talla

Five Ways An A.I.-Powered Knowledge Base Can Solve Your Sales Enablement Problems

Introduction: Technology Sales Needs Better Sales Technology

If you run sales for a technology company, you know that one of the most challenging problems you face is making sure your reps have fresh, accurate information about your products. Technology -- especially Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) tech -- evolves so quickly that old-school sales enablement tools and processes struggle to keep up.

At the enterprise software company I built before Talla, we would occasionally lose deals to competitors over key features that we actually offered, but that our reps weren't used to selling or didn't know we had released. It drove me crazy.

If you're in that situation now, it is a problem Talla can solve for you.

This brief eBook will look at how you can use artificial intelligence to increase the value of the sales-enablement content you create and make your sales team more effective and more efficient. That means more deals closed, and better ROI on your sales investment.

What Is a Smart Knowledge Base?

Traditional knowledge bases are sinkholes of information. Stuff gets put in them, but rarely gets pulled out. Modern businesses run on information, so it makes no sense why many companies still run their knowledge management processes like it's 1995.

Advances in artificial intelligence that came out of a 2014 paper published by Google showed that words, when put in a mathematical vector format, could be computable. This revolutionary insight brought the benefits of artificial intelligence to language in ways never before imagined. These "word vector" techniques laid the groundwork for Talla to start, in 2015, building an intelligent knowledge base, unlike anything that exists in the market today.

Talla's knowledge base is different because it knows and understands content at a deeper level, and "interrogates" the content it contains. Who owns this page? Is the information fresh and up to date? How does it correlate to other information in the knowledge base? How can you find the answer to a simple question when it is buried in dozens of paragraphs on the topic? These are questions Talla can answer that other knowledge bases can't.

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What Is a Smart Knowledge Base? (Cont'd)

Talla's knowledge base is intelligent because it builds neural network-driven models of all kinds of facts and information about the data inside it. For example, by learning a model of when information is changed and updated across certain topics or by certain people, Talla can estimate when content is likely to be fresh, or when it is outdated. Talla can then automate verification and validation workflows using the digital assistant that comes built into the knowledge base.

Most importantly, Talla can scan long-form content to parse out answers to the common questions that show up in your email and chat. The Talla assistant can find the answers your sales team is looking for, and it can find them faster than a sales rep ever could. Knowledge is your most powerful corporate asset and Talla is the tool that makes that knowledge more powerful and actionable.

Talla can find the answers your sales team is looking for, and do it faster than a human ever could.

Improve Ramp Time with Better Rep Onboarding

Salesperson productivity is a key metric at any fast-growing business, and the more time it takes to ramp a rep to get them productive, the more that rep is a drag on the business instead of a multiplier. New reps bog down more senior reps with common questions while they learn the product and learn the customer base. Onboarding tools can help but they need to be constantly reconfigured based on the latest information about the products and services your company offers.

With Talla, all that changes. As your product team writes documents in Talla, our digital assistant parses the data to understand it and helps the author format it to match questions commonly asked by reps or prospects. Talla digs through the content to suggest questions and answers that may be important, and Talla proactively recognizes what information has changed or is no longer valid. So, new reps can ask questions of Talla instead of from other reps. This enables your new reps to scale faster, with less drag on the existing team.

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Improve Close Rates with Accurate Product Information

Wouldn't it be nice to replicate your most senior, knowledgeable, productive sales rep? Talla can rapidly make a novice an expert.

Imagine that your product supports multiple Linux distributions and a prospect asks if you support Debian 9.3. Maybe that question came up once a few weeks ago, but, this particular rep has never even heard of Debian. How long will it take to find the answer? And how do you know that answer is up to date?

With Talla, your digital assistant is constantly scanning the knowledge base for information that appears to be out of date, or doesn't match information elsewhere. When problems are found, document owners are asked to verify or update key information points. Better information that is more up to date means faster closes. In the case of Debian 9.3, Talla not only knows that your product documentation shows support for that Linux distro, but it knows that information is true, and thus can provide the answer with both speed and confidence.

I have seen cases before where a company loses a deal to a competitor because a sales rep didn't know that the product feature the competitor was touting was one her own company had as well. Selling products requires up to date information. Talla can help make sure you never lose a deal to "I don't know."

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Increase Deal Velocity with Conversational Q&A

Sales reps spend a lot of time on the phone. Getting a prospect on the phone is difficult and, once you have them, the last thing you want a rep to do is to break the flow of the conversation. Unfortunately, if a sales rep encounters a question they can't immediately answer, the best-case scenario is they interrupt the work of another rep, a product person, or sales enablement staffer to get an immediate response. The more common outcome is to ask the prospect if the rep can follow up later with a researched answer, which means ending your precious first sales call without a close.

With Talla, our digital assistant knows what is in your knowledge base and can parse out answers to common questions. These answers can be retrieved via a conversational interface in a web browser, or via Slack or Microsoft Teams. Imagine being on the phone when a prospect asks a question you can't answer. You pause for five seconds while you type it into Talla in natural language, and Talla returns the answer. No broken conversation, no interrupting other employees' workflow, and no risk of a forced follow-up call.

Talla can make first sales calls go more smoothly. Better calls improve deal velocity which means more closes in less time.

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Capture Conversational Workflows for Better Information

We keep harping on the point that Talla knows what is up to date, but Talla isn't psychic. So, how exactly does this happen? Talla learns when people update information. Talla can also build models based on usage patterns, topic modeling, and other data that guess when content or information is likely to be stale. (This document hasn't been edited in two years, but the products it talks about have been mentioned in several new documents in the last month.) But where Talla really shines is in connecting the conversational workflows of email and chat back to documents and information that is relevant to sales.

Talla can monitor chat logs and emails to find questions that were previously unseen, and check to see if there are answers in the knowledge base. If not, Talla can flag those questions and make sure a content editor responsible for those topic areas sees the content gaps and can update the necessary information.

The world is a dynamic place. Your competitors do not have static products. Your customers do not all shop the same way, year in and year out. Your team is not static, but grows and sometimes turns over. You need a workflow that captures this dynamism and feeds it back into a central repository where everyone can have access to the latest information, questions, and answers. Talla is the tool that can make that vision a reality.

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Use 24/7 Lead Qualification to Better Prioritize Leads

Up to this point, it may seem like Talla can do some pretty amazing stuff, but we are just getting started. Everything you have seen so far is a workflow around content management or knowledge management, but Talla also has some processes built in for basic sales workflow automation.

Sales reps can't work 24/7, but Talla can. Think of Talla as a knowledge bot that knows everything about your product. You can package up a lot of this knowledge into a separate bot you deploy your website, or in the communication channel of your choice, so that when your reps aren't available, you can still qualify leads by providing basic information and collecting basic facts about prospects.

Talla's natural language processing (NLP) technology isn't the brittle kind that breaks when you say something that isn't an exact match for a targeted term. Our data science team has spent three years working with word vector technology, invented at Google, to make sure we can handle almost everything your prospects throw at us.

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Use 24/7 Lead Qualification to Better Prioritize Leads (Cont'd)

Attention is the scarcest resource human beings have. When your buyer is paying attention to you, the last thing you want to do is tell them to come back tomorrow. Talla bots can capture information and qualify leads while you sleep, or deliver information to better inform prospects and nurture them along the buying cycle, 24/7 in real-time. Give potential customers the answers they need immediately, with accuracy, and capture what you need to know from them - even setting up a meeting on the fly. Talla can help engage and qualify leads to improve the productivity and efficiency of your sales team, so that you can close more deals with less time.

Summary: What A Smart Knowledge Base Can Do for You

A smart knowledge base makes your product documentation more valuable, so that it can actually help you close sales deals. Talla's smart knowledge base is proactive and self-aware, alerting your documentation team to out-of-date or incorrect information that could mislead sales representatives, prospects and customers. Talla's chat assistant can retrieve highly accurate information from your knowledge base to ensure that no sales question goes unanswered, even on the first phone call, and even for first-time sales reps.

Lack of timely information slows down sales velocity, and Talla's smart knowledge base ensures every member of your team has the product info they need, just in time. And with A.I. sales automation, Talla can offer that same support directly to customers, even when a sales rep isn't available.

By delivering just the right information at just the right time to just the right audience, Talla's smart knowledge base multiplies the value of your product documentation, sales representatives, and every single sales contact you ever make.

If you want to increase sales velocity, shorten sales rep training time, and offer more sales support with less staff, contact us at sales@talla.com.