



# Survey: The Fractured State of Enterprise Sales Enablement and Training

Executive Summary | FEBRUARY 2016

allego 

# The State of Sales Enablement and Training: 2016

## Sales training is broken – it's antiquated and ineffective.

Sales managers and representatives alike in nearly all industries agree that sales training processes implemented in their companies are inherently flawed. Nearly all can identify an aspect of the training process that is outdated and in need of transformation – in fact, **96 percent agree that the training process at their companies is ineffective and requires improvement**. Only 30 percent of sales representatives feel that traditional training techniques, such as boot camps, certifications and periodic training programs, improve sales performance. Nearly double that number (59 percent) agree that they would like their sales training and enablement to be more accessible for when they need it most.

Allego commissioned ResearchNow to field a 34-question online survey of 150 U.S. individuals who self-identified as full-time sales managers and 150 U.S. individuals who self-identified as full-time sales representatives at companies with 200 or more employees in their sales organizations. All sales managers have indicated that they were somewhat, very or extremely involved in the training and sales enablement of the sales staff at their companies. Fielding occurred between October 6 and October 20, 2015.



**ONLY 30%** sales reps feel that traditional training techniques, such as boot camps, certifications and periodic training programs, improve sales performance.

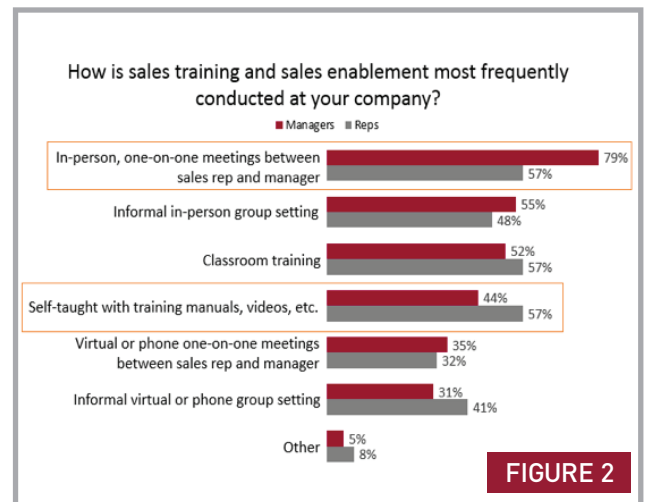
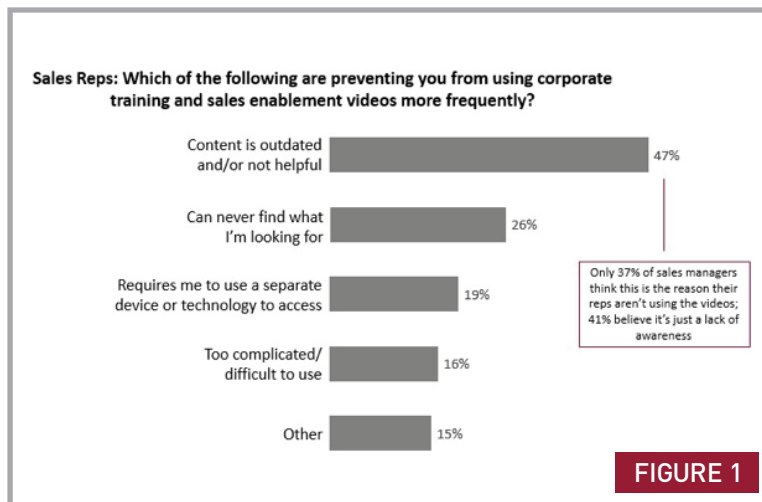
The study revealed that sales people crave the real-life advice of their peers and believe that carrying that advice in their back pocket is the key to sales success in 2016 and beyond.

## Barriers to sales enablement resources

Nearly half (47 percent) of sales reps say that corporate training and sales enablement videos are outdated and/or not helpful, and an additional 26 percent say that they can never find the content they're seeking [Figure 1]. In addition, more than 20 percent of sales managers think their teams access sales enablement videos frequently, when in fact, only 8 percent actually do.

There appears to be a disconnect between sales managers' and sales reps' perceptions about how sales training and enablement are most frequently conducted at their companies.

Seventy-nine percent of managers say that training is most frequently conducted with in-person, one-on-one meetings between the manager and sales rep, but the reps stated classroom training and self-taught training were conducted just as frequently as in-person, one-on-ones.



Another noticeable contrast: significantly more reps than managers say their sales enablement and training is self-taught with training manuals and videos (57 percent vs. 44 percent) [Figure 2].

## Better training comes from within

Improvements to sales training processes are more readily embraced if they do not come in the form of company-wide training developed by the corporate office or marketing teams. Most salespeople (57 percent) say that insights derived from real-life scenarios from reps in the field would improve the sales training and enablement processes at their companies.

**The majority (70 percent) of sales representatives say that just-in-time access to knowledge, practice and coaching, particularly when needed for a specific deal, is more effective for improving sales performance** than structured boot camps and certifications [Figure 3]. They prefer real-world insights directly from top sales representatives instead of content delivered by the marketing team or corporate office (80 percent vs. 20 percent). **Nearly all sales managers (94 percent) attribute the successes of their sales team to personal coaching from senior sales staff.**

**Sales Reps: Which of the following is more effective for improving your sales performance?**



## Peer factor

By far, sales representatives say **learning directly from a peer** and **discussing or reviewing sales techniques with others** are the **most effective training techniques** [Figure 4].

Peer-to-peer methods rank far ahead of certifications and quizzes or reading new material on their own time. Furthermore, 65 percent agree that even talking through the pitch with someone else is an effective way to learn new product material, corporate messaging and sales techniques. Sales representatives are significantly more confident in the sales and positioning techniques recommended by their peers (57 percent) than those given by managers (51 percent) or the company itself (43 percent).

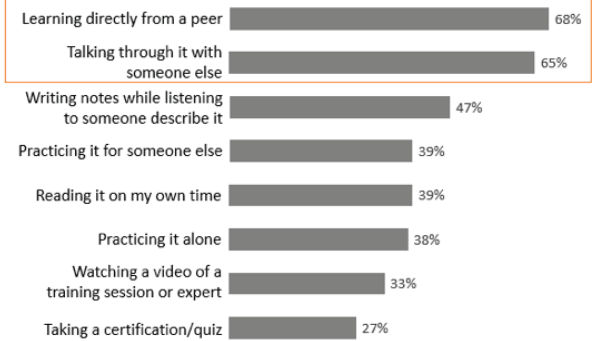
**65 percent of sales representatives agree:**  
 “Sales pitch advice from peers is more effective than advice/training from the corporation as a whole”

## “Make it mobile!”

To improve collaboration and performance, sales professionals are seeking easy access to materials on the devices they use in the field. They are demanding accessibility, yet very few (15 percent) say they currently have sales training and enablement materials always available to them on their mobile devices.

Nearly one-third (29 percent) say that to improve the training and enablement processes of their companies, **sales leaders should increase their emphasis on mobile technology to make it easier to access materials remotely**. This should not be much of a surprise, as essentially the same amount of professionals who use a laptop for work purposes use a mobile phone as well (66 percent and 60 percent, respectively – far more than the 44 percent who use a desktop computer).

**Sales Reps: In general, how effective are the following methods for you to learn new product material, corporate messaging or sales techniques?**



**FIGURE 4**

Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) say collaboration with peers has been an effective way to gain sales success. Also, 57 percent agree that they would like their training and sales enablement to be more collaborative, and nearly half (47 percent) agree that more interactivity between sales representatives would improve the training and enablement process at their companies. In addition, nearly all (91 percent) say trading advice with peers is helping them succeed and 97 percent of sales managers agree.

## Vertical-specific Highlights

Some interesting statistics emerged as we looked at industry-specific responses.

- Salespeople in the **tech industry** are 68 percent more likely than the average salesperson to have sales training and sales enablement materials available 24/7 on their mobile device.
- **Financial services industry** salespeople are 76 percent more likely than the average salesperson to participate in formal product training and sales enablement sessions about once a week. Salespeople in the **tech industry** tend to attend training less frequently, as they are 44 percent more likely to participate in formal product training and sales enablement sessions about once or twice a month.
- Salespeople in **tech** are performers: they are 22 percent more likely than the average salesperson to believe that practicing new product material, corporate messaging or sales techniques for someone else is an extremely effective method to learn.
- **Financial services** salespeople trust their peers' advice more than those in tech. Salespeople in the financial services industry are 21 percent more likely to agree that sales pitch advice from peers is more effective than advice and training from the corporation as a whole. Tech salespeople believe the opposite: they are 18 percent less likely to agree.
- Salespeople in the **financial services and tech industries** highly value expert content. Thirty-seven percent of financial services reps are more likely than those in other industries to believe that access to 'expert' content would improve the sales training and enablement process. Salespeople in tech are 38 percent more likely than those in other industries to believe this.
- Sales professionals in the **tech industry** are 47 percent more likely than the average salesperson to believe that better feedback to specific points in a pitch would improve sales training and the sales enablement process. They also are 70 percent more likely to believe that marketing's increased involvement in creating sales content would contribute to better sales training and enablement.
- The majority of salespeople (73%) in the **medical/pharmaceutical industry**, more than any other industry, believe insights from reps in the field would improve the sales enablement process at their company
- There is a vast disconnect between sales managers and their teams in the **medical/pharmaceutical industry** when it comes to explaining why corporate sales training videos aren't utilized more frequently. 46% of sales reps blamed outdated content as the culprit, while only 14% of their managers thought that was the reason their teams weren't viewing videos more often.

- 86 percent of **retail** sales people would prefer to learn new product information in a formal product training meeting.
- **Medical/pharmaceutical** sales reps are using tablets for work (73%) far more than their counterparts in **tech** (49%) or **retail** (42%)

## Conclusion

This research clearly reveals that sales teams at large U.S. companies – both managers and representatives – believe their sales enablement and training processes are severely flawed. Although there may be some discrepancy between managers and their sales staff on precisely the state of their current training and how they're utilizing available training resources, they both agree that collaboration and peer-to-peer learning are very effective. Managers and sales reps also both believe that sales materials that come directly from the corporation lack the inherent value and tailored insights that come from coaching and feedback from peers or managers.

Sales representatives crave advice and training from their peers and, they want these assets to be incredibly accessible. Currently, few have materials always available to them on their mobile devices, which are used for work nearly as often as laptops.

It is clear that sales professionals require the sales training, coaching and content that will help to win their next deal to be available on-demand, exactly when and where they need it. Businesses that invest in just-in-time learning will be able to respond to the growing demands of their sales teams and, by modernizing their sales organizations, they will reap the rewards of increased productivity and performance.

**65% of reps feel that advice from peers is linked to higher performance than corporate training.**

**96% of respondents feel that current training techniques are ineffective...and nearly 1/2 of reps feel that content is outdated.**

**Nearly 1/3 of reps feel that companies should make content more accessible on mobile devices.**

# Respondent Breakdown

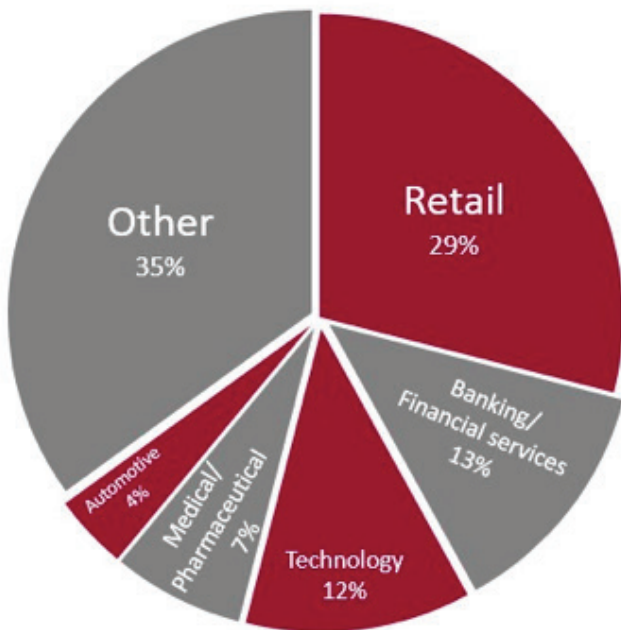
Sales Managers Title Breakdown



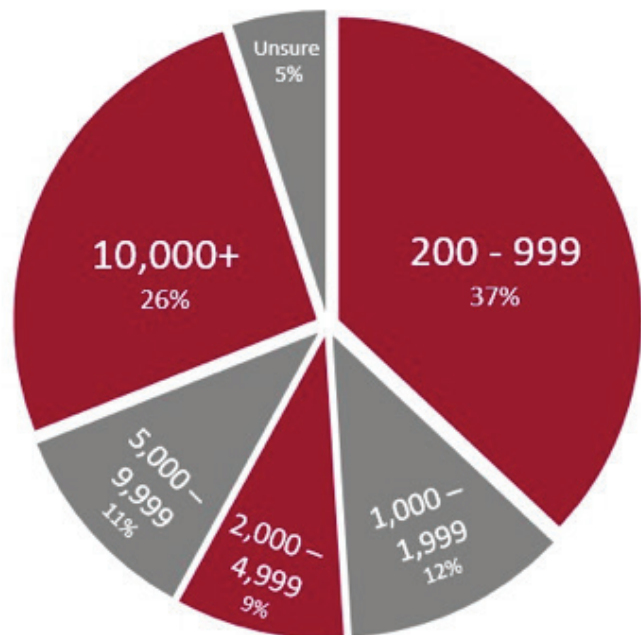
Sales Representatives Title Breakdown



Industry Breakdown

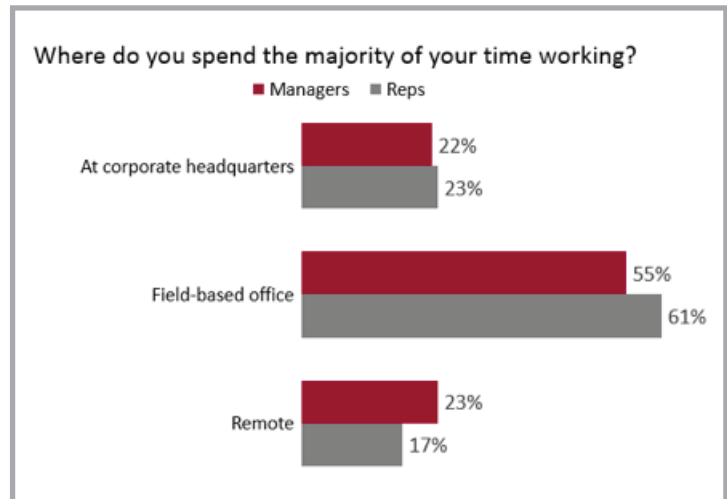


Sales Team Size

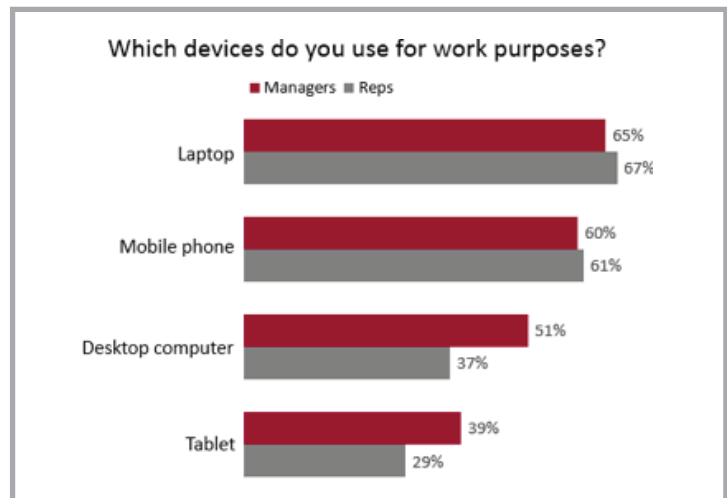


## Respondent Breakdown, continued

Most sales people surveyed spend the majority of their time at a field-based office. Of the remaining respondents, it is split almost evenly between those based at a corporate headquarters and those who work remotely.



The mobile phone is used for work purposes almost as often as the laptop and far more frequently than the desktop, particularly for sales representatives.



Sales people most commonly use their mobile phone for swapping insights with people in the field.

