



2026

Trends in Sales Compensation

Insights on pay and commissions for U.S. sales teams



Salary comparison charts inside



Foreword

Selling is hard enough. Trusting your paycheck shouldn't be. But despite the intensity of today's market, many reps are still forced to manage a second set of books on the side just to make sure they're being paid what they earned.

This lack of transparency is a silent tax on productivity. We want our sellers to be focused on the customer, not acting as math experts or auditors. It's time we elevate pay transparency from a "nice-to-have" to a competitive necessity.

Many reps got into sales for the thrill of landing the deal – and the check. My job as a sales leader is to encourage that drive by using compensation to motivate my team to sell the right deals. I do that through launching incentives and providing commission transparency [in Spiff](#).

Read on to discover fresh insights on the state of compensation in U.S. sales. You'll discover benchmarks, trends, and tips for using technology to build greater trust in pay.



Chris Bain
SVP, Sales, Salesforce



What you'll find in this report

This report extracts U.S. compensation data from our larger [State of Sales research](#), examining insights from 500 U.S. sales professionals to discover:

- Why many sales reps have concerns about fairness in pay.
- How sales leaders use technology to improve their compensation strategies.
- How compensation compares across different sales roles and industries.

Quantitative data in this report is from an anonymous survey conducted from August 7 - September 24, 2025. All respondents are third-party panelists. Due to rounding, not all percentage totals in this report sum to 100%. The comparison calculations are made from total (not rounded) numbers.

The quotes in this report come from interviews, conducted April 2-9, 2026, with 41 sales reps, leaders, and operations professionals in the U.S. Qualitative findings are used to illustrate and contextualize the quantitative data and are not statistically representative.

Who we surveyed



Sales Leaders

Sales and revenue leaders and managers



Sales Operations

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



Sales Reps

Front-line, quota-carrying sales representatives



Executive summary

The latest data on sales compensation is in, and it's a wake-up call for sales leaders.

Seventy-four percent of reps don't trust how their pay is calculated, and nearly half believe their compensation isn't fair.

At the same time, carrying a quota doesn't guarantee better outcomes. Sales reps are more likely to fall into lower earnings bands than their non-quota-carrying peers.

Most sales leaders are already working to address these pains. Over half say compensation strategy is one of their top three tactics for growth.

Read on to discover trends and insights for motivating reps with greater transparency in pay.

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Many reps don't trust their compensation

Three in four reps wish for greater transparency in pay, and nearly half feel their pay isn't fair. This suggests reps may not understand the mechanics of their comp structure, leaving them skeptical over the final numbers and about whether certain deals are being fully accounted for. Some reps even resort to maintaining their own shadow accounting, diverting hours away from selling to manually track and verify their own commissions.

Sales leaders are working to address these pains. Over half say compensation strategy is one of their top three growth tactics.

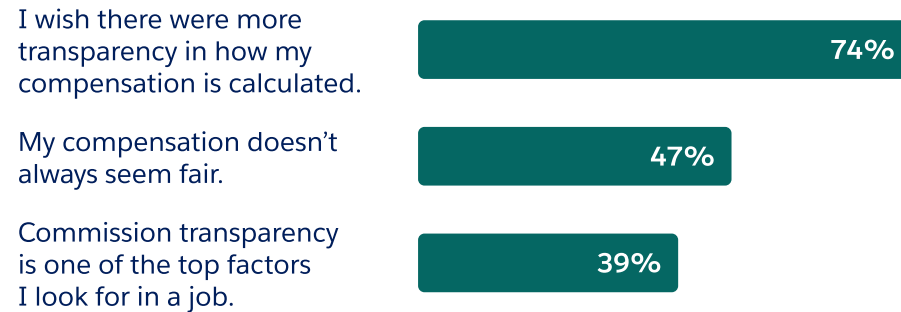


I feel like there's no transparency into how I'm making money. Every month is a mystery when I receive my checks.

Sales leader, retail industry

Sales leaders work to address concerns over unfair pay

Sales reps who say the following



Revenue is up, but most reps still miss quota

Sales are up, with 85% of companies reporting increases in revenue in the last year. Compensation is also up, but a closer look reveals that gains are concentrated among high performers.

The portion of reps earning more than \$200,000 surged 5x compared with the previous year. But most reps do not share in this runaway success.

Only 1 in 4 reps made quota last year. This could point to several factors, such as a tougher selling environment, mismatched expectations from management, or challenges in understanding which deals will drive them to their goals.

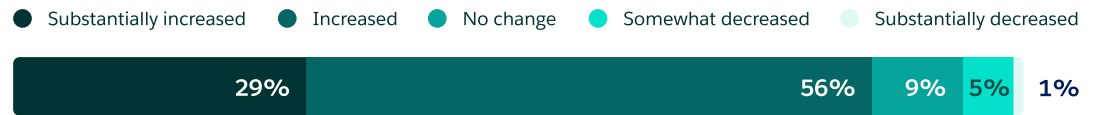


Often, sales reps are punished for success. If they have a good year, management will increase their quotas, making it hard to hit goals the following years.

Sales leader, healthcare industry

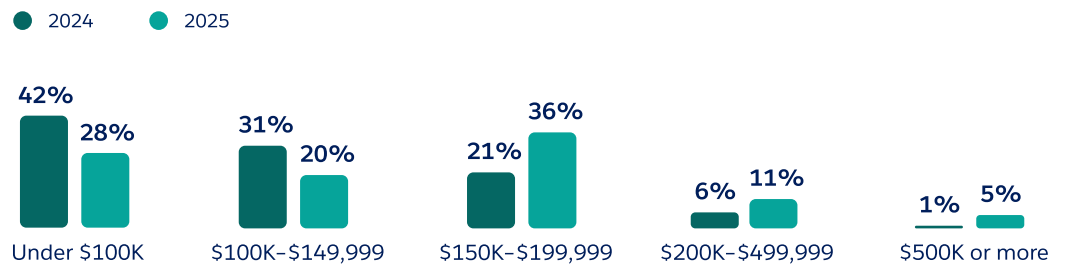
Most reps miss quota despite some jumps in comp

Changes to revenue over past 12 months



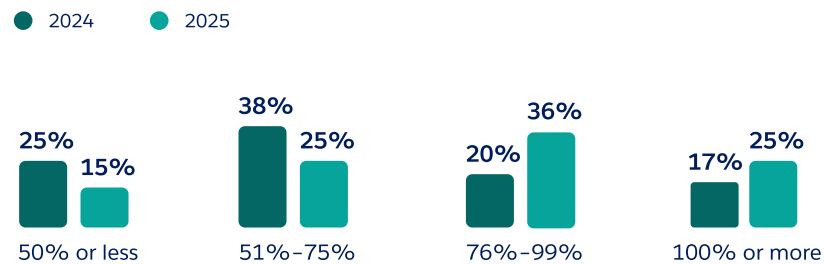
Base: U.S. sales professionals

Total sales rep compensation last year



Base: U.S. sales representatives

Percentage of quota attained last year



Base: U.S. sales representatives

Sales rep pay lags behind their colleagues

Compensation increases as sales professionals rise in level. That's to be expected.

What's more surprising is sales rep pay falling behind their salaried peers. Despite carrying a quota, and the risk and pressure that comes with it, sales reps earn less on average than sales ops professionals.



I feel like the ones doing all the grunt work, going out on the field, and meeting with others are getting paid less. It should be higher for those doing the more-stressful and urgent tasks.

Sales rep, travel and hospitality industry

Carrying a quota doesn't always lead to higher pay

Total compensation last year

● Under \$100K ● \$100K-\$149,999 ● \$150K-\$199,999 ● \$200K-\$499,999 ● \$500K or more

All roles



Sales reps



Sales ops



Sales leaders



Stable pay or high upside: Your industry decides

Industry choice shapes both risk and reward. Industries with the most predictable pay are consumer goods, healthcare, and life sciences, where about 3 in 4 reps earn between \$100,000 and \$200,000 – compared with roughly half in other industries. However, they have limited upside, with the lowest shares of reps earning above \$200,000.

Manufacturing, supply chain and logistics, and retail have more variation. These industries produce more \$200,000-plus earners but also a sizable group – about 1 in 5 – earning less than \$100,000.

Financial services and media, entertainment, and communications skew higher. They have the largest portions of \$200,000-plus earners and the fewest reps in lower earning tiers.



It sounds right that financial services is up there. It has high premiums and isn't a physical product, so there's more opportunity for greater profit and ROI.

Sales leader, financial services

Choice of industry matters for determining pay

Total earnings among sales pros in last year

● Under \$100K ● \$100K-\$149,999 ● \$150K-\$199,999 ● \$200K-\$499,999 ● \$500K or more

Retail



Manufacturing, supply chain, and logistics



Consumer goods



Healthcare and life sciences



Financial services



Media, entertainment, and communications





We use compensation technology to build trust in pay. Sales leaders and reps love having total visibility into their earnings.



Kelsey Harper

Director, Project Management,
Commercial Onboarding, Hyatt

Hyatt's legacy payout process was bogged down by complex spreadsheets. This manual approach created a high risk for human error and forced teams to waste hours pulling reports from fragmented systems. They needed a modern solution to align pay with performance.

By automating the commissions process, Hyatt transformed compensation from a back-office hurdle into a front-line motivator. Today, leadership can launch strategic incentives in clicks, while reps get real-time visibility into every dollar earned. The result is a culture of transparency that keeps the focus where it belongs: on the customer.

Learn how companies like Hyatt motivate reps with better tools

[Watch demo](#)



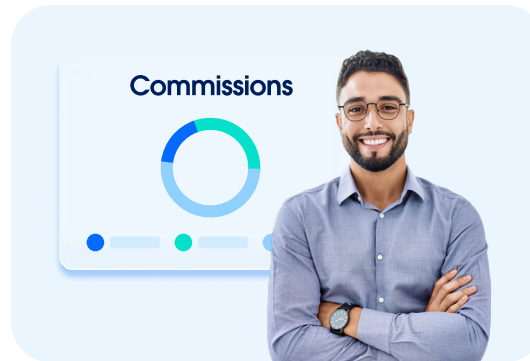
Resources for compensation management



Build trust with automated pay transparency

Shape the right selling behaviors with incentive compensation management software.

[Learn more](#)



See how Spiff motivates sellers with impactful commissions

Motivate sellers with impactful commissions and calculate effective incentive programs.

[Watch demo](#)



Join a workshop to get hands-on with Spiff

Build your own incentive compensation plan in this workshop led by a product expert.

[Join workshop](#)



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