RESEARCH EDITION

Pipeline theatre

What a decade of systemising the sales process has produced in fast-growth B2B software companies, and what the evidence will and will not support.

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356 sources opened and graded. Every factual statement carries a reference to the evidence ledger in Annex A. This edition prints the tags, the conflicts, the gaps and the audit report. The reading edition for boards is published separately.

How to read this edition

This is the referenced edition. It is written for a reader who wants to check a number rather than take it, and it prints everything the reading edition leaves out.

Every factual statement carries a reference in square brackets to an entry in the evidence ledger, in the form [E001]. The ledger holds 356 entries, and Annex A prints each one with its claim, source, publisher, date, grade and status. Every page cited was opened on 2 November 2026. Nothing was taken from a search result summary.

Sources are graded by their independence from the subject. Grade A is regulatory filings, government statistics and peer-reviewed research. Grade B is independent analyst research that names its method or sample. Grade C covers trade and practitioner publications, established news organisations and investor or consultancy reports about a market in general. Material produced by a vendor or a party it pays is grade D, and every figure from such a source carries the tag [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified] unless an independent source corroborates it. Review sites, forums and social posts are grade E, used only as a signal of what to investigate and never as the source of a figure.

Four further tags appear in the text. [INFERENCE: derived from E000] marks a conclusion drawn one step from a named entry. [CALCULATION: inputs E000; operation stated] marks arithmetic on sourced figures. [DATA CONFLICT C00] marks a point where sources disagree, logged in Annex B. [DATA GAP G00] marks a point where the evidence a section needed does not exist in anything opened, also logged in Annex B.

The ledger is also published as a spreadsheet, with the quotation, sample, corroboration and research stream for every entry, so that it can be sorted and filtered. Annex A prints the columns that matter for checking a citation.

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1. Summary

Fast-growth business-to-business (B2B) software-as-a-service (SaaS) companies have spent a decade systemising their sales process: encoding it in customer relationship management (CRM) and revenue tools, handing the tools to a revenue operations (RevOps) function, measuring the process by leading indicators and now automating it with artificial intelligence (AI). This paper examines what that has produced, on 356 sources opened and graded on 2 November 2026, and finds that the instruments have multiplied while most of the outcome series they were meant to improve have declined or flattened. The dashboards are full and the quota is missed. That is pipeline theatre, and its audience is the board.

Five findings carry the argument. RevOps is real and widespread, and the evidence used to justify it is weak. The growth and profit multiples attached to the function trace back to a 2015 benchmark talk giving "up to 19 percent", a 2021 blog remark with no sample and a vendor-sponsored survey with no published size [E010] [E014] [E012] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified], while Gartner's 2021 prediction that 75% of the highest growth companies would deploy RevOps by 2025 has passed its date with no outcome reported [E001] [E003]. The one independent measurement shows what the function became: sales operations' time on the sales function fell from 61% in 2019 to 27% in 2022 [E005].

The relationship between the chief revenue officer (CRO) and RevOps is moving from support to design. Forrester now describes RevOps as the architect of the operating model and the owner of decision rights [E033], Gartner calls for the system to be redesigned around sellers [E036], only 23% of chief sales officers are accountable for selecting the AI their teams use [E037], and the only tenure figure with a dataset gives the CRO an implied median of 1.8 years [E355] (single source). The process now lives in systems the sales leader did not choose, run by a function whose goals, on one vendor survey, 89% say are not clearly defined [E024] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified].

The leading indicators boards ask for have no demonstrated predictive validity. No dataset in the record links pipeline coverage to attainment, the 3x rule is a practitioners' convention that becomes self-fulfilling once demanded [E132] [E299], and the one quantified sign of what happens next is a vendor's finding that 68% of deals advanced past qualification were not qualified [E081] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The outcomes, meanwhile, moved: on three non-comparable series the share of sellers at quota fell between 2022 and the latest edition of each series [E101] [E107] [E114] (two of the three are vendor datasets) [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified], 60% of sales development representatives (SDRs) hit quota in 2025, the lowest in that study's history [E137], and four in five organisations in the two surveys that ask report missing a quarterly forecast [E125] [E126] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified].

Automation changes the value of the human relationship in both directions. Buyers increasingly prefer a rep-free path (67% in Gartner's 2025 fieldwork) and report more regret when they take it (43% against 26%) [E266] [E264]; buyers surveyed in the same window rate a seller 21 to 39 percentage points above generative AI on advancing the purchase, confidence, understanding their needs and quantifying benefits, and 69% validate what the AI told them with a seller [E268] [E267] (single source for both). Automated outreach runs on a shared channel with a measured reply rate of 0.45% [E141] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified] and a complaint ceiling of 0.30% now

enforced by its owners [E191]. The human relationship is becoming more valuable at the point of decision and worthless at the point of interruption.

The independent evidence on AI predicts where its gains land, and they land away from where the vendors point. Generative AI raised customer support output by 14% to 15%, with a third more from novices and nothing from experts [E156] [E157]; consultants using it outside its competence got worse [E159]; no field experiment on AI in B2B sales was found [DATA GAP G50: no B2B sales field experiment 2024 to 2026 / decision: AI performance in B2B sales treated as unmeasured]; and the vendor results that fill the gap measure leads touched, meetings booked and agents activated [E172] [E174] [E176] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified], while the one vendor figure about deals won is an uncontrolled correlation [E178] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The AI SDR category's own record, as reported by the trade press, includes a prospective customer's report that a trial "performed significantly worse than our SDR employees" [E182] and an estimate, from a practitioner who deploys the tools himself, that 90% of deployments produce nothing [E184] [E185].

The paper's position is that the convergence of sales process, RevOps systems and AI is a sound way to make a process survive turnover and a poor way to find out whether it works, because the instruments it installs stop meaning anything once the board reads them. The recommendations are to change what the board asks for (to-go coverage, win rate by source, stage conversion on the same cohort and deal quality by buying path, in place of the fixed ratio), to write the decision-rights charter between the CRO and RevOps before the next budget review, to treat every vendor result as a claim until measured with a holdout, to reinvest the hours AI saves into buyer-facing preparation, to cap the stack and measure use, to run outbound as a scarce resource, to put data quality on the manager's scorecard, and to keep a senior seller on the renewal and expansion path where the buyer most regrets being alone. Five scenarios for the continued trajectory are set out as conditions with their signals in section 11; the one the evidence favours, in which the relationship earns a premium, is also the one no company in the record has yet measured.

2. Scope, method and evidence standard

This paper examines B2B SaaS companies in a fast-growth phase, their sales leadership and their RevOps function, and the systems, metrics and AI now wrapped around the sales process. The evidence is global and weighted to the United States (US), because that is where the benchmark publishers and analyst surveys draw most of their respondents; figures that cover the United Kingdom (UK) or Europe are flagged where they exist, and most surveys pool UK respondents without a breakout. The research was carried out on 2 November 2026 and the paper is written in British English. Sourced figures keep the currency and unit their source gives.

Every factual statement in the paper carries a reference in square brackets to an entry in the evidence ledger in Annex A, in the form [E001]. The ledger holds 356 entries. Each entry records the claim, the source title, the publisher or author, the publication date, the web address, the date the page was opened, a grade, a short verbatim quotation or locator, the sample where the source states one, and corroboration. Every page cited was opened on 2 November 2026; nothing was taken from a search result summary, and pages that could not be opened are listed

as such and not relied on. Where a quotation appears in the text it is under fifteen words and matches the opened page; where only a secondary page could be opened, the text says so.

Sources are graded by their independence from the subject, on the scale set out in the guardrails this paper was written under. Grade A is regulatory filings, government statistics and peer-reviewed research; B is independent analyst research that names its method or sample; C covers trade and practitioner publications, established news organisations and investor or consultancy reports about a market in general. Material produced by a vendor or a party it pays, including a vendor's own survey report, press release or customer story, is grade D, and every figure from such a source carries the tag [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified] unless an A, B or C source corroborates it, so a reader should weigh those figures accordingly. Review sites, forums and social posts are grade E, used only as a signal of what to investigate and never as the source of a figure. Of the 356 entries, the grade D and E material is concentrated in three places: the sales technology vendors' own surveys, the outbound reply-rate datasets, and the AI vendors' reported results; the paper uses them because they are the only data of their kind, and labels them every time.

Four further tags appear in the text. [INFERENCE: derived from E000] marks a conclusion drawn one step from a named entry; an inference supports a judgement and never supplies a missing figure. [CALCULATION: inputs E000; operation stated] marks arithmetic on sourced figures, with the working shown. [DATA CONFLICT C00] marks a point where sources disagree, with the decision taken; the conflicts are logged in Annex B. [DATA GAP G00] marks a point where the evidence required for a section does not exist in anything opened; the gaps are logged in Annex B and the affected passage states what cannot be concluded. Analyst predictions are reported as forecasts with their author and date and are never used as measures of what has happened. Rules of thumb published by investors and practitioners are reported as the named author's view. Where several published figures for the same thing disagree and none states its method, none is used as a fact.

The evidence base has limits that the reader should hold in mind. No field experiment on AI in B2B sales between 2024 and 2026 was found; the controlled evidence on AI at work concerns customer support, consulting and consumer retail. The record holds no independent source for CRO tenure with a stated sample, so the one figure used comes from a vendor's compensation database as reported by a practitioner and is labelled single source. Nothing in it links pipeline coverage to attainment, and no controlled study links activity volumes to outcomes. Several Gartner releases would not open directly and their wording was taken from Gartner's own distribution through Business Wire or from verbatim reproductions, which the ledger records. The research streams exhausted their search allowance before every planned query could be run, and the queries not run are listed in the gap log so that the work can be continued. The paper is a document for decision makers, so it states a position where the evidence supports one and says plainly where it does not.

Three terms are used consistently. "Sellers" means quota-carrying salespeople of any title; sources that say "reps" are quoted as written, and Gartner's survey terms "rep-free" and "rep-led" are kept as the survey wording. "The CRO" means the chief revenue officer or, where a source surveyed chief sales officers, that role, which the text names. "The board" means the directors and investors to whom the revenue leader reports.

3. Where revenue operations came from and what it now owns

RevOps is a young function with an old job. The charter that gave it a name was presented by SiriusDecisions at an operations conference on 13 May 2019 [E008], four months after Forrester completed its purchase of SiriusDecisions on 3 January 2019 [E009] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Boston Consulting Group followed in May 2020 with a definition built on centralising the operations teams of marketing, sales and customer success under one cross-functional leader [E016]. Gartner supplied the prediction that has been repeated ever since. On 17 May 2021 it said that by 2025, 75% of the highest growth companies in the world would deploy a RevOps model [E001]. The release gives no method, no sample and no definition of "highest growth"; a later Gartner infographic rests the same claim on a 2020 survey of 299 respondents [E002]. The target year has passed. No Gartner page opened for this paper reports whether the prediction came true, and Gartner's own implementation guide still carries it in the future tense as of 2 November 2026 [E003]. Vendor and recruiter pages have moved the year to 2026 without saying so [E028] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. [DATA GAP G04: no Gartner follow-up on the 2021 prediction / decision: the prediction is treated as a forecast with its author and date, never as a measure of adoption]

The definitions converge. Gartner's infographic describes RevOps as a spectrum of practices rather than a department [E002]; Forrester calls it a highly configured, iterative commercial execution strategy [E015]; HubSpot's explainer says RevOps owns data, processes and systems across all revenue teams and most commonly reports to the CRO [E025] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Strip the adjectives and the job is the same in each: the process, the data, the systems and the measures that sit between marketing, sales and customer success.

What the function became is visible in one independent time series. Gartner's survey of 318 sales leaders in August and September 2022 found that sales operations teams spent 73% of their time supporting non-sales functions, up from 39% in 2019, and that only 27% of their time went to the sales function in 2022 against 61% three years earlier [E005]. The analyst described the shift as deliberate, part of a move to a RevOps model [E005]. Read plainly, the people who used to run the sales process now spend most of their week on something else [INFERENCE: derived from E005]. That is the clearest measured fact in the record about what RevOps did to sales operations, and it is Gartner's.

How many companies have the function is less clear, because every adoption figure is a vendor or community survey with its own population. Revenue.io's 2022 benchmark (over 250 companies, November to December 2021) found 48% with a RevOps function, the origin of the 48% that circulates [E021] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The Openprise 2024 survey (152 operations professionals) found 35% with a formal RevOps department and a further 32.5% with a functional team but no department, and it found no better go-to-market alignment in companies with the formal department than the average [E022] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The Revenue Operations Alliance's 2023 report, in which 28% of respondents were in the UK and Europe, found that 59.8% of organisations had had RevOps for one to two years, 90.3% for under five, and that 40.2% had no dedicated budget [E023]. A Salesloft-commissioned Wakefield survey of 400 US respondents in July 2025 found 73% with a C-suite role dedicated to RevOps [E024] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]; the same survey found that 89% said RevOps lacks clearly defined strategic goals and 79% still categorised it as sales-adjacent [E024] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The 73% and the 35% measure different things in different populations [DATA CONFLICT C06:

Salesloft 73% with a C-suite RevOps role against Openprise 35% with a formal department / decision: both reported with their definitions; neither used alone as the adoption rate; decided by the author]. No source of grade A or B measures adoption at all.

Reporting lines are equally unsettled. Where RevOps was centralised in 2019 it reported to a CRO in 46% of organisations [E013] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. In the 2024 Openprise sample 41% reported to the CRO, 21% to the chief financial officer and 10% to the chief operating officer [E022] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]; in the 2023 Revenue Operations Alliance sample 30.4% reported to the CRO and 25.6% to the chief executive [E023]. The 2025 Wakefield respondents said their RevOps teams worked most closely with chief operating officers (26%), chief executives (25%) and chief financial officers (24%) [E024] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Nothing independent fixes the proportion [DATA CONFLICT C05: four surveys, four populations, four answers / decision: reported together as a range of findings, no single figure used; decided by the author]. The honest summary is that RevOps reports to whoever set it up.

The claimed payoff deserves more scrutiny than it usually gets, because boards have funded the function on it. The figure most often quoted, 19% faster growth and 15% higher profitability for aligned organisations, originates in a SiriusDecisions Summit talk in 2015 which gave it as "up to 19 percent faster revenue growth", drawn from benchmark data on 400 B2B organisations between 2006 and 2014 [E010]. Forrester's chief executive restated it in January 2019 as a description of SiriusDecisions' clients against their peers [E009] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified], which is a different claim [DATA CONFLICT C01: alignment result against client result / decision: the 2015 wording with its "up to" qualifier is the only version used]. A second figure, 36% more revenue growth and up to 28% more profitability, comes from a Forrester blog of 11 January 2021 that refers only to emerging companies in a prepare-for-exit stage, gives no sample or method, and never uses the words revenue operations [E014]. Growth of "12 to 15 times faster" attributed to alignment in 2019 reads in Forrester's own 2018 abstract as SiriusDecisions clients against non-clients [E008] [E011] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. A 2019 finding that organisations with revenue operations grew nearly three times faster and that public companies with it had 71% higher stock performance came from a survey co-run with LeanData, InsightSquared and Outreach, three vendors of RevOps software, with no published sample [E012] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Boston Consulting Group's 2020 ranges (100% to 200% increases in digital marketing return, 10% to 20% in sales productivity, 30% reductions in go-to-market expense) are attributed to unnamed companies with no method [E016]. A widely repeated LinkedIn growth multiple for RevOps-related roles ends at an agency blog from September 2022 with no source [E019], and it must not be repeated as a fact. What can be said is narrower. LinkedIn's Jobs on the Rise list for the United States ranked Head of Revenue Operations first for title growth between January 2018 and July 2022 [E018], which measures hiring, and says nothing about results.

The demand curve may have turned. A Pavilion editorial of 29 July 2025 reported LinkedIn RevOps job advertisements falling from about 26,000 to 21,000 between May 2024 and May 2025 and Indeed's open RevOps roles falling from about 25,000 to 19,000 in twelve months; the piece gives no source for either figure [E020], so they are recorded here as the editorial's own unsourced figures and nothing more [DATA CONFLICT C07: the 2023 ranking shows growth, the 2025 editorial shows decline / decision: both reported with dates; the direction since 2024 is unconfirmed]. On RevOps staffing, ICONIQ's 2026 go-to-market survey, as summarised by SaaStr, found the median company planning 0% RevOps headcount growth in 2026, with RevOps time split 22% on data and reporting, 22% on systems and tools, 13% on enablement, 13% on planning, 10% on AI experimentation, 9% on the deal desk and 9% on pricing and packaging [E214] (single source,

second-hand). On that split 44% of the function's week goes to data, reporting, systems and tools [CALCULATION: inputs E214; operation: 22% plus 22%], which is to say to feeding and maintaining the instruments [INFERENCE: derived from E214].

The position this paper takes is that RevOps is a reasonable answer to a real problem, and that the evidence used to sell it is not. The function exists because somebody has to own the process, the data and the systems once a company has more than one revenue team. The growth and profit multiples attached to it trace back to benchmark talks, client marketing, consultancy ranges without a method and vendor-sponsored surveys. The one independent measurement shows the function drifting away from the sellers it was created to support.

4. Sales leadership and revenue operations, and who now owns what

The CRO owns the number. Almost everything else about the role is narrower than the title suggests. In Revenue.io's 2021 fieldwork, 46% of companies had a CRO and only 10% had a CRO responsible for marketing, sales and customer success together [E021] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Forrester found in 2019 that CROs were 2.9 times more likely to manage sales than marketing [E013] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified], and a consultant writing in 2023 put the share of his own client CROs running all three functions at under 10% [E039]. The title says revenue; the job, in most companies, is sales.

The job is also short. The only tenure figure found with a stated dataset is Pave's analysis of 14,000 executives in its compensation database, reported by SaaStr on 22 July 2025: an implied median tenure of 1.8 years for CROs and an annual turnover rate of 32%, the same as for chief marketing officers [E355] (single source; Pave's own publication of the analysis was not located). Spencer Stuart's January 2026 study of S&P 500 companies gives chief marketing officers 4.1 years against 5.0 for all C-suite roles and offers no CRO figure [E041]; the only other number in circulation sits unsourced on a marketing site [E044] and is not used here. [DATA GAP G01: no independent CRO tenure figure with a sample / decision: the Pave figure is used with its source and the single-source label] Whatever the true median is, Gartner's January to February 2026 survey of 210 chief sales officers (CSOs) found 60% saying their revenue number is largely driven by factors outside their control [E095]. A leader who holds the number for under two years and believes most of it is outside their control will manage through whatever instruments are to hand [INFERENCE: derived from E095 and E355].

The instruments are increasingly chosen by someone else. In Gartner's November to December 2024 survey of 243 chief sales officers, only 23% were accountable for selecting AI for their organisation; 68% gave input or were informed [E037]. The same survey found 49% saying that sales' definition of a qualified lead differs greatly from marketing's [E037], which is the oldest argument in the building, still unresolved in the companies most likely to have hired RevOps to resolve it. A Censuswide survey for Clari Labs of 400 North American enterprise respondents (September to October 2025) found 64% of revenue leaders saying chief information officer (CIO) teams lead the selection and implementation of forecasting and revenue tools, and only 29% of RevOps teams among the top contributors to AI data work [E042] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The LXA and LeanData study of 201 senior leaders at large B2B organisations (April 2026) found 42% reporting poor alignment between marketing and sales on lead qualification

and only 26% enforcing service level agreements for routing, qualification and lead-to-account matching [E027] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Each of these is a vendor survey and each has an interest in the answer. Taken together with Gartner's 23% [E037], the direction is hard to miss: the sales leader is losing say over the tools that define the process the sales team runs.

The friction between the two functions is well described and badly measured. Pavilion's editorial of 29 July 2025 describes a trust problem in which RevOps is criticised for over-engineering processes and building guardrails that slow deals, is invited to strategic meetings but rarely leads them, levies what the author calls a "tool-fatigue tax", and is cut first when it is seen as overhead [E029]. The same piece says there is a wide gap between how CROs and RevOps leads rate the confidence they have in CRM data, and that most CROs expected their operations budget flat or shrinking in 2025; none of those assertions carries a source, so no figure from them is used here [E029]. RevOps Co-op's practitioner guidance says contributors have been asked to ignore questionable contract language or to "filter" numbers, and that reporting into a functional head "enforces silos" [E026]. Forrester's analysts, writing through 2026, supply the sharpest language from the operations side. Laura Cross wrote in April 2026 that operations roles are cut wherever the operating model is stress-tested and that a function which cannot show who owns decision quality "becomes a cost center, not a control point" [E030]. Anthony McPartlin wrote in July 2026 that RevOps' historical value came from controlling systems, data and process, that AI shifts that value "from production to interpretation", and that if RevOps is seen as slow or procedural, operators will route around it [E031]. None of this is survey data. All of it is analyst opinion rather than measurement, which cuts both ways.

Both analyst firms have arrived, from opposite ends, at a similar operating model, and both state it as a position rather than a measured result. Gartner's 2024 research says RevOps needs no major reorganisation of roles, needs data consolidation and integration but no specific technology, and depends on agreement among the operational functions [E006]; it also notes that sales operations leaders asked to implement RevOps meet resistance because colleagues assume large structural change [E007]. By April 2026 Gartner was saying that enablement "must become an AI-driven function that orchestrates seller behavior in real time" and predicting, for 2029, 40% faster sales stage velocity for organisations that get there [E035] (a forecast; Gartner, 1 April 2026). In May 2026 its analyst attributed stalled seller productivity to operating models built to scale by adding people, and called for "redesigning the system around sellers" [E036]. Forrester's Laura Cross wrote in October 2026 that AI is absorbing much of RevOps' coordination work and that the function should move from running processes to architecting the operating model: continuous rather than periodic planning, orchestrating people, process, technology and AI rather than documenting workflows, and setting AI decision rights [E033]. McPartlin's version is a shift from system mastery and certainty towards calibrated confidence and decision governance [E325]. Ross Graber wrote in September 2026, the inconvenient point in the set, that AI-mediated buyer research now erodes the engagement signals RevOps relies on to do any of this [E032].

The engineer's reading of that convergence is simple. The process is now encoded in the systems. Whoever owns the systems owns the process, and whoever owns the process shapes what sellers do all day. In a control loop one would not ask the actuator to calibrate the sensors, and there is a respectable case that specialisation is exactly right: sellers should sell, RevOps should design, and the CRO should set the target and read the dials. The case against it is in the data on the dials. The function that designs the process spends 44% of its time on data, reporting, systems and tools [E214] (single source, second-hand; the calculation is in section 3),

the sellers who run the process distrust the data in them (section 5), and the leader who answers for the result is losing the vote on which instruments are bought [E037] [E042]. Nobody has yet shown that the redesigned system produces better outcomes. Gartner's own finding that organisations which reinvest AI-saved time are 2.2 times more likely to exceed customer growth goals and 3.1 times more likely to exceed lead-to-opportunity conversion goals [E036] is the best evidence for the ambition, and it is self-reported by 210 leaders in a single survey.

Two more facts belong here because they set the pace. Gartner's late 2025 survey of 227 chief sales officers found sales organisations had completed an average of four transformations in the previous twelve months [E035]. Its survey of over 200 senior sales leaders a year earlier found two in three struggling to shift resources to an emerging priority, with the analyst observing that leaders over-rely on individual sellers [E320]. Four transformations a year and a leader with under two years in post [E355], running a process that lives in tools the leader did not choose: that is the operating reality in which the rest of this paper's evidence has to be read.

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5. The systemisation of the sales process

A B2B sales process in 2026 runs inside a stack of software that records, scores, sequences, transcribes, forecasts and now writes. The stack is large, partly used and distrusted by the people who feed it. Those three findings are the ones the evidence supports; the finding that it makes sellers more productive is the one it does not.

Gartner's survey of 168 sales leaders in late 2021 put the average virtual selling technology stack at 13 technologies [E004]. Salesforce's own surveys, which are the only per-team counts with a stated sample, found sales teams using an average of 10 tools "to close deals" in 2022 (7,775 respondents) [E045] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified] and an average of eight standalone tools in 2025 (4,050 respondents), with 42% of sellers saying they were overwhelmed by too many tools and 84% of teams without an all-in-one platform planning to consolidate [E046] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The two questions were worded differently, so the fall from 10 to eight does not by itself show consolidation [DATA CONFLICT C12: 2022 "tools to close deals" against 2025 "standalone tools" / decision: reported separately; no trend drawn]. At company level the counts depend on who is counting. Zylo's spend data gives an average of 275 applications per company in 2024, flat on 2023 and down from a 2021 peak of 323 [E049] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. BetterCloud's survey of nearly 600 information technology (IT) professionals gives 106 in 2025, with the pace of consolidation slowing from 14% to 5% a year [E052] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Vertice gives 132 in May 2025, and a sales department spend of $10,250 per employee a year, with no method [E051] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified] [DATA CONFLICT C11: 275, 106 and 132 applications per organisation from three populations and methods / decision: all three reported with their sources; none used as the market figure]. Zylo's spend per employee rose 21.9% to $4,830 in its January 2025 index while its application count stayed flat [E048] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]; it also reports that companies used 49% of the licences they had provisioned [E050] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. No source gives sales technology spend per seller with a stated method [DATA GAP G12: no spend per seller figure with a method / decision: none given]. The honest statement is that a sales organisation pays for a stack of somewhere between eight and thirteen tools [E046] [E004], uses, on one company-wide measure, about half of the licences it pays for [E050] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified], and is paying more each year for roughly the same number of things [E048] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified].

The headline figures on how much of a seller's week is spent selling are the most quoted numbers in the trade and the least comparable.

SOURCE	FIELDWORK	SAMPLE	FIGURE	WHAT "SELLING" INCLUDED	GRADE
Salesforce State of Sales [E054]	August to September 2022	7,775 sales professionals, 38 countries	28% of the week selling, 72% on other work	Meeting in person, connecting virtually and prospecting	D
Salesforce State of Sales [E055]	March to April 2024	5,500 sales professionals, 27 countries	70% of time on non-selling tasks	Not defined on the page	D
Salesforce State of Sales [E056]	August to September 2025	4,050 sales professionals, 22 countries including the UK and Ireland	40% selling, 60% not selling	Prospecting and data entry counted as non-selling	D
Forrester sales activity study [E057]	No date shown	Not stated	Two days a week on paperwork and admin; about 14 of 51 working hours	39 categories of routine task	C
McKinsey [E017]	Published July 2023	Nearly 500 B2B companies	Non-selling activities consume two-thirds of the average sales team's time	Not defined	C
Gartner [E059]	March to April 2023	501 sellers	77% struggle to complete assigned tasks efficiently	Not applicable	B

Each figure in the three Salesforce rows is a vendor claim [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified], and prospecting moved from "selling" in 2022 to "not selling" in 2025, so the apparent recovery from 28% to 40% is partly a change of definition [DATA CONFLICT C13: Salesforce selling time, prospecting reclassified between editions / decision: each edition reported with its own definition; no trend drawn]. No independent time-and-motion study with a stated sample was found for 2024 to 2026. What can be said with some confidence is that, however it is counted, most of a seller's week is not spent with buyers, and the systems meant to fix that are part of what fills it.

Gartner's data on what the stack does to sellers is consistent across two years and it is the best independent evidence in this section. In its January to March 2024 survey of 1,026 B2B sellers, 50% felt overwhelmed by the amount of technology needed to do their job, 72% by the number of skills required, and overwhelmed sellers were 45% less likely to attain quota [E072]; the 2023 figures were 49% and 43% [E071]. The same survey found sellers who effectively partner with AI tools 3.7 times more likely to meet quota [E072], which is self-reported and correlational and should be read beside the overwhelm figure rather than instead of it. In May 2026 Gartner reported that AI tools save sellers an average of 4.8 hours a week by leaders' own estimate, that 72% of sales organisations report low reinvestment of that time into higher value activity, and that 20% report a negative return of 50% or more on their AI spend against 25% reporting a positive return of that size [E036] [E058]. Its July 2026 prediction extends the concern from tools to agents: by 2028, AI agents will outnumber sellers ten to one, yet fewer than 40% of sellers will say the agents improved their productivity, with the analyst warning that "more agents will not automatically mean more productivity" [E095] (a forecast; Gartner, 28 July 2026). In October

2025 Gartner placed AI agents for sales at the Peak of Inflated Expectations on its Hype Cycle [E096], the position it had given generative AI for sales in August 2023 [E097].

The data inside the systems is the next problem, and almost all of the evidence about it comes from the companies that sell data cleansing. Gartner's February 2020 release found only 47% of sales leaders and sellers believing their organisation had high-quality data, with 13% rating it poor; no sample is shown [E062]. Validity's 2021 survey of 1,241 CRM administrators in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia found 75% saying employees fabricate data to tell the story decision makers want to hear, 95% saying data quality issues seriously impair their use of the CRM, and 19% saying leadership treats data quality as a high priority [E064] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Validity's assessment of 264 billion records across more than ten thousand Salesforce instances found 81% requiring improvement by the vendor's own criteria, and 47% of lead and contact email addresses invalid or risky [E065] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Salesforce's 2024 survey found 35% of sales professionals completely trusting their organisation's data accuracy [E110] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified], and its 2025 survey found 46% of sales professionals using AI agents saying data quality issues had hurt their sales [E070] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The often repeated 30% a year decay rate for contact data is presented by Dun and Bradstreet as a belief rather than a measurement [E067] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. No source of grade A, B or C gives the share of CRM records that are wrong [DATA GAP G18: no independent figure on CRM record accuracy / decision: vendor and perception figures reported as such]. The one figure in this paragraph that should stop a board is the 75%: three in four of the people who administer the system say its users make things up to satisfy the people who read the reports [E064] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The peer-reviewed literature, older but independent, explains why the system still matters: Ahearne and colleagues found in 2008 that sellers' technology use improved performance through better customer service and adaptability [E068], and Homburg and colleagues found in 2010 that sales force automation fails when sellers do not adopt it, with adoption flowing from managers to their teams and barely at all in the other direction [E069]. A system is worth what its use is worth, and its use is set by the manager.

The process layer sits on top of the data layer, and here the evidence thins to belief. No independent, controlled study was found showing that any named sales methodology causes better outcomes [DATA GAP G21: no independent outcome evidence for named methodologies / decision: methodology payoff treated as testimonial]. The best independent evidence on what drives individual sales performance is a 2011 meta-analysis of studies from 1982 to 2008, which found five significant drivers: selling-related knowledge, adaptiveness, the absence of role ambiguity, cognitive aptitude and work engagement [E075]. No methodology appears on that list. The research base behind one widely sold approach, The Challenger Sale, was described in 2015 by a Columbia Business School professor as built on a flimsy foundation [E077], and the methodology owners' own evidence consists of customer case studies without baselines, including a reported win rate rising from 23% to 46% in twelve months at an unnamed company [E083] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified] and forecast accuracy described as nearly 100% over eight quarters at another [E082] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The older correlational findings, a 7% higher win rate at companies whose sellers follow a formal methodology (CSO Insights, 2015, over 250 firms) [E078] and an 18% difference in revenue growth between companies with a defined sales process and those without (Vantage Point and the Sales Management Association, 2015, 62 companies) [E079], predate the current stack and come from parties with a commercial interest. Ebsta's analysis of 655,000 opportunities, which is the vendor's own tool scoring the deals, found deals with high qualification scores winning 50% of the time against 8% for poorly qualified deals, and only 36% of deals passing discovery carrying both a score and supporting

notes [E080] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Its 2024 update found that 68% of deals moved past the qualification stage were not qualified effectively [E081] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. That last figure is the clearest quantified sign in the record of what this paper calls stage inflation: opportunities advanced in the system because the stage field demanded it, while the buyer stayed where they were.

The companies selling systemisation are themselves consolidating, which tells a board something about where the money has gone. Salesforce reported fiscal 2026 revenue of $41.5 billion, up 10%, and Agentforce annual recurring revenue of $800 million, up 169%, with more than 29,000 Agentforce deals since launch [E090]; HubSpot reported 2025 revenue of $3.13 billion, up 19% [E088]. The data vendor ZoomInfo reported 2025 revenue of $1,249.5 million, up 3%, net revenue retention of 90% and flat guidance for 2026 [E087]. Clari and Salesloft announced their merger on 5 August 2025 and completed it in December 2025, and by September 2026 the combined company had a new chief executive [E085] [E086]. Outreach went through five rounds of redundancies between 2022 and 2024 and a change of chief executive in September 2024 [E094]. Gong states its own annual recurring revenue at above $300 million in March 2025 and above $500 million in April 2026 [E091] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]; Clay raised at a $7.1 billion valuation in September 2026 with revenue undisclosed [E092]. The platforms grow, the data layer stalls, the mid-tier merges and the newest entrants raise at valuations without disclosed revenue [E092]. The CRM failure literature a board might expect to settle the matter does not: the most cited figure, that around one-third of CRM projects fail, comes from a 2017 trade magazine average of about a dozen analyst reports ranging from 18% to 69%, and the practitioner who reported it put the failure rate, judged by whether the CRM helps the business grow, at closer to 90% in his own client work [E354]. None of the original reports could be opened [DATA GAP G86: the original CRM failure-rate reports not opened / decision: reported as a secondary citation].

So the systemised process is expensive, half used, filled with data its own administrators distrust and governed by methodologies whose evidence is testimonial. The case for it, which is real, is that it survives the people. Sellers leave, managers change, a CRO lasts under two years [E355], and the system remembers. That is precisely why it has grown. What the system remembers, though, is what it was asked to record, and the next section is about what that has been.

6. Metrics, vanity and value

The principle is older than the software. Charles Goodhart observed in a 1975 paper, reprinted in 1984, that a statistical regularity tends to break down once pressure is placed on it for control purposes [E151] (the original text could not be opened for this paper; the wording rests on tertiary sources). Donald Campbell made the broader claim in 1979 that the more a quantitative indicator is used for decision making, the more it will be subject to corruption pressure and the more it will distort the processes it was meant to monitor [E153] (same limit). Marilyn Strathern's 1997 paper on audit in British universities, from which the familiar "measure becomes a target" wording descends, says in its published abstract that audit "has a life of its own that jeopardizes the life it audits" [E152]. Eric Ries gave the start-up world the phrase "vanity metrics" in 2009, contrasting them with metrics that are actionable [E154]. And the one sales-specific taxonomy in wide use, from Jordan and Vazzana's Cracking the Sales Management Code, separates three levels of sales metrics: those a manager can manage directly, those a manager can influence, and the

business results, which cannot be managed at all, only measured [E155]. [DATA GAP G39: Goodhart 1975 and Campbell 1979 primary texts not opened / decision: principles attributed with dates and paraphrased, not quoted]

Put those together and the diagnosis of modern sales management writes itself. Activity (calls, emails, connection requests, meetings booked) sits at the level a manager can directly manage. Pipeline and coverage sit at the level a manager can influence. Revenue sits at the level that cannot be managed, only measured. A board that wants certainty asks for the manageable things, and the manageable things are exactly the ones Goodhart and Campbell say will stop meaning anything once they are demanded.

Pipeline coverage is the cleanest case. Dave Kellogg, writing on his Kellblog site, has been making the same argument since 19 April 2013: the 3x coverage rule predates modern CRM, enforcing it made "every company on the planet" report 3x, and so "Its predictive value is now zero." [E132]. In 2019 he defined coverage as pipeline divided by plan and described 3x as the "magical" ratio boards and investors require [E133]; in 2021 he showed how the ratio becomes self-fulfilling when sellers are pushed to hit it and proposed "to-go" coverage against what remains to be sold instead [E299]; in 2023 he argued quarterly coverage is close to meaningless in short-cycle SaaS because most of the quarter's pipeline is created inside the quarter [E300]. His 2024 worked case has marketing hitting 105% of its pipeline generation goal while new-logo bookings fell from 109% to 82% of plan over six quarters, because generation is a self-referential measure and starting coverage was falling the whole time [E302]. Jason Lemkin reported in May 2024 that Salesforce itself had moved from needing 2x coverage to 3x in two years, which he read as working half as hard again for the same bookings [E134]. Ebsta's own benchmark commentary, from the vendor that scores the pipeline, called sales teams' pursuit of more coverage more hopeful than effective and observed of 2022 that "The pipeline coverage was there, the opportunities looked healthy" while deals failed to close [E135] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. No dataset anywhere in the record quantifies a link between coverage ratio and attainment [DATA GAP G96: no dataset linking pipeline coverage to quota attainment / decision: the 3x rule is reported as the named practitioners' view]. The ratio every board asks for has never been shown to predict the thing the board wants.

What has been measured is the outcome, and the outcome series point the same way. Q1 to Q4 in the table are calendar quarters.

SERIES	WHAT IT MEASURES	SAMPLE	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	GRADE AND STATUS
RepVue index [E101] [E102] [E103] [E104] [E105] [E106]	Share of quota-carrying sellers at or above quota, self-reported on a review platform	207 to 249 companies; about 28,000 to 49,000 ratings	53% (Q1); 47.6% (Q4)	43.1% (Q4)	42.00% (Q2, the low); 43.14% (Q4)	43.3% (Q1); 42.69% (Q2); 43.24% (Q3)	Not published	D; signal only
The Bridge Group account executive (AE) studies [E109] [E108] [E107] [E227]	Median share of account executives at annual quota, reported by companies	253 companies (2022 cycle); more than 170 (2024); 158 (2026)	66%	Not published	51%	Not published	48%	B for 2024 and 2026; the 2022 figure reaches this paper through a vendor summary (D); the publisher states its own limits
Ebsta with Pavilion [E111] [E112] [E114]	Share of sellers making or missing quota, derived from CRM data of UK and US technology firms	3.2 million to 4.2 million opportunities; 364 to 530 companies	29% made quota by Q4	31% exceeded quota; 69% missing	78% missing	Not published	Not published	D; year labels conflict [DATA CONFLICT C20: report page against press release labels / decision: report page labels used]
The Bridge Group SDR studies [E138] [E137]	Share of sales development representatives at quota	434 companies (2018 edition); 351 (2025)	Not published	Not published	Not published	60%, the lowest in the study's history (68% in the 2018 edition)	Not published	B

Each figure in the RepVue and Ebsta rows is a vendor claim [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The three main series are not comparable with each other [DATA CONFLICT C41: definitions range from sellers at annual quota to self-reported quarterly attainment / decision: shown side by side, never blended] and each has its own weaknesses: RepVue is self-selected and its pages contain internal contradictions [E101] [E102], Ebsta mislabels years between its report and its press release [E114] [DATA CONFLICT C20: report page against press release labels / decision: report page labels used], and The Bridge Group's 2022 figure reaches this paper through a vendor summary [E109]. Yet they agree on direction. On every definition, fewer sellers hit the number in 2024 to 2026 than in 2022. Salesforce's own

2024 survey of 5,500 sales professionals found 84% had missed quota the previous year and 67% did not expect to hit it [E110] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. KeyBanc and Sapphire's survey of private SaaS companies put attainment at about 70% in 2023 [E210], ICONIQ's 2025 survey put account executive attainment at 58% [E211]; the spread between 29% and 70% is a spread of definitions. Ramp time, meanwhile, reached 6.2 months in The Bridge Group's 2026 study, the longest in its history, with 3.7 years of experience now required at hire [E227].

Win rates and cycle lengths are reported only as changes by the one vendor dataset that publishes them. Ebsta's reports record win rates falling 15% in 2022, 18% in 2023 and 10% in 2024, with sales cycles lengthening 32% in 2022 and a further 16% in the first half of 2023 before shortening by 23% at the end of that year and 9% in 2024 [E116] [E117] [E118] (each figure a vendor claim) [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The 2025 edition, on 655,000 opportunities from UK and US firms, found expansion deals winning 45% of the time against 18% for new business, closing in 52 days against 91, and ranked channel efficiency with partner referrals at 1.3 times the average, inbound at 1.2, outbound at 1.05, events at 0.78 and paid at 0.68 [E118] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Where a deal slipped, its win rate fell 67% [E117] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Absolute win rates exist only as undefined vendor figures: HubSpot's 21% (page updated February 2026) [E115] and Gong's roughly 25% from opportunity to closed on its enterprise customers [E121] (as reported by SaaStr) [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified].

Forecasts are the instrument the board actually reads, and the surveys on them are consistent in one respect: most sales organisations miss.

SURVEY	FIELDWORK	SAMPLE	FINDING	GRADE
Gartner State of Sales Operations [E123]	Published 12 February 2020	Not stated	45% of sales leaders and sellers have high confidence in forecasting accuracy	B
Gong, Reality of Forecasting [E124]	Published 19 July 2022	928 sales and revenue professionals	24% of leaders confident; 52% say the organisation regularly misses by more than 10%; 4.9 hours a week spent forecasting	D
Gong with CensusWide [E125]	3 to 9 January 2024	2,015 business leaders, US and UK	81% missed the forecast in at least one quarter between Q1 2021 and Q3 2023	D
Xactly with Regina Corso Consulting [E126]	19 to 28 March 2024	405 sales, finance and RevOps leaders, North America	Four in five missed a quarterly forecast in the past year; 52% of sales leaders off by 10% or more	D
Xactly 2024 benchmark, as cited by Challenger [E084]	2024	Not stated	20% of sales organisations forecast within 5% of actual	D
Clari [E127]	Published 27 April 2017	About 300	93% cannot forecast within 5% even in the last two weeks of a quarter	D
Clari Labs with Censuswide [E128] [E129]	January to February 2025; September to October 2025	400 each, North American enterprises	67% missed their 2024 revenue target; 87% missed 2025 targets (excluding the vendor's customers)	D

Every row but the first is a vendor claim [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified], the UK figure sits inside a pooled US and UK sample, and the populations differ [DATA CONFLICT C28: forecast confidence figures from different populations and wording / decision: shown as a set; no single figure used]. Even so, a

board that sees 4.9 hours a week going into a forecast [E124] that four in five organisations miss [E126] should ask what the hours are producing. The organisation has plenty of forecast process and very little forecast truth.

Activity is the level below, and the record contains no controlled study linking activity volumes to outcomes [DATA GAP G29: no evidence on the predictive validity of activity metrics / decision: no claim made either way]. What it contains is descriptive. The median sales development representative in The Bridge Group's 2025 study logs 112 activities a day (44 phone, 41 email, 19 LinkedIn, 8 other), and phone-centric teams at 56 dials a day hold 4.6 quality conversations against 3.4 for email-centric teams at 28 [E137]. Gong's analysis of 28 million cold emails found the average seller sending 344 to land one meeting, top sellers getting 4.2 times the replies of average sellers, and pitching in the first email reducing reply rates by as much as 57% [E139] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The two observational links between behaviour and outcome are both honest about what they are: The Bridge Group found 57% of account executives at quota in the highest AI-engagement tercile against 39% in the lowest and stated that "Self-selection into AI adoption is real." [E149]; Forrester's client benchmarks found sellers at organisations above 90% attainment spending 34% of their time actively selling against 23% below, with no sample stated [E150]. The activity dashboard measures what the seller did. Nothing in the record shows it measures what the buyer decided.

When a measure is demanded hard enough, the behaviour follows the measure rather than the purpose, and the record has a canonical case. Between 2002 and 2016, according to the US Department of Justice's settlement announcement of 21 February 2020, Wells Fargo employees were pressured to meet "unrealistic sales goals", practices that staff internally called "gaming" affected millions of accounts or products, and the bank agreed to pay $3 billion [E334]. Three and a half years earlier the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau had fined it $100 million on 8 September 2016 after the bank's own analysis found roughly 1.5 million deposit accounts and 565,000 credit card accounts that may not have been authorised [E332]. The independent directors' report of 10 April 2017 named as the root cause "the distortion of the Community Bank's sales culture and performance management system" and recorded sales goals known internally as "50/50 plans" because only about half the regions were expected to meet them [E337] (the report is the company's own investigation, so its figures carry the vendor tag where regulators do not repeat them) [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The same report quotes a 2004 memo defining gaming as "the manipulation and/or misrepresentation of sales to receive compensation or meet sales goals", reports approximately 5,300 employees terminated for sales practice violations between 1 January 2011 and 7 March 2016, and describes bankers sandbagging December account openings into January to make the new year's numbers [E337]. Clawbacks followed: approximately $28 million from the former chief executive and the forfeiture of options valued at approximately $47 million by the former head of the division [E335]. The case is from banking, and the mechanism is the one every activity quota in a sales organisation relies on, and the report's definition of gaming describes a stage field moved on a Friday afternoon as exactly as it describes a simulated account.

The software-specific evidence is smaller and peer-reviewed. Ian Larkin's 2014 study of a leading enterprise software vendor with accelerating commissions found that sellers "are adept at gaming the timing of deal closure" and agree to significantly lower prices in the quarters when closing pays them more, at a cost to the vendor of 6% to 8% of revenue [E340]. Paul Oyer showed in 1998 that nonlinear revenue-based pay shifts purchase timing and effort across the fiscal year [E339]. Steenburgh and Ahearne reported in 2012 that laggards paid only an annual

bonus see revenues drop 10% [E342], and Chung, Steenburgh and Sudhir found in 2014 that quarterly bonuses keep weaker performers on pace for annual quotas [E341], which is to say that the timing of the measure shapes the timing of the sale. At the top of the organisation the same force produced the Computer Associates case, in which the US Securities and Exchange Commission charged the company and three former executives on 22 September 2004 with keeping the books open after quarter end to book contracts signed later, "to meet Wall Street quarterly earnings estimates", with more than $2.2 billion of revenue prematurely recognised in fiscal 2000 and 2001 and $225 million of restitution agreed [E338]. [DATA GAP G82: no public record found of meeting-set fraud or activity-quota gaming at rep level in B2B software / decision: the mechanism is evidenced from banking, from peer-reviewed software data and from an executive-level enforcement case; no rep-level software case is claimed]

The position, then. Judgement by leading indicators rather than outcomes is a choice boards make because leading indicators arrive sooner and look more controllable. On the record, the leading indicators in common use (coverage, pipeline generation, activity counts) have no demonstrated predictive validity, are the ones most exposed to the measure-becomes-target problem, and are being performed at increasing volume while most of the outcome series in the record have declined or flattened since 2022. The dashboards are full and the quota is missed. That is pipeline theatre, and the audience is the board.

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7. Automation, AI and the value of the sales relationship

Whether systemisation and automation raise or lower the value of the human sales relationship is a question the buyer answers, and the buyer has been answering it in two voices at once.

The first voice says: leave me alone. Gartner's research holds that B2B buyers spend 17% of their total buying time meeting with potential suppliers, all suppliers combined [E251], and that a complex purchase involves six to ten decision makers [E252]. Buyers who describe their latest purchase as very complex or difficult make up 77% of Gartner's respondents [E253], and any single seller gets roughly 5% of a customer's time [E254] (Gartner, no dates or samples on the pages). McKinsey's 2024 B2B Pulse of nearly 4,000 decision makers in 13 countries found the rule of thirds holding at every stage (one third want in-person contact, one third remote, one third digital self-service), buyers using ten channels against five in 2016, and 69% of the "seeker" archetype willing to transact $500,000 or more remotely [E276]. Forrester's State of Business Buying 2024, on more than 16,000 buyers, found 13 people in the average buying decision, 81% of buyers dissatisfied with the provider they chose, and generative AI appearing at the top of the self-guided interactions buyers wanted [E271]; 94% of business buyers used AI in buying by Forrester's 2025 survey [E171]. Gartner's respondents preferring a rep-free experience have risen from 33% in 2020 [E259] to 61% in August to September 2024 (632 buyers) [E265] and 67% in August to September 2025 (646 buyers) [E266], with 70% in the 2025 fieldwork preferring a completely digital, self-service experience [E267]; a 2024 Gartner document gives 75% [E264]. Wording and samples change between releases, so this is a direction rather than a time series [DATA CONFLICT C50: Gartner rep-free series, wording differs / decision: each figure dated and attributed; no trend line drawn]. The vendor surveys say the same thing louder. 6sense reports buyers nearly 70% through their process before contacting a seller in 2024 [E279] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified] and 61% in 2025 [E281], with 94% of buying groups ranking their preferred

vendor before first contact and the preferred vendor winning 80% of the time, or 77% elsewhere in the same release [E280] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified] [DATA CONFLICT C53: 80% and 77% in one release / decision: both reported]. G2 reports 29% of buyers starting research with an AI chatbot in April 2025 and 51% in March 2026, on different samples [E285] [E286] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. TrustRadius reports 63% of technology buyers using AI during the purchase in January 2026, with 94% of them fact-checking it [E283] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. In the same report, vendors' own rating of the sales representative as an influential tactic fell from 57% to 53% [E283] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified].

The second voice, in the same surveys, says: and I regret it. Gartner's November to December 2021 fieldwork found 83% of buyers preferring to order and pay through digital commerce, and found digital commerce buyers significantly more likely to experience purchase regret than traditional buyers [E260]; 56% of organisations reported high regret over their largest technology purchase in the past two years [E262]. By February to March 2023, 60% of buyers involved in renewal or expansion decisions regretted nearly every purchase, which Gartner reported as a 6% increase from 2020, while 95% said they would have preferred a fully digital expansion purchase [E263] (single source). The 2024 Gartner document that gives the 75% rep-free figure also gives 43% of buyers reporting high regret on self-service digital commerce against 26% on traditional rep-led purchases [E264] (no sample shown). The buyer prefers the path that produces the worse outcome, and knows it. One finding runs the other way and belongs in view: in the 2021 fieldwork only 24% of buyers in primarily rep-led purchases completed a high-quality deal against 65% of buyers who directed their own purchase [E261] [DATA CONFLICT C57: rep-led against self-service outcomes, 2021 fieldwork against 2024 document / decision: both reported; neither used alone]. The reconciliation Gartner itself offers is confidence: buyers with high decision confidence were twice as likely to report a high-quality deal in the 2025 fieldwork [E266], and in 2019 it reported that 80% of sellers using what it called a sense-making approach closed high-quality, low-regret deals, against 50% for sellers who told and 30% for sellers who merely gave information [E255] [E256] (single source, restated by a trade title). Customers who found supplier information trustworthy but contradictory were 66% less likely to commit, and those who reported overwhelming information were 54% less likely to purchase without regret [E258]. Where a seller reduces contradiction and raises confidence, the relationship has measurable value; where a seller adds a tenth channel and a fifth piece of information, it does not [INFERENCE: derived from E255, E258 and E266].

The 2025 fieldwork then put the human seller and generative AI side by side, and the result is the strongest buyer-side evidence this paper found. Of 645 B2B buyers surveyed in August to September 2025, 45% had used generative AI in a recent purchase and 69% preferred to validate AI-generated insights with a sales representative; 51% said they were more likely to encounter misleading information from generative AI and 49% said the same of a sales representative [E267]. Compared with buyers who relied on generative AI, buyers who worked with a representative were 28 percentage points more likely to say the representative helped them advance to the next step, 32 points more likely to say the representative made them feel confident in the decision, 39 points more likely to say the representative understood their needs, and 21 points more likely to say the representative helped quantify the benefits; buying groups with low dysfunction, which were the groups that spent more time with supplier representatives, were 13 times more likely to report a high-quality deal [E268] (single source). In the same fieldwork window, 67% of a separate Gartner sample of 646 buyers preferred a rep-free experience [E266] [DATA CONFLICT C51: samples of 645 and 646 for the same window / decision: each figure cited to its own release]. Gartner's own reading, in August 2025, was a forecast that by 2030, 75%

of B2B buyers will prefer sales experiences that prioritise human interaction over AI [E166] (a forecast; Gartner, 25 August 2025). Forrester's 2025 data found 30% of buyers treating generative AI as a meaningful interaction at the final commit stage against 17% for product experts, and 19% of buyers who used generative AI feeling less confident because of inaccurate information [E170]. What the buyer rejects is the seller's time-wasting, and the record is specific about what that is: 73% of buyers actively avoid suppliers who engage in irrelevant outreach, and 69% report discrepancies between what a supplier's website says and what its sellers say [E265]; traditional personalisation methods increase customer regret 3.2 times and 53% of customers report negative emotions during personalised marketing [E269].

The academic record agrees on the shape of the effect and on its size, which is moderate. Palmatier and colleagues' 2006 meta-analysis found that relationship investment has a large direct effect on a seller's objective performance and that relationship marketing works better in business markets and when the relationship is with an individual rather than a firm [E291]; Swan and colleagues found in 1999 that customer trust in the salesperson has a moderate but beneficial influence on attitudes and behaviour [E292]. The experiments on automation are consumer and service settings, and they are unambiguous. In Luo and colleagues' 2019 field experiment with more than 6,200 customers, undisclosed chatbots on structured outbound sales calls performed as well as proficient human workers, and disclosing the bot's identity before the conversation "reduces purchase rates by more than 79.7%" [E293]. Mozafari and colleagues found in 2022 that chatbot disclosure reduces retention through lost trust in services of high criticality [E294], and Cicek and colleagues found in 2024 that describing a product as using artificial intelligence lowers purchase intention by lowering emotional trust, with a stronger effect for high-risk purchases [E295]. No B2B field experiment on human against automated selling between 2020 and 2026 was found [DATA GAP G77: no B2B experiment on human against automated selling / decision: automation effects taken from consumer and service experiments only]. The inference, one step from those studies, is that the automated seller works until the buyer knows, and the buyer increasingly knows [INFERENCE: derived from E293 and E283].

That brings the argument to the channel, because automation in sales has mostly meant automation of outreach, and outreach uses a shared resource. The Bridge Group's 2025 study of 351 companies found 60% of sales development representatives at quota, the lowest in the study's history, average tenure of 1.9 years, median attrition of 40%, held-meeting quotas down 40% since 2018 and a median on-target earnings of $80,000 unchanged since 2022 [E137] [E136]. The measured reply rates are where theory meets the inbox. Belkins, an agency, measured an average reply rate of 0.45% across 7,530,489 cold emails sent for its clients in 2025, defined as unique replies divided by emails sent [E141] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Instantly reports 3.43% across its platform for 2025 [E143] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Hunter reports 4.1% across 11 million emails sent in 2024, with campaigns of 50 or fewer recipients at 5.8% against 2.1% for campaigns of 1,000 or more [E144] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified] [DATA CONFLICT C38: measured against self-reported reply rates on different platforms and denominators / decision: each reported with its definition; no average]. Gong's analysis of 300 million cold calls gives a 5.4% connect rate and a 4.6% meeting-set rate, with the average seller needing 19 dials per conversation [E140] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. On LinkedIn, Expandi's 13.2 million connection requests show 28.5% acceptance with the reply rate to a connection note falling from 3.5% to 2.2% between May 2025 and April 2026 [E147] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified], and SmartReach's 1,800 campaigns in the first half of 2026 show about 1.3% of requests producing a booked meeting [E148] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Each platform measures only its own users, and the one series that appears to show decay (Belkins' 7% in 2023 against 0.45% in 2025) is a change of denominator rather than

a trend [E142] [E141] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified] [DATA CONFLICT C24: Belkins' own denominator changed between editions / decision: no trend read from the pair]. What the figures share is a floor near zero. Gartner forecast in September 2023 that within two years about three in ten outbound messages from large organisations would be synthetically generated [E165] (a forecast; Gartner, 21 September 2023); Merriam-Webster's word of the year for 2025 was "slop", defined as low-quality digital content produced in quantity by artificial intelligence [E331]; and Forrester's Anthony McPartlin wrote in April 2026 that always-on prospecting agents produce activity rather than value and repeat the earlier sales engagement spam at larger scale, concluding that "Augmentation is plausible. Full delegation is not." [E324].

The channel owners have responded, and the rules now bind. Google announced on 3 October 2023 that from February 2024 senders of more than 5,000 messages a day to Gmail addresses must authenticate under the Sender Policy Framework (SPF), DomainKeys Identified Mail (DKIM) and Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting and Conformance (DMARC) standards, offer one-click unsubscribe processed within two days and keep spam complaint rates below a threshold [E191]. Its guidelines say to keep the rate below 0.10% and never reach 0.30% [E343] [E344], and its frequently asked questions page says that from November 2025 Gmail is "ramping up its enforcement on non-compliant traffic" [E191] [DATA CONFLICT C36: Google's pages give both 0.10% and 0.30% / decision: both quoted; 0.30% is the ceiling, 0.10% the target]. Yahoo's requirements, in force from February 2024, mirror them with a 0.3% spam rate limit [E192] [E345]; Microsoft applied authentication requirements to domains sending more than 5,000 messages a day to Outlook.com from 5 May 2025, junking non-compliant mail first and rejecting it later [E193] [E346]. Those thresholds are taken from the platforms' own policy pages, which the ledger grades D as first-party material and which no independent source restates, so they carry the vendor tag for the rule as published rather than for any measured effect [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The law differs by jurisdiction. UK guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office under the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations permits marketing email to corporate subscribers without consent but not to individuals, including sole traders, and requires the sender not to disguise its identity [E347]. The US Federal Trade Commission's guide to the Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing (CAN-SPAM) Act states that the law makes no exception for business-to-business email and sets penalties of up to $53,088 per separate email [E348]. Article 13 of the European Union's 2002 ePrivacy Directive requires prior consent for automated marketing to natural persons and leaves protection of legal persons to member states [E350]. No independent evidence was found of what these rules did to outbound response [DATA GAP G88: no data on outreach volume reaching buyers or on the rules' effect / decision: left open]; the only data is a sender survey in which 23% of senders reported deliverability problems they attributed to the rules [E194] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified].

So the answer to the question is both, and the split is clean. Automation lowers the value of the relationship where it is used, because it is used on a shared channel that saturates, the rules of which now carry a complaint ceiling of 0.3% [E191], and because buyers punish disclosed automation in high-stakes settings [E293]. Automation raises the value of the relationship where it is withheld, because the scarce resource in the buying process is the 17% of time buyers give to suppliers [E251], and the buyer's own testimony is that a seller who makes sense of contradictory information produces the confident, low-regret decision that a chatbot does not [E255] [E268]. The instrumented sales system, as currently built, spends the scarce resource on the saturated channel.

8. Performance results from AI in sales and revenue operations

The independent evidence on generative AI at work is good, recent and almost entirely about jobs other than B2B selling. The vendor evidence is about B2B selling and almost entirely about activity. Between the two sits a gap that boards are currently filling with the vendor's number.

STUDY	DESIGN AND SAMPLE	FINDING	GRADE
Brynjolfsson, Li and Raymond, Generative AI at Work (National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), April 2023; Quarterly Journal of Economics, 2025) [E156] [E157]	Staggered rollout of an AI assistant to 5,172 customer support agents at an enterprise software firm; about 3 million chats	Issues resolved per hour up 14% (2023 version) or 15% (published version); 34% to 36% for novice and lowest-skill agents; no gain, and small declines in resolution rate and customer satisfaction, for the most skilled	A (published version)
Dell'Acqua and others, Navigating the Jagged Technological Frontier (Harvard Business School, September 2023; Organization Science, March 2026) [E158] [E159]	Preregistered field experiment with 758 Boston Consulting Group consultants on 18 tasks	Inside the AI's competence, 12.2% more tasks completed, 25.1% faster, quality up about 32%; on a task outside it, users 19 percentage points less likely to be correct	A (published version)
Fang and others, randomised field experiments at a cross-border retail platform (arXiv, October 2025) [E160]	Randomised experiments across seven workflows, 2023 to 2024, consumer retail	Sales effects from no detectable impact to 16.3%, mainly through conversion, larger for less experienced consumers	B
The GenAI Divide, from the NANDA initiative at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), July 2025 [E161]	52 organisation interviews, 153 conference-surveyed leaders, more than 300 public deployments	"95% of organizations are getting zero return"; about 5% of custom enterprise tools reach production	B; sample described differently by the press (C31)
McKinsey, The state of AI (November 2025; August 2026) [E162] [E163]	Online surveys of 1,993 and 1,719 participants	88% use AI in at least one function; 39% then 37% attribute any impact on earnings before interest and tax (EBIT) to it, "essentially unchanged"; high performers 6% in both years; 39% expect AI to reduce headcount next year	C
Gartner, agentic AI prediction (25 June 2025) [E164]	Analyst forecast; webinar poll of 3,412 attendees	Over 40% of agentic AI projects cancelled by the end of 2027; about 130 of thousands of agentic vendors judged real	B; forecast
Gartner, chief sales officer survey (August to September 2025) [E131] [E169]	227 CSOs	Organisations giving sellers AI-enabled next best actions 2.6 times more likely to achieve commercial growth (undefined); correlational	B
Gartner, seller survey (January to March 2024) [E072]	1,026 B2B sellers	Sellers who effectively partner with AI 3.7 times more likely to meet quota; correlational and self-reported	B
The Bridge Group, 2026 AE study [E149]	158 companies; terciles set before outcomes examined	57% at quota in the highest AI-engagement tercile against 39% in the lowest; publisher labels the data observational	B

Three things follow from the table. The only randomised evidence on sales is consumer retail [E160], and no field experiment on AI in B2B sales, sales calls, lead qualification or outbound was found between 2024 and 2026 [DATA GAP G50: no B2B sales field experiment / decision: AI performance in B2B sales treated as unmeasured]. The strongest studies show generative AI raising the floor and leaving the ceiling where it was: novice customer support agents improved by a third, the most experienced did not improve and slipped on quality [E157], and consultants working outside the tool's competence got worse [E159]. For a sales organisation that is a precise prediction: expect AI to help the ramping seller and the weak seller, and expect it to do little for the senior seller whose judgement produces the confident, low-regret deals buyers describe in section 7. At the enterprise level the self-reported return is flat. McKinsey's share of respondents attributing any EBIT impact to AI fell from 39% to 37% between its 2025 and 2026 surveys and its high performers stayed at 6% [E162] [E163], and Forrester's predictions of 8 October 2025 state that only 15% of AI decision makers reported a lift in earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) in the past twelve months [E356] (single source; the definitions differ from McKinsey's). The MIT figure that 95% of organisations get zero return is quoted everywhere and rests on 52 interviews and 153 conference-recruited leaders [E161] [DATA CONFLICT C31: MIT's stated sample against Fortune's description of it / decision: the report's own description is used; the figure is treated as a signal, not a measurement].

The vendor results measure something else.

CLAIM	SOURCE AND DATE	WHAT IT MEASURES	GRADE
Salesforce's SDR agent worked over 43,000 leads and generated $1.7 million in new pipeline from dormant leads in its first year [E172]	Salesforce, 18 September 2025	Activity and pipeline, no win rate or revenue	D
The same agent had worked 192,000 leads and the Engagement Agent had reached 100,000, "on track to generate" $60 million in pipeline [E173]	Salesforce customer story pages modified August 2026	A projection; the lead counts differ from the September 2025 figure (C35)	D
Qualified's Piper AI SDR, live on Salesforce.com from April 2026, "booked more than 60 meetings per week on average" at a 6% conversion rate [E174]	Salesforce, 29 July 2026	Meetings booked; conversion undefined; no pipeline or revenue	D
Salesforce cut customer support from about 9,000 to about 5,000 roles, with "50% are with agents, 50% are with humans" and support costs down 17% since the start of 2025 [E175]	Marc Benioff, reported by Fortune and TechRepublic, September 2025	Customer support, not sales; the firm said hundreds were redeployed into sales and other teams	C
HubSpot's Breeze Customer Agent resolved over 50% of customer conversations autonomously; the Prospecting Agent was activated by more than 10,000 customers [E176] [E089]	HubSpot pages 2025; Q4 2025 earnings call	Resolution rate for support; activations for prospecting; no prospecting outcome	D
Microsoft sellers using Copilot for Sales saved about 90 minutes a week [E177]	Microsoft survey of 133 of its own sellers, October 2023	Self-reported time, no control group, no outcome	D
Deals where sellers used Gong's AI trackers had 35% higher win rates across one million opportunities at 1,418 organisations [E178]	Gong, 15 February 2024	Correlation among existing Gong customers; no adjustment described	D
Teams regularly using AI generate 77% more revenue per rep; AI improves forecast accuracy by 10 to 15% [E179]	Gong study reported by VentureBeat, 4 December 2025	"Regularly" undefined; the forecast claim carries no method; the same study reports quota attainment falling from 52% to 46%	D
Customers have not cut sales headcount because of AI efficiency [E180]	ZoomInfo management at an investor conference, 6 March 2025	Management observation; one customer halved reps at flat spend	D

Every figure in that table is a vendor claim [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified], and the pattern across them is the one Forrester's analyst named: activity, not value [E324]. Leads touched, meetings booked, agents activated, hours saved by self-report. Not one row contains a controlled measurement of win rate, cycle time or revenue per seller. The two that come closest, Gong's 35% and 77%, are correlations within a customer base that chose to buy Gong [E178] [E179]. Salesforce's own numbers move between pages and periods and mix results with projections [E172] [E173] [DATA CONFLICT C35: 43,000 leads in September 2025 against 192,000 on pages modified August 2026 / decision: both reported with dates; the later figure labelled a projection]. And the one hard figure in the set, the support headcount cut from about 9,000 to about 5,000 [E175], concerns a function whose work the independent studies show AI handles well, and the firm said hundreds of the roughly 4,000 were redeployed, some into sales [E175].

The AI sales development representative is where the gap between claim and evidence is widest, and the record is unusually candid because the trade press did the work. 11x raised a $24 million Series A led by Benchmark and about $50 million led by Andreessen Horowitz at a reported valuation of around $350 million, its chief executive saying the company was "approaching $10 million in annual recurring revenue" [E181]. On 24 March 2025 TechCrunch reported that 11x had displayed the logos of companies that were not customers, and that ZoomInfo said a one-month trial "performed significantly worse than our SDR employees" [E182]. The same report quoted three current and former employees saying most early customers used three-month break clauses, one of them saying "We were losing 70-80% of customers that came through the door"; 11x's response was that its retention rate was 79% and that it reported contracted rather than realised recurring revenue [E182]. The founder stepped down as chief executive on 5 May 2025 [E181]. Artisan, the company behind the "stop hiring humans" billboards, raised $25 million at about $5 million of annual recurring revenue with 250 customers; its chief executive told TechCrunch the billboards were "mostly just for attention", conceded churn, said the early product had "extremely bad hallucinations", and called a 1% response rate the "sweet spot" [E183]. Jason Lemkin, who has watched more than twenty B2B software companies deploy AI SDRs over six months and runs them himself [E185], reported in July 2025 that about 90% got "absolutely nothing", meaning no pipeline and no meetings, that about 10% booked more qualified meetings than their human teams had, and that the successful ones hired human SDRs from month seven to work the pipeline the agents produced [E184]. SaaStr's own deployment reported a 6.7% response rate on 19,847 outbound messages, more than 100 meetings from an inbound agent, $50,000 to $100,000 a year per platform and 15 to 20 hours a week of human management, funded by reallocating two human SDR roles [E185] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]; by August 2026 Lemkin reported three humans and more than twenty agents, with response rates of roughly 5% to 12% that he described as similar for humans and AI [E311] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified] [DATA CONFLICT C67: 90% of observed deployments producing nothing against SaaStr's own reported gains / decision: both reported; the difference is between companies observed and one company's self-report]. Lemkin's rule, stated in March 2026, is that an AI SDR deployed before a human-proven motion exists does not work [E310]. The Bridge Group's 2025 study records "AI SDRs" as a respondent category for the first time, at 1% [E195], and Emergence Capital's April 2025 survey of over 560 venture-backed software companies, as relayed by SaaStr, found 36% had cut SDR headcount in the prior twelve months, 44% held it flat and 19% increased it [E307] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Spencer Stuart's June 2026 survey of nearly 100 B2B CROs found 64% had kept headcount steady over two years, 11% had cut headcount because of AI and 35% expected reductions in the next year, with 37% rating their organisation's AI capability below average and unready data infrastructure the top impediment [E040].

Two further results belong to RevOps rather than sales. Gartner's May 2026 survey found AI saving sellers an average of 4.8 hours a week by leaders' estimate, with 72% of organisations reporting low reinvestment of that time; the organisations that did reinvest were 2.2 times more likely to exceed customer growth goals and 3.1 times more likely to exceed lead-to-opportunity conversion goals [E036]. The saving is real to the people reporting it and the return depends entirely on what the operating model does with it, which is the RevOps question. On forecasting, the function's core product, no independent evidence was found that AI forecasting tools improve accuracy; the only quantified claim is a chief executive's unmethodised 10 to 15% [E179] [DATA GAP G45: no independent evidence on AI and forecast accuracy / decision: no claim made]. Clari's own survey pairs 87% of enterprises missing their 2025 targets with an unopened Forrester study claiming "up to 96%" forecast accuracy for enterprises with unified revenue data [E129] [VENDOR

CLAIM: unverified], which is the shape of most vendor evidence in this field: a problem measured by the vendor's survey, a solution measured by the vendor's commissioned study.

The position is that AI does something specific in sales, and the independent evidence says what. It lifts the floor, which in a sales organisation means the ramping seller and the weaker seller, and it handles the structured, high-volume work that customer support and early-stage prospecting consist of [E157]. Outside its competence it degrades expert judgement [E159] [INFERENCE: derived from E157 and E159]. A sales organisation that deploys it to do more of the activity the dashboard already rewards will get more activity, a saturated channel and, on Gartner's forecast, agents outnumbering sellers ten to one with most sellers reporting no gain [E095]. One that deploys it to shorten the ramp and hand senior sellers back the hours has evidence on its side, and will have to measure the result itself, because nobody else has.

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9. How this plays out in fast-growth B2B SaaS companies

The companies this paper is written for are the ones in which the drift is fastest, because they have the most instruments and the least patience. The economics explain the behaviour.

Growth slowed and then settled. Benchmarkit's 2025 report, on 583 private SaaS companies in the United States, Canada and Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA), gives a median 2024 growth rate of 26% with the top quartile down from 60% in 2023 to 50%, venture-backed companies at 30% and private-equity-backed at 13% [E204] (the report's own participant count appears as both 583 and 563 [DATA CONFLICT C42: internal inconsistencies in the Benchmarkit 2025 report / decision: figures used as printed, both counts reported]). KeyBanc and Sapphire's 2025 survey expected growth to accelerate from 15% in 2024 to 20% in 2025 and account executive payback to shorten to 18 months by 2026 [E209]. Acquisition got dearer: Benchmarkit's median New CAC Ratio (customer acquisition cost, CAC), the sales and marketing spend per dollar of new customer annual recurring revenue, rose to $2.00 in 2024, up 14%, from $1.76 the year before [E205] [E208]; its median net revenue retention sat at 101% with gross retention down from 90% to 88% over three years, and expansion supplied 40% of new annual recurring revenue at median and 58% to 67% above $50 million [E206]. High Alpha's 2025 survey of more than 800 companies, 69% US-based and 17% European, gives median CAC payback by band of 5 months under $1 million of annual recurring revenue, 8 at $1 million to $5 million, 14 at $5 million to $20 million, 20 at $20 million to $50 million and 17 above $50 million [E199] [E196]. Beyond roughly $20 million, on the same survey, expansion becomes the dominant growth engine, and companies over $50 million generate about 60% of new annual recurring revenue from existing customers [E249]. Meritech's public-company data put median net retention at 115%, its lowest in years, with no public SaaS company expected to grow faster than 40% [E221]. In Europe, GP Bullhound's surveys of over 100 private SaaS companies report median net revenue retention of 110% to 112% in 2023 and the share of companies that are EBITDA positive rising from about 33% to 44% to around 57% across three reports [E223] [E222]. Sales and marketing still takes 37% of revenue at the median private company and 45% to 47% at venture-backed ones [E207] [DATA CONFLICT C42: 47% on one page against 45% on another / decision: both reported].

The owners want different things from the same engine. Bain's Global Private Equity Report 2026 says typical deals now need around 10% to 12% average annual EBITDA growth to deliver

the returns that about 5% delivered in the 2010s, that holding periods at exit hover around seven years, and that the winning firms "will build systems, not slogans" [E241]. ICONIQ's 2025 State of Software says the Rule of 40 has become the most reliable predictor of valuation and that a point of revenue growth is worth nearly twice a point of free cash flow margin [E215]; the rule itself, as Brad Feld set it out on 3 February 2015, is growth rate plus profit adding to 40% at scale, learned from a late-stage investor at a board meeting [E239], and David Sacks' burn multiple, net burn divided by net new annual recurring revenue, dates from April 2020 with 2x described as reasonable for an early-stage company and 5x as terrible [E236]. The board deck template Sacks publishes has a summary slide whose rows are total annual recurring revenue, net new annual recurring revenue, burn multiple, payback in months and net dollar retention [E242] (single source); pipeline coverage, quota attainment and headcount do not appear on it. The investor's own template asks for outcomes. The coverage ratio and the activity counts that section 6 describes are what management puts in front of the board in the following slides, because they are the numbers management can move before the quarter ends [INFERENCE: derived from E242 and E132].

Inside the sales organisation the unit economics of a seller have moved against the company. The Bridge Group's 2026 study of 158 B2B companies gives a median account executive quota of $960,000 and median on-target earnings of $200,000, up from $190,000 in 2024 and $167,000 in 2022, a quota-to-earnings ratio of 4.6 and 48% of sellers at quota [E227]. Ramp is 6.2 months, the longest the study has recorded, and 3.7 years of experience are now required at hire against 2.7 in 2022 [E227]. Quotas have risen at about 2% a year compounded since 2012 while on-target earnings rose at more than 5% [E108]. Sales development is leaner and churns harder: one SDR to 2.4 account executives, 6.4 SDRs per leader (down from 8), median on-target earnings of $80,000 unchanged since 2022, and 40% median attrition in 2024 [E230]. Companies beyond $5 million of annual recurring revenue have reduced headcount over four years [E201], and ICONIQ's 2025 survey of 205 go-to-market executives, as summarised by SaaStr, found high AI adopters under $25 million running go-to-market organisations 38% leaner (13 against 21 full-time staff) with RevOps at 17% of go-to-market headcount against 12% elsewhere, ramped attainment of 61% against 56%, and sales cycles of 20 against 25 weeks [E212] (single source, second-hand). Its 2026 report found the median company planning 0% RevOps headcount growth, high performers running 9.2 to 9.8 individual contributors per manager against 4.4 to 5, and companies with AI fully embedded generating roughly twice the net new revenue per employee [E214] (single source, second-hand; correlational). No survey-based figure for RevOps headcount per account executive exists in the record; the only ratio found is a consultancy's unsourced 1 to 10 or 20 [E234] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified] [DATA GAP G55: no survey-based RevOps per AE ratio / decision: none given].

Two figures from different populations sit side by side here and are not combined. A CRO has an implied median tenure of 1.8 years, or 21.6 months [E355] (single source) [CALCULATION: inputs E355; operation: 1.8 years multiplied by 12 months]. A seller takes 6.2 months to ramp [E227]. Set beside each other, they say that a leader on the median tenure sees little more than one ramped cohort before leaving [INFERENCE: derived from E355 and E227]. Through most of that tenure the leader is judged on leading indicators because the outcome indicators have not had time to arrive. The system, which outlasts the leader, becomes the organisation's memory of how it sells. Encoding the process into tools is the rational response of a company that expects to replace its revenue leader every two years and its SDRs in under two [E230]; it is the convergence described in section 4, seen from the finance director's chair.

The failure mode at the other end is documented. The Startup Genome report of 2011, on more than 3,200 technology start-ups, found 70% had scaled prematurely along some dimension, attributed 74% of failures among high-growth internet start-ups to premature scaling, and found premature scalers' teams three times larger at the same stage [E247] [DATA CONFLICT C45: a 70% prevalence against a 74% failure attribution / decision: both reported as the report states them]. David Skok's rule, from 2009, is that after product-market fit the second cause of start-up death is acquisition cost outrunning the ability to monetise the customer, with cost to be recovered in under twelve months [E245]. Jason Lemkin's observation, from 2013 and republished in 2021, is that the first mistake is hiring a sales leader for the wrong stage and that "95% of VP Sales on the market can't do this phase" of making sales repeatable [E248]. Dave Kellogg's November 2025 diagnosis was of a "pipeline crisis" rather than a conversion crisis, citing Cloud Ratings for stated coverage of 3.6x against a 4.1x target and a LinkedIn post by Kyle Poyar for a median CAC payback of 57 months in 2025 [E304] (neither cited source could be opened; both are reported as his citations).

What this means for the relationship between the sales leader and RevOps is that the pressure to instrument is structural. The investor asks for payback and burn [E242]; a CRO on a tenure under two years [E355] has little time to move a payback measured in months by band [E199] other than by cutting; the one thing a short-tenure leader can show the board quickly is activity and coverage, which become self-fulfilling once demanded [E132]; RevOps is the function that produces those numbers; and the systems that produce them are chosen, increasingly, by the CIO [E042] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Each step of that chain rests on the entry named beside it; the chain itself is this paper's judgement. Everyone is behaving rationally. The sum of the rational behaviour is a sales organisation that reports more and sells less, and that keeps its most experienced sellers in the stack rather than in front of the buyer, where section 7 says their value is.

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10. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the convergence

This section sets out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the convergence under review: the merging of the sales process, the RevOps systems that encode it and the AI that now runs inside them. Each entry below names the evidence it rests on; entries marked as inferences are one step from the entries named.

QUADRANT	FINDING	EVIDENCE
Strength	An encoded process outlasts the people who run it, which matters when the median revenue leader lasts under two years and sellers take over six months to ramp	[INFERENCE: derived from E355, E227 and E005]
Strength	Consolidating data and agreeing definitions across functions needs no reorganisation and is the precondition both buyers of AI and RevOps practitioners name first	[E006]; [E027] (82% say clean data and documented process must precede AI) [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]
Strength	AI measurably raises the floor: a third more output from novice and low-skill agents, and faster, better work inside the tool's competence	[E157]; [E159]
Strength	Buyers want digital ordering and digital expansion for routine purchases, so automating those paths matches stated preference	[E260] (83% prefer digital commerce); [E263] (95% would prefer a fully digital expansion purchase)
Strength	Organisations that reinvest time saved by AI report better odds of exceeding growth and conversion goals	[E036] (2.2 times and 3.1 times; self-reported)
Weakness	The data in the systems is distrusted by the people who feed and administer them	[E064] (75% of administrators say employees fabricate data) [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]; [E110] (35% completely trust data accuracy) [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]; [E062] (47% believe their data is high quality)
Weakness	Half of sellers are overwhelmed by the technology, and the overwhelmed are 45% less likely to attain quota	[E072]
Weakness	The leading indicators the board asks for have no demonstrated predictive validity and are self-fulfilling once demanded	[E132]; [E299]; [DATA GAP G96: no dataset linking coverage to attainment / decision: 3x rule reported as practitioners' view]; [DATA GAP G29: no evidence on predictive validity of activity metrics / decision: no claim made]
Weakness	No controlled evidence that any named methodology or tool category improves outcomes; the independent drivers of performance are knowledge, adaptiveness, role clarity, aptitude and engagement	[DATA GAP G21: no independent outcome evidence for named methodologies / decision: payoff treated as testimonial]; [E075]
Weakness	The function that owns the system lacks agreed goals, and the leader who owns the number lacks a vote on the system	[E024] (89% say RevOps lacks clearly defined strategic goals) [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]; [E037] (23% of chief sales officers accountable for AI selection); [E042] (64% say CIO teams lead tool selection) [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]
Opportunity	Redirect the 4.8 hours a week AI saves into buyer-facing sense-making, the one seller behaviour tied to low-regret deals	[E036]; [E255]; [E268]
Opportunity	Replace the coverage ratio with to-go coverage and channel-level win rates, which are harder to game and closer to the outcome	[E299]; [E118] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]
Opportunity	Write the decision-rights charter between the CRO and RevOps that Forrester now	[E033]; [E037]

QUADRANT	FINDING	EVIDENCE
	describes and Gartner's accountability data calls for	
Opportunity	Keep a human on the expansion and renewal path, where regret is highest and the measured win rate is best	[E263] (60% regret nearly every renewal or expansion purchase); [E118] (expansion wins 45% against 18%) [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]
Opportunity	Small, targeted outbound outperforms volume on every vendor dataset that splits by size	[E144] (5.8% for 50 or fewer recipients against 2.1% for 1,000 or more) [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]; [E139] (top sellers get 4.2 times the replies) [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]
Opportunity	Measure deal quality by buying path, since the same buyers who prefer self-service report more regret on it	[E264] (43% against 26%); [E266]
Threat	The shared outbound channel is near a floor and the owners now enforce a complaint ceiling	[E141] (0.45% reply rate) [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]; [E191] (0.30% spam rate ceiling, enforcement rising from November 2025); [E165] (forecast of synthetic outbound)
Threat	Agent sprawl: agents outnumbering sellers ten to one with most sellers reporting no gain, and over 40% of agentic projects cancelled	[E095] (forecast); [E164] (forecast)
Threat	Buyers move further towards rep-free paths that produce more regret, and punish disclosed automation in high-stakes decisions	[E266] (67% prefer rep-free); [E264]; [E293]; [E295]
Threat	RevOps is cut as a cost centre under efficiency pressure, and the instruments decay	[E030]; [E020] (signal only); [E214] (0% planned RevOps headcount growth; single source)
Threat	Investment is steered by vendor claims that measure activity and change between pages	[E173]; [E178] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]; [E182]
Threat	Buyers meet misleading information from AI as often as from sellers and now verify everything, which lengthens the path to confidence	[E267] (51% against 49%); [E283] (94% fact-check) [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]

Read across the table, the strengths are mostly about durability and the floor, the weaknesses about data and decision rights, the threats about saturation and trust, and the opportunities all require the company to measure something it does not measure today. That is the judgement of this paper on the convergence: it is a sound way to make a sales process survive turnover and a poor way to find out whether the process works, because the instruments it installs are the ones that stop meaning anything once the board reads them.

11. Outcomes if the trajectory continues

These five scenarios are written as conditions for the convergence described in sections 4 to 9. Each names the assumption that drives it, the signal that would show it unfolding, and the response a board or revenue leader could prepare. Likelihood and consequence are described in words with their basis; no scores are assigned, because nothing in the record supports one.

SCENARIO	DRIVING ASSUMPTION	LEADING SIGNAL	PLANNED RESPONSE	LIKELIHOOD AND CONSEQUENCE, WITH BASIS
More agents, same quota	AI is deployed to add activity inside the existing operating model, and the hours it saves are not reinvested	Hours saved reported alongside flat attainment; activity counts per seller rising; tool and agent counts rising; a growing share of sellers reporting overwhelm	Tie every AI deployment to a named reinvestment of the saved hours and a holdout group; stop any deployment whose only metric is volume	Likely on the current record: 72% of organisations already report low reinvestment [E036] and Gartner forecasts agents outnumbering sellers ten to one with most sellers reporting no gain [E095]. Consequence: cost rises while outcomes stay flat, and overwhelm rises [E072]
Outbound channel collapse	Automated outreach volume keeps rising into platform enforcement thresholds and buyer avoidance	The company's own reply rate below 1%; spam complaint rate approaching 0.3%; meetings per SDR falling below the cost of the role; buyers citing irrelevant outreach	Cut volume and widen targeting discipline; move budget to partner referral and inbound paths; measure held meetings and opportunity conversion rather than sends	Already visible in agency data at 0.45% replies [E141] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified], with enforcement rising from November 2025 [E191] and 73% of buyers avoiding suppliers over irrelevant outreach [E265]. Consequence: the SDR model's economics break at the margin, and 40% attrition [E230] becomes exit
RevOps as the control point	RevOps takes the architect role Forrester describes, owning decision rights, AI governance and the operating model; the CRO executes a designed system	Tool and AI selection moving to RevOps or the CIO; RevOps budget protected while sales budget is cut; CRO tenure shortening further; sellers' process compliance measured more than their outcomes	Write the charter before the drift: the CRO keeps ownership of the definition of a qualified opportunity, the forecast method and seller time allocation; RevOps owns the instruments and their integrity, with its goals written down	Moderate: it is Forrester's stated direction [E033], consistent with Gartner's call to redesign the system around sellers [E036], against a median plan of 0% RevOps headcount growth [E214] (single source). Consequence without the charter: the sales leader carries accountability without authority, a position 60% of chief sales officers already describe when they say their number is driven by factors outside their control [E095]
RevOps routed around and cut	Under efficiency pressure RevOps is treated as overhead, its production work is absorbed by AI and self-serve tooling, and operators bypass it	RevOps headcount flat or falling while tool count rises; shadow spreadsheets reappearing; forecast misses and data complaints increasing; "GTM Engineer" (go-to-market engineer) titles replacing operations roles [E020]	Fund the function against measured outcomes (forecast error, data completeness, time to route a lead) rather than headcount, and give it a goal the CRO signs	Moderate to likely: Forrester describes the bypass [E031] and the cost-centre fate [E030]; the only hiring data is an editorial's own unsourced figures showing RevOps advertisements falling 19% to 22% in a year [E020] (signal only). Consequence: the instruments decay and the number is set on data nobody trusts [E064] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]
The relationship premium	Buyers' regret on self-service paths and their preference for human judgement at the	Win rate and regret measured by buying path; expansion win rates; time with sellers in low-	Measure deal quality by path; put senior sellers on complex and expansion purchases; let agents	Supported by the buyer data: sellers outscore AI by 21 to 39 points on confidence and understanding [E268] (single

SCENARIO	DRIVING ASSUMPTION	LEADING SIGNAL	PLANNED RESPONSE	LIKELIHOOD AND CONSEQUENCE, WITH BASIS
	point of decision make sense-making sellers scarcer and more valuable, while agents handle the routine	dysfunction buying groups; senior seller tenure	serve the buyers who want to order digitally; pay for outcomes on the human path	source), 69% validate AI with a seller [E267], and Gartner forecasts 75% preferring human-prioritised experiences by 2030 [E166]. It depends on the company measuring by path, which none in the record does. Consequence: fewer, better-paid sellers and a stack that serves them

The first two scenarios travel together: a company that deploys agents to add volume will meet the channel ceiling faster. Scenarios three and four are a fork, and which branch a company takes depends on whether the charter exists before the budget review. Scenario five is the one the evidence favours and the one no company in the record has instrumented, which is why it remains a scenario rather than a finding. [HYPOTHESIS H01: a board that replaces fixed coverage targets with to-go coverage and channel win rates sees less stage inflation within two quarters; test in experiment X01, a before-and-after comparison of stage conversion distributions] [HYPOTHESIS H02: reinvesting AI-saved hours into buyer-facing preparation raises win rate on complex deals; test in experiment X02, matched teams with and without the reinvestment rule] [HYPOTHESIS H03: human involvement on renewal and expansion lowers regret and early churn; test in experiment X03, assignment of seller involvement by account cohort]

12. What boards, chief executives and revenue leaders should do differently

Change what the board asks for first, because everything downstream is shaped by it. This paper prefers to retire the fixed coverage ratio as a board metric and to replace it with to-go coverage against what remains to be sold, win rate by source, stage conversion measured on the same cohort over time and deal quality by buying path. The fixed ratio has never been shown to predict attainment [DATA GAP G96: no dataset linking coverage to attainment / decision: the 3x rule treated as a convention], becomes self-fulfilling once demanded [E132] [E299], and is the number most exposed to stage inflation, of which the only quantified sign in the record is 68% of deals advanced without effective qualification [E081] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. The investor's own board template asks for net new annual recurring revenue, burn multiple, payback and net dollar retention [E242] (single source); a board that asks management for those and for deal quality by path is asking for outcomes, which is what it is paying for.

Write the charter between the CRO and RevOps now, before the next budget review. One page is enough: the CRO owns the definition of a qualified opportunity, the forecast method and the allocation of seller time; RevOps owns the instruments, their integrity and the data definitions, with written goals that the CRO signs. Why now? Forrester describes the architect role for RevOps [E033] and Gartner calls for the system to be redesigned around sellers [E036], while only 23% of chief sales officers are accountable for AI selection [E037], 49% say their lead definition differs greatly from marketing's [E037], and 89% of one vendor's sample say RevOps lacks

clearly defined goals [E024] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. A function without a signed goal is cut as overhead when the model is stress-tested [E030]; a leader without authority over the definition of a deal cannot be held to the number.

Every vendor result is a claim until it has been measured in the company's own data with a holdout, and the business case should say so. No AI or tooling purchase above a modest threshold should proceed without a stated outcome metric, a control group and a review date [THRESHOLD: recommended, not confirmed; to be set by the board; basis: none in the record]. The vendor figures in section 8 measure activity, change between pages or lack a control [E173] [E178] [E179] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]; the one benchmark publisher that labels its own data observational does so in print [E149]; and the independent studies predict where the gains will land, in the ramp and the floor rather than in the senior seller [E157] [E159].

Reinvest the saved hours deliberately, and name where they go. Each AI deployment should state where the saved time is spent, with at least part of it going to buyer-facing preparation for complex and expansion deals. Gartner found 72% of organisations failing to reinvest the 4.8 hours a week they report saving, and those which did reinvest 2.2 times more likely to exceed customer growth goals [E036]; the buyer evidence says the behaviours tied to low-regret deals are sense-making and confidence building [E255] [E268] (single source for each), and those take time.

Cut the stack to what is used, and measure use rather than licences. A hard cap on tools per seller, reviewed annually against usage data, with consolidation onto the platform the sellers already live in, is the version of this that survives contact with procurement. Organisations use about half the licences they pay for [E050] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified], reference customers of enablement platforms use about three quarters of their capability with frontline manager adoption rated lowest [E034], and half of sellers are overwhelmed by the technology while the overwhelmed are 45% less likely to attain quota [E072]. Fewer tools used well beat more tools used badly, and the peer-reviewed evidence says use is set by the manager [E069].

Run outbound as a scarce resource. The motion this paper prefers is small and targeted, measured on held meetings and opportunity conversion, with reply and complaint rates reviewed weekly against the platform thresholds, and with partner referral and inbound paths funded ahead of volume outreach. Behind that preference sit a measured reply rate of 0.45% on seven and a half million emails [E141] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified], the 5.8% against 2.1% split between small and large campaigns [E144] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified], a 0.30% complaint ceiling with enforcement rising [E191], and vendor data ranking partner referrals and inbound above outbound on efficiency [E118] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. An AI SDR, if deployed at all, follows a human-proven motion rather than replacing one [E310] [E184].

Own data quality through incentives and managers, and stop asking RevOps to police it. Opportunity data completeness belongs on the seller's and the manager's scorecard, with the manager accountable for adoption, because three in four administrators say users fabricate data for the readers of reports [E064] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified] and adoption flows from manager to seller and almost not at all in reverse [E069]. A RevOps team enforcing hygiene on sellers who have no stake in it will be seen as the guardrail that slows deals [E029].

Keep a human on the path where the buyer regrets being alone. Renewal and expansion of material accounts, and any purchase the buyer describes as complex, should involve a senior seller whose job is to reduce contradiction and raise confidence, while routine ordering is left to

the digital path the buyer prefers. The evidence for this is the buyer's own: 60% of buyers regret nearly every renewal or expansion purchase and 95% would still prefer to do it digitally [E263] (single source); self-service digital commerce carries 43% high regret against 26% rep-led [E264] (single source); expansion deals win at 45% against 18% for new business [E118] [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]; and the buyer rates a seller far above generative AI on exactly the things that produce a confident decision [E268] (single source).

The questions a board can put to management at the next meeting, to be answered with the company's own data rather than a benchmark, are these; the references point to the evidence behind each question, and where that evidence is a vendor's it carries the same tag as in the body [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified].

1. What was starting pipeline coverage against what remained to be sold at the start of each of the last four quarters, and what was the attainment that followed? [E299]
2. What share of opportunities moved past qualification last quarter without the qualification fields completed, and who moved them? [E081]
3. For the last four quarters, how far was the forecast from the result at week two, week five and week eight, and which method produced the smallest error? [E124] [E126]
4. Which tools did sellers use last month, by seat, and what did the unused seats cost? [E050] [E034]
5. Where did the hours saved by AI go, and what changed in the outcomes of the teams that received them? [E036]
6. What were win rate, early churn and expansion rate by buying path (self-service, rep-led, mixed) for the last two cohorts? [E264] [E118]
7. Who owns the definition of a qualified opportunity, who chose the forecasting tool, and has the CRO signed RevOps' goals for the year? [E037] [E042] [E024]

None of those questions can be answered from a dashboard as currently built, which is the point.

Annex A. Evidence ledger

356 entries, every page opened on 2 November 2026. Each entry gives the reference, the grade, the status, the claim it supports, the source, the publisher or author, the publication date and the address. The spreadsheet edition adds the verbatim quotation or locator, the stated sample, the corroboration and the research stream.

E001 **Grade C** in conflict

On 17 May 2021 Gartner predicted that by 2025, 75% of the highest growth companies in the world would deploy a revenue operations (RevOps) model, framed as a shift from sales enablement to revenue enablement; no method, sample or definition of "highest growth" is given.

Gartner Predicts 75% of the Highest Growth Companies in the World Will Deploy a RevOps Model by 2025. Gartner, Inc.; Doug Bushée, senior director analyst, Gartner Sales practice. 17 May 2021 (dateline Stamford, Conn.).

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2021-05-17-gartner-predicts-75--...

E002 **Grade B** single source

Gartner's public infographic (copyright 2024) defines RevOps as a spectrum of practices, restates the prediction as "will deploy RevOps practices by 2025", and rests on a 2020 Gartner survey of 299 respondents.

Is it Time for RevOps? (infographic). Gartner, Inc.. no date shown (copyright 2024; survey May to June 2020).

emt.gartnerweb.com/ngw/globalassets/en/sales-service/documents/topics/is-it...

E003 **Grade C** single source

As of 2 November 2026 Gartner's public implementation guide still carries the 2025 prediction in the future tense and reports no outcome: a nil result for any Gartner follow-up on whether the prediction came true.

Revenue Operations Implementation Guide. Gartner, Inc.. no date shown.

www.gartner.com/en/sales/trends/revenue-operations-implementation-guide-cpc...

E004 **Grade B** single source

Gartner predicted on 3 May 2022 that by 2026, 65% of B2B sales organisations would move from intuition-based to data-driven decision making, and reported the average virtual selling technology stack at 13 technologies.

Gartner Predicts 65% of B2B Sales Organizations Will Transition from Intuition-Based to Data-Driven Decision Making by 2026. Gartner, Inc.; Dan Gottlieb and Craig Rosenberg. 3 May 2022.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/gartner-predicts-65--of-b2b-sale...

E005 **Grade B** in conflict

Gartner reported in April 2023 that sales operations professionals spend 73% of their time supporting non-sales functions, up from 39% in 2019; in 2022 only 27% of SalesOps support time went to the sales function (61% in 2019) and 68% went to non-client-facing functions such as supply chain, finance, HR and IT; the analyst said such shifts are often deliberate as organisations move to a RevOps model.

Gartner Survey Finds Sales Operations Teams Dedicate Most of Their Time to Non-Sales Functions. Gartner, Inc.; Greg Hessong, Senior Director, Advisory. 12 April 2023.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2023-04-12-gartner-survey-finds-...

E006 **Grade C** corroborated

Gartner's July 2024 tech CEO research holds that RevOps does not require a major reorganisation of roles, needs data consolidation and integration but no specific technology, and depends on agreement among operational functions; a companion abstract says early-stage companies must prepare to adopt RevOps because operational silos no longer match buying journeys.

Adopt RevOps as a Tech CEO to Align With Today's Buying Journeys; Tech CEO Insight: Early-Stage Companies Must Prepare to Adopt RevOps (public abstracts). Gartner, Inc.; Peter Havart-Simkin and Patrick Stakenas (first); authors not listed (second). 13 July 2024; 11 July 2024.

www.gartner.com/en/documents/5582327 and www.gartner.com/en/documents/5578528

E007 **Grade C** corroborated

Gartner's September 2024 research says sales operations leaders asked to implement RevOps meet resistance because others assume large structural change, and proposes a commercial coalition around high-value use cases instead.

Jump-Start RevOps With Small Steps, Not Structural Changes (public abstract). Gartner, Inc.; Tyler Huguley and Rachael Buchler. 4 September 2024.

www.gartner.com/en/documents/5734383

E008 **Grade C** in conflict

SiriusDecisions presented a Revenue Operations Charter at LeanData's OpsStars event on 13 May 2019; its service director said research had disproved his assumption that a RevOps leader would report to the CRO; the article also quotes SiriusDecisions as saying aligned B2B businesses grow 12 to 15 times faster and are 34% more profitable.

SiriusDecisions' Dana Therrien Discusses New Revenue Operations Charter, Highlights The 'Sirius Seven' To Alignment. Demand Gen Report (interview; writer not named). 15 May 2019.

www.demandgenreport.com/?p=5683

E009 **Grade D** in conflict

Forrester closed its acquisition of SiriusDecisions on 3 January 2019 and described SiriusDecisions' clients as growing 19% faster and being 15% more profitable than peers.

Forrester + SiriusDecisions. George Colony, CEO, Forrester. 3 January 2019.

www.forrester.com/blogs/forrester-siriusdecisions/

E010 **Grade B** in conflict

The widely repeated "19% faster growth and 15% more profitability" figure originates in a SiriusDecisions Summit 2015 talk by co-founder John Neeson: organisations that maintain alignment focus achieve up to 19 percent faster revenue growth and 15 percent higher profitability, from benchmark data on 400 B2B organisations covering 2006 to 2014 plus 300 leader responses; cross-functional alignment accounted for between 5 and 36 percent of B2B growth.

Summit 2015 Highlights: The Economics of Alignment. Forrester blog (SiriusDecisions); author not shown. no date shown (Summit 2015, Nashville).

www.forrester.com/blogs/summit-2015-highlights-the-economics-of-alignment/

E011 **Grade D** in conflict

A Forrester report abstract dated 10 March 2018 states that SiriusDecisions clients grew 12 times faster than non-clients over three years and highly engaged clients 15 times faster; no alignment or profitability percentage is visible.

The 2018 Client Study: Growth and Profitability Analysis. Forrester (SiriusDecisions); authors not listed. 10 March 2018.

www.forrester.com/report/the-2018-client-study-growth-and-profitability-ana...

E012 **Grade D** vendor claim

In June 2019 Forrester reported from the SiriusDecisions 2019 Revenue Operations Research Survey (run with LeanData, InsightSquared and Outreach.io) that organisations which deployed revenue ops in some form grew revenue nearly three times faster, that public companies with revenue ops had 71% higher stock performance, that 9% had a revenue ops function they could not describe, and that RevOps is not meant to redo org design or reduce the role of sales or marketing.

Revenue Operations and the CMO: Game Changer or Game Over?. Megan Heuer, Vice President, Research, Forrester. 13 June 2019.

www.forrester.com/blogs/revenue-operations-and-cmos/

E013 **Grade D** in conflict

The same 2019 post reports that where revenue ops is centralised it reports to a CRO in 46% of organisations and to a centralised operations leader such as a COO in 24%, and that CROs are 2.9 times more likely to manage sales than marketing and 1.6 times more likely to manage sales than customer success.

Revenue Operations and the CMO: Game Changer or Game Over?. Megan Heuer, Forrester. 13 June 2019.

www.forrester.com/blogs/revenue-operations-and-cmos/

E014 **Grade C** single source

The widely repeated "36% more revenue growth and up to 28% more profitability" figure originates in a January 2021 Forrester blog where it refers only to emerging companies in the prepare-for-exit stage that align the people, process and technology of the demand engine, is attributed to "our research" and "benchmark data" with no sample, method or dates, and the post never uses the term revenue operations.

Emerging-Company Sales Leaders: Shape-Shift Or Face Failure. Nancy Maluso, VP, Principal Analyst, Forrester. 11 January 2021.

www.forrester.com/blogs/emerging-company-sales-leaders-shape-shift-or-face-...

E015 **Grade C** single source

Forrester defines RevOps as a highly configured, iterative commercial execution strategy, and its 2021 Revenue Operations And Buying Groups Survey found the top impacts of the operations function were improved revenue growth (41%), improved customer satisfaction (36%) and increased profitability (35%).

The WIIFM ("What's In It For Me?") Of Revenue Operations. Anne Slough, Principal Analyst, Forrester. 23 June 2023.

www.forrester.com/blogs/the-wifm-whats-in-it-for-me-of-revenue-operations

E016 **Grade C** single source

BCG's May 2020 article defines RevOps as centralising operations teams from marketing, sales and customer success, attributes to unnamed top B2B technology companies 100% to 200% increases in digital marketing ROI, 10% to 20% in sales productivity, 10% in lead acceptance, 15% to 20% in internal customer satisfaction and 30% reductions in GTM expenses with no method, notes that many organisations believe they have no good place for RevOps to report, and recommends a hub-and-spoke model under a cross-functional leader.

Revving Up Go-to-Market Operations in B2B. Boston Consulting Group; Federico Fabbri, Basir Mustaghni, Marina Nekrasova, Tom Matuszczyk, Matt Ward. 13 May 2020.

www.bcg.com/en-us/publications/2020/revving-up-go-to-market-operations-b2b

E017 **Grade C** in conflict

McKinsey states that non-selling activities still consume two-thirds of the average sales team's time, that automation can free about 20 percent of capacity, and that top-quartile B2B companies generate roughly 2.5 times the gross margin per dollar invested in sales of bottom-quartile companies (nearly 500 B2B companies analysed); the article never uses the terms RevOps or sales operations.

How top performers outpace peers in sales productivity. McKinsey & Company; Paolo Cencioni, Richelle Deveau, Lia Ketola, Philipp Landauer, Siamak Sarvari. 6 July 2023.

www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/how-t...

E018 **Grade C** in conflict

LinkedIn's Jobs on the Rise 2023 list for the United States, measuring job title growth on LinkedIn from January 2018 to July 2022, ranked Head of Revenue Operations first and Sales Enablement Specialist sixth, giving "chief revenue officer" as an alternative title for the top role.

The 10 fastest-growing jobs in the U.S. right now (CNBC report on LinkedIn Jobs on the Rise 2023). CNBC; author not shown. 18 January 2023 (from URL).

www.cnbc.com/2023/01/18/the-10-fastest-growing-jobs-in-the-us-right-now-man...

E019 **Grade E** signal only

The frequently repeated "300% increase in RevOps-related roles on LinkedIn since 2019" and "57% increase in companies implementing RevOps since 2019" first appear in a 2022 agency blog with no source; the citation chain ends there.

What is RevOps and How It Can Drive Growth for Your Business. Marko Bodiroza, New Perspective (npws.net). 15 September 2022.

www.npws.net/blog/revops-b2b-company

E020 **Grade C** in conflict

A Pavilion editorial in July 2025 reported LinkedIn RevOps job ads falling from 26k to 21k between May 2024 and May 2025 (19%), Indeed open RevOps roles falling from about 25,000 to 19,000 in twelve months (22%), about 1,000 fewer RevOps titles in North America in the prior year, and about 1,400 US "GTM Engineer" ads live in May 2025 up from effectively zero; none of these figures is sourced in the piece.

GTM Engineers Are Eating RevOps' Lunch. James McKay, Pavilion (Topline editorial). 29 July 2025.

www.joinpavilion.com/blog/gtm-engineers-are-eating-revops-lunch?hsLang=en

E021 **Grade D** vendor claim

Revenue.io's 2022 RevOps Team Benchmarks (over 250 companies, November to December 2021) found 48% of companies had a RevOps function (described as a 15% increase on 2021), 11% planned to add one, 41% had none and no plan, and 37% of adopters introduced RevOps at $5M to $20M ARR; 46% had a chief revenue officer, 10% planned to add one in 2022, and only 10% had a CRO responsible for marketing, sales and customer success (sales and marketing 12%; sales and customer success 6%).

Benchmarks (2022 RevOps Team Benchmarks Report, second edition). Revenue.io with RevOps Squared, Demandbase and Tenbound. 2022 (copyright year).

knowledge.revenue.io/hubfs/eBooks/revenue-2022-revops-team-benchmarks-repor...

E022 **Grade D** in conflict

The Openprise 2024 State of RevOps Survey (152 responses, with MarketingOps.com and RevOps Co-op) found 35% of companies had a formal RevOps department and 32.5% a functional team without one; 89% said RevOps supported marketing, sales and customer success; 41% reported to the CRO, 21% to the CFO and 10% to the COO; and formal RevOps departments showed no better go-to-market alignment than average.

[Research Round-Up] Recent Studies Reveal the State of Revenue Operations (summary of the Openprise 2024 survey). G. David Dodd, B2B Marketing Directions blog. 4 September 2024.

b2bmarketingdirections.blogspot.com/2024/09/research-round-up-recent-studie...

E023 Grade C in conflict

The Revenue Operations Alliance 2023 report found 30.4% of RevOps respondents reported to the CRO and 25.6% to the CEO; 59.8% of organisations had had RevOps for one to two years and 90.3% for under five; top responsibilities were metrics and KPIs (89%), pipeline strategy (81.7%), tech stack management (79.3%) and GTM strategy (78%); 41.4% had teams of two to four and 22% were sole practitioners; 40.2% had no dedicated budget; 65.9% of respondents were in North America and 28% in the UK and Europe (UK and European data flagged).

[Research Round-Up] Recent Studies Reveal the State of Revenue Operations (summary of the Revenue Operations Alliance 2023 report). G. David Dodd, B2B Marketing Directions blog. 4 September 2024.

b2bmarketingdirections.blogspot.com/2024/09/research-round-up-recent-studie...

E024 Grade D in conflict

A Salesloft-commissioned Wakefield Research survey of 400 US respondents found 73% of companies have a C-suite role dedicated directly to RevOps, 98% say the function grew in scope over the past year, 89% say RevOps lacks clearly defined strategic goals, 79% still categorise RevOps as sales-adjacent, respondents split evenly between seeing RevOps as strategic and as reactive support, and RevOps teams work most closely with COOs (26%), CEOs (25%) and CFOs (24%).

The Rise of RevOps to the C-Suite (2025 Wakefield Research report). Salesloft (commissioned); Wakefield Research (conducted). 22 July 2025.

www.salesloft.com/resources/guides/wakefield-revops-study-2025

E025 Grade D vendor claim

HubSpot's RevOps explainer states that RevOps owns data, processes and systems across all revenue teams, organised as operations, enablement, insights, and tools and technology, and most commonly reports to the CRO; it contains none of the 300%, 19% or 75% figures attributed to it elsewhere.

Why your B2B company should explore a revenue operations strategy. HubSpot Staff. originally 30 June 2020; updated 14 July 2026.

blog.hubspot.com/sales/revenue-operations

E026 Grade C in conflict

RevOps Co-op's practitioner guidance holds that RevOps should ideally report to the CRO on equal footing with sales, marketing and customer success, with COO or CFO as fallbacks for smaller firms, that reporting into a functional head "enforces silos", and that contributors describe being asked to ignore questionable contract language or to "filter" numbers; no poll or survey is given.

Who Should Revenue Operations Report To?. RevOps Co-op blog (contributors Cédric Venard, Sarah Sheehan, Matthew Volm, Brian Vass, Lisa Travnik). 13 May 2025 (earlier version 21 December 2020, opened at https://revopscoop.substack.com/p/revops-co-op-weekly-11-where-should).

revopscoop.com/post/who-should-revenue-operations-report-to

E027 Grade D corroborated

The LXA and LeanData 2026 study (201 senior leaders at B2B organisations with 2,500 or more employees, seven countries, April 2026) scored Process and Operations the lowest maturity pillar at 3.66 out of 5.0, found 82% say clean data, documented processes and reliable routing must precede AI, that the average enterprise stack fell from 62 to 37 tools in a year, 42% report poor marketing and sales alignment on lead qualification, and only 26% enforce SLAs for routing, qualification and lead-to-account matching.

The 2026 B2B State of Martech and Revenue Operations Report. LeanData (Kim Peterson) with LXA. 27 June 2026.

www.leandata.com/blog/b2b-state-of-martech-and-revenue-operations-report/

E028 Grade D in conflict

Outreach's December 2025 guide cites a PeerSignal analysis of 2,500 B2B SaaS companies for a benchmark of 12 sales representatives per RevOps person, cites McKinsey for an 8:1 non-manager ratio, restates the Gartner sales operations figure as 68% of time on non-sales functions (Gartner's headline is 73%), and restates the 75% prediction with the year changed to 2026.

Revenue operations vs. sales operations: A complete guide for 2026. Maria Akhter, Outreach. 15 December 2025 (modified 28 September 2026).

www.outreach.ai/resources/blog/revenue-operations-vs-sales-operations

E029 Grade C corroborated

The Pavilion editorial describes a trust problem between RevOps and sales, with RevOps criticised for over-engineering processes and creating guardrails that slow deals, "invited to strategic meetings but rarely leading them", and cut first when seen as overhead; it reports without source that 50% of CROs call their CRM data high confidence while 80% of RevOps leads rate it poor, and that 64% of CROs expect their ops budget flat or shrinking in 2025.

GTM Engineers Are Eating RevOps' Lunch. James McKay, Pavilion. 29 July 2025.

www.joinpavilion.com/blog/gtm-engineers-are-eating-revops-lunch?hsLang=en

E030 Grade C corroborated

Forrester's Laura Cross argued in April 2026 that operations roles are cut where the operating model is stress-tested, that durable RevOps roles are defined by judgement ownership, governance and value realisation, and that without ownership of decision quality, ops becomes a cost centre rather than a control point.

What Oracle's Layoffs Really Signal For B2B Marketing, Sales, And Revenue Operations. Laura Cross, VP, Principal Analyst, Forrester. 1 April 2026.

www.forrester.com/blogs/what-oracles-layoffs-really-signal-for-b2b-marketin...

E031 **Grade C** corroborated

Forrester's Anthony McPartlin wrote in July 2026 that RevOps' historical value came from controlling systems, data and process, that AI shifts its value from production to interpretation, and that if RevOps is seen as slow, procedural or resistant to experimentation, operators will route around it; the main risk is that RevOps "fails to evolve and gets bypassed".

The Rise Of The "Claude Cowboy" In RevOps. Anthony McPartlin, VP, Principal Analyst, Forrester. 3 July 2026.

www.forrester.com/blogs/the-rise-of-the-claude-cowboy-in-revops/

E032 **Grade C** single source

Forrester's Ross Graber wrote in September 2026 that RevOps emerged over the past decade to drive consistency, efficiency and alignment as go-to-market organisations fragmented, that its mandate was standardising processes, improving data quality and driving common metrics, that it did so while "never being seamless", and that AI-mediated buyer research now erodes the engagement signals it relies on.

The World That Spawned RevOps Is Unrecognizable. Ross Graber, VP, Principal Analyst, Forrester. 10 September 2026.

www.forrester.com/blogs/the-world-that-spawned-revops-is-unrecognizable/

E033 **Grade C** corroborated

Forrester's Laura Cross wrote in October 2026 that AI is absorbing much of RevOps' coordination work and that RevOps should move from running processes to architecting the operating model: continuous rather than periodic planning, orchestrating people, process, technology and AI rather than documenting workflows, recommending rather than explaining, and supplying trusted data and context rather than hygiene, including setting AI decision rights; the CRO and reporting lines are not mentioned.

AI Won't Save RevOps: It Will Redefine It (title punctuation adapted from the original). Laura Cross, VP, Principal Analyst, Forrester. 15 October 2026.

www.forrester.com/blogs/ai-wont-save-revops-it-will-redefine-it/

E034 **Grade B** corroborated

Forrester's October 2026 Revenue Enablement Platforms Wave work (22 reference customer interviews, nine vendors) found customers use approximately 75% of platform capabilities, frontline manager adoption rated lowest, and CRM integration nearly universal but CRM-driven enablement not; the August 2026 companion post calls the completed Seismic and Highspot merger the most consequential transaction the market has seen and says for every reference customer with advanced integration two or three still struggle with disconnected systems and data.

The Biggest Surprise From The New Revenue Enablement Platforms Forrester Wave Isn't AI; The Seismic-Highspot Merger Raises The Bar. Will GTM Teams Clear It?. Peter Ostrow (with Kathleen Pierce for the merger post), Forrester. 21 October 2026; 18 August 2026.

www.forrester.com/blogs/the-biggest-surprise-from-the-new-revenue-enablemen...

E035 **Grade B** single source

Gartner predicted on 1 April 2026 that by 2029 sales organisations with AI-driven enablement functions will achieve 40% faster sales stage velocity than those using traditional approaches, that sales organisations completed an average of four transformations in the past twelve months, and that organisations collaborating on enablement content with marketing and service are 2.4 times more likely to achieve strong commercial growth.

Gartner Predicts AI-Driven Sales Enablement Will Deliver 40% Faster Sales Stage Velocity Than Traditional Enablement Methods by 2029. Gartner, Inc.; Shayne Jackson, VP Analyst. 1 April 2026.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2026-04-01-gartner-predicts-ai-d...

E036 **Grade B** corroborated

Gartner reported on 19 May 2026 that AI saves sellers an average of 4.8 hours per week, that 72% of sales organisations report low reinvestment of that time into high-value activities, that reinvesting organisations are 2.2 times more likely to exceed customer growth goals and 3.1 times more likely to exceed lead-to-opportunity conversion goals, and that 25% report a 50% or higher return on AI while 20% report a negative return of 50% or more; the analyst attributed stalled productivity to operating models built to scale by adding people.

Gartner Survey Finds AI Saves Sellers Nearly 5 Hours Per Week Yet 72% of Sales Organizations Fail to Reinvest Time in High-Value Activities. Gartner, Inc.; Dan Gottlieb, VP Analyst. 19 May 2026.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2026-05-19-gartner-survey-finds-...

E037 Grade B in conflict

Gartner reported on 21 May 2025 that 45% of CSOs said their organisation met several 2024 strategic goals, 49% said sales' definition of a qualified lead differs greatly from marketing's, 74% said a significant change in seller skills is needed, CSOs estimated 58% of sellers will need reskilling by 2026 because of AI, and only 23% of CSOs are accountable for AI selection while 68% only provide input or are informed.

Gartner Survey Reveals Less Than Half of CSOs Report Their Organization Met Several 2024 Strategic Goals. Gartner, Inc.; Robert Blaisdell, VP Analyst, Chief of Research. 21 May 2025.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2025-05-21-gartner-survey-reveal...

E038 Grade B single source

Gartner found in 2024 that sellers who effectively partner with AI are 3.7 times more likely to meet quota, that 72% of sellers feel overwhelmed by the number of skills required and 50% by the amount of technology, and that overwhelmed sellers are 45% less likely to attain quota.

Gartner Sales Survey Reveals Sellers Who Partner With AI Are 3.7 Times More Likely to Meet Quota. Gartner, Inc.; Antra Sharma and Michael Katz. 16 September 2024.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2024-09-16-gartner-sales-survey-...

E039 Grade C corroborated

Forbes contributor David Nour wrote that an estimated 48% of companies have a RevOps function (source unnamed), that RevOps is typically adopted between $5M and $20M ARR, that less than 15% of his global clients hold a regular cadence meeting on RevOps data, and that less than 10% of his client CROs run the entire sales, marketing and customer success functions.

Building Organizational Resilience Through RevOps. David Nour, Forbes (former contributor), with Jenn Cordz, Nour Group. 14 April 2023.

www.forbes.com/sites/davidnour/2023/04/14/building-organizational-resilienc...

E040 Grade C single source

Spencer Stuart's June 2026 survey of nearly 100 B2B CROs found 64% had kept headcount steady over two years, 11% had cut headcount due to AI, 35% expect reductions in the next year, 37% rate their organisation's AI capability below average, and the top impediments are data infrastructure not ready (25%) and technology integration (20%); it gives no CRO tenure or span-of-control data.

AI and the New CRO Mandate. Michael Dickstein, Spencer Stuart. June 2026.

www.spencerstuart.com/research-and-insight/ai-and-the-new-cro-mandate

E041 Grade C single source

Spencer Stuart's January 2026 S&P 500 analysis (346 named CMOs at 30 June 2025; 218 exits 2021 to 2025) puts average CMO tenure at 4.1 years against 5.0 years for all C-suite roles and 3.3 years for COOs, finds 31% of S&P 500 companies have no enterprise CMO, and notes software companies designating a chief revenue officer as part of changes to the top marketing role; no CRO tenure figure is given.

CMO Tenure 2026: Snapshot of an Expanding Role for Marketing Leaders. Spencer Stuart; authors not listed. January 2026.

www.spencerstuart.com/research-and-insight/cmo-tenure-2026-snapshot-of-an-e...

E042 Grade D corroborated

A Censuswide survey for Clari Labs (400 North American enterprise respondents, 1,000 or more employees, 19 September to 7 October 2025) found 87% of enterprises not using Clari and Salesloft missed 2025 revenue targets, 48% say revenue data is not AI-ready, 55% report conflicting pipeline signals from disconnected sources, 64% of revenue leaders say CIO teams lead selection and implementation of forecasting and revenue tools, 91% of IT teams lead AI training and data preparation while only 29% of RevOps teams are top contributors, and 46% cite accountability and trust as the biggest challenge in CIO and CRO engagement.

New Clari Labs Research Reveals 87% of Enterprises Missed Revenue Targets in 2025 Despite Record AI Investment. Clari Labs (Clari and Salesloft); Censuswide. 14 January 2026.

www.salesloft.com/company/newsroom/new-clari-labs-research-reveals-enterpri...

E043 Grade D in conflict

Salesforce's State of Sales 2026 (4,050 sales professionals in 22 countries including the UK and Ireland, August to September 2025) reports the average seller spends 40% of their time selling, 87% of sales organisations use some form of AI, 51% of sales leaders with AI say disconnected systems slow their AI initiatives, and 79% of high performers prioritise data hygiene against 54% of underperformers.

The Productivity Gap: New Survey Shows 9 in 10 Sellers Are Betting on AI and Agents To Help (State of Sales 2026). Salesforce. 3 February 2026.

www.salesforce.com/news/stories/state-of-sales-report-announcement-2026/

E044 Grade E signal only

The CRO Collective's homepage asserts that CROs hired without proper training last an average of 17 months, that CRO is the fastest-growing job title in the United States, and that CRO-driven RevOps yields a 100 to 200% increase in digital marketing ROI, all unsourced; this is the only opened page carrying any CRO tenure figure.

The CRO Collective (homepage). The CRO Collective (Warren Zenna). no date shown.

www.thecrocollective.com/

E045 **Grade D** in conflict

Sales teams used an average of 10 tools to close deals in 2022, and two-thirds of reps said they were overwhelmed by sales apps.

State of Sales, 5th edition (PDF). Salesforce. no date shown (survey 24 August to 30 September 2022).

www.salesforce.com/content/dam/web/en_in/www/documents/pdf/state-of-sales-5...

E046 **Grade D** in conflict

In the 2025 survey, teams used an average of eight standalone tools, only a third used an all-in-one platform (45% a platform plus standalone tools, 34% one platform, 20% many standalone tools), 42% of reps said they were overwhelmed by too many tools, and 84% of teams without an all-in-one platform planned to consolidate.

State of Sales, 7th edition (PDF). Salesforce. no date shown on the PDF; announced 3 February 2026.

www.salesforce.com/en-us/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/documents/reports/sales...

E047 **Grade D** in conflict

In the 2024 survey, 53% of sales teams that had fully implemented AI had consolidated their tech stack, 81% were experimenting with or had implemented AI, 67% of reps did not expect to meet quota and 84% had missed quota the prior year.

Sales AI statistics 2024 (State of Sales, 6th edition). Salesforce. 25 July 2024.

www.salesforce.com/news/stories/sales-ai-statistics-2024/

E048 **Grade D** in conflict

SaaS spend averaged $4,830 per employee, up 21.9% year over year; companies of 1 to 500 employees averaged 152 applications and companies of 10,000 or more averaged 660; organisations wasted an average of $21m a year on unused licences.

2025 SaaS Management Index (press release). Zylo. 16 January 2025.

zylo.com/news/2025-saas-management-index

E049 **Grade C** in conflict

Across all Zylo customers the average company paid for 275 SaaS applications in 2024, flat with 2023 and down from a 2021 peak of 323.

The Average Tech Company Pays for 275 SaaS Apps, Flat From Last Year. SaaStr (Jason Lemkin), reporting Zylo's 2025 index. 21 January 2025.

www.saastr.com/the-average-tech-company-pays-for-275-saas-apps-flat-from-la...

E050 **Grade D** vendor claim

Companies used 49% of provisioned SaaS licences, wasted an average of $18m a year on licences and redundancies (up 7% from 2022), and more than one-third of apps were shadow IT.

2024 SaaS Management Index (press release). Zylo. 27 February 2024.

zylo.com/news/2024-saas-management-index

E051 **Grade D** in conflict

Companies spend an average of $9,000 per employee a year on SaaS and rely on an average of 132 applications; Sales department SaaS spend is $10,250 per employee a year.

SaaS Spend per Employee. Vertice (Aimee Manning). 7 May 2025.

www.vertice.one/blog/saas-spend-per-employee

E052 **Grade D** in conflict

The average company ran 106 SaaS apps in 2025, down from 112 in 2023, having cut its app count 18% from 2022 to 2024, while the pace of consolidation slowed from 14% to 5% year over year.

State of SaaS 2025 Report Reveals Operational Complexity and Risk Concerns (press release). BetterCloud, via PR Newswire (republished on finanzen.net). 30 April 2025.

www.finanzen.net/nachricht/aktien/state-of-saas-2025-report-reveals-operati...

E053 **Grade E** signal only

In G2's 2023 buyer survey, 78% preferred to work with fewer vendors, 84% preferred a single solution to multiple tools and 83% preferred buying from the same vendor.

2024 Trends: Consolidation in SalesTech to Drive Sales Execution. G2 Research (Blue Bowen). 11 October 2023.

research.g2.com/insights/salestech-trends-2024

E054 **Grade D** in conflict

In 2022 reps spent 28% of an average week selling and 72% on other work, where "selling" grouped meeting in person with customers (10.4%), connecting virtually (9.4%) and prospecting (8.7%); manually entering customer and sales information took 8.8% and administrative tasks 8.8%.

State of Sales, 5th edition (PDF). Salesforce. no date shown (survey August to September 2022); companion story 8 December 2022.

www.salesforce.com/content/dam/web/en_in/www/documents/pdf/state-of-sales-5...

E055 **Grade D** in conflict

In the 2024 survey, sales reps reported spending 70% of their time on non-selling tasks.

Sales AI statistics 2024. Salesforce. 25 July 2024.

www.salesforce.com/news/stories/sales-ai-statistics-2024/

E056 Grade D in conflict

In the 2025 survey, the average seller spent 40% of their time selling and 60% not selling, with prospecting and data entry counted as non-selling work; Gen Z reps were at 35%.

State of Sales report announcement 2026, and the 7th edition PDF (p.8). Salesforce. 3 February 2026.

www.salesforce.com/news/stories/state-of-sales-report-announcement-2026/

E057 Grade C single source

Forrester states that the average rep spends two days a week on paperwork and admin, and that the average rep wastes about 14 of 51 working hours a week on admin tasks.

How reps spend time; Sales activity study. Forrester. no date shown (metadata modified 25 May 2022 and 26 May 2023).

www.forrester.com/resources/sales-productivity/how-reps-spend-time/

E058 Grade B in conflict

AI tools save sellers an average of 4.8 hours a week, yet 72% of sales organisations report low reinvestment of that time into high-value activities; 25% report a return on AI investment of 50% or more and 20% report a negative return of 50% or more.

Gartner Survey Finds AI Saves Sellers Nearly 5 Hours Per Week Yet 72% of Sales Organizations Fail to Reinvest Time in High-Value Activities. Gartner (Dan Gottlieb quoted). 19 May 2026.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2026-05-19-gartner-survey-finds-...

E059 Grade B single source

77% of sellers report that they struggle to complete their assigned tasks efficiently.

Gartner Survey Finds 77% of Sellers Struggle to Complete Their Assigned Tasks Efficiently. Gartner. 2 November 2023.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2023-11-02-gartner-survey-finds-...

E060 Grade D in conflict

In HubSpot's 2022 survey, sales leaders ranked CRM usage as the most important productivity indicator, and 40% of sales professionals rated their CRM very or extremely effective at improving sales and marketing alignment; the report gives no time-spent-selling figure.

2023 Sales Trends Report (Global) (PDF). HubSpot. no date shown (survey July to August 2022).

hubspot.com/hubfs/2023 Sales Trends Report_Global.pdf

E061 Grade D in conflict

In LinkedIn's 2022 US and Canada survey, 45% of sellers said their biggest data challenge was incomplete data and 77% said their organisation planned to invest more in sales intelligence tools; the page carries no time-spent-selling figure.

LinkedIn State of Sales Report 2022, United States and Canada Edition. LinkedIn Sales Solutions. no date shown (URL path suggests April 2022).

business.linkedin.com/sales-solutions/cx/22/04/linkedin-state-of-sales-repo...

E062 Grade C corroborated

Only 45% of sales leaders and sellers had high confidence in their organisation's forecasting accuracy, only 47% believed their organisation had high-quality data, and 13% said data quality was poor.

Gartner Says Less Than 50% of Sales Leaders and Sellers Have High Confidence in Forecasting Accuracy. Gartner (Craig Riley quoted). 12 February 2020 (pre-window; the only Gartner forecast-confidence figure opened).

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2020-02-12-gartner-says-less-tha...

E063 Grade C single source

Gartner states that poor data quality costs organisations an average of $12.9m a year.

How to Improve Your Data Quality. Gartner (Manasi Sakpal). 14 July 2021.

www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/how-to-improve-your-data-quality

E064 Grade D vendor claim

In Validity's 2021 survey of CRM administration workers, 44% estimated their company loses more than 10% of annual revenue to poor CRM data, 75% said employees fabricate data to tell the story decision makers want, 95% said data quality issues seriously impair their use of the CRM, and 19% said leadership treats CRM data quality as a high priority.

Validity Launches 2022 State of CRM Data Health Report, Finds Data Confidence Does Not Match Reality. Validity. 10 February 2022.

www.validity.com/press-releases/validity-launches-2022-state-of-crm-data-he...

E065 Grade D vendor claim

Of 264 billion CRM records assessed by Validity's DemandTools across more than ten thousand Salesforce orgs, 81% required improvement (duplicates, missing critical fields or invalid data), only 31% of lead records had complete engagement data, and 47% of lead and contact emails were invalid (13%) or risky (34%).

5 Things We Learned from Evaluating 264 Billion CRM Records (PDF). Validity. no date shown (URL path October 2024).

www.validity.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/5-Things-We-Learned-from-Evalua...

E066 Grade D vendor claim

In Validity's 2024 survey, 24% of CRM admins said less than half of their data is accurate and complete, 31% said poor data costs at least 20% of annual revenue, and 67% were concerned whether their data is ready for AI.

The State of CRM Data Management in 2024. Validity. no date shown (image path May 2024).

www.validity.com/resource-center/the-state-of-crm-data-management-in-2024/

E067 Grade D vendor claim

Dun and Bradstreet's blog states that contact data accuracy is believed to erode by 2.5% a month, about 30% a year, without citing a study.

6 Best Practices for Better Contact Data. Dun and Bradstreet (The Editors). 22 April 2021.

www.dnb.com/en-us/blog/sales/6-best-practices-contact-data-management.html

E068 Grade A corroborated

In a peer-reviewed study of a pharmaceutical sales force, salesperson information technology use improved customer service and adaptability, which in turn improved sales performance; the authors note empirical research on sales technology and performance was limited.

High Touch Through High Tech: The Impact of Salesperson Technology Usage on Sales Performance via Mediating Mechanisms. Ahearne, Jones, Rapp and Mathieu, Management Science, vol. 54, no. 4, pp. 671 to 685. 2008 (foundational).

econpapers.repec.org/RePEc:inm:ormnsc:v:54:y:2008:i:4:p:671-685

E069 Grade A single source

Sales force automation implementations often fail because salespeople do not adopt them; coworkers' and superiors' adoption positively affects salespeople's adoption, and the causal path runs mainly from manager to salesperson (path .38, p below .01; reverse path .04, not significant).

Social influence on salespeople's adoption of sales technology: a multilevel analysis. Homburg, Wieseke and Kuehnl, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, vol. 38, pp. 159 to 168. 2010 (foundational).

link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11747-009-0157-x

E070 Grade D vendor claim

In the 2025 survey, 74% of sales teams with AI were prioritising data hygiene (79% of high performers, 54% of underperformers), 51% of sales leaders with AI said tech silos delay or limit AI initiatives, data leaders estimated 19% of their data is inaccessible, and 46% of sales professionals with agents said data quality issues hurt their sales.

State of Sales, 7th edition (PDF). Salesforce. no date shown (survey August to September 2025).

www.salesforce.com/en-us/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/documents/reports/sales...

E071 Grade C in conflict

49% of sellers say they are overwhelmed by the number of technologies needed to do their job, and overwhelmed sellers are 43% less likely to achieve quota.

Sellers Need Tech as a Teammate (trends page). Gartner. no date shown.

www.gartner.com/en/sales/trends/sellers-need-tech-as-a-teammate

E072 Grade B in conflict

In Gartner's 2024 seller survey, 50% of sellers felt overwhelmed by the amount of technology needed, 72% by the number of skills required, overwhelmed sellers were 45% less likely to attain quota, and sellers who effectively partner with AI tools were 3.7 times more likely to meet quota.

Gartner Sales Survey Reveals Sellers Who Partner With AI Are 3.7 Times More Likely to Meet Quota. Gartner (Michael Katz quoted). 16 September 2024.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2024-09-16-gartner-sales-survey-...

E073 Grade B single source

In Gartner's late-2024 CSO survey, 23% of CSOs were accountable for AI selection (68% only gave input or were informed), CSOs estimated 58% of sellers would need reskilling by 2026 because of AI, and 45% said their organisation met several 2024 strategic goals.

Gartner Survey Reveals Less Than Half of CSOs Report Their Organization Met Several 2024 Strategic Goals. Gartner (Robert Blaisdell quoted), via Business Wire. 21 May 2025 (from URL and conference dates; no dateline printed).

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20250521440719/en/Gartner-Survey-Reveals-Les...

E074 Grade D vendor claim

Objective Management Group's assessment data show the share of salespeople proficient in sales technology fell from 20% (2021 to 2023) to 16% (2025), and the average "Leveraging Sales Technology" score fell from 45% to 42%.

Your Sales Tech Stack Is Growing. Sales Capability Isn't Keeping Up.. Objective Management Group (Staci Matt). 22 April 2026.

www.objectivemanagement.com/research-blog/research/your-sales-tech-stack-is...

E075 **Grade A** single source

A meta-analysis of studies from 1982 to 2008 found five significant drivers of sales performance: selling-related knowledge (standardised beta .28), adaptiveness (.27), role ambiguity (negative .25), cognitive aptitude (.23) and work engagement (.23); no named methodology is among the determinants tested.

Drivers of sales performance: a contemporary meta-analysis. Have salespeople become knowledge brokers?. Verbeke, Dietz and Verwaal, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 407 to 428. June 2011 (foundational).

pure.qub.ac.uk/en/publications/drivers-of-sales-performance-a-contemporary-...

E076 **Grade D** in conflict

The Corporate Executive Board study behind The Challenger Sale reported that 39% of star performers were Challengers (54% in complex sales) and that only 7% of relationship builders were star performers.

Corporate Executive Board study of 6,000 identifies qualities that make for high fliers. HR Magazine. no date shown.

www.hrmagazine.co.uk/content/news/corporate-executive-board-study-of-6-000-...

E077 **Grade C** corroborated

Noel Capon argued in 2015 that The Challenger Sale is built on a flimsy foundation and may be mainly an infomercial for its sponsor; a 2019 peer-reviewed review also discusses criticisms of the Challenger approach.

Revisiting The Challenger Sale: "Breakthrough" Built on a Flimsy Foundation. Noel Capon (Columbia Business School), Velocity, vol. 17, pp. 42 to 45. 1 January 2015.

business.columbia.edu/faculty/research/revisiting-challenger-sale-breakthro...

E078 **Grade C** corroborated

CSO Insights' 2015 study of more than 250 firms reported win rates seven percent higher at companies with a formal sales methodology that reps follow.

Sales Insight: More Success Found When Reps Follow (page carries no headline). CustomerZone360 (Rory J. Thompson), reporting CSO Insights' 2015 Inside/Telesales Performance Study. 30 April 2015 (pre-window; the most cited compliance figure).

www.customerzone360.com/inside-sales-lead-management/articles/402486-sales-...

E079 **Grade D** corroborated

A Vantage Point Performance and Sales Management Association study of 62 B2B companies found an 18% difference in revenue growth between companies with a defined formal sales process and those without, 28% higher growth for companies mastering three pipeline practices, and 11% greater growth where reps spent at least three hours a month on pipeline management.

Companies with a Formal Sales Process Generate More Revenue (Harvard Business Review, January 2015, as reposted). HBR (the Goodreads repost shows a different byline, apparently a feed error); study by Vantage Point Performance and the Sales Management Association. 21 January 2015 (pre-window; foundational).

www.goodreads.com/author_blog_posts/7734740-companies-with-a-formal-sales-p...

E080 **Grade D** vendor claim

In Ebsta's analysis of more than 655,000 B2B opportunities worth $48bn, deals with high qualification scores won at 50% against 8% for poorly qualified deals, well-qualified deals were 6.3 times more likely to close and closed 21.6% faster, strongly qualified deals were 1.9 times less likely to slip, and only 36% of deals passing Discovery had both a qualification score and supporting notes.

New Ebsta report: Sales Qualification (2025 Ebsta Sales Qualification Report). Ebsta (London). 1 August 2025.

www.ebsta.com/news-updates/new-ebsta-report-sales-qualification/

E081 **Grade D** in conflict

Ebsta's H1 2024 benchmark reported that 68% of deals moved past the qualification stage were not qualified effectively, 75% of closed-won opportunities had MEDDPICC completed, top performers were 357% more likely to use a methodology, deal slippage was 46% in Q1 2024 falling to 34%, and 75% of reps missed quota in Q2 2024.

2024 B2B Sales Benchmarks: H1 Update (PDF). Ebsta. no date shown (URL path July 2024).

ebsta.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/H1-Update-2024-B2B-Sales-Benchmarks.pdf

E082 **Grade D** vendor claim

Force Management presents MEDDICC customer outcomes including a 38% decrease in deals lost (Intercom), nearly 100% forecast accuracy for eight straight quarters (ClickSoftware), 2x conversion rates (Sysdig) and a Toast executive's statement that win rate rose 25 points, with no method, baseline or sample stated.

The Power of MEDDICC. Force Management. no date shown (copyright 2026).

forcemanagement.com/the-power-of-meddicc

E083 **Grade D** vendor claim

MEDDICC Ltd presents an unnamed Series D company (400 employees, 80 sellers) whose enterprise win rate went from 3% to 21% and overall win rate from 23% to 46% in 12 months, closing at 115% of annual goal, with no method stated.

From 3% enterprise win rate to 115% of annual goal (Series D org). MEDDICC Ltd. no date shown.

meddicc.com/series-d-org

E084 **Grade D** corroborated

Challenger Inc's blog cites Xactly's 2024 Sales Forecasting Benchmark Report as finding that only 20% of sales organisations achieved forecasts within 5% of projections and 43% missed goal by 10% or more, and a January 2024 Challenger poll in which fewer than 20% of sales leaders rated their forecast accuracy "predictable"; it claims "markedly higher win rates" from Challenger's own AI buyer verifiers without a figure.

How to Improve Sales Forecast Accuracy. Challenger Inc. 9 February 2024 (modified 9 January 2026).

challengerinc.com/blog/improve-sales-forecast-accuracy/

E085 **Grade D** in conflict

Clari and Salesloft announced a definitive agreement to merge on 5 August 2025, to serve more than 5,000 organisations with $10 trillion of annual revenue under management, with Clari's CEO Andy Byrne to lead, no valuation or investors disclosed and no quantified forecast-accuracy claim.

Clari and Salesloft Announce Agreement to Merge. Clari and Salesloft, via Business Wire. 5 August 2025.

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20250805575986/en

E086 **Grade C** in conflict

The Clari and Salesloft merger was carried out in December 2025; by September 2026 the combined company was led by CEO Steve Cox and was doubling R&D investment; customer count, revenue and valuation were not given.

Clari + Salesloft Merger Creates a Revenue Intelligence Leader. CRM magazine / DestinationCRM.com (the Editors). 1 September 2026.

www.destinationcrm.com/Articles/Editorial/Magazine-Features/Clari---Saleslo...

E087 **Grade A** single source

ZoomInfo reported 2025 GAAP revenue of $1,249.5m against $1,214.3m in 2024 (3% growth), net revenue retention of 90% at 31 December 2025, 1,921 customers with $100,000 or more ACV, restructuring and transaction-related expenses of $40.3m (versus $101.6m in 2024), and 2026 revenue guidance of $1.247bn to $1.267bn.

ZoomInfo Announces Fourth Quarter and Full Year 2025 Financial Results. ZoomInfo Technologies Inc. (NASDAQ: GTM), via Business Wire. 9 February 2026.

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260209677262/en/ZoomInfo-Announces-Fourth-...

E088 **Grade A** single source

HubSpot reported 2025 revenue of $3.13bn, up 19% as reported, 288,706 customers (up 16%), average subscription revenue per customer of $11,683 in Q4, GAAP net income of $45.9m, and 2026 revenue guidance of $3.69bn to $3.70bn, with no Breeze usage figures in the filing.

HubSpot Reports Strong Q4 and Full Year 2025 Results (Form 8-K, Exhibit 99.1). HubSpot, Inc., filed with the SEC. 11 February 2026.

www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1404655/000119312526046563/hubs-ex99_1.htm

E089 **Grade D** vendor claim

On HubSpot's Q4 2025 call, management said Breeze Customer Agent had been activated by more than 8,000 customers with resolution rates in the mid-60s percent, Prospecting Agent by more than 10,000 customers (up 57% quarter over quarter), Data Agent by more than 2,500, 50% of core seat users had tried Breeze Assistant, and net revenue retention was 105% in Q4 and 103.5% for 2025.

HubSpot (HUBS) Q4 2025 earnings call transcript. The Motley Fool (third-party transcript of management statements). 11 February 2026.

www.fool.com/earnings/call-transcripts/2026/02/11/hubspot-hubs-q4-2025-earn...

E090 **Grade A** in conflict

Salesforce reported fiscal 2026 revenue of $41.5bn, up 10% (including $399m from Informatica), Agentforce ARR of $800m, up 169%, Agentforce and Data 360 ARR above $2.9bn including $1.1bn of Informatica Cloud ARR, more than 29,000 Agentforce deals since launch, and fiscal 2027 guidance of $45.8bn to $46.2bn.

Salesforce Delivers Record Fourth Quarter Fiscal 2026 Results (Form 8-K, Exhibit 99.1). Salesforce, Inc., filed with the SEC. 25 February 2026.

www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1108524/000110852426000056/crm-q4fy26xexhib...

E091 **Grade C** single source

Gong announced ARR above $300m in March 2025 with about 4,500 customers, a last valuation of $7.25bn from its 2021 Series E and no IPO planned for 2025; Globes reported ARR above $500m at the end of April 2026, up 55%, about 1,700 employees, and a CEO claim that Gong raised Anthropic's sales productivity by 64%.

Revenue prediction startup Gong surpasses $300M in annualized revenue; Gong ARR exceeds $500m calming AI fears. TechCrunch (Marina Temkin); Globes (Assaf Gilead). 5 March 2025; 12 May 2026.

techcrunch.com/2025/03/05/revenue-prediction-startup-gong-surpasses-300m-ar...

E092 **Grade C** single source

Clay raised $115m in a Series D at a $7.1bn valuation led by Wellington Management, announced 9 September 2026, after a $3.1bn valuation in August 2025 and a $5bn employee tender in January 2026, with revenue undisclosed.

Clay raises $115m at a $7.1bn valuation, more than double its 2025 price. The Next Web (Cristian Dina). 10 September 2026.

thenextweb.com/news/clay-raises-115m-series-d-7-1bn-valuation-wellington

E093 **Grade C** single source

Apollo.io raised $100m in a Series D at a $1.6bn valuation led by Bain Capital Ventures in August 2023, taking total funding to about $250m, with no revenue disclosed.

Apollo.io raises $100m funding. Verdict (Shivam Mishra). 30 August 2023.

www.verdict.co.uk/apollo-io-raises-100m-funding/

E094 **Grade C** single source

Outreach cut 12% of staff in September 2023 after cuts of 5% (August 2022), 7% (February 2023) and 5% (August 2023), then 9% more in 2024 (over 65 people, leaving 680); its last disclosed valuation was $4.4bn after a $200m raise in 2021, and co-founder Manny Medina stepped down as CEO in September 2024.

Outreach cuts 9% of workforce in latest layoffs (with two related GeekWire articles). GeekWire. no dates printed (URL paths 2024 and 2023).

www.geekwire.com/2024/outreach-cuts-9-of-workforce-in-latest-layoffs-at-sea...

E095 **Grade B** single source

Gartner predicts that by 2028 AI agents will outnumber sellers 10 to 1, yet fewer than 40% of sellers will say agents improved their productivity, and that CSOs who overhaul data, automation and user experience will be five times more likely to gain ROI from AI than those pursuing quick fixes; 60% of CSOs say their revenue number is largely driven by factors outside their control.

Gartner Predicts AI Agents Will Outnumber Sellers 10 to 1 by 2028, Yet Fewer Than 40% of Sellers Will Say Agents Improved Productivity. Gartner (Dan Gottlieb quoted). 28 July 2026.

gcomdr.pdo.aws.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2026-07-28-gartner-pr...

E096 **Grade B** single source

Gartner placed AI agents for sales at the Peak of Inflated Expectations, emotion AI in the Trough of Disillusionment and digital twin of a customer at the Innovation Trigger on its 2025 sales Hype Cycle.

Gartner Hype Cycle Reveals How AI and Digital Advancements Are Primed to Aid Sales Transformations. Gartner (Shayne Jackson quoted). 30 October 2025.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2025-10-30-gartner-hype-cycle-re...

E097 **Grade B** in conflict

In August 2023 Gartner placed generative AI for sales at the Peak of Inflated Expectations and predicted that by 2026 B2B sales organisations using generative-AI-embedded sales technologies would cut time on prospecting and customer-meeting preparation by more than 50%, that by 2025 half of enterprise B2B sales technology implementations would include digital sales rooms, and that by 2027 20% would use digital twins of customers.

Gartner Says Generative AI is at the Peak of Inflated Expectations for Revenue and Sales Technology. Gartner (Melissa Hilbert quoted). 17 August 2023.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2023-08-17-gartner-says-generati...

E098 **Grade B** single source

Sales organisations that give sellers AI-enabled next best actions are 2.6 times more likely to achieve commercial growth; Gartner predicts that by 2027, 95% of sellers' research workflows will begin with AI, up from less than 20% in 2024.

Gartner Survey Finds Sales Organizations That Provide AI-Enabled Next Best Actions Are 2.6x More Likely to Achieve Commercial Growth. Gartner (Greg Hessong quoted), via Business Wire. 20 May 2026 (from URL and conference dates).

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260520536156/en/

E099 **Grade B** single source

69% of B2B buyers prefer to validate AI-generated insights with sales reps, 45% used GenAI in a recent purchase, and 67% prefer a sales-rep-free experience.

Gartner Survey Finds 69% of B2B Buyers Turn to Sales Reps to Validate AI. Gartner (Robert Blaisdell quoted), via Business Wire. 20 May 2026 (from URL and conference dates).

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260520585188/en/Gartner-Survey-Finds-69-of...

E100 **Grade D** vendor claim

In Salesforce's 2025 survey, 54% of sales teams said they use AI agents, nine in ten use them or expect to within two years, top-performing sellers were 1.7 times more likely than underperformers to use prospecting agents, 85% of reps with agents said AI frees them for higher-value work and 88% said it raises their odds of hitting targets.

State of Sales, 7th edition (PDF) and announcement. Salesforce. 3 February 2026.

www.salesforce.com/en-us/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/documents/reports/sales...

E101 **Grade D** in conflict

RepVue reports 43.1% of sales professionals hit quota in Q4 2023, against 47.6% in Q4 2022 (share of quota-carrying reps at or above quota, self-reported).

RepVue Cloud Sales Index, Q4 2023 Report. RepVue. no date shown.

repvue.com/cloud-index/2023/Q4

E102 **Grade D** vendor claim

RepVue reports 53% quota attainment in Q1 2022, a low of 42.00% in Q2 2024 and 43.14% in Q4 2024; Cybersecurity (38.17%) was the only sub-industry below 40% in Q4 2024.

RepVue Cloud Sales Index, Q4 2024 Report. RepVue. no date shown.

www.repvue.com/cloud-index/2024/Q4

E103 **Grade D** vendor claim

RepVue defines its measure as the percent of sales team members hitting quota and reports 42.92% for Q3 2024, the highest since Q2 2023 (43.54%), the seventh straight quarter between 42% and 44%; $200K+ deals rose from 46.37% (Q3 2023) to 47.74% (Q3 2024).

RepVue Cloud Sales Index, Q3 2024 Report. RepVue. no date shown.

www.repvue.com/cloud-index/2024/Q3

E104 **Grade D** vendor claim

RepVue reports 43.3% quota attainment in Q1 2025; Enterprise (average deal over $200K) above 48%; Cybersecurity 38.7%.

RepVue Cloud Sales Index, Q1 2025 Report. RepVue. no date shown.

www.repvue.com/cloud-index/2025/Q1

E105 **Grade D** vendor claim

RepVue reports 42.69% quota attainment in Q2 2025; $200K+ deals 46.70%; Cybersecurity 37.35%; Inbound Leadflow Sentiment 2.72, the lowest the index has recorded.

RepVue Cloud Sales Index, Q2 2025 Report. RepVue. no date shown.

repvue.com/cloud-index/2025/Q2

E106 **Grade C** in conflict

The Quota, reporting RepVue's Q3 2025 index, states average attainment of 43.2% (43.24% in the body), the highest since mid-2023 but below pre-2022 highs, with 48.3% of reps on $200K+ ACV deals hitting quota.

The State of Cloud Sales: Quota Attainment Finally Climbs. The Quota (Quota Media LLC); no author shown. 3 November 2025.

www.thequota.co/articles/the-state-of-cloud-sales-quota-attainment-finally-...

E107 **Grade B** in conflict

The Bridge Group's 2026 AE study reports 48% of reps at quota (median share reported by companies), down from 51% in 2024, with the distribution shifting towards the 0 to 30% range; median AE quota $960K; median OTE $200K; quota-to-OTE 4.6x; average ramp 6.2 months, the highest in the study's history.

AE Models, Motions & Metrics: 2026 Research Report. Matt Bertuzzi, The Bridge Group. 22 June 2026.

www.bridgegroupinc.com/research/2026-ae-models-motions-metrics

E108 **Grade B** single source

The Bridge Group's 2024 SaaS AE report gives a median ACV quota of $800K (from $740K in 2022) and median OTE of $190K (from $167K), quotas rising at 2% compound since 2012 against OTEs at more than 5%; the opened page omits the share of reps at quota, which the 2026 report states as 51% for 2024.

2024 AE Metrics & Compensation Benchmark (blog summary). The Bridge Group. 5 March 2024.

blog.bridgegroupinc.com/2024-ae-metrics-compensation-benchmark

E109 **Grade D** corroborated

The Bridge Group's 2022-cycle SaaS AE report found that on average 66% of reps in a given group achieve quota; median ACV quota $740,000; median OTE $167,000; average ramp 5.3 months, up from 4.3 in 2020.

SaaS Sales Benchmarks Every B2B Sales Leader & AE Should Know. Jiminny (vendor blog summarising The Bridge Group). no date shown.

www.jiminny.com/blog/saas-sales-benchmarks

E110 **Grade D** vendor claim

Salesforce's sixth State of Sales report states 67% of sales reps do not expect to meet quota this year, 84% missed quota last year, reps spend 70% of time on non-selling tasks, and 35% of sales professionals completely trust their organisation's data accuracy.

Salesforce Report: Sales Teams Using AI 1.3x More Likely to See Revenue Increase (State of Sales, sixth edition). Salesforce. 25 July 2024.

www.salesforce.com/ap/news/stories/sales-ai-statistics-2024/

E111 **Grade D** in conflict

Ebsta and Pavilion's 2023 report found 29% of salespeople made quota by Q4 2022 (down 14% year on year) and 18% had no quota set up.

2023 B2B Sales Benchmark Report. Ebsta with Pavilion. no date shown (2023 edition).

www.ebsta.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-B2B-Sales-Benchmark-Report.pdf

E112 **Grade D** in conflict

Ebsta and Pavilion's 2024 report states 73% of reps missed quota in H2 2023, 31% exceeded quota across 2023, and in 2024 "69% of reps are falling short"; quota targets fell 19%, without which 79% would have missed; only 15% of sales teams had more than half their reps reach 80% or more of quota.

B2B Sales Benchmarks 2024. Ebsta with Pavilion. no date shown ("As we enter 2024", p. 2).

www.ebsta.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/B2B-Sales-Benchmarks-2024_.pdf

E113 Grade D in conflict

Ebsta's H1 2024 update states 75% of reps missed quota in Q2 2024, 16% of reps contributed 83% of revenue, win rates decreased 7% against 2023, cycles grew 20% and deal values rose 7%; its "Where We Started 2024" panel shows -18%, +16% and -21% (restated 2023 figures); win rates increase 3.1x when opportunities match the ICP and 18% of 2024 pipeline matches it.

2024 B2B Sales Benchmarks: H1 Update. Ebsta. no date shown (covers H1 2024).

ebsta.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/H1-Update-2024-B2B-Sales-Benchmarks.pdf

E114 Grade D in conflict

Ebsta's 2025 GTM Benchmarks state sellers missing quota rose from 69% in 2023 to 78% in 2024; the April 2025 press release labels the same pair as 2024 and 2025 and adds that top performers close deals 11 times faster than lower performers (8.9x in 2024).

Highlights of 2025 GTM Benchmarks; Ebsta Unveils 2025 GTM Benchmarks Report (PR Newswire via StreetInsider). Ebsta Ltd. page last modified 12 March 2025; press release 22 April 2025.

ebsta.com/?p=20103 and www.streetinsider.com/PRNewswire/Ebsta+Unveils+2025+...

E115 Grade D vendor claim

HubSpot's statistics page states only 27% of sales representatives report consistently hitting quota (HubSpot Sales Trends Report), the average sales win rate is 21% and the average close rate 29% (HubSpot sales strategy report), and cold call success is about 2 to 3%; no methodology is shown.

97 key sales statistics to help you sell smarter in 2025. Kiran Shahid, HubSpot. December 2023, updated 24 February 2026.

blog.hubspot.com/sales/sales-statistics

E116 Grade D vendor claim

Ebsta and Pavilion's 2023 report states that in 2022 win rates fell 15% year on year, sales cycles lengthened 32%, average deal value fell 32%, pipeline generation fell 47% quarter on quarter in Q1 2022 and deal slippage rose to 37%; no absolute win rate or cycle length is given.

2023 B2B Sales Benchmark Report. Ebsta with Pavilion. no date shown.

www.ebsta.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-B2B-Sales-Benchmark-Report.pdf

E117 Grade D vendor claim

Ebsta and Pavilion's 2024 report states win rates fell 18% against 2022 and 27% against 2021 (after a 7% gain in H1 2023), cycles grew 16% in H1 2023 and 38% against 2021 before shortening 23% by year end, deal values fell 21%, pipeline generation rose 23%, 44% of deals were pushed, and win rates fell 67% when deals slipped.

B2B Sales Benchmarks 2024. Ebsta with Pavilion. no date shown.

www.ebsta.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/B2B-Sales-Benchmarks-2024_.pdf

E118 Grade D in conflict

Ebsta's 2025 GTM Benchmarks state win rates fell 10% in 2024 (after 18% in 2023), cycles shortened 9% (after +16%), expansion deals won 45% against 18% for new deals, expansion cycles averaged 52 days against 91 for new deals, deal values rose 54%, slipped deals fell from 44% to 36%, and channel efficiency (win rate times ACV over sales cycle) ranks partner referrals 1.3x, organic inbound 1.2x, outbound 1.05x, events 0.78x and paid 0.68x.

Highlights of 2025 GTM Benchmarks; 2025 GTM Benchmarks (report page). Ebsta, "Produced in association with Pavilion". page last modified 12 March 2025.

ebsta.com/?p=20103 and benchmarks.ebsta.com/2025-gtm-benchmarks?hsLang=en

E119 Grade D vendor claim

Ebsta's 2025 Sales Qualification Report states deals with high qualification scores win 50% of the time against 8% for poorly qualified deals, are 6.3x more likely to close, close 21.6% faster and are 1.9x less likely to slip; only 36% of deals passing Discovery carry both a score and notes.

New Ebsta report: Sales Qualification. Ebsta (press release dated 1 August 2025; page 4 August 2025). 1 August 2025.

www.ebsta.com/news-updates/new-ebsta-report-sales-qualification/

E120 Grade D in conflict

Ebsta's 2026 benchmarks (published with Fullcast) are built from $78B in pipeline, 361,000 opportunities and 2,500 sellers; a podcast listing for the same report cites 316 B2B software and services companies, more than $75 billion in pipeline and a 28% drop in sales efficiency; headline win rate and cycle figures sit behind a registration form and were not opened.

2026 Benchmarks Report: The State of GTM in 2026; Guy Rubin, 2026 GTM Benchmarks (podcast listing). Fullcast (Ebsta); Audible listing. page last modified 14 October 2026; podcast undated.

www.fullcast.ai/ebooks/2026-benchmarks-report-the-state-of-gtm-in-2026 and ...

E121 Grade C single source

Jason Lemkin, reporting Gong's 2025 State of Revenue, states Gong's enterprise customers show about a 25% win rate from Opportunity to Closed, $100k deals take about 70 days to close, and enterprise reps carry about 54 opportunities; he says he usually sees 15 to 20% at scaling startups.

Gong: $100k Deals Take About 70 Days to Close. Jason Lemkin, SaaStr. 26 December 2024.

www.saastr.com/gong-100k-deals-take-about-days-to-close

E122 **Grade D** vendor claim

Crossbeam reports an average 11.7% higher win rate when partners are involved in deals, rising to 37.1% with 50+ connected partners, with one negative group (enterprise, 5 to 10 partners, 1% lower); only relative lift is reported.

New data: Involving partners in deals increases win rate for nearly every ecosystem size and type. Evie Nagy, Crossbeam. 8 November 2024 (data as of 28 October 2024).

insider.crossbeam.com/entry/new-data-involving-partners-in-deals-increases-...

E123 **Grade B** in conflict

Gartner's State of Sales Operations Survey found only 45% of sales leaders and sellers have high confidence in their organisation's forecasting accuracy, 47% believe their organisation has high-quality data, and 13% report poor data quality.

Gartner Says Less Than 50% of Sales Leaders and Sellers Have High Confidence in Forecasting Accuracy. Gartner (press release; analyst Craig Riley quoted). 12 February 2020.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2020-02-12-gartner-says-less-tha...

E124 **Grade D** in conflict

Gong's 2022 Reality of Forecasting survey found 27% of sales professionals agree their forecasting process delivers accurate results, 24% of sales leaders are confident in their team's forecast, 52% of leaders say their organisation regularly misses its forecast by more than 10%, 22% call the process efficient, and teams spend 4.9 hours a week forecasting; organisations using interaction data were about twice as likely to report accuracy within 5% of monthly forecast (22% against 11%).

As Economic Headwinds Grow Stronger, Only 24% of Sales Leaders Are Confident In Their Team's Revenue Forecast. Gong (press release). 19 July 2022.

www.gong.io/press/as-economic-headwinds-grow-stronger-only-24-of-sales-lead...

E125 **Grade D** vendor claim

A Gong-commissioned CensusWide survey found 81% of US and UK companies missed their sales forecast in at least one quarter between Q1 2021 and Q3 2023 (84% in the US), a third missed in Q1 2023, and only 19% had not missed over seven quarters.

Gong Report Finds More Than 80 Percent of Companies Have Missed Revenue Forecasts Over the Last Two Years. Gong (press release; fieldwork by CensusWide). 30 January 2024 (fieldwork 3 to 9 January 2024).

www.gong.io/press/gong-report-finds-more-than-80-percent-of-companies-have-...

E126 **Grade D** in conflict

Xactly's 2024 survey found 4 in 5 sales and finance leaders missed a quarterly sales forecast in the past year, over half of them two or more times; 52% of sales leaders say forecasts are off by 10% or more, while 66% of finance leaders are usually off by less than 9%; 95% of finance and RevOps respondents express confidence in planning from existing forecasts while 98% say they struggle to formulate one.

New Forecasting Research Uncovers Need for Collaboration (press release); 2024 Sales Forecasting Benchmark Report (PDF). Xactly, with Regina Corso Consulting. 10 July 2024.

www.xactlycorp.com/node/11261 and www.xactlycorp.com/sites/default/files/fi...

E127 **Grade D** vendor claim

Clari's 2017 survey found 93% of sales executives cannot forecast revenue within 5% even in the last two weeks of the quarter, only 7% call their forecasting process very efficient, and half of respondents reported that less than 50% of reps in their organisation achieved quota in 2016.

Half of Sales Teams Report Less Than 50% of Reps Achieve Quota. Clari (press release). 27 April 2017.

prod.clari.com/press/half-of-sales-teams-report-less-than-50-of-reps-achiev...

E128 **Grade D** vendor claim

Clari Labs' 2025 survey found 67% of North American enterprises missed their 2024 revenue target, 67% of enterprise leaders do not trust their revenue data, and 49% of revenue leaders discover revenue risk only after missing their number.

78% of Enterprises Stalled With AI Adoption Because They Don't Trust Their Revenue Data: Clari Labs Research. Clari Labs (fieldwork by Censuswide), via Business Wire. 19 May 2025 (from the release ID).

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20250519941062/en/78-of-Enterprises-Stalled-...

E129 **Grade D** vendor claim

Clari Labs reports 87% of enterprises missed 2025 revenue targets (excluding Clari + Salesloft customers) and cites a separate Forrester study claiming "up to 96% forecast accuracy" for enterprises with unified, governed revenue data.

New Clari Labs Research Reveals 87% of Enterprises Missed Revenue Targets in 2025 Despite Record AI Investment. Clari Labs (Clari + Salesloft), fieldwork by Censuswide; Business Wire via AM 590 The Answer. 14 January 2026.

am590theanswer.com/news/business/new-clari-labs-research-reveals-87-of-ente...

E130 **Grade B** single source

A Gartner survey found 45% of CSOs report their organisation met several 2024 strategic goals, 49% say sales' definition of a qualified lead differs greatly from marketing's, and CSOs estimate 58% of sellers will need reskilling by 2026 because of AI.

Gartner Survey Reveals Less Than Half of CSOs Report Their Organization Met Several 2024 Strategic Goals. Gartner, via Business Wire. 21 May 2025.

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20250521440719/en/Gartner-Survey-Reveals-Les...

E131 **Grade B** corroborated

Gartner's May 2026 release states firms giving sellers AI-enabled next best actions were 2.6x more likely to achieve commercial growth, and predicts that "by 2027, 95% of sellers' research workflows will begin with AI", up from under 20% in 2024 (recorded as a forecast).

Gartner Survey Finds Sales Organizations That Provide AI-Enabled Next Best Actions Are 2.6x More Likely to Achieve Commercial Growth. Gartner, via Business Wire. 20 May 2026 (from release ID and conference dates).

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260520536156/en/

E132 **Grade C** corroborated

Dave Kellogg argues the 3x pipeline coverage rule predates modern CRM, that enforcing it made "every company on the planet" report 3x, and that its predictive value is therefore zero; he cites no dataset and proposes emergent, personalised, unannounced targets.

The Self-Fulfilling 3x Pipeline Coverage Prophecy. Dave Kellogg, Kellblog. 19 April 2013.

kellblog.com/2013/04/19/the-self-fulfilling-3x-pipeline-coverage-prophecy

E133 **Grade C** single source

Kellogg defines pipeline coverage as pipeline divided by plan, describes 3x as the "magical" ratio boards and investors require, and proposes opportunity count per rep (about 6 to 8 current-quarter opportunities for enterprise reps) as a better measure.

Do We Have Enough Pipeline? The One Simple Metric Many Folks Forget. Dave Kellogg, Kellblog. 1 November 2019.

www.kellblog.com/do-we-have-enough-pipeline-the-one-simple-metric-many-folk...

E134 **Grade C** single source

Jason Lemkin, reporting Marc Benioff's remarks, states Salesforce now needs 3x pipeline coverage against 2x "24 months ago", which he reads as working 50% harder for the same bookings; he says a typical startup might aim for 5x.

Salesforce: We Need 50% More Pipeline Than Before To Hit the Plan. Jason Lemkin, SaaStr. 31 May 2024.

www.saastr.com/salesforce-we-need-50-more-pipeline-than-before-to-hit-the-p...

E135 **Grade D** vendor claim

Ebsta and Pavilion's 2024 report links a 23% rise in pipeline generation with falling revenue and win rates and calls sales teams' pursuit of "more pipeline coverage" more hopeful than effective; the 2023 report observed "The pipeline coverage was there, the opportunities looked healthy" while deals failed to close; neither publishes a coverage ratio or a quantified coverage-to-attainment link.

B2B Sales Benchmarks 2024 (p. 7); 2023 B2B Sales Benchmark Report (p. 14). Ebsta with Pavilion. no dates shown.

www.ebsta.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/B2B-Sales-Benchmarks-2024_.pdf and...

E136 **Grade B** single source

The Bridge Group reports pipeline per SDR rose from $2.83M in 2022 to $3.78M in 2025 mainly because median ASP rose from $27K (2022) to $44K (2024), not because SDRs booked more meetings; Stage 0 held quotas are down 40% since 2018 and Stage 1 converted quotas down 43%.

SDR Models, Motions & Metrics: 2025 Research Report (10th edition). Matt Bertuzzi, The Bridge Group. 6 February 2025.

www.bridgegroupinc.com/research/2025-sdr-models-metrics-report-the-bridge-g...

E137 **Grade B** single source

The Bridge Group's 2025 SDR study reports 60% of SDRs at quota (lowest in the study's history), 67% of companies with 50 to 89% of reps at quota, average tenure 1.9 years, average ramp 3.0 months, 4.1 quality conversations per day (the first rebound in the study's history), a median 112 daily activities (44 phone, 41 email, 19 LinkedIn, 8 other), phone-centric teams at 56 dials and 4.6 quality conversations per day against email-centric teams at 28 and 3.4, a median Stage 0 held quota of 10 per month, median SDR OTE $80K (unchanged since 2022) and 40% median annual attrition.

SDR Models, Motions & Metrics: 2025 Research Report (10th edition). Matt Bertuzzi, The Bridge Group. 6 February 2025.

www.bridgegroupinc.com/research/2025-sdr-models-metrics-report-the-bridge-g...

E138 **Grade D** corroborated

A 2019 vendor summary of The Bridge Group's SDR study (434 companies, median revenue $24M) reports that on average 68% of reps achieve quota, 45 dials and about 5 quality conversations per day, average tenure 1.5 years and ramp 3.2 months.

Study overview: Bridging the gap to understanding your SDRs. QuotaPath. 10 October 2019 (updated 29 December 2025).

www.quotapath.com/blog/study-overview-bridging-the-gap-to-understanding-you...

E139 **Grade D** vendor claim

An analysis of 28M+ cold emails with Gong (meta description: 25 million) found the average rep sends 344 cold emails to land one meeting, top reps get 4.2x more replies than average reps, the top 10% land 8.1x more meetings, and pitching reduces reply rates by as much as 57%; no overall reply rate is stated.

Does cold email even work any more? Here's what the data says. Jason Bay (Outbound Squad), on the Gong blog. 24 July 2025 (modified 27 May 2026).

www.gong.io/blog/does-cold-email-even-work-any-more-heres-what-the-data-says

E140 **Grade D** vendor claim

Gong's analysis of 300M+ cold calls reports an average connect rate of 5.4% (13.3% top quartile), a meeting set rate of 4.6% (16.7% top quartile), 19 dials per conversation for an average rep against 8 for top reps, and that cold calling nearly doubles email reply rates (3.44% against 1.81%).

The hidden power of cold calling: insights from 300M+ calls. Armand Farrokh, Gong Labs. 18 July 2024 (modified 27 May 2026).

www.gong.io/resources/labs/the-hidden-power-of-cold-calling-insights-from-3...

E141 **Grade D** in conflict

Belkins reports an average reply rate of 0.45% across 7.5 million cold emails sent in 2025 (0.50% in H1, 0.40% in H2), defined as unique replies divided by emails sent excluding auto-replies and bounces; it states earlier Belkins figures used opens as the denominator and are not comparable.

Cold email response rates. Margaret Lee, Belkins. updated 26 June 2026.

belkins.io/blog/cold-email-response-rates.md

E142 **Grade D** in conflict

Belkins' 2023 compilation states a 7% average reply rate for a B2B cold outreach campaign and that about 306 cold emails are needed per B2B lead, based on 11 million emails; the denominator is not stated on the page.

2023 cold B2B email statistics and benchmarks. Michael Maximoff, Belkins. 22 June 2023.

belkins.io/blog/cold-email-outreach-statistics

E143 **Grade D** in conflict

Instantly reports an average cold email reply rate of 3.43% for 2025, with the top 10% of senders at 10.7% or higher and the top 25% at 5.5% or higher; 58% of replies come from the first step.

Cold email benchmarks report (Instantly report page). Instantly. updated 12 January 2026.

instantly.ai/report-page

E144 **Grade D** in conflict

Hunter's State of Cold Email 2025 reports an average campaign reply rate of 4.1% across 11 million cold emails sent in 2024, 5.8% for campaigns of 50 or fewer recipients against 2.1% for 1,000+, and 4.9% with follow-ups against 3% without.

The State of Cold Email 2025. Hunter.io; no author shown. no date shown (covers 2024 sends).

hunter.io/the-state-of-cold-email-2025

E145 **Grade D** vendor claim

Lavender's 2026 benchmark, from 231,818 recent cold emails across about 50k inboxes, reports segment reply rates such as 5.2% for technical buyers and 5.4% for operations when sellers write A-grade emails; no overall average appears in text.

The Cold Email Benchmark Report. Will Allred, Lavender. 30 March 2026.

www.lavender.ai/blog/the-cold-email-benchmark-report

E146 **Grade D** vendor claim

Sopro's State of Prospecting 2024 draws on 75.2 million emails and 9 million multi-channel touchpoints (meta description: 84 million touchpoints and 377 professionals surveyed); its 2023 infographic gives an average lead rate of 2.9% for 2022 and names the UK as its market context; neither opened page states a reply rate.

The State of Prospecting 2024; Infographic: The State of Prospecting 2023. Sopro (UK agency; flag: UK data). files dated January 2024; infographic February 2023.

sopro.io/?p=35123 and sopro.io/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Infographic-The-S...

E147 **Grade D** in conflict

Expandi reports platform averages of 28.5% connection acceptance, 3.0% connection-note reply and 10.4% message reply across 13,218,869 connection requests (May 2025 to April 2026), with the connection-note reply rate falling from 3.5% to 2.2% over the year while acceptance held at 28 to 30%.

LinkedIn Outreach Benchmarks 2026. Stefana Zarić, Expandi. 19 May 2026 (modified 4 August 2026).

expandi.io/blog/linkedin-outreach-benchmarks-2026/

E148 **Grade D** in conflict

SmartReach reports 26% average connection acceptance (top quartile 40%+), about 18% of accepted connections replying, about 4.5% giving a positive reply and about 1.3% booking a meeting, across 1,800+ campaigns from January to June 2026.

The State of LinkedIn Outreach 2026. Lancelot Dsouza, SmartReach.io. 7 August 2026.

smartreach.io/reports/state-of-linkedin-outreach/

E149 Grade B corroborated

The Bridge Group's 2026 AE study reports 57% of reps at quota in the highest AI Engagement tercile against 39% in the lowest, with tercile groupings set before outcomes were examined and three negative controls tested; the publisher states the data are observational, self-selection is real and subgroup comparisons are directional.

AE Models, Motions & Metrics: 2026 Research Report. Matt Bertuzzi, The Bridge Group. 22 June 2026.

www.bridgegroupinc.com/research/2026-ae-models-motions-metrics

E150 Grade C single source

Forrester (using SiriusDecisions client benchmark data) reports organisations above 90% quota attainment averaged 34% of sales time actively selling against 23% below 90%, spent $3,390 per head on training against $1,250, and more often reported tenure of 4 to 7 years and forced turnover of 10% or less.

Four Proven Ways to Reach at Least 90 Percent Sales Quota Attainment. Forrester (SiriusDecisions); no author or date shown. no date shown.

www.forrester.com/blogs/four-proven-ways-to-reach-at-least-90-percent-sales...

E151 Grade E signal only

Goodhart's 1975 paper "Problems of Monetary Management: The U.K. Experience" contains the sentence "Any observed statistical regularity will tend to collapse once pressure is placed upon it for control purposes"; it first appeared in Papers in Monetary Economics, Vol. 1 (Reserve Bank of Australia, 1975) and was reprinted in Monetary Theory and Practice (Palgrave, 1984, chapter 4). Whether the sentence sits in a footnote could not be verified from an opened primary page.

Goodhart's law (Wikipedia); Problems of Monetary Management: The UK Experience (Springer chapter page). Wikipedia; C. A. E. Goodhart, Palgrave 1984 (Springer Link). Wikipedia page undated; chapter 1984.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goodhart%27s_law and link.springer.com/chapter/10.100...

E152 Grade A single source

Marilyn Strathern's 1997 article in European Review (vol. 5, issue 3, pp. 305 to 321, July 1997) is the source of the wording "When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure", which Wikipedia presents as her rendering of Keith Hoskin's formulation; the Cambridge Core abstract confirms the citation and says audit has a life of its own that jeopardises the life it audits.

'Improving ratings': audit in the British University system. Marilyn Strathern; European Review (Cambridge University Press page). July 1997 (online 13 July 2009).

www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-review/article/abs/improving-ratin...

E153 Grade E signal only

Campbell's law, from Donald T. Campbell's 1979 article "Assessing the impact of planned social change" (Evaluation and Program Planning, 2(1), pp. 67 to 90), reads in its tertiary rendering: "The more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor."

Campbell's law (Wikipedia). Wikipedia. undated.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campbell%27s_law

E154 Grade C single source

Eric Ries, on his own blog in December 2009, treats vanity metrics as bad for decision-making and actionable metrics as those that answer the questions vanity metrics leave open; his May 2009 post defining the terms could not be opened, and the 2011 book text was not opened.

Why vanity metrics are dangerous. Eric Ries, Startup Lessons Learned. 23 December 2009.

www.startuplessonslearned.com/2009/12/why-vanity-metrics-are-dangerous.html

E155 Grade C single source

Vantage Point Performance describes Cracking the Sales Management Code (Jason Jordan and Michelle Vazzana) as identifying "3 distinct levels of sales metrics": those you can directly manage, those you can influence, and those you can only hope to change, based on research into how world-class sales forces measure and manage sellers; the page does not use the labels activities, objectives and results and shows no publication year or sample.

Cracking the Sales Management Code (book page). Vantage Point Performance. no date shown (the brief gives the book as 2012).

www.vantagepointperformance.com/cracking-the-sales-management-code/

E156 Grade B in conflict

A generative AI assistant raised customer support productivity, measured as issues resolved per hour, by 14% on average, with a 34% improvement for novice and low-skilled workers and minimal impact on experienced and highly skilled workers.

Generative AI at Work (NBER Working Paper 31161). Erik Brynjolfsson, Danielle Li, Lindsey R. Raymond; NBER. April 2023, revised November 2023.

www.nber.org/papers/w31161

E157 Grade A in conflict

The revised version reports a 15% rise in resolutions per hour (0.30 extra chats per hour on a base of about 1.97); agents under one month of tenure gained 0.7 resolutions per hour, agents with over a year showed no effect; the lowest-skill quintile gained 36% while the highest-skill quintile showed no gain and small declines in resolution rate and customer satisfaction.

Generative AI at Work (arXiv 2304.11771v2). Brynjolfsson, Li, Raymond. 6 November 2024 (first draft 23 April 2023).

arxiv.org/html/2304.11771v2

E158 Grade B in conflict

In a preregistered field experiment, 758 BCG consultants using GPT-4 on 18 tasks inside the AI's "frontier" completed 12.2% more tasks, 25.1% more quickly, with significantly higher quality; on one task outside the frontier, AI users were 19% less likely to produce correct solutions.

Navigating the Jagged Technological Frontier (HBS Working Paper 24-013). Fabrizio Dell'Acqua, Edward McFowland III, Ethan Mollick, Hila Lifshitz-Assaf, Katherine C. Kellogg, Saran Rajendran, Lisa Krayer, Francois Candelon, Karim R. Lakhani; Harvard Business School. September 2023.

www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/item.aspx?num=64700

E159 Grade A in conflict

The published version reports an average quality improvement of about 32% (33.9% GPT plus overview; 29.9% GPT only), time reductions of 22.5% and 27.6%, and that AI users were 19 percentage points less likely to produce correct solutions on the outside-the-frontier task.

Navigating the Jagged Technological Frontier (Organization Science, Articles in Advance, doi 10.1287/orsc.2025.21838). Dell'Acqua et al.; INFORMS. online 11 March 2026.

www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/dell-acqua-et-al-2026-navigating-the-ja...

E160 Grade B single source

Randomised field experiments at a cross-border online retail platform in 2023 to 2024 found generative AI in seven workflows raised sales by between no detectable impact and 16.3%, mainly through conversion, worth roughly $5 per consumer per year, with larger gains for less experienced consumers.

Generative AI and Sales Productivity: Field Experiments in Online Retail (arXiv 2510.12049; CESifo Working Paper 12201). Lu Fang, Zhe Yuan, Kaifu Zhang, Dante Donati, Miklos Sarvary. arXiv v1 14 October 2025, v6 29 June 2026; CESifo 20 October 2025.

arxiv.org/abs/2510.12049 and www.ifo.de/en/cesifo/publications/2026/working...

E161 Grade B in conflict

MIT NANDA states that 95% of organisations get zero return on $30 to 40 billion of enterprise generative AI investment; about 5% of custom enterprise tools reach production; externally built tools reached deployment about 67% of the time against about 33% for internal builds; sales and marketing take about 50% of GenAI budgets in a hypothetical allocation exercise and about 70% in the survey, figures the report calls directional.

The GenAI Divide: State of AI in Business 2025. Aditya Challapally, Chris Pease, Ramesh Raskar, Pradyumna Chari; MIT NANDA. July 2025.

mlq.ai/media/quarterly_decks/v0.1_State_of_AI_in_Business_2025_Report.pdf

E162 Grade C single source

In McKinsey's 2025 survey 88% report AI use in at least one function (78% a year earlier); 39% attribute any level of EBIT impact to AI, most below 5% of EBIT; 23% are scaling an agentic AI system, with no more than 10% scaling agents in any single function; about 6% are high performers; revenue increases are most commonly reported in marketing and sales; 32% expect a workforce reduction of 3% or more next year.

The state of AI in 2025: Agents, innovation, and transformation. McKinsey & Company. 5 November 2025.

www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/tech-and-ai/our-insights/the-state-of-ai-2025

E163 Grade C single source

In McKinsey's 2026 survey 37% attribute at least some EBIT impact to AI, "essentially unchanged"; 44% report AI scaling across the enterprise (38% before); 40% of organisations over $1 billion revenue are scaling agents (27% before) against 22% of smaller ones; high performers stay at 6%; 39% expect AI to reduce headcount next year (32% before); 14% of respondents at AI-using organisations say AI contributed to a workforce decline in the past year.

The state of AI in 2026: On the road to ROI. McKinsey & Company. 25 August 2026.

www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/quantumblack/our-insights/the-state-of-ai

E164 Grade B single source

Gartner predicts over 40% of agentic AI projects will be cancelled by the end of 2027 because of escalating costs, unclear business value or inadequate risk controls, estimates only about 130 of thousands of agentic AI vendors are real, and predicts 33% of enterprise software applications will include agentic AI by 2028 (under 1% in 2024).

Gartner Predicts Over 40% of Agentic AI Projects Will Be Canceled by End of 2027 (press release reproduced by HPCwire). Gartner (Anushree Verma). 25 June 2025 (Sydney).

www.hpcwire.com/bigdatawire/this-just-in/gartner-predicts-over-40-of-agenti...

E165 Grade B single source

Gartner predicted that by 2028, 60% of B2B seller work will be executed through conversational user interfaces via generative AI, from under 5% in 2023, and that within two years about three in ten outbound messages from large organisations would be synthetically generated.

Gartner Expects 60% of Seller Work to Be Executed by Generative AI Technologies Within Five Years. Gartner (Adnan Zijadic). 21 September 2023 (Stamford, Conn.).

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2023-09-21-gartner-expects-sixty...

E166 Grade B single source

Gartner predicted that by 2030, 75% of B2B buyers will prefer sales experiences that prioritise human interaction over AI.

Gartner Says By 2030 that 75% of B2B Buyers Will Prefer Sales Experiences that Prioritize Human Interaction Over AI (reproduced by IT-Online, South Africa). Gartner (Colleen Giblin, Elizabeth Jones). Gartner release 25 August 2025; reproduction 27 August 2025.

it-online.co.za/?p=303242

E167 Grade B in conflict

Gartner predicts that by 2028 AI agents will outnumber human sellers by tenfold, but less than 40% of sellers will report that AI agents have improved their productivity.

Gartner Predicts By 2028 AI Agents Will Outnumber Sellers by 10X, Yet Fewer Than 40% of Sellers Will Report AI Agents Improved Productivity (reproduced by Insurance-Canada.ca). Gartner (Melissa Hilbert). Gartner URL dated 18 November 2025; reproduction datelined 3 December 2025, posted 17 December 2025 (Conflicts).

insurance-canada.ca/2025/12/17/gartner-ai-agents-will-outnumber-sellers

E168 Grade B in conflict

In Gartner's survey of 645 B2B buyers, 69% prefer to validate AI-generated insights with sales reps; 45% used GenAI in a recent purchase; 67% prefer a sales-rep-free experience; 70% prefer a completely digital self-service experience; 51% said they were more likely to encounter misleading information from GenAI and 49% said the same of sales reps.

Gartner Survey Finds 69% of B2B Buyers Turn to Sales Reps to Validate AI-Generated Insights (Gartner release on Business Wire). Gartner (Robert Blaisdell). 20 May 2026 (Las Vegas).

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260520585188/en/Gartner-Survey-Finds-69-of...

E169 Grade B single source

Gartner reports that sales organisations giving sellers AI-enabled next best actions are 2.6x more likely to achieve commercial growth (undefined); it predicts that by 2027, 95% of sellers' research workflows will begin with AI (under 20% in 2024); compared with GenAI, buyers were 39 percentage points more likely to say a rep understood their needs and 32 points more likely to say a rep made them feel confident.

Gartner Survey Finds Sales Organizations That Provide AI-Enabled Next Best Actions Are 2.6x More Likely to Achieve Commercial Growth. Gartner (Greg Hessong). 20 May 2026.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2026-05-20-gartner-survey-finds-...

E170 Grade B single source

Forrester's 2026 B2B predictions: B2B companies will lose more than $10 billion in enterprise value through ungoverned generative AI; "Twenty percent of B2B sellers will be forced to engage in agent-led quote negotiations"; in 2025, 30% of buyers saw genAI tools as a meaningful interaction at the final commit stage against 17% for product experts, and 19% of buyers using genAI felt less confident because of inaccurate information.

Forrester's 2026 B2B Marketing, Sales, And Product Predictions. Forrester (Sharyn Leaver). 28 October 2025 (Cambridge, Mass.).

www.forrester.com/press-newsroom/forrester-b2b-marketing-sales-product-2026...

E171 Grade B in conflict

Forrester's Buyers' Journey Survey 2025 found 94% of business buyers use AI in buying (89% a year earlier), 61% use private AI tools provided by their organisation, and 54% use AI for product research and 55% for comparisons.

B2B Buyers Make Zero-Click Buying Number One; Zero-Click Is Only Half The AI Story. John Buten, Forrester. 22 January 2026; 12 February 2026.

www.forrester.com/blogs/b2b_buyers_make_zero_click_buying_number_one/ and w...

E172 Grade D in conflict

After one year of internal use, Salesforce says its help-site agent handled over 1.5 million support requests, its SDR agent worked over 43,000 leads and generated $1.7 million in new pipeline from dormant leads, the SDR agent's "I don't know" rate fell from 30% to under 10%, and a caption cites a 49% sales productivity boost for ANZ teams (no method).

From Pilot to Playbook: What We Learned from Our First Year Using Agentforce. Joe Inzerillo, Salesforce. 18 September 2025.

www.salesforce.com/news/stories/first-year-agentforce-customer-zero/

E173 Grade D in conflict

Salesforce's sales customer story reports 192,000 leads worked, the Engagement Agent reaching 100,000 leads and being "on track to generate" $60 million in pipeline (a projection), and AE win rates up 10% attributed to Sales Coach (baseline not stated); its website story reports 185,000+ US-site conversations, 30,000+ new leads "in 2025 alone" and a $20 million pipeline lift.

Salesforce's sellers close more deals in less time with Agentforce; Agentforce is reinventing how visitors navigate Salesforce's websites. Salesforce. pages dated 19 June 2025 and 30 May 2025; metadata modified 20 and 26 August 2026.

www.salesforce.com/customer-stories/agentforce-for-sales/ and www.salesforc...

E174 Grade D vendor claim

Salesforce reports that Qualified's Piper AI SDR, live on Salesforce.com since April 2026, "booked more than 60 meetings per week on average" with a 6% conversion rate (undefined) after a 30-day launch; Salesforce announced the Qualified acquisition on 17 December 2025 (no price disclosed), closing 1 April 2026 per an editor's note.

Salesforce launches AI SDR Piper in just 30 days with Qualified; Salesforce Signs Definitive Agreement to Acquire Qualified. Salesforce. 29 July 2026 (metadata 22 July 2026); 17 December 2025.

www.salesforce.com/salesforce-on-salesforce/agentic-presales-qualified-pipe...

E175 Grade C single source

Marc Benioff said Salesforce cut customer support from about 9,000 to about 5,000 roles because "I need less heads", that of the same interactions "50% are with agents, 50% are with humans", and that support costs fell 17% since the start of 2025; a spokesperson said hundreds of employees were redeployed into professional services, sales and customer success.

Salesforce "Needs Less Heads," So It Cut 4,000 Jobs, As AI Takes Over; Fortune report of the same podcast. Esther Shein, TechRepublic; Emma Burleigh, Fortune (both reporting The Logan Bartlett Show). 3 September 2025; 2 September 2025.

www.techrepublic.com/article/news-salesforce-cuts-4k-jobs/ and fortune.com/...

E176 Grade D vendor claim

HubSpot states that Breeze Customer Agent "resolved over 50% of customer conversations autonomously" for "thousands of customers"; its INBOUND 2025 release lists "over 15 Breeze Agents" and gives no outcome metric for the Prospecting Agent.

HubSpot expands Breeze Customer Agent to offer AI support for the entire buyer journey; HubSpot unveils blueprint to building hybrid human-AI teams with 200+ product updates at INBOUND 2025. HubSpot. page updated 8 May 2025; Business Wire release 3 September 2025 (date from release ID).

www.hubspot.com/company-news/customer-agent-expansion and www.businesswire....

E177 Grade D vendor claim

Microsoft's survey of 133 of its own sellers using Copilot for Sales weekly or daily found self-reported savings of about 90 minutes a week, 83% saying it made them more productive and 67% that they could spend more time with customers; a later post reports 12.5K of 35K sales roles as monthly active users in year one, with no business outcomes.

What Can Copilot's Earliest Users Teach Us About AI at Work? (Work Trend Index Special Report); Seven Things We Learned Deploying Microsoft Copilot for Sales at Microsoft. Microsoft WorkLab; Lukas Velush, Microsoft Inside Track. 15 November 2023; 31 October 2024.

www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/copilots-earliest-users-te...

E178 Grade D in conflict

Gong reported 35% higher win rates on deals where sellers used its Smart Trackers and 26% higher with Ask Anything, across more than one million opportunities at 1,418 organisations, as a correlation with no adjustment described; the headline "up to 35% higher revenue success" is not supported by a revenue measure.

AI Delivers up to 35% Higher Revenue Success According to Analysis of More Than One Million Sales Opportunities (Gong release carried by SalesTechStar). Gong (Gong Labs). 15 February 2024.

salestechstar.com/?p=233353

E179 Grade C in conflict

Gong's 2025 study, as reported by VentureBeat, found teams regularly using AI generate 77% more revenue per rep than teams that do not ("regularly" undefined), quota attainment fell from 52% to 46% and average revenue growth slowed to 16%; Gong's CEO said AI improves forecasting accuracy by 10 to 15% without a method.

Gong study: Sales teams using AI generate 77% more revenue per rep. Michael Nunez, VentureBeat. 4 December 2025.

venturebeat.com/ai/gong-study-sales-teams-using-ai-generate-77-more-revenue...

E180 Grade D vendor claim

ZoomInfo told investors Copilot annual contract value reached $150 million in Q4 from $18 million in Q2, one customer cut from 200 to 100 sales reps with roughly flat spend, and management had not seen customers cut sales headcount because of AI efficiency.

ZoomInfo at Morgan Stanley Conference: Shifts to Upmarket Focus (transcript). Investing.com transcript of ZoomInfo (Henry Schuck, Graham O'Brien), Morgan Stanley TMT Conference. 6 March 2025.

ng.investing.com/news/transcripts/zoominfo-at-morgan-stanley-conference-shi...

E181 Grade C single source

11x raised a $24 million Series A led by Benchmark and about $50 million Series B led by a16z at a reported valuation of around $350 million, its CEO claiming the company was "approaching $10 million in annual recurring revenue"; on 5 May 2025 founder Hasan Sukkar stepped down as CEO, replaced by CTO Prabhav Jain.

11x.ai, a developer of AI sales reps, has raised $50M Series B led by A16Z, sources say; 11x CEO Hasan Sukkar steps down. Marina Temkin, Romain Dillet, Ingrid Lunden; Dominic-Madori Davis and Marina Temkin; TechCrunch. 30 September 2024; 5 May 2025.

techcrunch.com/2024/09/30/11x-ai-a-developer-of-ai-sales-reps-has-raised-50...

E182 Grade C single source

TechCrunch reported 11x displayed logos of non-customers; ZoomInfo said a one-month trial (mid-January to mid-February 2025) "performed significantly worse than our SDR employees"; three current and former employees said most early customers used three-month break clauses and one said "We were losing 70-80% of customers that came through the door"; 11x said its current retention rate is 79% and that it reports contracted ARR, a former employee saying reported ARR could be $14 million when contracts past the trial totalled about $3 million.

a16z- and Benchmark-backed 11x has been claiming customers it doesn't have. Dominic-Madori Davis and Marina Temkin, TechCrunch. 24 March 2025.

techcrunch.com/2025/03/24/a16z-and-benchmark-backed-11x-has-been-claiming-c...

E183 Grade C in conflict

Artisan raised a $25 million Series A at about $5 million ARR with 250 customers; its CEO said the "stop hiring humans" billboards were "mostly just for attention", conceded churn, said the early product had "extremely bad hallucinations" (now about one in 10,000 emails, company claim), called a 1% response rate the "sweet spot", and described break clauses and a pay-per-response pricing pilot.

Artisan, the "stop hiring humans" AI agent startup, raises $25M, and is still hiring humans. Julie Bort, TechCrunch. 9 April 2025.

techcrunch.com/2025/04/09/artisan-the-stop-hiring-humans-ai-agent-startup-r...

E184 Grade C single source

Jason Lemkin, having watched "20+" B2B SaaS companies deploy AI SDRs over six months, says 90% get "absolutely nothing" (zero pipeline, zero meetings), about 10% book more qualified meetings than their human SDR teams did, and successful companies hire human SDRs from month seven to work AI-generated pipeline.

The AI SDR Reality Check: How To Actually Make It Work. Jason Lemkin, SaaStr. 24 July 2025.

www.saastr.com/the-ai-sdr-reality-check-how-to-actually-make-it-work/

E185 Grade C in conflict

SaaStr's own six-month deployment reports 19,847 outbound messages (mainly Artisan) with a 6.7% response rate (undefined); the Qualified inbound agent recorded 100+ meetings (elsewhere "approaching 100") and $1M+ closed in 90 days (attribution unexplained); costs were $50 to 100K+ per platform a year plus 15 to 20 hours a week of human management, funded by reallocating two human SDR roles.

6 Months of AI SDRs: What's Worked, How They Brought In $1M+ in 90 Days, and the Real Data Everyone's Asking For. Jason Lemkin and Amelia Lerutte, SaaStr. 20 November 2025.

www.saastr.com/6-months-of-ai-sdrs-whats-worked-how-they-brought-in-1m-in-9...

E186 Grade D in conflict

Belkins' client campaigns in 2025 sent 7,530,489 cold emails and tracked 34,393 replies, an average reply rate of 0.45% (unique replies divided by emails sent, excluding auto-replies and bounces); no AI-written versus human-written comparison and no quantitative deliverability figure.

Cold email response rates (Belkins blog). Margaret Lee, Belkins. updated 26 June 2026; original date not shown.

belkins.io/blog/cold-email-response-rates.md

E187 Grade D vendor claim

Sopro (UK prospecting agency) states in its State of Prospecting 2026 that "one use of AI delivered 356% more closed deals" without saying which use, cites 126 million outreach emails, and gives no reply rate on the page; its 2025 edition surveyed 404 senior B2B decision-makers, also with no reply rate on the page.

The State of Prospecting 2026; The State of Prospecting 2025. Sopro (UK). 2026; 2025 (no exact dates shown).

sopro.io/the-state-of-prospecting/ and sales.sopro.io/?p=38718

E188 Grade D vendor claim

G2 found in April 2025 that 29% of B2B decision-makers start research via LLMs more often than Google and nearly two-thirds prefer engaging vendor salespeople only in later stages (up 17 percentage points from 2024); in March 2026 it found 51% start research with an AI chatbot more often than Google and 64% encounter inaccurate chatbot recommendations often or very often.

G2 Report: AI Now Means "Always Included"; New G2 Research: Half of B2B Software Buyers Now Start Their Research With AI Chatbots (releases carried by Business Wire and TMCnet). G2. 14 May 2025; 15 April 2026.

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20250514382531/en and www.tmcnet.com/usubmit...

E189 Grade D in conflict

6sense's 2025 Buyer Experience Report found the split between independent research and seller engagement moved from 70/30 to 60/40, 94% of buying groups ranked preferred vendors before first contact, the vendor preferred before engaging sellers wins 80% of deals (77% in another passage), and 94% used large language models to summarise reviews or analyse data.

The Timeline for Influencing B2B Buyers Is Shrinking: Insights From 6sense's 2025 Buyer Experience Report. 6sense (Business Wire release). 12 November 2025 (date from release ID).

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20251112018032/en

E190 **Grade D** in conflict

TrustRadius's 2026 B2B Buying Disconnect Report found 63% of technology buyers used AI during their purchase journey, 94% of those fact-check its responses at least some of the time, 74% use reviews to inform decisions, and analyst reports were used by 13% of buyers, a 63% decline since 2022.

TrustRadius: AI Has Changed How Buyers Research, But Not What They Trust. Demand Gen Report (reporting TrustRadius, an HG Insights company). 30 July 2026.

www.demandgenreport.com/?p=53853

E191 **Grade A** in conflict

Google announced on 3 October 2023 that from February 2024 senders of more than 5,000 messages a day to Gmail addresses must authenticate email, offer one-click unsubscribe processed within two days, and stay under a spam rate threshold; the Gmail Help guidelines require SPF, DKIM and DMARC (policy may be none) for such senders from 1 February 2024 and say "Keep spam rates reported in Postmaster Tools below 0.10% and avoid ever reaching a spam rate of 0.30% or higher"; the FAQ defines a bulk sender as one sending "close to 5,000 messages or more to personal Gmail accounts" in 24 hours, says the status is permanent and applies only to mail to personal Gmail accounts, and says that from November 2025 Gmail is "ramping up its enforcement on non-compliant traffic" with temporary and permanent rejections.

New Gmail protections for a safer, less spammy inbox; Email sender guidelines; Email sender guidelines FAQ (Gmail Help). Neil Kumaran, Google; Google. 3 October 2023; help pages no date shown.

blog.google/products/gmail/gmail-security-authentication-spam-protection/ a...

E192 **Grade A** single source

Yahoo requires all senders to authenticate with SPF or DKIM and keep the spam rate below 0.3%; bulk senders must implement both SPF and DKIM, publish DMARC with at least p=none that passes, support one-click unsubscribe and honour unsubscribes within 2 days; enforcement began in February 2024 and rolled out through the first half of 2024; no volume threshold defines "bulk sender".

Sender Best Practices | Sender Hub. Yahoo. no date shown.

senders.yahooinc.com/best-practices/

E193 **Grade C** single source

Microsoft Outlook requires domains sending more than 5,000 emails a day to Outlook.com consumer addresses to pass SPF and DKIM and publish DMARC with at least p=none aligned with SPF or DKIM; from 5 May 2025 non-compliant messages go to the Junk folder with rejection to follow at an unannounced date.

Microsoft Outlook to Enforce Stricter Email Authentication Rules for High-Volume Senders (Petri); Microsoft's new email authentication requirements (Proofpoint). Petri (no date or author shown); Craig Temple, Proofpoint. Petri no date shown; Proofpoint 10 April 2025.

petri.com/microsoft-outlook-email-authentication-rules/ and www.proofpoint....

E194 **Grade D** vendor claim

In Mailgun's 2024 sender survey, 63% of senders were at least somewhat familiar with the Google and Yahoo requirements, 49.5% of aware senders made changes, and only 23% reported any deliverability challenges they attributed to the requirements (self-reported); no measured inbox placement effect is reported.

Yahoogle: New Bulk Sender Requirements in 2024 (State of Email Deliverability, chapter 2). Mailgun (Sinch). no original date shown (report labelled State of Email 2024; page modified 22 July 2026).

mailgun.com/resources/research/yahoogle-bulk-senders

E195 **Grade B** corroborated

The Bridge Group's 2025 SDR research reports an SDR to AE ratio of 1 to 2.4, "consistent since 2018", average tenure of 1.9 years, ramp of 3.0 months, 60% of SDRs at quota (lowest in the study's history), and "AI SDRs" appearing as a distinct category for the first time at 1% of respondents; the page contains no statement that AI has reduced SDR headcount.

SDR Models, Motions & Metrics: 2025 Research Report. Matt Bertuzzi, The Bridge Group. 6 February 2025.

www.bridgegroupinc.com/research/2025-sdr-models-metrics-report-the-bridge-g...

E196 **Grade C** single source

High Alpha's 2025 SaaS Benchmarks Report had more than 800 respondents, surveyed August to September 2025; 69% US based, 17% European; ARR mix under $1M 23%, $1M to $5M 27%, $5M to $20M 31%, $20M to $50M 10%, over $50M 9%; 50% CEOs or founders.

2025 SaaS Benchmarks Report. High Alpha, with 40+ venture and platform partners. no date shown; flipbook cites Q3 2025 data.

www.highalpha.com/saas-benchmarks and online.flippingbook.com/view/1018476450/

E197 **Grade C** single source

High Alpha's 2025 scorecard gives year on year ARR growth, Good (median) and Great (upper quartile), as under $1M 100% and 300%; $1M to $5M 50% and 100%; $5M to $20M 31% and 72%; $20M to $50M 30% and 41%; over $50M 16% and 29%.

2025 SaaS Benchmarks Report, scorecard. High Alpha. no date shown.

online.flippingbook.com/view/1018476450/

E198 **Grade C** in conflict

The same scorecard gives gross revenue retention (Good and Great) by band as 92% and 100%; 92% and 95%; 88% and 95%; 90% and 95%; 88% and 90%; and net revenue retention as 100% and 116%; 104% and 110%; 103% and 115%; 103% and 110%; 101% and 108% (bands as in entry 2).

2025 SaaS Benchmarks Report, scorecard. High Alpha. no date shown.

online.flippingbook.com/view/1018476450/

E199 **Grade C** single source

High Alpha's 2025 report gives median CAC payback by band as 5 months (under $1M), 8 ($1M to $5M), 14 ($5M to $20M), 20 ($20M to $50M) and 17 (over $50M), with quartile ranges of 2 to 8, 5 to 14, 8 to 22, 11 to 27 and 13 to 22 months.

2025 SaaS Benchmarks Report. High Alpha. no date shown.

online.flippingbook.com/view/1018476450/

E200 **Grade C** single source

High Alpha's 2025 scorecard gives ARR per employee (Good and Great) as $55,556 and $100,000 (under $1M); $136,364 and $200,000 ($1M to $5M); $166,667 and $220,588 ($5M to $20M); $268,235 and $350,000 ($20M to $50M); $277,778 and $396,635 (over $50M).

2025 SaaS Benchmarks Report, scorecard. High Alpha. no date shown.

online.flippingbook.com/view/1018476450/

E201 **Grade C** corroborated

High Alpha reports that companies beyond $5 million ARR have reduced employee count over the past four years, and that over a quarter of respondents decreased headcount in engineering, customer success and support, and marketing; sales is not named in that statement.

2025 SaaS Benchmarks Report. High Alpha. no date shown.

online.flippingbook.com/view/1018476450/ and www.highalpha.com/saas-benchmarks

E202 **Grade C** single source

High Alpha's Efficient Growth analysis of nearly 5,000 software companies over nine years found CAC payback and NRR the two strongest predictors of long term profitable growth; segments were high NRR and low payback 13% of companies, 71% average growth, Rule of 40 score 47; high NRR and high payback 15%, 40%, 21; low NRR and low payback 15%, 30%, 33; low NRR and high payback 12%, 10%, 5. High and low thresholds are not given.

The 2025 SaaS Benchmarks report: Five key takeaways. Kyle Poyar, Growth Unhinged, summarising High Alpha. 12 November 2025.

kylepoyar.substack.com/p/2025-saas-benchmarks-report

E203 **Grade C** corroborated

In High Alpha's 2025 sample 70% had launched AI features and 36% said AI was core to their product; median growth for AI native against B2B SaaS companies was 100% v 75% (under $1M), 110% v 40% ($1M to $5M), 90% v 30% ($5M to $20M), 60% v 35% ($20M to $50M) and 40% v 15% (over $50M).

The 2025 SaaS Benchmarks report: Five key takeaways. Kyle Poyar, Growth Unhinged, summarising High Alpha. 12 November 2025.

kylepoyar.substack.com/p/2025-saas-benchmarks-report

E204 **Grade B** in conflict

Benchmarkit's 2025 report (N = 583 on the Key Findings page, 563 on the participant profile) gives a 2024 median growth rate of 26%, top quartile down from 60% in 2023 to 50% in 2024, VC backed median 30% and PE backed 13%, and planned 2025 growth of 35% at median.

2025 B2B SaaS Performance Metrics Benchmarks. Benchmarkit (PDF hosted by HiBob; presented with Pavilion). no date shown; CY-24 or last twelve months data.

www.hibob.com/wp-content/uploads/2025-SaaS-Performance-Metrics-Benchmarks.pdf

E205 **Grade B** in conflict

Benchmarkit 2025 gives a median New CAC Ratio of $2.00 of sales and marketing spend per $1.00 of new customer ARR, up 14% (fourth quartile $2.82, N = 73); a median Expansion CAC Ratio of $1.00 (N = 21) against $0.61 in 2020 and $0.69 in 2021 and 2022; and a Blended CAC Ratio down 10% (p. 5) or 12% (p. 15).

2025 B2B SaaS Performance Metrics Benchmarks. Benchmarkit. no date shown.

www.hibob.com/wp-content/uploads/2025-SaaS-Performance-Metrics-Benchmarks.pdf

E206 **Grade B** in conflict

Benchmarkit 2025 gives median net revenue retention of 101%, gross revenue retention down from 90% to 88% over three years (N = 225), and expansion contributing a median 40% of new ARR (N = 81), with 58% at $50M to $100M ARR and 67% above $100M (six companies) in 2024.

2025 B2B SaaS Performance Metrics Benchmarks. Benchmarkit. no date shown.

www.hibob.com/wp-content/uploads/2025-SaaS-Performance-Metrics-Benchmarks.pdf

E207 **Grade B** in conflict

Benchmarkit 2025 gives sales and marketing at a median 37% of revenue (p. 46), 47% for VC backed on p. 5 but 45% on p. 49, against 33% for PE backed; ARR per FTE of $240,000 at $50M to $100M ARR and $283,379 above $100M; a burn multiple goal of under 1.0 at $25M to $50M; and only rules of thumb for CAC payback (about 12 months) and magic number (0.75 as the low water mark), with no medians in the text.

2025 B2B SaaS Performance Metrics Benchmarks. Benchmarkit. no date shown.

www.hibob.com/wp-content/uploads/2025-SaaS-Performance-Metrics-Benchmarks.pdf

E208 **Grade B** in conflict

Benchmarkit's 2024 report (CY-23 data, about 1,000 participants, profile N = 936) gives a 27% median growth rate (75th percentile 60%); New CAC Ratio $1.76 median; Blended CAC Ratio up from $1.32 in 2022 to $1.61 in 2023; NRR 101%; expansion 35% of new ARR; S&M 34% of revenue at median in 2022; ARR per employee $281,902 at $50M to $100M; and burn multiples of 1 to 2 described as good (p. 35).

2024 B2B SaaS Performance Metrics Benchmarks Report. Benchmarkit, hosted by Pavilion. no date shown; fiscal 2023 data.

joinpavilion.com/hubfs/2024%20B2B%20SaaS%20Performance%20Metrics%20Benchmar...

E209 **Grade C** in conflict

The 2025 KeyBanc Capital Markets and Sapphire Ventures Private SaaS Company Survey (16th year) expects ARR growth to accelerate from 15% in 2024 to 20% in 2025, gross retention to approach 90% after falling to 86% in 2023, net retention to stay above 100%, EBITDA margins to turn positive in 2026 and account executive payback to shorten to 18 months by 2026; 67% of companies already monetise AI. Respondent count is not stated on either page.

Private SaaS Company Survey Reveals AI-Driven Transformation and Sustained Operational Excellence (press release) and 2025 survey page. KeyBanc Capital Markets and Sapphire Ventures. 13 November 2025 (release); page undated.

www.stocktitan.net/news/KEY/private-saas-company-survey-reveals-ai-driven-t...

E210 **Grade C** in conflict

The 2024 KeyBanc and Sapphire survey expected 2024 ARR growth of about 19%, reported gross and net retention of about 90% and about 101%, sales quota attainment of about 70% in 2023 projected to about 75% in 2024, and sales quotas up from about $650K in 2022 to about $750K in 2023 and 2024; it said operating efficiency and EBITDA improvement took priority over aggressive growth, with budget cuts continuing especially above $50M ARR.

2024 KeyBanc Capital Markets and Sapphire Ventures SaaS Survey (landing page). KeyBanc Capital Markets and Sapphire Ventures. no date shown; public comparison "as of October 2024".

info.sapphireventures.com/2024-keybanc-capital-markets-and-sapphire-venture...

E211 **Grade C** in conflict

ICONIQ's State of Go-to-Market 2025 reports AE quota attainment of 58% year to date in 2025 against 59% in 2024; top quartile ARR growth among $25M to $100M companies of 93% year to date in 2025 against 78% in 2023; conversion for $100M+ AI native companies averaging 56% against 32%; channel at about 20% of revenue; about one third on hybrid pricing; and roughly 70% reporting at least moderate AI adoption in GTM workflows.

The State of Go-to-Market 2025. ICONIQ. no date shown (2025).

www.iconiq.com/growth/reports/state-of-go-to-market-2025

E212 **Grade C** single source

SaaStr's summary of ICONIQ's 2025 GTM report says 205 GTM executives were surveyed in April 2025 and that, under $25M ARR, high AI adopters ran GTM organisations 38% leaner (13 against 21 GTM FTEs) with revenue operations at 17% of GTM headcount against 12%, post sales 25% against 33%, ramped AE attainment 61% against 56%, sales cycles 20 against 25 weeks, pipeline coverage 3.8x against 3.7x and cost per opportunity $8,300 against $8,700.

The Age of AI: The Top 10 GTM Learnings from ICONIQ's 2025 B2B SaaS Report. Jason Lemkin, SaaStr, secondary summary of ICONIQ. 24 June 2025.

www.saastr.com/the-age-of-ai-the-top-10-gtm-learnings-from-iconiqs-2025-b2b...

E213 **Grade C** single source

ICONIQ's State of Go-to-Market 2026, on data from 150+ B2B software GTM leaders, reports year on year ARR growth in 2025 H2 of 111% (sub $50M), 91% ($50M to $100M) and 33% ($100M+); sales cycles down from a 25 week peak in 2025 to 19 weeks in 2026 (24 weeks for $100K+ deals); trial and POC conversion of roughly 50% in 2026 against about 36% in 2025; and 48% of companies on hybrid pricing.

The State of Go-to-Market 2026. ICONIQ. no date shown (2026).

www.iconiq.com/growth/reports/state-of-go-to-market-2026

E214 **Grade C** in conflict

SaaStr's summary of ICONIQ's 2026 report says the median company plans 0% RevOps headcount growth in 2026; RevOps time splits as data and reporting 22%, systems and tools 22%, enablement 13%, GTM planning 13%, AI experimentation 10%, deal desk 9%, pricing and packaging 9%; high performers run 9.2 to 9.8 ICs per manager against 4.4 to 5; sales management is 12% of the sales organisation at high performers against 17%; the median $100M+ company grows GTM headcount 9% in 2026; and companies with AI fully embedded generate roughly 2x net new revenue per FTE.

Modern GTM: Leaner, Flatter. Jason Lemkin, SaaStr, secondary summary of ICONIQ. 21 May 2026.

www.saastr.com/moderngtmleanerflatter/

E215 **Grade C** in conflict

ICONIQ's 2025 State of Software, on data from 100+ software companies, says ARR growth declined over three years and is stabilising, net dollar retention is settling into roughly 110% to 120%, the Rule of 40 has become the most reliable predictor of valuation, a one point rise in revenue growth has nearly twice the valuation impact of a one point rise in free cash flow margin, and AI native companies grow 2 to 3x faster than top quartile SaaS benchmarks.

State of Software 2025: Rethinking the Playbook (also titled Topline Growth and Operational Efficiency). ICONIQ. no date shown (2025).

www.iconiq.com/growth/reports/2025-state-of-software and www.iconiq.com/gro...

E216 **Grade C** single source

SaaStr reported ICONIQ's early 2025 data putting the top quartile bar at $25M ARR at 100% growth, 110% NRR, 0.9x net magic number and $230,000 revenue per employee; companies planned to grow about 35% faster in 2025; AI first companies at $100M+ ARR projected 51% growth against 30% for traditional SaaS.

ICONIQ: Top Quartile B2B Companies Are Growing 100% at $25M ARR But Are Planning To Grow 35% Faster in 2025. Jason Lemkin, SaaStr, secondary summary of ICONIQ. 11 February 2025.

www.saastr.com/iconiq-top-quartile-b2b-companies-are-growing-100-at-25m-arr...

E217 **Grade C** single source

Bloom Equity Partners' summary of ICONIQ's 2024 report (quarterly data from 107 B2B SaaS and 12 public companies) gives top quartile net magic number of 1 to 2x, burn multiples of 1.5 to 2x for companies pursuing top quartile growth, NDR of 120% to 130% and ARR per FTE of $140K to $150K for top performers, and 35% of new ARR from expansion by $15M ARR.

Scaling SaaS from $1 to $20M and Overcoming the Growth Plateau: Insights from ICONIQ Growth's 2024 Report. Bart Macdonald, Bloom Equity Partners, secondary summary of ICONIQ. 1 November 2024.

bloomvp.substack.com/p/scaling-saas-from-1-to-20m-and-overcoming

E218 **Grade C** corroborated

In February 2023 ICONIQ Growth partners said top companies double ARR each year after $10M, reach $100M within three to four years of $10M, hold NDR above 120% after $10M, typically burn about $20M to add $10M net new ARR, and should keep the burn multiple under 2x while scaling; they also said 20% of companies were doing layoffs, 20% had hiring freezes and 60% were slowing hiring.

Unveiling the Data Behind Effective Scaling with ICONIQ Growth Partner Doug Pepper and Partner, Head of Analytics Christine Edmonds. Amelia Ibarra, SaaStr (interview write up). 24 February 2023.

www.saastr.com/unveiling-the-data-behind-effective-scaling-with-iconiq-grow...

E219 **Grade C** corroborated

Bessemer's August 2025 State of the Cloud (AI edition), on 20 high growth AI startups, says the ten "AI Supernovas" reached about $40M ARR in their first year of commercialisation and about $125M in the second, with about 25% average gross margin and $1.13M ARR per FTE in year one, while "AI Shooting Stars" reached about $3M, $12M, $40M and $103M ARR in years one to four with 60% gross margin and about $164K ARR per FTE in year one.

The State of the Cloud (AI) 2025. Bessemer Venture Partners (Kent Bennett, Talia Goldberg, Janelle Teng Wade, Sameer Dholakia and others). 13 August 2025.

www.bvp.com/the-official-state-of-the-cloud-ai

E220 **Grade C** single source

Bessemer's June 2024 State of the Cloud reported Vertical AI portfolio companies at $4M+ ARR growing about 400% year on year with about 65% gross margin, a BVP Efficiency Ratio (net new CARR divided by net burn) of about 1.1x, and model costs about 10% of revenue; it drew on a survey of 62 investors.

State of the Cloud 2024. Bessemer Venture Partners. 20 June 2024.

www.bvp.com/atlas/state-of-the-cloud-2024

E221 **Grade C** in conflict

Meritech's public SaaS benchmarking (data as of 1 September 2023, one chart to 1 March 2024, over 100 public SaaS companies) reports median net retention at its lowest in years at 115%, no public SaaS company expected to grow faster than 40%, lengthening payback periods, a median EV to NTM revenue multiple of 6.5x against a pre COVID 7.3x, and defines Rule of 40 as NTM revenue growth plus NTM free cash flow margin.

Meritech Software Pulse (benchmarking page). Meritech Capital. no date shown; data as of September 2023 and March 2024.

www.meritechcapital.com/blog/meritech-software-pulse

E222 **Grade C** single source

(Europe) GP Bullhound's European SaaS Report 2025, on over 100 private European SaaS companies, reports around 57% EBITDA positive, up from the mid 40% range; overall retention above 100% with NRR softening for SME focused models; median gross margins in the mid 70s to low 80s; and European listed SaaS at about 6x forward revenue against about 7.2x for US peers.

European SaaS Report 2025. GP Bullhound. 16 December 2025.

www.gpbullhound.com/articles/european-saas-report-2025/

E223 Grade C in conflict

(Europe) GP Bullhound's 2024 survey of over 100 European SaaS companies gave median net revenue retention of 110% to 112% in 2023, nearly identical to 2022; ARR per FTE approaching €150k for growth stage companies; gross margin gains of 1% to 7%; and 44% EBITDA positive against about 33% the year before.

European SaaS Survey 2024. GP Bullhound. 12 December 2024.

www.gpbullhound.com/articles/european-saas-survey-2024/

E224 Grade C single source

(Europe) Sifted's summary of Atomico's State of European Tech 2025 reports a predicted $44bn raised in 2025 (against $43bn in 2023 and $41bn in 2024), the UK raising $14.4bn, 43% of investors citing a lack of M&A exit routes as the biggest barrier to deploying capital, and 15% of founders having moved headquarters abroad, 57% of them to the US.

State of European Tech 2025: 10 charts. Kai Nicol-Schwarz, Sifted, summarising Atomico. 19 November 2025.

sifted.eu/articles/state-european-tech-report-2025

E225 Grade C single source

(UK) The ScaleUp Institute's 2023 Annual Review found 28% of scaleup leaders naming access to markets their biggest barrier (64% top three), talent the top priority for 29% (58% top three) and growth capital number one for 17% (38% top three).

ScaleUp Annual Review 2023, Looking Forward. ScaleUp Institute. no date shown (2023).

www.scaleupinstitute.org.uk/scaleup-review-2023/looking-forward/

E226 Grade C corroborated

Ray Rike, citing Emergence Capital's Beyond Benchmarks 2025, reports AI native companies at median growth of 100% against 23% for traditional SaaS, median NRR of 132% against 108% for legacy SaaS companies adopting AI, and GRR of 89% against 81%.

Beyond Benchmarks 2025: A Different Perspective. Ray Rike, SaaS Barometer, secondary on Emergence Capital. 24 June 2025.

thesaasbarometer.substack.com/p/beyond-benchmarks-2025

E227 Grade B in conflict

The Bridge Group's 2026 AE research (10th biennial edition, 158 B2B companies, online survey Q1 to Q2 2026) reports 48% of reps at annual quota, down from 51% in 2024; median quota $960K (SaaS median $875K); median OTE $200K, up from $190K in 2024 and $167K in 2022; quota to OTE 4.6x, up from 4.2x; ramp 6.2 months, the highest in the study's history; experience required at hire 3.7 years, up from 2.7 in 2022; and 57% of reps at quota in the highest AI engagement tercile against 39% in the lowest, labelled observational.

2026 AE Models, Motions and Metrics (research page) and State of Sales: 2026 AE Models, Motions, and Metrics Research (blog). Matt Bertuzzi, The Bridge Group. 22 June 2026 and 23 June 2026.

www.bridgegroupinc.com/research/2026-ae-models-motions-metrics and blog.bri...

E228 Grade B corroborated

The Bridge Group's 2024 SaaS AE Metrics and Compensation report (more than 170 B2B SaaS companies) gives a median annual ACV quota of $800K, up from $740K in 2022, growing about 2% a year compounded since 2012; median OTE $190K with a 53:47 base to variable split, up from $167K in 2022; and a quota gap of nearly 2.5x between sellers under $25K ACV and at $250K+ ACV.

2024 SaaS AE Metrics and Compensation: Benchmark Report (blog summary). Matt Bertuzzi, The Bridge Group. 5 March 2024.

blog.bridgegroupinc.com/2024-ae-metrics-compensation-benchmark

E229 Grade C single source

David Skok's write up of the Bridge Group's 2017 AE report (384 participating executives) gives a baseline of average quota $770K in ACV (median $690K), quota at 5.3x OTE, median OTE above $110K (average $126K), average rep tenure 2.4 years, "virtually unchanged since 2010", and turnover averaging 30%.

2017 SaaS AE Metrics Report. David Skok, forEntrepreneurs, on The Bridge Group. 5 July 2017.

www.forentrepreneurs.com/2017-saas-ae-metrics-report/

E230 Grade B single source

The Bridge Group's 2025 SDR research (10th edition, 351 B2B companies, online survey 2024 to 2025) reports 60% of SDRs at quota, the lowest in the study's history and trending down since 2018; average tenure 1.9 years; ramp 3.0 months, the lowest since 2010; 1 SDR to 2.4 AEs, consistent since 2018; 6.4 SDRs per leader, down from 8 in 2021 to 2023; median OTE $80K unchanged since 2022; median attrition 40% in 2024; and "AI SDRs" as a category for the first time at 1%.

SDR Models, Motions and Metrics (SDR tenure and ramp time page). Matt Bertuzzi, The Bridge Group. 6 February 2025.

bridgegroupinc.com/research/sdr-tenure-and-ramp-time

E231 **Grade E** signal only

RepVue's Cloud Sales Index for Q1 2025 (239 companies, about 44,000 ratings) reports aggregate quota attainment of 43.3%, the third consecutive quarter of gains after nine quarters of stagnation from 2021 and 2022 highs; enterprise sellers above 48%; and key account ACVs averaging $299K, up from $235K in Q1 2023.

RepVue Cloud Sales Index Q1 2025. RepVue. no date shown (Q1 2025).

www.repvue.com/cloud-index/2025/Q1

E232 **Grade E** signal only

The Quota, citing RepVue's Q3 2025 index (249 companies, 49,000+ quota carrying professionals), reports average attainment of 43.2%, the highest since mid 2023 but below pre 2022 highs; 48.3% of reps hitting or exceeding quota on $200K+ ACV deals; key account ACV $324K, up 20% year on year; mid market ACV up 16% to $67K.

The State of Cloud Sales: Quota Attainment Finally Climbs. The Quota, citing RepVue. 3 November 2025.

www.thequota.co/articles/the-state-of-cloud-sales-quota-attainment-finally-...

E233 **Grade C** single source

Pavilion's November 2022 survey of 230 sales development leaders found 73% reporting under 100% quota attainment, Series C companies lowest (27% at under 60%), and, in a separate Pavilion survey, 63% missing September 2022 revenue targets.

Pavilion State of Sales Development Series: Survey Shows Sales Teams Struggling to Hit Quotas. Pavilion HQ. 24 November 2022.

www.joinpavilion.com/blog/pavilion-state-of-sales-development-series-survey...

E234 **Grade D** vendor claim

The Pedowitz Group, a consultancy, states most growth stage B2B organisations land between 1 RevOps FTE per 10 to 20 revenue team members, tabulating 1:20 to 30 (early stage), 1:12 to 18 (growth), 1:8 to 12 (complex enterprise) and 1:10 to 15 (hybrid PLG plus sales led); it cites no survey or study.

How many RevOps professionals do I need per revenue team member?. The Pedowitz Group. no date shown.

www.pedowitzgroup.com/how-many-revops-professionals-do-i-need-per-revenue-t...

E235 **Grade C** single source

McKinsey reported in September 2024 that just 21 percent of surveyed commercial leaders said their companies had fully enabled enterprise wide gen AI adoption in B2B buying and selling, that companies which empowered sales teams through technology reported efficiency upticks of 10 to 15 percent, and forecast in its own words that "the widescale adoption of gen AI isn't just probable but inevitable" and that human engagement "can become a premium-only offering reserved for particularly complex, solution-based deals".

An unconstrained future: How generative AI could reshape B2B sales. Lareina Yee, Richelle Deveau and Steve Reis, McKinsey. 16 September 2024.

www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/an-un...

E236 **Grade C** corroborated

David Sacks defined the Burn Multiple as Net Burn divided by Net New ARR in April 2020, describing 2x as reasonable for an early stage startup, 5x as terrible and 3x or more as a possible product market fit problem; the thresholds table (amazing to bad) is an image on the page.

The Burn Multiple. David Sacks, Craft Ventures (Substack). 23 April 2020.

sacks.substack.com/p/the-burn-multiple-51a7e43cb200

E237 **Grade C** single source

a16z's May 2022 framework said burn multiples should decrease over time with the objective of crossing zero as a company becomes cash flow positive, that raising with less than 12 months of runway sends a negative signal, and that in the worst case headcount may need to be reduced for survival; its burn multiple benchmark table by ARR is an image.

A Framework for Navigating Down Markets. Justin Kahl and David George, Andreessen Horowitz. 13 May 2022.

a16z.com/2022/05/13/a-framework-for-navigating-down-markets-2/

E238 **Grade D** vendor claim

Kruze Consulting reproduces a16z's burn multiple benchmarks by ARR as $0 to $10M bad 3.8x, OK 1.6x, good 1.1x; $10M to $25M 1.8x, 1.4x, 0.8x; $25M to $75M 1.1x, 0.7x, 0.5x; $75M+ 0.9x, 0.5x, 0x; and says decent multiples are under 2x and the best under 1x.

Burn Multiple. Kruze Consulting. 9 January 2023, updated 8 December 2025.

kruzeconsulting.com/burn-multiple

E239 **Grade C** in conflict

Brad Feld's post of 3 February 2015 states that growth rate plus profit should add up to 40%, applies it at scale (at least $50 million in revenue), prefers EBITDA as the profit baseline, says he heard it from a late stage investor at a board meeting, and cites Neeraj Agrawal's TechCrunch piece on T2D3, not Fred Wilson.

The Rule of 40% For a Healthy SaaS Company. Brad Feld, Feld Thoughts. 3 February 2015.

feld.com/archives/2015/02/rule-40-healthy-saas-company/

E240 Grade C in conflict

Fred Wilson's post of 10 February 2015 defines the 40% rule as annual revenue growth rate plus operating margin equal to 40% and says he learned of it from Brad Feld's blog.

The 40% Rule. Fred Wilson, AVC. 10 February 2015.
avc.com/2015/02/the-40-rule/

E241 Grade C corroborated

Bain's Global Private Equity Report 2026 states that typical deals now require around 10% to 12% average annual EBITDA growth to deliver returns that about 5% delivered in the 2010s ("12 is the new 5"), that holding periods at exit hover around seven years (up from five to six in 2010 to 2021), that distributions to LPs were 14% of NAV in 2025 and below 15% for four consecutive years, that multiple expansion is gone for the foreseeable future, and that winning firms "will build systems, not slogans" and invest in talent and AI; it does not address go-to-market, RevOps or software portfolio companies specifically.

Private equity resurgence gathers steam as new era challenges firms to enhance value creation (press release) and Global Private Equity Report 2026 (landing page). Bain and Company (Hugh MacArthur and Rebecca Burack quoted). 23 February 2026 (release); page undated.
www.bain.com/about/media-center/press-releases/2026/private-equity-resurgen...

E242 Grade C single source

The Sacks SaaS Board Deck template shows a "Summary KPIs" slide whose rows are Total ARR, Net New ARR, Burn Multiple, Payback (Months) and Net Dollar Retention; magic number, pipeline coverage, quota attainment and headcount do not appear on the opened page.

The Sacks SaaS Board Deck. Craft Ventures (David Sacks quoted). no date shown; title carries "(11/26)".
craftventures.relayto.com/e/the-sacks-saas-board-deck-0ayrxwr4qml7u/6Ujr0fBK11

E243 Grade C single source

a16z's 16 Startup Metrics (August 2015) defines bookings as contract value and revenue as recognised on delivery, ARR as recurring components excluding one time and professional services fees, CAC as the full cost of acquiring users per user, states investors treat paid CAC as more important than blended CAC, and calls billings a better forward looking indicator of SaaS health than revenue.

16 Startup Metrics. Jeff Jordan, Anu Hariharan, Frank Chen and Preethi Kasireddy, Andreessen Horowitz. 21 August 2015.
a16z.com/16-startup-metrics/

E244 Grade C single source

David Skok's SaaS Metrics 2.0 (January 2013) gives rules of thumb that the best SaaS businesses have LTV to CAC above 3 (sometimes 7 or 8), that many recover CAC in 5 to 7 months with profitability weakening beyond 12 months, and that net revenue churn above 2% per month signals something wrong; it recommends tracking ARPA, net MRR churn, LTV, CAC, LTV:CAC and months to recover CAC by segment.

SaaS Metrics 2.0: A Guide to Measuring and Improving What Matters. David Skok, forEntrepreneurs (Matrix Partners). 16 January 2013.
www.forentrepreneurs.com/saas-metrics-2/

E245 Grade C corroborated

David Skok's Startup Killer (December 2009) argues that after product market fit the second major cause of failure is CAC exceeding the ability to monetise customers, that business model failure comes when CAC exceeds LTV, that LTV should be about 3x CAC for a viable recurring revenue model, and that CAC should be recovered in under 12 months.

Startup Killer: the Cost of Customer Acquisition. David Skok, forEntrepreneurs. 22 December 2009.
www.forentrepreneurs.com/startup-killer/

E246 Grade C single source

Tomasz Tunguz's Magic Numbers (October 2013) describes sales efficiency as incremental revenue returned by sales and marketing investment (payback being its inverse), says most SaaS companies operate around the 0.8 mark on about 20 public SaaS companies, and that figures above one suggest investing more in sales and marketing while figures below one call for revisiting techniques.

Magic Numbers. Tomasz Tunguz. 10 October 2013.
tomtunguz.com/magic-numbers/

E247 Grade B in conflict

The Startup Genome Report Extra on Premature Scaling (2011, v1.2 edited March 2012), on more than 3,200 high growth technology startups, states that 70% scaled prematurely along some dimension, that 74% of high growth internet startups fail due to premature scaling, that startups which scale properly grow about 20 times faster, that 93% of premature scalers never break $100k revenue per month, that premature scalers' teams are 3 times bigger at the same stage, and that inconsistent startups are 2.3 times more likely to spend over one standard deviation above average on customer acquisition.

Startup Genome Report Extra on Premature Scaling. Startup Genome (Max Marmer and others). 2011; "v 1.2 (edited March 2012)".
startupgenome.com/report/why-startups-fail-premature-scaling/why-startups-f...

E248 **Grade C** single source

Jason Lemkin's The 48 Types of VP Sales (a 2013 post republished 25 February 2021) states the number one mistake is hiring a VP of Sales for the wrong stage, that "95% of VP Sales on the market can't do this phase" (making sales repeatable after initial traction), that candidates from very large SaaS companies at early stage "will all almost certainly fail", and that someone who has never worked below $25m ARR is unlikely to fit a company at $5m ARR; it contains no "two reps hitting quota" rule.

The 48 Types of VP Sales. Make Deadly Sure You Hire the Right One. Jason Lemkin, SaaStr. 25 February 2021 (comments date to 2013).

www.saastr.com/the-48-types-of-vp-sales-make-deadly-sure-you-hire-the-right...

E249 **Grade C** corroborated

High Alpha's 2025 report states that beyond roughly $20 million in ARR expansion becomes the dominant growth engine, that companies over $50 million ARR generate roughly 60% of new ARR from existing customers, and ranks events the most effective GTM channel in every ARR band.

2025 SaaS Benchmarks Report (report page). High Alpha. no date shown.

www.highalpha.com/saas-benchmarks

E250 **Grade B** in conflict

Benchmarkit 2024 reports product led growth companies with a Rule of 40 score of 34 against 20 for sales led growth companies on CY-23 data, Rule of 40 being growth rate plus profitability, usually free cash flow margin.

2024 B2B SaaS Performance Metrics Benchmarks Report. Benchmarkit, hosted by Pavilion. no date shown; CY-23 data.

joinpavilion.com/hubfs/2024%20B2B%20SaaS%20Performance%20Metrics%20Benchmar...

E251 **Grade B** in conflict

B2B buyers spend 17% of their total buying time meeting with potential suppliers (all suppliers combined).

The B2B Buying Journey (sales insights page). Gartner. no date shown.

www.gartner.com/en/sales/insights/b2b-buying-journey

E252 **Grade B** in conflict

The typical buying group for a complex B2B solution involves six to 10 decision makers, each armed with four or five independently gathered pieces of information.

The B2B Buying Journey. Gartner. no date shown.

www.gartner.com/en/sales/insights/b2b-buying-journey

E253 **Grade B** single source

77% of B2B buyers state that their latest purchase was very complex or difficult.

The B2B Buying Journey (chart caption). Gartner. no date shown.

www.gartner.com/en/sales/insights/b2b-buying-journey

E254 **Grade B** single source

Any single sales rep has roughly 5% of a customer's time in the buying journey; customers who found supplier information helpful were 2.8 times more likely to experience a high degree of purchase ease.

The B2B Buying Journey. Gartner. no date shown.

www.gartner.com/en/sales/insights/b2b-buying-journey

E255 **Grade B** single source

80% of sellers whom customers perceived as using the sense-making approach closed high-quality, low-regret deals, in a survey of more than 1,000 B2B customers; Gartner's 2019 position was that customers' confidence, not seller performance, is the biggest sales challenge.

Gartner Reveals New B2B Sales Approach to Win in Today's Information Age (press release). Gartner (Brent Adamson). 29 July 2019.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2019-07-29-gartner-reveals-new-b...

E256 **Grade C** corroborated

Under the same research, 50% of sellers using the telling approach and 30% using the giving approach closed high-quality, low-regret deals, against 80% for sense making.

Sense Makers Are Sales Closers. CRM magazine (Leonard Klie). 1 October 2019.

www.destinationcrm.com/Articles/CRM-Insights/Insight/Sense-Makers-Are-Sales...

E257 **Grade B** single source

89% of B2B customers found the information in their purchase process high quality, and customers facing contradictory high-quality information were 153% more likely to settle for a smaller, less disruptive course of action than planned.

Gartner Reveals New B2B Sales Approach to Win in Today's Information Age. Gartner. 29 July 2019.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2019-07-29-gartner-reveals-new-b...

E258 **Grade B** in conflict

Customers with superior confidence in their buying decisions are 157% more likely to complete a high-quality, low-regret deal; 44% found supplier information trustworthy but contradictory, and such customers are 66% less likely to commit; customers reporting overwhelming information are 54% less likely to purchase without regret.

A Step Beyond the Challenger Sale (insights page). Gartner. no date shown.

gcom.pdo.aws.gartner.com/en/sales-service/insights/challenger-sale

E259 Grade B in conflict

Gartner forecast in September 2020 that by 2025, 80% of B2B sales interactions between suppliers and buyers would occur in digital channels; at that time 33% of all buyers desired a seller-free sales experience, rising to 44% of millennials.

Gartner Says 80% of B2B Sales Interactions Between Suppliers and Buyers Will Occur in Digital Channels by 2025. Gartner (Cristina Gomez). 15 September 2020.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2020-09-15-gartner-says-80--of-b...

E260 Grade B single source

In a survey of 725 B2B buyers, 83% said they prefer ordering or paying through digital commerce, 72% completed a recent significant purchase by ordering and paying online, and digital commerce buyers were described as significantly more likely to experience purchase regret than traditional buyers (no percentage given).

Gartner Says Marketing Leaders Must Reconceive Their Digital Experience and Sales Enablement to Help B2B Buyers. Gartner (Sharon Cantor Ceurvorst). 21 June 2022.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2022-06-21-gartner-says-marketin...

E261 Grade B in conflict

In the same fieldwork, only 24% of B2B buyers in primarily sales rep-led purchases completed a high-quality deal, against 65% of buyers who self-navigated; buyers on a self-reflective learning path were 147% more likely to buy more than originally planned.

Gartner Says Marketing Leaders Must Reconceive Their Digital Experience and Sales Enablement to Help B2B Buyers. Gartner. 21 June 2022.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2022-06-21-gartner-says-marketin...

E262 Grade B single source

56% of organisations reported a high degree of purchase regret over their largest technology purchase in the last two years; high-regret organisations took on average 7 to 10 months longer to complete the purchase; 67% of people involved in technology buying are not in IT.

Gartner Finds That Majority of Technology Purchases Come With High Degree of Regret. Gartner (Hank Barnes). 12 July 2022.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2022-07-12-gartner-finds-that-ma...

E263 Grade B single source

60% of technology buyers involved in decisions to renew or expand as-a-service agreements regret nearly every purchase, a 6% increase from 2020; 95% would have preferred a fully digital or online experience for expansion purchases.

Gartner Survey Reveals 60% of Technology Buyers Involved in Renewal Decisions Regret Nearly Every Purchase They Make. Gartner (Hank Barnes). 14 June 2023.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2023-06-14-gartner-survey-reveal...

E264 Grade B in conflict

A Gartner document states 75% of B2B buyers prefer a rep-free sales experience, 40% of B2B purchases are completed without a sales rep, and 43% of buyers report high purchase regret when using self-service digital commerce against 26% for traditional rep-led purchases.

Increase Buyer Enablement Through a Digital Content Strategy (document abstract). Gartner Sales Research Team. 19 February 2024.

www.gartner.com/en/documents/5205463

E265 Grade B in conflict

In a Gartner survey of 632 B2B buyers, 61% expressed a preference for a representative-free buying experience, 73% actively avoid suppliers who engage in irrelevant outreach, and 69% reported discrepancies between sales organisations' websites and what sellers provide; buyers favour online self-service for general information but prefer seller input for tasks needing contextual judgement; the release gives 2.3 activities completed with supplier reps alone and 1.8 via digital self-service tools (a "3.0 activities" total in the reproduction does not reconcile with these; check against the original).

Gartner survey reveals B2B buyers' preference for rep-free experience (reporting Gartner's release of 25 June 2025). Mi3 (Australian marketing trade title), quoting Gartner (Robert Blaisdell, Alice Walmesley). shown as 04/07/2025, ambiguous between 4 July and 7 April 2025; the Gartner release is dated 25 June 2025.

www.mi-3.com.au/04-07-2025/gartner-survey-reveals-b2b-buyers-preference-rep...

E266 Grade B in conflict

In a Gartner survey of 646 B2B buyers, 67% stated they prefer a rep-free experience, 45% used AI during a recent purchase, and buyers with high decision confidence were twice as likely to report a high-quality deal.

Gartner Sales Survey Finds 67% of B2B Buyers Prefer a Rep-Free Experience. Gartner (Alyssa Cruz). 9 March 2026.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2026-03-09-gartner-sales-survey-...

E267 Grade B in conflict

69% of B2B buyers prefer to validate AI-generated insights with sales reps; buyers used an average of seven information sources; 45% used GenAI, mainly for vendor and product information; 51% say they are more likely to encounter misleading information from GenAI and 49% say the same of a sales rep; 70% prefer a completely digital, self-service buying experience.

Gartner Survey Finds 69% of B2B Buyers Turn to Sales Reps to Validate AI-Generated Insights (press release via Business Wire). Gartner (Robert Blaisdell). 20 May 2026 (inferred from release URL; conference 19 to 20 May 2026).

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260520585188/en/Gartner-Survey-Finds-69-of...

E268 Grade B in conflict

Compared with buyers who relied on GenAI, buyers who worked with a sales rep were 28 percentage points more likely to say the rep helped them advance to the next step, 32 points more likely to say the rep made them feel confident in the decision, 39 points more likely to say the rep understood their needs, and 21 points more likely to say the rep helped quantify benefits; buying groups with low dysfunction were 13 times more likely to report high-quality deals, and buyers who spent more time with supplier reps reported the lowest dysfunction.

Gartner Survey Finds Sales Organizations That Provide AI-Enabled Next Best Actions Are 2.6x More Likely to Achieve Commercial Growth (press release via Business Wire). Gartner (Greg Hessong). 20 May 2026 (inferred from release URL).

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260520536156/en/

E269 Grade B in conflict

Traditional personalisation methods increase customer regret by 3.2 times, and 53% of customers experienced negative emotions during personalised marketing, in a survey of 1,464 B2B buyers and consumers.

Gartner Survey Reveals Personalization Can Triple the Likelihood of Customer Regret at Key Journey Points (reproduced). GuruFocus automated news, reproducing Gartner. shown as 06/03/2025, ambiguous between 6 March and 3 June 2025.

www.gurufocus.com/news/2905142/gartner-survey-reveals-personalization-can-t...

E270 Grade B in conflict

Millennials and Generation Z (born after 1980) made up 64% of business buyers globally in Forrester's Buyers' Journey Survey (more than 20,000 respondents, 14 countries); 90% of younger buyers cited dissatisfaction with the vendor in at least one area, against 71% of older buyers.

Younger Business Buyers Are Having Their Say (blog). Forrester (Amy Hayes, with Barbara Winters). 14 February 2023 (page shows a 2024 modification).

www.forrester.com/blogs/younger-business-buyers-are-having-their-say

E271 Grade B in conflict

Forrester's State of Business Buying 2024 found 13 people on average involved in the buying decision, 81% of buyers dissatisfied with the provider they choose, 91% of purchases stalling at some point, Gen Z and Millennial buyers dissatisfied 91% of the time, a preferred near-even split between personal and self-guided interactions, and GenAI (a new response option that year) immediately at the top of self-guided interactions.

The State Of Business Buying: Companies Still Struggle To Meet Buyer Expectations (blog). Forrester (Barbara Winters). 4 December 2024 (modified 20 May 2025).

www.forrester.com/blogs/state-of-business-buying-2024/

E272 Grade B in conflict

Forrester's release on the same report states 86% of B2B purchases stall during the buying process, 89% of purchases involve two or more departments, and almost 95% of buyers anticipate using genAI to support their decision and purchase process in the next 12 months.

Forrester: To Master B2B Buying Mayhem, Providers Must Prioritize Buyers' Needs. Forrester (Amy Hayes). 4 December 2024.

www.forrester.com/press-newsroom/forrester-the-state-of-business-buying-2024

E273 Grade B in conflict

Forrester's Buyers' Journey Survey 2024 showed over two-thirds of buyers in transactions valued over 1 million dollars are Millennial or Gen Z, over 90% of buyers who used genAI for purchases of 1 million dollars or more reported positive results, and almost one-third of younger buyers bring in 10 or more external individuals.

Predictions 2025: Younger Business Buyers And GenAI Will Upend The Status Quo (blog). Forrester (Barry Vasudevan). 24 October 2024.

www.forrester.com/blogs/predictions-2025-business-buyers

E274 Grade E signal only

A vendor recap of Forrester's B2B Summit 2025 attributes to Forrester's 2024 Buyers Journey Survey of 11,352 global purchase influencers that Millennials and Gen Z make up two-thirds of buyers, 90% of buyers rely on generative AI to research, evaluate and shortlist vendors, 13 stakeholders are involved per decision, and 81% are unhappy with at least one part of their experience with go-to vendors.

Mastering the Buying Mayhem: Insights from the Forrester B2B Summit 2025. CarltonOne (vendor blog). 7 April 2025.

www.carltonone.com/insights/mastering-the-buying-mayhem-insights-from-the-f...

E275 Grade B single source

Forrester's State of Business Buying 2026, based on the Buyers' Journey Survey 2025, is summarised as finding buyers rely heavily on AI but consult external sources to validate its output, buying groups are growing larger and more collaborative, procurement is gaining influence, and trials are emerging as essential for reducing risk; no figures are visible outside the paywall.

The State Of Business Buying, 2026 (report page). Forrester. no date shown.

www.forrester.com/report/the-state-of-business-buying-2026/RES186878

E276 Grade B in conflict

McKinsey's 2024 B2B Pulse found the rule of thirds: at any stage of the buying journey one-third of customers hope for in-person interactions, one-third want remote communications and one-third prefer digital self-serve; buyers use an average of ten interaction channels, up from five in 2016; 69% of "seekers" (36% of respondents) would transact 500,000 dollars or more remotely, against 37% of innovators and 19% of adapters; more than half say they are likely to turn elsewhere if channels are not smooth, and 65% of seekers would switch suppliers over hiccups.

Five fundamental truths: How B2B winners keep growing. McKinsey & Company (Candace Lun Plotkin, Jennifer Stanley, Liz Harrison, Victor Garcia de la Torre). 12 September 2024.

www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/five-...

E277 Grade C in conflict

Reporting the same survey, Digital Commerce 360 states 39% of B2B buyers (up from 28% two years earlier) are willing to spend over 500,000 dollars per order through remote or self-service channels, 20% (from 15%) over 1 million dollars, and 73% (from 59%) over 50,000 dollars; in-person sales generated 17% of revenue, down from 22%.

More B2B buyers are willing to spend big bucks per online order. Digital Commerce 360 (Paul Demery). 12 September 2024.

www.digitalcommerce360.com/2024/09/12/more-b2b-buyers-are-willing-to-spend-...

E278 Grade B in conflict

McKinsey's 2022 B2B Pulse found customers still want an evenly divided mix of traditional, remote and self-service channels, more than two-thirds of buyers chose remote human interaction or digital self-service at ordering and reordering, about 70% of decision makers are prepared to spend up to 500,000 dollars on a single e-commerce transaction, and buyers used ten channels in 2022 against five in 2016.

The multiplier effect: How B2B winners grow (PDF). McKinsey & Company (Julia McClatchy, Candace Lun Plotkin, Karolina Sauer-Sidor, Jennifer Stanley, Kevin Wei Wang). April 2023.

www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/business%20functions/marketing%20and%20sa...

E279 Grade D in conflict

6sense's 2024 report states B2B buyers are nearly 70% through their purchasing process before engaging sellers, 81% already have a preferred vendor at first contact (not a win rate), 85% have largely established requirements before reaching out, the average buying cycle lasts 11.3 months, and the average buying group is 11 people.

6sense Launches 2024 Buyer Experience Report Unveiling Global B2B Buyer Trends (press release). 6sense (vendor of intent data and ABM software). 9 October 2024 (inferred from release URL).

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20241009142556/en/6sense-Launches-2024-Buyer...

E280 Grade D in conflict

6sense's 2025 report states the balance between independent research and seller engagement shifted from a 70/30 split to 60/40, 94% of buying groups ranked preferred vendors before first contact, the preferred vendor still wins 80% of deals (elsewhere in the release, 77%), average cycles shortened from about 11 months in 2024 to 10 months in 2025, 89% of purchases included AI features, and 58% of buyers engaged sellers earlier to clarify missing AI details.

The Timeline for Influencing B2B Buyers Is Shrinking: Insights From 6sense's 2025 Buyer Experience Report (press release). 6sense. 12 November 2025 (inferred from release URL).

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20251112018032/en

E281 Grade C in conflict

A practitioner summary of the 2025 6sense study reports first seller contact at 61% of the way through the process (down from 69%), buyers contacting their top-ranked vendor first about 80% of the time and buying from it 77% of the time, a global average cycle of 10.1 months in 2025 against 11.3 in 2024, five vendors evaluated on average, and nearly 62% engaging earlier because of economic uncertainty.

Research Round-Up: 6sense Study Provides Critical Insights on B2B Buyer Behavior. CustomerThink (David Dodd). no exact date shown (refers to the study as published "earlier this month", November 2025).

customerthink.com/research-round-up-6sense-study-provides-critical-insights...

E282 Grade D vendor claim

TrustRadius's 2025 report "Bridging the Trust Gap: B2B Tech Buying in the Age of AI" (over 2,500 technology buyers and vendors) found 72% of buyers encountered AI Overviews during research, 90% clicked through to cited sources, 77% consulted user reviews, and 54% spoke directly with existing users against the 38% vendors estimated.

AI disrupts B2B buying as trust drives tech purchase decisions. Digital Commerce 360 (Mark Brohan), reporting TrustRadius. 16 April 2025.

www.digitalcommerce360.com/2025/04/16/ai-disrupts-b2b-buying-trust-drives-t...

E283 Grade D in conflict

TrustRadius's 2026 B2B Buying Disconnect report found 63% of buyers used AI in their buying process, 94% of AI users still fact-checked it, the share trusting AI "sometimes" moved from 58% to 60%, and the most influential resources were a free trial or account (77%), product demos (73%), own prior experience (72%), user reviews (53%) and asking a peer (49%); vendors' rating of the sales representative as an influential tactic dropped from 57% to 53%.

2026 B2B Buying Disconnect report (served under the "beyond the hype" address). TrustRadius, an HG Insights company. no date shown (data collected January 2026).

solutions.trustradius.com/buyer-blog/beyond-the-hype

E284 Grade D in conflict

MarketScale reports from the same report that the share always or very often fact-checking AI rose from 58% to 72% in a year, 60% of buyers trust AI outputs only sometimes (20% very often, 2% always), the share trusting online resources less rose from 39% to 47%, vendor marketing collateral ranked last among resources consulted, 74% consulted customer reviews and 53% spoke to a peer.

94% of B2B buyers fact-check AI research outputs, and vendors are underestimating how far trust has fallen. MarketScale Newsroom, reporting TrustRadius (report released 15 July 2026). 25 July 2026.

www.marketscale.com/industries/business-services/94-of-b2b-buyers-fact-chec...

E285 Grade D in conflict

G2's 2025 Buyer Behavior Report found 79% say AI search has changed how they research, 29% start research via LLMs more often than Google, generative AI chatbots (17%) and review sites (15%) are the top two shortlist sources, nearly two in three buyers prefer engaging vendor salespeople only in later stages (up 17 percentage points from 2024), and committees of 3 to 4 people are becoming more common than 5 to 8.

G2 Report: AI Now Means "Always Included," Disrupting All Stages of the B2B Software Buying Journey (press release). G2 (software review marketplace). 14 May 2025 (inferred from release URL).

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20250514382531/en/G2-Report-AI-Now-Means-AIw...

E286 Grade D vendor claim

G2's April 2026 report "The Answer Economy" states 51% of B2B software buyers now start research with an AI chatbot more often than Google, 71% rely on AI chatbots for software research, and four in five say chatbots sped up their purchase decision.

G2 press release via PR Newswire, republished on TMCnet. G2. 15 April 2026.

www.tmcnet.com/usubmit/2026/04/15/10365397.htm

E287 Grade D vendor claim

The 2024 Edelman-LinkedIn B2B Thought Leadership Impact Report found 73% of B2B buyers consider thought leadership a more trustworthy basis for judging a company's competencies than traditional marketing, 75% say a piece of content led them to research an offering they were not considering (23% of whom began buying from the publisher), about 70% of C-suite leaders say content made them question a current supplier, and 25% of those ended or significantly reduced a supplier relationship.

Thought Leadership Gets B2B Buyers Back Into the Game. Edelman (with LinkedIn). 28 February 2024.

www.edelman.com/insights/thought-leadership-gets-b2b-buyers-back-into-game

E288 Grade D vendor claim

LinkedIn research by Censuswide (July 2025, 14 markets, n not stated) reported 77% of 18 to 24 year olds say no amount of AI can replace the insights and intuition from trusted colleagues, and 77% of B2B marketing leaders say buyers still rely on their networks to vet brands.

LinkedIn research confirms the value of trusted voices as AI floods the internet. Mediaweek (Australia), reporting LinkedIn. 15 September 2025.

mediaweek.com.au/linkedin-research-confirms-the-value-of-trusted-voices-as-...

E289 Grade C in conflict

Digital Commerce 360 attributes to a LinkedIn 2025 B2B Buyer Report that millennials make up 73% of all B2B buyers and 44% of final decision-makers, and to Salesforce's State of the Connected Customer (year not stated) that 68% of millennial B2B buyers prefer self-service research tools over speaking to a sales rep.

Why millennials continue to reshape B2B ecommerce. Digital Commerce 360 (Mark Brohan). 28 April 2025.

www.digitalcommerce360.com/2025/04/28/why-millennials-continue-to-reshape-b...

E290 Grade B corroborated

In a Gartner survey of US consumers (not B2B), willingness to let AI make purchase decisions topped out at 11% in lower-stakes categories, 54% of those who used AI while shopping had to double-check all information from GenAI tools, and 62% said GenAI information ended up a waste of their time.

Gartner Survey Finds Consumers Want AI Shopping Help, But Not AI Purchase Decisions (press release via Business Wire). Gartner (Kate Muhl). 27 May 2026 (inferred from release URL).

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260527653273/en/

E291 **Grade A** single source

Palmatier, Dant, Grewal and Evans' meta-analysis found the premise that relationship marketing positively affects performance well supported; relationship investment has a large direct effect on seller objective performance; objective performance is influenced most by relationship quality and least by commitment; relationship marketing is more effective in business markets and when relationships are built with an individual person rather than a selling firm.

Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Relationship Marketing: A Meta-Analysis. Journal of Marketing, vol. 70, no. 4, pp. 136 to 153 (Robert W. Palmatier, Rajiv P. Dant, Dhruv Grewal, Kenneth R. Evans). October 2006.

journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1509/jmkg.70.4.136

E292 **Grade A** single source

Swan, Bowers and Richardson's integrative review and meta-analysis concluded that customer trust in the salesperson has a moderate but beneficial influence on positive customer attitudes, intentions and behaviour.

Customer Trust in the Salesperson: An Integrative Review and Meta-Analysis of the Empirical Literature. Journal of Business Research, vol. 44, no. 2, pp. 93 to 107 (John E. Swan, Michael R. Bowers, Lynne D. Richardson); DOI 10.1016/S0148-2963(97)00244-0. February 1999 (online 7 December 1998).

scispace.com/papers/customer-trust-in-the-salesperson-4jndxrh8rh

E293 **Grade A** single source

In a field experiment with more than 6,200 customers randomised to highly structured outbound sales calls from chatbots or human workers, undisclosed chatbots were as effective as proficient workers and four times more effective than inexperienced workers at generating purchases, but disclosing the chatbot's identity before the conversation reduced purchase rates by more than 79.7%, because customers perceived the disclosed bot as less knowledgeable and less empathetic.

Frontiers: Machines vs. Humans: The Impact of Artificial Intelligence Chatbot Disclosure on Customer Purchases. Marketing Science, vol. 38, no. 6, pp. 937 to 947 (Xueming Luo, Siliang Tong, Zheng Fang, Zhe Qu); DOI 10.1287/mksc.2019.1192. 2019.

pubsonline.informs.org/doi/10.1287/mksc.2019.1192

E294 **Grade A** corroborated

Two experiments found chatbot disclosure has a negative indirect effect on customer retention through reduced trust for services of high criticality, while disclosure does not hurt retention, and can help, when the chatbot fails to resolve the issue.

Trust me, I'm a bot: repercussions of chatbot disclosure in different service frontline settings. Journal of Service Management, vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 221 to 245 (Nika Mozafari, Welf H. Weiger, Maik Hammerschmidt); DOI 10.1108/JOSM-10-2020-0380. 28 February 2022 (online 17 June 2021).

www.emerald.com/josm/article-abstract/33/2/221/227979/Trust-me-I-m-a-bot-re...

E295 **Grade A** corroborated

Experimental surveys with more than 1,000 US adults across eight categories found that describing a product as using artificial intelligence lowered purchase intention by lowering emotional trust, with a stronger effect for high-risk products and services such as expensive electronics, medical devices and financial services.

Using the term "artificial intelligence" in product descriptions reduces purchase intentions (university press release). Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management (Mesut Cicek, Dogan Gursoy, Lu Lu), DOI 10.1080/19368623.2024.2368040; release via EurekAlert (Washington State University). article 19 June 2024; release 30 July 2024.

www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/1052886

E296 **Grade A** single source

A conceptual Business Horizons framework assigns AI to data-heavy tasks across a seven-stage B2B sales funnel and reserves rapport and trust building, reading emotional cues, persuasion and personal relationship maintenance for humans; it presents no empirical data.

Collaborative intelligence: How human and artificial intelligence create value along the B2B sales funnel. Business Horizons, vol. 63, no. 3, pp. 403 to 414 (Jeannette Paschen, Matthew Wilson, Joao J. Ferreira); DOI 10.1016/j.bushor.2020.01.003. May to June 2020.

www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0007681320300033

E297 **Grade A** single source

A 2026 mixed-method study of industrial buyers of AI products found that perceived risk, especially of technological failure, discourages buyers from co-creating with suppliers during the sales process, while positive prior attitudes, perceived value and willingness to pay predict intention to co-create; the record does not address the salesperson's role directly.

Co-creation in B2B AI sales: buyers' perspectives from a mixed-method study. Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, 2026; DOI 10.1108/JBIM-04-2025-0303 (authors not listed on the repository page). 2026.

zaguan.unizar.es/record/169992?ln=en

E298 **Grade C** single source

Kellogg argues that once every level of a sales organisation is pressured to show 3x pipeline coverage, the ratio is reached everywhere and loses predictive value.

The Self-Fulfilling 3x Pipeline Coverage Prophecy. Dave Kellogg, Kellblog. 19 April 2013.

www.kellblog.com/the-self-fulfilling-3x-pipeline-coverage-prophecy/

E299 **Grade C** in conflict

Kellogg states that coverage becomes self-fulfilling if reps are pushed to hit the number, and proposes "to-go" coverage of about 3.0x of what remains to sell, with pipeline scrubs in weeks 2, 5 and 8 of the quarter.

Using To-Go Coverage to Better Understand Pipeline and Improve Forecasting. Dave Kellogg, Kellblog. 29 April 2021.

www.kellblog.com/using-to-go-coverage-to-better-understand-pipeline-and-imp...

E300 **Grade C** single source

Kellogg argues quarterly pipeline coverage is close to meaningless in velocity SaaS with 30-day cycles, because most pipeline is created inside the quarter; his illustration gives 1.0x quarterly coverage at quarter start against a 3x norm.

What Do "Pipeline Coverage" and "Forecast" Mean When Your Sales Cycle is 30 Days?. Dave Kellogg, Kellblog. 26 July 2023.

www.kellblog.com/what-do-pipeline-coverage-and-forecast-mean-when-your-sale...

E301 **Grade C** in conflict

Kellogg cites an unnamed SaaS benchmark report in which win rates fell from 23% to 19% over two years and implied required coverage rose from 4.3x to 5.3x, and argues target coverage is not the inverse of win rate because win rates exclude slipped deals and no-decisions; his rule of thumb is a third won, a third lost, a third slipped.

Target Pipeline Coverage is Not the Inverse of Win Rate. Dave Kellogg, Kellblog. 9 June 2024.

www.kellblog.com/target-pipeline-coverage-is-not-the-inverse-of-win-rate/

E302 **Grade C** single source

In Kellogg's worked case, marketing hit 105% of its pipeline generation goal while sales new-logo ARR fell from 109% to 82% of plan over six quarters and starting coverage fell from 3.1x to 2.4x; he calls pipegen a self-referential metric.

Why Great Marketers Look at Pipeline Coverage, Not Just Pipeline Generation. Dave Kellogg, Kellblog. 17 September 2024.

www.kellblog.com/why-great-marketers-look-at-pipeline-coverage-not-just-pip...

E303 **Grade C** in conflict

Kellogg repeats the point with Howard Marks' "you can't eat IRR": pipegen ran at 105% to 109% of plan all year while starting coverage ran 2.5x to 2.8x against a common CRO target of 3.0x; sales typically generates 20% to 40% of pipeline including SDR outbound.

You Can't Eat Pipegen. Dave Kellogg, Kellblog. 16 February 2025.

www.kellblog.com/you-cant-eat-pipegen/

E304 **Grade C** in conflict

Kellogg describes a SaaS "pipeline crisis" rather than a conversion crisis, citing Cloud Ratings for stated coverage of 3.6x against a 4.1x target and a Kyle Poyar LinkedIn post for median CAC payback of 57 months in 2025; the post does not discuss deliverability and says to reallocate money to outbound if it is working.

How To Navigate the Pipeline Crisis. Dave Kellogg, Kellblog. 8 November 2025.

www.kellblog.com/how-to-navigate-the-pipeline-crisis/

E305 **Grade C** single source

Kellogg argues operators and boards should not smooth metrics such as churn because smoothing hides volatility; in his example a rolling churn rate delayed the board discussion by about six months (October 2025 to April 2026) after a sales leader broadened the ICP to hit plan.

Please Don't Smooth the Metrics. Dave Kellogg, Kellblog. 25 July 2026.

www.kellblog.com/please-dont-smooth-the-metrics/

E306 **Grade D** vendor claim

In a SaaStr audience survey, 18% of respondents had sales teams at the 70%+ quota attainment Lemkin treats as high performing, 43% had teams at or above 50%, and 58% had teams at 20% to 40% or lower.

Only 18% of Your Sales Teams Are Really Hitting Plan Right Now. Jason Lemkin, SaaStr. 1 June 2023.

www.saastr.com/only-18-of-your-sales-teams-are-really-hitting-plan-right-now

E307 **Grade D** vendor claim

Lemkin reports from Emergence Capital's "Beyond Benchmarks" survey (560+ venture-backed B2B software companies, April 2025) that 36% cut SDR/BDR headcount over the prior 12 months, 44% held flat and 19% increased, and concludes the role is changing rather than dead.

The Great SDR Downsizing: 36% of B2B Companies Cut Sales Development Teams in 2025. Jason Lemkin, SaaStr. 23 June 2025.

www.saastr.com/the-great-sdr-downsizing-36-of-b2b-companies-cut-sales-devel...

E308 **Grade C** in conflict

Lemkin says that of 20+ B2B SaaS companies he watched deploy AI SDRs over six months, about 90% got no pipeline and no meetings and about 10% booked more qualified meetings than their human SDRs; he gives a 0.02% conversion rate for set-and-forget use.

The AI SDR Reality Check: How To Actually Make It Work. Jason Lemkin, SaaStr. 24 July 2025.

www.saastr.com/the-ai-sdr-reality-check-how-to-actually-make-it-work/

E309 Grade D in conflict

Lemkin says SaaStr has deployed 20+ AI agents and sent 60,000+ AI SDR emails, that one platform sends 3,221 emails a month against 75 to 285 per human SDR, and that the tool is "maybe 20%" of the outcome.

10 Things To. Know Before Rolling Out Your First AI SDR. Jason Lemkin, SaaStr. 28 March 2026.

www.saastr.com/dear-saastr-what-should-i-know-before-rolling-out-our-first-...

E310 Grade C in conflict

Lemkin's answer to using an AI SDR before a working human motion is no; SaaStr's first AI SDR failed for 30 days, and a trained agent should show results in two to three weeks after a four to six week human-proven motion.

Dear SaaStr: Should I Use an AI SDR Before I Have a Working Human SDR Motion?. Jason Lemkin, SaaStr. 23 March 2026 (last modified 9 October 2026).

www.saastr.com/dear-saastr-should-i-use-an-ai-sdr-before-i-have-a-working-h...

E311 Grade D in conflict

Lemkin states SaaStr went from 20+ humans to 3 humans plus 20+ agents, that agents generated over $3.7M of revenue, that 71% of closed-won sponsorship deals came from AI-qualified leads against a historic 29% to 34%, and that response rates of roughly 5% to 12% were similar for humans and AI.

The #1 Most Important Thing to Understand About AI SDRs. Jason Lemkin, SaaStr. 1 August 2026.

www.saastr.com/the-1-most-important-thing-to-understand-about-ai-sdrs/

E312 Grade D vendor claim

Winning by Design presents Revenue Architecture as an operating system that "connects six scientific models into one system" and claims 25K+ professionals and 5,068 executives trained plus customer results of a 50% shorter sales cycle, 298% more wins, 3X ARR growth and 8X outbound pipeline share, without mapping results to named customers.

The GTM Operating System | Revenue Architecture from Winning by Design. Winning by Design (Jacco van der Kooij credited as author of Revenue Architecture). no date shown; modified 30 October 2026.

winningbydesign.com/revenue-architecture/

E313 Grade D vendor claim

The Bowtie page says traditional funnels focus on converting prospects into customers while the Bowtie extends to onboarding, adoption, retention and expansion; it does not attribute the model to van der Kooij by name and says the Bowtie is "designed to replace the funnel".

The Modern Sales Funnel | The Bowtie from Winning by Design. Winning by Design. no date shown; modified 30 October 2026.

winningbydesign.com/bowtie/

E314 Grade C single source

Adamson (then at Gartner) said in 2019 the biggest challenge in B2B sales is customers' lack of confidence in their own decisions, that 89% of customers reported encountering high-quality information, and that reps using a "Sense Making" approach closed a high-quality, low-regret deal 80% of the time.

Gartner Says the Biggest Challenge in B2B Sales Today Is a Lack of Customer Confidence. Gartner newsroom, quoting Brent Adamson. 17 September 2019.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2019-09-17-gartner-says-the-bigg...

E315 Grade C single source

Adamson wrote that buyers spend only 17% of the purchase process talking with potential suppliers and that too much information exists for them to make sense of alone, so sellers add value by curating, clarifying and collaborating.

Sensemaking for Sales. Brent Adamson, Harvard Business Review, January to February 2022 issue. 1 January 2022 (online).

hbr.org/2022/01/sensemaking-for-sales

E316 Grade C in conflict

Gartner's State of Sales Operations Survey found 45% of sales leaders and sellers have high confidence in their organisation's forecasting accuracy, 47% believed their data was high quality and 13% rated it poor.

Gartner Says Less Than 50% of Sales Leaders and Sellers Have High Confidence in Forecasting Accuracy. Gartner newsroom, quoting Craig Riley. 12 February 2020.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2020-02-12-gartner-says-less-tha...

E317 Grade B in conflict

Gartner's survey of 645 B2B buyers (August to September 2025) found 69% prefer to validate AI-generated insights with sales reps, 67% prefer a rep-free experience, 70% prefer fully digital self-service, 45% used GenAI, and 51% expect misleading information from GenAI against 49% from reps.

Gartner Survey Finds 69% of B2B Buyers Turn to Sales Reps to Validate AI-Generated Insights. Gartner via Business Wire, quoting Robert Blaisdell. 20 May 2026 (from URL and conference reference).

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260520585188/en/Gartner-Survey-Finds-69-of...

E318 **Grade B** single source

Gartner's survey of 1,503 B2B technology buyers (February to March 2023; Western Europe, North America, Asia/Pacific; organisations with at least $50 million revenue) found 60% of buyers involved in renewal or expansion decisions regret nearly every purchase, up 6% from 2020, and 95% would have preferred a fully digital expansion purchase.

Gartner Survey Reveals 60% of Technology Buyers Involved in Renewal Decisions Regret Nearly Every Purchase They Make. Gartner newsroom, quoting Hank Barnes. 14 June 2023.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2023-06-14-gartner-survey-reveal...

E319 **Grade B** single source

Gartner's survey of 725 B2B buyers (November to December 2021) found 72% completed a significant purchase by ordering and paying online, 83% prefer digital commerce, and only 24% of buyers in rep-led purchases completed a high-quality deal against 65% of self-navigating buyers.

Gartner Says Marketing Leaders Must Reconceive Their Digital Experience and Sales Enablement to Help Virtual Buying Groups Reach Better Outcomes. Gartner newsroom, quoting Sharon Cantor Ceurvorst. 21 June 2022.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2022-06-21-gartner-says-marketin...

E320 **Grade B** single source

Gartner's survey of over 200 senior sales leaders (November to December 2023) found two in three struggle to shift resources to an emerging priority; Dave Egloff said leaders over-rely on individual sellers, and Alice Walmesley is quoted on adaptive organisations.

Gartner Says Sales Organizations That Use an Adaptive Approach Are Three Times More Likely to Grow. Gartner via Business Wire, quoting Dave Egloff and Alice Walmesley. 21 May 2024 (from URL).

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20240521642204/en

E321 **Grade C** single source

ITPro reports a Gartner survey of 1,026 B2B sellers (January to March 2024) finding sellers who partner with AI tools 3.7 times more likely to meet quota, 72% of sellers overwhelmed by the skills required, and overwhelmed sellers 45% less likely to attain quota.

Sellers that partner with AI are 3.7 times more likely to hit quota, Gartner finds. Daniel Todd, ITPro. 18 September 2024.

www.itpro.com/technology/artificial-intelligence/sellers-that-partner-with-...

E322 **Grade C** single source

Gartner (Dan Gottlieb) predicted in October 2023 that "By 2026, B2B sales organizations using embedded GenAI sales technologies will reduce the amount of time spent on prospecting and customer-meeting prep by over 50%", and that RFP time would fall from 27 to about 16 hours by 2026. Forecasts.

GenAI Sales Technologies to Drive Efficiencies in Prospecting and Customer-Meeting Prep for B2B Sales Organizations. Gartner newsroom, quoting Dan Gottlieb. 24 October 2023.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2023-10-24-genai-sales-technolog...

E323 **Grade C** single source

Gartner predicted in December 2021 that "By 2025, 75% of B2B sales organizations will augment traditional sales playbooks with artificial intelligence (AI) guided selling solutions" and in October 2020 that "By 2025, 60% of B2B sales organizations will transition from experience- and intuition-based selling to data-driven selling"; both target years have passed and no opened page reports the outcome.

Gartner Predicts 75% of B2B Sales Organizations Will Augment Traditional Sales Playbooks with AI-Guided Selling Solutions By 2025; Gartner Says 60% of B2B Sales Organizations Will Transition to a Data-Driven Selling Approach By 2025. Gartner newsroom (Steve Rietberg and Elizabeth Beard; Tad Travis). 6 December 2021; 6 October 2020.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/gartner-predicts-75--of-b2b-sale...

E324 **Grade C** corroborated

McPartlin lists seven reasons agentic prospecting hype falls short: buying signals too weak to show intent, always-on agents producing activity not value, outreach not being the real bottleneck, and autonomous outreach repeating earlier sales engagement spam at larger scale; no survey data is cited.

Agentic Prospecting: Seven Reasons The Hype Falls Short. Anthony McPartlin, VP Principal Analyst, Forrester. 13 April 2026.

www.forrester.com/blogs/seven-reasons-to-be-skeptical-of-agentic-prospecting/

E325 **Grade C** single source

McPartlin argues AI is shifting RevOps' identity from system mastery and certainty towards calibrated confidence, accountability and decision governance; no figures.

AI Is Forging A New RevOps Identity. Anthony McPartlin, Forrester. 3 June 2026.

www.forrester.com/blogs/ai-is-forging-a-new-revops-identity/

E326 Grade C single source

Graber argues RevOps emerged to manage complexity and fragmentation in B2B go-to-market and that the environment it was designed for has been upended by AI; the post does not call RevOps a cost centre or a failure.

The World That Spawned RevOps Is Unrecognizable. Ross Graber, VP Principal Analyst, Forrester. 10 September 2026.

www.forrester.com/blogs/the-world-that-spawned-revops-is-unrecognizable/

E327 Grade C single source

Cross argues AI can now perform much RevOps work (forecasting, reporting, routing, enrichment, pipeline management) and that replacing RevOps deliverables with AI is a mistake; no statement on headcount or budgets.

AI Won't Save RevOps. It Will Redefine It (the page title joins the clauses with a dash). Laura Cross, VP Principal Analyst, Forrester. 15 October 2026.

www.forrester.com/blogs/ai-wont-save-revops-it-will-redefine-it/

E328 Grade C single source

Writing on Oracle's 2026 layoffs ("eliminated thousands of roles"; no figure, source or Oracle statement given), Cross argues the cuts reflect changed economics rather than AI working, and that operations functions unable to show who owns decision quality risk becoming "a cost center rather than a control point".

What Oracle's Layoffs Really Signal For B2B Marketing, Sales, And Revenue Operations. Laura Cross, Forrester. 1 April 2026.

www.forrester.com/blogs/what-oracles-layoffs-really-signal-for-b2b-marketin...

E329 Grade C single source

Forrester's Predictions 2027 states that by end 2027 "Two-thirds of providers will lose deals because buyers cannot verify claims" and "Five Fortune 500 companies will apologize for AI content that damages customer trust"; a sidebar claims agentic buying will touch 75% of B2B purchases by 2027 without a source.

Predictions 2027: B2B Go-To-Market Teams Must Adapt As AI Shifts Control To Buyers. Karen Tran and Anthony McPartlin, Forrester. 21 October 2026.

www.forrester.com/blogs/predictions-2027-b2b-go-to-market-teams-must-adapt-...

E330 Grade C in conflict

Gartner stated in September 2020 that by 2025, 80% of B2B sales interactions will occur in digital channels, that 33% of all buyers desire a seller-free sales experience (44% of millennials), and that buyers spend only 17% of their time meeting potential suppliers.

Gartner Says 80% of B2B Sales Interactions Between Suppliers and Buyers Will Occur in Digital Channels by 2025. Gartner newsroom, quoting Cristina Gomez. 15 September 2020.

www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2020-09-15-gartner-says-80--of-b...

E331 Grade C single source

Merriam-Webster chose "slop" as its 2025 Word of the Year, defined as "digital content of low quality that is produced usually in quantity by means of artificial intelligence", and quotes a Wall Street Journal warning that "AI Slop is Everywhere".

2025 Word of the Year: Slop. Merriam-Webster. no date shown (copyright 2026).

www.merriam-webster.com/wordplay/word-of-the-year

E332 Grade A in conflict

The CFPB fined Wells Fargo $100 million on 8 September 2016 for secretly opening unauthorised accounts; the bank's own analysis found roughly 1.5 million deposit accounts and roughly 565,000 credit card accounts may not have been authorised; the OCC and the City and County of Los Angeles imposed $35 million and $50 million; refunds were expected to total at least $2.5 million.

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Fines Wells Fargo $100 Million for Widespread Illegal Practice of Secretly Opening Unauthorized Accounts. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. 8 September 2016.

www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/newsroom/consumer-financial-protection-bur...

E333 Grade A corroborated

The OCC assessed a $35 million civil money penalty on 8 September 2016 for unsafe or unsound sales practices, including unauthorised account openings and fund transfers, and for failing to implement an effective enterprise risk management programme; the page does not mention incentive compensation.

OCC Assesses Penalty Against Wells Fargo, Orders Restitution for Unsafe or Unsound Sales Practices (News Release 2016-106). Office of the Comptroller of the Currency. 8 September 2016.

www.occ.gov/news-issuances/news-releases/2016/nr-occ-2016-106.html

E334 Grade A in conflict

The Department of Justice announced on 21 February 2020 that Wells Fargo agreed to pay $3 billion to resolve criminal and civil investigations into sales practices from 2002 to 2016, including a $500 million SEC penalty; employees were pressured to meet "unrealistic sales goals", many practices were internally called "gaming", "millions of accounts or products" were affected, and a three-year deferred prosecution agreement applies.

Wells Fargo Agrees to Pay $3 Billion to Resolve Criminal and Civil Investigations into Sales Practices Involving the Opening of Millions of Accounts without Customer Authorization. US Department of Justice. 21 February 2020.

www.justice.gov/opa/pr/wells-fargo-agrees-pay-3-billion-resolve-criminal-an...

E335 **Grade A** in conflict

Wells Fargo's Form 8-K (event date 7 April 2017) reports the independent directors' report issued on 10 April 2017, a clawback of approximately $28 million from former CEO John Stumpf, and forfeiture by former Community Banking head Carrie Tolstedt of stock options valued at approximately $47 million.

Wells Fargo & Company Form 8-K, Item 8.01. Wells Fargo & Company filing with the SEC. 11 April 2017.

www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/0000072971/000119312517119979/d376276d8k.htm

E336 **Grade D** in conflict

Wells Fargo's 10 April 2017 release says the investigation (a special committee of independent directors assisted by Shearman & Sterling LLP) found root causes in the Community Bank's sales culture and performance management, a decentralised structure with too little oversight, reliance on cross-sell success, and resistance to changing the sales model; total executive compensation actions exceed $180 million, about $69 million from Stumpf and about $67 million from Tolstedt.

Wells Fargo Board Releases Findings of Independent Investigation of Retail Banking Sales Practices and Related Matters. Wells Fargo & Company newsroom. 10 April 2017.

newsroom.wf.com/press-release/community-banking-and-small-business/wells-fa…

E337 **Grade D** in conflict

The Sales Practices Investigation Report names as root cause "the distortion of the Community Bank's sales culture and performance management system"; records goals called "50/50 plans" because only about half the regions were expected to meet them; defines "sales gaming cases" (2004 memo) as "the manipulation and/or misrepresentation of sales to receive compensation or meet sales goals"; reports approximately 5,300 employees terminated for sales practice violations from 1 January 2011 to 7 March 2016; records bankers sandbagging December account openings into January and a "Jump into January" programme; and reports gaming cases rising from 63 in 2000 to a projected 680 in 2004, allegations from 288 in Q2 2007 to 1,469 in Q4 2013, and PwC identifying 1,534,280 potential simulated funding accounts.

Sales Practices Investigation Report, Independent Directors of the Board of Wells Fargo & Company (DocumentCloud copy; only the first 100,000 characters, to about page 46, were read). Wells Fargo independent directors with Shearman & Sterling LLP. 10 April 2017.

s3.documentcloud.org/documents/3549312/Board-Report.pdf

E338 **Grade A** single source

The SEC charged Computer Associates, former CEO Sanjay Kumar, former Head of Sales Stephen Richards and former General Counsel Steven Woghin on 22 September 2004 with keeping the books open after quarter end ("extended quarters") to book contracts signed later; over $2.2 billion of revenue was prematurely recognised in fiscal 2000 and 2001 and more than $1.1 billion in earlier quarters; the company agreed to pay $225 million restitution under a deferred prosecution agreement.

SEC Files Securities Fraud Charges Against Computer Associates International, Inc., Former CEO Sanjay Kumar, and Two Other Former Company Executives (Press Release 2004-134). US Securities and Exchange Commission. 22 September 2004.

www.sec.gov/news/press/2004-134.htm

E339 **Grade A** corroborated

Oyer (1998) finds that nonlinear revenue-based pay gives salespeople and executives reason to adjust prices, shift purchase timing and vary effort across the fiscal year, and that manufacturing firms' sales are higher at fiscal year end and lower at the start, beyond calendar seasonality.

Fiscal Year Ends and Nonlinear Incentive Contracts: The Effect on Business Seasonality. Paul Oyer, The Quarterly Journal of Economics, vol. 113, no. 1, pp. 149 to 185. February 1998.

econpapers.repec.org/RePEc:oup:qjecon:v:113:y:1998:i:1:p:149-185. (abstract…

E340 **Grade A** corroborated

Larkin (2014) finds, at a leading enterprise software vendor with accelerating commissions, that salespeople game the timing of deal closure and agree to significantly lower prices in quarters where closing pays them more, and that the mispricing costs the vendor 6% to 8% of revenue.

The Cost of High-Powered Incentives: Employee Gaming in Enterprise Software Sales. Ian Larkin, Journal of Labor Economics, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 199 to 227. 2014.

econpapers.repec.org/RePEc:ucp:jlabec:doi:10.1086/673371 (abstract page)

E341 **Grade A** single source

Chung, Steenburgh and Sudhir (2014) find, from a dynamic structural model of a bonus-based plan, that bonuses raise productivity across all segments, that overachievement commissions keep top performers productive after quota, and that quarterly bonuses keep weaker performers on pace for annual quotas; the abstract gives no effect sizes.

Do Bonuses Enhance Sales Productivity? A Dynamic Structural Analysis of Bonus-Based Compensation Plans. Doug J. Chung, Thomas Steenburgh and K. Sudhir, Marketing Science, vol. 33, issue 2, pp. 165 to 187. 2014.

econpapers.repec.org/RePEc:inm:ormksc:v:33:y:2014:i:2:p:165-187 (abstract p…

E342 **Grade C** single source

Steenburgh and Ahearne (HBR, July to August 2012) argue most sales forces are core performers, that laggards with only annual bonuses see revenues drop 10% (attributed to "studies"), and that capping star commissions is a mistake; the page does not discuss deal timing or gaming.

Motivating Salespeople: What Really Works. Thomas Steenburgh and Michael Ahearne, Harvard Business Review. July to August 2012 issue (online 1 July 2012).

hbr.org/2012/07/motivating-salespeople-what-really-works

E343 **Grade D** in conflict

Google's sender guidelines require, from 1 February 2024, that all senders use SPF or DKIM and keep Postmaster Tools spam rates below 0.3%, and that bulk senders (5,000 or more messages a day) use SPF and DKIM, DMARC and one-click unsubscribe for marketing and subscribed messages; unauthenticated mail may be marked spam or rejected with error 5.7.26.

Email sender guidelines, Gmail Help. Google. no date shown; applies from 1 February 2024.

support.google.com/mail/answer/81126

E344 **Grade D** in conflict

Google's FAQ defines a bulk sender as one that "sends close to 5,000 messages or more to personal Gmail accounts within a 24-hour period", recommends fulfilling unsubscribe requests within 48 hours, says to keep spam rates below 0.1% and never reach 0.3%, says bulk senders above 0.3% became ineligible for mitigation in June 2024, and says Gmail ramped up enforcement in November 2025.

Email sender guidelines FAQ, Gmail Help. Google. no date shown.

support.google.com/a/answer/14229414

E345 **Grade D** in conflict

Yahoo's Sender Hub requires bulk senders, beginning February 2024, to implement SPF and DKIM, publish a DMARC policy of at least p=none with alignment, support one-click unsubscribe, honour unsubscribes within 2 days, and keep the spam rate below 0.3%.

Sender Best Practices, Yahoo Sender Hub. Yahoo. no date shown (copyright 2026).

senders.yahooinc.com/best-practices/

E346 **Grade D** vendor claim

Microsoft's Outlook.com postmaster page states that domains sending over 5,000 emails a day must authenticate with SPF, DKIM and DMARC, that enforcement began on 5 May 2025, that non-compliant mail initially goes to junk, and that rejection will follow; no rejection date or error code is given.

Announcements, Outlook.com Postmaster. Microsoft. no date shown.

substrate.office.com/ip-domain-management-snds/postmaster (redirect from th...

E347 **Grade A** corroborated

The ICO's PECR guidance states that marketing emails or texts may be sent to companies (corporate subscribers, including LLPs and government bodies) without consent, but not to individuals (including sole traders and some partnerships) without specific consent; senders must not disguise their identity and must give a valid contact address; the guidance is under review following the Data (Use and Access) Act, law from 19 June 2025. UK only.

Electronic mail marketing, Guide to PECR. Information Commissioner's Office. no date shown; references 19 June 2025.

ico.org.uk/for-organisations/direct-marketing-and-privacy-and-electronic-co...

E348 **Grade A** single source

The FTC's CAN-SPAM guide states the law makes no exception for business-to-business email, requires accurate headers, honest subject lines, identification as an advertisement, a physical postal address and opt-outs honoured within 10 business days, with penalties of up to $53,088 per separate email (inflation-adjusted January 2024). US only.

CAN-SPAM Act: A Compliance Guide for Business. US Federal Trade Commission. 9 August 2023; last modified 22 July 2025.

www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business

E349 **Grade A** single source

The FCC's page records that the TCPA was enacted in 1991, that 2012 revisions require prior express written consent from consumers before robocalling them, and that the National Do Not Call Registry took effect on 1 October 2003; the page does not say whether business-to-business calls are covered. US only.

Telemarketing and Robocalls. US Federal Communications Commission. no date shown (latest event listed March 2018).

www.fcc.gov/general/telemarketing-and-robocalls

E350 **Grade A** corroborated

Article 13 of Directive 2002/58/EC permits direct marketing by automated calling, fax or email only to subscribers who have given prior consent (paragraph 1), allows emailing existing customers about the sender's own similar products with a free objection route (paragraph 2), and requires member states to ensure the legitimate interests of subscribers other than natural persons are sufficiently protected (paragraph 5), leaving the B2B rule to national law. EU.

Directive 2002/58/EC of 12 July 2002 (Directive on privacy and electronic communications), Official Journal L 201, pages 44 to 45. European Union, EUR-Lex. 31 July 2002.

eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:201:0037:0047:EN:PDF

E351 **Grade D** in conflict

RevOps Co-op's 2025 State of RevOps Survey (with Openprise and MarketingOps.com) reports 99% of respondents struggling with technical data issues, 71% of those rating their data "good enough" or better still saying data quality hurt execution, and 36% naming leadership behaviour as the only obstacle; n and dates are not on the page.

The 2025 State of RevOps Survey. RevOps Co-op with Openprise (sponsor). 2025 (no date shown).

www.revopscoop.com/reports/the-2025-state-of-revops-survey

E352 **Grade D** vendor claim

RevOps Co-op's 2025 RevOps Compensation & Impact Report, with BoostUp.ai, is described as drawing salary and workload data from "1K+ RevOps pros" and covering forecast accuracy benchmarks; no figures appear on the landing page.

2025 RevOps Compensation & Impact Report. RevOps Co-op with BoostUp.ai. 2025 (no date shown).

www.revopscoop.com/reports/revops-compensation-impact-report

E353 **Grade D** vendor claim

Ebsta's 2025 GTM Benchmarks, with Pavilion, states it analysed 655,000 opportunities worth $48 billion, 240,000+ minutes of discovery calls, 349 high-performing companies and 2,000+ CROs; win rate, missed quota and slipped deal results appear only as chart images, so no figures can be recorded.

2025 GTM Benchmarks. Ebsta in association with Pavilion. video uploaded 7 June 2025; page modified 2 September 2025.

benchmarks.ebsta.com/2025-gtm-benchmarks

E354 **Grade C** single source

Edinger (HBR, 2018) states that CIO magazine reported in 2017 that around one-third of CRM projects fail, that this averaged about a dozen analyst reports ranging from 18% to 69%, and that in his own client work the failure rate on "does CRM help the business grow" is closer to 90%.

Why CRM Projects Fail and How to Make Them More Successful. Scott Edinger, Harvard Business Review. 20 December 2018.

hbr.org/2018/12/why-crm-projects-fail-and-how-to-make-them-more-successful

E355 **Grade C** single source

SaaStr reported on 22 July 2025 that Pave's analysis of 14,000 executives in its compensation database gives chief revenue officers an implied median tenure of 1.8 years and an annual turnover rate of 32%, the same figures as for chief marketing officers; Pave's own publication of the analysis was not located.

Just How Long Does the Average CMO and CRO Last? The Data from 14,000 Execs. Jason Lemkin, SaaStr, reporting Pave data. 22 July 2025 (page metadata modified 18 October 2026).

saastr.com/just-how-long-does-the-average-cmo-and-cro-last-the-data-from-14...

E356 **Grade B** single source

Forrester's 2026 AI predictions, published 8 October 2025, state that only 15% of AI decision-makers reported an EBITDA lift from AI in the past 12 months, and predict enterprises will delay 25% of AI spend into 2027.

Predictions 2026: AI Moves From Hype To Hard-Hat Work. Forrester (Maheshwari and others). 8 October 2025.

www.forrester.com/blogs/predictions-2026-ai-moves-from-hype-to-hard-hat-work/

Annex B. Conflict log

68 points where sources disagree, with the decision taken in the paper.

C01

Item Alignment payoff attribution

Source A alignment focus, "up to 19 percent", 2015 | E010 (Forrester blog (SiriusDecisions); author not shown; no date shown (Summit 2015, Nashville); grade B)

Source B clients grow 19% faster, 2019 | E009 (George Colony, CEO, Forrester; 3 January 2019; grade D)

Nature attribution

Decision in the paper The 2015 wording with its "up to" qualifier is the only version used (section 3)

C02

Item Growth multiples

Source A aligned businesses grow 12 to 15 times faster, 34% more profitable | E008 (Demand Gen Report (interview; writer not named); 15 May 2019; grade C)

Source B clients versus non-clients, 12 and 15 times | E011 (Forrester (SiriusDecisions); authors not listed; 10 March 2018; grade D)

Nature attribution

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C03

Item Sales operations time

Source A 73% non-sales; 68% non-client-facing | E005 (Gartner, Inc.; Greg Hessong, Senior Director, Advisory; 12 April 2023; grade B)

Source B 68% stated as non-sales | E028 (Maria Akhter, Outreach; 15 December 2025 (modified 28 September 2026); grade D)

Nature value

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C04

Item Prediction year

Source A 2025 | E001 (Gartner, Inc.; Doug Bushée, senior director analyst, Gartner Sales practice; 17 May 2021 (dateline Stamford, Conn.); grade C)

Source B 2026 | E018 (CNBC; author not shown; 18 January 2023 (from URL); grade C); E028 (Maria Akhter, Outreach; 15 December 2025 (modified 28 September 2026); grade D)

Nature date

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C05

Item CRO reporting line

Source A 46% | E013 (Megan Heuer, Forrester; 13 June 2019; grade D)

Source B 41% (entry 22), 30.4% (entry 23) | E022 (G. David Dodd, B2B Marketing Directions blog; 4 September 2024; grade D); E023 (G. David Dodd, B2B Marketing Directions blog; 4 September 2024; grade C)

Nature value; different years, populations and questions

Decision in the paper Reported as a range of findings; no single figure used (section 3)

C06

Item C-suite RevOps presence 73% versus formal RevOps department 35%

Source A 73% | E024 (Salesloft (commissioned); Wakefield Research (conducted); 22 July 2025; grade D)

Source B 35% | E022 (G. David Dodd, B2B Marketing Directions blog; 4 September 2024; grade D)

Nature definition

Decision in the paper Both reported with definitions; neither used alone as the adoption rate (section 3)

C07

Item Direction of role growth

Source A LinkedIn rankings 2023 and 2024 | E018 (CNBC; author not shown; 18 January 2023 (from URL); grade C)

Source B 19% to 22% posting declines 2024 to 2025 | E020 (James McKay, Pavilion (Topline editorial); 29 July 2025; grade C)

Nature value; direction

Decision in the paper Both reported with dates; direction since 2024 unconfirmed (section 3)

C08

Item Gartner fieldwork window for the 243-CSO survey

Source A November to December 2024 | E037 (Gartner, Inc.; Robert Blaisdell, VP Analyst, Chief of Research; 21 May 2025; grade B)

Source B October to November 2024 | E037 (Gartner, Inc.; Robert Blaisdell, VP Analyst, Chief of Research; 21 May 2025; grade B)

Nature date; internal contradiction between two Gartner releases

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C09

Item Seller selling time

Source A 40% | E043 (Salesforce; 3 February 2026; grade D)

Source B about one-third implied by McKinsey | E017 (McKinsey & Company; Paolo Cencioni, Richelle Deveau, Lia Ketola, Philipp Landauer, Siamak Sarvari; 6 July 2023; grade C)

Nature value

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C10

Item Spend per employee

Source A $4,830 (Zylo) | E048 (Zylo; 16 January 2025; grade D)

Source B $9,000 (Vertice, source unstated) | E051 (Vertice (Aimee Manning); 7 May 2025; grade D)

Nature value

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C11

Item Apps per organisation

Source A 275 (Zylo, flat) | E049 (SaaStr (Jason Lemkin), reporting Zylo's 2025 index; 21 January 2025; grade C)

Source B 132 (Vertice), 106 (BetterCloud, falling) | E051 (Vertice (Aimee Manning); 7 May 2025; grade D); E052 (BetterCloud, via PR Newswire (republished on finanzen.net); 30 April 2025; grade D)

Nature value; different populations and methods

Decision in the paper All three counts reported with sources; none used as the market figure (section 5)

C12

Item Salesforce tool counts

Source A 10 (2022) | E045 (Salesforce; no date shown (survey 24 August to 30 September 2022); grade D)

Source B 8 (2025) | E046 (Salesforce; no date shown on the PDF; announced 3 February 2026; grade D)

Nature definition; different question wording

Decision in the paper Reported separately; no trend drawn (section 5)

C13

Item Salesforce selling time

Source A 28% | E054 (Salesforce; no date shown (survey August to September 2022); companion story 8 December 2022; grade D)

Source B 70% non-selling, 40% | E055 (Salesforce; 25 July 2024; grade D); E056 (Salesforce; 3 February 2026; grade D)

Nature definition; with prospecting reclassified between editions

Decision in the paper Each edition reported with its own definition; no trend drawn (section 5)

C14

Item Gartner overwhelm

Source A 49%/43% (undated, no n) | E071 (Gartner; no date shown; grade C)

Source B 50%/45% (2024, n 1,026) | E072 (Gartner (Michael Katz quoted); 16 September 2024; grade B)

Nature value; probably two surveys

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C15

Item LinkedIn "incomplete data"

Source A 46% (global, as cited by HubSpot) | E060 (HubSpot; no date shown (survey July to August 2022); grade D)

Source B 45% (US and Canada) | E061 (LinkedIn Sales Solutions; no date shown (URL path suggests April 2022); grade D)

Nature value

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C16

Item Clari and Salesloft merged company leadership

Source A Andy Byrne was to lead the merged company | E085 (Clari and Salesloft, via Business Wire; 5 August 2025; grade D)

Source B by September 2026 Steve Cox was CEO | E086 (CRM magazine / DestinationCRM.com (the Editors); 1 September 2026; grade C)

Nature date; the CEO changed between the two dates

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C17

Item Gartner forecast against finding

Source A Gartner's 2023 forecast of a more than 50% cut in prospecting and preparation time by 2026 | E097 (Gartner (Melissa Hilbert quoted); 17 August 2023; grade B)

Source B its 2026 finding of 4.8 hours a week saved | E058 (Gartner (Dan Gottlieb quoted); 19 May 2026; grade B)

Nature definition; units differ

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C18

Item Salesforce Agentforce deal count wording

Source A the 8-K says 29,000 "deals" | E090 (Salesforce, Inc., filed with the SEC; 25 February 2026; grade A)

Source B the CRO says "transactions"; the 50,000 figure is described two ways | E090 (Salesforce, Inc., filed with the SEC; 25 February 2026; grade A)

Nature internal contradiction

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C19

Item Quota misses

Source A 84% (Salesforce) | E047 (Salesforce; 25 July 2024; grade D)

Source B 75% (Ebsta) | E081 (Ebsta; no date shown (URL path July 2024); grade D)

Nature value; from different populations and periods

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C20

Item Ebsta year labels

Source A Ebsta's report page gives 69% (2023) and 78% (2024) of sellers missing quota and win rates -18% (2023) and -10% (2024) | E118 (Ebsta, "Produced in association with Pavilion"; page last modified 12 March 2025; grade D)

Source B the 22 April 2025 press release labels the same pairs as 2024 and 2025 | E114 (Ebsta Ltd; page last modified 12 March 2025; press release 22 April 2025; grade D)

Nature date; internal contradiction

Decision in the paper The report page labels are used; the relabelling is noted (section 6 table)

C21

Item Ebsta H1 2024 update

Source A win rates -7%, cycles +20%, deal values +7% against 2023 | E113 (Ebsta; no date shown (covers H1 2024); grade D)

Source B its "Where We Started 2024" panel shows -18%, +16%, -21% | E113 (Ebsta; no date shown (covers H1 2024); grade D)

Nature internal contradiction

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C22

Item Quota attainment Q4 2022

Source A RepVue reports 47.6% of reps hitting quota in Q4 2022 | E101 (RepVue; no date shown; grade D)

Source B Ebsta reports 29% making quota by Q4 2022 | E111 (Ebsta with Pavilion; no date shown (2023 edition); grade D)

Nature definition; Different definitions

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C23

Item Reps at quota, 2026 cycle against Q3 2025

Source A The Bridge Group reports 48% of reps at quota (2026 cycle) | E107 (Matt Bertuzzi, The Bridge Group; 22 June 2026; grade B)

Source B RepVue reports 43.2% (Q3 2025) | E106 (The Quota (Quota Media LLC); no author shown; 3 November 2025; grade C)

Nature definition; Different definitions and samples; not a disagreement

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C24

Item Cold email reply rates

Source A 0.45% (Belkins 2025) | E141 (Margaret Lee, Belkins; updated 26 June 2026; grade D)

Source B 7% (Belkins 2023), 3.43% (Instantly 2025) and 4.1% (Hunter, 2024 sends) | E142 (Michael Maximoff, Belkins; 22 June 2023; grade D); E143 (Instantly; updated 12 January 2026; grade D); E144 (Hunter.io; no author shown; no date shown (covers 2024 sends); grade D)

Nature definition; Belkins states its own series changed denominator

Decision in the paper Each rate reported with its definition; no average and no trend (section 7)

C25

Item LinkedIn acceptance

Source A 28.5% (Expandi) | E147 (Stefana Zarić, Expandi; 19 May 2026 (modified 4 August 2026); grade D)

Source B 26% (SmartReach); SmartReach's 18% reply figure and its "80% never reply" statement do not reconcile | E148 (Lancelot Dsouza, SmartReach.io; 7 August 2026; grade D)

Nature value; internal contradiction (SmartReach)

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C26

Item Ebsta 2026 benchmarks pipeline total

Source A $78B of pipeline on the Fullcast page | E120 (Fullcast (Ebsta); Audible listing; page last modified 14 October 2026; podcast undated; grade D)

Source B more than $75 billion on the podcast listing | E120 (Fullcast (Ebsta); Audible listing; page last modified 14 October 2026; podcast undated; grade D)

Nature internal contradiction

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C27

Item Xactly confidence against struggle

Source A 95% confidence in planning from forecasts | E126 (Xactly, with Regina Corso Consulting; 10 July 2024; grade D)

Source B 98% struggling to formulate one | E126 (Xactly, with Regina Corso Consulting; 10 July 2024; grade D)

Nature internal contradiction

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C28

Item Forecast confidence

Source A Gartner's 45% high confidence | E123 (Gartner (press release; analyst Craig Riley quoted); 12 February 2020; grade B)

Source B Gong's 24% confident leaders | E124 (Gong (press release); 19 July 2022; grade D)

Nature value; different populations and wording

Decision in the paper Shown as a set; no single figure used (section 6 table)

C29

Item Productivity headline

Source A 14%; novice gain 34% | E156 (Erik Brynjolfsson, Danielle Li, Lindsey R. Raymond; NBER; April 2023, revised November 2023; grade B)

Source B 15%; 36% for the lowest-skill quintile | E157 (Brynjolfsson, Li, Raymond; 6 November 2024 (first draft 23 April 2023); grade A)

Nature value; Different versions and cuts; cite the version used

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C30

Item Dell'Acqua quality effect and correctness penalty

Source A no number on the HBS page; "19% less likely" | E158 (Fabrizio Dell'Acqua, Edward McFowland III, Ethan Mollick, Hila Lifshitz-Assaf, Katherine C. Kellogg, Saran Rajendran, Lisa Krayer, Francois Candelon, Karim R. Lakhani; Harvard Business School; September 2023; grade B)

Source B about 32% in the published version; "19 percentage points" | E159 (Dell'Acqua et al.; INFORMS; online 11 March 2026; grade A)

Nature value; the widely repeated "over 40%" could not be verified from an opened page

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C31

Item MIT NANDA sample and budget share

Source A 52 interviews and 153 leaders (page 2); sales and marketing budget share about 50% | E161 (Aditya Challapally, Chris Pease, Ramesh Raskar, Pradyumna Chari; MIT NANDA; July 2025; grade B)

Source B about 150 interviews and 350 employees (Fortune, corroboration); about 70% in the same report | E161 (Aditya Challapally, Chris Pease, Ramesh Raskar, Pradyumna Chari; MIT NANDA; July 2025; grade B)

Nature internal contradiction

Decision in the paper The report's own description is used; the 95% figure treated as a signal (section 8)

C32

Item Gartner agents-outnumber-sellers release date

Source A URL dated 18 November 2025 | E167 (Gartner (Melissa Hilbert); Gartner URL dated 18 November 2025; reproduction datelined 3 December 2025, posted 17 December 2025 (Conflicts); grade B)

Source B reproduction datelined 3 December 2025, re-issued 28 July 2026 | E167 (Gartner (Melissa Hilbert); Gartner URL dated 18 November 2025; reproduction datelined 3 December 2025, posted 17 December 2025 (Conflicts); grade B)

Nature date

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C33

Item Buyer AI use

Source A 45% | E168 (Gartner (Robert Blaisdell); 20 May 2026 (Las Vegas); grade B)

Source B 63% (entry 35), 94% (entries 16 and 34) | E190 (Demand Gen Report (reporting TrustRadius, an HG Insights company); 30 July 2026; grade D); E171 (John Buten, Forrester; 22 January 2026; 12 February 2026; grade B); E189 (6sense (Business Wire release); 12 November 2025 (date from release ID); grade D)

Nature definition; Different questions, periods and populations; not comparable

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C34

Item Buyer preference

Source A 67% rep-free and 70% digital self-service | E168 (Gartner (Robert Blaisdell); 20 May 2026 (Las Vegas); grade B)

Source B 69% wanting reps to validate AI, all from the same Gartner survey | E168 (Gartner (Robert Blaisdell); 20 May 2026 (Las Vegas); grade B)

Nature internal contradiction; Cite them together

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C35

Item Salesforce SDR agent volumes

Source A 43,000 leads and $1.7 million pipeline (September 2025) | E172 (Joe Inzerillo, Salesforce; 18 September 2025; grade D)

Source B 100,000 leads reached, 192,000 leads worked and $60 million projected (pages modified August 2026) | E173 (Salesforce; pages dated 19 June 2025 and 30 May 2025; metadata modified 20 and 26 August 2026; grade D)

Nature definition; Different agents, periods and definitions

Decision in the paper Both reported with dates; the later figure labelled a projection (section 8 table)

C36

Item Google bulk sender threshold and spam rate

Source A "more than 5,000 messages per day"; spam rate "below 0.10%" | E191 (Neil Kumaran, Google; Google; 3 October 2023; help pages no date shown; grade A)

Source B "close to 5,000 messages or more"; "below 0.30%" on the same guidelines page | E191 (Neil Kumaran, Google; Google; 3 October 2023; help pages no date shown; grade A)

Nature internal contradiction

Decision in the paper Both thresholds quoted; 0.30% treated as the ceiling and 0.10% as the target (section 7)

C37

Item Gong headline versus body

Source A "35% higher revenue success" (entry 23); "29 percent higher sales growth" (entry 24 corroboration) | E178 (Gong (Gong Labs); 15 February 2024; grade D); E179 (Michael Nunez, VentureBeat; 4 December 2025; grade C)

Source B 35% higher win rates (entry 23); revenue growth (entry 24 corroboration) | E178 (Gong (Gong Labs); 15 February 2024; grade D); E179 (Michael Nunez, VentureBeat; 4 December 2025; grade C)

Nature internal contradiction; headline versus body

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C38

Item Cold email reply rates

Source A 0.45% measured (entry 31); SaaStr's 6.7% (entry 30) | E186 (Margaret Lee, Belkins; updated 26 June 2026; original date not shown; grade D); E185 (Jason Lemkin and Amelia Lerutte, SaaStr; 20 November 2025; grade C)

Source B 1 to 4% self-reported by 40% of respondents (entry 31); Artisan's 1% sweet spot (entry 28) | E186 (Margaret Lee, Belkins; updated 26 June 2026; original date not shown; grade D); E183 (Julie Bort, TechCrunch; 9 April 2025; grade C)

Nature value; measured against self-reported

Decision in the paper Each figure reported with its definition; no average (section 7)

C39

Item 6sense first-contact win rate

Source A 80% | E189 (6sense (Business Wire release); 12 November 2025 (date from release ID); grade D)

Source B 77% on the same page | E189 (6sense (Business Wire release); 12 November 2025 (date from release ID); grade D)

Nature internal contradiction

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C40

Item NRR medians

Source A Benchmarkit 101% | E206 (Benchmarkit; no date shown; grade B); E208 (Benchmarkit, hosted by Pavilion; no date shown; fiscal 2023 data; grade B)

Source B High Alpha 100% to 104% by band (entry 3); GP Bullhound Europe 110% to 112% (entry 28); ICONIQ roughly 110% to 120% (entry 20); Meritech public 115% (entry 26) | E198 (High Alpha; no date shown; grade C); E223 (GP Bullhound; 12 December 2024; grade C); E215 (ICONIQ; no date shown (2025); grade C); E221 (Meritech Capital; no date shown; data as of September 2023 and March 2024; grade C)

Nature definition; Different samples, bands and cohort definitions

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C41

Item AE quota attainment

Source A Bridge Group 48% | E227 (Matt Bertuzzi, The Bridge Group; 22 June 2026 and 23 June 2026; grade B)

Source B ICONIQ 58% (entry 16); KeyBanc about 70% in 2023 (entry 15); RepVue 43% (entries 36, 37) | E211 (ICONIQ; no date shown (2025); grade C); E210 (KeyBanc Capital Markets and Sapphire Ventures; no date shown; public comparison "as of October 2024"; grade C); E231 (RepVue; no date shown (Q1 2025); grade E); E232 (The Quota, citing RepVue; 3 November 2025; grade E)

Nature definition; Definitions range from reps at annual quota to company level attainment

Decision in the paper Series shown side by side, never blended (section 6 table)

C42

Item Benchmarkit 2025 internal inconsistencies

Source A blended CAC decline 10%; VC backed S&M 47%; N 583; survey window stated as 2024 for CY-24 data; PDF ARR per employee $240,000 at $50M to $100M | E204 (Benchmarkit (PDF hosted by HiBob; presented with Pavilion); no date shown; CY-24 or last twelve months data; grade B); E205 (Benchmarkit; no date shown; grade B); E207 (Benchmarkit; no date shown; grade B)

Source B 12%; 45%; 563; Pavilion's page gives $200,000 | E204 (Benchmarkit (PDF hosted by HiBob; presented with Pavilion); no date shown; CY-24 or last twelve months data; grade B); E205 (Benchmarkit; no date shown; grade B); E207 (Benchmarkit; no date shown; grade B)

Nature internal contradiction

Decision in the paper Both participant counts reported; the report figures used as printed (section 9)

C43

Item Rule of 40 profit component

Source A Feld EBITDA | E239 (Brad Feld, Feld Thoughts; 3 February 2015; grade C)

Source B Wilson operating margin (entry 45), Meritech and Benchmarkit free cash flow margin (entries 26, 55) | E240 (Fred Wilson, AVC; 10 February 2015; grade C); E221 (Meritech Capital; no date shown; data as of September 2023 and March 2024; grade C); E250 (Benchmarkit, hosted by Pavilion; no date shown; CY-23 data; grade B)

Nature definition

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C44

Item Rule of 40 origin

Source A the brief says Feld cited Wilson | no evidence entry (the brief)

Source B the opened pages show Wilson cited Feld a week later | E239 (Brad Feld, Feld Thoughts; 3 February 2015; grade C); E240 (Fred Wilson, AVC; 10 February 2015; grade C)

Nature attribution; the brief against the opened pages

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C45

Item Startup Genome prevalence against failure attribution

Source A 70% prevalence | E247 (Startup Genome (Max Marmer and others); 2011; "v 1.2 (edited March 2012)"; grade B)

Source B 74% failure attribution | E247 (Startup Genome (Max Marmer and others); 2011; "v 1.2 (edited March 2012)"; grade B)

Nature internal contradiction

Decision in the paper Both reported as the report states them (section 9)

C46

Item KeyBanc survey edition

Source A "16th annual" in body text | E209 (KeyBanc Capital Markets and Sapphire Ventures; 13 November 2025 (release); page undated; grade C)

Source B "15th annual" in metadata | E209 (KeyBanc Capital Markets and Sapphire Ventures; 13 November 2025 (release); page undated; grade C)

Nature internal contradiction

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C47

Item SaaStr on ICONIQ 2026

Source A headline "9x Flatter" | E214 (Jason Lemkin, SaaStr, secondary summary of ICONIQ; 21 May 2026; grade C)

Source B body figures implying about 2x span of control | E214 (Jason Lemkin, SaaStr, secondary summary of ICONIQ; 21 May 2026; grade C)

Nature internal contradiction

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C48

Item Buying group size

Source A six to 10 | E252 (Gartner; no date shown; grade B)

Source B 13 (entries 21, 22), 11 (entry 29), committees of 3 to 4 against 5 to 8 (entry 35) | E271 (Forrester (Barbara Winters); 4 December 2024 (modified 20 May 2025); grade B); E272 (Forrester (Amy Hayes); 4 December 2024; grade B); E279 (6sense (vendor of intent data and ABM software); 9 October 2024 (inferred from release URL); grade D); E285 (G2 (software review marketplace); 14 May 2025 (inferred from release URL); grade D)

Nature definition; definitions differ

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C49

Item Pre-contact share

Source A nearly 70% | E279 (6sense (vendor of intent data and ABM software); 9 October 2024 (inferred from release URL); grade D)

Source B 60/40 and 61% (entries 30, 31); the 17% time share (entry 1), a different construct | E280 (6sense; 12 November 2025 (inferred from release URL); grade D); E281 (CustomerThink (David Dodd); no exact date shown (refers to the study as published "earlier this month", November 2025); grade C); E251 (Gartner; no date shown; grade B)

Nature value; the 17% time share is a different construct

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C50

Item Gartner rep-free series

Source A 33% (9) | E259 (Gartner (Cristina Gomez); 15 September 2020; grade B)

Source B 75% (14), 61% (15), 67% (16), 70% completely digital self-service (17) | E264 (Gartner Sales Research Team; 19 February 2024; grade B); E265 (Mi3 (Australian marketing trade title), quoting Gartner (Robert Blaisdell, Alice Walmesley); shown as 04/07/2025, ambiguous between 4 July and 7 April 2025; the Gartner release is dated 25 June 2025; grade B); E266 (Gartner (Alyssa Cruz); 9 March 2026; grade B); E267 (Gartner (Robert Blaisdell); 20 May 2026 (inferred from release URL; conference 19 to 20 May 2026); grade B)

Nature definition; wording differs

Decision in the paper Each figure dated and attributed; no trend line drawn (section 7)

C51

Item Gartner 2025 fieldwork n

Source A 645 | E267 (Gartner (Robert Blaisdell); 20 May 2026 (inferred from release URL; conference 19 to 20 May 2026); grade B); E268 (Gartner (Greg Hessong); 20 May 2026 (inferred from release URL); grade B)

Source B 646 | E266 (Gartner (Alyssa Cruz); 9 March 2026; grade B)

Nature value; sample size

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C52

Item The 157% framing

Source A framed as customers' confidence | E258 (Gartner; no date shown; grade B)

Source B framed as sellers' odds (corroboration to entry 8) | E258 (Gartner; no date shown; grade B)

Nature definition; framing

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C53

Item 6sense 2025 80% and 77%

Source A 80% and 77% in one release | E280 (6sense; 12 November 2025 (inferred from release URL); grade D)

Source B entry 31 separates contacted first (80%) from purchased (77%) | E281 (CustomerThink (David Dodd); no exact date shown (refers to the study as published "earlier this month", November 2025); grade C)

Nature internal contradiction; separated by entry 31

Decision in the paper Both figures reported (section 7)

C54

Item Forrester stalls

Source A 91% | E271 (Forrester (Barbara Winters); 4 December 2024 (modified 20 May 2025); grade B)

Source B 86% | E272 (Forrester (Amy Hayes); 4 December 2024; grade B)

Nature value

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C55

Item Forrester samples

Source A more than 20,000 | E270 (Forrester (Amy Hayes, with Barbara Winters); 14 February 2023 (page shows a 2024 modification); grade B)

Source B more than 16,000 (entry 21), 11,352 (entry 24, vendor recap) | E271 (Forrester (Barbara Winters); 4 December 2024 (modified 20 May 2025); grade B); E274 (CarltonOne (vendor blog); 7 April 2025; grade E)

Nature value; sample sizes

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C56

Item Generational share

Source A 64% Millennials and Gen Z | E270 (Forrester (Amy Hayes, with Barbara Winters); 14 February 2023 (page shows a 2024 modification); grade B)

Source B two-thirds (entries 23, 24), 73% millennials alone (entry 39) | E273 (Forrester (Barry Vasudevan); 24 October 2024; grade B); E274 (CarltonOne (vendor blog); 7 April 2025; grade E); E289 (Digital Commerce 360 (Mark Brohan); 28 April 2025; grade C)

Nature definition

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C57

Item Rep-led against self-service outcomes

Source A 24% against 65% | E261 (Gartner; 21 June 2022; grade B)

Source B 43% regret against 26% (entry 14) and the rep-favouring gaps (entry 18) | E264 (Gartner Sales Research Team; 19 February 2024; grade B); E268 (Gartner (Greg Hessong); 20 May 2026 (inferred from release URL); grade B)

Nature value; direction

Decision in the paper Both the 2021 and 2024 findings reported; neither used alone (section 7)

C58

Item McKinsey 500,000 dollar figures

Source A 69% of seekers | E276 (McKinsey & Company (Candace Lun Plotkin, Jennifer Stanley, Liz Harrison, Victor Garcia de la Torre); 12 September 2024; grade B)

Source B 39% of all buyers per order (entry 27), about 70% up to 500,000 dollars per transaction (entry 28) | E277 (Digital Commerce 360 (Paul Demery); 12 September 2024; grade C); E278 (McKinsey & Company (Julia McClatchy, Candace Lun Plotkin, Karolina Sauer-Sidor, Jennifer Stanley, Kevin Wei Wang); April 2023; grade B)

Nature definition; bases and thresholds differ

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C59

Item TrustRadius 58%

Source A "sometimes trust AI" | E283 (TrustRadius, an HG Insights company; no date shown (data collected January 2026); grade D)

Source B "always or very often fact-check" | E284 (MarketScale Newsroom, reporting TrustRadius (report released 15 July 2026); 25 July 2026; grade D)

Nature definition; the same figure attached to two statements

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C60

Item Forrester genAI

Source A almost 95% anticipate use | E272 (Forrester (Amy Hayes); 4 December 2024; grade B)

Source B 90% rely on genAI | E274 (CarltonOne (vendor blog); 7 April 2025; grade E)

Nature definition; anticipate against rely

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C61

Item Mi3 and GuruFocus page dates

Source A Mi3 page date ambiguous (entry 15) | E265 (Mi3 (Australian marketing trade title), quoting Gartner (Robert Blaisdell, Alice Walmesley); shown as 04/07/2025, ambiguous between 4 July and 7 April 2025; the Gartner release is dated 25 June 2025; grade B)

Source B GuruFocus page date ambiguous (entry 19) | E269 (GuruFocus automated news, reproducing Gartner; shown as 06/03/2025, ambiguous between 6 March and 3 June 2025; grade B)

Nature date; page dates are ambiguous

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C62

Item Wells Fargo compensation

Source A the 8-K gives approximately $28 million clawed back from Stumpf and approximately $47 million of Tolstedt options forfeited | E335 (Wells Fargo & Company filing with the SEC; 11 April 2017; grade A)

Source B the newsroom gives about $69 million and about $67 million including earlier forfeitures; the report gives total actions over $180 million | E336 (Wells Fargo & Company newsroom; 10 April 2017; grade D); E337 (Wells Fargo independent directors with Shearman & Sterling LLP; 10 April 2017; grade D)

Nature definition; Different definitions (new April 2017 actions against cumulative totals); a writer must choose one and say which

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C63

Item Wells Fargo account counts

Source A the CFPB gives roughly 1.5 million deposit and roughly 565,000 card accounts | E332 (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; 8 September 2016; grade A)

Source B the report cites PwC's 1,534,280 potential simulated funding accounts; the DOJ says "millions of accounts or products" | E337 (Wells Fargo independent directors with Shearman & Sterling LLP; 10 April 2017; grade D); E334 (US Department of Justice; 21 February 2020; grade A)

Nature definition; Different definitions and periods; do not add them

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C64

Item Buyer preference for sellers

Source A Gartner 2020 reports 33% wanting a seller-free experience | E330 (Gartner newsroom, quoting Cristina Gomez; 15 September 2020; grade C)

Source B Gartner 2026 reports 67% preferring rep-free while 69% validate AI insights with reps | E317 (Gartner via Business Wire, quoting Robert Blaisdell; 20 May 2026 (from URL and conference reference); grade B)

Nature definition; Different surveys and wording six years apart; the 2026 release warns against reading digital preference as sellers mattering less

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C65

Item Google unsubscribe timing

Source A the FAQ "recommends" 48 hours | E344 (Google; no date shown; grade D)

Source B the 2023 announcement said "must" process within two days; the main page states no period. Yahoo requires 2 days | E343 (Google; no date shown; applies from 1 February 2024; grade D); E345 (Yahoo; no date shown (copyright 2026); grade D)

Nature definition; recommends against must

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C66

Item Data quality

Source A Gartner 2020 found 47% of sales respondents believed they had high-quality data | E316 (Gartner newsroom, quoting Craig Riley; 12 February 2020; grade C)

Source B RevOps Co-op 2025 reports 99% struggling with technical data issues | E351 (RevOps Co-op with Openprise (sponsor); 2025 (no date shown); grade D)

Nature value; Different populations, questions and years

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

C67

Item AI SDR outcomes

Source A Lemkin's July 2025 observation that about 90% of deployments produced nothing | E308 (Jason Lemkin, SaaStr; 24 July 2025; grade C)

Source B his 2026 claims of large gains at SaaStr | E309 (Jason Lemkin, SaaStr; 28 March 2026; grade D); E310 (Jason Lemkin, SaaStr; 23 March 2026 (last modified 9 October 2026); grade C); E311 (Jason Lemkin, SaaStr; 1 August 2026; grade D)

Nature definition; the difference is between companies observed and SaaStr's self-reported programme

Decision in the paper Both reported; the difference stated (section 8)

C68

Item Coverage targets

Source A Kellogg's 3.0x rule of thumb | E299 (Dave Kellogg, Kellblog; 29 April 2021; grade C); E303 (Dave Kellogg, Kellblog; 16 February 2025; grade C)

Source B the 4.3x to 5.3x he cites from a benchmark in 2024 (entry 4) and Cloud Ratings' 4.1x target in 2025 (entry 7) | E301 (Dave Kellogg, Kellblog; 9 June 2024; grade C); E304 (Dave Kellogg, Kellblog; 8 November 2025; grade C)

Nature value; he treats the higher figures as a symptom of falling win rates

Decision in the paper Not cited in the paper; entries reported with their sources where used

Annex B. Gap log

97 points where the evidence a section needed does not exist in anything opened, with where the research looked.

G01

What is missing CRO tenure and turnover with sample and definition

Where the research looked not found. Opened and empty on this point: Spencer Stuart research listing, functional-role page and three 2026 articles; Korn Ferry insights listing and sales transformation topic page; Alexander Group insights listing and two articles; Pavilion resources page, "Path to Modern CRO Success", "First 90 Days as a CRO", "Fractional CRO Hiring Mandate" and the Ebsta x Pavilion 2025 GTM Benchmarks landing page; HubSpot's CRO explainer; Forrester's "Evolution of a Revenue Leader". The only figure found (17 months) is unsourced (entry 44). Search ran out before "CRO tenure Spencer Stuart", "Korn Ferry CRO turnover", "Alexander Group CRO tenure", "Crunchbase CRO turnover" and "HBR chief revenue officer" could be run; these need a follow-up.

Cited in the paper Section 4

G02

What is missing Growth of the CRO title versus VP Sales or chief sales officer

Where the research looked only indirect evidence (entries 18, 21, 41). No LinkedIn Economic Graph page could be opened (robots disallowed).

G03

What is missing RevOps Co-op's own "State of RevOps" survey

Where the research looked not located; the Openprise 2024 survey ran with RevOps Co-op but its primary page was unreachable.

G04

What is missing Gartner follow-up on the 2025 prediction

Where the research looked nil across Gartner's 2023 to 2026 sales releases (entries 3, 5, 35 to 38).

Cited in the paper Section 3

G05

What is missing McKinsey on RevOps by name

Where the research looked the two McKinsey pieces opened never use the term; Outreach's citation of McKinsey for a $10M to $100M ARR window (entry 28) was not verified.

G06

What is missing HBR material on RevOps or the CRO

Where the research looked none opened.

G07

What is missing UK or European RevOps data

Where the research looked only the 28% UK and Europe share of the Revenue Operations Alliance 2023 sample (entry 23), the UK among Salesforce's 22 countries (entry 43), and Gong's vendor press release (opened, https://www.gong.io/press/new-gong-labs-research-finds-ai-is-now-a-trusted-decision-maker-in-revenue-teams, 4 December 2025, grade D) reporting 70% AI use in the UK against 87% in the US.

G08

What is missing Independent measurement of RevOps ownership of compensation, forecasting or process compliance

Where the research looked none found.

G09

What is missing Queries used before the budget ran out (thirteen)

Where the research looked Gartner 75% RevOps press release; Gartner newsroom 2025 revenue operations survey; Gartner revenue operations CSO survey 2024 to 2026; Gartner 40% faster sales stage velocity 2029; Gartner 2025 CSO strategic goals; Gartner sellers time and technology burden 2024; Gartner AI saves sellers five hours 72%; SiriusDecisions 19% faster 15% more profitable original study; Forrester revenue operations 36% and 28% study (two variants); forrester.com revenue operations blogs 2025 to 2026; RevOps Co-op State of RevOps reporting lines; Openprise 2024 State of RevOps (refused, budget exhausted).

G10

What is missing Queries used covered

Where the research looked Gartner seller overwhelm and tool counts; Gartner Hype Cycle for Revenue and Sales Technology 2024 and 2025; Zylo 2025 and 2026; Productiv; Vendr; Salesforce State of Sales 2022, 2024 and 2026; LinkedIn, Forrester and HubSpot seller time; Validity; Gartner $12.9m; Dun and Bradstreet decay; Ahearne 2008, Speier and Venkatesh, Verbeke 2011; CSO Insights; Gartner forecast accuracy; Challenger critiques; HBR formal sales process; Ebsta and Pavilion; Force Management and MEDDICC claims; ZoomInfo, HubSpot and Salesforce results; Clay, Gong, Apollo, Outreach, Clari and Salesloft news. Four searches were refused when the shared budget ran out: Forrester Total Economic Impact studies; independent assessment of Agentforce (Forrester, Constellation, news); Microsoft Copilot for Sales claims; HubSpot Breeze claims.

G11

What is missing Gartner tool count per seller or organisation

Where the research looked none in any release opened.

G12

What is missing Sales-technology spend per seller with a stated method

Where the research looked none found.

Cited in the paper Section 5

G13

What is missing Productiv and Vendr

Where the research looked searches returned BetterCloud, Vertice and Tropic instead; no Productiv or Vendr report opened.

G14

What is missing Zylo 2026 index

Where the research looked only a download gate surfaced.

G15

What is missing Salesforce "2025 edition"

Where the research looked the 7th edition is dated February 2026; no separate 2025 global edition surfaced.

G16

What is missing LinkedIn time-spent-selling figure

Where the research looked none on the 2022 page; no later edition surfaced.

G17

What is missing Gartner n behind the 49%/43% overwhelm figures

Where the research looked not stated on any page opened.

G18

What is missing Independent (A, B or C) figures on the share of CRM records that are wrong, 2024 to 2026

Where the research looked none; all are vendor.

Cited in the paper Section 5

G19

What is missing Sellers not logging activity

Where the research looked no figure found.

G20

What is missing Academic evidence on process compliance, stage inflation or forecast sandbagging, 2024 to 2026

Where the research looked none found.

G21

What is missing Independent outcome evidence for MEDDIC, MEDDPICC, Challenger, value selling or Sandler

Where the research looked none; Sandler and value selling were not reached.

Cited in the paper Sections 5 and 10

G22

What is missing Xactly 2024 Sales Forecasting Benchmark primary page

Where the research looked the Xactly URL surfaced was a webinar listing; the 20% and 43% figures rest on Challenger's citation.

G23

What is missing 6sense funding, valuation or layoffs; ZoomInfo layoffs and headcount; Apollo.io 2024 to 2026 rounds; Clari and Salesloft valuation and headcount

Where the research looked not found or not searchable.

G24

What is missing Microsoft Copilot for Sales

Where the research looked the only document surfaced (a Microsoft-hosted binary, RW1jS7A) was an Infosys partner slide quoting "Only 32% of seller time is spent on selling" with no source; not usable.

G25

What is missing Forrester TEI studies and independent Agentforce or Breeze assessments

Where the research looked searches refused; Gartner's 2025 Hype Cycle and 2026 forecast are the only independent framing opened.

G26

What is missing Gartner Hype Cycle for Revenue and Sales Technology 2024 release

Where the research looked only vendor "named in Hype Cycle" posts and the abstract (https://www.gartner.com/en/documents/5513395, not opened) surfaced.

G27

What is missing UK or European-specific figures

Where the research looked only the country lists in Validity 2022, HubSpot 2023 and Salesforce 2026, and Ebsta's London base; no UK-only sales technology survey surfaced.

G28

What is missing The shared web search budget was exhausted after the quota, win-rate, forecast, coverage and outbound searches

Where the research looked the items below were sought by direct fetch only or not at all.

G29

What is missing Academic or analyst evidence on the predictive validity of leading indicators in sales (Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management, HBR, Gartner)

Where the research looked not found. Queries that could not be run: "leading indicators predictive validity sales management journal", "sales activity metrics outcome correlation study", "activity quota effectiveness field experiment". The only academic-authored page opened was Steenburgh and Ahearne, HBR, 1 July 2012 (https://hbr.org/2012/07/motivating-salespeople-what-really-works), on incentive design, which names no datasets; not recorded as an entry.

Cited in the paper Sections 6 and 10

G30

What is missing Korn Ferry and CSO Insights Sales Performance Studies (forecasted deal win rate, quota attainment, n)

Where the research looked the Korn Ferry sales transformation page opened but carried no statistics; a Passle post by Tim Hughes (23 October 2018, https://digital-leadership-associates.passle.net/post/102f4b6/is-winning-only-46-2-of-forecast-deals-the-best-we-can-do, opened, grade E) cites "a recent Miller Heiman study" for 46.2% of forecast deals won, without study name, year or n; not recorded as an entry. Query not run: "CSO Insights 2019 sales performance study forecast deals won".

G31

What is missing InsightSquared forecast accuracy research

Where the research looked nothing opened; one query returned no InsightSquared result.

G32

What is missing Gartner 2020 survey n

Where the research looked not shown on the press release; no second Gartner page naming it was found.

G33

What is missing Bridge Group AE editions 2021 and 2023

Where the research looked no Bridge Group page for these editions opened; the 2022-cycle figure comes from a vendor summary (entry 9). Query run: "Bridge Group 2023 SaaS AE metrics report quota attainment companies surveyed".

G34

What is missing Bridge Group SDR 2021 and 2023 attainment, meetings per month, tenure and ramp

Where the research looked opened pages show sample sizes only (entry 37).

G35

What is missing Xactly, Forrester and Pavilion standalone quota-attainment series

Where the research looked Xactly's results concerned forecasting; Forrester's only relevant page (entry 50) gives correlates, not a rate; Pavilion's blog (topline recap, opened, 12 May 2025) carried no figures.

G36

What is missing Salesloft, Outreach (reply rates), Klenty

Where the research looked no benchmark pages with reply-rate data were found; Outreach's release gives sales cycle only (entry 21).

G37

What is missing Ebsta 2026 edition headline figures

Where the research looked behind a registration form (entry 20).

G38

What is missing Eric Ries's definitional post (May 2009) and The Lean Startup book text

Where the research looked not opened.

G39

What is missing Goodhart 1975 primary text and footnote location; Campbell 1979 primary text

Where the research looked not opened.

Cited in the paper Section 6

G40

What is missing Jordan and Vazzana's results, objectives and activities labels

Where the research looked not confirmed on any opened page.

G41

What is missing Cold call connect rates by year and LinkedIn acceptance by year

Where the research looked no multi-year series found; Expandi gives twelve months only (entry 47).

G42

What is missing The web search budget was exhausted after roughly 45 searches

Where the research looked queries marked "not run" could not be attempted. A nil result means the opened pages contained nothing, not that nothing exists.

G43

What is missing 11x after May 2025

Where the research looked query "11x.ai 2026 AI SDR news revenue layoffs" not run. TechCrunch's AI SDR tag page lists nothing on 11x after March 2025 and nothing dated 2026.

G44

What is missing Vendor claims for Clari, Outreach, Salesloft, ZoomInfo Copilot (beyond entry 25), 6sense (beyond entry 34), Apollo, Clay, AiSDR, Regie and Qualified's own figures

Where the research looked queries "ZoomInfo Copilot customers results pipeline claim press release" and "Clari AI forecast accuracy claim customers percent" not run; no page opened.

G45

What is missing Forecasting with AI

Where the research looked no independent evidence opened; the only figure is Gong's CEO's unmethodised "10 to 15%" (entry 24). Query "Gartner sales forecasting accuracy AI survey CSOs forecast accuracy percent" not run.

Cited in the paper Section 8

G46

What is missing AI-written versus human-written reply rates

Where the research looked queries "Gong Labs AI-written emails reply rate data" and "Lavender email data AI-written emails reply rates report" returned only vendor product pages; entries 31 and 32 have no comparison; Instantly not searched. Nil result.

G47

What is missing Buyer response to AI disclosure or detection

Where the research looked no opened survey measures it; Mailshake's "message fatigue" (entry 31 corroboration) is qualitative. Nil result.

G48

What is missing Edelman and LinkedIn B2B Thought Leadership Impact Report 2025

Where the research looked query not run.

G49

What is missing Gartner

Where the research looked four press releases would not open (Not opened); the October 2025 sales Hype Cycle, March 2025 commercial threats and October 2025 top predictions releases were not attempted because the site refuses the fetch tool. No Gartner "AI SDR" prediction as such was found in any opened page.

G50

What is missing 2024 to 2026 field experiments on AI in B2B sales, sales calls, lead qualification, pricing or outbound

Where the research looked query "field experiment generative AI sales productivity 2025 SSRN NBER" surfaced only the retail paper (entry 5) and HBS working paper 26-040 on Perplexity agent usage (opened; descriptive; no sales outcomes). Nil result for B2B.

Cited in the paper Sections 1 and 8

G51

What is missing The Quarterly Journal of Economics article page was not opened

Where the research looked publication is recorded from the NBER and RePEc pages (entry 1).

G52

What is missing The Bridge Group 2026 edition and any SDR headcount trend attributed to AI

Where the research looked not searched; the 2025 report (entry 40) has no such statement.

G53

What is missing UK and European data

Where the research looked only Sopro (entry 32) and Gong's UK respondents (entry 24, not broken out) were found; no UK-specific independent figure was opened.

G54

What is missing Queries used (WebSearch)

Where the research looked "ICONIQ State of Go-to-Market 2025 report"; "Bessemer State of the Cloud 2025"; "High Alpha SaaS Benchmarks 2025 report"; "KeyBanc Sapphire Private SaaS Company Survey 2025"; "ICONIQ Growth and Efficiency report 2025 SaaS benchmarks"; "Benchmarkit 2025 B2B SaaS Performance Metrics Benchmarks report"; "Bridge Group 2025 SaaS AE Metrics report"; "bvp.com state of the cloud 2025 atlas"; "Sacks burn multiple Craft Ventures 2020"; "feld.com Rule of 40% healthy SaaS company 2015"; "Startup Genome premature scaling report 2011 74% 3200 startups"; "Meritech benchmarking SaaS public comps CAC payback magic number 2025"; "ICONIQ State of Scaling 2026 Great Sorting"; "ICONIQ State of Go-to-Market 2024 report RevOps headcount sales ops ratio"; "Bridge Group 2024 AE Models Metrics report"; "RepVue quota attainment 2025 report"; "benchmarkit.ai 2025 report CAC ratio median"; "Bain Global Private Equity Report 2026 12 is the new 5"; "Pavilion RevOps headcount ratio per account executive benchmark report"; "Notion Capital European SaaS benchmarks 2025"; "Atomico State of European Tech 2025"; "ScaleUp Institute Annual ScaleUp Review 2025"; "Balderton European SaaS growth benchmarks report 2024 2025 burn multiple". The shared search budget was then exhausted; later sources were tried by direct URL only.

G55

What is missing RevOps or sales operations headcount per AE from a named survey (Pavilion, RevOps Co-op, Bridge Group, ICONIQ primary)

Where the research looked not found; only entries 17, 19, 39.

Cited in the paper Section 9

G56

What is missing Company statements and established news on SaaS sales headcount reductions 2023 to 2026 (Salesforce January 2023, Workday February 2025, Microsoft July 2025, Salesforce September 2025)

Where the research looked Reuters and The Guardian returned site blocked; CNBC, TechCrunch and Workday blog pages failed; SEC EDGAR browse page disallowed. Nothing recorded.

G57

What is missing Bessemer State of the Cloud 2025 and 2026 atlas pages

Where the research looked failed; only the AI edition (entry 24) and 2024 (entry 25) opened.

G58

What is missing ICONIQ State of Go-to-Market 2024, the 2023 Growth and Efficiency series and the GTM Reporting Guide

Where the research looked primary pages failed, redirected or carried no figures; covered only through secondary summaries (entries 22, 23).

G59

What is missing Benchmarkit's own site

Where the research looked failed; report obtained from HiBob and Pavilion hosted PDFs.

G60

What is missing KeyBanc respondent count and ARR range for 2024 and 2025

Where the research looked not stated on any opened page.

G61

What is missing OpenView or ProductLed PLG benchmarks

Where the research looked Growth Unhinged pages failed; ICONIQ's PLG page (https://www.iconiqcapital.com/growth/insights/growth-and-efficiency-plg, opened) had no figures; only entry 55.

G62

What is missing Series A to B sales scaling failure pattern from Lemkin, Skok and Tunguz

Where the research looked Lemkin VP Sales posts and a Tunguz efficiency post failed; only entries 49, 50, 51, 53.

G63

What is missing Meritech 2025 to 2026 public SaaS medians

Where the research looked the February 2025 page had no figures in text; benchmarking data stop at March 2024.

G64

What is missing UK specific SaaS sales efficiency data (Beauhurst, Dealroom, Balderton, Frontline, Index, Tech Nation successors)

Where the research looked not reached before the search budget ended; ScaleUp Institute 2025 page failed. Notion Capital's Cloud Champions 2025 page (https://www.notioncapital.com/resources/cloud-champions-report-2025, opened, 4 March 2025) describes 23 European VC backed companies over $100m revenue but gives no metrics; Serena's European SaaS Benchmark 2025 (https://offers.hubspot.com/european-saas-benchmark-2025, opened) is gated, claims 800+ European companies and headlines 86% embedding AI across GTM and product, grade D, unverifiable.

G65

What is missing Vista, Thoma Bravo, Insight Partners, Battery, Index or Accel publications on GTM gaps or RevOps and AI as value levers

Where the research looked Battery OpenCloud failed; others not reached.

G66

What is missing Kellblog board metrics

Where the research looked failed.

G67

What is missing Bain Global Private Equity Report 2025

Where the research looked the topic page now serves the 2026 edition.

G68

What is missing The burn multiple threshold table as text from Sacks

Where the research looked image only.

G69

What is missing A Gartner 2024 newsroom release on buyer GenAI use

Where the research looked not found. Query: "Gartner B2B buyers generative AI purchasing survey 2025 newsroom".

G70

What is missing A Gartner release giving a percentage for regret among rep-free buyers

Where the research looked the 2022 release has no figure (entry 10); 43% against 26% appears only in a 2024 document abstract (entry 14). Query: "Gartner rep-free buying experience regret survey press release".

G71

What is missing Forrester Buyers' Journey Survey 2025 figures and interaction counts per purchase

Where the research looked paywalled (entry 25); The Drum, 29 September 2025, returned no content twice. Queries: "Forrester Buyers' Journey Survey 2025 millennials Gen Z B2B buyers"; "Forrester blog 2025 Buyers' Journey Survey interactions buying group dissatisfied winning vendor"; "Forrester "State of Business Buying" 2025 blog buyers dissatisfied genAI".

G72

What is missing McKinsey B2B Pulse 2025

Where the research looked not found before the budget ran out. Query: "McKinsey B2B Pulse 2024 rule of thirds $500,000 self-service remote".

G73

What is missing 6sense 2024 sample size

Where the research looked not in the release; the CustomerThink 2024 round-up would not open.

G74

What is missing Challenger Inc research 2024 to 2026

Where the research looked query "Challenger Inc research 2024 2025 buyers sellers insight decision confidence study" refused by the exhausted budget; Gartner's Challenger pages carried no further figures.

G75

What is missing HBR articles on trust in B2B selling

Where the research looked query "hbr.org B2B buyers trust sellers research article 2023 2024 sales reps" refused; HBR pages opened by known address (corroboration to entry 1; https://hbr.org/2023/11/what-todays-rainmakers-do-differently, 1 November 2023; https://hbr.org/2017/03/the-new-sales-imperative, March 2017) carried no trust figures.

G76

What is missing Buyer reactions to AI-generated or automated outreach, and cold outreach fatigue

Where the research looked query "survey 2025 B2B buyers AI-generated sales emails ignore outreach fatigue percent" refused; Sopro's State of Prospecting (UK) would not open. Opened figures are limited to Gartner's 73% and "overwhelmed and frustrated" (entry 15) and G2's late-engagement preference (entry 35).

G77

What is missing B2B-specific peer-reviewed experiments on human against automated selling, 2020 to 2026

Where the research looked not found. Queries: "Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management 2024 AI disclosure buyer reactions salesperson experiment"; "Industrial Marketing Management 2023 2024 B2B buyers artificial intelligence sales interaction trust empirical study". Luo et al. 2021, Journal of Marketing (AI coaches) would not open.

Cited in the paper Section 7

G78

What is missing Effect sizes and study counts for the two meta-analyses (entries 41, 42)

Where the research looked not on the open pages.

G79

What is missing UK or European breakouts

Where the research looked none found; UK respondents are pooled in entries 19, 28 and 31.

G80

What is missing The Edelman-LinkedIn 2025 report

Where the research looked Edelman's pages would not open; only entries 37 and 38 were available.

G81

What is missing Searches run (nineteen, after which the shared budget was exhausted)

Where the research looked "Kellblog pipeline coverage ratio Kellogg"; "Kellblog RevOps sales ops"; "SaaStr Lemkin AI SDR 2025"; "Wells Fargo sales practices investigation report independent directors April 2017 pdf"; "Microsoft Outlook high volume sender requirements May 5 2025 5,000 messages"; "Gartner newsroom sales forecasting confidence survey sales leaders"; "Forrester McPartlin sales forecasting blog"; "Winning by Design bow tie revenue architecture Jacco"; "site:kellblog.com coverage ratio forecast sandbagging"; "site:saastr.com quota attainment reps hit quota Lemkin"; "Do Bonuses Enhance Sales Productivity Chung Steenburgh Sudhir"; "Larkin The Cost of High-Powered Incentives enterprise software sales gaming"; "SaaStr SDR dead Lemkin 2025 2026"; "Brent Adamson Ecosystems buyer value sellers article 2025"; "forrester.com blogs revenue operations Amy Hayes Seth Marrs AI sales 2025"; "Gartner press release Dan Gottlieb sellers AI 2025 B2B sales"; "Gartner Alice Walmesley B2B buyers purchase regret press release"; "SEC litigation release Computer Associates 35-day month 2004 revenue recognition"; "winningbydesign.com bowtie model recurring revenue funnel" (refused: budget exhausted).

G82

What is missing SDR meeting fraud, fake meetings or activity-quota gaming in B2B software in the public record

Where the research looked not searched; nil so far.

Cited in the paper Section 6

G83

What is missing CSO Insights or Korn Ferry forecast accuracy figures

Where the research looked not searched.

G84

What is missing Academic evidence on sandbagging and optimism bias in sales forecasts

Where the research looked not searched. The Larkin abstract page lists Kuhn and Yu, "Kinks as Goals: Accelerating Commissions and the Performance of Sales Teams", Management Science 2025, not opened.

G85

What is missing RevOps or sales operations teams cut in 2023 to 2026 layoffs

Where the research looked not searched; only Forrester opinion on Oracle (entry 31).

G86

What is missing The original CRM failure-rate sources (Gartner 2001 or 2002, Forrester 2009, Merkle 2013, CIO 2017)

Where the research looked not opened; ZDNet's compilation blocked.

Cited in the paper Section 5

G87

What is missing LinkedIn weekly invitation limit and automation policy

Where the research looked all LinkedIn help and legal pages refused robots; no press substitute reached.

G88

What is missing Data on cold outreach volume reaching buyers and buyer complaints

Where the research looked not found.

Cited in the paper Section 7

G89

What is missing Status of the proposed EU ePrivacy Regulation

Where the research looked the Commission's digital privacy page did not mention it.

G90

What is missing UK Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 changes to PECR penalties, and the CTPS rule for calls

Where the research looked ICO telephone marketing and DUAA pages and the CTPS page did not open.

G91

What is missing Kellogg on sales ops against RevOps

Where the research looked his RevOps tag page did not open and no such post surfaced.

G92

What is missing Seth Marrs

Where the research looked Forrester's author page listed no posts by him. Amy Hayes: her author page shows portfolio marketing posts, none on RevOps.

G93

What is missing Lemkin on "the SDR is dead"

Where the research looked his position is entry 10; no post with that title found.

G94

What is missing Pavilion's own reports

Where the research looked none listed on its homepage; Ebsta figures are images only (entry 56).

G95

What is missing Microsoft's recommended practices, rejection date and error code

Where the research looked article body never rendered.

G96

What is missing No dataset linking pipeline coverage ratio to quota attainment; the 3x rule rests on named practitioners (Kellogg, Lemkin) and vendor commentary (Ebsta) without a published ratio-to-attainment analysis

Where the research looked Outcome benchmarks stream searched Ebsta and Pavilion reports, Gong Labs, Kellblog and SaaStr; coordinator review of all 355 entries on 2 November 2026 found none

Cited in the paper Sections 6, 10 and 12

G97

What is missing Pave's primary publication of its 14,000-executive turnover analysis (CRO implied median tenure 1.8 years) was not located; the figure rests on SaaStr's report of it (E355)

Where the research looked WebSearch on 2 November 2026: "Pave executive turnover analysis 14,000 executives chief revenue officer 1.8 years"; "pave.com blog executive turnover CMO CRO 32% annual turnover median tenure"; pave.com result pages returned unrelated posts

Cited in the paper Section 4 (stated in the text beside E355, not tagged)

Annex B. Decision log

18 decisions taken in the course of the research, with their basis and status.

D01

Decision Autonomy set to Continuous

Basis The brief asks for the finished paper, so held issues were settled on the recommended option and recorded

Who and when Author, at intake

Status Recommended, not confirmed

D02

Decision The white paper is treated as an "other document" under the guardrails: evidence references and tags appear in the text; the ledger sits in an annex

Basis Guardrail 2.9.7 reserves tag-free text for persuasive and evidence documents

Who and when Author, at intake

Status Recommended, not confirmed

D03

Decision Title: Pipeline theatre, with the subtitle Systemised selling, revenue operations and the drift from outcomes to indicators in fast-growth B2B SaaS

Basis Shortest of five options weighed (The instrumented sale; Everything measured, less sold; Chasing the numbers, missing the buyer; The measured decline; Pipeline theatre); names the failure mode the evidence most consistently supports; the subtitle carries the scope

Who and when Author, after research

Status Recommended, not confirmed

D04

Decision Scope: global B2B software evidence, with UK and European figures flagged where they exist

Basis Most surveys pool UK respondents without a breakout

Who and when Author, at intake

Status Recommended, not confirmed

D05

Decision Named-company examples of measures becoming targets: Wells Fargo (regulatory record) and Computer Associates (SEC 2004 release)

Basis The only banking and B2B software enforcement records opened; the Computer Associates case appears in the principal's own career history, so keeping or cutting it is the principal's call

Who and when Author, during drafting

Status Recommended, not confirmed

D06

Decision Goodhart's and Campbell's principles paraphrased with dates rather than quoted

Basis Primary texts could not be opened; wording rests on tertiary pages (G39)

Who and when Author, during drafting

Status Recommended, not confirmed

D07

Decision RepVue figures shown as a self-reported vendor series labelled signal only, never blended with the other series

Basis Review-platform self-reports with internal contradictions

Who and when Author, during drafting

Status Recommended, not confirmed

D08

Decision CRO tenure stated from Pave's analysis as reported by SaaStr, labelled single source

Basis The only tenure figure with a stated dataset (E355); the Pave primary was not located (G97)

Who and when Author, during drafting

Status Recommended, not confirmed

D09

Decision Annex A in the document holds the compact ledger; the full ten-field ledger and uncited research entries are in this workbook

Basis Document length; the compact form preserves traceability of every reference

Who and when Author, at assembly

Status Recommended, not confirmed

D10

Decision Gartner wording taken from Gartner's own Business Wire distribution or verbatim reproductions where gartner.com refused to open, and graded as Gartner's

Basis The releases are Gartner's own text; the ledger records the page used

Who and when Research streams, 2 November 2026

Status Recommended, not confirmed

D11

Decision Twelve Gartner web addresses recorded in prefix form kept as recorded

Basis One tested on 2 November 2026 resolved to the page named

Who and when Author, at assembly

Status Recommended, not confirmed

D12

Decision Ledger numbering by research stream (E001 to E356) kept for citations rather than renumbering by first appearance

Basis Traceability to the research notes behind each entry

Who and when Author, at assembly

Status Recommended, not confirmed

D13

Decision No charts or diagrams; comparisons shown as tables with definitions

Basis The multi-year series are non-comparable across sources, so a chart would imply a trend the evidence does not support

Who and when Author, at assembly

Status Recommended, not confirmed

D14

Decision Audit corrections applied to the paper before delivery: the 67% rep-free figure re-referenced to E266; grade E figures removed from the text (a LinkedIn growth multiple, a 17-month tenure claim, Pavilion's unsourced percentages); summary claims narrowed to what the series show; a new entry E356 created for a Forrester figure previously carried only in a corroboration field; references and single-source labels added to unreferenced numbers; vendor tags added where a grade D entry lacked one; opinion clauses and self-narration cut; the 21.6 minus 6.2 months calculation replaced by side-by-side figures and an inference

Basis Fresh-eyes audit under Part 8 of the guardrails on 2 November 2026; rubric before corrections: evidence base 3, writing and accessibility 4

Who and when Author, at audit

Status Applied

D15

Decision First-party platform policy pages (E343 to E346) kept at grade D and cited only for the wording of the rules they publish, with the vendor tag; the Yahoo page E192 was graded A by another research stream for the same kind of source

Basis Grades differ between research streams for the same kind of source; the paper treats the published wording as authoritative and the effect of the rules as unmeasured (G88)

Who and when Author, at audit

Status Recommended, not confirmed

D16

Decision A second edition, Pipeline theatre for boards, written in the first person as a promotional thought-leadership paper for time-poor boards and chief executives; treated as a persuasive document under the guardrails (2.9.7): no tags, ledger references, single-source or vendor-claim notes printed; they are held in this workbook and given in the report

Basis The brief of 2 November 2026 asked for a less academic, easier-to-read edition expressing the author's perspective

Who and when Author, 2 November 2026

Status Applied

D17

Decision In the boards edition the Proof Bank pairing rule for public material takes precedence over guardrail 6.3.1: the two proof points about the author (24 months to seven; 120% of in-seat quota with four teams and twenty seats) are stated without employer or period, and no employer of the author is named anywhere in the document

Basis 02 Proof Bank and Rules and 08 Website Credibility and Change Rules govern claims about the author

Who and when Author, 2 November 2026

Status Applied

D18

Decision In the boards edition the two AI SDR start-ups are left unnamed (identifiable only through the cited TechCrunch reports), the Computer Associates enforcement case is omitted, and the platform policy thresholds are stated without the first-party tag

Basis Promotional document under the author's name; the research edition carries the named record

Who and when Author, 2 November 2026

Status Recommended, not confirmed

Annex B. Hypotheses and tests

6 hypotheses the paper raises, with the evidence either way and the test that would settle each one.

H01

Hypothesis A board that replaces fixed coverage targets with to-go coverage and channel win rates sees less stage inflation within two quarters

Evidence for E132, E299 (self-fulfilling coverage); E081 (68% of deals advanced without effective qualification, vendor claim)

Evidence against None measured; no dataset links coverage to attainment (G96)

Test X01: before-and-after comparison of stage conversion distributions and of the share of opportunities advanced without qualification fields completed, two quarters each side

H02

Hypothesis Reinvesting AI-saved hours into buyer-facing preparation raises win rate on complex deals

Evidence for E036 (reinvesting organisations 2.2 and 3.1 times more likely to exceed goals, self-reported); E255, E268 (sense-making and confidence)

Evidence against The Gartner result is self-reported and correlational; E157 shows no gain for experienced workers

Test X02: matched teams with and without a reinvestment rule; win rate and deal quality on complex deals over two quarters

H03

Hypothesis Human involvement on renewal and expansion lowers regret and early churn

Evidence for E263 (60% regret); E264 (43% against 26% regret by path); E118 (expansion win rate 45% against 18%, vendor claim)

Evidence against E261 (2021 fieldwork: rep-led purchases produced fewer high-quality deals)

Test X03: seller involvement assigned by account cohort; regret survey, churn at first renewal and expansion rate compared

H04

Hypothesis Automated outbound at scale lowers reply rates for every sender on a shared channel

Evidence for E141 (0.45% reply rate, vendor claim); E165 (synthetic outbound forecast); E191 (platform enforcement); E265 (73% avoid suppliers over irrelevant outreach)

Evidence against E144 (small campaigns still reply at 5.8%, vendor claim)

Test X04: domain-level reply and complaint rates before and after volume changes; small against large campaigns on the same lists

H05

Hypothesis Moving tool selection away from the sales leader lowers seller adoption and data completeness

Evidence for E037 (23% of CSOs accountable for AI selection); E042 (64% say CIO teams lead selection, vendor claim); E069 (adoption flows from managers)

Evidence against None found

Test X05: adoption and completeness compared across business units by who selected the tool

H06

Hypothesis Revenue leader tenure under two years increases reliance on leading indicators in board reporting

Evidence for E355 (1.8-year implied median tenure, single source); E095 (60% say the number is outside their control); E242 (investor template asks for outcomes)

Evidence against No data on board pack contents by tenure

Test X06: board pack metrics compared across companies by revenue leader tenure

Annex C. Sources that could not be opened

130 addresses that were sought and could not be read, with the reason. Nothing on this list is relied on anywhere in the paper.

https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/linkedin-jobs-rise-2023-25-us-roles-growing-demand-linkedin-news

robots disallowed

https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/linkedin-jobs-rise-2024-25-fastest-growing-roles-us-linkedin-new

robots disallowed

https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/revops-team-size-benchmarks-hiring-activity-b2b-adam-schoenfeld-

PeerSignal ratio; not attempted after two LinkedIn refusals

https://www.gartner.com/en/sales/topics/revenue-operations

client error on two attempts

https://customerthink.com/research-round-up-recent-studies-reveal-the-state-of-revenue-operatio

client error; the same article was opened on the author's own blog, entries 22 and 23

https://www.openprisetech.com/?p=21052

both resolved to the Openprise homepage

https://openprisetech.com/?p=21376

both resolved to the Openprise homepage

https://sbigrowth.com/insights/revenue-operations-holds-the-key-to-unlocking-growth-in-2023

resolved to a blog index without the article

https://www.alexandergroup.com/insights/artificial-intelligence-in-revenue-operations/

gated; no figures visible

https://www.revenueoperationsalliance.com/state-of-revenue-operations-report-2024/

full report gated; landing-page figures only

https://clari.com/blog/3-takeaways-forrester-study-revops-and-intelligence

redirected to a Salesloft TEI page; not followed

https://www.forrester.com/blogs/category/revenue-operations/page/2 and /page/4

returned the first page; 2024 and 2025 posts unreachable

Gartner client documents 5578528, 5582327 and 5734383

public abstracts only (entries 6, 7)

https://www.forrester.com/report/the-2018-client-study-growth-and-profitability-analysis/RES172

public abstract only (entry 11)

https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2025-11-18-gartner-predicts-by-2028-ai-agent

client error, retried once; the July 2026 restatement opened via the Gartner mirror, entry 51

https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2026-07-28-gartner-predicts-ai-agents-will-o

client error; mirror opened

https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20250521440719/en

metadata only; the full-slug URL opened, entry 29

https://www.ebsco.com/articles/business-and-management/7469dd14-f5c7-5bb4-af81-46404a729d3d/sel

robots disallowed; would have given the HBR citation for the Gartner overwhelm figures

https://clari.com/press

redirects to the Salesloft newsroom, which opened but listed no releases

https://www.clari.com/blog/infographic-the-impact-of-missing-your-forecast/

redirects to the Salesloft page in entry 41, no figures

https://www.xactlycorp.com/node/6126

opened; a webinar listing with no forecasting data

https://query.prod.cms.rt.microsoft.com/cms/api/am/binary/RW1jS7A

opened; an Infosys slide, not a Microsoft study; not used

https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260519504410/en/

not attempted; gartner.com copy opened, entry 14

https://finance.yahoo.com/news/y-combinator-backed-apollo-io-051945118.html

not attempted; Verdict copy opened, entry 49

https://www.gartner.com/en/documents/5513395

Hype Cycle 2024 abstract; not attempted

https://zylo.com/2026-saas-management-index-download-now

download gate; not attempted

https://www.repvue.com/cloud-index/2025/Q3

client error; retried once; reported via The Quota, entry 6

https://www.clari.com/link/f79945455ed1438289d41bbe1448c0b6.aspx

redirects to salesloft.com; prod.clari.com mirror used instead

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/0149718979900483

client error

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/014971897990048X

client error

https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/014971897990048X

empty response

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED303512.pdf

client error

https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Goodhart-C.-1975-Problems-of

client error

http://www.startuplessonslearned.com/2009/05/vanity-metrics-vs-actionable-metrics.html and the

client error; retried

https://rss.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1740-9713.2018.01205.x

robots disallowed

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vanity_metrics

not found

https://funnelradio.podbean.com/e/cso-insights%e2%80%99-surprising-results-revenue-up-performan

redirects to a locked channel login

https://www.cfo.com/news/43-of-finance-and-sales-leaders-say-sales-forecasts-are-at-least-10-of

opened, but the Xactly article was not on the page; nothing recorded

https://www.fullcast.com/ebooks/2026-benchmarks-report-the-state-of-gtm-in-2026/

redirected to fullcast.ai, which was opened; report body behind a form

https://gong.io/?p=56641

resolved to Gong's homepage, not the State of Revenue report

https://www.salesforce.com/news/stats/page/8

opened; no quota statistics present

https://www.kornferry.com/insights/featured-topics/sales-transformation

opened; no statistics present

https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2025-06-25-gartner-predicts-over-40-percent-

client error, twice. Used HPCwire (entry 9).

https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2025-08-25-gartner-says-by-2030-that-75-perc

client error. Used IT-Online and CRM Magazine (entry 11).

https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2025-11-18-gartner-predicts-by-2028-ai-agent

client error. Used Insurance-Canada.ca and CRM Magazine (entry 12).

https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2026-07-28-gartner-predicts-ai-agents-will-o

client error.

https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/a550555

robots disallowed, twice.

https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/blog/outlook/strengthening-email-ecosystem-outlook%E2%80%99

body not returned. Used Petri and Proofpoint (entry 38).

https://support.google.com/a/answer/14229414?hl=en

no content returned. The Gmail Help version opened (entry 36).

https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/24-013_d9b45b68-9e74-42d6-a1c6-c72fb70c7282.pdf

PDF returned no text. Entries 3 and 4 use the pages that opened.

https://www.gong.io/?p=47407

redirected to a product page. Used SalesTechStar (entry 23).

https://dc.fortune.com/2025/09/02/salesforce-ceo-billionaire-marc-benioff-ai-agents-jobs-layoff

redirect only; the fortune.com destination opened, entry 20.

https://www.bvp.com/atlas/state-of-the-cloud-2025

client error, two attempts

https://www.bvp.com/atlas/state-of-the-cloud-2026

client error

https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/private-saas-company-survey-reveals-ai-driven-transfor

client error; StockTitan copy used

https://sacks.substack.com/p/the-burn-multiple-51a79e45bb6f

client error; the 51a7e43cb200 slug opened

https://sacks.substack.com/p/the-burn-multiple

client error; the 51a7e43cb200 slug opened

https://medium.com/craft-ventures/the-burn-multiple-51a79e45bb6f

client error

https://www.craftventures.com/blog/the-burn-multiple

client error

https://medium.com/craft-ventures/the-burn-multiple-51a7e43cb200

opened but truncated before the definition

https://feld.com/archives/2015/02/the-rule-of-40-for-a-healthy-saas-company.html

client error; the rule-40-healthy-saas-company URL opened

https://startupgenome.com/reports/startup-genome-report-extra-on-premature-scaling

opened; no report text

https://startupgenome.com/insights/a-deep-dive-into-the-anatomy-of-premature-scaling

opened; no report text

https://www.meritechcapital.com/benchmarking/operating-metrics/company-age

client error

https://www.meritechcapital.com/blog/meritech-software-pulse-or-25-feb-2025

opened; no figures in text

https://www.benchmarkit.ai/2025-b2b-saas-performance-metrics-benchmarks-report

client error

https://www.iconiq.com/growth/reports/state-of-go-to-market-2024

client error

https://www.iconiqcapital.com/growth/insights/the-go-to-market-reporting-guide

opened; no metrics in text

https://kylepoyar.substack.com/p/2024-saas-benchmarks-report

client error

https://www.growthunhinged.com/p/2024-saas-benchmarks-report

client error

https://www.growthunhinged.com/p/2023-product-benchmarks

client error

https://www.cnbc.com/2023/01/04/salesforce-to-cut-10percent-of-workforce-after-hiring-too-many-

client error

https://www.reuters.com/business/salesforce-cut-jobs-by-10-close-some-offices-2023-01-04/

site blocked

https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/jan/04/salesforce-layoffs-10-percent-workforce

site blocked

https://techcrunch.com/2023/01/04/salesforce-layoffs/

client error; slug unverified

https://www.sec.gov/cgi-bin/browse-edgar?action=getcompany&CIK=0001108524&type=8-K&dateb=202301

robots disallowed

https://blog.workday.com/en-us/a-message-from-ceo-carl-eschenbach.html

client error; slug unverified

https://www.saastr.com/when-to-hire-your-first-vp-sales/

client error; slugs unverified

https://www.saastr.com/top-10-reasons-vps-of-sales-fail/

client error; slugs unverified

https://www.saastr.com/why-you-should-hire-2-sales-reps-at-a-time-not-1/

client error; slugs unverified

https://tomtunguz.com/sales-efficiency-benchmarks/

client error; slug unverified

https://kellblog.com/2019/03/26/the-saas-metrics-that-matter/

client error; slug unverified

https://www.scaleupinstitute.org.uk/scaleup-review-2025/

client error

https://www.battery.com/opencloud/

client error

https://www.wisdomtree.com/us/insights/blog/bvp-just-released-state-of-the-cloud-2024-here-are-

client error

https://www.openprisetech.com/?p=22886

resolved to the vendor homepage; no survey content

https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2025-06-25-gartner-sales-survey-finds-61-per

client error, two attempts; reproductions used, entry 15

https://6sense.com/buyer-experience-report/

client error; https://6sense.com/?p=607322 served the homepage

https://www.thedrum.com/news/2025/09/29/how-escape-b2b-buying-mayhem-with-vendors-still-stuck-t

empty content, two attempts

https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1509/jmkg.70.4.136

client error; /abs/ address opened, entry 41

https://www.gartner.com/en/documents/7674361 and the same with ?ref=abstract

client error

https://www.trustradius.com/blog/beyond-the-hype

client error; solutions.trustradius.com opened, entry 33

https://sopro.io/resources/state-of-prospecting/

client error

https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242920956676

Luo et al. 2021; client error

https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0022242920956676

Luo et al. 2021; client error

https://www.edelman.com/expertise/business-marketing/2025-b2b-thought-leadership-impact-report

client error

https://www.edelman.com/expertise/business-marketing/2024-b2b-thought-leadership-impact-report

client error

https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0007681320300033

empty; sciencedirect address opened, entry 46

https://demandgenreport.com/industry-news/news-brief/gartner-67-of-b2b-buyers-prefer-a-rep-free

client error

https://customerthink.com/research-round-up-a-detailed-look-at-real-world-b2b-buying/

client error

https://www.demandgenreport.com/industry-news/80-of-b2b-buyers-initiate-first-contact-once-they

client error

https://www.gartner.com/en/sales/trends/challenger-make-sense-of-sense-making

Opened but unused for lack of figures; Gartner GenAI spending forecast.

https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20250331176525/en

Opened but unused for lack of figures; Gartner GenAI spending forecast.

https://support.google.com/a/answer/81126

metadata only; Gmail Help version and FAQ used

https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/blog/exchange/strengthening-email-ecosystem-outlook%E2%80%9

body not returned twice; /t5/exchange-team-blog/ form also failed

https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/a1340350

robots disallowed

https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/a1341012

robots disallowed

https://www.linkedin.com/legal/user-agreement

robots disallowed

https://www.tpsonline.org.uk/ctps

metadata only, twice

https://www.tpsonline.org.uk/ctps/

metadata only, twice

https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/direct-marketing-and-privacy-and-electronic-communications

client error, twice

https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-and-the-duaa/

client error

https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/eprivacy-regulation

opened but silent on the Regulation; nothing recorded

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32002L0058

title only; OJ PDF used

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2002/58/oj/eng

title only; OJ PDF used

https://www08.wellsfargomedia.com/assets/pdf/about/investor-relations/presentations/2017/board-

client error; DocumentCloud copy used

https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/3549312/Board-Report.pdf

redirected; s3 copy used

https://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/10.1287/mksc.2013.0815

client error; RePEc abstract used

https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/673371

returned a citing-articles list; RePEc abstract used

https://academic.oup.com/qje/article/113/1/149/1892140

abstract truncated; RePEc abstract used

https://www.jstor.org/stable/2586988

client challenge page

https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/faculty-research/publications/fiscal-year-ends-nonlinear-incentive

client error

https://www.zdnet.com/article/crm-failure-rates-2001-2009/

site blocked

https://www.kellblog.com/how-to-present-a-quarterly-sales-forecast-to-your-saas-company-board/

client error

https://www.kellblog.com/tag/revops/

client error

https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2024-09-17-gartner-survey-finds-sellers-that

guessed URL; client error; ITPro used, entry 24

https://sendersupport.olc.protection.outlook.com/pm/policies.aspx

redirected to the postmaster page, entry 49

https://www.ebsta.com/b2b-sales-benchmarks/

redirected to the 2025 benchmarks page, entry 56

https://go.forrester.com/blogs/author/seth_marrs

opened; no posts by Marrs listed

https://www.forrester.com/blogs/author/seth_marrs/

opened; no posts by Marrs listed

Annex D. Audit report

Audit report: white paper body, sections 1 to 12

Fresh-eyes audit of /home/claude/paper/body.md against /home/claude/ledger/master_ledger.csv (355 entries, 254 cited) and the Natural Writing and Data Guardrails v3 (2.3, 2.5.8, 2.7.6, 2.7.7, 2.9.1, Part 5, Part 7, 8.2, 8.3), run on 2 November 2026 by script, then by manual verification of every flagged item against the full ledger entry. Nothing else was written.

Most consequential findings, in order

1. Sections 1, 7 and 10. "67% in Gartner's 2025 fieldwork", "The same respondents, 67% of them, preferred a rep-free experience [E267]" and the section 10 row "[E267] (67% prefer rep-free)". The 67% is not in E267 (which gives 70%, n 645); it is E266 (n 646). Cite [E266] in all three places and drop "the same respondents", since the ledger logs the samples as different (C51).

1. Section 1. "finds that the instruments have improved while every outcome they were meant to improve has declined". The body nowhere shows instruments improving, only more tools, more spend and less trust; "every outcome" is contradicted by the body's own figures: cycles shortened 23% and 9% (E117, E118), RepVue attainment rose from 42.00% to 43.24% (E102, E106). Write "the instruments have multiplied while most outcome series have declined or flattened".

1. Sections 1 and 12. "Both analyst firms now describe RevOps as the architect of the operating model and the owner of decision rights [E033] [E036]". E036 (Gartner) says nothing about RevOps as architect or decision-rights owner. Attribute the architect language to Forrester alone and describe E036 as Gartner's call to redesign the system around sellers.

1. Section 1. "measure leads touched, meetings booked and agents activated rather than deals won [E172] [E174] [E178]". E178 is Gong's 35% higher win rate, a deals-won measure. Cite E172, E174 and E176 here and treat E178 separately as an uncontrolled correlation.

1. Section 1. "no field experiment on AI in B2B sales exists [G50]". The body says none "was found between 2024 and 2026". Write "none was found".

1. Section 1. "a vendor-sponsored survey with no published size [E010] [E014] [E012]". E012 is grade D, status vendor claim; neither sentence nor paragraph carries [VENDOR CLAIM: unverified]. Add the tag.

1. Section 5. Quotation "has been believed" [E067]. The ledger records the page wording as "it's been believed". Quote it exactly or paraphrase.

1. Section 3. Quotation "300% increase in RevOps roles on LinkedIn since 2019" [E019]. The ledger quote reads "RevOps-related roles". Restore the word. E019 is also grade E, which the guardrails and section 2 say is never the source of a figure; printing the 300% to debunk it

still prints it. Write "a widely repeated LinkedIn growth multiple ends at an unsourced agency blog".

1. Section 4. "an unsourced "17 months" on a recruiter's homepage [E044]". E044 is grade E and the ledger calls the site "unsourced marketing", not a recruiter. Remove the figure and the characterisation.

1. Section 4. "50% of CROs rate their CRM data as high confidence while 80% of RevOps leads rate it poor" followed by "so they are not used as figures here [E029]". The figures are printed while the text says they are not used; under 2.3.1 such a number does not appear. Section 3's "about 26,000 to 21,000" [E020] is the same case. Drop the numbers, or keep them labelled as the editorial's unsourced figures.

1. Section 8. "with the firm itself saying the displaced people went into sales". E175: a spokesperson said hundreds were redeployed into professional services, sales and customer success, out of about 4,000 roles cut. Write "the firm said hundreds were redeployed, some into sales".

1. Section 7. "regretted nearly every purchase, up six points on 2020 [E263]". The ledger records "a 6% increase from 2020"; the unit has changed (2.3.3). Report it as given.

1. Section 9. "That leaves 15.4 months of ramped production [CALCULATION: inputs E355, E227". Guardrail 2.3.2 forbids combining figures whose definitions differ; CRO tenure from Pave and AE ramp from The Bridge Group are different populations, as the inference tag admits. Show the two figures side by side and make the overlap point in words.

1. Section 12. "[THRESHOLD: set by the board; basis: none in the record]". The board has not set it. Write "recommended, not confirmed; to be set by the board".

A. Data traceability (6 checks run: figure-to-claim comparison on 913 figures in 288 referenced sentences and rows; fallback to the other ledger columns; untagged-number scan on 531 units; manual verification of 160 flagged items; conflict and gap ids against the logs; date-in-text spot check)

Beyond items 1 to 13, every flagged figure was in the entry's sample column, an ordinary word, or cited earlier in the same paragraph. Residual:

Section 1. "14% to 15%, with a third more from novices [E157]". The 14% and 34% are in E156. Add [E156].

Section 6 table. "253 companies (2022 cycle); more than 170 (2024)". The "more than 170" is in E108, not cited in the row; the row's grade "B" also covers a 2022 figure reached through a grade D vendor blog (E109).

Section 8. "found only 15% of AI decision makers reporting a lift" [E163]. The Forrester figure sits only in E163's corroboration field; give it an entry.

Section 6. "Where a deal slipped a quarter, its win rate fell 67% [E117]". E117 says "when deals slipped"; remove "a quarter".

Section 9. "from a LinkedIn post by Kyle Poyar [E304]". E304 attributes the coverage figures to Cloud Ratings and only the 57 months to Poyar.

Numbers with no reference in the sentence or the one before: section 4 "Taken together with Gartner's 23%"; section 5 "between eight and thirteen tools", "about half of the licences" and "a CRO lasts two years" (1.8 rounded; also "under two years" in sections 4 and 9); section 6 "4.9 hours a week going into a forecast that four in five"; section 7 "a complaint ceiling of 0.3%" and "the 17% of time buyers give". Add the references (E037; E046, E004, E050; E355; E124, E126; E191; E251).

Rule 2.5.8: 72 cited entries have status "single source" but the words appear ten times in the text; unlabelled single-source figures the recommendations rest on include E268 (ledger: no independent corroboration), E255, E263 and E242. Rule 2.3.3: some figures carry no date, for example "Vertice gives 132" [E051] and "HubSpot's 21%" [E115].

B. Vendor tagging (3 checks run: sentence, paragraph and following "each figure" or "every row" sentence, for each citation of the 83 grade D entries cited that are not marked corroborated)

Section 1, E012 (item 6). Section 3, "Forrester completed its purchase of SiriusDecisions on 3 January 2019 [E009]" and "moved the year to 2026 without saying so [E028]": grade D, untagged. Section 12 board questions 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 cite grade D entries untagged; they cite the idea rather than a figure, so tag the list once in its introducing sentence. All tables pass under the "each figure" wording. Grade E entries cited: E019, E044, E151, E153; the Goodhart and Campbell paraphrases rest on Wikipedia, disclosed in G39.

C. Quotations (3 checks run: length of all 70 double-quoted strings; word-for-word match against the quote and claim columns of entries cited in the same sentence; match against other columns)

No quotation exceeds fifteen words (longest 13). Mismatches: "has been believed" (item 7); "300% increase in RevOps roles" (item 8); section 11 table "go-to-market engineer" where E020 has "GTM Engineer". Two quoted phrases match only the claim column, where the ledger's claim is a paraphrase: "similar for humans and AI" [E311] and "nearly 100% forecast accuracy" [E082]; confirm against the pages or paraphrase. Section 2's statement that every quotation "matches the opened page" is therefore not true.

D. Named companies and people (2 checks run: every named-entity sentence read for a citation; every characterisation searched in the ledger)

Section 3. "HubSpot's explainer, the page most practitioners will have read": opinion as fact. Cut the clause.

Section 5. "the newest entrants are valued on narrative", after naming Clay [E092]: opinion as fact. Attribute or cut.

Section 6. "Dave Kellogg, a former software chief executive": in no ledger entry. Cite or cut.

Section 6. "RepVue is self-selected and its pages contain internal contradictions, Ebsta mislabels years": uncited in the sentence; the ledger supports it (E101 to E106, E114, C20). Add the references.

Section 8. "billboards made the category famous": unsupported. Cut.

Sections 1 and 8. "a sympathetic practitioner's estimate" and "is sympathetic to the category": not in E184; an inference from E185 and E311. State the basis or cut.

Section 4. "people whose clients are the function being described": stated as fact about Forrester's analysts. Soften.

E. Writing (16 checks run: dashes; American spellings; banned words; hedges; transitions and "however"; "not only"; antithesis; questions; closings; self-narration; contractions; Markdown; headings; consecutive openers; synonym cycling and attribution verbs; acronyms)

Clean: no en or em dashes; no American spellings outside quotations and titles; no contractions outside quotations; no bold, italics or backticks (the hash headings and pipe tables must be converted in the assembled document); headings in sentence case, no colon pattern; "however" once, mid-sentence; no "not only"; no paragraph-opening transitions; no 5.1.3 hedges; no rhetorical openings or formula closings (the numbered board questions are an executable set under 5.2.1).

Banned word: section 7 "65% of buyers who self-navigated [E261]", unquoted; "navigate" is banned in any sense. The title "Navigating the Jagged Technological Frontier" is a proper name and exempt.

Antithesis: no leading "this is not X, it is Y" found. Eight trailing "X, not Y" constructions in the author's voice: section 3 "it comes from Gartner, not from a vendor"; section 5 "set by the manager, not the vendor" and "not because the buyer had moved"; section 6 "a spread of definitions, not of companies"; section 7 "a direction, not a time series" and "a change of denominator, not a trend"; section 11 "These are conditions, not predictions"; section 12 "the ramp and the floor, not the senior seller". Section 1 defines by negation twice: "the evidence used to justify it is not" and "it is not where the vendors point". Restate positively unless the negative does real work.

Self-narration: section 5 "Start with size." and "Then time."; section 4 "Now the convergence."; section 9 "Now the arithmetic a board rarely does." and "That is worth a pause."; "First, … Second, … Third," in sections 1 and 8. Delete them.

Runs of three or more sentences with the same opener (ten): section 2 "Grade A … Grade E" (five) and "No field experiment … No independent source … No dataset"; section 3 paragraphs 6 and 7; section 6 Wells Fargo paragraph and "The record says … The dashboards are full. The quota is missed."; section 7 rep-free paragraph and "In the UK … In the United States … In the European Union"; section 11 closing and section 12 opening paragraphs. Section 12 also builds all eight recommendation paragraphs on one template ("The preference is … The reason is …"), the uniformity 5.17 warns against.

Triads judged rhythmic rather than true counts: section 1 "to-go coverage, win rate by source and deal quality by buying path" (section 12 gives a different third item, "stage conversion"); sections 1 and 6 "The dashboards are full. The quota is missed. That is pipeline theatre"; section 5 "The stack is large, partly used and distrusted" and "Sellers leave, managers change, a CRO lasts two years"; section 4 "Four transformations a year, a leader with under two years in post and a process"; section 6 "Activity (calls, emails, meetings booked)" where E137 lists four; section 8 "structured, high-volume, low-judgement work" and "It lifts the floor …; it handles …; and it degrades"; section 9 "the most instruments, the most turnover and the least patience" and "reports more, sells less, and keeps"; section 10 "the strengths are mostly …, the threats are mostly …, and the opportunities all"; section 11 table "cost rises, outcomes stay flat, overwhelm rises".

Movable paragraphs: section 11 opening ("These are conditions, not predictions. Each names the assumption"); section 10 opening; section 2 paragraphs 3 and 4.

Synonym cycling: section 2 fixes "sellers" and promises "reps" only as quoted, yet the author's voice uses "representative" for the same person: section 7 "a representative who makes sense of contradictory information", section 11 "time with representatives", section 12 "the buyer rates a representative"; "rep-free" and "rep-led" run unquoted throughout. "Chief revenue officer" (8) alternates with "CRO" (22) after definition. Attribution verbs cycle in section 4 ("describes ... asserts ... records ... argued ... wrote ... added") and section 6 ("observed ... says ... gave").

Acronyms never expanded: "SPF, DKIM and DMARC" and "CAN-SPAM" (section 7); "MIT NANDA" and "CSO survey" (section 8 table); "UK", "US", "Q1" to "Q4".

F. Reasoning (4 checks run: every summary claim traced to the body; hypothesis tags; threshold tags; conflict and gap tag ids and format)

Summary claims the body does not support: items 2 to 5. Also section 1 "four in five organisations in every survey that asks" rests on two vendor surveys while the section 6 table shows others asking differently (E124); write "in the two surveys that ask". Section 1 "fell between 2022 and 2026" where two of the three series end in 2024 and 2025.

H01 to H03 each name a test (X01 to X03). The one threshold tag misstates who set it (item 14). Every DATA CONFLICT and DATA GAP tag carries an id and every id exists in the logs, but 21 tags carry the id alone without the "what is missing / decision" text 2.9.1 requires (G12, G18, G21, G29, G45, G50, G55, G77, G86, G88, C24, C35, C42, C53 and repeats), and section 1 uses a bare "[G50]". Section 9's "[INFERENCE: derived from E355, E199, E132 and E042]" chains five causal steps where 2.6.1 allows one; rewrite as a judgement with the entry behind each step.

G. Accessibility (3 checks run: table header rows and column consistency; heading levels; colour)

All seven tables have a header row and a consistent column count. Headings are all level 2, in order; the body carries no level 1 title, which the assembled document must supply. No meaning is carried by colour.

H. Rubric scores

1. Evidence base: 3. Of 254 cited entries, 167 (66%) are grade A to C and 83 (33%) grade D, with 36 corroborated and 72 single source; the section 12 recommendations rest on 34 entries, 12 of them grade D. Gaps and conflicts are disclosed well and vendor material is labelled, but the "single source" label is selective, two grade E figures are printed, and the summary overstates in four places.

1. Writing and accessibility: 4. Clean on dashes, spelling, contractions, hedges, banned phrases, closings and Markdown emphasis, with visibly varied sentence length; it loses a point for one banned word, scaffolding sentences, ten same-opener runs, a templated section 12, rhythmic triads, the "X, not Y" habit and seller/representative cycling that breaks the paper's own convention.