

IDC MarketScape: Worldwide Sales Enablement Software 2023 Vendor Assessment

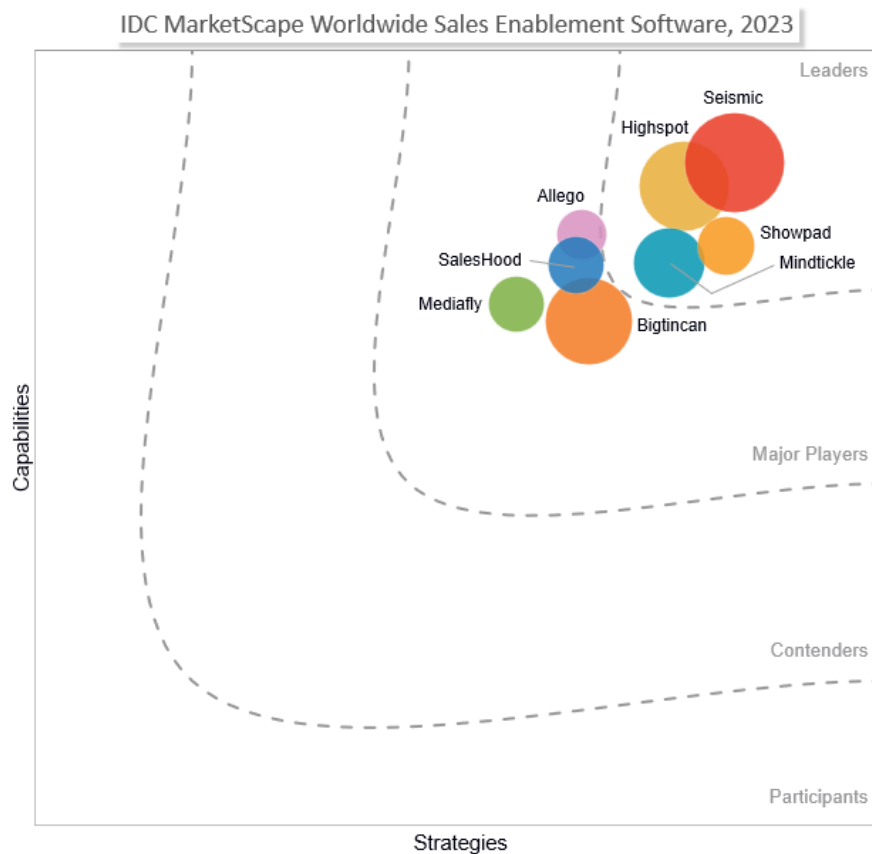
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THIS IDC MARKETSCAPE EXCERPT FEATURES SEISMIC

IDC MARKETSCAPE FIGURE

FIGURE 1

IDC MarketScape Worldwide Sales Enablement Software Vendor Assessment



Source: IDC, 2023

Please see the Appendix for detailed methodology, market definition, and scoring criteria.

IN THIS EXCERPT

The content for this excerpt was taken directly from IDC MarketScape: Worldwide Sales Enablement Software 2023 Vendor Assessment (Doc # US49707723). All or parts of the following sections are included in this excerpt: IDC Opinion, IDC MarketScape Vendor Inclusion Criteria, Essential Guidance, Vendor Summary Profile, Appendix and Learn More. Also included is Figure 1.

IDC OPINION

The past two years have profoundly changed the way sales organizations do business. The transition to virtual selling, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has now become the primary sales channel for many B2B sales teams. And while travel and expense budgets have mostly recovered to their pre-pandemic levels, and we are seeing more hybrid selling, buyers continue to prefer digital engagements. Even before the pandemic, the B2B purchase cycle began the move to a mostly digital experience driven by autonomous, self-powered research. Buyers are now spending much of their journey online conducting their own research before engaging a salesperson. Generational shifts among buyers have reinforced these behaviors. More millennials, those born from 1981 to 1996, are moving into buying roles and, as a digitally native group, prefer digital engagements. According to IDC's 2022 *B2B Technology Buyer Survey*, younger generations of employees increasingly prefer digital interactions earlier and further into the sales process than older generations of IT decision makers.

For sales organizations, the switch to virtual selling means global sales teams must be equipped with the technology, content, and competencies needed to sustain relationships even in the face of lower purchasing activity spurred on by economic headwinds. Everything from how a sales organization onboards new sales staff to how its teams collaborate to how it engages well-informed buyers is impacted by virtual selling. Sales enablement tools and solutions have evolved to meet these emerging needs of a remote sales force. IDC defines sales enablement technology as the tools, processes, and techniques that help sales teams sell more efficiently. The goal of sales enablement is to give sales teams the knowledge, resources, and support they need in the context of the opportunities they are pursuing to effectively engage with prospects and customers and, ultimately, close more deals. Sales enablement can have a variety of use cases, but the three that align most with the evolving needs of a digital-first/digital-only B2B buyer include training and coaching, content, and engagement. These are not serial steps but a continuous process, an always-on capability that adapts to each individual rep's needs in the moment.

Training and Coaching

Onboarding and training new sales staff can be a difficult process under the best of circumstances. When faced with obstacles such as high turnover, staff shortages, and remote sales teams that span multiple time zones, ramping up new hires becomes a Herculean task. Not to mention that the time sales staff spend in training is time not spent selling. Sales training is a big investment, and the best sales enablement platforms can assist organizations with streamlining the onboarding process, increasing training stickiness, and keeping staff engaged with incentives and personalized coaching. Successful sales enablement vendors also provide:

- Just-in-time learning opportunities that deliver information in bite-sized chunks at the time it is most needed
- Peer-to-peer collaboration that allows sales reps to share best practices and win stories

- Interactive video and role-playing opportunities
- Virtual coaching that can be accessed at any time
- Conversational intelligence to provide in-call feedback and post-meeting suggestions
- AI-powered learning recommendations and analytics

Content

Content is vital to the sales process and ensuring that it is timely, relevant, organized, and easily accessible via a central location is a basic requirement of any sales enablement solution. In fact, the ability to share and find content efficiently is what initially prompted several buyers to approach the vendors in this study. Ideally, content finds the reps based on the context of the account, opportunity, sales stage, and offers they are working on rather than reps having to find content. Customizable taxonomies, robust digital asset support, smart search, and recommended content are some of the features that buyers expect from their sales enablement provider's content management tool. Forward-looking sales enablement vendors will also offer:

- In-context recommendations that present sellers with the best content, collaborators, and coaching for every sales situation at the right time
- The ability to provide updated dynamic content quickly and effortlessly
- Content usage and performance analytics that can be tracked at the granular level (page, slide, etc.)
- Governance options that define permissions, user roles, usage procedures, and brand guidelines

Engagement

Today's B2B buyers are distracted and grabbing a share of their attention is becoming increasingly difficult. Each customer engagement matters. From initial outreach to post-sales support, each interaction with the customer influences how the customer thinks about your brand. In fact, according to IDC's 2022 *B2B Technology Buyer Survey*, 85% of millennials and 79% of baby boomer buyers state their overall customer experience with a vendor will have a greater influence on their buying choice. Interactive experiences, curated content, personalized microsites, and real-time collaboration are all approaches to engagement that delight customers and are also supported by the best sales enablement platforms. Other engagement features that are supported by some vendors include:

- Engagement analytics that measure buyer activity for each sales pitch
- Ability to tie engagement efforts directly to revenue outcomes (via customer relationship management [CRM])
- Real-time engagement feedback in video calls
- Integration of engagement information into other front-office systems for suitable follow-up
- Ability to embed a personalized video within an email
- Immersive and interactive dynamic content

Some of the key trends and differentiators for sales enablement platform providers are:

- **Accessible via a single pane of glass.** Most features within a sales enablement platform should be accessible within the same application/window and should avoid the need to toggle between tools. The "toggle tax" is an efficiency killer and a common obstacle to the adoption of new sales technology. How the platform integrates with an organization's CRM and other

necessary tools not only in terms of functionality but also in terms of usability is a consideration when thinking about ease of accessibility.

- **Smart content.** It is intelligent and discoverable beyond a basic search feature. AI/machine learning (ML) should work to proactively deliver content based on deal type, what stage the deal is in, what the use case is, and who is handling the deal. Content capabilities should be broad and have the ability to leverage marketing, sales, product, pricing, and other enterprise sources and third-party content.
- **Highly personalized buyer experiences.** From branded collateral to unique, customized digital sales rooms, buyers expect experiences that are tailored to their needs. Robust sales enablement platforms can support customization efforts that are simple to implement and easily repeatable.
- **Effective use of AI and ML.** AI/ML should seamlessly integrate into existing workflows, drive task efficiency, and boost productivity. The most successful use case for AI and ML is that of a personal assistant or copilot for the rep – automating manual tasks, serving up timely training, recommending content, and providing real-time feedback during and after client meetings.

IDC MARKETSCOPE VENDOR INCLUSION CRITERIA

For the purposes of this IDC MarketScope, sales enablement software is made up of tools, content, guidance, and/or other resources that enable sales teams to boost productivity and increase revenue generation. To be included in this IDC MarketScope assessment, participating vendors were required to meet the following criteria:

- Report a minimum of \$10 million combined on-premises and cloud-deployed recurring revenue
- Must have customers in production (general availability) for at least one full year at the time of publication
- Must have software that supports at least three features from each of the following sales enablement functionality categories: content, training and coaching, and analytics

ADVICE FOR TECHNOLOGY BUYERS

Sales enablement software and applications are evolving rapidly as vendors try to anticipate the needs of a modern sales force. Today's digitally native B2B sales reps and buyers both demand autonomous, customized experiences, with the ability to access relevant content from anywhere at any time of day. In addition, buying committees are expanding in size and complexity as technology purchases fall under increased scrutiny. The scope of sales teams' responsibilities has also grown as buyers eschew the concept of "being sold to" and instead look to sellers for guidance and advisory. The vendors in this study, while varied in size and experience, all have a common goal – the desire to arm sellers with the tools and knowledge they need to sell with confidence. As a buyer in this market, consider the following during the buying process:

- **Identify and define your business objectives.** Think about what you are hoping to gain/change/solve by procuring sales enablement software. Some questions to consider are:
 - Does your organization have standard sales processes? Most sales enablement solutions are designed to move customers through a set of criteria to advance to the next stage of a sales process.

- Does your organization have a sales enablement framework/process in place? How will new technology be incorporated into the current sales enablement workflows?
- How well is your sales content organized and aligned to the framework? There can be many sources needed to effectively support sellers that need to be coordinated into specific payloads for sales so that reps take the next best action with the best offers and resources to move buyers to the next stage in the sales process. Content management is usually a big part of the preparation process and a key determinant of value realization.
- How do you plan to measure success in the first three months after implementation? Six months? One year?
- Which internal stakeholders should be included in the evaluation process?
- How will you roll out adoption among your sales teams? What do you anticipate their response to new technology to be? Can the technology help make this transition easier?
- **Consider your unique business needs.** Separate from what you hope to accomplish by implementing sales enablement technology, is it important for a vendor to understand your specific industry and/or industry regulations? Is regional experience important? Does your business have particularly complex product and service catalogs and sales cycles?
- **Review current technology architecture.** Sales technology has swelled in the past two years. Sales tech stacks are bloated and rife with overlapping functionality. It is imperative that organizations consider their current technology stack and how new technology will integrate with or replace it. Some key questions are:
 - Are you looking to build, replace, or consolidate your sales tech stack?
 - What integration capabilities are compulsory?
 - Will you need support with data migration efforts? Development support?
 - Are there other front-office or back-office systems with which this technology will need to integrate (or at least play nicely together)? Who will own integration and optimization? Are there redundancies with current tools?
- **Remember the importance of AI/ML and data analytics.** Some of the vendors in this study have robust AI/ML and data analytics features. Given the relative novelty of AI in sales technology, consider how likely your organization is to use these features. If your organization is already using AI or is comfortable with the technology, are the AI/ML and data analytics features of the vendor comprehensive enough for your business?
- **Look to the future.** Sales processes are evolving quickly as are the needs of a dynamic sales force. Future proof your organization by ensuring your sales enablement software and vendors are agile, innovative, and forward thinking. Consider the following:
 - How frequently does the vendor roll out new products and/or product enhancements?
 - Does the vendor have a history of meeting its road map goals?
 - What does feedback loop between the buyer and vendor look like? Are product requests and/or suggestions for improvements incorporated into road map plans?

VENDOR SUMMARY PROFILES

This section briefly explains IDC's key observations resulting in a vendor's position in the IDC MarketScape. While every vendor is evaluated against each of the criteria outlined in the Appendix, the description here provides a summary of each vendor's strengths and challenges.

Seismic

Based on close evaluation of the company's strategies and capabilities and on client and partner feedback, IDC has positioned Seismic in the Leaders category in this 2023 IDC MarketScape for worldwide sales enablement software.

Seismic is a software company that offers a unified, comprehensive sales enablement solution called the Seismic Enablement Cloud. Founded in 2010 and based in San Diego, California, Seismic's Enablement Cloud equips customer-facing teams with the right skills, content, tools, and insights to engage customers and grow revenue. The Enablement Cloud is made up of six enablement pillars: sales content management, learning and coaching, strategy and planning, content automation, buyer engagement, and enablement intelligence.

Seismic's Partner Program is extensive and includes strategic partners like Adobe, Google, and IBM; consulting partners like adesso, Concentrix, and SBR Consulting; and integration partners like Gong, HubSpot, and Microsoft. Seismic's clients are worldwide and represent companies across industries such as banking, insurance, manufacturing, and technology. Some of Seismic's clients are Experian, VSP Vision Care, and Instacart.

Strengths

Seismic's expertise across a broad range of industry verticals, the company's large customer base, and ability of the company to respond to competitive challenges and deliver innovation gives Seismic instant credibility with prospective new clients. Beyond its ability to support organizations of different sizes and industries, Seismic offers companies access to a robust partner network that boasts over 150 strategic, consulting, and integration partners and a formal implementation partner certification program.

Seismic's utilization of machine learning is a key strength and a true differentiator. Seismic's Semantic Search (S3) technology enables users to perform searches that go beyond simple keyword search capabilities. S3 interprets search term meaning and handles search term ambiguity based on data science, natural language processing techniques, and analytics from millions of queries and results interactions. Being able to easily access the precise information at exactly the right time means reps can spend more of their valuable time doing what they do best: selling.

Challenges

Seismic is well positioned to capture market share from larger, cloud-based enterprise software vendors that offer similar enablement solutions. To do so, as Seismic continues to grow, it must demonstrate its ability to maintain the pace of innovation and scalability. It should also continue to leverage its strength in North America and EMEA to build greater market awareness globally.

Consider Seismic When

Large organizations that need a robust, enterprise-grade sales enablement solution that is supported by an extensive range of partners should consider Seismic for their sales enablement needs.

APPENDIX

Reading an IDC MarketScape Graph

For the purposes of this analysis, IDC divided potential key measures for success into two primary categories: capabilities and strategies.

Positioning on the y-axis reflects the vendor's current capabilities and menu of services and how well aligned the vendor is to customer needs. The capabilities category focuses on the capabilities of the company and product today, here and now. Under this category, IDC analysts will look at how well a vendor is building/delivering capabilities that enable it to execute its chosen strategy in the market.

Positioning on the x-axis, or strategies axis, indicates how well the vendor's future strategy aligns with what customers will require in three to five years. The strategies category focuses on high-level decisions and underlying assumptions about offerings, customer segments, and business and go-to-market plans for the next three to five years.

The size of the individual vendor markers in the IDC MarketScape represents the market share of each individual vendor within the specific market segment being assessed.

IDC MarketScape Methodology

IDC MarketScape criteria selection, weightings, and vendor scores represent well-researched IDC judgment about the market and specific vendors. IDC analysts tailor the range of standard characteristics by which vendors are measured through structured discussions, surveys, and interviews with market leaders, participants, and end users. Market weightings are based on user interviews, buyer surveys, and the input of IDC experts in each market. IDC analysts base individual vendor scores, and ultimately vendor positions on the IDC MarketScape, on detailed surveys and interviews with the vendors, publicly available information, and end-user experiences in an effort to provide an accurate and consistent assessment of each vendor's characteristics, behavior, and capability.

Market Definition

This IDC study assesses the market for sales enablement platforms through the IDC MarketScape model. This research is based on a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the key characteristics that explain a vendor's success and performance in the sales enablement space. The evaluation of these eight key vendors is based on a comprehensive framework and set of parameters designed to help technology buyers seeking sales enablement platform solutions.

Sales enablement software refers to a suite of tools and technologies designed to empower sales teams and enhance their performance. It provides centralized access to relevant content, training materials, and resources that help sales representatives effectively engage with prospects and close deals.

LEARN MORE

Related Research

- *IDC Market Glance: Sales Force Productivity and Performance, 1Q23* (IDC #US50265923, February 2023)
- *Revenue Enablement as the Next Step in the Enablement Journey* (IDC #US50022123, January 2023)
- *IDC TechBrief: Digital Sales Rooms* (IDC #US49815822, November 2022)

Synopsis

This IDC study provides an assessment of the leading sales enablement software vendors and discusses the criteria that are most important for companies to consider when selecting a sales enablement solution.

"To keep up with the evolving demands of a hybrid workforce, sales enablement providers continue to innovate and expand their capabilities," says Michelle Morgan, research manager for Sales Productivity and Performance at IDC. "To succeed in today's market, providers need to prioritize agility and scalability, ensuring they are able to meet the specific needs of a diverse marketplace while accommodating growth and evolving digital business requirements."

About IDC

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