



Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference Key Take-Aways May 16 – 17, 2023

Accelerate Commercial Performance in an Environment
of Perpetual Change

Track summary

Today's chief sales officers (CSOs) and sales leaders must find innovative ways to exceed revenue targets despite the unrelenting uncertainties caused by inflation, talent scarcity and supply chain disruptions. At Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference 2023, attendees had access to unique actionable insights, practical tools and innovative guidance in these four areas:

- Reinventing Sales Strategies to Drive Growth
- Enabling the Commercial Organization of Tomorrow
- Revolutionizing Sales Operations for Greater Scope and Impact
- Optimizing Revenue Technology to Boost Engagement

Sales leaders can use this to review the key take-aways from top sessions in each area.

Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference

Key Take-Aways

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Reinventing Sales Strategies to Drive Growth

Track summary

Trends in digital buying, shortages of sales talent and the remote/hybrid workforce trigger the need for changes in go-to-market strategies and sales models. Sessions in this track guided leaders on how to architect the growth of their organization and expand their executive role.

Sales leaders can use this to review the key take-aways from top sessions in this track, such as:

- Rev Up Your Revenue With the Go-to-Market Commercial Coalition
- Building a Diverse Sales Team in a Challenging Labor Market
- 3 Critical Actions to Take Before Launching a Change Strategy

Rev Up Your Revenue With the Go-to-Market Commercial Coalition



Rachael Buchler
Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

CSOs need to drive forward a modern GTM strategy that engages the wider commercial organization and has the customer at its core. This session reviewed how leaders across the functions of sales, marketing, service and product development can collectively change the game of their customers' experience and unlock new revenue growth.

By 2026, B2B organizations unifying commercial strategies will realize revenue growth that outperforms their competition by 50%.

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Unite leaders that contribute to customer experience to develop and govern a GTM strategy.
- Form a coalition of all customer-facing functions that contribute to customer experience.
- Deliver a charter to mobilize the coalition.
- Manage the end-to-end revenue process across the entire customer life cycle.
- Collate insight to enable a unified GTM response.
- Drive action through functional accountability.

Building a Diverse Sales Team in a Challenging Labor Market



Christopher Gamble
Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

At a time when talent is scarce and the seller role is getting more complex, sales organizations are neglecting vast pools of talent. CSOs are broadening their recruiting efforts to new talent pools and seeking to become a destination for the top sales talent of the future. They recognize — as our data shows — that diverse sales teams are more successful and that improved quality of hire is a benefit of acting on DEI commitments, not a trade-off. In this session, Gartner shared proprietary data around seller candidate preferences as well as trends shaping recruitment approaches in sales so CSOs can break away from the old, self-reinforcing seller profile to attract the seller of tomorrow, win the talent war and improve performance.

In 2023, 72% of heads of sales and senior sales leaders said they expect a more diverse sales force to produce accelerated commercial results.

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales

- Align skills and competencies to work.
- Recruit from non-traditional sources.
- Promote visible diversity in leadership.
- Create consequential accountability.
- Implement objective compensation policies.
- Influence CEO, CFO and board of directors.

3 Critical Actions to Take Before Launching a Change Strategy



Robert Lesser

Senior Director, Advisory

Session summary

Relentless change is battering organizations and sellers are fatigued. Failure rates on change initiatives are too high. This session reviewed how CSOs can boost success by taking three critical actions before launching transformational change.

38% of employees support organizational change in 2022: almost half the rate of six years ago.

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Due to high change failure rates, CSOs must invest in strategic change management practices
- CSOs must develop and communicate compelling change stories. Change plans must be co-created with frontline sellers.
- CSOs must deploy change stress tests to provide an early warning of change impact. CSOs must take proactive action when stress levels are high.
- Change initiatives should slow down to speed up. Engaging frontline sellers early on will accelerate buy-in after change launch

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Key Take-Aways

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Enabling the Commercial Organization of Tomorrow

Track summary

Enablement leaders are responsible for equipping revenue producing roles to adapt their knowledge, skills and tools to the needs of their buyers and markets. This track highlighted how to successfully support and drive change in go-to-market teams to succeed in today's complex buying environment.

Sales leaders can use this to review the key take-aways from top sessions in this track, such as:

- Creating a Digitally Immersive Seller Experience
- Navigating your Sales Digital Transformation: Avoiding the Three Biggest Pitfalls of Sales Digital Transformations
- Making the Shift From Sales Enablement to Revenue Enablement

Creating a Digitally Immersive Seller Experience



Elizabeth Beard
Director Analyst

Session summary

Learn how sellers can still be highly effective when there's a growing preference for a rep-free experience and omnichannel buying. This session covered how to determine what customers need throughout their buying journey, how to leverage marketing data to help sales and how buyer enablement tools can help the customer feel confident in their purchase

75% of B2B buyers prefer a rep-free experience.

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Optimize the customer buying experience by aligning digital and human channels with the customer buying journey.
- Create collaborative spaces, such as digital sales rooms.
- Invest in revenue enablement technologies to encourage sellers to be more digitally immersive in selling.

Navigating your Sales Digital Transformation: Avoiding the Three Biggest Pitfalls of Sales Digital Transformations



Doug Bushée
Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

This presentation confronted the widespread misunderstanding among sales leaders that digital transformation is solely about investing in technology to streamline business processes. We emphasized that an overreliance on technology can result in seller frustration and a complex selling environment. This session identified three major pitfalls and provided best practices to navigate these challenges, empowering sales leaders to successfully implement digital transformation strategies.

76% of Sales Executives Say Their Sales Technology Budget Will Increase in 2023

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Conduct an annual audit of the sales tech stack to ensure relevancy and effectiveness.
- Assemble a sales digital buying team, collaborating with sales operations, sales enablement, marketing and IT.
- Assign digital sales tool users to spearhead the implementation plan for better ownership and accountability.
- Establish a communication plan that emphasizes active engagement and dialogue rather than one-way communication.
- Consistently invest in enhancing your team's digital proficiency by pinpointing areas of improvement in digital dexterity and data literacy and providing targeted learning experiences along with side projects to effectively bridge those gaps.

Making the Shift From Sales Enablement to Revenue Enablement



Nate McCullough
Director, Advisory

Session summary

Learn the difference between sales enablement and revenue enablement and how you can start making these progressive changes in your organization.

By 2026, 60% of enablement functions will be tasked with enabling all client-facing, revenue-generating roles.

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Assess the maturity of your sales enablement function and its ability to support additional customer-facing revenue-generating roles.
- Identify revenue-generating learning resources, content, talent and programs.
- Locate all revenue-related content types and repositories.
- Perform a revenue technology audit.
- Build your revenue enablement evolution plan.

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Revolutionizing Sales Operations for Greater Scope and Impact

Track summary

Sales operations' scope is expanding as CSOs are responding to economic uncertainty, adopting new technology and collaborating across all revenue functions. This track provided best practices on organizational design, analytics, execution and talent needs to meet new stakeholder expectations.

Sales leaders can use this to review the key take-aways from top sessions in this track, such as:

- Stop Guessing at Seller Performance Metrics
- Future Proofing Sales Operations
- The Soul-Crushing Motivational Drag of Your Lackluster Sales Compensation Documentation

Stroke of Genius: The Innovation in Golf Analytics That Will Revolutionize Your Seller Performance Metrics



Steve Rietberg
VP Analyst

Session summary

Typical seller productivity metrics tell a limited story. They allow managers to gauge performance using arbitrary targets, but they don't reveal which success factors really drive individual performance. Join this session to learn how to implement comparative performance metrics that motivate sellers and unlock actionable insights for coaching and planning.

If you're not evaluating seller performance comparatively, you're missing out on your most actionable insights.

Key actions for sales leaders

- Identify appropriate seller cohorts that execute under comparable conditions and define unique performance metrics for each.
- Provide managers with comparative metrics that quantify which activities are contributing to each seller's success or failure, along with a playbook for how to coach specific scenarios.
- Use comparative metrics to reveal what behaviors differentiate your top performers and use that insight to prioritize operations and enablement activities.

Future Proofing Sales Operations



Tyler Huguley
Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

Technology, analytics, strategic planning and agile/fusion teams are expanding the scope of sales operations. This session covered how to develop a comprehensive strategy to attract, recruit and retain talent who are strategic, analytical and can engage the C-suite to satisfy these changes.

86% of sales operations leaders say their scope is broadening across commercial functions and more than 70% say this expanding scope will require STEM and M.B.A. skills within sales operations.

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales operations leaders

- Future sales operations skills include STEM and M.B.A. skill sets that are not currently looking at sales operations as a career.
- Sales operations leaders must begin planning for future capabilities today to build a talent pipeline — and it starts with understanding current strengths and weaknesses.
- Versatility is vital for the future of sales operations as agile becomes more prominent and stakeholders continue to expand.
- When building the future structure, sales operations leaders must do so with two separate type of work in mind: 1) strategic initiatives, and 2) day-to-day operations.

Overcome the Soul-Crushing Motivational Drag of Your Sales Compensation Documentation



Steve Herz

Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

To reap the benefits of the drag-and-drive model in the sales organization, sales leaders must get their incentive compensation plans right — no small task. Each year, companies invest massive amounts of time and money to optimize their sales incentives. But once the design ends, most companies undermine those efforts, dragging down seller motivation with text-heavy, legalistic and rules-focused materials. This session pointed out the ways sales leaders add to the problem and explained how a different approach to incentive communications can increase the motivational impact of sales incentives.

The vast majority (>90%) of sales compensation plan documents contain only text and tables; and less than a quarter include clear linkages between plan details and larger company sales goals.

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales operations leaders to reduce the drag of their compensation plan documents

- Design incentive plan documents to function as an actionable roadmap for sellers to reach their own goals — rather than focusing on where the company wants them to go.
- Reduce the administrative burden of plan documents that leads sellers to filter out incentive plan information, by optimizing those communications to the seller's experience.
- Eliminate the alienating legalese that dominates most incentive plan communications, using communication techniques that cultivate sellers' emotional alignment with their plans.

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Optimizing Revenue Technology to Boost Engagement

Track summary

Revenue technology is critical to delivering outsize commercial performance as organizations navigate perpetual change. Yet design and adoption challenges frustrate sales leaders, reduce the impact of technology and burden sellers. This track empowered attendees to optimize technology today and build scalable strategies for tomorrow.

Sales leaders can use this report to review the key take-aways from top sessions in this track, such as:

- Using the Power of AI to Better Enable Your Organization
- 9 Cool Technologies to Improve B2B Buyer Engagement

Using the Power of AI to Boost Sales Productivity



Doug Bushée
VP Analyst

Session summary

In this session, we explored the transformative potential of AI in elevating the capabilities of revenue teams and improving client interactions. By examining specific examples, we demonstrated how AI utilizes available data to empower sellers to work more efficiently, effectively and intelligently, ultimately driving sales performance and fostering stronger client relationships. Examples included auto data capture, AI SDR chatbots, sales call summarization, draft follow-up emails, real-time sales guidance, AI sales coaching and more.

By 2025, 75% of B2B sales organizations will augment traditional sales playbooks with AI-guided selling solutions.

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Identify an opportunity to add one AI use case from today's presentation to your revenue technology stack.
- Align selected AI application with specific sales objectives for maximum impact and improved output.
- Continually inquire about, evaluate and integrate AI capabilities into your revenue technology stack.

9 Cool Technologies to Improve B2B Buyer Engagement



Dan Gottlieb

Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

This fast-paced, high-octane session explored nine breakthrough technologies for improving B2B buyer engagement, their use cases and how to explore introducing them into your revenue tech stack: AI sales email, virtual reality, visual configuration, demo automation, visual collaboration, conversation intelligence, content automation, collaborative work management, and digital sales rooms.

Sales Leaders should invest in tech prioritizes buyers' value of real-time collaboration, provide them with the help required to influence consensus, and allow them to leverage digital tools for purchase guidance.

Key actions for sales leaders

- Enable sellers to be like water, adapting to buyers' preferences.
- Experiment with real-time collaboration tech to drive high-quality deals.
- Give sellers a chance to influence consensus from a distance.
- Use digital guidance tools to facilitate value clarity for buyers.

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May 21 – 22, 2024 | Las Vegas, NV

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