



The Global Sales Capability Index 2026

A cross-industry benchmark of sales execution quality.

Built on 500,000+ sales capability data points linked directly to revenue outcomes.

500K+

CAPABILITY DATA POINTS

45

COUNTRIES

6

YEARS





Foreword

The first global benchmark of sales execution quality, linked directly to revenue outcomes

AI can increase sales capacity. It cannot improve execution quality.

Sales teams can measure everything from activity, pipeline, to revenue. But they still cannot answer a more important question:

How well are we actually executing?

CRM shows what happened. It does not show why. This Index was built to close that gap.

Based on 500,000+ sales capability data points, across 45 countries and multiple B2B industries, the findings are clear:

- **76% of reps overestimate** their execution quality
- **Top performers are up to 6x** more likely to hit quota
- Continuous measurement drives sustained improvement

The Global Sales Capability Index introduces a new standard: Measuring sales execution quality linked directly to revenue outcomes.



Ash Ali & Matt Milligan
Co-Founders, Uhubs.ai



How this Index measures sales execution

Not activity volume. Not pipeline coverage. The quality of how reps convert opportunity into revenue.

$$\text{Sales Execution Score} = \text{Capability} + \text{Behaviour} + \text{Results}$$

CAPABILITY

Leading indicator

How well-equipped is this rep to execute?

Dual-scored assessment across role-specific competencies. Rep and manager score independently. The composite (0–100) reveals skill level and perception accuracy.

Includes: prospecting, objection handling, time management, strategy, negotiation, market acumen.

BEHAVIOUR

Real-time indicator

What is this rep actually doing in live selling situations?

Call analysis, AI role-play performance, and observed deal behaviours. Captures what happens between the capability assessment and the CRM outcome.

Coming in the next edition.

RESULTS

Lagging indicator

What did the CRM record?

Quota attainment, win rate, deal size, and pipeline velocity. Confirms whether execution quality translated into commercial outcomes.

Results tell you what happened. They do not tell you why — or what to change.



This edition measures execution through Capability and Results — the leading and lagging indicators that carry the most diagnostic weight. Behaviour scores will be incorporated in the next edition to complete the picture.



Five Indices. One Benchmark.

Each index measures a different dimension of sales execution quality.

76%

The Perception Gap

of sales professionals rate their own capability higher than their manager does.

6x

The Performance Multiplier

top-tier reps are more likely to hit quota than bottom-tier peers.

1.6x

The Alignment Effect

higher quota attainment in teams where manager and rep scores converge.

4.6x

The Skills Mismatch

more weaknesses in execution skills than interpersonal skills.

29%

The Measurement Dividend

of underperformers later achieved quota targets with continuous measurement.



Higher capability reps outperform across every revenue metric

Execution quality influences win rate, deal size, and quota attainment simultaneously.

6x more likely to hit quota.

+20% win rate

+18% deal size

CAPABILITY SCORE	% HITTING QUOTA	WIN RATE	DEAL SIZE
75+ Top tier	81%	+20% above team avg	+18% above team avg
65-75 Above average	47%	-3% vs team avg	-2%vs team avg
55-65 Below average	23%	-6% vs team avg	-3% vs team avg
<55 Bottom tier	13%	-11% below team avg	-20% below team avg



Your middle tier is your largest revenue lever. The question is whether you're investing there or spending to backfill what better execution would have closed.



The commercial case for lifting capability vs adding headcount

Illustrative scenario: 50-rep team | £500K quota per rep | £25M total quota capacity

LIFT CAPABILITY

20 mid-tier reps (score 55–65)
Currently at 23% quota attainment

Lift to above-average (65–75) → 47% attainment

Additional revenue attained:
 $20 \times £500K \times (47\% - 23\%)$

+ £2.4M

HIRE TO FILL THE GAP

To generate the same £2.4M
New hire Y1 attainment: ~40%

Reps required: 12 new hires

Year 1 fully loaded cost:
Salary + recruiting + ramp + attrition risk

£1.2M+

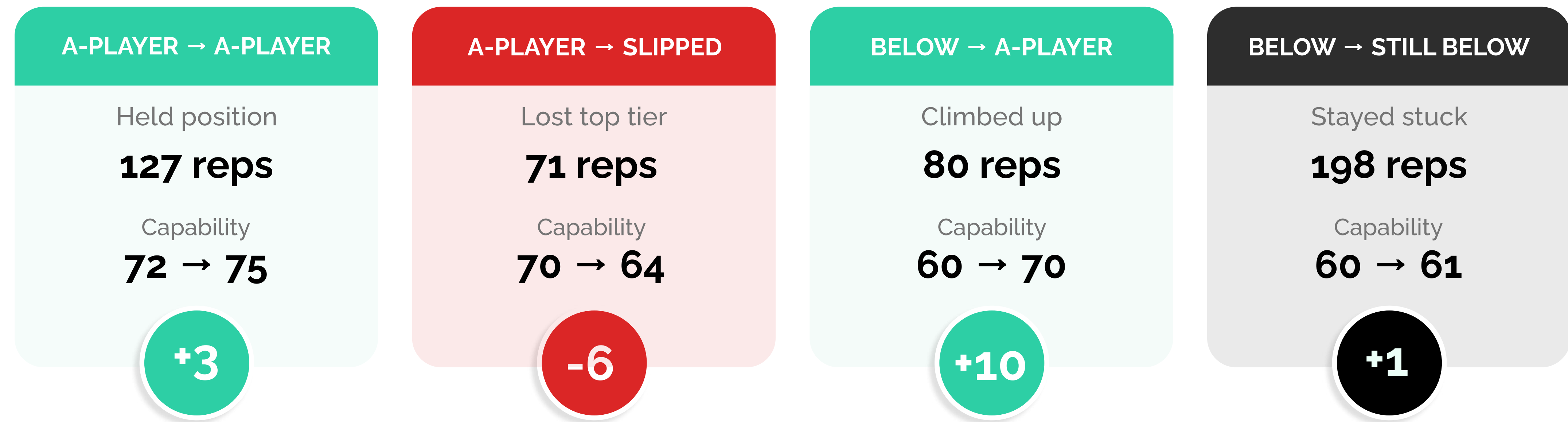



A 10-point capability lift in your middle tier can deliver the revenue equivalent of 12 new hires — without the ramp time, attrition cost, or management overhead. The question is not whether to invest. It is where the faster return sits.



Capability moves first. Quota follows.

Tracking hundreds of reps across multiple capability assessment cycles. The reps whose CRM outcomes changed the most also had the biggest capability score changes and the capability change came first.



 If you're waiting for the CRM to flag a struggling rep, you're six months late. Capability data gives you the signal in time to act on it.

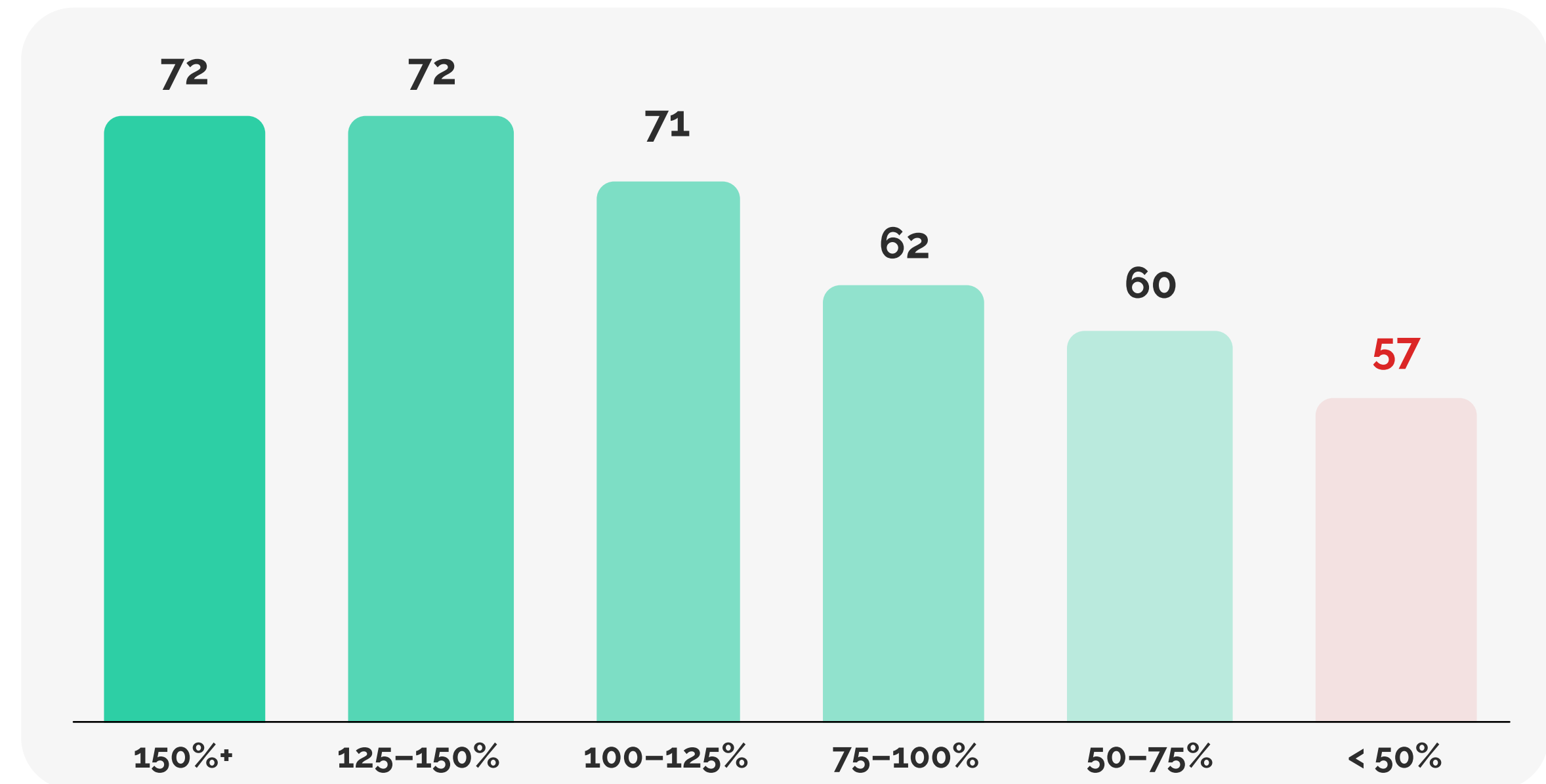


Capability assessment scores are a consistent leading indicator of quota attainment

The relationship holds across industries, geographies, and role types within the dataset.

72 vs **57**

Composite pulse score:
above-quota vs below-50% reps



Run your next pipeline review with capability scores alongside deal data. The reps with the weakest scores are sitting on the pipeline most likely to slip.



Sales capacity is expanding. Sales execution quality remains unmeasured.

AI agents address time spent selling. They do not address the quality of what happens when reps sell.

CAPACITY

60%

of rep time is spent on non-selling activities. 54% of sales organisations have deployed AI agents to reclaim it.

EXECUTION QUALITY

76%

of reps cannot accurately assess their own execution quality. More pipeline delivered to under-skilled reps produces more unqualified pipeline.



AI is giving your reps more time to sell. If execution quality stays the same, you're scaling mediocrity faster. More pipeline through under-skilled reps produces more unqualified pipeline.



About the dataset

The largest dual-scored sales capability dataset linked directly to quota outcomes.

500k+

Sales capability data points

80+

Sales competencies benchmarked

30+

Role types assessed

45

Countries represented

6

Years of continuous data

18k

Qualitative responses



CONFIDENTIALITY: All findings are cross-company aggregates. No individual company, team, or person is identifiable.

Company-specific benchmarks are available only to the participating organisation.



Part 1

The Sales Illusion

How self-perception diverges from reality across sales organisations

76% of professionals rate their own execution higher than their manager does.



76% of sales professionals overestimate their own execution quality

When manager and reps scores diverge, development investment is misdirected.

76%

overrate themselves

76% rate themselves higher than their manager does

23% underrate themselves (manager scores higher)

<1% are accurately calibrated with their manager



Three quarters of your team rate themselves higher than their manager does. Self-assessment is valuable, but only when paired with manager scoring. The gap between the two is the diagnostic. Without both inputs, you're coaching against one side of the picture.



The perception gap is widest among the lowest-performing reps

Reps below 50% of quota rate themselves higher than mid-performers — consistent with the Dunning-Kruger effect in sales.

5X

wider perception gap
in bottom vs top performers

Target Attainment	Self Score	Manager Score	Gap
<50%	5.77	4.99	0.78
50-75%	5.16	4.43	0.73
75-100%	5.21	4.68	0.53
100-125%	5.34	4.96	0.38
125-150%	5.11	4.96	0.15
150%+	5.65	5.28	0.37



Your lowest performers are the most confident in their own ability. If you're asking underperformers what they need to improve, expect the wrong answer.



The largest perception gaps in Account Executives are in Prospecting and Objection Handling

The competencies AEs overrate most are also the ones that separate top performers from the rest.

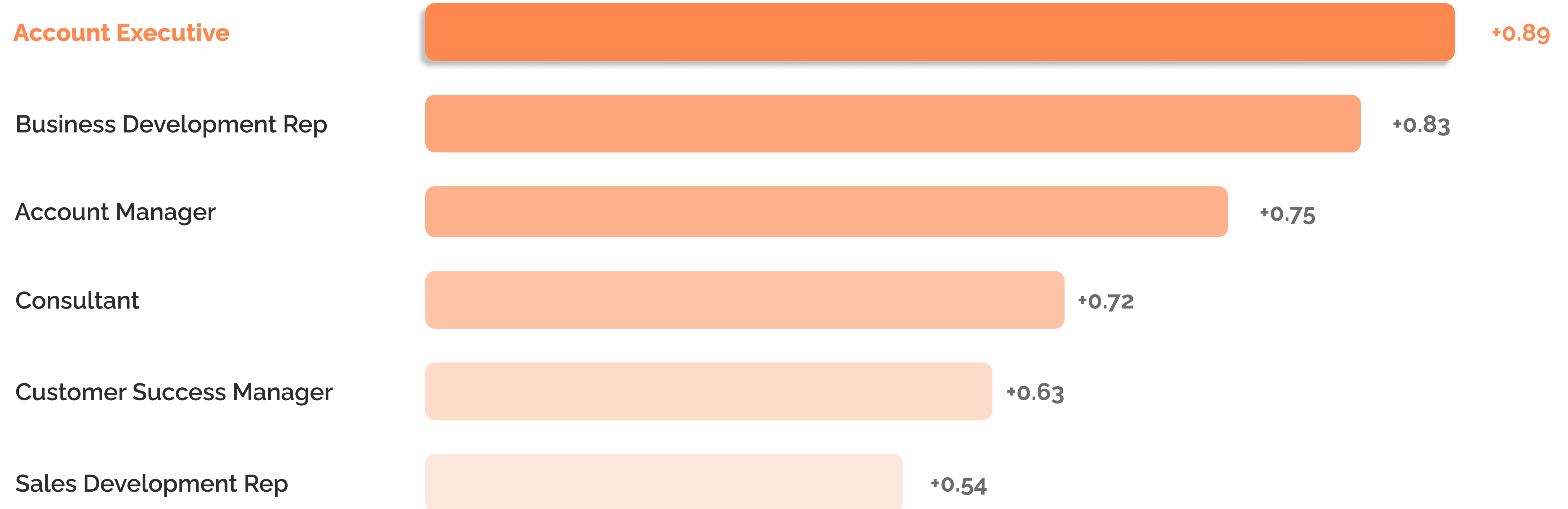


Your AEs think they're strong at prospecting and objection handling. Their managers disagree, and the data says these are the competencies that separate quota from miss.

Perception accuracy varies systematically by role type



Roles with less frequent objective performance feedback develop larger perception gaps.



SDRs get constant objective feedback. AEs don't. The less structured the signal, the wider the perception gap and the harder it is to coach against the right things.



If teams cannot **accurately assess**
their **own execution**, how are they
deciding **what to improve?**



Part 2

The Misdiagnosis

Where organisations invest in development vs where the gaps actually are

Execution skill deficits outnumber
interpersonal deficits by **4.6x**



Execution skill deficits are the dominant capability gap.

Most development programmes over-index on interpersonal skills, where teams are already strongest.

IDENTIFIED STRENGTHS

- 50%** Interpersonal / Soft skills
- 30%** Execution / Commercial skills
- 20%** Other

4.6x

IDENTIFIED WEAKNESSES

- 64%** Execution / Commercial skills
- 14%** Interpersonal / Soft skills
- 22%** Other

Rank	Top Strength	Top Weakness	Top Blindspot
1	Growth Mindset & Drive	Time Management	Objection Handling
2	Team Collaboration	Prospecting	Growth Mindset
3	Rapport & Relationship	Strategy & Methodology	Prospecting



Most enablement budgets over-invest in interpersonal skills where teams are already strong. The actual gaps are in time management, prospecting, and strategy. Check where yours is going.



Part 3

Performance Drivers

The specific execution habits that drive repeatable performance

Execution excellence is the primary differentiator of top-tier revenue performance.



The capability gap in win rate persists across every company

Relative performance differences remain consistent regardless of baseline win rates (representative data for illustration purposes)

	COMPANY AVERAGE	TOP TIER (75+)	BOTTOM TIER (<55)	GAP
Company A	12%	17%	10%	+7pp
Company B	24%	30%	18%	+12pp
Company C	29%	30%	25%	+5pp
Company D	38%	37%	34%	+3pp
Company E	44%	41%	38%	+3pp
Company F	53%	79%	51%	+28pp

THE CONSISTENT PATTERN

Across all companies, top-capability reps win at

120%

of their company's average

Bottom-capability reps win at

89%

of their company's average



This pattern holds in every company in the dataset. An 8-point win rate gap across 100 opportunities is the difference between 30 and 22 closed deals per rep per year. Multiply that by your team size.



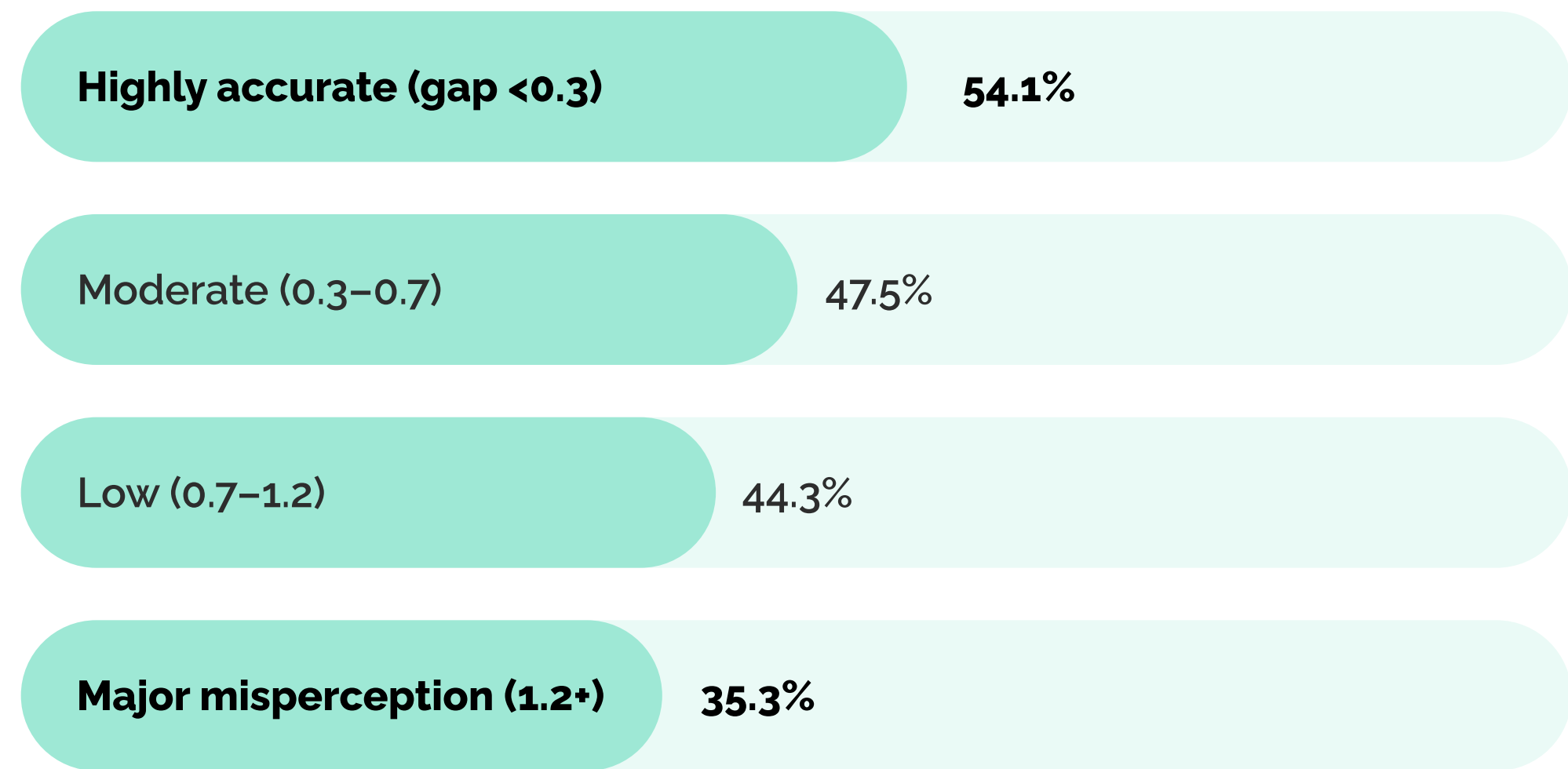
Self-perception accuracy is directly associated with quota attainment

The gap between self-score and manager score predicts performance independently of absolute skill level.

1.5X

higher quota attainment for self-aware reps vs those with major misperception

Perception Accuracy & % Achieving Quota



Reps who can accurately self-assess hit quota at 1.5x the rate of those who can't. Self-awareness isn't a soft skill. It's a performance predictor you should be measuring.



The competencies that differentiate top performers are execution habits, not closing skills

Across all three major role types, the performance delta is in repeatable discipline.

AEs

Growth Mindset: +11.9

Time Management: +10.4

Prospecting: +10.2

SDRs

Objection Handling: +8.4

Market Knowledge: +7.7

Rapport Building: +6.6

CS/AMs

Account Expansion: +18.4

Negotiation: +14.5

Strategy: +13.7



The performance gap isn't closing ability. It's prospecting consistency, time discipline, and pipeline hygiene. These are coachable habits, not innate talent. Coach accordingly.



Early performance trajectory is the strongest predictor of long-term quota attainment

Reps who are not approaching quota by month 12 rarely recover to sustained attainment.

Month 0–6

Ramp period

Coaching intensity should peak

Month 6–12

Critical trajectory window.

Skill gates should be applied

Month 12+

Decision point

Late recovery is statistically rare



If a rep isn't approaching quota by month 12, the data says late recovery is statistically rare. Make month 12 a formal decision point, not an informal hope that things will turn around.



The relationship between experience and performance varies significantly by role

Tenure is a positive signal for account management roles and a neutral-to-negative signal for acquisition roles.

CS / Account Managers

Performance improves steadily with tenure, reaching above-quota attainment at approximately 5 years.

AEs / SDRs

Performance plateaus after 2–3 years. Additional experience does not correlate with further improvement.



For AEs and SDRs, performance plateaus after 2 to 3 years. You may be paying for experience that is no longer improving results. Tenure is not a proxy for execution quality.



Experience improves strategic capability, but weakens execution discipline.

Manager-rated scores across experience bands reveal a divergent pattern.

SKILLS THAT IMPROVE WITH EXPERIENCE

- ▲ Negotiation: +0.66
- ▲ Strategy & Methodology: +0.64
- ▲ Market Acumen: +0.47
- ▲ Product Acumen: +0.45

SKILLS THAT ERODE WITH EXPERIENCE

- ▼ Growth Mindset & Drive: -0.44
- ▼ Time Management: -0.21
- ▼ Prospecting: -0.13



Your most experienced reps are getting better at strategy and worse at the execution habits most correlated with quota. They can't see it happening, and their growing perception gap means they won't ask for help.



If **execution drives performance**,
why are teams still coached against
the **wrong competencies**?



Part 4

The Management Gap

How manager–rep alignment and coaching direction affect quota attainment

Aligned teams are **1.6*** more likely to achieve target.



Manager–rep alignment is the strongest manager-level predictor of quota

When manager and rep' scores converge, quota attainment increases by 1.6x.

1.6x

52.1% vs 33.3% quota attainment

Alignment Level	% Achieving Quota
Highly aligned (≤ 0.3)	52.1%
Well aligned (0.3–0.6)	46.4%
Moderate gap (0.6–1.0)	37.0%
Misaligned (1.0+)	33.3%



Aligned teams hit quota at 1.6x the rate of misaligned ones. If you don't know where your managers' perception gaps are, you don't know which teams are being coached against the wrong priorities.




Coaching volume is not associated with performance outcomes. Coaching direction is.

Underperformers rate their manager's coaching quality higher than top performers do.

Metric	Below 50% of target	100–125% of target
Coaching quality	5.23	5.12
Feedback quality	5.40	5.31
Manager connection	5.30	5.17

The largest skill gaps between top and bottom performers are in Prospecting, Strategy, and Market Acumen, not relationship building or Product knowledge.

 Underperformers actually rate their coaching higher than top performers do. The issue isn't how much coaching is happening. It's whether it's aimed at the competencies that actually move quota.



Priority skill investment by role, ranked by correlation to quota attainment

The skill combination per role with the highest expected impact on quota, based on cross-company data.

AE

**Time Management +
Prospecting**

+10.4 and +10.2 point gap
between top and bottom.

SDR

**Objection Handling +
Qualification**

+8.4 point gap.
Most frequently self-identified.

CS/AM

**Negotiation +
Account Expansion**

+14.5 and +18.4 point gap.
Largest commercial upside.



top running the same enablement across all roles. AEs need time management and prospecting. SDRs need objection handling. CS/AMs need negotiation and expansion. The highest ROI investment is narrow and role specific.



Part 5

Performance Signals

Behavioural and language patterns that precede quota outcomes

Bottom performers use scarcity language
at **4.3*** the rate of top performers.



Language patterns in self-reported performance attributions predict quota outcomes

Top performers describe actions taken. Underperformers describe resources lacking.

TOP PERFORMER LANGUAGE

- "closed big deals" (+2.78)
- "good pipeline" (+1.66)
- "sales strategy" (+1.14)

4.3x

UNDERPERFORMER LANGUAGE

- "not enough pipeline" (-5.21)
- "lack of leads" (-2.38)
- "ramping up" (-1.34)

Pattern	Top	Bottom	Ratio
Scarcity language	3.0%	13.0%	4.3*
External attribution	4.5%	8.5%	1.9x
Focus / prioritisation	13.8%	6.7%	2.1x
Relationship ownership	8.7%	2.9%	3.0x



Bottom performers use scarcity language at 4.3x the rate of top performers. If your coaching conversations aren't shifting language from 'not enough pipeline' to 'how I'm building pipeline,' the mindset isn't changing.



Crushers talk about what they did. Below-target reps talk about what happened.

Thematic analysis of over 4000 open-text responses to: "What are the main reasons for your performance last quarter?"

QUOTA CRUSHERS (125% +)

3.7x

more likely to attribute success to their own effort and discipline

THEY SAY THINGS LIKE :

"Strong relationship with clients and perseverance."

"Careful ICP selection and following all the proven sales steps."

"Time to create a quality pipeline."

BELOW TARGET (<75%)

70%

more likely to attribute results to external circumstances

THEY SAY THINGS LIKE :

"Cancellations out of my control due to bankruptcy, discontinued product."

"Lot of deals got stalled. Macro economic uncertainty."

"Didn't understand how to identify leads."

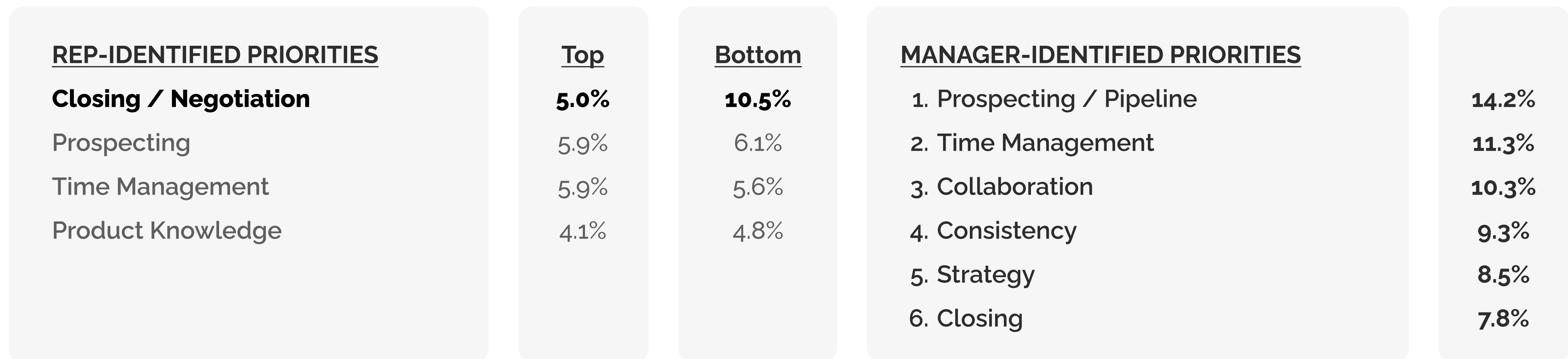


Listen to how your reps explain their quarter. The ones talking about what they did are outperforming the ones talking about what happened to them. Locus of control is coachable, but only if you're listening for it.



Reps and managers identify different development priorities. Both are partially correct.

Neither perspective alone produces accurate enablement planning. Triangulation with performance data is required.



Top performers request closing support at half the rate of bottom performers (5.0% vs 10.5%). They have already resolved that execution gap.



Neither reps nor managers alone produce an accurate picture of development needs. If your enablement plan is built from one input source, it's structurally incomplete.



If performance is **measurable**,
why is it not being **managed** that way?



Part 6

The Recovery Mechanism

How sustained measurement correlates with performance improvement

29% of under-performers subsequently achieved quota with continuous measurement.



29% of underperformers subsequently achieved quota. Only with continuous measurement.

One-off diagnostics produce awareness. Sustained measurement produces behaviour change.

29%

recovery and capability improvement data

Measurement Cycles	Avg Improvement Per Cycle
2 cycles	+2.3 points
3 cycles	+5.3 points
4+ cycles (smaller cohort)	+2.7 points

Among those who recovered, capability scores shifted from approximately 55 to 69 a measurable capability gain that preceded the revenue improvement.



29% of underperformers later hit quota. A single diagnostic is powerful for baselining where your team stands. Ongoing measurement cadence is what tracks whether upskilling and training are actually working.



Organisations that measure continuously improve. Those that measure once do not.

Company-level data confirms the individual pattern: sustained measurement correlates with sustained improvement.

3X

more improvement for organisations with 4+ measurement cycles

Measurement Cycles	Avg Improvement
1 cycle	0.0 points
2-3 cycles	+1.0 points
4+ cycles (continuous)	+2.9 points



Organisations with 4+ measurement cycles improved at 3x the rate of those that measured once. A baseline diagnostic tells you where to invest. Continuous measurement tells you whether the investment is producing measurable capability change.



Part 7

The Sales Excellence Gap

Sales organisations measure activity.

They measure pipeline.

They measure revenue.

They do not measure execution quality.

This is the gap between knowing what happened and understanding why.



Sales performance is measured through outputs, not execution quality

This Index introduces a structured, dual-scored framework for assessing how well reps actually execute, linked to revenue outcomes.

What organisations measure today

- Activity metrics (calls, meetings, emails)
- Pipeline coverage and stage progression
- Revenue and quota attainment

What this Index measures

- Self-perception accuracy (the blindspot)
- Manager-assessed execution quality
- The gap between perception and reality
- Direct linkage to quota outcomes and sales velocity metrics

Future editions of this Index will incorporate a composite Sales Excellence Score: a single, defensible metric for execution quality.



You measure activity, pipeline, and revenue. You do not measure the execution quality that produces them. That gap is why you can see what happened but not diagnose why, or predict what will.



Sales teams do not fail due to **lack of effort** or **tools**. They fail due to **limited visibility** into **execution quality**.

This Index introduces a measurable standard for sales excellence.

Methodology



The Global Sales Capability Index | First Edition | April 2026

Data Collection

Dual-scored capability inputs completed independently by sales professionals and their direct managers. Conducted quarterly as part of each organisation's enablement process. Classification is contextual, set within each organisation's own quota structure and role expectations. Future editions will include further behaviour scores through calls and AI role plays.

Scoring

1–7 scale, normalised to 0–100 composite index. Perception gap = self score minus manager score.

Performance Linkage

Quota attainment at time of measurement across standardised bands (<50%, 50–75%, 75–100%, 100–125%, 125–150%, 150%+) + sales velocity metrics.

Scale

500,000+ dual-scored assessments collected over six years across multiple industries and 45 countries.

Performance Quadrants

	High Capability	Low Capability
Above Quota	Proven Performers	Quota at Risk
Below Quota	Untapped Potential	Development Priority



CONFIDENTIALITY: All findings are cross-company aggregates. No individual company, team, or person is identifiable. Participating organisations are not named. Company-specific benchmarks are available only to the participating organisation. Raw data is never shared externally.



Turn Sales Potential Into Revenue Performance

