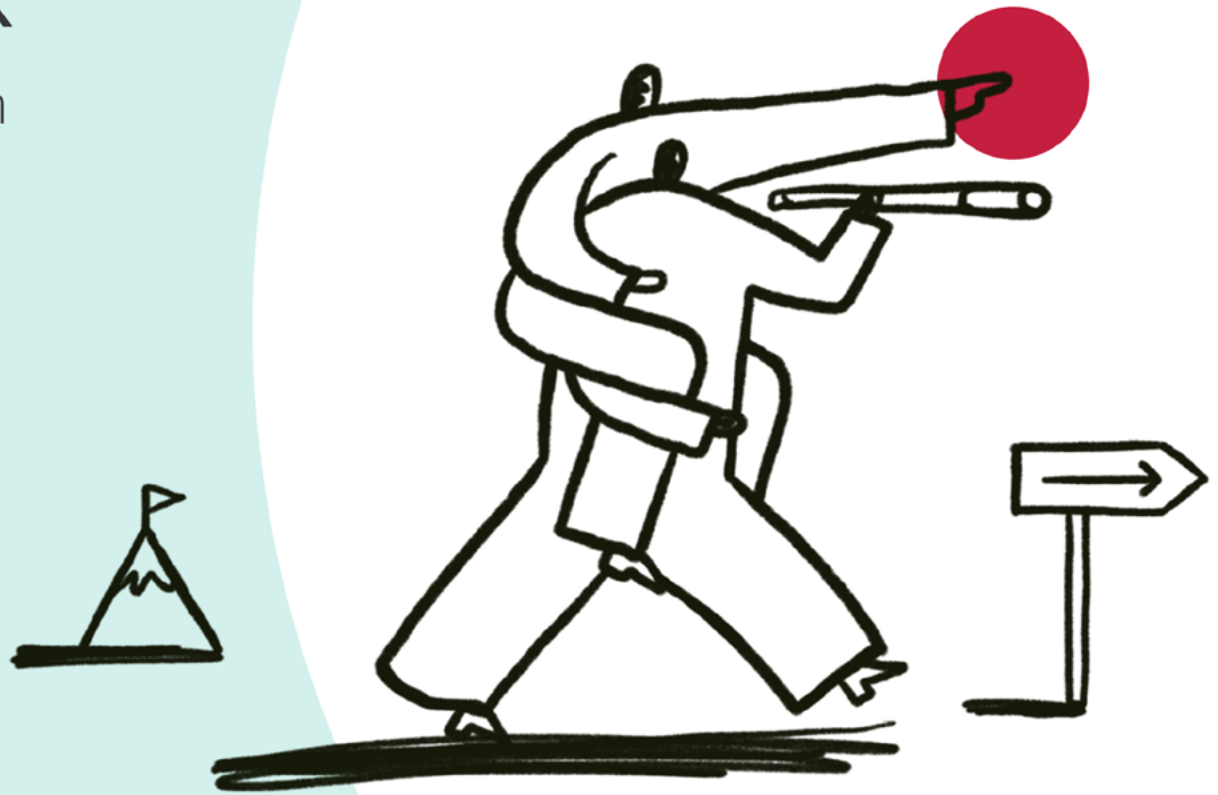


# B2B Sales Pulse Check 2023

Enterprise Sales in  
the Asia-Pacific



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Insights on navigating change  
from enterprise sales leaders

# Introduction

In a time of economic headwinds, B2B sales leaders face the challenge of doing more with less. Soaring inflation and interest rates add up to leaner budgets and slowing growth for many businesses today, directly impacting the B2B sales pipeline.

The ability to adapt will make or break success for enterprises, manufacturers, and wholesalers. For sales leaders, a strong focus on maximising resources and growing customer relationships will be more crucial than ever.

In early 2023, we conducted a “pulse check” survey of over 40 B2B sales leaders to find out their perspectives and priorities for the year ahead. This report aims to offer sales leaders a snapshot of how your peers are navigating change amidst uncertainty, and provides actionable steps to apply these insights in your own strategies.



# About our survey

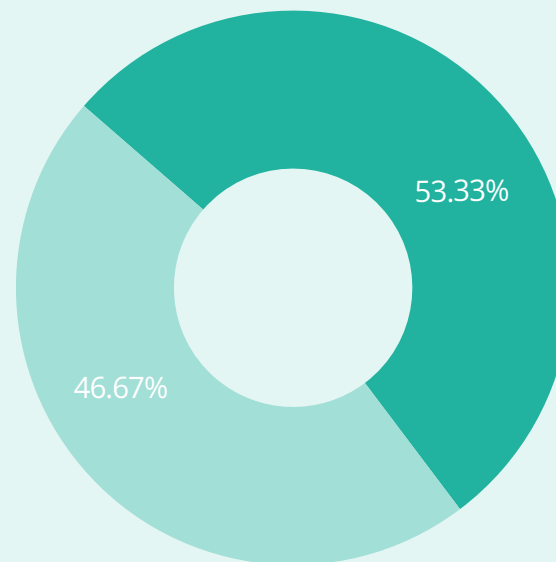
## Methodology and demographics

Between 1 and 15 March 2023, we surveyed a total of 46 sales and marketing leaders from enterprises, manufacturing, and wholesale companies across the Asia-Pacific region.

Our scope was focused on companies with more than 500 employees and annual revenues of over USD 300 million.

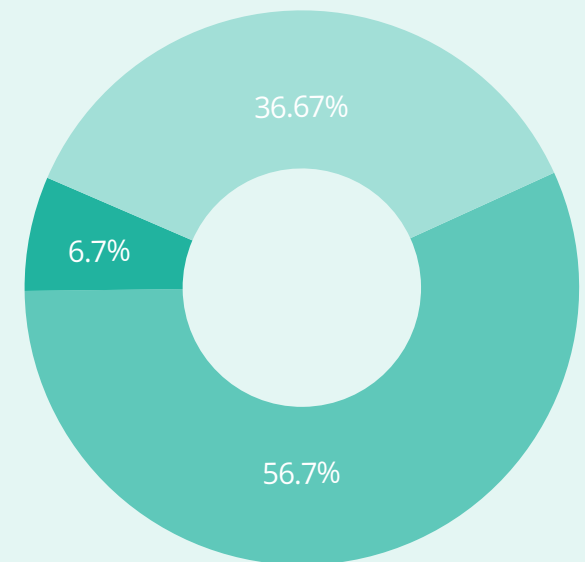
### Job Seniority

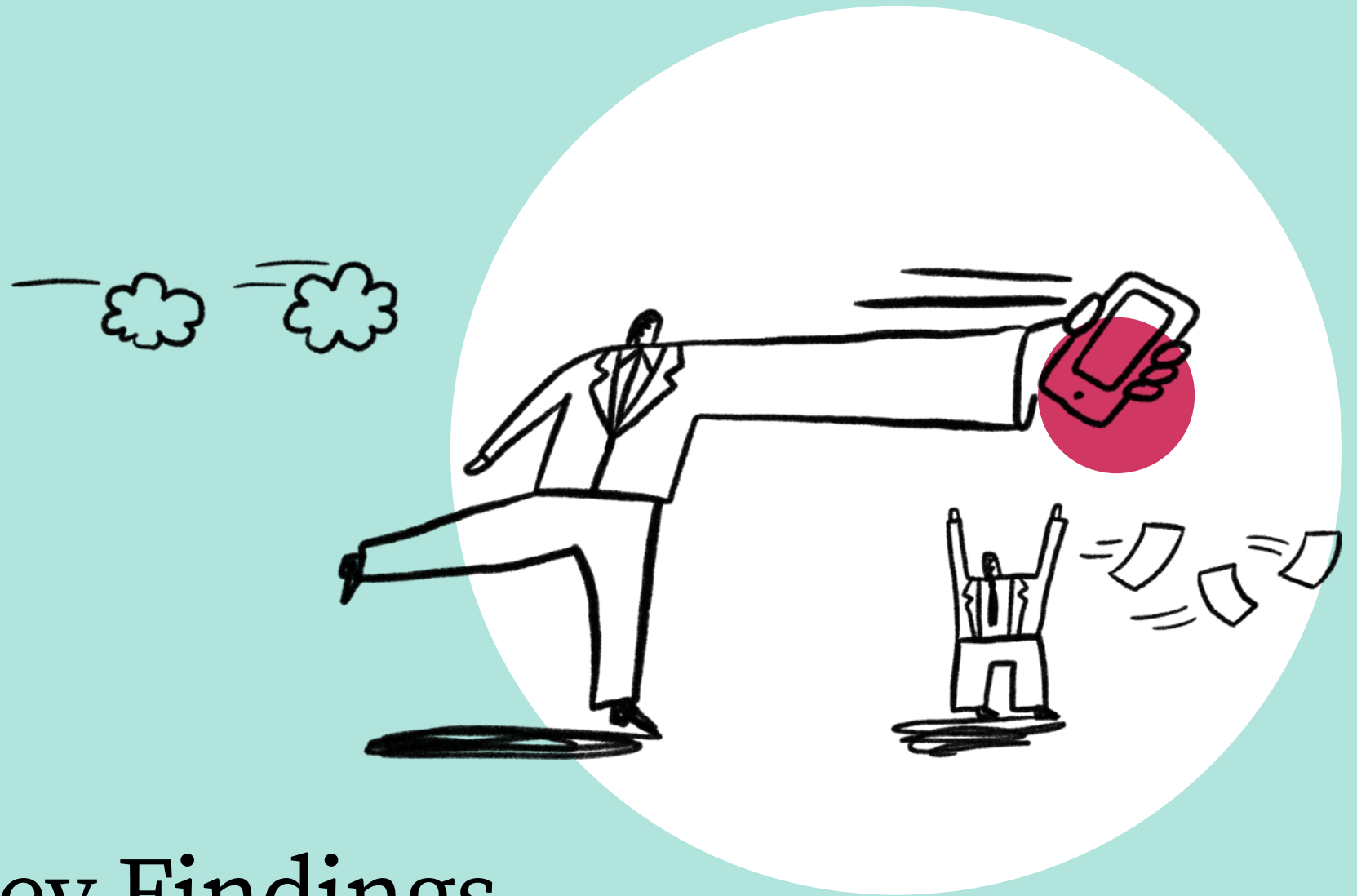
- Managers
- Directors/VPs



### Using e-commerce technology

- Being implemented
- Yes
- No





# Our Key Findings





#### OUR KEY FINDINGS

## 1. Growing with existing customers is the number one priority.

In a time of economic uncertainty, B2B leaders are shifting their attention toward nurturing existing customers to drive sales growth.

This new focus poses fresh challenges. Not all sales leaders have a clear, robust set of customer metrics and KPIs to pinpoint areas of potential growth and scale their efforts.

This year, the key differentiator for sales success will be the ability to collect better data on customer behaviour and transform it into personalised, timely recommendations.

## OUR KEY FINDINGS

## 2. E-commerce technology unlocks bandwidth for businesses to focus on growth.

B2B e-commerce has seen a massive boom on the back of the pandemic. Our survey points to a widening gap between companies who have embraced digital tools and those who lag behind.

Organisations that have adopted e-commerce technology are more satisfied with the effectiveness of their internal sales processes, freeing them up to focus on growth and expansion.





#### OUR KEY FINDINGS

### 3. Leaders are taking a strategic approach to digitalisation.

Digitalisation remains a priority for B2B leaders, but does not supersede strategic concerns like lowering operational costs. Leaders are focused on staying agile – digitalisation is simply a means to this goal.

This means that while a long-term digital strategy is still important, the days of lengthy, year-long implementations of single software solutions are over.

Post-pandemic, large organisations are opting for cloud-based applications that integrate easily and can be adopted quickly. The pandemic has shown that large organisations can quickly adopt new digital tools, as more leaders opt for cloud-based and best-of-breed applications that integrate easily.

To adapt fast in a changing landscape, companies now prefer solutions with pre-packaged capabilities that can be rapidly customised and deployed.





# The Results

Uncovering survey responses and sentiments from 40+ sales leaders



# What is the top sales focus for B2B organisations in 2023?

**Growing with existing customers emerged as top-of-mind for sales leaders this year.** Over 43% of respondents selected this as their organisation's B2B sales focus — more than double the percentage that cited "lowering operations cost" as their priority.

In the face of economic turmoil, it's clear that sales leaders are thinking beyond short-term cost-cutting.

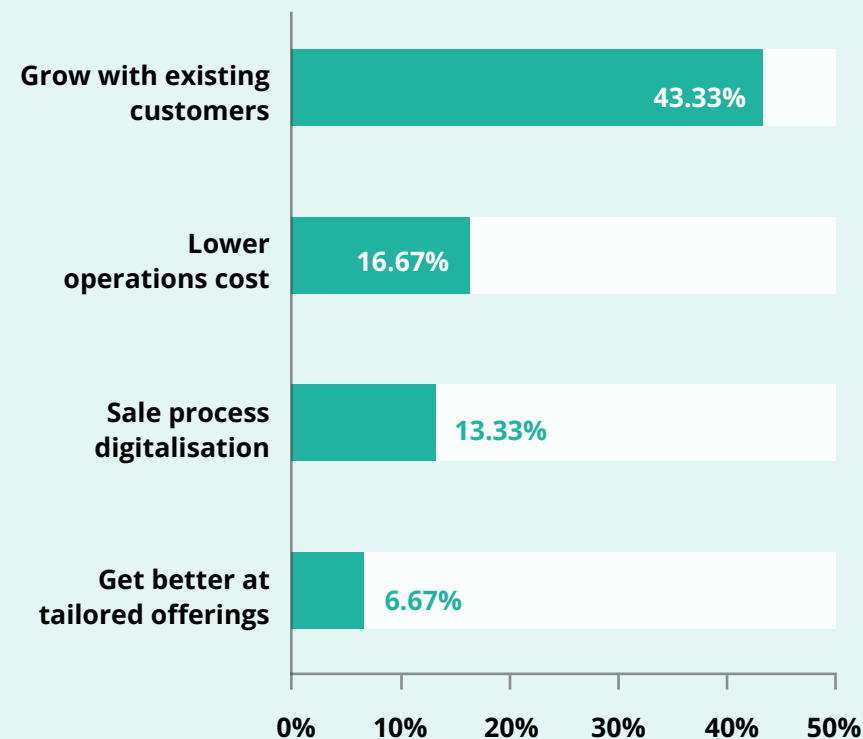
Instead, they are refocusing their efforts on customer satisfaction, improving their understanding of customer behaviour to provide better support.

What's the one thing you're trying to improve on and learn more about this year?

"Customer behaviour is the challenge. That is our focus for this year. We need to understand what is essential for the client and how we can support it."

- Cledson / Sales Manager

## How would you describe your organisation's B2B sales focus in 2023?



# Differing priorities: A closer look

To understand how sales priorities might diverge at different levels of a company, here's a breakdown of survey responses from managers in comparison with directors/VPs.

For B2B sales leaders at all levels, **growing with existing customers** was the number one priority.

Interestingly, the next top priority differed widely. **Adding new channels and expanding to new markets** was the second greatest concern (28.75%) for leaders at the director/VP level. In contrast, 0% of managers cited this as their organisation's focus.

Meanwhile, nearly one in three managers (31.25%) highlighted **lowering operations cost** as the organisation's next top priority — a concern that ranked far lower for directors and VPs (7.14%).

## How would you describe your organisation's B2B sales focus in 2023?



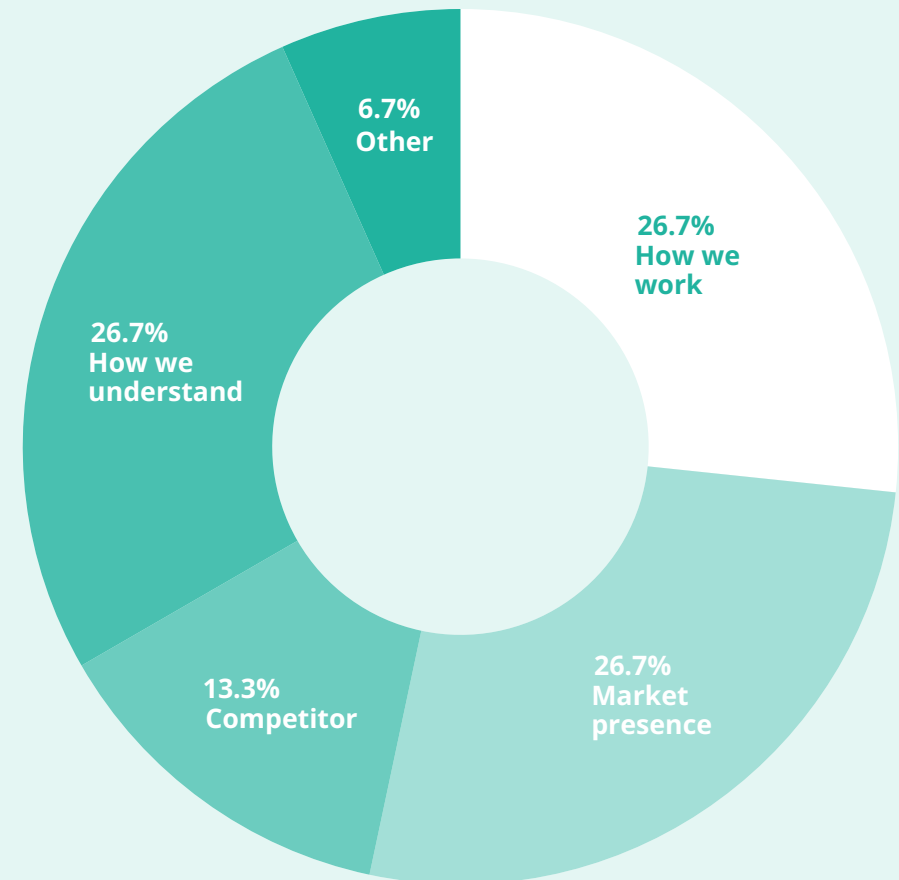
# What areas of improvement are sales leaders focusing on?

**In terms of areas of improvement for their businesses, sales leaders had divided responses across the board.**

Given the importance placed on growing with existing customers, it's no surprise that leaders strive to better **understand and support customers**. Over a quarter (26.67%) of respondents cited this as their top area for improvement.

At the same time, an equal number of respondents ranked **improving their internal processes** (26.67%) and **strengthening their market presence** (26.67%) as their key area of concern.

If you could improve your organisation in one way in 2023, which would you choose?



# Gaining an edge with e-commerce adoption

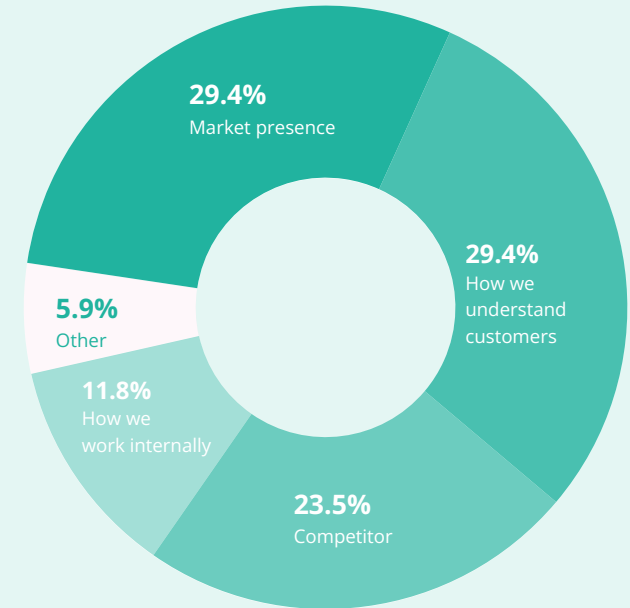
Zooming in on respondents from companies that do not currently use e-commerce technology, we see a trend taking shape.

Most organisations that have already adopted e-commerce technology are setting their sights on business growth in 2023. 29.41% are concentrating on **building their market presence**, while another 29.41% are striving to **improve their customer service capabilities**.

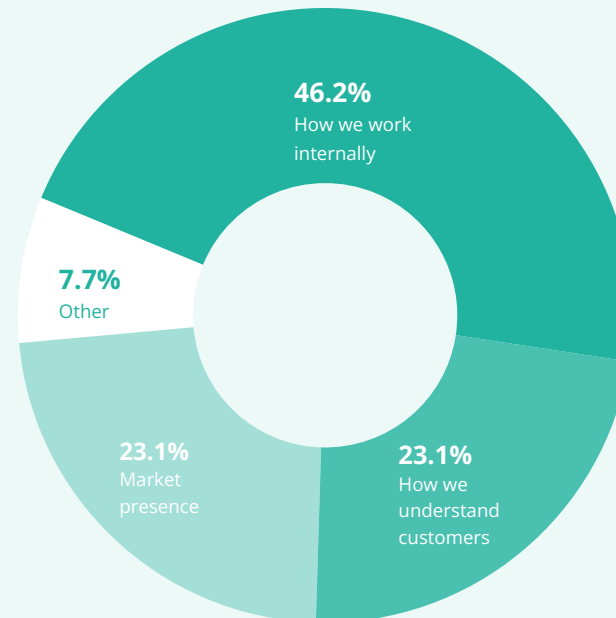
Companies that have yet to embrace e-commerce technology, however, remain caught up in efforts to upgrade their internal processes. **Improving how they work internally** was by far the top focus for nearly one in two respondents (46.15%).

Compared to their digitally savvy peers who are embarking on growth and expansion, companies in this group risk falling behind the curve.

## Using e-commerce technology



## Not using e-commerce technology





# How will sales leaders measure success in 2023?

To find out the top metrics that B2B leaders are paying attention to, we asked respondents "What KPIs are you responsible for in 2023?"

Even though **productivity** is not typically a KPI that sales leaders are measured on, over a third of respondents (36.67%) spotlighted this as a key metric.

This reflects the increased importance of **improving how sales teams work internally**, as leaders strive to do more with less in today's challenging landscape.

These were the five most common themes among respondents:



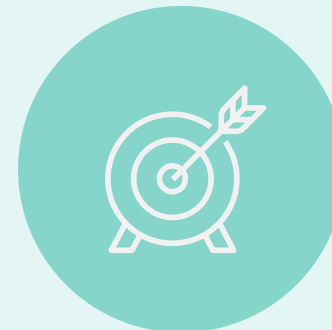
**90%**  
Sales/revenue



**66.67%**  
Customer satisfaction



**63.33%**  
Expansion to new market

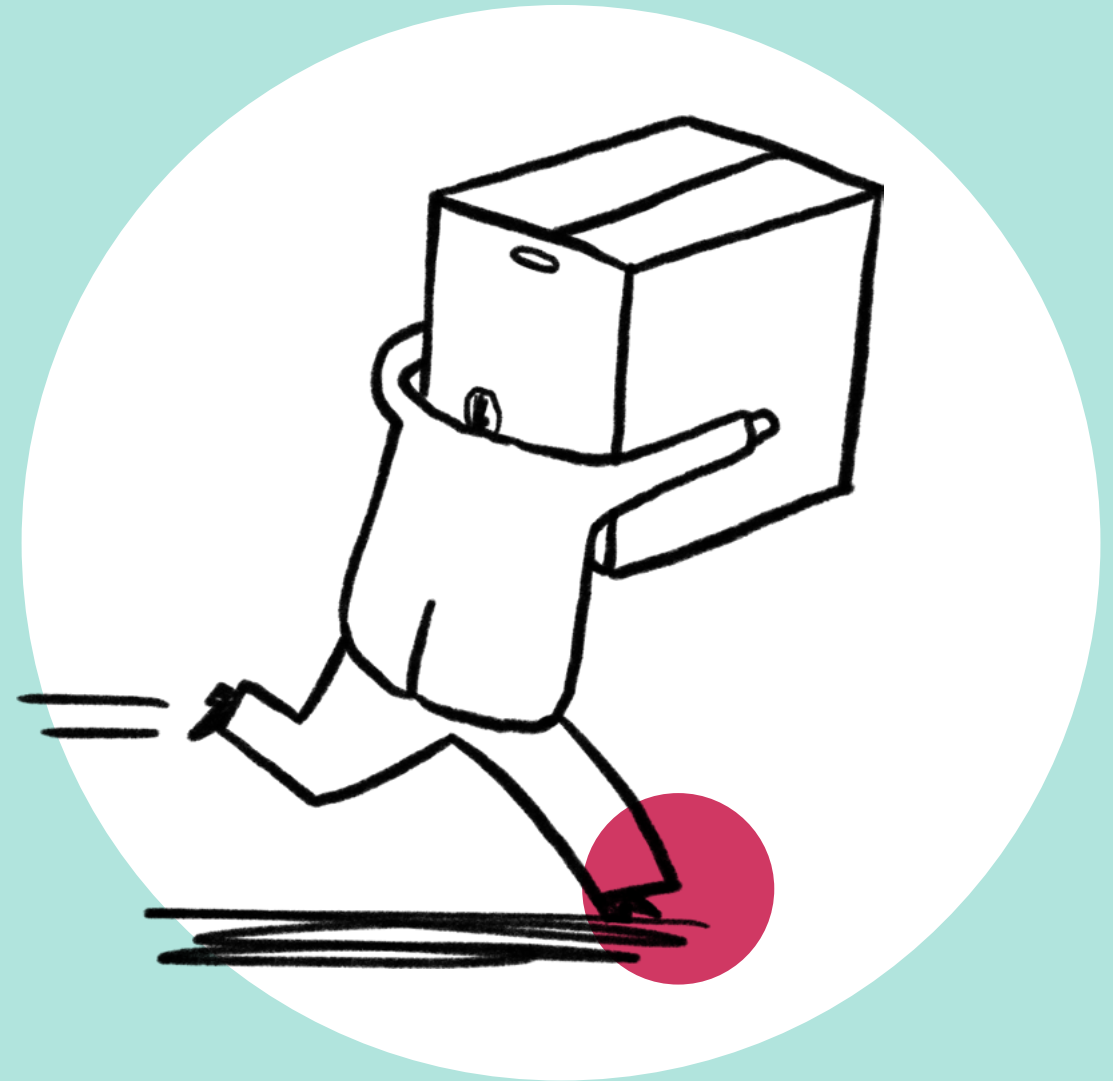


**50%**  
Cost/profit



**36.67%**  
Productivity





# Next Steps

Here are three quick recommendations for applying these insights in your own strategies:



## NEXT STEPS

# 1. Start collecting better data on your customers

You can't improve what you don't measure. To grow with your existing clients, think about gathering data on how customers are using your products. Besides a dedicated customer service portal, an after-sales portal is a good way to collect insights such as:



How frequently do your customers need equipment maintenance? This enables you to explore predictive maintenance solutions.



What products do customers often buy together? Knowing this will open up cross-selling opportunities to satisfy more of your customers' needs.



What products are different user groups buying? This can help you target user groups with new services, tailored offers on spare parts, and more.



## NEXT STEPS

## 2. Keep your team aligned on sales priorities

Our findings show that sales managers may be out of step with directors and VPs when it comes to the company's sales priorities. Getting your team on the same page is crucial to driving sales outcomes and making strategic decisions efficiently.



Sit down with your team to discuss the organisation's sales focus in 2023. Get input on what each leader feels should be prioritised, and why.



Lay out objectives and KPIs relating to each sales focus. Having a clear roadmap helps your team make better strategic decisions in their day-to-day.



Review accounts regularly to stay on track. Make sure you're spending the most attention on accounts and tasks that match your big-picture sales priorities.





## NEXT STEPS

### 3. Accelerate your e-commerce adoption

If you aren't already using e-commerce technology, it's time to start. Adopting e-commerce doesn't need to be complicated – the right commerce management platform will provide you with the basic building blocks to:



Create user-friendly buying processes



Manage custom catalogues and pricing



Automate repetitive sales tasks like quotations

ABOUT INTERSHOP

# Always nearby



Intershop is the engine that drives digital commerce. Our powerful B2B e-commerce platform enables the world's leading manufacturers and wholesalers to transform their business and increase revenue in a digital-first world.

Our cloud-based solutions give you an essential foundation for digital success, plus the flexibility to deliver unique ex-

periences and quickly react to changing needs. With a global presence and extensive partner network, we support your success every step of the way—creating opportunities to scale, innovate, and gain a competitive edge.

Intershop is built to boost your business. Discover what we can do at [www.intershop.com](http://www.intershop.com).



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