

# Boosting Seller Productivity



An introduction to “Playbook-based Selling”  
by Volker Wiora, Founder & CEO of Linkando

**Increasing B2B sales complexity threatens the commercial goals of sales leaders. Digital playbooks capture an organization's best practices and sales techniques and provide them to sellers directly in their conventional sales tools, improving win rates and shortening sales cycles.**

## Key Takeaways

- ➔ B2B sellers struggle to adapt to the complexity of modern sales environments which drastically impacts businesses' win rates.
- ➔ Digital playbooks capture a company's proven best practices and sales techniques and provide them to every seller in the organization.
- ➔ For sales leaders, playbooks offer a way to standardize and scale proven processes and get more control of the sales cycle.
- ➔ Linkando Playbooks integrate with conventional sales tools like CRM systems, minimizing integration and onboarding time.
- ➔ Use cases across our customer base show double-digit improvements in win rates, churn prevention, sales cycle length and upselling revenues.

## Executive Summary

Remote buying teams, global competition, new technologies and increasing compliance requirements have made B2B selling more complex. Across today's sales organizations, 77% of sellers struggle to do their job efficiently<sup>1</sup>. Sellers face difficulties influencing buyer consensus, complex products require more knowledge, and sellers get buried in an ever-growing role with increasing responsibilities that make it harder for them to focus on their main job: Selling!

More training will not solve this challenge, as training successes are short-lived and only a fraction of the new knowledge translates into actual results. Instead, sales leaders need to enable sellers by introducing "tech as a teammate" - at Linkando we call this "Playbooks". Conventional sales playbooks have been around for decades; Linkando makes them available digitally and integrated with conventional sales tools like meeting software or CRM systems. You may think of Linkando Playbooks as an experienced coworker, that helps sellers navigate their everyday tasks from prospecting to selling to aftersales.

Digital playbooks provide sellers real-time guidance during their daily work, improving the output of high-value tasks such as customer meetings and reducing time spent on low-value tasks such as populating CRM systems. By capturing best practices across the sales department and making them available to all sellers, digital playbooks can transform even low performers into sales champions. On the management level, sales leaders can use the data resulting from digital playbook usage to standardize processes, facilitate knowledge transfer and get more control of the sales cycle.

Using digital playbooks results in better win rates, higher customer satisfaction, faster sales rep onboarding, lower churn rates, more cross- and upselling potential and more effective teamwork across departments. Linkando Playbooks significantly boost corporations' top and bottom line.

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<sup>1</sup> Gartner, 2023



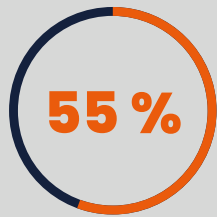
## The Challenge: Complexity Threatens Commercial Sales Goals

B2B sales has become much more complex over the past decade. Globalization has increased competition, new technologies are disrupting processes, shifting demographics and remote work have changed buying and selling behaviour. Current political crises force cost efficiency unseen for decades. The following challenges are direct results of this complexity:

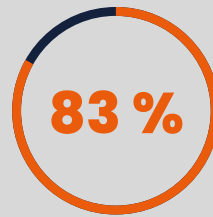
- ⌚ B2B buying centers have become intransparent and sellers lack understanding of their customers' requirements and how buying decisions are made. As a result, they lack the ability to influence buyer consensus.
- ⌚ More complex products require sellers to gather more in-depth product knowledge to the point where they often have to become technical specialists.
- ⌚ Internally, sellers are forced to take over tasks for which they have not been trained and which are not directly related to their sales targets.
- ⌚ Sellers are overwhelmed by an ever-increasing number of tools and processes in their day-to-day operations - you may have heard your sellers complain that it takes too much time populating CRM systems or filling in compliance forms.
- ⌚ Sellers struggle to adapt their sales skills to a remote work environment and they fail to keep up with fast-changing customer expectations.

As complexity rises, sellers hit their **ability barrier** and fail to reach their targets. Sales leaders and teams unable to navigate these challenges are suffering performance losses<sup>2</sup>.

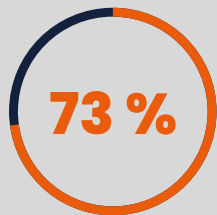
<sup>2</sup> Gartner, 2023



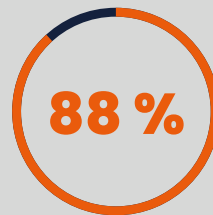
of buying groups experience moderate to high dysfunction



of sales leaders agree their sellers struggle to adapt to changing customer needs



lower likelihood of closing a high-quality deal due to buying complexity



of sales leaders say they need to find new ways to scale sellers' impact to meet revenue goals over the next 5 years

To address these challenges, sales leaders usually revert to either sales training or conventional sales tools like CRMs or lead generation platforms. But neither approach gets to the core of the problem. Training successes are mostly short-lived and only a fraction of the new knowledge translates into real results. 84% of all sales training is not retained by new hires<sup>3</sup>. Many conventional sales tools aim at reducing complexity but often have the opposite effect. They add complexity as sellers will have to deal with tool-related tasks that often add little value to the sales process - think of sellers recording compliance data in a CRM tool.

## Digital Playbooks: A New Approach to Improve Sales Productivity

As training and conventional sales tools rarely help sellers overcome their ability barriers, sales leaders are looking for a new approach. Our solution is called “**Linkando Playbooks**”, the first real-time, interactive digital playbook software in the market. Digital playbooks enable companies to leverage technology to provide sellers actionable guidance in real-time during their everyday work. At Linkando we use the term “tech as a teammate” to illustrate the difference to conventional sales tools. Instead of introducing yet another distracting sales tool, Linkando Playbooks support humans while using their existing range of sales solutions.

Digital playbooks add value at every step along the customer journey, such as prospecting, pitching, demos, sales meetings, onboarding and customer service sessions or follow-up meetings. You may think of digital playbooks like an experienced coworker that sits next to your sellers, and helps them get through their day by sharing experience and giving concrete instructions on what to do next. Digital playbooks also help sellers to consistently form and improve their habits, to ensure maximum sales success in the long term.

For example, businesses may use social media platforms like LinkedIn or Facebook to identify leads, video conferencing tools like Zoom or Microsoft Teams to educate and qualify leads and conduct sales meetings, CRM tools like Hubspot or Salesforce to document customer interactions, and software like Zendesk or ServiceNow to provide customer service. Linkando Playbooks are available inside all such tools through a smart browser and meeting solutions integration. Whenever your sellers use any of their conventional sales tools, Linkando Playbooks will be there and provide instructions.

<sup>3</sup> Zendesk, 2023



### Linkando's approach has the following goals:

- ➔ **Improve prospecting to drive high-value sales:** Marketers typically qualify leads according to subjective criteria and “gut feeling” rather than the objective scoring criteria provided by their organization, resulting in sellers pursuing leads that are no real opportunities. Sales leaders say that more than 50% of the leads they speak to never had a genuine buying interest in their product or service<sup>4</sup>. Playbooks significantly improve lead qualification by giving marketers and SDRs objective lead scoring criteria during lead interactions.
- ➔ **Actionable guidance during remote customer meetings:** As virtual selling is still a relatively new trend that has accelerated suddenly during the pandemic, employees have not yet been given the right tools and techniques to adapt their real life skills to virtual selling. 75% of sales reps believe they sell better live than virtually<sup>5</sup>. Digital playbooks provide real-life guidance during remote customer meetings that enable fast and sustainable performance improvements through structured customer interactions.
- ➔ **Focus on human core skills:** Conventional sales tools are cumbersome to maintain and sales reps spend too much time on documentation. Our solution automates routine tasks such as sales script generation or routine CRM entries to free up sellers’ resources, enabling them to focus on human core competencies. Higher quality CRM information also facilitates better collaboration across departments.
- ➔ **Automation creates scalable processes:** Automation makes processes more scalable. Yet, you cannot automate something until you clearly define it. Playbooks allow you to structure your processes in an optimal way and then roll them out to your sales team.
- ➔ **Standardization gives more control to sales leaders:** Sales leaders can use playbooks to define best practices and set the standard for their entire team, giving them more control while helping sellers improve their performance.

<sup>4</sup> Zendesk, 2023

<sup>5</sup> Allego, 2021

## What Users Say

Businesses using Linkando Playbooks are confirming that Playbook-based Selling achieves significant performance improvements. On average, we observe the following improvements across our customer base:

- ➔ **Conversion rates:** Using objective lead scoring, marketers reduce time spent on creating high quality leads and increase their conversion rates by 30%.
- ➔ **Shorter sales cycles:** Optimized customer journey playbooks shorten sales cycles for complex products by 25%.
- ➔ **Churn prevention:** A structured customer experience and highly educated after-sales personnel reduce churn rates by 20%.
- ➔ **Win rates:** Playbook-based Selling ensures sellers use proven sales techniques and have in-depth product knowledge, increasing win rates by 30%.
- ➔ **Up- and cross-selling:** Sales guidance enables sellers to cross-sell different products to their existing clients, increasing cross-selling revenue by 20%.

*As Linkando we believe in "Eat your own dog food" so were our own first early adopter. From the beginning, Linkando Playbooks has increased our win rate by 50% and shortened our sales cycle from 9 months to 4 months. Our solution revolutionizes the way sales enablement leaders can capture best practices and provide them to their entire team with one mouse click.*

**Volker Wiora, Founder & CEO at Linkando**

## Contact Us

Linkando is Germany's leading provider of AI-enabled digital playbook technology. Among our customers and partners are multinational corporations such as Deutsche Telekom, Zoom and SAP as well as small and medium-sized businesses. If you wonder if Linkando Playbooks can bring your company's sales success to the next level, contact us at <https://linkando.com/kontakt-whitepaper-0124/>.

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