

EBOOK

# Mastering the 3 Cs of Effective Sales Training

How to Enable Sales Teams to be Always Ready and Always On



 **Qstream**®



## The 3 Cs of Effective Sales Training

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## Sales Learning And Development Investments are on the Rise

A well-trained sales team is the most powerful weapon for driving corporate growth, which is why more and more companies are doubling down on sales training programs.

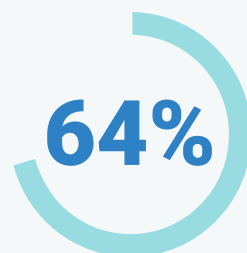
But, employees are also driving the increased demand for training. Today, most employees (65%) expect training and career guidance from their employers.<sup>1</sup>

As a result, learning and development is now viewed as a must-have investment that should be linked directly to proven knowledge attainment and mastery, and improved business performance rather than a nice-to-have that only shows course completion.

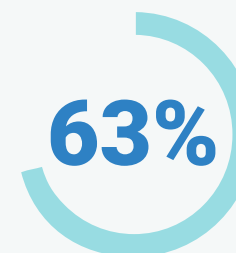
However, 81% of firms say the amount of sales training and development they provide is too little, and 63% of firms expect to increase sales learning and development (L&D) spend over the next three years.

Still, an astonishing 64% of firms say sales training is not as effective as it could be.<sup>2</sup>

## Emerging Sales L&D Trends



Say sales training is not as effective as it could be.



Next, 63% will increase spend on Sales L&D in the next three years.

So the million dollar question is...  
**How does sales training need to change to be more effective and drive revenue?**

To combat this, most firms are increasing their spend on sales L&D, and more than 92% of firms will undergo substantial changes in strategy, structure, and value delivery models over the next three years.<sup>3</sup>

If sales training is to be effective, firms must find new learning models that fit with a salesperson's short attention span, feed their hunger for the latest sales knowledge, and minimize time out of the field or away from customers.

# Why is Sales Training Ineffective?

## But More Sales Training Doesn't Mean Better Sales Training

Just because more budget is being spent on sales training doesn't mean sales teams are being effectively trained or retaining information.

In fact, 67% of chief learning officers (CLOs) report feeling under pressure to measure the impact of corporate and sales learning programs and prove sales readiness.<sup>1</sup>

And that means effective training that has lasting impact on sales knowledge retention is everything.

Training challenges arise because most sales training programs have a lot of information crammed into a small amount of time and may not reinforce information over the coming days, weeks, or months so that it is retained long term.

Additionally, too many firms are focusing on one-off training events. Only 27% of firms emphasize continuous delivery, a proven method to increase sales training effectiveness and ensure sales readiness.<sup>2</sup>

### Research reveals that most firms are only able to effectively train for three primary sales training topics:

- Products and services offered (66% of firms)
- Delivering value to customers (57%)
- Communicating specific sales messages (52%)<sup>2</sup>



## The Forgetting Curve's Impact

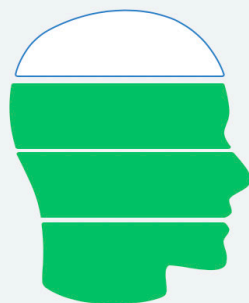
Forgetting is a natural, physiological occurrence and must also be factored into the sales training process.

Research has proven that in as little as 31 days, people forget 79% of what they've learned, also known as the Forgetting Curve.<sup>4</sup>

Complicating matters further, a large majority of firms (80%) provide training that is mostly or entirely the same for all salespeople, even though research shows customized learning and development produces better individual results.<sup>5</sup>

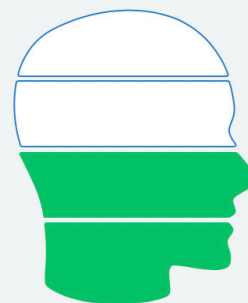
Additionally, our research revealed that 65% of sales objectives training is led solely by management (55%) or salespersons (10%). Just 35% is led by a joint effort between management and salespeople.<sup>5</sup>

## The Learning Loss Challenge



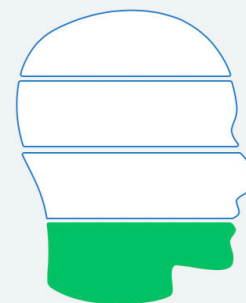
AFTER 20 MINUTES

**42%**  
of learning is lost



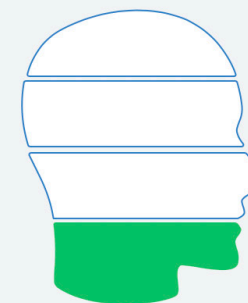
AFTER 24 HOURS

**67%**  
of learning is lost



AFTER 31 DAYS

**79%**  
of learning is lost



AFTER 60 DAYS

**90%**  
of learning is lost

### Simply put: Current sales training is ...

- Activity based and not designed in the way a sales brain learns or retains information
- Integral to sales performance, but the direct link to quota attainment is hard to track
- Too disjointed, generic, and infrequent

**This ebook is designed to help sales managers and learning leaders design more effective sales training programs with the three Cs: Collaboration, Customization, and Continuous Delivery.**

## What is the solution for designing high performing sales training programs?

Recent research from the Sales Management Association about emerging practices in sales training and development reveals three common traits of sales programs that result in high sales performance.<sup>6</sup>

### The Three Cs of Effective Sales Training



**Collaboration:** Sales management and salespeople working together to identify training needs and set learning goals.

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Firms that develop training objectives through manager and salesperson collaboration outperform other firms. Their overall sales training effectiveness is 9% higher than other firms; their sales objective achievement is 16% higher than other firms.



**Customization:** Personalizing training to a salesperson's job can drive better customer engagement in the sales process.

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Firms that emphasize customized training have overall sales training effectiveness ratings 40% higher than peers, and firm sales objective achievement 22% higher.



**Continuous Delivery:** Training repeated over and over so knowledge, skills, and behaviors are better retained and recalled before interacting with the customer.

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Firms emphasizing continuous delivery of training and development content outperform other firms, with 21% greater sales objective achievement and 35% more effective sales training overall.

# 1 Collaboration

Training design needs to be a two-way, cross-functional process if it is to be effective.

However, many organizations forge ahead with traditional top-down training initiatives and create programs based on what sales management thinks are the most critical training topics and needs, versus what sales reps and managers actually need, or by modelling the knowledge and skills of the most successful reps.

This “delta” causes a disconnect between sales teams and sales management in what they deem is needed to be sales ready, leading to training that lacks relevance and as a result can be viewed as a sheer waste of time, money, and resources.



*“The fact that we achieved such high engagement with Qstream is a testament to how much our reps enjoyed the challenges and the friendly competition fueled by leaderboards. In fact, reps would often ask me when the next challenge was starting.”*

- TDS Telecom Case Study

Collaborating on the sales training topics engages top sales performers, cross-departmental stakeholders (marketing, product, customer support, etc.), and senior management.

By co-creating cross-functional goals that everybody can support, sales training and reinforcement initiatives inevitably create two-way accountability to drive sales revenue.

It also demonstrates trust by showing sales reps that their voices are heard, which continues to foster collaboration.



# 1 Collaboration

## Data-Driven Collaboration

Collaboration shouldn't be a totally subjective exercise that is only facilitated through discussion or other qualitative feedback. When in the design stage, managers can use microlearning as a tool to inform the content and topics that should be reinforced in the final program.

This data becomes a very powerful set of learning analytics, which, when overlaid with performance data from a CRM or sales performance system, can help sales management model the sales knowledge and skill sets of top performers.

Equally, by identifying proficiency gaps of middle or lower performers at a granular level, setting training and development goals becomes more of a science than a guess.

### Microlearning uncovers sales knowledge gaps and weaknesses in sales skills in order to fully understand:

- What sales reps and sales managers know (or don't)
- What learning they don't engage with
- What training will have the most impact on sales performance





## Collaborative Coaching and Goal Setting

Microlearning also provides a transparent set of real-time engagement and proficiency data that can identify immediate coaching opportunities for sales managers to collaborate with their team on and positively affect performance now.

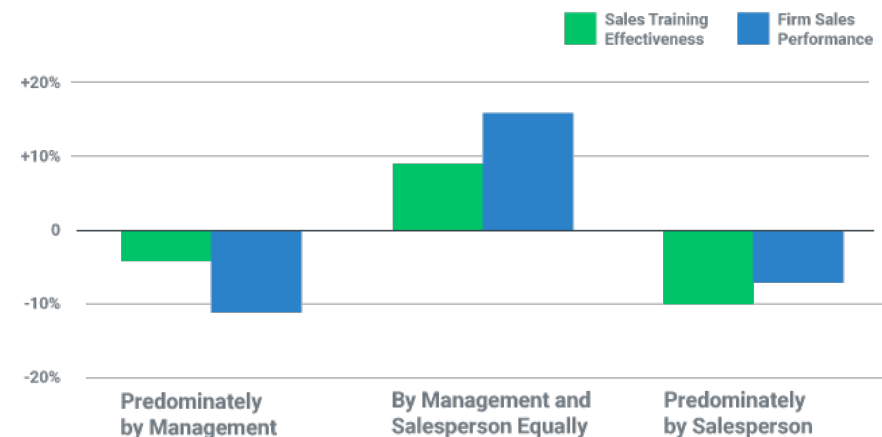
Providing hard evidence of training needs and knowledge gaps to senior sales leadership and their cross-departmental peers encourages organization-wide buy-in on a common set of sales learning goals, which can set the foundation for long-term sales success.

Some organizations are even formalizing this through internal sales micro-certification programs that set sales goals, sales knowledge thresholds to attain, and then assess each individual against that threshold to be sure they are sales ready.

Cross-functional and in-team collaboration, coupled with data-driven insights, effectively engages teams from every touchpoint along the customer journey and drives sales revenue by setting collective goals that each stakeholder can support. The end result is more effective training programs and increased company-wide learning engagement rates.

## Method of Determining Sales Learning Objectives and its Correlation with Training Effectiveness and Sales Performance

Variance in Rated Performance or Effectiveness



Method of Determining Salesperson Learning Objectives: N=92

*As this chart shows, sales training is most effective when management and salespeople collaborate.<sup>6</sup>*

## 2 Customization

Because sales managers are busy reporting and supporting their teams, organizations often fall into the trap of creating a single sales development plan without customizing it to fit the needs of individual sales reps.

Just 8% of firms fully customize training to the salesperson and 12% use generic and customized training in roughly equal proportions.<sup>2</sup>

But no two situations or salespeople are the same and not everyone takes the exact same knowledge with them after onboarding, sales meetings, sales training, or weekly sales calls.

It's absolutely necessary to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of your salespeople and focus on coaching, remediation, and further training where it is needed most for each individual.



The most effective sales training reinforcement programs are:

- Specific to the company, product, and service being sold
- Highly relevant to the individual salesperson's job role and the demands of the customers they are selling to
- Necessary to make sales training stick

*“We have highly experienced salespeople, some that are newer to their careers, and Qstream’s appeal spanned the spectrum, which was very impressive.”*

- Euler Hermes Case Study

### Resist Generic, Cookie-Cutter Approaches

The process shouldn't waste time on generic skills that salespeople already know.

Rather it must constantly reinforce must-know product information, soft skills, sales processes, and messaging to help with the decay of knowledge over time and fill knowledge and skill gaps until mastered.

Customizing the learning experience encompasses all aspects of the sales training experience – the content, design, and delivery.

It's up to firms to adapt and deliver job-related training content to meet their sales reps' needs, training time requirements, attention spans, and to cut through the noise to focus on the most important information they need to know today.

## 2 Customization

Focusing on an individual salesperson's training needs and meeting them with a customized learning program will give them the confidence they know their trade and are sales ready.

Modern learning approaches — like best-practice microlearning — provide real-time learning opportunities in the daily flow of work that enable training to be reinforced, measured, and quickly customized as needed.

### When designing custom sales training programs, ask yourself:

- How can engagement be guaranteed so learning happens in the first place?
- Is the content formatted to suit the delivery channel e.g. mobile?
- Is it company, product, customer, and job role specific?
- Is there a base understanding of what sales reps know today and what they don't?
- Are training outcomes measurable and can it be correlated to the impact on performance?
- Is the sales process aligned with a targeted customer audience?



# 2 Customization

## Measuring Sales Proficiency

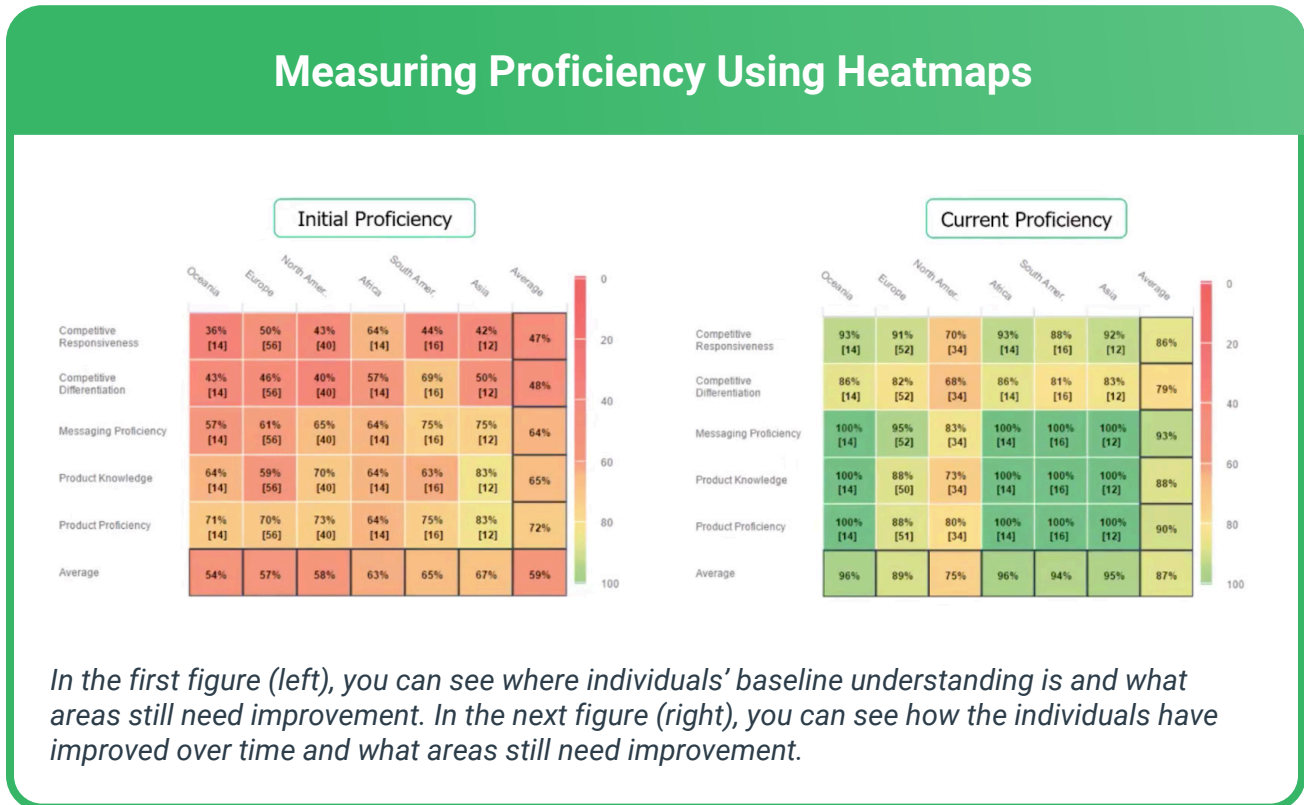
The first figure (left) shows how regional sales cohorts performed on an initial microlearning assessment and what sales training topics the scenario-based questions related to.

This can be run as a formal program or a formalized micro-certification program that sets a proficiency threshold to master the custom sales knowledge and skills to be deemed sales ready for the organization.

The next figure (right) shows results from a later round of microlearning, a breakdown of how employees performed, and what parts of training the questions relate to.

As you can see, most employees improved greatly over time. Yet there are still regional cohorts and sales training topics that need attention to get them up to speed.

Through data-rich metrics – like proficiency heatmaps and engagement levels – you can tell where employees are excelling and where there’s room for improvement.



# 3 Continuous Delivery

Research shows it takes roughly nine to twelve months to train a new sales rep. The longer the sales onboarding program delays time to value, the more money it costs (in training budget and real revenue terms), which ultimately depletes resources that could be used in other areas, or worse, risk the rep missing their first year quota.

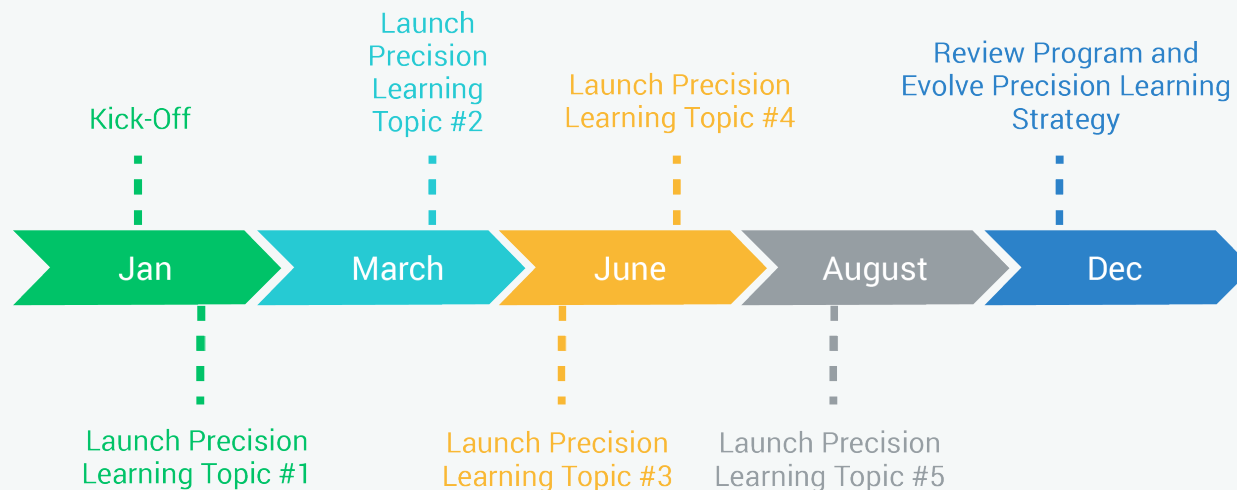
It is unreasonable to expect anyone to recall all the information imparted on them during sales onboarding and be sales ready when they get back to their desk.

Sales reps are human and benefit from tried and tested post-sales onboarding reinforcement to help them retain the most important knowledge.

To complicate matters, markets, customers, sales processes, competitors, and products change continuously.



## Continuous Microlearning Timeline



Expecting sales reps to have the agility needed to deliver on ever-changing critical business messages is unrealistic if updates are given through often forgettable, one-off training sessions, emails, or weekly sales calls.

Continuous sales training, and even sales re-certification, is vital to stay nimble, up to date, and to be successful.

Creating a structured continuous learning program that delivers training in the daily workflow is scientifically proven to beat the learning curve and have lasting impact on performance.

Training tied to a single event correlates with the poorest performance when it comes to sales knowledge retention.<sup>6</sup>

# 3 Continuous Delivery

To successfully implement a continuous training strategy, organizations should keep business objectives and timing top of mind to ensure they're delivering the right information at the right time.

When incorporating continuous reinforcement, training should be repetitive, social, and competitive to keep learners engaged, up-to-date, and perpetually sales ready.

Instant feedback in combination with consistent continuous knowledge reinforcement of the latest concepts and information is key to driving high workforce performance.<sup>7</sup>

With Qstream's mobile microlearning, sales training is "pushed" to employees anywhere, on any device. The push delivers a targeted message that hones in on the most important information for consumption at times likely for high engagement.

*"The significant increase in proficiency resulting from Qstream certainly exceeded our initial expectations. It was clear that Qstream had a strong effect on fluency, providing higher ROI for our training investments and positioning our MSLs to have the conversations that drive adoption of our first-in-class therapies."*

- Avanir Pharmaceuticals Case Study

## Make It Easy



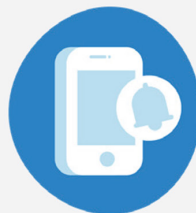
Break training content into bite-sized, scenario based challenges

## Make It Stick



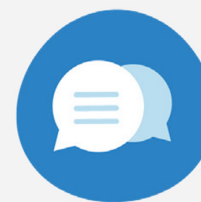
Use a proven methodology to improve knowledge, advance skills, and change on-the-job behavior

## Make It Mobile



Reduce training costs and reduce training time

## Make It Engaging



Keep people engaged with game mechanics, peer socialization, and personalized coaching

## Make It Measurable



Use proficiency as a measure for ROI and identify gaps to inform further training initiatives

## Put the 3 Cs In Motion

Because sales is a revenue center, companies often invest heavily in sales training program advancements. As a result, sales training programs are leading the way in the broader learning and development community with advanced methodology and technology-enabled learning platforms like best-practice microlearning.

Best-practice microlearning results in long-term knowledge retention and reinforces critical skills and behaviors in minutes a day with measurable impact on sales performance.

### Get Learners' Attention

A push notification (in the form of a learning challenge) is delivered to a person's mobile device.

### Present a Precision-Learning Challenge

The learning scenario is framed as a challenge to engage the user.

### Deliver Responses

Learners know the right answer immediately after they submit their response, correct or incorrect.

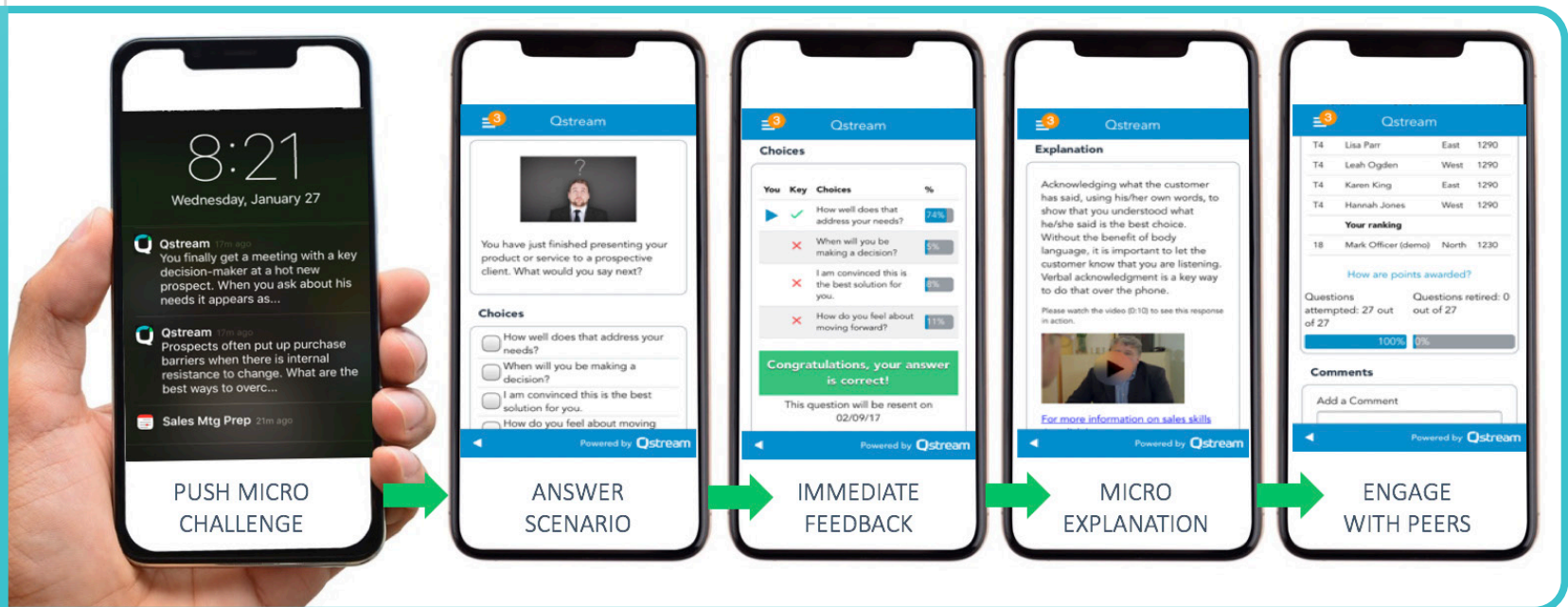
### Reinforce Knowledge

Regardless of the learners' response, they receive immediate knowledge reinforcement on the subject.

### Friendly Competition

Gamification engages learners, encourages competition, and creates transparency into the progress of individuals, cohorts, and the organization as a whole. Leaderboards are valuable to illustrate real-time who's participating and how they're doing.

## Learning in the Flow of Work



## Collaboration

Qstream is designed to be collaborative. Its flexible scenario-based microlearning model allows sales managers to collaboratively develop goals with their sales teams and enables stakeholders to positively influence their course study based on current and expected knowledge attainment.

## Customization

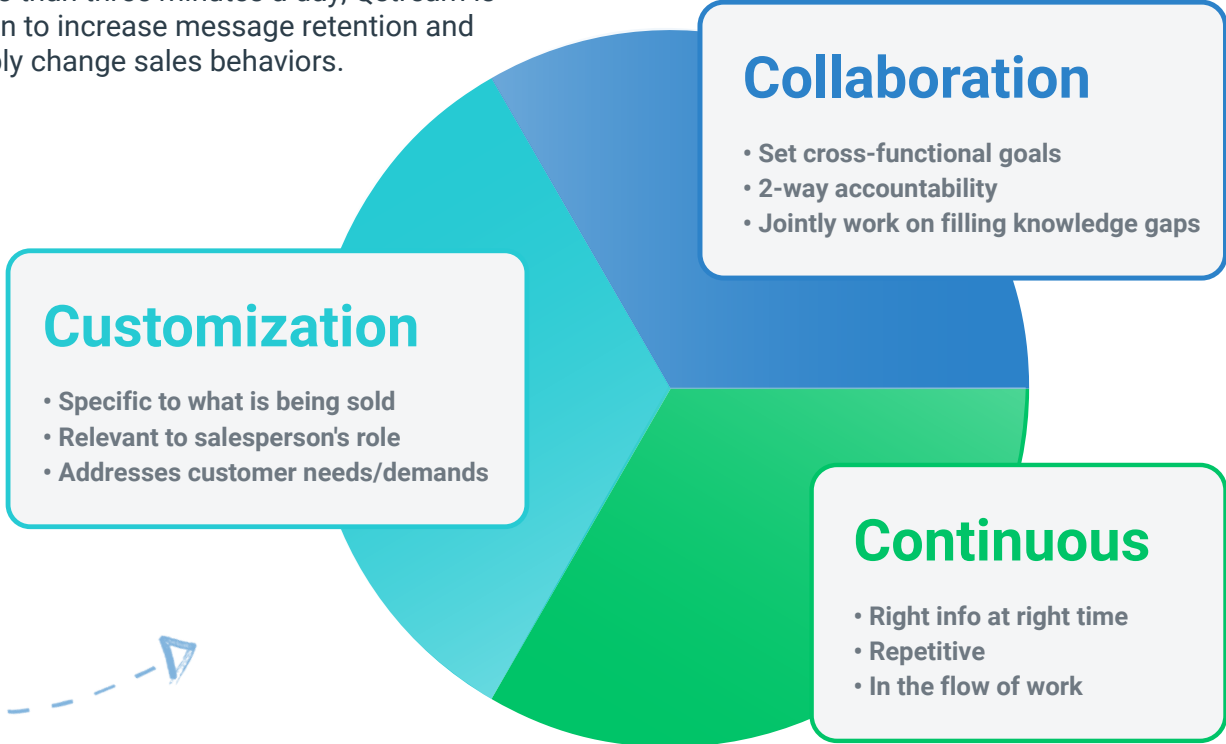
Qstream's proficiency heatmap shows detailed analytical information about the areas where sales reps are thriving and the areas where more training is needed (and everywhere in between).

This not only helps identify areas for improvement — and allows training to be customized to do so — but it helps measure how effective current training might be according to teams'/employees' answers over time. This data intel can be used to continuously hone the quality and impact of sales training programs and content.

## Continuous

Qstream is based around the continuous delivery of guided learning. Sales managers decide what type of job-related content sales reps receive. (If they've mastered a topic, for instance, you no longer have to deliver that type of content. But if they're struggling on a particular subject, you can give them more information on it.)

In less than three minutes a day, Qstream is proven to increase message retention and durably change sales behaviors.





## Micro-Certification that Makes Learning Stick

Certification is an essential component of many training programs. It ensures that companies are in compliance with a number of issues, ranging from external regulations, required job skills, important company updates, and many other requisite needs.

Following this model, organizations usually document that people complete the exercise versus assessing if employees actually understand and learn what they need to about the subject in question.

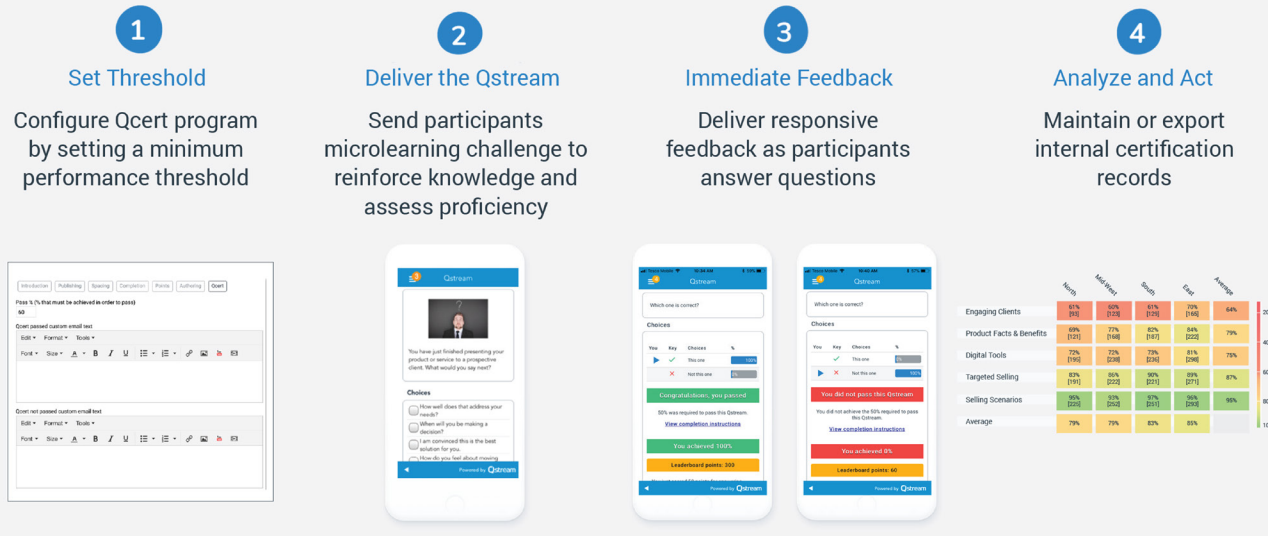
But certification should be about both: confirming that someone has attained a required proficiency threshold and knowledge reinforcement and learning.

Qstream recognized this problem and developed Qcert, a re-certification program embedded into the microlearning program that ensures a collaborative, customized, and continuous process.

## Here's how it works:

- 1 Combines power of knowledge reinforcement with the ability to certify that a learner has achieved a requisite level of proficiency on a given subject based on configurable threshold levels.
- 2 Uses microlearning challenges and knowledge reinforcement to ensure the long-term retention of knowledge and proficiency gain as part of the process.
- 3 Engages learners at an average of 93% participation rate to drive timely completion of an assessment process, including reporting on results and, when necessary, prescribing additional training as a result.
- 4 Delivers reports that demonstrate the performance readiness of the team or areas of risk.

### The Qcert Workflow



## How Does Qstream Engage, Reinforce, Analyze?



### ENGAGE SALES REPS

The success of your sales training program starts with engaging sales reps, teams, and managers in the learning experience ... in a way that isn't overwhelming or disruptive to valuable selling time.



### REINFORCE SALES SKILLS

Deliver must-have sales knowledge and skills in the way the sales brain learns for long-term knowledge retention – through spaced repetition of minutes-a-day scenario-based Q&A challenges.



### BOOST SALES PERFORMANCE

Analyze individual or team engagement and proficiency against sales performance metrics and training topics to expose a real-time view of sales readiness and identify precision training and coaching opportunities.



## Drive Sales Results

Easy to use and easy to install, Qstream's SaaS-based sales training reinforcement technology measurably impacts sales performance:

- Reduce ramp time of new reps
- Lift average sales price
- Improve cross sell opportunities
- Increase win rate
- Reduce cost of sale

## Meet Sales Learning Goals

Qstream's flexible design and delivery can be adjusted to assess, reinforce, and certify any sales training or topic:

- Sales onboarding
- Selling skills
- Product knowledge & pricing
- Pricebook
- Sales process & methodology
- Sales compliance

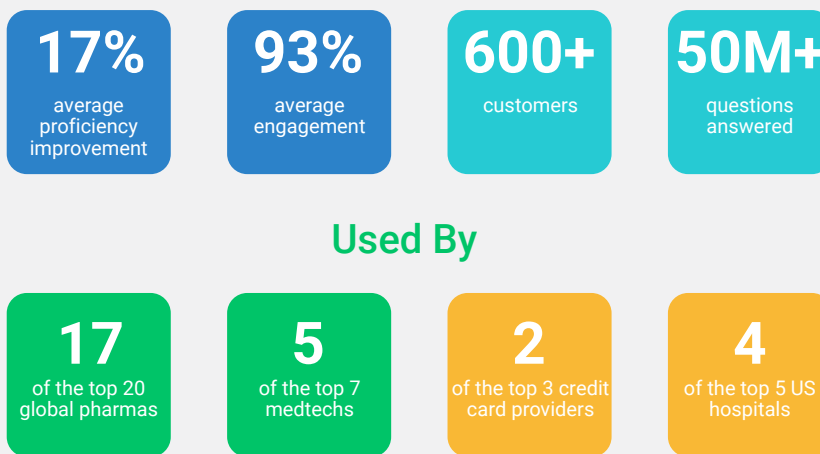
## Pinpoint Learning Needs

Cut through the noise and focus sales reps on the precise sales knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to close deals:

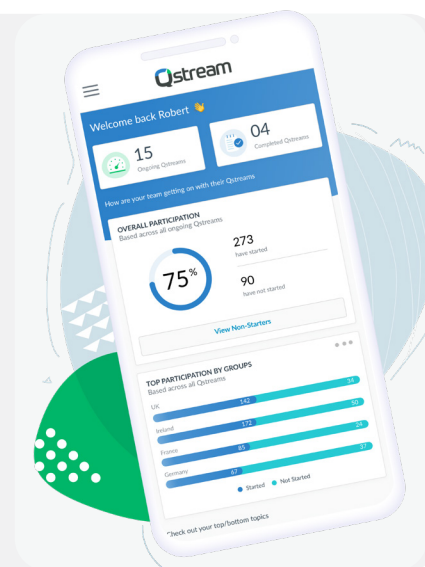
- Scenario-based microlearning
- Identify knowledge & skill gaps
- Precision micro-coaching

**Find out why more than 600 enterprise sales teams have chosen Qstream as their sales skills training and reinforcement partner.**

## Qstream in Numbers



## Used By



Sources:

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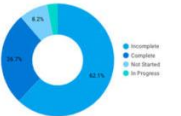
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**Qstream** Real Time Performance Dashboard - Qstream

Real Time Performance Dashboard

Qstream  
Country  
Department  
Team  
Participant

#### Engagement




- In Progress
- Completed
- Not Started

Started %	91.79
Attempted AB %	56.92
Completed AB %	26.67

- Engagement & Completion Tracker
- Engagement & Completion Global View

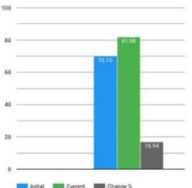
#### Activity



Expected Activity %	82.66
Questions	129
Answers	3,134

- Ostream Detail
- Activity Tracker

#### Proficiency



Initial %	70.1
Current %	81.98
Change %	16.94

- Ostream Proficiency
- Toxic Proficiency
- Content Analysis
- Toxic Analysis

#### Challenge Leaders

Country	Points
1. India	5082
2. Ireland	2129.32
3. United States	2090.7
4. United Kingdom	2485

Team	Points
1. Quest PM	6459
2. SLT	4426.43
3. Quest Eng	3927
4. Services EU	3639.6
5. Sales USA	2882.75

Ostreams	29
Participants	54

Countries	4
Teams	15

- Leaderboard View
- Leaderboard Results