



# State of sales

2022 United States & Canada Edition



# Top sellers use the tech stack to humanize interactions with buyers. That's why they're thriving.

Throughout history, technology has transformed the sales process.

But not always for the better.

At the dawn of the 20th century, new technologies like the automobile and the telephone allowed sellers to knock on exponentially more doors and speak with more potential customers. As the century drew to a close, the advent of the internet and email enabled sellers to reach buyers at scale from their laptops and mobile phones. These technological advances, however, brought downsides for buyers. The rise of telemarketers made the do-not-call list a necessity. The proliferation of spam forced the creation of the CAN-SPAM Act.

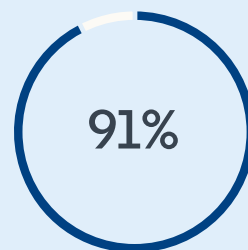
The growth of the sales tech stack is a further reflection of this trend. The pandemic and the rise of remote work accelerated the proliferation of sales technology: 91% of sellers at large companies use sales tech once a week, according to LinkedIn's 2022 State of Sales data.

\* We define "Top Performers" as the most successful sellers — those reaching more than 150% of quota.

That's a good thing — or at least it could be. In too many cases, the rise of sales technology is frustrating for buyers. Sales tech often leads to sellers simply becoming more efficient at spamming potential buyers with messaging for products that they don't need or aren't in the market for at that time.

Many sellers are engaging in ill-advised outreach simply because they can. For instance, early in the pandemic, HubSpot data found that sales teams boosted their email to prospects by 50%. At the same time, response rates from buyers dropped to an all-time low.

So, the State of Sales in 2022 is a paradox: The adoption of sales technology is at an all-time high, accelerated by the pandemic, yet the most successful sellers\* use technology to make themselves more human and connected to buyers.



91% of sellers at large companies use sales tech once a week.

\* According to LinkedIn's 2022 State of Sales data

*"Digital buying is here to stay, and sales organizations have to adapt to stay relevant and meet their customers where they are."*

**Steve Goldberg**  
CRO, SalesLoft

## Introduction

Data gathered for LinkedIn's 2022 State of Sales report shows that the actions of top performing sellers pave a better pathway to selling the way buyers want to buy. Here are three key ways that top performers outperform:

### 1. Better targeting

Like any tool, sales technology is only as good as the person who's using it. The most successful sellers are using technology such as sales intelligence tools in the right way. Top performers use technology, yes, but they don't use it to simply knock on more doors. Instead they use it to knock on the right doors, finding the welcoming buyers and delivering the right message at the right time.

### 2. Better organizational data

Top performers have uncovered the secrets of successful virtual selling. In a typical week, the most effective sellers spend 18% more time than average sellers updating their CRM systems to ensure they fully understand the buying committee and the complexities of the organizations they are selling to.

### 3. Better time management

Top performers say they spend less time selling than average performers, which sounds counterintuitive. But as we dig into this data, we find effective sellers spend more time using technology and data to research their buyers and to prepare for sales calls.

So, in effect, they're spending less time on the unproductive and potentially damaging blind outreach to buyers and instead leveraging the tech stack to zero in on the prospects most likely to buy.

Ultimately, the most effective sellers put their effort into the deals that data shows are the most likely to close.

In the end, top performers may spend less time knocking on doors — but they spend more time winning.

## Introduction

Welcome to LinkedIn's 2022 State of Sales report. In this report, we'll demonstrate how the past two years accelerated the rise of virtual selling and the growth of the sales tech stack and sales technology. Our data will also show that the sellers who embrace these advancements to prospect intelligently — using data to target accounts, to build relationships, and to understand buyer intent — are the ones who are thriving.

Here are the top three findings from this report:

### 1. The pandemic disrupted the sales process — permanently and positively.

For sellers (and the buyers they target) remote work has gone from rarity to commonplace in the past two years. Sellers have adjusted to this new reality of limited travel, canceled conferences, and rare face-to-face meetings. In response, they've honed their outreach skills, with our data showing that sellers, by a margin of 88% to 46%, are far more likely to do warm calling than cold calling. Buyers love this new world. More than half of buyers (55%) say that working remotely has made buying easier.

**88%** Almost 90% of sellers engage in warm calls; just 46% say they conduct cold calls.

### 2. The continued rise of sales technology and data-driven selling.

Sales technology permeates the modern sales organization. With CRM systems and sales intelligence tools leading the way,

technology is at the center of the virtual selling process, even if it is often being applied ineffectively and invasively. Successful sellers, who are far more likely than others to use sales tech weekly, are embracing data in all its forms to make sure they're reaching out to buyers at the right time. With 86% of sellers saying they have seen a deal lost or delayed in the past year by a decision maker changing roles, using sales intelligence tools and CRM systems to keep track of your buyers has never been more crucial.

**86%** Almost nine in 10 sellers say they have seen a deal lost or delayed in the past year by a decision maker changing roles.

### 3. Top performers are thriving due to their intelligent use of technology.

The most successful salespeople do things differently. For instance, our State of Sales report finds that sellers in the top cohort are far more likely — by a margin of 82% to 49% — than other sellers to do research “all the time” before reaching out to prospects. They're far more likely to use sales tech, to put buyers' needs ahead of theirs, and to leverage LinkedIn. And solutions like Sales Navigator are crucial. The top-performing cohort is 37% more likely than other sellers to say they plan to use sales intelligence tools, such as LinkedIn Sales Navigator, “significantly more” this year.

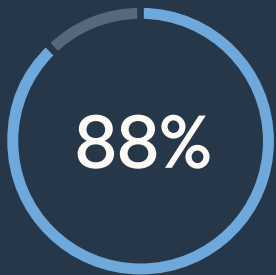
**82%** More than four out of five top sellers say that they conduct research “all the time” before reaching out to prospects.

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Trend #1

# The pandemic disrupted the sales process — **permanently and positively.**



The **researched, warm call** is taking precedence in sales. Almost nine in 10 sellers conduct warm calls. But 46% still conduct cold calls.

*“If you are lucky enough to get someone to answer your cold call, make sure you have done your research, so you are not wasting the person’s time with a spray and pray approach.”*

**Robert Knop**  
CEO, Assist You Today

**Trend #1:** The pandemic disrupted the sales process — permanently and positively.

Over the past two years, the landscape for buying and selling transformed. No longer could sellers meet buyers face-to-face at conferences, at their offices or out at business lunches.

Overnight, selling became virtual selling during the pandemic. Sellers interacted with buyers by commenting on their social media posts, via email, and through other electronic means.

What made selling in this new reality even more difficult is that the pandemic left in its wake a Great Reshuffle as decision makers changed jobs at unprecedented rates. LinkedIn's Economic Graph shows that turnover among corporate director-level-and-above — the mass of B2B buyers — increased 21% globally in the period from December 2021 to March 2022.

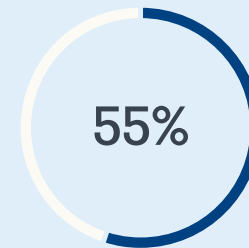
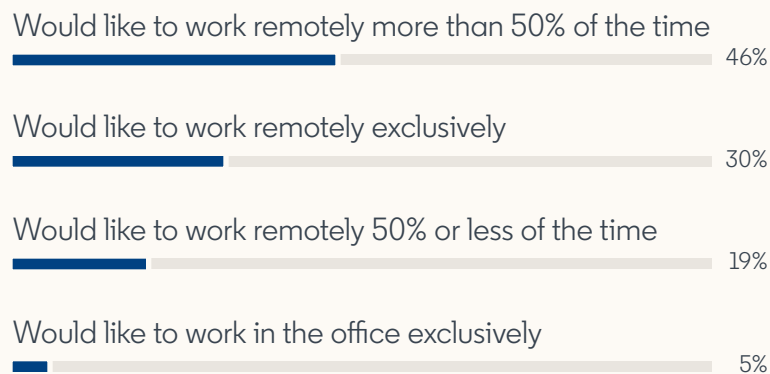
In this turbulent time, it is more imperative than ever for sellers to keep tabs on the roles of their prospects and customers. Why? Because State of Sales data shows that 86% of sellers say that they have seen a deal lost or stalled because a buyer changed roles. The most efficient way to track buyers, whether they are current customers or prospective clients, is online with sales intelligence tools like LinkedIn Sales Navigator, which can automatically flag role changes among buyers in your CRM system.



**Trend #1:** The pandemic disrupted the sales process — permanently and positively.

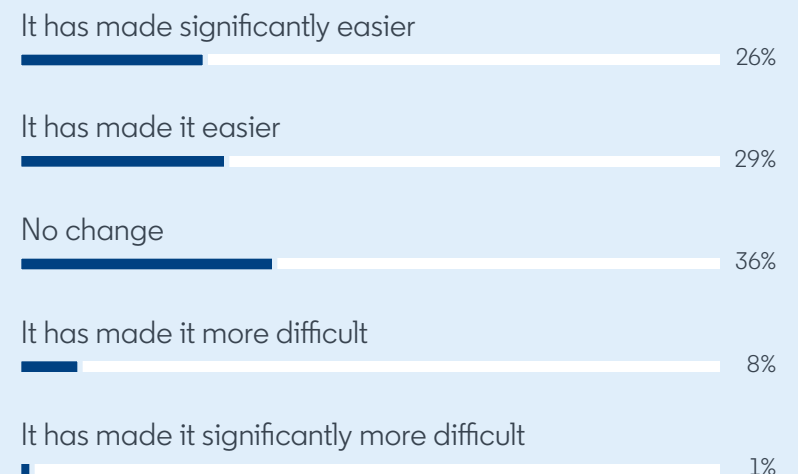
Much of the changing in roles among decision makers is driven by buyers looking for jobs that allow remote work. Currently, 61% of buyers work remotely more than half the time. Even more telling, 76% would like to work remotely more than half of the time. Only 17% of buyers say they don't work remotely, and only 5% say they want to work in the office exclusively.

### As a buyer, what is your **attitude towards** working remotely?



Here's what may be the most important remote work statistic of all: More than half of buyers (55%) say that working remotely has made buying easier.

### As a buyer, how has working remotely impacted your ability to make **purchasing decisions**?





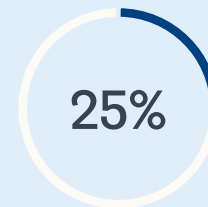
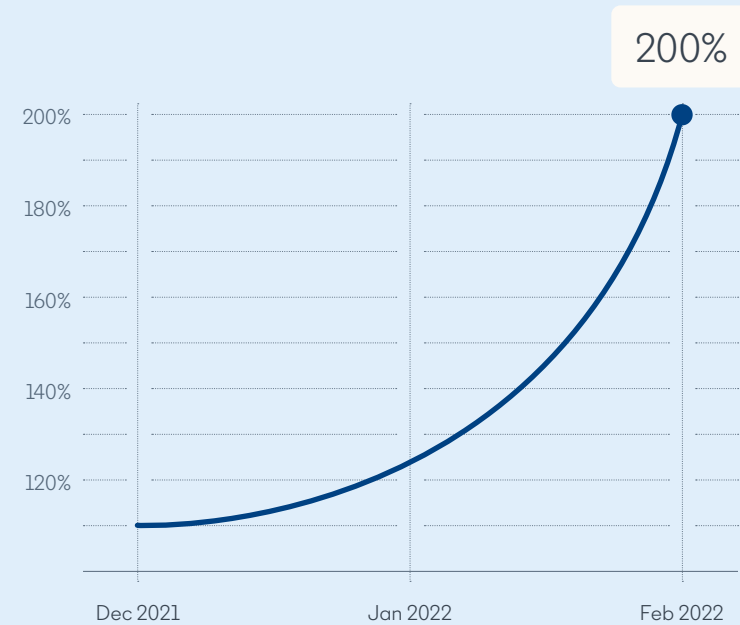
**Trend #1:** The pandemic disrupted the sales process — permanently and positively.

The inescapable conclusion: Remote work for buyers — and its companion, virtual selling — are not going away. LinkedIn data confirms that job postings for remote buyer roles are on the rise — up almost 200% for the United States and Canada in the December 2021 to February 2022 timeframe compared with the same period a year earlier. Note that this trend outpaces the growth of overall remote jobs on the platform by 25%.

### Action for sellers

Your buyers want to work remotely. In-person selling is not going to come roaring back any time soon. Embrace virtual selling. Understand how to use sales technology — without resorting to random spamming — to find prospects, communicate with buyers virtually, and close deals without ever meeting in person.

## Job postings for remote buyer roles are on the rise



The trend of job postings for remote buyers roles is rising 25% faster than the growth of remote jobs overall listed on the LinkedIn platform.

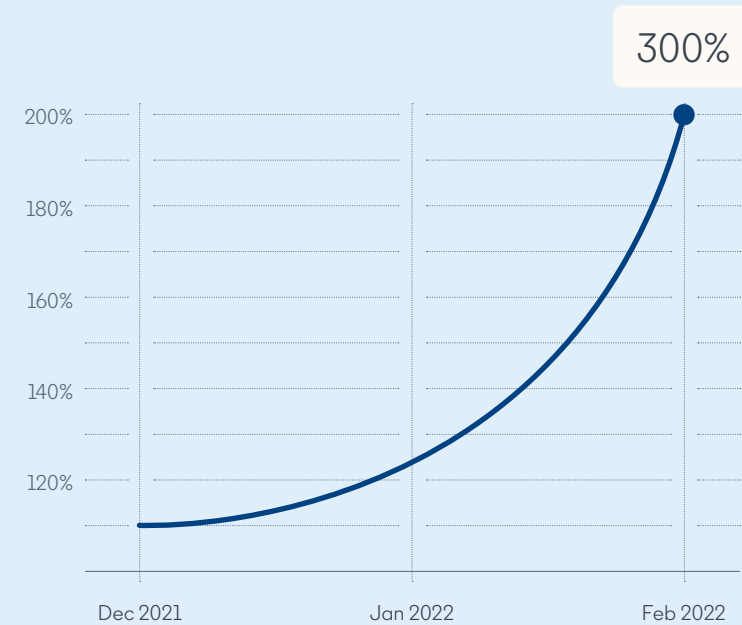
**Trend #1:** The pandemic disrupted the sales process — permanently and positively.

## Sellers want to work remotely, too

Like buyers, sellers want to work remotely. More than half (52%) of sellers say that in the future they want to work remotely 50% of the time, according to our survey.

LinkedIn data found that the number of remote sales jobs posted on the platform increased by almost 300% in both the United States and Canada, in the period from December 2021 to February 2022 compared with the same period a year earlier. And sellers are thriving in this remote world: 38% of sellers say they have closed deals over \$500,000 without ever meeting the buyer face to face.

## Job postings for remote seller roles are on the rise



## \$500,000

38% of sellers say they have closed deals over \$500,000 without ever meeting the buyer face to face.

**Trend #1:** The pandemic disrupted the sales process — permanently and positively.

## The rise of the warm call

With an increasing number of buyers and sellers working remotely, virtual selling has become indispensable. It requires a different kind of outreach. In our survey, buyers also outlined their preferred methods of outreach by sellers. At the top, gaining 66% approval, was email. Far down on the list, at 21%, was a cold call.

Instinctively, virtual sellers have moved to embrace the warm call over the cold call in their outreach. We defined a traditional cold call as when a seller is handed a list of names and dials for dollars using a pre-written script. A warm call is defined as outreach (whether via email or phone) where the buyer has researched the prospects, their company or their industry.

Conducting a warm call requires that sellers research the buyer. Whether it's performing a Google search or consulting a LinkedIn profile, research is increasingly necessary before a seller reaches out to a buyer. In our survey, 75% of sellers say they are doing "significantly more" or "more" research in the past 12 months. LinkedIn data also supports the notion that sellers are adopting a "warm calling" outlook. Our data found a 37% year-over-year increase in sellers who have viewed a buyer's LinkedIn profile before sending an InMail in 2021. Additionally, buyers globally are 181% more likely to accept an InMail from a seller if they already follow the LinkedIn Page of the company where the seller works.

## How buyers want to be contacted by sellers



*"I hate being cold called. I hate being treated like a name on a list. Approaching potential clients with a customized script that treats them like the unique human they are — that's how you maximize impact."*

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

**Trend #1:** The pandemic disrupted the sales process — permanently and positively.

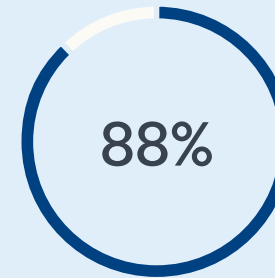
### The takeaway for sellers

Do your research. Be prepared before you pick up the phone or send that email. Research helps ensure that you're bringing relevant, challenging outreach to your buyers. Reaching out with irrelevant information can be a deal killer, because 68% of buyers say they're unlikely to engage with a seller who reaches out with information that's irrelevant to their job. Our survey data indicates that buyers more like to consider brands if sellers engage in behaviors that require research:



### The takeaway for sales managers

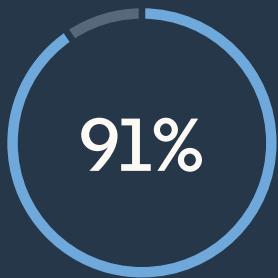
Remote work is here to stay. It will continue to be difficult for your sales teams to see buyers face-to-face, so sales managers will need to equip their teams with the tools, technologies, and training to master virtual selling.



LinkedIn's State of Sales survey data shows that almost nine in 10 (88%) of sellers say they engage in some form of warm calling, but only 46% of sellers still engage in cold calling.

Trend #2

# The continued rise of **sales technology** and data-driven selling



of sellers at companies with 1,000 or more employees use sales technology at least once a week.

*“The sellers who will win in the future will be those who use technology better than their competition. High performing sales teams are all in with technology to automate redundant tasks, streamline customer note logging, and next best action determination.”*

**Tiffani Bova**

Global Growth and Innovation Evangelist, Salesforce

## Trend #2: The continued rise of sales technology and data-driven selling

It's a fact: with the rise of remote work and virtual selling, sales technology is an essential part of selling.

Four out of five (80%) sellers who reached 150% of quota or more use sales tech at least once a week. Only 58% of other sellers use sales tech once a week.

Sales technology and the data it can provide enable sellers to understand their buyers, the role they play in their company and in the buying process, and when they're in the market to actually make a purchase. In a world where remote work is a fact of life, sales tech is the pathway to knowing your buyers, especially when it can remain difficult to meet with them in-person.



Four out of five

80% of sellers who reached 150% of quota or more use sales tech at least once a week. Only 58% of other sellers use sales tech once a week.

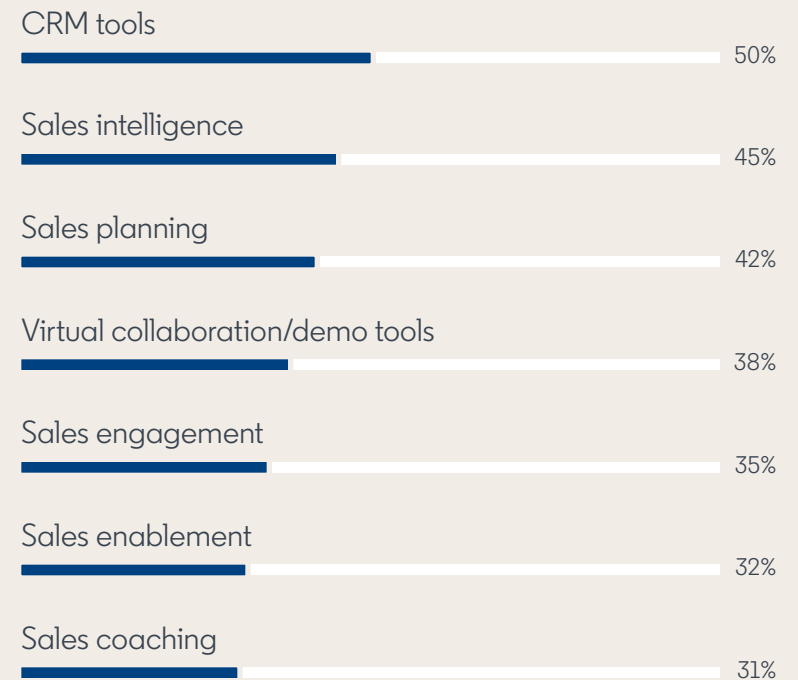
**Trend #2:** The continued rise of sales technology and data-driven selling

## Increased usage of sales technology

What particular tools comprise the sales tech stack? Half of sellers in our survey use CRM tools, 45% use sales intelligence and 42% use sales planning tools.

LinkedIn data shows that CRM skills are highly valued by employers globally based on the “skill mismatch,” which compares the difference between the skills of the entire salesforce (skill supply) versus the skills of salespeople hired in the past 12 months (skills demand). CRM skills ranked at the top of this list for salespeople.

### The **tech** sellers are using



## Trend #2: The continued rise of sales technology and data-driven selling

We asked sellers about their usage of seven different sales technologies, and for every tool that we inquired about, the overwhelming majority of sellers (at least 69%) said they planned to use them “significantly more” or “more” often this year.

CRM and sales intelligence tools are the most important elements of the tech stack, according to the State of Sales survey. Both tools are considered important or very important by 97% of respondents.

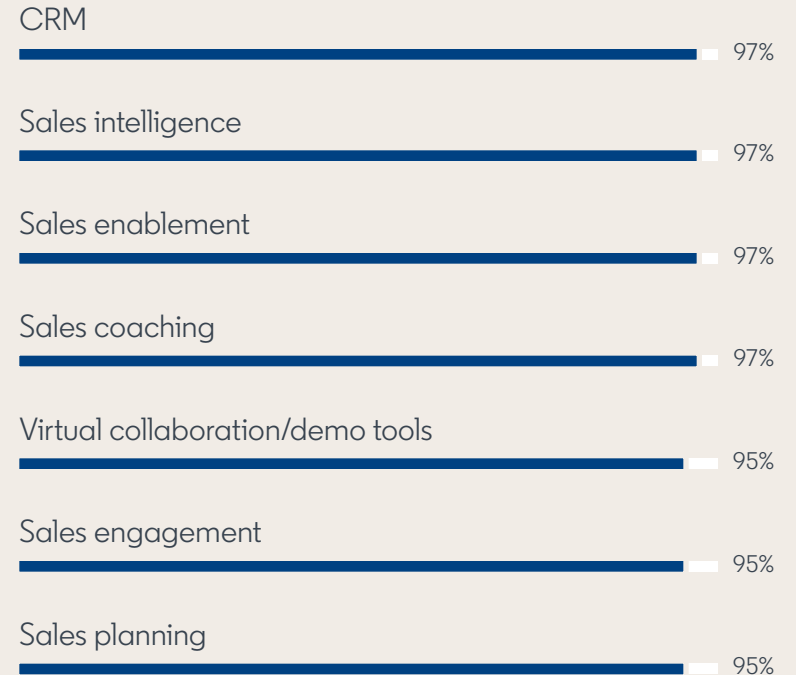
### Action for sellers

Your buyers are changing roles at an unprecedented pace, and this can lead to deals being delayed or derailed. Invest in a tool such as LinkedIn Sales Navigator, which lets you know immediately when buyers are shifting roles and which helps you keep deals on track.

### Action for sales management

As more buyers work remotely, virtual selling has become a necessity. And you can't sell virtually without sales technology. Invest not only in your sales tech stack, but invest in the time to make sure the tools you have integrate with your sales teams' workflow.

## Sellers rate the tech tools that are “very important” or “important”





**Trend #2:** The continued rise of sales technology and data-driven selling

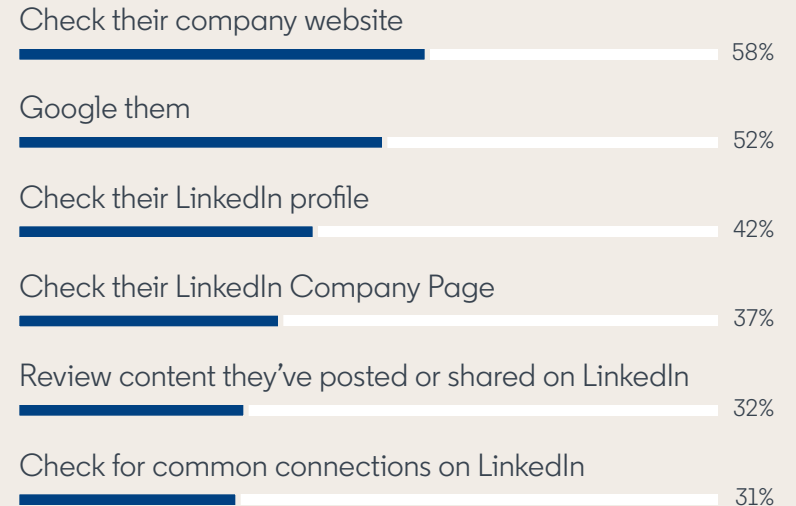
## LinkedIn is central to the buying process

Both buyers and sellers identify LinkedIn as a tool central to the buying process. When buyers are researching the sellers calling on them, four of the top six research methods they use are LinkedIn oriented:

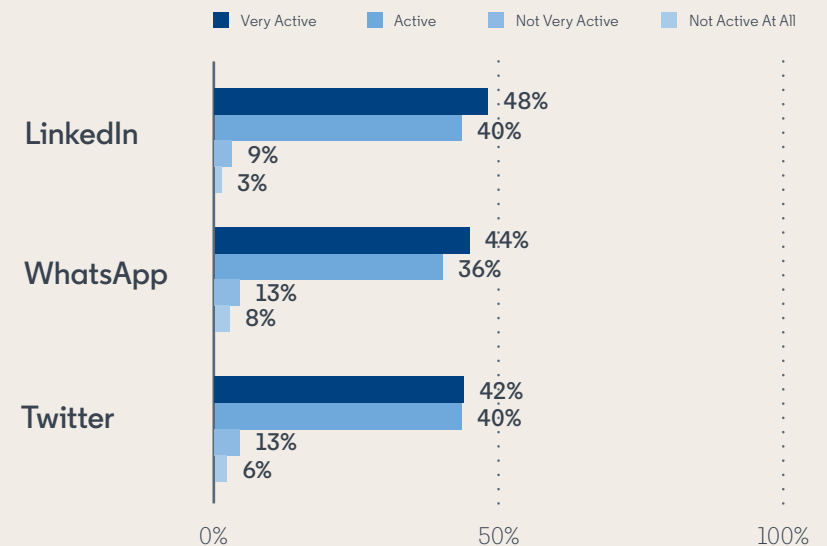
- Viewing the seller's LinkedIn profile
- Viewing the LinkedIn Page of the seller's company
- Reviewing content the seller has posted on LinkedIn
- Checking for common connections on LinkedIn

Sellers are active on social media for business purposes. They use social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Twitter, but they are most active on LinkedIn, according to State of Sales survey data. One reason why is clear: It is where buyers are researching sellers.

## How buyers research sellers who reach out to them



## How active are sellers on social media for business purposes?



**Trend #2:** The continued rise of sales technology and data-driven selling

## A growing variety of data points

With the rise of sales and revenue operations, data is playing a more central role in how sales organizations plan for the future, which includes everything from assigning territories to targeting accounts, industries, and geographies. As you can see in the chart, the three most common ways for sales organizations to use data are to select target accounts, to gauge seller performance, and to select target industries.

### Action for sales management

You can understand your total addressable market in a deeper way. Tools exist — such as LinkedIn Sales Insights — that can help your sales organization understand (in a data-driven way) the companies, industries, and geographical regions where your products and services are an excellent fit. Investing in these tools will give your sellers a sharper, more efficient focus in their buyer outreach.

## The primary ways sales organizations are using data



**Trend #2:** The continued rise of sales technology and data-driven selling

## Sellers value buyer intent data

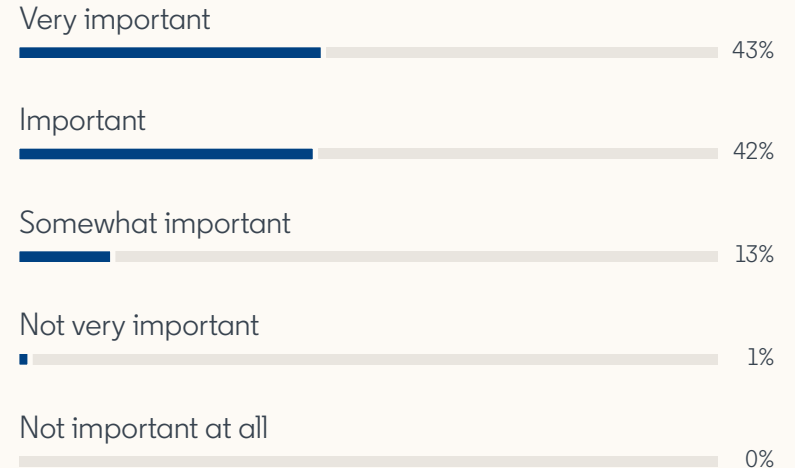
The use of buyer intent technology to find prospects who are ready to buy right now is increasingly central to the sale process. Almost nine in 10 sellers (85%) say determining buyer intent is important for their sales organization.

Sales organizations are using a variety of tools to gauge buyer intent. Topping the list is LinkedIn Sales Navigator, which is used by 38% of respondents.

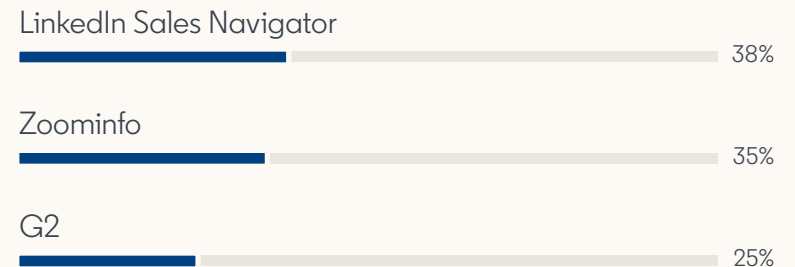
### Action for sales management

Research shows that only a small fraction of potential buyers are currently in the market for your product. Invest in buyer intent technology to help ensure your sellers are reaching out to the buyers who have their checkbooks out right now.

## The importance of buyer intent to sales organizations



## The primary tools for assessing buyer intent



**Trend #2:** The continued rise of sales technology and data-driven selling

## Data challenges

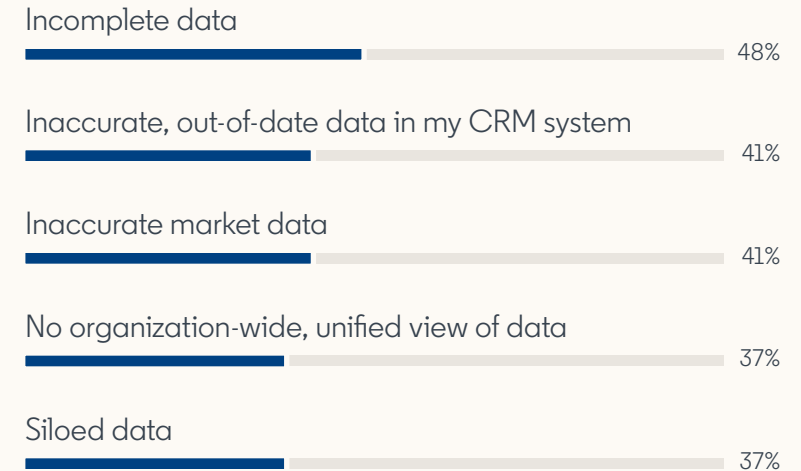
With the rise of data's importance in sales organizations, challenges are emerging. Sellers are looking for unique data that gives them an edge, and, in our survey, they identify the top providers of unique data as Google and LinkedIn. Almost half of sellers (48%) say their biggest data challenge is incomplete data.

The remainder of the top three data challenges facing sellers are inaccurate CRM data (41%) and inaccurate market data (41%). In the chart, you can see how sellers identify their biggest data challenges.

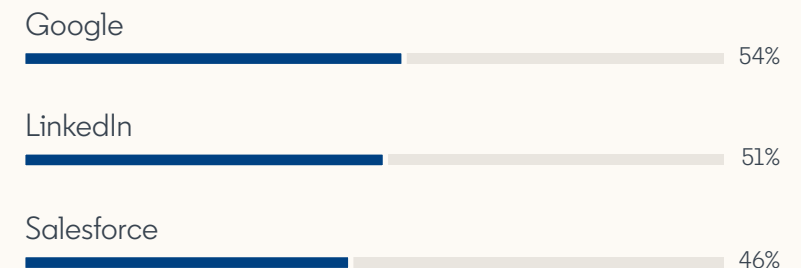
### Action for sellers

Inaccurate CRM data is a challenge for sellers, but there's a solution. LinkedIn Sales Navigator's data validation tool automatically flags out-of-date information in a seller's CRM system to help keep tabs on prospects and keep deals on track.

## Sellers' biggest data challenges



## Brands providing unique data to inform sales organizations' strategies



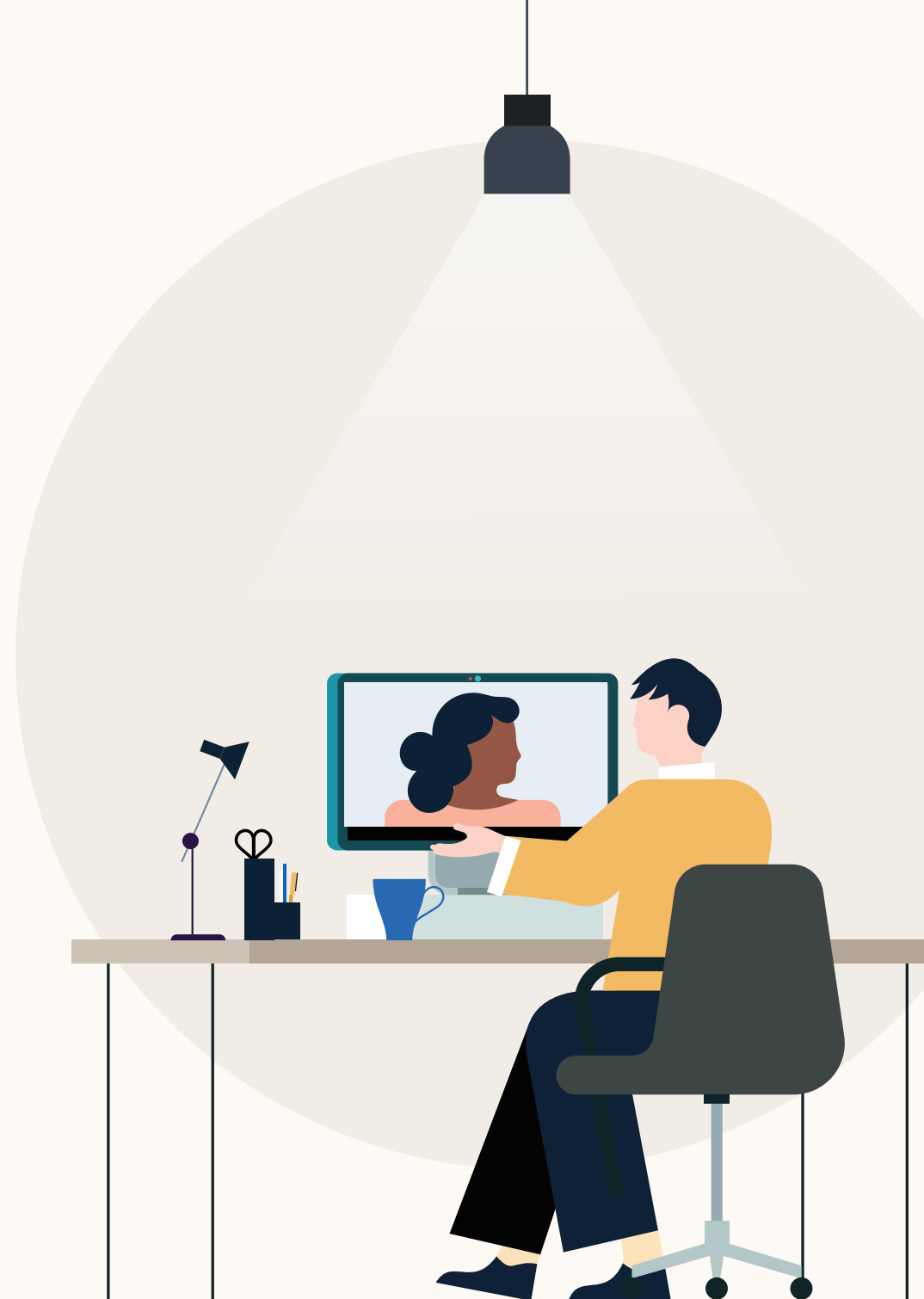
## Trend #2: The continued rise of sales technology and data-driven selling

### The takeaway for sellers

Sellers, there's no doubt sales tech and the data it provides can give you an edge. In the current Great Reshuffle, sales tools can supply the data to know when buyers are shifting roles and when a deal or a customer may be in danger. The most effective sellers are using CRM systems and other sales technology to see the latest movements at their customers and prospects.

### The takeaway for sales management

While the CRM system remains the most used sales technology tool, other elements of the sales tech stack — such as sales intelligence — are not far behind. As a next step, forward-looking sales managers should be working to integrate their sales tech stack so that the tools work together. For instance, LinkedIn Sales Navigator's CRM Sync feature enables data from LinkedIn to be automatically uploaded into CRM systems.



Trend #3

# Top performers are thriving due to their intelligent use of technology.

82%



of top performers say they perform research “all of the time” before reaching out to prospects.

49%



Fewer than 50% of salespeople who didn’t achieve the highest performance level say they perform research “all of the time.”

*“Top performers take the time to put the buyer first, and they also take the time to make the entire team better. Sales organizations should reward top performers for sharing best practices, and should invest in systems to centralize wisdom, so the entire team can win together.”*

**Shaan Hathiramani**  
CEO, Flockjay

### Trend #3: Top performers are thriving due to their intelligent use of technology.

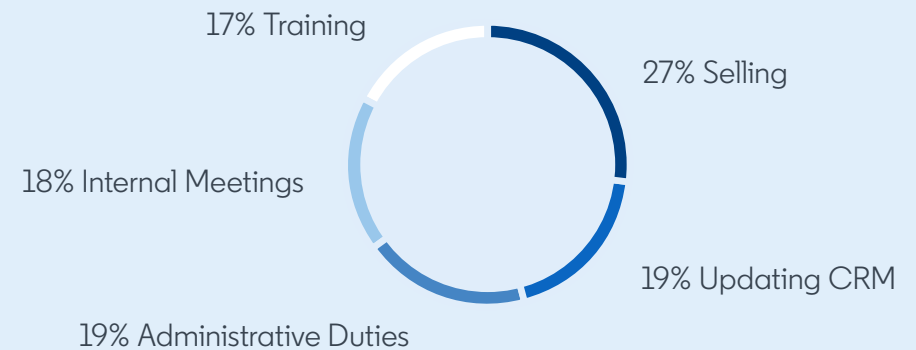
Top performing salespeople do things differently. It's important to understand this fact, because replicating the behaviors of top performers throughout your sales organizations can pay huge revenue dividends.

What exactly do top performers do differently than average performers? To answer this question, we divided the 750 sellers who took our survey into four categories:

- Sellers who met quota
- Sellers who exceeded quota by **1% to 24%**
- Sellers who exceeded quota by **25% to 49%**
- Sellers who exceeded quota by **50% or more**

Sellers, according to our data, spend about a quarter of their time (27%) selling products and services. The remainder of their time is spent updating their CRM systems and on administrative tasks, internal meetings and training.

### Sellers spend about a **quarter of their time selling** products and services



*“Don’t be so quick to dismiss ‘non-selling activity.’ The modern sales cycle requires more than just smiling and dialing to be successful. Research, training, and collaboration are key elements required to move deals forward. The key is asking if an activity has either short-term or long-term value or if you are just doing it because of inertia or poor planning.”*

**David J.P. Fisher**  
President, RockStar Consulting

### Trend #3: Top performers are thriving due to their intelligent use of technology.

The sellers who surpassed 150% of quota spend their time differently, which offers a window into why they are more successful. First, top performers actually spend about 10% less time selling than average performers. Over a year, they spend about six fewer days selling than average performers. Instead, top performers spend a greater proportion of their time prospecting and researching buyers, so that when they're selling, they are far more likely to win.

Second, top performers spend about 18% more time updating their CRM system than average performers do. Top performers spend time in their CRM, to ensure that they have the latest information on their buyers and updated insight into the buying committee. It helps ensure they are prepared for every sales call.

Overall, our survey data identified five key areas where the top cohort who exceeded quota by 50% or more take a different approach than their peers. What is remarkable about these findings is that all of the ways top performers stand out are behaviors that can be learned and that sales organizations can teach to their entire team. On the next several pages we'll take a deeper dive into the behaviors that separate top performers from their peers.



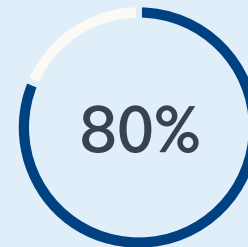


**Trend #3:** Top performers are thriving due to their intelligent use of technology.

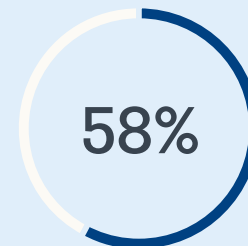
## Top performers deploy sales technology — in the right way

The highest performing cohort was far more likely to use sales technology. Our survey found that 80% of top performing sellers use sales technology at least once a week. The average for all sellers who took our survey was 58%. At companies with more than 1,000 employees, 91% of sellers use sales tech at least once a week. Top performers rely on their CRM systems much more than other sellers do.

For instance, by about 30 percentage points, top sellers are significantly more confident in their CRM data than other sellers are. Similarly, by about 20 percentage points, top sellers say they are significantly more likely to use their CRM systems more often this year than other sellers are. Additionally, top sellers identified the flexibility of sales tech as its primary advantage far more often than the other cohorts, by 38% to 27%. The emphasis on sales technology's flexibility indicates that top performers are more than perfunctory users of sales tools: They have mastered a variety of features of these tools and are maximizing their value.



of top performing sellers use sales technology at least once a week.



About three in five of all sellers use sales technology about once a week, far less often than top performers do.

**Trend #3:** Top performers are thriving due to their intelligent use of technology.

## Top performers **rely** on LinkedIn

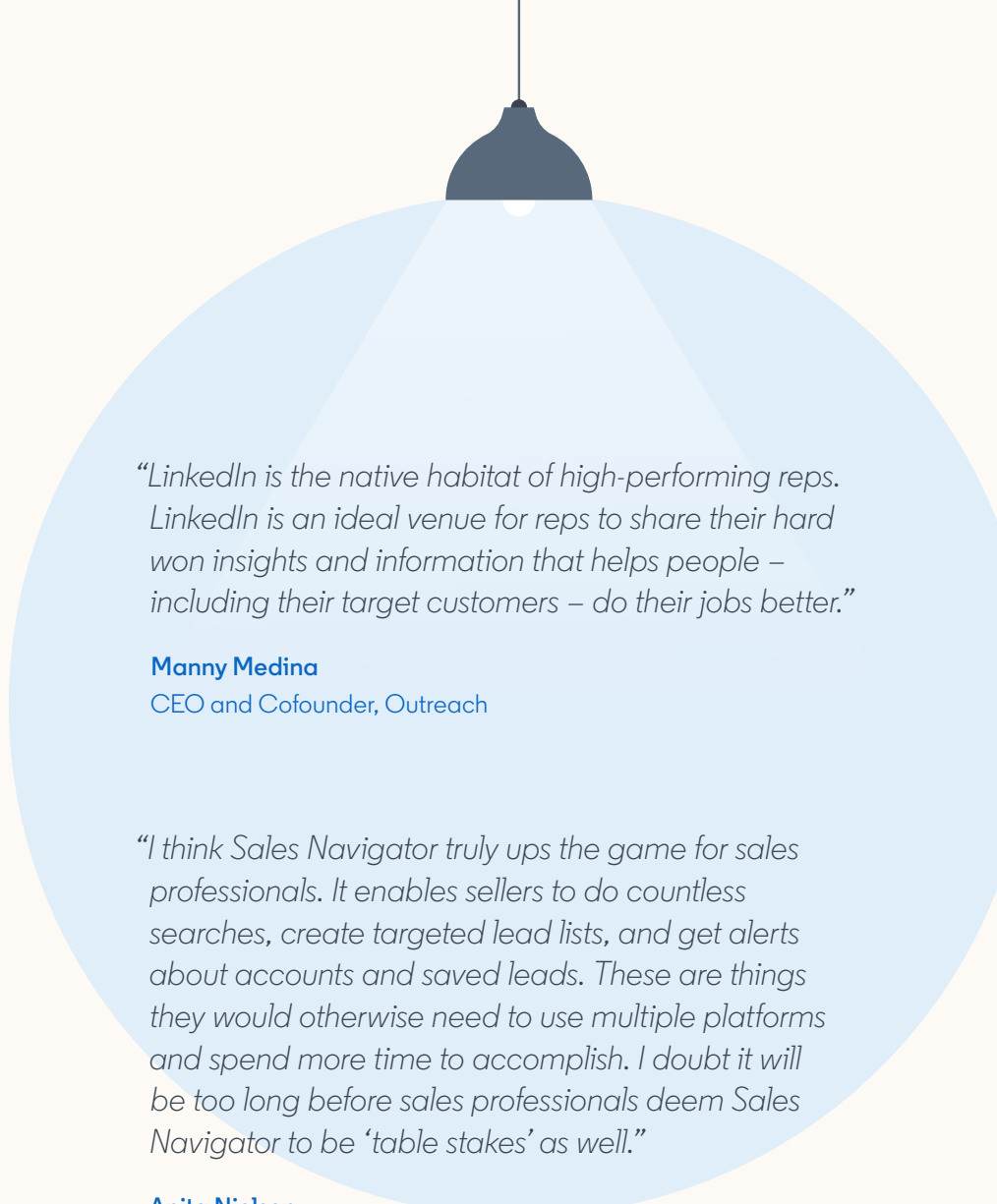
Members of the highest performing group of sellers in our survey are also more likely (53%) to say they “significantly” expanded their network on LinkedIn in 2021 compared to less than 25% of the other cohorts who say they made a similar commitment.

Moreover, the highest performing group was far more likely to be planning to boost its usage of LinkedIn in 2022. For instance, 53% of the top performing group said it was committed to writing many more articles for LinkedIn compared to just 39% of the other groups. They were also “much more” likely to use LinkedIn to share company content and third-party content than lower performers.

Finally, the top-performing cohort is 37% more likely than other sellers to say they plan to use LinkedIn Sales Navigator and other sales intelligence tools “significantly more” this year.

### Action for sellers

Top performing sellers are far more likely to say they are using LinkedIn. Set a calendar reminder for 30 minutes each month to spend time updating your LinkedIn profile. Take time to update your latest projects, add a new skill, endorse someone else, or try a new cover image.



*“LinkedIn is the native habitat of high-performing reps. LinkedIn is an ideal venue for reps to share their hard won insights and information that helps people – including their target customers – do their jobs better.”*

**Manny Medina**  
CEO and Cofounder, Outreach

*“I think Sales Navigator truly ups the game for sales professionals. It enables sellers to do countless searches, create targeted lead lists, and get alerts about accounts and saved leads. These are things they would otherwise need to use multiple platforms and spend more time to accomplish. I doubt it will be too long before sales professionals deem Sales Navigator to be ‘table stakes’ as well.”*

**Anita Nielsen**  
President, LDK Advisory Services


**Trend #3:** Top performers are thriving due to their intelligent use of technology.

## Top performers do **significantly more research** before outreach

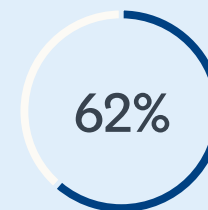
More than four out of five sellers (82%) who exceeded quota by 50% or more said they did research “all of the time” before reaching out to prospects. The highest figure in any of the other cohorts was 49%.

This data indicates that highest level sellers are conducting research — via Google, by visiting company websites, by perusing LinkedIn profiles of prospects, reading analyst reports, consulting SEC filings — that enables them to understand their targets in a way that can lead to meaningful conversations and more closed deals.

Since the start of the pandemic, 62% of the group that exceeded quota by 50% or more, say they have ramped up their research “significantly.” The highest figure in the other cohorts was 36%.



More than four out of five sellers (82%) who exceeded quota by 50% or more said they **“always” did research before reaching out** to prospects.



of the group that exceeded quota by 50% or more, say they have ramped up their research “significantly.”

### Trend #3: Top performers are thriving due to their intelligent use of technology.

LinkedIn data supports the concept that sellers who do research on their buyers reap rewards. A LinkedIn study from last year found that LinkedIn InMails sent to buyers get an 86% uplift if the seller had viewed the buyer's profile prior to sending a message. Further, if sellers follow their target company's LinkedIn Page, InMail acceptances increased 13%. Additionally, it's useful for sellers to react to digitally-active and engaged buyers. For instance, buyers who have recently posted content on LinkedIn are 52% more likely to accept an InMail within 30 days of their posting content. Similarly, buyers who have recently posted a job change on LinkedIn are 65% more likely to accept an InMail.

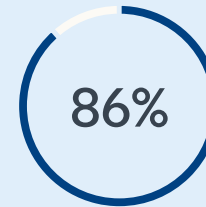
*"What is smarter selling? Not just researching the company, industry, product fit, but also the buyer themselves, their team, understanding how they buy, how they evaluate. Research, question asking, education and learning will always trump volume, clinical, cold outreach, and a "dialing for dollars" culture. And, it is a better buyer experience, which is the most important."*

**Michelle Benfer**

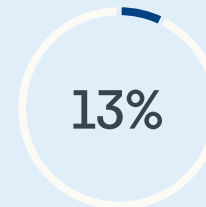
SVP of Sales, The Americas, HubSpot

#### Action for sellers

Buyers want warm, informed outreach. Before reaching out to buyers, do your homework. Take a look at their LinkedIn profile. Examine their company's LinkedIn page. Research their industry. It will pay off in productive conversations with buyers.



A LinkedIn study from last year found that LinkedIn InMails sent to buyers get an 86% uplift if the seller had viewed the buyer's profile prior to sending a message.



If sellers follow their target company's LinkedIn Page, InMail acceptances increased 13%.



Buyers who have recently posted a job change on LinkedIn are 65% more likely to accept an InMail.

**Trend #3:** Top performers are thriving due to their intelligent use of technology.

## Top performers put the buyer first

Our research shows that the highest-performing cohort was far more likely to say they “always” put the buyer first. In fact, 70% of the group that exceeded quota by 50% or more say they “always” put the buyer first, far more than any other grouping. Of those who met quota, for instance, just 39% say they “always” put the buyer first.

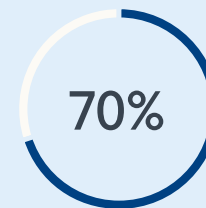
Putting buyers (and their needs) first is not an empty phrase. It’s a mindset that top performers use to win — and keep — business.

### Action for sales management

Buyers want to be challenged by sellers. Provide your sales team with a strong narrative that questions the status quo and positions your products and services as game changers.

Putting the buyer first doesn’t simply mean giving them what they ask for. Sometimes it means challenging the buyer’s assumptions, because, sellers, you have more influence on buyers than you may think. More than half (54%) of buyers say that sellers change their opinion “often” or “very often.” When the response “somewhat often” is also included, that figure jumps to 83%. The bottom line is more than four in five buyers agree that sellers have the power to change minds.

Even more encouraging: 89% of buyers say they are more likely to consider a brand if a seller changes the buyer’s way of thinking. Don’t be afraid to question a buyer’s assumptions. Changing their minds can prompt them to reconsider your product or service — which can lead to closed/won deals.



Of the group that exceeded quota by 50% or more, 70% say they “always” put the buyer first, far more than any other grouping.



Of sellers who met quota, just 39% say they “always” put the buyer first.

**Trend #3:** Top performers are thriving due to their intelligent use of technology.

## Top performers work closely with marketing


Almost three-quarters (70%) of the highest performing cohort in our survey say that marketing leads are “excellent.” Just 43% of all sellers rate marketing’s leads at the same level.

The highest performing sellers understand that marketing in all its forms — from brand building to generating leads — is key to helping ensure salespeople are calling on buyers who are already halfway sold when they walk in the door.

### Action for sellers

Meet monthly with marketing to understand the customer journey and what content is performing well with your target audience. Share what’s resonating with your prospects in sales conversations and what questions they are asking, so marketing can create content around those topics.

70%



of the highest performing cohort in our survey say that marketing leads are “excellent.”

43%



of all sellers rate marketing’s leads at the same level.

**Trend #3:** Top performers are thriving due to their intelligent use of technology.

### The takeaway for sellers

Of course, sellers want to sell. They want to get on the phone and pitch prospects and close deals. But an essential part of selling is doing the homework ahead of sales calls that demonstrates to buyers that you understand their business and know how you can help them. To be prepared for sales calls, top performers are using LinkedIn and other sales technology at higher rates than other sellers.

### The takeaway for sales management

Sellers are not born, they're made. By investing in training to instill the behaviors of top sellers in the rest of the sales team, sales managers can boost results throughout the organization. Additionally, far too many companies are not getting the maximum return from their investment in sales technology. Many sales tech tools have features that are going unused by sellers. But top performing sellers understand that sales technologies are highly flexible tools that can be leveraged in a variety of ways to uncover opportunities and to close deals.

*"If sales leaders are aware of the best practices of high performers on their team, then those behaviors should be part of the interview process ... If you can hire those sellers who come in with good habits, now it is just a matter of teaching them about what they are selling versus how to sell successfully."*

**Tiffani Bova**

Global Growth and Innovation Evangelist, Salesforce

*"If you did an assessment of the top 15% in a sales organization, top reps in today's world will demonstrate high scores and strong capability in these five competency categories: professionalism, drive for results, relationship management, product knowledge, and customer success. If you can teach and enable middle performers to upsell in these areas, your sales roles will increase dramatically."*

**Joe DiMisa**

Senior Client Partner, Korn Ferry

# Contributors

For this report, we interviewed many prominent sales professionals and influencers. Some were quoted directly; all helped shape this State of Sales report. We'd like to thank them for their time and insight.

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**Shaan Hathiramani**, CEO, Flockjay

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**Robert Knop**, CEO, Assist You Today

**Manny Medina**, CEO and Cofounder, Outreach

**Anita Nielsen**, President, LDK Advisory Services



# Methodology

This United States and Canada edition of the 2022 State of Sales report is part of a series from LinkedIn that includes seven other reports: Asia Pacific (encompassing Australia, India, and Singapore); Brazil, France, Germany, Mexico, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. For each country, we surveyed 750 buyers and 750 salespeople and sales managers. For the Netherlands, we surveyed 200 buyers and 200 sellers. For the entire State of Sales project, we surveyed about 14,000 people globally.

For the United States and Canada 2022 survey, Schlesinger Group, a research panel company, conducted two online surveys in January 2022: one of sales professionals, the other of decision makers. Both sample included respondents over 21 years old who are employed at companies of different sizes and industries.

In addition to the survey, we drew on relevant data from the LinkedIn platform relating to the sales profession. We also conducted numerous interviews with sales professionals and influencers.

LinkedIn Sales Solutions makes it simple to tap into the power of LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network of more than 830 million members, empowering every salesperson to put buyers first. Our portfolio of Sales Solutions, including **LinkedIn Sales Navigator** and **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 organization.

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For more information about LinkedIn Sales Navigator and LinkedIn Sales Insights, visit [lnkd.in/sales](https://lnkd.in/sales)