



# *The Four Keys*

*to Sales Force  
Productivity*

maestro'

in



g+

f



*Optimal sales force productivity is the goal of every sales professional, regardless of experience, knowledge or skills. And every one of them, given the right tools and support, has the ability to perform at a higher level.*

As a learning professional, it's your job to help your sales reps realize their potential. Significant responsibility rests on your shoulders. It's up to you to create the learning opportunities, training resources and content that will unlock the true potential of every sales rep. But with that responsibility also comes the exceptional opportunity to make a lasting, powerful and positive impact on the overall sales force and the company as a whole.

#### **What is that opportunity, exactly?**

It's the ability to achieve optimal sales force productivity by harnessing the power of advanced mobile technology. And it's possible when you align the separate efforts of Sales, Marketing and Training to improve visibility, consolidate insights and introduce an agile approach to learning.

This whitepaper will walk you through the must-have elements it takes to optimize the productivity of your sales force.

# Key #1 Alignment

The common thread that unites Training, Sales and Marketing is a shared goal of boosting the performance of the sales force. By coming together, these three teams are capable of delivering all the tools needed to make a sales team wildly successful. Training provides initial and ongoing learning opportunities. Marketing produces supportive content and resources. And sales reps experience actual customer interactions followed by feedback and coaching from Sales management. All of these efforts exist to empower sales reps to be as productive as possible.

All too often, each of these departments works independently of the others—each in its respective silo and each doing what it thinks it should to equip the sales force for success. But in this approach, it's rare – perhaps even impossible – that the independent efforts of each department will come together to work seamlessly and effectively for the sales rep. It is inefficient and, in the worst cases, may even counteract sales rep productivity instead of improving it.

Depending on your organization, collaboration among these departments may not come naturally. However, it couldn't be more important and it's worth whatever amount of effort needed to make it happen.

Consider this. According to a recent survey, as much as 40% of a sales professional's time is spent searching for information and knowledge required to do her job. This inefficiency and misalignment is taking a toll. So much so that 58% of buyers report that sales reps are unable to answer their questions effectively. And according to research from SiriusDecisions, the number one reason for not meeting sales quotas was the inability of sales people to effectively communicate value messages.

*All too often, each department works independently of the others*

Today's sales reps are hungry for resources that will help them be more productive. They want content that successfully speaks to their prospects. They need training tools that will sharpen their knowledge. They need feedback and coaching from their managers that truly help them grow. And they need all of these pieces to be easily accessible whenever they need it, wherever they need it. The alignment of your Training department with Sales and Marketing is the first step towards providing this content and support.



## Key #2 Technology

Technology is everywhere and has become an integral part of virtually every aspect of our lives. As it has grown in accessibility and reliability over the years, mobile technology has become a must-have for many of us, not a want. So much so that as of 2007, 91 percent of adults had their smartphones within arm's reach at all times, according to Morgan Stanley ...and that was in 2007. Just imagine how close that number is to 100% today.

In addition to mobile devices becoming an extension of who we are, they are also empowering us to do more with our time. A recent Mobility at Work study by CDW found that 94% of mobile device users agree that their use of mobile devices for work has made them more efficient.

It seems that new statistics like these about the rise of technology surface every day. And it all begs the question: How are you leveraging the power of technology to train your sales force and optimize the productivity of your reps?

*94% of mobile device users agree that their use of mobile devices for work has made them more efficient.*

Think about your content. Is it managed, delivered or accessed with mobile technology? Are you making a content library readily available for your reps through a mobile app? Are they able to access exactly what they need when they need it with confidence that it's accurate and up-to-date?

And how about your training? Are you delivering the tools and learning opportunities directly to your sales reps' mobile devices? Are they able to improve their product knowledge with things like flashcards and quizzes from their smartphones?

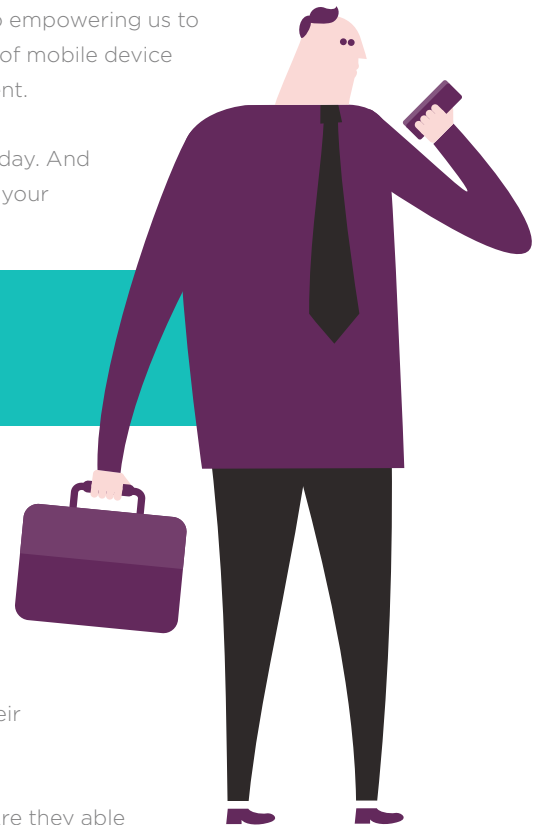
And lastly, how are you using technology to help your reps improve their skills? Are they able to practice selling scenarios while on-the-go through both synchronous and asynchronous role play?

Whatever your current situation may be, if you have yet to leverage mobile technology to support your sales reps, now is the time. Doing so will positively and drastically impact usage, the effectiveness of your training and the development of your sales reps. Strategic use of advanced technology is foundational to optimizing your company's overall sales force productivity.

### Socialized Learning

One often overlooked benefit of integrating technology into a training strategy is the social aspect of learning. Sales reps tend to trust and respect other reps, as they can empathize with each other. Their peers understand first-hand the challenges that come with the role. They are likely to turn to each other for advice and technology helps encourage this collaboration and social support.

However, sales reps tend to spend a lot of time "in the field", which sometimes leaves them feeling disconnected from their peers. They don't get much face time with other sales reps or often even with their managers, so this camaraderie and support can be difficult to achieve.



This informal, direct learning is incredibly valuable to the reps, but it's also a win for you as a learning professional, along with your partners in Sales and Marketing. By creating this community space, you're able to observe the challenges, guidance and candid feedback they share with each other.

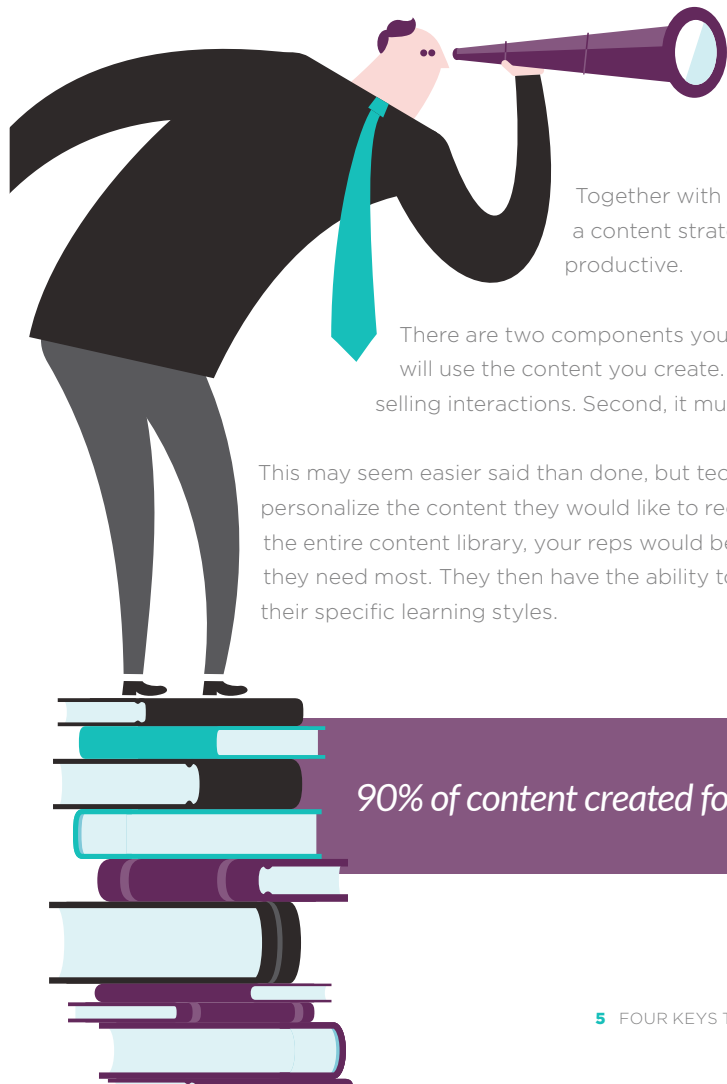
All of this is just a sample of the impact technology can have when applied to supporting and equipping your sales reps. But technology is just one piece of the puzzle.

## Key #3 Content

Creating the right training content and successfully delivering it to sales reps can be frustrating and time consuming, at best. It's tough to stay on top of it all in order to produce exactly what they need. Then, it can be equally difficult to ensure it effectively makes it to your reps so they can use it. It's not just a challenge for you as you try to manage it all, though. It's also frustrating for your sales reps as they always seem to be fumbling to find the most current versions of the resources they need.

Remember, about 40% of a sales professional's time is spent searching for the information and knowledge he needs to do his job. So much time is wasted searching for information – valuable time that could otherwise be spent selling.

And here's another scary thought. A recent study by IDC found that as much as 90% of content created for sales reps is never actually even used in selling. It's staggering, isn't it?



After working so hard to create content to support your reps, learning that the vast majority of it is never even used is rather depressing, to say the least. So how can you ensure this doesn't happen to you and your content? There must be a better way.

Together with your newly aligned team of Sales, Marketing and Training, craft a content strategy that will engage your sales reps and make them more productive.

There are two components your content strategy must have in order to ensure your sales reps will use the content you create. First, the content must be exactly what the reps need in their selling interactions. Second, it must be effortless for the reps to access and use it.

This may seem easier said than done, but technology makes it possible. A mobile app can allow sales reps to personalize the content they would like to receive. This means that while they would still have full access to the entire content library, your reps would be able to select the information that interests them or the content they need most. They then have the ability to consume it in the format and at the pace that best complements their specific learning styles.

*90% of content created for sales reps is never actually even used in selling.*

## Make Feedback Painless

Once you've aligned your efforts and you begin to leverage technology to deliver your collective content in a streamlined and individualized manner, it's time to watch it go to work. Collectively Sales, Marketing and Training has worked hard to create content, learning opportunities, tools and resources that directly impact your reps' ability to sell, but did you hit the mark? Are you really providing the support your sales reps need?

The only way to find out is to ask. However, requests for feedback often go unanswered, simply because sales reps are focused on selling, not providing feedback. Also, while sales reps typically do want your help, they don't always know how to communicate to you exactly what they need. So how are you supposed to know what is working and what isn't? Fortunately, technology has an answer here, too.

It's possible to build feedback channels into a mobile content management app. And they work because they are 100% effortless for the sales reps, yet provide you and your partners in Sales and Marketing with valuable information about the effectiveness and usage of your content.

*Feedback data is one of the greatest sources of information for content development.*

An app can be built to track the consumption of any piece of content. It can provide visibility of how often it is being used and by whom. It can also track which categories, topics, and forms of content are accessed most often. All of this data is gathered automatically as the sales reps simply use the app. They don't need to proactively do a thing to help you understand how your content is working.


You and your Sales and Marketing colleagues can use this feedback generated by the mobile app to iterate on existing content and create new pieces, as well. In fact, this data should be one of the two greatest sources of information for content development. In addition to information generated internally about new product launches, news and announcements, it's all you need to ensure you are making the right content available to your reps.

## Key #4 Iteration

With that valuable feedback provided by your technology solution, you will begin to shift to a content strategy driven by the needs of your sales team. You're focused on providing the content your sales reps want to "pull" from Sales, Marketing and Training. But to be most effective (and to get used by your sales reps) you can't stop here.

Your strategy, content, delivery and technology must continue to grow, evolve and stay fresh. Use the feedback provided by the app, as well as any other feedback received from sales reps or clients, to continuously improve the content. This important step is not one to be missed. Without it, the effectiveness of your content will quickly fizzle out and your efforts will fall flat.





For example, maybe your feedback tells you that your sales reps are regularly accessing training materials and courses for a particular product. The number of scheduled demos and closed sales for that product, however, remain stagnant. This may mean it's time to revisit the training content to identify ways it can be improved.

Or perhaps you find that reps seem to gravitate to the shorter pieces of content and rarely access the longer, more in-depth items. This may be a nudge to go through your longer-form content and break it into smaller pieces.

Lastly, let's say your reps seem to be doing really well with the tutorials and flashcards in your app and appear to be using the sales resources and marketing collateral for a new product, but their sales numbers aren't lining up. This could indicate that there is a disconnect between your content and the realities of the marketplace. This information could help you nip the potentially major problem of an ill-equipped sales force in the bud and refresh the content to be more effective for your sales reps.

Remember, about 90% of content is going completely unused – scary! To avoid becoming part of this dismal statistic, generate content that is useful and easy to use. When you apply the feedback delivered by your app to continuous iterations and improvements, you continue to optimize your content that really goes to work for your reps. And when your content works for your reps, it doesn't become part of that unused 90%. Instead, it's a valued, effective part of the well-used, well-loved 10%.

*You can achieve a level of productivity and success never experienced before by your company.*

Optimizing the productivity of your sales force is a challenge, but it is one that is well-worth pursuing. It is the opportunity to make a profound impact on your organization by aligning with Sales and Marketing. Together, you can unlock the potential of your entire sales team. You can achieve a level of productivity and success never experienced before by your company.

So kick-start the interdepartmental collaboration. Harness the power of advanced mobile technology. Begin crafting the exceptional content your sales team and your customers both crave. And never, never stop improving. Start the cycle. You (and your company) will love what happens next.

### **About Maestro**

Maestro designs and develops software to make your teams more productive. Whether we're optimizing sales force productivity, developing innovative marketing solutions or leveraging our experience and technology to rethink learning, Maestro is always a trusted partner in quality and productivity. Perform beautifully with Maestro. Some of today's strongest brands already do.

Want to learn more?

**Visit [meetmaestro.com](http://meetmaestro.com) today.**