

# **Growth by Design: Leading a Unified Commercial Function Through Compounding Change**

**Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference Key Take-Aways**  
**May 21 – 22, 2024**

# Conference Summary

Today's sales leaders identify organic growth, demand generation and sales talent as top priorities for the uncertainty success of their sales organizations. But changing buyer behavior, persistent and rapid advancements in AI add compounding complexity to an already challenging role.

At **Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference 2024**, attendees had access to unique actionable insights, practical tools and innovative guidance in these four areas:

- **Crafting** a unified commercial strategy in a dynamic market.
- **Transforming** a go-to-market execution to accelerate organic growth.
- **Driving** next-level seller performance.
- **Improving** speed, precision and resilience through operations and enablement.

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

## Keynote Summary

# Cracking Chaos: Your Winning Advantage

During the opening keynote at [Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference](#), Gartner experts discussed how future-proofing an organization to manage change with agility is the key to unlocking growth opportunities by as much as 3x.

What separates the winners are three accelerators that speed up decision making:

- **Revenue intelligence** leverages data as contextualized insight, informing us on what's coming, what's working, what's slowing us down, and what we should do as a result. Data is both predictive and actionable, giving organizations the power to adapt.
- **Technology as a teammate** focuses on building a different relationship between humans and technology, one which has clearly defined responsibilities and transparent actionability. Technology is no longer just another tool that can overwhelm sellers but now a partner that expedites our ability to adapt.
- **Modularity** enables agility and allows organizations to tweak their approach to the situation as it evolves, rather than being locked into tightly interwoven dependencies.

“In order to thrive in the uncertainty, sales organizations must embrace constant adaptation, effective decision making, and be able to sustain shifts in strategy or execution. Organizations that make this shift to adaptive design are more likely to mitigate the downsides created by external events and capture the full potential of opportunities. [CSOs](#) must embrace this winning formula regardless of marketplace conditions, acting with agility and finding opportunities for growth in disruption.”

[Alice Walmesley](#)

Director, Advisory,  
Gartner for Sales Leaders

**Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference**

**Key Take-Aways**

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# **Craft a Unified Commercial Strategy in a Dynamic Market**

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# Track summary

Shaping a unified commercial strategy has never been more crucial. Trends in buyer dynamics and market uncertainties necessitate a reevaluation of go-to-market strategies and sales models. This track provides innovative approaches that empower sales leaders to architect the growth of their organization, expand their executive roles and drive commercial excellence.

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

- 3 Critical Components of an Adaptive Sales Strategy
- 30-Minute Crash Course on AI for Sales: What It Is, How It Works and What to Do About It
- Connecting Sales Teams to Culture: Strategies for Enhanced Performance and Retention

# 3 Critical Components of an Adaptive Sales Strategy



**Michael Katz**

Senior Director, Research

## Session summary

Many CSOs are challenged on how to develop strategic sales plans, particularly when adapting to rapidly changing market conditions. CSOs must use these three approaches to achieve successful execution of sales planning in a dynamic sales landscape.

Organizations that take a signal-based approach to revisiting scenario planning are 1.9x more likely to have commercial growth compared to organizations that do not.

Source: Gartner

## Key actions for sales leaders

- Define the minimally viable strategy and associated resources.
- Assemble the strategic planning team and define roles, responsibilities and expertise.
- Establish the assumptions and metrics at the core of the strategy.

## Related resources

- [3 Approaches to Building an Adaptive Strategic Sales Plan](#)
- [How to Adapt Sales Strategies to the Current State of B2B Buying](#)
- [Tool: Sales Strategy on a Page](#)

# 30-Minute Crash Course on AI for Sales: What It Is, How It Works, and What to Do About It



**Adnan Zijadic**  
Director Analyst

## Session summary

CSOs get an overview of what AI is, how it works, and what to do about it for their sales organizations. We are in a pivotal moment where every organization will be driven by AI and every function will have AI embedded at the core of every sales process. CSOs need to educate themselves on AI so that they can have a better understanding and improve their strategic planning with AI at the forefront of their priorities.

Sellers who partner closely with AI are 3.7x more likely to meet quota than sellers with weaker partnerships.

Source: Gartner

## Key actions for sales leaders

- Articulate your AI sales vision: Do not delegate.
- Categorize your AI use cases by business value and feasibility.
- Pick three to five sales use cases for AI at most, aiming for quick wins and differentiation not transformation.

## Related resources

- [Use AI to Grow B2B Sales Revenue and Optimize Costs](#)
- [Multidimensional CRM: How GenAI Will Revolutionize Sales Force Automation Platforms](#)
- [Generative AI Strategic Planning Essentials for B2B Chief Sales Officers](#)
- [Innovation Guide for Generative AI in Sales](#)

# Connecting Sales Teams to Culture: Strategies for Enhanced Performance and Retention



**Shayne Jackson**  
Senior Director Analyst

## Session summary

Sellers' alignment to their culture is the lowest it's been since 2021. Organizations with sellers who are connected to their culture perform better and have better retention. We'll show you how to connect your revenue team to your culture in ways that are meaningful for each seller and how to adjust the trajectory of your culture when a change is needed.

Sale culture is a powerful, yet underutilized force in sales leadership. Organizations that improve cultural connectedness see performance improvements of 24%, and 30% increased retention.

Source: Gartner

## Key actions for sales leaders

- Assess your sales culture by looking at its shared values, attitudes, goals and practices.
- Design needed culture adjustments, focusing on the specific attributes that are most aligned to your growth strategy.
- Transform the culture to harness its power by removing barriers to change and leaning on managers to drive adoption.

## Related resources

- [Improve Sales Onboarding by Connecting New Hires to the Culture](#)
- [Make Sales Kickoffs Inspire, Inform, Connect for Long-Term Impact](#)
- [How CSOs Can Empower Sellers to Drive Commercial Results](#)
- [Effectively Leading Sales Through Organizational Change](#)
- [Quick Answer: How Can CSOs Drive Seller Behavior Change?](#)

Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference

Key Take-Aways

May 21 – 22, 2024

# **Transform a Go-to-Market Execution to Accelerate Organic Growth**

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# Track summary

Digital buying, market volatility and increasingly prevalent revenue technology are causing stalled deals and slow account growth. This track helps sales leaders transform their go-to-market execution to drive competitive differentiation, engage today's B2B buyer and increase customer revenue.

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

- It's Time to Take Control of the Wheel — Strategies to Drive Growth in Existing Accounts
- Unlock Customer Value and Revenue Potential by Integrating Sellers With Digital Commerce
- The Untapped Potential of Inside Sales — Evolve Inside Sales Into a Growth Engine

# It's Time to Take Control of the Wheel — Strategies to Drive Growth in Existing Accounts



**Elizabeth Jones**

Senior Director Analyst

## Session summary

Chief sales officers and frontline sales leaders are challenged to drive revenue goals for repeatable account growth. CSOs and frontline sales leaders learn how to accelerate growth in existing accounts, encourage buyers to embrace change and work in tandem with all revenue teams.

61% of B2B buyers say that when it's time to act, their organization is paralyzed by uncertainty.

Source: Gartner

## Key actions for sales leaders

- Collaborate with marketing to craft customer improvement content.
- Align with marketing to empower buyers through strategic buyer enablement.
- Join forces with marketing to develop change enablement.
- Motivate marketing to engage in account planning and joint business planning activities with sellers.
- Synchronize sales and marketing efforts through streamlined technology collaboration.

## Related resources

- [Drive B2B Account Growth by Boosting Customer Decision Confidence](#)
- [Grow Revenue in Existing Customers With the Gartner Cross-Sell and Upsell Blueprint](#)
- [Market Guide for Account-Planning Tools](#)
- [Use Digital Sales Rooms to Improve the Digital Buying Experience](#)

# Unlock Customer Value and Revenue Potential by Integrating Sellers With Digital Commerce



**Luke Tipping**  
Director Analyst

## Session summary

Current sales processes are not fit for modern buyer preferences, causing deals to stall, fail completely, or miss customer expectations. CSOs learn how to overcome this challenge by integrating sellers with digital commerce to develop a holistic view of the buying journey and provide valuable customer interactions that lead to positive commercial outcomes.

Sales organizations are 2.9x more likely to exceed expected revenue growth when sellers use digital channels in real-time buyer interactions.

Source: Gartner

## Key actions for sales leaders

- Define the digital commerce value proposition for sellers.
- Establish an integrated digital commerce culture.
- Broaden sellers' knowledge of third-party information.
- Deploy valuable digital commerce tools.
- Provide sellers with actionable buyer insights.

## Related resources

- [Enable Sellers to Regain Influence in a Digital Buying Environment](#)
- [Make Sellers Critical Value Sources in Digital Buying Journeys](#)
- [Improve B2B Buying Interactions With Better Enablement Content](#)
- [Increase Buyer Enablement Through a Digital Content Strategy](#)
- [Use Digital Sales Rooms to Improve the Digital Buying Experience](#)

# The Untapped Potential of Inside Sales — Evolve Inside Sales Into a Growth Engine



**Greg Hessong**

Senior Director Analyst

## Session summary

The pandemic forced sales organizations to experiment with a sales role that's been around for a long time — inside sales. While many braced for performance downturns, unexpected and pleasant surprises abounded. Today, many CSOs are now wondering what the future of selling looks like and whether they should be expanding the role inside sales plays in it. Inside sales is uniquely positioned to take advantage of the shifts in B2B buying if organizations are prepared to capitalize and drive efficient growth.

40% of sellers have closed deals over \$500K without ever meeting the buyer face to face.

Source: Gartner

## Key actions for sales leaders

- Assess current coverage and deployment models.
- Expand inside sales to focus field sellers on priority accounts.
- Adapt to evolving buyer preferences for virtual interactions.
- Build new digital engagement skills for inside selling.
- Increase the value and impact of digital interactions.

## Related resources

- [Expand Inside Sales for Revenue Growth](#)
- [Enable Sellers to Regain Influence in a Digital Buying Environment](#)
- [Make Sellers Critical Value Sources in Digital Buying Journeys](#)
- [B2B Buyer Survey: Create Value Through Integrated Digital and Human-Led Interactions](#)

**Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference**

**Key Take-Aways**

**May 21 – 22, 2024**

# **Drive Next-Level Seller Performance**

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# Track summary

Declining seller productivity, outdated training and development strategies, and costly onboarding practices put organizations at risk for falling behind in growth objectives. This track equips sales leaders with strategies that lead to peak sales performance, improve cost optimization and revenue growth, and enhance operational efficiency.

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

- Unlock the Neurodivergent Advantage to Attract and Retain High Performing Sellers
- Rebuilding the Sales Manager Role of the Future
- Turn Customer Conversations Into Go-to-Market Gold With Call AI

# The Unlock the Neurodivergent Advantage to Attract and Retain High Performing Sellers



**Christopher Gamble**  
Senior Director Analyst

## Session summary

Embark on a strategic exploration of talent challenges in today's sales landscape. This session unveils actionable strategies for unlocking the neurodivergent advantage in your sales teams. Discover how to attract and retain high-performing sellers by leveraging this unique talent pool and revolutionize your sales organization with practical insights on driving success with neurodivergent individuals.

96% of autistic employees expressed that they would be open to roles at a more inclusive employer.

Source: Gartner

## Key actions for sales leaders

- Focus hiring to the unique strengths of neurodiverse individuals that complement and enhance missing team skills.
- Tap into alternative sources to reach a wider pool of neurodivergent talent.
- Redesign the interview process to be more inclusive of neurodiverse individuals.
- Offer proactive diagnostic support as a benefit.
- Monitor and adjust strategies to ensure the success of neurodivergent sellers.

## Related resources

- [Key Drivers for Retaining Sales Talent](#)
- [Sales Success: Building and Retaining Diverse Teams That Win](#)
- [Improve Seller Retention With Regular Stay Conversations](#)
- [Quick Answer: How Can I Build My Sales Teams' Resilience To Adversity?](#)
- [Predicts 2024: Evolving the B2B Seller Role](#)

# Rebuilding the Sales Manager Role of the Future



**Alice Walmesley**  
Director, Advisory

## Session summary

Managers face challenges in driving behavior change among sellers due to competing demands, data overload and coaching difficulties. The role has become too big and too difficult for most managers to handle. This session explores how CSOs must reduce the scope of the sales manager role by looking at technology as a teammate for managers and focusing managers on the parts of the role that deliver the most unique human value.

Job manageability is 5x more impactful than skill proficiency in improving manager effectiveness

Source: Gartner

## Key actions for sales leaders

- Assess what sales manager time spend look like today.
- Determine sales manager comfort and capability toward the uniquely human aspects of the role.
- Identify low-value activities to be reduced and/or offloaded with technology as a teammate support.
- Refocus managers on high-value, uniquely human activities such as coaching, team management and organization navigation.
- Support managers as agents of adaptability.

## Related resources

- [Frontline Sales Manager Diagnostic](#)
- [How to Focus Sales Managers on High-Impact Activities](#)

# Turn Customer Conversations Into Go-to-Market Insights With Call AI



**Guy Wood**

Senior Director Analyst

## Session summary

Customer calls are full of go-to-market insight but sales operations leaders struggle to unlock them. Discover how treating key customer conversations as a data source can benefit the entire go-to-market organization. The presentation covered how to develop talent, infuse precision into deal-health evaluations, automate CRM administrative burdens and sculpt compelling customer-centric sales positioning with call data.

50% of sellers agree or strongly agree they are overwhelmed by the amount of tech needed to complete their work and 54% of sellers used passive ways to avoid tech after negative experiences in last 2 years.

Source: Gartner

## Key actions for sales leaders

- Establish the value of call AI from buyer and seller perspectives.
- Enable sellers to use call AI autonomously.
- Celebrate success at key cultural moments: positive and specific.
- Embrace transparency by building trust and earning the right to embed call AI into sales management routines.

## Related resources

- [Seller Time Spend Assessment](#)
- [Design a Seller Action Hub To Drive Frontline Productivity with AI \(publication due b4 CSO conf\)](#)
- [Market Guide for Sales Engagement Applications](#)
- [Market Guide for Revenue Intelligence Platforms](#)
- [Innovation Insight: Revenue Technologies to Improve SFA/CRM Activity Data Capture](#)

Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference

Key Take-Aways

May 21-22, 2024

# Improve Speed, Precision and Resilience Through Operations and Enablement

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# Track summary

Between rapidly shifting buying behaviors and a burgeoning revenue technology landscape, sales leaders must make bold investments in data, processes and technology. This track explores how you can balance innovation with pragmatism and empower your sales operations and enablement leaders to improve decision making, efficiency and change agility.

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

- Enablement's Guide to Improving Buyer Interactions Through Digital Tool Adoption
- Enablement's Plan for Outsized Impact-Aligning Sales Strategy, Marketing and Behavior Change
- The Balanced Sales Playbook: Blending AI and Conventional Techniques

# Enablement's Guide to Improving Buyer Interactions Through Digital Tool Adoption



**Alyssa Cruz**

Senior Principal Analyst

## Session summary

Many organizations fail to achieve adoption of buyer enablement tools as they mistakenly align seller use to an increased quantity of buyer interactions, rather than their impact on improving deals. Sales enablement leaders can avoid this by structuring tool development around their ability to help buyers make high quality purchases and shifting the conversation from traditional adoption to measured value.

Organizations are 1.9x higher more likely to exceed expected revenue growth when sellers use digital channels in real-time customer interactions rather than relying on buyers to use them independently.

Source: Gartner

## Key actions for sales leaders

- Define value clarity for your buyers by understanding the key questions they must answer at each buying job.
- Assess sellers ability to deliver value clarity by analyzing buyer enablement for value framing and value affirming elements.
- Partner enablement with revtech to create digital tools that respect seller workflows.
- Reintroduce digital tools through a compelling change story.
- Reinforce usage through just-in-time learning and nudges.

## Related resources

- [Increase Seller Adoption of Digital Tools to Drive High-Quality Interactions](#)
- [Driving Seller Behavior Change: The New Enablement Mandate](#)
- [Transform Sales Enablement by Treating Technology as a Teammate](#)
- [B2B Buyer Survey: Create Value Through Integrated Digital and Human-Led Interactions](#)

# Enablement's Plan for Outsize Impact-Aligning Sales Strategy, Marketing and Behavior Change



**Shayne Jackson**  
Senior Director Analyst

## Session summary

Reactive enablement functions put sales targets at risk because they are unable to help sellers adapt to shifting B2B buying behaviors. Enablement leaders who align their initiatives to specific sales strategies have an outsized impact on achieving sales goals by catalyzing seller action.

Collaboration on sales enablement boots likelihood of commercial growth by 2.8X

Source: Gartner

## Key actions for sales leaders

- Accelerate growth by forming a deep, collaborative partnership with marketing.
- Drive business impact with a proactive, enablement function strategically aligned to sales goals and initiatives.
- Focus on driving the specific behaviors needed for the sales team to successfully execute key sales.

## Related resources

- [The Sales Enablement Plan for Outsized Commercial Impact](#)
- [Leadership Vision 2024: Sales Enablement](#)
- [Tool: Sales Enablement Charter Planning Guide](#)
- [Sales Talent Management Primer for 2024](#)
- [Why Sales Enablement Must Partner With Product Marketing](#)
- [Driving Seller Behavior Change: The New Enablement Mandate](#)

# The Balanced Sales Playbook: Blending AI and Conventional Techniques



**Adnan Zijadic**  
Director Analyst

## Session summary

Not all is lost to AI, there is a harmony that needs to be explored to maximize the benefit for your frontline sellers. At the heart of your sales playbook is your guided selling technology and process. These are not to be replaced by AI but can be supercharged by it. Learn how to achieve competitive advantage by balancing conventional techniques and processes with the promise of AI.

More than 75% of sellers are willing to use data-driven insights.

Source: Gartner

## Key actions for sales leaders

- Create a sales framework for GTM priorities.
- Incorporate conversation intelligence and intent data to narrow down key signals and topics to be tracking.
- Explore sales tech vendors who utilize knowledge graphs to improve time-to-value.
- Pilot a knowledge graph-driven approach to execute effective AI-guided selling.

## Related resources

- [Magic Quadrant for Sales Force Automation Platforms](#)
- [Market Guide for Revenue Intelligence Platforms](#)
- [Hype Cycle for Revenue and Sales Technology, 2023](#)

# Dig Deeper

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