

Sales & tech's relationship status

It's complicated



Ghosting each other

On a break

We surveyed 500 sales leaders to learn about the impact of tech on their efficiency, their CRM challenges, and their hopes for AI.

The promise of sales tech.

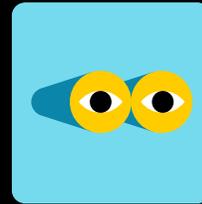
Sales teams seem to have more technology than they could have ever dreamed of.

From CRM systems and email automation tools to revenue intelligence, data analytics, sales engagement platforms, and more, there's an ever-growing list of tools that promise to increase efficiency.

But, is it working?

In this survey, we wanted to hear from sales leaders about whether all this technology is actually helping their teams perform more efficiently. Considering nearly every service claims to help sales teams work faster and close more deals, shouldn't teams with all this technology be thriving?

We broke down our survey into three key parts, aiming to understand the following questions:



Is technology helping sales teams with their efficiency?



How do sales leaders view CRMs?



And what do sales teams hope to achieve with AI?

We surveyed C-level executives, VPs, and Directors to uncover how their roles interact with technology and what challenges their teams face with the tools in their stack.

Our respondents came from companies of various sizes: businesses with 100-499 employees, mid-sized companies with 500-999 employees, and enterprises with over 1,000 employees. The goal was to understand how these businesses use technology and what they expect from the tools they invest in.

We discovered that the relationship between sales and tech is quite complicated – in particular when it comes to CRMs.

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01

Who we
surveyed

02

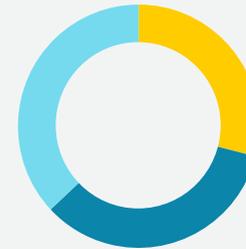
We surveyed 500 sales leaders.

To explore CRM usage trends and challenges, we surveyed 500 full-time employees, including sales directors and above, across the sales departments of organizations in the US and UK.

Participants represented industries such as manufacturing, software, corporate services, finance, and media & communications. Half of the companies surveyed were mid-market (100–1,000 employees), while the other half were enterprises with over 1,000 employees. All respondents used CRM systems daily. The survey was conducted in October 2024 in collaboration with Global Surveyz.

Job seniority

- C-level: 29%
- VP: 37%
- Director: 34%



Company size (by number of employees)



- 100-199: 6%
- 200-499: 18%
- 500-999: 23%
- 1K-5K: 33%
- 5K-10K: 17%
- 10K+: 3%

Industry

Manufacturing

25%

Finance

22%

Professional services

20%

Media & communication

17%

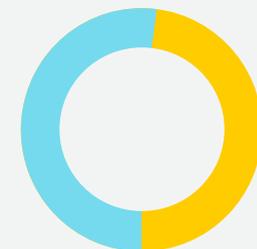
Software

16%

Country

United States: 52%

United Kingdom: 48%



01



Key
findings

03

Key finding 01

Sales teams waste significant time on inefficient technology.

Thought your sales team spent most of its time selling? That's apparently not the case at all.

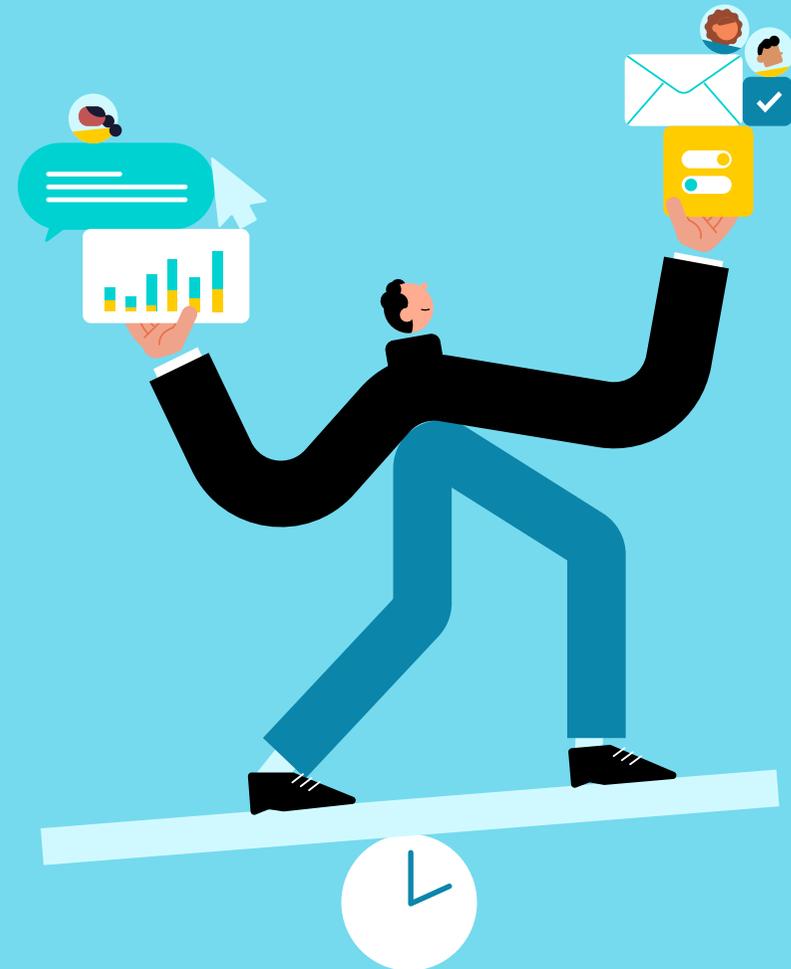
Sales leaders believe that tech time-wasters account for an average of 42.3% of their team's total work time.

The top time-consuming tools that sales teams struggle with are data analytics platforms, CRMs, and contract management systems.

Software downtime leads the list of time-wasters overall. But C-level executives are most bothered by inefficient reporting and analytics tools while Directors, closer to front line sellers, are more annoyed at the amount of time spent manually entering data. Sales leaders from mid-market companies report feeling the burden of disjointed tools the most.

42.3%

Tech time-wasters account for an average of 42.3% of total work time.



Key finding 02

There are some mixed feelings about CRMs.

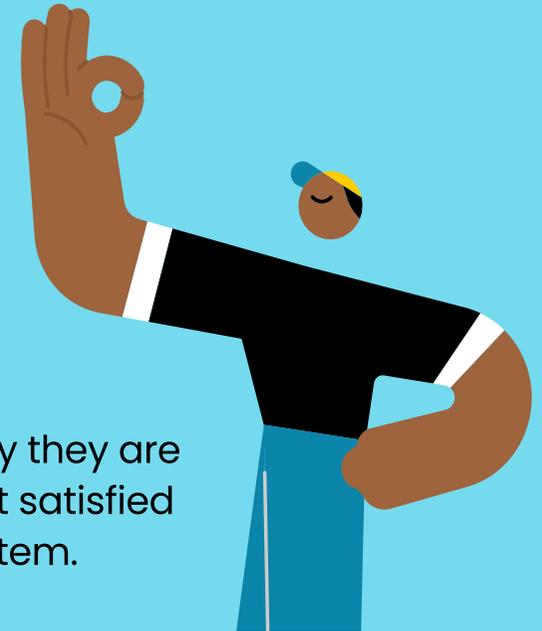
With CRMs being one of the most time-consuming tools, it was surprising to learn that 61% of respondents say they are at least somewhat satisfied with their CRM system. But that satisfaction plummets when you dive into the responses as nearly half of C-level respondents express dissatisfaction. The biggest frustrations include clunky interfaces, ineffective reporting, and poor integration.

Meanwhile, only 21% of respondents feel their CRM's benefits outweigh the costs.

Likewise, a significant 81% are considering replacing their CRM in the next year. That number is even higher when it comes to sales leaders from mid-sized and enterprise companies.

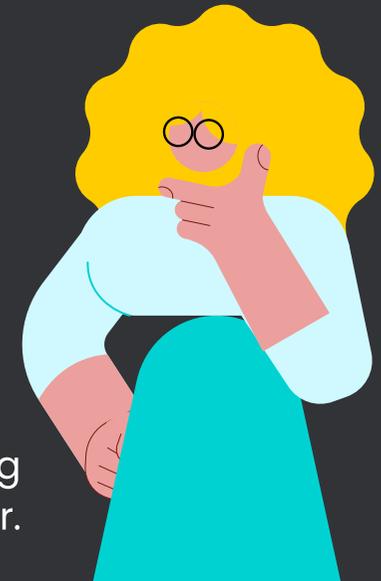
61%

of respondents say they are at least somewhat satisfied with their CRM system.



81%

are considering replacing their CRM in the next year.



Key finding 03

AI is boosting productivity and reshaping sales strategies.

The AI revolution has impacted sales teams. Over 80% of respondents report that they use AI as a productivity booster and it makes them more efficient.

Popular applications include sales forecasting, personalized outreach, and sales analytics. C-level executives are leading the adoption of advanced tools like forecasting much more than VPs and Directors. Sales leaders from smaller companies focus on simpler tasks like outreach more than their counterparts from larger or enterprise companies.



+82%

of respondents report that they use AI as a productivity booster and it makes them more efficient.

02

03

Tech =
efficiency?

04

Percentage of time spent on technology-related time wasters

Sales teams spend shockingly large portions of their workdays fighting with technology, even though these tools were often made to help them sell better.

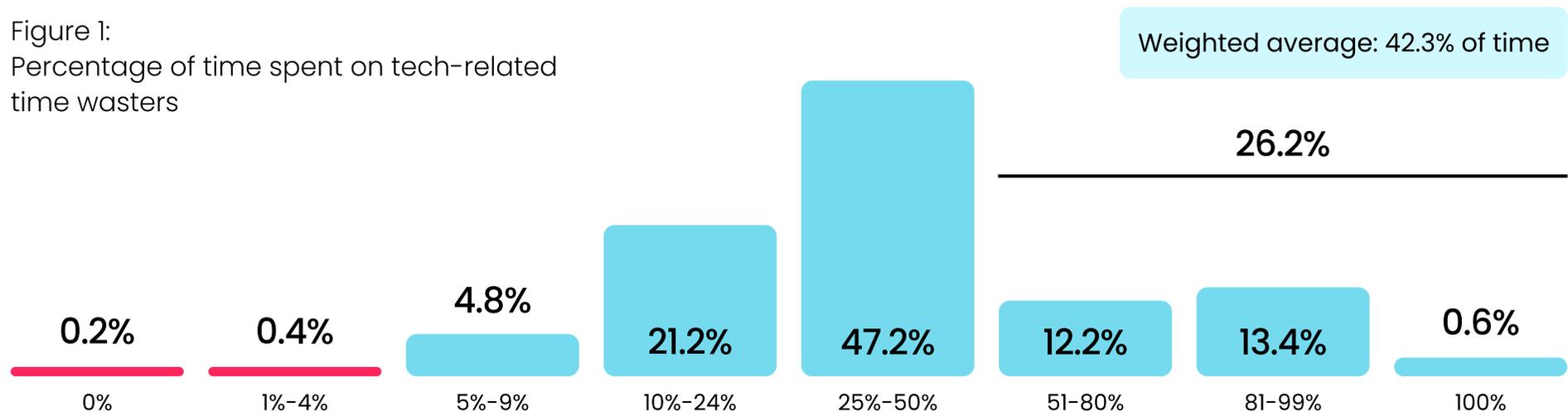
Our survey found that on average, sales leaders believe that technology-related time wasters like software downtime, manual data entry, and inefficient reporting account for an average of 42.3% of their team's total work time.

When we break down the numbers, we see that a substantial 73.4% of sales leaders believe their teams spend more than 25% of their time on technology-related time wasters, while 26.2% of them say technology wastes more than half of their team's time. Meanwhile, nearly half of sales leaders (47.2%) estimate that 25-50% of their team's time is wasted fighting with their sales tech, while 13.4% say 81-100% of their time is wasted on tech.

Time that could be spent on more valuable tasks like creating outbound sequences, following up with prospects, and pushing deals over the finish line, is instead spent fighting with technology.

These findings highlight a troubling norm: many sales leaders feel their teams are wasting significant time as a result of technological inefficiencies as part of their workday.

Figure 1:
Percentage of time spent on tech-related time wasters



Primary time-consuming sales tools

Which sales tools are the most time consuming? While sales teams rely heavily on technology, not all tools are created equal when it comes to efficiency.

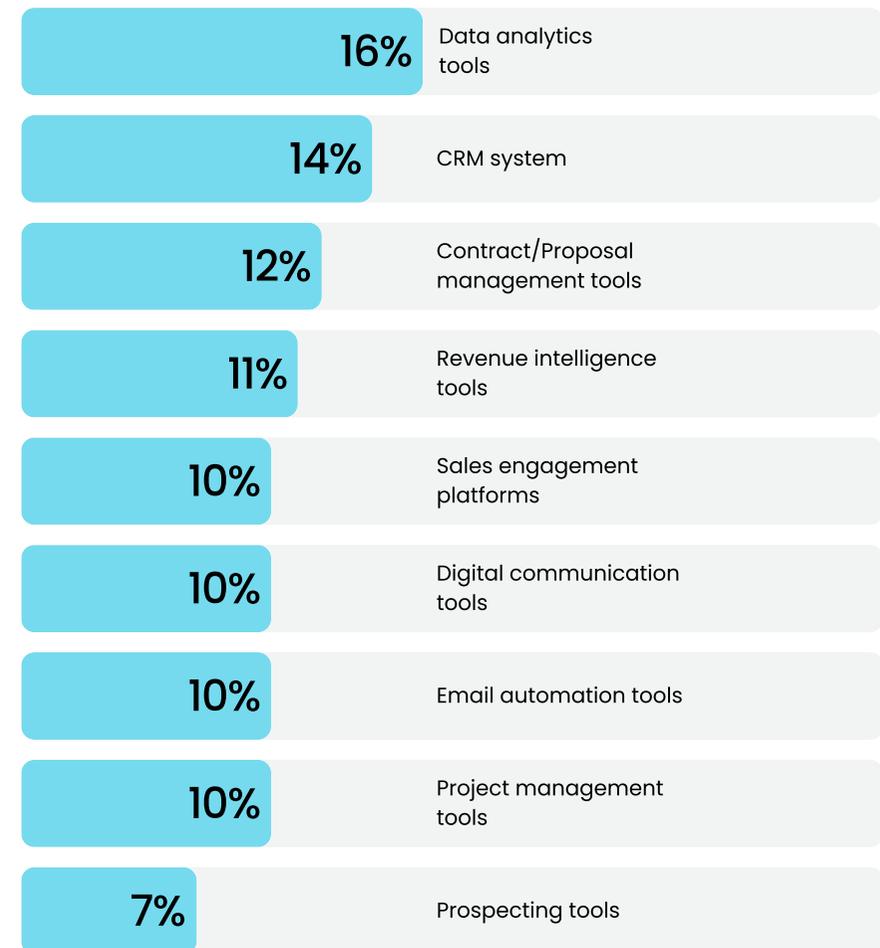
While there are so many types of software that help with different parts of the sales process, data analytics tools were identified as the most time consuming (16%), followed closely by CRM systems (14%). Other notable tools contributing to time drain include contract and proposal management systems (12%) and revenue intelligence platforms (11%). Sales engagement platforms, digital communication tools, and email automation tools were each cited by 10% of respondents.

Because our survey is based on the responses of sales leaders, it's not surprising that the technology they are more likely to use, like data analytics tools, beat out technology their team may use, like prospecting tools.

But regardless, this data highlights a key frustration for sales teams, which is that the tools designed to streamline operations often create additional work.

These findings underscore the importance of evaluating not only the functionality of sales tools but also their impact on day-to-day productivity. Organizations that prioritize intuitive, integrated systems may find it easier to balance technology's benefits with its demands.

Figure 2: Primary time-consuming sales tools



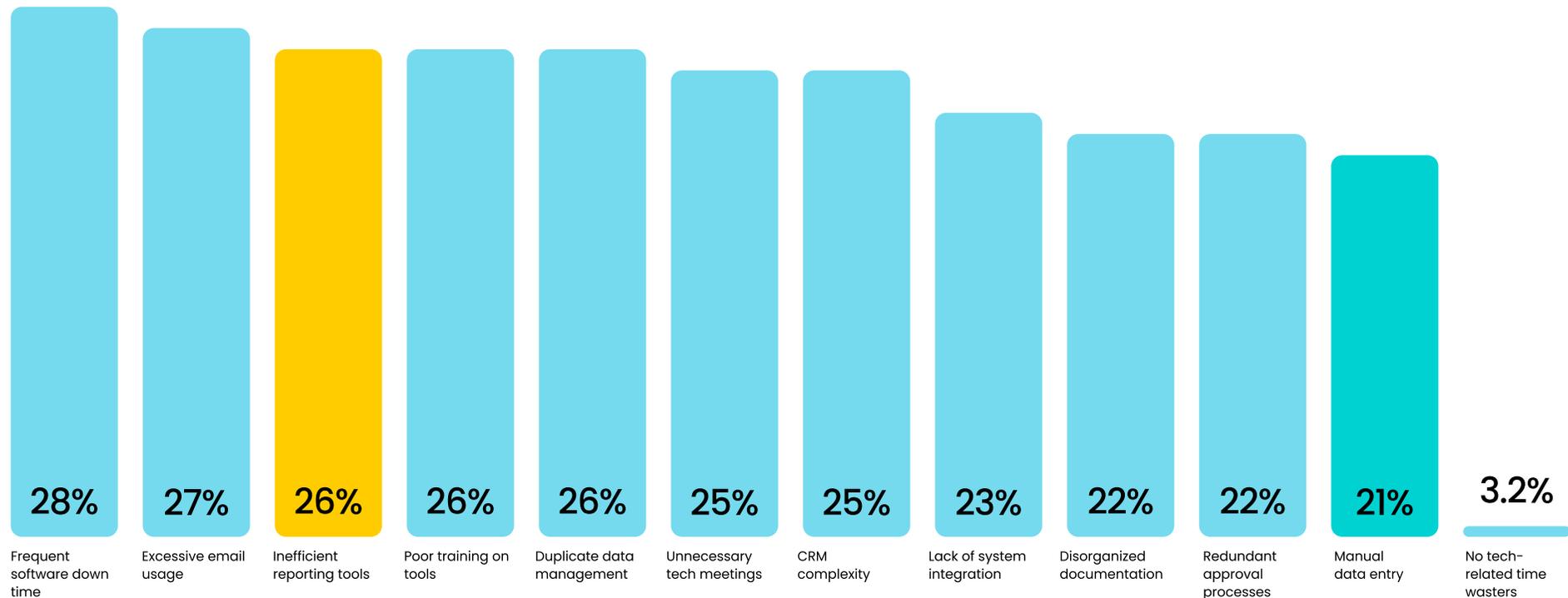
Top technology-related time wasters for sales teams

So sales teams are overwhelmed by technology-related inefficiencies, but what kinds of time wasters are most debilitating?

At first glance, no time wasters jumped out as being significantly worse than others. There were only seven percentage points from the most cited (software down time at 28%) to the least cited (manual data entry at 21%).

Figure 3: Top tech-related time wasters

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



But things get more definitive when we break down the data by role.

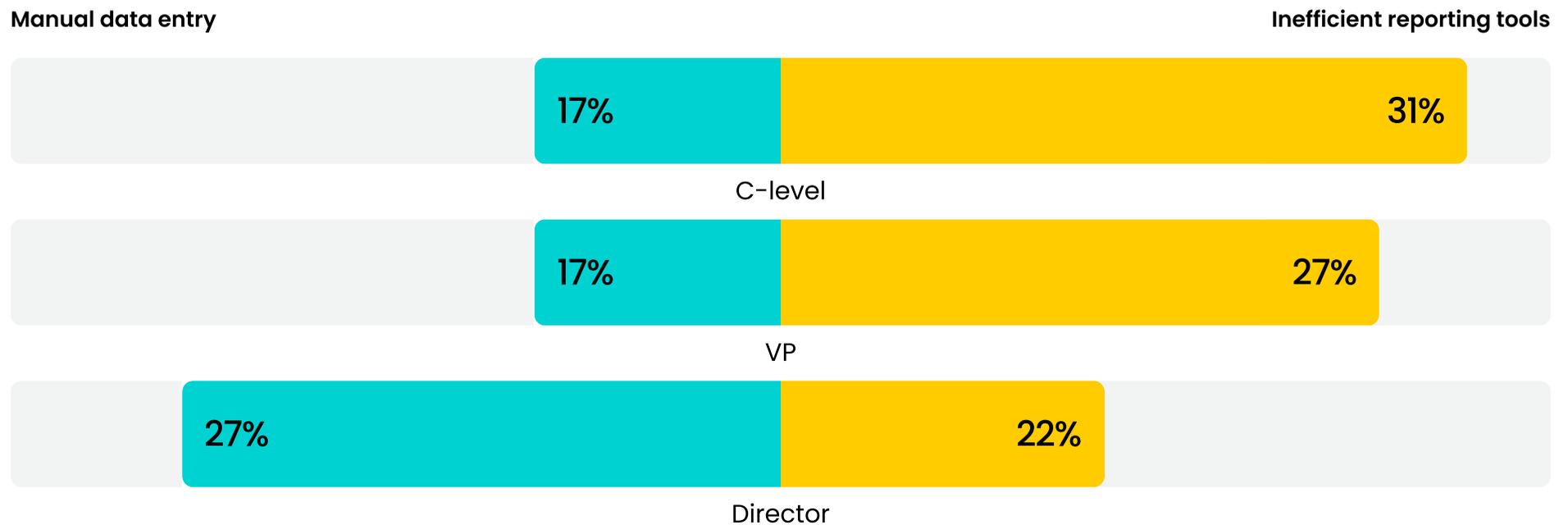
C-level executives report struggling more with “inefficient reporting” (31%) compared to Directors (22%), likely due to their role’s focus on forecasting and strategic decision-making.

Meanwhile, Directors, who are usually closer to frontline teams, are more affected by “manual data entry” (27%), reflecting their involvement in operational tasks, compared to their C-level colleagues (17%).

This shows that despite the consistent issue with wasting time on technology, different roles are impacted slightly differently by different tech issues.

But only 3% of respondents felt they had no tech-related time wasters at all (Figure 3), while all the tech issues we offered as examples received a considerable number of votes. This shows the extent to which technological issues plague sales teams.

Figure 4: Time wasters broken down by job seniority



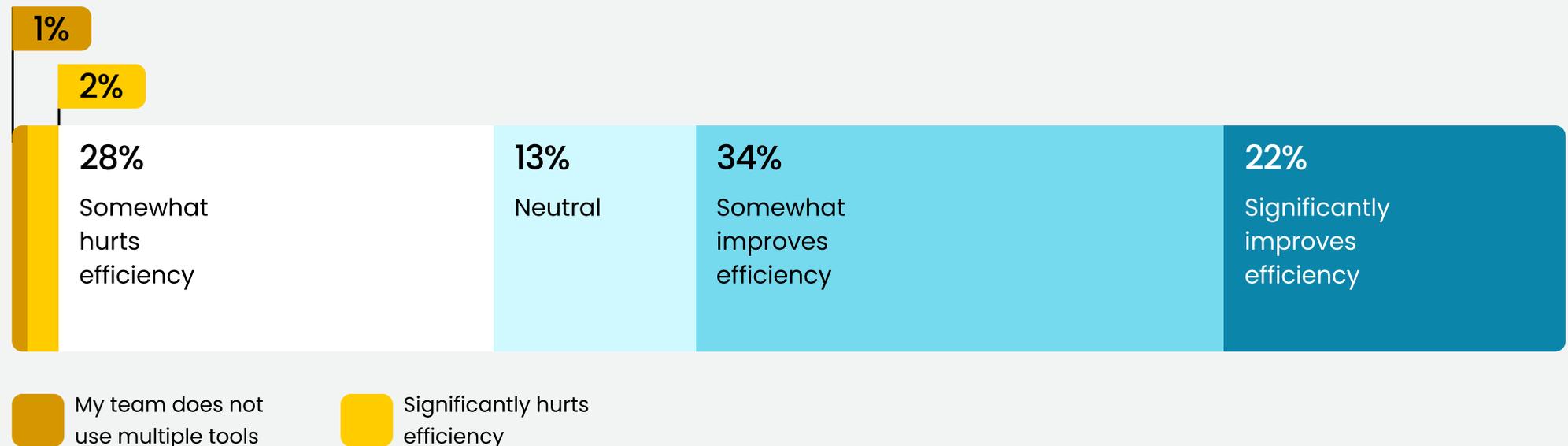
Impact of multiple tools on sales team efficiency

But overall, using multiple technological tools is obviously significantly beneficial for sales teams, right?

Actually, using multiple tools creates mixed outcomes for sales teams.

Just 22% of respondents say these tools significantly improve their team's efficiency. Meanwhile, a surprising 43% don't believe multiple tools are beneficial at all, with 30% of them actually saying that using multiple sales tools hurts their efficiency to some extent.

Figure 5: Impact of multiple tools on efficiency



Interestingly, sales leaders from mid-market companies perceive themselves to be disproportionately impacted by the dysfunction that multiple tools may cause, with a higher percentage citing inefficiencies caused by multiple tools. This may stem from being caught between smaller teams, which likely use fewer tools, and larger enterprises, which have the resources to integrate and optimize their tech stacks effectively.

Regardless of the organization's size though, these findings underscore a recurring theme: while existing tech stacks are "fine," they don't deliver the transformational benefits many teams desire, leaving room for improvement and innovation.

Tip

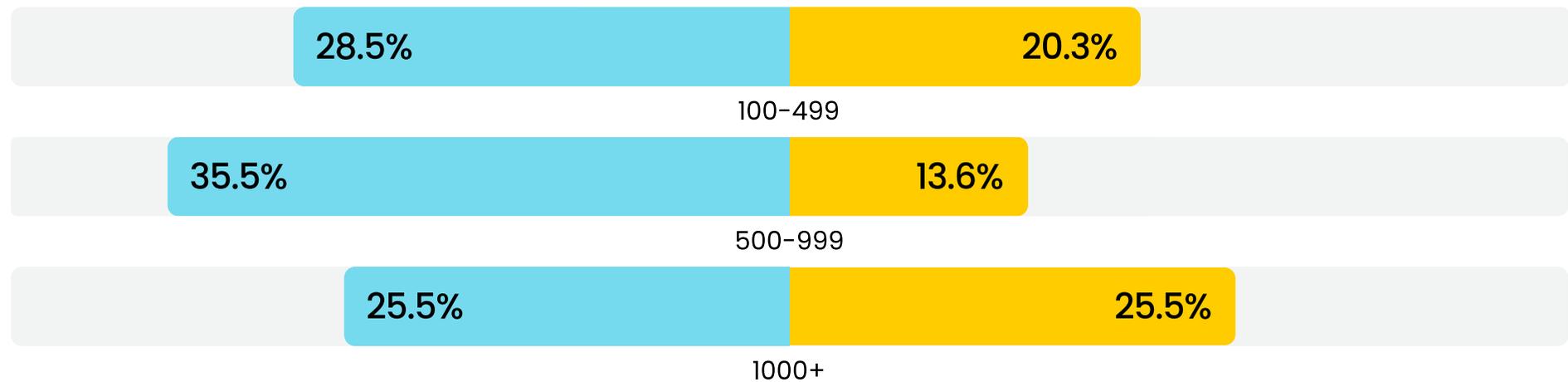


For mid-sized companies, boost efficiency by centralizing your team's work in fewer key tools. Choose platforms that offer multiple services, so your team can handle everything in one familiar environment.

Figure 6:
Impact of multiple tools on efficiency by company size

Somewhat hurts efficiency

Significantly improves efficiency



Top technological causes of silos in the revenue team

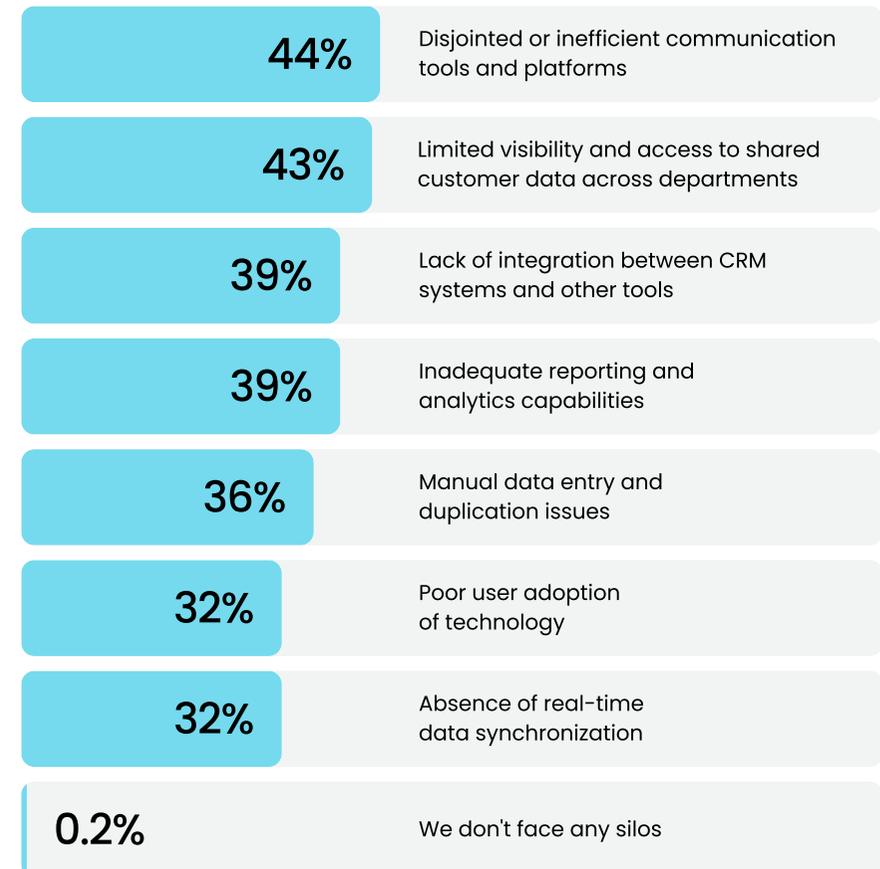
Another huge problem faced by businesses is the issue of silos in their revenue organizations. While there are many issues that may lead to these silos, one can be a result of inefficient technology. Our survey found just how widely felt this pain is, with only 0.2% of our survey respondents saying that their teams don't face any technology-related silos.

The cause of these technological silos? Many people blame issues that are born from using multiple tools. "Disjointed or inefficient communication tools and platforms," had 44% of sales leaders saying this caused silos in their teams, which was closely followed by "limited visibility and access to shared customer data across departments" (43%), "lack of integration between CRM systems and other tools" (39%), and "inadequate reporting and analytics capabilities" (39%).

These top responses point to the breakdown of transparency and connectivity across platforms, presumably due to different technology. Despite many tech solutions that aim to help teams stay on the same page, silos are being created due to lack of integrations, communication, and data sharing.

In contrast, the responses that received the least number of votes, which speak to manual errors, poor user adoption, and absence of real-time data, were not as painful as the lack of connected technologies.

Figure 7: Top technological causes for silos in revenue teams



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

Negative consequences of technological silos in the sales process

But maybe silos aren't such a huge problem?

Nope. Technological silos in the sales process create ripple effects that hinder business outcomes. The most reported consequence is a lack of data-driven decision-making (35%), a critical concern for executives who rely on accurate insights to steer strategy. Scaling challenges due to poor process standardization follow closely (34%), reflecting the operational inefficiencies caused by fragmented systems.

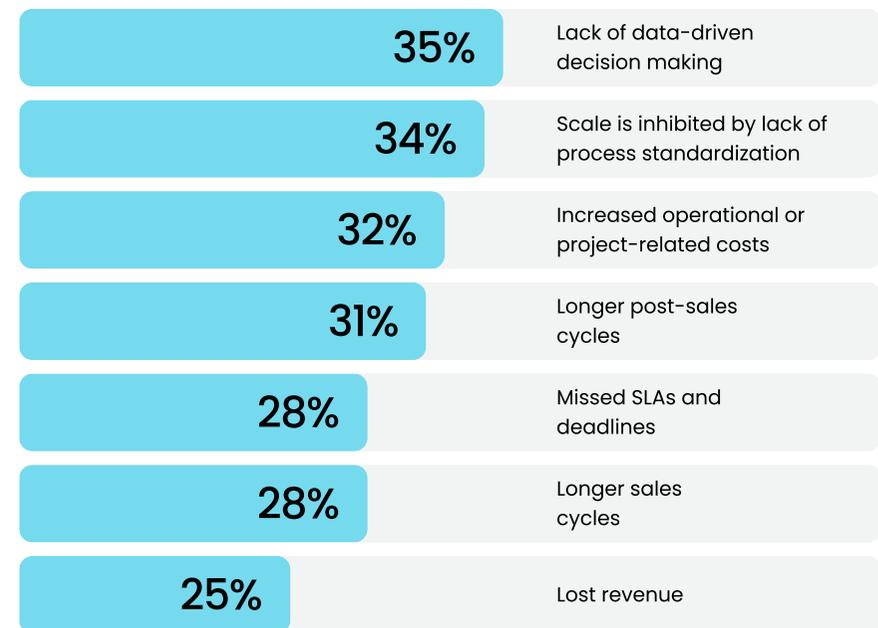
Tip



Break down workplace silos and enable full visibility across departments by using a centralized platform that promotes transparency. Ensure smooth handovers, clear feedback loops, and make sure data doesn't get lost along the way.

These findings highlight how disconnected tools and processes don't just slow down individual stages of the sales cycle—they undermine the ability of organizations to scale, meet goals, and make informed decisions, particularly at the executive level.

Figure 8: Consequences of tech silos in the sales process



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

03

04

The CRM
paradox

05

Sales team satisfaction with current CRM system

Despite the widely held beliefs about how painful CRMs can be, we were surprised to see 61% of respondents express overall satisfaction with their CRM system.

Figure 9:
Satisfaction with current CRM

All respondents

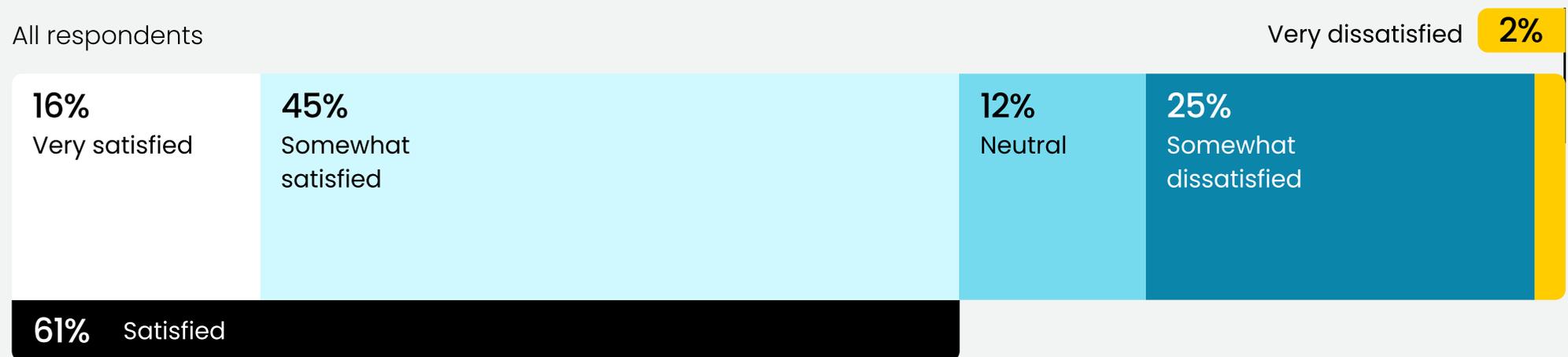
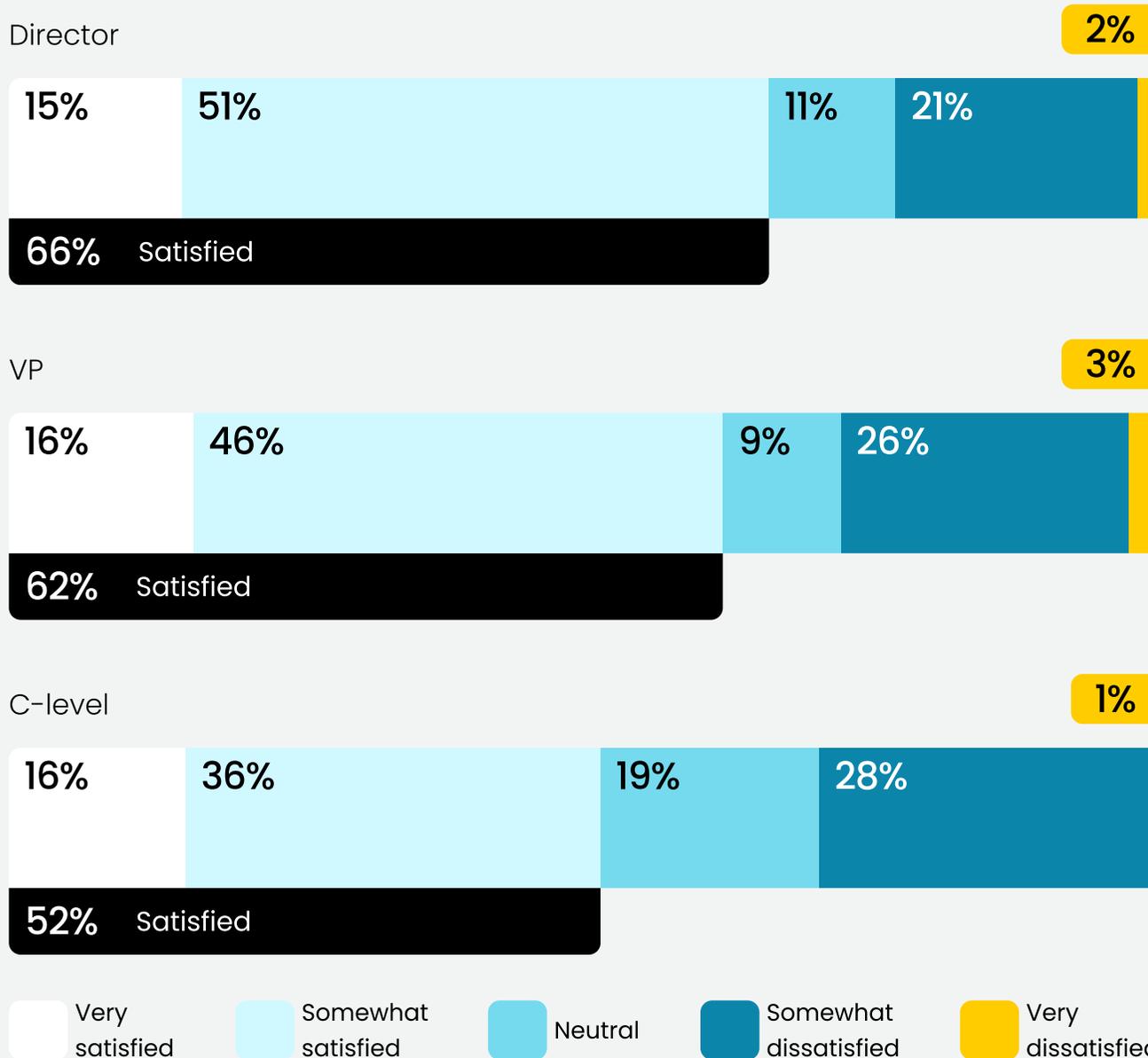


Figure 10:
Satisfaction with current CRM by job seniority



But satisfaction levels vary by seniority. Directors report the highest satisfaction (66%), with 51% somewhat satisfied and 15% very satisfied, while VPs reported slightly lower satisfaction (62%), with 46% somewhat satisfied and 16% very satisfied.

In contrast, C-level executives show less enthusiasm. Only roughly half (52%) of C-level respondents report being satisfied with their current CRM, with just 36% somewhat satisfied and 16% very satisfied.

These findings suggest a clear pattern: the higher the seniority, the lower the satisfaction.

This reflects how inefficiencies like silos and wasted time ripple through an organization, ultimately hindering decision-making at the highest levels where accurate, actionable data is critical.

Cost-benefit analysis of current CRM system

Despite the overall satisfaction sales team's have with their current CRMs, our survey found an interesting discrepancy: a significant number of respondents perceive their CRM systems to have high costs compared to the benefits.

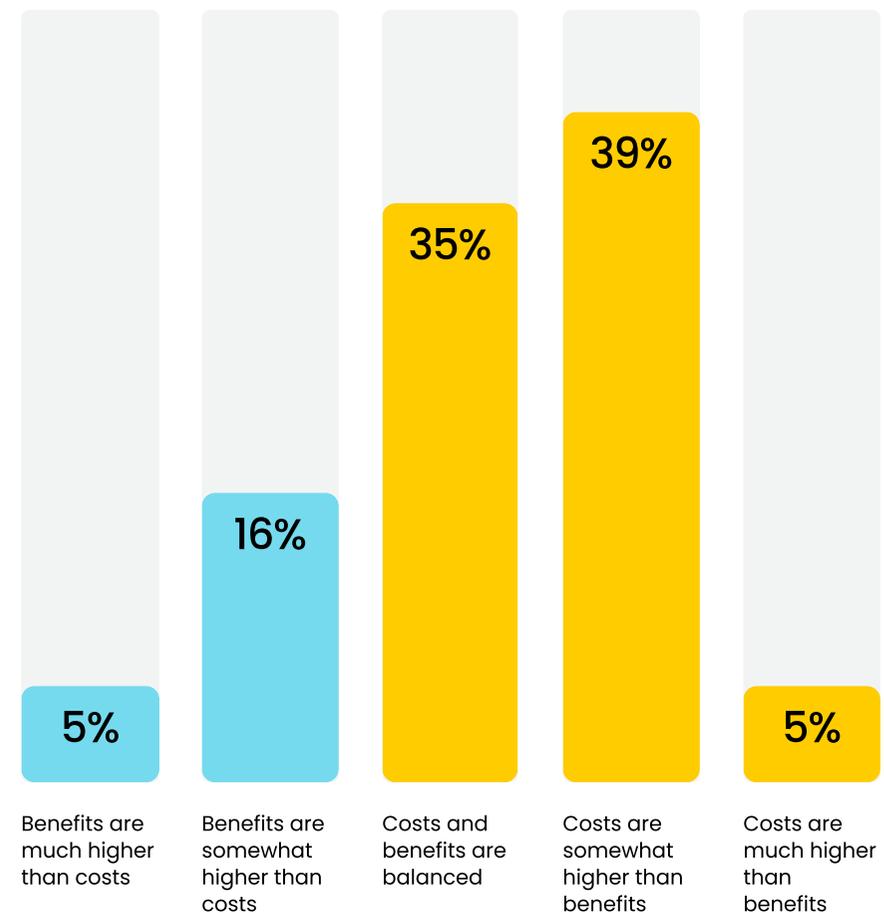
While 35% feel the costs and benefits are balanced, 44% believe the costs either somewhat outweigh the benefits (39%) or are much higher than the benefits (5%).

In contrast, only 21% think the benefits exceed the costs, with 16% saying benefits are somewhat higher than the costs and just 5% reporting that benefits are significantly higher.

Which means that despite overall satisfaction with CRM systems, many users see them as delivering limited value relative to their expense. This suggests that while organizations are getting what they expect from their CRMs, there is still a significant opportunity to improve cost-effectiveness and perceived value.

Likewise, this may show another reason why C-level executives are less satisfied with their current CRMs compared to less senior team members (Figure 10): the ones managing the budgets feel the pain of costs that are too high compared to the value they are receiving for their money.

Figure 11: Perceived costs vs. benefits of current CRMs



Critical challenges with current CRM system

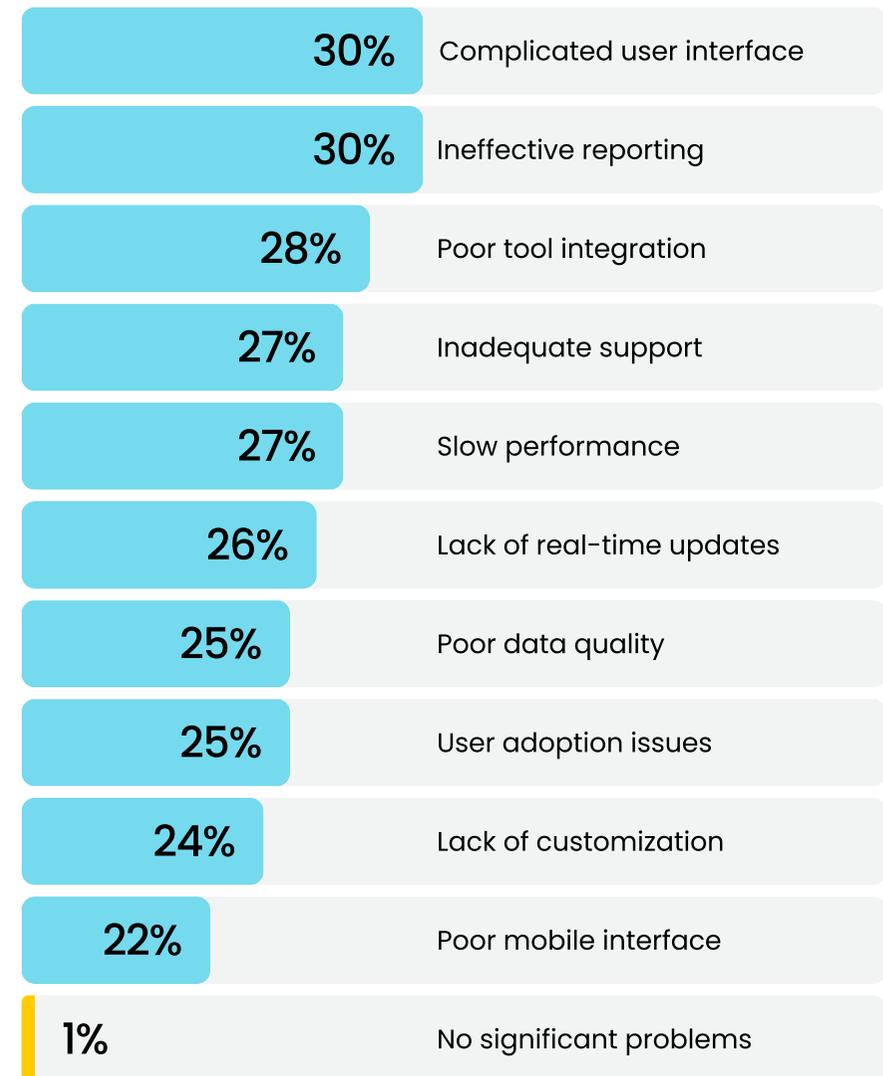
The issues with CRMs become even more clear once we dive into the specific pains and critical challenges felt by sales teams with regards to their current CRMs.

When asked for their top 3 challenges with their current CRM, only 1% of sales leaders said they face no significant problems.

Meanwhile, complicated user interfaces and ineffective reporting tied as the most commonly reported challenges (30% each), the latter pointing to the pains felt by executives who rely on accurate reporting for decision-making.

Other notable challenges include poor integration with other tools (28%), slow performance (27%), and inadequate support (27%).

Figure 12: Critical challenges with current CRM



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

We also found that there are some interesting differences in issues when it comes to company size. Sales leaders from smaller companies (100-499 employees) are much more concerned than the rest about their CRM's slow performance, while those from larger companies (500-999 employees) and enterprise companies (1000+ employees) care the most about poor integration capabilities and ineffective reporting, respectively.

The data supports the consistent theme we've been seeing: CRM systems often fail to meet the needs of their users. This highlights the widespread frustration with current systems and underscores the need for improvements in usability, integration, and reporting capabilities.



Tip

Choose an easy-to-use CRM to ensure team adoption and maintain data integrity. Make sure it integrates with your favorite platforms for smooth data flow. Also, ensure you have access to real-time reports, whether it's for team performance, pipeline tracking, forecasting, or more.

Figure 13:
Critical CRM challenges by company size



Likelihood of CRM system replacement in next year

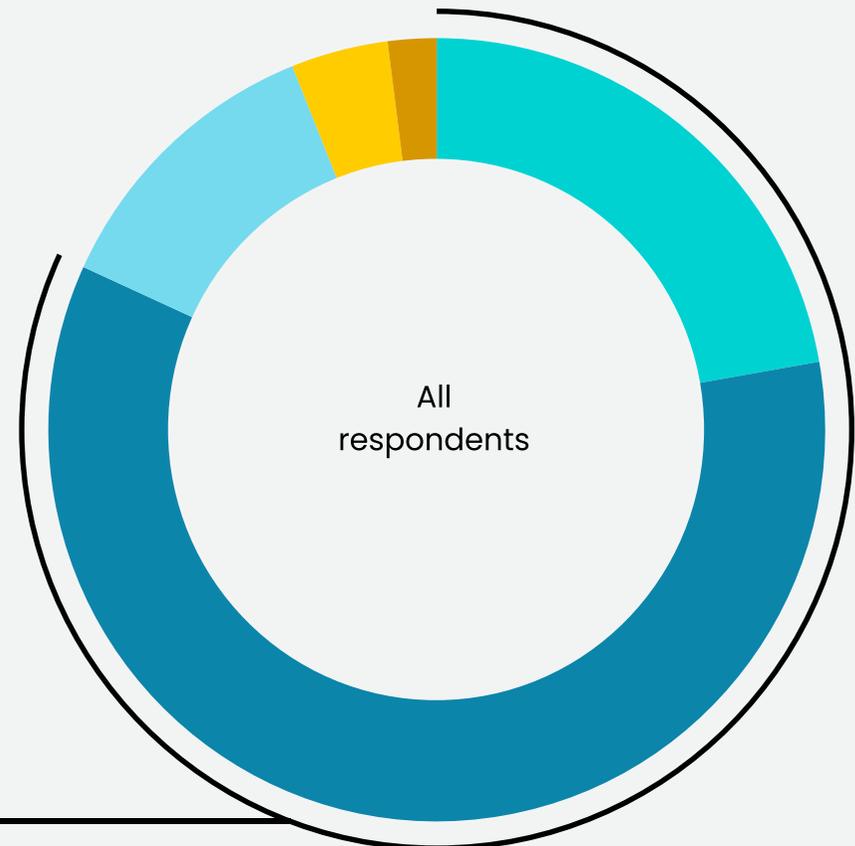
After all is said and done, is their current satisfaction with their CRMs (Figure 9) enough to make sales teams want to continue using their CRMs within the next year? Or will the CRM's critical challenges (Figure 12) push sales teams to move to another software?

Our survey found that a striking 81% of respondents believe a CRM replacement is somewhat likely (59%) or very likely (22%) in the next year.

Meanwhile, just 2% say they are very unlikely to replace their CRMs this year while 4% say they are somewhat unlikely.

These numbers point to an overall sentiment salespeople feel toward their CRMs: these tools are a necessary evil. While they mostly do the jobs they are required to do, they are also cumbersome, time-consuming, and inefficient.

Figure 14:
Likelihood of CRM replacement in the next year



22% Very likely

59.4% Somewhat likely

12.2% Neutral

4.2% Somewhat unlikely

2.2% Very unlikely

81% Likely

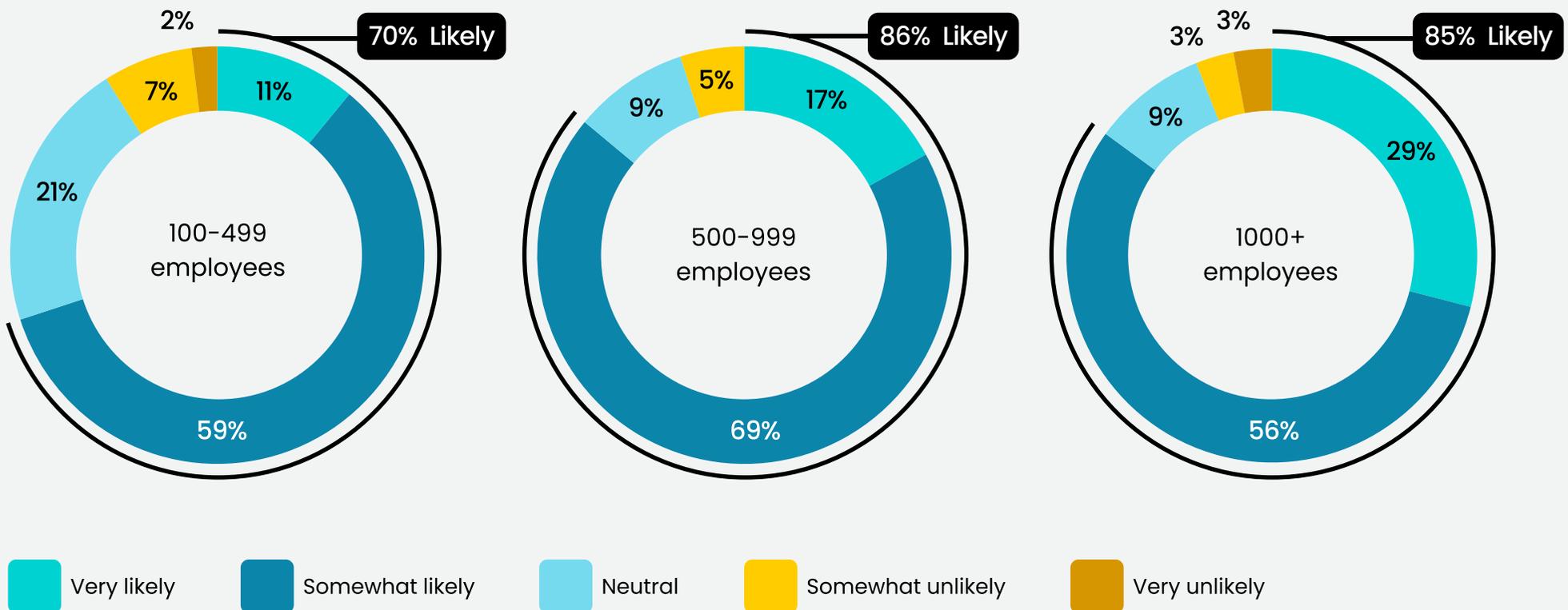
This sentiment is particularly strong among mid-sized companies (500–999 employees) and larger enterprises (1,000+ employees), where 86% and 85% view a replacement as likely, respectively.

In contrast, only 70% of smaller companies (100– 499 employees) consider it likely that they will replace their CRM in the next year.

So while it seems that many teams have adapted to their CRM systems, dissatisfaction with cost-benefit balance, inefficiencies, and limited integration drives a high appetite for change, especially among large and mid-sized organizations that often feel the resource strain of sub-optimal tools most acutely.

But the fact that so many sales teams are open to new solutions, points to an optimism that there is a better solution out there. This optimism may be a result of 2 letters: AI.

Figure 15:
CRM replacement likelihood by company size



CRMCARE



Your CRM has feelings, too.

Millions of CRMs are suffering from sales teams' needs to work faster in 2025. You can help!

Show your support today

04

05

The
promise
of AI

06

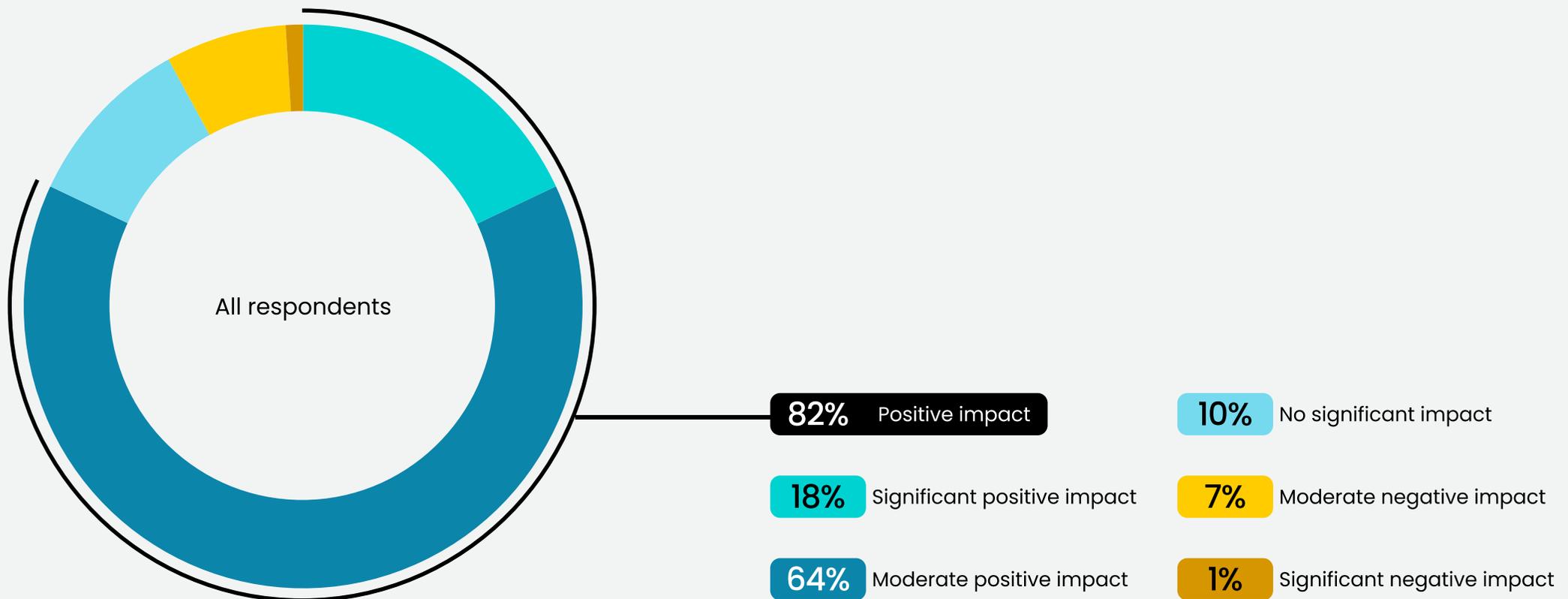
AI's influence on sales performance and team productivity

While CRMs face criticism for their complexity and lack of integration, artificial intelligence provides an opportunity to bridge these gaps.

But do sales teams see the opportunity? As AI becomes more commonly embedded in sales processes, we set out to understand how sales teams view this revolution.

Our survey found that AI is widely recognized as a game-changer for sales teams, with 82% of respondents reporting a positive impact on sales performance and team productivity, with 18% of them describing it as significantly impactful and 64% saying it is moderately impactful.

Figure 16: AI's influence on performance and productivity

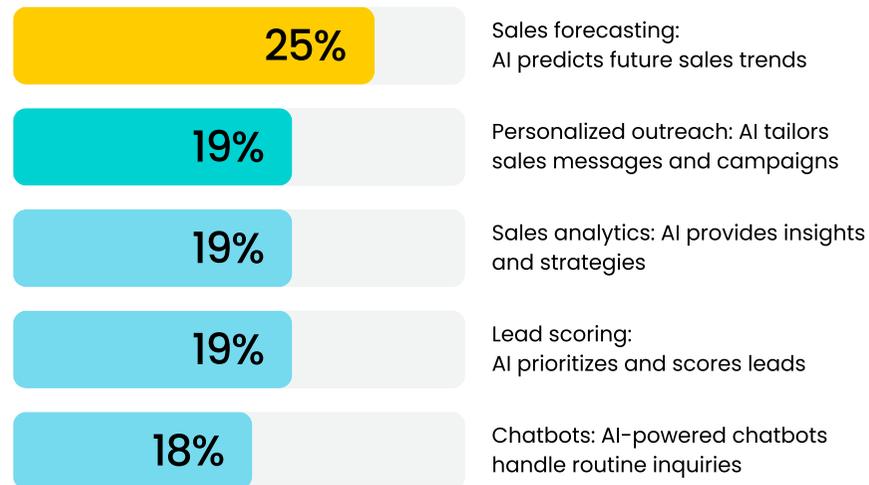


Key tasks where teams utilize AI the most

So where are sales teams already using AI to work more efficiently?

Sales forecasting jumped out as the most common application, chosen by 25% of respondents. This use is particularly prominent among C-level executives, with 33% of them choosing this task (Figure 18). This may be due to accurate forecasting being critical for strategic planning.

Figure 17: Key Tasks Where Teams Utilize AI the Most

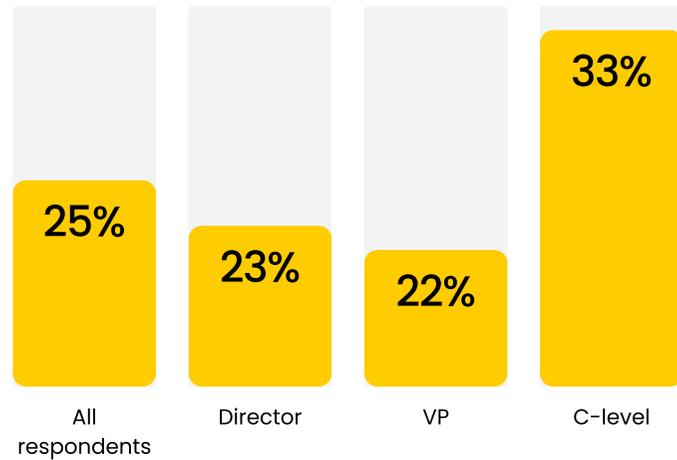


Tip



Today, AI is much more than just a writing assistant. When selecting a CRM, choose one that's driven by AI. Look for a CRM that can also offer you key features like conversation summaries, data analysis, forecasting, lead scoring, chatbots, and revenue intelligence to take your team's performance to the next level.

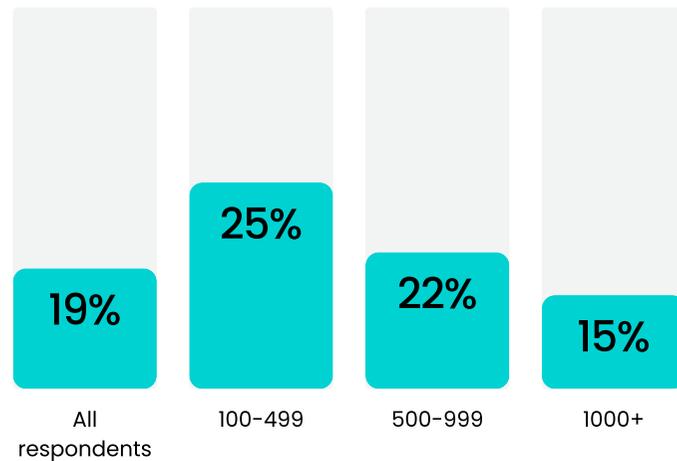
Figure 18: Sales forecasting: Utilization by role



Personalized outreach and sales analytics both follow at 19%, with AI enabling teams to create tailored sales campaigns and derive actionable insights from data. Similarly, lead scoring (19%) and chatbots (18%) help streamline processes by prioritizing high-potential leads and handling routine inquiries.

The survey also found that AI adoption varies by company size and seniority. Smaller companies often focus on basic applications like outreach (Figure 19), while larger organizations leverage AI for advanced tasks like forecasting and analytics.

Figure 19: Personalized outreach by company size



05

06

Conclusion

The state of sales tech

Despite the nearly constant rollout of new sales technology that promises to boost efficiency, our survey found that nearly half of sales teams' time is spent on technology-related time wasters. Ironically, the very tools meant to help them sell are eating into the crucial time they should actually be selling.

And while there's plenty of blame to go around, our survey points to a key culprit: the CRM.

CRMs are known throughout the industry to be — quite simply — the bane of sellers' lives. Yet, despite the frustration they cause, they remain the backbone of modern sales operations. Sales teams rely on them to track pipelines, forecast revenue, manage customer relationships, and more.

That might explain an interesting paradox our survey uncovered: While 61% of sales leaders said they are currently satisfied with their CRMs, only around one-fifth think that their CRM's benefits outweigh its costs and 81% say they are seeking to replace their CRM in the next year. Likewise, they expressed frustration about many technological inefficiencies, including complicated user interface, inefficient reporting, and poor tool integrations.

This contradiction points to a deeper issue. Despite legacy CRMs being widely regarded as cumbersome, costly, and only marginally effective, over time, sales teams have adjusted their expectations, accepting these flaws as the norm. The fact that many "satisfied" CRM users are still looking for alternatives suggests that people see CRMs as essential, but believe they should work better. Sales leaders seem to view them as a "necessary evil" — indispensable yet deeply flawed.

The push for sales leaders to find better CRM options may also be a result of the rise of AI.

Sales leaders in our survey expressed optimism about AI's potential to transform their workflows. Forecasting, chatbots, and personalized outreach are just a few ways AI could revitalize CRM systems. It seems sales leaders are beginning to realize that it's time to replace legacy CRMs with solutions that truly deliver on their promise of helping sales teams sell more and sell faster.

CRM CARE



Your CRM has feelings, too.

Your CRM might be sad. Like this cat. Without you even noticing. You can help on [CRMcare.org](https://www.crmcare.org).

Show your support today



Your team will love using this CRM.

Move deals faster with the most intuitive CRM –
powered by AI and code-free automations.

Contact us