



Association for
Talent Development

The Rise of AI in Sales Coaching

How AI-Enabled Coaching Transforms
Sales Teams



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Enable the future of revenue effectiveness with Highspot. Highspot is the leading platform for revenue enablement, helping companies drive consistent performance and accelerate growth.

Highspot equips go-to-market teams with the tools and insights they need to unify execution and drive revenue—from onboarding and training, sales coaching, content management and delivery, and analytics. Our platform combines powerful AI with a seamless user experience to streamline execution, personalize every buyer interaction, and scale rep performance like never before.

With Highspot, companies can:

- **Unify their go-to-market motion** with a single platform powered by connected content, training, coaching, and analytics.
- **Accelerate sales rep readiness** through AI-driven learning and coaching that transforms training into action.
- **Engage every buyer with precision**, using intelligent recommendations and real-time engagement insights.
- **Optimize performance** with real-time data and KPIs aligned to business outcomes.

Highspot is trusted by leading organizations like Adobe, Siemens, Okta, and Nvidia to drive revenue effectiveness at scale by connecting strategy to execution in a single platform. As AI reshapes the sales landscape, Highspot empowers go-to-market teams to stay ahead with seamless integration, enterprise-grade security, and the agility to grow revenue with confidence.

Note From the Sponsor



Sales coaching has always been a critical lever for driving revenue performance. But in today's complex, fast-paced market, traditional coaching methods no longer scale. Sales organizations are under immense pressure to equip reps with the skills, confidence, and agility they need to succeed—all while navigating shifting buyer expectations and tightening budgets.

That's where AI comes in. This research reveals how AI-powered coaching is already helping organizations boost performance and adapt quickly to changing buyer demands.

At Highspot, we believe coaching works best when it's connected to the broader enablement strategy. That's why our platform unifies coaching, training, content, and analytics—all powered by AI. We hope the insights from this report help guide your journey toward more effective, future-ready sales coaching.

By the Numbers

We know you are busy —so here is a summary of the most important takeaways from this report.

79%

Of respondents said their AI-enabled coaching improved the quality of customer interactions for their salespeople.

66%

Of organizations using AI-enabled coaching rated the ROI of their coaching program as good or excellent. Only 46% of organizations that use traditional coaching rated their ROI as good or excellent.

91%

Of organizations using AI-enabled coaching said their median salesperson met or exceeded their sales goals. Only 69% of organizations that use traditional coaching said their median salesperson met or exceeded their goals.

If you are already using AI-enabled sales coaching, be sure to communicate the positive impact it is making on your sales team and their goals. Your organizational leadership team will be interested in knowing that it was a good investment.

If you aren't using AI-enabled sales coaching, now is your opportunity to try it out. This doesn't mean that you need to get rid of your traditional coaching program—you can add AI-enabled sales coaching to supplement your coaching program. This report will give you additional information that will help you decide if AI-enabled sales coaching is the right fit for your team.

The Rise of AI in Sales Coaching

Sales teams today are under pressure, from longer sales cycles to buyer expectations. The most pressing challenges? A tough economy, stalled deals, and a widening gap between enablement and execution. One solution to support sales reps in overcoming these challenges is to offer coaching.

Coaching is a critical component to support salespeople. But coaching can come in different formats. Managers can provide it, external consultants can provide it, or it can come from digital software that leverages AI. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to coaching—therefore at your organization, you may find that some salespeople flourish with the help of AI-enabled coaching, whereas other sales reps prefer a human coach. Organizations may find that a combination of these different coaches is helpful to their sales team.



In this report, we will be exploring AI-enabled sales coaching, including its effectiveness, how it can support salespeople, how it can help managers, and the benefits of using AI-enabled sales coaching. We'll also compare organizations that use this software versus organizations that do not utilize it.

In this study, we had 214 respondents—approximately half used AI-enabled sales coaching and half did not. To be qualified to take the survey, they had to be employed and have a sales department, staff, or team.

Approximately half of organizations are using digital sales coaching software that leverages AI or machine learning.



*Question: Does your sales department, staff, or team use digital sales coaching software that leverages AI and/or machine learning?
(Question displayed to all participants)*

Common Challenges

It's difficult to be a salesperson. There are common challenges that salespeople face, no matter their organization size or industry. The most common challenge sales teams face is that it's a tough economy to sell in right now.

Knowing how to handle objections and concerns can be difficult as well, and this is the second most common challenge for salespeople.

Another challenge is the ability to add quality leads to the pipeline. Organizations don't just want leads, they want quality leads that will become prospects and then customers. This is why it's important to ask the right questions to qualify leads—which was another common challenge for salespeople.

Once a lead has become a customer, then organizations find it challenging to upsell customers to purchase additional products or upgrade their purchases.

One way that organizations are addressing these challenges is by implementing AI-enabled sales coaching.

Top 5 Sales Challenges



Question: What are the challenges affecting your sales staff? Please list your 3 biggest challenges.

The Impact of Using AI-Enabled Sales Coaching



AI-Enabled Coaching Is Effective

Nine in 10 organizations rated their digital sales coaching software that leverages AI or machine learning as somewhat or very effective. Interestingly, no one said their software was very ineffective.

The [advantages](#) of AI coaching include personalization at scale, real-time feedback, 24/7 accessibility, and cost effectiveness.

When salespeople have access to immediate feedback, 24/7, this can help them become better at their job. They don't have to wait until their manager is available to coach them—they can continuously be receiving coaching when they need it.



AI-Enabled Coaching Supports Salespeople

Coaching is an effective way to support the needs of salespeople. AI-enabled software can be an effective way to offer this support.

The most common way coaching is helping salespeople is with their productivity. Coaching can help sales reps learn how to prioritize tasks, break bad habits, and schedule their time more effectively.

Respondents said their sales coaching software helped sales reps increase conversion or win rates and that it's effective helping salespeople achieve sales goals. Earlier we mentioned that a third of organizations said this is a tough economy to sell in, so coaching that helps sales reps increase win rates and achieve sales goals is a helpful tool.

Top 5 Areas Sales Coaching Software Is Effective at Supporting Salespeople



Question: How effective (or ineffective) is your sales coaching software at supporting salespeople with the following? (Percentage that selected very or somewhat effective; Question displayed to participants who use AI-enabled coaching)

Respondents said AI-enabled coaching supports salespeople in qualifying leads by asking the right questions. This was a challenge for a quarter of organizations, so utilizing coaching for this purpose may alleviate this problem in the future.

Respondents said AI-enabled coaching is somewhat or very effective at improving self-confidence of their sales reps. According to the [American Management Association](#), the most important determinant of sales success is self-confidence. If AI-enabled coaching can help salespeople be more confident, this can help them be better sales reps.



AI-Enabled Coaching Can Improve the Employee, Manager, and Customer Experience

AI-enabled sales coaching is a useful tool to improve the sales process.

Nearly four in five respondents said the quality of their customer interactions improved with the use of AI-enabled coaching. Earlier we noted that handling customer objections was the second most common challenge for sales teams, so being able to improve the quality of customer interactions means that sales reps can better respond to concerns.

More than three-quarters of respondents said the use of digital sales coaching improved the amount of time managers had to spend on coaching. By using AI-enabled coaching, this gives managers more time to create sales strategies.

73 percent of respondents said AI-enabled coaching can help improve the onboarding process for new salespeople. An effective [onboarding](#) can pave the way to having employees who are comfortable and committed to their organization.

Sales coaching has made an impact on the quality of customer interactions at most organizations.



Question: How has your sales coaching software affected the following? (Percent that selected significantly or somewhat improved; Question displayed to participants who use AI-enabled coaching)

Some Organizations Are Using Data to Communicate the Impact of AI-Enabled Coaching

Although some organizations are using data from their digital sales coaching software, there is room for improvement.

Two-thirds of organizations said they use data from their sales coaching software to make business decisions and nearly the same amount measure the effectiveness of their sales coaching software. Important sales metrics to track include exceeding quota attainment, deal size, frequency of upsells, among other sales data. Important coaching metrics include promotion rates, retention, and performance reviews.

It's important to collect data to understand the impact of the coaching program, but it's also important to communicate the findings. Only 62 percent of organizations communicate about the impact of their sales coaching software. In a recent [ATD research study](#), it was found that written reports, oral presentations, dashboards, and scorecards are common ways that organizations communicate evaluation results to stakeholders.

Some organizations are good or excellent at using data and communicating about the impact of sales coaching software.



Question: Please rate your organization's proficiency at the following. (Percent that selected good or excellent)

The Benefits of Using Sales Coaching Software

Organizations that use AI-enabled coaching software experience many benefits.

The most common benefit is that it improved the overall sales team performance. This includes win rates, deal size, quota attainment, and other sales metrics. Another benefit of this software was that it increases salespeople productivity and efficiency.

Another benefit that sales teams experienced was that the software generates helpful insights and analytics for the salespeople. As noted earlier, two-thirds of organizations are using this data to make business decisions.

Some respondents said the use of AI-enabled coaching reduced the workload of sales managers. This gives sales managers more time to focus on analyzing sales data for their team, while developing sales strategies.

Top 5 Benefits of Using Sales Coaching Software



Question: What are the top 3 benefits of using sales coaching software? (Percent that each response as a top 3 benefit; Question displayed to participants who use AI-enabled coaching)

Barriers to Implementing AI- Enabled Coaching



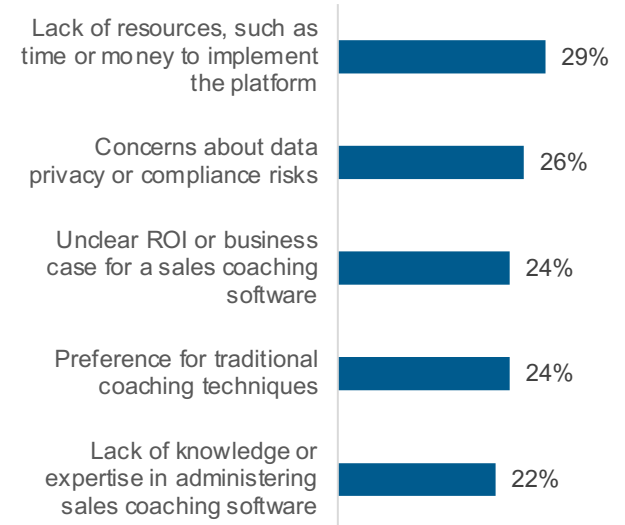
Some Organizations Don't Use Sales Coaching That Leverages AI

Approximately half of organizations said they aren't using AI-enabled sales coaching software. The most common reasons for not using it are a lack of resources to implement the platform. These resources could involve time to implement a new software or the budget to purchase new software.

Organizations are also cautious about implementing AI, which leads to concerns about data privacy and compliance risks. Organizations should always check with their IT and compliance departments before implementing AI-enabled software.

Some organizations prefer traditional coaching techniques over AI-enabled coaching software. These organizations may find that a blend of traditional coaching and AI-enabled coaching might be beneficial. This would allow the employees to receive the benefits of emotional intelligence provided by the human coach, with the around-the-clock availability of the AI-enabled coach.

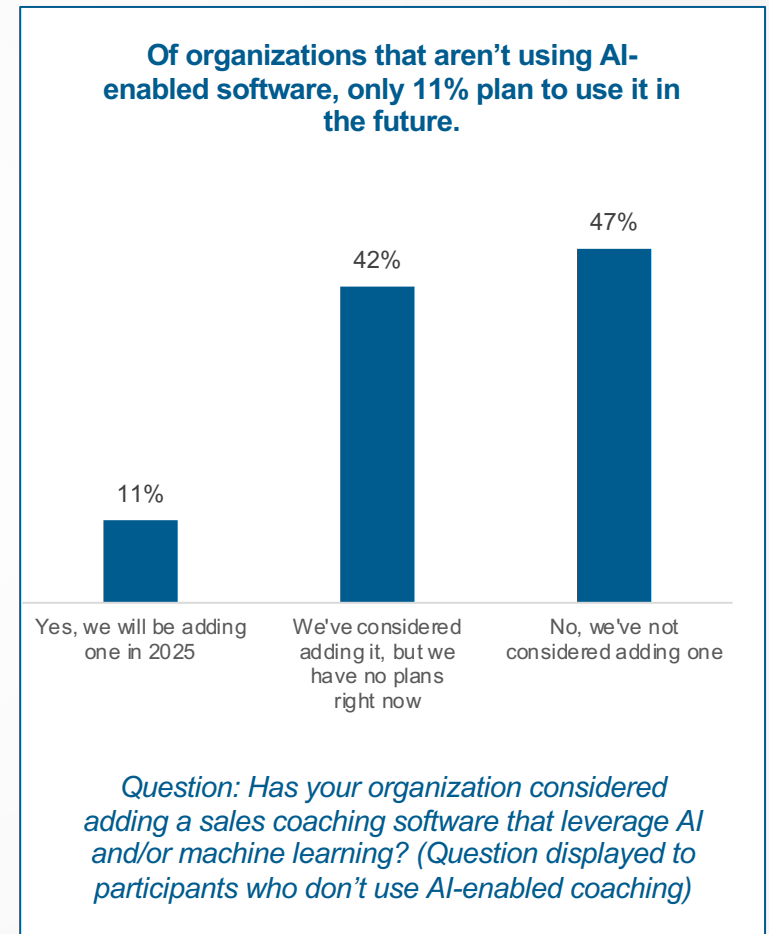
The most common reason organizations aren't using digital sales coaching is because of a lack of resources.



Question: What are some of the reasons why your organization does not offer digital sales coaching that leverages AI and/or machine learning? Select all that apply. (Percent that selected each response as a reason they don't use digital sales coaching; Question displayed to participants who don't use AI-enabled coaching)

Future Use of AI-Enabled Coaching

Organizations may have hesitations in implementing AI-enabled coaching, but 11 percent plan to add it in the next year. Forty-two percent said they are considering it but have no plans to implement it currently. Nearly half said they do not plan to use AI-enabled coaching.



A Comparative Analysis of AI-Enabled Coaching and Traditional Coaching



Organizations Using AI-Enabled Sales Coaching Are Seeing the Benefits

Organizations that are using AI-enabled sales coaching are benefiting.

Engagement is higher for organizations using AI-enabled sales coaching. Eighty-four percent of organizations using AI-enabled sales coaching rated their sales team engagement as good or excellent compared to only 60 percent of organizations using traditional coaching methods.

Retention is higher for organizations using AI-enabled sales coaching. Seventy-nine percent of organizations using AI-enabled sales coaching rated their retention as good or excellent compared to only 63 percent of organizations using traditional coaching methods.

Sales teams that are using AI-enabled coaching are rated better at using their new skills. Seventy-eight percent of organizations using AI-enabled sales coaching rated the use of their new skills as good or excellent compared to 49 percent of organizations using traditional coaching methods.

Interestingly, there were no differences in customer satisfaction. The differences appear to be limited to the sales team, and not to the customers.

Differences Between Organizations Using AI-Enabled Coaching and Those That Aren't

	Using AI Sales Coaching	Not Using AI Sales Coaching
Customer/client satisfaction	84%	83%
Sales team engagement	84%*	60%
Sales team retention	79%*	63%
Sales team using the skills acquired during coaching	78%*	49%
Productivity of sales team	75%*	56%
ROI of the coaching program	66%*	46%

Question: Please rate the following at your organization. (Percent that selected excellent or good; Question displayed to all participants)

** Items where organizations using AI sales coaching are statistically significantly different than those that do not.*

Using AI-Enabled Sales Coaching Helped Salespeople Exceed Their Sales Goals

In terms of performance, this research asked respondents to indicate whether their median salesperson met or exceeded their sales goal in the last full fiscal year. If an organization's median salesperson met their sales goal, it means most of its salespeople were also meeting their sales goals. Likewise, if the median person failed to meet their sales goal, at least half of the organization's salespeople were not meeting their sales goals either.

More than 90 percent of salespeople met or exceeded their sales goals when an organization used AI-enabled sales coaching. This fell to 69 percent for organizations that used traditional coaching methods.

Salespeople that use AI-enabled coaching are meeting (or exceeding) their sales goals.		
	Using AI Sales Coaching	Not Using AI Sales Coaching
Exceeded goal	20%	8%
Met goal	71%*	61%
Did not meet goal	9%*	31%
<i>Question: Did your organization's median salesperson hit their sales goal in the last full fiscal year? (Question displayed to all participants)</i>		
<i>* Items where organizations using AI sales coaching are statistically significantly different than those that do not.</i>		

Conclusion and Next Steps

AI coaching isn't a tool, it's a turning point. It's how the best teams are equipping reps, empowering managers, and turning enablement into impact. The question is no longer “should we adopt it?” but ‘how ‘fast can we make it work for us.’

But not every organization is ready to adopt AI-enabled sales coaching. These organizations have legitimate concerns about data privacy and compliance. They may also have salespeople that prefer traditional coaching techniques. Organizations may find that a combination of AI-enabled sales coaching, along with traditional coaching will provide their salespeople with the support they need to meet and exceed their sales goals.

With all the data presented in this report, you might be asking yourself, now what? How do I use this data to help make decisions at my organization that will improve the employee and manager experience for the sales team? Here are a few recommendations:



Try out AI-enabled coaching.

If you aren't already using AI-enabled sales coaching software, consider adding it to your catalog of talent development and training tools. This doesn't mean that you need to discard your traditional coaching program—this can be a nice supplement that enhances your traditional coaching program.



Use the insights. If you are using AI-enabled sales coaching software, dig into the data and analytics that it provides. Use this information to make data-informed decisions within the organization.



Communicate the results.

Communicate with stakeholders about the benefits of using AI-enabled coaching. Talk to senior leaders about how it has improved the sales team. They want to know that an investment into talent development is garnering positive results.

Demographics of Respondents (N = 214)

Span of Control of Respondent	
Executive	11%
Director	37%
People manager	20%
Project lead	18%
Individual contributor	12%
Other	2%

Top 5 Industries	
Manufacturing	11%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	37%
Finance and Insurance	20%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	18%
Construction	12%

Organization Size	
1 to 99 employees	24%
100 to 2,499 employees	47%
2,500 to 9,999 employees	13%
10,000 or more employees	16%

Headquarter Location	
Africa/Middle East	1%
Canada	3%
Headquarter Location	1%
USA	95%



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