

The Innovator's Edge

SALES 2.0



RYAN PINNEY

THE INNOVATOR'S EDGE: SALES 2.0

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INTRODUCTION

In 1970, my father began his career as an insurance agent with Prudential. He learned about the products, how to present them to prospects, and what to say if a client objected. Those were the only tools he needed to succeed. That system was proven and worked for decades.

Over the past 40 years, our industry has evolved. You can't succeed using only the tools my father had. Not only has technology changed in the past 40 years—our customers have changed, too.

Those customers are the heart of what we do. We're helping them protect their families, their assets, and their futures in a world where nothing seems certain anymore. But the way they shop has changed, and we need to make sure we're changing with them.

In this eBook, I'll explain how our customers have changed the sales cycle from beginning to end. Then I'll introduce you to the single most important tool you can use to adapt your sales and marketing tactics to your clients' needs: Insureio. Insureio is a next-generation customer relationship management (CRM) software system that allows you to spend more time selling and less time doing paperwork. It gives you all the tools you need to succeed in managing—and mastering—today's sales and marketing landscape.

Throughout the book, I'll be highlighting specific ways Insureio can help you implement the strategies I'm talking about on that page. Watch for the blue sidebars to get a quick glimpse at some of the system's most popular and helpful features.



*Ryan Pinney
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Technologies, Inc.*

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THE NEW SALES CYCLE

“IT IS NOT YOUR CUSTOMER’S JOB TO REMEMBER YOU.
IT IS YOUR OBLIGATION AND RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SURE
THEY DON’T HAVE THE CHANCE TO FORGET YOU.”

– Patricia Fripp

The competition in our industry changed forever with the rise of online direct marketers. The focus shifted from the value of the agent to the value of our products—specifically, pricing and underwriting. The problem is that we can’t control those prices, and we can’t control the underwriting process. So how are we supposed to compete, let alone excel?

The answer is to double down on what we’re good at and use technology to strengthen those skills. For example, as an agent, what’s your greatest skill?

You communicate. You explain how life insurance works. How it fits into an overall plan for your prospect’s financial future.

You’re the person the client calls when they have a question. The familiar face they seek out when they need help filing a claim. The one who interprets the insurance-speak they hear from the carriers.

We have to take that strength and use technology to apply it and amplify it in a way that creates a bond with today’s consumers. If we create a relationship using relevant and engaging messaging, pricing and underwriting will matter less than the overall value we bring to our clients.

UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER 2.0

Our buyers have changed, but our sales strategies haven't. That's why we're seen as commodities. To fix this, we need to create an end-to-end insurance sales process that's built to meet the consumer's needs.

Our first step?

Understanding today's consumers and what they need. Customer 2.0 has unlimited access to online business profiles, connections, products, services, reviews, and more. This is a departure from the pre-internet buying cycle, when it was *your* job to educate the customers who approached you.

Today, you have a limited window of opportunity to reach your customer as they shop. Before they make contact with you, that customer has already researched life insurance, specific product information, reviews, pricing, carrier information, and more. As far back as 2011, Google's *ZMOT Handbook* noted that most consumers do research on approximately 10 websites before making a buying decision. This behavior is now so common it has its own acronym: ROBO, or "research online buy offline." This means that the first part of the new sales cycle happens *before* you ever make contact with your customer.

ROBO: Abbreviation for
the consumer behavior known as
"research online, buy offline."

Based on this information, it may seem like agents aren't needed in the new insurance marketplace. But that's not the case at all.

According to Forrester analyst Ellen Carney, when they asked a group of 18-24-year-olds to name the most common thing they've done to interact with an insurance company in the last 90 days, their number one answer was "looking for an agent." The 2018 LIMRA Facts About Life publication confirms this.

According to their survey, 73% of millennials want to meet with a financial professional before buying life insurance. That's more than Baby Boomers (69%) or Gen X (64%). These first-time buyers already see the value in having an agent they can talk to in order to get their questions answered.

So let's say Customer 2.0 wants to work with an agent. Do they call an agent right away? No. First, they'll look agents up online, visit their websites, and scan their LinkedIn profiles. They may even ask friends and family for advice. Only after an agent has passed their scrutiny will they make contact.

None of this is how we used to do business.

Customer 2.0 has literally re-invented the marketing, sales, and purchasing process. So how do you adjust your marketing and sales methods to accommodate today's prospect-driven purchasing process?

GETTING CUSTOMER 2.0'S ATTENTION

In order to sell to Customer 2.0, you have to get their attention. And how do you do that?

By being relevant to them.

The key to relevancy is **knowledge**.

Customer 2.0 doesn't have time to give you a list of their financial questions and problems. They want you to know where they're coming from *before* they start talking to you. For example, if you're targeting a millennial market, you should be aware of the student loan debt crisis, and how it's putting a severe dent into millennials' ability to save for retirement. As another example, if you're working with near-retirees, you need to be aware of the issues that will affect their savings most, from the increasing cost of healthcare to the solvency of programs like Medicare and Social Security.

Insureio Tip:

Stay relevant to your clients and prospects by sending targeted messages, not generic email blasts.

With Insureio's tagging capabilities, you can create an unlimited number of tags that identify client needs and interests, from health information to personal data, marketing preferences, and more.

Once a tag is applied to a consumer, you can send targeted email and text messaging straight to everyone with a particular tag.

Tagging is the fastest, easiest way to segment your client database and send relevant marketing emails.

But how do you get this knowledge?

When it comes to big trends: Get that information from popular news outlets and websites. In his monthly newsletter, Van Mueller shares news stories that highlight relevant financial trends from sources including The Motley Fool, the *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, ThinkAdvisor, and more. Bookmark these sites and get in the habit of browsing headlines and articles on a regular basis.

When it comes to individualized knowledge: Social media is key. Prospects and clients expect you to be on social media. It's a given in this day and age, but it also works to your advantage. After all, a prospect might not see or open an email you send—spam filters, automatic sorting rules, Gmail's inbox categories, and plain old email overload are all working against you.

That prospect, however, might see your tweet, Facebook post, LinkedIn post, or Instagram story. It doesn't mean they'll act on it, but you'll have accomplished a key component of branding—presenting your name and photo with key information about the services you provide.

I know many of you are bound by compliance policies that don't allow you to post about your agency or insurance in general. It's still incredibly important for you to maintain a presence on social media. Even if your carrier or agency won't let you use social media as a marketing or sales tool, they'll probably allow you to have public personal accounts. I strongly suggest you take advantage of this so you can implement Strategy #1, described below.

STRATEGY #1: DO RESEARCH ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Insureio Tip:

Store your social media links in your Insureio profile and you'll always have one easy place to find them.

Store your clients' and prospects' social media links in their profiles and you can always check them quickly before a meeting or call.

This is the way I think *all* agents can use social media. In just a few minutes, you can identify things that are important to your clients and prospects, like where they went to school, recent vacation spots, even a favorite sports team. This is a fantastic way to create rapport.

I'm not suggesting you pretend to be interested in a prospect's favorite subjects

just to earn their business. However, if you have things in common, you can bring them up casually in your conversations.

While I don't recommend that you "friend" or "follow" everyone in your book of business, I suggest you look at the information they make public. For example, let's say you look up a client on Facebook. He announces that he and his wife are expecting their first child. Now you have a reason to call and congratulate them while dropping a subtle reminder that it's time to update their life insurance.

As another example, you might learn that your prospect just became a small business owner, got divorced, or is caring for elderly parents. These major life events trigger the need for an insurance review. Now, you can do further research and look for other information they've made public:

- Do they have children?
- Do they own a business?
- Do they own a home?
- Are they posting about financial worries?
- How might any of those factors above affect his or her financial decisions?

Actively listening and learning allows you to produce individualized service—relevant solutions tailored to your client's needs. This will drive them into deeper engagement with you and add value to your service.

If, however, your compliance department allows you to participate, my advice is to treat it like a cocktail party. We've all been to industry conferences that include a meet-and-greet cocktail hour. It's full of people you're anxious to get to know—usually because they have something you want, whether it's knowledge or influence. But you can't just walk up to these people and start bragging about your accomplishments, and then ask if they'd like to work with you. If you did, you'd probably end up alone with no one left to talk to.

Insureio Tip:

Add notes to any consumer or recruit record to keep track of things like an anniversary date, alma mater, or kids' names.

All notes in Insureio can be marked as critical or private. A critical note will flash on-screen every time you visit that profile. A private note will only be visible to you, and will remain hidden from other team members in your agency.

Social media works the same way. Think of it as a platform that allows you to mingle and offer a helpful comment now and then. The way you make a good impression is to be polite, helpful, upbeat, funny, and genuine—just like at a cocktail party.

STRATEGY #2: OFFER CUSTOMIZED MESSAGING

As you listen and learn, the goal is to find out who your customers are as individuals. Only then can you begin to address specific pain points in their lives. You want your messaging to match up as closely as possible with those pain points.

Remember, Customer 2.0 doesn't have time to read generic email blasts that may or may not apply to their personal situation. The best way to get their attention is to know the exact questions they're asking—and present a concise answer that explains why your solution will work for them. If you can't do that, you'll lose their attention, possibly for good.

You might be thinking, "But I already have my marketing in place. Every September, I participate in LIAM. Every February, I participate in Insure Your Love. Every May, I talk about disability insurance." You don't have to stop doing those things. What you do need to do is expand your platform so that it's more consumer-driven than calendar-driven.

The best way to do this is to use what you learned in Strategy #1 about your clients' pain points and interests. Then, use that information to create marketing campaigns that provide education and advice.

STRATEGY #3: PROVE YOUR VALUE

Consumers want value in everything. In its absence, things become commodities and consumers will make a buying decision based on price and service. We *must* provide that value or Customer 2.0 will walk away.

Insureio Tip:

Insureio gives you multiple ways to attach new information to a contact record: notes, tags, and document storage. Use tags if that information would be helpful for marketing purposes. Use notes if the information helps develop your relationship with the client. Use document storage to upload call recordings, copies of letters, copies of medical records, and more.

Some of you may feel that your customers are determined to shop based on price no matter what you do. However, ask yourself if they understand what's truly valuable about your service.

That's a huge part of our challenge in today's marketplace.

We have to shift our sales techniques to broaden the conversation from pricing and underwriting to the overall value we provide as their lifelong financial advisor.

To do that, we need to disregard the traditional sales pitch you were taught decades ago:

- **Don't** give Customer 2.0 a sales pitch about you, your agency, or the carrier(s) you represent.
- **Don't** start a sales conversation with a product or statistics that show more consumers are buying IUL than ever before.
- **Don't** start by telling prospects that you volunteer in the community, or that you've helped 500 of their friends and neighbors.

None of that information matters because it's all about you. Consumers need it to be about *them*. As Don Crowther says, "People want to do business with you because you help them get what they want. They don't do business with you to help *you* get what you want."

One way to show them you'll help them get what they want is to say, "If you hire me, I will help you define your personal financial goals and create an uncomplicated plan to achieve them. I will help you along the way and recommend any course corrections needed as your life changes."

Notice I didn't say anything about the "how" or "what" of accomplishing this.

I didn't say anything about myself.

I didn't mention a product or service or give them a brochure.

None of that matters until what I "do" matters, and what I "do" doesn't matter until I make it about them.

If you can make it about them, you can get their attention. And once you have their attention, the new sales cycle *really* begins.



2

THE NEW SALES FUNNEL

“IT’S NOT ABOUT HAVING THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITIES.
IT’S ABOUT HANDLING THE OPPORTUNITIES RIGHT.”

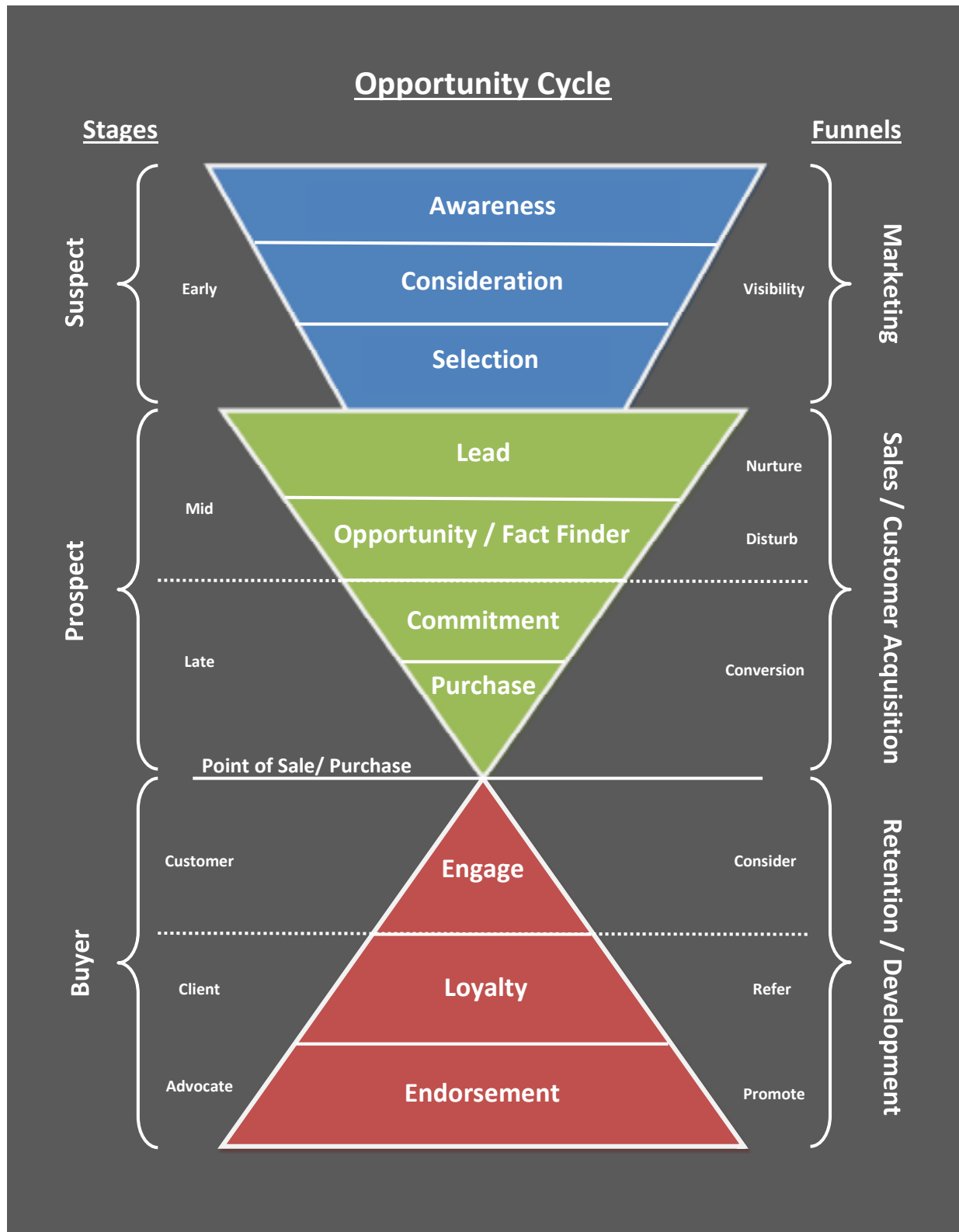
– Mark Hunter

Most agents ask me how they can get more leads into their sales funnel, especially online leads. While internet marketing and SEO were a great way to get leads a few years ago, it’s no longer a good idea to depend on search engine traffic alone to bring you an easy source of revenue. The new sales funnel will require you to look elsewhere to make more sales—and it’s somewhere you probably don’t expect: the *end* of your funnel.

THE OPPORTUNITY CYCLE

In today’s sales cycle, multi-tasking is a must. Every day, you handle tasks entire departments handle in bigger companies: marketing, sales & acquisition, customer retention & development.

Together, these tasks make up the **Opportunity Cycle**—a revised and expanded version of the traditional sales funnel you’re probably already familiar with. In the diagram below, you can see how I’ve positioned each of these tasks relative to the life cycle you have with a client.



Most producers spend the majority of their time in the middle of the funnel, trying to convert leads into sales. They often spend the rest of their time trying to get more leads. Some buy leads from an aggregator, others earn them with a good website and SEO strategy, and still others find them among family and friends.

I'm often asked how to generate more of these leads, especially internet leads. While this can *grow* your practice, I no longer think it's a good way to *maintain* a practice. Remember, I'm saying this having generated hundreds of thousands of leads.

Why do I feel this way?

Because new leads aren't your most valuable leads—the leads that can really grow your business and take you to the next level as a producer. Instead, your best leads and sales opportunities come from the bottom of the funnel.

The bottom of the funnel represents your existing clientele and centers of influence. These centers of influence contain a wealth of new leads, if you're willing to reach out to them. That's probably not a surprise, yet when was the last time you reached out to one of them? Do you know how your clients and centers of influence prefer to be communicated with, educated, or solicited for new business opportunities? My experience tells me that you probably don't.

There's an analogy I like to use to characterize this idea: dance with the one who brought you. A lot of agents want new leads and new clients—they're always after the newest shiny thing. That's one way of doing business, but I'm convinced it's not the best way because it neglects the lifetime value of a client.

To be effective today, you have to maximize each opportunity and customer.

That means cultivating and maintaining relationships with your existing clients, not just your prospects and leads. Instead of doubling your efforts to convert another new lead, why not spend that time working with a client who already knows and trusts you to help them fill in the next piece of the financial puzzle? Wouldn't you rather be known as "the insurance guy" instead of "the life insurance guy"?

I know I would.

Insureio Tip:

Don't have time to track your customers' buying cycles?

Insureio tracks them for you. With its status-driven lead management system, Insureio tells you when it's time to make contact or follow up with a client or lead. Automated task reminders on your dashboard keep you organized. One click opens the client record, so you know everything about your transaction history with that client at a glance.

PART 1: TURNING SUSPECTS INTO PROSPECTS

As you can see in the diagram, the first stage of the Opportunity Cycle involves marketing to “suspects,” the people you want to sell to but who haven’t yet expressed a specific interest in your service or product. These people are underappreciated and often overlooked in the traditional insurance sales market.



In fact, a Forrester Research study concluded that **84% of these people, specifically the ones who say they aren’t interested in purchasing today, will go on to buy from you (or a competitor) within the next 24 months.** This last fact showcases the importance of effective communication tools and informational content to help a suspect move to the next phase of the process.

Now, with such a promising statistic on hand, you might wonder why I began this chapter by telling you to spend more time at the end of your funnel. It’s because the traditional sales funnel—a single upside-down triangle—is misleading.

In the traditional model, the largest part of the triangle (at the top) belongs to marketing. The idea here is that you need to cast as wide a net as possible in order to ensure enough prospects make it down to the bottom of the funnel, where you convert them to buyers.

But just because you’re doing a lot of marketing doesn’t mean you’ll end up with a single guaranteed sale—not one. There is no such thing as a linear track that takes each suspect from being an anonymous consumer to a marketing-qualified lead to a sales-qualified lead to a conversion.

The reason this kind of approach often fails is because it ignores the needs of the consumer. As we already discussed, Customer 2.0 has re-invented the buying process. That's why we need to focus on the three stages of consumer awareness.

THE THREE STAGES OF AWARENESS

If you look at the Opportunity Cycle diagram, you'll see three stages in the center of the marketing funnel:

- **Awareness.** This is an early-stage suspect. In this stage, someone becomes aware of you or your products. This can happen in a number of ways, from a friend's recommendation, your advertising, or a web search they did for information about the product they want to buy.
- **Consideration.** This is a mid-stage suspect. In this stage, someone expresses interest in your product or service based on the awareness they gained in the "early" stage.
- **Selection.** This is a late-stage suspect. In this stage, someone decides to take action. They've done their research, and they decide your product or service isn't a luxury—it's something they know they need to have. This is the final stage before they take action to purchase a product or service.

There's a single course of action that's best for each of these stages: lead nurturing. **Using nurture-based marketing is the single best way to take a suspect from awareness to consideration to selection.**

But what is lead nurturing? It's the process you use to track leads and turn them into sales opportunities.

The process starts when an anonymous consumer gives you a name and email address or phone number, which you can enter into your CRM system. From that

Insureio Tip:

Building marketing campaigns in Insureio is fast and easy:

1. Create a new email (or use one of Insureio's built-in templates).
2. Add one or more emails to a new campaign.
3. Enroll a client or prospect in a campaign.

moment, you can choose how and when to make contact with that lead. Based on how they respond to your contact, you can move them to a different step in the sales process. During each step, it's your job to reach out to your prospects with content and information they find valuable and helpful.

The lead nurture process serves three purposes:

- Helps them reach the point where they decide to buy
- Reinforces the decision to buy
- Positions you as an expert in your field so that when your suspect is ready to buy, you're the agent who comes to mind

Lead nurturing can happen through a variety of media, including:

- Emails
- Social media
- Landing pages
- Ad retargeting
- Phone calls

Insureio Tip:

Marketing and Agency Management subscribers gain access to their own customized e-marketing websites.

The home page will feature your name, photo, contact details, and a welcome message. Use your welcome message to make what you "do" about them. This is prime online real estate you can use to deliver exactly what Customer 2.0 needs to hear.

Lead nurturing is an industry best-practice for moving your suspects from early to mid to late-stage awareness. At this stage, they want buying advice and product information as a first step in the buying cycle, not the last. So give it to them—fill your blog, website, and social media channels with clear, concise information about a product or strategy, paired with an equally clear statement about what's in it for them.

A few decades ago, this was the kind of information you might only give to clients who visited you in your office. Those days are gone. Give this information out for free, to anyone who wants to read it. That's one of the best ways to build a valuable and long-lasting relationship with Customer 2.0.

PART 2: TURN PROSPECTS INTO BUYERS

Now that you've taken a suspect through your marketing funnel, you have what I call a "prospect." These are people who express interest in insurance or a specific product, but haven't bought anything yet. Most insurance agents refer to them as "leads," and whether you purchase them or cultivate them, it's where most agents spend the bulk of their time.

Why does this process occupy so much time?

Because, on average, only 50% of consumers in this category are actually ready to buy. That's why a lead nurturing process that takes your suspects from "interested" to "qualified" to "ready to buy" is so important. If you've implemented this process, your *marketing*-qualified leads are a lot closer to becoming *sales*-qualified leads.

Once you have genuine sales-qualified leads, I use a method called the "Challenger Sale" to help turn prospects into buyers. It's a new way of thinking that can help you convince prospects that *now* is the time to act. In the interest of time, I won't go through that process here. If you're interested, you can read the book *The Challenger Sale* by Matthew Dixon and Brent Adamson.

Insureio Tip:

Insureio makes it easy to get the analytics you need to track your clients' and prospects' activity.

Customizable reports tell you which emails a client has received, what they've clicked on, and more. Customizable tags allow you to track clients based on any criteria you want, including age, demographic, health, or marketing preferences.

METRIC TO TRACK: CONVERSION

Before you implement the Challenger Sale technique (or any new sales techniques), you're going to want to track your conversion rate. In other words, what percentage of your current leads become customers? This is especially important for brokers who sell by phone using internet leads. You have to know whether your sales and processing are in line with industry benchmarks. This is the single best way to diagnose the weak spots in your current methodology.

Here are a few specific conversion metrics to track:

- **Contact percentage for leads (including purchased leads).** This percentage is never going to be 100%. It's unlikely you'll be able to contact 60% of your purchased leads. Knowing that, a good goal would be to achieve contact with 45 to 55% of your leads. The best way to evaluate this metric for purchased leads is to have a sliding scale based on how much you paid for a lead. If you paid \$45 per lead (a high price), you need to convert a lot of these leads to get your money's worth. If you can't routinely contact close to 50% of these leads, that vendor probably isn't supplying you with quality leads for the price. Either stop working with that vendor, or negotiate a lower price based on the percentage of leads you can demonstrate making contact with.
- **Conversion rate for lead to app out.** Once you've calculated this metric for yourself, how do you know where you stand within the industry? I advise you to be sure you're spending less than 30% of your commissionable premium sold on marketing and lead acquisition.
- **Percentage on sales of apps started to policies placed.** I estimate that a good percentage for this ratio is 60 to 65%. If you're under 50%, you know exactly which part of the process you need to focus on: (1) Are your quotes inaccurate, leading your prospects to abandon the process once the app is started? (2) Do you have a phone follow-up strategy to be sure important steps like the medical exam are scheduled and completed? You may find that working with an automated management system (I use Insureio) helps increase your application return rates and placement ratios.

Insureio Tip:

Use Insureio's built-in SMS text message capabilities to stay in touch with prospects and clients.

You can add text messaging to any automated status, making it faster and easier to reach prospects while their interest is high.

IMPROVING YOUR CONVERSION RATE

Once you know how your conversion metrics stack up, you can decide which parts of your process need work. Three things you may want to focus on include:

- **Initial contact.** How quickly do you respond to a lead? Even if you can't respond immediately by phone, do you have an introductory email that thanks a lead for their interest and lets them know you'll be following up soon? Does that email encourage them to call you or email you if they want to get started right away?
- **Follow-up contact.** Do you use email nurture campaigns to stay top of mind with potential customers? Are you presenting leads with relevant information about why life insurance is important? Do you have a call to action in each email?
- **Post-app support.** Once your prospect's app gets submitted, do you have procedures in place for following through? What would you do if the offer you got isn't what your client is looking for? Do you have underwriting support that can help resolve the issue?

Turning a one-time buyer
into a lifelong client is the
most important (and neglected)
step in the entire sales funnel.

PART 3: TURN BUYERS INTO ADVOCATES

Once you've brought suspects through your marketing funnel and used your sales funnel to turn them into buyers, you have one task left: turning that one-time buyer into a lifelong client.

Remember, a buyer isn't a client until you're able to help them with a second purchase or transaction. That's the key moment you should be striving for, yet so many producers ignore this step. In fact, this is the most important and neglected category in the entire sales funnel.

As an industry, we talk a lot about providing service, doing annual reviews, and getting referrals, but the truth is that most of us don't actually do these things. I firmly believe that your best leads and sales opportunities come from existing clientele and centers of influence. To do this, you need to spend a lot more time connecting with your current book of business.

In our agency, we break our buyers down into three categories:

- **Customers**, or one-time purchasers
- **Clients**, or those who have made two or more purchases
- **Advocates**, or those who have or make referrals to us

If you look at the metrics—the sales figures associated with your clients and advocates—you'll likely find, like we did, that they account for nearly 80% of our profits and less than 20% of our total expenses.

Don't just skim over those numbers.

Take a moment to let that really sink in.

Your clients and advocates will account for nearly 80% of your profit.

There's one simple reason for this: buyers are the most open to the last three items in the opportunity cycle, namely up-sells, cross-sells, and referrals.

Insureio Tip:

Marketing and Agency Management subscribers have access to pre-built marketing campaigns they can turn on with just one click.

Many of these campaigns focus on cross-sell products like long-term care, disability, annuities, and more.

UP-SELLS

Up-sells serve several purposes, including making each client more profitable to interact with. This involves adding riders and additional policy options that help the client better meet their goals. This is where we as an industry can add the value back to the products and services we offer, by making them more personalized and client-focused. This is something Customer 2.0 demands – remember, they want it to be about them.

For example, with every life insurance sale, you have a chance to give that client added protection with a long-term care rider, a disability rider, a return of premium rider, and more. If you're not explaining the value these riders can add, you're not doing right by your clients. Even if these riders are free and represent zero commission for you, it's still your responsibility to make to offer them to the client so that their financial needs are met. Yes, it takes more time. Yes, it might not generate more commission on this particular sale. But if you do a good job, that client will trust you and remember you when it's time to work on their estate plan, or when they have a question about another form of insurance.

CROSS-SELLS

Cross-selling is about focusing on account rounding, the process of adding additional products and services to each lead, customer, and client you work with. The goal here is to provide every option you can to every consumer you interact with. Already sold a customer a life insurance policy? Now is the time to offer income protection or retirement planning.

The best time to set the stage for the next sale is right after the first. This is when you should start the conversation about the next piece of the financial planning puzzle, filling coverage gaps, and protecting other parts of the client's life.

Unfortunately, your customers often only remember what you sold them last – even if you've talked to them about all of your services. This is because consumers only focus on what's timely and important to them. Having a well-thought-out, automated marketing and customer nurturing campaign to keep them informed and engaged is critical.

3

THE ULTIMATE SALES TOOL



“INNOVATION DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN A LEADER
AND A FOLLOWER.”

– Steve Jobs

Let's talk about the single most important tool that will drive the future of insurance sales. This tool gives you a way of focusing on the metrics of conversion, up-sell, and cross-sell. When used correctly, it allows you to do more with less, spend more time in front of your best clients and prospects, and can ultimately make you more successful than your peers.

That tool is a CRM.

A client relationship management (CRM) software system lets you effectively track your prospects, leads, and clients. It allows you to set up automated marketing and follow-ups for everyone in your database. Doing this will keep you at the top of your clients' minds - it will also help you track the messages each responds to best. Ultimately, this is how you can customize the messages you're sending and target each message to the optimal recipients.

WHAT'S A CRM?

A CRM is database and marketing software that automates as much of the insurance selling and marketing process as possible. It simplifies the way you track and score leads, rate and issue policies, up-sell, cross-sell, handle referrals, and market to your book of business. It keeps track of tasks and opportunities and can automatically remind you when it's time to check in with a client or conduct a policy review.

But how does it know when to do all that?

It stores your client data online for ease of use and instant retrieval. It can scan and process data faster than any human can. Instead of sorting your Excel spreadsheet by date or policy type and manually combing through the results and looking for clients up for policy renewal, your CRM software can extract the results you need in an instant.

To use a CRM, you simply log in to a website (or click on a desktop icon, if your CRM is desktop-based). All your tasks are then completed through the program's interface. You don't ever have to worry about having your own server or enough room on your computer to store all your virtual files. All you need to do is log in, and get to work.

It would take hours (or days) to sort through your client data if you had to do it manually. Yes, it can be done...but it's so burdensome that you'll likely put it off until that magical far-off day when you have no appointments or calls scheduled. CRM systems, on the other hand, help you organize your client list and keep track of opportunities. How do you know where a particular prospect is in the sales process? If you have 20 clients and 5 prospects, this might be easy—you memorize it. But what happens if you have 50 clients and 20 leads, or 100 clients and 40 leads? If you're interested in growth, and you should be, you're going to get to a point where automation is a must.

Insureio Tip:

Insureio provides value by making it easy to contact your clients and prospects when they respond to your content.

From click-to-call dialing to automated text messaging to targeted emails, it's never been easier to communicate with your contacts how and when they want.

Manual marketing is also ineffective. Cutting and pasting and sending one-off emails is not a productive use of time. That's not what you do best, after all - nor does it result in revenue. So why are so many agents still doing things the old-fashioned way, with spreadsheets and multiple carrier portal logins?

It's time to start using technology the way direct marketers do - to save time and make lead generation not only easy, but automatic. Top producers have an edge because they've figured out how to use a CRM system to handle this kind of "busy work." They earn more, sell more, and have happier clients because of it. **Here's a list that only scrapes the surface of what a good CRM can do for you:**

1. MANAGE LEADS

Track and score leads based on how ready the consumer is to buy. If you purchase leads or are involved in online marketing, you know how hard it is keep track of them without a comprehensive scoring system. Better management leads to more conversions.

Insureio Tip:

Insureio makes quoting on the fly simple. In addition to quoting within the system itself, you have access to unlimited customizable quoting widgets that you can use on your website, as well as on your social media profiles. Wherever you have an online presence, you can have a customized Insureio quoter.

2. GET ORGANIZED

CRM systems can automatically generate tasks and reminders based on parameters you set. Want to be reminded to wish your VIP clients a happy birthday? Done. Want to be reminded when a client's term policy is six months from expiration? Done. CRMs make accessing every scrap of data possible, from history to reminders, tasks, and notes.

3. GET AHEAD

When are your current clients up for term life insurance renewals? Find out in an instant with one-click reporting. Good CRMs offer customizable reports

you can run at any time, to find out where you need to focus.

4. PROSPECT WITHIN YOUR BOOK OF BUSINESS

Maximize your ROI by mining your own book of business for more sales opportunities. A CRM's custom reporting can show you the clients with the least amount of coverage, for example. Or run a report that segments clients by age so you can talk to clients in their late 30s about retirement planning. No obvious dates or landmarks to talk about? Create a report that gathers all your clients with term policies and talk to them about the possible benefits of converting.

Insureio Tip:

Insureio makes branding easy, even if you're operating a number of branded websites. Every client or lead is assigned to a brand, making it easy to ensure that clients see the same name and logo every time you communicate with them through the system.

5. DO MORE IN LESS TIME

When you automate tasks like follow-ups and annual policy reviews, you have more time to spend with clients. Give yourself the time to close the deals that need more personalized attention, and automate the tasks that still need to be done, but don't bring in as much revenue. A good CRM can send drip marketing emails, mass emails, and SMS/text messages.

6. BE A BETTER MARKETER

Use your CRM to provide educational drip content on relevant concepts (not products). When a prospect doesn't convert, you can assign them to a status that automatically enrolls them in a drip-marketing campaign. Over time, with more education, they may re-engage, giving you a second chance.

7. EXPAND WITHOUT TECHNOLOGY LIMITATIONS

Want to try promoting your new website with an AdWords campaign? No problem. Your CRM can handle the potential deluge of leads. You don't ever

have to fear trying a new technology and then being overwhelmed by the results. Your CRM can store and sort all the information for you, allowing you to do what you're best at—sell.

8. SECURE AND BACK UP YOUR DATA

You probably also know how important it is to keep a backup of your documents. How many times has your computer crashed, gotten a virus, or somehow corrupted one of your files? It's happened to all of us, and these kinds of incidents are productivity killers. The 21st Century Producer can't afford to waste time repopulating a spreadsheet with data. One great feature of CRM software is that it ensures you never lose a lead or client's information because of a hard drive crash or corrupted file. This is just one more way a good CRM system lets you focus on selling.

Insureio Tip:

Your clients are checking email on their mobile devices, so why aren't you reaching out to them on those devices?

Insureio lets you text your clients on their mobile devices. Using templates that are tied to status updates, you can automate text messages that keep your client informed.

9. MAKE YOUR BUSINESS EASIER TO SELL

You might not be thinking of selling your business right now. But what about in two years? Five years? Ten years? A CRM helps you prepare now. When you have all your client data in one place, with one-click reports showing you how much premium you've sold by year, your business becomes much easier to summarize and present to a potential buyer or partner.

AFTERWORD

ARE YOU A 21ST CENTURY PRODUCER?

You can be, now that you know what it takes to sell right now. If there's one thing I hope you take away from this book, it's the absolute necessity of maximizing the lifetime value of every client using a CRM.

I believe Insureio is the best possible tool you could have for doing this. It offers the most comprehensive set of tools on the market for insurance agents. Being a 21st Century Producer requires you to do a lot more than sell—there's client research, lead tracking, and reporting, in addition to the usual load of paperwork. Why not use a system that takes care of those things for you? Give yourself the time to sell more, learn more, and best of all, earn more.

SO WHAT'S NEXT?

- **Try it free!** It doesn't cost anything to create an account and get started. You can check out all of the automation, marketing, and agency management features for a full month first. Ready to give it a shot? Click the button below to get started!
- **Need help?** Contact us at 1-877-935-6755 or email help@insureio.com.

TRY IT FREE

ABOUT RYAN



RYAN PINNEY IS A THIRTEEN-YEAR MDRT MEMBER WITH THIRTEEN TOP OF THE TABLE QUALIFICATIONS.

Recognized for using innovative technologies to drive insurance sales, streamline the application process, and speed up underwriting, Ryan leverages his experience in social media and online marketing to help agents and agencies create their online presence and profit from it. Utilizing the same principles and technology his firm provides to agents, his agency sold thousands of policies direct-to-consumer over the internet last year. Ryan was named one of the inaugural NAILBA ID Twenty Award winners, one of AdvisorToday's 2015 "4 under 40" Financial Advisors, and one of LifeHealthPro Magazine's "24 Most Creative People in Insurance." He is a Past President of NAIFA Northern California, and served as the U.S. Chairperson for the MDRT Member Communications Committee.

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