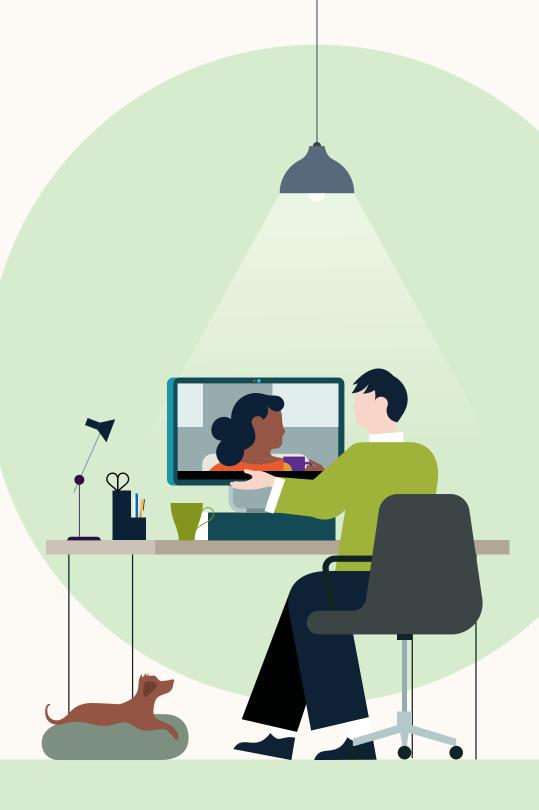


State of SCILES

2021 UK Edition



The UK's new State of Sales

The state of sales in the UK has been transformed by the COVID-19 pandemic – a wave of disruption that has coincided with the need to adapt to new trading relationships following Brexit. LinkedIn's new State of Sales report, the first to be fully conducted since the outbreak of the pandemic, proves just how profound this change has been.

Our data shows that the switch from a sales landscape dominated by field sales teams to one built around virtual selling isn't just a practical necessity resulting from lockdowns and safety concerns. It aligns with a deeper shift in how buyers want to buy. The vast majority of the contacts that sales professionals reach out to are more than comfortable with a remote buying journey. They find the experience of virtual selling more comfortable and more convenient – and this is changing perceptions about what the role of a salesperson in the buying process should actually be.

Only 12% of buyers in the UK now say that they need to meet a sales professional in person before buying from them. Only 18% say that working remotely has made purchasing more difficult. In stark contrast, 45% find the remote buying journey easier – and 73% would like to continue working remotely at least half of the time. With buyers increasingly comfortable navigating buying processes by themselves, sales professionals need to go further to demonstrate the value they can add. Providing fresh, insightful perspectives elevates the experience of dealing with sales and

the value that products and services can deliver. In fact, 80% of buyers say they are more likely to consider products and services from a salesperson who challenges their way of thinking.

All of the salespeople in our State of Sales survey have succeeded in hitting their quota over the past year. However, we also identify a group of top-performing sales professionals who have exceeded quota by 25% or more. Comparing the responses of these top performers to their peers helps to illuminate the approach to sales that fit best with this new selling landscape.

The most successful salespeople know when and how to engage buyers and add value as part of a digital buyer journey. They know how to apply data to understand shifting buyer behaviour, and they have re-ordered the sales process to place greater emphasis on researching opportunities prior to reaching out.

The new state of sales has been built on a big increase in the amount that companies invest in sales technology. It's been driven by a dramatic rise in the use of LinkedIn for both sales intelligence and sales outreach. It's also based on an important shift in sales philosophies. The most consistently successful salespeople don't just use new tech tools to identify and reach out to more prospects. They combine these tools with a very real commitment to putting the buyer first.

The key trends

#1 Selling is now virtual by default

45% of UK buyers want to make purchase decisions remotely - and closing deals means embracing a new sales process

#2 Keeping up means going all-in on sales tech

Sales organisations are investing in more tech tools, using them far more often, and giving LinkedIn the stand-out role in virtual selling.

- **#3 Buyer-first needs to be a philosophy, not just a tactic** It's the only way to close a growing gap between buyer and seller priorities.
- **#4** Sales needs less cold-calling and more brand-building Salespeople are making effective partners of marketing – but they need to ditch cold calls for intelligent challenges.
- **#5** The digital sales landscape makes data the differentiator Sales Operations is taking the lead as organisations seek competitive advantage in their data sources.

#6 Diversity provides a crucial competitive edge

A diverse organisation is preferred by buyers, and enables better sales practices.

Trend **#1**

Selling is now virtual by default



of UK buyers say that **remote working** has made purchasing decisions easier "The world is changing. It's never going back to the way that it was. We will sell in a virtual world much more often. We'll communicate in a digital world with our customers. For the sales profession, it's time to evolve."

Anne Sheehan, Director, Vodafone Business UK

Virtual selling is now **the norm**

Virtual selling has been around since before the pandemic began, and certainly has accelerated out of necessity brought about by the UK's various lockdowns. However, it has quickly evolved to be the first choice of buyers – an experience they will continue to demand long after the pandemic.

Buyers are finding remote purchasing easier, more productive and more convenient. They are in no rush to return to seeing sales professionals in-person. And they won't have to. That's because the most effective sales organisations have been quick to redesign the way they operate to work with a virtual buyer journey.

More than 1 in 5 UK buyers are waiting until 2022 or beyond to attend in-person conferences or events.

7

Buyers are planning a future of **remote buying** experiences

Remote job postings on LinkedIn have increased by more than 9x in the UK since the start of the pandemic, well above the global increase of 5x. As a result, buyers have been difficult to reach any other way but virtually. Seventy-six percent of buyers in the UK were working remotely more than half of the time, according to LinkedIn's survey data.

Only 18% of buyers report that working remotely has made it more difficult to make purchasing decisions. In stark contrast, 45% report that it's made buying decisions easier. Whereas, before the pandemic, only 39% would have considered buying from a salesperson they'd never met face-to-face, 57% say they're happy to do so now – and will do so beyond 2021.

This fits with how most B2B buyers would like their broader working routines to change, with 73% saying they want to work remotely at least half of the time. With hours in the office deliberately reduced, meeting sales reps face-toface may never return to being standard practice.

What is your attitude towards working remotely?

Would you like to work remotely exclusively?

	16%
Would you like to work remotely more than 50% of the time?	57%
Would you like to work remotely 50% or less of the time?	
Would you like to work in the office exclusively?	21%
-	5%

How has working remotely impacted your ability to make purchasing decisions?

It has made it significantly easier	11%
It has made it easier	
	34%
No change	36%
It has made it more difficult	
	16%
It has made it significantly more difficult	2%

Sales organisations have re-ordered the sales process

For their part, sales organisations have listened to buyers' shifting priorities and responded, driving through major adjustments in how they organise their time, prospect for new business, build relationships and construct deals. It's a pivot that's felt most natural to digital natives – and it's helped those who embrace it to continue exceeding quota.

Sales professionals have responded to buyers' preference for a more self-directed buyer journey by dialling down the time they spend actively selling – and investing more in researching opportunities and identifying the best way to reach out. The average sales rep in the UK spent 36% of their time selling products and services just before the pandemic. That has dropped to 28% today. The drop is most pronounced among Gen Z and Millennials, and also more pronounced among top sellers who exceeded their quota by 25% or more. Both of these groups report spending only a quarter of their time actively selling.

The average time spent selling by UK salespeople



What are they doing instead?

There's been a 40% increase in those thinking through potential objections and how to overcome them, and a 52% jump in those following a prospect company on professional social networks like LinkedIn. Sales professionals are also 52% more likely to consult with team members on leveraging their relationships, and 42% more likely to conduct research with their professional network before the first call.

This shift in the sales process is reflected in the forms of outreach that salespeople now find most effective. Customer referrals are the most effective tactic around, chosen by 41% as one of the techniques yielding the highest conversion-to-opportunity rate. The value of in-person meetings at conferences and trade shows has plummeted, with 29% fewer salespeople choosing them as effective. The most important new technique is virtual events, chosen by 30% as one of their top sources of opportunities.

What outreach techniques yield the highest conversion rate according to sellers?



Despite its challenges, remote selling is here to stay

The pivot to virtual selling hasn't been without its challenges: 61% of sales professionals describe the experience of selling remotely and managing remote teams as more challenging than they expected. However, the speed with which sales organisations across the UK have adjusted has been hugely impressive. They've been able to dial up and roll out techniques and behaviour that many of the most successful salespeople had already adopted

Prior to the pandemic, only 23% of sales professionals in the UK spent half their time or more working remotely. Almost twice as many (42%) now anticipate doing so during 2022 and beyond.

The challenges and opportunities created by digital buyer journeys can't be met through investing in sales tech alone. Sales organisations also need to invest in capabilities outside the sales team itself: support in tapping new sources of intelligence, planning more effectively, building longer-term relationships and enabling buyers to engage on their terms. The UK has recognised these new requirements – and responded. Almost two thirds of sales organisations (64%) are hiring more customer service reps, while more than half are investing in sales enablement and sales operations roles. LinkedIn hiring data shows that, over the last year, the number of sales operations roles has grown 2.7x faster than traditional sales roles.



Prior to the pandemic, only 23% of sales professionals in the UK spent half their time or more working remotely.

2.7x

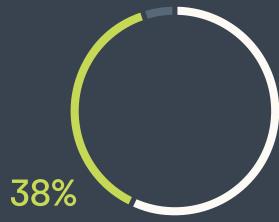
Over the last year, the number of sales operations roles has grown 2.7x faster than traditional sales roles.

Trend **#2**

Keeping up means going all-in on sales tech

57%

of UK sales professionals say sales technology is important to closing deals

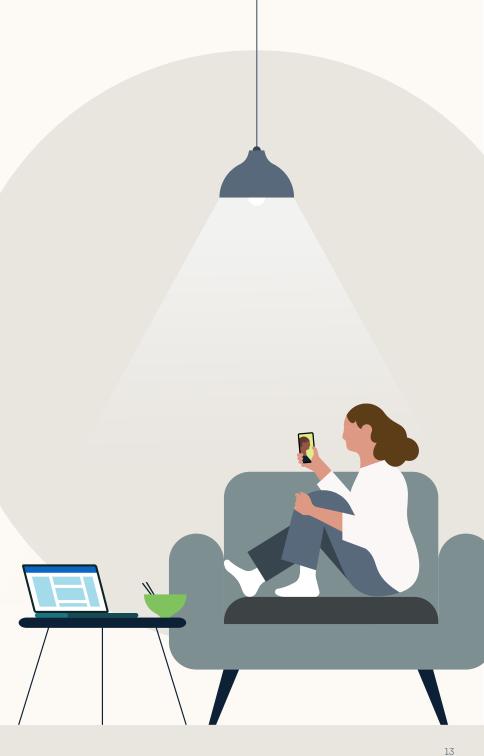


say it is very important

"Top performing salespeople are willing to take the leap of faith and embrace new technologies in order to educate and engage. Other salespeople need to change their ways and do the same, or face being left behind."

Paul Lewis,

Global Social, Digital Marketing, and Sales Enablement Lead, Pitney Bowes UK sales organisations have adjusted to a suddenly virtual sales landscape by ramping up their investment in sales technology to an extent never seen before. Half of all the companies we surveyed say they've responded to the challenges of the last year by adding new sales technologies to their stack. And this sales tech revolution is just getting started. The majority of sales professionals expect their business to increase investment in tech again over the next year, and a third of respondents anticipate an increase of 50% or more.



More sales tech tools, used more often

As a result of this investment, sales professionals have access to a far wider range of tech tools – and are making much greater use of them. At least 40% now use CRM, virtual collaboration and sales intelligence tools. Roughly a third are applying technology to sales planning, sales engagement and sales enablement. Close to three quarters expect to increase their use of every type of tool over the next year, and roughly a third expect their use of each tool to grow significantly.

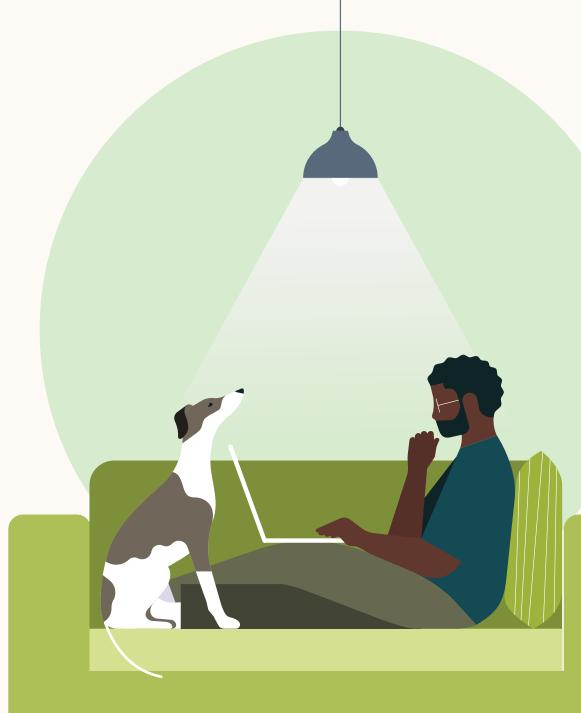
Sales coaching tools have emerged to take on a vital role in the pivot to virtual, and are now used by 28% of sales professionals. Interestingly, it's salespeople who exceed quota by 25% or more who make the greatest use of these coaching tools, with 39% leveraging them to build new skills and adopt new sales techniques. In times of change and disruption, a growth mindset and an appetite for learning distinguish sales' top performers.

What types of technologies do UK sales professionals use?

CRM tools	42%
Virtual collaboration/Demo tools	41%
Sales intelligence	40%
Sales planning	37%
Sales engagememt	36%
Sales enablement	30%
Sales coaching	28%

The rise of sales intelligence tools

Organisations are investing in sales technology across the board. However, the largest share of that investment is being channelled towards sales intelligence tools that provide both sales teams and sales operations with data and insights for market access, strategy and planning. Three quarters of salespeople expect their organisations to spend more on these tools going forward – and these spending choices are backed up by sales teams' own experience. Overall, 71% of salespeople describe sales intelligence tools as critical to closing deals. Top performers are more than twice as likely to describe them as extremely critical, with 31% doing so compared to 13% of their peers.

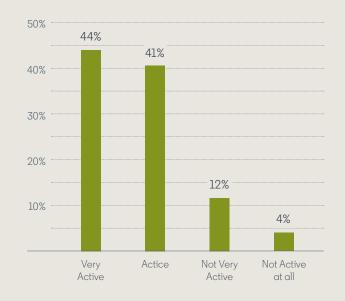


Virtual selling runs on LinkedIn

In the UK, sales intelligence has become synonymous with LinkedIn. Two thirds of salespeople (63%) now use LinkedIn as their source of sales intelligence, which is over 50% more than any other platform or tool. Half of all sales professionals in the UK use the specialist sales intelligence tools of LinkedIn Sales Navigator, which is itself more than any other sales intelligence platform.

The need to prospect, reach out and build relationships virtually means that LinkedIn is taking on an expanded role at every stage of the sales process. It's now the most actively used social platform for sales activity, with 85% of salespeople describing themselves as active on it, and 44% as very active. These sales professionals recognise the value of expanding their LinkedIn networks (something 82% of sellers are putting more effort into). They are also sharing more content from their business, with 34% saying they now share much more than they did before the pandemic, and building their selling brands by creating more content themselves; 30% say they now post much more often than a year ago.

We asked sellers how active they were on LinkedIn. Here's what they said:



51% of sellers ranked LinkedIn as the best social media platform for providing unique data for sales strategising.



Trend **#3**

Buyer-first needs to be a philosophy, not just a tactic



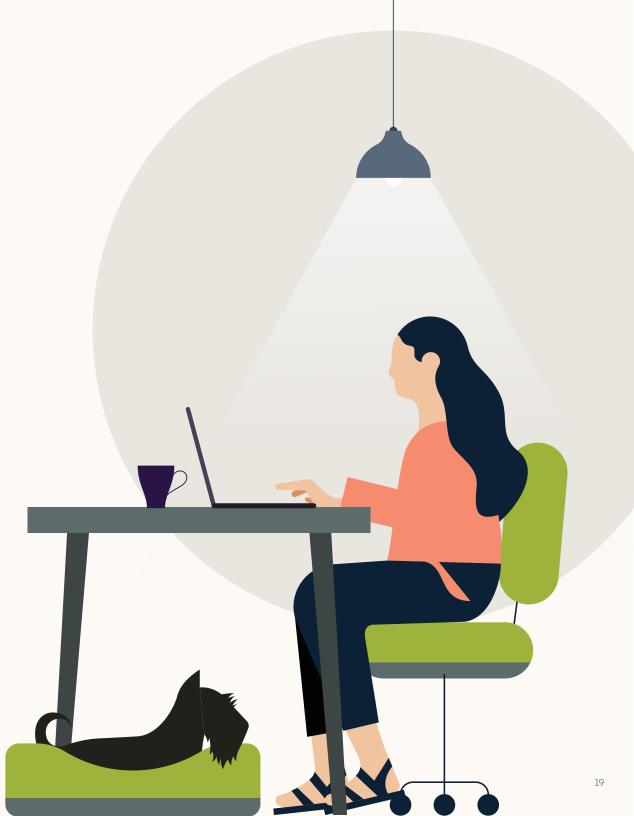
of UK sellers say they always put the buyer first. But only **12%** of buyers agree. "The buyer journey is getting longer and more complicated, but I see companies of all sizes benefiting when they focus on the shortest time to value for the client. Even if the processes are long and the sales cycles are long, how can you achieve the shortest time to value within that?"

Hans Dekkers,

Chief Digital Officer and VP Digital Sales, IBM EMEA

Top-performing salespeople (those who exceed their quota by 25% or more) do several things differently to their peers. They use sales technology more often – and they regard tech tools as more critical to their success. However, the most significant difference is the consistency with which these sales professionals but the needs of buyers first – even ahead of the needs of their own organisation. The 45% of top performers who say they always do this is almost twice as high as the proportion of their peers (25%).

This is telling, top performers have been able to navigate the transition to virtual selling more effectively, because their selling philosophy and methodology aligns far better with the experiences that buyers now demand. If sales organisations are to manage the risks involved in more remote buyer journeys, they must follow these top performers' example. They need to make buyer first a guiding philosophy rather than just a tactic of convenience.



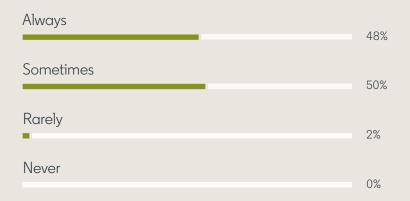
Buyers' shifting perceptions of sales

Buyers are increasingly confident navigating a digital buyer journey – and this is subtly shifting their perceptions of the salespeople they deal with. Over a third of buyers strongly agree that salespeople are well-informed about their industry (36%) and their specific business needs (35%).

However, they are significantly less likely than a year ago to describe sales professionals as trusted advisors, with only 25% strongly agreeing with this statement compared to 33% prior to the pandemic. It's not that salespeople are less capable of playing the trusted advisor role – it's that buyers perceive less need for them to do so.

The buyer-first perception gap

To what extent do you as a salesperson put the needs of your buyers organisations first?



To what extent do you as a buyer feel salespeople place your organisations needs above theirs?



Despite the fact that almost half of UK salespeople claim they always put the buyer first, only 12% of buyers agree that this is what happens. There's a clear disconnect between how salespeople interpret their approach to engaging prospects and closing deals – and how buyers themselves feel about it. To understand why this disconnect exists, we need to look in detail at what putting the buyer first actually involves in terms of salespeople's behaviour.

LinkedIn has identified five principles of true buyerfirst selling that help to signal that a salesperson is committed to adding real value throughout the sales process.

The 5 principles of a Buyer First approach



Learn, then define

Active listening is a critical foundation for the buyer-seller relationship.



Share readily

Buyer first selling is about transparency and always empowering buyers with information.



Solve, don't sell A buyer first seller measures success in problems solved, as well as products sold.



Deliver value

It's critical to see the relationship through, long after a deal is signed.



Earn trust

A buyer first seller develops long-term trusted relationships by always acting in the buyer's best interest. Based on these principles, we have identified six selling behaviours that come together to create buyer-first experiences. By asking both buyers and sellers about how often these happen, we can pinpoint the main disconnects that sales organisations need to address:



Providing free and easy access to product reviews and other content

- Being completely transparent about pricing
- Staying actively engaged after the sale to ensure value delivery
- Recommending different products/companies if your product doesn't fit the buyer's needs
- Aligning with buyers on their success metrics related to the purchase



Offering product tests, training and trials



The experience of buyerfirst doesn't match its importance

The problems come in practice. By salespeople's own admission, their organisations don't apply buyer-first principles as a consistent philosophy. This means that very few buyers expect sales professionals always to have their interests at heart. Salespeople who are dedicated to putting the buyer first have to battle against these perceptions and demonstrate from the start that they are aligning themselves with the buyer's agenda rather than their own. Those that are able to do so stand out as having genuine value to add.

Salespeople in the UK identify a range of barriers that their organisations will need to overcome in order to apply buyerfirst as a methodology. These include practical issues such as a lack of the right skills in the sales team (39%) and inadequate coaching (36%), but also broader cultural ones. The most significant barrier of all is an emphasis on meeting short-term revenue goals, chosen by 40%. It's this short term thinking that means buyer needs are often de-prioritised amid growing pressure to close deals. We asked buyers and sellers about their experience of the 6 activities that reflect buyer-first principles.

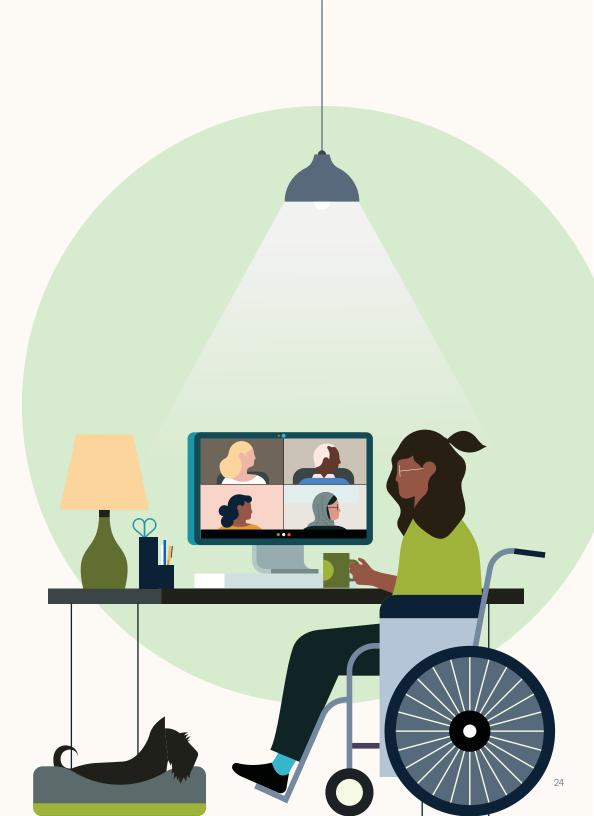
The % of sellers saying they always apply this behaviour
The % of buyers that say they consistently experience this behaviour

1 Providing free and easy access to product reviews and other content

		35% 17%
2	Being completely transparent about pricing	40% 21%
3	Staying actively engaged after the sale to ensure value delivery	39%
4	Recommending different products/companies if your product doesn't fit the buyer's needs	17%
5	Aligning with buyers on their success metrics related to the purchase	15% 36%
6	Offering product tests, training and trials	14% 33%
		20%

A starting point for buyer-first philosophies

There are signs that sales organisations have responded to the pandemic by starting to move towards a buyerfirst philosophy. Half of UK salespeople (50%) say their organisation has responded to change by starting to measure sales processes and outcomes in different ways. This provides the opportunity to place less emphasis on new customer acquisition at all costs; more on building enduring relationships through a buyer-first philosophy. Sales organisations' increased investment in customer service roles also demonstrates a shift towards staying engaged beyond the sale – and a new way of looking at the role of sales.



Trend #4

Sales needs less cold-calling and more brand-building



of UK buyers list repeated cold calling and emailing as the #1 disqualifying sales activity "[Customers say], 'I don't want to talk to anyone, I just want to click once and buy it.' Customers have changed way faster than salespeople, especially in the B2B space. That's a powerful acknowledgment. It means that we need to run faster, because customers are needing us less and less every single day."

Alejandro Cabral,

Global Digital Sales Transformation Leader, Kimberly Clark Professional. When buyers navigate the buying journey remotely, and under their own steam, they consume a lot more marketing content – and they start to form a relationship with a brand rather than just with a salesperson. As a result, sales professionals can't form trusted relationships with their prospects on the basis of their own behaviour alone. They need marketing support.

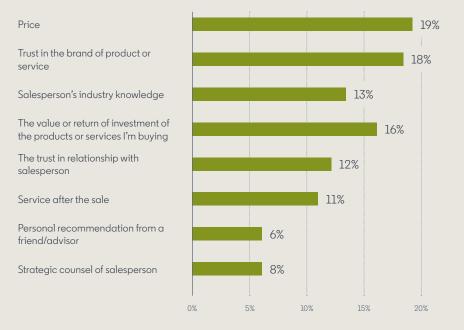
The UK's sales professionals have been swift to recognise this shift. They've significantly increased the time they invest in aligning with marketing, and they are seeing important rewards from doing so.



A rapidly evolving partnership with marketing

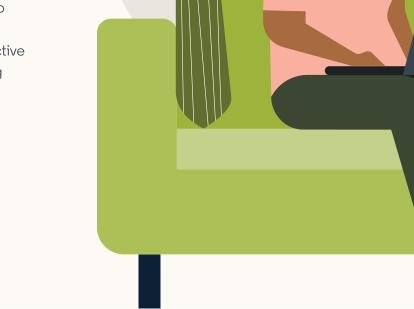
Almost half (49%) of buyers choose trust in a brand as one of the top three influences on their decision to purchase, with 18% choosing it as the most important influence. This puts brand just behind price as the greatest influence – and ahead even of trust in the salesperson themselves or their industry knowledge.

What do buyers see as the most important factor influencing their purchase decision?



Sales professionals are responding to the growing importance of brand as an influence by forming a closer working relationship with marketing: 44% say they are working more closely with marketing this year than last. And salespeople have a range of pressing priorities that they are keen to partner with marketing on. At least 44% pick out areas such as lead generation, lead qualification and measuring marketing effectiveness. However, building brand trust and awareness is now their number one priority, chosen by 49% of survey respondents.

This closer working relationship with marketing is driving results. The proportion of salespeople rating the quality of marketing leads as good or excellent is up 9% yearon-year. The proportion rating leads as excellent has also increased YoY, up 5% from 2020. Unsurprisingly, it's top performing salespeople who have formed the most effective partnership with marketing, with 44% of these describing marketing lead quality as excellent.



Trading cold-calling for informed challenge

Despite the importance of brand in influencing them to engage, individual salespeople's expertise and behaviour still matters – in both a positive and a negative sense. When a buyer is introduced to a sales professional by someone in their professional network, it's that salesperson's understanding of their particular needs that most influences their decision to buy from them, even more so than the pricing on offer. However, it's also true that salespeople's tactics can undermine the advantages they might have.

Persistent cold calling is the most common factor leading buyers to disqualify a salesperson from consideration, chosen by 50% of buyers in the UK. It's closely followed by salespeople giving misleading information (46%), showing a lack of understanding of their own product (43%) and of the buyer's company needs (41%). Sales professionals consistently underestimate the negative impact that these behaviours have. Worryingly, only 33% identify cold-calling as a factor that prevents deals closing – and only 32% acknowledge the damage done by sharing misleading information. Such misleading approaches to sales often involve telling buyers what they want to hear. Increasingly though, this isn't what buyers themselves want. In times of disruption and change, they're far more likely to be impressed by a salesperson who has the expertise and insight to challenge their established way of thinking. In fact, 80% of buyers in the UK say they're more likely to consider a brand's products or services if the salesperson challenges their way of thinking. However, only 10% say that they experience it very often.

Deals close when brand awareness and trust come together with expertise that adds perspectives and ideas the buyer acknowledges they wouldn't have arrived at themselves. Positioning themselves as informed challengers is one of the most important ways that salespeople can secure a valued role for themselves as part of a more independent buyer journey.



80% of buyers in the UK say they're more likely to consider a brand's product or services if the salesperson challenges their way of thinking Trend **#5**

The digital sales landscape makes data the differentiator



of UK sales professionals say their organisations will invest more in sales intelligence tools this year "CRM is no longer just a repository of data. You really have to leverage it as a hub of insights that you can tap into to understand how buyers are interacting with you."

Jeff Davis,

B2B Growth Strategist, Author of Create Togetherness

Trend #5

The rise of virtual selling and growing investment in sales intelligence platforms mean that sales organisations have more data at their disposal than ever before. The changes to the buyer journey and the shifting nature of demand mean that they have more need of it to try and interpret the emerging sales landscape. The competitive advantage that sales teams can leverage from data explains why sales operations is now such a priority area of investment. It's also broadening the way that organisations apply data. At least a third of sales organisations now use data to define the buying committee, evaluate patterns from closed-won and closed-lost business, and select accounts and industries to target.

Sales operations experts will be tasked with helping businesses cope with change by increasing the quality of and confidence in sales data, and applying it to a wider range of tasks than ever before. This will involve pushing to address the barriers to salespeople feeling confident in their data and making still wider use of it.

The 3 main reasons that sales people gave that undermine their confidence in the data they have are:

- Incomplete sales data (chosen by 46% of respondents)
- Inacurate and out-of-date CRM data (42%)
- Data stuck in siloes (32%)

The data that sales organisations trust to fix these issues and direct their strategy increasingly comes from LinkedIn. Over half (51%) of sales professionals now choose LinkedIn as the best source of unique data for informing sales strategy, more than any other social, CRM or sales intelligence platform.

We asked UK sellers what their organisations use their data for, here's how they responded:

45	5%
To select accounts target	1%
To evaluate patterns from closed-won businesses and share learnings	
40)%
To select industries to target	
39	9%
To evaluate patterns from closed-lost businesses and share learnings	
36	5%
To define the buying committee	1%
·	170
Io select geolocations to target	1%

Data is about more than tracking quota

The need to adapt to a changing buyer journey is reflected in the changing way that sales organisations measure performance. They are more likely to do this by looking at 'activity quantity' and 'customer lifetime value' than they are to use traditional metrics such as 'individual quota met'. The use of 'activity quantity' as a measure has increased 22% year-on-year, reflecting the need for a more nuanced analysis of how sales professionals work at a time when deals move more slowly and buyers repay time invested in research and building relationships. Use of 'customer lifetime value' is up 19% year-on-year, supporting a buyer-first approach to ensuring value beyond the sale. The growth of 'pipeline accuracy', up 42% year-on-year, reflects the growing importance of sales planning.

Biggest movers in performance measurement

We asked UK sellers how their performance was measured, and compared it with our 2020 results.

Here's how they responded:

2021

2020

Activity quantity

Customer lifetime value	
	32% 27%
	2770
Customer retention/attrition	
	29%
	38%
Customer satisfaction	
	29% 41%
	11/0
Pipeline accuracy	
	27%
	19%
Individual quota met	
	31% 29%
	2,70

33%

27%

Trend **#6**

Diversity provides a crucial competitive edge

80%

of UK buyers say that they will buy from a sales organisation they see as more diverse "Companies in the B2B space are increasingly asking for aligned purpose when it comes to the businesses they choose to work with."

Ruth Rowan, CMO, NTT Ltd This report provides a detailed, data-rich snapshot of sales in the UK following a year unlike any other. However, the state of sales can never be described by numbers alone. At a time when audiences feel bombarded by cold calls and exhausted by Zoom meetings, the ability to form a genuine human connection is more prized than ever. The techniques that we've described in this report, such as making greater use of sales intelligence and committing to a buyer-first philosophy, are effective because they help to create a trusted space for these connections to form. They're supported by challenging thinking, fresh and original perspectives and a capacity for empathy and understanding. And the importance of these factors is causing diversity to emerge as a key area of competitive advantage in sales.

Today's buyers want to deal with organisations that reflect their communities. The perceived diversity of a brand or organisation is increasingly important for its right to bid – and to be considered as a supplier. As the face of an organisation, the sales team sends one of the clearest signals about its commitment to diversity.

All other things being equal, 80% of UK buyers say that they will buy from a more diverse sales organisation over one they see as less diverse, and 73% agree that their likelihood to buy from a given organisation increases when the sales team represents its community and the industry it serves. Buyers don't just seek out diversity for its own sake – they actively seek the diverse thinking that comes with it. As this report has shown, buyers don't want to deal with salespeople who all look and sound the same – or who just playback what they think the buyer wants to hear.

Sales professionals are starting to recognise the importance of diversity, with 41% agreeing that it helps them connect to a more diverse customer base and improves internal culture, and 39% agree that it leads to better ideas, more innovation and less conventional thinking. However, there is still a long way to go. Only 19% believe that their organisation has exceeded its goals on diversity. Fewer than half say that their organisation currently pursues initiatives such as creating a more inclusive culture, training managers on diversity or developing onboarding processes that can build a sense of belonging.

Many aspects of sales have been transformed over the last year. However, the task of building more diverse, inclusive sales organisations could offer the most important support of all to sustainable future growth.

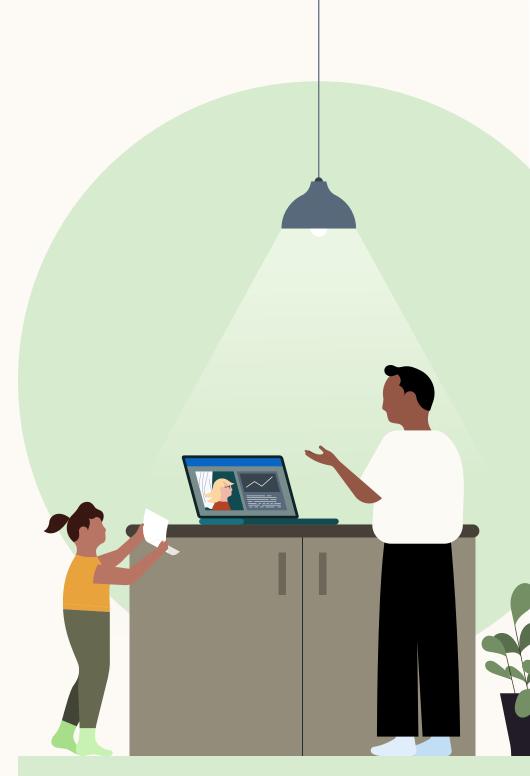


The future of sales is here

This State of Sales report confirms that the future of selling in the UK has arrived ahead of schedule. Sales technologies, techniques and tactics that once sounded futuristic are now the mainstream. It's not just that they've been adopted by sales teams. Crucially, they are now the experience of sales that buyers demand.

Research from McKinsey in October 2020 found that only between 15 and 25% of B2B buyers in the UK ever want to interact with sales professionals in-person again, even in an ideal post-pandemic world. Our research backs this up, not just by showing what buyers want to avoid – but by highlighting the aspects of the new sales that they are embracing.

Virtual selling is here to stay. This has propelled investment in sales technology forward, which has, in turn, changed the game when it comes to sales professionals' ability to understand their prospects and identify opportunities to add value. Rather than depersonalising sales, the prevalence of technology is raising the bar for the quality of sales conversations. Buyers want to be challenged through original, insightful perspectives that offer a form of value they can't find through their own remote research. This is elevating the role of the sales professional from a channel of information to a channel for inspiration and ideas.



LinkedIn Sales Solutions makes it simple to tap into the power of LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network of nearly 740 million members, empowering every salesperson to put buyers first. Our portfolio of Sales Solutions, including LinkedIn Sales Navigator and now, LinkedIn Sales Insights, 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 organisation.

Linked in Sales Solutions