# HYPERGROWTH
# SALES ENABLEMENT
# PLAYBOOK

# Hypergrowth Sales Enablement Playbook

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Before you embark on expanding your
initial sales team (which may only be you at this point in time), heed some of the advice that Elay lays out for you in "building to scale." Thinking about your sales organization (fledgling or not) as a machine will help you focus on the critical success factors outlined in this chapter needed to build a repeatable and predictable revenue stream for your company.

One of the most irking questions that keeps founders, CEOs, CROs, and CMOs awake every night is how to get their sales teams up to speed, faster. The question is universal — applying to both large companies and startups alike. Once a company has product-market fit worked out, and its go-to-market execution becomes the focus, there are several questions that need to quickly be addressed:

1. How can we onboard our sales teams faster, and get sellers hitting quota faster?
2. When did we last align our sales teams on messaging and products, and how do we know they're good to go?
3. How are we coaching our first-line managers to increase their team's distribution of quota attainment?

As the former senior vice president of sales productivity at Salesforce from 2005 −2013, let me tell you how I made sure those questions were always answered. We invested heavily in training, onboarding, certifications, messaging alignment, ongoing learning, coaching, communications, playbooks, and sharing best practices. We invested, on average, $10,000 per quota-carrying sales executive, per year, to elevate total team results. The International Data Corporation (IDC) claims the industry average is about $2,400 per seller, per year.

I'm sharing this to show what's truly possible for startups. As a startup founder myself, and now working with hundreds of startup companies, we need to be smart about how we invest our time and resources. We don't all have the deep pockets we had in the early Salesforce days, but that shouldn't be discouraging. Instead, we can get creative and do our best with what we have.

When I started working with many early-stage startups in 2013, I realized we had to create ways for marketing and sales to mesh together, yet remain nimble. The old onboarding methods of death-by-Powerpoint and thick playbook reference manuals weren't going to work. I was getting reactions along the lines of, "Are you crazy?" or, "Who has time to read all of this?" It got me thinking, we need to break down messaging alignment, playbooks, and onboarding into smaller, bite-size deliverables. Not only is this reflective of the fast-paced, content-focused world we live in today, it's also the perfect solution for startups who are moving quickly with limited resources.

## A Better Approach to Sales Learning

We're in the midst of a sales-learning revolution. The investments, shared learning, and outcomes happening at large enterprises like Salesforce are now in demand by small startups, too. Why? Because they work.

Take a look at the following trends in sales learning:

Trend #1:   Bite-Size, "Snackable" Content
Trend #2:   Crowdsourcing Best Practices
Trend #3:   Closed-Loop Performance Correlations

Applying these trends to how sales and marketing work together is crucial to hitting revenue goals faster, and ramping up sales teams faster, with better messaging alignment, onboarding, product launches, competitive battle cards, and certifications.

Certifications

When I was at Salesforce, we certified thousands of sales professionals every year. We were disciplined and maniacal about it. When Marc Benioff created a new corporate pitch, we were on a strict timeline to get everyone certified and on message, and we were better for it. As a startup, resources are thin but the discipline and focus to certify must be strong. It's a winning formula that produces results and brings teams together.

We all know too well how the certification process works for most companies. The typical practice is to publish a pitch, maybe with video, maybe with speaker notes, and then pray for the best. I'm here to tell you that approach is outdated, and in short, just won't get the results you're looking for. Here are some examples:

Fly around the world and have reps present pitches in local offices.  Result: Reps feel inspected. Experience isn't real-life. Cost is high.

Have reps present pitch to sales manager.    Result: After a few slides, many sales managers will say, "You got it, let's look at your forecast," and the pitch review isn't completed.

Have reps upload their pitches to a central doc library.    Result: No one watches the pitches. They just sit in a folder collecting Internet dust.

The larger consequence of these unsuccessful scenarios is that our salespeople miss out on the opportunity, and benefits, of watching one another pitch. There is data to prove that reps will see a productivity lift after integrating peer-pitch best practices with their own pitch style.

Salespeople ramp faster, sell bigger deals, and close deals faster when they hear one another pitch and share best practices amongst their teams.

## Messaging Alignment

Messaging alignment starts from the top. When Jim Steele started at InsideSales.com, the first sales enablement initiative he did was get every customer-facing employee to record their two-minute elevator pitch. He did his first.

Here's the scorecard he used to get everyone on message and aligned in a time frame of hours versus months:

1. Start with a catchy opening or industry stat.
2. Have a clear what-we-do statement.
3. Demonstrate value.
4. Share a compelling customer proof point.
5. Close with an open-ended question.
6. Keep it short.

Jim Steele instantly aligned his entire organization and created a culture where sharing best practices was encouraged. Magic.

Another executive and friend of mine, Bob Horn, joined a startup named Cognitive Scale. I'm inspired by the innovative work he did to crowdsource Cognitive Scale pitches and messaging. Starting with the CEO, every executive recorded an elevator pitch. Again, we see that messaging alignment starts at the top. Then, every product manager recorded how to sell the product. The short videos were shared with everyone in the company. Everyone reviewed the videos and shared their thoughts on the content. The short videos, along with peer reviews, made it fun, educational, and engaging for the whole company.

The videos then served as templates for everyone to follow. In a matter of days, Cognitive Scale had crowdsourced new innovative messages, while getting the whole company on the same page about how to pitch and how to position each product suite. The other benefit of this method is that everyone practiced their pitch and improved together. This is the kind of knowledge sharing and learning culture that wins, every time.

Make the sales pitch messaging alignment process fun, engaging, and bite-size. Do more pitch certification, more often, and in smaller chunks. Rather than doing 30 to 40 slides or a long drawn out pitch process, create many micro-pitches.

Here are some examples:

Elevator Pitch (90 seconds): Have reps record a 90-second elevator pitch using a scorecard focused on value, customer proof points, engagement, and length. What if every rep had a tight, on-message elevator pitch?

First-Call Pitch (5–10 minutes): Piece together presentations and deliver the what we do, customer stories, value/benefits, and solution slides in less than 10 minutes. What would happen to win rates if reps were on message, using the same high-quality slides?

Discovery Pitch (2–3 minutes): Have reps practice their qualification and questioning prowess. Practice the value of kicking off customer meetings with open-ended questions to ignite dialogue. How would your pipeline quality improve with more qualification and discovery practice?

Demo Story Pitch (3–5 minutes): Move beyond features and functions and have reps share their demo story setup, answering the why rather than the how. What would happen to sales cycle time with more demo storytelling?

Objection Handling Pitch (60 seconds per objection): Come up with your most common objections and have reps share, in video, the best ways to overcome them. Reps get good practice and you end up with a library for future reference and training, too. What would happen to rep confidence if everyone had more objections-handling practice?

Executive Close Pitch (5–10 minutes): Take your largest deals and have sales reps record their delivery of a mutual success, close plan, or value-based closing presentation. How would this pitch contest impact forecast accuracy?

In addition to the ROI of ramping up reps faster, and closing deals faster, we asked 100 reps, each who recorded 2–3 minute elevator

pitches, to share their experience using video storytelling to certify and get on message. The words shared on the next page highlight how hungry sales teams are for this kind of learning and best practice sharing. The words are verbatim, and my personal favorite happens to be, "Fan-Freakin'-Tastic!"

Exercise: Describe in three words your experience recording and watching pitch videos to share best practices.

"Enlightening. Informative. Educational."
"Collaborative. Valuable. Impactful."
"Collaborative. Team learning. Action."
"Innovative. Collaborative. Creative."
"Exciting. Educational. Curiosity."
"Educational. Insightful. Fun."
"Interesting. Educational. Motivating."
"Amazing. Informative. Game changer."
"Insightful. Educational. Collaborative."
"Fan-Freakin'-Tastic!"

## Product Playbooks

With teams aligned on message, which is always a great place to start, the next step is to build playbooks. What goes into a winning product playbook is pretty standard in the world of product marketing and sales enablement. We expect the following to be answered: who to sell to, how to sell, what to sell, what to say, and when to say it. Here is a list of items you can use as a guide to get started:

1. Industry Trends
2. Elevator Pitch
3. Buyer Profiles
4. Customer Stories
5. Industry Use Cases
6. Discovery Questions
7. Value Calculators
8. Sales Process
9. Objections
10. Frequently Asked Questions
11. Competition
12. Walk-Through of Product Features
13. Day-in-the-Life Demonstrations

It should be the job of product management or product marketing to create and maintain this content. As a former product manager, it's a great best practice project that builds both passion and confidence within your team. I recommend creating a video product playbook. Give your product personality by broadcasting your face. When you can avoid it, don't hide behind slides. You can use slides to augment your ideas, but your sellers want to see your face. Your product video should:

1. Tell your personal story.
2. Explain why you're passionate about the product.
3. Talk about the product history a bit. Share a story that makes your product human and helps your sellers connect with the history.
4. Include a 60-second elevator pitch.
5. Illuminate buyer challenges.
6. Share your favorite customer story.
7. Share unique differentiators.
8. Discuss how you qualify customers.
9. Discuss your top discovery questions.

Investing in these kinds of assets will scale a company. It's impossible for every PM to listen to every customer call or attend every training session. It's the job of the first-line sales managers and sales leadership to do the coaching in their team meetings and one-on-ones, and go through the materials with their accounts and deals.

Let's rethink our assumptions on playbooks. They are not intended to be static decks and documents that don't add value. They should be tools that are used to build confidence and competence, versus checking a product or feature release box.

## Competitive Playbooks and Battle Cards

Another kind of playbook that's important to address is what we call competitive battle cards. Who doesn't want to crush the competition on every deal, every time? Who doesn't want to see win rates skyrocket, rather than eat away at quota attainment and market share? Who doesn't want every rep to confidently overcome competitive objections and plant competitive traps? Who doesn't want to compete to win?

Do what most do and create slick one page PDF/PPT competitive tear sheets and wonder why competitive win rates don't improve. What

if I told you there's a proven way to improve competitive win rates by 20%–30% in less than 30 days?

Consistently competing to win is hard work. The secret is to focus on rep competence and confidence. Focus on how reps knock down formidable foes by repositioning perceived strengths to conflict with a buyer's needs and wants. Regardless of size, it's time to stop being defensive against the "fear, uncertainty, and doubt" (FUD) competitors are saying about you, and assert the leadership position in conversations.

When I was at Salesforce, we crushed Microsoft and Oracle in every deal because we were scrappy, creative, and armed. My friends Dave Kellogg, Gary Hanna, and Sheevaun Thatcher at Host Analytics created a winning competitive strategy that resulted in dramatic results in win rates. The transformation happened in days. Here's how they did it:

Step 1: Know Thy Competition (and Don't Bash)

Start by focusing on top competitive strengths. Embrace them, don't pretend they don't exist. Focus on your buyer needs and why this strength isn't important to them. Capture the questions reps can ask to plant traps, forever locking out your competition. Build a culture of overcoming objections and planting traps, versus aimlessly bashing the competition.

Step 2: Record Bite-Size Coaching Videos

Record short 2–3 minute video shorts for each competitive strength explaining what your competitors are saying and how you'd handle the objection. When recording the coaching videos, it's important to get very granular. Map strengths to objection handling and map weaknesses to traps and questions your sales team can strategically pose during discovery.

Step 3: Share Coaching Videos

Turn the videos into role-playing exercises with real deal scenarios. Make sure everyone watches the videos and shares what's working and what's not working against each competitor. Have teams practice blending discovery questions with competitive trap questions. Bringing all your teams together will improve the confidence of the reps, which leads to immediate results.

Step 4: Role-Play and Practice

The way to make this stick is to have every rep make a video of one objection and one trap or practice in a team meeting, in round-robin fashion. The power of practicing objections and traps is great and the benefits of peer-to-peer reviews and feedback are tremendous.

## Onboarding

Getting sales teams performing better and faster is the way to quickly grow a business. It's how we did it at Salesforce and it's one of the most important initiatives for young startups, too. The first step to creating a scalable, revenue-generating onboarding program is to align on metrics. We all want to front-end the process with metrics that help sales to focus on the right behaviors and actions. For example, we want to measure pipeline generated, time to first deal, and time to quota attainment.

When Dave Rudnitsky, former sales leader from Salesforce, joined Jim Steele at InsideSales.com, one of his first initiatives was to build an onboarding program to ramp up his new team fast. He went from 0–20 sales execs in a very short period of time. The program he created resulted in tens of millions of dollars in self-sourced pipeline and every seller closing a deal in their first 30 days.

Dave created a program that blended self-paced work with certifications and with team-based exercises and role-plays. He focused all activity around messaging competence, self-sourcing pipeline, and closing a deal in the first 30 days. Here's what the learning path of his program looks like:

Week 1: Culture, Stories, and Vision

The first week includes content and welcome videos from all the executives, including the CEO, CRO, and CMO, sharing their vision and goals. The week is filled with customer stories and testimonials along with top performers recording their deal wins to capture how they won the deals and to share their story in a more engaging way.

By the end of week one, which is all done pre-boot camp, sellers have gone through over 12 hours of rich content and have practiced their pitch and white-boarded the value proposition. The first week is all about getting up to speed on the culture and stories.

Week 2: Products and Services

During week two, the product managers share product playbooks as video interviews. The final measurable deliverable for this week is for every seller to record a 2–3 minute elevator pitch. Everyone sees one another's recordings, and peer reviews help engrain best practices.

Week 3: Prospecting and Territory Planning

Focusing on pipeline generation, the teams are then guided to prospecting. Territory plans are created and prospecting outreach strategies and winning emails are discussed. Salespeople are already generating self-sourced pipeline by this week. The certification is a recorded 5-Minute Territory Plan, focusing on top accounts and pipeline generation strategies.

Week 4: Account Strategies and Deal Execution

Dave Rudnitsky brings it all together in the final week where every seller records an account plan for their top account. He brands the program IGNITE and aligns everyone with his enterprise sales playbook. Account planning is focused on a core set of strategies on connecting the dots, compelling events, and a mutual close plan. This week has a final IGNITE certification.

The results of this type of program speak for themselves. Pipeline and revenue targets were exceeded. But the best part of the story is the feedback from the reps themselves. They all agree that they wouldn't have been able to ramp as fast as they did without the structure of a 30-day onboarding program.

All too often, building a scalable and repeatable sales onboarding program takes a back seat to other priorities. Follow the lead of David Rudnitsky and other forward-thinking sales leaders and put foundational pillars in place from day one. Your team will yield huge benefits and will start winning faster, and more often.

## Summary

Building a revenue machine that's fueled by certification, playbooks, and onboarding takes leadership and discipline. It means putting as much energy and focus into your go-to-market as you do into your product innovation.

Build a culture of sharing best practices and continuous improvement. To do this means leading by example. Do you think you're ready? Here's

a test: Pick up your phone, record your pitch, and share it with your team. Make it part of your onboarding process and make it a requirement for every product manager. Once you have these systems in place, watch your entire organization follow your lead and the revenue magic will follow.

To help jump-start your organization, I've broken all the information covered in this chapter into actionable to-do lists. You know what to do, now it's time to get started.

Onboarding To-Dos

1. Interview reps to document what it takes to win deals and ramp fast.
2. Listen to customer calls and do ride-alongs.
3. Interview reps who ramped fast to understand what worked, what didn't work, and what could be improved.
4. Define onboarding success metrics.
5. Map out 30-day learning path with weekly milestones, metrics, content, and certifications.
6. Inventory content and content gaps.
7. Crowdsource pitches and demos from the executive team, product managers, and top reps.
8. Conduct quarterly learning path results and iterate.

Product Playbook To-Dos

1. Invest the time to document a first draft of the playbook.
2. Use the best practice sections.
3. Deliver all content in video.
4. Crowdsource updates from sellers.

Competitive Battle Cards To-Dos

1. Know thy competition and don't bash.
2. Document strengths and overcome objections.
3. Uncover weaknesses and plant traps.
4. Make role-playing and practice part of the culture.

Certification To-Dos

1. Break down your customer conversation into bite-size certifications.
2. Be disciplined and institute a weekly pitch.
3. Be honest about feedback.