

BeamYourScreen – Whitepaper

Using Desktop Sharing Tools to Drive Sales Success

In the traditional sales model, presentations are made in person at the client's place of business. Today, however, rising fuel costs have translated into higher airfares and gasoline prices. As a result, the travel budgets of companies around the world are straining at the seams. Similarly, company executives are recognizing that traditional business travel consumes a significant amount of a salesperson's time, thereby negatively impacting employee productivity. Both travel costs and a salesperson's time increase the cost of on-site meetings, and represent resources that could be better leveraged to generate additional sales. As a result, businesses are increasingly seeking less expensive technological alternatives to on-site sales presentations.

This paper explores computer desktop sharing solutions as a means of leveraging resources to drive sales success. Specifically, this paper addresses four questions:

- What is desktop sharing and how does it work?
- What are the benefits of desktop sharing?
- How can desktop sharing tools be used in sales?
- What features should an effective desktop sharing tool include?

Although business travel and on-site sales presentations are sometimes necessary, many on-site pitches can be replaced by online presentations at a fraction of the cost. Effectiveness and efficiency increase, positively impacting both the sales professional's and the client's bottom lines.

Desktop Sharing: A Simple, Innovative, Technological Tool

Desktop sharing is an innovative software program that allows one or more people in remote locations to view the primary user's computer screen. Using a Web-based interface, the user can show others any document or application that is open on his or her desktop.

Desktop sharing is initiated when the presenter invites others to participate in a session. The presenter begins the session, and participants join via the Internet, using a unique session ID. During the session, the presenter's screen – including mouse movements, documents, and applications – is visible to the participants. The participants simultaneously interact with the presenter by phone or audio conference call.

The Benefits of Desktop Sharing

By delivering sales presentations online, desktop sharing allows sales professionals to increase the effectiveness of their presentations while leveraging their time to reach more clients and prospective clients.

Through the use of desktop sharing technology, sales presentations are amplified with visual components. The instantaneous, real-time delivery of documents, slides, or software applications allows for better communication and increased flexibility in addressing the specific needs and concerns of the customer.

As a Web-based tool, desktop sharing enables the sales professional to make a presentation instantly to anyone, anytime, worldwide. Because a session can be accessed by anyone with an Internet connection, traveling to a

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customer's place of business isn't necessary. This not only represents a significant savings in travel costs, but also a tremendous savings of time, allowing the salesperson to exponentially increase the number of sales presentations he or she can initiate.

Desktop Sharing in Sales

Lead Generation

Many companies have found that desktop sharing quickly becomes a critical tool to generate leads.

Breaking Down Geographic Barriers: As part of the salesperson's repertoire, desktop sharing provides sales professionals with the ability to schedule online meetings with larger groups of prospective customers, regardless of their geographic location. Web conferencing allows companies to gather leads in new markets without incurring the travel expenses associated with reaching these prospective customers.

Passive Lead Generation: Companies can, through their websites, offer visitors the opportunity to register for informational online meetings or for the launch and demonstration of a new product or service. Potential customers self-select as leads through the registration process. The data collected from registrants and from those attending the online meeting can be used by the company's team of sales professionals to convert leads to customers. When a company archives their informational meetings and educational seminars on their website, potential customers can register to download or listen to the information, which generates additional passive leads.

Existing Customers Become New Leads: Desktop sharing allows new products, services, or specials to be shown in order to upsell or cross-sell existing customers. Current customers make excellent prospective customers for new products, and desktop sharing enables a salesperson to upsell or cross-sell without having to make an on-site sales call.

Educational Seminars Hook Prospects: Online meetings can also be utilized as a non-sales marketing tool to present live educational seminars to potential customers, who then become qualified leads. In contrast to online meetings that introduce a company or a specific product or service, the topic of an educational seminar serves to address a common challenge faced by the company's potential customer base. For example, a company that provides shopping cart software might hold an educational seminar on cost-effective marketing techniques to drive traffic to e-commerce sites. The information gleaned from the attendees of these lead generation seminars can be passed on to the sales team, which can convert sales by using the collaboration features offered by desktop sharing.

Qualifying Leads

When marketing tools, such as white papers, recordings of product demonstrations, and customer testimonials, are posted on a company's website, potential customers self-select by downloading or accessing the materials. This process begins the selling process prior to a sales team member contacting a prospect.

Similarly, an online meeting utilizing desktop sharing technology can drive prospects to download or access supplemental materials that can further pique their interest and speed up the sales cycle.

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Sales Calls

Desktop sharing is most useful during sales calls, and represents a tremendous savings of resources. The salesperson can invite one or more prospects to a presentation or project demonstration, regardless of the geographic locations of the potential clients, thereby saving both time and travel expense.

Presentations and Product Demonstrations: By enabling prospects to view the sales professional's computer screen, desktop sharing allows the salesperson to easily present information about the company and its products and services. The salesperson can also turn over control of the desktop to a participant, allowing him or her to try the product or browse through various parts of the presentation. This hands-on experience gives the prospect a clear understanding of the benefits of the product or service.

Building a Virtual Bridge: When some members of a potential client's company can attend an in-person meeting but other key personnel cannot, desktop sharing allows those who can't be physically present to participate in the meeting to attend from a remote location.

Cold Calling: During cold calls, the sales professional can quickly initiate a desktop sharing session and invite the prospect to review the company profile and view slides or other information about the product or service.

Immediate File Sharing: During an online meeting, desktop sharing allows the sales professional to provide potential customers with any material they may request. This capability communicates efficiency and a commitment to customer support.

Closing the Sale

Desktop sharing is a powerful tool for closing sales and shortening the length of the sales cycle and increasing revenue streams.

Document Collaboration: Desktop sharing streamlines the process of working on proposals and contracts, since it allows both the salesperson and the client to modify proposals together in real time.

Team Leader Involvement: A salesperson's upline or supervisor can sometimes be instrumental in closing a sale. Desktop sharing solutions enable sales team leaders to join a sales presentation without ever leaving the office, thereby enhancing the interaction and increasing the client's level of satisfaction.

Client Authorization: When a sale hinges upon the go-ahead from a potential client's higher-level manager, desktop sharing solutions can smooth the way to closing the deal by allowing managers to attend meetings without ever leaving the office. In addition, the flexibility inherent in the tool makes it possible to initiate or reschedule a presentation at a moment's notice.

Customer Support

Once the deal is closed, desktop sharing tools can be utilized to enrich the relationship with the customer.

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Transitioning to Customer Support: Desktop sharing can become a bridge to provide the customer with the support needed to implement the company's product or service. For example, desktop sharing can be used to introduce the company's customer support team and walk the customer through the support services offered.

Follow-Up Meetings: Desktop sharing can also be utilized to conduct follow-up meetings, during which the sales staff can stay in touch with new customers. A series of weekly conferences, for example, can go far in demonstrating a company's commitment to their new clients.

Customer Retention: Similarly, desktop sharing can be incorporated as a way of keeping in regular contact with existing customers. Inviting customers to educational seminars, new product launches, and company news events are just three of the ways that desktop sharing can help ensure customer satisfaction and pave the way for future sales.

Features of Effective Desktop Sharing Products

There are a number of desktop sharing solutions in the marketplace. To ensure maximum accessibility and security, you should consider a number of factors when selecting a desktop sharing program.

In order for clients and potential clients to embrace participating in a multimedia sales presentation, there cannot be any barriers to accessing the technology. From a technological perspective, this means that the desktop sharing product should enable participants to connect through corporate networks, firewalls, and proxy servers. They must also be able to connect using a variety of operating systems, such as Windows, Mac, and Linux. Similarly, customers should not be required to install software in order to participate in sessions.

In order to facilitate spur-of-the-moment presentations, participants should be able to connect using any Internet browser and without having to register or submit any personal information. The desktop sharing interface should be intuitive and easy to use.

From the presenter's perspective, a desktop sharing tool should allow him or her to show his or her computer screen without first having to upload the content to a presentation server. Likewise, he or she should be able to hide confidential screen areas and have the ability to pause transmission in order to browse through confidential files. In order to facilitate discussion, the participants should be able to highlight items on the presenter's screen.

Finally, a desktop sharing solution should have strong security features. Transmission should be encrypted to the best practices standard, and connections to individual sessions should be made using unique, random session IDs.

Leveraging Resources to Boost Revenues

With tight travel budgets and time at a premium, using innovative tools to conduct remote sales presentations can leverage both your time and the time of your clients. Desktop sharing solutions can reduce routine business travel costs and increase productivity. The result is the ability to reach more prospective clients and an acceleration of the sales cycle. When sales presentations can start with a click of the mouse and reach customers and potential customers around the world, the result is an increase in the bottom line.