



# Winning Modern B2B Buyers

How to refocus sales execution to  
acquire, retain and grow customers



**Gartner**<sup>®</sup>

# “Just grow” is not a strategy

Sales organizations that rely on traditional approaches to generate pipeline, customer retention and growth often fail to meet changing buyer preferences. They also miss revenue goals.

Leading sales organizations are reimagining sales execution and buyer engagement throughout the entire revenue life cycle to win customer business in today’s complex B2B selling environment.

From account retention and growth to pipeline development and buyer insights and experience, this eBook helps chief sales officers (CSOs) optimize how value is delivered to buyers in digital and seller-led channels. Discover key actions for success and see how real Gartner clients used them to better acquire, retain and grow customers — and maximize revenue.



Source: Gartner



# Account retention and growth

B2B customers' preferences and behaviors have changed, making it harder than ever to retain and grow key accounts. Leading CSOs are prioritizing growth and retention through more focused cross-sell and upsell strategies within their most important accounts.

## Challenge

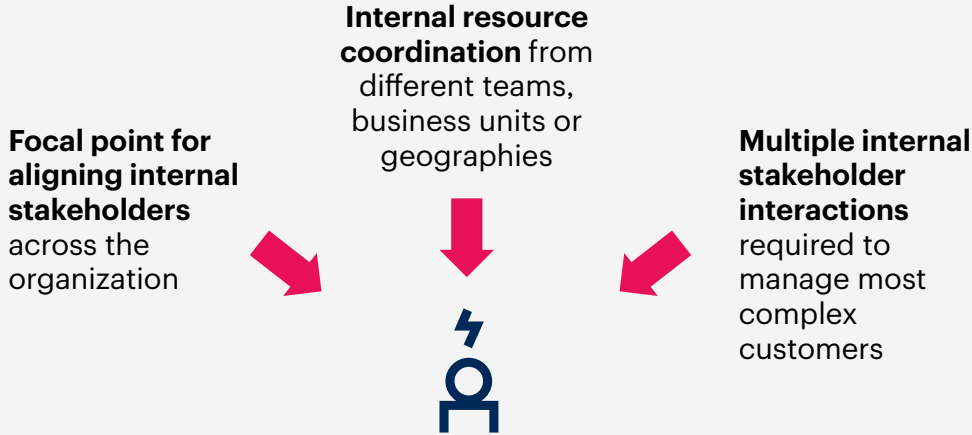
Poorly designed key account programs hinder growth and create a huge amount of burden for key account managers in their day-to-day roles.

## Key actions for success

- Involve cross-functional peers** in key account program design to help secure internal resources.
- Optimize key account programs** to better support key account managers to deliver retention and growth.

## Complex internal demands on key account manager

Factors limiting KAM's ability to strategize for account growth



**66%** of key account managers agree that the amount of internal coordination limits their ability to sufficiently strategize for account growth.

Source: Gartner



CASE IN POINT

# ABB used cross-functional collaboration to increase key account revenue

Even with ABB’s highest performing key account managers deployed to the most premium accounts, the sales team struggled to secure support and resources needed to drive key account growth.

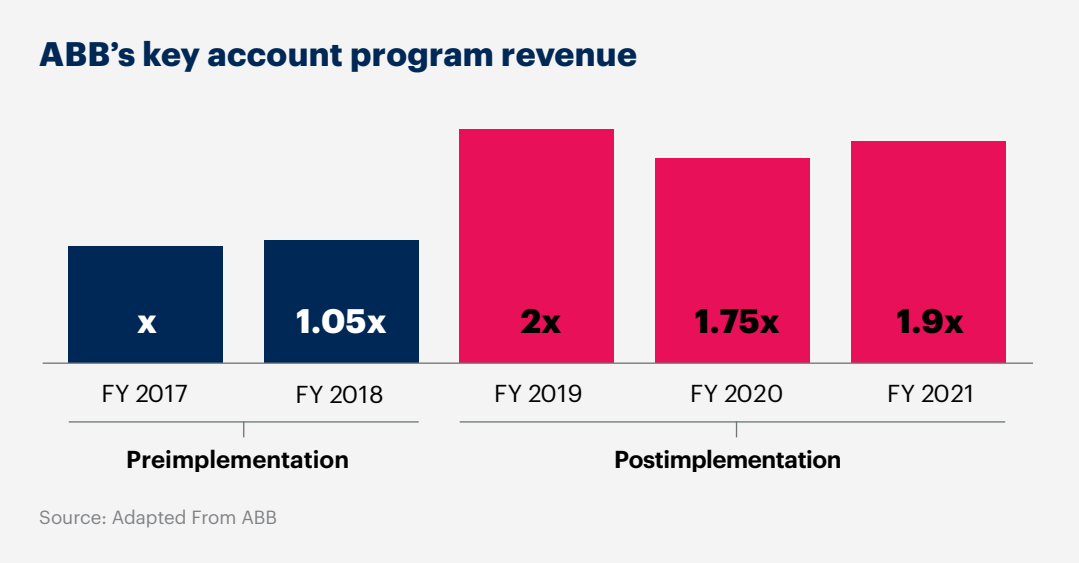
### How ABB reimagined account retention and growth:

- **Collaborated with cross-functional input** to develop business-centric selection criteria and identify the best-fit key accounts for the enterprise
- **Fostered cross-functional dialogue** during key account selection to minimize barriers to resourcing
- **Used technology to share ownership** of key account outcomes to proactively manage common resourcing roadblocks



### Results

Improved customer productivity and risk management



“By moving away from a sales-centric approach and focusing on enterprise-centric engagement, our organization is able to collaborate with customers who value a strategic relationship. For the customer, the delivery of business improvement, productivity and improved risk management is critical.”

**David Barnes, SVP of Sales and Marketing, ABB**



# Pipeline development

According to Gartner data, a significant majority (75%) of buyers now prefer to avoid direct interactions with sales representatives during the purchasing process. Additionally, there has been a notable decline of 55% in the number of high-quality conversations between sellers and customers.

The combination of B2B buyers engaging less with sellers and more with digital channels means sales organizations must rethink how they are generating pipeline and creating more meaningful buyer engagements.

## Challenge

Simply increasing the volume of meetings to drive pipeline is ineffective for today's evolved B2B buying.

## Key actions for success

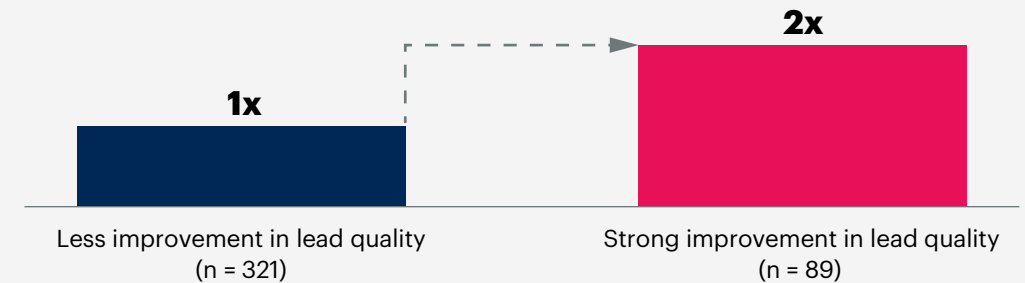
Increase interaction quality by helping sellers:

- ✓ **Focus activity** on high-quality outreach efforts, not just batch and blast volume.
- ✓ **Orchestrate execution** across sales and marketing.
- ✓ **Align buyer and account** content and messaging.

## Lead quality drives customer acquisition ... not volume

### Likelihood of exceeding expected customer acquisition

By improvement in lead quality



n = 410 executive/senior marketing and sales leaders

Q: How did lead quality change from the first half of calendar year 2022 to the first half of calendar year 2023?

Q: How did customer acquisition in FY 2022 compare to expectations of your company's senior-most executives?

Source: 2023 Gartner B2B Commercial Strategy Survey



## CASE IN POINT

# Snowflake accelerated pipeline and hypergrowth with velocity selling

Only 1% of startups have achieved the coveted \$1 billion valuation. Snowflake is one of them. Snowflake's success is due, in part, to its adoption of a "velocity-selling strategy."

### How Snowflake reimagined pipeline generation and hypergrowth:

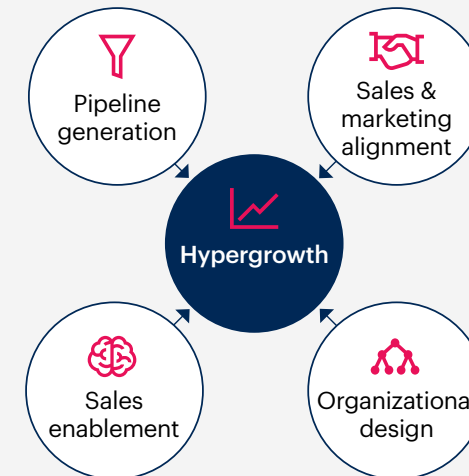
- **Pipeline generation** to hyperfocus on net new pipeline
- **Sales and marketing alignment** to collectively focus on the same milestone: booking sales meetings
- **Real-world sales enablement** to adapt training to market changes
- **Organizational design** to support full cycle reps with services and technology



### Results

The most successful software IPO in history

### The Snowflake velocity-selling model



Source: Gartner

“[Velocity selling] was probably the 1, 2, 3, 4 and 10 most important things we could have done.”

**Chris Degnan, CRO, Snowflake**





# Buyer insights and experience

As customers move across channels on nonlinear buying journeys, the amount of high-quality information available can make it harder for them to make purchase decisions. CSOs must enable sellers to help customers process and reconcile information in order to increase decision confidence.

## Challenge

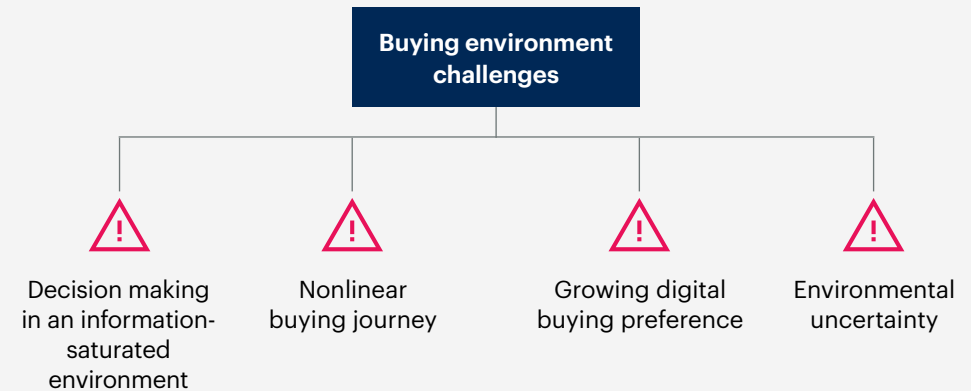
Half of customers are overwhelmed with the amount of trustworthy information and fall back on suboptimal coping strategies, which can lead to stalled or rescoped deals.

## Key actions for success:

Equip sellers to help buyers

- ☑ **Reconcile conflicting information** and build confidence.
- ☑ **Determine the right questions** to consider.
- ☑ **Identify what information matters most** and anticipate necessary changes.

## Buying environment challenges



Source: Gartner



CASE IN POINT

# Rockwell Automation designed sales execution around the customer journey

While Rockwell Automation was making the transition from information-driven to confidence-driven sales, the company’s linear sales process made it difficult to track customer confidence and guide sellers to provide the right support.

### How Rockwell reimagined buyer insights and experience:

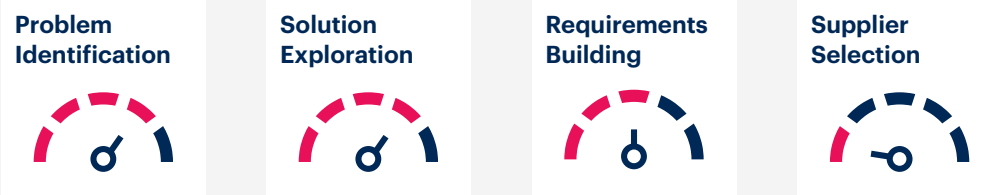
- **Created a platform to assess buyer confidence** in various buying jobs and targeted interventions accordingly
- **Tracked buyers’ tasks simultaneously**, rather than sequentially, and prioritized tasks that boosted customer confidence to help close a deal



### Results

Improved commercial results, shortened sales cycle times and achieved higher win rates

### The Rockwell buying job navigation dashboard



Buying job gauges indicate level of customer job completion and show sellers that closing deals requires addressing multiple jobs that occur concurrently and nonlinearly.

Source: Adapted From Rockwell Automation

“This change to the pursuit process is getting great reviews from our frontline sellers. Seeing the buying jobs and the associated buyer verifiers in a single view reinforces the importance of aligning sales activities to what the buyer is actually doing.”

**Hugh Wellington, Director of Sales Execution, Rockwell Automation**



# Actionable, objective insight

Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools on growth for sales leaders:



## Webinar

### CSOs, Build Stronger Pipeline Within Target Accounts

Explore how CSOs are building stronger pipelines by adopting new approaches with target accounts.

[Watch On-Demand](#)



## Report

### Gartner B2B Buying Report

The B2B buying journey has changed. Learn how winning sales and marketing organizations are adapting their strategies accordingly.

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## Quarterly

### The Chief Sales Officer

Get actionable insights for forward-thinking sales leaders.

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## Tools

### Sales Benchmarks and Diagnostic Tools

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