# SALES ENABLEMENT MAGAZINE

## Inside Avid's Global Sales Enablement Strategy

**LAUNCHING A SALES READINESS PROGRAM** WITH TECHNOLOGY

**WHY MICROLEARNING ISN'T ENOUGH**

SALES ENABLEMENT **METRICS YOU SHOULD BE MEASURING**

BRAINSHARK

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# The 3 P's of Sales Readiness:
## Prepare, Practice, Perform

In the sales enablement and readiness space, the concept of "practicing with purpose" has become a popular talking point. And it should.

But practice alone is only one piece of the puzzle when it comes to the readiness of your sales reps.

If you think about practice in any situation – sports, public speaking, business – you can't just practice for a specific event and expect to be perfect forever; that's only a **linear process.**

To achieve readiness and mastery, practice needs to be part of a **cyclical approach** to enablement that starts with preparation and ends with performance.

In sales, when we talk about preparation, most people think of the research, pre-call planning and any other activities that need to occur to get ready for an upcoming sales call or meeting.

But **preparation** needs to go beyond that. It must be ingrained throughout your sales culture – reps need to know that it's a job requirement and the right content and programs need to be available to make it possible. It's why it remains so important to deliver learning when, where and how your reps are working, so it's part of their normal routine.

Of course, **practice** should occur regularly too. But, similar to preparation, practice needs to be part of your culture. Leaders should make it a job requirement, remove barriers by using technology and add assessments to make sure reps are effectively practicing the right skills and knowledge.

Lastly, the **performance** aspect should not happen in a vacuum. Reps should never get back from a call or meeting saying they're not sure how it went. Sales managers need to evaluate rep performance by sitting in on calls, reviewing call recordings or gathering buyer feedback. Then, using those insights, managers can effectively coach reps on areas of improvement.

As I mentioned, a linear process for readiness won't work in sales – reps will face different situations every day and always need to be ready for what's next.

That's why the 3 P's of sales readiness are best used in a 'rinse and repeat' fashion – where reps are continuously preparing, practicing and performing for any and every buyer interaction that may occur, feedback is given at all levels and readiness is always tracked.

Greg Flynn

CEO, Brainshark

# **Sales leaders:** are your reps prepared to help your company hit its number?

This collection of articles provides an executive primer on sales enablement and readiness, including:

- What is Sales Readiness and Why Should Execs Care?
- The Future of Sales Onboarding
- If You're Not Assessing Reps, You're Guessing

**Download:**
The Executive's Guide to Sales Enablement & Readiness
bit.ly/bnsk-exec-guide

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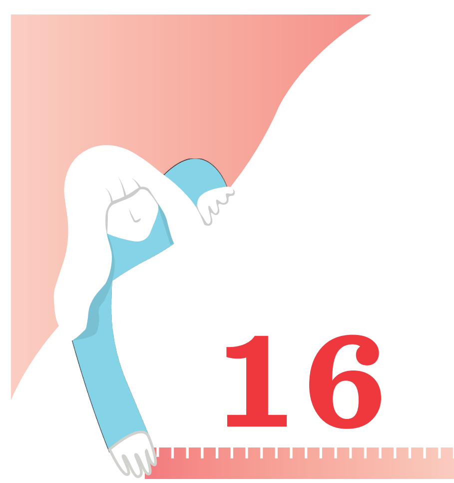


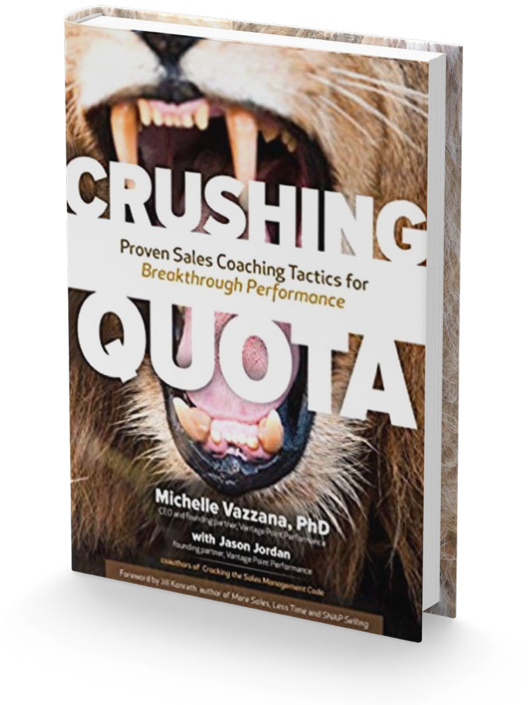
# What's in your sales enablement toolkit?

With Brainshark, you can ensure sales reps are always prepared with effective content, always-on training and flexible coaching, whether they're at the office, on the road or somewhere in between.

**View a short solution demo today:**
bit.ly/bnskdemo

# THE BUZZ

## GREAT READ




**Crushing Quota:** Proven Sales Coaching Tactics for Breakthrough Performance

**By Michelle Vazzana,**
Chief Strategy Officer & Co-Founder,
VantagePoint Performance

Companies widely recognize the value of sales coaching. Yet it's an unfortunate truth that many sales managers don't provide effective coaching, whether due to lack of time, skill or inclination. In *Crushing Quota*, Vazzana explains how managers can assess rep performance and help their teams make the most of their selling time.

## 4 WAYS SALES READINESS TOOLS IMPROVE ONBOARDING

### 1. Offer Multiple Learning Methods

A mix of learning formats such as video, interactive quizzes and other multimedia elements can help make training material stick – and appeal to the preferences of newer reps.

### 2. Focus Training on Key Sales Activities

The right technology can help you easily organize all of the information new reps need to know in courses and curriculums, so they stay on track and master the skills needed to complete a given sales activity (such as prospecting).

### 3. Incorporate Assessments

Sales readiness technology allows you to add an assessment component into the onboarding process, so you'll not only know whether reps have completed training courses, but that they've mastered them.

### 4. Track Learning Progress

The ability to monitor onboarding progress allows managers to certify that reps have mastered all skills and knowledge before it's time to start selling, adding a level of accountability for new hires.

## INSIDER'S PERSPECTIVE

### WHAT MAKES A GREAT SALES ENABLEMENT LEADER?

"The skills that have been most important in my role are: strategic thinking, program development, strong influence and engagement skills, and solid assessment skills. Throw in some superhero-like organizational skills and a completely fearless attitude for good measure."

**Lisa Mauri Thomas**
National Sales Trainer
Tactile Medical

# HOW TO LAUNCH A SALES READINESS PROGRAM WITH TECHNOLOGY

Q&A with Amy O'Brien

Senior Director of Implementation and Training

**Brainshark**

## Most companies provide some level of training for sales reps. Why is it more effective to create a sales readiness program focused on preparing and validating that reps are ready to sell?

**AO:** Without sales, you don't have a business, so ensuring your sales force can sell is common sense. That's why sales training has always been important. But training alone has never been enough, because there's a big difference between insight and action.

Before sales readiness technology came about, figuring out whether reps could apply what they learned in training was often not determined until it was too late. It's in action that the real learning occurs – when reps actually do what they've been trained on, they can increase skills and become masterful at their craft.

Organizations need reps out in the field selling quickly, so today's learner expects training to be fast. To do that, you need technology that will not only allow you to modernize your training delivery, but also give reps a place to practice what they learned and get coaching and feedback regardless of typical obstacles like geography. In addition, you need a way to measure that they're ready – before they meet with buyers.

## Some sales enablement leaders inherit training programs that need to be updated, others need to design a new program from scratch. What are some tips for getting started?

**AO:** As a sales enablement leader, it can feel overwhelming to prioritize all the work that needs to be done to create enablement programs and support the sales team in improving results. Start by asking yourself a series of questions to determine where your challenges lie and how technology could help:

What training do you do now in the classroom that could be delivered in less time and more conveniently through video? What changes do you need to embrace in order to deliver training in a new way? What content could be delivered before a live event to make the event itself less 'PowerPoint-focused' and more about skill building? How could on-demand learning help you reach a global or widely distributed audience? How can technology help you capture (and replicate) the knowledge and experience of your best reps?

## Sales readiness technology plays a significant role in the success of a program. What are some things leaders should keep in mind when rolling out a platform?

**AO:** The keys to finding success with sales readiness technology are to use it and use it well. The technology will power your readiness program, but it's also important to align it with the design of your program and content so your sales team will be motivated to use it.

Think about the habits you're breaking across your sales team, and the aspects of your program that they'll need to adapt to.

Make sure you have top-level support from key stakeholders, especially sales managers, and design a communication plan so everyone is informed along the way.

Prepare reps for what's coming by sending out a presentation outlining upcoming onboarding, training and coaching initiatives, and be sure to share 'what's in it for them.'

Designing a technology-powered readiness program is a bit like building a new house. You can build it, but you still need to furnish it with valuable resources and people need to move in (your sales reps). If you only have a technology platform, but you haven't filled it with useful content or effective training or coaching activities, then all you'll have is an empty house.

## What does a good sales readiness program look like today?

**AO:** An effective sales readiness program powered by technology means reps are consuming the content and learning programs you produce, embracing video coaching as a way to become masterful sellers, and when you test reps, they know how to respond to every situation. Buyers walk away from interactions with your reps feeling that their time was well-spent.

A good program also facilitates knowledge sharing across your sales team, creates a safe place to practice, and provides insight into rep performance.

Another indicator is that your reps have learned to be comfortable in uncomfortable situations that don't involve their prospects. Would you rather have reps say the wrong things in front of a coach, or in front of a client? It's much wiser to have reps make mistakes during a simulation than in the field with someone they want to close business with. By shifting that discomfort to a safe environment through assessments and coaching activities, reps can receive feedback and continue to improve their performance. It also provides sales managers and coaches with an opportunity to highlight where reps are excelling, to reinforce what they do well, and to give the rest of the team examples to learn from.

It takes a lot of effort to make sales readiness look effortless. But when reps are prepared and ready to sell, it should appear effortless to the buyer, and that's what having a modern, technology-powered sales readiness program can accomplish.

# How Avid Supports Reps and Partners Worldwide with Sales Enablement

**By** Lauren Boutwell – **Photography by** Corey Robinson

With a 200-person global sales team, over 600 channel partners and a product portfolio made up of thousands of SKUs, sales training at Avid Technology is a major undertaking.


AVID HQ in Burlington, Mass.
Left: Stephanie Bourque & Sharon McGowan-Spinelli

The 30-year old video and audio software company had difficulty getting its global sales team to tune into training across different time zones. In addition, Avid's diverse set of products each came with its own distinct customer bases and go-to-market strategies, making training even more challenging.

"What we need to do in sales is articulate and demonstrate how any solution from Avid will help to solve clients' business problems – which is no easy task with such complex product lines," says Sharon McGowan-Spinelli, VP of Global Business Operations.

Avid's sales enablement team

On top of the geographic and product complexities, Avid is currently making a shift toward enterprise buyers and new deal structures, which means sales reps need to be trained on how to conduct a different kind of sale.

## Sales Training on a Global Level

When McGowan-Spinelli joined Avid back in 2008, the only sales training that existed was week-long, new hire on-boarding at the company headquarters in Burlington, Mass., which was both costly and time consuming.

Luckily, McGowan-Spinelli was a previous user of Brainshark and thought the platform could offer a more efficient way to prepare the sales team.

"We wanted to make the best use of in-person time with our salespeople," she said. "Having the finance team review their org chart and discount policies or HR reviewing their org chart, that wasn't the best use of time. Obviously, these are important things for a new hire to know about, but as a sales person there is much more that they need to be taught, like things specific to sales."

Avid soon implemented Brainshark as a supplemental tool for face-to-face sales training.

Since then, Brainshark has evolved into the standard delivery method of pre-requisite content for in-person training (which initially helped save 2-3 days of training time), trade shows, sales kickoffs and more. Avid also improved the process for its online 'EduCASTs and ChannelCASTs;' internal and partner webinars where reps and resellers learn about new products and announcements.

Currently, before each webinar, reps typically will receive overviews in Brainshark (or a curriculum of Brainshark courses) with quiz questions, to ensure they are receiving the information they need. In this manner, the webinar time is used more wisely.

More importantly, the platform continues to help alleviate the difficulties of keeping the global sales force prepared by allowing Avid to create on-demand training that can be accessible anytime, anywhere.

"Brainshark is so user-friendly and so flexible. It's given us the ability to do training for large numbers of people at a time that's convenient for them."

"Brainshark is so user-friendly and so flexible. It's given us the ability to do training for large numbers of people at a time that's convenient for them," said McGowan-Spinelli.

## The Evolution of Avid's Global Sales Enablement Strategy

Today, as Avid's sales force and strategy has evolved, so has its use of Brainshark. The technology has become the go-to sales enablement resource for reps and channel partners across the world.

When new hires are brought on board, they receive pre-requisite training content via Brainshark on topics such as how to use Salesforce, where to find key materials or details on the company's discount approval policy.

In addition to face-to-face trainings, after reps get up to speed, they are assigned training courses around new products, programs and announcements, as well as other formal learning curriculums in the Brainshark portal. This goes for channel partners as well, who can access training content on new channel programs, sales methodologies and product releases. Brainshark has also come in handy as Avid rolls out new partner programs, including a newly established partnership with resellers in China.

"We've changed our vernacular here and every time we talk about training, someone asks, 'Is there a Brainshark on that?'" says Stephanie Bourque, senior manager, sales and channel enablement at Avid. "The whole idea that they can view a Brainshark in which a subject matter expert has narrated the PowerPoint; it's adding so much flavor and insight into the information that's being represented. People [can] do it at their own pace and stop and relisten to [information]; that's something that you can't get in a face-to-face presentation."

"We've changed our vernacular here and every time we talk about training, someone asks, 'Is there a Brainshark on that?'"

Oscars and other awards for Avid software on display at HQ

While McGowan-Spinelli and Bourque do most of the heavy lifting in terms of supporting the sales and channel teams, subject matter experts and regional leaders around the world are empowered to create and update training content as well.

"We don't have to keep going to the same pool of people [to create training content]," says McGowan-Spinelli. "We can expand that – it could be someone in Asia Pacific, somebody in London. Anybody, anywhere in the world can create a Brainshark for us."

"Anybody, anywhere in the world can create a Brainshark for us."

Beyond the sales team, Brainshark's ease-of-use has spread throughout Avid. The compliance team uses Brainshark for annual training and HR is starting to learn how to create their own presentations.

## Sales Coaching as the Difference-Maker

Another big difference for Avid has been Brainshark's video coaching and practice tool. Reps are now given coaching activities that help to reinforce training concepts, while encouraging sellers to share knowledge and ideas across the team.

For example, reps were assigned a coaching activity after the company's sales kickoff event, asking them to record a 1-minute video about their biggest takeaway and how they'll use it in 2019.

"Getting those answers helps their managers see what they took away from the conference and know that their attendance was beneficial," Bourque says.

New hires receive coaching activities to practice the 'Command of the Message' sales methodology, prepare for new product launches and for reps who attend tradeshows to practice their pitches in preparation for customer conversations at the booth.

"[Brainshark] helps us understand that [reps] really get the concept, they know what the value prop is, they know the features and benefits and the problem [the product] is trying to solve," says McGowan-Spinelli.

The coaching tool will also help Avid with the transition to selling enterprise agreements – reps might record a coaching activity where they choose a customer and then demonstrate how they would conduct the conversation and address the change.

"[Brainshark] helps us understand that [reps] really get the concept, they know what the value prop is, they know the features and benefits and the problem [the product] is trying to solve."

Overall, the sales enablement team at Avid has been able to transform the way it supports sales teams around the globe – making life easier for both them and their sellers.

"We have so much more flexibility than we ever had before," says McGowan-Spinelli. "Previously if we had to do training, we had to get everyone on the phone, and it was nearly impossible to get everyone at the same time. Anyone can create a Brainshark, it's so easy to use."

# Microlearning Isn't Enough:

## Your Sales Training Needs Micro-Assessments, Too

By Alec Shirkey

Whether it's searching for home improvement tips or learning the best way to sell a new product, technology has completely changed the way people learn new skills today. We expect to find the information we need instantly, regardless of where we are, what time it is or how we go about our days. (Thank you, Google and Steve Jobs.)

This is especially true as the working population grows increasingly comfortable with new learning formats, like video and mobile apps. Forrester Research found that 75% of employees are more likely to watch video lessons than read a document, email or web article. At the same time, attention spans are shorter than ever in an age of social media and endless distraction. Cognitive backlog – which happens when the brain absorbs new information too quickly – occurs after just 10 minutes of presentation in some cases, according to leading biologist John Medina.

Many organizations have rightfully embraced microlearning to address shifting learning preferences and promote better long-term knowledge retention. By delivering knowledge in "bite-sized" chunks that learners can easily consume and access, companies allow their employees to learn on the job and as needed, instead of limiting learning to a formal classroom setting.

This is especially important in sales, where microlearning is gaining popularity and acceptance, as you want reps in the field as much as possible. Chances are, your salespeople would also much rather spend their time connecting with prospects and customers than powering through a week-long training workshop.

However, microlearning by itself will not prepare a sales force to do its job effectively. B2B organizations (and their sales enablement functions) need a way to ensure that reps have the knowledge and skills needed to maximize their time in front of buyers – before they ever engage one.

That's why, in order to achieve sales readiness, you need to start implementing "micro-assessments" in your sales training process.

## Why Microlearning Alone Won't Cut It

It's one thing to know that your sales reps have completed all required microlearning. But just because they've completed it, doesn't mean they're prepared for the unexpected twists and turns that can happen during a sales conversation.

There's a difference in knowing that your sellers can actually apply the knowledge and skills they have gained during training, both in front of a buyer and throughout the sales process.

If you don't know whether reps can apply what they learned, then you may very well have underprepared sales reps "practicing" on unsuspecting buyers right now – wasting time for both parties and costing you potential deals.

The only way to determine whether reps can perform when it's "crunch time" is through assessment. Your sellers probably think they're ready to start calling on buyers, but until you force them to prove it, you're not assessing – you're guessing. And that's a recipe for poor results.

## Microlearning + Micro-Assessments = Sales Readiness

Just as a PB&J without the "J" is a poorly-designed sandwich (unless you substitute the J with Fluff!), microlearning without micro-assessments is poor learning design.

When we talk about micro-assessments, we can think about them at three different levels:

- **Knowledge-checks:** These are typically delivered as quizzes and tests that are embedded within microlearning content. An example would include assessing reps' knowledge of a certain product or whether they have grasped the concepts of a new methodology by having them answer questions that connect back to key points from the learning material.
- **Simulation:** Simulations assess reps' abilities to apply what they've learned. Traditionally, this meant structured role-playing. Today, it includes the use of video coaching and assessment tools.
- **Observation:** These assessments involve observing a rep engaging with a buyer. This could encompass managers reviewing reps' email correspondence, listening in on phone conversations or recordings (check your state's privacy laws), and/or observing a sales meeting in the field.

Remember that microlearning is effective because it is concise, engaging, and focused on one specific learning objective. Your micro-assessments should have the same traits and they should be delivered in the same way: wherever, whenever and however your reps work.

Sales training, whether delivered in a classroom or through micro-learning technology, is not an end in and of itself. The end is sales readiness – knowing reps are ready to engage buyers and bring value to every interaction. This should be the year you make micro-assessments part of your readiness strategy.

# HOW DO YOU MEAUSURE SALES ENABLEMENT SUCCESS?

By Alec Shirkey

The pressure to show ROI for new sales enablement programs is real for today's practitioners. However, many traditional sales metrics, such as quota attainment and win rates, don't provide the insight to put sales results in context. And when it comes to improving performance, that lack of insight can cause real problems for sales enablement leaders.

Say an organization's win rate is down. Although win rate is a crucial benchmark for sales teams, it doesn't explain whether poor win rates are caused by a lack of negotiation skills or an inconsistent prospect qualification process. Without that insight, any plan to address performance issues could wind up missing the mark.

Effectively diagnosing sales challenges starts with identifying metrics that highlight how reps actually perform – and ensuring that the sales force has everything it needs to track results effectively. Here are a few key points to consider before getting started.

### Determining What Matters

Having a clear sense of how a sales organization defines success, both from a sales and sales enablement perspective, is critical. Research firm CSO Insights recommends that all sales enablement functions develop a charter that documents a formal strategy and establishes executive sponsorship. Organizations with a sales enablement charter saw double-digit improvements in win rates, the research firm found.

From there, identify the KPIs that are most important to leadership. You should keep in mind which metrics can be directly impacted by sales enablement initiatives, and which ones can only be indirectly affected.

Time to first deal, time to quota, and time to pipeline milestones are all examples of metrics that sales enablement can **indirectly** affect through improved training, coaching and content management. Other measures, such as time reps spend selling, time managers spend coaching, time to productivity and training content consumption, can be **directly** influenced by the work a sales enablement leader does.

However, sales enablement leaders should also be careful to avoid over-relying on any one metric if it doesn't paint a complete picture. Focusing heavily on time spent selling, for instance, can cause sales organizations to overlook other valuable benchmarks like mastery of training concepts, or which activities reps are performing.

### Tracking Your KPIs

Sales readiness platforms can help you measure KPIs such as training content consumption and learning progress with visual dashboards and analytics. These tools also allow sales managers to assess and track sales messaging mastery through video coaching activities. As your "system of record," the CRM can track other important metrics such as time spent selling, time to productivity, time to first deal, sales cycle length, quota attainment and win rates.

In addition, collecting qualitative feedback from sales leadership, managers and reps can provide greater insight into areas such as time reps spend searching for content, time managers spend coaching, the quality of sales onboarding and training content, and sales force retention. Clients can even be a valuable resource here; Net Promoter Score, for example, is a potential benchmark for sales effectiveness.

Lastly, sales enablement leaders need to compare actual performance to their KPI goals, and then make adjustments as necessary. After all, there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to measuring sales enablement. As businesses and market realities change, so too should your performance indicators.

# 3 WAYS TO RETAIN TOP SALES TALENT

Finding the right sales talent isn't easy – but even when you hire the perfect candidate, keeping them can be a whole different challenge. Here are 3 ways to retain top sales talent.

## 1. MAKE ONBOARDING AGILE

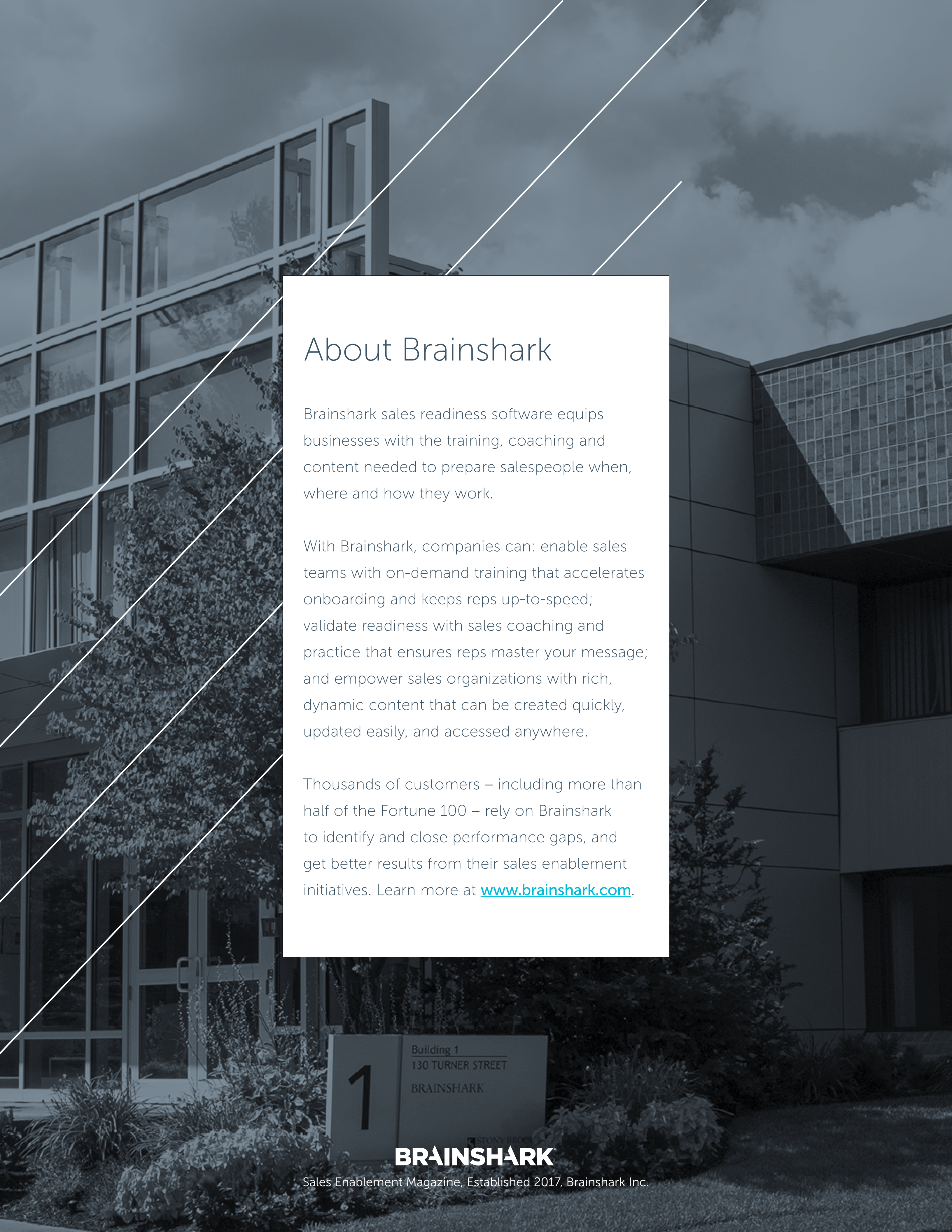
Break the months-long ramp process into shorter time periods of training and coaching. This way, reps will be focused on building proficiency in key competencies for each sales activity, such as a discovery call.

## 2. AVOID THE SOPHOMORE-JUNIOR YEAR CURSE

Support second- and third-year reps with continuous training that's proactive, not reactive. Instead of only assigning training around compelling events, such as product launches, provide microlearning with assessments on a regular basis.

## 3. PROVIDE CAREER DEVELOPMENT & MENTORING

Show reps a path for growth and career advancement, such as SDR to account executive, and offer them learning paths that will get them ready for that next step. Also provide training programs for leadership and management skills, and mentoring, where high-potential reps are paired with new hires.




# About Brainshark

Brainshark sales readiness software equips businesses with the training, coaching and content needed to prepare salespeople when, where and how they work.

With Brainshark, companies can: enable sales teams with on-demand training that accelerates onboarding and keeps reps up-to-speed; validate readiness with sales coaching and practice that ensures reps master your message; and empower sales organizations with rich, dynamic content that can be created quickly, updated easily, and accessed anywhere.

Thousands of customers – including more than half of the Fortune 100 – rely on Brainshark to identify and close performance gaps, and get better results from their sales enablement initiatives. Learn more at www.brainshark.com.

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