About this benchmark

Stay ahead of the competition by using our Frontline Sales Manager Diagnostic to benchmark your sales managers’ ability to drive commercial success. Based on more than a decade of research, this diagnostic is newly updated to help organizations implement the findings of our latest research, “Re-Engineering the Frontline Leader’s Role: A CSO’s Guide to Maximizing Sales.”

The diagnostic measures your managers across a range of dimensions, including:

• Time spend across key managerial activities
• Skill and deal level coaching
• Organizational burden placed on the manager role
• Management fundamentals
• Perspective on tools, dashboards

The Frontline Sales Manager Diagnostic asks managers and sellers questions to assess the typical activities managers engage in.

This diagnostic:

• Comprises manager- and seller-facing surveys to evaluate overall sales manager effectiveness.
• Is designed to take less than 30 minutes to complete.
Diagnostic Overview
360-degree view of the manager role

- Gartner sales research on manager effectiveness
- Overview of manager effectiveness research over the past decade

Building Successful Sales Coaching Programs
We surveyed over 19,000 sellers across 131 companies to assess managers’ coaching effectiveness and high-performing skills.

Building Managers for a Return to Growth
We surveyed over 900 managers and over 5,200 sales reps to assess whether a manager is likely to exhibit certain attitudes, skills/behaviors, knowledge and activities.

Driving Sales Transformation
We surveyed over 2,000 sales reps across 32 companies on the sales environment, process, metrics, leadership communication, and measured these against sales performance and sales rep behavior.

A CSO’s Guide to Maximizing Sales Manager Impact
We surveyed over 300 managers on how they spend their time and the difficulties they face in their roles. In addition, we surveyed over 750 sellers on how they perceive their manager’s ability to support them in their day-to-day activities.
## The manager role: A big job, now more complicated

Trends adding complexity to the sales manager role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External trends</th>
<th>Internal trends</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> Increasingly large and diverse buying groups. Buying group size has increased by 106% since 2013 to 11 members.</td>
<td><strong>5.</strong> Greater internal coordination required. A 2.3x increase in size of sales team portfolio since 2013.</td>
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<td><strong>2.</strong> Complex, nonlinear buying processes. 96% of buyers revisit at least one buying job.</td>
<td><strong>6.</strong> More time navigating the organization. Managers spend on average 7 hours per week navigating internal resources.</td>
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<td><strong>3.</strong> Diminished customer access. Customers only spend 17% of their total buying time meeting with potential suppliers.</td>
<td><strong>7.</strong> Greater availability of data. Managers have an average of 4.2 unique dashboards.</td>
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<td><strong>4.</strong> Significantly increased volume of higher-quality information. 89% of customers say they encounter high-quality information during a purchase.</td>
<td><strong>8.</strong> Larger sales teams to manage. Average span of control has increased by 16% since 2013 to 7.5 sellers per manager.</td>
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</table>

Shifting the manager focus

High-performing vs. low-performing manager time spend focus

Illustrative

High-performing managers focus on scaling the business.

Source: Gartner
The burden tax

Change in quota attainment for managers, by level of burden

n = 111 sales managers
Source: 2020 Gartner Frontline Sales Manager Diagnostic
Note: Quota attainment scores were provided by participating organizations. Scores were centered around the 60th percentile when calculating average centered quota attainment.
Evaluating manager effectiveness

**B2B manager survey**

**Manager-reported perspective**
- Time spend on management activities
- Level of organizational burden placed on the managerial role
- Approach to coaching
- Effectiveness and value of reporting, tools and dashboards

**B2B seller survey**

**Seller-assessed manager effectiveness**
- Management fundamentals
- Overall coaching effectiveness and culture
- Coaching quality and time spend
- Manager deal- and skill-level coaching effectiveness

**Improve manager effectiveness**
- Focus manager time spend on the activities proven to drive commercial performance
- Compare seller and manager perceptions of coaching quality and effectiveness.
- Tailor training to address identified opportunities for manager skill improvement.
- Identify and address areas of manager burden that distract from and impact commercial performance.
On average, managers work 50 hours in a typical week across these groups of activities with an average team of 7 direct report sellers.
Sample report: Coaching session quality, seller-reported

A strong understanding of products and services and customers is pivotal for developing trust when conducting coaching sessions.

Sample company, n = 149
Overall benchmark, n = 22 companies

Sample report: Coaching session quality, seller-reported

A strong understanding of products and services and customers is pivotal for developing trust when conducting coaching sessions.

- My manager's coaching is balanced, providing both advice on improvement and recognition of my successes
- When appropriate, my manager is well prepared for coaching sessions with me
- My manager has a great deal of knowledge about our customers and the marketplace in which we compete
- My manager has a great deal of knowledge about our products and services

Legend
- Sample company
Benchmark reference
- 75th percentile
- Median
- 25th percentile

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## Benefits of participating

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Enhanced diagnostic</th>
<th>Vetted set of questions</th>
<th>Customized reporting</th>
<th>Action planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retain your longitudinal data and gain additional insight if you previously participated in our Frontline Sales Leader Diagnostic.</td>
<td>Utilize our curated list of questions to help you gain valuable insight on the drivers of manager effectiveness.</td>
<td>Receive a customized report with benchmarking to compare your managers against data-backed metrics. Explore your results on the Gartner Pulse platform to compare custom segments of your data (e.g., by business unit or geography).</td>
<td>Leverage Gartner research and advisory services to help develop an action plan based on your results.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What participants receive

• **Customized report.** A detailed picture of the state of frontline sales management at your organization, including benchmarking, to compare your managers against data-driven metrics for effectiveness.

• **Interactive results platform.** Explore your results on the Gartner Pulse platform to compare custom segments of your data (e.g., by business unit or geography).

• **Action planning.** Save time interpreting the report with our diagnostic result walk-through, and receive guidance from a member of our advisory team to determine the next steps.

• **Ongoing access.** Retain a historical perspective with repeat participation and monitor trends with updated benchmarking.
A timeline of participation

Step 1: Plan your deployment
- Determine the target launch date.
- Complete the intake survey.
- Provide segmentation requests if applicable.

Step 2: Distribute survey
- Communicate the survey to those participating.
- Keep the survey open between two to three weeks after launch, depending on your satisfaction with participation levels.

Step 3: Analyze results
- Use Gartner resources to build and implement an action plan.
- Receive ongoing support from your client partner and executive advisor.
Want to learn more?

Visit gartner.com/en/become-a-client to learn how to become a client and participate in this assessment.