

# Sales in Focus Report '24

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**ARKTIC FOX**

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# REPORT METHODOLOGY

The **Sales in Focus Study '24** interviewed 28 Sales Leaders operating within local and globally owned businesses across Australia, across an array of industries. These leaders collectively represented over 5,000 sales professionals.

## **This study explores the following key areas:**

- The strategic sales priorities, key challenges, and digital trends facing sales leaders and teams in the next 12 - 18 months;
- Sales training priorities, key capability gaps and investment;
- A deep dive into sales operations along with the size and remit of the function;
- The relationship with marketing, alignment and friction points;
- SalesTech priority investment areas.

The data within this report was sourced via 60+ minute in-depth interviews containing 15 questions and discussion areas.

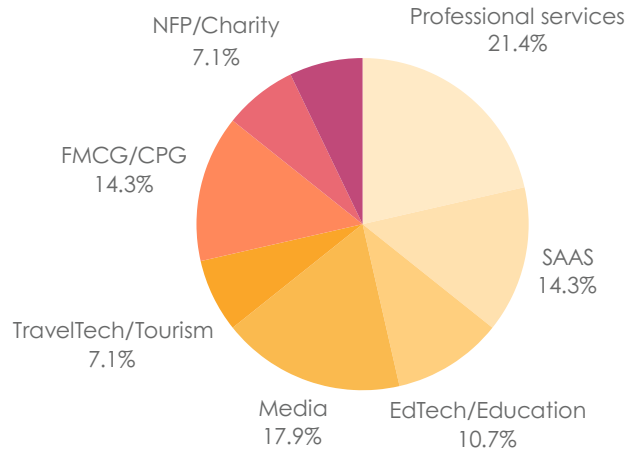
Responses were collected from the 15th of December 2023 to the 26th of March 2024.



# RESPONDENT PROFILE

## INDUSTRY

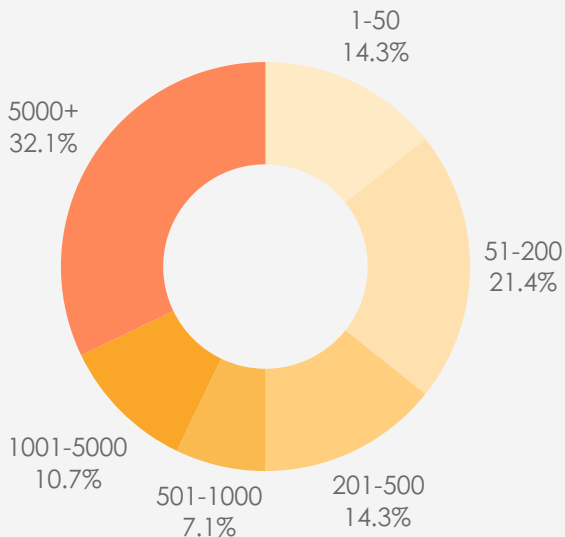
Sales Leaders spanned across a diverse range of industries with professional services, SAAS and FMCG/CPG making up nearly 50% of respondents.



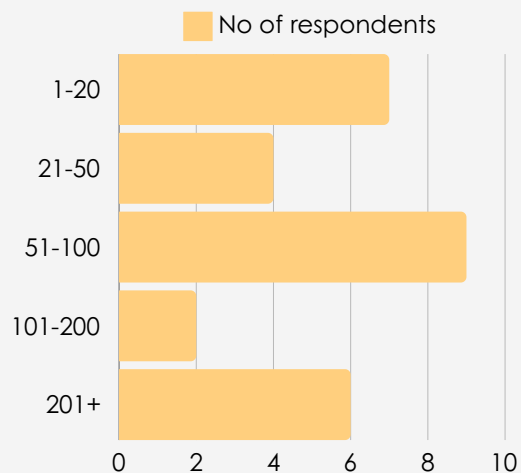
## SIZE OF ORG & SALES TEAM

Enterprise and large corporates made up more than 32% of respondents, while size of sales teams were mostly 100 reps or below. Overall, Sales Leaders surveyed represented over 5,000 sales professionals nationally.

### Size of Organisation



### Size of Sales Team





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# A WORD FROM US

Welcome to our inaugural Sales in Focus Study for 2024.

Managing a sales team in the digital age is challenging for Sales and Business Leaders. With a changing B2B buyer together with rising competition and a challenging economic environment, businesses must change and evolve like never before.

The study aims to shine a light on the important issues and opportunities facing sales teams across a broad cross section of industries and organisation sizes. At Arctic Fox we believe that by creating rich insights for the industry, we can help to foster a sales environment to enable businesses to better compete in today's environment as well as accelerate the change required to win in today's age.

With a more uncertain economic outlook and greater competitive threats, the report points to leaders placing a heightened importance on driving growth via new customer acquisition as well as deepening relationships with existing customers and doing so more effectively and efficiently. The role of AI to streamline processes to allow sales professionals to focus on the activities that matter such as prospecting, pipeline building, and customer conversations, was a key theme raised by more than half of all sales leaders interviewed, with most still in the early phases of adoption.

Sales capability gaps varied across teams and organisations with most reporting core foundational sales skills such as the discovery conversation, solution selling and negotiation skills as key areas requiring attention, with many leaders reporting that they are getting back to the basics on the training front. Digital literacy was another key gap reported together with business acumen, as sales professionals are expected to understand more about the businesses they are selling into, given the wide range of decision makers and more sophisticated buyers in market.

Whilst this is the case, nearly half of all teams don't have a dedicated training and development budget to develop their people and must tap into a global or central budget on an as needed basis.

[...]



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[...]

The partnership between sales and marketing is becoming closer than ever before but there are still friction points evident with more than 50% of leaders reporting a 3 out of 5 rating of moderately effective or less. Marketing's failure to understand the customer, and both sales and marketing's failure to deeply understand the role and value each other brings is primarily responsible for this situation. Those who rated the relationship as highly effective had characteristics of shared priorities and shared KPIs. As the buyer experience increasingly occurs online, sales and marketing teams must collaborate and partner more than ever. As a result of this, one of the key trends we are observing in markets is the rise of the chief Revenue or Commercial Officer, who oversees both sales and marketing to break down barriers between the teams and focus the business on the connected customer experience.

Lastly the industry continues to invest in CRMs as the primary technology to support sales, but we also observe investment in other priority areas including sales enablement for content, conversational intelligence for coaching and customer insight purposes, and a continued investment in data and analytics technology to support centralised customer data and enhanced insights for both reporting and performance, and for delivering ROI to customers.

We hope you enjoy our first Sales in Focus Study. We look forward to continuing to evolve the research ongoing and want to thank everyone who participated, your insights and perspectives are invaluable.



Yours sincerely,

**Petra Sprekos**

**Co-director & Co-founder, Arctic Fox**



**ARKTIC FOX**

# A WORD FROM OUR GOLD SPONSOR **SEISMIC**

The economic rollercoaster has continued for most businesses. From budget cuts and tech consolidation efforts to heavy-hearted layoffs and general global turbulence, 2024 has forced Sales Leaders to double down on what they can control.

It's not all doom and gloom; the future of sales is continuing to evolve with rapid advancement in technology. Building strong relationships and understanding customer needs will remain crucial, but the methods of engagement and tools used to facilitate customer facing teams is undergoing significant changes.

Looking ahead, the report highlights that investments in sales technology, particularly in CRM systems and tools for enablement, customer intelligence and coaching, will emerge as prominent themes over the next 12-18 months.

As you dive into the Sales in Focus Study 2024 it explores several key priorities and challenges facing sales leaders. What is evident, central to navigating this evolving landscape is the utilisation of data and analytics to drive informed decision-making and optimise the customer experience. Ensuring adeptness in the discovery and qualification process becomes imperative for steering conversations towards fruitful outcomes. What excites me most is seeing the evolution of AI when infused into every step of seller's workflows to help discover, create, automate, and advise is fast becoming the foundation to drive better buying engagement for modern selling practices.



Yours sincerely,  
Daniel Lodge  
**APAC Vice President**





**ARKTIC FOX**

# A WORD FROM OUR SILVER SPONSOR **SIX DEGREES EXECUTIVE**

Like most industries in Australia the B2B landscape has not been immune to strong headwinds, with challenging economic conditions, high interest rates and the cost of living which are more broadly impacting the job market. Rapid organisational growth throughout Covid has demonstrated over time that this resource investment may not have delivered as expected for many organisations. The additional headcount acquired to manage increased activity lacked the fundamentals of traditional sales skills and as the market has started to normalise this skill gap has become more evident.

This research has highlighted the need to go back to basics and retrain sales reps on traditional selling skills whilst upskilling to have a solution focused mindset. In addition, the business acumen of sales reps is crucial in identifying problems for customers in order to demonstrate value to customers, especially at the top of the funnel where the customer has become more discerning. Digital transformation and the new buyer has changed the way things were traditionally done. There has been a shift in the way customers acquire and digest information which then changed the way how leads are brought in. This multi-channel approach means that not only are buyers more savvy and often have formed strong views on the type of suppliers they want to work with, but has widened the remit of the sales environment.

Diversification of channels and additional customer touchpoints mean sales teams need to be aligned strongly to marketing and other functions within the organisation to provide a seamless experience and operate effectively and this is reflected in the type of talent organisations are currently seeking out. They are looking for a strong track record of demonstrable experience in understanding the marketing function and how leads are generated in order to maximise opportunities. In short, they want proof points that potential talent is high performing with a strong sales mentality in practice across the entire customer lifecycle.

[...]





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[...]

Key capability gaps in digital, and how to utilise the tools and data to win deals need to be addressed as 80% of organisations are looking to invest into their CRM over the coming 12-18 months. We see this leading to increased transparency and information sharing cross-functionally through a CRM mechanism that will help break down any existing siloes between sales and marketing, necessitating a seamless linkage between customer success initiatives and sales strategies. 65% of organisations expect to invest in data and analytics tools, facilitating and opportunity to share KPIs across departments and deliver a unified and cohesive experience across all touch points.

While many believe the downward trend of job opportunities over the last year has been a correction of the post-pandemic boom in the market, we are seeing higher than normal off-market activity. Restructures have been more prevalent due to streamlining of business units and centralisations of roles and teams. As a result there is a lot of talent at the senior end of the market. The behind-the-scenes activity in the market means organisations need to be more connected than ever to these candidates, their sentiment and movements. Working with a specialist recruitment consultant provides an extension of your brand in market with access to an engaged talent network.



Yours sincerely,  
Emma Heffernan  
**Manager - B2B Sales**





ARKTIC FOX

# SALES LEADERS ARE UNLOCKING SUCCESS BY PRIORITISING: ELEVATING **CUSTOMER-CENTRIC STRATEGIES & EXPERIENCES** AND BETTER UTILISING **DATA & EFFECTIVE MEASUREMENT**

*Customer profiling is a key priority for us. We need to move away from set call cycles to a strategic approach that is more focused and personal for our key clients and manage the tail end of the customer base through a different strategy with a more analytical approach using data. Overall, we need to be clear on the offering and strategy for each segment and then determine how we engage them most effectively i.e. which channel resonates with them.*



**JASON MACKENZIE**  
**NATIONAL SALES & MARKETING MANAGER, NOLAN GROUP**



ARKTIC FOX



# TOP 5 SALES PRIORITIES FOR SALES LEADERS & TEAMS IN THE YEAR AHEAD.



## Customer focussed

Understanding the customer including defining ICPs, the size of the market opportunity, competitive position as well as focussing on programs to better serve and target the customers e.g., Account Based Marketing (ABM).



## More effective measurement & attribution

Best use of data to deliver value for customers (external) as well as measuring sales performance and defining key metrics for success (internal).



## Diversifying their product offerings and channels

Expanding and clarifying the value proposition and offering for customer segments.



## Experience evolution and personalisation

Delivering a seamless and personalised experience for the B2B buyer and customer, across the entire buyer journey. Leveraging and aligning technology, product and marketing efforts to deliver on the intended experience.



## Building team capability

Elevating basic sales skills and training to better equip teams to sell in the current environment.



## Customer focus

Understanding the customer and market dynamics is fundamental for sales teams to navigate the ever-changing landscape effectively. This involves delineating the addressable market and determining strategic entry points, alongside crafting an Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) and implementing segmentation strategies. This is a key priority for sales leaders in particular as market conditions tighten and also as competition is more fierce than ever before.

**More than 60% of sales leaders reported that focusing on the right customers that would deliver long term value was a key focus area.** By knowing the customer and market intricately, sales teams can align their efforts with the most promising opportunities, optimising resource allocation and maximising the impact of their initiatives. Some Leaders then talked about the use of Account Based Marketing (ABM) initiatives to deliver personalised service and experiences to customers. By understanding the pain points and needs of customers, sellers can create stronger relationships that ultimately lead to better outcomes and long term growth.

## More effective measurement & attribution

This priority came in two forms, first in performance Indicators (KPIs) and measuring metrics that matter, otherwise known as internal essential tools for sales teams, to gauge their performance and align their activities with broader business objectives. The second form when sales leaders spoke to measurement was centered around demonstration of value to customers through insights, with **over 20% highlighting the need to improve in this area.**

Sales leaders emphasised the critical importance of staying closely attuned to the fundamental sales metrics of pipeline movement, activity levels and forecasts however expressed difficulties in accessing this data, hampering their ability to grasp the true picture of sales performance. With sales teams relying on diverse channels to drive leads and capture market share, Sales Leaders also reported the need to revisit priority data and metrics.

**While the concept of measuring performance isn't new, both resetting and establishing alignment across the entire organisation was identified as a key area of priority.**

Sales Leaders are also prioritising metrics related to buyer engagement, retention rates, and lifetime value. By tracking indicators such as customer satisfaction scores, net promoter scores (NPS), and sentiment analysis from social media or customer reviews, companies can gauge the effectiveness of their sales efforts in fostering long-term relationships and brand loyalty.

Some leaders also spoke to integrating predictive analytics and machine learning algorithms to enable sales teams to anticipate customer needs and behaviors more accurately. By analysing historical data and patterns, organisations can proactively tailor their offerings and outreach strategies to align with evolving market dynamics and individual preferences and also predict churn and other necessary variables when it comes to sales and account growth.



## ARKTIC FOX

[...]

From a buyer perspective, sales teams are also being challenged to deliver greater transparency around value and return from the services and products they have procured. To address the challenge, teams are needing to re-think how they demonstrate value through reporting and measurement for the customer which effectively proves value, strong levels of utilisation amongst others. However to improve transparency and visibility of performance as well as value, the sales organisation needs greater support from product, technology and marketing to bring this to life.

The modern buyer and customer are more discerning and informed than ever before. They expect personalised experiences and solutions tailored to their specific needs and requirements. Therefore, merely presenting data on sales performance, such as revenue generated or units sold as a result of a product and service, may not suffice in illustrating the comprehensive value proposition offered by a product or service.

Furthermore, storytelling and narrative techniques can play a pivotal role in conveying the value proposition to customers in a more compelling manner. Instead of inundating clients with raw data, sales professionals can craft narratives that illustrate how their products or services address specific pain points, deliver tangible benefits, and ultimately contribute to achieving the customer's objectives.

**“While conventional sales metrics remain essential for assessing performance, sales leaders need to recognise the imperative of supplementing these metrics with deeper insights to effectively demonstrate value to customers. In essence businesses must track more of the metrics that customers care about and serve this up as part of the sales process. By embracing a more holistic approach to measurement businesses can foster stronger customer relationships, drive sustainable growth, and differentiate themselves in a competitive marketplace.”**



**PETRA SPREKOS**  
DIRECTOR, ARKTIC FOX



## ARKTIC FOX



A key challenge for us is data and visibility on deep, meaningful and insightful metrics, as we are in the foundation stage of our 10 year strategy, we have limited insight. We are in the early stages of working out what data we require as we build our CRM. For now, having verbal conversations with the sales team across, in conjunction with our newly implemented sales pipeline provides us with the greatest visibility on what's happening in sales.



**EMMA WILKINSON-BEARDS**

HEAD OF SALES

WAVERLEY SOCIAL ENTERPRISES



A key sales priority for the next 12 months is measurability of performance and attribution to provide a deeper level of accountability for our products and the value we provide our customers. Digital players like Google, Meta and Spotify have set a precedence for what advertisers expect. By prioritising measurability and accountability in our sales approach we will not only better align with industry expectations, but also enable us to demonstrate a tangible ROI from reaching the mass audiences of our Metro, Regional and Digital Audio products and make informed decisions to ensure long-term sustainability.



**NICK FLOOD**

NATIONAL SALES DIRECTOR - DIRECT &  
INDEPENDENT AGENCY, ARN



**ARKTIC FOX**

## Diversifying product offerings and channels to add more value and capture new market segments

Sales Leaders reported that with market and competitive pressures, they are actively diversifying their product offerings to add more value and capture new market segments. This naturally necessitates a flexible approach from sales teams, who must be adept at promoting a diverse range of products across various market segments while ensuring a consistent brand experience. Diversification, both at the market and product level, presents both challenges and opportunities for sales teams.

Equally with customers expecting businesses to be present across multiple channels, sales teams must adapt and diversify their lead generation strategies and process to meet these expectations. **According to a report by McKinsey & Company, B2B customers use an average of 10 different channels during their decision-making process. This means that B2B businesses need to have a strong presence across multiple channels to be successful.**

“Collecting the right data on our customers and ensuring we segment our customer database has been pivotal to ensuring our BDMs nationally focus on the right prospects and divert energy where we will get the results we need. Measuring and reporting on the progress and outcomes of our approach then keeps our national sales leaders and BDMs accountable.”



**NICOLE TRIANDOS**

HEAD OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS & ENABLEMENT,  
BROKER DISTRIBUTION, NAB



**ARKTIC FOX**

## Experience evolution and personalisation

The last key priority identified in the study is delivering a seamless and personalised experience, from acquisition to onboarding through to ongoing support. This becomes paramount in retaining customers and fostering long-term loyalty in a competitive market landscape.

B2B buyers are time poor, they have many demands and have little time and patience to establish how to navigate complex and confusing interfaces. **According to research by Gartner, nearly three quarters of B2B buyers today expect the same convenient online experience they get from buying consumer product. And 73% of B2B buyers want and expect B2C like personalisation.**

As B2B buyers have become more sophisticated in their buying approaches and are more informed than ever, many sales teams have failed to adapt, leaving them exposed and delivering far less value in the sales process than they once did. Equally many B2B brands across an array of industries haven't stepped up to the plate to transform the way the buyer is engaged across the buyer journey via digital, so many buyers are making ill-informed purchase decisions. This means sales organisations need to re-think and re-engineer the sales experience to be fit for the modern buyer. The best of breed digital selling experiences are built to be flexible to enable buyers to engage on their terms. For example some segments will be more likely to embrace new digital channels to buy vs others, in instances where showcasing a product is vital, some will be far more likely to want a virtual experience than a physical one, whilst other buyers will want to be able to self-serve digitally. All of this makes it paramount to design experiences around the buyer not design on the basis of how we prefer to sell in market.

**“We have 12,000 customers nationally; we cannot possibly reach all our customers F2F so we need to find unique ways of engaging them and them reaching us. Awareness of product and a good experience is critical, our clients need to be able to self-educate and understand the product and value without a sales rep.**

**SALES LEADER**

PROPTech INDUSTRY





ARKTIC FOX

# NAVIGATING THE TRIPLE THREAT: MARKET CHALLENGES, DISCERNING BUYERS, AND EVOLVING SALES ROLES

The biggest challenges Sales Leaders are facing in the next 12 - 18 months.



**Market conditions impacting sales cycles and sales teams having to do more to win the sale**

Economic conditions are impacting purchasing behaviors and decision-making processes.



**The modern buyer is complex, sophisticated and discerning**

Shifting focus and approach to ABM rather than traditional outreach (essentially focussing on the need to deliver value to the right customer at the right time).



**Widening remit of sales**

The need for ongoing training and development to be more buyer | customer centric, value selling and using data and analytics to inform sales process.



**ARKTIC FOX**

## Market conditions impacting sales cycles and sales teams having to do more to win

Sales Leaders face many challenges in today's dynamic market environment, influenced by broader economic factors. This directly impacts buyer spending habits and purchasing power. As the cost of essential goods and services continues to rise, sales teams must adjust their strategies to resonate with increasingly budget-conscious buyers. This necessitates a delicate balance between maintaining profitability and offering compelling value propositions to prospective buyers.

In response to these market pressures, sales professionals are exerting extra effort in their approach to secure sales. Consequently, sales cycles have elongated, as clients scrutinise purchasing decisions more meticulously and buyers demand greater customisation, demonstration of value and value-added services.

To thrive in this challenging environment, Sales Leaders must foster a culture of adaptability and resilience within their teams. This entails equipping sales professionals with the necessary tools, training, and support to navigate uncertainty and capitalise on emerging opportunities. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation, Sales Leaders can empower their teams to overcome obstacles, drive sustainable growth, and ultimately, achieve long-term success in the dynamic marketplace. But this is not easy with many leaders reporting that this is consuming a lot of time.

## The modern buyer is complex, sophisticated and discerning

Modern buyer behaviour presents a complex challenge for sales professionals, characterised by increased sophistication and evolving preferences. Today's buyers demand more value and substance in their interactions with sales representatives, parting ways with fluff and sales pitches in favor of tangible benefits and solutions that directly address their pain points. Additionally, with a reduction in buyer loyalty, customers are more willing to explore alternatives and switch suppliers if their needs are not adequately met.

Furthermore, the presence of a greater number of decision-makers in the purchasing process adds another layer of complexity, requiring sales professionals to be versatile and adept at navigating a diverse set of stakeholders and tailoring their approach to various influencers and decision makers within the buying organisation. The ability to comprehend the intricacies of each customer interaction and discern where opportunities for value addition lie, becomes indispensable in driving meaningful sales outcomes.



## Widening remit of sales

As sales remits expand, the challenge of upskilling sales teams to adapt to changing market dynamics and customer expectations cannot be understated. **More than 40% of respondents indicated that the remit of sales has expanded, necessitating individuals to stay informed about market trends, buyer behavior, the buyer's business, as well as in some cases, the need for them to have specialised skill sets to not just sell but support implementation and training to secure a sale.** Other leaders referred to the sales reps being like a *Swiss army knife* or *jack of all trades*. Sales professionals require continuous training and development to keep pace with evolving market trends and customer behaviors. This involves not only building and refining core sales skills but also ensuring sales professionals are true experts in the product | service and solution to add value to the process during the sales cycle.

In essence, sales teams must undergo a transformational journey to build new skills and muscles within their teams. Various themes came up in the research including continuous learning and development especially around latest industry trends, adaptability, and flexibility to be able to respond effectively to changing market conditions and customer preferences. This requires a willingness to embrace new methodologies, adopt innovative approaches, and pivot strategies as needed to remain competitive and relevant. Strategic alignment and a customer-centric mindset in order to address the needs, challenges, and aspirations of customers and add value to customer interactions, was a key topic of much discussion throughout the research to stay ahead of the curve in an ever-evolving marketplace. This involves seeking out new ways to deliver value to customers and differentiate themselves from competitors.





# KEY TRENDS & THE DIGITAL DILEMMA: NAVIGATING TIMELY & RELEVANT CONTENT, AI, AND DATA-DRIVEN VALUE FOR SUCCESS

The 2-3 big trends in the digital space that keep leaders up at night.



## Development of timely and relevant content

Utilising online webinars, white papers, and thought leadership alongside sales-conversational content that is timely, relevant, and valuable, paired with automated programs to effectively reach customers. Employing diverse channels that facilitates delivering value both at the top and bottom of the sales funnel.



## AI and automated processes

AI transforming traditional tools, enabling reps to prioritise profitable tasks while engaging multiple channels to cultivate trust, loyalty, and long-term customer relationships, ultimately securing sales.



## Using data to understand churn, drive conversion and loyalty

Customer retention is paramount. Honing-in on usage trends, data points, and customer behavior to effectively drive repeat purchases, upsells, and loyalty.



## **MORE THAN 80% OF BUSINESSES ARE STILL RELYING ON TRADITIONAL OUTBOUND SALES EFFORTS FOR OVER HALF OF THEIR LEADS AND SALES.**

According to **Worldwide Business Research up to 70%** of prospects do their own research before speaking to a sales rep and two thirds are starting their purchase journey online. Whilst according to data from Wundermann Thompsons' 2023 B2B Shopping report, in Australia, 50% of all B2B purchasing is now occurring online and by 2028 it is expected to reach 55%. Despite this, many B2B brands are still operating and utilising more traditional channels and approaches to sell even though the market has demonstrably shifted.

In an era where digital is more pervasive in every aspect of the buying process, our aim was to pinpoint the pivotal digital trends that are currently preoccupying sales leaders. As digital tools and platforms continue to reshape the landscape of sales and customer engagement, sales leaders face mounting pressure to adapt and innovate to maintain competitiveness and drive revenue growth.

## **THERE IS A GROWING RECOGNITION OF THE NEED TO ADAPT TO CHANGING MARKET DYNAMICS AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOURS AND THE NEED TO USE DIGITAL TO ENGAGE WITH CUSTOMERS MORE EFFECTIVELY.**

### **Development of timely and relevant content**

While the traditional sales model has persisted over time, with outbound sales efforts continuing to dominate lead generation strategies, there's a noticeable evolution occurring in how these efforts are executed. In the digital realm, thought leadership has emerged as a significant focal point for sales professionals and businesses aiming to position themselves effectively at the top of the sales funnel across diverse channels. The emphasis on timely, relevant and valuable content, complemented by webinars and events, remains a cornerstone strategy for lead generation and showcasing value propositions. These initiatives serve not only to capture the attention of potential leads but also to establish credibility and authority within the industry.



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In today's market we use digital to meet the customers at the top of the funnel, when they usually haven't identified that they have a problem, and we highlight the problem as a trusted advisor.

**SALES LEADER**  
SAAS INDUSTRY

To continue to build strategic customer relationships - we use research, white papers, insights and value we can share via email, webinars and digitally. This is how we remain close to our customers. This allows us to deliver on the need to have tight alignment on value proposition and differentiation to competition. We really need to be clear about how we are different and the value we derive for each of our customer segments. We know our value in pockets but we need to be clear on this and have this guide everything we do and digital helps us do this at scale.

**SALES LEADER**  
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES INDUSTRY



**ARKTIC FOX**

## AI and automated processes

Despite the excitement surrounding the opportunity to leverage AI to enhance sales processes, there's apprehension about the disruptive nature of the technology. **While over 50% of respondents expressed enthusiasm for AI, there's a widespread concern about managing the accompanying changes effectively.** The selection of the right tools becomes paramount in ensuring that AI not only enhances productivity but also alleviates the mounting workload on sales professionals. Striking the delicate balance between leveraging AI for its transformative potential and preventing it from exacerbating existing challenges is crucial for sustainable success in the sales domain.

Sales professionals are now faced with a myriad of touchpoints and channels through which they must engage potential customers, coupled with increasing demands from existing clients to deliver personalised and timely solutions. In response to these challenges, businesses are developing automated processes and leveraging a combination of touch points to augment their outbound sales efforts.

By harnessing automation tools and technologies, sales teams can streamline repetitive tasks, allowing them to allocate more time and resources towards nurturing leads and building meaningful relationships with prospects and existing customers. Furthermore, the integration of various channels, such as social media, email and lifecycle marketing as well as targeted advertising, enables sales professionals to engage with potential customers across different platforms and stages of the buying journey.

**Continuing to refine the onboarding process and using automation to onboard our clients, this is where the park experience online is important. Our goal is to enable our clients to be as self-sufficient as possible, so we can spend more time adding value.**



**LOUISA DAY**

GENERAL MANAGER PARK SUCCESS, BIG4 HOLIDAY PARKS



**ARKTIC FOX**

## Using data to understand churn, drive purchase and loyalty

In the current dynamic business landscape, characterised by fierce competition and rapidly evolving consumer preferences, the concept of managing the "leaky bucket" has become increasingly crucial for sustainable growth and profitability.

With markets saturated and customer acquisition costs soaring, Sales Leaders have reported that businesses are recognising the importance of not only attracting new customers but also retaining existing ones. This requires a strategic shift towards prioritising quality over quantity in sales efforts and this ties in with the earlier priority around customer focus. Rather than focusing solely on securing short-term gains from transient sales, companies are placing greater emphasis on identifying and nurturing long-term customer relationships. By discerning which sales are likely to be fleeting and which have the potential for enduring loyalty, organisations can allocate resources more efficiently and effectively.

Central to managing the leaky bucket is the proactive identification and mitigation of churn. Harnessing the power of analytics and predictive modeling, businesses can anticipate churn patterns and implement preemptive measures to mitigate its impact. Through the adoption of predictive capabilities, companies can sift through vast troves of customer data to identify signs of disengagement, such as declining purchase frequency or waning interaction with the brand, product or service. Some leaders have reported that they have implemented health scores for their customers and this in turn dictates focus areas for the customer teams. Armed with these insights, organisations can tailor personalised retention strategies, ranging from targeted promotional offers to enhanced customer service initiatives, aimed at improving customer interest and loyalty. Moreover, fostering meaningful engagement and rapport with customers, companies can cultivate a sense of loyalty and advocacy.

**“Usage is a huge trend and top priority for SAAS companies, because in a tough market it's harder to bring new customers on board, you need to hang on to the existing by helping customers get the best out of your product and service. We work so hard at acquiring customers these days, but we need to work just as hard to onboard and retain them - therefore the early lifecycle is critical as part of our sales strategy, and we use data and automation to stay on top of this.”**





**SALES LEADER**  
SAAS INDUSTRY





# BRIDGING THE DIVIDE: IDENTIFYING CAPABILITY GAPS & TRAINING PRIORITIES

The top 4 capability gaps that exist in sales businesses today.

 <b>Basic sales skills</b>	 <b>Data &amp; analytics</b>	 <b>Digital literacy</b>	 <b>Soft skills</b>
<p>The fundamental sales skill gaps identified include: effective lead qualification, discovery calls, prospecting, lead management, negotiating the sale, closing, and solution selling.</p>	<p>The need to connect insights to commercial needs and outcomes. Teaching sales reps how to identify problems for customers and how to use data to effectively identify opportunities and deliver value to the customer.</p>	<p>Understanding the digital customer and how to use digital to enable the sale including all the salesTech required to underpin effective selling i.e. CRMs, LinkedIn, Sales Nav, prospecting tools.</p>	<p>Resilience in today's market together with collaboration and sharing knowledge to improve outcomes for the buyer.</p>



## 80% OF LEADERS CITED CORE SELLING SKILLS ARE ABSENT.

When asked about the top capability gaps that exist within the sales business today, it was clear foundational skills are still lacking within teams. There's a notable emphasis on revisiting the foundational elements of selling, encompassing both hard and soft skills as more than 80% of sales leaders reported that basic selling skills are lacking in their sales organisation. These skill gaps include the ability for sales professionals to qualify leads and opportunities, undertake discovery calls, effectively prospect and manage leads, negotiate the sale, close and solution selling.

Alongside of these core skills, leaders are looking to bolstering skills around data and analytics to improve decision making. Simultaneously, there's a concerted effort to enhance awareness and comprehension of emerging trends and technologies, particularly in the digital realm. **McKinsey & Company's recent research suggests 97% of B2B sales organisations rank re-skilling as their top priority so it's no wonder that re-skilling teams is high on the agenda for sales leaders today.**

“There are distinct challenges for sales having to manage online and offline channels. They are now required to assist sales driven from the customer and meet them where they are. Some reps don't know how to do this and the integration can be messy, disjointed or complicated. This is all very different to taking an order.



**ANDREW WYNNE**  
EXECUTIVE SALES, NAB

**FORBES RESEARCH SHOWS 55% OF SALESPEOPLE LACK THE BASIC SALES SKILLS TODAY, AND FORRESTER SUGGESTS 85% OF BUYERS REPORT SALES ENGAGEMENTS FAIL TO MEET EXPECTATIONS.**

“My team have not come from a structured selling background, they have come from fashion, so don't have strong skills in negotiation and P&L management. These are areas they are lacking.

**SALES LEADER**  
RETAIL INDUSTRY



## **ACCORDING TO SALES COACH GRAHAM HAWKINS, TO IMPROVE SALES PERFORMANCE YOU NEED TO *BEGIN BY GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT.***

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, returning to the fundamentals of sales training is important to navigate the shifting dynamics of consumer behavior and preferences. The advent of digital technologies has revolutionised the way people research, interact, and make purchasing decisions, reshaping the traditional sales paradigm in profound ways. As such, sales professionals must adapt their approaches to align with the new realities of the digital age. With access to a wealth of information at their fingertips, modern consumers are more informed, discerning, and empowered than ever before. They conduct extensive research online, seek out peer reviews and recommendations, and engage with brands across multiple digital touchpoints before making a purchase decision. Consequently, the traditional sales model, characterised by one-way communication and a focus on pitching products or services, is no longer effective in capturing the attention and trust of today's digitally savvy buyers.

Sales training must place a greater emphasis on understanding and adapting to the evolving needs and preferences of the modern buyer. This involves adopting a customer-centric approach that prioritises building meaningful relationships, providing value-added insights, and delivering personalised experiences tailored to each individual's unique requirements. Sales professionals must become adept at engaging with buyers across various digital channels, including social media, email, chat platforms, and websites, to meet them where they are and deliver relevant messaging that resonates with their interests and pain points.

Furthermore, the rise of e-commerce and online marketplaces has transformed the way products and services are bought and sold, presenting both challenges and opportunities for sales professionals. Sales training must address the nuances of selling in the digital realm, including understanding online purchasing behaviors, optimising product listings for search visibility, and leveraging digital marketing tactics to attract and convert leads. While this is for certain industries such as SAAS, tech, FMCGs, CPS and media – it comes down to the expectations of buyers – and the more you know the more value you can add. Additionally, sales professionals must become proficient in virtual selling techniques, such as video conferencing, webinars, and online demos, to effectively engage with prospects and close deals in a remote environment.



## Skill gaps in data and analytics to drive business acumen

Commercial acumen also featured within the top areas of focus for skills development, with leaders expressing limited capability of sales teams to harness data effectively and connect it to buyer problems to create meaningful opportunities. In today's dynamic business environment, where the buyer journey is increasingly complex and multifaceted, the ability to connect data, ideas, and performance to commercial needs and outcomes is paramount.

Commercial acumen empowers sales teams to quantify the value of their offerings in terms of tangible business outcomes. By articulating the financial impact and ROI of their solutions, sales professionals can build credibility, instil confidence, and justify investment decisions for prospective buyers. This requires a nuanced understanding of commercial financial metrics, enabling sales teams to frame their value proposition in a language that resonates with key stakeholders and decision-makers.

Some leaders also spoke to sales teams requiring skills in data analysis to craft strategies that enhance their own sales territory and market understanding at the individual representative level. This enables the sales rep to strategically plan where to invest their time, energy and effort based on spend, usage and other related characteristics.

**“There are quite a few gaps in our sales organisation, first digital capability i.e. utilising platforms like Salesforce to do business. Sales foundational skills such as closing the deal, having a difficult conversation with a customer on price, thinking outside the box | problem solving, undertaking customer research, and finding a reason to engage with the customer are all clear gaps. Sales reps also need to be armed with meaningful insights to add value. This is a real gap.”**

**SALES LEADER**  
CPG INDUSTRY



## Digital literacy gaps

The study also showed there is still a way to go to build digital literacy within the sales industry, and these literacy gaps are likely to hamper progress on effective sales strategy and effective use of tactics to reach prospects and customers at the right time with the right message. When we delved into the aspects leaders and teams are finding most difficult to navigate when it comes to digital, it was clear knowledge of the best and most appropriate channels to engage the buyer and how best to leverage those channels were key gaps.

The research findings also show critical skill gaps within sales teams related to the understanding and utilisation of technology and platforms that are core to sales success including Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, LinkedIn, Sales Navigator, and other prospecting tools. Surprisingly, **over 40% of sales leaders identified this as a key skills gap**, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive training and support in leveraging these channels and platforms effectively.

Furthermore, the resistance of some sales teams to embrace digital platforms exacerbates the issue. Despite the undeniable benefits of digitisation in streamlining sales processes, enhancing productivity, and expanding reach, there remains a reluctance among certain sales professionals to adopt these technologies. This resistance may stem from a fear of change, a lack of understanding of the platforms' capabilities, increased visibility of activity, or concerns about job security in an increasingly automated landscape.

**Our sales team don't fully understand the shift in buyer behaviour to online, they don't have time to think about it. Due to time constraints, they are focused on bigger customers but probably don't get access to or understand the insights.**

**SALES LEADER**  
RETAIL INDUSTRY



## **SALES TEAMS ARE OFTEN EDUCATED ABOUT THE WHAT AND NOT THE WHY WHEN IT COMES TO SALES TECHNOLOGY. THIS IS SOMETHING SALES LEADERS NEED TO STEER AS PART OF SALES ENABLEMENT AND TRAINING APPROACH.**

Addressing this challenge requires a multifaceted approach combining education, training, evolution of performance metrics and cultural change within sales organisations. Sales Leaders must prioritise initiatives aimed at demystifying digital tools, providing hands-on training sessions, and showcasing real-world examples of successful implementation.

Moreover, fostering a culture of innovation and continuous learning can help alleviate resistance and encourage sales teams to embrace digital platforms as valuable assets in their sales arsenal.

## **INTERESTINGLY THE RESEARCH SHOWED THAT MORE THAN 50% OF SALES LEADERS DON'T HAVE A DEDICATED TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT BUDGET TO DEVELOP THEIR PEOPLE.**

Whilst budgets for training are available at a central level, some leaders spoke to the need to prepare business cases to tap into it.

Sales Leaders play a pivotal role in championing the adoption of digital platforms by leading by example and highlighting the tangible benefits for individual sales professionals and the organisation. By demonstrating how these tools can streamline workflows, improve prospecting efficiency, and drive revenue growth, Sales Leaders can instil confidence and enthusiasm among their teams to embrace digital transformation, as well as substantiate ongoing investment in these areas to drive sustainable growth.



ARKTIC FOX

## THE RISE OF SALES OPERATIONS

**65% of leaders reported having a dedicated sales operations function, however many teams have too narrow a focus.**



## ACCORDING TO GARTNER, SALES OPERATIONS FUNCTIONS ARE GROWING IN IMPORTANCE AND THEIR REMIT IS EXPANDING.

With the changes in the selling landscape, along with technological advances, this requires sales operations to elevate its role in shaping sales strategy and building foundational capability. The evolving sales remit however has implications for the structure, size and capabilities of sales operations teams. The growing need for better reporting and therefore analytics skills as well as the need to better leverage technology to improve performance, decision making and efficiency for sales reps, increases the importance of building an operations team with a more diverse skill set and one that is effectively resourced to play its role. While the needs of all companies are unique, Sales and Sales Operations leaders must consider these broad changes as they make decisions about scope, structure, and size of their teams.

Out of the Sales Leaders surveyed, **65% reported having a dedicated sales operations function within their organisations.** However, the size, remit and maturity of these organisations greatly determines the level of influence and value they deliver for the sales function. Notably, the composition and responsibilities of these teams varied considerably based on factors such as complexity of the product and sales cycle, sales team size, industry, and stage of growth.

Where there was a larger sales team, and in instances where it is more difficult to deliver a more repeatable and consistent sales process in the market, is where we saw sales operation functions more prevalent encompassing a remit that included sales enablement and training, commission management, and broader Go-to-Market (GTM) functions like revenue and growth marketing. This evolution reflects a strategic shift towards integrating sales operations more comprehensively into the overall sales and marketing strategy, thereby enhancing organisational efficiency and effectiveness in driving revenue growth.

**BY AND LARGE CPGS, FMCG, NFPS AND MEDIA ORGANISATIONS DEMONSTRATED LESS MATURITY IN SALES OPERATIONS AND THE FUNCTIONS WERE NARROWER IN SCOPE.**

**TECH BASED BUSINESSES, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND SAAS ORGANISATIONS HAVE MORE SOPHISTICATED SALES PROCESSES AND POSSESS LARGER, MORE WELL DEFINED SALES OPERATIONS FUNCTIONS.**





## ARKTIC FOX

The proliferation of the number of sources of data available and increasing number of data and analytics tools to leverage has elevated the importance of sales operations in driving data-driven decision-making. In both mature and traditional sales organisations, there's a growing recognition of the immense value that data and insights can offer in optimising sales performance and enhancing customer engagement. Sales operations teams are tasked with aggregating, analysing, and interpreting vast volumes of sales data to derive actionable insights that inform strategic decision-making. For example, in the retail industry, sales operations teams leverage analytics to identify trends in consumer behavior, optimise pricing strategies, and forecast demand more accurately. By harnessing the power of insights, sales operations divisions empower sales teams to make informed decisions, refine their approach to customer interactions, and ultimately drive revenue growth. We see this role evolving further into an increasingly indispensable pillar of success.





ARKTIC FOX

## THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SALES & MARKETING

**50% of sales leaders rate their working relationship with marketing as neutral or ineffective.**



## ARKTIC FOX

Half of the respondents rated the working relationship between sales and marketing as highly effective, rating it 5 out of 5. Conversely, the remaining **50% rated their working relationship with marketing as neutral or ineffective, with scores of 3 out of 5 or below.**

In part, the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the relationship with marketing stems from the perception that marketing has an inadequate understanding of the customer and / or local market / vertical knowledge. Without a strong understanding of the customer, it makes it more difficult for marketers to;

- Identify and focus on the initiatives that will materially shift the dial;
- Undertake effective lead generation and ABM initiatives that deliver the right / and high quality leads and;
- Be able to develop effective communications and initiatives that cut through and will connect with the audience.

Given sales' proximity to buyers and customers, marketing must bring additional value to the table beyond the existing knowledge of the sales team. Some leaders reported that sales still need to prepare their own content as marketing doesn't hit the mark.



**Our relationship with marketing is fractured because a couple of years ago our business crafted a central marketing team. As a global business, marketing does not understand the local market. While we do have a local marketing presence, it's only one person, and we are feeding things back, but it was not getting heard. We get knocked back because it doesn't align with the brand globally. Marketing simply does not want to get to know the local market.**

### SALES LEADER

EDUCATION INDUSTRY



**ARKTIC FOX**

**SALES TEAMS, DRIVEN BY THEIR DIRECT INTERACTIONS WITH CUSTOMERS, OFTEN POSSESS INVALUABLE INSIGHTS INTO CUSTOMER PAIN POINTS, OBJECTIONS, AND MOTIVATIONS. THIS, COMBINED WITH A LACK OF TRUST IN MARKETING TEAMS TO FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS AND THEIR ABILITY TO DELIVER, OFTEN RESULTS IN SALES REPS TAKING MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS, EXECUTING MARKETING TASKS INDEPENDENTLY TO DELIVER ON THEIR SALES OBJECTIVES.**

**THIS SILOED APPROACH NOT ONLY UNDERMINES THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING INITIATIVES BUT ALSO DETRACTS FROM SALES PROFESSIONALS' PRIMARY FOCUS ON CLOSING DEALS AND NURTURING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS.**

The effectiveness of marketing in devising compelling campaigns and experience strategies heavily relies on their deep understanding of the target audience's needs, preferences, and behaviors. The traditional route to market has changed, and the buyer is spending enormous time researching up front. It's crucial for businesses to ensure they are effectively reaching and engaging buyers during this phase.

Furthermore, marketing has a pivotal role in equipping sales teams with the necessary tools and resources to effectively sell solutions beyond collateral. By leveraging their understanding of customer needs and market trends, marketers can provide sales professionals with valuable insights and differentiated offerings that resonate with the target audience. This collaborative approach ensures that sales teams are equipped to deliver unique value propositions and address customer pain points effectively, thereby enhancing the overall sales process and driving sustainable growth.

Sales teams must also transcend the reliance on marketing solely for collateral and sales materials and avoid reducing their role to that of a mere design service. It's imperative to afford marketing the autonomy and latitude to craft marketing strategies that align with the overarching objectives of the business, rather than catering exclusively to individual sales team member needs and preferences. By granting marketing the space and trust to strategise, organisations' can foster a more integrated and effective approach to driving business success.

Sales teams can significantly benefit from leveraging marketing expertise to enhance their understanding of customers and foster collaboration. By working together, sales and marketing can develop a shared understanding of the customer journey, enabling them to align strategies and efforts more effectively. This collaboration empowers teams to identify key touchpoints, anticipate customer needs, and tailor interactions accordingly, ultimately leading to the creation of a more seamless and satisfying buyer experience.



**ARKTIC FOX**

## Sales lack of understanding of marketing and the value it derives and road maps

**MORE THAN 40% OF SALES LEADERS HAVE RECOGNISED A SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE GAP REGARDING THE FUNCTIONS OF MARKETING AND THE VARIOUS CHANNELS IT LEVERAGES.**

This gap highlights a critical deficiency in cross-departmental collaboration within organisations. Sales professionals often lack insight into the value and intricacies of marketing efforts, which impedes effective coordination between the two departments and often means marketing is not engaged early in instances where strategies are being developed and defined. This challenge of mutual understanding between sales and marketing has persisted over time and continues to pose a substantial obstacle. Despite advancements in communication and technology, the disconnect between these departments remains palpable. Addressing this issue requires proactive efforts from both sides to bridge the gap.



**We always get there with marketing, but getting there can be a lot of work. Visibility and understanding of roadmaps are a big issue, marketing has limited visibility of what our plans are and to be fair they are asked to do things that they don't understand. There is a lack of understanding of what's required from a sales point of view to get what we need, there are knowledge gaps as well in marketing and leaders need to do more work at providing that level of understanding, so support is relevant and effective. Ownership of tasks and being clear on responsibilities is also a point of contention. It feels very disjointed between the teams.**

**SALES LEADER**  
MEDIA INDUSTRY



**ARKTIC FOX**

## Need for co-creation of strategy and alignment of priorities

It was also reported that there is still misalignment of goals and priorities between the two departments. While both sales and marketing ultimately aim to drive revenue and foster customer relationships, they often operate within distinct silos with divergent objectives. Misalignment can lead to friction and misunderstandings, as each department may perceive the other as hindering rather than facilitating their respective goals which was reported by 20% of leaders.

Collaborative strategy co-creation and alignment of priorities is therefore pivotal for driving successful outcomes. When departments operate in silos, it can lead to wasted efforts and re-work, fragmented messaging, inconsistent branding, and missed chances to capitalise on synergies between sales and marketing endeavors. For instance, marketing might craft compelling campaigns and generate high-quality leads, only to discover that sales teams lack the requisite insights or resources to pursue these leads effectively. Conversely, sales teams may struggle to relay customer feedback and insights to marketing, hindering the refinement of marketing strategies and messaging.

**To be successful in the tech industry, sales teams need to know how to bring others into the sales process, they don't know everything, but need to bring other members of the organisation into the fold at the right time to win the deal. Some of them don't know how to do this.**



**WILL GRIFFITH**  
HEAD OF SALES  
TEALIUM



## The need for shared KPIs

As previously outlined, **50% of respondents report diminished friction between sales and marketing when there are shared KPIs.** This underscores a fundamental truth about organisational dynamics: shared goals foster collaboration and alignment. When sales and marketing teams are measured against the same metrics and objectives, they are naturally incentivised to work together towards common outcomes and are far less likely to encounter competing priorities. Shared KPIs create a unified understanding of success, breaking down barriers and fostering a sense of camaraderie rather than competition between the two departments. This alignment encourages open communication, facilitates knowledge sharing, and promotes a collective focus on driving revenue and achieving business objectives. Furthermore, shared KPIs promote accountability and mutual responsibility, as both sales and marketing recognise their interdependence in influencing the buyer journey and ultimately contributing to the company's bottom line. In essence, the presence of shared KPIs not only mitigates friction but also cultivates a more cohesive and effective revenue generation ecosystem within organisations. Whilst shared KPIs is a critical starting point, teams must also ensure there are regular cadences to review progress and performance and collectively discuss how to adapt and evolve.

**“If we are not measuring sales off the back of marketing activity, marketing budgets get removed as we cannot measure or demonstrate ROI. So, it's important that our activity, messages and measurement of these campaigns are aligned with marketing. This is something we continue to work hard on cross functionally, and something I have personally seen improve considerably over the last couple of years.”**



**NICOLE TRIANDOS**  
HEAD OF STRATEGIC  
PARTNERSHIPS & ENABLEMENT,  
BROKER DISTRIBUTION, NAB



**ARKTIC FOX**



## The emerging trend of sales and marketing under a unified leadership structure

An emerging trend in 20% of organisations is the consolidation of sales and marketing under a unified leadership structure headed by a Chief Revenue Officer (CRO) or a similar executive role. This strategic realignment reflects a recognition of the interconnectedness and symbiotic relationship between sales and marketing functions in driving revenue growth and delivering one unified experience for the buyer. By centralising oversight of both departments, companies aim to foster greater collaboration, alignment, and synergy between sales and marketing efforts.

**MCKINSEY REPORTED IN JANUARY 2024 THAT THE HOTTEST NEW C-SUITE POSITION IS THE CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER (CRO) AND THAT FORTUNE 100 COMPANIES THAT HAVE A CRO-LIKE ROLE SHOW 1.8X HIGHER REVENUE GROWTH THAN THEIR PEERS.**

By breaking down organisational silos and promoting cross-functional collaboration, the CRO can foster a culture of accountability, innovation, and continuous improvement, ultimately enhancing the company's ability to drive sustainable revenue growth in today's competitive marketplace.





# SALESTECH & INVESTMENT AREAS

The CRM remains the cornerstone technology investment for sales teams with more than 80% of Sales Leaders focusing investment and efforts in this tool over the next 12 months.





While the CRM remains top of the list for almost all Sales Leaders when asked about investment areas when it comes to salesTech this was closely followed by investment in data and analytics tools, as well as content management and sales enablement, marketing automation and conversational analytics.

Account-Based Marketing (ABM) technology to underpin ABM efforts also emerged as a pivotal priority for more than a third of the sales leaders interviewed. Among those prioritising ABM, there's a notable emphasis on investing in tools that enhance sales messaging and conversations, regardless of whether they occur in face-to-face interactions or online settings. This strategic approach to marketing offers a range of benefits that contribute to its widespread adoption and effectiveness. This trend sees brands shift towards a more targeted approach to prospecting and demand generation efforts, leveraging data and insights to deliver timely and relevant communications across various channels and more personalised communications and interactions for high value targets.

**THE RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTED THERE'S A GROWING TREND TOWARDS MORE MODEST INVESTMENT IN SALES TECH AS COMPANIES SEEK TO CONSOLIDATE OPERATIONS AND MITIGATE THE RISK OF OVERBURDENING SALES REPRESENTATIVES.**

Some Sales Leaders reported they were focusing efforts to improve salesTech utilisation through more access and investment in training on key technologies. By taking a more measured approach to salesTech investment, companies can strike the right balance between equipping their sales teams with the tools they need to succeed and ensuring that technology remains an enabler rather than a hindrance to productivity. In doing so, organisations can foster a culture of empowerment and enablement, where sales representatives are equipped with the resources and support they need to thrive in today's increasingly complex and competitive sales landscape.

In addition, leaders also cited increased focus on greater integration of technologies with their core offerings and other systems such as finance. While technology can undoubtedly enhance efficiency and effectiveness, there's a fine line between empowering sales professionals and overwhelming them with excessive demands and distractions.

Finally, aligning the entire business when choosing, implementing, and utilising salesTech is essential for several reasons, primarily to ensure and facilitate seamless integration between platforms as well as to maximise efficiency and optimise outcomes across the entire customer journey. This was also highlighted by some leaders as key to the success of any salesTech procurement.



**ARKTIC FOX**



The amount of information and technology that reps are expected to absorb and learn these days is incredibly large. If you think about a sponge, at some point after taking too much water the sponge cannot absorb any more. Humans are the same, so the challenge reps across all industries face today is to find the one or two things that are going to make a real difference.

**SALES LEADER**  
SAAS INDUSTRY





**ARKTIC FOX**



SalesTech adoption often requires significant investment in terms of time, resources, and training, and it's an ongoing program of work; not a project with an end date. By aligning teams, organisations can pool their expertise and resources to make more informed decisions about which salesTech solutions to invest in, how best to leverage them including where the critical intersection points are, to achieve desired outcomes.

Different business units often have distinct requirements and priorities when it comes to technology selection. By asking all teams for their problems to solve and aligning on use cases (before the technology is selected) will ensure that the chosen salesTech solution supports business-wide goals and objectives. This collaborative approach aligns teams in the decision-making process and enables acceleration of delivery and roll out.



**PETRA SPREKOS**  
DIRECTOR, ARKTIC FOX





## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Whilst digital channels haven't taken over traditional sales methods the reality is more than 60% of buyers start their research online and are well into the sales process by the time they interact with your business. Digital needs to do more than raise awareness at the top of the sales funnel.

Thought leadership remains the linchpin in this landscape, offering avenues for establishing credibility and fostering trust among potential customers.

Central to navigating this evolving landscape is the utilisation of data and analytics to drive informed decision-making, optimise the customer experience and to power personalisation. Moreover, as sales reps are tasked with acquiring deeper insights into customer needs across various departments, there's a heightened emphasis on bolstering digital capabilities alongside foundational selling skills, i.e. the basics, and business acumen. Ensuring adeptness in the discovery and qualification process becomes imperative for steering conversations towards fruitful outcomes.

Looking ahead, investments in sales technology, particularly in CRM systems and tools for sales enablement, customer intelligence, and coaching, will be the key focus over the next 12 months as leaders become more reliant on these types of tools to aid coaching efforts as well as to better identify opportunities within existing customer bases and beyond. Additionally, demonstrating value for buyers will continue to be paramount in minimising churn, necessitating a seamless linkage between customer success initiatives and sales strategies and ensure teams are consistent in core messaging across all touch points. The role of technology in enhancing sales efficiency however must be approached carefully, balancing the need for innovation with the risk of overwhelming sales representatives.

As buyer behaviour and preferences continue to evolve, the experience is increasingly delivered online, the traditional boundaries separating sales and marketing functions have become increasingly blurred. Closer alignment between sales and marketing is therefore more important than ever before to drive revenue growth, enhance and streamline the buyer / customer experience and to maximise return on investment. Today's buyers and customers expect a unified and cohesive experience across all touch points, from initial brand awareness to post-purchase support. Therefore, integrating sales and marketing efforts enables organisations to deliver a more cohesive and personalised experience throughout the customer journey.



The proliferation of digital channels and data-driven marketing strategies has further underscored the need for collaboration between sales and marketing teams. By sharing key performance indicators or even merging functions with a shared executive leader, organisations can ensure that both departments are aligned towards common goals and objectives. This alignment not only facilitates better communication and coordination but also enables more accurate measurement and optimisation of marketing campaigns and activities based on real-time sales feedback. Additionally, shared KPIs incentivise both sales and marketing teams to work together towards achieving revenue outcomes, fostering a culture of accountability and collaboration across the organisation.

As businesses increasingly adopt account-based marketing strategies and personalised selling approaches, the synergy between sales and marketing becomes even more critical. By pooling resources and leveraging insights from both departments, organisations can develop more targeted and effective marketing campaigns, tailored to the specific needs and preferences of key accounts or high-value prospects. This approach not only enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing efforts but also empowers sales teams with the tools and intelligence needed to engage prospects more strategically and drive higher conversion rates.

Finally, with the sales landscape poised to become increasingly challenging, sales together with marketing must commit to testing, trialling and experimenting with new techniques and approaches to understand what is possible as well as to new capabilities and muscles. The next 12 months will be interesting with a changing landscape due to tougher market conditions, more complex buyers, and the need to be more focused than ever. Whilst this sounds challenging it's an equally exciting time to be in sales and contribute to the change that is upon us.

# Sales in Focus Report '24

STUDY CONDUCTED BY...



## ARKTIC FOX

Arctic Fox is a digital and eCommerce strategy and training organisation that partners with leaders to help them navigate the changing sales, marketing and digital landscape.

Arctic Fox specialises in digital transformation, eCommerce, organisational design, SalesTech, MarTech and customer data. We partner with some of Australia's best-known brands in retail, FMCG & CPG, B2B and the services space to drive and embed sustainable change. We also provide specialist training and programs to help leaders and their teams build desired skills and expertise in digital, Sales and Marketing, eCommerce, Customer Journey Mapping, CX, data and more. Our independence and hands on experience leading and driving change within organisations enables us to provide relevant solutions and advice based on our clients' business maturity and capability.

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