



EBOOK

HOW TO TACKLE TOP *SALES AND ENABLEMENT* CHALLENGES

BONUS: 10 TIPS FOR SELLING IN AN UNCERTAIN ECONOMY

Top Sales and Enablement Challenges and Priorities and How to Address Them

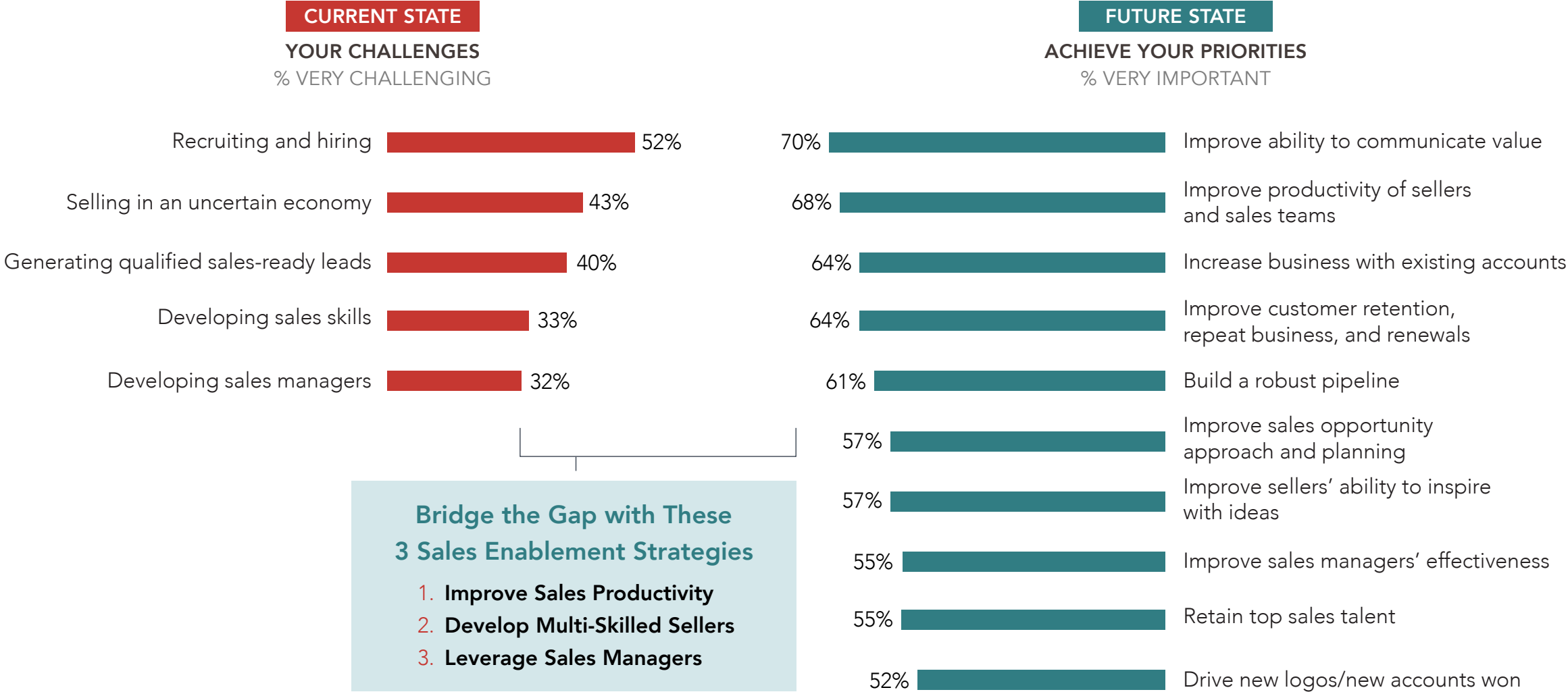
The RAIN Group Center for Sales Research' recent global study of more than 300 sales, enablement, and company leaders identified the top sales and enablement challenges facing sales organizations and their priorities for the coming year.

Not surprisingly, the top sales priorities are largely geared toward tackling the top challenges and revolve around the common themes of value, productivity, account growth, pipeline, and talent.

In this summary, we share the top 3 sales enablement strategies you can use to bridge the gap to overcome challenges and achieve your sales priorities.

Plus, we include a **BONUS: 10 Tips for Selling in an Uncertain Economy**.





Top 3 Enablement Strategies to Achieve Your Sales Priorities

Focus on these three strategies to achieve your top sales priorities. Execute well and you'll make the #1 challenge—recruiting top sales talent—much less important because you'll be developing your own talent.

1. Improve Sales Productivity

Improving the productivity of the sales team is the #2 priority. Many productivity initiatives center around technology or process. However, when companies focus on developing specific [productivity habits](#), they achieve significantly stronger results than just focusing on tech or process.

Most organizations could increase their sales productivity by 46% without adding new hires. Few areas drive sales performance more than the productivity of the sales team. You can read more about these productivity habits [here](#).

2. Develop Multi-Skilled Sellers

Improving the ability of sellers to communicate value, grow accounts, fill the pipeline, improve sales opportunity approach—these are all cited as top priorities. While sales skill training is a priority for many organizations, too many take a “flavor of the month” approach. Top-Performing Sales Organizations have this figured out. They work to develop skills across these topics systematically and support training as a change initiative to change seller behavior and habits.

An early step in this process is using a sales competency model to understand the skills your sellers need. We use our Top-Performing SellerSM model, which is research-validated. It identifies the capabilities and behaviors that separate Top-Performing Sellers from other sellers. Once you've defined the skills, knowledge, and attributes your sellers need, you can define the content and format of training best suited to build them.

See the Top-Performing Seller model on the next page.

3. Leverage Sales Managers

Sales managers are a key leverage point for most sales organizations. Managers work with sellers one-on-one, keeping them focused, advising them, checking in, and helping them stay motivated for the long term. A great sales manager is often the difference between an average and a top-performing team. They're also often the difference between seller retention and turnover.

Our research on sellers and sales managers reveals that sellers are 63% more likely to be Top Performers when they report having an effective sales manager combined with regular, ongoing coaching and effective sales training.

Learn more about what the best sales managers do differently [here](#).

It's the combination of employing these three strategies that will help you overcome challenges and achieve the priorities.

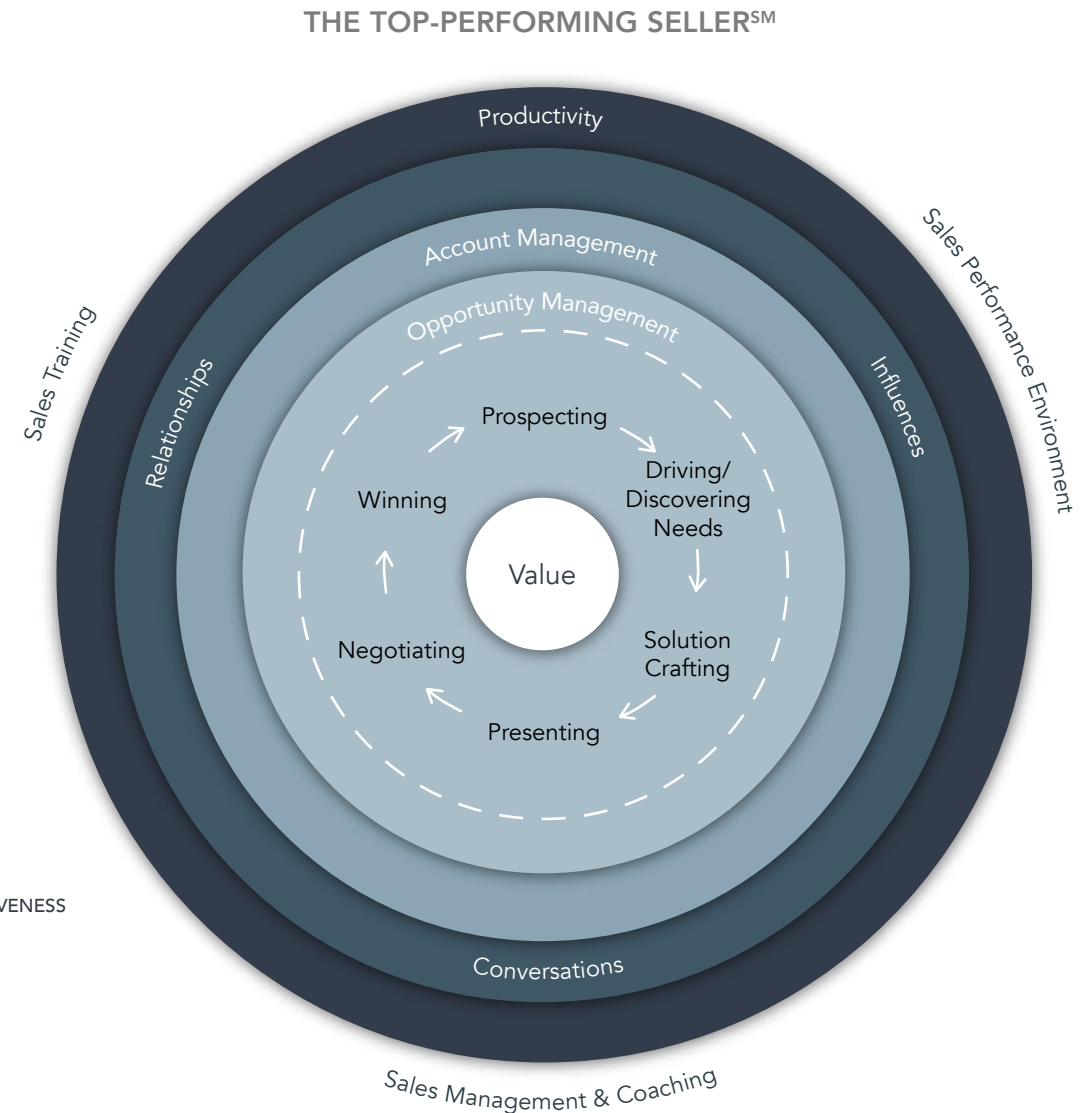
Sales Competency Framework: The Top-Performing SellerSM

We studied 100 skills and behaviors across 13 categories and found Top-Performing Sellers are statistically significantly more capable in the following critical categories of selling:

- Selling Across the Sales Cycle
- Opportunity Management
- Account Management
- Relationships, Conversations, and Influence
- Productivity

Learn more about what makes a Top-Performing Seller [here](#).

- MAXIMIZING PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS
- SUCCEEDING WITH PEOPLE
- DRIVING ACCOUNT GROWTH
- WINNING THE SALE
- ACHIEVING THE OUTCOME



10 Tips for Selling in an Uncertain Economy

Selling in an uncertain economy is cited as the #2 challenge in our study. Closing sales in today's environment can be challenging. The study also found that sales cycles are lengthening and more opportunities are being lost to no decision. Here are some tips that can help.



1. **Focus on value:** It's more important than ever to communicate the value your solution brings to the buyer (see priority #1). How will you help buyers save money, increase efficiency, or generate more revenue? Be specific about how you can help and the value you provide.



2. **Grow existing accounts:** Existing customers are often more likely to buy as they already have an established relationship with you and your company. It takes proactive effort with a planned strategy to grow your accounts in a systematic way.



3. **Develop multiple champions on the buying team:** Having multiple champions within an organization—people who will advocate for your solution even when you aren't in the room—can help insulate you from vendor changes and provide entrée to doing business with different buying centers.



4. **Target, target, target:** Identify industries and markets that are doing well and focus your prospecting efforts there. Tailor your outreach to be specific to the sectors you target (see tip #5).



5. **Customize your outreach:** Read up on quarterly earnings, press releases, industry news, and other information sources. Reach out to industry contacts to develop an understanding of current issues and trends. Use what you've learned to develop customized outreach and an offer that's unique to the prospect and valuable to them (see tip #1).



6. **Make a strong impact case:** Communicate the impact your solution will have on the buyer in the strongest way you can. To do this, be sure to answer the [four value proposition questions](#): Why act? Why now? Why us? Why trust? If buyers don't have a strong answer to any of the four whys, they'll delay the purchase because there either isn't a compelling enough reason to move forward or it's too risky.



7. **Collaborate with the buyer:** Get the buyer involved in making the case and they'll be more likely to take ownership of the idea. For example, as you're doing quantitative estimates of savings, efficiencies, and so on, ask the buyer to fill in the blanks with you. Plug the numbers into an ROI calculator (estimates are fine)—or do the math—alongside the buyer. They'll be more likely to believe and commit to the result if they're involved in the process.



8. **Be flexible:** Offer a trade you think might get the buyer to move forward. This could be a discount, additional services, or something else of value to the buyer. Don't just offer a straight discount, instead [trade, don't cave](#). This means asking for something in return when a concession is asked of you. For example, this could be a discount paired with an agreement the buyer will publish a case study with you. Or a financing plan paired with an adjusted project schedule.



9. **Start small:** A great way to get a buyer to move ahead or shorten the sales cycle on larger deals is to break them into phases, focusing on closing a smaller phase first. Once a buyer agrees to begin, it's much easier to get them to move forward with subsequent pieces of the deal.



10. **[Build a strong case for change](#):** We call this a Buyer Change Blueprint. Sales is about moving a buyer from where they are now to a better future state. In an uncertain economy with many unknowns, buyers are more wary and cautious as they scrutinize purchase decisions and spending.

Overall, you should be empathetic, understanding, and flexible. By focusing on building relationships, highlighting value, and being responsive to changing needs, you can increase your chances of closing more deals.

Take the Next Steps to Achieve Your Sales Priorities

It's easy to read the recommendations shared here and nod your head in agreement. After all, they tackle the top challenges and priorities of sales leaders.

However, it's not easy to make them come alive. How do you get it all done? As a sales leader, you need to:

- Build a sales team with deep, diverse skills
- Develop managers to unleash seller potential
- Improve the productivity of your sales force
- Generate qualified, sales-ready leads
- Ramp up sellers and teams faster
- Make lasting change in seller behavior and skills

And you need to do all of this for the least amount possible while showing impressive results. Many turn to sales training.

As a sales training company, you might think we're thrilled to see and hear this.

Yes and no.

Too many organizations approach training with a short-term perspective. They focus on a program to develop a specific skill. They see short-term improvements in results and ROI and call it a success.

This isn't good enough. And it doesn't drive the long-term change that allows sales organizations to achieve their priorities. In fact, priorities today have shifted very little since we first conducted similar research four years ago.

At RAIN Group we're committed to helping organizations overcome these common challenges and see these priorities through to fruition.

Developing a multi-skilled, highly-productive sales force with great sales managers is key to success.

As an industry, we need to move beyond the "one skill at a time" approach.

Through RAIN Group Total Access, it's our intention to change how sales leaders approach seller and sales manager development, how they buy sales training, and how they embed a sales method in their organization.

It's our goal to make it easy for you to do all these things across your sales organization with an affordable per person subscription to our complete suite of training programs across delivery modalities.

Whether you subscribe to our training or build your own, our recommendation remains the same: **if you truly want to become a top-performing sales organization that attracts and retains top sales talent, you need ongoing sales development focused on productivity and sales skills supported by strong sales managers.**



RAIN Group Total Access[®]

Subscription-based sales training for your team.

RAIN Group Total Access is subscription-based sales training that gives you access to our entire suite of training modules, videos, tools and assets, Train the Trainer and Train the Coach, learning journeys, and implementation support across sales skill, productivity, management, and coaching areas.

Train cohorts concurrently, assign different curricula per division, and launch on-site and virtual instructor-led, self study, and hybrid training on your schedule for a low per-person subscription.

- **Complete access** to world-class, award-winning sales training
- **77 modules** covering the complete sales cycle and sales management, organized across 11 programs
- **4 delivery modalities**, including instructor-led (ILT), virtual ILT (VILT), hybrid, and self-study
- **Manager coaching discussion guides** and application assignments for each module
- **Core sales planners** for conversations, opportunity management, account management, prospecting, and more
- **90-Day Sales Achievement Challenge** implementation and coaching guide
- **Just-in-time learning** with videos, job-aids, and tools that are quickly accessible when sellers need them
- **Training implementation** best practices, checklists, and tools for success
- **Train-the-Trainer and Coach Certification** processes
- **Facilitator walkthroughs** of all modules and programs

Low Per-Person Subscription

Develop **Top Performers.**
Drive Business **Results.**

About RAIN Group

Drive Transformational Change through Award-Winning Sales Training

We help organizations:

- Enhance sales capability with award-winning sales training
- Design and execute strategic account management initiatives
- Increase effectiveness of sales management and coaching

Best IP: We study buying and selling relentlessly through the RAIN Group Center for Sales Research. Our research and field work allows us to create industry-leading intellectual property to help our clients achieve the greatest success.

Best Education System: We use the best education approaches, methods, and technologies to make training work, stick, and transfer to the job.

Best Results: We make it our mission to drive value and achieve the highest client satisfaction through excellence in quality and producing transformational results for our clients.

