



The Smart Guide to Sales Enablement

SmartBug.

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CHAPTER 01

Introduction

In today's modern society, all landscapes of selling, marketing, and day-to-day operations have changed. Management in all walks of business continues to look for new strategies to keep a leg up on the competition. Sales enablement continues to be brought up in many organizations; however, the concept easily gets lost in the shuffle of your company's other day-to-day duties.

Our Smart Guide to Sales Enablement was created to help you develop a high level of understanding and further drive the message forward to your team that this piece of strategy is essential to achieving (and blowing out) your business goals. Let's take a look at some of the basics of sales enablement and what it can provide to your organization.

CHAPTER 02

The What, Why, Who, Where, and When of Developing a Sales Enablement Strategy



1. What Is Sales Enablement?

In order to better understand our topic, let's first define sales enablement. Although there is no "official" definition, let's split the term in two in order to arrive at a clear and concise definition.

Sale

(noun) \sāl\ – the act of selling; specifically: the transfer of ownership of and title to property from one person to another for a price.

This is pretty straightforward, as we tend to learn the function and action of a sale during our daily lives.

Enablement

(noun) \ i-nā-bəl-mənt \ – The act of enabling, or the state of being enabled; ability.

Enablement has a bit more context around it. Though enablement can go a few different ways, we can understand it as an approach that provides means or further opportunity.

After quickly examining both of these words separately, we can combine their meanings to create a definition for sales enablement we can use going forward.

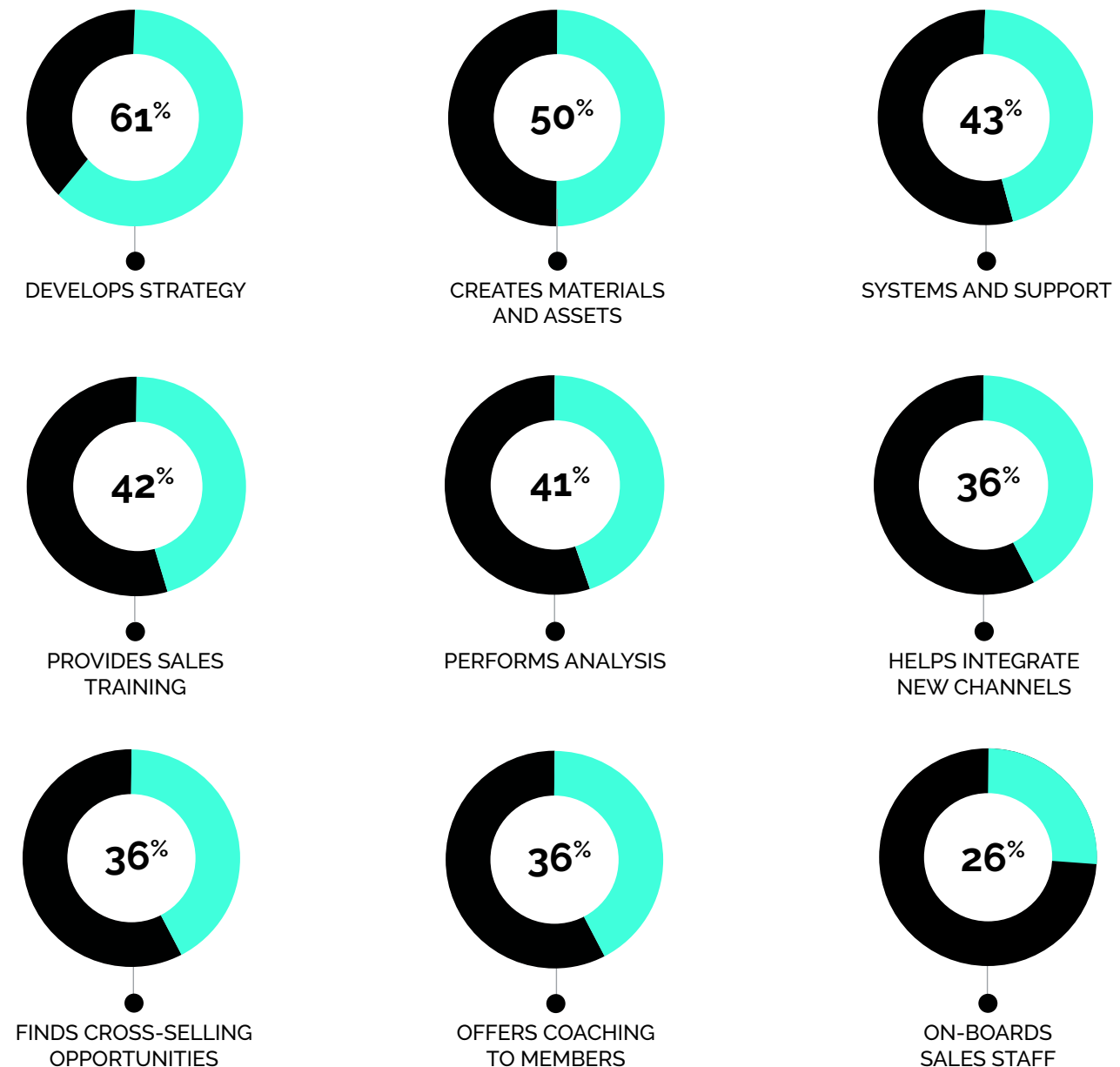
Sales Enablement

(noun) \ sālz i-nā-bəl-mənt \ – The act of developing approaches and processes behind sales and marketing teams and initiatives that help drive more sales.

Although this definition will help move us forward into the discussion, the overarching consensus on sales enablement can be quite baffling. Across the Internet and business landscape, there is no clear or concise definition to which sales enablement can look back.

Let's take a look at a joint [study](#) performed by Demand Metric and HubSpot. The study surveyed 380 qualified participants and asked the following question: "What defines sales enablement?" You can see that not everyone thought of sales enablement the same way.

What Defines Sales Enablement?



(Based on 380 Qualified Study Participants)

When looking at sales enablement, the picture has become clearer but still has a long way to go. After all, sales enablement still has a “buzzword” feel to it these days from most business professionals. So why should all of us look to implement a sales enablement strategy?

With the technological trends in front of us and the move from physical anything to digital everything, the sales and marketing landscape is shifting toward the digital side. Marketing automation software has helped us to begin nurturing prospects and reaching out to a broader audience in the early stages of the funnel. Sales enablement, on the other hand, manages the second half of the funnel, thus focusing on equipping sales with the right tools, skills, and assets to help drive more revenue to your organization.



Let's visualize where these platforms manage within the modern-day sales funnel:

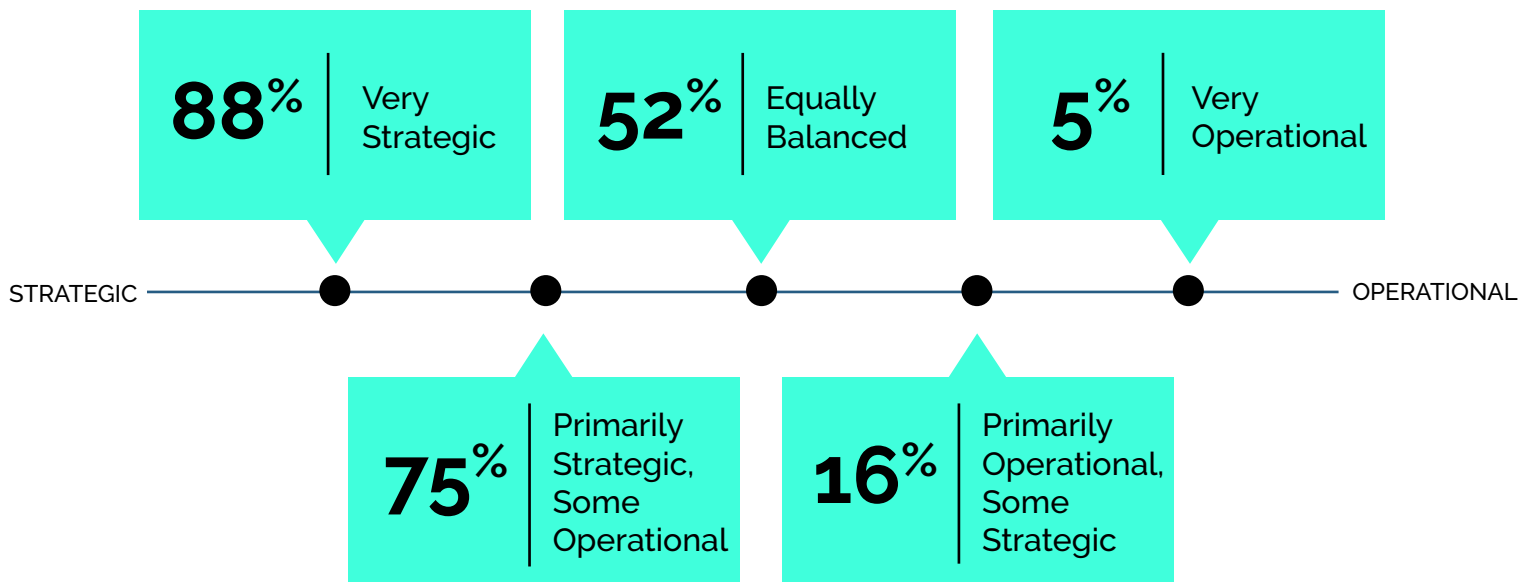
Type of Platform	Marketing Funnel	Sales Funnel
Marketing Automation Platform	Attract	Prospects/Discovery
	Convert	Lead/Solution Identification
Sales Enablement Solutions	Close	MQL/Solution Evaluation
		SQL/Opportunity
	Delight	Customer



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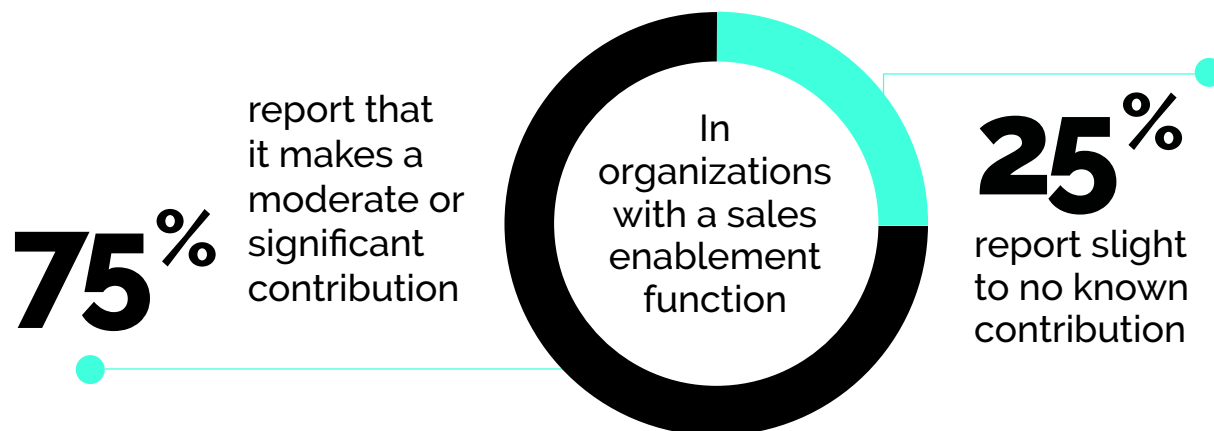
We can also see that implementing a sales enablement strategy or function can change the overall focus of your organization and move it from the very operational focus of days past to a very strategic focus.

Organizations with an effective sales enablement function are:



The data shows us that organizations with little or no results were very operational-focused. However, successful organizations that received moderate or huge results were very focused on strategy. If strategic organizations are not implementing sales enablement functions, you could be a step behind your competition's initiatives.

So how effective can sales enablement functions be once you've begun to move forward?



By making sure it's well understood across your business, you can keep yourself in the majority of organizations that enjoy success with sales enablement functions and processes.



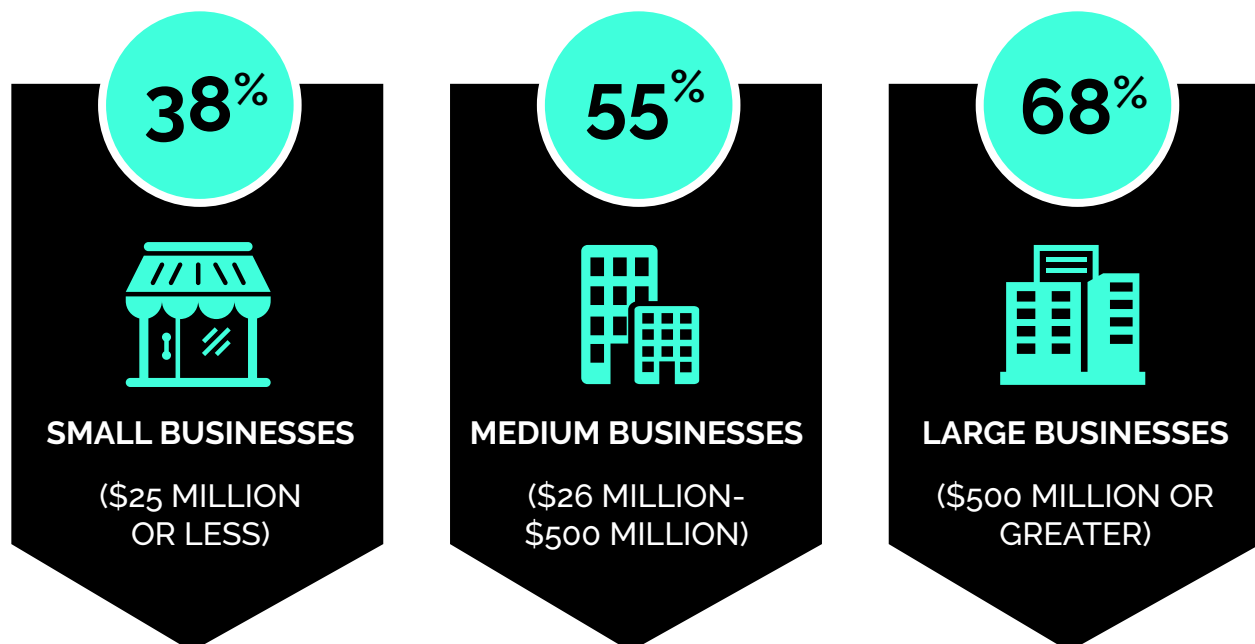
Successful organizations that receive moderate or huge results were very focused on strategy.

3. Who Is Currently Utilizing Sales Enablement (and Who Should Be)?

Now you might be thinking, “Who is utilizing sales enablement?” In all honesty, you, throughout your career, have tried to improve sales for your organization in some way, shape, or form. So does that mean 100 percent of us are currently utilizing sales enablement? Although I wish that was the case, I think we could all say no.

Let's bring some data behind this discussion and look at the types of organizations currently using a sales enablement function.

According to the same Demand Metric and HubSpot [study](#) we showed earlier, revenue size was slightly influenced if an organization had a sales enablement function in place:



As you can see from this data, the larger the business based on revenue size, the greater the opportunity of utilizing a sales enablement function. These numbers could also mean that larger businesses have the budget and headcount to put together a plan more easily than small or medium-sized businesses can.

We see that organizations of all sizes and industries are implementing a sales enablement function, but what is the effectiveness of these efforts? HighSpot and Heinz Marketing put together [a groundbreaking study](#) in 2015 with more than 400 B2B sales and marketing professionals who have implemented sales enablement programs.



Their overall effectiveness and how actively organizations are executing on these efforts were measured:

How Effective Are Your Sales Enablement Efforts?



(Based on More Than 400 B2B Sales and Marketing Professionals)

[HighSpot's State of Sales Enablement 2015](#)

Measure your effectiveness over time by constantly making sure that your sales enablement efforts are well defined and well understood by your organization.

4. Where Should Sales Enablement Be Emphasized in My Organization?

Most organizations have team members that focus directly within sales and marketing. Some may even be balancing both roles on a daily basis! These departments, however, can be severely siloed off from one another, focusing on certain primary tasks irrelevant to others.

Let's take a look at what duties these team members are already providing your organization:



Marketing

Marketing teams are responsible for being the voice of the organization, content kings, and the protectors of the brand. Their end goal is to represent a company's product or service in such a way that the right prospects are interested in furthering the conversation, and that existing customers are compelled and delighted to come back and tell everyone.



Most organizations have team members that focus directly within sales and marketing.



Sales

Sales teams are responsible for converting your provided leads (or their own sourced leads) into revenue for your organization. Their focus can be singular as well at times, focusing on in-person or one-on-one interaction with their lists of prospects. Also, rather than using traditional marketing channels, they mostly use their individual personalities and well-developed sales strategies from current and previous experiences to close the sale.

Your teams are already working on key objectives for your organization, so how are you able to effectively allocate time and resources to your sales enablement strategy?

Your Sales and Marketing Budgets (and Headcount!)

In order for your sales enablement strategy to flourish, it must have its own individually allocated resources. Most of your team is likely already up to their heads in their day-to-day duties and couldn't handle another part-time assignment.

If a sales enablement strategy is a top priority for your organization, why dedicate employees who can only allocate part-time effort and resources to this task? In turn, you will get partial results and set yourself up for failure.

For better results, a dedicated headcount (and budget) is critical to helping bring the strategy full-circle to everyone involved.

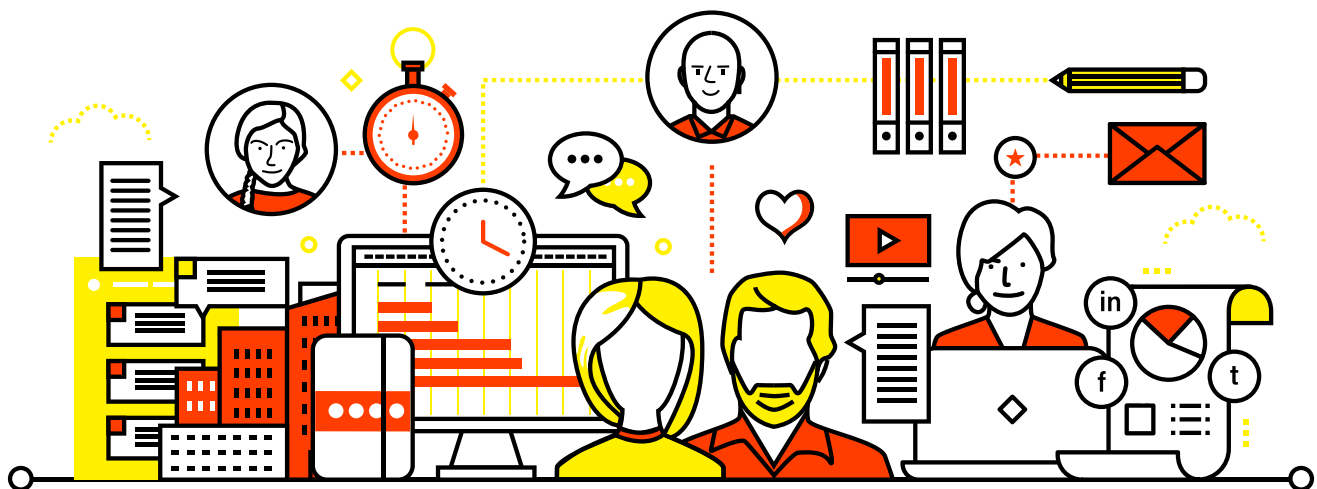
5. When Is the Best Time to Put Together a Sales Enablement Strategy?

To begin answering this question effectively, we must look at the key word in the question: “when.” Obvious answers for many organizations would be that “it should have been done already” and “as soon as possible.”

Before a sales enablement function, strategy, or tool can flourish in an organization, there must be some efforts and a clear consensus in the following areas:

The Sales and Marketing Relationship

When identifying and moving forward with a sales enablement strategy, pause and look at your current marketing and sales teams. Are they in alignment with one another? Are they looking toward the same business goals?



Although the idea that marketing and sales departments don't mesh too well isn't a surprise, there are ways to help get you started on the right path:

■ **Get sales to buy in to your current marketing objectives and strategies.**

Take a look at a couple of these convincing ways to get your foot in the door:

Start generating leads: One of the easiest ways is to bring the right traffic and leads to your website and hand them off to sales. By passing these along at the right time, you can begin to create a sense that marketing is helping to achieve its individual sales goals.

Gather your own data: Marketing and sales each have their own way of showing their progress and results. A closed-loop marketing tool helps develop reports for both your marketing and sales efforts (preferably in the same tool; otherwise, you should have a way to automate the data flow from both).



One of the easiest ways to get your foot in the door is to bring the right traffic and leads to your website and hand them off to sales.

■ **Show sales how it has helped others.**

Show the results of your efforts and how they have influenced sales in the short and long term. Here are a couple of quick statistics to keep in your back pocket:

Sixty-one percent of U.S. consumers have made a purchase based on a blog post.

Companies that automate lead management see a 10 percent or greater increase in revenue in 6-9 months.

Inbound leads cost 61 percent less than outbound leads.

■ **Have a formal service level agreement (SLA) in place among your staff.**

Ensure that both teams are held accountable and everyone is on the same page when it comes to marketing and sales goals. Fifty-nine percent of marketing teams surveyed admitted that they do not have an SLA.

■ **Define rules and criteria for leads defined as Marketing Qualified (MQL) and Sales Qualified (SQL).**

Forty percent of those same organizations had yet to define these rules and criteria.

These great tactical steps will start you and your organization on the right path.

Cross-Departmental Collaboration

How is the current communication among your marketing and sales departments? In most organizations, individual marketing and sales goals are hardly shared across the board, thus resulting in a bit of hesitancy and restrictions from both parties. From a management level, depending on the size of your organization, getting each of these departments together to talk strategy and next steps in a weekly or monthly meeting can be quite difficult. So how do you get your marketing and sales departments talking to each other on a regular basis?

Here are a couple quick steps:

- Align your departmental goals and share them among both your sales and marketing teams.
- Make sure your SLA has joint goals that require efforts from both marketing and sales.
- Find an opportunity to share information with both parties, whether it's through an internal system, a chat client, or a feedback-specific email address (feedback@yourdomain.com).

By keeping your marketing and sales departments in constant communication, you can ensure your sales enablement strategy is being put to the test and is benefiting your organization.

CHAPTER 03

How to Put Together an Effective Sales Enablement Strategy



Now that we have a basic understanding of sales enablement principles and functions, let's walk through some of the steps you should take to begin putting together an effective sales enablement strategy and solution for your organization.

When looking at sales enablement (and with most launches of new initiatives), there must be a gradual approach to success. Trying to implement a sales enablement solution with a one-time initiative will never work and will most certainly fall to the wayside after a couple of weeks. Condense your efforts into multiple steps for an increased success rate and to keep them constantly on the minds of your sales and marketing teams.

Let's take a look at HighSpot's [five-stage maturity model](#). This is a great example to see where you are at now and to better understand where you need to go. Although this doesn't cover everything involved with the sales enablement process, it touches most of the points you'll need to look at for success.

STAGE	COMPANY FOCUS	SALES TEAM FOCUS
Ad Hoc	Whole focus on customer acquisition; minimal planning and structure; frequent firefighting.	Rep efficiency and effectiveness is low.
Reactive	Content scattered across many systems and poorly managed; customer engagement is uneven.	Reps waste time they should be using to sell; onboarding is slow, turnover is high, and attainment is low.
Managed	Content is organized and up to date; reps have defined onboarding and training processes.	Attainment improved; onboarding is faster; more time is spent selling.
Data-Driven	Closed-loop used to measure content and training effectiveness.	Attainment, onboarding time, deal conversion, and deal velocity exceed industry norms.
Optimized	Closed-loop used to measure content and training effectiveness.	Industry-leading results for attainment, onboarding time, deal conversion, and deal velocity.

Where does your organization lie on this chart? Take a close look at all of your current processes, interview your marketing and sales team members to find common gaps, and put together a list in order of importance to tackle these one by one in order to increase your sales enablement efforts.

Take a look at some of these remaining efforts while moving forward with your sales enablement strategy:

- Content Management
- Analytics
- Training and Onboarding
- Pitching

Quick Tips:

As your plan begins to come together, keep these things in mind to avoid further delays or out-of-scope items:

- Don't play the waiting game! Don't wait for all of your initiatives or your next great piece to be complete. The time you spend waiting will further slow you down. Get a platform and strategy in place, then choose the most important content to focus your efforts on first. From there, you can use this time to perform a content audit and collect and organize your existing content to identify all gaps and opportunities for success.
- Stick to the plan! After you've initially gathered feedback, it can be too easy to constantly add new items and features as you go along. Before long, your initial focus is behind you and buried under these non-necessary features.

CHAPTER 04

Conclusion

All of the tips and strategies outlined in this guide will help your organization get a better understanding of sales enablement strategies and processes, and how they may influence your organization.

If this is something that you're looking to implement over the next 6-12 months, a [strategic partner](#) may be helpful in walking through some of the common hurdles associated with getting started.

Such a partner has walked in your shoes many times, can provide a fresh perspective to your questions and concerns, and can help develop custom strategies that will push forward your marketing and sales efforts—in turn increasing leads, customers, and revenue for your organization.



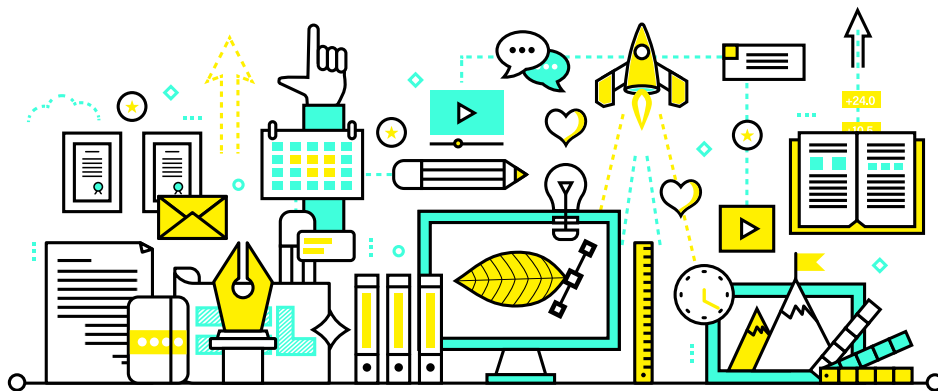
CHAPTER 05

Sales Enablement Resources and Tools

To help keep your mind in the know and learn additional tips and best practices, take a look at some of these resources and tools that are industry leaders in furthering sales enablement strategies and processes.

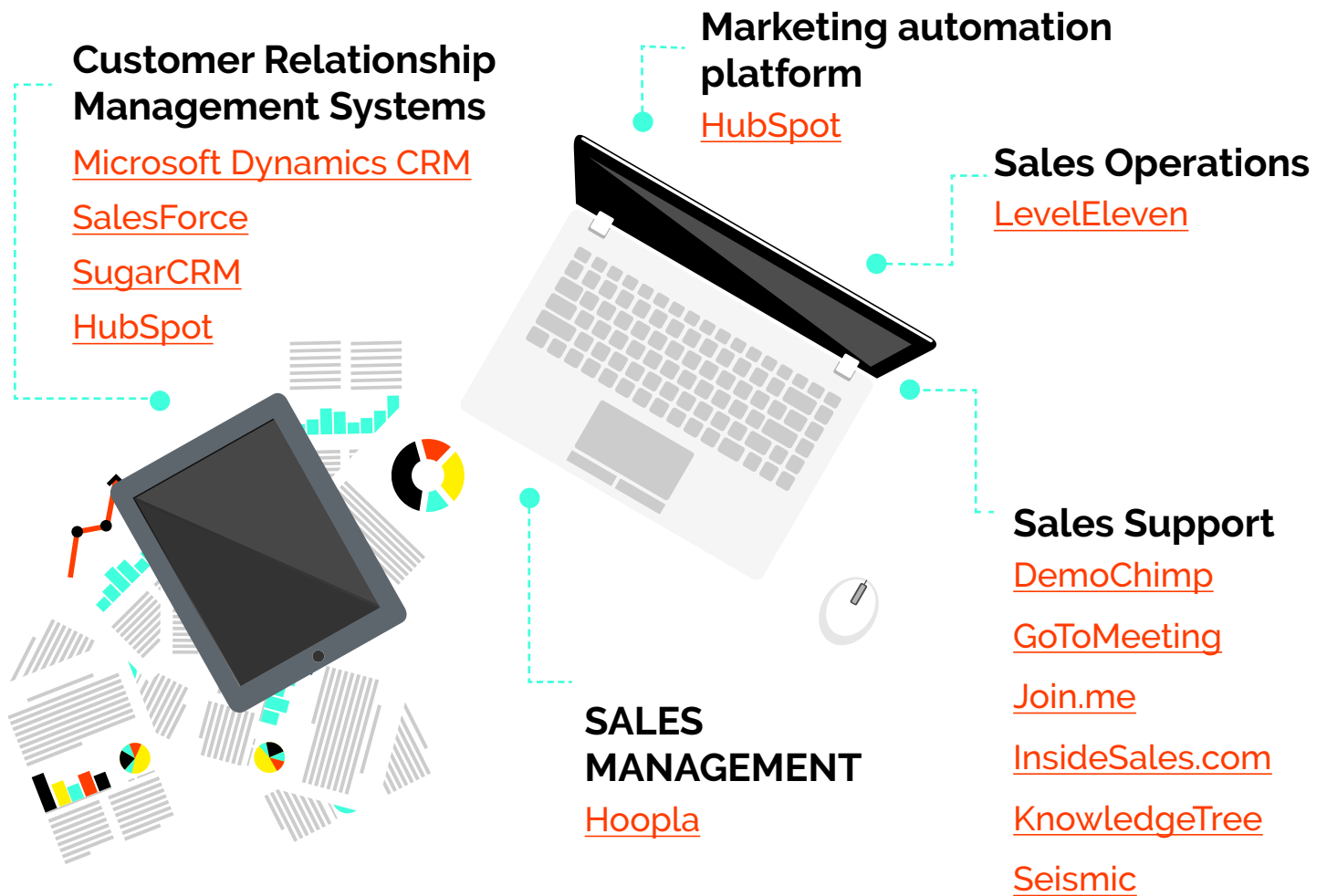
Sales Enablement Resources

- [Aberdeen Group](#)
- [Gartner](#)
- [Demand Metric](#)
- [Heinz Marketing](#)
- [Forrester](#)
- [SiriusDecisions](#)



Here's also a list of leading [sales enablement analysts](#) to keep up with on a regular basis.

Sales Enablement Tools



About SmartBug



SmartBug Media is one of a handful of HubSpot Diamond partners in the world and is the highest-rated agency in the history of the HubSpot ecosystem. We also boast the highest ROI documented from any HubSpot partner—3,558% and 14,500% ROI on a six-month and three-year campaign, respectively. At Inbound 2015, SmartBug Media was the most recognized agency, having won or been named a finalist in nine awards.

SmartBug Media is one of the first HubSpot partners to implement growth-driven design and was an inaugural member of the HubSpot COS Advisory Board. For more than seven years, SmartBug Media has been helping businesses increase sales leads, close more customers, and enhance the reach of their brands. From building comprehensive online marketing programs to designing new websites, driving leads through social media or sales enablement, we're an extension of your marketing team that delivers.

For a free inbound marketing or web design consultation, or to learn more, visit www.smartbugmedia.com or call [949-236-6448](tel:949-236-6448).

About the Author



Aaron Riddle is an Associate Consultant at SmartBug Media. He has more than five years of marketing experience helping organizations, ranging from not-for-profits to large technology-based groups and businesses, succeed in their digital marketing goals and objectives.

Have a question? Curious how we can help grow your business?

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SOURCES

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