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Gartner for Sales

# Strategic Roadmap for Accelerating Revenue Growth

Including Case Studies Of  
Revenue-Driving Initiatives

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## Introduction

Sustained revenue growth isn't easy. Chief sales officers (CSOs) face increasing sales complexity and growing customer and CEO expectations. Environmental uncertainty — the pandemic, volatility in financial markets and political unrest — are all affecting the willingness of B2B buyers to make significant purchases.

To drive growth in existing accounts and capture new customers in these conditions, CSOs must create a low-effort buying experience that builds customer confidence, simplifies the buying journey and reflects changing purchase preferences, which in some cases shun reps.

Not surprisingly, few sales leaders are confident they can deliver against revenue goals, and most say changing buyer preferences are directly impacting sales. Gartner recommends a four-step approach to driving revenue growth, and here we'll outline those steps, and illustrate each with a case study. Consider these to be best practices to adopt in your own strategies.

### How confident are you that your sales team will deliver against revenue goals?

6%

of CSOs say they are extremely confident about their team's ability to meet or exceed revenue goals



### What's impacting the sales organization?

86%

of CSOs cite changing buyer preference



Source: Gartner

## Be ready to give the B2B buyer what they prefer

### Today's buying environment presents key challenges for sales



#### Decision Making in an Information-Saturated Environment

- High-quality information that suppliers once provided as a key commercial differentiator is now so widely available that it often overwhelms and confuses customers.



#### Nonlinear Buying Journey

- Today's buying journey more closely resembles a set of distinct buying jobs, or sets of tasks, that buyers must complete to finalize an actual purchase.
- Most buyers (96%) revisit at least one buying job during their purchase.



#### Growing Digital Buying Preference

- Buyers show a growing preference to learn and complete buying tasks through digital and, in some cases, rep-free channels.
- Forty-three percent of all buyers — and 54% of millennial buyers — indicate a desire for an entirely rep-free sales experience.



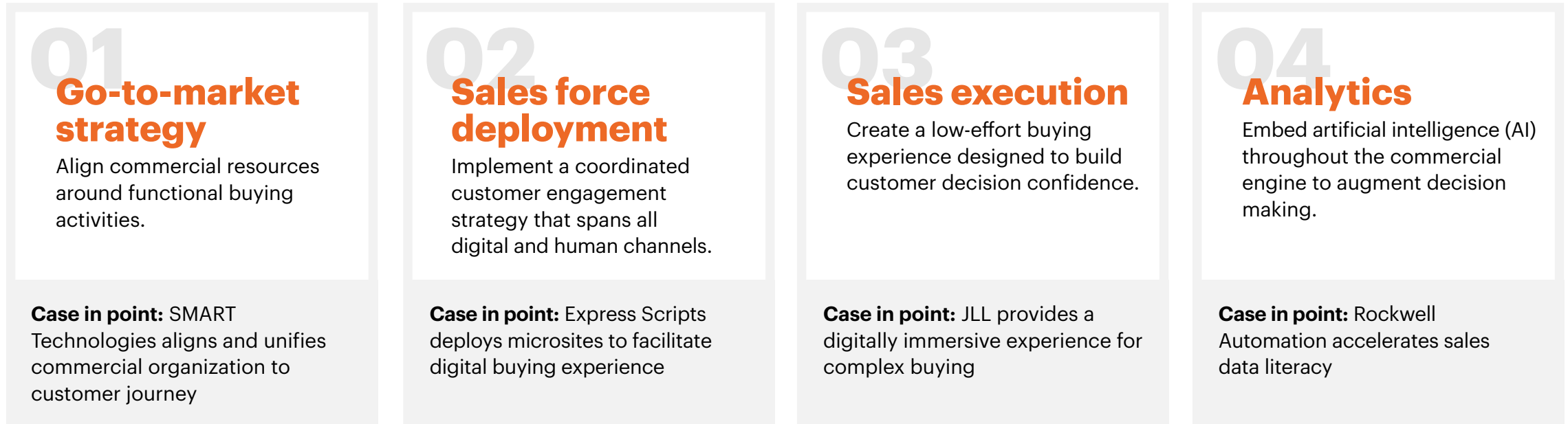
#### Environmental Uncertainty

- Social and political unrest, the pandemic and volatility in financial markets today all contribute to a complex and unpredictable environment.
- Buyers facing moderate to high environmental uncertainty are 30% less likely to complete a purchase.

Source: Gartner

## Four growth pillars

To create an optimal, customer-centric buying experience, CSOs must tackle and balance four pillars:



The Gartner roadmap describes how the average organization approaches these pillars today and provides steps they can take to reach the future state and accelerate revenue growth.

# Go-to-market strategy able to drive sales growth

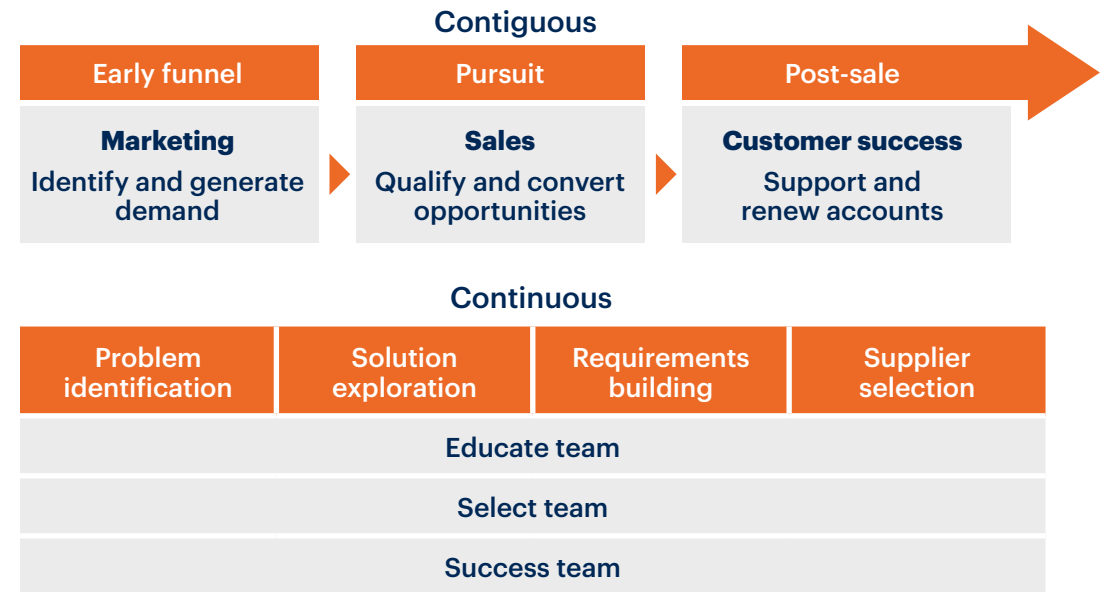
Align commercial resources around functional buying activities.

## Future state

A shift is needed from the traditional contiguous, serial approach to continuous, parallel engagements where sales, marketing, customer service and customer success work together to help buyers complete critical buying tasks. This requires aligning resources from all commercial functions to horizontally structured teams designed to influence the customer's (re)purchase decisions.

The end state of such a go-to-market strategy may be a completely parallel commercial system that removes the distinctions between sales, marketing and service entirely and where all the suppliers' commercial resources are consolidated to a single commercial operations team.

## Contiguous Versus Continuous Approach to the Customer Journey



Source: Gartner

## Current state

Commercial alignment is valued, but organizational roadblocks prevent necessary changes.

## Gap

Commercial funnels are designed around supplier constraints, not customer needs.

## Migration plan

Build a blueprint for a go-to-market strategy that reflects today's buying realities.

→ **Learn more: Strategic Roadmap for Growth webinar**

# SMART Technologies aligns and unifies commercial organization to the customer journey

SMART Technologies realized that its siloed marketing, sales and service operations created a discontinuous purchase experience for customers. This led to lost revenue, operational redundancies and excess spending.

## Action

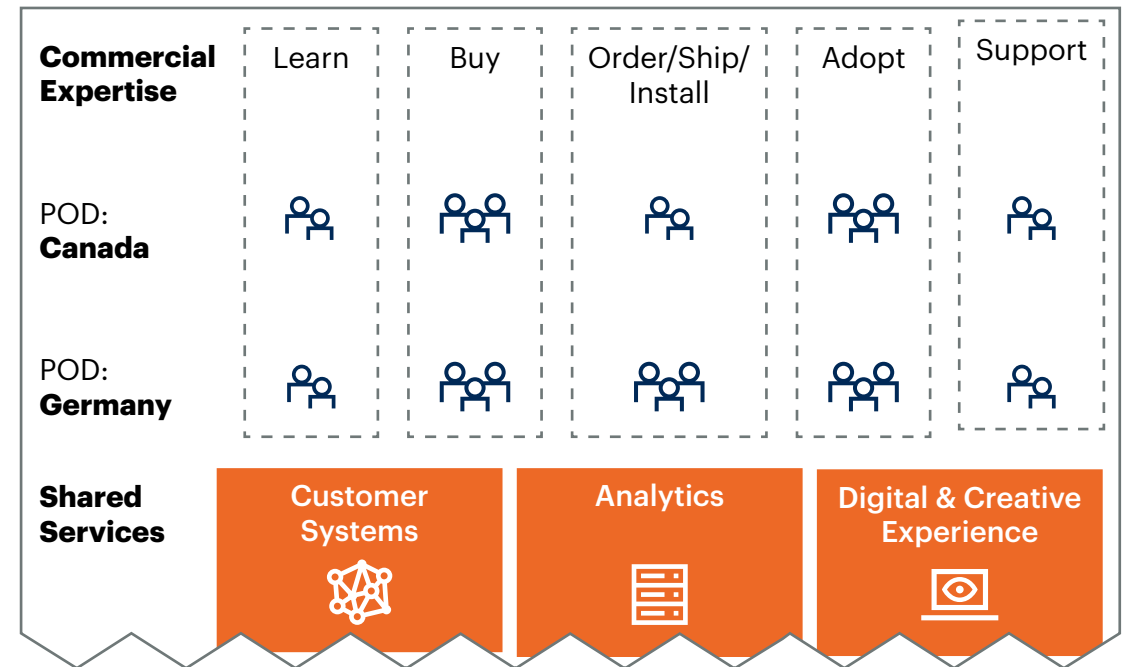
The company’s commercial leadership developed a unified go-to-market strategy, creating teams whose responsibilities are now tied to customer buying jobs, such as “learn” and “buy.”

SMART effectively collapsed sales, marketing and service silos into a single, cohesive commercial engine to support parallel customer engagements.

## Commercial Impact

- Year-over-year revenue increased 48%
- Lead volume increased by 50%
- Lead acceptance rate increased 35%

## SMART’s Updated Commercial Structure



Source: Adapted From SMART Technologies

Note: The characteristics of pods are 6-10 members in each pod, common KPIs and alignment to the customer market (e.g., geography).

# Sales force deployment

Implement a coordinated customer engagement strategy that spans all digital and human channels.

## Future state

A coordinated customer engagement strategy is designed with channel-agnostic and digital buyer preferences in mind. Suppliers look at all digital and human channels to make sure the information and support the buyer receives is:

**Consistent:** Avoids conflicting or repetitive information

**Complete:** Gives buyers the ability to complete all buying jobs

**Connected:** Guides buyers to key resources at important points throughout the purchase process

With this approach, sales leaders will lay a strong foundation for dynamic customer engagement (DCE). Fueled by data sources from all customer interactions across the entire commercial engine, DCE leverages AI to deliver customized next best actions and guide customers toward the channel most likely to have a positive commercial outcome.

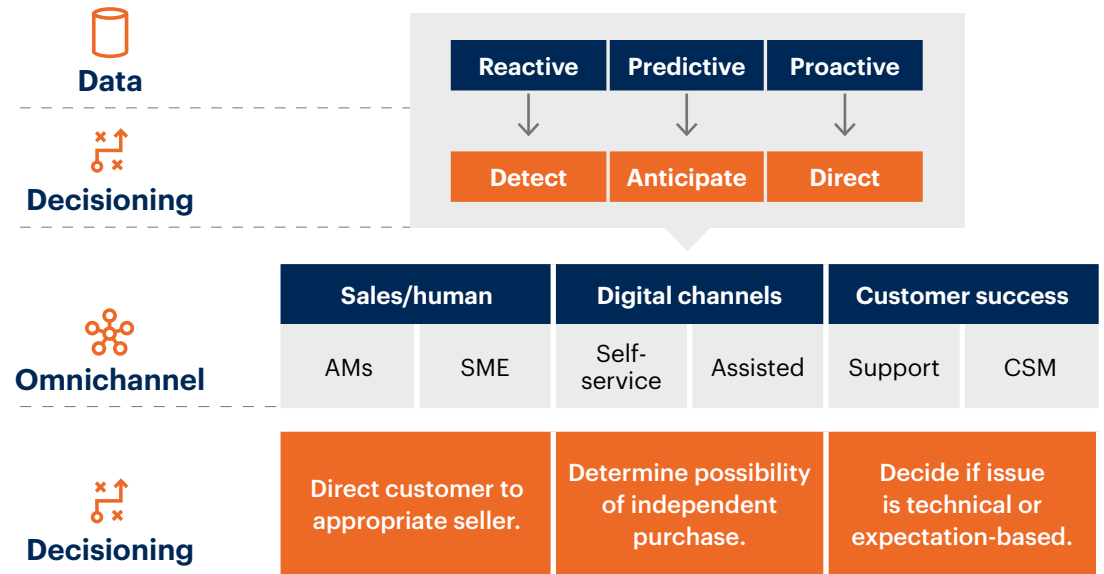
## Current state

Channel-agnostic buyers encounter conflicting and overlapping information in digital and human channels.

## Gap

Seller-centric sales force deployments no longer reflect the buying journey.

## Components of a Dynamic Customer Engagement Strategy



Source: Gartner

## Migration plan

Identify inconsistent information in digital and human customer engagement channels.

→ **Learn more:**  
**4 Strategies to Rev Up B2B Sales Growth in 2021 article**

# Express Scripts deploys microsites to meet clients' digital buying expectations

Express Scripts' sellers found it difficult to access and engage B2B customers who prefer digital channels. Without clear visibility into customers' progress in the buying journey, they struggled to provide pertinent information at the right time.

## Action

Express Scripts' sales and marketing teams co-created customized customer microsites for their most important pursuits, inserting the organization's reps into the customers' independent learning process and meeting them where learning happens where they are at. The microsites are a one-stop shop to engage with customers digitally.

## Commercial Impact

- 500% increase in conversion rates for prospective accounts using the microsites

## Highlights of Express Scripts' Customer Microsite Capabilities

The screenshot shows a customer microsite interface with the following elements:

- Header:** Express Scripts logo, tagline "Aligned with your vision, we'll do better - together", and a thank you message.
- Section 1:** "WE'RE JUST GETTING STARTED" with a link to "Click here to review follow-up materials from our recent meeting".
- Section 2:** "Nice to e-meet you!" and "Hear from our clients" with video player thumbnails.
- Section 3:** "Latest resources" with a description and three icons: "Insights and Research", "Navigating digital health", and "Buyer enablement content".

Three callouts point to specific features:

- 1 Easy access to direct communication:** Points to the link in the first section.
- 2 Customized video featuring sales reps and customers:** Points to the video player thumbnails in the second section.
- 3 Supplier-agnostic content to help customers complete buying tasks:** Points to the "Buyer enablement content" icon in the third section.

Source: Adapted From Express Scripts



# Sales execution

Create a low-effort buying experience designed to build customer decision confidence.

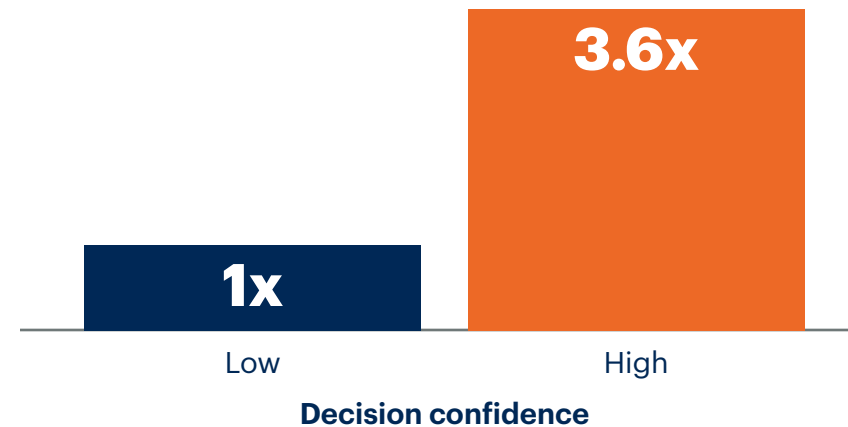
## Future state

At its heart, decision confidence is the customers' belief and feeling of affirmation that they are exercising sound judgment when making a purchase. This confidence drives revenue growth because organizational complexity — not a lack of information — is the key roadblock most B2B buyers face.

Sales teams are 3.6 times more likely to see a high-quality deal, where customers opt for a high-end or premium offering rather than settling for the less ambitious solution, when buyers have high levels of decision confidence. CSOs who focus sales execution on helping customers feel more confident in themselves see tremendous commercial success.

## Likelihood of a High-Quality Deal\*

By level of decision confidence (indexed)



n = 1,049 B2B buyers

Source: 2019 Gartner B2B Buyer Survey

\*High-quality deal is defined as either purchasing a high-end premium offering or not settling for a less ambitious offering and the purchase has met expectations.

## Current state

High-quality service and information are misinterpreted as the paths to revenue growth.

## Gap

Data quality and integration challenges hold back AI's potential.

## Migration plan

Assess sellers' current ability to build decision confidence.

→ **Learn more:  
The Sense Making  
Seller e-book**

# JLL provides a digitally immersive experience for complex buying

JLL is a commercial real estate services company. Its products — properties and spaces — might seem too tangible to be effectively sold digitally. But buyers have shown a clear shift in preferences from in-person to digital channels, and JLL sellers struggled to consistently and effectively use their technology to help their real estate customers find and acquire available spaces.

## Action

JLL identified the few critical decisions clients need to make and leveraged technology to reimagine those moments digitally by, for example, enabling customers to tour spaces using virtual reality. JLL also aligned its buying technology to help customers complete four critical buying jobs.

## Commercial Impact

- 115% increase in conversion rate
- Reduction of almost 500% in average sales cycle time

## Buying Technology Roadmap for Customers

JLL Tenant Experience Principles



**Cumulative:** Provides a recommendation based on customer inputs from across its buying technology.



**Interactive:** Displays a virtual version of a product or solution that the customer can view and modify with the seller's assistance.



**Data-Driven:** Generates outputs based on the customer's and/or supplier's data.



**Integrated:** Outputs from some buying technology capabilities are inputs for others.



**Empowering:** Provides customers with information to make their own decisions.

**Together, these principles ensure that the JLL Tenant Experience Flow creates a digitally immersive buying experience through technology that visualize real-world objects in the virtual environment for customers.**

Source: Adapted From JLL

# 04 Analytics

Embed AI throughout the commercial engine to augment decision making.

## Future state

AI will play a central role in all tactical, operational and strategic decisions across the commercial engine. As AI technologies connect to data sources across the organization, it will deliver more precise insights, better predict customer needs, and guide CSOs to help grow revenue and shape everything from sales execution to channel engagements with DCE.

Successful AI deployment will require high levels of maturity in four foundational areas:

- Data quality
- Sales analytics talent
- Organizational model efficacy
- Tool capabilities

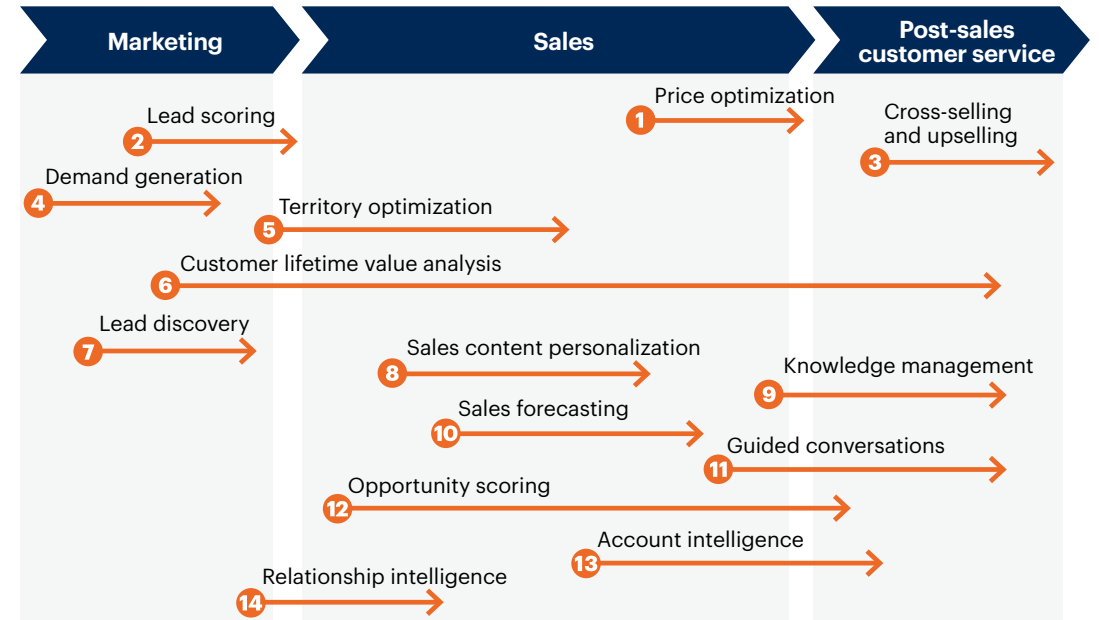
## Current state

Foundational challenges prevent most sales analytics teams from realizing AI's potential.

## Gap

Sales execution fails to help buyers reconcile conflicting information and prepare for change.

## The Different Types of Analytics Techniques



Source: Gartner

## Migration plan

Document sales analytics shortfalls that prevent AI-driven decision making.

→ **Learn more:**  
**AI Use Case Prism for B2B Sales infographic**

# Rockwell Automation accelerates sales data literacy

Rockwell Automation found that sales teams were using the same terms to describe different metrics and data sources, leading to confusion among leaders who didn't feel confident relying on the data to compare teams and make decisions.

## Action

To address low data literacy rates and misaligned data interpretations, Rockwell Automation systematically investigated where and how data misalignment was occurring and created new standardized data definitions that allowed data to be consistently interpreted and applied.

## Commercial Impact

- Adoption of standardized data definitions led to a dramatic drop in the number of sales reports generated — from 200 to 10
- That reduction freed up resources and enables more accurate and timely decision making at all levels of the organization

## Standardization as best practice for data and analytics

Example: Rockwell standardized the definition of “bookings”

**Original definition: The value of a contract with a prospective customer over a period of time**

**Problem: Nonstandard use of contract value, terms and calculation**

### Actions: Clarify and reconcile key components of definition

- 1 Specify unit of booking value
- 2 Include modifier to describe “contracts”
- 3 Include qualifying criteria for “contracts”
- 4 Include formula for calculations

**Standardized definition: The dollar value of won, signed or committed contracts over a period of time where the purchase order has been received and approved.**

**Formula: New bookings + expansion bookings + renewal bookings + nonrecurring bookings - churn**

Source: Adapted From Rockwell Automation

# Strategic Roadmap Timeline for Accelerating Revenue Growth

Creating a low-effort buying experience is the surest path to accelerating revenue growth in today's B2B sales environment. CSOs can set their priorities and get started with these short-, medium- and long-term actions — and tailor the timeline depending on their organization's agility and appetite for change.

## Year 1

- (Re)map the customer buying journey.
- Assess sellers' current ability to build decision confidence.
- Conduct a "red team" information audit.
- Build a blueprint for a go-to-market strategy that reflects today's buying realities.
- Document where data shortfalls prevent AI-driven decision making.

### Drivers

- Understand the buying journey
- Identify gaps in customer engagement

## Year 2

- Consolidate data from commercial functions.
- Conduct joint strategic planning.
- Deploy buyer enablement and Sense Making.

### Drivers

- Build capabilities for AI

## Year 3

- Create horizontally aligned teams.
- Align digital and human channels.
- Integrate AI into seller workflow.

### Drivers

- Dynamic customer engagement
- AI-enhanced sales execution

## Year 4

Source: Gartner

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