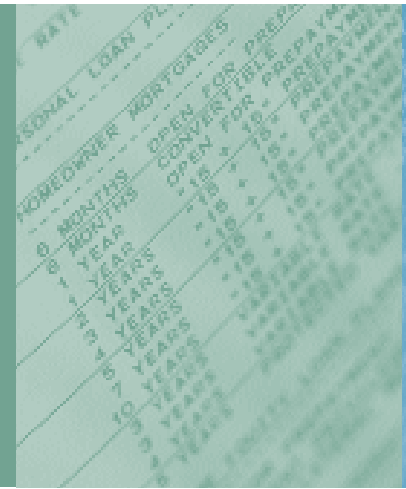


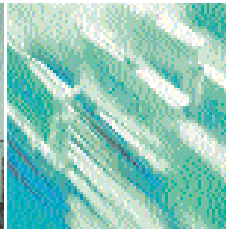
First Franklin Financial Corporation

GuideMark

Client Success Story



Financial Services



Selling
Smarter

Selling Smarter

GuideMark helps First Franklin's sales force build better relationships and boost the bottom line.



Steve Skolnik

Founded in 1981 as a small retail brokerage, First Franklin has become one of the nation's leading mortgage lenders, with over \$20 billion in loan originations per year. The company specializes in non-prime lending, providing mortgages to first-time, self-employed, or credit-challenged borrowers. Through a dedicated business-to-business sales force of more than 500 account executives (AEs), the company offers its products through over 27,000 independent mortgage brokers nationally. First Franklin recently completed a roll-out of the GuideMark broker relationship system, GuideMark BRS™, to help improve its sales force effectiveness, resulting in improved closing and unit loan ratios, as well as increased market share.

Targeting producers

Independent brokers who sell First Franklin's products employ loan officers who, in turn, sell mortgages to consumers. With each broker employing four or five loan officers on average – each of whom are free to offer competing products from other financial institutions – First Franklin wanted to help its sales force cultivate strong relationships with these individuals. "When our AEs visit a broker, we want them to know how many loan officers work at that particular office, and how each of them is performing," explains Steve Skolnik, executive vice president of production at First Franklin. "The more information we can provide our sales team about the brokers and loan officers working within their territories, the greater success they'll have at increasing customer penetration and building market share. This gives our sales team the right analytics to know what is important to our brokers, loan officers, and their customers so that we can emphasize the right products for the right audiences."

Providing this information to AEs also helps them to better manage their territories. "When our AEs understand where their best opportunities lie, they can target specific loan officers within certain brokers," says Skolnik. "This

allows them to plan their sales calls more efficiently, and helps management to deploy products and our sales force more strategically."

The challenge for First Franklin was providing its geographically dispersed sales force with this information in an easily accessible, convenient format, so that AEs could spend more time on the road visiting accounts. "Our AEs sometimes had to look in four or five different places before they knew how much business was being written with a particular account," explains Skolnik. "This meant they spent more time at their desks and less time in the field selling." Because gathering updated information was so time-consuming, AEs often focused on accounts where they already had relationships, resulting in lost business opportunities and inefficient coverage of their territories.

This focus on improved sales effectiveness was borne out in a customer survey that revealed some accounts would increase the amount of business they funded with First Franklin if they saw their AE more regularly. It became clear to the company's executive team that addressing

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*Executive Vice President of Production
First Franklin Financial Corporation*

the issue of sales force effectiveness would ultimately increase market share, improve AE sales ratios, and enhance pipeline pull through.

Process-driven development

First Franklin formed an internal team to investigate a sales effectiveness system that would meet their sales and sales management objectives, and integrate with the existing loan-origination system. First Franklin invited GuideMark to perform an extensive evaluation process, involving interviews and discussions with close to 100 employees from throughout the organization. The review gave GuideMark a clear understanding of First Franklin's goals and requirements, which they synthesized and presented as recommendations to First Franklin's sales, management, and executive team. First Franklin then selected GuideMark to tailor a system for its sales force.

GuideMark designed a version of its broker relationship system, GuideMark BRS, with several important customizations that would address First Franklin's specific needs. First, GuideMark created a module that not only provides broker-related information, but also drills down to profile individual loan officers. The module lets AEs segment and analyze each profile, allowing them to clearly identify the top-, middle-, and low-producing accounts within their territories. In addition to providing AEs with up-to-date pipeline information, the system produces broker and loan officer scorecards, enabling them to grow their market share by visiting those brokers and officers doing the most business, as well as those with potential to be top producers. GuideMark introduced the system to a launch group and helped First Franklin implement a national rollout. Today, more than 1,000 members of First Franklin's sales team are successfully using the system.

Keen focus delivers results

With GuideMark BRS, First Franklin has seen improvements in several key areas. AEs are now able to maximize their time on the road by targeting the most productive brokers and loan officers in their territories. AEs also use the system to cultivate key relationships. "Our AEs

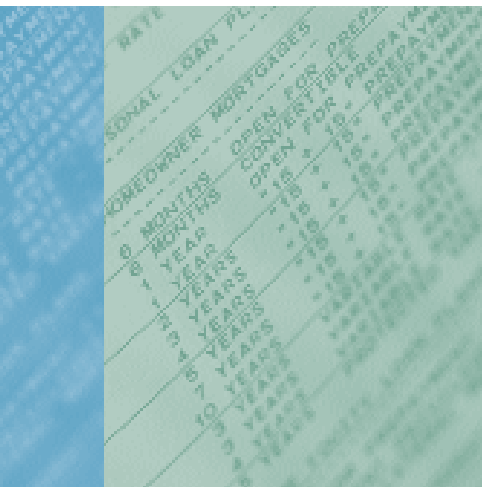
are able to sit with brokers and loan officers and give current, specific information about the mortgages they're writing," explains Skolnik. "As a result, they see their First Franklin AE as an ally, rather than someone just looking to close a deal."

First Franklin managers also use the solution to track how often accounts are visited by AEs, and how much business is being written by each. This allows the company to more effectively evaluate sales force performance, and more strategically deploy AEs. The company plans to further expand this functionality by introducing a GuideMark territory management tool.

These benefits have made an immediate and significant impact on First Franklin's bottom line. "Since implementing GuideMark BRS, penetration per customer has grown by 20%, and broker market share has increased by over 15%," Skolnik says. By using the system to gain a better understanding of the brokers and loan officers within their territory, AEs are migrating from transaction-motivated business to a longer-term, relationship-driven model that will ultimately result in more repeat business. The GuideMark solution has helped us do much more than just improve our ratios," comments Skolnik. "It's given our AEs the information and tools that they need to be more productive, better salespeople. In fact, it reinforces our brokers' and loan officers' perception that our AEs are trusted business advisors."



At left, Sydney Williams, a First Franklin AE, reviewing production with a top west coast broker.



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