

# TRENDS *in* EMEA SALES

Insights from 3,151 sales professionals in EMEA  
on what drives business resilience and growth



salesforce

# A Note from Angelique de Vries-Schipperijn

EVP & CEO  
Northern Europe



Sellers are accustomed to uncertainty – but these days, it’s on a whole new level. The world is a fundamentally different place than it was in 2019, and it’s anyone’s guess what the next 12 months will look like.

Despite that, sellers are adjusting to the new landscape together, and in examining patterns across our experiences, a path forward becomes clearer.

It is in that spirit that we’ve assembled this report of sales trends in EMEA. The plural of anecdote is data, and from the experiences of over 3,000 sales professionals, we’ve surfaced insights surrounding the new realities and opportunities for sales teams in the region.

While the North Star of sales remains the same as ever – relentless focus on the customer and delivering relevant value – I hope this report helps illuminate your trail.

*Angelique de Vries-Schipperijn*

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EVP & CEO Northern Europe, Salesforce

# What You'll Find in This Report

Salesforce Research surveyed 3,151 sales professionals in EMEA to discover:

- How sales professionals are adjusting to new expectations from their employers and customers
- The evolving role of sales operations
- New tactics and strategies driving growth and efficiency

## Methodology

Data in this report is a subset of findings from the fourth edition of the global “State of Sales” study conducted from May 13, 2020, through June 30, 2020. Respondents are full-time sales professionals from B2B and B2B2C companies, including sales operations, sales representatives, and sales leadership. All respondents are third-party panelists (not limited to Salesforce customers). For further survey demographics, see [page 15](#).

Due to rounding, not all percentage totals in this report equal 100%. All comparison calculations are made from total numbers (not rounded numbers).



Salesforce Research provides data-driven insights to help businesses transform how they drive customer success. Browse all reports at [salesforce.com/research](https://salesforce.com/research).



Belgium

France

Germany

Italy

Netherlands

Denmark

Norway

Finland

Sweden

Poland

South Africa

Spain

Switzerland

United Arab Emirates

United Kingdom

Over

# 3,000

sales professionals surveyed regionally

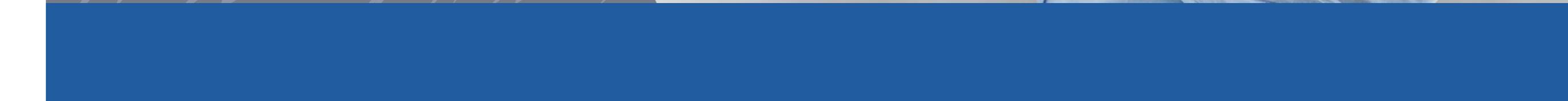
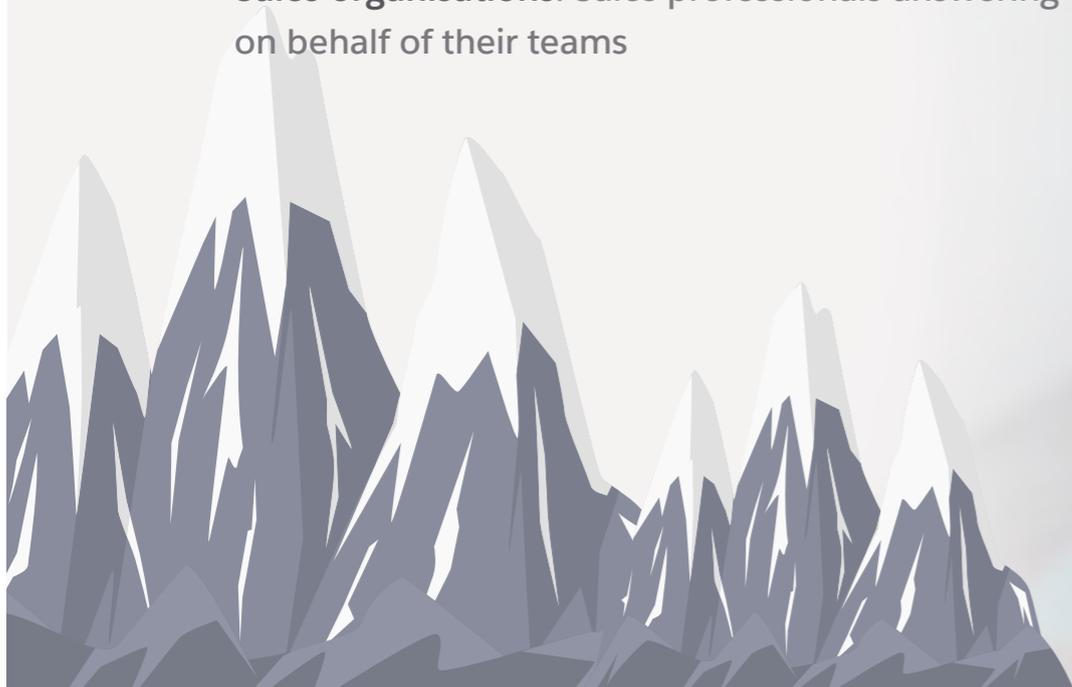


# What You'll Find in This Report

## Terms Used in This Research

In this research, we refer to several sample respondent groups, defined as follows:

- **Sales reps:** Quota-carrying sales representatives
- **Field sales reps:** Sales reps who primarily interact with customers via in-person meetings (*also known as outside sales*)
- **Sales operations:** Includes sales enablement, revenue ops, and deal desk
- **Sales leaders:** Sales executives and managers
- **Sales professionals:** All salespeople, inclusive of the groups above
- **Sales organisations:** Sales professionals answering on behalf of their teams



# What You'll Find in This Report

## Distribution of Sales Performance Levels

Throughout this report, we classify respondents across three tiers of sales organisation performance.

**69%**

**Moderate performers**

All other sales organisations

**7%**

**Underperformers**

Slightly or not confident in their ability to close deals

**23%**

**High performers**

Completely confident in their ability to close deals



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# Executive Summary

Effective selling has always been about adapting to the needs of the market.

However, in the midst of recent social and economic upheaval, sales teams have had to reimagine processes amidst greater ambiguity, and at a faster speed, than usual.

This report looks at five key trends shaping the world of sales in EMEA at a pivotal time.

## 01

### Top Teams Turn Insights into Sales (See page 08)

Sales reps track many information sources to stay informed about customers' evolving needs. **Sales reps at top sales organisations are 1.3x more likely than underperformers to monitor competitor activity weekly.**

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## 02

### As Business Needs Shift, Reskilling Takes Priority (See page 10)

With new business challenges come new staffing needs, and EMEA sales leadership is leaning on training to fill the gaps. **Fifty-nine percent of EMEA sales organisations are reskilling existing employees.**

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## 03

### Organisations Seek Visibility as Selling Goes Remote (See page 11)

As teams adjust to new ways of working, they confront new challenges around visibility and alignment. **Seventy-four percent of EMEA sales organisations have increased their monitoring of field sales rep activities.**

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## 04

### Sales Ops Becomes Increasingly Strategic (See page 12)

In a landscape riddled with ambiguity, agility and data-powered decision-making have become more important than ever. **Eighty-three percent of EMEA sales professionals say sales operations is becoming more strategic.**

---

## 05

### Digital Transformation Accelerates (See page 13)

The shift to remote selling has increased the urgency of connecting digitally with customers and colleagues. **Seventy-eight percent of EMEA sales leaders say their digital transformation has accelerated since 2019.**

01

## Top Teams Turn Insights into Sales

Personal relationships, grounded in trust, are critical to powering through moments of crisis. In the current business landscape, the seller-customer relationship is no exception.

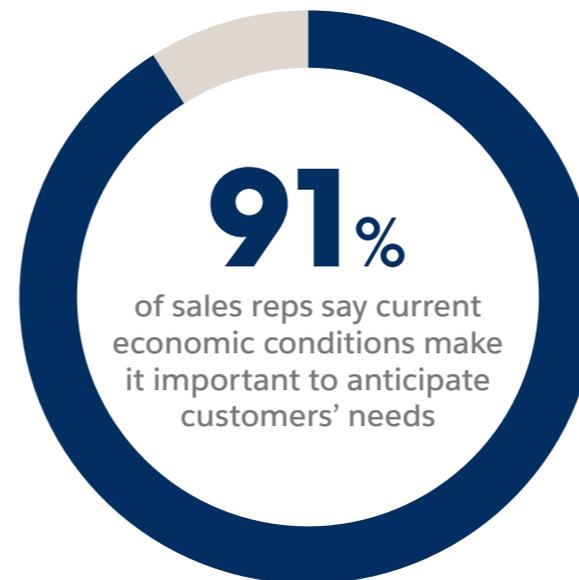
As buyers scramble to adjust to new terrain, they're turning to sales reps not just for product expertise but for tailored advice on how to reach their objectives.

**83%** of EMEA business buyers say they are more likely to buy from companies that demonstrate an understanding of their goals.\*

Sales reps in the region understand how critical this dynamic is, and are working hard to understand and serve emerging customer needs.

\* Source: Salesforce Connected Customer survey, August 2020.

## Trusted Relationships Form the Foundation of Sales



01

# Top Teams Turn Insights into Sales

Addressing customer needs in a changing world requires diligent efforts to stay informed.

The vast majority of sales reps across all performance levels rely on publicly available news sources to inform their selling, with underperformers even over-indexing on some of them.

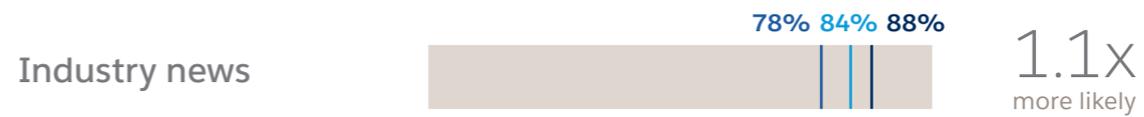
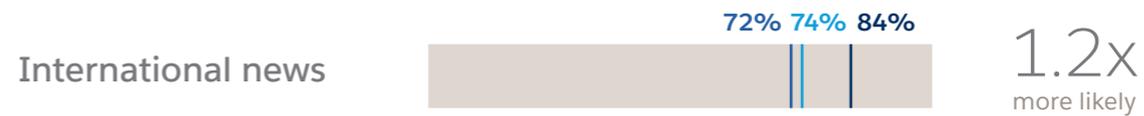
However, sales reps at high-performing sales organisations go a step beyond this by tracking deeper, customer-specific insights with greater frequency. Insights like staffing changes can signal changing decision-making dynamics, while new competitor activity can suggest ways to tweak existing strategies and tactics.

## Top Sales Reps Turn to Deep Customer Insights

### EMEA Sales Reps Who Monitor the Following Information Sources at Least Weekly to Inform Selling

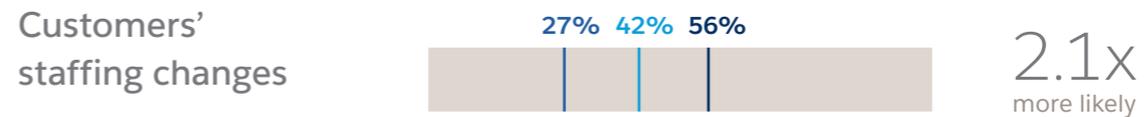
#### News

High performers vs. Underperformers



#### Insights

High performers vs. Underperformers



■ High performers ■ Moderate performers ■ Underperformers



02

# As Business Needs Shift, Reskilling Takes Priority

## EMEA Sales Teams Reskill to Address Needs

73% of EMEA sales professionals say they have taken on new responsibilities at work.



### Planned Tactics for Addressing Staffing Needs in EMEA\*



\* Base: Sales leadership.

Recent crises have reshaped many sales organisations’ staffing needs. Indeed, over two-thirds of EMEA sales professionals report taking on new responsibilities at work.

For many, the changes may bring opportunities for career growth. Rather than shake up the foundations of their teams through hires and layoffs, the majority of EMEA sales leaders plan to train existing employees to fill emerging gaps. Perhaps the most significant exercise of all is training field sales reps – long accustomed to in-person customer interaction at client sites – to sell over video or phone.

**74%** of EMEA sales leaders say they’re retraining field reps to sell from home.\*\*

\*\* Base: Sales leadership at companies with field reps.



03

# Organisations Seek Visibility as Selling Goes Remote

With the growth of remote work amidst a climate of market changes and ambiguity, many EMEA sales organisations are leaning on formal processes like activity logging to increase visibility into rep activity and keep sales teams aligned.

As activity logging gets stricter and meetings longer, some organisations – particularly high-performing ones – look to automation to reduce the burden of administrative tasks on sales reps and leave more time for selling.

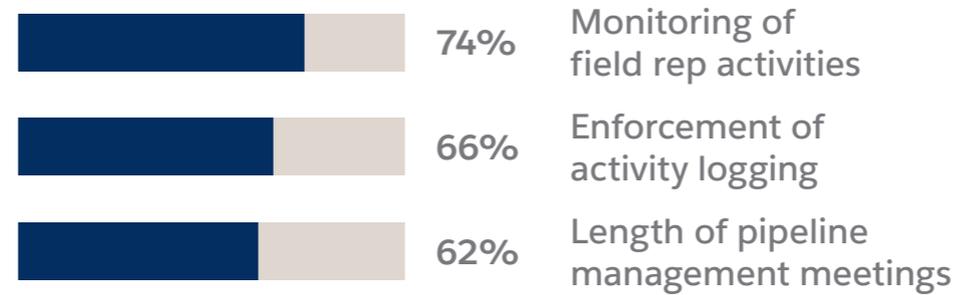
At organisations that have adopted artificial intelligence (AI), the technology is also doing its part to make transparency scalable.

**82%** of EMEA sales professionals say AI improves visibility into rep activity.\*

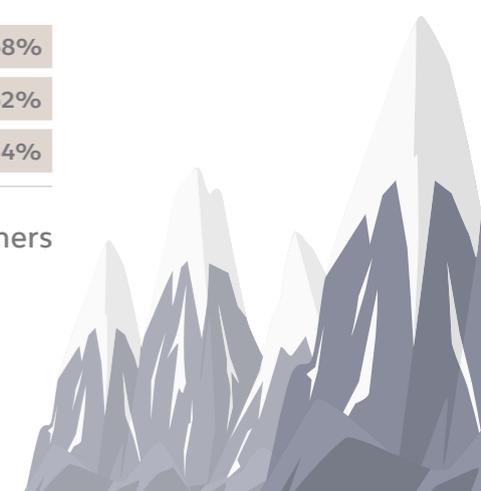
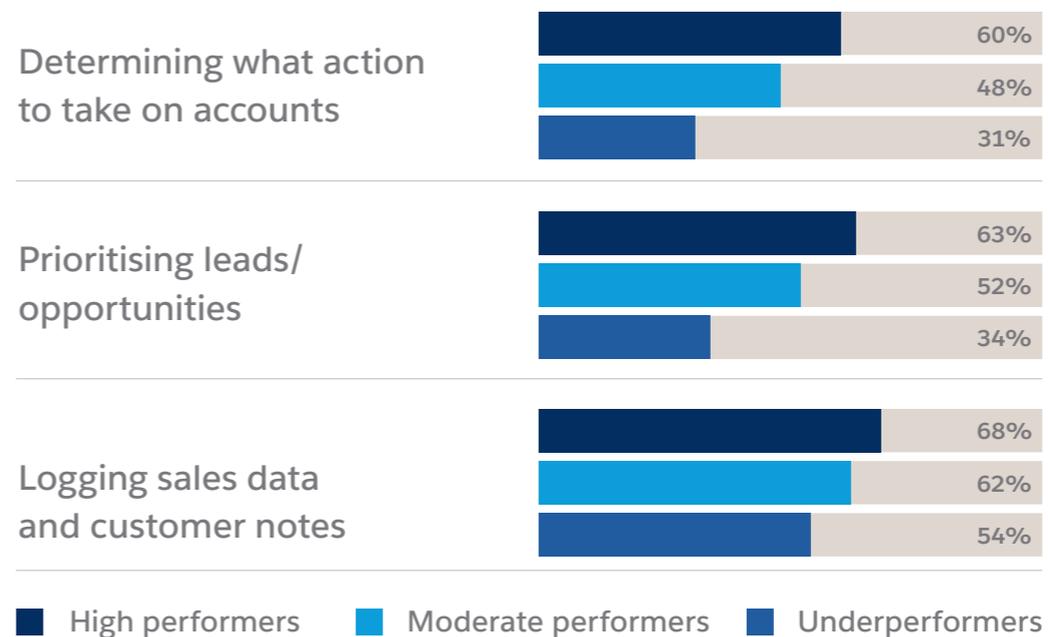
\* Base: At companies using AI. Includes responses of major and moderate improvement.

## Sales Organisations Adopt Processes to Enhance Visibility

### EMEA Organisations Where the Following Has Increased



### EMEA Organisations Where the Following Is Mostly Automated



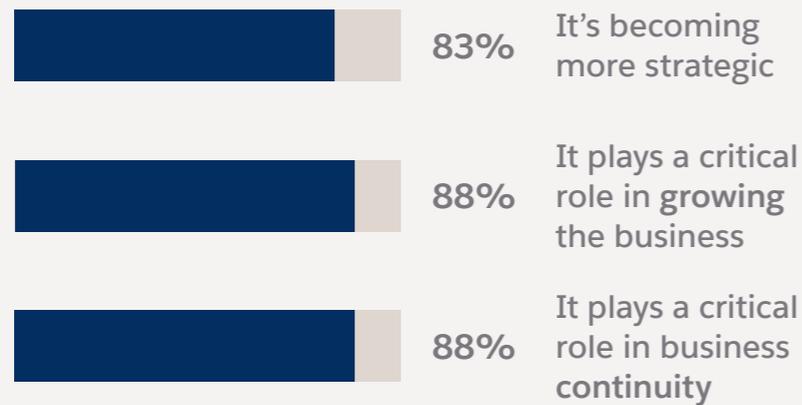
04

# Sales Ops Becomes Increasingly Strategic

Long the unsung hero of the sales team, sales operations is now recognised by colleagues as a role of increasing strategic importance.

In times of uncertainty, data-driven decision-making can make the difference between seizing or missing out on opportunities. Accordingly, sales ops professionals have become increasingly central in strategy planning since 2019.

## EMEA Sale Professionals Who Say the Following About Sales Operations



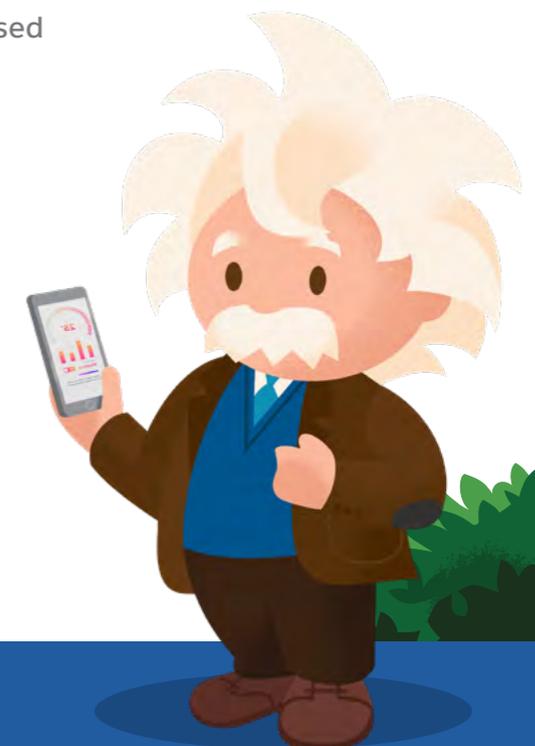
Base: Company has sales operations.

## Sales Operations Has Growing Role in Sales Strategy

### Scope of Sales Operations Teams' Work in EMEA



### Change to Sales Ops Involvement in EMEA Sales Strategy Planning Since 2019



05

## Digital Transformation Accelerates

Organisations' sales technology needs have undergone rapid change.

# 79%

of EMEA sales leaders say their digital transformation has accelerated since 2019.

That video-conferencing tools and mobile apps have become increasingly valuable in a time of distributed work may not come as a surprise. EMEA sales teams, however, have also recently placed particularly high value in artificial intelligence.

Appreciation for the value AI comes on the heels of a significant uptick in its adoption among EMEA sales teams since our last survey in 2018.

## New Landscape Alters Sales' Technology Needs

### Top 5 Sales Tools That Have Become More Valuable in EMEA Since 2019\*

- 1 Video conferencing tools
- 2 Artificial intelligence
- 3 Mobile sales app(s) for employees
- 4 Customer relationship management (CRM) system
- 5 Sales prospecting tools

### EMEA Sales Teams Using AI\*



\* Base: Sales ops and sales leadership at companies that use the tool.

\*\*  $((2020-2018)/2018) \times 100$

Note: Surveyed EMEA countries in 2018 differ from surveyed EMEA countries in 2020, Countries surveyed in 2018 include Germany, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Ireland.

# SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS



# Survey Demographics

## Industry

Architecture, engineering, or construction ...	2%
Automotive .....	4%
Consumer goods .....	9%
Financial services.....	9%
Healthcare, life sciences, and biotechnology .....	5%
Manufacturing, energy, and utilities .....	19%
Media, entertainment, and communications .....	4%
Professional and business services .....	10%
Retail.....	18%
Technology.....	10%
Transportation and hospitality.....	7%
Other .....	2%

## Company Type

Business-to-business (B2B).....	64%
Business-to-business-to-consumer (B2B2C)	36%

## Company Size

Small (21-100 employees) .....	14%
Medium (101-3,500 employees) .....	53%
Enterprise (3,501+ employees) .....	33%

## Generation

Baby boomers.....	11%
Gen Xers.....	45%
Millennials .....	42%
Gen Zers.....	1%

## Role Within Sales

Sales leadership/head of sales.....	13%
Sales manager or director .....	26%
Sales representative: inside sales .....	14%
Sales representative: outside sales.....	10%
Sales support.....	15%
Sales operations .....	22%

## Country

Belgium .....	10%
France .....	10%
Germany.....	10%
Italy .....	10%
Netherlands .....	10%
Nordics (Denmark, Finland, Norway & Sweden) .....	6%
Poland .....	10%
South Africa .....	8%
Spain.....	10%
Switzerland.....	8%
United Arab Emirates.....	2%
United Kingdom .....	10%

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