Upduo

The Upduo Playbook

# How to Train Your Frontline Sales Workers

Watch a video, take a quiz. This is the most common way for sales reps to learn in the retail and service industries.

But anyone who has ever watched a training video knows that this is not the best way. Learning Management Systems (LMS) don't offer metric-driven learning solutions or the ability for reps to practice key sales skills and ask questions.

In this guide, we dive into the issues with standard training and show you how to implement continuous learning in a way that is measurable and impacts the metrics you care about.

Contents
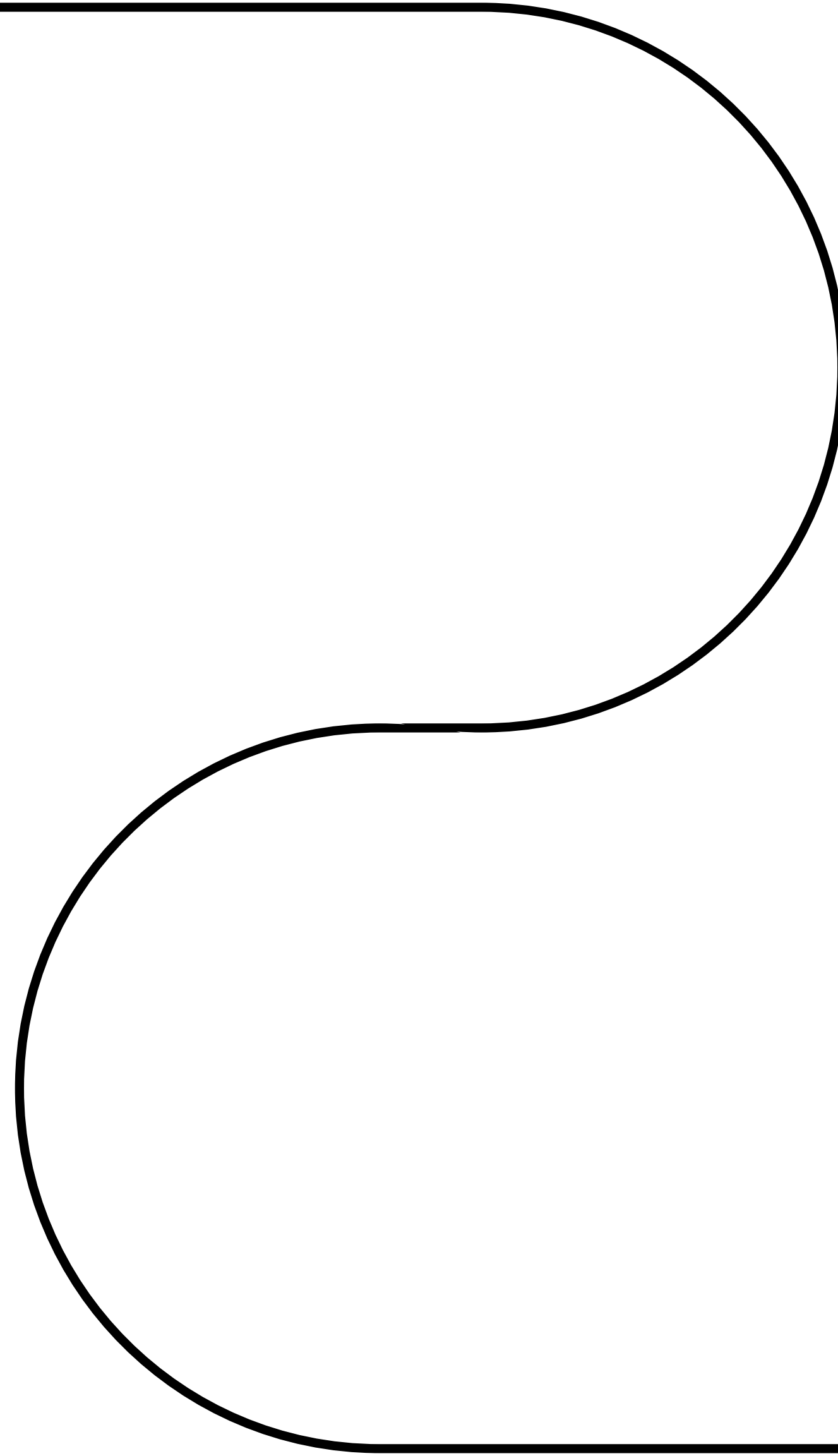
01

The challenges and opportunities with frontline sales

The challenges and opportunities with frontline sales

Whether in the wireless, automotive, department store, or other retail industry, sales employees are looking for an opportunity to earn commissions and grow their sales experience.

But without truly effective training, employees won't experience the higher paychecks that come along with great sales numbers.

The retail industry as a whole has an employee turnover rate of 60%*, but in some industries, such as wireless retailers, we've seen employers experience 80% losses of new hires within 90 days. Depending on your industry, your turnover rates might be somewhere in that 60–80% range.

60%
employee turnover rate of the retail industry as a whole*

80%
losses of new hires within 90 days in some industries, such as wireless retailers

*National Retail Federation

All in all, these are the most common reasons why sales employees turnover at high rates:

Burnout due to long shifts	**Lack of interaction with coworkers (field sales)**
Potential for higher pay elsewhere	**Perceived or real lack of upward promotion and earnings**
Ineffective onboarding and training	

A high turnover rate not only contributes to operational costs and hassles, but it also means that expertise is continuously lost.

Despite these challenges, there are opportunities. By offering training that aligns with frontline sales incentives and commissions, you can boost your sales while lowering turnover.
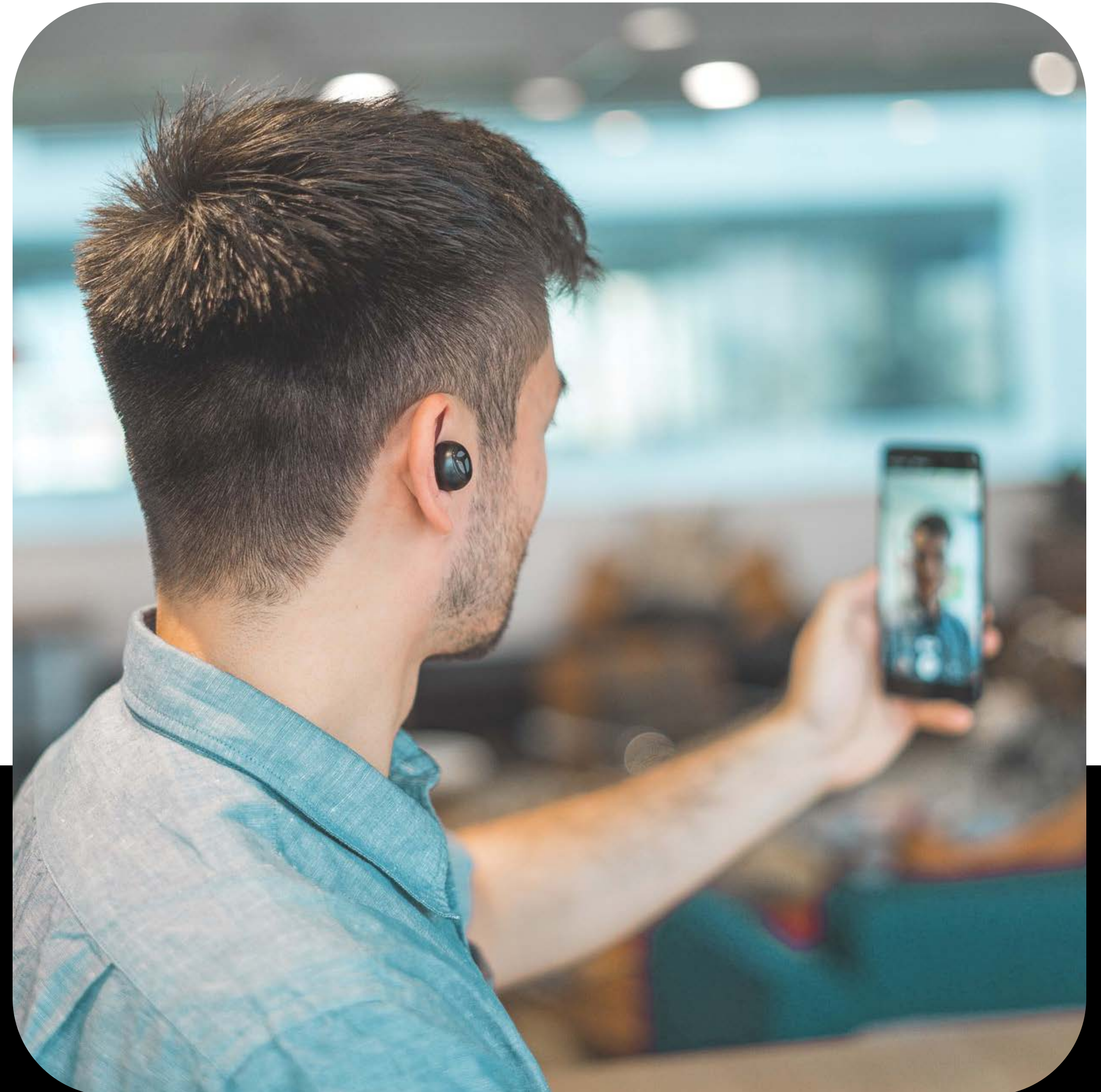
02

Why common training methods fail

Why common training methods fail

Before we explore new ways of training frontline sales teams, we need to first understand why current systems don't work.

An LMS is too passive

The most common format of employee onboarding and training is to passively watch a video. Because a traditional LMS does not map learnings to business metrics, most training is ineffective.

No one wants to roleplay

To resolve the ineffectiveness of LMS platforms, many learning directors will attempt to implement roleplaying. But having to act—especially in the presence of their peers or manager—only causes anxiety and embarrassment (the last thing you want when turnover is already sky high).

LMS content takes months to produce

LMS content is costly and time-consuming for learning departments to create. Businesses tend to keep the production quality high, and a single video can easily take months to release.

There's no continuous practice

Most companies don't have a system in place for continuous practice that employees actually enjoy. And that's a problem because reinforcing important subjects (again and again) is what really moves the needle in frontline sales.

Daniel Craig | Director of Retail Training, Prime Communications (Largest AT&T retailer in the US)
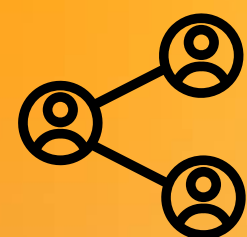
The industry standard is to watch a video and take a quiz. In my book, that's the lowest form of learning. Getting people to practice and engage, that's where the magic happens.

03

Introducing peer-to-peer training and coaching

Introducing peer-to-peer training and coaching

So what does work?

When it comes to improving sales, informal peer–to–peer conversations and mentoring sessions provide far better results than LMS platforms, roleplaying sessions, or company meetings.

Engages the entire team

The solution should engage everyone in the organization in an activity (not passive learning) so that employees can continue to learn and share their knowledge with each other.

Offers regular practice

Training is never a one–time deal. Make sure to implement a solution that is built for ongoing practice. By practicing the same concepts with different partners, employees will reinforce the subjects while keeping sessions fresh.

Strategically matches partners across the org

Choose a system that uses technology to match up peers from different locations, so your learning department doesn't have to schedule sessions. The solution should be able to match the right people (such as new employees with experienced employees).

Enables scalable curriculum

When replacing or supplementing your LMS, you don't want to sacrifice scalability. The solution you choose should allow you to scale and re–use your session topics, conversation starters, and prompts easily across the entire organization.

Feels easy, enjoyable, and natural

Peer-to-peer training sessions should be something that employees want to participate in, rather than feeling awkward or pointless. Be mindful of this when choosing a solution and when developing curriculum. Allow employees to naturally share their ideas and challenges, without having to roleplay or act.

Provides participation tracking

With peer-to-peer training sessions happening across your organization, there will be a lot of useful data produced. Make sure that you can track participation by individual, store, and session type. You should also be able to track overall company progress by skill.

## Makes it easy to calculate ROI

The solution you choose should offer ROI tracking capabilities, integrate with your CRM, and/or provide insights that you can use when calculating ROI. This way, you can discover correlations between training participation and sales results and drill down into which types of sessions have the biggest impact.

04

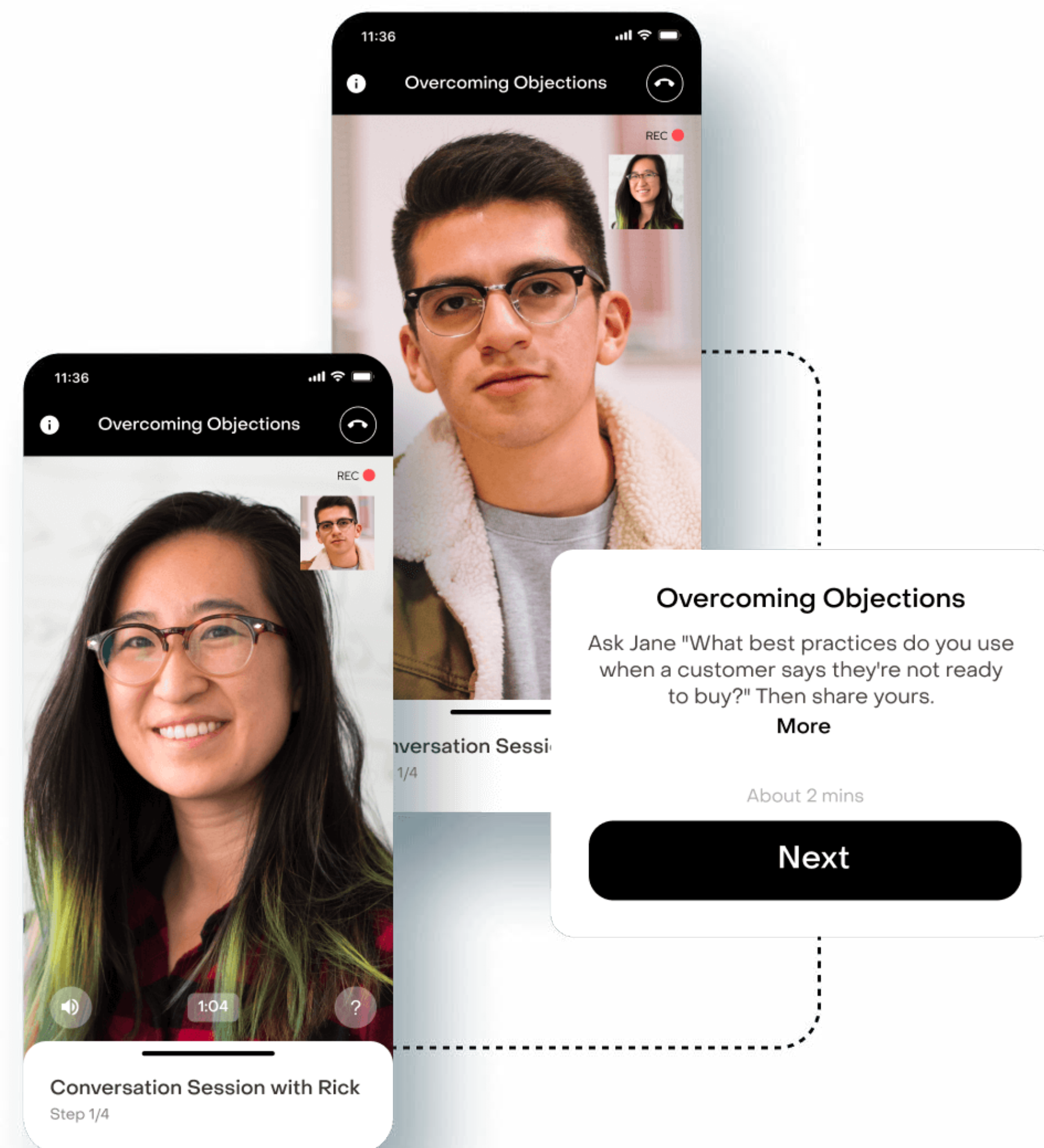# How to use Upduo to boost sales
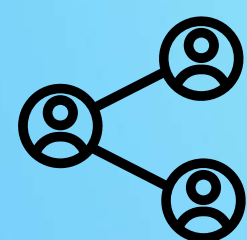
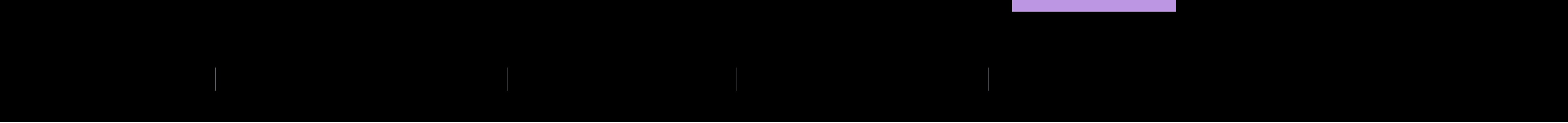# How to use Upduo to boost sales

Upduo is an ROI-driven learning platform designed for frontline sales teams.

Employees connect with partners during **1:1 mobile video calls** to learn and practice new skills together.

Cards guide them through the conversation and prompt them to discuss topics and share ideas in a natural way (no roleplaying) in just 5–7 minutes per session.
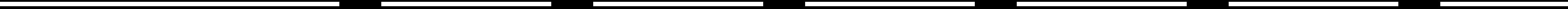
Upduo sessions are designed to sharpen necessary sales skills, map learnings to bottom line results, and develop confident, capable sales representatives.

Overcoming Objections

Ask Jane "What best practices do you use when a customer says they're not ready to buy?" Then share yours.
More

About 2 mins

Next

Conversation Session with Rick
Step 1/4

The most effective training engages employees on a regular basis in conversations and idea-sharing that will truly benefit them and arm them with tons of useful strategies when handling objections, pitching new products, or addressing customer concerns.

To put all of this into practice, we've defined a 7-part process for training employees and boosting sales with Upduo.

01 Pick a metric to uplift
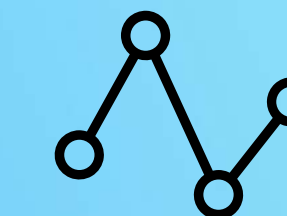
The first step is to identify a problem that you want to solve. This could be something simple, like increasing sales for a seasonal promotion, or something more complex, like activating new employees quicker.

Sales Metrics to Improve with Upduo:

- Sales of a specific product
- Sales of a specific subscription or plan
- Accessory and add-on sales
- Average monthly sales volume for new employees (under 90 days)
- Average monthly sales volume per store

Upselling: The Big Opportunity

If you want to overhaul your training processes, but aren't sure what to start with first, we recommend beginning with a curriculum on upselling. This is a quick win for both organizations and commission-based sellers. For example, Upduo customers in the smartphone industry experience a 25% uptick in accessories sales in 6-8 weeks on average.

Results From Upduo's Peer-to-Peer Training Sessions

Upduo customers have achieved these results:

20%
more device protection revenue for Prime Communications

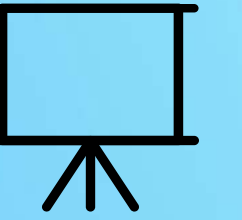**50%**
less staff turnover for MyWireless

18%
increase in close rates across all clients

Develop training session content

The next step is to come up with the curriculum. We're not talking about long, boring videos for employees to watch, but rather prompts that will guide employees through productive 1:1 conversations. Employees might share ideas of how to overcome objections, their favorite ice breakers to use with customers, or how they pitch hard-to-sell subscriptions.

If you choose to work with Upduo, our education team will work with you to come up with session content, based on the best practices we've discovered through upskilling other sales teams.

Example Session Prompts:
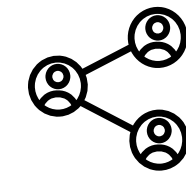
Beyond Your Favorite Feature

· Introduce yourself

· Take turns sharing the least interesting features of [product name] to you

· Discuss who might care about the features that you don't care about and why

· Brainstorm 3 open-ended questions you could ask to see if someone has preferences for these features

Overcome a Competitor Objection

· Introduce yourself and say what you like about your products compared to the products of [competitor name]

· Brainstorm some best practices when a customer says that [competitor name's] products are more affordable

· Partner 1: Explain how you would overcome a customer's objection when they mention why they're considering a product from [competitor name]

· Partner 2: Brainstorm some ways a customer might respond

· Share feedback on each other's ideas
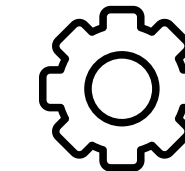
Pitch It Together

· Introduce yourself

· Ask your partner, "What accessory do you love to sell and why?"

· Take turns answering

· Ask your partner, "What accessory is challenging for you to sell and why?"

· Take turns answering

· Pick the accessory that is the most challenging for you to sell and create a "Sell It In 60 Seconds" pitch

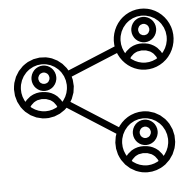· Share your pitches and offer feedback

03 Choose the right peer-to-peer matching method
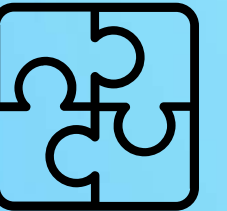
You need to pick a method for matching sales reps in real-time. With Upduo, you can utilize our algorithmic matching or set scheduled times and communicate these with your team.

Algorithmic Matching Versus Scheduled Sessions:

Algorithmic Matching

For organizations of over 250 sales reps, you can utilize Upduo's algorithmic matching. When they're ready to start a session, employees will be matched with someone else who's available. You can categorize employees so that matches will be with managers, more senior reps, or peers.

Scheduled Session Times

For smaller organizations, you should set scheduled weekly times. For example, you might encourage employees to fulfill their session requirements between the hours of 2–3pm or 6–8pm. This way, there will be enough people available to pair up.

You might also be wondering if you should match people based on their seniority levels. This all comes down to your main goals. If you want to use Upduo for boosting sales, peer-to-peer training is highly effective. Peers talk with each other and share hard-earned lessons from the trenches. Nothing is theoretical or fluffy. Peers feel more comfortable when working with each other, and are less likely to get performance anxiety.

Peer-to-peer sessions can also improve company culture and foster a belief that it's everyone's job to uplift each other.

However, there are benefits to pairing inexperienced sellers with executive leaders. This can help sales reps learn how to achieve their career goals and understand the potential for promotion within the company.

And when you pair inexperienced sellers with experienced sellers, you ensure that knowledge is being transferred and that employee turnover doesn't mean that collective experience has to go to waste.
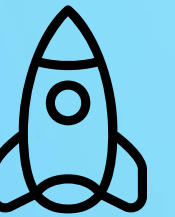
Set a requirement for weekly or monthly sessions
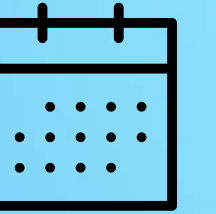
Give employees a requirement for how many sessions they need to do.

You might set an expectation of 1–2 sessions per week, or 4–8 sessions per month. Let them know that they can always do more sessions when work is slow or when they want to practice a certain skill or offer.

05 Launch the pilot group

We recommend starting off with a pilot group that's about 20% the size of your workforce.

Rolling out with a smaller group is not only easier, but it's also more effective. You can check your results and make sure that sales numbers are positively impacted before rolling out the same content to the company at large.

If the original content isn't as effective as you imagined, you can go back to the drawing board and try a different approach.

06 Measure results

Top Metrics to Watch for Movements:

|	
Total sales per store	**Specific product sales**
Total sales per employee	**Employee retention**
Promotional or seasonal sales	**Employee average rating of employer**
Accessories per opportunity rate	**Employee average rating of company culture**
Specific subscription	

Calculate whether or not the training sessions had an impact on the key metric you wanted to improve. You can measure this in a few different ways. Let's say you want to improve your accessories per opportunity rate (APO). You could compare the pilot group's first two months of using Upduo with the two months prior or with a similarly sized group of employees not using Upduo for the same time period. Or for a third option, you could compare your new APO with your former annual average baseline. Once you know that your practice curriculum is effective, you can roll it out to all of your staff.
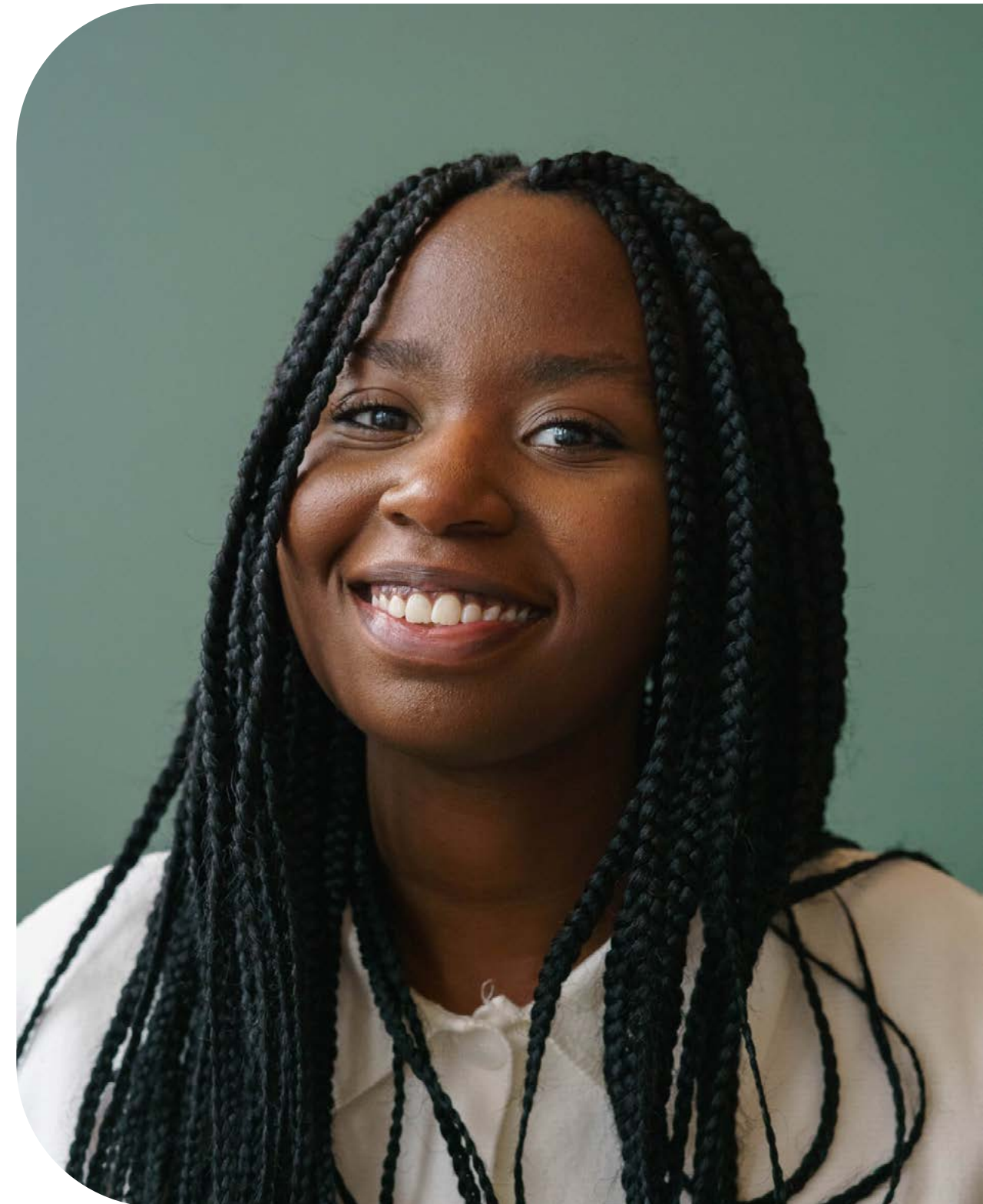
Repeat this process to achieve new goals
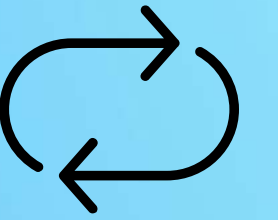
What metrics do you want to impact next?

If you started off with session curriculum for accessory sales, you might develop onboarding curriculum to see if you can activate new hires faster.

Or, if your first curriculum was more general (handling objections, practicing pitches, etc.) in order to boost overall sales volume, you might try creating curriculum for a seasonal promotion to see if you can beat last year's numbers.

Glenn Soliven | Associate Director of Talent Development & Brand

Upduo has allowed us to join team members in all states we operate and share learning, increase engagement, and build meaningful relationships beyond their four walls. Engagement is at an all time high and team members feel are loving the interactions they have with other team members in the company. And its showing in our performance as we are trending to beat out our 2021 metrics.

The best way to learn is to practice. Scheduling regular practice for thousands of employees can be a nightmare. With Upduo, you can run **highly effective and scalable practice sessions** that employees will actually want to participate in, all in less time than it takes to organize training events or produce LMS content.

To learn more about virtual peer-to-peer training and find out if Upduo is right for you, contact sales@upduo.com.