


2019 Guide To Buyer-Focused Sales Enablement

A Blueprint For How Marketing And Sales Teams Apply
New Tools & Tactics To Ensure The Right Messaging Is
Getting In Front Of The Right Buyers, At The Right Time

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REPORT
SPECIAL REPORT

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— JOHN THACKSTON, SOAR PERFORMANCE GROUP

Introduction

As digitally connected buyers become more sophisticated and demanding, sales teams are expected to deliver more personalized, relevant buying experiences. To do that, it's up to marketing and sales to align and collaborate on efforts that engage buyers on their terms and provide timely content and resources that help to accelerate sales cycles.

Companies such as **Hughes Network Systems** and **JLL** have found success by tasking their marketing teams to better enable their sales reps to build meaningful relationships with prospective customers — be it through aligning on core content messaging and accessibility, having an aligned view of success and ensuring that reps have the insights they need to have relevant and contextual conversations. This, for example, helped Hughes see a **2X lift across a variety of engagement channels**, plus an increase in win rates.

“There's been a blurring of the line on who's supporting the selling effort across the functional [business] groups, and expectations have changed, as well,” said John Thackston, VP of Client Engagements and Co-Founder of the **SOAR Performance Group**. “The concept of sales enablement isn't necessarily a new world, but now there are functions supporting sales that [marketing teams] are using. It's all being driven by customer expectations. People expect their B2B experience to match B2C, no matter the complexity.”

Industry experts also noted that the continued conversation around marketing and sales alignment is vital to the continued success of B2B businesses that have streamlined their sales enablement initiatives.



“Sales does what they want to do, and marketing is doing the arts and crafts work. The exceptional companies are the ones that are aligned and have defined roles within the sales cycle.”

— BRYAN EHRENFREUND, OSSIA

“Sales enablement needs to be strategic and align all resources to position sales to sell,” said Bryan Ehrenfreund, Global Sales Enablement & Marketing Leader at **Ossia** and President of the **Sales Enablement Society’s** Arizona chapter. “We’re all in enablement to get deals done and keep the lights on. This ensures buyers are engaged at the right time and place.”

However, many B2B organizations still struggle with tearing down the silos between marketing and sales to drive better business outcomes.

“I’m still amazed at how many organizations are still not aligned on this stuff,” Ehrenfreund said. “Sales does what they want to do, and marketing is doing the arts and crafts work. The exceptional companies are the ones that are aligned and have defined roles within the sales cycle.”

This special report will uncover what it takes to effectively enable sales to take on today’s empowered B2B buyers and help them have the right conversations with relevant data and information. It will also spotlight modern approaches to equipping sales with the proper content that engages the entire buying committee.

Other topics covered in this report include:

- Delivering customized content experiences to fuel account-focused sales initiatives;
- Appropriately applying sales content based on each stage in the buying decision process;
- Building a sales plan based on different sales personas;
- How to develop more audience-centric messaging for more relevant and contextual sales conversations;
- Personalizing engagement throughout the buying committee; and
- Best practices for achieving sales adoption.

Sales Enablement By The Numbers

95%

OF BUYERS SAID THAT THE SALES REPS DEMONSTRATING KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR COMPANY AND INSIGHTS INTO THEIR PROBLEMS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE WHEN EVALUATING SOLUTIONS, WITH 64% CONSIDERING IT “VERY IMPORTANT.”

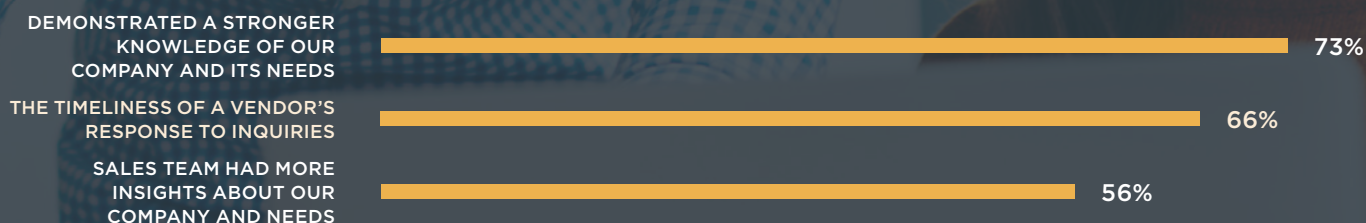
Source: 2018 B2B Buyers Survey Report, Demand Gen Report

62%

DESIRE SALES REPS TO DEMONSTRATE EXPERIENCE WITH OR KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR INDUSTRY.

Source: 2018 B2B Buyers Survey Report, Demand Gen Report

WHEN COMPARING WINNING VENDOR VERSUS OTHER VENDORS, RESPONDENTS NOTED THE FOLLOWING AS “VERY IMPORTANT:”



Source: 2018 B2B Buyers Survey Report, Demand Gen Report

67%

OF SALES REPS SAY THAT THEY'RE UNDERPERFORMING AT GETTING EXECUTIVES TO BUY NOW RATHER THAN LATER.


39%

ARE CONFIDENT IN THEIR ABILITY TO BUILD A MEANINGFUL BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL VISION TO JUSTIFY A DECISION.

74%

OF EXECUTIVE BUYERS WILL GO WITH THE COMPANY THAT'S ABLE TO CREATE THE BUYING VISION THEY DESIRE.

Source: Corporate Visions

A blue-tinted photograph of two people, a man and a woman, looking at a laptop screen. The man is on the left, wearing a beanie and glasses. The woman is on the right, gesturing with her hand. The image is used as a background for the quote.

“Marketing felt so strongly about sales enablement that we agreed to stand it up with or without sales.”

— CHRISTINE ELLIOTT, JLL

Content Fuels Better Enablement Strategies, Requiring In-Depth Sales Research, Easy Accessibility

Experts agree that content is a common denominator in effective and ineffective enablement strategies. This requires some market research into sales reps’ and prospective customers’ conversations to ensure the marketing team has a holistic view on buyer pain points and sales needs.

“Marketing needs to know they are creating the content they need,” Ehrenfreund said. “A lot of time is spent digging for content requirements that are driven directly from sales. For me, I’m on field calls and enterprise presentations to hear pains and problems from clients and how we can address them.”

For example, the real estate and investment management services provider JLL is seeing a major transition in its industry away from the common RFP model, requiring the company’s sales team to learn how to sell at a faster rate. Instead, the marketing team stepped up to ensure its sales counterparts had the content and messaging they needed to better engage prospects.

“We went for a marketing transformation about a year ago and, as part of that, stood up several different new competencies and functions, sales enablement being one of them,” said Christine Elliott, Global Leader of Content Strategy & Operations for Corporate Solutions at JLL, during a panel session at the [2019 B2B Marketing Exchange](#). “Marketing felt so strongly about sales enablement that we agreed to stand it up with or without sales — not in a controversial way — but along that journey, sales really took hold.”



“I refuse to publish a research report on our website because there's so much great insight locked in there.”

— CHRISTINE ELLIOTT, JLL

The company tapped **Seismic** as its sales enablement platform. While it's still in the early stages, the process has positioned the company to have a better understanding of the content sales was using when engaging prospective customers. Experts noted that other solutions such as **Uberflip**, **Prolifiq**, **Showpad** and **ClearSlide** can help manage content and bridge gaps between sales and marketing for consistent messaging.

With JLL currently soft launching Seismic to 40 employees, the company prepped by performing a global audit of over 1,000 pieces of content. Using Seismic as the content repository, Elliott noted that her team can now tag every asset to better serve content to reps and create enablement materials.

“Our ‘Future of Work’ platform, for example, is a huge research initiative that we just finished,” Elliott said. “I refuse to publish a research report on our website because there's so much great insight locked in there, but we recognize that the business needs that information and needs to be able to present it to clients. So, we created a PowerPoint presentation that could be used with tons of speaker notes that, when we loaded it into Seismic, we can separate sales information from the content.”



How To Use Personalized Experiences To Engage Sales Prospects

MELISSA WANKIEWICZ UBERFLIP



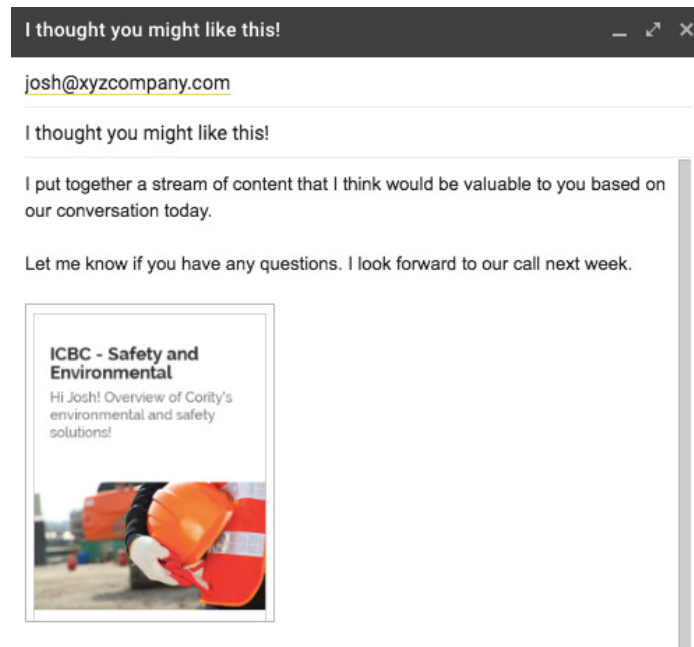
Ask any marketer you know, and chances are, a significant portion of them will report that sales has no idea what their content team is working on, or even what assets are available for them to share with prospects. As a marketer, it's up to you to bridge this gap and empower sales with content that will help them close deals.

Here are some ways to achieve this:

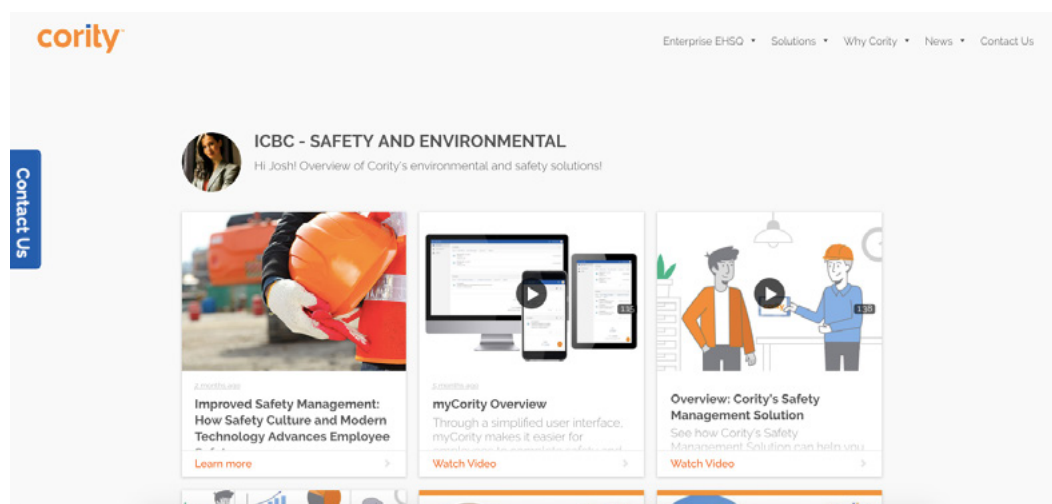
1. Linking To Relevant Content

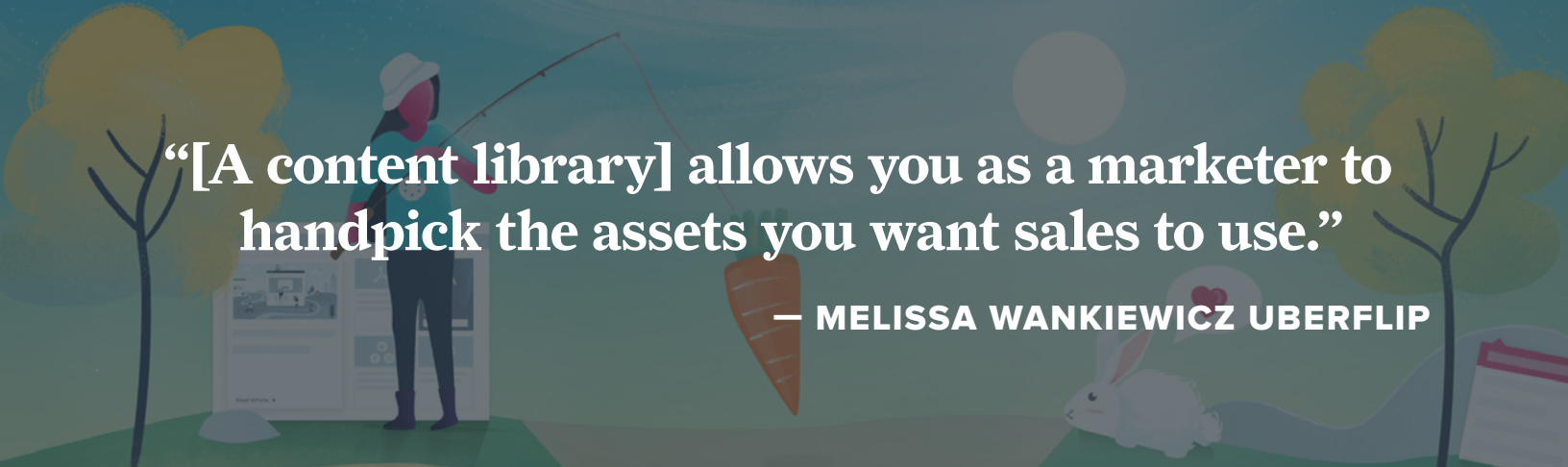
If you're wondering why a sales rep should be concerning themselves with sharing content, consider this: a prospect must touch at least five pieces of content before they're ready to buy, but only 20% of sales reps actively share content during sales conversations. Content helps build relationships because it reinforces a prospect's trust in your brand, and it provides the perfect opportunity to demonstrate that not only have you been listening to their pain points, but you understand how to tackle the challenges they're facing. As an added bonus, sharing resources will help educate prospects in between their conversations with your team, sometimes moving themselves to the next stage of their purchase decision without any engagement with a sales rep.

The simplest way to spice up a black and blue hyperlink-filled email is by encouraging your sales team to embed content rather than linking to it. Whether you decide to embed a single asset or include a link to a curated web experience, your team will probably start seeing an uptick in engagement right away. I mean, wouldn't you rather click through something visual (like the example from **Cority** below) instead of a boring old link?



Now, you could either have a tile like this link to a single blog post or ebook, or you can do what Cority has done and link to a curated collection of content—or what we call a **content experience**. You'll notice the experience the sales rep has created for their prospect is personalized to include the rep's photo and calls out the prospect (Josh) by name in the description.





“[A content library] allows you as a marketer to handpick the assets you want sales to use.”

— MELISSA WANKIEWICZ UBERFLIP

2. Build A Content Library Of Assets For Sales To Use

To make it easier for your sales team to know exactly what content is marketing-approved, create a collection of articles, videos, infographics, and other resources that either demonstrate the value of what you offer, or reinforce your messaging. I'd suggest organizing these by persona or use case to make it as easy as possible for your sales reps to find appropriate content.

If you're not using a platform to manage this, a shared Google Sheet is a good way to keep this updated and organized for both sales and marketing. It allows you as a marketer to handpick the assets you want sales to use, while also allowing your sales reps to go into the doc and find what content works for each unique sales conversation.

3. Create Templated Experiences For Personas

Rather than build out a content experience for each unique prospect, your team may find it more valuable to create templates of experiences for each of your buyer personas. Depending on what tool you're using to manage this, this could mean creating templated web experiences to clone, or simply creating a collection of the resources, appropriate calls-to-action, and role-specific messaging.

You'll want to give your sales team some flexibility to add in additional resources that may be particularly relevant to a prospect's unique use case or conversations they may have had, but however you execute, you'll want to make sure you're making your sales team's job as easy as possible when it comes to sharing content.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. For more insights on how to equip your sales team with the best content, check out this blog post in full [here](#).



“Marketing must think of themselves as a service provider to sales — sales is our customer.”

— SHAHID JAVED, HUGHES NETWORK SYSTEMS

Hughes Network Systems' ‘SMevolution’ Doubles Rep Engagement, Increases Revenue With A Streamlined Sales Enablement Strategy

Leadership buy-in is what makes or breaks enablement initiatives at B2B businesses from the start. At the enterprise managed networks and satellite technologies company Hughes Network Systems, they knew that without a solid enablement strategy in place, sales’ effectiveness would be drastically limited.

At the *2019 B2B Marketing Exchange*, Shahid Javed, Director of Enterprise Marketing at **Hughes Network Systems**, shared how he and his team were able to help the company’s B2B enterprise business boost revenue and increase engagement by more than 100% for web, email and tradeshow engagement. This, he stated, can be attributed to a “SMevolution” within Hughes Network Systems — led by the marketing team — to align marketing and sales on the same processes, messaging and expectations to drive success.

“When I started in 2016, I walked into the conference room and it was full of people from product marketing and sales, to solutions engineering and marcomm. Everyone was in there and they all had their own opinions,” Javed said. “Sales was not happy with marketing’s [messaging] for an event, and marketing was not able to convince sales that this was the right messaging. It was completely chaotic. You could actually feel the tension between sales and marketing.”

Overall, it took about 60 days to get to an initial alignment. Javed and his team broke the 60-day “Smevolution” into three phases:



Phase One: Listening

The initial goal was to gather as much information from marketing, sales and customer support as possible.

“The differing perspectives were very interesting,” Javed said. “I pretty much asked these questions: What were your objectives or roles in the previous year? What were your highlights in the previous year? What are the things that you didn’t meet in the last year? What are your goals this year? What do you expect from marketing? How can marketing help?”

Based on these initial meetings, Javed said marketing needed a mindset shift to better enable sales to be successful. “Marketing must think of themselves as a service provider to sales — sales is our customer,” he added.

Phase Two: Normalization

Taking that information, Javed and his team worked to normalize all that information to create a plan that can be pitched to marketing and sales leadership. He also noted that it was vital to include leadership in the exercise from the beginning to ensure every team is aligned on common objectives.

“I looked for common goals between business leadership, sales and marketing, then Venn diagramed everything — just like what we did in middle school. There are sales objectives, business objectives and marketing objectives. It’s really about finding that common objective between sales and marketing and leadership.”

Phase two also included normalizing how progress was measured within the organization. Javed highlighted his team’s challenge of identifying a unified definition of MQL and SQL between his marketing and sales teams. He added that incorporating sales into the definition process is vital to ensuring buy in.

“If sales comes up with your MQL scoring, they’ll be a lot more willing to take that and convert it into an SQL,” Javed said. “If I create an MQL score, they’ll never take it. There will never be a hand-off. Have sales define an MQL score and SQL. Our funnel was flowing very nicely after that.”



Phase Three: Execution

Lastly, Javed put together timelines that aligned marketing initiatives and tactics to the common goals.

For example, the company has about 103 trade shows and events each year. Javed said he created a sales and marketing alignment workshop, where the teams met on a bi-weekly basis. They discussed various event logistics, including the who, what, why and how. This also included consolidating the content and messaging available to the sales team, he added.

“We initially had 23 different sales presentations, and now we only have two,” said Javed. “One for small business and one for enterprise. We had 500 different dashboards in Salesforce that I removed. We created a Dropbox folder that holds templates, style and branding guides.”

The Results

Within the 60 days that the Hughes Network Systems team took to stand up its new enablement processes and tactics, the company saw more than a 2X increase in engagement across the web, email and in-person tradeshow. Specifically, the company saw a:

- **120%** increase in web engagement;
- **118%** increase in email engagement;
- **108%** increase in trade show engagement;
- **62%** increase in social engagement; and
- **22%** increase in win rates.

“We need to remember that we are the service provider as marketing,” Javed said. “If a sales person or a sales organization is unhappy, let’s learn from them. Really, find those common objectives, find that sweet spot and support that. Once we tightened things up [and] got that alignment, we had huge success in web engagements, in social media engagements and in trade shows. We actually beat our revenue goals because of the alignment exercise.”

Interested in learning more?



Uberflip is a platform for marketers to create, manage and optimize content experiences, so that content can be fully leveraged by all company stakeholders at every stage of the buyer journey.

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Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multi-channel demand generation efforts.

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