



Fast-brain selling:

the quickest way to **engage** your team, reach your **goals**, and drive more **revenue**



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As a sales leader, you know the importance of meeting short-term targets but also building for the future. To succeed at both, you need proven ideas that will get your team moving in the right direction, right away.

Keep reading to learn how fast-brain selling applies the science of behavioural economics to real-world challenges like onboarding new reps quickly, recognizing and retaining top performers, and moving your middle performers to achieve more.

Our brains process information in two significantly different ways: System 1 uses less energy, reacts faster, and relies on feelings and emotions. System 2 takes more time and energy and is more rational. Switching between the two can help us make better decisions and take more effective action.

Daniel Kahneman, an Israeli-American psychologist known for earning a Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences — which is incredibly rare — a psychologist earning the Nobel Prize in Economics, challenged modern economic theory

that asserts humans are rational and make decisions based on logic and reason. In 2011, his book entitled “Thinking, Fast and Slow”, was a bestseller, and it summarizes much of his research. The title refers to two modes of thinking – fast and slow.

The slow-brain is deliberate, analytical, and in a consciously effortful mode of reasoning about the world. Our slow-brain fills out a tax form or parallel parks a car. It thoughtfully arrives at beliefs and reasoned choices. When we see a formula like this our slow-brain starts to analyze things. We try to be logical and determine what each letter means. And even if we figure out the letters, we have to do the math.

You may recognize this as the formula Isaac Newton used to explain the law of gravity.

The fast-brain is automatic, intuitive, and in a largely unconscious mode. The fast-brain detects hostility or compassion in a voice and without thinking completes the phrase “bread and...” The fast-brain uses association and metaphor to produce a quick and dirty view of reality. As a sales leader, you probably have

Slow-brain:

We stop
and think
to
understand
complexity.

$$F = G \frac{Mm}{r^2}$$

more spreadsheets than your slow-brain will ever be able to digest. We as businesspeople like spreadsheets because they make us look rational and logical. They are safe. They prove things. Like Newton’s law of gravity, they form the foundation of our selling process, but they can only take us so far. Sales is about action. It’s activity. Doing the right behaviours and making the right decisions. The fast-brain selling concept

can help us get our sales teams emotionally engaged, set and achieve goals, and go from rookies to performers to stars as fast as possible. Now lets look at the fast-brain version of this formula:



Fast-brain:

We like to take the fast way whenever possible.

We immediately understand the concept, even if we can't prove it mathematically. This is what we mean by fast-brain selling.

Create focus through feedback

We know there are countless biases and obstacles that stand in the way of achieving our goals. Our sales teams take many short-cuts. A typical salesperson is already using their fast-brain. The key is to use whatever tools we have available to us to nudge our sales teams closer to their own goals and the organization's goals.

We know it's easy to set goals, but it's hard to achieve them. Four tools available to salespeople are:

1. Communications
2. Training
3. Measurement
4. Rewards

Thanks to the behavioural science of Kahneman, we know this approach works – that appealing to the fast-brain in the way you engage your salespeople takes them from “goal set” to “goal achieved” at any stage of their lifecycle.

But how?

The path it lays out is a journey that uses feedback to drive focus on key areas. Examples of this feedback that engage, motivate, and promote to change behaviour in and across all four stages (which we'll also show in a case study) are:

- Engagement points
- Award point redemption
- Levels
- Badges
- Contests
- Leaderboards

Engage all levels of performance

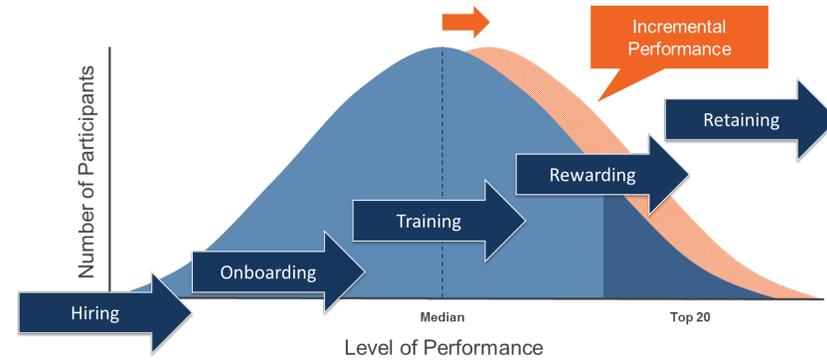
Most sales organizations take special care of their top performers. They are often more intrinsically motivated than middle and bottom performers. However, more and more sales leaders are now recognizing the importance of motivating and moving their middle performers.

But when it comes to onboarding new team members, they continue to get lost in the daily shuffle of priorities. By giving a new team member a great onboarding experience, they'll be far more likely to catch on to the culture quickly and get up to speed to perform at peak capacity.





Design for Incremental Performance



From left to right, the bell curve addresses four areas we can support:

1. Hiring and onboarding new reps. Our communications and training solutions are ideal to address this segment.
2. Moving up the bell curve, we need to train all sales reps on products and solutions to make them more effective.
3. Rewarding reps for improvement over the short-term can produce results for your overall bottom-line and re-set expectations on their quest to become top performers.
4. Recognition like year-end events, trips, and honours are a vital part of retaining your top sales reps.

We know from research and experience that we are natural goal setters, but goal achievement comes at a price. We have to challenge the status quo and go in new directions. We know that if we are going to take on a new challenge and succeed, we need to lead with **fast-brain thinking**.

That's why our sales contest and incentive programs are ideal for middle and bottom performers, helping them set goals and stay focused.

Our sales contests are designed to allow you to deliver relevant messages based on a participant's current performance level. We use it to create focus with graphical performance snapshots, launch tactical incentives, broadcast messages, recognize achievers, and motivate all participants to achieve their goals.

Using simple messaging and highly visual communications, we lay out the action plan. For example, convert a competitive account and get rewarded with awards that add trophy value – rewards that participants will talk about for weeks and months to come.





Further, as much as sales reps might tell you they want more cash in their paycheques, successful sales contests go beyond the calculative slow-brain compensation focus and tap into inspiration. We've proven that salespeople will repeatedly work harder and perform at a higher level for non-cash rewards like luxury merchandise, travel or experiences.

Encourage reps to set aggressive goals

When it comes to motivating your sales teams, the key is to be sure you're offering the right rewards. Are the rewards worth the effort? Why is it worth my time to enter information into my CRM? What good will it do to make another prospecting call?

The answer to most of these questions can be found in the behavioural economics concept of idiosyncratic fit, one of the most useful concepts to enabling and inspiring your team. When someone on your team asks if the rewards are worth the effort, they are really asking themselves, "What unique advantage do I have?" In other words, if I do what you are asking, is there a win in it for me?

Sales reps will perform much more intensely if they feel they have the inside track.

One way of accomplishing this is to create situations where they can choose their own goals. In a study we conducted around goal-setting, those reps who chose their own goals were more likely to stretch and achieve than those who are assigned goals.

The challenge, though, is to create an environment where self-selected goals can reward the individual but still contribute to the overall organization's goals. This can get tricky, as you will find top performers are always challenging themselves, but middle and bottom performers may not see any benefit in pushing themselves.

With up to 60% of your sales organization being classified as middle performers capable of double-digit improvements, it's easy to see where the potential lies.

Case study: How our sales incentive solution drove incremental revenue, growth, and new customers

Challenge: A client approached us to try and increase new customer referrals. We wanted to identify new opportunities so we engaged in the sales incentive program far beyond the salesforce.



Case study:

Results:

**INCREMENTAL
REVENUE**

\$22M+

More than **\$22 million in incremental revenue** for the organization over the past 2 years.

GROWTH

35%

Summer volume-based incentive drove more **than 1MM more units than the previous year** with 35% growth.

NEW SALES

33%

An average of one in three referrals leads to a new customer sale.

From our experience, when you ask all employees to engage in a new sales-related behaviour, there are going to be some natural product and brand advocates.

These usually top out at 20% of the total audience; therefore, we need to move those middle and bottom performers.

They don't have an idiosyncratic fit for lead generation, they don't know how to tell the story, and they don't feel like there's anything in it for them if they do start telling the story.

Solution: We came up with a company-wide lead generation program, gave each employee a story, and gave them the opportunity to earn ultra-motivating rewards for identifying prospects. We also made it easy to get started and created messaging that regularly "nudged" them to participate in the program.



Build a culture of learning

No one ever disagrees with the statement that salespeople sell what they know – especially in the channel. However, nearly every data point says that one of the lowest priorities for companies is ongoing learning for their sales teams. Long-term success in sales requires a culture of learning.

Gamification can be used to foster a culture of learning. It engages and educates sales teams and channel partners, allows sales reps to set their own learning goals and take the training at their own convenience, and keeps them coming back for more.

Case study: How our gamification solution drove learning across the board

Challenge: A global cloud computing company wanted to improve sales and reduce support costs. They knew if they were able to more effectively educate 200,000 channel partners and create a program that could encourage them to not only take the mandatory training — but also self-driven learning — they would be able to overcome their sales and support challenges.





They also wanted to increase product knowledge and learning engagement, but they had an outdated, text-heavy Learning Management System (LMS) that didn't offer clear direction. It was very slow-brain.

It was difficult for a user to put on their thinking cap and figure out where they needed to go next and what they needed to do. There was no way to indicate progress and there was wasn't anything tapping into the fast-brain. There was no feedback built-in, resulting in low adoption and engagement.

Solution: Our learning solution helped to take the difficult thinking out of the equation. We introduced a visually enhanced experience using game mechanics such as award points, levels, leaderboards, missions, and badges.

This included progress to completing a series of tasks or training, front and centre visuals, a dashboard to guide a clear path to learning, a clear direction on how to master what's relevant to the user's specific role, and positive feedback on forward progress to help generate and maintain momentum without having to think about it.

Our slow-brain is lazy which is why it often takes what the fast-brain says and doesn't question it; therefore, we trick our rational brain with its snap judgments. That's why we need to tap into the fast-brain even when we truly believe the slow-brain should be.

Case study:

Results:

- More than **50%** increase in core accreditation
- **200%** increase in non-core curriculum
- **85%** reduction in user support calls
- More **engaged** and **educated** workforce

Part of the communications vehicle is to drive urgency. Social comparison and competition help to achieve this. Leaderboards are very “me-centric”, not just comparing users to everybody, but to others like me so a user’s slow-brain doesn’t get caught up in the trap of feeling overwhelmed or having to figure out where to fit in. Our learning solution was very spoon-fed and clear about what a user needed to do in order to consume more training content, be successful, and stack up against peers. There was consistent feedback on not just the training, but on the user’s performance.



Connect efforts with data and analytics

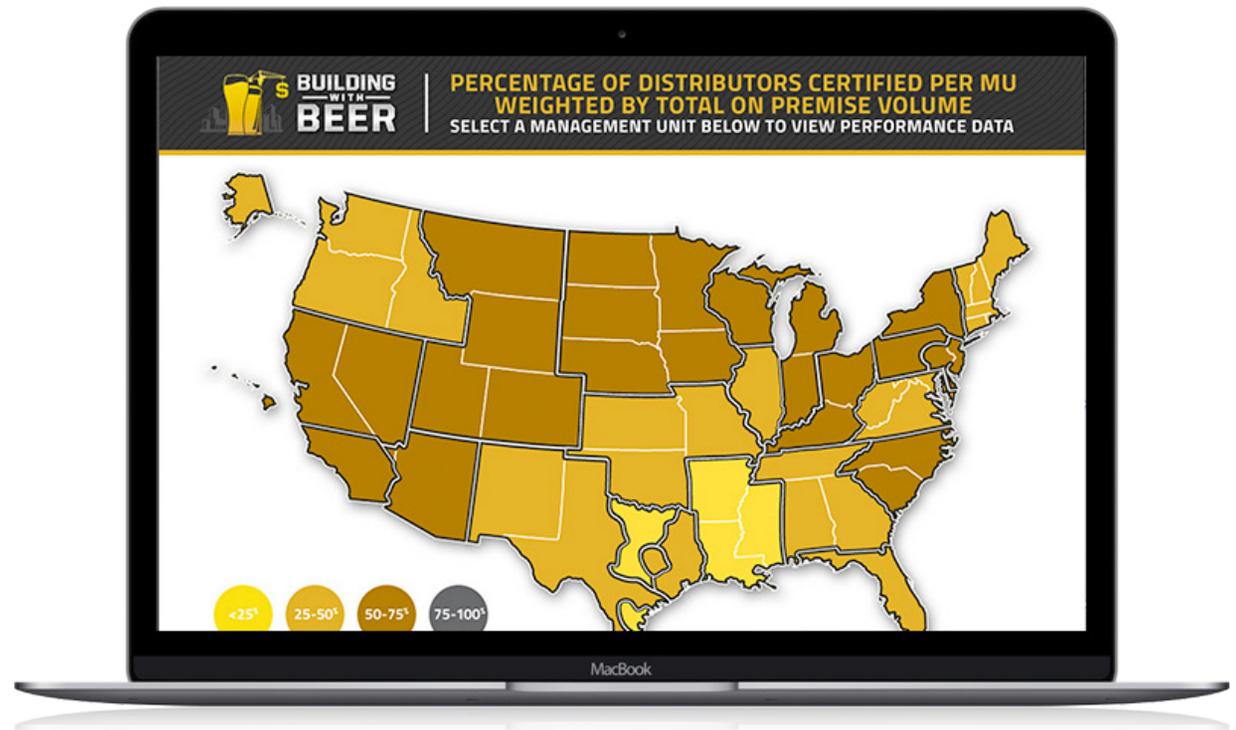
Measuring sales progress means that your target audience can track progress and stay motivated. This will help them remain focused, meet target dates, and experience the exhilaration of getting closer to achieving their goal.

We achieve this using fun, creative, and vivid measurement and communications tools such as real-time dashboards, league tables, leaderboards, and performance-driven communications.

Reporting is available at participants' finger-tips. Individuals can track their personal performance while top-level reports are available to managers and directors at both participant and geographic levels.

Conclusion

From a behavioural economics perspective, we know the fast-brain selling approach works. That appealing to the fast-brain in the way you engage your salespeople takes them from "goal set" to "goal achieved" at any stage of their lifecycle. The path it lays out is a journey



that uses feedback to drive focus on key areas. It ties together contests and incentives that go beyond compensation to inspire sales teams. It ties in vivid marketing campaigns to deliver relevant messages based on performance. And it ties learning to incentives to give sales reps the skills they need to achieve their objectives. Having an ongoing feedback mechanism that

creates a connective tissue across all tools, a holistic view of their progress towards their own success, and an understanding that there's a way to give sales reps credit or keep track and provide feedback along their career path helps to create an institutional record of their engagement with the brand, company, and initiative.

Who we are

At BI WORLDWIDE Canada (BIW), we inspire people and deliver measurable business results. Inspired employees solve problems and create value. Inspired salespeople take risks and seize opportunity. And inspired channel partners and customers choose your brand every time.

We employ communication, training, measurement, and rewards as the foundation to inspire behaviour change and achieve results for our clients.

Each organization has its own sales and engagement objectives, so we first work out what your overall business goals are.

Once known, we help define the employees' performance objectives and design and deliver innovative sales engagement solutions — grounded in the science of behavioural economics — to align with your business strategy.

To learn more about **BI WORLDWIDE Canada's** fast-brain sales solutions, visit:
biworldwide.ca or
email **canada@biworldwide.com**.



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