sales enablement

Accelerating sales through content, process and technology

madison miles media

introduction

Over the past two decades, sales enablement has emerged as a more efficient, effective way for companies to increase their win rates and boost revenue. The right sales enablement strategy plays a critical role for businesses looking to improve processes and stay ahead of the competition.

That explains why, according to HubSpot research, 59% of sales leaders now have a dedicated sales enablement team, and 65% of sales leaders who invested in their sales enablement team reported exceeding their revenue targets.

By equipping sales teams with the resources and information they need, sales enablement sets teams up for success, helping them close more deals in less time. We've divided this ebook into three parts:

1. First, we offer a primer on sales enablement. We look at what sales enablement is, how it can benefit your company and how to develop a successful strategy.
2. Then, we'll take a deep dive into the key elements that madison/miles media depends on to implement results-oriented sales enablement programs for our customers. We'll explain the importance of each of those areas and explain how you can better leverage them. We'll also share some success stories to show how we've helped real companies get real results.
3. Finally, we're giving you access to some of the proprietary materials we've developed to help companies just like yours find greater success through sales enablement.

Let's get started!

PART 1

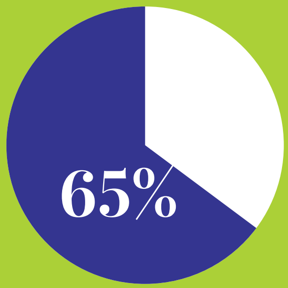
what is sales enablement — and why does it matter?

Let's tackle the basics first to ensure we're speaking the same language. Simply put, sales enablement is all about providing your sales team with the tools, processes and knowledge needed to effectively engage and convert prospects into customers. This encompasses everything from training and development to content creation and the right technology or customer relationship management (CRM) software.

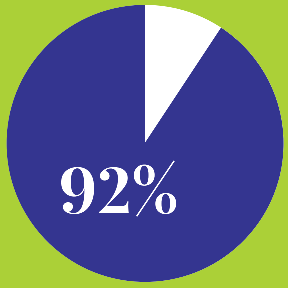
It requires a shift in mindset that recognizes the need for sales and marketing teams to communicate, collaborate and innovate together. When that happens, businesses can close more deals in less time — and that's just one of the benefits. Other reasons that sales enablement has become so prevalent include:

- **Increased sales productivity**
- **Higher win rates**
- **Streamlined processes**
- **Improved organization among teams**
- **Better customer relationships/satisfaction**

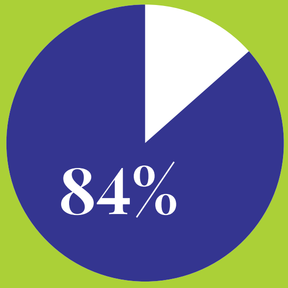
At a time when it's increasingly difficult to catch and retain the attention of prospects, sales enablement allows you to create a plan that leverages data and resources to meet customers' needs. And by automating certain tasks and providing your sales teams with the right information, you allow them to focus on what they do best: selling.



of sales leaders who over deliver on their revenue goals have a dedicated sales enablement person or team.
(Hubspot)



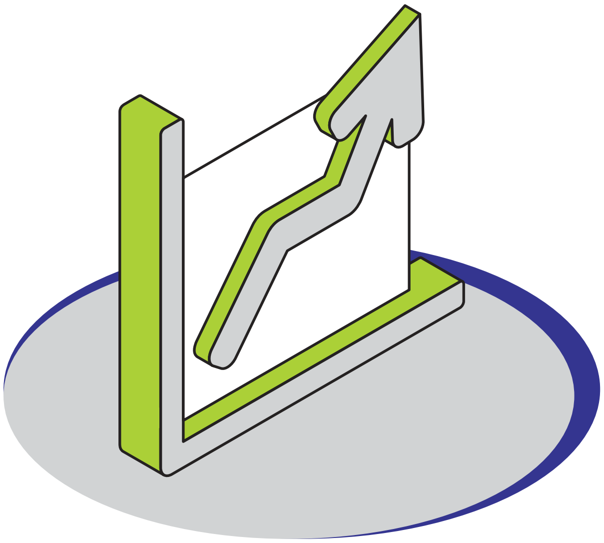
of sales and marketing professionals said having a dedicated sales enablement team increased the overall success of their company's sales efforts and performance.
(Hubspot)



of sales reps achieve their quotas when their employer incorporates a best-in-class sales enablement strategy.
(Spotio)

When Sales Met Marketing

The name "sales enablement" hints that it is a process owned by the sales team, but in reality, it is a collaborative effort between sales and marketing. Historically, these departments have worked separately, but that's not the most effective use of either department's time. And it leaves gaps between processes — gaps through which potential customers can slip.



When your sales and marketing teams work together, it means your company can present a clear, cohesive message to prospective customers at every step of the buyer's journey. It also means a smoother transition from the marketing stage to the sales process — which, in turn, means fewer lost leads and a higher close rate.

Communication is at the heart of this collaboration, as it requires getting both departments on the same page. While it sounds like an oversimplification, that begins with each department understanding what the other means by "leads."

A marketing team may consider anyone who expresses interest to be a lead, while the sales team is looking for someone who needs what they're selling and is able to make a buying decision. For this reason, it's imperative to define terms such as a lead, a "sales qualified lead" or SQL, and a "marketing qualified lead" or MQL.

When everyone has the same understanding of terms, they can work together to develop collateral materials that will address the customer needs for all stages. This can provide a better interdepartmental relationship, shorten the sales cycles and offer a better understanding of what customers want.

Organizations with tightly aligned sales and marketing functions experienced 24% faster three-year revenue growth and 27% faster three-year profit growth.

Source: SiriusDecisions

Implementing a Sales Enablement Strategy

Successfully implementing sales enablement begins with having a comprehensive plan that equips your sales and marketing teams with the knowledge and resources they need. In fact, training and development play a significant role in the success of your program.

Your training is about more than selling; it should include information to enhance product knowledge, sales techniques and customer service. When creating this plan, it's imperative to consider the specific needs of your sales and marketing teams: This is not a one-size-fits-all solution but depends upon the individual profile of your company, your customers and your employees.

Some of the things to consider as you develop a training plan include:

The size of your team

The types of products they're selling

The customer base they're targeting

The resources they have available

As you evaluate these factors, you will likely see areas that need improvement, such as the resources or processes they are using to reach desired customers. This is the ideal time to evaluate what methods might be outdated or aren't meeting your teams' current needs. They may need to be updated, or they may need to be eliminated entirely as you adopt new processes.

The knowledge and skills of your teams should also be considered to ensure that you're providing this information to them in the way that they find most beneficial. Some teams may need a comprehensive training program that covers all aspects of sales enablement, while others may only need to learn specific key skills.

As you look at how to train teams on sales enablement, think about the best methods for delivering the training. Will it be an online course or webinar? Or will it be an in-person workshop? How will you offer follow-up training to ensure it continues to be used?

Making sales training an ongoing part of the process is imperative, with Gartner recommending you provide formal training at least once a month to keep sales enablement top of mind for the sales teams. There is no single "right" way to implement your sales enablement education, so look at the method that works best for your company and develop your training plan accordingly.

The final piece of training, of course, is to measure how successful it is. This could be done by tracking the sales team's performance before and after the training, or by providing a survey to the team to gauge their level of understanding.

By creating a plan for training sales and marketing teams in sales enablement, you are equipping your teams with the knowledge and resources they need to increase your sales opportunities and generate more revenue. And that's a win for everyone.

Best Practices for Sales Enablement

It's not enough just to "do" sales enablement; you want to do it right. That means looking at what other companies have done and following their best practices. At m3, we encourage our clients to embrace these best practices:

1. Start with the right team. You already know that you need to assemble a cross-functional team of experts, so make sure you choose them carefully. Look at the skill sets of your sales and marketing teams and evaluate their strengths.

Your team should include marketers who are good at messaging and content creation, as well as sales pros who understand the customers' needs and what it takes to close them.

2. Align on revenue. Although revenue is often seen as the sales department's domain, in sales enablement, it's something marketing needs to think about, too. It might take extra effort to pull them across the line, but you must get your marketing team to embrace revenue goals so all members of your sales enablement crew are working together for the same goal.

3. Give them the right tools. Make sure that your sales team has what it needs to get the job done. With marketing providing them with the latest information, supported by ongoing training and support, your sales team should start seeing an increase in sales and a shorter sales cycle.

4. Automate. The right technology is everything. Automation software saves time, increases productivity and supports that important collaboration between sales and marketing. It helps manage emails and can provide greater insight into what's driving leads and closing deals.

5. Measure it. After you start your sales enablement program, you can't just "set it and forget it." Measure your results, using such metrics as customer retention, sales cycle length, average deal size and the lifetime value of your customers. Look at how many reps are reaching their quotas, and follow the effectiveness of the content you're producing to see what kind of ROI you're getting. Then, if you're falling short, use the tools and technology you've implemented to see what's not working and what you can improve.

Part of measurement includes monitoring where customers are coming from, so be sure to include an attribution model. This allows you to measure where marketing is influencing sales, whether that's first touch, last touch, multi-channel, influencers, etc. With a solid attribution model in place, you can identify what's working best to generate sales and what weaknesses might exist in your funnel.

PART 2

m3's elements of sales enablement

Now that you have a broad understanding of sales enablement, we'd like to dive deeper and show you what's worked for us. Like all good formulas, sales enablement requires specific things to make it successful, and we're going to share some of those specifics with you.

It's common for a small or mid-size company to have a robust sales force but not be as strong in the marketing department. That's something that we often see — and, frankly, it has helped reinforce our abilities as sales enablement experts.

We've also found there are certain advantages for companies that leverage the experience of an outside marketing agency; for starters, we're able to offer a 30,000-foot view of operations and see where small changes could make a difference. Our role is to challenge you, support you, and become the connector between sales and marketing to take you farther — faster.

And, because we know that sales and marketing are two different breeds — but we speak both their languages — it's easier for us to unite those two departments to create a truly cross-functional team that supports one another.

To accomplish that, we use a proven three-step process:

1. Interview all the stakeholders to understand where the company is in terms of working together.
2. Discover each department's goals and determine how they define success — making sure everyone is on the same page.
3. Develop a service level agreement to standardize the definition of leads and set clear, specific goals for your sales and marketing teams. You'll agree on what results you expect and what KPIs you'll use to track it.

Once these steps are complete, we're ready to dig into the secret sauce of a successful sales enablement strategy.

m3's Recipe for Success

Regardless of what industry our clients are in or the goals they want to achieve, madison/miles media leverages three critical elements to ensure success in sales enablement:

Processes **Content** **Technology**

When these three areas are aligned, we've seen companies get tremendous results — and we'll tell you more about that in our case studies (read on page 18). But first, let's talk about these three areas and why they're so important.

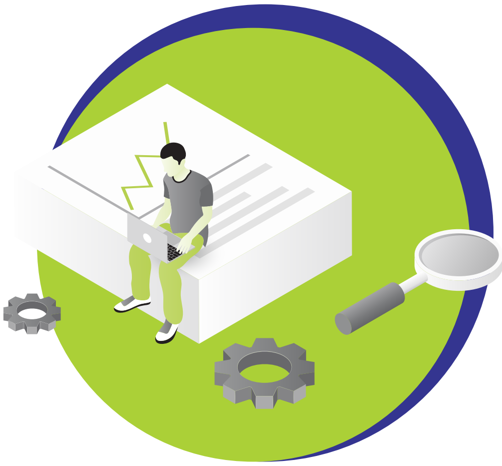
The Power of the Process

At m3, we look at developing processes as our superpower. We love helping clients expand or refine their sales process, and we've seen our clients achieve incredible results because of that. Having the right processes in place enables marketing to provide the sales teams with what they need — allowing them to focus on selling to customers and closing deals.

When we talk about your process, it means we're going to look at every step of your sales process and understand what is supposed to happen. Together, we'll define clear workflows, develop and define best practices, and implement a customized strategy across sales and marketing teams.

With the right processes in place, sales teams are better equipped to sell to customers and close deals. Some of the most important processes that should be in place for sales enablement include:

- **Lead generation.** Without leads, sales teams will have no one to sell to. Lead generation is key for every sales enablement strategy — and when marketing and sales work together, they'll start recognizing the different types of leads and how each one should be defined and managed.
- **Lead nurturing.** Once leads are generated, they must be nurtured to convert them into customers. Both sales and marketing teams should have a process in place for nurturing leads and keeping them engaged.
- **Lead scoring.** All leads are not created equal; that's why the practice of lead scoring is an essential part of your process. Lead scoring allows you to assign a value to each action a potential customer makes and can help you determine their likelihood of making a purchase.
- **Sales training.** It's critical for teams to be properly trained on the products and services they sell. We provide training on the sales process that we help establish, and we provide training on how to use the technology we help implement.
- **Performance management.** As mentioned earlier, none of this matters if you don't measure it. Measuring will help identify areas where improvement is needed as well as showing you what's working well and what you might want to do more of.



Content Is Still King

No matter how good your processes are, they won't mean much if you can't provide prospective customers with compelling and useful content. Today, "content" covers a broad range: It might be email, newsletters, blog posts, audio or video. Whatever it is, it must be able to reach your audience where they live, and it must have a message that they connect with immediately.

When you're working with a third-party content provider, make sure their style and practices align with your own company goals. For example, at m3, we take a journalistic approach to digital marketing, applying the same robust standards to content development that you'd find at leading news media organizations. We believe that's the best way to get fresh, original content that stands out and speaks directly to your audience.

No matter how good your processes are, they won't mean much if you can't provide prospective customers with compelling and useful content.

What's So Great About Your Content?

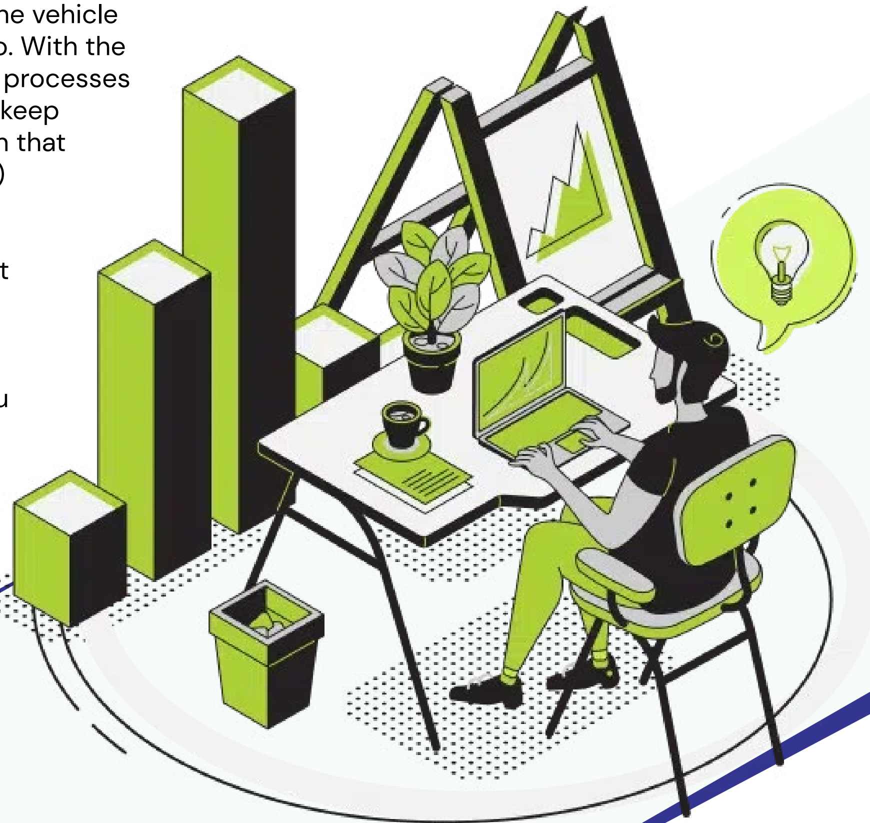
Chances are, if you're talking to a third party about providing content, they're going to promise "great content." (After all, "not-so-great content" is a hard sell.) But what, exactly, does that mean? It might mean different things to different companies, but at m3, it means:

- **It's original**. That means you won't be able to Google it and find a dozen other pieces of content that look just like it. Original content can set you apart from competitors and establish you as a trusted source of information.
- **It's properly researched and sourced**. In an era of "fake news," getting it right is imperative. Showing that you've done your homework and verified all the information will give readers confidence in your content.
- **It's skimmable**. Content needs to be easy to read, and that means it's presented in appealing bite-size paragraphs. (Think appetizers, not a seven-course meal.)
- **It's actionable**. Great content makes a difference and encourages people to do something, whether that means making a purchase, downloading an offer or diving deeper into your other content. You may not have a second chance to catch their attention, so make sure that every piece of content lives up to the promise of "great content."

Technology Matters

If process is the driver and content is the precious cargo, technology is the vehicle that gets them where they need to go. With the right digital tools, you can ensure the processes are aligned between departments to keep everything on track. (It also helps with that measurement we keep talking about.)

Of all the tools and technology, the centerpiece of your sales enablement strategy is your CRM, or customer relationship management software. While there are many programs out there, you need to make sure that you choose the CRM that's right for you and have the training needed to use it to its fullest.



With the right digital tools, you can ensure the processes are aligned between departments to keep everything on track.

That second part is crucial; when your team isn't properly trained on your CRM, they're going to miss opportunities, or they may stop using it entirely. At m3, we provide training to make sure your teams are comfortable with your CRM and see how they can use it to, say, write a series of automated emails that you can send out at designated points of the sales cycles.

It can help your marketing team create case studies for the bottom of the funnel and develop content for the top of the funnel based on what the sales team needs. In short, it ties the people, processes and content together to create a stronger company with a clear, defined purpose — and a way to reach it.

Get on the Same Page With an SLA

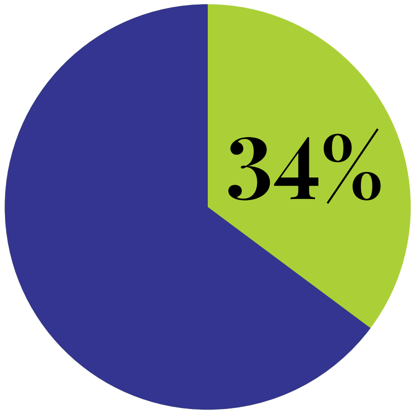
The best relationships depend on communication, and the relationship between the sales and marketing departments is no exception. One of the best ways to ensure effective communication is through the use of a service-level agreement, or SLA.

An SLA clarifies the expectations and accountability of each department. It's not uncommon for sales and marketing teams to have different ideas of what their roles are or who is responsible for certain tasks. This can lead to potential sales slipping through the cracks and leads being overlooked. When your teams better understand what's expected of them and what the other team can (and can't) do, you're aligning them to work together and be able to better assist each other.

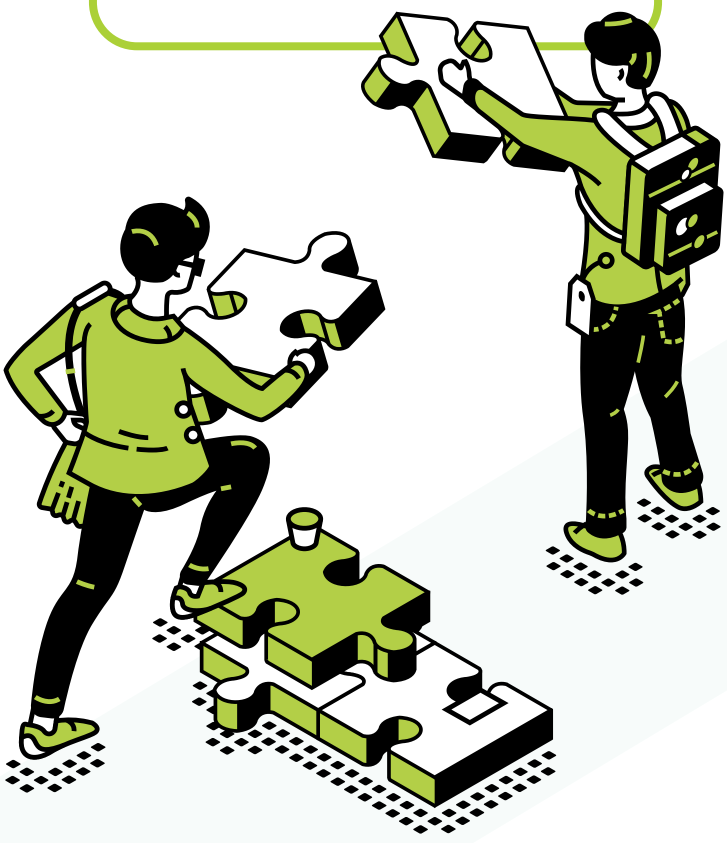
A comprehensive SLA will also define key terms — such as what each type of lead means. *(For more on leads, SQLs and MQLs, see our glossary of terms on page 14.)*

Even if your company doesn't have an internal marketing department and is using a third party to provide marketing services, an SLA is essential, as it clearly defines expectations for any marketing team. When you know that everyone is speaking the same language, your teams can focus on improved results, knowing they share the same goals. And when there's less confusion between them, sales and marketing teams can work together more effectively.

Don't just take our word for it; consider this fact from **HubSpot**:



Companies with an active SLA are 34% more likely to experience greater year-over-year ROI.



PART 3

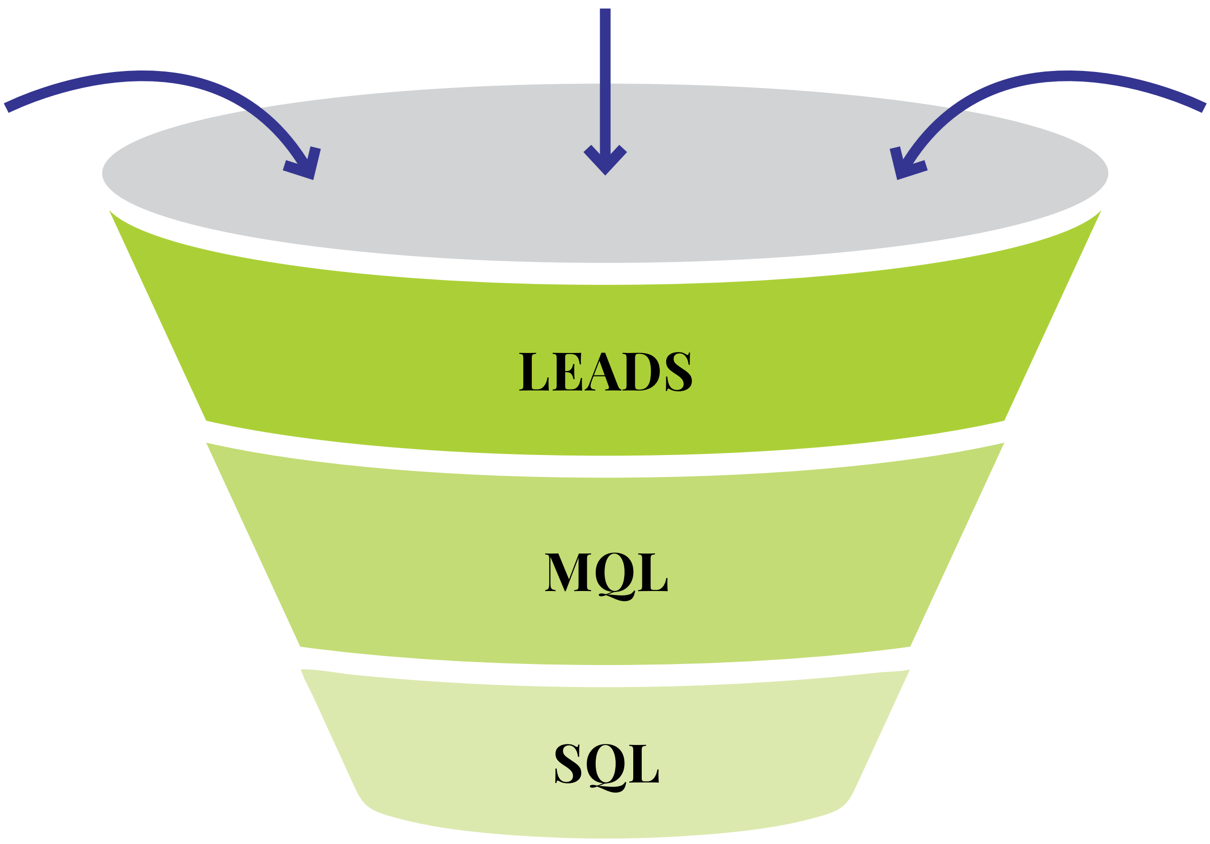
resources

Since 2010, madison/miles media has provided companies with content and campaigns to help them increase engagement, attract new prospects and ultimately boost sales. Part of our success is built upon the in-house resources we've developed to help companies streamline their processes and identify where they need improvement. In this section, we're sharing the same resources we use to help our clients increase sales and awareness.

The m3 Sales Enablement Glossary of Terms

If you're new to the world of sales enablement, you may not be familiar with all the terminology. Here's a cheat sheet for you.

- **CRM**. Customer relationship management. Software that is used to automate processes and procedures, creating greater efficiency and productivity for sales teams.
- **Lead**. Any individual the company has contact with who could be a potential customer or has indicated an interest in the company's products and services.
- **Lead scoring**. The process of assigning values to each lead you generate for the business, which helps prioritize leads based on their likelihood to purchase.
- **MQL**. Marketing qualified lead. This is a prospect that has either engaged with your content online or has expressed interest in your products and services.
- **SLA**. Service-level agreement. This important document standardizes the definition of leads and sets clear, specific goals for your sales and marketing teams.
- **SQL**. Sales qualified lead. This is a prospect that fits specific criteria outlined by your team, such as showing high levels of online engagement with your content or explicitly expressing interest in your products.



Service-Level Agreement Outline and Examples

An effective SLA standardizes lead definitions and sets clear goals for your sales and marketing teams. Whether working with an internal marketing team or an external marketing partner, clearly defining expectations is critical. Marketing teams need numerical goals, just like a sales team, and an SLA ensures the sales team and marketing are "speaking the same language."

Your sales team should all work from the same process, delivering on-brand messaging to prospects and clients and working toward clearly defined goals.

Use the outline and examples below to see what definitions, goals and processes should be included in your SLA.

Mission statement. Identify your mission statement and include how you intend to maintain a culture of communication and provide a continuous feedback loop among marketing, sales and other key business functions. This will allow you to constantly refine and optimize the sales process.

Information to include: Who will identify, attract, engage and nurture leads? Who will acquire and retain clients? Who will review each lead and determine the next action?

Define leads. Clearly outline what is considered a lead. For example, "a lead is regarded as any individual for whom [YOUR COMPANY NAME] has contact information and the company believes could be a potential fit for or has shown some degree of interest in the company's services."

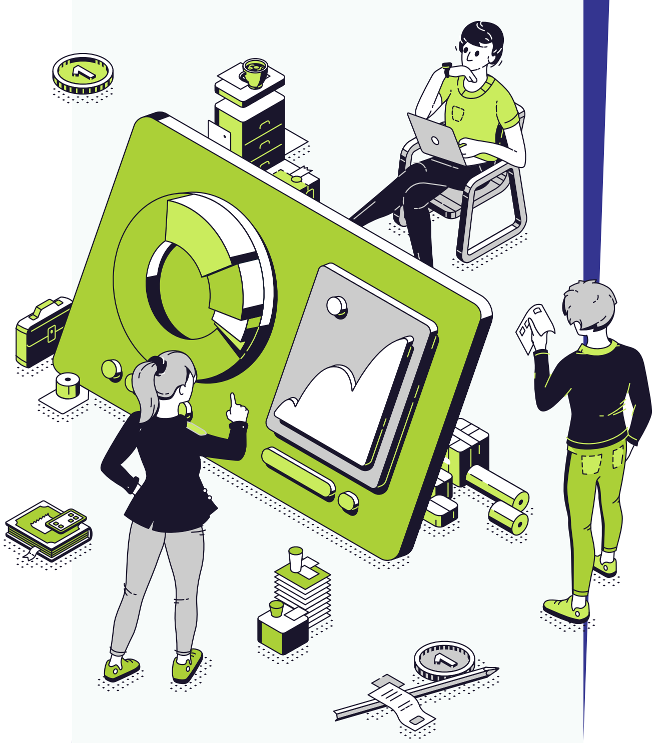
In other words, it's an account on your radar, with contact information, that appears to fit your buyer personas. It may also be an individual who visits the company website and provides contact information via a Contact Us form, newsletter sign-up form, lead-generation form, etc.

An **MQL** is a lead that initially appears to fit your customer profiles or buyer personas and meets the criteria you have developed, such as:

- Having an apparent need for your product or services.
- Has engaged with your content (use lead scoring to determine their value).
- Has expressed some kind of interest in your product or services.

An **SQL** is a prospect that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Has explicitly expressed the need for your product or services.
- Has a high rate of engagement with your content based on lead scoring.
- Has explicitly expressed an interest in your product or services.



A healthy pipeline has deals at many different stages, each of which has a different likelihood of eventually closing.

Lead status. Leads should also be identified by their lead stage. The lead status identifies the contact's point in the sales process. This ensures that you can follow the journey of the lead and prevent them from slipping through the cracks. The stages are (again, these are examples; yours may differ!):

- **In queue**. SQLs from the web and from assignment by management start here. No contact should live at this stage for more than one business day.
- **Working/in progress**. This is the connect/qualify, explore and deep dive queue. It captures leads that are being actively worked but don't have an open deal yet.
- **Open deal**. Contacts at this stage have received a proposal and/or submitted a sample for inspection; these are opportunities.
- **Closed and working**. These contacts have made the purchase, and the services are being performed. After the process has been completed, the lead status should be changed to Rework.
- **Rework**. Whether the lead stalled out, said no to a previous proposal, was unresponsive or has made a purchase in the past, there could be another opportunity here. The lead gets reworked from time to time; set a specific time frame for when you rework them (i.e., six weeks, three months, six months) depending upon your sales cycle.
- **Dead/unqualified**. These are contacts who either are a bad fit or have explicitly said, "Do not contact me again."

Deal stages. A healthy pipeline has deals at many different stages, each of which has a different likelihood of eventually closing. By tracking and adjusting these close rates per deal stage, you'll be able to make more accurate forecasts of your revenue — and save the headache of creating pipeline reports.

(Instead, just keep your deals up to date, and you can calculate the expected value — the probability of a stage multiplied by the total of all deals in that stage — of each stage.)

Lead handoff. It is critical to determine how different types of leads (general, MQLs and SQLs) will be handled. Who will take leads that come via the telephone? Who will enter them into the CRM? These roles should be clearly defined.

It's also important to determine who will handle leads coming in through the website. Create a specific course of action for each type of lead, such as:

- **Leads (general)**. Will these be nurtured through marketing activities? How will they be shared with the marketing team?
- **MQLs**. Who should be notified when a lead becomes an MQL? Who will decide if the MQL should be contacted yet and if it should be treated as a cold or warm lead?
- **SQLs**. Who will be notified when a contact becomes an SQL, and how quickly will they be required to respond?

Annual goals. Each team should be provided with goals pertaining to their engagement with the other team. Create three to five specific goals for each team.

For example, marketing team goals should include such things as:

- Amount of traffic
- Number of subscribers
- Number of MQLs expected
- Number of collateral pieces created

Sales team goals should include such things as:

- The close rate on leads generated by the marketing team
- Average dollar amount of each deal
- Overall revenue goal for the department

With these goals specified, each team can see the results of their collaboration and understand the value of the work they are doing.

Fostering collaboration. Set clear goals for when teams will meet. Define which players from sales, marketing and any other departments will be included in this meeting. The more specific you can be about who will meet and when the better your chances for success. The purpose of this meeting will be to evaluate performance by both marketing and sales relative to this SLA and to propose changes if needed.

Case Studies

Sales Enablement Drives Results for Smith System

As the world's leading provider of crash-avoidance driver training, Smith System is a familiar name among drivers in industries ranging from transportation to pharmaceuticals to health care. But the company was ready to reach out into new sectors and also wanted to re-establish its identity as the global thought leader it is.

Smith System partnered with madison/miles media to accomplish these new goals.

What we did. After refreshing the Smith System website and giving the printed sales collateral a more contemporary look, m3 worked to align the sales and marketing activities.

Since Smith System did not have a marketing team, m3 became its marketing partner and integrated HubSpot CRM and Sales Pro tools into the company's redesigned website. Using these tools, m3 could track leads that resulted from our inbound marketing efforts and send them to the sales team to nurture those leads through the buyer's journey. The team used CRM tools such as automated email sequences to engage leads, thus keeping Smith System top of mind with potential clients.

The Results

2,217
New leads in a nine-month period

80
New customers

$1 Million
Sales revenue

96%
Increase in Twitter followers

FlexXray Sees Better Results with Sales Enablement

For more than two decades, FlexXray has provided advanced food X-ray inspection and recovery services — an increasingly important service for food production plants safeguarding against contamination from foreign objects. Despite its history of excellence, many in the industry were unaware that FlexXray existed or understood what it offered.

To increase awareness of its services and expertise, FlexXray turned to madison/miles media.

What we did. Although it had a sales team, FlexXray lacked the marketing team to support its salespeople. Using a sales enablement strategy, m3 developed sales collateral that reinforced the sales team's messaging and developed content to bring new users to the company website.

Based on input from the sales team, m3 created email sequences to help potential customers through the sales funnel and developed a consistent schedule of blog posts to provide new reading for potential customers. This also gave the sales team new information to share with prospects and keep the conversation going.

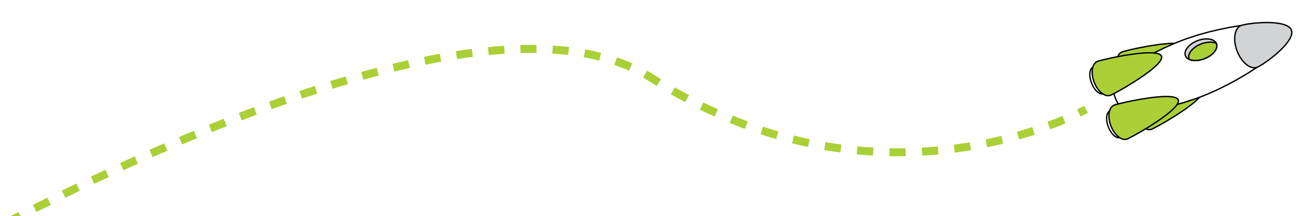
The Results

7%
Customer conversion rate

$50,000
In new business

116%
Increase in social media followers

146%
Increase in engagements



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Ready to discuss how we can help
reach your revenue goals?

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