

An aerial photograph of a calm lake surrounded by a dense forest. A yellow dotted line starts from the top right and extends towards the center of the lake. Two vertical yellow bars are positioned on either side of the main title. In the lower part of the lake, four kayakers in red and yellow kayaks are visible, moving towards the center.

Sales Operations 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 operations 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 operations function supports the commercial organization. Sales operations leaders can use this research help them answer 3 questions that are key to leading the operational transformation required to succeed in 2023 and beyond.

Key questions addressed:

- ① What organizational changes must sales operations leaders make to support revenue growth?
- ① How can sales operations leaders leverage technological innovations to drive commercial success?
- ① How can sales operations help commercial leaders make confident decisions in an uncertain environment?

Key changes influencing sales operations

Notable shifts in the B2B buying and selling landscape

From



Seller-centric routes to market



Multiexperience interactions



Customer relationship management (CRM) augmented with artificial intelligence (AI)



Focus on the sales organizations



Business partners and technical specialists

To



Digital-first or digital-only experience



Multithreaded interactions



Workflow integration, communal data and AI



Expanded support for all revenue functions



Business technologists



Key priorities



What organizational changes must sales operations leaders make to support revenue growth?



How can sales operations leaders leverage technological innovations to drive commercial success?



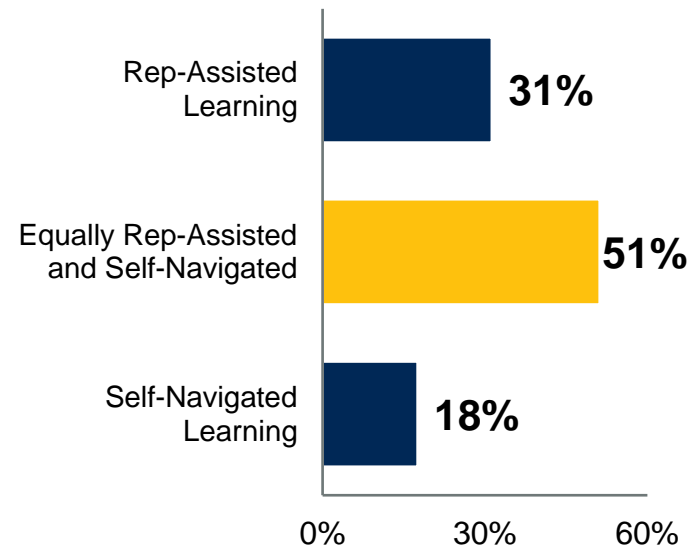
How can sales operations help commercial leaders make confident decisions in an uncertain environment?

Sales operations' scope is now organizationwide

Most buyers engage with both digital and human touchpoints

Sales Rep Involvement in Buying Tasks

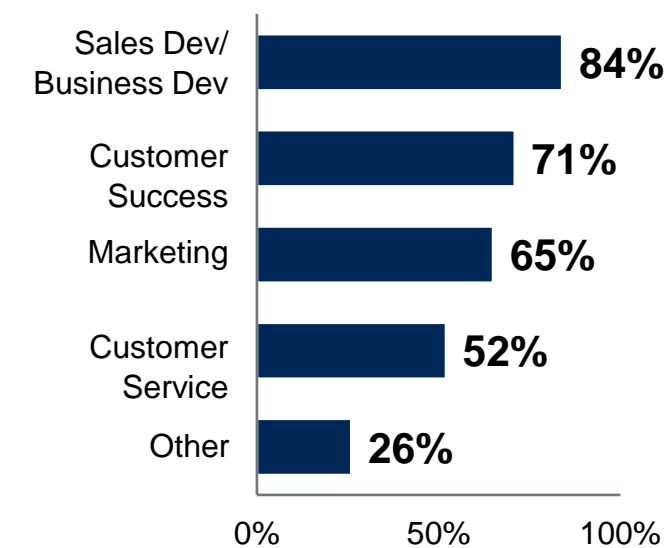
Averaged Across Buying tasks



In response, commercial leaders' remit is expanding beyond sales

Functions Reporting to the Commercial Leader

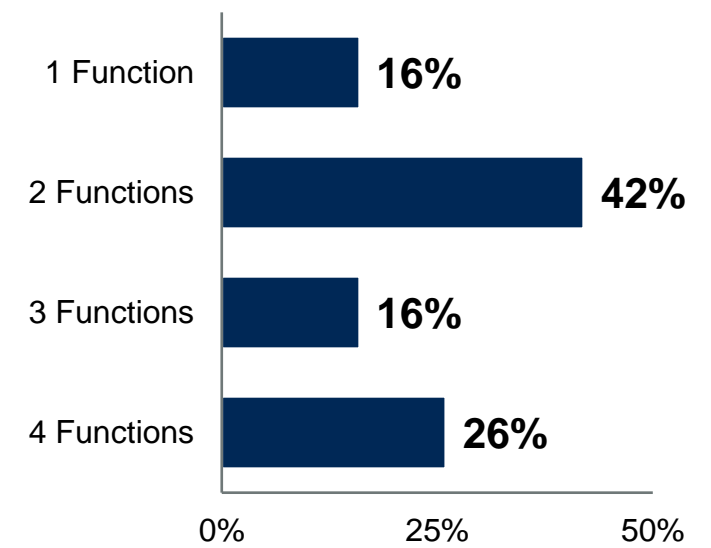
Percentage of CSOs



Sales operations' remit is also expanding beyond sales

Number of Non-Sales Functions Supported by Sales Operations

Percentage of CSOs



n = 713 B2B Buyers
Source: 2021 Gartner B2B Buyer Survey
Q2-5. Which of the following best describes how your buying group interacted with supplier's point(s) of contact during each of the following tasks?

n = 31 CSOs
Source: 1H22 Gartner CSO Priorities Survey
Q. Which of the following functions report to this commercial leader?

n = 43 CSOs
Source: 1H22 Gartner CSO Priorities Survey
Q. Which of the following functions currently receive support from your sales operations organization?

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The challenges of expanding sales operations' role during disruption

Commercial disruptions



Ongoing uncertainty: Expanded support during uncertain times forces sales operations to be reactive to constantly changing priorities.



RevTech mayhem: Rapid change in vendor offerings leaves operations leaders unsure which investments deliver the best ROI.



Shifting talent needs: Changes to sales operations' responsibilities, including emerging technologies, creates new talent requirements.

Risks to sales operations



CX at risk: Expanding requirements to support the end-to-end revenue processes are unmet, **disrupting the customer experience.**



Diminishing insights: Signals driving predictive and prescriptive analytics are changing, **eroding the value of analytics.**



Incomplete RevTech stack: Technology investments are misaligned with current business needs, **affecting seller productivity.**



Insufficient support: Yesterday's sales ops profiles won't satisfy tomorrow's commercial support needs, leading to **missed expectations and dissatisfied leaders.**

Source: Gartner

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Redesign the sales operations function for proactive support and deeper insights

The Expanded Scope of Sales Operations



Sales operations' response

- **Reevaluate** talent requirements.
- **Align** commercial tactics and operations with go-to-market strategy.
- **Build** RevTech roadmap for end-to-end revenue process support.
- **Integrate and consolidate** commercial data.

Source: Gartner

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Key priorities



What organizational changes must sales operations leaders make to support revenue growth?

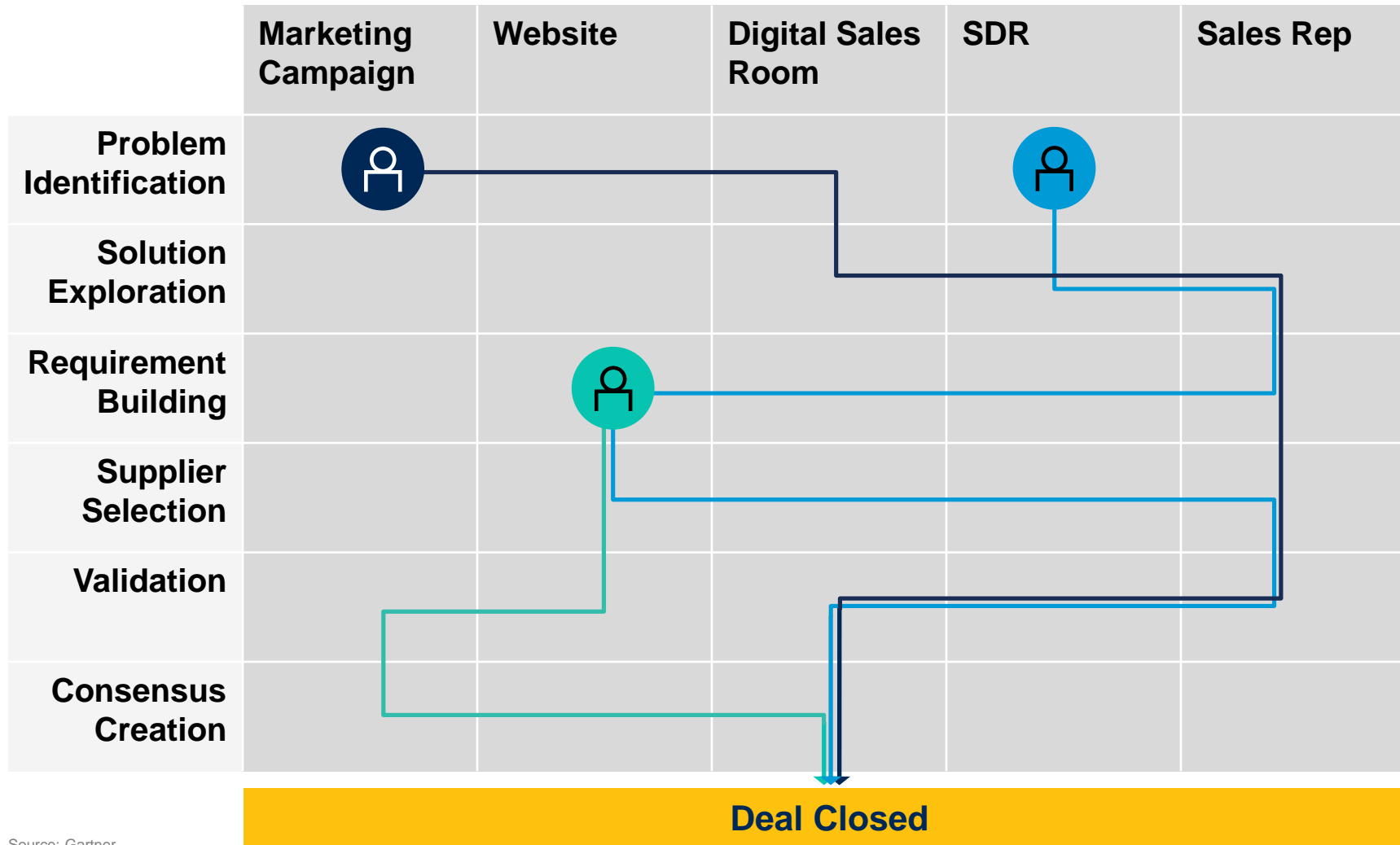



How can sales operations leaders leverage technological innovations to drive commercial success?



How can sales operations help commercial leaders make confident decisions in an uncertain environment?

“Everywhere Buyers” create new requirements



 End User

 IT

 Finance

Today's B2B customers are everywhere, freely moving between digital and human channels, often owned by different functions, throughout their buying journey.

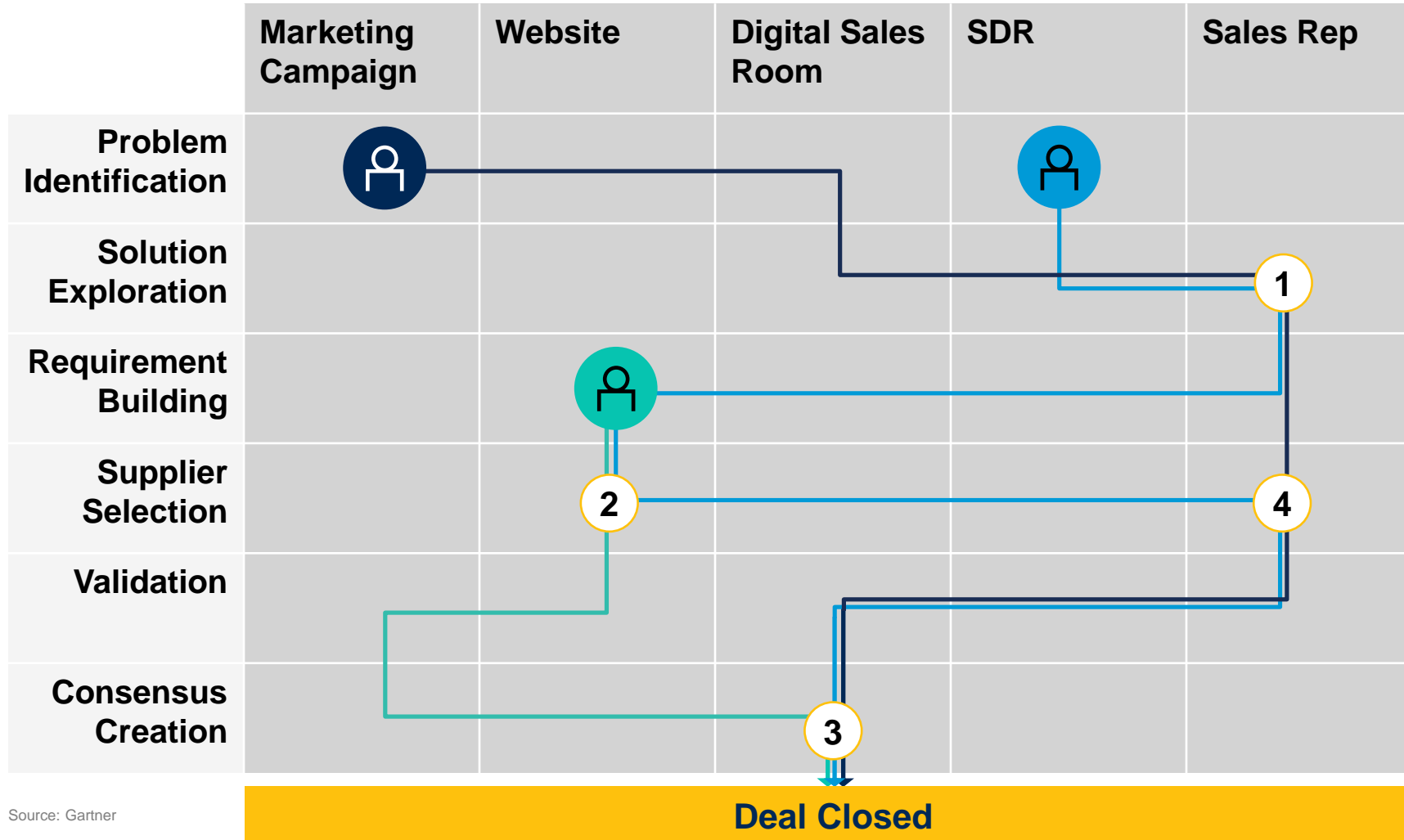
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Commercial teams need better situational awareness to enable buyers



Everywhere Buyers' new engagement patterns are creating **four challenges with commercial team's current approach to technology.**

- 1 **Limited visibility** when buyers start in non-Sales led channels makes workflow orchestration between teams more difficult.
- 2 **Communal data** is needed to consolidate the information gathered from interactions in previously siloed workflows.
- 3 **Insight identification and delivery** is becoming more complex and time sensitive.
- 4 **New technology use cases** are emerging as the way buyers and suppliers interact is changing.

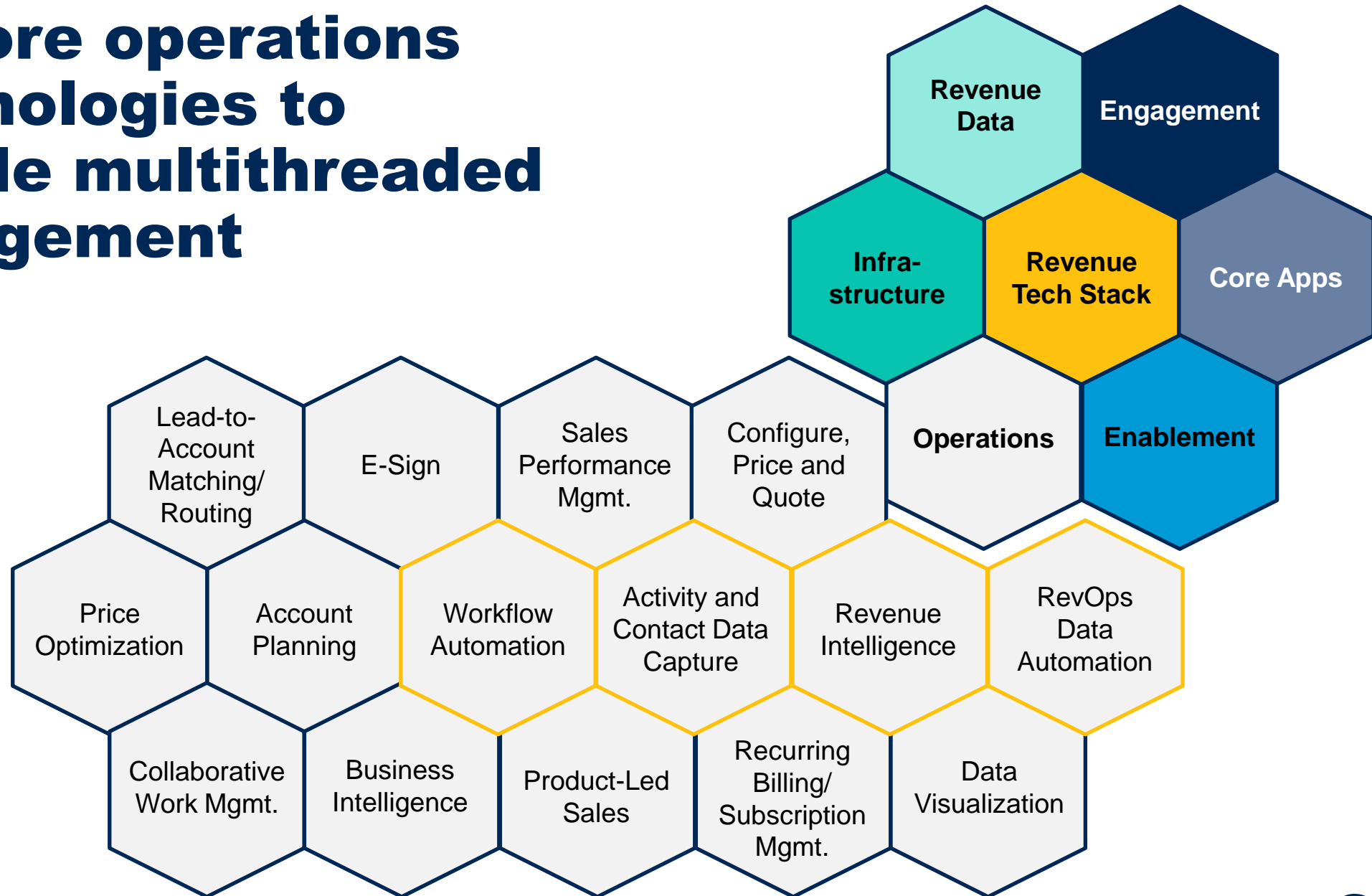
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Explore operations technologies to enable multithreaded engagement



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Key priorities



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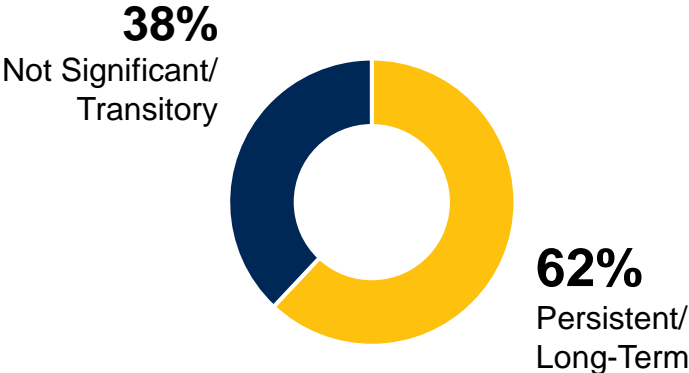
Uncertainty is disrupting B2B selling

Three profitability pressures are 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.



n = 404 respondents, excluding "don't know"
Source: 2022 Gartner CEO and Senior Business Executive Survey
Q. "There will be a significant and persistent rise in inflation, but it will level off within three years," and "There will be a significant rise in inflation ... lasting three or more years."

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.

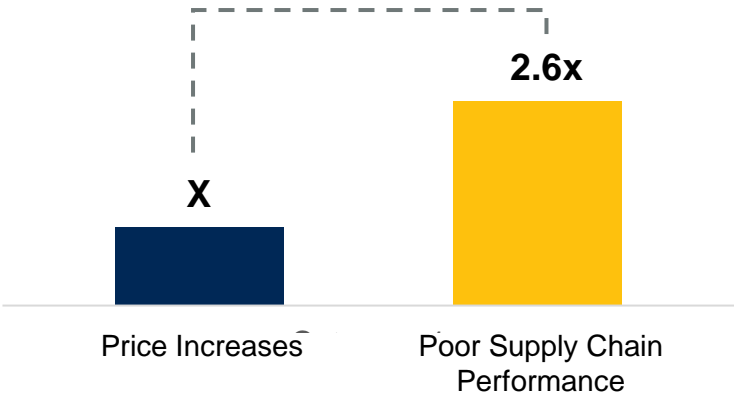


Source: Gartner TalentNeuron™

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

Enabling leaders to make confident decisions despite uncertainty

What leaders are experiencing



Disrupted leading indicators: The traditional signals used to predict future outcomes may no longer apply.



Growing demand for insight: Commercial leaders require better insights — down to the seller level — to help their teams perform.



Inconsistent analytics: Managers are increasingly unsure which analytics to use for decision making in specific use cases.

Challenges for sales operations



Unclear sources of risk: Sales operations must find new causes and correlations to avoid **losing credibility**.



Legacy silos: Information and signals spanning previously siloed systems must be correlated, else **critical insights are lost**.



Incomplete governance: Enterprise data governance may already exist but doesn't meet sales' needs, resulting in **limited ROI on analytics**.

Source: Gartner

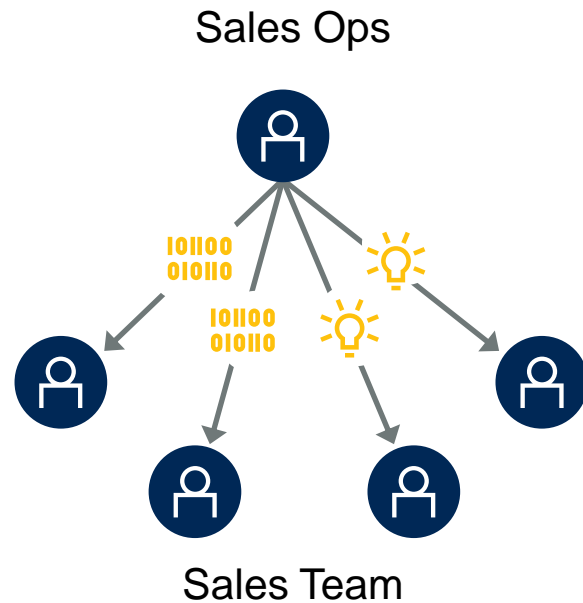
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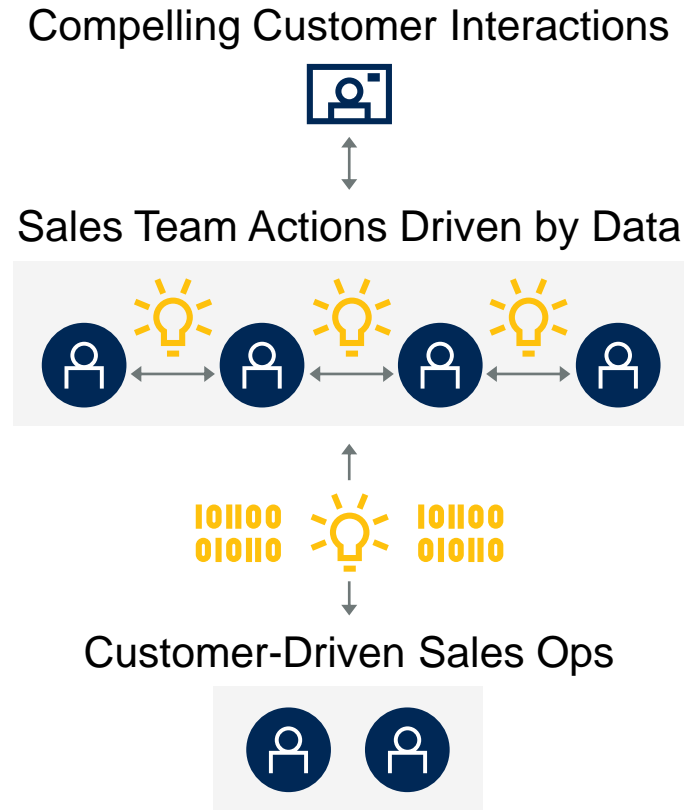
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Transform analytics to become data-driven

Typical Approach: “Inside-Out”



Better Approach: “Outside-In”



Actions for Sales Operations

- Establish analytics governance to drive consistency in decision making.
- Ensure that sales operations provides macro-level insights along with key analytics.
- Initiate a data literacy program to enable managers and sellers to contextualize insights for their own regions and accounts.
- Explore technology that draw signals from multiple sources to provide AI-based insight and guidance at the point of need.


Source: Gartner

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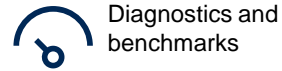
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Summary: Sales Operations Leadership Vision

Priority	Trend	Challenge	Action
 <p>Building a world-class sales ops function</p>	<p>Responsibilities and stakeholders of sales operations are expanding</p>	<p>Customer experience is disrupted when commercial teams operate in silos</p>	<p>Redesign the sales operations function to support the end-to-end revenue process with appropriate talent and workflows</p>
 <p>Leveraging emerging revenue technology</p>	<p>Buyers interact with suppliers via a changing mix of digital and human channels</p>	<p>Suppliers need technology to provide situational awareness of buyers' progress in their purchase decisions</p>	<p>Assess revenue technology solutions that integrate workflows and data spanning multiple commercial functions</p>
 <p>Enabling confident decisions despite uncertainty</p>	<p>Economic uncertainty is disrupting B2B selling and complicating internal decision making</p>	<p>Suppliers need new leading indicators, workflow integrations and means of analytics governance</p>	<p>Drive more effective data-driven decision making by transforming analytics from "inside-out" to "outside-in"</p>

How Gartner helps sales operations leaders

The sales operations function is expanding to support a broader set of stakeholders, while expectations for leveraging revenue technologies grow. Sales operations leaders must reassess their strategic visions and organizational designs to prepare for new execution demands. 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



Leverage [“Transform Sales Operations for the Future”](#) to understand the changing scope of sales operations and how to expand the function for organizationwide impact.



Read [“Quick Answer: How Do I Improve My Virtual Selling Tech Stack?”](#) to identify the steps toward adopting a modernized revenue tech stack to share data and interconnect workflows across sales functions.



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

Develop your plan



Watch a recording of the [“Optimizing the Revenue Tech Stack to Accelerate Pipeline Growth”](#) virtual executive briefing to equip your team with best practices for leveraging technology to drive pipeline growth.



Schedule an inquiry with a [Gartner expert](#) to discuss how to evolve your organizational designs and talent profiles to meet near-term challenges.



Apply Gartner’s [blueprint](#) for building a data-driven sales organization, focusing on enhanced data literacy, collaborative governance and effective tools.

Execute and drive change



Leverage the [“Toolkit: 2022 Strategic Roadmap for Sales Analytics”](#) for step-by-step guidance on establishing a plan to deliver a data literacy and governance program.



Drive pipeline growth by aligning your technology stack to the pipeline generation process using [“Top Technologies for Driving Pipeline Growth.”](#)



Improve visibility into pipeline and performance with a revamped approach to forecasting using [“Ignition Guide to \(Re\)Designing a Sales Forecasting Process.”](#)

Actionable, objective insight

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

Roadmap



Strategic Roadmap for Sales Analytics

Use this roadmap to achieve the full potential of your sales analytics capabilities.

[Download Now](#)

Guide



Revenue Operations Implementation Guide

Learn how the revenue operations model allows organizations to operate with greater efficiency and predictability.

[Download Now](#)

Quarterly



The Chief Sales Officer

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

[Download Now](#)

Podcast



The Gartner Sales Podcast

Listen to leading experts across Gartner and beyond highlight important implications and unexpected findings for senior sales leaders.

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