Magic Quadrant for Sales Force Automation Platforms

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SFA platforms are critical to sales execution. Vendors have integrated AI features to various extents. Sales operations leaders should use this research to enhance their evaluation process and gain further insights into critical sales capabilities, including those driven by AI.

Strategic Planning Assumptions

By 2026, B2B sales organizations using generative-AI-embedded sales technologies will reduce the amount of time spent on prospecting and customer-meeting prep by over 50%.

By 2028, 60% of B2B seller work will be executed through conversational user interfaces (UIs) via generative AI sales technologies, up from less than 5% in 2023.

Market Definition/Description

Gartner defines sales force automation platforms as AI-augmented tools supporting automation and capture of sales activities, processes and administrative tasks, facilitating initiation, engagement and documentation of buyer-seller interactions through multiexperience and channel-agnostic approaches and devices. They leverage advanced analytics to support actionable insights, tracking and monitoring sales contact, pipeline and opportunity management; guided selling; and forecasting process execution. Optimal UX for sales managers or leadership extends beyond internal use cases, and is scalable to support buyer-seller intermediation and shared prospect/customer experiences. These platforms

incorporate AI features beyond add-on products in predictive and prescriptive analytics, ML and NLP, enhancing processes and customer interactions.

Sales force automation (SFA) is a foundational sales technology implemented to automate and augment an organization's core sales processes. Leveraging AI and advanced analytics, it enhances the seller's ability to engage with customers across various interaction touchpoints and devices. It not only streamlines administrative tasks, but also provides actionable insights for improved sales contact, pipeline and opportunity management.

Must-Have Capabilities

The must-have capabilities for this market include:

- Lead, account, contact and opportunity management

- Sales activity management

- Pipeline and forecast management

- Platform and integration

Standard Capabilities

The standard capabilities for this market include:

- Collaboration

- Guided selling

- Mobile, voice-activated assistants and bots

- Visualizations and analytics

- Partner relationship management

- Composability

- Proposal and quote builder (not formal configure, price and quote [CPQ])

Optional Capabilities

The optional capabilities for this market include:

- CPQ applications or suites

- Digital sales rooms

- Revenue intelligence

- Sales engagement

- Revenue enablement (digital content management, training and coaching)

Magic Quadrant

Figure 1: Magic Quadrant for Sales Force Automation Platforms

Vendor Strengths and Cautions

BUSINESSNEXT

BUSINESSNEXT is a Niche Player in this Magic Quadrant. BUSINESSNEXT comprises a number of enterprise solutions, which also contains its sales force automation product, with a majority presence in financial services and insurance. It also operates in multiple regions, with a heavier presence in APAC, followed by EMEA and North America. Recent enhancements include GenAI-powered analytics and models for financial services, insurance and manufacturing, as well as enhancements to the UI for user views, advanced analytics and visualizations. A number of operational improvements were made to reduce latency and improve storage. It also added automated visit and call detection features for mobile. Looking ahead, BUSINESSNEXT plans to deliver a smart seller assistant that supports management of action lists, as well as follow-ups and meeting scheduling. Future plans also include Gen AI-powered designers for workflow and layout build productivity. To support its banking clients, BUSINESSNEXT expects to release an AI document handler for know-your-customer (KYC) verification and lending collateral management.

Strengths

- **Lead management:** BUSINESSNEXT offers machine-learning-based predictive lead scoring models that customers can configure. These models analyze lead attributes, including behavioral data, intent signals and engagement history. Sales teams can access lead scores, source signals and recommended actions. The scoring model is integrated with guided selling for an optimized sales experience and supported by a segmentation-building model that enables identification of high-value leads.

- **UI improvements:** BUSINESSNEXT has improved its user interface with an enhanced Kanban view, as well as improvements for those preferring compact and split-level views, along with improved calendar views.

- **AI strategy:** BUSINESSNEXT provides a comprehensive, user-friendly AI solution tailored for sales use cases. It offers out-of-the-box AI models for lead and opportunity scoring, AI-guided selling, and predictive forecasting, all of which can be configured by administrators who wish to customize sales model inputs. Additionally, BUSINESSNEXT includes a variety of validated machine-learning models designed for specific sales scenarios. This is particularly valuable for sales organizations that require more than standard features, but lack extensive data science resources.

- **Proposal and quotation:** BUSINESSNEXT has a relatively weak offering for proposal and quotation generation relative to leading SFA vendors in this Magic Quadrant. It has a basic quote-builder tool that uses templates and offers limited pricing guidance for sellers. Additionally, the AI-guided RFP response function was unable to answer nearly half the questions posed during the demo.

- **Pipeline and forecast management:** BUSINESSNEXT's ability to trace, inspect and monitor pipeline health is among the weakest of the vendors evaluated for this report, based upon demonstrated features.

- **Pricing and packaging:** BUSINESSNEXT has transitioned from a single edition to a three-tier-edition offering. Relative to features included, these are priced higher than those of leading market vendors, not considering discounts, ranging from $125 per user month for the lowest edition to $450 per user per month for the highest edition. Additionally, opting for 24/7 support will add an extra 24% to the total subscription cost. If you require AI features, expect to pay an additional $45 per user per month per model.

Creatio

Creatio is a Visionary in this year's Magic Quadrant. Its SFA product, Sales Creatio, is well-suited for midsize and enterprise organizations that have more than 250 employees. It has a dominant presence in financial services, professional services, manufacturing and high tech, but can extend to a wide variety of industries. It operates in multiple regions, with a heavier presence in EMEA, followed by North America, Asia/Pacific, and South/Central America. Recent releases include an AI assistant called Creatio Copilot for SFA use cases with a sidecar experience throughout the entire platform. This allows users to engage it in natural language for tasks such as summarizing records, creating tasks, enriching data, or initiating workflows and rules. The company's roadmap includes expanding Creatio Copilot to provide advanced recommendations on pipeline attainment. Creatio has introduced a delivery assurance program to ensure successful implementations, offering guidance for implementation, user adoption and ongoing delivery.

Strengths

- **Product packaging and pricing:** Creatio has a compelling approach to how it packages the SFA platform product. Prospects can purchase a platform base, plus stand-alone capabilities or objects from the SFA module, such as purchasing an account, opportunity or lead object only. This is desirable for companies with minimal requirements or those

looking to test the platform on core components before making a broader sales technology investment.

- **Support for sales best practices:** Creatio is one of the few vendors in this Magic Quadrant to offer support for sales best practices on specific processes, including it with all base products. This includes guidance on workflows for lead and opportunity management process orchestration, as well as sales forecast and pipeline inspection models, either as a general best practice or by vertical industry.

- **Innovation:** Creatio has released the Creatio Copilot experience in its SFA platform product. This allows users to not only summarize records or initiate email replies, but also initiate tasks, rules and workflows, and enrich data with third-party integrated data solutions via prompting in natural language. It also released a library of new drag-and-drop minicomponents to improve SFA workflow developments, such as a new sales progress bar, a next-steps component and simplified records management components.

Cautions

- **Usability:** Creatio has usability shortcomings in forecast management, visualization, analytics, and collaboration. It requires manual steps to invoke calculations, business logic, or collaborate on sales documentation, unlike its drag-and-drop components.

- **Activity management:** Creatio has ranked lower in activity management. For example, it does not provide out-of-the-box support for building sequences or cadences to extend sales activities beyond its business process management capabilities. Its native conversation intelligence features are basic compared to other leading SFA vendors and do not offer a robust set of insights and metrics for improving seller productivity.

- **Artificial intelligence (AI)/Machine Learning (ML):** Creatio's AI-guided selling relies heavily on rule-based actions, with machine learning suggestions mainly used in its Creatio Copilot experience. Outside of Creatio Copilot, the system suggests generic actions that lack specificity and decision confidence like "send an email" or "create an opportunity." Its ML configurability is complex for business users, requiring detailed knowledge of training datasets and predictors. The generative AI (GenAI) lacks robust debugging and bias-testing features, offering only a basic bias index slider with subpar explainability.

Freshworks

Freshworks is a Niche Player in this Magic Quadrant. Its SFA product is Freshsales. It primarily sells to small businesses and lower-midsize organizations with fewer than 250 employees. It has a dominant presence in professional services and high tech, but can also support a variety of industries. It supports deployments in North America, EMEA and Asia/Pacific. It has recently introduced predefined sales bot templates, designed to capture lead information, schedule meetings and address frequently asked questions. For field sellers, Freshworks introduced the ability to scan business cards for quick and accurate capture of new contact details in its mobile app. Freshworks is set to enhance its offerings with automatic call transcription and summarization, AI-based duplicate contact detection, and it plans to provide quick summaries for accounts and contacts, automate lead assignments, and suggest the next best action from notes and tasks.

Strengths

- **Pricing value:** Freshsales is one of the more budget-friendly SFA solutions evaluated in this Magic Quadrant. Its highest-priced editions, geared toward the enterprise, lists for $59 per user per month when billed annually, and includes a dialer, sales engagement features, AI features such as scoring, deal insights, and a chatbot.

- **Visualization:** Freshsales allows admins to create custom visualizations for both standard and custom objects, and filter charts based on various attributes. The platform also supports drill-down functionality, allowing users to explore data at different levels of granularity. Unique URLs for each dashboard ensure seamless report sharing.

- **Omnichannel support:** Freshworks provides omnichannel activity tracking across several channels, including Instagram, SMS, WhatsApp and website chats, which are included in all paid versions of its packaging. The platform enables sales organizations to create pretrained chatbots for engaging prospective customers in multiple languages to help streamline customer interactions in one place. These chatbots can change the object value, trigger API and custom functions in the application to enable task execution, and also support handover to an agent or seller for further human support.

Cautions

- **Limited AI capabilities:** Freshsales lags in several AI capabilities, compared to leading vendors. It lacks predictive and prescriptive analytics for pipeline inspections, sentiment analysis, and conversation intelligence, limiting its ability to provide comprehensive insights from customer interactions. While it does offer account and contact scoring,

which are rules-driven, and basic next-best-action recommendations through Freddy AI, these features are rudimentary.

- **Basic mobile experience:** Freshsales' mobile app is relatively basic, lacking advanced features such as speech recognition. This limits the ability of field sellers to populate information across various fields using voice input. The absence of route optimization functionality also hinders the efficiency of sellers who make multiple client visits.

- **PRM support:** Freshworks' capabilities for partner relationship management are limited. Partner sellers can access accounts and contact objects via restricted user licenses. However, additional capabilities like pricing approval, order and return management require a third-party application.

HubSpot

HubSpot is a Niche Player in this Magic Quadrant. Its product, Sales Hub, is best suited for small and midsize organizations with fewer than 2,000 employees. HubSpot has a dominant presence in high tech and professional services, with the ability to support additional industries such as noncomplex manufacturing. It supports deployments in North America, followed by EMEA, Asia/Pacific and a smaller presence in South/Central America. HubSpot recently introduced a prospecting workspace that consolidates essential tools and data for sales reps in one canvas, and launched native data integration with LinkedIn for seamless CRM synchronization. HubSpot leverages GenAI for sales email composition with predefined options to steer the output, including the ability to adjust the tone and provide the seller with background info on the target company and the addressee. The company's roadmap includes investments in both traditional AI and GenAI. Its traditional AI features include AI-driven lead scoring, deal scoring and next best actions. For GenAI, the focus is on generating sales content, summarizing and analyzing companies, and enhancing ChatSpot, its GenAI assistant.

Strengths

- **Viability:** HubSpot demonstrates above-average growth and customer retention in the SFA market. This is particularly reassuring for prospective clients seeking stability from vendors that cater to small and midsize businesses.

- **Usability:** HubSpot has an intuitive, connected-platform approach to SFA. In its demonstrations to Gartner, it features a friendly user interface with easy-to-follow task

execution. The UI also includes an activity timeline that allows you to filter activity types shown across adjacent modules, such as showing marketing email signals or events.

- **Activity management:** HubSpot possesses notable activity management features, ranging from a native conversation intelligence tool to a sequence builder, a LinkedIn bidirectional sync and an email template library for outreach efforts, all contained natively.

Cautions

- **AI/ML strategy:** HubSpot lags behind leading vendors on AI and ML features provided out-of-the-box, such as machine-learning-based lead scoring, next best actions and predictive forecasting. Most of these features have been present in several SFA vendors for the last two-plus years, whereas HubSpot is either planning to release them, or has released them more recently. Furthermore, it offers limited configurability for its AI use cases and is not suitable for sales organizations that need to train on custom fields or data sources.

- **Pricing and cost:** HubSpot has recently moved to a seat-based pricing model that eliminated the minimum seat requirement, but also increased the list price for its enterprise edition by 25%. Gartner has fielded complaints from HubSpot clients pertaining to cost for small and midsize organizations.

- **Guided selling:** HubSpot possesses weak guided selling capabilities, it currently does not use AI-driven next-best-action recommendations, and the extent of guided selling is limited to rule-based workflows. Furthermore, its GenAI assistant ChatSpot, which may provide conversational recommendations, lives as a separate interface that is not part of the same sales hub module.

Microsoft

Microsoft is a Leader in the Magic Quadrant. Its SFA product, Microsoft Dynamics 365 Sales, suits small, midsize and enterprise organizations. It has a strong presence in financial services, healthcare, professional services and manufacturing. It has deployments in North America, EMEA, Asia/Pacific, and South/Central America. Recent enhancements to its Microsoft Copilot for Sales include lead and opportunity summary generation, Bing news integration, and email action recommendations. The future roadmap features an agent framework for lead management, zero-touch CRM updates, enabling bulk updates, and enhancing voice-command interactions to improve seller efficiency. Further promises

include pitch deck generation support and an AI-first canvas for exploring data to support account planning and forecasting.

Strengths

- **SFA and GenAI packaging:** Microsoft's SFA product, enhanced by Copilot functionality, offers a compelling package. The Enterprise edition includes partial GenAI features (through Copilot) across SFA, Outlook and Teams, which allows sales organizations to use basic features and pilot the product. More-advanced features are available for an additional $30 per user per month, including functionalities like recommending SFA updates, tracking recent changes in sales records, and meeting prep.

- **Roadmap:** Microsoft's roadmap for Dynamics 365 Sales focuses on enhancing the Copilot experience and leveraging AI agents. These autonomous or semiautonomous software entities utilize AI to perceive, make decisions and achieve goals without excessive human supervision, demonstrating Microsoft's commitment to intelligent and automated assistance for sales professionals.

- **Usability for account and contact management:** Due to its Copilot for Sales sidecar experience, Dynamics 365 Sales offers improved data capture and synchronization capabilities between core productivity applications (Outlook and Teams). This allows for seamless record updates across the three applications, reducing the need for manual data entry and improving seller usability.

Cautions

- **Limited AI configurability:** Dynamics 365 Sales has limitations in configurable sales ML, including traditional and GenAI. It doesn't support ML training on custom data entities for predictive scoring, and unlike Copilot capabilities in Dynamics 365 Sales, its Copilot for Sales lacks support for custom prompts and entities. More sophisticated ML use cases may require Azure AI and Azure Machine Learning, needing deep data science expertise. Copilot performed slowly during Gartner demos. Prospective customers should carefully evaluate their needs and expectations.

- **Mobile app innovation:** The Dynamics 365 Sales mobile app has limitations in using voice and text to create SFA tasks and records, which still require manual form field selection. Unlike its desktop version, the mobile app has not seen significant innovations over the past year.

- **Forecast management:** Microsoft will deprecate forecast management snapshots in October 2024, replacing them with a forecast API for daily data sync. Its forecast management has limitations, such as its inability to forecast on split opportunities without custom entities. Predictive forecasting features only use historical sales wins and losses, not sales activities or time-and-date attributes, to inform predictions.

Neocrm

Neocrm is a Niche Player in this Magic Quadrant. Its SFA product, Neocrm Sales Cloud, predominantly supports customers in China, but is increasingly attempting to do business outside of the region. Neocrm serves all organization sizes, targeting those with over 3,000 employees. Its commercial customers are in the high-technology manufacturing, biomedical, durable consumer goods and high-tech industries. Most of its implementations are primarily in the Tencent Cloud infrastructure as a service, with Amazon Web Services also supported. During the past year, Neocrm has added numerous Neo AI features, including analytics, opportunity scoring, customer insights, conversation insights, a writing assistant and a GenAI-powered chatbot. Improved collaboration features include Outlook add-ins, Lark and DingTalk communication tools, and the release of a Digital Sales Room for individual customers. Its Partner and CPQ capabilities have also been strengthened.

Strengths

- **AI/ML:** Neocrm has improved its AI capabilities throughout its platform to support seller workflows, capture insights and strengthen the core pipeline management and forecasting capabilities of its platform. In its Niche Player part of the quadrant, these additions enable it to compete favorably with vendors across the market and service its regional customers.

- **Innovation:** Neocrm has released a compelling set of features, such as AI conversation insights for analyzing intent, sentiment and context using GenAI, along with an AI email assistant for preconfigured or custom prompt building. It has also released a digital sales room, which is a tailored microsite with the ability to create personalized content for buyers.

- **Partner relationship management:** Neocrm offers a partner relationship management (PRM) capability for its indirect sales model that supports the life cycle of partner interactions. This includes onboarding through co-marketing, sales transactions, sharing of leads, opportunities, collateral through partner portals, and integrated collaboration

for social media via multiple access points. Neocrm's PRM functions monitor and manage incentive and rebate administration, budgets, settlement and reconciliation.

Cautions

- **Activity management:** The vendor's demo to Gartner revealed a reliance on marketing for sequences and cadences, and a lack of complex workflow automation for sales. Instead of demonstrating sales automation following an email association, it showcased marketing email templates and failed to show an email record triggering an automated sales activity. Additionally, the Outlook plug-in requires multiple scrolls and clicks for account overviews, logging contacts, and accessing records, hampering user experience.

- **Marketplace ecosystem:** Neocrm has among the fewest number of third-party apps in its ecosystem. This is particularly important for sales organizations that are looking to complement their SFA platforms with tailored apps for specific verticals or business processes. All of its apps and website languages are for the Asia/Pacific region, with no English-based website.

- **AI/ML limitations:** Neocrm has notable limitations in its AI/ML configuration capabilities. It allows users to create lead and opportunity scoring models by selecting fields and attributes for training. However, it does not permit adjusting predictor weights or explaining feature correlations to outcomes during setup. The model is trained solely on historical closed-won opportunity data, which is not a reliable predictor of future success. Although Neocrm offers predictive forecasting, it did not demonstrate the administrative setup for these models as it did for lead and opportunity scoring. Additionally, its response to Gartner's questionnaire did not indicate that administrators can build predictive forecasting models using ML.

Oracle

Oracle is a Leader in this Magic Quadrant. Oracle Sales Cloud, its SFA product, is best suited for midsize and enterprise organizations. It is most present in manufacturing, high tech, professional services and financial services, with the ability to support additional industries. Its deployments are present in North America, EMEA, Asia/Pacific and South/Central America. Oracle recently introduced significant UX enhancements in its Redwood Sales product, including enhancements to workflow orchestration, such as adding a sales guide for improved customer interactions, and the ability to capture competitor details within the Leads object. The company's roadmap includes developing collaborative digital buying

experiences for complex B2B buying flows, and enhancing its traditional/discriminative AI with a machine-learning framework. It also includes the ability to introduce a GenAI experience for supporting conversational reporting, lead conversion and call preparation.

Strengths

- **Mobile:** Oracle possesses strong mobile app capabilities for its SFA product. It has a clean and simple user interface where sellers can manage actions within a single pane. Its Oracle Sales Assistant can be used within the Sales Cloud mobile app to provide a conversational experience, initiate and complete record updates, and search for data.

- **Market understanding:** Oracle demonstrates a strong commitment to composite AI, with plans to integrate GenAI large language models (LLMs) with traditional AI models, automatically extract contractual insights, and tailor outbound communications based on customer-specific business problems. This provides a good mix of AI capabilities with feature explanation, extraction and feedback loops using both GenAI and traditional AI techniques.

- **Roadmap:** Oracle demonstrates a rich product roadmap compared to its competitors in this market, especially in the areas of composite AI, GenAI content expansion, GenAI prediction explanations, enhanced analytics and GenAI-augmented lead conversion. This will appeal to customers looking to expand AI capabilities in their revenue technology roadmaps.

Cautions

- **AI strategy:** Oracle gravitates toward providing a machine-learning platform that allows sales teams to create custom AI solutions. While it offers several out-of-the-box AI use cases (such as, but not limited to, lead scoring, opportunity contact recommendation, and win prediction among others), these use cases have limited configurability. As a result, sales organizations may need in-house data science expertise to effectively scale their AI initiatives if using Oracle Sales as their SFA platform.

- **Advanced forecasting:** Oracle's predictive forecasting features are demonstrated through its sales planning module, a separate product from Oracle Sales Cloud. While it is contained in a single Professional edition license, this separation creates a disjointed user experience and additional costs. Prospective clients should carefully consider their requirements, especially if they plan to complement manual forecasting in Sales Cloud with machine-learning-based predictive forecasting.

- **Product usability and integration complexity:** Oracle's SFA demonstrations for this Gartner Magic Quadrant included features like forecasting insights for anomaly detection and predictive forecasting in the Sales Planning module. Conversation intelligence features require integration through Oracle Digital Assistant, CX Text Analyzer and Webhooks. Additional AI features were developed using Oracle's Data Science platform, which require advanced expertise.

Pega

Pega is a Challenger in this Magic Quadrant. Pega Sales Automation, its SFA product, is best suited for large enterprises with complex business processes. It has the heaviest presence in financial services, public sector, insurance and healthcare verticals, with the ability to support additional industries. Most of Pega's deployments are in North America, and EMEA, followed by Asia/Pacific. Pega has introduced seller insights using GenAI, including capabilities like Pega GenAI Analyze and Automate (for email creation and meeting summaries) and a real-time video meeting extension. Pega also introduced a GenAI assistant that provides sellers with guidance on next steps, Pega GenAI Knowledge Buddy, which surfaces contextual answers to seller questions, and a GenAI meeting prep assistant. The company's future roadmap includes enhancing the user experience across Pega GenAI Coach, Account Coach, Plan My Day, and Partner Coach, as well as investing in GenAI-supported automation for task creation and workflow management.

Strengths

- **Innovation:** Since this research was last published, Pega has introduced significant product enhancements. These include a GenAI email composer, email interpretation and action items, meeting prep and summaries, route planning optimization, a GenAI assistant/coach for deal progression, and Pega GenAI Knowledge Buddy for contextual searches. Additionally, Pega is developing a GenAI Plan My Day feature and a GenAI simulated buyer for pitch practice and objection handling. These innovations may appeal to organizations aiming to optimize their sales teams' use of GenAI.

- **Platform and composability:** Pega distinguishes itself with its newly released Pega GenAI Blueprint, a GenAI feature that enables admins and business leaders to create workflows, rules and apps using natural language. This is especially significant, given Pega's reputation for a complex platform with a steep learning curve. Pega GenAI Blueprint can streamline deployment and reduce complexity, making Pega's SFA platform more accessible for sales organizations.

- **Activity management:** Pega provides a correspondence timeline with GenAI summaries, meeting prep support, and guided selling through Pega GenAI Knowledge Buddy, which delivers real-time answers to product and messaging questions. Pega Customer Decision Hub identifies top offers with a propensity-to-buy prediction, both on the account record and during calls, using conversation intelligence.

Cautions

- **Third-party marketplace:** Pega has among the fewest number of prebuilt third-party apps that can be used with its SFA product. Prospective clients looking for a vast ecosystem of plug-ins and connectors will have a difficult time sourcing developed products that are tightly integrated with Pega.

- **Forecasting:** Pega's forecasting capabilities are relatively weak, with usability sometimes resembling that of spreadsheets. Forecasting visualizations are confined to the dashboards tab as configured components. Its predictive forecasting demands significant data science expertise, particularly for adding or removing model predictors. The platform lacks qualitative explanations of how predictors influence outcomes, and does not allow admins to adjust feature weights based on business importance.

- **Mobile offline capabilities:** Pega's mobile app has limitations regarding offline support, particularly in its new Constellation architecture, which aims to offer a consistent experience across the desktop and mobile versions of SFA. Specifically, the app does not support offline functionality. Additionally, for clients using the traditional Theme UI, offline support is lacking for business card scanning for leads and contacts, as well as for adding attachments to appointments.

Salesforce

Salesforce is a Leader in the Magic Quadrant, with its Sales Cloud product catering to small, midsize, and enterprise businesses. It has a strong presence in financial services, manufacturing and high tech, and supports various other industries and processes. Salesforce operates in North America, EMEA, Asia/Pacific, South/Central America and emerging markets. Recent updates include Einstein 1 Studio and Salesforce Data Cloud in the Sales Cloud Enterprise and higher editions, enhancing AI capabilities and data source ingestion for SFA use cases. The future roadmap features "Forecast Anything" for cross-model revenue forecasting, AI-powered "Automate Prospecting" with Einstein SDR, and xGen Sales, a sales-specific LLM. Since the last publication of this research, Salesforce has

expanded its GenAI offerings, enabling admins to configure custom prompts and actions, and deploy multiple LLMs, providing more options for GenAI initiatives across various industries.

Strengths

- **Roadmap:** Salesforce plans to integrate customer data platform features into its SFA — including a streamlined Enterprise edition — to enhance client visibility across marketing, service, and website interactions. It will also enhance GenAI with autonomous agents for prospecting and launch a sales-specific LLM for sales content.

- **GenAI flexibility:** Salesforce allows custom prompts, action creation, and the use of multiple LLMs from external developers via a bring-your-own-model approach, offering sales ops admins greater flexibility and customization.

- **Forecasting:** Salesforce's forecasting features are visually intuitive, offering team-based and individual views of pipeline health. They support predictive models with a standard calendar setup, allowing in-line edits, annotations, and improved what-if scenario modeling. Users can visualize changes in a waterfall chart when deals are moved or removed from the committed stage.

Cautions

- **AI/ML limitations:** Salesforce's machine learning models, primarily available through its Einstein Discovery product (either as an add-on or included in the highest edition for SFA), have certain limitations in the types of use cases they support. These are restricted to numeric outcomes, binary classification (yes/no answers, for example) and multiclass classification (such as identifying top factors driving deals). Additionally, the qualitative relevance of the insights provided lacks deeper context. For example, predictive forecasting explanations are often basic and require administrators or data scientists to build separate model explanations in Einstein Discovery, making them difficult for novices to interpret. These explanations focus on individual deal-level factors and do not account for qualitative relevance or support semistructured/unstructured data sources.

- **GenAI assistant user experience:** Einstein Copilot's user experience has issues. Prompt outputs may lack structure, and may fail to differentiate key insights using a specific text style, making them hard to read. Sellers may not always be able to invoke actions from prompt outputs, requiring manual copying and pasting for tasks like navigating to Copilot-created records or creating quotes. Einstein Copilot also lacks reference links

within its interface, preventing users from easily verifying the accuracy of extracted information.

- **Einstein Copilot functional maturity:** Some Einstein Copilot features shown to Gartner were not fully functional, especially Custom Copilot Actions. Generated account fields and website hyperlinks were preconfigured but not clickable by end users receiving the output of a prompt due to lack of rich text formatting. Additionally, the tool couldn't create quote documents or provide live links to view the quote.

SAP

SAP is a Challenger in this Magic Quadrant, its SFA product, SAP Sales Cloud, primarily focuses on supporting midsize and enterprise customers. It supports all verticals, but has a stronger presence in manufacturing and consumer goods industries, with a global reach across North America, EMEA, Asia/Pacific and South/Central America. SAP recently redesigned its mobile app, introducing a new UI that provides real-time insights and engagement trends through a graph component. The app also offers visibility into daily planned activities and features a guided selling-completion bar graph to track progress. Additionally, SAP has enhanced its AI models for lead and opportunity scoring by including intent data signals from Bombora, website visits, surveys and campaign scores. The roadmap includes innovations such as Joule, a GenAI assistant, and an AI/ML-based duplicate check feature. Both are expected in the second half of 2024.

Strengths

- **UI modernization:** SAP Sales Cloud has undergone a modernization of its user experience, which is particularly evident in the simplification of opportunity management. Notably, interactive visuals have been added in a sidecar panel, allowing users to observe predictive and diagnostic trends. These visuals include opportunity scores, a timeline view and highlights on the account with assigned scores. These enhancements improve the likelihood of engagement and overall usability for sellers.

- **Balanced AI roadmap:** SAP aims to provide a balanced approach between discriminative/traditional AI and GenAI features. This includes enhancements to activity management insights based on external highlights, as well as opportunity win predictions. Additionally, SAP plans to introduce a discovery questions generator aligned to opportunity signals and characteristics, as well as a synopsis feature that delivers valuable insights on the account. These insights may include the account's current challenges based on industry trends, typical customers and the competitive landscape.

- **Add-ons and integrations:** SAP has a robust ecosystem of add-on and integration-ready products to complement its API-first architecture approach for SAP Sales Cloud, some of which are natively built. These include SAP S/4HANA (for ERP), SAP Analytics (for advanced analytics), a configure, price and quote (CPQ) product, and tight integration with Microsoft Teams for collaboration.

Cautions

- **Mobile app limitations:** The new mobile UI lacks offline functionality, which is crucial for field sales users. Its mobile AI assistant is still in beta and not production-ready. Due to SAP's API-first approach, users may need workarounds to integrate with legacy applications until feature parity is achieved.

- **Scope of releases:** SAP continues to play catch-up with other Leaders in this Magic Quadrant. Its releases since the previous iteration have been underwhelming, such as the enablement of intent data through a Bombora partnership, guided lead conversion, and sales cadence features. All of these features have been present in products from other market vendors for a few years now, while SAP is just starting to introduce them.

- **AI/ML limitations:** SAP does not support configuring AI model predictors for predictive forecasting or lead and opportunity scoring. While additional data sources can be included, users cannot fine-tune data attribute weights, making it less effective for tailored solutions. Current AI/ML use cases rely on historical sales data, limiting adaptability to real-world sales scenarios.

SugarCRM

SugarCRM is a Challenger in this Magic Quadrant. Its SFA solution, Sugar Sell, is often targeted at the B2B upper midmarket, though the vendor does sell to B2C and enterprise customers. SugarCRM supports all industries and offers industry-specific templates for manufacturing, high tech, financial services and professional services. SugarCRM has recently introduced AI-based predictive forecasting, GenAI omnichannel conversation intelligence, and customer sentiment capabilities. SugarCRM has seen positive developments with its Time-Aware CX for customer journey orchestration, as well as low-code/no-code data entry automation. The company's future roadmap includes innovations such as GenAI-enabled opportunity summarization, as well as natural language querying and search.

Strengths

- **Customer community:** SugarCRM has a vibrant community platform, called SugarClub, with around 12,000 members, promoting discussion, news sharing, product inquiries and training. It connects customers, partners and stakeholders, offering seamless educational experiences through SugarUniversity (SugarU). Managed by the customer experience team, it features forums, a knowledge base, real-time chat, and networking tools, along with webinars and events for continuous learning and engagement.

- **Implementation and ongoing services:** SugarCRM distinguishes itself with tailored professional services, including custom or quick start onboarding, extensive training and dedicated support for data migration and system integration. Its SMOOTH methodology ensures low-risk, consistent and predictable projects. Additionally, SugarCRM offers change management and adoption services, in-person events, and a fan-based program.

- **Strategic product partnerships:** SugarCRM regularly adds to its strategic partnerships. In 2024, it launched a partnership with Mediafly for integrated sales enablement and content management, as well as a partnership with Conga, for configure, price, and quote. Existing partnerships include SYSPRO, sales-i (acquired by SugarCRM in 2024), Liferay, Oktopost, DealHub, Mobileforce, Magic Software and Triblio (now Foundry).

Cautions

- **AI-guided selling:** Compared to other vendors in the Magic Quadrant, SugarCRM has poor AI-guided selling capabilities. Most of the guided selling features are its visual Kanban view, with no AI overlay. Even the GenAI aspects used for next best actions are basic at best, with no ability to execute the suggestion within the platform as an integrated action.

- **User experience:** SugarCRM provides an outdated experience across its platform. This is particularly noticeable in its workflow and business-process designer, which would benefit from a modernized look and feel. Additionally, during demonstrations to Gartner, SugarCRM showcased add-on products embedded as iframes within the SFA module, resulting in a disjointed user experience. For instance, the integration of the sales-i application for building predictive models highlighted a poor user interface and inconsistent experience when used with SugarCRM.

- **AI/ML product strategy:** SugarCRM offers a limited set of ML-based use cases for sales, including predictive lead conversion, opportunity close prediction and sentiment analysis via SugarLive. The depth and scope of configuration for these use cases are restricted to

out-of-the-box functionality. This may not meet the expectations of sales organizations seeking a more comprehensive range of sales AI functions from their SFA platforms.

Vtiger

Vtiger is a Niche Player in this Magic Quadrant. Its Vtiger One product is best suited for the SMB segment. Serving B2B and B2C, it also has channel sales features. It has an industry vertical edition for construction, and offers supported instances for the financial services, CPG, insurance, pharmaceutical and real estate industries. It has a strong presence of clients in Asia/Pacific, EMEA and North America. In the year since this Magic Quadrant was last published, Vtiger introduced GenAI features, including natural language query support for data visualization in VtigerCalculus AI, a prompt builder for custom commands in bot management. It has also introduced custom models powering GenAI functions such as chatbots, chat agent consoles and automated email replies. Vtiger continues to support industry-specific functions, adding a field sales rep mobile app, and a multiwarehouse stockroom add-on. The platform is set to enhance its application with a Shopify integration, enabling users to view the entire customer journey. Future plans include an AI-driven, consumption-based forecasting function and a conversational UI for record creation and adjustments. It also aims to offer buyers an interactive quoting function and to provide sellers with questionnaire-based guided selling.

Strengths

- **Activity management:** Vtiger offers SMB clients useful AI- and rule-based tools to support seller/customer interaction summarization, and rating across channels like email, mobile, chat and voice. Tracking all interactions supports account, contact and deal scoring, and with AI-generated responses, can personalize customer interactions and automated seller data entry.

- **Collaboration and productivity:** Vtiger offers internal and external collaboration tools, including a digital sales room, document co-editing, and communication tracking.

- **SMB market focus:** Vtiger's always-free, self-signup version is designed specifically for small businesses initiating their CRM journeys, and offers a seamless transition to paid editions. Many of the standard features are included in the free edition, which allows sales users to trial a diverse range of capabilities, both SFA and non-SFA.

Cautions

- **Forecasting:** Vtiger's forecasting capabilities rank among the lowest of all vendors. For instance, its predictive forecasting is limited to AI scoring on individual deals. The platform does not support forecasting splits, offering only dashboard views and custom filters. Tracking changes in user-submitted forecasts is only available through the reports feature.

- **Lead management:** Vtiger's lead management capabilities show significant weaknesses compared to similar market competitors. While Vtiger offers basic lead scoring and engagement scoring, it lacks AI-driven insights and predictive analytics that competitors provide. Vtiger does not support ML-based lead scoring natively, and requires professional services for setup. It falls short in offering AI-driven recommendations for next best actions, optimal contact times and channel selection, which are standard features in comparable platforms.

- **Customer success management (CSM):** Vtiger's CSM has several weaknesses compared to similar competitors, lacking the depth and personalization of training and certification programs and limited role-specific sessions. VTiger's CSM metrics are limited, focusing on product usage and testimonials only, and lacking robust indicators like annual recurring revenue and customer churn rate. Vtiger's problem-solving and continuous-learning initiatives are less comprehensive and structured compared to other vendors in this Magic Quadrant.

Zoho

Zoho is a Visionary in this Magic Quadrant, Zoho CRM, its SFA product primarily serves SMB and midsize segments, with some enterprise presence. It has a balanced footprint across various verticals, including life sciences, financial services, retail, professional services and high tech, with deployments in North America, EMEA, Asia/Pacific, and a presence in South/Central America. Recent enhancements include WhatsApp message templates and Blueprint support for portal applications. Zoho has reduced portal pricing to $5 per user per month and introduced workload limits in autolead assignment, making it more accessible and efficient for sales teams. The company's robust roadmap emphasizes data and analytics, featuring Kiosk DataHub for abstracting data layers from third-party applications and Databridge for connecting external databases, legacy systems, and on-premises data sources. New chart types like waterfall, tree map, divergent, and Sankey charts enhance data visualization. Zoho is aggressively building a data backbone by integrating with multiple

third-party data sources, is aiming to improve its AI capabilities, and plans to enhance the overall customer experience, providing sales teams with powerful tools for success.

Strengths

- **Predictive scoring:** Zoho offers robust capabilities for predicting close dates, sales conversions, total contract value and customer churn. It supports custom scores for any field, tailored to unique business needs. Zoho's AI assistant, Zia, updates scores biweekly for accuracy. Sellers can also compare predictive scores by analyzing included fields and records, enhancing data-driven decision making.

- **Workflow automation:** Zoho offers multiple workflow automation tools. Sellers can use Workflow Rules for "if and then" automations, available from the free version. Cadences streamline customer follow-ups with targeted, sequential communications based on interactions and actions. Blueprint enables more-complex business process automation for customer journeys, detailing steps like updating opportunity values and identifying customer needs; these are available from the professional license. Zia's workflow suggestions allows it to analyze recurring actions performed and suggest corresponding workflows. This unique feature can improve a sales organization's overall time to value.

- **Lead management:** Zoho CRM captures leads from multiple sources and provides real-time notifications through SalesSignals, available from the professional license. Automated lead assignment is optimized based on seller workload and historical trends of successful lead conversion. Additionally, Zoho supports double-opt-in to ensure data privacy and security, addressing any concerns regarding compliance.

Cautions

- **AI-guided selling:** Zoho's guided selling, particularly the next best experience and recommendation builder functions, are basic. Sellers will find the provided suggestions, such as "make a call within two days," largely unhelpful and lacking qualitative relevance and context for what the action should entail. These products are more useful for product recommendations than contextual next best actions.

- **Activity management:** Zoho decided to deprecate its activity management tab in March 2024 in favor of individualized modules for tasks, meetings and calls. This is a notable consideration for sales organizations looking to centralize sales activities. While it still retains a system of record, it further introduces productivity complexity.

- **Forecasting:** Zoho's anomaly detection and alerts for unusual changes in forecasts are limited. It does not support custom fields in the forecast module. Forecast types, such as forecasting by revenue or by quantity, need to be created as two separate forecasts. Its forecasting experience for predicted insights and values jumps between the Reports and Dashboards tab, and the Forecast Module, providing an inconsistent user experience.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

For Gartner clients, Magic Quadrant research identifies and then analyzes the most-relevant providers and their products in a market. By default, Gartner uses an upper limit of 20 vendors to support the identification of the most-relevant providers in a market. Occasionally, Gartner may extend the upper limit, in situations where the intended research value to our clients might otherwise be diminished. The inclusion criteria represent the specific attributes that analysts believe are necessary for inclusion in this research.

To qualify for inclusion in the 2024 Magic Quadrant for Sales Force Automation Platforms, vendors were required to meet the entry criteria *and* eight of the following nine of the Level 1 criteria, natively (that is, without relying on third-party add-ons).

Entry criteria:

- Must provide AI/ML features in at least three critical capabilities —

    - Account/contact management

    - Activity management

    - Opportunity management

Level 1 criteria:

- **Account/contact management, activity management and opportunity management:** Serve as a system of record for account/contact management AND sales activity management AND opportunity management. Be able to natively support systems of engagement for capturing and facilitating sales and customer interactions, tasks, and activities.

- **Pipeline management:** Serve as a system of record for sales AND support sales-customer engagement journeys through channel-agnostic interactions including web portal (self-

service), SMS, chat, and email at minimum AND support predictive and/or prescriptive analytics for pipeline management (*must include all three*)

- **Forecast management:** Automate a recurring bottom-up sales forecast process AND serve as a system of record AND system of insights for the sales forecast.

- **Lead management:** Serve as a system of record for lead management capabilities, which includes functions for lead nurturing, lead conversion tracking, and lead attribution analysis.

- **Guided selling:** Provide guided selling capabilities in the form of formal sales playbooks and rule-based recommendations that align with sales playbooks.

- **Infrastructure:** Provide a platform for extending sales processes with custom user interfaces, custom data objects, custom data fields, and custom workflows, including (but not limited to) building engagement support with a diverse set of channel interactions.

- **Communication channel support:** Provide a platform for extending sales processes into customer interaction channels for buyer-seller engagement support in at least four core channels — namely, web portal (self-service), SMS, chat and email.

- **Integrations:** Provide native open APIs that allow the solution to integrate with third-party applications such as (but not limited to) ERP systems, BI tools and unified communication tools (or as may be deemed relevant to a selling organization).

- **Mobile access:** Provide mobile and voice-activated (VA) assistant capabilities, whereby sellers and their managers can manage their primary daily sales. This could be either a natively provided mobile app, mobile web browser, VA assistant such as a smartwatch, Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant, among others. This should be supported by a low-code mobile app development SDK. Native apps should work without the internet or offline.

Level 2 Criteria:

If the provider met Entry and Level 1 Criteria, then they must meet both of the following criteria to qualify:

- Have customers with live SFA implementations in at least two of the three use cases featured in Gartner's **Critical Capabilities for Sales Force Automation Platforms**:

  - B2B sales

- B2C sales

- Indirect/relationship sales

- Made at least two major CRM SFA releases with significant functional improvements between 1 March 2023 to 26 April 2024. A new or acquired offering from an established provider in this market is also considered, if Gartner has established that the offering was being sold to customers.

Level 3 Criteria:

If provider met Level 2 Criteria, then they must also meet at least *four of the following five* criteria:

- Provide native partner relationship management capabilities (PRM). To qualify for this criterion, providers must offer a portal-user license type, offer portal management capabilities for partners to manage leads and opportunities assigned to them, and offer partner life cycle management capabilities. All three criteria must be satisfied to qualify for this category of evaluation.

- At least 50 customers with live SFA platform implementations as of 1 March 2024, spanning at least four industries, in accordance with Gartner's industry definitions.*

- Must have an average number of SFA paid users (not partner users or freemium users) per customer (not org/instance) of at least 25 users as of 1 March 2024.

- Revenue from SFA platform sales of at least $15 million during the calendar year 2023.

- Between 1 March 2023 to 26 April 2024, closed SFA contracts with at least 18 new logos (not new contracts sold to an existing client) on deals that exceed $750,000 in total contract value OR closed SFA contracts with at least 50 new logos on deals between $50,000 and $750,000 in total contract value.

*Gartner Industry Definitions:

- Automotive (includes automotive manufacturers, distributors or direct-to-consumer sales processes)

- Communications, media and services (includes telecommunications)

- Consumer packaged goods manufacturing

- Education

- Energy and utilities

- Financial services (includes commercial banking, retail banking, all forms of lending, and wealth management)

- Healthcare providers

- High tech and software (includes IT hardware)

- Insurance (includes health insurance)

- Life sciences (includes pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturing or distribution).

- Manufacturing and natural resources (includes all forms of discrete manufacturing and the forms of process manufacturing not already specified in this list).

- Professional and business services

- Retail (includes retailers and specialty retailers, restaurants, grocery, and hotels)

- Transportation and logistics

Evaluation Criteria

Note to Gartner Clients: The Gartner authorship team has chosen to place a heavy emphasis on AI capabilities of SFA vendors, including its SFA-native scope, depth and usability against sales organization needs and requirements, and therefore all writeups, placements and scores in this Magic Quadrant and its companion Critical Capabilities reflect this new scoring approach. This is done to prepare for an uptake in the market of such capabilities and to better help clients with strategic roadmap planning.

Ability to Execute

In terms of capabilities, sales organizations require different levels of depth and complexity. Vendors that support a wide range of complexity have greater market potential, and are positioned accordingly. Because this is a cross-industry Magic Quadrant, evaluation of a provider's offering is focused on the ability to serve several broad industry sectors, not to provide industry-specific solutions.

- **Product or Service:** This criterion looks at core goods and services that compete in and/or serve the defined market. Vendors are evaluated on the quality of their native SFA capabilities, including both the core capabilities and SFA extensions. Vendors are also evaluated on technical considerations, such as ease of use and administrative functions. Gartner assesses information provided from the Gartner Peer Insights data, as well as other, publicly available sources, from the Critical Capabilities research and from observations collected from Gartner inquiries.

- **Overall Viability:** This is an assessment of the organization's overall financial health, as well as the financial and practical success of the business unit. We consider the likelihood of the organization continuing to offer and invest in the product, as well as the product position in the current portfolio. Vendors will be evaluated on additional factors, such as customer retention rate, and their ability to generate revenue specifically in the SFA market.

- **Sales Execution/Pricing:** This includes an organization's capabilities in all presales activities and the structure that supports them. It considers deal management, pricing and negotiation, presales support and the overall effectiveness of the sales channel. The vendor must provide global sales and distribution coverage that aligns with its marketing messages. It must have specific experience and success selling SFA applications to sales buying centers (i.e., the VP of sales or sales operations) and to application leaders. Among the many factors in this category, Gartner evaluates the number of new customers acquired, growth in SFA revenue, average SFA deal size, average contract duration and customer retention. Gartner also evaluates clients' satisfaction with contracting and negotiation processes.

- **Market Responsiveness and Track Record:** This criterion considers a vendor's ability to respond, change direction, be flexible and achieve competitive success as opportunities develop, competitors act, customer needs evolve and market dynamics change. We also consider the vendor's history of responsiveness to changing market demands. Gartner evaluates the quality and depth of the vendor's releases, and the ability to release functions requested by clients.

- **Marketing Execution:** The clarity, quality, creativity and efficacy of programs designed to deliver the organization's message to influence the market, promote the brand, increase awareness of products and establish a positive identification in the minds of customers. This "mind share" can be driven by a combination of publicity, promotional, thought

leadership, social media, referrals and sales activities. Gartner will measure the frequency and quality of the vendor's marketing techniques, including its use of publicity promotions, and thought leadership in social channels or print publications. Gartner will also evaluate the vendor's presence on the shortlists of Gartner's clients and the scope of available third-party solutions.

- **Customer Experience:** This criterion considers products and services and/or programs that enable customers to achieve anticipated results with the products evaluated — specifically, quality supplier/buyer interactions, technical support or account support. This may also include ancillary tools, customer support programs, availability of user groups and service-level agreements (SLAs). Feedback from active customers on generally available releases during the past 12 to 18 months is an important consideration. Sources of feedback include Gartner client inquiries and other customer-facing interactions, such as Gartner conferences, Peer Insights and research surveys. Customer experiences are evaluated based on the vendor's ability to help customers achieve positive business value, as well as sustained user adoption, quality implementation and ongoing support.

- **Operations:** The ability of the organization to meet goals and commitments. Factors include: quality of the organizational structure, skills availability, experiences, programs, systems and other vehicles that enable the organization to operate effectively and efficiently. Criteria include assessments of product upgrade processes, quality, scope, and breadth of peer user community/customer community.

Ability to Execute Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Weighting
Product or Service	High
Overall Viability	Medium
Sales Execution/Pricing	Medium
Market Responsiveness/Record	High

Evaluation Criteria	Weighting
Marketing Execution	Low
Customer Experience	High
Operations	Medium

Source: Gartner (August 2024)

Completeness of Vision

Gartner evaluates vendors on their ability to convincingly articulate logical statements. This includes current and future market direction, innovation, customer needs and competitive forces, as well as how well these statements map to Gartner's view of the market.

Market Understanding: This includes the ability to understand customer needs and translate them into products and services. Vendors that show a clear vision for their market listen, understand customer demands, and can shape or enhance market changes with this. Vendors must define how their SFA solutions improve clients' sales process execution and support sales effectiveness objectives. Vendors must also define their competitive differentiators, value proposition and the outcomes achieved by their clients. Vendors are also evaluated on their articulated and demonstrated ability to align with clients' customer experience, digital business and sales execution optimization objectives.

Marketing Strategy: In this category, we look for clear, differentiated messaging that is consistently communicated internally and externalized through social media, advertising, partner programs, systems integrators, customer programs and positioning statements. Vendors are evaluated on their segmentation strategies and how their solutions appeal to selling organizations in multiple verticals, as well as prospects with 50 or more sales sellers. If the vendor derives a significant percentage of its revenue from recurring revenue-based products, it must also have a customer-retention strategy.

Sales Strategy: In this category, we look primarily for a sound selling strategy that uses the appropriate direct/indirect sales strategy, as well as partners that extend the scope and depth of market reach, expertise, technologies, services and customer base. Vendors are

evaluated on their ability to sell to both business and IT stakeholders, as well as to the segments defined in the marketing strategy.

Offering (Product) Strategy: This category includes the vendor's approach to product development and delivery that emphasizes market differentiation, functionality, methodology and features, as they map to current and future requirements. Gartner assesses the vendor's product and packaging offerings. The vendor should not only demonstrate a product vision that accounts for core SFA functionality (as defined by the market's core capabilities), but also one that offers new application functionality across the breadth and depth of product capabilities. The latter consideration is critical for meeting the needs of a maturing market.

Subcapabilities include the vendor's vision for:

- Sales enablement functions, such as content management, sales training and coaching

- B2B and B2C digital commerce

- Digital sales rooms

- Sales effectiveness functions (e.g., CPQ or order management)

- Integration with third-party sales applications, although primary focus is on native functions

Business Model: In this category, we look for how the design, logic and execution of the organization's business proposition helps it achieve continued success. Vendors need to have clear business plans for how they will be successful in the SFA market. These business plans should include appropriate levels of investment to achieve profitability and healthy revenue growth during a three- to five-year period. Sales channels and partnership strategies are important components.

Vertical/Industry Strategy: In this category, we look for how the vendor deploys products to meet the specific needs of individual market segments, including verticals. Vendors will be evaluated on the scope of native-built applications that automate industry-specific sales processes in verticals such as financial services and life sciences. Vendors will also be evaluated on the scope of third-party partnerships with ISVs that offer industry-specific capabilities.

Innovation: This concerns direct, related, complementary and synergistic layouts of resources, expertise or capital for investment, consolidation, defensive or preemptive purposes. Vendors are evaluated on the quality of their enhancements and product releases. Vendors must show continued investment in improving core SFA features. They must also show growth in new areas such as improving sales execution, analytics, collaboration or new devices such as IoT; or new technology directions, such as digital business and bot-building functions to support multiexperience.

Geographic Strategy: We look at the vendor's strategy to direct resources, skills and offerings to meet the specific needs of geographies outside the "home" or native geography. This can be direct or through partners, channels and subsidiaries, as appropriate for that geography and market. Vendors will be evaluated on the percentage of employees allocated to the regions, as well as the depth and scope of partners available in those regions.

Completeness of Vision Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	*Weighting*
Market Understanding	High
Marketing Strategy	Medium
Sales Strategy	Medium
Offering (Product) Strategy	High
Business Model	Low
Vertical/Industry Strategy	Medium
Innovation	High
Geographic Strategy	Medium

Source: Gartner (August 2024)

Quadrant Descriptions

Leaders

Leaders have the ability to execute their vision through products, services and demonstrably solid business results, in the form of revenue and earnings. Leaders have significant successful worldwide customer deployments in a wide variety of industries, and with multiple proof points for deployments above 500 users. They demonstrate consistently above-average customer experience levels, product execution scores and sales execution scores.

They demonstrate product leadership, delivering new enhancements and innovations on a consistent schedule. They also provide thought leadership, showing customers and prospects how their SFA solutions improve sales execution and sales processes.

Challengers

Challengers are often larger than most (but not all) Niche Players, and demonstrate a higher volume of new business for SFA. They have the size to compete worldwide; however, in some cases, they may not be able to execute equally well in all geographies or segments. They often return stronger CX satisfaction scores. They understand the evolving needs of a sales organization, yet may not lead customers into new functional areas with a strong functional vision.

Challengers tend to have a good technology vision for architecture and other IT organizational considerations, but have not won over the top sales executives and/or application leaders in the IT organization.

Visionaries

Visionaries are ahead of most potential competitors in delivering innovative products and/or delivery models. They anticipate emerging and changing sales needs, and move the market into fresh areas with solutions that improve sales execution.

Visionaries have strong potential to influence the direction of the SFA market, but are limited in terms of execution and/or track record.

Niche Players

Niche Players offer products for SFA functionality, but may lack some functional components. Some may not show the ability to consistently handle deployments of more than 500 users across multiple geographies. Some may lack strong business execution in the SFA market, even if their core features are strong. These vendors may offer complete portfolios for a specific industry, but face challenges in one or more areas necessary to support cross-industry requirements, such as complex forecasting, or pricing and quotation features. They may have an inconsistent implementation track record, or they may lack the ability to support the requirements of large enterprises.

Niche Players often offer the best solutions for the needs of particular sales organizations or sales use cases.

Context

Given that there are more than 75 SFA vendors worldwide, the vendors in this research are a small part of the overall SFA vendor market. Hundreds more vendors provide basic contact management software, which is a subset of SFA. Dozens of vendors have built vertical-specific SFA solutions.

Because it is not possible to review every SFA provider, this Magic Quadrant evaluates SFA solutions that are broadly applicable to many differently sized sales organizations and verticals.

We place particular emphasis on vendors' core SFA capabilities, as described in the Market Definition/Description section of this Magic Quadrant. However, for the purpose of building as complete a picture as possible, we also evaluate their noncore SFA capabilities, such as sales engagement and sales enablement.

SFA means different things to different types of sales organizations:

- Product-driven, transactional sales organizations, such as those with short-cycle B2B sales, value the ability of its basic lead and opportunity management functions to reduce sales cycles and improve sales management visibility.

- Product and service organizations selling enterprisewide deals, such as long-cycle B2B sales organizations, value SFA's account management and forecasting. These

organizations often also value lead management, CPQ and sales content management systems. They often tie together proposals, bids, configurations and quotes with authorizations and order capture systems. Organizations operating in this space require granular forecasting and pipeline management features.

- Organizations engaged in relationship selling require SFA tools to manage their customer and prospect data, but also require sales enablement tools for content distribution and sales activity capture.

- Organizations that sell via indirect sales channels require PRM features.

Sales Organization Sizing

In this Magic Quadrant, Gartner refers to sales organization customer sizes or vendor target segments. We define these segments as follows:

- **Small business:** Fewer than 100 sales users

- **Midsize enterprise (MSE) or business:** 101 to 1,000 sales users

- **Large business:** 1,001 to 2,500 sales users

- **Enterprise:** More than 2,500 sales users

Market Overview

The SFA market grew 14.4% to an estimated $13.4 billion in 2023. Gartner continues to facilitate a large number of inquiries surrounding vendors and their capabilities. Most notably, Gartner inquiries have seen a significant shift into AI capabilities, with clients both learning and inquiring about sales AI use cases and where to anchor their platform investments.

Generative AI (GenAI) Continues to Lead the List of Capabilities Released but Is No Longer a Differentiator

GenAI is becoming a standard feature among SFA platform vendors, with all vendors in the Magic Quadrant now offering functions such as email generation, record and meeting summarizations, and conversational AI assistants augmented by large language models (LLMs). This trend signifies a shift toward deeper emphasis on AI-powered designer

experience studios, enabling the configuration and extension of sales AI use cases to enhance personalized experiences for sellers and managers. SFA platforms are on the brink of enabling agents to execute sales processes, as several vendors are investing in embedding AI agents for tasks such as prospecting or seller-roleplay assistants.

Functionality Trends

GenAI: All vendors in this report are heavily investing in AI-powered abilities that enhance core SFA functionalities. GenAI is being widely integrated for content generation, including automated email composition, meeting summaries, and sales collateral creation. AI-driven analytics and insights are becoming increasingly sophisticated, offering predictive forecasting, lead scoring, and opportunity analysis to guide sales strategies and improve decision-making.

User experience and productivity: There is a strong focus on improving user experience and productivity through AI-assisted automation and intelligent interfaces. This includes the development of AI assistants, virtual sales assistants, and conversational UIs that can understand and respond to natural language queries. These tools aim to streamline workflows, automate routine tasks, and provide contextual recommendations, allowing sales representatives to focus on high-value activities and relationship building.

Data unification: Vendors are emphasizing the importance of data unification and enrichment as a foundation for AI functions. There's a trend toward creating comprehensive customer data platforms that integrate data from multiple sources, including CRM, communication tools, and external data providers. This unified data approach, combined with advanced AI models, enables more accurate predictions, personalized insights, and a true 360-degree view of customers, enhancing the overall effectiveness of sales strategies and customer engagements.

⊕ Evaluation Criteria Definitions

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