The Chief Sales Officer
Fourth Quarter 2022

IN THIS ISSUE
- Recession Planning in One Hour and Other Actions to Navigate Economic Turbulence
- The Case for Revenue Enablement
- Using Artificial Intelligence to Improve Customer Engagement and Sales Results
- The State of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Sales
- Infographic: Is It Time for RevOps?
- Sales Leader Spotlight: The Changing B2B Landscape

Strategic Opportunities for 2023
The Chief Sales Officer

Contents

Recession Planning in One Hour and Other Actions to Navigate Economic Turbulence

The Case for Revenue Enablement

Using Artificial Intelligence to Improve Customer Engagement and Sales Results

The State of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Sales

Sales Leader Spotlight: The Changing B2B Landscape

Is It Time for RevOps?

Editor in Chief
Betsy Gregory-Hosler

Managing Editor
Delainey Kirkwood

Authors
Shreya Biswas
Kelly Fischbein
Betsy Gregory-Hosler
Josh Kaye
Delainey Kirkwood

Design
Brittany Hoover
Tim Brown
Tal Yaari

Editor
Karen Ross

Project Managers
Lauren Abel
Lindsay Kumpf

Legal Caveat
© 2022 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved. Gartner is a registered trademark of Gartner, Inc. and its affiliates. This publication may not be reproduced or distributed in any form without Gartner’s prior written permission. It consists of the opinions of Gartner’s research organization, which should not be construed as statements of fact. While the information contained in this publication has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable, Gartner disclaims all warranties as to the accuracy, completeness or adequacy of such information. Although Gartner research may address legal and financial issues, Gartner does not provide legal or investment advice and its research should not be construed or used as such. Your access and use of this publication are governed by Gartner’s Usage Policy. Gartner prides itself on its reputation for independence and objectivity. Its research is produced independently by its research organization without input or influence from any third party. For further information, see “Guiding Principles on Independence and Objectivity.”

Any third-party link herein is provided for your convenience and is not an endorsement by Gartner. We have no control over third-party content and are not responsible for these websites, their content or their availability. By clicking on any third-party link herein, you acknowledge that you have read and understand this disclaimer.
Letter From the Editors

It’s hard to believe the fourth quarter is already here. I’ve talked to a lot of sales leaders this year. It’s clear that leading a sales organization is a balancing act. On one hand, you have to hit your numbers — keeping your focus on this month, this quarter and this year. On the other hand, we all know that the B2B sales environment is rapidly evolving. Leading a successful sales org requires a vision for meeting that future head on.

Investments in the future often don’t produce results in the short term, but a failure to build toward the future will lead to problems in the long run. In this issue we offer up several strategic opportunities for your consideration as the balancing act continues into 2023:

• **The Case for Revenue Enablement.** Customers increasingly expect a seamless buying experience. Organizational silos among customer-facing roles increase the risk of message misalignment and friction. Revenue enablement presents an opportunity to overcome those silos and better meet customer expectations (p. 9).

• **Recession Planning in One Hour.** CSOs are receiving mixed signals on whether a recession is around the corner. What looks unlikely one week seems impending the next. To foster a balanced approach, we offer a recession-planning exercise, and a few other actions, to help you focus on preparation rather than last-minute panic (p. 4).

• **Leveraging AI to Reduce Sales Cycles.** CSOs are hearing a lot of hype around the use of AI in sales. To effectively pursue the possibilities that AI provides, you need a clear understanding of AI’s potential impact on end-to-end revenue production. We discuss examples of how AI can be integrated in the sales function and what kinds of returns you might expect (p. 12).

• **Quant Corner: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.** Recent studies have shown that employees increasingly value a diverse workplace. In a fierce labor market, you need to understand the impact of addressing (or neglecting) DE&I in your organizations. Look to our Quant Corner for data on the state of DEI in sales (p. 17).

• **Is It Time for RevOps?** Revenue operations is all the rage, but what is it? This infographic provides a holistic understanding of RevOps principles to clarify what this opportunity can provide (p. 23).

Our sales leader spotlight focuses on Tobias Waldeck, vice president of sales and marketing, North America at Daimler Truck Financial Services. Tobias chats with us about the challenges and opportunities that 2023 brings and how he balances short- and long-term priorities as a sales leader.

Best wishes to everyone for a happy and successful fourth quarter. Enjoy the holiday season and we’ll see you next year.

Betsy Gregory-Hosler and Delainey Kirkwood
Recession Planning in One Hour and Other Actions to Navigate Economic Turbulence

By Josh Kaye

CSOs face a delicate balancing act as they examine mixed global economic signals. If they take aggressive, proactive steps to prepare for a recession, they risk spreading fear and doubt among the sales team and potentially putting revenue at risk.

At the same time, a reactive response that is sluggish or primarily cost-focused is almost certain to harm sales performance. The following actions can help ensure your organization is prepared for economic turbulence without risking current performance.

Conduct Premortem Exercises

While CSOs need to plan for long-term uncertainty, they rarely have the opportunity — and sometimes little incentive — to think beyond the next quarter. The premortem exercise — a valuable tactic to create urgency among the senior team to take action into a potential downturn — requires as little as one hour of leadership team time.

Premortem Defined

A premortem begins by defining a provocative, hypothetical future failure point and then working backward to determine the drivers and decisions that led to it. This future orientation encourages objectivity when exploring negative outcomes by keeping attention on actions within the team’s control, challenging assumptions and sensitizing leaders to flaws in current strategy without disengagement.
Even when executed quickly, this short focus burst can inspire major competitive pivots. Follow the steps below and those depicted in Figure 1 to complete a premortem.

1. Articulate a possible worst-case scenario linked to a hypothetical downturn. For example: “It’s April 2023 and a downturn has hit our industry hard. Sales have declined 20%, we have compressed margins and a 33% drop in retention rate.”

2. Pose an open-ended question to start the conversation. For example: “What sales issues could have caused or exacerbated this outcome?”

3. Prioritize the top underlying causes of the hypothetical problem.

4. Reverse-engineer steps to prevent the hypothetical problem.

5. Define critical actions the team must start or stop doing right now to avoid the future scenario in an action-based plan.

6. Assign accountability for executing preventive actions to key individuals.

**Figure 1. Sample Premortem Exercise**

Q: It’s 2023 and a downturn has led to a 20% decrease in sales. What issues could have caused this outcome?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Causes</th>
<th>“Start Doing”</th>
<th>“Stop Doing”</th>
<th>“Keep Doing”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cause 1: Ineffective Skill Development</td>
<td>Start: Prioritizing intensive training for low-performing, high-potential sellers</td>
<td>Stop: Investing in training and coaching equally for low-potential sellers</td>
<td>Keep: Offering training content through a mix of channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause 2:</td>
<td>Start:</td>
<td>Stop:</td>
<td>Keep:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause 2:</td>
<td>Start:</td>
<td>Stop:</td>
<td>Keep:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As your team starts discussing potential causes, list them here.

Source: Gartner
Equip Sellers to Begin Having Downturn-Focused Conversations With Customers

Premortem exercises often surface seller skill or capability concerns, such as a lack of readiness to talk openly about the economy with customers. Don’t wait to address this lack of readiness. Issue a direct challenge to sellers: “How are you advising customers about their approach to a possible economic downturn?” Then task sales enablement to create comprehensive questioning guides to help sellers uncover vital information about how customers are preparing for a downturn, if at all (see Figure 2).

No matter the scenario, sellers must be able to guide customers to better understand their future risks and opportunities. Additionally, ensure that the team can comfortably engage in two-way dialogue across a range of responses. Some customers may be overly confident. Others may appreciate having their assumptions challenged. Still more customers may want more information and will take another meeting.

For maximum impact, deliver conversation guidance via the full enablement portfolio, including updated messaging guides, seller and buyer collateral, prescriptive tools, coaching checklists, training and simulations or role plays. The likelier a downturn becomes, the more urgently sales enablement must shift its priorities.

Figure 2. Comprehensive Questioning Guide Example

- **Value Chain**
  
  Where in your value chain are you most vulnerable to disruption?

- **Competitive Landscape**
  
  What industry disruptions are you facing right now that may worsen in a downturn? How do you expect your customers to respond in a downturn?

- **Supplier Relationships**
  
  What threats or challenges to your current supplier relationships do you anticipate?

- **Relationship With the Seller/Supplier**
  
  How might your requirements from our partnership change? How might we need to adapt to better meet your needs?

Source: Gartner
Inspire Frontline Teams to Play Offense

Better enablement content alone won’t guarantee greater commercial success. CSOs must inspire their teams to build pipeline and expand deals by embracing key tactics:

- **First land, then expand**: Leverage downturn-focused conversations to win a small piece of a customer’s spend (e.g., a pilot implementation) that will immediately lead to new opportunities for increased customer budget share.

- **Best foot forward**: Proactively target existing contacts who have experienced recent and sizable value (including personal wins) to source testimonials, introductions and referrals elsewhere within the customer organization.

- **Who you don’t know**: Review the map of contacts at existing accounts to close gaps and missing links among potential influencers and stakeholders where “no relationship” could significantly threaten future retention and expansion.

**Conclusion**

The old adage “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” still applies in today’s economic environment. A failure to plan for a variety of economic scenarios could leave the sales organization scrambling as the business environment evolves. The actions above will take up a relatively minimal amount of seller or leader time while having an outsized impact on organizational preparedness. Conducting a premortem, preparing sellers to have downturn-related conversations with customers and “going on offense” are critical steps in creating an agile, dynamic sales organization capable of weathering economic turbulence.
Resources for Executives and Their Teams Amid Recession Risks

 Amid a volatile global risk environment, record inflation and fiscal policy changes, warnings of a coming recession are credible.

 In such a situation, functional leaders must get recession-ready with strategies that enable short-term cost optimization for continued long-term growth.

 To help you win through, Gartner reveals 9 actions across 3 key areas that will position your organization to:

- Manage resources and spend strategically
- Be agile in securing talent
- Accelerate digital and technology initiatives

 Download your function-specific recession playbook today.

© 2022 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved. CM_GBS_1961903
Evolving B2B buyer preferences are driving companies to increase alignment between customer-facing functions. Revenue enablement facilitates that alignment, looking beyond sales to provide a more holistic approach to driving revenue growth.

**Predictions**
- By 2025, more than 60% of frontline sales enablement organizations will enable additional customer-facing roles.
- By 2026, “revenue enablement” will appear in 10% of all enablement titles in the B2B sales market.

**Challenge**
B2B buyers are changing the way they interact with organizations, expecting similar experiences to the ones they have as consumers in their daily lives. Many B2B buyers — 72% in our latest survey and over 70% for millennials) — have voiced a preference for a rep-free experience.¹

As buyers demand more ways to interact with suppliers, those suppliers naturally invest in new routes to market, ranging from digital, self-service sales to indirect resellers or dedicated customer success teams. These groups report to different leaders, use varying technologies, collect siloed data points and use various enablement efforts to achieve performance goals. This siloed structure increases the chances for message misalignment, creating friction within the buying process.
So how can CSOs and sales enablement leaders break down counterproductive silos without completely restructuring the organization?

**What is Revenue Enablement?**

The evolution of sales requires the evolution of sales enablement. Revenue enablement responsibilities include the onboarding, ongoing training, coaching and support of not only sellers, but other roles closely connected to revenue generation, such as inside sales teams, channel managers and customer success managers. Other responsibilities include providing access to the content, technology, tools and information each role needs to help the customer at each respective stage in the customer journey. Revenue enablement efforts use shared technology, tools, data, analytics, processes and KPIs to reduce the complexity of the modern sales ecosystem and provide buyers and sellers with a seamless, more effortless experience (see figure 1).

**Why is Revenue Enablement the Way Forward for CSOs?**

**End-to-End Revenue Enablement Reduces Buyer Friction and Seller Burden**

Streamlining enablement across the various customer touchpoints reduces buying friction, improves message alignment and provides better insight from end-to-end data and analytics. Revenue enablement leaders, armed with this end-to-end insight, can optimize their enablement efforts to address inefficiencies, misalignments or redundancies within the enablement framework.

Revenue enablement helps reduce selling complexity. Training, content, tools and support are consistent across sales channels and designed with the sales channel experience in mind. This consistency improves sellers’ experience with enablement efforts and strengthens the end-to-end selling process.

---

**Figure 1. Introducing Revenue Enablement**

Definition of Revenue Enablement

1. Enablement happens in all parts of a typical organization, but siloed efforts lead to conflict in the end-to-end customer experience.

   Bringing traditional, siloed *enablement functions* together to ensure all customer-facing roles have the *technology, content, and competencies* needed to create a *frictionless and consistent* customer experience throughout the buying journey.

2. Ensure that all revenue facing roles have an accurate view of the entire customer lifecycle.

3. Friction is reduced for both the customer as well as the members of the revenue team.

Source: Gartner
Revenue Enablement Reduces Redundancy and Aligns Revenue and Sales Metrics

A revenue enablement function not only aligns enablement across all channels and reduces enablement redundancy but also aligns with the revenue operations function. It gives enablement the same end-to-end data and metrics used by revenue operations to further improve enablement effectiveness.

Previously, the siloed functions only offered visibility for metrics and analytics that supported functional KPIs. But by using the revenue enablement and revenue operations model, with end-to-end data and analytics, CSOs can accelerate revenue generation and improve the probability of winning business.

Revenue Enablement Overcomes Silos to Meet the Demands of the Changing Sales Ecosystem

Sales enablement organizational design is shifting from a focus on sales training and content to support for end-to-end revenue production. The most critical difference between sales enablement and revenue enablement is an expanded remit to enable roles beyond quota-carrying sellers.

A centralized revenue enablement organization needs agile program managers who can support specific functions throughout the business (i.e., direct sales, presales, indirect sales and customer success). Program management comprises enablement generalists responsible for supporting a specific role within the business. Their specialization is in the domain expertise of what it requires to succeed in the roles they support, and they are responsible for tailoring enablement programs to the needs of those roles.

Three Things CSOs Need to Keep in Mind

1. **Common Purpose:** Revenue enablement only succeeds if the team has a common purpose. CSOs and their counterparts must define a single, shared vision for success that will give disparate sales, marketing and customer success teams the incentive to work together to grow revenue and increase customer lifetime value. Functional metrics based on linear sales goals and independent functional roles will fail to either foster teamwork or address current customer needs.

2. **Teamwork:** CSOs will need new managerial architecture that breaks down organizational silos and foster teamwork across sales, marketing, and service at scale. Old hierarchical command and control approaches will be too slow, culturally toxic, and introduce too many points of leakage as revenue opportunities move across functions.

3. **Insights:** All customer-facing employees need a fully transparent, 360-degree view of the entire buying journey available in real time if they are going to play like a team. Revenue teams must act on buying signals, location-based opportunities, or churn triggers within minutes instead of hours or days. Sharing information horizontally across the enterprise to inform and support teams from across geographies, business units and market segments is key.

Conclusion

As enablement continues to play an increasingly larger role in overarching customer experience initiatives, the function must continually evolve to meet commercial roles and buyer expectations. Regardless of the terminology, the goal isn’t revenue at any cost; it’s strategic growth, which, at its core, is driven by delighting customers at every turn. For CSOs, this means strategically evaluating whether moving from sales enablement to revenue enablement is right for their organization.

1. 2021 Gartner B2B Buyer Survey
Using Artificial Intelligence to Improve Customer Engagement and Sales Results

By Kelly Fischbein

The hype around potential benefits of artificial intelligence (AI) is inflating expectations. Focusing conversations on real business problems and achievable use cases can help CSOs ensure that they invest in AI that fulfills its promise.

Key Findings
• CSOs who do not invest in artificial intelligence (AI) are missing opportunities to increase efficiency and improve customer engagement.
• Emerging technologies in AI are transforming sales models and cost structures, making it difficult to assess where to invest.
AI’s Potential to Impact the Sales Function

According to Gartner’s 2021 B2B Buyer Survey, 72% of B2B buyers desire a “seller-free” sales experience.\(^2\) Given that, CSOs are looking to AI-based solutions to improve seller effectiveness (see Figure 1). With AI, CSOs are able to free up time for sales leaders and their teams to deal with delicate customer cases that require acute problem-solving skills, empathy and creativity.

However, few CSOs have reached the point of adopting or using AI or machine learning (ML) to positively affect their sales results. AI capabilities have broad potential in the sales function. Figure 2 illustrates a small sample list of AI uses in sales. As an example, conversational interfaces can automate aspects of the sales process and customer experience (CX) support. ML models embedded in dedicated sales platforms can yield better forecasting predictions.

Figure 1. AI in B2B Sales Organizations
Saving Time and Effort, and Providing Insights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Workflow</th>
<th>AI-Supported Workflow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>Sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers</td>
<td>Customers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- High pressure
- Less efficient
- “One after the other”

- Sensitive to all data
- Efficient
- More activities

Source: Gartner

Figure 2. Sample Areas of AI’s Impact on Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Sales</th>
<th>Sales Management</th>
<th>Sales Operations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Voice-based guided selling</td>
<td>• Funnel risk and forecasting risk identification</td>
<td>• AI-enabled training and seller support (predeal, live deal and postdeal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Real-time competitor deal analysis and insights</td>
<td>• Gap analysis in marketing, sales and user experience execution</td>
<td>• Continuous customer engagement models with RevOps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Win-theme support and next best action insights in real time</td>
<td>• Predictive modeling for team results and high-priority deals</td>
<td>• Competitor intel and pricing insights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deal-level recommendations both prepost and post customer engagement</td>
<td>• Anomalous signals to detect revenue abnormalities</td>
<td>• Hyperpersonalization of content and engagement with buyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Live feedback on tone, content and client engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gartner
AI works best when used to support B2B sales reps in their daily sales tasks (see sample AI use cases in Figure 2). These include recommending which sales lead to prioritize or providing insights about a sales lead or customer. AI can also improve customer engagement with hyperpersonalization. This may result in better buyer engagement and improved revenue capture. Employing AI in this way allows the enterprise to take advantage of AI’s promise now and prepare the organization for future developments.

**Focus AI Sales Investments on Growth Areas**

High-velocity sales organizations will continue to embrace additional investments in AI. See figure 3 for predicted process changes as sales and marketing spending increases.

**AI in Demand Generation**

AI tools can automate digital marketing processes and enable chatbots to have real-time customer interactions. AI can also automate content distribution for buying tasks and help to personalize responses to convert more leads. Suppliers that have already deployed predictive lead qualification, guided selling and AI-based opportunity scoring across their B2B sales organization will:

- Better understand and predict customer behavior with data collection across the entire revenue production life cycle.
- Generate improved engagement with hyperpersonalization that presents the right content at the right point in time during the buyer journey.
- Convert more leads into wins with better opportunity scoring.
- Improve sales and marketing alignment by bringing together all interaction data for a continuous customer experience.

**AI in Forecasting**

Forecasting is an immediate opportunity for AI investment. It speaks to the urgent need to establish a strong foundation in predictive analytics today.

Predictive forecasting solutions offer the following:

- AI-based expected revenue levels for future periods
- Predicted revenue shortfalls/excesses versus assigned quotas
- Predicted revenue shortfalls/excesses versus sell-submitted forecast levels
- Forecast indicators at the opportunity level, used to help sellers determine if specific deals should be included or excluded from specific forecast categories

Using AI in forecasting improves sales efficiency, deal prioritization and cost of revenue acquisition. These savings can then be used to fund additional AI investments in sales and marketing.

### Figure 3. Where Sales and Marketing Spending is Increasing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Process Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>30% of all B2B companies will employ AI to augment at least one of their primary sales processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 months</td>
<td>15% of all sales technology spending will be applied to sales enablement technology, up from current levels of 5.6%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72 months</td>
<td>50% of low- to medium-touch B2B sales transactions will be conducted solely via self-service commerce, electronic data interchange and intelligent tools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gartner
With a strong foundation and further investments, sales organizations will be well-positioned to take advantage of AI in forecasting as use of revenue intelligence platforms becomes more common. Revenue intelligence platforms are third-party solutions that integrate AI-driven sales force automation (SFA) platforms with data from frontline revenue-supporting systems. They facilitate the capture of sales activities and coach sellers to quickly anticipate buyers’ needs. This technology may incorporate data signals from sales, marketing and customer service activities, including digital and nondigital interactions.

**Recommendations**

CSOs looking to improve sales execution and pipeline development with AI should:

- Select use cases for AI in their sales and marketing processes by focusing on how to improve buyer engagement and support sales engagement with customers.
- Build confidence around seller funnels, activities and deals by implementing AI-enabled forecasting systems that correlate past and current CRM data plus ERP data to predict which deals to focus on.
- Prioritize AI technology investments in sales and marketing by evaluating which processes can be automated to speed up and personalize customer engagement throughout the entirety of revenue generation.

Gartner
Benchmarking and Functional Diagnostic Tools for Sales

Leverage the Gartner suite of benchmarking and diagnostic tools to empower:

1. Efficient resource allocation
2. Data-backed strategic planning
3. Confident decision making

Sales Score
Comprehensively assess the performance of your sales function using objective, peer-based standards across 40 key activities to identify blind spots, prioritize investment and improvement efforts.

Sales Benchmarks
Compare the structure, responsibilities, budget, technology, staffing and cost of sales of your sales organization, and/or sales enablement function, against those of your peers. Leverage these insights to build business cases for investment, defend budgets and optimize costs.

Seller Time Spend Assessment
Identify where high-performing sellers focus their efforts, points of seller burden and which technologies increase (or detract from) seller productivity. Replicate best behaviors across your core-performing population, streamline processes and redirect seller time toward activities that matter.

Want to Participate?
If you are a Gartner client, connect with your account executive or email us at SalesDiagnostic@gartner.com. Not a Gartner client? Learn more about becoming a client by visiting gartner.com.
The State of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Sales

By Delainey Kirkwood

Today’s employees value companies with inclusive cultures. The majority of U.S. employees and job seekers (76%) describe a diverse workforce as important when valuing companies and job offers.¹ In a time of heightened labor market competition, CSOs discount the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) at their own peril.
As part of our ongoing research into DEI and motivation in sales, we surveyed more than 900 B2B sellers to understand the seller experience.

**Biases and Discrimination Persist**

Although 86% of sellers work for organizations that support DEI, sellers report encountering workplace discrimination. A quarter of respondents told Gartner that they witness or experience discriminatory workplace behavior a few times a year, and an additional 23% witness or experience discriminatory workplace behavior at least a few times a month (see Figure 1).

Nonwhite and female sellers report diversity issues at higher rates than white sellers. As shown in Figure 2, twice as many nonwhite sellers (23%) see their compensation as not fair when compared to white male sellers who are white men (11%). In addition, 13% of female respondents lack a manager that effectively advocates for their team members, more than twice the proportion of white male respondents (5%).

**Figure 1. Frequency of Seller Exposure to Workplace Discrimination**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage of Sellers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At Least a Few Times a Month</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Few Times a Year</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Than Once a Year</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2. Workplace Biases Exist in Sales**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compensation Perception</th>
<th>White Male Sellers</th>
<th>Nonwhite Sellers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lack of Effective Advocacy From Manager**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manager Advocacy</th>
<th>White Male Sellers</th>
<th>Female Sellers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 431 B2B Sellers

Q. I am paid fairly for the amount of work I do.

Note: Not fair defined as selecting Extremely Disagree, Disagree or Somewhat Disagree in response to the above statement.

Source: 2022 Gartner B2B Seller Motivation Survey

n = 533 B2B Sellers

Q. My manager is an effective advocate for individuals on their team.

Note: Lack of effective manager advocacy defined as selecting Extremely Disagree, Disagree or Somewhat Disagree in response to the above statement.

Source: 2022 Gartner B2B Seller Motivation Survey

n = 881 B2B Sellers

Q. How frequently have you witnessed or experienced discriminatory behavior at your sales organization within the past year?

Source: 2022 Gartner B2B Seller Motivation Survey
The Trade-Off Myth

Some sales leaders assume that taking action on DEI commitments could require a tradeoff with the quality of hires. Our research indicates that this tradeoff is a myth. For example, women comprise 69% of recent U.S. graduates whose qualifications match sales job descriptions.¹ In addition, the average quota attainment is similar for male sellers (72%) and female sellers (73%). Nonwhite sellers and white sellers achieve the same win rate with existing customers (65%). Among full-time employees, there is no statistically significant difference in quota attainment between nonwhite sellers (91%) and white male sellers (85%).²

Successfully building a pipeline of sales talent presents significant challenges in today’s labor market. Sales leaders can confidently incorporate DEI initiatives in their recruiting efforts without reducing the quality of talent or chances of meeting sales goals. But to retain employees, CSOs must examine biases in compensation and employee treatment or risk persistent disruptions from low morale and high attrition.

¹ Glassdoor 2020 Diversity and Inclusion Workplace Survey
² 2022 Gartner B2B Seller Motivation Survey
³ Gartner TalentNeuron, B2B sales representatives (March 2020 to March 2021)
Tobias Waldeck serves as Vice President of Sales and Marketing North America for Daimler Truck Financial Services. Tobias joined Daimler Truck Financial Services in 1994 as Controller of Credit Risk for the Mercedes-Benz Bank in Germany and has since worked in various countries across all continents in the areas of finance, credit and audit processes. He has also held several other positions of increasing responsibility, including serving as the Managing Director Daimler Financial Services in Mexico and Head of Strategy Daimler Truck Financial Services.

An interview with Tobias Waldeck, vice president of sales and marketing, North America at Daimler Truck Financial Services. Tobias discusses his priorities in 2023, the changing nature of sales and the enduring importance of B2B relationships.

You’ve had an expansive career at Daimler. What brought you to a sales leadership role?

I didn’t originally set out to be in sales. I went through more of a classic corporate career. I joined Daimler 28 years ago in the credit department and moved through different functions. I eventually ended up running one of our subsidiaries, which obviously required...
sales knowledge. It came down to almost a personality trait. I like dealing with people. My mom always said I could convince anyone of anything, so it’s kind of a natural draw. So, I didn’t choose a career in sales. It kind of chose me.

What’s the most important experience for an aspiring CSO to focus on in the next 12 months?
The profession is changing so much. My advice would be to have an open mind and an affinity for technology. Sales is moving away from being primarily relationship-based. Now you must understand what tech can do and enable your sellers through tech. I’m not saying that the traditional CSO is a dying breed, but the sales environment is changing. If you have a tech background and you want to be in sales, you’re in the right place at the right time.

What types of AI capability present the most opportunity from your perspective?
I’m very careful with the word AI because it’s so overused. It has become a cliche. I’ll refer to our data analytics instead. Revenue enablement is the biggest opportunity for these capabilities. In our small business organization, it can be very hard to make future business projections. So, we use data analytics to develop predictions for pipeline planning. We have data from at least the last 10 years. We know buying patterns, seasonality, and replacement patterns. We’re able to predict where our sellers should focus their activity in this quarter.

It’s a pretty cool development, but it’s not pie in the sky. It’s real. Over the next couple of years, I think we’ll be seeing very practical applications of data analytics.

A Gartner survey has indicated 72% of B2B buyers don’t want to interact with a sales rep in the buying process. Are you seeing this rep-free preference in your business?
I’ve seen some of it. We have a new generation of buyers in B2B sales with more of an analytical background and rationalized process for buying. But human relationships will never go away in B2B sales — not in the next five years, or even the next 20 years.

Relationships still matter, but they aren’t everything. People aren’t going to send you business just because you’re a nice person. People are going to send you business because your environment is set up so the transaction is seamless and easy. Technology enables that to happen. If you don’t understand that, you risk becoming a dinosaur.

What do you foresee the seller role in the future?
We would like our sellers to spend more time interacting with customers and do less busy work in the background. We’re investing in enablement to direct them to the next opportunity, but we’re also trying to free them from administrative work by using automation as much as possible. Ideally, sellers won’t even notice the change. They just notice that they are spending less time doing non-value add activities and more time selling, building relationships, and explaining options to overwhelmed customers. I think that’s where we want the sellers to excel.

What are the trends influencing your industry and how are those shaping strategic priorities for 2023?
There are three mega trends that are influencing our industry. First, we have the emphasis on zero emission vehicles. There’s a lot of attention from investors, stakeholders, communities, and politicians on electrifying our combustion world. The second trend is a focus on automated or autonomous vehicles. The third major influence relates to the data around the truck or telematics.

“We would like our sellers to spend more time interacting with customers and do less busy work in the background.”
A truck is almost like a giant computer on wheels. There’s a ton of valuable data generated from these trucks. Given these and other trends, a focus on data analytics will be a priority for 2023. We just came out of the pandemic where the whole world realized how important trucking is to a functioning society. There’s a lot of attention and external investment coming into the industry. It’s a very cool time to be in the industry, but it’s certainly unpredictable.

Speaking of unpredictability, how is your organization navigating mixed economic signals? Are you preparing for a recession?

We’ve planned for economic cycles for almost 50 years. Trucking is a very cyclical industry, so we always have standard preparation for a recession. In a few ways, however, we’re in uncharted territory. So, we’re preparing for both. We’re preparing for growth, but we’re also dusting off our playbook for a downturn.

How do you encourage a diverse environment in your organization?

We’ve made a conscious effort to address diversity on several fronts, including age, gender and racial diversity. In the last 48 months, we’ve dramatically lowered the average age in sales through natural attrition and hiring efforts. Now we have at least three generations working together in the sales team. It has been amazing. We’ve made a similar effort with gender and racial diversity. There is the notion that trucking is dominated by white men. I’m very happy to say that the opposite is happening. It’s very diverse. When everyone contributes, the resulting outcome is better. I couldn’t be happier.

As a sales leader, how do you balance a short-term focus on revenue with the need for long-term planning?

The short and long term are not always conflicting, but the pressure is always there. I wish I had a magic answer for you. I don’t. As CSO, you’re the person that everybody can see. The KPIs don’t lie. I think that conflict is almost built into the CSO function. It’s a natural conflict that we just must live with as sellers.
Operations leaders are experiencing one or many of these symptoms across their customer buying journey.

- Misaligned GTM OKRs
- Incorrect prioritization of goals
- Overlap in GTM roles and responsibilities
- Duplicate effort and confusion
- Siloed GTM data strategy
- Inaccurate data and metrics
- Siloed, intuition-based decision making
- Inconsistent view of data
- Decelerated pipeline velocity
- Errorneous forecasting and missed revenue targets
- Disparate systems
- 75% of the highest growth companies in the world will deploy RevOps practices by 2025.
- 65% of B2B sales organizations will transition from intuition-based to data-driven decision making by 2028.

If leaders have experienced these symptoms, then their organization is already at the RevOps crossroads.

RevOps is now more viable than ever and aims to realize three shared GTM goals:

1. Improvement of conversion and margin
2. Reduction of revenue leakage
3. Better usage of customer data for revenue realization

Is It Time for RevOps?

Having only a partial view of RevOps can create hesitancy around initiating or undertaking RevOps practices. Use this infographic to gain a holistic understanding of RevOps principles and drive organizational commitment to the transformation.

Organizations need to practice RevOps to better help their GTM functions drive growth.

Specifying functional roles and responsibilities

Map the buyer journey

Define revenue process milestones

Create handoffs and SLAs

Automate workflows

Create an accessible single source of truth

Establish data quality standards and checks

Integrate disparate systems through APIs

Invest in targeted RevTech

Create data-driven decision frameworks

Identify analytics use cases

Start your RevOps journey today. Read more about RevOps on Gartner.com.
The Gartner Sales Podcast

Betsy Gregory-Hosler, Senior Director, Research, and Doug Bushée, VP Analyst, sit down with leading experts across Gartner and beyond to highlight important implications and unexpected findings for senior sales leaders from across the company’s vast range of cutting-edge research.

Listen Here

Our Most Popular 2022 Webinars for Sales Leaders

Catch them on demand:

- Redefine Commercial Strategies With Orchestrated Customer Engagement →
- Close More Quality Deals With the Sense Making Sales Approach →
- Build a Data-Driven Sales Organization to Maximize Growth →
- Increase Sellers’ Motivation, Hunger and Energy to Close More Deals →
- Drive Demand at Key Accounts via Account-Based Strategy →
- Shift From Seller Enablement to Revenue Enablement →