

Why ROI/TCO Spreadsheets Don't Work

Why should I use Alinean's business value selling solutions when we already have an Excel™ based ROI spreadsheet?

The Issue	The Reason	The Alinean Advantage
<p>Spreadsheets are developed internally, and often lack credibility with vendor wary prospects</p>	<p>In a recent Ernst & Young survey, although over 70% of prospects need solution providers to perform business case analysis for them, and require it as a distinguishing factor, less than 3% believe vendor analysis is credible. However, when developed by a credible third party, over 50% would trust the provider analysis.</p>	<p>Third party credibility is delivered via IDC Alinean's independent research, model development and standard framework / toolset for cost-benefit analysis. The credibility is maintained through exclusive IDC research partnership, the only business value selling solutions company partnered with a major analyst firm, and industry thought leadership as ROI experts with ComputerWorld, SearchCIO, SearchSMB, CIODecisions and BetterManagement.com.</p>
<p>Customers do not like spreadsheet reports or output</p>	<p>With spreadsheet based reports or its limited output ability, the user is often forced to add analysis graphs, background and text to the report in order to make it compelling.</p>	<p>Professional PDF or Word reports are automatically generated including compelling text, graphs and charts such as a customized Executive Summary, Top Benefits, Benefits by Goal or Stakeholder, and Breakeven charts.</p>
<p>Most salespeople are not particularly good at using spreadsheets</p>	<p>Spreadsheets can be complex and intimidating, and as such, often have low adoption rates amongst sales professionals (usually most sales people top out their expertise in managing their pipeline). Often, the spreadsheets are only used by a select group of consultants instead of having the entire sales force armed with business value selling tools. Often salespeople corrupt the spreadsheet and provide false results in the sales opportunity and destroy credibility with the customer or prospect.</p>	<p>The Alinean software is easy to use, wizard driven and standardized for all analyses. To provide usability for all user communities, the user login determines what level the user has been trained to, and tunes the application to make it as simple as possible for the novice user, or more thorough for consultants. For example, With the Alinean platform, a single ROI model can be used on the corporate web site for lead generation, a quick ROI mode for sales professionals, and a complete, multi-project business case analysis for consultants.</p>
<p>Spreadsheets are hard to maintain</p>	<p>Spreadsheets are often developed by a single internal expert who has to maintain the content, often as a second or third job. The spreadsheets are often programmed with macros and other tools to help make them easier to use, but these are difficult to maintain. The spreadsheets often lack an adequate maintenance schedule to update key metrics, product information, benefit impacts, costs and other important defaults to keep the tool current. Once in the field, the spreadsheets take on a life of their own creating a version control nightmare of older version usage and field modifications.</p>	<p>The Alinean business value selling software uniquely leverages a central library database repository of IDC Alinean research, analysis and metrics which is maintained and managed centrally to optimize manageability and ensure validity of ROI/TCO model content. Since the application is Internet based, updates are immediately available to all users as updates are provided. Regular updates to key metrics are performed by IDC Alinean to keep the customized models current and relevant.</p>

<p>Spreadsheets are not standardized</p>	<p>Any company with multiple products has faced the issue of various ROI / TCO spreadsheet initiatives and tools having different interfaces, calculation methodologies, considerations and reports.</p>	<p>The Alinean software and IDC Alinean business value selling methodology are standardized for all ROI / TCO content. The content is stored in a central database library of customized ROI / TCO templates defining the detailed and customized content for your specific projects and prospects, while the tool standardizes the usability, business logic, and reporting for all users and uses in the sales process, from web site / direct marketing lead generation, to a quick ROI / TCO by sales professionals in the engagement / positioning process, through detailed ROI / TCO analysis through proposal and close.</p>
<p>I have already made an investment in my spreadsheets</p>	<p>Your company may have already invested in a spreadsheet model, and trained the field on its use. However, there is an on-going cost to maintain and update the spreadsheet, additional training costs to get user adoption, and lost opportunity cost in deal flow from not having the best solution possible.</p>	<p>Alinean is the only company that can port (not replace) your existing spreadsheet content to the Alinean business value selling platform quickly and easily, and maintain all of the diligent work that went into the cost and benefit calculations and metrics. By moving to the Alinean business value selling platform you can improve the use of your value justification content throughout the sales process, increase user adoption, lower maintenance and support costs, improve timeliness on updates, and most importantly, provide the tools to make you sales and consultant staff more effective against competitive selling solutions, prospect's other priorities, and CxO / economic buyer scrutiny.</p>
<p>Spreadsheets are not designed to cover all of the sales process</p>	<p>When a spreadsheet is developed, the user has to decide what the audience will be and what step in the sales process the spreadsheet is being developed for – keep it simple for earlier in sales process with an ROI calculator type interface for customer or sales professional use, or make it more credible and thorough for later use in sales process by consultants at the exclusion of sales professional ease of use.</p>	<p>Our business value selling solution is unique in that all aspects of the sales process are covered - providing customization from a single content set and application suite that is used to position the company's unique value proposition at each stage of the sales cycle. The Alinean Business Value Selling solution helps the sales team identify the most likely prospect opportunities with Value Finder™, attract qualified leads using the ROI Calculator™, conduct a consultative and compelling executive discussion using corporate and IT benchmarks in PeerComparison™, calculate ROI / TCO and build a compelling and customized business case justification using the ROI Analyst™ and more. Integrated with your CRM solution to reinforce the process assures adoption, and improved selling effectiveness.</p>

The Bottom Line – Versus current Excel based ROI spreadsheets, the Alinean Business Value Selling solution provides a much more effective, easy to use, lower cost of ownership solution that covers all aspects of value selling throughout the sales cycle.