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The Chief Sales Officer is a quarterly publication for CSOs looking for the latest insight on leading and managing their sales functions. In this issue, we explore how CSOs can set their sales organizations up for success in 2020.

In the past year, executives have felt a common sentiment: uncertainty. In fact, the current growth cycle has crossed into record-setting territory, with some experts predicting a recession in the near future. Geopolitical and trade drama is straining long-held economic partnerships, and profitability forecasts are down. Disruptive technologies, changing customer dynamics and rapidly shifting economic conditions are all changes CSOs should anticipate across 2020. However, these uncertainties present a very unique opportunity for sales leaders. That is, the current environment is creating another moment in which winners and losers may be distinctly separated. That is why in this issue of The Chief Sales Officer, we focused on strategies to help you move ahead of your peers and succeed in 2020.

We cover this topic from a variety of perspectives, which include:

- **New research on the importance of customer confidence in driving high-quality deals (page 4)** — Nick Toman explores how the best sales executives are helping build the customer confidence that is crucial for selling in today’s increasingly complex buying environment.

- **Insight into CSO priorities in 2020 (page 12)** — We review the results of our 2019 Chief Sales Officer Agenda Poll, which explores the initiatives CSOs classify as being most critical to their organizations’ success in 2020.

- **A quiz to evaluate preparedness for economic uncertainty (page 20)** — Take this quiz to better understand how prepared your sales organization is for a potential economic downturn.

- **Strategies for maximizing impact in a new leadership role (page 24)** — We sit down with Tim Hardin, VP of sales and business development at Neon One, to discuss his unconventional path into sales and his strategy for maximizing his impact in a new leadership role.

- **A deep dive into territory planning effectiveness (page 24)** — Learn why territory plans are so important and how you can keep sellers accountable for using them.

- **Your guide to winning in times of economic uncertainty (page 32)** — Understand the strategies and tactics that will separate winners and losers in the current economic environment.

Our Winning in the Turns research found that, in times of uncertainty such as this, winners exhibit discipline and confidence even as pressure mounts. While uncertainty seems to be the only thing guaranteed 2020, we hope this collection of insights, strategies and guidance affords you the confidence you need to succeed throughout the year.

Enjoy!

Alex Boyd
Why Decision Confidence Should Be Front and Center of Your Sales Strategy

Building customer confidence closes high-quality, low-regret deals

by Nick Toman
A remarkably human story rests at the center of today's purchase. Specifically, this comes in the form of customer decision confidence. Rarely do sales teams, let alone sales leaders, reflect on how customers feel about their purchase decision. However, our research continues to highlight the tremendous economic impact improved confidence has on winning substantive deals. Yet most sales organizations’ actions are unwittingly leaving customers with more anxiety than confidence.

Previous research we conducted on B2B customer buying behavior has repeatedly shown us customers currently feel awash in too much information. This means customers are subjected to navigating a maze riddled with options, choices and noise. However, a more recent twist highlights a new phenomenon: Customers are not simply awash in information, but substantive, evidence-based and highly credible information from suppliers and other third parties. Improvements in data and analytics, content thought leadership and sales messaging have resulted in a high-quality information arms race that governs the B2B purchase. Indeed, nearly half of B2B customers in our recent survey felt overwhelmed by good, credible information, which had real consequences on their decisions. Implications exist for both current customers from an account growth standpoint and for large solution sales in general.

**Customer Confidence: The Missing Link to Consistent Account Growth**

A recent examination of how to most effectively drive consistent, high-quality account growth revealed customer confidence as the key. It’s easy to assume current customers have inherent trust and confidence in their incumbent supplier, but what this research highlighted is that decision confidence matters just as much in account growth decisions as a new business scenario.

Our analysis of 1,100 existing B2B customers provided a detailed understanding of what drove continuing or expanding customer relationships with an existing supplier. We tested a series of customer perceptions about a given purchase and the related supplier.

Through a factor analysis, the research highlighted three overarching perceptions and the impact of those perceptions on account growth:

- **Customer satisfaction with an incumbent supplier**, which consisted of overall satisfaction with a supplier, belief that the supplier is better than the competition and likelihood to recommend the supplier.
- **Motivation to change**, which consisted of belief that opportunities to improve the business existed, that making a purchase was required and an urgency to make a purchase quickly.
- **Decision confidence**, which consisted of a belief that the right questions had been asked, the best information had been identified, likely changes had been anticipated and a general sense of confidence about the choice.

Perhaps the most interesting finding from this analysis is what did not drive account growth. This research found no relationship between customer satisfaction with an existing supplier, nor the customer’s motivation to change, as a significant predictor of account growth. Instead, the research found a remarkably strong relationship between customer decision confidence and ultimate account growth (see Figure 1).

We’ve long studied the strained relationship between customer satisfaction and ultimate account growth, and this inconclusive relationship continues to endure. Customer satisfaction is a reasonable predictor of customer attrition, but little more. We also know the vast majority of customers are already satisfied with their current suppliers. Speaking from an account growth standpoint, little gains are to be made from further satisfying customers. As for account growth, this raises an important distinction: A simple repurchase is quite different from embarking on some form of organizational change. This change required to purchase something new, incremental or different often requires new capabilities, different processes, new sets of stakeholders and unanticipated complexity. According to our 2019 Account Growth Buyer Survey, B2B customers are 70% more likely to claim a growth purchase requires significant organizational change compared to a repurchase decision.

The natural thinking is to shift from making customers happier with what’s been done in the past, to instead motivating them to change. By turning the conversation toward what the future can hold, the possibilities of new, expanded solutions on the customer’s business can be made apparent. But our research shows while motivation for change is likely a precursor to account growth, it by no means is sufficient. Indeed, customers may be motivated but unable to change. Nearly 70% of B2B customers feel overloaded with organizational complexity, facing roadblocks such as unclear decision making and conflicting priorities.

**Figure 1: Impact on Likelihood of a High-Quality Account Growth Purchase**

Among Buyers Considering a Growth Decision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on Likelihood of a High-Quality Account Growth Purchase</th>
<th>Customer Satisfaction</th>
<th>Motivation to Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall satisfaction</strong></td>
<td>Confident than competitors</td>
<td>Clear understanding of why we need to make this purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to change business practices</td>
<td>Eagerness to complete purchase quickly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Likelihood to recommend</strong></td>
<td>Decision Confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confidence that we anticipated necessary changes</strong></td>
<td>Decision Confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confidence that we determined the right questions to consider</strong></td>
<td>Decision Confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confidence that we are making the right choice</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 271 B2B customers

* A high-quality account growth purchase is defined as either purchasing a high-end, premium offering or not settling for a less ambitious offering. It also means the purchase has met expectations. A logistic regression model controls for type of growth decision, type of product or service, cost of switching to a different supplier, degree of organizational complexity, industry and region.
Incumbent suppliers have to overcome organizational inertia and move customers from motivation to action while simultaneously ensuring customers don’t get swept up in the momentum to do something different and decide to change suppliers. Our research suggests improving customers’ decision confidence is critical to both. Doing so ensures customers are not only motivated and able to change but also more likely to do so with you (see Figure 2).

Wanted: Sales Professionals That Make Customers Confident

A separate analysis, which we’ve previously detailed in the 3Q 2019 issue of The Chief Sales Officer, found that customers who felt confident in the information on which they based their decision, as well as those who felt little skepticism toward any claims made by sales reps, ultimately made bigger and bolder purchase decisions (see Figure 3).

Knowing this, we set out to better understand how customers perceive today’s sales reps, specifically in terms of providing information and necessary details. In another survey, we asked B2B customers to reflect on their experiences with winning and losing supplier sales reps and were able to isolate three distinctive information-sharing approaches: giving, telling and Sense Making.

Sellers who embrace a “Giving” approach are characterized by a responsive posture, providing comprehensive information and operating under the assumption that more is better. Sellers who embrace a “Telling” approach overtly share their opinions, stories and anecdotes. They are very forward with providing information, taking on a more aggressive sharing posture.

Figure 2: “When Addressing a New Business Need, We Are Just as Likely to Select a New Supplier as an Existing Supplier”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 1,100 B2B customers
Source: 2019 Gartner Account Growth Buyer Survey
Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Figure 3: Impact on Closing a High-Quality*, Low-Regret† Deal

Logistic Regression

170% 0% -170% -164% 157%

Customer Confidence in Information

Customer Skepticism of Seller

• Determining the right questions to consider for ourselves and ask suppliers
• Identifying which information mattered most
• Identifying consistent patterns or themes in the information we encountered during the purchase

n = 1,174 B2B customers
Source: 2019 Gartner Buyer Survey

* “High-quality sale” is defined as the customer 1) did not settle for a less ambitious solution or 2) purchased a premium offering relative to the base offering.
† “Regret” is defined as: “The offering we ultimately purchased is failing (or failed) to meet our expectations.”
The Sense Making approach, in contrast, carefully guides customers toward a simpler, rationalized view. Their posture is to simply make sense of purchase complexities and competing views in the market. The Sense Making approach engenders greater customer confidence, reduces customer skepticism, and most importantly, yields far greater likelihood of the customer making a bold, premium purchase from a supplier (see Figure 4).

**The CSO Mandate: Activating Customer Confidence**

When B2B commercial leaders recalibrate their organization from “helping customers buy” to “helping customers change,” the entire customer life cycle becomes an opportunity for confidence creation as customers move from one change journey to the next.

Through ongoing analysis, we have found supplier tactics for boosting customers’ decision confidence. These recommendations are predominantly viewed as organizational capabilities — and not exclusively a sales skill or trait. They include mapping the customer buying journey, aligning buyer enablement at key decision points, arming sales managers to train and coach their teams to these critical decision points and relying on a Sense Making sales approach.

To best understand how to drive decision confidence, it’s critical to first assess where customers most struggle with buying decisions. Mapping the buyer journey is crucial; however, many organizations attempt to create a linear, lock-step process to depict the buying journey. Simply put, this does not reflect reality and inherently will overlook some of the most challenging moments.

These moments include decision setbacks, rescoping of the issue and new stakeholders entering the picture, among other moments. Our team can advise on how to best model a buying journey more reflective of customer reality.

Creating and aligning buyer enablement against the buying journey comes next. Buyer enablement effectively takes the guidance and best practices a sales organization uses internally to help sales teams drive deals forward, and instead repurposes this content for direct customer usage. This enablement can take the form of decision tools, interactive models, requirements builders, scorecards and ready-made presentations. Integration support is a more specific variant of buyer enablement, intended to help integrate a product or service better into a customer’s workflow.

For those familiar with customer success roles, there is an important difference between integration support and customer success best practices: Integration support helps the customer effectively plan the integration and change management ahead of the purchase. This is not meant to drive effective product usage postpurchase. In this regard, however, many customer success best practices can be repurposed to build customer confidence in advance of the purchase.

Deploying a successful Sense Making sales approach requires seller training and arming sellers with an ecosystem of buyer enablement. It also requires evolving opportunity plans, account plans and deal coaching to hypothesize and address likely points of customer skepticism and indecision. The key to successfully embracing a Sense Making sales approach is helping sales teams remain vigilant of — and highly empathetic to — the issues that harm customer confidence.

Improving customer confidence in this era of high-quality, but often confusing, information is among the most important actions today’s CSOs should drive into their organizations. It is critical to helping customers make bold, decisive purchases and establishing healthy, continually growing accounts. Decision confidence works because it builds a bridge from status quo to change, helping customers feel capable of overcoming challenges as they believe in themselves, their logic, their process and their decision-making skills.

* Sense Making
* Telling
* Giving

**Figure 4: Percentage of Sellers Closing a High-Quality*, Low-Regret* Deal By Seller Approach**

*High-quality sale* is defined as the customer 1) did not settle for a less ambitious solution or 2) purchased a premium offering relative to the base offering.

*Regret* is defined as: “The offering we ultimately purchased is failing (or failed) to meet our expectations.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seller Approach</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense Making</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 1,174 B2B customers  
Source: 2019 Gartner Buyer Survey
CSOs’ Top Priorities for 2020

by Alex Boyd
To effectively understand the priorities CSOs have for the coming year, it is important to take a step back and consider the things that are top of mind for their CEOs. Our 2019 CEO and Senior Business Executive Survey revealed that, while growth is nearly always the topmost concern of CEOs, the pressures shaping CEOs’ growth expectations are indeed changing. To this end, we identified three key CEO pressures:

1. **Improving margins** — Our survey found CEOs are focusing more on profitability improvement than other financial management issues. Seven out of 10 companies we have surveyed are working on enterprise-wide cost management programs.

2. **Stakeholder expectations** — Almost half of CEOs we surveyed reported that activist investor positions have impacted their strategic thinking. Be it navigating vocal shareholders or ensuring disconnects with the board lead to productive discussions, CEOs are feeling the pressure of stakeholder expectations.

3. **Adapting to survive and thrive** — Eighty-six percent of CEOs we surveyed expected their business model to be either “somewhat different” or “very different” by 2021.

These changing pressures present risks for CSOs because they indicate that CEOs’ demands of their sales organizations are likely to change as well. To better understand how CSOs are responding, we gathered top CSOs from a range of industries and organizational sizes to discuss a variety of issues and poll them about their priorities. The results of this effort reveal how CSOs plan to focus their time and budget to deliver on their CSOs’ expectations.

Our research found that the initiatives CSOs plan to focus on in 2020 largely fell into three themes (see Figure 1):

1. Sales manager effectiveness
2. Prospecting and early pipeline activities
3. Account growth Sales Manager Effectiveness

**Figure 1: Three Emerging Themes in CSO Priorities**

- Improving Sales Manager Effectiveness: 43%
- Improving Effectiveness of Sales Development Activities: 34%
- Improving Early Pipeline and Lead Management: 32%
- Improving Key Account Management: 26%
- Improving Account Planning and Management: 26%

n = 47 sales leaders

Source: 2019 Gartner Chief Sales Officer Agenda Poll

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2. Prospecting and early pipeline activities
3. Account growth Sales Manager Effectiveness

**Figure 2: A Framework for Sales Manager Success**

- **Manager Success**
  - **Sales Innovation**
  - **Engagement and Performance**
  - **Talent Attraction and Retention**

**Sales Manager Effectiveness**

**Bad Managers Can’t Hide in a Competitive Labor Market**

Recent economic prosperity has seen revenue and customers growing faster than sales budgets, which has confronted sales managers with new challenges. For CSOs, these challenges have become hard to ignore.

With unemployment rates below 4% in the U.S. and U.K. and 100,000 B2B sales rep job postings in the U.S. alone, sellers simply don’t need to tolerate bad managers right now. In fact, our Global Labor Market Survey, which is our quarterly pulse on sellers worldwide, found two of the top three reasons why sellers quit are related to their managers’ performance.

Progressive CSOs are making it increasingly clear they will not tolerate mediocre management, and they are working to create managers who attract talent rather than repel it.

Our research shows all sales managers need to have certain fundamentals. These include integrity, reliability, listening, project management and selling skills. While these are vitally important attributes, they are not distinguishing hallmarks of managerial excellence, but rather “table stakes” for managers.

To improve managers’ quality so they increase seller productivity, attraction and retention, our research over the last several years shows CSOs need to focus on a three-part framework (see Figure 2):

1. **Promoting seller judgment** — Effective managers build a team culture that empowers sellers to make their own judgements and engage in participatory decision making.
2. **Increasing team innovation to close deals** — Managers must inspire and display innovation at the deal level. This means going beyond a standard deal inspection review to improve sellers’ ability to become more creative in troubleshooting deals.
3. **Providing meaningful, actionable coaching** — Manager coaching efforts should support efforts to promote judgment and innovation and prioritize the activities that have the highest impact on deal outcomes.
Prospecting and Early Pipeline Activities

Sales Teams Reject 55% of Marketing-Qualified Leads

In today’s cost-conscious environment, CSOs simply cannot afford to let organizational resources go to waste. However, this is precisely what happens as sellers reject more than half of the marketing-qualified leads provided to them. Even when CSOs don’t control marketing resources, they are increasingly concerned about how these resources are being used within the sales organization.

Recent major customer changes — such as the rise of more informed customers who engage suppliers later in the purchase process, coupled with the prevalence of large buying groups and increasing consensus requirements — are blurring traditional lines between sales and marketing. While in the past there was a clear transition from marketing to sales, today the two functions must partner closely during the entire customer purchase journey with a parallel rather than serial commercial engine to effectively close sales.

Our research has found the solution lies in rethinking transparency. Sales organizations must work with marketing to align on what type of transparency around leads is and is not helpful. Instead of simply knowing why a lead is sales ready, there must be a clear understanding of what the lead is ready for.

To accomplish this, sales leaders must work with their marketing partners to use a series of filters to identify high-quality leads over time. Our research finds these filters should be focused on identifying leads with emerging demand potential, meaning those customers whose needs are not fully understood or agreed upon. While traditional BANT criteria provides a baseline understanding of opportunity’s value, to really empower sellers, this must be supplemented with progressive criteria to identify not only high-quality leads but also strong candidates for long-term partnership. Opportunities that meet the criteria outlined in Figure 3 are more likely to convert — and convert at higher margins — because the customer is more focused on the size of the problem or opportunity than on the price of the supplier solution.

Account Growth

Service Doesn’t Drive Growth

Virtually every head of sales today has told us the same thing: As their organizations have built an increasingly broad portfolio of solutions and services, a crucial part of their growth going forward hinges on convincing existing customers to buy far more of that broader offering than they have in the past. Account growth is critical, and CSOs are determined to develop new strategies to move this needle further.

With this in mind, we have conducted a wide variety of account growth research in recent years. Perhaps our most important finding is this: While high levels of customer service increase the likelihood of customer retention, they do not drive growth (see Figure 4).

To better understand this, consider that, from a customer perspective, account growth is actually about doing something different than what they’ve done in the past, requiring a new decision altogether. So what actions can suppliers take to actually convince customers to change their behavior and buy more? Our research found one key driver of account growth that vastly outperformed the others: decision confidence. Defined as customers’ belief and feeling of affirmation that the buying group is exercising sound judgment, it increases the likelihood of a high-quality account growth decision by 2.6 times.

To boost decision confidence, we identified three especially effective supplier tactics:
- Integration support — Advice and tools for integrating a product or service into the customer organization’s workflows
- Buyer enablement — Information that helps buyers complete critical buying jobs and advance their purchasing process
- Customer improvement and affirmation — Proactive, ongoing guidance to help customers identify and pursue their goals

Uncertainty and Opportunities

With uncertainty looming large, CSOs who move into 2020 with a clear understanding of the pressures their CEOs face will be better positioned to adapt their sales organizations for success. Beyond understanding the common CEO priorities we have outlined here, it is important for individual CSOs to have clear and data-backed priorities for their own organization.

To help chart a clear course on these priorities, the Gartner Sales Score diagnostic helps CSOs and their direct reports measure organizational effectiveness and maturity in a variety of core objectives and identify next steps for improvement. This service — included with many Gartner products — can help you understand how well your organization is currently performing and recommend guidance and tools to efficiently address any maturity gaps.
Measure, prioritize and improve your sales function’s capabilities

### Account Management & Growth
1. **Account Planning**
   - We provide sellers with a standardized account planning approach used to assess both short and long-term account growth plans. This approach drives a proactive focus on known and emerging customer needs and incorporates information from beyond the core account team (e.g., operational, support, services).

2. **Key Account Planning**
   - We have a key account program to ensure the development and retention of customers critical to our organization’s growth. We strategically tier key accounts, ensuring that customers receive service commensurate with their importance to both short- and long-term company objectives. We also regularly up- and down-tier accounts.

3. **Sales Development & Execution**
   - We provide guidance and support — in the form of processes, training and enablement resources — on sales development activities (i.e., prospecting, opportunity qualification, deal pursuit).

### New Customer Acquisition
4. **Early Pipeline & Lead Management**
   - We ensure a healthy sales pipeline by partnering with marketing to establish a common definition of a high-quality lead. We also track relevant pipeline metrics and conduct periodic pipeline review meetings.

5. **Sales Support, Tools, & Technology**
   - We build enablement tools and resources around end-user needs aimed at reducing seller burden and driving productivity. These tools are often embedded in seller’s workflows and organized around the customer buying journey.

### Sales Effectiveness & Enablement
6. **Commercial Messaging**
   - We provide sellers with standardized commercial messages and talking points that highlight the company’s differentiators and ultimately lead back to us as the supplier.

7. **Managing the Sales Operations Function**
   - Our sales operations team is positioned as a value-added function that is responsible for leading initiatives and driving innovations that create sales success and strategic advantage for the sales organization.

### Sales Talent Management
8. **Sales Analytics & Intelligence**
   - We actively capture essential customer and account data and quantitatively analyze it to understand past results, model possible future outcomes and make actionable, insight-driven decisions.

9. **Sales Process Design & Management**
   - Our sales process is extensively aligned to the customer buying journey and ultimately helps managers coach sellers, provides an ecosystem for sales enablement and drives the sales forecasting process.

10. **Compensation Design & Management**
    - We design, launch and govern sales incentives in a way that rewards sellers for outcomes that drive sales strategy and enhances seller trust through stability and transparent expectations.

11. **CRM/SFA Management**
    - We ensure enterprise-wide system value by balancing ease of use with high-quality data and reporting (for leaders and sellers alike). This includes enabling a business-level view of the customer, execution of business processes, and reporting that supports seller guidance, pipeline health and forecasting.

### Sales Strategy & Design
12. **Strategic Planning and Sales Transformation**
    - We have a clear timeline and systematic process for strategic planning and proactively identify business goals by surfacing, root cause and prioritizing organizational gaps.

13. **Sales Force Design**
    - We have a strategic, data-driven process — informed by customer buying behavior as well as market and organizational changes — for determining sales coverage, role design, sales force size and territory design.

14. **Indirect Channel Management**
    - We provide support to channel partners in taking the company’s products and solutions to market (e.g., product updates, collateral, voice of the channel). We also provide tiered incentive programs as well as exclusive arrangements with key partners, such as private label, OEM, etc.

15. **Talent Acquisition**
    - The recruiting and hiring process is governed by specific sales competencies that align with how the organization wants to go to market. These competencies are informed by skills, behaviors and mindsets of high-performing sellers.

16. **Onboarding**
    - Our onboarding program goes beyond teaching sellers day-to-day workflows to having them demonstrate key skills and behaviors in structured, experiential settings. We also set clear and verifiable performance expectations at key onboarding milestones.

17. **Sales Training**
    - Our training program upsells sellers on critical sales skills in addition to product/technical knowledge. Training is incorporated into sellers’ workflows to maximize safe, experiential learning opportunities. We have formal certification programs to ensure seller proficiency in required competencies.

18. **Talent Engagement & Retention**
    - We actively monitor seller satisfaction by employing a variety of methods, including employee engagement and job satisfaction surveys. We use this information to design a clear and widely accepted employee value proposition (EVP) that taps into the key drivers of engagement and attraction.

19. **Sales Manager Effectiveness**
    - Our frontline sales manager invest significant time on skill-building and coaching. They also encourage team collaboration, leveraging the collective strengths of their sellers to drive sales creativity and innovation.

20. **Coaching**
    - We facilitate ongoing, dynamic and job-embedded coaching interactions between sales managers and their direct reports designed to diagnose and correct or reinforce behaviors specific to that individual.

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**On the scale of nascent to master, where does your sales organization stand?**

The Gartner Sales Score self-assessment tool and report help you evaluate your sales organization’s maturity. With an accurate look at performance gaps between where you are today and where you want to go tomorrow, you can:

- See how you measure up across six objectives and 20 discrete functional activities
- Identify sales strengths and weaknesses
- Build a fact-based case for resource investment and cross-functional planning
- Define specific initiatives, across sales disciplines, to reach the next level of maturity

For more information, contact us at salesleaders@gartner.com.

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Source: Gartner © 2019 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved. CM_I_792129
How prepared is your sales organization for a potential economic downturn? Score your organization based on your progress against the downturn preparation activities below, then add up the total to assess your preparedness.

**Customer-Based Planning**
- Have explicit conversations with a representative sample of your customer base to understand their current cost projections, likely areas of budget impact and impact on you as a supplier.
- Discuss with customers any unique opportunities that a recession or budget compression in their businesses may create to help you provide better or different value.
- Plan a program for early renewal or wallet-retention initiatives/campaigns to secure 2020 or 2021 contracts or spend in advance of economic headwinds.
- Establish a customer communication plan, acknowledging your likely budget, supply chain or other impacts that could affect customers, as well as reinforcing your value as a partner.
- Establish a contingency plan with a set of prioritized areas to reduce spend in the event your sales organization faces a budget cut.
- Evaluate and agree on a set of "must protect" longer-term investments through any period of budget pressure.
- Assess business continuity impacts and ways to minimize those impacts in the event of reducing technology or other external operating expense.
- Partner with finance to assess the need (or potential timing) of having the sales force or other channels support accounts receivable.

**Budget and Cost Optimization Planning**
- Establish a contingency plan with a set of prioritized areas to reduce spend in the event your sales organization faces a budget cut.
- Evaluate and agree on a set of "must protect" longer-term investments through any period of budget pressure.
- Assess business continuity impacts and ways to minimize those impacts in the event of reducing technology or other external operating expense.
- Partner with finance to assess the need (or potential timing) of having the sales force or other channels support accounts receivable.

**Talent Planning**
- Establish a focused strategy with HR and recruiting to lure top sales talent and leadership away from competitors during a recession.
- Partner with HR to drive heightened performance management ahead of a downturn, allowing these roles to be filled more rapidly as markets improve (versus a reduction in force).
- Capture best practices and sales approaches that yielded results in the last downturn, and develop training or other enablement to quickly reprise those behaviors, skills and processes.

**Quota, Coverage and Territory Planning**
- Explore the impact and implications of quota-relief programs should the economy impact your sales teams.
- Determine how you will handle uncovered territory, particularly for high-priority prospects and existing accounts, in the event of a reduction in sales force.
- Incorporate lower-cost sales channels into your forward planning, such as SDR/BDR and inside/virtual sales, to reduce and reinvest sales expense without material coverage or revenue loss.
- Assess account down-tiering opportunities to reduce sales expense with minimum revenue impact.

**Value-Prop and Positioning Planning**
- Partner with marketing to distil your economic advantages (relative to your competitors) in a recession cycle.
- Develop a plan to quickly disseminate those talking points, and supporting collateral, well ahead of competitors.
- Quantify and reinforce the economic upside of your solutions, as well as the costs of a customer leaving for another supplier/provider, during a recession.

**CSO Economic Headwinds Readiness Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Getting Started (18 points-42 points)</th>
<th>Making Progress (43 points-67 points)</th>
<th>Ahead of the Game (68 points-90 points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time to get started! Resist the urge to slash costs frantically as short-sighted decisions focused on securing quick savings often erode longer-term sustainability. Instead, consider taking Gartner’s Sales Operations Benchmarking Survey, which compares your organization’s cost of sales, budget, spend, head count and more to those of your peers.</td>
<td>Keep the momentum. Take steps to position your sales organization to take advantage of the opportunities that economic uncertainty and a downturn can create. Utilize Gartner’s Winning in the Turns research (included in this issue), along with our other downturn preparation resources, to learn more about how to succeed in changing times.</td>
<td>Don’t stop now! Keep working to identify ways to make your sales organization more efficient and agile. Many of the changes made to prepare for a potential downturn will also serve your sales organization well in more favorable economic climates. Get in touch with Gartner to learn more.</td>
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Source: Gartner
Disruption on many fronts has made widespread and multidimensional uncertainty the new normal. Progressive business leaders do more than just survive. They thrive.

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**Reengineering the Frontline Leader’s Role**
A CSO’s Guide to Maximizing Sales Performance

Despite deploying more technology, tools and data, sales executives are struggling to see improvements in seller performance and are placing more pressure on managers to translate these investments into results through coaching. However, sales managers already have endless responsibilities and are stuck in reactive problem solving. Recognizing this challenge, chief sales officers (CSOs) say improving manager effectiveness is their No. 1 priority in 2020. Leading CSOs are asking, “What should I be doing differently to focus my frontline sales managers?”

Attend this meeting with your peers to learn how to increase frontline sales leaders’ ability to improve seller performance. We will discuss:
- How the manager role evolved in light of increased internal and external complexities
- How to shift managers’ focus to the activities that deliver the most value to the frontline
- How to create an environment that increases manager effectiveness
- How to build a pipeline of high-performing manager talent

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- 17 September | Atlanta, GA
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Lessons in Sales Leadership

An Interview With Neon One’s Tim Hardin

by Brent Adamson

Each month, Brent Adamson interviews CSOs on our Lessons in Sales Leadership podcast. He recently spoke with Tim Hardin, VP of sales and business development at Neon One, about his unconventional path into sales and his strategy for maximizing impact in a new leadership role.

Tim Hardin serves as the VP of sales and business development at Neon One, a company founded with the mission of becoming the most comprehensive and authentic technology ecosystem for nonprofits. Prior to his work at Neon One, Tim served as SVP and managing director for Solera Holdings, served for 20 years with CDK Global and led both operations and product organizations for ADP Dealer Services.

How did you initially get into sales?
It was actually a long journey into sales. I went to school in Virginia at the University of Richmond until I realized I wasn’t going to make a living playing sports and then transferred back to Arkansas Tech University to finish up my undergraduate degree. When I came out of undergraduate, I had enough sociology background that the Department of Human Services in Polk County, Arkansas hired me for a social worker position.

And from there you went on to various global heads of sales roles?
The years in social work had a dramatic impact on me as a person. A caseload of 350 families in rural Arkansas is certainly going to teach you a number of lessons about the fine line between one side of the desk and the other in life. It effectively gave me a master’s degree in human nature and the psychology of why people do what they do. After a couple of years in social work, Axiom Corporation, which was a technology company located in Arkansas, came to recruit at the college where I had done my undergraduate work. So I went to work for Axiom first in an operations role for seven years before moving onto the strategic planning team. Axiom doubled in size while I was there, which afforded me an opportunity to grow into a senior leadership position at an early point in my career. So I moved into the strategic planning team and ultimately was put into a national accounts role about six years in operations.

So your first experience in sales wasn’t banging the phones as an inside sales rep. It seems like you had a very drastic transition into sales.
It was very interesting because at that age and that point in my career, I was moved into a role where I was essentially operating at the C-level within the organization and was expected to carry the water from an overall value-add perspective in those meetings.

Do you feel like your background in operations and social work prepared you for these sales roles?
I feel like my background in social work has equipped me to see different things that most people don’t look for. It helped me come into the role with a mission to personalize the buying experience for every one of our customers. So I think the background in social work really gave me some additional tools to understand why people make the decisions they do.

There is a tendency in sales to think a lot about customers as “stakeholders.” But what you’re talking about is not customers as stakeholders, but rather customers as human beings, right?
What I’ve taken away from the work we’ve done with Gartner over the past few years is that there is a difference between being empathetic and having good bedside manner. You don’t go to the doctor just to be asked, “Tell me where it hurts.” You go to the doctor for them to say, “I get it. I know that hurts. Let me tell you three things you can do that can take away this pain.” So I think there’s very much a human and emotional part of this buying process, but on the other hand, we have to have the prescription that we can hand to somebody and say, “Go take three of these, and then call me tomorrow.” And we need to have a really high level of confidence that it is going to feel better.

Most people think that when they leave a big global head of sales role, like you did at CDK Global, their next job should be a bigger role at a bigger company. In your case, your next job was a smaller job. That was a very intentional decision, wasn’t it?
That’s right. I thought I had some muscles that may have atrophied as I had been in a policy-setting role for a good part of my career. I thought it would be really good for me — from a marketability perspective and for my own skill set — to challenge myself to get back in the gym and take on a smaller role. Chris Jones, at PROS at the time, was kind enough to bring me on board. It was a year or so of really tough challenges moving from policy back into the day-to-day operations of a sales team. I think that equipped me in a couple of areas that were critical to making sure I hadn’t lost touch with what happens at the field level.
There’s a sort of predetermined path you’re on as a sales leader, but you purposefully chose to scale back. I imagine that had to be a bit of a hard choice.

Absolutely. There were clearly times of reflection. It can be humbling when you were the person making all the calls, and then you find yourself sitting down with your boss and he’s saying, “Well, I don’t think that went well. What are some things we can do better?” And it was a good reminder. I think if you want to grow as a leader, you have to be willing to put yourself in these kinds of positions because ultimately, they end up being better for you and for the people around you, and ultimately for the teams you lead in the future. I wouldn’t trade that experience for anything.

So you’ve now transitioned over the last several years across a number of different organizations. My sense is you’ve managed to realign organizations pretty quickly and you’ve been very successful at it. What allows you to have that kind of impact so quickly?

When I come into an organization, the first thing I do is listen and absorb. You have to give respect for the culture they’ve already created even though you may end up disrupting it in some areas. I listen for culture and find the rhythm of the business, then focus on finding one or two things I’m going to make progress on. There’s a specific reason for that. People gravitate toward progress. So I really try to focus the lens on finding one or two things within that first hundred days that I can turn around in the organization and say, “Look how much progress we’ve made.” When people see progress, they’ll follow.

Where do you want to be five years from now?

I continue to long for those big, sweeping leadership challenges. I’d say that five years from now, I hope to be leading at this level or higher within an organization. But I’m going to be very mindful about what I do because ultimately I want it to have a culture I believe in. I’m very focused on the cultures of organizations and the way they inspire their employees. I also tend to look for experiences. For me, as I’ve gone on in my career and understood myself better, I’m more likely to pursue an experience where I can have a significant impact rather than have a broader set of responsibilities. That just doesn’t matter as much to me.
Improve Territory Planning With Sales Analytics and Activity Tracking

by Steve Rietberg

Territory planning is a recurring exercise where sellers identify which accounts to prioritize and which types of activities to execute within their territories. The discipline with which managers and sellers conduct the territory planning process is key to their success, and sales operations plays a pivotal role in that process. When prepared correctly, a territory plan increases sellers’ effectiveness and productivity by allocating sales resources to the accounts that offer the best long-term return on investment. A comprehensive territory plan also prescribes what types of sales activities will be executed during the period. But when sellers lack the data and insight necessary for preparing a territory plan, they are less motivated and less able to plan the appropriate activities with the right accounts.

The territory plan is not a static document. Sellers and managers agree on an initial plan and then continually monitor execution and outcomes to maximize the territory’s performance as demonstrated in the territory planning cycle (see Figure 1). Chief sales officers (CSOs) must leverage sales operations to provide data and insight to enable the initial planning step, as well as the subsequent monitoring and adjustments.

Tracking the execution of territory plans requires that the CRM system be configured to distinguish activities that support territory plans so that real-time reporting is possible. If sales operations fails to provide visibility into plan execution, managers are unable to monitor their sellers’ actions and link them to outcomes. This makes course corrections to the territory plan difficult. Of course, CSOs can’t oblige sales operations to build territory plans on the sellers’ behalf. Instead, they must be sensitive to the burden that internal processes place on their sellers and managers. If sellers and managers can’t balance territory planning and tracking with the remainder of their daily activities, they will struggle to participate. Sales organizations can overcome this challenge through CRM enhancements and sales analytics.

CSOs can partner with sales operations leaders to instill more value into the territory planning process by:

- Providing sellers with comprehensive data for the planning process
- Automating the delivery of real-time reporting to enable effective territory reviews
- Making high-impact activity tracking more efficient in CRM

Figure 1: Territory Planning Cycle

Sales operations provides underlying data.

Source: Gartner
Provide Sellers and Managers With Comprehensive and Recurring Territory Data Analyses

Managing a territory that includes multiple accounts at many different points in the buyer’s journey — and multiple prospects with varying potential for new revenue — can be a daunting exercise. By providing essential data analyses, CSOs can leverage sales operations to facilitate the process and increase seller effectiveness.

Figure 2: Territory Planning Input Data and Analyses

Initiate the Territory Planning Cycle With “Push” Reporting

Sellers must create a formal plan to specify where they will invest their time and effort in the coming period. They must detail which accounts to prioritize, which activities to execute, which partners to engage and which campaigns or programs to utilize.

Sellers require data to make fact-based decisions along those lines, and sales operations contributes to the success of each territory by supplying this data. Sellers need a spectrum of data covering all accounts in a territory, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Diagnostic Analyses should provide the following insights at the territory level for seller review:

- What is the revenue trend by type (new, add-on, renewal), by customer segment and by line of business or product? Are there key market or competitive events that coincide with inflections in these trends?
- How have the initial pipeline and pipeline creation changed over time? Are there changes in the sales process or methodology that have impacted this trend?
- Are customer satisfaction scores increasing or decreasing, and is there a correlation with renewal rates?
- What is the trend in win rate by customer segment, product group or competitor? What deal characteristics can be associated with higher win rates?
- Do pipeline metrics indicate that certain sales activities improve the odds of deal success?
- Predictive analyses should provide additional insight, again at the territory level:
  - What is the projected revenue by type (new, add-on, renewal), by customer segment and by line of business or product?
  - Is this projection based only on historic trends, or are other factors — current productivity improvement efforts, for example — influencing the results?

Based on typical pipeline conversion, what is the minimum pipeline needed at any point in the selling cycle to achieve revenue targets?

Support the Territory Planning Cycle With “Pull” Reporting

The territory plan is a living document. Sellers and managers track activities and monitor deal progress, making course corrections based on each territory’s performance. Without current, relevant data, sellers and managers must rely on anecdotes and isolated data points to make decisions for the territory. Sales organizations can overcome this challenge by providing sellers and managers real-time access to territory performance data.

Technology can help sales organizations improve its automation. Modern sales systems and business intelligence platforms provide online and offline access to predefined reports.

Guidance on how to assess current capabilities and build a technology roadmap is available within Gartner’s “Ignition Guide to Building a Technology Roadmap for Sales.”

Define High-Impact Activities and Enable CRM/SFA Tracking

The territory planning cycle requires demonstrating the impact of seller activities to sellers and managers. For this reason, activity tracking is critical to the success of territory planning.

To provide activity tracking that supports territory planning, CSOs must hold sales leaders responsible for reviewing data and agreeing on what activities best align with current strategic goals. Sales operations must, in turn, provide sellers with a mechanism to capture these “high-impact” activities as they are executed, and integrate this mechanism into the existing CRM/SFA solution for the sellers’ ease of use as they execute their territory plans.

Modern sales systems and business intelligence platforms provide online and offline access to predefined reports.

The definition of high-impact activities likely differs among sales roles. CSOs should lead sales operations to construct a matrix of high-impact activities by role to clarify definitions for sellers and managers. Sales leaders may also agree that standard targets for activity completion should be introduced to foster adoption within the sales force. Whether or not role-specific targets are set, sellers and managers must be provided with real-time reporting in their CRM system to quantify the adoption and outcomes of a high-impact activity program.

Enabling high-impact activity tracking in CRM will help incorporate insight based on activities and outcomes into the diagnostic and predictive analytics in support of the territory planning cycle.
Winning in the Turns: A CSO Action Guide
by Woojin Choi

During the financial crisis of 2008-2010, just 60 of the largest publicly traded companies in the U.S. and Europe broke away from the competition (see Figure 1) and achieved efficient growth — a type of growth where companies are able to grow revenue while simultaneously reducing costs. These companies were ultimately able to sustain their outperformance for the subsequent decade.

The current environment is creating another turn for companies to pass through, and another moment in which winners and losers may be distinctly separated. This creates a unique urgency for CSOs to start positioning their sales organizations to take advantage of the opportunities that economic uncertainty and a downturn can create.

Figure 1: Organizational Performance After a Downturn
Company Earnings (2003 Indexed to 100)

Uncertainty and Mixed Signals
Through all of last year, there has been a common sentiment felt among executives: uncertainty. Top of mind is economic uncertainty, driven by mixed signals, some of which are overwhelmingly positive. For example, many parts of the world are experiencing full employment, and hiring remains strong. Consumer sentiment is healthy, and earnings growth is the strongest in a decade. Venture and private equity investors have reserves of $1 trillion.

At the same time, we have just crossed into record-setting territory for the current growth cycle. Some experts predict a recession in the coming months, but even without one there are unsettling indicators.
There is an abundant of geopolitical and trade drama, causing long-held partnerships to strain. Profitability forecasts are down and debt levels look precipitous in a period of rising interest rates. Indeed, the common sentiment that “everything is changing at the same time” isn’t just a gut feeling. Figure 2 shows companies and the overall economy are experiencing historic peaks in numerous indexes that matter. Consider the following:

- Peaking change in businesses — From business model transformation to M&A transactions and cross-enterprise initiatives, businesses face new heights in uncertainty on multiple fronts.
- Conflicting economic signals — High CEO confidence, peaking economic uncertainty and probability of recession indexes, are converging for the first time in years.
- Strong entrepreneurial health and next-generation digital startup indexes are reaching new heights as the economy is facing greater industry consolidation.
- A mix of balance sheet health indexes show signs of vulnerability — Record-high corporate debt and record-high corporate cash on hand, with cost increases outpacing revenue gains.

Individually, the upward trajectory of these trend lines are puzzling, but taken together, many converging at 15-year peaks represent real risks and opportunities.

**Figure 2: Trend Lines Across Major Indexes**
Rolling Three-Year Average Scaled Based on the Max Range Reached Since the Recovery


Three Areas of Focus

While senior company leadership clearly plays a key role in navigating an economic turn, sales leaders have to prepare their own set of to-dos. Specifically, they should focus on three areas (see Figure 3):

- Strategically planning to prepare for uncertainty, economic or otherwise
- Cost management while maintaining sales effectiveness
- Sales talent management amid changing economic conditions

**Figure 3: Winners in The Turns**

**Questions every CSO should ask about strategy:**

- How should we assess our sales organization’s capabilities to adequately respond to changes in the economic environment?
- How do we know it’s time to adjust our strategy to stay competitive during changing economic conditions?
- What is the most effective way to communicate to the sales force any changes to our sales strategy, their impact and the reasons behind them to ensure clarity of direction is maintained throughout the enterprise?
- How can we ensure these changes stick?

**Actions to take now:**

- Ensure you have the functional capabilities to adequately respond to changes in the economic environment and actively communicate these changes to the sales leadership as well as the sales force.
- Use feedback from business unit leaders and other stakeholders to evaluate your function’s current effectiveness at key sales activities and to align the sales leadership team on functional priorities.
- Review data on key sales talent and productivity metrics; pulse survey the sales force on specific questions to assess strategy-critical talent’s willingness and ability to execute strategic plans.
- Sensitize the sales leadership to prepare for a downturn by creating urgency around the potential risks involved. For example, conducting a “premortem” exercise with sales leadership team members can encourage them to think proactively and critically about an action plan to stay ahead of a potential downturn.
- Ensure CSOs and their organizations are tuned in to economic conditions?
- Encourage sales managers to contextualize changes in strategy as necessary to increase their relevance and practicality for sellers. Managers’ proximity to the sales force and their knowledge of the practical implications of the change allow them to deliver messages and assist sellers in working through the change.

**Strategic Planning to Prepare for Uncertainty, Economic or Otherwise**

It can be detrimental for an organization to have a strategic plan that is static and fails to account for changes in the external environment. Winning CSOs ensure that they periodically assess the organization’s ability to respond to disruptions in the economy and develop a communication strategy to keep every part of the sales organization aligned on changes in strategy.
Cost Management While Maintaining Sales Effectiveness

During turns, sales executives’ first instincts are to stop discretionary spending, lay off staff, reduce training and cut capital investments. While winners employ a mix of these strategies, they approach it in a way that considers the possible unintended consequences and focuses on the long term.

Questions every CSO should ask about cost:
- How can we apply a disciplined and holistic approach to cost management now to avoid any unintended consequences in the future?
- How can we think about cost management as a long-term strategy, not just a short-term margin play?
- How can we make sure we’re not compromising our top-line activities when cutting costs?
- What are some low-impact, low-effort cuts we can make immediately?
- What scalable actions can we pursue to grow revenue faster than expenses?

Actions to take now:
- Apply a disciplined, holistic and sustainable approach to cost management.
- Evaluate and agree upon a set of “must protect” longer-term investments through any period of budget pressure.
- Assess business continuity impacts, and ways to minimize those impacts, in the event of reducing technology or other external operating expense.
- Instead of relying on a few aggressive measures to reduce the cost of sales, prioritize and select cost reduction strategies based on key elements — ease of execution, immediacy of impact, potential levels of disruption and challenges to any economic recovery — that can help avoid the occurrence of and disruption from urgent cost reductions.
- Engage business unit leaders to develop two to three actions to grow immediately without increasing selling expenses. Encourage them to think about channel gaps, redundancies or even white-space opportunities.
- Consider cost reduction alternatives that lead to scalable cost savings. For example, instead of reducing subject matter expert (SME) head count, consider low-value, high-frequency sales activities that SMEs are responsible for and codify information related to these activities in enablement tools to get more productivity from SMEs and better scale them.

Sales Talent Management Amid Changing Economic Conditions

Healthy, high-performing sales teams are essential to winning in the turns. Our research on sales culture shows that skilled sellers who operate in a team climate characterized by high levels of autonomy, collaboration and creativity are, on average, 15% more likely to stay with an organization. Frontline sales managers play a significant role in developing and managing sellers; as such, CSOs should proactively develop a strategy for talent management that encourages managers to coach in a way that promotes recession-proof skills and minimizes departures of high-performing sellers.

Questions every CSO should ask about talent:
- How do we identify and quickly develop the competencies we need to outperform in a turn — and beyond?
- How do we encourage managers to coach in a way that fosters innovation and new ideas as opposed to strict process adherence?
- How quickly can we create and cascade new, clear objectives out to the entire sales force?
- How can we aggressively acquire top sales talent from competitor organizations in a turn to better position ourselves for growth?

Actions to take now:
- Limit productivity declines and departures of high-performing sellers by developing recession-resistant skills in reps and coaching them in a way that encourages innovation and ideation.
- Identify sales approaches that yielded results in the last downturn, and modify training or other enablement to quickly reprise those behaviors, skills and processes.
- Boost and reinforce sellers’ business acumen and listening skills so they are capable of uncovering vital information about how customers are preparing — if at all — for a downturn and how it would affect customers’ needs and relationship with your organization. Doing so, sellers can uncover new business opportunities and provide more meaningful services to customers.
- Encourage frontline managers to coach for creativity and problem solving as opposed to strict process adherence (e.g., teaching reps to anticipate potential deal roadblocks and apply creative thinking to solutions).
Enhanced Frontline Sales Leader Diagnostic

Accelerate sales manager performance with data-driven action planning.

Benefits
- Uncover the specific actions that drive frontline manager effectiveness.
- Receive a customized report comparing your organization’s responses to our benchmark.
- Identify the highest impact areas to target organizational support for frontline sales managers.

Why participate
Stay ahead of the competition by using our enhanced Frontline Sales Leader Diagnostic to benchmark sales manager effectiveness and identify critical organizational action items to accelerate performance. Based on more than a decade of research, this diagnostic is newly updated to help organizations implement the findings of our forthcoming research, *Re-engineering the Frontline Leader’s Role: A CSO’s Guide to Maximizing Sales*.

What you get
Early access to the findings of our new research into the specific strategies that drive frontline sales manager effectiveness. Some benefits of participating include:
- **Enhanced Diagnostic**: Gain new insights for both managers and reps and retain key longitudinal data if your organization has participated before.
- **Customized Reporting**: Receive a customized report with benchmarking to compare your managers against proven, data-backed metrics for manager effectiveness.
- **Action Planning**: Save time interpreting the report with a diagnostic result walk-through and receive guidance from a member of our research and advisory team to determine the next steps.

The Enhanced Frontline Sales Leader Diagnostic asks managers and sellers questions to assess the typical activities managers engage in. This diagnostic is:
- Appropriate for frontline sales managers and sellers.
- Designed to take less than 30 minutes to complete.

The diagnostic measures the effectiveness of your managers across a range of dimensions, including:
- Skill and Deal Coaching
- Team Management
- Customer Understanding

To learn more, contact your account team or reach out to us at:
Email: SalesDiagnostic@gartner.com

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- Stay ahead of industry trends so you are prepared to tackle challenges before they hit.
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