THE BBD BOOM TOP 7

Sales Enablement Mistakes to Avoid

(and what to do instead)

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Introduction

When considering sales enablement, especially when you have an exciting technology platform like HubSpot, it's normal to want to go full speed ahead. However, when this happens, there are some common mistakes that are made during strategy, set-up and adoption that keep users from reaching the full potential of their sales enablement tools.

To help you avoid making those mistakes, we've put together the 7 we see most commonly, along with some tips on what to do instead.

What is sales enablement?

Sales enablement, simply put, is the name for the strategy that helps you complement your sales strategy with automation, information and data to help your sales team do their job more effectively.

It refers to processes and systems put in place to move prospects through the sales pipeline as efficiently as possible, with the exact right of involvement from the sales team. It also helps with marketing to sales handover and allows you to identify points of friction throughout the user journey.

Typically sales enablement will take place within your CRM. It could include anything from automated notifications when someone changes lifecycle stages to completely automated email sequences to a sales document library. It usually also includes a lot of strategy around pipelines, deal stages and assigning contacts. These tasks are linked together strategically using automation tools, from the marketing handover to closing a deal and beyond.

Because BBD Boom is a HubSpot Platinum Partner, we use HubSpot for our sales enablement projects. The tools and features HubSpot offers, specifically when it comes to the transition from marketing to sales, are unrivalled in the tech space. It is user-friendly and incredibly capable.

To learn more about our sales enablement solutions using HubSpot, click here.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON CHALLENGES WITH SALES ENABLEMENT?

Sales and marketing can seem to be eternally at odds with one another, but sales enablement is meant to help ease that tension by automating the handover process. However, there can still be a lot of challenges around lead quality, with the sales team not being happy with the leads delivered by marketing campaigns. This can cause sales teams to be hesitant to adopt technology when led by marketing, and vice versa.

However, adoption challenges don't stop with marketing. Sales teams are notoriously slow to adopt new technologies, largely because they have spent a lot of time and effort developing the systems and processes they use to close deals. It can be a massive challenge to get an entire team onto the same platform using the same processes, but it's necessary for the level of insights that are needed to further enable them down the line.

Lastly, the strategy and setup of an effective sales enablement strategy can be overwhelming. User-friendly platforms like HubSpot make it easier, but with a plethora of tools at your disposal, it can be hard to know where to start and tempting to over-complicate things.

To help you overcome these challenges, we've put together this list of the 7 most common mistakes businesses make when trying to create a sales enablement strategy, as well as what you should be doing instead to ensure sales enablement success.

The Top 7 Sales Enablement Mistakes to Avoid (and what to do instead)

Mistake #1:
Not approaching sales enablement from a sales perspective

As marketing technology experts, we like to think we know best when it comes to things like automation, processes and communication. But the term is sales enablement, not marketing enablement or even technology enablement.

For that reason, it's important to approach sales enablement not from the marketing perspective but from the sales perspective. Otherwise, you'll end up with a system that may sound great on paper but doesn't actually work with any of the use cases you'd encounter from your sales team.

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:

We recommend including the sales team in the sales enablement strategy. You don't need to have them do the actual work, but it's important to get inside their minds and understand not just the way they do things but why they do them that way, and even why they decided against doing it another way. This will allow you to build a strategy that works in practice as well as it does on paper and is actually used by your sales team.

Mistake #2:
Not considering marketing at all

That said, the marketing to sales handover is an important part of a good user experience, as well as a defining factor in the KPIs of many marketing departments. It's also why those marketing departments are often the ones driving sales enablement initiatives.

To not consider marketing at all may give you a beautiful sales solution, but the leads coming from marketing will need so much editing and retrofitting and evaluation that the whole initiative becomes not worth the effort. It will only exacerbate the tension between the two departments rather than alleviating it, defeating the purpose of sales enablement to begin with.

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:

Since the marketing to sales handover process is so important, it should be considered. However, it's not inherently more important than the rest of the sales process. As the strategy is developed, it's important to evaluate how leads are being introduced into the system and adapt in a way that will make the transition smoother, giving sales all the insights around email history and product interest so they can best approach the leads.

It's also important to provide the necessary insights to marketing around lead quality and acceptance rates. If most marketing qualified leads (MQLs) aren't worthy of becoming sales qualified leads (SQLs), marketing needs to know that so they can adjust their campaign strategy and improve their targeting.

Mistake #3:
Trying to connect too many platformsl

One of the most frustrating aspects of any job is the technology. You have to run an email campaign here, connect it to a landing page there, and send the form fills to a CRM somewhere else… it can all get incredibly exhausting.

If you're already using multiple platforms for your sales process, it's important not to tack another one on just for the sake of "sales enablement". Your sales team will resent having to use a new tool, your adoption and utilisation rates will be low, and your insights and reporting will be so disjointed that it will be difficult to glean any actionable insights.

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:

If sales enablement is a priority, consider the value of an all-in-one solution like HubSpot. It allows for all the automation and integration of a traditional CRM, and since it's also a marketing platform it handles the marketing to sales handover perfectly.

Click here to learn more about HubSpot Sales Hub.

Mistake #4:
Not letting your sales team behind the curtain

For a sales team, especially one that has been managing their own processes individually, it can be incredibly frustrating to be told something is going to happen and have faith in that process without understanding how it works. When sales teams don't understand why tasks are appearing in their inboxes or that prospects are automatically getting emails for up to a week after getting in touch, they understandably get annoyed and are unlikely to play within the rules.

It's important to make sure that sales teams have an understanding of the automations and processes at play, how they're working, and why they've been put in place. If you've done your job including them in the strategy, it should all make perfect sense to them. But even if it doesn't, their questioning is productive because it could help identify snags in the process that no one else could have spotted.

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:

Whenever we onboard a client onto Sales Hub, we make sure to have not just one training with the sales team but two, first giving them the opportunity to understand all of the behind-the-scenes elements at play, and then offering a follow-up training to address any of the more particular use cases. This allows them to feel confident using the system, not only knowing how to use it but also understanding why it works the way it does and what's happening in the background.

Mistake #5:
Letting your sales team change things behind the curtain

Of course, too much behind-the-scenes access can cause its own problems. Letting sales teams understand why and how things work is important, but if they're given too much agency to change things without authorisation, then you run the risk of creating knock-on effects in the rest of your system.

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:

By involving the sales team in the initial strategy and getting their buy-in before implementation, this should be mostly avoided. However, there will always be those who want to make changes. Just remember that any changes they request are valid as they're the ones having to follow the process.

This doesn't mean every change should be made; some of it may be a matter of educating them on the process in place and showing them tools that could help solve the problem. But for recurring issues, it may be worth making a change to the system.

Mistake #6:
Making the workflows too complicated

We've all been there: you want to create a comprehensive marketing automation strategy, but you end up with so many caveats and branches and dependencies in your workflows that even you can't follow the logic anymore.

It may be tempting to take advantage of your sales enablement tech by making the workflows as complex as possible, but that isn't the point. In fact, it can hurt you in the long run, making it difficult to make updates, troubleshoot issues or onboard new people..

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:

Simplicity is key when it comes to automation. Don't overthink it. Plan out your strategy carefully to make sure you avoid duplication, and don't be afraid to create a higher volume of simple automations rather than fewer more complicated ones.

Mistake #7:
Not training the sales team properly

If you've involved the sales team in the strategy and carefully planned out the implementation, you may want to just hand it over and tell the sales team to get stuck in. They helped with its inception, after all, so surely they're ready to hit the ground running, right?

Wrong. While most people recognise that sales teams will need some training, they often underestimate how much time is needed to make sure they understand the full functionality of the tools and the full scope of the process. Adoption is one of the most common issues in sales enablement, so take the time necessary to train up the sales team on both the technology and the process.

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:

When we onboard new Sales Hub clients, we like to make sure the sales teams are fully trained before we hand over. This includes walking them through the automations so they understand what's happening behind the scenes, teaching them the tech so they can move through it adeptly, and hosting follow-up sessions so they feel supported and invested.

Conclusion

Sales enablement doesn’t have to be complicated, and it doesn’t have to be a pain to get your sales team to adopt your new strategy. It just requires careful thought and planning to make it work for your organisation. Hopefully our tips will help you avoid these 7 common mistakes when creating your sales enablement strategy.

To speak to a member of our team about sales enablement or HubSpot Sales Hub, click here to get in touch.

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