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Mastering Dealer  
Effectiveness:

# A Sales Training Playbook for Auto Manufacturers



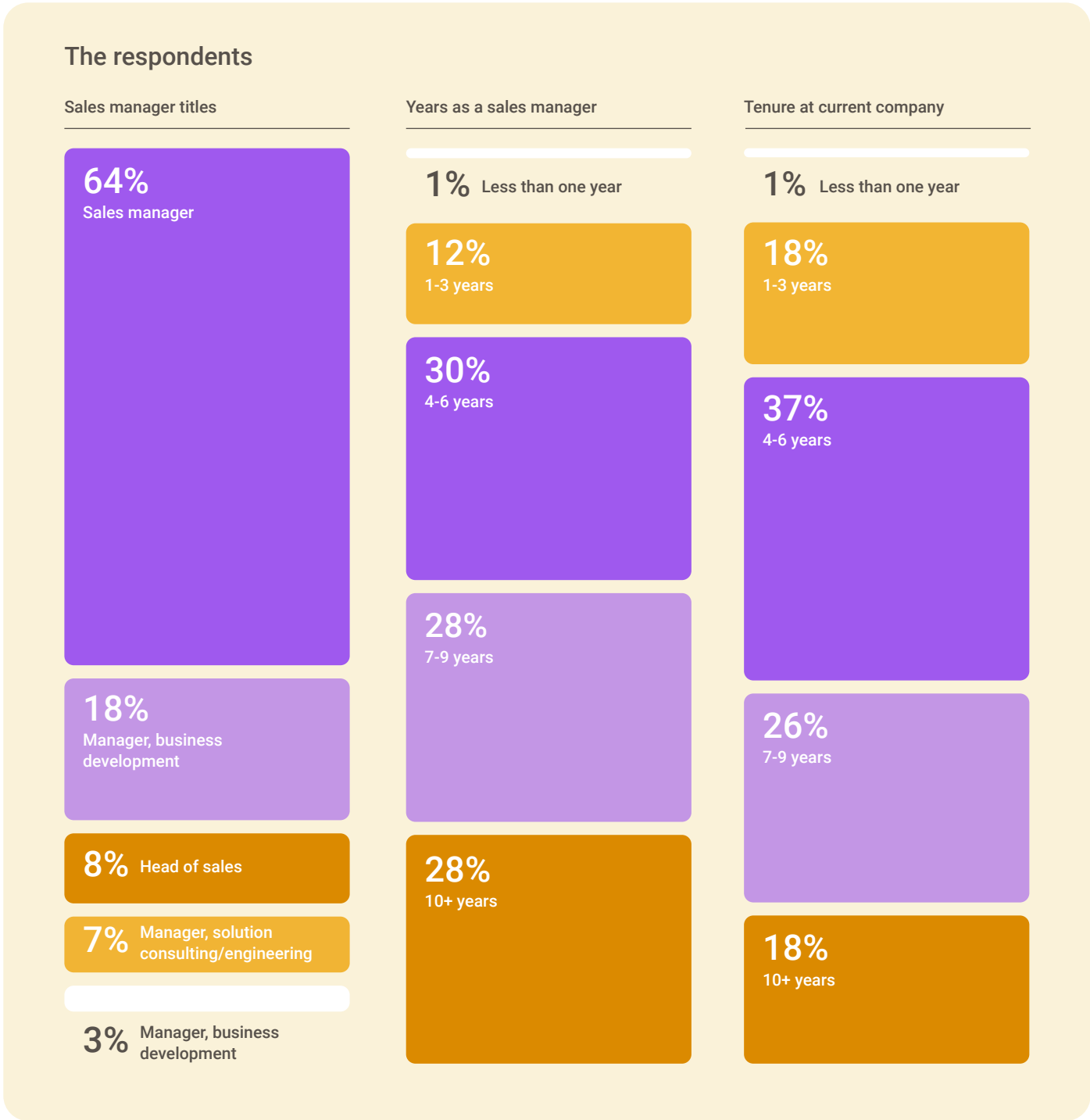


The automotive industry stands at a pivotal crossroads, where traditional sales approaches meet unprecedented market transformation. As digital technologies reshape buyer journeys and global economic factors influence purchasing decisions, automotive sales leaders face increased pressure to adapt their strategies.

This report presents key findings from a B2B sales leader survey and offers actionable strategies for automotive sales leaders to increase revenue through optimized processes and technology adoption. We'll provide a roadmap to reduce administrative inefficiencies, strengthen digital integration, and evolve coaching approaches to build high-performing sales teams.

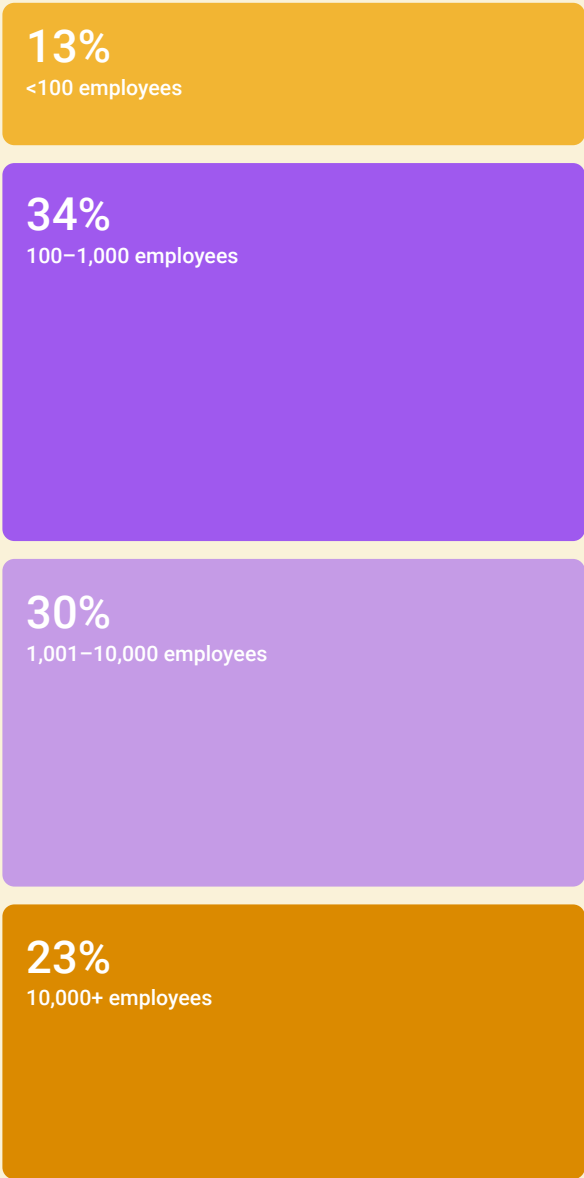


These findings are based on an online survey we conducted in 2024 of 634 B2B sales managers throughout the United States.

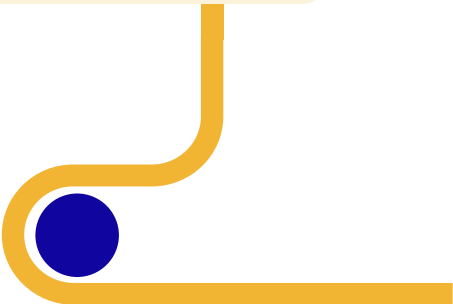
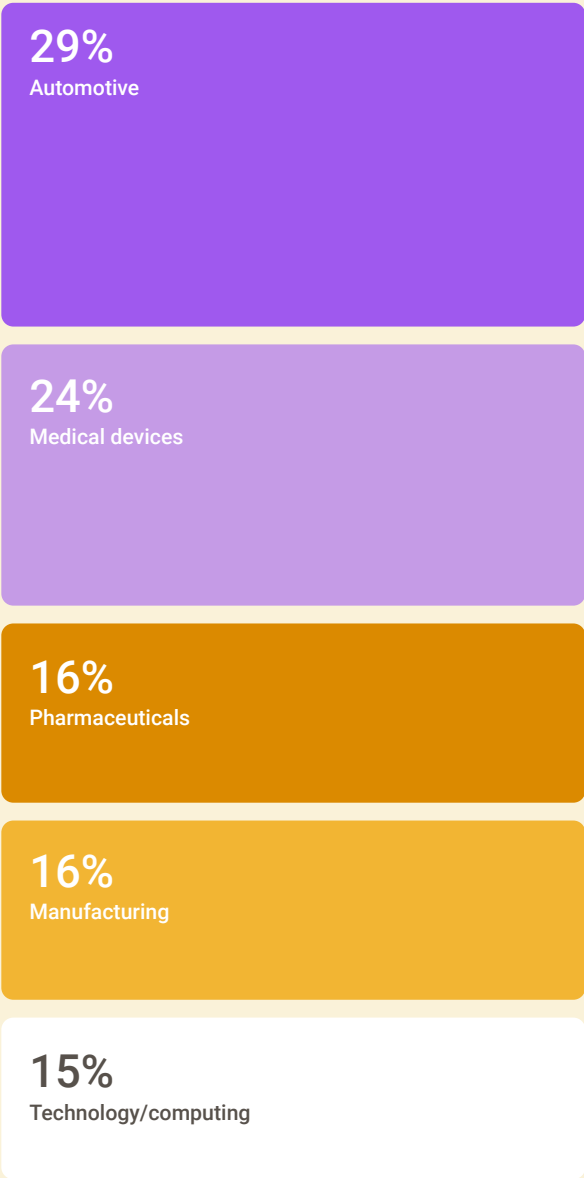


Their companies

Size of respondent's company



Industry breakdown

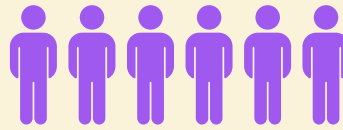


## Key Findings

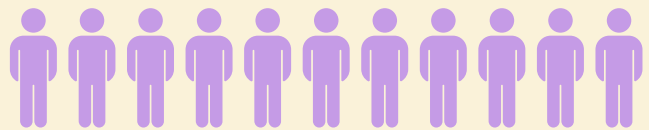
### Sales team size:

- 65% of automotive respondents say their team size has increased in the last year, yet 48% manage only six to 10 sellers. This presents an opportunity for automotive sales managers to provide deeper training and coaching support to their teams.
- Only 22% of managers handle teams of 11 or more sellers, demonstrating a focus on lean and agile teams.

### Size of direct sales teams



**48%** 1-6 reps



**22%** 11+ reps

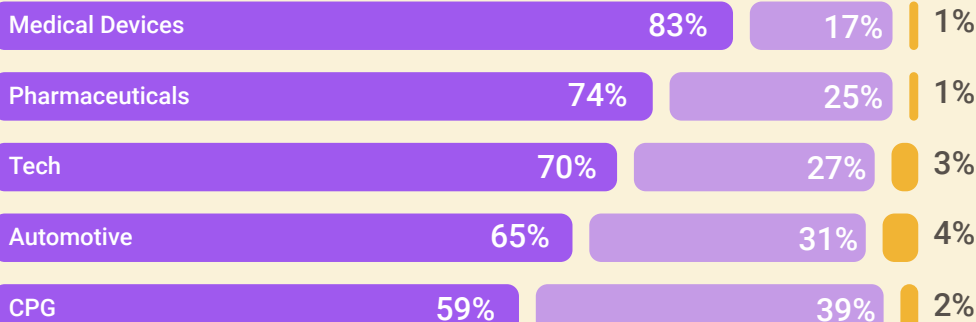
### Team size changes in the last year

**70%**  
Team size increased

**27%**  
Team size stayed about the same

**2%**  
Team size decreased

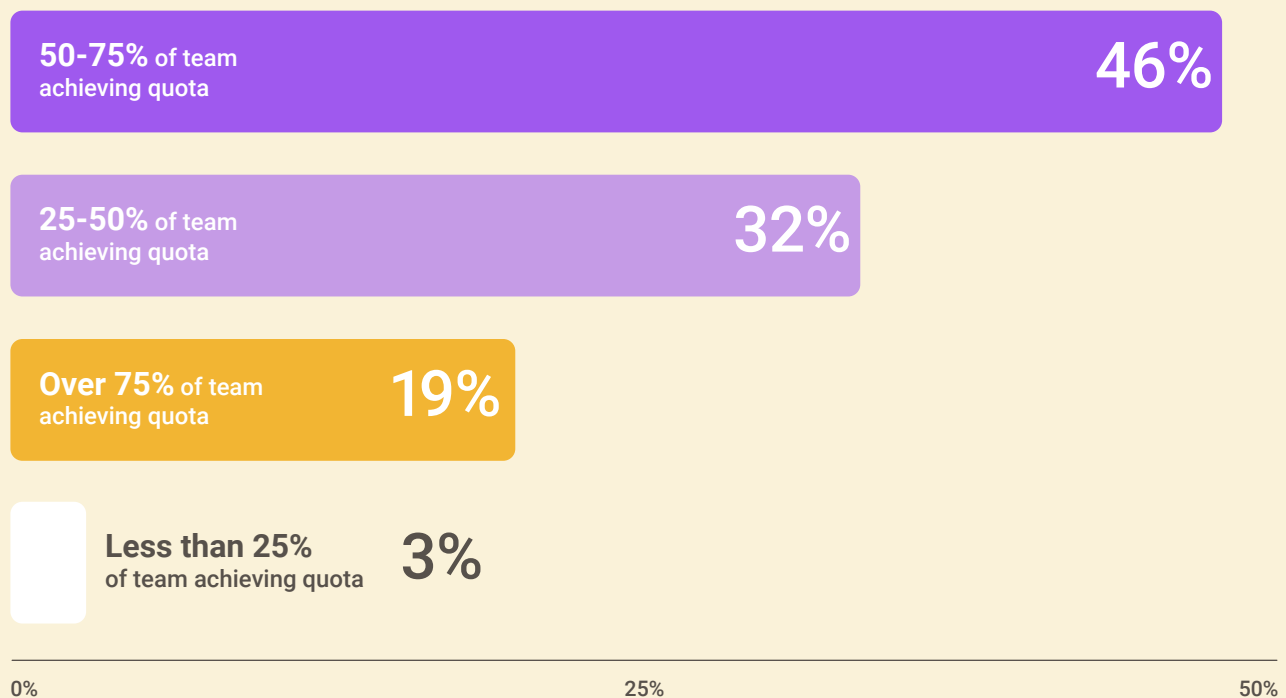
### Team size changes by industry



## Quota achievement and performance:

- Automotive industry sees robust sales target attainment rates, with over 50% of sellers consistently meeting or exceeding targets.
- However, only 19% of their team members are achieving at least 76% of their targets, which was middle of the pack for quota attainment.

### Percentage of team achieving sales quota



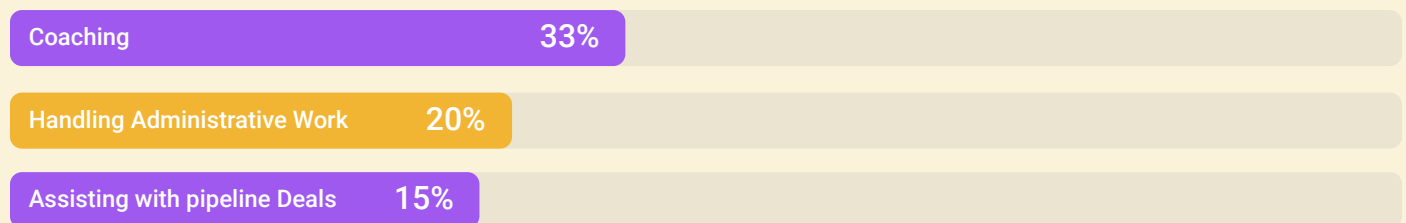


# Managerial priorities and time allocation

## Top managerial tasks

According to our 2024 State of Revenue Productivity Report, high performing sellers are coached **four times more** than average sellers. Successful coaching involves working with sellers through specific deals, providing training to close skill gaps, practicing pitches, and reviewing sales calls.

### Manager Priorities in CPG:



- Coaching is identified as the most important task by **33%** of managers in automotive, consistent with findings across multiple industries.
- Additional priorities include handling administrative work (**20%**) and assisting with pipeline deals (**15%**).

## How they spend their time:

- Managers in automotive allocate significant time to tasks like coaching, while reviewing deals (9%), call reviews (5%), and forecasting (4%) accounted for a smaller portion of their focus.

## Challenges in time management

- Less strategic administrative tasks consume 27% of managerial time, reflecting a misalignment between their priorities and actual time spent.
- Addressing this imbalance can unlock more time for high-impact coaching and sales strategy.

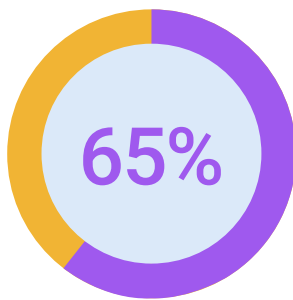


**Pro tip:** Sales training teams can be the driver to help sales managers be more efficient and productive with their time. This could mean an opportunity to streamline or consolidate tech so managers are using fewer tools in their day-to-day work. Ensure tools are integrated so that information is available in the flow of work. This is also an opportunity to explore the administrative tasks taking up manager time to see if evolving AI agents could help (e.g., tools that transcribe customer calls).

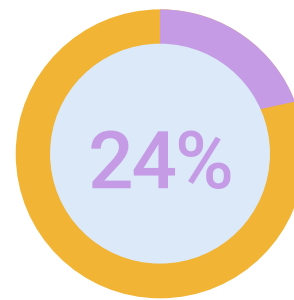
## Coaching practices

### Where coaching happens

#### Scheduled coaching calls:



65% of sales managers in the automotive industry report using scheduled coaching channels, the highest rate among industries surveyed.



24% of sales managers in the Automotive industry reported they would reach out to their team members based on performance as a trigger to coaching, the highest rate among industries surveyed.

**Pro tip:** Use scheduled coaching calls to focus on deal-specific feedback and role-playing real scenarios (e.g., objections, financing options, in-dealership scenarios). Prepare ahead with a call summary or CRM notes to maximize value.

**Pro tip:** Use informal interactions (e.g., walkarounds, lunch conversations) to reinforce learnings and check progress in the flow of work. Keep it light, but intentional.

#### Preferred coaching channels

Scheduled coaching calls are the primary channel of communication, with technological channels being used less frequently than in other industries.

**Pro tip:** Supplement live sessions with quick digital nudges—like AI-powered follow-ups, mobile role-play practice, or micro-coaching via SMS or email. This keeps sellers engaged between calls and reinforces what was covered, without replacing the personal touch that drives trust in this industry. Use tech as the co-pilot, not the driver.



## Building high performers

### Core strategies:

83%

83% of automotive sales managers reported direct managers as being responsible for coaching, the highest rate among industries surveyed.

78%

78% of automotive sales managers reported that they are evaluated based on their coaching activities, the highest rate among industries surveyed.



**Pro tip:** Make coaching a daily priority—not a monthly task. Use every touchpoint (formal or informal) to reinforce behaviors, not just review results.

**Pro tip:** Track not just coaching activity—but impact. Focus on skill improvement, deal progression, and seller confidence as success signals.

### Underutilized methods


- Only 4% of automotive sales managers rely on reviewing call recordings, highlighting opportunities to enhance performance review techniques, especially for those managing teams that are selling digitally. This is likely due to in-field (in-person) selling motions typical in the automotive space.

**Pro tip:** In automotive, live interactions dominate—but layer in video role-plays or AI feedback tools to give sellers practice time on their own schedule. This builds muscle memory and reinforces coaching even when managers aren't around.

# Technology adoption

## Top technologies

- Sales coaching platforms (20%) and communication creation tools (17%) are highest used in automotive.
- 59% of automotive sales managers reported using channels as their primary coaching channel, tied with pharmaceuticals as the lowest rate among industries surveyed.
- CRM input and role-plays remain underutilized compared to other industries.

 **Pro tip:** Leverage your strength in **sales coaching tools** by pairing them with **AI-driven insights**—like predictive dashboards or personalized learning modules—to uncover coaching moments, automate follow-ups, and drive smarter, faster decision-making.




## AI adoption trends

- AI-driven tools such as predictive analytics, dynamic dashboards, and personalized learning modules are emerging as powerful solutions to enhance decision-making and streamline workflows.

## Future directions

- Investment in advanced sales training and enablement platforms can address gaps in training, automate repetitive tasks, and deliver data-driven insights for managers.

 **Pro tip:** Future-ready automotive sales teams are investing in training and enablement platforms that unify coaching, training, and analytics. Start small with tools that automate repetitive tasks and grow into platforms that deliver real-time, role-specific insights.

## Opportunities for improvement

### Free up time for coaching:

Reduce administrative load by automating tasks like CRM updates and call transcription. Streamline tool usage and workflows so managers can spend more time coaching and less time on logistics.

### Modernize coaching:

Supplement scheduled calls with AI-triggered nudges, digital role-plays, and mobile follow-ups to keep coaching continuous. Leverage performance data to deliver timely, contextual feedback.

### Maximize underutilized tools:

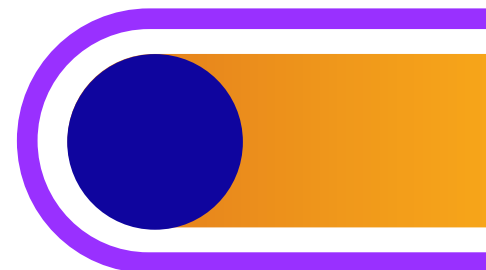
Increase adoption of CRM input and call recordings to drive better visibility, consistency, and feedback loops. These tools offer powerful insights that often go untapped in live selling environments.

### Create impact-focused coaching frameworks:

Provide structured dashboards and tools that focus on behavior change and performance impact—not just coaching activity. Track progress against skill benchmarks to develop high-performing sellers.

### Invest in AI-driven training and enablement:

Transition from siloed tools to integrated platforms that combine training, coaching, and analytics. Use predictive insights and personalized learning paths to support seller development at scale.



## Conclusion

Investing in comprehensive coaching programs enables automotive manufacturers to transform sales performance in today's challenging landscape. Forward-thinking leaders must prioritize targeted training initiatives, eliminate inefficiencies, and embrace digital sales technologies to empower their teams.

As buyer journeys become more complex, a data-driven approach to sales training and enablement will become a defining competitive advantage. Automotive companies that act now to modernize sales strategies will be positioned to capitalize on opportunities and drive sustainable growth.

**Ready to see how Mindtickle prepares your sellers to stay ahead of these trends so they can close more deals?**

**Request Your Demo**

