Gartner

Make Your 2025 Sales Plan a Reality

The new playbook to adapt, evolve and elevate your sales organization

Introduction

In today's fast-paced world, sales leaders need a fresh approach to turn plans into action. Traditional methods can't keep up with technological changes and market pressures. Chief sales officers (CSOs) can become strategic architects and improve execution by creating an adaptable organization, boosting leadership capabilities and simplifying seller roles to drive growth.

This eBook, based on Gartner research, guides CSOs to enhance seller productivity by embracing adaptability, strengthening leadership and using data-driven strategies. Use these insights to turn plans into results and achieve your goals for 2025 and beyond.



Source: Gartner

Top CSO challenges:

1. What steps can I take to ensure my sales organization is resilient and adaptable to market shifts?
2. How can I adapt my leadership skills to better navigate the constant changes in the sales environment?
3. How can I use data and analytics to enhance my team's productivity and drive commercial success?

CSO CHALLENGE

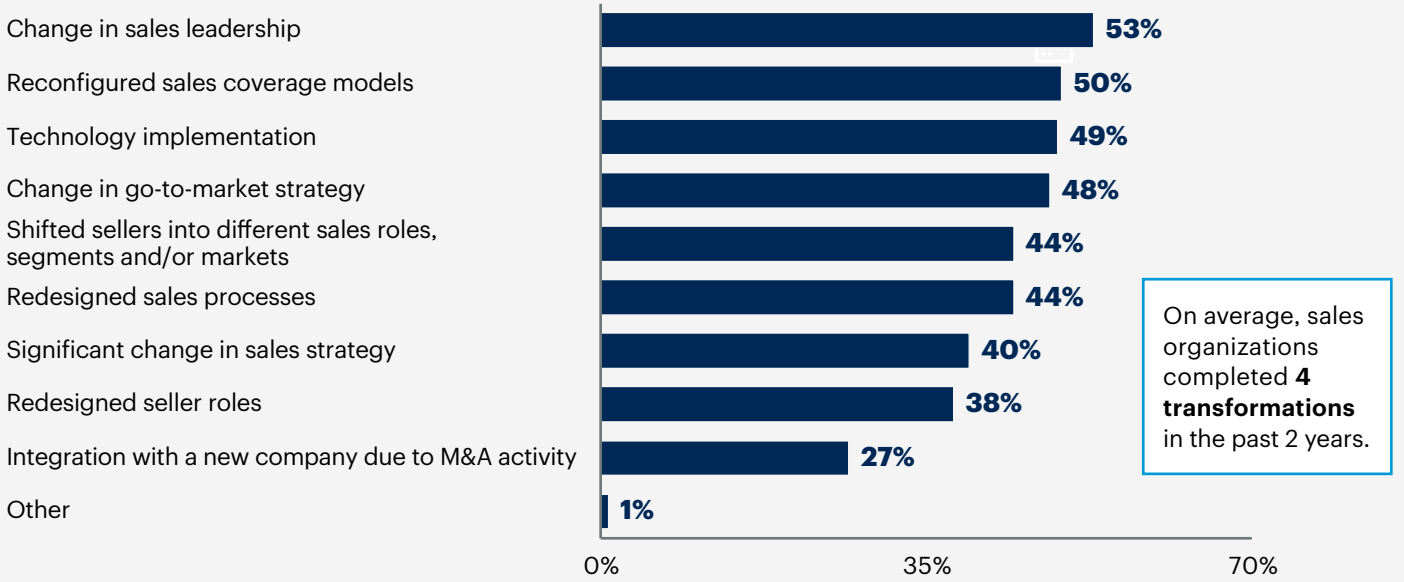
What steps can I take to ensure my sales organization is resilient and adaptable to market shifts?

The rate of change will never be this slow again but is constantly accelerating. Organizations are undergoing multiple transformations to keep up. CSOs face the daunting task of maintaining organizational resilience in a constantly shifting B2B sales landscape. The rapid pace of market volatility makes it challenging to predict future trends, leaving sales leaders struggling to align their teams with shifting priorities. They grapple with relentless pressure to hit quarterly targets while keeping the organization competitive.

Balancing the immediate need to meet revenue goals with a long-term vision for adaptability often stretches resources thin and complicates strategic planning. CSOs frequently find it difficult to adapt strategic plans to sudden changes and to reallocate budgets and resources to emerging priorities, despite adaptive sales organizations being three times more likely to achieve commercial success.

The only constant is org change

Transformations completed by sales organization



n = 232 heads of sales and senior sales leaders, excluding Don't know/None of the above
Q. In the past 2 years, which of the following transformations did your sales organization complete?
Source: 2024 Gartner Sales Org DNA Survey

GARTNER ANSWER

Build a sales organization that is adaptive by design

Adaptive sales organizations are over three times more likely to achieve commercial success. Use adaptive-by-design tenets to build an adaptive sales organization capable of implementing and adjusting to ongoing transformations:

- Leverage a structured model to improve decision making.
- Make better and quicker data-driven decisions via revenue intelligence.
- Design with modularity to pivot with precision.
- Deploy technology as a teammate to radically simplify seller roles.

Likelihood of strong performance

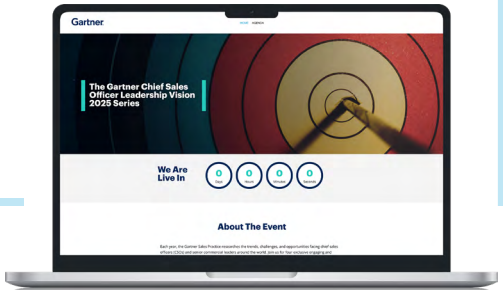
By level of adaptable organizational design



Source: Gartner

Gartner resources to help you adapt your organization

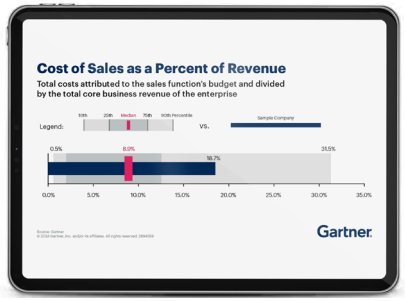
Watch the **Gartner CSO Leadership Vision Series** for real-world examples of how top sales organizations are addressing this challenge.



Build and execute an adaptive sales plan using **3 Approaches to Building an Adaptive Strategic Sales Plan** and **the Sales Strategy on a Page Toolkit.**



Compare your sales organization's headcounts, budgets and spending to peers with the **Sales Budget and Efficiency Benchmark.**



Meet with a **Gartner expert** for external validation of your sales strategy and ongoing support through execution.



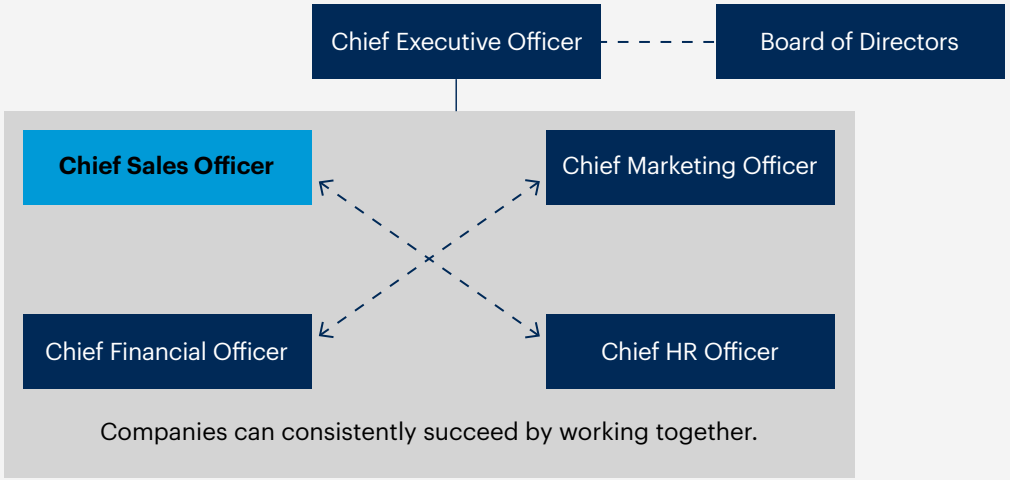
CSO CHALLENGE

How can I adapt my leadership skills to better navigate the constant changes in the sales environment?

The expanding role of the CSO presents significant challenges, as leaders must now navigate an increasingly complex commercial environment. Economic uncertainties and evolving buyer behaviors demand a broader skill set that many CSOs find challenging to develop.

Balancing daily execution with strategic foresight is difficult, as is maintaining influence across the C-suite, while managing the pressures of meeting immediate sales goals. Delivering commercial excellence requires building executive influence skills to align the sales function with organization goals in collaboration with the C-suite.

Commercial excellence is a team sport



Source: Gartner

GARTNER ANSWER

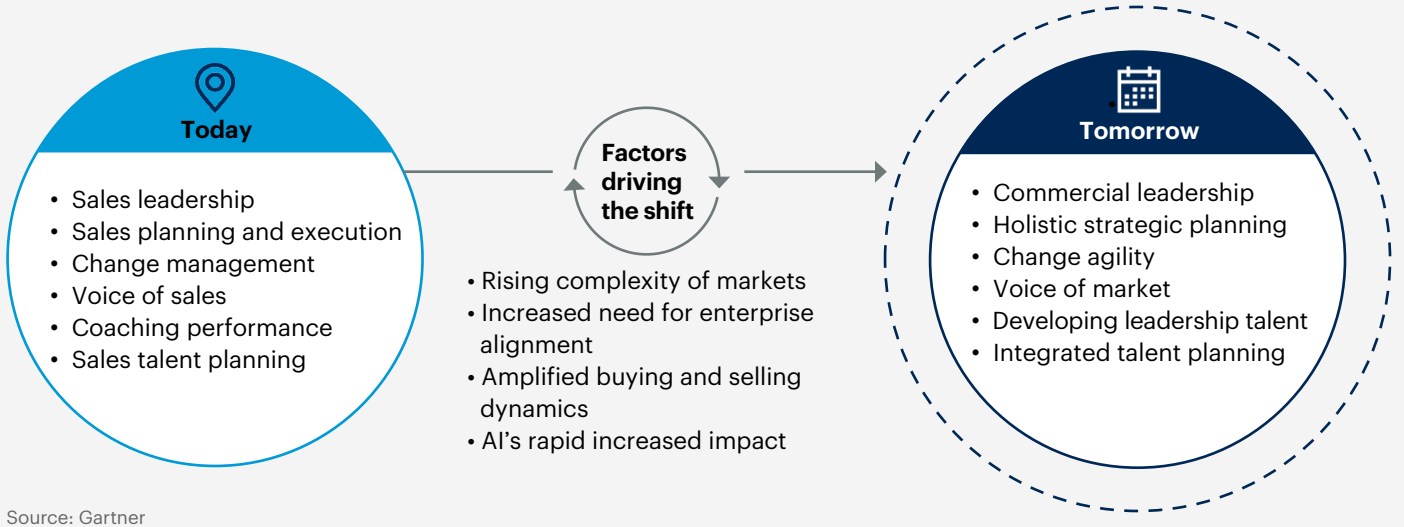
Build and strengthen your CSO executive skills and influence to deliver a unified commercial strategy

The CSO role is becoming more complex due to economic uncertainty and expanding responsibilities. Focusing solely on daily execution won't suffice for long-term success. CSOs must balance hitting current revenue goals with staying ahead of the economy and changing buyer dynamics in an ever-evolving labor market.

To succeed, CSOs need to lead at three levels: the sales function, the commercial organization and the C-suite. This involves building skills to lead the commercial organization, using analytics to optimize decision making and aligning go-to-market strategies with corporate goals.

To grow revenue, CSOs should broaden their leadership scope and update their skills. Key areas include understanding market dynamics, strategic planning, change agility and commercial leadership, which are crucial for professional growth.

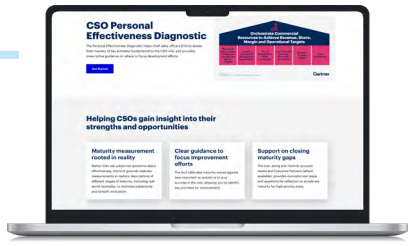
A unified commercial strategy requires new CSO skills



Source: Gartner

Gartner resources to help you evolve your leadership

Take the **Gartner CSO Personal Effectiveness Diagnostic** to assess mastery of key CSO activities and get guidance on where to focus development efforts.



Discover the art of effective influence and leadership **3 Things the Best Sales Leaders Do Differently.**



Tap **Gartner experts** to build skills to drive commercial collaboration, digital transformation, change and stakeholder management, and adaptive planning.



Use **Gartner Sales Score** to optimize decision making and drive revenue performance.



Align GTM strategy with corporate objectives using the **Gartner Go-to-Market Strategy Framework.**



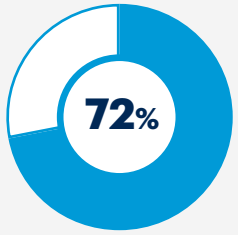
CSO CHALLENGE

How can I use data and analytics to enhance my team's productivity and drive commercial success?

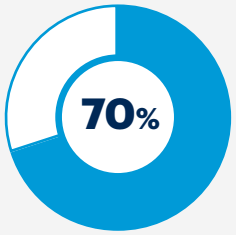
CSOs face constant pressure to drive growth, but traditional strategies like hiring, training and new technologies can overwhelm sellers and stall productivity. A key issue is the lack of detailed, data-driven insights into actions that drive success, leading to overly complex seller roles and extraneous tasks that decrease seller productivity and adaptability. While technology promises to support efficiency, it can also become an additional burden and slow market response.

CSOs must balance these factors to avoid overwhelming sellers and ensure sustainable growth, making it crucial to address these issues for improved commercial performance.

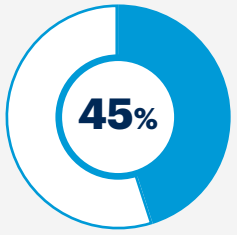
Overwhelmed sellers are less likely to succeed



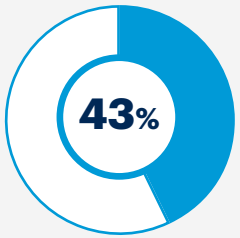
of sellers feel overwhelmed by number of required skills



of sellers feel overwhelmed by required tech



less likely to attain quota if seller is overwhelmed



less likely to have high productivity if seller is overwhelmed

n = 1,026 B2B sellers
Source: 2024 Gartner Seller Skills Survey

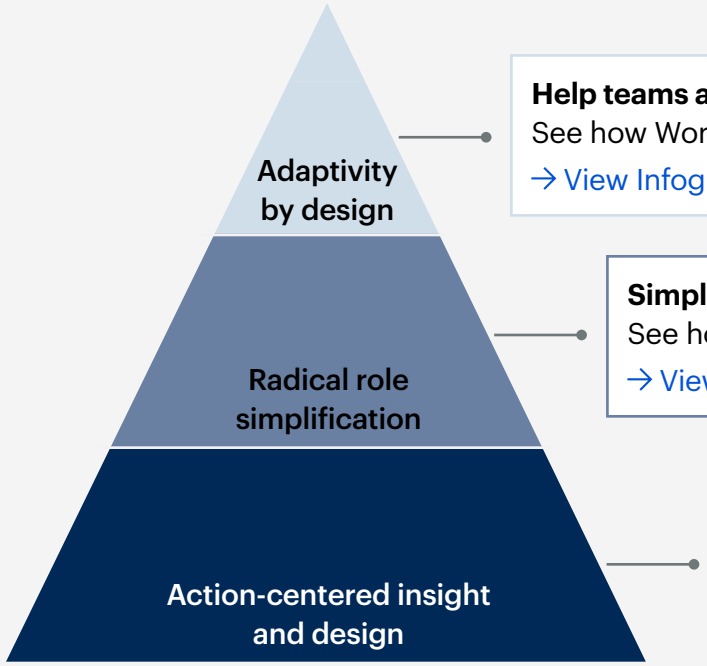
GARTNER ANSWER

Improve seller productivity by developing a granular, data-driven understanding of the actions that drive commercial success

Simplify seller roles by eliminating extraneous tasks and leveraging technology to enhance productivity and adaptability. This approach helps organizations innovate and respond to market changes effectively.

Sales organizations that focus on action-centered insight and design are more likely to be among the top sales organizations in terms of ease of transformation and commercial success. Action-centered insight enables radical role simplification, wherein organizations purposefully reduce the scope and complexity of the seller role through role design and deployment of "technology as a teammate." This improves commercial performance in times of change, reduces the likelihood of overwhelming sellers and improves organizational adaptability.

What top organizations do differently



Help teams adapt to change
See how Workday puts adaptivity by design into action.
→ View Infographic

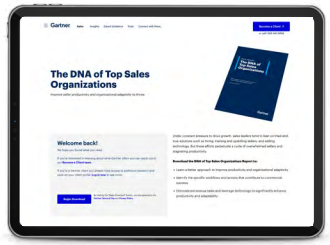
Simplify selling to focus on high-impact activities
See how Cisco puts role simplification into action.
→ View Infographic

Use data to pinpoint actions that drive results
See how Mimecast puts action-centered design into action.
→ View Infographic

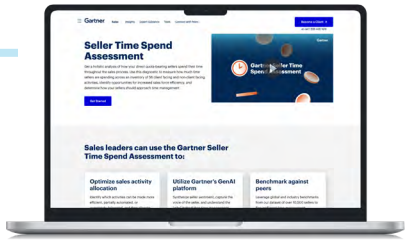
Source: Gartner

Gartner resources to help you elevate your team

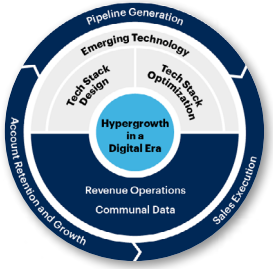
Review Gartner's findings on how to reduce seller overwhelm and improve productivity with **The DNA of Top Sales Organizations.**



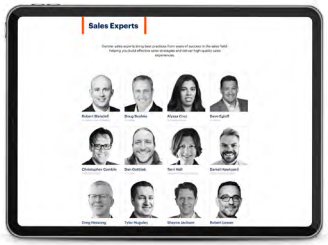
Identify opportunities for increased sales force efficiency and improved time management with the **Gartner Seller Time Spend Assessment.**



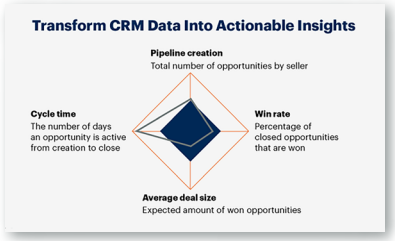
Develop a plan to make tech a teammate with the **Gartner Sales Tech Audit Guide.**



Meet with a **Gartner expert** to discuss sales role design and development.



Understand areas to improve sales productivity with the **Comparative Seller Performance Diagnostic.**



Conclusion

As you embark on the journey to make your 2025 sales plan a reality, remember that adaptability, strategic leadership and data-driven decision making are your key allies. By leveraging these insights and tools, you can view the challenges outlined in this eBook as opportunities to redefine your approach and achieve unprecedented growth.

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U.S.: 1 855 811 7593

International: +44 (0) 3330 607 044

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