

Sales Stack in 2021:

ROI, Adoption and Impact

SALES 
HACKER

INTRODUCTION

Problem, meet perspective.

As selling gets more complex—and relationship-based sales becomes even more important—the sales stack is getting more complex, too.

How many sales tools have you considered this year?
How many have you bought?

It's difficult to know which software categories are worth investing in, let alone which tools will give you what you're looking for. To make things even more complex, it's rarely a binary decision and the ecosystem is shifting (and growing) rapidly.

To help break through the marketing noise, Sales Hacker asked **1,000+** salespeople, marketers, and operations experts for their perspective on what they're using, how they're using it and the results they're seeing.

We set out to accomplish two things with this report:

1. Jumpstart a collective conversation for how revenue innovators can best leverage sales tools and best practices to improve selling.
2. Identify which sales tools and categories show the highest impact, ROI and adoption (and where teams are planning adoption in the next 12 months).

40+ tools. 7 categories. 1,000+ revenue innovators.

Use this report for a bit of perspective and—as always—keep innovating,

The Sales Hacker Team

“The difference between a problem and a possibility often comes down to perspective.”



Scott Barker

*Director of Strategic Engagement
Outreach*

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Setting the Stage

SETTING THE STAGE

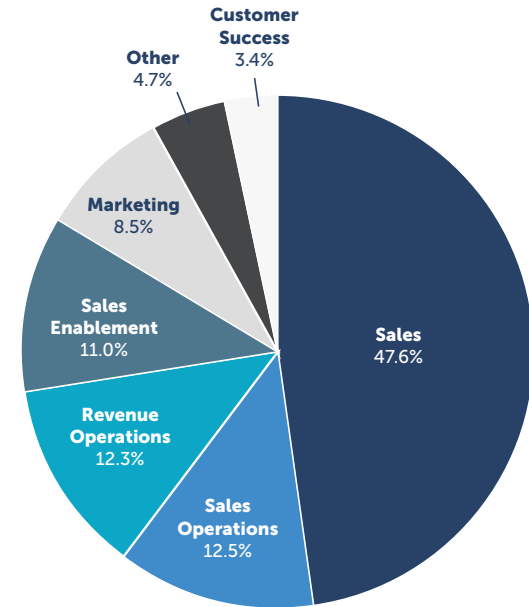
Who did we talk to?

Before digging into the results, let's add some context. Some key insights from the breakdown:

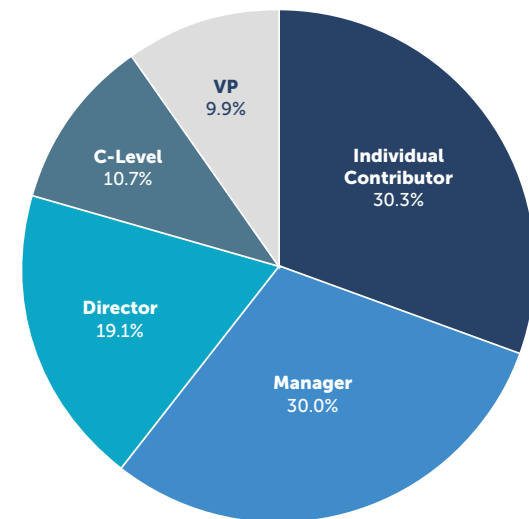
- Two-thirds of responses are from companies between 10-250 people.
- Nearly 60% of responses are from the Computer & Software and Business Services industries.
- 7 out of 10 responses are from North America.

While the largest percentage of respondents are in sales roles, we also received quite a few responses from Sales Operations, Revenue Operations, Enablement and Marketing. Better yet, 4 out of 10 responses are from a Director+ level leader.

What best describes your role?

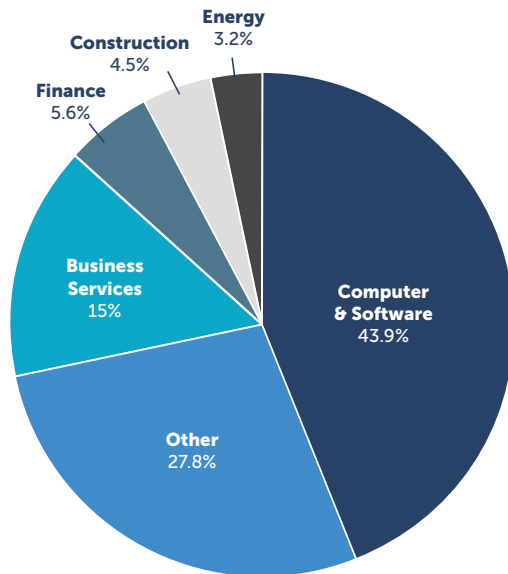


What best describes your seniority level?

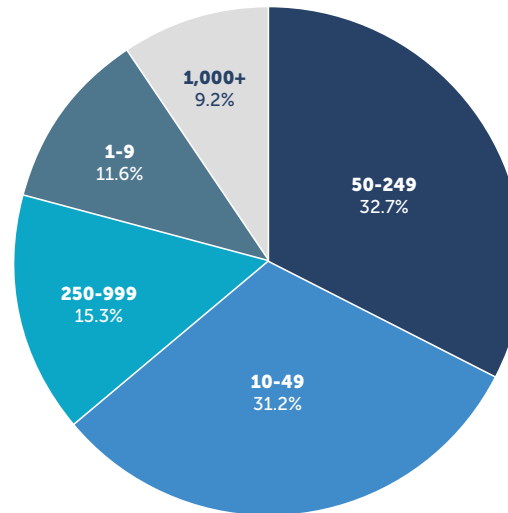


SETTING THE STAGE

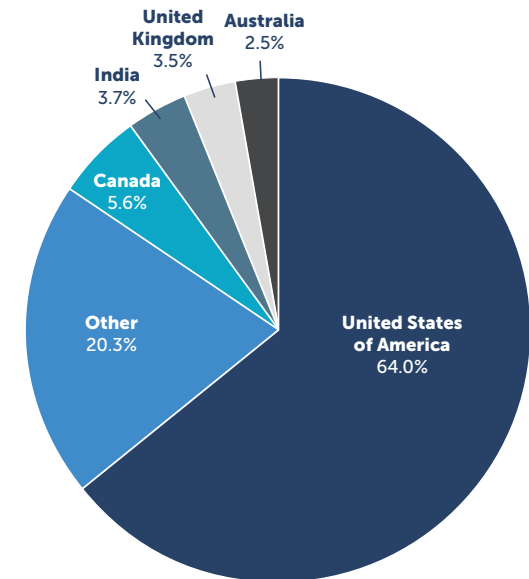
What is your industry?



How many employees are at your company?

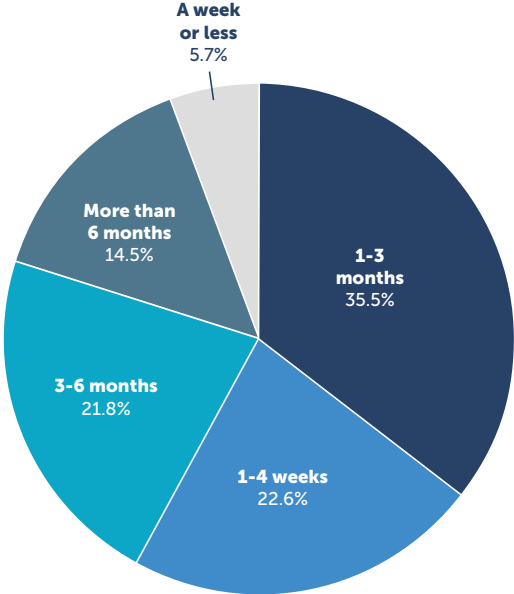


What country are you in?

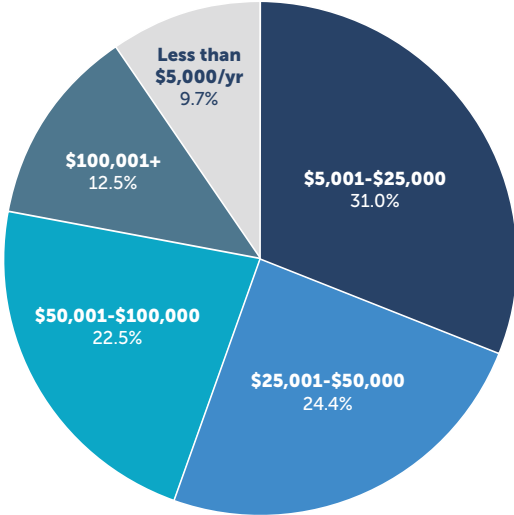


SETTING THE STAGE

Average deal cycle



Average deal size



SETTING THE STAGE

What we asked (and how we asked it)

There's plenty of talk about the sales stack—but a truly one-size-fits-all solution is rare. We wanted to identify which tools revenue leaders are using and the results they're seeing.

We asked respondents to identify the **tools** they're using across 7 **categories**:

- CRM
- Data & Intelligence
- Sales Engagement
- Sales Enablement
- Revenue Intelligence
- Sales Performance & Compensation
- Conversational Intelligence & Coaching

Then we asked them to rate each category across three areas: ROI, impact and adoption.

1 ROI

How would you rate the return on investment for the tools you're using in each category?

2 Impact

How would you rate the impact on rep performance and productivity for the tools you're using in each category?

3 Adoption

How would you rate the adoption of the tools you're using in each category?

The Big Picture:

Must-Have and Up-and-Coming
Sales Tech Categories

BIG PICTURE

Must-haves:

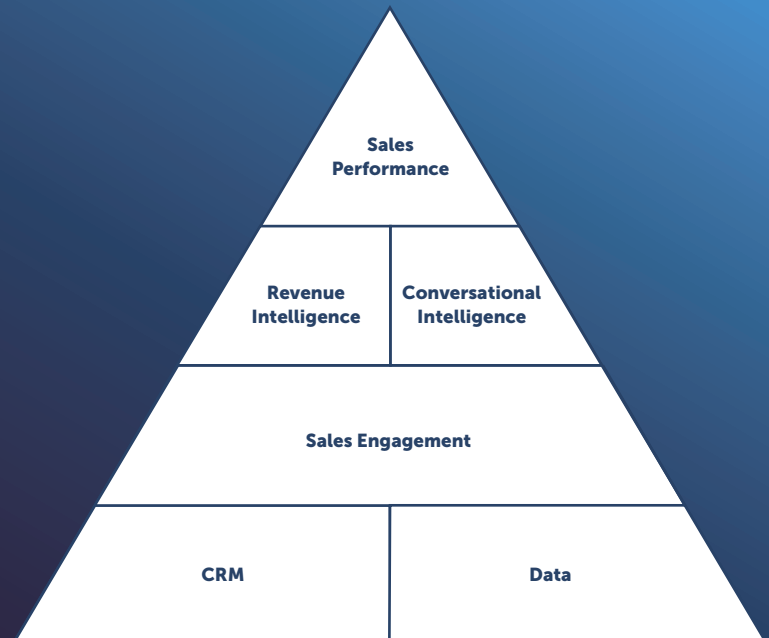
Which categories have the highest ROI and impact on rep performance?

Besides a CRM, respondents were most likely to rank Sales Engagement and Data & Intelligence tools as having both the highest ROI and the highest impact on performance.

That tracks with adoption: 89% of respondents have Data & Intelligence tool in place, while 72% are using a Sales Engagement solution.

The overall stacked ranking of these categories makes sense, too:

First, you need a place to put data and track customer info. Next, you need data for biz dev and a way to act on that data with sales engagement. Then you need a way to build a mature sales team with enablement and coaching tools. Finally, you need a way to tie all that to revenue and performance.



BIG PICTURE

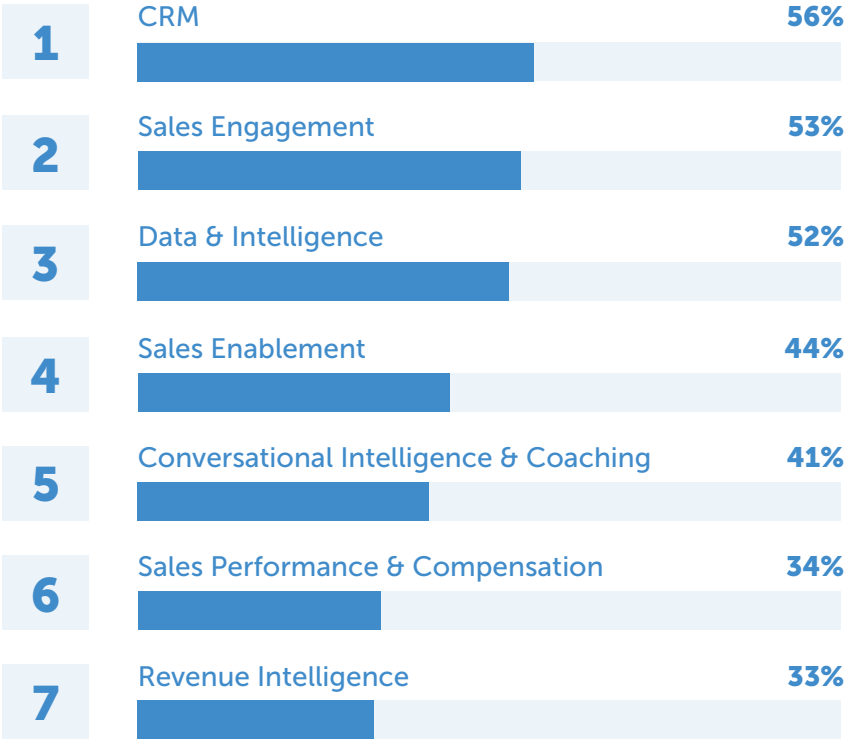
ROI

Responded High or Very High



Impact

Responded High or Very High



BIG PICTURE

Up-and-coming: Which categories are respondents planning on adopting in the next 12 months?

The planned adoption for sales tools for those not using specific categories closely tracks the ROI reported by respondents who are using those categories.

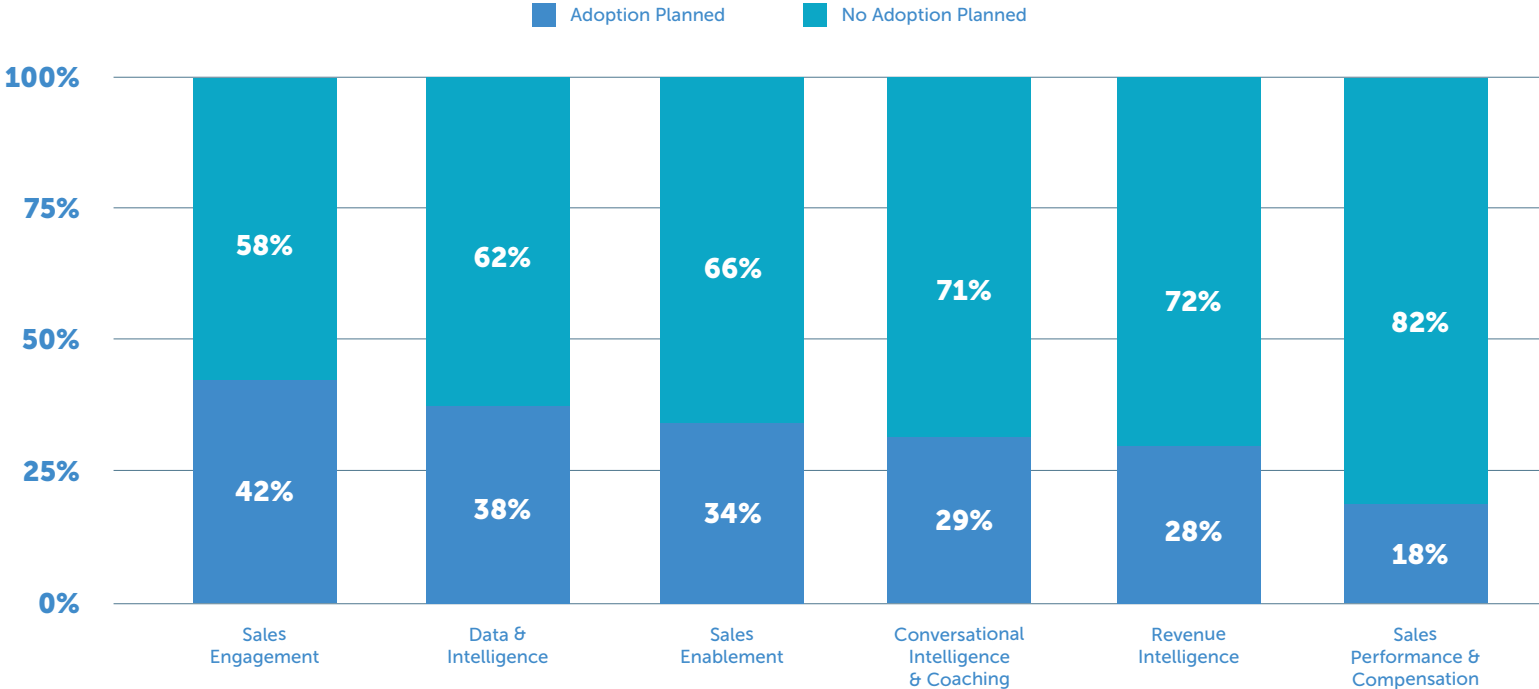
Sales Engagement, Data & Intelligence, and Sales Enablement tools will all see the most adoption over the next 12 months, in other words.

Note: Unsurprisingly, CRM adoption is at 97% so we're leaving the category out of this comparison.

42% of respondents plan on implementing Sales Engagement, but only 18% plan on implementing a Sales Performance & Compensation solution.

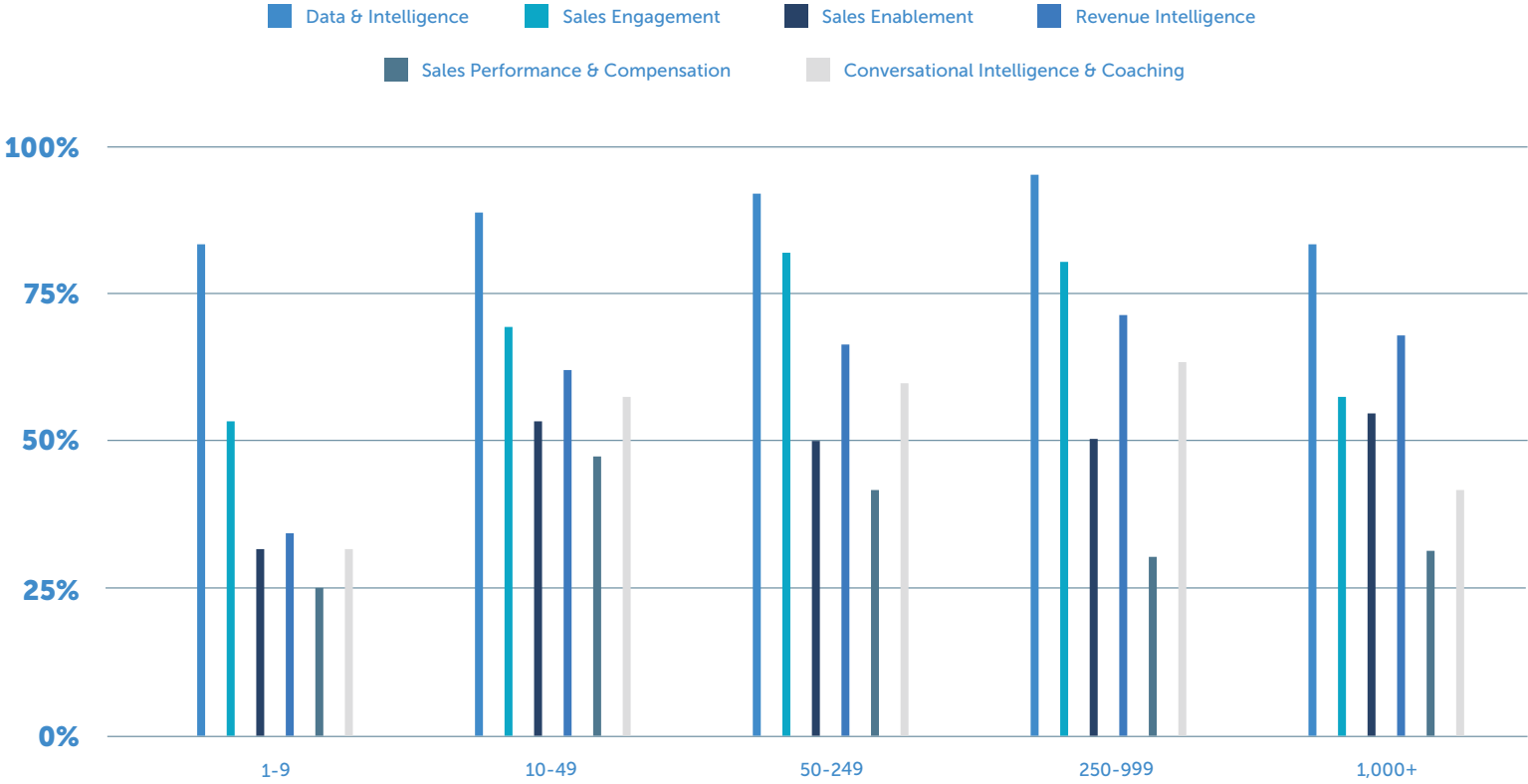
Adoption Planned vs. No Adoption Planned

Percent planning adoption in the next 12 months



Company Size x Category Adoption

Planned adoption for categories by number of employees



Category Breakdown

ROI, Adoption and Impact Across
7 Sales Tech Categories

CRM

Since a CRM is the foundation of nearly any sales motion, it's no surprise that 97% of respondents said that they have a CRM in place.

Outside of the high usage, two points stand out:

1. Two-thirds of respondents use either Salesforce or HubSpot for their CRM solution.

Those using either of the two major CRMs were much more likely to report high or very high ROI from the solution.

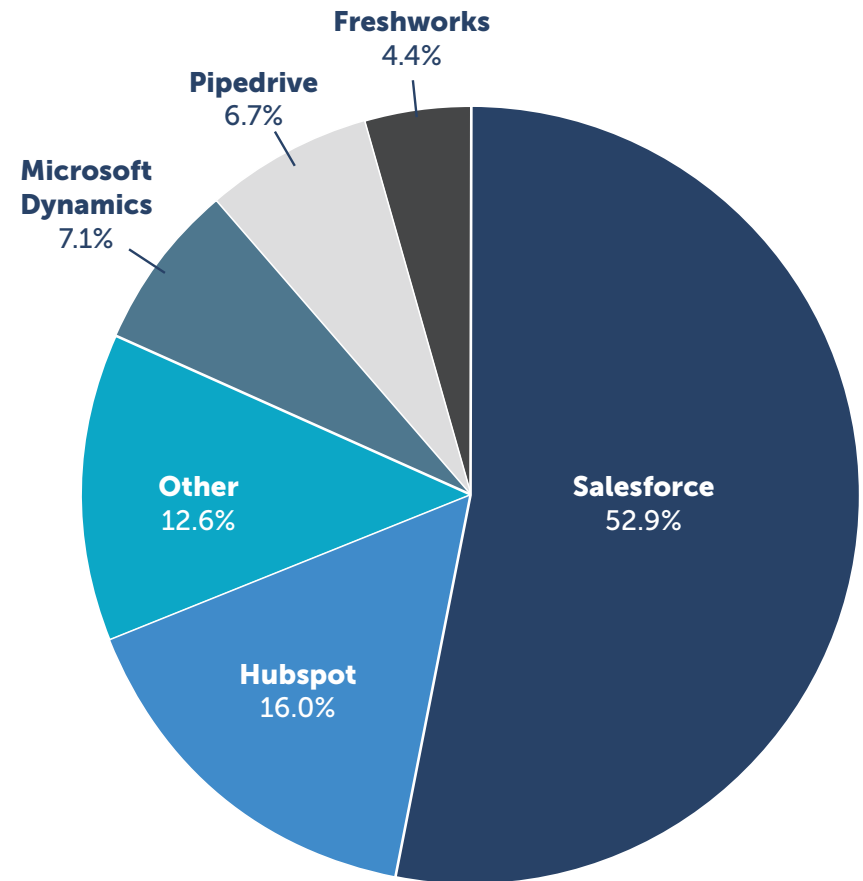
Salesforce and HubSpot stand out for ROI, but the picture is a little less clear for the adoption and impact of the CRM across the org.

2. Revenue leaders struggle with organization-wide adoption.

Despite the vast majority of companies having a CRM in place, adoption is still a struggle. On average, only 20% of respondents reported full adoption across the organization. Even among those using Salesforce, which has both the highest ROI and widest usage, only 45% reported full adoption.

This seems to spell out a case for Salesforce shops, CRM connectors and sales automation tools as revenue leaders drive toward more adoption.

What CRM do you use?



“Although 60% of respondents rated the ROI for CRM as high or very high, lack of seller adoption has caused significant information gaps and data inaccuracies in CRM systems leading to disjointed customer experiences, an inability to derive insights, and poor visibility into pipelines and forecasts.”



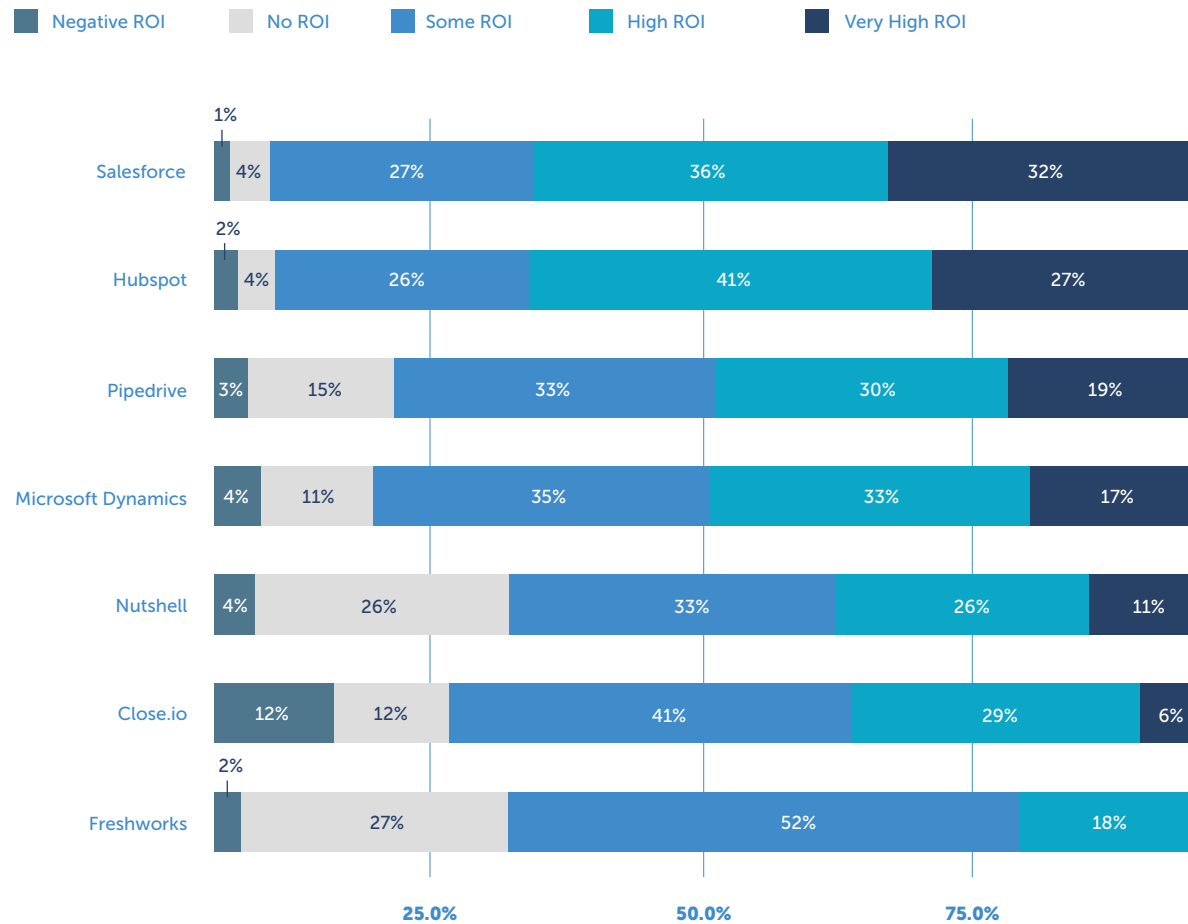
Mary Shea

*Global Innovation Evangelist
Outreach*

CATEGORY #1

CRM

CRM ROI

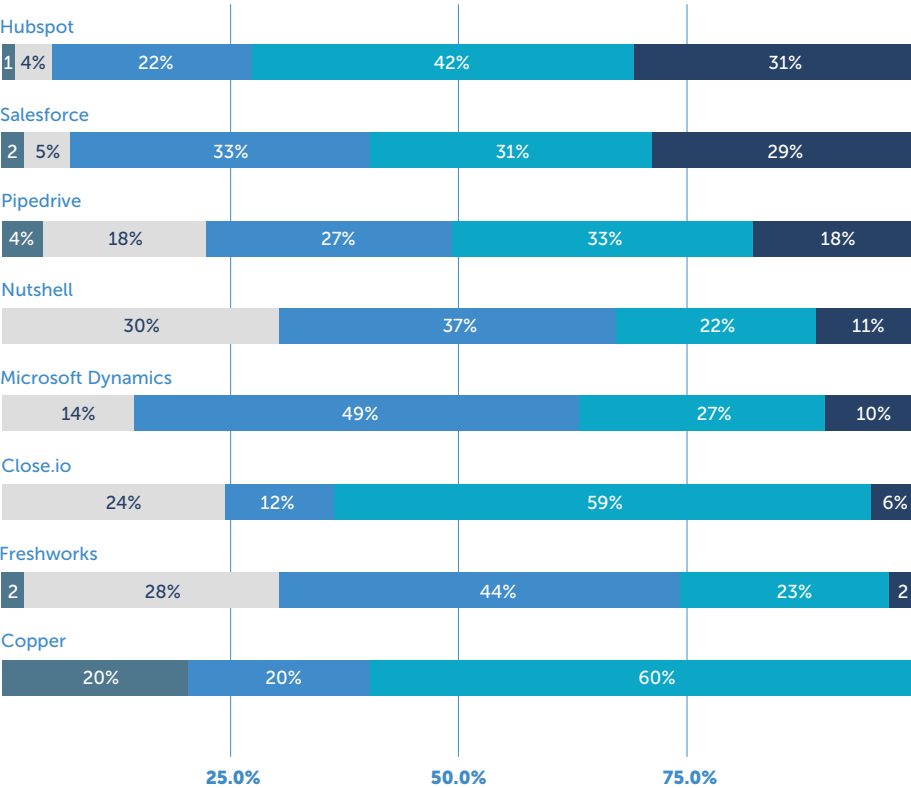
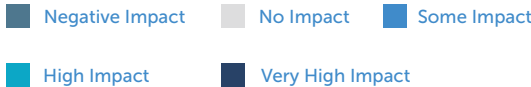


Salesforce and HubSpot show the highest ROI, followed by Microsoft Dynamics and Pipedrive. For a handful of less-established tools, respondents reported no ROI or *negative* ROI.

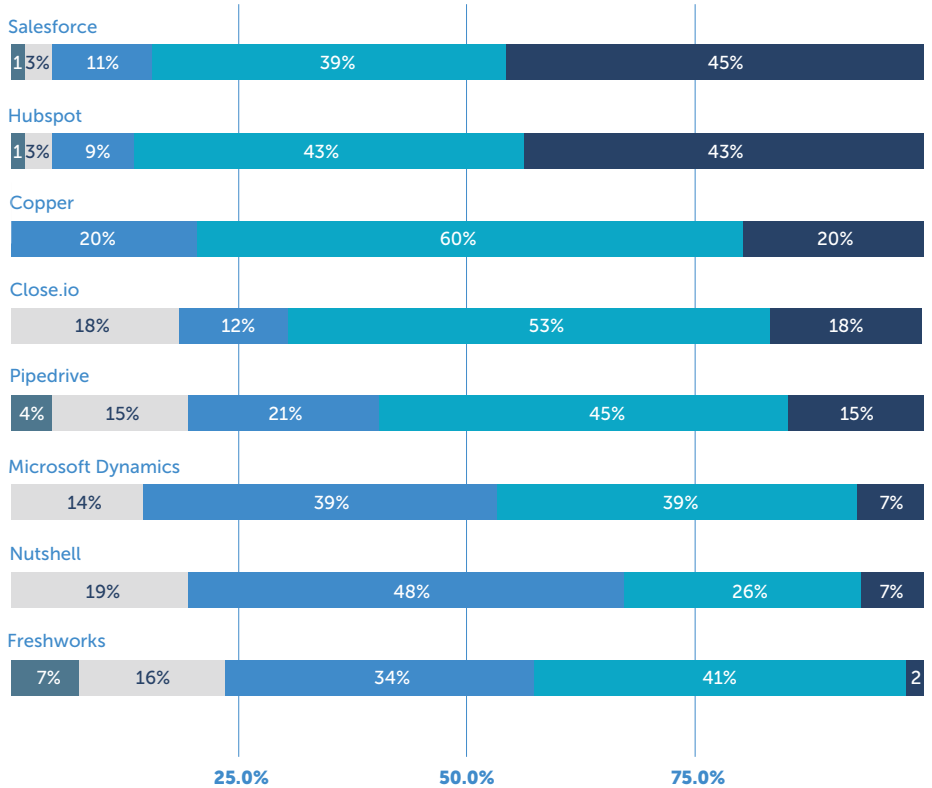
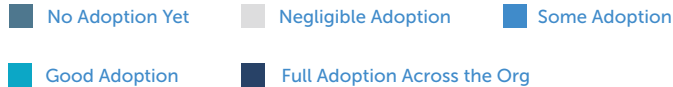
CATEGORY #1

CRM

Impact by Tool



Adoption by Tool



Data & Intelligence

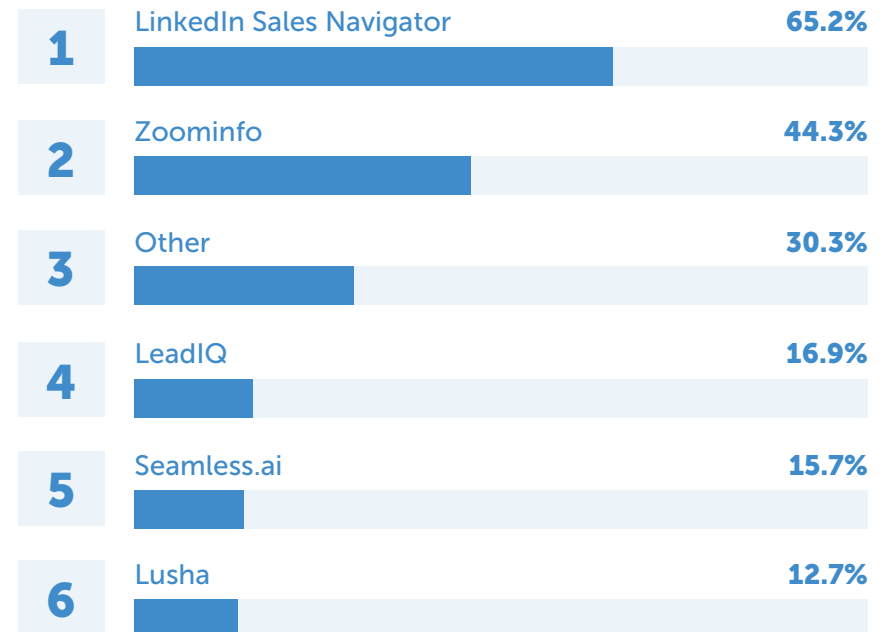
This one's a little different: it's not a direct comparison, since many organizations use multiple lead enrichment and data tools.

In terms of usage, LinkedIn Sales Navigator takes the cake—more than 50% of respondents use the tool. ZoomInfo, the second-most popular data & intelligence tool, has just under 40% usage from respondents.

Outside of those two tools, three other solutions are used by more than 10% of the respondents:

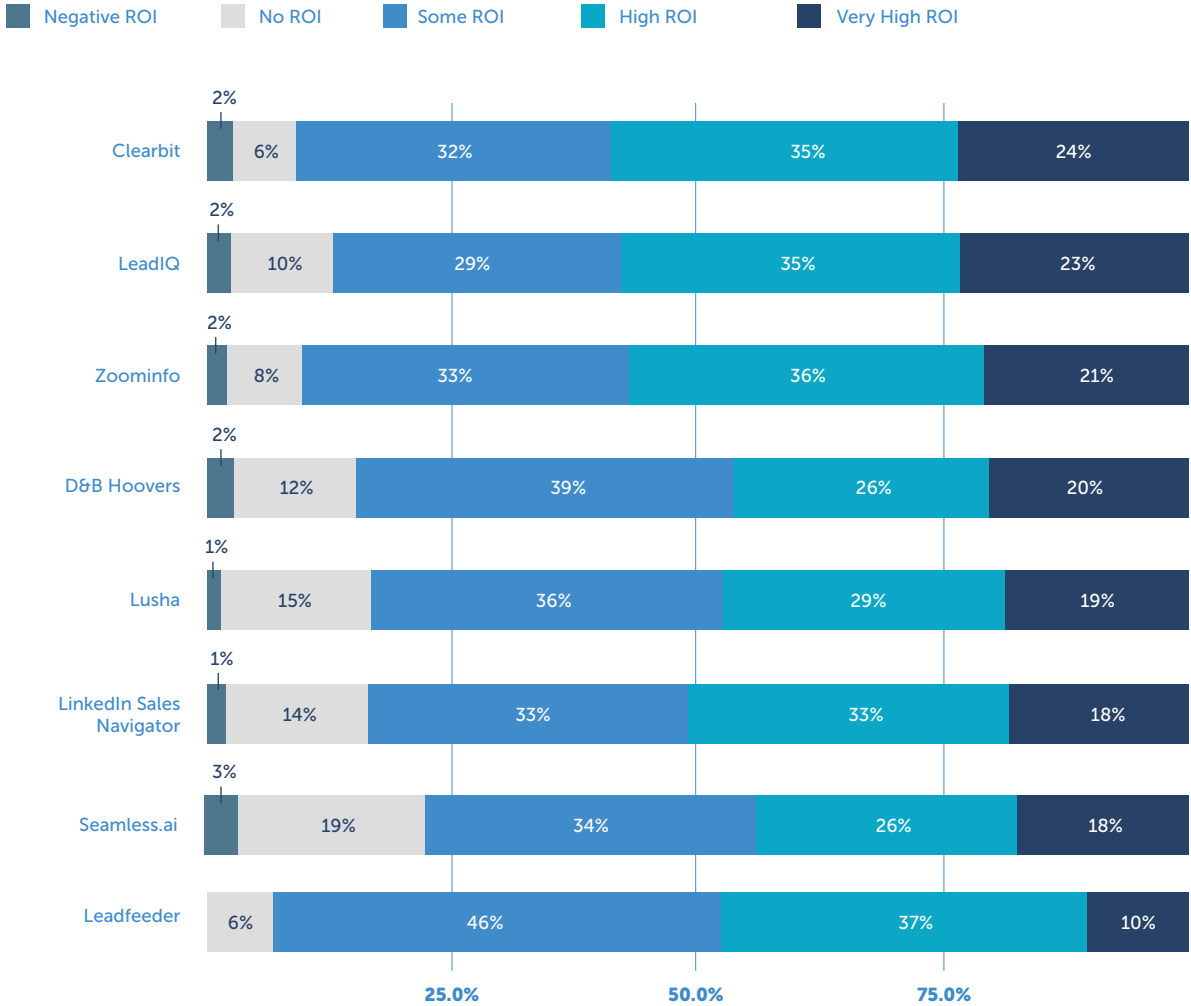
- LeadIQ
- Seamless.ai
- Lusha

Which of the following are currently in your Data & Intelligence tech stack?



Data & Intelligence

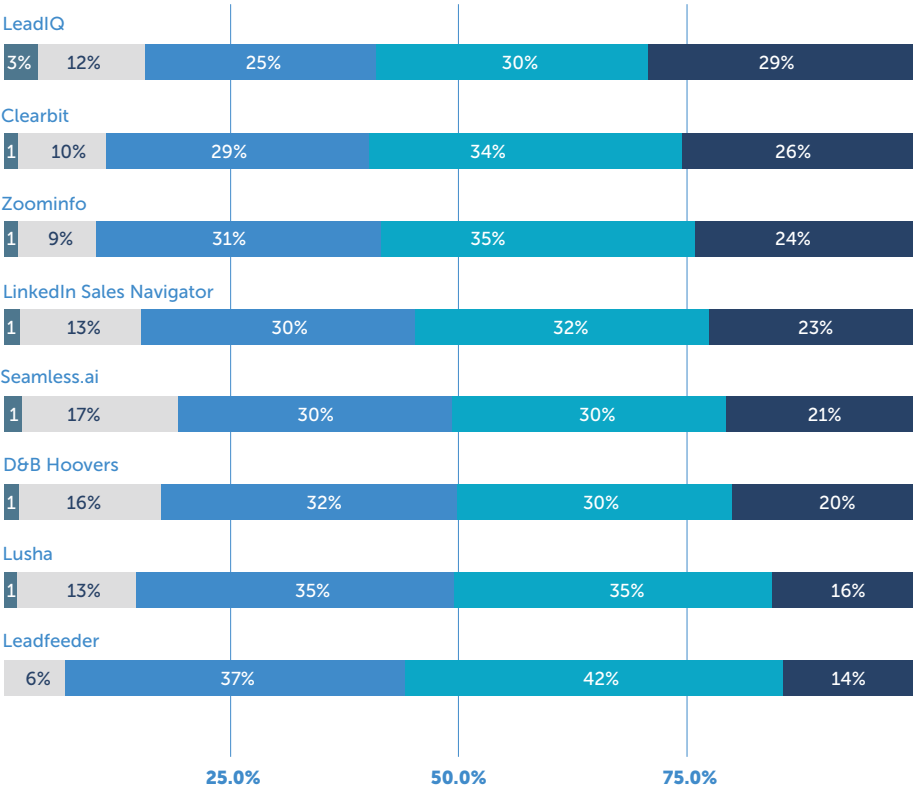
Data & Intelligence ROI



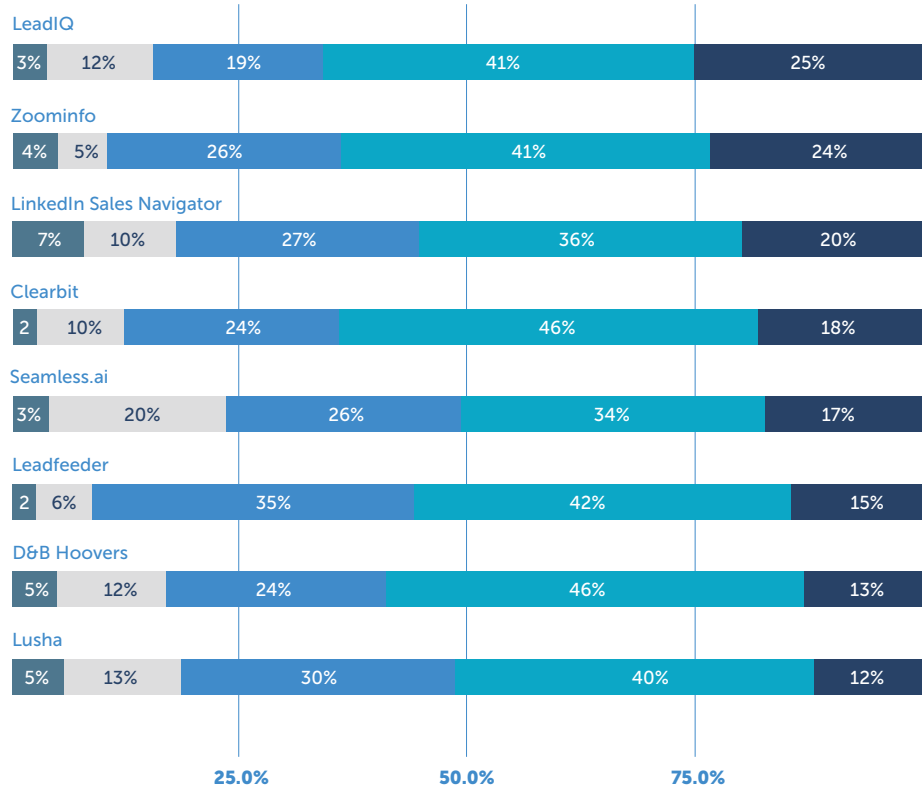
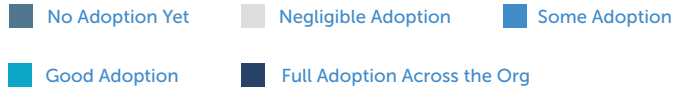
Popularity doesn't necessarily reflect ROI, adoption and impact. For example, LeadIQ shows a higher ROI than Sales Nav and is on par with ZoomInfo for both adoption and impact on rep performance.

Data & Intelligence

Impact by Tool



Adoption by Tool



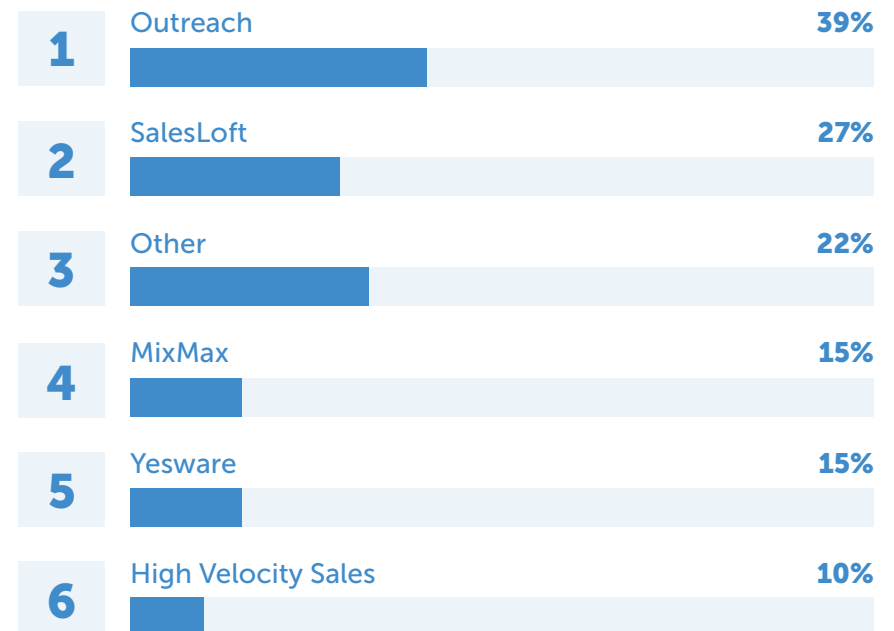
Sales Engagement

Sales Engagement may not have been around as long as the CRM or sales data, but it's quickly becoming a critical piece of the stack. 7 out of 10 of respondents already have a Sales Engagement tool in place, and 42% of those without one are planning adoption in the next 12 months.

Along with Data & Intelligence, the Sales Engagement category shows the biggest impact on performance and the best ROI.

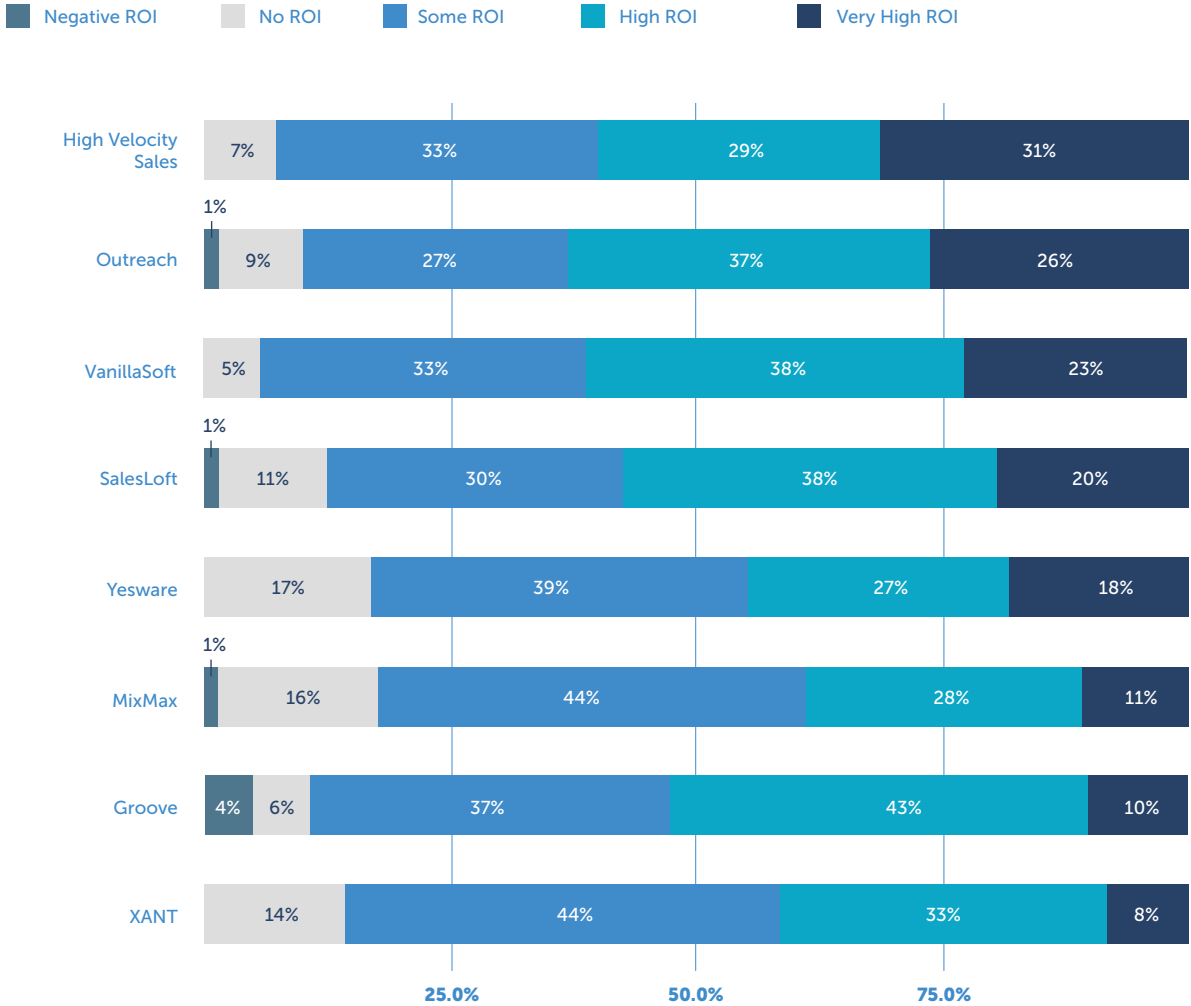
Two-thirds of respondents use either Outreach (39%) or SalesLoft (27%). Another 30% or so use either Mixmax or Yesware.

Which of the following are currently in your Sales Engagement tech stack?



Sales Engagement

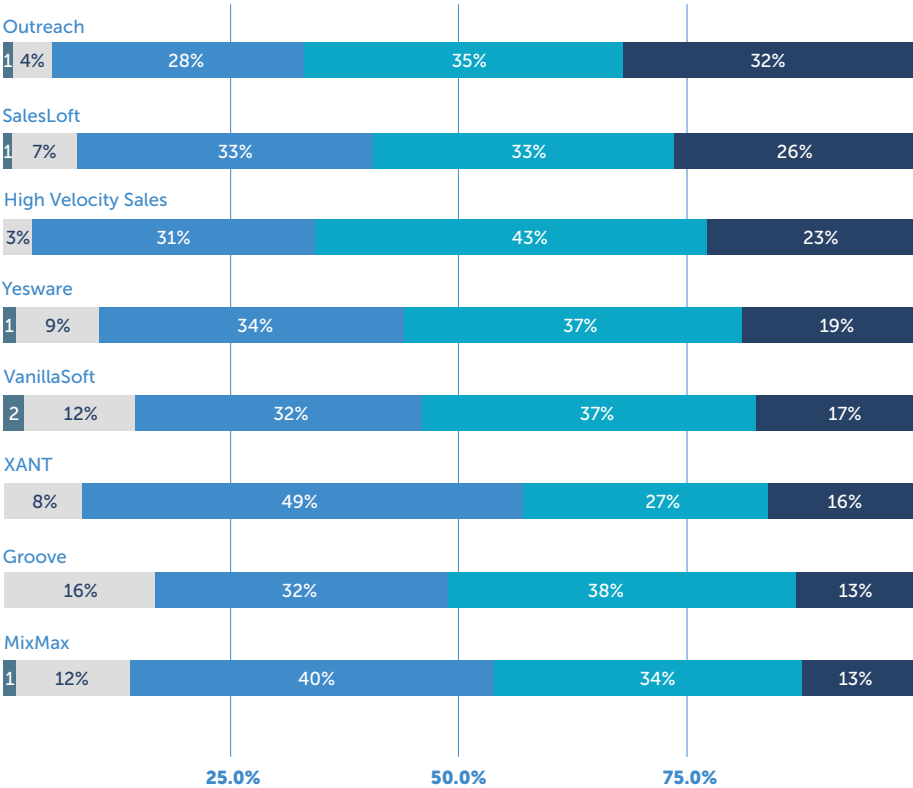
Sales Engagement ROI



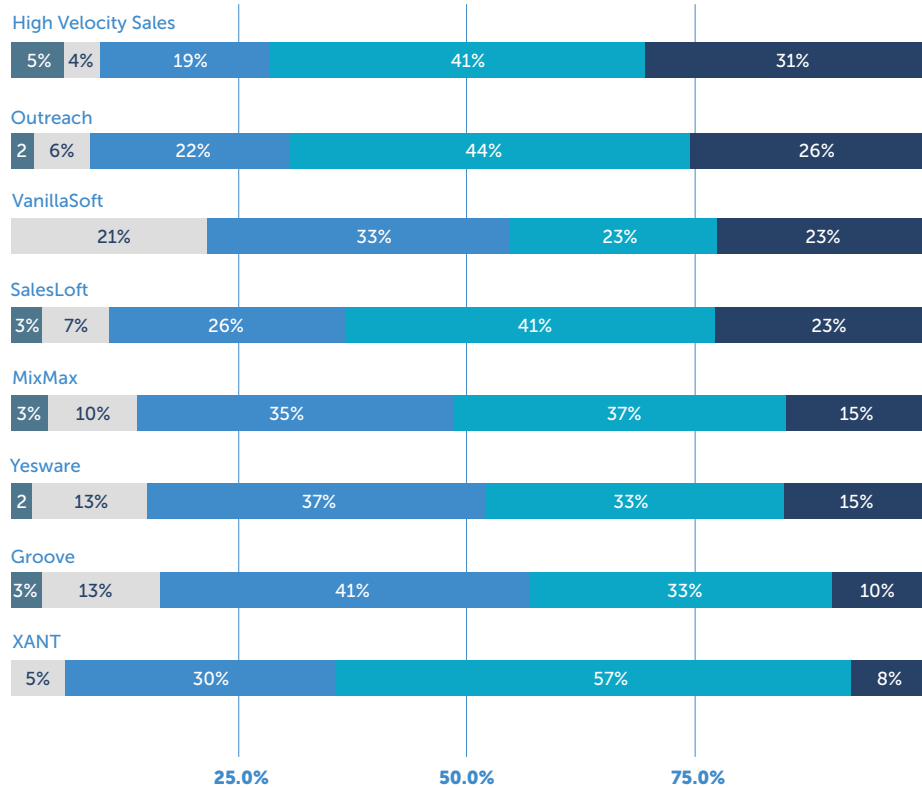
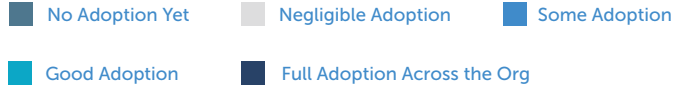
Respondents were most likely to say Outreach has the highest ROI, followed by VanillaSoft and High Velocity Sales.

Sales Engagement

Impact by Tool



Adoption by Tool



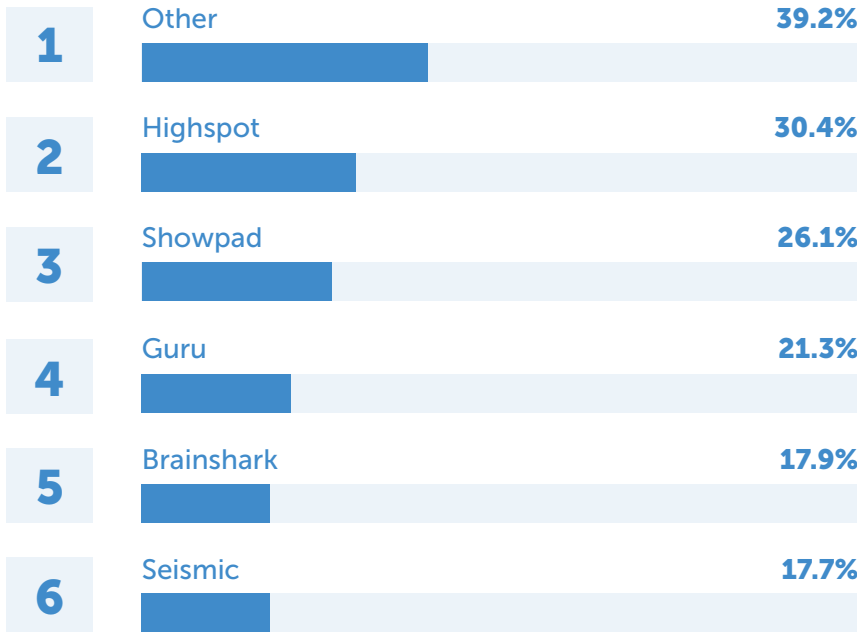
Sales Enablement

Sales Enablement as a category has the second-lowest adoption across the board—just under half of revenue pros have an enablement platform in place at their company. The only category with less of a presence is Sales Performance & Compensation.

But remember: nearly a third are planning on implementing Sales Enablement in the next 12 months. And Sales Enablement shows both high Impact and ROI—above the Revenue Intelligence, Sales Performance and Conversational Intelligence categories.

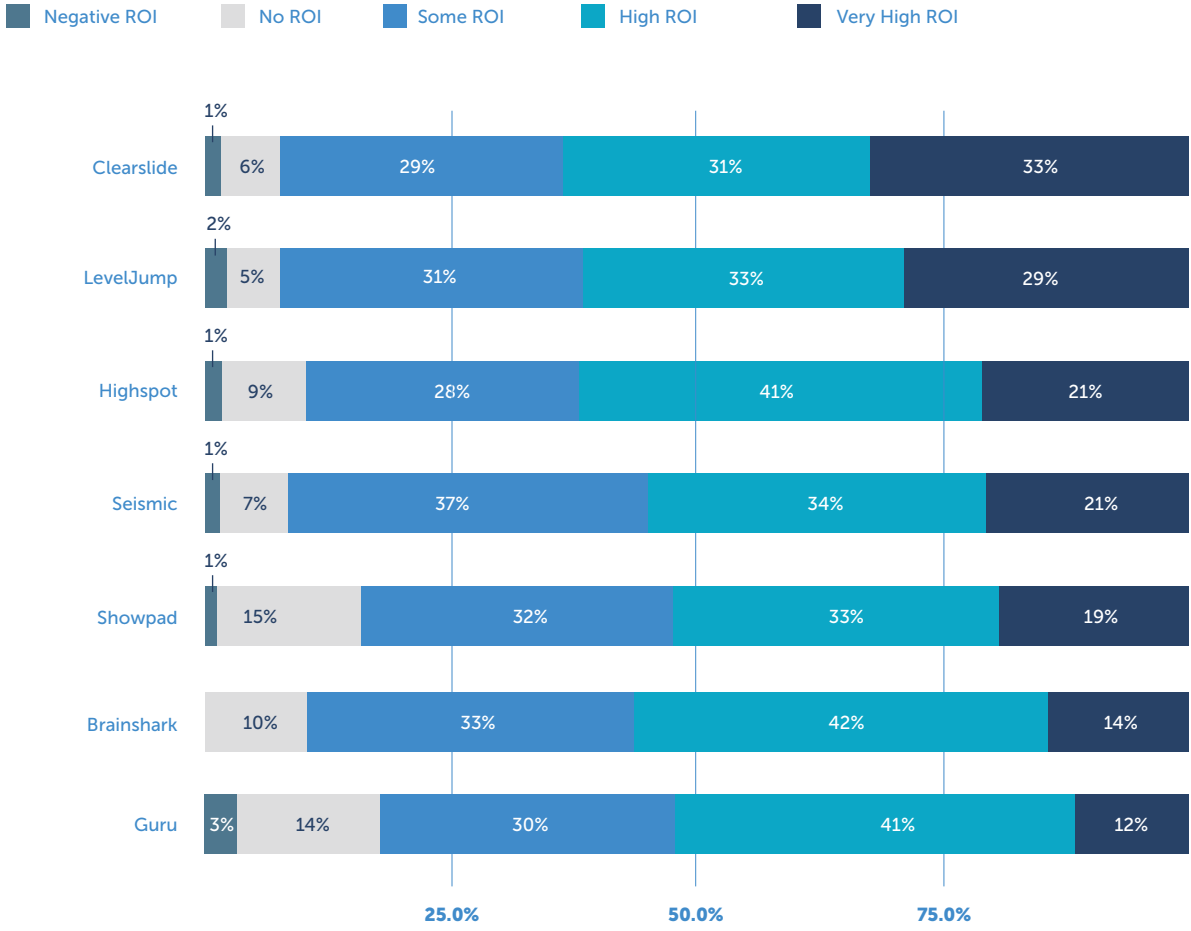
For the ROI of specific tools, Clearslide takes the top spot (64%), followed by Highspot (62%). “Others” in this category include LevelJump and Mindtickle.

Which of the following are currently in your Sales Enablement tech stack?



Sales Enablement

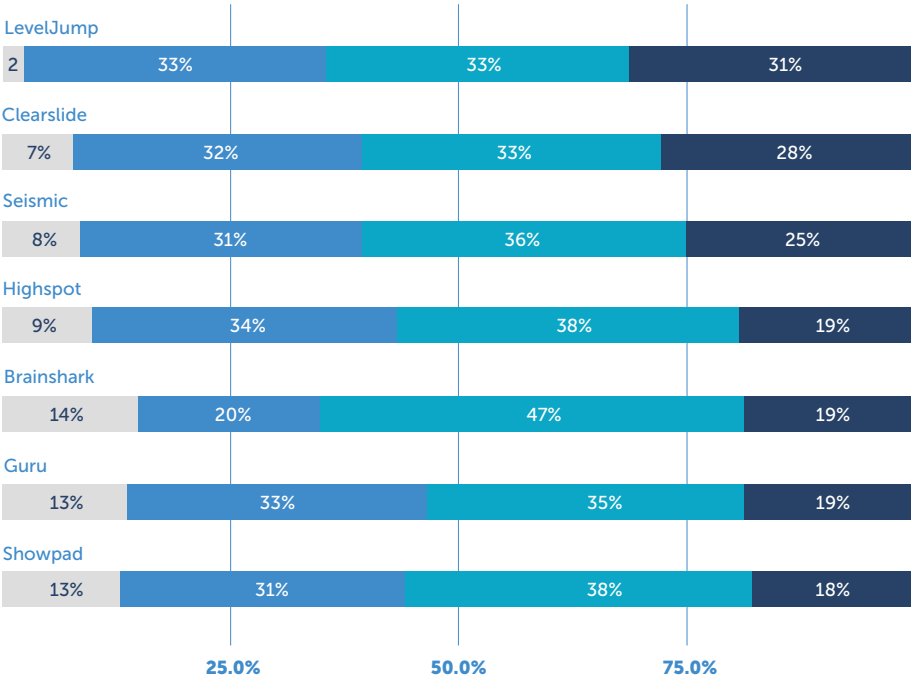
Sales Enablement ROI



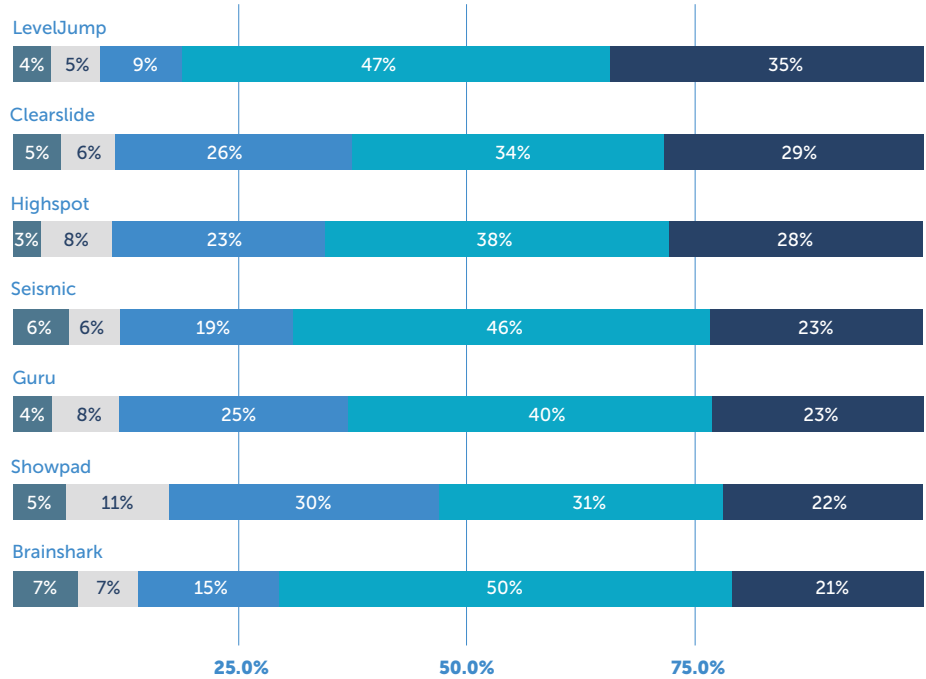
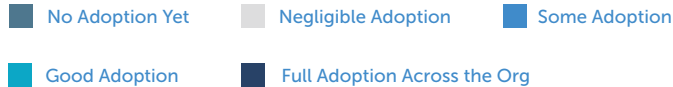
Across the board, respondents see good ROI for Sales Enablement—more than half of users for every tool reported High or Very HIGH ROI.

Sales Enablement

Impact by Tool



Adoption by Tool

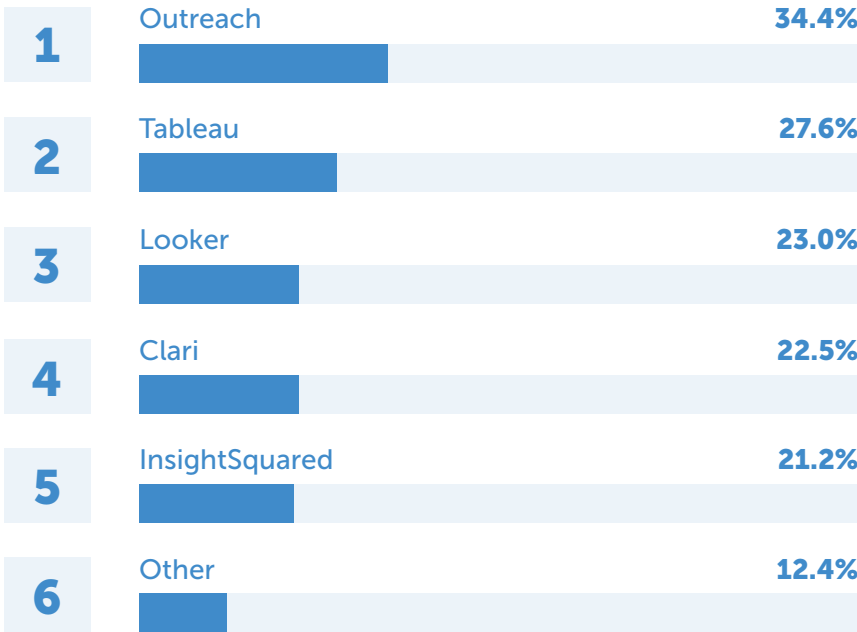


Revenue Intelligence

Roughly 6 in 10 respondents use Revenue Intelligence software, and 1 out of 10 plan on adopting the category in the next 12 months. This time next year, Revenue Intelligence should have the penetration that Sales Engagement has now.

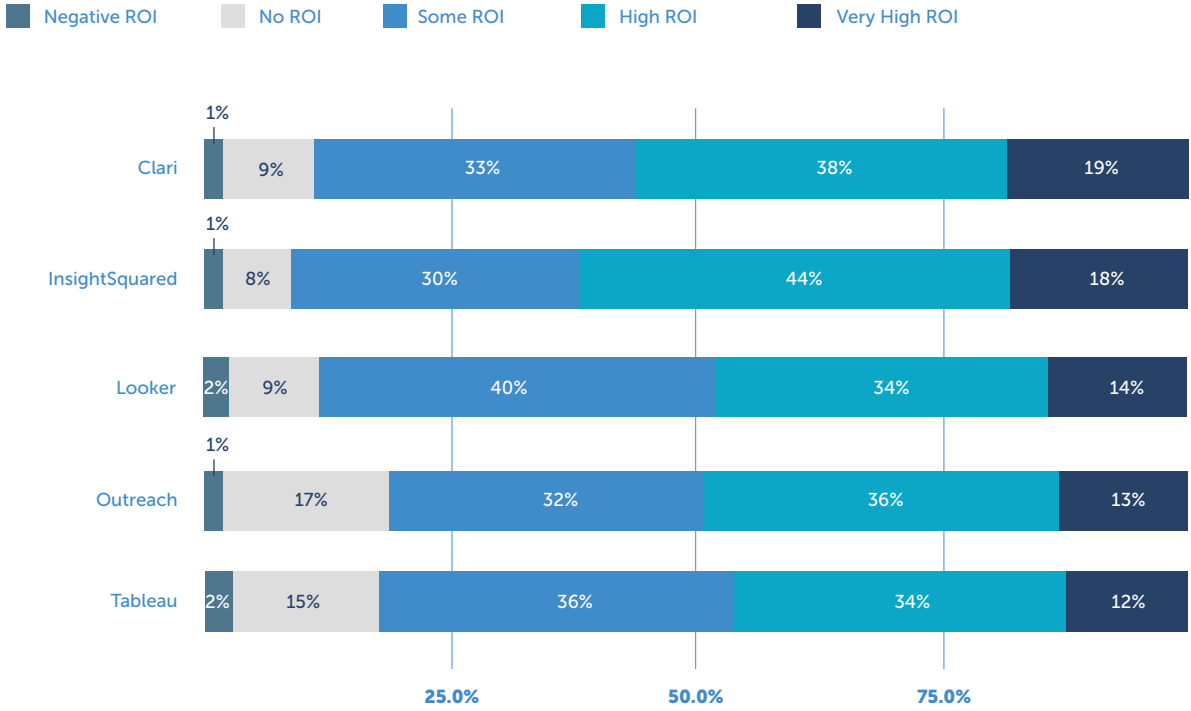
While Outreach is typically boxed into the Sales Engagement category, 27% respondents said they use Outreach for Revenue Intelligence—compared to the 21% who use Tableau and the 18% who use either Looker or Clari.

Which of the following are currently in your Revenue Intelligence tech stack?



Revenue Intelligence

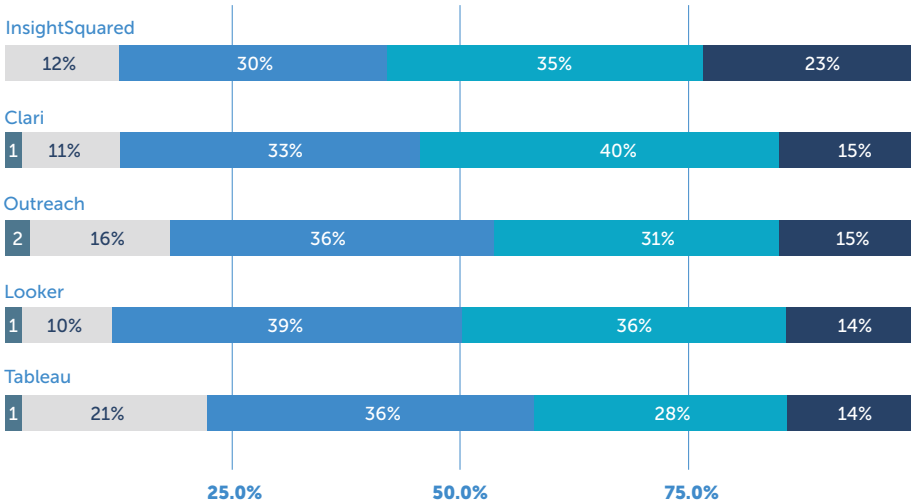
Revenue Intelligence ROI



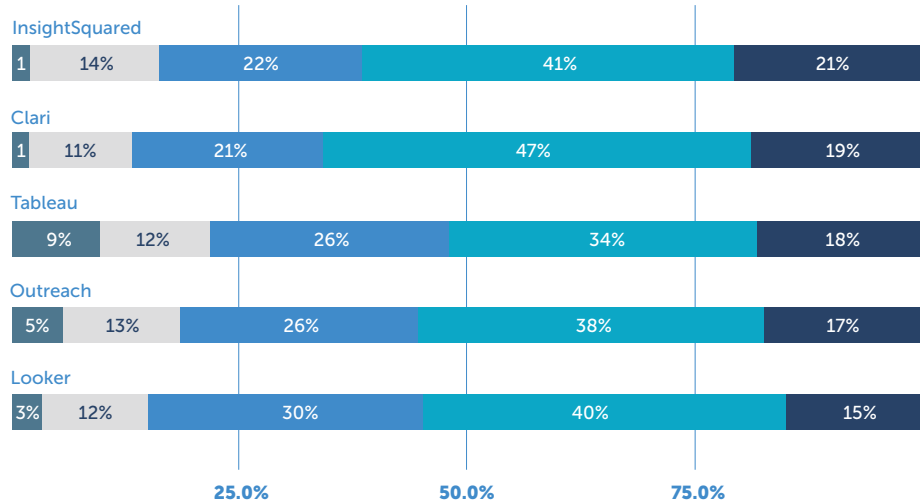
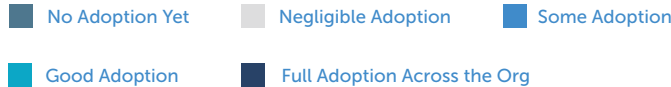
Usage aside, respondents were most likely to report high ROI for InsightSquared (62%) and Clari (57%).

Revenue Intelligence

Impact by Tool



Adoption by Tool



Sales Performance & Compensation

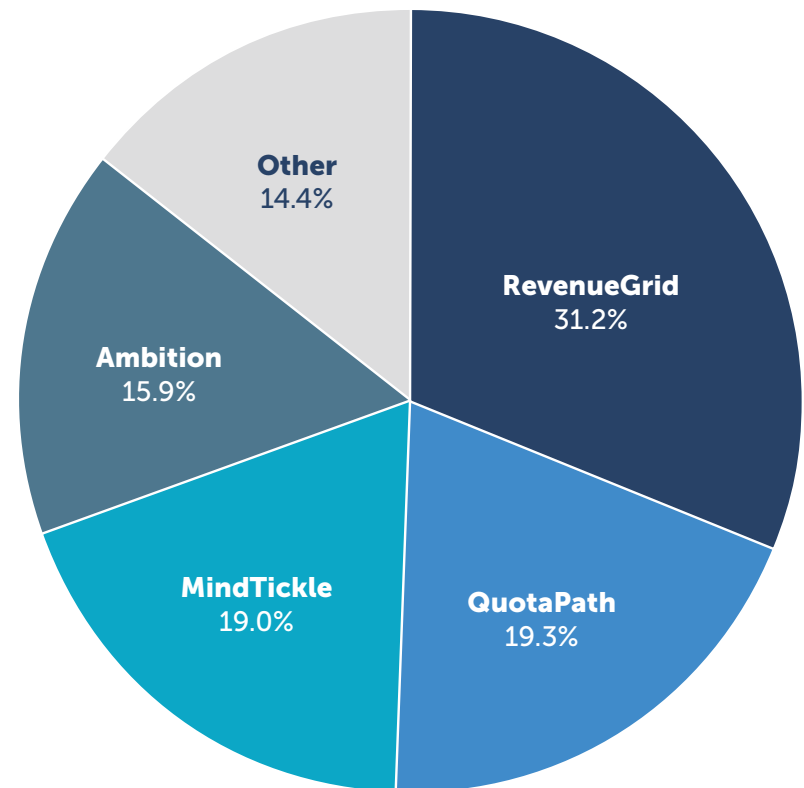
The big picture: this category has the lowest penetration in the sales industry and the lowest showing for planned implementation in the next 12 months.

So, the question now becomes: how do users feel about the category? Should other revenue leaders be thinking more about the impact of these tools?

With a third of respondents using Revenue Grid, it's by far the most popular tool in the category. Just under a quarter of respondents use either QuotaPath or MindTickle, and nearly 1 in 5 use Ambition.

The return is certainly there: two-thirds of QuotaPath users report a high or very high ROI, while roughly half of other respondents report the same.

Which of the following are currently in your **Sales Performance & Compensation Management tech stack?**



Sales Performance & Compensation

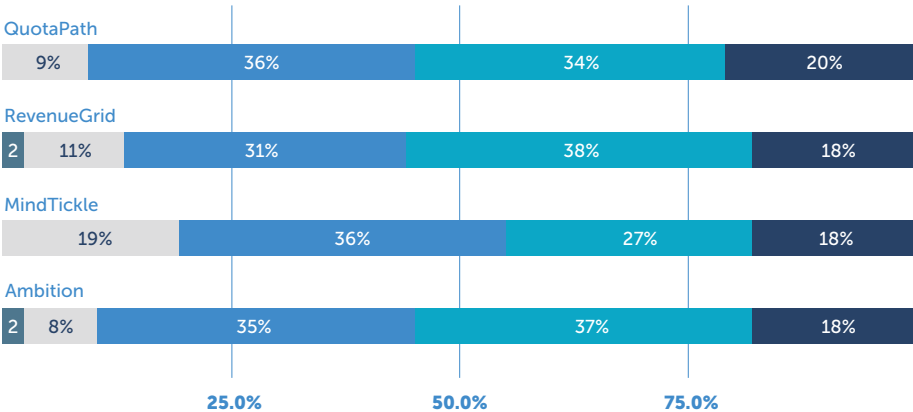
Sales Performance & Compensation ROI



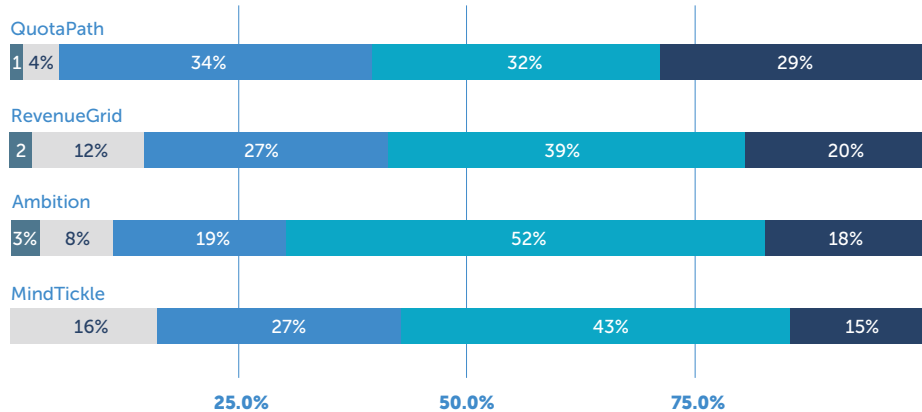
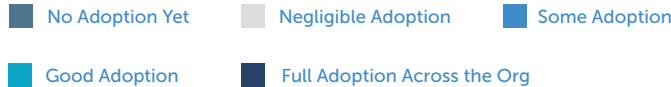
The category shows a wide range of ROI—nearly 7 in 10 QuotaPath users report high or very ROI, while 4 out of 10 Mindtickle users would say the same.

Sales Performance & Compensation

Impact by Tool



Adoption by Tool



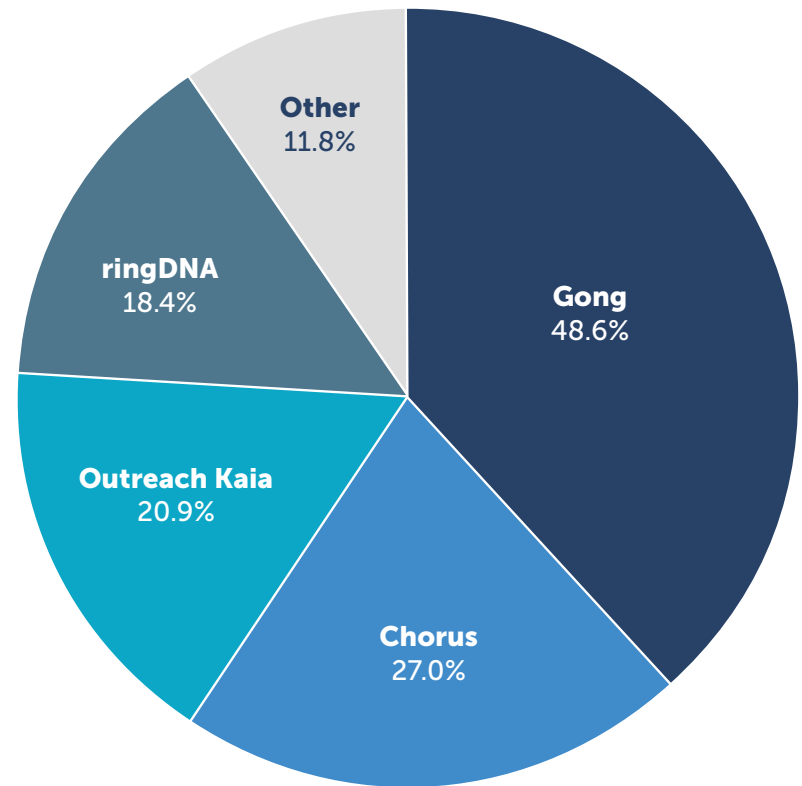
Conversational Intelligence & Coaching

This category is relatively uncrowded compared to some of the other categories in your tech stack, with four main players: Gong, Chorus, Outreach Kaia and ringDNA.

Gong has by far the most users (42%), followed by Chorus (24%). Outreach Kaia and ringDNA have 18% and 16% of users, respectively.

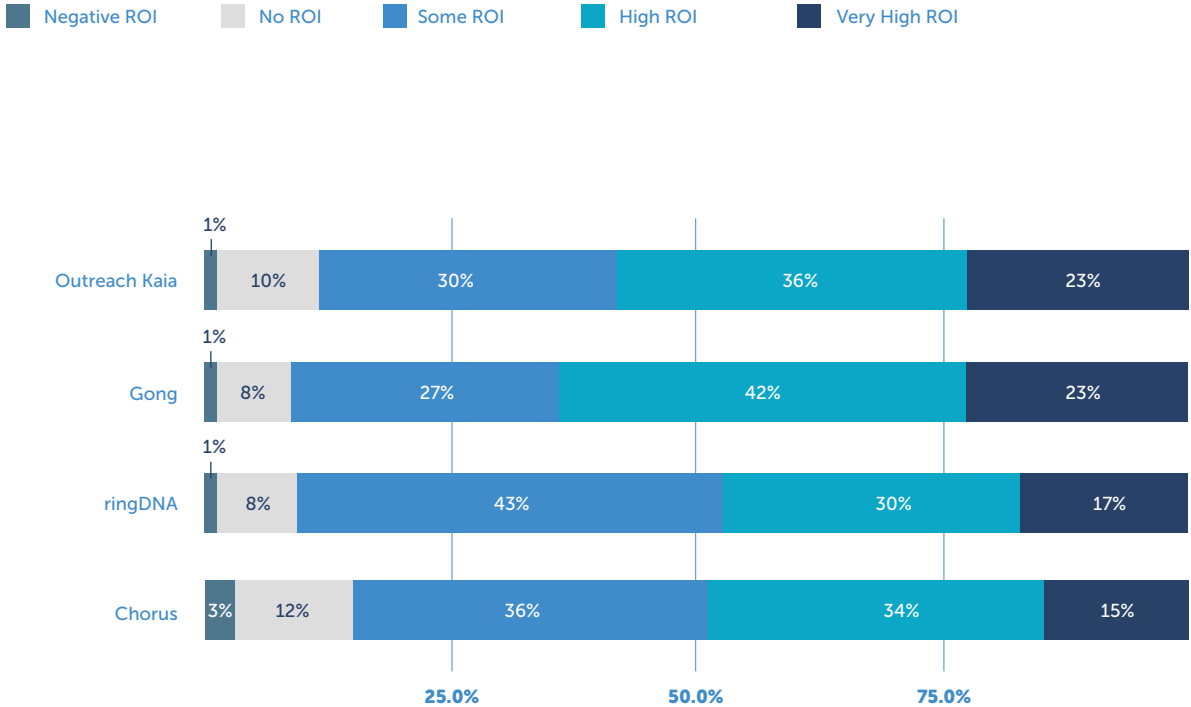
Despite the difference in user base, Gong and Outreach take the top spots for ROI, Adoption and Impact in the Conversational Intelligence & Coaching category.

Which of the following are currently in your **Conversational Intelligence & Coaching tech stack?**



Conversational Intelligence & Coaching

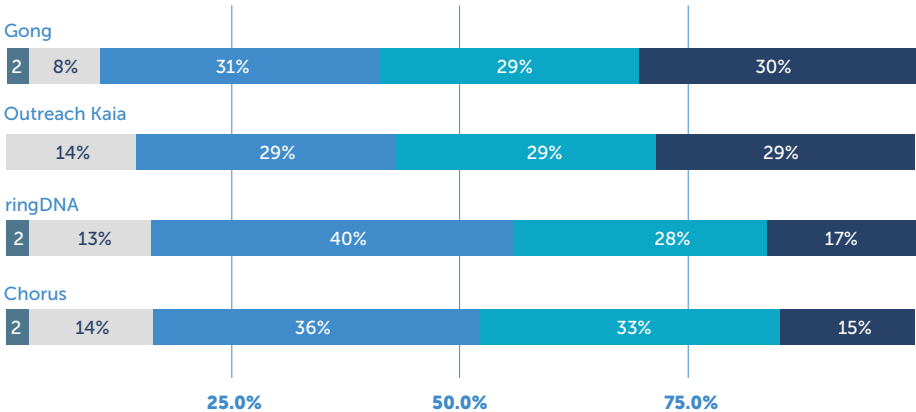
Conversational Intelligence & Coaching ROI



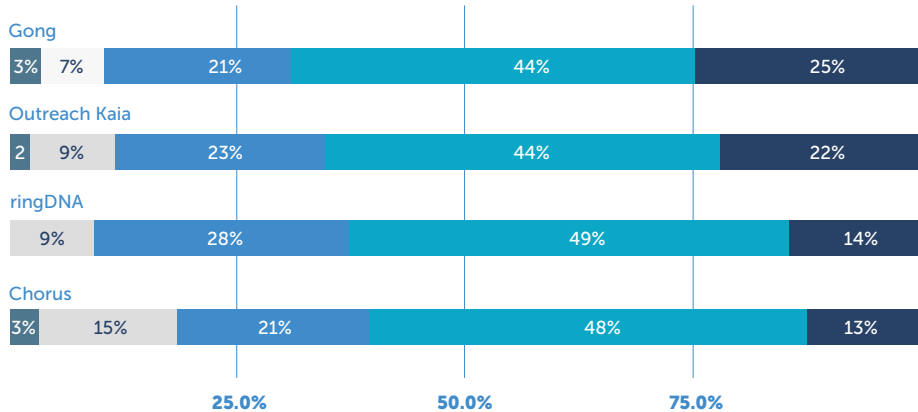
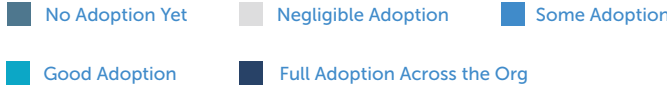
The vast majority of respondents using a Conversational Intelligence tool see at least some ROI—nearly 90% across the board.

Conversational Intelligence & Coaching

Impact by Tool



Adoption by Tool



What's Next for Sales Tech?

CONCLUSION

Perspective, meet action.

Remember our questions from the beginning:

How many sales tools have you considered this year?

How do you know which categories are worth investing in?

Now, armed with a bit more information about the ROI, performance and adoption of the 40+ tools we've covered here, you get to ask yourself another question: "how can I bring the best tools together for the biggest impact on revenue?"

Sales leaders who put buyers at the center of their strategies and over-index on data—who we're calling Revenue Innovators—will stop cobbling together a collection of point solutions and increasingly make bets on core platforms that serve all roles of the revenue generation organization.

So: what's next for *your* sales tech?

"Today, hundreds of point solutions make up a fragmented sales technology marketplace while leading providers extend capabilities and land multi-billion-dollar valuations.

Although CRM is still an important component of the sales tech stack, sellers now work from other more relevant layers... while sales leaders turn to revenue intelligence and operations solutions to better meet their strategic and execution needs.

As newer adjacent sales technologies mature and consolidate, expect CRM to play a different role in the modern sales tech stack."



Mary Shea

*Global Innovation Evangelist
Outreach*