

How to Fix Your Sales Learning and Enablement in **2022**



Table of Contents

What’s Wrong.....	3
How to Fix It.....	5
Key Take-Aways	12
Authors and Contributors	13
About Brandon Hall Group.....	14
About Allego	15

What's Wrong

No part of the business has been immune to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Brandon Hall Group's recent study, *COVID-19: Impact on Workplace Practices*, 83% of companies say the pandemic negatively impacted sales effectiveness at least to some degree. At the same time, generating sales and revenue was ranked the most critical business transition as companies emerge from the pandemic.

Most Important Post-COVID Business Transitions



Rated important or critical
Source: 2022 Brandon Hall Group

The world in which sales teams operate changed dramatically and so, too, must the tools companies use to drive performance. Sales-enablement managers have their hands full, operating in an unprecedented and volatile environment. Products are constantly improved, new ones continue to roll out, the competitive landscape has changed dramatically, customer needs are adapting and sales best practices are evolving. Sales teams have also been hit hard by the "great resignation." Organizations struggle to retain top talent; difficult with highly mobile and transferrable role such as sales.

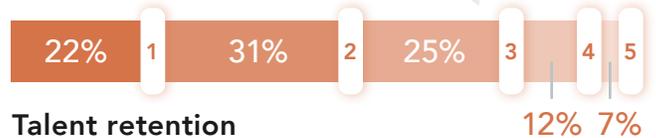
The Pandemic's Impact

Sales effectiveness



Only 47%

of companies are optimistic about talent retention in the year ahead.



Talent retention

Source: 2022 Brandon Hall Group

When it comes to sales enablement, there are many things companies seek to accomplish. But essentially, they want the tools and training that help sales teams perform better and more consistently and create loyalty-building customer experiences.

Most Pressing Sales Training Needs



Source: 2022 Brandon Hall Group

In addition to the challenges presented by the pandemic environment, companies face many perennial sales enablement challenges.

Salespeople are too busy for training; they have too many other priorities.

Salespeople think they already know the material so they don't want to participate.

Sales training has a bad reputation so employees avoid it.

Training systems are hard to use.

None of the content seems relevant.

How to Fix It



Several areas make up a robust sales enablement strategy. It starts with onboarding; getting new salespeople up and running and reinforcing that training. Brandon Hall Group's *Strategic Onboarding Study* found that product training is the most important onboarding element, seen as highly important or critical by 74% of companies. Then

there are new product launches where companies must teach the new and existing salespeople about the products, ensuring everyone knows and is consistent with the messaging. Another big part of sales enablement is the management of the content and tools available to the salespeople.

Since the onset of the pandemic, the practice of virtual selling has become increasingly critical. Over the last two years or so, many sales professionals had to relearn how to get and stay in contact with customers. The last piece is providing tools to enable better coaching interactions and keep the sales team connected and collaborating.

Hybrid Training and Onboarding

The pandemic forced many companies to manage learning in a hybrid environment where some learners are on-site and others remote. This caused numerous logistical challenges, as in-person learning was put on hold and people often work with asynchronous schedules. However, there are some key strategies for onboarding and training sales teams in this environment.

Set expectations and build excitement.

Onboarding is all about acculturation so it's important to put your best foot forward. Make sure the program is well organized and learners know what to expect.

Bite-sized, consumable pieces.

In this environment, retention is key. Leveraging things like 2- or 3-minute explainers from subject matter experts, or clips of successful moments from actual recorded sales call.

Leverage asynchronous content.

It can be difficult to get hybrid teams together at the same time in the same place. Asynchronous, on-demand learning gets and keeps people up to speed, giving them what they need when they need it.

Equity, inclusion and connection.

Things such as user-generated video capture help introduce and include new team members. Ensuring everyone has the same information keeps the team aligned.

Diversify training elements.

Mixing it up is the best approach. Too much of the same thing will cause engagement to drop off. Rotate in new elements to keep the experience fresh.



Examples of Asynchronous Learning Content

- Welcome videos
- Customer presentations
- Leverage internal experts
- What good looks like
- Calls clips
- Practice exercises
- Product videos
- Product launch training
- Feedback and assessments
- Competitive intelligence
- Training and certification
- Peer-to-peer content

Knowledge Sharing

There are also many strategies for fostering and sustaining knowledge sharing among sales teams:



Ask the Experts.

When team members are on the job and need answers, allow them to question experts instead of searching through training materials.



Track and Reward.

As learners and experts work together to create best practices, recognize top performers and learning experts with a tracking and rewards system.



Get Answers.

Allow for rating and reviewing of expert answer, so the best ones can be leveraged as training assets.



Capture and Upload.

Use video capture (mobile recording device, smartphone, etc.) to create sales learning content, then update content to a shared knowledge library.



Create New Knowledge Assets.

Exchanges between learners and coaches can be used as enablement assets that enrich formal learning modules (courses) and knowledge library items.



Validate through Peer-Review.

Validate sales content created by teammates through an informal peer-review process, then edit, curate and publish content to the knowledge library.

Sales Coaching at Scale

A huge part of sales enablement is feedback.

That means learners receiving and providing feedback from managers, coaches, peers and themselves.



When it comes to delivering a pitch or overcoming objections, it is important that sales professionals first give themselves an honest self-assessment. They should also get feedback from other team members before working with their coach or manager. This feedback can and should include links to helpful resources from subject-matter experts. This helps the learner improve specific trouble areas.

Of course, the whole process should be scalable. Strong feedback and coaching is simple for a team of five. A team of 50 or 500 needs technological help. This is where artificial intelligence comes into play. A tool driven by AI can scan any and all user-generated submissions and identify coachable moments, which can then be surfaced directly to the learner and the coach. AI can also

automatically make content recommendations based on call topics and buying situations. If the AI is trained with organizational best practices, it can find and highlight good examples and surface those as examples. These are the kinds of things managers and coaches strive to do, but simply cannot scale that kind of hands-on interaction at enterprise scale.

Organizations must leverage the right tools to deliver sales enablement at scale. Sales leaders will often look at their top performers and say, “I wish I had 20 of this person.” With the ability to capture best practices and share them across the organization, AI coaches can help deliver on that. They can help create “conversation intelligence” by analyzing recorded sales calls and parsing things such as:

Pace of speech

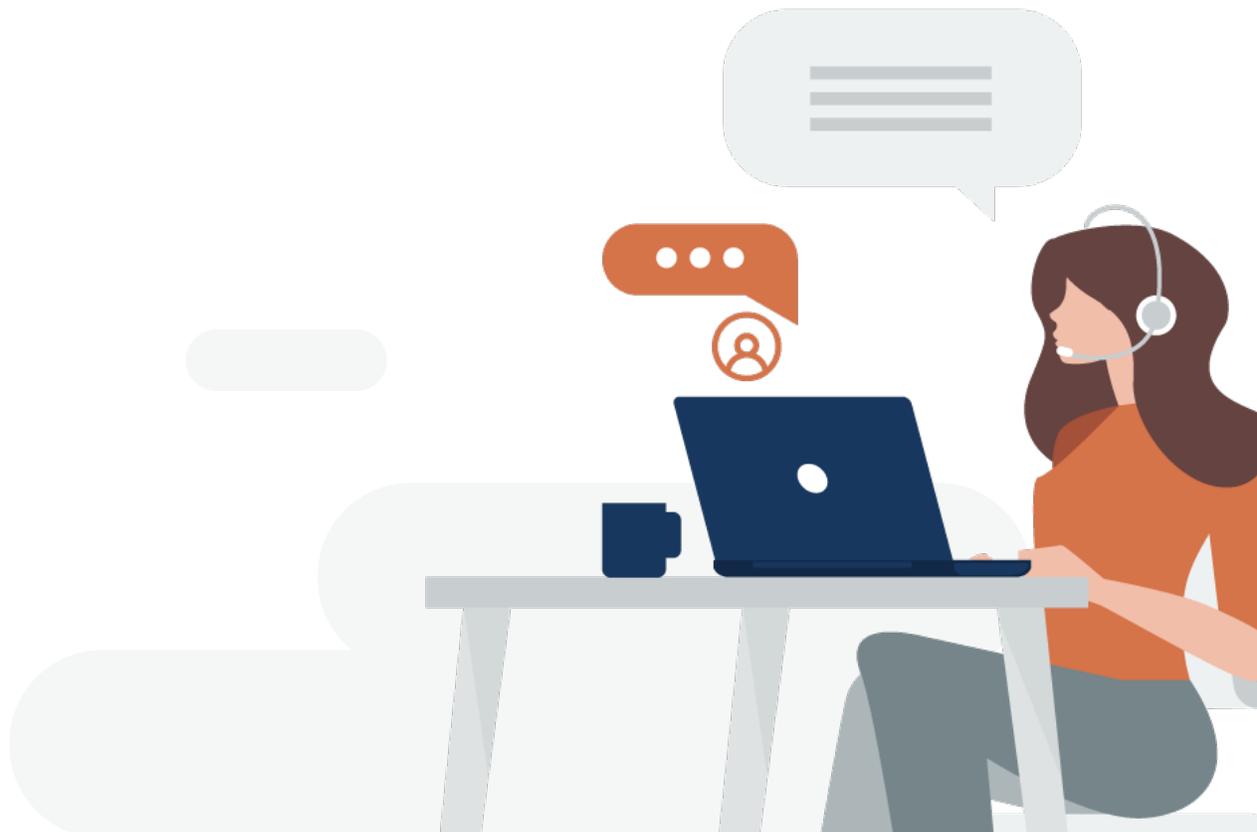
Filler words

Topics to avoid

Topics to cover

Points-in-time to scrutinize

It becomes similar to athletes watching “game tape” with their coaches, analyzing what went right and wrong. These AI coaches can highlight areas in the training that need to be corrected based on what is observed in the calls. Sales meetings can be mined for the accuracy of the messaging and effectiveness of the content. It is also an opportunity to automate notetaking and analyze prospect engagement. It would take a massive amount of effort to manually do this kind of analysis.

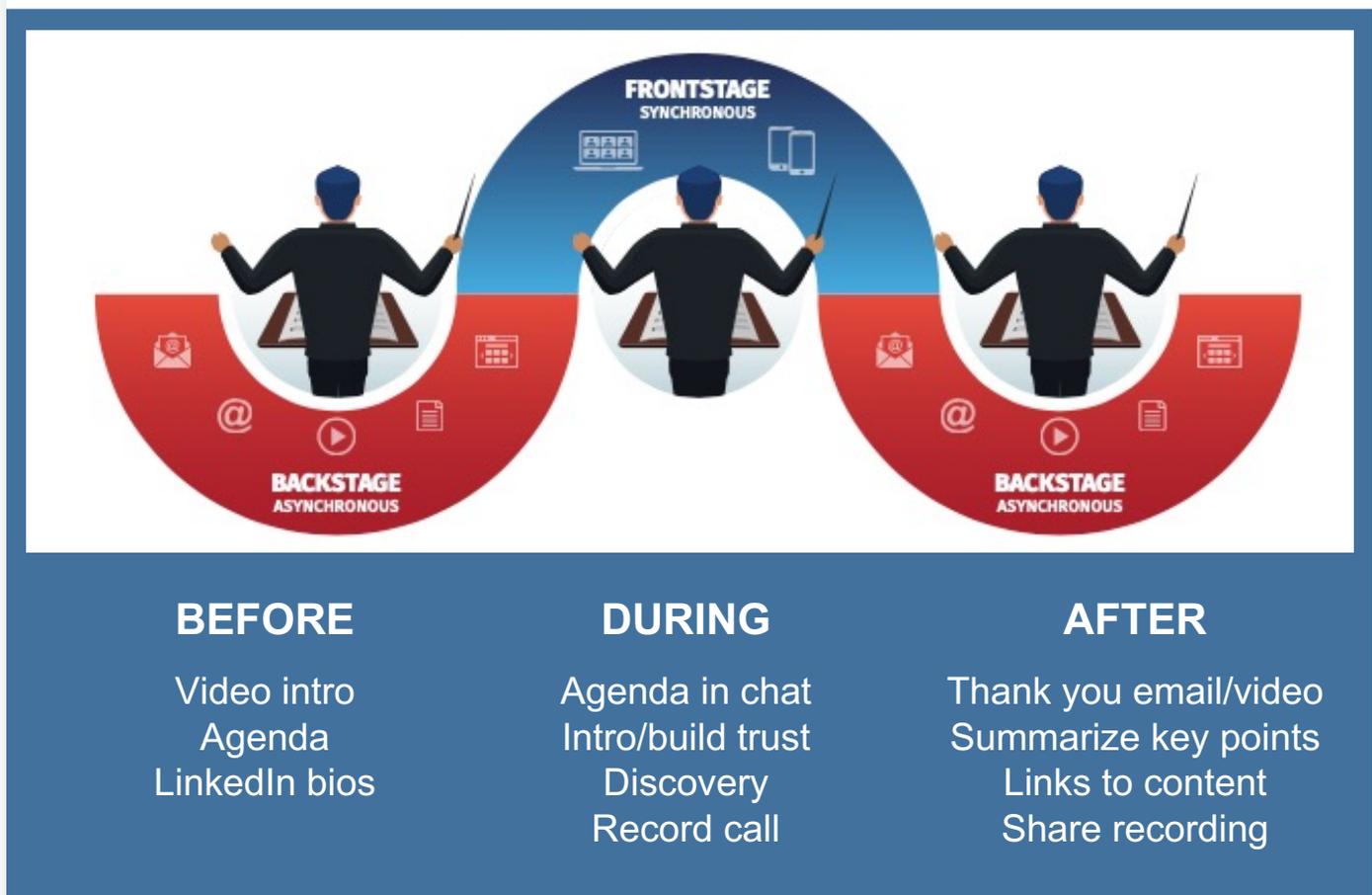


Learning Content

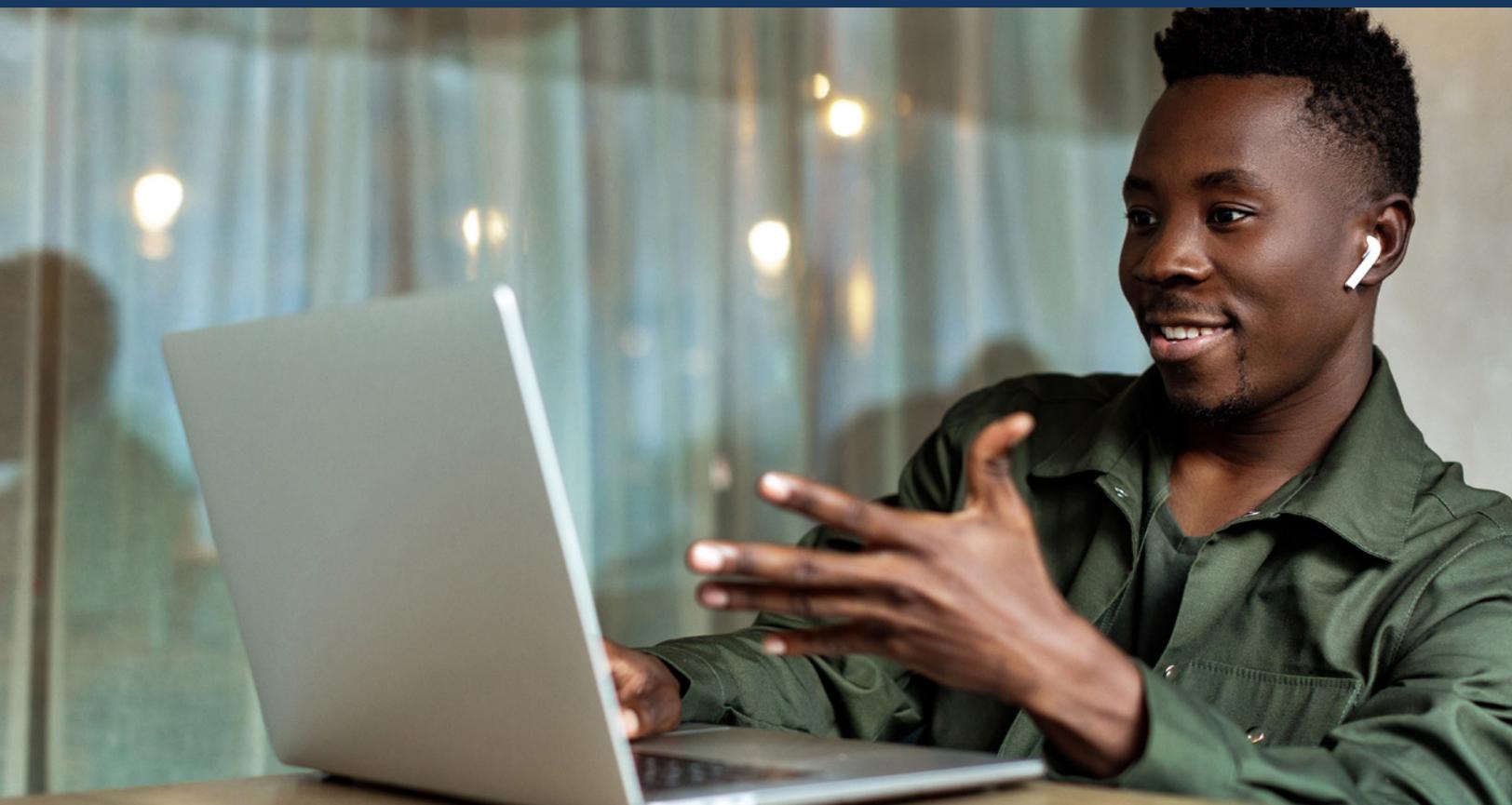
When it comes to the actual training material, speed and relevance rule the day for sales enablement. It is critical for the available content to be properly tagged and associated so it can be sourced when a need arises. It can be arranged into playbooks, channels or folders so learners can find what they need in specific topic areas.

Search functionality is critical. Sales professionals do not have the time to hunt for what they need. Predictive search and relevant returns make search a valuable tool rather than a time-waster. Artificial intelligence comes into play again to drive curation and recommendations based on the learners specific, in-the-moment needs. Additionally, the system should be optimized for mobile use. Sales professionals on the job will often need to search for, find and interact with content on the go.

New Paradigm for Deploying Content



Source: Allego



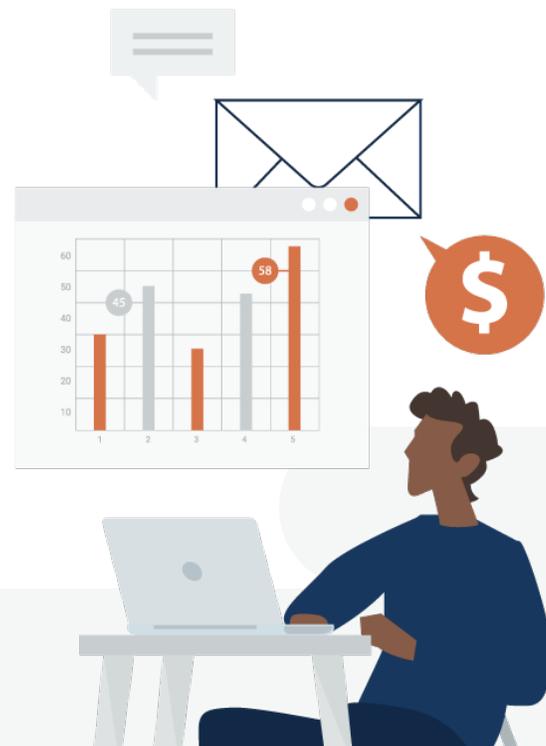
Deploying the right content at the right time requires companies to look at the sales enablement process via the various stages of the sales process. There are “front stage” activities and “backstage” activities. Front stage are the things collected during calls to create conversation intelligence. Backstage is everything that happens before and

after the call. An intelligent enablement platform can provide the right content to prepare for a specific call and resources during the call, then recommend follow-up materials to send to the prospect to allow salespeople to create a presence in their absence. By providing relevant collateral, testimonials, SME videos and more, they can

stay top-of-mind with their buyer. In fact, a digital sales room can be created so buyers can come back and engage on their own terms. It becomes a place where they can review the relevant material and share it with their own teams. It keeps the experience consistent for the prospect while creating a continuing set of analytics for follow-up.

Key Take-Aways

- **Sales teams require agile, accessible training.** They are too busy to focus on scheduling training and making time for it.
- **It's in the best interest of the salespeople and the business to limit the time they are away from the job for training.** Salespeople aren't earning when they are in training and neither is the organization.
- **Sales teams learn best from one another, so connect them.** Few groups appreciate shared best practices as much as sales teams.
- **Artificial intelligence is critical for scaling sales coaching and enablement.** At enterprise scale, it can be impossible to manually review every sales interaction to identify success and challenges. AI can quickly pinpoint coachable moments and good examples.
- **Sales professionals respond to incentives.** In most cases, their employment structure is centered around them. Injecting them into training fits the natural way they work.
- **Sales performance is one of the easiest things to measure.** For other forms of training, it can be difficult to measure impact but when it comes to sales, the company is already tracking and measuring performance and the data is readily available. It makes it much easier to see the impact of training.



Authors and Contributors



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About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 28 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

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are comprehensive educational programs that center around a multiphase knowledge test.

About Allego

Allego's modern learning and enablement platform ensures that sales reps and other business-critical employees have the skills and timely knowledge to make the most of each selling situation or initiative. Instead of traditional onboarding and training marathons — which are rapidly outdated and quickly forgotten — enablement and training teams use Allego to deliver the fresh, bite-sized learning that employees need to close deals in today's dynamic business environment. Content is personalized and mastered through reinforcement, on-the-job coaching and peer collaboration. More than 300,000 professionals use Allego to onboard faster, deliver consistent messaging, rapidly adopt best practices, coach and practice more frequently, and collaborate more effectively.

To learn more about Allego and learning and enablement in the flow of work, please visit:



www.allego.com