
Sales Enablement: Enabling Sales Teams, Sales Conversations, and Market Shares



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Sales Enablement is an organization's strategic, cross-function effort and ongoing process to support sales teams by leveraging capabilities and resources to provide training, education, knowledge, tools, and technology throughout the sales process and customer journey. Sales enablement integrates marketing, sales, operations, customer success, human

resources, training, and information technology for go-to-market alignment, and business growth. As sales enablement is one the fastest-growing roles in corporate sales, its very purpose and evolving practices makes it a function of significant importance in the ever-transforming world of sales.

The main complexities of sales enablement pertain to (a) its increasing importance and sales teams' demand for support, (b) its collaboration with multiple organizational functions and accountability, and (c) the effective creation and dissemination of resources and content. Sales enablement leaders also need to carefully draw on capabilities, evolving in-demand skills and technologies to adapt and deploy sales enablement operations to their organizations' specific challenges.

Regarding the increasing importance of sales enablement and sales teams' demand for support, recent research from Forrester found that high-performing organizations increased their sales enablement budget by an average of 25% versus 12% for low-performing organizations. Further, within high-performing organizations, sales enablement supports about 17% more of the sales teams, and averaged a better ratio of the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) number in sales enablement to the FTE number in sales (i.e., about 1 sales enablement FTE per 36 full-time sellers versus 1 per 49 for low-performing organizations). Such figures show the pervasive importance and impact of sales enablement in organizations today.

Sales enablement collaboration with multiple organizational functions and accountability is of the essence due to required cooperation with the involved stakeholders. One of the key questions organizations face relates to the sales enablement reporting structure and span of responsibilities. As customer-facing roles are becoming more complex, high-performing organizations maintain sales enablement as a sales function rather than a marketing function, while making it report more effectively to sales leadership rather than marketing, human

resources, training, or business unit leadership. Sales enablement organizational responsibilities and accountability is also particularly essential for global organizations where local regions, customers, thus sales teams entail market adaptation. Notwithstanding wherever sales enablement is practiced in the world, it is critical for the function to receive support, especially in terms of resources and investment. This may be one of the most significant factors of success to establish a sales enablement culture within an organization and ensure sales enablement success. High-performing organizations accomplish this by having for example a charter of political support and accountability at the very top management level.

Sales enablement's effective creation and dissemination of resources and content require organizations to build enablement engagement models, key performance indicators, and measures of impact. However, such an endeavor is not an easy task due to the multidimensional aspects of sales enablement. Sales enablement resources and content indeed involve training, learning, intelligence, knowledge, best practices, technology, tools, and deal support throughout the sales process and customer journey. High-performing organizations measure sales enablement performance and impact at different levels, and points of time. For example, at the training and learning level, interesting metrics relate to onboarding effectiveness and time-to-first deal, time-to-productivity, and certification completions. At the intelligence, knowledge, best practices levels, metrics may be content consumption, content shared, and attribution reporting. At the technology, tools, and deal support level, performance indicators are for example technology adoption and usage, pipeline generation, lead-to-customer conversion, compared quota attainment, win/loss rates and revenue increase among sellers while benefiting from enablement. Most importantly, leading organizations and sales enablement executives constantly A/B test and measure against control groups, tweak and adjust, and are prepared to make the necessary changes. In the end, the bottom line remains for sales enablement to support, develop, and accelerate the growth of people, organizations, and sales.

Indeed, sales enablement is about turning knowledge into shares of mind to turn sales conversations into market shares. △