



# The State of Field Sales

FOURTH EDITION

The metrics that drive your industry

# Introduction

The field sales industry has changed significantly in the past few decades. The last couple of years, in particular, have really turned the industry on its head. This fact has led many professional sellers to ask themselves, "What happens next?" Will the industry continue to evolve? If so, how?

## MOST SURVEY RESPONDENTS

believe field sales is more difficult now than it was 12 months ago.

One of the biggest changes that we see has to do with complexity. Most people we spoke to for this report believe that *field sales is more difficult now than it was 12 months ago*.

So, we wanted to know: What challenges do modern field sales teams face? How are top organizations overcoming them? And which technology solutions prove most helpful?

To answer these questions, we surveyed hundreds of sales professionals, ranging from entry-level reps to experienced managers. Keep reading to discover what we learned—and how you can apply this knowledge to your own sales career to achieve more success.

## In This Report

We divided this "State of Field Sales" report into a number of different sections.

First, we'll share information regarding the ways in which we've collected the data you're about to read

Once we've handled these house-keeping items, we'll dive into the meat of this report:

1

The first chapter will tackle the most prominent challenges field sellers face in 2023.

2

The second chapter will dig deep into real-world sales processes, identifying the essential strategies that top-performing sales teams use to close deals.

3

The third chapter will explain how modern field sales teams relate to technology. How many different tools do they use? And what kind of tools are most popular?

By the end of this report, you'll know exactly where the field sales industry stands. More importantly, you'll have the information you need to navigate it effectively.

# Forward

Dear Readers,

I am thrilled to introduce the 4th edition of our State of Field Sales report. For many, this report has become a trusted source of inside information on the dynamic industry of field sales professionals. For this year's research, we dive deep into recent trends and market drivers that have shaped the trajectory of field sales globally.

Field sales teams have faced significant changes in recent years, with shifting landscapes, evolving technologies, and soaring customer expectations. Yet, through it all, the field sales profession has remained resilient, demonstrating its strength and growth year after year.

However, let's not mistake growth for ease. Field sales are becoming increasingly challenging, surpassing past complexities. The ever-changing business environment and customer needs demand adaptability and agility from sales professionals.

This era of constant change presents a remarkable opportunity. Field sellers who embrace transformation can survive and thrive in the future. Our report sheds light on the industry's current state, providing insights, strategies, and best practices to empower field sellers and sales leaders.

At SPOTIO, we are committed to the success of field sales professionals, equipping them with the tools and knowledge they need to excel. By leveraging data, automation, and best practices, field sellers can navigate challenges and unlock unprecedented success.

Thank you to the SPOTIO team for their tireless efforts in compiling this research report and also to the sales professionals, leaders, and experts who generously shared their insights. Collaboration and a shared commitment to growth are essential in navigating the complexities of the field sales industry.

I invite you to dive into this report and embrace the opportunities that lie within. Let us adapt, innovate, and transform the field sales profession to achieve more together.

Sincerely,

Trey Gibson | CEO, SPOTIO



**"The era of constant change presents a remarkable opportunity. Field sellers who embrace transformation can survive and thrive into the future."**

# Data Collection Methodologies

At SPOTIO, we live and breathe outside sales. That's one of the reasons that, for the past five years, we've released an annual "State of Field Sales" report. Our goal is always to identify trends, best practices, and areas of improvement for the broader industry.

To do that in 2023, we surveyed 442 professionals from various field sales organizations. Our team of sales experts then analyzed the data collected to uncover practical insights you can use to further your sales career, while determining where the field sales industry currently is.

# 442

survey participants from

# FIELD SALES

professionals across  
various organizations

## A Note On Survey Participants

Over half of the professionals we surveyed are sales reps or managers. Another 20% are involved in sales in some way, holding revenue ops, sales enablement, or similar roles. The remaining survey respondents are either in sales adjacent jobs, such as marketing and customer success, or declined to specify their specific roles in our questionnaire.

As for seniority, roughly 52% of respondents are individual contributors, i.e. sales reps who report to a management professional of some kind. Just over 31% are considered sales managers or directors. The remaining respondents hold a senior-level position of some kind.

### SURVEY RESPONDENTS: TEAM ROLES



Individual Contributor (52%)

Sales Managers/Directors (31%)

Senior Level (19%)

On average, the professionals who participated in our survey have held their positions for three to five years, though we did work with a small cohort of people (roughly 6% of respondents) who have at least 25 years of experience in the field sales industry.



## DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGIES: CONTINUED

When reading reports of this nature, it's important to understand the kind of companies that survey respondents are employed by. After all, the challenges that startups face on a regular basis are usually different from the ones enterprise organizations face.

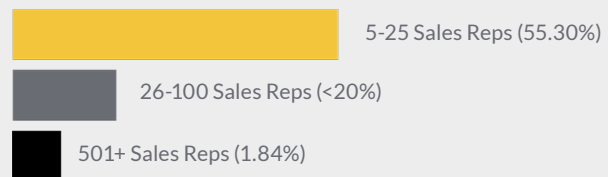
55.30% of the companies we worked with for the "State of Field Sales" report employ 5 to 25 sales reps, while just under 20% use 26 to 100 sales reps. 1.84% employ 501+.

When it comes to company revenue, 10% or survey respondents generate less than \$1 million a year, 30.38% of respondents generate \$1 million to \$10 million a year, and 27.73% of respondents generate \$10 million to \$50 million a year. The rest of the survey participants that we worked with to craft this report generated in excess of \$50 million a year.

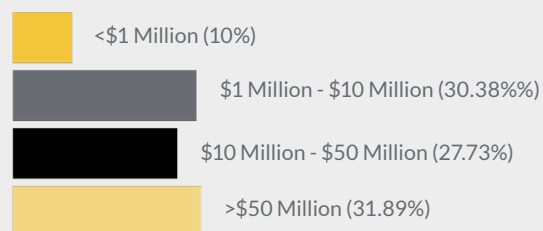
Last but not least, survey respondents come from various B2B and B2C industries, ranging from automotive to pharmaceuticals to professional services. Almost all of them, though, are located in North America. In fact, only 5% of respondents live elsewhere.

Now that you know exactly who we talked to for this report, let's dig into the data!

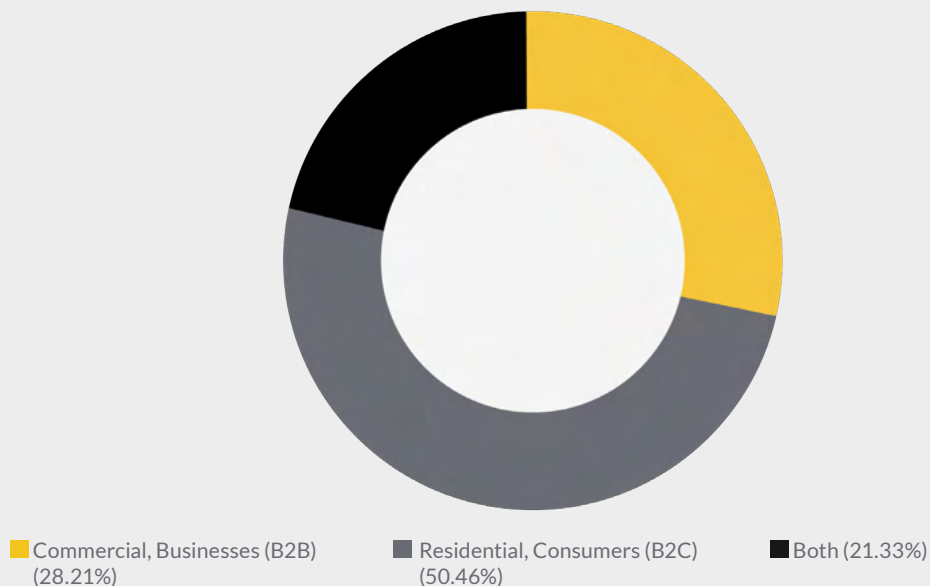
### SURVEY RESPONDENTS: TEAM SIZE



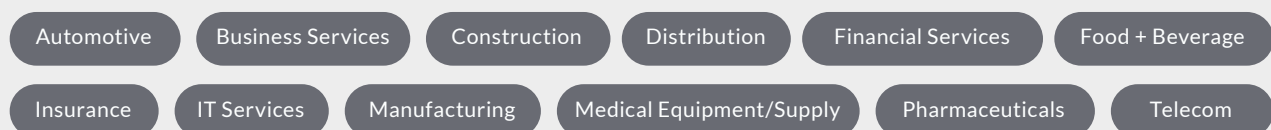
### SURVEY RESPONDENTS: REVENUE



### SURVEY RESPONDENTS: SALE AUDIENCE



### SURVEY RESPONDENTS: INCLUDED INDUSTRIES



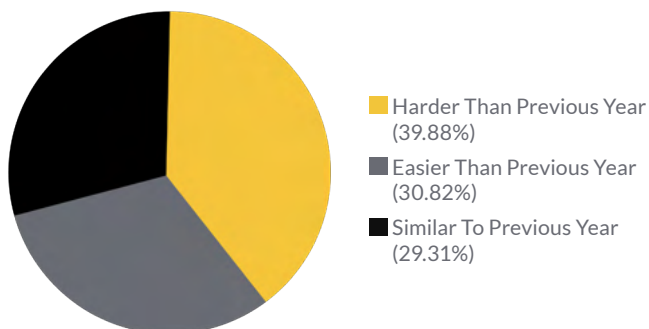
# Outside Sales Trends + Challenges

## Field Sales Sentiment and Performance

*Are field sales getting more difficult? Survey respondents share their views on the industry at large, and how their specific teams have performed over the past 12 months.*

The majority of sales reps (39%) agree field sales are harder now than it was in the past. This sentiment isn't necessarily shared across industries, however.

FIELD SALES DIFFICULTY YEAR OVER YEAR  
(OVERALL RESULT)

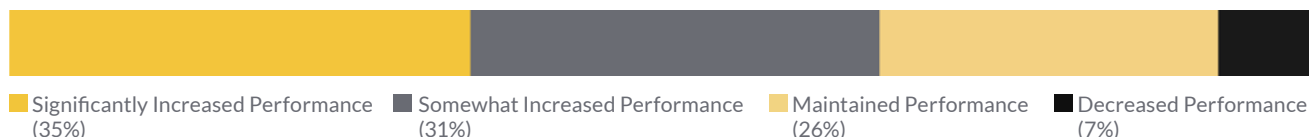


### DIGGING DEEPER

Nearly 50% of the survey respondents in the B2C and/or residential sales segment believe winning deals has become more challenging in the last year, *compared to just 29% of B2B sellers*. That's not to say that B2B selling is easy. **But those in the B2C space seem to experience more difficulties in 2023.**

Closing deals in 2023 may be more difficult, but that hasn't stopped most sellers. Only 7.45% of the sales reps we surveyed for this report have experienced revenue decline. Even better, **67% of respondents have actually grown revenue in the last year.**

COMPANY REVENUE TRAJECTORY YEAR OVER YEAR (OVERALL RESULT)



### DIGGING DEEPER

Once again, there is a stark difference between B2B and B2C segments. 78.95% of B2B sellers report some or significant YoY revenue growth, *compared to 59.21% of B2C sellers*.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Field sales are in constant flux, but the teams we surveyed for this report have shown remarkable resilience in the face of tough challenges. This fact is proven by the average YoY revenue growth that most survey respondents have achieved. Regardless of circumstances, the best sellers find ways to drive revenue.

**"67% of respondents have actually grown revenue in the last year."**

# OUTSIDE SALES TRENDS + CHALLENGES: CONTINUED

## External Challenges

*What struggles face the average field sales team in 2023? Survey respondents weigh in on the top external challenges impacting their sales organizations.*

Knowing that your sales organization faces challenges is one thing. Understanding what those challenges are and why they exist is another. According to our survey results, the number one challenge that sales reps face in 2023 is slowing economic growth.

As you would expect, both B2B and B2C markets have difficulty qualifying leads, finding sales talent, and adapting to changes in customer buying behavior. These age-old problems were the next most prominent challenges that survey respondents faced in 2023.

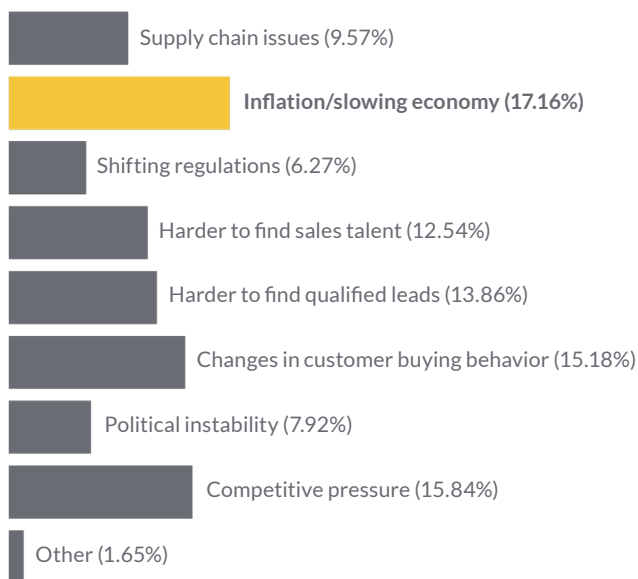


### DIGGING DEEPER

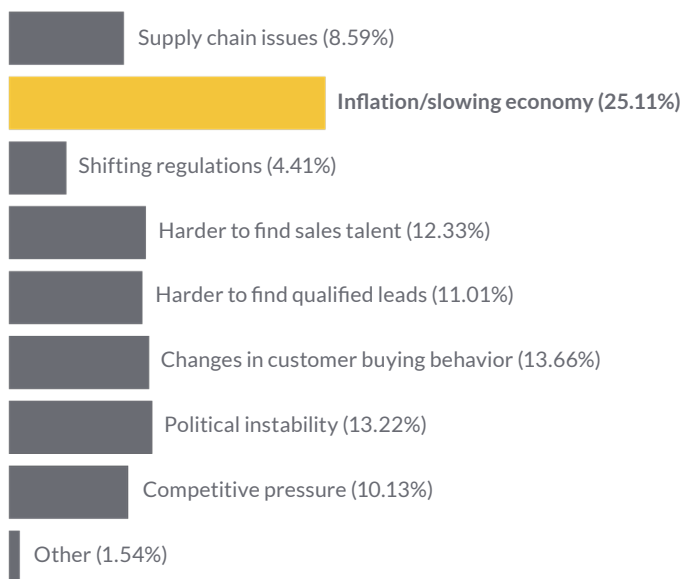
Economic factors have a disproportionate effect on the B2C market. 25% of B2C sellers have been impacted by the economy, compared to just 17% of B2B sellers.

When it comes to the B2B segment, 15.84% of sellers say their biggest challenge is competitive pressure—a more than 50% increase compared to the B2C segment (10.13%).

### EXTERNAL CHALLENGES FOR B2B



### EXTERNAL CHALLENGES FOR B2C



### WHY IT MATTERS

Economic downturns often reveal deep-rooted issues. This is especially true for residential field sales teams that rely on consumer financing options to close deals. (When rates rise, fewer people qualify for financial assistance, which shrinks the buying pool.)

**Companies that face economy-related challenges can continue to excel in economically unstable times by adopting a more selective targeting process.** Field sales teams can improve productivity by focusing on top-level buyers and pre-qualifying them before engaging them in detailed sales conversations. This "quality over quantity" approach will result in fewer prospects but allow sellers to focus on deals that drive revenue.

## OUTSIDE SALES TRENDS + CHALLENGES: CONTINUED

### Internal Challenges

*What internal factors prevent field sales teams from doing their jobs? Survey respondents in both sales management and representative roles explain the obstacles they face.*

Sales reps and sales managers have different jobs. So it's only natural that they would experience different challenges. According to survey results, the biggest challenge that sales leaders face revolves around rep turnover.



#### DIGGING DEEPER

28.75% of B2C sales organizations and 13.37% of B2B sales organizations have trouble retaining sales talent. We will be covering turnover and retention in a later section.

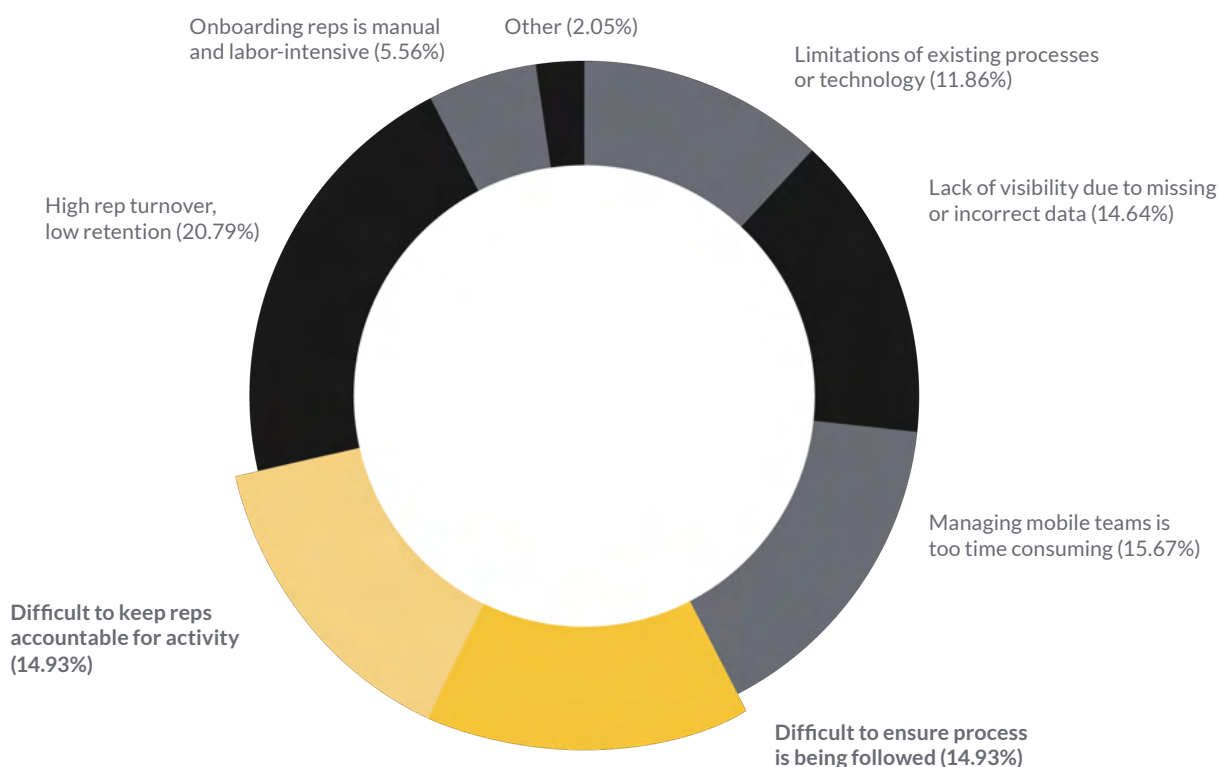
Other top challenges identified in our survey include managing remote teams in an efficient manner, ensuring proper processes are followed, and collecting data that leads to visibility.

#### GREATEST INTERNAL CHALLENGES FOR FIELD SALES LEADERS

**B2B: Difficult to ensure process is being followed (20.30%)**

**B2C: High rep turnover, low retention (28.75%)**

#### INTERNAL CHALLENGES FOR FIELD SALES LEADERS (OVERALL RESULTS)



We see that rep accountability is a major issue for most sales leaders. *Nearly 30% of survey respondents claim to have trouble tracking rep activity and ensuring the actions they do take follow proper company protocols.*



## OUTSIDE SALES TRENDS + CHALLENGES: CONTINUED

What keeps sales reps from making quota? If you knew the answer to that question, you could revolutionize your entire sales process. The results of our survey may give you valuable insight into that question. According to respondents, changes to buyer finances (15.77%) and finding qualified prospects (15.67%) are the two most likely reasons for missed quota.

### GREATEST INTERNAL CHALLENGES FOR FIELD SALES REPS

1 Changes to Buyer Finances (15.77%)

2 Finding Qualified Prospects (15.67%)



#### DIGGING DEEPER

We find that B2C sellers are particularly vulnerable to experience/skill deficiencies, sales process friction, and time management issues. B2B sellers, on the other hand, struggle to maintain peak productivity levels and pinpoint qualified prospects.

### WHY IT MATTERS

Rep turnover will always be an issue for sales teams, regardless of industry and/or team performance. This is the nature of the business. As long as your company stays within acceptable limits, rep turnover shouldn't adversely impact your organization.

Instead, field sales teams should focus their efforts on improving visibility. You must hold your reps accountable, ensure team processes are regularly followed, and that company data is accurate. If you don't, you won't be able to lead your sales team effectively.

This is perfectly clear when it comes to quota attainment. When asked why reps don't make quota, 43% of the answers we received related to "Experience/Skill," "Time Management," and "Sales Process". Fortunately, many of these issues can be remedied through training. But sales managers will only know that these problems exist if they have clear visibility into their sales teams, as few field sales reps will admit they're struggling or why said struggles occur.

**"You must hold your reps accountable, ensure team processes are regularly followed, and that company data is accurate. If you don't, you won't be able to lead your sales team effectively."**

## OUTSIDE SALES TRENDS + CHALLENGES: CONTINUED

### Field Sales Outlook

*What does the future of field sales look like? Survey respondents share their views on where the industry is heading, as well as their department's approach to hiring in 2023.*

Generally speaking, professional salespeople have an optimistic view of the future—barely. When asked if they believed sales performance would get easier in the next year, 37.54% of survey respondents said "yes," while 35.78% said "no".

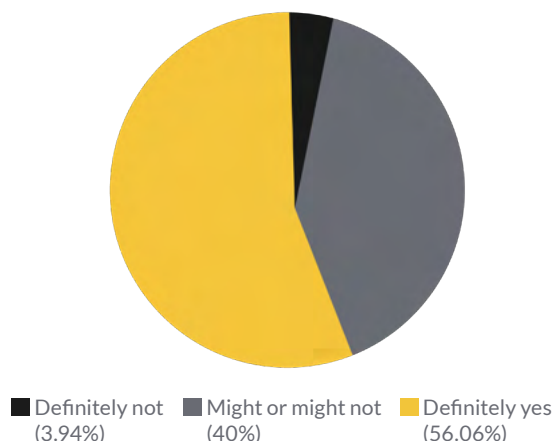


#### DIGGING DEEPER

There's a much greater divide between segments, per usual. Only 31.95% of B2C sellers believe sales performance will get easier next year, compared to 42.11% of B2B sellers.

It's clear: the field sales industry faces challenges, and many field sellers are less than optimistic about the future. Despite these things, most field sales organizations plan to grow their head counts over the next year.

#### ARE YOU PLANNING TO GROW HEAD COUNTS NEXT YEAR? (OVERALL)



#### DIGGING DEEPER

The majority of sales both B2C and B2B companies have indicated that they plan to grow their field sales teams in the next year. Though, according to survey participants, sales organizations with both B2B and B2C sales motions are the most likely to expand. 67.53% of B2B/B2C teams will grow head count in the coming year compared to the 56.06% average.

### WHY IT MATTERS

Due to the challenges the field sales industry faces, as well as the mixed views of salespeople regarding the future, it's crucial that organizations adapt to and overcome the near-term obstacles impacting them. While optimism about sales performance varies among segments, it's noteworthy that a significant majority of field sales organizations, both in B2B and B2C sectors, are planning to increase their head counts in the coming year. This highlights the importance of proactive measures and strategic adjustments when navigating various challenges in order to capitalize on potential growth opportunities.

# OUTSIDE SALES TRENDS + CHALLENGES: SUMMARY

## SUMMARY

### Outside Sales Trends + Challenges



Since Covid, field sales teams across the industry have been dealing with increasingly difficult challenges and near-constant change. Economic factors have been a major contributing factor to the increased challenge from the last year. These conditions are likely going to persist in the years to come, so it is important that organizations be adaptable to remain competitive in a more difficult market.

To excel in such times, a selective targeting approach is vital. By focusing on top-level buyers, pre-qualifying them, and prioritizing revenue-generating deals, teams can boost productivity. Rep turnover, a persistent issue, demands improved visibility and accountability. Holding reps accountable, ensuring process adherence, and gaining clear insights into sales teams is crucial for effective leadership and addressing low quota attainment. Training can address skill and process-related issues, but visibility is key as reps rarely admit struggles.

Despite mixed outlooks on whether these hardships will get easier in the next 12 months, a significant majority of **B2B** and B2C field sales organizations plan to increase head counts, underscoring the need for proactive measures and strategic adjustments to overcome challenges and seize opportunities to grow.

## KEY QUESTIONS COVERED

- Is outside/field sales getting more difficult?
- How are field sales teams performing?
- What are the biggest external challenges facing the industry?
- What are the biggest internal challenges for field sales teams?
- How do field sales teams feel about the future of the industry?
- What are the growth plans for field sales teams?

# Sales Process

## Metrics and Reporting

*Do modern field sales teams prioritize data? Survey respondents weigh their department's commitment to sales metrics and reporting.*

Most sales organizations agree: **data matters**. A large majority of survey respondents (88%) claim to monitor rep activity and performance-related metrics regularly.

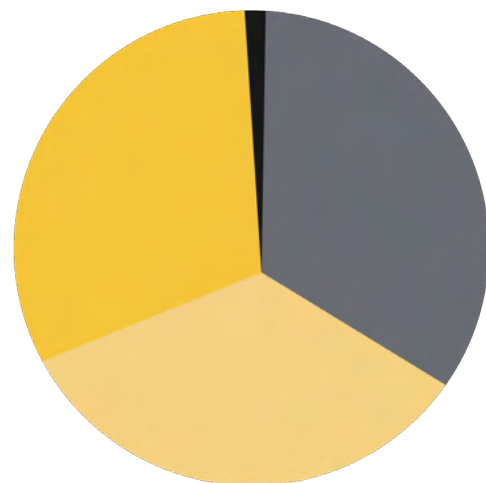
But, as our research indicates, companies that truly value metrics measurement achieve greater year-over-year growth. According to survey results, high-performing sales teams are almost 23% more likely to say metrics measurement is "important" or "critical".



### DIGGING DEEPER

The importance of measuring sales metrics is especially true in the B2C segment, where 63.40% of survey respondents say tracking activity metrics is "critical" vs. 44.19% of B2B respondents—a 19% increase.

### IMPORTANCE OF SALES PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT



Critical  
(55.08%)

Important  
(32.46%)

Somewhat Important  
(11.15%)

Not Important  
(1.31%)

### WHY IT MATTERS

Effective metrics monitoring and measurement are crucial for sales organizations to achieve success. **Research shows that companies that prioritize metrics experience higher year-over-year growth.** Overall, valuing and utilizing [metrics monitoring](#) strategies leads to success and growth in sales organizations, particularly in the B2C sector.

**"Effective metrics monitoring and measurement is crucial for sales organizations to achieve success."**

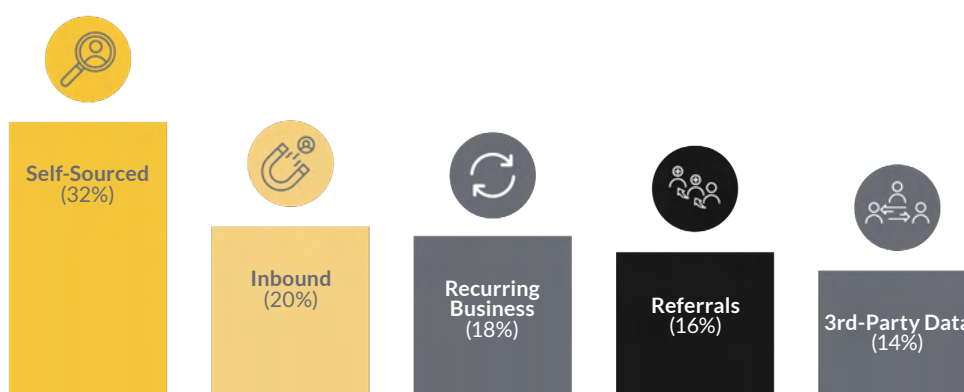
## SALES PROCESS: CONTINUED

### Revenue Sources

Where does the average field sales team's revenue come from? Survey respondents explain the revenue channels their departments utilize the most.

Survey respondents say 32% of company revenue can be traced back to self-sourced prospecting initiatives—the most significant revenue source.

#### INTERNAL CHALLENGES FOR FIELD SALES LEADERS (OVERALL RESULTS)



The data becomes more interesting when comparing revenue sources between sales teams. High-performing teams utilize self-sourced prospecting techniques more often, *producing 7% more revenue from this channel* than their low-performing counterparts.

Top performers collect and use customer referrals more effectively, generating 4% more revenue from this specific source. They also rely less on third-party data, generating just 9% of revenue from this channel, compared to 18% for low-performing teams.



#### DIGGING DEEPER

Also of note, data regarding revenue sources is relatively the same between B2B and B2C companies. The most significant differences have to do with self-sourced prospecting, which is more prevalent in B2C markets (34% to 28%), and recurring business, which makes up a much larger portion of company revenue in B2B markets (26% to 13%).

#### WHY IT MATTERS

Diversification is an essential aspect of growing revenue. But sales organizations should also improve existing channels to produce better results. The data shows that high-performing teams see more sales through self-sourced prospecting and referral channels. In other words, they are finding better prospects more often and leveraging them more effectively after the sale. **Improvement in these two areas could launch your team toward greater success in the future.**

**"The largest company revenue source can be traced back to self-sourced prospecting initiatives."**



## SALES PROCESS: CONTINUED

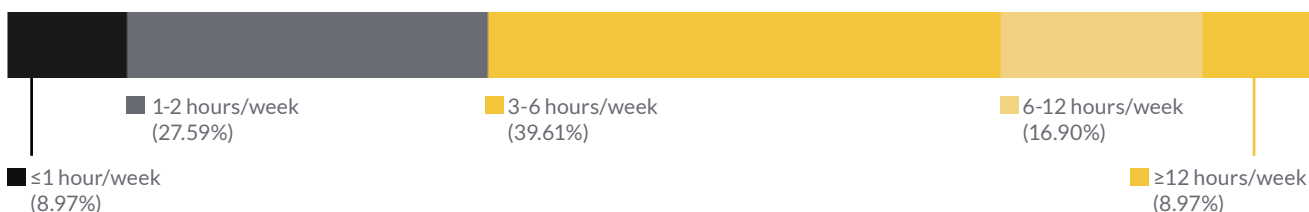
### Leadership and Coaching

*How much time do field sales managers allocate to sales coaching? Survey respondents break down the hours their teams spend in training initiatives and the most common tasks sales leaders are asked to complete regularly.*

Coaching is critical to the success of your sales department. We know this because the high-performing sales teams we surveyed were almost 7% more likely to spend six or more hours a week coaching and/or training reps than the low-performing teams.

Additionally, 39% of survey respondents spend three to six hours a week on this activity, but 37% spend less than two hours coaching.

FIELD SALES TRAINING ALLOCATION (OVERALL RESULT)



#### DIGGING DEEPER

B2C companies struggle with this the most. Based on survey results, just 20.98% of them spend six or more hours a week coaching, while 31.71% of B2B companies do the same.

#### WHY IT MATTERS

Modern field sales leaders face many challenges, and chiefs need more visibility into their team's actions. To compensate, leaders likely spend significant effort to "fill in the blanks," which is often labor intensive. Over time, this leads to an increase in sales team attrition and subpar team performance.

**"The high-performing sales teams we surveyed were almost 7% more likely to spend six or more hours a week coaching and/or training reps than the low-performing teams."**

## SALES PROCESS: CONTINUED

### Rep Activities

*How does the average field sales rep spend their time? Survey respondents share information regarding the sales activities they complete regularly.*

Field sales reps spend much time in the area, talking face-to-face with prospects and existing customers. The question is, how much time?

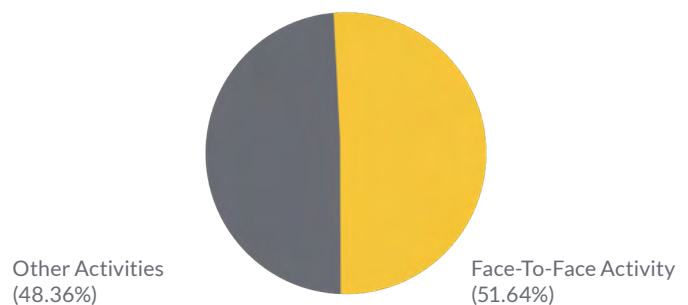
According to survey results, the average sales rep, across industries, spends about 50% of their time on in-person sales activities.



#### DIGGING DEEPER

For B2B sellers, the amount of time spent face-to-face with prospects and customers all over the map. For B2C sellers, it ranges between 30% and 40%, with a 32.24% average.

#### FACE-TO-FACE ACTIVITY TIME (OVERALL)



The most compelling bit of data we uncovered has to do with in-person sales and team performance. Companies that achieve significant year-over-year growth spend the most face-to-face time with prospects. 59% of high-performing teams we surveyed claim to spend at least 60% of their time in the field, compared to 50% for low-performing teams.

We wanted to know how many field activities the average field sales rep completes in a week. For this survey, a "field activity" was defined as a door knock, visit, or appointment. Most respondents (71.84%) report less than 150 weekly field activities. As shown in the graph, this number changes dramatically depending on the audience.

#### ACTIVITIES RECORDED PER WEEK (OVERALL)



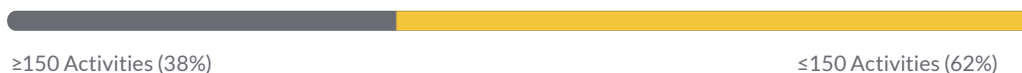
#### DIGGING DEEPER

When comparing B2B and B2C respondents, we find that B2B sellers are much more likely to communicate with prospects virtually than B2C sellers—though this may be the wrong strategy. Our research reveals that, on average, high-performers complete fewer virtual sales activities than low-performers.

#### ACTIVITIES RECORDED PER WEEK (B2B)



#### ACTIVITIES RECORDED PER WEEK (B2C)



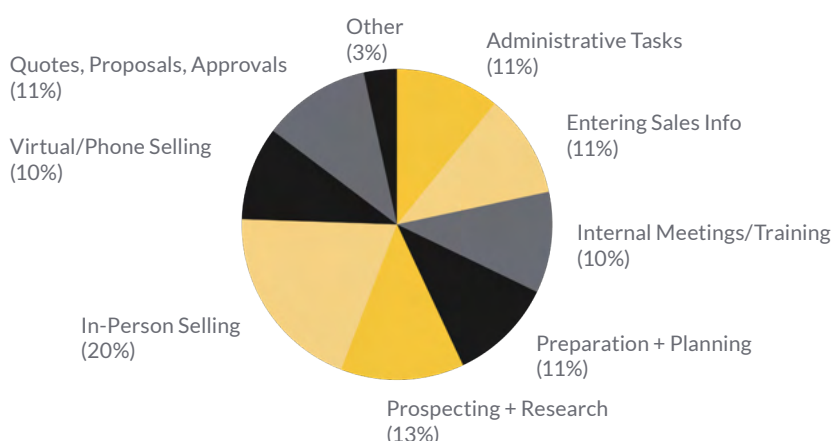
## SALES PROCESS: CONTINUED

In-person conversations are just one communication channel available to modern field sales teams. Virtual sales activities, like, calling, emailing, and texting potential customers, can help close deals. Survey results indicate that the average field sales rep completes less than 30 daily virtual sales activities.

Unsurprisingly, the field sellers we surveyed spend most of their time on in-person sales. According to our research, the average field sales rep spends 36% of their work hours in the field, talking to potential customers, which aligns with industry standards.

After in-person sales, the field reps we spoke to spent equal time on administrative tasks, entering sales information, attending internal meetings and training sessions, and preparing/planning.

THE FIELD SELLER'S TIME (OVERALL)



### DIGGING DEEPER

B2B and B2C field sellers spend their time similarly. The one significant difference that our survey revealed concerns preparation and planning. *The average B2B sales rep spends 5% more time preparing/planning than the average B2C sales rep.*

Of importance, high-performing teams spend 4% more time on in-person selling, 4% more time on preparation and planning, and 3% more time entering sales information than the low-performing teams we surveyed. *While these discrepancies may seem inconsequential, they reveal the tasks that effective teams value, likely leading to more success.*

### WHY IT MATTERS

Modern-day field reps spend one-third of their time on in-person selling activities. This means that the average rep also spends two-thirds of their time on non-selling activities. Since our data shows that the amount of time reps spend in front of prospects and customers directly affects team performance, **it's imperative that reps find ways to increase their selling time.** Or, at the very least, they make the most of their time, which they can do by spending more effort preparing and entering sales data. These activities will help keep reps organized and effective in the field, which in turn, will produce greater returns.

**"Modern-day field reps spend one-third of their time on in-person selling activities."**

## SALES PROCESS: CONTINUED

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### Sales Compensation Structure

*How do modern field sales teams pay their sales reps? Survey respondents explain their company's compensation structure.*

There are a range of ways to compensate salespeople. The field sales teams we surveyed seem to use many of them, but "Base + Commission" is the most common. We did not find a correlation between compensation structure and sales team performance, leading us to believe that it's not a clear predictor of success and other factors are likely more critical.

#### COMMON COMPENSATION STRUCTURES

- 1 Base + Commission (33.74%)
- 2 100% Commission (23.11%)
- 3 Salary + Bonus (21.06%)
- 4 Revenue/Profit Sharing (19.22%)
- 5 Other (2.86%)

#### WHY IT MATTERS

The way you structure your compensation plan can have a significant impact on the way your reps perform. According to our data, there may not be a clear "winning strategy" in this regard, so it's essential to experiment and find out what works best for your unique team and the specific goals you want your department to achieve.

**"It's important to experiment and find out what works best for your unique team and the specific goals you want your department to achieve."**

## SALES PROCESS: CONTINUED

### Quota Attainment

*How often does the average field sales team meet its quota goals? Survey respondents break down the percentage of their company's reps that attain quota.*

Despite the numerous challenges affecting sales performance, a third of sales organizations we surveyed claim that 70% of their sales reps consistently meet quota targets.

#### SALES REP QUOTA ATTAINMENT



#### DIGGING DEEPER

B2B salespeople are much more likely to hit quota than B2C salespeople. Our research finds that 72% of B2B companies achieve 50% or more quota attainment, compared to just 46% for B2C companies. Overall, average rep quota attainment sits between 50% and 69%.

#### WHY IT MATTERS

According to sales industry best practices, **the average sales team designs quotas in a way that allows 75% of team members to achieve their goals.** Our research reveals that B2B sellers reach quota more regularly than their B2C counterparts. This could be due to the economic challenges affecting B2C sales teams disproportionately. However, it could also be due to various other factors, such as rep training, coaching, and sales technology.

**"Despite the numerous challenges affecting sales performance, a third of sales organizations we surveyed claim that 70% of their sales reps consistently meet quota targets."**



## SALES PROCESS: CONTINUED

### Rep Onboarding, Tenure, and Turnover

*What about the average lifecycle of a field sales rep? Survey respondents share information about their sales team's onboarding processes, tenure lengths, and turnover rates.*

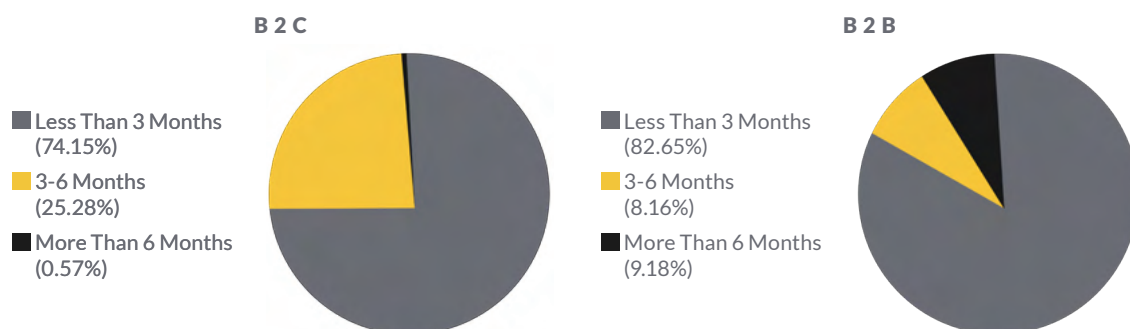
The faster you onboard new reps, the faster they can close deals for your company. On average, survey respondents say their company expects new reps to complete onboarding and hit quota goals within two months time.

#### DIGGING DEEPER



**Surprisingly, B2C companies are more likely to double, or even triple, the 2-month onboarding average when compared to B2B companies.** 25.28% of B2C companies we surveyed say onboarding takes three to six months, compared to 8.16% for B2B sales teams. Either way, the time it takes to onboard a new sales rep and train them to meet quota targets largely depends on the industry and products/services they're hired to sell.

#### ONBOARDING TIMELINES | B2C vs B2B



The companies we surveyed typically retain sales reps for one to three years, with 18 months being the average across all segments, and according to past research, the average sales organization loses 35% of its sales force annually.

#### DIGGING DEEPER



On closer inspection, B2B companies tend to have better retention metrics than B2C companies, enticing reps to stay for 21 months, on average, instead of 16. The surveyed companies fare worse than the broader industry benchmark of 35%, garnering an average turnover rate of 42%. It's bleak for B2C brands, who lose 47% of sales reps every year, while B2B brands only lose 34% of them—right in line with accepted industry standards.

#### WHY IT MATTERS

In the past, if you wanted to increase sales, you hired more people. This is a tried and true tactic that, while effective, takes a significant amount of time and resources to implement. Yes, some turnover is natural, and the sales industry is known for having higher attrition rates than many others, but your organization should still pay attention to its turnover rate. If you estimate the cost to hire and train a new sales rep while accounting for lost productivity at \$20K (a conservative estimate), even a small reduction in turnover could save your organization hundreds of thousands of dollars if not millions.

## SALES PROCESS: CONTINUED

### Deal Cycle and Size

*How long does it take the average field sales rep to close a deal? Just as important, how lucrative are said deals? Survey respondents dig into their company's financial data.*

As you would expect, average deal cycle length (ADCL) has a lot to do with the industry reps sell in and the complexity of their offering(s). So, it's no surprise that B2B companies have longer sales cycles than B2C companies. Our research found that it takes the average sales rep 10 days to close a deal (17 days for B2B, 8 days for B2C.) But certain respondents claim it can take them upwards of a year to make a single sale.

AVERAGE DEAL CYCLE LENGTH | B2C vs B2B



Similarly, average deal size varies from industry to industry—often in extreme ways. Still, the B2B organizations we surveyed tend to land higher average contract values (ACV) than their B2C counterparts. The average ACV across all industries was \$13,500. This averages out to \$25,500 for B2B brands and \$8,750 for B2C brands.

**"Average deal cycle length and size varies from industry to industry—oftentimes in extreme ways."**

# SALES PROCESS: SUMMARY

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## SUMMARY

### Sales Process



Based on the survey data in this section, we identified several areas likely to be major contributing factors to the **productivity** and effectiveness of high-performing teams. Effective metrics monitoring and measurement drive success and growth in sales organizations, particularly B2C. High-performing teams achieve more sales through self-sourced prospecting and referrals, highlighting the need to improve existing channels. Enhancements in these areas can propel future success.

Additionally, some interesting characteristics of sales leaders and sales reps were observed across all teams that could be quickly addressed to improve team performance further. Sales leaders indicated a lack of visibility into team performance and activity, increased attrition, and subpar performance. Reps spend one-third of their time on selling activities, emphasizing the importance of maximizing selling time through preparation and data entry. B2B sellers more regularly achieve quotas than B2C, influenced by economic challenges and various factors. Addressing turnover saves significant costs associated with hiring and training, making even a small reduction valuable.

## KEY QUESTIONS COVERED

- How important is performance data for field sales?
- What channels are companies using to create revenue?
- How are sales reps compensated?
- What do managers and sales reps spend their time on?
- How much time do managers actually spend coaching/training?
- How much time do sales reps actually spend selling?
- What's the average number of face-to-face and virtual activities?
- What percentage of sales reps achieve quota?
- How long does it take to onboard new reps and how long do they stay?
- What is the average deal cycle length and size?

# Sales Technology

## Sales Tech Usage

*How many tools do the average field sales teams use? Looking deeper, which specific tools are in their tech stacks? Survey respondents weigh in on sales technology.*

There are thousands of different tools sellers can use to prospect for quality leads, manage deals, track proposals, forecast future sales—the list goes on. **But 68% of the sales teams surveyed use less than three tools to power their sales processes.**

### HOW MANY TOOLS/SYSTEMS DO YOU USE IN YOUR SALES PROCESS?



#### DIGGING DEEPER

When comparing B2C sales to B2B, it seems that B2C organizations are 9% more likely than B2B organizations to invest in four or more sales tools.

Our survey also found that high-performing teams use more systems on average than lower-performing teams. **45% of high-performing teams reported using four or more systems compared to only 36% of low-performing teams.** There are a variety of reasons that could influence team performance. Technology adoption is typically viewed as a proven way to improve revenue, and this data corroborates that concept.

As previously mentioned, a wide range of sales tools are on the market. We wanted to know which ones field sales teams use. The research is clear: the most popular sales tools allow survey respondents to store data and craft sales reports, while the next most popular sales tools revolve around data analysis and sales forecasting. Interestingly, high-performing sales teams invest more in prospecting tools than low-performing teams. To level up your sales game, consider an investment in prospecting software.

### WHY IT MATTERS

**High-performing sales teams prioritize and invest in sales-related technology.** The most popular tools in this category help users store data and [create sales reports](#), followed by tools that help users analyze data and forecast future results. Notably, high-performing teams emphasize [sales prospecting tools](#), which suggests these tools may impact sales performance more than others. Consider doing the same to achieve more success.

**"68% of the sales teams we surveyed use less than three tools to power their sales processes."**

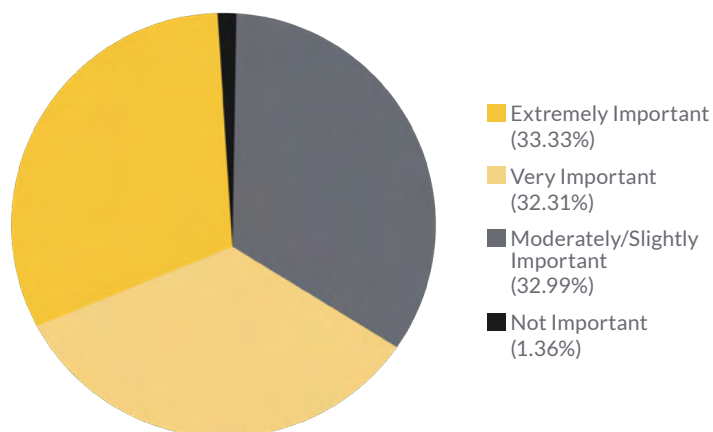
## SALES TECHNOLOGY: CONTINUED

### Importance of Sales Tech

*How valuable is sales technology to modern field sales teams? Survey respondents share their department's take on the importance of sales-related tools.*

The majority of surveyed sales teams use one to three sales tools. While this number is lower than inside sales teams, almost every respondent agrees that technology is crucial to their company's sales process. Just 1.36% of survey participants said that technology is "not at all important" to the success of their sales team. On the other hand, 66% of surveyed participants claim that technology is either "very important" or "extremely important." This is especially true of high-performing sales teams. 83% agree that technology is essential, compared to just 75% of low-performing teams.

IMPORTANCE OF TECHNOLOGY IN FIELD SALES



#### WHY IT MATTERS

Sales tech has come a long way, and while most of that innovation has been directed at inside sellers, the outside sales industry is finally catching up. Tools specifically designed for field sales teams are making a significant impact. Organizations that embrace and leverage these technologies tend to outperform those that don't. The gap will only widen as they stretch their competitive advantage into the future.

**"66% of surveyed participants, on the other hand, claim that technology is either very important or extremely important."**



## SALES TECHNOLOGY: CONTINUED

### Tech Stack Evaluation

*How do field sales teams evaluate technology in 2023? Survey respondents explain the factors that matter to them to evaluate and prioritize technology providers for future investment.*

Regarding technology, the average field sales team prioritizes "User Experience" and "Ease of Use" above all. 25% of survey respondents claim these two factors were most important when choosing a new technology provider. The next most important factor was "Data Reporting and Accuracy" at 19%, followed by "Flexibility/Configurability," "Features/Capabilities," and "Reliability/Stability," which each ranked in the 10-11% range.

#### MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR CHOOSING TECHNOLOGY

1 User Experience/Ease of Use (26.22%)

2 Data + Reporting Accuracy (23.11%)

3 Flexibility/Configurability (11.76%)

4 Features/Capabilities (11.60%)

5 Integration Options (8.07%)

6 System Price (7.56%)

Perhaps most significantly, only 7.5% of the sales professionals we surveyed claim that "System Price" was an important factor when deciding which sales technology to invest in. This suggests that successful field sales teams are more concerned with a product's effectiveness, not how much it costs their organization.

While most sales teams appreciate sales technology, most survey respondents (48%) were still determining if they'd invest in a new solution over the next 12 months.



#### DIGGING DEEPER

According to the data, B2B sellers are more hesitant to adopt new tech in the next year. 31.75% of B2B respondents say they won't invest in new technology this year, compared to just 13.04% of B2C sellers.

#### WHY IT MATTERS

"User Experience" and "Ease of Use" are the most important factors when evaluating new sales technology. Only some sales teams want to replace their current tech stack. Regardless of how you feel about new tools, evaluate your existing system regularly to ensure your team is equipped to achieve its targets.

# SALES TECHNOLOGY: SUMMARY

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## SUMMARY

### Sales Technology



Technology has become an integral part of any modern business. The last decade has seen significant technological developments targeted at helping sales become more efficient and effective.

However, much of this advancement has been focused on - and was designed for - inside sales teams that sit behind a desk all day. The systems are powerful and multi-faceted but quickly become challenging to use effectively when you're away from your computer. This oversight has meant a need for more investment and adoption of technology for sales teams, with a heavy emphasis on face-to-face interactions with customers and prospects. Even though field sales is leveraging technology less often than inside sales, there are clear trends in the data that suggest this is changing: high-performing sales teams prioritize sales-related technology, particularly sales prospecting tools, which significantly impact sales performance. Investing in innovative sales tech, including tools designed for field sales teams, enhances overall performance and provides a competitive advantage.

As the outside sales industry catches up with inside sales, embracing and leveraging these technologies becomes essential for organizations to outperform competitors and maintain a competitive edge in the future.

## KEY QUESTIONS COVERED

- How many systems/technologies do field sales teams use?
- Where are those systems being utilized?
- How critical is technology for a team's success?
- What are the most important factors when choosing a new technology provider?
- Are field sales teams investing more into technology in the future?

# Closing

Modern field sales teams face numerous challenges. Rising inflation, economic uncertainty, and changing customer buying habits keep field sellers on their toes.

Fortunately, the high-performing sales teams we surveyed for this report prove that success is still possible. With hard work, an effective strategy, and the right technology, you and your sales reps can get through the year and truly thrive in 2023 and beyond.

Speaking of technology, take a look at [SPOTIO](#). Our platform was specifically designed to help field sales teams. As such, it's equipped with [lead generation](#), [route planning](#), [appointment setting](#), [multichannel communication](#), [automation](#), [territory management](#), [customer mapping](#), and sales [reporting](#) features.



To learn more about SPOTIO and how it can help your outside sales team increase sales, [visit our website](#).

Ready to see our product in action?

**Sign up for a free demo today  
to see how we can transform your field sales!**

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