

salesforce

Trends in Sales Ops

Insights from more than
7,700 sales professionals
on sales ops strategies
driving productivity



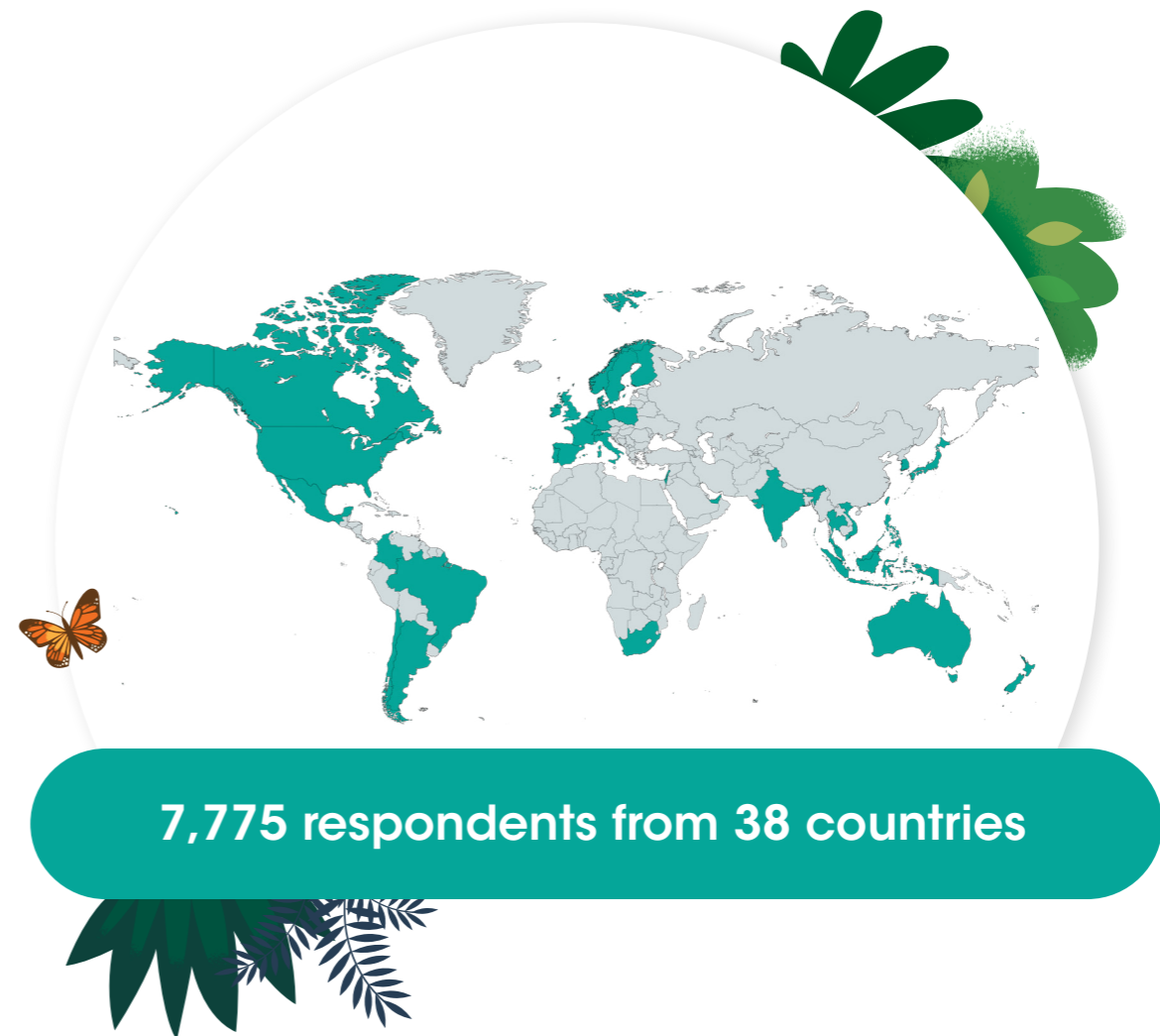
What You'll Find in This Report

For this "Trends in Sales Ops" report, Salesforce Research surveyed more than 7,700 sales professionals worldwide to discover:

- How sales operations is contributing to business strategy
- What orgs are doing to boost seller efficiency
- Trends in tech use and simplification
- The role of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation in increasing productivity

Data in this report is from a double-anonymous survey conducted from August 24, 2022 through September 30, 2022. The survey generated 7,775 responses from a range of sales professionals from across North America, Latin America, Asia-Pacific, and Europe. All respondents are third-party panelists. See [page 14](#) for further survey demographics.

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



Terms Used in This Research

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

- **Sales reps:** Front-line sales representatives
- **Sales operations:** Includes sales operations, sales enablement, revenue ops, and deal desk professionals
- **Sales leaders:** Revenue and sales executives and managers
- **Sales professionals or sellers:** All salespeople, inclusive of the groups above
- **Sales organizations:** Sales professionals answering on behalf of their team

Sales Performance Levels

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



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Foreword



Yan Pu

VP, Sales Strategy & Operations

Sales used to favor the reps who could land the shiniest deals. The goal then was growth at all costs – and it often resulted in praise for the best sellers in the bunch. Today, it's about hitting targets at reduced costs and working as a team to deliver success.

That's a job for sales ops, and it's why we're being seen as more critical than before. This report shows that 65% of sales leaders see sales ops as a key player in defining sales strategy. That's up from 54% in 2020.

Why? We're innovating on new ways to make sellers more productive, and we're backing our decisions with data – how we approach our customers, devote our resources, and design our territories. We're also streamlining processes across teams so collaboration can deliver results at a time when buyers are asking for more.

Technology is a big part of all of this. It can help us get to that intimate knowledge of the customer faster, with data-driven insights instead of dinners.

But technology can be a double-edged sword. Sales teams use an average of 10 tools to close. Two-thirds told us they're overwhelmed by their tech stack. Sales ops is here to make technology a friend, not foe, by consolidating tools and making them simpler and easier to use.

It's not just about the bottom line. It's also about experience. It's sellers knowing what to do at the beginning of their day, and feeling like all the non-selling junk is cleared out of the way to go do it. That's the promise of sales ops – paving a way forward so we can hit targets together, whatever challenges we face.

Executive Summary

Sales operations professionals have long been the experts in process efficiency, but in resource-tight times, leaders are increasingly looking to them to boost productivity.

Top on sales ops' list of to-dos: getting sellers back to selling. Reps say more than two-thirds of their time is spent on non-selling tasks, taking them away from important customer conversations.

Sales ops pros are responding with, among other tactics, tech consolidation and optimization that cuts reps' manual work, so they can focus on building customer relationships and closing deals.

- 01 Sales Orgs Struggle with Inefficiency**
Reps are bogged down with manual work. **In fact, they spend 72% of their week on non-selling tasks.**
- 02 Sales Ops Becomes Increasingly Critical**
Process optimization is the focus of sales ops, and that pursuit is increasingly strategic: **82% of sales professionals say sales ops plays a critical role in growing their business.**
- 03 Teams Simplify Tech Stacks**
Sales teams are drowning in tools – **they use an average of 10 tools to close deals.** This is overwhelming for reps who deal with regular context switching. As a result, most sales ops teams are consolidating tech stacks.
- 04 CRM Utilization Lags**
While some sales professionals claim that their teams utilize CRMs effectively, there is room for improvement: **Only 37% of all sales professionals say they strongly agree their org fully utilizes its CRM.**
- 05 AI Increases Productivity**
AI adoption in sales is still low, but teams that embrace it enjoy a competitive edge. **Eight in 10 leaders and sales ops professionals with AI say it has improved use of reps' time at least moderately.**



01

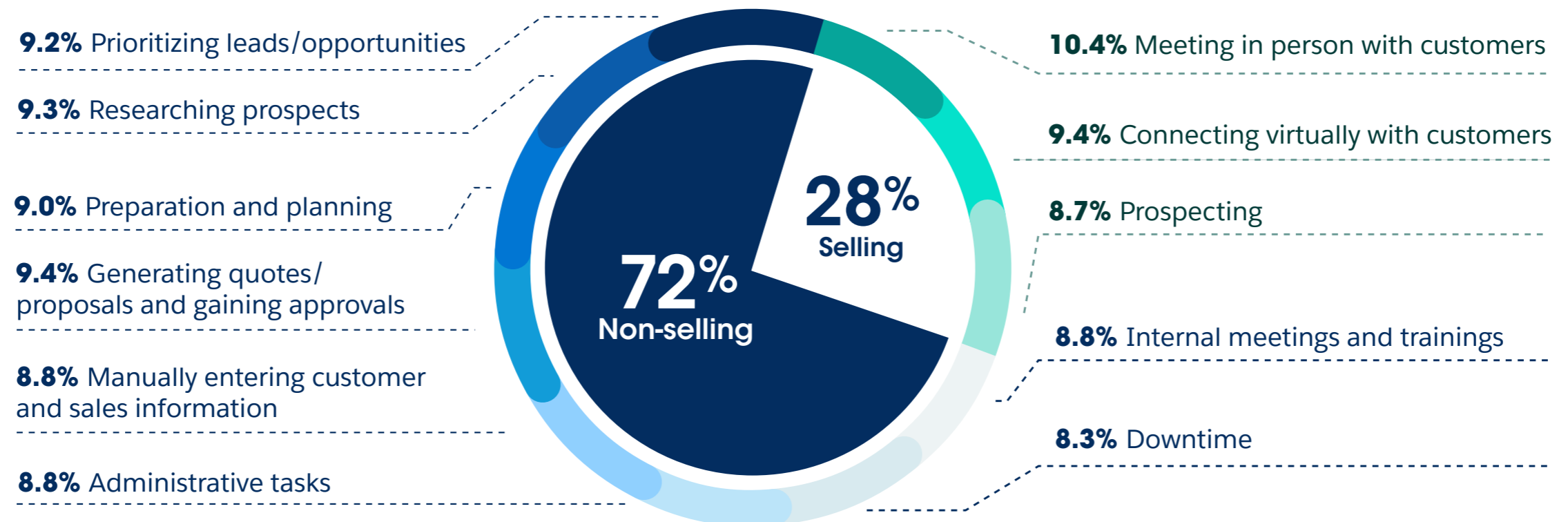
Sales Orgs Struggle with Inefficiency

With their expertise in process and efficiency, sales ops professionals spend considerable time helping reps focus on what they were hired to do: sell.

As it now stands, reps spend only 28% of their week actually selling. The rest is made up of critical, but tedious tasks like deal management and data entry.

The challenge? Removing unnecessary non-selling tasks from reps' to-do lists so they can spend more time connecting with customers and closing deals.

How Sales Reps Spend Their Time During an Average Week



02

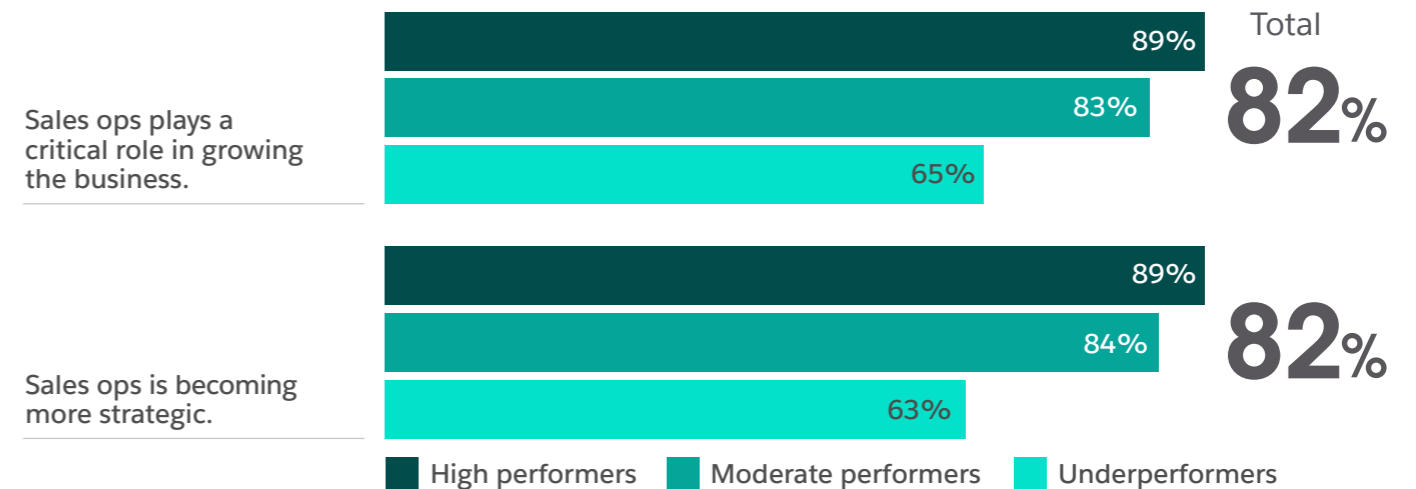
Sales Ops Becomes Increasingly Critical

Removing manual tasks from reps' to-do lists is part of a more strategic role sales ops teams are taking on. Their focus has always been on process improvement, but this is now center stage in the drive toward efficiency and cost savings. For businesses prioritizing these efforts, sales ops is important to include in strategic conversations.

In fact, more than eight in 10 sales professionals say sales operations plays a critical role in growing the business – with professionals in high-performing organizations even more likely to say so.

Sales Ops Increasingly Influences Sales Strategy

Sales Professionals Who Say the Following:



Sales Leaders Who Say Sales Ops Is a Key Player in Defining Sales Strategy



* [Chief Economist Outlook](#), World Economic Forum, September 2022



03

Teams Simplify Tech Stacks

A key problem for sales orgs to tackle: too much tech. Sales teams are drowning in tools – analytics platforms, account management and forecasting tools, lead management tools, and so on. Many of these are vital to the sales process. But they can be expensive, and the sheer number of resources can create click overload. No wonder two-thirds of reps say they're overwhelmed by all the sales apps.

In response, sales organizations are planning to streamline their tech stack. This could enable reps to focus more on the human side of selling, and less time switching from tool to tool.

To promote efficient selling, sales ops can prioritize their consolidation around features most popular with sales organizations: reporting, CRM functionality, and account/contact management, among others.

94% of sales organizations plan to consolidate their tech stack in the next 12 months.*

* Base: Sales operations professionals.

Reps Are Overwhelmed by Too Many Tools



Sales teams use an average of **10 tools** to close deals.

Top 5 Tools Used by Sales Organizations

- 1 Sales reporting/analytics
- 2 Customer relationship management (CRM) system
- 3 Account and contact management
- 4 Mobile sales app(s) for employees
- 5 Sales forecasting tools



04

CRM Utilization Lags

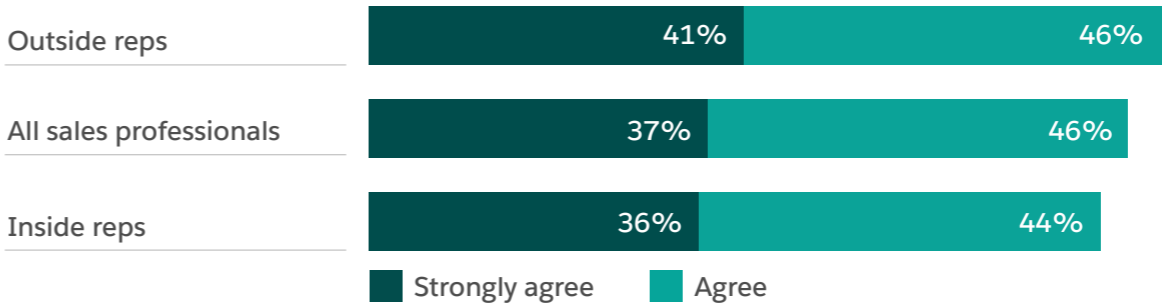
In addition to tech consolidation, sales ops is often responsible for optimization of existing tools, including CRM systems.

At first glance, it seems that most (83%) sales orgs take full advantage of their CRM systems. However, **only 37% of sales professionals strongly agree that their organization fully utilizes its CRM.** Inside sales reps in particular have noticed an opportunity for improvement.

Where to start? Reps nod to the features they find most useful, with automation and AI functions at the top of the list.

Most Useful CRM Features: Automation and Intelligence Insights

Sales Professionals Who Feel Their Organization Takes Full Advantage of Its CRM



Most Useful CRM Features for Sales Reps

- 1 Process/workflow automation
- 2 Data entry automation
- 3 Intelligent customer insights
- 4 Integration with internal systems
- 5 Ability to replace other sales tools



05

AI Increases Productivity

A focus on efficiency and cost savings may bring greater urgency to the adoption of AI for sales operations teams.

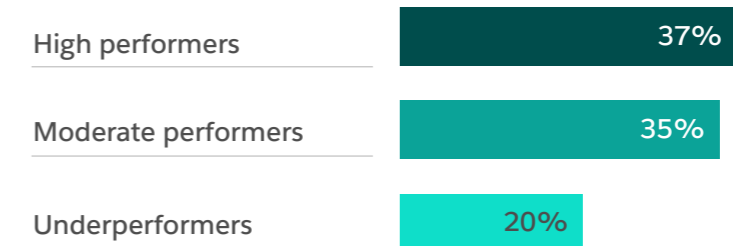
Only one-third of sales organizations currently use AI. But in the next two years, an additional 20% of organizations plan to do so.*

Top performers are the most likely to have already embraced AI. The reported benefits are wide-ranging, touching on everything from improved lead prioritization to more accurate forecasting. Eight in 10 leaders and sales ops professionals with AI say it has improved use of rep time at least moderately.

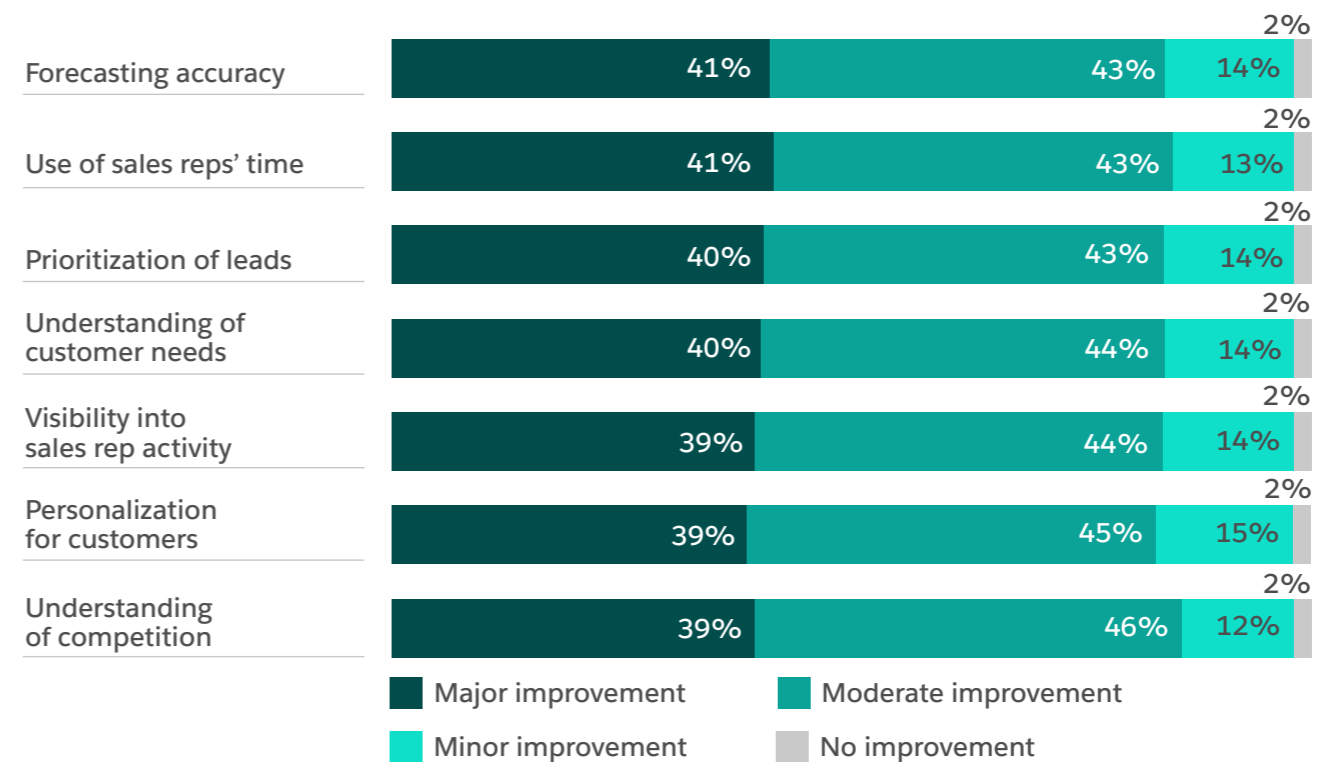
High performers are 1.9x more likely to use AI than underperformers.

* Base: Sales operations and sales leadership.

High-Performing Teams Boost Efficiency with AI



Extent of AI's Improvement on the Following:



Base: Sales ops and sales leadership at companies using AI.

Looking Ahead

Sales operations is no longer an unsung back-office contributor to sales success. It's a key player in developing efficiency-first strategy and using simplified tech and processes to help teams do more with limited resources.

To support this effort, sales ops professionals are enabling teams to sell virtually, modernizing tools, and bringing on more AI functionality that saves reps time. They're also focused on improving the quality of data that can deliver key deal insights for sellers.

Whatever the future holds, it seems sales ops is key to building resilience – with efficiency and productivity top of mind.

Sales Ops' Top Tactics to Drive Growth

- 1 Adapt to hybrid or virtual selling
- 2 Modernize tools and technologies
- 3 Streamline processes
- 4 Optimize product packaging
- 5 Improve data accuracy and quantity

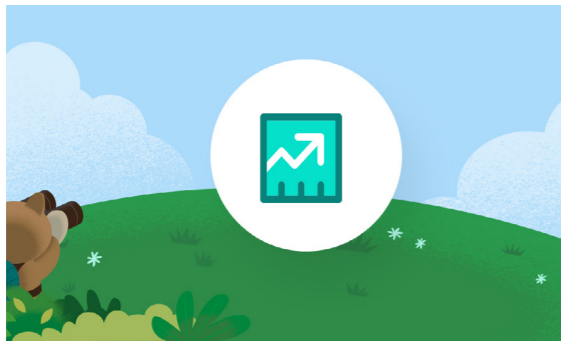


More productivity and efficiency resources



Save Now, Grow Efficiently with Sales Cloud Unlimited

See how you can simplify your tech stack to boost sales efficiency.

[Learn More](#)

Reduce Costs with Sales Cloud

Learn more about how our platform uses automation, data, and intelligence to save you money.

[Learn More](#)

Get the Sales Cloud Guided Tour

Take a spin around Sales Cloud's best and brightest features.

[Learn More](#)

Survey Demographics



Survey Demographics

Country

| | |
|---|----|
| Argentina..... | 1% |
| Australia | 4% |
| Belgium | 1% |
| Brazil | 4% |
| Canada | 4% |
| Chile..... | 1% |
| Colombia..... | 1% |
| France | 4% |
| Germany..... | 4% |
| Hong Kong | 1% |
| India..... | 4% |
| Indonesia | 4% |
| Ireland | 1% |
| Israel | 1% |
| Italy | 4% |
| Japan | 4% |
| Malaysia..... | 4% |
| Mexico | 4% |
| Netherlands | 2% |
| New Zealand..... | 1% |
| Nordics (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden)..... | 3% |
| Philippines..... | 4% |
| Poland | 3% |
| Portugal..... | 1% |
| Singapore | 2% |
| South Africa | 3% |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| South Korea | 4% |
| Spain | 3% |
| Switzerland..... | 1% |
| Taiwan..... | 2% |
| Thailand..... | 4% |
| United Arab Emirates..... | 1% |
| United Kingdom | 4% |
| United States | 10% |
| Vietnam..... | 4% |

Company Size

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Small (21–100 employees) | 30% |
| Medium (101–3,500 employees) | 50% |
| Enterprise (3,501+ employees) | 20% |

Role within Sales

| | |
|--|-----|
| Sales operations | 27% |
| Sales support | 17% |
| Sales representative | 23% |
| Sales manager or director | 26% |
| Sales leadership / head of sales | 6% |

Industry

| | |
|--|-----|
| Agriculture..... | 2% |
| Architecture, engineering, and construction..... | 3% |
| Automotive | 7% |
| Communications | 4% |
| Consumer goods | 13% |
| Energy and utilities..... | 6% |
| Financial services..... | 11% |
| Healthcare..... | 3% |
| Life sciences and biotechnology..... | 3% |
| Manufacturing | 9% |
| Media and entertainment | 4% |
| Professional and business services..... | 4% |
| Retail | 13% |
| Supply chain and logistics | 6% |
| Technology..... | 7% |
| Travel and hospitality | 5% |
| Other | 0% |

Generation

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Baby boomers | 8% |
| Gen Xers | 46% |
| Millennials | 45% |
| Gen Zers | 1% |





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