

The State of B2B Sales 2022



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Introduction and Key Findings

Introduction & Methodology

As a sales intelligence platform, Lusha deals in data. We pride ourselves on the quality and accuracy of the data that we provide to our customers, and we recognize how the wrong data can be the difference between a closed deal and a missed opportunity.

This led us to ask, how does the B2B sales industry at large feel about the data that it's currently working with? How much do today's Sales Development Representatives (SDRs) rely on sales intelligence software, and what is their level of satisfaction with these tools?

We chose to use this report to zero in on the initial steps of the sales cycle, from lead generation and prospecting up until the point of demo, allowing us to look at the sales cycle up until and including the pitch in granular detail. As a result, this report provides an insightful peek behind the curtain at the challenges facing both businesses and sales professionals today in the earliest stages.

While almost all SDRs have access to sales intelligence tools, there are key challenges occurring with personalization, accuracy, and productivity. Not only are these issues negatively impacting morale, but they also result in a direct impact on sales and revenue for the business.

Methodology

To get a bird's eye view into where the industry stands on essential data challenges, we commissioned a survey of 500 B2B sales representatives from across the United States. 80% of respondents varied in seniority from Junior Sales Reps to Directors of Sales, while the remaining 20% of the pool included the most senior sales executives - Head of Sales and VP Sales positions. The survey was completed by Global Surveyz, an independent survey company, and took place during May 2022.

The respondents were all from companies with more than 50 employees in the Financial Services, IT, and Technology industries, with 50% selling directly to end-users, and 50% selling to other businesses. They were recruited through a global B2B research panel and invited via email to complete the survey. The average amount of time spent on the survey was 6 minutes and 41 seconds. The answers to the majority of the non-numerical questions were randomized, in order to prevent order bias in the answers.

Key Findings

1 **Despite widespread use of in-house sales intelligence tools, salespeople are supplementing to see success**

95% of salespeople report having access to sales intelligence tools, with 34% stating that they rely heavily on the technology given to them by their organization. The top sales intelligence tools in use are Sales Navigator, ZoomInfo, and HubSpot Sales Hub. The larger the company, the greater the reliance on in-house tools appears to be. However, in 60% of cases overall, salespeople are relying on their own supplemental tools for prospecting, which should be a serious wake-up call to today's businesses.

2 **Regardless of which tools SDRs are utilizing - they are experiencing a number of growing troubles**

Whether salespeople are utilizing tools from their organization, or supplementing sales intelligence with additional technology, 96% of respondents feel they need additional support in the early sales cycle, especially with getting the right data to start the conversation. The sales tools in use today are clearly in need of improvements. In addition, 77% of sales professionals say they are facing troubles in starting the sales cycle, with the top issue getting the right data to craft personalized pitches - a must-have in today's hyper-personalized business world.

3 **All of these challenges have a direct impact on SDRs' productivity, satisfaction, and morale**

Despite the proliferation of sales intelligence tools, salespeople are struggling, and 97% indicated that the early sales cycle can take a personal toll. The results pack an emotional punch. 12% experience burnout from the amount of outreach required, 27% experience feelings of frustration, and 28% report feeling unprofessional when they don't have the right data to hand. When morale is low, productivity generally takes a hit, and we can see this reflected in the data, with as much as 20% of a salesperson's monthly outreach efforts not materializing into sales. This equates to an average of 45.5 hours per person, each month.

4

Wrongly targeted outreach doesn't just harm the salesperson, it also damages the business

For the business, the same challenges are believed to directly impact sales business revenue. Respondents openly stated a belief that wrongly targeted outreach can have a catastrophic impact on sales, either through direct loss of ongoing sales (52%), or reputational damage, which can be split into bad reviews on social media or professional job boards (38%) and potential damage to company reputation due to the unprofessionalism and inaccuracy of the outreach (49%). Just 10% of respondents said poor outreach processes have no impact on the business.

5

SDRs know what they need: accurate and personalized data earlier in the sales cycle

For companies looking to improve the sales intelligence tools offered to their SDRs, respondents called out the exact areas in which they are most challenged, and where help could be provided to optimize their prospecting. 30% expressed a desire for access to better data to help them start conversations, while 22% want accurate contact information for their leads. SDRs overwhelmingly recognize the potential benefits of sales intelligence technology, including helping to reduce time spent on research, helping to focus their prospecting on relevant leads, and cutting down time spent on outreach. To realize these benefits, however, an emphasis needs to be placed on both accuracy and personalization.

Survey Findings

Top Challenges in Starting a Sales Cycle

77% of sales professionals admitted to having challenges in starting a sales cycle. This is a very high number, and points to the need for improvements in today's sales tools.

What kind of troubles are salespeople facing? The top answer, from 38% of salespeople is difficulty with personalizing their pitches to each individual prospect. This is a large problem, especially considering that, by this point in the sales cycle, a lot of legwork has been put in to finding the right prospects. If salespeople stall here, and can't create a compelling and personalized pitch, this work will have been done for nothing. Without a personalized pitch, the chances are they won't be successful, as people are increasingly seeing personalization as table stakes.

Additionally, 27% of salespeople report difficulty in qualifying their leads, and 12% are feeling challenged by finding the right prospects in the first place.

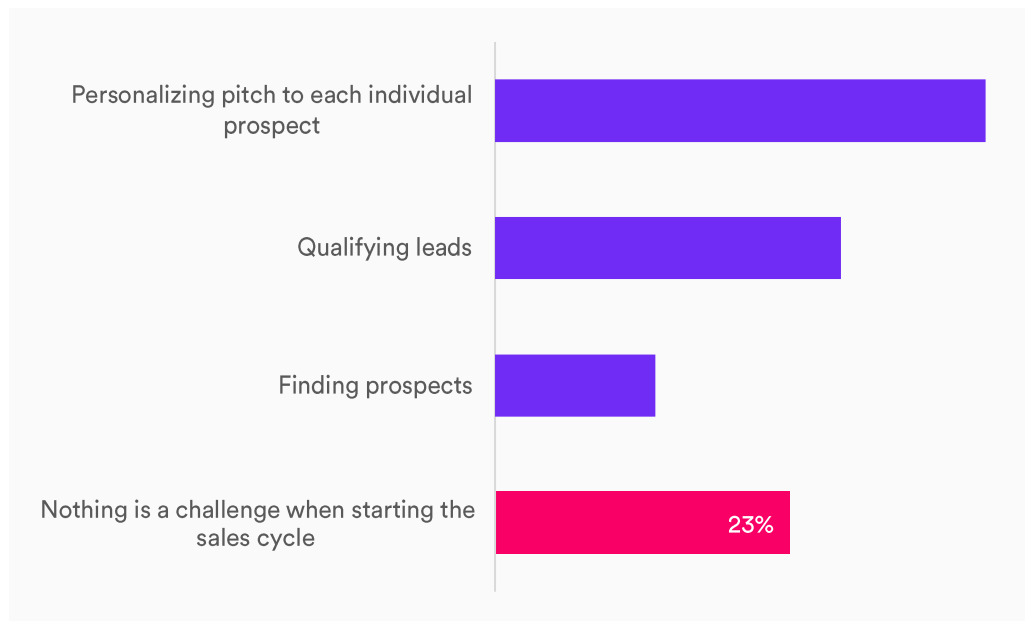


Figure 1: Top Challenges in Starting a Sales Cycle

Biggest Personal Toll of the Early Sales Cycle by Company Size

We asked survey respondents what part of the early sales cycle takes the biggest personal toll on them.

The biggest personal tolls reported are getting treated unkindly by disinterested prospects (30%), feeling unprofessional when reaching out to non-relevant prospects (28%), and getting frustrated by the time wasted on admin work such as prospecting (27%) when they could be selling.

When deep diving to compare these answers by company size, we see that at smaller companies (< 200 people), 38% of SDRs feel unprofessional when reaching out to wrongly targeted prospects. This number drops to 30% in companies of 500+ people.

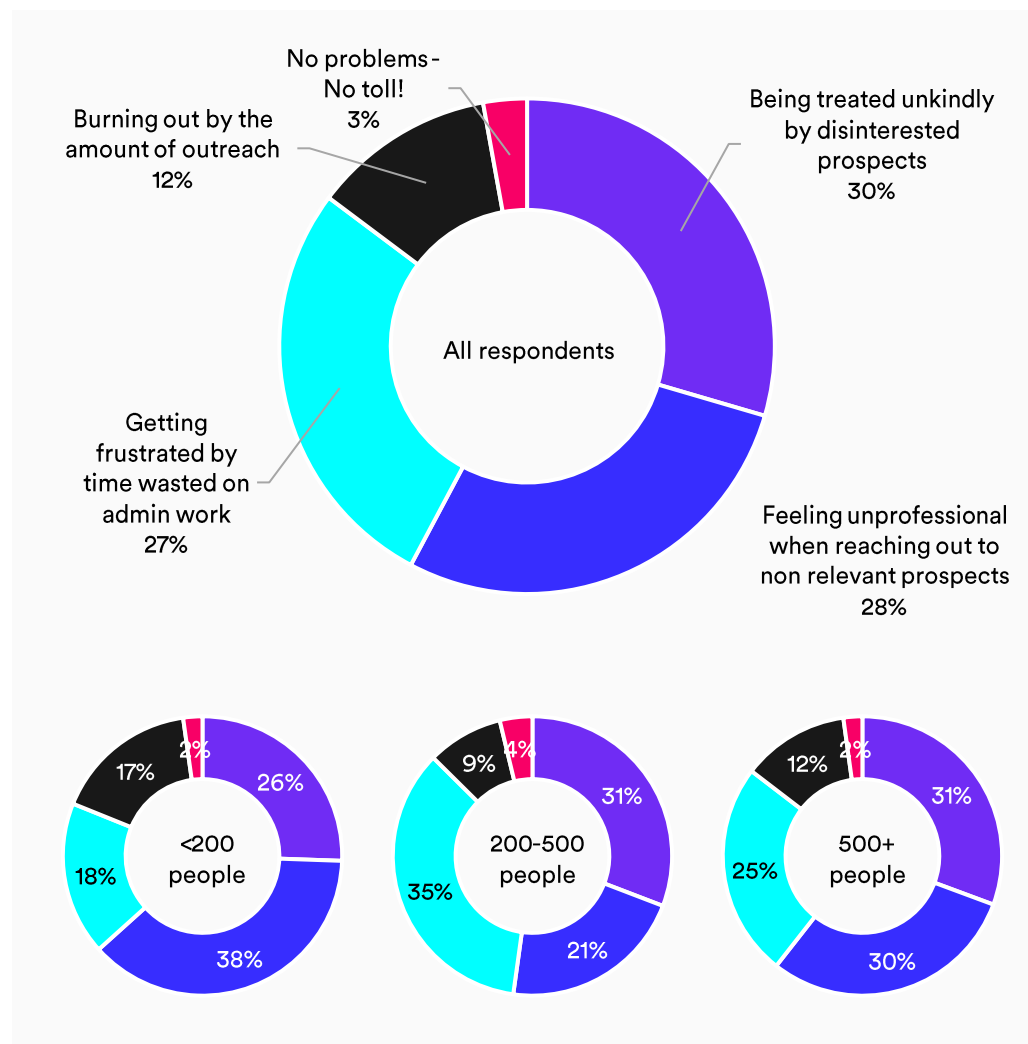


Figure 2: Biggest Personal Toll of The Early Sales Cycle by Company Size

Where in the Early Sales Cycle is Help Needed the Most?

96% of sales professionals feel they need help in the early sales cycle.

The top area they reported wanting help with is in getting data about their prospects that can be used to start the right conversations (30%).

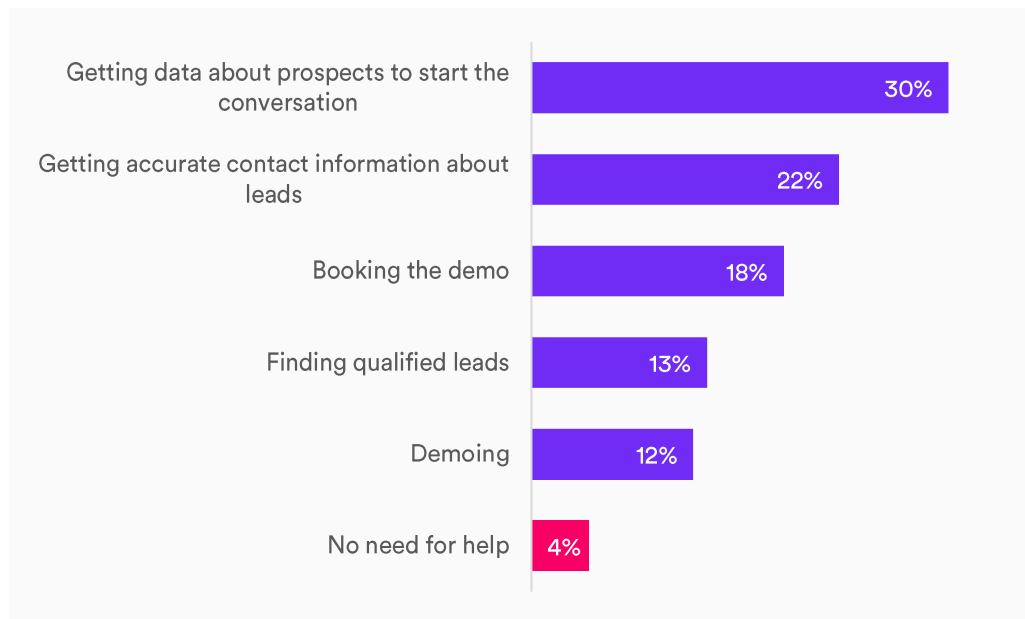


Figure 3: Parts in Early Sales Cycle Where Help is Most Needed

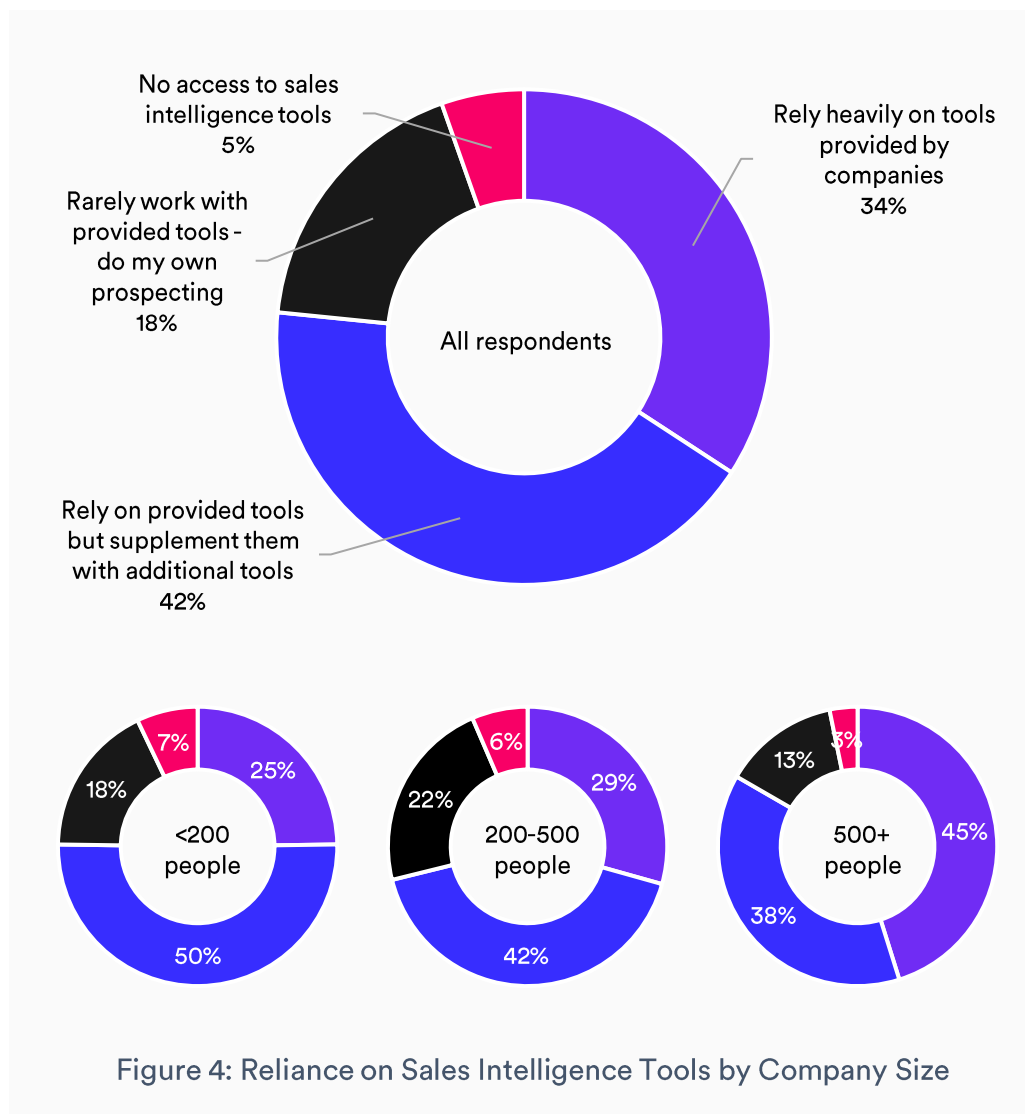
*Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding up of numbers

Reliance On Sales Intelligence Tools by Company Size

To what extent do sales teams rely on the sales intelligence technologies provided by their companies?

95% of survey respondents have access to these kinds of tools, with 76% reporting that they rely on them to some extent, either alone or supplemented with other tools.

There is a significant correlation between company size and usage of tools. The bigger the corporation, the more SDRs report relying on the tools provided by their company (45% vs. 25%).



Impact of Sales Intelligence Software on Pipeline Building

When it comes to the impact of sales intelligence tools on their work, the vast majority of survey respondents agree that there are multiple benefits to working with these tools. 94% agree that these tools do their leg work for them so they don't have to do the research on their own; 91% agree that sales intelligence tools help to focus their prospecting on more relevant leads; and 88% agree this technology cuts down on the amount of outreach they have to do.

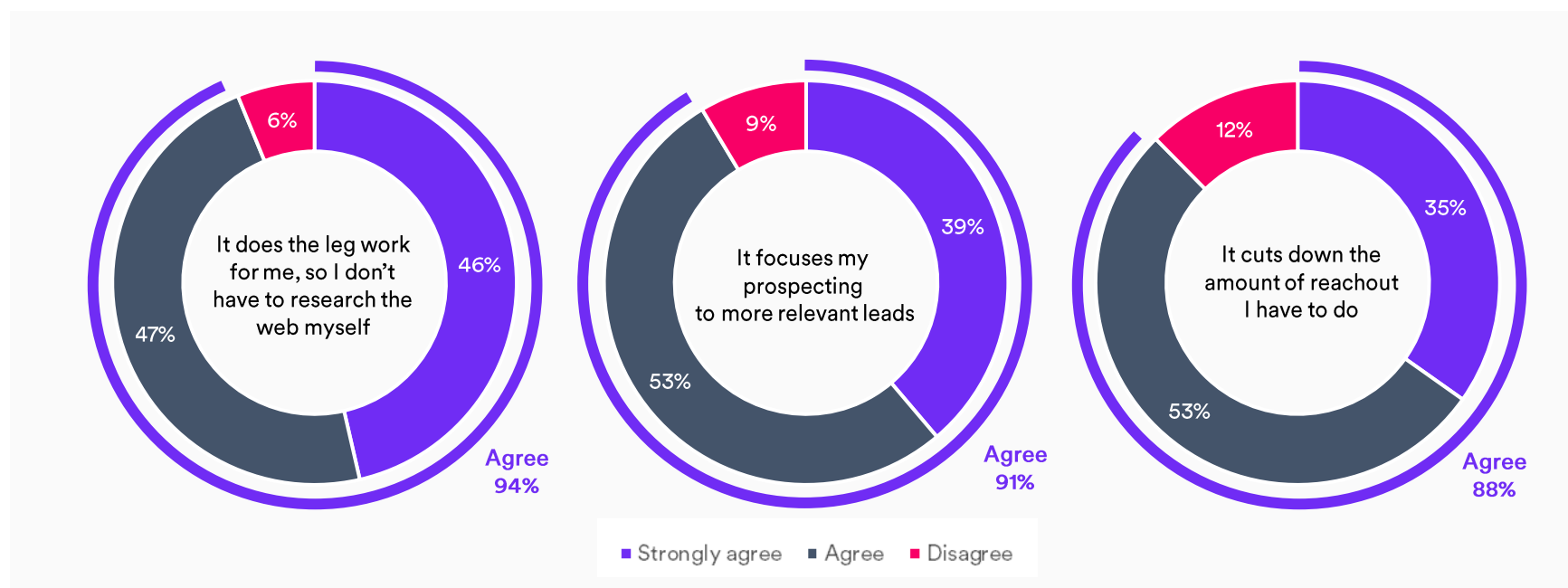


Figure 5: Impact of Sales Intelligence Software on Pipeline Building

What Percentage of Monthly Outreach Calls Don't Materialize Into Closed Sales?

On average, respondents report that 20% of monthly outreach calls don't materialize into a sale. That equates to 45.5 hours each month going down the drain.

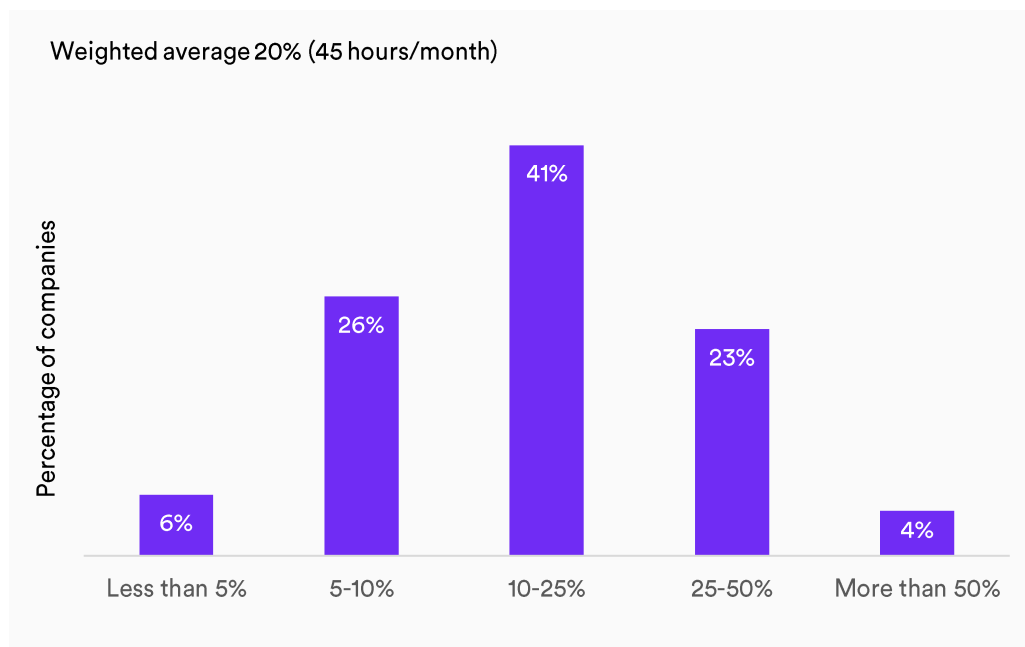


Figure 6: Percentage of Monthly Outreach Calls that Don't Materialize into a Sale

What is the Effect of Wrongly Targeted Outreach?

According to respondents, the biggest effects of wrongly targeted outreach are believed to be an ongoing loss of sales (52%) and damage to the company's reputation (49%). 38% of respondents also call out that poor outreach may result in negative reviews and low ratings on social media, which may also amount to reputational damage. These issues are all connected, and it's important to remember that any damage to a company's reputation causes a negative impact on sales too.

A direct correlation can be seen between company size and the perceived negative effects of wrongly targeted outreach. The bigger the company, the more this is believed to cause reputational harm (49% vs. 30%).

Bad reviews also substantially contribute to reputational harm, and the same curve can be seen when comparing negative reviews between companies of different sizes (30% in small companies vs. 49% in larger companies).

*Question allowed more than one answer and as a result, percentages will add up to more than 100%

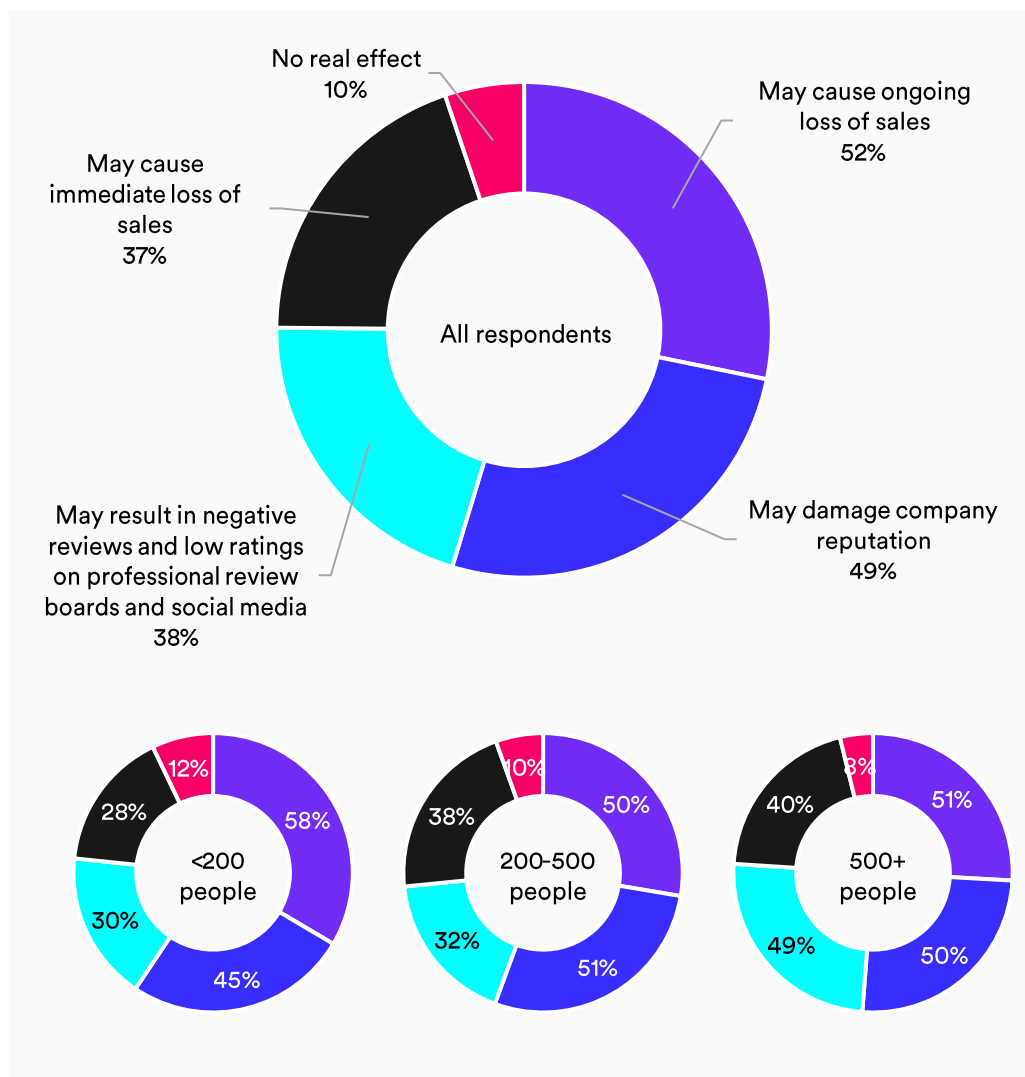


Figure 7: Wrongly Targeted Outreach Effects by Company Size

Response to Irrelevant or Wrongly Targeted Sales Outreach from Software Company

We asked survey respondents, as sales reps themselves, if they received irrelevant or wrongly targeted sales outreach from another software company selling sales technologies and services, what would be their own response?

80% reported that they are put off in some way when receiving irrelevant or wrongly-targeted sales outreach, with just 20% saying they wouldn't mind the mistake.

Despite being in the sales game themselves, when on the other end of the sales process, salespeople don't seem to be any more tolerant towards a lack of professionalism by salespeople.

If this is how salespeople in the business react, it stands to reason that those outside of the industry would be as, if not even less, impatient with irrelevant sales interactions.

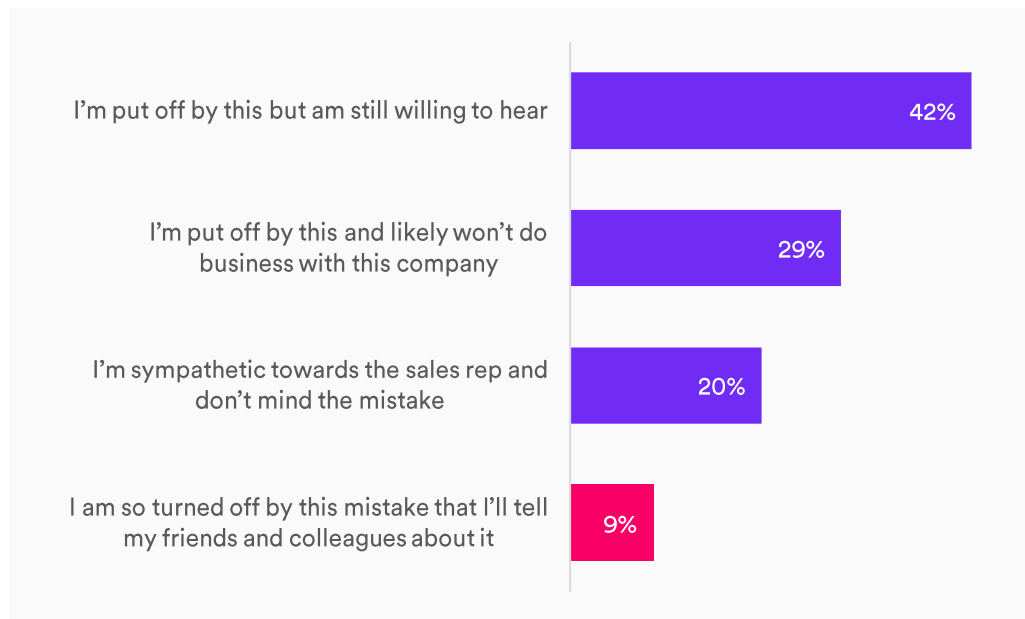


Figure 8: Response to Irrelevant/Wrongly Targeted Sales Outreach from Software Company

Top Reasons for Losing a Prospect

In this question, we focused on the whole sales cycle, rather than only the earlier stages. However, we still discovered that the greatest challenges are primarily in the earlier stages.

The top reasons respondents reported for losing a prospect included pitches that don't stand out well enough (50%), poor timing (43%), and not having enough personalized information about the prospect (42%). As we saw earlier in the report, personalization remains an essential element of a successful pitch.



Figure 9: Top Reasons for Losing a Prospect

*Question allowed more than one answer and as a result, percentages will add up to more than 100%

Purchasing Plans for Sales Intelligence Tools

According to respondents, the top sales intelligence tools their companies are planning to purchase are ZoomInfo (41%), HubSpot Sales Hub (41%), and Lusha (36%).

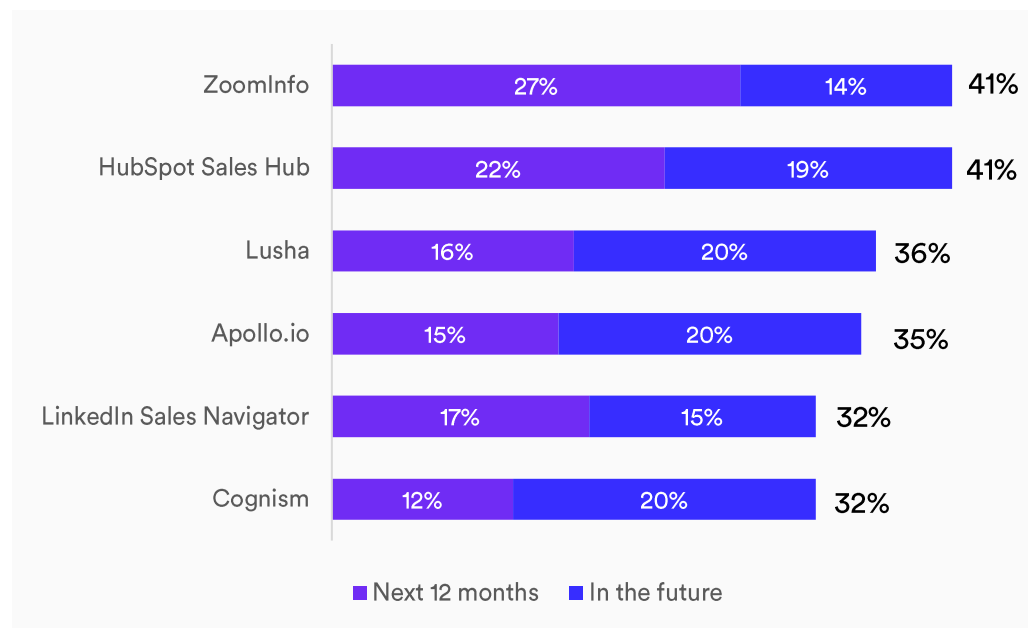


Figure 10: Purchasing Plans for Sales Intelligence Tools

Demographics

Industry, Role, Sales Prospects & Seniority

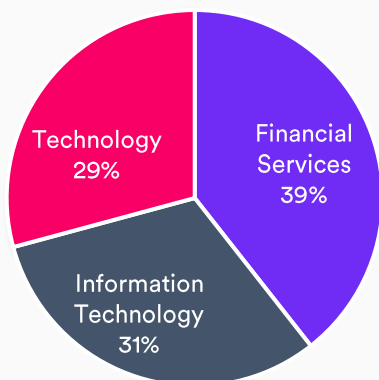


Figure 11: Industry

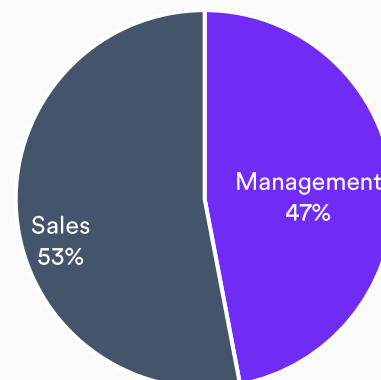


Figure 12: Role

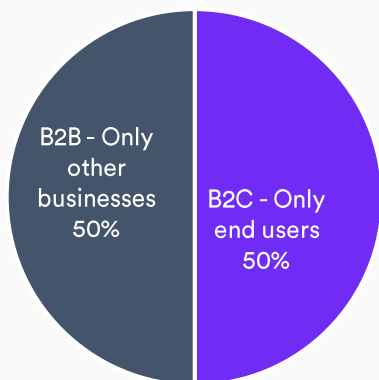


Figure 13: Sales Prospects

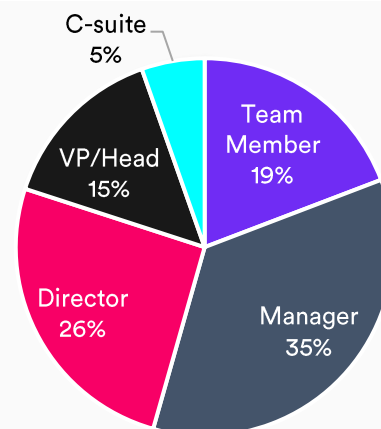


Figure 14: Seniority

Company Size & Sales Tools Used

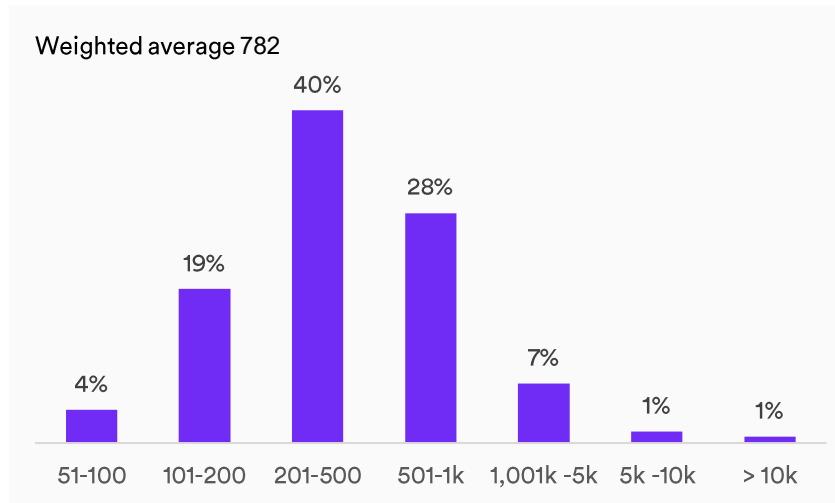


Figure 15: Company Size

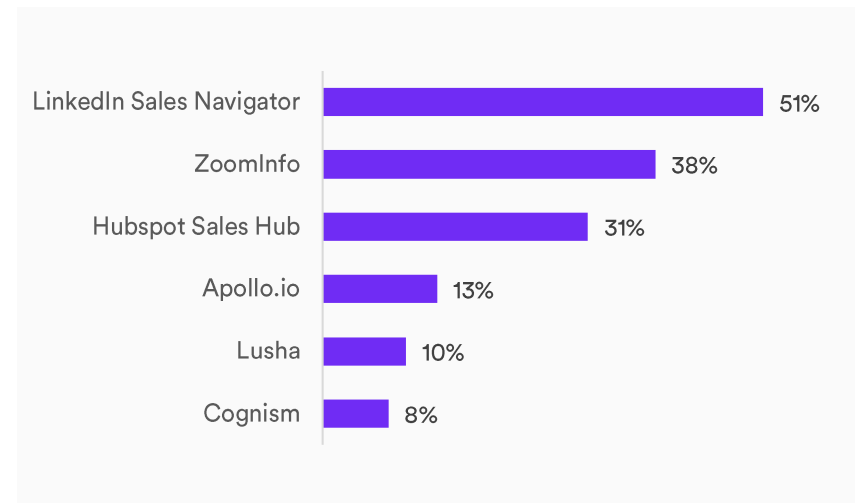


Figure 16: Sales Tools in Use

About Lusha

Lusha is a crowdsourced data community and sales intelligence platform which empowers B2B sales professionals to identify, engage, and close qualified prospects thanks to accurate and accessible data. Lusha recommends relevant prospects and organizations, eliminating cumbersome research and allowing over 800,000 salespeople to focus on selling. Lusha's community approach ensures that salespeople from organizations of all sizes have access to accurate sales data. Lusha was founded in 2016 by Assaf Eisenstein and Yoni Tserruya and is headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts. Lusha's community has expanded to over 223,000 sales organizations including Google, Microsoft, Sprinklr, and Aircall.

Learn More

For more information, please visit us:



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