

CHALLENGE

Water Treatment Company Implements AI for Sales Forecasting — Landing Accuracy Improves from +/-20% to +/-0.4% vs Target

A large water treatment service company could not achieve predictable sales month over month or quarter over quarter. Reps forecast revenue, then dropped expectations through the month — leaving the business unable to plan SG&A and headcount, size customer inventory, or give investors a reliable picture. A structured sales-operations process plus an AI forecasting layer in the CRM cut landing error to a fraction of a percent.

SECTOR

Water Treatment
Services

KEY ISSUE

Unpredictable
Sales Landing

SCALE

Multi-Site
Operating District

RESULT

+/-0.4%
Forecast vs Target

CHALLENGE

What was happening

Sales forecasting deviated ~20% from actual. There was limited visibility into customer inventory, and the pipeline didn't move — close dates were pushed out every month. Reps believed there were few opportunities for new sales. The process was too unstable to plan SG&A and headcount, size customer inventory, or maintain a predictable business for investors.

WHAT I DID

How it was fixed

Analyzed sales operations, communications, and meetings, in addition to customer applications versus R&D-delivered innovation. Standardized a sales-operations calendar for every critical checkpoint. Built a supply-chain vs. customer-inventory reconciliation view with predictive chemical use and run-out. Compared simple regression forecasting against an AI layer analyzing daily sales, pipeline quality, and invoicing.

RESULTS — WHAT IT MEANS IN DOLLARS

+/-0.4%

Backtested monthly forecast vs target
(~0.8% realized monthly · 4% quarterly)

Manual +/-20% -> Regression ~8% -> AI +/-0.4%

A 25x improvement in monthly predictability

\$8.0M / yr

\$2.5M -> \$0.5M per quarter

\$2.64M

from right-sized safety stock

Forecast landing error

+/-20% -> +/-0.4% backtest / ~0.8% realized

Quarterly \$ swing

\$2.5M -> \$0.5M (-\$2.0M per quarter)

Working capital carrying savings

~\$528K / yr

SG&A right-sized (no reactive swings)

~\$750K / yr · ~6 loaded headcount

Recovered slipping pipeline

~\$1.0M / yr

Total quantified annual value

~\$2.3M / yr + \$2.64M one-time

WHAT WE FOUND

Reps mostly used the same method — estimated deliveries plus a fixed risk percentage, plus pipeline with self-chosen close-date risk. Because it was largely fixed, simple regression alone cut variability from 20% to ~8% — still short of the +/-5% target. The AI layer in the CRM analyzed true pipeline quality, connected it to inventory and predicted run-out, and read relationship strength, decision-maker probability, and comparison to similar past projects down to the manager-rep level. It also exposed rep development needs, weak and strong pipelines, and structural problems within areas.

Predictable sales isn't a spreadsheet problem — it's a process and data problem. Structured sales operations plus an AI forecasting layer turn a +/-20% guess into a decision-grade number leaders can plan and invest against.