



Gartner
Hot Sales for Cool Vendors



April 2010

Gartner[®]



Abby Mobile



Abby Web



Abby Phone

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For additional information contact:

Brett D. Miller

Phone: 877.305.1341

E-mail: bmiller@getabby.com

Gartner names the new and the noteworthy in the realm of sales applications for CRM.

By [Marshall Lager](#)

Market share and company history are important when evaluating new business applications, but those metrics don't do much when it comes to up-and-coming vendors with innovative approaches. Recognizing this, industry research firm Gartner from time to time recognizes what it calls "Cool Vendors" in a variety of industries, and the 2008 Cool Vendors in CRM Sales have recently been announced.

Here are the vendors that made the list, and their areas of expertise, along with the recommendations of the report authors:

- **Aggregate Knowledge:** Behavioral recommendations for Web sites. "E-commerce leaders that are interested in providing product recommendations on their Web site should look into Aggregate Knowledge."
- **GetAbby:** Virtual assistants to support lead management and sales functions. "Business-to-business sales organizations that want to improve the effectiveness of their Web-site-to-salesperson lead management processes using virtual assistants should investigate GetAbby."
- **Lemonade:** Social network advocacy. "Web-based sales e-commerce leaders who are interested in tapping into social networks as a way to increase sales should look into Lemonade as a complement to other social selling technologies."
- **SalesCentric:** Account-review organization-chart management. "Sales organizations using Microsoft Dynamics CRM for account management seeking to improve the account review process should investigate SalesCentric."
- **Xmonic:** Collaborative account planning. "Sales organizations focused on capturing greater wallet share from clients, seeking to standardize and improve account sales processes and methodologies, and require coordination across different teams or geographies should investigate Xmonic."

Recognizing that a great deal of sales technology has been targeted at sales managers seeking better oversight of their departments -- an emphasis that traditionally has resulted in low adoption -- Gartner this year chose to spotlight vendors that deliver help from the bottom up.

"The new, cool vendors of these technologies are addressing these limitations by focusing on how account reviews actually take place on the whiteboard with the organization chart; how leads come from the reception desk, contact center, or Web site to the sales representative; and how the key account-planning process really happens," the report states. "Likewise, consumers' use of e-commerce applications has changed during the past five years. Few consumers trust suppliers' claims on their Web sites and [instead] seek advice from friends, family, and reviews from other customers. Behavior recommendations and social network advocacy add value for confidence-building in areas where people may not have traditionally turned to online shopping."

Aggregate Knowledge (AK), for example, has developed the Pique Discovery Network, a behavior-based recommendation engine for Web sites similar to the recommendation engine found on Amazon.com -- but less expensive and less resource-intensive, putting it within reach of smaller businesses. "AK's offering supports two online industries -- retail and media -- and supports recommendations across several forms of interactions, such as on a Web site, within email, and with partner Web sites or networks," writes Gene Alvarez, a Gartner research vice president and one of the report's three authors.

In a subsequent interview with destinationCRM, Alvarez calls behavior recommendations an "area [that] is starting to come back from a commerce perspective -- recommendations that are real-time and activity-based, not just historical." (Activity-based recommendations take into account what you're doing right now, whether you're zooming and panning an image, clicking a particular link associated with a product, etc.) "In the media space, Aggregate Knowledge could notice what articles you read in an online magazine and recommend upcoming or archived Webinars, a video, or related articles. If you've watched a particular film, it can start recommending by genre, director, actor, or a combination -- 'produced by Lorne Michaels and starring certain *Saturday Night Live* alumni,' for instance."

"We are honored to be named a 'cool vendor' by Gartner," Paul Martino, AK's founder and chief executive officer, said in a statement. "It is very exciting to read a story about your favorite March Madness team and see a discovery ad with the tickets and merchandise that people are buying -- or even not-so-obvious things such as an article on what to do in San Antonio. That's the power of discovery and that's why companies are joining the Pique Discovery Network -- to get their products discovered by more than 100 million people a month."

Product discovery is also a selling point for Lemonade, Alvarez says -- but that company's key innovation is its social aspect. "Lemonade took a different view of product reviews," he says. "They're not 'reviews,' per se, but commerce within social networking: You pick products you've used, know about, or are interested in, and put them on your 'Lemonade Stand' in your social profile. If anybody clicks through and buys, you get a cash kickback. If you have 600 or 700 friends in your profile, it can add up."

Alvarez says this kind of networked selling offers a win-win opportunity -- for sellers as well as for posters. "There's a story about a teenage kid whose birthday was coming up," he says. "He put his wish list on his Lemonade Stand and directed all his friends there to see what he wanted. Not only did he get the presents, he made a few bucks as well."

Contact Us: Brett Miller bmiller@getabby.com 1.877.305.1341