



EBOOK

# Why Enablement Programs Fail — and How to Build Ones That Don't





## Introduction

Enablement is no longer a support function; it's a strategic imperative. Enablement programs have come a long way from their fragmented beginnings. What once existed as isolated silos for content management and learning, gradually evolved into sales enablement, which unified some disciplines but left the root challenge unresolved — true go-to-market (GTM) alignment.

The next evolution, revenue enablement, addresses this gap by bringing together all customer-facing teams under a cohesive strategy. Yet, despite growing investments, many enablement programs fail to deliver sustainable business value. Why? The reasons are rarely singular or superficial. They're often systemic, rooted in misaligned priorities, poor integration, siloed execution, and a failure to evolve with the business.

To uncover the anatomy of these breakdowns, we analyzed data from Seismic's proprietary research and surveyed enablement leaders across our global go-to-market (GTM) teams. One finding stood out: enablement falters when treated as a short-term fix rather than an enterprise-wide growth engine.

This report unpacks the most common reasons enablement programs fail, and outlines what leading organizations do differently to build programs that are strategic, durable, and outcomes-focused.



## Executive Summary

Enablement programs often fail due to a combination of structural, strategic, and cultural missteps. Based on conversations with Seismic's Strategic Enablement Consultants and our recent research, the most common failure points include:

- **Misalignment across stakeholders:** When Marketing, Sales, and Enablement teams operate in silos, programs lack cohesion and clarity.
- **Lack of integration into seller workflows:** Enablement content and tools must be embedded into daily routines, not bolted on as an afterthought.
- **Insufficient ownership and governance:** Programs without clear accountability and ongoing leadership support tend to stall post-launch.
- **Failure to evolve:** Static programs that ignore feedback, data, and changing business needs quickly lose relevance.
- **Overemphasis on technology:** Tools alone don't drive impact. Strategy, behavior change, and outcomes must be the focus.

To avoid these pitfalls, enablement leaders must build programs with clear strategic intent, cross-functional alignment, and a robust feedback loop. As Seismic's Global Vice President, Strategic Enablement Services, Irina Soriano advises, success hinges on connecting engagement, behavior change, and measurable outcomes — and communicating that impact consistently to executive stakeholders.







## 1. Misalignment Across Stakeholders

Enablement thrives in ecosystems where cross-functional collaboration is embedded in the operating model. When Marketing creates content, Enablement activates it, and Sales delivers it. Clarity on mutual KPIs is essential, yet in many organizations, these teams still operate in functional silos.

This misalignment often extends beyond go-to-market teams to include IT, security, and data owners. Take AI as a prime example: is your AI strategy aligned with your enablement goals? Does IT understand the value of enablement, and are the owners of CRM and data governance aligned? Without this alignment, these functions can unintentionally become barriers, limiting access to advanced capabilities in revenue enablement platforms and, ultimately, reducing their effectiveness.

“Most enablement programs fail because whoever is leading them is misaligned with the CRO in terms of goals, or there’s no clear plan for developing and maturing the program.”



**Jennifer Fong**  
Senior Director, Solution Consulting, Seismic





Data from [Seismic's Value of Enablement Report](#) shows that organizations with tightly aligned GTM teams are 2.3x more likely to exceed revenue targets.

### What High-Performing Organizations Do

- Define shared success metrics across Sales, Marketing, and Enablement.
- Establish regular cross-functional planning and retrospectives.
- Empower enablement leaders to act as strategic integrators — not content librarians.

“Manager alignment and early buy-in from that group is critical. Without it, you won’t get the engagement or behavior change needed to drive outcomes.”



**Irina Soriano**  
Global VP, Strategic Enablement Services, Seismic



## 2. Poor Integration into Seller Workflows

Even the most compelling enablement content loses its impact if it's difficult to access or disconnected from seller workflows. Sellers don't have the time or the patience to search for resources. Instead, the next evolution of enablement is about flipping the model: rather than sellers finding content, content should find them.

By leveraging AI, organizations can automatically recommend the right content based on industry, persona, sales stage, and insights extracted from customer interactions. These intelligent recommendations can appear directly within the CRM, where sellers already work, and even assist in crafting personalized engagements. This approach not only streamlines access but also addresses one of enablement's biggest challenges: driving adoption.

[Seismic's Generation Enablement Report](#) found that sellers are 3x more likely to use enablement content when it's surfaced contextually — in CRM, sales engagement platforms, or virtual meeting tools.

### What High-Performing Organizations Do

- Integrate content and training directly into sales tools.
- Partner with Sales Ops and IT to reduce workflow friction.
- Use AI to surface relevant enablement assets in real-time.

"We measure engagement across live sessions, certifications, and page visits. But the real question is: Are sellers using the content in conversations with customers?"



**Irina Soriano**  
Global VP, Strategic Enablement Services, Seismic



### 3. Lack of Ownership and Governance

Many programs launch with energy but lack the infrastructure to sustain momentum. Without defined ownership and executive sponsorship, programs devolve into a series of disconnected initiatives.

Governance ensures continuity, consistency, and accountability. It's non-negotiable in regulated sectors, but every industry benefits from structured oversight.

"If no one from the business takes ownership of the enablement program, business units will begin bumping into each other, adoption will plummet, and the program will fail."



**Emily Dahl**  
Principal Project Manager  
Seismic







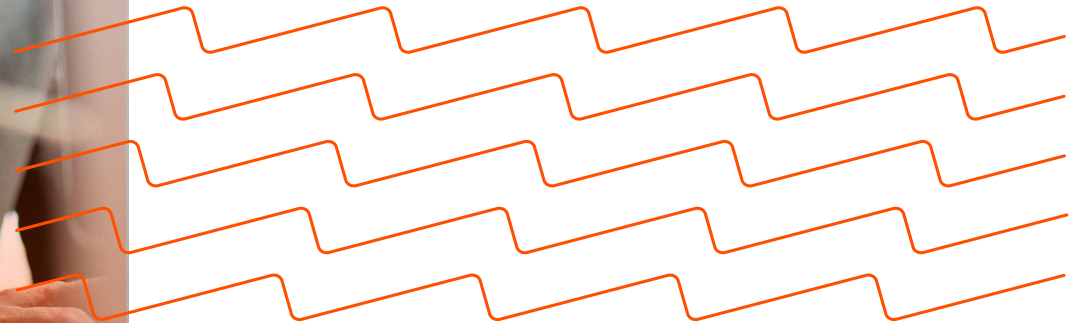
### What High-Performing Organizations Do

- Appoint a program owner with decision-making authority.
- Establish a steering committee to align cross-functional priorities.
- Create quarterly business reviews to measure, adapt, and iterate.

“Build a strategic learning brief aligned to engagement, behaviors, and outcomes. Drive execution with managers first, then individual contributors. And always report back to leadership.”



**Irina Soriano**  
Global VP, Strategic Enablement Services  
Seismic







## 4. Failure to Evolve Post-Launch

Enablement is not a campaign — it's a capability. Programs that fail to evolve quickly become irrelevant. Sellers need timely content, evolving skills, and tools that grow with the business.

The most mature organizations reassess their enablement strategy every quarter, adjusting based on performance trends, seller feedback, and business shifts.

### What High-Performing Organizations Do

- Use both quantitative and qualitative data to drive evolution.
- Solicit frontline feedback through regular councils or surveys.
- Treat enablement as a product — with sprints, feedback loops, and continuous improvement.

**“Failure to monitor metrics means you miss the chance to pivot using data.”**



**Amanda Cremone**  
Enablement Director, Product  
Seismic

**“We recommend a council motion: meet with your team to analyze data, then share findings with stakeholders and field leadership. Finally, report highlights to the executive council quarterly.”**



**Irina Soriano**  
Global VP, Strategic Enablement Services  
Seismic



## 5. Overemphasis on Technology

Technology is a powerful enabler, but it's not the solution. When enablement becomes a tech implementation rather than a strategic transformation, programs miss the mark.

Seismic's AI in Enablement Report shows that 92% of companies plan to increase investments in enablement tech, but success depends on more than tools. Strategy, people, and process come first.

“Misalignment on how to leverage technology long-term is extremely common. Companies often change platforms instead of improving people and processes.”



**Jennifer Fong**  
Senior Director, Solution Consulting  
Seismic





## What High-Performing Organizations Do

- Start with clear enablement objectives, then select tech that supports them.
- Train teams not just on features, but on outcomes.
- Use AI to scale personalization, not replace human judgment.

“You won’t get budget or headcount unless you show impact. That means connecting engagement to behavior change to outcomes — and telling that story clearly to executives.”



**Irina Soriano**  
Global VP, Strategic Enablement Services  
Seismic



# Building Programs That Don't Fail

Enablement success starts with strategic intent and ends with measurable impact. Here's how to build programs that stand the test of time:

## 1. Start With Strategy

- Draft a strategic learning brief aligned to business goals.
- Define success metrics in terms of engagement, behavior, and revenue outcomes.

## 2. Secure Cross-Functional Buy-In

- Engage Sales, Marketing, and Enablement in co-creating the program.
- Align on shared KPIs and communicate progress regularly.

## 3. Design for the Seller Experience

- Embed enablement directly into seller tools and workflows.
- Prioritize usability, findability, and contextual relevance.

## 4. Establish Governance

- Appoint a program owner with executive sponsorship.
- Set a cadence for strategy reviews and program optimization.

## 5. Create a Continuous Feedback Loop

- Use data and seller input to refine content, coaching, and delivery.
- Run quarterly “council motions” to maintain alignment and momentum.

## 6. Communicate Impact

- Report enablement performance in business terms.
- Connect initiatives to revenue, retention, and strategic priorities.





## Conclusion

Enablement fails when it's an afterthought. It succeeds when it's embedded, intentional, and accountable.

Seismic's research shows that enablement leaders are increasingly earning a strategic seat at the table — meeting monthly with GTM leaders and even the C-Suite. But that seat must be earned and re-earned by delivering clear business outcomes.

Enablement teams must go beyond content delivery. They must become architects of behavior change, stewards of strategy, and engines of transformation.

In short: Stop doing enablement. Start leading it.

If you're ready to turn enablement into a revenue-driving force, [get a demo](#) or talk with the [Seismic Strategic Enablement Services team](#).



## About Seismic

Seismic is the global leader in AI-powered enablement, empowering go-to-market leaders to drive strategic growth and deliver exceptional customer experiences at scale. The Seismic Enablement Cloud™ is the only unified AI-powered platform that prepares customer-facing teams with the skills, content, tools, and insights needed to maximize every buyer interaction and strengthen client relationships. Trusted by more than 2,000 organizations worldwide, Seismic helps businesses achieve measurable outcomes and accelerate revenue growth. Seismic is headquartered in San Diego with offices across North America, Europe, Asia and Australia.

Learn more at [seismic.com](https://seismic.com).