



## **Optimizing Sales Performance**

*Defining, Supporting, and Managing Your Best Practices Sales Process  
with The Six Boxes® Approach*



A White Paper from  
The Performance Thinking Network  
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## Sales Enablement: How do we *do* it?

The phrase *sales enablement* has become a standard term in the language of those who support sales performance. There are currently 37 LinkedIn groups with this phrase in their titles. There are software companies, products, consultancies, and all kinds of online resources that include *sales enablement* in their names, descriptions, or value propositions. It's a great descriptive phrase for marketing products and services, but, like many such catch phrases, means different things to different people.

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always invested large sums,  
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returns on those investments.*

The term first came to our attention during the 1990's when my former consulting firm, Product Knowledge Systems, Inc., was a pioneer in the field of sales knowledge management, performance-based training, and sales performance support. In that era, many sales and marketing automation products, books, conferences and experts exploded into the marketplace, most claiming to be the next big thing. There were many flavors-of-the-month (or year). But often the marketing messages obscured an underlying question: How do we *do* sales enablement in the most cost-effective way?

## Beyond Sales Training: Optimizing ROI

The good news about the phrase *sales enablement* is that it points beyond sales training to a more holistic, combined set of factors needed to support or enable sales success. It counters the knee-jerk assumption that training is a sufficient vehicle for improving performance, an assumption that virtually never holds true. While companies have always invested large sums, year in and year out, to educate and train their sales people, they have not always reaped the best possible returns on those investments. That ROI depends to a large extent on how well they set expectations for their people and what combinations of interventions, other than training, they put in place to support sales success. Those enabling factors come from sales organizations themselves, from product and marketing groups, sales training, IT, field operations teams, and sometimes from other sources within and outside the organization.

Perhaps more than most business functions, sales organizations recognize and actively fund all kinds of interventions intended to accelerate results, including online tools, coaching and manager development, aggressive incentive and reward systems, customer materials, outreach programs, and more. For this reason, it's often much easier to bring sales trainers, sales managers, executives, and field operations groups together with a focus on the same business results: sales revenues, sales efficiency, customer retention, and so on. But what we've noticed over several decades is that despite such efforts to