

Sales Management Software for Small to Medium-Sized Sales Teams



Nikolaus Kimla - CEO

About Pipeliner

Headquartered in Los Angeles, California and Vienna, Austria, Pipeliner spans every continent. We have offices in the UK, Sweden, Slovakia, India, the Middle East, and Asia/Pacific.

Pipeliner sales Inc. thrives as a powerful IT culture. Our award-winning team includes technical consultants, sales professionals, and CRM experts--some of whom helped to found the CRM industry.

Our technical team has worked together for many years, most recently creating the power behind the global platform of World-Check (acquired by Thomson Reuters). This software, used by more than 5,000 banks, connects and integrates governance, risk, and compliance processes across organizations.

We have a track record of being a innovative and forward-thinking company with proven product development—delivering software products on time and fully functional.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Mr. Kimla, what is Pipeliner?

Mr. Kimla: Pipeliner is leading the revolution in the CRM area. We are disruptive to the industry because we are coming with a different approach and different angle. Comparing, in the last couple of years not really new CRM systems were coming in the market because most of the CRM systems that were coming up are for small to medium sized businesses and also add-ons, just apps. However, not really a CRM. It takes time to program that. Pipeliner is a new way, a new approach, and will be changing the industry in the next years.

CEOCFO: How so? How is your approach different?

Mr. Kimla: First of all, our approach was different in the area because most of the CRM systems today are coming out because there is so much to program and there are so many features that you have to have in a CRM system, coming from an old legacy system. That means that the CRM systems that are the big ones out there like Microsoft Dynamics, SugarCRM and Salesforce, all of them have been around for a long time, about 10 to 15 or more years. The thing is with the legacy systems of the whole architecture and the whole layout of the system was, at that stage, classical client service solutions. The service solution and the client are inherent of having a mindset of the area, what needs management. Then we program the system and the end user was not at that time in the general focus. We changed that because we said the user is most important. There is a saying almost everywhere in the world that CRM sucks. How can a technology suck? This is really ridiculous because a technology should not suck. A technology should be useful. Could you imagine that you would say about your own car that your car sucks? You would not drive the car, and you would change the car. The thing is that the same is true. No one would every use a smartphone if the saying was that smartphone sucks. You would just change the vendor. The thing is that you cannot so easily change the vendor. First of all, there is not much difference between SugarCRM, Salesforce or Microsoft Dynamics. At the end of the day, the user was saying that they all suck and that there is not a big difference. For that reason, they were all frustrated. Number two, it is all so deep embedded in some stuff over the years that people think that if they change something it will ruin their system. There are many things going on in the past years in the industry in integration and everything. This is the why we have had the focus on the user. The main users in CRM systems are the people who are out there. That means you want to have all your salesforce and everyone who is in charge of the customer, which is why it was called customer relationship management –CRM – that was the core of the beginning. However, sales people hated that and for that reason they were still using their Excel sheets and other stuff, and for that reason the data was never accurate. Because the data was never accurate, the management could not really get anything sophisticated out of the CRM system in forecasting. The people were not feeding the beast.

CEOFCO: *Would you give me one or two concrete examples of how you differ from the standard CRM and how you are able to sort and see the information?*

Mr. Kimla: We are disruptive to the industry and we have five areas where we are disruptive. I will give why we are disruptive and how this is for the user. Everything in the future is going more and more in the area of making the same things simple. When you make things simple, what it means is that at the end of the day there is only one universal language out there in the world. This is visualization because pictures can speak a thousand times faster than words. That means we have a mind to create a system through visualization. When you have visualized everything, then people say it makes sense and they understand what they can do. That is number one. Number two is that we have the user in focus. We ask our thousands of users about what they would like to see when visualization is everything and what they would like to see in using the system and how it should work. They came up with a couple of things. I will give you a couple of examples. Number one is if I have a data set, and normally I am working in one industry in a vertical market, I have one big data set and the second data set is almost the same but just a little changed. Why can I not copy and paste the whole data set? We did that. Copy paste of not only the account but contacts, leads, opportunity; everything. When you have it, you can just copy and paste and pull it there, and in one second it is there. The other thing is why can I not sometimes make simple, easy, immediately intensive bulk updates so that you can immediately have the whole set for all of the other stuff. The next thing is about why in the world I am not getting out more as a manager or a user, on both sides. It is both for the end user, the sales rep, or for the sales manager, or the board. When we lose opportunities, why can we not visualize everything we are losing and see immediately in which stage I am losing it, why I am losing it and who is losing it or which team is losing it? We created a forum that we called the archive. It is the first and only solution in the world that you will find today. We have a couple of them. There were many around that, and the basic number one principle of how we are different is that Pipeliner is deeply rooted in its philosophy and not on features and functions. The philosophy is that we say everything in an economy is driven by entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs upgrading business, going out, putting money in and risk, because they know they risk their own money. It is different for a corporate manager in a company who has probably millions and he says he does not care because it is not his money. It is a different approach. A sales rep in itself is pretty much the same like an entrepreneur. He has a high risk around the world and I did not know that before I started researching. Ninety percent around the world are living only by commission, not by big salary. The rest live by base salary with commission. Some of them in the states or other parts of the world you have 60/30, but it depends on how much the base salary companies are paying. There is a risk, and you would never risk your commission if you are not in the same principle like an entrepreneur. You are not stupid; you are not risking your own money. You say that if you just make too much time in that area that could maybe risk your provision, commission, time and energy. For that reason, I am changing that. The philosophy behind it is that we are sitting back in the driver's seat the sales rep and the sales manager. We say you guys are entrepreneurial, and we should treat you like that. We should give you access to that and control over it. We should help you in everything, and this is what we do.

“For you as an owner, entrepreneur or company, whatever you are, the most important part is to really understand how you can reduce your risks and leverage your opportunities. Pipeline is the best system for that today in the world. It is a process-driven tool that is visualized, easy, simple, and it can help you and keep you going.” - Nikolaus Kimla

CEOFCO: *For whom are you doing it? What types of companies are typically using your system today and what industries are most receptive?*

Mr. Kimla: We have had programs eight years on Earth. As I said before, if you want to replace the big systems, it is not over night. You cannot just put a couple millions on a table and say here is a team that has come together, do two years of programming and then go out. This is why most of these other systems are not really tracking Microsoft Dynamics or Salesforce. They are just little tiny solutions, so we were really programming for eight years. Since our almost not exactly two years we were on the market, we are just trying. We are not there, but we have a business concept and we are in series A. We are starting in September with our series A and we are already in contact with many investors. The thing is we really have to build the salesforce right now going out. We have tried because we wanted to know, and so we have tried to go out, look into the market and see how the response is, and the response is phenomenal. With almost no marketing effort and only our website, we have not invested any marketing money in advertising or anything. People are coming to us. We have right now a couple hundreds of customers around the world, and we have more than 128 customers in the U.S. in the last one and a half years. We are gaining about 27 new companies per month without any advertising and without anything. They just come to us, and we speak with them. We have over 100 in Europe, and we have a few in Australia, Singapore and in South Africa and South America – across the world. The interesting thing is we are really in dialogue with these companies. Because I am out of my history coming from the enterprise business, I knew to go with the CRM in the enterprise you cannot do that, because it takes time. Therefore, small to mid-size business around the world is where we go at that stage for the next two years. We have a vertical approach out of customization, but not with templates. This will come in the next couple of months, and we are really having a broad view right now of all the industry. We are doing very well in manufacturing in technical IT industries and then in the financial industry. We are

also in some real estate and others. It is interesting. Manufacturing, financial and classical IT industries right now pull me in.

CEOCFO: *When you are speaking with a prospective customer, do they understand the entrepreneurial concept that you talked about or is it more they look and see what the system does and they are not so concerned with the philosophy behind it?*

Mr. Kimla: I would say when you are starting a brand and starting a product, first of all the product has to convince. You are not speaking about the philosophy; you are speaking about how the product can help your day-to-day workload. You want to use it and you say it is different, and then you slowly come in and say it is the concept behind it. You are not selling the concept first, you sell the solution first to the pain that these people have, and you say we can help you guys. You ask them if they have thought of this and our education. If you go to our website now, we have approximately 40 or 50 eBooks that are already published. We have a big division in our company that is producing because out of entrepreneurship we believe in education. We have to educate people, and sales are dramatically changing. I can explicitly go deeper in why it is. The buyer in the last 10 to 15 years has changed dramatically. The buyer is more informed than any time before. They know about the product and they know everything. When it comes to sales, the seller has not changed. Now the seller has to change, but they do not know how and in which direction they should change. We are coming here with a constant and saying this is how you should change. This is how you should really work. Then, the company is coming back to us and saying this makes sense. We use your product and this is the idea behind it. We are not going first with the philosophy and making big words. We just use the system and we are just feeding them and asking if they think about this and if it makes sense. Do you try to control your people? Because right now they have a tool by themselves, you should mentor your people. You should come alongside your people. This is much more. In the old systems, our Salesforce, Microsoft or whatever you call it; the problem is that the sales manager is overloaded the whole day. At the end of the day, she has just the data with 50 people under her. Therefore, how much time do you really have per week for one sales rep when you just do not have the data analyzed in a good way? That means that they do not even have the time to mentor these guys, and this is one of the core problems. When I am coming to the guy and he has a problem and I am speaking about entrepreneurship but he thinks I am crazy, we are just coming first with solutions, showing them, telling them and saying have you thought of this? They say that makes sense and they want it. They want them to be more self-responsible and they want them to take action by themselves. Then they can be led, guided and coached.

CEOCFO: *You have been involved in a fair number of ventures. What have you learned to avoid?*

Mr. Kimla: First of all, I am 53 and I moved here years ago from Austria, Vienna to the United States because the product was moving here. The product was saying give up everything, be crazy, close your house, pack your stuff and move with your whole family overseas. The thing is, the really important part is always what you are feeding the beast. There are really only two things that you can feed. One is the fear and the other is the fate. The question is not if you are driven by either one, it is just what you feed. Sometimes, you feed the wrong stuff in your life, and this is what I have learned. As an entrepreneur, as myself, I am sure everyone has some doubts sometimes. Can we really survive? Can really market lead that we want? Is it too brave? Then it starts to stop. Then comes all the rational thought and faith is gone. Then it is only fear. What you do is you get frightened. When faith is there, you say you have a good concept, a good product, good people, a good strategy, and the right time. Faith builds up, and I think it is always what you feed not only in your own life but also in your people. If you come and feed in your people the fear aspect of controlling, you just come onto them and lead them and be what you should be as an entrepreneur, their manager and a leader who goes first and not last.

CEOCFO: *Put it all together. Why pay attention to Pipeline today?*

Mr. Kimla: Every person reduced the risk, and reducing the risk is one part and really leveraging the opportunities. If you want to reduce your risk, then you should get serious because the customer is not waiting. The customer is moving on. If you do not deliver the product, service or whatever you have to the customer, they are moving on to the next vendor. For you as an owner, entrepreneur or company, whatever you are, the most important part is to really understand how you can reduce your risks and leverage your opportunities. Pipeline is the best system for that today in the world. It is a process-driven tool that is visualized, easy, simple, and it can help you and keep you going. Out of the numbers and out of the subconscious concept behind immediately you are on a safer side. You sleep better, you are more relaxed, and you can better enjoy what you are really doing.

BIO: Nikolaus Kimla is the founder and managing partner of Pipelinersales Inc. and the creator and mastermind of Pipeliner CRM Software, which wants to change the sales management worldwide with a paradigm shift. More than 19 years ago, Kimla set the foundation for Pipeliner's future with his European company uptime ITechnologies Inc.

The groundwork for the successful development and later deployment of Pipeliner CRM was laid with World Check, a banking compliance solution developed and operated by uptime with more than 5,000 customers worldwide, which was acquired by Thomson Reuters in 2011.

Nikolaus Kimla is also a renowned author and has just released a new book entitled Salespeople Embracing It All. Previously published works by Kimla include The IT Revolution and Empty Coffers--New Burdens.



Pipeliner
15209 W. Sunset Blvd
Suite 492
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272
888-843-6699
www.pipelinersales.com