

Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master Degree in Management from the NOVA – School of Business and Economics.

“SALES ENABLEMENT PROGRAM AT MASTERCARD”

GIACOMO DURANTE – N° 1934

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the following thesis, which is a Direct Research Internship, is to explore the challenges faced by a multinational company in its procedures and practices of sales enablement, so more focused on internal communication strategy addressed to sales forces. As this type of company are spread worldwide, it is difficult to align the communication among all the departments, usually displaced in different countries under different cultural influences, different laws, and different time hours. In this specific case the paper will be focused in a company, MasterCard, where I have been working as an intern of the Processing Europe team. In such complex business model as the company has, with hundreds of different services and products provided, it might be difficult for sales employees and account managers to understand and obtain all the information that they need when they have meetings with potential customers or presentations. In that case when sales forces have not a clear situation of all the business and they have difficulties to get the material, the company may lose important opportunities due to this lack of knowledge. For instance in a meeting with a possible customer, a seller who does not know how the entire services of MasterCard work may miss a crucial point to provide a product or a service which would bring a substantial benefit or value to the this potential client and consequentially a huge probability to close an important deal. This problem could lead the company not only to decrease revenues, but also to influence negatively MasterCard's brand.

In the first part of the following paper the MasterCard's overview and the business model will be described in order to understand how the processes might be simplified to facilitate internal awareness within the different departments.

In the second part, the paper will try to answer to the following questions, by providing practical examples and by analyzing different theories and opinions in the sales enablement ambit.

- What does sales enablement mean?
- Why are these practices important in general for companies?

The third part will be more concern on the implementation of a possible strategy for MasterCard in order to enable sales and how the company may measure possible performances and positive findings gained in concrete. The following questions will be faced:

- How should MasterCard build and implement an internal communication strategy to enable sales?
- Might MasterCard try to standardize the communication through all these departments worldwide or in a different way?
- Is it possible to measure the findings of the strategy? If yes, how?

In conclusion the advantages provided by the implementation of the strategy will be analyzed; moreover possible future results and new opportunities will be observed in order to improve the strategy itself in a longer period of time.

MASTERCARD'S OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

The company was founded in 1966 when a group of bankers based in California created a member-owned association that later became MasterCard. In 1968 it started to expand its presence to Mexico, Japan and Europe, marking the start of the commitment to becoming the leading global payments network. Today MasterCard is innovating and growing the range of products and solutions that brings to market. The company is addressing its technology and expertise to benefit consumers, merchants, business partners, governments and the communities served. MasterCard is a technology company and payments industry leader. For more than four decades, it has been a driving force at the heart of commerce, making the global economy safer, more efficient, more inclusive and more transparent for all. MasterCard could be seen as a link among financial institutions and millions of businesses, cardholders and merchants worldwide, MasterCard provides an incredible number of products and services in more than 210 countries and territories globally.

BUSINESS MODEL - SWITCHING AND PROCESSING

The Processing team is crucial for the company, it brings a consistent part of the revenue for the company. This team takes care of the Switching and Processing procedures. Switching: This part is composed by three moments; Authorization verifies the identity of the cardholder, the authenticity of the card and funds availability; Clearing adjusts and transfers financial transaction data between acquirers and issuers to

facilitate settlement; Settlement facilitates the exchange of funds between issuers and acquirers that clear through MasterCard.

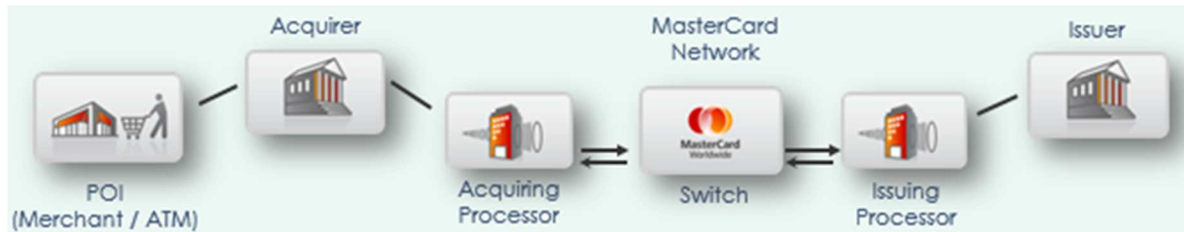


Figure 1 (Switching process)

Processing: Around the Switching part, both issuers and acquirers sometimes need to have processors to support these particular operations to switch through MasterCard network, in order to offer a complete pack the company provides these services to allow flexibility to its customers.

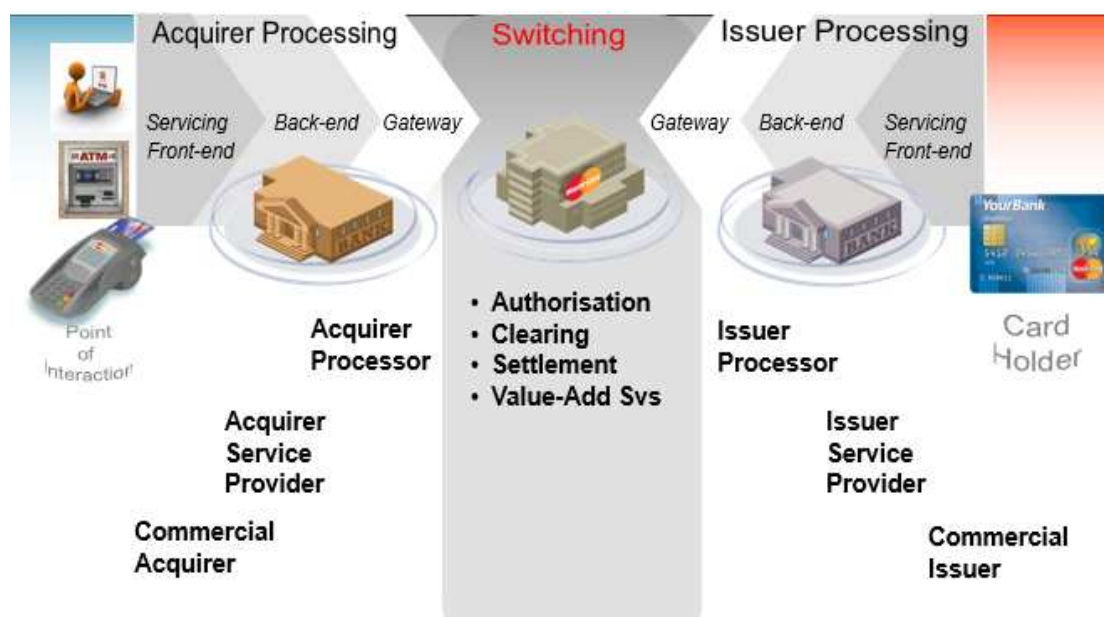


Figure 2 (Processing Value Chain)

Around these assets the Processing team provide also value-add products and services, very complex, and often these are difficult to understand even within the company. An internal sales enablement program had to be built to train and support employees.

SALES ENABLEMENT

WHAT IT MEANS

Forrester define Sales Enablement as: “Sales Enablement is a strategic, on-going process that equips all client-facing employees with the ability to consistently and systematically have a valuable conversation with the right set of customer stakeholders at each stage of the customer's problem-solving life cycle to optimize the return of investment of the selling system.”¹ Beyond the definition Sales Enablement is that tool which allows sales forces to have a high level of knowledge about products and services offered by a certain company in order to maximize the possibilities to have success in all the moments in which they reach buyers and clients. Theory of Sales Enablement says that a fundamental requirement to make it efficient is to connect and unify the different departments within a company in order to make sales forces more conscious about the message communicated to the costumers and so to help them to have a total view. This means that sales has to work with Marketing, Finance, Supply chain, IT, etc.

Basically Sales Enablement is focused on these particular activities such as:

- A list of whom to contact in order to have easy and fast access to critical information base on purchase intent.
- Providing tools to facilitate the buyer’s process, for sales reps and either for consumers.
- Building specific content and guideline for sales reps to follow during the relationship with clients.

¹ Sales Enablement in 2014 - An Eyeful White Paper, page 2

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT (trends)

Apart the strategic relevance that assumes these processes, probably analyzing trends and scenarios in the market would help to have a wider view how Sales Enablement impact indeed companies in the market. As described in “*Sales Enablement Market and Trends Survey Revealed*”, companies understood the importance of these procedures and consequentially they are starting to invest on them. For instance the budget addressed for Sales Enablement programs has been doubled among companies from 2012 to 2014 with an increase from 1.2 million to 2.4 million².

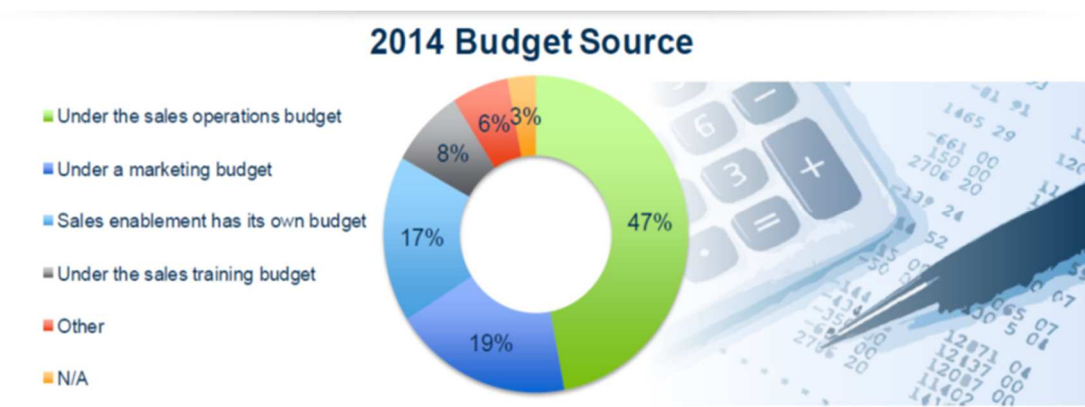


Figure 3 (2014 Budget Source, "Sales Enablement Market and Trends").

These investments are justified by the fact that in the last two years there has been a 19 percent increase in the Sales Enablement function reporting to the sales organization.

² “Sales Enablement Market and Trends, SiriusDecisions.



Figure 4 (Sales Investments, “Sales Enablement Market and Trends”).

Due to the fact that applying a Sales Enablement program in an efficient way will bring to connect the different departments and units in a company, usually this might be a good tool or exercise to review the entire value chain involved. That results important for a company because the program will help the company to address a single and clear message not only to sales forces but also to all the departments. Moreover this approach helps to identify possible improvements and developments regarding the value chain once you have each department working together, and in this case Sales Enablement plays a crucial role as a catalyst among all the parts. Marketing involved in the Sales process may help salespeople to improve the buyer’s cycle, especially in complex businesses where this cycle is usually very long. Marketing is able to provide important contents and insights to sales reps, highlighting what are the most relevant values for consumers in order to build more efficient pipeline more aligned with the target’s strategy and the segmentation of the market. As is well highlighted in the report written by Paul Greenberg, “Sales leaders guide to modern marketing”, only 8 percent of the companies surveyed felt that their Marketing and Sales departments were tightly aligned. As things stand now, there are still complaints of³:

³ Paul Greenberg, “How to Get More from Marketing”, page 17

1. The disconnection of objectives
2. Misalignment of measurement
3. Lack of common definitions and understanding
4. Misalignment of messaging
5. Lack of cadence
6. Separate use of technologies and disparate, non-integrated database.



Figure 5 (Percentages 2014)

In the same report is analyzed the importance of the alignment between marketing and sales, finding that the companies who were best-in-class aligned had 40% of the sales forecasted pipeline is generated by marketing and that there was 31.6% year over year growth in revenue where in companies that this wasn't the case so much in average companies (22%) and laggards (18.2%). Through tangible results is possible to understand how powerful might be the combination between Sales and Marketing, which also enhances large possibilities of expansion as mentioned before.

Another important trend observed is the time that complex technical products have as ramp up cycles of up to a year for new sales reps, and most companies tend to

underestimate how long it really takes. In fact, “CSO Insights 2012 Sales Performance Optimization report”, shows that new sales rep ramp-up is taking longer, with nearly 40% of 2,500+ companies saying that it takes 10 months or more to fully ramp up their new sales reps. Often when companies see that the ramp up cycle is still slow, they try to invest a lot of money to hire new sales reps with a better experience and they hope that the process with them might be faster. Given the annual sales quota that a fully productive enterprise sales rep is responsible for producing, anything that reduces this timescale can be seen as a clear and quantifiable return to an effective Sales Enablement program. This is amplified by the volume of new sales reps that need to ramp up to full productivity on an annual basis.

The following is a clear example of how Sales Enablement may impact a company:

Reps have an annual quota of \$2.4M or \$50K per week in revenue production fully ramped. Additionally, historical ramp to full productivity is six months. Data shows that after enablement there is typically a 10-20%+ reduction of ramp up time. Thus, a very typical conservative business case calculation might be:

1. \$50K of full ramp revenue per week per rep.
2. 24 weeks to full ramp up without enablement.
3. 2.4 weeks saved at 10% compression due to enablement. Reduction of ramp up by 2.4 weeks at \$50K or \$120K added top line revenue per net new sales rep.

4. Following this simple logic, just ten new sales reps ramped adds \$1.2M in new top line revenue due to enablement.

HOW IT WORKS

In order to approach and to implement a successful Sales Enablement program is important to organize a long-term plan and to follow different steps, the journey is demanding but the effort is worth.

1) The first step will be to understand what the costumers “pains” are, what makes them worried and to identify sales issues during each stage of the negotiation. An important part is to consider these two elements together, this probably can’t done well without talking to front line sales people and probably to customers as well.

2) Once these two issues are analyzed it is important to know how to face these problems in each stage and how to get to the next stage while dealing with customers, by providing the critical information needed to the sales forces.

3) Another important phase is to establish relationships with local account managers in order to segment the markets and to understand what the gap of the customers is about products and services provided by the company. Do customers know all the features that the company can offer?

4) Address this gap by providing tools and by building tactics and strategy but in an efficient way, indeed by addressing it to a selected target would help the entire program to be more focused and less costly.

5) In this step a focus on the capabilities of the company, in the sense that a company has to wonder if is able to offer tools and support to sales forces and customers in an easy and fast way, if it provides immediate access to trainings or communication.

6) When a company identifies the problems in the step number 5, obviously it has to discovery process and identify field subject matter experts required to capture field best practices in order to develop content and training.

7) Finally at the end of the process a company should not think that the journey is finished, on the contrary, this is the step where a measurement is needed to be built and to be divided for each stage. This measurement faces the necessity to evaluate step by step the entire program and moreover to intervene where a determined problem is detected.

Sales enablement covers the sales side of the revenue cycle, including:

- Identifying prospects whose behaviors and company activities make them promising buyers.

- Providing sales with topics they should raise to engage each individual prospect in a high-value, relevant dialogue.
- Educating sales on available tools and techniques for tracking customer prospects throughout the buying cycle.
- Delivering information that sales can quickly access, customize, and send to prospects to help them navigate the buying process.

THE TRUE SALES RESULTS SALES ENABLEMENT PLANNING FRAMEWORK™									
1	STAGE IN BUYER'S JOURNEY	Pre sales cycle stages: unconcerned, categorizing		Inflection point creates desire for engagement with sales	Sales cycle execution stages, from identifying needs to resolving concerns and negotiating.				Renewal
	THE BUYERS GOAL AT EACH STAGE	Not yet willing to engage; kicking the tires		Willing to engage to address pain	Buyers needs mapped to sales process.				Willing to re-engage
2	THE SELLERS GOALS & KEY DECISIONS AT EACH STAGE	Outbound and inbound sales decisions		How to engage	Information and go/no go decisions in sales process mapped to buyers needs.				How to re-engage
3	SKILLS GAPS ACROSS THE SELLING CYCLE BY ORGANIZATION	Inbound mktg Inside sales	Inbound & outbound mktg Sales Dev't Inside sales	Inside sales	Inside sales Outside sales	Outside sales Pre-sales	Outside sales Pre-sales	Nurture mktg Outside sales Prof. Services Support	Nurture mktg Inside sales Outside sales Pre-sales
4	REQUIRED SALES ENABLEMENT CONTENT	Engagement		Engagement Sales cycle	Sales cycle Sales plays	Sales cycle Sales plays Competitive	Sales cycle Sales plays	Customer success	Sales cycle
	PROPOSED TRAINING TOOLS AND TACTICS	Virtual and face to face team meetings, Checklists		Virtual, Sales Kickoff, Face to Face, Boot Camps, SKOs, Checklists, Sales Certification Program				Customer success metrics	ROI tools, Checklists
5	INFRASTRUCTURE READINESS	How infrastructure supports top down and peer to peer sharing of best practices. A single accessible trusted source for documents, multimedia, informal/technical interaction, product collateral, training/ enablement organized by sales cycle.							
6	DISCOVERY PROCESS	The discovery process and SMEs required to capture best practices and build or support validity of content.							
7	CURRICULUM	Instructional strategies and required reading and learning outcomes by experience level with required methods of certification.							

Figure 6 ("Planning Progressive Enterprise Sales Enablement")

SALES ENABLEMENT PROGRAM AT MASTERCARD

PLAN

As every action in a company, the implementation of the Sales Enablement program has needed to be planned, in order to measure each step and to evaluate how the process is working within the people involved.

The decision was made and the program was structured with the following components and objectives:

- Workshops in different markets.
- Meetings with the different divisions spread in the other countries in order to be updated in terms of projects and products in development.
- Internal web-site where the team may share all the information internally within the company.
- Internal and external trainings.
- Divisional accountability in team: a single point of contact by trying to coordinate the Processing team's activities with the other teams involved in the program, such as sales (account managers, marketing, finance, so on).

IMPLEMENTATION

Once the plan has been set, the implementation part was divided within the team, for different tasks one or two persons were assigned but the entire program needed to be constantly monitored by all the team in order to coordinate the activities and to address

all the process to a single track/message. The internal web-site and one of the training have been the part assigned to me.

INTERNAL WEB-SITE

The scopes of the web-site were identified as the following: creating internal awareness regarding the activities and the events of the team; providing support to account managers about products and services and support them (case studies, reference guide, FAQ documents, product sheets).

I have been working especially on the product sheets, in order to support the account managers when they needed to answer to RFPs and for customers' meetings. The first step was to meet the account managers to understand their needs, their thoughts, to receive feedback. After this meetings I realized that the big issues were basically three:

1. The sources to gather all the information were unclear and the difficulty to establish a fluent and continue communication among the teams was high.
2. The material already existent was complicated and disorganized in terms of structure.
3. None was in charge to keep update the information about the products and services existent.

In the meetings the best possible approach with customers has been analyzed as well. For this reason particular questions and topics concerning customers have been discussed with the account managers, such as: have account managers clearly understood the value proposition to offer? And the benefits? Are they aware about the

pains of potential customers? The marketing team has been involved in the discussion in order to understand the message that the company wanted to give to the customers for trying to be coherent and aligned with all the departments within the company. Once received all the feedback and the information necessary, I came up with a template to be used for the product sheets. The mainly idea was to have two slides; one slide to be used by account managers for getting know the product/service referred, the other page to be showed to customers during a presentation. Moreover the first slide might be used by account managers during a presentation to better describe the product/service to the audience.

The template of the first slide has been structured as the following (table):

- **DEFINITION:** A short definition of what is the product/service in consideration.
- **CHALLENGES ADDRESSED:** An explanation in easy words about the pains and challenges that the product/service might face. This part is crucial because often even potential customers do not really know that they have pains (intrinsic pains).
- **HOW IT HELPS:** A briefly description of how the product/service solves the customer's pains, how it works.
- **TRENDS:** Trends in the market to make customers aware about the utility of the product/service in consideration.
- **REFERENCES:** Cases studies or business cases already faced by the company and findings in order to make the proposition stronger into the eyes of the potential customer.

- BENEFITS: A list of the benefits for the stakeholders involved in each product/service.
- EXTRA INFO: Information regarding experts to contact, pricing of the product/service and update or news that have to be known (bulletin, regulation).
- On the left a column showing the target referred, the scope and for which type of cards the product/service is related.

The second slide is based on a picture of the product/service and three or four bullet points for describing the main features of it. The intention was to create something very easy for the account managers, something that they can feel comfortable with and that they can memorize. Daniel Kahneman, winner of the Nobel Prize for Economic Sciences in 2002, has conducted different studies on cognitive ease and remembering. He has demonstrated that *“a sentence that is printed in a clear font, or has been repeated, or has been primed, will be fluently processed with cognitive ease”*⁴. Indeed that is why the design chosen for the slides just mentioned is clear and easy to memorize. It has been also decided to have the same template for every product/service in order to imprint a sort of familiarity with the materials. A psychologist named Larry Jacoby has conducted different experiments on human being’s memory, his studies have shown that the experience of familiarity has a simple but powerful quality of “pastness” that seems to indicate that it is a direct reflection of prior experience, consequentially familiarity remarks things that have to be memorized.

⁴ Thinking, Fast and Slow (Daniel Kahneman)

TRAINING

Another part of the Sales Enablement program in which I have been involved was the building of the new training for May. The Processing team was doing already some trainings and it also received positive feedback, but just few days after that day the impression was that the audience just did not memorize and did not fully understand what has been said during the training. There were key elements that had to be taken in consideration before planning the training: the training had to take place in one day, the audience might be various (finance, marketing, account managers, so on). The first step was to get feedback and thoughts from the previous trainings, in order to understand the issues to overcome and the improvements to implement on it. Old participants were questioned about their experience. Moreover a collaboration with the marketing team was needed in order to improve the communication contents in the program. One of the most constant complain among the old participants was the fact that the training was really hard to follow, due to the complexity of the contents and to the duration of one day, this means that all these difficult processes were described in an intense day. With the team we have analyzed that especially after lunch time, the audience had a flexion on focusing and paying attention to the speaker; for this reason the agenda of the training was modified in order to increase the efficacy of the program. Moreover the participants of the new training were asked few days before the starting date to make a brief summary of their position in the company and their knowledge, in order to understand the average of knowledge of the audience regarding Switching and Processing and to better address the entire program, in order to make it more flexible. Also in this case the studies of Daniel Kahneman have been taken as example. He says that before something is discussed in a meeting or activity in a certain company, all members of the committee should be asked to write a very brief summary of their

position; this procedure makes a good use of the value of the diversity of knowledge and opinion in the group. First of all, the order of the topics was changed, a representation of a classic flow of a transaction was showed with animations and then the topics have been explained by following this flow going through all the value chain. This was made to build familiarity in the minds of the audience and to make all the process clear and easy, with pictures and animations and trying to avoid long texts. Another change implemented in the agenda was the introduction of a trivia game after the lunch time, the scope of this was to keep the audience focused in a funny and relaxing way due to the flexion after lunch break. Moreover the game has been introduced also to help the participants to go over again all the concepts learned during the previous session and to be aware about the own level of knowledge acquired. In this way the participants might be immediately aware if they did not understand something or something was unclear and they may take advantage to ask directly to the experts present at the training.

FINDINGS

MEASUREMENT

There are different ways to measure the impact of a Sales Enablement program for a company. Obviously the most efficient is to evaluate how sales reps have performed after the implementation of the program and compare these results with the performances before the program was applied; the results need time to come up therefore the evaluation should start at least ten months after the program has been started.

In my case I could not apply this measurement due to the lack of time available for me, but I have found another interesting way to measure the effectiveness of the program. The idea was to measure the improvements reached by using these new procedures and to make aware sales reps of it when the process was ongoing. A meeting was established every month with the account managers, where they were asked some questions which were representing the different steps of the project. The questions were:

- “Have you noticed some differences in your relation with customers?”
- “Have the customers noticed something different in the approach?”

PROJECT “X”

Collaboration and alignment between Marketing and Sales departments has been described previously, by trying to simplify the buyer’s process. This collaboration was

based on continuous flows of communication between Marketing and account managers based on different countries. This communication helped the Marketing department to clarify the needs of the different countries, which were unexpectedly totally different, so sales and account managers provided efficient insights, based on their direct experiences with customers, to improve the segmentation for the European countries.

Due to this, an important improvement in terms of segmentation and of possibilities to better address the products and services was discovered, we as a team thought to launch a new project (here called Project “X”). This project had the goal to segment the different European countries by involving account managers and sales reps in the process and based on their insights and ideas, by building different packed solutions (products and services) for each country.

Once the Marketing department gathered and elaborated all the data and information provided by the account managers, they sent the segmentation and the main needs found to us. So we as a Processing team have built different packed solutions to offer to our customers in each different European country. Moreover we heard account managers in order to hear their feedback and to discuss on how to introduce these new solutions to the customers and what might be the obstacles during the buyer’s process.

This project is really important for the company, because it may allow MasterCard to offer customized solutions but without losing its scalability in the processes. This is just one of the examples how many benefits Sales Enablement practices are able to bring to a company.

CONCLUSION

In the project the overall meaning of Sales Enablement has been explained, with particular attention to how companies recently are approaching the entire implementation process. It has been observed the importance emerged in the last few years regarding these particular procedures by the fact that especially in technological companies the business is complex and often sales reps struggle to understand it. Examples of why it is important to have sales reps aware and update about all the products and services and the entire value chain have been discussed as well as the opportunities to lose revenue and relationships with clients if the program is not implemented or wrongly structured. As it was mentioned before, Sales Enablement might be seen as a tool to connect and align different departments within a certain company, in order to do a recap of all the activities and to improve the efficiency of the collaboration among the teams. It was also provided a practical example of how usually a Sales Enablement program is implemented in a multinational company, the process is long and the findings are not immediately straightforward but during the process is always useful to gather feedback in order to monitor the success of the implementation. In conclusion this project has highlighted few key aspects of a general Sales Enablement approach:

- Internal awareness is a crucial element in a company and as possible to imagine is really difficult to build, it takes time. “Identifying and telling an engaging story is worth a thousand plans and strategies”.
- Many sales enablement programs fail because they are too tightly controlled by a small branch of the sales department, or focus exclusively on a single tactic.

- Communication between different departments, sales reps need to be supported because they often have the feeling of “loneliness”, they feel abandoned and this is a critical mistake for a company. “Making sure that every sales person has access to everything they need to make sales”.
- Findings are measurable in a long-term situation, companies have to be patient, if you try to force the results the entire process would never work.

In the end, sales enablement is first and foremost about attitude. It’s a team approach to sales that gives everyone in the organization a support role in aligning resources to make the right sale to the right customer.

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