

# BUILD A NEXT-GEN SALES TALENT STRATEGY



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- 10 years in sales, sales training, and enablement within a jan-san distributor
- Works with hundreds of manufacturers and distributors to improve their sales performance and profitability at SPARXiQ
- Author of **Modern Sales Foundations** methodology & training program

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# Next-Gen Sales Talent Strategy: Why?

- Shifts in buyer preferences require adapted sales processes
- Evolving talent pool, especially for distributors



# Common Sales Talent Goals



**Better talent  
selection = stronger  
sellers**



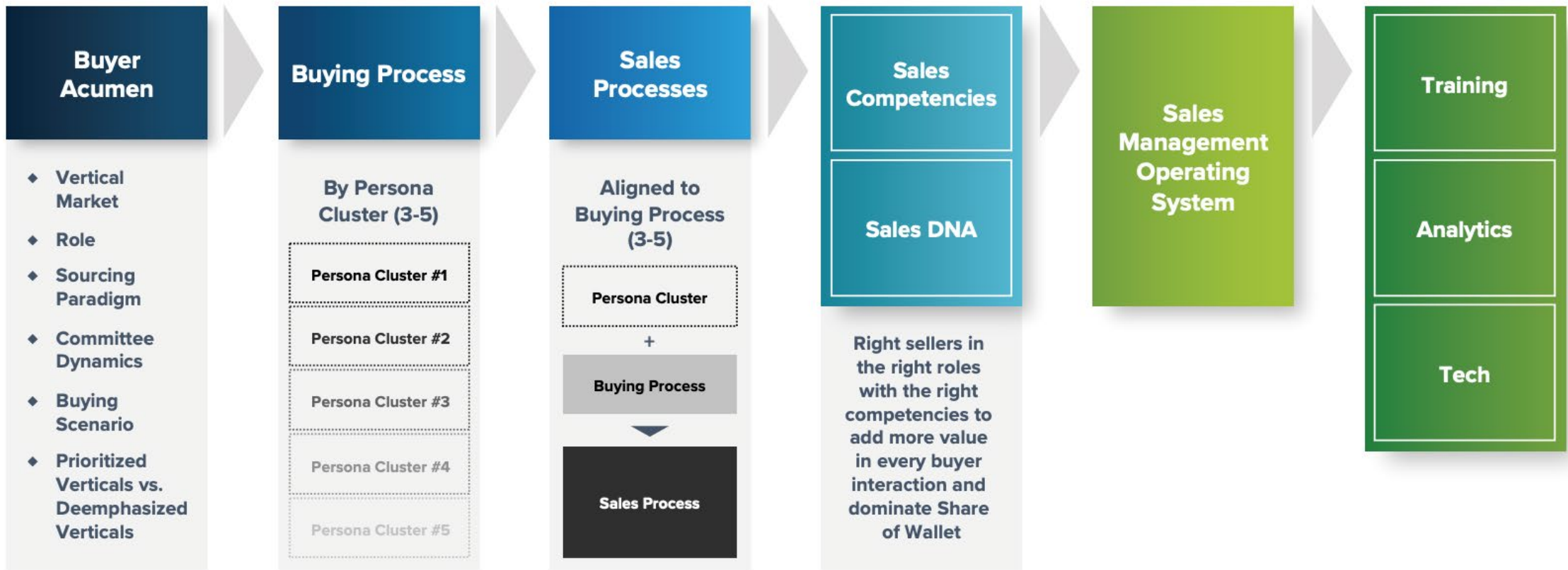
**Quicker ramp up  
and longer  
retention**



**More  
productivity /  
do more  
with less**



# Take a Step Back – Sales as a System



**How would you describe  
your sales team?  
Strengths? Weaknesses?**

# 3-Legged Stool of Sales Talent

## KNOWLEDGE

Expertise and experience surrounding your products, their applications, and the markets you serve.



## SKILLS

Sellers' ability to follow a successful sales process and execute well at each stage.

## DRIVE & MINDSETS

A seller's motivation and will to succeed in sales, as well as their personal belief system influences their success.

# Drive & Mindsets

It's a lot easier to hire for certain intrinsic traits, or "hardwiring," rather than trying to train it.

Historically, distribution sales reps scored relatively similarly to the broader market in these areas.



## DRIVE

- **Desire** to succeed in a sales role
- **Commitment** to doing what it takes
- **Outlook** on their career
- **Motivation** level and source
- **Responsibility** for their own success



## MINDSETS

- Seeks to be **Trusted** instead of **Liked**
- **Stays in the moment** when things don't go as planned
- **Comfortable discussing money**
- **Handles rejection**
- **Coachable**

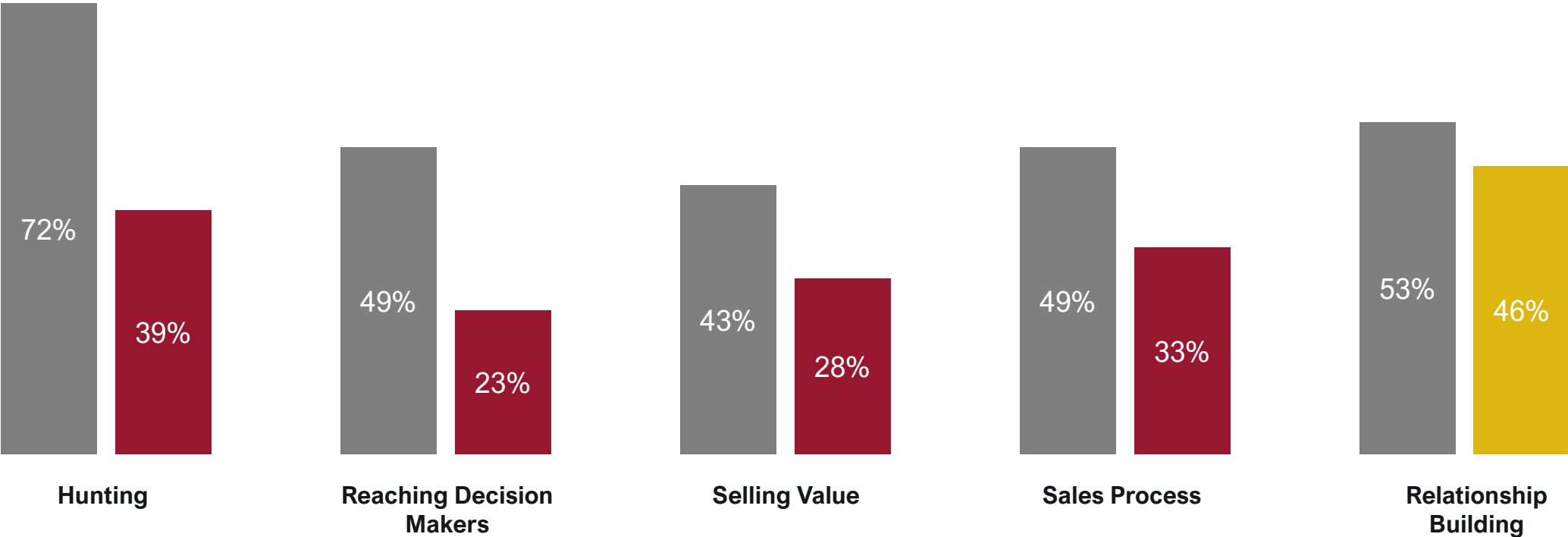


# Distribution Reps vs. The World

## Selling Skills

% of sellers were strong in these areas

All Verticals vs. Wholesale Distributors



# Common Approaches to Sales Talent



## Traditional Distribution Model

- Hire for industry knowledge and experience
- Assume they have developed the skills needed over time
- Tolerate a mixed bag of drive and motivation



## Churn Acceptance Model

- Hire early career reps, train them in products
- Provide basic skills training as they've likely not been trained in selling
- Try to hire based on drive and mindset; cut ties quickly if not strong

**What are your current  
processes for sales  
talent?**

# How is Your Company Getting There?

## KNOWLEDGE

Do you hire or train product, market, and application knowledge?

How well are you doing it?



## SKILLS

Do you hire for skills?

Or, if you train them, how well do you do it?

## DRIVE & MINDSETS

How do you ensure that you're selecting sellers with strong drive and healthy sales mindsets?

# Best Practices for Addressing All 3 Legs

Next-Gen Sales Talent Strategies



# Identifying Drive & Mindsets



## Interview & Selection Process:

Implement a formal hiring process to consistently ask the right questions that uncover strong drive and healthy mindsets

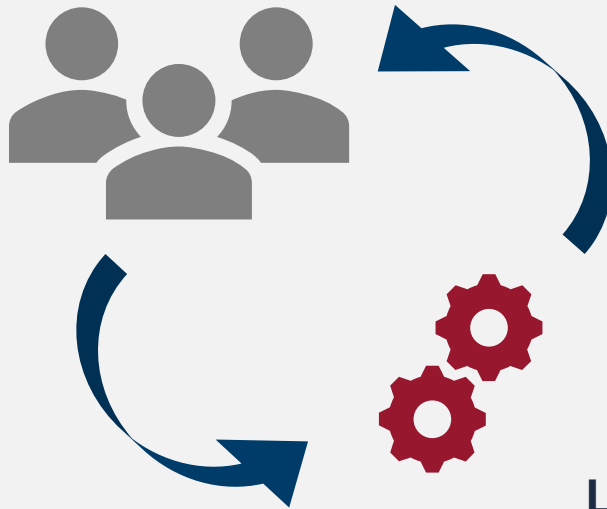


## Sales Competency Assessment:

Consider augmenting your hiring process with a hiring assessment that objectively evaluates drive and mindsets (not personality!)

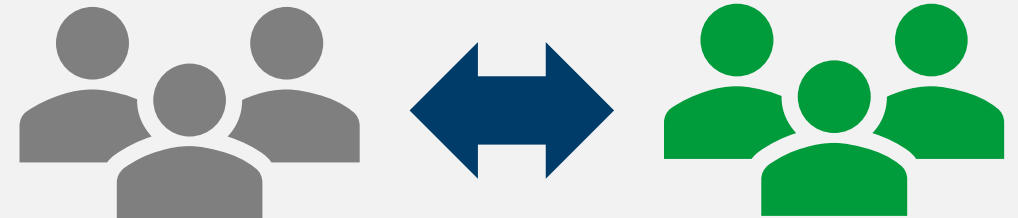
# Strategies for Knowledge Transfer

## CENTRALIZED



Sales  
Enablement  
Leader / Team as  
Curator and Instructor

## CROWD-SOURCED



Orchestrated Peer-to-Peer  
Knowledge Sharing

# Sales Process & Methodology; You Need Both



## **Sales Process:**

The stages a sale progresses through in support of the customer's buying process.



## **Sales Methodology:**

*How* sellers sell or interact with customers in each stage of the sales process.

# Training Sales Skills Effectively

## Content Selection

- ✓ Modern, consultative methodologies
- ✓ High relevance to sales situations and specific role(s)
- ✓ Frameworks, not scripts
- ✓ Easy-to-remember and easy-to-apply models

## Rollout Strategy

- ✓ Top-down support & leadership
- ✓ Spaced learning vs. boot camp
- ✓ Cross-team discussion and practice
- ✓ Front-line coaching from managers

# Putting it Together: Full Cycle Talent Strategy

## Attracting & Selecting

Consider how big your talent pool is based on which areas you are hiring for vs. training.

Build a process to ensure you are consistently selecting candidates with your **must-haves**.

## Development

Take a systematic approach to onboarding and ongoing skill development.

Focus learning and development resources in areas you've designated as those that should be taught.

## Retention

The right sellers who fit your profile and are properly enabled will naturally stay longer.

Beyond that, ensure you have strong sales coaching and consistent, productive feedback to keep reps on track.





# Case Studies

Next-Gen Sales Talent Strategies



# Case Study #1: Regional Fluid Power Distributor (\$100M+)

## Knowledge & Expertise

Source candidates with industry experience for highly technical sales role

## Sales Skills

Implemented a formal sales process and methodology to maximize execution and consistency. New hires trained right away.

## Drive & Mindsets

Evaluated all existing team members and created coaching plans to close gaps; use hiring assessment to get stronger-than-average drive and mindsets.

# Case Study #2: Large Electrical Distributor (\$500M+)

## Knowledge & Expertise

Launch an “immersion” program with 3 months on site to train new, entry-level (college grad) hires on product, market, and applications.

## Sales Skills

Provide formal skills training (which college grads haven’t had) starting 3-6 months after hire and immersion program.

## Drive & Mindsets

Considering a hiring assessment alongside a formal talent selection process to select from large pool of candidates. Quickly part ways with those that lack.

# Case Study #3: Huge Industrial Distributor (\$5B+)

## Knowledge & Expertise

Split sales roles between account management (veteran experts) and transactional growth (entry level inside sales).  
Programmatically train inside reps on products/markets

## Sales Skills

Align sales skills training for each role – simple and transactional business development for inside and strategic account management for outside.

## Drive & Mindsets

Use assessment, particularly for entry level inside sales role that requires heavy outbound calling.

# Discussion & Q&A

Next-Gen Sales Talent Strategies



# THANK YOU!



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