

CSO QUARTERLY · 2025

# The Sales Awakening Guide

Five trends reshaping B2B sales — and three things you can do about them

*Based on Gartner research. Written for sellers, account managers, and BD professionals.*

Every year, Gartner publishes research aimed at the people running sales organisations. It's full of useful thinking — but it's written for the top of the org chart, not for the people actually doing the selling.

This guide translates the most relevant findings into plain English. What's changing in B2B sales, why it matters to you specifically, and what you can do about it now — not when your organisation catches up.

**Two reports. Five trends. Three moves to stay ahead.**

## What's in this guide

Part 1 · Five trends reshaping B2B sales right now (the short version)

Part 2 · The three traits that predict whether you'll thrive or tread water

Part 3 · Nine AI prompts you can put to work this week



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## Part 1: Five Trends Reshaping B2B Sales

Sales leadership is going through a significant reset. The old playbook — hire more reps, run more training, add more tools — is no longer producing results. The research is clear on why: sellers are overwhelmed, managers are stretched too thin, and buyers have changed how they buy.

Here is what that reset looks like in practice, and what it means for you on the ground.

#	The trend	What it means for you
1	<b>Your role is getting narrower — on purpose</b>	70% of sellers feel overwhelmed by the tools they use, and 72% by the number of skills their role demands. Organisations are responding by simplifying: fewer responsibilities, sharper focus. You will be expected to do less, but do it better.
2	<b>AI is becoming a teammate, not just a tool</b>	Organisations are moving from basic automation to AI that can research, draft, analyse, and act alongside you. This isn't a future prediction — it's already being rolled out. The sellers who adapt fastest will have a significant advantage over those who don't.
3	<b>Experience matters less than you think</b>	98% of sales job descriptions have historically led with years of experience. That's changing. Leaders are being told to prioritise potential and specific behaviours over tenure. How long you've been doing the job is less important than how you're developing.
4	<b>Your manager is changing</b>	45% of CSOs say their frontline managers aren't meeting expectations — not because they're bad managers, but because they're buried in admin. Organisations are clearing that away so managers can focus on coaching. Expect fewer pipeline interrogations and more deal-level conversation.
5	<b>Buyers want less pitch, more insight</b>	Enterprise buyers are focused on four things right now: managing market risk, finding growth in slow markets, cutting operational costs, and hitting sustainability targets. If your solution doesn't connect to one of those, it's going to be a harder conversation than it needs to be.

### The common thread across all five

The sellers who will struggle are the ones waiting for their organisation to tell them what to do next. The ones who will thrive are already adapting — sharpening their focus, building new skills, and meeting buyers where they actually are.

## Part 2: The Three Traits That Actually Predict Success

If you want to know what separates the sellers who are thriving right now from the ones who are treading water, the answer isn't experience, sector knowledge, or even relationships. It's three specific behavioural traits — and the data on this is striking enough to be worth taking seriously.

Gartner found that sellers who demonstrate these traits are significantly more likely to hit quota. Not marginally more likely. Significantly.

Impact	Trait	What it means in practice	What it looks like
<b>3.7×</b> more likely to hit quota	<b>Growth Mindset</b>	You seek out tough feedback and treat a lost deal as information, not just a disappointment. You don't wait for a post-mortem — you ask what you should have done differently.	<i>After losing a deal, you go back to the customer and ask them to be straight with you about where you fell short.</i>
<b>3.4×</b> more likely to hit quota	<b>Tactical Flexibility</b>	When the obvious approach isn't working, you change tack rather than push harder. You have more than one way to move a deal forward — and you know when to switch.	<i>When a champion goes quiet, you don't send another follow-up. You reframe the problem, try a different angle, or find another way in.</i>
<b>3.7×</b> more likely to hit quota	<b>AI Partnership</b>	You use AI where it saves you time and skip it where it doesn't. You write prompts that get useful outputs and treat it like a capable colleague — not a magic shortcut.	<i>Before a major account review, you use AI to scan the customer's latest report and pull out what they're worried about right now.</i>

### How to show these traits in your next performance review

Most performance reviews are dominated by numbers — deals closed, pipeline value, revenue against target. Those matter, but they're not what leaders are looking for right now. They want evidence that you're developing, adapting, and building the skills that will make you valuable in two years, not just last quarter.

Three things worth doing before your next review:

1. Bring a specific example of a setback. Not to dwell on it — to show what you learned and how you changed your approach. That's growth mindset in practice.
2. Share a moment where you changed strategy mid-deal rather than doubling down on something that wasn't working. That's tactical flexibility.
3. Show one concrete way you've started using AI in your workflow. It doesn't have to be impressive — it just has to be real. That's AI partnership.

*If you don't surface these yourself, they won't be noticed. Managers aren't looking for them yet — but the research says they should be, and the organisations ahead of the curve already are.*

## Part 3: Nine AI Prompts to Put to Work This Week

You don't need your organisation to roll out an enterprise AI platform before you start working differently. Every prompt below works with any standard AI tool — ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, whatever you have access to.

The goal isn't to automate your job. It's to stop spending time on things AI can handle adequately, so you have more time for the things only you can do — the conversations, the judgement, the relationships.

#	Use it for	Prompt to try
1	<b>Account Intelligence</b> <i>Turn reports into insight in minutes</i>	<b>Try this prompt:</b> <i>Summarise the top three strategic priorities from this document and identify two risks they're likely facing right now. [paste annual report or earnings transcript]</i>
2	<b>Meeting Follow-Up</b> <i>Notes in, email out</i>	<b>Try this prompt:</b> <i>Turn these meeting notes into a concise follow-up email. Pick out the three key actions and suggest a check-in date for next week. [paste your notes]</i>
3	<b>Prospect Outreach</b> <i>Build angles that actually land</i>	<b>Try this prompt:</b> <i>I'm selling [product or service] to [industry]. Give me three outreach hooks that connect directly to what's happening in their market right now.</i>
4	<b>Deal Review</b> <i>Get an honest read on a stalled conversation</i>	<b>Try this prompt:</b> <i>Act as a sceptical enterprise buyer. Read my last message to this prospect and tell me where the value case is weak and what questions you'd push back on. [paste your email]</i>

#	Use it for	Prompt to try
5	<b>Proposal Writing</b> <i>Reframe your standard materials for a specific buyer</i>	<b>Try this prompt:</b> <i>Rewrite this executive summary for a CFO whose main priority is reducing supply chain costs by 15%. Make it analytical and financially grounded. [paste your draft]</i>
6	<b>Pipeline Review</b> <i>Find the pattern in deals that aren't moving</i>	<b>Try this prompt:</b> <i>Here are notes from five deals that stalled before close. What's the common thread in my discovery process? Where am I losing them? [paste anonymised deal notes]</i>
7	<b>Value Messaging</b> <i>Translate features into stories buyers actually care about</i>	<b>Try this prompt:</b> <i>Our solution cuts onboarding time by 40%. Help me build a before-and-after story to pitch this to a VP of HR dealing with high staff turnover.</i>
8	<b>Market Prep</b> <i>Get up to speed before a big meeting</i>	<b>Try this prompt:</b> <i>What are the three biggest challenges facing [customer's industry] right now, and how are they affecting [type of company]? What questions should I be asking?</i>
9	<b>Account Re-Engagement</b> <i>Bring a dormant account back to life</i>	<b>Try this prompt:</b> <i>Design a five-step sequence to re-engage a key account that's gone quiet for six months. Tell me which channel to use for each step and write the opening message.</i>

### One thing worth remembering

These prompts are starting points. The output will always need your judgment — your knowledge of the customer, the relationship, the context that no AI can see.

*The value is in the time you save, compounded across every week. That's time you can put back into the work only you can do.*

## Where to start

None of this requires your organisation to change first. The traits are habits you build yourself. The prompts work today. The shift in how you approach buyers is something you can try in your next conversation.

If any of this feels like a gap between where you are and where you want to be — that's fine. That gap is useful. The question is just whether it stays the same size next quarter.

**Pick one thing from this guide and do it this week. That's all.**

### **About this guide**

Based on: Gartner, "The DNA of Top Sales Organizations" (January 2025) and Chief Sales Officer Quarterly, Q4 2025.

Interpreted and written for individual contributors and key account managers by Warwick Brown — The KAM Club / Account Minded.

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