



14 Hacks to Upgrade Your Sales Enablement Strategy

Managing a sales enablement practice isn't easy – but it can help to have a few tricks in your back pocket. This list of 14 hacks will help you stay on top of your game when it comes to strategic initiatives, onboarding, coaching tactics and keeping your program fresh over time.

Contents:

- #1:** Come up with a 100-day plan
- #2:** Know the terminology
- #3:** Find out how the best do it
- #4:** Hire the best talent you can find
- #5:** Assess – don't guess
- #6:** Invest in enablement for managers
- #7:** Harvest your organizational knowledge
- #8:** Appeal to your millennial reps
- #9:** Let technology do some of the work
- #10:** Prepare reps to use LinkedIn to their advantage
- #11:** Take a 360 approach to SKO
- #12:** Coach with a purpose
- #13:** Improve communications to make messages go viral
- #14:** Compete against yourself

About Brainshark



#1

Come up with a 100-day plan

Whether you're a new sales enablement leader or setting up a new function, it helps to go in with a plan. As an example, here is what your first 100 days might look like:

First 30 days – Learning is the main objective to start. Go through the current sales onboarding process to learn about the company, culture, products and industry. This will also give you the opportunity to evaluate the training for new hires. Meet with key people across the organization to get clarity on what's expected from sales enablement.

60-day mark – Build on the foundation of the first month by reading up on key competitors, shadowing sales calls, and delving deeper into your current sales (and enablement) processes.

Days 90-100 – Aim to have a detailed, yet fluid plan of the projects that sales enablement will focus on in the next 6 to 12 months. Determine your success measurements and KPIs up front and get buy-in from key stakeholders on your initial plans.

Read more: [Getting Started as a Sales Enablement Leader](#)

Only 26% of firms said their sales enablement initiatives over the last 2 years met or exceeded expectations.

–CSO Insights



BRAINSHARK

www.brainshark.com | 781-370-8200

#2

Know the terminology

CSO Insights has defined sales enablement as “a strategic, cross-functional discipline designed to increase sales results and productivity by providing integrated content, training and coaching services for salespeople and front-line sales managers along the entire customer’s buying journey, powered by technology.”

Sales readiness is a core component of sales enablement that involves all strategic activities designed to prepare sellers with the skills and messages needed to make the most out of every buyer interaction; it’s any activity that gets reps ready to sell.

Onboarding and training, content delivery and coaching all fall within the enablement and readiness buckets, as well as trends like social selling and triggers for learning such as business transformations.

Read more:

[Sales Enablement Definitions: 12 Key Terms to Know](#)



#3

Find out how the best do it

It's important to establish what great enablement looks like, not only for your reps, but for you as a leader.

Check out what leading companies are doing in terms of sales enablement and how they define success. Sync up with analyst firms or experts in the space and have them evaluate your maturity or tactics as a sales enablement department. Always iterate on your sales enablement initiatives and stay aligned with the needs of the sales organization and sales leaders. Their success depends on your success (and vice versa).

Learn more:

[How effective is your sales enablement strategy?](#)

“ **Sales enablement leaders need to be strategic by prioritizing what's important, aligning with sales, and delivering results in a meaningful way to show what the function does for the organization.** ”

Heather Cole, service director,
sales enablement strategies, SiriusDecisions



#4

Hire the best talent you can find

Since sales enablement is a newer function than most, the skills of sales enablement leaders and professionals are still somewhat undefined. Important traits to look for when hiring can include:

- A strong sense of empathy (i.e. can they think like a salesperson?)
- Solid communication skills, not only for product and company information, but to pitch initiatives and get buy-in
- The ability to be both proactive and reactive, so they can respond quickly to situations while also thinking about what sales reps will need, before they need it
- Previous sales experience is a plus, but not required (85% of enablement pros have worked in sales, according to SiriusDecisions, though others come from training or consultative roles)

In a job description for a sales enablement professional or leader, consider including the following desired skills and traits:



#5

Assess – don't guess

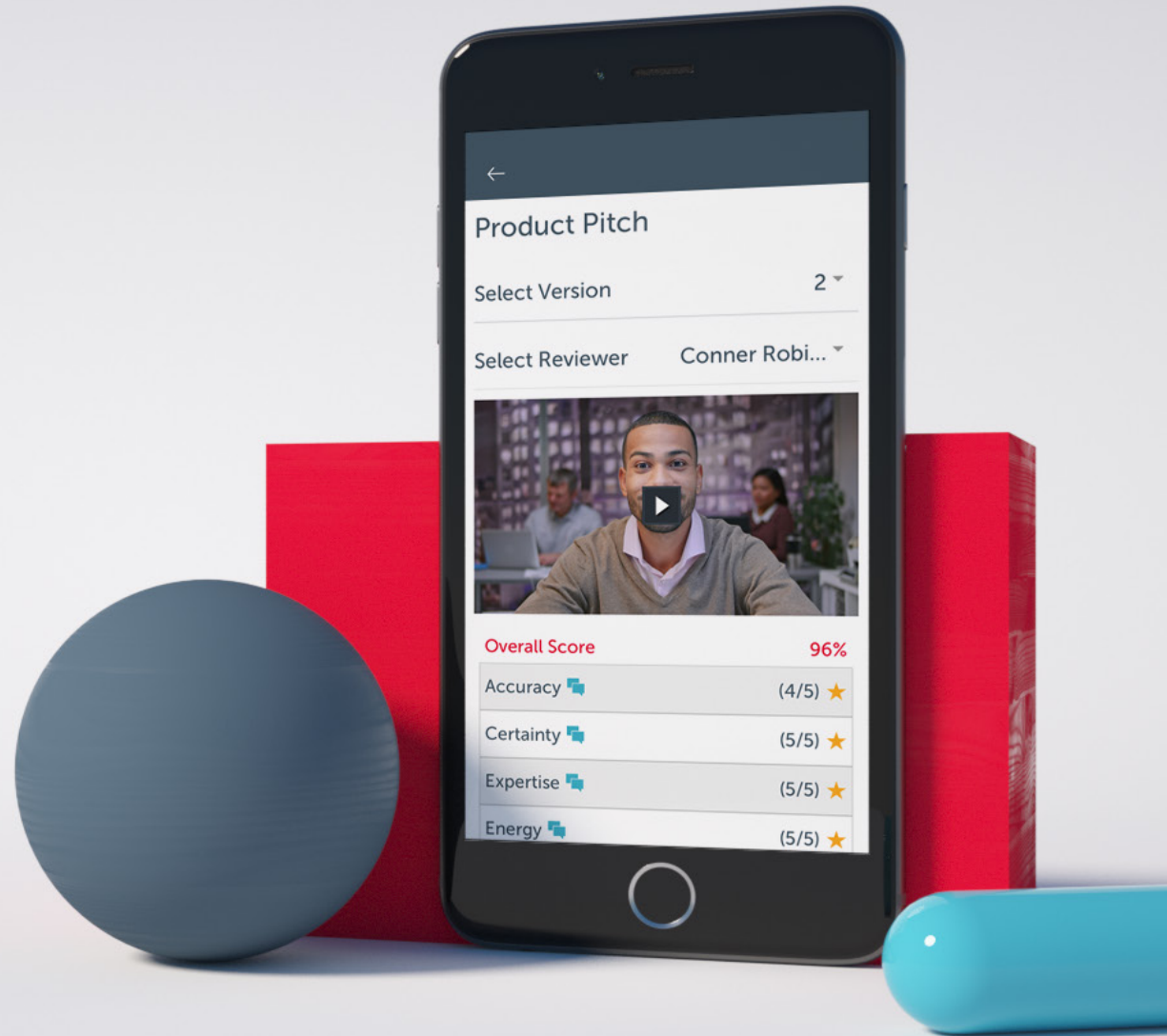
Don't assume reps are ready for game time, only to have them practice and fail in front of a buyer.

Assessments help you figure out if reps are ready ahead of time. An effective way to test reps' readiness is through video coaching activities where they're asked to relay key information through a video response.

For example, reps can record video responses to situations involving negotiations, pricing or competitors. Assessments can also involve reps recording their screens for a demo presentation, or (of course) pitching your company and products.

“ **Experience may be the best teacher, but in sales, it's not the most economical.** ”

Jim Ninivaggi,
chief readiness officer, Brainshark



BRAINSHARK

www.brainshark.com | 781-370-8200

#6

Invest in enablement for managers

Sales enablement is all about supporting reps, boosting productivity and increasing positive business outcomes, right?

That means your sales managers need enablement, too. Develop an enablement program specifically designed to help them become more effective managers and coaches.

For example, you can have a plan in place to “coach the coaches” by providing a playbook that includes tips on how to provide meaningful, constructive feedback to reps. You can also provide new sales managers with their own onboarding programs so they can develop a better understanding of the role and daily routine. If there’s a new product feature release, create a training track for managers (before training reps) to ensure they master the material first, and can then reinforce the material when coaching their teams.

Sales manager development has a direct correlation to better quota attainment, revenue plan attainment and win rates.

–CSO Insights



#7

Harvest your organizational knowledge

Your top sales performers already have a wealth of expertise and best practices to share – find a way to capture them! Have sellers share examples of how deals were won, effective pitch examples, objection handling and more.

Sales readiness platforms like Brainshark make this easy. Reps can simply record short videos with their mobile phones or webcams to be easily accessed and shared with the rest of the sales team. Vet the content to ensure the best examples are shared and the content is of good quality.

Read More:

[Peer Learning for Sales: Managing the Chaos](#)

99% of millennial workers value sharing knowledge with others at work.

–Forrester Research



BRAINSHARK

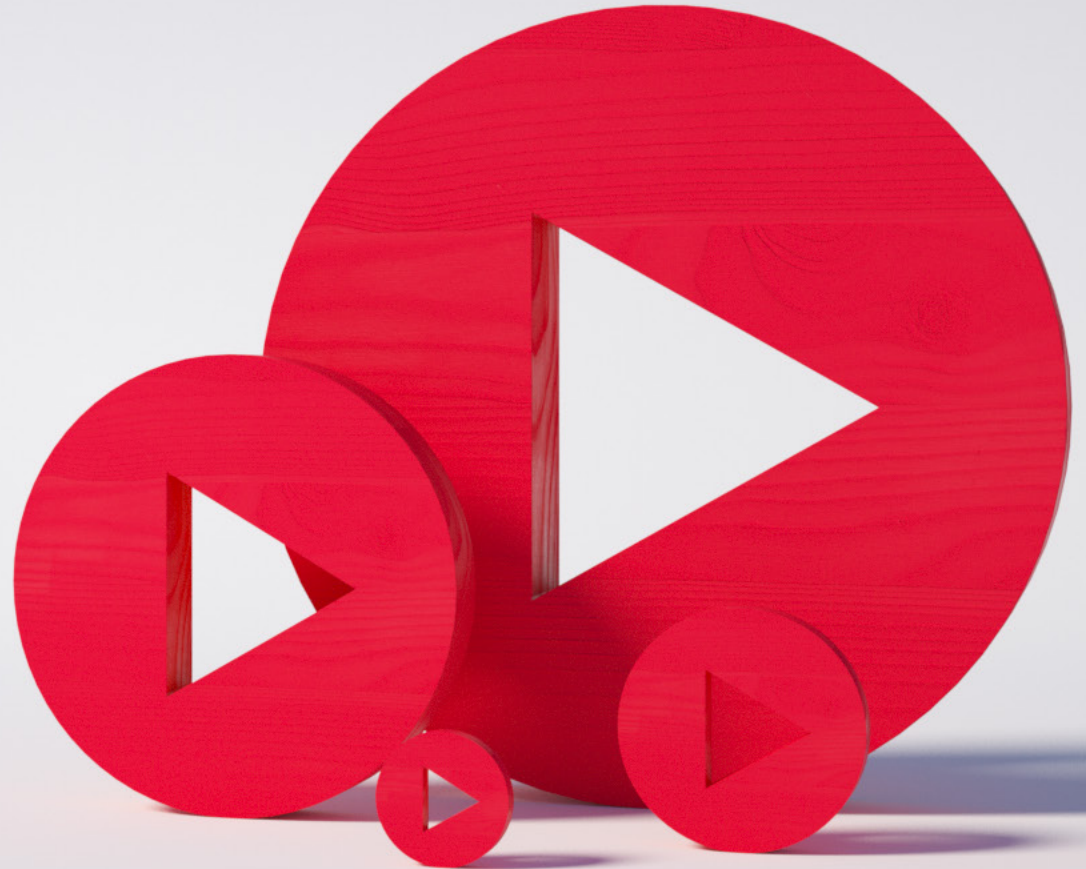
www.brainshark.com | 781-370-8200

#8

Appeal to your millennial reps

Research shows millennials prefer more informal, just-in-time training that they can consume in “snackable,” bite-sized amounts.

Provide a healthy mix of formal and informal learning and make it available digitally and via mobile devices. Incorporate simple forms of gamification and leaderboards to drive internal competition and keep reps engaged. Millennials like to be recognized, so games and contests that enable them to achieve work goals can be a powerful tool for driving readiness.



Millennials are expected to make up 75% of the workforce by 2025.

—US Bureau of Labor Statistics

BRAINSHARK

www.brainshark.com | 781-370-8200

#9

Let technology do some of the work

Sales readiness technology can make life a lot easier for you and your reps. Consider solutions that allow for:

- Easy creation and distribution of your own custom learning content
- The ability to design and assign learning paths
- Mobile access to learning resources
- Video coaching for practice, reinforcement and assessments
- Analytics to measure reps' progress and overall team readiness
- Integrations with systems sellers already use (like the CRM)

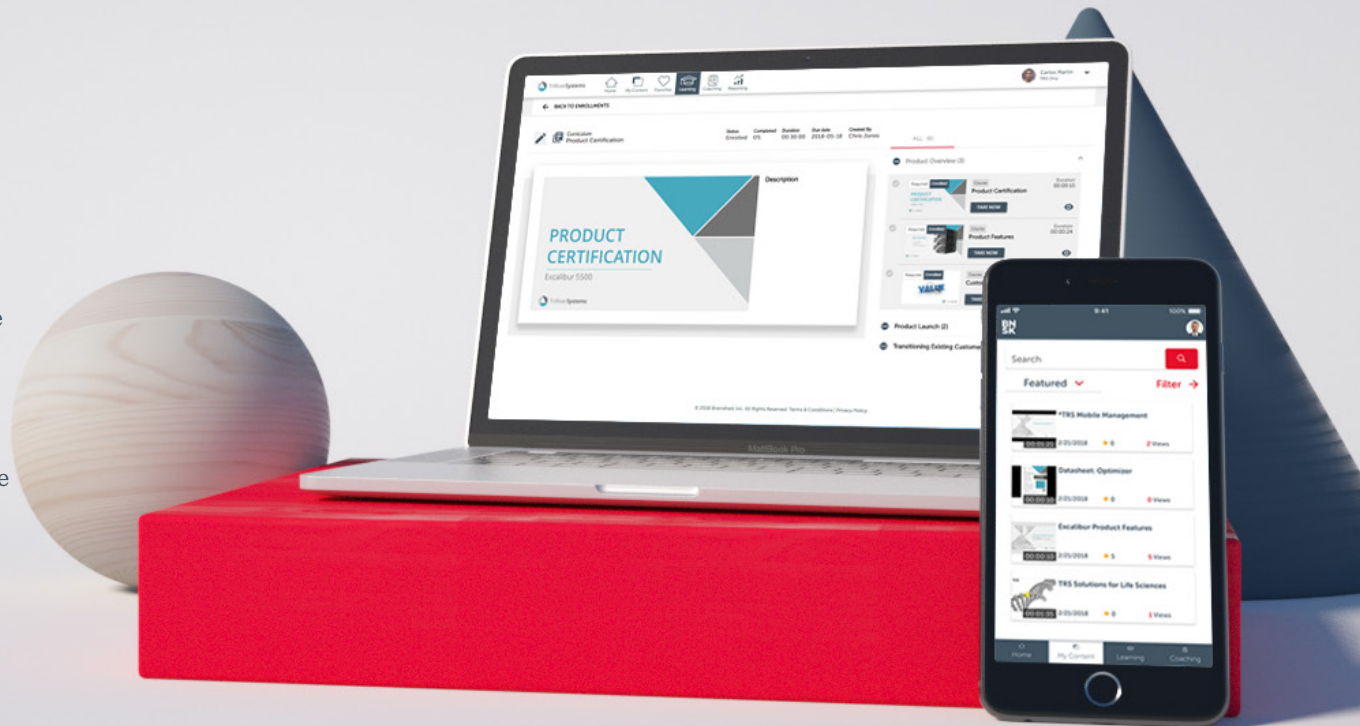
If executives are part of the buying process, help them understand how the technology will help reps be more prepared and sell more, and how it will help you contribute to company and sales goals.

Read more:

[Sales Readiness Technology Buyer's Guide](#)

55% of top-performing companies are investing in sales enablement technology to drive sales productivity.

-Forbes Insights



BRAINSHARK

www.brainshark.com | 781-370-8200

#10

Prepare reps to use LinkedIn to their advantage

When used properly, LinkedIn can be a powerful selling tool. But salespeople often need help and guidance to get there.

Lay out a plan for social selling on LinkedIn. First, think broadly about the key characteristics of your buyers and personas, what messages you'll use to reach them and what kinds of content you'll share.

Make sure reps have LinkedIn profiles that feature the right company and product information. Help reps strategically engage with others online within your company's space. Show them how to comment on others' posts (not just say 'nice post!'), ask thought-provoking questions, and engage in conversation – and make sure their participation is consistent; social selling isn't a one-time thing.

Locate content they can share from thought leaders (not just your own) and make sure they're on top of the latest trends and breaking news. Reps should get to know buyers and their pain points through what they say and do online. Then, after building a relationship through online interactions, they can send a personalized message at the right time.

“ **Social selling must be part of your overall sales strategy but it will only work if it's combined with a solid sales process, a mashup of online and offline approaches to reach buyers, and rockstar sales skills that will get you across the quota finish line.**”

Barbara Giamanco,
sales and social media strategist



BRAINSHARK

www.brainshark.com | 781-370-8200

#11

Take a 360 approach to SKO

Your sales kickoff (SKO) event is the beginning of a year-long process. Make content from the event, like videos of the keynotes and sessions, available to view later through your sales readiness platform. Videos should be edited and tagged so they are searchable and available to reps.

Help improve learning retention by sending a recap of key points to attendees immediately after the meeting. Ongoing communications of sales successes mapped to the meeting theme can also help extend the kickoff's benefits throughout the year.

A recent Brainshark survey found that 62% of companies don't deliver pre-work to sales representatives in advance of their SKO, and 84% don't conduct training in advance...this is a missed opportunity!

Read More:

[The Ultimate Guide to Sales Kickoff Readiness and Planning](#)



360

BRAINSHARK

www.brainshark.com | 781-370-8200

#12

Coach with a purpose

When coaching, it's important to have key skills in mind that you want reps to improve upon and a process for giving constructive feedback. Some skills that all reps should have, regardless of their industry, include time management, storytelling, active listening, objection handling, communication skills and the ability to understand the needs of the buyer. These are all great opportunities for coaching.

Make sure coaching feedback is sincere, specific, timely and acknowledges the sellers' effort (not just the results). In addition, show reps examples of what good looks like so they know what to strive for.

Almost 75% of sales organizations waste resources due to random and informal coaching approaches.

-CSO Insights



#13

Improve communications to make messages go viral

Publish a weekly newsletter – so reps aren't being bombarded with constant communications – to highlight the latest and greatest sales content, including core training resources, just-in-time learning, product updates, marketing collateral and more.

Change up your content formats to include a mix of video and short, snackable content. Use peer learning where reps share win stories and tips and tricks; for example, reps always want to hear how the biggest deals were won so they can replicate those commissions themselves!

**Up to 70% of sales content
goes unused.**

-SiriusDecisions



#14

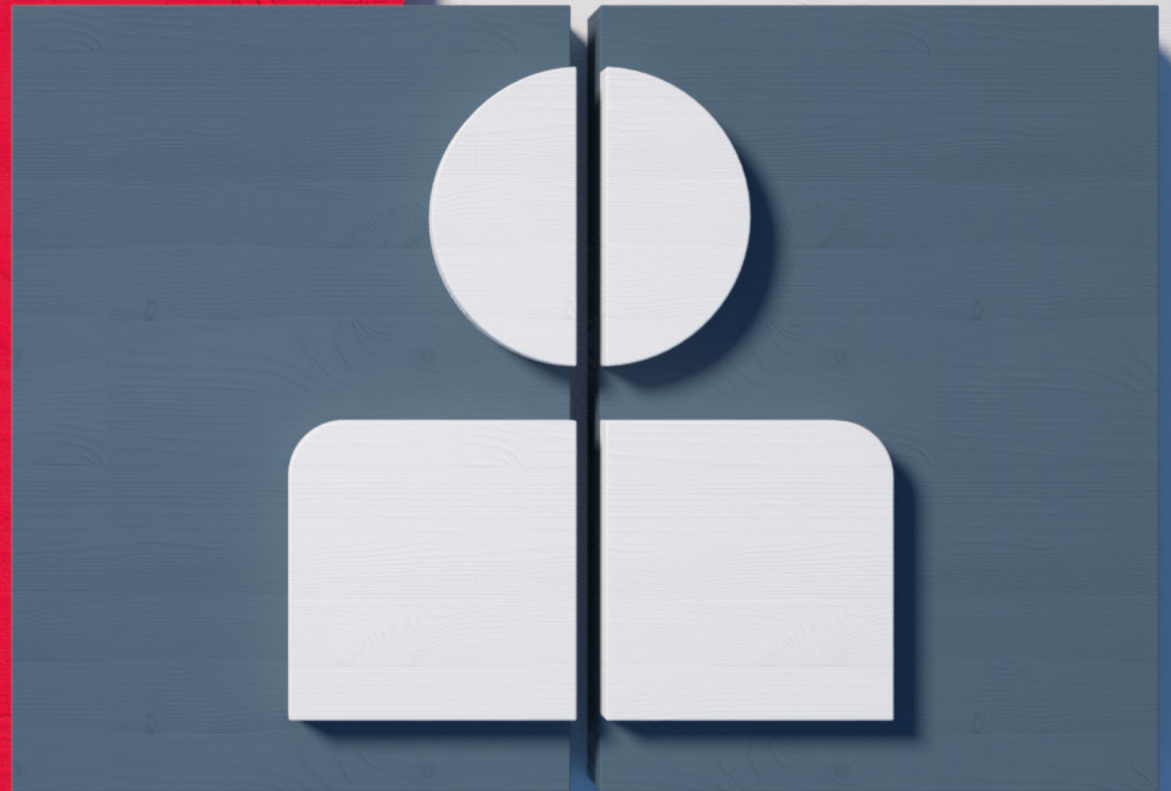
Compete against yourself

If you have nothing to compare your sales enablement strategy to, how do you know you're successful? Set your own benchmarks and align with sales goals and review the metrics each quarter to see if you're meeting or missing the mark. Don't be afraid to stop doing something if it's not working.

Ask reps what's helping them and what's not. Look at your initiatives compared to the number of closed deals and whether those reps completed all their training and coaching activities. Ask whether people are aware of sales enablement's initiatives and the impact; if they aren't, inform them of what you're doing and the results.

“ If the mission of sales is to make money, then the mission of sales enablement is to provide reps with the training, content and information they need to be successful in that goal.

Christi Wall,
director, training and enablement, Ping Identity





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.

BRAINSHARK

www.brainshark.com | 781-370-8200