

MindTickle!★

CRO RAMP TIME REDUCTION GUIDE

3 PRINCIPLES TO REDUCING ONBOARDING
RAMP TIME FOR NEW SALES HIRES





INTRODUCTION

According to a recent study, effective onboarding services that meet or exceed expectations can improve quota attainment by 16.2%.¹ This reinforces the mantra that effective new hire onboarding is central to any sales readiness strategy designed to improve productivity.

Human resources and training departments are often tasked with the implementation of onboarding programs. While these programs work well for integrating new employees into a company and its culture, CROs need to take control from Day 1 of the outcomes important to them—building and maintaining sales-specific behaviors that provide insight and perspective to customers in order to drive value, while ensuring the sales process is aligned to the customer’s journey. So, how do CROs quickly and predictably implement a system to ramp new sellers that drive deals to close faster and more profitably?

The answer shouldn’t be limited to a cookie-cutter list of activities. While every company has its own version of an onboarding checklist, the head of revenue needs to first consider a set of guiding questions and principles aligned with the strategic interests and realities of the business before pursuing an onboarding plan. The 3 principles below represent a few of MindTickle’s learnings and observations from working with revenue leaders across a wide spectrum of companies.

Effective onboarding services that meet or exceed expectations can improve quota attainment by 16.2%¹

¹ Source: CSO Insights Sales Enablement Report 2018

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Onboarding without a destination in mind and a team in place makes for an incomplete journey.

Taking 'Onboarding' literally for a minute, think about your new sales hires as passengers eager to get underway. Your plan for a safe, punctual ride must begin well before the plane or train pulls up to the gate. Here are questions to ask yourself:

- Do you have the right team in place to offer an efficient and effective onboarding experience from jetway to seat? Do they have the right experience, skillset, mandate, incentives, objectives and most importantly, the tools to ensure that the initial onboarding experience continues well into the flight (aka the seller's journey)?
- What can you learn from your organization's current or historical onboarding programs? Were they designed with your current sales strategy in mind? If so, did they deliver the expected outcomes?

49% of companies are currently investing money in updating their onboarding programs.²

Work with a representative subset of your sellers for a bottom-up view from the people the onboarding programs are designed to help.

- Every sales team falls along a distribution curve of top, middle and bottom performing sellers. Spend time with folks at all levels of the performance curve for insight into their onboarding experience and any correlation to confidence or ramp time. This also helps you evaluate if you have the right people, platforms and resources in place.

² <https://www.urbanbound.com/blog/onboarding-infographic-statistics>

- Create a basic competency chart that aligns the top 2 or 3 behaviors you have identified as critical for sellers and see if your top performers exhibit them in the field consistently.
- Observe and analyze your top seller's industry knowledge, customer-engagement skill set, relationship building and networking skills. Then map these map it back to their onboarding activities and content, KPIs and ramp time to productivity.

The screenshot shows the 'Sales Academy' Admin Site interface. The main content area is titled 'AE Onboarding' and was created by John Smith on Oct 20, 2015. It features a 'Settings' section with 'Seq.Lock' and 'CATEGORY: Onboarding'. Below this is a 'Modules' section for 'Week 1' containing 3 modules. The table below shows the details for these modules:

	Name	Learners	Participation	Completion	
1	About the Company Course	4	25%	25%	...
2	Values and Culture Course	4	25%	25%	...
6	Product Training 102 Course	5	20%	20%	...
7	Know the Competition Course	5	20%	20%	...
4	Org Structure and Teams Quick Update	5	20%	0%	

Having a team, a plan, and a platform in place for your new hires is critical to setting them up for success. When new reps have a single place they can count on to find the information they need, they understand what is expected of them as well as how it all works together to help them do their jobs to the best of their abilities.

A well-planned onboarding program gives your new hires a clear, well-defined path to competency. This helps them to understand the critical context of everything they're learning and how it pertains to their role, and lets them see what it is all building towards—keeping them engaged, focused, and successful.

ACTION ITEMS

- Conduct a working exercise with your onboarding team to evaluate current onboarding activities and content, and how those align with target competencies.
- Identify core knowledge content and preparation gaps in the onboarding process.
- Leverage the wider team's experience and network to identify resources and assets to be used in onboarding.
- Evaluate the current onboarding experience for your new sellers, focusing on core competitive advantages, revenue strategies, products, training, and content.
- Design, build, and evaluate your initiatives to target the specific training outcomes that matter to your business.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Make measurable, field-ready skills the outcome of onboarding

Map your onboarding program to the skills, assets, processes and content that enables winning behavior.

- Align the onboarding process with the behaviors and corresponding competencies that will enable every team member to execute your current and long-term revenue strategy.
- Within your blueprint for your onboarding process, the framework should focus on the knowledge areas that are mission critical for your business. These typically include:
 - Addressable market (what the opportunity is)
 - The customer (who you're serving)
 - Product (what you offer based on customer needs)
 - Sales motion (methodology, tools, and process)

Ensure you have specific productivity outcomes—both qualitative and quantifiable—that sellers should take away from your onboarding process.

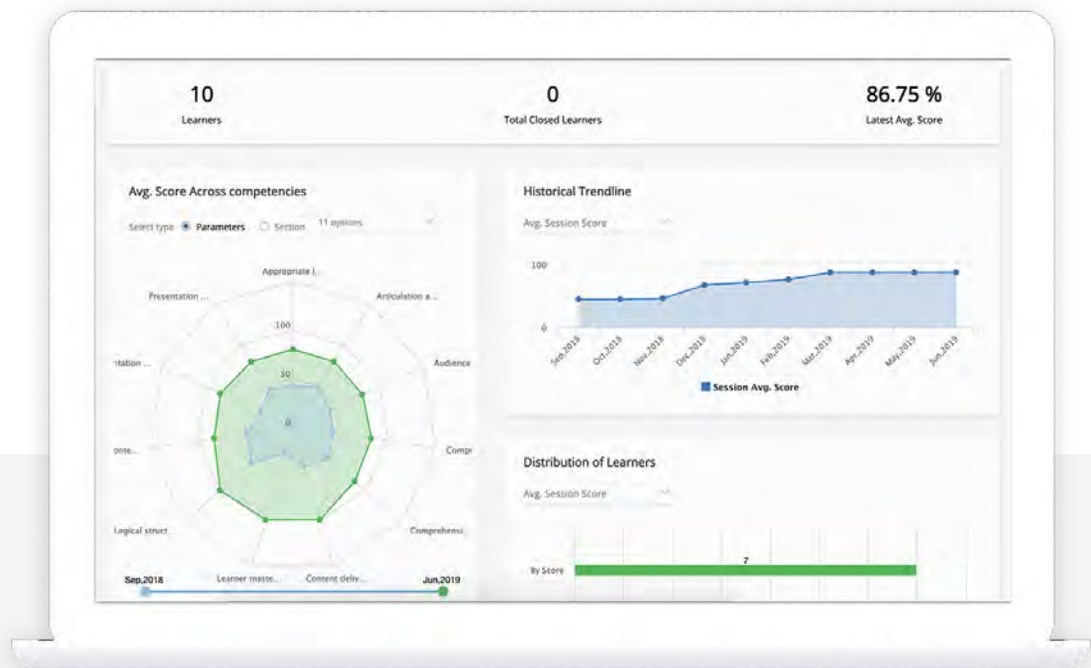
- Sales processes include marketing and sales/business development score leads, and the criteria used to evaluate a qualified opportunity.
- Leverage your market and competition knowledge in your success criteria.

Companies with onboarding programs that measure new hire progress see 54% better new hire productivity.³

³ <https://www.clickboarding.com/18-jaw-dropping-onboarding-stats-you-need-to-know/>

Personalize, personalize, personalize. Don't assume that you should start every seller from square one.

- Leverage insight from your sellers' experience, strengths and weaknesses to create programs around knowledge sharing, coaching and role play and reduce ramp time.
- While introducing a new seller to items such as company mission, product, competition and ideal customer profile is expected, craft programs geared to the specific experiences and skill levels of your seller.



In order to be effective, sales managers need data and insight to know what to coach. No rep needs to be developed in every aspect of the sales process, but trying to find what they need help with isn't always clear-cut. Coaching is only effective if it drives a business outcome. There is no point having your management team spend hours each week coaching reps if your top line revenue doesn't grow.

Well-designed assessments and certifications help you collect the data, measure, and build a culture of high performance, while giving you clarity into each rep's unique skills. This empowers you with real visibility into your team's selling capability and progress over time, and allows you to put reps in positions to succeed based on their personal abilities to drive revenue for your business.

ACTION ITEMS

- Sync with your marketing team to ensure your sales goals align with their demand generation and outbound marketing activities.
- Clearly communicate key sales milestones, established benchmarks, and incentive-driven initiatives.
- Identify areas where you can shorten ramp time through effective coaching to drive faster deal closings and quota achievements based on each rep's personal and unique skills sets.
- Ensure your onboarding program and tools allow you to successfully measure sales rep competency at the individual-level

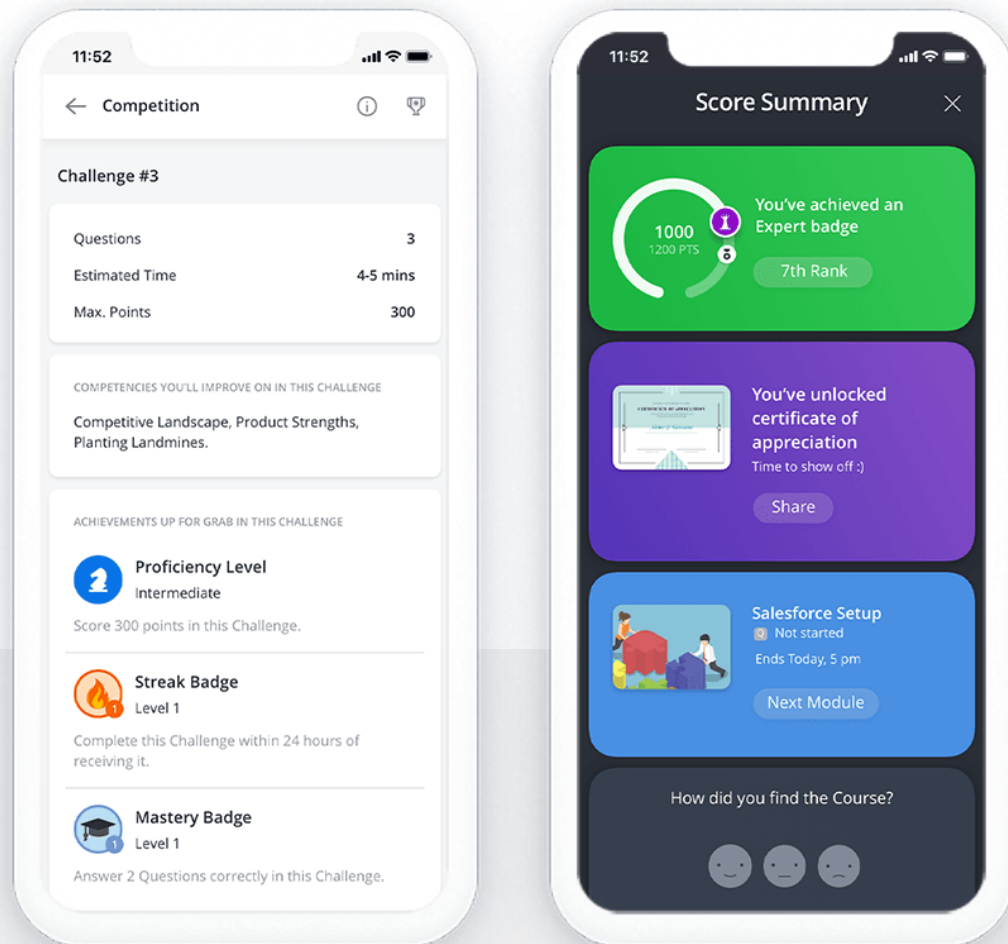


Implement onboarding as a continuing journey, not a one-time event.

Customer-centric selling is all about engagement throughout the seller's and customer's journey.

- Rather than an abrupt transition from the initial onboarding program to insertion into the field, carry over the relevant elements of onboarding into the ongoing sales readiness and enablement programming. An ongoing readiness program should provide a steady diet personalized to the needs, personalities and preferences of each individual.
- Blueprint a readiness program that leverages reinforcement and continues to utilize resources, materials and people involved in onboarding on an ongoing basis. In addition to providing continuity, it also creates a 360-degree, two-way exchange of information that benefits both sides and keeps content current.
- Collaborate with Sales Enablement and Readiness to promote and encourage ongoing knowledge sharing and reinforcement through a single source training and content repository. Best practices and different perspectives are key to growing a seller into a trusted advisor with prospects.
- Correlate revenue streams and quarterly objectives with sales performance and turnover and be willing to evolve your model as business requirements change.

Think of onboarding as everboarding—continuous learning and education throughout a seller's career to ensure skills are always being sharpened and enhanced to maximize selling capability.



Delivering an immersive learning experience throughout an entire seller's career will drastically impact your bottom line. Sales reps need to retain key information on a range of topics, including products, services, and competitors in order to have effective sales conversations. Unfortunately, retaining knowledge is a significant challenge, as the typical person forgets 90% of new information within 30 days⁴.

Spaced reinforcement and microlearning help promote a culture of continuous improvement and knowledge-sharing. Provide reps with short, personalized and gamified quiz-based scenarios that are automatically delivered at ideal intervals to improve knowledge retention that drives proficiency and performance. By proactively bridging knowledge gaps and streamlining coaching and analysis of programs, organizations achieve better sales engagement, productivity and performance to win more deals.

⁴ Ebbinghaus' Forgetting Curve

ACTION ITEMS

- Develop a training playbook and guidelines for your experienced sellers at deal closure to capture what worked, what didn't, and provide that real-world experience for your newer sellers.
- Create peer and leader learning circles for sharing and leveraging feedback, and be open to serving as a mentor to new sellers.
- Gauge hiring and retention patterns and develop an engagement strategy to keep sellers happy and reduce turnover.
- Develop an everboarding strategy focused on providing spaced reinforcement and microlearning to promote a culture of continuous improvement.



Get in touch with MindTickle to find out how you can arm your salespeople to deliver a superior customer experience.



**Get a MindTickle
Readiness Value
Assessment**



**Speak with one
of our Sales
Readiness Experts**



**Schedule a demo
of the solution**

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MindTickle provides a comprehensive, data-driven solution for sales readiness and enablement that fuels revenue growth and brand affinity. Its purpose-built applications, proven methodologies, and best practices are designed to drive effective sales onboarding and ongoing readiness. With MindTickle, company leaders and sellers can continually assess, diagnose and develop the knowledge, skills, and behaviors required to effectively engage customers and drive growth.

Companies across a wide range of industries use MindTickle's innovative capabilities for on-demand, online training, bite-sized mobile updates, gamification-based learning, coaching and role-play to ensure world-class sales performance.

MindTickle is a global, privately-held company headquartered in San Francisco, CA.