The Dos & Don’ts of Sales Enablement. 

7 BEST PRACTICES
A in-depth read or a snapshot – it’s up to you.

Read in full, click on a section below to jump ahead or click on the link below for a one-page summary.

- Level-setting for context.
- Develop a culture of collaboration.
- 1. Define content-based Sales Enablement.
- 2. Get on the same page.
- 3. Know who your buyer is and what they want.
- 4. Determine the resources needed to help sales sell.
- 5. Educate the sales team on the resources.
- 7. Meet regularly to learn and evolve – together.

Considerations for your approach
- Don’t run your program in a silo.

Don’t have a lot of time? Click here to view a one-page quick read of these best practices.
Level-setting for context.

Sales Enablement is not a new concept. It’s been around for some time. However, it is experiencing somewhat of a renaissance as businesses are eagerly trying to further align their Marketing and Sales organizations to drive greater success.

80% of companies feel their cross-functional team collaboration is informal, ad-hoc or non-existent.°

Aberdeen research has identified three kinds of Sales Enablement: 1. content-based 2. technology-based 3. education / training-based. Each are critically important to the success of a Sales Enablement strategy, but it is the content-based approach that provides the greatest opportunity for Marketing and Sales to align.

Dos & Don’ts

provide best practice directives and learnings to enhance your content-based Sales Enablement efforts.

°Source: CSO Insights’ 2016 Sales Enablement Optimization Study
Develop a culture of collaboration.

On paper, it makes perfect sense - Marketing and Sales teams collaborate to ensure the success of the organization. In reality, it’s a little more complex. Historically, the relationship hasn’t always been harmonious. That can be overcome when both teams consider this:

Marketing and Sales have a shared responsibility to grow the organization.
Ongoing collaboration increases the potential for success.

Marketing exists to support organizational growth. Content-based Sales Enablement is owned by Marketing. Salespeople have insights that can provide contextual relevance to content to assist in its creation. A culture of collaboration creates a win for both teams as well as the business.

Alignment of efforts:
Information exchange and ongoing collaboration to create buyer-centric content.
1. Define content-based Sales Enablement.

As mentioned earlier, there are three different kinds of Sales Enablement. These best practices focus on the content-based approach that is defined as:

“The process of providing the sales organization with the information, content, and tools that help salespeople sell more effectively.”

It’s important to make sure everyone on the Marketing and Sales teams understand the definition you’re working from so they know what they are working toward. This understanding will help lay out what to do, and what not to do.

**Do:** Define content-based Sales Enablement through the needs of your Sales team. Develop a vision for your approach and make sure Sales and Marketing are on board.

**Don’t:** Lose sight of what you’re working toward or the need for Sales and Marketing to work together. Communicate, collaborate and educate together.
2. Get on the same page.

Buyers own the sales process. Which means your Sales Enablement approach needs to be buyer-centric. Use data and insights to drive your collaborative content-based approach to ensure relevance and increased personalization.

To be effective, content creation, lead qualification and lead nurturing must be based on shared insights and collaboration.

One of the many benefits of being on the same page from the outset is the evolved process from “selling” to “consultative.” Buyers are looking for knowledgeable and trustworthy resources. When Marketing and Sales work together, it gives your organization a greater chance of becoming that valued resource.

**Do:** Keep lines of communication between Sales and Marketing open. Keep a common understanding of the buyer and their need to seek a trusted resource.

**Don’t:** Be satisfied with a couple of meetings together. Sales needs Marketing as much as Marketing needs Sales. Keep the collaboration going.
3. Know who your buyer is and what they want.

To most effectively develop thinking that will resonate with your buyer, you need to know who they are and what is important to them, beyond what you know from their basic demo- and firmographic data.

Research, insights and understanding of your audience are key drivers in creating a successful content-based Sales Enablement approach. Everyone can contribute.

Understanding your buyer enables your content to be developed with contextual relevance that resonates with what the buyer experiences daily - from their perspective. The more relevant the information you provide, the more likely you will remain in their consideration set when decision time comes.

**Do:** Establish an environment that encourages ongoing learning and collaboration. Remember, Salespeople are experts on the buyer. Marketing are experts in content creation.

**Don’t:** Be fooled into thinking your buyer and their needs won’t change over time. The market is changing constantly with people adapting and trying to keep up.
4. Determine the resources needed to help Sales sell.

Meet regularly with Sales to understand what they are seeing in the market and hearing from buyers. Be sure to bring your campaign results and research so you can compare notes. Then, based on shared input and discussion, revisit your content and internal sales tools to ensure they’re still relevant.

**Track what content and sales tools are, and aren’t, working or being used.** 
Understand why and then focus your efforts on the top priorities.

Prioritizing your content and sales tools will help to focus your efforts on what is needed most by Sales to help them be a better resource for their buyers. Determine what stays, what gets re-purposed, what needs to be created and what goes.

**Do:** Keep pace with how content is performing and how sales tools are being used. Create an open feedback loop with the Sales team to ensure content stays relevant.

**Don’t:** Branch off and develop thinking as individual teams. Sales and Marketing should be in constant collaboration to make sure all content and sales tools are working together.
5. Educate your Sales team on the resources.

Your Sales team not only needs to know what content assets and sales tools are available, they should also know where to find them and how to best use them.

**Schedule quarterly meetings focused on content, to review assets and to answer questions in an effort to prepare Sales to use the tools effectively.**

Make sure Sales understands what is internal and external content. Remind them of your conversations about the buyer, their needs, and that they’re looking for knowledgeable advisors in their search for solutions.

**Do:** Work closely with your Sales team to keep them aware of what campaigns are in market and tools are available to support their efforts.

**Don’t:** Assume your Sales team should inherently know what is in market, what content and tools are available or where they should find them.

More than ever, Marketing is being measured against specific revenue goals. And both Sales and Marketing are responsible for contributing to the growth of the organization – so it just makes sense for these two groups to collaborate on mutually understood metrics.

A mutual understanding of metrics can enhance collaboration. Sales and Marketing should share insights and learn from each other throughout the process.

A common focus on lead quality should help improve the overall buyer experience. Communication is key – share progress reports and work together to help one another achieve your respective goals.

Do: Work to understand one another’s performance metrics to know how to most effectively contribute to the success of the business.

Don’t: Get complacent and start to think that performance metrics are static. Keep your team informed on change and what it means to the overall effort.
7. Meet regularly to learn and evolve – together.

Successful Sales Enablement – of any kind – needs open communication. Schedule meetings with a frequency all stakeholders can commit to and strive for 100% participation. Reality doesn’t always allow for it, but that’s the goal. Create an agenda (get input), distribute it before the meeting and let people know what you need from them during the discussion.

Regularly scheduled meetings will help to ensure that content and internal resources are keeping up with the pace of change in the market and buyer’s journey.

Discuss performance and how it is measuring against set goals. Determine if you are being effective in getting the right message in front of the right buyers at the right time to create a more informed and qualified lead. Nothing should be off the table for these conversations.

**Do:** Commit to having regular scheduled meetings to learn from one another and how to best evolve your collective efforts. Share what’s been learned and seek input.

**Don’t:** Let your collaboration energy fizzle out. Everything that is new and exciting eventually gets old and mundane. Work hard to stay focused on the end goal – sales conversions.
Considerations for your approach.

Sometimes the hardest thing is finding a starting point. Content-based Sales Enablement focuses on creating materials that inform and educate, both your buyer and your Sales team. Below we’ve aligned buyer-facing content and internal tools with the buyer’s journey and sales funnel. Hope you find it helpful.
Don’t run your program in a silo.

Know what is going on in the market – buyer consumption behavior, sales trends, sales enablement strategies and content creation. **Don’t limit your exposure to the four walls of your office.** Below, we’ve provided a handful of timely and relevant stats that, taken in the context of your business, can provide insight that leads to program-enhancing change.

- **32%** of organizations say over the next 12 months, sales enablement will be their top marketing priority.¹
- **65%** of sales reps say they can’t find content to send to prospects – the most common complaint of sales teams.²
- **93%** of organizations don’t track content used by sales reps.³
- **95%** of buyers choose a solution provider that “Provided them with ample content to help navigate through each stage of the buying process.”⁴
- **52%** Companies with a sales enablement team are 52% more likely to have a sales process that’s tightly aligned with the buyer’s journey.⁵

Sources: ¹ Hubspot, ² Kapost, ³ CSO Insights, ⁴ Demand Gen Report, ⁵ HighSpot
About Gain: We’re a direct, digital and data-based marketing communications agency that brings the people-perspective back into acquisition and lifecycle marketing. Learn more about Gain by visiting hellogain.com.

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