ENABLEMENT VALUE CHAIN

CHAPTER 1

ANALYTICS PROGRAM

BUYING JOURNEY

FIELD PROCESS

SKILLS PROGRAM

VALUE JOURNEY

CUSTOMER LIFE CYCLE

FIELD METHODOLOGY

FIELD ACTIVATION

FIELD ENABLEMENT

OPERATIONS COUNCIL

BUSINESS COUNCIL

FIELD COUNCILS

MARKETING COUNCIL

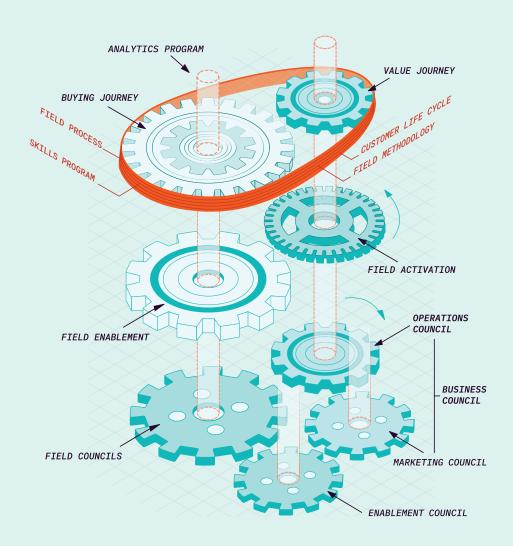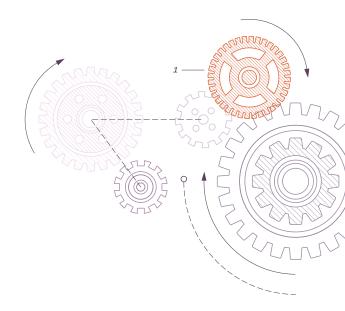ENABLEMENT COUNCIL

MOVING FROM *CHAOS* TO *TRANSFORMATION* WITH THE ENABLEMENT VALUE CHAIN

Enablement Foundation Resources and Prework

In recent years, the field of enablement has undergone a significant transformation. Enablement leaders have fought fires and have bandaged thousands of business paper cuts. They used to pride themselves on being the ultimate problem-fixers. They would take on challenges and then make them go away, one by one, at rapid speed. They've embraced the chaos and started to implement structure and order to support growth for healthy go-to-market functions. According to LinkedIn, there were only 3,233 users on LinkedIn in 2017 whose job titles included the word "enablement." By 2023, that number had grown to over 18,000.[1] Additionally, LXA reports that 77.1% of companies with a sales force exceeding 500 people now have dedicated enablement teams in place.[2] Yet, many enablers still feel pressured to repeatedly fix problems

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[1]   Paul Krajewski, "LinkedIn has 18k users with Sales Enablement in their job title and I see the market at USD $11.06Bn a year," LinkedIn (April 7, 2023).

[2]   Sarah O'Neill, "Sales Enablement: Stats and Trends for 2023," LXA (February 10, 2023).

without seeing their actual enablement value — that is, a clear-cut correlation between their efforts, behavioral changes, and business outcomes. As the need to prove what we're worth has grown, especially since events of recent years have changed the way we work, with macroeconomic conditions ebbing and flowing, many enablers have started to shift their focus to a strategic approach for their enablement practice. The foundation of making this strategic move toward structured enablement requires a fully built *enablement charter*. Although this phrase has become well-known among enablement leaders, we've seen few enablers who fully and effectively embrace this practice at the beginning of each fiscal year. In fact, according to the Sales Enablement Collective (SEC) "Sales Enablement Landscape Report," only 45% of enablement leaders had a charter in place in 2022.[3] To embark on the journey toward a fully functioning *Enablement Value Chain (EVC)*, a new way to establish end-to-end, value-based enablement across an organization, the enablement charter must be executed, communicated, and brought to life every fiscal year.

At Seismic, we invest significant time at the beginning of each year to thoughtfully develop our enablement charter with our senior enablement leadership team. This practice is the most important strategic aspect of building and scaling a successful enablement department, period. Going through the foundational prework for this chapter, you learn how to develop a strategic and executable enablement charter that will guarantee executive and stakeholder buy-in, while creating the foundation for shifting the enablement department toward an end-to-end, value-based operation. This approach will help transform the entire field organization and eliminate silos for good. Investing time in the prework will also teach you valuable skills for establishing an enablement practice that will last for years.

While going through this activity, you learn how to establish clarity around your enablement practice. Your charter will outline responsibilities — what you do and don't do — that will help to clearly define the scope of every single enabler on your team and to set unambiguous expectations for

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3   Sales Enablement Collective (SEC), "The Sales Enablement Landscape Report 2022," (2022).

your team, your stakeholders, and the field organization. Socializing the charter will let you set clear boundaries with other business units and with internal customers.

Your charter will also allow you to align to business goals and to strategically communicate enablement impact — an aim that often falls through the cracks, as enablers are pushed toward executing tactics rather than strategy. Being able to eventually move toward the EVC and to show a clear correlation between enablement efforts and outcomes that are correlated to business goals will reveal the actual value of your enablement practice.

Lastly, through this prework, you'll understand how to leverage the charter as a beacon of value — a vehicle to establish a strong reputation across the organization — and gain even stronger buy-in from all relevant parties. Before focusing on and executing any newly introduced practices and ideas in this chapter, we highly recommend that you review the provided *Enablement Foundation Resources* in the back of the book, which will help you establish a strong enablement charter. Besides a detailed *Enablement Charter Checklist* (pg. 134), including activities that outline all relevant to-dos to effectively build your charter, we also provide an *Enablement Charter Example* (pg. 137) *as a starting point*. If you're in the middle or the end of your fiscal year, don't worry — it's never too late to set up your charter. The only thing worse than building a charter late in the year is not building a charter *at all*.

Introduction to the Enablement Value Chain

Across our enablement journey, which spans more than 20 years combined, we've experienced many different levels of enablement maturity, ranging from complete chaos to the well-oiled enablement machine and various iterations in between. Having worked with numerous customers to support their enablement growth, we know that enablement maturity is a journey. We look at it through three phases: *Chaos*, *Impact*, and *Transformation*.

Chaos can mean different things to different people and organizations, but it typically means silos, uncoordinated efforts, scattered content across different sources, an unstructured enablement tech stack, the inability to

measure enablement's impact on the organization, and an ad hoc approach to servicing your internal audience. At its heart, this stage is about creating a solid foundation for your enablement department, so it doesn't feel like the team is trying to find its way out of a maze without a plan, randomly making turns and hoping to eventually find the exit.

After we figure out how to clear up the *Chaos* and we introduce structure to our enablement efforts, we enter the phase of *Impact*: How can we show the correlation between our efforts and behavior changes, leading to business outcomes? This challenge kept us up at night for most of our enablement life. Although we always knew we provided value, we never had a way to show a clear correlation between our enablement programs, the expected behavior changes from certain groups, and clearly defined program-specific business outcomes aligned with overall company revenue goals.

Most enablers get stuck right here and struggle to move beyond this level of maturity, especially if the enablement tech stack hasn't been fully built out. Having platforms and tools is critical to support the enablement leader's efforts to scale their practice and to gain necessary insights and analytics. A fully built-out stack should include — but is not limited to — tools and platforms that support content management, learning and coaching, strategy and planning, content automation, buyer engagement, and enablement intelligence.

The last step, after we've mastered showing our *Impact* and bringing executives and stakeholders with us in the enablement evolution, is *Transformation* — that is, transformed enablement and a transformed field organization. For us, *Transformation* means that we support the organization through changes, staying agile in our approach, adapting quickly, and having a clear picture of what's working and what isn't, through in-depth insights, data, and analytics that we consistently socialize to appropriate parties to create actionable plans for course correction.

In this *Transformation* stage, the EVC starts to come to life as we enable a value "drumbeat" across the customer life cycle, from the *Buying* (*presale*) to the *Value* (*post-sale*) *Journey* and back, providing every buyer with outstanding experiences. Please refer to *The Enablement Value Chain* graphic at the start of this chapter.

At the center of these efforts sit our enablement teams. The traditional sales enablement approach, which evolved to what analysts now call *revenue enablement* and what we refer to as *360 Enablement*, will further mature into a two-step enablement approach, combining *field enablement* and *field activation*.

Let's use an example. Imagine our Field Enablement team is the pit crew on a racetrack. The Field Enablement team's key role is to enable our field teams to drive the race car, to give them all they need to be prepared for race day, and to send them out on the racetrack. For many practitioners, this is the extent of their enablement practice. After we enable our race car driver to give it their all on the racetrack, we sit back, watch, wait for a win or a loss, and then review what happened — only to do it all over again. That's how we operated for many years. We couldn't analyze what was working, what we were missing, and what feedback our race car drivers had *while* trying to win the race. As a result, we lost our chance to adapt to changes, course-correct, and enable the win while on the racetrack. This is precisely why the Field Activation team came into play for us.

The Field Activation team ensures that our race car drivers are agile and that they make it over the finish line without encountering significant disturbances. It's not just about the win — it's also about the quality and the execution along the racetrack and about enabling our other teams to be better prepared for the next race. The Field Activation team uses data and analytics to identify enablement gaps and opportunities, while the Field Enablement team is executing on the enablement program. They stay close to the field to gather feedback and observe the execution of our enablement. The two teams provide a holistic approach to transformational enablement and are the cornerstone of success for the EVC.

The next step to executing a fully functioning EVC is to have a clearly defined audience. At Seismic, we're enabling all customer-facing roles across the entire field organization, which includes employees who are actively (and inactively) impacting buyer experiences along the customer life cycle. As mentioned, we call this approach *360 Enablement*. This allows us to run a smooth, end-to-end value chain across all buyer and customer touchpoints. It

also requires that our field process (that is, presales and post-sales processes), field methodology, and skills program are aligned with this transformational approach. *Process*, *methodology*, and *competencies* are a fully integrated motion, an infinity loop, not broken down by what we usually refer to as *presales* and *post-sales*, but instead supporting one fluid, never-ending sales motion.

We also have to ensure smooth relationships with our close partners, such as Operations and Marketing, so we can exchange feedback and integrate needs from different business units into our EVC. We accomplish that through structured Business Councils — cross-functional engagements that occur on a regular basis to review enablement analytics and discuss structured action plans.

Lastly, after you establish all the pieces to operate a successful EVC, it's time to set up a process that supports its smooth operation. The answer may seem simple but is much more complex than you might expect. Only a structured *Enablement Analytics Program* can serve as the grease on your enablement wheels, because it provides business units, field teams, managers, stakeholders, and executives with valuable insights and recommendations on further actions to successfully drive enablement programs over the finish line. It's the final piece to make your Enablement Value Chain work. For the enablement leader, we consider the EVC to be the *future of enablement*.

As we speak about the future, we also must mention the use of generative AI to bring your EVC to life. Although there are endless enablement use cases for AI, the following are starting points to infuse it into your day-to-day practice. Please ensure that you review and follow your company's guidelines on AI before incorporating it into your practice. For content creation, AI is able to assist in developing structured content for live sessions, lessons, certifications, playbooks, content hubs, FAQs, and job aids. Enablement teams generally invest considerable time and energy creating content, and AI can help alleviate this pain by providing quick and accurate first drafts. AI can also save a significant amount of time by structuring live sessions and building supporting content for those sessions.

As we think about enablement reinforcement, AI can also be used to create practice and coaching scenarios for field teams, allowing them to

practice pitches and talk tracks, handle objections, and much more. Notably, when resources are scarce, AI can be useful in supporting these efforts. Fortunately, Seismic has invested significant time and resources in integrating AI into our own platform, and we're fortunate to leverage the above-mentioned use cases right in our product. Another interesting use case is one that we explore further in Chapter 4 — the use of AI for your *Enablement Analytics Program*. It can be intimidating to do in-depth analyses of large sets of data, especially when enablement leaders don't have anyone on their team with a data or analytics background. AI can be leveraged to look at larger datasets and to provide actionable insights, identify trends, and pinpoint recommendations. Although the use of AI for enablement leaders is inevitable, it becomes most powerful when used in conjunction with the Enablement team's expertise, understanding of the business, and customization to align with specific goals.

In this chapter, we introduce several new terms and phrases that may be unfamiliar to you at this stage. As you continue to go through the book, you might encounter even more terms that aren't yet familiar to you. To assist you in effectively navigating the content, we've compiled a comprehensive *Dictionary of Terms* in our *Enablement Innovation Resources*, found in the resources section under Chapter 1 (pg. 164) This dictionary will provide you with definitions and explanations to enhance your understanding as you delve deeper into the book.

Step one: Control the *Chaos*

Doing enablement at Seismic, the global leader in enablement, puts us in a unique position. Although we're practitioners, we're also consultants and advisors to our customers who drive enablement across all maturity levels in their organizations. This gives us a unique perspective on the challenges that enablers across all levels of experience, different geographies, and various industries face while running their day-to-day enablement organization. The topic of how to build an effective and efficient charter surfaces in almost every conversation we have with other practitioners who are still living in *Chaos* or who have already started to dip their toes into the *Impact* phase.

Although the phrase *enablement charter* is commonly used, few enablement leaders have clear direction on what components their charter should include and how to socialize it strategically. The conversations usually range from, "I don't have a charter at all," to, "I have most of the components defined but could use more guidance." The most frequently mentioned reasons for not having an effective charter are challenges and misconceptions that have haunted enablement leaders for some time. The lack of understanding of a thorough charter's power, if effectively built and correctly socialized, holds many enablement leaders back from establishing it in their organization.

In some cases, there's a misconception that the enablement role and its responsibilities are self-explanatory, so it might seem like a formal need to outline responsibilities, strategies, values, and success measures is optional. Although enablement is well-known to some, many others still need help to grasp the concept. We encourage you to educate the entire organization in the same depth as key stakeholders.

We've also heard that a charter might take away the adaptability of the enabler, stealing flexibility and the ability to respond to changing business needs and requirements. We consider the latter misconception as the most dangerous since this mindset pushes enablers to stay in firefighting mode forever.

Lastly, we often work with enablement leaders who are a team of one, and they feel that it seems too early in their enablement journey to set up a charter. We understand what drives this belief — after all, we want to quickly make an impact in an organization that gives the enablement leader full autonomy. However, it's critical to set the strategic vision for your organization as to where the enablement journey will go in the years to come. This allows you to plant the seed and explore what budget is needed to grow and scale the department early on, what impact is possible, and what value the future team can provide if investments are made in the right places.

Although the enablement charter is developed at the beginning of the fiscal year, you'll want to avoid letting it become a dusty printout in your desk drawer. You should revise it each quarter to ensure that it's up to date and reflects changes driven by business needs. A great way to keep the charter alive and

relevant for all audiences is to tie it to the annual "Field Kickoff" theme through visuals and metaphors that support the theme.

After your charter has been developed and designed, it's time to socialize it with your executive team, followed by the field organization. Before scheduling "charter road shows" with the field, or 30-minute team meetings to engage others on the enablement journey with you, we recommend communicating the charter to your key stakeholders for input, feedback, and early buy-in. This is also a critical time to highlight that the charter might need to change to adapt to evolving business requirements.

Setting clear expectations and agreeing on how to communicate changes to the charter is a key practice to ensure that the charter stays alive and active until the end of the fiscal year. To remain agile, we recommend that you always keep your charter at a high level. For example, don't add specific launch dates but instead stick to quarterly program announcements. That way, only significant changes need to be socialized.

Being highly engaged in your enablement requires a time investment; therefore, setting clear expectations of how many quarterly hours are required to be considered *fully enabled*, as well as outlining how this investment can support building a more robust pipeline, close deals faster, and impact customer lifetime value, equals true "what's in it for me" (WIIFM) for your field teams. Additionally, setting these expectations allows managers to plan for required enablement and to drive accountability with their teams.

In our many years of enablement experience, we've seen firsthand what happens when a charter isn't in place. The most common consequences are enablement burnout and frustration about the lack of visibility on the value of enablement (the result of an absence of strategic execution). We've all been there, working tirelessly to support the field, only to arrive at the end of the fiscal year and feel as if our efforts have gone unnoticed. This reactive way of executing enablement can be incredibly demotivating, especially for first-time enablement leaders and their teams.

Other common phenomena we have to fight are the absence of investment and a lack of budget for the people and technology to drive actual enablement value, especially during strong economic headwinds. No organization —

including ours — is spared the scrutiny of investment consideration during challenging economic times. And though we certainly benefit from having world-class technology in our product to make our jobs easier, we still have to justify continued investment in our Enablement team. Getting genuine executive buy-in and having a supportive chief financial officer is only possible if the enablement leader can demonstrate how they'll help improve business results.

You're likely at a point in your journey where you're ready to embrace transforming your organization through value-based, end-to-end enablement. In that case, the time has come to invest in your charter as the first step in this direction. But the charter isn't just about you and your success. Enablement leaders are responsible for shaping the path for the next generations of enablers by establishing the practice of building effective charters for their departments. We have the weight on our shoulders of creating enablement experiences for executives, key stakeholders, managers, and field teams, since they'll carry their enablement perceptions from role to role, impacting other enablers' lives — positively or negatively.

There are no excuses for any Enablement team to be without a charter anymore. Numerous books cover how to successfully set one up. Plus, the enablement community converses about the topics through various digital channels and widely circulates best practices. To make it easy, we've collected the most valuable resources you'll need in our *Enablement Foundation Resources* section so that your charter doubts become a thing of the past.

After you've followed our guidelines to build your charter, socialize it, and gain buy-in from stakeholders, you'll be on your way to controlling the *Chaos* and to bringing order and structure to your field organization.

Step two: Understand your *Impact*

Everyone in an enablement leadership role wants to get their hands on data that helps them show their value, as this is key to proving our worth and showing our *Impact*. But it's easier said than done — we need technology to

help us accomplish our goals. Access to the best-in-class enablement platform and its analytics puts us in a position to take the available data and analyze it in a way that shows us a clear correlation between enablement engagement, adoption, and business outcomes.

With this approach, we first try to understand if and how field teams engage with our enablement program. After we have a clear picture, we're looking for specific, predetermined behavior changes and business outcomes that we'd expect to see from someone with high enablement engagement versus someone who had much lower engagement. When we say *engagement*, we mean virtual and in-person live session attendance and participation, e-learning lesson completion, certification scores, and content consumption, such as engaging with playbooks or content hubs.

Over the years, we've consistently shown that teams with high enablement engagement also showed significant behavior changes versus those who opted out of engaging with our enablement programs. That desired behavior change could be anything from adjusting a talk track during meetings or showing specific assets during prospect and customer calls to simply sharing content externally that we know can significantly impact the buyer and customer experience. Being able to make this correlation has been a game changer for us.

We like to take it further and correlate *behavior changes* with specific business outcomes. We choose concrete outcomes related to our enablement programs rather than high-level company metrics, such as net retention or annual recurring revenue. Being able to access relevant data, analyze it, and tell a story that includes recommendations for field managers, stakeholders, and executives is critical to creating visibility around your enablement impact. Understanding this impact unlocks the next step of maturity in your enablement organization. Establishing a structured *Enablement Analytics Program* in your organization and utilizing the program to make informed decisions, provide recommendations, and affect the strategic business direction are the keys to *Transformation* and standing up a fully functioning EVC.

Let's discuss why your EVC will only run smoothly with a structured analytics program and why a simple collection of data that shows your impact

won't be enough. There are three main reasons:

- *Enablement analytics and related recommendations speak the truth, free of opinions, and this is critical when partnering with other business units.*

- *They encourage less-engaged field teams and managers to join others who are already on the enablement journey.*

- *The only way to gain executive buy-in and sponsorship (and consequently, regular access to the budget) is through an* *Enablement Analytics Program*.

Let's talk about each of these reasons in detail. A structured partnership with other business units, like Operations and Marketing, through a monthly Business Council is necessary to operate the EVC. We discuss this practice in more detail in Chapter 5. We often hear from enablement leaders that those collaborations lack structure, clarity, and feedback mechanisms, and this gap makes effective enablement challenging in every organization. Without enablement analytics, we don't have any way of providing opinion-free feedback to our partners, and everything we share will be hearsay, perception, and anecdotal.

When an Enablement team invests hours, days, and weeks into the execution of a program, only to hear anecdotal feedback about it not hitting the mark without any data to back it up, it can be (at best) demotivating for a team and, more critically, detrimental to the business. Likewise, when we bring the raw data without backing it up with structured analytics and recommendations, it doesn't land with our business partners. Offering data insights and telling a story that's infused with qualitative feedback is a far more powerful way to let them know which of their initiatives are landing and which ones are not. It also allows for open dialogue and discussion on recommendations for working together on a solution or additional reinforcement.

Business partners are critical to the EVC's success, but so are field teams

and managers. An adequately structured Enablement Analytics Program allows practitioners to identify the individuals whose behavior has changed and those who achieved clear business outcomes while regularly engaging with your enablement programs. They symbolize *what good looks like*. This is a powerful way to engage everyone else — those who are already successful but realize that they can do even better by engaging with what your team provides to them, along with low performers who are struggling to find their way to success.

Finally, the key to success for every enablement leader is executive buy-in and access to budget. Like many other enablement teams — especially during economic headwinds and budget cuts — we, too, have to protect existing enablers on our team from layoffs and restructuring efforts. To set up a fully functioning EVC, we need a budget for head count and technology. We can hire the best enablers on the planet, but if we can't scale and automate our efforts and gain analytics and insights from what we're doing, we'll never be able to show the actual value of our enablement. We're doomed to struggle, right from the start.

Access to the budget comes with executive buy-in. We're not talking about buy-in from *one executive* — we're talking about buy-in from *all executives*. As enablement leaders, we deserve to sit at the executive table to influence decisions and business road maps. We're sure it's not news to you that you can only permanently get that seat if you have a robust analytics program that shares the various layers of health within a business. Taking our seat will put us in a position to strategically align our enablement plans, programs, and charter to the organization's strategy and priorities and, therefore, effectively allocate resources. It will also allow us to identify where we have resource gaps on the team and what additional budget we need to fill them.

The seat at the executive table also gives us full access to potential sponsors. The path to executing a smoothly running EVC while staying in the *Transformation* maturity stage is a rocky one and practically impossible to undertake if you don't have an executive sponsor. By definition, a sponsor has to be a senior-level executive in the organization who provides active support in bringing your enablement vision to life. That sponsor will go to bat for you. They'll support your vision and your charter, help you access budget

and resources, and ensure that your seat at the table is permanent. They're personally invested in your enablement success.

Unlike mentorship, sponsorship can't be mandated. Instead, you need to gain an executive's attention, and the best way to do so is to let your analytics program speak for itself. After you gain their attention, your sponsor must also buy into your potential, skills, and abilities. Hence, they're willing to commit their time and effort to help drive your enablement agenda across the organization. The relationship with your sponsor is one on one, which means that they become part of your personal career journey, too.

Step three: Drive *Transformation*

As you start to establish your EVC components, such as your Field Enablement and Field Activation teams, field process and methodology, customer life cycle, Business Councils, and analytics program, you'll notice that you'll have to maneuver through a change curve with your team and the rest of the organization. Change isn't easy, and it requires specific measures to keep distraction low and impact high.

When introducing EVC components or upleveling existing ones, the consequences of change usually unfold in the following ways. First, your Enablement team needs to find its rhythm and gain clarity on how things move from *plan* to *reality*. Your team needs to get used to the new motion, and junior enablers need to be briefed and engaged. Plus, we often have to change how we work, which can be challenging when there are so many competing priorities and when teammates are globally distributed.

Enablement *Transformation* also always comes with many changes for business partners and field teams. Those changes need to be addressed through a change management process, which takes time to build and execute, so you can engage all affected parties while also dealing with change fatigue.

While managing the change, you have to ensure that you don't lose focus on the impact: Are the executed changes showing the desired result? After you understand that building the EVC in your organization will support several continuous cycles of change management, you can ensure that your

Enablement team and the rest of the organization are prepared for what's coming. In Chapter 6, we address how to effectively handle the change management process so that your journey toward *Transformation* and a fully operational EVC is effortlessly executed.

Embark on your journey toward Transformation: What's next?

Some of you may have read through the *Enablement Foundation Resources and Prework* section at the beginning of this chapter and thought to yourself, "I have some work to do." Or maybe you skipped the prework entirely, since your charter is in tip-top shape and has been socialized with all relevant parties, and you're ready to dive deep into our EVC to start making changes to the way you drive enablement at your organization. No matter which phase you're in right now, we encourage you to see this book as a journey of realizing the phenomenal opportunity that lies ahead of you, as you move through the enablement maturity curve toward *Transformation* and a fully functioning EVC.

As you work with this book and absorb the different chapters, we recommend that you be aware of where you are in your enablement maturity, the *Enablement Foundation Resources and Prework*, and the presented enablement innovation. In the *Enablement Innovation Resources* section for this chapter (pg. 162), we provide you with an *EVC Gap Analysis*, which will allow you to quickly identify your gaps and opportunities as you progress. We recommend using the template as your guide throughout the book to decide where you should invest your time, while keeping the following questions in mind:

- *Which enablement foundation elements provided at the beginning of each chapter have I not fully executed?*

- *Which components of the EVC do I already have in place to uplevel first for a quick win?*

- *Which components of the EVC do I not have in place right now?*

We can say from experience that you won't change your enablement department or your organization overnight; it has taken us several years combined to get to where we are today. That said, you and your team can make small efforts to align with the broader vision of implementing the EVC over time. Fully understanding this advanced strategy to transform end-to-end, value-based enablement is critical to aligning everything you do, in the spirit of eventually reaching this goal.

Book a meeting with our Strategic Enablement Services team to bring the Enablement Value Chain to life in your organization or download the full copy of *Tomorrow's Enablement for Today's Leaders* now.

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