

# THE FUTURE OF SALES

Insights From 14 Thought Leaders



# Introduction

There is no doubt that the modern consumer has changed. Enabled by technology, with higher expectations and more resources than ever before, the modern consumer is forcing businesses to change everything about the way they operate, from sales to service.

While marketing and customer service have seen rapid change in response to new consumer expectations, sales has been slower to respond. At the beginning of 2015, we are just starting to see the signs of major shifts in the way sales teams sell, the technology and tools they use, and their underlying sales philosophy.

So what do the next five years hold for the sales profession? We asked 14 of the industry's foremost thought leaders what the future of sales will hold. Let's take a look!

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# Jason Jordan



Partner, *Vantage Point Performance*

Jason Jordan is a partner of Vantage Point Performance, the leading sales management training and development firm. He is a recognized thought leader in the domain of business-to-business selling and conducts ongoing research into management best practices in hiring, developing, measuring, and managing world-class sales organizations. Jason's extensive research into sales performance metrics led to the breakthrough insights published in his first book, "Cracking The Sales Management Code."



Sales  
Strategy



Sales  
Enablement



Sales  
Coaching

“ Don't ignore THE big thing that every sales force in the world struggles to get right: execution. ”

## Getting Execution Right

Sales forces are on a perpetual search for the Next Big Thing. And that's fine. But don't ignore THE big thing that every sales force in the world struggles to get right: execution. To truly maximize sales performance, you probably don't need a new methodology, more technology, or disruptive idea... You just need to execute your current sales strategy more effectively. And in our opinion, better execution always comes down to better sales management. If your front-line sales managers are equipped and committed to driving sales execution, it will happen... always. But if they are ill-equipped and distracted, it will never happen ... ever.

This is counterintuitive to some people: If you want your salespeople to sell better, then don't focus on your salespeople... Focus on their managers. But without exception, great sales managers drive great execution. And great execution drives great sales results. But decide for yourself: Are you most likely to maximize your team's performance by discovering the Next Big Thing or by better managing the things you already have? If the latter, then start by focusing your attention there.

## “Sales Enablement” Will Mean Something

Sales Enablement is one of those terms that can mean everything and nothing to everyone and no one, all at the same time. It's like Sales Process, Sales Coaching, and Sales Effectiveness in that way. And like those other terms, Sales Enablement is amazingly powerful, if you can do something with it. Therefore, the first step to 'enabling' Sales Enablement is to define what it actually is. In the research that went into our book *Cracking the Sales Management Code*, we inadvertently discovered how leading companies define it. We found that Sales Enablement includes the four basic processes:

1. Recruiting and Hiring
2. Training and Coaching
3. Providing Tools
4. Assessing Performance.

Interestingly, this somewhat mirrors the lifecycle of an employee... You hire, develop, support, and then assess them. And if the assessment is not good... Time to hire, develop, or support them some more. At once this might not seem all that insightful, but we observe many companies obsessing over only one or two of these areas, to the detriment of the others. So to truly enable sales performance, balance your effort across all four. Then Sales Enablement will mean everything to everyone.

## Sales Coaching Will Become a Priority

Most sales managers tell us that they know how to coach...and they probably do. Yet most salespeople will tell us they don't receive enough sales coaching... and they probably don't. So what's going on?

The sad fact is that sales coaching is the most important thing that doesn't HAVE to get done this week.

Forecasting has to get done. Reporting has to get done. But coaching? Well, it's a bonus if it does. And this is what needs to change in the future, if sales forces want to develop real sales capability. In our clients' sales forces where coaching is a top priority, everybody likes it. Managers like to do it, sellers like to receive it, and executives like to book the inevitable revenue growth. But in many sales forces, coaching is treated as a regrettable intervention for a failing salesperson. And nobody likes that.

Nobody. So if your sales force is one of the many where sales coaching is 'somewhat' of a priority, make it a top priority today. Don't wait for the regrettable intervention tomorrow.

# Donal Daly



CEO, *The TAS Group*

Author of the Amazon #1 bestseller “Account Planning in Salesforce,” Donal Daly is CEO and Founder of (his fifth global business enterprise) The TAS Group, the global leader in Smart Sales Transformation. Combining his expertise in enterprise software applications, artificial intelligence, and sales methodology, he continues to revolutionize the sales effectiveness industry. Feel free to download an extract from Donal’s book “Account Planning in Salesforce” [here](#).



Sales &  
Marketing  
Alignment



Sales  
Performance



Sales  
Enablement

“ A lot of the effort around sales and marketing alignment has been misdirected. The target has been misplaced. ”

## Finding the Right Target

A lot of the effort around sales and marketing alignment has been misdirected. The target has been misplaced. Unless the customer is placed at the center of these efforts, investment is likely to be wasted. All sales and marketing activity should be focused on helping the sales team to connect your solutions to your customers' business problems. This starts with an understanding of how the customer operates their business, the business issues they address, the pressures they have to overcome, and the obstacles (or barriers) that get in the way of being able to relieve those pressures to achieve their goals. Designing all sales and marketing activity around this focus, with the customer at the center, drives greater sales results, significantly improved marketing effectiveness and happier customers.

## Pulling the Right Levers

There are only four levers that impact how much you can sell in any given period. These are: the number of qualified opportunities (qualified deals), your average deal size, win rate and average sales cycle (the time it takes to win the deal). We call this the Sales Velocity Equation. To truly maximize sales performance you need to optimize each of these four levers.

Some sales organizations only focus on the number of active opportunities. Some prioritize win rate. Too few pay adequate attention to examining how to increase their average deal size and even less take a strategic approach to reducing their sales cycle. Taking a holistic approach to all of the levers in the sales velocity equation can have a dramatic impact on your results. If you increase the number of qualified deals—deal value and win rate—each by 10% while at the same time reducing your sales cycle (the time it takes to win a deal), your sales velocity increases by 47%. That's how you fully maximize sales performance.

## Help Sales Enable Customers

Sales enablement is about more than just teaching your sales teams about your products, how to sell, your value proposition or your competitive advantage. It is about helping your sales team – in fact the whole organization – to enable your customers to buy. It's about accelerating your sales teams' credibility with your customers. That is driven by a customer-first approach, leading with customer, market, and business-focused insights that add value to the customer conversation.

Sales enablement should take a systematic approach to helping sales prepare for customer interactions, engage effectively with each buying persona role in the customer organization, and uncover sales opportunities that deliver mutual value for you and your customer. These are the opportunities that are easiest to close.



# Joe Galvin



Chief Research Officer, *MHI Global*

Joe Galvin leads the MHI Research Institute, formerly the Miller Heiman Research Institute, as Chief Research Officer. (Miller Heiman has joined with four other companies to form MHI Global.) His mission is to continuously research, measure, and analyze the best practices, innovations, and emerging trends for complex B2B sales organizations to provide clients with the insights required to make strategic decisions.



Buyer Science



Social Selling



Big Data

“ Big data will play a new role in 2020—a role that will disrupt business-as-usual in every sales organization. ”

## Buyer Science

The study of sales performance has always focused on the salesperson in the art-versus-science discussion. Greater transparency of the activities, messages and behaviors of the salesperson in the opportunity lifecycle will lead to a more precise model of how their buyers make decisions. This will generate greater clarity regarding the roles involved, the process and activities they follow, and how their executive decision styles and influences drive the decision dynamic. Group decision patterns and models will emerge that will guide the selling strategy based on modeled buyer behaviors. The result will digitally align how each customer wants to buy with the optimal sales strategy to win the business. As more decisions are made across the organization, the model will “learn,” continuously adapting from each decision.

## Maximizing Performance

In 2020, the social sales community will perfectly balance people and technology to achieve one goal: enabling buyers to make their best decision to achieve their desired outcomes. Salespeople will have mastered their own branding and social marketing on various networks. They will connect and engage with prospects and customers based on context-tailored content and aggregated social media profiles they find on an actionable dashboard directly within their CRM.

Salespeople will use their knowledge shareeconomy infrastructure, which conveniently pushes and pulls content and information to them at different stages of the customer’s journey. The knowledge shareeconomy, with capability, situational and social knowledge as its gold standard, will have transformed CRM systems into a social customer collaboration platform. The social sales community will transform salespeople into buyer enablers, and sales enablement to buyer enablement.

## Driving Sales Enablement

Big data will play a new role in 2020—a role that will disrupt business-as-usual in every sales organization. We’ll see sales teams combining in-house data and subscription-based external data to deliver automatic prospecting and buying profiles of target customers and associated stakeholders to each individual salesperson. Levels of precision will be an order of magnitude higher in 2020 compared to 2015. Sales organizations will have universally adopted IoT concepts to connect the technologies used by sales professionals to seamlessly capture sales activity and sync the data with CRM systems. Analytical tools will quickly determine the attributes and characteristics of the winning and losing selling behaviors and activities. Individual sales professionals will be accustomed to receiving data-driven personal sales analytics that benchmark their behaviors and activities against winning and losing profiles.



# Mark Hunter



*The Sales Hunter*

Mark Hunter, “The Sales Hunter,” is the foremost thought leader in sales profitability and sales leadership. Mark speaks globally to thousands of sales leaders and sales forces each year, sharing insights and strategies from his book “High-Profit Selling: Win the Sale Without Compromising on Price.” He is recognized as one of the Top 50 Influencers in Sales by Top Sales World.



Sales  
Leadership



Sales  
Motivation



Focus

““ The result of being more focused will dramatically change how your customers and prospects view you and your sales team. ””

## What is the Real Value of Sales Leadership?

What is sales leadership? The term “sales leadership” is thrown around too loosely, and as a result, it becomes too easy to not see the impact sales leadership can have.

It starts with understanding what “leadership” is. The value of leadership is not based on what a leader says. The value is based on what occurs when the leader is not there. View this in regard to how Sales and Marketing work – or more frequently, don’t work – together, or how an account manager deals with their customers.

A real leader drives change and allows others to see AND achieve things they didn’t think were possible. It’s not the talk. It’s the outcomes that matter. A sales leader is one who doesn’t just communicate well, but communicates well in a manner that creates change by creating a vision others can believe in.

Ask yourself this question: “Do I exhibit in both communication and actions a vision others can believe in and will take action upon after I leave?” This is a question true leaders ask of themselves, and it’s a question we also need to ask of ourselves if we want to be seen as a sales leader.

## Why Managers Fail in Motivating Their People

Managers are quick to assume it’s their job to motivate their people at every possible moment. I’m going to shatter this belief by saying it’s not a manager’s job to motivate their people.

Shocked by that comment? When I share this with managers, most are shocked. Now let me explain. Motivation is personal. It’s something from within and it explains why two salespeople can come away from a bad sales call with one being pumped for the next call and the other person feeling dejected and ready to throw in the towel.

A manager’s job is not to motivate, but rather to create an environment to allow the individual to motivate him or herself. Think about this. Your job as a manager is to create the environment. This changes things dramatically!

When a manager is operating with this premise, it frees them up to think more clearly, because they’re not trying to analyze each person’s actions. For the salesperson, it frees them up, because they now see things as being more genuine and not a force-fed coaching session. Your job as a manager is to create the environment, tailored in such a way that each person will appreciate the opportunity to motivate him or herself.

## The Power of Focusing Your Efforts

Too many times, salespeople jump from one prospect to another. They in essence are doing nothing more than chasing the shiny object. When we assume the most valuable asset we have is not what we sell, but rather our own time, we can begin to shift our thinking.

When we’re focused in our selling process, it means we’re leveraging our time. This all begins with how we organize our time. You or your team may sell to any number of different customer groups or industries, but how much of the day is wasted jumping from one industry to another? Yes, geographical issues, time zones, etc., come into play, but the fact remains we can’t be as mentally sharp if all we do is jump around all day.

This is why the successful sales managers will task their teams with being focused on a specific industry for an entire day or week. By focusing, it allows for better learning, which in turn creates more confidence. With more confidence comes a greater likelihood for insights to be shared, both inside the organization and with clients.

The result of being more focused will dramatically change how your customers and prospects view you and your sales team.

# Barry Trailer



CEO, CSO Insights

Barry Trailer is managing partner and co-founder of CSO Insights, a sales effectiveness research and benchmarking firm. In addition to more than thirty years of professional selling experience, Barry is a published author who conducts seminars and provides keynote speeches for organizations such as Oracle and Hitachi. He is also a dog lover and Bay Area native.



Sales  
Performance



Sales  
Coaching

“ The better question is whether all of your reps have facility with and are leveraging digital technology as much as possible. ”

## Inside Sales vs. Field Sales

The idea is this: “Field sales is dead and dying; inside sales is growing like a weed and will soon be the only way successful sales reps operate.” And indeed, CSO Insights’ data show that inside sales is expected to grow faster (14% vs. 11%) in 2015 - but the debate itself is misdirected. The real shift is in virtual vs. physical (in-person) selling.

Today’s field sales reps are conducting on-line briefings (WebEx, GoToMeeting, etc.), phone, chat, email, and social interactions (LinkedIn, Chatter, etc.) a huge percentage of the time; face-to-face meetings are either initial meetings, regularly scheduled, or some milestone (demo, contract closing) that everyone prefers be in person.

The business imperative to “do more, with less, faster,” combined with higher quotas for reps and more packed daily schedules for buyers, means if reps can complete the next action in the buy/sell cycle in a 15-minute phone/on-line meeting versus 45 minutes in the office, let’s do it.

The real question isn’t inside versus field. The better question is whether all of your reps have facility with and are leveraging digital technology as much as possible.

## Process Improvement for Long-Term Success

CSO Insights has tracked sales performance versus level of sales process implementation and customer relationship. Findings have been consistent each of the past eight years: higher levels of sales process implementation correlate with higher sales performance.

But rigid sales process adherence is not the point or the vehicle to long-term success and neither is simply buying technology. Process improvement is. To improve a process you first need to document and track actions against a standard. But to improve a process requires feedback.

This is where technology really shines. Today’s applications can capture details throughout the sales cycle such as: number of site visits before first call, number of calls, time in each stage of the sales process, etc. But you have to consistently use the technology for this to happen; our 2015 Sales Performance Optimization study shows CRM adoption at the lowest level in a decade.

In the next five years, the breakaway firms will be those that consistently implement/track process measures, supported by adopted and utilized technology, and ongoing coaching providing meaningful feedback.

## Average Performance Yields Average Results?

This orientation will prove less true with every passing day as we move into the “winner take most” future. Analogies between sports and sales are common and, usually, appropriate. This is also true in understanding the “winner take most” concept. If you think about any sport, the professionals whose names you know/recognize are making big money. But for every one of these, there are thousands of minor leaguers, aspiring amateurs, up and coming high school/college players who earn little or no pay.

Companies that have enjoyed average results because of an above average advantage in location, pricing or product design will see these being neutralized or diminished faster than ever—and ever faster—in the years ahead. Instead, it will be companies that excel in the 4R’s (recognizing, remembering, responding, respecting) of customer experience that will take most of the pie.

These companies have invested in infrastructure, developed individual and team effectiveness, and practice internal collaboration and partner/customer co-creation (see CSO Insights’ 2015 Anatomy of a World Class Sales Organization) that will leave average performers far behind by 2020.

# Hugo Sarrazin



Partner  
*McKinsey &  
Company*

Hugo leads McKinsey's Business Technology Practice on the West Coast, where he works with technology providers (software, digital media, hardware, service providers, telcos), users of technology (CIO, CTO, GMs), and technology private-equity investors on a broad range of strategic technology issues.

# Lareina Yee



Principal  
*McKinsey &  
Company*

Lareina is a leader within the sales and marketing practice specializing in high-tech sales transformations. For more than 12 years with McKinsey, she has worked extensively in Asia and the U.S. Her most recent experience includes creating a new account management model that both reduced costs and improved customer experience; creating the go-to-market strategy for a new product launch; developing marketing campaigns based on in-depth insights about the client's customers.



Sales &  
Marketing  
Alignment



Sales  
Technology

“ Selling effectively today requires unprecedented amounts of collaboration, and nowhere is that truer than between marketing and sales. ”

## Putting “and” back into “marketing and sales”

Selling effectively today requires unprecedented amounts of collaboration, and nowhere is that truer than between marketing and sales, especially in the B2B world. With the increasing power of analytics, marketing can apply insights and foresight to identify addressable markets and help determine the most appropriate go-to-market approaches for specific customers or opportunities. This puts in place a much more nuanced and accurate picture of the customer. When well applied, companies move from customer segmentation to behavioral segmentation, which can provide a more accurate picture of how individuals or organizations like to buy. And the focus moves to understanding customer decision journeys, where interactions don't follow a reductive funnel but are iterative, continual, and expansive. This understanding helps to emphasize the importance of the after-sales experience, where lines between sales, service, and marketing are blurring as well. What really makes this understanding powerful is that these insights provide marketing and sales with a common set of information, in effect a common language that is crucial for making collaboration work.

## Tech to Turbocharge Sales

Technology can turbocharge your sales force in four important ways:

1. If your sales team is not on mobile to access sales and customer data and information in real time, then you're not in the game anymore. When a salesperson can access all interactions with a customer – from the last service center call to bill payment history – that is a massive advantage.
2. “Mobilizing” the sales force also provides you with a tool to guide a distributed work force. For example, in certain industries where your sales force is also your field workforce, it makes sense to guide your sales force based on real-time events like a stock-out at a specific location or customer.
3. Data blending can map and identify much richer sources of growth at more granular levels. This requires the ability to creatively pull data from internal and external systems, mash them up, and then develop opportunity maps, which allows managers to better allocate resources and set targets.
4. Technology is making inroads into performance management through

improved dashboards. While much of this still relies on people to manage a performance dialogue, the ability to serve information instantly in a way that highlights opportunities for interventions is an important tool for managers to improve the performance of their people.



# Robert Kelly



Chairman, *Sales Management Association*

Robert Kelly is Chairman of The Sales Management Association, a global, cross-industry association for sales management and sales operations. The Sales Management Association serves members in 35+ countries with research, content, workshops, and peer networking.



Big Data

## The Quantified Sales Force

Adherents of today's "quantified self" movement use wearable technology to track sleep, exercise, diet, and other health-related activities. Combining technology and continuous performance monitoring, the quantified self has unlocked a new era of personal improvement.

Future sales organizations will embrace similar performance management approaches. Combining mobile (including wearable) technology, sophisticated analytics, and social collaboration, sales performance management efforts will see an explosion of available data, but also the democratization of its use. Just as the quantified self movement empowers individuals to monitor their own performance, the quantified sales force will see salespeople play a greater role in their own goal setting, activity monitoring, performance evaluation, and development.

These changes will vastly improve performance visibility – but also its transparency. Firms may find it difficult to keep performance information sufficiently secure, and some salespeople will resist greater scrutiny in their daily activities. But organizations that combine an empowered, quantified sales force with a culture of self-directed, continuous development will unlock limitless future productivity.

# Yusuf Tayob



Managing Director, *Accenture*

Yusuf Tayob is a managing director in Accenture's customer relationship management organization and specializes in transformative business agendas in marketing, sales, and customer service. He has extensive experience with sales strategy, sales methodologies and processes, direct and indirect sales, and CRM technologies, particularly in the communications, media and high technology industries.



Sales  
Performance

“ Digital disruption is impacting organizations today and will continue to do so in the future. ”

## Impact of Digital Disruption

Digital disruption is impacting organizations today and will continue to do so in the future. One area of opportunity organizations must not ignore is the sales environment, where there is greater pressure than ever to maximize sales results. We can look at this through three lenses: customers, sellers and competitors.

Through the power of digital, customers are more connected and informed than ever. They have high expectations of their buying experience and want to have the same great experience regardless of the platform they use. They want the best customer experience possible.

Sellers are inundated with all kinds of digital tool options. All sellers want a mobile experience, but operating in that environment in a value-added way requires innovative approaches. Digital masters are empowering their sales teams at the “point of decision” by building quotes, configuring products, bringing experts into a sales conversation or even signing contracts. At Accenture, we believe an end-to-end sales experience must be designed to boost seller productivity and enable high performance.

Organizations cannot operate in a vacuum, of course. Your competitors are also taking advantage of digital innovation, changing to meet new demand and bringing new products to market faster. So, to win, you have to identify how your sales organization can leverage its differentiators and carve out competitive advantages.

Ultimately, the market leaders will be the masters of the digital disruption — placing themselves at the center of the digital ecosystem. These leaders will quickly master new digital relationships with their customers, end users, suppliers, partners, developers, data sources, makers of smart devices, and sources of specialty talent. As a result, the digital masters will be best positioned to outperform their peers.

# Nick Toman



Managing Director, CEB

For the past decade, Nick has conducted numerous research studies in the space of customer service and sales effectiveness and presented these findings to Fortune 500 business leaders and management teams.

Nick's expertise spans a variety of topics including talent management, customer experience management, sales and service operations management, sales and service strategy, sales enablement and organizational culture. He most enjoys researching the intersection where behavioral economics and social science meet traditional business management.



Sales &  
Marketing  
Alignment



Sales  
Performance

“ Ironically, the very information that enabled the sophisticated customer is now overwhelming customers. ”

## Not-So-Sophisticated Customer Buying

Marketing and selling products to B2B customers will continue to be more complex in the coming years, but not for the reasons one might suspect. On average, 5.4 critical stakeholders are involved in today's B2B purchase decisions. That's 5.4 different perspectives, often representing different functions, each with their own biases, beliefs, and goals. Couple that with overwhelming amounts of information, often contradictory in nature. Ironically, the very information that enabled the sophisticated customer is now overwhelming customers. Infinite choices, endless learning, and suppliers eager to accommodate the multitude of opinions amongst customer stakeholders - these are all dynamics that are powerfully altering customer buying behavior for the worse. Closing high-quality deals will hinge on the ability of salespeople to motivate the customer not only to agree on the true challenges, but to maintain remarkable focus amongst diverse stakeholders.

## Know the Customer's Business Better Than They Do

Inherently any sales organization sells one simple thing: change. Implicit in any completed sale is the customer saying, "We're stopping that, and now doing this." The ability to sell change, however, is predicated on suppliers precisely understanding customer beliefs. Few organizations truly know where customers learn, how customers overcome the consensus dynamics inside buying committees, and truly know how customers think about their own challenges and proposed actions. Leading suppliers will teach customers not just how to think about their business challenges and the best courses of action, but rather, highlight for customers where they've gotten things wrong. They'll empathetically show the customer where their collective beliefs have misled them, where the information they've encountered has led them astray, and how the world around them is changing in ways they haven't fully recognized. Only once customers precisely understand the need to change can they grasp how your solution best overcomes their real challenges.



# Tony Robbins



Co-Founder,  
*CloudCoaching  
International*

For the past three decades, Anthony Robbins has served as an adviser to leaders around the world. A recognized authority on the psychology of leadership, negotiations, organizational turnaround, and peak performance, he has been honored consistently for his strategic intellect and humanitarian endeavors.

# Walter Rogers



Co-Founder & CEO  
*CloudCoaching  
International*

Walter is the CEO of CCI Global Holdings, a joint venture with Tony Robbins focused on creating world-class learning experiences for sales and service organizations worldwide. Portfolio companies include CloudCoaching International, Baker Communications, CCI Labs, and 4What Interactive. Walter has created and led businesses in 13 countries on three continents and is a recognized thought leader in the areas of sales and change management.



Sales  
Performance

“ Recent surveys report that 35% of companies today say it takes too long – 10 months to over a year – for new sales reps to be productive. ”



## Sales Performance

Recent surveys report that 35% of companies today say it takes too long – 10 months to over a year – for new sales reps to be productive. Not only do companies spend extra money during this time on training and onboarding to develop this new resource, but they also lose money during the same period because they don't have adequate "boots on the ground" to pursue new opportunities. Sales organizations are already taking steps to address this problem. Ten years from now, when today's 8th graders are becoming front line sales professionals, the whole view of sales recruitment and training will be different in at least three ways:

**1. Sales Profession:** Companies will realize that they get better performance and more loyalty from sales reps by taking the time and resources to develop them, retain them, and support them. Selling will be seen more as an actual profession. It will be the norm rather than the exception for salespeople to have degrees in sales, as well as specializations in certain product or service types, solutions, transactions, and verticals.

### **2. Social Relationship Management (SRM):**

Sales as a discipline will still be strongly relationship-based, but the relationships will be increasingly digital as well as personal. Social Relationship Management (SRM) – a digital platform similar to CRM which enables you to manage and scale your relationship with customers across all pertinent social media channels – will be a key differentiator in a company's ability to create customer intimacy and anticipate their needs.

### **3. Knowledge as a Service (KaaS)**

will also become an integral part of sales and sales management skills development. KaaS describes our growing capability to store and mine information on just about anything in the cloud and easily, immediately access it from any location on any device. Being able to deliver timely, topical information in this fashion to sales reps will not only drive their learning curve and decrease training and onboarding costs, it will also accelerate their ability to deliver information and services to customers on a daily basis.

# Matt Sharrers



Partner, SBI (*Sales Benchmark Index*)

Prior to his current career as consultant and thought leader, Matt held an executive sales leadership position at Cintas, a Fortune 250 multi-national company. As employee #4 and Partner at SBI, Matt Sharrers spends his time studying, and working with, the top 1% of B2B sales leaders.



Sales  
Enablement



Sales  
Strategy

“ Without sales enablement, your sales strategy is stuck. ”

## Without Sales Enablement Your Sales Strategy is 'Stuck'

Sales Enablement is a critical part of your sales strategy. Compare your sales strategy to a car. With all of the parts working in unison, the car works great. Sales Enablement is the 'tires' in this analogy. Without the tires, the car will just sit there. Your sales strategy won't take you anywhere without Sales Enablement. So how do you get that car on the road? Two ways:

**1. Execution** – Executing sales enablement is knowing what to do, when to do it, and who is doing it. Answer the questions below to know if you are executing:

- How do you define Sales Enablement within your organization?
- Do you know your objectives for your Sales Enablement team?
- Where does Sales Enablement live and who owns it?

**2. Adoption-** Millions are spent on sales programs that do not get adopted. Why invest time and money in a strategy if it's not going to be adopted? Sales Enablement is your answer. Is the Sales Enablement team implementing programs to drive adoption? If not, then your strategy is in jeopardy. Adoption is critical.

Execution and adoption are not the only components to a successful sales strategy rollout, but again, the strategy will be tough to get off the ground without them.

## A Winning Sales Strategy

Sales performance and sales strategy are related. A Sales strategy is a rich document. It is defined as "An Operating Plan for the company's sales force". It is 25-30 pages in length. A sales strategy allows you to allocate people, money and time in the most optimal way in pursuit of the revenue goal.

78% of sales forces are trending to miss the 2015 revenue number. We say this because in 2014, that was the number of organizations that had the wrong sales strategy. Some key reasons why your strategy is suffering:

**1. You have the same strategy as your competitors** - In this scenario, the sales experience becomes a commodity. When this happens, differentiation is reliant solely on product or price. This strategy could work if you are lucky enough to sell a superior product. Although, this advantage is likely to be short lived. Competitors will catch up. The pricing pressure will result in missing the number.

**2. You have tactics masquerading as a strategy** - When the strategy is a compilation of tactics, the organization is reactive vs. proactive. They may make the number one quarter, but miss the next. However, they are unable to excel every quarter unless they can systematize these tactics.

**3. You have a strategy that is misaligned with buyer needs** - When a sales team does not align the strategy to buyer needs, friction results. Buyers may have great experiences during the self-directed portion of the buyer's journey. But once the sales team engages, the experience degrades substantially. The result is frustrated buyers who take their business to a better aligned competitor.

**4. Your strategy is out of alignment with the product strategy** - Sales strategy not aligned with product strategy often leads to sales teams underperforming. Product management delivers new solutions to specific problems of certain prospects. The sales strategy needs to be built around these prospects to solve their problems.

**5. You don't have a strategy** - When there is no sales strategy, the number is almost always missed. This results in periodic success through the heroic efforts of a few superstars. Without a sales strategy, the sales leader becomes overly dependent on a few reps. This is not sustainable.

Maximizing sales performance has never been harder. You are fighting for attention internally and externally. If you undertake initiatives in the wrong order, they'll be less effective. They'll also cause unnecessary disruption. In today's ultra-competitive environment, strategy provides a clear competitive advantage.

# Jill Rowley



Founder & Chief Evangelist, *JillRowley.com*

Ms. Rowley is the founder and Chief Evangelist of her consulting firm, where she advises enterprises on how to leverage social selling to drive revenue growth. She evangelized and enabled 23,000 Oracle salespeople on the techniques of social selling. Prior to Oracle, she was a top-performing salesperson for over a decade at Eloqua, where she earned the title “EloQueen.” She was hailed as the number one most influential woman in social selling by Forbes and named to OpenView’s list of Top 25 B2B Sales Influencers for 2014.



Sales &  
Marketing  
Alignment



Social Selling

“ Be where your buyer  
is offline, online,  
#allthetime. ”

## The “Why” of Sales and Marketing Alignment

Companies that have marketing and sales alignment are 60% better at closing deals. Closing deals impacts revenue. Companies with best-in-class alignment have over 100% less friction between sales and marketing. Lead acceptance rates are higher. Conversion rates are higher. Sales velocity is higher. Win rates are higher. Data shows that sales and marketing alignment impacts the funnel — funnel progression, funnel conversion, win rates, and ultimately lifetime value.

The metrics that matter have changed. If you, as the CMO, see your CEO or board of directors in the hall, and you run up to them trying to get a high five for your open rates or your click through rates, you're toast. You're screwed. That is not what matters. What we've seen in B2B is that we have to have one view of the entire funnel. We have to stop saying, “Well marketing's done, toss it at sales.”

## The “What” of Sales and Marketing Alignment.

What it is, is aligning around the customer. Always looking at things through the eyes of the customer. Too much of what we do is internally focused. Marketing needs to know more about sales, sales needs to know more about marketing, and everyone needs to know more about the customer. One of the challenges is, we don't sit in the same room, we don't attend the same conferences, and that leads to the silos. We don't even have the same metrics.

We have to align around the customer and the customer journey. We have to really understand who our ideal customer is and focus on the companies that we can generate the most value for. We have to focus on the value creation of our customers and really understanding where that is, and within that demographic, we need to understand the people aspect. Who are we selling to within the organization? We have to understand the personas of those various people on the buying committee, and really understand the buyer's journey and need to align to that.

The buyer has changed more in the past 10 years than in the past 100. I've seen the transformation in marketing; I haven't seen nearly the same transformation in sales. Sales is way behind. So what do we

do? We need to invest in training and the mindset of the sales professional. We need to shift the mindset from “Selling! Closing!” to “Serving! Helping!” the buyer. We need to invest in the skills that this modern sales professional has to have. You have to be digital, you have to be social, you have to be mobile. You have to be like your buyer and you have to be where your buyer is. Be where your buyer is offline, online, #allthetime.

And we need marketing to understand more about sales. Marketing needs to understand more about those later stages of the buyer's journey so that they can provide more content, community, and customer advocacy to support sales.

We also need process. Process isn't a dirty word. We need a shared process and we need shared planning and strategy. We need finance involved. We need product involved. We need operations involved. We need shared process that is developed via cross-functional teams.





## Conclusion

While the future of sales is far from certain, one thing is undoubtedly true: The next few years will hold a lot of change for sales professionals. From new technology and strategies to new focuses and philosophies, our group of 14 sales leaders presented their ideas for the future. Now it's your turn. While predictions and speculations will always have their place, it's up to you to go out and define the future of sales yourself!

Use these insights as inspiration and a catalyst to take a hard look at your sales team and sales processes. Is there room for improvement? How are you going to take things to the next level? There is no better time than the present to dive in and start defining the future.



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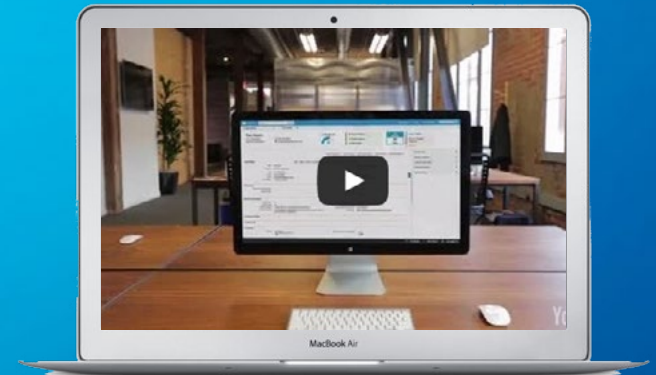
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