

SALES ENABLEMENT: THE MOST IMPORTANT ROLE IN YOUR BUSINESS

A TURNINGPOINT TALENT REPORT



Today's businesses are filled with processes: IT, accounting, manufacturing, supply chain, operations, security, etc. Department heads are responsible for documenting and managing the steps in their units, constantly striving to increase efficiency and productivity while decreasing inherent system waste.

If CFOs determine they're unable to close the books in a timely manner due to lacking accurate data from the warehouse, the process of counting and reconciling inventory is analyzed and improved. When VPs of Supply Chain realize their work-in-process numbers are understated by 3-5% every quarter, they'll spend time with the sourcing and assembly team to determine the factors causing the bottleneck, correcting each inefficient step along the way.

In both cases, a uniquely qualified team is in place, tasked with executing, monitoring and adjusting processes on a regular basis. From the Accounting Assistant and Project Manager to the Warehouse Manager and Controller, a clear understanding exists of the contributions made by each function, and their impact on the entire company. The leadership team carefully designs and documents the various components of their procedures, including the creation of an organizational chart that includes a designated support person who may also act as the liaison between departments, ensuring ongoing and effective communication across the company.

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Any process that lacks these systematic actions, or includes ambiguous roles, is doomed to inefficiency and underperformance, rendering it nearly impossible to replicate. It can't be analyzed for deficiencies, nor can it be enhanced with new tools or methods. Moreover, it's nearly impossible to hold anyone accountable if department heads lack the information to identify where the problems reside. It's akin to "managing by gut."

The Issue with Sales

At first glance, this may seem remedial; "Of course I can't measure success or make improvements without a defined process" exclaims the CEO. "That's why we document every process in our business."

Every process? Not always. While most companies spend a great deal of time documenting and tracking their operational and technical procedures, assigning tasks and creating Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for their accounting, legal, engineering, and software development teams, in many cases the sales process receives very little attention.

Sales has always been considered more of an art than a science. "Either you're born with the ability to sell, or you're not" is the typical mantra. Moreover, it's expected that sales and marketing just won't get along, so why bother trying to build a bridge and create synergies? It's a relationship doomed to fail! It's precisely these myths that contribute to the absence of an effective SOP and dedicated sales support, ultimately fostering an environment of inconsistent accountability and a lack of lead transparency.

The Missing Link

Clearly, companies that attempt to operate within this dysfunctional culture will experience inconsistent, unpredictable and low-performing results. According to the "State of Sales Enablement 2020" the results show



that 79% of leading companies have a defined sales enablement role. Even more telling, 72% of companies that consistently exceed their quotas by 25% maintain this same role. That begs the question: What exactly does a “sales enablement” professional do?

“Sales enablement is the bridge between product marketing and sales,” says Dionne Mischler, CEO and founder of Inside Sales by Design and President of the American Association of Inside Sales Professionals (AAISP) Orange County chapter. “Effective sales enablement transcends industry and company size, ensuring the content and messaging created by the marketing and product marketing teams can be absorbed, understood and effectively delivered by the sales team.” The most effective sales enablement professionals possess a

background in sales and marketing, equipping them with the language used by both constituencies. Their role is to work with both groups to dissect, analyze, and remediate each step of the sales process, providing real-time feedback from the marketplace and creating a sales message that resonates with prospects and customers.

Among our clients at TurningPoint, we see a noticeable increase in the demand for sales and marketing leaders who have a proven ability to communicate with their counterpart. This is especially true within small to mid-size start-ups and early stage and private companies, where a more collaborative dynamic exists between sales and marketing. These smaller, more progressive and nimble organizations don’t have to worry about the embedded rivalries prevalent in many large, legacy businesses.

“Sales and marketing can no longer afford to live in their silos, blaming one another for failed campaigns and lost sales,” explains Niloo Bushweller, Commercial Operations Executive. With more than 15 years of experience in sales and marketing operations and enablement at name brand companies such as Bank of America, Dell, Owens & Minor, and General Electric, Bushweller describes her view of a highly effective sales organization. “Sales must be seen as a process, rather than a transaction. Transactions are static and fully automated, whereas the sales process is a living and breathing system. Many steps can and should be encapsulated in a repeatable formula, while a few must remain fluid to allow the salespeople to react to each customer’s buying style and the changing marketplace.” Issues arise when the sales team is allowed to be completely ad hoc, adhering to nothing more than a subjective list of action items that lack a consistent, validated and company-wide process.

Ryan Campbell, former VP Sales for FinTech firm Dealstruck, has seen his share of adversarial relationships between sales and marketing. “I have certainly experienced the traditional blame game whereby sales blames marketing for sending worthless leads, and marketing constantly blames sales for squandering all of the good leads they generate,” he notes. After nearly one year with Dealstruck, Campbell had seen the impact the right tone at the top can have. “At Dealstruck, the CEO and executive team believed wholeheartedly in building a bridge between sales and marketing,” he explains. “Our teams were on the same floor, we interacted daily, and we worked together to consistently analyze the effects of each marketing campaign, incorporating feedback from the sales team to ensure every activity is funnel-relevant.” Thanks to this highly collaborative approach, Dealstruck reached its goal of granting \$100M in loans, ahead of schedule and under budget.

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“If Only I Had a Better CRM”

Campbell describes sales enablement as “the confluence of relevant and accurate data and technology, with an effective and streamlined process that guarantees no sales rep will ever ask ‘what do I do next?’” However, he does not see technology as a crutch, rather a tool to enhance an already effective go-to market strategy for generating leads and closing deals.

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The key to the effective adoption of sales enablement technology is the strength of the underlying process. Technology will not enhance or “fix” weak practices. Automating a broken process, or making it available via mobile device, will do nothing to address the deficiencies in the core sales operation. While it’s time-consuming initially, prior to adopting a new CRM or other sales enablement tool, senior management must invest the time to fully map out the current sales process, identifying any variances and impediments to closing sales. Nothing should be off the table, including quality control issues, participating in the RFP process, the time it takes for contracts to be approved by legal, the sales reps’ understanding of a value-based rather than price-

based sale and their need to receive more training on products’ technical aspects, or the bias inherent in the commission structure that rewards selling to “low hanging fruit.”

Once a sound sales process is developed, a strong CRM tool should then be layered on top of it to accelerate its effectiveness. “At a former employer, after spending a great deal of time enhancing our sales process, we decided the best way to ensure a high adoption rate with our internal CRM was to build a dashboard for each sales rep that provided information about their commissions, sales trends, stack ranking and pipeline,” describes Bushweller. “As the sales enablement team, we also built a customer dashboard that allowed each sales rep to quickly and easily see all relevant notes, upcoming renewals or ongoing concerns on a per-customer basis. This data provided an incentive for the reps to sign in, and once they were in, the system helped to accelerate their training and onboarding while boosting their engagement and equipping them with real-time market intelligence.” The company’s ability to rely on its sales enablement team to build a system and process that enhances the interaction between the sales team and the end customer radically improved their close rate and increased revenues.



Where Do I Go From Here?

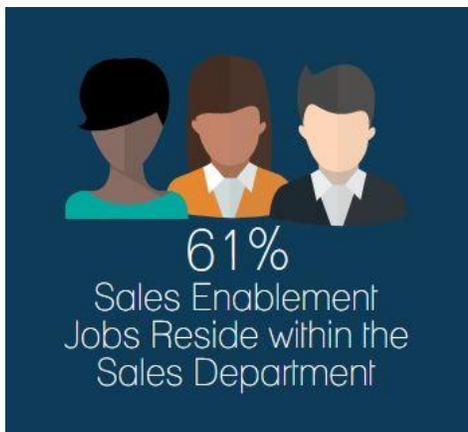
“One of the biggest challenges to the development of a sales enablement team is the willingness by senior management to invest in a non-producing sales professional,” says Trindl Reeves, Principal & CSO for Marsh & McLennan Agency. “At Marsh & McLennan, our marketing team is focused on traditional branding and creating visibility for the firm; our producers are responsible for lead generation and my role is to support and enhance both sides. Mine is the first role in the sales group without a direct quota, and it required a leap of faith by our CEO to make the investment. The addition of this role has certainly contributed to our ability to exceed our revenue and profit projections for three consecutive years.” The dictionary defines “enabling” as the ability to

make (something) possible or easy. In today's hyper-competitive market, it's imperative that companies equip their sales teams with the tools that enable them to secure more qualified leads and ultimately close more deals. The sole purpose of incorporating an effective process and sales enablement role into your organization is to "make more sales in the least amount of time and with minimal wasted effort," according to Bushweller. Considering that most prospects have gathered 50-70% of the information they need to make a buying decision before contacting a seller, today's sales organizations need to develop and follow a consistent, market-driven and repeatable process.

Every step in the sales process must be identified, blown up, analyzed, tested, and reconstructed on a regular basis to remain relevant and effective. And the best group to conduct this internal research, mapping the results to a consistent and reality-based process, is the sales enablement team. The job description for this role must include an expectation that the sales enablement team will be personally responsible for aligning the sales and marketing departments, will ensure continuous collection and sharing of market data, will analyze and score all leads, and will confirm that all new campaigns are "funnel-relevant," as Campbell described. Additionally, this documentation must include the steps taken to assess the results post-sale, to increase the number of positive outcomes in the future.

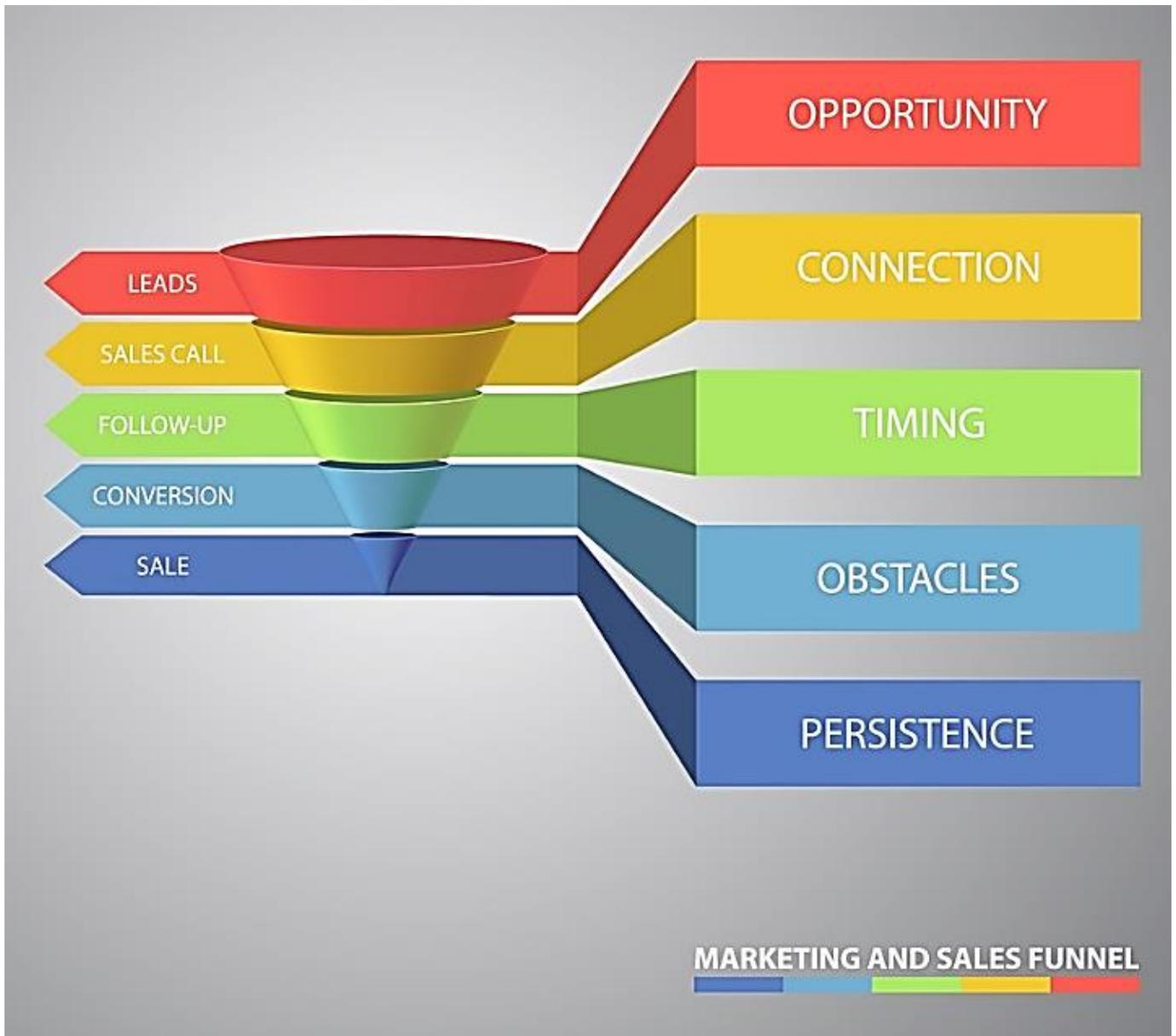


An effective sales enablement team will ultimately touch every aspect of the sales process. All sales should be examined to determine the factors that led to the final close, from the initial source and number of steps to the language used and the message and collateral delivered — down to the rep who closed or lost the deal. Likewise, top performing sales reps should be studied and benchmarked to determine what traits and strategies contribute to their success. Once this data has been collected, a new, more streamlined sales process should be constructed and rolled out to the sales team — and shared with the marketing team. According to the CSO Insights Sales Enablement Survey, 61.3% of sales enablement jobs reside within the sales department. However, ultimately, "sales enablement should report to



whoever is going to give it the attention it deserves," says Mischler. "This position is far too important in today's global, 24/7, social media and experience-driven economy to be left unattended. The right blend of sales and marketing interaction, combined with highly efficient, well-documented activities, can truly drive revenues to new heights."

Sales Enablement: The Most Important Role In Your Business



Company Information

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Case Studies- A Tale of Two Sales Teams

Scenario 1

CEO: “Of course I can’t measure success or make improvements without a defined process. That’s why we document every process in our business.”

Me: “Great, tell me about your sales process,” hoping to hear terms such as sales funnel, lead generation and scoring, inside sales support, proposals, and conversion rates.

CEO: “Our sales process is very unique and relatively complex. It basically changes with every customer. We don’t want to micromanage our sales team by forcing it to conform to a rigid sales process, and we pride ourselves on providing reps with a lot of autonomy and leeway.”

Me: “Interesting...how did your sales team perform during the recession, and how is it doing now?”

CEO: “We have a very solid sales team of nine people. Our top two performers just know how to get it done, and they close a ton of sales every quarter. They beat their quotas by 15-22% and they were consistent during the lean years as well. They are self-sufficient and develop their own leads month after month. Right now, one of our salespeople probably shouldn’t be here, and has never hit more than 60% of his quota. He has been with us for almost two years, and we are trying to coach him along. The rest do OK, but nothing spectacular, and they tend to hit about 70-85% of their quotas most quarters. I’m always surprised they can’t hit their numbers more often, considering I invest in Salesforce every month. The underperformers obviously have two strong role models to learn from, but I just don’t see them taking the initiative.”

Me: “How effective are your marketing campaigns and where do your best leads come from? Do you feel your marketing team is doing a good job keeping the sales pipeline full?”

CEO: “Our sales and marketing teams do really well in their own areas, but I don’t see them together very often. Every month, our leads seem to come from someplace new. Sometimes we get great leads from our infographics, other times they come through our website, and last month we got three leads from a lunch-and-learn we set up. I’m sure the sales and marketing folks are discussing the results at some point, but I’m not sure how often and we haven’t set up any formal strategy meetings in a while.”

This may seem simplistic, but we see it play out time and time again. The issue is relatively obvious from the outside looking in:

1. There is no systematic, consistent approach to engaging the target market.
2. Leads aren’t analyzed or scored.
3. Leads aren’t tracked as they move through the pipeline.
4. Lead conversion rates aren’t being reviewed or categorized by source, timeline, sales rep, or customer type to ultimately develop a new plan that produces more effective leads and increases conversion rates.



Scenario 2

Let's see how this conversation plays out with a sales enablement professional in place.

CEO: "Of course I can't measure success or make improvements without a defined process. That's why we document every process in our business."

Me: "Great, tell me about your sales process."

CEO: "Our sales process is unique and relatively complex, and we work hard to document as much as possible, regularly updating it to reflect the evolving marketplace. Here is our basic framework:

1. Marketing is responsible for generating roughly 60% of our leads through sharing of our weekly blogs and creating quarterly infographics, semiannual white papers, and monthly videos and podcasts (although we haven't been able to remain consistent about producing podcasts on a regular basis).
2. The other 40% of our leads come through our sales team directly. Reps are charged with identifying a new territory, industry or sub-sector every six months. With help from our sales enablement team, they spend time researching the sectors and individual targets to identify hot buttons, relevant contacts, and market intelligence. Their calls are more educational than sales oriented, as the goal is to commit prospects to downloading or receiving one of our collateral pieces, scheduling a follow-up call to discuss their thoughts and gather feedback.
3. Our sales enablement team consists of two people who are tasked with conducting ongoing research in the marketplace, uncovering new prospects within each sales rep's target area. They are also spending time toggling between sales and marketing to maximize their collaboration and ensure everyone is on the same page (which can sometimes be a struggle when it comes to getting sales and marketing to communicate). New marketing campaigns must be approved by sales, and any sales promotions are approved by marketing. Our sales enablement team speaks both languages and is able to bring everyone together to increase the likelihood of a successful campaign.
4. This sales enablement team is also charged with the analysis and dissemination of results regarding each lead. As an organization, we look at the source of the lead, the time it takes to work through the pipeline and the eventual outcome including any revenue generated. We then apply a matrix to each lead, accounting for the sales rep who handled it, which piece of collateral was responsible for the lead getting to that person, the region where the prospect resides, the size of the deal, the margins and the likelihood of follow-on business. This allows us to stack rank each rep, but it also provides a great deal of transparency that will focus our efforts in the right areas going forward.

"While this certainly isn't foolproof, and it takes a great deal of time, it allows us to cut down on inefficient activities, holding our reps accountable to their quotas. Roughly 91% of our reps are meeting their goals, and 21% are exceeding them on a regular basis. We have a strict policy of managing out any rep who misses his or her quota by more than 20% for two quarters in any given 12-month period. Last year as a company, our sales grew by 18%, and our profit rose by 27%, thanks in large part to our focus on this sales process."

