



# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BUILDING AN SDR\* TEAM FOR SALES ENABLEMENT

\* Sales Development Representative



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# INTRODUCTION

Every B2B company loves the idea of sales enablement, but very few have staff who know how to do it right. To have a successful sales enablement program, you need to have a team of high-performing sales experts to pitch your company's product or service effectively and routinely follow up with leads when timing makes the most sense for them.

Ideally, a sales enablement program starts with business development representatives (BDRs) and sales development representatives (SDRs). These two roles are commonly used interchangeably, but they have some notable differences. For instance, a BDR is responsible for finding key decision-makers (KDMs) and qualifying a lead in the sales pipeline. On the other hand, an SDR is responsible for taking these qualified leads and nurturing the relationship until they're toward the end of their purchasing funnel.

Many B2B companies and outsourced sales and marketing agencies integrate these roles, so a lead in the sales pipeline talks to the same individual during each point of contact. While it is ideal to separate the roles, it can be done effectively in a single position—which is what we do at Abstrakt Marketing Group.

Keep reading to learn everything you need to know about building a high-performing SDR team for your business's sales enablement efforts.





# What's the Role of a Sales Development Representative?

A sales development representative is responsible for building and sustaining a sales pipeline. Through this sales pipeline, the goal of the SDR is to set a sales appointment between a qualified lead and an account executive (AE), or whoever is responsible for submitting proposals and closing business deals.

Core responsibilities of sales development reps include:

## Qualifying Inbound Leads

Inbound leads are generated through your company's website and social media platforms. When leads enter their information on a contact page or a submission form, they're introduced into the sales pipeline. From here, an SDR contacts them to determine if they meet your company's ideal customer criteria. If the lead meets your company's qualifications, the SDR asks them questions to build a relationship and discover what they're looking for in a B2B product or service provider.

## Prospecting Outbound Leads

SDRs prospect outbound leads by cold calling and emailing potential customers. Through strategic prospecting, SDRs are unsure if a business has a need or interest in your company's product or service. However, they use this time to find a key decision-maker, qualify the company, and build relationships over time.

## Scoring Leads

Lead scoring enables SDRs to prioritize leads in the sales pipeline. If an SDR marks the lead with a high score, it means there's a greater opportunity to set a sales appointment. Many factors determine a lead score, such as how close a prospect is to the end of the sales funnel. Setting a lead score helps sales reps follow up with leads more or less frequently to ensure that nothing falls through the cracks.

## Setting Sales Appointments

Overall, the end goal of an SDR is to set a sales appointment between a qualified lead and your business. A sales appointment allows you or an account executive to talk one-on-one with a prospect to discuss business specifics, such as pricing and a partnership timeline.

# Who Should Be Involved in Sales Enablement?

A sales enablement program involves many key players. When developing your sales enablement team, it's crucial to hire the following sales experts:



## Sales Development Representatives

As mentioned above, sales development reps are responsible for building and sustaining the sales pipeline. Without SDRs, you have no one to contact or build relationships with prospective businesses. In addition, they ensure that every scheduled sales appointment is with a lead that meets your company's ideal customer criteria.



## Data and Operations Analysts

Data and operations analysts are the list builders of the sales enablement program. They are responsible for finding outbound prospects for SDRs to contact. These sales experts can find prospects through various avenues, including referrals, social media (specifically LinkedIn), search engine results, or lead prospecting software databases. Ideally, these prospects meet the predetermined company qualifiers, but SDRs must confirm that they meet the criteria.



## Sales Training Specialists

Sales enablement best practices are constantly changing, which is why it's important to include sales training specialists in your sales team. These sales experts are responsible for recognizing what works and what doesn't with your sales enablement program. If you're not getting the ROI you'd like for your sales enablement program, sales training specialists are tasked with listening to SDR pitches and analyzing the process in place to gain a better understanding of what may be going wrong. From here, they can strategize alternative ways to improve the sales enablement program.



## Sales Managers

Lastly, sales managers are the glue that holds the sales enablement team together. Sales managers are responsible for overseeing every sales expert to ensure that they perform to their best capabilities. If sales reps are getting a lot of pitches but set very few appointments, the sales manager is responsible for connecting with them to uncover gaps in their pitch.



# Why Should a Business Develop a Sales Enablement Team?

A sales enablement team is essential for generating revenue. In addition to setting qualified sales appointments, sales teams have the opportunity to create and distribute compelling marketing collateral that catches the eye of prospects and supports top-of-mind awareness. These sales enablement materials include digital brochures, sell sheets, and promotional videos that could be embedded into a website or attached to email marketing campaigns, furthering a prospect's journey through the sales funnel.

While setting qualified sales appointments is the ultimate goal of a sales enablement program, a sales team allows you to actively learn about current industry and marketing trends. By regularly communicating with leads in the sales pipeline, SDRs have the opportunity to discover what matters most to key decision-makers. This allows your business to gain critical insight into your target market and effectively pitch products or services that are important to them.





# How To Build a Successful Sales Enablement Team

Any company can develop a sales enablement team, but how do you build a successful sales enablement team? Assembling an SDR team can take a lot of trial and error, but here are some points to consider when you start putting your sales enablement program together:

## Step 1: Determine Your Key Sales Team Members

As mentioned previously, many key players are involved in a sales enablement program. While it is ideal to have both BDR and SDR roles, many companies decide to intertwine both roles to save money and reduce communication gaps.

When you start visualizing what your ideal sales enablement team looks like, what do you want each team member to be responsible for? It's important to remember that if you put too many responsibilities on a single team member's plate, tasks can be forgotten or not handled as responsibly as you'd like.

Sales enablement isn't a one-person show, which is why it's crucial to have a team of people with specific skills. While a one-person sales enablement program sounds great for your budget, it's important to keep each sales expert's professional abilities in mind. When you prioritize the capabilities of your sales employees, you reduce the risk of burnout and turnover.

## Step 2: Hire Skilled Salespeople

Sales is not an easy career for a lot of people. It takes a lot of soft and hard skills to not just do the job, but do the job effectively. As you go through the hiring process of your sales enablement team, it's essential to keep the following soft and hard skills in mind:

- Soft Skills
- Empathy
- Communication
- Influence
- Creativity
- Time management
- Hard Skills
- Sales industry knowledge
- Sales onboarding knowledge
- Sales content and collateral expertise
- Analytics expertise
- Productivity tools experience



## Step 3: Define Your Sales Enablement Strategy

What does sales enablement look like to you and your company? How do you want to get leads in the sales pipeline? Every company has its unique approach to lead generation. Once you have a fully equipped SDR team, it's time to develop a sales enablement strategy that works best for your company, industry, and target market.

Traditionally, there are two ways to approach sales enablement: inbound marketing and outbound sales. Inbound marketing focuses on using digital marketing practices to bring leads to your business. This could include optimizing your website for search engines, creating and distributing relevant content for users, and actively engaging on social media. Ideally, users will find value from your digital platforms and enter their contact information for more insight about your company or the products and services you offer. From there, SDRs contact the lead to guide them into the next step of the sales funnel.

On the other hand, outbound sales is when an SDR reaches out to prospective businesses with no prior indication of interest in your company's product or service. Through outbound sales, SDRs contact prospects by cold calling, emailing, and sending LinkedIn connections to key decision-makers. During these conversations, SDRs aim to introduce the company and nurture the relationship with the prospect until they're ready to change their current B2B solution.

Many companies believe they need to choose one sales enablement strategy over another. However, we're here to tell you that's not the case. When paired together, these sales enablement strategies provide a greater impact on your ROI.

## Step 4: Put Your Sales Enablement Program Into Action

Once you have your sales enablement strategy in place, it's time to put it into action. As you execute your sales enablement strategy, think about what you want to achieve from this program. How are you measuring your program's success? Remember to track your growth (or lack thereof) and metrics so you can determine if you're achieving the goals you set for your sales enablement program. If your SDR team is not where they need to be toward their goal, uncover areas for improvement.

## Step 5: Review and Analyze Your Strategy

After 12 to 18 months of an active sales enablement program, it's time to review and analyze the strategy you have in place. While it may seem like a small segment of your plan, it's one of the most important. Reviewing your strategy allows you to have a better grasp of what works for your sales efforts and what doesn't. If something isn't working the way you want it to, you and your team can brainstorm new approaches and processes to advance your strategy.

## Step 6: Repeat the Process

As mentioned previously, a sales enablement program requires a lot of trial and error—what may work for one business may not work for another. Repeating steps 4 and 5 allow you to continuously expand your program while sustaining leads in the sales pipeline.



# 4-Step Process of Outbound Sales Enablement

A common issue companies have with outbound sales enablement is that they don't effectively build relationships and follow up with leads. If a lead in the sales pipeline refuses to meet for a sales appointment, many SDRs get intimidated and shoo them out of the sales pipeline. If you want to know how to build an unsustainable sales pipeline, that would be step number one. However, we're not here to do that. Here is the 4-step process that SDRs should follow for sustainable outbound sales enablement efforts:

## Step 1: Lead Cleansing

Lead cleansing is when an SDR connects with a prospective business in the sales pipeline and determines if they meet your company's ideal customer criteria. Lead cleansing is essential to ensure you connect with an individual who has financial power and that the lead you're chasing is worth your SDR's time and effort.

An SDR's first step in lead cleansing is discovering who the KDM is for the product or service they're pitching. Once they identify a KDM, they ask qualifying questions such as:

- Number of full-time employees
- Square footage of their office building (depending on the industry you serve)
- Number of workstations (specifically for MSP or software companies)

While there can be many other qualifying questions, these are dependent on the industry you serve and the qualifiers your company has in place.

## Step 2: Company Introduction

Once your SDRs make sure the lead in the sales pipeline is qualified for your company's product or service, it's time to introduce your company to the KDM. When cold calling or emailing a prospective business, the SDR should reach out to a KDM. Once an SDR connects with a KDM, the SDR can introduce your company and pitch what you have to offer.

More often than not, KDMs will object to a sales meeting after the first call. SDRs use this first phone call with them to build rapport, provide top-of-mind awareness, and create a foundation to build and nurture a relationship with them over time.



## Step 3: Lead Nurturing

Lead nurturing may be the most crucial step in the outbound sales enablement process because many leads in the sales pipeline stay in this phase for most of their buyer's journey. The lead nurturing phase allows SDRs to routinely follow up with qualified leads and build a stronger relationship over time. This stage enables SDRs to provide more value to their company's product or service and better understand what a prospective business looks for in a B2B partnership.

## Step 4: Set Appointments

Lastly, the final step of the outbound sales enablement process is for SDRs to set sales appointments with qualified leads. By setting appointments, you and your account executive have the opportunity to have a more detailed conversation about how your business could benefit their day-to-day operations. Overall, the end goal of the sales appointment is to convert the KDM from a lead into a loyal customer.





# Sales Enablement Best Practices

While many sales enablement best practices are changing constantly, some best practices are timeless—no matter how often the process evolves. By following these basic sales enablement best practices, your SDRs can get one step closer to moving leads out of the nurturing phase:

## Personalize Your Pitch

Like any sales and marketing strategy, it's essential to personalize a pitch to align with the wants and needs of a prospective business. Pitch personalization enables SDRs to have a productive conversation with leads in the sales pipeline because it shows that they're actively listening to the concerns of the KDM. By personalizing a pitch, your SDRs encourage leads to feel more connected with your business.

## Be Persistent

Very few great results come from the first try. Sales enablement is all about persistently following up with hot leads until they're ready to make a purchase. This ensures that your SDRs don't let any opportunities fall through the cracks and that you're able to reach a KDM when timing makes the most sense for them.

## Uncover Pain Points

Your SDRs have a lot to say about how great your company is, but that's not the point of a sales call. As SDRs call prospective businesses, make sure they ask open-ended questions to learn about a prospective business's pain points. If a lead says they're happy with their current solution, encourage your SDRs to ask what makes that product or service provider so great. In addition, motivate your SDRs to ask prospects if they could change anything about their current solution, what would it be? This may loosen up the prospect and inspire them to open up about their B2B partnership.



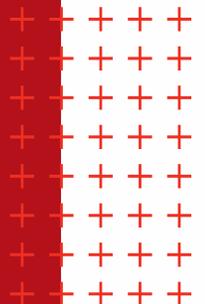
## Focus on Building Relationships

One of the most important aspects of developing a successful sales enablement program is to focus on building relationships rather than prioritizing making a sale. KDMs get cold calls and emails from sales reps all the time, but where they lose the lead is when they push their company's product or service rather than learning about what really matters to them. When your SDRs call prospective businesses, make sure they empathize with the KDM and discuss solutions to their pain points.

## Measure Performance

While the previous sales enablement best practices are focused on the approach of SDRs, this best practice is targeted toward you and your sales managers. Measuring an SDR's performance is essential for understanding the effectiveness of your team and the program you have in place. There are many ways you can measure an SDR's performance, including:

- Number of qualified appointments set
- Quality of the value of the calls
- Average number of dials to appointment
- Appointment show rate (minimum of 80% show rate)





# Why Do B2B Companies Choose To Outsource Sales Enablement?

Developing a successful sales enablement program isn't an easy task. Many B2B companies choose to outsource their sales enablement efforts for many reasons, including to:

## Save Time and Money

A sales enablement program can be costly and time-consuming to develop. Outsourcing sales enablement offers you access to a team of high-performing sales experts for the price of a single internal sales team member. In addition, you save time from onboarding, training, and overseeing the sales division. This gives your internal team more time to craft a sales presentation that aligns with the wants and needs of a potential customer.

## Acquire High-Performing Sales Reps

Unfortunately, turnover in the sales industry is high. When you outsource your sales enablement efforts, you gain access to a team of trained and experienced sales reps who know how to pitch KDMs effectively and convince them that they need your business. Outsourcing sales enablement ensures that every team member is skilled and trained, so you don't have to spend a significant amount of time and money onboarding new reps to represent your business.





## Have Access To Sales Tools and Technologies

There are many different tools and technologies that sales teams need to do their job effectively and keep a competitive edge. Outsourcing your sales enablement efforts gives you access to all the various tools and technologies you need to sustain a healthy sales pipeline. These components to your sales enablement strategy can be costly and take a significant amount of time to learn. When you outsource, you don't need to purchase the tools or technologies, and your outsourced sales team already knows how to use them to their full potential.

## Generate High-Quality Leads

A common misconception businesses have when they start their sales enablement program is that every lead is worth chasing. However, we're here to tell you that's inaccurate and wastes a lot of valuable company time. Outsourcing your sales enablement efforts provides the opportunity to set your own lead qualifiers and ensure that each appointment set by SDRs meets your ideal customer criteria.

## Build a Sustainable Sales Pipeline

Above all else, outsourcing your sales enablement program is essential for building a sustainable sales pipeline. When SDRs call prospects, they ensure that each lead in the sales pipeline meets your qualifications and that there's an opportunity to close business. Over time, SDRs can nurture the relationship with KDMs and guide them toward the end of the purchasing funnel to convert them from a lead into a long-term customer.





# Looking for High-Quality SDRs?

Abstrakt Marketing Group is a leading sales appointment setting company. We collaborate with growing B2B companies across the nation to strategically prospect and set sales meetings with key decision-makers.



**Contact us today to learn how our sales development reps find and nurture relationships with qualified leads.**

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