Sales Enablement

7 Steps to Produce Sales Quickly & Efficiently

Introduction

What is sales enablement?

While this term may be new to many folks, it is basically what growth agencies and great CMO's have been teaching, promoting and delivering for years.

In Essence...

Sales Enablement combines process, information, and interactions from your organization synergistically to produce the most sales, in the least time, with the most efficiency.

The sales process breaks down into 7 steps. Each one can be automated and fine-tuned to maximize results:

1) Identify Your Ideal Prospect
2) Initiate Contact and Start to Build a Relationship
3) Qualify the Value of Your Contact
4) Generate Intrigue and Prove You are the Optimum Solution
5) Enroll by Formalizing the Agreement
6) Provide Quality Service to Keep Your Client Happy
7) Maintain and Nurture the Relationship for Future Opportunities

Let's break these down and take a closer look at each element...

1 Identify Your Ideal Prospect

Use electronic and conventional research to identify the people and organizations that would use your products or have the problems your products solve

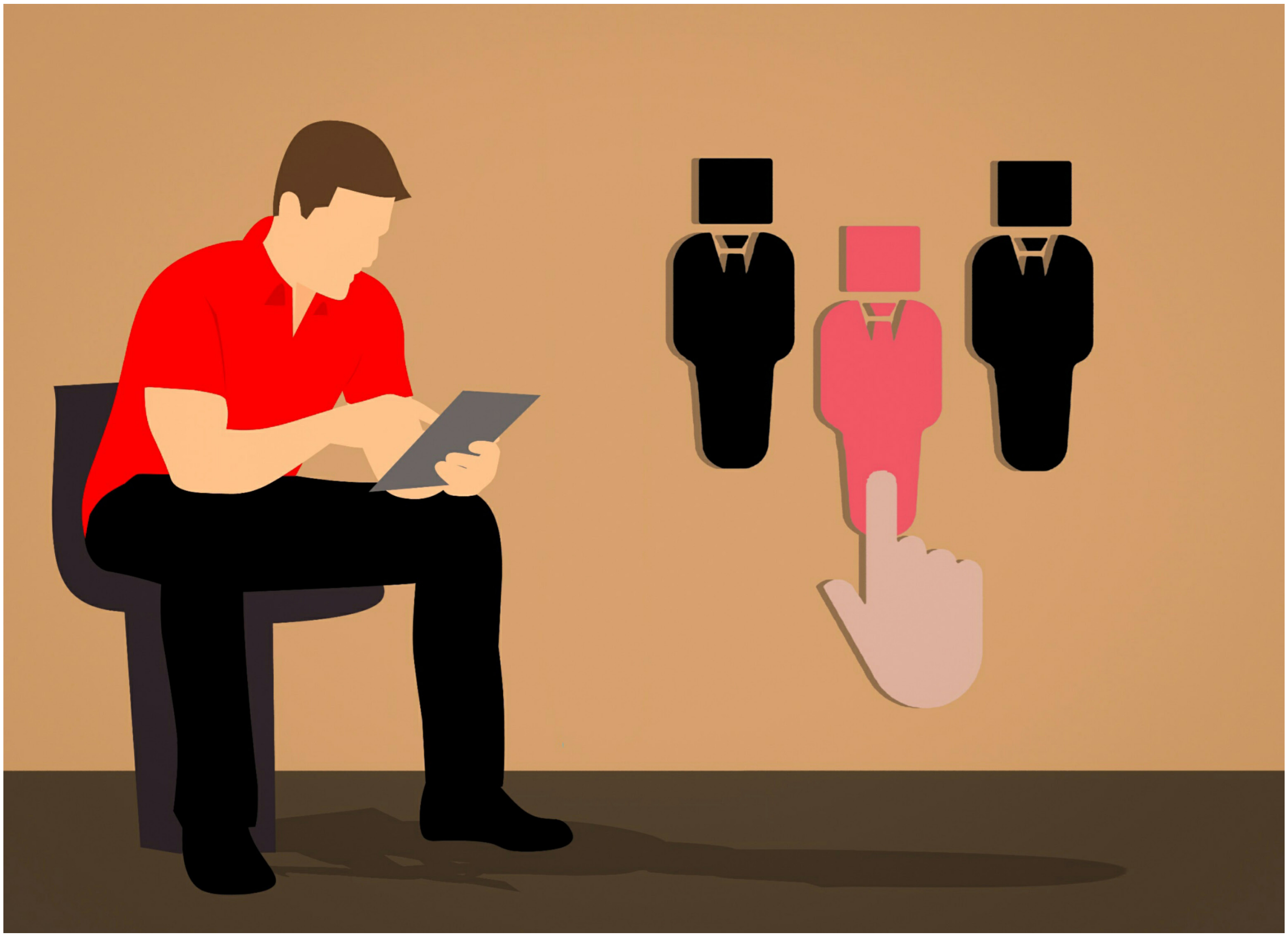
The days of knocking on doors, cold-calling and email blasts are pretty much over. No one answers the phone, few people open emails, fewer corporate people surf the web.

With the ubiquity of cellphones and other computer devices, any research is done online; either through search engines or social media references.

Since 70% of any purchase information is gathered by the prospect before they ever contact a sales person, how can your organization find those prospects?

In other words...

How do you help a potential customer find your solution?



By having a fully optimized website, you provide the prospect with many opportunities to come across your company in their search.

That content could be social media, recommendations, success stories from past clients, benefit-based blogging, or referrals from others in the industry.

You will be easier to find if you provide problem-solving and thought-leading information to searchers.

2 Initiate Contact and Start to Build a Relationship

Use web sites, online offers, social marketing, blogging, email, and promotion to get recognized and known by the prospect

Few people are beating a path to your door today, even if you have invented a better mousetrap. There is too much noise and too many time-wasters that can mean their mice continue to play.

Virtually every purchase decision of consequence today is prefaced by some kind of electronic search.

Having a computer in your hand or pocket that can even search via voice command has cornered all the action. Of course, B2B sales can focus on client business by their products and processes, but dunning potential users is inefficient and may even be counter-productive.

Cold calling continues to decrease in value, with voicemail, caller ID and screening. No one blindly answers the telephone today.

Likewise, the flood of spam into inboxes has dulled any productivity that was considered email marketing. Unless you are known by the prospect and have explicit permission from the customer (thanks, GDPR and the new CA privacy regulation), your email will get dumped.

Consumer goods email blasts only one sale in a million emails to make the sales process profitable.

Think about that amount of spam. For every sale the marketer may have, they burdened another 999,999 email boxes.

For B2B sales, unwanted emails can be counterproductive. Buyers may associate your company as a nuisance, mark messages as spam or junk, or automatically delete them.

In B2B sales, potential buyers are often identified by their company's product or industry, but it's usually difficult to locate the right person to contact within the organization.

The obnoxious aspects of email marketing make it more challenging for any legitimate solution to be found.

While this aggravates you as the seller, it also bothers the potential buyer who likely has a problem that needs to be solved, but instead of having an easy route to the solution, they are sidetracked with unqualified vendor pot-holes.

3 Qualify the Value of Your Contact

Use online triggers and personal contacts to identify the value and urgency of the client's need

The only elements your sales team has to offer are time and expertise.

The beauty and value of sales enablement is that it optimizes the salesperson's time on selling and using their expertise to get the best results.

Sales enablement can leverage your expertise using automated tools, so your reputation and problem-solving ability is not only recognized but also experienced by both prospects and referrals.

Optimized sales time:

The bane of nearly every sales force after gaining a new lead is the administrative and internal process that follows.

While nurturing, convincing, and closing the proposal is the heavy lifting of the process, the killer of sales efficiency is spending time on prospects who can not or will not buy, no matter how nice or enticing the offer is.

Therefore...

Sales enablement allows you to see the budget, authority, and timing of a prospect to help recognize whether or not the sales investment will pay off.

Of course, there are prospects who might buy, and those who recognize you can solve their problem seamlessly, but the real question is, will they acknowledge that need and have the desire and resources to pay to have it resolved.

A sales enablement program enables the prospects to understand how your solution has value and the type of investment it requires.

Further, it exposes prospects to other success stories that outline the time and budget required for successful projects or sales.

Sales enablement focuses on an organized, predictable sales path that explains what qualifies the prospect and then leads them to a commitment that their investment is a good fit.

Stopping a sales process is not an insult to the prospect, as they understand the importance of making a profit. The particular timing and business circumstances determine whether or not the prospect is a good fit and allows the salesperson to delay or decline the potential deal.

In addition to careful communication throughout the "explore" stage of the sale, forms on your website can get the qualifying answers without requiring a salesperson's time.

Chatbots, FAQ sections, and knowledge bases can also refer potential solutions while capturing contact info, so prospects have 24/7 access to the important stuff.

When the prospect is qualified, the value of the organized, predictable sales process pays off. The conversation with the prospect ramps up as a relationship is built between the human salesperson and the human customer.

4 Generate Intrigue and Prove You are the Optimum Solution

Use content delivered on passive pages, via email, phone or in person sales calls to nurture the interest of the prospect toward a purchase decision and prove your solution will resolve the client's problem

The intelligence gathered from personal contact and prospect interaction with the information available on the web allows a salesperson to direct or automate more detailed information to the prospect that will answer their questions, point them in the right direction.

It’s easier to convince prospects that your team is the right one to solve their problem by using focused articles and industry-specific information.

In earlier times, this would have meant several personal sales calls to keep the ball rolling.

However…

Since most people today rely heavily on electronics, these nurturing messages can be delivered online. Most of the content and warm, fuzzy tactics can be automated, including personalization, addressing their concerns, and engaging in their personal interests.

Sales calls can be made online and provide real-time use of slide shows, video, and downloadable proposal information.

The savings in travel time alone is a big win for the salesperson and the customer as well. Online meetings and presentations can be easily shared and replicated with others in an organization.

The goal of convincing is to prove to the client that, regardless of all their other choices to solve their problem, your organization has the best solution.

Case studies, testimonials and success stories should be listed on your website, but personal presentations work as well.

Video conferencing or traditional, in-person meetings are both great outlets for demonstrating and delivering this proof of service and compatibility. Meetings and online demos appear on the client's desktop and can be shared in-house.

These proofs can be sent after client interactions as further endorsements of your company's value. Your sales presentation's impact is greatly enhanced by using the sights, sounds, and infographics of today's technology.

The planned, predictable sales process follows up with these interactions so that the salesperson has a solid grasp of the client's interest and, therefore, the problems they want to be solved.

Salespeople who have a firm understanding of their customer's wants and desires can deliver confidence and reassurance to prospects that your organization can and will provide the best solution for them.

5 Enroll by Formalizing the Sales Agreement

Formalize the agreement and get to work

The primary purpose of sales enablement is to increase efficiency.

By automating the research to understand the prospect's needs, wants and attitudes, then building a comfort level of mutual understanding and prompt, professional interactions, all that's left to discuss is the fee and the start date.

Proposals, whether presented digitally or on paper, can make the client's job to share with the rest of his or her organization easier.

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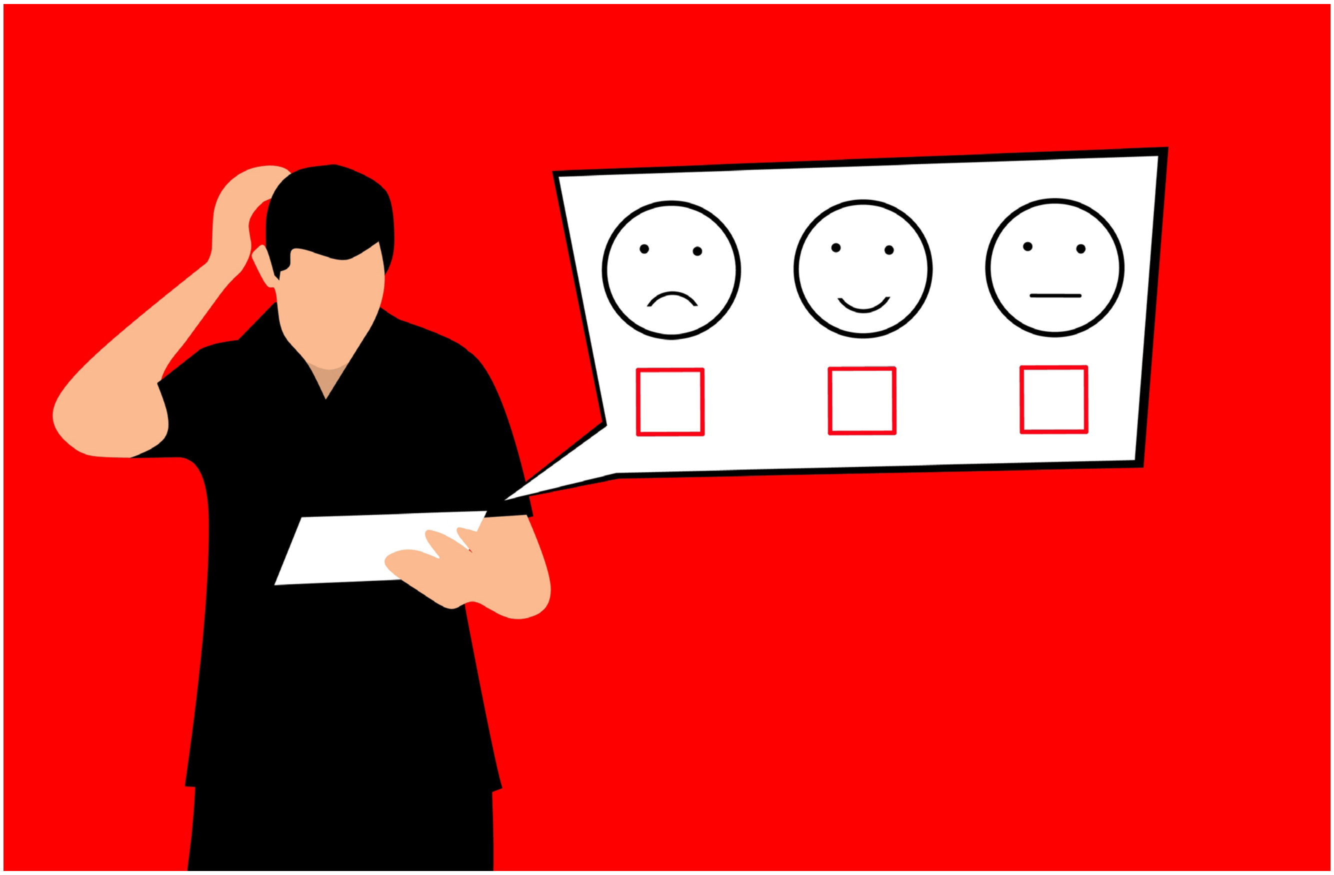
Similar to prepared forms, proposals can be assembled in outline formats using photos, video clips, and audio with details personalized for each client.

Digital proposal forms can make the client's job easier when it comes to gaining approval from higher-ups and critics within his or her organization.

6 Provide Quality Service to Keep Your Client Happy

Verify that both organizations have communicated and are successfully working together

Many times, clients are turned off by their perceived abandonment after a deal is made.



The best organizations want to make a sale but more importantly, want to keep the client long-term.

The long-term journey includes an onboarding process that involves the sales staff so that each new customer and their assignees feel comfortable and understand how the process works and how it will get them the solutions they paid for.

The best companies have a scheduled follow-up call or review after the first month of service.

The salesperson will verify the client received what they expected, and your organization is on the right track to meet the customer's needs.

Once the client is reassured of your capability and caring attitude, the business tends to flow and grow more smoothly.

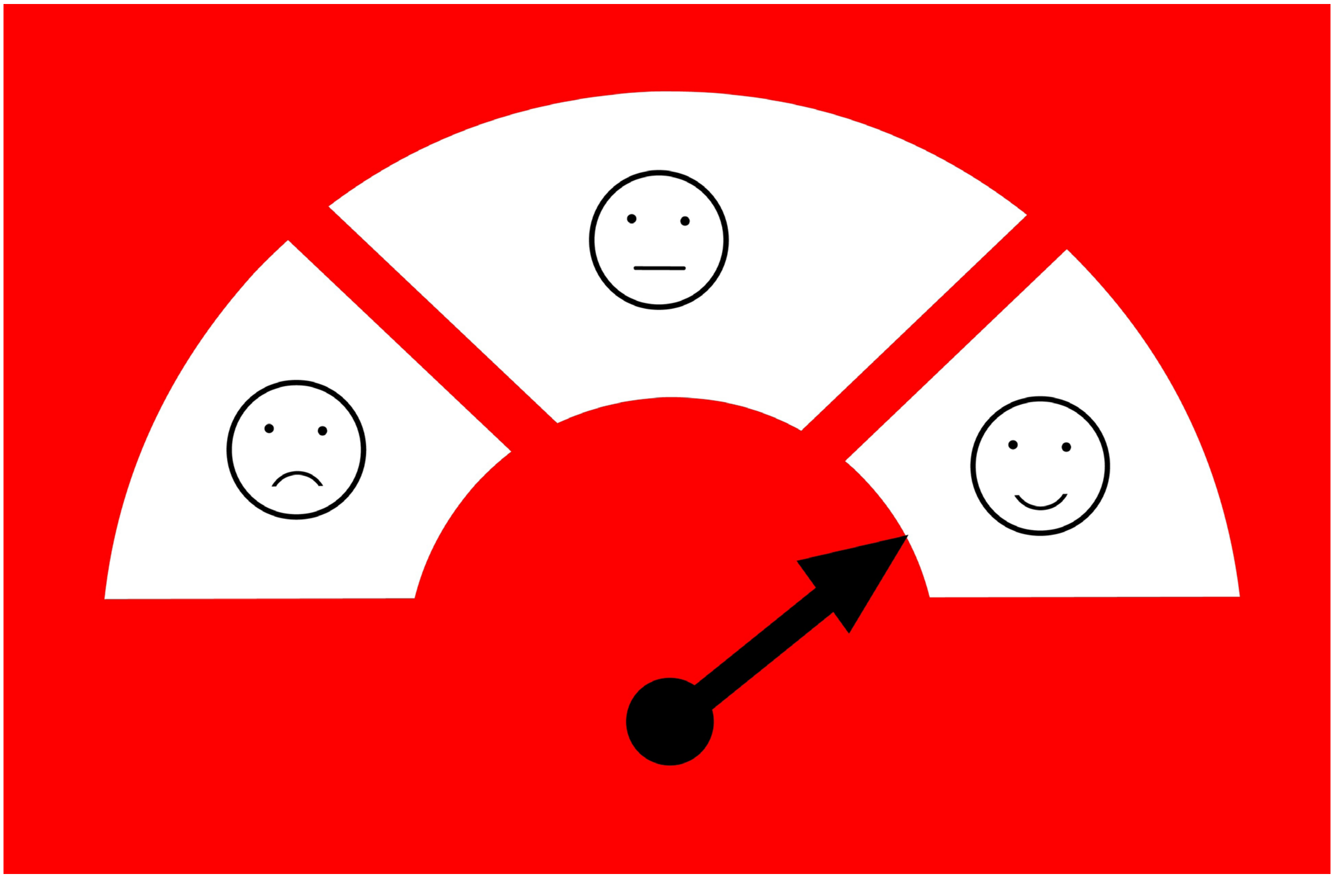
Having a "Frequently Asked Questions" area on your website or through chatbots for service questions can provide client reassurance without monopolizing valuable employee resources.

7 Provide Quality Service to Keep Your Client Happy

Create ongoing contact to enhance your reputation and future sales

The easiest and often most profitable strategy is to increase sales from existing customers. You must keep your current customers informed, and happy with your service.

Through newsletters, email offers, and special client portals, these users receive “special treatment,” or “exclusive” offers that let them know they are valuable and your organization cares about helping them grow efficiently.



Periodic checkups and report cards also reinforce the seller’s purchase decision.

They can now identify your organization is the best one to solve their problem on an ongoing basis.

This relationship can also lead to additional sales or opportunities should their business undergo any changes or growth.

They start to trust you (looking out for them in the long haul) to offer insights and alternatives to their production and competitive structure.

Finally, delight the client on an emotional level, beyond delivering the right stuff on time. This is a great strategy to increase word-of-mouth marketing.

Birthdays, anniversaries, big sales, and new product introductions are all reasons for you to congratulate and gift. Feeding clients sales leads or recommendations for their staff makes you stand out.

Ideally, your organization will be their reference for well-run, caring, serviceable vendors and that can lead to dropping your name to their peers and encounters in the big market place. Referrals are the second easiest sale to make.

Now It's Your Turn

Every one of these steps is proven time and time again by real people, visiting real customers talking over lunch or in their offices. This can still be done that way, as long as cost and time per sale are not a concern.

The impact, though, of a 24/7/ 365 multimedia reference source with personalized content, immediacy, and time flexibility has proven not only much more efficient but also much more convincing.

So there you have it, the seven steps of the sales process!