



## Found Money

### Brainshark Improves Forecast Close Rates With Cloud9 Pipeline Accelerator



**Company:**  
Brainshark

**Industry:**  
Software

**Geographies:**  
Global

**Solution:**  
Cloud9 Pipeline Accelerator

**“Based on our quarterly revenue run rate of \$8M, a 5% improvement in close rates works out to \$400K of found money every three months.”**

There is a huge difference between guessing and knowing. For Dave Fitzgerald, that difference has translated to \$400,000 straight to the bottom line every quarter.

Fitzgerald, Executive Vice President responsible for Sales, Marketing and Services at Brainshark, long suspected that improved visibility into his team’s pipeline could result in better forecast closure, but the results surprised even he. “I would say that with Cloud9 Pipeline Accelerator we improved our forecast closure rate by 5%, but I think I am being conservative; it could easily be twice that. Based on our quarterly revenue run rate of \$8M, a 5% improvement works out to \$400K found money every three months. That’s meaningful, to say the least.”

#### Pipeline Management and Forecast Accuracy in a High-Growth Environment

As the leader in on demand presentation solutions for enterprises of all sizes, Brainshark, based in Waltham MA, has enjoyed an enviable record of sales growth and customer acquisition in a highly competitive environment. As such, Brainshark has developed a nimble sales strategy that successfully employs multiple teams and multiple opportunity types that can quickly move deals through the sales cycle. But this sales model resulted in a pipeline management and forecasting nightmare.

“It was nearly impossible to get meaningful visibility out of our CRM system, given all the variables at play,” said Lori Rapoza, Director of Sales Operations at Brainshark. “It was immensely frustrating to have to manually map what was changing in discrete sales stages across so many teams and

opportunity types. It was like playing connect-the-dots with invisible ink.”

#### Brainshark’s Customer-Facing SaaS Strategy

Brainshark’s ongoing challenge – as is the same with any Software as a Service (SaaS) provider – is to keep the cost of sales and marketing low. In order to build in scalable process efficiencies, Brainshark, under Fitzgerald’s leadership, embarked on a comprehensive initiative to provide a unified SaaS-based technology architecture to support the company’s sales, marketing, services, and training efforts.

At the hub of the company’s SaaS strategy, was Salesforce CRM that provided the transactional data store and integration hub for specialized best-in-breed solutions for marketing automation, Web analytics, and proposal creation, among others. But when it came to sales analytics, Brainshark faced a daunting decision: build or buy.

“The complex nature of data warehouse-based analytics definitely made us pause and look at our options because there is so much more technology that goes into these systems than most other customer-facing apps,” said Fitzgerald. “We could either buy a box of Cognos, a server, implementation services, a maintenance contract, and dedicated headcount to have a custom-built solution in six months or we could go with a SaaS sales analytics solution like Cloud9 that removes all of the overhead and complexity and starts delivering results day one. I think the build-or-buy debate lasted about fifteen minutes.”

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**Dave Fitzgerald,**  
Executive Vice President,  
Brainshark

### **Sales Analytics On Demand**

After an evaluation of two SaaS-based analytics solutions, Brainshark chose Cloud9 because the solution took nightly snapshots of all their data – including all objects, custom objects, and fields – and provided immediately-relevant pipeline information to sales leadership in an easy-to-use application tightly integrated with Salesforce.

“It gets back to the fact that sales managers are so busy, they don’t want to spend time creating reports on their own, they just want an answer so they can close the next deal,” said Fitzgerald. “And that’s what we pay them for. Cloud9 not only fit extremely well with our SaaS architecture, but provided everything we needed in a pipeline and forecasting analytics solution, including simple point-and-click access to answers, powerful filtering capabilities, mouse-overs that revealed important information, meaningful charts and graphs, and a way to easily export data for distribution. Our sales leaders wouldn’t use the solution if it didn’t fit them like a glove.”

The result? Brainshark sales leaders can now see instantly what is changing in their pipeline, including deals at risk and strategic new opportunities. Armed with this “early warning system,” sales leaders can

then deploy their teams on the deals that matter most, resulting in higher win rates and improved forecast accuracy.

### **ROI in Less Than 30 Days**

It took Brainshark less than a week to deploy Cloud9 Pipeline Accelerator and less than 30 days for them to realize a full return on investment (ROI). And that was even *before* Fitzgerald calculated the increase in revenue at quarter-end. “The first thing we noticed with Cloud9 was that sales leaders were spending almost zero time on sales analytics resulting in increased productivity not just with sales management, but across the organization,” remarked Fitzgerald. “I calculate that Cloud9 saved Brainshark \$250,000 annually by returning selling time back to the team and that equates to a payback in 2-3 weeks.

“On top of that, we are now having more productive conversations about what is really going on in sales instead of arguing over sketchy information because the data doesn’t lie. That lowers the frustration level all around – almost as much as finding \$400K in additional deals every quarter. It’s really been a win-win all around for us.”

### **About Cloud9 Analytics**

Cloud9 Analytics is the global leader in SaaS performance management applications delivered directly to line-of-business managers to increase revenue. The Cloud9 Pipeline Accelerator Suite enables sales management and operations to more effectively manage their sales pipeline and forecast. The result is a dramatic increase in forecast accuracy, increased win rates and higher CRM adoption. Powered by patent-pending row-versioning database technology, Cloud9’s applications deliver value in just 24 hours and require zero installation, zero maintenance and zero IT support. Cloud9’s customers include Covad Communications, Data Domain, Siemens, Thermo-Fisher Scientific, and Thomson Reuters.



### **Cloud9 Analytics**

333 Twin Dolphin Drive #112 Redwood City, CA 94065

Main: 650.561.7855 | Fax: 650.637.1478 | [www.cloud9analytics.com](http://www.cloud9analytics.com)