



2017 FIELD GUIDE TO SALES INTELLIGENCE VENDORS

Advice for Buying Committees and
Sales Operations

Michael Levy, GZ Consulting

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Advice for Buying Committees and Sales Operations

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[GZ Consulting](#) is a market research and competitive intelligence consultancy headed by Michael R. Levy. The firm focuses on the information services industry as applied to the sales and marketing functions.

Services include market sizing, market research, competitive profiling, product strategy, licensing advice, competitor benchmarking, and sales enablement. GZ Consulting adheres to the SCIP (Strategic & Competitive Intelligence Professionals) code of ethics.

The Field Guide was written by [Michael R. Levy](#). Michael has fifteen years of experience in the sales intelligence industry having worked for OneSource (now Avention) as a Product Marketing Manager and Infogroup as the Manager of Strategy and Competition. Amongst his duties at the two firms were competitive intelligence, product strategy, product management, content licensing, market monitoring, and sales training. For the past four years, Michael has been an independent consultant working for companies across the information industry. He also has written several articles and product reviews for [FreePint / VIP](#) and blogs on [sales intelligence](#) and related subjects for GZ Consulting.

Contents	About GZ Consulting	2
	Executive Summary	4
	Sales Intelligence Products	5
	Introduction	5
	Buying Committees	6
	Initial Research	10
	Primary Use Cases	12
	Social Selling	12
	Trigger Selling	18
	Mobile Sales Teams	24
	Differences between the US and UK Sales Intelligence Market	25
	Overarching Questions	29
	Tips to Ensure High ROI	31
	Purchasing	31
Launch	38	
Vendor Analysis	44	

Executive Summary

The informed buyer thoroughly researches solutions prior to reaching out to companies, causing B2B sales to become increasingly difficult. In response, B2B product and service companies are looking to even the information edge via Sales Intelligence (SI) solutions. SI services help B2B sales reps answer questions such as which accounts should I target, who should I call, when should I call, and what should I say? At their heart are deep company and contact databases that assist with sales processes such as:

- Lead Prospecting
- Lead Qualification
- Account Planning
- Selling Deeper into an Organization
- Account Monitoring via News and Sales Triggers
- Social Selling

The more advanced services such as Artesian Solutions (the sponsor of this book excerpt) marry structured company and contact information with unstructured insights such as news, sales triggers, business descriptions, company financials, and filings.

SI services are delivered via web browsers, CRMs, and mobile devices.

My book was written for purchasers and influencers currently evaluating or implementing sales intelligence solutions for American, British, or Global sales teams. I also discuss differences between the US and UK markets for those evaluating multi-market solutions. My goal (and yours) is to ensure high ROI from your SI purchasing decision.

Michael Levy
GZ Consulting

Sales Intelligence Products

Introduction

I have worked in the Sales Intelligence industry for over fifteen years and long felt there was a need for a Field Guide to Sales Intelligence vendors. Unfortunately, the technology analysts (e.g. Gartner, Forrester) have never deemed this segment worthy of significant coverage. Simply put, the industry was neither large enough nor growing fast enough to warrant a research report. Furthermore, until a few years ago, the services were mostly delivered via web browsers so existed as standalone workflow tools sold to sales reps. The one vendor that regularly covers sales intelligence products, FreePint (recently renamed JINFO), publishes reviews of information service products but does not focus on the sales space resulting in only a few in-depth reviews per year.¹

The second reason I published this report is the growing complexity and diversity in this space. Virtually all of the sales intelligence vendors are integrating with Salesforce.com and many have built connectors with other CRMs (e.g. Microsoft Dynamics, Oracle for Sales, SAP) and Marketing Automation platforms (e.g. Marketo, Eloqua, Pardot). Some vendors are also beginning to develop predictive analytics tools for assisting with lead scoring and ideal profile definitions, while others are investing in mobile apps to assist field sales. In short, there is a great deal of dynamism in the space as sales intelligence vendors are evolving into sales and marketing intelligence solutions.

¹ Full Disclosure: I have published several articles in JINFO.

In the end, ROI is important. But many of the benefits of sales intelligence services are difficult to measure as they are diffuse and apply to multiple groups. What is the benefit of improved fill rates on industry information in your CRM or the value assigned to a direct dial phone number vs. a switchboard number? Likewise, how do you put a price on sales reps performing better opportunity qualification or improved account planning? What is the retention value of a sales rep that is actively working high value opportunities instead of getting bogged down in data entry and unstructured account research? For many of these questions, it is your sales team that will have an intuitive feel for which service best meets their information and workflow needs. Procurement departments should trust their input. Sales reps are very bottom-line focused and will identify the product which provides them with the greatest ability to blow past their quotas.

Buying Committees

Purchasing of information service products has become more complex and strategic resulting in a shift from lone evaluators to buying committees. The lone decision maker would call one or multiple prospective vendors, make a decision based on which tool he or she thought was best, and hand the final negotiations off to purchasing. But, decision making related to Sales Information (SI) services has moved from an individual decision maker to a more complex analysis often involving buying committees and trials. Buying committees should include sales reps, sales managers, sales operations, marketing, IT, and purchasing. Although marketing has not traditionally had a hand in SI purchasing, the rapid expansion of SI tools into the marketing space along with the stated goal of “sales and marketing alignment” suggests that they should also have a seat on the buying committee.

While I was unable to find any research on sales intelligence purchasing committees, a recent [survey](#) by digital marketing

company Walker Sands on marketing technology purchasing committees found that 57% of the committees consisted of three to five members and ten percent of the committees had ten or more members. Only nine percent of MarTech purchasing decisions were made by a single individual.

Trials should be performed by sales reps with sufficient time to evaluate vendors. If a rep has a planned vacation or is looking to close her most important account next month, then she may not be the best trial participant. Trial participants should include both rookies and veterans as well as sales reps from across the organization as information needs vary across sales teams. For example, the information requirements of a territory sales rep differ from those of a strategic account rep selling to a list of named accounts. Likewise, inside sales, field service reps, and international sales reps all have different informational and workflow requirements. You should cast a wide net when handing out trial IDs and make sure that the reps understand that they are responsible for providing thoughtful feedback at the end of the trial period.

There is significant overlap between sales operations and the marketing department with respect to data hygiene. This overlap began in CRMs (e.g. Salesforce.com, Microsoft Dynamics) and is now extending into Marketing Automation Platforms (e.g. Marketo, Eloqua, Pardot) and an emerging category of continuous hygiene vendors called Customer Data Platforms. Both sales and marketing departments benefit from improved data quality and data fill rates. Marketing gains improved reporting, targeting, and segmentation along with inbound lead enrichment and reduced spend on bad and incorrect leads; while sales operations enjoys improved reporting, lead scoring, lead routing, and sales intelligence tools for the sales team.

Sales intelligence vendors are well positioned to offer data hygiene services. Many now offer connectors for both CRMs and Marketing

Automation Platforms (MAPs). Furthermore, they have focused on building out a rich set of contacts and emails associated with companies. Thus, they are well positioned to offer MAP based lead enrichment which ties contact-based lead records to company-based account records in CRMs.

This functional overlap is driven by advances in information based workflow tools, matching engines, data quality, data depth, and predictive tools. A few years ago, Salesforce went to war on the “unknown” bar in segmentation reports. If your largest wedge is “unknown” then the overall validity of your pie chart is low. While missing data is not as problematic as incorrect data, it still poses a number of issues and risks:

- What biases are buried in that unknown universe of customers and prospects?
- How can you target or message to customers and prospects when you don't know how big they are or what industry they are in?
- What errors are generated when you lack basic firmographics concerning a prospect or account?
- How much business is lost when a lead for a subsidiary or branch is not rolled up to its parent organization and instead sits in the marketing automation platform for lead nurturing?

While marketing should not be driving the sales intelligence vendor decision, they should have a seat at the table as sales and marketing share both a common problem (bad data) and objective (revenue growth). Furthermore, the shift from demand generation and content marketing to Account Based Marketing (ABM) raises the importance of real-time lead enrichment, tying leads to accounts, and properly routing leads to account managers.

Likewise, the IT department should also be advising the decision to ensure that the selected vendor fits the long-term technology and

data strategy at the firm. This strategy likely involves integrating and synchronizing activities across multiple clouds. Cloud migrations are quickly shifting the location and management of data and impacting user workflows and data availability. According to Gartner,

just over fifty percent of 2015 CRM revenue was generated in the cloud

with Salesforce.com and Microsoft Dynamics as the fastest growing vendors.² Likewise, the primary marketing automation platforms are cloud based. While IT would not be hosting your information service, they need to ensure that your selected vendor is secure and can be integrated with current and future cloud applications.

Sales Operations should also be included. They are likely to be administering the service so would be heavily involved in rollout, training, usage reporting, and account administration. Sales Operations have a strong bias towards accurate, complete data as they are often generating reports and dashboards for sales and marketing. If you don't have a Sales Operations manager, then you should look at including your CRM Administrator.

Sales VPs and Directors should not be handing off the decision to lower level managers. Executive Sales Management support is critical for adoption. While the executive may not be joining all the meetings, he or she should host the first meeting and define objectives. A Director or VP should also be announcing the final decision and promoting usage. One of the most important variables in ensuring success for new platforms and tools is visible support from executive management.

And, of course, sales should be involved as they are the ones who benefit the most from the final decision. They are also your best advocates for promoting the service when it is launched.

² Gartner Press Release, "Customer Relationship Management Software Market Grew 12.3 Percent," May 25, 2016.

Initial Research

Before evaluating vendors, begin with internal research and ask the following questions:

- Which sales intelligence tools do we use today? Are the sales teams satisfied with these tools? What problems are they confronting? What do the usage reports say? What are the potential switching costs (e.g. Administrative, Training, CRM customization, Setting up saved account and alert lists, etc.)?
- Which CRM do we use? Is it behind the firewall or in the cloud? Are we including the CRM Admin in the purchasing team? How are we ensuring data quality in the CRM?
- What Marketing Automation Platform do we use? How do we ensure data quality in the MAP? Do we have a solution that ties Marketing Automation Leads to CRM Accounts (leads are contact focused while accounts are company focused)? Are we maintaining data quality within the MAP with either ongoing or periodic batch updates? Are we including a marketing POC in the purchasing team? Do we have a way to enrich new leads such as those generated from tradeshows or webforms? How important is company linkage data for proper scoring and routing of leads to named accounts?
- What sales methodologies do we employ? What information is required for our methodology? How often do we lack key information for our methodology?
- How are our sales teams configured (e.g. Territory, Industry, Named Account, SMB, telemarketing, field sales, etc.)? What information does each team require? Do we sell across a broad set of industries or is it narrowly focused? What percentage of customers and prospects are supported by field reps?

- What is the geographic scope of your sales team? Do you require national, regional, or international coverage? Do you require multilingual solutions? How about localized variables (e.g. industry codes, local currency, sub-national regional screening)?
- What plans does the Chief Sales Officer have for next year? Are there changes in methodology, team configuration and objectives? What is the balance between account retention (“farming”) and new account generation (“hunting”)?
- Is there a predictive analytics initiative for sales or marketing planned? How might that impact our decision?
- Are there key dates from which we are working back (e.g. Next fiscal or calendar year, annual sales meeting)?
- Is there a significant Sales Development group within your sales team? Are they employing or planning to deploy a sales acceleration (ABSD) platform in the next year?

While the temptation is to dive directly into the vendor outreach phase, you should begin with a basic understanding of your internal requirements and then map them to a researched list of vendors. Only once you have an understanding of which vendors are most likely to meet your needs should you be reaching out to your short list. Failing to set objectives will only slow down your process in the long run or result in a sub-optimal vendor selection.

Think of this as a rare opportunity for the sales department to be on the procurement side of the house. You may even find some practices that you can incorporate into your own sales and marketing activities.

Primary Use Cases

Social Selling

Social Selling extends the sales communication process into the social sphere. Sales has always been social which is why sales reps tend to be gregarious individuals more intent on interacting with clients than researching prospects or developing account plans. Good sales reps generally have excellent communications and interpersonal skills.

Several years ago, an InsideView survey found that 90% of CxOs never respond to cold outreaches via phone or email. Thus, sales reps need a new mechanism for bypassing cold calls and unsolicited emails. Social selling provides reps with a new communication channel which supports informal interactions over time. As phone and email communications have become less effective, social provides a third channel through which sales reps can reach out to prospects and customers with short event-focused notes. Social selling also provides “who knows who” referral tools for network management and monitoring.

I would also include relationship finding tools such as LinkedIn and InsideView’s TeamLink features as core elements of a social seller’s toolkit. Being able to leverage your friends’ and colleagues’ networks for introductions and sales intelligence is essential for both establishing beachheads at a firm and selling deeper into the organization.

Social Selling provides further color around customers and prospects, making it easier to create initial hooks and ongoing talking points. Sales reps (and marketing) utilize social media to better understand individual customer needs and communicate their company’s value proposition through social channels. Thus, it involves listening, publishing, and direct communication.

Social monitoring is similar to sales triggers in that it alerts sales reps to company and executive events. Knowing that a company released a new product or that an executive changed companies, titles, or departments provides a reason to reach out to key contacts. While sales triggers are usually company focused, social triggers are generally focused on current relationships.

Social monitoring provides a form of prospect intent. After all, a business professional complaining about a problem or asking about new technologies is potentially an unhappy customer of a competitor or a potential prospect at the beginning of her buyer journey. [Sales consultant Jim Keenan](#) noted that, "A lead today can be a complaint on Twitter, a question on LinkedIn, or a discussion on a Facebook page."

As to which social media platforms to use for social selling, Ken Krogue of InsideSales.com, provides the following advice:

LinkedIn is for business, my platform of choice. Facebook is for personal use and consumers, though many consumer companies use it well for business. Blogs are the true platform for serious authors and thought-leaders. Google+ is the key to your message showing up in the search engine owned by the same company. Twitter amplifies and broadcasts your message. Pinterest and Instagram promote the images of your thought and expression. Each platform plays specifically to your purpose, or lack of purpose. Choose wisely.

To this list, I would add YouTube, Vimeo, and SlideShare as multi-media broadcasting platforms for marketing and service departments.

A 2015 study of B2B Lead Generation by Holger Schulze found that amongst social media platforms, only LinkedIn was widely used and deemed effective by B2B marketers. The survey found that 79% of marketers deemed LinkedIn effective at generating leads while only

15% found the platform ineffective. Other major platforms were deemed significantly less effective:

Social Media Platform	Effective	Ineffective
LinkedIn	79%	15%
YouTube	42%	29%
Twitter	40%	40%
Facebook	22%	48%
Google+	16%	35%
SlideShare	29%	13%

No social selling tool provides a complete solution, but every B2B sales rep should be using LinkedIn for network management, social monitoring, self-branding, and amplifying the marketing message of their firm. There is great value in the free LinkedIn service. **Any sales rep not regularly using the LinkedIn free offering is engaging in career malpractice.**

Nevertheless, the LinkedIn free service should be used in conjunction with other sales intelligence tools. When evaluating the subscription LinkedIn Sales Navigator service, make sure to compare LinkedIn Sales Navigator versus all other services alongside free LinkedIn. There is so much value provided in the free LinkedIn service that you should factor in its value in conjunction with competitor offerings. While this is intuitively obvious, many of the end-user reviews on G2 Crowd and Trust Radius review Sales Navigator as if free LinkedIn features were only available to Sales Navigator users.

LinkedIn Sales Navigator is emerging as one of the leading solutions thanks to the success of its free LinkedIn service, and the volume and accuracy of people data available. This in turn highlights a key difference between LinkedIn Sales Navigator compared to other sales intelligence vendors. The former focuses solely on the people aspect, providing you with the names of appropriate contacts and a method, via InMail or messaging, of contacting them. The latter

focuses more on the company and insights, giving you the actual reason to get in touch.

If you are having a bake off between Sales Navigator and other competitors, make sure that the sales reps testing the services evaluate either the value add of Navigator on top of core LinkedIn or compare Navigator against other competitors alongside free access to LinkedIn.

Unfortunately, LinkedIn operates as a walled garden. Users cannot upload LinkedIn content to SFDC or MS Dynamics (it offers view only connectors to these platforms) or download prospecting lists as CSV files which means that firmographic intelligence from LinkedIn is not available to CRMs or MAPs for lead scoring, routing, segmentation, or data enrichment. It has also blocked most of the sales intelligence vendors from displaying LinkedIn content in their services (the sales intelligence vendors generally provide hyperlinked window pops to LinkedIn profiles).

Conversely, LinkedIn does not integrate other social media content. So, while InsideView, Contify, and Owler offer integrated viewing of social media content within their services, LinkedIn does not provide integrated viewing of social media content and only supports posting to Twitter. Thus, no vendor provides a complete social selling solution for sales reps.

Regrettably, most of the sales intelligence vendors have done a poor job of supporting social monitoring and messaging within their services. InsideView is probably the most advanced with its inline social media viewing Buzz Tab (Facebook, Twitter, and Blogs), Executive Tweets, and a who knows who relationship finder. Owler also offers an integrated viewer which can be filtered by category: Blogs, Press Releases, News, YouTube, Vimeo, Sales Triggers. Likewise, Contify offers news and social media Watchlists for companies and individuals with alerting, filtering, and social sharing.

But most of the sales intelligence vendors have a limited set of features:

- Hyperlinks to the major social media sites.
- Social and email sharing of news and sales triggers.
- Chatter or Yammer sharing of news and sales triggers.
- Corporate Blogs included in their open web news crawls and alerts.

Unfortunately, there is no vendor that has combined a robust social selling platform with deep company intelligence. InsideView may be the closest, but they have not invested in their social selling tools for several years.

With respect to the UK, Artesian Solutions has a strong presence in financial services companies with its social selling service which includes social monitoring, sales triggers, social sharing, a strong mobile app, a social selling score, and company profiles. The service is in the middle of a soft US launch at the time of publication so should be evaluated by US firms looking at social selling products. In support of the US market, Artesian opened a Boston office in 2016.

Also in the UK, DueDil should be evaluated for social selling. While DueDil does not offer Social Monitoring, it provides alerts, social sharing, team list sharing tools, and a Who Knows Who tool. In the context of this handbook, I am limiting social selling to B2B sales, but it is also a critical element of multi-channel marketing and content marketing.

So, if your focus is on social selling, the services that provide the strongest toolkits are (listed alphabetically):

- **Enterprise Social Selling:** InsideView, LinkedIn Sales Navigator
- **Enterprise Tech Social Selling:** DiscoverOrg

- **SMB Social Selling:** Contify, InsideView, Owler
- **UK Social Selling:** Artesian Solutions, DueDil
- **Financial Services Social Selling (message archiving for compliance):** Artesian Solutions, LinkedIn Sales Navigator

Finally, it is important to call out research which has found frustration with social selling training. A 2015 CSO Insights study of sales reps found that 33% felt social selling training was in need of a major redesign and 31% felt the training needs improvement. CSO Insights warns against reducing social selling training to LinkedIn or Twitter training. Research Director Tamara Schenk cautions that lessons from CRM training were not transferred to social selling training. “Salespeople are again asked to take tool training when at the same time the tool and the required skills have not yet been integrated into the current sales system, methodologies and processes. The result is the same. The new tool, social selling, is then considered as a time-consuming add-on rather than an effective enabler to create more and better business.”

Schenk noted that social strategy needs to be defined with marketing. “An organization’s social strategy has to be aligned along the customer’s journey. [Sales] Enablement leaders are in an ideal position to orchestrate this process. After that, social selling skills have to be integrated in the current methodologies, engagement principles, and processes. Only then, not earlier, can social selling training services be designed and provided. And using the technology effectively is just one element. Another key element is the content challenge. Relevant and valuable content to attract prospects has to be made available for salespeople, ideally on the sales enablement platform with no further internal obstacles to access this content.”

A [2016 study by CSO Insights and Seismic](#) of B2B sales reps found that a full 38% weren’t sure of the benefits of these tools speaking to a need for vendors to better explain their value and provide user

metrics.

B2B professionals found the biggest benefits of social selling tools to be reduced account / contact research time (39%), an increase in the number of leads (33%) and deeper client relationships (31%). Broader process improvements were noted at lower rates with improved lead conversion (24%), shorter sales cycles (14%), and increased win rates on forecasted deals (13%) rounding out the benefits.

However, when the sub-group of professionals at firms which have aligned their social marketing and selling strategies was assessed, CSO Insights found a sixteen percent improvement in win rates. Furthermore, the benefits were better understood with 57% enjoying more leads and 56% found deeper client relationships. Amongst this group, only 18% were unsure about the benefits of social selling tools. Thus, CSO Insights concluded that the high percentage of B2B professionals doubting the value of social selling tools was due to “a lack of maturity.”

In short, for social selling to be effective, social selling training needs to integrate social selling tools with the broader sales process and methodology. This works best when sales and marketing have aligned their strategies.

Social selling vendors are experimenting with ways to improve the value of their tools through training and competition. For instance, Artesian and LinkedIn Sales Navigator include an element of gamification with their Social Seller scores. These tools help sales managers compare usage of social selling products across their teams, encourage reps to compete for the top spot, and help identify and address social selling process gaps. Artesian also provides academy-style training to up-skill sales teams in the principles and best practices of social selling.

Trigger Selling

Trigger Selling has become a popular strategy for companies to place warm calls instead of cold calls into companies. Trigger sales involve monitoring a group of prospects for key events that indicate a greater likelihood of purchasing. By tying these events to companies and execs, sales reps can be more confident that they are reaching out when the company is most likely to be open to new processes and vendors.

In a 2012 Harvard Business Review article titled “The End of Solution Sales,” Adamson, Dixon, and Toman identify the traits of successful sales reps in this new era of the informed buyer. They found that successful reps:

- “Evaluate prospects according to criteria different from those used by other reps, targeting agile organizations in a state of flux rather than ones with a clear understanding of their needs
- Seek out a very different set of stakeholders, preferring skeptical change agents over friendly informants
- Coach those change agents on how to buy, instead of quizzing them about their company’s purchasing process”

Sales triggers address the first bullet – successful reps don’t look for signals of established demand (i.e. need for change, clearly stated goals, purchasing processes in place), but instead look for agile firms that are in a state of organizational flux. These firms are not driven by pre-existing rules and relationships and can act quickly. Furthermore, there are internal or external pressures being applied to the organization that disrupt the status quo.

Successful reps are very good at identifying companies in flux. They prioritize efforts at firms where there is a potential for change instead of companies that are ready to buy. Why? Because your competitors are also targeting the same set of “ready to buy” companies and speaking to the same set of purchasers. Furthermore, the “ready to buy” companies are those with formalized purchasing rules and a low level of risk tolerance. For

them, mitigating risk and maintaining relationships results in an incremental approach. Lacking a strong push, they are likely to maintain the status quo.

Triggers should be assessed at three levels:

- **What is the signal?** – Sales triggers may be derived from a broad set of events associated with companies and executives.
- **What does the signal mean?** – Triggers represent new opportunities, changes in the likelihood of a deal closing this quarter, renewal threats, etc.
- **What should I do about the signal?** – Triggers drive sales activities such as new prospect research, opportunity status updates, or renewed relationship development.

The following chart provides additional structure to these questions:

While there are many types of triggers, the most broadly beneficial are Executive Changes, M&A, and Funding Events. Each of these

Sales Triggers

What is the signal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exec joins or leaves firm • Promotion or role change • New product, partner, expansion plans, funding etc • Revenue or employee growth / decline • Change in strategy or positioning • Competitor product announcement
What does it mean?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Window of opportunity at a new prospect • Change in the ability to upsell or cross-sell • Opportunity or renewal at risk
What should I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize daily sales activities • Craft discussion hooks • Identify new contacts or champions • Reassess pipeline close status • Research “net new” opportunities

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categories is supported by vendors such as Artesian Solutions, Avention, BvD Mint, Hoover's, InsideView, and Owler. The good news is that each of these products includes sales triggers as part of their broader sales intelligence offering.

Trigger vendors begin with events derived from millions of sources on the open web or hosted news archives. But news is not the only source of sales triggers as can be seen in the next table:

Sales Triggers are most commonly news based, but they can also be sourced from data changes (e.g. New Earnings, Credit Score

Trigger Sources	Avention	InsideView	Hoover's	Artesian	BvD Mint	Owler
Business News Archive	✓				✓	
Open Web Crawl	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
New Businesses	✓					
New Contacts	✓			✓	✓	
Prospect Reminders (User Created)	✓		✓			
Financial Data Changes	✓			✓	✓	
US Credit Rating Change (Credit.net)	✓*					
UK Credit Rating Change (Experian)	✓*			✓		
Exec Change Editorial Feed	DCA	✓**				
LexisNexis WorldCompliance KYC Flags					✓***	
Reuters Significant Developments Editorial Feed	✓					
Executive Twitter Posts		✓				
M&A Detail					Zephyr	Owler
UK Companies House Filings	✓			✓	✓	
Global Filings					✓	
US SEC Filings	✓	✓			✓	

* Credit Rating Change Alerts are only available with Premium Credit Packages

** An executive change alert is provided for the Relationship Manager Service. If an exec departs, alternate contacts are suggested

*** Sanctions Lists, Politically Exposed Persons Alerts for Companies and People

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Change), filings (e.g. SEC, UK Companies House, UCC), web mining (e.g. Job Postings, New Exec listed on website), social media posts, editorial research (e.g. Technology Projects), intent data (e.g.

DiscoverOrg OppAlerts based upon the Bombora intent file), and other methods.

Sales triggers provide a broad set of benefits to sales reps. They:

- Indicate a **window of opportunity** during which a company is in flux and gaining the attention of a decision maker or influencer is more likely.
- Help **prioritize daily sales activity**. If an account or prospect is in flux, then it is best for sales reps to contact them immediately. As competitors potentially have access to the same sales triggers, it is best to reach out to prospects and frame the discussion before your competitors do so.
- Provide a **discussion hook** that helps warm up cold calls and displays an interest in the company and their needs. Whether you are reaching out via email, leaving a voicemail, or contacting an executive via LinkedIn's InMail system, a quick reference to relevant company news and how your firm can assist the executive is far superior to a generic pitch. A personalized approach greatly increases the likelihood of grabbing your prospect's attention. Conversely, sales reps that fail to develop a hook and understanding of a target are likely to annoy the prospect. It is the informed rep that rises above the din created by poorly trained trigger sales reps all calling the newly hired exec. If the alert lacks a hook, then research the company and prospect via social media and your sales intelligence service.
- Offer a **reason to check in with existing clients** outside of quarterly reviews. The check in could be little more than a congratulatory sentence or it might be a reason for setting up an interim review of future needs and expectations. In either case, the contact displays an interest in the client's business that goes beyond simple order taking.
- Often include a **contact name** or two. Executive Change

triggers are likely to include new contacts along with bios; Joint Venture announcements provide Business Development Directors; and product announcements often include Product Directors and Marketing Directors along with quotes that speak to corporate positioning and strategy.

- **Flag accounts at risk or opportunities in jeopardy.** Companies that are restructuring, suffering margin pressures, or cutting staff are also in flux, but may be looking to reduce their spend. Sales reps may need to identify new contacts or work with clients to improve their value proposition. Negative triggers provide an early warning system which indicates deals that are likely to be smaller or delayed. It is better to adjust pipeline forecasts immediately than to base your estimates on dated information. Such news also indicates a greater likelihood that price may drive the decision-making process. Of course, if you are the low-cost provider, negative triggers may make your price more appealing. Negative triggers also provide an opportunity to revisit last year's lost deals to see if the conditions are now more favorable.
- Allow sales, marketing, and competitive intelligence departments to **track competitors and key partners**. Have they released new products or major enhancements, entered new markets, or indicated a change in their market strategy?

Triggers should be available as both an alerting service and within company profiles. More advanced firms also provide Sales Triggers as a screening variable in their prospecting modules (listed alphabetically).

- **US Sales Triggers:** Artesian, Avention, Hoover's, InsideView
- **UK Sales Triggers:** Artesian, Avention, Bureau van Dijk
- **Triggers in Prospecting:** Artesian, Avention, InsideView
- **Tech Triggers:** DiscoverOrg, RainKing

- **Intent Triggers:** DiscoverOrg OppAlerts
- **Freemium Trigger Services³:** Owler, InsideView

Mobile Sales Teams

Up until a few years ago, most of the sales intelligence vendors avoided mobile delivery and simply ensured that their products worked on mobile browsers. The few that developed mobile apps tended to focus on a single function (usually news alerts or thin profiles). What's more, because the services were designed for web browsers, they failed to leverage key features of mobile devices such as location services, calendar integration, push notifications, and click-to-connect. The good news is that many of the vendors are now committed to mobile apps on tablets and smartphones with a broad set of features.

Vendors with full-featured mobile apps include Artesian Solutions, Salesgenie, Infofree, Data.com, LinkedIn Sales Navigator, InsideView, and Hoover's. Of these apps, Artesian Solutions Ready is probably the most sophisticated.

Artesian Ready helps sales professionals prepare for meetings by providing the latest news, insights, and financials to sales reps. The app also supports team collaboration and information sharing. Ready pulls meeting information from the mobile calendar and classifies attendees as colleagues and clients based upon the email domain. Artesian users can share notes concerning meetings as well as news articles with team members. The app can also be used to research additional companies and add them to Watchlists. It is available in US and UK editions.

If you have field sales teams that require sales intelligence while on the road, you should include the following questions in your RFI / RFPs:

- Which mobile operating systems do you support (e.g. Android,

³ Both InsideView and Owler restrict their free triggers to Exec Changes, M&A, and Funding Events.

iOS)?

- Can sales reps receive news alerts while on the road? Does your tool filter alerts to present only the most urgent (e.g. clients with meetings in the next 24 hours)?
- If a rep has an open time block while traveling, can she find nearby customers and prospects with which to meet?
- Does the app provide maps and driving directions to meetings?
- Does the app share meeting notes with team members?
- Is the app integrated with the mobile contact manager? Inbox?
- Is the app integrated with my CRM or the sales force automation features that are included in the service?

All vendors should be asked whether their service supports responsive design which automatically resizes the browser display based upon the form factor of the device (e.g. laptop, tablet, smartphone).

Vendors generally do not charge for mobile apps but include them as part of the seat licensing.

For now, mobile apps should only be used as a tie breaker when choosing between vendors. Much more important is the depth of coverage, quality of data, browser functionality, and ability to integrate with your CRM. All things being equal, though, mobile apps should be included in trials for your field sales reps.

Differences between the US and UK Sales

Intelligence Market

Both the UK and US markets have seen widespread adoption of sales intelligence services. For US firms, the UK is usually either the second or third market (after Canada) which they support. Thus, the UK is served by both British (e.g. Artesian Solutions, Bureau van Dijk, DueDil) and American companies (e.g. Avention, Dun & Bradstreet, Factiva).

A key difference between the US and UK markets is the availability of UK private company data. Approximately three million active UK firms are required to register with Companies House (the major exceptions are small businesses, partnerships, and public sector entities). Large firms are required to provide full financials, while mid-size firms may only be required to file a Balance Sheet or summary financials. The smallest firms may simply be required to file a basic Annual Return with Director and Shareholder information and abbreviated accounts.

Due to this filing regime, one can find the following information for registered companies in the top UK sales intelligence services:

- **P&L** – The profit and loss statement is the British version of the American Income Statement.
- **Balance Sheet**
- **Credit Scores and Reports**
- **Financial Ratios** – As there are different accounting standards in the UK, some of the ratios have alternate names or are calculated differently.
- **DASH** – Directors and Shareholders. The Directors report includes at least two current directors and a corporate secretary. For smaller companies, the directors are often the owners. Generally, Director profiles include both current and previous directorships along with [disqualified directors](#).

Because Shareholdings are filed with Companies House, the family trees of UK businesses are both detailed and accurate and often include subsidiary revenue figures.

- **MCCJ** – Mortgages, Charges, and County Court Judgments.
- **Trading Address** – This is the address where the company conducts business. When evaluating UK sales intelligence vendors, make sure the firm includes Trading Addresses as well as Registered Addresses. Some vendors simply list address and do not clarify whether the address is the Registered or Trading Address. Make sure to ask about addresses. If a vendor is unable to answer this question, it is a good signal that they are not dedicated to the UK market.
- **Registered Address** – The Registered Address is often the address of a holding company, parent company, or registration agent. The Registered Address is important for legal purposes and due diligence, but has limited value to sales reps.
- **Companies House Images** – Some vendors include PDF images of key filings. These are important for financial services companies and analysts which require original documents for Know Your Client and Anti-Money Laundering due diligence. They have limited value for sales reps outside of relationship managers at financial services companies.
- **Gazette Status** – Winding down and receivership flags.
- **Registration Numbers** – Sometimes called Regnos, registration numbers are the unique ids that businesses use to file with Companies House. Some vendors also provide VAT numbers. Sales intelligence vendors that display Registration Numbers usually make them available for download and for company lookup.

It should be noted that subsidiaries are also required to file with Companies House. Thus, it is possible to research the operations of UK subsidiaries of multi-nationals.

In the prospecting module, local variables should be supported. Selects should include counties, postal areas and codes, FTSE flags, gazette status, TSP (business do not call flags), and UK SIC. The service should also support screening and financial display in sterling.

In general, UK sales intelligence services have more detailed company information than US services, but with a few caveats:

- Information on non-registrant companies tends to be quite thin with little beyond phone directory information.
- While family tree information is more accurate and complete, operation location information is weaker than in the US.
- When screening, use turnover instead of employee counts as turnover data is better populated.
- Look for vendors that supplement DASH data with additional executives. Otherwise, you will find you lack key job functions and direct contact information.
- With the exception of Avention which has long provided VNU and CorpData tech intelligence in its service, vendors are just beginning to collect technology profiles for UK companies. DiscoverOrg and RainKing only cover a few thousand British companies. BvD recently added Product/Vendor data in UK Mint which it licensed from HG Data.

While the rest of the EU has strict data privacy rules which make it difficult to obtain emails and direct dial phone numbers, UK rules are looser. Thus, you should look for sales intelligence services which offer both DASH profiles and a broad set of non-director titles with direct contact variables.

Overarching Questions

With all these use cases, there remains a set of basic questions that you should be applying to your analysis with features and benefits falling underneath these questions. In her [Keynote at Dreamforce](#) (September 2015), Data.com VP Michelle Huff offered three key questions:

“What if you could...

- Discover the Best Opportunities
- Prioritize Your Prospects
- Understand Your Customers Better”

These questions get at core sales activities such as prospecting, qualification, and account planning. To this list, I would add

- Monitor your Customers and Prospects Better
- Sell Deeper into the Organization
- Ensure that both sales and marketing platforms are synchronized with the same reference database.

Monitoring is an aspect of understanding your customers better, but it recognizes that customers are dynamic – executives come and go, earnings are announced, products and services are launched, etc. It is this dynamism, which I referred to in the [Trigger Selling](#) section as “flux,” that impacts your ability to prioritize and understand clients. Flux occurs outside of your control, but it can be harnessed to improve close rates through monitoring and reprioritization. By recognizing and acting on sales triggers, reps can conduct ongoing requalification with account plan adjustments.

Selling deeper into an organization recognizes that there are many initiatives and budget centers within an organization. Whether your presence is limited to a beachhead or facilitated by a master services agreement (MSA), sales reps should be looking to sell deeper in organizations to both expand revenue and secure your position at the account. Tools for expanding your presence include Org Charts, Family Trees, Sales Triggers, Relationship Tools, and Projects. It is much easier to service an account and expand your presence than it is to fight your way to the beachhead. Likewise, negotiating an MSA may take months, but it facilitates extending your presence across the organization.

Tips to Ensure High ROI

Purchasing

Sales Intelligence products are not inexpensive so make sure you provide sufficient time for your research, trial, and purchasing negotiations. Contracts generally run in the five or six-digit range based upon the number of seats (SMB products can be had for less than \$1,000 for a single seat). Keep in mind that sales teams do not normally have large sales tool budgets so you may need to go through a justification process to obtain budget. Here are a set of tips to help facilitate the purchasing process:

1. **Leverage this Handbook**

Over the past decade, power has shifted from sellers to buyers as they now have the opportunity to quietly research prospects before approaching them. Research is performed online (websites, review sites, analyst blogs, professional boards, etc.) in stealth mode. As part of the commercial team, you have probably felt this shift in informational power and understand the need for better sales research tools to help close the information gap. Here is your opportunity to be on the other side of this power shift and observe how companies use their tools and the open web to research you and your company.

This Handbook is designed to assist with that research process. Before reaching out to vendors, you should have a list of the most important content sets and capabilities for which you are looking. This handbook discusses various use case scenarios and recommends the vendors most likely to meet your needs under these scenarios. Use this guidance to put together a grid of your top two to four vendors against your top purchasing requirements. Then make sure you add in subjective variables such as:

a. **Support Quality**

Did they provide strong demos? Did they understand your

company and vertical? Did they respond quickly to queries? Do they provide sufficient support hours for teams in other time zones (or continents)? Are there sufficient help tools (FAQ, Knowledge Base, Training Videos) to provide guidance when the support staff isn't available? How quickly did they setup trial accounts? If you submit a data error, do they quickly research the issue and correct it in their database or does it go to the "great bit bucket in the sky?"

b. **User Interface**

Are their company profiles laid out in a logical manner that allowed for quick discovery? Was it easy to lookup a company or executive? Was site navigation logical or were you regularly confused about how to accomplish tasks such as save a search, setup an alert, or find key reports?

c. **Are They "Eating Their Dogfood?"**

Is there any indication the vendor is using their own tool in dealing with your firm? For example, if there is a press release from your company, does the sales rep weave it into the discussion or use it as a basis for an email? Ask the sales rep to list a few things they learned about your company by using their tool and then have him or her demonstrate how these insights were gleaned.

2. **Don't Weight Numbers Too Heavily**

One of the things I hate about online RFP systems is they often end up asking for dozens of numeric values. This information is then passed to purchasing departments that lack a deep understanding of your sales processes and information needs. There are a number of traps you can fall into by overweighting objective variables. The first is the "bigger is better" problem. A firm with an 80 million company database isn't better than a company with 20 million profiles simply because they have the bigger database. If the 80 million company profiles are of lower quality or breadth, then you will have traded volume over quality. Furthermore, if the depth

is around small businesses and branch locations that you don't target, then the additional companies may be noise.

A second problem with relying on numbers is that it places your focus on easily measurable benchmarks instead of trial and feedback from your sales reps. It is unlikely that a sales rep would test two products and pick the one with higher counts for that reason. They are much more likely to pick the product with better workflows and insights around enterprise and mid-market prospects.

3. **The Executives in Your Profile**

While your own profile seems like an obvious place to evaluate executives, it can be highly misleading. Some vendors have their editors review company and executive profiles prior to a demo. Also, the depth of executive coverage can vary widely. Companies with more execs are going to have a greater percentage of mid-level contacts that are more difficult to validate. Thus, a database of top execs will appear more accurate simply because they are providing the easiest to collect and verify names even when the accuracy of top execs is the same as at deeper coverage products.

4. **Anticipate Data Errors**

No service is perfect. Data is dynamic and many events are not announced immediately or at all. The annual attrition rate of business contacts is generally given in the twenty-five to thirty percent range. Thus, even if an exec were validated last month, there is still a two percent chance that he or she left the company in the interim. Revalidating the full data set multiple times per year would be cost prohibitive for the larger sales intelligence databases and is only performed by industry niche vendors with smaller datasets (e.g. RainKing has a 120-day cycle and DiscoverOrg has a 90-day cycle) and higher price points. Most other vendors perform less frequent updates combined with regular bounce testing of emails and editorial updates based upon client feedback.

5. **Apples to Apples**

When comparing vendors, make sure you pull a set of the same profiles from each of the vendors across multiple categories (e.g. US Public, US Private, US subsidiary, Small Company, International Public, etc.). If the vendor provides a PDF export of the company report, pull those so you can compare them against each other.

Also, be creative in some of your tests. For example, download prospect lists of companies and execs and compare them across vendors (e.g. companies in three zip codes with at least 25 employees or the top N companies in your vertical) and assess the key field fill rates. Are you seeing long business descriptions, URL, or SIC code descriptions? Are you receiving ranged sizing values or actual values? Do execs have actual titles or generic titles? How many emails are available? If you are pulling your vertical, is there a high incidence of companies being listed that are miscoded by industry?

6. **Comparing Incumbents vs. New Vendors**

You know the incumbent well including all of its faults. What's more, your sales reps have a year or more of experience with calling into execs no longer at the firm or receiving news alerts and triggers that aren't valuable. Be careful about treating an alternate vendor as the shiny new bauble. It may look pretty at first with new tools and no history of bad data, but every vendor has its warts. Make sure you provide sufficient time for sales reps to trial the new service so that they have a more objective analysis. Some will automatically go for the new tool because they are frustrated with the limitations of your current service while other reps will be resistant to change and wish to retain the current tool. A multi-week trial helps remove the blinders from both categories of sales reps. What's more, a longer trial provides advocates in support of changing vendors should you decide to do so.

Finally, review the usage reports from the vendors to see which reps seriously tested out the new service.

7. **Trials**

Make sure that you setup trials across your sales teams. The needs of appointment setters differ from strategic sales reps. Likewise, hunters and farmers have different information needs as do named account reps vs. territory reps (I could go on, but you get the idea). Stratifying trialers across groups makes sure that you don't benefit one group while handicapping another.

Make sure that the trialers have the time to properly test the service. If they are focused on closing their biggest deal of the year this month or heading out on vacation, they should be excluded from the list. Also, make sure that they understand that feedback will be required at the end of the trial and that they are expected to attend a demo session at the beginning of the trial. Set expectations and garner their commitment. Otherwise, your trial will not provide sufficient input to assist with purchasing decisions.

8. **"Time to Pie"**

The phrase "Time to Pie" is from Intuit which used the term to describe usability of their Quicken and QuickBooks offerings. They understood that product usability would be low if users spent too much time doing mundane work such as order entry and received few rewards. "Time to Pie" is the time it takes a user to complete the necessary input work to receive a reward (i.e. Pie Chart). With financial software (and most enterprise software), there is an element of delayed satisfaction. Good design keeps the delay to a minimum by reducing administrative overhead. In the context of Sales Intelligence, "Time to Pie" could be viewed as "Time to Insights" – how long does it take a sales rep to find a useful kernel of information that potentially helps move a deal forward. This could be basic information such as quickly qualifying a lead or locating an email or more complex tasks such as understanding whether a company is growing, has new execs in key positions, or provides a reason to call. A simple set of tests could be setup across a list of companies (use the same companies and tests for

all vendors). For a strategic sales team, the test items would be more complex (e.g. earnings transcripts, SWOTs, relationships, bios) than for SMB sales. The test would look at both the availability and discoverability of information.

9. **Question the Hockey Stick**

Many purchasing departments prefer to make enterprise software purchasing decisions at the end of the quarter or year in the belief that companies are more likely to discount to ensure they make their numbers. Amongst enterprise software companies, this is known as the hockey stick because a very high percentage of revenue gets booked in the last two days of the quarter resulting in a hockey stick bookings graph. While there is certainly logic to playing this purchasing game, it makes for very hectic decision making and licensing and can result in delayed training at the beginning of the next quarter. Instead, I would recommend negotiating for a thirteenth or fourteenth month on the contract. Fourteen months is a seventeen percent discount and it provides a number of benefits. First off, it allows your team to begin using the service this quarter (or year) and be fully trained by the start of the next quarter. Secondly, your launch and training isn't delayed due to the demands of supporting hundreds of new and renewal clients making last minute decisions. Also, if you are licensing additional services (e.g. Professional Solutions development, data match and load into your CRM), these will be addressed more quickly if you aren't playing timing games.

10. **Review Sites**

I heavily recommend using review sites for peer feedback, but take careful note of the timing of the reviews as they may no longer be accurate. On older sites, such as the AppExchange, many of the review may be four or more years old so no longer relevant. Nevertheless, older reviews are included in the scoring.

Also, some vendors create incentives to their users for evaluating their products. A telltale sign is a heavy clustering of reviews by

date or a few vendors having ten times the review volume of others. For example, in mid-2015, DiscoverOrg had been rated 453 times on G2 Crowd and RainKing had two reviews. As they have similar products and pricing structures with DiscoverOrg roughly 50% larger in terms of revenue, you would not expect a 220x fold difference in rating volume. However, RainKing recognized that they were not being covered and have encouraged their users to write nearly 150 reviews over the span of twelve months. I've found this type of review "astroturfing" to be more of an issue on G2 Crowd than TrustRadius, so I generally put more stock in TrustRadius reviews. Please note that this observation is specific to the sales intelligence industry and may not apply to other product categories.

11. **Valuing Emails**

Some vendors have retained Canadian emails after the CASL law went into effect while others have removed them from their service. Given the potential penalties for violating the CASL law, I would place zero value on Canadian emails in these services. Likewise, there are issues in European countries so I would simply limit evaluation to the presence of US and UK emails, two countries which have not set overly burdensome rules on legitimate B2B email marketing. I would make an exception for DiscoverOrg's European Safe Harbor email set which fully complies with EU rules.

12. **Brand Names**

Don't select vendors because of their brands. Well known services tend to be higher priced and are sold by sales teams that are not specialists in the information industry. Furthermore, their solutions are often not best of breed but bundled alongside other offerings from these companies.

13. **Single Seat Pricing**

Be careful in quoting only a single seat from a service provider. Roughly half the vendors charge much more for the first seat than subsequent seats. In fact, some vendors price one to five seats the same or charge less for the next four seats combined than the

first user ID. The primary reason for high single seat pricing is a concern that the single user will be building prospect lists and then distributing them to the sales team. A second reason is single seat deals are highly unstable as the licensor could be reassigned or leave for another company resulting in a fallow seat and no renewals. Thus, if you are interested in only one or two seats, look at whether five seats are a better deal and share the seats with other sales reps or sales teams. You may find it is a much more cost efficient approach.

14. **Value to Other Departments**

While some vendor solutions provide value exclusively to the sales department, many provide value to other functions as well. Several Sales Intelligence vendors have been aggressively extending their value into the marketing department – aligning themselves with the growth in Account Based Marketing (ABM). Likewise, several vendors offer products for credit and supplier risk, compliance, on boarding, and Know Your Customer processes.

15. **GZ Consulting Blog**

I [blog](#) on the sales intelligence industry so there will be ongoing discussions of trends, product releases, product overviews of services that did not make this Field Guide, and general observations.

Launch

Information services, similar to CRM, can be a very valuable service that greatly improves your sales reps' efficiency and efficacy, but only if they are widely adopted. Here are some tips for generating enthusiasm behind a sales intelligence initiative:

1. **Management Support**

As with other initiatives, it is important that management acts as a booster of the service. They should be involved in purchasing

decisions and understand the value proposition of the selected service. The decision should be announced by the VP of Sales or other officer with an explanation of the key benefits of the service. However, support needs to be generated at both the executive and managerial level. According to tech CEO [Joe Gustafson](#), “Coaching and mentoring is the most important role your front-line sales managers play. If the managers that are supporting your reps don’t recognize the value in a new technology, that will trickle down throughout your team. So buy-in at every level of the sales organization is very important, as it will ensure your managers are reinforcing the behavior (and technology usage) you’re looking for.”

2. **Sales Meetings**

If the announcement is made at or just prior to a Sales Meeting, then training can be planned for the meeting. This could be a quick demo given to the full group or as a set of breakout sessions based upon custom training for specific teams (e.g. a Strategic sales team will focus on research tools and account planning while telemarketing groups will focus on prospecting).

3. **Sales Stories**

You should also include one or two sales reps discussing an opportunity they discovered or insight that helped close a deal during the trial period. Sales reps are natural story tellers and enjoy talking about their victories. A good story can do more to sell your product (or a sales tool) than a recitation of features and benefits (but make sure they understand the benefits as well). Sales stories should be viewed as internal case studies generated by the sales reps. They are a low cost means of rewarding reps who gain a psychic reward from retelling their victories. Encouraging such “tribal knowledge” helps motivate sales reps and is akin to the hunter retelling the story of the hunt.

Peter Ostrow of the Aberdeen Group emphasized [the value of such “tribal knowledge”](#) in a report on Sales Reinforcements:

Today's millennial sellers are far more willing and comfortable to share with one another, as compared to 20th-century quota-carriers. A generation ago, a sales rep was expected to acquire skills and knowledge predominantly from managers above them in the corporate food chain. Modern enterprise social collaboration platforms are designed to leverage the changing mindset of individual contributors, and help provide companies committed to lifelong sales education with technology platforms that complement their commitment to learning that clearly pays measurable dividends.

4. **Training**

he rollout should include a training program scheduled towards the beginning of the month (or even better, quarter). Some vendors offer on-site training for enterprise contracts, but much of it is done as scheduled webinars. Look to setup custom webinars as a first option with standard training sessions as a fall back. As most vendors also provide recorded mini-tutorials on best practices with their tools, include notes and links to these tools as part of standard sales operations or training messaging. Of course, a train the trainer program can also be implemented at larger companies.

When the vendor is providing you with custom training, brief the trainer beforehand on your company and its sales practices (e.g. methodology, key verticals, territory structure, etc.) That way, the trainer can incorporate use cases and sales methodology terminology which reinforces your previous training and speaks to likely sales scenarios and information requirements.

5. **Ongoing Training**

Peter Ostrow of the Aberdeen Group emphasized the value of ongoing training for sales success. [His research](#) found that Best-In-Class companies were fifteen percent more likely to follow up initial training with "various methods of educational reinforcement." Ostrow also listed a series of other training practices by Best-in-Class Sales teams. These included a central repository for sales

tools and case studies, actively capturing institutional knowledge and best practices from experienced staff, capturing user generated content such as references and testimonials, and identifying subject matter experts. Aberdeen research also found that when it came to custom training of sales managers, there was an eighteen percent gap between Best-in-Class companies and other firms. Overall, “post-training reinforcers” performed better than other firms across several metrics including team attainment of sales quota (ten percent advantage), customer renewal rates (five percent advantage), all reps achieving quota (nine percent advantage), and first year reps hitting quota (thirteen percent edge).

6. **Encourage Sales Reps to Setup Alerts**

Named, Territory, and Strategic Account reps should be setting alerts for their key accounts and prospects. Training should include a few minutes to setup alerts on their top five accounts. Don't simply demonstrate how to do it, but give them a few minutes to build a base alert set of news or sales triggers. The alerts then serve as a daily reminder of the service and provide reasons for users to regularly visit the service.

7. **Account Setup**

Smaller implementations will be setup by account administrators from the purchasing company (generally somebody in sales operations or an office admin) while larger implementations will be managed by the vendor. Generally, the vendor will request a spreadsheet containing user identifiers (e.g. name, title, group, email) which is uploaded into their system. Users are then sent user IDs along with information on training, demos, and FAQ/ Knowledgebases.

8. **Usage Reports**

Vendors often provide usage reports to the service administrators. These provide information on who is using the service and at what levels. Some vendors also include details on who has attended training sessions.

9. **CRM Match & Append**

Several of the services offer match and append services for CRM. There are several benefits to including such projects in your roll out planning, but the key benefit for sales reps is having accurate data and insights in the CRM that are automatically maintained by the vendor. The result is reduced data entry and improved customer and prospect intelligence at launch. Matching projects also provide data standardization, deduping, segmentation values (e.g. industry, company size), and improved reporting and targeting that benefit the marketing department and sales operations.

10. **Overemphasizing Efficiency**

While efficiency is important, when rolling out tools to you sales team, they are more likely to be swayed by messaging around effectiveness. Your messaging should be around improvements in efficiency and effectiveness which help sales reps sell better. Reps live in a bottom line environment where meeting and exceeding quota is their measure of success. A pitch that says, you'll spend less time on busywork isn't as impressive as one that says you'll sell more. For example, enriching CRM records can be viewed as an efficiency gain (less keying) or an effectiveness gain (more accurate qualification and prospecting, improved messaging). Efficiency is where you'll find your ROI argument, but effectiveness is where you will sell it to your sales team.

11. **Make Adoption Easy**

Make sure your sales operations and training teams have sufficient time to rollout the service. Reps should have little or no front end personalization. Where possible, account setup, territory definitions, and key clients should be setup for the reps. They should also have on demand training sessions with a focus on the most important tasks which provide immediate benefits. The lower the speed bumps, the greater the likelihood that reps will engage with the solution. The goal is to minimize the impact to rep workflows. Thus, a solution that is well embedded within the CRM is superior

to one that operates as a standalone browser offering. An initial CRM match and append (recommendation number eight) is a highly effective way to reduce barriers and should be considered as a valuable step in improving sales rep adoption and the overall quality of your CRM data quality.



Vendor Analysis

Website

artesian.co

Contact

info@artesian.co

UK

+44 (0)330 321 0101

US

+1 (617) 917-5290

Artesian Solutions

[Artesian Solutions](#), a British VC funded startup, provides mined news and sales triggers from the open web along with a social media view (Twitter and Blogs). Their core offering is the Artesian Sales Intelligence SaaS platform which supports company and prospect research on the web, within CRMs (SFDC and MS Dynamics), and via a native app on IOS and Android platforms.

Artesian Solutions does a very good job of summarizing the value of semantically mined intelligence for social selling:

Every day through press releases, journalistic comments, reviews, online conversations, and corporate data submissions, customers are telling us what's important to them right now and signaling their intention to buy. We need to target the right customers, listen to these conversations, extract the commercially valuable insight, and then connect. And finally, to engage in conversations which are relevant and contextual – not cold calling and making sales pitches. By developing and nurturing meaningful relationships with buyers and uncovering the trigger points that identify when customers need their help when they're ready to do business.

It's all about targeting prospects accurately, listening and connecting with customers frequently, and sharing openly with customers and colleagues.

Artesian's global HQ is based in Reading, UK. They opened a US office in Boston in early 2016 and released a US edition in Q3.

Size	<p>Employees: 80 (2016)</p> <p>Customers: 25,000 Users (2016)</p>
Target Verticals	Banking & Financial Services, Insurance, Technology, Communications, Professional Services, Utilities
2016 Product Launches	Artesian released the Artesian Ready mobile app in late 2015. Artesian launched their US edition during 2016.
2016 Enhancements	Artesian releases new product iterations every five to six months. Smaller enhancements and bug fixes are deployed more frequently.
	<p>Artesian Sales Intelligence Platform:</p> <p>Artesian rolled out V15 of its platform in November 2016. New features include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salesforce Opportunity rollup information in Artesian and Artesian intelligence within SFDC Opportunity records. • Improved Company Searching rolls companies into a group • Improved de-duplication logic reduces news duplicates and rolls similar articles into a group. • Added North American prospecting filters for counties, business type, and the presence of specific job functions at a company. <p>Artesian rolled out V14 of its platform in August 2016. New features include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A redesigned CRM connector for SFDC and MS Dynamics • Full sales trigger customization • Market sector alerts • An updated employees page which supports executive filtering by job role and seniority. <p>Artesian Ready Mobile App</p> <p>Artesian rolled out version 3.0 of the Artesian Ready mobile app which provides company and executive insights synched with the mobile calendar. Ready also supports collaborative note taking and a “360° comprehensive profile of customers and prospects.”</p> <p>New Ready features include company searching, company add to Watchlists, Twitter timelines and Twitter sharing, social links (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, AngelList, Crunchbase), job information, and a data quality form for reporting incorrect information.</p>
2016 Vendor Changes	The firm added a US vendor for companies and contacts and a second vendor for biographic profiles and social media links. Artesian does not disclose its content partnerships.
2016 Pricing Changes	Artesian added a US product at \$40-\$99 / user / month depending on the edition.

Data Collection

Artesian Solutions combines US, Canadian, and UK data with open web news. The news is taxonomized by company, industry, and business topic providing a broad set of event triggers. News is filtered to remove duplicate articles and ephemeral stock information.

UK content includes registered company Financials; Directors & Shareholders reports; Mortgages, Charges, and County Judgments; Registered and Trading Addresses; and Delphi Scores.

They also editorially collect ecosystem (competitors, vendors) information for “super high profile companies” in the UK. These operate as Watchlists which may be added to user accounts. However, users need to request these lists.

The firm added an undisclosed but highly regarded US vendor for company and contact profiles. Content includes North American linkage, credit scores, executives, and firmographics.

Key Vendors

Artesian does not disclose its primary vendors but both the US/Canadian and UK content partners are well respected in the industry.

Two content partners are discernable by using the platform: Google Maps and Twitter.

Unique Features

1. Artesian Solutions is a true social selling service with a focus on account awareness and social sharing.
2. Artesian Solutions provides a proprietary Social Seller Score and Social Selling Leaderboard which offer a gamification element within the service, encouraging users to expand product usage. The Social Seller Score is based upon three sub-metrics: Target (Business Development), Connect (Customer Knowledge), and Share (Collaboration).
3. Artesian provides social selling and user adoption reports to managers which track overall scores, individual behaviors, and usage type.
4. Artesian offers certification training with a set of tracked courses which can be assigned by managers.
5. The Compare Sectors feature provides a visual analysis of how different UK market sectors are performing by output and number of employees compared to other sectors.
6. The UK service includes a timeline report displaying data changes for registered companies.
7. Company Followers displays who else is following the company at your firm.
8. Team sharing features allow sales assistants or large teams with overlapping accounts to co-manage their Watchlists.
9. The Community capability allows managers to select and follow key accounts managed by their team.

10. Salesforce Opportunity intelligence is displayed within Artesian and Artesian company insights are displayed within SFDC Opportunity records.
11. The Ready Mobile app for Android and iPhone ties into the user's calendar and provides alerts, company and executive profiles, shared meeting notes, executive search, one-click calling and email, and meeting directions.

Strengths

1. The firm indicates high usage (89% daily usage) and retention rates (92%)
2. Artesian has a deep topic taxonomy for identifying events at a granular level.
3. The service is multi-platform so bookmarks, followed firms, and trigger filters are automatically shared across platforms and with co-workers.
4. Training is bundled with the service and available onsite in the UK. In the US, training is a combination of webinars and onsite training for large groups.
5. UK content includes registered company Financials; Directors & Shareholders reports; Mortgages, Charges, and County Judgments; Registered and Trading Addresses; Companies House images, and Delphi (credit) Scores.
6. Artesian has a one business day SLA for support requests.
7. Build and maintain targeted lists; monitor news concerning the lists.
8. Artesian supports a broad set of sales triggers which are available for alerting, prospect list prioritization, and sharing (email, social, bookmarks)
9. Share and comment on insights relevant to customers and prospects directly or socially (Twitter and LinkedIn). Email forwarding includes templated messages.
10. Sector Reports include UK sector historical and geographic analysis along with industry news, top companies, and trigger alerts.
11. Artesian lists many of the major UK banks (e.g. Barclays, RBS, HSBC) as customers which speaks to the value of their offering for relationship managers.
12. Influence tracking indicates whether insights shared with customers have been opened.

Weaknesses

1. Although news coverage is global, company coverage is limited to the UK and US/Canada. While the two services are not unified, Artesian supports account licenses distributed across both regions.
2. The firm does not publicly disclose their data partners. However, their partners are well respected in the industry.
3. No executive prospecting
4. No executive upload to CRM
5. UK Executives are focused on registered directors; however, Artesian plans to extend UK contact coverage in their first major FY17/18 release.
6. Family Trees are limited to direct parents and subsidiaries within the geographic scope of the product (i.e. UK or US/Canada) along with the Ultimate Parent Name and country.

7. They do not support YouTube and Vimeo.
8. News is limited to sixty days with the exception of bookmarked news which is retained indefinitely.
9. Artesian lacks public company (quoted) content such as financials, ratios, SWOTs, Earnings transcripts, SEC filings, and analyst reports.
10. No industry market research (they do offer industry news and top companies)
11. Artesian provides view only profiles within CRMs and does not populate firmographic information.
12. No Marketing Automation connectors

ABM Features

- Strong current awareness tools including a Surveillance Tab (a cross-account Watchlist), sector news, and deep account alerting by topic.
- The Artesian Ready Mobile app helps teams prepare for meetings, stay abreast of breaking news and share post-meeting notes.
- Business Development list filtering for best suited accounts with discussion points.
- Broad contact profiles with emails, direct dials, social media links, executive news, bios, and headshots in Artesian Ready. Artesian plans on adding the social media and bio content to the browser editions.

Company Counts

US:	4.4M	Europe:	4.1M
Canada:	450K	AsiaPac:	0
UK:	4.1M	Global:	8.9M

Company Coverage

Artesian UK companies include registered company Financials (4 years); Financial Ratios; Directors & Shareholders reports; Mortgages and Charges; Registered and Trading Addresses; Companies House images, and Delphi Scores. A timeline report indicates key financial value changes (e.g. Risk Score, Turnover, Net Worth, Pretax Profit).

US companies contain firmographic profiles and a five-star trade credit score.

US and UK companies also display direct parents and subsidiaries; social media links, event triggers, and a Twitter feed.

Public (Quoted) Financials

Years:	0	Segments:	N
Quarters:	0	Stock Chart:	N
Ratios:	N	Scope:	N/A

Private Financials

Four year UK registered financials including P&L, Balance Sheet, Company Ratios, and Disclosures.

Filings

UK Companies House Document Images (PDF)

Credit Data

- UK Delphi Scores, Mortgages & Charges
- US Credit scores

Family Trees

Direct Parent and Immediate Subs

Long Biz Descriptions

N/A

SWOTs

N/A

Business Signals

N/A

Key Events	Artesian supports a set of highly granular sales triggers		
Competitors	Limited to 50 "super high profile companies".		
Neighbors	N/A		
Peer Lists	Similar Companies		
PE/VC/IPO	Available as sales triggers		
M&A	Available as sales triggers		
Earnings Transcripts	N/A		
Other 1	Growth and risk stories available as sales triggers		
Tech Profiles	US Firms:	0	Global Firms: 0
	US Execs:	0	Global Execs: 0
	T Installs:	N	Segments: N/A
	T Plans:	N	T Budgets: N
	T Alerts:	Y	T Org Charts: N
Tech Content Model	N/A		
Executive Counts	US:	9M	Europe: 7.1M
	Canada:	450K	AsiaPac: 0
	UK:	7.1M	Global: 16.5M
Executive Emails	US:	5.3M	UK: 160K
	Canada:	0	Global: 5.5M
Executive Coverage	Executive content includes emails, direct dials, headshots, bios, and social media links. In the UK, Directors profiles are included.		
Connection Tools	N/A		
News Triggers	Artesian currently delivers 12 million actionable insights per month on almost 700,000 watched companies. Event triggers include awards, budget or spending cuts, business growth or decline, corporate and social responsibility, major deals or partnerships, product launches, changes in strategic direction, M&A, and executive changes.		
Data Change Triggers	UK data change triggers are delivered monthly and displayed with a timeline report.		
Filings Triggers	N/A		
Exec Change Triggers	Yes		
Social Triggers	N/A		
Custom Triggers	Artesian editors will build custom triggers for clients upon request.		
Other Triggers	Credit Score Change Triggers		
News Sources	English language only open news crawl (sixty days).		
News Search	N/A		
Industry Overviews	N/A		
Market Research	N/A		

Industry Norms	N/A
Industry News	Market news and alerts
Social Media	<p>Users can view Twitter and Blogs within the service.</p> <p>Users can share articles via Twitter, LinkedIn, Chatter, or email. They can also bookmark an item or flag as a reminder for the next engagement.</p>
Consumer File	N/A
Prospecting	<p>UK company prospecting includes the following variables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees, Turnover, Profit, Net Worth and another dozen financial variables and ratios • Group status • Sector, UK SIC (1992 and 2007), and Business Type • Region, County, Town, and Post Code • Bank Name, Auditors Name • Delphi Credit Scores and Limits <p>US / Canadian company screening is based upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total or Site Employees, Revenue • US SIC or NAICS • State/Province, City, ZIP / Post Code, County • Credit rating • Contact Details Available • Ownership Type (e.g. Parent, Sub) • Presence of Specific Job Functions <p>Up to 5,000 records may be downloaded at a time. There are no contractual limits on the total number of downloaded files although usage is closely monitored and Fair Usage limits apply.</p> <p>Once the initial set of variables have been selected, users may select a set of Hotness variables (trigger events) which highlights companies with recent triggers and sorts them at the top of the list.</p> <p>Users may save companies to lists individually or in the aggregate. Artesian also supports saved searches.</p>
Internationalization	US, UK, and Canadian ZIP/Postal screening
Other Datasets	N/A

Team Tools	<p>Artesian supports a broad set of sharing and collaboration tools including shared lists, watchlists, bookmarks, alerts, and notes. The Ready mobile app supports meeting collaboration and commentary.</p> <p>Sales Triggers may be shared via email, social media, or Chatter. When emailed, there are a set of templated messages from which the sales rep can select to expedite the transaction.</p> <p>Salesforce Opportunities, displayed within Artesian, facilitate proactive conversations about key developments at individual accounts. The conversations, based on the latest Artesian news and insights, help refine account planning and strategy while reinforcing social selling skills.</p>
Predictive Tools	N/A
Marketing Tools	Marketing teams can view key news and trends by vertical and compare market sector growth. They can also setup market news alerts.
CRM Partners	Salesforce.com, Microsoft Dynamics
CRM Features	<p>Artesian supports standard I-frame views of their service within SFDC and MS Dynamics profiles. Features include sales triggers, news monitoring, social media viewing, Chatter sharing, and alert management.</p> <p>Salesforce Opportunity stages and pipeline deals sync to Artesian, helping reps prioritize outreach based on the likelihood of the account closing.</p>
MAP Partners	N/A
MAP Features	N/A
ABSD Partners	N/A
Other Partners	N/A
API	REST based API
Mobile Support	<p>Artesian has one of the leading sales intelligence mobile apps. Artesian Ready helps sales professionals prepare for meetings by providing the latest news, insights, and financials to sales reps while on the move. The app, available at no charge to Artesian customers on the Apple and Google stores, also supports team collaboration and information sharing.</p> <p>Ready pulls meeting information from the mobile calendar and classifies attendees as colleagues and clients based upon the email domain. Artesian users can then share notes concerning meetings and post news articles with each other. Users receive mobile notifications when colleagues comment on meetings.</p> <p>The app can also be used to research additional companies and add them to Watchlists.</p>

Support	<p>Customer support hours are from 9 AM GMT to 5 PM EST with reps based in the US and UK. Reps may be reached via a feedback button (Improve Your Results), email, phone or Twitter. There is also access to a Q&A forum via the Artesian platform.</p> <p>The service includes a set of Training Videos and sales tools.</p> <p>Customer startup services include sales training and account setup.</p>
Related Products	<p>The Artesian Gazette is a newsletter service which provides curated content to a librarian or corporate researcher who then assembles a final version for corporate distribution.</p>
Futures	<p>Artesian will continue development of the US product including more data visualizations and an expansion in the number of contacts and emails. An international service is planned for the near future.</p> <p>Artesian plans on adding the social media links and biographic content found in Ready to their browser-based tools.</p> <p>At a high level, Artesian is looking to help customers prove the ROI of Social Selling and enable insight-driven engagement within their organization.</p>
Pricing	<p>Artesian is priced between \$40 and \$99 per user per month in the US depending on edition, and £89 per user per month in the UK for SMEs. Enterprise pricing is undisclosed in the UK. Pricing includes customer training, account support, Ready Mobile apps, and CRM connectors. There are no download credit charges.</p> <p>Volume discounts are available for larger accounts.</p>
Channels	<p>N/A</p>

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