MAGAZINE UNION **WHAT'S A CHIEF** READINESS OFFICER? (AND WHY YOU NEED ONE) **REAL-WORLD** THE FIRST 100 DAYS: **GETTING STARTED AS A SALES COACHING:** ENABLEMENT LEADER TIPS FOR DIFFERENT **SELLING SCENARIOS** FORGING A PATH TO BETTER SELLING WITH PING IDENTITY'S CHRISTI WALL **BRAINSHARK** Issue No. 1 | Fall 2017

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Are Your Sales Reps Really Ready?

the end of the day, sales enablement is really about one thing: increasing the yield per rep across your organization. How do you put your salespeople in the best possible position to win more deals for your company?

There are two primary ways to increase the productivity of each salesperson. You can either make them more efficient or more effective. **Efficiency** essentially involves providing them with technology that increases their amount of actual selling time. Products that help reps find and create the content they need for specific sales opportunities can eliminate many hours of wasted time looking for the right assets to send to a prospect.

But how do you know that your reps are *prepared* to speak to your prospects about that content? How do you know that when a rep has an actual human-to-human interaction with a buyer, that they are knowledgeable enough about your products, industry, customers' business challenges, and how your offerings can help solve those problems?

Only by making your reps more **effective** and ensuring they are truly READY to represent your company will you increase productivity. Any other money and time spent is wasted until you first solve for the foundational problem of readiness for all your customer-facing employees. An efficient but ineffective rep will always fail.

So what does it mean for reps to be ready? The process certainly comes with its share of challenges, starting with the fact that there is a LOT each salesperson needs to know. They need a strong understanding of your company, products, competitors, selling methodology, customers' businesses – in other words, they need to know how to sell *your* stuff, *your* way.

To get there, you need a constant flow of content to keep them prepared. Unfortunately, you can't buy this type of proprietary learning content off the shelf; after all, it's unique and custom to your business. You have to create it all yourself... leveraging your company's internal subject matter experts... delivered in an engaging format, when and where reps need it ... and keep it continuously updated as your business changes and your products evolve.

But it doesn't end with the delivery and consumption of the training. You also need to validate that your reps have actually *learned* the material. Practice, coaching, peer-to-peer learning, assessment and reinforcement are all necessary to ensure critical information doesn't just go in one ear and out the other. With most training, I simply want to know, "DID you do it?" With sales training, I want to know, "CAN you do it?" Can you speak to a prospect? Can you do the demo? Can you handle objections and can you make the sale?

Readiness has become the core foundational priority of the sales enablement function. And at Brainshark, these are the issues we're committed to helping our customers get better at every day.

Greg Flynn

CEO, Brainshark



That feeling when you remove the one piece of content that no one's used for 6 months...

... and 30 seconds later get a phone call asking "what happened to that?"

Linked in

3 Ways to Help Sales Reps Optimize their LinkedIn Profiles



Offer Pro Headshots:

A LinkedIn profile picture should be treated like a rep's first impression for buyers – make sure it's a good one! Schedule a time every year for all reps to get professional headshots.

2 Suggest Content:

Help reps stay on message by providing copy about their roles and your company. Show them how to embed content into the Experience and Summary sections, and provide promo videos, blog posts, whitepapers, eBooks and more.



Post our core values video This is great thanks! CQRE VALUES

3 Create a profile checklist:

To simplify the process for reps, provide a checklist of each key LinkedIn profile section, including Headline, Contact Information, Experience, Honors and Awards, Education and Groups.

WORD ON THE STREET



Tiffani Bova @Tiffani_Bova

Put the customer at the center of all your decisions - make them successful and they will return it w/ loyalty #CustomerSuccess



Elinor Stutz @smoothsale

Understanding of your preferred clientele per needs, wants and desires translates into a solid foundation for business. #sales



Anthony lannarino

#Salespeople need to build the kind of relationships that will withstand the ask



Nancy Bleeke
<u>@SalesProInsider</u>

Don't judge or box in your contacts - remain flexible with your approach in each conversation.

#ConversationsThatSell



Mike Weinberg
mike_weinberg

Salesperson: why do you think you can win deals by scoring obedience points? Often playing the prospect's or competitor's game = losing deal



Lori Richardson
oscoremoresales

It's time to rethink that strategy which says "yes" is the most important part of negotiation in selling.



Aaron Ross <u>amotoceo</u>

The biggest bottleneck when prospecting into companies with more than a few execs is finding the decision maker!



Shari Levitin

Curious #salespeople want to get to know their customers' inner worlds and discover how it affects their outer worlds. #HeartAndSell

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Peer Learning for Sales:

Managing the Chaos

Peer learning provides a great opportunity for salespeople to share knowledge and best practices across skill levels and generations – but it can quickly fall into anarchy if you're not careful.

Download this exclusive eBook to learn:

- · The benefits of peer learning
- · The meaning of "peer created, enablement refined"
- Leveraging sales enablement technology for peer learning

• Applying peer learning to training and coaching programs

Download the Peer Learning eBook: http://bit.ly/bnsk-peer

PEERRYINGS MANACHAOS THE CHAOS THE CHAOS BRAINSHARK



The sales enablement function is growing steadily, achieving 14% growth over the last three years with 32% of companies reporting a dedicated sales enablement department. As sales enablement continues to grow and evolve, it's only natural that leadership positions will begin to develop. For the function to become more influential within organizations, it needs a leader who can get that "seat at the table" and help the department develop a vision, strategy and goals that will impact the entire company.

I recently took on the role of Brainshark's Chief Readiness Officer; a new role that we believe will be important to the world of sales enablement. Here are some insights around what the role means and what it's responsible for.

"Organizations spend millions building their brand, developing products and generating demand – but success and growth still comes down to that interaction between reps and buyers. If you've underinvested in the readiness of

your salespeople, those millions will be wasted."

Why was the position of Chief Readiness Officer created? Who does it report into?

I am responsible – along with my sales enablement team members – to ensure that our salespeople have the necessary knowledge and skills to optimize every buyer interaction. Since readiness is what our technology here at Brainshark is all about, we felt it made sense for us to have the first Chief Readiness Officer. We wanted to showcase our commitment to sales readiness and why it should be top of mind for every sales organization. The title gives me a platform to evangelize the importance of readiness.

I report directly to our CEO, but the reality is my team and I work for the sales organization.

How do I define sales readiness?

Sales readiness is all about ensuring that salespeople have the knowledge (of your products, your competitors, the market, the company they are calling on, etc.) and the skills (listening, presenting, writing and so on) to bring value to every buyer interaction.

Why should companies consider appointing a Chief Readiness Officer?

According to Forrester Research, B2B buyers say that only 20% of sales calls focus on their specific needs. Clearly, we have a long way to go to ensure that reps are really ready to bring the value that today's buyers are looking for. That's reason number one.

Another reason is to improve rep productivity – and we define productivity as the amount of revenue a rep produces over a given period of time. One way to improve productivity is to give reps more time to sell by improving their efficiency. But giving reps more time to sell can be risky; meaning if you have a bad salesperson, you've now given them the opportunity to make more bad sales calls.

The third reason is all about that buyer interaction. Every interaction a rep has with a buyer has basically four outcomes: establish the relationship, deepen an existing relationship, or destroy a relationship (sometimes before a relationship has been established). It's too risky to send out a rep who is not truly ready.

What's it like leading sales readiness at a readiness software company? What types of things are Brainshark doing to ready their salespeople?

At Brainshark, we do Sales Mastery sessions with our sales team. All materials are delivered to our sales managers via Brainshark software so they are ready to train and coach reps on closing skills, presentations skills and more. We recently did one of these mastery sessions on pre-call planning and are soon launching another on handling objections.

We also place a focus on peer-to-peer learning. Using Brainshark software, we're able to virtually interview our salespeople about recent sales success. We then take those videos and turn them into ondemand learning content using Brainshark for other reps to review. We call them Sales SpotLights and reps absolutely love being able to learn from one another.

How should a Chief Readiness Officer be measured?

Like anybody in sales, a Chief Readiness Officer needs to be measured on productivity, which in sales means revenue. But there are a lot of things that contribute to whether reps produce revenue that goes beyond readiness, such as market conditions, competition and product evolution. Hence the name. Chief Readiness Officers should also be measured on the "readiness" of the sales organization because at the end of the day, their job is to ensure that the team in the field has the skills and knowledge to have effective sales conversations. They should be measured on things like rep certification and assessments as well.

ARE YOUR SALES REPS READY?

Ensure your salespeople are always prepared to make the most of every buyer interaction with Brainshark's comprehensive platform for sales enablement and readiness.



Content Authoring

Arm sellers with engaging, interactive learning content that can be created quickly, updated easily, and accessed anywhere.



Sales Training

Onboard new hires faster and keep reps continuously prepared with anytime access to learning content and resources.



Video Coaching

Reinforce training, sharpen team performance, and validate mastery of the skills and knowledge reps need to succeed.

> View a short solution demo today: www.brainshark.com/see-a-demo

> > **BRAINSHARK**





early 2015, Ping Identity was buzzing with activity. The company was getting ready to roll out a series of new product capabilities that would propel them forward in the identity and access management industry. The only problem

was that there was no sole person or department in charge of equipping the sales force with the tools and knowledge they needed to be effective.

"We had a lot of 'random acts of sales enablement' by various groups. They were well-intended, but didn't achieve the results we wanted because they were done sort of one-off, in all these different silos."

The company realized it would be difficult to succeed with this or any future product expansion without a more structured enablement process in place. With so much growth and potential at its fingertips, Ping needed to figure out a plan – and fast.

"We had a lot of 'random acts of sales enablement' by various groups," said Christi Wall, sales enablement manager at the

Denver-based software company. "They were well-intended, but didn't achieve the results we wanted because they were done sort of one-off, in all these different silos."

To solve the issue and forge a path for better selling, Ping created a

dedicated sales enablement department; a new function to support onboarding, learning, content management and communications for the sales organization. "We really needed a dedicated function to be prepared for where the market was heading, and to build up our sales force so they were ready to sell," Wall said.

Facing Sales Enablement Challenges Head-On

Wall stepped up to help lead the sales enablement initiative, and one of her first objectives was to improve adoption of Ping's sales enablement platform:

Brainshark. Wall took inventory of all existing sales content and messaging, which involved reviewing current content, repurposing specific assets, and creating best practices and peer learning examples.

While doing this, she realized not only was content dispersed in a variety of places (from Google Drives to individual laptops), but that it exposed a need to change their whole selling approach.



Photo Credit: Brian Campbell



Photo Credit: Brian Campbell

"Once we started seeing the content that was being used, we started to understand what was working and not working in the field," she said. "It became very clear

"It was a bit of a paradigm

shift. We needed common

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that we needed a common way to talk with customers."

Ping partnered with sales effectiveness firm, GrowthPlay, to develop a new selling

methodology that focused on enabling sales reps to have more value-based, customer-focused conversations.

"We needed a change in our mentality towards more customer-focused conversations, instead of showing up and just talking about Ping," Wall explained. "It was a bit of a paradigm shift. We needed common language and a framework to root ourselves in when it came to customer conversations. That framework allowed not only sales but also other departments in the organization

> to align on how we approached customer conversations."

Rolling out the new methodology went hand-in-hand with increasing

the adoption of Brainshark. To raise awareness about new and updated content, Wall created 1-2 minute "This Week in Brainshark" email communications. But she didn't stop there; she also developed her own original music videos in which she rapped about the latest resources available for sales.

"It turns out that sales reps will watch a

video before they'll ever read an email," she said. "Why not do a video where you can wear costumes and rap?"



Due in part to this creative approach to sales communications, Ping saw an 85% increase in sales content views internally year-overyear and was able to drastically improve adoption of its sales enablement technology.

But just as Wall began to find some rhythm, Ping Identity as a company was moving forward with its own plans.

Ping's (New) Identity

In 2016, a confluence of changes hit Ping Identity. The company was acquired by Vista Equity, followed by Ping making an acquisition of its own: software company UnboundID.

The sales enablement function now was in charge of preparing new and existing reps amidst this business transformation, as well as successfully incorporating the new selling methodology and technology. Wall and the team had their plate full to say the least.

"I was glad we had a framework to plug all these changes into. It gave us a foundation to take incoming information, make sense of it, and then roll it out to the sales team in a clear way," she said.

With its enhanced product portfolio (thanks to UnboundID), Ping organized instructor-led trainings across various cities. Wall recorded the trainings and split them into individual videos for reps to use as just-in-time learning refreshers. She also coordinated regular training calls with the product marketing and sales teams to align on products and messaging. Those meetings were recorded and posted via Brainshark so reps could access them on-demand.

Kicking Sales Enablement (and Readiness) into High Gear

Having an established sales enablement function also enabled Ping to think differently about its approach to sales training, starting with onboarding. "We realized that in trying to keep up with all the organizational changes, we had put our ramp plans on auto-pilot," she explained. "We finally saw the data though and realized we weren't ramping people effectively."

So Wall and team have now flipped onboarding on its head: instead of having reps go through learning courses first before finishing with an activity or certification (like a quiz or video coaching

"The legwork of establishing

sales enablement is hugely

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be harder to adapt to changes."

assignment via Brainshark), she made those activities the center of the ramp plan. This new plan would present reps with the required

activity upfront (such as recording an elevator pitch to be submitted and scored), allowing them to complete it however they wanted. Alongside that, salespeople were provided with the appropriate supplemental resources and tools, including training courses and videos, to help them complete the activity effectively.

Wall also emphasizes the importance of creating a culture to foster coaching across the sales organization. Not only is video coaching now part of onboarding and training at Ping, but it's also spurred a behavioral and cultural change that's being adopted by the whole sales organization.

For example, when two inside sales $\ensuremath{\operatorname{reps}}$

were promoted to account executives, their VP created a coaching challenge asking each to submit a recording of themselves giving a presentation in their new roles. The VP offered a gift card to the person that earned the highest score.

"[The VP] created this coaching challenge on his own because he wanted to 'pulse check' where those reps were as they were getting ramped into their new positions,"

Wall said.

Wall added that even the prospecting team uses video coaching as a natural part of its learning routines. For

example, Ping's sales developer leaders have created coaching challenges asking reps to submit their best response to a common objection so they can practice and learn from each other.

"The only constant is change"

With the help of a fully-established sales enablement function, Ping Identity has seen impressive results. The company reached 45% year-over-year growth in 2016 and closed seven of the 10 largest deals in the company's 15-year history.

Wall said taking that first step of establishing sales enablement provided an important gateway to what the organization has been able to achieve since.

"The legwork of establishing sales enablement is hugely important for any company that's growing," she said. "If you don't have a foundation, it's going to be harder to adapt to changes."

But Wall added that the work is never done.

"The only constant is change," she said.
"You need that foundation to iterate and make changes but the work is never done.
You have to constantly nurture it to make sure your program is effective and efficient."

Photo Credit: Brian Campbell



For sales enablement leaders, there are high expectations when entering a new organization – it's not a 'keep the lights on' type of position. Sometimes you're inheriting legacy processes that need refreshing, and other times you're given a clean slate to build out a new strategy. Whatever the situation, you can set yourself up for success from the start by going in with a plan.

First 30 Days

Within the first 30 days, sales enablement leaders should go through their own onboarding process to learn about the company, culture, products and industry and meet with key people across the organization. By meeting with members of senior leadership, the executive team and key stakeholders in sales and marketing, you'll learn about roles and responsibilities, as well as the expectations for sales enablement and how you can collaborate.

Learn or reestablish what sales enablement means at your new organization. Find out what your role is responsible for and what it's expected to deliver, as well as the role it plays in the broader organization. As part of this information gathering exercise, be sure to take inventory of the technologies that are used across the sales organization and start to learn about them and whether any infrastructure changes will be needed.

Another focus should be product knowledge. Since sales enablement is typically responsible for the education of the sales team, knowing the products inside and out is a must. You can learn about the products in a multitude of ways and if there is already a formal sales onboarding program in place, you can follow that too (while brainstorming how you'd like to improve future onboarding, of course).

60 Days

Think of this as phase two of sales enablement onboarding. But now that you have foundational knowledge about what you'll be working on and who you'll be working with, it's time to take your learning to the next level.

Take this time to read up on competitors in your industry and where your company fits. Find out if your company puts together competitive intelligence reports and research your competitors' key features, messaging and customers.

Meet with key people again but this time, go beyond the introductory conversation and start to delve into the existing processes and strategies. This is a good opportunity to think about how you'd like to improve sales enablement; but don't go ahead and develop a formal plan just yet. Use this learning phase to your advantage. Ask specific questions to thoroughly understand the challenges that you'll need to solve for the sales team and start compiling ideas of how you'd tackle them.

A helpful exercise is to shadow key salespeople on calls. Not only will this help you form relationships with reps, but it will allow you to experience a 'day in the life' of your sales reps.

100 Days

Leading up to the 100-day mark, you'll want to kick things into high gear. Of course, you'll keep learning (and you always will), but now you should start applying some of your learnings to real projects and strategies. This is the time to come up with a plan of which projects you want to prioritize in the next 6 to 12 months.

Since the objective of the sales enablement function is to improve the effectiveness of the sales team, as the new leader it's your job to figure out how to make improvements. For example, is there enough relevant content to support onboarding or are reps ramping up quickly enough? If you observe any shortcomings, take note of those and map out some possible solutions.

At this point, you shouldn't be afraid to share what you've observed about the sales team thus far. That's what you're there for!

By following a plan with key milestones in your first 100 days as a sales enablement leader, not only will you be set up for success, but you'll save yourself a lot of headaches down the road since you've learned the right information and formed the right relationships from the start.

Day 30 Goals

Come away with a foundation of product knowledge
Start relationships with key executives and colleagues
Get clarity on the expectations of the sales enablement role

Day 60 Goals

Articulate your knowledge as if you were talking to a friend at a party		company and products

Test your knowledge of the

Day 100 Goals

plan of the projects to focus on in the next 6 to 12 months
Determine measurements of success upfront which will allow you to gauge effectiveness later on
Get buy-in from key stakeholders on initial plans

Develop a detailed, yet fluid

Informal vs. Formal:

Sales Coaching Tips for Real-World Scenarios











Sales coaching reinforces the knowledge sales reps have learned in sales training and prepares them for each and every buyer interaction. According to the Association for Talent Development, organizations that make continuous investments in training and reinforcement see over 50% higher net sales per employee.

Video-based coaching strategies – where reps practice material by recording video responses to coaching assignments or 'challenges' – allow sales leaders to validate that reps have mastered critical messaging, processes, systems, and more. But your sales coaching program can't be one-size-fits-all. Depending on the scenario, you will need to utilize either informal or formal coaching techniques – and the most effective strategies have a healthy mix of both.

Using the Brainshark Video Coaching Model as a guide (see Fig. 1), here are four real-world scenarios to use either formal or informal approaches to coaching.

Scenario #1: Your company is going through a merger or acquisition

Let's say your company has recently acquired a competitor that owns unique technology that will make you a frontrunner in your industry.

In this scenario, it's critical that all reps have consistent and accurate messaging. According to SiriusDecisions, 70% of mergers and acquisitions fail to meet business expectations. Don't let your organization fall into this group.

Sales coaching tip: Time is of the essence with mergers and acquisitions. To make sure your newly combined sales force is message-ready, organize a formal, teamwide video-coaching challenge. This is also known as Organizational Mastery, where you're testing the sales team as a whole to assess if they've mastered the material. Each rep's submission should then be assessed and scored by their manager and/or sales enablement team.

Scenario #2: Identifying best practices across the sales team

Every sales team has high-performers that stand out from the rest of the crowd. But how do you transfer critical knowledge and skills from those 'A' players to your 'B' players? Let's say you are looking to teach reps how to navigate tough sales calls where the rep's back is against the wall and they need a Hail Mary in the fourth quarter to pull it off.

Have reps submit a video discussing a time when they achieved victory on a deal that was a tough close. Then, select the best video responses and use them as training for other reps.

Sales coaching tip: This type of informal, teamwide coaching will provide recognition to star players while doubling as training content for present and future sales reps. This form of coaching is also known as **Peer Learning**, where reps of all levels and generations can learn from each other's tips and experiences through repgenerated videos.

Scenario #3: Sales managers need leadership development

Some organizations believe that the best sales reps will make the most qualified sales managers, but the truth is that not everyone has the skills to lead. It takes hard work and experience to develop leadership skills, and it's up to sales enablement to prepare sales managers to lead their teams.

A recent CSO Insights study found that sales manager enablement is often the missing piece of the puzzle in most sales enablement programs that are seeing less than satisfactory results.

Sales coaching tip: Initiate formal, individual video coaching with sales managers to ensure they have achieved Individual Mastery of the skills necessary to lead their team of reps.

Scenario #4: Tough sales calls are becoming a pattern

Let's say you have a sales rep who is a great performer, but lately you've noticed she's been struggling on recent calls. Instead of handling price objections with the responses she learned in training, she is skirting around the questions and frustrating potential buyers.

Furthermore, she is failing to accurately demonstrate your value proposition in comparison to your competition. What should you do in this scenario?

Sales coaching tip: Informal, individual video coaching, also known as Just-In-Time Learning, can help address this immediate need. ■

Video Coaching Model

Individual Team Just-in-Time Learning Peer Learning Tips and techniques One-on-one Rep-requested Capture & share Informal from the field coaching coaching tribal knowledge Regional meeting Additional Buyer meeting Identify best development preparation practices prep (pre/post) Individual Mastery Organizational Mastery Onboarding Leadership Onboarding Certification Formal development Individual mastery Product launches eLearning & workshop development post-assessment New methodology

Figure 1



rtificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality have the potential to significantly impact the sales enablement technology space – and it will happen sooner than you'd think. Companies are already priming for this revolution, with Forrester Research predicting a 300% increase in AI investments alone in 2017.

What could these innovations mean for the world of sales enablement? Here's a quick glimpse into what the future might hold.

Cognitive analysis for more scalable coaching

Video coaching solutions already provide an easy way for sales leaders to virtually coach and reinforce critical selling skills. But what if AI could simplify this process even further by letting the machine do most of the work?

Machine learning and cognitive analysis make it possible to collect data on things like facial analysis, visual perception, speech recognition and more. Applying these scoring and grading capabilities before a manager reviews a video can drastically streamline the coaching process, particularly for larger, enterprise sales forces.

The possibilities are endless.

Companies that have pioneered the use of Al in sales rave about the impact, which includes an increase in leads and appointments of more than 50%.

- Harvard Business Review

By 2020, 30% of all B2B companies will employ AI to augment at least one of their primary sales processes.

Virtual simulations with augmented reality

No matter how much training a salesperson receives, there's nothing quite like the real-life experience of getting in front of a customer. Augmented reality applications (which could include the use of VR headsets) will provide salespeople with a way to practice pitches in environments designed to simulate real sales meetings. Imagine being able to interact with and even field objections from simulated "buyers"? That reality may be just around the corner.

Gartner



