

# Thinking About Bringing the Challenger™ Model to Your Organization?

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Your No-Nonsense  
Guide Awaits

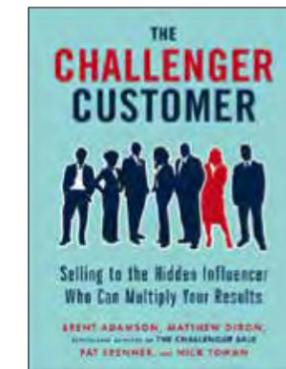
With over 80,000 sellers and 20,000 managers improving their sales results based on Challenger training, and more than 461,000 books inspiring change around the world, we're just getting started.

**Are you ready to join us?**



**2011**

There is a distinct set of seller behaviors and skills needed to perform best in the new, complex sales environment. These high performers are known as *Challengers*.



**2015**

Sales and Marketing must work together to identify and arm Challenger customers to drive purchase consensus, helping you win more deals.

## Welcome

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We've observed hundreds of organizations implement the Challenger™ model, and **the ones that have experienced the most success made strategic investments early in the process by preparing leaders**, collaborating with marketers, and empowering sellers and managers for a successful transformation in the long term.

In 2011, our research and best-selling book *The Challenger Sale* overturned decades of conventional wisdom with a bold new approach to sales. Since then, the Challenger™ model continues to be the proven way to drive revenue and customer loyalty in the face of increasing sales complexity. Each year, CEB research on sales and marketing best practices deepens our understanding of world-class execution—providing even more direction and specificity to our membership.

As your organization continues demanding unprecedented growth, there's never been a better time to learn how Sales and Marketing are using a new and different approach to manage and win in today's selling environment.

But how do these teams roll out this concept? We've observed hundreds of organizations implement the Challenger model, and the ones that have experienced the most success made strategic investments early in the process by preparing leaders, collaborating with marketers, and empowering sellers and managers for a successful transformation in the long term.

Whether you are familiar with Challenger concepts or are just getting started, these next pages will help you build—or strengthen—a strategy to capture the customer loyalty and revenue that Challenger organizations attain.

## Executive Perspective on Challenger™ Implementation

**What is your advice for anyone thinking of implementing Challenger?**

“ You know, my advice would probably be, do it now. Do it now. **I feel like, as a sales leader, your job is not just to run the sales organization; your job is to transform.** In every industry I watch, this digitization, this whole different perspective of this kind of new world for us, is driving the need for dramatic change in organizations that sell into those industries. I'm not saying move quick. Certainly, take a step back; understand this better; build a strategy; get the right level of commitment; figure out how you're going to fund this. Even if you have to self-fund as I did, you do that, but then start moving. **The more you contemplate, the more later on, you're going to wish you started earlier. I'd say, 'Act now.'**”

Michael Cremen

### Michael Cremen

Executive Vice President  
Global Sales, Hitachi Data Systems



Hear more of Michael's advice on Challenger implementation [here](#).

Ready to Act Now?

## Preparing Your Leadership Team to Lead

### 🔍 Why?

A typical organization has undertaken five major firm-wide changes in the past three years. Of those changes, **50% were considered a failure, and only 34% were thought to be a clear success. Ouch.**

There's no question that change is harder to manage than in the past, but when managed effectively, your investment in a Challenger rollout can lead the effort to change the way you engage with your customers in a whole new way.

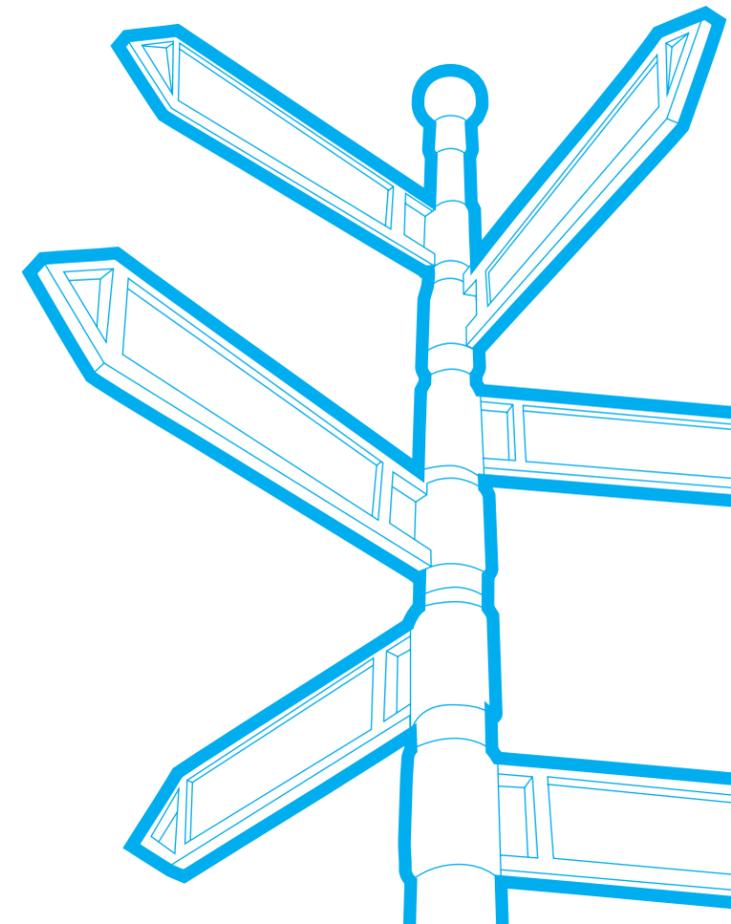
**50% of change initiatives failed in the past 3 years. Prepare leaders and arm managers to deliver a successful Challenger™ transformation.**

### ✓ How to Do It

- **Focus on emphasizing** the benefits to your customers (who are overwhelmed with information), and **lead with** business results that provide significant impact to the customer's world.
- **Link** Challenger clearly to your growth goals and objectives.
- **Prepare** managers and leaders by focusing on their understanding of Challenger and **strengthening** their coaching skills. High-quality sales coaching can improve rep performance by up to 19%.

### ✗ What to Avoid

- Do not jump right into training your sellers without arming leaders to coach.
- Do not assume that the work and training you did at your annual sales meeting means you're good for the year.
- Do not expect change overnight from your sales team. This is a transformation after all.



## Sales: Don't Go It Alone

# Collaborate with Marketing

### Additional Reading:

Five Spots Where  
Sales and Marketing  
Alignment Isn't  
Enough

**Forbes**

### 🔍 Why?

Your customers are more empowered today than ever before. In fact, research shows they spend much more time evaluating problems and researching possible solutions than they do engaging suppliers for information or help. By the time customers do reach out in a meaningful way, they typically want to focus the conversation on price. In other words, you're unable to influence the decision until it's likely too late. And, you've once again fallen into the commoditization trap. Talk about a double whammy.

That's precisely why Sales and Marketing need to work together—Marketing can go where Sales can't. Marketing can help shape the customers' purchase early in their journey by developing insights and messages that actually shift customers' mind-set and set sellers up for more meaningful conversations.

**Only 3% of marketing qualified leads close.** That's largely because of siloed Marketing and Sales efforts that lead to disconnected purchase experiences for customers.

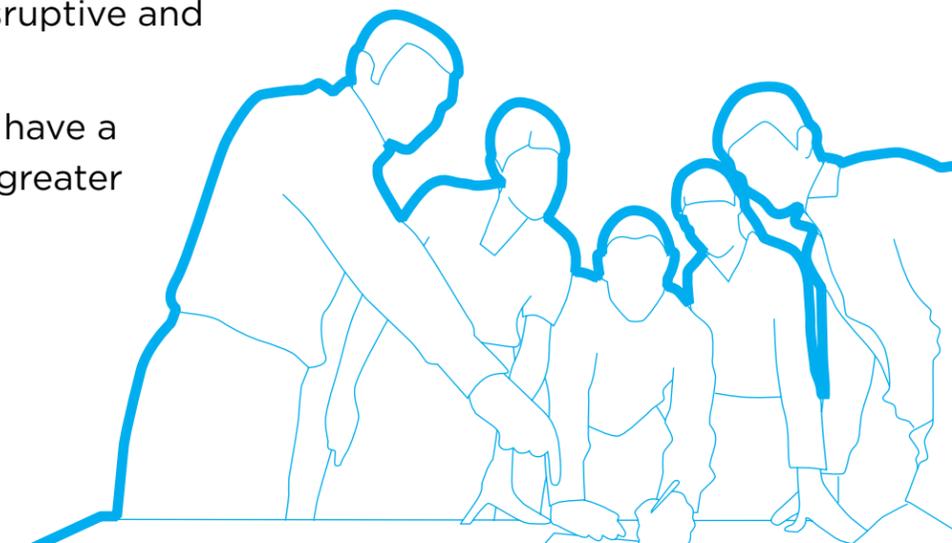
### ✓ How to Do It

Leading organizations align marketing content with sales conversations, which allows for continued teaching throughout the process. Additionally, marketers fine-tune the type of content they are developing—and actually create fewer, more powerful content assets that **spark** customer interest, **introduce** customers to a new way of thinking, and **confront** their assumptions about what works and what doesn't work for their company. This content approach—spark, introduce, confront—meets the customer where they are learning and puts their needs and preferences at the center.

### 💬 Tell Me More

#### By working together:

- Marketing can use Sales' deep customer knowledge to create and test messages that will really resonate with their target audience(s).
- Marketing can create fewer but more powerful pieces of content.
- Sales will have more meaningful leads and deals given the customers' prior exposure to the disruptive and surprising content.
- Sales and Marketing will have a deeper partnership and greater trust between them.



## Deploying Challenger™: Flybys Need Not Apply

### Why?

Consider someone building a house. To repel harsh outdoor elements and create a sturdy and permanent building, an architect must consider a strong foundation, crack-proof walls, and a durable roof. If any of these three are missing, the house won't stand. It may temporarily provide protection, but ultimately, it will fall, leaving the poor homeowner to pick up the pieces and start over.

The same applies to sales transformation. Investment in training for the sales force may see a temporary improvement, a new marketing effort may provide a momentary bump, but a lasting and effective change needs foundational support through leadership reinforcement, enablement, and strong messages and content to support the roof. This comes from an investment in and commitment to the commercial team as a whole.

Like any meaningful change, getting sales transformation right happens over time. Indeed, if it were instantaneous, every organization would understand how to capture customer loyalty.

**Behavior change doesn't happen overnight.** Don't rush to check the box on training; instead focus on building a commercial team that wins amid increasing complexity.

### How to Do It

Are your sales and marketing leadership teams committed to making the leap? Companies that align to implement Challenger have a clear strategic vision and execution plan. This foundation is critical for sustainable change and impact.

These key steps include:

#### 1. Evaluate

Current State  
and Assess  
Needs



#### 2. Create

Your Company  
Case for  
Change



#### 3. Secure

Leadership  
and Cross-  
Functional  
Support



#### 4. Set

Strategy  
and Design  
Implementation  
Plan



### Why the Flyby Approach Fails

- Skills **don't stick**; sellers revert to their old ways.
- Insight-filled messages **don't take hold**.
- Management **moves on**.

## Sustaining Challenger™: Long After the Launch

**Less than 30% of reps report** getting the optimal 3–5 hours of coaching per month from their managers.

### How the Best Sellers Prepare for a Meeting



[Click here to play video.](#)

### Why?

If your organization is like most, it's increasingly difficult to know what's actually happening on the front line with the application of Challenger skills. Commercial leaders lack visibility into daily execution, struggle to efficiently share what good Challenger selling looks like, and simply hope that managers are providing reliable coaching.

Our research finds that without this proper coaching, reinforcement, and practice, 87% of learning is lost within a month.

The current method of ride-alongs, posting materials to various portals and relying on managers to coach effectively, does not provide any scale or visibility into Challenger execution. The importance of sustaining Challenger skill development cannot be understated.

### ✓ How to Do It

- **Embed** Challenger skills into rep workflow: Provide sellers a safe environment to practice techniques, receive peer and manager feedback, and share examples of great Challenger selling in action. Ensure sellers apply Challenger principles to their actual opportunities and interactions.
- **Scale** your coaching efforts. Provide managers visibility into Challenger execution, and enable their coaching across broad, distributed teams.
- **Improve** delivery of disruptive commercial insights. Insight practice sessions help sellers learn, tailor, and sharpen new insights, which are easily captured and distributed. Also consider creating a library to save all insights and messages for sellers to have easy access.
- **Expose** new hires to Challenger. Leverage Challenger best practices, and pitch videos to help new hires onboard quicker.

### X What to Avoid

Don't expect that once you leave the classroom, sellers and managers will immediately and effectively begin applying these new concepts.

Why? The lack of a safe place to practice and realize the gap to good, short-term pressures often deters new skill application. In fact, in a 2015 survey, **sales leaders said less than 25% of sellers actually practice new skills** they were trained on after leaving the classroom.

## Fueling the Talent Pipeline for Tomorrow

### 🔍 Why?

The cost of hiring a bad seller is tremendous. There's the obvious cost—missed revenue—but there are also hidden costs that rise, including the time wasted in training and onboarding and the negative impact on prospects and future customers.

Of course, sales leaders want to hire sellers who will succeed, but subjective hiring and recruiting processes do not objectively evaluate the changing skill set that wins business today. Bringing in the best sales talent demands recruiting for a very different skill set, with not only traditional sales competencies (e.g., persuasion and persistence) but also new competencies, like strategic thinking and business acumen.

**17% of today's sellers** have the skills needed to consistently bring a Challenger™ selling approach to customers.

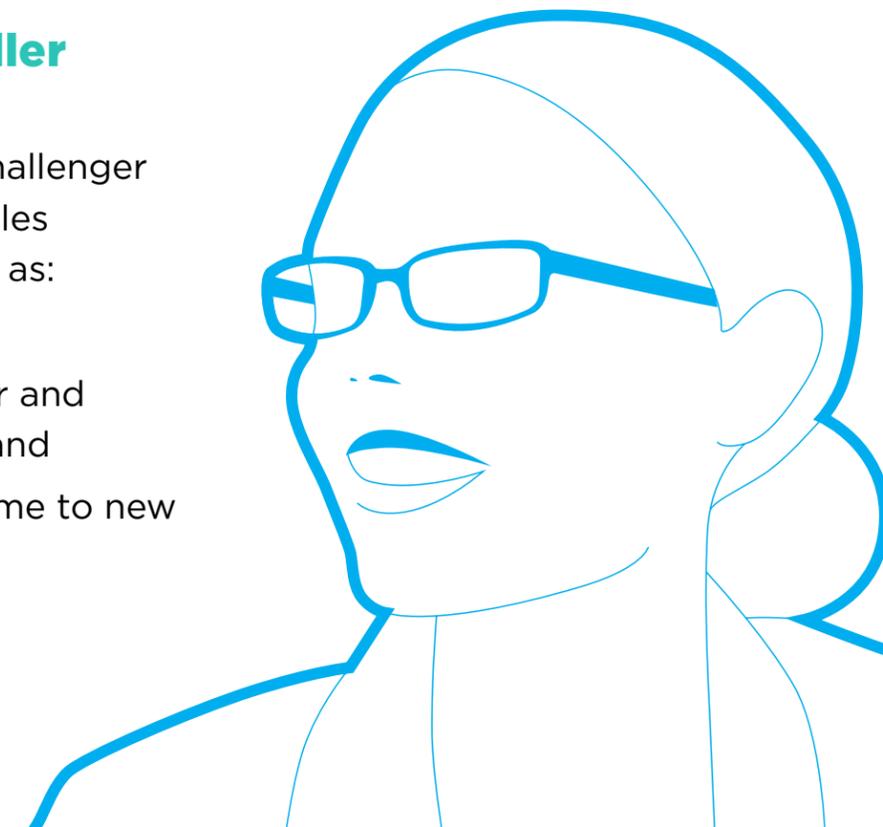
### ✓ How to Do It

- **Proactively engage** passive applicants, and rewrite job descriptions to emphasize the job challenge, autonomy, and empowerment.
- **Implement** an objective assessment to test applicants, and identify candidates with the skill and will to deliver a powerful, insight-led sales experience.
- **Equip** hiring managers with structured Challenger interview guides selling-aligned to ensure consistent, objective, and rigorous interviews.
- **Consider** recruiting from outside the sales function if your industry has a limited concentration of Challengers within sales.

### ✗ Don't Gamble on Seller Performance

Without a robust model for Challenger selection and development, sales organizations face issues such as:

- **Leaving** deals on the table,
- **Dealing** with higher turnover and associated overhead costs, and
- **Experiencing** a longer lag time to new hire productivity.



# Results Peers Have Seen From Challenger™ Implementation

“After speaking with counterparts and associates, we knew that Challenger, if done well, could transform our business. That’s why we have engaged with the people that wrote the book, not just someone who read it.”

Shaun Williams  
Chief Executive  
Snell Packaging and Safety

Challenger-trained individuals at **SAP** closed 26% more deals faster and generated 27% more revenue for the organization.



**Xerox** saw \$65 million in contract value attributed to Challenger in less than three months.



**GM** directly attributed 27,000 sold vehicles to Challenger, totaling nearly \$400 million, including 54 accounts won over from direct competitors.



A multiyear challenger development effort helped **Sodexo** health care services realized significant results, including \$237 million in closed business from accounts that were specifically worked on during Challenger training workshops.



# Learn More

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[challengercustomer.com](http://challengercustomer.com)  
[challengersale.com](http://challengersale.com)