Solution Academy Provides Foundational Knowledge of VMware for Sales Staff

VMware and Youd-Andrews

Best Program for Sales Training and Performance

August 2022

Company Background

Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	Palo Alto, CA
Year Founded	1998
Revenue	$11.5B
Employees	31,000
Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)	VMware operates globally with offices throughout North America, Europe (10 countries), Asia Pacific (7 countries), Latin America (3 countries), Middle East/Africa (2 countries).
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	VMware streamlines the journey for organizations to become digital businesses that deliver better experiences to their customers and empower employees to do their best work. Our software spans App Modernization, Cloud, Networking & Security and Digital Workspace.
Industry	Software
Stock Symbol	VMW
Website	www.vmware.com

Company Background

Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	San Jose, CA
Year Founded	2019
Revenue	500k
Employees	7
Global Scale	North America
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	SUPER*MEGA*BOSS is a training development company based in Silicon Valley. We develop short videos, virtual, in-person, and SMS training designed to teach fundamental human skills and behaviors based in neuroscience. We also provide custom solutions to improve human performance.
	Our clients are global Fortune 500 companies, as well as small and medium businesses, spanning Technology, Finance, Media, and Healthcare industries.
	The SUPER*MEGA*BOSS philosophy on creating content and learning experiences that are immersive and as engaging as what people look at outside of work is the cornerstone of our programs. We make the science of human skills both accessible and entertaining.
Industry	Training and Development
Stock Symbol	Private
Website	www.supermegaboss.com

Company Background

Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	High Wycombe, UK
Year Founded	1989
Revenue	US$3.5m
Employees	6
Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)	EMEA, AMER and APAC
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	Youd Andrews is an experiential training business development company based in High Wycombe UK. The Airline Industry uses Flight Simulation to prepare pilots for difficult encounters, so Youd Andrews created the Business Simulation to train sellers in difficult 'C' level conversation. Clients are global IT Services companies. The Youd Andrews philosophy is on creating experiential learning experiences, interacting with experienced Senior Executives, that are immersive and as engaging. We make the science of selling both accessible and entertaining using Virtual or Face-to-Face interactions.
Industry	Training and Development
Stock Symbol	Private
Website	www.youd-andrews.com

Budget and Timeframe

Budget and Timeframe	
Overall budget	$3.5 million
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	8 total core team members: Director of Sales Enablement Program Strategist Program Manager Project Manager 2 Learning Curriculum Architects Digital Learning Platforms Specialist Solutions Enablement Team Member 2 Vendor
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	42 total SME members: 15 cross-functional Advisory Council members 26 SMEs and Coaches and Customer Role Players 1 Internal Sales Facilitator
Number of contractors involved with implementation	2
Timeframe to implement	June – March 2021 (9 months)
Start date of the program	June 1, 2020

Business Conditions and Business Needs

There was a significant opportunity and need to quickly and remotely prepare and enable Field Sales representatives during the COVID-19 crisis.

The business conditions that led to the rapid development of the Solutions Academy included:

1. **COVID-19**: The pandemic impacted VMware and our Field Sales Representatives much like most of the world. VMware quickly transitioned to a remote work environment, which meant shifting to 100% remote sales. Our field sales groups adjusted to this new work-from-home paradigm but found challenges in the sales conversation process in this new virtual world. Simultaneously, customers were flocking to VMware for immediate assistance with their digital workspace

needs, and our field sales team needed to be able to respond to customer demands by supporting them with the full complement of the VMware portfolio.

2. **Continued rapid growth of the organization**: The Covid-19 situation drove rapid growth in the digital workspace market, which led to an increase in the business opportunities for VMware and thus a need for accelerated onboarding of new sales talent in a fully remote workplace. Sales enablement never slows down at VMware, and our continued expansion through further acquisitions and partner collaborations drove additional requirements for sales training focusing on content for new talent as well as refresher training for existing sellers.

3. **Complexity of the VMware Solutions Portfolio**: Acquisitions over the past year further expanded the Solutions Portfolio, increasing the diversity of the Solution offerings. Conversations with customers became much more complex with this evolving portfolio, and the enablement team needed a way to quickly upskill field sales in order to not just familiarize them with new solution capabilities, but also accelerate their solution area knowledge, so that they could hold comprehensive and prescriptive conversations with customers.

4. **Evolution of the sales culture:** VMware has been actively moving from a product-based sales model to a solution-based sales model over the past 3 years. Because of this transition, sales professionals must develop a broader understanding of each solution area and use it to guide their customer conversations. They are expected to apply their Solutions level knowledge when addressing customer needs in order to be more prescriptive in their sales strategy. This significant shift in the sales culture demands flexibility and collaboration, with sales professionals expected to increase their depth of understanding of Solutions and demonstrate an ability to adapt to and model new behaviors, all while adjusting to a virtual sales environment throughout 2020 and 2021.

5. **Evolution of enablement into a Flexible Capacity Academy model**: The long-term goal of the sales enablement organization is to develop a curriculum that guides sellers from a baseline level of essential solution knowledge to the development of applied solution sales skills, transitioning from a group workshop experience to a robust Capability Academy model that will support workflow learning, idea exchanges, and peer and manager coaching. The Solutions Academy lays the groundwork for this evolution in how field sales representatives adapt to new learning styles and receive just-in-time training.

Background:

In June 2020, the Sales Enablement team recognized the opportunity to deploy just-in-time learning for the field sales representatives dealing with the ongoing challenge of a global pandemic. The sales team consisting of over 11,000 team members shifted from in-person sales meetings focused on product-focused sales to a new virtual sales environment with a broader set of brand-new solutions on offer.

Due to this drastic, fast-moving change, field sales representatives were exhibiting low confidence in holding business-level conversations about the value of VMware solutions. They struggled with working cross-functionally within VMware as they had to transition to a fully virtual selling environment given the constraints of COVID-19. Waiting to address these learning needs until the next sales Worldwide Kick Off (WWKO) that happens annually in March was not going to be sufficient.

The Solutions Academy was developed as a method to not only establish greater core knowledge of Solutions, but also build additional soft skills needed to navigate the present challenges.

Overview

High Level Description:

The VMware solutions portfolio is large and complex as shown in the illustration below. The Sales Enablement team needs to ensure that everyone in the field sales organization masters the key "must know" elements of the 5 solutions areas and the proper progression through the 100+ products and services tied to these "franchises" at VMware. The conversations are varied and potentially intimidating, but not out of reach, even for new sales team members.
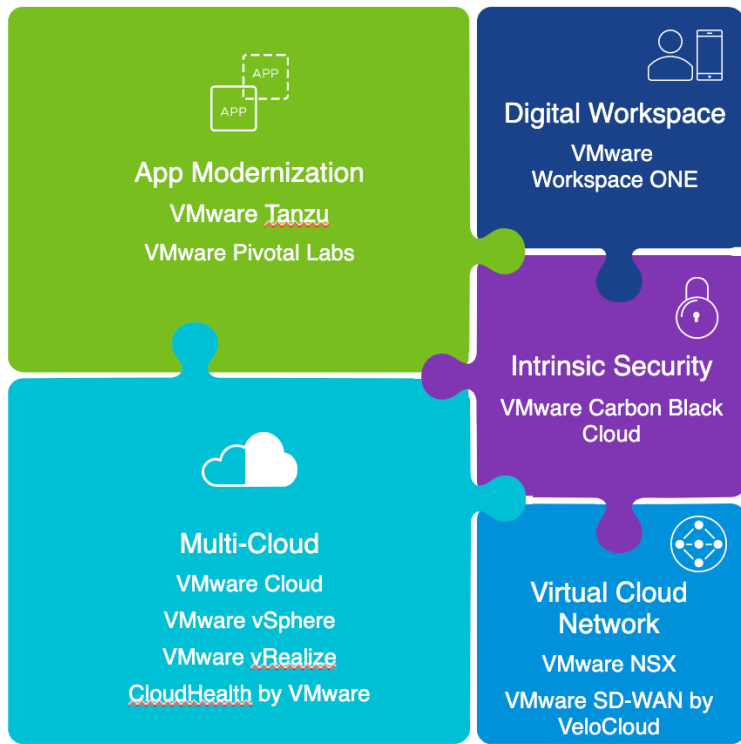
In brief, Solutions Academy is a program designed to help the growing sales team at VMware understand and better position our diverse Solutions Portfolio, confidently conduct introductory conversations with customers about each solution area and identify and qualify leads across many of the portfolio segments to generate a better multi-product pipeline.

The Solutions Academy consists of two parts:

Solutions Essentials is a series of short, on-demand micro-learnings that provide a high-level overview of each solution area. It is intended to accelerate stages 1 and 2 in the sales process (Prospect & Qualify) and is provided to the sales team as pre-work to be completed prior to the live workshop event.

Solutions Conversations Workshop is a live, virtual, instructor-led workshop that provides participants with an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills acquired from Solutions Essentials in a simulated deal. The Solutions Conversations Workshops are specific to segment and conducted virtually "in geo" or timed regionally (AMER, EMEA, APJ) and intended to accelerate stages 3 to 5 in the sales process (Validate, Design & Prove).

Intended outcomes and goals of the Solutions Academy:

1. Increase baseline level of solution knowledge
2. Build confidence in applying solutions to customer needs
3. Increase in qualified multi-product pipelines
4. Accelerate the Prospect & Qualify phases
5. Demonstrate the value of VMware's solutions to customers

Program Overview:

Solutions Academy is a two-part training curriculum, composed of Solutions Essentials, a self-paced E-learning, and Solutions Conversations Workshop, a live, instructor-led training.

Solutions Essentials consists of a series of nine, 3-to-5-minute microlearning modules for each of the five solutions areas, covering the following topics

- Elevator Pitch
- Value Proposition
- Keywords
- Triggers and Pain Points
- Qualifying Questions
- Use Cases & Categories
- Buyer Personas
- Competitive Differentiators
- Rules of Engagement

The content in each module is designed to accelerate stages 1 and 2 (Prospect & Qualify) of the sales process. Modules are available in one central location for on-demand, self-paced learning. Each module consists of a brief video and interactive lesson, as well as a short assessment. The content for each module is also available as a downloadable PDF "cheat sheet" that learners can use a takeaway resource for future reference.

Solutions Conversation Workshop consists of a half-day instructor led virtual workshop. It provides learners an opportunity to apply the Solutions Essentials content in a simulated customer deal interaction. The experience was designed to accelerate stages 3-5 (Validate, Design, & Prove) of the sales process. The workshop participants were grouped based on specific segments and geographies within each of our global sales regions (AMER, EMEA, APJ). During the workshop, subject matter experts played the roles of both customers and coaches, providing feedback and mentoring the participants throughout the sales simulations. Additional training was provided on brain based virtual selling tactics and collaborative tools to help support sellers with their virtual customer conversations.

The goals of the Solutions Conversation Workshop are:

- Participants will be able to identify their simulated customer's Future Ready phase and relevant VMware solutions
- Participants will help their simulated customers navigate through current initiatives and priorities
- Participants will be able to provide viable solutions and guidance that support their simulated customer's short and long-term objectives
- Participants will engage fully with their customer over a remote/virtual medium and practice communication and engagement techniques in their conversation

Phase one of the Solutions Academy, Solutions Essentials, was deployed in Q2 of FY21; phase two, Solutions Conversations Workshops, was deployed in Q3 and Q4 as a lead in to our annual WWKO event in Q1FY22.

Additionally, the Solutions Academy is expanding beyond this introductory Solutions curriculum (referred to internally as L100) to an intermediate (called L200) which will provide a more in-depth understanding of the solution. The L200 curriculum will introduce sellers to the use cases, whiteboards, demos, and common verticals and customer environments for each of the five Solutions. The long-term plan for the program is to extend the curriculum further, by introducing product integrations (L300) and addressing the complex designs and architectures of each solution. The full curriculum is designed to increase the sales professionals' deep technical understanding of each Solution, with an opportunity for learners to demonstrate Mastery of the solution in the terminal level (L400).

Impact on the Organization:

VMware needed to move quickly to equip sales professionals with tangible skills that could be built within the flow of work and during an unprecedented pandemic. Solutions Essentials provides a wide range of new skills in easy, digestible format for sales professionals, while the Solutions Conversations Workshop provides a method for the sales team to practice and hone those skills for use in real sales opportunities.

	Knowledge Gained	Skills Gained
Solutions Essentials	+ Broader depth of understanding of 5 Solutions areas + Understanding of customer triggers and pain points + Deeper understanding of personas + competitive landscape	+ Ability to create elevator pitches, value propositions + Ability to determine customer issues + Application of use cases and categories relevant to customers + Application of the sales "Rules of Engagement" for collaboration with broader teams
Solutions Conversations Workshop	+ Understanding of proper positioning of solutions by buyer personas + When to pull in different team roles into a sales conversation and when + Virtual selling and engagement techniques	+ Application of financial acumen and account planning + Ability to respond to competitive scenarios + Validation of operational tools + Use of questioning techniques to uncover business issues

		+ Application of objection handling techniques
		+ Use of collaborative virtual whiteboarding tools

Macro impacts of the Solutions Academy:

Overall, the Solutions Academy has accomplished the macro goals of deploying a large amount of high quality, workflow-based consumable content quickly that the sales team could apply in the new remote business environment.

The high-level assessment data indicated an increase in confidence as well as a high degree of application of the course material

SOLUTIONS ESSENTIALS:

Solution Essential	Overall Satisfaction (out of 5)	"I will be able to apply knowledge and skills to my job"	"To what extent did you gain confidence in the topics covered in this course"
App Modernization	4.53	4.54	4.48
Digital Workspace	4.67	4.67	4.66
Intrinsic Security	4.52	4.56	4.50
Multi-Cloud	4.56	4.57	4.51

App Modernization Solutions Essentials		
Please rate your overall satisfaction with the program.		4.53
I clearly understand the purpose/objective of the program.		4.61
I will be able to apply the knowledge and skills to my job		4.54
Participating in the program was a valuable use of my time		4.51
The sequencing of the training (i.e., order of the courses/topics presented) within the program was logi...		4.55
The time allocated to EACH course/topic was (pick from choices: sufficient, excessive, or inadequate.)		4.54
To what extent did you gain confidence in the topics covered in the course?		4.48

Digital Workspace Solutions Essentials		
Please rate your overall satisfaction with the program.		4.67
I clearly understand the purpose/objective of the program.		4.69
I will be able to apply the knowledge and skills to my job		4.67
Participating in the program was a valuable use of my time		4.68
The sequencing of the training (i.e., order of the courses/topics presented) within the program was logi...		4.68
The time allocated to EACH course/topic was (pick from choices: sufficient, excessive, or inadequate.)		4.72
To what extent did you gain confidence in the topics covered in the course?		4.66

Intrinsic Security Solutions Essentials		
Please rate your overall satisfaction with the program.		4.52
I clearly understand the purpose/objective of the program.		4.62
I will be able to apply the knowledge and skills to my job		4.56
Participating in the program was a valuable use of my time		4.51
The sequencing of the training (i.e., order of the courses/topics presented) within the program was logi..		4.55
The time allocated to EACH course/topic was (pick from choices: sufficient, excessive, or inadequate.)		4.53
To what extent did you gain confidence in the topics covered in the course?		4.50

Multi-Cloud Solutions Essentials		
Please rate your overall satisfaction with the program.		4.56
I clearly understand the purpose/objective of the program.		4.60
I will be able to apply the knowledge and skills to my job		4.57
Participating in the program was a valuable use of my time		4.53
The sequencing of the training (i.e., order of the courses/topics presented) within the program was logi..		4.59
The time allocated to EACH course/topic was (pick from choices: sufficient, excessive, or inadequate.)		4.56
To what extent did you gain confidence in the topics covered in the course?		4.51
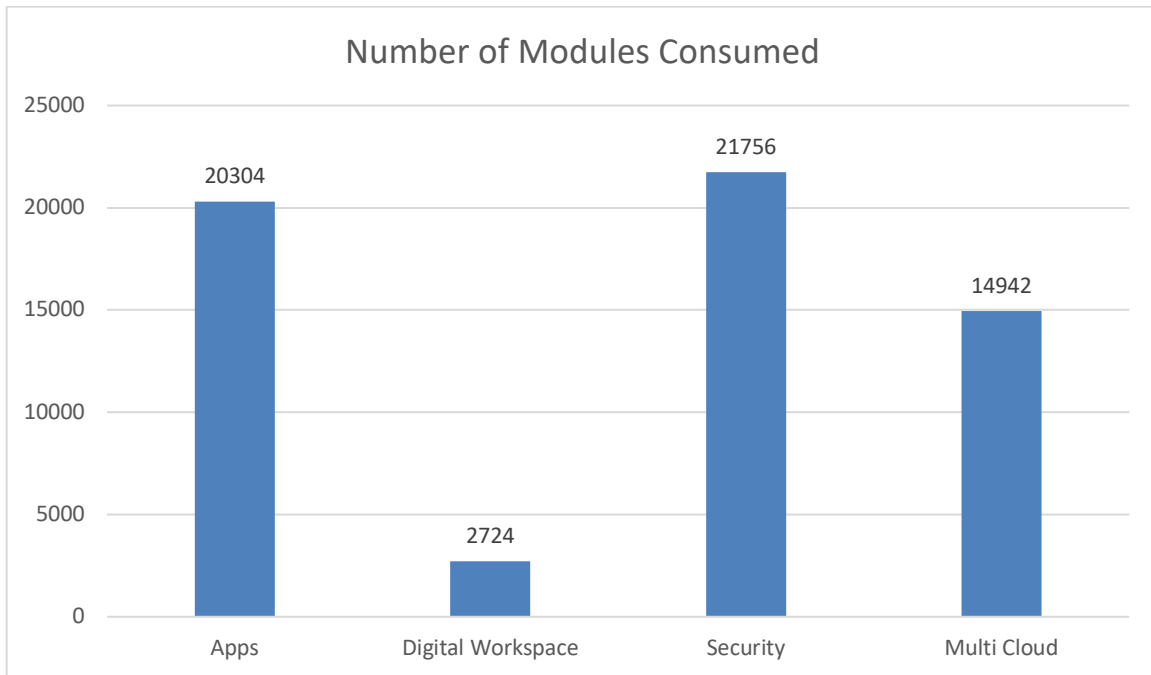
Number of Modules Consumed

Category	Value
Apps	20304
Digital Workspace	2724
Security	21756
Multi Cloud	14942

SOLUTIONS CONVERSATIONS WORKSHOPS:

4.55/5
Labs/hands-on exercises were a valuable component of the training

4.33/5
To what extent did you gain confidence in the topics covered in the course?

4.33/5
The content addressed my long-term enablement needs.

The overall success of the Solutions Conversations Workshop pilot led to a broader implementation and inclusion as part of the pre-event workshops for the Worldwide Kickoff program.

Delivery of the Program

Delivery of the Solutions Academy experience varies and driven by the learner. The Solutions Essentials component is a workflow learning experience, intended to be engaged in the flow of work. Building capabilities through microlearning is at the learner's discretion and can allow for ongoing refreshes of the microlearning modules. The Solutions Conversations Workshop is a 2 half-day event held virtually interspersed with offline group work and collaboration.

	Solutions Essentials	Solutions Conversation Workshop
Delivery method	Remote, self-service microlearning modules	Virtual workshop over Zoom in 3 geographies
Components and resources	+ 9 microlearning video components for each of 5 Solutions Areas	+ Sample Customer Case Study CXO profile and customer data provided by Youd Andrews + Pre-event preparation calls + Pre-read overview of fictional customer + Customer guides + Coaching guides + Participant workbooks + Collaboration tool: Miro whiteboard + Miro Solutions whiteboard for each team of participants

		+ Teams chat boards and resource pages
Facilitation	--	Facilitated by a sales facilitator and a team of sales coaches Supported by external vendor to provide Collaborative Selling content and guidance on collaborative tool (Miro)
Timeframe	Workflow learning: meant to be deployed by the learner as needed in the flow of sales process activities	Two half-day components used to simulate customer meetings

Objectives of the Solutions Conversation Workshop:

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

Identify their customer's Future Ready phase and relevant solutions

Help their customers navigate through their current initiatives/priorities

Provide viable solutions and guidance that support short and long-term objectives

Participation for the Solutions Conversation Workshop included a broad-based collaboration team that mirrored actual customer facing sales teams. It was important to include a variety of roles to accurately depict the types of collaboration happening in the field with the sales organization. As the "rules of the road" on how the teams were changing, the Workshop provided an opportunity to practice communication behaviors and how to lead the customer conversations, pulling in the right role as needed, just like in a real customer experience.
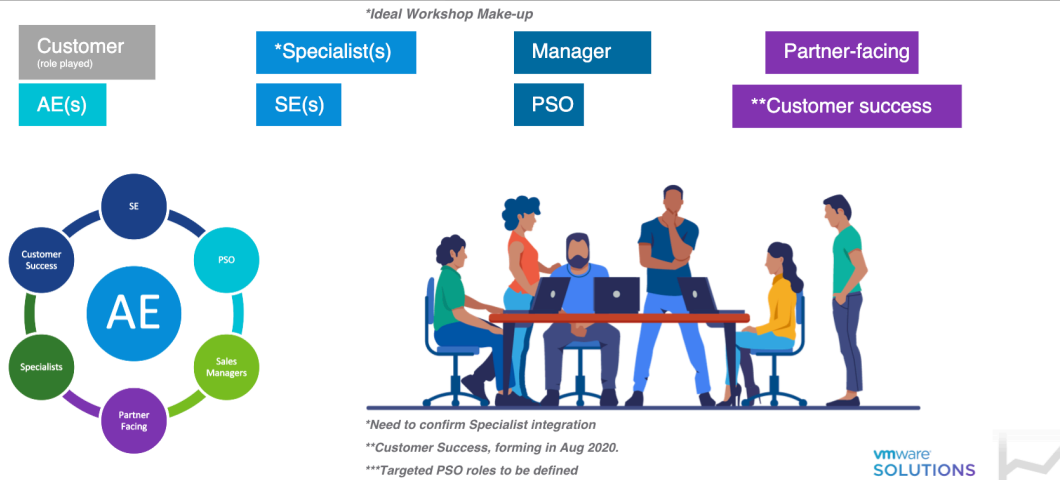
Offline work between the workshop sessions provided an opportunity to dive deeper into reflection from the team on how the Discovery and Validation sessions went, as well as build a collaborative customer-facing discussion board using Miro whiteboard technology.
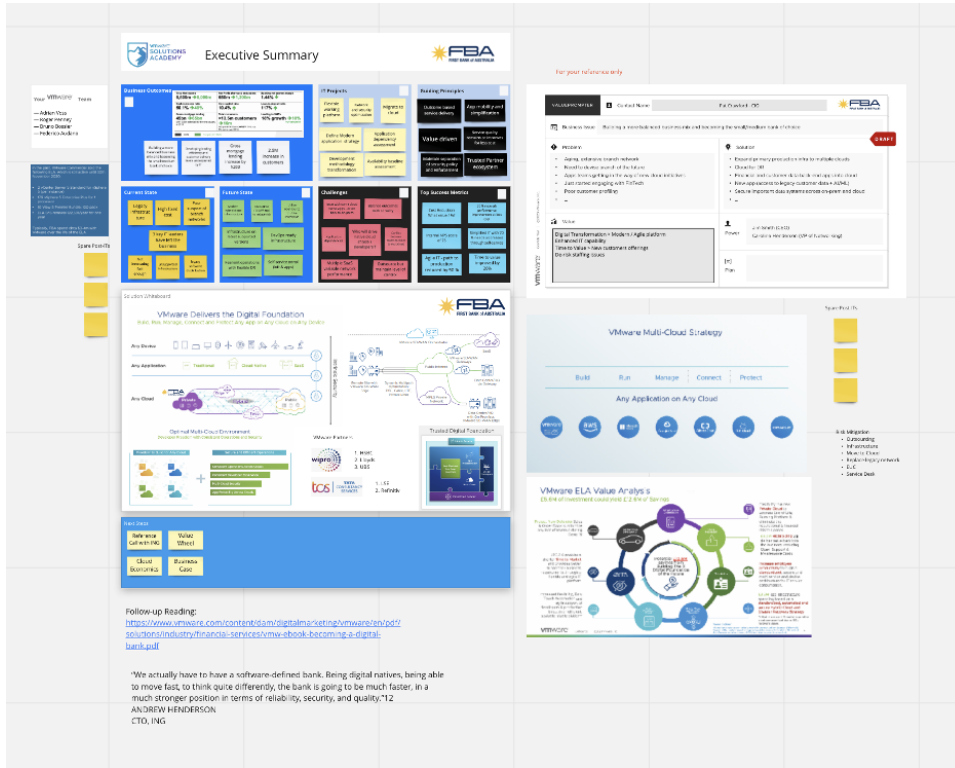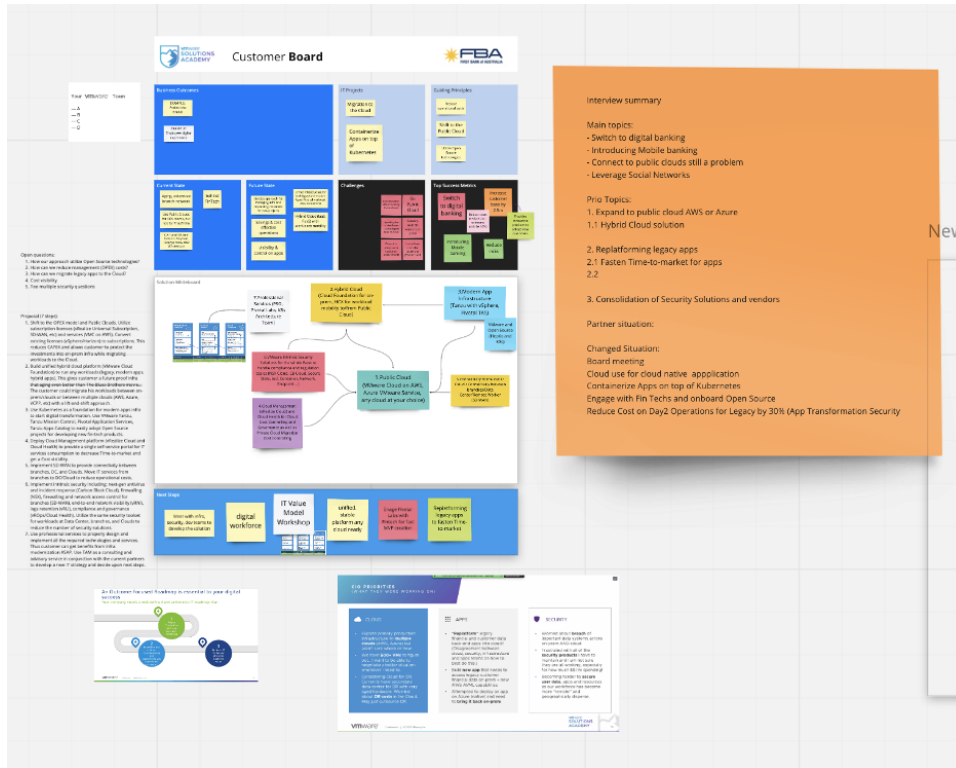
The teams created collaborative discussion boards using Miro technology, allowing them to collaborate synchronously with each other as well as invite the customer along to work together on building a solution. The boards allowed virtual "sticky note" collaboration on

key challenges, solutions diagrams, goals and objectives, as well as brainstorming areas to align on outcomes.

Sample Miro Collaboration boards created by the teams:

Additionally, the team used Microsoft Teams for additional collaboration, building a sense of virtual community with the coaches and program team to assess in real time how the learner teams were engaging in the role plays.

Microsoft Teams conversations:

Matthew Steiner 10/15/20 1:46 AM
I really want to take over a bit - but I am letting them crack on....

Tore Brynaa 10/15/20 1:46 AM
Matthew Steiner - that balance is soo hard ... coach but ot solve

Elan Yanovsky 10/15/20 3:29 AM 👍 1
Hi. Sorry but I have to move to a customer call. A long one. Time to say goodbye and thank you for this GREAT initiative!

Amy Scott 10/5/20 11:55 PM
i'm wondering if next time we should have a group coach after this discovery. cut the small group coaching short and join up together for a big group coach for a few mins

Furthermore, the program team developed a resource portal on Microsoft Teams to provide a one-stop access point for the materials, guides, and preparation work for facilitators, coaches, and participants. The Solutions Conversations Workshop had many moving parts, and the portal provided a comprehensive overview for all participants to easily access and get questions answered.

The "Know Before U Go" or KBUG resource provided a series of email communications to help participants, coaches, and facilitators handle last minute questions and provided reminders of upcoming deadlines.

Upcoming TTT Sessions
- Invites have been sent to help you better understand your role.
- Please take a moment to lock these sessions in your calendar.
- If you all want to meet sooner – happy to set up. Just let me know.

Purpose	Date	Notes
Discuss Solutions Academy Program and Roles in Solutions Conversations Workshop.	Thursday, Sept 17	Gain Support Commitment
Train-the-Trainer: Walkthrough Sales Coaching/Customer Role (Option 1)	Thursday, Sept 24 (APJ) (Wed, Sept 23 PST)	Pick one of two options
Train-the-Trainer: Walkthrough Sales Coaching/Customer Role (Option 2)	Mon, Sept 28 PST & APJ	Pick one of two options
Final Dry-Run: SA Workshop - All Presenters & Coaches - *Please Prioritize*	Thursday, October 1 (Wed, Sept 30)	Prioritize. We'll go thru everything end to end, test breakout rooms, review groups, etc.
Open Office Hours for any open questions	Monday, Oct 5 PST & APJ	Optional – stop by for a few min if you need anything.
Pilot delivery	October 6 & 7	

Session Invite
- Presenter placeholder sent for Oct 6 & 7 to block your calendar. Dial-in info to come.
- Presenters/Program staff will start at least 30 min in advance of the actual session start to ensure we're all set to go. (Audio/last min questions/breakout room procedures)

Content Drafts
- Visit the Pilot Resources Portal
- **Expect some refinements to these assets over the next couple of days**, as we look at some of the feedback we received in Pilot.
  - BTW, we didn't get to speak too much about AMER Pilot, I know I mentioned that it went great. A few things we can polish up (directions, more time for activities) but participants received it very positively.
- If you have feedback on any of materials or how we are executing – let us know.
- In the next few days I'll be posting some recordings from the AMER pilot so you can better idea of what to expect.

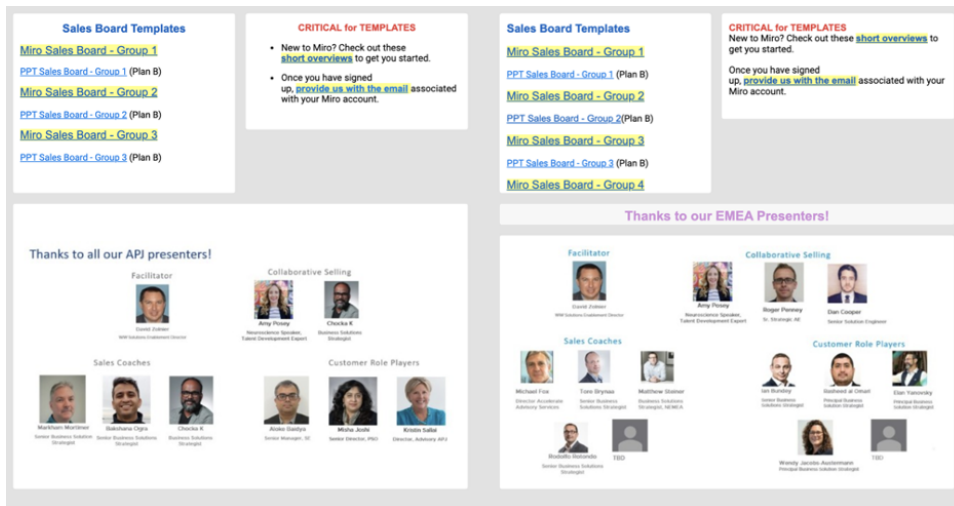| Workshop Asset	Notes
SA Workshop - PILOT Deck	**For Dave Z:** This deck will be shared by Dave during the event in the MAIN Zoom Room
SA Workshop - Sales Coach Guide	**For SALES COACHES.** Provides you information on each breakout and slides you can leverage/share in your breakout room.
SA Workshop - Customer Scenario for SALES	**For SALES COACHES & PILOT PARTICIPANTS:** This is the scenario you will be coaching your breakout group through.
SA Workshop - Customer Guide	**For CUSTOMER ROLES:** This is the background on the customer you will be playing and the business issues and challenge you are looking to address.
SA Workshop - Workbook	**For PILOT PARTICIPANTS:** This is their participant guide. They have the scenario info, areas to take notes, etc. This will be sent to participants in advance in their KBUG (Know Before You Go) comm. Targeted to push early next week.
SA Workshop - Show Flow	**For any SPEAKER/COACH/SUPPORT ROLE:** This will keep us straight. We will add "production" call outs to help all of us behind the scenes.

Thank you all so much for your support on this! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let us know.

Training content included a detailed customer case study provided by Youd Andrews and adapted from a VMware CXO program. Additionally, guides for coaches and participants were created, walking through step-by-step instructions for each of the sessions and breakouts.

Measurable Benefits

Solution Essential	Overall Satisfaction (out of 5)	"I will be able to apply knowledge and skills to my job"	"To what extent did you gain confidence in the topics covered in this course"
App Modernization	4.53	4.54	4.48
Digital Workspace	4.67	4.67	4.66
Intrinsic Security	4.52	4.56	4.50
Multi-Cloud	4.56	4.57	4.51

Number of Modules Consumed

SOLUTIONS CONVERSATIONS WORKSHOPS:

4.55/5
Labs/hands-on exercises were a valuable component of the training

4.33/5
To what extent did you gain confidence in the topics covered in the course?

4.33/5
The content addressed my long-term enablement needs.

Initial Pilot Feedback

Customer Discovery

Be prepared. greatest lesson learned. This said always know that a curveball is possible. Lead customer when possible

excellent practice. especially as a channel person to watch the approach of our teams, which ¡ then try to translate over to our channel partners

This scenario was good…. A little more prep time and objective setting by the coach in prep session (or maybe just more detailed guidance and explanation of the agenda up front of how the activities will be run and what we will be asked to to) would have helped make this session more productive.

More time here with more detail in advance so that we can ask better questions

Customer Role Players

Validate the Solution with Customer

It is good to validate the solution with the customer and allows for the practice of delivering the solution and addressing objections and questions. Specific outcomes expected should be given prior to the breakout, like commitment to workshop, introduction to the CFO, timeline...

¡ really liked how Anthony afterwards summarized that every room got to the outcome - confirmed next steps. I really think everyone had uncomfortable moments and things they would do better next time, but the take away that getting to the desired outcome (with some misses, stumbles and different paths) can be achieved.

Initial Pilot Feedback

Collaborative Selling

you guys nailed the messaging. really liked the 3-8 minutes speakers, having intentions and energy out of the gate

It is a great concept. More time should be spent on how to get the customers to buy into and participate in collaboration.
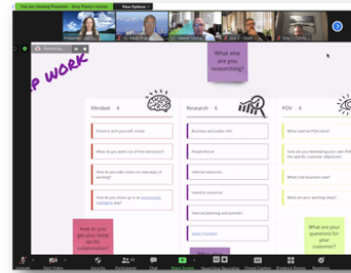
Powerful Introductions

Honestly a really appreciated this as I have been in the field for some time and comfortable with my role and after going through this exercise I will work on my intro...

It is always great to work on this and should be a part of every sales training.

I would like to see a slight pivot in intro to - 'what's in it for them'. have intention not just who are you (which many people did)

Overall

The overwhelmingly positive feedback received from participants in this program led to the immediate development of a follow up Solutions Intermediate (L200) curriculum to expand sellers' understanding of the VMware Solution Franchises at a deeper level.

While the goal of the Solutions L100 and Workshop was to help sellers feel more confident having introductory conversations about VMware's solutions, the goal of L200 is to provide them with more in-depth information to support them as they progress through the sales process and have expanded customer conversations and sales presentations. Solutions Intermediate (L200) builds off of the content covered in L100, however the approach becomes more granular in how to address the different solution areas and business drivers.

For each solution, modules were created that address each strategic Use Case within the solution area. Depending on the Solution Franchise, this could be as few as two use-cases or as many as eight. Because of the depth and breadth of information covered, these micro-learnings were of longer duration than the L100, with the average length for completion being approximately 7 to 10 minutes.

Each module features a section on Product Overview and Strategic Relevance, which provides learners with an introduction to the respective products that are applicable to the specific use case, as well as a discussion of the relevance of this use case in the current market. After highlighting common customer problems regarding the use case and demonstrating how VMware's solution solves the problems, the use case is then illustrated with a Real-World Customer Example that shows how an existing customer was able to use the solution and relevant products to address a particular need. Finally, the module concludes with a section on Competitive Differentiators that are specific to the solution features and capabilities, highlighting the aspects of the solution that are unique to VMware.

WWKO

The modules were developed in collaboration with the different Solution Franchises, and were designed to be used as pre-work for our annual Worldwide Sales Kickoff (WWKO) in March of 2021. Because the team worked closely with the different Solution franchise leads, we were able to tailor the content of the modules to support the solution messaging and new sales initiatives that were being presented at WWKO. Each solution franchise presented at least one 25-minute session at the virtual live event and used a similar approach by using a recent customer win as an example to illustrate a winning sales play for the solution.

By developing and releasing L200 in conjunction with WWKO, the team was able to provide our sellers with a more meaningful WWKO experience due to the immediately applicable enablement that accompanied the kickoff presentations. The Solution sessions at WWKO were mandatory for most sales professionals, and with our L200 curriculum, the team was able to prepare them for the sessions so that the information presented in the virtual live event had a deeper and more useful context for them. Not only did this further increase learner baseline knowledge of VMware Solutions, but it also enhanced their confidence to use the information from WWKO and address upcoming sales initiatives. Solutions knowledge was included in the Pitch2Win contest in FY22Q1 and Q2.

Lastly, as part of this development process, the team created a workflow that allows for continuous expansion the Solution curriculum such that is has become part of an ongoing

cycle of enablement that supports upcoming initiatives such as WWKO, Sales University, and specialty events. For example, VMware recently launched a new Cross Solution sales initiative on App and Cloud Transformation, which marries two solutions areas together into a new sales motion. By adopting the same framework used for Solutions Essentials, the team could quickly create three micro learning modules to support the event. This enabled our sellers to immediately come up to speed on the latest strategic sales initiative at VMware with a familiar enablement format that is concise and easy to consume. Rather than putting them in a position where they might feel overwhelmed by needing to understand and sell yet another solution package, they received just-in-time training to immediately provide them with the top three concepts they would need to be successful – an Elevator Pitch, Key Customer Challenges, and Value Proposition.

Looking Ahead and Changes:

As VMware continues to expand the Solutions curriculum, the team has identified other areas that are tangential to solution selling, but do not sit squarely in the realm of the individual franchises. For these areas, the team is in the process of developing new curriculum and enablement that will provide information on solution selling across different industry verticals, SaaS solution selling, and selling across the VMware Portfolio.

There has been a significant number of requests from our sellers for support in the area positioning our solutions within different verticals. In response, the team is beginning to develop a curriculum that will address the main verticals that VMware sells into, with specific content on which solutions are relevant to that vertical. This will provide yet another avenue for sellers to upskill quickly and prepare themselves for customer conversations.

SaaS is quickly becoming a primary sales driver at VMware, which has not traditionally been a SaaS company. SaaS selling is a new frontier for our sellers, and a SaaS curriculum that pertains to the specific solution franchises is another piece that is on our development horizon. This could potentially present with another opportunity to revisit the Solutions Academy model, with a SaaS Conversations Workshop a possible option for enablement later in FY22.

Finally, a Cross Selling curriculum is in development and will eventually be deployed midway through FY22. In addition to moving away from product focused sales and into solution sales, VMware has a directive to increase cross-solution selling motions. The ideal outcome will be for all

sales professionals to be skilled enough to pivot any customer conversation about one specific solution area into an opportunity to introduce other solutions, which then

provides the customer with a better view of how VMware can offer a comprehensive package that addresses any potential IT initiative or need. Because specialists tend to focus only on their one solution area (Networking, Cloud, etc.), they are not always adept at introducing other solution areas into a customer conversation. The Cross Selling Solution curriculum will provide them with an overview of how the solutions relate to each other, an introduction to the hero products that lie within each solution that possess strong connections to other solutions, and basic talking points that helps them not only make logical connections between the solutions, but to provide a framework and narrative to introduce this to a customer. This curriculum also lends itself to another Conversation Workshop, and could potentially be expanded into a two-part Academy model.
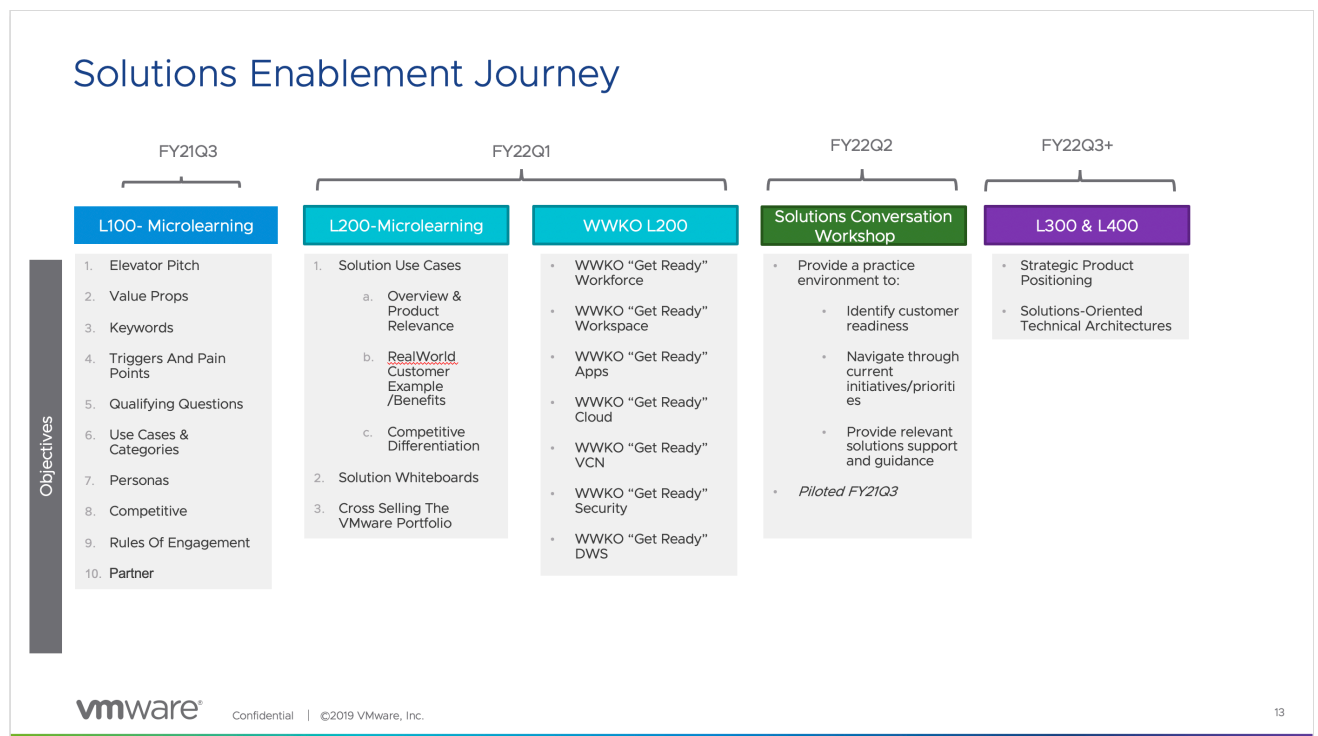
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