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It's Time for People-Powered Performance



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Foreword

Now is the time to move beyond an old, industrial revolution era model of learning and development for new knowledge workers. Now is the time to move beyond a sink-or-swim performance mindset for sales reps. Now is the time for sales leaders and forward thinkers to begin a movement towards People-Powered Performance.

Sales is one of the fastest-growing, most accessible career paths for upward mobility. There are over 500,000 entry-level sales development representatives in the US alone. A significant portion of that number are in tech sales, positions that offer opportunity to leverage success into generational wealth.

There is a growing desire on the part of employees and managers alike for upward mobility through education and access for all. There is a need for greater diversity and inclusivity in the tech sales sector, and for greater support of these sales professionals. Amidst the shifting structures of the economy though the past few years of the pandemic, aspiring sales reps are asking for the training necessary to become successful in the changing sales environment they are operating in.

“And they are showing little hesitancy in moving away from current positions that do not provide what they seek.”

All reps deserve equitable and inclusive access to information that will assist them in their professional advancement. In response to these developments, the mission of visionary, like-minded sales leaders is to create, adopt, and implement learning and support systems for the future success of their employees and their companies. Systems that do not yet exist.





The State of Sales

As things stand now, sales jobs are high-stress positions without adequate investment into the skill development, support, and mental health of the reps that drive a company's success. Reps increasingly report feeling isolated and alone, experiencing burnout, and facing a lack of community-based onboarding and advanced training systems. Meanwhile, managers are finding themselves stretched further and overwhelmed with too many of the wrong tools to best serve the growth of the individuals on their teams. Solving for better ramp and development leads to reps more likely to exceed sales goals and advance their careers.

Challenges to upward mobility for both reps and managers does not end with a two-week onboarding program or a ten-week training series. They continue and, in fact, have only increased over the past two years as industries lean into knowledge-driven, hybrid work environments. The solution must be to create more paths for advancement for a larger number of people by building a better and more inclusive learning system. But first, we must better understand and move past the old ways of not only critical content delivery, but of creating and passing on company knowledge and culture.

A Necessary Pivot

Most management approaches are still rooted in the industrial transformation of more than 100 years ago when work was simple, scripted, and repeatable. The world is less predictable now. Knowledge and creativity

drive success more than ever before. There is no longer room for the top-down content delivery model. Sellers must learn how to earn a buyer's attention amidst the barrage of outreach they receive each day. And they must learn how to do so in a remote-first environment where the organic knowledge and team building benefits from physical proximity in the workplace is not an option for everyone. In this space, sales leaders must reimagine how learning moves from a place of coincidental collaboration to intentional collaboration.

What is needed now are new frameworks for the new knowledge worker.

Employers can no longer expect new hires to show up, receive their laptop, phone, and two weeks of scripted, top-down training and then perform to the best of their abilities. We see that this old way leads to turnover, burnout, and inconsistency - where a small number of team members produce the majority of sales.

A pivot must be made towards a community-driven, continuous learning model where people can practice and grow together. **Learning needs to be flipped on its head** in order to best serve the sales reps and the managers tasked with training them up for success and advancement.

Companies need to shift with employment trends, respond to the changing needs of their employees or risk being left behind in the Great Resignation. The winners will be companies who get out in front and embrace the "next normal." They will be the ones who position themselves to be able to build a more generous culture

within teams and across orgs. They will be the ones able to **support, celebrate, and invest in their reps** so as to cultivate an inclusive environment that works together. They will be the ones to maximize the potential of their people and their profits.

These forward-facing companies need their sales reps to adapt to a continuously changing and uncertain world. This means reps who are better prepared for the realities of remote work, more confident in their abilities to problem solve, more engaged and self-motivated in their professional development, and are better able to access and acquire new skills as needed. They will need reps who will always have access to learning opportunities. All of this can be made possible by responding to the needs expressed by their reps. In this highly competitive labor market, incorporating a system to meet all of these demands will give companies the advantage in retaining their sales professionals and nurture a winning sales culture.

Where We Go Next

This is what we at Flockjay are calling People-Powered Performance, a movement towards equitable access to continual learning and designed for the modern, knowledge-driven, sales professional.

Flockjay was founded on the mission to empower the professional advancement of everyone. Our

belief that we all fly farther and faster when we fly together is behind everything that we do. Our vision is to unlock the wisdom within teams and communities so everyone can achieve their full potential, together. That is why we are dedicated to collaborating and leading with industry visionaries to develop community-driven learning solutions that bring teams together, give them the resources they need to succeed, and then allow them to connect with others who can help them continue to develop in their careers.

We understand the problems companies face hiring, training, and retaining successful sales teams. We understand what your company needs in order to become a revenue leader and to maintain that position in the market. That is why we are moving on from the existing onboarding and training methodologies and reimagining a better way to empower sales reps to reach their full potential and empower managers to best support that growth. We have the solutions for today. We are prepared to meet the challenges of the future. And we want you to join us.



Chapter 1: The Problems

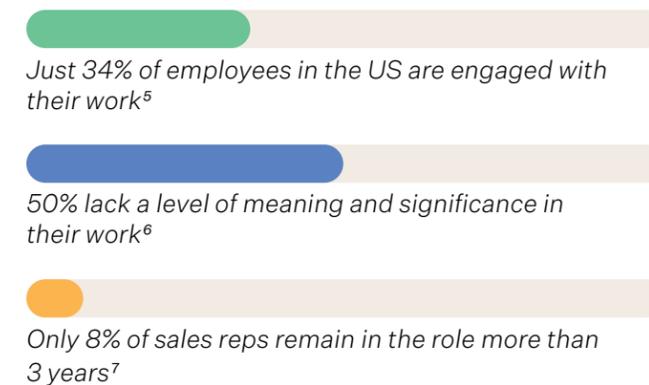
The pandemic did not create the learning accessibility challenges companies are now facing. However, it pushed those challenges from a 10 to a 12 on the scale, forcing systems and people to a breaking point. And, while productivity tools for Sales had been in development long before the pandemic, companies, by and large, responded to pandemic shifts by adding even more tools to their tech stacks in the hope that greater efficiency would lead to increased performance from their reps.

These efforts are missing the mark. They are not responding to the needs sales reps are expressing. Reps are telling their companies and industry researchers that they need pathways to new skills and growth, support of their professional aspirations, and better connections within their teams and orgs. The data makes this message clear:



When Needs Go Unmet

The result of companies not being able to respond to the needs of their reps has been frustration, inconsistent performance, burnout, and an overreliance on a small percentage of reps doing the job of the entire team. These have had knock-on effects to employee engagement, mental health, and retention. The numbers paint a concerning picture:



These attitudes are having a direct impact on the bottom line; companies are losing money every month per disengaged employees and spending an average of \$97,960 to replace a sales rep – far greater than the expenses needed to retain and nurture them⁸.

Sales leaders have seen a high attrition rate among reps over the past several years which has been a growing concern across the tech industry. This is especially true for early-career sales reps. 44% of employees reported that they plan to look for a new job this year⁹. The motivations? While 15% of employees looking to change jobs cite burnout from the pandemic as their main driver for leaving, and 17% indicate it is because the job is too stressful, the number one reason given for seeking a different position is because the employee wants access to more growth opportunities¹⁰.

Even those who aren't considering a move recognize where their companies are letting them down. 64% report that their employer did not offer them networking

opportunities during the past year, while 60% also report a lack of meaningful professional development and training opportunities¹¹.

Response

In the new, remote-first workplace, with reps completing training sessions on laptops from their bedrooms and managers checking in for meetings from newly renovated home offices, **it can feel like everyone is online, but no one is available.** Too often this leads to reps feeling adrift and disconnected from their work and their coworkers.

Once they begin to feel disconnected, reps have a hard time seeking out ways to operate at their best. They struggle to address their situation proactively. They aren't creating a plan to improve their situation, instead depending on someone else to come along and re-engage them. And, if that doesn't happen, they are far more likely to leave their position.

When work was fully in-person, community and culture was a by-product of having people spending every day together. Companies were getting the benefits of bonding for "free." This isn't happening anymore and what team building efforts are out there aren't serving employees well.

On the other hand, companies that have learned how to develop community in an intentional way while partially or fully remote, also develop more engaged employees. Gallup surveys support the conclusion that such workers will seek out their manager's advice, assistance, and advocacy to improve their performance and will prepare themselves to move along the career development pathway in place at their company.

Creating these internal pathways for upward mobility is the alternative to watching reps leave to pursue career advancement opportunities elsewhere. Getting the pathways correct will solve much of the retention problems companies currently face. And, what it doesn't solve can be remediated by addressing the limits of current employee training systems.



Managers

Problems with current professional development and training programs are not limited to pain points experienced by sales reps.; Mmanagers are also feeling it. As teams grow, managers are reaching a place where they can't scale themselves to adequately support their teams anymore. They have limited time to provide the support needed by their reps and they are struggling to replicate the experience of walking a sales floor in a new, virtual environment, all while hitting their own targets and setting strategic priorities.

It is because managers have historically been under-supported – without the tools or training to develop their teams in a remote-first world or to innovate within the learning space – that they are having to rely on brute force and older tools designed to support and perpetuate the status quo. This reliance on outdated platforms due to a lack of alternatives is exacerbating the problems within their sales teams and leading to both engagement and retention problems.

Information gets lost; content is dry, unwieldy, and hard to access later. New programs to onboard, train, and provide ongoing support to new knowledge workers are few, and none which are revolutionary or impactful. This disheartening status quo is not the fault of managers; the solutions simply don't exist. If managers are to support their teams now, support them in a meaningful way, and find success themselves, it will require new ideas and tools. The need for such has been one of the most important realizations from the events of the past two years. Meeting this need is the priority for forward thinkers and change agents right now.

15 reasons why salespeople leave your company. SalesFuel. (2020, December 4). Retrieved March 22, 2022, from <https://salesfuel.com/5-reasons-sales-reps-will-leave-company/>

2 149 eye-opening sales stats to consider in 2022 (by category). SPOTIO. (2022, February 18). Retrieved March 22, 2022, from <https://spotio.com/blog/sales-statistics/#salestraining>

3 Jeftovic, Anja. Very pa, & Jeftovic, A. (2021, June 21). 130+ sales statistics to guide you in 2022. TaskDrive. Retrieved March 22, 2022, from <https://taskdrive.com/sales/130-sales-statistics/>

4 Jeftovic, Anja. Very pa, & Jeftovic, A. (2021, June 21). 130+ sales statistics to guide you in 2022. TaskDrive. Retrieved March 22, 2022, from <https://taskdrive.com/sales/130-sales-statistics/>

5 Royal, K. (2021, September 20). What engaged employees do differently. Gallup.com. Retrieved March 14, 2022, from <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/266822/engaged-employees-differently.aspx>

6 Cole, S. (2014, June 25). Why finding meaning at work is more important than feeling happy. Fast Company. Retrieved March 22, 2022, from <https://www.fastcompany.com/3032126/how-to-find-meaning-during-your-pursuit-of-happiness-at-work>

Engage Through Growth

Taking these cues from sales reps and managers, we can see that reps crave opportunities to grow and advance their careers. The more they can learn the more they can succeed, the more they can have an impact, and the more they feel they are making a difference in both their own lives and in the careers of those following behind them.

Upward mobility does wonders for retention.

So, how do sales leaders facilitate the learning and development of their reps? It isn't through top-down content delivery. It isn't by ignoring team camaraderie and culture. It is by addressing the three main issues current platforms are not: capturing the best content, sharing it in a way that matches how reps learn best, and motivate reps to continue learning throughout their time at the company.

Institutional knowledge is locked up with your best sales reps. The ability to extract that content and share it so that the rest of the sales team can also learn to perform like the best, is what will determine a company's success in today's, and tomorrow's, economy. Community learning with seller-driven content delivered in a way that can be easily consumed and acted upon.

Flockjay has been uniquely positioned to see all these problems in their entirety. The companies we serve are at the forefront of the movement to update and improve onboarding and training processes. We started observing the issues and implications and then started observing the enlightened sales leaders who are reimagining what training looks like. Now we are actively building the systems that will bring these evolved ideas to reality.

7 Jeftovic, Anja. Very pa, & Jeftovic, A. (2021, June 21). 130+ sales statistics to guide you in 2022. TaskDrive. Retrieved March 22, 2022, from <https://taskdrive.com/sales/130-sales-statistics/>

8 Jeftovic, Anja. Very pa, & Jeftovic, A. (2021, June 21). 130+ sales statistics to guide you in 2022. TaskDrive. Retrieved March 22, 2022, from <https://taskdrive.com/sales/130-sales-statistics/>

9 Qualtrics // June 23. (2021, June 23). Stress, Burnout main reasons more than half of leaders plan to leave their jobs in the next year, new research finds. Qualtrics. Retrieved March 14, 2022, from <https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/labor-shortage-study/>

10 Qualtrics // June 23. (2021, June 23). Stress, Burnout main reasons more than half of leaders plan to leave their jobs in the next year, new research finds. Qualtrics. Retrieved March 14, 2022, from <https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/labor-shortage-study/>

11 Qualtrics // June 23. (2021, June 23). Stress, Burnout main reasons more than half of leaders plan to leave their jobs in the next year, new research finds. Qualtrics. Retrieved March 14, 2022, from <https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/labor-shortage-study/>



Chapter 2: What is Needed

The solution systems that will serve the future of sales will meet reps where they are and address their needs without sacrificing the flexibility that the past few years has given them. These systems will allow reps to grow and expand their skills, discover meaning and purpose in their work, and develop strong relationships. They will reimagine what learning and development look like, how they are offered to reps, and who will be creating the most useful content. Onboarding will truly align with the expectations of managers and the pathway for acquiring additional skills will be a continuous one. The solutions will also redefine what it means for a company to create a community and culture of connected learners.

Success will depend on thinking beyond a seller's quota to also include a "learning quota."

Companies and individual leaders at the forefront of this movement realize that the power of emerging tech cannot be limited to selling more efficiently but must also target how their people learn most effectively.

This is the approach that will generate the greatest impact on sales success.

Investments will target continuous learning through a peer-to-peer model. No longer can managers limit learning opportunities to one-off events like an SKO or the beginning of a new quarter. Learning must be available to reps on a regular basis throughout the entirety of their time in the organization.

These new approaches borrow from best-practice strategies for adult learning. Research into the field of adult learning theory has made great strides within the past five years. Results of which show that learners are more receptive to information when it is explained to them by a peer than when it comes top-down from a subject matter expert, that combining text with video/images is the most effective method for content delivery, and that information is retained with 80-85% accuracy when delivered to the learner on three separate occasions¹.

When all of this is properly understood and synthesized, the ability to design a unified platform with the tools necessary to reinforce learning and reduce memory loss of important concepts becomes attainable. And advances in tech now allow for broader access to information by anyone within a team or across teams within a company.

Community Learning

This broad access, "open source" content creation, and inclusive model involves and thus shapes the entire sales community, as well as adjacent communities within a company. **Empowering people to do their best work is a team sport**, as opposed to the sole responsibility of a manager or training office. In this way, with community learning, managers, trainers and enablement take on the role of facilitator rather than sole provider.

Instead of learning coming from a single source, anyone can be a content creator. Likewise, employees are able to learn from anyone in the company. Information is no longer stuck within institutional knowledge silos, lost within messaging channels, or closed within coaching sessions only open to a few individuals.

In a similar way, community learning solves the challenges faced by managers when writing a sales bible or creating a sales spreadsheet. The onus is no longer on a single or limited number of people to keep the document up to date; community learning creates a culture wherein reps themselves are encouraged to update team resources with what is working and what isn't. Gathering key sales information becomes organic and nearly instantaneous when people are empowered to be learners and teachers for their teams.

When managers, trainers, and enablement shift from trying to solve all problems themselves, to facilitating knowledge sharing and coaching, they can scale themselves to have more impact across far more people. In fact, in a recent survey, managers who focused on centralizing wisdom were able to transition from managing six reps to nine, without any additional hires.

Culture

We used to get meaning from being together in the same place. Physical proximity allowed for relationships to develop on their own. Employees could count on regular, coincidental connections – sit next to someone, overhear something, ask questions, and learn new information. Remote and semi-remote environments have created situations in which people have become purely transactional with their work. In response, companies must become explicit with their efforts to foster strong team bonds when their reps are no longer in-person.

Community learning is a component of a vibrant, remote team culture. Intentionally harnessing the power of new tech can connect people and bring them closer rather than alienate them even further. Peer-to-peer learning activities leveraging video and audio, conducted through a robust platform can build a shared sense of camaraderie, as can programs that encourage reps preparing to advance into new roles to also lift up and support teammates coming along after them.

Flockjay is focusing our energy on supporting companies that are implementing these community learning and culture shift programs because we too realize that upward mobility doesn't end when an early-career sales rep accepts a position, it marks the beginning of their journey. Our Sales Elevation Platform for People-Powered Performance was launched to join with the innovative sales leaders creating actionable steps towards the necessary solutions.

"Gone are the days when lessons are delivered top-down in a classroom environment – whether in person or virtual."

¹ Terada, Y. (2017, September 21). Why students forget-and what you can do about it. Edutopia. Retrieved March 14, 2022, from <https://www.edutopia.org/article/why-students-forget-and-what-you-can-do-about-it>





Chapter 3: The Future of People-Powered Performance

The movement, however, doesn't end with the rollout of a platform. As the global economy continues to restructure itself around remote and hybrid work, a culture of collaboration and mobility will be the determinant factor driving business success forward. This success will be powered by the people who are willing to get behind their sales reps and move from sink-or-swim performance to People-Powered Performance.

The People-Powered Performance movement is a conversation with future-thinkers that manifests as an ideology and unifying system by which sales organizations are lifted up through the development and advancement of their reps. As companies recognize the critical importance of retaining key talent, they will refocus efforts into systems that will provide meaningful growth opportunities for their employees. They will remake performance ranking systems to reflect new priorities. And they will begin to ask reps 1) What impact do you drive? 2) How are you improving the work of others? And 3) How are you using the work of others for self-improvement?

As ideology becomes action and advanced platforms are adopted, onboarding leaders, trainers, and managers will no longer have to "do it all." Training by reps and for reps will mean:

- The creation of an invigorating environment that involves an increasing number and diversity of people across a company's workforce
- Reps will be recognized and rewarded for making the entire team better, resulting in seller-driven lesson content and teaching that is more meaningful to ALL learners

- Managers will be able to structure the content packages, organize them by need, and push access to the information that will support the development of individual reps on their teams.

The future will be an inclusive community knowledge sharing platform. The intersection of learning and community means that company culture will be preserved no matter how far flung its employees are, onboarding and training will be more fun and impactful, and upward mobility will be accessible for all.

The benefits to a company's bottom line of such a diverse, equitable and inclusive knowledge structure is undeniable. A 2021 study by Forrester¹ between organizations that lead on investment in their access-for-all programs and those lagging confirms that those who invest in inclusive programs see a significant return:

- Lead-to-opportunity conversions rates are 28% higher
- Year-over-year sales expectations are 3% greater
- Customer satisfaction is 7% better

More and more, sales leaders are coming around on the social and financial necessity of this approach.

What they need now is the integrated solution to invest in, a semi automated engine for unlocking the wisdom that exists within teams, organizing, curating, and sharing out with their orgs. In order to have the greatest impact on this mission, we at Flockjay are building a platform with all the tools to do so. We are building for the success of sales reps throughout their careers, from onboarding to aligning with best practices, from elevating themselves for promotion to sharing back with people after advancing on.

¹A Forrester Consulting thought ... - business.linkedin.com. (n.d.). Retrieved March 17, 2022, from <https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/business/en-us/amp/sales-solutions/pdf/forrester-diversity-report-2021.pdf>

About

Flockjay is looking to the future alongside top visionaries in both sales and learning. We see the direction sales rep development is headed and we are determined to be there first. By building a new knowledge sharing platform that integrates onboarding, coaching, continuous training, and motivational features geared to the ways in which reps learn best, Flockjay is proven ready for the future of the People-Powered Movement.

