State of Sales Enablement: Sales Operations and Salestech Report 2022/23

LXA

Seismic

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01 Welcome

Sales enablement continues to evolve as a function and ecosystem within organisations of all sizes, as well as an industry in general.

More and more, businesses are aligning their sales content, training, technology and operational activities to their business needs. And they're delivering a combination of improved efficiency and effectiveness to achieve their sales goals.

We're starting to see a culture of collaboration across sales, marketing, and product teams, leading to more aligned strategic outcomes. That alignment is driving increased sales revenue.

Much of this is driven by a combination of enhanced long-term strategy with technological developments that support the sales teams and those that assist them.

But barriers remain to building sales enablement maturity.

This report examines how sales enablement and the overall sales technology market is developing and the challenges and opportunities faced by growth leaders.

Given the growing importance of sales enablement, LXA have delivered a series of learning experiences to help the industry understand sales enablement excellence.

LXA have been happy to work with Seismic to delve even deeper into the current state of the industry and to share those findings with you.

Carlos Doughty
CEO and Course Instructor, LXA

02 Foreword

Today's businesses are operating in a difficult environment with rising interest rates, workforce skill gaps and heightened geopolitical risks. Compounding this challenging trading environment is the increased expectation from modern clients who demand personalised experiences.

What can businesses do to navigate through these challenging times? Can these challenges perhaps also present opportunities for organisations to compete to win?

Indeed, we are seeing leading firms are adopting sales enablement as a strategic approach to unite their sales, marketing and operation teams around the common goal of providing salespeople with the right resources, content, processes, and technology required to engage with prospects and customers throughout the buyer's journey to sell effectively.

Seismic partners with over 2,000 businesses globally across various sectors and company sizes. We have learnt a lot from our customers with case studies on how best to develop and implement sales enablement excellence.

I am thrilled to be working with LXA to bring these insights to you in the hope to help drive efficient growth for your business.

Winnie Palmer
EMEA Head of Marketing, Seismic

03 Methodology

The methodology involved three main phases:

Phase 1: Desk research to review some of the most recent and relevant literature that explores themes relating to sales enablement and technology.

Phase 2: Qualitative research including a series of in-depth interviews with a range of senior client-side, agency and vendor marketing leaders across multiple sectors.

Phase 3: An online survey of 202 respondents was conducted during August and September 2022.

90% of respondents were Sales Directors, Chief Growth Officers (CGO) or Chief Revenue Officers (CRO). While 10% were Chief Marketing Officers (CMO).

All respondents were B2B organisations with 1000 employees across the UK (72%), France (11%) and Germany (12%). Respondents are from a range of industries, with greater response from the financial services, manufacturing, telecoms and healthcare.

All respondents had a defined Sales Enablement function.

This report also contains commentary from respondents interviewed by LXA. LXA would like to thank the following people for their contributions to this report:

Our thanks to the following contributors:

- **Carlos Doughty**, CEO & Course instructor, LXA
- **Winnie Palmer,** EMEA Head of Marketing, Seismic
- **Stewart Conway,** Head of Digital & Sales Enablement, Columbia Threadneedle
- **Deon Pillay,** Head of Marketing Operations, Legal & General Investment Management (LGIM)
- **Pam Didner,** Author and Keynote Speaker
- **Liz Waugh,** Global Director of Sales Enablement, Crayon

04 Current state of sales enablement

The market for salestech has grown rapidly, driven by several long-term trends, including:

Remote and hybrid working. In the UK, 24% of people were working hybridly and 14% remotely in May 2022. Remote ways of working require the technology to manage and facilitate interactions.(1)

Consumers prefer virtual interactions. More than 75% of buyers actually prefer virtual interactions with sales people, and a more self-service approach where they will interact on their own terms.(2)

Greater alignment between sales and marketing. This is a cultural shift, and one which requires the right tech for success.

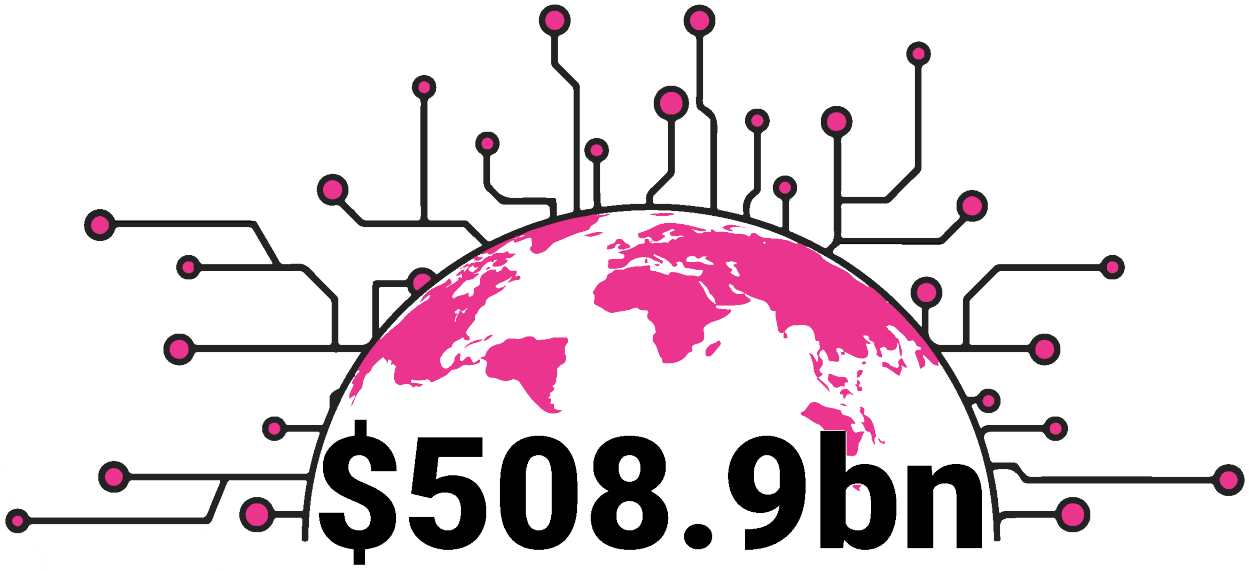
The need for personalisation. Buyers always expect a tailored experience, right from the first interaction. This requires a wealth of data on previous interactions and the tech to make full use of it.

Salestech market size number and key deals

Salestech and martech is big business. We estimate that the global market for salestech and martech solutions was worth $509.8bn in 2022.

This market size number takes into account both salestech and martech. This is because the two are intrinsically connected, and salestech and martech tools frequently overlap.

Many tools are used (and should be used) by both marketing and sales teams. For example, Salesforce isn't exclusively a salestech or martech tool. It's both.



GLOBAL SALESTECH & MARTECH MARKET SIZE

Note: *The approximation of market sizing has been calculated using WARC's ad spend data (Global: US$880.9bn 2022) and LXA's survey response data on marketing budget spend split by percentage (across martech, staff, agency/services and media). The methodology assumes ad spend is a proxy for marketing communication spend, which combines media and agency costs. And that survey responses are typical globally. This reflects how modern marketing is changing and any discrepancies in how media and agency spend is attributed. The sizing has been independently substantiated against a series of methodologies and data points including martech company public revenues, market sizing of key martech categories, M&A martech activity and martech landscape growth.*

We've seen a number of significant salestech deals in the last two years, with more than $1bn invested into a handful of companies.

For example, Seismic completed a series G funding round in August 2021, raising $170 million and bringing its total valuation to $3 billion. Seismic also acquired sales training tool Lessonly to enhance its capabilities.[3]

Other major M&A deals in this space include:

- Salesforce acquired Slack for $27.7bn.[4]
- Drift was acquired by Vista.[5]
- ZoomInfo acquired sales intelligence tool Chorus.ai for $575m.[6]
- 6sense received $200m.[7]
- Sales Intelligence startup Cognism received $87m in 2022.[8]

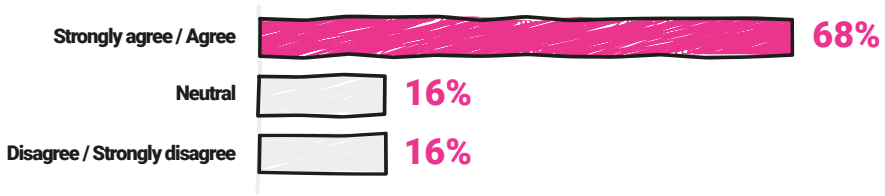
The growing importance of sales enablement

Sales enablement can have a key impact when implemented successfully, and our respondents recognise this, with 68% agreeing that advancing sales enablement strategy is key to business performance.

Sales enablement helps businesses to be more effective in their go to market strategy. It's about productivity, efficiency and effectiveness, which means more bottom line growth. This is absolutely critical in today's highly competitive market. Organisations are recognising that sales enablement is no longer just a nice to have, but business critical.

Winnie Palmer, EMEA Head of Marketing, Seismic

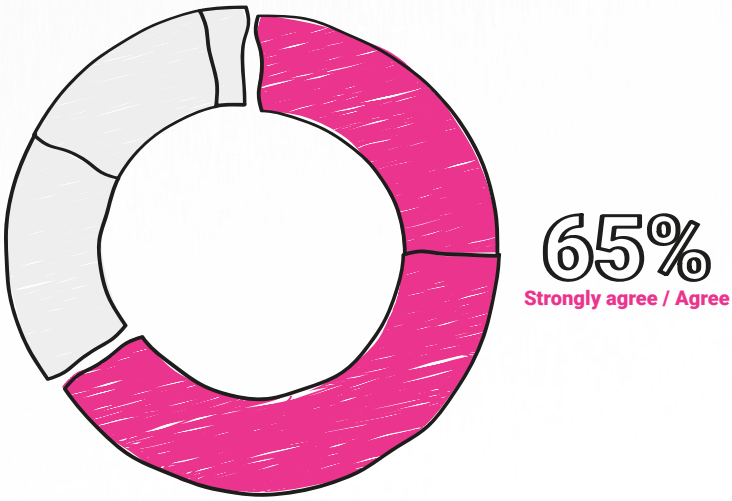
To what extent do you agree with the following statement? 'Advancing our organisation's enablement strategy is key to driving our business performance'



Sales enablement adoption is being driven partly by the increasing complexity of the customer buyer journey. 65% of our respondents agree that journeys have become more complex, and that new ways of selling are required to survive and thrive.

There's a need to connect with customers across many more channels than before, as buyers tailor their own journeys to their device and channel preferences.

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? 'Customer buyer journeys have become more complex than ever and require new ways of selling for organisations to survive and thrive'



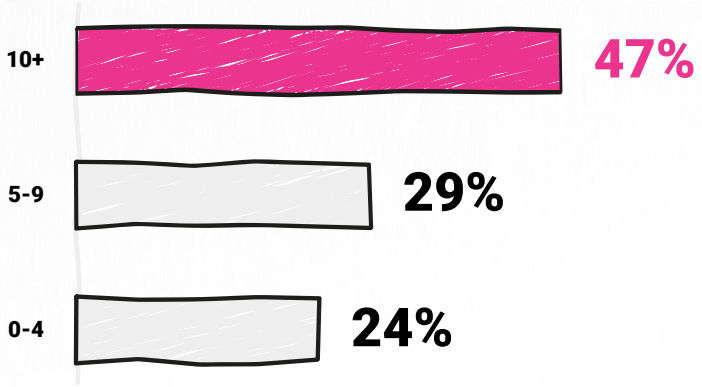
More complex journeys mean that sellers have less opportunity to directly influence customers, who present themselves further down the buying journey with more advanced knowledge than ever before.

With an average of 9.2 sales interactions before a deal is closed, buyers are taking time to inform themselves about products, and sales teams must be more advanced in their understanding of the market, their product, client pain points and industry competitors.

The number of people involved in buying decisions is also increasing, with more complex B2B buying decisions typically including six to ten decision makers, each of which are armed with different pieces of information. On the buyer's side, this increases the difficulty of decision making.[9]

Only the buyer can dictate when they are ready to move forward through the journey, so sales teams need to have access to the content and information that customers need to make informed decisions at exactly the right time. They need to provide the right content, at the right time, to support their client through that journey.

How many sales interactions does an average customer have with your organisation before closing a deal?



The way you engage with customers has changed. Customers want to be challenged, and they're also keen to learn from you as a supplier. You need to be seen as an expert - they want facts and credibility and expect you to know about them before you even pick up the phone. The planning, investigation and discovery that you do as a seller is probably one of the most important aspects of any customer engagement.

The competitive landscape is so broad now that it's complex for potential customers to know which business to choose. When a supplier is able to stand out, provide facts, and show the impact they've already made with other customers, it's a lot more compelling.

Liz Waugh, Global Director of Sales Enablement, Crayon

05 Sales enablement maturity

With changes in the global economy, B2B companies are facing increasing challenges.

Previous downturns would suggest that these challenges will place increased pressure on growth functions and the technology investment across sales and marketing.

Those delivering sales enablement services and owners of sales tech will need to demonstrate the value and ROI of their investment, across the key pillars of planning, process, platforms and people, as they seek to pilot new sales initiatives. Not a simple task, where growth leaders are increasingly distracted by immediate revenue concerns.

It's now time for those with ownership of revenue functions and sales technology to consider the maturity of their sales enablement ecosystem and supporting tech stack management.

Companies that are using sales enablement effectively have the right planning, processes, and teams in place. They also have the technology and know how to use it effectively. They are aware of new developments in tech and customer behaviour, and are ready to adapt to them.

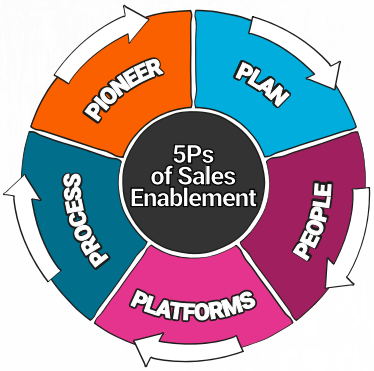
As our results show, the biggest area needing improvement is People & Teams, with the average score of 3.26, which places their maturity level between Standard and Advanced. Just 10% of organisations rated their maturity as Advanced within this category.

There is a talent shortage in the industry, and organisations will need to use training to upskill and reskill employees.

Planning & Strategy is also a key area for improvement. This is the foundation on which sales enablement is built - sales process, methodology and more. It's the roadmap that will align your sales enablement initiatives to your customers, their buyer journeys and your overall business goals

Sales Enablement Maturity

Sales enablement maturity dimension	Score
Planning Maturity	3.29
People & Teams	3.26
Platforms, Apps & Ecosystems	3.40
Process & Operations	3.47
Pioneer & Pilot	3.37



Note: *Respondents were asked to assess their organisation's sales enablement maturity across each of the 5Ps. Maturity was rated as Advanced, Optimal, Standard, Basic, or Subpar. For example, a score of 1 would mean Subpar while a score of 5 would indicate Advanced maturity.*

There are a number of barriers holding organisations back from becoming more mature in terms of sales enablement.

As we'll explore later in the report, issues around staff, skills and knowledge make up two of the biggest barriers to maturity. Other barriers include the lack of adoption of sales tools, and issues around integration.

Integration is a key issue for sales tools. With the proliferation of technology, the sheer volume of available tools is always likely to bring this issue with it.

Most companies already have lots of sales technology, and new tech has to be able to work alongside existing tech, with data flowing between systems. As companies add more tools to the sales stack, integration can become more of a challenge.

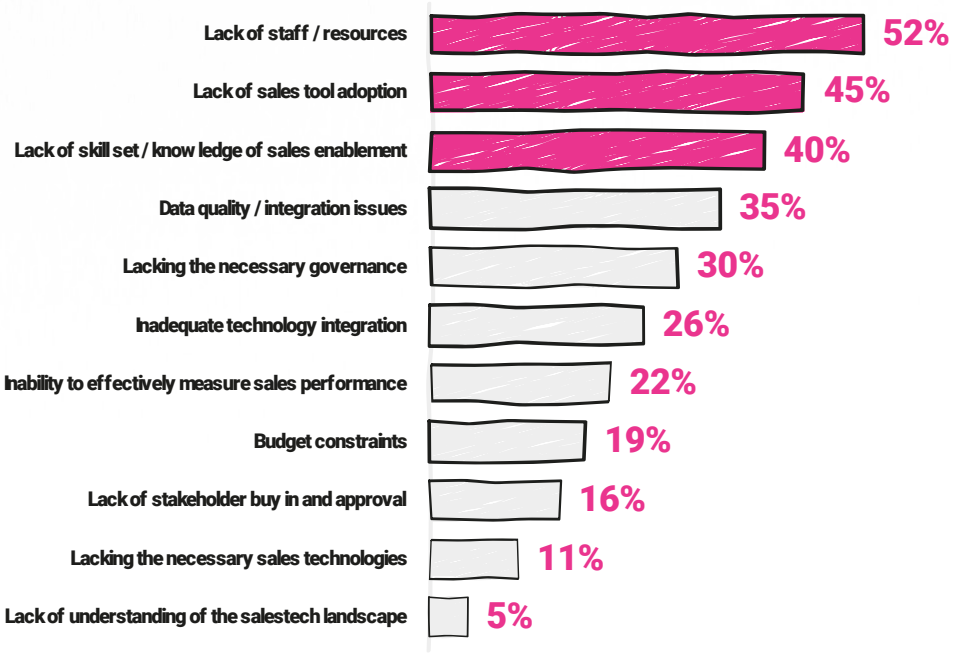
This is an issue that vendors can help to address through ecosystem thinking - realising the tools that their tech will need to work with, and ensuring that integration is as simple as possible.

Skills and knowledge is also an issue here. Companies need people with the knowledge to select tech that will integrate with the existing stack, and have the skills to manage this integration successfully.

I think one of the biggest barriers is people adopting change. They say they want to change, but once you start implementing it, it can be uncomfortable, and barriers can come up. I think the cultural shift towards continuous improvement and development has to be embedded, otherwise we won't change without actually changing ourselves. We all need to adapt.

Stewart Conway, Head of Digital & Sales Enablement, Columbia Threadneedle

What are the biggest barriers to driving your organisation's Sales Enablement, Operations and Technology maturity?



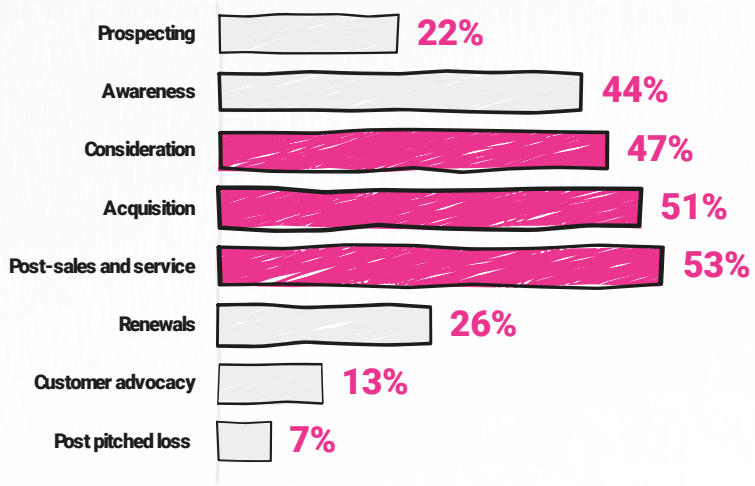
Sales Enablement through the buyer journey

As expected, we see a clear increase in sales enablement efforts in the consideration, acquisition and post-sales and service stages of the buyer journey.

Sales enablement contributes to an average of 2.5 stages of the buyer journey, and these contributions are tilted towards the front-end of the journey, rather than customer advocacy, and post pitched loss. However, sales enablement is playing a higher than expected role in post-sales and service.

We expect future research to reflect an increase in the spread of buyer stages that sales enablement covers, across the whole buyer journey, as those organisations with a higher sales enablement maturity level tend to work across more elements of the buyer journey.

To which of the following buyer stages does your sales enablement efforts contribute?



5Ps of Sales Enablement explained

1. **Planning & Strategy** – The extent to which your organisation's sales enablement strategy, initiatives and roadmap align to your customers, buyer journeys & business goals.

2. **People & Teams** - The extent to which your organisation is well resourced to deliver sales enablement initiatives. And the extent to which your organisation can support sales enablement expertise development; recruitment, agency selection and training.

3. **Platforms, Apps and Ecosystems** – The extent to which your organisation has the technology and tools needed to deliver the sales strategy. As well as the level to which the sales stack is integrated, managed and tools are adopted by the team.

4. **Process and Operations** - The extent to which your organisation has the sales and data governance, measurability, content planning, sales messaging and campaign process, that underpins your organisation's sales strategy and sales enablement activities.

5. **Pioneer & Pilot** - The extent to which your organisation is up to date on market trends, able to react to changes in buyer behaviour, customer trends, able to assess and experiment with new sales technologies, and has the agility to adapt rapidly to new sales patterns.

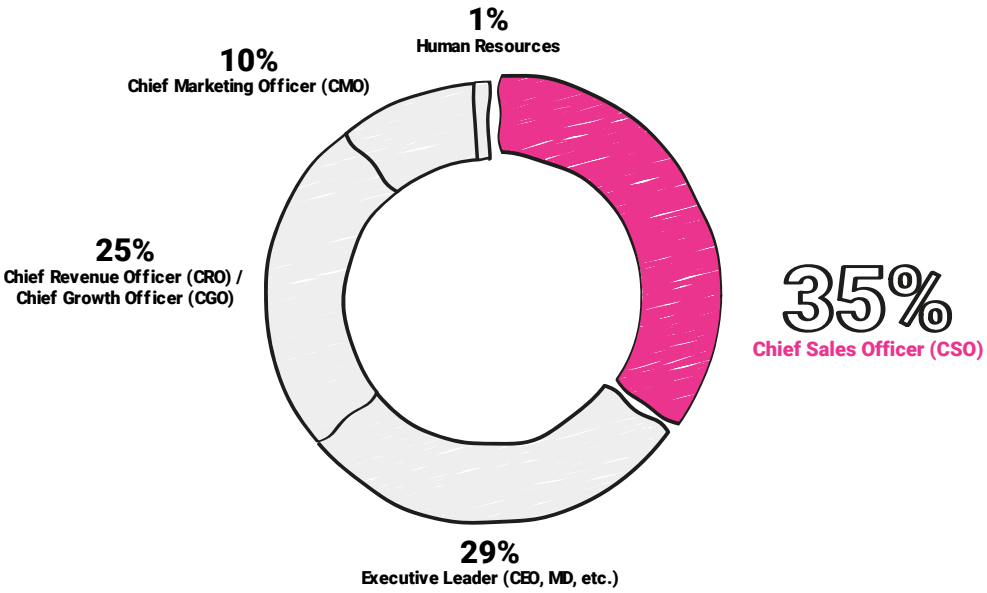
And all Ps are interconnected.

06 A culture of collaboration and alignment

Collaboration between marketing and sales is vital for overall business success, and we see some encouraging signs in our survey data. There have always been department silos, but sales enablement has the power to be a key lever to align marketing and sales teams. Sales enablement is a catalyst for breaking down those silos and bringing departments together.

While the Chief Sales Officer (CSO) primarily owns the sales enablement function in 35% of organisations, Chief Revenue Officers (CROs) and Chief Growth Officer (CGOs) collectively represent 25% of ownership, reflecting the broader trend of sales and marketing being more aligned.

Where does the primary ownership of the sales enablement function sit within your organisation?



While the largest individual response (38%) saw the responsibility of sales enablement mostly managed by sales with some collaboration with marketing, it's important to say

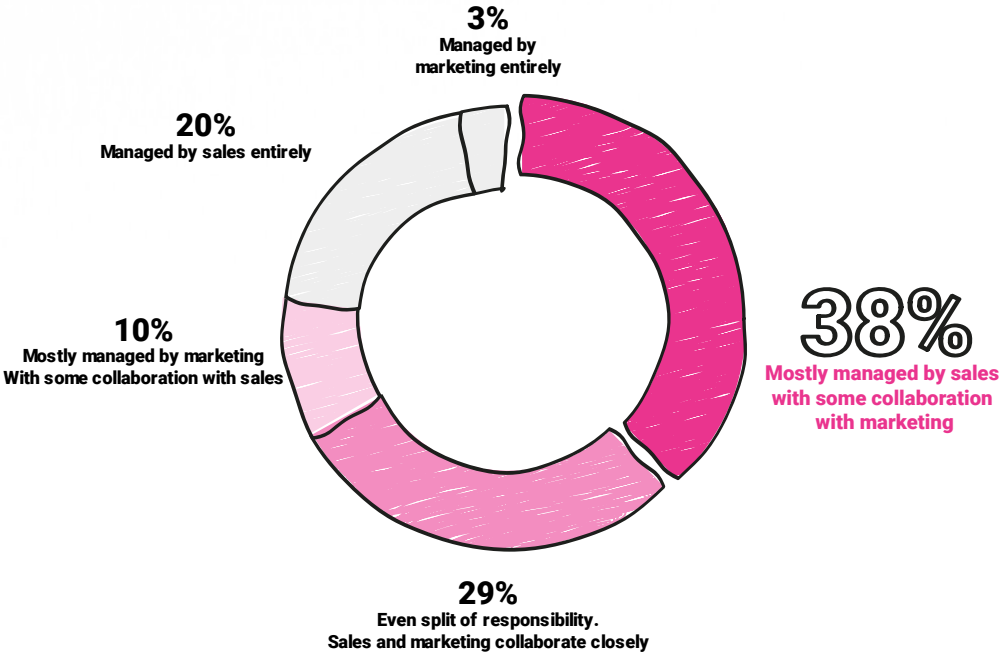
that a total of 77% suggested varying levels of collaboration between the two functions. This clearly suggests a good progression towards greater collaboration.

This is encouraging, as collaboration between sales and marketing is so important. If your organisation has that culture in place, you're well set up for success.

Sales enablement collaboration requires people, data, processes, technology, and tools. At the same time, it also requires marketing to be nimble and spontaneous. You'll need to adjust sales and marketing priorities and budget allocation in order to effectively plan and collaborate.

Pam Didner, Author and Keynote Speaker

How would you describe your organisation's split of responsibility for managing sales enablement between sales and marketing?



Sales enablement doesn't just land within sales. It should really involve the whole business. Everyone should be able to have a high-level discussion on what sales enablement does and the impact it makes. If you've made sure that there is consistency between sales and marketing, then everybody is able to land the right message.

Liz Waugh, Global Director of Sales Enablement, Crayon

Alignment between marketing and sales, with common goals, shared process and a more complete view of the customer journey, is more likely to produce results.

With 80% of respondents reporting that sales and marketing is either fully or somewhat aligned, the results are promising.

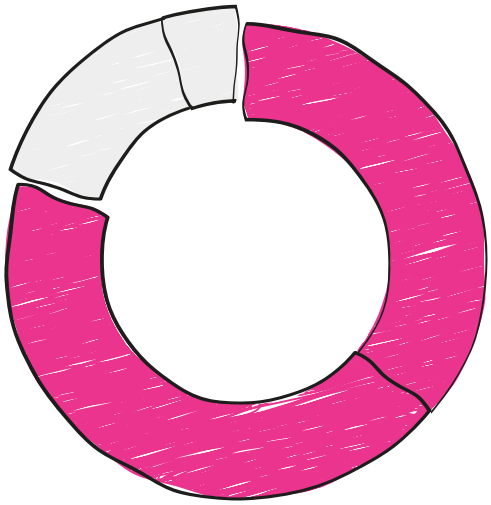
Sales and marketing alignment is not a new phenomenon, it's something that organisations have been looking to deliver for many years, with varying levels of success. What's different now is that the issue can be addressed through technology. This technology allows teams to unify data, share assets and insights.

For example, marketers wouldn't know which messaging is used by salespeople, or the content that resonates with prospects. Now marketers can see data on usage and consumption, and assess which content is most effective, while sales teams can access content to use at each stage of the buyer journey. Such alignment and collaboration can have a powerful business impact.

We have a 50/50 split (between sales and marketing). It's a definite partnership. While both teams have a common purpose in developing client relationships, the engagement models will differ and so information needs and development priorities will vary. Working together to remain client-focused makes sense.

Stewart Conway, Head of Digital & Sales Enablement, Columbia Threadneedle

How would you describe the alignment of marketing and sales in your organisation?



80%
Fully aligned/ Somewhat aligned

Marketing plays a core role in sales enablement, leveraging technology to capture data analytics and client insights to help shape strategy and inform how we market.

A connected martech strategy ensures improved synergies between marketing and distribution, leveraging technology to drive personalisation, increase engagement, and to build meaningful relationships that enable sales.

Deon Pillay, Head of Marketing Operations, Legal & General Investment Management (LGIM)

While sales and marketing are clearly the biggest contributors to the sales enablement ecosystem, the lack of engagement with HR/L&D, Customer Success and IT (25%) all raise concerns.

Sales enablement doesn't end with the sales and marketing function. It should be an ecosystem that aligns all customer facing departments, and the teams that support them.

Sharing knowledge across all those teams is a critical element to enablement success. Those with greater sales enablement maturity are able to manage content and knowledge and harness the information available to them.

Which of the following departments would you describe as being involved with your sales enablement ecosystem?

DEPARTMENT	%
Sales	67%
Marketing	53%
Growth / Revenue / Commercial	49%
Human Resources / L&D	14%
Product Management	38%
Customer Success & Support	20%
IT	25%
Senior Leadership	30%

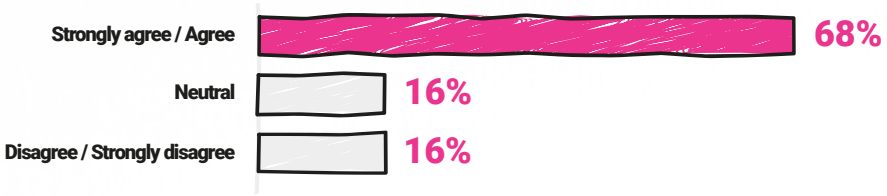
Another concerning statistic is that just under a third of respondents still don't feel their customer-facing departments are fully aware of their product offerings and positioning.

All customer-facing teams need to come together to create a seamless process that is tailored to the buyer's needs. When all departments are working towards this holistic view of the customer and your offering, then unified customer experience will help deliver long-term business relationships and revenue growth.

Partnership and collaboration between marketing and distribution is fundamental in ensuring a connected and seamless enablement strategy. This comes with trust and an increased understanding of products, target markets and client preferences. The increased pivot to digital-first and tech-driven marketing, has forced marketers to sharpen their regulatory understanding, data analytical and coding skills.

Deon Pillay, Head of Marketing Operations, Legal & General Investment Management (LGIM)

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? 'Every customer-facing department is fully aware of our product offerings and positioning, market and customer opportunity and ways to achieve revenue targets.'



07 Building sales and sales enablement capabilities

Successful sales enablement depends on having the right people and skills. In this section, we'll explore some of the issues facing organisations, such as talent shortages, and the importance of training to fill these gaps.

Talent and the need for training

Training and coaching is probably one of the most fundamental drivers for successful sales performance, but a key theme running through this report is the difficulties in finding people with the required skills and knowledge.

72% of our respondents feel that the market is lacking sales enablement professionals with the necessary salestech, data, sales content or sales operations skills and knowledge.

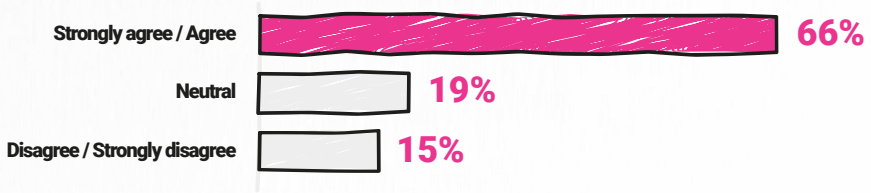
Lack of staff and resources is also seen as one of the biggest barriers to sales enablement maturity, cited by 52% of respondents.

72% of organisations strongly agree / agree...

The market is lacking sales professionals with the necessary salestech, data, sales content or sales operations skills and knowledge

In addition, 34% of firms say they lack the internal skills and talent required to capitalise on sales technology investment.

To what extent do you agree with this statement?
'Our organisation has the internal skills and talent needed to capitalise on the sales technology investment'



With this lack of available talent on the market, it's likely we'll see a battle for talent in the year ahead. Organisations will need to invest in the talent they have, and work hard to support and improve their skill sets.

If you were hoping that in order to achieve that nirvana of amazing sales enablement, all you needed to do was just hire great people, it's not that simple. You're going to have to think about nurturing talent, about upskilling and reskilling. You need amazing people to have amazing sales enablement maturity. There really is a challenge around talent in the year ahead.

Carlos Doughty, CEO and Course Instructor, LXA

This brings us to training. The good news is that 75% of organisations have structured sales training programmes to upskill or reskill employees.

For the 25% of the respondents that don't have a formalised, structured sales training programme, there is clearly work to be done via the sales enablement initiatives. They need to utilise the experience of internal sales leaders, integrate advanced training experiences, and optimise the use of technology for 'just in time' knowledge sharing.

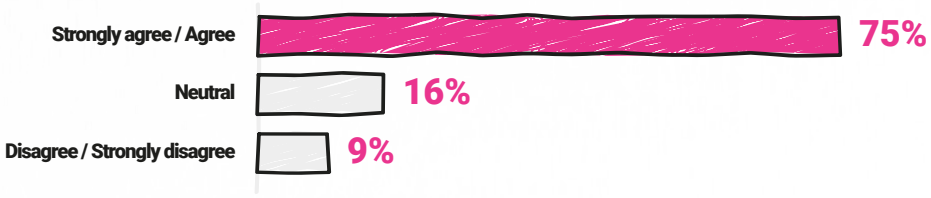
A lot of training and coaching has historically been centralised and pushed to the employee. The beauty of what we call just-in-time training and coaching is that you actually deliver knowledge at a time of need to your seller, so anyone in the organisation can become an expert on any topic. They don't need to memorise it anymore, as it can be delivered at the point where it is needed.

Winnie Palmer, EMEA Head of Marketing, Seismic

Those without will find it hard to deliver results in a difficult economic environment. They will find it hard to retain their workforce, as the performance levels and overall remuneration of each member of the sales team declines.

The most innovative companies know that a downturn is the right time to increase spending on activities with a greater return on investment. Few other areas will have more impact on growth, than empowering your sales teams with the tools, content, knowledge, insight and skills to delight their clients.

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? 'Our organisation has formalised, structured sales training programmes to help upskill our sales team.'



Sales enablement is not just about technology. It's important to focus on the people. Training and coaching is probably one of the most fundamental drivers for successful sales performance.

Winnie Palmer, EMEA Head of Marketing, Seismic

Sales enablement training is essential to help the salesforce adapt to new ways of selling; the use of technology; and changing customer journeys and behaviours.

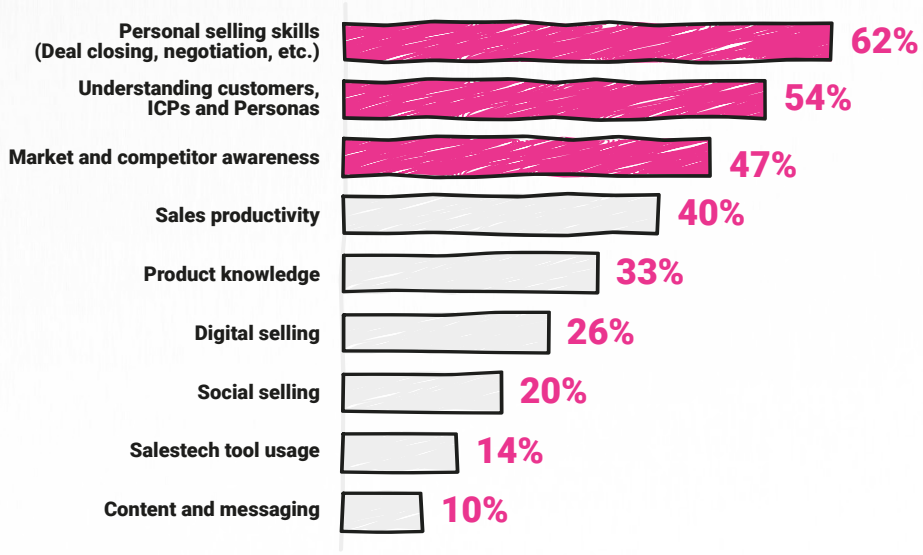
Teams also need to be prepared to work with buyers who are more sophisticated and informed than ever. They need to show expertise around the product or service they're selling, and show an advanced knowledge of the industry they work in.

Most importantly, they need to know all about their customers, the various personas involved in the buying decision, and their key pain points.

Personal selling skills such as deal closing, negotiation, etc (62%) are the most common element to sales training, ahead of understanding customers, ICPs and Personas (54%).

This suggests that organisations are placing a much greater focus on the consumer and the seller, rather than the product itself, with product knowledge seen as essential by just 33% of respondents.

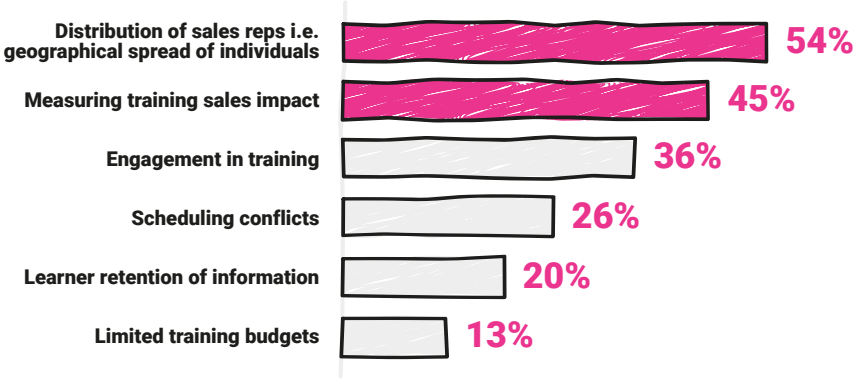
Which of the following areas do you see as essential in your organisation's sales training and coaching?



Companies are facing various challenges in delivering successful sales enablement training.

A mixture of remote and hybrid working has meant that teams are now more distributed, and it's this distribution which is seen as a major challenge for 54% of respondents. This can contribute to scheduling conflicts, cited by 26% of respondents.

What do you see as the most common challenges in delivering effective sales training in your organisation?



Some answers suggest that training is not being delivered effectively, with engagement in training (36%) and learner retention of information being key challenges (20%).

The method of training is important to consider here. While some companies may offer full-time intensive learning courses, a better option is to think of training as an ongoing activity.

Training is an interesting one in that people learn in very many different ways. A lot of salespeople want to get out and do the job and meet clients. They are action orientated, so we have to change training to account for this. So give them a little bit, let them play with it. Take feedback, let them play again. Training needs to be delivered in smaller chunks so people have more ability to gain experience and develop, learning a little at a time.

Stewart Conway, Head of Digital & Sales Enablement, Columbia Threadneedle

Snackable training, portioned out in smaller segments is more likely to engage staff, and will encourage retention of information. Indeed, according to RPS research, microlearning improves knowledge retention by 80%.[(10)]

Organising training in short interactive sessions helps to achieve higher engagement, and such sessions can be supplemented with short and focused messages, and relevant information that can help your salespeople in doing their jobs.

Onboarding is another key issue to consider. Research suggests that it can take three to four months to onboard new sales people, but if your onboarding process is clearly defined you can reduce the time it takes for your new recruits to make their first sale.

Content, process & measurement

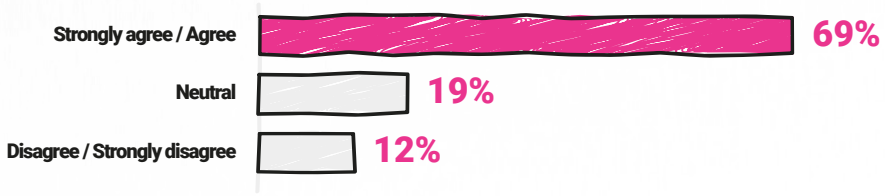
An integral part of effective sales enablement is a strong content strategy. Sales enablement teams need to provide useful and trustworthy information that empowers the buyers' purchase decision, aligns with your sales funnel, and converts prospects in each stage of your process.

An integrated content strategy aligning the traditional 'broadcast' marketing content at the early awareness stages with the 1:1 content for sales at the latter stages, makes a huge difference.

For example, while blog articles and whitepapers are used in the awareness stages, more detailed content such as product reviews, product demos and case studies play a greater role further along the buyer journey.

The good news is that 69% of organisations feel they have the salestech tools and processes to drive content strategy effectively.

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? 'Our organisation has the salestech tools and processes to drive our sales content strategy effectively.'



Content is key to helping your prospects and customers understand who you are, what you do, and how you can help them. But that's not all it can and should do. When you plan your sales enablement editorial calendar and content, it's vital to understand sales' needs so you can create content that doesn't just support your marketing efforts, but also helps your sales team close deals.

Pam Didner, Author and Keynote Speaker

Sales technology plays a key role in content strategy. It enables sellers to find, personalise, and share memorable content with their prospects or customers in a matter of seconds.

It will help ensure a company's content library is always current while providing the flexibility for content to be personalised as required.

Technology also has a role to play in measurement. This may mean understanding what content is being used, and in what stage of the buyer journey, and identifying and filling gaps where content is needed.

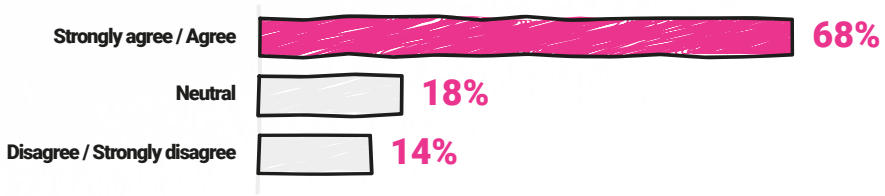
It's also important to demonstrate a return on investment from your content and from sales enablement in general. Measurement is key to be able to understand and optimise the effect that sales enablement has on sales. This becomes more important in uncertain economic conditions.

In an ever-changing sales environment, sales enablement leaders and sales managers need to be able to read the signals that tell them what sort of results they can expect. This can also act as an early warning system that can let them know when they're going off track.

Without accurate measurement, you're potentially missing valuable opportunities for sales growth, and lost revenue in terms of investing in inadequate sales enablement strategies.

68% of sales leaders agree that their companies have the procedures and metrics to measure the effectiveness of sales enablement. However, that leaves 32% of organisations which have plenty of room for improvement.

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? 'Our organisation has the process, procedures and metrics to analyse sales effectiveness of our sales enablement efforts.'



Measurement is also key for reporting to senior stakeholders, and for justifying further investment in technology and the sales enablement function in general.

It's important to agree on and use metrics that communicate performance effectively, and that are easily understood.

Most sales leaders are focusing on sales deal win rates KPIs (60%), increase in new business and ROI (42%), and uplift in customer retention (52%).

The metric to measure the impact on the sales team (Uplift in sales team retention / reduced sales recruitment time & costs) was disappointingly low at only 14%, but does improve with the overall size of the organisation.

How does your organisation measure sales enablement effectiveness?	
Improvements in sales deal win rates KPIs	**60%**
Uplift in customer retention / Reduced customer churn, increase customer repeat rate	**51%**
Increase in new business / Increase return on investment (ROI)	**42%**
Improvement in sales content engagement rates KPIs	**35%**
Increase in sales productivity KPIs / Return on time (ROT)	**30%**
Improvements in sales deal velocity KPIs	**26%**
Uplift in average sales deal size	**23%**
Uplift in sales team retention / reduced sales recruitment time & costs	**14%**
Our organisation doesn't measure it	**2%**

There are the typical metrics you would expect that we would track, but we also look at how sales enablement influences our business priorities. I think being able to tie the outcomes of sales enablement back to business objectives can be more effective in demonstrating the value of sales enablement.

Liz Waugh, Global Director of Sales Enablement, Crayon

08 Investing in the right salestech tools

With the increased complexity discussed earlier in this report, organisations require the right technology to guide customers through the buyer journey; to collect and use data; and to deliver the right content and message at each stage of the buyer journey.

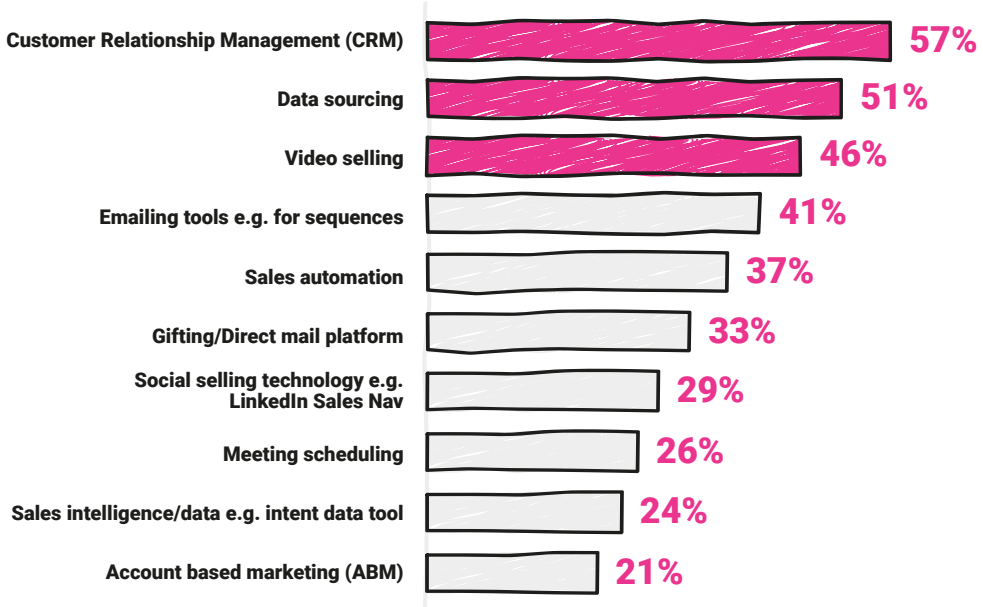
With so many tools to choose from, it's important that tech selection is carried out in a planned and strategic way. This is outlined in the Platforms, Apps and Ecosystem section of the LXA Sales Enablement Maturity model, and in more detail in LXA's 5Ps of Marketing Technology.

Current tech

On average, respondents highlighted five pieces of sales technology currently in use within their organisation.

CRM systems were the most commonly used. Data sourcing, Emailing Tools and Video Selling were also used in nearly half of the organisations we surveyed.

Which of the following sales enablement technologies are currently in use within your organisation?



Many of these salestech tools and capabilities are part of Sales Enablement Platforms (SEPs). These SEPs integrate with existing tools in the sales stack, and provide tools for training, buyer engagement, sales intelligence, and automation.

Sales enablement shouldn't be just another tool. It should be something that works with your existing CRM because that's the natural environment your sellers would go to. In effect, sellers don't even feel they're using another tool.

By having that integration in the back-end as a really flexible and configurable architecture, you enable an almost frictionless experience for your sellers.

Winnie Palmer, EMEA Head of Marketing, Seismic

Looking at some of the most common issues we've heard from our community recently, we can look at how organisations are acquiring tech to solve sales technology issues and unlock opportunities.

These issues broadly fall into the following categories:

Sales Intelligence

Sales revolves around data, for lead qualification, to understand customers, and to assess the effectiveness of the sales enablement process.

Data sourcing tech is the second most common tool, as sales teams look to collect and integrate data from a wide range of sources.

Sales intelligence tools help teams to monitor data and identify triggers for your sales teams. Sales intelligence can not only save hours of research time, but also enables salespeople to improve their preparation for pitches and proposals.

It will empower teams to deliver data-backed behaviour and better business outcomes.

Efficiency

Many of the tools being added to sales stacks are designed to create more efficient processes, and allow sales teams to focus on what they do best - closing deals.

Tech can help teams avoid repetitive tasks, such as scheduling meetings. It enables reps to spend more time selling and connecting with buyers instead of spending their time just prepping to sell.

Meeting scheduling tools make it easier for your team to manage their own calendars and for customers to get in touch as needed, blocking out times when sales reps are unavailable and speeding up the booking process.

Buyer engagement and personalisation

Buyers expect tailored, personalised experiences, and several of these tools help sales teams to communicate in a more personalised way.

Gifting platforms allow sales people to stand out through direct personalised gifting, while video selling allows for one-to-one communication in an era where sales interactions are often remote.

Video selling includes virtual meetings as well as the use of video for pitching and demos. Short, engaging clips of less than two minutes allow sales people to introduce themselves, deliver value with a quick tip and ask to schedule a call.

Account Based Marketing (ABM)

Used by 21% of respondents, ABM tech delivers a strategy to target key customers and accounts for maximum return via efficient use of marketing resources.

It's an approach becoming ever-more popular with B2B organisations, often when selling more complex products and services with longer sales cycles.

ABM involves the coordination of resources to create highly-personalised campaigns focused on a targeted set of accounts that matter most for the business, thereby increasing the likelihood of converting prospects to sales when compared to using lead-focused models alone.

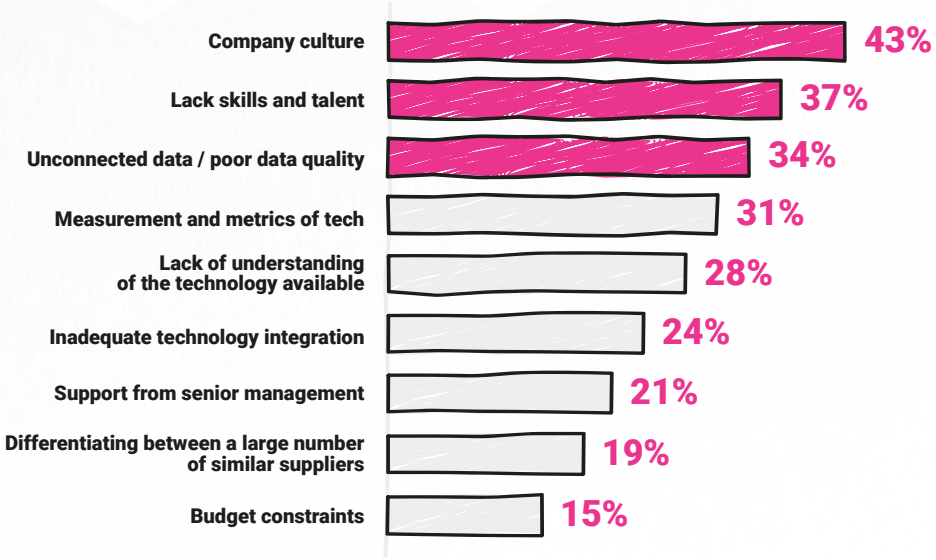
The combination of ABM strategy and technology, alongside sales enablement methodology represents one of biggest opportunities for driving sales growth.

Barriers to tech implementation

Company culture is seen as the biggest barrier to implementing new sales technology by our respondents. With limited budgets cited by just 15% of respondents, this suggests that companies have the money to spend on sales technology, but are held back by company culture, and by a lack of skills.

For sales technology to be acquired and used successfully, organisations require skilled people, time, resources, and the right set up and configuration.

What are the biggest barriers to implementing new sales technology?



In Formula One, drivers like James Hunt just got in the car and raced. Likewise, the sales person just wants to get on with the job. Now drivers are racing with all of that telemetry, technology and a team of experts around them. The best drivers are the ones who can provide feedback and help craft the car (tool) around them. If you can't provide effective and progressive feedback loops, the car won't perform, the team won't perform and you end up at the back of the pack scrambling for minor points and places.

We now have more technology around to support the sales enablement process. What we've got to be able to do is work closely in a language that actually helps this technology to support individuals and master key feedback loops. Sales teams need to become more digitally enabled. That also means being able to provide constructive feedback on the digital platform they're using.

Stewart Conway, Head of Digital & Sales Enablement, Columbia Threadneedle

Future tech

Sales organisations need to be able to keep up with market trends, changes in customer behaviour, and to be able to assess and experiment with new technologies that emerge.

On average each respondent said they would be looking to invest in 2.1 emerging sales enablement technologies over the next 12 months.

Our survey finds that technology using AI is high on the shopping lists of CSOs, CGOs and CROs, thanks to its potential to automate workflows and improve customer experience.

54% will be investing in AI-enabled meeting scheduling, which helps sales people to optimise busy schedules and find gaps for key meetings.

Conversational chatbots, which also use AI, are the choice for 47% of respondents. Chatbots are used to optimise the customer experience, enabling customers to have queries answered quickly.

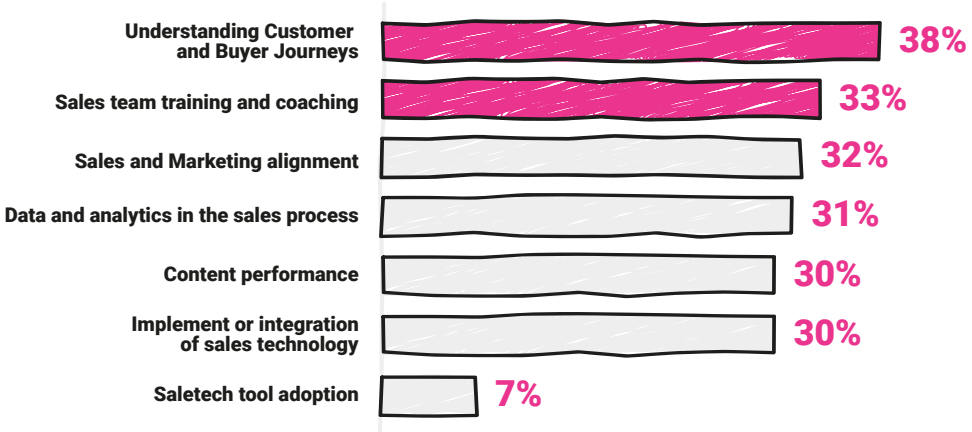
One common theme with much of the emerging tech on the sales radar is that it is very customer-focused and practical rather than experimental. This perhaps reflects the need for sales teams to tie investment more directly to sales outcomes.

For example, while our State of Martech 2022/2023 report found that 53% of CMOs would be using metaverse related tech in their 2023 marketing strategy, just 24% of sales leaders plan to invest in the metaverse next year.[11]

Sales alignment is a key priority in the year ahead for 32% of respondents. While 80% of organisations report that sales and marketing is either fully or somewhat aligned, there is clearly still room for improvement here.

The same is true of training, with 33% seeing it as a key focus for the next 12 months. As we've discussed earlier in this report, with a shortage of talent in the market, and sales enablement maturity being held back by a lack of skills and knowledge, this is an important area of focus.

Which of the following strategic sales enablement competencies will you be looking to improve over the next 12 months?



About Seismic

Seismic is the global leader in enablement, helping organisations engage customers, enable teams, and ignite revenue growth.

The Seismic Enablement Cloud™ is the most powerful, unified enablement platform that equips customer-facing teams with the right skills, content, tools, and insights to grow and win.

From the world's largest enterprises to startups and small businesses, more than 2,000 organisations around the globe trust Seismic for their enablement needs.

Seismic is headquartered in San Diego with offices across North America, Europe, and Australia.

https://seismic.com

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