



# LEADERSHIP SUMMIT 22

SALES TRANSFORMED



A compendium of ideas and insights from  
Schaumburg, Illinois, March 8-10, 2022



**Bob Perkins**

Founder

AA-ISP

## A Simple Mission

Thirteen years ago, a group of 60 sales leaders like you met in a small hotel outside of Minneapolis for the first ever Inside Sales Leadership Summit. Our mission then was simple: to take inside sales to the next level of professionalism and performance. Our aspiration hasn't changed to this day.

Now, over a decade later, tens of thousands of like-minded inside sales leaders take pride in how far we've come. A movement that was well established years before the pandemic has evolved to become a respected, essential component of every business, no matter what you call it—inside sales, digital sales, virtual sales, remote sales. (How about just sales?) I take tremendous satisfaction in a dream fulfilled via this simple phrase that you suddenly hear everywhere: now, we're all inside sales.

Today begins a new opportunity to further shape the future of our sales profession. The attributes of those first 60 sales leaders—commitment, dedication, grit, curiosity, open-mindedness, and humility—continue to guide and inspire us as we evolve together. If we stay true to these principles, together we'll create a better tomorrow for anyone who chooses to be in this great profession.

This e-book is a sampling of the insights, ideas, and conversations shared among us at AA-ISP Leadership Summit '22 in Chicago on March 8-10. If you weren't able to be with us in person, we missed you and you're in for a treat.

You'll learn about some fresh, exciting research from B2B DecisionLabs. We're excited about this new relationship, as we officially announce our merger and look toward a future where together, we'll bring more rigorous science to the practice of sales.

You'll also hear top leaders' perspectives on today's most pressing challenges: **attracting, hiring, and retaining talent; developing your leaders; transforming with technology; navigating the relationship between inside and field; and relating to your buyer.**

Today is in your hands, as you join the other 23,000 members of AA-ISP. Let's trust again that simple mission: to take our profession to the next level of professionalism and performance. Let's do it together.



**Tim Riesterer**  
Chief Visionary  
B2B DecisionLabs

# The Science of Sales

If you want to transform sales, you need the latest research and science-backed principles, tools, and techniques at your disposal. Now, with B2B DecisionLabs as the official research partner of AA-ISP, you have access to all of that, plus expert insights, events to challenge the way you think, and a team of scientists and practitioners working on your behalf to uncover the latest findings from inside your buyer's brain.

Why do you need research and science in sales? Well, people like stories. But too often, those stories are theory rich and data poor. Sellers (and some so-called "thought leaders") have taken the stories of a few successful individuals, told them and retold them, and those stories have become what I like to call "anecdota." Some people call them "best practices."

Decision Science is not—and I repeat, *not*—a collection of best practices. Rather, it's a peek inside the brain at the invisible forces that shape the way people frame value and make choices. It incorporates research from neuroscience research, behavioral studies, and field trials that answer the questions that sellers like you face every day. If you want to improve an area of your business, you can work with us to study your buyers' motivations and behaviors and uncover insights that will make a measurable difference—not only in your bottom line, but in the quality of your buyers' and sellers' conversations.



Throughout this e-book, you'll learn more about the B2B DecisionLabs approach and hear firsthand from diverse thinkers and doers who are leading today's sales organizations. It goes without saying: you're in good company. I hope you're looking forward to this new era of AA-ISP and B2B DecisionLabs. Thanks for being with us.



**Carole Mahoney**  
Founder  
Unbound Growth

## KICKOFF:

# The Science of Transformation

If you don't recognize me the next time you see me, that's okay. I just lost 85 pounds.

Let's talk about transformation, shall we?

Prior to this, I had tried all kinds of things: keto diet, paleo diet, South Beach diet, Zone diet. Some diet that tasted like cake mix but it was a shake. (You probably would've tried it too, though, right?)

I was kind of like people in sales: you've spent so much time and energy trying different processes, technologies, and methodologies, just to improve sales performance. And then you've gotten the same results as before.

Well, me, too. The weight would come back. And then I'd try the next fad diet, hoping this time was going to be the change and this time it would stick. You know how the story goes: the yo-yo cycle continues.

This reminds me of the barely 60 percent of sellers today who make quota despite the billions that we're spending in training and technology.

So, what's different this time? That is the question, isn't it? That's the question you have to ask yourself, your teams, and your buyers. The thing that was different for me this time was science.

“ If the gap between where you are and where you want to be isn't great enough— if the contrast isn't wide enough—why would you go through the effort and the resources and the risk to make a change happen? ”

Here's one of the things I learned from science: if the gap between where you are and where you want to be isn't great enough, if the contrast isn't wide enough, why would you go through the effort and the resources and the risk to make a change happen? You won't. And neither do your buyers.

This time, I had the science. Instead of taking the next fad diet that worked for a few people, I applied the science of behavioral change to get healthy and to stay healthy for four years now. You can do the same thing to transform your sales teams. Because you have actual scientists here, folks. Actual freaking scientists! Please tell me I'm not the only nerd excited about that.

It used to be that when you'd go to conferences, when you'd read books, when you'd read books or listen to podcasts, the best you could hope for was to get a few golden nuggets from the limited experiences of a few. And that's what led to less-than-stellar results. It's also what's caused buyers to look at sales as a "pushy, slimy, and sleazy" profession. A 2016 [survey](#) from HubSpot Research suggests that only three percent of buyers see sales and marketing as trustworthy. Ouch.

You know what the most trusted profession is out there right now? Doctors. Of course, right? But it wasn't always the case. In fact, prior to the Renaissance, doctors were seen as barbarians and religious fanatics because they blindly followed the teachings of a few.

It took many years after the introduction of dissection and anatomy into their methods for doctors to gain the respect and credibility you take for granted today. You can do the same thing.

You are living in the renaissance of sales right now. You can take the science of how people change their behaviors and how buyers make decisions and apply it to the way you sell.

You have the power to turn "Oh, you're in sales?" to "You're in sales? Oh my gosh, I've had this problem for so long, do you think you can help me?"

Why? Because you have the science!

**You can leverage science to:**

- Better relate to your buyers.
- Attract, hire, and retain top sales talent.
- Develop the next generation of leaders.
- Merge your inside and outside sales teams.
- Use the right technology to help get there faster.





**Kelly Wright**  
President and Chief  
Operating Officer  
Gong

**KEYNOTE:**

# Culture-Driven Sales

I have always been in sales. I was the kid who was selling the candy bars, the cookie dough, and the educational books. After spending a long part of my career at Tableau as Executive Vice President of Sales—where we were just as focused on building a great company culture as we were on helping people see and understand data—I wanted to help other technology companies, other hypergrowth companies, and other sales organizations transform themselves.

So, I talked to a ton of people. (I'm a salesperson; of course that's what I did.) I spoke to over 50 venture capitalists, private equity investors, bankers, and other financial investors. I talked to a whole slew of go-to-market professionals: CROs, CMOs, VPs of sales, heads of enablement, heads of operations, and heads of sales ops. But most importantly, I sat down with over one hundred CEOs. These CEOs came from all walks of life, and they worked at small companies, large companies, tech companies, public companies, and private companies across many industries. I asked them, "What's your biggest challenge? When you think about upleveling your sales organization, what's important?"

These CEOs would say, "Our marketing team is marketing something other than what our sales team is selling. Can you help us align them?" Or they'd say, "How can we get our sales team to actually sell the exact product or service that our product and engineering team is building?" The similarities in these CEOs' responses were baffling to me.

Then I'd ask them, "Well, CEO, what is your mission? Tell me what your company is about." To my surprise, much of the time the CEOs (even those in large companies) did not know what their own company mission was. Sometimes a CEO would say something that wasn't the same as the mission that they had on their website or on the wall where we were meeting. So then they'd ask me to talk to five or six of their executives. I'd go ask the CRO, the CMO, the head of product, what their mission was. Sometimes I'd get five different answers from five different people.

And they wondered why they weren't aligned. It's because their leaders were chasing in all different directions.

This made me realize that we need to focus on how we're creating culture and how we're driving alignment to give our teams a unified sense of purpose. That was the impetus for building the class I teach on culture-driven sales and launching my thought leadership platform.

Here are three things to think about when it comes to building culture in your sales organization:

- 1. Mission first.** A mission is a unifying purpose that helps give everyone a sense of why they matter to your business. Companies spend so much time on the "how" and the "what," but that's not how you emotionally connect with your employees and your customers. People want to know the essence of who you are and why you exist. This purpose is important not only for how you talk to your employees and customers; it's important for how you talk to industry analysts. It's important for how you differentiate from your competition.
- 2. Core values matter.** So many companies have core values that are just words on the wall. Your company's core values should permeate through the way you attract and hire talent. They should live on your website and be integrated into your performance management. Together, your mission and core values create the personality of your company that will make customers want to interact with you.
- 3. People, people, people.** Let's go back to those hundred-plus conversations I had with CEOs. Often, they'd ask, "Based on the stage of company we're at, what should we do? What should our three strategic priorities be?" My answer was always the same—and it will always be the same: people, people, people. It's people who make companies happen. It's people who build your products and services. It's people who sell to your customers. It's people who engage with the customers to make them successful. It's people who run the back office. Of course everyone's going to make mistakes sometimes. Building a company is never easy. But if you have the right people, they're going to make decisions with your mission and core values in mind.

“ Ninety-four percent of executives and 88 percent of employees believe a distinct workplace culture is important to business success. ”

Some people might say, "Well, of course, Kelly, what you're saying is super obvious." But the data supports what I'm saying. Deloitte did a study on culture, and they asked over 300 executives and over 1,000 employees what they thought about company culture. Ninety-four percent of executives and 88 percent of employees said they believe a distinct workplace culture is important to business success. "Okay," you might say. "That's sentiment. Of course, everyone is going to say it's important." Culture is in the news all the time now because everyone wants to have a unified sense of purpose—a place where they can thrive, do their best, and bring their authentic self to work. But does culture really drive results?

“ A study done by Forbes found that companies with a strong culture have seen a 4x increase revenue growth. ”

A study done by Forbes found that companies with a strong culture have seen a 4x increase in revenue growth. You read that right: Culture is 4x revenue growth. Is there anything else in your organization that can be such a transformational accelerant to your business?

The data does indeed confirm: culture is the key and culture truly does drive sales.



**Paul Butterfield**  
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**IDEA EXCHANGE:**

# Relating to Your Buyers

**If you want to transform sales, you must transform how you interact with your buyers.**

**Q:** *What do buyers really want from sellers?*

**A:** Researcher Deb Calvert and her colleagues asked this question of 500 B2B buyers. They found that what buyers want from sellers is to:

- Be actively listened to.
- Collaborate on new ideas and insights.
- Challenge the way they think about their problems.

**LinkedIn's Buyer First report asked sellers, how focused on the buyer are you?**

Sixty-seven percent of sellers said that they put buyers first. Twenty-three percent of buyers agreed.

**Q:** *If your employees are stressed out, burned out, and overwhelmed, how will they be able to be fully in the moment to help your buyers?*

**A:** They're not. They're going to be thinking about their quota and their activity levels and not thinking about your buyer's problems.

**Q:** *When you're not buyer-first, what impact does this have on your sales organization?*

**A:** Not being buyer-first leads to fewer sales, lower sales numbers, and less sticky sales.

**Research from Sales Benchmark Index shows that the number one reason companies lose sales is to "no decision"—not to a competitor.**

**Q:** *What's causing the huge disconnect between buyers and sellers in the first place?*

**A:** It could be a lack of understanding on sellers' part of the real needs, desires, and concerns of buyers.

**Q:** *How can you fully understand your buyer?*

**A:** You can:

- Lead thoughtful discovery sessions.
- Ask probing questions about their current state, future state, and the gap inbetween.
- Help them establish a business case for change.
- Present real research and insights, then ask for their reaction.

**Q:** *Any other reasons for the disconnect between buyers and sellers?*

**A:** Buyers are evaluating solutions on their own long before sales ever gets involved. This means that sellers need to find ways to insert themselves into the buyer's journey sooner, rather than wait to be invited in—at which point the decision is 80 percent of the way made. You must train your teams on how to do this.

**Q:** *How can sellers get involved in the buying decision sooner?*

**A:** On the outbound/prospecting side, you can start thinking about what your prospects want to receive and what kinds of interactions they want to have with your company. For instance, in most workplaces, the rampant use of Teams and Slack teaches people to ignore their inbox. It's a your job to make the prospect's inbox irresistible—or at least make the message irresistible—because you're providing so much value in a personalized way.

**Differentiate yourself by offering an exceptional customer experience—and this starts with understanding your buyer.**

Embrace the phrase “It’s not about me.” It’s about the buyer—not about you, your company, or even your solution.

**Q:** *What about personalization and customization? How can automation help you better connect with your buyer?*

**A:** Personalization and customization are top of mind for most sellers, but automation has changed the workforce. Technology can help you save time and money, but some quality has been lost. There has to be a balance between automated touches with prospects and human touches. Consider automating the things that don't require thought and don't automate the things that require your heart and soul. Just because you can send an email through a platform doesn't mean you should.

**Q:** *How do we personalize at scale?*

**A:** Try the 10-minute game. Set a timer, research a prospect for 10 minutes, then reach out with that first touch. Do four or six 10-minute sessions an hour to build your muscle memory. In a short time, you'll get better and faster. You'll find you can get the same amount of research done in under 10 minutes, and soon you'll be able to do 10 or 12 of these sessions an hour. If you reach out to 30 people, you'll probably hear back from two or three. Relating to your buyers is where every sale starts and ends. Remember: it's not about you.





**Dana Feldman**  
SVP Strategic Sales  
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The Art of Hustle and Heart

**IDEA EXCHANGE:**

# Attracting, Hiring, and Retaining

## The war for talent is ongoing.

4.5 million people left their jobs in November 2021.

From February 2020 to January 2022, male workers regained all jobs they had lost due to the public health crisis, according to an analysis by the National Women’s Law Center of the latest U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report. However, 1.1 million women left the labor force during that span, accounting for 63 percent of all jobs lost.

Clearly, it’s time to reexamine gender norms.

LinkedIn’s Buyer First study asked buyers: What’s the number one trait you look for in a salesperson?

The answer? Active listening.

The study also asked the same question of managers: What’s the top trait you look for in a seller?

Active listening was last on their list.

## And the gap between buyers and sellers widens.

The lesson here? If you haven’t hired the right people to work with your buyers, you’ll continue to have a disconnect between buyers and sellers.

**Q:** *Why is hiring and retaining talent so important today?*

**A:** This is the hardest sales cycle we’ve ever seen in terms of attracting and hiring talent for our sales organizations. We tend to overlook a buyer-first mindset, even in the recruiting process.

**Q:** *Where should sales organizations start when examining their hiring process in this current market?*

**A:** Start with retention. Retaining happy, productive employees makes it easier to attract new talent. Talent attracts talent and helps you hire.

People are the foundation of inside sales. If you look at the numbers on what it costs to hire and retain people, losing an employee costs the company far more than that employee's salary. Losing an employee is a hit to a company's productivity, morale, opportunities, bottom line revenue, and culture. Overperforming teams stand out because of how they treat their people.

**Q:** *How can you retain the employees you have before you start hiring more?*

**A:** Show them a realistic and attainable career path and offer them individualized support. You can keep your attrition rate low by having a great onboarding process, a great career pathway, and a great culture.

When it comes to retaining the best talent, it's always about the individual.

Get and stay hyper focused on people. Offer customizable benefits, perks, and solutions that fit all people—but fit them differently. One approach does not fit all. Support people the way they want to be supported, not the way you think they need to be.

**It's time to evolve—to put candidates first as “buyers,” because they are consumers of your hiring process.**

**Q:** *How can you immediately improve your recruiting and hiring process?*

**A:** Look at your whole candidate experience from recruitment to onboarding to post-onboarding. Beyond weeks 1-2 on a new job, what do weeks 3-12 look like? Map it out. Involve executives and department heads in the recruiting process, so the candidate understands what company they're working for and how they'll fit in. Follow up with candidates after each interaction you have with them to see where their mind is at and what new questions they have.

**Q:** *When you've recognized that you need to make changes to your hiring process, where do you start changing it?*

**A:** Job seekers are looking for organizations that speak to them, that help them live their core values, and where they feel they could fit in. A job is no longer just about the 401k, healthcare package, and salary.

People are looking at flexibility (when/where can I work?), work/life balance (mental health offerings, flex days), how the company invests in them, and their career pathway. Today's talent is looking for ways to connect—through your organization—to what's important to them as people.



**Q:** *Will a higher base pay attract better talent?*

**A:** Not necessarily. You can be the company who doesn't pay the most and still attract and retain quality talent. With sales development, we have to show them where their career will go. Let them speak to peers who started in the role and then got promoted.

**Q:** *Now that so many companies are fully remote and/or hybrid for the foreseeable future, how do you motivate and engage employees in a virtual environment—especially people you'll never meet in person?*

**A:** Ask questions. Listen deeply. Spend just as much time focusing on "voice of the employee" as you do on "voice of the customer." Have 1:1s, especially with your front-line reps. Invite them to schedule 15 or 30 minutes with you whenever they want.

**Q:** *Sixty-three percent of the jobs lost during the pandemic were women's. Caregiving responsibilities are the main reason. How can you tackle this problem?*

**A:** If we give women and all caregivers the flexibility they need, they'll be more apt to stay. Leaders need to have empathy. Five years ago we were focused on bringing more women into sales. Now we need to stay focused on retaining them. For anyone who wants to start a family, we have to be mindful of how we're supporting them. We prepare for people to take time off and to come back, but we don't think much about how they're doing mentally and socioemotionally once they've returned. Everything outside of work has changed for them. We need to put more focus there and transform our approach to flexibility, resources, and support.

**Q:** *How can men and others in a place of privilege support women and other people in marginalized and underrepresented groups?*

**A:** Be an ally. Go beyond allyship and be a front-running supporter and a voice leading the change. With your support, agendas, attitudes, views, and policies will change to make your workplace a better experience for every person.



**Tim Riesterer**  
Chief Visionary  
B2B DecisionLabs

KEYNOTE:

# Decision Science or Seller “Best Practices”—What Motivates People to Buy?

The science of sales is a movement that’s gaining momentum. To illustrate, consider these three numbers:

- 103
- 12
- 88

There have been **103** million hands of poker played online.

Only **12** percent of the time did the best hand win.

The best player won **88** percent of the time.

The moral of the story? The best hand doesn’t win; it’s the best player that wins.

You’re in the market because you have something viable to sell. Today, the difference between you and your competitor is no longer what that something is, but what you say about it. The best players are masters of the psychology of the moment. They adjust their approach based on the moment—and as a seller, so should you. But historically, B2B sales is missing something—and that’s data. You read in the intro to this e-book that sales has been theory rich but data poor. Most of B2B selling has been about theories based on people’s personal experiences, and those people have projected those experiences onto other salespeople, but they have no idea if or why the strategies, tactics, or techniques actually worked.

It’s time to start collecting, testing, implementing, and winning with the data that’s all around you, but that you haven’t been playing with. Now that B2B DecisionLabs has joined forces with AA-ISP, you can go deeper into the behavioral economics, social psychology, and cognitive neuroscience of how people make decisions and choices. This means that you and your teams can be part of the 88 percent who wins most of the time.

“ Scientific research...captures revealed preference: what people actually do at a subconscious level, without a filter. ”

Today, many companies conduct industry surveys and call them research. But surveys aren't research. Surveys only capture declared preference—what people say they would do, and/or think they would do. People can lie in surveys, even to themselves. Scientific research however, captures revealed preference: what people actually do at a subconscious level, without a filter.

Did you know that most research studies are done on gamblers, grad students, and convicts? That's because they're captive audiences who require very little money to participate in a study. At B2B DecisionLabs, every study we do is done with real B2B professionals. You had the opportunity to participate in our latest study during the Leadership Summit. Some of you took us up on it and got to wear the funny-looking caps and the heart rate monitor and the skin response monitor. The results of that study will be available soon.

B2B DecisionLabs conducts and releases new research every quarter. We run three types of laboratories: behavioral studies that put would-be B2B buyers into simulations to see how they respond; neuroscience research, where participants put on all the gear to allow us to peek at their real-time subconscious behaviors; and field trials, where we turn sales teams into labs to identify what content, cadences, touch patterns, and channels really make the difference, then certify the best approach.

Let me tell you a little more about each type of study, with an example or two.

## 1. Behavioral studies.

These are simulations where we set up test conditions to test a theory or a question, and we observe what people actually do, not what they think they'd do or say they'd do. For instance, we tested whether prospects respond differently to sales messages than existing customers do. Turns out, they do! While most companies use the same messaging to talk to prospects and customers, research shows that your approach needs to be 180 degrees different.

In another behavioral study, we learned that changing only the pronouns in your prospecting messages to 'you' from 'we' (e.g. 'You know that your customers...' vs. 'We know that customers...') increases the persuasive power of the message. You-phrasing is more convincing than we-phrasing.

And, we studied apologies: specifically, the best way to make them. We researched how to invoke the Service Recovery Paradox: how to apologize in a way that causes customers to become more loyal, better advocates, and more willing to stick with you.

Coming up in our research pipeline: customer win-back messaging. We studied what to say to reignite and reacquire a lost customer.



## 2. Neuroscience studies.

Facilitated by our Chief Science Officer, Dr. Carmen Simon, these are the studies where each participant is fitted with an EEG cap to monitor brain waves, an ECG patch to monitor heart rate, a galvanic skin response monitor, and eye-tracking equipment to follow their gaze.

Recently, Dr. Simon studied your buyer's brain on Zoom—in partnership with Zoom. She studied the effectiveness of virtual vs. in-person vs. hybrid presentations. You may be surprised at the results.

You can bring a neuroscience study to your company or to your customers. Just let us know what you want us to study.

// People want to know about what other people in their peer group are struggling with, and they want to hear it from you, because you see more people who look like them than they do. //

## 3. Field trials.

In a field trial, we study actual sales motions with real sellers and buyers. We studied personalization—which, let's be honest, can get pretty creepy. Your buyers might open highly-personalized messages because they want to know how you knew that they were at Publix at 10 p.m. on a Sunday. And then they say, "Wow, that's really creepy," and it goes no further in the pipeline.

But we found what does work: industry personalization. People want to know about what other people in their peer group are struggling with, and they want to hear it from you, because you see more people who look like them than they do. Tap into that basic human urge: voyeurism. Show them what their peers are doing. You don't have to know that particular buyer. You just need to know other people who look like them and tell them what those people are wrestling with.

We recently studied how to add content assets into a cadence to get a meeting. Long form vs. short form? Video vs. e-book? We wanted to figure out which content assets, in which order, will get you the best results to create more opportunities and pull a buyer all the way through the funnel.

To really transform your sales organization, you must get beyond surveys and into live simulations and studies so that your teams can be part of the 88 percent who win most of the time. Because if you're not testing, you're guessing.



**Eva Helén**  
Chief Executive Officer  
EQ Inspiration

KEYNOTE:

# Why Your Contribution Matters

You're already familiar with the impact the pandemic has had on the workforce, and on women in particular: of the 63 percent of jobs lost by women during the pandemic, most were lost due to caregiving responsibilities.

Women can't undo or mitigate this disproportionate impact alone. We need men to be our allies.

Men, if you've ever wondered why your contribution matters, and why it's important that you don't rely on others to do this, stick with me.

I did tons of research with men in tech about their willingness to support women and what things they were actually doing. **Through my research, seven prototypes emerged.** In the allyship tier, we have Mark at the top, followed by James, and then Samir. Next, we have Memo, Al, and Cree. And at the bottom, we have Richard, the chauvinist.

I don't think that one message works the same for every man. I wondered, what is truly interesting for a guy like you, and where can you—specifically you—contribute? This has to do with your comfort level talking about equality, your willingness to support women and other underrepresented groups, and the actions you're already taking. As you read, think about which character prototype you most closely identify with—because there's something concrete you can do. Every guy starts his journey at a different point. We can't expect everyone to enter through the same door.

Let's walk through and describe each of these prototypes, starting with Mark at the top. I'll also provide some ideas of what each of these prototypes can do as a next step, to grow and be a driver for change.

If you're a **Mark**, you're caring, you speak up for and about women specifically and in general, and you're intelligent about issues affecting women and other underrepresented groups. You understand why your contribution matters and how this positively connects to business results. **What to do next:** If you're not already receiving plenty of candidates from your recruiting firm who are women and from other underrepresented groups, specifically ask the recruiters to send them to you.

If they say no women are interested in the role(s) you're posting, ask them to call women candidates who are great fits or close, and ask them what's wrong with your website or your posting, or what otherwise is keeping them away. Ask for critique, reverse the process, and make changes. Then share your story so that other men have a role model for how to transform their recruiting process and practices.

If you're a **James**, you're a visibly supportive presence in your organization. You've built equitable teams before and other men look to you as a role model. **What to do next:** Hire a woman who is clearly qualified for a role even though she may not have 100 percent of the job requirements asked for on paper. Then rewrite that job description to clearly state what the job does not require (e.g., "This job does not require a computer science degree.") Review all job descriptions for roles on your team to make them more explicitly inclusive. Proactively invite women and other marginalized or underrepresented individuals to apply.

If you're a **Samir**, you're a sponsor. You put your own name on the line to introduce a woman to your network. You do this in one-to-one and group settings. **What to do next:** Defend and uphold women in front of colleagues and customers and set the standard of behavior on behalf of women who aren't even in the room.

If you're a **Memo**, you tend to withdraw if someone questions your motives for mentoring someone of a different gender. **What to do next:** Move from ally to advocate. Focus on someone else's experience of a situation or a workplace culture rather than your own experience. Ask yourself: Are you willing to risk your business to create a better culture?



If you're an **Al**, you're a happy-go-lucky ally. You say things like, *I love working with women. They're fantastic!* But you don't go so far as to say that gender diversity will improve business. **What to do next:** Forget about personal mentoring; maybe that can come later. For now, focus on your expertise and pass it on to women mentees in a formal setting, if your company doesn't yet have a mentoring program. Make the engagement short; you can grow the engagement later if it works well.

If you're a **Cree**, you're friendly but the discussion about gender equity, diversity, and inclusion tends to intimidate you. You back up and stay silent, but you do support women in quiet ways—maybe a daughter, sister, partner, or a woman on your team you've worked with for a long time. **What to do next:** Volunteer yourself as a facilitator and actively seek out input from women.



The majority of men I talked to were AIs and Crees. They have an amazing opportunity to move up into the next level of the matrix.

And finally, if you're a **Richard**, you're a chauvinist. You're opposed to change and you fear that women will replace men in the workplace. **What to do next:** Team up with women and men to start hearing different perspectives than you typically consider.

When you start imitating actions and doing that as a part of your everyday work, and you practice it regularly, it becomes automatic and you can climb to the next level.

Diverse teams increase innovation. Diversity introduces more rigor to decision making and promotes better decisions because there are more people with different perspectives to question things. Inclusion means you feel like you belong, people hear you, respect you, care about you, and challenge you. People who feel included are happier and more productive.

So pick up your phone, send a message to a woman you appreciate, and ask how you can help her. Or, schedule a virtual coffee and talk about how her work is going, share your story, and share how you've been supported and what support you're now offering to her. Your contribution matters. Let's keep it going.

// People who feel included are happier and more productive. //



**Lauren Bailey**  
Founder and President  
Factor 8

**KEYNOTE:**

# Boost Top-line Revenue This Year

We moved work home. We endured sickness, resignations, market pivots, budget freezes, and stalled pipeline. Frankly, I think we were kind of gracious while we watched our field counterparts figure out virtual selling. Let's be clear: virtual sales is the future of sales.

I'm in sales. I'm not a chief delight officer. Or a growth manager. I'm in sales, dammit!

Is finding good talent a priority for you right now? Yes. But there's something more afoot. MarTech did a great job at tracking the customer lifecycle minute by minute. But accordingly, sales goals went up. As a result, there's been a crazy curve of acceleration that maybe isn't always sustainable.

Now we have higher unemployment rates. Talent pools have shrunk dramatically. We're hiring fewer experienced reps to work with smarter customers who have higher demands. And in the end—sorry—our reps are getting dumber. It's not their fault. There's more to master because sales tooled up, too. (We know. We all get each other's sales calls.) Lately, I feel like I'm being sold at: I'm being spammed, I'm being sequenced, I'm being robo-ed, I'm being bumped. It doesn't feel good.

“ Fifty percent of all graduates—not just business school grads—end up in sales. ”

Fifty percent of all graduates—not just business school grads—end up in sales. We drafted a lot of them and we lost a lot of them. The turnover is especially massive with BDRs and SDRs. The travesty is that it's their first exposure to our profession and we're teaching them to hate it.

This is the war *on* talent.

*Harvard Business Review* tells us: 50 percent of college graduates enter our profession, and then 75 percent fail out of it. Customers don't love sales anymore, either. This problem is bigger than any one of us. There are global resignations and global shifts in where young people want to work. What we're doing isn't working. It's going to take all of us to turn this around.

The good news is, we here at AA-ISP are the top two percent. We didn't have onboarding or a tech stack. We made it! We got promoted and we made it again. And again. Until we earned a spot in this room. We're in sales. Ladies, you worked the hardest to get into this room. We influence thousands and thousands of sellers, and before our careers are over, that number will be in the hundreds of thousands.

The old road (the way marketing has done it) is paved with technology—and it's good stuff—but I don't know that it's always pointed in the right direction. Our road must be about people. If marketing could do it alone, we wouldn't be here. Sales is one person talking to another about their challenges so we can help them meet their goals. Selling is helping. Can we please get better at this part? Those conversations are where we're going to regain customers' trust.

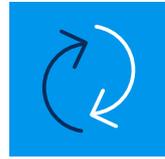
Let's focus on retention. CEB found that 60 percent of new managers fail within their first two years. You've got eight quarters to teach them. Simon Sinek talks about reframing the conversation and taking the conversation higher. Let's teach young people to love sales and to stay—to come in for the opportunity and the challenge and the learning and to stay for the connection with customers.

As top sales leaders, our goal is not the number. Our goal is engagement with our people and teaching them to engage with our customers. That's the apple of our story, our long game.

Most BDRs and SDRs go into calls thinking the meeting is the goal—so they pitch a meeting after a minute on the call. What if the goal weren't a meeting? What if it were just customer engagement? I experimented with my team. We listened to calls, we geeked out, and we rated the engagement. Then I asked them, "Now that we've done this together, how many more meetings do you think you could book?" They said between 10 percent and 500 percent because they were excited to go get on the phones again. When we align with a higher purpose, we're more powerful. Ditch the scripts. People need help having conversations. Role play with them.

Millennials and Gen Z are wise and strategic about their careers in a way that previous generations never were. They want room to fail. It's called the growth mindset. People not only perform better, but are also happier when they have a growth mindset. It's what separates amateurs from professionals. Leaders who get this know that a growth culture is one that never stops that development. That's what new recruits are craving right now. Celebrate the improvement over the deals. Opportunities to fail are rampant in our profession, but somewhere along the way, we've stopped talking about it. You've got to let new reps hear you talk about failure and rejection. You have to talk about it and normalize both.

Want to boost your top-line revenue this year? Focus on retention.



**IDEA EXCHANGE:**

# Priority Setting —Leadership Development



**Maggie Taylor Aherne**  
Director of Revenue Operations  
and Customer Success  
KickFire



**Adria Jefferies**  
Sales Director, PlanHub  
Mentor/Volunteer  
#GirlsClub



**Dharmesh Shah**  
Vice President Inside Sales  
Vonage

In a roundtable with sales leaders focused on understanding their biggest challenges, the majority of leaders said, “I want to know how I can be a better manager and grow and develop my team.”

**Q:** *Why is leadership development so important?*

**A:** We’re not going back in time to 2019; we’re going forward. The natural buzz that happens between departments and managers in the office isn’t happening like it once did. We need to recreate it in a different way throughout the organization. Our buyers are getting sophisticated. We need to meet them where they are in the market. If we’re not improving, we’re going to get left behind. To keep pace with the changes our buyers are going through, we have to make sure our leaders are agile and growth minded.

**Q:** *How did we get here? Why is leadership development still low on the priority list for most sales organizations, right after training reps?*

**A:** The pandemic has given rise to an idea that if you’re not developing your leaders, they go elsewhere. When companies think about development, they tend to think about developing their sellers. As their manager, you want your sellers to convert more leads, book more meetings, and win more deals.

**//** If you don’t intentionally, proactively develop your leaders, you’ll end up with a mediocre middle management layer, and it will affect company execution at the strategy level, as well as company culture. **//**

Now think about your managers and fellow leaders: you hired them because they're smart. So there's an expectation that they'll just self-develop. People often "fake it 'til they make it" as a leader. But that's the wrong mindset if that's all you're relying on. If you don't intentionally, proactively develop your leaders, you'll end up with a mediocre middle management layer and it will affect company execution at the strategy level, as well as company culture. It's a win all around to develop your leaders.

**Q:** *How does leadership development look different at big companies than at small companies?*

**A:** Big companies have different challenges than small companies. Big companies can invest in programs to develop leaders. The downside of big companies is they're not consistent.

In smaller companies, you've got to meet booking and revenue goals, and you can't spend a ton of money, so you've got to get creative. But you can expose people to the entire business, which helps people grow and develop their careers in ways that are interesting to them. Also, in small companies, leaders have to wear many hats: sales, marketing, revenue, DevOps. That means nothing is actually a priority because they're trying to focus on so many things.

**Q:** *Why are we still challenged by leadership development today?*

**A:** So often, we're trying to make grand gestures to get people into sales leadership. But all you have to do is make one simple move. Find opportunities for those promising employees to shine. Also, we have to be okay with people not doing things exactly the way that we'd want them to. Notice the difference between "the right way" and "your way." This is like resisting the urge to rearrange the dishes that your spouse loaded into the dishwasher. It's not wrong; it's just different.

**Q:** *How can we make leadership development more of a priority?*

**A:** It's important to look for those little opportunities to build in leadership development and make it meaningful. You can get involved in clubs and community groups to help everyone and give back. It doesn't necessarily take a fortune or even a budget line item to do it. Those little steps you take with individuals matter. You can get people to the next level that way, and both of you contribute to company culture as a whole. To get there, you've got to give people exposure, invest in programs, give people internal coaching and realistic development paths, and create a blueprint.

// Today's sales managers are tomorrow's sales directors and VPs. //

**Q:** *What advice would you give to sales leaders to help them make the case for more leadership development and more training?*

**A:** Today's sales managers are tomorrow's sales directors and VPs. Pick one thing that you can do—one certification, one training course to offer an individual or several people. Start small and grow your leadership development program from there. The future of sales will thank you.



**Steve Pacinelli**  
Chief Marketing Officer  
BombBomb

KEYNOTE:

# Humanizing Business

People make decisions about other people instantaneously when they meet them in person. But digital communication is emotionally impoverished. Your emotion and tone don't come through via email. When you hide behind the cloak of digital anonymity and the text on your screen, you can't connect with your buyer. Your words on the screen are only a small part of your overall communication schematic.

How many sales leaders hire their sales folks over a 19-touch email sequence? None of them. You hired them on Zoom or in person. You hired them because they connected with you—they did something that made you feel that they'd be great at this job. Now you put them in the sales world and you expect them to sell through a 19-touch email sequence. You just negated all the value they brought to you in the hiring process. But still, they must sell virtually.

// Humans are breaking the sales funnel. Specifically, it's the lack of the human within the sales funnel that is breaking it. //

Online environments—your email and LinkedIn inboxes—are polluted. People don't want to hear and see what's in there. People don't do the proper preparation to reach out to you, to learn about you, to understand what you're doing and thinking and wanting. Humans are breaking the sales funnel. Specifically, it's the *lack* of the human within the sales funnel that is breaking it. Humans can fix the sales funnel with human-centered selling. How can you put the needs, wants, and interests of the human you're reaching out to on an equal playing field as your own? That's human-centered selling.

Video is only an amplifier, a megaphone. If you have a bad message and you put it in a video, it'll make that message even worse. If you have a good message and you put it in a video, it'll help you accelerate your sales cycle. We can't just take the same old methodologies and dump them into a new medium or paradigm. Each new medium needs a new technique.

// Attention needs to precede trust, but trust is the true currency of sales. //

Attention needs to precede trust, but trust is the true currency of sales. Every message you send trains someone on whether they should open or delete your next message. Human brains are prediction engines. If someone doesn't open your email once, they're less likely to open the second time. But if you're familiar, trusted, warm, and competent, they might open it. Warmth trumps competency because people need to know you'll use their competency on their behalf—that you can be trusted. Provide value, give great tips, be warm. This is what human-centered selling sounds like.

Here's a quick and easy method to help you evaluate your messaging: When you write a sales cadence, ask yourself: Why would they open this email? Why would they play this video? Also ask yourself the opposite: why wouldn't they open and play? This helps you put yourself in their shoes.

It's hard to get everyone together on a Zoom call for a sales presentation but you don't need to wait for that. There's something in between: relevant, short-form video messaging that can be used across the whole funnel. You can use video all over. Where in your sales funnel are you lacking emotional impact? What about priority? Lack of clarity? That's where video can help you. Keep the needs of the recipient in mind: why should they watch? Why shouldn't they watch? This is where you need to insert your people in your sales funnel. A lack of emotional drivers leads to a logical lack of justification.



When it comes to your buyer's education phase, make educational videos. Video helps you provide real value to a real person in a human way. Here's a strategy against getting ghosted for an important meeting: The day before the meeting, send a 20-second video to the decision maker or influencer who keeps ghosting you to tell them the work you've already put into the meeting.



Say, “The team and I have been working hard to prepare some great ideas for you, and we’re excited to show you tomorrow. I’m also going to be pulling one our specialists into the meeting who can help you XYZ,” and say that they’ll meet that person on the call. This will reduce your chances of getting ghosted for the upcoming meeting, because they’ll see the work you’ve already put into preparing.

It can be difficult to get all the necessary people on a synchronous call. Use a screen recorder to walk through the parts of your presentation you most want decision makers to see. Record it so that your prospect can forward it to their CIO or CFO. Now you’ve just delivered that important information the way that you want to, rather than secondhand from someone’s memory or notes.

// Your people are the answer to the deficiencies, the friction, and the failure you may be experiencing in different parts of your sales funnel. //

In all you do, put the needs of your buyers first. Start with what’s desirable for your recipient—not what’s best for your business. Then run it through the possibilities of technology. Your people are the answer to the deficiencies, the friction, and the failure you may be experiencing in different parts of your sales funnel.

How can you get your people in front of other people more often? That’s the way to do human-centered messaging, rather than starting with your business first. Because if there’s no emotion, there’s no action.





**Janae Bennett**  
VP Global Digital Sales  
Development  
IBM



**Chris Lamon**  
Director, Digital Sales,  
North America  
Kimberly-Clark Professional



**Drew Moldenhauer**  
Sales Technology Leader  
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IDEA EXCHANGE:

# Inside and Field Sales Coming Together

**The integration between inside and field has been a long time coming.**

Business does not look the same today as it did 20 or 30 years ago. Customers are buying differently, and how they're getting their information about our solutions is changing. We must adapt our selling strategy to be more virtual/digital. This is scary for some sellers, especially those from the field. They're saying, "Where's my role in this?" Managing change is a shared responsibility.

**Q:** *What's the most important thing to keep in mind when uniting your inside and field sales teams?*

**A:** Above all, understand that everyone in your organization has a different perspective on this shift and comes from different backgrounds. Be empathetic to those differences but strive to be on the same team. Inside sellers and field sellers are both responsible for making the necessary changes happen.

**//** It's emotional for a lot of folks. We've been in our home offices for the last two years, and everyone was an inside seller. Now we're coming out of our offices, and we have to figure out how to work together again. **//**

It's emotional for a lot of folks. We've been in our home offices for the last two years and everyone was an inside seller. Now we're coming out of our offices, and we have to figure out how to work together again. What is my role with the customer? Who are the customers? How can we work collaboratively so it's not this "us vs. them" mentality?

**Q:** *How can you encourage better collaboration across your sales teams?*

**A:** Sales development is the tip of the spear. Your SDRs can go in and tee up the deal for your field sellers to close. Look at it as a team sport. Field can learn from inside, and vice versa. We can establish better efficiencies and divide and conquer to maximize what we're all doing. You can start by having the hard conversations: How can I work with you? What are your challenges? How can I help you most?

In fact, what do we call our profession now, if it's not "inside" and "field?" We're hybrid sellers—because there's a digital component for all sellers now—including field—that that wasn't there pre-COVID. Or we're digital sellers because all our selling is powered digitally. The tech stack is important to all of us.

**Q:** *What's been the hardest moment within your teams around this transition?*

**A:** For many, it's been the fact that everyone is at a different place. You might have folks who believe that digital selling is a fad. As in, "If I sit around long enough and keep my head down, this will pass." But this is the new reality for everyone—it's not going away. This is the way our customers want to be engaged. You have to be able to adapt. It's change management and getting folks involved in the process. It takes trust, time, and stamina. Yes, sales leaders must set expectations and timelines, but they should also have some grace for their teams and allow space to adjust to the new ways. Embrace a collective growth mindset.

**Q:** *Is there another way of looking at this transition?*

**A:** For some sales organizations, inside, field, and sales development will remain the three legs of the stool. They should be different, for good reasons that make sense for that company's clients. Inside and field have their own special qualities that they bring to the business. The key is to bring them together and optimize.

**Q:** *What is the impact that you're seeing from this change and what's the atmosphere?*

**A:** Once you're in motion, doing the work of change, you need your ancillary teams to support you: marketing, enablement, IT, customer success, and operations. The biggest impact might be that people are working together who have never worked together before. You must set your vision and figure out how to get there as a team, then build the capability. As a team, where are your strengths and weaknesses? Expect mistakes and set the tone that mistakes are okay.

**Q:** *How is technology supporting this change?*

**A:** In the beginning of the pandemic, it was all about the tools. People got really caught up in the tech. But now we realize it's not about the tech, it's about the people. People sell to people. Now people are getting comfortable with this new normal. They're realizing, "I can still be me. I can still bring all of my qualities. I'm just not in person." Tech doesn't work without people.

**Q:** *What can we learn from each other and what advice would you give to sales leaders?*

**A:** Be open about the bad sides of the changes as well as the good sides. You're going to have failures and you'll learn from them. Learnings come through shared challenges. Talk to peers about what you're learning and going through. Be transparent across your whole team. Share information, successes, and failures. Try to get one percent better every day.

**//** In the beginning...people got really caught up in the tech. But now we realize it's not about the tech, it's about the people. **//**



**Jeff Santelices**  
Chief Revenue Officer  
MindTickle

KEYNOTE:

# Transforming the Revenue Org— Sales Performance in the Digital Era

This journey over the last few years has been pretty amazing—especially the fact that we’re all here talking and collaborating about what’s happened and how to get through it. Our profession has changed dramatically.

If you think about competition in the past, things were geographically limited. Your sellers were selling into a specific territory. The funds available to start up a company weren’t readily available. The value of a seller was paramount—they were the holders of critical information and incredibly valuable from a customer perspective. The concept of a three-martini lunch was crucial to our field sellers. That was often the difference between getting the deal and not getting the deal.

Now let’s look at that old-school world versus today’s environment. Today, your competition is limitless. You have sellers out of India who are selling to customers in Schaumburg, Illinois. You have the friendliest funding environment I’ve ever seen. It makes things incredibly challenging. The information available to your customers and the amount of work they’re doing to understand the industry and the solutions available to them means that by the time they engage with your sellers, they have 80 percent of the information they need. And they’re questioning the value of your sellers.

// Relationships will always be valuable, but they’re not the sole difference maker anymore. Relationships are just one element in the decision process. //

Relationships will always be valuable but they’re not the sole difference maker anymore. Relationships are just one element in the decision process. We’re all grappling with this reality.

What's the implication and the impact of all this? Your teams are challenged. Forty-three percent of sellers aren't getting to quota. Despite the time and money you're investing in your new recruits, over 50 percent of them will fail. That failure is a challenge for that individual, their family, your company, and you, personally. You need to think of a way to address and change that dynamic.

As a sales leader, you're accustomed to these numbers; you plan for them. You're expecting extra capacity in order to cover all those non-performers. You plan for the 80/20 rule: 80 percent of your sales reps perform at the bottom, and the top 20 percent of your org will deliver the vast majority of your number. This has been true for many, many decades. But the margin for error in today's selling environment has become very thin.

Picture this: Today, five of your top 20 sellers drained the swamp last quarter and won't be able to fill their pipe this quarter. We're dealing with the friendliest job seeker market we've seen in years, which means two or three of your top sellers left for other places. The handful of tried-and-true reps who always deliver—they're not going to deliver this quarter. Their customers went elsewhere, or they're going through an M&A, so all deals stop. You're crossing your fingers that those 10 remaining reps can find a way to get you to your number. When you're in this situation quarter after quarter after quarter, and you're crossing your fingers to see if you can get to that number with just a few members of your team, that's a tremendous challenge.

How can you move the middle—those reps who are doing just okay? How can you take them from satisfactory to doing great? Most sales leaders are managing by gut. But you need to start identifying your top performers based on what you see inside of your CRM. You need to look at their close rates, cycle times, and lead conversions; this is all good data which creates their end results.

There are two different types of sales leaders. What type do you want in your company?

**Sales rep #1:** They're making their number every quarter. When you ask them how they did it, they say, "We crushed it because our team is great, we worked super hard, and we're way better than the competition."

**Sales rep #2:** They came in and missed their number. But they're able to provide granular-level detail as to why they missed. They know and understand their weaknesses and what actions they can drive their team toward next quarter.

Which sales leader do the funders want? Absolutely, it's the person who's focused on the data.

More important than a result is the data on what a rep did to get to that result. What did the rep do to prepare the space they're selling into? What do they know about the competitors and their solutions? What are they doing to level up their skills across the sales process? When they're talking to customers, are they performing the way you'd expect them to perform? How can you assess and validate that?

Get out of the 80/20 mentality about your sales team and optimize everyone on your team. Create a profile of your ideal rep using data, share it with your recruiters, and baseline new hires against it. Engage your enablement team to put programs in to supplement weaknesses and challenges. Coach up and get all your reps to a point where they're producing and performing. This will reduce ramp time. We can't effectively scale if we can't get our frontline managers to engage and coach the people on the ground.

Most importantly, go from gut feel to science and a data-based approach.



**Julie Cadalen**  
Head of Digital Transformation  
Webhelp



**Becc Holland**  
Chief Executive Officer  
and Founder  
Flip the Script



**Christian Kletzl**  
Co-Founder  
UserGems

IDEA EXCHANGE:

# Transforming with Technology

**Technology is a great multiplier. Tech can make people better at what they're doing.**

**Q:** *Why do we still need to talk about technology?*

**A:** We have all the tech necessary, but what's still on the docket is the vision for how to deploy it, when to deploy it, what's the goal, and how to drive execution. How do you use the technology, in which situations, to drive pipeline?

Collectively, we've spent astronomical numbers on technology over the last several years, but we're still seeing the same performance numbers. We all think there must be someone in the industry who has all the secrets, the answers, the playbook. But the truth is, quota attainment just isn't there. Babe Ruth wasn't good because he had a good bat. The bat was table stakes. Tech is the bat. But how are we using it?

We all have shiny object syndrome. Before you invest, see what people are already doing well and then ask yourself: What technology would make your team even better at what they already do?

**Q:** *What's getting in the way of tech adoption?*

**A:** Maybe you have too many options. Leaders need to go step by step, have a vision, explain to your team why you're using certain tech, and you need to test it. Make sure your team can use the tech and convince themselves whether it's working and it's worth it.

**//** If I had a tool that could book me 15 meetings a day, you wouldn't have to send me a push notification to tell me to get the tool. **//**



**Q:** *When you do adopt tech the right way, what's the impact?*

**A:** You always want quota attainment to be the impact. If you're not hitting quota, it might mean you're not using the tool right. But if I had a tool that could book me 15 meetings a day, you wouldn't have to send me a push notification to tell me to get the tool. Do you understand why certain things work?

It can be a vicious cycle. If you buy tech, but the reps don't use it and tools are still being forced on them, they're now suspicious of why.

// The whole point is to make people more effective and more human with others.  
Don't scale motions that aren't effective. //

**Q:** *How can you ensure the reps will use the tech you invest in?*

**A:** Sit down with your team and have them go through all the steps they have to go through just to make one phone call. The average rep is touching eight or nine apps or platforms before they even make a single phone call. Reps are only using around 30 percent of their time to sell. Apps and platforms can slow people down if they're not using them right. The whole point is to make people more effective and more human with others. Don't scale motions that aren't effective.

Hold focus groups to ask your people what they want and what they expect. Include individual contributors in your buying decisions because they're the ones who have to use it—not only the managers. Is the new technology going to help you do what you *already* do well but better and faster? As a leader, you need to be understand what's driving conversion.

**Q:** *What advice do you have for tech execs who are evaluating all these programs? Where should they start?*

**A:** Look first at how it can help sellers hit their quota. Don't look only at how it will improve sales activity, but how it will improve your sellers' lives. Turn the vicious cycle into a virtuous cycle.



**Silvano Sansoni**  
General Manager  
Global Digital Sales  
IBM

**KEYNOTE:**

# A Customer-Centric Company

As we continue to make the transformation to digital sales at IBM, let's talk about the numbers. We have 80 percent outbound sellers and 20 percent inbound and SDR reps. We have 12 centers around the world, and our sellers work in 25 languages.

“ I love the science part. We're taking the best of what we do and finding a new way. ”

My mission is very simple: to create a new digital sales team that is customer-centric. IBM has a 100-year heritage of sales. We have a lot of processes and data. I love the science part. We're taking the best of what we do and finding a new way. We've had two priorities for this transformation: We took best practices from the ground and created squads, and then added automation. Squads bring together an SDR, a DSS (digital sales specialist), a renewal rep, a CSM, and a partner to serve a category.

We give our sellers flexibility. They can stay remote if they want to. They can come back only for critical stuff, like squad work and training. We're bringing the best things about working from home to our new office spaces. We're designing a new office workspace in Bangalore, and it might look like a kitchen or a library. We want the new design to look like the environments people want to work in now.

We're organizing differently and we're trying to bring data and automation to what we do every day. We've brought in people who specialize in processes and automation. We're creating a new area where the best aspects of B2C sales can be applied to B2B. IBM was known for consultative selling, which is selling the value first. We put price upfront for the customer because it could be a bit of a shocker. This was similar to how B2C did it. We used some e-commerce competencies to apply to B2B. We look for and embrace new techniques to attract clients, and we're applying those to simple products first.

// We're seeing digital sales becoming a destination for people's careers, not just a first stop. //

When it comes to talent, we don't compromise. Talent is our key, and there's a battle for talent. A flexible workplace and a great culture attract talent. We're seeing digital sales becoming a destination for people's career, not just a first stop. We're reinventing what it used to be, when digital sales was a big pool where you started your career. Now people are staying in digital and growing there.

We spend a lot of time with our team analyzing the market to make sure we can be leading edge. We'll continue to be here at AA-ISP Leadership Summit every year to learn and to create a better digital sales org for IBM. We'll be humble about where we go from here and how we change our organization.

The word "company" comes from Latin and it means breaking bread together. There's nothing better than taking care of our clients. Let's continue to serve them and break bread with them and with each other.





**Bob Perkins**  
Founder  
AA-ISP



**Ashley Gagliano**  
Vice President, Sales  
AA-ISP

# Closing Remarks

We all made history at AA-ISP Leadership Summit '22. We dropped our egos at the door. Competitors shook hands. And we rallied behind the mission to be better tomorrow than we are today.

Thank you to our sponsors—many who have been with us for years and many new ones—for helping us push the engine forward. Thanks to our chapter presidents, leaders, and officers, who volunteer their time, energy, and passion to elevating our profession and supporting one another.

And thanks to our new partner, B2B DecisionLabs, for bringing the science we need to succeed in this new era.

Onward, sales leaders!

## Thank You to Our Sponsors

