Modern pharmaceutical sales organizations now use rep-centric learning and development strategies to unlock peak productivity and eliminate training costs.
A pharmaceutical rep turns a corner while driving to one of the biggest meetings of the year when a jolt from under his car forces a change of plans: he just ran over a pothole and now needs to swap out his tire, except he’s never actually done a tire change by himself before. What does he do? In 2019, he calmly pulls up YouTube and absorbs a user-generated video demonstration of exactly how to perform the tire change on the make, model, and year of his car before turning around, grabbing his tools, and successfully executing the task himself. Within twenty minutes he’s back on the road driving toward the hospital feeling ready for anything.

This is what it feels like to be ready in a world where you can pull a device out of your pocket and quickly extract whatever day-to-day lessons you need from somebody else’s life experiences. Pharmaceutical sales reps already use consumer apps like Waze to learn about open routes in real time based on other drivers’ experience of current road conditions, or even Duolingo to practice and learn new languages using friendly competition with other would-be travelers. But what about the tasks involving the substance of pharmaceutical reps’ work? What if our rep were to hit a different kind of “pothole” while preparing for the call, he finds out that the hospital was recently acquired to be part of a larger integrated delivery network and he had only planned on speaking with a particular doctor? Our rep would need a debrief with a colleague to understand how to position the value of the drug with the various buyers he’ll be speaking with, but unfortunately, no one is available.
Agile learning, agile content and agile collaboration at work

But what if our rep could pull up a peer video demonstration of how to perform this task too? He could open an app and not only search for content specific to this scenario, but also receive scenario-specific recommendations of system-curated example videos detailing how to articulate the value of the drug to the various stakeholders he’ll be speaking with—created by fellow pharmaceutical reps, themselves. He'd watch one and absorb internal best practices while scanning recommendations for supporting collateral and other customer-facing content that scroll by throughout the video. He'd take ten minutes to “bone up” in the parking lot before walking in, articulating value, and then turning around to create a recap video for the team, himself.

Agile approaches to sales readiness ensures pharmaceutical reps are “ready” even in instances where conventional definitions of the word would say they are not. With a small bit of additional context from colleagues, our rep can walk into that meeting without needing to wing it. Instead of relying solely on formal learning, **agile approaches to sales readiness empower reps with learning in the flow of their daily work**. Traditional learning content and sales collateral takes weeks or months to create, so **agile approaches to sales readiness empower reps with content captured “in the wild” by other successful reps at their company**. And instead of only collaborating through formally scheduled conference calls that are too difficult to coordinate—or through messaging apps that memorialize the conversation but lack the richness of information conveyed in face-to-face interactions—**agile approaches to sales readiness bridge the gap with collaboration that uses video to enable reps, managers, and subject matter experts to work together in complex ways asynchronously**. Sales readiness today demands more than just **learning, content, or collaboration** by itself; it demands an agile approach that combines all three to drive measurable business impact.

But what does the research say? Sales organizations whose reps consistently hit quota enable their reps with a combination of these three elements. SiriusDecisions’ [2018 Sales Talent Study](#) revealed that high-performing sales reps—those who have made quota for at least the last two years—list in-field observation of others, on-the-job informal learning, and peer collaboration as their top three sources of learning. According to recent [McKinsey research](#), top-performing sales organizations are 67% more likely to provide frequent sales capability training than their underperforming peers, while providing ongoing access to coaching, reinforcement, and short videos of top performers demonstrating their approaches.

Read on to explore a real-life example of how sales enablement leaders at a global therapeutic device manufacturer are using Allego’s sales learning and readiness platform to combine these elements for better rep performance. Consider the tactics discussed in this case study when formulating your readiness strategy.
Agile approaches to sales readiness open doors for pharmaceutical sales organizations

Chris Gish, Vice President of Sales at a global pharmaceutical company, needed to certify the sales force on a new indication for one of the company’s drugs while providing ongoing access to best practice examples of how to articulate the messaging. Learning about the new indication wouldn’t require much training, but flying the dispersed sales team to HQ for a relatively short meeting would be a waste of human and financial resources, and bringing reps together in person to collaborate on best approaches didn’t make sense.

In the past, Gish would have used video conference software to hold a live training, but this method was cumbersome and offered no audit trail, which is critical for pharmaceutical companies. Gish considered several alternatives, but took an agile approach because it would enable him to certify reps on the product’s new use in an effective and compliant way without the time and expense of HQ travel.

To certify the reps, Gish devised a two-part strategy: part 1 was a televised meeting involving the entire organization. He gathered a handful of sales trainers and reps at the company’s headquarters to broadcast a presentation of the new content, which the rest of the sales team watched from their offices. Part 2 was an assignment for each rep. “We gave everybody a week after the meeting to practice,” said Gish. “Then we asked them to upload two practice videos to their manager, get feedback from the manager, and then deliver their final video one week later, which they did. “After watching the videos, the manager would certify reps or give them a failing grade, give them feedback where appropriate, and then share what was learned throughout the team.”

The sales management team then used the platform to surface the best examples of reps delivering the messaging, and then used that content to build a library of powerful learning content by enhancing it with quiz questions, summary prompts, audio overlays, and other interactivity. The training organization then used the platform to deploy personalized learning paths and on-demand video playbooks for reps to access before walking into calls. Because the content featured successful peers and trusted experts whom reps wanted to hear from, they readily engaged with it.

Gish’s team certified the sales force in a much shorter period than previously possible, and they were able to provide reps with ongoing access to critical learning in the flow of their daily work. Reps repeatedly practiced their messaging, giving them the competence and confidence to make the most of their sales calls with physicians and staff. The team was able to respond quickly to shifts in the market during the post-launch period by engaging in agile collaboration where reps captured competitive insights via short videos on their smartphones after coming out of calls. The company now has a mechanism to ensure successful and speedy launches for new drugs without having to budget exorbitant amounts of money for training.
Conclusion

It’s not enough to ‘set it and forget it’ when it comes to sales readiness. Learning needs to be agile and continuous to ensure pharmaceutical reps remain equipped in an ever-evolving world. Harnessing the power of agile content gives organizations the ability to supply reps and their customers with an ongoing stream of system-curated information and collateral that they naturally engage with because the content simulates face time with real players in the arena. Empowering reps and managers with agile collaboration provides training and enablement organizations with the means to help teams perform at the highest level by leveraging the collective knowledge at a velocity not possible before. Agile approaches to sales readiness incorporate all three of these elements to drive compelling ROI in pharmaceutical sales organizations.

For more information about how Allego can help your company take an agile approach to sales readiness, or to see the platform in action, click here.