

HubSpot

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# 2023 Asia-Pacific Sales Trends Report

Strategies, Data & Insights for Global Leaders



# Foreword

As sales organisations have worked through big changes in the past few years, it's been an incredible learning experience. Simon Sinek said, "We don't learn much when things go right. It's when things go wrong that we learn the most." We've built up resilience, adjusted to new ways of buying and selling, and now sales teams are focusing on building deep relationships with audiences, and prioritising how they sell over what they're selling.

In the APAC region, our [recent HubSpot survey data](#) from Australian sales leaders found that sales teams are using NPS (net promoter score) as a top sales metric. Buyers use peer recommendations and tools like G2 and Gartner to evaluate new software options more than ever, showing how important education and trust are to the buyer's journey. And sales and marketing teams need to be aligned on goals, sales enablement content, and overall strategy to drive business results.

In this report, we've got brand new data from over 1,000 global sales leaders, along with region-specific insights from leaders across APAC. We've put together a comprehensive analysis of sales trends and strategies to help you succeed in the year ahead. Inside, you'll also find ways to put the data into practice and see measurable results.



# Foreword

Individuals are doing more of their own research than ever, and the customer journey starts with the sale. Companies that find ways to integrate technology into their marketing and sales processes to answer questions, guide the user, and provide learning resources are leading the way. Recent [Forrester research found a positive impact of automated sales software](#) in the B2B selling space, since the number of interactions in the sales cycle has increased significantly over the past few years.

Digital technology is key to a seamless customer experience, since expectations for personalisation are higher than ever. This requires a solid tech stack.

When you engage with prospects and customers effectively during the sales process, you win more business and help your customers succeed. And delivering better (more human) customer experiences creates brand promoters.

I hope this report will help you lead your team confidently in 2023.



**KEVIN ACKHURST,**

Head of Sales, Japan and Asia-Pacific (APAC)



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# Introduction

## The Evolving Hybrid Sales Landscape

Sales has evolved over the past several years, perhaps more than we could have imagined in the space of two to three years. All industries have seen a shift from in-person selling and networking to virtual and hybrid strategies. Automation and technology have redefined sales efficiency, and new sales intelligence apps join the marketplace weekly. During a time of economic uncertainty and shifting budgets, efficiency is top of mind for sales leaders who are experiencing budget cuts and tighter margins.

Today, we've seen that sales managers measure productivity based on Customer Relationship Management (CRM) usage. With longer sales cycles and more relationship-building prior to closing deals, CRMs have proven critical to keeping track of prospects and meeting their needs at scale, while keeping operational costs down.

Younger generations are gaining decision-making power and growing in the sales force, and they communicate much differently than previous generations. They've grown up as digital natives, and many have never worked in an office environment. Fundamental sales strategies remain effective, but with new tweaks to fit into today's tech stack.



## New Survey Data + Insights from 1,000+ Sales Professionals

HubSpot partnered with Aircall to survey 1,000+ global sales professionals around the world to learn what sales channels and strategies are working, how sales teams can hit their targets in 2023, where to find qualified leads, and more.

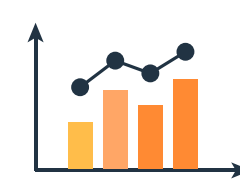
The data revealed that the buyer's journey continues to grow and change, and top sellers have adapted to meet new (higher) customer expectations. [Consumers expect hyper-localised content](#), targeted communication via a variety of multimedia touchpoints and channels, and strategic consultation at every stage. And with an exponential rise in the volume of virtual messaging, the top challenge in sales in 2023 is standing out from the competition.

With a looming recession, budgets and headcounts are shrinking across departments — buyers want to see how every decision they make will impact revenue, and want to feel confident that they will have dedicated support once they sign on with a new solution.

In this report, we'll review high-level trends in B2B and B2C sales, provide executive insights from leaders at top companies, and cover the strategies and tools that sales leaders can use in 2023 to reach their goals.

### Report Methodology

HubSpot surveyed 1,000+ sales professionals via online survey in July-August 2022 from B2B and B2C organisations in the U.S., UK, Japan, Canada, Australia, France, and Germany.





## Powerful all-in-one CRM and sales software for teams

Tools, data, and automation that help eliminate friction from the selling process and deliver business insights.

- Find new opportunities to connect with prospects
- Build trust and establish lasting relationships
- Automate administrative tasks, giving reps time to connect
- Access detailed revenue analytics and forecasting

[Explore](#)



## The phone solution for savvy sales teams

Foster productive—yet personalised—selling, at scale.

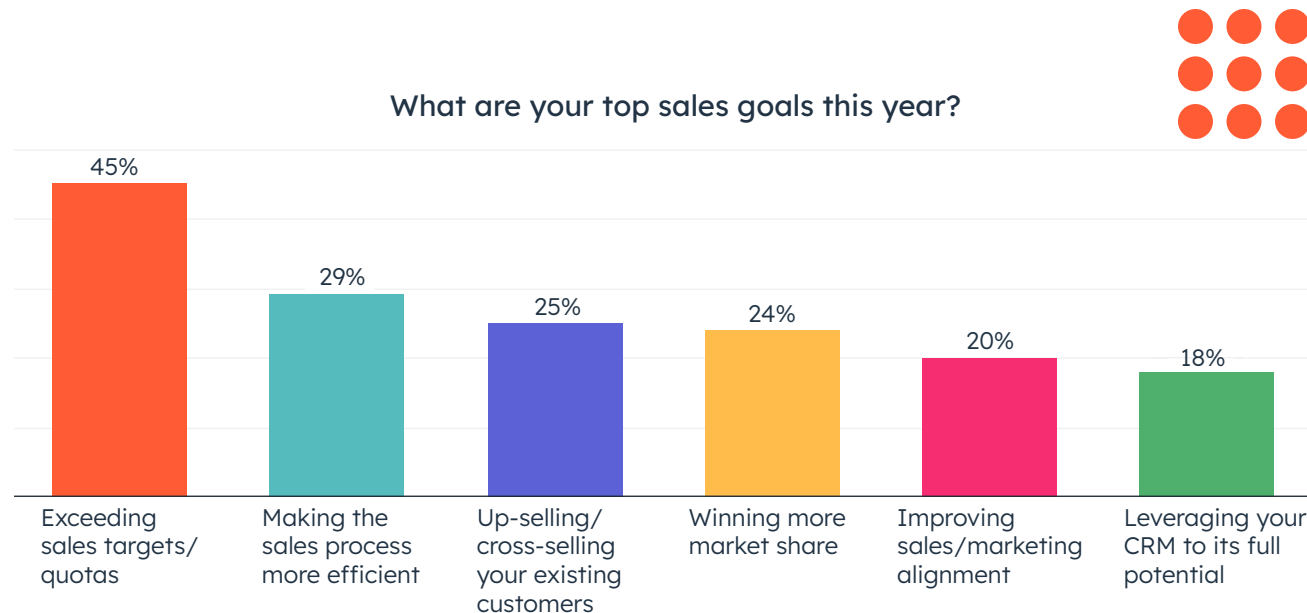
- Boost sales team productivity
- Integrate with HubSpot and other leading CRMs
- Track sales performance
- Onboard new teammates more effectively

[Try Aircall for Sales](#)

## Chapter 1:

# Top 6 Sales Goals for 2023

2021 was a surprising year for sales — following the pandemic, a global shutdown, and a complete transformation in the way that we work and live, 42% of sales professionals still managed to exceed their goals. In 2022, 41% report exceeding their goals, despite challenges like a crowded solutions landscape, fewer high-quality leads, and difficulty finding and reaching qualified prospects.



For the year ahead, the main sales goal leaders hope to achieve builds off of the momentum of the past few years — 45% of sales leaders want to exceed sales targets and quotas. But they plan to reach these goals in new ways. Sales teams are leveraging technology, focusing on demonstrating value, and building their own marketing and media channels to increase market share.

**One in four sales leaders identified their main goal for 2023 as upselling or cross-selling existing customers.** Selling to existing customers has lower acquisition costs, and happy customers can drive significant business growth when they become brand promoters.

Other high priority goals in 2023 include making the sales process more efficient, leveraging CRMs to their full potential, improving sales and marketing alignment, and winning more market share in a competitive online space. Today's sellers need to build trust in new ways, and it's harder to reach executives and decision makers with the growing majority of leaders working remotely. Technology like CRM platforms and sales intelligence tools are helping uncover new opportunities and guide more effective conversations.





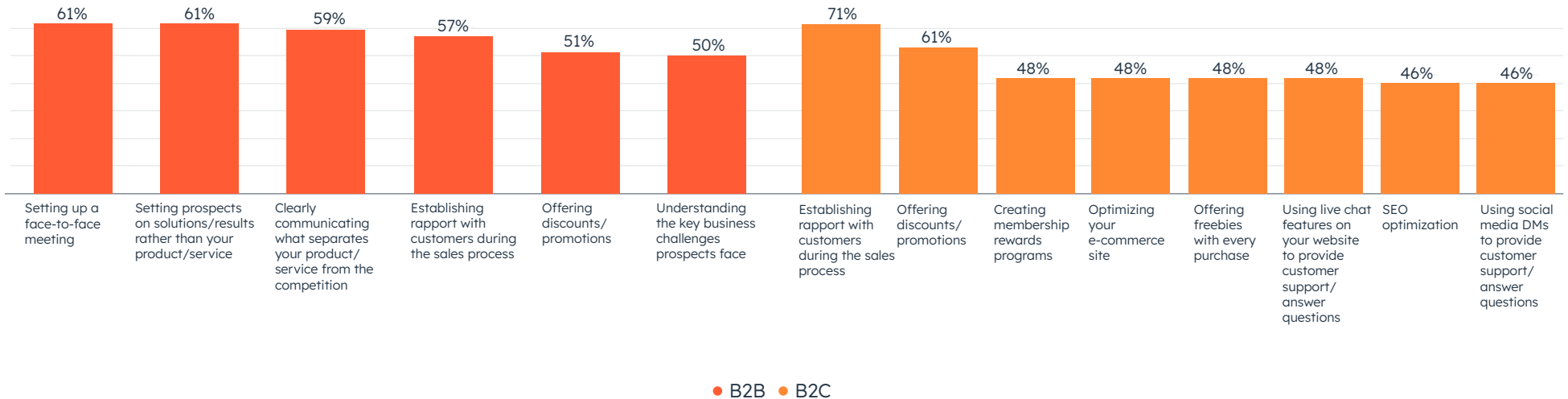
## Goal 1: Exceeding Sales Targets and Quotas

The top sales goal across B2B and B2C teams is to exceed sales targets and monthly or yearly quotas. What's changing in this area is the strategies that are successful in converting leads into customers. In 2023, expect sales tactics to become even more specialised by audience, niche, phase of the buyer's research journey, and sales intelligence information.

The ways sellers win B2B vs B2C customers differ hugely — it's critical to know your buyer, and develop a thorough understanding of their needs and challenges.

### B2B & B2C sales

Which B2B & B2C sales strategies are most effective for selling to new customers?



For B2B sellers, the most effective sales strategies for winning new customers are setting up face-to-face meetings, highlighting solutions to customer problems, and establishing competitive advantages in the market.

On the B2C side, sellers have found success establishing rapport during the sales process, offering discounts and promotions, creating membership rewards programs, and optimising their e-commerce sites.

“Treat others the way that you want to be treated and think about that all the time, whether that be a customer, or the teams that you’re working with, or the partners that you work with as well.”



**Kevin Ackhurst, Head of Sales,  
Japan & Asia Pacific, HubSpot**





## Goal 2: Making the Sales Process More Efficient

As [customer expectations rise](#), sales representatives have to add even more to their discovery checklists, which adds time and administrative tasks to their daily schedule. Almost one third (29%) of sales professionals' top goal for 2023 is to make their sales process more efficient. And the most popular tools to improve sales efficiency are Troops, Zoho, LeadIQ, LinkedIn Sales Navigator, and the HubSpot CRM.

More than one in five sales professionals reports that the **top reason prospects back out of deals is the length of the sales process**, so any steps to speed up approvals and timelines helps you stand out and increases the likelihood of closing the deal.

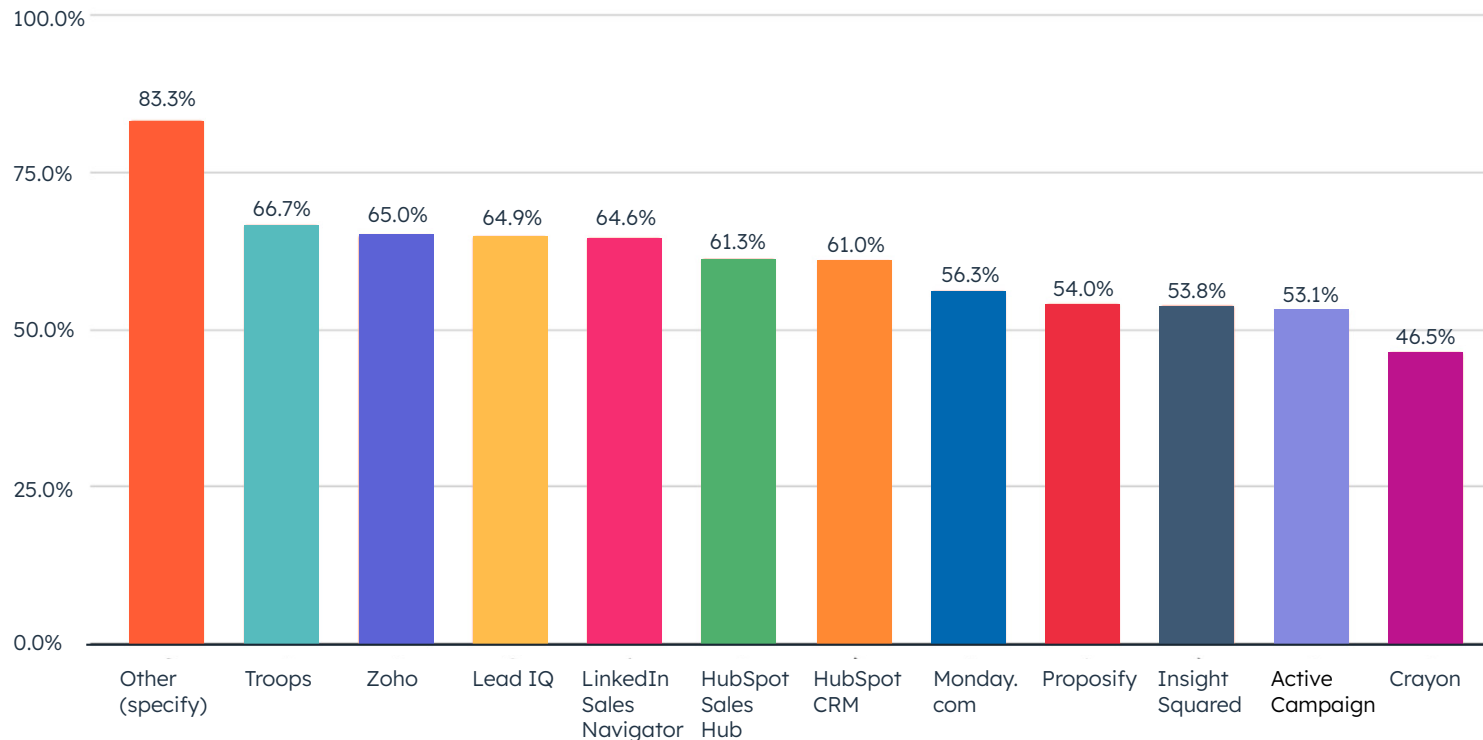
**Almost one-third of sales professionals' top goal for 2023 is to make their sales process more efficient.**

“Things like email templates, call recording functionality, and calendar management links are new features that are taking sales productivity to the next level.”



**[Dean Moothart, Director of Client Solutions, LeadG2](#)**

## Which of the tools you use helps you the most with productivity?



### Goal 3: Prioritising Existing Customers

More than three-quarters of sales professionals (76%) report that 10%+ of their company revenue comes from upselling. And 68% say that 10%+ of total company revenue comes from cross-selling. Prioritising existing customers impacts both direct revenue on upsells and cross-sells, and also influenced revenue.

The three most effective opportunities for upselling existing customers are:

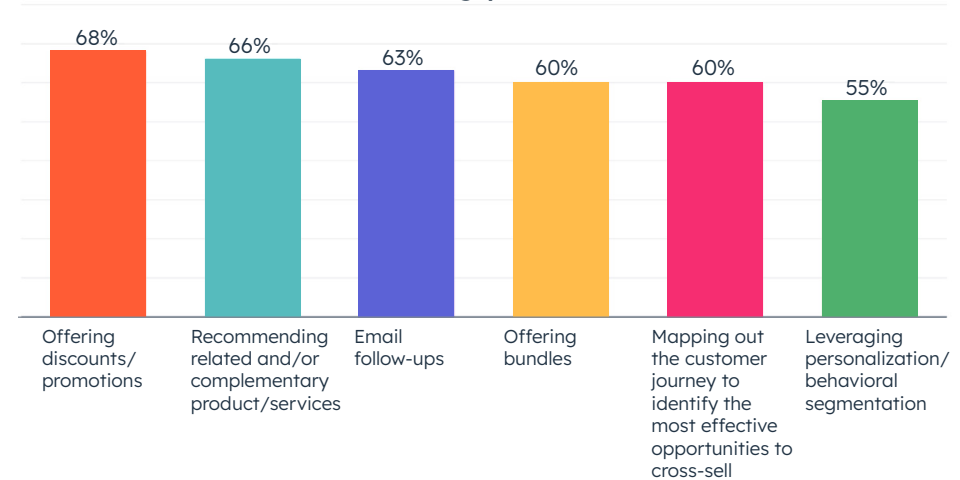
- 01 After successfully meeting your customer's goals
- 02 When you've identified issues with your customer's strategy that your service or product can help solve
- 03 When you are setting goals with your customer

## Upselling and Cross-Selling Strategies for Existing Customers

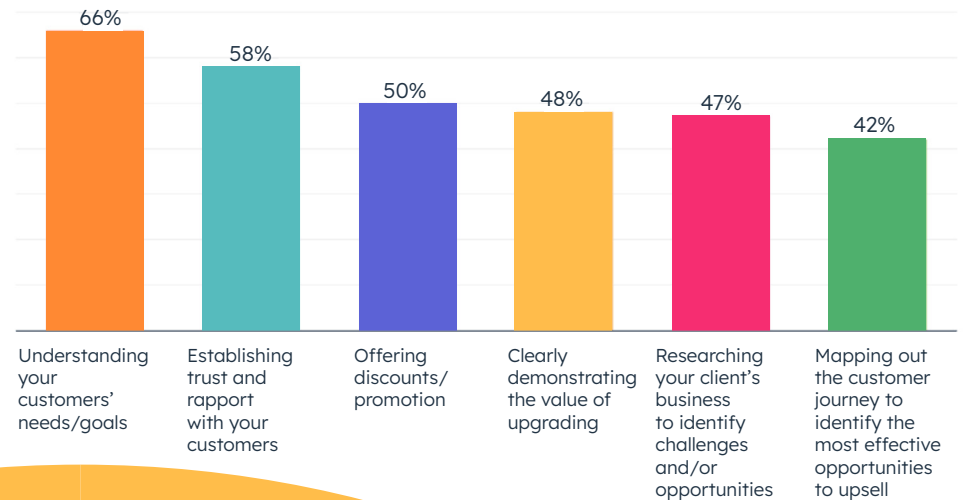
Upselling and cross-selling requires a deep understanding of your customers, their goals, and their actions, as well as strong cross-functional partnerships with marketing and customer service. People give business to people they trust and enjoy working with, and they have more choices than ever before.

In the [LinkedIn Global State of Sales Report](#), almost half (46%) of sales representatives said their biggest challenge was incomplete data. Upselling and cross-selling rely on accurate data and automation, which support an exceptional customer experience. Without a foundation of a solid relationship with your customers, discounts and promotions, which are the most effective sales strategies for existing B2B and B2C customers, will only go so far and last so long.

What are the most effective strategies for cross-selling your customers?



What are the most effective strategies for up-selling your customers?

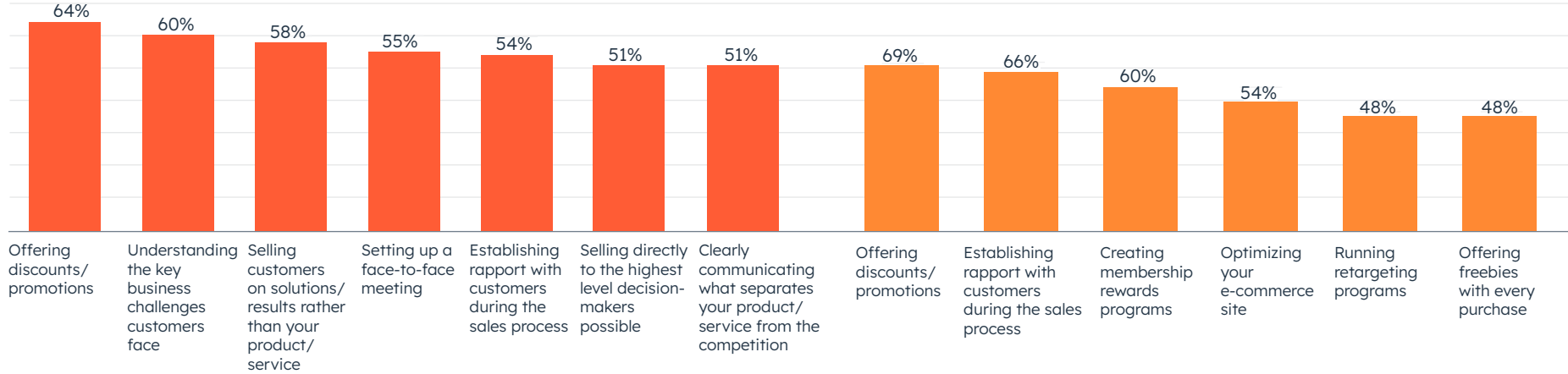


Using sales intelligence tools, understanding industry trends and nuances, and providing thoughtful suggestions to help customers hit their goals are some of the top ways sales teams are adding value and successfully selling to current B2B and B2C customers.


### B2B & B2C sales

Which B2B & B2C sales strategies are most effective for selling to existing customers?

● B2B ● B2C



“When it comes to B2B sales, there are multiple decision makers at the table. And these decision makers have done their research online before ever jumping onto that first demo. Competitive intelligence solutions are enabling sales teams and giving them insights in real time so they can confidently know when to say, ‘Only with my solution can you get...’ And that’s what wins more deals,”



**John Judge, SVP of Sales at Crayon.**





## Goal 4: Winning More Market Share

Six in 10 sales leaders feel that having dedicated sales enablement support is ‘very important’ or ‘extremely important’ to making sales. And salespeople at companies with dedicated enablement teams perform better and are more likely to exceed their goals.

When sales enablement and marketing teams establish a wider presence in the market, it makes it easier for sales teams to close deals and focus on customer challenges, rather than having to start from square one with laying a foundation of trust and brand recognition.

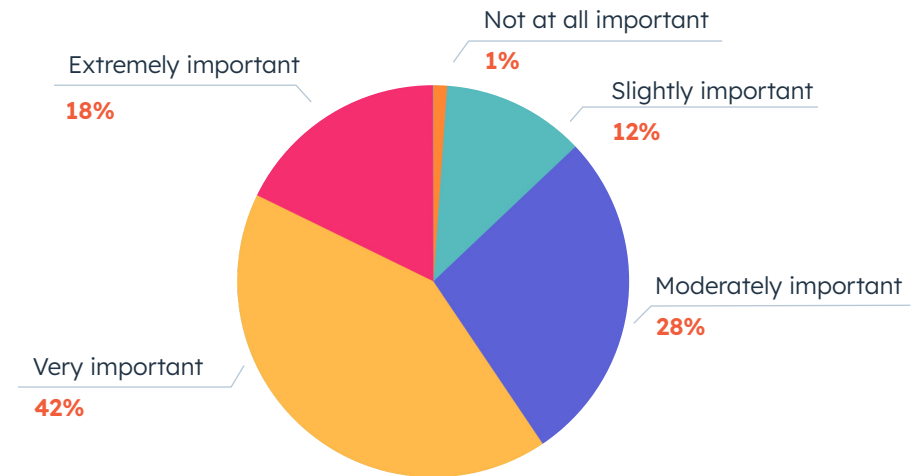
In 2023, sales enablement teams should focus on creating and generating:

- Product demos based on use cases
- Up-to-date customer testimonials and case studies
- Reviews
- Current market research reports
- Shareable social media content

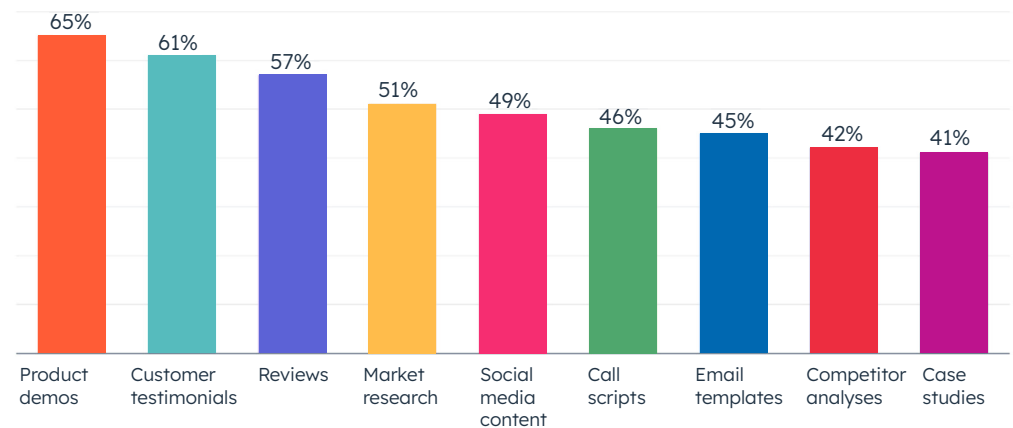
Other ways that sales teams are winning more market share are offering discounts and promotions with industry partners, and down-selling to capture leads at an earlier growth stage than the ideal target audience.

## Sales Enablement is Key to Sales Success

How important is sales enablement content to making a sale?



What types of sales enablement content is most effective at helping salespeople win deals?





## The importance of cross-functional partnerships to growth

“Think about how to align the whole go-to-market (GTM) team. As we evaluated our existing regional team structure and looked at changes, our goals were: clear swimlanes to ensure both individual and team impact, alignment with HubSpot’s core central teams and 2023 strategy, clear paths for career growth, and breaking out of our silos with a cross-functional model across the APAC team.”

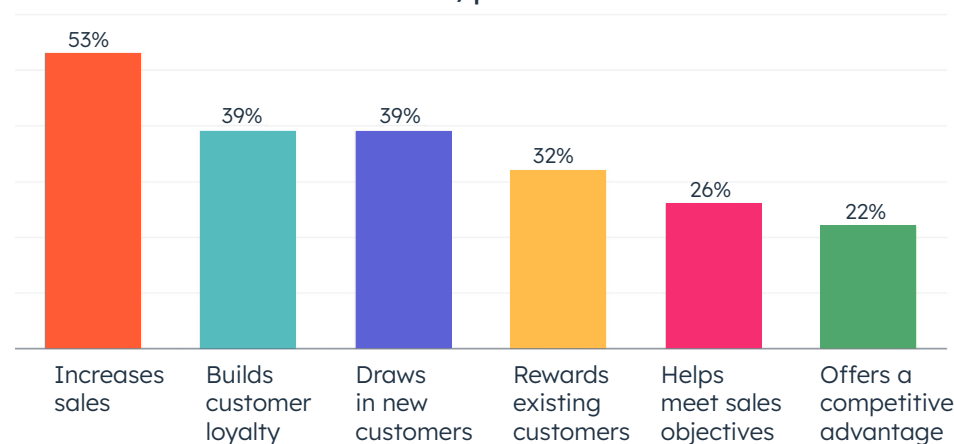


**Kat Warboys, Marketing Director, APAC, HubSpot**

**Try the HubSpot Academy Sales Enablement Training Course + Get Certified in Sales Enablement**

## Partner Discounts + Down-Selling Increase Market Share

What are the biggest benefits of offering discounts/promotions?



Which down-selling strategies are most effective?





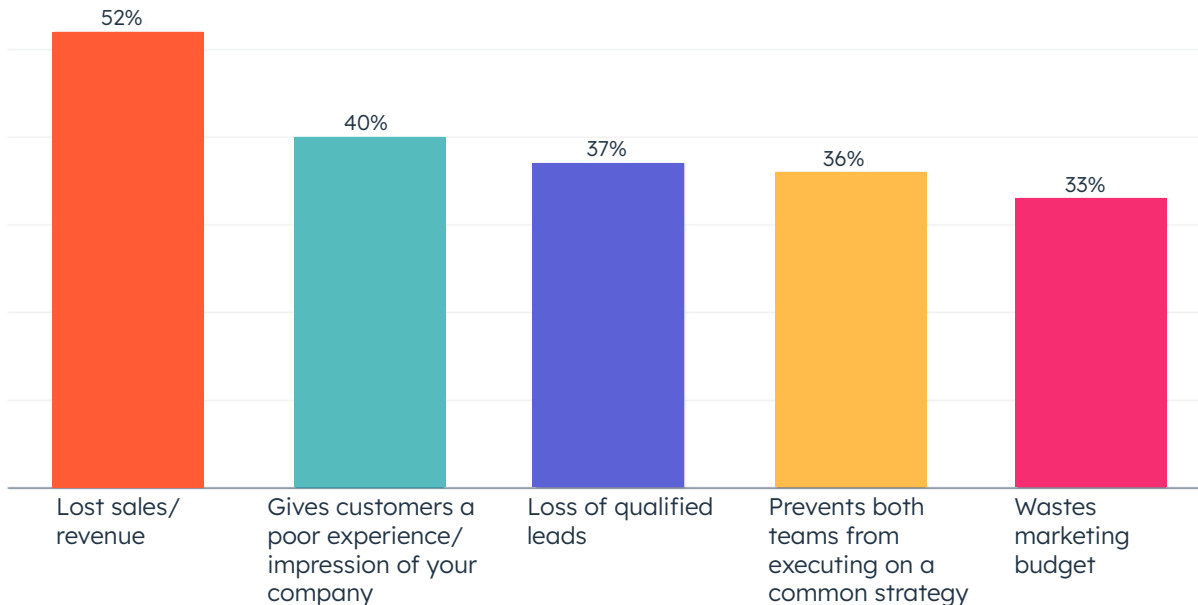


## Goal 5: Improving Sales + Marketing Alignment

When sales and marketing teams are misaligned, it leads to missed sales and revenue, lost qualified leads, and a poor impression of the company as a whole. More than half of sales leaders (52%) say that misaligned sales and marketing teams have cost them revenue, and more than one-third (36%) report that it prevents both teams from succeeding. A third of sales leaders (33%) also find that when sales and marketing aren't aligned it wastes marketing budget.

**In 2023, one in five sales professionals feels that sales and marketing teams aren't very aligned or not aligned at all.**

What are the biggest impacts of sales and marketing teams being misaligned?

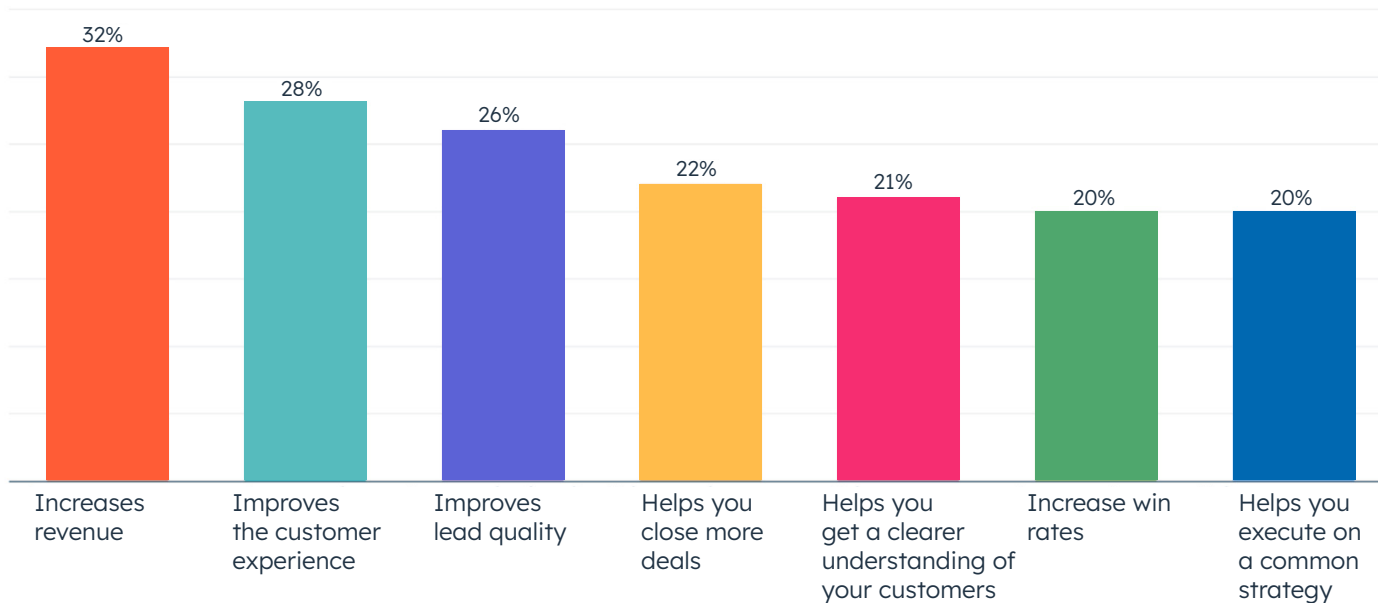


When sales and marketing teams are aligned, it

- a) Increases revenue
- b) Improves the customer experience,
- c) Increases lead quality, and
- d) Helps teams close more deals, along with more benefits to both teams.



What are the biggest benefits of sales and marketing teams being aligned?



## How Sales and Marketing Teams Can Work Better, Together

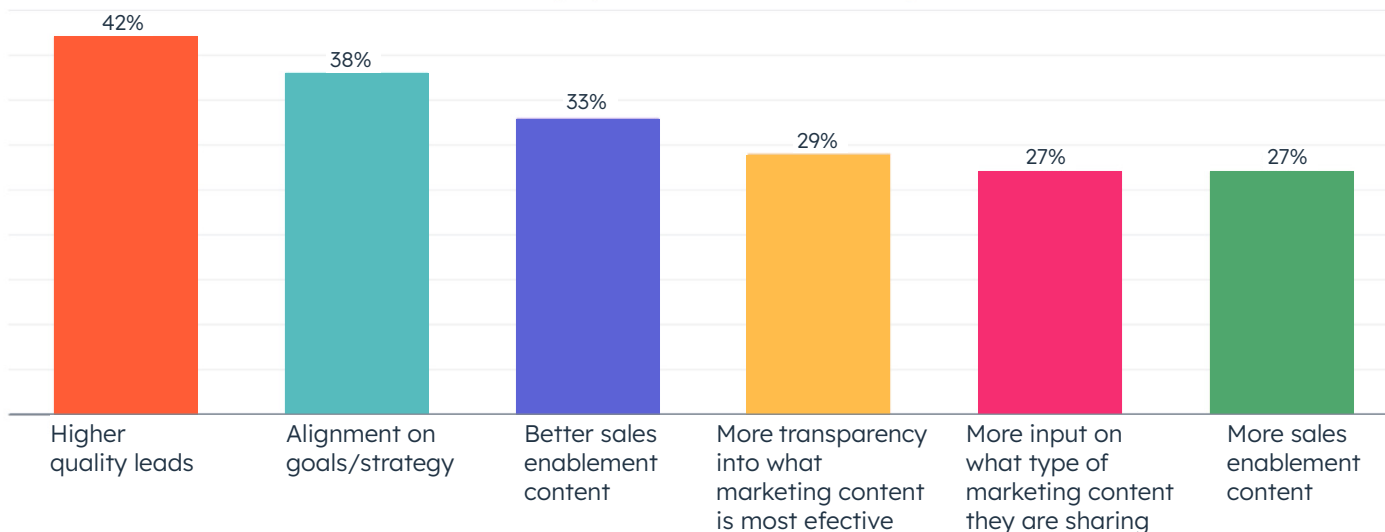
When marketing and sales teams aren't on the same page, it wastes budget, and creates frustration for both sides. For example, if marketing spends a quarter of their budget on a campaign that generates low-quality leads, everyone suffers — sales representatives spend time calling unqualified prospects, the marketing team sees low engagement, and no one hits their targets.

When these teams work together, they can help each other grow better. The biggest barriers to sales and marketing alignment, from a sales perspective, are:

- 01 Lack of effective communication between teams (38%)
- 02 Lack of alignment on goals/strategies (30%)
- 03 Lack of input from sales on marketing content (27%)
- 04 Sales and marketing teams use different tools (26%)
- 05 Difficulty sharing data between sales and marketing teams (26%)

The first step towards bringing sales and marketing together is establishing one source of truth in terms of contact profiles and data. When teams can accurately track the success of marketing initiatives all the way down to sales and brand ambassadors, they can more confidently report on ROI and make informed decisions about marketing campaigns.

What do salespeople need most from their marketing teams?



## Hear from Sales & Marketing Leaders

“It’s important to align your marketing sales teams around a single source of truth, which of course, should be your CRM and how we can use tools within the CRM to automate parts of the process that will enable sales in either sales acceleration or in sales productivity”



**Kat Warboys, Marketing Director, APAC, HubSpot**

“Sales and marketing are two sides of the same coin. One cannot exist without the other. Together, they create a powerful force that drives revenue and growth for the company. By aligning strategies and efforts, sales and marketing can work together to target and engage potential customers, boosts lead quality, resulting in higher opportunity conversion rates.”

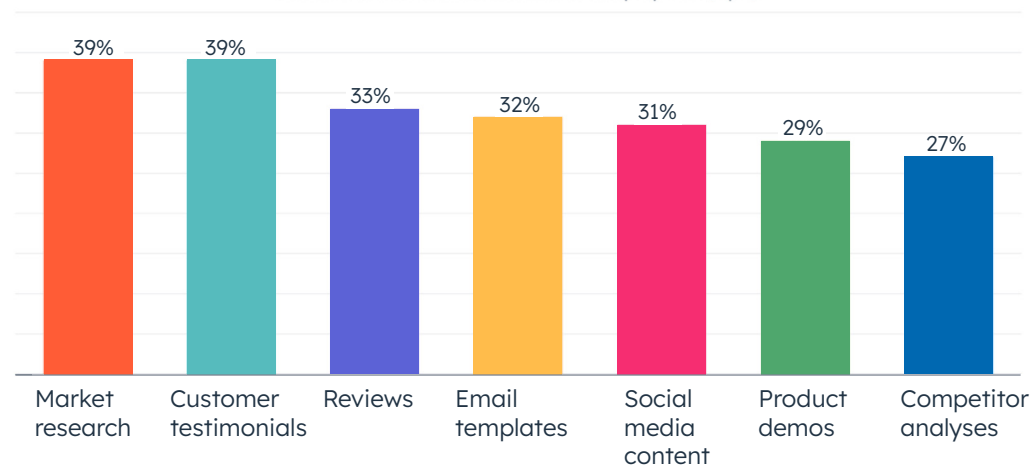


**Fred Viet, VP of APAC, Aircall APAC, HubSpot**

## Sales Enablement Content to Create & Generate in 2023

- 01 Market research reports
- 02 Customer testimonials & case studies
- 03 Reviews
- 04 Email templates
- 05 Social media content
- 06 Product demos
- 07 Competitor analysis

What kinds of sales enablement content do sales reps use?





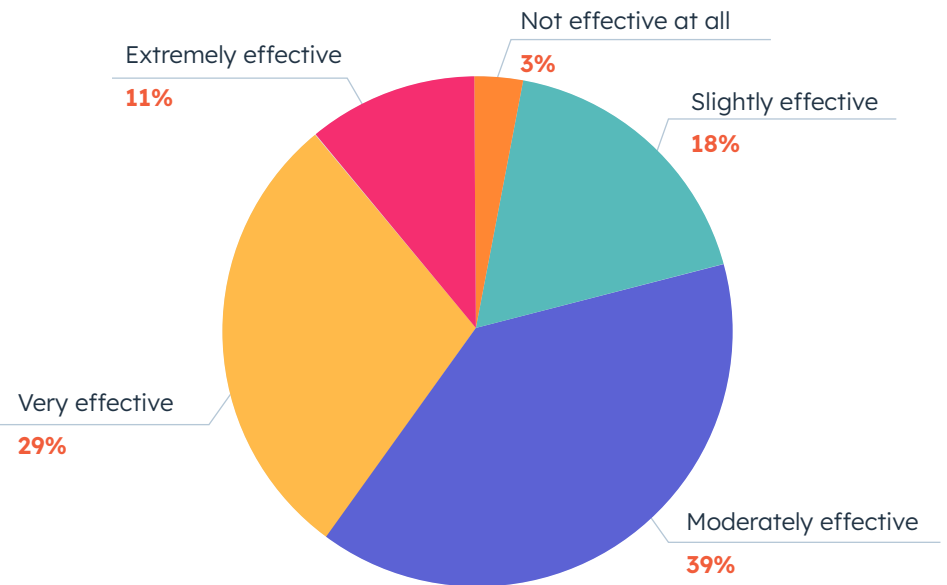
## Goal 6: Leveraging Your CRM to Its Fullest Potential

Two of the top five obstacles to sales and marketing alignment are a) having different tools, and 2) difficulty sharing data between teams. For teams hoping to better leverage their CRM, the first step is to make sure it's connected to your marketing and revenue optimisation tools. The more teams using a shared data source and contact management system, the more connected the user experience is.

Another underrated consideration is supporting the tools your teams actually use. Regularly analyse user data in the sales tools that you invest in to find out what the top performers use the most and which tools are connected to the highest revenue customers. Survey sales teams to learn what tools they are using to help them find new prospects, do research, conduct outreach, follow up with leads, and manage their pipeline — and if any of these tools are outside of your team's tech stack, find a replacement that integrates with your systems.

**40%** of sales professionals feel that their CRM is 'very effective' or 'extremely effective' at improving sales + marketing alignment.

How effective is your CRM at improving sales/marketing alignment?



“To get the full benefit of your tech stack, it has to feel natural to lean on it. If half of your marketing, sales, and service teams don’t leverage these tools, then the data isn’t accurate and the ROI can’t be properly measured.”



**Tracey Quinn, Associate Inbound Growth Specialist, HubSpot**

### What are the biggest benefits of using a CRM in your sales process?



## Chapter 2:

# APAC Sales Trends + Opportunities

The APAC region has seen great momentum in both the B2B and B2C sectors in recent years.

**96%** of sales leaders in Australia report that they've maintained or improved their average deal size from 2021 to 2022.

But with this new growth, customer demands and business intelligence requirements are higher than ever, and sales teams are changing how they operate.

Successful sales organisations are relying more on automated tools, business intelligence, buying signals, texting and messaging, and social selling. In the APAC area, expect to see more hybrid and remote selling, a focus on upselling and cross-selling, frequent, personalised outreach throughout the buying process, and a boom in emerging channels like using WhatsApp for sales in 2023.

“Today, consumers expect brand experiences to be highly personalised, delivered via the channels they prefer, and to receive real-time answers.



Kat Warboys, Marketing Director, APAC at HubSpot.



Reviewing the latest APAC research, and gathering insights from leaders across the region, here are the top trends for sales teams to know:

- 📈 APAC prioritises NPS as a top sales metric more than the global average
- 📈 Texting and messaging are growing as effective sales channels, and there are massive opportunities in this region
- 📈 **57% of Singaporeans report that they have increased purchases from their mobile phones for both personal and business use**
- 📈 **61% of Singaporeans prefer to use WhatsApp to reach out about a product or service over other messaging and chat platforms**
- 📈 Leaders in Singapore + Australia are facing challenges to growth due to increasing business intelligence requirements
- 📈 Recent Forrester data found a positive impact of automated sales software in light of a huge increase in the number of interactions in the sales cycle
- 📈 User-directed buying interactions have surpassed human interactions in the B2B buying process
- 📈 4 in 10 Singaporeans report that they would spend 20%+ more on a brand with conversational messaging capabilities
- 📈 **72% of sales managers believe that they will need to complete a sales transformation over the next three years to continue scaling during uncertain economic conditions**

“The pandemic changed buying and selling behavior permanently across Southeast Asia. Both buyers and sellers turned to the internet as a result of the quick shift to remote and hybrid work. A 2020 report by McKinsey revealed that 70-80% decision makers prefer remote human interaction or digital service in terms of sales process.

Instead of spamming prospects with irrelevant mass emails, the most effective salespeople will use Sales tech tools to gain a thorough understanding of the buyer and use these insights for contextual communication and developing human-to-human connections. Buyers enter a sales process when they are at 60% of their decision process - a targeted and tailored approach is necessary for success.”



**Romka Walkowiak, Sales Director for Southeast Asia, HubSpot**



Here's a breakdown of the key sales trends and opportunities for the APAC market.

## APAC is Leading with Personalised Hybrid & Remote Selling

Compared to the global average, sales teams in Australia are more likely to embrace hybrid sales.

**(55% in Australia vs. 50% globally) and remote selling (25% vs. 17% globally). And in this region, nearly 4 in 10 (39%) report that they're performing better than their sales goals.**

In Southeast Asia as a whole, [marketing and sales strategist Andrew Tran predicts a mobile-first strategy for sales](#), along with more alignment with marketing, and making it easier for buyers to get in touch with sales.

Since user-directed buying interactions have surpassed human interactions, sales reps will need to make live calls and video interactions count. Invest in engaging sales enablement content, and experiment with making it public-facing — then, coach your sales teams on walking prospects through these enablement tools, like market research reports and calculators.

The most effective types of sales enablement content for winning deals, according to Australian sales leaders, are:

- 01 Email templates
- 02 Customer testimonials
- 03 Social media content
- 04 Reviews & product demos
- 05 Ebooks

**Explore your free sales plan template from HubSpot + Aircall here**

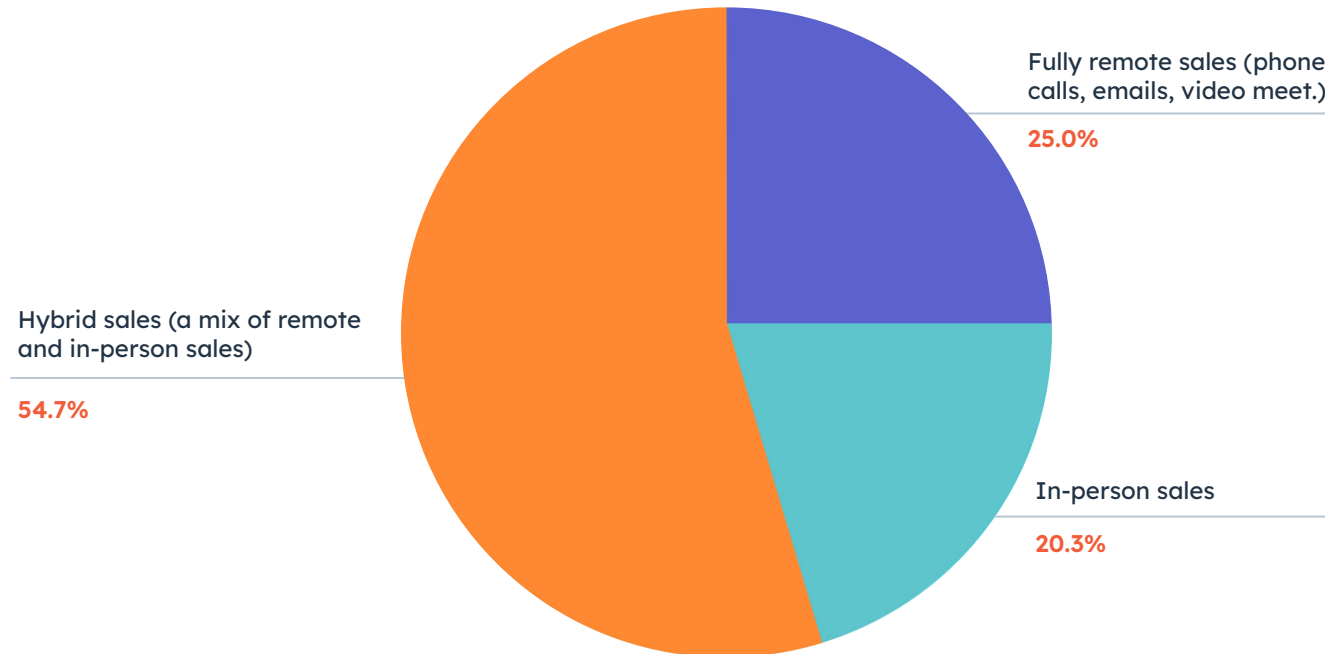
In Singapore, marketing leaders feel that sales enablement is one of the top marketing channels that local teams should own, since sales strategies vary so much by region.

“In Singapore, the tech market is exploding, and local leaders want access to use their company brand as a lever for growth and a channel that they have control over.”



**Kat Warboys, HubSpot's APAC Marketing Director.**

Which model will your sales rep follow this year? (Australia only)



## Cross-selling + Upselling are Key Sales Goals for 2023 in Australia — In Southeast Asia, Localised Sales Tactics are Top of Mind

The top goals for sales teams in Australia in 2023 are:



Exceeding sales targets/quotas



Upselling and cross-selling existing customers



Making the sales process more efficient

Sales teams in APAC are using intelligent sales, marketing, and customer service software that gives them rich insights into which customers might be ready to expand their services or explore upgrades. In [Southeast Asia, recent consumer research shows promise for continued growth in the region, along with new expectations](#) for the sales process. Consumers expect an integrated, omnichannel experience. Social media videos are the fastest-growing way to discover new brands, and over

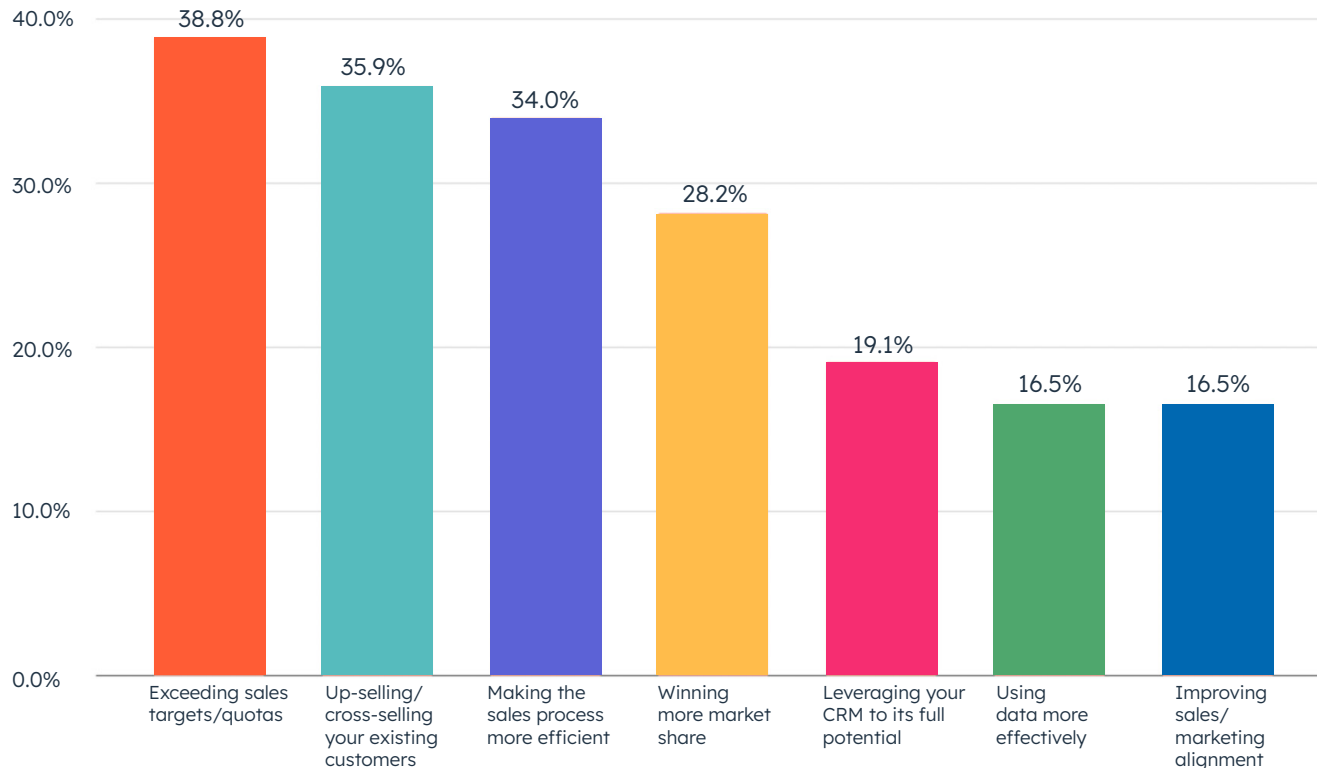
**50% of respondents in Southeast Asia report changing brands in the past 3 months, seeking more value for what they purchase.**

A [Top 100 Retailers in Asia report](#) says a well-executed, localised approach gives retailers and manufacturers a longer-term competitive edge.

More than half (53%) of Australian companies surveyed report that existing customers represent more than 50% of their revenue. And since one third (33%) of salespeople say that making sales has become harder in the past year, sales and marketing teams need to find ways to re-engage their customer base and turn happy customers into brand promoters.

Australian sales leaders say that the #1 opportunity to upsell existing customers is when you've identified issues with your customer's strategy your product or service can help address.

### Top Sales Goals in Australia





## Sales Tip

In Australia, sales leaders report that the most effective cross-selling strategies are following up via email, recommending related products and services, and using promotions. Recent [research in South Asia on digital marketing influence on B2B sales](#) also found that “inbound marketing shows a very important part in bringing the sale numbers as the content gets leads and leads contribute to sales,” and that “sales are greatly influenced by digital media.”

Additionally, this research study revealed that while overall, strategies are similar across South Asia, the effects vary, so sales and marketing teams should localise B2B strategies in different markets.

### **Sales Teams in Australia and Southeast Asia are Relying on Email, Phone, and Messaging to Reach Prospects**

The sales process is only becoming more and more personalised as buyers become more informed. Sales calls turn into consultations, and demos are part of an ongoing effort to find exactly the right investment that will help your prospect solve their problems. The most effective sales channels in Australia are in-person meetings, video calls, and social media — but sales teams are predominantly using email and phone calls.

“One of the best tools and knowledge that sales representatives can have is accurate data, that can help build strategic decisions, highlight areas of growth, and identify new streams of revenue that could be untouched. Upselling and cross-selling as a sales team rely on having accurate data which can help build a true story of your customer experience. Without strong and accurate data businesses aren’t able to build an effective sales strategy for their existing and potential net new customers. When the data isn’t accurate, the ROI can’t be properly measured.”



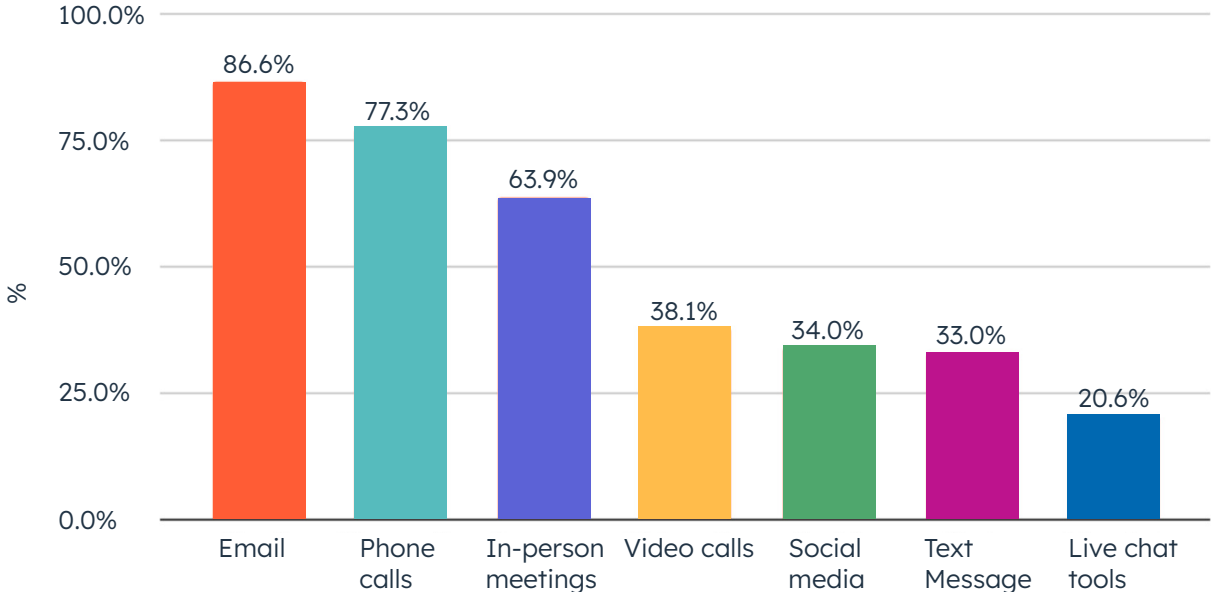
[Hugo Mas, Sales Director, Asia, Aircall](#)

**In Southeast Asia, 63% of consumers report using business messaging apps to connect with brands — why? Convenience, and ease of communication.**

Evaluate what strategies you're using versus which ones work. It might be time for a complete sales transformation in your strategies, tools, training + onboarding, and overall sales culture. Establish an environment of personal accountability and helping sales reps find what type of communication works best for their prospects and customers.

### Remote Selling Tips

Top Sales Channels (Australia only)



“Staying connected to our customers is extremely important because ultimately we’re a relationship driven business. It’s very important for us to make sure we’re providing a great experience for them even before they become a customer all the way through to scaling the business and growing with us.”



**Thomas Jeng, Head of Sales, Aspire App**

“It is all about the personal outreach and the extra effort you put into it as a sales executive. It takes on average 10-11 personal touches for a response. Utilising a strong CRM system with an integrated phone system identifies customers who are hot. Outreach tools and data scraping platforms can aid in contact acquisitions. Having a hunting mentality is critical because there are always businesses out there that need your product and service, but sometimes that extra effort really pays dividends.”



**Ellis Mitchell, XDR (BDR + SDR) Manager APAC, Aircall**

## **In-Person Meetings, Video Calls, and Emerging Channels like Text Messaging are Leading APAC Sales Teams to Success**

Emerging sales strategies like video calls, social media selling, live chat, and text messaging are scalable, low-cost ways to meet prospects where they already are online.

**There are 4B+ mobile phone connections in Asia-Pacific vs 1B+ in the Americas, and WhatsApp alone has over 2B monthly active users.**

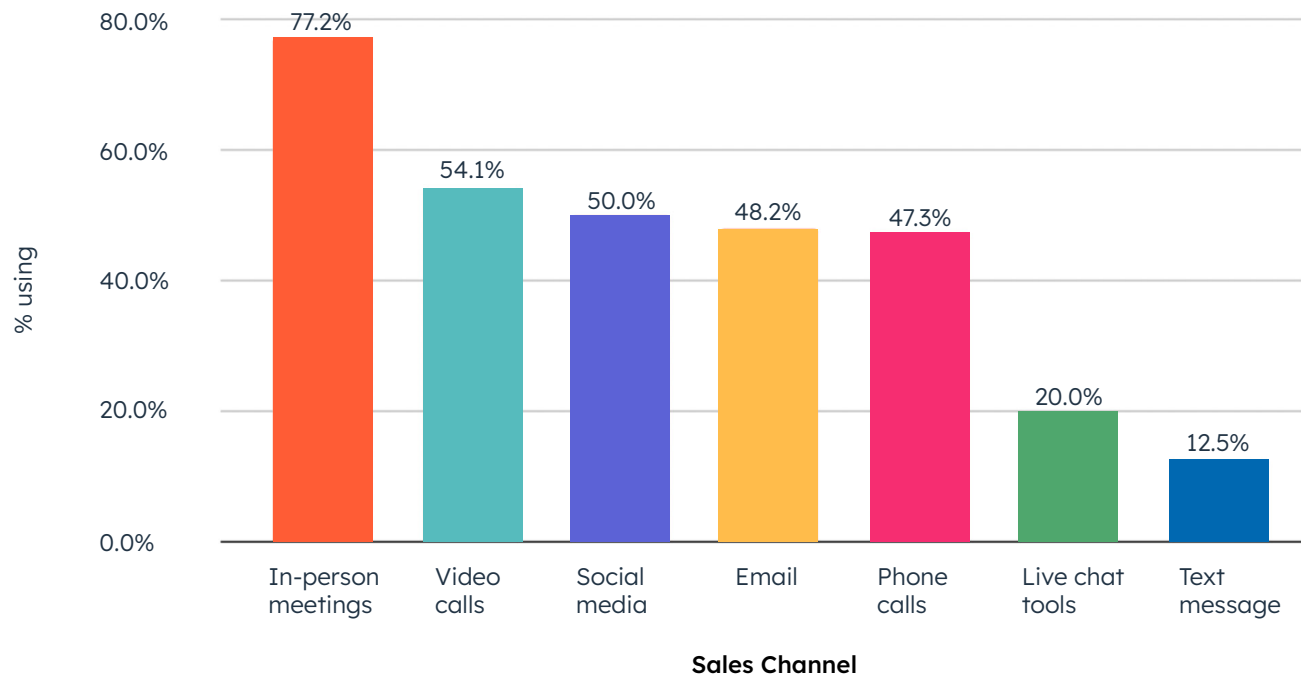
The way that people communicate is changing yet again, and savvy companies are trying text messaging for initial outreach, follow-up, and ongoing communication. Plus — now, sales reps can [automate WhatsApp messages right through HubSpot](#).

“We are fortunate as salespeople to have multiple channels to engage with prospects and customers. And while call and email are likely to remain the primary channels, the desire for personalisation and convenience will likely lead to further acceptance of SMS, chat, video and social networks as ‘professional’ channels. In 2023, the winning teams will be those who utilise data to determine the most effective channels for their business and who master an omnichannel sales experience.



**Ellis Mitchell, XDR (BDR + SDR) Manager APAC, Aircall**

Most Effective Sales Channels (Australia only)



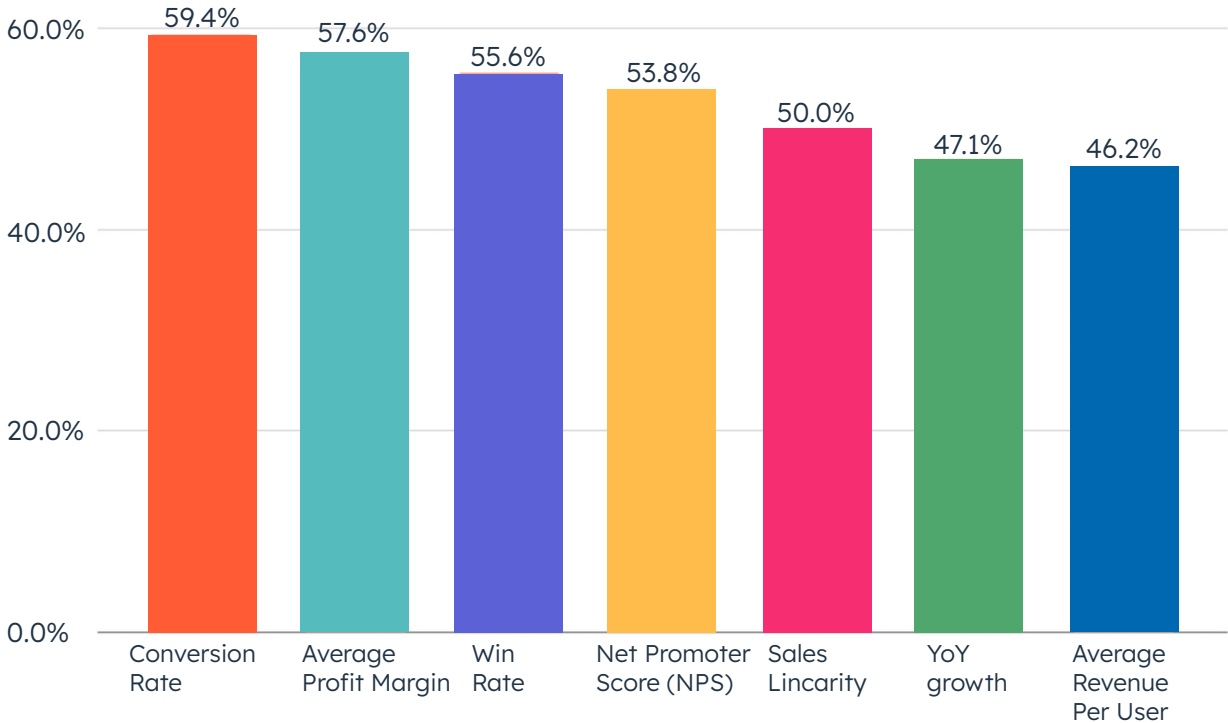
Try the new WhatsApp Business Integration with HubSpot →



# Sales Teams in the APAC Region Care About the Prospect Experience — They're More Likely to Prioritise Net Promotor Score

Net promoter score (NPS) is a measure of customer satisfaction, and sales teams in Australia scored it as an important sales metric versus the global average, where NPS didn't appear in the top seven. Sales is an ongoing effort, and the sales cycle can last a year, or longer. When sales and marketing teams invest in strong outreach and ongoing nurturing, as well as dedicated customer support, they create brand promoters who fuel the business flywheel.

Top 7 most important sales metrics to track (Australia only)



## Chapter 3:

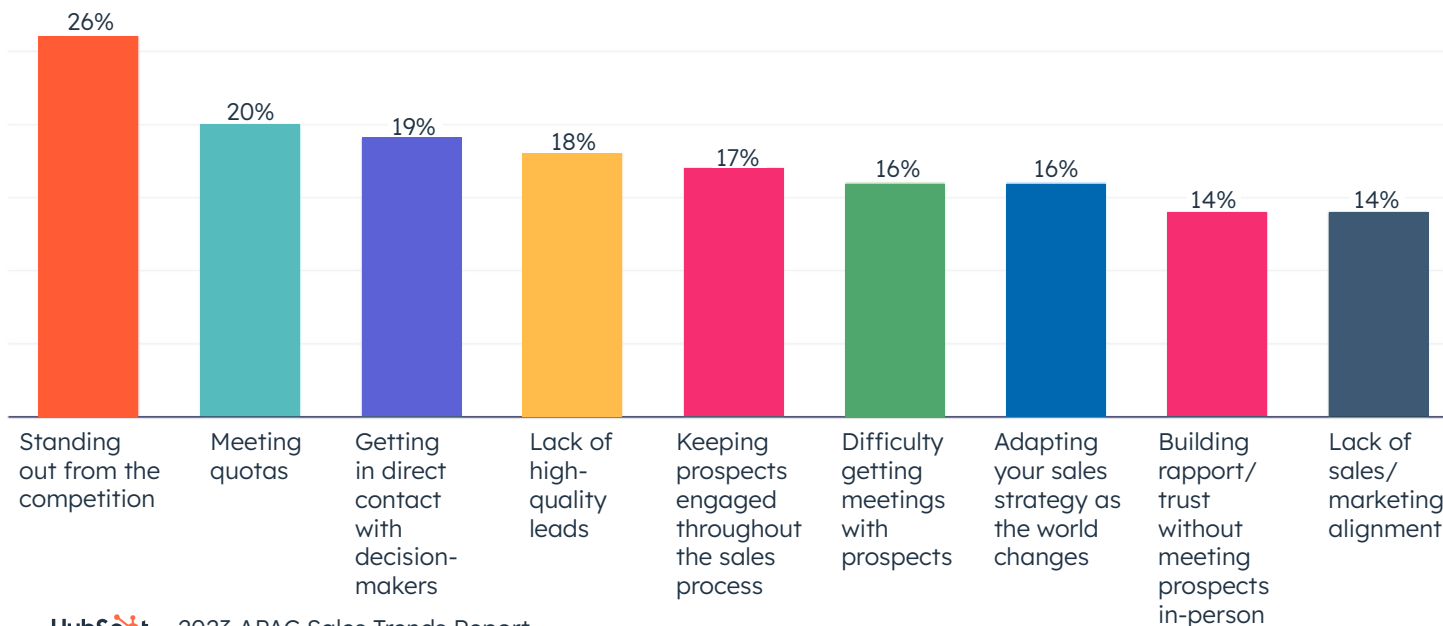
# Top Sales Challenges (and Tips to Solve Them)

In 2022, the top sales challenge is standing out from the competition. Other top challenges include meeting quotas, getting in touch with decision makers, and lead quality. For sales managers, consider your team quotas for 2023, and how frequently you revisit them. Due to market shifts, the same expectations from previous years may be harder to hit this year.

To address sales challenges like finding quality leads, getting in touch with decision makers, keeping prospects engaged, and building rapport, salespeople should consider building out a personal branding strategy. The #1 channel for getting in touch with decision makers is LinkedIn, making it a great place to share useful content about the industry. [Video content is one of the most popular forms of marketing](#), and sees great engagement on LinkedIn, Facebook, and YouTube. When prospects develop a relationship with you via social media first, they're more likely to feel ready to purchase from you when the time is right.



What are the biggest challenges salespeople face with the sales process?





## Challenge 1: Standing Out From the Competition

To stand out against the competition, prepare to exceed prospects' expectations at every interaction. The standard for SaaS companies today is personalised email marketing, [educational content and events](#), and experienced reps available for in-depth exploratory calls. So in order to rise above the crowd, you need to be one step ahead of the already high standards in helpful, inbound selling.

- 01** Read user guides or use tutorials to learn your CRM and sales software inside and out.
- 02** Gather sales enablement materials like industry-specific demos, case studies, reviews, testimonials, and analytics tools or reports.
- 03** Keep up with industry news, trends, and reports to help prospects guide strategy and show the potential ROI to their supervisors or other decision makers.
- 04** Set up alerts and automation to help you follow up with prospects at the right time and provide valuable resources.

“With the sheer number of competitors offering any specific SaaS solution, running a strong sales process is more important than ever. When sales reps push for a close, without having executive buy-in and a clear ROI, more deals will be lost to ‘no decision’ and timelines will push.”



**Jayme Manos, Senior Manager,  
Enterprise Sales, HubSpot**

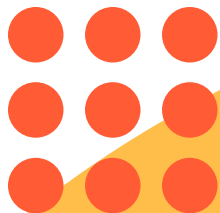




## Challenge 2: Meeting Quotas

Setting and meeting sales quotas in 2023 will both be harder than in previous years. Nearly [three-quarters of major advertisers report that the economic downturn is impacting their 2023 budget decisions](#), and 30% are cutting ad budgets. Using this as a preview of the marketing space at large, salespeople should expect prospects to be careful with their spend and deeply consider purchases in the coming year.

To meet quotas and convert leads, **the most effective strategy sales representatives can use is making phone calls** — both for those selling remotely, and overall. Two thirds of salespeople also use discounts and promotions, and more than half report that they increase sales. The most popular promotion among sellers is bundling a suite of products, followed by free trials.



## Hear from Sales Leaders

“To make sure I meet and exceed my monthly quota, I take the time to understand the prospect’s timeline and if there are any hidden parts of the process (this usually includes the legal team or other stakeholders), so I can plan and get ahead of it. Beyond that, I always make sure my calendar is as open as possible so I’m available to hop on calls and can reply to client emails as quickly as possible so they have the answers they need to make decisions. Finally, I make sure to only take meetings with prospects and clients that I think are most likely to find value from Aircall.”



**[Elizabeth Beggs,](#)**  
**[Strategic Account Executive, Aircall](#)**

“A solid sales trend I see in 2023 is the utilisation of a multi-touch connection process that absolutely includes a ‘warm call’ on the telephone that can be a first step in starting a sales conversation.”

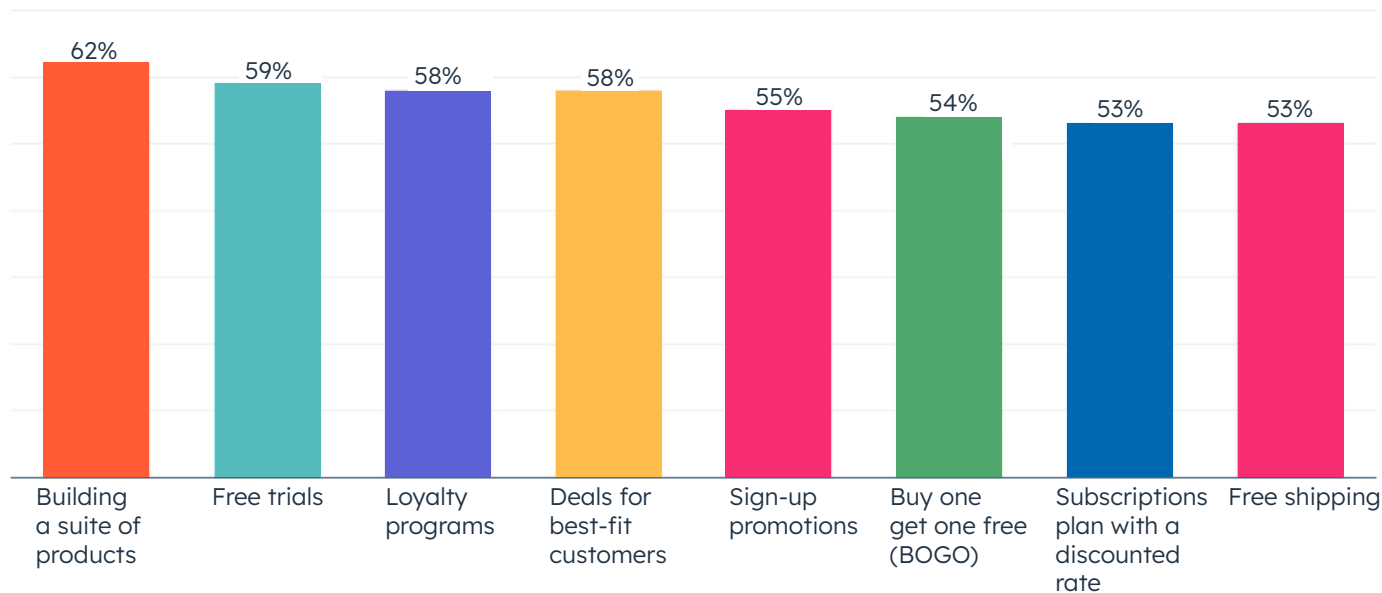


**Dan Tyre, Sales Director, HubSpot**

★ **Leadership tip:**

16% of salespeople believe that **unrealistic quotas are one of the top reasons for turnover in sales roles**. Regularly evaluate your team quotas and check in with reps on how they’re feeling ahead of the end of month or end of quarter.

What are the most effective discounts/promotions for converting new customers?





### Challenge 3: Getting in Direct Contact with Decision-Makers

In 2023, 67% of sales representatives will work under a hybrid or fully remote basis, and globally, almost [70% of professionals work remotely](#). Industry events have largely shifted to virtual and hybrid formats, and many leaders and decision makers have physically moved to new locations farther away from their HQ.

If they're not already, salespeople need to get comfortable with virtual networking and establishing their own presence on social media. Almost **three quarters of sales professionals say that LinkedIn is the most effective platform** for researching prospects.

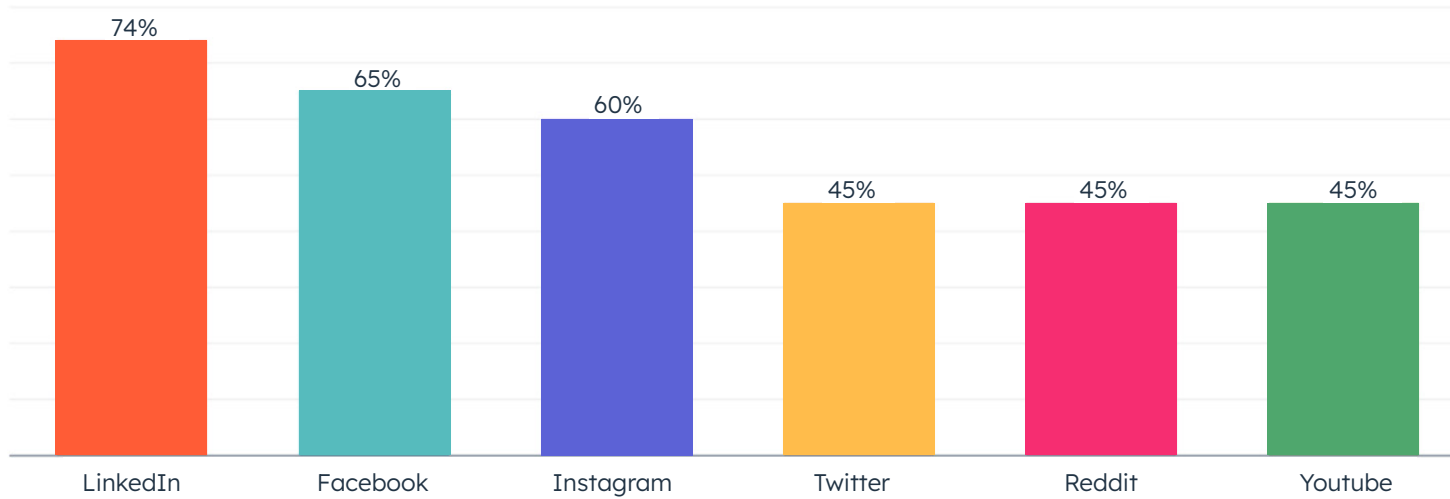
#### Hear from Sales & Marketing Leaders

“When it comes to getting to the right decision maker, get straight to the point. In my experience, a simple, direct question leads to a simple, direct answer. Of course, sometimes that answer is no, but asking things in a long convoluted way might cause confusion or distrust about intentions on the prospect’s side. Overall I have seen a lot more success with one or two-line emails than with essays.”



[Louise Ryan, Business Development Representative, Aircall](#)

Which social media platforms are most effective for researching prospects and/or their businesses?



#### Challenge 4: Lack of High-Quality Leads

To address lead quality issues, the first place to look is sales and marketing alignment. It's important for sales and marketing teams to share the same understanding of the [ideal customer profile](#) or [buyer persona](#), and regularly review what this means. Develop and update these assets based on sales data, lifetime value, and which customers turn into promoters.

After the target customer has been identified, sales teams use tools like LinkedIn Sales Navigator, HubSpot Sales Hub, LeadIQ, and others to find and engage with prospects at the right time.

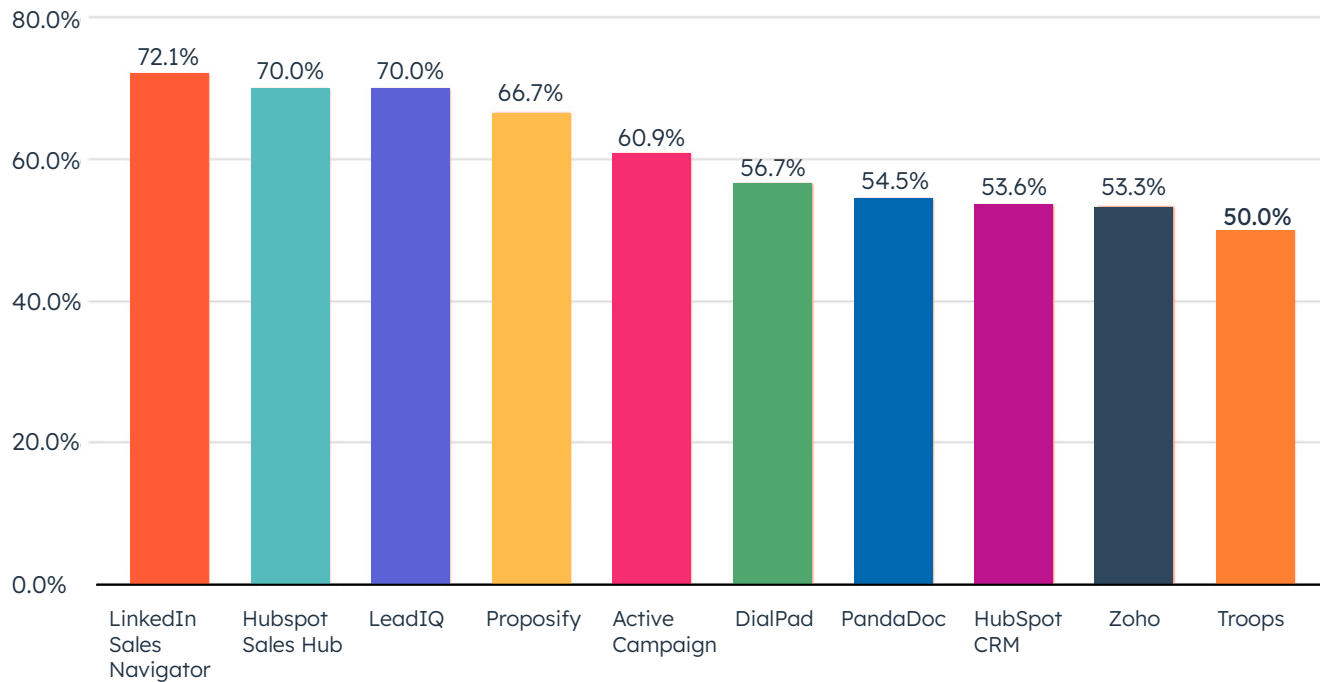
## Hear from Sales Leaders

“I see it as an opportunity to get more creative with my outreach strategy. Believe it or not, there are warm leads everywhere. Whether it be on LinkedIn, review sites, etc., you just have to find them. Having that hunting mentality is critical because there is always a business out there that needs your product/service but you’re going to have to put in that little extra work to find them when warm leads lack.”



**Chris Butera, Business Development Representative, Aircall**

Which tools are most effective at helping you get leads?







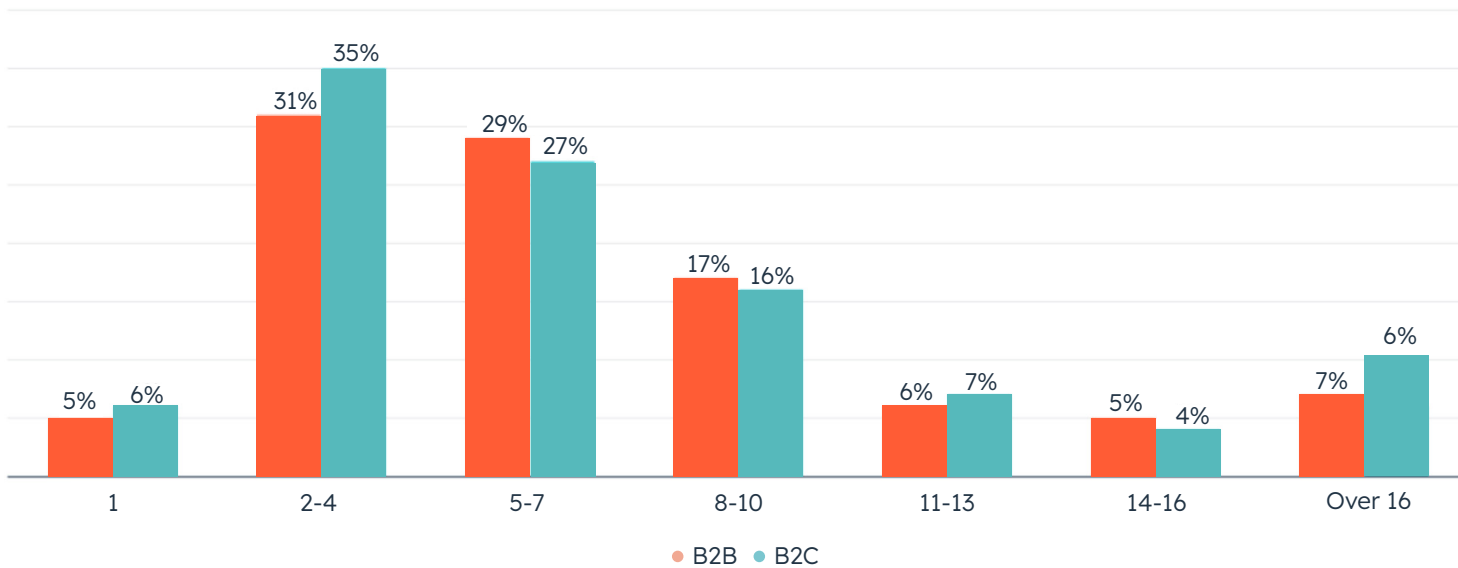
## Challenge 5: Keeping Prospects Engaged Throughout the Sales Process

To maintain a prospect's interest throughout the sales process, which can be lengthy depending on the scale of the software package or service, you need to understand your buyer in terms of the bigger picture context.

- What are their goals?
- What is their busy season?
- How has their industry been impacted by the staffing shortage?
- Are companies in their industry going through layoffs?
- How do they prefer to communicate?
- What metrics do they report to their manager?

During the B2B and B2C sales processes, sales representatives most frequently communicate with prospects two to seven separate times, which adds up when you consider that most have dozens of prospects they're working with at a given time. Using automated sales management tools and a CRM that adds lead intelligence and logs communications with prospects (like phone calls, emails, and actions) can help sales teams manage the hundreds of data points they need to use to successfully bring in new customers.

How many separate communications do salespeople have with a prospect throughout the sales process?



### Hear from Sales Leaders

“I keep my prospects engaged throughout the sales process by making sure I make it all about them. I like to ask questions to really understand where they are as a business and what they’re hoping to accomplish with solutions like Aircall and HubSpot, and then I assure them that I’m here to help. I always inform them that I’m working off of their timeline given the information that they share with me.”



**Christell Cherenfant, Account Executive, Aircall**

“Keeping prospects engaged throughout the sales process can be challenging for a sales executive. The key here is really understanding your prospect; their business model, growth goals, challenges, and KPIs. This will help you tailor and personalise your communications. Keep bringing relevant new insights, valuable articles, and high-value CTAs. By sharing regular, tailored and insightful content, you’ll ensure a prospect that’s motivated to stay engaged throughout the buyer journey.”



**Crevan O'Malley, Senior Director of EMEA Sales, HubSpot**



### Challenge 6: **Difficulty Getting Meetings With Prospects**

Timing is everything. Reach out at the wrong time, you're a nuisance. Reach out at the right time, and you're the answer to a prayer. It's well known in the industry that the best salespeople spend most of their time on calls with prospects listening.

“It’s critical to come with a very high threshold of resilience, and the ability to deal with rejection, frustration, loss, and failure. We’re doing business in challenging times. Your teams are going to experience these and, as a leader, you need to know how to coach and guide them through those challenges.”



**Kevin Ackhurst, Head of Sales,  
Japan & Asia Pacific, HubSpot**

“As an Outbound BDR, one of the biggest challenges I face is holding the attention of a prospect if they aren’t ready to commit at that initial conversation. Something I’ve found to contribute to my success is not only to follow up but also to make notes pertaining to that prospect’s specific circumstances. That way, every prospect feels like they are the only one you’re talking to, allowing for that great customer experience right from the get-go.”



**Olivia Smith, Business Development  
Representative, Aircall**

In order to secure meetings with qualified prospects, the best strategy is to listen. And to make it easy to meet with you.

When listening for signals that a prospect is ready to meet, use these questions as a guide:

- Has the prospect viewed the pricing page?
- Have they requested additional pricing information?
- Did they recently download a case study?
- Have they used the chat feature on your website?
- Did they attend an event with your company or a partner?
- Have they asked for recommendations for new products on social media?

Social selling requires a combination of social media savvy and sales tools that can automatically flag key readiness indicators and send automatic alerts.

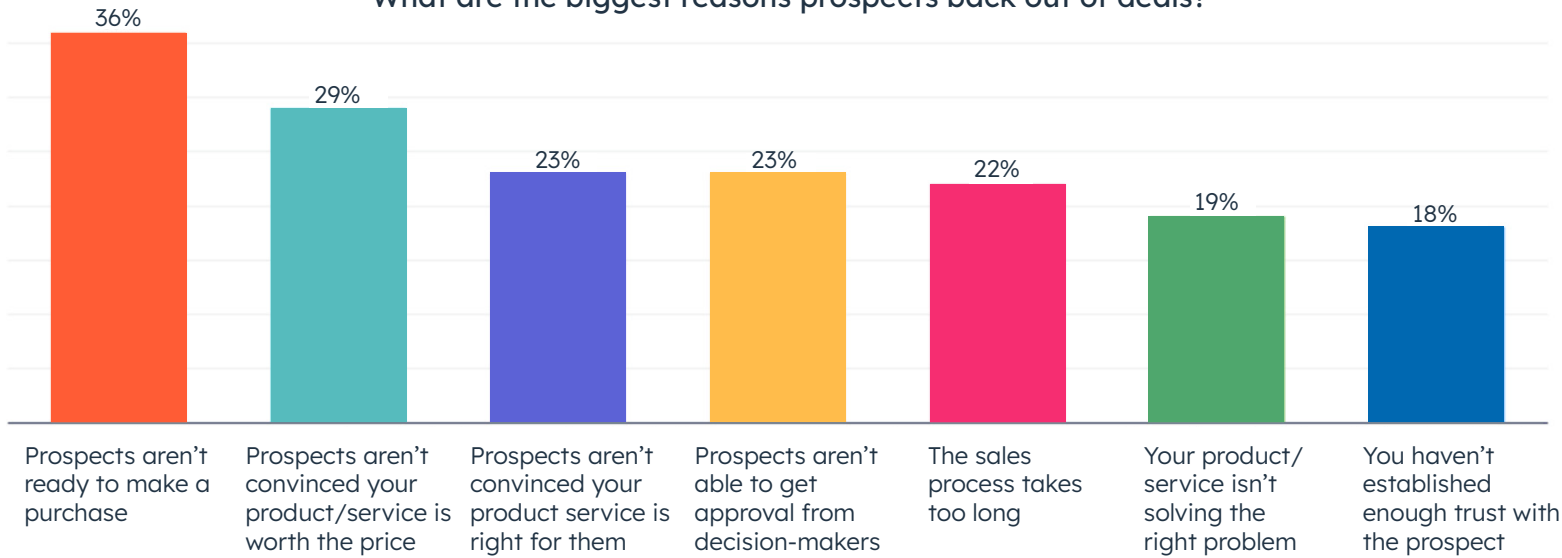
[Explore HubSpot's Sales Playbook for Social Selling](#)

## Why Prospects Back Out of Deals

The **number one reason prospects back out of deals is that they aren't ready to purchase**. Remember — timing is everything. Other key reasons like prospects not being convinced that the product or service is right for them, or that it doesn't solve their problems largely signal a disconnect between the prospect, the messaging, and the solution.

Collect data on why prospects are backing out of deals to find out where the breakdown is happening. Look at the entire process, from initial outreach, to nurturing, to customer marketing and retention. Align sales and marketing teams around the same buyer persona and make sure it's easy for everyone to access up-to-date sales enablement materials.

## What are the biggest reasons prospects back out of deals?



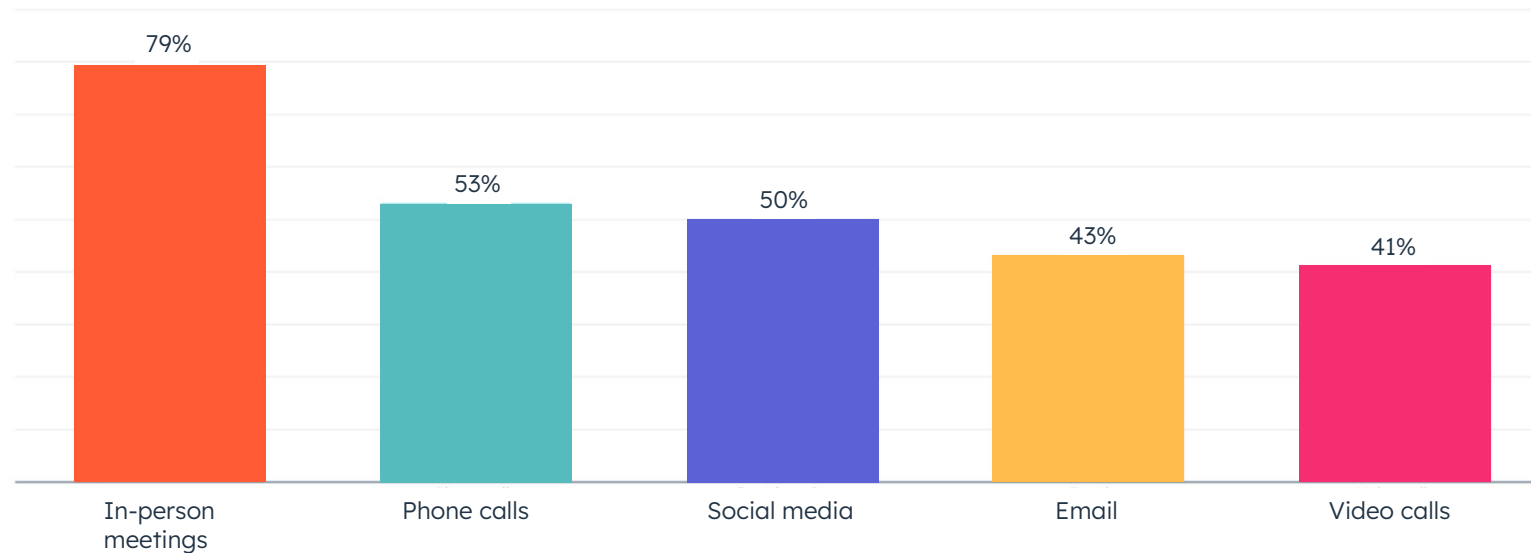
Reasons Prospects Back Out of Deals	Tips to Solve Prospect Challenges
“I’m not ready to make a purchase.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask about budget cycles and the decision-making process</li> <li>• Use data to guide the right time to send contracts</li> <li>• Incorporate decision-makers earlier in the sales process</li> </ul>
“I don’t think your product/service is worth the price.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide case studies for similar sized businesses with ROI details</li> <li>• Down-sell to a freemium version or a trial and let the product sell itself</li> <li>• Use a comparison matrix with competitors</li> </ul>

<p>“I don’t think your product/service is right for us.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send case studies from the same industry or use case with data and testimonials</li> <li>• Offer an extended free trial</li> <li>• Show the prospect how your product/service works with their existing tech stack</li> </ul>
<p>“I can’t get approval from my supervisor.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjust buyer personas to leadership and decision makers</li> <li>• Bring decision makers in earlier</li> </ul>
<p>“The sales process is taking too long.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automate follow-up tasks and reminders</li> <li>• Bring decision makers in early</li> <li>• Use digital proposal apps that integrate with your CRM</li> </ul>
<p>“Your product/service isn’t solving the right problem.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer an extended product demo</li> <li>• Offer an extended free trial</li> </ul>
<p>“I don’t trust you enough to commit yet.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer an extended free trial</li> <li>• Send case studies or testimonials</li> <li>• Suggest a more flexible pricing plan</li> </ul>

## Chapter 4:

# How to Get the Most Value from Phone Calls as a Sales Channel with Aircall

What are the most effective sales channels?



It's no secret that phone is one of the most successful sales channels, ranking right below in-person meetings and right above social media and email. It's direct, personal, and effective, leading to positive outcomes as you build rapport with prospects and customers alike.

Let's break down a couple of ways you can leverage voice to reach your business goals.



## Use Phone Calls to Keep Track of Customer Data

From a data standpoint, phones can provide essential context to help you keep track of leads throughout the customer journey, especially when you connect your business phone to key business tools like your CRM or help desk.

By connecting these tools, you'll be able to quickly access order info, customer details like their name and contact information, and see their interaction history so you can get a sense for the problems they're navigating and how you can help.

For Aircall customer Humanitix, they integrate voice with HubSpot to coach team members and improve their customer experience.

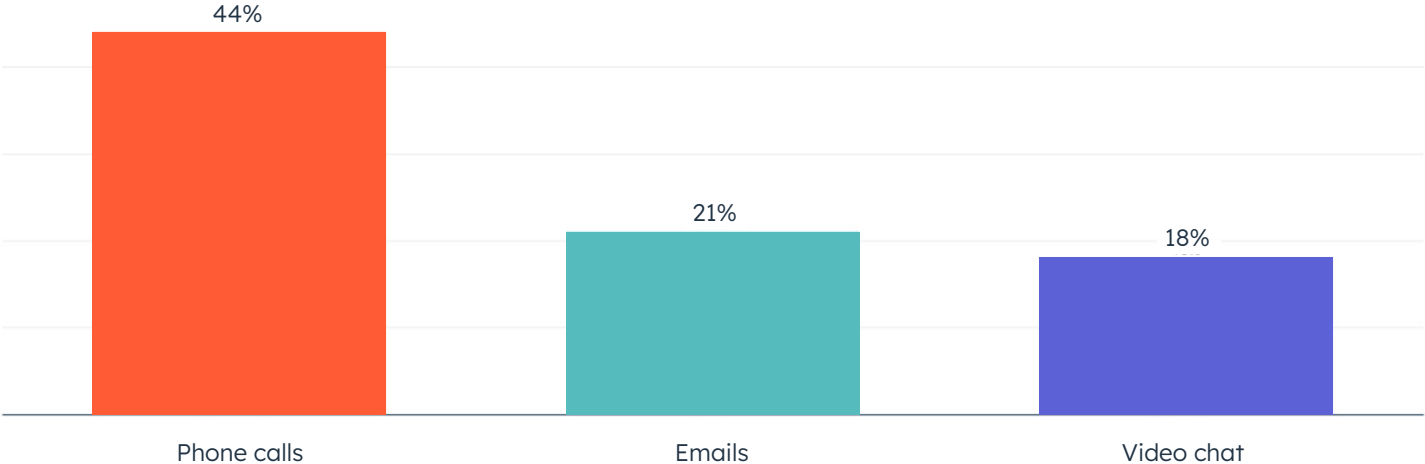
“All recordings are brought into HubSpot, which is really helpful, so when we do need to listen to a call, we can quickly pull up the contact and listen. If we're doing a call feedback session, we'll jump into the call recording within Aircall itself,” said Michael Shaskey, Humanitix's Head of Growth.

Beyond call recording, integrations make it easier to focus on what matters most. “Whether tracking communications or linking updates to specific contacts, our work is seamless,” said Bree Wright, Head of Client Acquisitions at The Photo Studio.



# Sell Anywhere with Modern Cloud-Based Phone Solutions

What are the most effective channels for selling remotely?



Another benefit of investing in a modern business phone is being able to sell no matter where you're located. When it comes to remote selling, 44% of survey respondents ranked phone calls as the most effective way to close deals (21% of respondents preferred email and 18% preferred video chats) since they allow for you to really build relationships with prospects and create a positive and memorable experience.

When you leverage cloud-based phone features like international and local numbers, you're able to expand your global reach and speak to prospects wherever they are (and see major cost savings on international calling in the process).



For Superscript, having the ability to easily scale a remote-friendly phone system was key to their growth.

“Aircall just really took a lot of stress out of the situation itself. It allowed us not only to execute a remote working option for all members of staff, but it allowed us to then continue with a really solid hybrid policy across the business,



**Daniel Prescott, Head of Customer Operations at Superscript.**

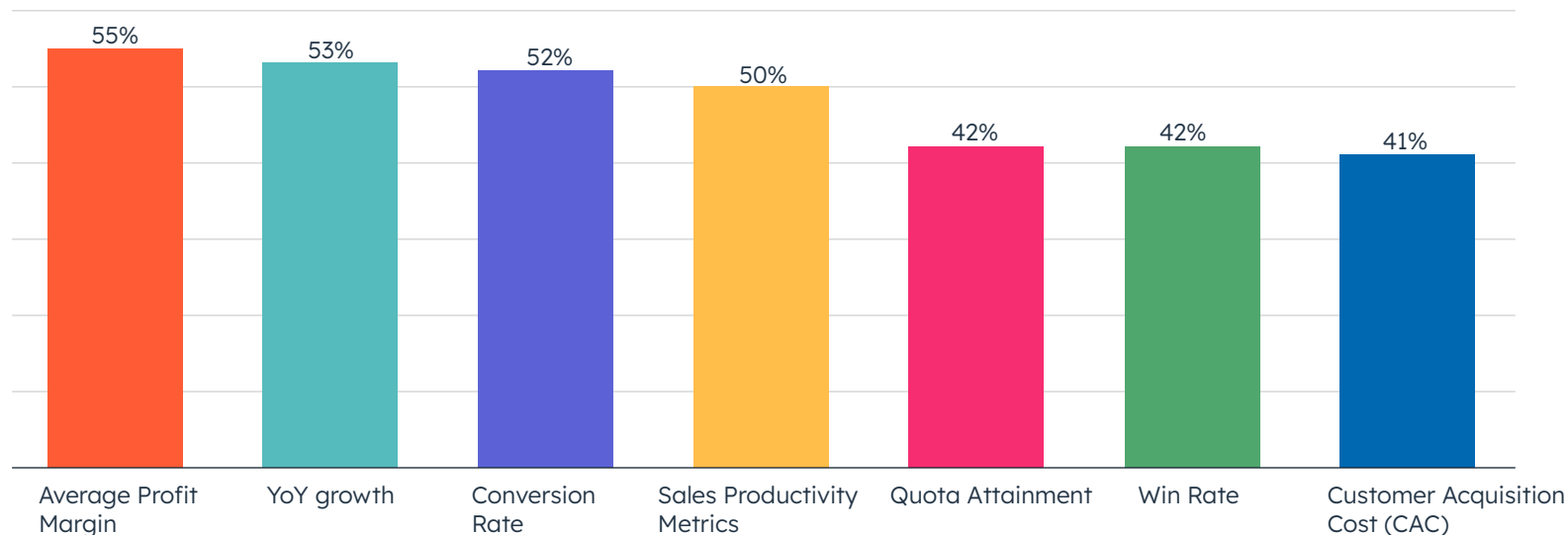
“Not having to worry about the telephony system as we expanded into European markets—and allowing people to always feel connected—is so great. No one feels like they’re a million miles away from a colleague. For all they know, they could be sitting right next to them.”



## Chapter 5:

# Sales Metrics to Track in 2023

Which sales metrics are most important to track?



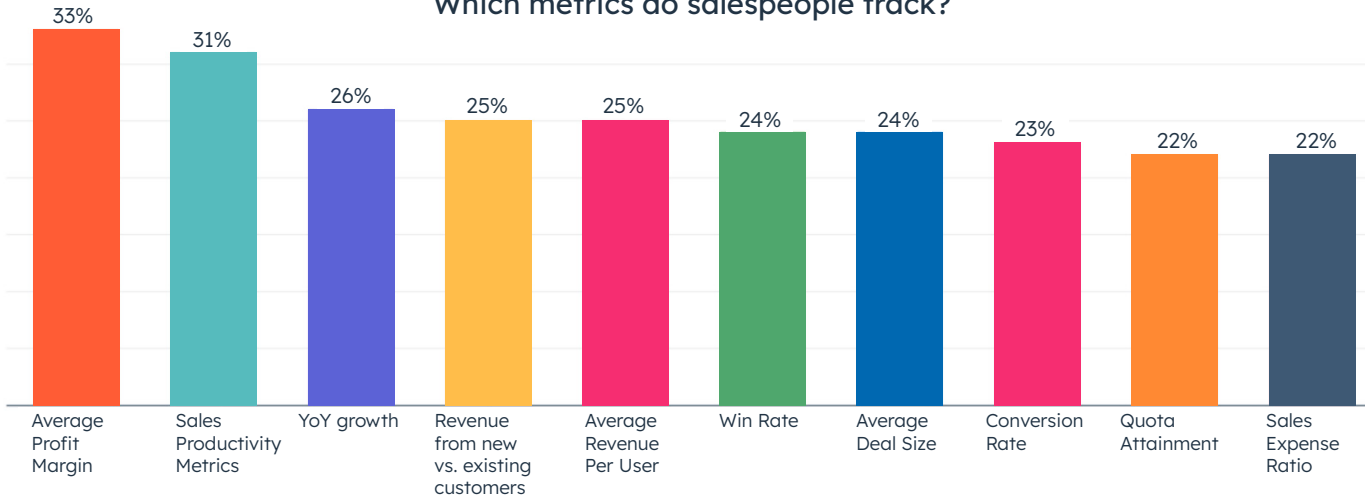
Among 1,000+ global sales professionals, the sales metric deemed the ‘most important’ to track in 2023 is average profit margin, followed closely by year-over-year growth and conversion rates. Customer acquisition cost (CAC) used to be a top metric for sales, but it can be hard to measure and has lost popularity in recent years.

Salespeople are most likely to track average profit margin and their own productivity metrics, along with year-over-year growth. For sales leaders, when asked what they do track, they say CRM usage, calls made, emails sent, and conversations. They want to know what’s happening at the moment and keep a close eye on overall progress and productivity. But when asked what’s most important to track, leaders are looking for calls made, follow-ups on high-quality leads, CRM usage, and proposals sent.

In 2023, CRM usage is the most important indicator of productivity in sales.

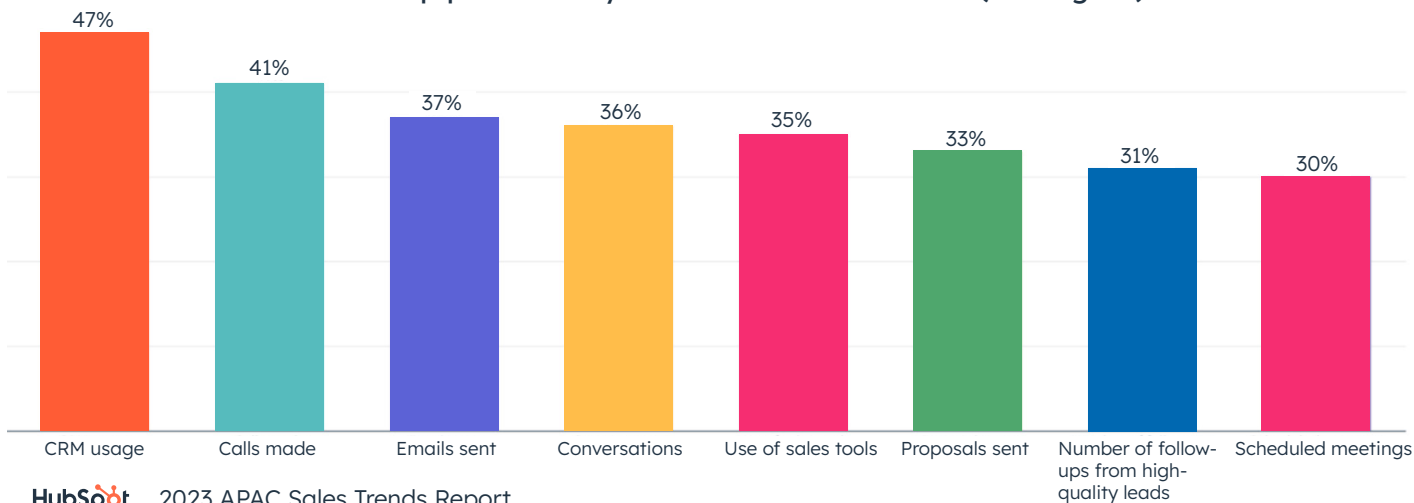
### Metrics that Salespeople Track

Which metrics do salespeople track?



### Productivity Metrics that Leaders Track

Which sales rep productivity metrics do sales leaders (manager+) track?



## Chapter 6:

# Lead Generation Strategy

One of the top challenges for salespeople is a lack of high-quality leads. But 41% say that they do receive quality leads from their marketing teams. Where's the disconnect? In 2022, salespeople find that the best quality leads come from referrals, followed in a distant second by social media, tradeshow and events, telemarketing, inbound marketing, and digital marketing efforts like website, blog, and SEO.

What “quality” leads means has changed over the past few years, largely due to changes in consumer behaviour.

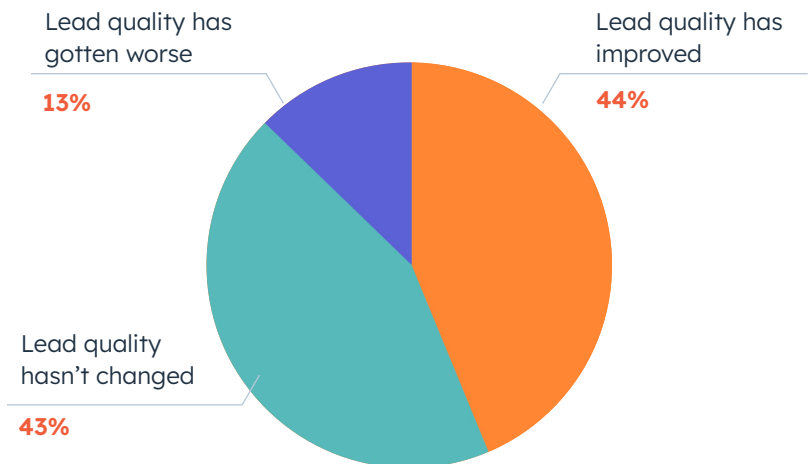
## Finding High-Quality Leads

In 2021, the top marketing channels for lead generation were social media, SEO, and account-based marketing. In 2022, [influencer marketing and short-form video became priority channels for marketing growth](#), along with virtual events and mobile-focused web strategy. More than half (56%) of sales representatives feel that lead quality has stayed the same or gotten worse from 2021 to 2022, which could be attributed to marketing and sales strategies needing to catch up with the times and pivot more quickly than they needed to in the past.

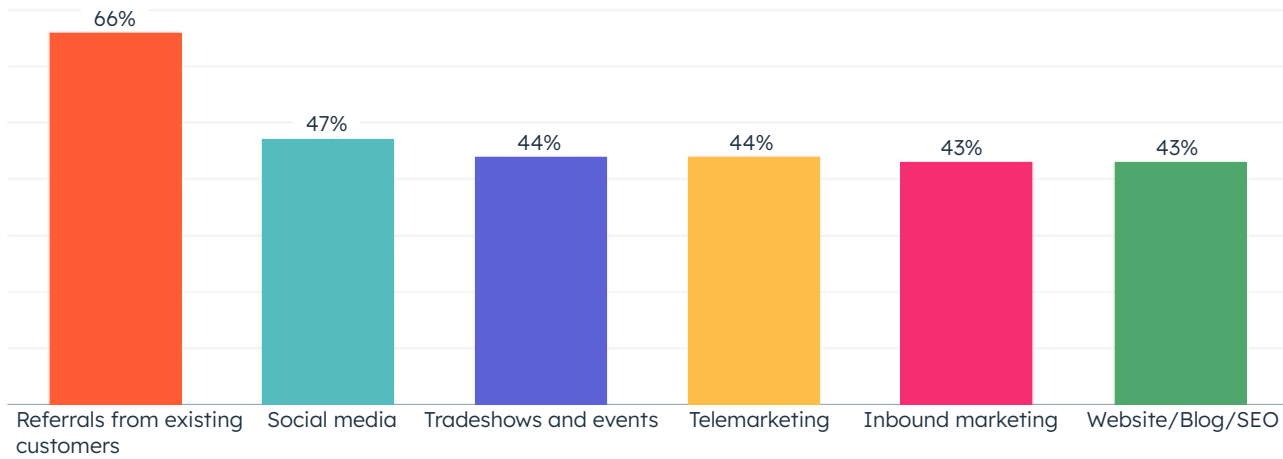
The ways that people engage online and do research have changed drastically, and today sales and marketing teams should focus on referral programs, social media and encouraging user-generated content, and virtual events.

**According to sales teams, the best quality leads come from referrals.**

How has lead quality changed from 2021 to 2022?



### Which source offers the highest quality leads?

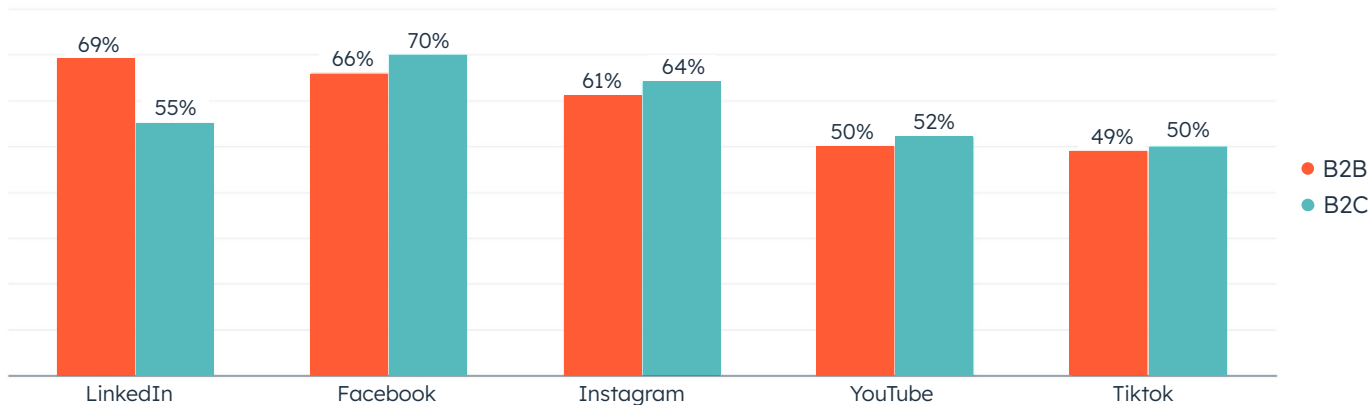


### Using Social Media for Lead Generation

In 2023, B2B sales reps plan to use LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram to find new prospects and leads. B2C sales reps are more likely to use Facebook and Instagram, and more than half are also on LinkedIn.

YouTube and TikTok are growing as channels for both B2B and B2C sales and marketing, with short-form video on the rise in the professional space.

### Which social media platforms are most effective for finding new prospects?



## Sales Pipeline Averages

Sales leaders need ways to benchmark their team's performance and understand what a healthy [sales pipeline](#) looks like in a given quarter in the context of the regional and global economy.

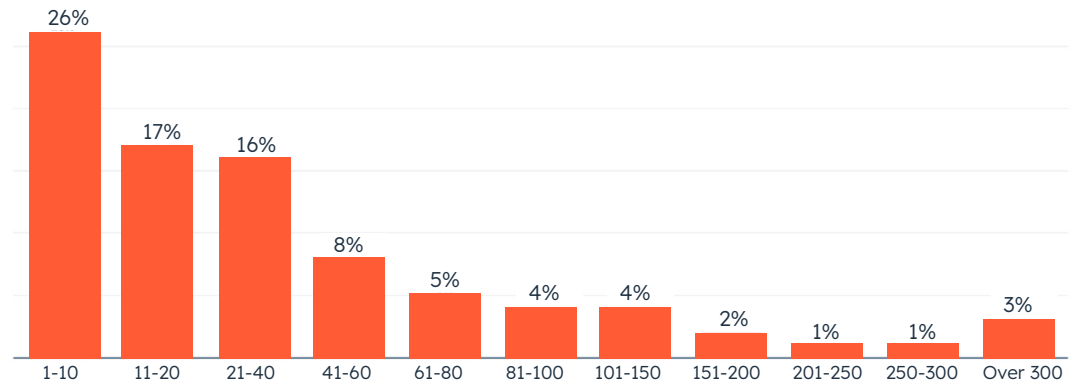
In 2023, sales leaders can estimate that in order to see sustainable growth, sales representatives should get 1 - 40 leads per week. And 78% of salespeople have anywhere from 1 - 40 prospects moving through the sales process at a given time.

As an additional point of reference, the [average SaaS sales cycle is 84 days](#).

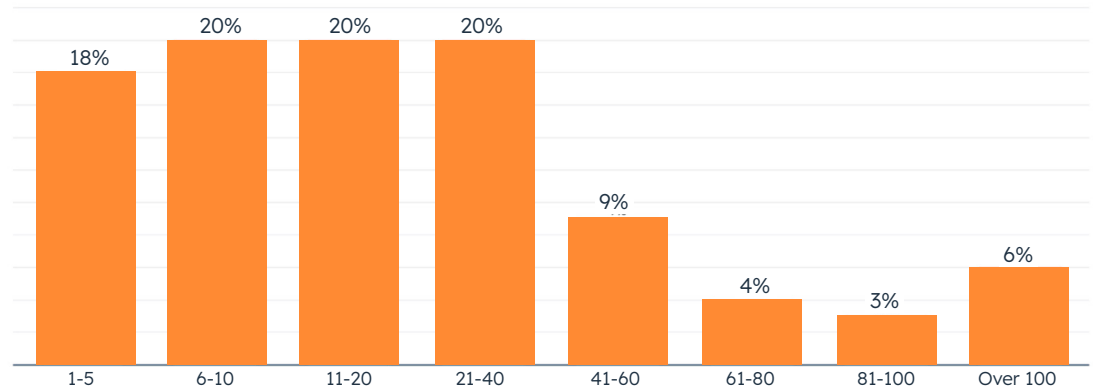
[Explore how HubSpot can help achieve your goals.](#)



How many new leads do salespeople get per week?



How many prospects are salespeople currently moving through the sales process?





## Chapter 7:

# Sales Culture

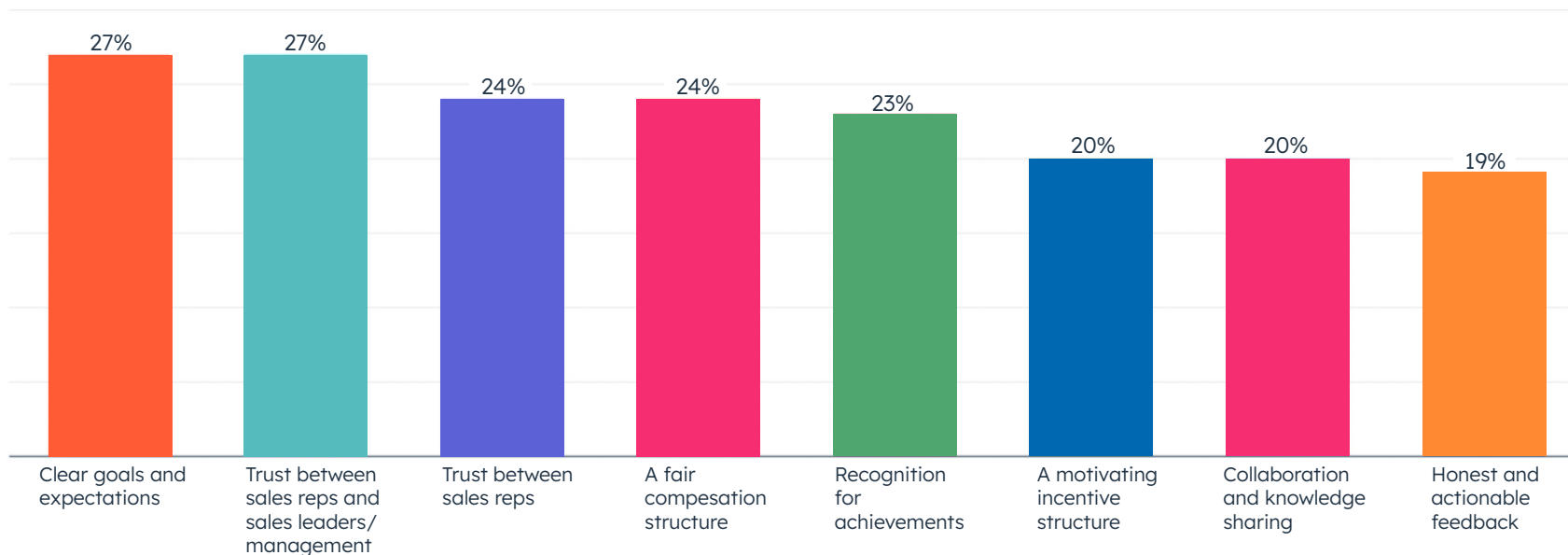
Sales culture is shifting, and leaders now understand what encourages happy employees, and what leads to burnout. Prioritising a strong sales culture improves employee satisfaction, prevents turnover, and helps employees do their best work.

“What happens when you work for an employer that celebrates your diversity, empowers you to take ownership, and promotes values that align with your own? You are inspired to do your best work, you grow phenomenally, you deliver spectacular results.”



**Radwa Khorshid, Senior Manager, EMEA BDR, HubSpot**

Which aspects of internal sales culture are most important for sales people to succeed?

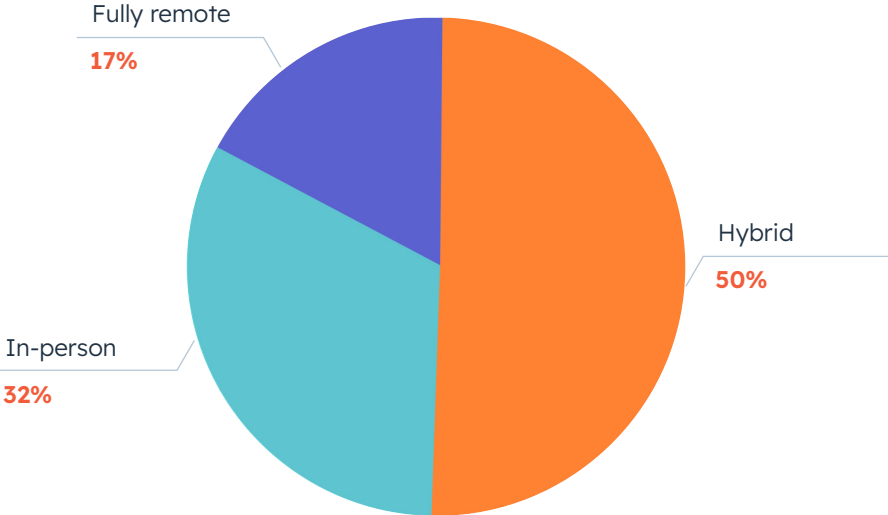


The top three most important aspects of internal sales culture that help sales teams succeed are:


- ✓ Clear goals and expectations
- ✓ Trust between reps and leadership
- ✓ Trust between sales reps

With 67% of sales teams operating under a remote or hybrid model in 2023, leaders will need to invest in virtual teambuilding and collaboration tools, and consider a more flexible org structure than in the past.

Which sales model will reps follow this year (according to sales leaders)?



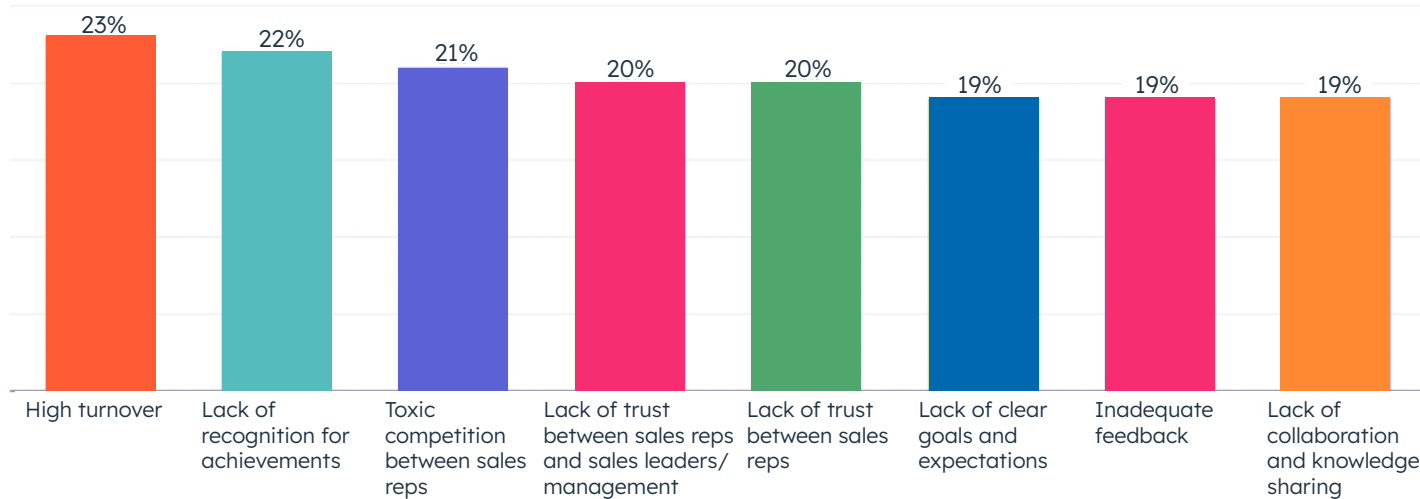
“I hypothesise that [the hierarchical nature of sales organisations will flatten] and accelerate over the next five years. More people are working from home — leading to more focus on the output of work, the leveraging of technology to get that output, and cleaner communication. We must simplify things, and therefore, processes. I think we’ll see a shift of more doers and less managers on sales teams.”



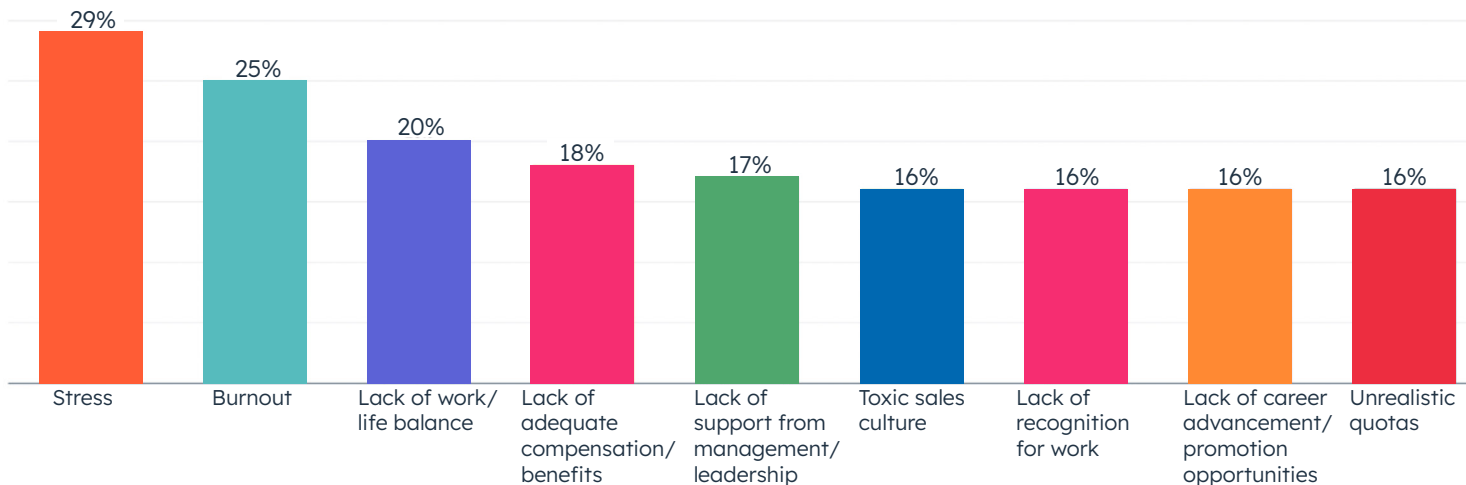
**Stuart Blake, VP of Sales, Help Scout**

## Retaining Talent & Fostering Success on Sales Teams

Which aspects of internal sales culture negatively impact salespeople's ability to succeed?



What causes turnover in sales positions?



Experienced salespeople are in high demand and will continue to have their choice of companies and teams into the year ahead. For leaders looking to avoid turnover and support their teams in hitting their goals — here are some dos and don'ts.



## Great Sales Leadership in 2023

✔ Dos	✘ Don'ts
Watch for signs of burnout and stress	Push teams without checking in
Recognise team members for their achievements	Foster too much competition between reps and create a toxic environment
Facilitate team bonding and mentorship	Silo employees in their own work
Encourage work-life balance	Set unrealistic goals and expectations
Provide thorough feedback and actionable tips	Wait until yearly evaluations to give feedback

# Closing

Consumer trends and the global economic market will continue to shift over the coming months — sales teams need to be ready to pivot their strategies and showcase exactly why they stand out from the competition. Sales leaders should prioritise sales and marketing alignment and create an environment of support among sales reps on the team — not one of competition.

As companies expand internationally and begin selling in new markets, they can learn from local analyses and prepare new sales teams with localised sales enablement content like market research reports, testimonials and case studies, reviews, and email templates.

The biggest takeaways for sales teams as they plan their goals and strategies for the year ahead are to align data and tools between customer-facing teams, create personalised content, establish trust and build rapport, and leverage their CRM and automation.

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