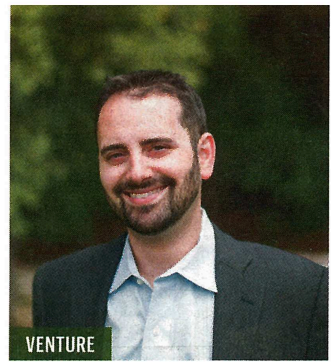


# AUSTIN BUSINESS JOURNAL

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VENTURE

HE MIXES FANTASY FOOTBALL WITH SALES FOR SUCCESS 11



VENTURE

Business intelligence for fast-growing enterprises  
by Managing Editor Greg Barr

## When make-believe impacts the bottom line

WITH HIGH-PROFILE CLIENTS IN TOW, AN AUSTIN ENTREPRENEUR HAS A SALES CONTEST GAME CHANGER ON HIS HANDS

BY KRITIKA KULSHRESTHA

A soccer match at work between employees may now earn them more than just bragging rights – it can lead to increased revenue for the company and a boost in employee productivity. That's Adam Hollander's way of changing the game for sales managers and sales representatives around the globe.

Hollander is no amateur when it comes to sales, marketing and “gamification,” the idea of applying video game mechanics to incentivize employee behavior.

His new Web-based software application FantasySalesTeam – designed along the lines of ESPN.com's Fantasy Football in which NFL players are “drafted” onto users' makeshift teams – helps sales managers run sales contests and allows the whole company to be involved in the success of the sales team.

The idea for Austin-based FantasySalesTeam was born a couple of years ago when CEO and founder Hollander was searching for a way to motivate his sales representatives to close more business deals. He realized traditional sales contests weren't really too effective because the top performers were always winning, while the bottom-rung sales reps were getting discouraged and dropping out.

“I realized I was motivating only a small percentage of my team,” Hollander said. “I wanted to keep my team better engaged in the success of the company.”

In early 2013, after spending weekends and nights creating a self-funded, working version of the FantasySalesTeam product, Hollander launched games in three medium-sized companies.

Now, FantasySalesTeam has 20 employees, including software developers in India and Ukraine. Its roster of more than 75 clients includes companies such as Reliance Energy, Go Daddy, LinkedIn Corp., Cisco Systems Inc., Hewlett-Packard Co., Lionbridge Technologies Inc. and All Over Media.

### Profit in sight

The company has raised \$640,000 in seed funding from the Central Texas Angel Network and ATX Seed Ventures. Hollander said he hopes to reach profitability by the end of this year and is focused on growing the business.

“I went for 14 months without a salary because I wanted every dollar to go



NICK SIMONITE | STAFF

Adam Hollander of FantasySalesTeam: ‘My reps earn points for every deal based on their team's performance.’

toward the growth of the company,” he said. “Now I've started paying myself although my current salary is 30 percent less than what I used to earn before.”

FantasySalesTeam exists in five game formats: baseball, football, soccer, basketball and racing. It has three game options for sales managers: an individual-based game; a fixed-team mode, in which sales managers can build teams and add sales reps to them; and an option in which sales reps can draft themselves onto teams. The third option assigns more control to the sales reps to let them choose who they want on their teams.

“My reps earn points for every deal based on their team's performance. It's this behavior and activity that drives results,” Hollander said.

The company also rolled out a new ‘Fan’ feature in July that allows non-sales personnel such as sales managers, CEOs, human resources staff and others to participate and give the whole company more of a stake in the outcome.

In the next few months, he said the

company will launch new features including the functionality to send custom-automated emails from within the application and more game templates.

Rick Hanson, one of Hollander's clients with Palo Alto, California-based Hewlett-Packard, said in a testimonial on the FantasySalesTeam website that using the game format helped his company achieve its sales contest metrics.

“FantasySalesTeam changed the game,” said Hanson, vice president of global sales and field operations at HP Enterprise Security.

“We could now put several metrics in place and the prize is more than monetary; because of the style of the game. Winning among your peers in a team setting is also a motivator.”

While gamification is still a young industry, Hollander said several competitors are already on the scene. Companies such as Redwood City-based Bunchball.com and Badgerville Inc., and San Jose-based Hoopla, have also created gamification platforms.