

Gartner

Architecting Sales Success in the Age of AI

**2026 Gartner CSO & Sales
Leader Conference Key
Take-Aways and Actions**



Keynote Summary

Reimagining Sales Productivity in the Age of AI

During the opening keynote at Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference, Gartner Vice President Analyst, **Dan Gottlieb** explored why the need to rethink productivity is urgent.


Sixty percent of CSOs view achieving their revenue target as largely influenced by factors beyond their control. At the same time, sales organizations continue to invest in technology, process redesign, AI and training, yet productivity gains remain constrained by operating models designed to scale primarily by adding more people.

To move beyond the sales productivity paradox, CSOs should focus on three actions: owning AI-forward sales infrastructure, orchestrating winning seller behaviors and measuring AI's impact on sales capacity.

AI is not the hero of this story; AI is the accelerant. The opportunity is not simply using AI to improve sales productivity. It is using AI to identify and address the constraints that limit sales output.

Key actions:

- **Own your AI infrastructure before you scale your AI ambition.** Assign ownership of your data and context layer; without it, investments struggle to compound.
- **Design winning behaviors into the system – don't just train for them.** Behavior change sticks when the right one is also the easiest one. For each role, use AI to make the top 3 plays the path of least resistance.
- **Measure the capacity AI is adding to the organization, not just what it's automating.** Time saved is not value created. We need to update the capacity-based planning model so we can know which bets move the number.



Improve Strategies
to Accelerate Revenue
Retention and Growth

Leading Sales in AI Era: Strategies for CSO Success



Robert Blaisdell
Vice President Analyst

Session summary

AI is reshaping the sales landscape at an unprecedented pace, bringing both exciting opportunities and new challenges. The ability to lead through this volatility is critical. This session dives into how today's CSOs can harness AI to drive sales productivity, reinvent go-to-market strategies in line with evolving buyer expectations and prioritize investment in their teams, especially sales managers, to unlock peak seller performance.

Key actions for sales leaders

- Conduct a seller time spend assessment to identify where they are overinvesting effort.
- Identify low-value activities to offload or automate with AI.
- Create a sales-centric vision of how current AI capability gaps can be addressed in the next three years.

69%

**of B2B buyers
still prefer to
validate
AI-generated
insights with
sales reps.**

How to get started

- › [How CSOs Can Make and Manage Smart AI Investments](#)
- › [2025 Strategic Roadmap for an AI-First Sales Organization](#)
- › **Already a client?** Use AskGartner to explore “How to best leverage AI and sales reps to improve performance results?”

Strengthen Your Sales Org With a Predictive Health Assessment



Dave Egloff
Distinguished VP Analyst

Session summary

Today's CSOs cannot wait until lagging metrics tell them what's working. Instead, they must continually assess the health and resilience of their organizations. Discover the predictive insights to reveal risks and emerging issues before they derail your success.

Key actions for sales leaders

- Align sales dashboards and review metrics to ensure they are purpose-built, insightful and complementary for leadership.
- Balance retrospective monitoring with “premortem” analyses to safeguard the critical elements for sustained success.
- Prioritize “high-altitude” signals that offer maximum insight into current and future performance with minimal complexity.
- Select nonoverlapping metrics that evaluate both immediate results and long-term organizational health.

How to get started

- › [Build Confidence in Your Sales Performance With a Diagnostic Scorecard](#)
- › [Tool: Sales Organization Health Diagnostic](#)
- › **Already a client?** Use AskGartner to explore “How can we refine executive sales reporting to maximize strategic insight while minimizing metric clutter?”

3.1x

Organizations are 3.1x more likely to exceed their growth goals when effectively using productivity metrics.

CSO Circle Roundtable: Empowering Sellers With Buyer-Centric Value Propositions



Greg Hessong
Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

Sales organizations that fail to align with buyer perspectives and instead cling to a supplier-centric vision of value risk declining pipeline, stalled deals and slower growth. Explore how to realign value propositions to customer priorities, close the value gap and help sellers regain influence with buyers.

Key actions for sales leaders

- CSOs must help sellers move away from general, supplier-centric value propositions and toward buyer-specific situational messaging.
- Expand beyond static mapping of the buyer journey and leverage new technologies to uncover buyer signals and convert them into value indicators.
- Make it easier for both your buyers and your GTM organization to rationalize and affirm value in buyers' preferred channels as they progress toward purchasing.

How to get started

- › [Adaptive Value Positions: Master Situational Messaging to Drive New Business](#)
- › **Already a client?** Use AskGartner to explore “[How can we enable sellers to use buyer insights to tailor value propositions?](#)”

73%

Buyers demand tailored relevance — 73% of B2B buyers avoid doing business with suppliers that send them irrelevant messages.

The background features a dark blue central area with a large, dark blue arrow pointing to the right. This arrow is set against a background of various shades of blue, including light blue and medium blue, which are arranged in geometric patterns of triangles and rectangles. The overall aesthetic is modern and professional.

Optimize Go-to-Market to
Improve Sales Execution

Next-Gen Role Design for AI-Augmented Sellers



Greg Hessong
Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

As AI-augmented workflows and agentic AI take on more responsibilities across GTM execution, what does it mean for sellers and how they work? Future-fit seller roles in the age of AI require a redesign to gain the productivity benefits of AI while also helping sellers focus on human value in buyer engagements.

Key actions for sales leaders

- Acknowledge the shift: Reimagine the value of human sellers in the age of AI by focusing capacity where human capital is most effectively deployed.
- Delineate and focus: Align sales roles to human strengths by clarifying seller vs. AI ownership, automating low-value tasks and embedding AI into workflows with proper seller upskilling.
- Embrace the future: Maintain agility in role design by continuously adapting sellers to new, more effective ways of working as AI agent deployment accelerates.

72%

Only 72% of sales organizations are reinvesting AI-driven time savings in high-impact sales activities.

How to get started

- › [Redesign Sales and Revenue Enablement With New Roles and Structures](#)
- › **Already a client?** Use AskGartner to explore “[How are leading sales organizations redefining the value of human sellers and redeploying seller capacity in AI-augmented GTM models?](#)”

From Static to Dynamic: Reimagined Key Account Programs for Growth



Robert Blaisdell
Vice President Analyst

Session summary

Key accounts are the powerhouse of profitable growth — yet many programs still rely on static, one-size-fits-all strategies that fail to unlock the full potential of their customers. In this breakout session, discover how to elevate your approach by strategically tiering your most valuable accounts, harnessing the power of AI for deeper insights and delivering hyperpersonalized engagement at scale.

Key actions for sales leaders

- Create a key account value proposition that clearly articulates internally and externally what it means to be a key customer.
- Develop a focused criteria model to determine which type of key account each key customer is.
- Conduct a time spend assessment to identify where KAMs are investing their capacity.

1.7x

Sales organizations that focus on simplifying roles and using AI market insights are 1.7x more likely to achieve strong profitable growth from existing customers.

How to get started

- › [Improve Key Account Growth With a Nonlinear Tiering Strategy](#)
- › [Integrating AI Agents: The Future of Key Account Programs](#)
- › **Already a client?** Use AskGartner to explore “What are the first steps to take to improve a key account program’s performance?”

CSO Circle Ask the Analyst: AI for Chief Sales Officers



Paul Vignati
Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

Chief sales officers face pressure to use AI for revenue and productivity, but most struggle to scale beyond pilots. Leaders must recognize that while conversational AI is proven and augmented AI is emerging, fully autonomous agentic AI is still rare. This session offered practical guidance and Q&A on advancing your organization's AI maturity and scaling the right capabilities across the revenue engine.

Key actions for sales leaders

- **Mandate the internal reality:** Treat organizational context and data (deal history, win/loss, buyer signals) as the actual value of your AI investment, not the tool. Diagnose CRM gaps and unify fragmented data before scaling any tool.
- **Orchestrate the commercial fast lane:** Lead the conversation with IT, legal and security to stand up a sandbox for testing AI on your data. Inform governance design rather than wait for it.
- **Catalyze through the revenue field lab:** Run controlled field labs that measure decision-rehearsal alignment and capacity lift, not logins. Share results to create pull from the rest of the organization.

How to get started

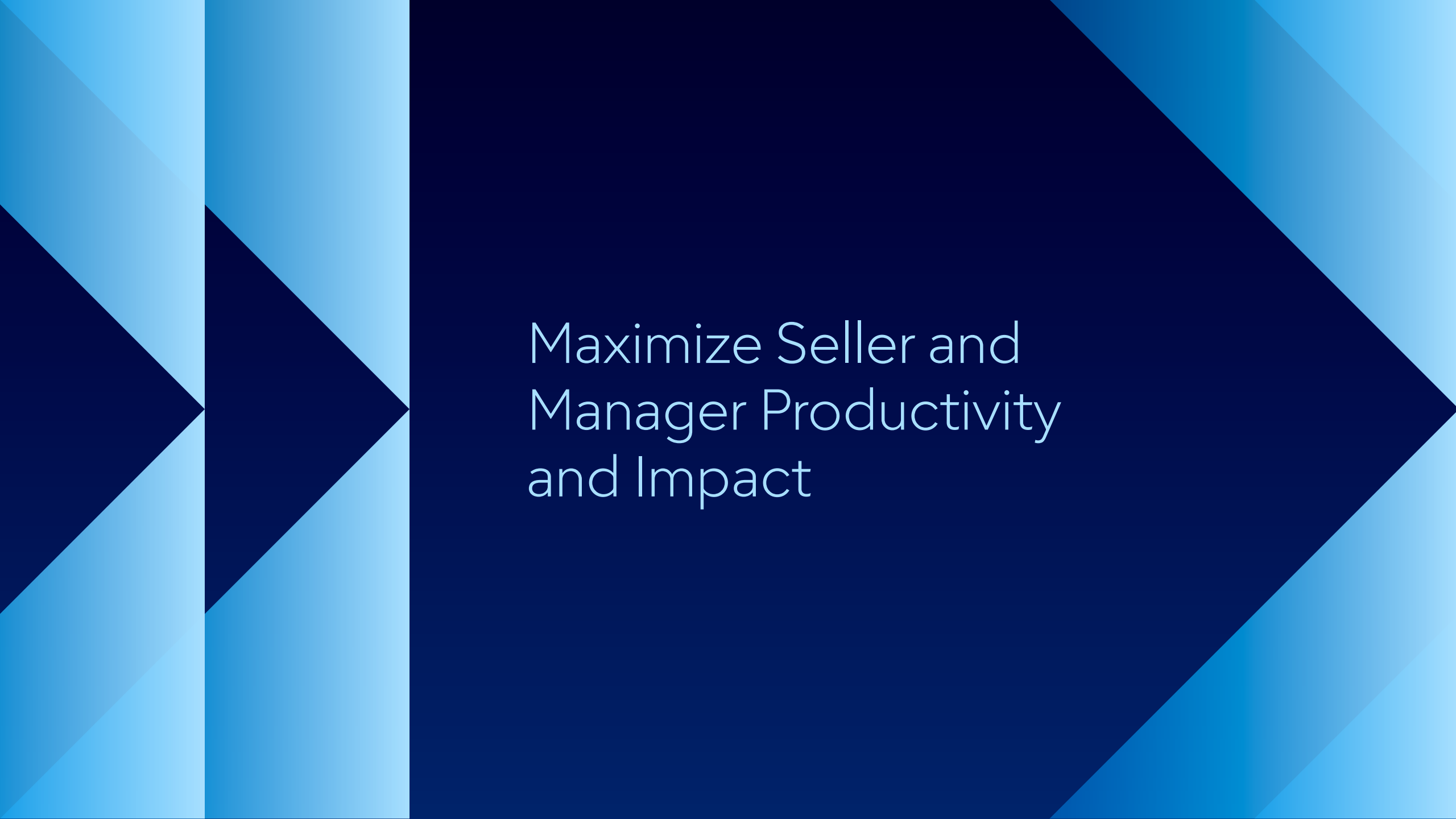
- › [Why Your Investments in AI Tools Aren't Paying Off](#)
- › **Already a client?** Use AskGartner to explore "How do I ground AI tools in in context and data to drive seller adoption?"

66%

of sales leaders report low trust in AI-generated insights.

4%

Only 4% trust AI to act autonomously.

The background features a series of overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, from light sky blue to deep navy blue. The shapes are primarily triangles and quadrilaterals, creating a dynamic, layered effect. A prominent dark blue triangle points towards the right, framing the text.

Maximize Seller and
Manager Productivity
and Impact

Redesigning the Sales Manager Role of the Future



Michael Katz
Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

Sales managers can be force multipliers, with up to six times the impact on seller performance. However, only 18% of managers have high-performing teams. The sales manager role is often misaligned with what matters; over half of managers say their day-to-day responsibilities differ completely from their formal job descriptions. This session explored how sales organizations can redesign the sales manager role by focusing on its purpose, key activities and responsibilities to drive higher sales performance.

Key actions for sales leaders

- Redesign the true purpose of the manager role in your organization in today's B2B sales world.
- Determine high-impact manager activities within your organization.
- Shift manager priorities and focus to high-impact activities.

3.2x

When sales managers have role clarity, they are as much as 3.2 times more likely to have strong team performance.

How to get started

- › [Sales Manager of the Future: Your Secret Weapon for Outsized Performance](#)
- › **Already a client?** Use AskGartner to explore “[How can I simplify the manager role to focus on high-impact activities?](#)”

Ask the Analyst: Sales Compensation Strategies to Attract, Motivate and Retain in the AI Era



Brian Petty
Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

Sales compensation programs must do more than reward performance. They must attract top talent, motivate teams and drive retention in a complex, fast-moving environment. Organizations with agile, data-driven comp plans are better equipped to align seller behaviors with business goals and adapt to shifting market demands.

Key actions for sales leaders

- Rewire incentives toward human judgment, deal creativity, relationship depth and complex negotiation, not AI-automatable activity metrics.
- Stress-test new plan designs against real historical transactions using AI simulation before go-live, not after second-quarter surprises.
- Build modular plan components that can be tuned midyear without full redesigns as AI reshapes selling motions.
- Align comp metrics to reward effective AI partnership, the single highest predictor of quota attainment today.

How to get started

- › [CSO's Guide to Effective Sales Compensation Design](#)
- › **Already a client?** Use AskGartner to explore “[How do I design compensation plans that align seller behaviors with business goals in a fast-changing market?](#)”

3.7x

Sellers who effectively partner with AI are 3.7x more likely to meet quota.

Empowering Sales Managers: The New Coaching Playbook



Rachael Buchler
Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

Imagine if every sales manager coached with the same rigor, structure and impact as your best leader. Where would that take your sellers' performance? CSOs must shift sales managers from directive management to a coaching-centric approach. The new playbook equipped attendees with actionable strategies to elevate sales manager coaching and boost both seller engagement and sales performance.

Key actions for sales leaders

- Empower your managers with the authority, evidence and operating guidance to coach with precision.
- Shift manager coaching focus from activities to the true drivers of sales performance.
- Improve manager productivity by deploying the new playbook of who to coach, on what and when.

18%

Only 18% of sales managers say they lead high-performing teams.

How to get started

- › [Unlocking Seller Growth: The ORBIT Framework for Next-Gen Sales Coaching](#)
- › [How to Use Sales Metrics for Data-Driven Coaching](#)
- › **Already a client?** Use AskGartner to explore “[How can I make my managers more effective sales coaches?](#)”

Roundtable: Moving Beyond Correlation to Prove the Impact of Sales Enablement



Shayne Jackson
Vice President Analyst

Session summary

This interactive roundtable explored how enablement leaders used data and AI to demonstrate true impact. Participants shared real-world strategies for connecting enablement efforts to critical business outcomes by tying initiatives to win rates, ramp time and revenue per rep. The discussion moved beyond correlation to deliver actionable ROI insights that proved the impact of the enablement function.

Key actions for sales leaders

- Define what enablement is (and is not) responsible for with a sales enablement charter.
- Connect what enablement does to the most critical goals for the sales organization. Enablement's ability to drive behavior change tied to sales goals is a clear reflection of its impact.
- Begin each enablement initiative with an assessment of the behaviors that will be changed and indicators of progress for those changes.
- Enhance measurement by integrating AI-powered tools to track leading and lagging indicators, for example, analyzing seller interactions in real time.

65%

of CSOs and sales leaders say their sales enablement function is stretched thin by increasing requests from multiple functions outside of sales. As its scope expands faster than capacity, enablement's impact on its most critical audiences becomes harder to sustain.

How to get started

- › [How to Measure the Impact of Sales Enablement in 3 Steps](#)
- › [Tool: Sales Enablement Charter Planning Guide](#)
- › **Already a client?** Use AskGartner to explore "What are the first steps to showing the impact of enablement?"



Scale Revenue Growth With Technology and AI

Achieve High-Impact Agentic AI Deployment With an Opportunity Heat Map



Adnan Zijadic
Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

A surgically precise look into how AI agents should be deployed and categorized, giving attendees ideas and introducing seller time spend assessment-aligned activities, potential builder difficulty involved and how reliably they may operate in the real world today.

Key actions for sales leaders

- Prioritize agentic AI use cases by time impact, data impact type, builder difficulty and reliability, not by demo quality alone.
- Start with reliable creation and consumption use cases that sales ops can own, such as customer meeting prep, to create fast seller-visible wins.
- Treat transformation and movement use cases as strategic builds requiring IT partnership, governance controls, exception handling and validation plans.
- Use a 30-day pilot scorecard to scale what stays reliable, stop what does not and fund the next wave of AI deployment.

100%

Use cases where AI drafts or summarizes show 100% reliable execution and are 100% buildable by sales ops. When AI reasons over rules or moves data across systems, reliable execution drops to 5% to 7%, and 86% to 95% need IT or engineering support.

How to get started

- › Pick one workflow category where sales owns the tools and process.
- › Sort opportunities by seller time impact, then ask: What does the AI do with the data?
- › Pilot two reliable use cases with a small seller group, clear success metrics and weekly scorecard reporting.
- › **Toolkit:** [Agentic AI Opportunity Heat Map for B2B Sales](#)
- › **Already a client?** Use AskGartner to explore “How can sales leaders create fast, seller-visible wins with agentic AI while building confidence in reliability and minimizing adoption friction?”

Where Is the ROI From My AI Investments?



Sandhya Mahadevan
Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

CSOs face pressure to link AI investments with revenue growth and cost reduction, but most struggle to show clear ROI. Personal productivity gains aren't enough to convince CFOs. In this session, attendees learned three key ways to frame AI value and build a roadmap to measurable, defensible ROI.

Key actions for sales leaders

- **AI ROI has many dependencies** – technical, behavioral and economic. Identify your barriers and focus on what you can control.
- **Group your AI investments into three categories:** user productivity gains (small), capacity extensions (moderate) and transformations (high potential but not guaranteed). Your ROI story will look different for each type.
- **Create awareness of your “floor” (maximum productivity level) and your “ceiling” (maximum capacity level)** to set realistic expectations from AI.

2.2x

Sales organizations that deployed a stand-alone AI tool are 2.2x more likely to exceed their profitable growth targets. Yet, 31% of CSOs cited the difficulty of proving the ROI of AI-driven tools as a top challenge to sales objectives this year.

How to get started

- › **Define an AI Operating Model to Go From Theory to Real Impact**
- › **Already a client?** Use AskGartner to explore “What are best practices for linking AI investments in sales to measurable revenue growth?”

5 AI Use Cases Actually Improving Sales Productivity and Performance



Dan Gottlieb
Vice President Analyst

Session summary

This session explored how AI transformed sales by expanding cognitive capacity and enabling smarter decisions across the sales organization. Attendees examined five real-world AI use cases that boosted frontline and manager productivity and elevated the quality of work for leadership, operations and enablement. The discussion also covered how to evaluate solution effectiveness and provided practical insights on leveraging AI for greater impact.

Key actions for sales leaders

- Prioritize use cases that raise the floor of sales productivity fundamentals; they're not always exciting new tools.
- Get going right away on account and buyer intelligence if you haven't started yet; this can help today.
- Shape your deal orchestration AI to the needs of your talent for different sales roles, business units or segments.
- Invest in a proper AI boot camp focused on orchestrating winning behaviors, not tool usage.

How to get started

- › [Tool: Accelerate AI Adoption in Frontline Sales Teams](#)
- › **Already a client?** Use AskGartner to explore "What AI use cases are actually improving sales productivity and performance?"

3.3x

Sales teams improving seller time spend on high-impact activities are 3.3x more likely to exceed revenue growth targets.

Roundtable: Adopt, Adapt or Abandon? Navigate Decisions on What to Do About Underperforming Tech



Wendy Butler-Mafuz
Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

With tight budgets and increased ROI scrutiny, CSOs must make tough calls on underperforming or underused sales technology. This roundtable invited CSOs to share decision frameworks, key evaluation criteria and real-world experiences to determine when to optimize, replace or retire existing tech investments.

Key actions for sales leaders

- Treat underperforming tech as a leadership decision, not an ops cleanup: Continually identify when tools create seller drag, not just when renewals hit.
- Start with outcomes and seller workflows: Define what the tool must improve (seller capacity, deal progress, forecast confidence) and where it must fit in the day to day.
- Separate “fixable adoption/workflow/data” from “tool mismatch”: Look for evidence it works somewhere (bright spots) versus signs it cannot support the job.
- Account for the true cost of change: Retention, implementation of contract constraints, and short-term productivity dips. Then choose fix, layer, consolidate, replace or retire.

2.1x

Sales organizations that align sales technology to seller workflows are 2.1x more likely to achieve transformation success.

How to get started

- › [Give Your Sales Tech Stack a Performance Review for Value Optimization](#)
- › **Already a client?** Use AskGartner to explore “For my underperforming sales tech, should I push adoption, swap it out, or retire it altogether?”

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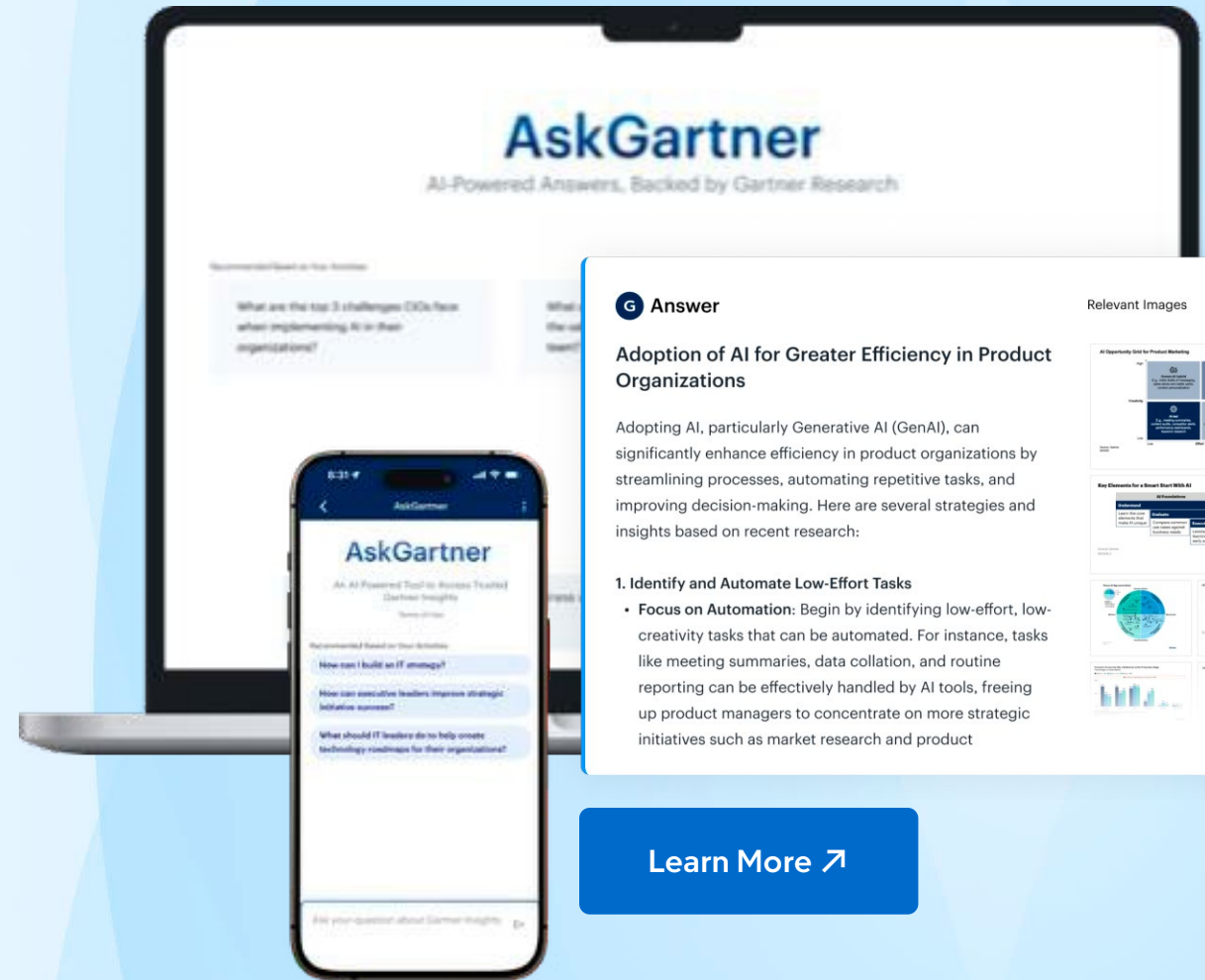
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