



**SPIFF**  
from  Salesforce

# The Seller Experience Handbook

The original playbook for operationalizing seller engagement as a revenue strategy.



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## Introduction

**The demand for a seamless buying experience has radically changed how B2B organizations sell.**

**To keep up, companies now need:**

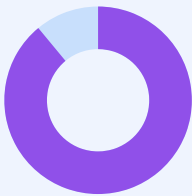
- Complex tech stacks to support hyper-personalized buyer journeys
- Enablement resources to help sellers quickly understand nuanced pain points
- Robust customer service and support teams to spearhead world-class implementations

None of this is extraordinary. This is the bare minimum required to compete in a modern B2B market. And, organizations are used to doing everything it takes to reduce friction for potential buyers.

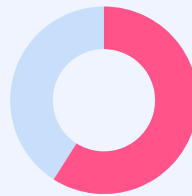
But, how often do we talk about reducing friction in the experiences we provide to our sellers, or operationalizing their satisfaction as an actual go-to-market motion? As it turns out, not as often as we should.

## Modern sales organizations are in a state of crisis.

Consider [Gartner's recent findings](#):



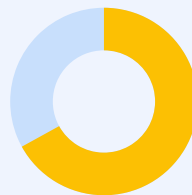
**89%** of sellers are burnt out



**59%** of sellers think management doesn't understand how to motivate



**54%** of sellers are actively looking for a new job



**67%** of sellers feel leaders are overly optimistic and disconnected from seller reality



The way sellers think and feel about your organization doesn't just impact their motivation and output, but how they *interact with buyers*. Seller Experience is intrinsically linked to customer experience– but too many organizations punt seller engagement and job satisfaction to HR, where it gets buried under broader employee experience initiatives.

Unless HR is fully entrenched in the complexity of modern sales teams, they're ill-equipped to tackle sources of friction that inhibit sellers from bringing their A-game and delivering the standout experiences buyers have come to expect.

**Seller Experience isn't an HR function– it's a revenue function.** You need to aggressively implement processes, resources, and practices to *operationalize* a standout experience for your sellers– so it can flow directly to your buyers– starting from the top down.



# Part 1:

# What is Seller Experience?

## Seller Experience

*/'selər,ik'spirēəns/* noun

The culmination of everything a seller does, sees, feels, learns, and experiences at every stage of the employee lifecycle– from recruiting and onboarding up to (and even past) their last day on the job.

### So why not group Seller Experience with Employee Experience?

For one, it's not the same thing. Employee Experience is how any and every employee experiences your organization. Seller Experience focuses on the nuance and complexity unique to sales teams, and how their collective experiences impact revenue.



# The Seller Experience Lifecycle

If we look at the seller lifecycle specifically, the experience at each stage is determined and influenced by multiple factors. And, each stage impacts and influences the next.



## Recruiting

- Transparency of information around compensation, company growth, and team performance metrics
- Quality of interactions with recruiter, hiring manager, and any other stakeholders
- Useability of tools available during the hiring process
- Current seller feedback

## Onboarding

- Comp plan documentation and communication
- Ease of understanding compensation
- Quality of training on tools, systems, processes, and equipment
- Quality of training and enablement resources
- Quality of management and support

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## Development

- Quality of coaching and training
- Frequency of learning opportunities
- Level of support from manager
- Level of support from teammates

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## Engagement

- Perception of control and autonomy
- Quality and frequency of feedback
- Perception of growth opportunities
- Organization-wide transparency
- Clear communication around goals and expectations
- Networking and team building opportunities
- Pay transparency

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## Retention

- Ease and accuracy of payout process
- Quality of communication and support from manager
- Level of team camaraderie
- Quality of communication from leadership
- Work/Life Balance
- Tech stack maintenance and accessibility

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## Separation

- Quality of communication from manager
- Quality of communication from HR
- Ease of offboarding process
- Range of feedback opportunities



**Leadership can champion Seller Experience by investing in people, processes, tools, and resources to reduce friction for sellers at every level and stage of their employee lifecycle.**

# Part 2: Why Seller Experience Matters

In this next section, we'll take a closer look at how  
Seller Experience impacts your organization.



## Sales Culture & Performance

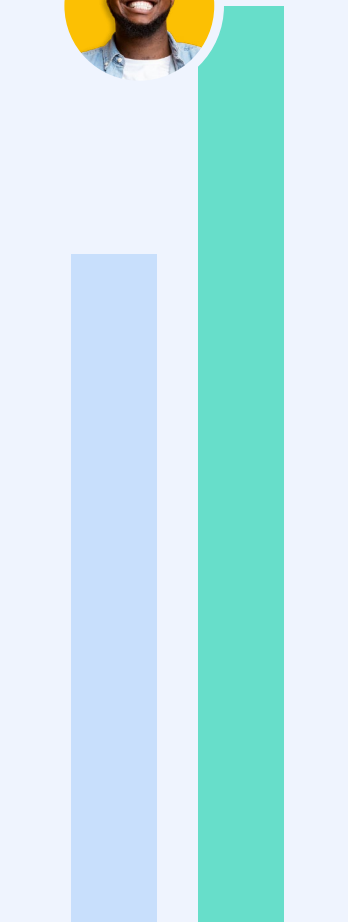
It's impossible to build a strong sales culture that drives real results without a good Seller Experience.

Think of Seller Experience as the “input” – these are the experiences and interaction sellers accumulate during their time within your organization. Collectively, these direct the “output”, or the attitudes, behaviors, practices, and habits on your sales team.

Sellers who are routinely pitted against each other, for example, will learn that the only way to survive is to withhold information and play dirty to win deals at any cost. **This invariably leads to a cutthroat sales culture, where:**

- Sellers are both stressed by uncertainty and distracted by internal politics, leaving less time to focus on providing value to buyers
- Sellers have harder time tracking down information, compromising transparency and efficiency (even more time diverted from selling)
- Lack of trust (both towards each other and the organization) undermines confidence and leads to breakdowns in communication, leading to confusion and misalignment.
- In absence of clear goals, support from team members, and the ability to course correct as needed, sellers are less likely to succeed.

When sales employees are happy at their workplace, it raises overall sales by 37%.





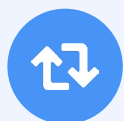
## Employee Turnover & Loss of ROI

Sellers with low job satisfaction are more likely to be disengaged, unproductive, and ultimately churn. This can mean huge expenses for your organization. Turnover in your sales organization can hit your bottom line in three different ways:

- The cost of recruiting and hiring each rep's replacement
- Revenue lost during the time it takes to backfill the role
- Revenue lost during ramp periods as new hires get up to speed



Operating at reduced sales capacity also inhibits your organization from being agile and responding quickly to changes in the market. In the long run, it costs significantly less to invest in resources, systems, and support boost engagement and job satisfaction on your sales team by enabling a positive seller experience.



In B2B sales, the average turnover rate is [a whopping 35%](#).



[89% of sales turnover](#) is caused by deficient compensation.



A vacancy on a sales team cost the average company more than [\\$20K per week](#) in 2016. Since then the value of the average sales rep has skyrocketed.



## Recruiting Efforts & Reputation

Remember, Seller Experience starts the moment a rep hears about your organization for the first time. A positive recruiting and hiring experience can result in higher quality reps accepting offers at your organization. And, conversely, a negative recruiting and hiring experience can result in a pool of low quality candidates.

While recruiting is typically owned, at least in part, by HR and people teams, it's critical that sales leaders have visibility into hiring practices.

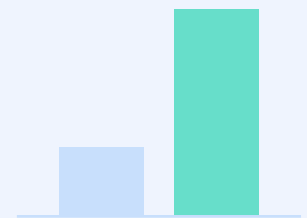
Here's another unavoidable fact: Even the best candidate experience can't outshine rumors of a negative Seller Experience. This is especially important as competition for sales talent is fierce. It's easy for sellers to compare notes and get the inside scoop from their personal network or by visiting popular 3rd party review websites.

**The bottom line is this: A low quality Seller Experience won't stay a secret forever.**

If you do the work now to build and invest in a quality Seller Experience, your organization will gain a serious advantage over competitors when it comes to recruiting top sales talent.



Sales is the second most [in-demand job](#) in the world.



Job candidates report that they [trust employees 3x more than employers](#) to provide an accurate representation of what it's like to work at a company.



[63% of job seekers](#) will reject an offer if their candidate experience is bad.



## Revenue Generation

At this point in your reading, the writing should be on the wall: **Seller Experience is inextricably intertwined with revenue generation.** Think about it: The impact of Seller Experience on sales performance, employee ROI, and recruiting directly translates to impact on revenue.

### The Seller Experience Formula

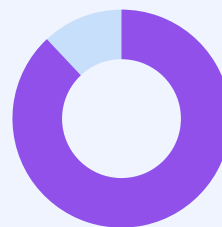
Low-Performance Sales Culture + Low Employee ROI + Weak Recruiting Function = Less Revenue

High-Performance Sales Culture + Positive Employee ROI + Strong Recruiting Function = More Revenue

The window of opportunity to make a positive impact on any given buyer's experience is shrinking rapidly. When buyers are ready to engage, they expect reps to operate as thoughtful, trusty advisors who are genuinely committed to helping them solve a problem— not an aggressive salesperson forcing them through a funnel.

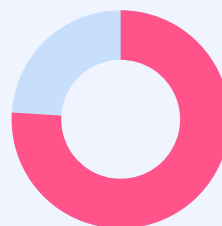
Organizations who equip their sellers to deliver quality experiences will gain a serious competitive advantage, while those who don't will be left behind.

Seller Experience must be taken as seriously as any other prospect facing sales strategy. Reducing friction for your sellers is ultimately reducing friction for your buyers. Investing in Seller Experience is really investing in your revenue engine.

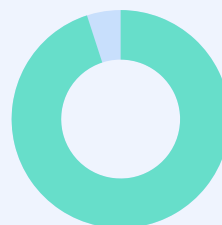


**88% of B2B buyers**

only buy when they see their salesperson as a “trusted advisor.



**76% of B2B buyers** expect personalized attention from providers based on specific needs.



**95% of B2B firms** agree the ability to provide a seamless and consistent positive experience throughout the customer lifecycle is key for increasing revenue.

## Part 3:

# How to Audit & Measure Seller Experience

There's no singular way to measure Seller Experience. Instead, your organization will need to gather several data points to determine what your current Seller Experience actually looks like.



**We recommend doing this through a formal audit, supported by team leads and front-line managers for “on the ground” insight.**

To ensure an accurate assessment, it’s also crucial to have a process in place to collect feedback from the sellers themselves– throughout several different points in their employee lifecycle.

Since Seller Experience is shaped by several different aspects of your organization, we suggest breaking down your audit into **three main categories**:

- 1 The organization’s mentality towards the sales function**
- 2 The general sentiment of reps working at your organization**
- 3 How you operationalize and enable core aspects of the sales function**

Let’s take a look at these categories in more detail– and the types of questions your audit should answer. This is by no means a definitive list, but should help audit stakeholders start thinking about Seller Experience in more specific and tangible ways.

## 1 The organization's mentality towards the sales function

Leadership's mentality towards your sales force impacts everything from sales culture to compensation budgets. The attitudes and mindsets toward sales across an organization ultimately determine how much the organization is willing to invest in their sales team.



**Consider asking yourself and other members of your leadership team the following questions:**

- How would you describe your organization's mindset towards its sales force? Is their engagement and satisfaction a priority for leaders?
- How does leadership stay informed of meaningful trends in engagement, satisfaction, retention and turnover on your sales team? Is there a formal system in place for front-line managers to share insights, observations, or recommendations? How often do you ask for feedback through official, operationalized channels?
- How often do leaders communicate with front-line sales managers? How often do leaders communicate with the sellers themselves? How closely does your organization track retention and turnover on your sales team specifically? How would your organization respond if HR reported challenges with recruiting new sellers?
- As a leader, do you have insight into the recruiting process for new sales reps?
- Has your organization launched any specific initiatives to improve or support sales culture? What does your organization do differently than its competitors?
- When was the last time your organization invested in new or updated enablement, tools, and resources for your sales force? If you were to advocate for more, do you think you'd be successful?



## Analyzing the results

After conducting an audit of your seller experience, use the following guide to see which statement is the most accurate reflection of your findings. Each statement corresponds with a rating– weak, average, and strong. This assessment will help you objectively look at how your organization thinks about its sales teams.

Which attitude most accurately reflects the attitude and mindset of your organization?



| Weak Seller Experience                                                                                                                                                                          | Average Seller Experience                                                                                                                                                                            | Strong Seller Experience                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Your organization holds the belief that they can't cater to the needs of each and every seller and that frequent turnover is inevitable. High turnover rates in sales are just part of the job. | The organization recognizes the benefits of an engaged sales force and tries their best to make it happen, but also believes there is only so much they can do. There are always bigger fish to fry. | Your company recognizes each seller as an invaluable asset. It is a commonly held belief that sales engagement, motivation, and satisfaction has a significant impact on performance and ultimately revenue. |



## 2 The general sentiment of your sales team

Seller Experience simultaneously influences and is influenced by engagement and satisfaction on your sales team. For example, distrust and resentment towards the organization can quickly spread among sellers, while reps who feel happy and excited about their job can more easily boost others' morale.

To ensure a more comprehensive and accurate assessment, we recommend consulting employee retention and turnover metrics to pinpoint how long sellers are actually staying with your organization, then collect feedback from your sales team through official channels to help you understand why and monitor dips as they happen in real time.



### Consider asking yourself and your sales reps the following questions on a regular basis:

- How would your sellers honestly rate their experience at your organization? Would they recommend this company to other sellers in their network?
- What do your sellers like most about working at your organization? What are the biggest sources of frustration? Are there any recurring problems or trends?
- How much trust do sellers have in the information, data, and training your organization provides?
- How often does your SalesOps/RevOps team address questions or disputes from sellers? What are these disputes and questions most often about?
- What % of your salesforce can see themselves building a career at your organization? If you don't know, how difficult would it be to find this information?
- How likely are they to be looking for a new sales role at any point in time?
- Does your sales team feel comfortable and heard when they voice concerns or report issues?
- How much time and energy goes into building your sales culture? Is it intentional or is your sales culture a byproduct of shifting priorities, training programs, goals, and business needs?
- What is the candidate experience like for sales reps who take a role at your organization? What's it like for reps who have declined offers with your company?
- What could be done better right now, that would make each sales rep happier and more engaged?

## Analyzing the results

Again, after conducting your audit, use the following assessment to see where you fall on the spectrum of Seller Experience. Whichever statements most accurately reflect your findings, will tell you how your organization stacks up.



| Weak Seller Experience                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Average Seller Experience                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Strong Seller Experience                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Sellers will do what they have to bring in money, even if that means gaming the system. The company isn't invested in their sales team, signaling that every individual has to look out for their own best interest.</p> <p>New sellers aren't always your top candidates. Instead you often end up hiring runners up and candidates who just barely meet expectations.</p> <p>High performing sellers may actively be looking for better opportunities. Poor performers will be happy to coast, unchecked.</p> | <p>Sellers feel they're employed to earn a paycheck. They might explore other opportunities if something better comes along, but they may also be easy to engage and coach if the organization makes an effort.</p> <p>Goals are set but expectations may not be documented or clear. The seller may feel goals shift frequently or feel as though it's hard to keep up with the latest initiative or objective.</p> <p>Sellers may feel as if there is the potential to grow and develop within this organization, but they aren't sure what that path looks like or what they need to do to progress.</p> | <p>Sellers feel valued for their contributions, and believe that the organization's success is their success.</p> <p>Sellers have the visibility and information they need to understand expectations, limitations, and how to achieve their goals. They also have access to support, resources, and tools to make their job easier.</p> <p>Sellers look at their job as a path to greater responsibilities and growth. This is an organization and role they can throw themselves into, because the benefits are valid and clear.</p> |





### 3 How you operationalize and enable core aspects of the sales function

The “day to day” for your sellers will have a meaningful impact on their overall experience, including how they interact with their team, what their workflows look like, and what information, support, training, and tools are available to them.

Operations and enablement are both critical to sales success. Both of these functions can make or break your Seller Experience in a multitude of ways.

A great operations and enablement function makes it easy for reps to do their job effectively by automating and eliminating manual work, documenting processes, and setting expectations.

A poor operations and enablement program can slow down teams, take time away from selling activities, and distract reps from achieving their goals.



#### Consider asking your leadership teams, your sales teams, and your operations and enablement teams the following questions:

- What tools, resources, and enablement support are currently available for your sellers? Does your organization have a system in place to assess the effectiveness and satisfaction of your technology stack, your training programs, and your onboarding process?
- How does your organization equip front-line sales managers to lead their teams more effectively? Do they have access to training, coaching, or other types of support?
- Does your organization have a system in place to ensure the sellers themselves have access to sufficient training, coaching, and support?
- How does your organization communicate with sellers about topics like compensation? Is there a formal process in place for clearly communicating changes?
- How much of your sales team's time is devoted to administrative and manual tasks? How much is spent selling?
- Do your sales teams feel they're properly trained when new products or features launch? Do they feel they have the right competitive intelligence, sales collateral, and marketing resources to properly sell their solutions?
- Have you operationalized win/loss reporting? Is there a feedback loop in place to communicate customer pain points and concerns back to your marketing team?
- Does your sales team know where to look for reports and dashboards? Do they have access to the reports and dashboards they need?

## Analyzing the results

This category should be the easiest to evaluate objectively. For consistency, however, we still recommend comparing against the following statements to see which most accurately reflects your findings.



| Weak Seller Experience                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Average Seller Experience                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Strong Seller Experience                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Information and resources are disconnected, leading to inefficiencies and diverting time away from selling.</p> <p>You frequently field prospect and customer complaints and notice you lose a large amount of deals to your competitors.</p> <p>Reps don't have access to the education and technology they need to sell effectively.</p> | <p>Resources exist but are more likely to be ad-hoc and underutilized.</p> <p>Your sales tech stack is more built out, but there may be overlap between tools and some reps may be more comfortable than others using the tools available to them.</p> <p>Messaging is inconsistent across reps and teams.</p> | <p>Valuable insights and teachings are operationalized, proactively gathered and shared, enabling improvements to sales process, product, or both.</p> <p>Sellers feel confident in their ability to sell and spend most of their time on sales activities.</p> <p>Sellers have quality dashboards, tools, and resources available to them.</p> |





## Final thoughts

**How sellers experience your organization directly impacts their interactions with buyers and— by extension— the revenue they can generate.**



It's impossible to provide a truly seamless buying experience if the sellers behind it are encountering friction every step of the way. When leaders dismiss sales roles as short tenured and difficult by design, that friction only intensifies.

Attempting to wring out as much productivity from sellers in the short time they're with your organization is a mistake. The best way to maximize sales ROI is by investing in the people, processes, practices, tools, and resources necessary for a strong Seller Experience.



# Related Products

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