BRIDGE
BY INSTRUCTURE

The Sales Manager's Handbook for

Increased Productivity

There's more to managing a sales team than pep talks and quota chats.

This guide will help you at every step in the process, from hiring to providing your team with continuous learning.

About This E-Book

WHAT?

An informative how-to for busy sales managers who need to make their reps as productive as possible, as soon as possible.

WHY?

In today's fast-paced environment, companies can't wait around for employees to start producing and closing deals.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Sales managers looking to elevate their teams and realize faster, more effective onboarding from Day One.

ABOUT BRIDGE.

Bridge is the ultimate sales-enablement platform. This comprehensive talent suite helps you develop, promote, and retain top talent, resulting in better employees that stick around longer.

Created by Instructure, Inc., the software-as- a-service (SaaS) technology company, Bridge combines a robust e-learning platform with the video and performance management tools teams need to get ahead and stay there.

Learn more at **www.GetBridge.com**.

The Sales Manager's Handbook for Increased Productivity

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SALES MANAGER: BECAUSE "SUPERMAN" & "WONDER WOMAN" WERE ALREADY TAKEN

Sometimes you feel like kryptonite may be the only thing that can stop you, while other days an unmet quota is enough to push you over the edge. You know better than anyone that competence in the sales game is what gets you the green. But not everyone can do what you do.

First-time managers have an average role lifespan of only 18 months, because—hello—it's hard. Research by Vantage Point Performance and the Sales Management Association found that 44 percent of B2B company bigwigs felt their organization misses the mark when it comes to managing sales.

Whether you've recently been promoted to manager or you've been in the management game for years, being a sales superhero takes mastery, wit, and persistence.

Sales enablement begins with an educated workforce, and we're here to give you the tools to drive higher productivity for your team. The steps aren't easy, but they're necessary to close more deals and replace peaced-out employees less often.

USE THIS HANDBOOK TO HELP YOU:

- Attract, vet, and hire the right reps for your team
- Pick up the pace from onboarding to productivity
- Enable social learning and collaboration
- Deploy new and updated messages and information faster than ever
- Provide the ongoing training and development your team needs to crush sales quotas

DO YOU HAVE IT IN YOU? WE THINK YOU DO.

SECTION 1:

Assembling an Awesome Team

Hiring: Get it right from the get-go.

Your job as manager is to manage humans. But humans are complex, and choosing the right team can be daunting, to say the least. Learn how to pick the right one every time.

IDENTIFY YOUR IDEAL CANDIDATE BY EVALUATING YOUR CURRENT TEAM AND OPERATIONS.

You'll only build a dream team by first knowing who and what you're working with.

First, consider these aspects of your sales strategy:

- The buyer journey, both before and after the sale
- The cost of the sale
- The length of the buying process
- Client satisfaction
- How and where marketing and sales work together (or clash)

Then, consider these elements of your sales force:

- Size
- Job requirements
- Sales productivity
- Your team's expectations

Even if your current team rocks, you'll probably need to hire again in the future. Here's how you can be ready for the next wave of resumes:

› **Go beyond basic skills and resume.** Plan your sales hiring process so your new hires consistently have potential and drive.

› **Create "hire personas."** Before you even write the job posting, map out exactly what you're looking for by creating a profile of your ideal sales candidate, avoiding the mistake of hiring on intuition alone.

INTERVIEW CANDIDATES LIKE A BOSS, NOT A FRIEND.

Don't rank feelgoods before ability—follow these rules of thumb to keep the heat in an interview:

› **Test for ability to overcome objections.** Testing a candidate's recovery method from rejection will speak volumes. Be wary of candidates who get emotional or simply apologize—instead look for those who seek to improve.

› **Ensure applicants can think fast.** Candidates who can respond confidently to questions that catch them off guard will likely do well when faced with work challenges.

› **Check for rule-bending.** Unethical responses are the biggest red flags for a potential hire. Monster suggests using behavioral questions instead of asking about a person's ethics. Ask them to tell you about a time they were challenged ethically, if they'd lie for a boss, or how they define terms in your company's ethical guidelines.

› **See if they make excuses.** Look for lessons in unmet goals (e.g. "In my first sales job, I wasn't aware of the importance of prospecting and didn't do enough of it") instead of excuse-making (e.g. "My boss didn't give me the right training").

› **Let the team interview candidates to check culture fit.** A good fit can go a long way with proper training. Introduce a candidate to a few team members to see how they interact with those already on your squad.

SECTION 2:

Onboarding

Ninety days is too long for time to productivity.

Getting newbies up to speed in any industry is no easy feat. And in sales, time spent onboarding is time not spent earning cash for the company. For 50% of new hires, it takes between six and 10 months to start contributing to quota. Trust us: You can't afford to wait that long.

Another mistake companies make with new hires is assuming that since they have sales experience, they don't need much training. Surprisingly, 56% of sales pros have no formal training. Fortunately, that's totally fixable with the right onboarding strategy.

Sloth-like onboarding gives new hires less time to prove themselves in those first few weeks or months. And it costs companies a not-so-small fortune that can add up very quickly:

The average untrained rep costs a company $40,000 *per month* in lost potential earnings their first year, and $60,000 per month every following year.

AVOID THE 90-DAY ONBOARDING TRAP.

Be sure your sales onboarding program covers key topics and tactics from every angle, including:

- Sales systems and practices
- Company products and services
- Sales tools and techniques
- Relevant business and industry standards

Make sure everyone is on the same page, in the same language.

STREAMLINE YOUR SALES VOCAB WITH THESE GUIDELINES:

1

Don't get too cute. Have some fun with internal sales terms, but don't sacrifice clarity for creativity.

2

Do your homework. Identify, define, and provide a framework for terms, including items that have been miscommunicated in the past or are hard for new hires to comprehend.

3

Create a glossary and train the team. Get employees fluent ASAP with an online vocab lesson.

Implement these essentials for an effective onboarding program:

› CLEAR PERFORMANCE GOALS.
New hires need to know from the get-go what's expected of them, what resources are available to help them get there, and how their progress will be measured.

› SNACKABLE CONTENT.
Provide tidbits such as company mission, specific product details, phone best practices, and the office Facebook policy, all in snack-sized portions that your trainees will remember.

› SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING.
Allow trainees to take control of their own professional development and learn at their own pace with access to an online library.

› JUST-IN-TIME TRAINING.
A cloud-based learning platform allows employees to quickly get trained on a topic, even while on hold with a customer.

› METHODS FOR TESTING KNOWLEDGE.
Interactive games and quizzes help trainees practice recalling information quickly (and help them retain it). A baseline should be established ASAP so training can be deployed to fill in any gaps or build on what learners already know.

› REAL-TIME ASSESSMENTS.
Quickly test knowledge, identify gaps, and address any issues with additional coaching or training.

› MOBILE-FRIENDLY COURSES.
Give employees the ability to learn on their terms, whether it's waiting on a late date (d'oh!) or during a long commute.

› MATERIALS IN A WIDE RANGE OF FORMATS.
Use video, presentations, infographics, case studies, and role-playing to keep things interesting.

› MULTIPLE MEANS FOR PROVIDING FEEDBACK.
Use surveys, discussion groups, and face-to-face meetings to see what new hires think is working (or not). Video peer-to-peer feedback sessions can shorten the learning curve for all team members when the critique is made available to the team.

› MENTORS TO GROOM NEW HIRES FOR SALES SUCCESS.
Assign new associates a mentor to guide them through the many potential sales pitfalls that lie ahead. It'll help them build confidence and learn without failing too hard, and it'll provide them with a living library of insight. Thanks to technology, mentors can even be assigned to mentees in different sales territories.

› RETENTION TOOLS.
The Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve is any sales manager's arch nemesis. According to the theory, workers forget roughly 70% of learning within 24 hours of a training experience. To keep information top of mind, use retention tools such as in-course and follow-up quizzes.

SECTION 3:

Streamlining the sales process

Take these pointers straight to the bank.

Training your team to be beasts at their job is the most important part of your job. Here's how you can not only manage better, but maximize production and ROI.

TEACH THE BEST METHODS FOR PROSPECTING AND UNCOVERING NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

› **Pursue prospects with similar problems.** The beautiful thing about capitalism is that other companies face similar problems to those of your current customers. If it's not an industry-wide issue, think of some other factors that come into play (geography, company size, etc.).

› **Identify meaningful events.** Train reps to pay attention to trigger events that may create change for a client. Maybe the company just went public on the NYSE or recently acquired another company.

› **Keep an eye on leadership changes.** New leadership always means some form of organizational shake-up. A surefire way to get the attention of a new regime is to get on the newbies' calendar within the first few months of their start date.

› **Use social media to search and join conversations.** Searching hashtags, interests, groups, and comments on relevant posts is a great way to see who may be a hot prospect (and no, we're not talking about Tinder).

› **Be a good citizen and volunteer.** Pro-bono work is always worth the elbow grease. Encourage your team to pay it forward and share the good deeds on their social networks.

› **Keep skills sharp with training.** Keep sales reps' skills sharp and practice new tactics for gaining prospecting opportunities with an online learning and engagement platform.

› **Stay on top of trends with e-learning and industry blogs.** Be sure your reps subscribe to blogs and magazines from your target industries to get a sense of what's happening, pinpoint upcoming trends, and identify problems they may be able to solve.

Last but not least, help your reps remember that prospecting opportunities are everywhere, from PTA meetings to the dentist's waiting room.

Cold-calling worst practices to avoid like the plague:

- Not listening to the prospect
- Never shutting up
- Not doing your homework on the prospect
- Being vague or misleading
- Getting the customer's or company's name wrong
- Ignoring objections
- Bragging or being overly salesy

Train your teams to own LinkedIn prospecting.

Thanks to platforms like Twitter and LinkedIn, prospects' vital info is out there for the world to see and for sales reps to use for cold calling and emailing. Make sure your sales reps know where to find the gold by following these pro tips:

› **Write LinkedIn profiles for sales prospects, not recruiters.** Since nearly half of all prospects research vendors on LinkedIn, profiles should include keywords that are relevant to the prospects' challenges and goals—i.e. don't include your SAT scores or nunchuck skills.

› **Become an influencer.** Team members should not only follow industry influencers, but regularly share and curate their content on their own LinkedIn profiles (as long as the info is helpful).

› **Join relevant industry and alumni groups (and participate).** Reps are 70 percent more likely to get an appointment from a cold request if they reference a shared group. They can also connect with alumni, including any shared alma mater, when crafting a personalized LinkedIn invite.

› **Skip "anonymous" mode for viewing profiles.** We're all guilty of perusing the "Who's Viewed Your Profile" feature. Unless your reps are trolling an ex, the goal should be to have those people return the favor and check out your reps' profiles.

› **Watch for job-change and promotion alerts.** Job-change alerts not only help you follow current prospects and customers to their new gigs, but can also be a valuable source for connecting to the newbie in your connection's previous role. According to LinkedIn, newly hired decision-makers are up to 10 times more likely to make a purchase than established ones.

› **Personalize every invite to connect:** Generic invites are a great way to make a horrible first impression. Reps should do a little homework, then draft a LinkedIn invite that references any mutual connections, LinkedIn groups, alma mater, or any other details to warm it up.

› **Use the "People You May Know" feature.** Whether they're mutual connections from a previous job or the connections of current customers, train your reps to leverage the "People You May Know" feature to warm up any cold-connection requests.

› **See who your coworkers know.** Social media has made the world much smaller. Your reps should look to see if prospects may be connected to other members of your own organization as another way to warm up a cold-connection request or email.

ORCHESTRATE YOUR EMPLOYEES TO BE PITCH PERFECT.

Your team's off-key pitch prep could be getting in the way of reaching monthly quotas.
Here are some tips that will help your reps boost their performance (and that ROI) with the perfect pitch:

› **Establish connections with the audience.** By using stories, building suspense, or establishing a personal connection, your sales rep will capture the long-term attention of the audience.

› **Set a time expectation.** No one wants to walk into a scheduled 20-minute meeting only to be greeted with an hour-long pitch. If a rep is prepared, she'll know a ballpark amount of time the pitch will take.

› **Focus on the audience's goals and problems, not the sales quota.** A pitch is not a monologue, but a conversation prompting feedback—encourage reps to ask open-ended questions and use active listening to get a better understanding of how they can help.

› **Don't use jargon; speak plainly and clearly.** Speaking simply and clearly, even if it requires a few extra words, will ensure prospects remember key points.

› **Amplify the pitch with statistics and anecdotes.** You probably know that statistics help people retain information (up to 10 percent better), but combined with anecdotes, retention rate is improved about 70 percent.

› **Practice makes perfect.** Salesforce suggests video-recording a practice pitch to watch later, paying attention to things like voice tone, pace, and body and eye movement. And with video-enabled peer-to-peer platforms like Practice, reps can receive feedback from their teammates and managers and even share these teachable moments with the whole team.

› **Study successful sales pitches by others.** Whether it's by watching a few episodes of "Shark Tank" or video coverage of a colleague's last sales win, getting a little inspiration can help reps improve their demeanor when planning for pitches.

Check the stats:

HOW BUYERS AND SALES REPS ARE USING LINKEDIN

75%

75% of B2B buyers use social media in their decision-making process.

44%

44% of buyers and potential vendors connect through shared LinkedIn connections.

57%

B2B buyers are about 57% through their buying decision before they reach out to reps.

49%

49% of buyers research vendors through LinkedIn.

50%

50% of buyers avoid sales professionals with incomplete profiles.

70%

Reps are 70% more likely to get an appointment from a cold request if they cite a common LinkedIn group.

5x

B2B buyers are 5 times more likely to buy from a seller who's an industry thought-leader.

SECTION 4:

Sales Training Tune-Up

Empower reps for greatness.

Tune down for what? Your sales team has more potential than you know. Uncover that stardust by tuning up your sales training.

SEE HIGHER PERFORMANCE IN FOUR WEEKS.

The average ramp-up time for sales teams can vary from 90 days to nine months. Ain't nobody got time for that. Ramp up sales productivity faster.

Week 1: See what they know and how much training you have to do. Use a learning platform, or learning management system (LMS), to easily create micro-assessments and establish your baseline. Then determine just how much more schooling your sales team needs.

Week 2: Analyze the results and let your LMS grade the quizzes for you. When it's "pencils down," be sure to analyze a variety of factors to determine how knowledgeable and engaged your team really is.

ENGAGEMENT METRICS:

- **Adoption rate.** Total participation of your team (those who didn't take the quiz will be red flags, representing your least-engaged employees).
- **Number of times a quiz was taken by each rep.** Even if they get the answers wrong, at least they are engaged enough to want to do a good job.

PERFORMANCE METRICS:

- **Overall quiz scores.** Keep track of the highest quiz scores to help identify high performers. These guys and gals may need a little engagement boost, but their product knowledge is where it needs to be.
- **Percentage of correct answers for each question.** If several reps miss the same question(s), maybe it's worded in a confusing way or product knowledge needs improvement.

Week 3: Fill in the gaps with additional training. Create courses that turn all those wrong answers into right actions.

Week 4: Test team knowledge (again and again). Now that your team has received additional training and coaching, it's time to test their knowledge again. This time, switch up some of the questions and the format (so they won't just remember the correct answers from last time).

Keep refining this process, revising the timing, questions, and methods you use to complete these four steps until you and your organization's sales training groove. You can also enlist the help of their peers to provide feedback on their skills and product knowledge.

USE SALESFORCE TO BOOST YOUR SALES FORCE.

Salesforce delivers metrics that can not only identify training gaps, but strengthen sales reps to infinity and beyond. Check these key performance indicators (KPIs) in Salesforce to address where your people are excelling or needing additional training:

› **Lead response time.** Check call logs to see how quickly sales reps are responding to inbound and outbound leads. Harvard found that calling leads within one hour gives a salesperson seven times more likelihood of closing.

› **Rate of follow-up.** 80 percent of sales are made after eight to 12 touchpoints, so you'll want to recognize the team's persistence with prospects.

› **Pipeline performance and win-rate (lead-to-close rate).** Some reps could be great at getting leads, but not so good at closing (and vice versa). Look at which stage they're consistently losing in—or, if winning, where the conversions are happening.

› **Forecasting.** See if employees actually close the forecasted sales amounts and accounts, and if they're not following through, what's holding them back.

› **Slippage (value or close date).** Consistent slippage in value or timing may be an issue with the rep's communication approach, timing, or lack of product knowledge.

› **Quota attainment / time to quota.** Track whether employees are reaching quota and if so, how long it takes them to get there so they can strengthen their work.

LET STAR EMPLOYEES TEACH THE REST OF THE TEAM

Your top salespeople are good at what they do on a daily basis, so why not tap into their MVP mojo to train the rest of your squad?

With a capable online training program, anyone from managers to team MVPs can make the magic happen with custom courses that are accessible anytime, anywhere by:

- Uploading and embedding their own explainer videos
- Providing constructive feedback to team members who record themselves practicing a pitch
- Assigning a video challenge to another team member, then allowing other reps to examine and critique that challenge
- Asking for feedback from employees, teammates, and managers through surveys and interactive comments
- Incorporating quizzes for interactivity and learning retention
- Delivering bite-sized information prioritized by importance

YOUR STAR SALESPERSON CAN LEAD THESE TEAM EXERCISES:

Role-playing. Keep scenarios as targeted, specific, clear, and comprehensive as possible for maximum learning. Try creating a handout like this one before the activity to guide employees in their scenarios.

Story time. Whether done in a daily huddle, a one-on-one environment, or by the water cooler, sharing recent sales triumphs and challenges not only gives other employees an opportunity to learn, but opens the door for feedback. Give team members a time limit of no more than two minutes each in huddle situations.

Mini-sales challenge. Your star can ask reps to record themselves talking about a specific product or the company as a whole, then enlist peers to share their feedback on that mini-challenge. Everyone has the opportunity to learn something, not just the rep who completed the task.

10 tech tools for every sales situation

SLACK
Everything you loved about AIM, but for work. Different categories and segmented conversations make it easy to track communications and share files with your team for all of your projects.

WUNDERLIST
This to-do list app works wonders across all devices.

CAMCARD LITE
Takes real (losable) business card information and stores it on your mobile device, which you can then view and manage.

KEYNOTE
Apple's version of PowerPoint can be synced with any desktop or mobile device.

BOOMERANG
With this plugin, schedule emails and set up repeat emails to send again if originals haven't been opened.

GMAIL'S 'UNDO SEND' FEATURE
Un-send emails within 30 seconds of clicking "send."

GRAMMARLY
This browser extension is like your own personal grammar police (without the embarrassment).

VOILANORBERT
Find a prospect's email address by entering the name and domain.

BRIDGE SUITE
Combine the power of robust performance-management software with an easy-to-use, easy-to-love e-learning platform.

PRACTICE
Empower reps to perfect their pitches and close more deals via video sessions that enable peer and manager feedback.

SECTION 5:

Ongoing Training = Best-in-Class Sales Performance

Continuous improvement leads to unstoppable awesomeness.

The sales training tune-up should take place as soon as you take the wheel as manager. But just because you improved the team's knowledge over four weeks doesn't mean their training is over.

To truly be a best-in-class sales organization, you need to make training an ongoing effort. Companies that get it right are rewarded with an average of 50% more net sales.

Here are the ingredients required for the special sauce that dominates sales:

SEE HIGHER PERFORMANCE IN FOUR WEEKS.

› **Training in sales methodology, as well as products.** Of course, product knowledge is essential for effective sales, but reps also need to understand the effective processes and stages of the buyer's journey—and best practices on how to identify where prospects are and help move them along. When these areas are the focus of ongoing training, it adds up to a 26% increase in the number of reps meeting or beating sales quotas.

› **Peer-to-peer learning.** Peer reviews are an effective tool in shortening the learning curve. Their feedback can encourage social learning on everything from tips and tricks to elevator pitches, sales techniques, and even body language.

› **Workplace coaching.** A little coaching can go a long way in generating more sales, as well-trained and coached reps generate 27% more revenue. Whether you set aside time during employee 1:1s or conduct micro-coaching sessions online, avoid giving reps the answer right away. Instead, ask open-ended questions and help guide them toward a list of possible solutions. Their ideas may surprise or inspire you!

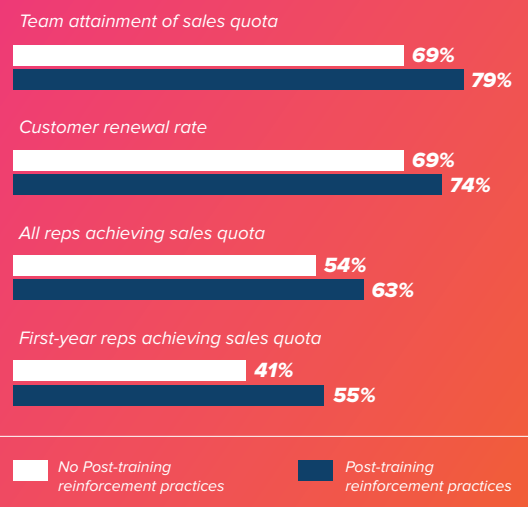
› **Video, video, video.** There are many ways to use video in ongoing training—from manager or sales-star-created courses with embedded comments to micro-coaching and peer-review sessions. And top-performing organizations are 76% more likely to use user-generated video than other firms, so enlist the help of your team in training whenever possible.

› **Post-training reinforcement.** As attention spans get smaller and technology provides more distractions, post-training reinforcement is crucial to help your reps retain valuable knowledge. This reinforcement can come from:

- In-course quizzes to immediately test knowledge and provide feedback
- Consecutive follow-up quizzes designed to increase retention through frequency
- Mobile access to content for just-in-time (JIT) learning
- Email reminders
- Mini-challenges or role-playing scenarios

Reinforcement, for the win

According to research from The Aberdeen Group, companies that use post-training reinforcement practices outperform those who do not in several key categories:



SECTION 6:

Time and People Management

Juggling all things #saleslife.

If time is money, people are gold. Learning to manage the two takes patience, practice, and learning along the way. Here are some tips to help.

MAKE REGULAR CHECK-INS AND FEEDBACK SESSIONS NON-NEGOTIABLE.

Today's modern workforce needs ongoing feedback, and they're 3 times more engaged when they receive it on the regular. A year is an eternity in the sales world, so waiting even half that long to provide constructive feedback or assign additional training is an expensive no-no.

Instead, try these simple tools to boost engagement and productivity:

› **Conduct weekly or monthly 1:1s.** These meetings don't have to be long, but they do need to happen on a recurring basis. Use performance-management tools that record tasks, enable collaboration on the agenda, and help you manage all of these additional meetings.

› **Assign and track individual goals.** Clearly communicate to each rep what their goals are, how they contribute to overall company success, and how they will be measured. Sales quota may be the obvious goal, but others are just as crucial—like ongoing training and skills development. Who knows, you may have a future leader on your hands.

› **Enlist the help of peers to evaluate team members.** Managers like you can't be everywhere at once, so ask peers to pitch in on reviewing their coworkers. Whether it's a simple peer assessment of a skill or video-enabled peer-to-peer reviews of specific sales pitches or tactics, it takes a village to deliver invaluable feedback.

TRAIN REPS TO STRUCTURE THEIR DAYS FOR MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESS.

When numbers show that your sales reps might not be at peak performance, they may just need a little help from you (without you being an annoying micromanager).

Here are several ways to help reps achieve maximum sales effectiveness on the daily:

› **Conduct a calendar audit.** Have everyone review the last month in their calendar to see how they're spending time, when productivity seems to be best, and when they need breaks. Once they figure out what works best for them, encourage them to schedule accordingly.

› **Color-code tasks by priority.** By labeling activities that take over the calendar with specific colors (e.g. red for detail-oriented tasks, grey for meetings, and blue for leisure tasks), reps can visually feel less overwhelmed when taking in what the day holds each morning.

› **Pick up the phone when the timing's right.** Reps can get better cold-calling results between 8 and 9 a.m., as prospects have yet to be bogged down by the stress of the work day. If some of your team members can't imagine calling anyone before they've had at least four cups of coffee and a lunch break, cold calling is also effective between 4 and 5 p.m.

› **Teach them to be reliable responders.** Though responding to initial prospect inquiries within an hour (or 20 minutes for B2B clients) is proven to generate up to seven times more meaningful conversations, it's not always a priority for every busy rep. Encourage your sales team to answer customers quickly and ensure they're not letting unanswered questions and hot leads turn to inbox ashes.

› **Sprinkle in emails.** If reps are making prospecting calls either first thing in the morning or near the end of the workday, they should have time set aside for email prospecting and researching as well.

At the end of the day, your team will benefit most from having a manager who cares not only about overall productivity, but who helps make their jobs easier.

GET A GRIP ON REMOTE TEAMS.

The number of remote workers increased 103% from 2005 to 2015, and it won't stop. Here's how to keep up:

> **Hire people with proven self-directed or remote work experience.** Not everyone is cut out for remote work, so ensure reps can make mature decisions independently, are good communicators, and are goal-driven.

> **Over-communicate goals and expectations.** Make feedback the majority of your communication. Also, be available and transparent, manage expectations, and be clear with written messages.

> **Leverage technology.** Collaborate with free and low-cost options like Slack, ToDoist, Basecamp, G-chat, and GoToMeeting.

> **Choose project-management tools over micromanaging.** Have employees log project time, report daily/weekly summaries, have regular one-on-one calls, or respond to surveys.

> **Use training to keep them learning.** An e-learning platform can take online training further with cloud-based courses that can be used whenever and wherever learners have the most brain power.

> **Build relationships and rapport with video coaching.** Video-enabled platforms make it easier than ever to provide individual micro-coaching sessions that are much more meaningful than email or other impersonal means of communication.

> **Tap into social learning.** Help remote workers feel like part of the team by enabling video collaboration and skills assessments. Social learning doesn't have to be complicated. It can be as simple as allowing comments in online and video courses so others who take that training can learn and add their own insights.

GIVE RECOGNITION WHERE IT'S DUE.

Gold stars are so kindergarten—or are they? Praise and recognition can go a long way in making your employees feel valued. Here's how:

> **Make it a priority to track progress.** We're all crazy busy. But in your reps' minds, the progress they make from grinding it out every day is worth a few minutes of your attention. With performance management software, it's easy to stay on top of employee wins and schedule brief 1:1s where you can celebrate them.

> **Praise behaviors, not people.** You might be causing employees to underperform if you use "trait praise," which is praise that focuses on the person (e.g. "You're so smart"). Instead, experts say praising behaviors (e.g. "You handled that question in the meeting really well") is the key to positive reinforcement.

> **Give props in meetings.** Other than making the employee feel great, recognition in front of a group emphasizes positive behavior to motivate the rest of your team. Extra points if you make them blush.

> **Spot bonuses matter.** Spot bonuses, or cash rewards, can be great short-term motivators that create long-term habits.

> **Small tokens or gestures go a long way.** A simple trophy on your new hire's desk after handling a tough call with ease shows you've noticed (remember: associate it with a behavior for max results).

> **Suggest a recognition program.** Companies with a recognition program are more likely (over 75 percent more) to have motivated workers that get more done. It doesn't even take much money—one percent of the amount spent on payroll invested in recognition programs can yield over 85-percent better employee engagement.

CONCLUSION:

Takeaways for turning up team productivity

There is no set it and forget it with your sales team. To be the sales superhero we know you can be, follow the key best practices below. Your team will be reaching new quota heights in no time.

HIRE WELL & KEEP 'EM HAPPY

Use the traits of your top performers to create hire personas.
Then fill those desired personas with the right fit.

Don't interview like a friend.
Put interviewees in the hot seat to see how they handle stress and think on the fly.

Culture is (almost) everything.
Training can solve a lot, but it can't solve a bad culture fit. Be sure your team has the chance to vet potential hires, too.

Give your team props.
Shout-outs in meetings, spot bonuses, and praise can go a long way in motivating your team.

Use frequent feedback and reviews.
Don't wait for the annual review to give and receive team input. Use engagement surveys, monthly or weekly check-ins, micro-coaching, and peer-to-peer feedback sessions to ensure your team is engaged and getting any help it needs.

TRAIN FOR THE WIN

Provide a culture of learning through ongoing training and coaching opportunities.
Your team needs a variety of methods for learning the ropes. Use a learning management system (LMS) and video peer-review technology to provide a combination of personalized coaching and online training.

Focus on every aspect of the sales process.
There's a science and art to pitching, lead scoring, prospecting, and even cold calling. Empower your team with the training and tools for every step.

Use video to enable peer-to-peer feedback and shared knowledge.
When reps get real-world feedback from their peers on pitching and other skills, there's no stopping the social learning snowball.

Develop learning paths for each team member.
Newbie or veteran, each rep should have a clear development path to help them continue to sharpen their skills.

Analyze, analyze, optimize.
Thanks to analytics in Salesforce and your CRM and interactive quizzes in your learning and engagement platform, e.g. Bridge, this is cake.

Develop, promote and retain your talent with Bridge—
the most comprehensive sales-enablement platform.

Learn more at getbridge.com.