

# iBeAuthentic's new iBeLink reinvents inside sales

As a brand or distributor, chances are that you want your salespeople focused on sales. The challenge is, they have dozens of other responsibilities on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Those might include prospecting new markets, blitzing promotions, promoting new products, covering vacant territories, solving customer issues and more. But, how does one salesperson do it all for their accounts?

CAN they get everything done? Perhaps. But, ask yourself, "Is that the best use of your resources? Am I getting the best ROI and maximizing sales growth?" If the answer is yes, then you've found the golden ticket. If no, and you need a plan to increase sales potential, you're not alone.

Enter **iBeLink**, which is **iBeAuthentic's** reinvention of inside sales.

## Time for reinvention

From the seller's side, iBeAuthentic's distributor and brand clients began requesting help with specific initiatives and new programs—in addition to the typical account management or sales support—during the pandemic. On the customer side, we

noticed that salon owners and stylists were becoming more comfortable with using a virtual environment to collaborate with salespeople and make purchases. But they still craved information and one-on-one attention.

As a result, we changed the way we approached inside sales. Instead of focusing solely on lead development, we began customizing our solutions for more nuanced sales support needs for our clients and their customers. We asked ourselves, "What do those businesses need right now?"

## What is iBeLink?

iBeLink is the new, modern version of inside sales, with the essential difference being the addition of new, non-sales services. We still manage an account base and can provide the traditional, expected sales coverage, but we've added flexibility and short-term options to our service menu to support sales initiatives with less sales-oriented and even non-sales functions. Our clients (brands and distributors) can choose and change, as needed, the role that their iBeLink associate partner plays in their overall business.

With the addition of these non-sales

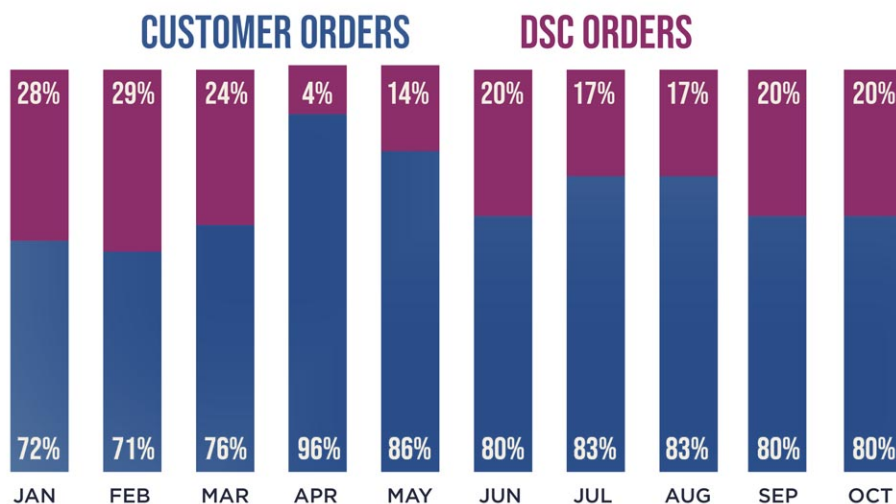
stronger connection between you, your sales team, your marketing team and your customers, hence the term "iBeLink."

Consider this common scenario. You've laid out what you believe is the perfect plan to launch a salon support program. Your team has spent countless hours preparing and creating a cohesive message to be shared in various channels. You present the program to the sales team and are confident it will be a huge success. But shortly after coming out of the gate, the sales team runs into a few minor details they don't fully understand or, more likely, they get pulled in another direction by

the newest product launch or presell opportunity. The program comes to a screeching halt.

In this scenario, iBeLink will help connect all those efforts and ensure the process is followed through to ultimately close the sale with layers of calls to answer questions, assist with registration if needed and follow up through the entire sales process to ensure ultimate success.

CUSTOMER-PLACED ORDERS VS DSC-PLACED ORDERS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL



*In 2020, most salon orders on iBeAuthentic-managed websites were placed directly by the salon vs the distributor salon consultant. The increase in customer-placed orders denotes a change in buying behaviors. As a result, iBeAuthentic created iBeLink to serve those new needs.*

services, not only will inside sales act as an extension of your field sales team, but they will enhance the execution of your overall sales plan. By assuming responsibility for sales reps' tasks—scrubbing through lead lists, cold calling and supporting marketing initiatives—iBeLink gives the sales reps the time to focus on their primary roles of opening new doors and cultivating current customers. The long-to-do list still gets done, but without pulling your top salespeople off focus.

We've found that the new structure builds a

## Shifting into high gear

We were considering restructuring our team at iBeAuthentic before COVID-19, and our conversations became more intense after extensive industry business closures.

First and foremost, companies were dealing with layoffs, the inability to generate sales and the inability to rehire their entire sales teams back. Some distributors or brands didn't have the resources to hire full-time employees and fund the associated expenses that go along with that. iBeLink offered them the cost-

effective solution that allowed them to stay in touch with their customers and keep sales coming in.

In addition to facing their own obstacles, our distributor and brand clients are also seeing their salon and stylist customers continue to grapple with the possibility of more closings. Do you have a plan for that? Have you helped your salons set up a curbside pickup program to give them the ability to sell retail while the salon is closed? Can that salesperson we mentioned earlier help every salon on their account list keep their businesses alive? Or do they need help?

**How we evolved our inside sales team to serve the beauty industry's new needs**

When deciding to evolve our inside sales team, we looked at our structure, based on the questions we fielded regularly from our clients. They told us resoundingly that they needed more customization and more assistance with short-term projects and initiatives that change from month to month or quarter to quarter.

They said they needed a team that could change focus as quickly as needed without losing the connection—or “link”—with the salons. So, we set in motion a reorganization that would give our clients what they needed, as they needed it, while still keeping our team engaged, incentivized and excited. As a result, we added enhanced sales support services, short-term contracts and a flat-rate fee, no matter how many of our sales professionals are needed to tackle a project.

**iBeLink works as your trained, experienced inside sales team**

The iBeLink team consists of trained, experienced inside sales professionals. They are experts in connecting verbally with all customer accounts—field, store or e-commerce. With over 30 years of combined industry knowledge, our team members build rapport, and profile and identify brand or distributor needs to assist in each beauty

professional's and salon's success. Being able to transition from sales to sales support and back again is all in a day's work for this crew.

**“iBeLink provides the link between the personal relationship that has long fueled the professional beauty industry and the new technology that is driving profitable brands and distributors.”**

**Enhanced services round out relationships**

The iBeLink team continues to perform traditional inside sales activities, including:

- Covering vacant territories and managing small volume territories
- Team selling with DSCs and blitzing product launches, educational events or distributor programs
- Calling through lost customer lists (those who haven't purchased in six months or more)
- Expanding brands' and distributors' business by opening new markets

iBeLink's sales support services also include:

- Assisting with setting up curbside pickup retail programs
- Providing follow-up calls, supporting sales initiatives and allowing DSCs more time for brand expansion and prospecting
- Working through house account lists
- Promoting and supporting e-commerce initiatives
- Blitzing new programs, promotions and presell opportunities

**iBeLink offers flexible contracts**

To serve our customers' evolving needs, iBeAuthentic adapted our contract commitment terms to match the flexibility that businesses now require. Whether our clients are interested in long-term agreements or short-term partnerships, our adjustable contract helps boost the effectiveness of their programs, achieve results and assist them in budgeting resources efficiently.

**What's next?**

The way salons do business is changing quickly. iBeLink provides the link between the personal relationship that has long fueled the professional beauty industry and the new technology that is driving profitable brands and distributors. The flexibility and adaptivity of the iBeLink team, whether through its contract, services or team members, helps brands and distributors maintain connections, generate sales and achieve a higher ROI.

The iBeLink team can manage servicing brands' or distributors' small accounts, cold-calling, reactivating former accounts, providing customer service and more of the tasks that—



Bonnie Tiemann



Deanna Klose

although important—are not where a salesperson's efforts are best focused. The iBeLink team allows your field sales team to do what they do best—sell. Not only will iBeLink help alleviate to-dos from a salesperson's long list, but it will add to the brand's or distributor's bottom line. After a call to discuss your goals, we will recommend the most cost-effective plan for achieving them.

To learn more, contact Bonnie Tiemann ([btiemann@ibeauthentic.com](mailto:btiemann@ibeauthentic.com)), sales manager; Deanna Klose ([dklose@ibeauthentic.com](mailto:dklose@ibeauthentic.com)), vice president of sales and administration; or Erin Noha ([enoha@ibeauthentic.com](mailto:enoha@ibeauthentic.com)), digital media supervisor, who co-authored this article in partnership with iBeAuthentic and Beauty Industry Report. Visit [ibeauthentic.com](http://ibeauthentic.com).