

## Cloud-Based Sales Enablement Platform

### Technology Enterprise Applications

#### SAVO

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**Mark F. O'Connell**  
President and CEO

#### BIO:

A results-driven, highly successful leader in the global technology and software industry, Mark O'Connell is the president and CEO of SAVO. With more than thirty years of experience in marketing, finance, strategy, business development and executive management, he has led high technology organizations in the pursuit of significant growth, international expansion and evolution.

Prior to joining SAVO, Mark served as the president and CEO for Supply Scape Corporation, a leading software provider to the pharmaceutical and life sciences industry, and for MatrixOne. At MatrixOne, he led the company to exponential growth in sales and revenue, established a world-class management team, and led two rounds of venture financing and an IPO. His vision and leadership transformed the organization into the industry leader in product lifecycle management software and services,

realizing a growth in sales from less than \$20 million to \$145 million, and the eventual sale of the company for more than \$400 million.

#### About SAVO:

Founded in 1999, SAVO is the market leader in sales enablement. SAVO's on-demand sales enablement platform maximizes the sales team's ability to communicate value and differentiation in clear, consistent and compelling ways. Combining proven sales and marketing best practices with award-winning technology, SAVO addresses all aspects of the sales enablement challenge — spanning people, process, insight and technology. For more information, visit [www.savogroup.com](http://www.savogroup.com) or follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter.

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

**CEOCFO:** Mr. O'Connell, what is the basic concept at SAVO?

**Mr. O'Connell:** We offer a cloud-based software solution that helps organizations drive a higher level of productivity from their salespeople by helping them understand the next steps they should take in their sales process, and what they should say to inspire a customer.

**CEOCFO:** How do you accomplish your mission?

**Mr. O'Connell:** Before we get into that, let me help a little more with the definition of the problem. For example, the single largest line item of spending on a company's P&L is sales and marketing. CEOs and CFOs set company roadmaps in motion and those plans are driving new product development, which will be responsible for X percent of their growth. To sell

those new products, they expand their sales teams, who need to get ramped quickly. They are opening up global channels so they can get third-party companies to sell their products. They acquire companies and then try to figure out how to leverage all of these strategic initiatives all the way down to the salespeople to actually execute them. All of those plans sound great inside the boardroom, and when making promises to Wall Street. However, when CEOs and CFOs look into their organization, are they actually able to execute on those strategic revenue initiatives? Chances are, most CEOs and CFOs would say their confidence level is low. The ability to translate the revenue objectives of a company to the salespeople's actions to help them achieve their revenue objectives is becoming the final frontier that companies have left to automate. Of the automation in the finance and accounting pipeline, the investors and supply chain yield ERP systems and huge reductions in inventory, and turn that inventory into cash. Similarly, in the last five to ten years, billions of dollars have been spent on technologies such as CRM and marketing automation. The CEO and CFO sponsor these, yet when you look at the statistics industry analysts are publishing, the tools are not generating the anticipated return on investment. The key reason for this is that while there is a lot of automation around the edges, there is not enough support for the day-to-day life of a seller. There is a lack of support for salespeople around what they should do to advance a deal, and what they need to be able to say to communicate the value of their products and services so the prospect will make a purchase. SAVO sits right in the middle of the road between the

investment in marketing and marketing automation, and the investment in CRM. Our whole focus and purpose is to help companies enable their salespeople to inspire their customers and convert strategic revenue initiatives into actions, conversations and deals.

**CEO CFO:** What is the strategy?

**Mr. O'Connell:** There are five critical areas where companies have made investments but still are not realizing productivity. The first area is around lead conversion. Companies have invested a tremendous amount of money in marketing automation. We are seeing a huge shift in IT spending towards marketing. Yet, the conversion rate from when the lead comes in through marketing to when it arrives at the salesperson is still a very small number. In fact, Forrester says that 87% of the leads that come out of marketing automation systems do not convert into deals. Our solutions focus right on that. When a lead comes in, our technology helps the seller understand exactly what the buyer is looking for and where they are in the buying cycle based on who they are – CEO, Head of Sales, or a marketing leader. We give salespeople real-time coaching, playbooks and processes that are built in and enable them to take the best practices of the industry and their company, and apply them to their customer conversations. With that, they have the chance of a much higher conversion rate so they can take the leads that come from marketing and turn them into opportunities, therefore turning that 87% down to something much smaller. That is the first step. The second step is sales process. Believe it or not, statistics say that when a sales representative calls on a prospect, they get the next meeting only 7% of the time. So what can you do to help sales representatives have a more compelling story and deliver it in an inspiring way? The challenge most sellers face in today's technological age is that buyers are incredibly knowledgeable and they are predisposed to what they are going to

buy before they ever engage with a salesperson. If the salesperson happens to be selling the prospect exactly what they want, then they are in great shape. But the chance of that happening is not usually very high, which means that the sales representative has to get a "win," and they have to be inspiring, communicate enough clear value, and do it in a compelling way where the buyer sits back and says, "You know, that is really interesting. I had not thought about it that way. Tell me more."

**CEO CFO:** There have been hundreds of sales books written along with training courses and programs. In general, what have you figured out at SAVO that others do not understand?

**"For the first time, executives get actionable insight on the behavior of their salespeople so they can intervene and say they are not getting the productivity needed, and their teams are not using the processes they want in different parts of the world. By gaining visibility into these different areas, the CEO, CFO and Head of Sales can now take necessary action long before the financial results are realized. This is one of the most powerful things that we offer."**

**- Mark F. O'Connell**

**Mr. O'Connell:** The fact is, these sales books contain great ideas and they all contain great processes that a company can adopt. But the larger the company, the harder it is to adopt the recommended processes and actions that the books espouse. At this time of the year, many companies are gearing up for their annual kick-off meetings and they are preparing to fly in tens of thousands of salespeople to Las Vegas, Orlando, etc. A substantial portion of their agenda will be dedicated to training salespeople on a sales process. But after the kick-off, the reps will go back to wherever they came from, and all they will have to reinforce the newly learned process is what was in the book or on a laminate card. For most companies, they have not invested in the necessary underlying technology to support the new process and messages. The salesperson needs to have technology that pushes the right content and

messages, and ensures they are using the correct sales process every single day. Today, organizations are investing billions of dollars in building sales organizations, and billions of dollars in sales training and messaging, yet people are just starting to invest in the underlying technology that makes those messages and processes come to life situation by situation in a very strong way wherever those salespeople are located.

**CEO CFO:** Would you tell us about the other three points that people are not recognizing?

**Mr. O'Connell:** The next key area is helping salespeople prepare for meetings. Statistics say that salespeople spend over half of their

time preparing for meetings and doing research on prospective clients. We help to automate a lot of that. When a lead comes in, we automate the conversion of information from marketing to the CRM system and do it in a way that clearly presents all the information to the sales representatives so they are not wasting time searching and preparing. We take a lot of that back-office out and give it back to them by delivering

quality information and guidance on what to do. Salespeople can then spend more time on the sales strategy. Helping reps prepare for sales meetings and develop a strategy is a critical element of the SAVO system. Another key area of importance is the way people sell today. The majority of B2B sellers are hosting executive level meetings at airports and coffee shops. To help the modern seller, we have invested very heavily in a mobile solution that allows all of the technology and coaching support to be in the hands of a salesperson so they have the knowledge of their company at their fingertips. For instance, when a salesperson is having an engaging conversation with a prospective buyer and they are asked a question they do not immediately have an answer to, the rep can access SAVO from their tablet or smartphone and ask SAVO the question. It will come back, give

them relevant presentation materials, whitepaper materials, and things they may want to ask the prospect in return. At SAVO, our mobile application, Mobile Sales Pro, was the Tabby award-winning mobile platform for 2012. You can now do whiteboarding, animation and annotate PowerPoint slides – to name a few features – which are very powerful tools for salespeople. Another example of something that companies are not thinking about when arming their salespeople with a new process is that the salesperson then needs to answer an RFP or put a proposal in front of his or her prospect. They are making a commercial offer from their company to yours and about 80% of organizations do not have a simple application that puts discipline, protection and compliance in place, and allows salespeople to save a large amount of time preparing those proposals. They also do not have a way to deliver those proposals in a way that is professional and differentiated, so when they deliver the commercial proposal, they put forward their best effort. SAVO has an application to fill this gap, save salespeople time, and help them deliver professional proposals. The last step is analytics. If I go back to the business problem that most companies have, every company struggles with their growth. They put plans in place, they invest and they make promises. However, when they try to drive execution, many CEOs and CFOs hold a false sense of security because they have a CRM system. Our customers look at SAVO as potentially the other side of the coin for CRM. CRM is capturing information from salespeople and reporting pipeline information back up to the CEO and CFO. What we do is take information from the CEO, the product management, the marketing teams and sales, and we push that information into the hands of the salespeople. We have an analytics product built into our solution that gives company executives real-time insight into the behavior of salespeople. It tells them what they are actually doing - not what they say they are doing, as they would within a CRM system. Executives are able to gain

true visibility into what people are doing on new product launches - from how effective they are at delivering proposals to whether they are delivering the methodology and message the way you expect them to when you bought those books and hired that sales training company. For the first time, executives get actionable insight on the behavior of their salespeople so they can intervene and say they are not getting the productivity needed, and their teams are not using the processes they want in different parts of the world. By gaining visibility into these different areas, the CEO, CFO and Head of Sales can now take necessary action long before the financial results are realized. This is one of the most powerful things that we offer.

**CEOCFO:** When you speak with a prospective client, is there an “aha” moment when they get it and understand the value?

**Mr. O’Connell:** They get it when they take the time to understand what we do to help automate the processes and really focus in on what we are doing to make an individual seller more productive. What has happened is organizations have invested very heavily in all of their technologies, but those technologies are not supporting the individual seller. They are supporting the management team with information, but there is not enough driving the productivity of what a seller does every day. When we take prospects through the different scenarios of what we are doing for IBM, Citrix, American Express and Symantec, among other companies, they sit back and say, “Aha, I get it now. I understand that we are not making the investments to make our individual sellers productive.” When they aggregate that, whether it is 1,000 salespeople or 15,000, they understand why they are not realizing productivity in the field. The tools they put in place are helping the company move faster, but they are not becoming more productive. The investments are not helping their salespeople.

**CEOCFO:** Would you tell us one or two of the differences when you are

working with specific industries or different job titles?

**Mr. O’Connell:** First, I would say there is a lot of customization to our system. You can configure certain capabilities like trying to integrate to a specific CRM system, but most companies have different sales processes. Some companies have a five-step and some companies have a seven-step. They put different things in those stages, and they have a different structure to their commercial proposals. In the early days of setting up the system for them, we go through a configuration process so our solution can be implemented very quickly - unlike a CRM system where the implementations typically take a long time and are very expensive. We generally deploy our system within sixty to ninety days, and often in less time, depending on the size of the organization and what the client needs. The investment in our solution is predominantly in the cloud, and that is the first difference. The second one is that there are differences by industry. One of the big challenges companies face is – especially if they are in financial services or the healthcare market – what materials their salespeople are actually going to get access to and how to preserve the customer-sensitive information to abide by industry regulations. To meet these needs, and protect and preserve the data, we have invested very heavily in different levels of security all the way through our mobile solutions on iPads, iPhones and Androids. As a result, we have a very large portfolio of financial services customers, including Northern Trust and American Express. Because we take these steps for highly regulated clients, it is easy for us to do it for other industries as well.

**CEOCFO:** You have recently launched a new version. What has changed and what is newly available?

**Mr. O’Connell:** We have put deeper investment in individual applications. We have introduced a portfolio of applications that allow people to start, for example, on that lead conversion solution. They can buy our CRM app and commercial proposal solution. Wherever their biggest pain point is, they can start with us there. They do

not have to buy the whole solution suite upfront. We make it very economical for organizations and very low risk so that they can grab a piece of SAVO, and when they are ready to add another piece, the system is still completely integrated. This is a big breakthrough for our technology and what we have been doing for our customers.

**CEOCFO:** How do you reach prospective clients?

**Mr. O'Connell:** We have a direct sales organization that calls on executives in companies with commercial sales forces ranging in size from a couple hundred reps up to

sales forces as big as IBM's. IBM has been a customer of ours for six years and it continues to grow each year, so it is up and down that entire spectrum. A lot of our customers are very active references for us, even when we do not ask, because of the visibility of what they are doing. A lot of people in the industry are trying to solve the sales productivity problem and they see why other companies are gaining market share, gaining momentum, and their salespeople are more productive.

**CEOCFO:** Why should people in the business and investment community pay attention to SAVO?

**Mr. O'Connell:** I think every CEO and CFO is preoccupied with how they are going to achieve their probable growth. They need to examine carefully if they have made the necessary investments that give them the confidence that their sales teams are executing to their strategy, and they need to be able to say that with confidence. If CFOs and CEOs lack visibility into what their sales teams are actually doing before the quarter ends, they will not have enough visibility to give them the confidence and control to run their company, which is always a dangerous place to be.

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The SAVO logo consists of the word "SAVO" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is stylized with a white circle inside it.The SMARTER SELLING logo features the words "SMARTER" and "SELLING" stacked vertically in a blue, sans-serif font. A small "TM" trademark symbol is located to the right of "SELLING". A vertical blue line is positioned to the left of the text.