Trends in Data and Analytics for Sales

Insights from more than 900 sales professionals on building a solid foundation of data to grow the business.

Research Methodology

Salesforce conducted two double-anonymous surveys on data and analytics in June and July 2023.

The respondents include 5,540 analytics and IT leaders and 5,540 business leaders – 949 of them in sales.

The respondents hail from 18 countries in the regions of North America, Latin America, Asia-Pacific, and Europe.
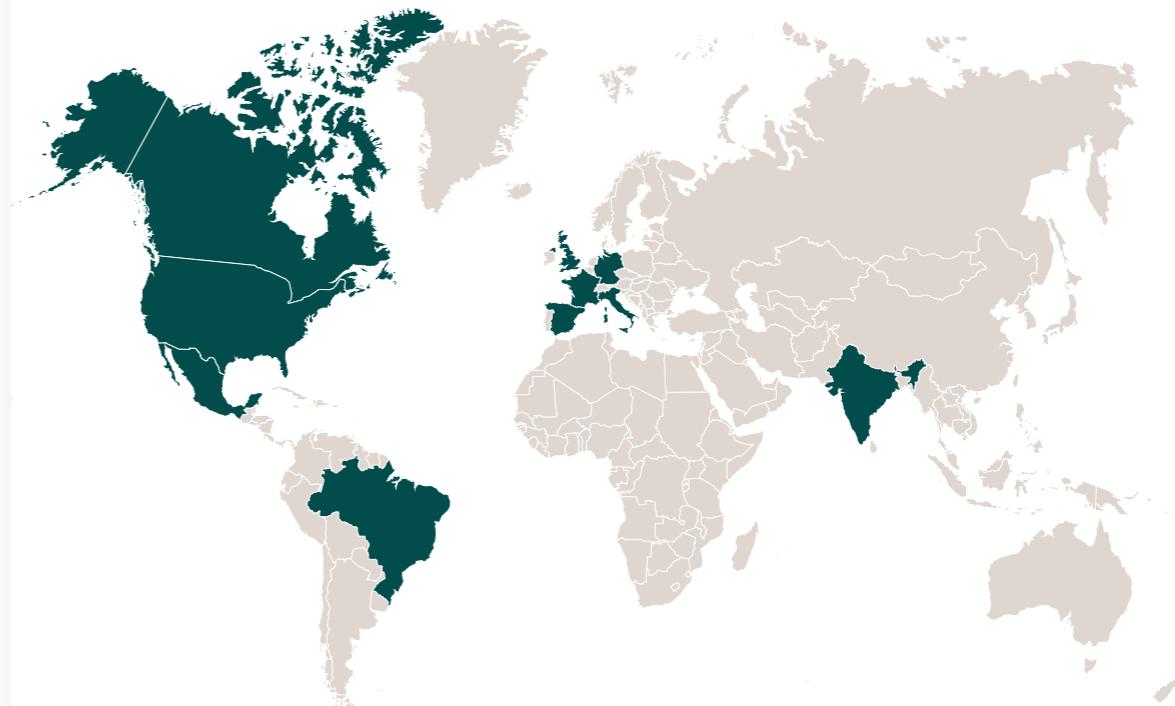
949 sales professionals in 18 countries

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Real-time, complete data is needed to remain competitive.

Facing changes like the rise of AI and shifts in how customers want to buy, 82% of sales professionals say they're adapting to new ways of selling.*

To adapt quickly, sales teams are turning to real-time data, something they agree is needed to answer customer demands and make decisions fast.

Equally important is data completeness. More than half (55%) of IT leaders note that accurate, complete, and unified data is key to successful generative AI use.

*Salesforce "**State of Sales**," November 2022.

Sales professionals see real-time data as a differentiator:

96% agree real-time data is essential to keep up with customer expectations.

96% also agree that data and analytics speed up decision-making.

Marcus Chan
Founder and President, **Venli Consulting Group**

"With everything we face today – from customer pressure to the promise of AI – sellers are turning to the data to improve the buying experience and beat their targets."

02

Data-powered personalization is within reach but hard to scale.

One benefit of real-time, complete data: personalization. This can help reps address the unique motivators of individual customers, giving them a competitive edge.

But effective personalization requires a 360-degree view of the customer. It means pulling in their data from a wide range of engagement channels, such as chats, web inquiries, and sales calls.

Unfortunately, many sales professionals struggle to achieve this personalization: Nearly half are not very satisfied with their company's state of personalization, and more than three-quarters agree it's difficult to execute at scale.

Sales teams believe their data is not properly set up to personalize their outreach:
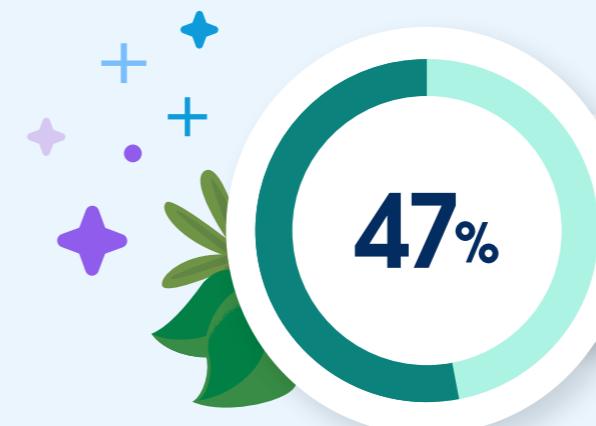
47% of sales professionals are not very satisfied with the use of company data for customer personalization.

79% agree personalization is difficult to execute at scale.

Cherilynn Castleman
Managing Partner, **CGI Sales Coaching**

"Let's begin by seeing data for what it is: not cold numbers, but the voice of our customers, the heart of the market, and the very foundation of sales."

03

Sales teams worry they'll miss out on generative AI because of data gaps.

AI is another focus: Nearly four in five sales leaders (78%) are concerned their company is specifically missing out on generative AI, which can write emails, create sales pitches, and give real-time guidance for next steps.

But the outputs of generative AI are only as good as its data inputs, and the majority of sales professionals say their data is not ready to take advantage of this powerful new technology.

Part of the problem is a lack of trust. Sales professionals say that trusted customer data – vetted for accuracy and managed with security measures – is a top factor for using generative AI and a challenge for their teams.*

*"**Trends in Generative AI for Sales,**" Salesforce, July 2023.

Sales professionals believe their data isn't ready for AI:

63%

of sales professionals say their company's data is not properly set up for generative AI.*

42%

Only 42% of sales professionals say they are completely confident in their data accuracy.

*"**Generative AI Snapshot Series,**" Salesforce, March 2023.

Jen Lagaly
EVP, Sales, **Salesforce**

"The AI advantage will go to the companies with the cleanest customer data. My advice? Don't wait to shore up your data."

04

Far-reaching data challenges go beyond trust.

While trust concerns – specifically, data security and accuracy – are blockers for effective AI use, sales teams face a range of other data challenges.

Many describe feeling overwhelmed by a growing data volume, which is expected to increase by 23% this year.*

Other challenges include insufficient data management training, lag time to get insights, and the lack of a single source of truth, which would allow teams to connect customer data together more completely and gain comprehensive insights to improve selling motions.

*Average percent growth was calculated from respondents who said they expected their data volumes to increase in the next 12 months.

Top challenges sales professionals face when leveraging data to achieve their goals:

- 🔒 Security threats
- 🎓 Lack of training
- 🗄 Volume of data is overwhelming
- 🕐 Takes too long to get insights
- ❓ Lack of a single source of truth

Lori Richardson
CEO, **Score More Sales**

"Sales leaders worry they'll go through the effort of setting up their data, only for that data not to be used. The solution? Train reps to access and act on the data. We can't leave it up for individuals to figure this out for themselves."
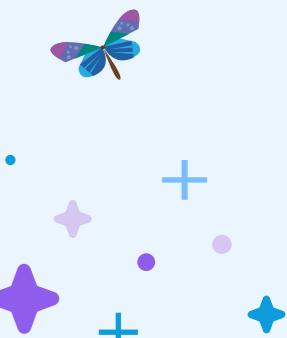
05

To address rising challenges, sales teams are building a culture of data.

With a wide range of obstacles standing in the way of achieving personalization and taking advantage of AI, sales professionals are rethinking their approach to data management. They're building a culture of data that emphasizes data literacy, security measures, data quality, and the modernization of tools.

This cultural focus puts the spotlight on the people who stand to benefit from the data: the sales rep safely accessing customer data in real time, and the customer eager to buy on their terms.

Analytics and IT leaders name these as key data priorities:

1 Improve data quality

2 Strengthen security/compliance

3 Build AI capabilities

4 Improve company-wide data literacy

5 Modernize tools and technologies

**Dini Mehta**
Operating Partner, **Operator Collective**

"The data project asks us to empathize with the seller who uses it. How can we empower reps with accurate insights to help them make data-driven decisions about their pipeline?"

Data and analytics resources for sales teams:
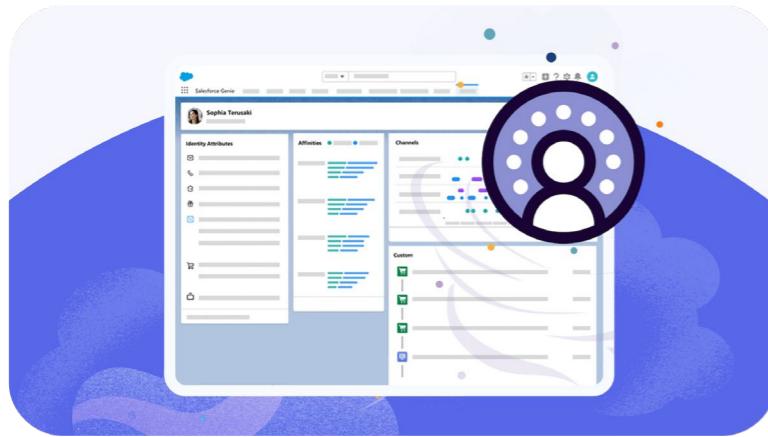
Connect your data to create a complete customer view.

Centralize your sales and customer data with Data Cloud, and sell faster from a single source of truth.

LEARN MORE
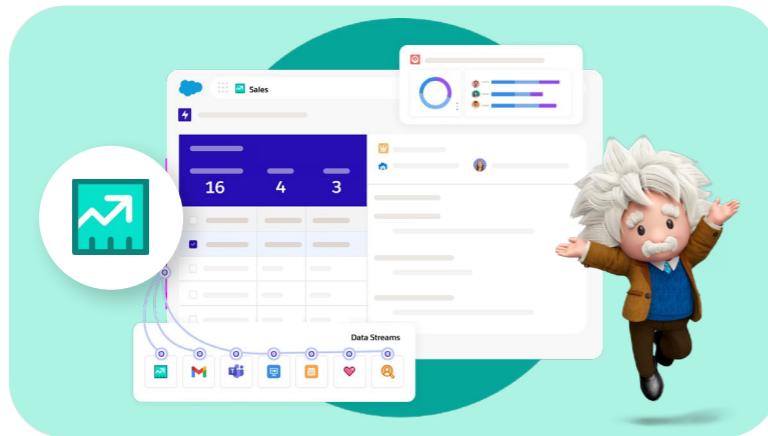
Win more revenue with better sales data.

Discover how Sales Cloud helps you capture sales activities automatically and turn sales data into insights you can act on.

LEARN MORE

Confused about AI? Learn seven ways reps are using it today.

Discover how reps use generative AI, grounded in CRM data, to sell – from writing emails to automating prospecting.

GET THE PLAYBOOK