

Gartner Research

Marketing and Sales Execution for Tech CEOs Primer for 2024

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Initiatives: Marketing and Sales Execution for Tech CEOs

Successful customer acquisition and expansion has always required strategic targeting and powerful storytelling. But, in a changing landscape of customer preferences and emerging technologies, tech CEOs must carefully balance investments across people, process and technology to support those goals.

Scope

This initiative provides best practices and strategies to improve lead and demand generation, run effective programs to increase sales, and grow customer relationships.

Topics in this initiative include:

- **Targeting and Differentiated Messaging:** Develop highly relevant messaging and content focused on the needs of target buyers.
- **Lead and Demand Generation:** Grow awareness and optimize marketing channels and calls-to-action (CTAs).
- **Sales Model and Process:** Define, plan and map sales support to the buyer journey across a series of repeatable actions.
- **Sales Effectiveness:** Increase win rates and reduce sales cycle times for both direct and indirect sellers.
- **Customer Retention and Growth:** Nurture and grow customers with renewals, cross-selling and advocacy programs.

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Analysis

Figure 1: Marketing and Sales Execution for Tech CEOs Overview

Marketing and Sales Execution for Tech CEOs



Source: Gartner
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Gartner has predicted that by 2030 70% of B2B sales development reps will be replaced by digital humans (see 2024 Tech Provider Top Trends: Precision Marketing and Sales). Meanwhile, marketing budgets have declined over the previous year, ¹ making well-planned investment decisions more critical. CEOs of startup and emerging technology and service provider organizations are faced with a paradox: Most buyers say that they prefer a rep-free buying experience, but high-quality buying decisions depend on human engagement. To support customer acquisition and expansion goals, tech CEOs need to venture into a frontier of marketing, sales and customer success as defined by hybrid human and technology investments.

Seventy-five percent of respondents in the 2022 Gartner B2B Buyer Survey indicated they preferred a rep-free sales experience. ² Yet, among buyers who renewed and expanded their contracts, 93% indicated that some form of human engagement helped them achieve value from their original agreement. ³ For tech CEOs, these findings highlight a need to carefully balance digital and human investment in sales and marketing motions, especially as generative AI presents a growing opportunity to execute with fewer people.

In 2023, technology marketers' organizations with \$10 million to less than \$100 million in annual enterprise revenue allocated, on average, 7% of their revenue to marketing budget; Only about one-fifth (20.5% on average) of that went to technology (as opposed to staff or programs). ¹ As technologies continue to rapidly mature and buyers' expectations are further shaped by their experiences, tech CEOs need to continuously strategize, not only for financial investments in new technology, but for growing teams around them.

To find balance among buyer preferences, expanding AI use cases and changes to the human element, tech CEOs must:

- Improve storytelling power to capture more of their target markets target.
- Assess and grow key capabilities to close strategy-to-execution gaps.
- Build stronger buyer and customer relationships to drive value realization and expansion.
- Balance investments in people, process and technology to optimize efficiency and meet buyer and customer expectations.

Topics

This initiative is designed to help tech CEOs meet business priorities in a highly disruptive climate and across the buyer and customer life cycles. It consists of data insights, case studies, diagnostic self-assessment tools, benchmarks, maturity models and repeatable best-practice guidance.

Our research in this area addresses the following topics:

Targeting and Differentiated Messaging

A compelling and customer value-centric message is critical for attracting identified target audiences, converting and progressing leads, and accelerating sales cycles. An effective message underpins your value proposition. It connects specific buyer pains and market needs to the unique and proven advantages of your solution and establishes your credibility and thought leadership to cut through the “noise” of the market.

Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- How do we develop messaging that helps us stand out and close deals?
- How do we effectively tailor our messaging to our target audiences and buyer personas?
- How can we improve the presentation of our competitive value proposition?

Recommended Content

 Some recommended content may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

- 5 Steps to Differentiated Messaging for Tech CEOs
- Ignition Guide to Developing a Messaging Strategy as a Tech CEO
- Quick Answer: Startup Lift — How to Develop Content That Conveys Value to the Customer
- Tech CEOs Must Be Efficient When Using Video for Differentiated Messaging

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- How to build and align buyer personas for improved messaging and storytelling effectiveness
- How to create messaging that stands out using AI — when using AI becomes standard practice
- How to use real business outcomes to establish and underpin differentiation claims

Lead and Demand Generation

Building brand awareness, engaging prospects, and growing and nurturing a pipeline of leads require a mix of intentional planning, strong fundamentals and some creativity. This topic examines the practices and investments needed to grow the strategic value of outreach activities in demand creation to improve funnel conversion rates, grow campaign effectiveness and measure impact.

Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- How can we accelerate leads and demonstrate ROI for our channels and programs?
- How can we increase conversion rates in early and middle stages of the funnel?
- What are the emerging trends we should focus on in digital marketing?

Recommended Content

🔑 Some recommended content may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

- Startup Lift: Storytelling Is the Demand Generation Path to Product-Market Fit
- 2023 Tech Marketing Benchmarks: Demand Generation Insights for Tech CEOs
- Ignition Guide to Building a Lead Scoring Method as a Tech CEO
- Tool: Annual Marketing Funnel Planner for Tech CEOs
- Quick Answer: Startup Lift: How to Set and Measure Demand Generation Goals

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- How to balance people and technology to accelerate and scale demand generation efforts
- What to know about content marketing strategies that meet buyer needs across the sales and marketing funnel
- How to extract more ROI from investments in marketing channels

Sales Model and Process

With buyer preferences for digital and self-service experiences growing, getting the sales model right has never been more critical. Mapping the sales process to the customer buying journey overcomes the dynamics that often make buying and selling so difficult by making buyers' preferences and motions the guiding principle.

Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- How do we grow and scale a predictable sales model?
- How do we simplify sales and marketing workflows to accommodate motions aligned with more models?
- How can we mature our sales and revenue operations to grow our accounts?

Recommended Content

🔑 Some recommended content may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

- Tech CEO Self-Assessment: Sales Process
- Tech CEOs: Generative AI Can Make Sales and Marketing More Efficient
- Tech CEOs Must Stress-Test Their Sales Process to Improve Win Rates
- Ignition Guide to Setting Up a Sales Team as a Tech CEO

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- How to choose a sales model which reflects your evolving business model
- How to optimize sales effectiveness in a product-led growth model
- When to choose a chief sales officer vs. a chief revenue officer
- How to organize sales and adjacent teams as the business scales

Sales Effectiveness

To improve sales effectiveness, sales and channel partner enablement programs must exploit competitive advantages and lead to market share gains by equipping frontline sellers to align their sales process to the complexities of the buying process. Sales enablement programs and resources must focus on buyer task orientation and signals, making it easier for customers to buy within an evermore digital and self-service journey.

Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- How do we use sales enablement best practices to close deals faster?
- How can we improve the performance of sales channels and partner programs?
- What are the emerging trends in digital selling?

Recommended Content

🔑 Some recommended content may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

- Tech CEOs: Evolve Your Systems to Better Enable Channel Partners
- Tech CEOs: Attract Partners by Pitching a Stronger Value Proposition
- How to Establish an Effective Demo Strategy as a Tech CEO
- Tech CEO Sales Effectiveness: Engage the Right Champions to Build Consensus
- Tech CEOs Can Shorten Sales Cycles by Addressing the Top Delay-Causing Activities

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- How to create a channel/indirect sales enablement plan
- How sales should disqualify deals to better prioritize resources for better business
- When and how services providers should expose their IP
- How to plan for whose sales process (and enablement) should support sellers of managed services

Customer Retention and Growth

Customers are more likely to renew or expand contracts, become advocates, and consider additional products and services when they realize lifetime value created by successful projects. Account management and customer success practices protect and grow revenue when they focus on developing customer relationships that increase loyalty, feedback, positive word-of-mouth and the coveted referenceable customer.

Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- How do we capture more customer-driven growth through expansion, cross-selling and upselling?
- How do we drive renewals while maturing our customer success operations to grow revenue?
- How do we turn our customers into references and advocates?

Recommended Content

 Some recommended content may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

- Ignition Guide to Building a Customer Reference Program for Tech CEOs
- Startup Lift: Initiate Customer Success to Drive Adoption and Renewal
- Tech CEOs: Drive Growth Through Upsell, Cross-Sell and Expansion!
- Toolkit: Drive Upsell, Cross-Sell and Expansion Opportunities for Tech CEOs Tech CEOs: Build Your Customer Advocacy Program to Drive Retention and Higher Growth

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- How to build and manage scalable customer reference and success programs
- Tools for creating strategic account planning for cross-sell and upsell growth
- How to balance technology and humans for optimized and scalable customer success

Suggested First Steps

- Gartner Tech Growth and Innovation Conference
- High Tech CEO Score
- Tech CEO Self-Assessment: Website Homepage Effectiveness

Essential Reading

- 2023 Tech Marketing Benchmarks: Top Insights for Tech CEOs
- Tech CEOs: Generative AI Can Make Sales and Marketing More Efficient
- Startup Lift: Storytelling Is the Demand Generation Path to Product-Market Fit
- Increase Revenue Opportunities With a Compelling First Sales Meeting
- 5 Steps to Differentiated Messaging for Tech CEOs
- Tech CEOs: Drive Growth Through Upsell, Cross-Sell and Expansion!
- Tech CEOs: Build Your Customer Advocacy Program to Drive Retention and Higher Growth

Tools and Toolkits

- Tech CEO Self-Assessment: Sales Process
- Tech CEO Self-Assessment: Website Storytelling and Homepage Messaging Effectiveness
- Tool: Annual Marketing Funnel Planner for Tech CEOs
- Tool: How Tech CEOs Can Select the Right Resale and Services Partners
- Tool: Demand Generation Campaign Checklist for Tech CEOs, With Conceptual Examples
- Tool: Content Marketing Strategy Template for Tech CEOs
- Ignition Guide to Building a Lead Scoring Method as a Tech CEO
- Ignition Guide for Using LinkedIn Sales Navigator to Generate Leads as a Tech CEO
- Ignition Guide to Building a Customer Reference Program for Tech CEOs
- Ignition Guide to Setting Up a Sales Team as a Tech CEO
- Ignition Guide to Building a Sales Process as a Tech CEO
- Ignition Guide to Conducting Analyst Relations Interactions as a Tech CEO
- Ignition Guide to Formalizing an SEO Strategy as a Tech CEO
- Ignition Guide to Creating a Customer Retention Program as a Tech CEO
- Ignition Guide to Developing an Account-Based Marketing Plan as a Tech CEO
- Ignition Guide to Developing a Messaging Strategy as a Tech CEO

Evidence

¹ **2023 Gartner Tech Marketing Benchmarks Survey.** This survey was conducted online from January through March 2023 among 310 respondents. Respondents came from technology-focused organizations located in the U.S., Canada and the U.K. with more than \$10 million in annual revenue. Among the total respondents surveyed, 95 came from organizations with \$10 million to less than \$100 million in annual revenue. Respondents were required to be aligned to one of the following primary job functions/roles: demand generation/ABM marketing/performance marketing, marketing executive leadership, web/digital/social marketing, marketing operations/analytics, product marketing or customer marketing. They were also required to have knowledge of the marketing budget and spend (for the company or business unit) and the marketing campaign/program tactics. Quotas were established to guarantee a good distribution in terms of countries, product offering (software, technology services and hardware) and company size (annual revenue). *Disclaimer: The results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.*

² **2022 Gartner B2B Buyer Survey.** This survey was administered in November and December 2022 and includes data from 771 B2B buyers from the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and Australia. Respondents who qualified for this survey had to be employed full time at an organization with total revenue of at least \$250 million or the equivalent and had participated in a significant B2B purchase decision. A “significant B2B purchase decision” is defined here as a decision that required deliberation with at least one other person and the evaluation of more than one potential supplier or vendor. Respondents were instructed to answer questions based on their experience with this recent purchase and with the supplier that was used to complete the purchase. Respondents evaluated the quality of the purchase decision and provided insights into various stages of their recent purchase decision. *Disclaimer: Results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.*

³ **2023 Gartner End User Buying Behavior Survey.** This survey seeks to understand the behavior of B2B buyers on how they approach decisions to renew or expand technology subscription agreements. The survey was conducted online from February through March 2023 among 1,503 respondents from organizations with annual revenue of at least \$50 million or equivalent from Western Europe (41%), North America (33%) and Asia/Pacific (25%). Industries surveyed include education providers, energy, financial services, government, health payer, healthcare, technology, telecom, insurance, manufacturing, natural resources, retail, transportation and utilities. Qualified respondents are involved in vendor evaluation/selection or review of at least one of the following products or services (subscription agreement) within the past two years: software as a service, platform as a service, infrastructure as a service, network as a service, hardware as a service, managed IT services or business process as a service. Also, respondents have been personally involved in a renewal and/or expansion decision at their organization in the past two years. *Disclaimer: Results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.*

Document Revision History

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Customer Acquisition for Tech CEOs Primer for 2019 - 2 January 2019

Customer Acquisition for Tech CEOs Primer for 2019 - 2 January 2019

Customer Acquisition for Tech CEOs Primer for 2018 - 23 May 2018

Related Priorities

Initiative Name	Description
Product and Services Strategy for Tech CEOs	This initiative helps tech CEOs create evidence-based product and services strategies that support critical, growth-oriented GTM decisions.
Scalable Business Operations for Tech CEOs	To achieve scalable business operations, tech CEOs must focus on practices and strategies that help them effectively attract and retain talent, manage operations, predict finances, and measure KPIs.
Corp. Development & Growth Strategy for Tech CEOs	This initiative covers corporate development and expansion actions technology providers must pursue in planning and executing strategies for growth. beyond their current products and customer segments.
Technology Market Essentials	This initiative helps organizations harness growth opportunities by providing a quantitative fact base with market analysis and insights on market dynamics and technology trends.

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