



Leadership Vision for 2025

Top 3 Strategic Priorities for Chief Sales Officers

Leadership Vision for Chief Sales Officers in 2025

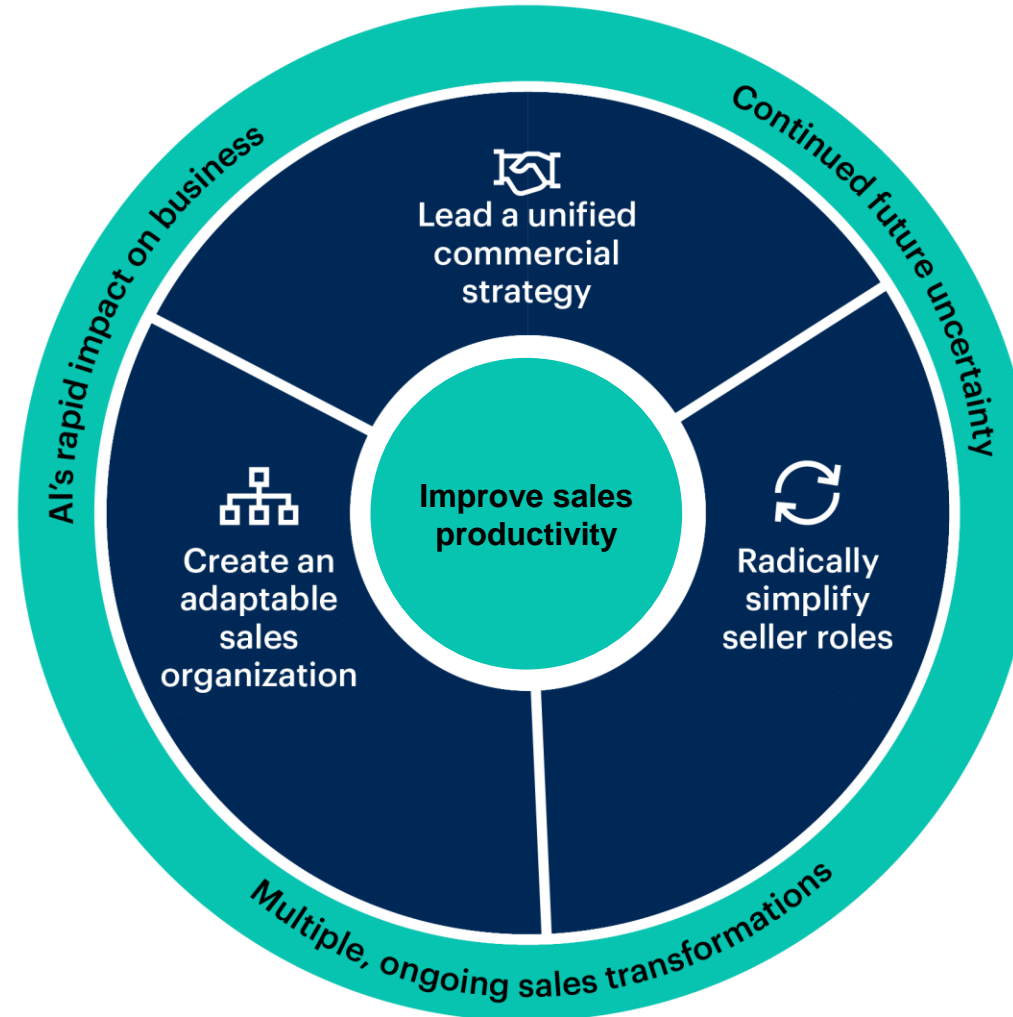
To drive commercial growth in 2025 and beyond, chief sales officers (CSOs) must contend with three major trends impacting B2B sales — the need for greater sales and marketing alignment through a unified commercial strategy, creating an adaptable sales organization able to thrive through multiple sales transformations, and simplification of ever more complex seller roles.

CSOs can use this research as a guidebook to navigate these trends and learn how to leverage cross-functional collaboration, adaptability and role simplification to improve seller productivity.

Key questions addressed:

- How should I modify my leadership skills to lead a unified commercial strategy?
- How do I better prepare for and lead change management in my organization?
- What steps should I prioritize and take to improve seller productivity?

Chief Sales Officers' Success in 2025



Source: Gartner

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Sales and Marketing Must Collaborate to Achieve Results

B2B buyer behaviors



72% of B2B buyers have completed a transaction through a **traditional rep-led channel**, typically owned by sales.

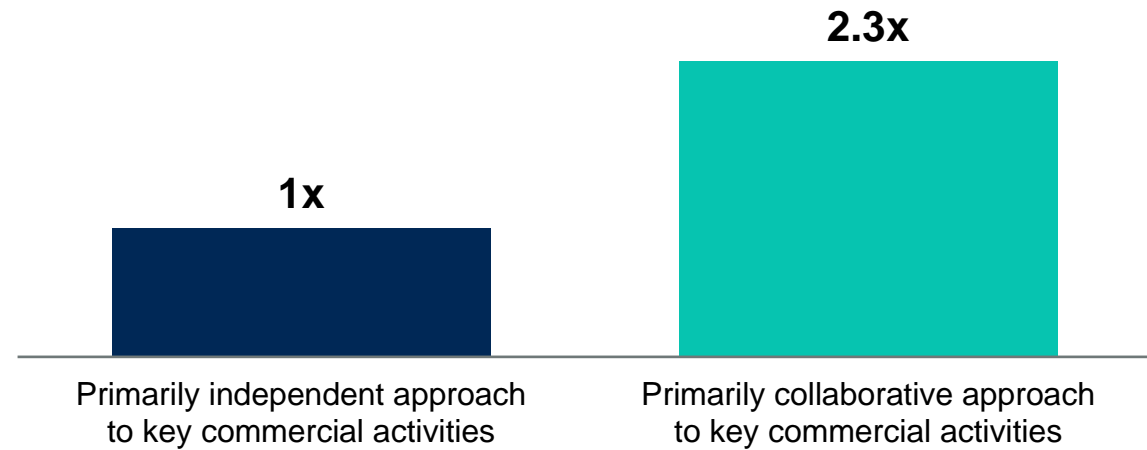


28% of B2B buyers have completed a transaction via a **digital channel**, typically owned by marketing.

n = 440 B2B buyers
Source: 2024 Gartner B2B Buyer Survey

Frequency of dysfunction in shared marketing — sales initiatives

By level of marketing/sales collaboration on key commercial activities



- Key commercial activities**
- Buyer journey mapping
 - Sales enablement
 - Digital commerce management

n = 285 executive/senior marketing and sales leaders
Source: 2023 Gartner B2B Commercial Strategy Survey

Silos Create Sales and Marketing Dysfunction

Sales and marketing disconnect



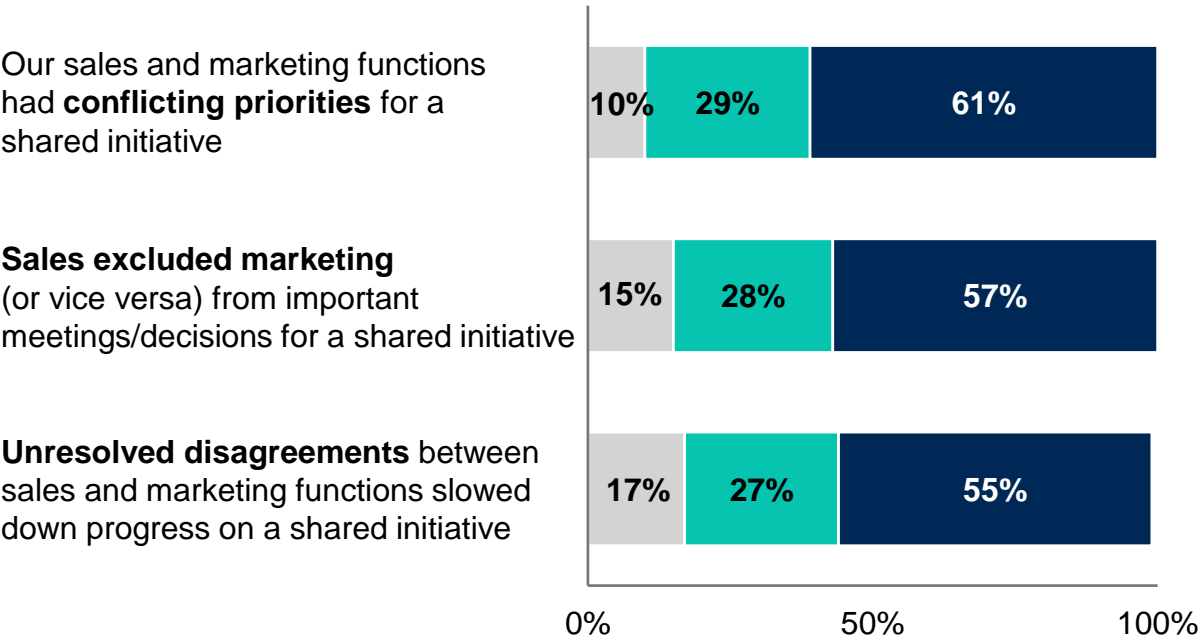
80% of key **commercial activities** are **missing** contributions from sales or marketing.

n = 382 – 404 executive/senior marketing and sales leaders whose marketing and/or sales contributes to given commercial activities.
Source: 2023 Gartner B2B Commercial Strategy Survey

Frequency of dysfunction in shared marketing — sales initiatives

By level of marketing/sales collaboration on key commercial activities

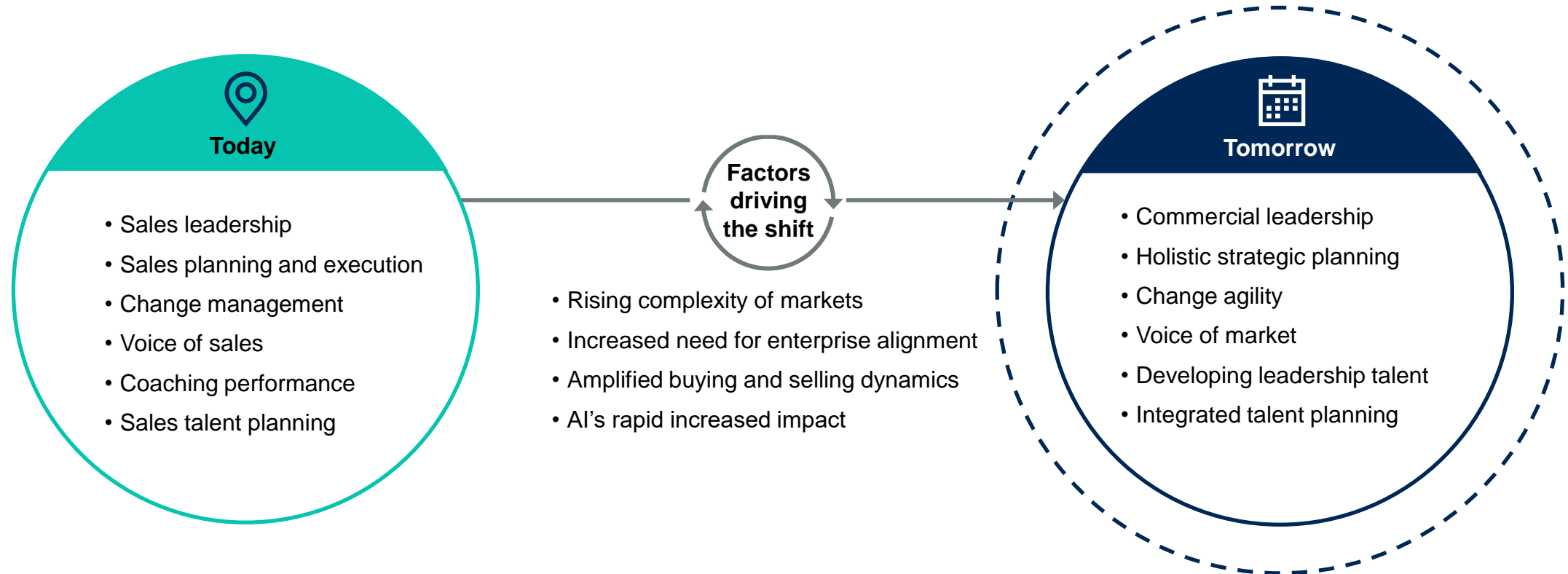
■ Never and rarely ■ Sometimes ■ Always



n = 410 – 412 executive/senior marketing and sales leaders (varies by statement)
Source: 2023 Gartner B2B Commercial Strategy Survey

A Unified Commercial Strategy Requires New CSO Skills

The CSO skill shift

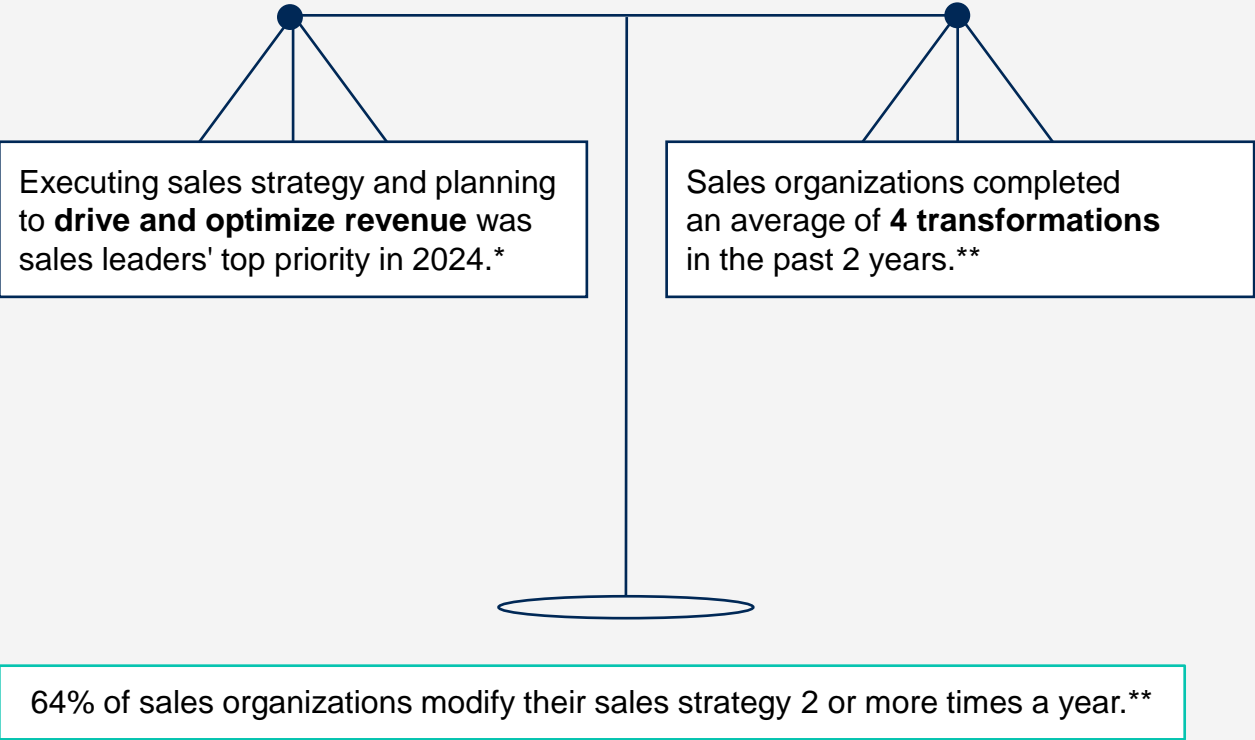


Source: Gartner

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CSOs Face a Balancing Act

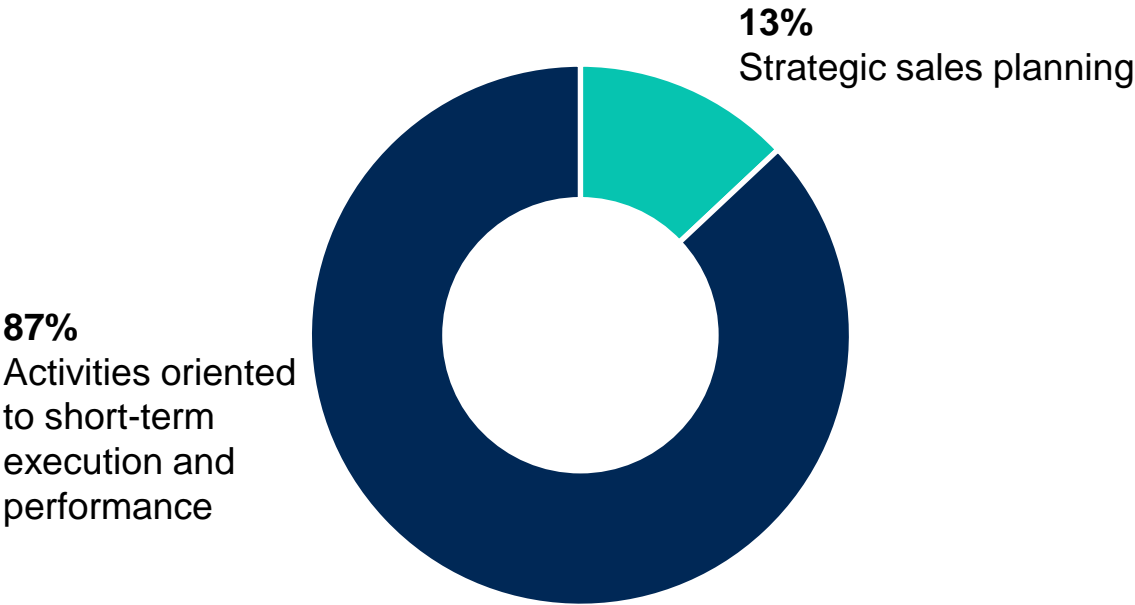
Balancing execution and longer-term transformations



*n = 238 heads of sales and senior sales leaders; ** n = 232 heads of sales and senior sales leaders
* Source: 2024 Gartner CSO Priorities Survey; ** Source: 2024 Gartner Sales Org DNA Survey


Adapting Is Even Harder Than Just Balancing

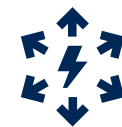
Where CSOs spend their work time



CSOs who need to adapt or shift

When CSOs need to adapt their sales strategy:

 66% of CSOs **struggle to adapt** their strategic plans to sudden change.

 65% of CSOs **struggle to shift budget and resources** to an emerging priority.

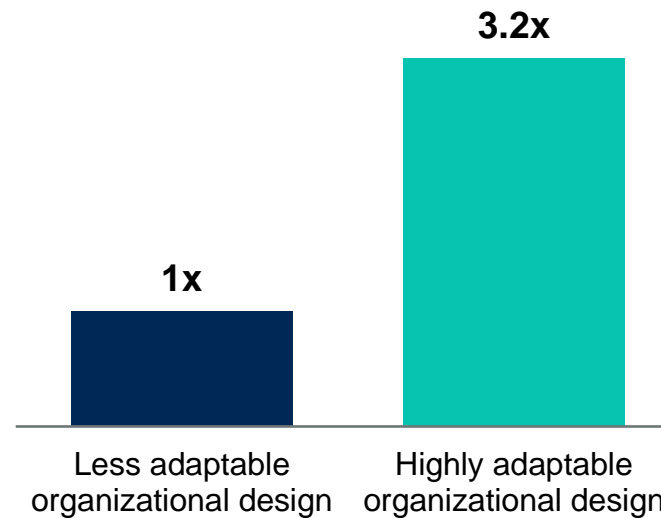
n = 175 heads of sales and senior sales leaders
Source: 2024 Gartner CSO Priorities Survey

n = 240 heads of sales and senior sales leaders
Source: 2024 Gartner CSO Priorities Survey

Build an Adaptive-by-Design Sales Organization

Sales organizations that are adaptive by design are 3x **more likely to have commercial success.**

Likelihood of strong performance
By level of adaptable organizational design



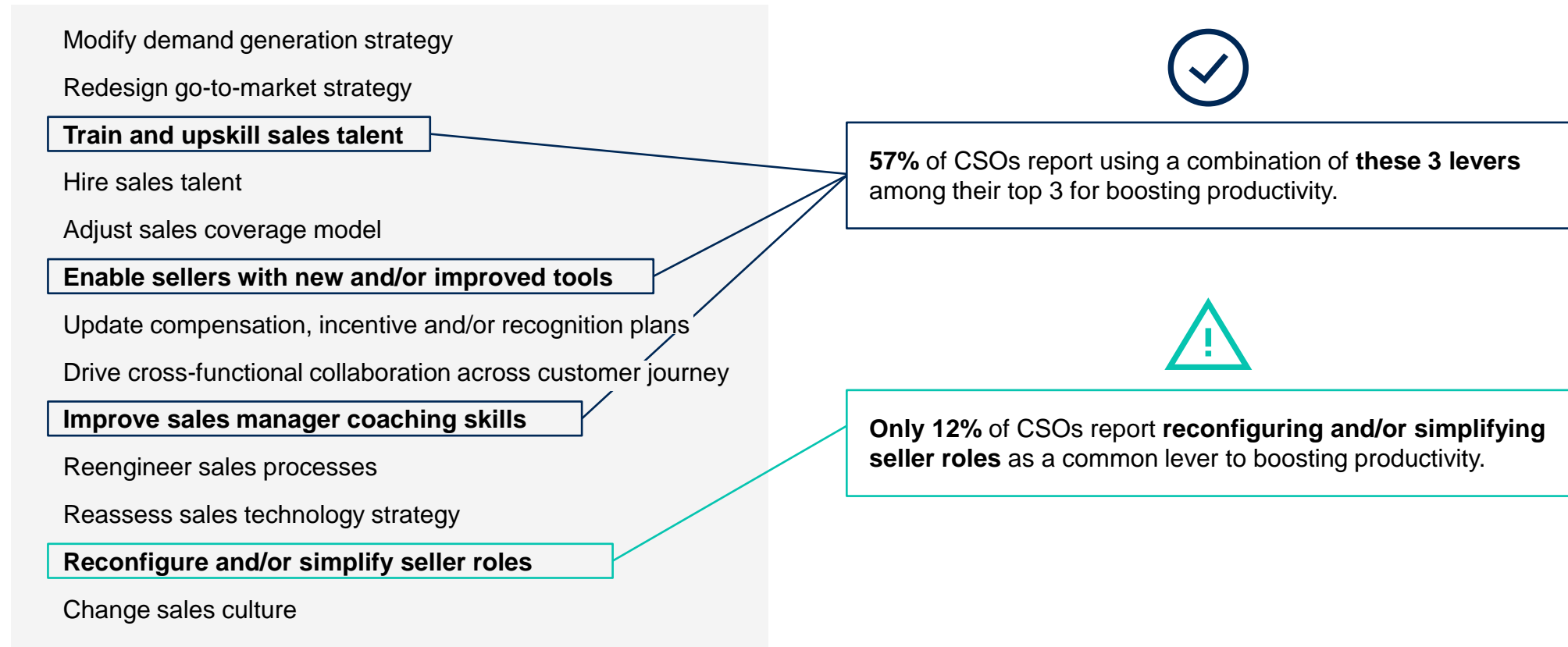
Source: Gartner

Adaptive-by-design tenets
By level of adaptable organizational design

- ✓ Leverage a structured model to improve decision making
- ✓ Make better, quicker data-driven decisions via revenue intelligence
- ✓ Design with modularity to pivot with precision
- ✓ Deploy technology as a teammate to radically simplify seller roles

There Is No Clear Path to Improve Productivity

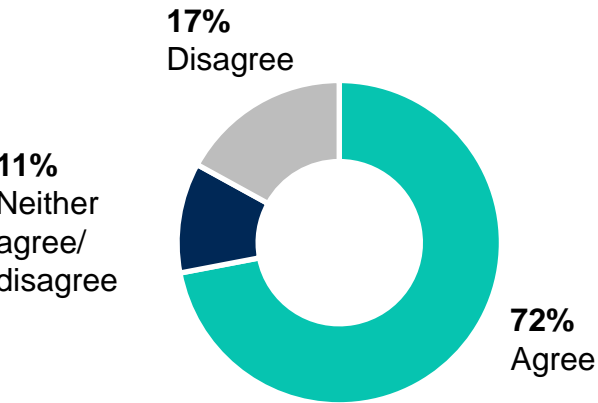
Levers to boost productivity



n = 232 heads of sales and senior sales leaders
Source: 2024 Gartner Sales Org DNA Survey

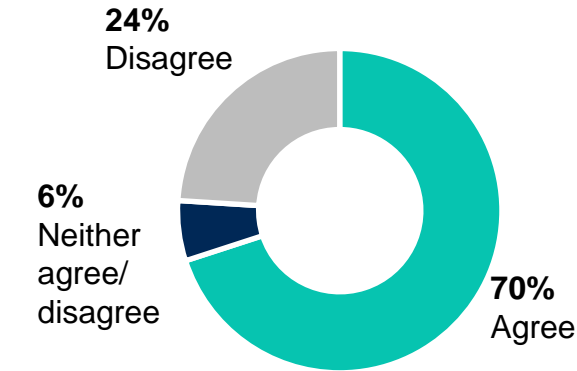
Overwhelmed Sellers Are Less Likely to Succeed

Sellers overwhelmed by number of required skills



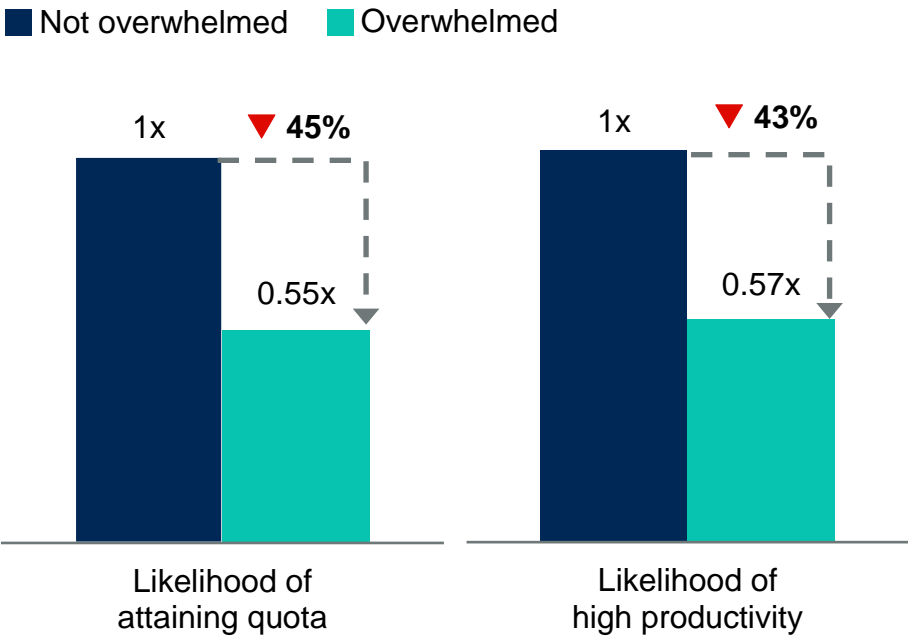
Sellers feel overwhelmed by number of required skills

Sellers feeling overwhelmed by required tech



Sellers feel overwhelmed by required tech

Likelihood of performance
By overwhelmed vs. not overwhelmed sellers

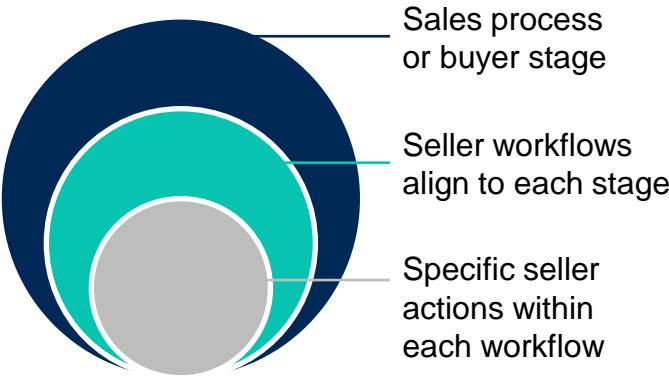


n = 1,026 B2B sellers
Source: 2024 Gartner Seller Skills Survey

Role Simplification Is Required

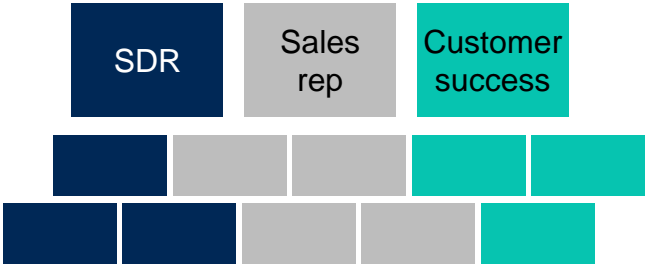
Role simplification continuum

Action-centered role simplification



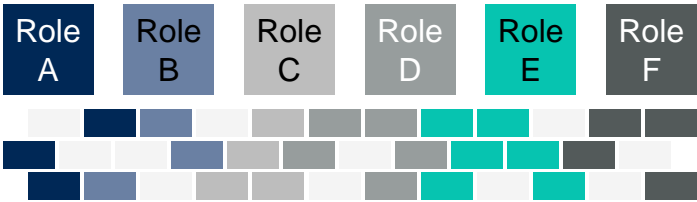
- Aligned to specific activities within the sales process
- Looks at more detailed view of seller actions below the workflow level
- Leverages data to understand which seller actions predict a desired outcome

Conventional role simplification



- Aligns work to existing roles
- General responsibilities are understood; specific actions are assumed
- Limited to sales roles
- Leverages technology as a tool

Radical role simplification






- Aligns roles to specific work
- Explicitly identifies and tracks responsibilities at the workflow and action level
- Encompasses commercial roles
- Leverages technology as a teammate

Role specialization

Improved productivity

Source: Gartner

Summary


Priority	 <p>Lead a unified commercial strategy</p>	 <p>Create an adaptable sales organization</p>	 <p>Radically simplify seller roles</p>
Trend	Buyers complete purchases in sales-rep-led, digital or a combination of sales and marketing channels.	CSOs increasingly face the need to balance between meeting consistent revenue targets, and focusing on longer-term initiatives.	57% of CSOs report using a combination of manager coaching, new/improved tools, and upskilling/training as their top 3 levers for boosting productivity.
Challenge	Siloed sales and marketing functions present obstacles to customer engagement, evidenced by 80% of key commercial activities missing contributions from sales or marketing .	CSOs say they struggle to adapt their strategic plans to sudden change and to shift budget and resources to an emerging priority.	Sellers are already overwhelmed by the required skills and technologies needed to be successful.
Action	CSOs should shift their skill focus to meet the needs of the broader commercial team by being the voice of the market, taking on holistic strategic planning and modeling change agility while leveraging AI technology to improve results.	Use adaptive-by-design tenets to build an adaptive sales organization able to competently implement and adjust to ongoing sales transformations.	Design sales roles using an action-centered role simplification approach that identifies and tracks commercial role responsibilities at the activity level.

Source: Gartner

Actionable, objective insight

Position your sales organization for success. Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools:

Webinar




The Gartner Chief Sales Officer Leadership Vision 2025 Series

Hear Gartner experts explain how to navigate pressing questions and challenges.

Register Now

Tool




CSO Personal Effectiveness Diagnostic

Assess your mastery of key activities fundamental to the CSO role.

Learn More

Guide




The New High-Performing Seller

Get actionable insights for forward-thinking sales leaders.

Download Now

Guide



Integrating Sales and Marketing to Drive Demand

Learn why sales leaders must break down silos between sales and marketing.

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