



TECHNOLOGY SALES

Why onboarding, enablement, and high-value sales activities matter more than ever

Scott Smestad
Division Vice President
Client Services – Technology
BI WORLDWIDE



THE NEW RULES OF THE SALES GAME

Let's face it: technology sales are a high-stakes, high-velocity game. Every player—whether a business development rep (BDR) making the first call, an account executive (AE) closing the deal, or a client success manager (CSM) ensuring renewals—has a direct line to your company's growth. But here's the twist: while most organizations obsess over the finish line, the real winners are investing where it counts—onboarding, enablement, and the daily focus on high-value activities (HVA), which lead to higher quota attainment and revenue growth.



Accelerate onboarding

Gamify role-based new hire onboarding
Recognize and reward desired behaviors



Boost enablement

Gamify role-based sales enablement journeys
Motivate sellers to complete learning
Recognize and reward desired behaviors



Drive high-value activity

Gamify role-based sales processes and activities
Motivate sellers to complete HVA



Drive quota attainment

Motivate sellers to attain or exceed quota
Improve closure rates, deal size, cross-sell and upsell, renewal rates, etc.
Recognize and reward top performers and consistent quota attainment

The data is clear. Structured onboarding, robust enablement, and smart non-cash incentives aren't just “nice to have”—they're the difference between teams that are simply trying to hit quota and teams that redefine what's possible.

ACCELERATE SALES ONBOARDING

First impressions, lasting impact

First impressions matter. In sales, they're everything. The moment a new rep walks through the (virtual) door, the clock starts ticking. How fast can they ramp up? How soon will they deliver results? The answer: as fast as your onboarding allows.

Korn Ferry found that effective onboarding boosts quota attainment by **14%** and win rates by **11%**, and it speeds ramp-to-productivity by **6%**. Miss the mark, and voluntary turnover jumps from **10.7%** to **13.7%**.¹

Harvard Business Review reports companies with formal onboarding see **50% greater retention** and **62% higher productivity** among new hires.²

¹ Mark Grimshaw and Doug Johnson. “How to Effectively Onboard New Sales Talent.” Korn Ferry Insights, October 17, 2023. <https://www.kornferry.com/insights/articles/how-to-effectively-onboard-new-sales-talent>

² Gys Kappers and Sinazo Sibisi. “Onboarding Can Make or Break a New Hire's Experience.” Harvard Business Review, April 5, 2022. <https://hbr.org/2022/04/onboarding-can-make-or-break-a-new-hires-experience>



Yet, only **12%** of employees believe their organization excels at onboarding.³

So, what's the secret sauce? **Gamification and recognition.** Aberdeen Group found that gamified onboarding can lead to **31% higher first-year quota attainment.**⁴

BI WORLDWIDE (BIW) helped a global tech company dramatically improve new rep engagement in the **first 90 days** and accelerate early milestone achievement, such as **cutting time-to-first sale by 30%**, while reducing early attrition by integrating badges, leaderboards and milestone rewards into onboarding.

Gamified onboarding dramatically improved engagement in the **first 90 days** and accelerated early milestone achievement such as a **cutting time-to-first sale by 30%.**

BOOST SALES ENABLEMENT

Sustaining excellence

If onboarding is about starting strong, enablement is about sustaining excellence. The best sales teams don't just train once—they build a culture of continuous learning, coaching, and support. Companies with structured enablement strategies report a **9-point increase** in win rates, and those using formal methodologies are twice as likely to see gains in both win rate and quota attainment.⁵

Gamification and incentives bring enablement to life. **83%** of employees receiving gamified learning feel motivated (vs. **61%** without), and **89%** say they'd be more productive if their work were gamified.⁶

BIW partnered with a leading media and technology company to gamify enablement. The results? More than **40%** of total reps engage with content monthly, completing an average of **120,000 missions or 4.6 missions per rep.** During one period, engaged reps sold **90%** more units than non-engaged reps.

When learning is fun, reps don't just participate. They compete, collaborate, and strive to win.

Gamified personal learning journeys engage more than **40% of reps monthly**, completing an average of **120,000 missions or 4.6 missions per rep.**

³ Gallup. State of the American Workplace Report. 2017. <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/238085/state-american-workplace-report-2017.aspx>

⁴ Aberdeen Group. Gamification in B2B Sales: Is it Time? (Part I). 2014. Retrieved August 18, 2025, from <https://appexchange.salesforce.com/partners/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=00P3000000P3QENE3>

⁵ Highspot. 2023 State of Sales Enablement Report. July 2023. Accessed August 25, 2025. <https://community.highspot.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/State-of-Sales-Enablement-Report-2023.pdf>

⁶ Apostolopoulos, Aris. "Gamification at Work: The 2019 Survey Results." TalentLMS, August 19, 2019. Retrieved August 18, 2025, from <https://www.talentlms.com/blog/gamification-survey-results/>



DRIVE HIGH-VALUE SALES ACTIVITIES

Less busy work, more selling

Here's a reality check: LinkedIn reports that sales reps spend less than **30%** of their time selling.⁷ The rest of the time? Meetings, admin, and everything but what moves the needle.

Prioritizing high-value activities like pipeline-building, client demos, and executive meetings isn't just smart, it's proven. Highspot research shows companies that identify and prioritize winning activities see a **7-point boost** in win rates and a **10-point increase** in rep satisfaction.⁸ Korn Ferry data reveals even bigger gains: focusing reps on role-specific success factors leads to **25%** higher quota attainment, **17%** higher win rates, and **20%** lower turnover.⁹

Gamification and recognition bridge the gap. Aberdeen found that sales gamification doubled quota attainment, tripled engagement, and drove **11%** higher year-over-year revenue growth.¹⁰

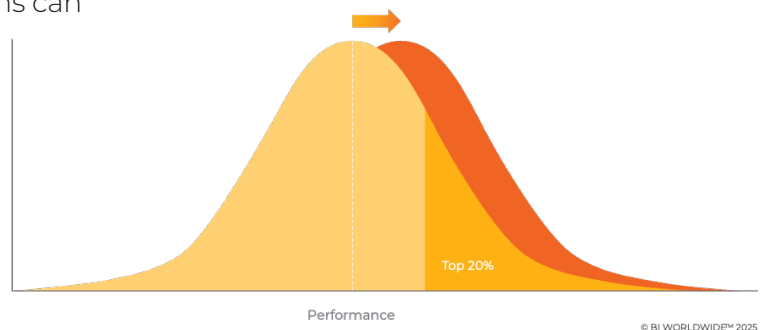
BIW engaged with a global software company to gamify aspects of its sales process and incorporate targeted incentives, boosting qualified leads by **25%** and accelerating conversion speed.

Sales process gamification and targeted incentives boosted qualified leads **25%** and accelerated conversion speed.

INCREASE QUOTA ATTAINMENT

The power of incentives and recognition

Quota attainment isn't just a metric—it's the scoreboard. And incentives are the playbook. Gamified sales processes drive **18%** higher team quota attainment, while structured incentive programs can increase performance by **25–44%**, especially when sustained over time.^{4,11} BIW's meta-analysis shows that long-term incentive strategies generate **14%** higher annual quota performance.



⁷ LinkedIn. Global State of Sales 2022. LinkedIn Sales Solutions. Accessed July 28, 2025. <https://business.linkedin.com/sales-solutions/the-state-of-sales-2022-report>

⁸ Highspot. 2023 State of Sales Enablement Report. July 2023. Accessed August 25, 2025. <https://community.highspot.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/State-of-Sales-Enablement-Report-2023.pdf>

⁹ Korn Ferry. Supercharging Sales Effectiveness: From Talent Excellence to Precise Execution. Korn Ferry Sales Maturity Survey. 2024. Accessed August 25, 2025. <https://www.kornferry.com/insights/featured-topics/sales-transformation/supercharging-sales-effectiveness>

¹⁰ Aberdeen Group. Sales Performance Management: How the Best-in-Class Optimize the Front Line to Grow the Bottom Line. 2014.



To unlock performance, improve quota attainment, and maximize returns, incentives must go beyond rewarding only the top echelon. They must engage the middle **60%**—the often-overlooked majority who represent the greatest capacity for incremental growth. When you design incentives to motivate all performance levels, not just the elite few, the result is a more energized sales force, greater growth, and a stronger return on investment.

BIW collaborated with a prominent software company to integrate all sales incentives and recognition initiatives into a unified, comprehensive program. This approach included quarterly and semi-annual global incentives, local discretionary incentives, and an exclusive group travel reward for top performers. The partnership increased revenue and grew market share while producing a return on investment of 10.4:1 or greater for each promotion.

Unified,
comprehensive
sales incentives
and recognition
increased revenue
and grew market share
while producing an
ROI of 10.4:1
or greater for each
promotion.

CONCLUSION

Enable your sellers, growth will follow

Selling technology is complex, fast paced, and unforgiving. But the path to better outcomes is clear: invest in structured onboarding, reinforce with strong enablement, focus reps on high-value activities, and amplify it all with gamification, incentives, and recognition. The results speak for themselves: faster ramp-up, stronger productivity, healthier pipelines, faster velocity, higher win rates, and greater quota attainment. Together, they drive sustainable growth—not just for sales teams, but for the entire organization.

Ready to outpace your competitors? **Enable your sellers. Growth will follow.**



