2017 CSO Insights Sales Enablement Optimization Report | Summary
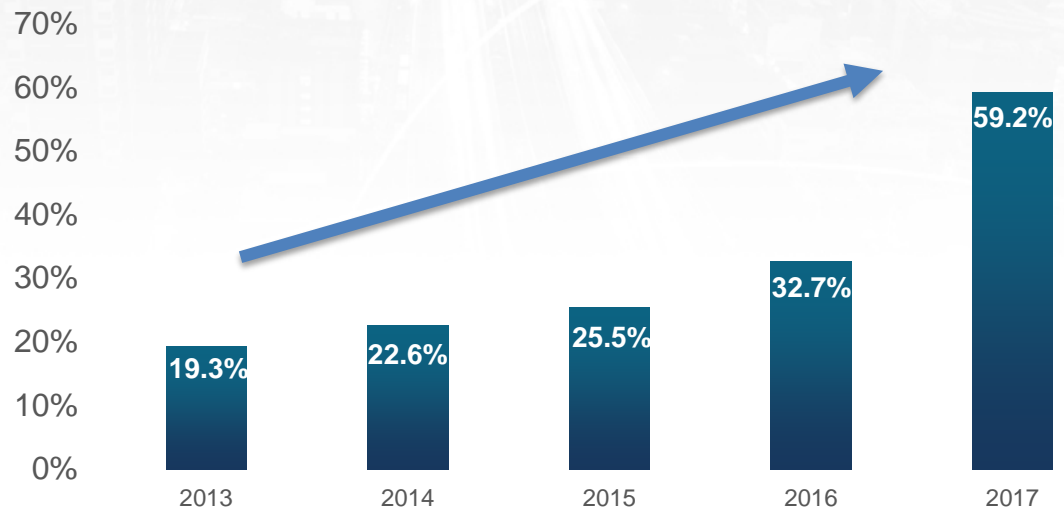
CSO Insights' 3rd Annual *Sales Enablement Optimization Study*

CSO Insights has been tracking sales enablement since 2013, and has produced a major report on it every year beginning in 2015. This year's study presents the latest research on who's using it, and how and why.

Our study collected insights from over 500 leaders around the world with significant participation in North America, EMEA, Latin America, Asia and Australia/New Zealand across a broad range of industries and company sizes.

Among the most dramatic findings is that sales enablement has decisively moved from margins to the mainstream. About 60% of those surveyed said their organizations have a sales enablement function, and we're confident that number will continue to grow rapidly.

Growth in Dedicated Enablement Person, Program or Function
Dramatic growth from less than 20% of companies four years ago to more than ½ today investing in a dedicated resource or set of resources

Year	Percentage
2013	19.3%
2014	22.6%
2015	25.5%
2016	32.7%
2017	59.2%

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More common, but not more successful

While the number of organizations investing in sales enablement has grown drastically, the portion of those who report that they are achieving their sales enablement goals has moved only slightly, from 31% to 34%.
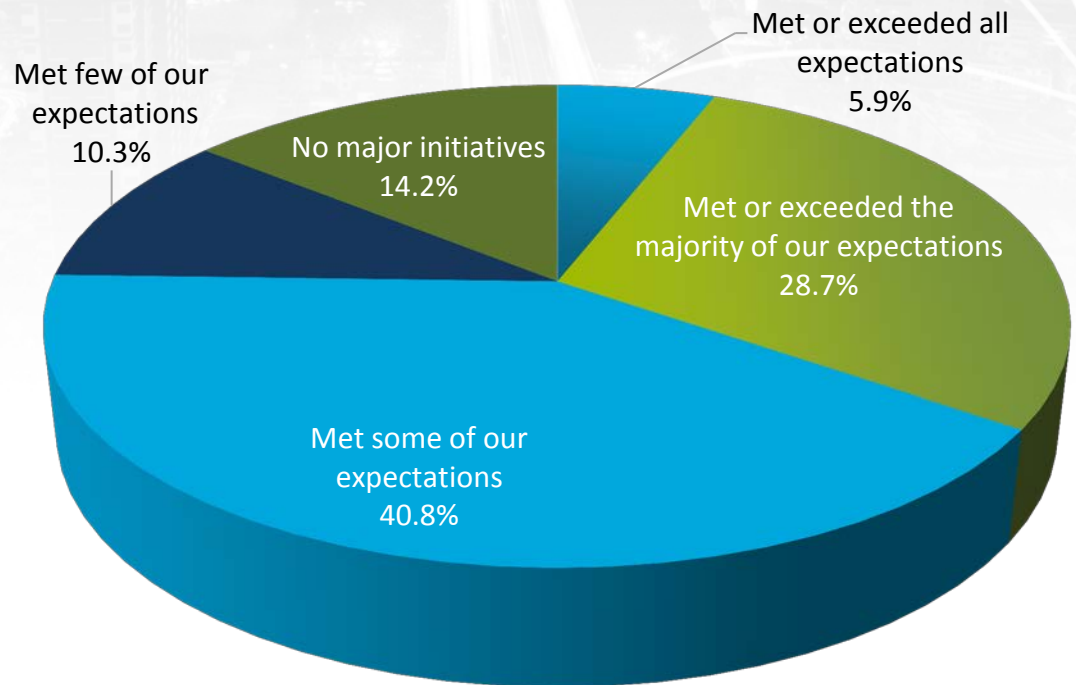
Objectives for sales enablement functions cover both productivity and performance.

Top performance goals include 1) increase revenues 2) increase margins and 3) increase new account acquisition.

Top productivity goals include 1) increase selling time 2) decrease ramp up time and 3) streamline opportunity management process.

Outcome of Sales Enablement Initiatives, Last Two Years

Less than 1/3 of organizations say the majority, or all, of their enablement goals are being met. This is only a slight increase versus prior year.

Met or exceeded all expectations
5.9%

Met few of our expectations
10.3%

No major initiatives
14.2%

Met or exceeded the majority of our expectations
28.7%

Met some of our expectations
40.8%

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# Bringing clarity to the confusion around sales enablement

As more organizations enter the fray, there is less agreement on what is meant by sales enablement. The resulting confusion inhibits success.

We find value in starting with *what* it is: "A strategic, collaborative discipline designed to increase predictable sales results by providing consistent, scalable enablement services that allow customer-facing professionals and their managers to add value in every customer interaction."

We then advocate a common understanding of *how* to do it. The Sales Force Enablement Clarity Model is a step-by-step guide to assemble a World-Class sales enablement discipline. The model shows each of the facets, working together to create an effective discipline with customers as the primary design point..

CSO Insights Sales Enablement Clarity Model
Direction on how to build and mature a sales enablement function.

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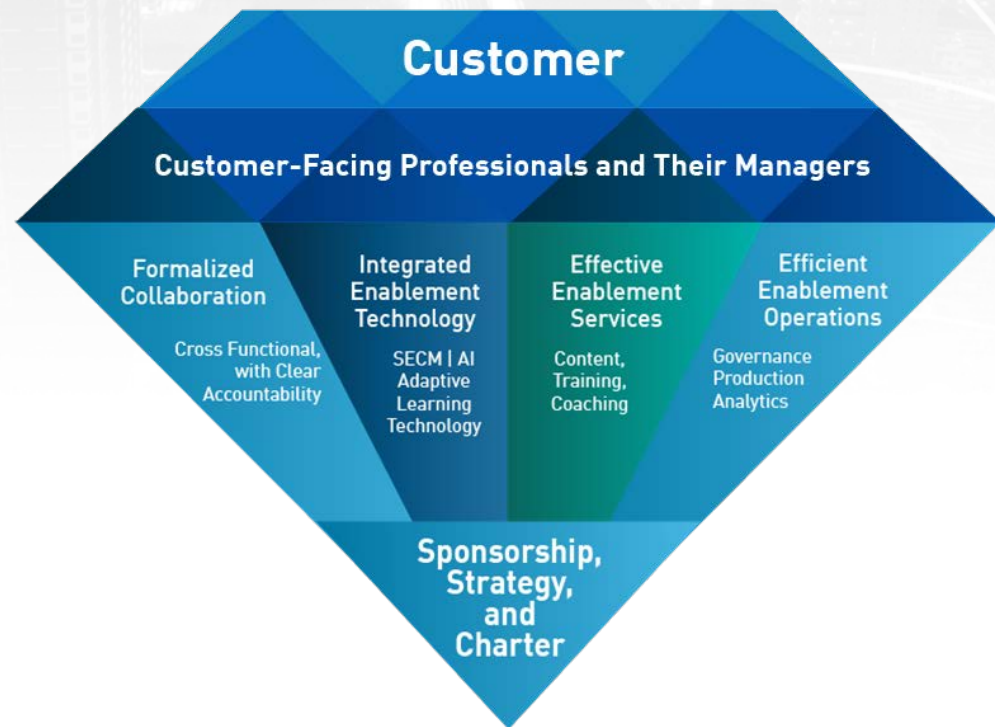
Establish the customer as your guiding force

You'll notice that the top of the clarity model is the customer.

All sales enablement efforts must support the customer, specifically an alignment to how customers make decisions. From awareness to buying to implementation, customer expectations vary over the journey. Therefore, tight alignment is required as a pre-requisite for successful enablement.

Unfortunately, according to the *2017 World-Class Sales Practices Study* over half of sales organizations (54%) do not formally align their sales process, or other aspects of how they sell, to the specific journeys taken by their customers.

Those that do have such alignment report quota attainment rates of up to 14% greater than the average.

Alignment of Sales Process to Customer Journey
Organizations are over-reliant on informal connections between sales process and customer journey.

Dynamic
21.0%

Random
13.8%
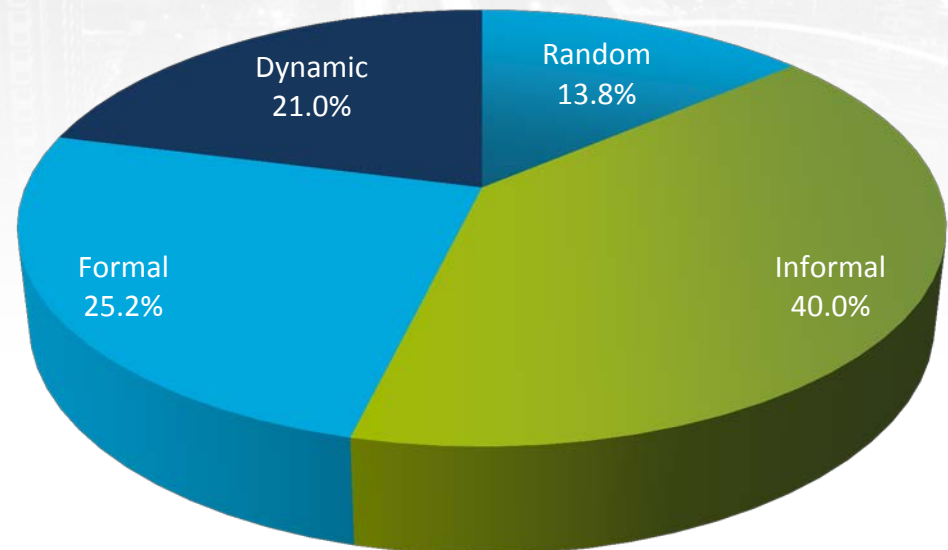
Formal
25.2%

Informal
40.0%

*CSO Insights 2017 World-Class Sales Practices Study

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It's worth the effort to formally charter your discipline

The sharp point at the bottom of the clarity model is where you define your charter, establish executive sponsorship and document a strategy.
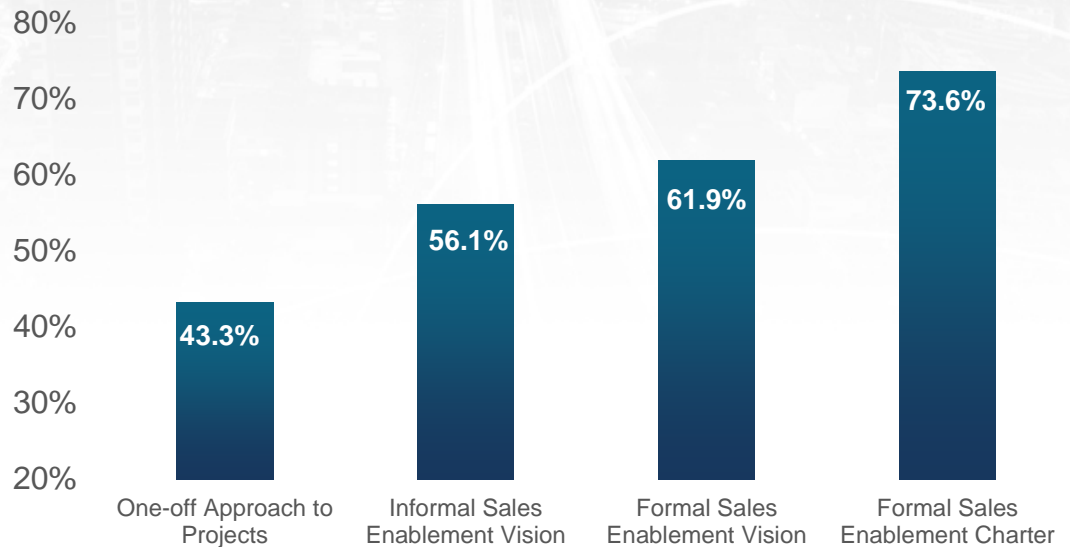
Start with discussions with executive leadership to clarify overarching business goals. Next, determine what must change for the sales organization to achieve those goals.

The resulting mission, vision, goals and measures are documented in a charter, a business plan for creating a comprehensive enablement function.

Only 13% of organizations formally create a charter. Those that do have substantially higher quota attainment than those using less formal planning.

Ultimately, the C-Suite should 1) sign-off on the plan; 2) provide authority to make it happen; 3) identify a C-Suite "champion" for sales enablement.

Percent of Salespeople Achieving Quota Related to the Approach used to set Enablement Priorities

Approach	Percent
One-off Approach to Projects	43.3%
Informal Sales Enablement Vision	56.1%
Formal Sales Enablement Vision	61.9%
Formal Sales Enablement Charter	73.6%

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Enablement Services: Training is powerful, yet a mixed bag

As you move to the middle of the clarity model, you will find Enablement Services including training, content and coaching. Your audiences see this as the face of enablement in your organization.
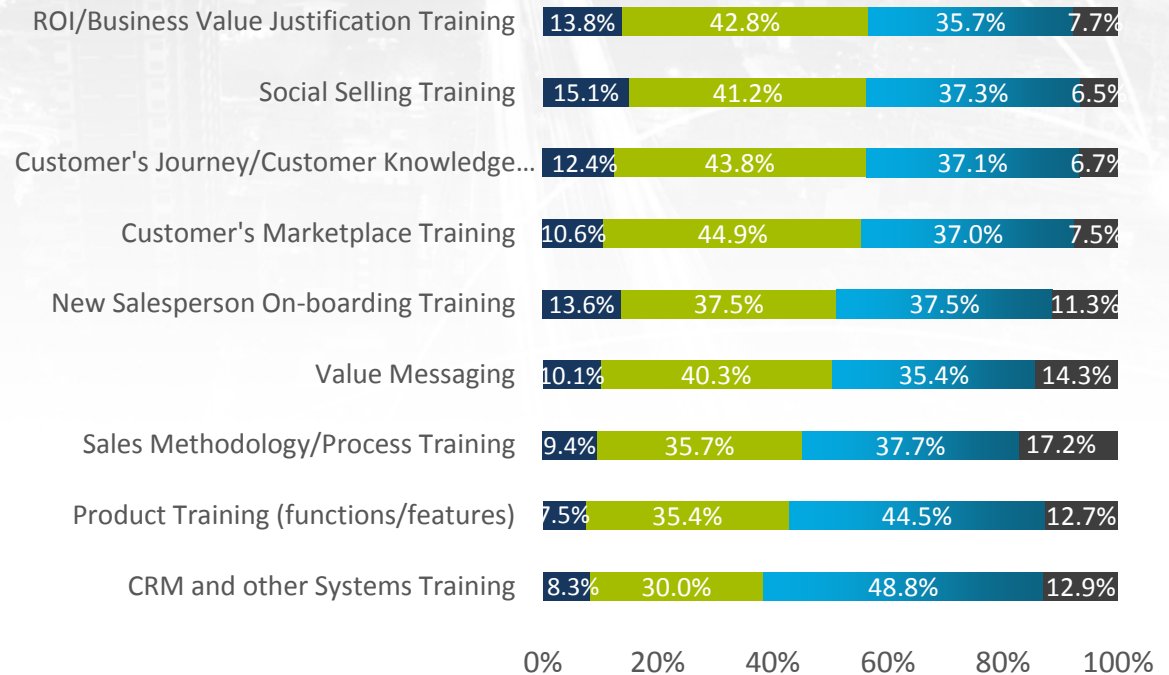
For the third year in a row, sales training is the most commonly offered enablement service for salespeople.

Overall training effectiveness was improved versus 2016. However, many organizations still reported training in ROI/business value justification; social selling; and customer's journey/customer knowledge as needing improvement or major redesign.

Effective training, particularly in the areas of onboarding, social selling and sales methodology had a strong relationship to better quota attainment (up to a 33% difference in the case of social selling training!)

Assessment of Training for Salespeople
Overall training effectiveness is up, yet critical gaps remain

Training				
ROI/Business Value Justification Training	13.8%	42.8%	35.7%	7.7%
Social Selling Training	15.1%	41.2%	37.3%	6.5%
Customer's Journey/Customer Knowledge...	12.4%	43.8%	37.1%	6.7%
Customer's Marketplace Training	10.6%	44.9%	37.0%	7.5%
New Salesperson On-boarding Training	13.6%	37.5%	37.5%	11.3%
Value Messaging	10.1%	40.3%	35.4%	14.3%
Sales Methodology/Process Training	9.4%	35.7%	37.7%	17.2%
Product Training (functions/features)	7.5%	35.4%	44.5%	12.7%
CRM and other Systems Training	8.3%	30.0%	48.8%	12.9%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

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Enablement Services: Content in many forms, from many sources

Content comes in many forms: internal content (playbooks, scripts etc.), customer-facing (collateral, presentations etc.) and training assets.
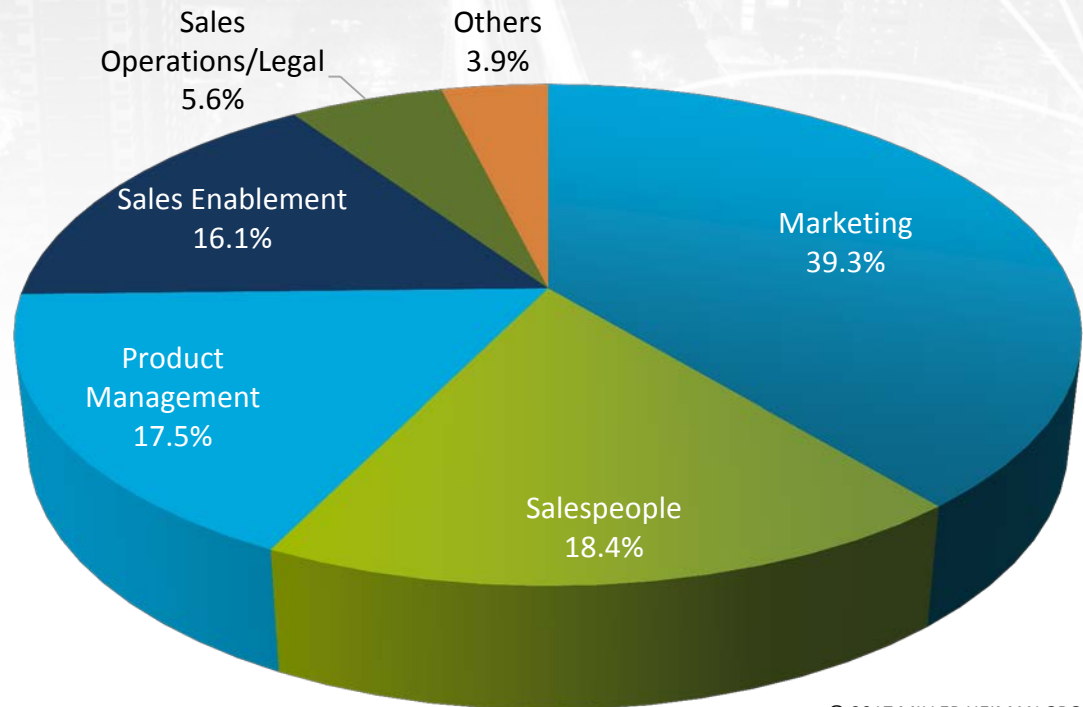
Sellers are often drowning in content. Yet it is often not the right content, nor is it easily accessible. As a result, 18% of respondents still report that sellers themselves are creating the content needed to sell. While this is better than last year, it is still an enormous waste of selling time.

In addition to questions on sourcing and accessibility, respondents found that content was of varying quality.

Product-oriented content was generally reviewed more positively than ROI templates, case studies, playbooks and relationship maps, which have remained consistent gaps for organizations over the last three years.

Sources of Content Creation

Fewer than 40% of content comes from Marketing and only 16% from Sales Enablement. Sellers themselves create 18%..

- Sales Operations/Legal 5.6%
- Others 3.9%
- Sales Enablement 16.1%
- Marketing 39.3%
- Product Management 17.5%
- Salespeople 18.4%

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Enablement Services: Coaching drives adoption and results

Sales coaching improves adoption and reinforcement of enablement services.

Two conditions must be met. First, sales managers must be taught how to coach. Second, the coaching process must be "formal" or "dynamic."
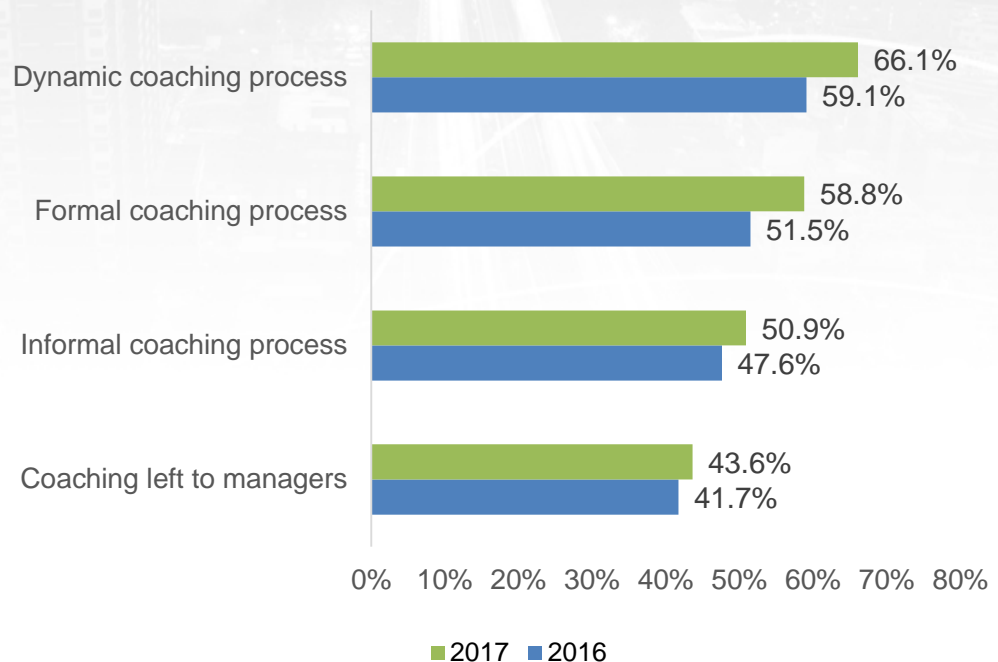
A "formal" coaching process is one that is defined, been trained to managers and implemented. Sales managers are required to use it. "Dynamic" goes a step further, and connects the coaching process to the enablement framework. Managers are measured by their coaching impact.

Unfortunately, less than 1/3 of sales organizations have a formal or dynamic coaching process.

Similar to 2016, dynamic coaching delivers the most significant performance impact: a 27.6% improvement in win rates.

Coaching Process

Only formal and dynamic coaching process are linked to higher than average win rates. Informal and ad hoc coaching have average and below results.

Coaching type	2017	2016
Dynamic coaching process	66.1%	59.1%
Formal coaching process	58.8%	51.5%
Informal coaching process	50.9%	47.6%
Coaching left to managers	43.6%	41.7%

■2017 ■2016

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Focus on collaboration, technology and operations

The other three components in the middle of the clarity model are used to fulfill on your charter and deliver services. They require intense focus for even the most mature functions.
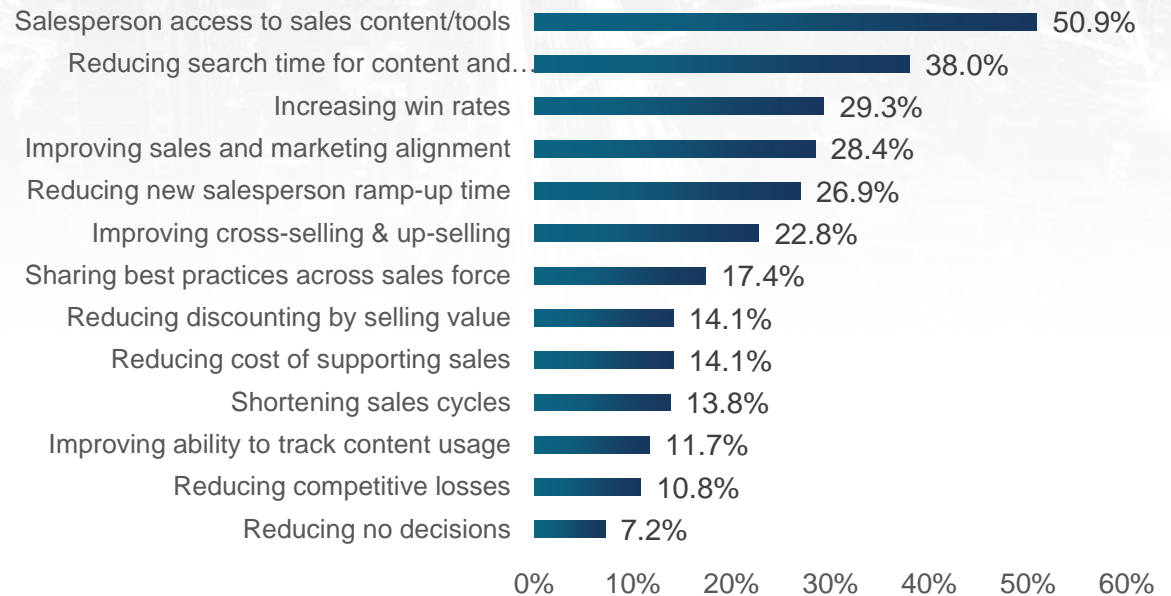
Formal collaboration (used by <20% of respondents) puts enablement in the role of central coordinator. Effective collaboration with marketing and product mgt./ development improves win rates of forecast deals.

Integrated technology plays a major role in creation and distribution. Wider adoption of SECM (sales enablement content management solutions) currently only at 20%, will help salespeople sell more, faster.

Finally, establishing clear **enablement operations** for governance, production and leveraging analytics increases productivity and scalability.

Improvement in Sales Performance from SECM

Top benefits are productivity related (access, search times reducing ramp-up) and effectiveness (win rates, org alignment)

Category	Value
Salesperson access to sales content/tools	50.9%
Reducing search time for content and…	38.0%
Increasing win rates	29.3%
Improving sales and marketing alignment	28.4%
Reducing new salesperson ramp-up time	26.9%
Improving cross-selling & up-selling	22.8%
Sharing best practices across sales force	17.4%
Reducing discounting by selling value	14.1%
Reducing cost of supporting sales	14.1%
Shortening sales cycles	13.8%
Improving ability to track content usage	11.7%
Reducing competitive losses	10.8%
Reducing no decisions	7.2%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%

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Move forward by polishing your diamond

Use the research findings to guide your next steps in sales enablement.

Just starting out?

❑ Create an enablement charter

❑ Conduct an enablement maturity assessment. Identify current state before launching new initiatives.

❑ Align to the customer by aligning all work and process to the way your customers make decisions.

❑ Identify gaps in your current content and training services.

Have a mature enablement practice?

❑ Align and integrate enablement services. Use the clarity model to collaborate and increase efficiency.

❑ Install enablement operations. Create a formal, cross-functional production process.

Using the Clarity Model as a Roadmap
Use the research from the study to assess your gaps and opportunities in relation to each component of sales enablement. Look for alignment.

Customer

Customer-Facing Professionals and Their Managers

Formalized Collaboration

Cross Functional, with Clear Accountability

Integrated Enablement Technology

SECM | AI Adaptive Learning Technology

Effective Enablement Services

Content, Training, Coaching

Efficient Enablement Operations

Governance Production Analytics

Sponsorship, Strategy, and Charter

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About CSO Insights

CSO Insights is the independent research arm within Miller Heiman Group™, dedicated to improving the performance and productivity of complex B2B sales. The CSO Insights team of respected analysts provides sales leaders with the research, data, expertise, and best practices required to build sustainable strategies for sales performance improvement. CSO Insights' annual sales effectiveness studies, along with its benchmarking capabilities, are industry standards for sales leaders seeking operational and behavioral insights into how to improve their sales performance and to gain holistic assessments of their selling and sales management efficacy. Annual research studies address sales and service best practices, sales enablement and sales performance optimization.

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