

# SALES TRENDS *in* INDIA

Insights from 300 sales professionals in India  
on what drives business resilience and growth



salesforce

# A Note from Arundhati Bhattacharya

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This year, the world, customer needs, and workplace operations radically changed.

We have seen many sales teams across the region rise to the challenge, researching new buyer and employee needs, augmenting where necessary, and adjusting strategies to drive success.

In India, improved cross-functional partnerships is expected to have the greatest impact on how sales professionals adapt to recover and grow during this pivotal time.

We are committed to customer success, helping you meet and exceed your customers' expectations and maintain business as usual in all the days and years ahead.

As Salesforce continues to refine our operations in response to new ways of working, we hope this "Sales Trends in India" report will provide you with insights to navigate this challenging period. As we all embark on a new journey, let's leverage the power of technology to build resilience and agility together.

# What You'll Find in This Report

Salesforce Research surveyed 300 sales professionals in India to discover:

- How sales professionals are adjusting to new expectations from their employers and customers
- The evolving role of sales operations
- New tactics and strategies driving growth and efficiency

## Methodology

Data in this report is a subset of findings from the fourth edition of the global “State of Sales” study conducted from 13 May 2020 through 30 June 2020.

Respondents are full-time sales professionals from B2B and B2B2C companies, including sales operations, sales representatives, and sales leadership. All respondents are third-party panelists (not limited to Salesforce customers). For further survey demographics, [see page 13](#).

Due to rounding, not all percentage totals in this report equal 100%. All comparison calculations are made from total numbers (not rounded numbers).

# 300

sales professionals surveyed in India



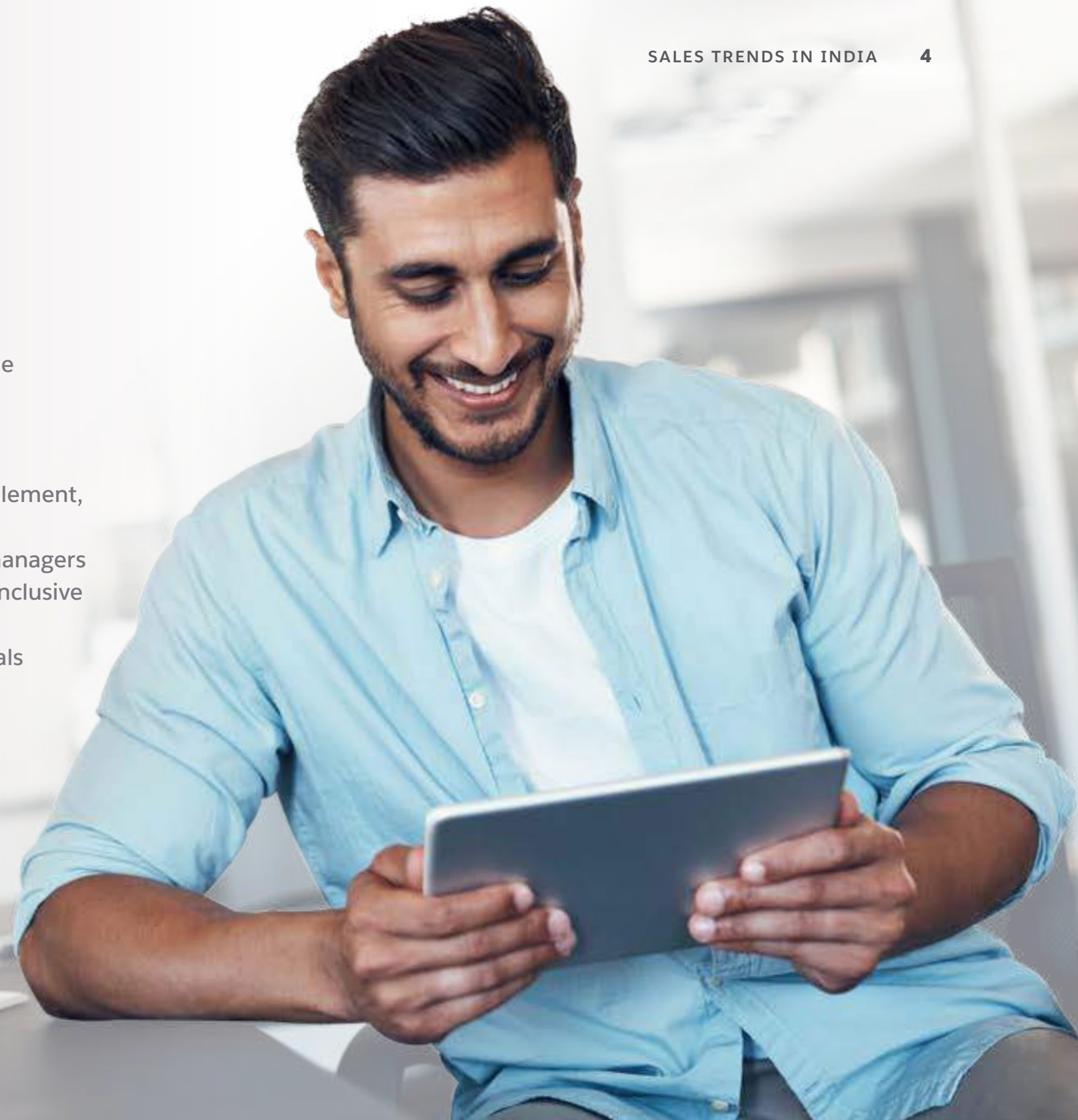


# What You'll Find in This Report

## Terms used in this research

In this research, we refer to several sample respondent groups, defined as follows:

- **Sales reps:** Quota-carrying sales representatives
- **Sales operations:** Includes sales enablement, revenue ops, and deal desk
- **Sales leaders:** Sales executives and managers
- **Sales professionals:** All salespeople, inclusive of the groups above
- **Sales organisations:** Sales professionals answering on behalf of their teams



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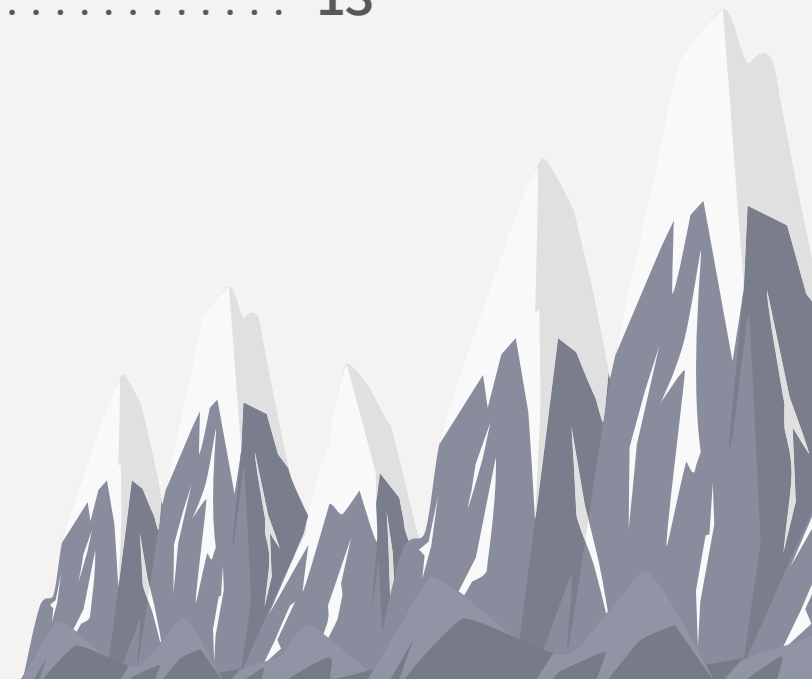
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# Executive Summary

Public health and economic crises across the globe have resulted in unprecedented changes in sales organisations. With customers' needs and workplace dynamics changing, Indian sales organisations are working to quickly adapt.

Reps are turning to insights to fuel trusted relationships with customers, while sales leaders are adjusting tactics to fit a new climate. Sales ops, meanwhile, is taking centre stage in a more strategic role.

This report highlights these trends and more, showing how Indian sales organisations are adapting during a critical time.

## 01

### News and Insights Shape Sales Adaptation

Insights provide a holistic view of who customers are and what they need. **Forty-eight percent of Indian reps monitor customer purchase history daily, with an additional 40% doing so weekly.**

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## 02

### Organisations Seek Visibility Solutions as Selling Goes Remote

Many organisations are automating and using AI to alleviate the time pressure on sales reps. **Sixty-eight percent of Indian sales organisations using AI say the technology has made major improvements to visibility into rep activity.**

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## 03

### Sales Ops Becomes Increasingly Strategic

Teams seeking operational efficiency and data-driven decision-making have turned to the experts: sales operations. **Ninety-eight percent of Indian sales professionals credit sales ops with a critical role in growth.**

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## 04

### Digital Transformation Accelerates

Sales organisations' technology needs have rapidly shifted. **Tools that support collaboration with external partners and working from anywhere have increased in value this year more than other tools.**

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## 05

### Recovery and Growth Are Cross-Departmental Efforts

Indian buyers are demanding consistent interactions across departments. Accordingly, **Indian sales leaders say the number one tactic for sales success will be improving partnerships with other teams.**

01

## News and Insights Shape Sales Adaptation

Sales reps know it is critical to demonstrate an understanding of customers' unique needs and objectives, particularly in times of uncertainty.

Business buyers agree that the advisor relationship is crucial, but say that sales reps are generally falling short.

**93%** of Indian business buyers expect reps to have a firm understanding of their business – but 79% say most reps lack that understanding.\*

To understand and advise customers, the majority of reps gather information from many sources, both public and proprietary, at least once a day. They are particularly attuned to the competition, with nearly two-thirds tracking competitor activity on a daily basis.

\* Source: Salesforce Connected Customer survey, August 2020.

### Indian sales reps seek information from many sources

#### Indian reps who agree with the following

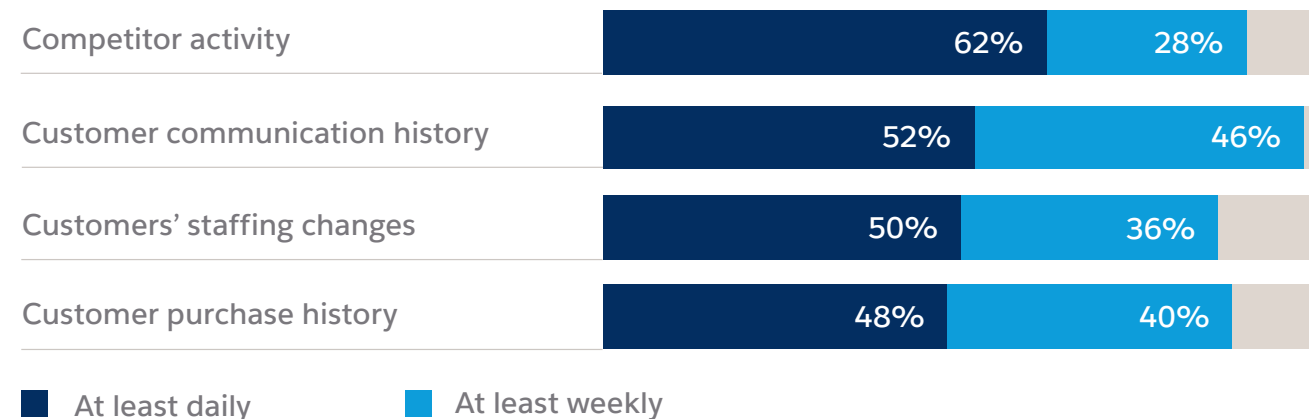


#### Frequency with which Indian reps monitor the following to inform selling

##### News



##### Insights





## 02 Organisations Seek Visibility Solutions as Selling Goes Remote

With the growth of remote work amid a climate of ambiguity, many sales organisations are strengthening formal processes and protocols that provide more visibility into rep activity and keep sales teams aligned.

**94%** of Indian sales reps say activity logging has become stricter since 2019.

However, competing needs hang in the balance. While these new protocols are being prioritised by half of organisations, the other half are remaining flexible by giving reps more autonomy.

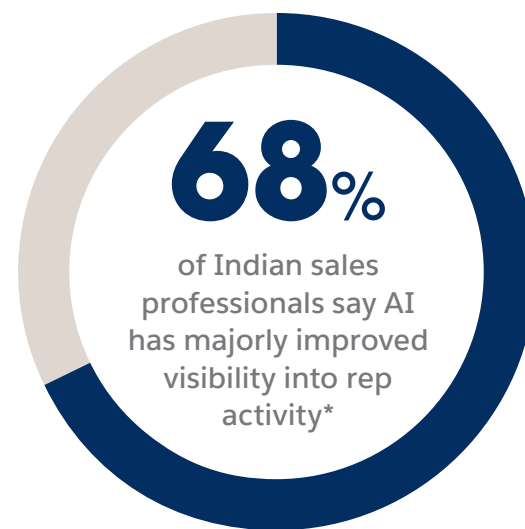
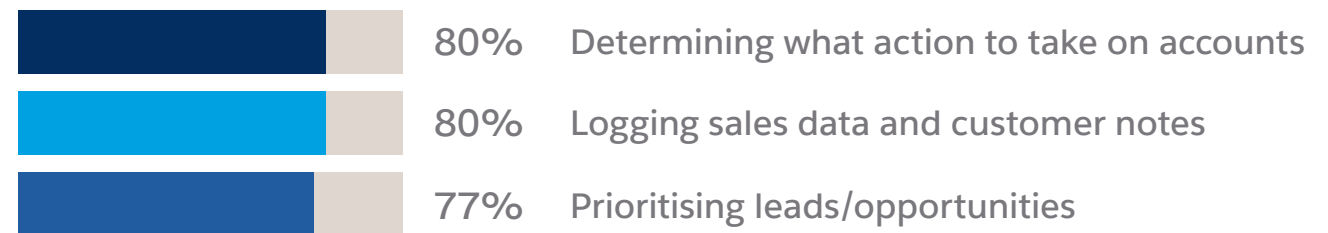
Many sales teams are also automating repetitive tasks and using artificial intelligence (AI) to make it easier for reps to provide visibility – freeing up time for customers and selling.

### Organisations aim to increase visibility without increasing administrative burden

How Indian sales organisations encourage reps to operate



### Indian sales professionals who say the following is more automated than manual at their organisation



\* Base: Sales leaders and ops at organisations using AI.





03

# Sales Ops Becomes Increasingly Strategic

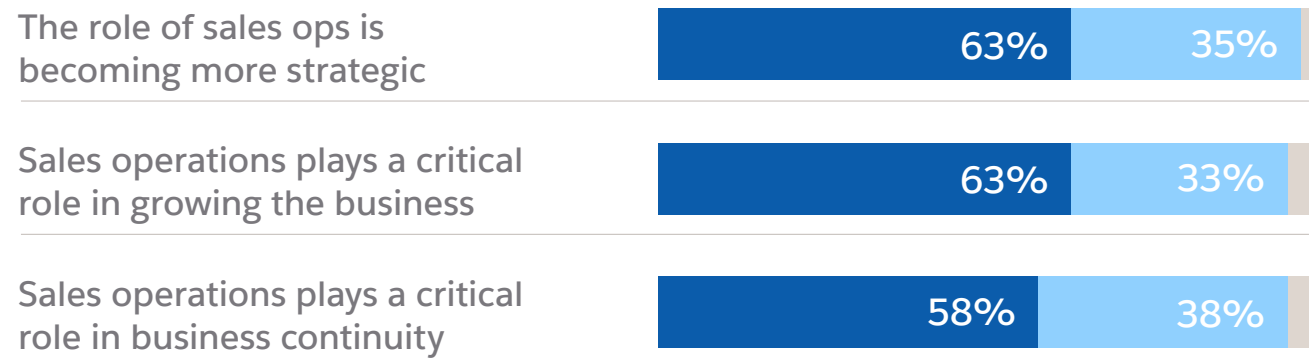
Sales ops has historically supported sales strategy, rather than being a key strategic decision maker on day-to-day deals.

Now, though, operational efficiency and data-driven decision-making have gained new importance – a result of needing to find new agility and bolster business resilience.

Sales organisations have turned to the experts, sales ops, who are now playing a critical role in shaping sales strategy.

## Sales ops doesn't waste a crisis

### Indian sales professionals who agree with the following\*



■ Strongly agree    ■ Agree

\* Base: Company has sales operations.



## 04 Digital Transformation Accelerates

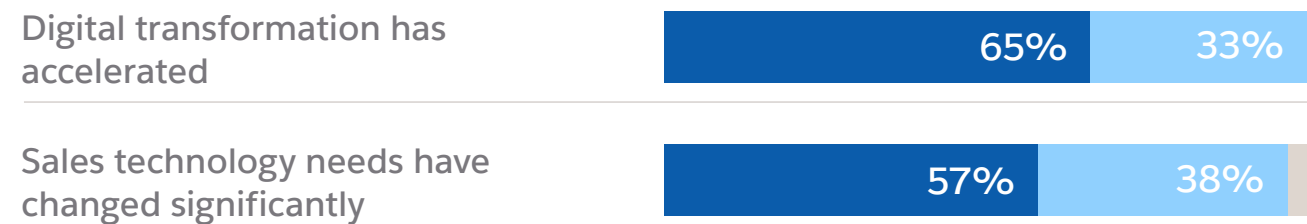
A need to engage customers and employees at scale has driven digital transformation for some time, but COVID-19 is accelerating the pattern.

The rise of remote work and shifting conditions have changed how sales professionals operate day to day. The value of technology tools is increasing as sales organisations leverage specialised external partners in advantageous locations to respond swiftly to a changing economy and build relationships with new prospects.



### Sales tech needs shift to support teams during change

Indian sales leaders and sales ops who agree the following has happened in their organisations since 2019



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree

Top five sales tools that have become more valuable in India since 2019\*

- 1 Partner relationship management (PRM) solution
- 2 Mobile sales app(s) for employees
- 3 Sales prospecting tools
- 4 Competitive intelligence
- 5 Sales process automation

\* Base: Sales ops and sales leadership at companies that use the tool.

05

## Recovery and Growth Are Cross-Departmental Efforts

Indian buyers are prioritising customer experience (CX) – of which sales is just one part – when they do business.

Customers want convenience and consistency in their interactions with companies. However, when departments like sales, marketing, and service don't work smoothly together, customers may experience conflicting communications, long wait times, and more.

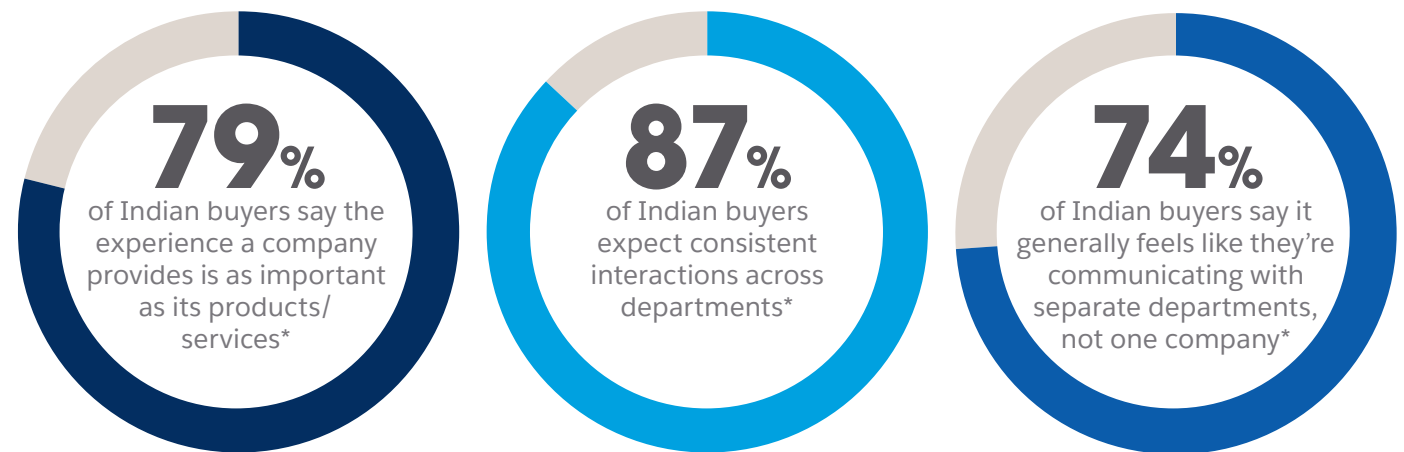
To solve this, sales leaders plan to break down cross-functional silos over the next 12 months, saying their top tactic for sales success will be improving partnerships with other teams.

\* Source: Salesforce Connected Customer survey, August 2020.

\*\* Base: Sales leadership.

### Buyers want frictionless experiences

Indian buyers say the following



### Top 5 tactics for sales success in India\*\*

- 1 Improved cross-functional partnerships
- 2 Improved data quality and accessibility
- 3 Increased flexibility with customers
- 4 Simplified sales processes
- 5 Personalised outreach



# SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS





# Survey Demographics

## Industry

Healthcare, life sciences, and biotechnology.....	9%
Manufacturing, energy, and utilities .....	8%
Professional or business services .....	39%
Retail and consumer goods .....	22%
Technology.....	20%
Other .....	2%

## Company Type

Business-to-business (B2B) .....	88%
Business-to-business-to-consumer (B2B2C).....	12%

## Company Size

Small (21-100 employees) .....	1%
Medium (101-3,500 employees) .....	79%
Enterprise (3,501+ employees).....	20%

## Generation

Baby boomers .....	4%
Gen Xers .....	34%
Millennials .....	62%
Gen Zers .....	0%

## Role Within Sales

Sales leadership/head of sales .....	2%
Sales manager or director .....	26%
Sales representative: inside sales .....	12%
Sales representative: outside sales .....	5%
Sales support .....	27%
Sales operations .....	27%

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