

## It's the Economy, Stupid!



Things are tough all over—especially the last year or so. People laid-off and the remaining ones expected to carry the load for those let go. So what else is new? This has been going on for a long time – my recollections of this trend goes back to the early 80's when I was involved in carrying out massive layoffs for a giant telecommunications company, "they who shall not be named".

As usual, small business owners are especially hard hit. According to a 2009 study done by

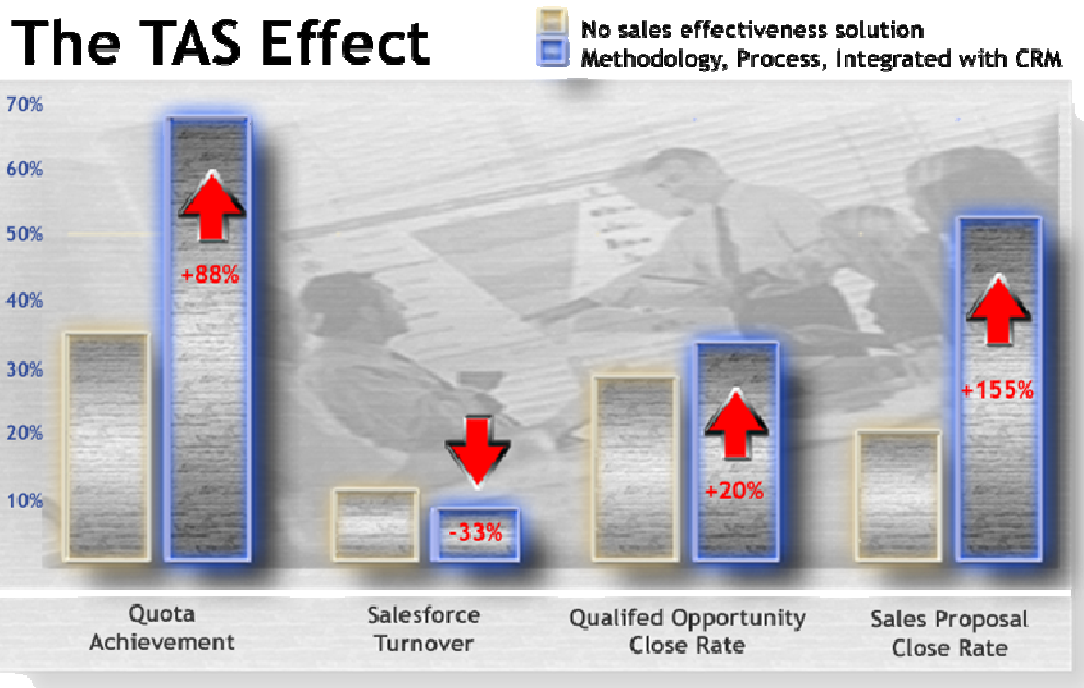
CSO Insights, a Boulder, CO-based research company that tracks the sales and marketing trends, a majority of the small business companies they surveyed responded to the recession by raising their quotas (although they didn't look at large companies my bet is that they did the same thing). My experience is that just raising quotas does not increase sales but it does increase frustration and ultimately turnover.

So what can a small business owner do? Today, there are many tools available, especially in the software as a service (SaaS) arena that do not require a huge capital investment, long lead times, or a staff of IT people. These sales force automation systems can:

- Track sales leads
- Manages accounts, contacts, and customers opportunities.
- Schedule sales promotion activity
- Manage field service requests
- Provide sales forecasts and market analysis based on the data collected from SFA-related systems and algorithms.
- Manage sales orders
- Incorporate best practice sales process, sales methodologies, and virtual training – real tools that help a sales person sell more by:
  - Identifying the right opportunities to pursue early in the process
  - Identifying an appropriate sales strategy to use

- Keeping track of the critical people in the decision process
- Giving sales leadership information on the opportunities so they don't have to spend Monday mornings answering the "what's going to close this month" question. Instead, leadership can give coaching and real support to help close the sales where help is needed.

These tools can increase sales success by increasing the number of deals, deal size and shortening the lead time. My buddies at The TAS Group put it this way:



It doesn't have to be "the economy".

HP Pelzel, Principle - Bee Group, Inc.

Source: Bee Group Blog – [www.beegrp-blog.com](http://www.beegrp-blog.com)