Radical Change in the DNA of High-Performing Sales Organizations

Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference Key Take-Aways

May 20 – 21, 2025 | Las Vegas, NV

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Conference summary

To thrive, CSOs and sales leaders must possess a deep knowledge of the changing components, such as crafting winning strategies to lead a unified commercial function, leveraging technological advancements and enhancing productivity that define a truly world-class organization. Explore our conference sessions below, all developed with this theme in mind.

At **Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference 2025,** attendees had access to unique actionable insights, practical tools and innovative guidance in these four areas:

- **Redefining** sales strategies to drive revenue
- **Transform** sales process execution to accelerate growth
- **Igniting** sales productivity and performance
- **Innovating** with future-forward operations and enablement

Sales leaders can use this to review the key take-aways from top sessions in each area.

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Seizing the Moment: Transform Sales Organization DNA With Big Bets on AI and Talent

During the opening keynote at **Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference,** Dan Gottlieb explored The Great Sales Awakening — this transformative era driven by shifts in labor, technology and market dynamics. Sales leaders have a unique opportunity to fracture the DNA of the sales function and rewrite the playbook for the future.

To seize the opportunity and outpace the competition, sales leaders must act swiftly and decisively. What kind of sales leader do you want to be?

- **Be a sales leader for the AI era:** Avoid the vendor hype and set your own pace for AI transformation in your organization. Use the revenue x transformation matrix to design a sales AI transformation portfolio and adapt your operating rhythm to drive results.

- **Build an agentic sales organization:** Ensure your teams hit the mark with AI initiatives. Use action-centric insight and design to break down sales work into actions, hypothesize AI accelerators and adapt work and roles with AI.

- **Pursue future-fit sales talent:** Prioritize high-upside talent — including a growth mindset, AI partnership and tactical flexibility — over relying on industry experience. Update job descriptions to emphasize future-fit attributes and upskill the existing workforce.

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Redefine Sales Strategies to Drive Revenue

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Track summary

Trends in buyer dynamics, evolving roles and market uncertainties necessitate a reevaluation of go-to-market strategies and sales models. This track focuses on adapting sales and GTM strategies with an emphasis on CSOs leading unified commercial approaches across their organizations.

Sales leaders can use this to review the key take-aways from top sessions in this track, such as:

- Top 5 Commercial Disruptions CSOs Need to See Coming

- The Future of B2B Sales: The 7 Forces Impacting A CSO's Sales Organization

- The New CSO's Toolkit: Leveraging Gartner's New To Role Insights for First Year Success

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The CSO 2025 Leadership Vision: It's Way More Than Just Sales

Robert Blaisdell
VP Analyst

Session summary

CSOs are confronted with unprecedented challenges and threats that demand strategic foresight and agility. This session provides an inventory of the top threats poised to reshape commercial enterprises and sales strategies over the next 12-18 months. Equip yourself with the knowledge and tools necessary to anticipate and navigate these changes to remain resilient and competitive.

Organizations that take a signal-based approach to revisiting scenario planning are 1.9x more likely to have commercial growth compared to organizations that do not.
Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- 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, 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.

Related resources

- [Accelerate Decision Making and Adaptability to Drive Commercial Growth](#)

- [Innovation Insight: Improve Sales Strategy Using a Structured Decision Making Model](#)

- [Portrait of the New High-Performing Seller](#)

- [Use Business Intelligence to Power Strategic and Operational Decision Making](#)

- [Simplify Seller Role Design to Increase Productivity](#)

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Top 5 Commercial Disruptions CSOs Need to See Coming

Dave Egloff

VP Analyst

Session summary

CSOs are confronted with unprecedented challenges and threats that demand strategic foresight and agility. This session provides an inventory of the top threats poised to reshape commercial enterprises and sales strategies over the next 12-18 months. Equip yourself with the knowledge and tools necessary to anticipate and navigate these changes to remain resilient and competitive.

A top priority for CSOs and senior sales leaders is to develop and execute on a sales strategy that drives and optimizes revenue. However, 65% of CSOs struggle to adapt their strategic plans to sudden business changes.

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Plan the sales growth roadmap around corporate value drivers and mission-critical priorities.

- Formalize a commercial listening program for publicly available Gen AI tools to hear what they say about your company, product set and market.

- Plan for global disruptions. Run a "fire drill" to gauge the speed of responsive.

Related resources

- [Top 7 Commercial Threats for CSOs in 2025](#)

- [How to Adapt Sales Strategies to the Current State of B2B Buying](#)

- [Tool: Sales Strategy on a Page](#)

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The CSO's New Strategy for Improving Seller Productivity

Steve Rietberg
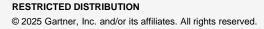VP Analyst

Session summary

What is the key to improving sales productivity in your business? Is it pipeline creation, win rate, sales cycle time or something entirely different? As a CSO, you have a strong opinion based on experience and intuition. But there's a better way to improve sales productivity. Join this session to identify the activities that matter the most for improving the productivity of your sellers.

Organizations where frontline sales managers use data-driven guidance to identify highest-impact coaching opportunities are 4.3x more likely to achieve greatly improved profit growth.

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Implement comparative seller performance analysis to uncover hidden insights related to sales productivity.

- Identify leading indicators to seller performance using a tiered quantitative approach, and train sales managers to use them.

- Use Gartner's Comparative Seller Performance Diagnostic to drive continuous improvement.

Related resources

- Determine What Really Drives Productivity With Comparative Seller Performance Metrics

- Identify Leading Indicators That Improve Seller Productivity

- Comparative Seller Performance Diagnostic

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The New CSO's Toolkit: Leveraging Gartner's New-to-Role Insights for First-Year Success

Brendan Condon
Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

First-time CSOs need to understand the remit of their new role and how it is vastly different from roles they have had in the past. Join this session to know how CSOs can leverage the Gartner New To Role insight to ensure success in their first year.

Nearly 40% of transitioning executives tend to underperform and half (at 49%) are experiencing that unwelcome occurrence within a new company.

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Quickly set priorities by aligning with board and CEO expectations, assessing sales, and addressing urgent areas. Quick wins enhance credibility.

- Understand your role by evaluating company culture, governance and relationships. Study industry trends to make informed decisions and avoid pitfalls.

- Build relationships and a personal brand by engaging with executives, tailoring communication and refining leadership skills. Your brand influences perceptions.

- Focus on stability, risk management, strategic updates and team building for long-term success.

Related resources

- [Leadership Vision for 2025: Chief Sales Officers](#)
- [How CSOs Can Influence C-Suite Peers and Champion Commercial Success](#)
- [The Chief Sales Officer's First 100 Days](#)
- [A Changing Sales Landscape Demands New CSO Skills](#)

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Key Take-Aways

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Transform Sales Process Execution to Accelerate Growth

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Track summary

Evolving buyer behavior and disruption of conventional sales processes lead to missed revenue opportunities across new and existing accounts.

This track guides CSOs and sales leaders on how to best acquire, retain and grow customers amid persistent market uncertainties.

Sales leaders can use this to review the key take-aways from top sessions in this track, such as:

- CSO Circle Ask the Expert: How AI Is Evolving B2B Buyers, and What Sales Needs to Do About It

- Maximize Revenue Growth by Overcoming Stalled Deals

- Untapped Potential: Use Revenue Management Technology To Maximize Profitability

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CSO Circle Ask the Expert: How AI Is Evolving B2B Buyers, and What Sales Needs to Do About It

Alyssa Cruz
Senior Principal Analyst

Session summary

AI is transforming buyer behavior; are you ready to meet AI-savvy clients? Join this session to explore AI's impact on the buyer's journey and discover innovative sales strategies that align with this new paradigm. Learn to leverage AI for enhanced customer engagement, streamlined decision-making and driving sales success.

While only 22% of buyers report using GenAI during a recent purchase, those who did were 1.4x more likely to report completing a high-quality deal.

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- **Audit your buyers' journey** to ensure your organization is up to speed on how your buyers are navigating the purchasing journey and the tools they're using.

- **Reevaluate your messaging strategy** to validate who you target and when, as well as the content you share with them.

- **Incorporate AI-led solutions** into both your buyers' experience and seller workflow strategically to ensure value.

Related resources

- [Unlock Revenue Growth With Digitally Enabled Sales Strategies](#)

- [Integrate Sales Tech and Digital Commerce to Unify Customer Experiences](#)

- [Toolkit: Build Digital B2B Content to Support Buyer Enablement](#)

- [CSOs Must Adapt Sales Engagement Strategies for AI-Driven Buyers](#)

- [Use Digital Sales Rooms to Improve the Digital Buying Experience](#)

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Maximize Revenue Growth by Overcoming Stalled Deals

Danielle McKinley

Senior Director, Advisory

Session summary

In today's dynamic sales environment, stalled deals can significantly hinder revenue growth and disrupt sales forecast. Join this insightful session that dives deep into the root causes of stalled deals and equips you with actionable strategies and best practices to keep the sales pipeline moving. Learn how to diagnose stalled deals, implement targeted solutions and empower your sales team with proactive and defensive tactics to maintain deal momentum.

Sellers report a 48% increase in sales cycle length from 2022 to 2024.

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Review current stalled deal metrics.

- Validate data accuracy and identify immediate discrepancies.

- Locate the most problematic stalled deal selling scenarios.

- Evaluate technology and AI to enhance data inputs, analysis and seller actions.

- Integrate signals into seller workflows.

Related resources

- [Boost Revenue by Diagnosing the Root Causes of Stalled Deals](#)

- [Tool: Template for Boosting Sales via Customer Journey Mapping](#)

- [Case Study: Isolate and Measure Enablement's Impact](#)

- [Boost Sales AI Impact With Revenue Action Orchestration: A Gartner Trend Insight Report](#)

- [Comparative Seller Performance Diagnostic](#)

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Untapped Potential: Use Revenue Management Technology To Maximize Profitability

Mark Lewis
Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

Harness profit optimization technology to elevate B2B profitability. Integrate price optimization, deal negotiation and rebate management to craft profit-maximizing deals. By adopting these tools, organizations can boost margins by 1% or more, realizing a 10x return on investment. This approach not only enhances financial performance but also strengthens competitive advantage.

Profit optimization software has a rapid payback on investment (often less than six months).
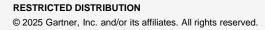Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Review current pricing & rebate processes.
- Align sales and finance teams.
- Create a strategy for profit optimization.
- Implement tech to enable the strategy.
- Pilot, measure and scale.

Related resources

- [Market Guide for B2B Profit Optimization Software](#)
- [Magic Quadrant for Configure, Price and Quote Applications](#)
- [Critical Capabilities for Configure, Price and Quote Applications](#)

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Ignite Sales Productivity & Performance

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Track summary

Ineffective training programs, suboptimal frontline management and inefficient onboarding pose significant threats to sales organizations ability to transform into a high performing machine. This track focuses on adopting high-performance approaches in upskilling, productivity and talent management to achieve revenue growth and operational efficiency.

Sales leaders can use this to review the key take-aways from top sessions in this track, such as:

- Optimizing GenAI's Impact on Seller Time Spend
- Ask the Expert: Motivating the Youngest Generations With Your Compensation Strategy
- Ask the Expert: Developing the Next-Generation Seller Competency Model

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Optimizing GenAI's Impact on Seller Time Spend

Alice Walmesley

Director Analyst

Session summary

GenAI has massive implications on the seller role and how sellers use their time. Sales leaders can help sellers optimize their time by identifying the seller and technology actions correlated to productivity. In this session, we use the seller time spend assessment and case studies from leading organizations to explore how to best optimize sellers' time to drive real value.

Sellers with high AI partnership competency are 3.7x more likely to meet quota.

by Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Understand how to map seller activities.
- Audit seller time spend.
- Identify activities to partially offload and streamline with AI.
- Explore the AI market to ascertain the tech that is best suited.
- Refocus sellers on high value activities to increase seller productivity.

Related resources

- [Seller Time Spend Assessment](#)
- [Case Study: Improve Prospecting With Technology as a Teammate](#)
- [13 Generative AI Use Cases for B2B Sales](#)
- [How to Drive Sellers' Adoption of Generative AI](#)

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Ask the Expert: Ask the Expert: Top Tips, Tricks and Trends in Sales Compensation Strategies and Tactics

Dave Egloff

VP Analyst

Session summary

Discover the newest strategies, tactics and best practices in sales compensation. Learn how to effectively align compensation with sales goals to enhance performance. Uncover innovative approaches to motivate your sales team and increase productivity. Stay updated with trend analyses that emphasize technology integration and performance metrics.

Sales compensation has been the highest ranked employee value proposition attribute across baby boomers, Gen X and Millennials — but for Gen Z the strength of compensation is weakening.

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Assess the effectiveness of the existing sales compensation pay curve by using a mix of qualitative stakeholder feedback and cross-functional KPIs.

- Generate sales compensation expense predictability by financially stress-testing the compensation plan design with a probabilistic, Monte Carlo simulator.

- Identify compensation metrics that are within sellers' control, support business objectives and are accurately reportable.

Related resources

- [Sales Compensation Plans Require Pay Curves That Drive Performance](#)

- [Model Sales Compensation Expense to Improve Predictability](#)

- [Tool: Assess the Need to Change Your Sales Compensation Plan](#)

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Ask the Expert: Developing the Next-Generation Seller Competency Model

Bill Yetman

Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

Many existing competency models are outdated, poorly aligned with sales strategies and lack actionable insights. This session will explore how to create or enhance a competency model that is practical, effective and seamlessly integrated into your sales organization. We will leverage the Gartner innovative seller competency model, which focuses on differentiated skills that drive commercial success, technology integration and aligned metrics.

87% of B2B sellers wish sales leadership could accurately identify which skills are required for success.

Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Conduct a Comprehensive Competency Model review against the backdrop of AI's impact on buyer behavior and seller roles.

- Integrate AI fluency into sales competencies while prioritizing human-centric skills.

- Establish a process for regularly reviewing and updating the competency model based on sales performance data, market feedback, technological advancements, and input from sales leaders and sellers.

- Investigate AI-powered learning platforms that deliver tailored training programs based on individual competency assessments and identified skill gaps.

- Connect competency models across roles to decrease regrettable talent churn, develop a robust talent pipeline, and ensure clear and logical career progression is visible.

Related resources

- Initiative Accelerator: [Identify Seller Skills That Drive Commercial Results](#)
- [Tool: Frontline Seller Competency Model](#)
- [Increase Sales Manager Impact by Addressing 3 Critical Strategies](#)

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Innovate With Future-Forward Operations & Enablement

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Track summary

CSOs need to make bold investments in AI, which has opened up exciting possibilities along with new challenges. The key to success is developing AI-forward operations and enablement functions equipped with the right talent, processes and data. This track helps sales operations and enablement leaders evolve their functions to support the sales organizations with innovative approaches.

Sales leaders can use this report to review the key take-aways from top sessions in this track, such as:

- What are AI Agents and What Do They Mean for Sales?
- Cutting-Edge AI Use-Cases in Enablement: Lessons From the Frontlines
- 3 Things You Should Know About the Revenue Enablement Platform Market

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What are AI Agents and What Do They Mean for Sales?

Adnan Zijadic

Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

This session demystifies AI Agents, examining their types and capabilities. Compare them to human agents, highlighting strengths, limitations, and collaboration opportunities. Discover how AI Agents can enhance sales strategies, improve customer interactions, and drive growth. Gain insights to effectively leverage AI in your sales organization and embrace the future of sales.

Organizations with action-centered insight and design are already 2.5x more likely to be among the top 11% of sales organizations.
Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Start documenting sales processes through the lens of role-based workflows because AI agents thrive on details and minutia.

- Establish clear guardrails and start creating a governance framework to monitor AI agents and keep cybersecurity risks in mind.

- Create a sales technologist talent pool as you need skills on the ops team to manage AI agents.

- Pilot small internal Agentic use cases at a maximum of 3 use cases in individual processes.

- Understand the difference between AI assistants and AI agents and beware of "agent-washing" where assistants are incorrectly labeled as agents.

Related resources

- [Innovation Guide for Generative AI in Sales](#)
- [Make Your SFA Platform An Action-Centric Hub for Sellers](#)
- [Create an AI Strategy for Your Sales Organization](#) (Interactive Accelerator)

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Cutting-Edge AI Use-Cases in Enablement: Lessons From the Frontlines

Guy Wood

Senior Director Analyst

Session summary

In today's dynamic sales landscape, harnessing AI is essential for staying ahead. This session unveils the most common GenAI use cases that are revolutionizing sales and revenue enablement. Dive into compelling real-world examples and case studies, uncover the innovative solutions implemented and equip your organization with actionable strategies to lead in AI-driven sales enablement.

Sellers who partner closely with AI are 3.7x more likely to meet quota than sellers with weaker partnerships.
Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Accelerate growth by forming a deep, collaborative partnership with marketing.

- Drive business impact with a proactive, enablement function strategically aligned to sales goals and initiatives.

- Focus on driving the specific behaviors needed for the sales team to successfully execute key sales.

Related resources

- [Generative AI Use-Case Comparison for Sales Enablement](#)

  [Reframe Sales Tech Adoption Through Utility, Not Usage Metrics](#)

- [The Sales Enablement Plan for Outsized Commercial Impact](#)

- [Leadership Vision 2025: Sales Enablement](#)

- [Tool: Sales Enablement Charter Planning Guide](#)

- [Why Sales Enablement Must Partner With Product Marketing](#)

- [Driving Seller Behavior Change: The New Enablement Mandate](#)

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3 Things You Should Know About the Revenue Enablement Platform Market

Melissa Hilbert
VP Analyst

Session summary

This session will provide you with three key features of revenue enablement platforms you should know about, to evaluate and make the best purchase. This will help your organization drive performance. It will explore vendors in the space and where the market is headed in the future.

Organizations whose top 3 priorities include upskilling sales force are 2.6 times more likely to achieve overall growth, compared to organizations with different priorities.
Source: Gartner

Key actions for sales leaders

- Build an AI-led enablement roadmap.
- Investigate AI features that enable sellers and enablement teams.
- Thread DSRs into your sales strategy to improve buyer/seller experience a deliver higher quality LTV.
- Use the Seller Time Spend Diagnostic to find where sellers are spending time on low-value activities.
- Use AI for sales role play to bring to "life" a real-time practice coach.

Related resources

- Market Guide for Revenue Enablement Platforms
- Market Guide for Digital Sales Rooms
- Generative AI Use-Case Comparison for Sales Enablement
- Seller Time Spend Assessment

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