



WHITEPAPER

10 TOP **SALES METHODOLOGIES** COMPARED & EXPLAINED

BY THE EXECUTIVES REPRESENTING THEM

UNDERSTAND THEIR DIFFERENCES
AND THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY


We interviewed leaders of the world's top sales methodologies, asking each of them the same fourteen questions in regard to their history, unique differentiators, marketplace, process, technology, and the future of the industry.

We compiled their answers into charts and summaries, and extracted key insights into this paper for the purpose of helping sales leaders make informed choices about the future of their sales organizations.

THE PURPOSE OF OUR STUDY

Effective sales methodology implementation can increase sales performance by impressive margins, driving new revenue and higher profits for the organization. Despite these potential benefits, many sales leaders hesitate to invest in a methodology, not least because a mistake can be costly.

We developed this white paper to help sales leaders sort through their options, understand each methodology's place in the market, and gain insight into how implementing a specific sales methodology and/or process might help their organization. Our interviews included top executives at the organizations representing Sandler Selling, Strategic Selling, Solution Selling, SPIN Selling, ValueSelling Framework, Customer-Centric Selling®, RAIN Selling, and Baseline Selling. We also attempted to speak with representatives for Target Account Selling and The Challenger Sale, but these organizations declined to participate.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a dark red pen, writing on a spiral-bound notebook. The notebook is open, and the pen is positioned over the page. The background is softly blurred, showing a person's arm and shoulder in a light-colored shirt. The overall lighting is warm and focused on the writing action.

We hope this white paper will help organizations understand the role of methodology and process, and assist sales leaders in making decisions about the future of their organizations.

INSIGHTS IN BRIEF

ON IDEAL CLIENTS

While most of our participants agree that their sales methodologies are most appropriate for complex B2B sales environments, there are some differences in how they describe their ideal clients. A few claim to be appropriate for any sales environment, while one (Solution Selling®, owned by SPI) claims to have also cracked the code on high-volume transactional sales.

ON PROCESS

All agree that process is separate from, and important to, methodology. They describe process as the set of stages, milestones, and steps that move a prospect through the sale, while methodology is the approach and behavior of the salesperson within those stages, milestones, and steps. Some of the organizations have a specific process that they recommend or sell, while others work with the buyer's own process.

ON REINFORCEMENT

We also uncovered consensus on the matter of reinforcement, and its critical importance to successful methodology and process deployment. Effective coaching, our participants agree, is critical to preventing the "rubber-band" effect of salespeople returning to old behaviors. Technology, and especially CRM and Sales Improvement Tools, provides the right tools for this reinforcement, though traditional CRM has some gaps that require additional technologies in order to perform this function adequately.

ON CHANGE

One area where our interviews uncovered wide divergence of opinion is the topic of how methodologies should change in response to changing buyer behavior. Responses ranged from "our methodology is solid and doesn't need to change" (Sandler and SPIN), to "our methodology is updated constantly based on the latest research" (RAIN Group). Pat Mustico (SPIN)

clarifies that although the methodology hasn't changed, "the application of the skills will vary based on changing buyer behaviors."

Among those who state that their methodology changes in response to buyer behavior, there is wide divergence in what those changes look like. Leaders at RAIN Group and CEB (The Challenger Sale) in particular disagree on the best approach for salespeople to take in response to current changes in buyer behavior.

ON TECHNOLOGY

Regardless of their opinion on whether the methodology itself should change, all agree that changing technology has an impact on implementation. The latest technologies can be used to implement, reinforce, track, analyze, and optimize both sales process and methodology. Finding the right technology to perform these functions can be challenging, but all agree that it is critical.



THE FOUNDING OF A SALES METHODOLOGY

1967

Sandler Selling System

1978

Strategic Selling

1988

Solution Selling & SPIN Selling

1991

ValueSelling Framework

2002

Customer-Centric Selling®
& RAIN Sales Training

2005

Baseline Selling

2011

The Challenger Sale



A BRIEF HISTORY OF SALES METHODOLOGIES

Before psychology selling, before needs and pains and solutions and strategies, there was phrenology: The science of selling cars based on the size of a customer's forehead. No wonder car salesmen have a bad reputation.

Fortunately for customers and sales teams alike, salesmanship has come a long way since the 1800s and early 1900s, when peddlers promoted fake snake oil to cure what ails. Following a number of fits and starts in improving sales process, the 1960s brought a major innovation that resonates through sales organizations today: Needs Satisfaction.

During the decade of the 60s, Xerox Corporation invested several million dollars in response to the end of the dry photocopying patent that had sustained their company through the previous several decades. They developed a "Needs Satisfaction" approach, now also referred to as "solution selling." This, the first of the modern sales methodologies, was so successful that Xerox packaged and sold it to other corporations, under the name of Professional Selling Skills.

Several of today's top sales methodologies were founded by salespeople and sales leaders who were engaged at Xerox during this time period, including Mike Bosworth and Lloyd Sappington. These individuals leveraged the potential and power of Xerox's approach, and updated their own approaches to create Solution Selling (a trademark of SPI) and ValueSelling, respectively.

Xerox's influence is also seen in the methodology founded by Neil Rackham (SPIN Selling), who studied the behaviors of salespeople across more than 35,000 sales calls at organizations including Xerox. More or less simultaneously, salespeople in other marketplaces were uncovering similar insights into effective selling. Notably, David Sandler was selling motivational materials and realized that the old "trick-based" methods weren't working for him. He explored the emerging science of sales psychology to develop new approaches, which ultimately became the Sandler Selling System, which is still widely used today.

Meanwhile, Bob Miller and Steve Heiman were selling for IBM during the same time period, and realized that traditional methods were not effective in moving merchandise. They looked to logic and analysis to develop a "win-win" sales approach that is alive and well in the Miller-Heiman Corporation and its patented Strategic Selling methodology.

In 2002, John Holland, Frank Visgatis, Gary Walker, and Mike Bosworth brought forward a new methodology in response to yet another change in the marketplace. According to Holland and Visgatis, the current (at that time) solution sales methodologies had failed to keep up with the fact that most technology buyers were more educated than previously, and were no longer buying disruptive technologies. The language and approach had to change. They developed Customer-Centric Selling® to meet these new needs.

In 2002, Mike Schultz and John Doerr saw a need for a research-based approach to selling. RAIN Group took into account the results of a major benchmark study showing what buyers want and need from sellers to create the foundation



of its methodology, RAIN Selling. RAIN Group continues today in its focus on updating and optimizing the sales system based on in-depth research. In 2005, Dave Kurlan brought forward a new approach called Baseline Selling. Kurlan suggested that while solution-based selling methodologies have a great deal to offer, they are limited by the complexity of implementing them. His methodology, called Baseline Selling, took all the best things about existing methodologies, and reworked them into a simple framework that uses a baseball metaphor to help salespeople more quickly grasp and implement the methodology and process.

The next big disruption in sales methodology came with the publication of The Challenger Sale by Matthew Dixon and Brent Adamson in 2011. Dixon and Adamson propose that the Internet and content marketing has changed the sales landscape once again, by placing customers in charge of designing their solutions. Where solution selling methods focus on helping the customer to build a solution, the new environment means that customers come to the sale with the solution already built, and simply seeking vendors to fulfill that solution. The Challenger Sale approach is designed to disrupt the customer's buying process by uncovering un-recognized needs, and position the seller as the best resource to fulfill those needs.

The publication of The Challenger Sale launched a debate that continues to rage in regard to whether its approach is a genuine revolution, just another way of approaching the same problem, or perhaps a dangerous distraction from effective sales methods. Regardless of the outcome of that debate, every one of the sales leaders we spoke with agreed that the marketplace continues to change, and an effective sales process is critical to every sales organization's success.

THE METHODOLOGIES

In our research, we uncovered the unique origin, history, and approach that informs the character of each sales methodology. Here's a brief overview.

SANDLER TRAINING

Founded in 1967 by David Sandler, the Sandler Selling System focuses on long-term success over quick fixes. Sandler was one of the first thought leaders to begin talking about the use of "pain" in selling, and the Sandler "pain funnel" remains among its most well-known tools, along with the "submarine" graphic that outlines its step by step approach to prospect engagement. Sandler is a particularly good fit for organizations with complex sales cycles, and can be used by entrepreneurial organizations looking to compete with larger brands, as well as large organizations looking to fill gaps in their sales process. Sandler owns the largest sales training organization in the world, with more than 250 local training centers serving Fortune 500 companies, SMB, and independent producers. We spoke with Sandler's CEO, Dave Mattson.



MILLER-HEIMAN (AN MHI GLOBAL COMPANY), STRATEGIC SELLING

Founded in the 1960s by Bob Miller and Steve Heiman, Strategic Selling focuses on a practical, repeatable sales process that breaks complex situations down into small, manageable chunks. The approach focuses on creating a win-win situation for buyer and seller, to build long-term relationships. The organization provides "blue sheets" to help sellers win opportunities along a well-defined sales process, and "green sheets" that support all direct customer interactions along the sales process. Strategic Selling is a particularly good fit for complex sales in any B2B vertical market. We spoke with Miller-Heiman's European Sales Vice President, Klaus Leutbecher.

SOLUTION SELLING® (SPI)

Mike Bosworth developed Solution Selling® from research originally conducted at Xerox in the late 1970s. This research examined the behaviors of top-performing sales professionals at that organization and applied the resulting insights to his methodology, which was later acquired by SPI, the largest Solution Selling® distributor and implementation partner. The approach is has been continuously refined and improved, in response to changing market conditions and ongoing research into what top-performing sellers do differently. Like many sales methodologies, it works well within a complex B2B sales environment but, unlike the others, it also claims to perform particularly well in high-volume commodities markets. We spoke with SPI's Director of Business Development, Tim Sullivan.

SPIN SELLING

In the 1980s, behavioral psychologist Neil Rackham conducted research over 12 years and 35,000 sales calls, looking at what sellers and buyers actually did during those sales calls. He then correlated that research with sales success. Rackham was hired by Xerox, Kodiak, Motorola, and others to use that research to help them develop their internal sales methodologies. In 1988, he founded SPIN Selling, which stands for Situation, Problem, Implication, Need-payoff. The approach is best suited for complex B2B selling situations and focuses on helping buyers draw their own conclusion that they need the product or service. We spoke with SPIN Selling's president and principal consultant, Pat Mustico.

VALUESELLING FRAMEWORK

In 1991, the ValueSelling Framework was created by Lloyd Sappington, one of the leaders of Xerox's sales methodology revolution. The methodology's parent company, ValueSelling Associates, was later purchased by its current owner, Julie Thomas. The ValueSelling Framework simplifies sales methodology to make it easier for salespeople to learn and master. It is best suited for companies with complex B2B sales cycles, who are competing on value and using differentiation to win. The ValueSelling Framework is translated into 12 different languages with multiple training modalities available, and facilitators available across the globe. We spoke with ValueSelling Associates's CEO and President, Julie Thomas.

CUSTOMER-CENTRIC SELLING®

Founded in 2002 by John Holland, Frank Visgatis, Gary Walker, and Mike Bosworth, Customer-Centric Selling® was developed in response to the maturity of the business technology market. Holland and Visgatis noted that buyers were no longer investing in disruptive technologies, but rather improvements on old technologies. The methodology is based on Rackham's research into how people buy, updated to focus on asking the right questions of modern technology buyers. Though its origins are in the technology industry, Customer-Centric Selling® is a good fit for any B2B organization with complex sales. We spoke with Customer-Centric Selling®'s co-founder, John Holland.



RAIN SELLING

In 2002, Mike Schultz and John Doerr founded RAIN Selling in response to insights from a major benchmark study they conducted that year. They designed it to better satisfy what modern buyers want and need from sellers, and continue to update and optimize the methodology based on ongoing research. They are known for their in-depth sales performance research and analysis. RAIN Selling is best suited for complex sales processes involving multiple decision makers. Organizations in financial services, professional services, and technology industries, for instance, often represent a good fit. We spoke with RAIN Group's President, Mike Schultz.

BASELINE SELLING

Founded in 2005 by Dave Kurlan, Baseline Selling was created as an answer to the difficulty of getting salespeople to buy into complex sales methodologies. Baseline Selling uses a baseball metaphor to divide sales into "bases" that represent stages of the sales process. Baseline Selling is a good fit for growing mid-market companies with sales forces of 30-100 individuals, in any industry. We spoke with Baseline Selling's CEO, Dave Kurlan.

TARGET ACCOUNT SELLING

Declined to respond.

THE CHALLENGER SALE

Matthew Dixon and Brent Adamson published The Challenger Sale in 2011 in response to the way that content marketing and wide availability of information has changed the sales landscape. They claim that solution selling—a category into which nearly all the other methodologies fall—is dead, and a new approach is called for. The Challenger Sale, owned by CEB, focuses on disrupting the customer's buying process by uncovering un-recognized needs. Its leaders declined to answer what specific industries or types of sales it is best suited to serve. CEB's leadership was unable to participate in the study.

SIDE BY SIDE: A METHODOLOGY COMPARISON

Methodology	Founder(s)	Founded	Best Client Fit	Key Differentiators	Online/In-Person	Number of people trained in the methodology
Sandler Selling System	David Sandler	1967, used emerging science of sales psychology to develop a selling system based on reinforcement of behaviors	Entrepreneurial and large organizations with complex sales cycles	Use of psychological principles to uncover prospect pain. Emphasis on reinforcement.	Either/or	At least 1.75 million
Miller-Heiman (Strategic Selling)	Bob Miller and Steve Heiman	1978, used logic and analysis to create win-win sales, to move IBM product	Complex sales in any B2B vertical	Focus on practical, repeatable process, breaking complex situations into manageable parts. Focus on mutually beneficial relationship.	Either/or	Approx.. 2 million, globally
Solution Selling (SPI)	Mike Bosworth	1988, documented and analyzed behaviors of top sellers at Xerox	Every industry (except government), including high-volume commodities	Includes sales process, methods, and skills as part of integrated selling system. Focus on dynamic, buyer-aligned process.	Blended	More than 1.5 million
SPIN Selling	Neil Rackham	1988, studied 35,000 sales calls across 17 countries and 12 years to understand behavioral psychology behind top performers	Complex sales in any B2B vertical	Uses an elegant, intentional conversation to help prospects draw their own conclusion to buy. Highly researched and validated approach.	Usually blended	Hundreds of thousands using it in the field
Methodology	Founder(s)	Founded	Best Client Fit	Key Differentiators	Online/In-Person	Number of people trained in the methodology
ValueSelling Framework	Lloyd Sappington	1991, developed approach from findings while working with the Xerox sales team, with a focus on measurable business value	Any B2B company competing on value	Elegant simplicity. Scalable and global. Available in seven different languages and deployed on multiple continents.	Blended	Training 7500 per year
Customer-Centric Selling	John Holland, Frank Visgatis, Gary Walker, and Mike Bosworth	2002, developed to meet needs of more-mature technology marketplace, in which buyers were purchasing incremental improvements rather than disruptive technology	Most B2B verticals, especially high-value, complex sales cycles	Built around how buyers buy. Focus on organization-wide messaging matched to buyer needs.	Primarily in-person, some online	Over 1,000 clients
RAIN Selling(sm)	Mike Schultz and John Doerr	2002, conducted benchmark study on problems buyers have with how sellers sell, and designed methodology to satisfy what buyers want from sellers	B2B and complex B2C sales, especially financial services, professional services, and technology	Research-focused and modern, based on cutting-edge studies. Easy to learn and apply quickly, yet offers deep levels of mastery.	Usually blended	Hundreds of thousands across 62 countries
Baseline Selling	Dave Kurlan	2005, used baseball analogy to simplify sales methodology to increase salesperson adoption	Mid-market with sales force of 30-100 in any industry	Integration of baseball diamond to represent stages of process. Methodology grows with the salesperson.	Blended	Tens of thousands of salespeople
The Challenger Sale	Matt Dixon and Brent Adamson	2011, response to better-educated customers, for which founders believe traditional solution selling is no longer effective	No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response
Target Account Selling	No Response	No response	No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response

THE STATE OF SALES: KEY INSIGHTS

In the course of our research for this paper, we uncovered both surprising commonalities and intriguing differences of opinion among the participants in the study.

These conversations yielded important insights into the biggest challenges facing the sales industry today, including process implementation, reinforcement, and the role of technology.

MYTH-BUSTING

SALES METHODOLOGY IN TRANSACTIONAL SALES ENVIRONMENTS

Common wisdom has it that sales methodology is best suited for complex sales. Nearly all the experts we spoke with agreed that their approach is best suited for B2B industries whose sales cycles are long, buying committees are complicated, and transaction sizes are large.

There was one stand-out exception to this rule, however. Tim Sullivan, with Sales Performance International, says that while his organization's methodology, Solution Selling®, was originally focused on complex, long-cycle technical sales, changes in buyer behavior have expanded the methodology's applicability. While it is still used in complex sales environments, it has also been implemented successfully in high transaction volume organizations.

"We have discovered that some of our best customers use Solution Selling® to sell highly commoditized products," he says, explaining that it works for them because "except for price, the only way that they can differentiate is by how they engage with customers." SPI's success suggests that industries that have traditionally operated on volume and price may equally benefit from the implementation of sales methodologies born in more complex sales environments.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

Among the leaders we interviewed, there was significant consensus regarding the difference between process and methodology. Most agreed that process is a step-by-step structure, with milestones and stages, while methodology is a way of interacting with the customer to move them from stage to stage.

Dave Mattson (Sandler) described process as the "what" and methodology as the "how." Several other experts added a third category of "skills and activities" as separate from the methodology.

Julie Thomas, president and CEO of ValueSelling Associates stated the difference between the three (process, methodology, and skills) most vividly with a football analogy. "The sales process helps you identify where you are on the football field and how close you are to getting into the end zone," she explains. "Sales methodology is what has to happen to move you from the 40-yard-line to the 30-yard-line. Skills and tactics are the playbook."

While they agree on the essential definition of process, each methodology has a slightly different relationship with process, as outlined in the chart on the next page.

Interviewee	Methodology vs process	How the methodology fits with process
Dave Mattson, Sandler	"Methodology is the 'how' and process is the 'what.'"	In general, small organizations adapt Sandler to create a process while large organizations use Sandler inside their own process. Some organizations ask Sandler's team to build a custom process.
Klaus Leutbecher, Strategic Selling	"Methodology is the methods, principles, and skills. Process is a set of steps linked to sales actions and correlated with customer actions."	Strategic Selling works within a process defined by the client.
Tim Sullivan, SPI, Solution Selling®	"Process is the framework for execution. Methodology is how to execute a process step."	Solution Selling contains process, methods, tools, and skills as part of an integrated solution.
Pat Mustico, SPIN Selling	"Methodology is how (skill) we approach the client, and process is what (process) steps we take."	SPIN methodology provides skills for how to have the best customer interaction possible and works best in concert with a sales process like Strategic Selling which is owned by its partner.
Julie Thomas, ValueSelling	"Methodology is how you advance, process is where you are on the field."	ValueSelling aligns and integrates with the company's own sales process.
John Holland, Customer-Centric Selling®	"Methodology is a map to the buying cycle. Process allows forecasting and analysis."	Customer-Centric Selling® is both a process and a methodology.
Mike Schultz, RAIN Group	"Methodology is a philosophy and skillset for how to sell. Process is a series of stages and actions."	RAIN Selling serves as a foundation for clients, but must be customized and mapped to how a particular company's clients prefer to buy.
Dave Kurlan, Baseline Selling	"Methodology is the conversational approach that moves a process from stage to stage. Process is the formal, structured set of stages."	Baseline Selling provides a framework for both process and methodology.
Target Account Selling	No response	No response
The Challenger Sale	No response	According to publicly available information, CEB claims to provide a complete sales "strategy," and not strictly a methodology.

WHY SALES ORGANIZATIONS ARE FAILING AT PROCESS

Nearly everyone we spoke with agreed on two points in regard to process:

- ✓ **IT'S CRITICALLY IMPORTANT**
- ✓ **AND MOST ORGANIZATIONS ARE FAILING AT IT**

According to Leutbecher (Strategic Selling), World Class Organizations consistently apply sales methodology and process, while average organizations typically do not. Schultz (RAIN Group) says their data shows that 69% of Top Performing Sales Organizations have clearly defined sales processes while, according to Kurlan (Baseline Selling), "only 9% [of all sales organizations] follow an effective sales process."

"Everybody says they have a process," says Mattson (Sandler), "but if you ask them to write it down, nobody on the team writes the same thing." Thomas (ValueSelling) adds that "a lot of companies do pieces of it very well and few companies do all of it well."

For those companies that do have a consistent process implemented, that process is often ineffective. The participants in our study gave several perspectives on what makes these processes ineffective, all of which boil down to the same problem:

"It's usually an inwardly focused picture," says Sullivan (SPI, Solution Selling®). "Some sales organizations," says Mustico (SPIN Selling), "tie their process to reporting requirements in the CRM rather than basing it on what leads to verifiable outcomes." Others, says Holland (Customer-Centric Selling®), "focus on product-based training rather than product usage and business outcomes."

What's needed, says Sullivan, is a "dynamic, buyer-aligned" process tied to positive outcomes. Thomas adds that in order to accomplish this, sales team leaders and executives must look at the organization holistically to align training, compensation, roles, and reinforcement.



HOW TO PREVENT BEHAVIORAL “RUBBER-BANDING”

Besides creating and implementing an effective sales process and methodology, all of our study’s participants agreed that behaviors must be reinforced to prevent behavioral “rubber-banding.” Rubber-banding refers to the phenomenon of trained sales employees returning to old behaviors after the newness of the methodology and process wears off. Everyone agreed that:

- Sales managers and leaders must be involved and congruent. Coaches and leaders should be trained in process and methodology either ahead of, or concurrently with, the sales team.
- Rewards and recognition should be tied to implementing process and methodology rather than strictly to wins.
- Skills and behaviors must be reinforced on a regular basis.

To this last point, most agreed that both effective coaching and technology are critical elements of effective reinforcement. Sullivan (SPI, Solution Selling®) suggests embedding sales process and methods within CRM systems, and linking each stage to content assets (available on mobile devices) that support the salesperson in using the methodology’s tools and skills.

“You have to ensure that the learning is reinforced so sellers don’t forget what they learned,” says Schultz (RAIN Group). “Track actions in the CRM and observe sellers live to know what they are doing. Then make sure coaches and managers are available to help sellers work through problems they’re having.”



New technologies like Membrain build this capability into the technology. These same technologies can be used to support another element that all agree is critically important:

Mustico:
“Coaching.”

Sullivan:
“Effective coaching.”

Schultz:
“Coaches and managers.”

Thomas:
“It’s the coaching program.”

Leutbecher:
“A strong coaching culture.”

Kurlan:
“Daily sales coaching.”

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE BUYER'S JOURNEY

There's no question among the experts we interviewed that technology has had a significant impact on the way they deliver training. As evidenced in our comparison chart, nearly all of the methodologies offer at least some form of online learning, while some of them are almost exclusively online or blended in their learning environment.

Perhaps more significantly, technology has changed the way buyers buy, which is not news to anyone in the sales business. Buyers come better armed with information. Buyers complete much of their buying process before they contact a salesperson. Buyers often assemble a "solution" for themselves and don't necessarily want the seller to assemble it for them. The Challenger Sale (CEB) in particular addresses this latter point with their disruptive approach to sales process. According to their approach, salespeople in the new environment must learn to challenge the buyer's assumptions about what they need in order to uncover new insights, and ultimately restart the buyer's process.

But CEB is not alone in having recognized and addressed this change. Sullivan (Solution Selling) says that they address it in their latest book, **The Collaborative Sale: Solution Selling** in a Buyer-Driven World, and have adapted their methodology to accommodate it. Likewise, most of the others agree that their methodology has adapted and changed to accommodate the new reality. Schultz and the other leaders at RAIN Group in particular invest continuously in research to understand what motivates buyers and what works for sellers. Their benchmark reports, **What Sales Winners Do Differently** and **The Top-Performing Sales Organization**, condense years of research across hundreds of organizations into key insights that can help companies stay ahead of the curve as the market continuously changes.

Two of the leaders we interviewed, however, had a different perspective. Both Mattson (Sandler) and Mustico (SPIN) essentially said: No, we have not changed our methodology because of changes in buyer behavior. Mustico, in particular, was firm on the point. "The methodology itself is solid," he says. "How it's delivered, reinforced, and applied in the marketplace shifts with the market and the technology, but the intellectual property does not." He compares the methodology's core principles to a book like the Bible, that is thousands of years old but the contents of which are still applicable today. What everyone did agree on is the importance of leveraging technology for reinforcement of the methodology.

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN REINFORCEMENT

Nearly all of the sales methodology leaders pointed at CRM as a critical tool for methodology reinforcements, with adjustments to make it more buyer-centric and useful for seller learning.

Leutbecher, Sullivan, and Kurlan all cite the importance of integrating learning assets within the CRM to deliver training and information to the salespeople at the right time. Thomas points out the importance of "chunking" the learning into bite-sized pieces, and making it easier to find. "Sellers need integrated, on-demand access to learning assets within the CRM," says Sullivan. Kurlan agrees, adding that the integration must include "audio, video, sales process, methodology, analytics, and coaching" within the context of the CRM. He adds that most CRMs are not well suited to this task, and require the addition of technologies like Membrain in order to operate in this way.

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN OPTIMIZING

When properly set up, the same software that reinforces sales methodology and process can be used to analyze and optimize the system. Schultz emphasizes that the right technology will both drive and track seller behavior. Holland adds that the data thus gained can be used to analyze and understand what works, in order to continuously adapt and optimize the sales process. A technology like Membrain provides the ability to "chunk" learning, tie it to the relevant section of the process, and deliver it up at the right time, while simultaneously tracking and analyzing buyer and seller behaviors for the purpose of optimizing. Combined with the right process and methodology, technologies like this will be critical, says Kurlan, in driving and supporting sales performance.





CONCLUSION

Every organization is different and has different needs. Understanding how methodologies compare can help leaders make smart decisions about where to invest their sales training resources.

Top organizations will involve the entire organizational leadership in not only this decision, but in developing cohesive sales strategies and process, and implementing them effectively with the tools and technologies for reinforcement and optimization.

The Membrain software provides a vital foundation for building process and methodology into a cohesive, reinforced, high performing system. Contact our team today to find out how we can help your clients and your organization excel.

HOW YOU SELL MATTERS



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