ENABLING THE "JUST-IN-TIME" SITUATIONAL LEARNER

Marketing Messages

Sales Skills
When’s the last time you had to change a flat tire?

Chances are it’s been many years. And, when it happens next, you’ll probably need to update your knowledge by pulling out the owner’s manual.

Let’s face it, you learn best when you’re in a deficit. Meaning, you want to learn when you need to learn. We’ve coined a phrase for that approach: We call it just-in-time, situational learning.

Your salespeople are no different. They learn best when they need to learn something. Not when marketers decide it’s time to issue a product launch and blast a bunch of messaging into the field. Or, when trainers decide to schedule a stand-alone training event.

With that in mind, here’s a grim warning for stand-alone product launches, isolated messaging rollouts and skills-only training events: Your days are numbered.

But a few things have to happen first…read on to learn what’s needed to make the just-in-time, situational learning and enabling revolution a reality—creating a singular virtual experience that gives reps the specific messaging, content, and skills they need to have the right conversations at each stage of the customer lifecycle.
The Just-in-Time Learning Revolution

All kinds of tools and apps promise to help your salespeople succeed “in the moment” across the many different types of selling situations they face.

From a technology standpoint, those tools are ready to deliver. But, they’ve struggled to realize the dream for one big reason...

The “content.” Marketing messaging, content assets, and skills training are not being developed to take advantage of the “situational sales enablement” technologies available in the market. Nor are they adequately meeting the in-the-moment learning style of all humans.

The content—which is more important to enabling your customer conversations than the tech itself—needs to catch up, and fast. If it doesn’t, you’re going to struggle to break through in enabling salespeople. You’re also going to see more technology failures and adoption problems.

No matter how sophisticated or user-friendly your tools and apps are, they won’t do your reps any good if the actual content packaged inside them isn’t chunky enough and situationally relevant enough to help them in their moment of need. Same goes if the stories you’re providing aren’t aligned to the skills they’re being trained on.

Each moment in the buyer’s journey requires a consistent, appropriate approach in both your stories and your skills. Generating demand is different from building a business case and proposal, which is different from negotiations and closing, which is different still from ensuring renewals or communicating price increases.

You get the point. A salesperson needs to be situationally fluent to succeed in all cases. And, they are most eager and ready to learn what they need for each moment when they are right there in it.
Stories and Skills

At its core, great situational learning and execution is based on a simple premise: It’s about the convergence of **stories** (marketing messaging and content assets) with **skills** (training and coaching) in a singular virtual experience for the salesperson. Imagine giving your reps just the right messaging and just the right skills coaching for the exact selling situation they find themselves in—whenever and wherever they need it.

Three trends happening right now are accelerating the convergence of marketing stories and sales skills—and making just-in-time, situational messaging, content and skills a game-changer. **Those three trends are:**

**Situational Messaging Frameworks**
One-size-fits-all messaging is being replaced with tested, proven frameworks that are matched to the pivotal moments in the customer lifecycle (Why Change/Why You/ Why Now/ Why Stay/Why Pay).

**Situational Skills Training**
Stand-alone skills training over the course of days in classrooms is being replaced by short, compelling video-based skills coaching modules that are aligned to the various selling scenarios your reps will confront across the buyer’s journey.

**Integrated, Interactive Online Experiences**
Static playbooks and bulky platforms, tools and applications are being replaced by interactive, mobile experiences that combine your stories and your skills into a single situational messaging and coaching service that a) doesn’t require additional software and b) is intuitive enough that you don’t need any training to use it.

READ ON to learn how these trends are propelling in-the-moment learning and execution forward.
Your go-to-market strategies are not created equal.
For example, in different moments you might be…

1. The Disruptor.
   Maybe you’re launching highly disruptive products or services that require you to challenge the status quo and create a need for change. This would demand a messaging approach and selling skills designed to defeat status quo bias and introduce the urgency to change.

2. The Differentiator.
   You might be launching an upgrade to an existing product in a mature market where your goals include providing some differentiation that helps you take some market share while protecting your pricing premium. This scenario calls for messaging and skills that de-commoditize the conversation and allow you to hold the line on discounts.

3. The Conductor.
   Maybe you’re combining several products and services into a solution that addresses a key topical initiative, with the hope that you’ll elevate your sales conversations to more senior-level buyers. This requires yet another messaging model and a separate set of skills for salespeople, both designed to help your sellers provide a business case that passes muster with executive and financial decision-makers.

4. The Expander.
   In another case, you may be working with existing customers who are in multi-year agreements with you that are about to expire and need to be renewed. For this, you need messaging and skills that effectively reinforce their previous decision, helping you ensure a renewal while also possibly communicating a price increase to improve your profitability for the next term.

Create, Elevate, and Capture Value

“Why Change?” – Tell a story that defeats status quo bias and convinces prospects to make a change. Learn More

“Why You?” – Once you defeat the status quo, tell a follow-on story that clearly differentiates you from competing alternatives. Learn More

“Why Now?” – Making sure your prospects take action versus delegate or defer demands a powerful business case story that justifies the budget and timing. Learn More

“Why Stay?” – Tell a story that convinces existing customers to renew their relationship with you and propel it to greater growth. Learn More

“Why Pay?” – Drive growth by telling a story that’s most likely to generate a positive response to a price increase. Learn More
Imagine you’re the outsider...

and you need to tell a compelling “why change” story that defeats status quo bias and convinces prospects to make a change. You’re in the Disruptor role. As such, this scenario calls for specific disruption-minded messaging and skills that respond to the demands of that moment. Why? Because when you’re the outsider, the biggest threat to your success is your prospect’s status quo bias—i.e. their natural preference for staying the course instead of changing. For this “why change” situation, you need to tell a provocative, insights-driven story designed to displace your prospect’s incumbent vendor (research proves it).

An integrated, interactive playbook—visualized above—can give your sellers the in-the-moment learning experience they need to face this situation head-on. The visual shows the library of chunky, modular content they need for a) gaining a clear understanding of the buying committee they need to make an impact with, and b) knowing how to win access to those buyers with the right messaging.

On the following page, we’ll break the sections down so you can get an in-depth feel for the experience.
Know Your Buyer

As buying committees get larger and more complex, salespeople need simpler, punchier ways to remember the roles and responsibilities of the different buyers they’re engaging. Interactive playbooks deliver on that front, providing quick-hitting synopses of the target buyer profiles they’re likely to encounter.

Each targeted customer profile includes more granular, role-specific learning modules that explore what the buyers within each profile are looking to achieve.

For each targeted customer profile, salespeople can refresh themselves on major industry trends and corresponding risks that are relevant to their role or responsibility.
Winning Access

A truly integrated situational learning experience won’t help salespeople execute across the range of scenarios they face if it doesn’t help them package your messaging and skills into powerful access messages that help them break through with key prospects and customers.

Salespeople need real talk tracks and choreographies to help deliver a message that’s aligned to a tested and proven “why change” framework.

If you’re trying to convince a prospect to leave his or her incumbent vendor, you should have available at your fingertips the status quo-busting access messages suited to that moment, both for email or phone.

The “why change” choreography helps you lead prospects from a) a provocative insight or unconsidered need to b) an analysis of their flawed current approach to c) a demonstration of how you’re qualified to resolve the challenges you’ve exposed, and finally, to d) your meeting proposal.
Got your meeting booked? You can review your key messages anywhere, anytime. You’ll also have the opportunity to quiz yourself on the particulars of your stories to help you stay sharp and develop deeper mastery and situational fluency.

Access your “why change” and “why you” stories across multiple consumable formats, including step-by-step storyboards and videos.

On the next page, we’ll cover how to make sure your stories and skills stay “sticky.”

In the “why change” modules, you’ll learn how to effectively transition to your “why you” story, where you establish your differentiation. In the “why you” story modules, you’ll learn how to map the unconsidered challenges you identified in the “why change” story to your unique capabilities.
Skills Reinforcement—Whenever, Wherever

If your messaging and selling techniques should be accessible in any situation, so too should your reinforcement content. In an ideal in-the-moment learning experience, a library of skills reinforcement content should be a key destination for salespeople, so they can up-skill themselves in their moment of need.
You Learn Best When You’re in a Deficit.

You know, those tense, back-against-the-wall moments when you have no option but to learn and get yourself out of a tight spot.

Salespeople face this everyday across the variety of selling situations they face. They might not perfectly remember your product launches or sales training events a few weeks after they happen, let alone months later. But that doesn’t have to be a problem, because salespeople are just-in-time situational learners. They perform best when they have the messaging, content and skills to help them most in their moment of greatest need. If you can create the integrated learning experience they need to learn and execute in the moment, you’ll outperform the competition at telling the right story for every stage of the customer lifecycle.