



THE 5TH ANNUAL

MEDIA SALES REPORT



OVERVIEW

Last year, we saw the various ways in which sales managers and salespeople weren't quite seeing eye to eye. From the "right" ratio of hybrid and in-office work to the very outlook of media sales itself, each group had differing perspectives about their own roles as well as each other's.

Today, in the 5th edition of The Media Sales Report, you'll see that there are more ways that sales managers and salespeople agree than not.

For example, while there are those still who might quibble about the details of where and when they work, the consensus is clear:



90% of salespeople and 74% of sales managers want a hybrid work schedule in one form or another.

Members of both roles are also equally decisive in how unenthusiastic they are about their company's current marketing strategy. Just 6% of managers and salespeople believe that their company's marketing plan "rocks" at generating leads and promoting thought leadership.

And when it comes to the current state of media sales, you'll find significant overlap there as well. Spoiler alert! Various aspects of both roles are becoming harder.

Of course, there will always be differences, many reflected in the data from this year's media sales surveys. But the increased level of agreement across various topics hopefully speaks to strengthening relationships between managers and their direct reports.

With virtually all salespeople (93%) feeling supported by their managers, we'd say the future looks more than bright on that front.

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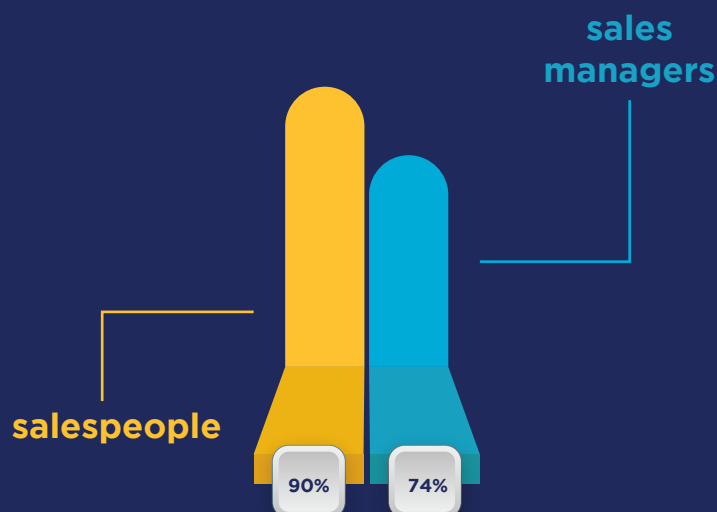
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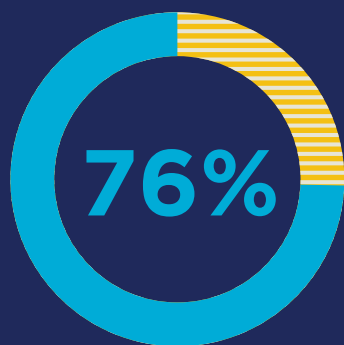
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Achieving organizational goals is **81% harder** than last year according to sales managers

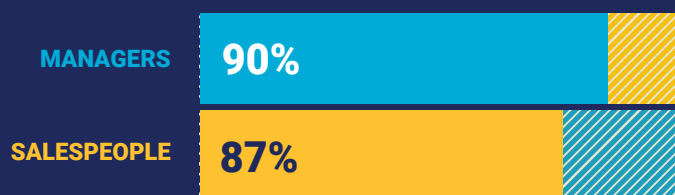


90% of salespeople & 74% of sales managers want some form of a hybrid work schedule



76% of sales managers say that **less than 40%** of their team are superstars

Virtually all salespeople (93%) feel supported by their manager



The **vast majority of sales managers and salespeople (90% & 87% respectively)** agree that securing appointments with prospects is harder today than five years ago



Less than half of salespeople (44%) are given feedback around their sales talents on a regular basis

SALES DEPARTMENT

STRUCTURE, PEOPLE, COMPENSATION, AND HYBRID/IN-PERSON WORK

Almost Everyone Is Happy With Hybrid & Achieving Organizational Goals Has Become More Difficult

HARDEST ASPECTS OF BEING A SALES MANAGER

It will come as a surprise to no one that recruitment remains tough across the media sales landscape. However, that doesn't mean sales managers haven't witnessed any improvement in that area.

While recruitment does, in fact, remain the hardest aspect of a sales manager's role, there seems to have been a decrease in those who believe that to be true.

Last year, nearly two thirds of managers (65%) pointed to recruitment as the hardest part of their jobs. This year, 43% say the same. That's a 34% decrease.

However, what is more difficult, according to managers, is new business development. Compared to last year's findings, sales managers report a 45% increased difficulty in that area.

And achieving organizational goals isn't getting any easier either! Sales managers say that reaching their company's targets has become a staggering 81% harder to achieve.

43%
of managers point to
recruitment as the hardest
part of their job.



SALES DEPARTMENT SIZE

77% of sales managers oversee teams consisting of 15 or less salespeople.

And over a third of managers (36%) report the size of their sales department being between 6 and 10 salespeople.

Last year, a whopping 73% of managers were unhappy with the number of salespeople on their teams. And just 27% were satisfied in that regard! Cut to today and almost half of managers (47%) are happy with the current size of their sales teams. That's a 74% jump!

And while over half (53%) are still dissatisfied in this area, there's no denying we've seen vast improvement in all aspects of sales department size.

74%

.....
sales manager
satisfaction increase
of current salesteam
size YOY



SALES TALENT ASSESSMENTS

An encouraging 70% of sales managers are using sales talent assessments in the hiring process.

And the vast majority of managers (86%) find such assessments to be “accurate” or “very accurate” in predicting future success.

70%

of sales managers are using sales talent assessments in the hiring process.

COMPENSATION FOR SALESPEOPLE

When it comes to compensation, more than a third of salespeople (38%) want 100% commission.

Another 36% say that they would prefer to have 30% to 50% of their compensation in the form of a salary and the rest commission.

However, nearly the same number of salespeople (38%) responded that they would be willing to take less commission if their company had a solid lead generation strategy in place.



86% of sales managers find sales talent assessments to be ‘**accurate**’ or ‘**very accurate**’ in predicting future success

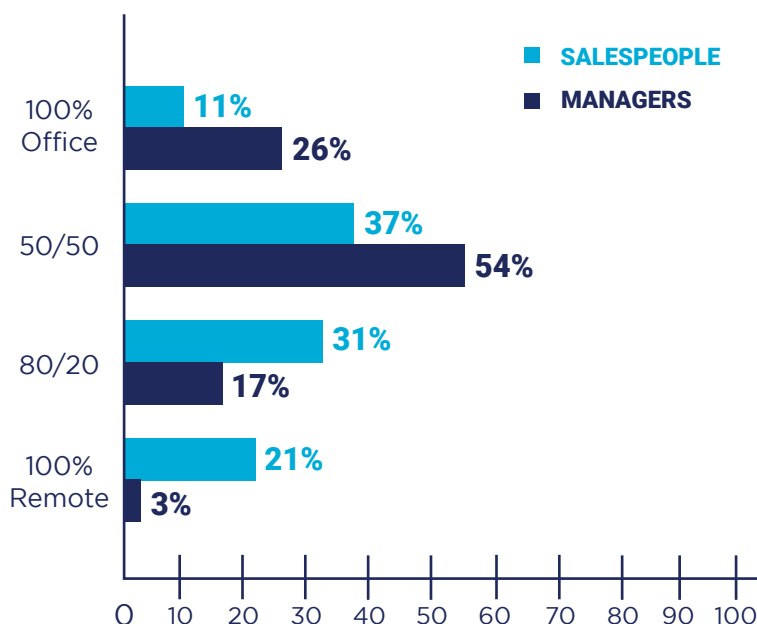
WORK SCHEDULE

While, like last year, some sales managers and salespeople disagree on what the “right” hybrid schedule looks like day-to-day, both groups aren’t interested in returning to the office full-time.

90% of salespeople and 74% of sales managers are looking for a hybrid work schedule in one form or another.

Over half of salespeople (52%) want to work from home most of the time.

What Office Schedule Would You Prefer to Have Moving Forward?



LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

Salespeople Value Learning and Development Opportunities as Much as Ever & Managers are Lacking Superstars

CURRENT LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT SENTIMENT

The overwhelming majority of salespeople (92%) believe that it is “important” or “very important” that they are learning and developing in their roles.

Roughly half of salespeople (48%) report participating in sales training on a weekly basis.

And 61% of managers say that they conduct training for their salespeople every week.

55%

of managers feel as though they don't spend enough time every week coaching members of their sales teams.



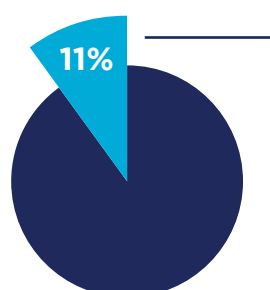
92% of salespeople believe that learning & development is “important” or “very important”

COACHING & FEEDBACK

55% of managers feel as though they don't spend enough time every week coaching members of their sales teams. And another 65% say that they aren't joining their salespeople in-field as much as they'd like.

Salespeople, unfortunately, back these numbers up.

Less than half of salespeople (44%) are given feedback about their sales talents on a regular basis.



11% of salespeople have “never” received feedback at all regarding their sales talents!

SUPERSTARS AND UNDERPERFORMERS

76% of sales managers don't consider most of their teams (60%) to be superstars.

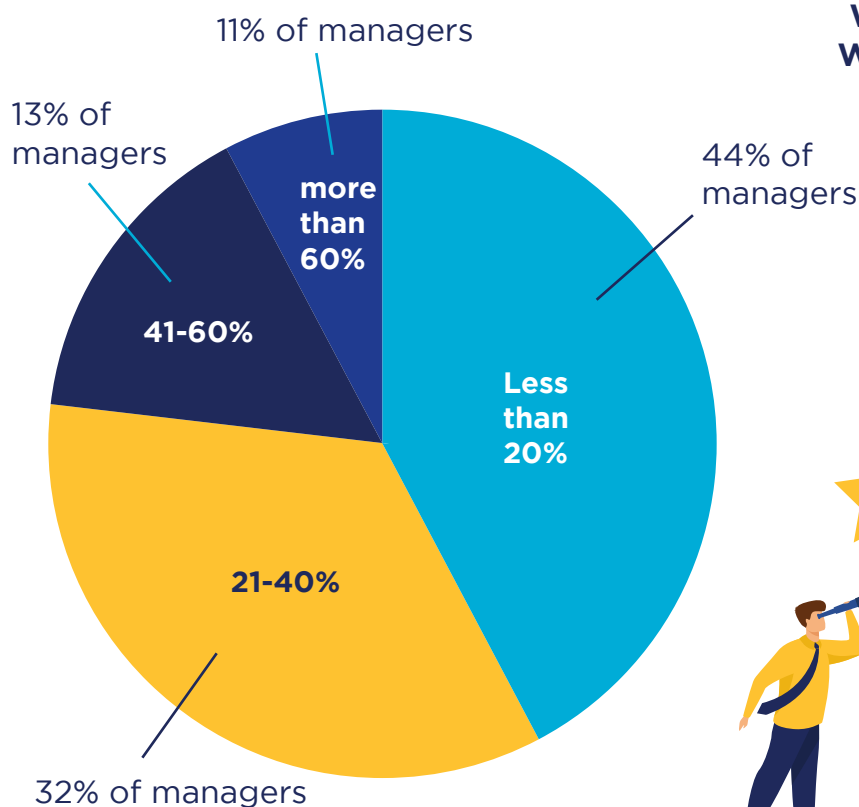
In a world where you should have a team made up of 100% superstars, that figure is dispiriting to say the least.

76%
of sales managers don't
consider most of their teams
(60%) to be superstars.

However, while managers appear to be lacking when it comes to superstar talent, that doesn't mean they feel as if their salespeople are underperforming.

Almost half (44%) say that less than 20% of their sales teams aren't performing as well as they should.

And just 11% of managers think that most of their sales team is underperforming.



What Percentage of Your Sales Team Would You Consider to be Superstars?



SETTING APPOINTMENTS & SALES PROCESS

Sales Appointments Remain Elusive & Converting Prospects is Becoming More Difficult

SECURING SALES APPOINTMENTS

Much like years previous, sales managers (90%) and salespeople (87%) agree that securing appointments with prospects is harder today than five years ago, with well over half of salespeople (57%) saying that it takes more than five attempts.

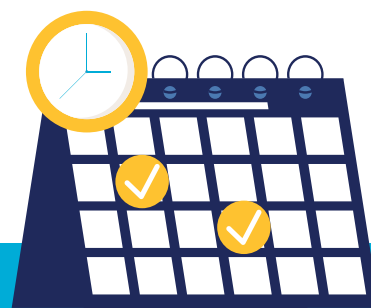
However, while both managers and salespeople concur over the difficulty of locking down appointments, there's some disagreement in terms of how many are actually happening.

52% of salespeople say that they go on 1-3 scheduled appointments (face-to-face or virtual) each week. 40% of sales managers believe the same of their salespeople.

And more than 1/3 of sales managers (35%) think that their salespeople go on 4-5 scheduled calls per week, while less than a quarter (23%) claim to do so.

Either way, those numbers fall short of what sales managers would like to see.

42% believe that their salespeople should be going on 8 or more appointments every week.



57%

say that it takes more than five attempts to secure a sales appointment.

WRITTEN PROPOSALS

Sales managers also believe their salespeople are presenting too few written proposals. Almost half (45%) say their salespeople present, on average, 1-2 proposals each week. Another 40% say members of their sales team achieve 3-4 proposals on a weekly basis.

However, 76% of managers say those numbers aren't high enough.

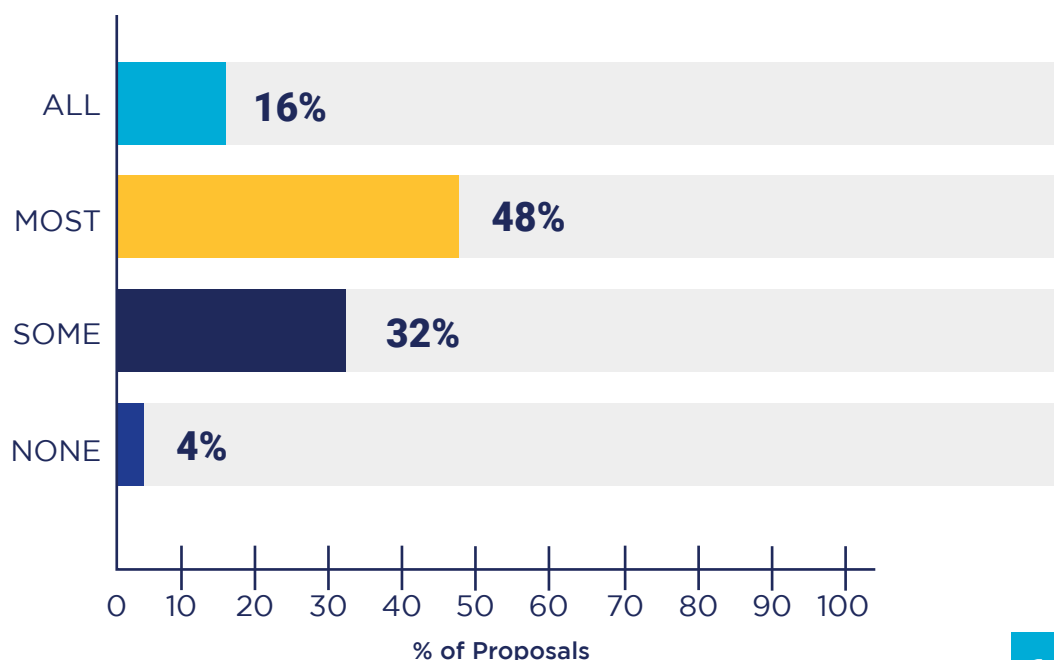
That being said, there seems to be some significant room for improvement when it comes to the quality of written proposals themselves.

63% of managers say that "all" or "most" proposals contain specific business needs outlined by the client. Not only is that a 20% decrease since last year, but over 1/3 of managers (36%) today say only "some" or even "no" proposals contain a client's specific business needs.



76%
of managers say their
salespeople aren't
presenting enough written
proposals every week.

Approximately How Many Written Proposals Contain Specific Business Needs Outlined by the Client?



COMMUNICATION WITH PROSPECTS AND CLIENTS

When it comes to how salespeople are reaching out to prospects, legacy channels continue to dominate with most salespeople (72%) relying on email and over half (55%) reaching them over the phone.

And while over 2/3 of salespeople (69%) still aren't using 1:1 personalized video to make a connection with prospects, more are adopting the format. Compared to last year, there has been a 250% increase in "sometimes" using video messaging for this purpose.

Another sustained trend from previous years is the effectiveness, or perceived lack thereof, in setting appointments through social media channels. Just 5% of salespeople surveyed said that social media was "very effective" in helping set appointments. 78% of salespeople say they text their clients on a semi-regular to regular basis.

CONVERTING PROSPECTS AND RENEWING CLIENTS

In terms of the ease or difficulty of converting prospects, 57% of salespeople tell us that it has become more difficult.

The same story seems to apply to the renewal of clients as well. Renewing current clients has gotten harder for 42% of salespeople.

57%
of salespeople tell us that
converting prospects has
become more difficult.

How often do salespeople use each of the following to secure an appointment with prospects?



LINKEDIN

Never/Rarely: **43%**
Sometimes: **37%**
All the time: **20%**



PHONE CALLS

Never/Rarely: **8%**
Sometimes: **37%**
All the time: **55%**



OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA

Never/Rarely: **50%**
Sometimes: **38%**
All the time: **12%**



EMAILS

Never/Rarely: **5%**
Sometimes: **23%**
All the time: **72%**



TEXTS

Never/Rarely: **39%**
Sometimes: **42%**
All the time: **19%**



1:1 PERSONALIZED VIDEO MESSAGING

Never/Rarely: **86%**
Sometimes: **13%**
All the time: **1%**



USAGE OF CRM AND AI TOOLS

The vast majority of salespeople (87%) continue to utilize a CRM with 74% believing they use their software effectively.

Of those who use a CRM, over half (56%) find it most useful for the tracking of clients and prospects. Achieving more accountability is the second most valued activity that salespeople get out of using such tools. 44% of salespeople use their CRM most often for that purpose.



Over a quarter of salespeople (26%) feel like they aren't using their CRM effectively

But, interestingly, only 21% find their CRMs most useful for automating basic tasks.

Additionally, 60% of salespeople "sometimes" use AI to help advance the sales process. 56% of which find such tools most useful for idea generation.

SALES CYCLE

When it comes to the overall sales cycle, half of salespeople (50%) say that it takes a month or less to go from the first discovery call to closing the sale.

91% say that their entire sales process takes less than 90 days.

On Average, How Long Does it Take From First Discovery Meeting to Closing the Sale?



Only
21%
of salespeople find their
CRM most useful for
automating basic tasks.

Setting Appointments and Sales Process for Salespeople and Sales Managers



Home
Improvement



Healthcare



Legal



Automotive



Home
Services

Where do you
think you should
be **spending
more time?**



Discovering meetings
with prospects



Prospecting



Meetings to close
business



Salespeople



Sales managers



Joining members
of their sales team
in- field

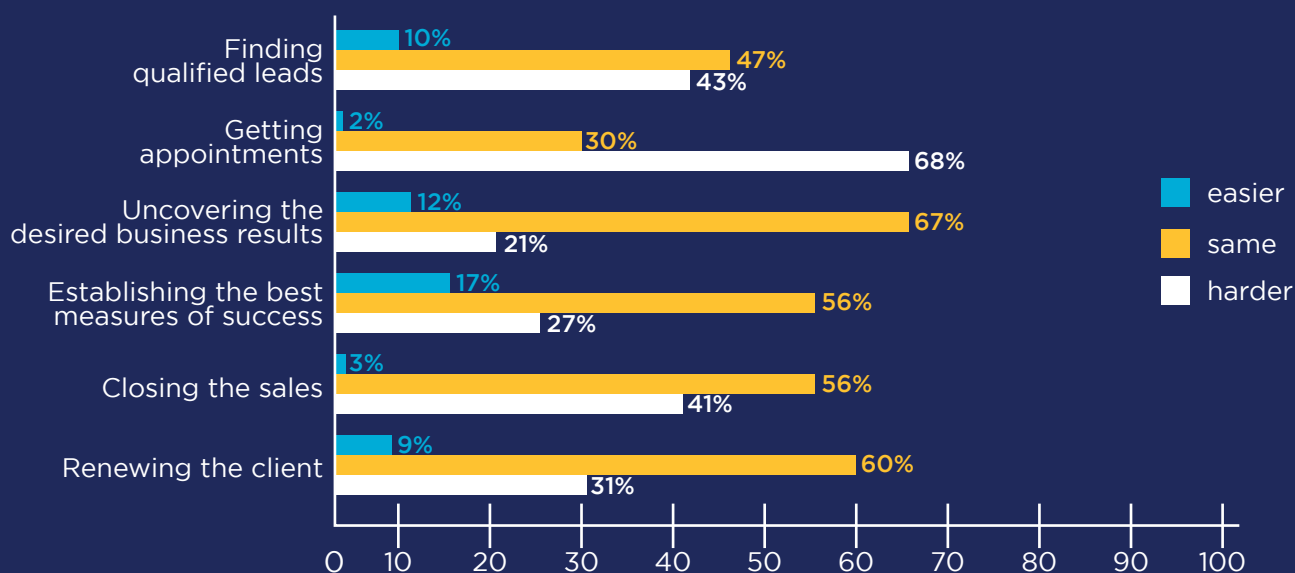


Coaching



IFM's or
one-on-ones

Where Are Salespeople's Jobs Getting **Easier** and **Harder?**



SALES ENABLEMENT

While Both Managers and Salespeople Have the Resources to Succeed, Both Want More Effective Marketing Strategies

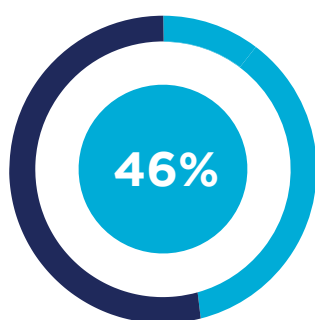
SALES ENABLEMENT RESOURCES

Encouragingly, just as in last year's report, most salespeople (81%) say that they have access to the resources needed to exceed their sales goals.

However, also like last year, too many report having lackluster sales enablement resources. Nearly half of salespeople (46%) say they either are "not sure" or are outright "dissatisfied" when it comes to the quality of their sales collateral pieces.

Sales managers are a tad more enthusiastic on that front, though, with 54% feeling "satisfied" with their current quality. But that still leaves over a quarter of managers (29%) who disagree.

Also, unlike salespeople, managers aren't feeling quite as sunny about how many resources they have at their disposal. Almost a third (31%) feel as though they don't have enough resources on hand to outperform their sales targets.



Nearly half of salespeople (46%) are **'not sure'** or are outright **'dissatisfied'** with the current quality of their sales collateral pieces

81%

of salespeople say that they have access to the resources needed to exceed their sales goals.

VIDEO CASE STUDIES

Neither group in this year's surveys reported having enough case studies to share with prospects, an ongoing trend that we've seen in every year of The Media Sales Report thus far.

85% of salespeople and 66% of sales managers don't have more than 2 video case studies.

That's a lot of missed opportunities to share success stories and influential endorsements with potential clients.

MARKETING STRATEGY

When reviewing their company's current marketing strategy, 70% of sales managers and 63% of salespeople wish their companies would adopt a marketing plan that attracts more leads and promotes thought leadership.

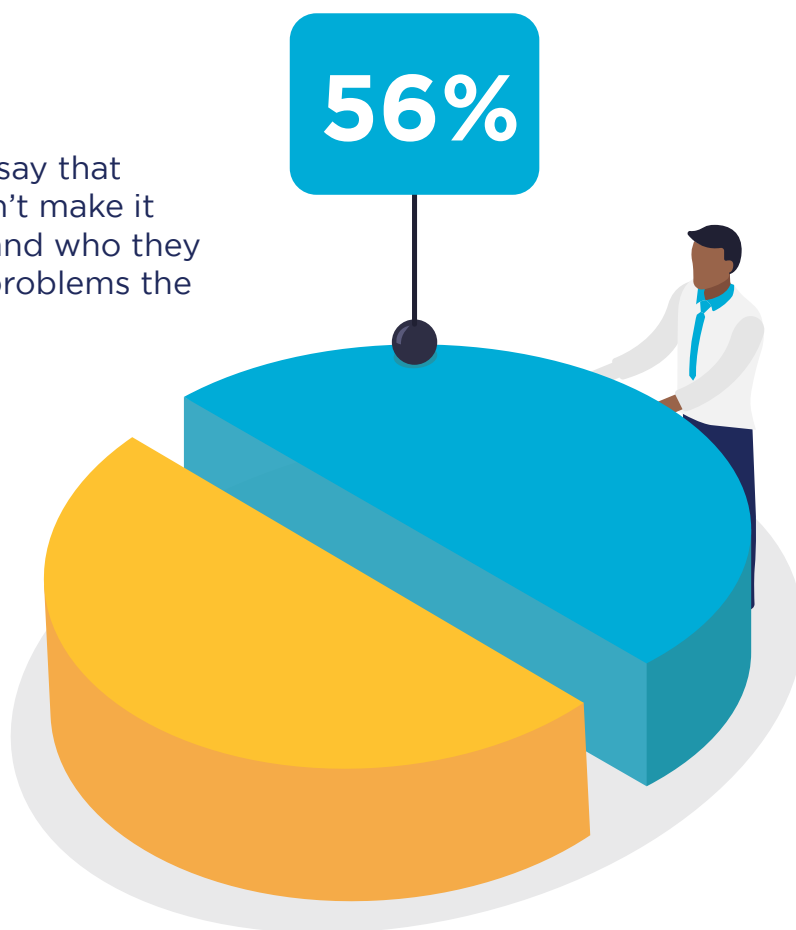
Over half of managers (56%) say that their company's website doesn't make it easy for prospects to understand who they are as an organization or the problems they solve.

And just 6% of managers and salespeople say that their company's current marketing strategy "rocks."

6%

of sales managers and salespeople say that their company's current marketing strategy "rocks".

Over half of managers (56%) say that their company's website doesn't make it easy for prospects to understand who they are as an organization or the problems they solve.



INDUSTRY OUTLOOK & CULTURE

Most Salespeople Feel Supported by Their Manager, but Too Many Wouldn't Recommend Their Company as a Great Place to Work

COMPANY SENTIMENT

Over a quarter of salespeople (27%) wouldn't recommend their company as a great place for other salespeople to work. That's a worrisome figure.

Thankfully, most salespeople (73%) seem to disagree with that notion and it's not hard to see why when taking a look at the relationships with their managers.

27%

of salespeople wouldn't recommend their company as a great place for other salespeople to work.

SALES MANAGER AND SALESPERSON RELATIONSHIP

Virtually all salespeople (93%) tell us they feel supported by their sales manager!

To add to that astounding figure, less than 1% reported "Never" feeling supported by the manager to which they directly report. And almost 2/3 of salespeople (61%) feel valued "all the time."

Sales managers are clearly forging strong bonds with their salespeople and it's amazing to see.

Almost 2/3 of salespeople (61%) feel valued by their manager 'all the time'

61%



COMPANY AND INDUSTRY OUTLOOK

At first glance, it seems that most managers are optimistic about the future of their industry. 72% say such a statement describes exactly how they feel at the moment.

However, over a quarter (28%) disagree. That's an 115% increase in pessimism compared to last year.

43% of salespeople also share that more skeptical outlook on the future of media sales.

And just as most managers see success in the future of their industry, roughly the same amount says the same when assessing their own company. Nearly three-fourths (73%) believe their company is well equipped to compete in the years ahead.

73%

**of salespeople believe
their company is well
equipped to compete in
the years ahead.**



CONCLUSION

While the media sales landscape is as rife with uncertainty as it has ever been, the results from this year's surveys paint an, overall, optimistic picture.

Sure, recruitment is as tough as ever, new business development is becoming more difficult, and salespeople report having more trouble converting prospects.

But take every sobering detail from this year's data and remember the following findings:



70% of managers are using sales talent assessments in the hiring process, with 86% finding them to be “accurate” or “very accurate” in predicting future success.



Most salespeople (81%) say they have access to the resources needed to exceed their sales goals.



And, it can't be stated enough, 93% of salespeople feel supported by their manager!

With such stellar data points as those, no challenge, however more difficult than last year, is insurmountable.

There's no wonder that nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of sales managers (72%) are optimistic about the future of their industry.



THE CENTER FOR SALES STRATEGY

METHODOLOGY

The Center for Sales Strategy, a sales performance company, conducted two online surveys in November of 2023. Two sample groups were surveyed representing sales managers and salespeople in Radio, TV, Digital, Newspaper, and Cable.

The first sample included 105 sales managers with job titles such as VP of Sales, Director of Sales, and General Sales Manager. The second group was a sample of 111 salespeople, primarily Account Executives. The majority of all respondents were industry veterans with over 11 years of media sales experience representing a balanced cross-section of market sizes.

Numbers have been rounded for readability.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR SALES STRATEGY

Founded in 1983, The Center for Sales Strategy (CSS) has grown to serve hundreds of clients annually, across a spectrum of industries including broadcast, print, and digital media, professional services, non-profit associations, and more. CSS is focused on improving sales performance as it helps sales organizations turn talent into performance and develop the highest-performing sales professionals. Its approach to customer-focused selling and talent-focused management has always been, and continues to be, core to its clients' success and the organization's success.

CSS is joined by LeadG2, its inbound marketing and sales enablement division, and Up Your Culture, its employee engagement and company culture division, to help organizations achieve total revenue performance.

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