

Virtual Sales Coaching, Training, and Development



Scale Your Sales

Janice B Gordon

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More than three-quarters of B2B companies (79%) said they are likely to sustain the shift to remote selling well after the Pandemic has subsided. The Gartner Future of Sales 2025 report predicts that 80% of B2B sales interactions will occur in digital channels.

This is not a surprise. The B2B sales process was moving in this direction even before the Pandemic. The events of the past year have accelerated the shift to digital interactions.

In this context, we must adapt and enable our sales teams to engage with customers without the benefit of physical interaction. Sellers will need to develop new skills to succeed in a digital and remote world, which requires enhanced virtual sales training or coaching methods.

76% of sales leaders admit that it is harder to observe and coach over the past year. Yet, with advanced revenue intelligence technology in call recording and the absence of travel, those same sales leaders have more time and opportunity to coach—if they know how to do it well.

In the next ten minutes, you will learn how to blend coaching and training and combine modalities to empower your virtual sellers and to optimise your sales development efforts for a virtual world. At the end you will have a 12-Point Checklist to guide you through the essentials of virtual sales training and coaching development. You will be able to download this checklist as a free resource from my website [Scale Your Sales.co.uk/Checklist Virtual Training Coaching](https://ScaleYourSales.co.uk/ChecklistVirtualTrainingCoaching).



Virtual Sales Coaching, Training, and Development

Agenda

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- Best Practice
- Blending Training with Coaching
- Virtual Sales Coaching
- Benefits of Sales Coaching
- Coaching Practice
- Why Make it Fun?
- Leveraging Analytics
- 12-Point Checklist
- Resources

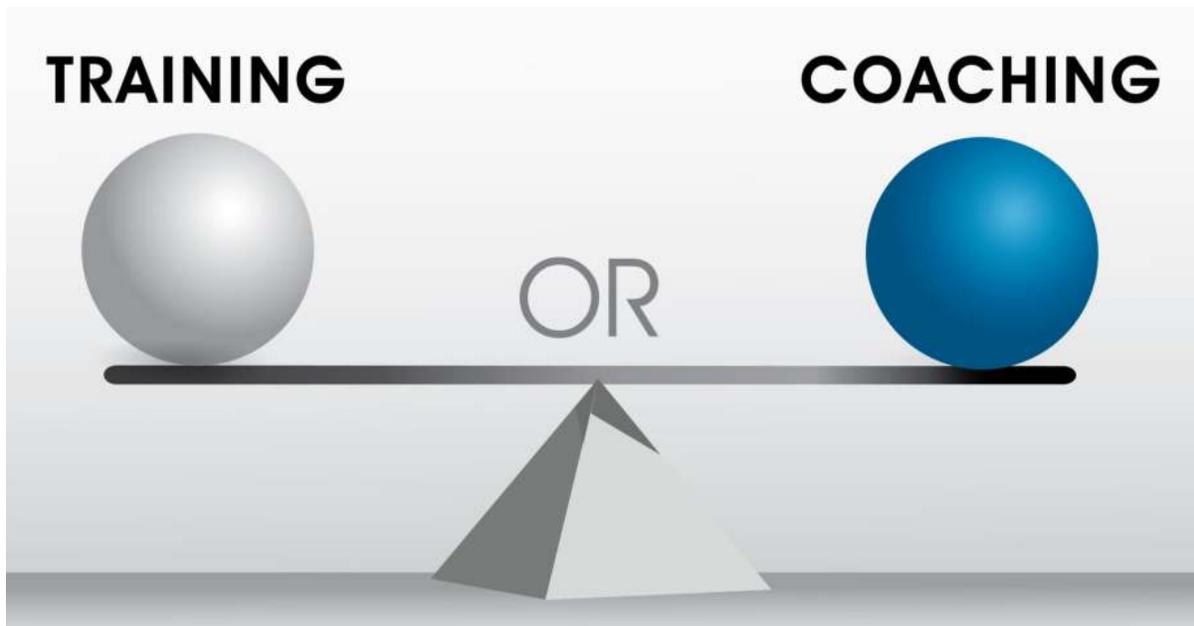
With the Pandemic, and virtually all sales delivery online, Sales coaching must be viewed as a new way of leading and developing behaviours rather than just another task; it is not something you tick of your list but an on-going activity. The focus of sales development is on helping team members self-assess and self-discover ways to solve problems and to grow; after all, they must do this when they are in front of the client. Sellers must know what good looks like, and even best practice is not static, hence the on-going nature of sales development.



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The Difference Between Coaching and Training

Sales training is about transferring new knowledge, while coaching is about enhancing or reinforcing the knowledge or skills with building confidence and personal mastery, this is sales development. 'I may know something, but I have not developed the skill of it unless I practice it and comprehend how it works!'



The Objectives of Sales Development is to:

- Assess strengths in a particular area and identify improvement requirements.
- Develop best practice knowledge and skills and change behaviours.
- Inspire self-motivation and strengthen critical relationships and the sales culture.

Virtual training and coaching, at scale due to the Pandemic is new to everyone. However, buyers and customer are no longer tolerant of poor service, poor skill delivery and general bad practice. If you are not adapting, you are dying. There is now an abundance of revenue intelligence tools to help identify specific gaps in knowledge skills and behaviours.

There is no excuse!

What is Virtual Sales Training?

Virtual sales training is any formal training that takes place where the learner is not in the same room at the same time as the facilitator, just as we are now. Training can be synchronous via video conferencing, or asynchronous, such as on-demand or self-guided digital modules, or a blend of both.

Whichever method you choose, the aim is to ensure the trainee has the skills necessary to engage customers and drive sales revenue successfully. Much of the customer engagement is conducted via video conferencing such as Zoom, WebEx, Team , so a new skill that sellers must master is remote video presentations and meetings.

The image shows the logos for Zoom and Cisco WebEx. The Zoom logo is in blue lowercase letters. The Cisco WebEx logo features a circular icon with a blue and green gradient, followed by the word "Cisco" in black and "webex" in green lowercase letters.

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Asynchronous Training Benefits - on Demand Bitesize or Micro Training Benefits

A trainee working through self-guided modules is not constrained by the instructor, facilitator, or peers' pace.

- Each trainee can be expected to complete a module by themselves and receive potentially tailored feedback or results.
- The completed modules and potential for replays entails more learning practice and the potential for coaching reinforcement of skills opportunities. Hence virtual training can overcome typical live classroom constraints and help with information retention and more defined connection to behaviour change and business impact.

Synchronous Training benefits

- Ability to read the audience and schedule frequent development or activity breaks.
- Bite-sized sessions can ensure audiences stay engaged, listening and learning rather than zoning off.
- Ability to organise breakout rooms and panel discussions, participate in live chat, Q and A, and gain feedback through surveys and polls, is a key advantage.

I interviewed Julie Mann on Scale Your Sales Podcast.

In September 2020. Julie is a 4x Sales Leader of Inside Sales & SDR. She has built and led award-winning teams at many of the top Austin tech companies. She said, "I probably have spent most of my time as an SDR leader making sure that we were connected as a team. Then from a training and learning perspective, the attention span of humans is now low. We cannot just put a deck in front of people and say, hey, learn this, their eyes will glaze over, it has become harder for people to retain information, so we have gamified most of our training".



What Good Virtual Sales Training Looks-Like.

- Bitesize: "Microlearning" create learning chunks and revisit the key points.
- Vary the Modalities: The modality is the learning format such as video, physical activities, reading, cheat sheets, skill demonstrations using audio and/or video. Ability to reach all types of learners.
- Make E-Learning Interactive: make learner move. Click here and do x or drag and drop, slide the scale, make a choice, type in an answer. Interactivity not only keeps learners present and engaged but is also the only way to achieve higher-level learning objectives.
- Apply Learning on the Job create higher objectives: this gets past "remembering and understanding", and moves learning to analysing, evaluating, and creating by getting learners to interact with the data and information. This improves knowledge, retention and understanding.
- Layer in Live Interaction: Layer e-learning with live interaction synchronous and asynchronous with activity between module 4 and 5 or a live virtual course between recorded modules. Here is where you customise, apply, practise, and role-play. On my Art of Social Selling workshop, the participants will learn how to develop their LinkedIn page, apply learning in to practice on their LinkedIn profiles, and then get feedback from another participant or facilitator before the next module.
- Involve Leaders or Sponsors: Involving the leaders keep the participant engaged and the leaders aligned, which re-reinforces the learning and committed to the outcomes.
- Learning Management System: Ensure your LMS is mobile responsive , this makes learning and retaining information easier for your learner. If you want your training content to stick, making it accessible and convenient, hence mobile.

Best Practice for Successful Virtual Sales Training

1. Practice and be comfortable with the right setup of technology and have a backup plan ready.
2. Approach virtual training as an opportunity
3. Make time to be human as you would in the room, use storytelling and be engaging.
4. Consider your modal mix and planned interaction.
5. Identify critical takeaways early and revisit often.
6. Do not just educate; you must entertain.

Why a Blend of Training and Coaching Works Best?

The forgetting curve is a mathematical formula created by Hermann Ebbinghaus in 1885. It demonstrates the rate at which information is forgotten over time if you do not reinforce it. Studies suggest that humans forget approx. 50% of new information within an hour of learning it and an average of 70% within 24 hours.

I worked with a publishing client's global sales country managers, helping them win high-value contracts.

I will not take on an engagement to transfer knowledge and skills and change behaviours unless the client is committed to a programme of re-enforcing skills and behaviours through (often online) coaching.

If you want knowledge, skills, and behaviours to stick, you need developmental training and coaching.

Increase in Productivity



The Benefits of Sales Coaching:

1. It improved talent and retention rates.
2. It is an opportunity to share best practice.
3. It maximises investment in sales training by embedding knowledge.
4. It increased confidence, self-awareness, customer centric relationships.

“Coaching is more than about achieving goals it is discovering the magnificence of who you are”.

You are more likely to get behaviour changes if the seller realises the cost to them of not changing behaviours and can see the benefits and outcomes of the coaching practice.

Coaching Practice

The frequency of coaching leads to better outcomes. Managers who coach regularly embed the practice within their organisation's culture. If you establish a specific time and cadence for the coach and seller to meet and formalised the structure, this will reinforce behaviours and the commitment to the coaching dynamic.

To make remote work successful for all parties involved, even if you do not have a fixed agenda for each check-in meeting, placing some time on the calendar can help reinforce workplace bonds and build trust between the seller and the manager.

Humanise Coaching

Whether you choose to meet monthly or weekly, always humanise the topics or themes for discussion to relate to the whole person, for example:

- Recent wins, becomes: what are you happy about? what can you change?
- On-going obstacles, becomes: What is bothering you? What barriers are you facing?
- Logistical concerns even if it is personal, like childcare, these things will block creativity and productivity.
- Overall employee progress, becomes on a scale of 1 to 10, where are you and why both personally and professionally? What do you need from me? How can I best support you?

Continually Build Rapport and Trust

People feel they are being listened to when they feel heard, which means they must do most of the talking and you do most of the listening, this builds rapport and trust.

I view a successful meeting whether client or colleague or employee when I have listened 80% of the time and talked 20%. This is especially true in coaching.

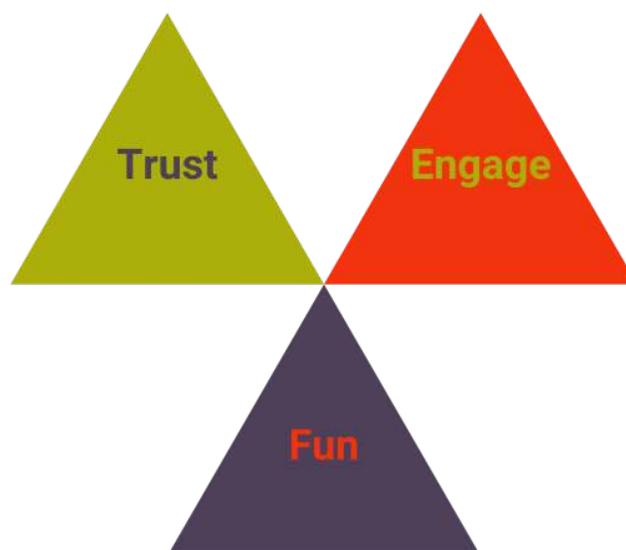
Ask sellers - What are their goals? What is important to them? What do they want to achieve? Make the coaching about the sellers; then their buy-in, is much higher. When you have their buy-in, their performance improvement will follow.

Make Coaching Activities Engaging and Fun

Focus on exciting and engaging coaching activities that promote skill retention and progressive improvement.

You must trust that your sellers want to grow their skills and provide them with engaging, participant-driven exercises, role-playing scenarios and gamification that encourage them to acquire new skills, think critically, problem-solve, and practice what they have learned and to build community with their peers.

A live or recorded observation is not possible; you can simulate activity and record a practice presentation with a team member playing the client's part. Then, review and feedback together.



Leverage Analytics

Every seller is uniquely different in their strengths and specific growth areas; therefore, a one-size-fits-all virtual sales coaching model is ineffective in helping each seller reach their full potential. Using a data-powered approach to virtual sales coaching can help to identify the specific areas for improvement. If sellers can gain confidence in their expertise and remote selling abilities, leading to higher performance, then use the methods that work for the seller. I would warn you against having an over-reliance on data; data is only one of many sources of information, so balance quantitative with qualitative.



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The Sales Leaders 12-Point Coaching Checklist:

1. Communication in the virtual world is critical to sharing values, vision, and goals and to engage sellers to see coaching as helpful.
2. Focus on the middle 60% for the most significant development gains. The bottom 20% will need a career review. The top 20% support them to remove barriers that prevent them from being most productive.
3. Learn each seller's drivers to use incentives effectively and give regular personal rewards.
4. Develop your coaching practices with supporting training and resources.
5. Focus on the one targeted area for improvement, and the specific behaviours, competencies, and performance objectives, for each coaching session. Coach the person, not the deal.
6. Leverage recordings, role-plays, always use video and continue to build rapport every session.
7. Leverage your entire sales team and identify your best practice heroes and sheros.
8. Deal with the difficult conversations, do not assume, ask 20% and listen 80% of the time.
9. Agree on the activity or practice for the learning development or next steps, each coaching session.
10. Provide more positive than negative feedback, be honest and fair.
11. Ask the coached to create the method of accountability and to commit to a timescale.
12. Dedicate consistent time for coaching.

The Pandemic has had a profound impact on business-to-business (B2B) sales operations. I urge you not to stop with the enhancement of technology but to investing in your sellers with developmental coaching. Customers' demands for digital interaction have increased, and so to the need for human-to-human authentic interaction, and this can make the difference between a win or lose in a virtual world.



Virtual Sales Coaching, Training, and Development

Resources

I know there has been a lot of information to absorb, so I have created a download to ensure you create training that is memorable and develop a coaching practice that keeps on delivering results. Go to <https://scaleyoursales.co.uk/> Checklist Virtual Training Coaching. Connect with my on LinkedIn Janice B Gordon, or any other network you prefer.

Do not forget to Listen, Rate and Review Scale your Sales Podcast on iTunes <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/scale-your-sales-podcast/id1480686554> or watch on my YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8DMnLfkC_IfPvXhWkIAVdJAYbFphI2RI

Other Resources

The [Gartner Future of Sales 2025](#) report predicts that 80% of B2B sales interactions will occur in digital channels.

Learning Management System: Ensure your LMS is [mobile responsive](#), this makes learning and retaining information easier for your learner.

The forgetting curve is a mathematical formula created by [Hermann Ebbinghaus](#) in 1885

[Studies](#) suggest that humans forget approx. 50% of new information within an hour of learning it and an average of 70% within 24 hours.

A [study from CSO Insights](#) reveals a correlation between quota attainment and coaching. When coaching skills exceed expectations, 94.8% of sellers meet quota.

Most organisations [rate sales coaching as one of the highest-impact activities](#) related to sales effectiveness investment.

About the Author



Midcap companies hire me, Janice B Gordon, The Customer Growth Expert, to help them re-imagine revenue growth through customer excellence and sales. My Scale Your Sales Podcast and framework develops leading-edge capabilities to secure, retain and grow key customer relationships for long-term value and partnership. I am a professional speaker and have been delivering keynotes, virtual interactive training, and masterclasses for over seven years.

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