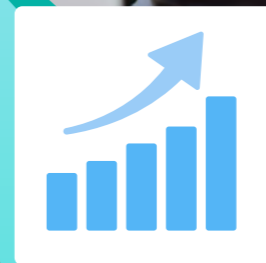




Sales Trends in India

2024 Insights



Foreword



In the fast paced Indian market, information (*read:data*) has outscored everything else. Today, the customers have too much information but lack support in making sense out of it. Likewise, the Indian sellers are not just gatekeepers of product information, they are the new customer and product experts, who offer personalised offerings for their specific concerns.

In return for their loyalty and repeat purchases, Indian customers today want sellers to take on the bigger role of their advisors, offering productive, personalised interactions to build connections. Addressing data and trust concerns, particularly in the age of artificial intelligence (AI), has also become critical to building and maintaining these customer relationships.

As sales teams in India evolve from being target chasers to being value creators, sales leaders have also realised the need to collaborate with other functions like marketing and service. They also concede that they must drive significant revenue growth while battling rising customer demands and competition. And, to do so, they must bypass traditional approaches to sales-force productivity. One way to unlock the full potential of their sales teams is with training and enablement.

The latest Salesforce State of Sales Report offers insights into how the sales teams from around the country are helping make sense of it all for their organisations and also for the customers they serve. It also highlights the priorities, challenges, and performance metrics that define the sales environment in India today.



What You'll Find in This Report

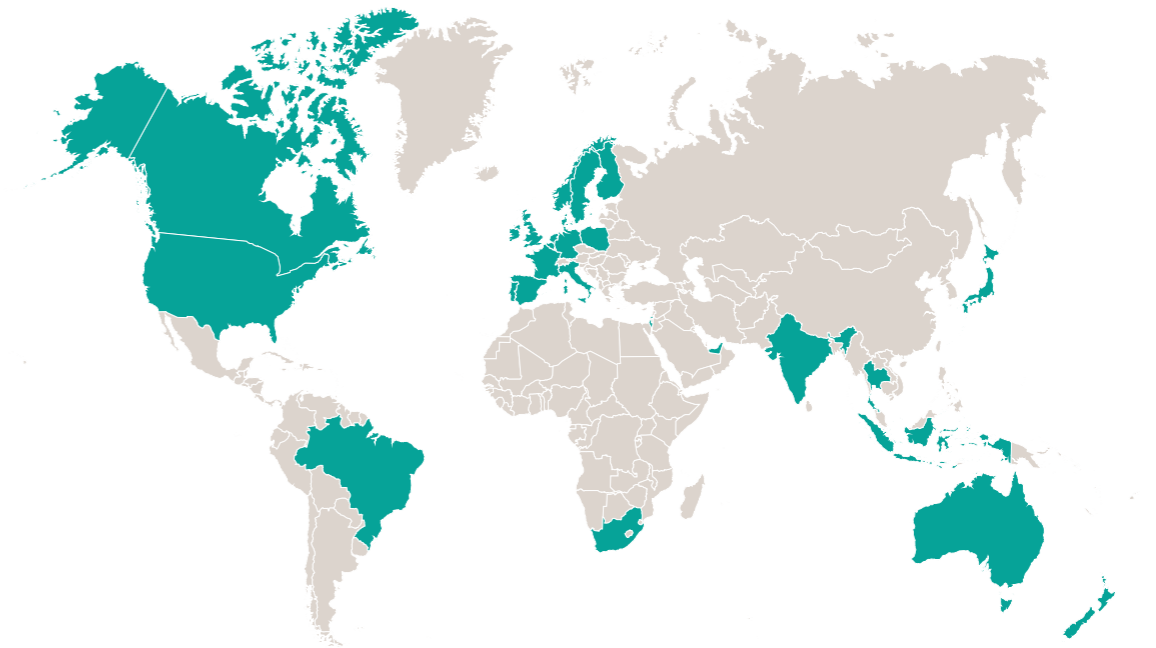
For the sixth edition of the State of Sales report, Salesforce surveyed 5,500 sales professionals Worldwide and around **300 in India** to discover how sales pros are:

- Recurring sales and partner selling make up for most of the revenue generation
- Competition and customer expectations are rising, while sales productivity is taking a hit
- Sales AI: Strengthening data and trust to accelerate sales success
- Training and Sales Enablement - The essentials for sustainable growth
- Using tech and AI to counteract high attrition rates

Due to rounding, not all percentage totals in this report sum to 100%. All comparison calculations are made from total numbers (not rounded numbers). Data in this report is from a double-anonymous survey conducted from March 8, 2024, through April 18, 2024. All respondents are third-party panellists. Survey data was collected from a wide range of sales professionals across multiple industries, providing a comprehensive view of the sales landscape in India. For further survey demographics, see page 30.



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



300 sales professionals surveyed in India



Who We Surveyed

In this report, we refer to the following respondent groups:

Sales Reps

Front-line sales representatives, inclusive of the following:

- **Inside Sales Reps:** Quota-carrying individuals who primarily interact with customers virtually via phone or digital means
- **Outside Sales Reps:** Quota-carrying individuals who primarily interact with customers via in-person meetings
- **Partners and Channel Sales Reps:** Reps external to the company who sell through revenue sharing agreements

Sales Support

Specialists assisting with administration and support, along with sales and business development representatives (SDRs and BDRs)

Sales Operations

Includes sales operations, sales enablement, revenue ops, and deal desk professionals

Sales Leaders

Sales and revenue leaders and managers

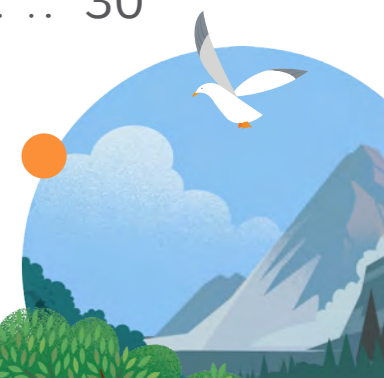
Sales Professionals

All salespeople, inclusive of the groups above



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Executive Summary

The shift for Indian sales teams from being the number chasers to becoming the customer advisors has been in the making for a while. **58% of the sales professionals in India feel that it is harder to sell now than it was a year ago.** Targeting new markets is the top priority of the Indian sales organisations, because they consider **rising competition with other businesses as one of their biggest challenges.** Competition is more of a challenge than it was a year ago according to 73% of sales professionals. **And 65% believe that rising customer expectations are more of a challenge than they were a year ago.**

The rising concerns about sales productivity has highlighted the need for better, more organised sales enablement. As sales teams take on the role of customer champions, they are also looking to close trust and skill gaps in their data to make the most out of AI, boosting productivity to achieve sustained growth.

- 1** **Recurring sales and partner selling make up for most of the revenue generation**
Targeting new markets with partners is a primary focus. Although **92% of the sales leaders believe that channel / partner selling has a bigger impact on revenue than a year ago,** they are keen to look beyond their comfort zone as the competition saturates the market.
- 2** **Competition and customer expectations are rising, while sales productivity is taking a hit**
Sales reps spend 27% of their time selling. **90% of sales professionals believe that their sales budgets have increased, but only 8% believe that they will be able to meet their sales quotas.**
- 3** **Sales AI: Strengthening data and trust to accelerate sales success**
Almost **90% of sales teams have either implemented or have begun experimenting with AI.** Sales teams in India are endorsing AI's larger role in pushing sales productivity and personalisation but also have concerns over budget, training, and data quality.
- 4** **Training and Sales Enablement - The gamechangers for sustainable growth**
49% of sales professionals believe sales training and resources make a major impact on channel sales ROI. Sales organisations are prioritising sales training, both for direct and channel sales, but sales reps feel much is left to be desired.
- 5** **Using tech and AI to counteract high attrition rates**
Sales leaders in India saw an attrition rate of 34% last year. Although most sales reps feel their employee satisfaction is important for their leaders, at least a quarter feel that lack of adequate tools and technology plays a decisive role for them to quit.



1

Recurring sales and partner selling make up for most of the revenue generation



01

Recurring sales and partner selling make up for most of the revenue generation

91% of the sales pros believe that recurring sales is the chief source of their revenue. However, as the market heats up, they want to keep exploring new territories to ensure sustained growth.

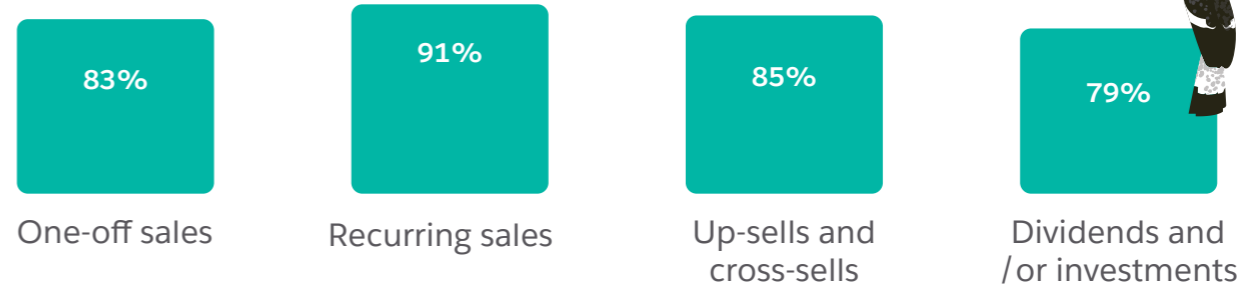
Partner relationships are, therefore, crucial, with over 80% of sales people and sales ops leaders agreeing to have used channel /partner selling last year.

Channel partners play a bigger role than ever before in building new customer relationships. 92% of sales professionals believe that channel/partner selling has a bigger impact on revenue than a year ago.

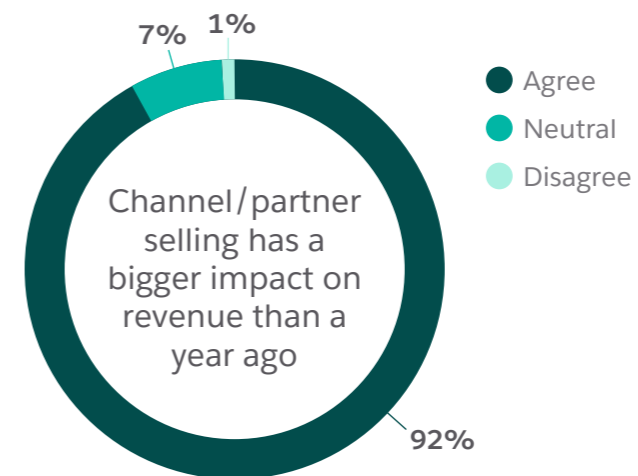
90% of the Indian sales leaders also report that they directly manage channel / partner sales reps or their agency relationships.

While sales orgs are confident of recurring sales

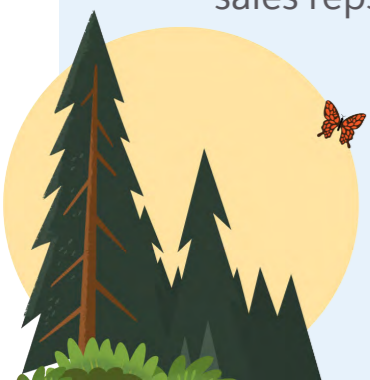
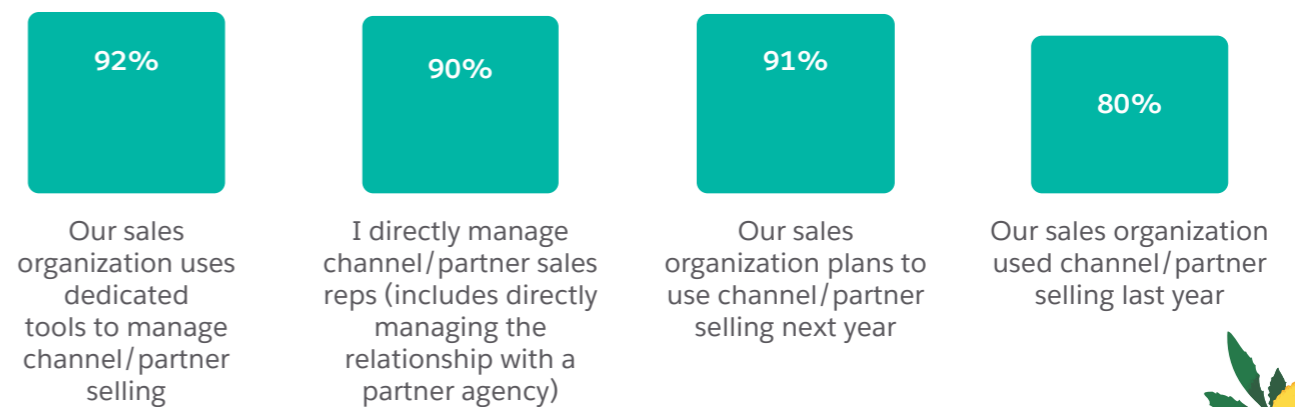
Revenue Sources for Sales Orgs (Base: Not a channel rep)



they are keen to invest in their partner ecosystem for new customer acquisition



Use of Channel Sales Partnerships (Base: People leaders + sales operations)





Customer story

Cementing Channel Sales Success with Digital Solutions

Penna Cement has revolutionised its channel sales operations by empowering its dealers and partners with innovative digital tools. The company's dealer management mobile app is integrated with Salesforce, and enables seamless interactions, allowing dealers to place orders, raise requests, and track data on the go.

A custom-built loyalty program allows Penna Cement to easily register dealers, generate loyalty points, manage gifts or payouts, and monitor loyalty program performance; further strengthening relationships and boosting sales. Seamless and efficient dealer management has driven a **13% increase in trade sales**, and a **15% expansion in the dealer and influencer network**.



Vamsee Mohan Kanneganti

General Manager, IT & CRM

"With Salesforce, our sales, marketing, and operations teams, along with our partners and customers, are all connected and collaborating seamlessly. That has made for greater customer satisfaction and employee effectiveness, as well as faster revenue and lower costs."



2

Competition and customer expectations are rising, while sales productivity is taking a hit



02

Competition and customer expectations are rising, while sales productivity is taking a hit

Overall, 58% of sales professionals say selling today is more difficult than it was a year ago.

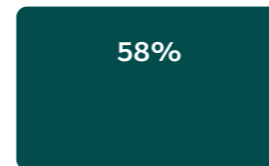
Competition, rising customer expectations, have eroded their confidence too. Only 37% are fully confident of closing deals in the current economic environment.

The fact that only 27% of their productive time is spent on selling does highlight the pressing need for optimising sales processes and improving use of sales tools / technologies to reduce administrative burdens.

Compared to last year, marketplace competition is more of a challenge for almost 73% of sales professionals, while higher customer expectations come a close second with 65% acknowledging them as a bigger challenge than they were in the previous year.

Difficulty in selling is up from last year

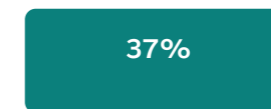
It's harder to sell than it was a year ago



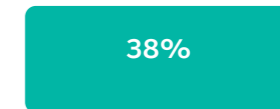
Agree

While sales reps confidence is down

Your personal ability to close deals in the current economic environment



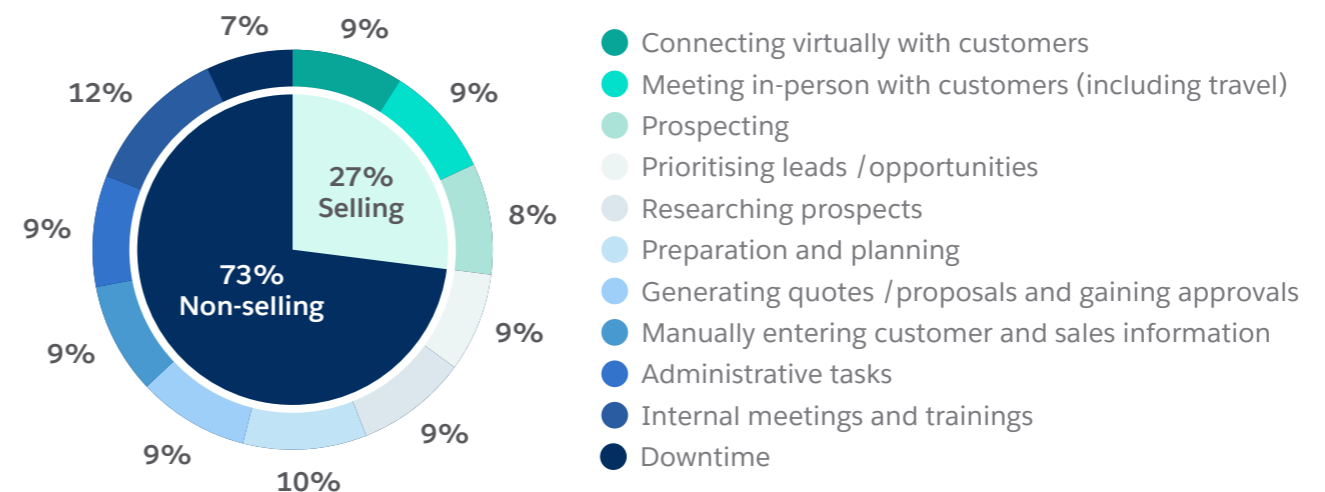
Completely confident



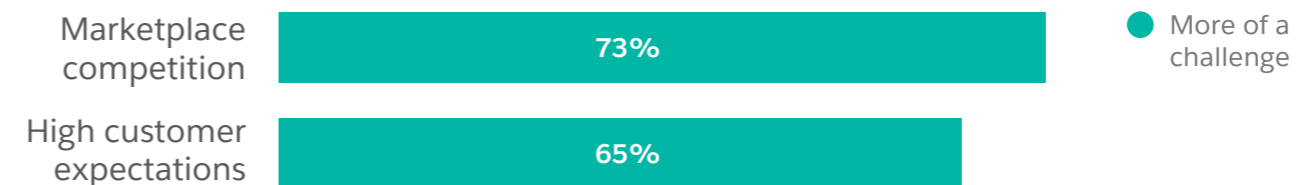
Somewhat confident

Non-selling tasks impact sales productivity

How Reps Spend Average Week



Also, competition, customer expectations are in an overdrive compared to last year





Customer story

Powering Sales Productivity: L&T Electrical & Automation Energises Efficiency with Salesforce

The electrical Standard Products (ESP) unit of **L&T Electrical & Automation** enhanced sales productivity and collaboration by uniting multiple teams on Salesforce platform. With Sales Cloud, sales processes are fully automated, driving a **4x increase in sales activities** and a **4x jump in the average number of sales calls per month**.

Salesforce's 360-degree customer view empowers reps with contextual insights, while Einstein forecasts help them prioritise opportunities. The result? Over **129+ hours saved** through automation, a **26% reduction in case resolution time**, and a **96% net satisfaction score**, delivering greater customer experiences and operational efficiency.



Spotlight

B2B Buyers Want Better, More Personalised Engagement

As if higher customer expectations weren't enough, 54% of sales pros report that sales cycles are longer than a year ago. Coupled with increased number of approvers on deals and budget constraints, B2B sales teams are facing a double whammy.

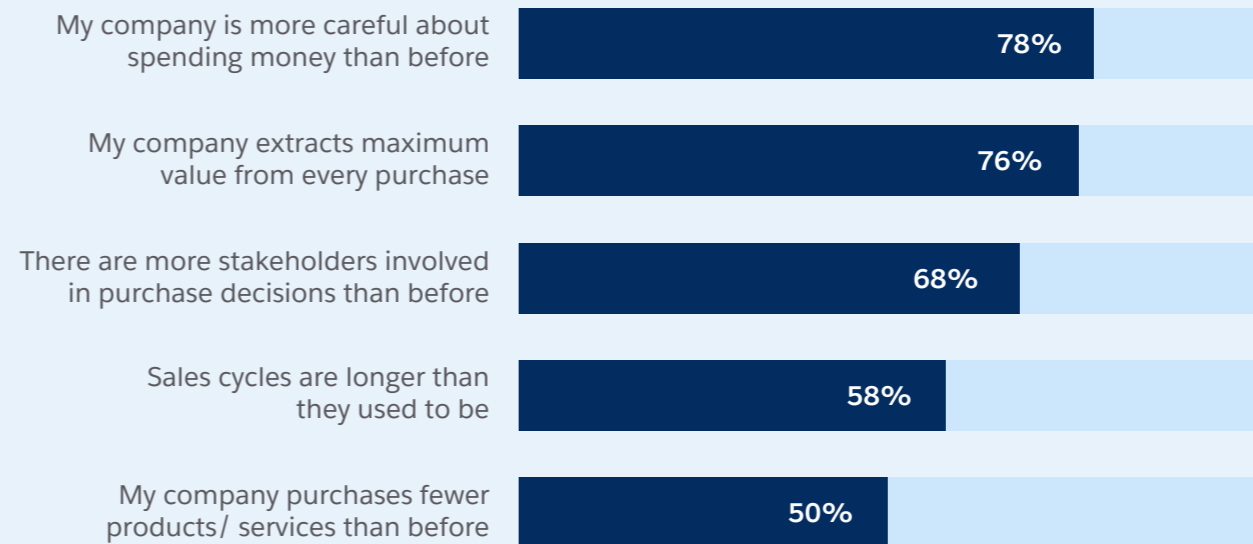
B2B buyers have their own feedback to share, as they expect sales reps to step up as trusted advisors and not just deal-pushers who are least interested in understanding their goals.

Almost 3 in 4 business buyers say their selling relationships feel transactional, lacking desired depth and personalisation.

63% of business buyers say that most customer experiences fall short of what they know is possible.

*Salesforce State of the Connected Customer 2023

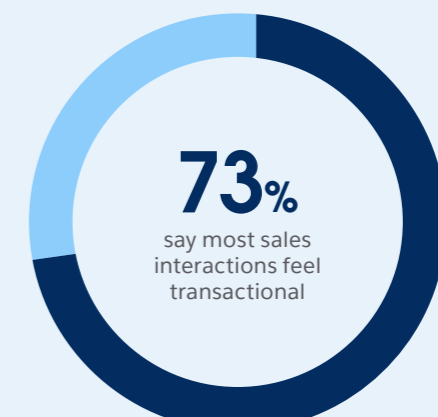
Business buyers who say the following about their company's procurement process



but

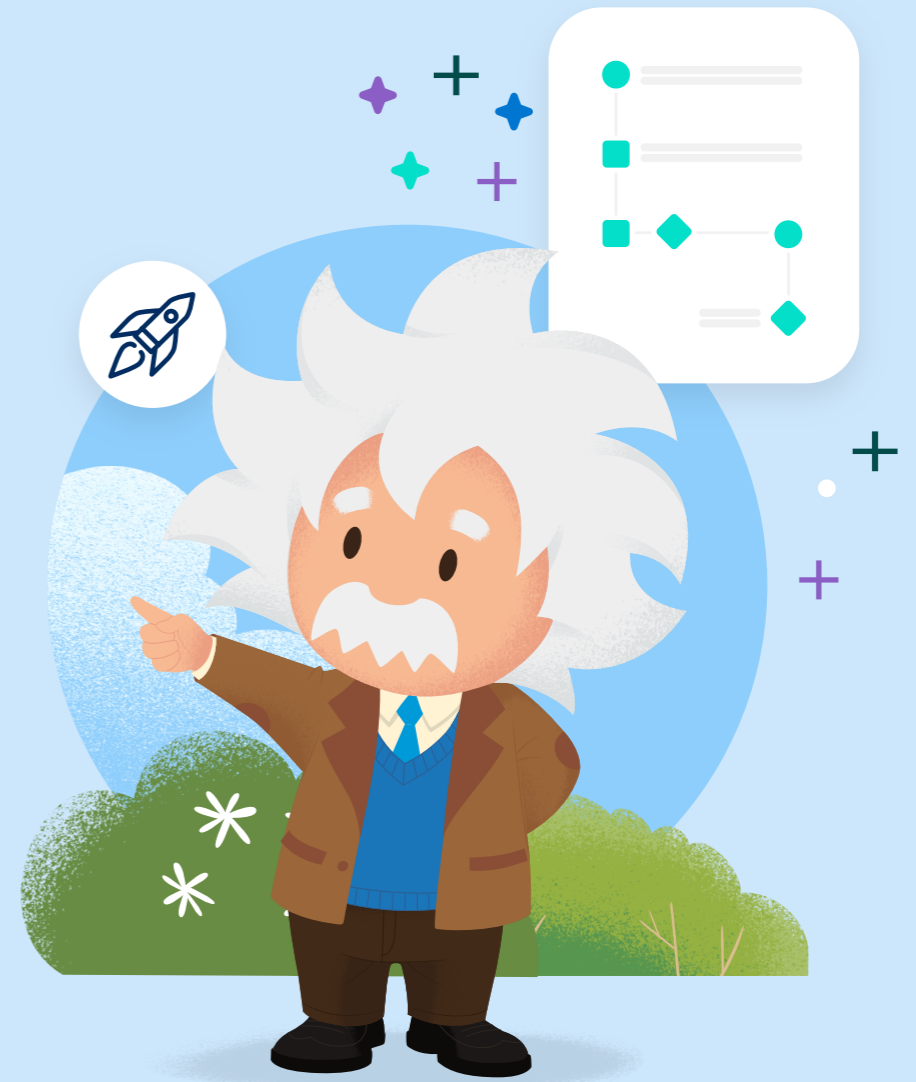


but



3

Sales AI: Strengthening data and trust to accelerate sales success



03

Sales AI: Strengthening data and trust to accelerate sales success

Almost 40% of sales organisations have completely implemented AI, while another ~50% are experimenting with AI in their operations.

At least 40% of sales organisations using AI claim to have seen a major improvement in sales processes like:

- **assessing competition,**
- **forecasting accuracy, and**
- **training and enablement of their sales reps,**

clearly a strong indicator of how sales leaders are looking to take the top challenge of market competition head on with AI.

Artificial intelligence has also played a major role in almost 50% of the organisations developing a better understanding of customer needs, and improving customer communication, for example using AI to generate emails grounded in customer data. But there are concerns around implementation as well.

Half of the leaders from sales organisations using AI have security concerns which hampers a wider adoption.

Globally, 83% of sales teams with AI saw revenue growth in the past year – versus 66% of teams without AI.*

*Sales leaders

AI- Impact on Sales operations- laying a strong foundation for cross-functional collaboration



Base: Organization uses AI

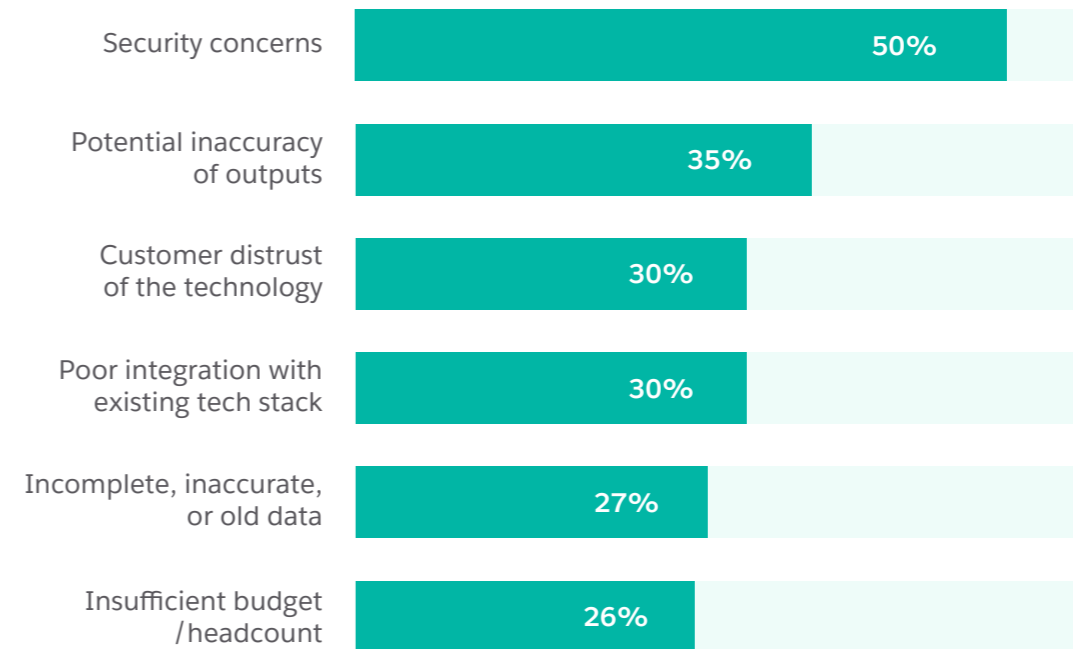


Sales AI: Strengthening data and trust to accelerate sales success

Budget, training, and data deficits are proving to be the roadblocks for most sales organisations aiming to implement AI efficiently. Almost 30% of sales ops professionals have concerns about data security, completeness, and accuracy.

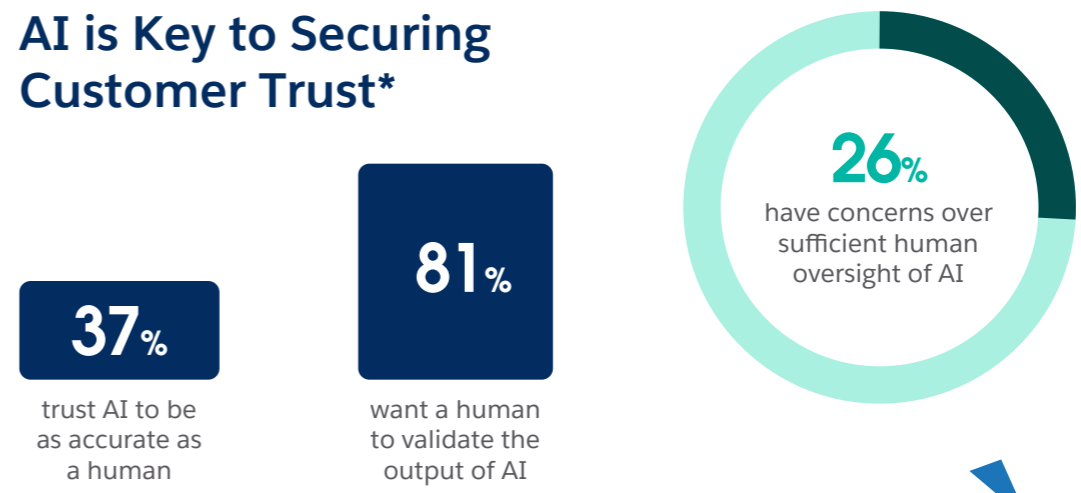
Customer distrust is another obstacle for successful AI implementation. Globally, just 37% of customers trust AI’s outputs to be as accurate as those of an employee. Accordingly, 81% expect a human to be in the loop, reviewing and validating those outputs. **26% of sales ops professionals in India have concerns over sufficient human oversight of AI.**

Almost a 3rd of sales leaders have faced roadblocks during AI implementation

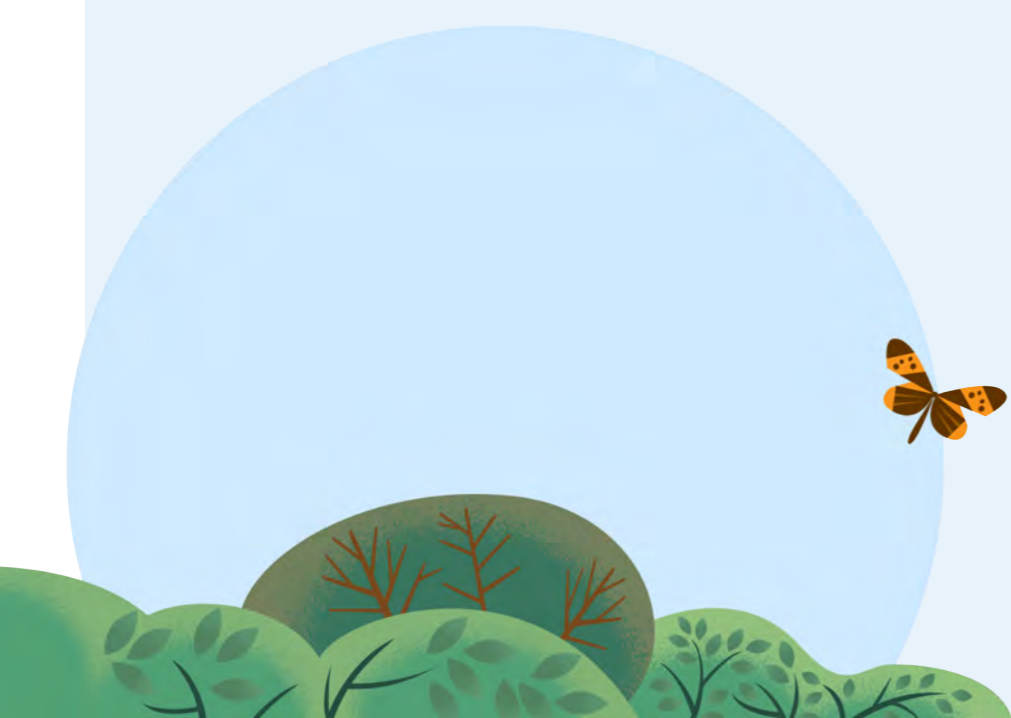


Base: Organisation uses AI

Human Involvement in AI is Key to Securing Customer Trust*



*Salesforce State of the Connected Customer 2023





Customer story

Revving Up Lead Conversions: How AI Drives Sales at Royal Enfield

Royal Enfield, a leader in the motorcycle industry, is leveraging AI to drive more intelligent and personalised customer engagement. With Salesforce Einstein, the brand is able to improve the accuracy of propensity scores that predict which leads are most likely to convert.

Armed with these AI-powered propensity scores for every lead, dealers prioritise their efforts to focus on high-potential customers. This data-driven approach ensures more strategic and personalised conversations, allowing them to upsell and cross-sell relevant products based on each prospect's behavior.

The result? Royal Enfield dealers are converting **23% of high-propensity leads** into sales, significantly boosting efficiency and success rates.

By activating customer intelligence, Royal Enfield is enhancing not just sales but the entire customer journey, creating deeper connections and driving long-term loyalty.



ROYAL ENFIELD

Spotlight

Optimising Sales Strategies with Trusted Data

AI offers significant benefits for sales organisations—for example, enhancing lead scoring, forecasting, and personalising communications.

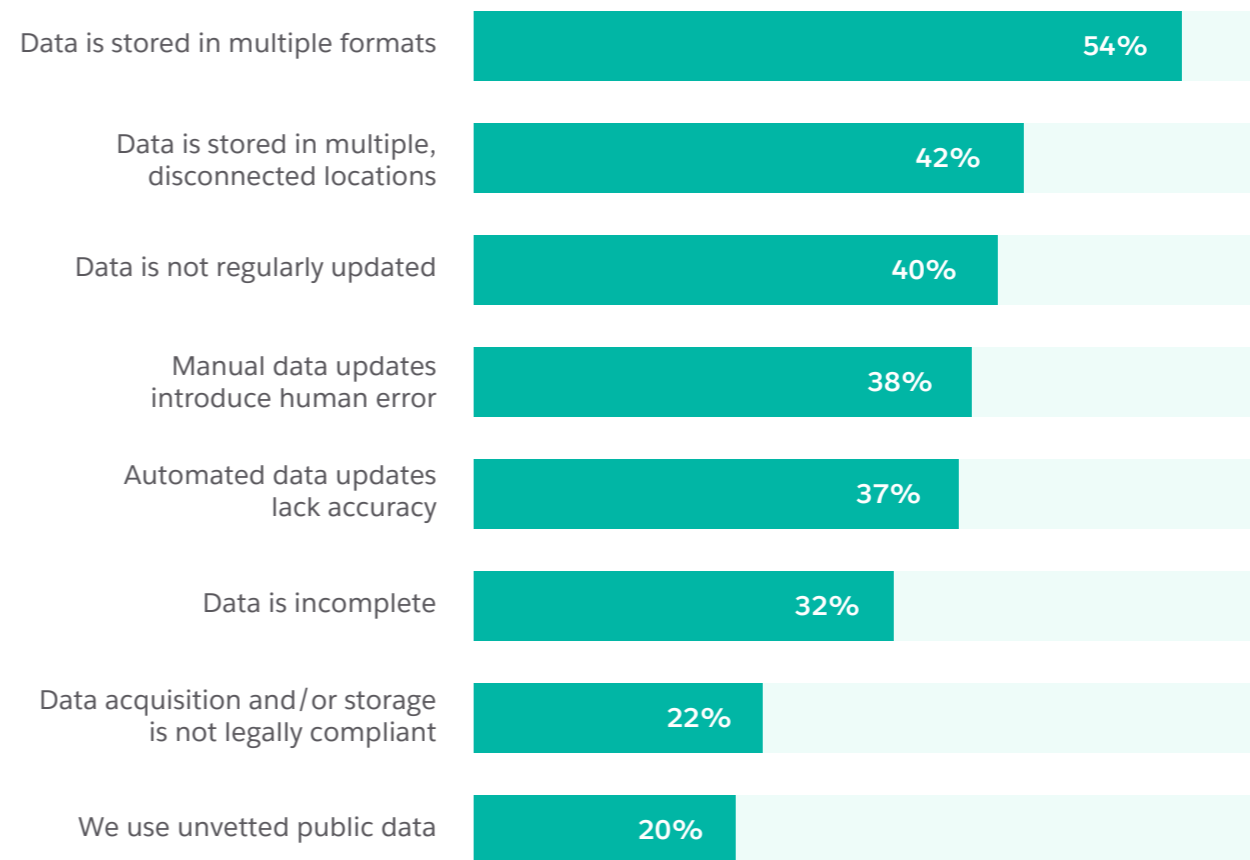
However, the effectiveness of AI is rooted in the quality of the data it is modelled on. Trusted, accurate data is essential for AI models to deliver valuable insights and help improve sales performance.

Poor quality data is a big challenge for sales professionals in India as well. 54% of sales professionals don't trust their sales data as it is stored in various formats and silos, leading to outdated or incomplete information. 38% of them believe that manual data updates introduce errors, and automated updates often lack precision needed to close deals faster.

Poor-quality data hinders sales processes and reduces the effectiveness of AI tools. Ensuring high-quality data is vital for accurate predictions and insights.

Source: IDC Salesforce Economic Impact Report

Reasons for Not Trusting Sales Data



Base: Does not trust aspect(s) of organisation's data

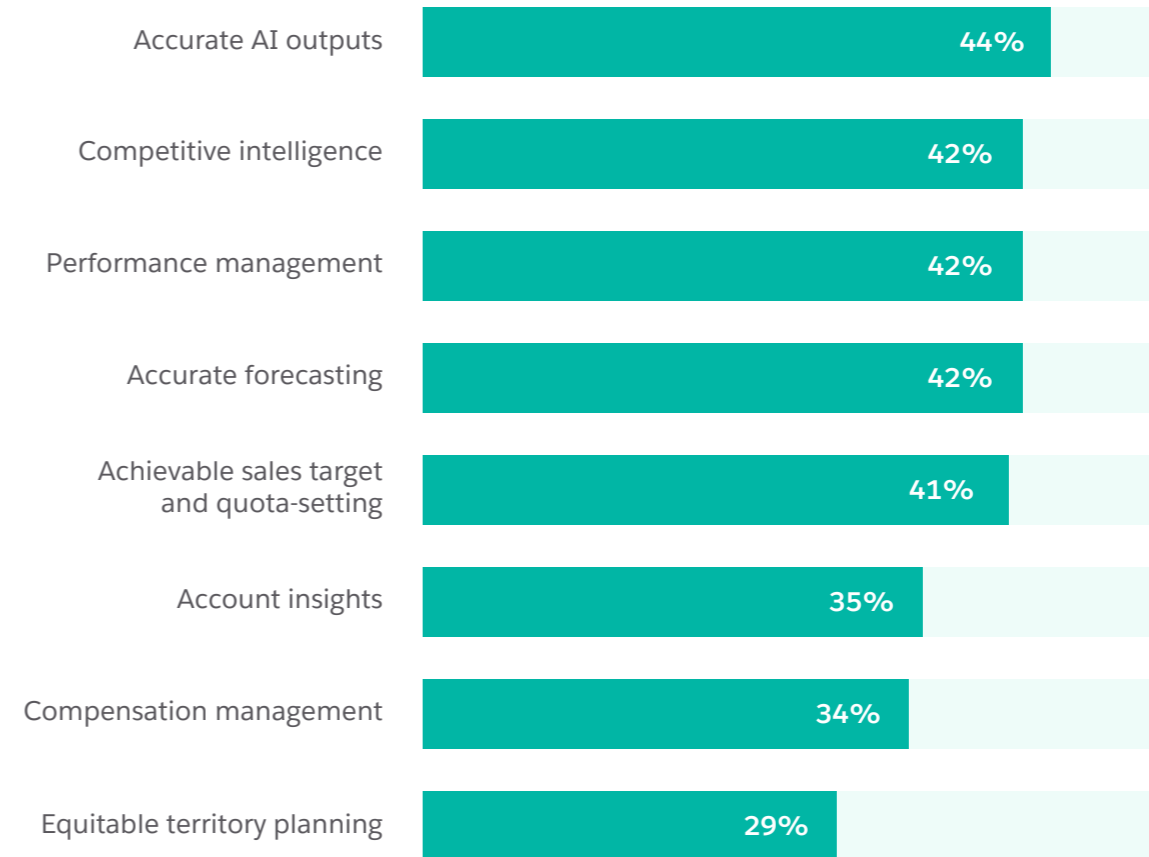
Spotlight Optimising Sales Strategies with Trusted Data

According to 27% of sales professionals from organisations using AI, incomplete, inaccurate, or old data is a key obstacle in AI success. For example- Without reliable data, AI could set inaccurate forecasting and unreasonable sales targets.

42% of the Indian sales professionals believe that poor quality data impacts competitive intelligence and an equal number agree it affects performance management, making it difficult for sales leaders to make informed decisions. This can, in turn, lead to ineffective compensation management and territory planning as reported by almost 1/3rds of sales professionals.

By addressing data quality issues, sales organisations can enhance their AI tools and overall sales strategies. Investing in data integrity not only boosts AI performance but also drives better sales results and improves team efficiency. Keeping data accurate and compliant is key to leveraging AI's full potential and achieving sales success.

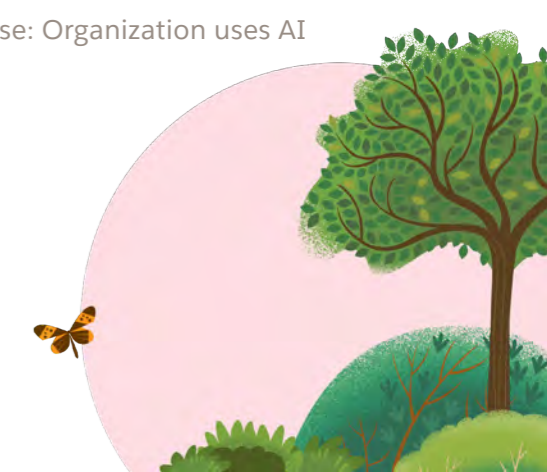
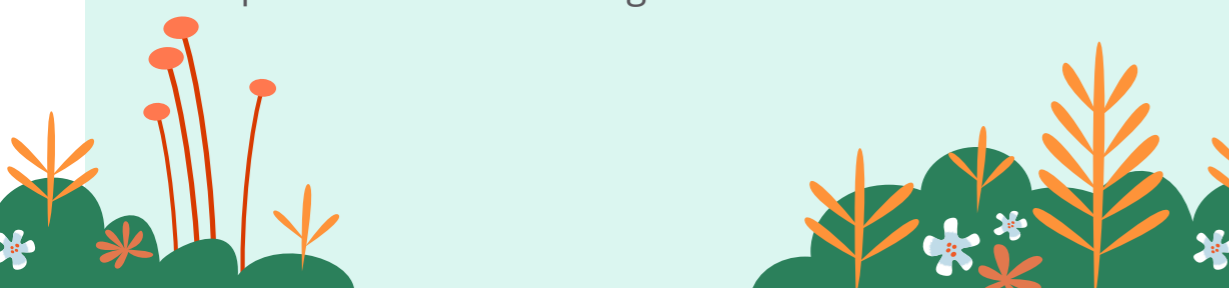
Processes Hindered By Poor Data Quality



Obstacles Encountered While Implementing AI



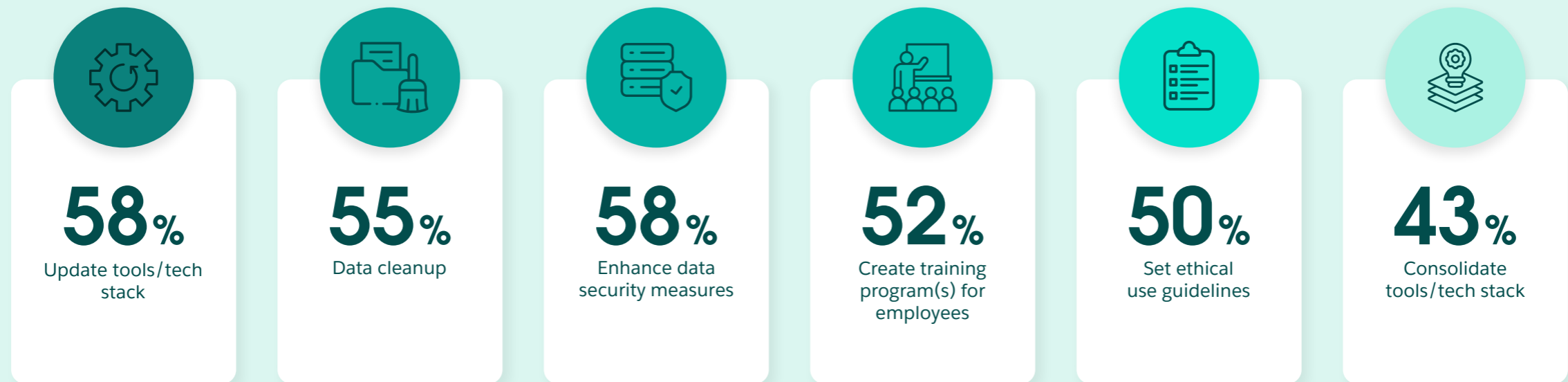
Base: Organization uses AI




 **Exclusive**

Top AI Integration Priorities: Insights from Indian Sales Leaders

AI integration may seem daunting, but sales leaders are already acing it with the right action plans that suit their business.

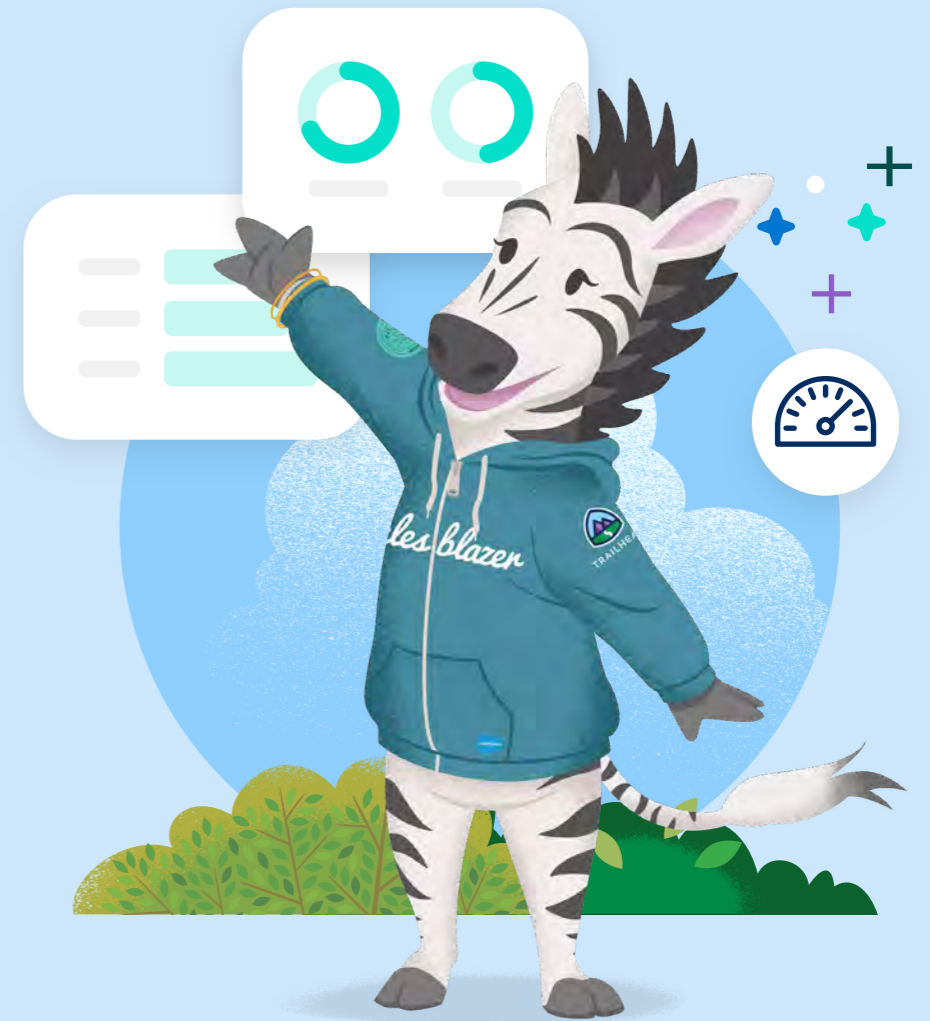


Base: Sales professionals from organisations using AI



4

Training and Sales Enablement - The Essentials for Sustainable Growth



04

Training and Sales Enablement - The Essentials for Sustainable Growth

As sales professionals are recognising the importance of cross-functional alignment to create unified, omnichannel experiences, engaging on multiple channels and personalising sales communication top their list of sales tasks they spend the maximum time on.

The customer-centric outlook is noteworthy considering that **globally, 79%** customers expect consistent interactions across departments.

Sales teams, often the first point of customer contact, need to initiate conversations that are knowledgeable, unified, consistent, and trustworthy to guide customers through their buying journey and ultimately achieve successful sales. To address these challenges, sales professionals in India are calling for more robust training solutions.

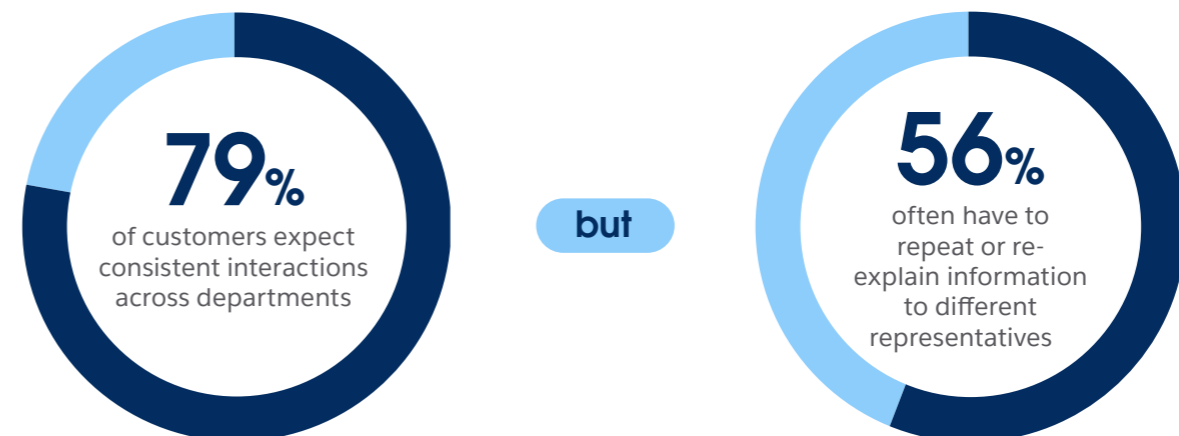
Sales teams and customers agree: Consistent omnichannel engagement is the key differentiator

Ranking of sales tasks by time required to complete

- 1 Engaging on multiple channels
- 2 Personalizing communication
- 3 Meeting customer budgetary needs
- 4 Supporting requests for more value
- 5 Explaining products or services
- 6 Personalizing solutions
- 7 Building a strong personal relationship
- 8 Adjusting to customer schedule

Consistency does not match expectations

Customers who agree with the following



*Salesforce State of the Connected Customer 2023

To meet the customers where they are, sales organisations prioritise training but most sales reps feel there is much left to be desired



04

Training and Sales Enablement - The Essentials for Sustainable Growth

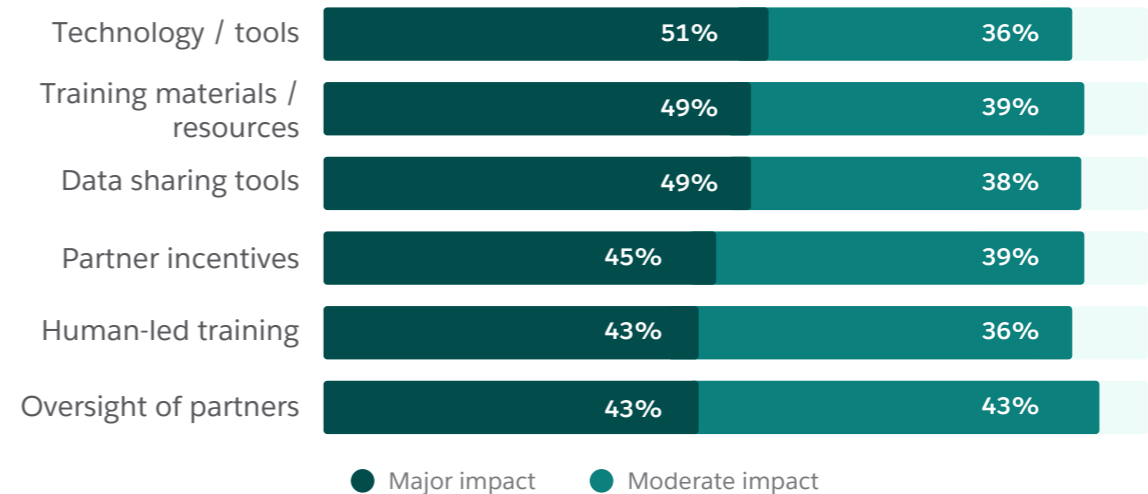
Training programmes and resources are helpful in improving channel sales as well. 49% of people leaders and sales ops at organisations with channel sales believe that training and resources play a major role in boosting channel sales ROI.

Sales organisations in India are leaning in on AI for sales enablement to train reps more efficiently in the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in a dynamic market. From real-time selling guidance to customised sales training, AI is enabling personalised training and timely interventions directly in the flow of work.

For example, AI-driven analytics can identify patterns in sales performance data, highlighting areas where reps might need additional support or training. This allows sales leaders to provide targeted guidance and resources exactly when and where they are needed, enhancing overall team effectiveness.

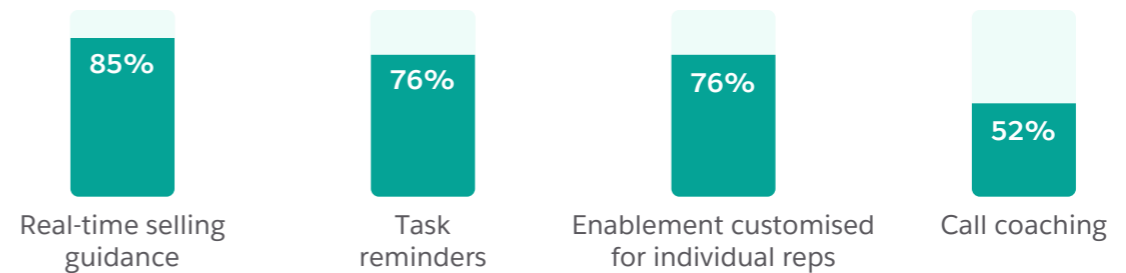
However, 35% of sales leaders cite insufficient employee training as a key hurdle in successful AI implementation, bringing it back in focus as one of the top priorities for sales organisations.

Training positively impacts channel sales ROI too

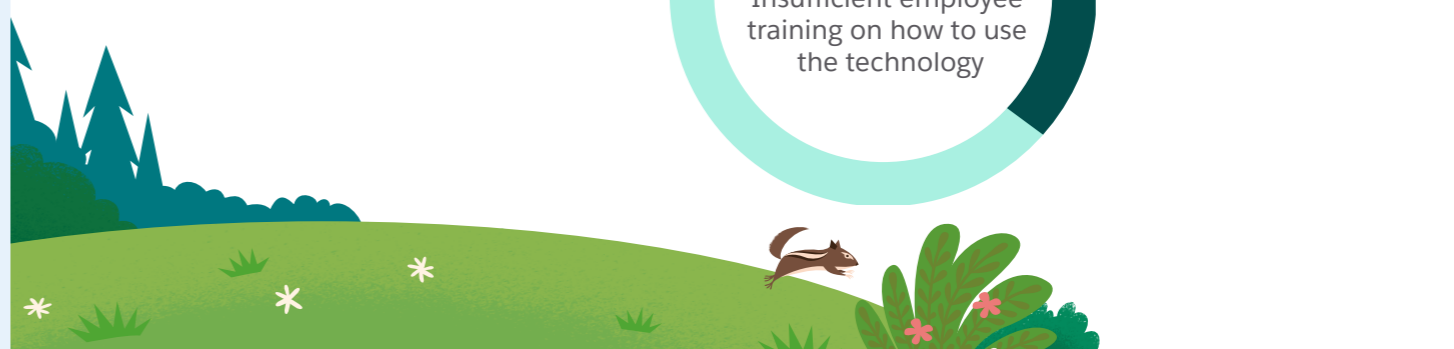
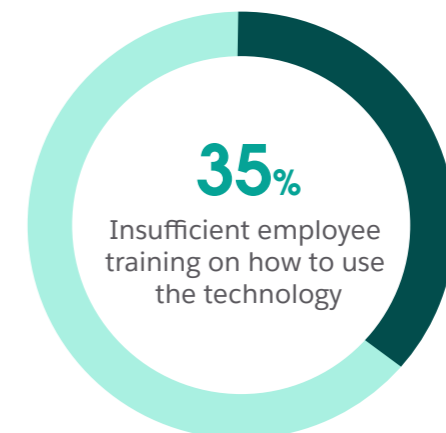


Base: People leaders + sales ops at org with channel sales

Enablement activities where AI is being used



Obstacles Encountered While Implementing AI



5

Using tech and AI to counteract high attrition rates



05

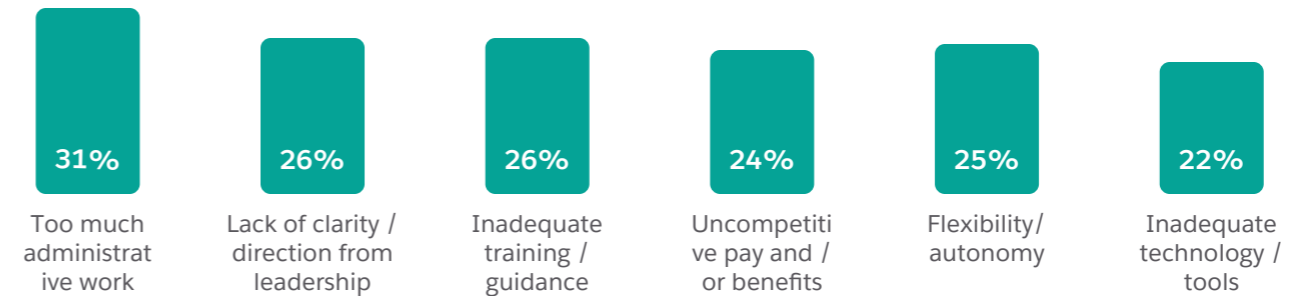
Using tech and AI to counteract high attrition rates

Sales professionals in India say they prioritise compensation and growth prospects to stay with their employers. Ensuring competitive pay and clear career paths is therefore, essential for retention.

Many sales reps claim they are overwhelmed by excessive administrative work and overly complex sales cycles. Modern technologies are seen as a solution to enhance job satisfaction and productivity. Providing robust support and development opportunities can significantly improve employee engagement.

57% of sales reps are considering a job change. The high turnover has major implications on sales productivity and puts pressure on already strained budgets. Therefore, sales leaders are adopting advanced tools to bring down attrition rate from last year's 34% and simplify sales processes.

Reasons for Leaving Current Job

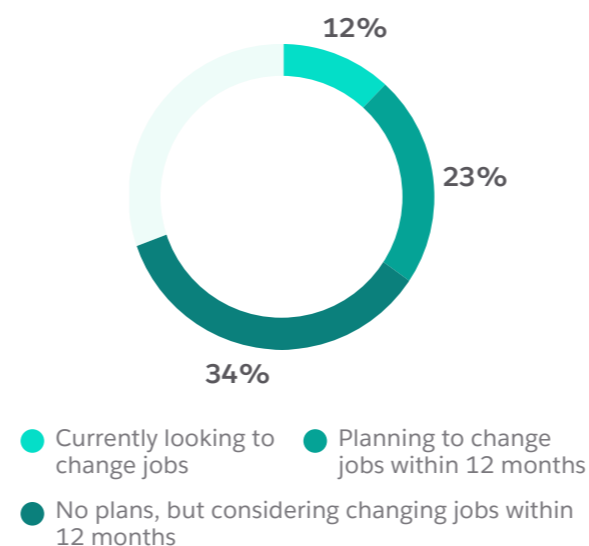


Base: Considering, planning, or looking for a new job

Employee Experience Sentiments



Plans for Changing Jobs



Estimated Sales Staff Turnover Rate Over Past Year



05

Using tech and AI to counteract high attrition rates

Legacy systems hinder efficiency; integrating AI and modern technologies can significantly boost productivity for sales teams. Modern tools reduce administrative burdens, allowing sales reps to focus more on customer engagement and sales.

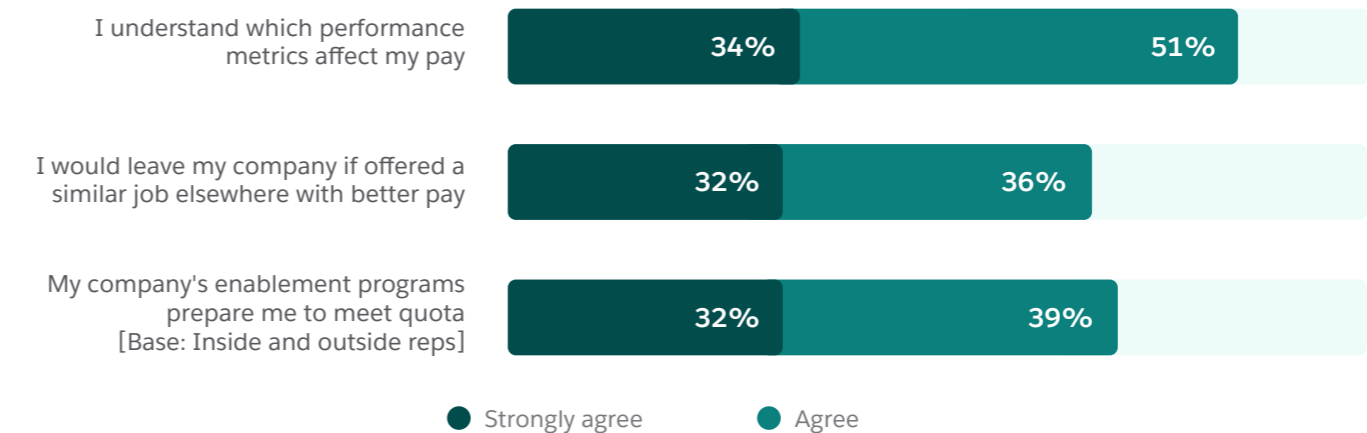
Indian sales organisations are modernising their tech stack to streamline operations and drive efficiencies, following global trends in leveraging technology for enhanced sales efficiency and productivity. This shift aims to keep them competitive in a rapidly evolving market.

What are the Indian Sales Orgs Prioritising?

- 1 Targeting new markets
- 2 Improving sales enablement/training
- 3 Improving use of tools/technologies
- 4 Optimizing how products are offered
- 5 Improving processes
- 6 Improving our use of data
- 7 Engaging beyond the initial sale
- 8 Modernizing tools and technologies
- 9 Improving cross-functional alignment
- 10 Adjusting sales KPIs
- 11 Cutting costs

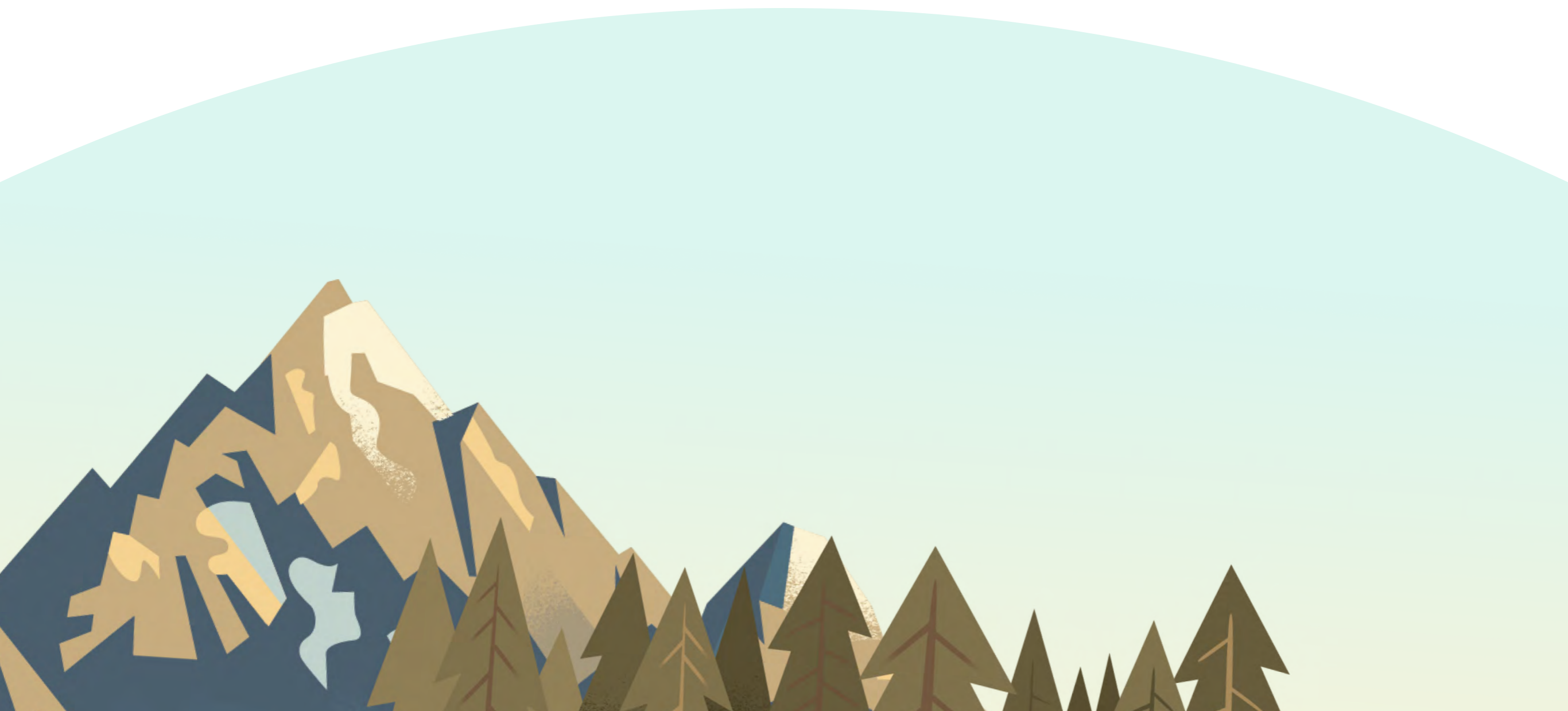
Base: Not a channel rep

But they have less faith in compensation and training



With evolving customer expectations, technological advancements, and the increased need for trust and transparency, the sales landscape in India is undergoing a significant transformation. Agile sales organisations can effectively navigate these challenges and achieve sustained growth. Continuous adaptation, cross-functional alignment, and customer-centric approach still remain crucial for sales teams to play the bigger role of value creators and help organisations maintain competitive advantage in the dynamic Indian market. Embracing digital transformation and responsibly leveraging AI grounded in trusted data will not only improve sales productivity but also position sales teams for long-term success.

At Salesforce, we are committed to supporting your sales organisation with the tools and resources needed to thrive in this dynamic landscape. Want to know more?



Ready to Learn More?



Sales Productivity Hacks for Indian Businesses

[LEARN MORE >](#)



State of Sales Report 6th Edition

[LEARN MORE >](#)



The Sales AI Playbook

[LEARN MORE >](#)

Top Growth Tactics, By Industry

Automotive

- 1 Improve sales enablement/training
- 2 Improve use of tools/technologies
- 2 Target new markets (*tie*)

Consumer Goods

- 1 Optimize how products are offered
- 2 Improve use of tools/technologies
- 3 Improve sales enablement/training

Financial Services

- 1 Optimize how products are offered
- 2 Improve use of tools/technologies
- 3 Target new markets

Healthcare and Life Sciences

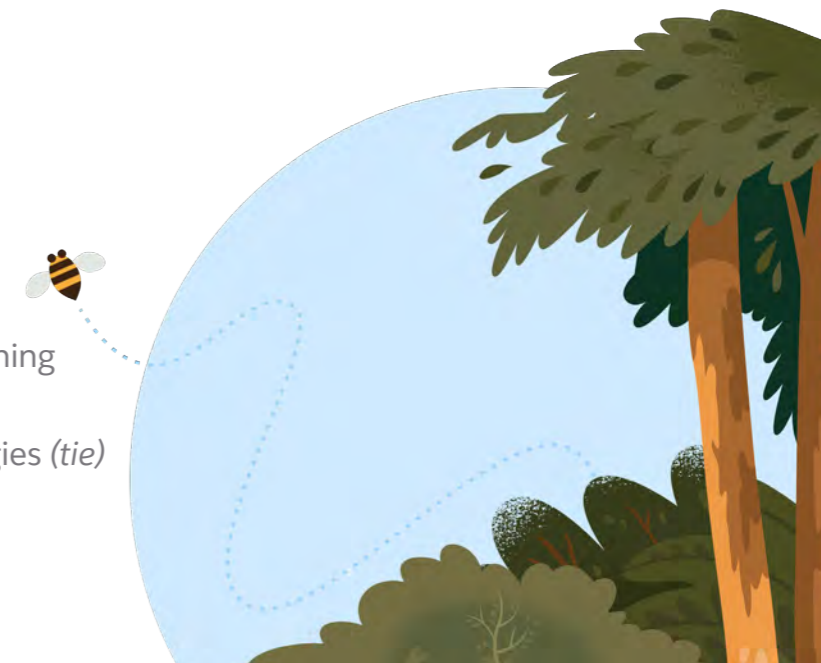
- 1 Improve use of tools/technologies
- 2 Optimize how products are offered
- 3 Improve sales enablement/training

Manufacturing

- 1 Optimize how products are offered
- 2 Improve sales enablement/training
- 3 Target new markets

Technology

- 1 Target new markets
- 2 Improve sales enablement/training
- 2 Improve use of tools/technologies (*tie*)



Survey Demographics

Country

Australia	4%
Belgium	2%
Brazil	5%
Canada	5%
Denmark	1%
Finland	1%
France	5%
Germany	5%
India	5%
Indonesia	4%
Ireland	2%
Israel	2%
Italy	4%
Japan	5%
Netherlands	3%
New Zealand	2%
Norway	0%
Poland	2%
Portugal	2%
Singapore	2%
South Africa	4%
Spain	4%
Sweden	1%
Thailand	4%
United Arab Emirates	2%
United Kingdom	5%
United States	18%

Role Within Sales

Sales operations	26%
Sales support	15%
Sales manager or director	25%
Sales leadership/Head of sales	10%
Inside sales rep	7%
Outside sales rep	12%
Partner/channel sales rep	5%

Industry

Agriculture	3%
Architecture, engineering, and construction	4%
Automotive	8%
Communications	3%
Consumer goods	11%
Energy and utilities	4%
Financial services	8%
Government	0%
Healthcare	5%
Life sciences and biotechnology	3%
Manufacturing	14%
Media and entertainment	3%
Nonprofit	0%
Professional and business services	5%
Retail	16%
Supply chain and logistics	5%

Technology	5%
Travel and hospitality	4%
Other	1%

Company Size

SMB (21-100 employees)	30%
MM (101-3,500 employees)	50%
ENT (over 3,500 employees)	20%





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