



THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SALES KICKOFF READINESS & PLANNING

BRAINSHARK®

Introduction

Regardless of how your sales team performed this year, chances are your goals for next year will be even higher. Most companies organize an annual (or bi-annual) sales kickoff event to recap the previous selling period and prepare for the year ahead. This is the time for sales enablement and sales leaders to motivate and unite their teams to achieve the goals that they've set for the upcoming year.

Plus, it's one of the only times that all of your sellers, remote and local, and sales leadership will be under one roof. To make the most of this occasion, sales enablement leaders should be instrumental in the preparation and strategic planning up front. Sales enablement is in a unique position where they have a bird's eye view of the sales organization and collaborate with sales reps and sales leaders, making them a logical choice as planner of the sales kickoff event.

But planning sales kickoff requires more than making a few phone calls to book a venue. Sales enablement should take a strategic approach while trying to answer one key question: *Is your sales kickoff really adding value for your sales team?*

This eBook provides a framework to maximize the sales kickoff experience before, during and after the event, so your sellers are truly prepared to hit your targets in the upcoming year.

**Is your sales kickoff
really adding value
for your sales team?**



Step 1:

Identify Your Kickoff Planning Committee

Identifying *who* will be planning your sales kickoff is the first important component to determining the strategy behind the event. Who are the key stakeholders that need to be involved to **ensure cross-functional alignment**?

Some possible committee members could include:

- Sales enablement
- Senior sales leaders
- Event coordinators
- Product management

While various unique perspectives will help you plan a well-rounded event, avoid including too many representatives in order to keep the planning process as seamless as possible.

You can also **survey the sales team** to identify the top pain points or concepts that they'd like to see addressed during kickoff. For example, if sellers want time to ask sales leadership about their vision, schedule a panel; if reps would like to see where the product is headed, schedule more time to cover the product roadmap. This not only makes it easier on your planning committee, but it also makes reps feel more invested in the event knowing that their ideas and concerns were heard.

QUICK TIP

There will be certain individuals that you'll need buy-in from, such as sales managers, who don't necessarily need to be a part of the official committee. Bring them in periodically to approve important details.





Step 2:

Establish a Theme & Agenda

Once you've polled your salespeople to gather ideas, your committee can start to **craft a rough agenda** for the event. Keep in mind that the agenda you initially put in place isn't set in stone. Speakers, topics, and times may shift throughout the planning process – and that's okay!

In an effort to make your kickoff a cohesive event, consider **establishing a central theme**. This will help presenters find common ground in their messaging and tie everything together for attendees. Themes can have motivational undertones, like "Breaking Barriers" or simply "Beat [Competitor]," for example.

Once your theme has been established, use these **four key components of a successful sales kickoff** to craft your agenda: readiness, team building, motivation and communication.

Four Components of Sales Kickoff

READINESS

- Pre-work & follow-up reinforcement
- Product, messaging, or selling certifications

TEAM BUILDING

- Interactive role playing
- Group exercises (ex. building bicycles for charity)

MOTIVATION

- Inspirational speakers
- Sales spotlights recognizing recent wins

COMMUNICATION

- Corporate strategy
- Product strategy
- Sales strategy

QUICK TIP

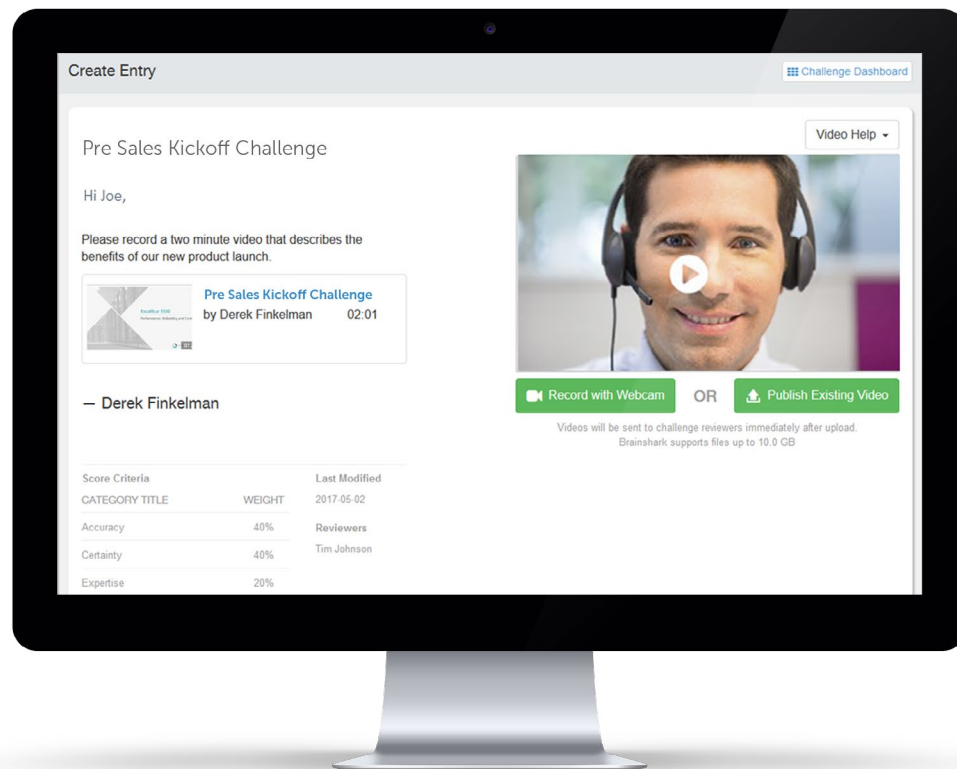
Sales kickoff is not about beating up on the sales team for what they did wrong. Focus more on areas of improvement and talk about action plans.

Sample Sales Kickoff Agenda

7:30-8:00 a.m.	Breakfast			
8:00-8:20 a.m.	Opening Keynote from Head of Sales		Have a customer give a presentation around their use case and how your product has helped them achieve business goals. A successful customer will inspire your whole sales organization!	
8:20-8:50 a.m.	Customer Speaker			
8:50-9:35 a.m.	Tactical Session with Senior Sales Reps			
9:35-10:45 a.m.	Group Role Playing		Have reps role play in various selling scenarios such as objection handling or product questions. Mix up the reps by region or tenure so they can meet and interact with each other.	
10:45 a.m.	Break			
11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Panel with Sales Leaders			
12:00-1:00 p.m.	Lunch			
1:00-2:00 p.m.	Guest Speaker		Bring in an inspirational speaker whose story connects with your event theme. Provide background information about your company's story beforehand so the speaker can really connect their message.	
2:00-2:15 p.m.	Sales Spotlight #1			
2:15-3:00 p.m.	Team Building Exercise			
3:00-3:15 p.m.	Break			
3:15-3:30 p.m.	Sales Spotlight #2		Split the sales force into teams and have each team accomplish a task that requires group problem solving like building a bicycle or doing a scavenger hunt.	
3:30-3:45 p.m.	Sales Spotlight #3			
3:45-4:30 p.m.	Sales Leadership Recap			
4:30-5:00 p.m.	Closing Keynote			

Step 3:

Design Pre-Work & Onsite Activities



To maximize the value your sellers get from the kickoff, it's important to prioritize key learning and reinforcement opportunities at the event. **Assign pre-work** to ensure sellers are adequately trained beforehand so there's more time for team building exercises, peer-to-peer learning, and breakout sessions during the day. This makes for a much more engaging and exciting sales kickoff, allowing you to make the most of your reps' time.

PRE-WORK EXAMPLE

Let's say your company is launching a new product. Sales kickoff is not the time to go over every new feature; it should be a **culmination of the learning** that's already taken place. Before the event, assign pre-work so reps can learn the new product and its features. Platforms like Brainshark make it easy to share online learning content for sellers to review. Then encourage them to practice the new messaging so they can be certified on the material prior to the event, or to accelerate the certification process the day of.

QUICK TIP

Sales readiness technology makes it simple to assign and track pre-work. For example, [GE Digital](#) used Brainshark to roll out video-based content as pre-work for its sales kickoff. Executives were able to see that 85% of their reps completed their pre-work training prior to the event.

Assigning pre-work also holds sales managers accountable; no one wants to show up with unprepared reps. Doing the practice and reinforcement in person will create a sense of urgency and competition across the sales force.



Step 4:

Review, Rehearse, Refine

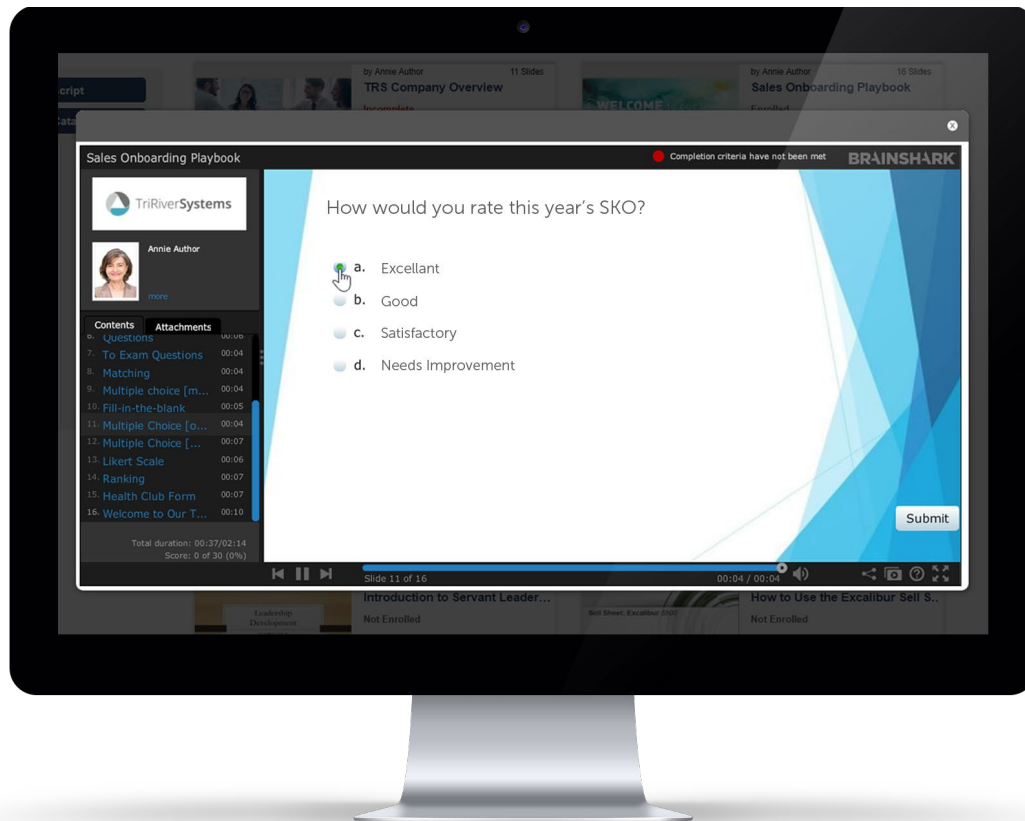
If you've been planning sales kickoff for months and want all of your hard work to pay off, then you'll want to pay attention to this often-overlooked step: **review, rehearse, and refine each of your presenters' content.** The key here is to ensure that all presentations align with your kickoff strategy and overall goals for the event.

QUICK TIP

Compile the master slide deck in advance. That way if presenters request any last minute edits (which happens often), you are aware of the changes and can ensure they are included in the final deck.

- 1. Review:** Make sure that all content fits within the overall theme of the kickoff event, and that there is no overlap between presenters.
- 2. Rehearse:** Sales kickoff is not immune to Murphy's Law. Show presenters the stage, confidence monitor and slide advancer before their session so they know what to expect. Encourage the presenters to do a dry run and suggest that they leave time for questions at the end of their session.
- 3. Refine:** Much like reps, presenters often need to be coached. If you feel like some of your speakers are weak on presentation skills, don't let that take away from the value of their message. Consider hiring a presentation coach.

Step 5: Get Real-Time Feedback



Sales kickoff is a critical initiative and should be much more than just a fun day out of the office. There must be a carefully crafted strategy involved to make sure the topics, speakers and activities resonate with your sellers and what they hope to achieve in the coming year.

Too often, companies wait too long after the event to ask for feedback. Be proactive about taking the pulse of the sales team during the event.

You can also deliver a follow-up communication that includes a survey and any content you've created or captured from the sessions. Platforms like Brainshark make this easy. From there, gather the survey results and view and analyze the data. You'll be able to get a sense of whether the agenda resonated with reps and sales managers and what you can do better next time around.

QUICK TIP

Send push notifications during kickoff to get reps to respond on the spot – this way you'll get valuable thoughts about how they're feeling about the event, before they forget.

Step 6:

Use Technology to Reinforce Learning Post-Event



Your team put a lot of effort into making sure your sales kickoff was worthwhile. Before reps leave the event, remind them that the sales strategy was set *globally*, but it will be up to them and their sales managers to execute it *locally*. **Hold them accountable** for the next 90 days and beyond by setting some goals for prospect meetings or even closed deals.

There's no reason that all the lessons learned should stay within the walls of sales kickoff. Record presentations to be shared and accessed post-event via your sales content portal. You could also have presenters [record their presentations separately](#) as on-demand assets. Then send out recaps to the sales team that reinforce what was covered at the meeting, so they don't forget everything they learned after they leave.

Also don't forget to send a high-level overview of learnings and goals that were set at sales kickoff to loop in the rest of your organization.



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About Brainshark

Brainshark sales readiness software equips businesses with the training, coaching and content authoring capabilities to achieve sales mastery and outsell the competition.

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

Thousands of companies – 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.

“At our global sales meeting, we did an oral certification – where reps had to come into a testing booth and recite a number of key facts that have been part of their learning. We had an over 95% pass rate, absolutely unheard of without us having used a tool like Brainshark.”

– Pete Bell

Head of VI Sales Enablement
& Execution, Spectranetics

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