If Enablement Equips Sellers, Who Owns Account Expansion?

A CRO Brief on Closing The Strategic Account Support Gap

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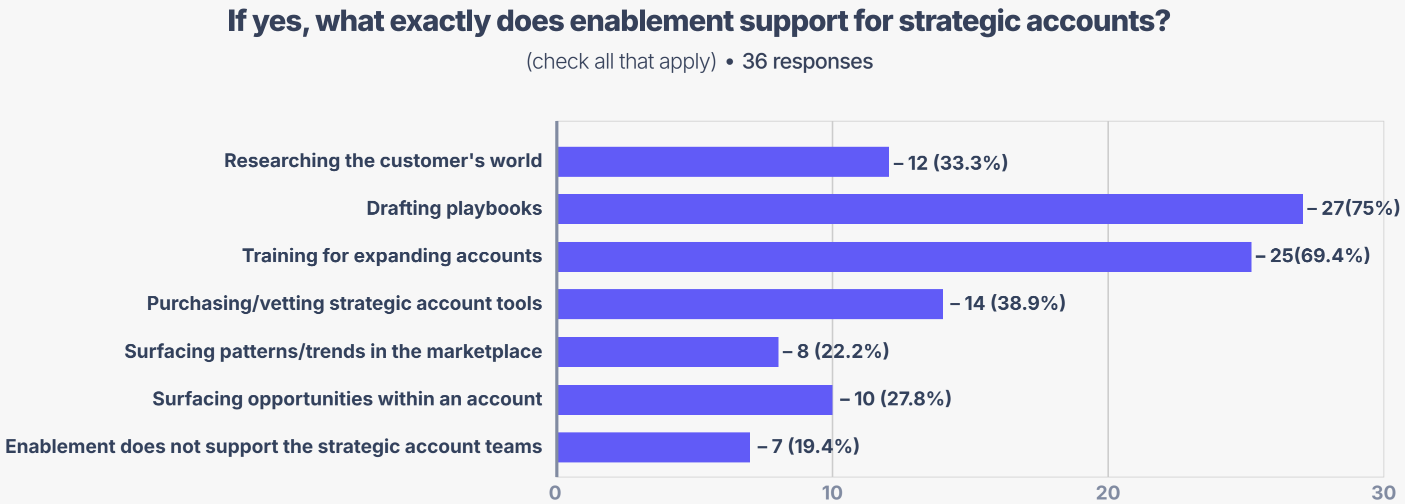
Executive Summary

Revenue leaders often assume Sales Enablement has strategic accounts covered. Enablement teams do excel at operational work: training, playbooks, and tools that help sellers execute. But the work that drives growth in large accounts, including researching the customer's world, spotting patterns, and surfacing expansion moves, rarely has a clear owner inside the organization, and it almost never sits within enablement.

In a short survey of 31 enablement professionals from Global 2000 and mid-market companies across multiple industries, tactical activities dominated; strategic activities appeared far less often. That isn't a failure of enablement; it points to a role-definition gap. The responsibility for customer-driven growth has not been assigned.

This brief explores this gap and why CRO-approved strategies can stall once routed to enablement. It's a practical read — a way to turn signals into action and move accounts forward.

What We Observed – A Directional Snapshot



- **~84%** say they support strategic accounts; most describe training, playbooks, and tool work.
- Strategic tasks show up far less: **~35%** customer research, **~29%** opportunity surfacing, **~23%** pattern detection.
- No clear pattern by team size in this snapshot; points to scope, not headcount.

Takeaway: **Enablement equips sellers; ownership of insight-to growth is unclear—that's the stall point.**

External Alignment

Recent industry reports emphasize seller readiness—content, skills, and coaching—but stop short of assigning ownership for strategic account planning or orchestration to enablement. Different lanes, different outcomes.

Why Deals Stall When Routed to Enablement

Enablement is built for readiness and adoption, onboarding, launches, coaching, and tools. When strategic account growth is routed there, strong C-suite interest often slows. Momentum fades because the buying group shifts into internal loops where no team owns insight-to-action across stakeholders. More context won't fix it; an operating role will.

The Operating Answer - CRO-led Activation (Strategic Account Manager + Commercial Insight Strategist)

Owner: CRO sponsors the motion and keeps it out of the maze.

Team: Strategic Account Manager + Commercial Insight Strategist (CIS)

- CIS generates insight - surfaces early signals, frames possibilities, creates the narrative, and feeds the team while the window is open.
- SAM consumes and converts – turns insight into coordinated stakeholder movement and measurable revenue outcomes. Creation to consumption; then to action.

Alignment Leadership - The Connective Tissue

Treat "enablement" here as alignment leadership: ensure insights trigger cross-functional action rather than more content for its own sake.

Four core functions:

1. **Insight-to-message** - translate CIS findings into customer-ready narratives, push to the right teams at the right time.
2. **Cross-functional coordination** - tie insights to account-specific moves with owners and dates.
3. **Workflow governance** - run the AI-enabled workflows that bridge research to execution; monitor adoption.
4. **Feedback loops** - capture what works, feed it back into CIS processes, scale the best plays.

What changes:

- Teams act on early signals faster
- Messages stay consistent across stakeholders.
- Moves inside complex accounts happen sooner and with more confidence.
- AI helps people do the right work at the right time.

Note: This doesn't "replace enablement." It clarifies lanes and elevates the connective work so the account team can move. owns insight-to-action across stakeholders. More context won't fix it; an operating role will.

What is a *CIS*?

Purpose: Convert customer signals into actionable insights for Key accounts

Primary outputs: Opportunity Reports; stakeholder storylines; risk/trigger alerts.

Works with: SAM (who consumes and executes); Enablement as alignment leadership.

Where it sits: Often under the CRO or Strategic Accounts leader.

Why now: More stakeholders; faster priority shifts; teams need a role focused on insight-to-action.

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How to Use This Brief in Your Activation Sequence

Give each stakeholder the shortest piece they need to keep momentum. This brief should come early to avoid a detour into enablement-as-procurement; then hand it off to the Activation Team.

A simple path:

1. CRO session - 30 minutes. Align on the gap and the SAM + CIS model.
2. Short asset sequence - This brief > an activation guide > a planning system primer.
3. Stand up the Activation Team - SAM + CIS run a first account plan with defined expansion moves; then measure progress and share quick wins.

Self-diagnosis - five qualifying questions for CROs

1. Who owns connecting customer signals to account growth today?
2. How are insights translated into account-specific messages and moves?
3. What workflow turns new signals into cross-functional action within a week?
4. How do SAMs consume CIS-style insight outputs
5. What feedback loop scales? What works across accounts within a quarter?

If your answers are vague, you've found the stall point.

Where CROs Go From Here

When you evaluate expansion selling and Go to Customer™ strategies, do five things:

1. Audit ownership; designate who turns signals into account moves (SAM + CIS or equivalent).
2. Check the workflow; monitor how fast early signals become actions across stakeholders.
3. Inspect the plan system; determine if there a living account plan with clear owners and dates.
4. Measure what matters; expansion velocity, stakeholder coverage, and storyline consistency.
5. Decide the pilot; stand up a SAM + CIS team on one strategic account; 60-day readout.

Build your path with proven resources:

- Selling What's Possible Book; practical guide for Go to Customer and expansion selling.
- Selling What's Possible & Margin Makers podcasts; conversations with leaders who strive to run this motion well.
- White papers; best practices for account growth, alignment, and activation workflows.

Two Ways to Engage Now:

Explore the resources; access the book, podcasts, and white papers; pick one tactic to test this quarter.

Run a 30-minute CRO session; map your expansion path; confirm ownership; stand up a SAM + CIS pilot.

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