



# The New Rules of **SALES ENABLEMENT**

**How to Stop Sabotaging Your Sales Teams  
and Start Empowering Them for Success**

**X**

**(THE OLD RULES.)**

by Jeff Ernst

**“The sales game has changed. The lone cowboy gunning for deals just isn’t as successful these days. In an always on, plugged in, social media-driven world, your buyers have much more information about your company and its products than ever before. *The New Rules of Sales Enablement* shows you everything you need to arm your sales team for success. No more lone cowboys. No more, “yeah, but” excuses. Read this ebook now and you’ll be on the way to a sophisticated modern selling machine. Play to win. I dare you!”**

—**David Meerman Scott**, bestselling author of *The New Rules of Marketing & PR* and *World Wide Rave*

### Thank you . . .

Special thanks to **David Meerman Scott** whose first ebook, [\*The New Rules of PR: How to create a press release strategy for reaching buyers directly\*](#), inspired me to write this ebook, and whose coaching gave me ideas for how to structure it. Visit David’s site at [www.davidmeermanscott.com](http://www.davidmeermanscott.com)

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**Please feel free to post this on your blog or email it to whomever you believe would benefit from reading it. Thank you.**

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## I used to play by the **OLD RULES**. Now I know better.

Let me say something up front: I write from experience. For more than 20 years, I've supported B2B sales teams, first as a product manager, then as a sales engineer, and now as a marketing executive.

For too many of those years, I did what I was asked to do. Beautiful collateral? Yup, I created reams of it. Killer demos? I'm your guy. Dutifully, I fired emails to my sales team alerting them to new materials. I would practically cry in frustration— because no one read the emails or used the materials.

Then one day, I had a life-changing experience. One of my sales reps—let's call him Tom—lost an important deal that had been forecasted to close. When I asked him what happened, Tom seemed genuinely puzzled: He said he had really “hit it off” with the decision-maker—they were both into cycling and had gone to a Bulls game together. According to Tom, the client team “really liked the product” and had made positive comments during the demos. “Every call went really well,” Tom said.

But when I called the decision-maker who shot us down, I got a very different story. Yes, Tom had given “very slick presentations,” the prospect said, “but he didn't know enough about our business.” Further, Tom “did little to help me understand how our product would solve his company's problems.” When pressed with questions, Tom “took a long time getting back with answers” and when he did, some of the information was just plain wrong.

**Ouch.** But it got worse. When I reviewed some of the information Tom had shared with the prospect, I found he had used a four-year-old slide deck with outdated messaging and branding, and a poorly written, inaccurate data sheet that he had “borrowed” from another rep. I can only imagine what his conversations sounded like.

**BAM!**  
That's when it hit me

Tom hadn't approached this sale unprepared—he just had the wrong kind of preparation: wrong expectations, wrong materials, wrong approach. Tom hadn't failed. I—and the company—had failed Tom.

I took a look at what was going on in sales at other companies, and this reality finally slapped me in the face.

- **Over 40% of salespeople fail to hit quota**
- **30% of reps turn over each year**
- **It takes an average of seven months to ramp up a new sales person.**
- **65% of sales rep time is spent not selling**
- **Salespeople spend 30 hours a month searching for and creating their own selling materials**
- **90% of marketing deliverables are not used by sales**

Even worse, buyers actually think that salespeople slow down their buying process. They report that vendors don't sell the way they want to buy, while salespeople, collateral, and demos are forced on them out of sync with their buying process.

**The game has changed. But you can play to WIN.**

At this point, you may be relating to the same pain that stung me. But I came around, abandoned the old rules, and set out to find sales enablement strategies that really work. I discovered that:

- **It's not about posting more collateral to a sales portal. It is about enabling salespeople to have conversations that help customers advance through their buying process.**
- **It's not about creating messages at "corporate" and throwing them over the wall. It is about discovering the messages and strategies that are resonating with buyers.**
- **It's not about bringing in yet another sales process or methodology. It is about providing salespeople with playbooks containing the "plays" that are proven to work in their current selling situation.**
- **It's not about burdening reps with complex reporting requirements. It is about giving them tools and applications that deliver real value.**

I learned the hard way. I had to make a mindset shift. So I've written *The New Rules of Sales Enablement* to make it much easier for you. Inside, you'll find a fresh approach to sales enablement that challenges the way we've traditionally done things and channels our efforts towards empowering success rather than sabotaging sales.

**Good Luck!**



Jeff Ernst

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# 1. Conversations, **NOT** Collateral

If your company is like most, you equate sales enablement with collateral and sales tools. You've treated sales enablement as a task—loading your sales and marketing collateral into a sales portal or intranet site and giving your salespeople a login. Then you ring the dinner bell, cross your fingers and wait for the magic to happen.

One of my clients is a large technology company with five businesses, a field sales department, and a corporate marketing group. A few years ago, they launched a sales enablement initiative. The product folks within each business unit had to compete for the attention of the sales team to try to get them to sell the new and updated products they kept launching. So they would work with corporate marketing to create a ton of product collateral and 75-slide PowerPoint presentations. They created a sales portal, which their salespeople could access by clicking a big blue button right on the front page of the corporate intranet site, and they posted all their collateral to the sales portal.

I asked my client how often the reps use this content. She said there was no way to know. So we polled some of the salespeople and shadowed a few experienced reps on sales calls. We heard the same story from each rep. It sounded something like this:

*“When I first joined the company, I got a couple of documents and presentations from my sales manager. Every time I have a meeting, I take these files and modify them for the current opportunity. I now have dozens, no, hundreds of versions of these documents and presentations on my laptop. The sales portal? I don't remember how to get to it or what my login is.”*

Can you imagine what the conversations are like between this salesperson and his customers?

## **The sales portal is fundamentally flawed**

Every company I have worked with has previously deployed one or more formal sales portals and has a proliferation of maverick portals or intranet sites that have popped up over the years. And without exception, sales management considers them failures.



Why aren't these portals working?

This “collateral in a box” approach to sales enablement has three fundamental flaws:

- 1. Too much information!** :: Most sales portals have become dumping grounds for everyone in the company who has information they think would be useful to the sales team. The collateral in a sales portal is usually high-level, one-size-fits-all content and is way too hard to keep up-to-date. How does a salesperson know what to use? No wonder they rely on the content they keep on their laptop!
- 2. Not aligned with selling situations** :: Sales portals organize information in ways that are logical for the people posting the content, such as by file type (PDFs, PPTs, DOCs), by type of content (case studies, product briefs), or by product line. They don't deliver it the way salespeople think, which is situational (for example, attempting to qualify the opportunity of selling to a CFO in a manufacturing firm who's worried about managing cash).
- 3. Disconnected from daily reality** :: Sales portals require reps to log in to a system that is separate and disconnected from the tools and applications they use every day, such as their Blackberry, email, and CRM system.

**So salespeople feel overwhelmed, lose confidence, and stick to the stuff they've saved on their laptop.**

**OLD RULE:**

**SALES ENABLEMENT IS ABOUT PUTTING THE SALES AND MARKETING  
COLLATERAL RACK ONLINE.**

**NEW RULE:**

**Sales enablement is about ensuring salespeople are able to  
have valuable conversations that help buyers advance through  
their buying process.**

I wish I had a dollar for every person I talk to who thinks that sales enablement is nothing more than deploying a better sales portal, with no regard for the buyer's information needs.

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## We need a new definition of sales enablement

Before defining what sales enablement is, let's consider the desired outcome.

A well-enabled salesperson can:

- **Understand the customer's marketplace and business issues**
- **Help the buyer envision solving their problems using his or her products and services**
- **Get stalled deals moving again**
- **Sell newly launched or acquired products, and cross-sell unfamiliar products**
- **Frame the buyer's evaluation criteria so that the competitors are at a disadvantage**
- **Help the "buyer champion" sell within his or her organization**
- **Overcome objections raised by the buyer**
- **Respond to the tough questions immediately and with credibility**
- **Do all this within three months of being hired rather than seven months**

What do all these abilities have in common? A real give-and-take, back-and-forth, you-and-me kind of groove. Something all humans recognize in that wonderful thing called a "conversation."

**That's why we need to rethink sales enablement as something other than a one-way deposit of materials in a portal.**

## The **NEW** Definition of Sales Enablement

Sales Enablement is about ensuring your salespeople can have the valuable conversations that help buyers advance through their buying process.

Sales Enablement is everything your company needs to do to ensure your salespeople are armed with:

- **The right knowledge,**
- **Specific to the current selling situation,**
- **At the right time**
- **In the right place**
- **Tailored to the needs of the buyer**

## Let's look at what we mean by the right knowledge

Sales knowledge is much more than a stack of data sheets or four-color glossy brochures.

The right knowledge includes:

**Shared experiences** :: Stories of successful selling experiences, lessons learned in the field, advice on how to avoid landmines or differentiate from competitors.

**Sales support tools** :: Competitive analysis, objection handling, customer stories and references, discovery questions, call scripts, sample letters.

**Subject matter experts** :: Product gurus, industry specialists, client service managers who can help prepare the rep for a sales call or support the rep on a call.

**Coaching and proven strategies** :: Content, messages, and strategies that are proven to work in the current selling situation.

**Customer-facing materials** :: Not just static collateral, but dynamic deliverables that are personalized for each prospect.

As you can see, this goes way beyond what companies are cramming into their sales portals today.

Whenever I tell people about this first new rule, I get a lot of **“Yeah, buts.”**

“YEAH, BUT WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH OF THAT STUFF.”

“YEAH, BUT OUR MARKETING FOLKS CAN'T KEEP UP WITH THE REQUESTS THEY GET FROM SALES TODAY.”

“YEAH, BUT OUR CONTENT IS NOT READY TO BE ROLLED OUT TO SALES.”

“YEAH, BUT WE HAVE NO IDEA WHETHER SALESPEOPLE USE THE STUFF WE GIVE THEM ALREADY.”

That's where the **next rule** comes in...

## 2. Experience **BEATS** Expertise

Look at any job description for a product marketing or marketing communications role, and I guarantee you'll see a bullet point like this under “responsibilities”:

- **Gather input from a variety of sources—customers, industry analysts, media, competitors, and salespeople—and create powerful sales tools that communicate value and differentiation.**

Often these marketers (and those who write their job descriptions) spend too much time trying to “communicate value and differentiation” and don't see what salespeople really want to know—what other salespeople are using and doing to win deals.

No matter how much time marketers and product managers spend with salespeople and customers, they just don't see enough of what happens at the moments of truth—the points in time at which the buyers are receiving and responding to the messages the sales team delivers. Look how fast the competitive landscape, the needs of the marketplace, and the product portfolios change. A top-down approach will never keep up.

So salespeople spend way too much time creating their own materials and rarely reach out to marketing unless they want that new product data sheet or more company-branded *tchotchkes* they can give to customers.

**So it shouldn't be surprising that they ignore 90% of the “stuff” that the folks in corporate give them.** (I didn't make this up. It's a stat from the American Marketing Association.)

**OLD RULE:**

**THE FOLKS IN CORPORATE KNOW BEST WHAT SALESPEOPLE NEED IN THE FIELD.**

**NEW RULE:**

**The most effective selling content, messages, and strategies  
are discovered from experience with buyers.**

Being a marketing professional myself, I know that this is the hardest mindset shift for marketers to make, and I wish I had accepted this reality much earlier in my career. If you are a marketer, don't feel bad, it's not your fault. We've been classically trained to work this way.

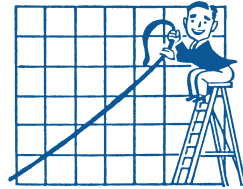
## Through trial and error, your salespeople learn something new every day about what works and what doesn't

There's a treasure trove of knowledge in the heads and on the laptops of your salespeople. In a sales 2.0 world, it's critical that your sales and marketing teams collaborate in a process to unlock this treasure and apply it. This is a process of discovering what messages, tools, and tactics are most effective, and getting that knowledge into a framework where everyone can find and use it. It's capturing feedback on what works and doesn't work, and using that feedback to continuously improve the base of knowledge.

Let me give you an example of how I've applied this new rule. I was working for a company that had a best-of-breed product in a market where big companies like IBM, Oracle, and Microsoft had acquired lighter-weight products and released them under their own brands. Our product had a huge differentiator, and we'd never lose when this capability was important to the buyer.

That is, until one of our competitors introduced a new module that claimed to do everything our product did. I knew our sales reps would encounter this competitor in more deals, and I wanted to arm them with knowledge to combat the evil empire.

If I had applied the old rules, I would have talked to a few industry experts, inspected the competitor's product, written up a great competitive brief, and posted it in my sales portal. And the sales team would have ignored it.



### They bought it because they owned it

Instead, I still did all that research and wrote up my notes. But before releasing anything to the field, I got on the weekly sales call and asked who's been encountering this competitor.

The folks in the field gave me some valuable insight into what the competitor's reps had been saying to our prospects. They validated a few of my data points. One of my more experienced salespeople had written an email to a buyer that had been effective in getting him to realize the competitor's approach to solving this problem had too many shortcomings compared to ours. I had the rep send me that email, I merged it with the competitive intelligence I had gathered, and sent him back a draft.

After including more of his feedback, we jointly rolled it out to the field the following week.

### **Guess what happened? The team ate it up.**

What a difference. I had worked with salespeople to discover information that was already being used effectively in competitive selling situations, so the sales team had more trust in it.

This all works great when salespeople know what they're looking for. But that's not always the case. To really scale sales, you need to gain repeatability in how salespeople sell.

### **Which brings us to the next New Rule...**



### 3. **PROVEN** Plays

Connie is a top salesperson at one of my client companies. Like most other stars, one thing that separates Connie from the pack is that she'll never *wing it*. Whenever she's in a particular selling situation, she does the same set of things that helped her win similar deals in the past. When something stops working, she finds an alternative and sticks with it as long as it keeps working. You might say that Connie has a set of repeatable playbooks in her head. These playbooks have been developed and adapted through her four years of experience in front of customers.

Mark sells the same products as Connie. He is a career middle-of-the-packer, always near or at quota, but never hitting it out of the park. Mark just sort of makes it up for each deal as he goes along. Sometimes it works. And sometimes it doesn't. Mark believes he would be so much more successful if he just got more at-bats. The problem is he can't swing the bat like Connie. So giving him more at bats won't improve his batting average.

Connie and Mark's boss thinks he has a solution. He is planning to roll out a new sales methodology at the next sales meeting, believing that this is the missing link to improving sales performance. Think again.

**A methodology alone won't get Mark to hit a split-fingered fastball.**

**OLD RULE:**

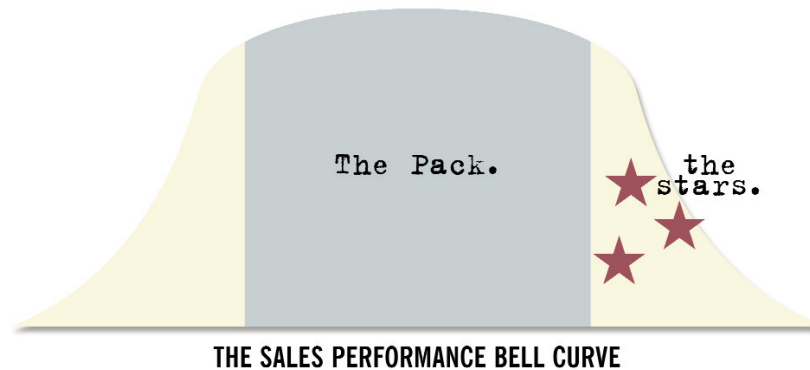
IF WE IMPLEMENT A NEW SALES METHODOLOGY, EVERY SALESPERSON  
WILL BECOME AN "A" PLAYER.

**NEW RULE:**

**Any salesperson can improve performance by following sales playbooks  
that are proven to work in winning deals.**

Don't get me wrong, I think a sales methodology or process is essential, but in my experience, they usually don't have the impact they could because salespeople don't have a practical way to follow them.

There are stars, then there's everyone else



If you look at sales performance across a sales team, it almost always forms a bell curve. The top ten percent are the star performers. These are the folks who can sell blindfolded with their hands tied behind their backs. We all want more of these stars, so we spend millions of dollars sending people to sales training where we parade our product experts, methodology gurus, and motivational speakers in front of the team—all with the hope that methodology and training will give our reps the knowledge, skills, attitude, and structure to become stars.

But it doesn't work. Studies show that the average salesperson forgets more than 80 percent of what they learn in sales training within 30 days. The rep gets back to the office, puts the training binder on the shelf, reverts to old habits, and continues to follow the path of least resistance rather than adhere to your sales process.

What do they remember from your high-priced sales meetings? They remember the stories they heard your best reps telling at the bar about deals they won. They remember Paul, showing pictures of his new vacation home, telling everyone what he did at Big Whale Financial to eliminate the competition within the first two weeks and bring in the contract with no price discounting. Rather than paying attention to the training, the junior reps are thinking “If I just do what Paul does, I’ll be able to buy a vacation home too.”

### Why methodologies alone are not enough

I’m not knocking methodologies. They certainly have their place in providing structure to the sales process. The reason they often fail is that companies don’t give salespeople the guidance to put them into practice. A methodology or process tells you **why** to do something, but it doesn’t tell you **what** to do in a specific situation, **when** to do it, or **how** to do it.

And no amount of training is going to enable a sales rep to be ready to handle every selling situations he or she will encounter. What a rep needs to know to do solution selling exceeds what any one person can retain in their head.

## Shift the performance curve with sales playbooks

Stop trying to turn every “B” and “C” player into an “A” player and instead focus on shifting the whole performance curve a few points to the right. The real opportunity is in the middle 80 percent of performers.

- **What if you could help each of these reps be more effective and close two or three more deals a year from working the same number of opportunities? That would cause a significant increase in revenue across the company.**
- **What if you can make each rep more efficient by taking away some of the time-wasting activities they’re doing today, enabling them to work three or four more opportunities in a year? The effect is like an investment (in a good economy)—it multiplies.**

Salespeople are just-in-time, opportunity-specific learners, so they need just-in-time, opportunity-specific knowledge. This knowledge is best delivered to sales teams as dynamic coaching, in the form of repeatable sales playbooks.

You can shift the performance curve by bottling up the plays that are proven to work for people like Connie and putting them in the hands of reps like Mark.

## Four simple steps to the sales playbook creation process

**1. Assess ::** You start by identifying recurring selling situations where you want to drive repeatable behavior. If you find your team in 80 deals a quarter selling a particular product line to CIOs in the manufacturing industry, that situation is a good candidate for a playbook. Once you've identified the situation, profile winning sales engagements to find out:

- **What were the buyer's information needs at each stage of their problem-solving process?**
- **What tools and materials did the reps use and when?**
- **What objections did they have to overcome?**
- **What experts did the rep bring in to help work the deal, and what role did they play?**

Look for the patterns across multiple sales engagements, and then align these with your sales cycle or sales process.

**2. Build ::** Organize the content, tools, and resources you identified in the Assess stage into playbook activities. Identify gaps where new information needs to be created and assign ownership for filling the gaps. Surround the playbook activities with coaching tips that help the reps know how to perform the activities.

**3. Launch ::** Roll out the sales playbooks to the sales team. Start with a pilot group to get feedback. Make sure there are well-respected sales professionals who are opinion leaders in that pilot group. Expand usage to the larger team with the support of sales management, marketing and the opinion leaders in sales.

**4. Evolve ::** Playbooks should be living, breathing creatures. Monitor usage and measure the impact. And use these metrics to optimize the playbooks over time. You will find opportunities to:

- **Refine the activities, content and messaging within the playbooks**
- **Eliminate the choke points in your sales process**
- **Keep deals from going off track**
- **Develop new sales playbooks**

## What the right plays will mean for you

Let's look at a couple of situations in which taking a more prescriptive approach can shift the performance curve of people in the middle 80 percent to the right.

**HIGH POTENTIAL SALESPEOPLE:** These people have the attitude and skills to be stars, but don't have the knowledge and experience. Playbooks give them the knowledge they need at the right time, so they don't have to learn the hard way.

**CHRONIC AVERAGE PERFORMERS:** They may never be "A" players, but if you give average salespeople the strategies and messages used by top performers, they can emulate the superstars and improve their own performances.

**NEW HIRES:** With the high rate of turnover in sales, more than one out of four reps will be new to their position this year. You can accelerate the ramp-up time of these new reps by giving them playbooks used by your best reps.

**CROSS-SELLING:** In many highly competitive industries, sales teams have a bigger focus on cross-selling new and acquired products than on new customer acquisition. Companies can create playbooks for common cross-selling situations.

[Get a free guide](#) on how to create killer sales playbooks.

Whenever I'm talking with a VP of Sales or a VP of Marketing about the New Rules of Sales Enablement, this is about the point where I get the "Yeah, but we've rolled out tools to enable sales before, and no one uses them. Why would things be any different here?"

**I wouldn't be surprised if you were thinking the same thing, so let's go to the next New Rule.**

## 4. Value **OUT**, NOT Data **IN**

I asked one of my clients to describe the usage of their Sales Force Automation (SFA) system, and here's the story I got:

*“We spent over a million dollars to roll out our SFA system back in 2004. We defined about a dozen data points that we wanted to capture for each sales opportunity so we could get a lot of visibility into our pipeline and business. That was wishful thinking. The salespeople didn't use the system. We tried everything to get them to update the data. First we tried offering incentives, but that didn't work. Then we tried sending emails to each sales manager identifying the reps who hadn't logged in during the previous week. That didn't work either.*

*As a last resort, we decided to cut the fields they have to populate down to five, and we threatened to withhold commission checks if they didn't update them. What happens now is that the reps wait until the night before their sales manager has his or her meeting with the VP of sales, and then they throw in some data. We have no idea how accurate the data is, but at least we're getting the salespeople to log in.”*

**I wish I had a dime for every time I've heard someone tell a story like this about their **SFA adoption struggles**.**

**OLD RULE:**

IT TAKES A STICK TO GET SALESPEOPLE TO USE THE TOOLS WE GIVE THEM.

**NEW RULE:**

**Adoption of sales enablement applications is driven by the value a salesperson gets out of it, not the data they key in.**

I can't believe how much bookkeeping we are asking our salespeople to do. It's not surprising it takes a stick. They'd rather be out selling.

### They won't adopt what they don't value

While an SFA system is absolutely necessary for the sales team, it has been treated as a tool of control rather than a tool of sales enablement. Traditional SFA software systems are intended to collect data about sales activities for the benefit of managers, so they can get their pipeline and forecast reports, but are not built to give salespeople guidance on how to sell better.

Because it is a one-way flow of information—reps key data into the system—salespeople don't get much value out of it. For them, updating the SFA becomes a major nuisance. It leaves them thinking, “What's in this for me?”

### Don't take from sales, give to them

Before you even think about putting another tool or application into the hands of your salespeople, ask yourself whether it's something that's going to help the reps make money for them or for you. Sales enablement applications need to make it simple for reps to get all the resources they need to win. If they find that a system gives them content and insights that help them to be more successful in the field, they will be more inclined to use it.

If they find that the information and strategies that are proven to work are being delivered to them within their SFA system, in the context of the deal they are working, then guess what? They might finally go into the SFA system, without you beating them with a stick.

**That means making the right kind of investments in sales enablement—the subject of the next new rule...**

## 5. Act NOW

I was talking with Margaret, the head of sales for a technology company with just under 400 sales reps. She was in a real bind. Her board was insisting that the company preserve capital, due to the panic in the financial markets and so much uncertainty about how bad the economic crisis of 2009 could become. Her CEO was still pushing her to grow the top line, while the CFO thought they were spending too much money on their CRM system without seeing the benefits. She doesn't have budget to invest in better sales enablement, so she's postponing investments until the economy improves.

I asked her what impact the economy is having on her plans, and she rattled off a bunch of things she's doing:

- I'm putting a hold on all non-essential hires
- I'm weeding out the folks who've been on board for over a year but still aren't bringing in revenue and well-qualified accounts are being reassigned to my stars
- We're meeting every week to find ways to squeeze every ounce of production we can from the rest of the team
- I'm working to get the folks we hired last year productive so they have stronger pipelines this year
- I'm cutting back on travel — rather than jumping on a plane five times to visit a prospect, we're doing more conference calls and web demos
- And I'm going to push my team to get more revenue from existing customers

**WOW!**

Wow! With all those plans, she can't afford to **NOT** invest in sales enablement.

**OLD RULE:**

WITH THIS ECONOMY, WE NEED TO CUT OUR SPENDING ON ENABLING SALES.

**NEW RULE:**

**In an economic crisis, it's even more important to invest in knowledge-enabling your salespeople to perform.**

I have a prediction. The sales and marketing leaders who figure out how to grow revenue during the economic crisis of 2009 will be the ones who become CEOs during the next economic explosion.

“In a hurricane, even a turkey can fly.”

Venture capitalists have been using this phrase for years. It applies equally well to start-up companies as it does to sales team performance. When the economy is booming, everyone does well, so there’s more attention given to how you get more deals in play and more feet on the street than on how to optimize individual performance.

At the time I’m writing this book, our country is in a recession, and the economy may get much worse before it gets better. The types of changes and tradeoffs that Margaret is making are being made within every sales organization.

The most important investment right now is to knowledge-enable your sales force.

**Let’s look at why.**



## Why you should invest more, not less, in sales enablement

**Buyers are scrutinizing every purchase.** Your salespeople must communicate, and often quantify, the value that your offering will deliver to the prospect. This is something your superstars do intuitively, but not the other 80 or 90 percent.

**Salespeople are being pushed outside their comfort zones.** Most salespeople sell what they know. Now you're asking reps to take on new accounts, new territories, or sell additional products. If you don't give them the information they need, in the context of the opportunities they are working, they'll stay within their comfort zones and sell what they know. You need to enable and reinforce the behavior you're looking to drive.

**Fewer salespeople are taking on more accounts.** You can't create more hours in a day, but you can reduce the amount of time salespeople spend doing administrative work and creating sales materials. For most companies, that's at least 40 percent of every rep's time, which is 16 hours a week. By investing in sales enablement, you can cut that down to 20 percent. You've given each rep another day in every week. How many more opportunities can your reps work with one more day?

**Less travel, more web meetings.** It's hard enough for a rep to communicate value and differentiate your offerings when face-to-face with prospects; it's even harder when the sales rep is not in the same room with the buyers. More of the information that gets exchanged between your sales reps and their buyers will be done electronically, so it is more critical than ever that the salespeople have easy access to information that is accurate, timely, and personalized to the buyer's needs.

## Match your shift in approach with a shift in budgeting

Sure, money is tight. But the real issue isn't counting pennies; it's establishing priorities. After all, do you really need to spend \$40,000 on another week of sales training? Or drop \$100,000 to redesign a sales portal no one really uses?

Imagine how much more powerful your sales process would be if you shifted even a portion of your budget into the following investments:

- **Identifying and sharing the right knowledge that stimulates productive customer conversations**
- **Leveraging real life experiences salespeople can apply to their real challenges**
- **Creating playbooks that lift every salesperson's performance**
- **Developing sales force tools that deliver value salespeople see, respect, and use**

As your competitors make cutbacks, this is the ideal time for your company to take action. With the right allocation of resources, you can build a sales team that's better positioned to succeed where others fail.

## Are you ready and able to **ENABLE** your sales team?

With competition growing for every customer and revenue dollar, optimizing sales team performance is more important than ever. Now that you've read *The New Rules of Sales Enablement*, it's time to reflect on the status of your own sales processes:

YES	NO	I DON'T KNOW	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are your current tools and materials producing the results you want?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your sales portal mean anything to your sales team?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can your salespeople engage your prospects in meaningful conversations?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your sales team have the right knowledge for creating and sustaining conversations?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can your salespeople get the information they need in the right place at the right time?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can your knowledge be tailored to specific sales situations?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you drawing insights from real-life sales processes?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can you take advantage of what's learned in the field?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have a process for collaboration and continuous improvement?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your sales team have access to proven playbooks?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can you move your "middle 80%" toward improved performance?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your SFA deliver real value to your salespeople?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you increasing your investment in sales enablement?

Every “no” or “I don’t know” answer means lost sales; every “yes” brings you closer to the business results you want.

But the first step to that customer “yes” is your own affirmation of a new mindset, one that encourages conversations, learns from real-life experience, maintains practical playbooks, builds genuinely useful sales tools and—finally—has the will to take action now.

**Let’s have a conversation!**

**Like what you read in this eBook? Disagree with any of my points?**

**Had a different experience?**

**Share your ideas and opinions with me:**

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## About the Author



Jeff Ernst has been performing sales enablement in the high tech industry for more than 20 years, helping sales teams of five to 1,000 improve performance. He is the author of *The New Rules of Sales Enablement* and co-author of *How to Create Killer Sales Playbooks*. Jeff is a frequent public speaker and blogger on the topics of sales enablement, sales and marketing effectiveness, and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS). He also consults with companies, and conducts seminars and workshops to help them apply the practices described in this book.

Most recently, as Vice President of Marketing at Kadient, Jeff drove the development and launch of the company's innovative sales enablement Software-as-a-Service application; among his other responsibilities was, of course, sales enablement. He has also held sales and marketing leadership positions at FatWire Software, Open Market, and Infinium. Jeff received his MBA and BS degrees from Babson College.

When he's not trying to change people's mindsets about sales enablement, you'll find Jeff driving around New England watching his kids play competitive sports and living up to his reputation as a physical fitness fanatic.

To have Jeff speak at your next event or run a *New Rules of Sales Enablement* seminar at your company, contact him at [jernst@jeffernst.com](mailto:jernst@jeffernst.com), follow him on Twitter: [@jeffernst](https://twitter.com/jeffernst), or visit his blog [www.thesalesenabler.com](http://www.thesalesenabler.com)