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Sales enablement 2024

Bye bye battlecards, hello smarter,
seamless revenue engine

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Let's start with the good news

Business leaders are more positive about the economic environment, shifting from a low-risk, high-efficiency mindset towards driving growth.

83% of finance leaders are expecting to invest more in sales this year.¹

Gartner expects sales enablement budgets to increase by **50%** by 2027.²

The catch?

It's time for a rethink

To drive value from sales investment now IT B2B organisations must completely:

1. rethink sales
2. rethink how they 'enable' sales

1 (the_chief_sales_officer_2q_2024.pdf)

2 (<https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2023-02-15-gartner-expects-sales-enablement-budgets-to-increase-by-50-percent-by-2027>)





Big statement? Yes, but let's consider:

"It is now accepted that most B2B buyers prefer a seller-free experience, increasingly relying on digital interactions to research solutions, evaluate suppliers and complete a purchase. Beyond the immediate impact on marketing, sales and customer service, this phenomenon also has a profound impact on the sales enablement function."

(Gartner Sales Enablement Leadership Vision 2023)

The four big shifts in sales and enablement

01

No sales selling

Customers increasingly do their research online and determine vendors and products/ services long before engaging with sales “Overall, 72% of B2B buyers prefer a “rep-free” experience.”³

02

Sales as change consultants

Today’s customer expects a more consultative relationship with ‘sales’. SaaS and Marketplaces may be providing the platform for customers to acquire and access services, but they look to ‘sales’ to help them navigate and adopt new technologies: “88% of sellers say they’re frequently required to respond to unexpected changes”.³ And this role for sales is vital to ensure customer retention and increase cross and upsell opportunities.

03

Selling people vs technology

Sales must also sell very different, often non-technical, ‘services’ to win a technology solution deal. Customers are already familiar with the SaaS or platform delivered solution they are considering. Instead, sales now need to sell the people-led services required to deliver that technology-enabled service. Conversations are less ‘what is the product and what does it do’ and more, “how we help you adopt it, customise it, train your people, or integrate it”. It’s a very different conversation, often with very different stakeholders who have little interest or knowledge in the technology aspects.

04

Sales left out of the loop

“58% of buyers agree that information on the supplier website conflicts with information shared by a seller or subject matter expert”.⁴ Add to this a shift to virtual sales that isn’t going to reverse anytime soon (23% of CSOs report plans to permanently shift field sales to virtual sales roles)⁵ and sales are left ever more reliant on virtual training and online resources that may or may not line up with what the customer is being told.

³ (Gartner Sales Enablement Leadership Vision 2023)

⁴ (Gartner Sales Enablement Leadership Vision 2023)

⁵ (Gartner Sales Enablement Leadership Vision 2023)

⁶ (<https://www.gartner.com/en/sales/role/sales-enablement>)



Revenue enablement 1.0

Move on sales enablement.

Welcome to revenue enablement.

As sales has changed, so must sales enablement – and fast. In many cases sales enablement has been too long reliant on hard-to-search content libraries and second-hand content, hoping sales will join the dots between some training, the CRM platform, and a list of battlecards they've been served with. And nowhere is this truer than sales enablement for partners, who – at one more stage removed from the process – are often left reliant on a few PowerPoint slides and a solution brief or two.

Sales enablement 2.0 needs to evolve to become Revenue Enablement 1.0 in the sales environment of 2024, with 30% of sales leaders saying driving cross-functional collaboration across the buying journey is one of their top three important productivity levers.⁶

The Opportunity

Think unified cross-platform content strategy and management vs “do we have a PowerPoint or technical diagrams?”.

Revenue Enablement relies on Marketing, CRM platform owners, Direct Sales and Partner Sales (and customer services and support) all working together with enablement as a responsibility for all. And “Sales” Enablement needs to evolve to become content curators and advisors, ensuring sales don't get 'content' – they get the right content at the right time. Finally, training must be integrated rather than an afterthought or separate function to deliver an “educational” experience that is fully aligned with what the business is doing and, critically, what customers are looking for.

“The notion of what makes a partnership has changed. It used to be the case that you would look at a supplier and vendor relationship almost and call it a partnership. Now partnership is all about what you can do together to get a joint outcome. This includes sell to, sell through, sell with, buy from, buy through”

Mark Hollman,

Experienced former VP of Partnerships

⁶ (the_chief_sales_officer_2q_2024.pdf)





The eight steps to shift from sales to revenue enablement

01

Start with a strategy not a program

This is a longer-term approach that lines up with how your business and your customer's buying tactics have transformed. Bring all the people together and then look at the systems, the content, the partners you work with. Assess and prioritise. You don't have to do everything at once!

02

Recognise you need a mind-set shift

Success rests not on virtual sales or new Sales Enablement platforms but whether they work for people, and whether people will work with them. Note that 84% of Chief Sales Officers see effective use of technology as important to meeting revenue targets, but 59% of B2B sellers agree that technology is a hinderance.⁷

⁷ (Gartner Sales Enablement Leadership Vision 2023)

03

Address sales team engagement and confidence

62% of sellers indicate that they've lost virtual deals that they would have won in person. 65% of sellers believe that success at their job today is largely determined by factors outside of their control.⁸ And leaders already recognise that upskilling sales talent is one of the biggest challenges they face.⁹

Jason Hatch, Senior Director at Palo Alto Networks says, "When it comes to communicating key business outcome messages, sales teams should be given no more than three." And there's lots of science to back this up. Our brains often breaks up complex concepts into three parts to make information easier to understand and analyse. He adds, "one thing that I've learned from experience is to get commitment from the sales director that once a quarter sales teams learn and master a 60 second elevator pitch, using those key messages. From my experience, no one enjoys doing it. But if you make it mandatory, though it may feel uncomfortable, the next day sales can feel more confident with their pitch."

04

Devise a unified content strategy and management approach

Then look at the platforms you have or may need to keep sales informed and supported virtually, without overload or old, duplicate or contradictory information. This about who is going to manage content and how. What are you going to do to ensure content is fresh and old content updated or removed regularly? How will you signpost or communicate that new materials are available? Could AI help reduce sales search time and content creation? And consider where platform consolidation may be effective for users while also reducing costs.

05

Consider that timing is everything

Stop thinking of sales as 'the end of the funnel'. Look at your processes and how you can bring some activities further up to combine eLearning, new assets, and information on go-to-market activities ahead of marketing initiatives. Sales don't have conversations with customers AFTER your LinkedIn campaign drops, they are doing it all the time.

06

Help them tell a good story and (really) shift to customer-centric selling

While customer-centric approaches have been touted for years, customer-centric sales enablement has been slower off the mark. Sales need persona specific assets that help them hone-in on the angles and interests that will support engagement, tell a good story, advise what language to use, and outline the concerns and areas of focus for a wider, more diverse, set of stakeholders.

⁸ (Gartner Sales Enablement Leadership Vision 2023)

⁹ (the_chief_sales_officer_2q_2024.pdf)

07

Rethink the sales enablement content mix so it works for virtual and consultative selling by your own and your partners sales teams

You need to devise an approach that balances budget with a mix of longer but easy to digest assets for new offers and consultative plays, and shorter videos, podcasts and cheat sheets that give sales the knowledge they need quickly. Focus on what will help sales cross sell, up-sell and sell people-driven services to support new revenue streams and retention rather than providing piles of product information.

08

Measure the right things

The days of clicks, views and downloads as effective measures of sales enablement and training are long gone!

- ✓ Revenue
- ✓ Pipeline
- ✓ Sales feedback



Industry leaders believe revenue enablement 1.0 begins with collaboration

“Marketing is the conduit for collaboration. That’s what Coterie has done quite well in the past; linking marketing with the vendor, the partner, to be that observational piece in the middle. Sometimes vendors and partners are difficult to have a conversation with because it can be seen as confrontational.”

Jason Hatch: Senior Director at Palo Alto Networks

“The agendas of each team can be different, and they may be wanting to push different things to different people at the same time. Sales are usually able to articulate the challenges they’re coming up against in the field, and marketing can really help sales articulate that unique value, but only when they work together with the product organisation and indeed with the partner. A unified value proposition and a Tiger team are essential to fostering collaboration.”

Mark Hollman: Experienced former VP of Partnerships

“Marketing is good at bringing people together. A Tiger team is creating a diverse team of people from different departments who can give a unique perspective. This is great when you’re doing something like a joint value proposition as you’re able to look at it from all angles. At the same time, you need to keep your Tiger team small. You can’t open the doors too much. You want to keep it quite specific. Too many people can result in too many opinions. You need to make sure you’re engaging the right stakeholders and bringing them together.”

Maria Ferrara: Service Provider Marketing Manager EMEA and LATAM





As the world transforms, sales enablement needs to transform with it

Those who don't recognise the importance of enablement, or who stick with old-style sales enablement are going to find it harder to cut spend and drive revenue. Salespeople, already fed up with mis-aligned targets and poor support will leave for those organisations with a smarter approach. But those who pivot will see revenue growth, better sales retention, more efficiency, more engaged and loyal customers.

Ready to unlock the power of Revenue Enablement 1.0?

Speak to our team



Gillian Clark
Senior Customer Success Director



Harriet Beckett-Trevor
Customer Success Director



Noah Mizrahi
Customer Success Executive



Victoria Silva Rodrigues
Customer Success Executive



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