

6 Data-Backed Secrets for

# Translating AI Role Plays into Maximum Revenue Uplift



When Second Nature first introduced AI-powered role plays eight years ago, most teams approached them as a digital add-on to live practice, another way to rehearse scripts and scenarios. Today, after millions of completed sessions and years of performance data, there is clear direction on how to design, deploy, and scale AI practice for maximum revenue impact.

In the past year alone, hundreds of thousands of users completed more than 1.6 million AI role play sessions with Second Nature. This guide draws on that usage, along with rigorous research from the University of Houston's Sales Excellence Institute, which analyzed more than 8,000 Second Nature role plays conducted by 2,000 sales reps at United Rentals.



Every time our people practiced with Second Nature, their sales revenue improved by 1%. If they practiced five times they got a 5% uplift, and that's huge

JEFF CUMMINGS, DIRECTOR OF SALES DEVELOPMENT, UNITED RENTALS

Inside, you'll find six data-backed tactics for getting more from your AI role plays and driving measurable revenue growth.

## 1 Encourage Repeated Practice

### The data:

According to University of Houston's research, every additional role play practiced by a United Rentals rep translated into 1% extra revenue uplift.

### The takeaway:

Increased role play practice turns skills into automatic habits, improving real-world performance. Sales rep confidence rises with their scores, leading to greater fluency in live conversations.

### How to make it happen:

- Only AI-powered role plays allow sufficient practice. United Rentals sales reps completed 8,000+ role plays or over 670 hours across six months, significantly more than they could have without AI.
- Use Second Nature to make practice so enjoyable that sales reps voluntarily complete more role plays. [SAP Academy](#) saw practice time increase 7x; [GoHealth](#) 5xed their practice time.
- Incentivize sales reps to practice more often by rewarding whoever rehearses the most.
- Assign weekly role plays as part of your regular training. [Spa World](#) shortened closing rates by 25%.
- Educate reps that people who practice more see higher revenue uplift.



In other words, repetition pays off: salespeople who repeatedly engage in role plays tend to achieve higher sales performance, holding constant the number of scenarios and the mean AI score attained.

JOHANNES HABEL, PROFESSOR OF MARKETING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON'S SALES EXCELLENCE INSTITUTE

## 2 Offer Diverse Scenarios and Personas

### The data:

United Rentals saw the biggest revenue uplift from sales reps who improved their scores significantly in training role plays, and also practiced many different role play scenarios.

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Managers should encourage salespeople to engage in AI role plays repeatedly and across diverse scenarios, since both repetition and improved AI-assigned scores are linked to better sales outcomes.

**JOHANNES HABEL, PROFESSOR OF MARKETING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON'S SALES EXCELLENCE INSTITUTE**

### The takeaway:

Sales reps can't expect to face the exact same situation in real life, so they need to experience a range of different scenarios. Rehearsing handling diverse situations and personalities equips them to flexibly apply skills in real customer conversations.

### How to make it happen:

- Prepare a range of personas, scenarios, and situations as part of your training role plays.
- Require reps to practice diverse scenarios in order to complete a training module.
- Use Second Nature's Customizable Role Play feature, which allows employees to tailor any role play for their precise upcoming conversation by inputting just three URLs.

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When we apply the mood feature, you're going through a different customer persona each time. So it's not like the reps can game the system after they've done it once or twice. They continue to get better at it as the customer evolves.

**JEFF CUMMINGS, DIRECTOR OF SALES DEVELOPMENT, UNITED RENTALS**

## 3 Motivate Employees to Set High Personal Goals

### The data:

Employees at United Rentals with high sales quotas achieved an average 29.9% improvement in revenue when using AI-powered role plays, far beyond the average of 2.6%. They knew they needed to stretch to meet this target, so they set high personal goals and motivated themselves to succeed.

### The takeaway:

It's not enough to score well in an AI-powered role play. Real impact comes from transferring practiced behaviors into live customer conversations. Sales reps who are the most motivated to succeed will be more diligent about implementing their new skills in real-world conversations.

### How to make it happen:

- Offer incentives that stimulate motivation, like prizes for the most improved or highest score
- Provide dynamic leaderboards that stimulate friendly rivalry
- Explain the impact of AI role plays and how it will help sales reps to meet and exceed quota

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The key was whatever they did on Second Nature, we followed up on their phone calls to make sure that it was applied. Agents think 'I'll go into the learning module, and then I'll do what I always do on the calls.' But we can compare, here is the recording with Second Nature and here is how you sound with the customers.

**AVRIL KEVILL, QUALITY MANAGER, ONETOUCH DIRECT**

## 4 Managerial Leadership is Crucial for Success

### The data:

United Rentals reps with high-performing supervisors delivered 7.3% revenue uplift, outperforming the 2.6% average.

### The takeaway:

Employees must transfer skills from AI role plays into real life. While this can happen naturally, manager guidance often accelerates the process. Effective managers help reps convert practiced behaviors into tangible performance gains.

### How to make it happen:

- Train managers to review salespeople's AI role play outcomes with them and discuss AI feedback
- Prepare managers to model effective behaviors and show employees how to transfer the AI recommendations.



This points to a crucial success factor when it comes to running those role plays. You need somebody who coaches you to take those learnings and do them in real life, and shadows you while you do it in a real-life customer interaction and gives you some face-to-face feedback afterwards. It really comes down to transferring those learnings into real life and doing it in a real customer interaction. And it turns out those people who have high performing supervisors perform better in that respect.

**JOHANNES HABEL, PROFESSOR OF MARKETING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON'S SALES EXCELLENCE INSTITUTE**

## 5 Lower-Performing Reps Have the Most to Gain

### The data:

Previously lower-performing reps improved by 35.2% after practicing with Second Nature, the largest uplift of any cohort.

### The takeaway:

Sales reps with a history of relatively low performance see the greatest gains from AI role plays. Motivated to close performance gaps and supported by a safe, private environment, they can experiment, refine their approach, and build confidence before bringing those skills into real customer conversations.

### How to make it happen:

- Explicitly tell your B- and C-players that AI role plays will help them to improve their productivity.
- Schedule more frequent reminders for lagging performers.
- Remind your lower performing reps that no one will judge their training conversations.
- Invite sales reps to choose which score or practice role play to submit for human evaluation, so that they can practice as many times as they like until they reach their goal.
- Adjust incentives so that they are focused towards the lagging group, e.g. a big prize for whoever has the biggest jump from first score to last score.



We also emphasized to the reps that this is AI. This is you and the avatar having a conversation. This is a safe place to practice and hone your talk tracks, your talking skills

**ELAINE JONES, DIRECTOR OF INTERNAL PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AT PACIRA BIOSCIENCES**

## 6 Incentivize Experienced Employees to Participate

### The data:

Sales reps with longer tenure at United Rentals achieved a 7.6% improvement, outperforming the 2.6% average.

### The takeaway:

Long-tenured employees may feel they don't need new training approaches because they're usually already performing well. In reality, they often have significant gains to unlock. Their experience helps them translate practiced skills into real-world application, and like everyone else, they benefit from a private environment where they can experiment, refine new techniques, and strengthen performance without reputational risk.

### How to make it happen:

- Tell high performers and long-tenured team members that AI role plays give them a private space to polish their skills and receive targeted feedback about details like pace, tone, speed, and body language.
- Remind high performers that they can use the AI role plays to practice a specific scenario with full context before a challenging call, so that they are really on top form.
- Specifically incentivize employees with long tenure to use AI role plays.



Even our most experienced salespeople say they gain something new each time they practice with Second Nature.

**ANDREW PULLEN, MANAGING DIRECTOR, SPA WORLD**

## Overview

# 6 Practical Tactics for Maximizing the Real World Impact of AI Role Plays

The Tactic	The Data	How Second Nature Helps
Encourage frequent practice	<b>1%</b> uplift for every 1 extra role play	AI role plays available on demand allow sales reps to practice whenever it's convenient for them.
Offer diverse role plays	Highest uplift for those who also practice many different role play scenarios	Diverse AI personas and moods enable sales reps to practice handling many different personality types.
Stimulate high motivation with incentives	<b>29.9%</b> revenue uplift for employees who were set high sales goals	Dynamic leaderboards encourage friendly competition.
Teach managers to facilitate transfer of skills	Sales reps with supervisors who have high prior performance achieved <b>7.3%</b> improvement	Easy to read reports empower managers to guide sales reps in transferring skills.
Prioritize lagging performers	<b>32.2%</b> uplift for employees with lagging performance	Private, judgment-free practice space encourages lagging performers to find the methods that work best for them.
Incentivize employees with longer tenure	<b>7.6%</b> uplift among employees with longer tenure	Customizable role plays let experts adjust the challenge level.

## About Second Nature

Second Nature transforms professional training and development through realistic AI role plays that enable unlimited practice of customer facing conversations. Lifelike AI personas adapt dynamically, providing personalized feedback right after each session, and accelerating skill development while reducing the need for manual 1x1 coaching.

## About the Academic Study

Johannes Habel, Professor of Marketing at the University of Houston's Sales Excellence Institute, led a detailed analysis of data from Second Nature customer United Rentals. 1,947 Outside Sales Reps completed training programs between May 2024 and April 2025, with 1,569 using Second Nature's role plays and 378 sticking to traditional methods.

[You can read the report here.](#)

Habel, together with his coauthors Michael Ahearne, Seshadri Tirunillai, and Amy Novak, found an average revenue uplift of 2.6% for sales reps who used Second Nature, compared with those who did not use AI role plays. This rose to 35.2% for previously low performers; 29.9% for those with high performance goals; 7.6% for reps with high tenure; and 7.3% for reps with high-performing supervisors.

 [Watch Habel and Jeff Cummings from United Rentals explain the study here](#)

