Seismic

GUIDE

7 signs you need a sales enablement solution

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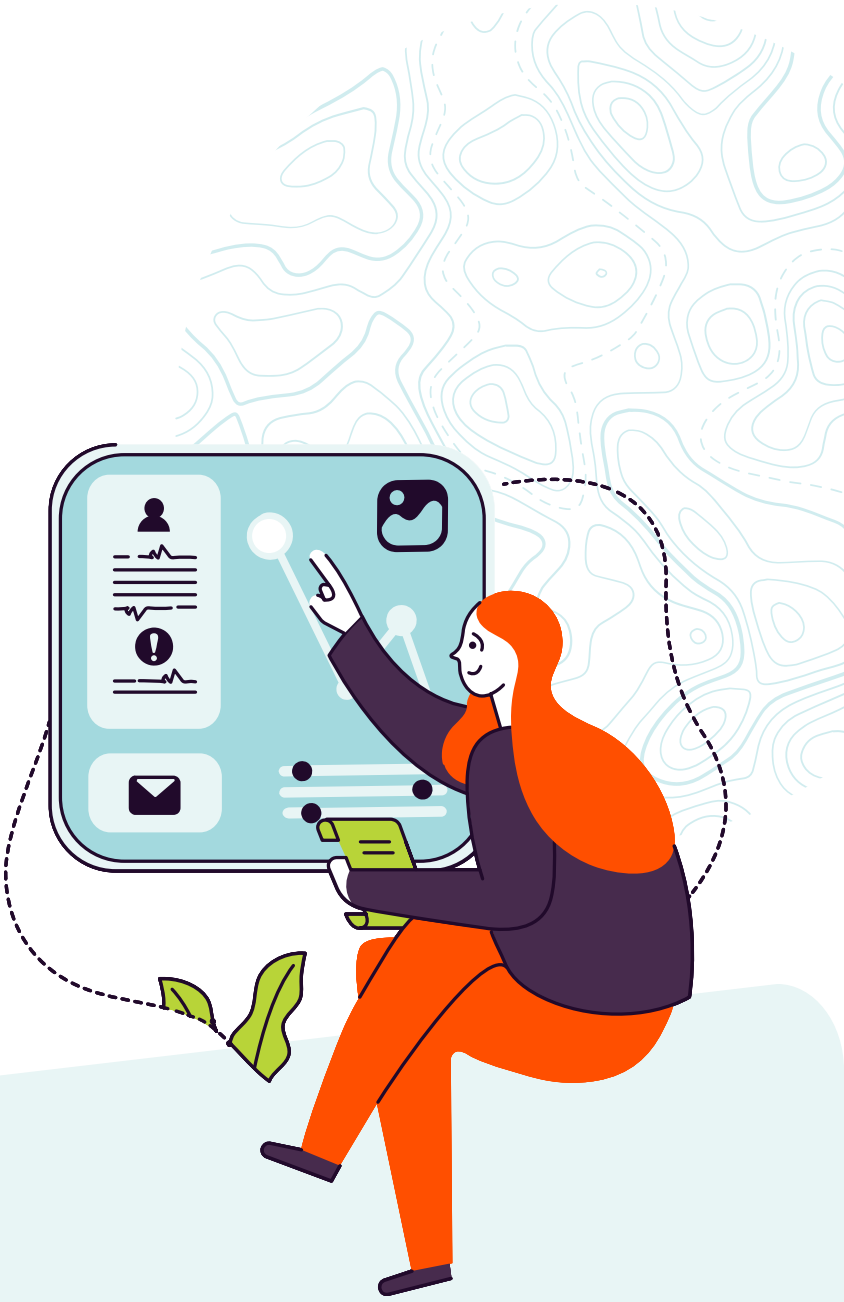

Introduction

In today's competitive business environment, sales organizations are increasingly chasing more aggressive goals with greater pressure to overachieve.

But only 1/3 of sales reps meet or exceed quota, and only 10% are consistently high-performing. What can an organization do to increase performance and see bottom-line results?

Well, a modern selling strategy requires modern sales tools to help reps do their job efficiently and effectively. **Business2Community** asserts, "Successful salespeople know that the right tools in their arsenal can mean the difference between a deal and a dud". And according to **Aberdeen Group**, "Sales enablement has evolved from a nice-to-have niche into an essential tool for successful business selling". If you can relate to one or more of the following indicators, you just may need to add a sales enablement tool to your arsenal.

Onboarding time for new reps is longer than average

Onboarding is intended to help sales reps get up to speed quickly. Unfortunately, **it takes about seven months and almost $30,000 to recruit and onboard a new sales rep, and 87% of that training content is forgotten within weeks**. Further, a study from the Harvard Business School shows that the time it takes to get new reps up to speed means that a company may not see the full benefit of their productivity for 12-18 months.

That is a lot of lost time and opportunity.

The sales enablement solution

The Aberdeen Group research reveals that 37% of enterprise level companies identify 'focusing on getting new sales reps productive more quickly' as the most important factor in hitting sales quota. With the right onboarding tools in place, an organization can decrease ramp-up time by at least 30-40% while increasing productivity, reducing mistakes, and boosting job satisfaction.

Sales enablement tools further serve to empower your sales team with content and just-in-time sales guidance. Empowering your reps means making it easy for them to learn about complex products and services quickly, and with a level of knowledge deep enough to make the sale.

Empower your sales team with content

It should be easy for sales reps to find and access content, from sales scripts, pitch decks, and price sheets to blog articles, whitepapers, and videos. If a prospect references a specific piece of content, it's important that your reps feel informed and can maintain a meaningful conversation. After all, sales teams that challenge and engage prospects are twice as likely to hit quota.

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of enterprise level companies identify focusing on getting new sales reps productive more quickly the most important factor in hitting sales quota

Provide guidance

Use tools such as playbooks to give reps guidance about moving prospects from one stage to the next and using content effectively in their engagements. With just-in-time coaching, you can ensure that reps have the information and instruction they need to further the deal.

Reproduce best practices

Sales enablement technology uses data science and predictive analytics to determine which content and sales tools top performers rely on and then assists in replicating those best practices across your sales organization. These tools will help your new hires hit quota faster by pushing relevant training material and guidance as needed, enabling your entire team to operate like your top performers.

Make training an ongoing practice

Less than 45% of companies have a formal sales training process. However, ongoing development and continuous training can result in 50% higher net sales per sales rep. And those 2/3 of sales reps who perform at or below quota can be coached and guided to operate at a higher level of performance.

50%

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Your Sales Team Suffers from Lack of Productivity

Sales productivity means maximizing sales results while minimizing the resources expended, such as cost, time, and effort. Studies show that sales productivity is the #1 challenge for almost 65% of B2B organizations, but unfortunately, the productivity of the salesforce has a direct and significant impact on revenue.

The 20/60/20 rule says that about 20% of your sales team are top performers who often meet or exceed quota. That leaves a majority of your sales team with room for improvement and opportunity to increase productivity. But although organizations are growing their sales teams and chasing more aggressive sales goals, they simply aren't scaling their processes, best practices, and sales tools effectively.

The Sales Enablement Solution

Less than 1/3 of a sales person's time goes to core selling. Any time you can automate an unproductive, repetitive, or non-best practice activity, you will save steps and time so that sales reps can get back to sales activities.

This is where a sales enablement solution comes in. For example, sales reps spend up to 19% of their day searching for content. A sales enablement tool can automate this process by recommending winning content right where sales reps work, giving reps back almost 2 hours of time per day!

Embrace automation

Reduce or eliminate admin tasks, such as data entry, and automate the sales workflow as much as possible. Consider triggered events such as follow-up emails, which help reps respond to prospects faster. **Companies that follow a defined workflow are 33% more likely to be high performers.**

A sales enablement tool can give reps back almost 2 hours of time per day

Sales reps who leverage social media in the sales process are 79% more likely to hit quota

Get social

Sales reps can use social selling in every stage of the sales process, from networking and prospecting to customer service. With prospect insights such as demographics and company/industry news, sales reps can more quickly and effectively drive engaging and meaningful conversations. And according to Aberdeen, sales reps who leverage social media in the sales process are 79% more likely to hit quota.

Invest in the proper tools

With the aforementioned costs of recruiting and training sales reps, there is no reason not to invest in their success and keeping them around. Give your sales team the right tools to help them do their job efficiently and effectively.

Sales enablement technologies aim to align marketing goals and processes and then arm sales teams with the tools and content to improve sales execution and drive revenue. Sales enablement, by nature, empowers and enables sales reps to work more efficiently. And remember, a more productive sales team means more revenue is being generated!

Align Marketing Goals

Arm sales teams with tools and content

Improve sales execution and drive revenue

> **With prospect insights such as demographics and company/industry news, sales reps can more quickly and effectively drive engaging and meaningful conversations.**
>
> Nicholas DeBenedetto
> CEO,
> LeapPoint

Your Sales Team Uses a One-Size-Fits All Approach

In today's B2B sales environment, the balance of power has shifted from the vendor to the buyers, who expect an individualized purchase process and solution that takes into consideration their unique challenges and priorities.

Further complicating the decision-making process are an increasing number of stakeholders representing a wider variety of jobs, functions, and geographies.

There are at least 7 executives on average involved in a B2B buying decision, and it takes five to six decision-makers to agree for a sale to happen.

Thus, it is imperative to know who your audience is and how to best tailor the sales process for relevance and value. However, over 40% of sales reps are unable to effectively do this.

The Sales Enablement Solution

Personalization goes beyond simply updating your standard sales deck with the prospect's name and logo on the title slide. Rather, it has come to refer to a scientifically-driven, metricsbased approach that matches content, messaging, and sales strategy based on factors such as persona, type of company, industry, and stage in the purchase process. A sales enablement tool can use predictive analytics to proactively recommend winning content and best practice strategy based on the sales situation, helping to personalize the buyer experience and add value to the sales conversation.

Engage in meaningful conversations

First, know your audience - what are their demographics, psychographics, and challenges? Secondly, B2B buyers look for vendors who understand their business and the challenges they face. So demonstrate an understanding of the prospect's pain points, offer insights about their industry, and disrupt their assumptions about your product. Those sales teams that do challenge and engage prospects are twice as likely to hit quota.

Use content to add value

Share relevant content based on the prospect's persona and sales stage. Proactively offer them pieces that address their pain points, that demonstrate value and the ability to solve a problem, and that show how ROI can be attained. Sales enablement tools are able to automate this process and surface the right content at the right time based on the specific sales situation, increasing sales rep productivity and effectiveness.

Offer innovative insights

According to Forrester, only 20% of sales people bring value to buyers. Adding value means being able to offer perspective on the market, knowing what to say to support a prospect's business case, and providing relevant content to help the prospect make a purchase decision. With this credibility and authority, sales reps can quickly be viewed as trusted advisors and resources for best practices.

20%

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04 Your Sales Team Doesn't Know How to Advance a Deal

The longer a prospect is stuck at a particular stage in the pipeline, the less likely it is that they will advance and eventually close. One of the top reasons that deals stall is because there is no sense of urgency. While some stalled deals in the pipeline may be out of your control (i.e. a merger or consolidation, office politics, internal restructuring, your champion leaves, etc.), many instances are more easily influenced.

Sales reps must demonstrate the value of their solution to create a compelling case for change and emphasize the impact of not taking action.

The sales enablement solution

Use tools such as playbooks to give reps guidance about moving prospects from one stage to the next and using content effectively in their engagements. With just-in-time coaching, you can ensure that your reps have the information and instruction they need to further the deal. Collateral such as talk tracks, training materials, kill sheets, and persona-based selling tips can be instantly accessible to reps for any given sales situation.

Create a compelling case for change

Battle the status quo with a compelling case for change. Identify the problem for your prospect and highlight the impact of NOT taking action, or rather, the 'cost-to-delay'. Back up any assertions you make with data or research, establishing yourself as an authority figure. Lastly, help prospects build a business case to share with other decision makers.

Establish an effective sales process

Salespeople give up pretty quickly: 44% of reps give up after making a single phone call, and 94% give up after the fourth call. Unfortunately, research on sales behavior reveals that it takes 8 attempts on average to even reach a prospect. These stats emphasize the importance of having a structured sales operations workflow for prospecting and follow-up.

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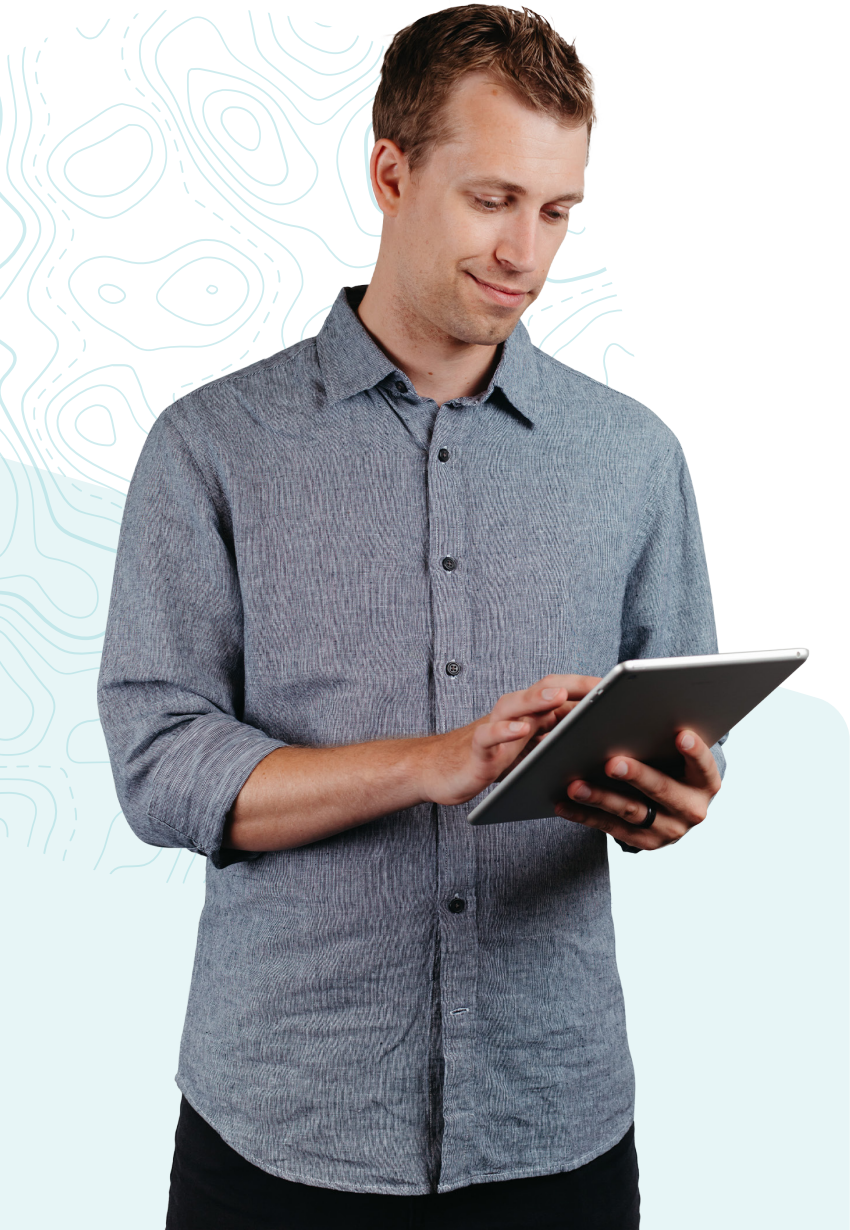

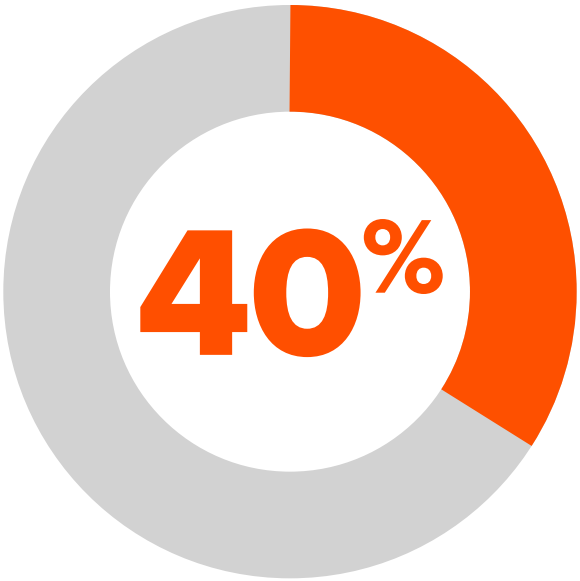

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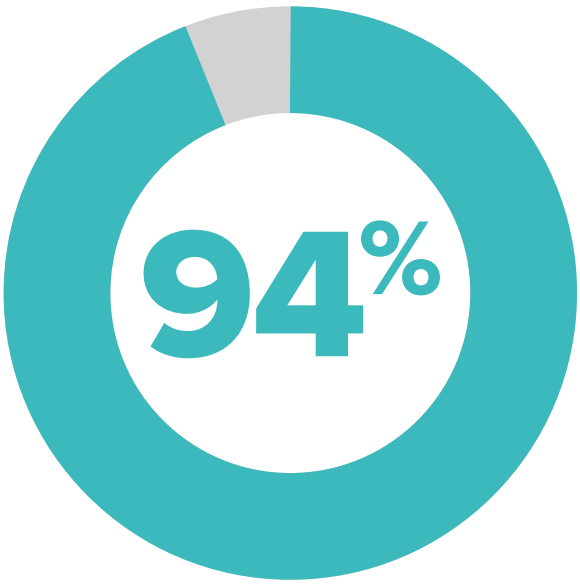

of reps give up after the fourth call.

High Percent of Deals End With “No Decision”

Anywhere from 25-50% of forecasted deals end in ‘no decision’, meaning the prospect journeyed through most of the sale cycle but didn’t purchase. **The Sales Benchmark Index reports that 58% of these stalled deals are lost to the status quo, i.e. it’s easier to do nothing**. The status quo is a comfortable safe zone, with less perceived risk and effort. Status quo may also give way to the fear of change – why fix what isn’t broken, even when efficiency and productivity may be at stake?

The sales enablement solution

The status quo is often an organization’s greatest competition. One of the best ways to overcome this barrier is to offer value. Not demonstrating value is the reason for almost 60% of stalled deals, and according to CEB (Now Gartner), **94% of prospects have ceased communication with a vendor because they received irrelevant content and messaging**. When B2B buyers see 80% of their sales engagements as being valueless, it can be a major differentiator for your company to deliver a positive, value-based experience.

94% of prospects have ceased communication with a vendor because they received irrelevant content and messaging.

Simplify your buying process

Evaluate your sales process from the prospect’s perspective and look for potential points of friction. Consider areas where you can improve the customer experience by streamlining interactions and offering more relevant information. For example, marketing can use real-time analytics to tell them what content works, what is missing or needed, and how to focus their efforts.

Share valuable insights & relevant content

Sales enablement tools can recommend content to share based on the sales situation, such as stage in the purchase process, helping reps engage prospects with relevant collateral to advance the deal. Help buyers understand why they need to change, why change now, and how your solution can help.

Marketing Content is Not Being Utilized

An IDC survey found that 90% of marketing content is never used, and 88% of missed opportunities were because sales couldn't find or leverage internal resources. **Further, sales reps spend up to 30% of their day looking for or building content to share with prospects.** This internal disconnect between sales and marketing often results in missed opportunities and lost revenue.

The sales enablement solution

When 95% of B2B deals are influenced by content, it is imperative for reps to know what content to use and when to use it. A sales enablement tool uses real-time data and predictive analytics to determine what content is most effective at progressing deals and generating the highest ROI. It then surfaces recommended content based on the Salesforce record, right in the CRM and email. This enables sales reps to deliver the right message at the right time and allows them to remain focused on sales objectives.

Recommend the right content

Sales people often have a set of content that they know and rely on. They downloaded it from a portal or built it themselves. But that content is likely out of date and sometimes no longer accurate. A sales enablement tool recommends winning content based on what has been proven to work for a given sales situation.

Push content to where reps work

Sales enablement tools can recommend content to share based on the sales situation, such as stage in the purchase process, helping reps engage prospects with relevant collateral to advance the deal. Help buyers understand why they need to change, why change now, and how your solution can help.

Know what content is used

With a sales enablement platform, gain insights into which content wins in different sales situations. Quickly spot less successful content to eliminate or improve and identify gaps where sales has a need and where your marketing team should invest.

88%

of missed opportunities were because sales couldn't find or leverage internal resources

> **A sales enablement tool uses real-time data and predictive analytics to determine what content is most effective at progressing deals and generating the highest ROI.**

07

You Have Limited Insight into What Works & What Doesn't

Studies from CIO Insights have found that making decisions without data undercuts revenue, **with 40% of survey respondents indicating that limited visibility into data hurt sales performance**. A data-driven sales strategy is about decreasing costs, boosting productivity, optimizing effectiveness, and driving revenue.

Decrease Costs

Boost Productivity

Optimize Effectiveness

Drive Revenue

The sales enablement solution

Research shows organizations that use sales analytics increase their quota attainment 4x faster than nonusers. Sales enablement technology uses data science and predictive analytics to determine which content and sales tools top performers rely on and then helps to replicate those best practices across the sales organization. These insights enable your entire sales team to operate like the top performers by helping reps understand what factors impact their successes, how to deliver the right content at the right time, and what changes will improve their performance.

Collecting and analyzing the proper data can quickly uncover opportunities for improvement.

Measure selling - not just sales

Measuring 'sales' is easy – revenue and dollars are good indicators of success. Measuring 'selling' is the challenging part. Many organizations are not consistently improving their sales productivity because they don't regularly track productivity gains and results.

Determine the best kpis

Consider metrics such as call rate, win rate, sales cycle length, pipeline conversion rates, and average number of touches until conversion. Use dashboards to visualize trends and gain valuable insights into sales rep activity. Collecting and analyzing the proper data can quickly uncover opportunities for improvement.

Conclusion

Next Steps: A Sales Enablement Solution

Sales enablement is no longer a 'luxury' software.

As Aberdeen says, "**Sales enablement has evolved from a nice-to-have niche into an essential tool for successful business selling"**. And shifts in the balance of power between buyers and sellers, as well as a modernized sales strategies and a data-driven sales cycle, mean that B2B organizations must keep up with the technologies available.

Ready for Sales Enablement?

Learn More

Seismic

About Seismic

Seismic is the global leader in enablement, helping organizations engage customers, enable teams, and ignite revenue growth. The Seismic Enablement Cloud™ is the most powerful, unified enablement platform that equips customer-facing teams with the right skills, content, tools, and insights to grow and win. From the world's largest enterprises to startups and small businesses, more than 2,000 organizations around the globe trust Seismic for their enablement needs. Seismic is headquartered in San Diego with offices across North America, Europe, and Australia.

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