

Tapping the Potential of Sales Enablement



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Contents

- 3 About the Sponsor
- 5 Introduction
- 9 **SECTION 1:** The Sales Enablement Function
- 16 **SECTION 2:** The Sales Enablement Tools
- 23 Action Plan
- 25 Appendix
- 26 Acknowledgments
- 27 About the Author and Contributors

Survey Overview

Target Survey Population

The target population for this research was professionals across different organizations and industries with a sales department. This survey had 262 respondents.

Survey Instrument

The survey was composed of 30 questions including those related to the demographics of the respondents.

Procedure

ATD Research distributed a link to the online survey to the target population in July and August 2023. The survey closed in August 2023.

Identifying Statistically Significant Differences

This report notes differences between groups. All differences are significant at a level of at least $p < 0.05$. A significance of $p < 0.05$ implies a less than 5 percent probability that the difference is a result of chance and one can be 95 percent confident that the results represent a statistically significant relationship. Some data points were included for informational purposes only and no statistically significant differences were found.

About the Sponsor



A Note From UMU

Improving sales productivity is a top priority for CEOs. In the face of economic fluctuations, the rise of hybrid or remote work models, and evolving customer demands, sales teams must enhance their capabilities to navigate constant changes and challenges.

Many companies have heavily invested in traditional offline sales training, purchasing relevant learning resources, and implementing various platforms. However, the mere deployment of these tools and resources is insufficient to drive performance improvements and organizational growth. Effective sales training requires a seamless integration of learning sciences and technology.

Sales training facilitates the transformation of acquired knowledge into behavioral change. In addition to offering quality content and courses, it is crucial to provide opportunities for practice and feedback to enable salespeople to confidently showcase their best selves when interacting with clients. Additionally, sales teams are often on the move, visiting clients and operating at a large scale. Therefore, there is a pressing need for efficient, asynchronous methods that allow for learning and practice anytime, anywhere. This is where learning technology plays a pivotal role. Leveraging AI, sales training can now reach a wider audience, offering personalized and constructive feedback that effectively enhances the capabilities of the entire sales team.

With the continuous development of technology and the application of learning science principles, sales enablement is set to undergo substantial transformation. UMU aims to assist more companies in improving sales team efficiency and achieving better business outcomes by effectively combining AI and learning science.

About UMU

UMU is on a mission to develop global learning resources, connect people with knowledge, speed up knowledge transfer, and enable everyone to engage, share, and achieve.

UMU's AI-enabled learning platform empowers enterprises and L&D professionals to drive performance and results, especially in the area of sales enablement. Founded in 2014, UMU has served more than 100 million users across 200 countries and regions, and thousands of customers. Clients include industry leaders and fast-growing brands, including top life science companies, financial services companies, and retail chains.

Together with these customers, UMU has made many breakthroughs in the area of sales training to achieve effectiveness, efficiency, and scalability. UMU is disrupting the sales enablement landscape through its best-in-class AI-enabled solutions, which empower sales teams to promote behavioral change, enhance sales pitch skill, and eventually drive business results. With AI, UMU is transforming the traditional learning process to interactive learning. Through integrating learning science with AI, UMU offers AI-enabled practice, simulation, and formative feedback to help enterprises conduct effective sales training at scale. Clients who have used UMU's solution have seen as high as 70 percent sales performance improvement. For more information, visit umu.com.

Introduction

Businesses create solutions to solve problems and fulfill the needs of their customers. However, having a good product or solution isn't enough for a successful business strategy. Organizations must employ talented sales professionals to sell the products. And these sales professionals need to be supported by an effective sales enablement (SE) team.

The landscape of sales has changed drastically in the last decade, asserts Bob Britton in *TD* magazine.¹ Nearly half of customers “have already begun to create their own solutions to those issues before ever engaging with a seller,” so Britton notes that in addition to dealing with a more knowledgeable customer base, the sales function has also had to navigate an increasingly complex technology landscape and an extremely rapid shift to virtual selling due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, these changes emphasize the importance of sales enablement. “Reframing companies’ concepts of sales for the realities of this modern era and helping them navigate modern sales hurdles,” writes Britton, “is one of the value-adds SE can provide.”

ATD defines **sales enablement** as activities related to onboarding, sales training, coaching, content creation, and process improvement, among other areas. It is the effort to increase the productivity of revenue-generating teams by providing development, tools, and resources to help sales teams convert more opportunities into wins.²

Drawing upon a sample of 262 talent development professionals, this report investigates key questions to provide benchmark data and highlight best practices about sales enablement. ATD Research took a closer look at sales enablement departments and the tools they use.

When organizations have sales enablement functions, they understand how important they are. Nearly every professional (90 percent) said sales enablement was somewhat or very important to their organization (Figure 1). Only 3 percent said it was somewhat unimportant or very unimportant.

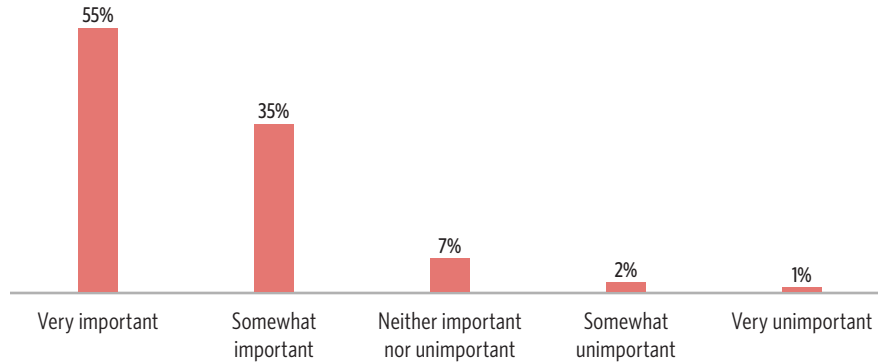
1 B. Britton, “Solving the Puzzle of Sales Enablement,” *TD*, October 1, 2021, td.org/magazines/td-magazine/solving-the-puzzle-of-sales-enablement.

2 ATD (Association for Talent Development), “Talent Development Glossary Terms,” td.org/glossary-terms.

FIGURE 1

90% of Respondents Said Sales Enablement Was Very or Somewhat Important to Their Organization

In your opinion, how important is sales enablement to your organization?



Mike Kunkle, vice president of sales effectiveness services for SPARXiQ, founder of Transforming Sales Results, and author of *The Building Blocks of Sales Enablement*, believes that “enablement is critical because of the focus on the company’s buyers and customers, and on readying and supporting market-facing personnel to serve them in the most effective, efficient, and frictionless manner possible.”³

A top healthcare IT provider in Japan discussed why sales enablement was an important function for organizations: “First and foremost, sales enablement made it possible to standardize the sales process for our sales team of over 100 members nationwide,” they said. “This will enable us to control customer expectations during the order acquisition process, stabilize the quality of implementations, and keep our after-sales service quality consistent. Overall, we believe that this initiative will have the greatest impact in reducing operational variations within our business.”

Korn Ferry reported that organizations with a sales enablement function see increased sales revenue, improved client acquisitions, and increased selling time for the sales team.⁴ The evidence points to the fact that sales enablement is an important function for organizations to provide to their sales team.

Although sales enablement is important to organizations, sales staff gave mixed reviews on the impact that it has had. More than half of survey respondents said that sales staff had given both positive and negative feedback (Figure 2). Meanwhile, 31 percent said their

³ Interview with Mike Kunkle, August 5, 2023.

⁴ Korn Ferry, “A Guide to Sales Enablement,” Korn Ferry Featured Topics, [kornferry.com/insights/featured-topics/sales-transformation/a-guide-to-sales-enablement](https://www.kornferry.com/insights/featured-topics/sales-transformation/a-guide-to-sales-enablement).

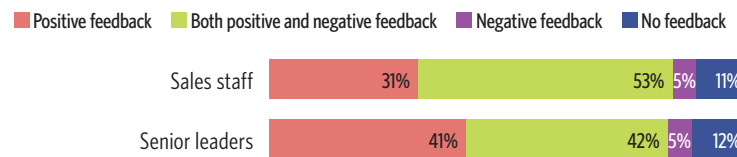
sales staff had provided only positive reviews and 5 percent said their sales staff had given only negative reviews. More than one in 10 said they had received no feedback from the sales staff about the impact of sales enablement.

Senior leaders also gave mixed reviews about the impact of sales enablement—42 percent of respondents said senior leaders had given both positive and negative feedback, 41 percent said they provided positive feedback, and 5 percent said they provided negative feedback. At some organizations (12 percent), senior leaders had not given any feedback on the impact of sales enablement.

FIGURE 2

The Impact of Sales Enablement Received Mixed Reviews From Sales Staff and Senior Leaders

Within the past 12 months, what feedback have sales staff and seniors leaders given on the impact of sales enablement?



About the Participants

ATD Research surveyed 262 professionals who worked for an organization with a sales team and had knowledge of their sales enablement function. Of the respondents, 28 percent represented small organizations (fewer than 100 employees), 44 percent were from medium organizations (100 to 2,499 employees), and 28 percent were from large organizations (2,500 or more employees).

Respondents resided in 16 different regions around the world—45 percent were from the United States, 29 percent were from China, and 17 percent were from Japan. The full list of countries included in the study can be found in the Appendix.

The study also asked about the industry that participants' organizations were part of, as well as their span of control within the organization. Of participating organizations, 13 percent were part of retail trade, 12 percent were from healthcare and social assistance, 11 percent were from manufacturing, and 10 percent were from information services. Approximately a third of respondents were executives and directors; 41 percent were managers, supervisors, and team leaders; and nearly a quarter were individual contributors.

Key Findings

- 90 percent of respondents said sales enablement was very or somewhat important to their organization.
- 65 percent of respondents had an established sales enablement department.
- In the 35 percent of organizations that did not have a dedicated sales enablement function, sales leaders or the marketing department were most likely to take responsibility for sales enablement tasks. However, at 29 percent of these organizations, no one was responsible for sales enablement.
- More than 90 percent of respondents measured the success of their sales enablement efforts; the most common methods of doing so were via sales success statistics, such as wins and conversion rates (53 percent) and sales revenue (42 percent).
- More than 80 percent of respondents used sales enablement tools, whether developed within their organization or purchased from a third-party vendor. Two-thirds rated their sales training tools as good or very good.

SECTION 1

The Sales Enablement Function

Not every organization with a sales department has an established sales enablement department; in fact, this was true of nearly a third of responding organizations. To understand the different business models, ATD Research asked respondents some specific questions about how sales enablement fit within their organization.

65 percent
of organizations had
a sales enablement
department.

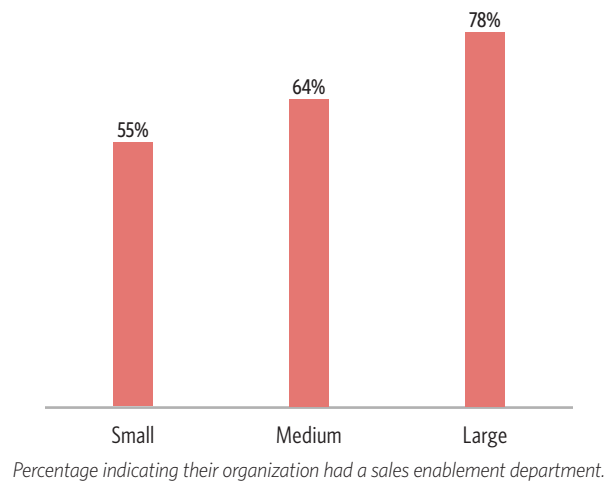
The Sales Enablement Department

Sixty-five percent of organizations had a sales enablement department. Large organizations were significantly more likely to have a sales enablement department than small organizations (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3

Large Organizations Were Most Likely to Have a Sales Enablement Department

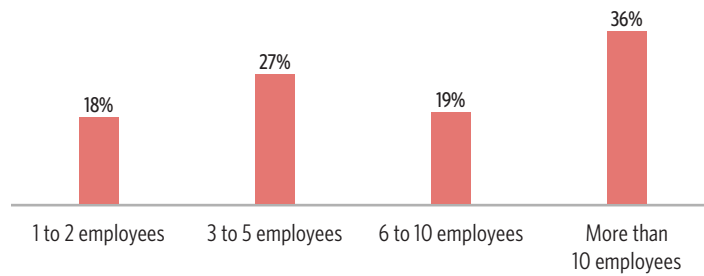
Does your organization have an established sales enablement department?



Organizations also differed on the size of their sales enablement department. In 18 percent of responding organizations, only one or two people were responsible for sales enablement: 46 percent of departments had three to 10 people, and 36 percent had more than 10 people (Figure 4). Unsurprisingly, small organizations were more likely to have one to two employees in their sales enablement department, compared with large organizations, which were more likely than small and medium organizations to have more than 10 employees in their sales enablement department.

FIGURE 4
Sales Enablement Departments Differed in Size

How many employees are in the sales enablement department?



Sales enablement functions reported to a variety of departments. The most common was the sales department (38 percent), followed by marketing (17 percent) and human resources (16 percent; Figure 5). A less common business model included sales enablement reporting to the communications or public relations department (2 percent).

FIGURE 5
Sales Enablement Commonly Reported to the Sales Department

Which area does the sales enablement department report to?



Organizations Without Sales Enablement Departments

Thirty-five percent of organizations did not have a sales enablement department. The study found that smaller organizations were less likely to have sales enablement departments than large organizations. In addition, organizations headquartered in Japan and China were less likely to have sales enablement departments when compared with organizations headquartered in the United States.

In organizations without a sales enablement department, other departments had to pick up these responsibilities—such as sales coaching and data analytics. According to survey respondents, sales leaders were the most likely to take on these tasks in the absence of a sales enablement department (50 percent; Figure 6). At 24 percent of organizations, the marketing team took on this responsibility. It was less common to see the training team, talent development, product managers, or human resources taking on sales enablement tasks. At 29 percent of organizations that had a sales team but no sales enablement function, no one performed sales enablement tasks.

FIGURE 6

When There Wasn't a Sales Enablement Department, Sales Leaders Most Commonly Took Responsibility for the Tasks

Who takes responsibility for sales enablement functions (such as sales coaching or data analytics) in your organization? (Choose all that apply.)



Collaborating With the Sales Enablement Function

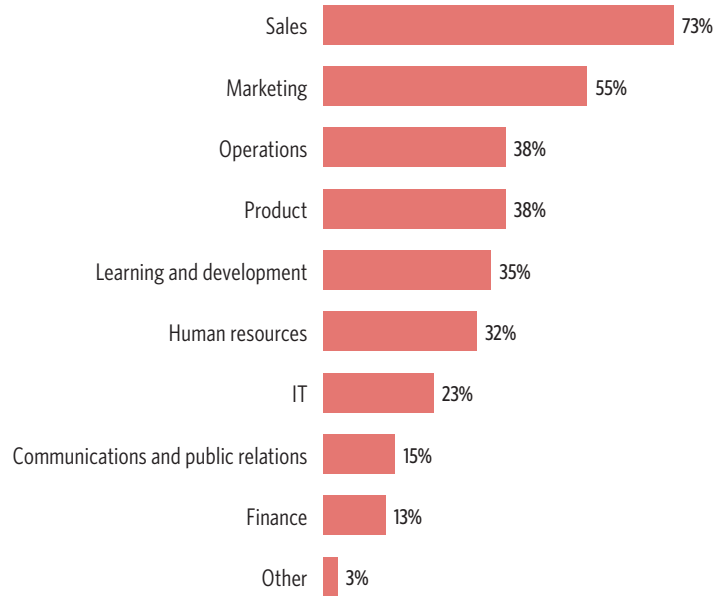
“Think about how difficult professional, B2B, complex sales have become, and how much goes into the preparation and support . . . to get to the formal maturity model for enablement and impact business results,” says Kunkle. “This isn’t something that one person, or even one department, can do on their own. Or, at least not to reach fully optimized levels. It takes a village; it takes cross-functional collaboration.”

Dayna Williams, sales content leader at ATD and SELL programming chair, has a similar outlook on collaboration. “Alignment is king,” she says. “This ensures the customer experience is smooth and consistent at each touchpoint.”⁵ Williams goes on to explain the need to collaborate with certain departments: “SE needs to collaborate with marketing to ensure alignment between external messaging and the sales experience. SE needs to collaborate with product leaders to ensure they understand what problems their solution suite is designed to solve and communicate real feedback from their on-the-ground conversations. SE needs to collaborate with finance to ensure smooth input and output of bookings, contracts, and so forth.”

Survey respondents were asked about the departments their sales enablement function collaborates with. The most common response was the sales department (73 percent; Figure 7).

FIGURE 7
Sales Enablement Regularly Collaborated With the Sales Department

*Which other departments or areas regularly collaborate on sales enablement projects?
(Choose all that apply.)*



5 Interview with Dayna Williams, August 7, 2023.

In addition, 55 percent of organizations with a sales enablement function reported that it collaborated with their marketing department. When sales organizations “prioritize alignment with marketing, [they] are nearly three times more likely to exceed new customer acquisition targets.”⁶ When sales enablement collaborated with the marketing team, senior leadership gave more positive feedback about the impact of sales enablement.

Kunkle uses an analogy to explain the importance of collaborating: “Aligning everyone on how they will all support each other, and especially the sales force, in serving buyers and customers, gives enablement a broader reach and fosters a larger impact. It’s just like rowing a big boat. If two boats are racing, and one has people rowing in multiple directions and another has everyone rowing in the same way, speed, and direction—who do you believe is going to win the race?”

Measuring the Success of Sales Enablement Efforts

To understand the impact of sales enablement, it’s important to measure the success of the efforts. There are different ways to think about the success of sales enablement initiatives. Williams says, “It is important to consider and define success on initiatives that are wholly owned by sales enablement versus those shared initiatives where sales enablement can influence, support, and impact, but are ultimately dependent on others.

“Each organization is going to have different criteria for measuring success of enablement efforts; however, there are two considerations,” she explains. “The first is to identify the areas of responsibility where enablement has end-to-end control and measures outcomes based on performance. This could be cost savings, participation or utilization levels, and so forth. Secondly there are areas where sales enablement may play an important yet dependent role. For instance, enablement may design and deploy a manager coaching program but would be dependent on the managers to coach with regularity to get big impacts.”

Organizations were most likely to measure the success of their sales enablement efforts through sales success statistics, such as wins, conversion rates, and quota attainment (53 percent; Figure 8). Some organizations (42 percent) measured success through sales revenue; 33 percent looked at employment satisfaction survey results from their sales force; and 8 percent did not measure the success of their sales enablement efforts.

6 Gartner, “Gartner for Sales Leaders,” gartner.com/en/sales.

FIGURE 8

More Than Half of Organizations Measured Sales Enablement Success Through Sales Statistics

How do you measure the success of your sales enablement efforts? (Choose all that apply.)



ATD Research also found that organizations differed in how they measured success by where they were headquartered (Table 1).

TABLE 1

Organizations Differed on Measuring Success by Where Their Headquarters Were Located

How do you measure the success of your sales enablement efforts? (Choose all that apply.)

	China	Japan	United States	Global Data
Sales success statistics	65%	61%	43%	53%
Sales revenue	37%	42%	45%	42%
Sales force employee satisfaction survey results	41%	33%	28%	33%
Usage rate of sales tools	38%	18%	32%	30%
Shortened sales cycle	37%	6%	26%	27%
Cost savings	34%	12%	30%	27%
Sales force turnover	32%	27%	25%	27%
Other	0%	3%	0%	1%
We do not measure the success of our SE efforts	9%	15%	4%	8%

Sales Enablement Can Influence Organizational Challenges

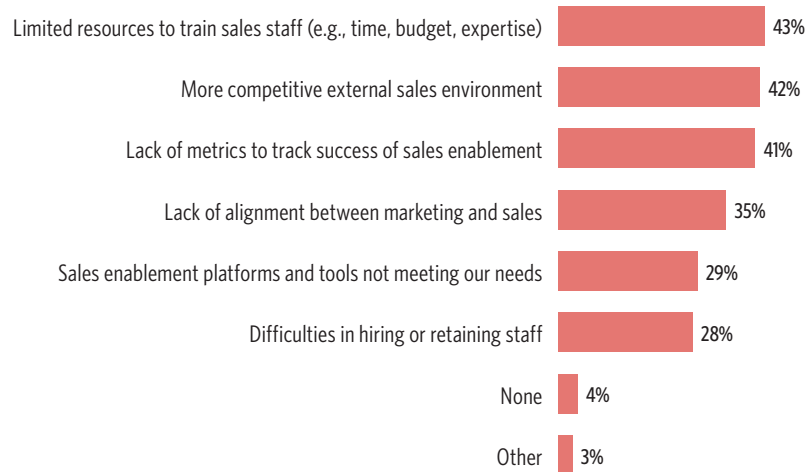
The sales enablement function can have a positive influence on areas that challenge organizations.

The top three areas were limited resources for training (such as time, budgets, and expertise; 43 percent), a more competitive external sales environment (42 percent), and a lack of metrics to track success (41 percent; Figure 9).

FIGURE 9

Limited Resources, a More Competitive External Sales Environment, and Lack of Metrics Were Challenging Areas That Sales Enablement Could Influence

What are the greatest challenges affecting your sales organization that sales enablement may be able to influence?



SECTION 2

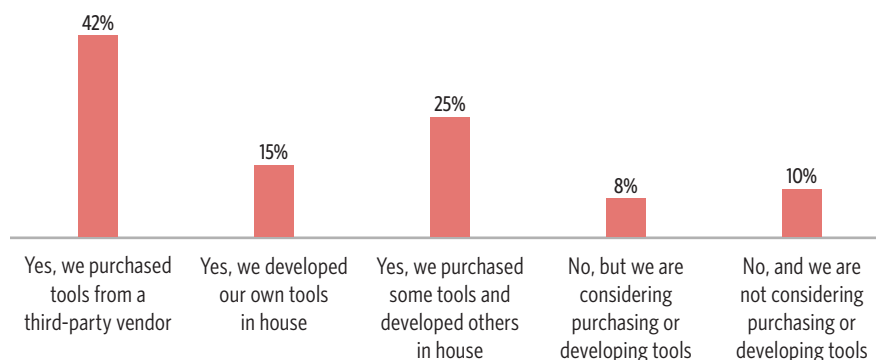
The Sales Enablement Tools

Some organizations used sales enablement tools—such as contact center software, customer relationship management, and learning management systems—to help them be more successful. Eighty-two percent of organizations used sales enablement tools and 18 percent did not (Figure 10).

FIGURE 10

More Than 80% of Organizations Used Sales Enablement Tools

Is your organization currently using sales enablement tools (e.g., contact center software, customer relationship management, or learning management systems)?



Organizations can purchase sales enablement tools from a third-party vendor, or they can develop their own. Of the respondents, 42 percent said they used a tool purchased from a third-party vendor, 15 percent used a tool developed in house, and 25 percent used both purchased and in-house developed tools. Of the nearly one in five organizations that did not use sales enablement tools, 8 percent were considering purchasing or developing them and 10 percent had no interest.

Williams makes the following recommendation to any organization looking to add sales enablement tools: “Selection of the software should include a discussion of whether it will improve performance versus slow people down, as well as the level of effort it will take to implement internally and expectations around adoption and utilization.”

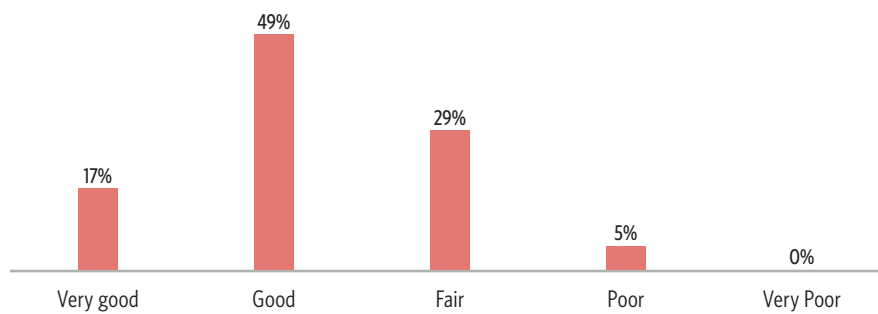
Effectiveness of Sales Enablement Tools

Overall, two-thirds of talent development professionals rated their sales training tools as very good or good (Figure 11). Twenty-nine percent rated them as fair, and 5 percent rated them as poor. When respondents rated their overall sales training tools as good, their sales and senior leadership teams were more likely to give positive feedback about sales enablement.

FIGURE 11

Two-Thirds of Respondents Rated Their Sales Training Tools As Good or Very Good

How would you rate your sales training tools overall?



With a variety of sales enablement tools in the market, organizations need to consider what software will help them achieve their goals and objectives. When organizations are trying to determine what features they need in a sales enablement tool, Kunkle advises asking, “What does the sales force at your company need most to find buyers with problems you can solve and help them make purchase decisions?”

Most organizations indicated their sales enablement platform included sales content, training, coaching, sales intelligence, presentations, and sales analytics. “By unifying the scattered information and standardizing the learning process, we can streamline sales training,” explained a principal specialist at a top medical devices provider in Japan. “This not only helps individuals who prefer to retrieve information themselves but also ensures consistency. While the ultimate goal is to further connect this learning to output, our initial focus is to provide standardized training to each team and aim for a uniform learning experience for everyone.”

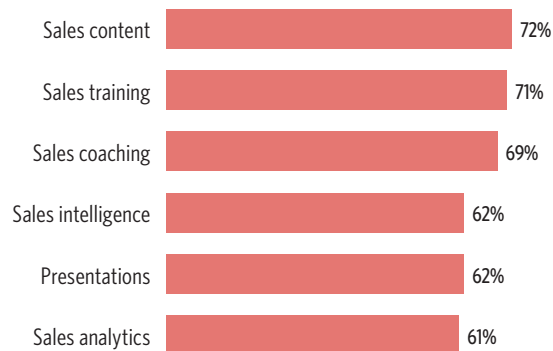
They also discussed the importance of video content in their sales enablement software: “We are currently utilizing a lot of video content. However, what is really helpful is that the information can be organized on one platform. . . . Before its implementation, our resources and content were scattered across various locations. It was challenging for employees to find out where everything was stored. We have materials from various internal lectures managed solely by the marketing department, but now we are centrally managing them on one platform through collaboration with the marketing department.”

Although these features are available at many of the responding organizations, TD professionals didn’t always think they were effective at meeting their needs. Of respondents that had sales content, 72 percent rated it as very or somewhat effective (Figure 12). When respondents rated their sales content as effective, senior leaders were more likely to give positive feedback about the impact of sales enablement. Sales training was rated as effective by 71 percent of respondents who had that feature.

FIGURE 12

72% of Respondents Rated Their Sales Content As Effective

How effective are your sales enablement tools at meeting your organization’s needs for the following sales training functions?



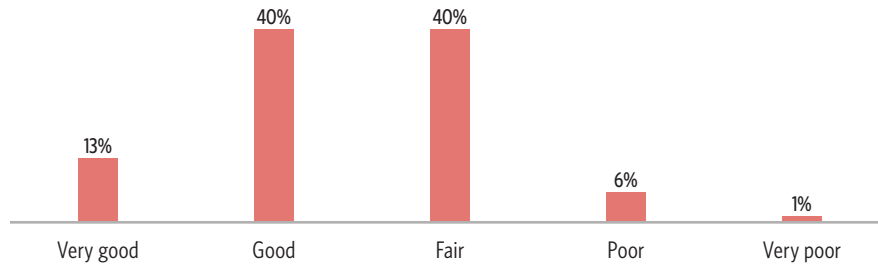
Percentage of respondents who selected very or somewhat effective.

“Sales is about finding buyers with problems you can solve, who want to solve them, and have the means to do it,” explains Kunkle. “This requires buyer acumen and a deep understanding of your market and your ideal customer profile.” Having customer insight tools was important for the sales team. When asked how they rated their customer insight tools overall, 53 percent of talent development professionals rated them as very good or good, 40 percent rated them as fair, and 7 percent rated them as poor or very poor (Figure 13). When respondents rated their customer insight tools as good, their sales and senior leadership teams were more likely to give positive feedback about sales enablement.

FIGURE 13

More Than Half of Respondents Rated Their Customer Insight Tools As Good or Very Good

How would you rate your customer insight tools overall?

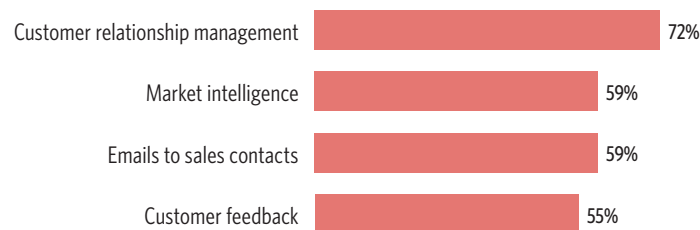


Most respondents indicated their sales enablement tool included customer relationship management, market intelligence, emails to sales contacts, and customer feedback. Of respondents that had a customer relationship management feature, 72 percent said it was effective or very effective at meeting their needs (Figure 14).

FIGURE 14

72% of Respondents With Customer Relationship Management Features Said They Were Effective

How effective are sales enablement tools at meeting your organization's needs for the following customer insight functions?



Percentage of respondents who selected very or somewhat effective.

AI and Sales Enablement

AI-enabled applications have been a hot topic in the training and talent development field in 2023. AI is defined as “a wide collection of use cases and programming approaches that allow [for the creation of] machine-based solutions to everyday problems.”⁷

In 2022, ATD partnered with UMU to find out more about AI in talent development. In that study, 20 percent of respondents said their organization was using AI-enabled applications for sales enablement and 35 percent said they planned to use it in the next two years.⁸ A top healthcare IT provider in Japan indicated that they were considering using AI in four key areas:

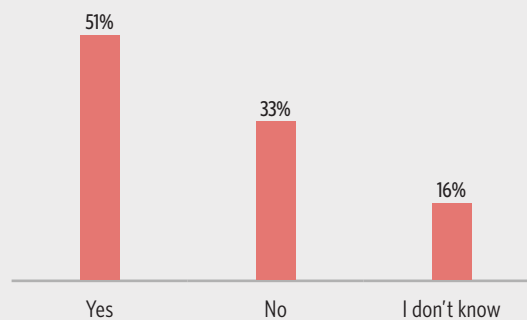
- Enhancing expertise and understanding of client insights (using AI to understand the medical specialty of doctors as our clients)
- Using AI as a coach to check for missing preparatory items (thus ensuring uniformity and improving the quality of sales management)
- Using AI as a receiver of ropelines to check that proper proposal talks are conducted and scripts are used
- In future, after loading the SFA (sales force automation) data into the original AI, the AI will suggest or prompt the next action to be performed when the SFA is entered after the action

In the current study, approximately half of respondents said their sales enablement tool used AI-enabled applications (Figure 15).

FIGURE 15

Approximately Half of Respondents Used AI-Enabled Applications

Do any of your sales enablement tools use AI-enabled applications?



⁷ M. Meacham, *AI in Talent Development* (Alexandria, VA: ATD Press, 2020).

⁸ ATD (Association for Talent Development), *AI in Learning and Talent Development: Embracing Its Future Potential in the Workplace* (Alexandria, VA: ATD Press, 2022).

Nearly 60 percent of organizations with a sales enablement department used tools with AI-enabled applications, whereas only 34 percent of organizations without a sales enablement department used them. Organizations that both created their own tools and purchased tools from a third-party vendor were more likely to use AI-enabled applications than organizations that solely purchased tools from vendors.

“AI is already suggesting content for specific buyers based on personas and sales process stage, or how frequently the content is used in other deals that closed,” says Kunkle. “I can see AI offering training, tools, mentor suggestions, job aids, or reminders based on an analysis of calls or sales competency assessments. As AI progresses, a lot more will be possible.” With all the excitement around AI-enabled applications, Kunkle cautiously warns that while “generative AI is more advanced (based on large language models), the accuracy of the output is only as effective as the database being used. When the data is recent, large enough, validated, accurate, and preferably yours, the output will be more reliable and accurate.”

Changes to Sales Enablement Tools

ATD Research also sought to find out what changes organizations have made to their sales enablement function since 2020.

A few organizations said that their organization did not have a sales enablement team prior to 2020, but had added one during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, one comment noted that their “company did not have a dedicated person in a sales enablement role and now they do.” Other respondents discussed how their use of tools changed during the pandemic. One respondent explained that they’d “adopted virtual tools,” and another said that they now have “greater remote tools.”

Not all the changes were positive, including a struggle to get back to in-person experiences. “Look at the number of people working remotely and hybrid right now, and the number of Zoom, Teams, or Google Meet meetings we’re all having. The same is true of digital buying behavior,” says Kunkle. “Many sellers are trying to go back to pre-pandemic ways of working, and buyers in some industries are too, to a degree, but many will never return to pre-pandemic buying behaviors.” Another respondent explained that they have less support because their team was experienced in an in-person environment, but aren’t as well prepared for a virtual model.

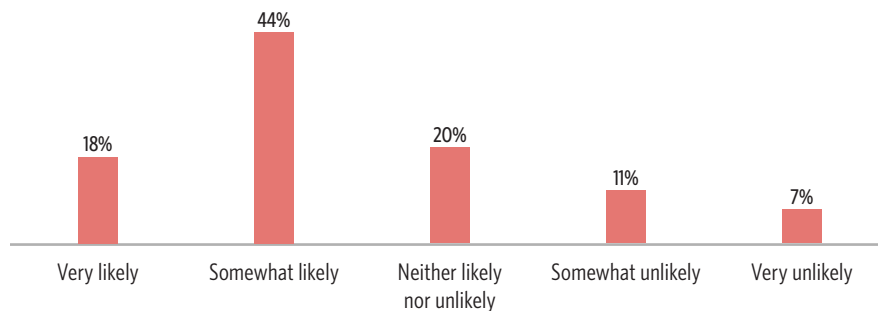
The way we learn and train has also changed. “After shifting all learning to 100 percent online, there was a desire to get back in the same room,” says Williams. “But things aren’t as straightforward as they were pre-pandemic, so decisions have to be made around what training is best served live and how we make arrangements for say 70 percent in person and another 30 percent that will remain virtual.”

When thinking about the future, 62 percent of talent development professionals said they believed it was very or somewhat likely their organization would change or purchase new sales enablement tools in the next two years (Figure 16). Conversely, 18 percent said they believed it was somewhat or very unlikely that their organization would make the change.

FIGURE 16

62% of Organizations Were at Least Somewhat Likely to Change or Purchase Sales Enablement Tools in the Next Two Years

How likely are you to change or purchase new sales enablement tools in the next two years?



Action Plan

ATD asked respondents about sales enablement. Based on that data, this report makes several recommendations.

Hire an Expert

When the 35 percent of organizations that did not have a sales enablement function are ready to start one, they should hire an expert. “Promoting a salesperson into the company’s very first enablement role, without any enablement experience, is a long path to value,” Kunkle explains. “When I see this, it’s usually an indication that the person in charge doesn’t really understand what enablement is, or can be, and just wants someone to do what they say—meaning, execute random acts of enablement, without a strategic approach that is likely to make an impact.”

Once someone is in the sales enablement role, Williams reminds organizations to “identify what impact you want enablement to make (such as developing capability, productivity, or efficiency) and align responsibilities around that. If there are tasks that don’t fit within that, see if they can be delegated elsewhere or parked for the time being. Sales enablement functions best when it is strategic and focused, not a tactical, catch-all department of one.”

Develop a Strategic Sales Enablement Plan

Organizations that want to improve their sales enablement function should focus on their strategic sales enablement plan. If they don’t have one, the goal should be to work toward creating one. If the organization does have one, they should focus on implementing and achieving the goals they have set forth.

“Start by building an enablement charter with your cross-functional partners and stakeholders,” recommends Kunkle. A sales enablement charter is “a job description for how your team functions in the organization. It shows how sales enablement relates to other teams such as marketing, product marketing, and sales operations. It also indicates whom the sales enablement team does and does not support.”⁹ This document can provide guidance to help the sales enablement function understand its goals.

Kunkle also recommends that organizations conduct a situation assessment of their sales force with their senior sales leader and key stakeholders to help “document the current

⁹ J. Emerick and D. Masak, “Sales Enablement Charter Prevent Teams From Getting Spread Too Thin,” *TD*, April 30, 2021, td.org/magazines/td-magazine/sales-enablement-charters-prevent-teams-from-getting-spread-too-thin.

state and the desired future state.” Then, the sales enablement function should “create a force field analysis to determine what’s driving you forward and what’s holding you back,” he continues. “Weight the forces, which should help you prioritize them.”

Once these steps are complete, organizations will have a strategic sales enablement plan that they can use as a road map to understand their objectives and accomplish their goals. If sales enablement functions find that they’re drifting away from their strategic plan, it could be time to review their objectives and confirm that the tasks are still moving them toward their goals.

“This may seem counterintuitive, but you may need to look at what items you can take off of enablement’s plate,” explains Williams. “Enablement can be a storehouse of every idea, hope, and dream that leadership has—their backlog full of initiatives in progress that don’t get over the finish line because there isn’t enough focus or hours in the day. Look to strip some of those extraneous things off enablement’s plate, give them a clear focus for how they can impact the organization, and give them the room and resources to run with it.” This advice can help keep sales enablement functions on the right track to achieve their goals.

Utilize the Available Sales Enablement Resources

At the 35 percent of organizations that did not have a sales enablement department, sales leaders, the marketing team, and other parts of the organization had to take on these responsibilities instead. If an organization doesn’t have the budget to hire a sales enablement professional, it should explore other resources to give its sales team an advantage. The ATD World-Class Sales Competency Model, for example, provides a framework for helping organizations achieve their sales goals. It identifies that sales professionals need skills and knowledge in selecting and developing sales talent, coaching, sales incentives and compensation, and sales tools.

For the more than two in five organizations with limited training resources, sales tools and software can provide the resources needed for training, customer relations, sales analytics, and more. When organizations rate their overall sales tools and customer insights tools as good or better, their sales team and senior leadership team give more positive feedback about the impact of sales enablement. These tools can give sales staff an opportunity to have a competitive advantage.

When selecting a sales enablement tool, organizations may want to consider the advantages of software that uses AI-enabled applications. AI tools can help sales teams with lead prioritization, content management, automated task management, personalized coaching, and sales performance analytics. These types of tools allow team to concentrate on fostering relationships and meeting their sales goals.

Appendix

Countries included in the study:

- Brazil
- Canada
- China
- Greece
- India
- Japan
- Mexico
- New Zealand
- Peru
- Philippines
- Saudi Arabia
- Singapore
- Spain
- United Kingdom
- United States

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About the Author and Contributors

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