RevOps²

the HARRIS consulting group

BENCHMARK

Sales Leadership

Skills Development Benchmarks

Disclosures

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Research Overview

Executives, sales leadership and sales professionals from companies of all sizes answered the call throughout February, 2021 to provide their feedback and insights into the highest priority skills development priorities for Sales Leadership.

The research covered skill development priorities for every level of sales leadership including: 1) Chief Revenue Officer; 2) Vice President Sales; 3) Sales Directors and Managers; 4) Sales Development Directors; 5) Sales Development Managers.

One unique aspect to this research was to use a 360-degree process to understand how different roles across the organization view the top priorities for sales skill development. It is interesting to note that priorities were not consistent across different levels in the organization.

This 360-degree approach provided unique insights into what everyone from an individual contributor, such as a Sales Development Representative or Account Executive to the Chief Executive Officer viewed as the skill development priorities for sales leadership across all levels.

While we did analyze differences based upon company size and annual contract value, there were not significant correlations that we identified. Skill development priorities were more dependent on the respondent's title and level versus the company's attributes.

Top Findings

Forecast Management Skill is Critical

Predictability of revenue growth and new revenue is a consistent top skill development area across every revenue generating role and level. This was a top 3 priority for every sales leadership role and level

Pipeline Development and Management Ranks High

Pipeline is the most cited cause of Sales and Marketing alignment friction. The research highlights that pipeline development and management is a top skill development area for every level in sales management. This provides another factor in the need for more integrated and aligned sales and marketing organizations

Development of Sales Manager is Critical CRO Skill

Sales Manager development was ranked far too low by CRO's as a skill priority. In contrast, the CEO and Sales Managers both saw this as a top-level skill development priority

Opportunity Management – Not a Top Priority

This was one of the most surprising findings, especially as the CEO does not view this as a top skill development priority for sales managers. This skill is critical to forecast accuracy, pipeline coverage ratios and close rates

Variable Compensation Plan and Territory Development

This highlighted the classic difference in priorities between the individual contributors and leadership. Salespeople and SDRs both rated this skill as a high priority. It consistently ranked at the lowest levels of priority by sales leadership and CEOs alike

Conversation Feedback - Priority for Sales Development

Conversation Intelligence vendors will love this finding. The skill to provide feedback to SDR's was a top priority by both SDR's and leadership alike. The ability to coach on objection handing was a common theme for sales development and sales alike

Sales Leadership Skills Development
Chief Revenue Officer
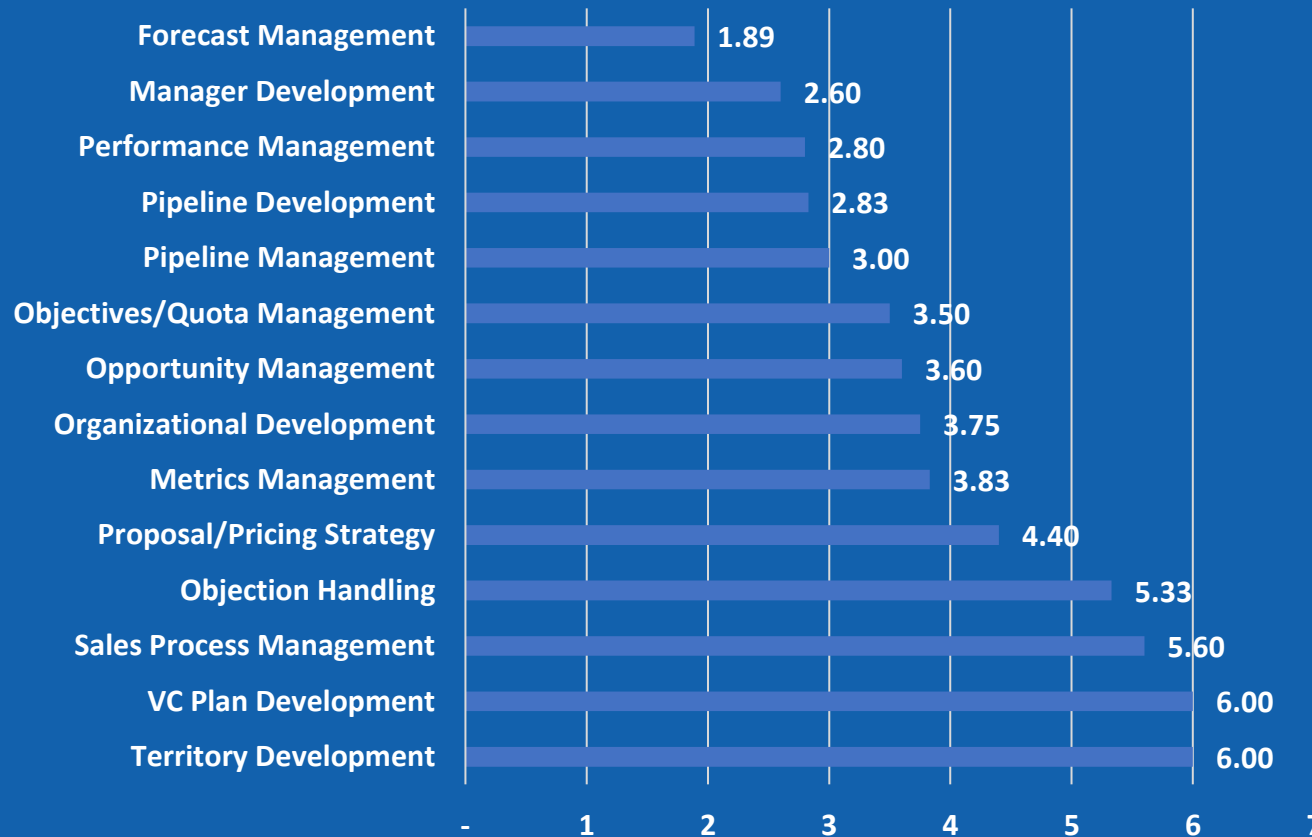### (1 = High Priority, 10 = Low Priority)

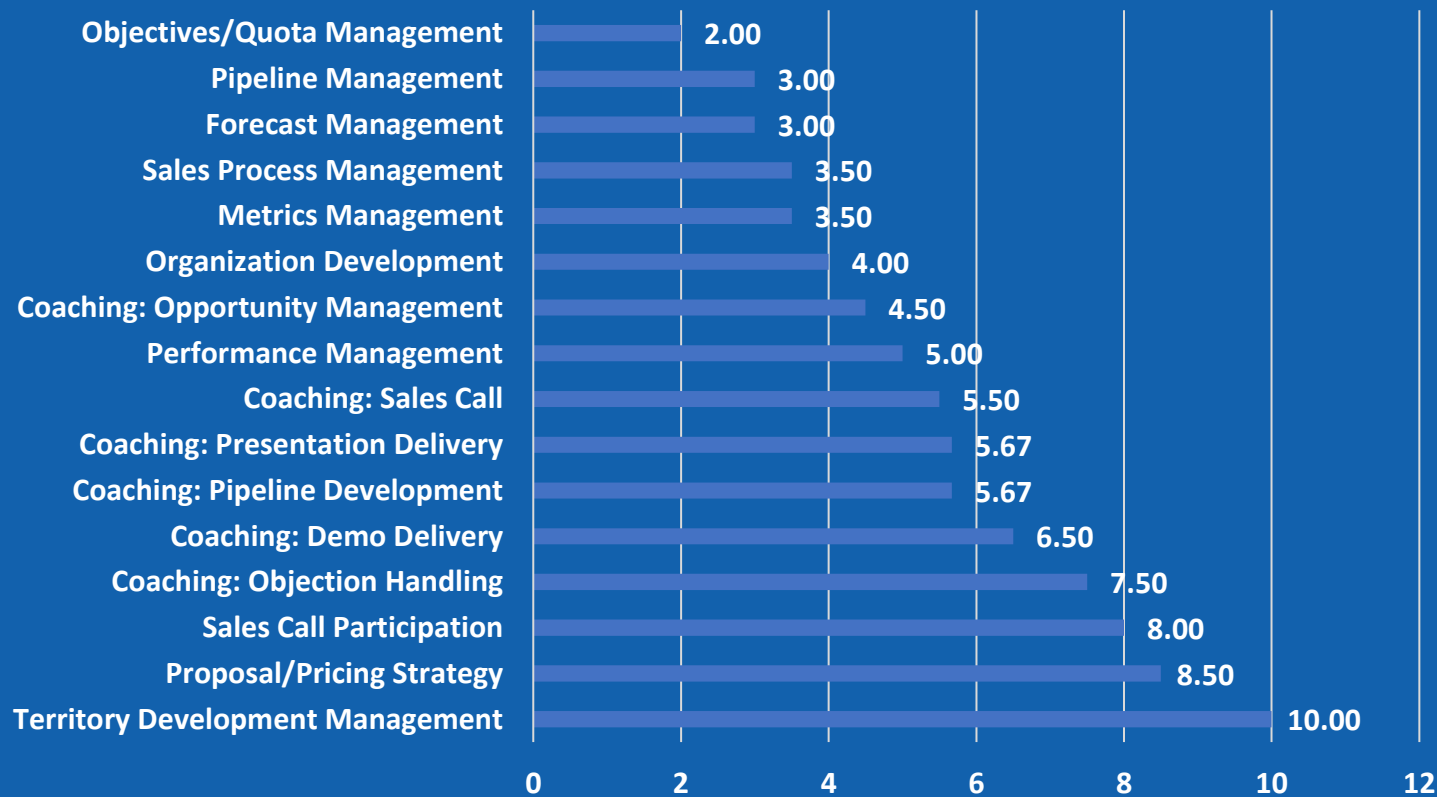**CRO - Skill Development Priorities**

Skill	Value
Forecast Management	1.89
Manager Development	2.60
Performance Management	2.80
Pipeline Development	2.83
Pipeline Management	3.00
Objectives/Quota Management	3.50
Opportunity Management	3.60
Organizational Development	3.75
Metrics Management	3.83
Proposal/Pricing Strategy	4.40
Objection Handling	5.33
Sales Process Management	5.60
VC Plan Development	6.00
Territory Development	6.00

- Forecast Management is the top skill development area for the CRO

- Sales Manager development is a skill that the CRO must prioritize and enhance

- Pipeline Development and Management is a key skill development priority for the CRO – especially according to the CEO

- VC Plan development and territory development skills are a much lower priority – but not according to the individual salesperson

N = 137

Sales Leadership Skills Development
Vice President, Sales
(1 = High Priority, 10 = Low Priority)
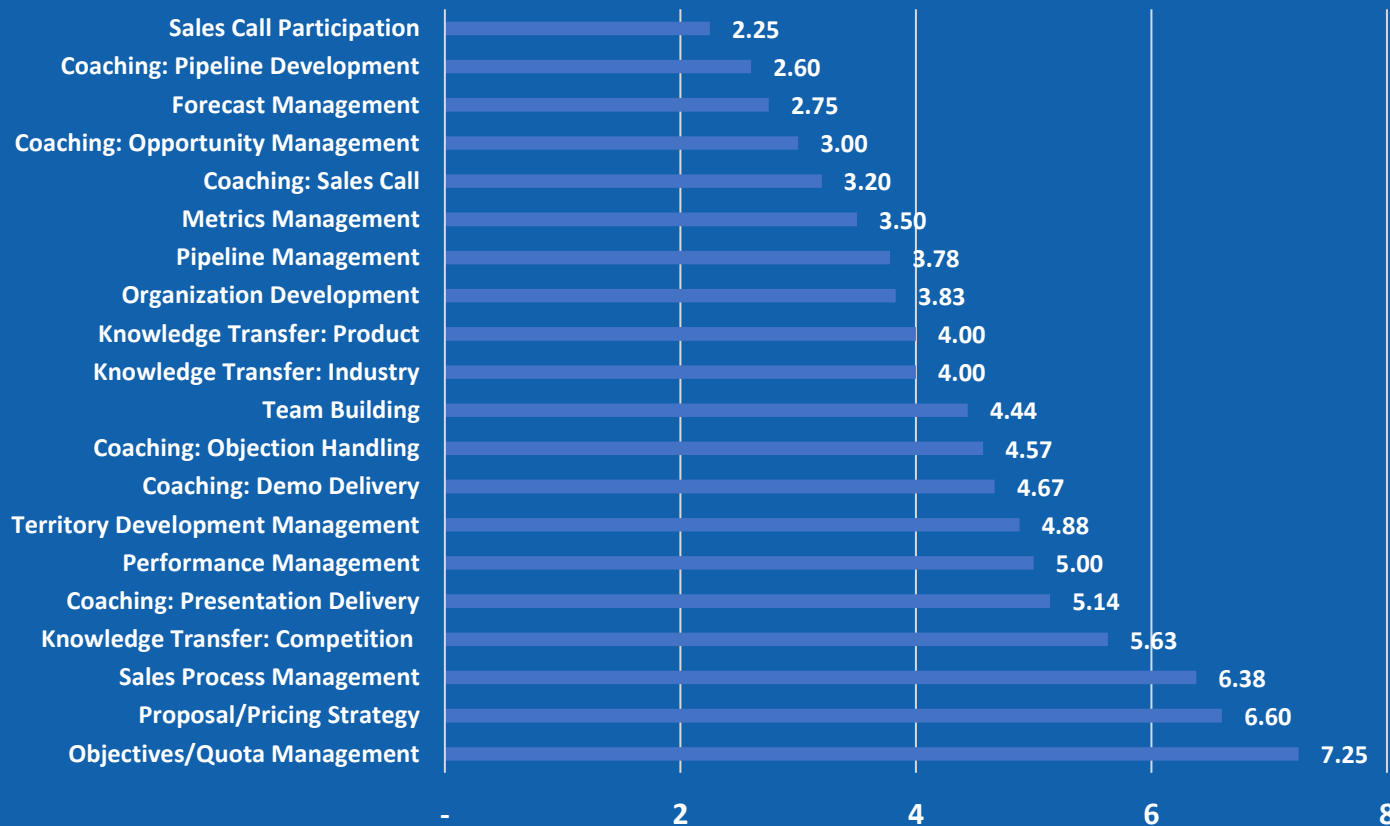
VP Sales - Skill Development Priorities

Skill	Value
Objectives/Quota Management	2.00
Pipeline Management	3.00
Forecast Management	3.00
Sales Process Management	3.50
Metrics Management	3.50
Organization Development	4.00
Coaching: Opportunity Management	4.50
Performance Management	5.00
Coaching: Sales Call	5.50
Coaching: Presentation Delivery	5.67
Coaching: Pipeline Development	5.67
Coaching: Demo Delivery	6.50
Coaching: Objection Handling	7.50
Sales Call Participation	8.00
Proposal/Pricing Strategy	8.50
Territory Development Management	10.00

➢ Objectives and Quota management a top VP Sales skill development area

➢ Forecast management is a similar priority as to the CRO – Very High

➢ Metrics management is a top 5 skills development priority for VP Sales

➢ Coaching for VP Sales is a lower skill development area – though more important in smaller size companies

➢ Sales call participation averaged as only the 8th highest skill development priority

N = 137

Sales Leadership Skills Development
Sales Managers
(1 = High Priority, 10 = Low Priority)

Sales Manager/Director: Skill Development Priorities

Skill	Priority
Sales Call Participation	2.25
Coaching: Pipeline Development	2.60
Forecast Management	2.75
Coaching: Opportunity Management	3.00
Coaching: Sales Call	3.20
Metrics Management	3.50
Pipeline Management	3.78
Organization Development	3.83
Knowledge Transfer: Product	4.00
Knowledge Transfer: Industry	4.00
Team Building	4.44
Coaching: Objection Handling	4.57
Coaching: Demo Delivery	4.67
Territory Development Management	4.88
Performance Management	5.00
Coaching: Presentation Delivery	5.14
Knowledge Transfer: Competition	5.63
Sales Process Management	6.38
Proposal/Pricing Strategy	6.60
Objectives/Quota Management	7.25

➤ Sales Call participation is the top skill development priority for Sales Managers – are ranked by Sales Managers

➤ Coaching is a much higher skill development priority for front line Sales Managers

➤ Surprising that Quota and Objectives management were not a higher priority

➤ Forecast management is a top priority across every sales leadership level

➤ Sales Process management was much lower for sales managers - interesting

N = 137

Sales Leadership Skills Development
Sales Development, Director
(1 = High Priority, 10 = Low Priority)

Sales Development, Director - Skills Development Priorities

Skill	Score
Coaching: Conversation Feedback	3.71
Coaching: Cadence Development/Management	3.71
Team Building	3.75
Objectives/Quota Management	4.00
Metrics Management	4.00
Performance Management	4.60
Coaching: Objection Handling	5.20
Email Structure and Writing - Coaching	5.57
CRM / Sales Tech Utilization - Coaching	6.00
Knowledge Transfer: Use Case	6.11
Organization Development	6.25
Knowledge Transfer: Product	6.33
Knowledge Transfer: Industry	7.67
Knowledge Transfer: Competition	8.40

x-axis: - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

➢ Sales Development leadership priorities are more coaching centric than they were for sales managers

➢ Team building – maintaining morale is a top skill development opportunity

➢ Interesting that product, competitor and industry knowledge transfer is a low priority skill development need

➢ Metrics and performance management are a top skill development area across every role in sales and sales development
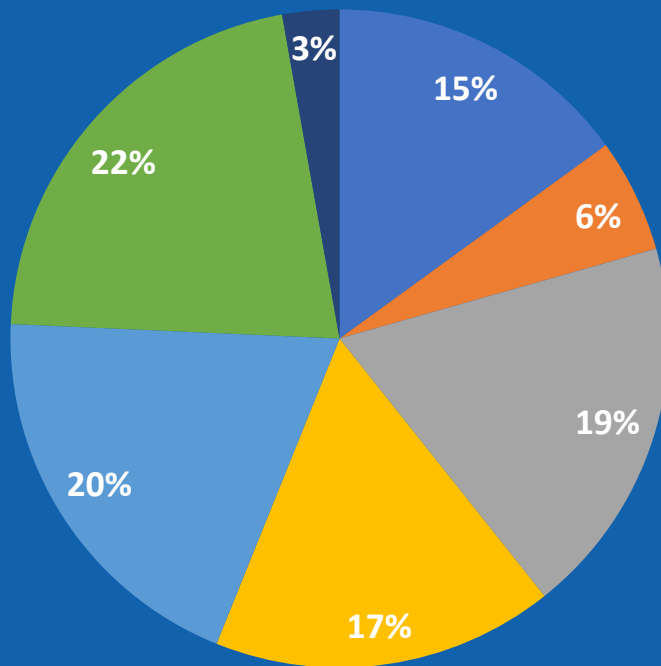
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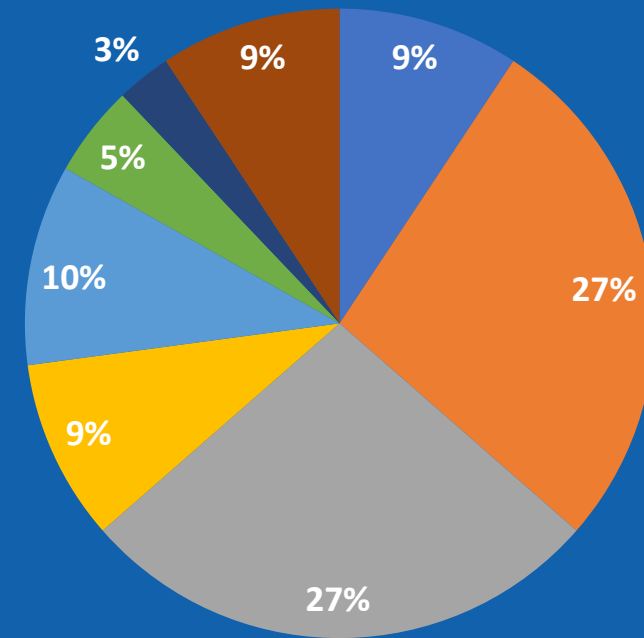
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**Sales Leadership
Skills Development
Benchmarks**

Participant Profile

Participant Profile

Participants: By Level

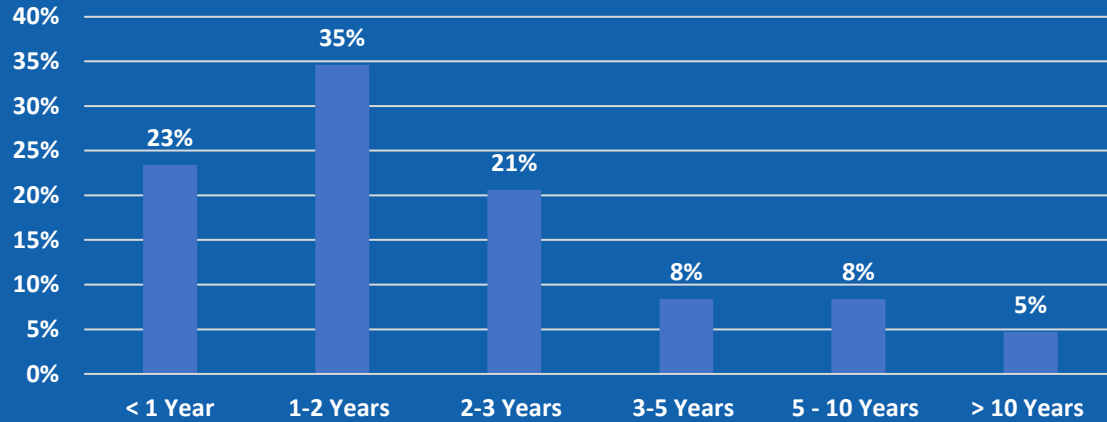- C-Level
- SVP
- VP
- Director
- Manager
- Individual Contributor
- Other - Write In (Required)

Participants: By Role
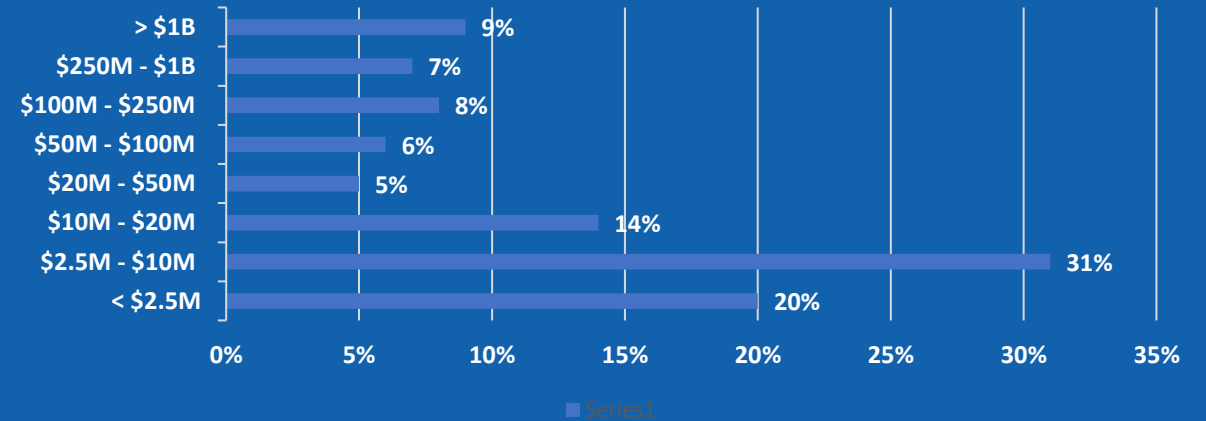
- Chief Executive Officer
- Executive Sales Leadership
- Sales Management
- Sales Development Management
- Field Sales Rep
- Inside Sales Rep
- Sales Development Rep
- Other - Write In (Required)

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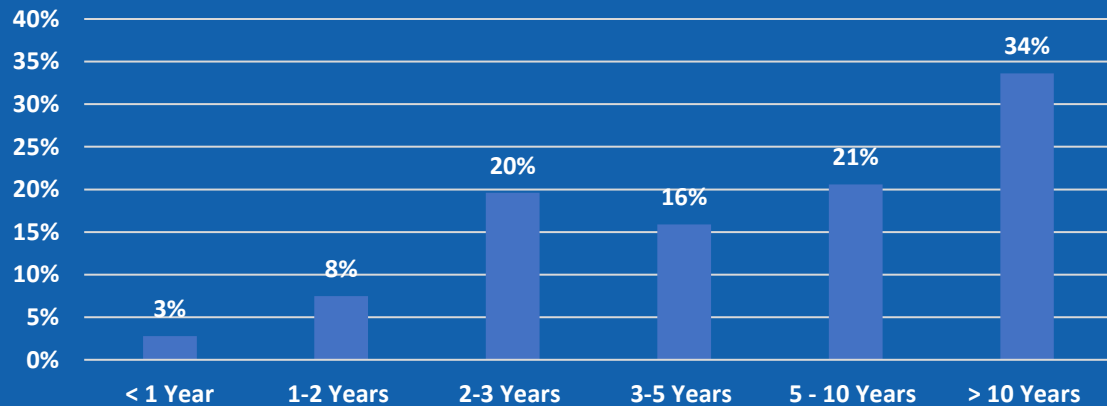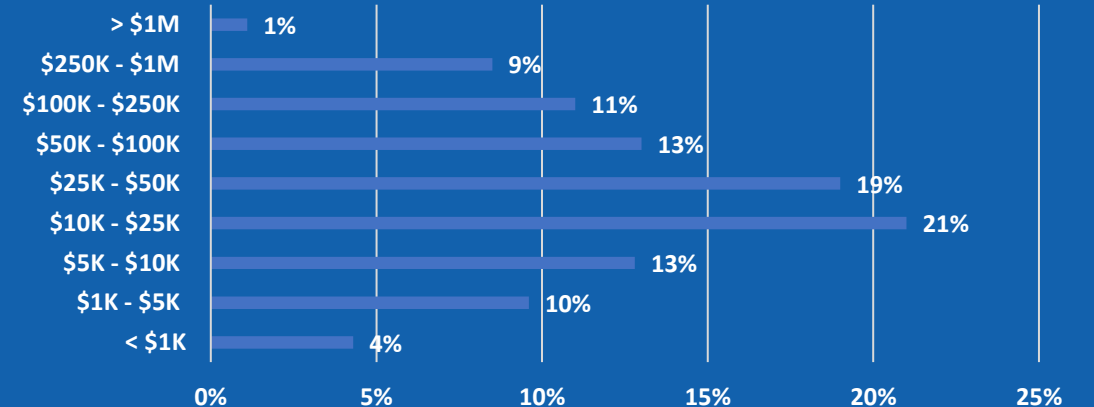
Sales Leadership
Skills Development

Bonus Sales Benchmarks
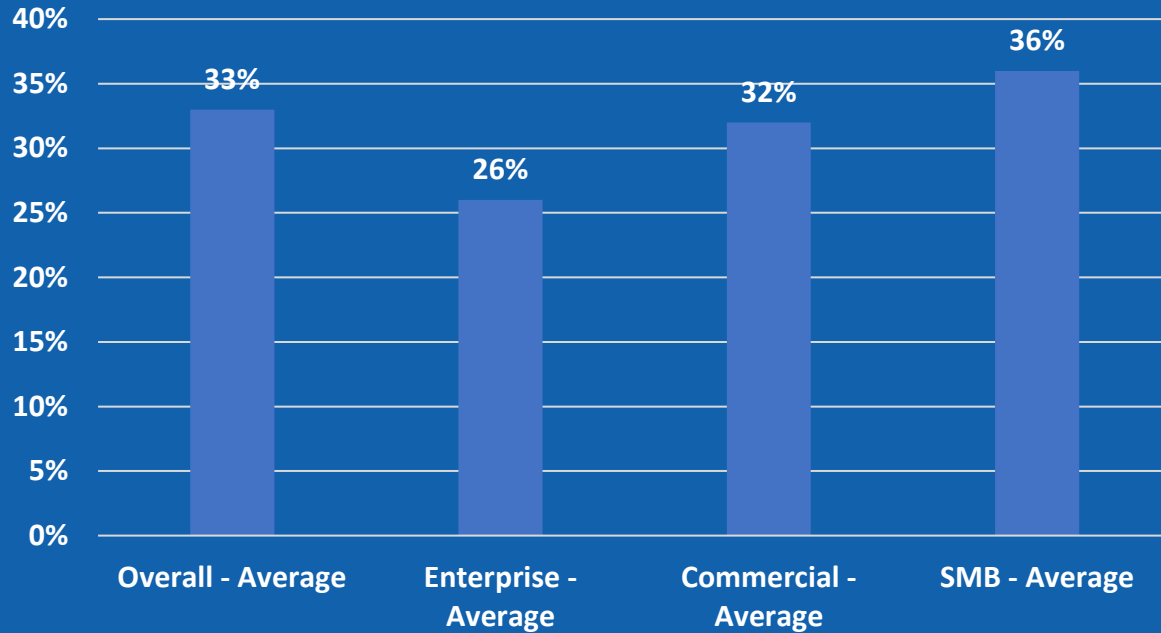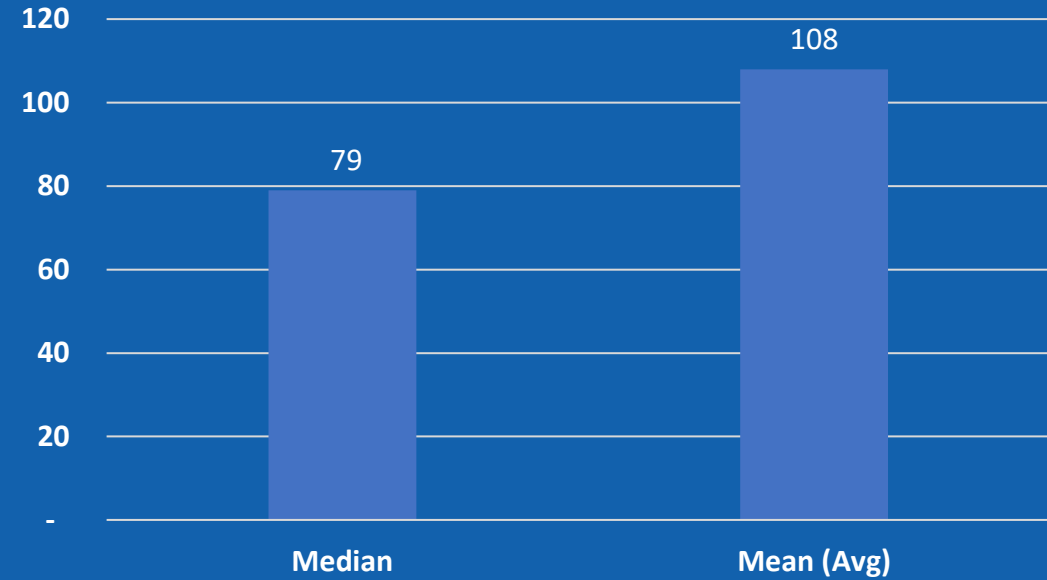
Research Summary

Sales professionals from companies of all sizes answered the call to provide their feedback and insights into the highest priority for Sales Leadership skills development throughout February 2021.

The research covered every level of sales leadership including: 1) Chief Revenue Officer; 2) Vice President Sales; 3) Sales Directors and Managers; 4) Sales Development Directors; 5) Sales Development Managers.

There were several interesting themes and areas of opportunity that emerged. First, the CEO is much more focused on the strategic and high-level company valuation impacting skills, specifically forecast management, pipeline development, pipeline management and metrics management centric skills.

Chief Revenue Officers consistently applied different skill development lower priorities on the importance of sales management and organization development. This may be a factor in the high attrition rates of CROs and VP of Sales, especially in < $50M companies. Growth and scalability cannot be maintained without strong middle and front-line sales management.

Variable compensation and territory development are both high priorities from the individual contributors perspective. This may highlight low hanging fruit for executive sales leadership to better communicate the criteria that went into these areas, as neither executive sales leadership, nor CEOs identified this as a skill development priority. That suggests it is either a lower priority for senior leadership or is not a primary area of responsibility for senior sales leadership.

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