The Grande Guide to

Sales Enablement

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What's a "Grande Guide"?

> We know what the typical day is like for marketers. After all, we are marketers ourselves. Between brainstorming and strategy sessions, last-minute requests and impromptu meetings ("It'll just take a minute, really!"), and trips to meet colleagues and customers, you can barely find time to breathe, never mind keep up with the latest marketing trends. That's why we've developed the Grande Guide series. In the time it takes you to drink a cup of coffee, you can become proficient on a key marketing topic, in this case, sales enablement.

Why Sales Enablement Matters Today

> Let's face it. Nobody wants to be sold. Especially by a salesperson. Really, when was the last time you even answered an unidentified call at work, much less listened patiently as an overeager sales rep fumbled through a script? The same is true for your prospects. That's why they avoid your salespeople until the last possible minute, instead educating themselves by accessing publicly available information and connecting with peers online until they've narrowed down their options. In fact, SiriusDecisions estimates that the buyer's journey is 70% complete by the time a sales person is contacted.

> While you can't blame prospects (in fact, odds are, you follow a similar process when you are the prospect), this shift places buyers in control of the sales cycle. And that forces corresponding changes in how your organization sells. The winning sales rep is not the one who can "hunt," "farm," or "close," but the one who consults with prospects to simplify their decision-making process based on a keen understanding of buyer interest and behavior. When a prospect finally reaches out, your sales rep had better understand everything there is to know about the buyer and be prepared to deliver value. Immediately. That's where sales enablement comes in.

The average sales cycle is 22% longer than five years ago.
Source: SiriusDecisions, Buying in to Longer Sales Cycles

What is Sales Enablement?

> Sales enablement – also referred to as sales readiness – is about helping today's salesperson deliver the right content to the right person at the right time to facilitate this (mostly independent) buying process. And it's up to you to get your sales team ready, namely by making it easy to access and use the following:

- A prioritized list of who to contact next based on lead quality and purchase intent
- Behavioral data that summarizes prospect interests and intent
- Tools that help salespeople track their hottest prospects and alert them to key activities as they advance through the buying process
- A library of content aligned to specific stages of the buying process that helps build trust and rapport with the buyer – and ultimately encourages the prospect to reach a favorable purchase decision

Why Do I Need to Understand Sales Enablement Personally?

> Your success as a marketer depends on your ability to help the sales team sell. While a number of factors play into this success, passing on knowledge and content is key. After all, many salespeople spend inordinate amounts of time researching prospects, contacting those unlikely (or not ready) to move forward, and creating content to facilitate the buying process.

> What if you could tell your sales reps what each prospect is interested in so they could communicate more intelligently about topics that resonate? And what if you armed your reps with the tools and content to easily engage and keep in touch with hot prospects? Your salespeople could then focus on building strong relationships with prospects and guiding them to a buying decision – and your perceived value would really rise.

> "The measurement of demand creation and the sales pipeline begins the process of co-ownership of the funnel by both marketing and sales; clearly identifies the role that both play in the health of an organization's new business pursuits; and systematizes the fact that quality activity at the funnel top will result in a healthier funnel bottom."
>
> – *SiriusDecisions*

Why Does My Business Need to Understand Sales Enablement?

> So why should your company care about sales enablement? If your organization is like most others, it spends a lot of money on sales. And because it's making such a big investment, it wants to squeeze out the most productivity and greatest results possible from the sales team. Sales enablement allows your company to do just that.

Sales Enablement Basics

> Effective sales enablement helps your marketing team pass higher quality leads to sales, allowing your sales reps to focus on higher priority activities. This in turn drives a steadier, more predictable pipeline. Plus, when your sales reps are reaching – and even surpassing – their quota faster than ever before, they'll be eager to stay on board. Just as important, your organization will better understand how marketing demand translates to pipeline and how conversion rates impact revenue – ultimately enabling the "holy grail" of sales and marketing: better alignment.

> It's easy to get overwhelmed by terminology and techniques when it comes to sales enablement. But here's all you really need to know – sales enablement covers the sales side of the revenue cycle, including:

- Which prospects are displaying behavior and engaging in activity that makes them promising buyers
- What topics sales should focus on to engage each prospect in a high-value, relevant dialogue
- What tools and techniques are available to track their prospects throughout the buying cycle
- What information they can quickly access, customize, and send to prospects to help them navigate the buying process

The Key to Success: Understanding Digital Body Language

> Your marketing organization is in a unique position to help sales thrive when it comes to sales enablement. But you'll fail unless you understand how and when buyers are interacting with your website, content, and campaigns. It's not enough to generate high-quality leads, as challenging as that may be. You also need to deliver the information that sales needs to close business. And that means being able to understand prospect interest and intent based on what they are doing on your site. In fact, understanding prospect behavior is more powerful than knowing demographic information, such as the data you get from a list broker or capture via a registration form.

$135,262 is spent, on average, in support costs per year for each salesperson
7 hours per week is the average time a salesperson spends looking for relevant information to prepare for sales calls
Source: Forrester Research & IDC Sales Advisory Service (http://www.destinationcrm.com/Articles/Columns-Departments/ReTooling/Sales-Enablement-Tools-60853.aspx)

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Top Campaigns by Total Response



Integrated sales and marketing platforms enable marketers to quickly understand which campaigns are driving the most responses and having the biggest impact on revenue.

> For example, on your registration form, a prospect might indicate interest in one of your solutions. But a greater need might become apparent when you see what content the prospect downloads and the time she spends viewing your online demos and Webinars. With this information, your sales rep can engage in a more targeted, relevant conversation with the prospect – which helps accelerate the close.

Sales Enablement Tools and Technologies

> You and your sales reps can – and should – tap into a number of tools and technologies to get your sales enablement efforts humming along. Here are several you can't afford to overlook:

- CRM or SFA to manage sales activities, including daily tasks, activity record-keeping, lead routing and disposition, and opportunity and forecast modeling.
- Marketing automation to bridge your marketing and sales databases, and connect marketing activities to sales leads/opportunities in CRM and other favored tools.

Sales Conversations are Extensions of Marketing Dialogues
– Ardath Albee, author of *eMarketing Strategies for the Complex Sale*

Considering that much of the buying process is completed prior to sales engagement, it's imperative that your sales people have the insights they need to step into the conversation seamlessly. If marketing has created buyer personas and is mapping content across all stages of the buying process to address relevant problem-to-solution scenarios, sales enablement becomes an extension of the dialogue the prospect is already familiar with.

Prospects are looking to solve a problem, not buy a product. A recent Forrester Research survey found that only 15% of executives say that their meetings with sales people meet expectations. As a result, only 7% of them say they schedule follow-up meetings. Improving the information shared during the hand-off with the intention to extend the marketing dialogue will help sales people improve those odds.

This approach provides sales with many benefits, including:

> Less time spent on research.
> Reduced need for sales to customize content.
> Improved ability to meet prospect's expectations.
> Increased pipeline momentum.

Effective hand-offs should include the following information:

> Overview of problem-to-solution scenario presented to the prospect.
> Activity history of detailing the scenario content viewed by the prospect.
> Links to the remaining collateral in the scenario series with brief descriptions to expedite orientation (ensuring your sales person knows what to use next).
> Customer stories related to the problem, industry and company size of the prospect with key points highlighted.
> Topics for conversation based on the prospect's expressed interests and industry.
> A selection of slides that addresses the problem from the prospect's perspective, based on helping them meet their business objectives.

This may sound exhaustive, but if marketing has focused its content strategy on the prospects' perspectives — as well as the entirety of the buying process — then you should already have the information available. Everything but the prospect's activity history can be pre-bundled and ready to go. Your marketing automation system should make including the activity history an efficient process, with all the information you need readily available.

Make sure to get feedback from sales people about what works and what doesn't so that you can continue to refine the hand-off materials over time as patterns are discovered and the sales activity that produces wins is evaluated.

- Tools designed to help sales reps quickly identify opportunities, communicate with prospects, and close deals:
  - Send real-time email alerts directly to sales when hot prospects visit your website, containing visitor details like pages visited, length of visit, and search terms used.
  - Decipher a prospect's online activities and behavior so your sales people can focus conversations on topics that resonate with buyers.
  - Enable sales to access and customize pre-built templates and track recipient response directly through their email program.
  - Automatically email a report to your sales reps' inboxes on prospect activities so they can track important contacts, companies, or hot leads.

Businesses that invest in sales tools to provide more insight about prospects see results:

71% year over year improvement in sales cycle time

51% year over year improvement in lead conversion rates

54% year over year improvement in the percent of sales reps achieving quota

Source: Aberdeen Group, Sales Intelligence: The Secret to Sales Nirvana, January 2009

Sales Enablement Best Practices

- When it comes to excelling at sales enablement, there's no need to reinvent the wheel. Instead, follow these proven best practices.
  - Share relevant information. When you send leads to sales, do you provide any insights into the prospect's recent activity? You'd be amazed at the amount of information marketers collect on websites and through campaigns, but don't share with the sales team.
  - Incorporate a proven sales technique. Focus on your top reps – what communication techniques do they use to engage prospects? How can you pass these on to all your sales reps?
  - Arm sales to engage. Start with "foundational" email templates on the following topics; they are easy to draft and will get used frequently:
    - Fast facts about the company – maybe with a link to a fact sheet or "about us" page on the website
    - "I understand your pain" – customized messages that match the subsets of your prospect database
    - "Check out this online demo"
    - "I recently switched jobs and joined an exciting new company …" – a big hit with newbies
    - Test your sales enablement tools. Get feedback from a small group of reps before rolling tools out to the entire sales organization. This helps develop sales champions for your initiative and builds credibility for your efforts.
    - Make it easy. Make prospect information and tools available in the environments that are familiar to your sales team, such as CRM, Microsoft Outlook, and mobile devices.
    - Don't force adoption. Collaborate with salespeople to demonstrate the benefits of your tools – then publicize successes to the rest of the team.

Sales Enablement in Action

- Not convinced of the impact sales enablement can have on your organization? Check out these examples of success.

- Plum Benefits contracts with companies to offer employee perks, namely discount entertainment tickets. By tagging pages on its site to track online behavior and pushing that data into Salesforce.com, Plum Benefits enables its sales team to generate higher revenues when talking to prospects. For example, a prospect might indicate on a form that she is interested in ballet, but her onsite behavior shows she was viewing sports and concert tickets. With this insight, the sales rep can make a cross-sell.

- Meridium provides software that helps companies track and manage the performance of their production assets. The firm's inside sales team spent hours qualifying prospects by looking up information. By tracking what's happening on its site and combining the information with data collected via form submissions, Meridium can proactively arm the sales team with additional insights. This sales enablement process allows the inside sales team to focus on higher value activities, such as sending relevant content to prospects. Thanks to targeted delivery of relevant content, Meridium's sales cycle

has been reduced by 3 to 6 months. Plus, by integrating Eloqua with its CRM system – and delivering marketing campaigns through Eloqua – Meridium has realized a 30% increase in sales opportunities.

What's Next in Sales Enablement?

> While it's important to be up to speed on the here and now, it's also smart to think ahead. Here's what we see on the horizon for sales enablement:

- Going more mobile. Whether they're on the road or grabbing lunch, sales reps want to respond as quickly as possible to prospects. It will become increasingly important that your sales team can access information about an opportunity and the prospect's online behavior from their mobile devices so they can do just that.
- Integrating CRM with social. As more and more prospects turn to their social networks for input and advice on buying decisions, your sales force needs a way to tap into their activities. We'll see greater integration between sales tools like CRM with social media channels. Salesforce Chatter is a prime example.
- Getting predictable. Sales reps are always looking for a way to shorten the sales cycle. Soon they'll want you to predict the next best course of action with hot leads based on your analysis of how similar buyers responded to your content and website while still in research mode.

The ultimate goal of enablement is to help sales close more deals faster. And they can do that when they have access to their prospects' digital body language, in other words, the digital clues prospects leave behind when they engage with marketing assets.

Sales Enablement Resources

> **Want to dive deeper into the topic of sales enablement? These resources will start you on your way.**

> **Eloqua sales enablement Web pages:** http://www.eloqua.com/platform/lead_management/sales_enablement/ and http://www.eloqua.com/services/videos/Relationship_Mapping.html

> **Articles on Marketing and Sales Alignment:** https://www.visionedgemarketing.com/Content/Articles-on-Marketing-and-Sales-Alignment/menu-id-1.html

Blogs:

> **It's All About Revenue blog:** http://blog.eloqua.com/

> **Digital Body Language blog:** http://digitalbodylanguage.blogspot.com/search/label/sales%20enablement

> **Marketing Interactions blog:** http://marketinginteractions.typepad.com/

> **Enable Your Sales:** http://www.enableyoursales.com/blog/3-reasons-why-the-enterprise-urgently-needs-content-intelligence/

> **The Sales Enabler:** http://www.thesalesenabler.com/

> **Sales Enablement in a Sales 2.0 World:** http://salesenablement.wordpress.com/

> **SiriusDecisions:** http://blog.siriusdecisions.com/Blog/

> **The Top Line** - http://www.bbmarketingplus.com/blog/

eBooks

> **The New Rules of Sales Enablement: How to Stop Sabotaging Your Sales Teams and Start Empowering Them for Success** http://info.kadient.com/TheNewRulesofSalesEnablement.html

> **Beyond Lead Flow - Enabling Sales Through Marketing Automation** - http://media.eloqua.com/documents/BeyondLeadFlow_eBook_SW.pdf

White papers:

> **Reading Your Buyer's Digital Body Language** - http://www.eloqua.com/resources/whitepapers/Digital_Body_Language_whitepaper.html

> **Restoring the Balance: Why Marketing Holds the Key to Effective Selling in a Changed Business World** – Raab Associates http://eloqua.icentera.com/exLink.asp?8387709OX34Q48I42364137

Organizations/Events:

> **Sales Leadership Roundtable** https://www.salesleadershiproundtable.com

> **Forrester's Technology Sales Enablement Forum 2011** - http://www.forrester.com/events/eventdetail?eventID=2438

Research:

> **InsideSales.com/MIT Lead Response Management Study** - http://www.leadresponsemanagement.org/mit_study

> **Don't Understand Sales Enablement? You're Not Alone!** – IDC Sale Advisory Practice http://www.slideshare.net/lml999/idc-sales-enablement-jan-2009-presentation

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