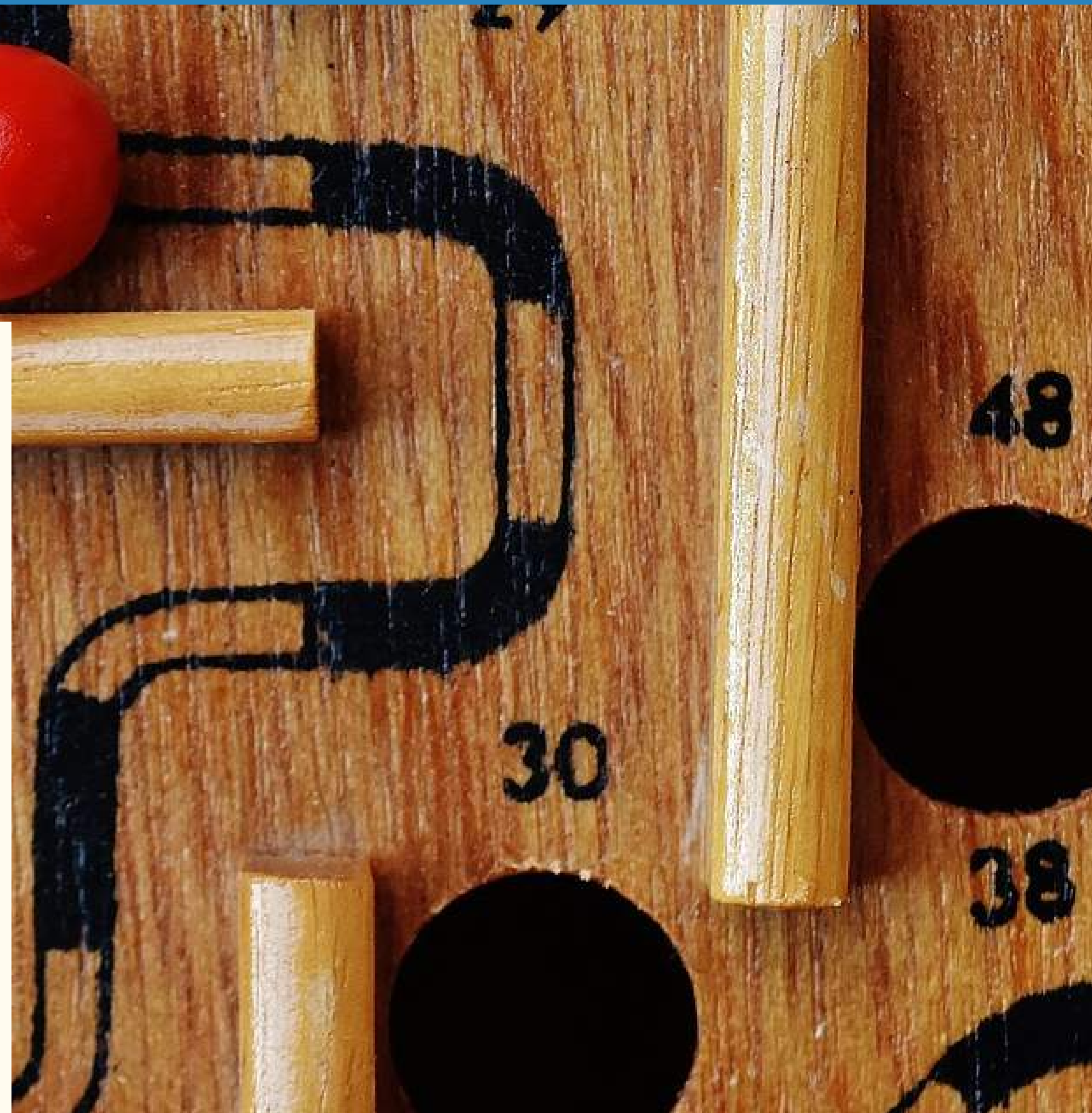# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO ENABLEMENT OF DIRECT SALES TEAMS

mindmatrix

ONE PLATFORM : DIRECT & CHANNEL

Why is direct sales enablement gaining importance?

To understand why a company engaged in direct sales needs sales enablement, we need to look at some facts:

Only 33% of inside sales rep time is spent actively selling.   Source: CSO Insights

95% of the sales assets created by marketing for sales are never used- AMA

50% of sales time is wasted on unproductive prospecting -The B2B Lead

The opportunity cost of unused or underused marketing content is roughly $2.3 million for enterprise organizations –SiriusDecisions

Failure to align sales and marketing teams around the right processes and technologies costs B2B companies 10% or more of revenue per year – Kapost, 2015

" All of these point towards one reality: Sales enablement has become indispensable **"**

Did you know?

In a research conducted by DemandMetric, it was revealed that 68% of large businesses were using sales enablement, while 75% of companies that deployed a sales enablement strategy, said it made a moderate to significant difference.

Source: DemandMetric

With buyers having too many options at their fingertips coupled with a shortened attention span, salespeople have to be on their toes, completely attuned to buyer behavior and preferences at every stage of the sales cycle.

Accomplishing this without sales enablement is just impossible.

Traditional marketing automation/CRMs don't help

For a while, marketing automation and CRMs were thought to be the answer to this challenge. These systems focused on two key areas:

(1) Automating marketing and sales collateral creation in order to enable marketing to better support sales in their content requirements, and
(2) CRM worked to offer sales a better prospect view through the sales cycle.

However, it didn't take long for the industry to realize that a disjointed system such as this which had marketing and sales working in silos just doesn't offer the results organizations seek. This was when the focus shifted to sales enablement. So, what does sales enablement really mean?

Did you know?

30-60% of CRM and SharePoint Projects Fail

Source: C5 Insight

What does direct sales enablement involve?

Leading research firm Forrester defines sales enablement as "A strategic, ongoing process that equips all client-facing employees with the ability to consistently and systematically have a valuable conversation with the right set of customer stakeholders at each stage of the customer's problem-solving life cycle to optimize the return on investment of the selling system"

True sales enablement involves complete enablement of your direct sales team at every stage of the sales cycle from the time an opportunity is created until the time the lead is closed, and sometimes beyond that. While marketing automation platforms do a decent job offering marketing support to salespeople, investing in a marketing tool alone leaves many loose ends. What your salespeople really want is a tool that will help them walk the last mile confidently and close the leads--solid support on the sales front with tools that help them sell. For sales enablement to work, companies need to look beyond the obvious and handhold their salespeople throughout the buyer's journey. Key elements include guided sales processes, tools that take the guesswork out of what to say, when to say it and how to say it to a lead and the ability to reach out to leads at the right time, with the right message. True Sales Enablement entails all these, and more. In short, it is all about bringing those elements together that make it easy for salespeople to sell.

Next up, we break down the elements of sales enablement, one-by-one, so you know what you need when enabling your direct sales teams.

#1 Build a powerful onboarding & training program

A great onboarding program truly adds value to your salespeople. It can-

- Boost revenue from sales:-A solid on boarding program ensures your salespeople are better prepared to face the market, which, in turn, helps them close more leads and generate more sales for you.
- Reduce the time spent learning: A well-crafted on boarding program prepares your salespeople for every situation. They are well-trained and can go straight for the sale. This reduces the time they take to ramp up sales and start achieving their targets sooner.
- Keep your salespeople longer: A good onboarding program offers the support a salesperson needs to perform well. This lets them achieve their personal and professional goals, thus motivating them to stay with the company.

The first step to enabling your salespeople is by building a great sales onboarding program. Sales training playbooks can play a key role in helping you do that.

When your salespeople join your organization, they need much more than a bunch of induction presentations and brochures. What they really need are plays for different scenarios or plays for prospects who are in different stages of the sales cycle. Sales playbooks fit this need perfectly. As a part of the onboarding process, introduce your salespeople to sales playbooks that teach them the what, when, and how of prospect engagement—what to say to a prospect, when to say it and how to say it so they can respond to leads anywhere in the sales cycle.

Did you know?

It takes 10 months or more for a new sales rep to be fully productive

Source: CSO Insights

Did you know?

The average company spends $10K – $15K hiring an individual and only $2K a year in sales training

Source: The Bridge Group

Did you know?

Between 85% and 90% of sales training has no lasting impact after 120 days

Source: ES Research Group

Tip: Make sure the playbooks are easy to access, use and are always up-to-date. Remember, the sales playbook is NOT an asset dump. Instead, it should be a systematic collection of assets that help your salespeople quickly find what they need. Otherwise, if your salespeople have to sift through multiple folders and documents before they find the asset they require, they will never use it.

#2 Offer your salespeople a well-guided sales process

A guided sales process is a map, a GPS for your salespeople that takes them to their ultimate goal--lead closure. It offers a systematic organization of all marketing and sales assets whereby each asset is mapped to the buyer's position in the sales cycle.

Typically, companies provide salespeople with a bunch of leads (which marketing usually deems qualified for sales exposure), a couple of sales, perhaps a few brochures, sales presentations, a couple of emails and a call script, and expect them to work magic. We call it the 'Penguin syndrome'. Expecting your salespeople to put random information/assets to use and close deals just because they are 'salespeople' is like expecting a penguin to fly just because it is a bird! Without a guided sales process, your sales revenue will not take flight.
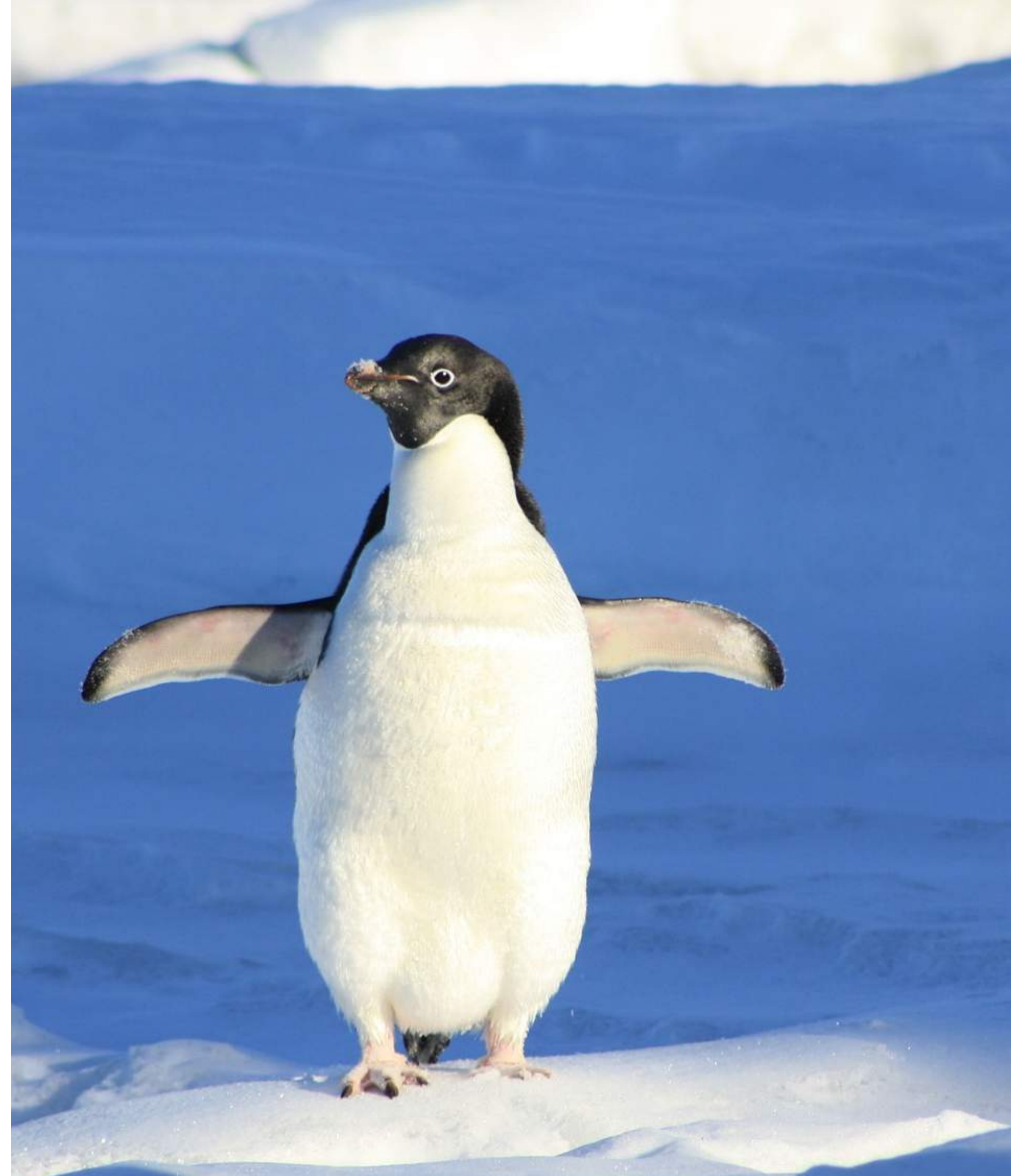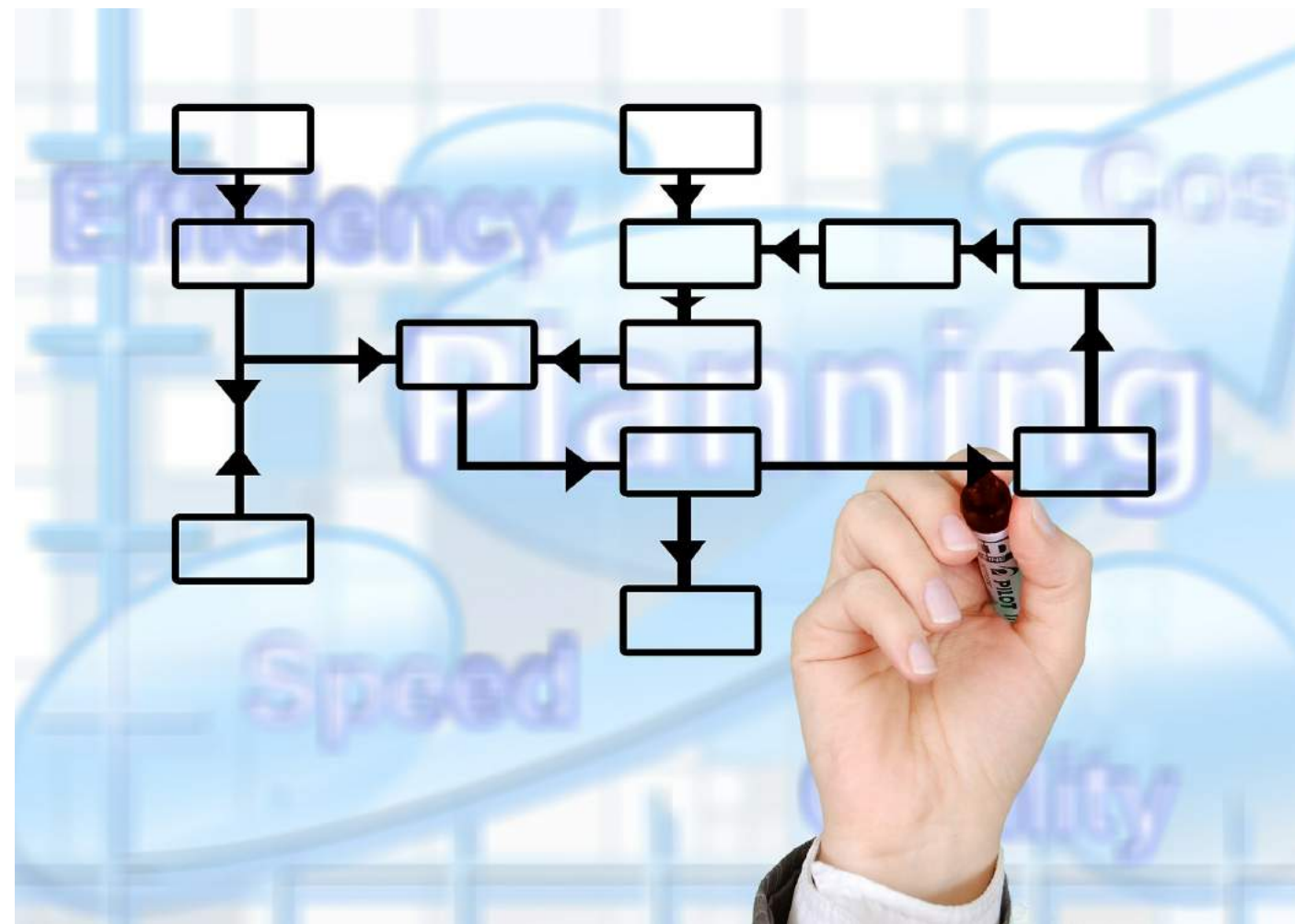
Did you know?

95% of buyers chose a solution provider that "Provided them with ample content to help navigate through each stage of the buying process"

Source: DemandGen Report
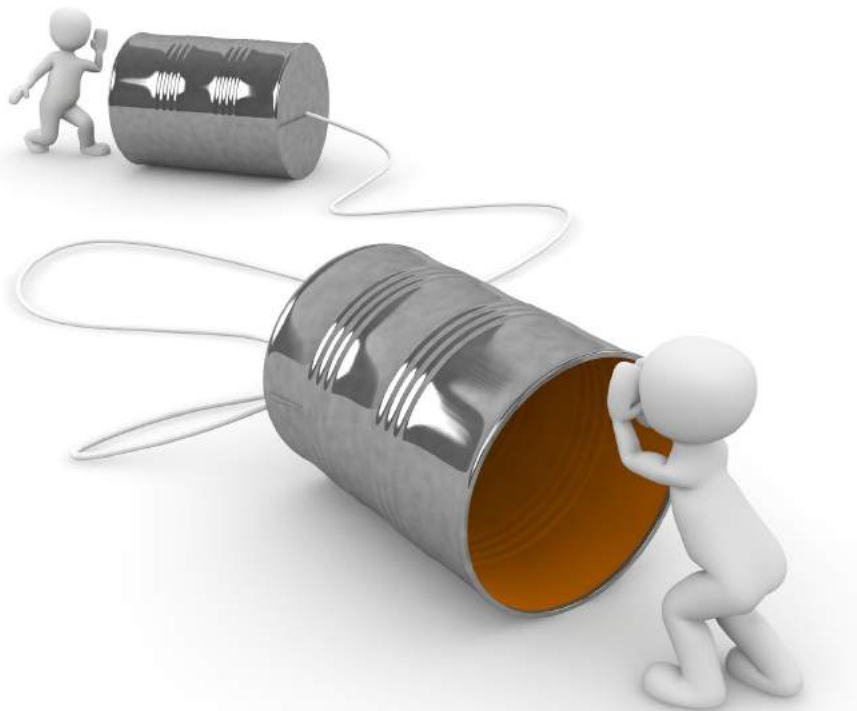
Did you know?

70% of companies don't require their salespeople to comply with a standardized, documented set of sales processes

Source: ES Research Group

Did you know?

Companies that communicate sales methodologies clearly and have mechanisms in place to share internal sales knowledge have win rates that exceed 50%

Source: Saleforce.com study

Sales playbooks–discussed earlier–play a role in the creation of a guided sales process. A playbook lets you map your sales assets to the relevant point in the buyer's journey and gives your salespeople easy access to all the sales and marketing assets they need when reaching out to their leads. Unlike shared folders or drives on the cloud, sales playbooks are less complicated and specifically created for sales teams. They are not a random asset dump and work as a great mechanism to share internal sales knowledge.

Tip: Create playbooks for different plays, different sales cycle milestones and even different prospect personas, and pain points. Once you give your salespeople the answer to the when, what and how of selling, you will make it a lot easier for them to close leads.

#3 One touch access to important elements

As discussed before, the modern day buyer that your salesperson is dealing with is very agile. In order to enable your sales teams to keep in step with their leads, you need to equip them with tools that give them the low-down on their prospects. A powerful sales dashboard that offers one touch access to key metrics is what we are talking about here. What are the key metrics? Lead activity overview, hot lead lists, recent sales campaign success rates, most popular sales assets, to name a few.
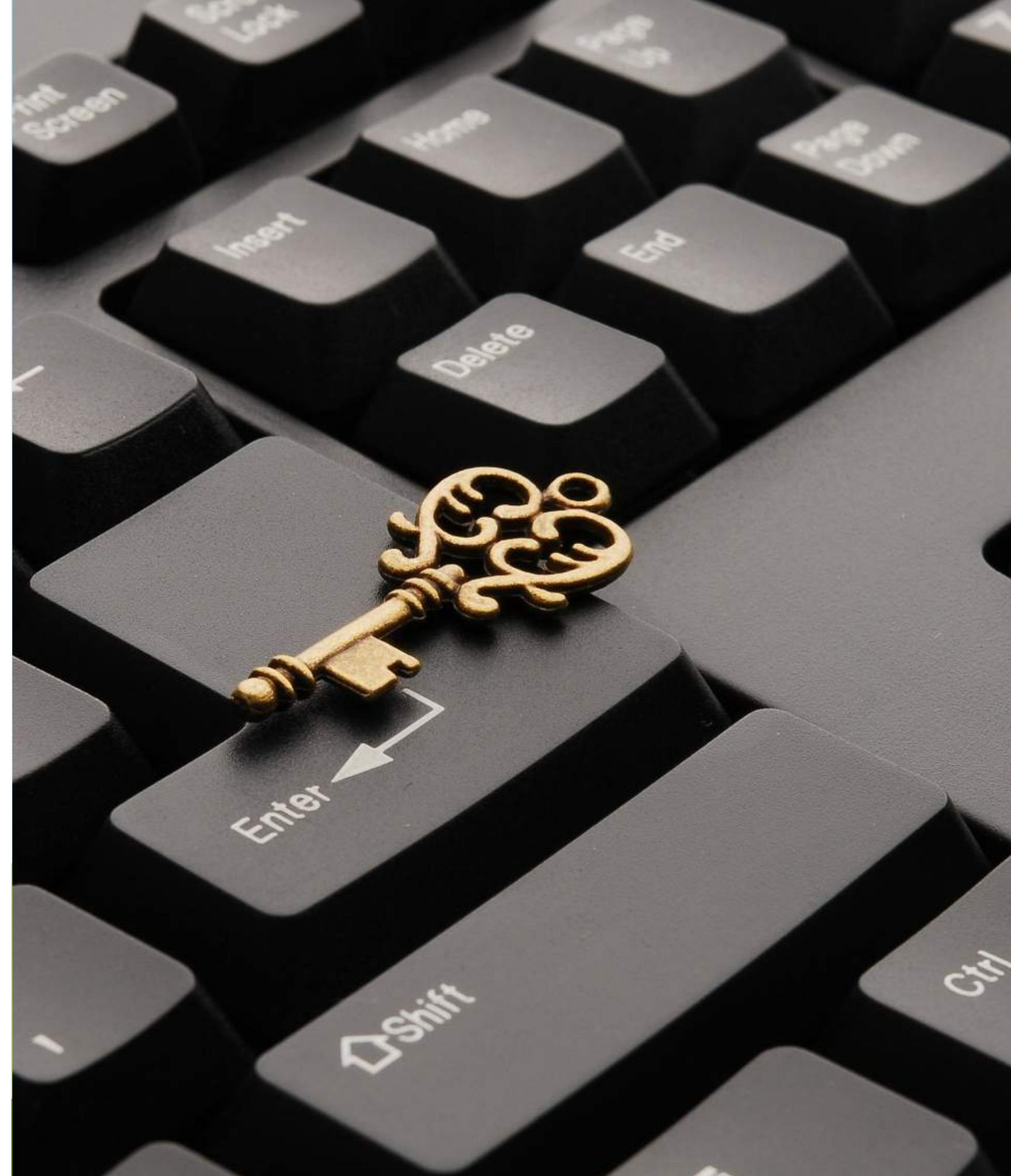
Did you know?

33% of all unsuccessful client deals could have been won, if the seller had been better informed and had acted more client-oriented

Source: IDC study

#4 Access to the right assets at the right time

Giving your salespeople access to the right assets at the right time is a BIG, BIG way to enable them. You are not only telling them what to say to their leads, but you are also telling them when and how to say it. It helps you retain more control over your messaging and makes the salespeople's job so much easier. Doesn't that sound like a dream? Well, here's how you can make it happen. When investing in a sales enablement platform, look for one that comes with an asset recommendation engine--which allows you to map your assets to the lead's position in the sales cycle and suggest the right assets to your salespeople as they reach out to those leads.

Did you know?

Between 60 percent and 70 percent of B2B created content is never used. More than half of B2B organizations do not have a unified, enterprise-wide content creation process in place

Source: SiriusDecisions

Another way to ensure your salespeople have access to the assets they need, on-demand, is by providing mobile access to them. Salespeople are always on the move. Business breakfasts, formal lunches and client site visits leave them with very little time to respond to prospects in a timely manner. For your sales and marketing assets to be really used, they need to be accessible on the go, by any wireless device with an internet connection. That way, the sales team can access vital elements such as warm leads, prospect activity and key communication pieces from any internet-enabled mobile device—even when they are not in their office.

Did you know?

70% of businesses enabling their sales staff through mobile technology enjoyed significant ROI

Source: Sales Management Association

Another overlooked aspect is the availability of assets in email clients. If your salespeople are using gmail or Outlook to reach out to their prospects and your assets are available for use only via your sales enablement platform's email marketing module, then you are again risking assets will be ignored by your salespeople. Imagine your salesperson wants to send a quick email out to a lead with a brochure attached. Wouldn't she appreciate the convenience of being able to do that via the regular email client, rather than log into another system? Not integrating your assets with your salespeople's most commonly used email clients can cause them to use the 'most recent version' of the asset that they have on their device, which may or may not be updated.

Another concern is making sure your assets are easily searchable and accessible. No matter how good your assets are, if your salespeople can't find them, they are never going to use them. When you upload your assets into your sales enablement platform, make sure you are identifying them correctly. Most platforms will allow you to create filters and tags for assets that help you organize them correctly.

" Some sales enablement platforms also allow you to control the availability of assets to your salespeople. For example, a salesperson dealing with a particular prospect vertical doesn't have access to assets that extend beyond their area of specialization, or a special pricing brochure is not available beyond the holiday season. "

Did you know?

65% Reps spend too much time on non-sales activities, which limits the time required to fully understand the needs of the client

Source: SiriusDecisions

#5 Ability to make that great first impression with personalized sales communication

Personalized sales communication helps your salespeople break the ice with their prospects sooner and achieve better results. As part of your sales enablement efforts, offer your sales team tools that enable personalization on two fronts —branding and content. Branding-based personalization involves personalizing your sales person's communication with their personal branding elements.

Content-based personalization is tailoring your sales team's communication to match the prospect's preferences and sales cycle position. Unfortunately, tailoring sales content for every prospect manually is impossible. Sales enablement entails providing your salespeople with tools that allow them to add a personal touch to their interaction with prospects. Whether it is personal branding of sales materials or customizing them to suit prospect preference, personalization tools can make it happen for the sales team. Not only do these tools make your sales communication more effective, but they also enable your sales team to personalize without straying from branding standards.

Did you know?

Personalized emails that include the recipient's first name in the subject line have higher open rates

Source: Retention Science

#6 CRM Integration

One of the key factors hampering adoption of a sales enablement program is the salesperson's need to toggle between their CRM and the new platform. Your CRM already contains vital information about leads, existing customer accounts and the sales pipeline; plus, most salespeople are comfortable using their CRM tool. Ensure that your sales enablement platform integrates with your corporate CRMs to ensure a smooth exchange of contacts and key lead data between the two. Integrating your sales enablement platform with your company's CRM saves your sales professional's time and helps them respond better to prospect interest. Your salespeople will appreciate the convenience of using the single CRM platform to perform all their sales tasks.

# #7 Your salespeople love their leads. Help them get closer to the right ones

Leads! Leads! Leads! That's what your salespeople really dream about. Your sales enablement effort can take them a step closer to their dreams by ensuring the right leads are passed on to them.

A robust lead scoring process, automated lead routing and segmentation based on lead scores and interests are all ways to ensure only the right–a.k.a "qualified"–leads get passed onto your sales team.

Did you know?

Only 44% of companies are using any kind of lead scoring system
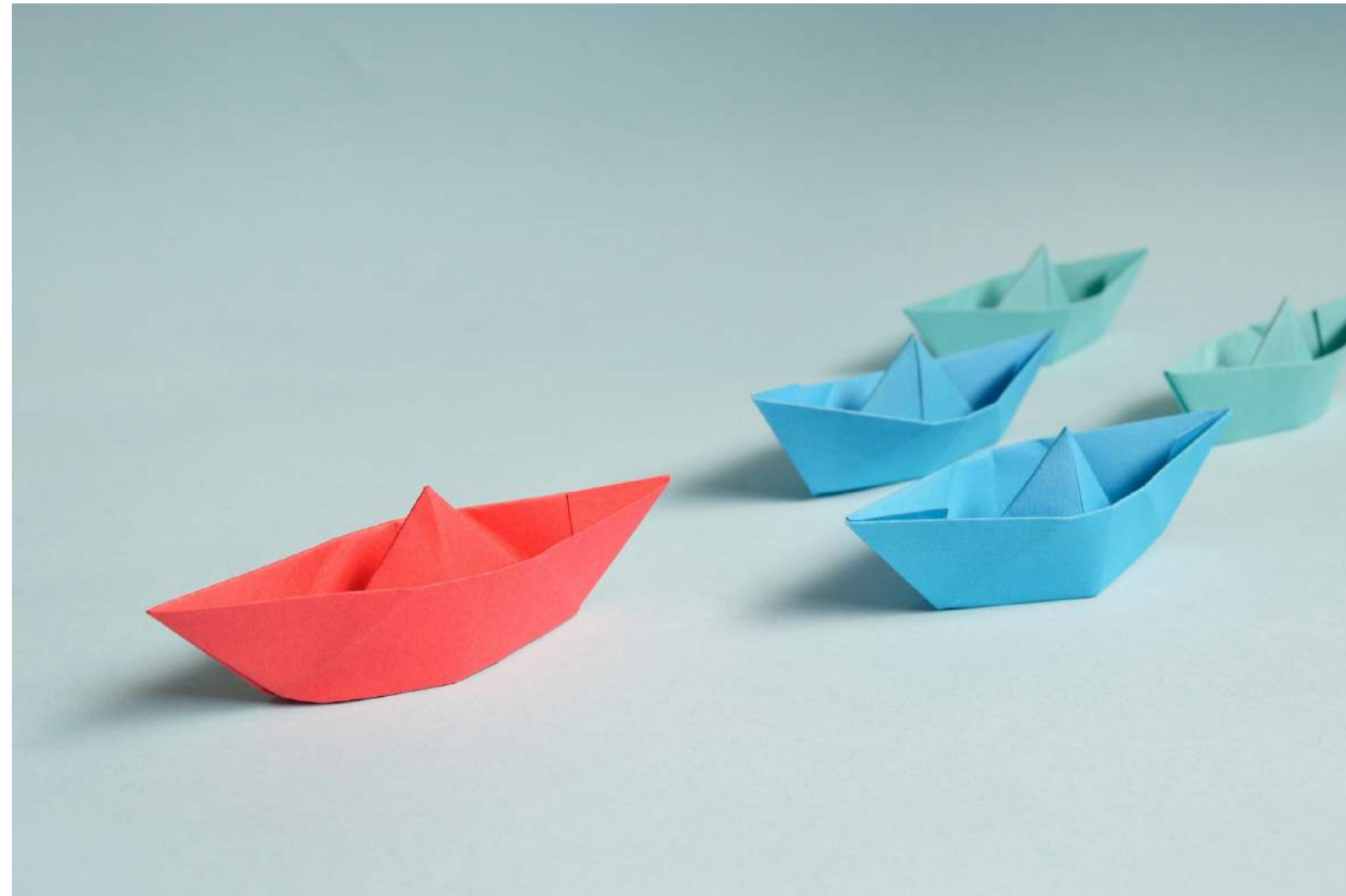
Source: Decision Tree

#8 Help your salespeople understand their leads better

One sure-fire way to enable your salespeople is by giving them a complete, 360-degree view of their prospects. When your sales teams know what stage of the sales cycle their leads are in and how they are responding to the information your sales team is sharing with them, your salespeople can pitch your products and services better to the leads, thus automatically moving a step closer to success.
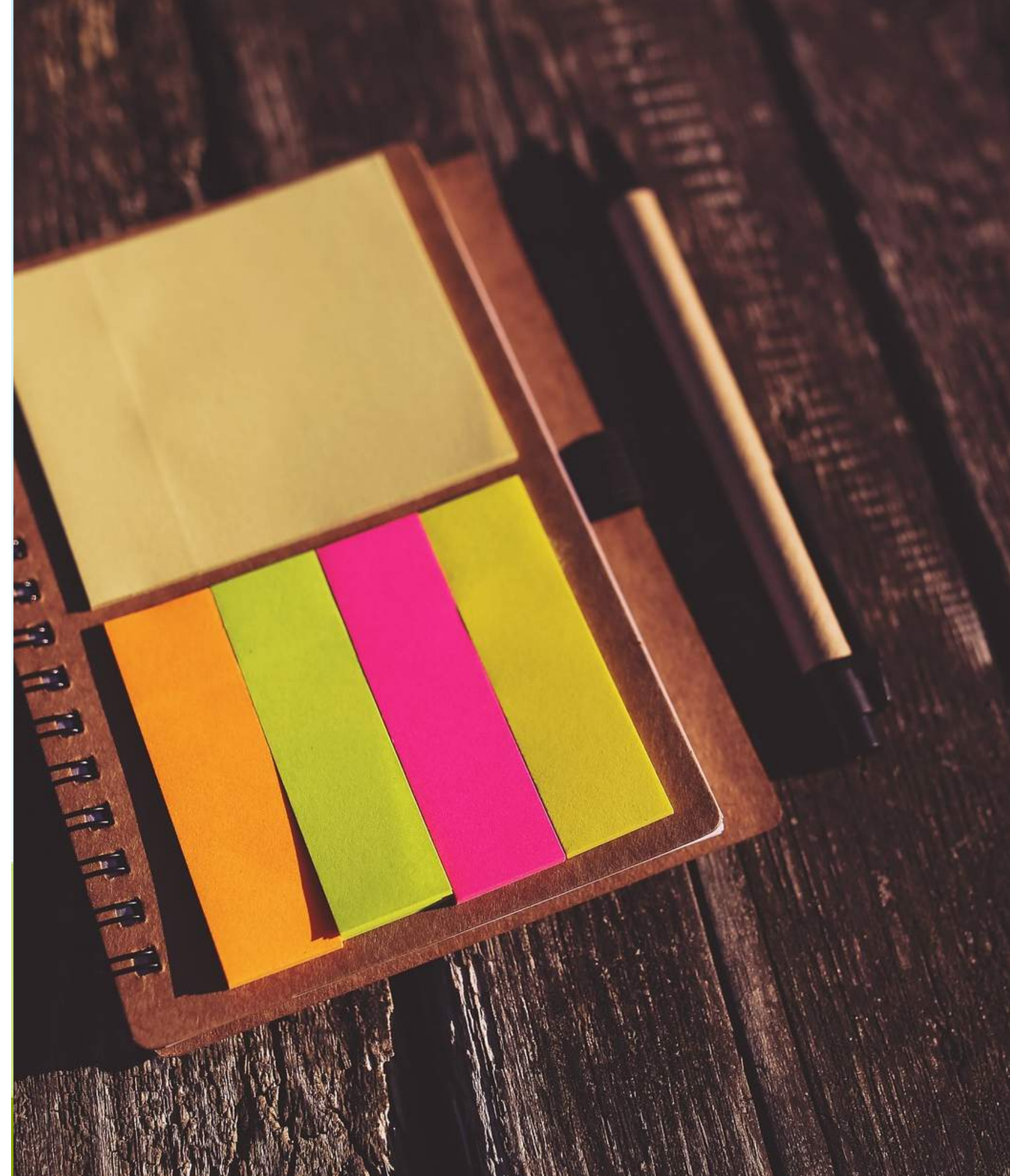
Did you know?

57% of the buyer's journey is completed before the buyer talks to sales

Source: Corporate Executive Board

#9 Make sales follow up easy

Enabling your sales team in the truest sense involves making it easy for them to follow up with their leads. There are many ways in which a sales enablement platform can help you do that, including drip campaigns that can be run on-behalf of your salespeople by your marketing team. These drip or lead nurturing campaigns do a great job of keeping salespeople in touch with all their leads, when, in fact, they are focusing on other, hotter leads that are nearer to closure. These drips help salespeople engage their leads throughout the sales cycle and result in lower lead drop rates and higher closure rates.

Did you know?

According to the Annuitas Group, businesses that use marketing automation to nurture prospects experience a 451% increase in qualified leads and nurtured leads make 47% larger purchases than non-nurtured leads

Source: Annuitas Group

Real-time alerts and notifications about significant lead activity. Every salesperson knows the importance of timely lead follow up. However, when you have a pipeline full of leads, keeping tabs on each of them at an individual level is not easy. While daily or weekly lead reports are great to get an overview of your lead status, you can't expect your channel partners to look at lead activity reports constantly. The sales team should get alerts in case of vital prospect activity such as lead status progress from cold to warm or demo requests or trial sign-ups. This will allow your salespeople to respond immediately and make the most of the rise in the prospect's interest level. Check if your sales enablement tool generates alerts for your salespeople at a defined activity level.

Did you know?

Gleanster reports that using lead nurturing showed that 15-20% of the "not yet ready to purchase" opportunities converted into sales
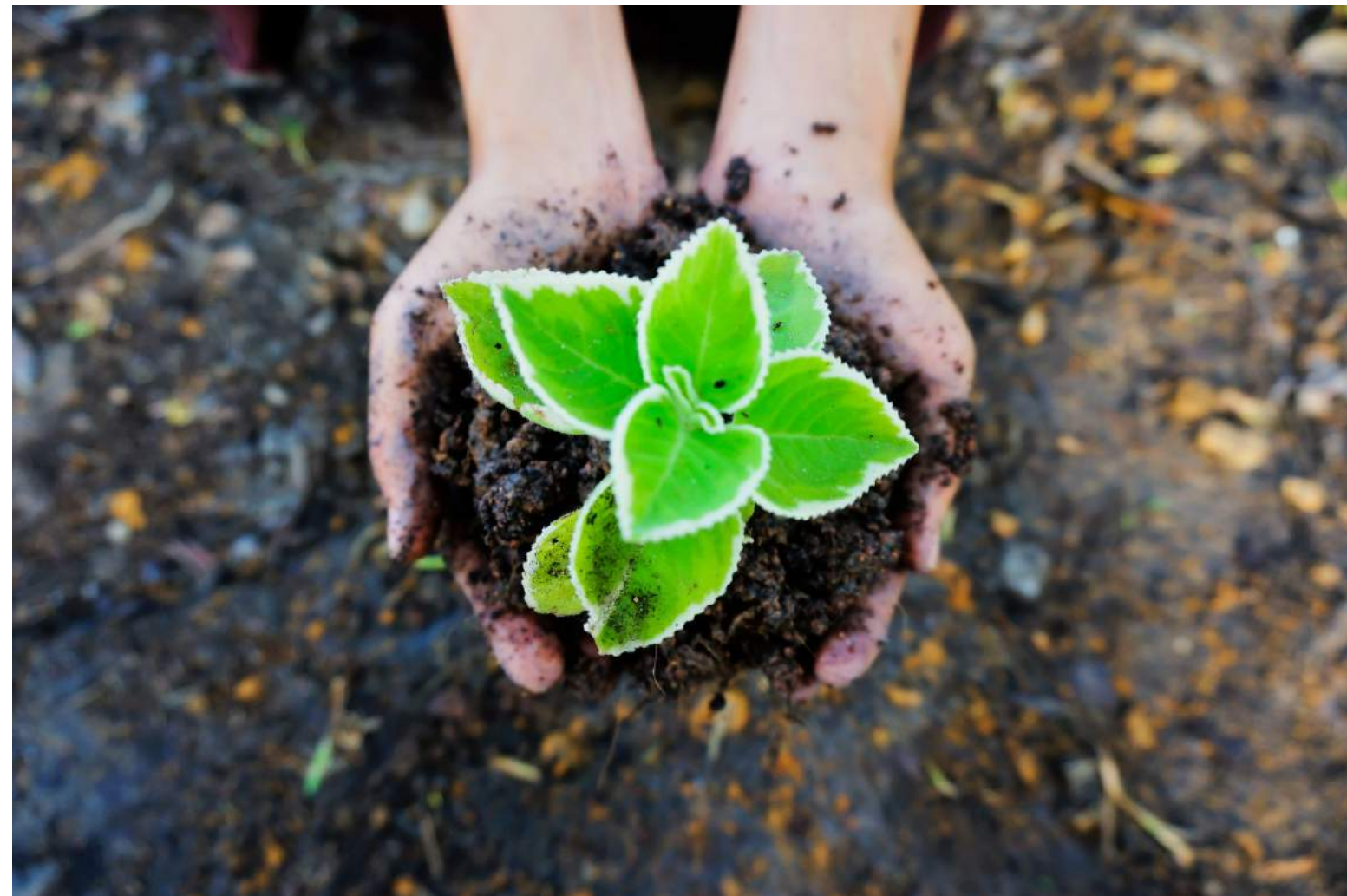
Source: Gleanster Research

Did you know?

44% of salespeople give up after one follow-up

Source: Scripted

Did you know?

Research shows that 35-50% of sales go to the vendor that responds first

Source: InsideSales.com

Did you know?

If you follow up with web leads within 5 minutes, you're 9 times more likely to convert them

Source: InsideSales.com

#10 Help your salespeople engage in social selling

Social channels are a great platform for salespeople to build their personal brand and to attract leads. Social media also acts as a good medium to interact with leads on an informal basis. But, most sales persons don't have the time to invest in social media interactions. Pick a sales enablement tool that automates social media postings for your salespeople. That will truly add value to your Sales Enablement efforts by allowing your salespeople to engage prospects earlier in the buying journey and also increase the probability the prospect will sign-up with you instead of a competitor.
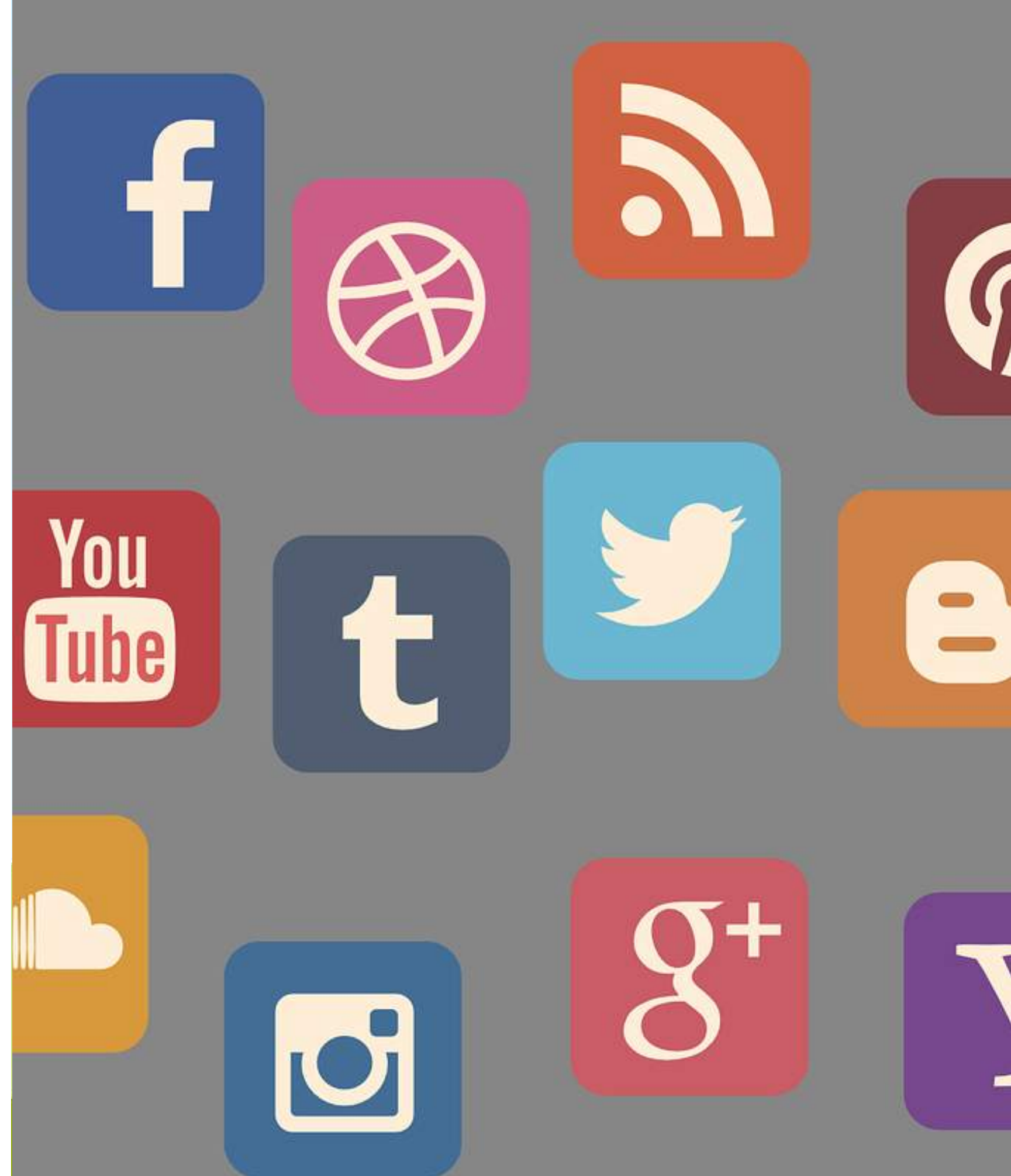
Did you know?

Reps who exceed quota share 23% more content each month on social media
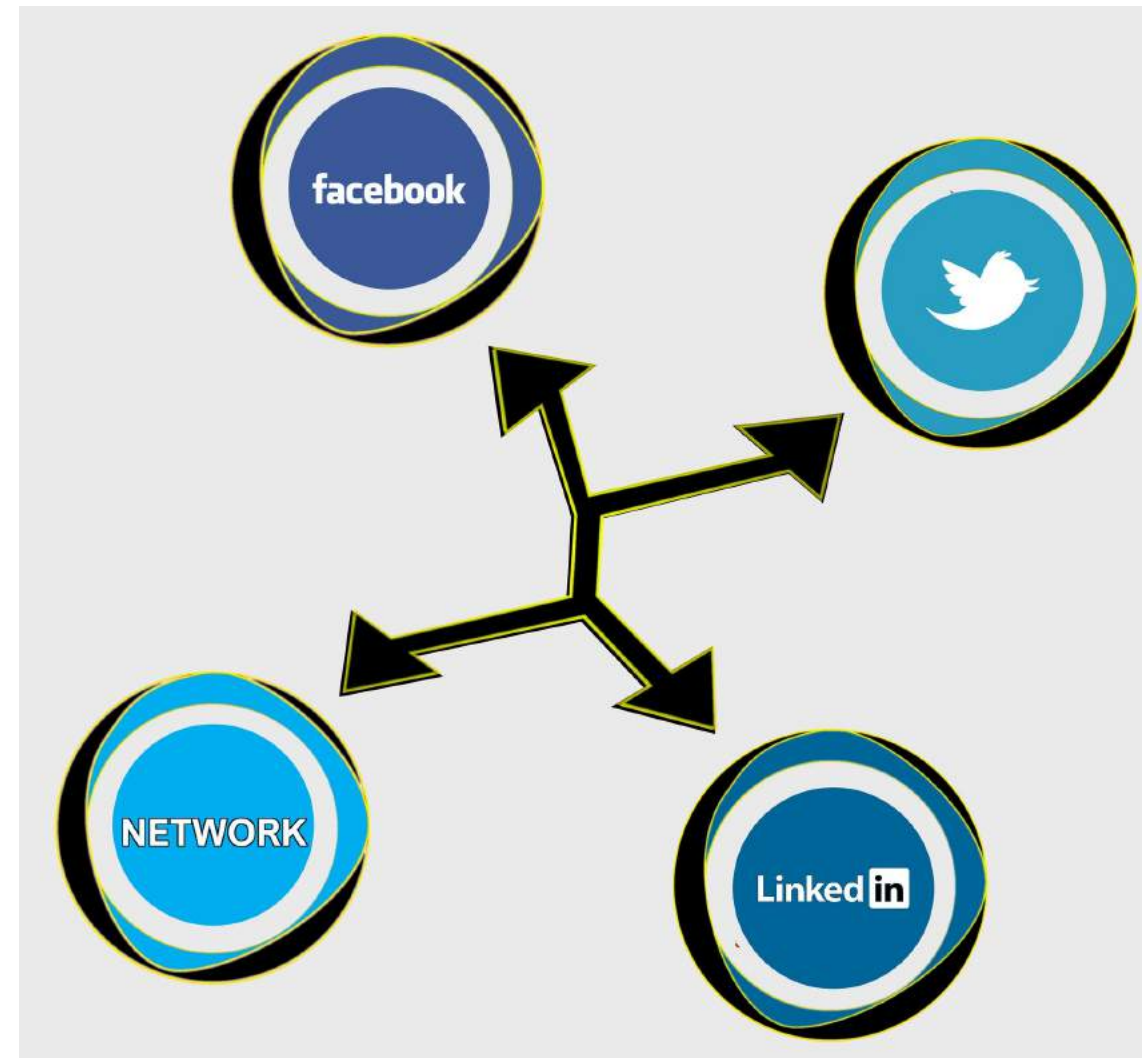
Source: LinkedIn

Did you know?

You are 70% more likely to get an appointment on an unexpected sale if you join LinkedIn Groups

Source: Vorsight

#11 Hear out your salespeople

At the start of this whitepaper, we spoke about how the assets created by marketing are often not used by sales. What if you had a way to actually get formal feedback on the sales assets provided to your sales team? Come to think of it, shouldn't their feedback be important? Check with your sales enablement vendors whether their platforms offer a system for asset rating or review whereby your salespeople can offer feedback. That's one way of soliciting feedback. Another, of course, is by tracking the usage of sales assets by your salespeople. Your sales enablement platform should be able to tell you which assets were used by salespeople and how often. That way you can determine the effectiveness of the assets you pass on to them.

Did you know?

93% of organizations fail to track content usage by sales reps

Source: CSO Insights

Did you know?

90% of B2B salespeople don't use the content provided to them by marketing because they find it outdated, irrelevant or difficult to customize

Source: Forrester

#12 Help your salespeople measure up

Knowing key parameters such as sales campaign results, effectiveness of sales collateral used, investment per prospect, etc., will help your sales team truly understand their performance. Offer your sales team strong reporting and analytics tools that allow the sales leadership team to clearly understand where the sales funds are being pumped and the returns on that investment.

Did you know?

ESR's research shows that 90% of companies have no formal sales performance measurement system

Source: ESR's research

A holistic approach to sales enablement

For your sales enablement efforts to be successful, it is very important to look at it holistically. Complete sales enablement is all about finding the right mix of sharp sales coaching, training and onboarding, gripping content and powerful sales and marketing enablement tools. A lot of its success also depends on adoption of the sales enablement tools and processes. Most sales enablement projects cover the obvious angles of enabling salespeople and leave the last mile– closing–unsupported. Build a comprehensive sales enablement package for your sales teams and see how they embrace your sales enablement project with greater enthusiasm.

LEARN HOW YOU CAN ENABLE YOUR DIRECT SALES TEAMS BETTER

WWW.MINDMATRIX.NET

mindmatrix
ONE PLATFORM : DIRECT & CHANNEL

2403 Sidney Street, Suite

150, Pittsburgh, PA 15203

Phone: 412.381.0230

Fax: 412.774.1992