

Sales kick-offs are a key milestone in the calendar for lots of organisations. They're the perfect setting to get your key people in a room and inspire them about what's to come on the sales horizon in the next year.

A successful SKO will see team members empowered and energised, ready for a new season of sales. But, getting it wrong risks squandering a huge opportunity. Your sales teams could leave confused, unlikely to take your new messages and ideas out on the road at all.

# So, how do you run an effective sales kick off?

It's probably fair to say all companies want to sell more. But what that looks like for your organisation may be totally different to another, even a competitor. Going into an SKO event assuming that attendees will be inspired by the message just to 'sell more' is selling yourself short. Instead, all of the messages at your SKO should centre around your specific business goal for that period, and point attendees to that destination point.

And so if the business goal is your destination, the SKO is the map you provide to help your teams on their journey.



## 1 Plan the learning journey 6 months out

With your business goal defined, you're ready to start working on your event. You'll have different priorities and areas of focus at different times, and there will be two main lenses that you use when you're building your event:

### Learning perspective

Your audience may be salespeople, but they're also learners, and you need to give them what they need for their part on the journey towards your business goal, and this will involve teaching and upskilling.



### Events perspective

At the end of an event the last thing you want is your attendees to wish you'd sent them everything in an email. The goal should therefore be to engage your audience, grab their attention and make a lasting impression on them.



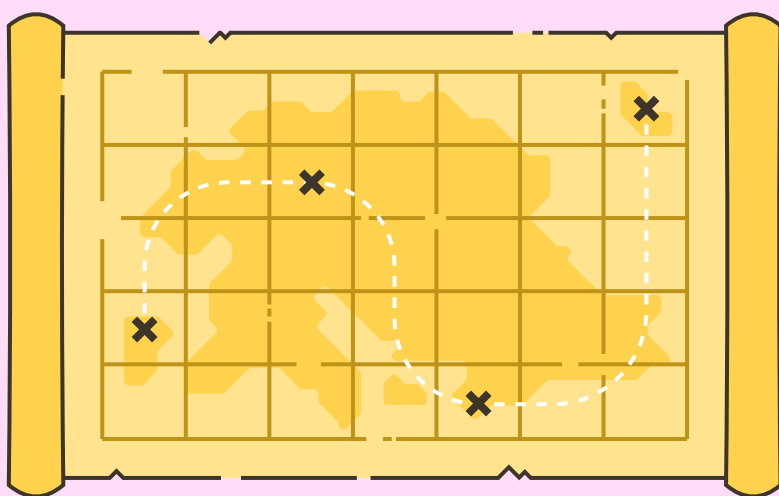
## 2 Set your agenda 3 months out

Next it's time to set the agenda. Keeping your business goal top of mind at all times.

It all comes down to this: what do your salespeople need to know to help you achieve your goal? Much like creating training or other educational content, you start by defining **learning objectives**.

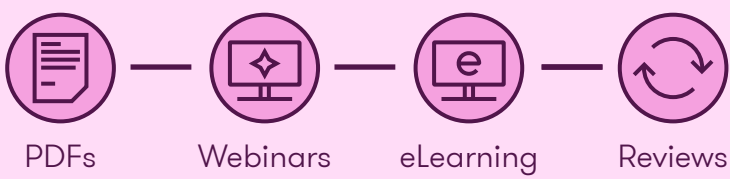
As your learners tick off these objectives during the event, they build the skills for the journey towards your overall goal, so think of the learning objectives as the waypoints on your map.

Some attendees will be further along in their journey, so make sure you have objectives to serve all the skill and ability levels of those in attendance.

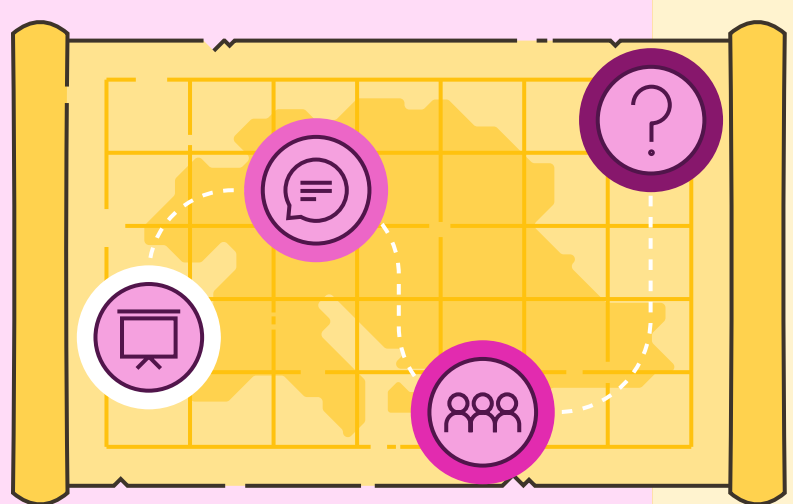


Don't forget to follow up! A key part of equipping your teams is making sure they have the tools and resources they need when they leave your event and take their new knowledge out on the road. That comes in the form of an effective follow-up strategy.

#### Consider creating



Make sure all your learning objectives will be covered across your sessions.



Run a variety of session types to keep audiences engaged. Go beyond keynote and break-out presentations

#### Consider:

- Forums
- Q&As
- Panel discussions
- Teambuilding workshops

## 3 Build your content 2 months out

It may feel like a long time to build your slides, but a lot of this time should be spent discussing messaging.

Before slide building can even begin, speakers need to write outlines and then work together to align their stories into one cohesive narrative.

#### Keep coming back to your learning objectives:

- **What** are you telling your audience in this session?
- **How** does that build into the SKO objectives?
- **How** does that build into your business goals?

It's time to reach out to the venue and AV team to understand the space you're working in.

- How big is the screen?
- Is it a standard ratio?
- Are there any obstructions on stage?

You don't want to spend months building the best slides in the world only for them to be blocked by pillars and podiums!

## 4 Finalise your content 1 week out

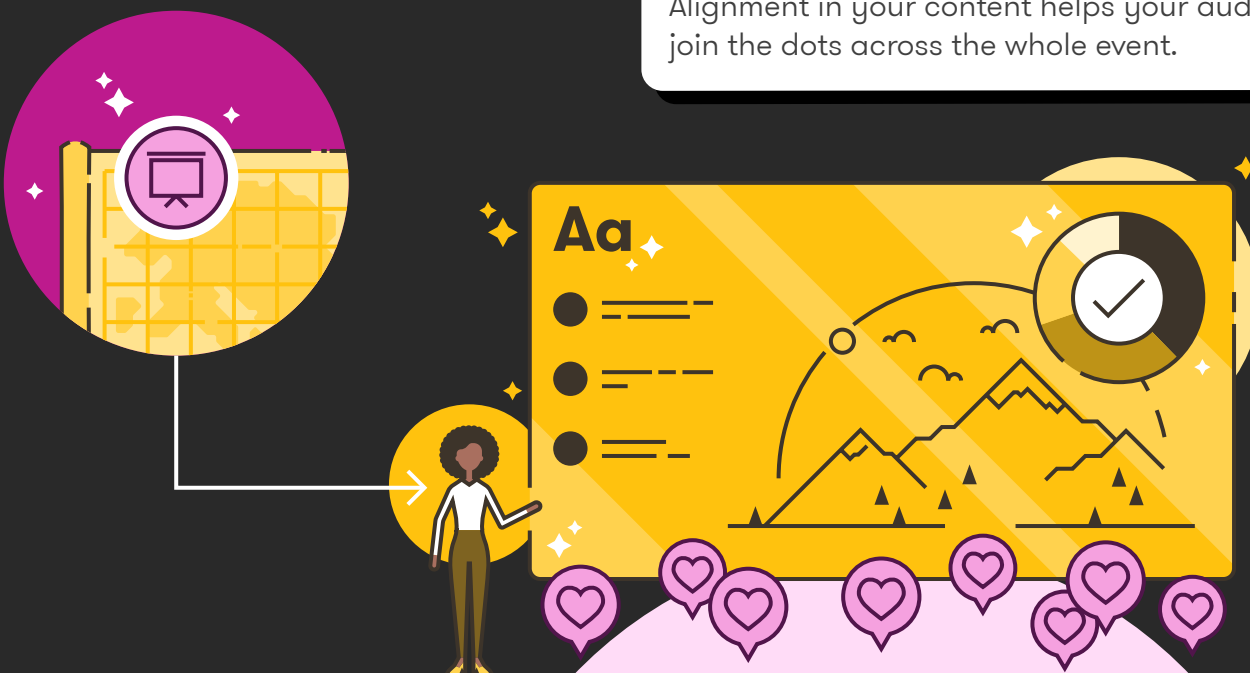
At this point most of your content should be built – this is the time to tweak and refine to make sure it lands perfectly with your audience.

Have your speakers align on their presentations again, looking for places of overlap where they can refer to each other.

Again, this is how you create a cohesive message across your event and help the audience join all the dots. And make sure – you guessed it – to keep your learning objectives in mind to make sure they're all being met by the mix of sessions.

#### Top tip

Alignment in your content helps your audience join the dots across the whole event.



#### Top tip

Remember to check the following elements during your rehearsal:

- On-screen text
- Footnotes
- Speaker notes
- Animations
- Speaker transitions
- Rich media (like videos)

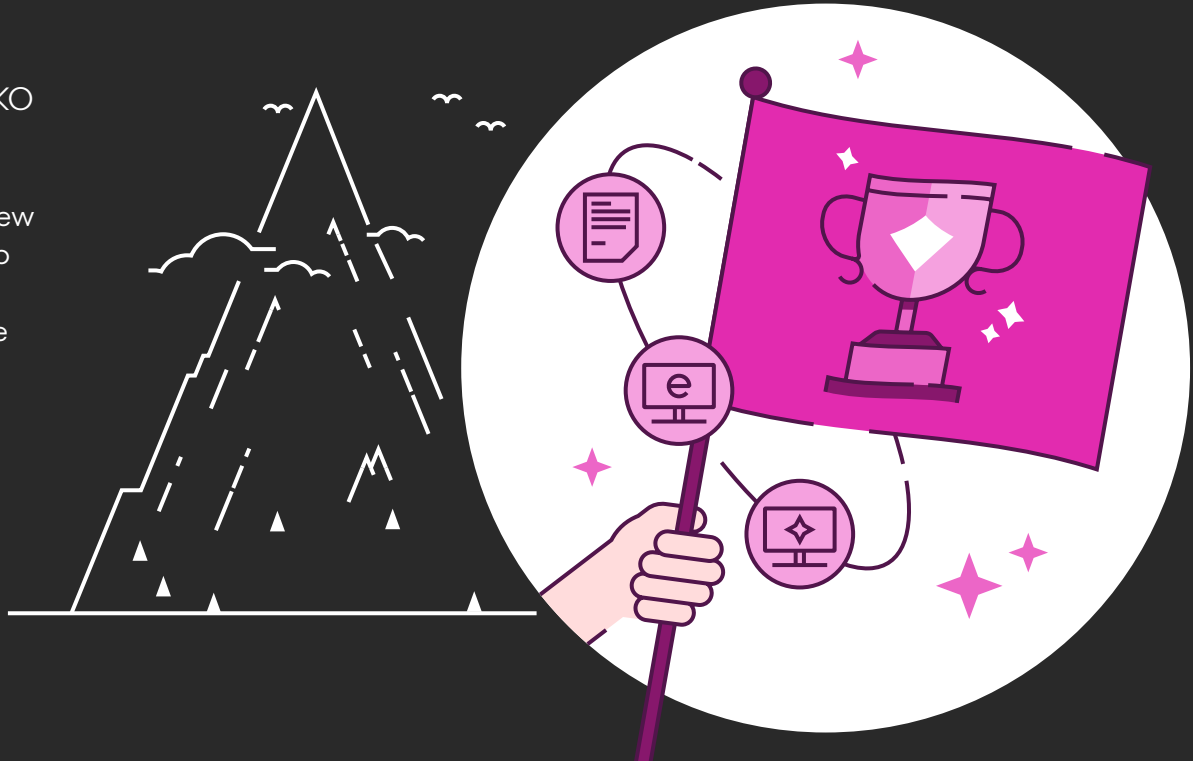
## 6 Follow-up After the event

Once it's all wrapped up it may feel like all the hard work is done, but you have one more job to do.

Did you know that we forget around 70% of new information after a day of learning it? Part of ensuring the long-term success of your SKO is to set up a robust follow-up strategy.

Everybody's energised and ready to tackle the new sales year, so execute your follow-up plan to keep your learners focused and on the right track, maintaining that energy and engagement for the following 12 months.

\*Ebbinghaus, H. (1885). Memory, trans. HA Ruger and CE Bussaniss, New York: Teachers College.



## Three things to remember:

- Learning objectives are key
- Design for the space
- Follow up properly

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