

An aerial photograph of a calm lake surrounded by a dense forest. A yellow dotted line starts from the top right and extends towards the center of the lake. Two vertical yellow bars are positioned on either side of the main title. In the lower part of the lake, several kayakers in red and yellow kayaks are visible, moving towards the center.

# Sales Enablement Leadership Vision 2023

3 strategic actions for success

It is now accepted that most B2B buyers prefer a seller-free experience, increasingly relying on digital interactions to research solutions, evaluate suppliers and complete a purchase. Beyond the immediate impact on marketing, sales and customer service, this phenomenon also has a profound impact on the sales enablement function.

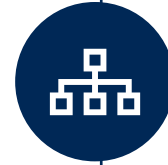
Sales leaders recognize that siloed commercial processes are a hindrance to creating a superior customer experience. Adding to this challenge, sales enablement leaders must adapt to a tumultuous economic environment, marked by inflation, scarcity of talent and supply chain disruptions. These factors interfere with commercial organizations' ability to help buyers make confident purchase decisions.

These shifts are changing how the sales enablement function supports the commercial organization. Sales enablement leaders can use this research to help them answer three questions that are key to leading the enablement transformation required to succeed in 2023 and beyond.

### **Key questions addressed:**

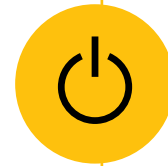
- ① How can we build an enablement function for today's commercial environment?
- ① How can sales enablement prepare sellers to drive commercial success using technology?
- ① How can sales enablement leaders help build a high-performing sales team?

# Turning sales enablement into a strategic partner



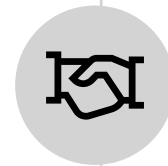
Support and elevate customer-facing roles to:

- Align technology, content, knowledge and skills
- Align deliverables to ensure consistent customer messaging, regardless of their chosen revenue channel
- Leverage data throughout the buying journey to revise and improve content
- Coordinate development efforts to build a revenue team with role-specific skills, spanning the entire buying journey



To harness the power of the revenue technology stack, sales enablement must:

- Develop sellers' digital competence
- Improve sellers' data literacy and digital dexterity
- Create a workspace that facilitates buyer engagement



Build a high-performing organization today to keep an eye on tomorrow's needs by:

- Scaling up trainings using methods aligned to seller learning habits
- Optimizing processes and tools by focusing on "drag reduction"

Source: Gartner

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# Key priorities



How can we build an enablement function for today's commercial environment?



How can sales enablement prepare sellers to drive commercial success using technology?



How can sales enablement leaders help build a high-performing sales team?

# The changing nature of enablement needs

Shifts in the macroenvironment and buying preferences have changed what sellers need from enablement.

## 1 Change is frequent and overwhelming.

**88% of sellers** say they're **frequently** required to respond to unexpected changes.

**69% of buyers** agree that the amount of change in their organization is **overwhelming**.

n = 907 B2B sellers  
Source: 2022 Gartner B2B Seller Motivation Survey

n = 725 B2B sellers  
Source: 2021 Gartner B2B Buyer Survey

### Macro disruptions are causing change.



**Economic Uncertainty**  
(Recession fears, inflation, interest and currency exchange rates)



**Employee Turnover**  
(Great Resignation, low morale, disengaged sellers, scarcity of talent)

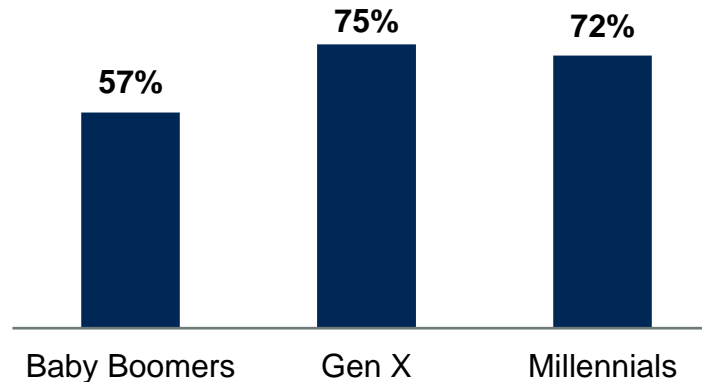


**Supply Chain Risks**  
(Increase in order management responsibilities, factors beyond vendors' control, etc.)

## 2 Customers prefer to not engage sellers.

Overall, **72%** of B2B buyers prefer a "rep-free" experience.

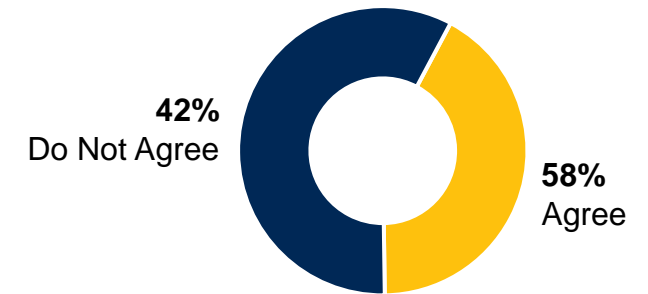
### Percentage of Buyers Preferring a "Rep-Free" Experience by Generation



n = 725 B2B customers  
Source: 2021 Gartner B2B Buyer Survey  
Note: Rep-free preference defined as selecting "Somewhat Agree," "Agree," or "Strongly agree" in response to the statement: "I prefer a rep-free sales experience."  
Percentages should not be compared to 2020 Gartner Digital Buying Survey due to key differences in sampling.

## 3 Conflicting information is common.

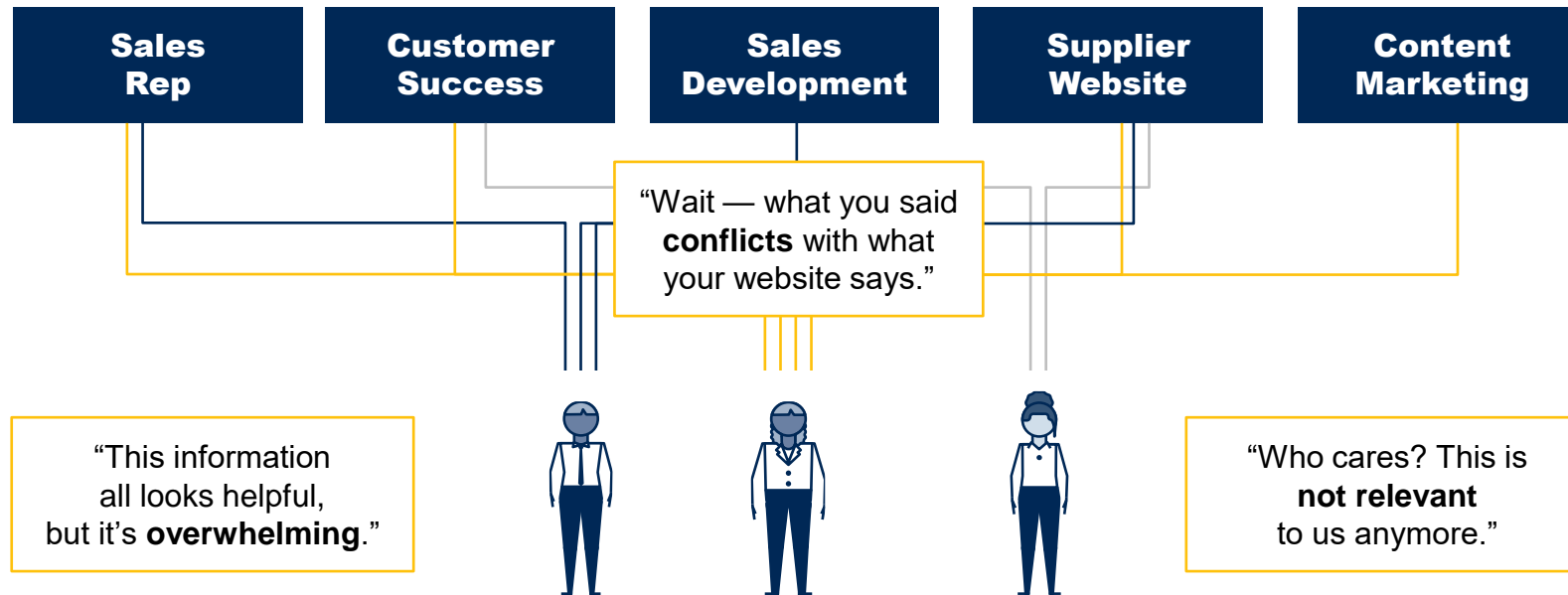
**58%** of buyers agree that information on the supplier website conflicts with information shared by a seller or subject matter expert.



n = 730 B2B buyers  
Q. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the information you encountered across the purchase decision: "Information we found ourselves on the supplier website conflicted with information shared by their rep or subject matter expert(s)."  
Source: 2021 Gartner B2B Buyer Survey  
Note: Agree indicates 5, 6, 7 on a 7-point scale.

# Poor orchestration hurts commercial success

Each buying group member consumes information from multiple information channels and touchpoints.



## Fixing orchestration problems leads to commercial success:

B2B buyers who encountered consistent information from the supplier website and sales reps were **2.89x** more likely to complete a high-quality deal.

n = 396 B2B buyers who completed a recent purchase  
Source: 2021 Gartner B2B Buyer Survey

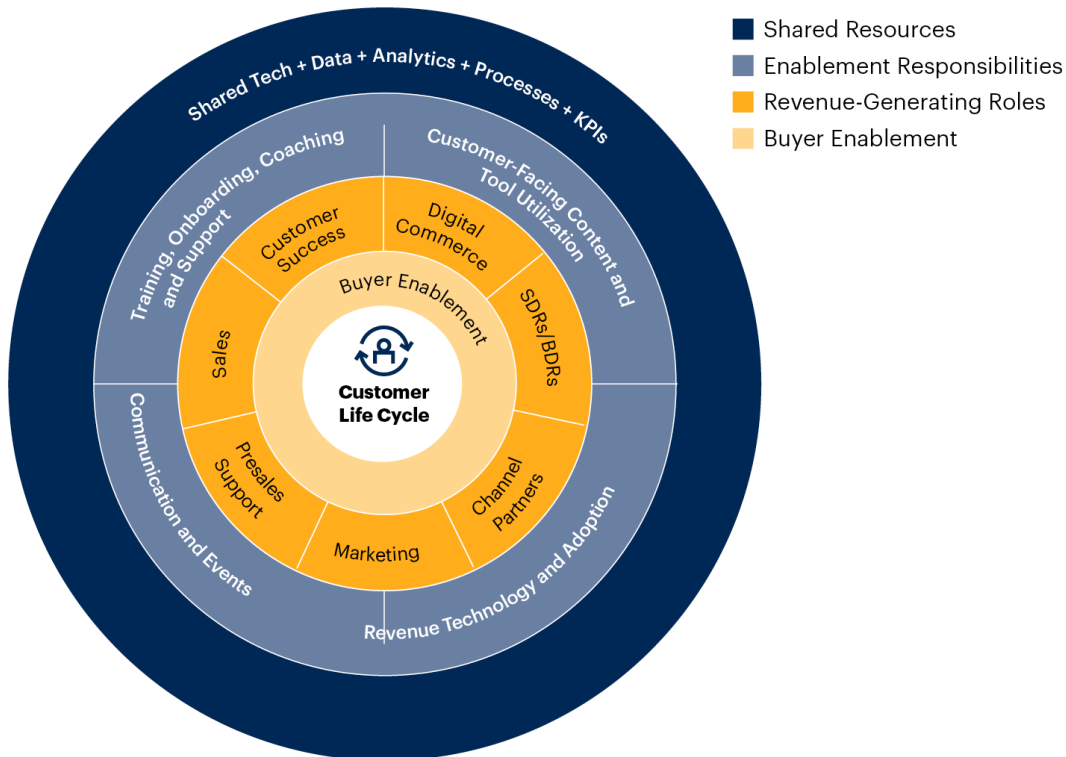
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# Orchestrating commercial success

A revenue enablement approach enables orchestration to succeed in the coming years.



**Revenue enablement** brings traditional and siloed enablement functions together to ensure all roles that touch a customer have the **technology, content, knowledge** and **skills** needed to maximize revenue production.

## A revenue enablement approach can overcome orchestration challenges by:

- Enabling all customer-facing roles with **consistent customer messaging, similar technology and data, and sales motions**
- **Aligning enablement efforts** that support the entire customer buying journey or **restructuring under one revenue enablement function** to work together as a team
- **Elevating the visibility of the customer buying journey** and optimizing enablement efforts to improve revenue results

Source: Gartner

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# Technology is reshaping the sales landscape

## Technology is essential.

**84%** of CSOs see effective use of technology as important to meeting revenue targets.



n = 43 CSOs  
Q. How important is effective use of sales technology to meeting your revenue targets?  
Source: 1H22 Gartner CSO Priorities Survey  
Note: High importance defined as selecting "very important" or "important."

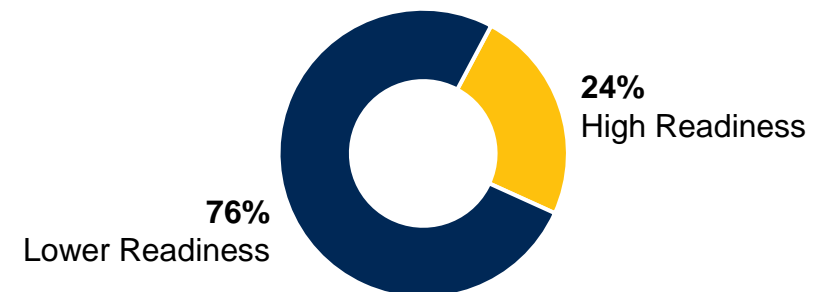
## Many sellers think technology makes things harder.

**59%** of **B2B sellers** agree that technology is a hinderance.

n = 899 B2B sellers  
Q. The introduction of new sales technologies in my organization generally hinders my overall efficiency.  
Source: 2022 Gartner B2B Seller Motivation Survey  
Note: Agree indicates 5, 6, 7 on a 7-point scale.

## Employees need new skills.

Only **24%** of workers have a high degree of readiness to adopt new, technologically driven ways of working; this is undermining the successful adoption of technology.

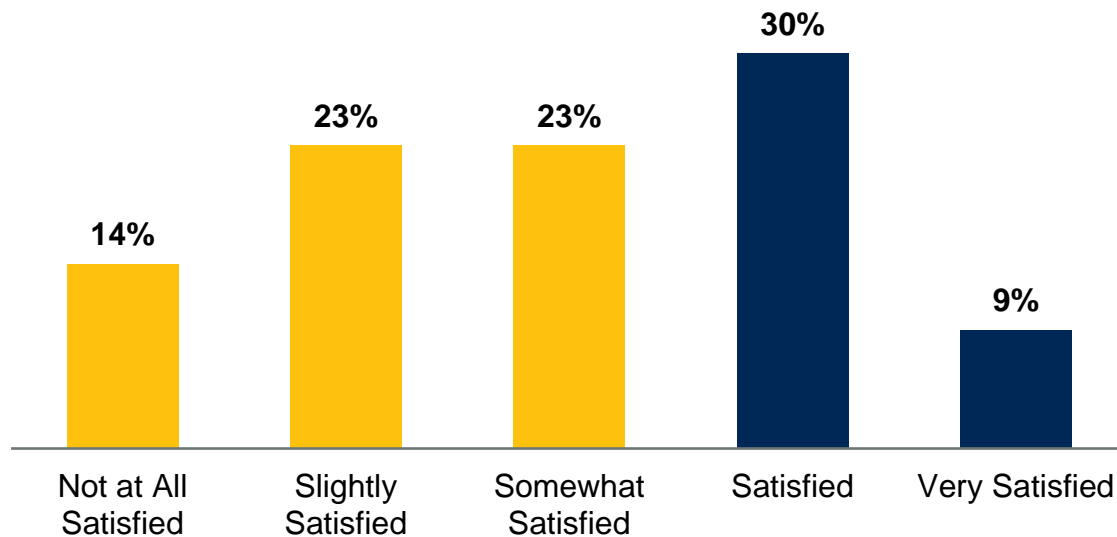


n = 4,953 software users  
Q. Select which of the two statements describes the way you view technology and collaboration in your job?  
Source: 2021 Gartner User Influence on Software Decisions Survey

# Current approach to using tech is falling short

Only a few CSOs are satisfied with current sales technology stack.

60% of CSOs are not fully satisfied with their current sales tech stack.



n = 43 CSOs  
Q. How satisfied are you with your current sales technology stack?  
Source: 1H22 Gartner CSO Priorities Survey  
Note: Satisfied is 4 and 5 on a 5-point scale.

Most enablement teams are not using technology effectively.

42% of enablement teams use technology effectively, but only 7% are very effective.



n = 43 CSOs  
Q. How effective is your sales enablement team in utilizing technology to perform their duties?  
Source: 1H22 Gartner CSO Priorities Survey  
Note: Effective is 4 and 5 on a 5-point scale, very effective is 5 on a 5-point scale.

Data literacy is a key competency.

74% of CSOs believe improving data literacy now is of high importance.

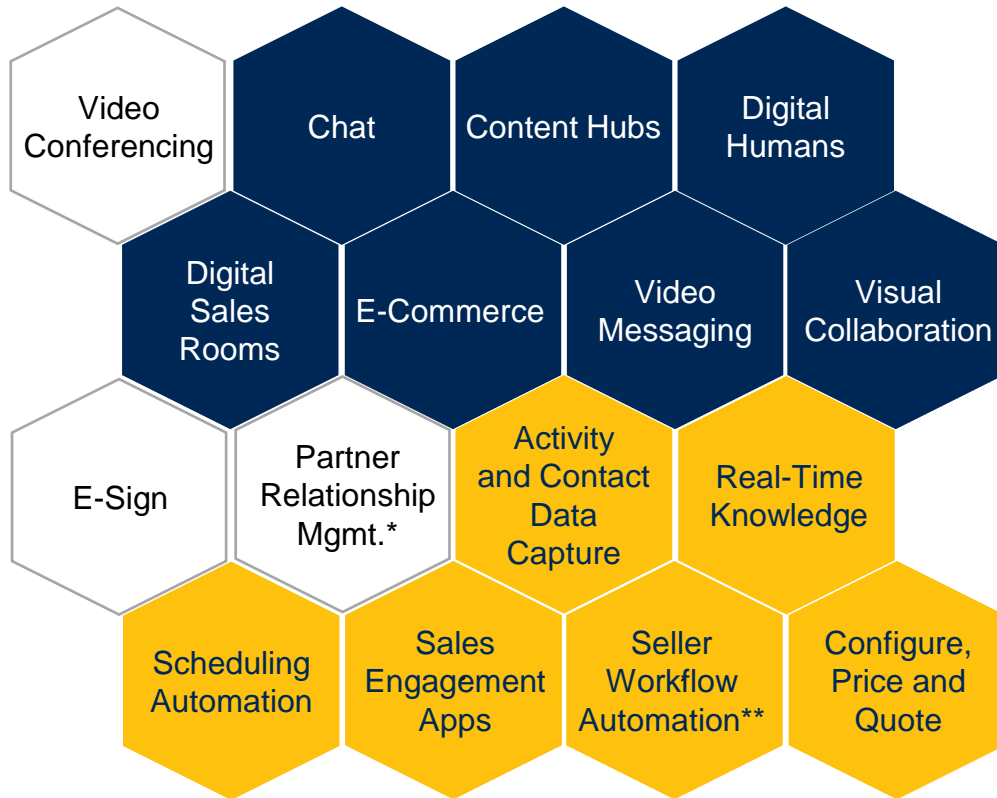
n = 43 CSOs  
Source: 1H22 Gartner CSO Priorities Survey  
Note: High importance defined as responding "very important" or "important" to the questions: "How important is it for your sellers to improve on the following competencies in 2022?"

# Enable sellers to harness the power of technology

Today's commercial environment requires changing how sellers use technology and data.

## Revenue Technology Generates Insights and Simplifies Workflows for Sellers

■ Buyer Engagement    ■ Simplified Workflows    □ Essential Technologies



## Sales enablement leaders who want to fully harness the power of revenue technology must:

- Help sellers **overcome barriers** that impede technology adoption (e.g., accuracy, relevance and volume).
- Build sellers' **digital dexterity** in increasing their usage of digital platforms to gain deeper customer understanding and promote collaboration.
- Develop sellers' **data literacy skills** to source and validate interpretation of data insights for optimal customer engagement.
- Create a workspace that **facilitates buyer engagement** and can be used in in-person meeting facilitation, hybrid selling and interaction points.

Source: 2021 Gartner Sales Technology Survey  
Note: \*Only for indirect business model; \*\*Technologies not included in study

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## Key priorities



How can we build an enablement function for today's commercial environment?



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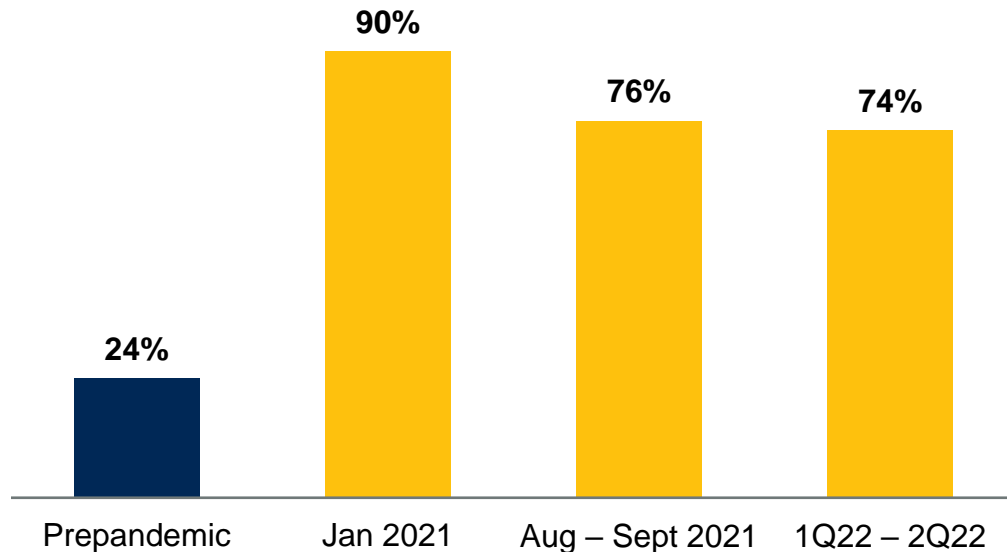
How can sales enablement leaders help build a high-performing sales team?

# The seller role has changed

**Seller skills needed to succeed today have changed ...**

## Virtual Selling Skills No Longer Optional

Percentage of sales force operating predominantly virtually



n = 61 CSOs (Prepandemic and January 2021), 69 CSOs (Aug – Sept 2021), 43 CSOs (2022 Q1 – Q2)

Q. What percentage of your sales force is currently operating in a predominantly virtual capacity?

Source: 1H21 Gartner CSO Priorities Survey, 2H21 Gartner CSO Priorities Survey, 2022 Gartner CSO Priorities Survey

Note: Predominantly virtual defined as response greater than 75%.

**... and will continue to change going forward.**

**62%** of sellers indicate that they've lost virtual deals that they would have won in person.

n = 898 B2B sellers

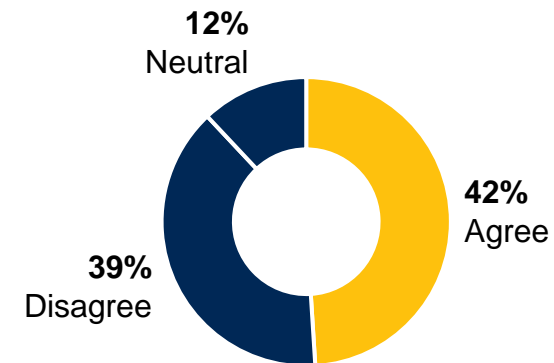
Q. I have lost deals virtually I could have won in person.

Source: 2022 Gartner B2B Seller Motivation Survey

Note: Top 3 on a 7-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

## Sellers Expect New Required Skills in the Years Ahead

Level of agreement that seller skills used today will be outdated in 2–3 years



n = 898 B2B sellers

Q. The skills I currently use in my role will become outdated over the next 2-3 years.

Source: 2022 Gartner B2B Seller Motivation Survey

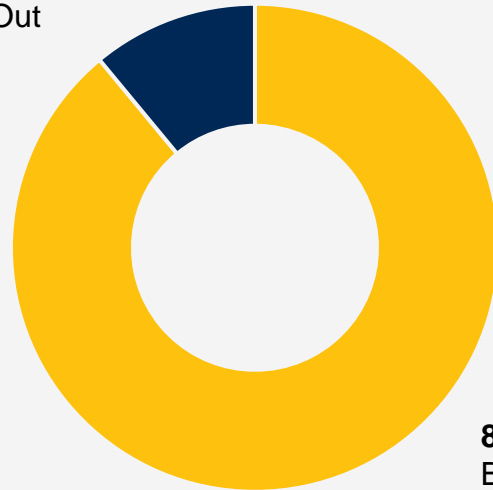
Note: Agree is answering 5 through 7 on a 7-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

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# Today's sellers are struggling to adapt

## Sellers Who Feel Burned Out

11%  
Not Burned Out



89%  
Burned Out

n = 885 sellers  
Q. To what extent do you feel burned out from work?  
Source: 2022 Gartner B2B Seller Motivation Survey  
Note: Burned out defined as responding "slight extent," "some extent," "moderate extent" or "large extent" on 5-point scale.

# 65%

of sellers believe that success at their job today is largely determined by factors outside of their control.

n = 908 sellers  
Q. "My success at my job is largely determined by factors outside of my control."  
Source: 2022 Gartner B2B Seller Motivation Survey  
Note: Agree indicates top 3 on 7-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

# Support the changing role of sellers

Four actions sales enablement leaders must take to build the sales force of the future.

**Redesign tools** to create collaborative resources that sellers and customers can use together to improve the buying experience.

**Optimize workflow** for sellers by focusing on “drag reduction” to improve quota attainment, engagement and retention.



**Update talent profiles** to emphasize digital engagements, buying stakeholders, buying jobs and situational awareness.

**Downsize training** by implementing more effective and efficient learning methods aligned to seller learning habits like microlearning, nudges and other practical learning experiences.



Source: Gartner

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# Summary: Sales Enablement Leadership Vision

Priority	Trend	Challenge	Action
 <p><b>Orchestrate commercial success</b></p>	<p>Shifts in macroenvironment and buying preferences have changed the nature of enablement needs for both buyers and sellers.</p>	<p>Success in a fast-moving, disruptive environment increasingly depends on collaboration with other teams.</p>	<p>Rebuild sales enablement by creating a coalition focused on driving revenue in today's commercial environment.</p>
 <p><b>Enable sellers to harness power of technology</b></p>	<p>Technology is essential, but sellers are often resistant and view it as a hindrance.</p>	<p>The current approach isn't meeting sales leaders' or sellers' expectations.</p>	<p>Develop data and digital adoption skills in sellers to harness the power of the revtech stack as buying insights increase in volume and accuracy.</p>
 <p><b>Support the changing role of sellers</b></p>	<p>Skills required for sales success are continuously changing to adapt to a highly variable buying environment.</p>	<p>Seller burnout and lack of control of their outcomes is causing disengagement and less motivated sellers.</p>	<p>Maintain an adaptive approach to building seller skills and tools to keep pace with a rapidly changing buying environment and the diverse needs of sellers.</p>

Source: Gartner

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# How Gartner helps sales enablement leaders

The sales enablement function is expanding to consistently drive change across the entire revenue team and address shifts in customer buying behavior. Sales enablement leaders must reassess their strategic visions and program designs to meet the needs of today's buyers and sellers. Gartner has everything you need to start turning insights into action.



Diagnostics and benchmarks



Guides and toolkits



Expert inquiry



Expert research



Live events



Peer connections



Case studies and best practices



Webinars and online learning events



Document reviews

## Example — How Gartner supports you as a client:

### Diagnose current state



Gauge your current progress on the journey to consistent, effective, virtual engagement with [Infographic: The Path to Effective Virtual Selling](#).



Benchmark resource allocation and key metrics against global colleagues using [Sales Enablement Benchmark Report 2022](#).



Use [Sales Score](#) to assess organizational effectiveness and prioritize gaps in delivering sales enablement impact.

### Develop your plan



Build a multiyear plan to engineer cross-functional commercial impact for your organizing using the [2023 Strategic Roadmap for Revenue Enablement](#).



Learn how to leverage data from marketing, sales and customer success to fuel the revenue engine by watching the [Shift From Seller Enablement to Revenue Enablement](#) on-demand webinar.



Ensure you can show clear ROI from enablement initiatives by leveraging [The Right Way to Measure the Impact of Sales Enablement](#).

### Execute and drive change



Identify the root causes of seller pain points and implement an optimized set of seller-suggested initiatives to boost motivation using the [Sellers as Co-Investigators Lever Case Study](#).



Schedule an inquiry with a [Gartner expert](#) to pressure-test your plans and subsequent actions.



Equip frontline managers with the critical skills to support on-the-job learning and skill acquisition with [Ignition Guide to Creating a Sales Coaching Program](#).

# Actionable, objective insight

Position your organization for success. Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools for Sales leaders:

## Guide

### Build an End-to-End Revenue Enablement Strategy

Learn how to provide your buyers and sellers with a seamless and effortless experience.



[Download Now](#)

## Report

### Sales Enablement Benchmark Report

Discover how your peers are evolving the sales enablement function to achieve revenue targets.



[Download Now](#)

## Quarterly

### The Chief Sales Officer

Get quarterly, actionable insights for forward-thinking sales leaders.



[Download Now](#)

## Podcast

### The Gartner Sales Podcast

Listen to leading experts across Gartner and beyond highlight important implications and unexpected findings for senior sales leaders.



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