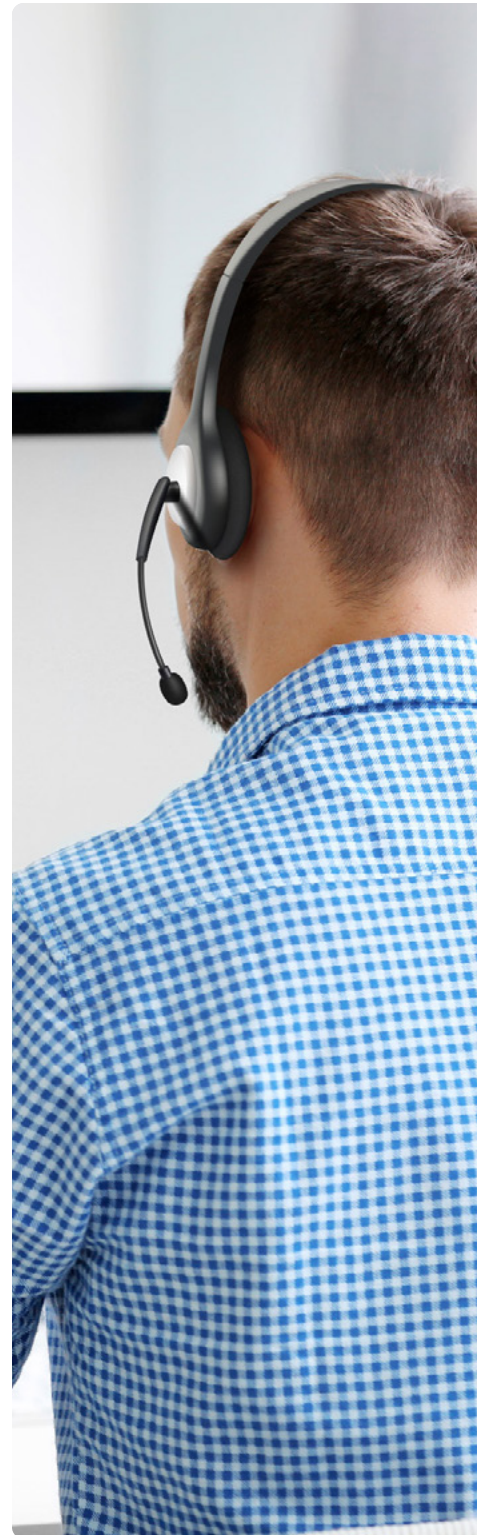


SALES EFFECTIVENESS IN REVENUE- GENERATING CONTACT CENTERS

2023 Business Decision
Maker's Report



CRESTA

OVERVIEW

In the years since COVID-19, contact centers have experienced a tremendous increase in volume, triggering a fundamental shift in their role. While contact centers traditionally received and mitigated customer concerns, they are taking on a more strategic role, geared towards driving sales and generating revenue. Sales leaders across industries - from healthcare and telecom to financial services - now need to rethink how they support their teams.

What are the top business challenges you are currently facing?



In this first edition of the Cresta Decision Makers Survey on Revenue-Generating Contact Centers, Cresta sought to further understand how sales leaders are navigating these industry-wide changes, adopting new best practices, and preparing for the future. To do this, Cresta commissioned Zogby Analytics to survey 300 sales and service-to-sales leaders who run high-velocity sales / revenue-generating contact centers at large enterprises. Unsurprisingly, sales

leaders are facing similar challenges across the board: employee turnover (52%) and business optimization, or doing more with less (51%). 62.5% of Customer Service/Care respondents (whose contact centers are also trained to upsell and cross-sell) marked 'employee turnover', compared to 45% of those in a Sales role. 'Business optimization' was also mentioned more frequently by 57.8% of Customer Service/Care respondents versus 45.9% for Sales.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

This online survey was conducted among 300 business decision makers, a mix of both sales leaders and service-to-sales leaders from large enterprises. For a more in-depth look at how this survey was conducted, please see the Methodology at the end of the report.

Key Takeaways:

1

The role of the playbook - and how to measure it - is in flux

More than three quarters (77%) of respondents stated that they have a sales playbook that they used to train and guide sales representatives. However, just over half (55%) are actually measuring all customer interactions against their sales playbook.

2

Coaching in the contact center is due for a revamp

The need to implement real-time coaching is high on the priority list for many of the companies and leaders surveyed. Currently, less than half are using any form of real-time coaching, but over two-thirds are looking to change that in the near future.

3

Implementation of AI and real-time intelligence is on the mind - but varies widely by company size and industry

Current use of AI for sales effectiveness and enablement is quite low (35%), and especially lower at companies with over 1000 employees - 37% versus 44% overall.

THE PLAYBOOK AND MEASUREMENT

More than three-quarters (77%) of respondents stated that they have a sales playbook in place that is used to train sales representatives. The existence of a formal sales playbook is highest among BPO respondents (100%), Telecom (88%) and Financial Services (82%); and lowest (62%) among respondents within the Healthcare – Insurer segment.

67% of companies believe they have identified the key behaviors that drive conversion, and a further 85% overwhelmingly believe that increasing adherence to these behaviors would ultimately improve sales execution. However, fewer than half – 41% – have tools in place to monitor employee adherence. Rather, many companies cited that their top metric to measure sales performance is based on the percentage of agents achieving revenue goals.

85%
believe increasing adherence to these behaviors would improve sales execution

At least 50% of respondents reported using a similar range of metrics, including: the percentage of agents achieving goals, overall sales conversion rates, and total revenue driven by the group.

Surprisingly, we found that the larger the company, the less mature their use of metrics to measure sales efficiency and effectiveness is, as compared with respondents from companies with less than 1000 employees or annual revenues of less than \$1 billion.

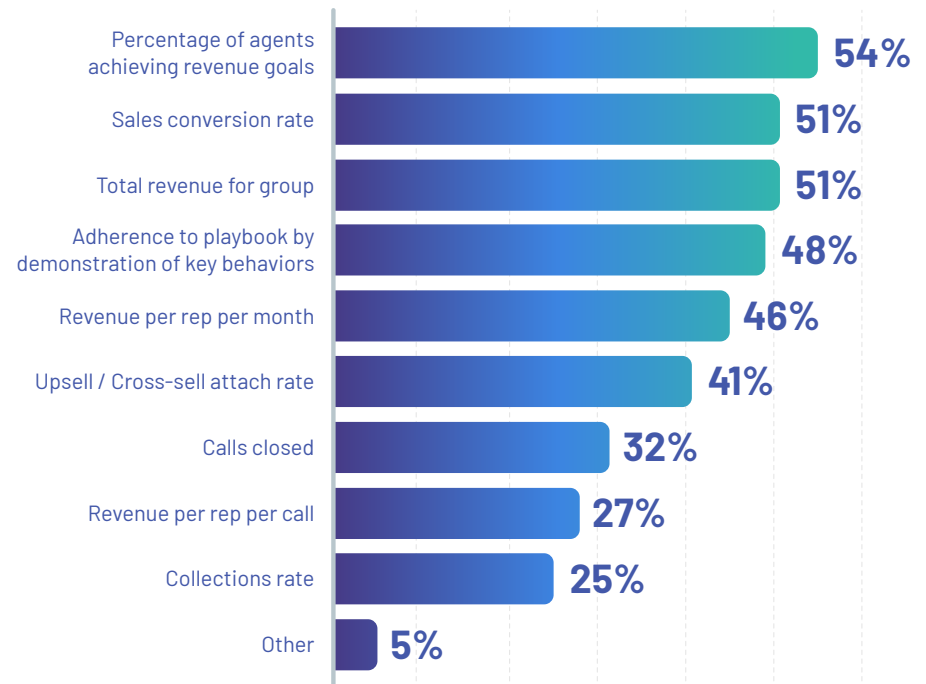
From a vertical perspective, Business Process Outsourcers (BPOs) are currently most mature

in their use of technology and the measurement of sales efficiency and effectiveness.

Conversely, Retail/Consumer Goods ranked the lowest in their adoption rates of technology to optimize sales efficiency and effectiveness.

Overall, Customer Service/Care had a substantially higher use of sales efficiency and effectiveness tools and metrics, compared with respondents in organizations primarily focused on sales. This could be due to the widespread use of technology and application of metrics by large, customer-service-centric contact centers.

What metrics do you measure to track overall sales performance?



Following the playbook makes sales teams more effective

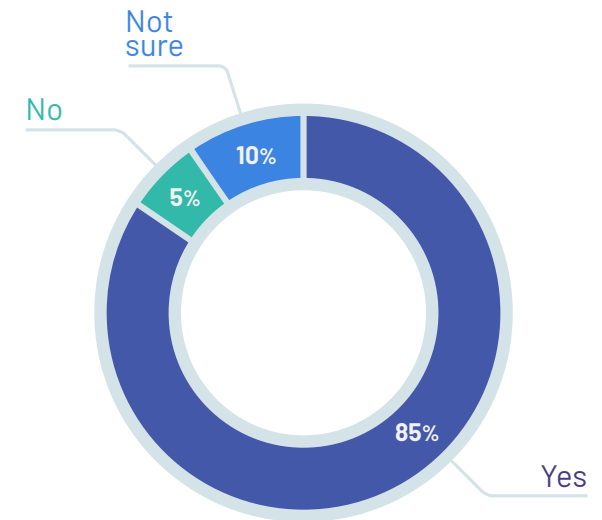
While over half of companies surveyed measure all interactions against their sales playbook, fewer than half have a process by which they can sample calls to determine if reps are following the playbook.

Measures to determine playbook adherence vary. Most respondents measure overall team effectiveness (83%) against revenue targets. Just over half (55%) measure all interactions against their sales playbook.

Respondents who primarily oversee Customer Service/Care as a functional area were more likely to measure overall team effectiveness than their Sales counterparts (90% vs 77%). They were also much more likely to sample calls (59% vs 34% for Sales).

Measurement of overall team effectiveness against revenue targets is highest among respondents in the BPO, Healthcare Insurer, and Technology verticals (all 100%) and lowest among those in Retail/Consumer Goods (78%). BPOs are also more likely to sample calls (86%), whereas sampling of calls is lowest for Retail / Consumer Goods at 35%.

Do you believe that increasing adherence to key behaviors would improve sales execution?

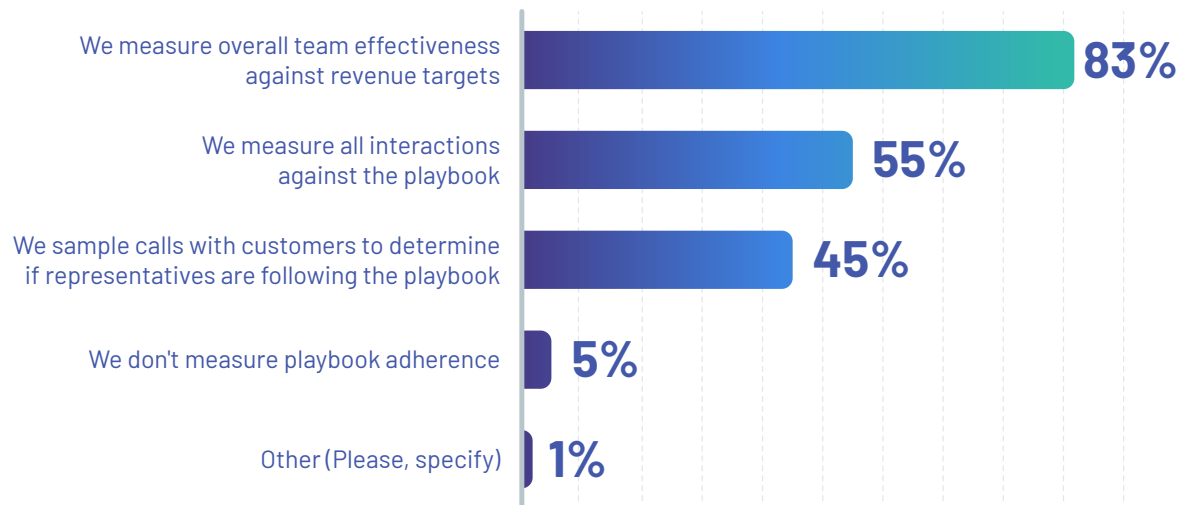


Almost a third of respondents (30%) do not measure playbook adherence of behaviors against sales performance. Despite this, the vast majority of survey respondents - 85% - stated they believe that adherence to key behaviors would ultimately improve sales performance.

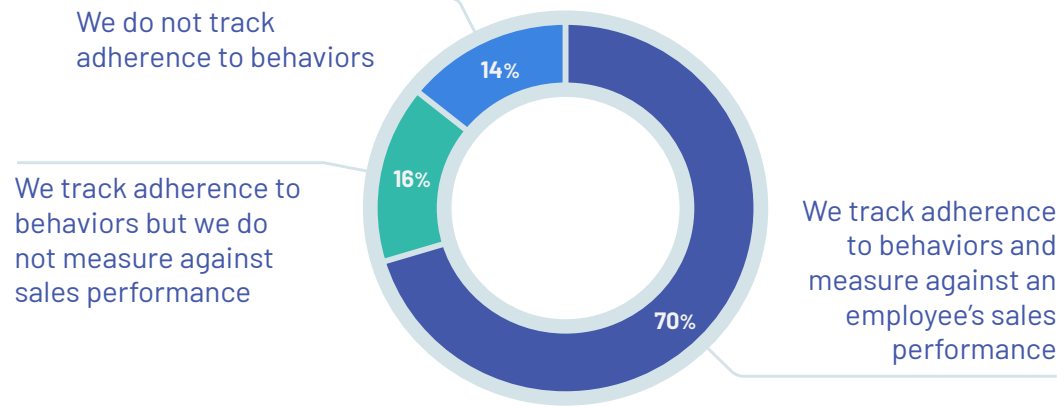
30%

do not measure playbook adherence of behaviors against sales performance

How do you measure adherence to the sales playbook process?

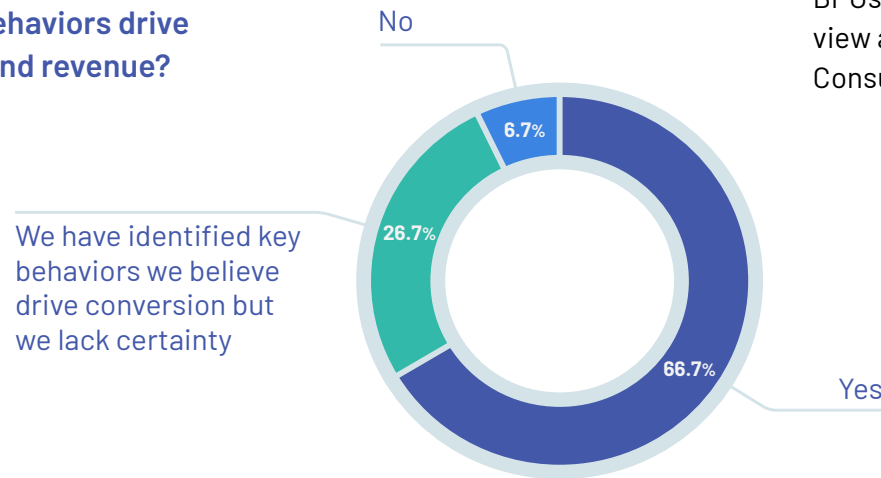


How do you track agent adherence to behaviors to increase their sales conversion rates?



BPOs and Telecommunications companies scored highest (100% and 88% respectively) on tracking adherence to behaviors and measuring against employee sales performance.

Do you have a clear view of which sales behaviors drive conversion and revenue?

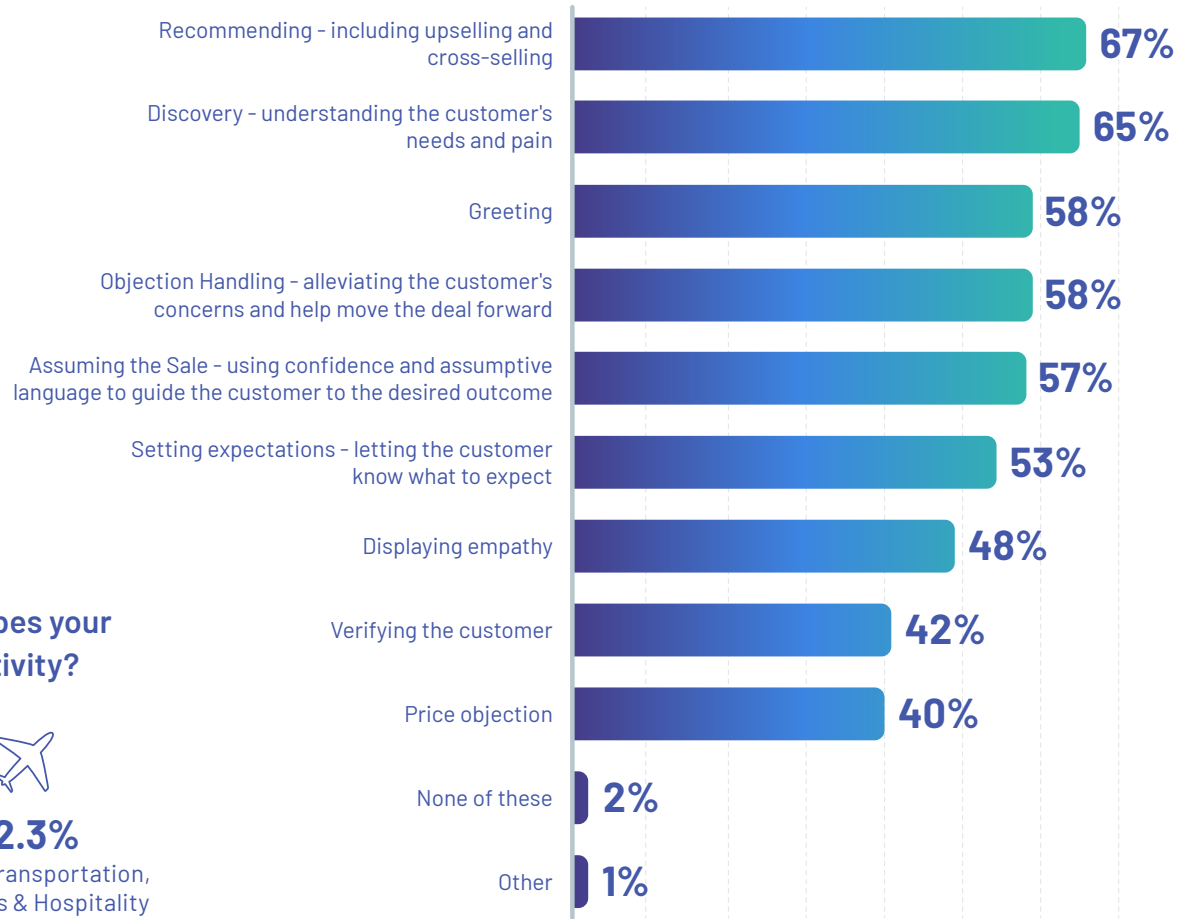


BPOs were most likely to have a clear view at 100% of respondents. Retail / Consumer Goods the lowest at 25%.

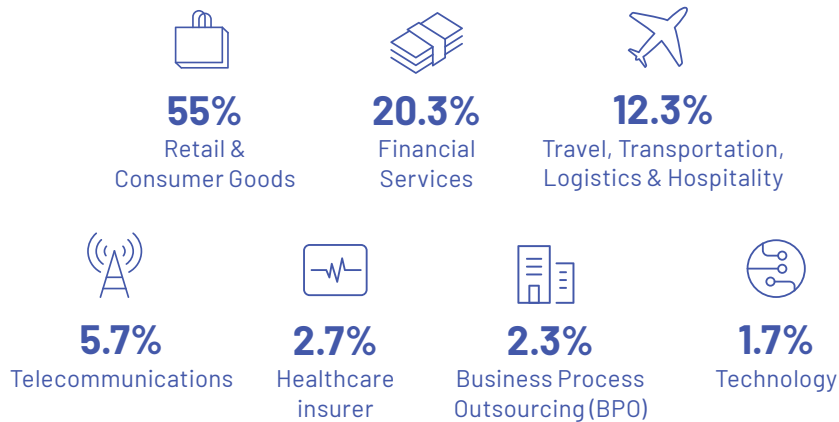
COACHING AND TRAINING TOOLS

If a sales playbook is being deployed across an organization, it is ultimately only as strong as the behaviors it is emphasizing. A range of behaviors are reinforced in training; 'recommending an offer' was the most commonly reported at 67%, closely followed by 'discovery', which is dedicated to unearthing a customer's unique pain points and needs.

What behaviors do you train sales representatives to perform to increase their sales conversation rates?



Which of the following best describes your employer's primary business activity?



While 62% of respondents provide online access to the sales playbook, fewer than half (48%) provide online hints and tips through the use of tools to encourage employee engagement with the playbook. The majority of respondents (82%) provide periodic training and coaching sessions to agents.

Training on the sales playbook is highest among BPOs (100%) and lowest for Healthcare Insurer at 50%; refresher training on the sales playbook was highest for Technology companies at a full 100% and lowest for Retail / Consumer Goods at 59%.

Adoption of tools also varies by industry. Online hints and tips are more widely used by BPOs (71%) and Financial Services (69%), but implemented by just 50% of Healthcare Insurer companies. In-session coaching use is highest among Telecom (71%), and lowest in Financial Services (54%).

While methods vary, fewer than half of respondents have existing tools in place to both monitor employee adherence during a conversation, and then coach them in real time to ensure key behaviors are performed. Most respondents instead focus on training – either up-front training on the sales playbook, or with regular refresher training.

What tools do you provide agents to help them achieve their sales targets?



Fewer than half have tools in place to monitor employee adherence and then coach them in real time



How do you currently coach agents to improve their sales effectiveness during a call?



When it comes to implementing real-time coaching and guidance, Customer Service/Care respondents score higher across the board compared to their Sales counterparts. Training on the Sales Playbook is highest among BPOs (100%) and lowest among Healthcare Insurers at 50%. Conducting refresher training is highest priority for Technology companies, at a full 100%, and lowest for Retail / Consumer Goods at 59%.

The need to implement real-time coaching is high on the priority list for many of the companies and leaders surveyed. Currently, fewer than half (44%) are using any form of real-time coaching - including prompts or hints and tips. Nearly two thirds (62%) of survey respondents have plans to introduce real-time coaching in the near future.



AI IMPLEMENTATION

Current use of AI for sales effectiveness and enablement varies widely by the size of company, the functional area, and the industry. Generally speaking, adoption of AI in revenue-generating contact centers is still quite low: just over one third (35%) of respondents are currently using AI for sales effectiveness and enablement.

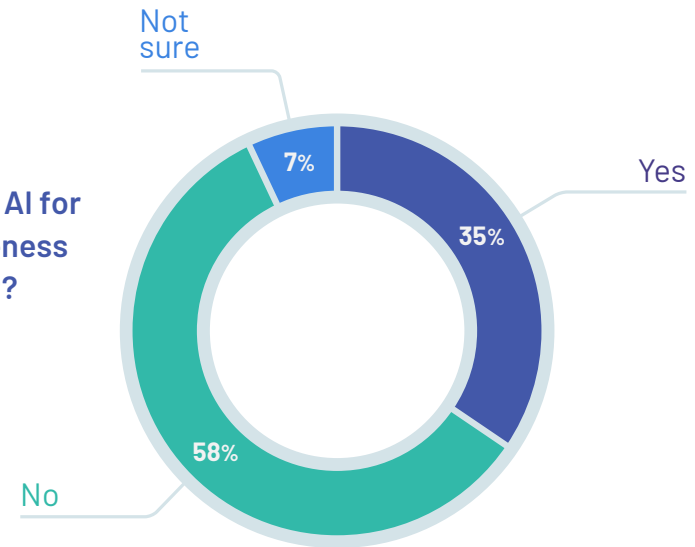
35%
of respondents are using AI for sales effectiveness and enablement

Guided Selling Recommendations Primary Way AI Used for Sales Effectiveness and Enablement

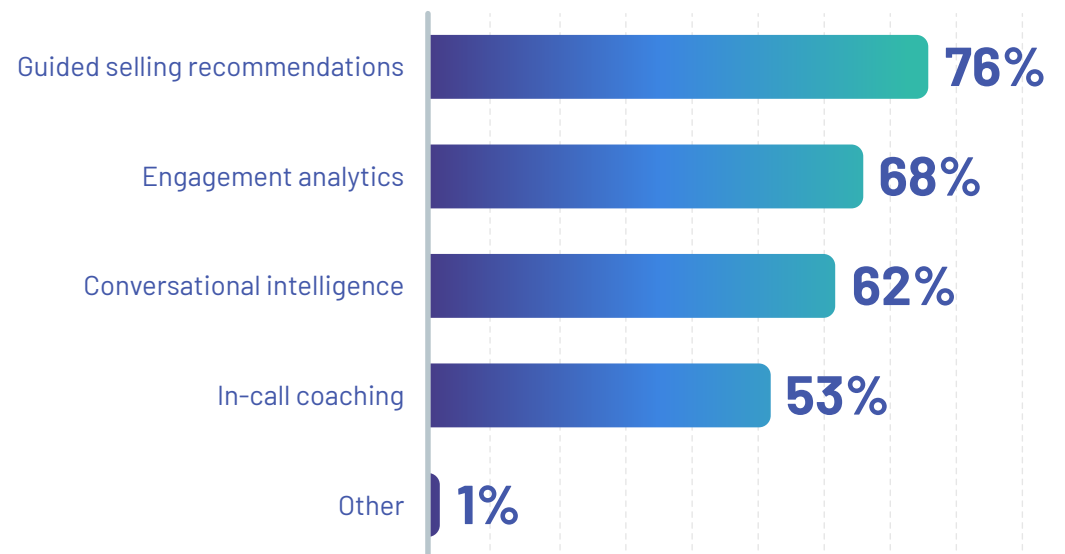
Of those that are currently using AI, the top use cases are guided selling (76%), engagement analytics (68%) and conversational intelligence (62%)

Use of AI for guided selling is much higher in Customer Service/Care (83%) than Sales (69%).

Do you currently use AI for your sales effectiveness and enablement?



How do you currently use AI for your sales effectiveness and enablement?



We found that the larger the organization, the less likely they are to implement AI technology, an insight from the research that stood out as surprising. While larger organizations may be well-positioned and -resourced to be early adopters of emerging technologies, it's also possible that change management at such scale may end up being more of a hindrance to nimble adaptation.

Use of AI is highest among companies with 501-1000 employees (57%) and \$250-500M in revenue (48%) compared with 35% overall. When it comes to the functional area within these organizations, Customer Service/Care are using AI at much higher rates (44%) than their Sales counterparts (28%).

Real-time intelligence is infrequent

Fewer than half of respondents (44%) monitor calls with customers in real time and then prompt agents with hints and tips.

Monitoring of all customer conversations in real time is lowest for companies with >1000 employees (37% versus 44% overall). Care respondents reported they monitor all conversations in real time far more than their Sales counterparts (57% versus 34%). Monitoring of customer conversations in real time also varies by vertical. It is highest for BPOs (100%) and lowest for Retail/Consumer Goods (38%).

Future-looking

Approximately two-thirds (62%) of respondents stated that they plan on introducing real-time capabilities for coaching at some point in future, with a quarter of all respondents planning to do so in the next 12 months.

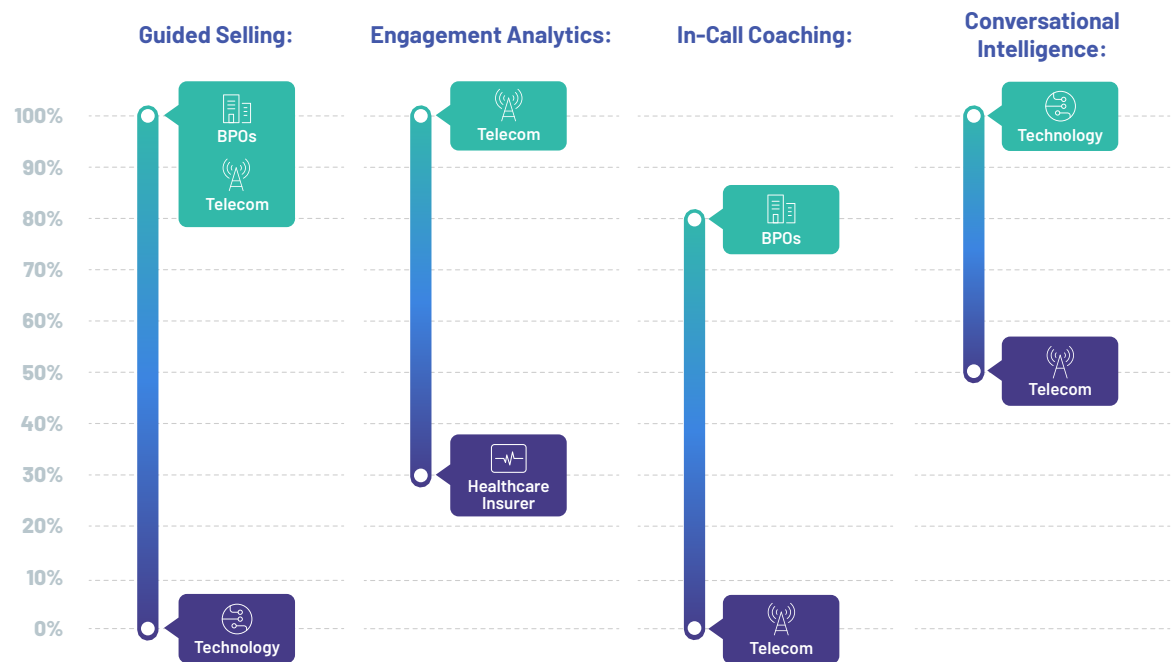
Intent varies by industry with plans for AI implementation highest among Healthcare Insurer respondents (50%) and lowest among those in Retail/Consumer Goods (22%).

When it comes to implementing real-time coaching and guidance, Customer Service/Care respondents score higher across the board compared to Sales counterparts.

Range of Views on Ways AI Can Improve Sales Efficiency and Effectiveness

The top two ways mentioned as benefits are guided selling recommendations (55%) and enablement analytics (57%). Respondents with a Customer service/care function were more likely to indicate that AI can help them - across the board.

Perceived Benefits of AI - by Industry



SUMMARY AND LOOKING AHEAD

The top project overall is 'improving the customer purchase experience' (64%) followed by 'increasing revenue by improving the agent/seller effectiveness' (60%) and 'improving the employee experience' (60%). Not surprisingly, 'improving the customer purchase experience' ranked much higher for the Customer Service/Care respondent than for Sales – 70.3% versus 59.9%. 'Improving the employee experience' also ranked higher among Customer Service Care respondents at 64% versus 55% for Sales.

Central to these projects is the dedication to ultimately improving the experience on both sides of the aisle: the customer and the agent. However, as the volume to contact centers only increases alongside a sharp rise in customer expectations, the need to adopt, implement, and champion AI technology becomes more and more critical to the enterprise.

Methodology

Cresta commissioned Zogby Analytics, an independent market research firm, to conduct an online survey of 300 business decision makers at customer service and sales companies.

The survey focused on business leaders in enterprises with more than 1,000 employees (company-wide) with revenues of over \$250 million. Respondents were all from B2C and B2B2C companies that sell to a large set of customers and users via inbound (voice or chat) inquiries into their contact center.

All participants were in the United States or Canada. Respondents either held sales leadership roles in revenue-generating contact centers, or were in customer service / care organizations that generate revenue through new sales or upselling/cross-selling efforts.

What projects are key focus areas and top priorities for the next 12 months?

