

Traditional sales coaching *falls short*.

Here's why (and what to do about it).



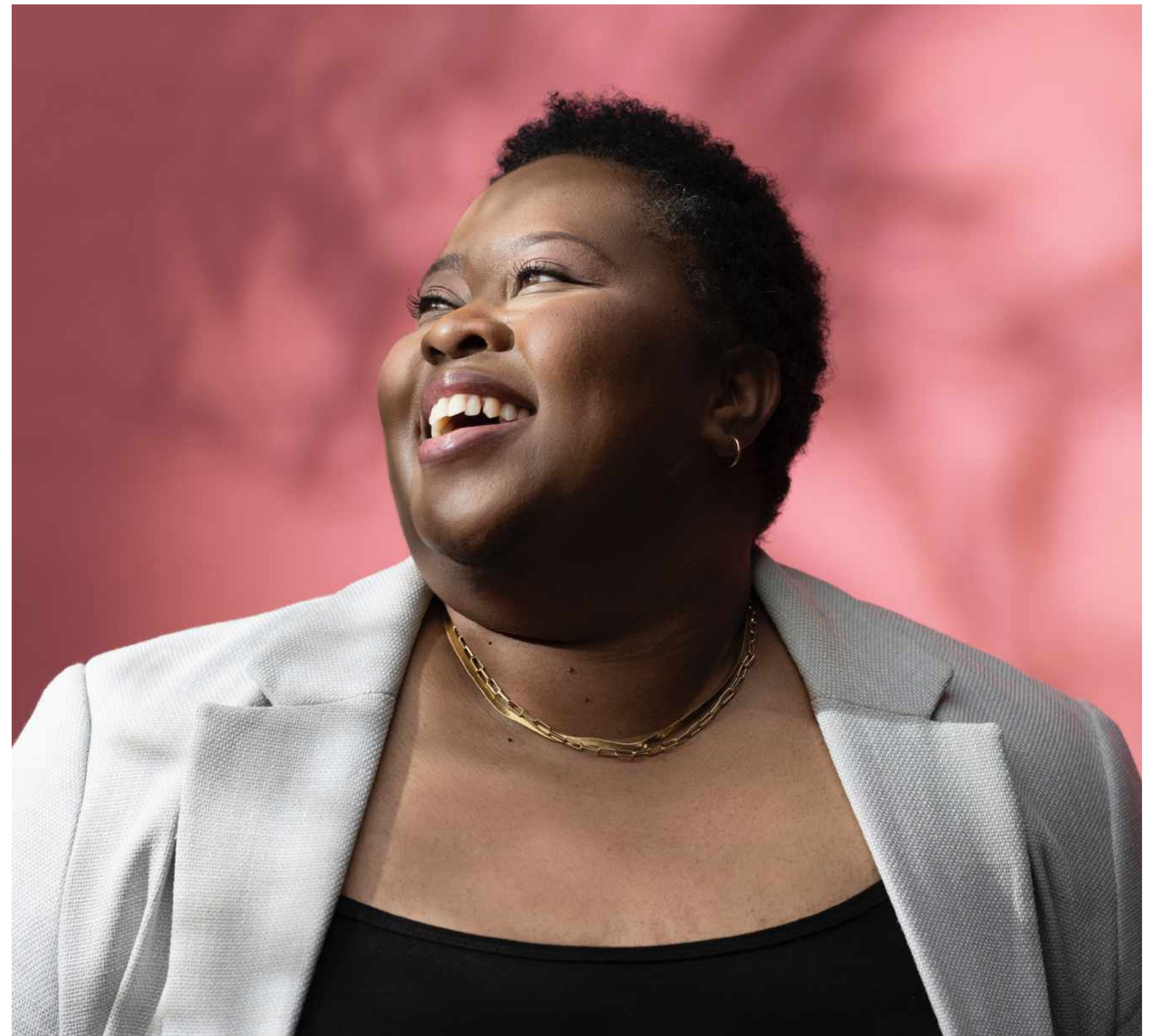
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Challenges facing sales teams today

Every company wants to unlock sales performance, but today's sales leaders work in a challenging environment for hiring, retaining staff, and maintaining productivity. Throughout 2021, the U.S. saw the highest quit rates ever, with over 4 million people leaving their jobs in December. An analysis by Gartner reveals that every salesperson who leaves costs the sales leader 7.5 months of productivity.¹

To retain and support reps, sales leaders have tried various approaches such as adding AI-driven sales enablement tools, training in new sales methodologies, and upleveling existing training efforts. But a new tool or training is not always the best solution: Gartner research finds that B2B sales reps forget 70% of the information they learn within a week of training, and 87% will forget it within a month.² It takes time to assimilate learning, and consistent reinforcement is required to turn new approaches into new behaviors that generate higher sales.

Building a coaching culture is another approach to supporting sales teams and improving retention. But it's more complicated than it sounds: sales managers' schedules quickly fill up with things like account planning, deal reviews, and forecasting; tactical activities like territory planning and CRM hygiene; and jumping in as a super seller to close deals. That leaves little time left over for the effort needed to cultivate a culture shift.



87%

of individual contributors in a sales function report interest in spending time with a coach.

55%

of sales reps report receiving no coaching from their manager in the past 12 months.

Even though coaching is an effective solution to improving sales performance, only 42% of sales reps report managers at their organization are accountable for providing good coaching.³

To top it off, not everyone agrees on how exactly to define coaching in a sales context. In this guide, we'll demystify coaching for sales and present a coaching solution that's been proven to improve sales performance from the inside out.

¹ Gartner, The Greatest Sales Risk is the Great Resignation, 2021

² Gartner, The Evolution of Sales Training and Coaching Technology, 2019

³ Gartner, Gartner Research Shows Only 23% of B2B Sales Reps Say They Are Equally Effective Selling Virtually as They Are in Person, 2021

Where traditional
sales coaching
falls short

1

Sales coaching is an essential part of a salesperson's development. Sales team members need to learn how to communicate core offerings, handle objections, and progress deals. Managers often provide what they believe to be coaching in weekly 1:1s, ride-alongs or joint calls, but all they typically do is give feedback based on their recent observations in a presentation or deal review. Many external vendors offer much of the same with an even narrower focus — reviewing sales calls and providing feedback on tactics — not the kind of live coaching that can drive lasting behavior change and increased performance.

A study by Allego found that 80% of sales leaders say coaching is the difference between success and failure.⁴ If that's true, then why do 55% of sales reps report receiving zero coaching in the last 12 months?⁵

A BetterUp analysis found that sales scores were significantly lower than other functions on measures of Coaching Culture. It's not because salespeople don't want coaching — in fact, they are quicker to adopt coaching than non-sales professionals because of its real-world value. The problem with traditional sales coaching is that it's not the kind of coaching that salespeople need.

Traditional sales coaching focuses on tactical issues and deal reviews. This leaves little time for the kind of coaching that actually unlocks performance, like helping the seller uncover any obstacles that prevent deal closure and quota attainment.

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Sales managers often earn their promotions by being star sellers, which means they may find it easier to teach direct reports to do things as they would (the “mini-me” syndrome). This approach works well for navigating systems and understanding products, but when it comes to communicating with prospects and closing deals, each seller has to adopt best practices to match their unique style. Not only that, each seller has unique skills, background experiences, and mindsets that influence their selling approach, making some behaviors that seem easy for one seller difficult for another.

“Coaching sales reps is about clarifying relevant behaviors and whether the issue is motivation or ability. Some reps may work hard, but lack certain capabilities while others demonstrate capability but seemingly lack motivation or effort. Good coaching helps to clarify the issues, and lets both manager and rep then concentrate on behaviors that can be improved.⁶”

In short, telling a rep what to do is not the same as connecting them with their motivations. And even though sales managers may receive training on a coaching model, it's difficult to reinforce those learnings so that they become embedded in daily behaviors.

To coach effectively, managers need to be coached themselves — not just on skills and tactics, but on the behaviors that allow them to bring out the best in their team. **A different approach to coaching is needed to truly activate the potential that lies dormant in each seller. At BetterUp, we call this Sales Performance Coaching.**

⁴ Allego - Virtual Sales Coaching: How Sales Training Has Changed

⁵ BetterUp - Internal Study on Sales Function

⁶ Harvard Business Review - Avoid one-size-fits-all approach to sales coaching, 2021



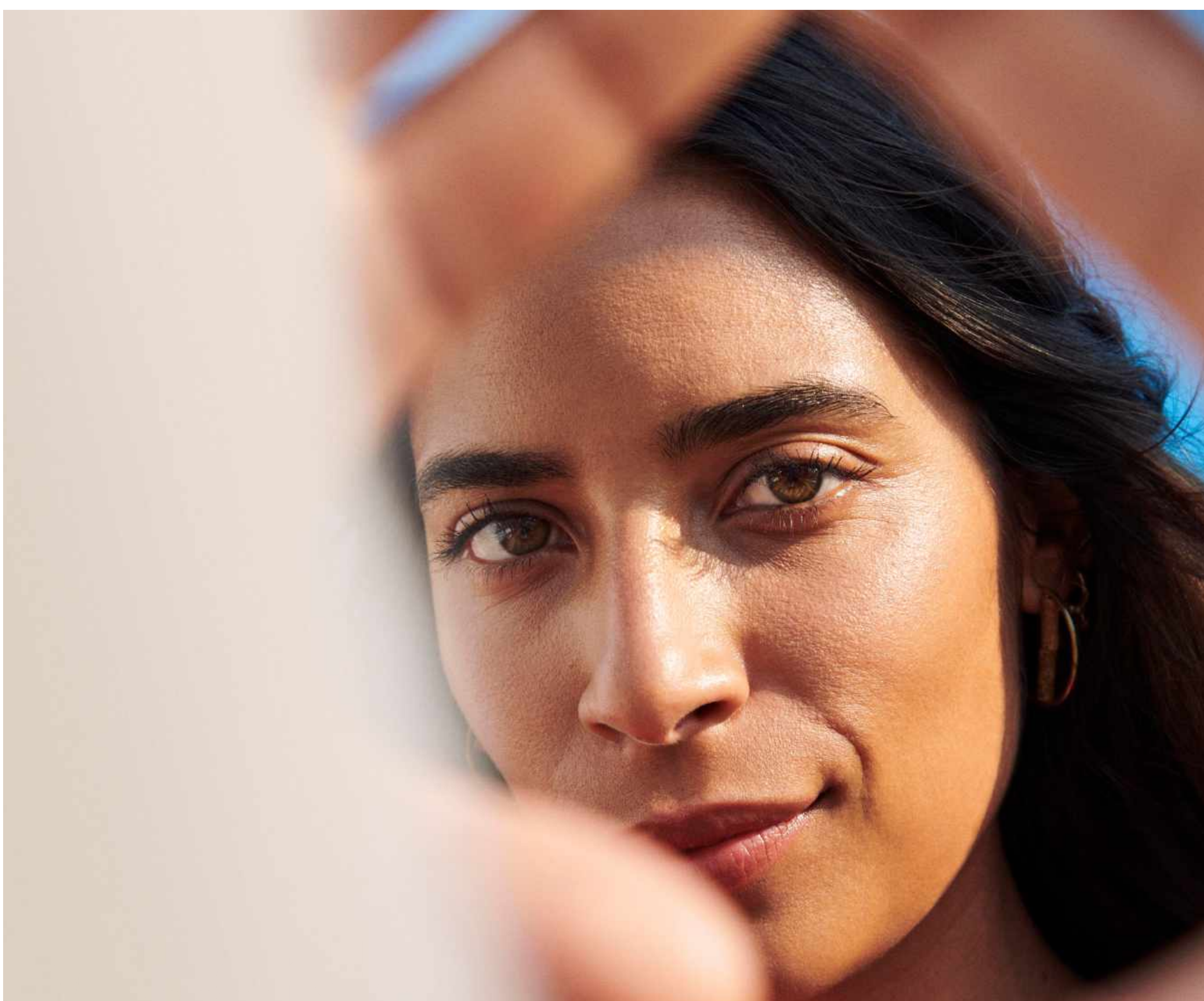
Sales performance coaching: defined



All BetterUp coaching is based on our Whole Person™ Model, a validated assessment that measures the mindsets and behaviors that are proven to drive performance, well-being, and strong company culture. We also know that salespeople are entirely different from their colleagues in other functions and have nuanced needs to support their development, growth, and goal attainment. In addition to the WPM assessment, BetterUp Sales Performance coaching was developed to build and strengthen the key sales mindsets that science says organizations can use to build a winning sales culture.

Every BetterUp Sales Performance Coach is certified by the International Coaching Federation (ICF), a nonprofit that serves as the main accrediting and credentialing body for training programs and coaches worldwide. This skilled third-party Coach understands sales challenges because they've also been there themselves. Each of our Coaches has prior experience as a sales exec, sales leader, or rep. This blend of sales background and professional training means BetterUp Sales Performance Coaches not only profoundly understand sales — they can coach to the Whole Person and provide insight on tactics and techniques through motivation, influence, and resilience that drive results.

Sales Performance Coaches can offer direct, ongoing, and focused support without the distractions of tactical issues that usually occur in 1:1 meetings with a supervisor. In contrast to group training sessions for managers on coaching models, this 1:1 interaction addresses the highest-priority needs of each person to help them achieve the organizational goals.



Sales Performance Coaching offers 1:1 interactions with certified Coaches who provide sales staff with a customized path for developing the mindsets and behaviors proven to drive sales performance.

Sales Performance Coaching in practice



Whole Person™ capabilities applied to sales

Data from thousands of coaching sessions with sales professionals have given BetterUp a wealth of insight on the capabilities that sales team members need most to thrive and inspire others. We have identified seven key capabilities that show particular impact for sales professionals:

Inspiring capabilities			
Capability	What it is	Benefit to sales	Seller mindset
Empowerment	The extent to which we enable others to make decisions and control how they manage their work.	Enable others to operate in ways that are aligned with their natural abilities.	<i>My team is empowered to meet sales goals in the way that best suits each person.</i>
Alignment	The ability to coordinate people and provide feedback to ensure everyone is working towards a common goal.	Sales leaders effectively rally and respond to their teams, sales ICs effectively manage those involved in deals.	<i>I know how to get everyone on board to close more deals.</i>
Relationship building	Developing trusting personal relationships with co-workers.	Help with value selling, to build relationships internally and with prospects.	<i>I know how to build trust with prospects. Co-workers trust me and are inspired by my example.</i>
Thriving capabilities			
Cognitive agility	The ability to shift thinking quickly to adapt to the demands of the situation.	Navigate quickly changing best practices, product updates, marketplace developments, and stakeholders.	<i>I know how to shift gears and adapt when something new comes at me.</i>
Emotional regulation	The ability to effectively manage our emotional states, particularly when emotions run high.	Manage stress, manage high-stakes deals, bounce back after a deal loss.	<i>I can stay positive and look toward the future. I know how to recover after a deal loss.</i>
Focus	The ability to ignore distractions, cancel noise, and sustain attention on one task.	Prioritize tasks and manage interruptions. Work more efficiently, allowing more time for high-value work.	<i>I can easily focus and do the work that matters most. I can set boundaries for others to support me in getting work done.</i>
Strategic planning	The ability to clarify where you want to be in the future and create a clear plan for how to get there.	Salespeople have an actionable plan to reach revenue goals.	<i>I know how to manage my time so that I meet my quota. I know what I need to do to help myself and my team get there.</i>

Sales leaders set the tone for their teams. Teams can suffer if a management conflict or personal dilemma impacts a leader's ability to stay positive. Leaders equipped with capabilities like emotional regulation, cognitive agility, and focus are not only better equipped to empower and align their teams to achieve high performance — they thrive themselves.

Conversely, BetterUp member data show that when sales managers are not thriving, it leads to a it leads to a **23% decline** in team performance and **13% increase** in team turnover.

Equipping individual sales professionals with the capabilities strengthened by Sales Performance Coaching enables them to be more efficient and effective at work. A focus on strengthening critical behaviors like strategic planning, focus, and emotional regulation builds the foundation for high performance in the long term. Sales Performance Coaching works across the employee spectrum by helping new, up-and-coming, and experienced team members alike cut through the noise of the tools, products, methodologies, and changes to truly grow into a high performer who is engaged, empowered, and energized to excel every day.

Compared to a one-size-fits-all training, Sales Performance Coaching is tailored to each salesperson, allowing them to develop the exact behaviors they need to unlock performance.



Results

A BetterUp study that compared results for coached and uncoached sales managers at one organization showed that the coached managers had a

60%

increase in their team members' who achieved quota.

\$10M

The coached managers achieved \$10 million more in additional bookings than non-coached managers in just one quarter.

24%

The coached team saw overall productivity gains of 24%, with a 24% gain in Focus and a 16% gain in Strategic Planning.

Salespeople are uniquely valuable to any organization for their ability to drive revenue and their presence during interactions with prospects, customers, and potential future employees. Supporting sales teams to thrive and inspire those around them is a win for the entire organization.

Learn more about how BetterUp Sales Performance Coaching can unlock performance for your entire sales team.

Schedule a demo

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