ENABLING SALES AT SCALE

How to create and drive success with sales enablement

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WHAT IS SALES ENABLEMENT?

We define sales enablement as an essential strategic and ongoing process that ensures every customer-facing person has the necessary knowledge, materials, skills, processes and behaviors to move deals forward.

But no matter how you put it, sales enablement at its core involves content and training. We particularly like IDC's take on it: Sales enablement is all about "getting the right information into the hands of the right sellers at the right time and place, and in the right format.

The goal of sales enablement is to prepare salespeople to have valuable conversations with various decision-makers and adapt the company's value proposition to the unique situation of each buyer.
Top-performing sales reps of leading organizations are masters of market knowledge, customer needs, their products and services, their value, their competition, and everything else they need to know to succeed at selling for a specific buyer persona. They might not be technical experts in every area, but they know what they need to know to support the buyer through their purchasing journey. Therefore, the importance of a sound sales enablement strategy.

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CHALLENGES

BUSINESS VELOCITY

New product releases and updates, growing customer needs, shifting market requirements, and changing competitive landscape makes keeping the sales team up to date on value proposition and product information extremely challenging. This is especially true for high technology markets -- take software, as an example.

Meanwhile, sales teams are busier than ever, yet the organizations they work for have largely kept their training strategies the same, with the majority of training resources earmarked for boring formal learning and event-based training.

EVENT-BASED TRAINING ALONE DOES NOT WORK

A classic example of event-based training: The annual sales kickoff meeting. Sales teams are gathered from their territories across the globe and set up in a scenic location for a few days, and, between happy hours, they're loaded with a massive amount of training content, on every possible topic, all in one sweep. Months later, sales leadership is confused when 80% of their reps don't remember or implement the new processes or information gleaned from the sales kickoff meeting. The same happens with other event-based forms of training, such major product launches.

80[%]
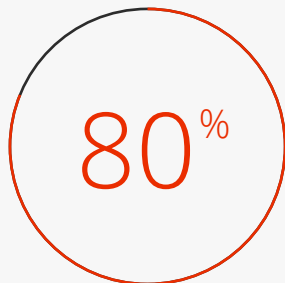
A STAGGERING 80% OF SALES PROFESSIONALS REPORT THEY DON'T REMEMBER OR IMPLEMENT THEIR LESSONS FROM ANNUAL SALES KICKOFF MEETINGS.

DISPERSED PRODUCT INFORMATION

One of your richest sources of sales enablement collateral is your marketing department. Such content is delivered during event-based training, but it's also delivered across multiple systems (email, file storage, the CRM, etc.), requiring your people to go on an information fishing expedition. If information is difficult to find, the enterprising sales rep may attempt to recreate the content themselves. The result: Marketing has no visibility into which resources work (and which don't), but they ultimately discover that their intended audience hasn't used the same content they've invested weeks of resources into developing, just because it was poorly organized. Bummer.

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NO EASY ACCESS TO EXPERTS

Perhaps the most invaluable source of product knowledge resides in a few individuals, the top experts in the company. These experts are often engaged by a variety of customer-facing departments including marketing, sales, technical support, customer success, implementation. The problem with relying on experts' availability as source of training material and knowledge is that (1) they are asked the same questions multiple times (2) they are pulled away from critical projects where they are essential (3) they are the busiest people in the company and are simply not able to keep up with demand and (4) relying on the same pool of expert does not scale, which takes us to the following section.

SCALABILITY

And here it is the top challenge for B2B, fast-growing, global enterprises: the ability to scale sales enablement efforts as the company grows. New product knowledge, skills and behaviors must be progressively developed (in a consistent manner) across a large and quickly increasing population of salespeople, and across a growing number of geographies, all in a short time.

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CHAPTER **2**

THE SALES ENABLEMENT FUNCTION

Sales enablement is, like all business functions, part of a broader picture. Leading companies have a defined sales enablement role in their organizations.

30[%]   59[%]   72[%]

A recent report from _Forbes_ shows that 59% of companies that surpassed revenue targets – and 72% that exceeded them by 25% or more – have a defined sales enablement function, compared to only 30% of underperforming organizations.

Without a strategy for sales enablement there are two risks:

LENGTHEN THEIR SALES CYCLES AND MAKE DEALS MORE EXPENSIVE FOR THE SALES ORGANIZATION

DISENGAGE BUYERS THUS LOSING OPPORTUNITIES

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CHAPTER 3

LEARNING MODALITIES

Technology is increasingly supporting the multi-modality approach to learning, well beyond traditional online training courses. A sound learning program always incl des a combination of learning modalities. Let's take a look:

CLASSROOM (INSTRUCTOR-LED) TRAINING

Live ILT is expensive and time-consuming. Knowledge retention is abysmal. However, Classroom training can significantly reinforce learning material by providing an opportunity to practice the skills required. On the other hand, virtual ILT is incredibly convenient, as participants can access and take courses from anywhere, reducing or avoiding altogether time away from the field, which can damage productivity for some teams. The best virtual ILT offers learners frequent opportunities for collaboration using chat, polling, discussions and interactive exercises.

ONLINE AND MOBILE LEARNING

Training fits in when it works best for the learner, meaning peak activity hours can remain uninterrupted. Your sales team can access training anytime, even on the go. Online learning is a great way to reinforce training, as it can be delivered in short, two to three minute modules on-demand, from any device. Elearning allows trainers to reuse existing content across a variety of courses and learning plans that can be built online and made available in minutes, to every team across the globe. Not only can you manage and distribute learning content on an online training platform, but the tracking and reporting capabilities of these solutions are unmatched.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

Good old-fashioned, hands-on application will never go out of style. The key here is to ensure your training program provides individual attention and immediate feedback for trainees. Moreover, complementing on-the-job training with classroom events and augmenting them with a solid coaching and mentoring program are essential steps toward making the most out of this training modality.

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WHY LMS?

The short answer is: LMS (learning management system) helps organizations to keep up with business velocity, and to enable sales at scale. A system that acts as a unified, single learning environment for everybody who contributes to the sales process for a consistent, uniform sales process, where everybody is using the right messaging and the most up-to-date information available.

WHAT DOES THE RIGHT LMS LOOK LIKE?

UNIFIED MESSAGE, CONSISTENT COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT
With a learning management system that allows you to centralize all your learning content, you gain a single repository across various business units and organizational branches, rather than having to manage content across multiple systems. The right LMS is also the place where certificates, certification and retraining programs are managed.

INSTANT ACCESS TO CONTENT IN THE FIELD
Provide learning content in both push and pull modalities to accommodate a variety of learning styles, business conditions and, of course, schedules. Enable a pull modality where new hires can instantly access learning and knowledge assets and and reach out to subject matter experts on their time to learn more about, say, the sales process or product.

DELIVER THE RIGHT CONTENT TO THE RIGHT AUDIENCE
Generic content that is intended for consumption across any role of the sales organization is ineffective. Training must be tailored to different groups of salespeople, e.g. depending on industry, territory or whether the salesperson is a prospector, a sales development representative or an account executive. Look for a platform that supports organizing and distributing learning content based on specific needs of the individuals involved.

MANAGE BOTH ONLINE AND ILT
Look at learning management systems that include ways to organize and keep track of both instructor-led classes, both virtual and in person. Well designed training programs often include a combination of self-paced online training and instructor led training activities, which reinforce each other. Your LMS need to fully support that, end-to-end.

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MEASURE IMPACT, STAY ON TOP OF TASKS

Select a system that is able to provide accurate, automatic tracking of completion data and robust and customizable reporting capabilities for both specific business units and cross-department groups of learners alike. You want to gain complete visibility into how effective your training programs are. But at the same time don't want learning tasks to fall through the cracks. Use alerts and notifications for incomplete or overdue training modules, tasks and deadlines

SUPPORT INFORMAL AND SOCIAL LEARNING

Link your salespeople to the subject matter experts in your organization to bring light to the knowledge that your people may never have known was available to them. Beyond simple courses and learning plans, an end-to-end LMS should support both social learning - that is, learning that happens via peer interaction and coaching - and experiential learning, or learning that happens in the workflow.

FOCUS ON LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Don't compromise your user experience. If a learning system delivers a poor experience, learners are unlikely to return or use it again once they have done and passed any mandatory assessments. It's not just about usability - It's a matter of creating an experience that supports and engages salespeople right from the start and nurturing them along in their journey to keep them coming back for more.

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INTEGRATE WITH SALES REPS WORKFLOW (AND CRM)

The last thing you want to do to your sales teams is to push an additional platform with an additional user interface and username/password combination. Always look for a LMS that provides an off-the-shelf integration with your CRM so that sales reps have straightforward access to their training in the environment they live and breathe in.

Let's take as an example the n.1 CRM in the world, Salesforce. Although it may sound like a no brainer, an off-the-shelf integration with Salesforce with LMS is rare. Accordingly to Talented Learning's CEO John Leh, there is today only a dozen LMSs offer an integration with SalesForce, out of approx 900 systems in the market, which equals to only 1.2%). So choose wisely.

GAMIFICATION

Build and keep engagement up! Be sure to build gamification mechanics into your learning courses. By instilling a sense of accomplishment, gamification increases interaction and motivation in learning, which can provide a far more effective learning process than a traditional course can. Implement leaderboards, contests and awards - and never underestimate the power of small tangible rewards such as an Amazon card or a subscription to Spotify.

SCALABILITY

Make scalability your top priority. Adopt an LMS that supports the evolving needs of your business and your organization. As you develop the need for a more sophisticated learning program, find a platform that can support multi-organizational environments, and adopt a platform with a flexible pricing model, so you only pay for the users who access the platform, tying pricing to effective usage of the platform as adoption grows.

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CHAPTER **6**

SOURCES

Maximizing the effect of sales training - Sales Readiness Group, Inc.

Getting the Most from Your Sales Training Dollars

Measuring the impact of training: a focus on sales readiness

Docebo's onboarding paper

IDC

> *"Getting the right information into the hands of the right sellers at the right time and place, and in the right format"*

Best Practices in Design and Delivery of Sales Training Programs

Salesforce.com + LMS = Measurable Training Bliss

Top-Performing Organizations Prioritize Sales Enablement

Strategies for sustaining the impact of sales training

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