

2024 STATE OF SALES ACCELERATION

Driving Value Through
Personalized Experiences
& New Tech



2024

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INTRODUCTION

The B2B industry underwent a profound transformation marked by the convergence of digital advancements, changing customer expectations and a globalized business environment. As organizations grapple with these shifts, the imperative to enhance sales acceleration strategies has emerged as a key driver for sustainable growth and competitiveness. With **73% of B2B organizations** actively investing in sales acceleration initiatives, they're focusing on strategizing and creating campaigns that actually deliver value to customers.

"There's a disconnect between the perception of value being delivered to buyers and the value actually received by buyers," said John Arnold, Principal Analyst at **Forrester**, at the **B2B Sales & Marketing Exchange**. "To grow, leaders need to close the gap between value creation and value realization. You must realize that value can't be delivered — it isn't value until it's received. If you can create enough value for customers and your customers can receive it, your customers will grow and you will grow, too."

Cutting-edge technologies — such as artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics and automation — are playing an integral role in reshaping traditional sales methodologies. As sales teams work to adopt a consultative approach, they're focusing on customer needs, pain points and desired outcomes to better personalize their outreach. This translates to personalized content, value-driven conversations and the ability to position data as the heartbeat of all sales operations.

As sales teams strive to build lasting relationships in an era characterized by increased connectivity and information accessibility, this special report will outline:

- The latest advancements and uses of predictive analytics, sales intelligence platforms and AI-powered coaching tools;
- The focus on creating an integrated omnichannel strategy that delivers consistent messaging and personalized engagement at every stage of the buyer journey, such as virtual sales rooms, chatbots and social selling;
- How to leverage data to segment audiences, create dynamic content and deliver personalized offers and recommendations through tools such as AI-powered personalization engines and dynamic landing pages that adapt to individual visitors;
- Why sales teams are embracing AI-powered forecasting and lead scoring; and
- How companies are empowering sales teams with social selling skills to engage in valuable conversations, share industry insights and build thought leadership on relevant platforms.

“To grow, leaders need to close the gap between value creation and value realization.”

JOHN ARNOLD, FORRESTER



UNDERSTANDING THE TOOLS NEEDED TO SUCCEED

The integration of AI is perhaps the most defining technology that's reshaping traditional sales methodologies — according to [Forrester research](#), companies that use AI in sales see an estimated 5% to 10% revenue increase. While AI-powered sales tools can mitigate biases and enhance efficiency, there's also a struggle for companies to distinguish themselves in an increasingly automated environment. Against this backdrop, sales teams must take a strategic approach to technology adoption.

"The sales process already has more AI applications than most other industries, and while automation helps significantly reduce bias, it will also make it increasingly difficult for companies to stand out," said Chris Heard, CEO of software sourcing platform [Olive Technologies](#). "The teams should leverage sales technology, which includes automation tools for repetitive tasks, CRM systems for data management and analytics platforms for performance tracking and optimization."

Beyond the automation benefits, technology also helps assist the increasingly intricate buying cycle. Forrester's Arnold explained that with most buyers finalizing their purchases in under six months, there's a strong urgency for companies to adapt and resonate with potential customers. A study suggests that [77% of B2B buyers](#) find their latest purchase "difficult" or "very complex," emphasizing the need for straightforward information to streamline decision-making.

"The average buying cycle is complex: It involves three considered vendors, four separate departments and eight people in the buying group — four of whom are outside the buyers' company," said Arnold. "But buying is also more streamlined. Most buyers completed their purchase in under six months, and only 14% of buyers conducting purchases of \$1 million or more reported that their purchase took more than a year."



PROVIDING MORE TRANSPARENCY IN SALES INTERACTIONS

Today's customers demand transparency and ease of accessibility into pricing information, driving intolerance for opaque claims. Yet, many companies still haven't adjusted or adapted to this new transparency, leaving them vulnerable to customer scrutiny and discontent. If companies expect to remain competitive in the current sales landscape, they must address customer concerns by prioritizing openness.

"When it's time for the salesperson to have that conversation with a prospect, they should make it easy for potential customers to experience the product and offer intuitive onboarding and clear value propositions," said Heard. "Companies can adjust sales processes to customer needs, shorten time to value and prioritize efficiency without compromising quality."

By facilitating easy access to product experiences, providing intuitive onboarding and articulating clear value propositions, salespeople can enhance customer engagement and satisfaction. The intersection of customer-centric sales processes and strategic brand differentiation emerges as a critical factor in navigating the nuanced dynamics of contemporary B2B sales.

"Branding will become important early on, and many of the trends we see in B2C purchasing — an empowered buyer but with a herd mentality — will become more prevalent in B2B and larger organizations will thrive," said Heard. "Smaller organizations who haven't yet established their brand will need to have very clear differentiation, highlighting all that's wrong with the large organization, like slow to innovate and scale, not trendy, etc."



PERSONALIZING ALL OUTREACH & TOUCHPOINTS

The entry into a new digital era has not only elevated the expectations of buyers but also rendered them more discerning and demanding than ever before. B2B buyers are increasingly reliant on content for research and decision-making, as **62% engage with** three to seven pieces of content before contacting sales. This highlights the need for high-quality, relevant content throughout the buyer journey. Arnold articulated a paradigm shift where immediacy in responses and personalized experiences tailored to individual needs have become indispensable benchmarks.

"Buyers have changed — they're more digital and more demanding than ever before," said Arnold. "In 2022, 83% of buyers said that they were dissatisfied with the winning provider — that was two years ago, and buyer expectations are still rising. They expect immediate answers to their questions and experiences that are personalized to their needs."

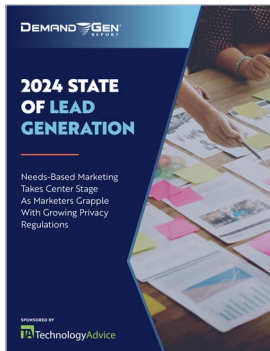
Expanding on Arnold's insights, Heard underscored the proactive measures companies can take to meet these expectations. From optimizing content for search engines to leveraging data for personalized outreach, he outlined the strategies that can bridge the gap between buyer demands and effective sales practices.

"Companies can optimize content for search engines and relevant topics," said Heard. "Salespeople should actively participate in relevant social media communities, engage with industry influencers and share thought leadership content. The teams should leverage data and insights to personalize cold outreach, ensuring relevance and minimizing intrusiveness."



CONCLUSION

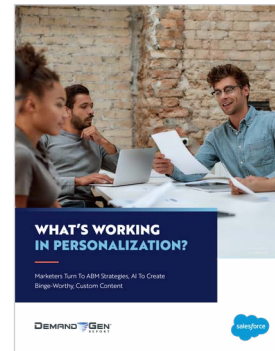
As sales teams adapt to the shifting terrain, the intersection of intuitive onboarding, clear value propositions and strategic brand differentiation are crucial for success. The convergence of these insights underscores the need for businesses to prioritize customer-centric approaches, leverage cutting-edge technologies and remain agile in responding to the ever-changing expectations of a digital and demanding clientele.



State Of Lead Generation



2024 Database Strategies & Contact Acquisition Benchmark Survey



What's Working in Personalization



Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multichannel demand generation efforts.

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