can clean more efficiently with less water, as well as looking for a reduction in cleaning agent use. Here again, a more careful selection in building materials and products can make a difference in the way they withstand frequent cleaning and foot traffic.

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## From page 1: “Better Forecast Probability from a defined Sales Cycle”

Keep refining the steps in the sales cycle so that every sale takes the same path. Each step should build on the previous step in an orderly progression. Although the time between steps may vary based on the salesperson and customer, don’t let salespeople (or their managers) ‘leapfrog’ the milestones. Doing so only defeats the purpose of a more disciplined approach to quality sales forecasting.

Putting this discipline in place, you can begin managing sales efforts by getting from one step to the next. Looking at it another way, to move from 40% probability to 50%, you need to overcome any barrier that is holding you back from getting to the next milestone.



Better forecasting delivers predictable results and richer fruits of your labor.

Overcome the barrier and your probability will go up 10%. This is a more tactical approach to selling and one that is more easily managed by the salesperson, and sales management.

This more focused approach is why we say, “It takes a disciplined process to produce an accelerated sales cycle.”

## From page 2: "Green building in the restaurant and hospitality industry"

Consider your building, landscaping, and overall land use. The smaller the footprint, the better. When it comes to landscaping, think drought. Your plant selection will not only weather better, but in most cases you will reduce water consumption from irrigation, require less maintenance of the grounds, and become a candidate for a reduction in landscaping service costs from outside vendors.

New planting that may require more maintenance in the form of trees or other larger plantings may be a means to cool your building naturally while improving the overall appearance. This is where careful planning and a long term view should be taken into account. Other areas to consider are designs that inadvertently encourage abuse of the landscaping from foot traffic, or shortcuts by employees to other areas of the building.

Lastly, think education. You can carry the Go Green movement outside the confines of your establishment by helping your employees to think green. This effort can bring new opportunities for you as employees return to work with ideas and methods that can help you achieve a stronger environmental presence for your business.

Many local resources are available to learn more about green building practices for businesses. The North Carolina [Triangle Chapter of US Green Building Council](#) was formed in 2004, and serves the Raleigh, Durham and Chapel-Hill area and eastern North Carolina. You can locate other chapters throughout the country via the [US Green Building Council](#) web site.

### About Brent Francese (Raleigh, NC):

Known for his work in the field of construction, Brent has served numerous office environments, small and large residential projects, commercial developments, retail developments and mixed use buildings. He is also an accomplished musician and graphic designer.

[Clean Living](#) is the collaboration of two architects, Tony Lineberry + Brent Francese – "Our world has become overwhelmed with the "green" label of design and architecture. It is our goal to help shed this label into creating a smart architecture for living our lives. This architecture is an organic one that will become a necessity to our environment and our daily lives." More information on Clean Living can be found at: <http://www.designsforcleanliving.blogspot.com/>

## From page 1: "Cut the Sales Manager loose"

unnecessary management layer in their current position – great salespeople tied down by unwarranted duties or oversight.

Before you rush to write me a nastygram, the idea was being driven by what I see as a potential waste of talent, or more importantly, putting your best salesperson in the wrong job. Also, the justification for the position in some companies seems unnecessary. I hear things like "they can train my salespeople", "I need someone to run herd on the sale team", or "my salespeople aren't closing business; a sales manager will help get more business by making joint sales calls". Looking closely at these responses, all I can see is your sales team is weak and a manager isn't going to make a big difference in the larger picture.

Leave sales training to a disciplined sales course taught by professional instructors. I wish I had a nickel for every time I heard a

salesperson tell me about their sales manager taking over the sales call and later justified it as a "sales training experience". Sure, most sales managers have good sales skills and can close business. But, often they rest with the

individual and are not easily transferred to others.

Running roughshod over the sales team? Hounding salespeople for when they'll close business

reflects more on the salesperson than the sales manager's ability to take the reins of someone run amok. This is more about your choice of hire vs. the sales manager making a difference in getting things done.

Joint sales calls? That's a favorite of mine. Now you are throwing twice the amount of resources needed to close a piece of business. Here again, one of the common complaints I hear from salespeople is their inability to reach their manager on the

day he/she is riding with someone else – or making their own sales calls. It hurts business, as well as lost selling time in the failed attempt. Smart phone or not, you can't call someone while they are on an airplane, let alone where cell service is poor, not to mention the proverbial "out of office reply" for email.

What's the solution? Read Buckingham's book and apply it to your sales team. Do you have the right people in the right position? Spend some time and money on personnel profiling to gain insight into an individual's strengths and weaknesses. As my sales and business mentor use to say to me, "Get the person for the job, don't suit the job to the person."

Salespeople who treat their job as a profession and not an occupation rarely require direct supervision. They are a self-disciplined bunch who appreciate their independence and thrive on the competitive spirit of getting an order. Let them run, and cut the sales manager loose to help you write more business.

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One Goal - Revenue Generation ®

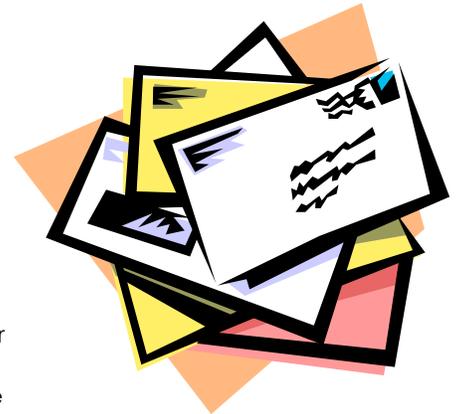
Our blog is located at:  
[salesbarriers.typepad.com](http://salesbarriers.typepad.com)

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"Keep those cards and letters coming, folks!"

Okay, so we don't get much in the way of postal mail from our eNewsletter, but we do enjoy hearing from you via email, or even a phone call, or two.

We have revamped our newsletter based on reader and subscriber suggestions from past issues, and where you have pointed us to examples you like from others.



We really enjoy hearing from our readers and subscribers.

Moving forward, we hope to add more guest content from a variety of sources that is written with our readership in mind. Also, the format will revert to a more traditional printed newsletter so that you can easily distribute it to others via print, or email.

Please send your suggestions, comments, and insight to the Editor at: [newsletter@nvestntech.com](mailto:newsletter@nvestntech.com). If you are new to our newsletter and would like to join our mailing list, [please click here](#).

## From our blog this month: "Sound and Fury – the divisive nature of technology and culture"

When you talk about technology and culture that divides people, sometimes you think in simplistic comparisons like PC vs. Mac, iPhone vs. Palm Pre, Kindle vs. Nook, and many others. Or, you may associate it with a term like the "Digital Divide" – a technology division that crosses numerous cultural, social, and economic boundaries.

One of my favorite blogs, MediaShift (hosted by Mark Glaser), offered a thorough description in 2007 as "The digital divide is the chasm separating the haves and have-nots in digital technology. On one side are people who can afford or who have access to computers, a high-speed broadband connection and the plethora of services from online banking to social networking to blogging. On the

other side of the equation are people who cannot afford the technology, cannot get broadband access because of their location, or who have learning or cultural limitations to using the technology."



Sometimes medical technology gets in the way of an established community who sees things in a different light.

But what if the division rests with "...a close-knit, supportive community based on a rich history and beautiful language." This is the culture of the deaf, which was vividly brought to life for me in the movie Sound and Fury, a 2001 Academy Award nominee for Best Documentary Feature.

Rented on DVD, I was originally attracted to the film by the Netflix description of "Josh Aronson's documentary takes an unexpected approach to the "medical miracle" film by examining the political and emotional turmoil that erupts between brothers over the cochlear implant that might allow their deaf children to hear.

[Click here](#) to read the rest of the story.