

# State of **SCIES**

2022 UK Edition



#### Introduction

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Einstein said "in the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity", and through the pandemic, we have seen top performing salespeople adapt and become more efficient in their prospect targeting. They have evolved to utilise sales technology and data, to target the right buyers. Rather than knocking on more doors, they have knocked on the right doors, better equipped through sales tech and data utilisation to encounter more buyers ready to buy. Top performing sales organisations have evolved too, understanding that not all sales tech is created equal; identifying the right tech to put in the hands of their sales orgs. Less spam. Less whitespace burn. More efficiency in understanding buyer intent, mapping buying committees, critical stakeholders and warm introduction paths.

In last year's State of Sales report for the UK, we revealed how sales professionals need to overhaul their methodologies to fit the role that buyers now want them to play. We argued that they need to move on themselves from outdated sales techniques, put the needs of buyers first and earn the right to engage by demonstrating value from the start. This year's report reveals how quickly sales has risen to this challenge. The profession is proving once again how agile and responsive it can be, using technology to re-imagine how the sales process can work.



Jack McKeon Sales Director, Linkedin Sales Solutions, EMEA

### Top findings from the UK State of Sales

### 1. How sales has changed, permanently and positively

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about permanent change to buying and selling processes. Both salespeople and their customers are working remotely, and buyers prefer the experience, **74% of UK buyers** would like to work remotely at least half of the time. Sales professionals have responded to the world of remote work by honing their outreach techniques, sellers are putting more time into researching their prospects, with barely 1/3rd of sellers making cold-calls anymore.

### 2. The rise of sales tech and data-driven selling

Reliable data and a robust sales tech stack are at the heart of the modern sales organisation. UK salespeople report a greater reliance on tools and technologies that save them time by integrating with their CRM and other systems. For the first time, over half of UK salespeople now use sales tech several times a week or more.

### 3. How top performing salespeople thrive with technology

Top performing salespeople do things differently. Surprisingly, they actually spend less time selling than their peers. Our survey identified five ways that top performers stand out. For instance, **82% of top performers** say they "always" perform research before reaching out to prospects, and report higher usage of sales technology across the board.



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Trend #1

How sales has changed, **permanently and positively** 

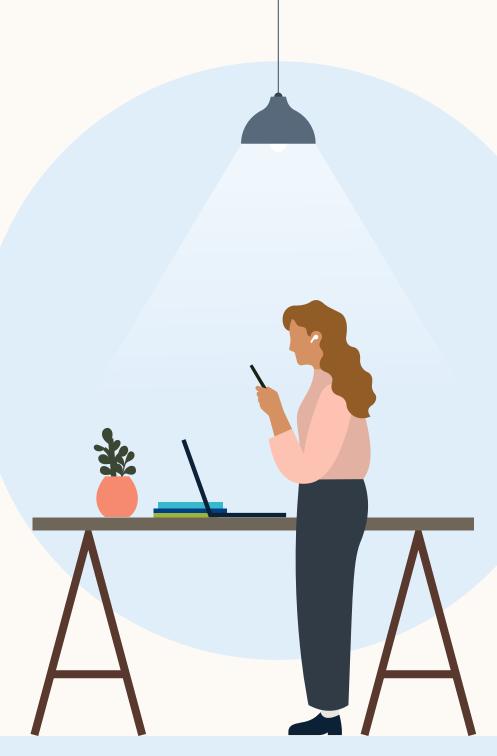


of buyers say **working remotely** has made buying easier. Only **11**% say it's made it more difficult Buyers want more of the buying experiences that they discovered during the pandemic: remote, self-directed and with the ability to put salespeople's claims to the test. They find virtual buying easier — and that's enabled them to raise the standards they expect from sales as a condition of engaging.

Sales teams haven't stood by watching as buyers have embraced a new world of work and a new buying process. Adapting to a more remote world has been tougher for them than for their customers, but it's still a pivot that they've pulled off with impressive speed and conviction.

#### In this section you will find:

- 1 How sales professionals spend their day
- 2 An era of warm outreach takes shape
- **3** Remote working a challenge that's becoming a habit
- 4 What your buyers want from sales professionals
- 5 How your buyers want to hear from you

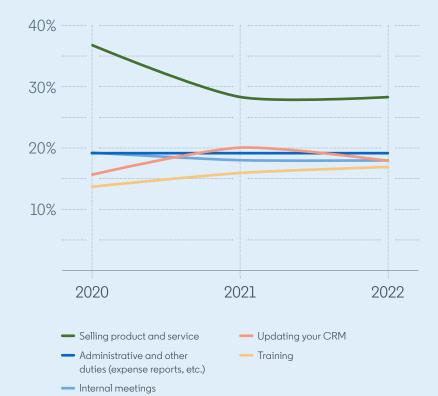


# How do **UK sellers** spend their day?

A salesperson's time has always been precious. There are constant demands on salespeople's time and our survey shows that this has only been exacerbated during the pandemic. In the last two years, the amount of time that sellers report devoting to actually selling has fallen below 30% in the UK. Updating CRM and undertaking training have both eaten into this share of time recently.

Sales professionals are also reporting they increasingly use social media as part of their business. Over half (51%) of salespeople now describe themselves as very active on LinkedIn for business purposes, up from 44% a year ago. Similarly, 70% say they've placed more emphasis on expanding their LinkedIn network.

### How **UK sellers** spend their day



#### Action item

Create <u>saved searches</u> on LinkedIn Sales Navigator to save time searching for leads, leaving time for more sales outreach.

### An era of **warm outreach** is taking shape on LinkedIn

Salespeople have turned to new platforms to replace inperson meetings and events, and they've been quick to double down on those that work. Back at the outset of the pandemic, they considered meeting at trade shows or conferences to be their most effective form of outreach. This year, events have been overtaken by connecting or messaging on LinkedIn. In fact, LinkedIn has overtaken every other outreach technique besides customer referrals.

> LinkedIn's messaging feature InMail lets salespeople send messages to members outside of their network, and strong engagement rates in the UK with an 11% response rate, and an average response time of 2-days.

### The **prospecting techniques** that work best for UK salespeople

- **1** Customer referrals
- 2 Connecting or messaging on LinkedIn
- **3** Meeting at conferences and/or trade shows
- 4 Reaching out via email
- 5 Virtual events (e.g. webinars)
- 6 Recommendation from someone in my network

This is part of a more fundamental change in sales methodology. Salespeople have recognised that being productive isn't a measure of how much time they spend hitting phones or video call buttons. They're investing more time in research and abandoning cold approaches for warm outreach. Just 34% of UK sellers say they make cold calls without prior research. This era of warm outreach is gathering momentum: 78% of sellers say they've done more research in the last year.

### 34%

Just 34% of UK sellers say they make cold calls without prior research.

# Remote working — is it working?

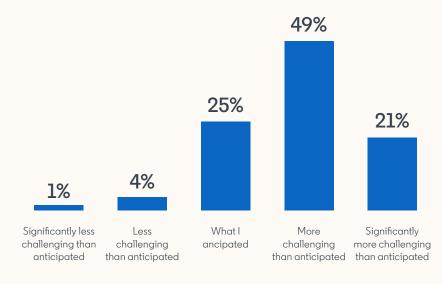
Adjusting to remote working and virtual selling has been hard work for sales teams. Overall, **70%** describe remote working during the pandemic as more challenging than they expected. Meanwhile, **65% of sales managers** say that remote managing represents a greater challenge than they expected.

Despite this, a majority of salespeople now accept hybrid working as a new reality that will endure beyond the pandemic: a majority **(55%)** expect to work remotely half of the time in the future.

### Sales jobs are on the rise

According to LinkedIn job data, postings for sales positions on the LinkedIn platform have grown a massive **114% year-overyear in the UK**, well above the **global average of 82%**. For many European countries, the hiring for sales jobs outpaces the overall trend of increased job postings generally seen this year.

### How UK salespeople felt about **working remotely** (over the last 3 years)





# Where you'll find **your buyers**

The UK's buyers are at least as likely to be found out of the office as they are to be in it. And they like it that way. Already, **60% work remotely** at least half of the time — but even more (74%) would like to. In fact, **1 in 4 buyers** would like to work remotely full-time.

It's also true that in-person meetings with sales are becoming more of an option again, with **41% of buyers** saying such meetings are now allowed again.

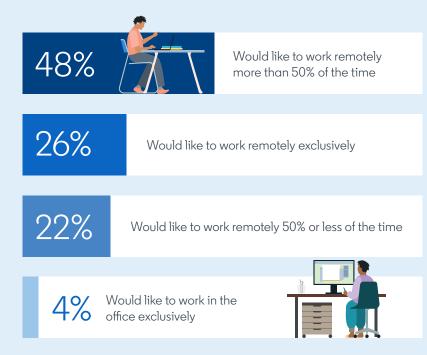
Buyers are reporting that remote working is having no negative impact on the size of deals they are authorised to close without having met a sales rep in person. The number of reps reporting they can close deals of £10,000 or more has **risen over 30%** in the last 12 months.

"One-in-six jobs are remote now, compared to only one-in-sixty-seven just two years ago."



Alyssa Merwin-Henderson VP of Global Sales Solutions, LinkedIn

### Where you'll find your buyers



### How has remote working **impacted buying decisions?**

11%	38%	30%	20%
more difficult	no change	easier	significantly easier

#### Action item

Encourage your sellers to check a prospects location on LinkedIn in case they have changed time zone while remote working.

### What your buyers want

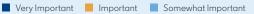
Something interesting happened when we asked UK buyers which sales approaches are very important for encouraging them to engage. Every value-adding sales behaviour was considered more important than it was a year ago. Across the board, buyers have higher expectations of their engagement with sales.

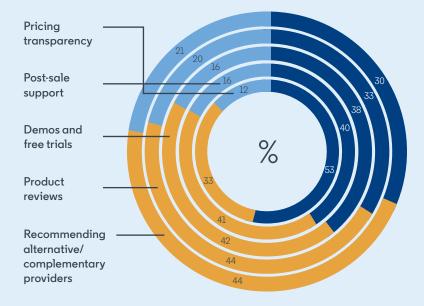
#### Buyers want to sellers to change their way of thinking

Among UK buyers, **87% say they are more likely** to consider a product or service if the salesperson changes how they think. However, only half of buyers say this happens often. Challenging buyers' perspectives remains one of the biggest missed opportunities in sales. It's telling that only 1/3rd of salespeople choose it as one of their top three factors for helping close a deal.

### What buyers want from their sales reps

Total % of buyer respondents who described a given action as important





#### Action item

Use <u>Sales Navigator Alerts</u> to anticipate where businesses are in the growth cycle — and offer them content about how your product or service can help them achieve growth. "Sales success is based on trust. If you can create trust between the prospect and the customer and the salesperson, then good things happen."



#### Paul Liesching

Director of Enterprise Sales, Truphone

# How your buyers want to **hear from you**

Earning a place in the remote buying process starts with choosing the right form of outreach — a tactic that aligns with how buyers want to be approached. That no longer includes cold calls. Of all the outreach methods ranked by buyers, taking a call from a salesperson they don't know ranks lowest, preferred by **only 14%**. The most welcome sales outreach for a buyer is digital, with email leading the way followed by virtual events and social media.

#### Buyers do their due diligence on LinkedIn

The UK's buyers don't just have higher expectations of salespeople. They also have more opportunities to check their expectations are being met. The first port of call is the company website or a Google search. Then they head for LinkedIn: **40%** check the LinkedIn Page of a salesperson's company, **39%** check the salesperson's LinkedIn profile, **31%** check for common connections and **29%** review content the salesperson has posted or shared on the platform.

### The **outreach methods** that UK buyers prefer

Email	61%
Live in-person events	
	38%
Webinars and virtual events	30%
Social networking sites	30%
Email newsletters	29%
Videos	27%
	23%
Search engine marketing	22%

#### Action item

Set a calendar reminder for 30 minutes each month to spend time updating your <u>LinkedIn profile</u>. Take time to update your latest projects, add a new skill (or endorse someone else's), or try a new cover picture Trend #2

### The rise of sales tech and **datadriven selling**



In the last year, 79% of salespeople have had **deals lost or stalled** due to a key client leaving. In a dynamic world, sales teams' confidence in their data is crucial. And the post-pandemic selling landscape is nothing if not dynamic. Buying committees are becoming more complex and unpredictable — and both buyers and salespeople are changing jobs in greater numbers. Whether this dynamism results in risk or opportunity depends on whether your sales data can keep up with it.

Sales organisations have put their faith in sales technology to help them respond to a virtual selling world — and their investment is increasingly embraced throughout sales teams. More salespeople are using more sales tools more often, with growing appreciation of the value that advanced sales intelligence and CRM tools bring. Sales organisations must be alert that sales tech does not equal more sales. Not all types of technology facilitate the type of selling that works best for top performers. In this section you will find:

- 1 The importance of sales technology
- 2 The types of tech sales depend on
- **3** LinkedIn, multithreading, and your network
- 4 What data matters most to sales organisations
- 5 Buying committees are more dynamic and complex
- 6 Data accuracy How confident are sales professionals in their data?



# **Sales tech** is considered more important than ever

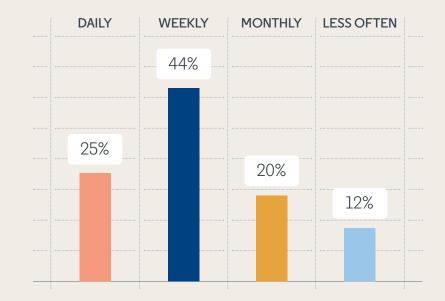
Usage of almost every type of sales tool is up year-on-year in the UK, with particularly big increases for CRM (now used by **59% of sales professionals**), Sales Intelligence **(48%)**, and Sales Planning tools **(43%)**.

Sales teams aren't just adding more tech to their stack, though. The members of those sales teams are embedding tech more deeply within their working routines. The proportion using sales tech daily has increased **8% in the last year** — and this rise is set to continue. At least a third say they will use CRM, Virtual Collaboration, Sales Intelligence, and Sales Planning tools significantly more over the coming year.

#### Action item

Survey your sales teams to find out the tools they're using most and why. Are there any gaps in your sales tech stack?

### How often do UK sellers use sales technology?



Research from Gartner shows the average sales tech stack now consists of **13 virtual** selling technologies.\*

# The **tech tools** that sales depend on

When it comes to the sales tools that are relied on for closing deals, there is no outright winner. From CRM to sales planning and demo tools all types of sales technology are described as essential business drivers by UK sales professionals.

Most notably, the proportion who describe CRM tools as very important in helping close deals is up **from 56% to 60%**. The proportion describing Sales Intelligence tools as very important is up **from 51% to 57%**. The **types of sales technologies** that are important to closing deals





LinkedIn data shows Sales Navigator sellers who are connected on LinkedIn to at least four people at an account are **16% more likely** to close a deal with that company, compared to sellers who have fewer than four connections.

# LinkedIn, multithreading, and your network

Sales Intelligence has become synonymous with LinkedIn. It's the most commonly used source of unique data to help inform sales strategy after Google, trusted by **56% of salespeople**.

A crucial role for Sales Intelligence tools involves assessing levels of buyer intent — something that **86% of salespeople consider important**. LinkedIn Sales Navigator is the single most important tool used for this purpose, with **39% of salespeople** trusting it to help them deliver relevant information at the most opportune moment.

The value of these tools has led to LinkedIn pulling clear as the Number 1 ranked social media platform for business purposes. **Over** half (51%) of salespeople in the UK now describe themselves as very active on LinkedIn, up 6%. Similarly, 70% say they've placed more emphasis on expanding their LinkedIn network, with 21% putting significantly more effort into doing so.

#### Action item

To expand your network, try using the <u>TeamLink</u> feature in Sales Navigator to find colleagues that can give you a warm introduction to prospects.

### Sellers said they would do these actions "more" or "much more" in 2022

- 1 Interacting with content posted by others on LinkedIn
- 2 Writing my own articles for LinkedIn
- **3** Sharing my company's content on LinkedIn
- 4 Sharing third-party content on LinkedIn

Sellers are active across all social media sites for business purposes, but **UK sellers rank LinkedIn #1.** 

# What data matters most to sales organisations

Data is taking a central role throughout the sales process, from selecting industries and accounts to target through to defining the buying committee and identifying patterns for insights to use going forward. However, there's one use of data that's dropped significantly over the last year: assessing the performance of salespeople themselves. This reflects a shift in emphasis. It could be that data is being seen more as a tool for sales enablement and empowerment, rather than for monitoring and control.

#### The continued growth of Sales Operations

The centrality of data is contributing to the rapidly growing importance of Sales Operations. For the second year running this is the fastest growing role in sales organisations, with **59% of UK sales organisations** planning to hire more sales ops roles.

### Top uses for sales data

- **1** To select industries to target
- 2 To select accounts to target
- **3** To assess performance of salespeople
- 4 To evaluate patterns from closed-won business and share learnings
- 5 To evaluate patterns from closed-lost business and share learnings
- 6 To define the buying committee
- 7 To select geolocations to target





of UK sales organisations are planning to hire more sales operations roles.

### **Buying committees** are more complex and more dynamic

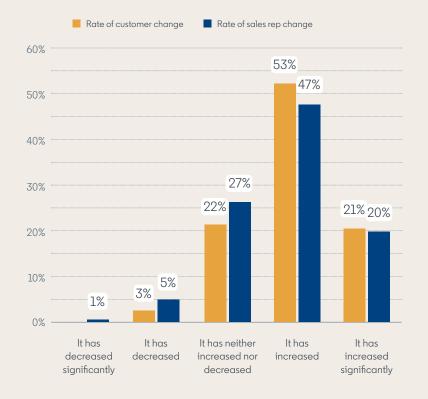
The great talent reshuffle has super-sized the complexity of the buying process and the risks involved. Not only do salespeople have to navigate more decision-makers, but those decisionmakers are each more likely to move on. Almost three quarters (74%) of salespeople say that more customers have changed company in the past year than previously.

It's a similar story within sales teams themselves. Over two thirds (67%) of salespeople say the number of people leaving their team has increased. Buyers are noticing. **More than half** (56%) of UK buyers say they've seen more turnover among their suppliers' sales teams in the last 12 months.

This dynamism matters because movement on either side of the buyer-seller relationship increases the chances of business changing hands. **Over half (52%) of buyers** say they've purchased from a sales rep they were a client of at a previous company.

What's more, 43% say that most of the time when a dedicated sales professional leaves, their company ends up moving to another supplier.

### The **rate of job changes** among UK buyers and salespeople (in the last 12 months)



#### Action item

Consider making multithreading, or sales data upkeep part of your sales team's performance targets. Buying committees are growing in size. After a small dip in 2021, the number of reported people involved in the average B2B purchasing decision has climbed to a **record high of 13 people**.

#### Action item

Use <u>Sales Navigator Alerts</u> to warn you when a contact changes organisation — their move to a new company could create opportunity.

## CRM confidence — or overconfidence?

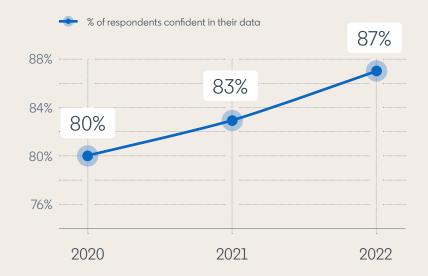
Institutionalising account knowledge and customer support helps to mitigate the risk of key salespeople leaving. It's one of the reasons why maintaining accurate CRM data has become such a priority for sales organisations.

Salespeople now spend an average of three to five hours updating CRM data each week, an investment of time that reflects how important data accuracy has become. Confidence in the quality of CRM data is responding. The proportion describing themselves as confident in CRM data is **up from 83% to 87% over the last year**.

### Average **buyer committee size** over time



### Data confidence growth over time

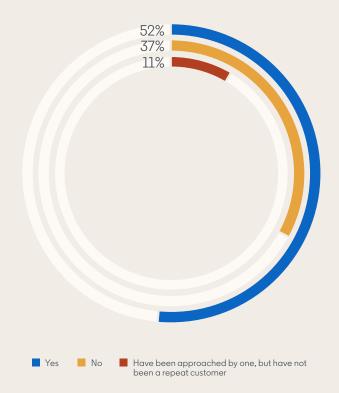


# Your past customers are your **best customers**

Keeping track of your customers is an incredibly powerful lead generation technique. Our survey showed that over half of UK buyers made a purchase from a sales rep they knew from a previous company. Make sure your sales teams can identify when their buyers move, and use that information to create new lead opportunities.

### What percentage of buyers are repeat customers?

The % of UK buyers who report purchasing from a sales rep they knew at a previous company



#### Action item

Review your sales tech stack and identify if your services could integrate better with one another and save on admin time for your team. Trend #3

### How **top performing salespeople** thrive with technology

82%

Top-performing salespeople spend less time selling than their peers, but 82% of top performers say they **"always" perform research** before reaching out to prospects, twice as much as regular sales performers.

# How **top performers** are leading the way

Adopting new techniques, platforms and methodologies is working for sales. It's helping the profession as a whole to catch up quickly with the way buyer expectations have changed. However, not every sales professional and organisation is catching up at the same speed. Some have moved further and faster than others, anticipating what buyers want rather than just reacting to it. These are the sales professions top performers — the salespeople who don't just meet quota but exceed it.

Top performing salespeople do things differently. It's important to understand this fact, because replicating the behaviours of top performers throughout your sales organizations can pay huge revenue dividends. The good news is that LinkedIn's findings show that these behaviours are imitable, scalable, and repeatable.

> We define top performing salespeople as those who achieve **150% or more** of their sales target

### Top performing salespeople...

- **1** Do more research
- 2 Put their buyers first
- **3** Deploy more sales tech
- 4 Work closer with marketing
- **5** Multithread their networks

### Top performing salespeople **don't spend more time** actually selling





One of the most surprising results form the State of Sales survey was the fact that salespeople who smash their target don't actually spend their time simply hitting the phones and pushing sales. Instead, they report devoting more of their time researching their buyers fully.

This group instead reports higher usage of sales technology, where solutions like Sales Navigator are crucial. The top-performing cohort is **19% more likely** than other sellers to say they plan to use sales intelligence tools, such as LinkedIn Sales Navigator, "significantly more" this year.

"Elite sales performers train their mind to think differently. They maintain a willingness to learn, stay disciplined, and don't chase short-term gratification."



Natasha Vilaseca Founder, SurgeFlow Digital

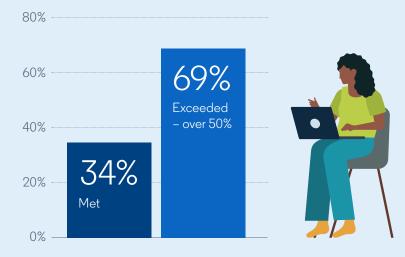
### Top performers spend less time "selling" and **more time researching**

Salespeople who exceed their quota by **25% or more** actually spend less time selling than those who only meet quota — or who beat it by **25% or less**. The average salesperson spends **28% of their time selling**. A salesperson who exceeds quota by **over 50%** spends **only 24%** of their time this way.

The key to top performance isn't time spent on sales calls. It's time spent on sales research. Salespeople who exceed quota are significantly more likely to say that **they always conduct research** on prospects prior to reaching out. Among those who exceed quota by **50% or more**, **69% always research**. That's more than twice the average for those who only meet quota.

The bottom line? Top performers, more than their peers, are leveraging data and technology in a way that leverages all the intelligence available to craft relevant, timely and welcomed outreach to buyers. This approach helps these high-performing sellers thrive in the new reality of remote selling.

### l **"always" research my prospects** before reaching out



#### Sales quota attainment

"Every sales leader's dream is to bottle the behaviours of their most successful sales reps."

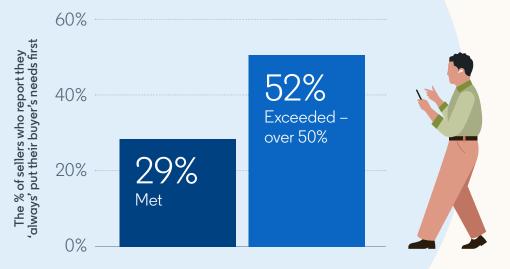


**Steve Golberg** CRO, SalesLoft

#### Action item

Buyers want warm, informed outreach. Before reaching out to buyers, do your homework. Take a look at their LinkedIn profile. Examine their company's LinkedIn page. Research their industry. It will pay off in productive conversations with buyers.

### I always put my **buyer's** needs first



Sales quota attainment

### Top performers are far more likely to **always put the buyer first**

A commitment to putting the buyer first is one of the major drivers of out-performance in sales.

Whereas **only 29%** of those meeting quota say they always put the buyer first, **52% of the very top performers** do.

Both buyers and sellers report an improvement in this category year-over-year, but there's still some way to go before salespeople's perceptions of how they behave catch up with those of buyers. **Over a third** (34%) of salespeople claim to put the buyer first all of the time, but just 20% of UK buyers agree that their needs are prioritised by their sales reps.

#### Action item

Managers should develop sales training and methodologies around how to promote <u>active</u> <u>listening</u> on sales calls.

# Top performers use more sales tech, more often

Top performing salespeople are tech-powered by default. Those who exceed quota by **50% or more** are twice as likely to use sales tech on a **daily basis** as those who only meet quota. Among these top performers, **40% use** sales tech daily and **65% use** it several times each week. Additionally, top performers identified the ability to close more deals as the primary advantage of sales technology more than other cohort.

The emphasis on sales technology's effectiveness indicates that top performers are more than perfunctory users of sales tools. They have mastered a variety of features of these tools and are maximizing their value.

"The sellers who will win in the future will be those who use technology better than their competition. High performing sales teams are all in with technology to automate redundant tasks, streamline customer note logging and next best action determination."

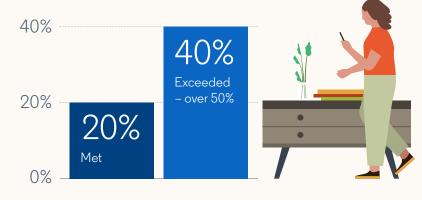


#### Tiffani Bova

Global Growth and Innovation Evangelist, Salesforce

### I use sales tech everyday

60%

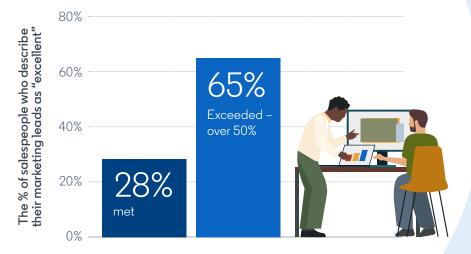


Sales quota attainment

#### Action item

Ask one of your company's top performing sales colleagues to demonstrate what technologies they're using to learn about and reach their buyers.

### The leads my marketing team sends me are **"excellent"**



Sales quota attainment

### Top performers work more closely with marketing

Exceptional sales performance tends to be built on effective marketing support. Salespeople who beat quota by **50% or more** are more than twice as likely to rate the quality of their marketing leads as "excellent." **Almost two thirds (65%)** describe their marketing leads this way. The highest performing sellers understand that marketing in all its forms — from brand building to generating leads — is key to helping ensure sales success.

#### Action Item

Make sure to coordinate territory planning with your marketing team. Sales intelligence tools such as <u>LinkedIn</u> <u>Sales Insights</u> can highlight the most profitable areas for businesses to focus their cross-functional efforts.

### Top performers multithread accounts by expanding their networks

A wider LinkedIn network enables top performers to multithread accounts, building relationships with more members of the buying committee, addressing roadblocks and moving deal through to completion. Among the highest performing group of salespeople in our analysis, **49% say** they significantly expanded their LinkedIn network during 2021. This compares to an average across all salespeople of 21%. What's more, the highest performing group reported being far more likely to to boost its usage of LinkedIn in 2022. Top performing UK salespeople are 10% more likely on average to say they will share content on the platform, write their own articles on LinkedIn, and interact with others content.

"To be honest. I don't know how sellers sell without using LinkedIn. It is a necessary step in scoping internal buyers, titles, and backgrounds for a more personalized buying and selling experience."



### I am placing a significantly larger effort on expanding my LinkedIn network



#### Action item

Use the Account Mapping feature in LinkedIn Sales Navigator to help identify the potential members in a buying committee. Increasing your chances of successfully closing a deal by up to 16%.

### Conclusion

Sales is often accused of sticking to outdated tactics and conservative ways of doing business. This year's State of Sales report shows that this is very far from the case. Ours is an inherently responsive profession. Where buyers lead, salespeople and their organisations find ways to follow — and they've rarely followed faster than in the past 12 months.

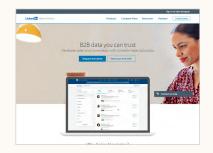
The State of Sales in 2022 is significantly more datadriven, technology-empowered and calibrated around buyer needs and priorities than it ever has been. We are quickly leaving the era of the cold call behind and entering a period characterised by warm outreach aimed at delivering value from the start. More buyers than ever are inclined to believe that a salesperson will put their needs above the seller's own. Now's the time for sales organisations to get more ambitious about the role this enables them to play.



### LinkedIn Sales Insights Under schwrachtwater Werter werter

#### LinkedIn Sales Navigator →

### LinkedIn Sales Insights →



Request demo →



#### LinkedIn Sales Solutions Blog →



Resource centre →

### Methodology

State of Sales is LinkedIn's unique global survey of the key trends in sales and how they align with the experiences that buyers want from salespeople.

It's based on in-depth surveys of 750 sales professionals and 750 B2B buyers in each of 12 countries worldwide, surveying almost 15,000 people globally in total. The State of Sales survey data used in this report has been supplemented in parts with data from the LinkedIn network, this data is based on members with sales related titles between 1 Dec 2020 and 28 Feb 2022.

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LinkedIn Sales Solutions makes it simple to tap into the power of LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network of more than 830 million members, empowering every salesperson to put buyers first. Our portfolio of Sales Solutions, including <u>LinkedIn Sales Navigator</u> and <u>LinkedIn Sales Insights</u>, leverages this people-powered data and insights to allow your sales organization to focus on the accounts with the most opportunity and your sellers to develop and grow relationships with buyers at scale. LinkedIn Sales Insights helps sales operations plan smarter while Sales Navigator allows your sales teams to target, understand, and engage the people and accounts they need to bring those plans to life seamlessly. With LinkedIn Sales Solutions you can create deep and trusted relationships with buyers to fuel growth for your organization.

### Linked in Sales Solutions

For more information about LinkedIn Sales Navigator, visit Inkd.in/sales