



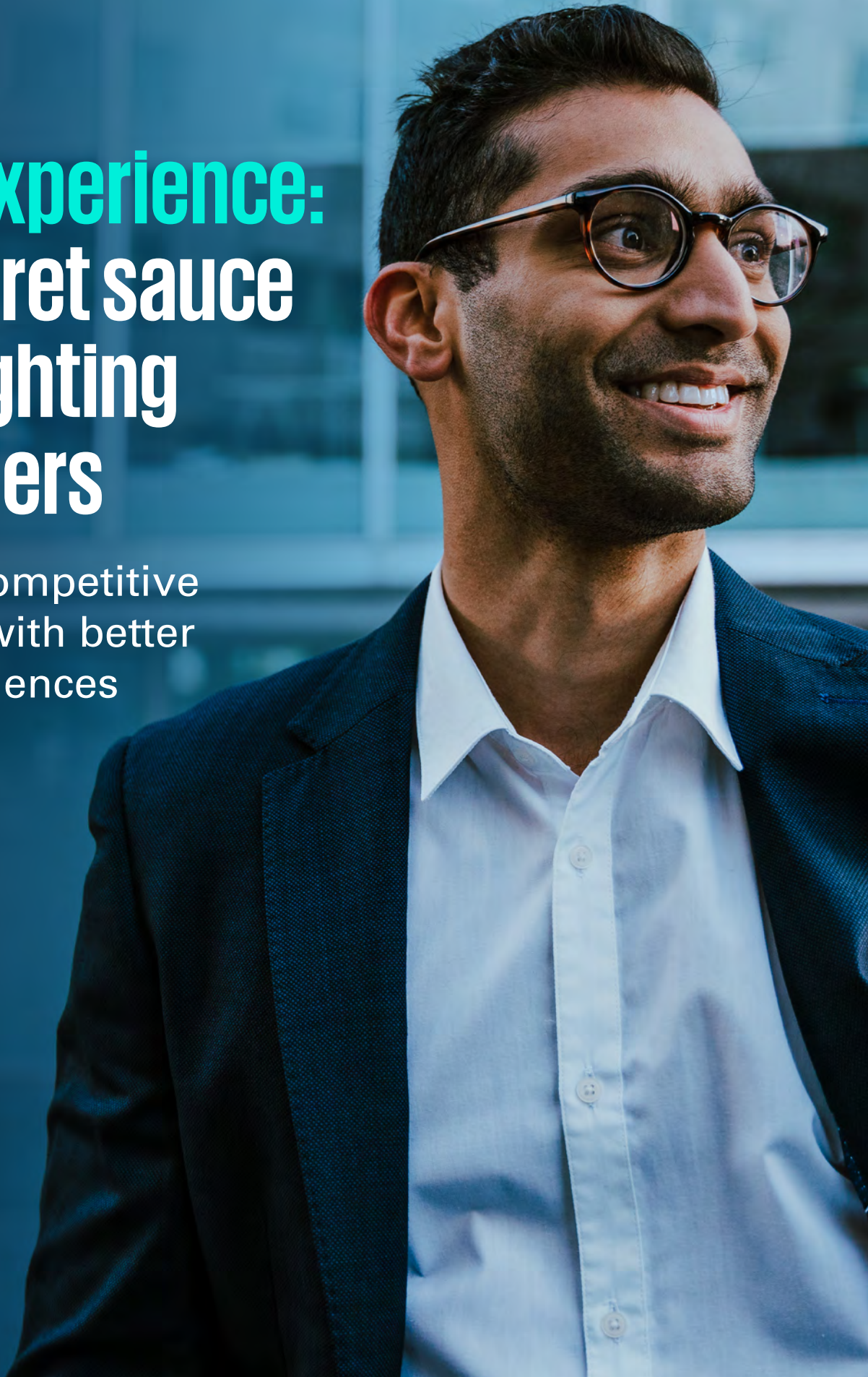
Customer
Advisory

Seller experience: **The secret sauce** **for delighting** **customers**

Achieve a competitive
advantage with better
seller experiences

2024

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Competitive advantage is about being better at what matters to customers. That means reaching them at the right moment, intuiting their needs, and delivering customer experiences that make the brand's commitment to excellence clear. However, as companies develop go-to-market strategies focusing on the quality of customer experience, they often miss a crucial component of business growth: seller experience.

The best seller experiences, just like optimal customer experiences, ensure that each seller-customer interaction is personalized, seamless, and solutions focused. The quality of a seller's experience is based, in essence, on their ability to do their best job influencing customers. It determines the probability of a positive business outcome, and if a seller has the right data, technology, and knowledge to ensure that each customer touchpoint is crafted with intention. It allows (or hinders) a customer's ability to benefit from a business's brand promise in relevant, practical ways.

Customer experience remains a top priority



Over 80% of enterprises globally

report that customer experience programs will be a priority investment over the next two years¹



21% of companies

identified skills and people resources as a challenge in transforming and improving their customer experience²

How seller-centric experience design creates better customer experiences

Seamless. Frictionless. Easy to do business with. All are common buzzwords in the business-to-business (B2B) customer experience domain. But, even the most seamless experiences can seem boring without the special “sauce” that makes sales interactions drive growth. In a marketplace flooded with lookalike services and products, the difference between customer loyalty and indifference can depend on a razor-thin layer of seller effectiveness.

Now, consider how B2B buying processes have changed.

By using online content, customers have taken ownership over a significant portion of the early stages of their buying journey and increasingly only engage with a seller as they get closer to a purchasing decision.

Because these human-to-human touchpoints are less frequent than in the past, they are now priceless when it comes to the potential impact on sales and customer experience.

To win in these high-stakes point-of-sale interactions, sellers need to understand the customer’s intent in each interaction and use these insights to craft propositions that are on point and enabled by seamless tools that contribute to seller effectiveness. Easier said than done. In fact, sellers in many companies are drowning in too much content, a spaghetti soup of fragmented sales tools and distracting administrative tasks.

So, what’s the prescription for all this pain we subject our sales professionals to? A seller-centric sales experience, intentionally designed to parallel and complement the desired customer experience. By investing in seller experience, not only will you see improved top-line results, but you’ll create a competitive advantage that delights both your customer and sellers.



A checklist

Assessing the seller experience requires identifying the key moments that impact effectiveness and productivity. Here are three questions to ask to get started:



What causes friction in the day and career of a seller, particularly when it comes to customer interactions?

While pain points vary across groups and geographies, to gain a true picture of engagement, explore the entire journey—not just during a day in the life, but also across their onboard to transition lifecycle.



What seller actions, customer interactions, or lack thereof differentiate between a win and a loss?

A detailed understanding of your customer's buying process, supported by analytics, helps to identify the moments that matter to customers. Architect your seller experience to proactively engage with customers and win in these moments.



What factors drive seller success over the long term, not just in the lead to order process?

Identify and invest in long-term drivers of success including, but not limited to: initial onboarding; coaching; territory design; quota allocation; compensation administration; and without a doubt, sales enablement from lead to order.

B2B companies are playing a game of seller experience truth or dare

As a leader, you can create major competitive advantages when you create a positive seller experience by putting tools and processes in place that help sellers bring clarity and order to their environment. It's often one of the overlooked secrets to driving sustainable growth.

Studies show that organizations that invest in and focus on the seller experience see significant returns.



1.8x lift in customer KPIs when they focus on improving employee experience³



14% Increase in win rates⁴



50% Increase in sellers who achieved quotas⁵

Sales organizations, whether they like it or not, are competing in a game of truth or dare when it comes to seller experience. Let's examine three undisputable truths:

Truth #1

Sellers expect consumer-like job experiences

Much has been written about the impact of digital buying experiences and evolving consumer expectations on changing employee expectations. Today's employees expect simplicity, transparency, and predictability in the work environment. Those expectations are even higher with sellers who are on the hook to deliver those same experiences to customers.

Dare #1

Make it easy for sellers to do their jobs

- Streamline and automate lead qualification, enrichment, and nurturing processes to provide sellers with actionable and high-probability sales qualified leads.
- Connect customer data from across the business, combine it with relevant external data, and give sellers insights to shape compelling offers.
- Simplify the lead to order tech stack, arming sellers with tools that enable a seamless experience.
- Radically simplify and reduce the administrative burden of configuring, pricing, and quoting a deal.
- Eliminate or offload nonvalue-added activities unlocking seller time to focus on call prep and execution.

Truth #2

The competition wants your best people

Many companies attempt to compete on customer experience. Few, however, understand that to win at that game, you also have to compete on seller experience. Recruiting and retaining top sales talent is no longer all about the promise of rich compensation packages. Today's sellers understand the importance of their experience on their ability to overachieve.

Dare #2

Focus on simplicity and transparency in Sales Performance Management

- Maximize sales coverage and opportunity with well-designed and fair territories.
- Focus your sales team on strategic objectives with easy-to-understand incentives.
- Motivate sellers with timely sales targets, quotas, and objectives.
- Keep sellers engaged by offering real-time analytics to provide transparency over sales performance.
- Continuously improve with advanced sales performance reporting and analytics.

Truth #3

Absent timely insights, sellers focus on near-term and big deals

A seller's pipeline/territory is constantly evolving and changing. Every lead, every opportunity, every deal changes daily based on customer activities sellers have little to no visibility to. Sellers often do not recognize fast enough which opportunities need attention and default to what sellers have always done. They prioritize time and activity on late-stage deals and potential whales. But what if sellers had better insights?

Dare #3

Connect internal and external data to help your sellers be more agile

- Invest in customer analytics that provide sellers with relevant new information daily on every lead, opportunity, and deal.
- Augment internal with external data to identify events that should trigger a sales action.
- Invest in a new, or enhance your existing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform to provide sellers with a daily "stand-up" of recommended actions. Note: For high-velocity sales, these insights need to be real-time.
- Leverage AI-based analytics to remove the burden of forecasting from sellers while also increasing forecast accuracy.
- Give frontline sales managers the insights they need to prioritize which reps/deals need help.

Ok, so are you in the game?

If you accept these dares, there is no doubt you will need to ante up investment dollars, but the return could far exceed the investment if you win.

Consequences of winning:



Raise your win rates by

5-10%



Increase your seller productivity by

15-20%



Improve overall seller performance to plan by

5-10%



Reduce seller attrition by

10-20%



Hone your forecast accuracy by at least

5-10%



Start with understanding the seller journey

Seller experience is rooted in understanding the seller journey, identifying the moments that matter, and reducing complexity. Address the underlying levers across talent, motivation, insight, and enablers to create the environment sellers will embrace throughout the stages of the sales journey.

An intentionally designed seller experience will lead to greater business benefits.






The goal is to identify the moments that matter and their associated pain points or delighters to uncover why sellers stay and why they leave.

					
Employment stage	Onboarding	Selling	Performing	Enabling	Transitioning
	Help me start selling faster.	Make it easy for me to sell.	Help me succeed.	Give me the support I need.	Make it easy for me to move.
Touchpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orientation New-hire setup Team introduction Product education Market and client introductions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead management Account planning Discounting and deal management Pipeline management Partner interactions Cross-functional engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance management Coaching/ Mentoring Sales competencies Compensation design Learning and development opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRM tools Data and insights Incentive Compensation (IC) administration Customer portals Sales content Territory management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career progression Book of business transfers Resignation/ Termination

Help sellers overcome increasing complexity

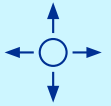
Selling has always been complex, but the sales environment has shifted. Buyers are taking longer to make their decisions. Remote work has resulted in a more collaborative procurement process with more contacts than ever before getting involved in the process. Further, the same changes affecting clients are affecting sellers, too, resulting in a longer process with more stakeholders to please and a more complex set of expectations to deliver on. Internal and external complexity combine to create risk for lost revenue, increased cost, disconnected client experiences, and demotivated employees. A thoughtful approach that works with the new environment can help mitigate modern selling complexities.

Experience-led design will enhance seller effectiveness and productivity

					
Employment stage	Onboarding Help me start selling faster.	Selling Make it easy for me to sell.	Performing Help me succeed.	Enabling Give me the support I need.	Transforming Make it easy for me to move.
Issue	Sellers who don't have time to acclimate to the role tend to not meet performance targets.	New sellers lack the experience to successfully plan for and penetrate many accounts.	Performance management reports are static and follow an inconsistent feedback process.	Homegrown IC systems results in manual work-arounds and simplistic IC statements, leading to seller distrust and shadow accounting.	Today's sellers often rely on "gut" decision making and overlook intelligent selling alerts.
Implication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High turnover costs Decreased efficiency Disconnected client experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lost revenue Demotivated employees Additional management investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower productivity KPIs misaligned to firm strategy Inconsistent coaching and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowered seller efficiency Frequent compensation disputes Increased Sales Ops workload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower win rates Closed mindset culture Reduced internal progression opportunities
Consider	Sales competency model How might we develop a ramp-up plan that focuses sellers on the right KPIs during onboarding?	Coaching and development What is the optimal mix of coaching and development to help sellers acclimate to the role and focus their efforts?	Performance management How well aligned are performance management targets to KPIs and sales objectives?	Incentive compensations design and administration How reliable is operation of our IC model and how can we reduce the burden for sellers?	Customer insights and segmentation What insights are available to help focus our sellers efforts to the right accounts at the right time?



External complexity



54% jump over two years

The average number of interactions per buying cycle has jumped 54 percent over the past two years.⁶

20% increase over 2 years

The average number of stakeholders involved in buying process is increasing: 20 percent increase over a two-year period.⁷

10 channels

Organizations use an average of 10 channels to sell to customers.⁸

Internal complexity



Only 24% of seller's time

is spent working on client interactions.⁹

35% of seller's time

is spent on manual updates, administrative tasks, or internal meetings.¹⁰

Solution complexity



72% of customers

agreed that they expect vendors to personalize solutions to their needs.¹¹



Addressing seller productivity goes beyond just technology implementation

Technical solutions deliver positive business outcomes when they are implemented with an eye on their value to each human experience, for both sellers and customers. Seller productivity depends on the basics of performance—how well they can leverage human ingenuity and technology to make each interaction substantive and of lasting value to the customer. That requires significant, organization-wide change

focused on how technology and people work together. It means sellers need a full range of tools that enable them to get the most out of the resources at hand as they develop customer strategy. Technology implemented without the transformations necessary to make these solutions accessible and functional for all stakeholders leads to unrealized returns and failed business cases.

Today's marketplace calls for a fully realized transformation. Technology is only half the picture.

How can KPMG help?

Let us develop the big picture with you.



We'll guide you as you implement new technologies and develop a competitive customer focus.



We'll translate your needs and revenue goals into steps that are simple to take and easy to maintain.



We offer a rapid seller experience assessment to reveal attrition drivers, the limits of your existing data tools, tech debt analysis, and a review of sales and marketing processes that are due for a refresh.



We'll show you which tools will help you transform seller experiences so that your existing resources support your revenue goals.

Footnotes

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¹IDC Webinar; “Future of Customers and Consumers Survey,” IDC, September 2021

²IDC Webinar; “Future of Customers and Consumers Survey,” IDC, September 2021

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³Salesforce, “Salesforce report shows companies can miss out on 50% revenue growth: employee experience makes the difference,” Tiffiani Bova, (March 23, 2022)

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⁵Highspot, “How to increase seller effectiveness and improve buyer engagement,” Marissa Gbenro, (November 12, 2019)

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⁶Forrester, “The great sales content disconnect,” Jennifer Bullock, Perter Ostros, Eric Zines, (April 20, 2022)

⁷Harvard Business Review, “The new sales imperative,” Nick Toman, Brent Adamson, and Cristina Gomez, (April, 2017)

⁸Salesforce, “5th edition: State of Sales,” (2022)

⁹Forrester, “The sales talent divide and three things sales leaders can do,” Nancy Maluso, (November 9, 2021)

¹⁰Salesforce, “5th edition: State of Sales,” (2022)

¹¹Salesforce, “5th edition: State of Sales,” (2022)



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KPMG Customer Advisory helps some of the world's leading marketing, sales, and service professionals make the right investments that deliver meaningful, sustained growth. At every step, we deliver insights that help you make decisions with precision and confidence. Together, we'll turn opportunities into tangible, transformative results. Let's start the conversation.

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