

VMF Sales Challenges & Responses

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During the course of any given sales interaction with a potential VisNetic MailFlow customer, sales representatives may encounter various types of challenges. This document will strive to outline some of these challenges and provide a response framework for them.

Note that this needs to be considered a living document, subject to growth, change, and expansion. Please feel free to [contact me directly](#) with additional content ideas.

Challenge:

We have no use for a product like VMF.

Response:

When a customer makes a statement like this, the first question we must ask ourselves is how well they understand the product to begin with.

Any company doing business with the general public must interact with them at some point. If they interact with customers via email, then VMF can help them.

Here are some simple qualifying questions:

- Do you have product sales, support, marketing, or customer service representatives? If yes, VMF can help you to:
 - Intelligently distribute the workload originating from sales@, info@, marketing@, support@, and other “generic” email boxes
 - Greatly improve productivity through use of a standard response library
 - Track the entire communications history of every customer
 - Report upon (and monitor) the activities of company representatives
 - Reduce service costs by migrating expensive phone support processes to email
 - Etc.

Here are some questions that VMF can help companies answer:

- How much email do you receive each day?
- Who replied to those emails, if anyone?
- What's the current status of those email inquiries (and customers)?
- What are customers asking of your company?
- Are customers receiving the right answers?
- How long do email messages remain unanswered (on average)?
- Who's answering emails the most efficiently & effectively?

Another element to consider is *role-based qualification* of the customer. Does your contact fulfill or support one of the following roles?

- Sales or Marketing Rep
- Customer Support or Service Rep
- Manager (of any public service representative or communications process)
- IS / IT Administrator or Specialist

If so, we have specific parts of the VMF website developed / tuned to fit their needs. See the “How Does VisNetic MailFlow Help...” qualifiers on the left-hand side of the home page.

Finally, some organizations may just naturally assume that VMF-like solutions are *very expensive*. Re-assure them that VMF was designed for small / medium businesses, and it's very affordable (share pricing with them). It was also developed for maximum ease of use and deployment.

Additional resources:

- [“Why Do I Need VisNetic MailFlow?”](#) (VMF website)
- [VMF Product Pricing](#) (VMF website)
- [White Papers](#)

***Note:** Consider offering to send resources such as white papers to customers via email, for their convenience. Find reasons to maintain contact with these people, and create follow-up opportunities.*

Challenge:

We don't understand what VMF is, or how it works.

Response:

This is an excellent opportunity to educate a customer about the potential benefits of VisNetic MailFlow. Here's a *summary phrase* you might use to capture their interest:

“VisNetic MailFlow is a revolutionary email management tool that your organization can use to provide a superior level of service to your customers. It provides comprehensive email communications history tracking, customer management, and message routing facilities to ensure a seamless and highly personalized service experience for your customers.”

Here's a run-down of the **key features** of VMF, for your reference:

- 1. Powerful email routing and workflow processing**
 - a. Distribute workload effectively among multiple customer service or support representatives
 - b. Flexible message routing criteria
 - c. Robust email auto-processing features (auto-reply, forward copy, etc.)
- 2. A centralized library of standard responses to customer inquiries**
 - a. Develop a centralized knowledge store that can help representatives be more efficient and accurate with their email replies
 - b. Create standard responses that enforce corporate standards and policies
 - c. Automatic per-representative tracking of most-frequently-used standard responses
- 3. Automatic generation and tracking of service incidents**
 - a. Never lose track of a customer service or support inquiry
 - b. Quick customer and ticket search facilities
 - c. Private comments and draft capabilities for collaboration purposes
 - d. Ticket moving and splitting features
- 4. Comprehensive reporting and analysis**
 - a. Enforce timely handling of all customer correspondence
 - b. Support business intelligence with email flow analysis
 - c. Report on email traffic levels to aid workload distribution plans
- 5. Instant access to customer communications history**
 - a. Personalize the customer service experience
 - b. Shared contact database with ownership feature
- 6. An intuitive, familiar web-based interface**
 - a. Per-agent preferences for theme, signature placement, etc.
 - b. Powerful HTML and plain-text message composition features
 - c. Integrated spell-checking

- d. Zero-footprint, access-anywhere usability
- 7. Robust security and administration features**
 - a. Support for NT account integration
 - b. Flexible and customizable access control lists
 - c. IP address restrictions for controlled access
 - d. Mail backup, archiving, and purging facilities
- 8. Integrated logging and alerting facilities**
 - a. Customized logging at various severity levels
 - b. Integrated log viewer with filtering support
 - c. Internal and external (email) alerting
 - d. Integrated alert viewer
- 9. An optional virus scanning plug-in**
 - a. Best-of-class anti-virus scanning support by Kaspersky Labs
 - b. Scans both inbound and outbound email correspondence
 - c. Fast, reliable and scalable virus protection

Additional resources:

- [“Why Do I Need VisNetic MailFlow?”](#) (VMF website)
- [Product Tour](#) (VMF website)
- [White Papers](#)

Note: Remember to create follow-up opportunities.

Challenge:

We wanted to use it but we did not have a web server or SQL and did not want to purchase it.

Response:

For some organizations, the concept of running both a web server and a database server in support of a product can be daunting. However, VMF makes managing these requirements fairly straightforward.

Here are some points to make:

- IIS is available free of charge from Microsoft, and can be installed on Win2k Server/Pro, and Windows XP Pro
- We have a special VMF installation package that installs its own database engine (MSDE – the Microsoft Data Engine). This is a free, lightweight database server that's appropriate for lighter loads (e.g. 3-6 users with light to moderate email volumes)
- The VMF installer seamlessly handles the configuration of **both** the web server **and** the database engine
- The need to interact with these elements (e.g. database server, web server) post-installation is minimal
- In summary, VMF is very easy to install and maintain

Additional resources:

- [VMF Requirements page](#) (VMF website)
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Challenge:

We're happy using MS Outlook.

Response:

This is one you're likely to encounter somewhat regularly. When an organization has widely deployed (and standardized on) an email client like MS Outlook, they can be very hesitant to

move away from it. Here are some points to make:

- An organization can continue to use both MS Outlook for private communications and VMF for “generic” or “public representation” email communications (like those associates with sales@, info@, support@, marketing@ email boxes). Few companies will give up stand-alone email clients entirely, and VMF is not a drop-in replacement for those.
- Having sales & support representatives work from multiple, distinct MS Outlook installations has several **serious** disadvantages:
 - a. No ability to monitor representatives’ productivity
 - b. No ability to intelligently or efficiently distribute workload (or change it in the event of staff loss, illness, etc.)
 - c. No centralized store of customer contacts
 - d. No centralized store of communications history with customers
 - e. No centralized administration potential, including backups, troubleshooting, and maintenance
 - f. No ability to increase productivity by collaborating on a standard response library
 - g. No ability to report on mail loads in order to refine business processes & operations
 - h. No ability to access email systems from anywhere

In summary, a stand-alone email client (any email client) and VMF really serve distinct purposes, and they *absolutely can* co-exist quite nicely.

Additional resources:

- [“Why Do I Need VisNetic MailFlow?”](#) (VMF website)
- [Product Tour](#) (VMF website)
- [White Papers](#)

Note: Remember to create follow-up opportunities.

Questions Customers May Ask:

- Can I use [insert stand-alone email client name here] to work with VMF directly?
 - No, VMF does not directly interoperate with standard email clients like MS Outlook, Express, etc. However, VMF has the advantage of being entirely web-based, which means it can be used from any location that has an Internet connection. Further, the user interface is very intuitive & easy to learn.

[Also see notes above about not needing to abandon MS Outlook entirely, as well as the core benefits of using VMF versus stand-alone clients]
- Will VMF support my preferred ODBC database platform (e.g. MS Access, MySQL, etc.)?
 - VMF currently supports MS SQL Server 7 & 2000, and we also have an installation that includes MSDE (a free, light-weight version of SQL Server). Support for other database platforms is being considered for future versions.
- Does VMF support “push-style” distribution of email (e.g. round-robin, load-balanced, etc.)?
 - Future versions of VMF will strive to support the various “push” routing models, but it’s important not to under-estimate the value of our current architecture.

Quote from [Mark Richards](#), Product Development Manager:

"In many ways, the public ticketbox concept (and having agents work from those in groups) is more elegant than the push-routing alternatives, even though we'll strive to support both (in VMF) in the future. Ultimately, however, in order to do push-routing effectively, you must have constant knowledge of the availability status of all agents/representatives. This means that someone has to maintain this (including sick days, holidays, etc.) at all times. The benefit of pull-routing in VMF is that you can more readily distribute workload based upon a looser set of scheduling dynamics."