

SALES ENABLEMENT



A MASTER FRAMEWORK
TO ENGAGE, EQUIP, AND EMPOWER
A WORLD-CLASS SALES FORCE

BYRON MATTHEWS | TAMARA SCHENK

WILEY

Further praise for *Sales Enablement*:

“Tamara and Byron could have titled this book ‘*Outside/In*’ *Sales Enablement*! They put the focus on building your sales enablement strategy where it should be – on your customer. A must-read, whether you’re a sales enablement pro or just getting started!”

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“A book that demystifies sales enablement and provides a seminal clarity model, which serves as a valuable roadmap for organizations at all levels of their sales enablement journey.”

—DR. HOWARD DOVER, Director,
Center for Professional Sales at UT Dallas

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A World-Class Sales Force***

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About the Authors

Byron Matthews is the Chief Executive Officer of Miller Heiman Group and leads their commitment to championing customer management excellence.

Over the past 23 years, Byron has consulted with and led sales organizations for several Fortune 500 companies. He has collaborated with industry leaders throughout the world at companies like Microsoft, AT&T, Samsung and Coca-Cola on the development of pipeline and revenue management solutions, implementation of sales methodologies, optimization of sales management processes and compensation plans and competency models linked to assessment and recruiting.

Byron's depth and breadth of prior experiences include serving as chief sales officer at Aflac, where he led over 30,000 sales professionals across multiple channels, and over five years at Mercer as global sales leader and global head of the Sales Performance Practice.

Byron received his MBA at the University of Chicago.

Tamara Schenk, Research Director at CSO Insights, the research division of Miller Heiman Group, is focused on all things sales force enablement, sales managers, social selling and collaboration.

She has enjoyed more than 25 years of experience in sales, business development and consulting in different industries on an international level. Before becoming an analyst in a research director role in 2014, she had the pleasure of developing sales enablement from an idea to a program and a strategic function at T-Systems, a Deutsche Telekom company, where she led the global sales force enablement and transformation team.

Tamara is a member of The Sales Enablement Society, a regular contributor to *Top Sales World* and a featured writer for *Top Sales Magazine*. She graduated from the University of Hohenheim in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, with a Dipl. oec. in economics.

About Miller Heiman Group

MILLER HEIMAN GROUP empowers people across the entire organization to perform at peak potential by bringing game-changing insight to sales performance, customer experience and leadership and management. Backed by more than 150 years of experience and performance and built on several well-known brands such as Miller Heiman, AchieveGlobal, Huthwaite, Impact Learning Systems and Channel Enablers, we offer more sales- and customer service-based solutions than anyone in the industry. This allows companies to build and sustain successful, customer-focused organizations that drive profitable revenue and top-line growth on a global scale. To learn more, visit our website and follow us on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube or Google+.

About CSO Insights

CSO INSIGHTS is the independent research arm within Miller Heiman Group™ dedicated to improving the performance and productivity of complex B2B sales. The CSO Insights team of respected analysts provides sales leaders with the research, data, expertise and best practices required to build sustainable strategies for sales performance improvement. CSO Insights' annual sales effectiveness studies, along with its benchmarking capabilities, are industry standards for sales leaders seeking operational and behavioral insights into how to improve their sales performance and to gain holistic assessments of their selling and sales management efficacy. Annual research studies look at World-Class practices for sales and service optimization, sales enablement and sales operations.

Foreword

I FIRST MET Byron Matthews several years ago when my team and I were working to address a sales capability gap at LinkedIn. Over the course of our discussions, I immediately felt like Byron understood my world. What I appreciated most throughout the process, was that he was dead set on helping me solve my business problem rather than focusing on what the Miller Heiman Group had to offer. He worked with me in the same way we want our sales team to go-to-market – with the customers’ needs at the forefront of every conversation.

Since then, Byron and I have stayed in touch, and I’ve watched the Miller Heiman Group expand their focus and continue to dive deeper into elevating the sales profession through top-notch sales enablement offerings. Needless to say, I was thrilled when they called and asked if I would be willing to write the forward to their book on sales enablement. While there are dozens of books on sales strategies, there are few on enabling sales teams that are designed for the sales enablement professional. This is the book I wish I had back when I started my career in sales enablement. More importantly, this isn’t just a book for sales enablement teams – it’s a book written for sales leaders, without whom sales enablement professionals fail, every time.

Over the years, I've worked with many sales leaders who think sales enablement is just about training or worse, event planning. They see their sales enablement partners as transactional support functions versus strategic business advisers. But you can't blame them because so many sales enablement teams focus so much of their effort on getting programs out the door that they fail to look at the system as a whole, working hand in hand with sales to solve real business problems. I know because I've made those mistakes, and I've experienced the failure that comes along with them. My take on the matter is simple. At the core, sales training by itself is ineffective almost 100% of the time. You need the right conditions to sustain newly learned skills, and you need an engaged sales leadership team to lead from the front and coach to create new habits over time. If you don't have this, you're wasting your time and your money.

If you are a sales leader looking to upskill your sales team, or you are a sales enablement professional trying to get a seat at the table, read on. The Miller Heiman Group approach to sales enablement is comprehensive and spot on, covering all of the elements of a true sales enablement discipline: content, training, technology, and one of my favorites, sales coaching. Every recommendation in the book is backed by research as well as by anecdotal evidence from sales leaders who have put these principles into practice. Perhaps most importantly, the book emphasizes the need for sales enablement teams to be insights-driven – using data to understand the return on your sales enablement investment, and better yet, how data can help sales leaders make better business decisions. You can't manage (or improve) what you can't measure, and the Miller Heiman Group gets it.

I know firsthand how hard the job of sales enablement is. For those of you in it with me, you have the potential to be one of, if not the most important partner to sales. But you can't get there if you don't prioritize building out each component of the sales enablement ecosystem. This comes with trade-offs you have to make and a vision you have to paint for your sales leadership team, backed by data and insights they can believe in.

This book gives you the guidance you need to make the shift from tactical support function to strategic partner, widely recognized for having a significant impact on sales performance and a key driver in transforming the most important part of the sales organization—the people.

Amy Borsetti
Senior Director, Global Sales Readiness
LinkedIn Corporation

PART



Introduction

SALES HAS NEVER been an easy profession, but our research shows that more salespeople than ever are struggling to make their numbers. Over the last five years, the percentage of salespeople making quota dropped by 10 points. The percentage of companies achieving revenue also dropped by nearly 4 points.

If you're in senior leadership, this performance decline can be incredibly frustrating. You've invested hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions, in CRM solutions and other technologies designed to make your salespeople more productive and effective. You've put considerable funding into developing training programs and sales collateral. You've honed your hiring practices and sought to attract top-notch talent with a proven track record in your industry. So why aren't you seeing a return on your investment?

Our answer is simple. Today's sales organizations are not keeping up with and adapting to the pace of change.

We all know how quickly things change. Just think about what you can do with the phone you use today as compared

to the one you used just five years ago. From the technology itself to the apps that are available, the difference is night and day.

However, few of us take the time to think about the macro forces of change all around us and how they impact the profession we're in. We're not talking about the small things like the release of the latest iPhone. Or even more dramatic events like an economic recession that can have a real, but often temporary, impact on our opportunities. Instead, we're talking about the really big changes that irrevocably reshape the world we live in and how we sell.

The Macro Forces of Change

To understand this, we need to start with five important macro-level changes. You'll probably be familiar with each of these to some extent, but what we want to look at is how they are impacting the sales profession.

Digital first: disruption and consumption. The release of the latest smartphone technology certainly falls into this category, but it is much broader than that. McKinsey estimates that the Internet of Things has the potential to impact the global economy by as much as \$11 trillion by 2025. This impact will be the result of changes in the way businesses collect and leverage data for better decision making and the way consumers use technology to interact with sellers. As sales becomes more technologically driven, desirable skill sets will shift from strictly soft skills like relationship building to include harder skills like data analysis. In some cases, the best candidates may not even come from the field of sales.

Emerging middle class. In the developed world, the number of people with middle-class buying power has remained relatively stagnant and, in some cases, has even declined. However, in many emerging economies the opposite is true. By 2025, the middle class is expected to have

increased by 153% around the world, with the greatest increases coming from countries in the Asia-Pacific region. To tap into this new buying power, companies are going to have to staff a sales force with professionals from countries and cultures that may be very different from those of their current sales force. These new hires will have unique enablement needs.

Increased urbanization. Many geographies are also moving from primarily agrarian-based economies to heavily industrialized economies supported by growing cities. As many as 65 million people are moving to cities every year. That's the equivalent of adding seven new Chicagos (including surrounding suburbs), five-and-a-half new cities the size of the Paris metro area or almost two new cities to rival Shanghai every year! What were once small urban areas will grow into commerce power centers as people and industry flock to these cities in the hope of new opportunities and an improved lifestyle. Companies will need to adapt both their market and go-to-customer strategies to adapt to new opportunities and new competitors that are sure to emerge.

Productivity and the aging workforce. In more mature markets, workers are hitting retirement age faster than they can be replaced with new recruits. The labor market for the last 50 years has seen a steady growth of around 1.7%, but McKinsey predicts it will drop to just 0.3% over the next 50 years in its report *Global Growth: Can Productivity Save the Day in an Aging World?*

For businesses, this translates into more competition for an ever-smaller pool of qualified talent. To be successful, companies will need to get better at attracting younger talent and profiling new hires. Once talent is hired, enablement will need to onboard these new recruits as quickly as possible and provide the services necessary to drive sales professionals to higher and higher levels of productivity.

Invisible sector boundaries. The ability to redefine your industry has long been a recognizable principle of business survival. If you took any business classes at all, you probably remember the buggy whip manufacturer example or how railroad companies went out of business because they saw themselves as being in the railroad business and not the broader transportation market. Some of the most successful businesses today are masters at crossing sector boundaries. Ten years ago, Amazon just sold books. Today, the retail giant is successfully chipping away at established retail and logistics businesses across a range of sectors.

For sellers, the competitive landscape shifts like the sands of the Sahara. Salespeople will need to get better at crossing these boundaries, selling into new markets and competing against companies that they never imagined would enter their space.

Sales Is Changing at the Micro Level, Too

It's not just the macro forces that are impacting our ability to sell. There are a number of micro forces at work as well. If you're in sales, you probably have stories you could tell in each of these categories, but our research puts some statistics behind the changes you see every day.

More buyers involved. In complex B2B sales, facing a team of buyers is nothing new, but over the years, the size of that team has been steadily growing. Our 2018 research shows the number of buyers on the average buying team has risen to 6.4. Our clients also tell us that these teams are made up of buyers from a wider range of disciplines as well. Salespeople will need to get better at managing a larger number of buyers and identifying their unique challenges, wins and ideas for how to achieve their personal and business objectives.

Increasingly formalized process. As the size of the buying team increases, businesses tend to follow a more formalized

process. This is one of the reasons we will focus so much on the path the customer follows to make decisions and implement solutions throughout the rest of this book.

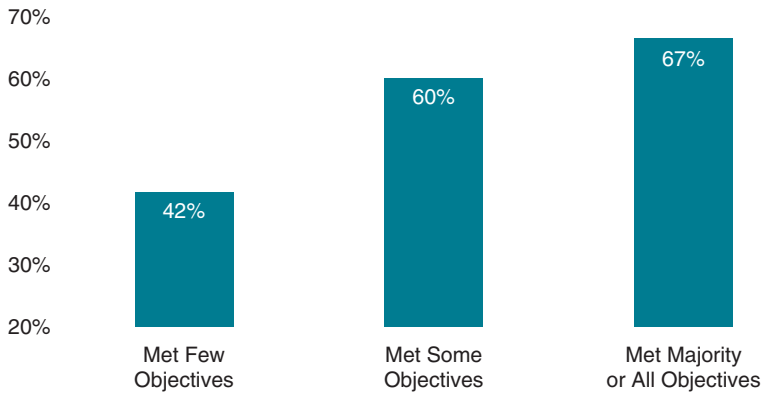
Political and business-driven decisions. Increasing the number of people on the team almost always increases the amount of politics involved as interrelationship dynamics become more complex. Teams are also focused more on the business aspects of the decision, and the percentage of customers requiring an ROI analysis has gone from a five-year average of 40 to 61% in 2016.

Evolving buyer expectations and needs. Today's buyers have greater access to information than ever before, but while that may mean they are much *more* informed when they engage sales, it doesn't always mean they are *better* informed. Furthermore, buyers are not so much interested in what a product, service or solution *is* as what it *does*. They want to know how it will help them solve their challenges or reach a business goal. That requires a very different selling approach that translates capabilities into business value. This need cannot be met by adding a little bit of customer-centric color to an otherwise product-centric approach.

Longer sales cycles. The CSO *Insights 2017 World-Class Sales Practices Study* found that 60% of sales cycles with new customers lasted over six months. That's up from 41% just a year ago. This is reflective of other trends, such as larger buying teams, as well as the increasing sophistication of the solutions sold. While sales enablement can sometimes help shorten sales cycles, in general, salespeople and organizations will need to learn to adapt to their approach to these longer selling cycles.

The Rise of Sales Enablement

The changing needs of today's buyers and the downward slide in sales performance have led to an increased focus on sales



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Figure I.1 Quota Attainment As Related to Sales Enablement Program Success

enablement in many organizations. In 2013, only 19% of companies we studied had a dedicated enablement person, program or function. In 2017, that rose to 59%.

How successful sales enablement is makes a huge difference. In our most recent study, only 35% of organizations reported that their enablement discipline met or exceeded expectations, but within this group, 67% of salespeople achieved quota (see Figure I.1). Organizations that reported meeting only some of their enablement expectations saw 60% of salespeople achieving quota. Organizations that reported achieving few of their expectations, essentially failing to enable their sales force, saw only 42% of their salespeople achieving quota. Quota attainment in this final group was even lower than the study's average quota attainment of 58%.

So, what's gone wrong?

CSO Insights research and our experiences in the field with hundreds of sales organizations lead us to several main conclusions:

- There is very little agreement (even within organizations) on what exactly sales enablement is, what it does and how to create an effective discipline.