

2026 Executive Summary

As the demands of your role continue to evolve, leverage key insights and tools to operationalize AI for measurable impact, elevate your executive leadership skills, and build a resilient, future-proof sales strategy.

We hope to see you at Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference 2027.



Michael Katz,
Conference Chair and Sr Director Analyst, Gartner



Top takeaways

1

Redefine sales productivity in the age of AI

The traditional definition and playbook for productivity is losing relevance. Decouple your revenue goals from traditional headcount constraints by treating AI as a measurable workforce resource. To capture both human and digital contributions, establish an AI-forward infrastructure that strips out busywork and stacks expert guidance into daily workflows. Then, accelerate your team's growth by adopting a minimum viable visibility approach - inventorying critical metrics, benchmarking against objective targets, and analyzing historical trends to sharpen strategic decisions.

"You cannot re-imagine sales productivity without infrastructure. And you cannot build a sales AI infrastructure waiting for perfect data."

Dan Gottlieb,
VP Analyst, Gartner

2

Remove operational constraints to accelerate growth

Rewire your sales organization for immediate speed and growth by refusing to simply insert AI into old, constrained workflows. You must retire one outdated tool or reporting ritual to directly return hours back to selling. Actively bypass the administrative bottlenecks that consistently trap your good deals. By shifting from auditing activities to orchestrating insights, you empower sellers to reinvest time in decisions that accelerate deal cycles.

"Your current system is capped. AI-first growth comes from replacing constraints - not accelerating them."

Morgan Barnes,
Sr Director Analyst, Gartner

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Top takeaways

3

Establish a well-defined AI roadmap to unlock ROI

Most sales organizations struggle to prove AI ROI, but those that succeed treat AI as a catalyst for advancing data maturity, process automation, and user experience. Overhaul your legacy revenue engine to unlock true value instead of merely automating existing constraints. Execute this strategic roadmap immediately: retire a redundant workflow, bypass bottlenecks trapping good deals, and replace legacy forecast rituals with AI-native insights to sustain your competitive advantage.

“The point of retiring work is not simply to save time. It is to redirect commercial attention.”

Doug Bushée,
VP Analyst, Gartner

4

Future-proof your sales talent strategy

As technology rapidly reshapes the sales landscape, you must rethink how you approach talent. Build a future-fit sales team by identifying and developing human-focused skills, updating compensation models, and redefining seller and manager roles. Leverage new productivity approaches and metrics and invest in upskilling to ensure you attract, motivate, and retain top performers who can adapt quickly and maximize the benefits of AI-driven change.

“A manager with role clarity can have a 3.2x impact on seller performance.”

Michael Katz,
Sr Director Analyst, Gartner

5

Harness the power of agentic AI to scale solutions

Deploy your AI pilot programs immediately through a focused 30-day sprint targeting reliable, high-impact workflows like product training, knowledge transfer, and scalable prospecting. To realize the true promise of agentic AI, you must integrate these tools seamlessly into your sellers' daily routines. Continuously refine these systems and align them directly with your team's specific needs to build enduring trust and scale your solutions effectively across the enterprise.

“Trust builds from experience, not promises. Your wins fund the hard stuff.”

Adnan Zijadic,
Sr Director Analyst, Gartner



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