FOUR CRM FABLES

**SUCCESSFUL SALES
ORGANISATIONS & HOW
CRM SOFTWARE HELPS
MAKE THEM EVEN BETTER!**

BuddyCRM

INTRODUCTION

IN MY WORK HELPING COMPANIES IMPLEMENT CRM SOFTWARE, I HAVE SEEN A LOT OF SALES TEAMS, BOTH GOOD AND BAD. CLEARLY, I THINK A SIMPLE, WELL THOUGHT OUT AND PROPERLY MANAGED CRM SYSTEM IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF A SUCCESSFUL SALES ORGANISATION. HOWEVER, TECHNOLOGY CAN ONLY HELP IF IT IS MARRIED TO A DEFINED SALES PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH. FAILING TO DEFINE THIS BEFORE CHOOSING THE RIGHT CRM PACKAGE FOR YOU IS ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS THAT 65% OF CRM IMPLEMENTATIONS FAIL. THEREFORE, I WANT TO SHARE FOUR PARABLES THAT I FEEL ARE RELEVANT TO RUNNING THE TYPE OF SALES ORGANISATION THAT I BELIEVE IS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL.

Philip Mayling

BUDDYCRM FOUNDER

1. THE FABLE OF:

THE FOX & THE STORK

At one time the Fox and the Stork were on visiting terms and seemed very good friends. So the Fox invited the Stork to dinner, and for a joke put nothing before her but some soup in a very shallow dish.

This the Fox could easily lap up, but the Stork could only wet the end of her long bill in it, and left the meal as hungry as when she began. "I am sorry," said the Fox, "the soup is not to your liking."

"Pray do not apologise," said the Stork. "I hope you will return this visit, and come and dine with me soon." So a day was appointed when the Fox should visit the Stork; but when they were seated at the table all that was for their dinner was contained in a very long-necked jar with a narrow mouth, in which the Fox could not insert his snout, so all he could manage to do was to lick the outside of the jar.

One narrowly defined way of working does not help everyone achieve their potential. Hire good people and give them the environment, structure and tools (including a simple to use, easy CRM system) and let them do the job in their own successful way. If someone cannot achieve in this structure then quickly identify why and see if they can be coached through it.

The world would be a boring place if we were all the same. The fact that everyone is different in almost every way is what makes the world interesting, and challenging. As a Sales Manager, it is foolish to think that your sales team can all be the same – speaking the same words, in the same order, in the same way.

People buy off people. Whether on the phone, via web conferencing or face to face, it is a personal connection or an established trust that has to be built for a sale to take place. Given everyone is different, it seems crazy that most CRM providers, and hence a great deal of sales managers try to fully automate the sales process through software, down to the same script being used.

Just like there is no foolproof chat up line that always gets the girl (or the guy), there is no one size fits all sales script that works exactly the same for every member of the sales team. Successful selling is all about establishing that personal connection. Removing or reducing the impact of that personal connection through technological automation actually makes the sales process less effective.

Therefore, when implementing a CRM system to help manage your sales team, think about implementing a tool to help each member of the sales team sell in their own style, to the best of their ability, within a loose framework of best practice. If it starts being a constraint rather than an aid, the sales people become less successful and disillusioned.

Good CRM software can help give an already talented salesperson a framework and a base to spend as much time selling as possible. But at the end of the day, it shouldn't get in the way and impact their natural style. A properly implemented CRM won't make a poor salesperson good but it may help make a good salesperson great!
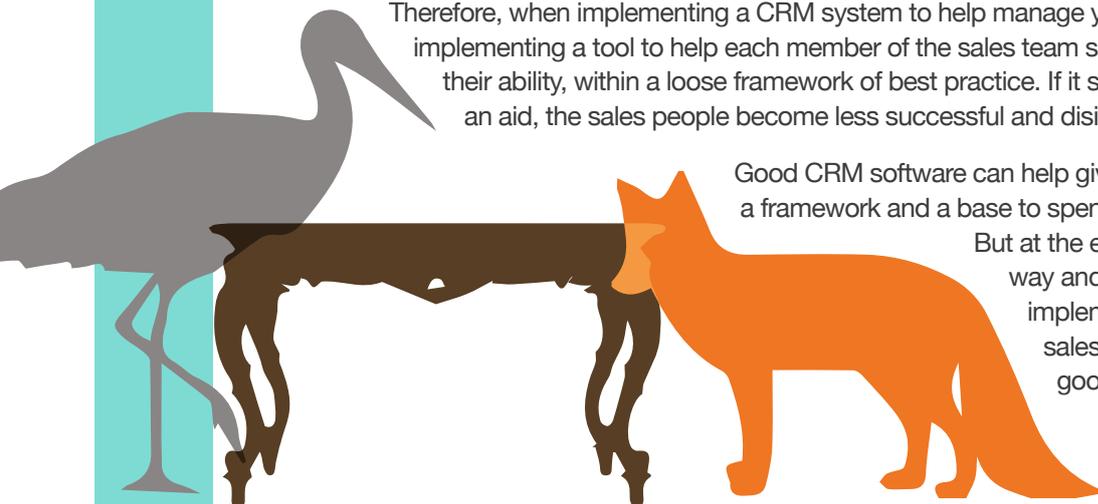
THE BLIND MAN & THE LAME

A blind man was carrying a lame man on his back, and everything was going well, everything's on track. Then the blind man decides to take it into his head that he needn't listen to all that the lame man said.

"This stick I have will guide the two of us safe," said he. Although he was warned by the lame man, he plowed into a tree. On they proceeded; the lame man now warned of a brook; The two survived, but their possessions a soaking took. At last the blind man ignored the warning of a drop, And that was to turn out their final and fatal stop.

Which of the two travelers, you may ask, was to blame? Why, 'twas both the heedless blind man and the trusting lame'.

The first parable spoke about allowing your sales team to be their most effective self in their own personal style. This does not mean however that they can be left to do what they want with no management or structure.

Just like there is no one size fits all sales patter, there is no one size fits all sales management approach. In too many businesses, the data that a sales person puts in their CRM is the start and end of the management process… management through spreadsheets.

However, just like selling is a personal connection, so is effective management. People aren't robots and just like a great CRM package can't make a poor salesperson good, it also can't make a poor manager a good one. An effective CRM system is a conversation starter in terms of sales management, not the whole conversation. The best sales managers I see utilise their CRM software to put into practice a system of informed management. Taking the data on customer and prospect conversations, meetings, emails, opportunity and pipeline information and more to help give them an informed base for their discussions and reviews with their sales teams.

Management visibility is not about being big brother and endless monitoring. It is about identifying where things are going right or wrong to enable effective mentoring and development of the sales people off line. In the modern world, sales managers see their time stretched more than ever. Therefore, within a few minutes a sales manager should be able to call up, on their CRM, detail on a sales person's activity with customer and pipeline data. This helps them get on with the harder and more time consuming part of the job – the personal side.

It also makes sure that a salesperson is not spending valuable selling time on writing reports for managers. The worst sales managers are the ones who create pointless internal admin and internal time-wasting activities. They best use their CRM software to get their information in real time and use that to help their sales people.
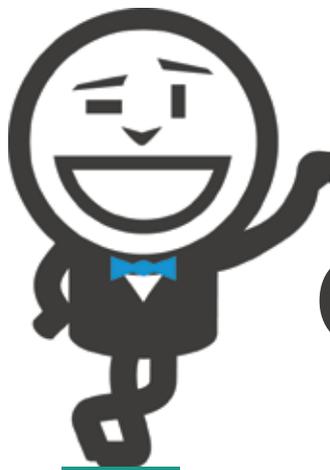
3. THE FABLE OF:
THE ANT & THE GRASSHOPPER

In a field one summer's day a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, bearing along with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest.

"Why not come and chat with me," said the Grasshopper, "instead of toiling and moiling in that way?"

"I am helping to lay up food for the winter," said the Ant, "and recommend you to do the same."

"Why bother about winter?" said the Grasshopper; "We have got plenty of food at present." But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil.

When the winter came the Grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger - while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. Then the Grasshopper knew: It is best to prepare for days of need.

In the course of my work, the best sales people I have seen are not rock stars who can click their fingers and close a million dollar sale. Some are extrovert, some are introvert. Some are great at doing their paperwork, some are terrible. Some can present like Barack Obama, some present like Barney Rubble.

The one thing that is consistent is that they have worked out how they are successful in generating opportunities and closing business and they do it everyday, even when they are way ahead of target. They don't only think about cold calling or prospecting when they desperately need to do it, they do it every day. They don't just review their pipeline at the end of the quarter or month, they do it everyday.

Building a good sales pipeline is an everyday job. The best salespeople supplement, review and analyse their pipeline everyday. A good CRM system should give a one screen, uncomplicated dashboard that gives total visibility into their pipeline. Current status, history, next identified steps – all on one screen for ease of access and review by them and their manager, in real time.
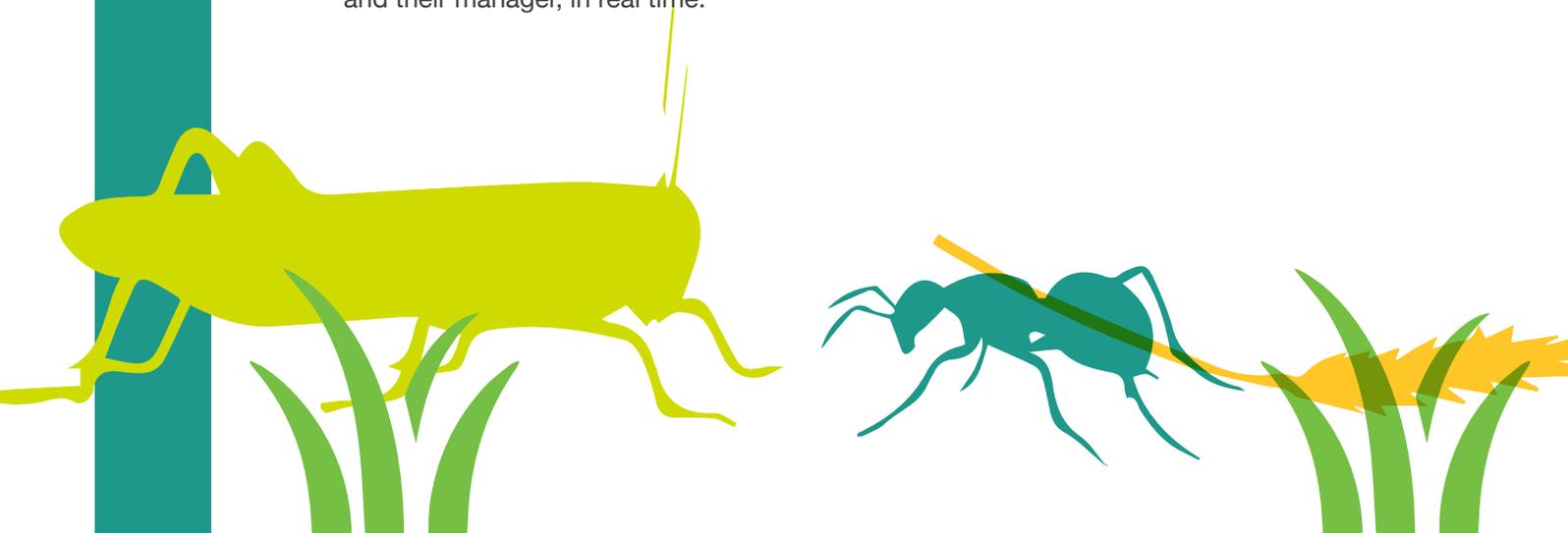
THE SCORPION & THE FROG

A scorpion and a frog meet on the bank of a stream and the scorpion asks the frog to carry him across on its back. The frog asks, "How do I know you won't sting me?" The scorpion says, "Because if I do, I will die too."

The frog is satisfied, and they set out, but in midstream, the scorpion stings the frog. The frog feels the onset of paralysis and starts to sink, knowing they both will drown, but has just enough time to gasp "Why?"

Replies the scorpion: "It's my nature..."

I believe that a properly implemented CRM can be invaluable to a sales person and their whole organisation. However, often the nature of even the best sales person is that if they think something they are doing is pointless and irrelevant then they won't bother doing it. It's human nature.

At a recent conference, one of the delegates I spoke to was a top sales achiever for a major FT100 company. Naturally the subject moved onto what CRM they had implemented at his business. They had implemented one of the big, enterprise CRM solutions, at the cost of several million pounds. I asked how it helped him. His reply was surprising. He said that he and his colleagues could see the benefit of how it helped them manage a pipeline and record their activities. However, no one used it and he couldn't remember when he last logged in. When asked why, he said that it was because of an email that they had been copied in on from the Sales Director some months earlier. It was to the Head of IT and said that they wanted to cancel the subscriptions for the Management team to the CRM as they logged in barely once a quarter and the saving from cancelling these subscriptions was significant. However, the sales team would retain their subscription and should keep using it. Given it was clear that the information being put in the CRM was never being viewed by Management; the team, even those who could see the value, had fallen out of the habit of using the application.

People do what you inspect, not what you expect and if your whole management team doesn't buy into the CRM software, you might as well not bother. Every level of the organisation needs people who champion the use of the CRM. Above all, it needs buy in, and active use from the very top.