Master-O™

Improve Skills, Effortlessly

Three Ways How Organizations Leverage Microlearning To Ramp Up Sales Productivity

Introduction

Sales effectiveness or sales force productivity will always be a focus area for any CEO. Improving top line by bringing efficiencies in the sales force has become a part of an organization's digital transformation agenda.

As customer experiences help organizations to observe, measure and improve interactions with customers, it also allows organizations to relook at key skills required for their salesforce to succeed.

To make matters more complicated, buyers today are infinitely more informed about products and services, sometimes shockingly more than a sales person. This further puts pressure for sales people to up their game and stay ahead of the curve. But as the time to learn and keep abreast of developments continue to shrink with increasing work pressure to acquire more customers, the time to leverage bite sized learning or what is popularly known as microlearning is opportune to ramp up sales productivity.

By keeping the learner (the front-line salesperson) as the core focus, organizations can improve selling skills and product knowledge for salespeople by reinforcing key messages at regular intervals.

Here we shall talk about three compelling ways how organizations can improve sales effectiveness using Microlearning.

#1 Focus on Learning Content

Microlearning does not simply imply taking existing content and shortening the content to 1 to 3 minutes. The starting points should be to identify three priority areas where selling skills continue to be a challenge. Based on our analysis of data for over 50,000 learners, we see the following areas as challenges for front line sales people:

A.   Sales planning

B.   Understanding customers and identifying their requirements

C.   Answering objections by articulating value

once organizations can focus on the specific areas where selling skills can improve, they can tie these areas to improving lead measures, such as improving sales coverage, shorter sales cycles, more proposals, among others.

Once the learning objectives have been identified, it's important to tag content on the priority areas. This approach is particularly useful when analysing data as it helps isolate the ongoing problem areas for each sales executive and for your salesforce.

#2 Adopt A Multidisciplinary Approach

As you can see, focusing on content can be hugely beneficial to enable your sales teams to sell more. But does microlearning only require an expertise in learning content or instructional design? Fortunately, or unfortunately no. While the content should be the starting point, by no means does that mean you cannot leverage other inherent strengths of your organization to deliver a truly effective microlearning experience. Based on work with sales organizations in banking, insurance, medical device & pharma, telecommunications and retail industries, we've observed that beyond contextualized learning content, there are numerous disciplines that can work wonders to elevate the learning experience and ensure better results.

A. **Behavioural Psychology:** It's a well-known fact that as humans we are wired to accomplish easy tasks and procrastinate on tasks which are harder, such as learning or improving our skills. But by breaking content into shorter chunks, we reduce the "perceived difficulty level" associated with experiencing the learning content. Furthermore, by building tiny habits of everyday learning for 2 to 3 minutes, the probability of continuous learning increases. Another important aspect of psychology in learning that can be leveraged is to promote "new" content on an ongoing basis to further encourage the sales person to stay tuned and continue to learn. Newness in microlearning ensures better engagement and psychologically allows the sales person to constantly be interested to learn more.

B. **Game Design:** While salespeople and learners in general believe they do not have enough time to learn, they will more likely make time to indulge in casual gaming, especially if it helps them to "switch off" from work. Here's where the concept of building a gaming experience can add magic to the learning experience. By creating an engaging story, building levels of difficulty and including game mechanics such as points, leader board and badges, the learning experience gets intertwined and inseparable with the gaming experience allowing sales people to believe they are switching off (gaming) while improving skills relevant to their role (learning).

A great example of where Game Design and Behavioral Psychology can intersect is by building healthy competition. Sales people are fundamentally more likely to improve their results if they believe they are lagging their peers. This competitive drive is already a part of any sales organization in the form of incentives, rewards and recognition. The problem which most sales leaders do not realize is all these motivators are only applicable after sales people achieve the result or the lag measures. But what about rewarding for lead indicators?

Here's where sales training should help and how microlearning for sales productivity can work effectively, if blended with game design and psychology.

#3 Continue to Implement Betas with Data

Digital transformation is all about implementing betas, measuring, calibrating and relaunching. Digital learning or microlearning should follow the same approach. By reducing time to launch, time to measure and time to recalibrate, sales leaders can continuously improve the learning effectiveness of their sales force, personalize their learning experience and thereby enable front line teams to overachieve their sales targets.

A leading global medical devices company was struggling to improve product knowledge for the sales team that was responsible to selling products across all business verticals of the company. By adopting a digital approach that blended learning content, game design and behavioural science, not only were they able to generate a higher utilization of learning, but the resulting data points enabled business leaders to identify specific aspects for each product line that were seemingly harder to comprehend by the learner. This allowed the company to reiterate and build more content on only those areas for each product where the retention of learning was relatively low.

By adopting such a data centric approach, the organization could improve product knowledge by continuously measuring retention as a function of three things:

A.   Total attempts to learn by each sales person

B.   First time right or minimum attempts taken to understand the learning content

C.   Repetitive accuracy or consistently getting correct answers

By continuously validating their results with data, not only did the sales team improve productivity through better product knowledge, the content team was also able to better understand what product aspects required more content and where they needed to tweak their content strategy and instructional design to make the sales content easier to understand.
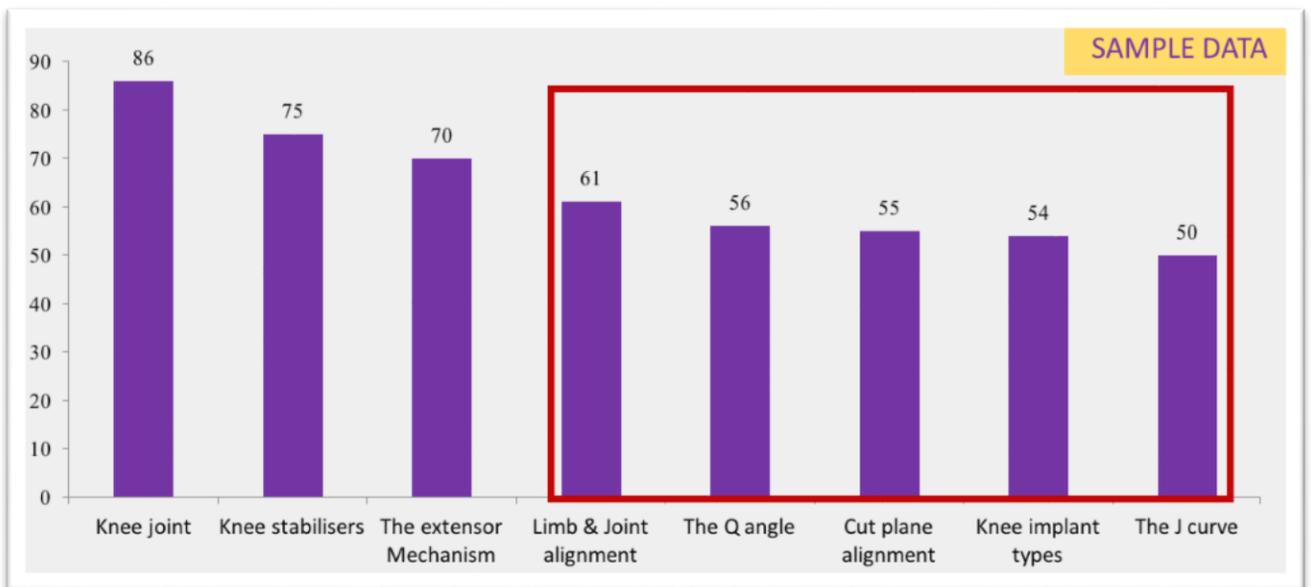
As you can see, all three ways of improving sales effectiveness using digital learning are interlinked in that:

A.   Learning content is important to tag to get better accuracy from a data science perspective

B.   Data science itself is an important discipline to leverage as part of a multidisciplinary approach to digital learning

C.   Shrinking learning content is not possible without ensuring shorter gaming experiences

D.   By leveraging game design and increasing learning addiction, you also generate more data which increases the accuracy of the analysis

This brings home an important point on which to conclude. Improving sales effectiveness using digital learning is not a problem for the L&D or HR team alone. By leveraging the combined experience of the digital, marketing and sales teams, a richer and more robust solution is likely to generate better and more sustainable results, which by default will also have an organization wide alignment.

About Master-O

Master-O provides a mobile-based digital learning experience that leverages microskills to make learning effective and enjoyable. By creating microskills that blend content with game design and behavioral science, Master-O ensures quick learning and enhanced retention and application on the job.

Make use of our extensive library of microskills ranging from sales and customer service to personal productivity and leadership or partner with us to create custom microskills that fit your specific learning and business requirements.

Create your own skills with Master-O

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