

An aerial photograph of a calm lake surrounded by a dense forest. In the foreground, four kayakers in red and yellow kayaks are paddling away from the viewer. A yellow dotted line starts from the right side of the frame and extends towards the center, where it meets two vertical yellow bars. These bars and the dotted line form a large triangle that frames the main title text.

Chief Sales Officer 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 function.

Sales leaders recognize that siloed commercial processes are a hindrance to creating a superior customer experience. Adding to this challenge, sales operations 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.

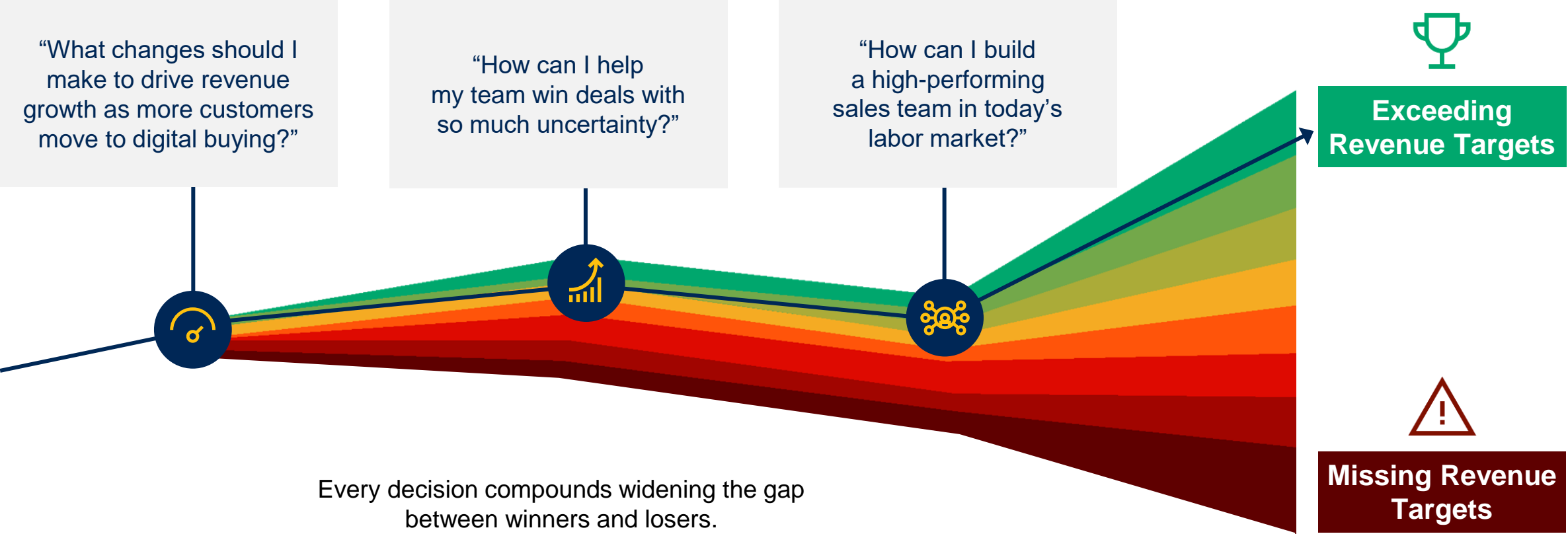
These shifts are changing how the sales function supports the commercial organization. Chief sales officers can use this research to help them answer three questions that are key to leading the transformation required to succeed in 2023 and beyond.

Key questions addressed:

- ① What must CSOs do to drive revenue growth in a digital sales environment?
- ① What must CSOs do to improve sales effectiveness in the face of perpetual and compounding uncertainty?
- ① What must CSOs do to attract, retain and motivate high-performing sales talent in today's environment?

B2B sales is at a tipping point

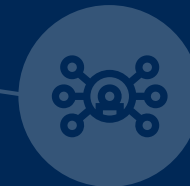
Heading into 2023, CSOs will have to make **key decisions** that will shape **sales success**.



Source: Gartner

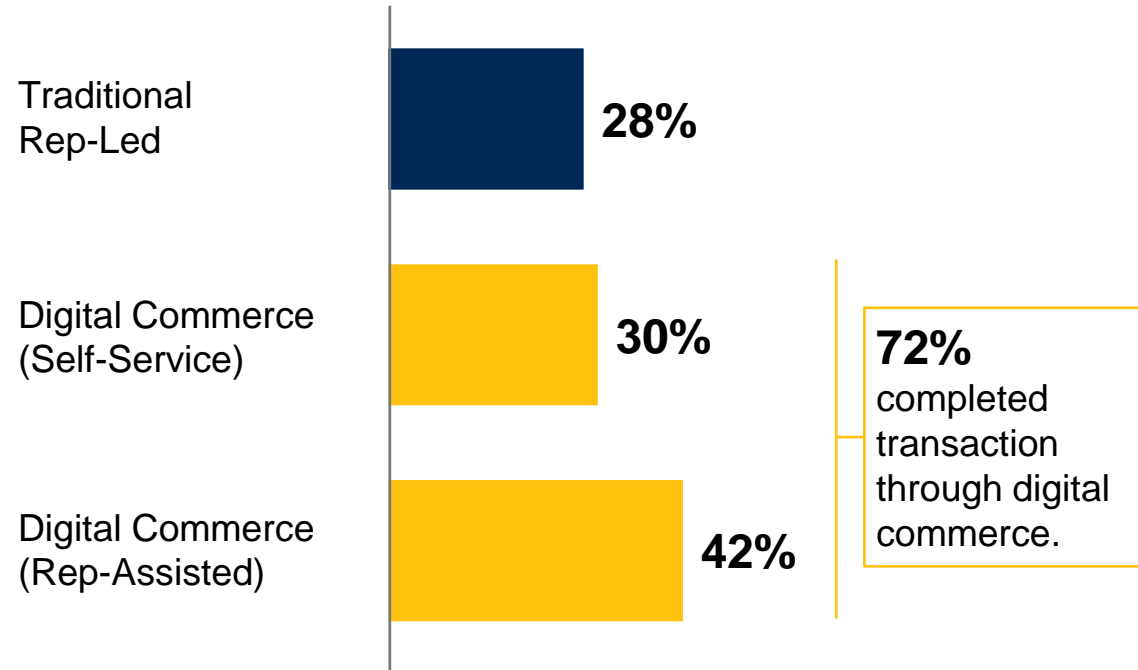
Key priorities

What must CSOs do to drive revenue growth in a digital sales environment?

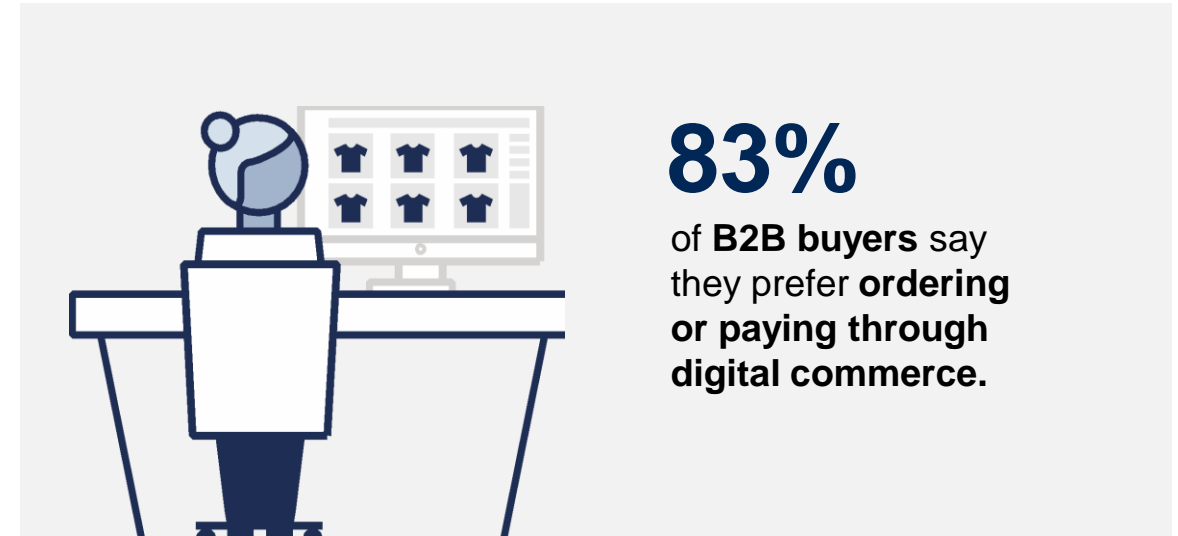


Trend #1: Digital commerce overtakes traditional purchases

Digital Commerce Accounts for Majority of B2B Purchases

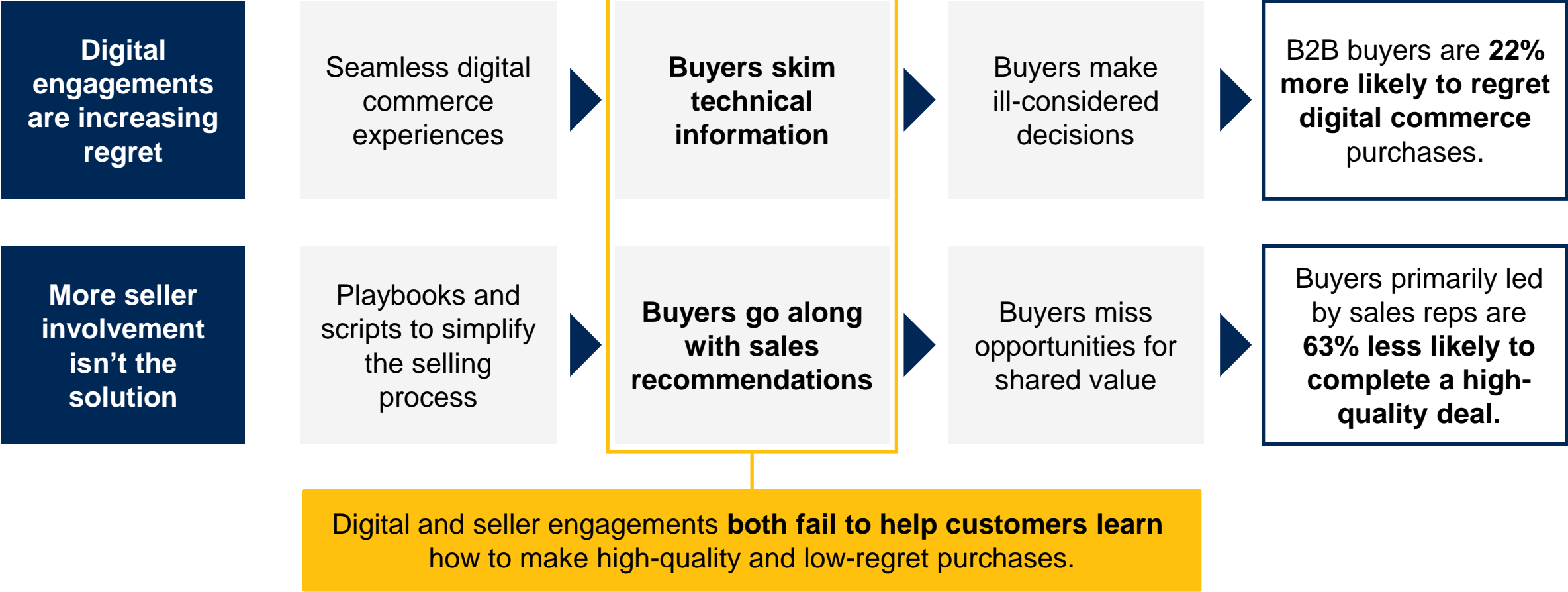


n = 461 B2B buyers who completed a recent purchase
Q. How was this significant business purchase completed?
Source: 2021 Gartner B2B Buyer Survey



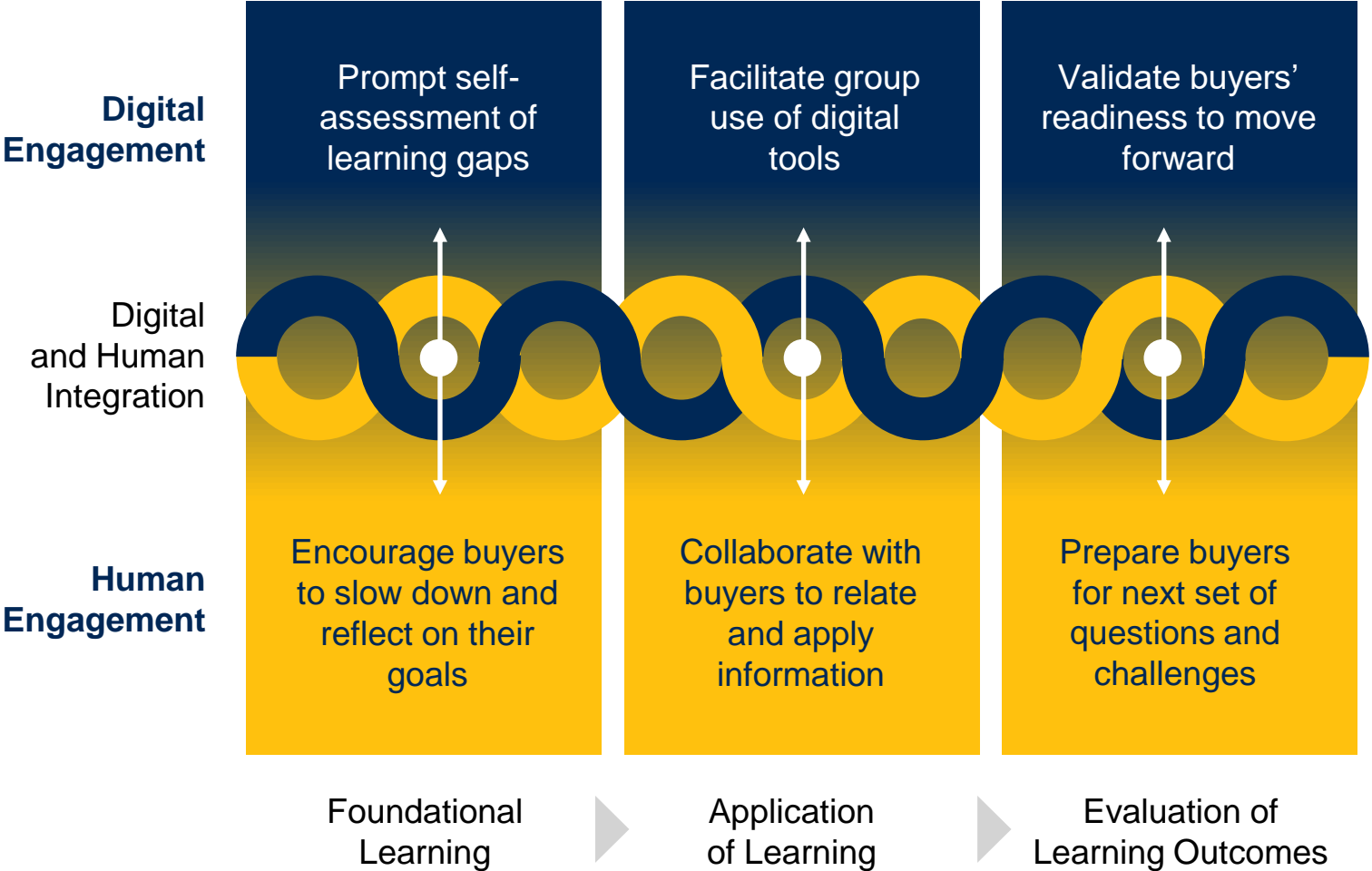
n = 725 B2B buyers who completed a purchase
Q. Generally as a business customer, to what extent do you agree with each statement.
Source: 2021 Gartner B2B Buyer Survey
Note: Percentage represents respondents who selected at least a 5 'Somewhat Agree' on a 7-point scale.

Digital and seller engagements are falling short



n = 396 B2B buyers who completed a recent purchase
Source: 2021 Gartner B2B Buyer Survey
Note: A high-quality deal is defined as an ambitious or premium purchase that lives up to customers' expectations (i.e., not regretted).

Build better customer engagements



Better customer engagements use:

Customer learning paths designed to deepen customer's understanding of how to accomplish their goals.



Effective customer learning paths:

Integrate digital and human engagements to help customers understand through three successive learning stages.

Customers who experience learning paths have **147% greater likelihood to buy more than expected.**

n = 511 B2B buyers
Source: 2021 Gartner Journey Orchestration Customer Survey

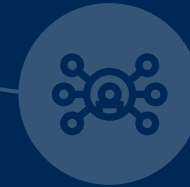


Key priorities

What must CSOs do to drive revenue growth in a digital sales environment?



What must CSOs do to improve sales effectiveness in the face of perpetual and compounding uncertainty?



Trend #2: Uncertainty is disrupting B2B selling

Three Profitability Pressures Disrupting Sales Heading Into 2023

The Value of Cash

Inflation challenges persist.

62% of CEOs see general price inflation as a persistent or long-term issue.

38%
Insignificant



62%
Persistent

Labor Market Costs

Sales talent costs more.

Median salaries for less tenured B2B Sales candidates have increased in all the top U.S. metropolitan areas.

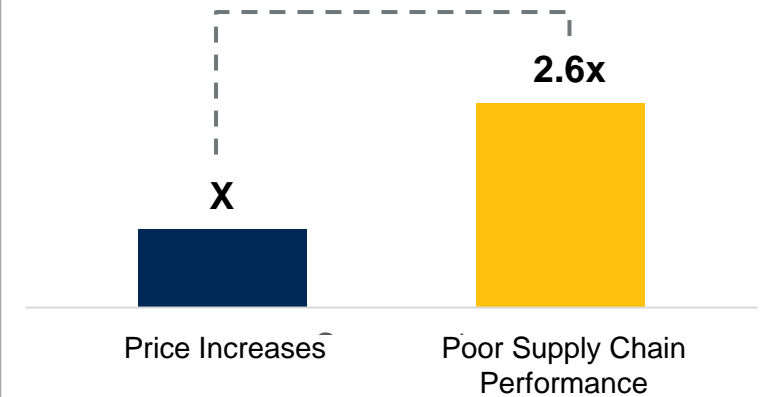


Source: Gartner TalentNeuron™ in April 2022

Supply Chain Risks

Shortages hurt loyalty.

Poor supply chain performance is 2.6x more likely to lead to customer disloyalty than are price increases.



Source: Gartner Supply Chain's 2021 Customer Experience Survey

Uncertainty is hurting buyers' confidence and deal quality

What Buyers Experience



Buying Group Turnover

Labor market changes mean buying group stakeholders keep changing.



Changing Priorities

Organizations are regularly adjusting growth strategies and goals.



Increasing Purchase Scrutiny

Organizations are reevaluating and reprioritizing all current and future investments.

Where Sellers Struggle



Customer Understanding

Changing priorities and stakeholders make it harder to understand what customers want, leading to **increased cycle times**.



Customer Engagements

Changing priorities and evaluation criteria make it so standardized playbooks are falling short, leading to **lost 'winnable' deals**.

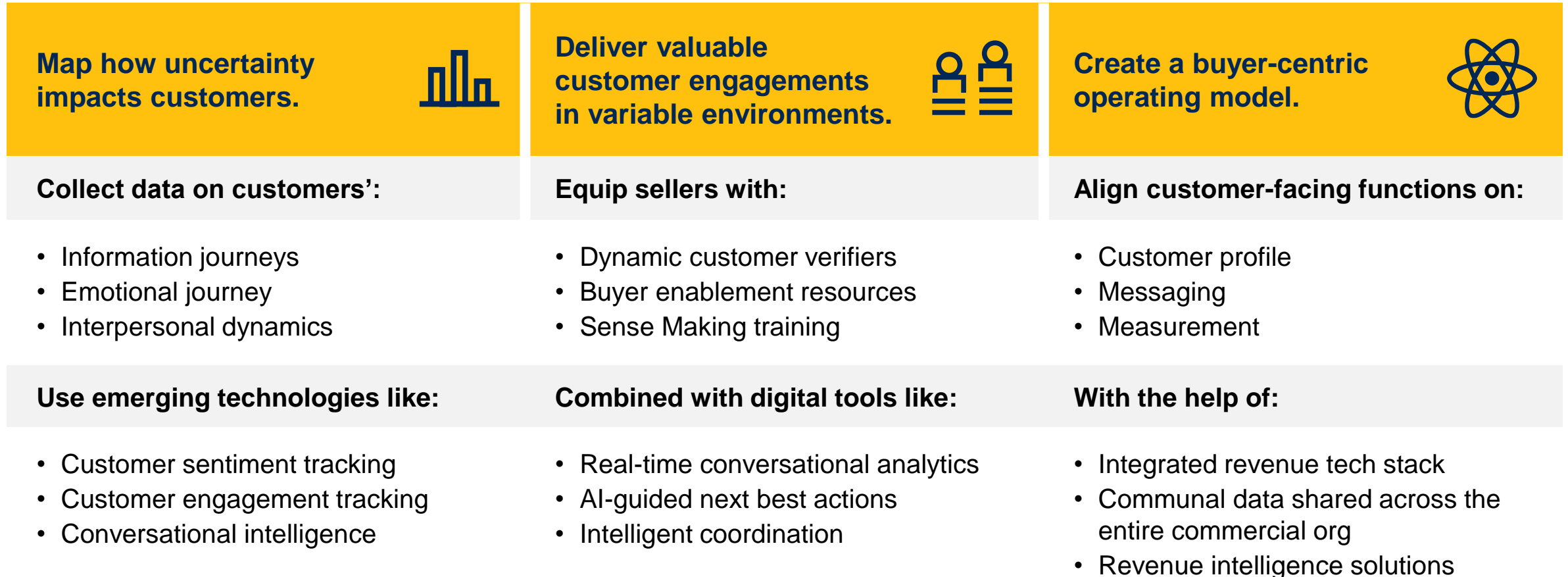


Operating Model

Limited cross-functional visibility makes omnichannel customers appear unpredictable to sellers, leading to **less accurate forecasts**.

The path to an adaptive sales organization

How to deal with uncertainty



Source: Gartner

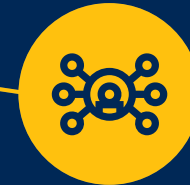
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Key priorities

What must CSOs do to drive revenue growth in a digital sales environment?



What must CSOs do to attract, retain and motivate high-performing sales talent in today's environment?

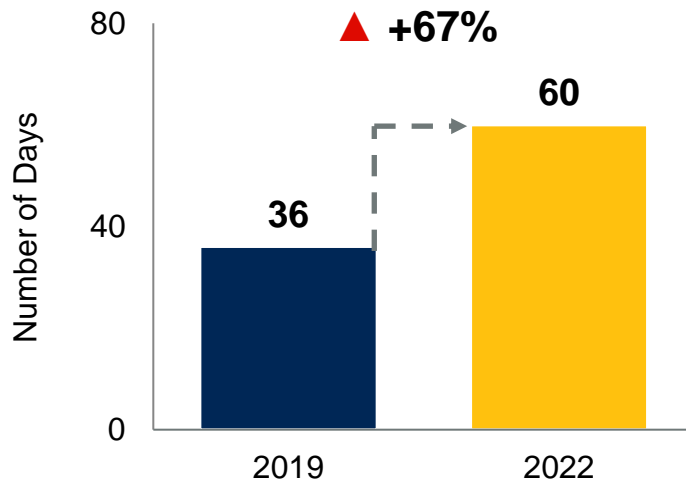


What must CSOs do to improve sales effectiveness in the face of perpetual and compounding uncertainty?

Three new realities of the sales talent market

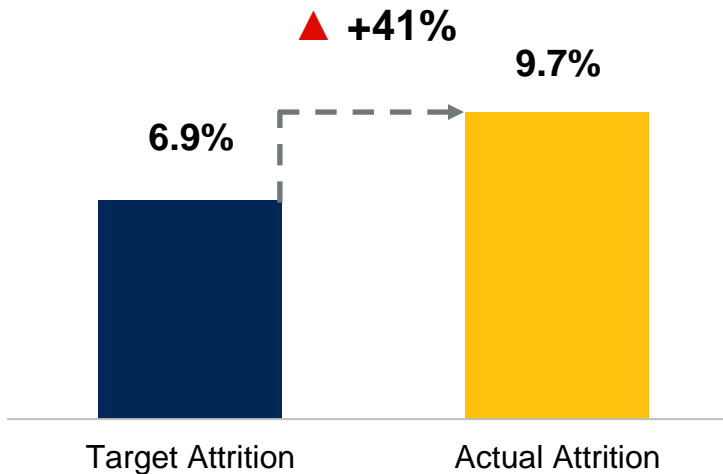
1. Hiring is taking longer.

Average Posting Duration For B2B Seller Roles



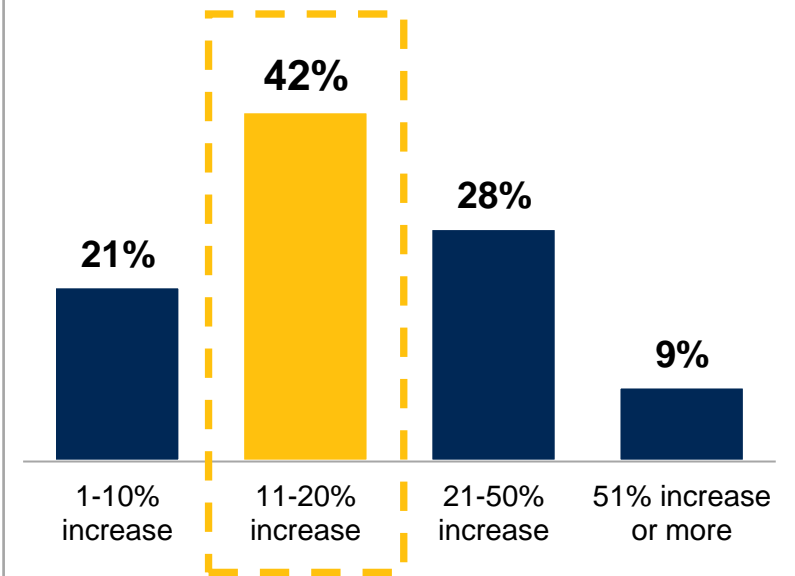
2. Retaining talent is harder.

Target vs. Actual Attrition of B2B Seller Roles



3. New hires are more expensive.

With a Smallest Compensation Increase Sellers Would Accept to Switch Jobs



n = To Come
Source: 2019 and 2022 TalentNeuron

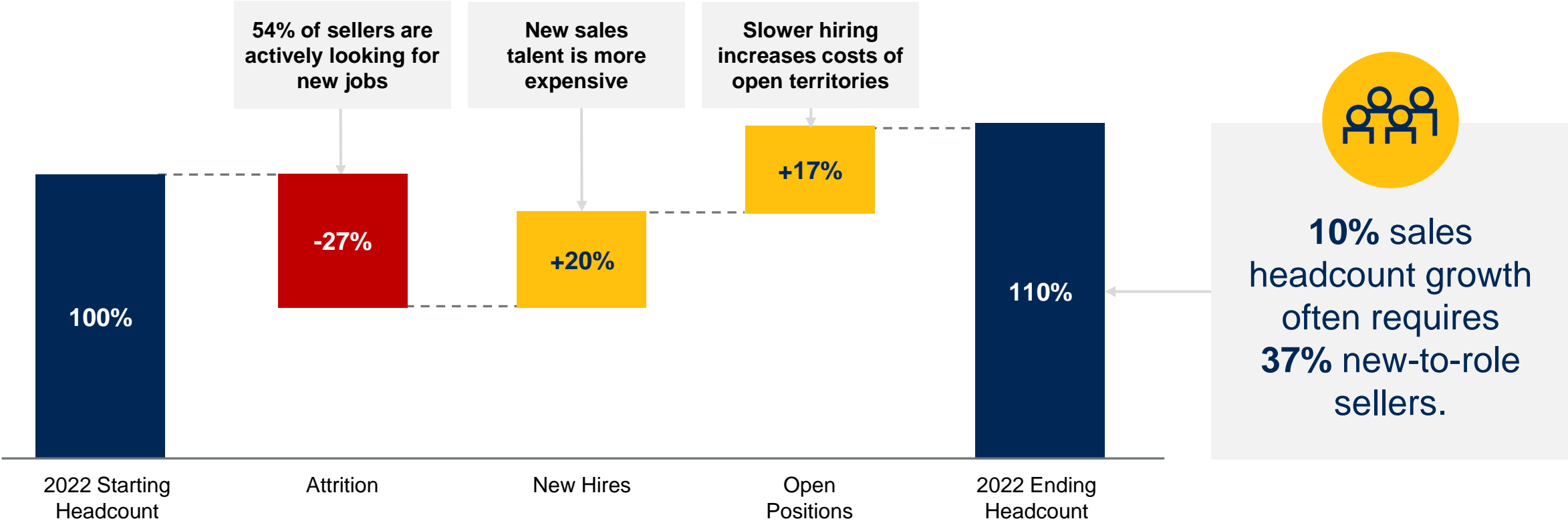
N = 43 CSOs
Q. What is your target/current regrettable voluntary turnover/attrition rate for sellers in your organization?
Source: 1H22 Gartner CSO Priorities Survey

N = 681 B2B Sellers
Q. What is the smallest percentage increase you would accept in your total compensation to do your same job with a different employer?
Source: 2022 Gartner B2B Seller Motivation Survey

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Building a high-performing sales team is now harder than ever

Realities of sales team building in today's environment



n= 906 B2B Sellers
Source: 2022 Gartner B2B Seller Motivation Survey
a Note: Percentage of sellers who "somewhat agree," "agree," or "strongly agree" with the statement: "I am actively looking for a new job opportunity."
Other data on this slide based on estimates from Gartner client inquiries.

Building a sales force in today's environment

Focus on drag reduction.

Drag is demotivation away from work.
Moving from medium to low drag:

Improves mean quota attainment

28% 

Reduces active job seeking

72% 

n = 832 B2B sellers, 906 B2B sellers
Source: 2022 Gartner B2B Seller Motivation Survey

Three ways for CSOs to reduce drag:

1. **Diagnose and address** the sources of seller drag.

2. **Develop a career lattice** to provide sellers with growth opportunities.

3. **Design opportunities** for seller empowerment.

Source: Gartner

Redefine the seller role.

Sales roles must change to integrate humans into digital engagements. This will help *build the high-performing sales force of the future*.

Digital



Human

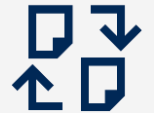
Three areas CSOs must focus on to integrate sellers into digital channels:



Deployment models



Talent profiles



Enablement

Summary

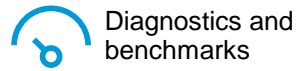
Priority	Trend	Challenge	Action
 Customer Experience	B2B digital commerce has overtaken seller-led purchases.	Current digital and seller-led engagements create poor customer experience and hurt commercial results.	Create a unified customer engagement strategy focused on customer learning journeys across channels.
 Economic Uncertainty	Constant and compounding disruptions threaten revenue growth.	Sellers struggle to respond to uncertainty's impact on buying groups.	Adopt a technology-augmented approach to better understand and respond to uncertainty's impact on customers' needs.
 Sales Talent Management	Hiring and retaining talent is harder and more expensive than ever.	Constant turnover and longer hiring cycles threaten sales results.	Expand your talent pool by redesigning the traditional sales role and reduce attrition by focusing on reducing seller drag.

Source: Gartner

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How Gartner helps chief sales officers

Compounding disruptions in buying dynamics, the economic environment and sales talent are creating uncertainty in B2B sales. CSOs must frame these challenges and develop actions to drive market growth in 2023 and beyond. Gartner has everything you need to start turning insights into action.



Diagnostics and benchmarks



Guides and toolkits



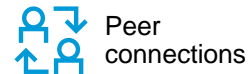
Expert inquiry



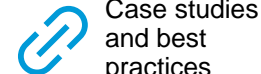
Expert research



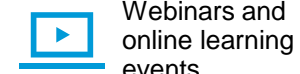
Live events



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



Review the latest benchmarking data leveraging [Benchmarking the 2022 U.S. Labor Market for High-Performing B2B Sales Representative Talent](#).



Assess planned resourcing heading into 2023 using [Sales Budget & Efficiency Benchmark Survey](#).



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

Develop your plan



Isolate top priorities using [Quick Answer: 3 CSO Priorities in Response to Economic Headwinds](#).



Learn how buyers are evolving with [Key Digital Commerce Buying Behaviors CSOs Must Address](#).



Attend the **“Motivating Tomorrow's High Performers: Focusing Seller Energy on Growth”** virtual executive retreat to learn best practices for motivating your sellers.

Execute and drive change



Focus your team on growth using [Quick Answer: 3 CSO Actions to Drive Growth During Economic Turbulence](#).



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



Develop a robust view of the customer purchase journey with [Ignition Guide to Aligning a Sales Process With the B2B Customer Buying Journey](#).

Actionable, objective insight

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

Blog

Get Recession Ready



Learn three actions CSOs should take to prepare for growing economic headwinds.

[Read Now](#)

Guide

How to Motivate and Retain Your Sales Team



Understand why and what you can do to drive faster growth and greater sales talent retention.

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The Chief Sales Officer



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

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