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Needles and Haystacks: Which GTM Practices are Actually Best Practice?
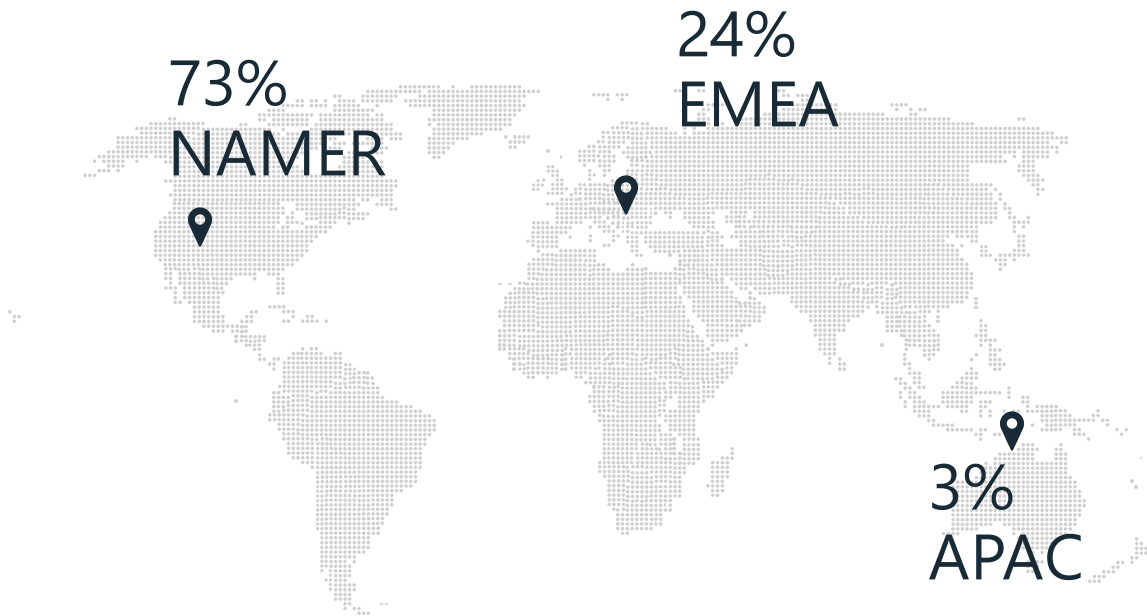
Jeremey Donovan
EVP, Sales & CS Center of Excellence

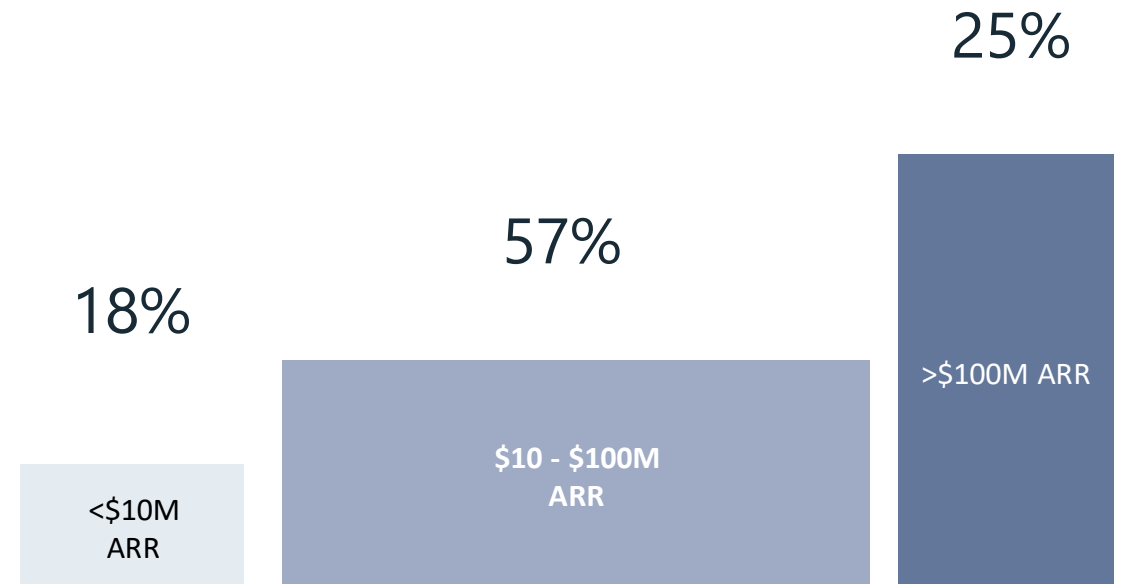# There is so much GTM advice and all of it seems reasonable on the surface

So, we engaged 106 companies to complete Insight's Revenue Maturity Assessment to determine which practices lead to better performance
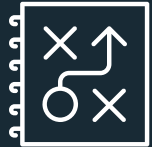
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Companies by Regions (%)

73%
NAMER

24%
EMEA

3%
APAC

Companies by ARR (%)

18%

57%

25%

<$10M ARR

$10 - $100M ARR

>$100M ARR

We considered 85 GTM practices across 9 categories

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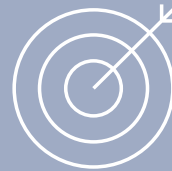
1. Go-To-Market Strategy	4. Sales Compensation & Quota	7. Technology & Data Governance
2. Sales Process	5. Pipeline & Forecast	8. Hiring & Talent Management
3. Customer Success & Support Process	6. Sales Leadership & Team Effectiveness	9. Order-To-Cash

First, companies self-rated their performance relative to competition

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How has your company performed relative to your closest competitor over the last 12 months?

Much Worse · Somewhat Worse · About the Same · Somewhat Better · Much Better
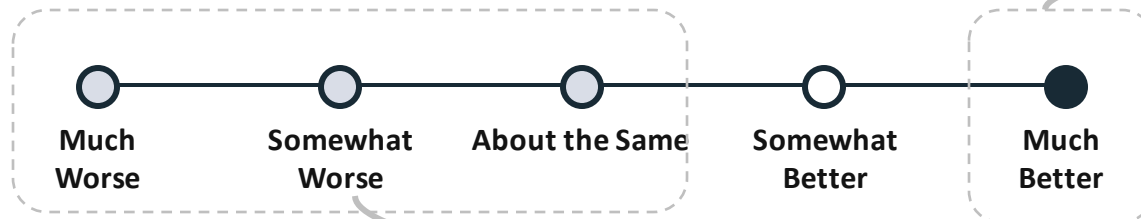
Top Performers

Lower Performers

Top vs Lower Performers analyzed on following slide...

Then we use the gap between self-stated top & lower performers to identify *differentiated* GTM best practice in each GTM activity

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How we calculated the best practice gap

We actively manage partner channel conflict using rules of engagement and systems (e.g., deal registration)

Strongly Disagree **(1 pt)**

Somewhat disagree **(2 pts)**

Neither agree or disagree **(3 pts)**

Somewhat Agree **(4 pts)**

Strongly Agree **(5 pts)**

OR

Planning to Build, Building, or Not Applicable (n/a)

Top Performers Average Pt Score		Lower Performers Average Pt Score		Best Practice Gap
4.54	- (minus)	3.56	= (equals)	+0.98

The Results

1. **Go-To-Market Strategy** (1 of 2)**:** Top performers manage channel & set revenue contribution targets

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Best Practice Gap: Top Performers Minus Lower Performers

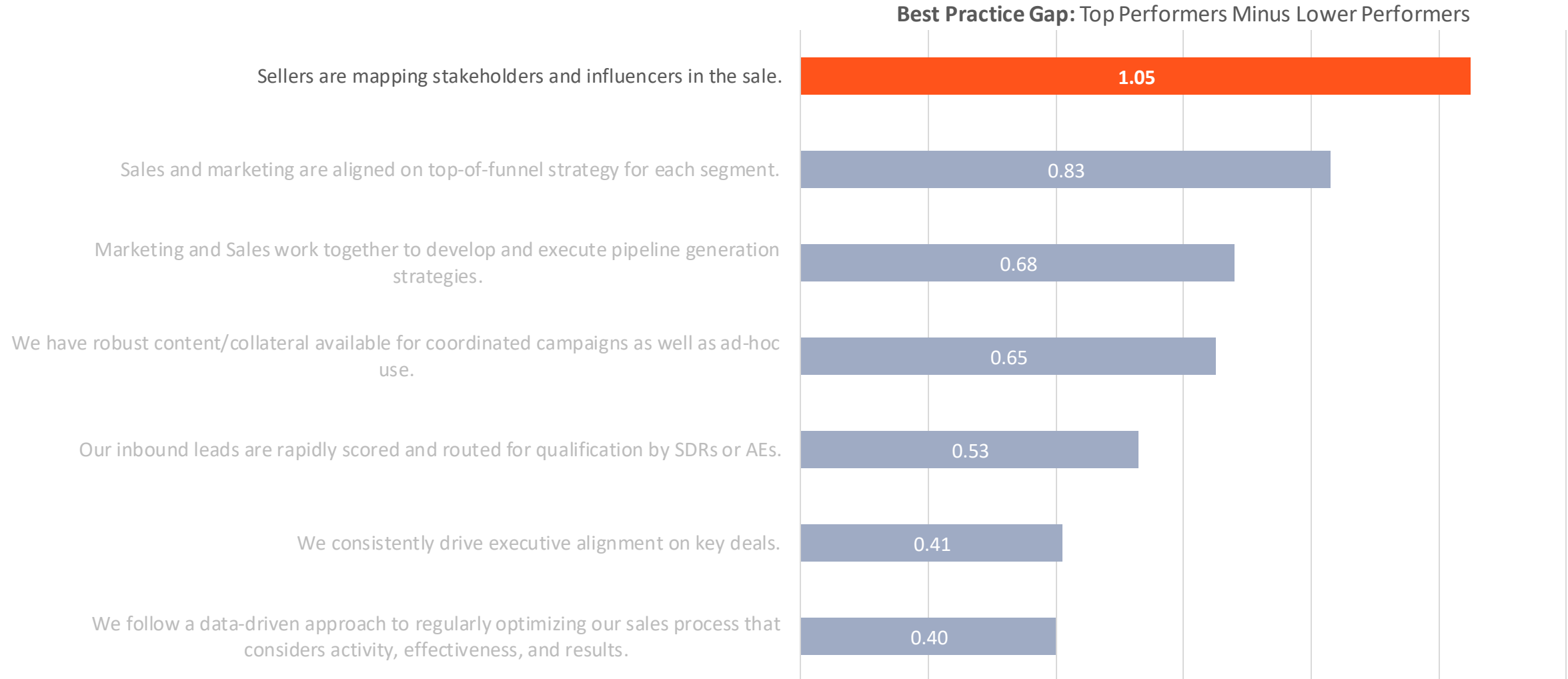|	
We actively manage partner channel conflict using rules of engagement and systems (ex: deal registration).	**0.98**
We have targets for net new revenue contribution by source (ex: product-led, marketing-led, SDR-led, AE-led, partner-led, etc.)	**0.76**
Our sellers can pitch our solution in a consistent manner.	0.75
We have a product-led growth (PLG) option where prospective customers can get a free trial or purchase our product from our website	0.68
Our value proposition in well-differentiated from the competition.	0.60
Our sellers have assigned accounts in equitable territories based on size, industry, geography, and/or other relevant segmentation criteria.	0.52

Go-To-Market Strategy (2 of 2): Top performers manage channel & set revenue contribution targets

Best Practice Gap: Top Performers Minus Lower Performers

We regularly perform competitive analysis to refresh battlecard (ex: via win-loss analysis; etc.)
0.44

We use clear account segmentation to allocate marketing and sales resources.
0.26

We have identified the key buyer personas our sellers should engage throughout the deal process.
0.24

Our revenue is neither concentrated with a small number of customers nor in a single vertical market.
-0.14

> Small gap suggests that all companies seem to adhere to standard SaaS practices

We have identified the types of accounts we should not sell to, I.e. companies that are costly to serve and/or difficult to retain.
-0.32

> Negative gap indicates top performers under-index on this practice

2. Sales Process (1 of 2): Top performers engage accounts broadly and deeply

Best Practice Gap: Top Performers Minus Lower Performers

Sellers are mapping stakeholders and influencers in the sale.	1.05
Sales and marketing are aligned on top-of-funnel strategy for each segment.	0.83
Marketing and Sales work together to develop and execute pipeline generation strategies.	0.68
We have robust content/collateral available for coordinated campaigns as well as ad-hoc use.	0.65
Our inbound leads are rapidly scored and routed for qualification by SDRs or AEs.	0.53
We consistently drive executive alignment on key deals.	0.41
We follow a data-driven approach to regularly optimizing our sales process that considers activity, effectiveness, and results.	0.40

Sales Process (2 of 2): Top performers engage accounts broadly and deeply

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Best Practice Gap: Top Performers Minus Lower Performers

Statement	Gap
We create and present demos based on specific use cases/pain points outlined with the customer.	0.33
Our sales process has enough steps that we can adequately track deal progression and make decisions based on that information	0.18
Sellers in each segment follow a documented, multi-stage sales process with adherence to exit criteria.	0.08
We rigorously follow a methodology (ex: MEDDPICC; Challenger; etc.) for deal inspection.	-0.07
Our salespeople (AEs, SDRs/BDR, etc.) follow a qualification methodology to ensure only high-quality leads convert to opportunities.	-0.17
Our sales reps are focused on selling multi-year deals.	-0.19
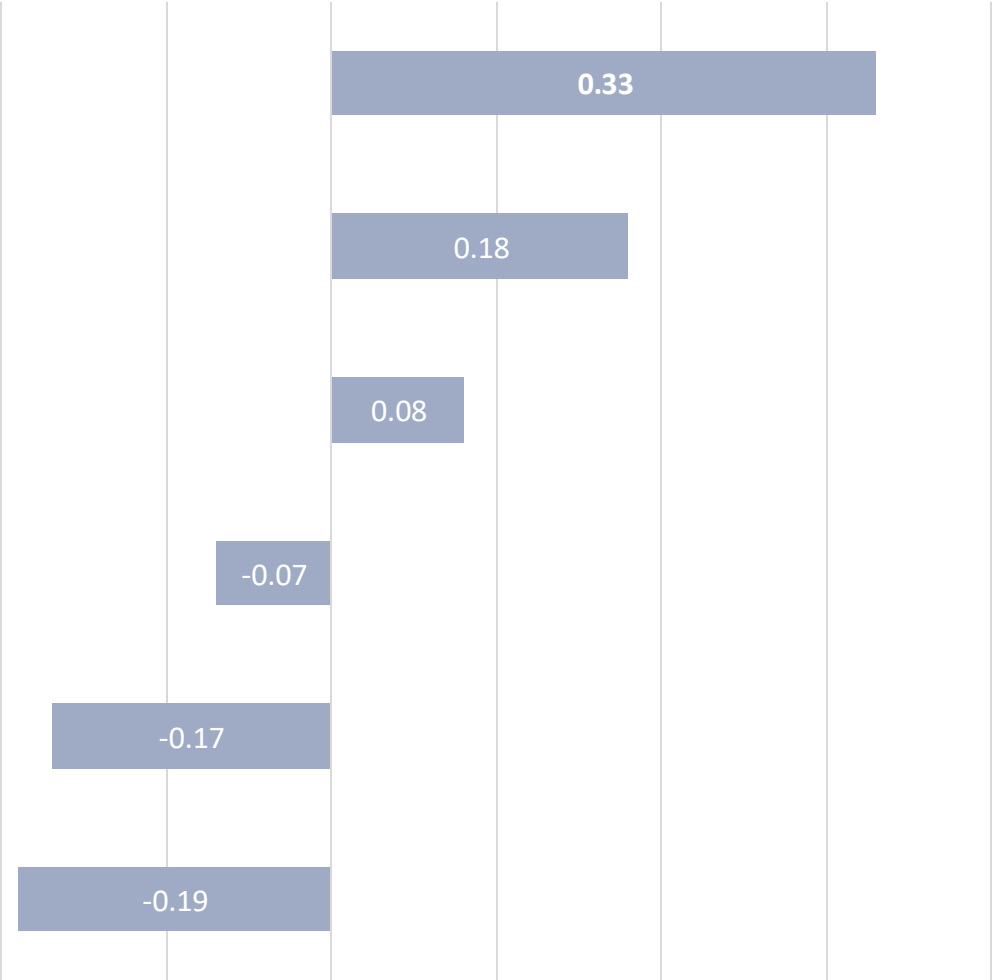
3. CS & Support Process (1 of 2): Top performers prioritize exceptional support

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Best Practice Gap: Top Performers Minus Lower Performers

We have the necessary tools and data to provide effective customer support (ex: ticketing system, etc.)
0.54

We have structured processes for the customer support team to provide feedback to the product development team about common customer issues and suggested enhancements.
0.36

We proactively engage clients to drive value-realization, satisfaction, adoption (usage), and engagement.
0.19

We measure customer health and respond rapidly to address issues.
0.19

Our customer success team focuses on driving value rather than functioning as customer support.
0.18

We provide robust self-service customer support options (ex. knowledge base, FAQs, community, etc.)
0.15

CS & Support Process (2 of 2): Top performers prioritize exceptional support

Best Practice Gap: Top Performers Minus Lower Performers

We have well-defined and optimized customer support processes (ex: assigning tickets; escalations; etc.)   0.11

We have service level agreements (SLAs) defined and measured for key customer support metrics (ex: response times; first contact resolution rate; etc.).   0.05

Our CSMs and/or sales reps conduct periodic, client-facing business reviews (EBRs/QBRs).   -0.05

We have a differentiated customer success approach based on customer segment (ex: high touch, low touch, tech touch).   -0.12

Our renewal process all but ensures on-time renewal.   -0.21

We regularly collect and analyze customer feedback (ex: NPS, CSAT, etc.) in order to improve our processes and products.   -0.61

4. Sales Compensation & Quota: Top performers keep their comp plans simple

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Best Practice Gap: Top Performers Minus Lower Performers
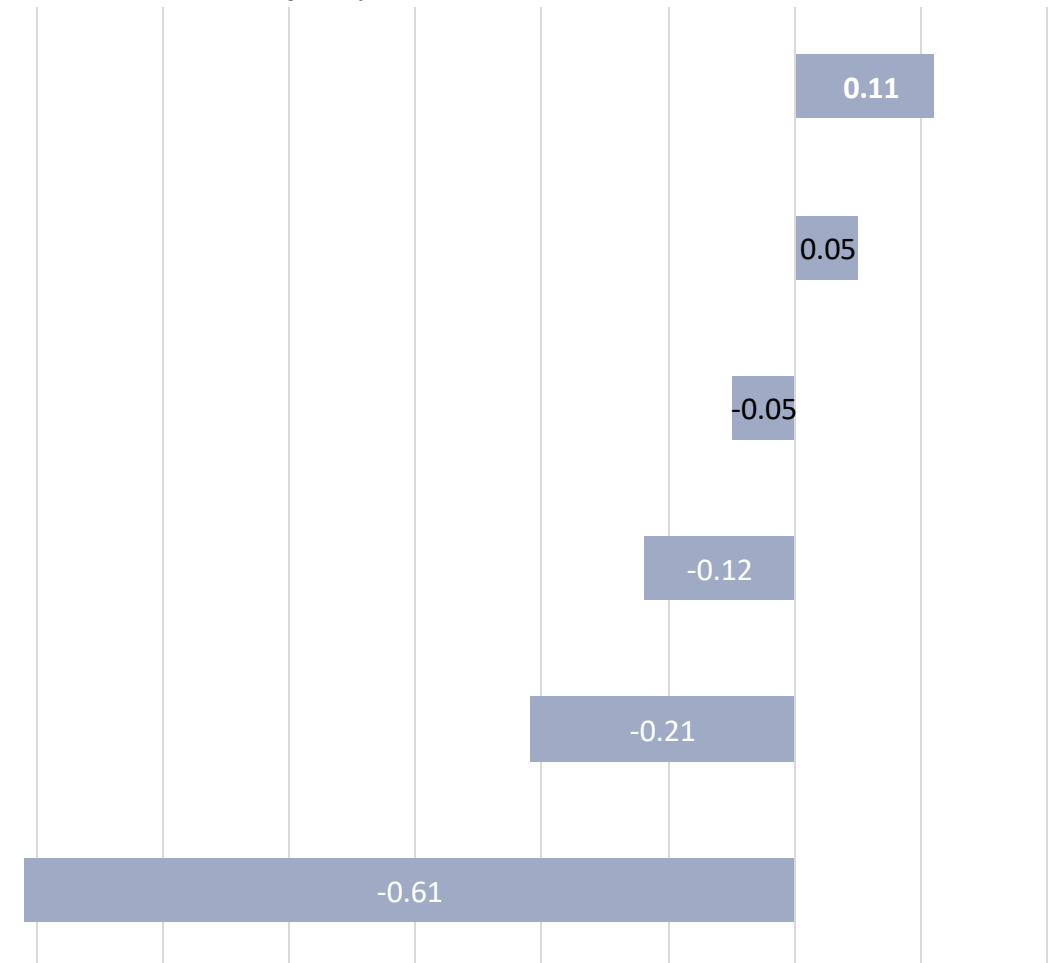
Over 60% of our salespeople meet or exceed quota in every period.
— 0.81

Our sales compensation plan is simple for reps to understand and easy to administer. (For example, the plan uses no more than 3 key performance measures weighted at least 20% each.)
— 0.62

Quota is at industry benchmark 5x on-target earnings or is adjusted in a way that makes sense for the business.
— 0.56

We have consistent compensation ranges for each role in the sales organization that are competitive by role and geography.
— 0.25

Our sales compensation plan is directly aligned with our key corporate objectives.
— 0.16

Sales reps are at 50/50 base to bonus or that ratio is adjusted in a way that makes sense for the business.
— 0.00

Our sales compensation plan offers generous (2x or higher) accelerators to sales reps should they exceed quota.
— -0.06
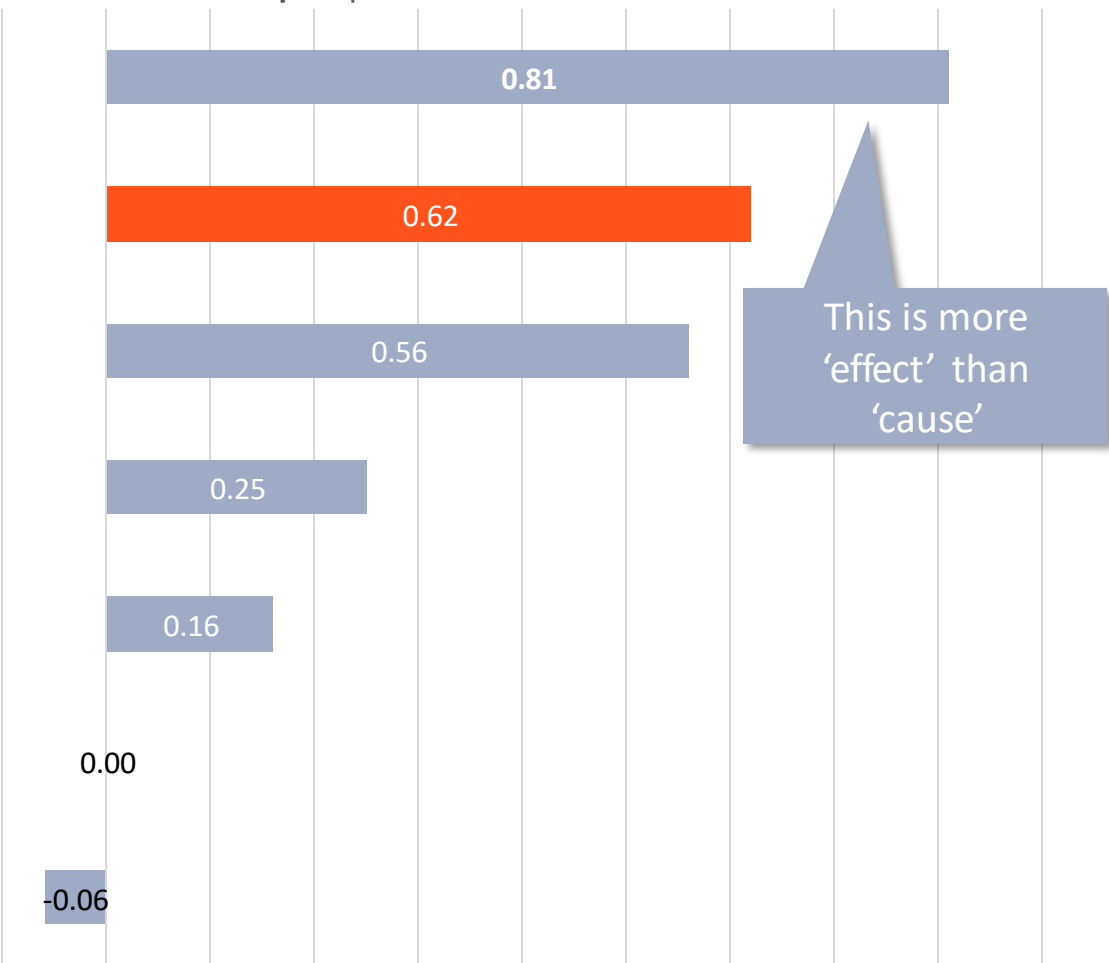
This is more 'effect' than 'cause'

5. Pipeline & Forecast: Top performers fixate on pipeline

Best Practice Gap: Top Performers Minus Lower Performers

We have a large enough pipeline to achieve bookings goals in each period given sales cycles and win rates. **0.91**

We have a deal desk to support sellers on complex opportunities. **0.30**

Sales cycles are predictable by segment and consistent with industry standards. **0.23**

We monitor and report on pipeline created per seller on a frequent (ex: weekly) basis. **0.11**

We run highly effective Quarterly Business Reviews (QBRs) with reps to review past performance and to improve current pipeline health. **0.09**

We have an operating rhythm in place to help advance key deals this period and next period that engages all levels of sales leadership. **0.07**

We have robust processes in place to drive existing customer expansion via upsell & cross-sell. **-0.59**
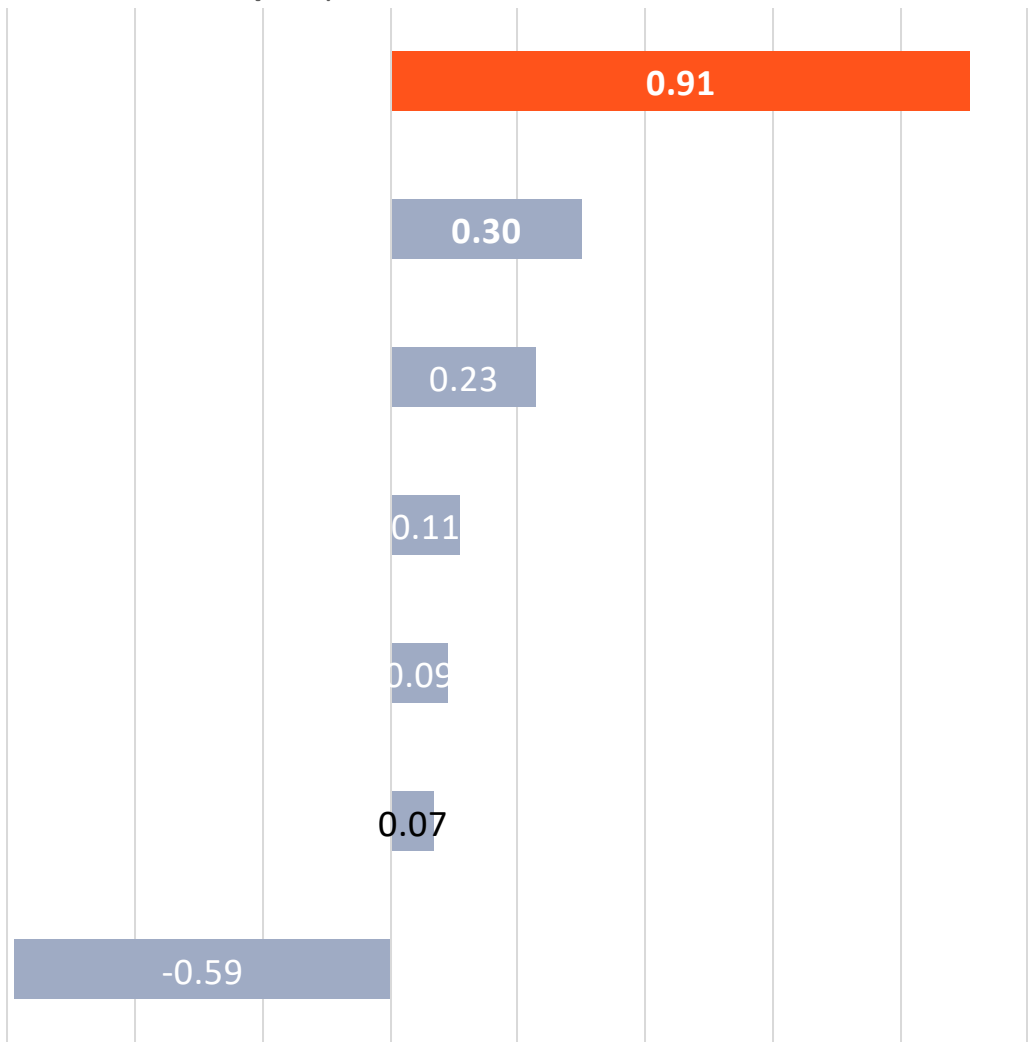
6. Sales Leadership & Team Effectiveness: Top performers prevent attrition

Best Practice Gap: Top Performers Minus Lower Performers

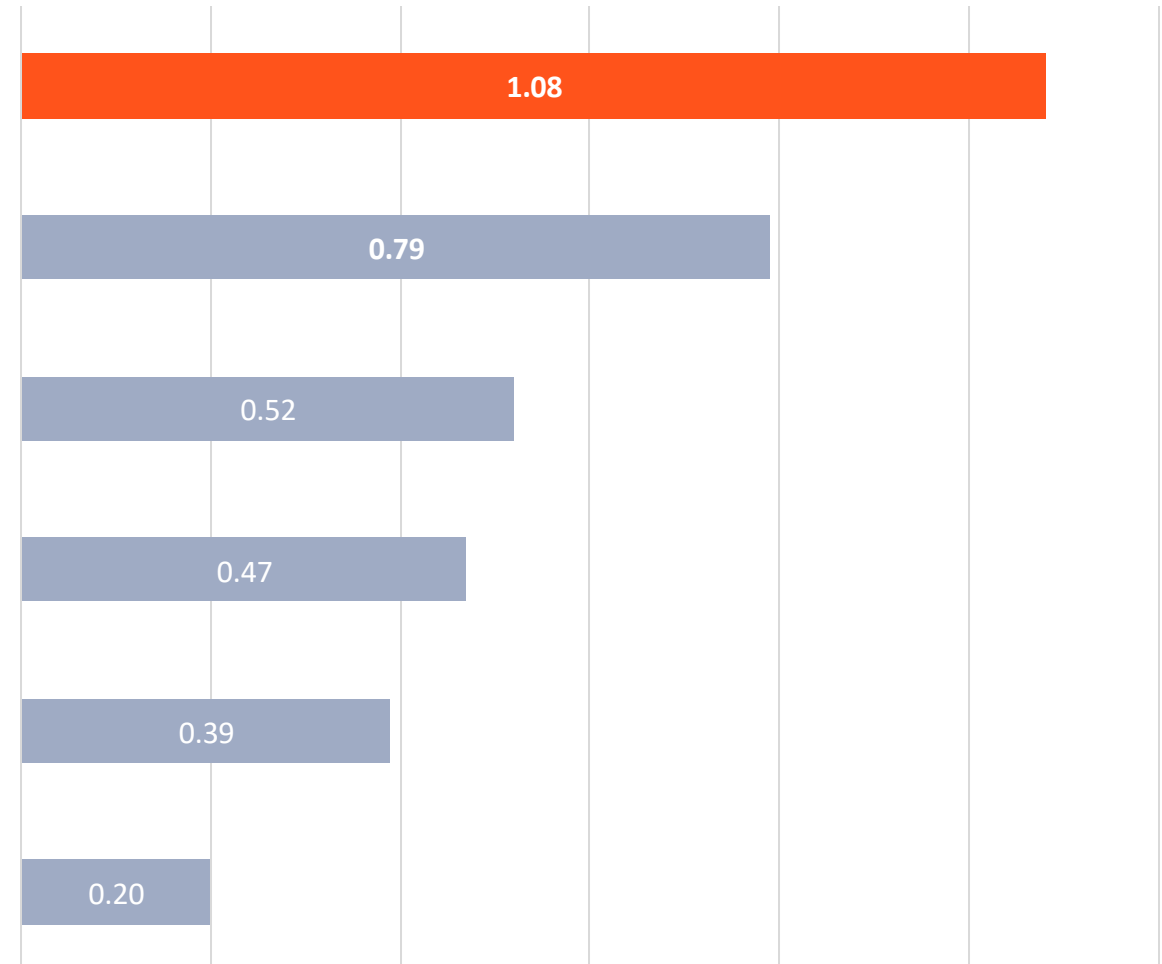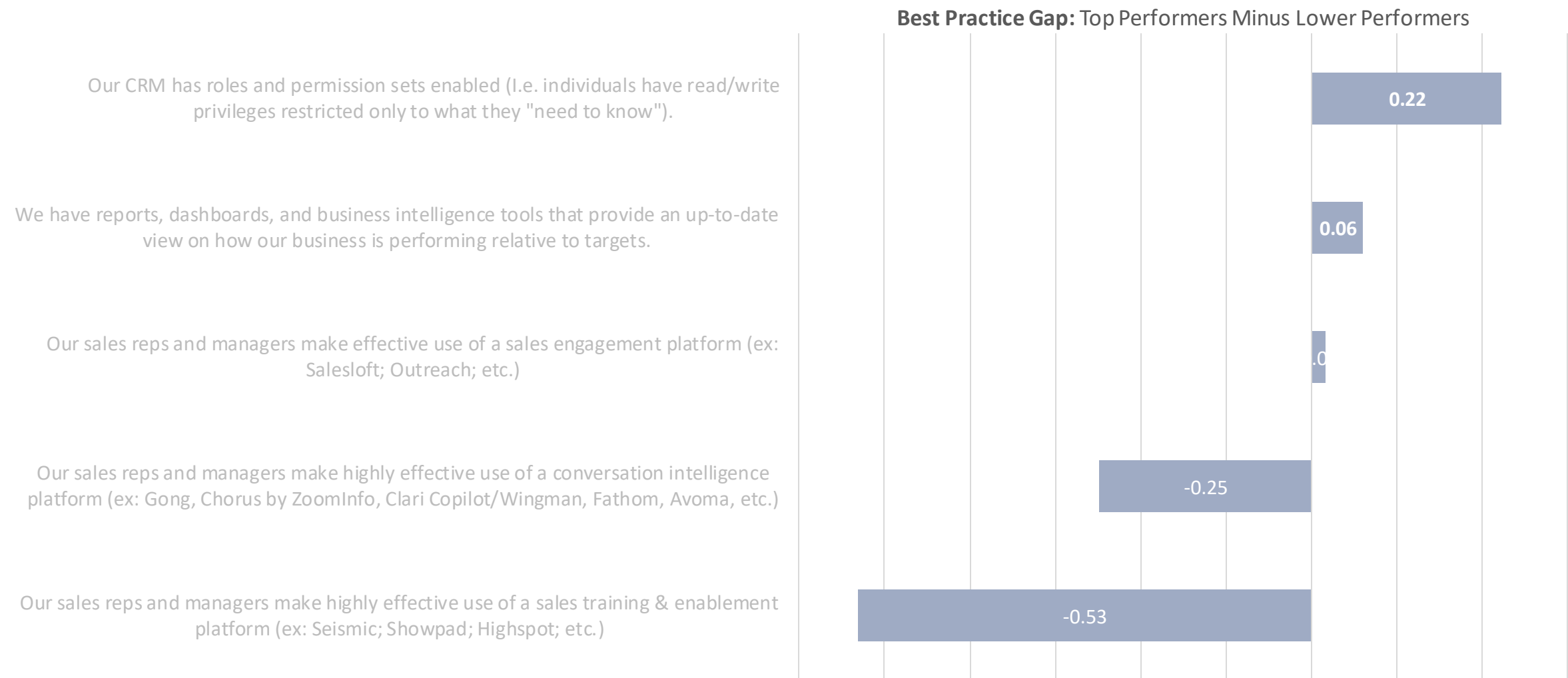| Statement	Value
Our seller attrition rate is well below industry standards (<25% per year).	1.08
Our sales & product organizations are well-aligned.	0.79
Our sales leaders have a maniacal focus on pipeline generation across all relevant channels (ex: AE, xDR, Marketing, Partner, etc.)	0.52
We maximize rep productivity by limiting the time sales reps spend on non-customer facing activities, meetings, and projects.	0.47
Responsibilities for each of our pre- and post-sale roles are well-defined. (ex: SDRs, AEs/AMs, Sales/Value Engineers, CSMs, Renewal Specialists, Implementation/customer onboarding,...	0.39
Sales Leaders monitor rep performance and provide coaching and support to ensure ongoing success.	0.20

7. Technology & Data Governance (1 of 2): Top performers focus on data hygiene & access

Best Practice Gap: Top Performers Minus Lower Performers

CRM data (activities, contacts, accounts, opportunities, etc.) is consistently captured and cleaned.
0.82

Customer data such as billing, usage, product configuration, etc. are easily accessible to those who need access.
0.74

Our sales reps are strong adopters of AI.
0.56

We have a lead routing tool in place that rapidly matches qualified leads with sales professionals.
0.42

We have one or more dedicated Salesforce Administrator(s).
0.33

We have a customer success platform/tool (or equivalent) to monitor/manage customer health and product adoption.
0.30

Technology & Data Governance (2 of 2): Top performers focus on data hygiene & access

Best Practice Gap: Top Performers Minus Lower Performers

Statement	Gap
Our CRM has roles and permission sets enabled (I.e. individuals have read/write privileges restricted only to what they "need to know").	0.22
We have reports, dashboards, and business intelligence tools that provide an up-to-date view on how our business is performing relative to targets.	0.06
Our sales reps and managers make effective use of a sales engagement platform (ex: Salesloft; Outreach; etc.)	.0
Our sales reps and managers make highly effective use of a conversation intelligence platform (ex: Gong, Chorus by ZoomInfo, Clari Copilot/Wingman, Fathom, Avoma, etc.)	-0.25
Our sales reps and managers make highly effective use of a sales training & enablement platform (ex: Seismic; Showpad; Highspot; etc.)	-0.53

8. Hiring & Talent Management (1 of 2): Top performers focus on recognition & capacity planning

Best Practice Gap: Top Performers Minus Lower Performers

Statement	Value
Our sales reps are frequently recognized for their successes.	0.71
Our hiring plan for sellers and sales support roles ensures we have ramped capacity to meet our financial goals.	0.66
We have a programmatic approach to onboarding new talent and a documented enablement plan to skill them up quickly.	0.63
We leverage ideal hiring profiles and a repeatable hiring process that consistently selects great sales and sales support talent.	0.58
Management is actively engaged in the enablement process and reinforces the training through 1:1 coaching, team training, and role-playing.	0.53
Recruiting is a proactive, scalable process that ensures that roles are quickly filled.	0.44

Best Practice Gap: Top Performers Minus Lower Performers

We have in-house recruiting resources to aid in filling sales roles.	0.23
Enablement is provided by a dedicated team who delivers continuous training and development.	0.00
We have documented career paths for all roles that are motivating and achievable.	-0.09
We have a well documented process for identifying, managing, and, if needed, exiting underperforming sales reps.	-0.22

9. Order-To-Cash: Top performers automatically lock in renewals

Best Practice Gap: Top Performers Minus Lower Performers

Our default contracts include automatic renewals.	0.65
We have robust processes and tools (ex: CPQ) to configure, price/discount, quote, and approve deals.	0.59
We have strong controls in place to minimize errors in the order entry and billing process.	0.26
Customers can contract with us via usage-based pricing.	0.26
Our default contracts include standard price increases at renewal.	0.00
Financial systems and sales systems either use the same customer identifier or have a means of mapping customers from one...	-0.11
There is an automated process to extract data from the CRM and load it into our billing/finance tools.	-0.34
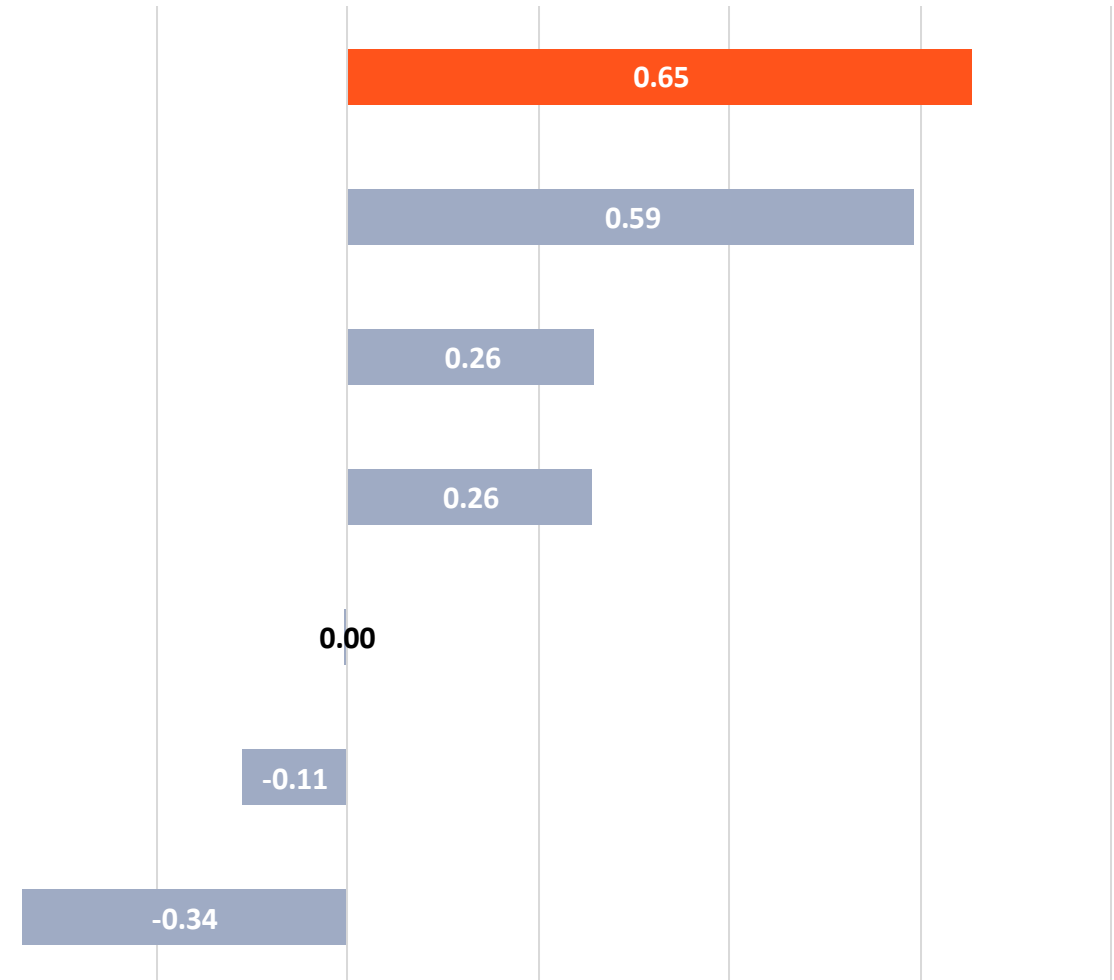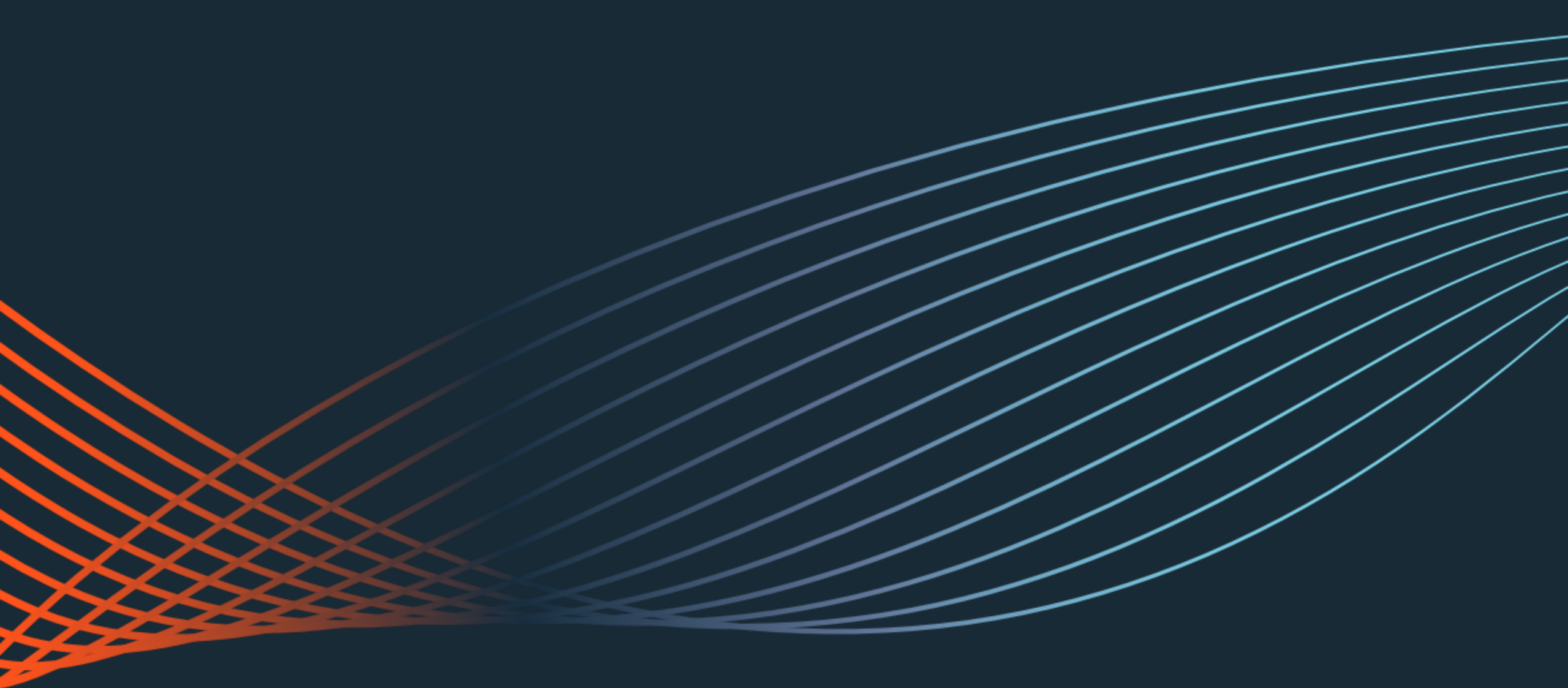
The Bottom Line

People x Process x Pipeline x Partner = Performance

5 Best Practices

Top Performing Companies Over-Index On

1. We actively manage partner channel conflict using rules of engagement and systems (ex: deal registration). **(Partner)**

2. Sellers are mapping stakeholders and influencers in the sale. **(Process)**

3. We have a large enough pipeline to achieve bookings goals in each period given sales cycles and win rates. **(Pipeline)**

4. Our seller attrition rate is well below industry standards (<25% per year). **(People)**

5. Sales and marketing are aligned on top-of-funnel strategy for each segment. **(Process)**

We used self-rating to identify the best practices of successful GTM teams

How has your company performed relative to your closest competitor over the last 12 months?

Much Worse | Somewhat Worse | About the Same | Somewhat Better | Much Better

Top Performers

Lower Performers

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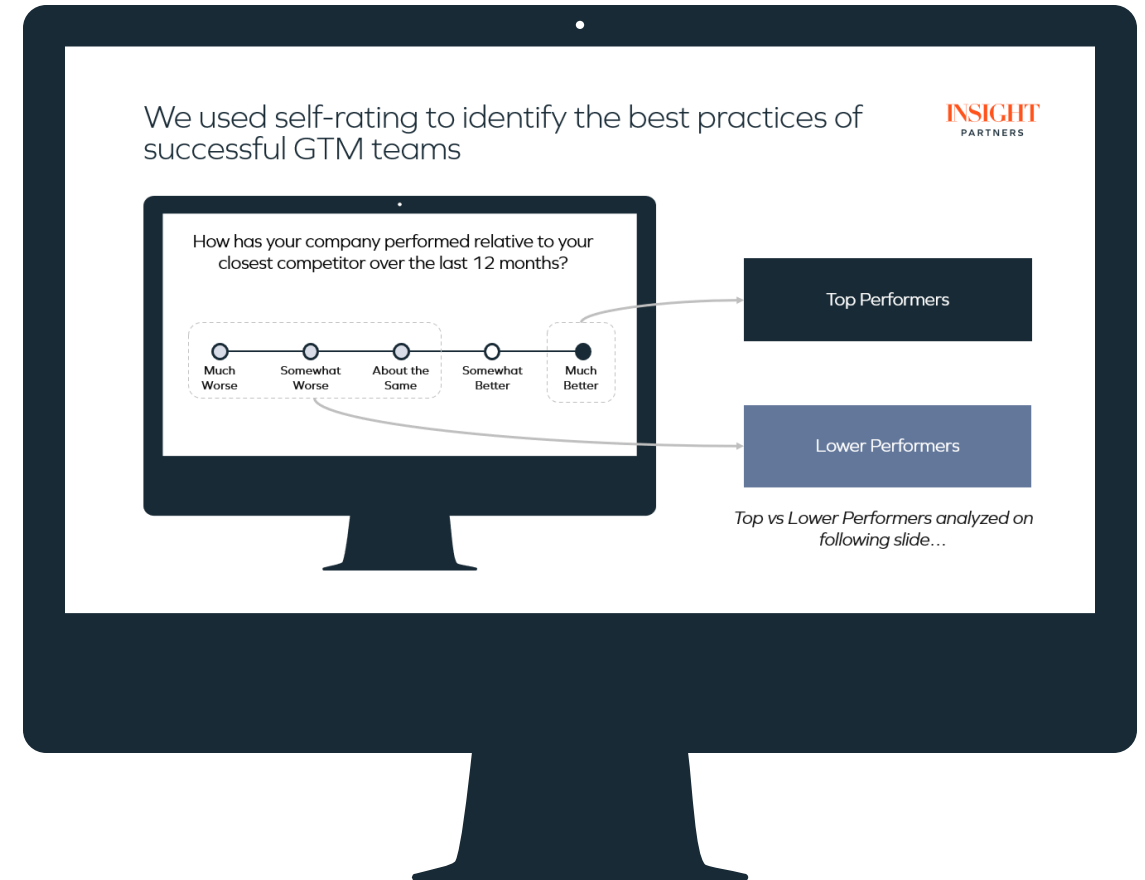
Summary of Results

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Category of Assessment	What Top Performers Do	Best Practice Gap
Go-To-Market Strategy	Top performers manage channel & set revenue contribution targets	• 0.98 in channel mgmt. • 0.76 in setting contribution targets
Sales Process	Top performers engage accounts broadly and deeply	• 1.05 in stakeholder mapping
Customer Success & Support Process	Top performers prioritize exceptional support	• 0.54 in tools & data for effective support
Sales Compensation & Quota	Top performers keep their comp plans simple	• 0.62 in comp plan simplicity
Pipeline & Forecast	Top performers fixate on pipeline	• 0.91 in pipeline volume
Sales Leadership & Team Effectiveness	Top performers prevent attrition	• 1.08 in managing attrition
Technology & Data Governance	Top performers focus on data hygiene & access	• 0.82 in CRM hygiene • 0.74 in access to customer data
Hiring & Talent Management	Top performers focus on recognition & capacity planning	• 0.71 in recognition • 0.66 in GTM capacity planning
Order-To-Cash	Top performers automatically lock in renewals	• 0.65 in contracting with automatic renewals

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