Panasonic CONNECT

The Ultimate Sales Professional:

Integrating Generative AI into Sales

Research Whitepaper

Foreword

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Until the public release of ChatGPT in November 2022, the debate about the impact of generative AI on work was largely academic. In the short time since its launch, the discussion has become very real. Generative AI is changing the way people work – and fast.

Some roles are disappearing; new roles are emerging, and the majority of roles will evolve to leverage this generational innovation. It is not a case of whether this will happen, but – crucially – how.

Deciding how to incorporate Generative AI (GenAI) into core business processes is now a matter of strategic urgency for companies wanting to harness its power to gain a competitive edge. At the forefront of that competitive edge is the company's sales division.

The most successful sales professionals of the future will be GenAI super users. That's the opinion of 94% of the 200 European sales professionals surveyed in Panasonic's study into the adoption of GenAI in sales*.

> **The most successful sales professionals of the future will be Gen-AI super users.**
> Panasonic Connect Europe Research, 2025

Expectations are high. Sales professionals believe that implementing GenAI into their processes will drive an average 38% increase in sales over the next 12 months. Those already using GenAI say it is delivering benefits ranging from enhanced accuracy for data analytics to more personalized customer interaction and faster response times.

With GenAI expected to play this central and lucrative role in the future of sales, it raises a number of important questions:

How do businesses achieve the transition? What are the barriers to adoption? What should companies consider as they aim to bring employees on this journey of GenAI-powered sales performance? How will they support the transition, and what will it take to ensure the full benefits are realized?

As GenAI adoption proceeds at pace, we undertook this study to answer some of these questions and identify areas that may cause tension. From the sheer pace of the technology's introduction to the differing views of those who will be closely involved in its use, there are certainly pitfalls to be aware of on the road ahead. The biggest of these is the question of who will support the rollout of GenAI. Our survey participants are clear that they will need help incorporating it into their processes, but the majority (68%) believe that support will come from their organization's IT department.

We believe that this is the biggest area of concern that will delay GenAI adoption in sales.

GenAI is not simply operational/functional technology to be installed and maintained. It sits at the nexus of human-technology interaction. Leveraging its full potential means asking employees to do things differently from a psychological, as well as a process perspective. That means it needs a comprehensive change management programme incorporating training and specialist support to upskill sales professionals and smooth the adoption pathway. Expecting to achieve the exponential benefits of GenAI deployment without fully supporting the people and processes involved will end in disappointment.

We hope you find this study informative and insightful as you explore integrating GenAI into your sales processes. If you'd like to learn more about how Panasonic is supporting organizations to maximize the impact of GenAI in sales, please get in touch.

At a Glance Findings

High expectations for GenAI's impact on sales.

GenAI will boost the bottom line, increasing sales by an average of 38% in the coming year, according to our respondents. 95% say their organization has experienced, or expects to experience, positive ROI from incorporating GenAI technologies into their sales processes.

Successful Sales Professionals will be GenAI Super Users.

From market understanding, lead qualification, and customized content creation to prospecting and forecasting, 94% believe the most successful sales professionals will be skilled at leveraging GenAI in key sales processes.

Adoption is rapid but the pace of change is proving problematic.

91% of respondents are already using GenAI to some extent in their sales, but only 41% have been using it for more than 12 months. This reflects the rapid emergence and adoption of the technology, but points to potential pitfalls associated with the pace of rollout. 96% say they need help with incorporating it into their sales processes and 92% are experiencing or expect to experience challenges.

IT Departments are on the front line for support.

The burden of supporting GenAI implementation is falling on the trusty – if overstretched – IT department, with 68% of respondents saying that is their first port of call. Fewer than half of respondents would turn to consultants for support. But is this the right call? While the IT department has expertise in the functional elements of technology, guidance on areas such as prompt engineering and output refinement are not in the typical IT department's skillset. Organizations need to consider a broader range of support options as they implement GenAI-powered sales processes.

Training needs, security, and compliance concerns are key barriers.

Businesses recognize that training is a key requirement, and that they don't have sufficient in-house resources. 68% list training as a top-three barrier to GenAI adoption, with 63% noting security concerns and 61% citing compliance regulatory concerns. This demonstrates clear understanding of the pitfalls of using GenAI tools with sensitive corporate sales data.

The GenAI generation gap should be taken into account.

There's a distinct perception split between younger and older sales professionals about the adoption, use cases and impact of GenAI – and not always in the way you might expect. Respondents in senior roles report higher GenAI usage. They are more likely to agree that the successful sales professional of the future will be a GenAI super user and that they would benefit from third-party help to integrate GenAI. Junior respondents are less likely than senior peers to agree that GenAI will result in more time to communicate with prospects and customers. Are those younger and more familiar with the technology slightly more realistic about its potential? Perhaps they believe that the time they save through integrating GenAI into sales will be diverted to different priorities, or they are less optimistic about the technology overall.

Methodology

Panasonic Connect Europe commissioned independent research into the adoption of generative AI (GenAI) among sales professionals in the UK and Germany. The aim of the study is to understand where GenAI is being used effectively and where there is room for development.

200 sales professionals were surveyed in September 2024. Roles ranged from Junior and Middle sales managers to Senior sales managers and C-Suite executives.

Fast Findings

"In order to remain competitive, organizations must incorporate GenAI technologies into their sales processes"

95%
AGREE

"My organization would benefit from the help of a third party to incorporate GenAI technologies into its sales processes"

96%
AGREE

"My organization has experienced/ expects to experience a positive return of investment (ROI) from incorporating GenAI technologies within its sales processes"

95%
AGREE

"The most successful sales professionals of the future will be GenAI super users"

94%
AGREE

"In the future, sales professionals will have more time to spend communicating with prospects and customers thanks to GenAI"

94%
AGREE

"My organization is experiencing/ will experience challenges integrating GenAI into its sales processes"

92%
AGREE

"My organization's sales force has been/will be slow to adopt GenAI in our processes"

71%
AGREE

Full Findings

**Q: Does your organization's sales team currently use, or plan to use, GenAI technologies within their processes?**

Nine in ten (**91%**) of respondents already use GenAI in sales processes. Those that don't yet will do so within the next two years.

A hundred percent adoption rate in just over a three-year period is testament to the impact – both perceived and actual – of GenAI.

It is clearly viewed as a competitive weapon. Indeed, **95%** of respondents agree that to remain competitive, organizations must incorporate GenAI technologies into their sales processes. However, the fact that barriers to GenAI adoption are low and all companies can access it makes the method and success of adoption the critical factor.

Perhaps because of this strategic nature, there is greater focus from C-Suite and Senior managers. **92%** of this cohort report that GenAI is in use, compared to only **84%** of mid-level and junior management.
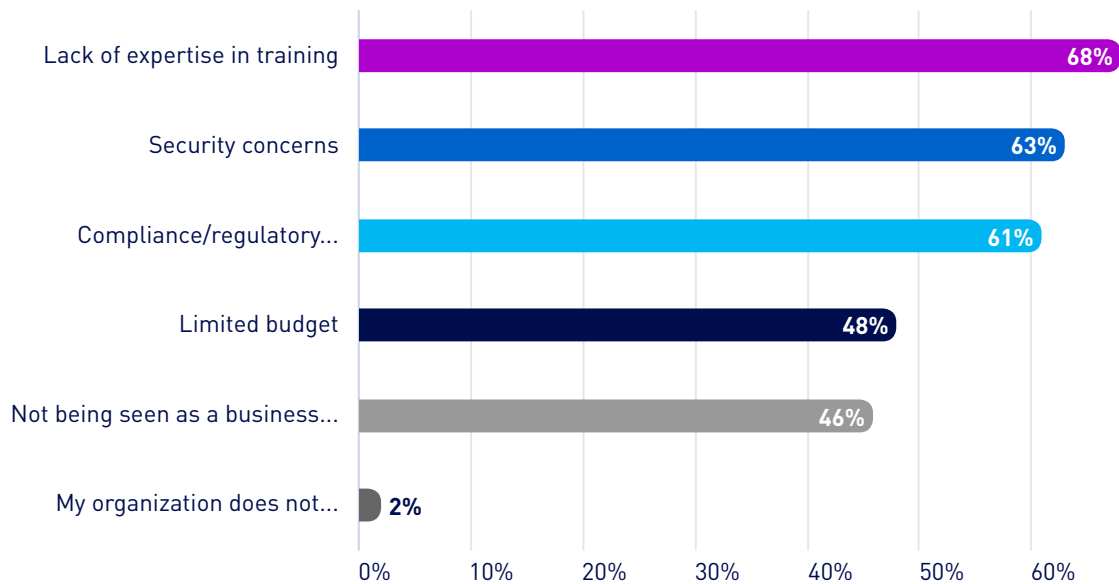
Interestingly, respondents working in IT and Technology companies are less likely than those from other sectors to report that they are already using GenAI in sales; only **87%** say they are using it and none of them has been doing so for more than 12 months. This resonates with responses to later questions from IT & Technology company respondents, where they seem to show a higher level of reticence around GenAI compared to other sectors.
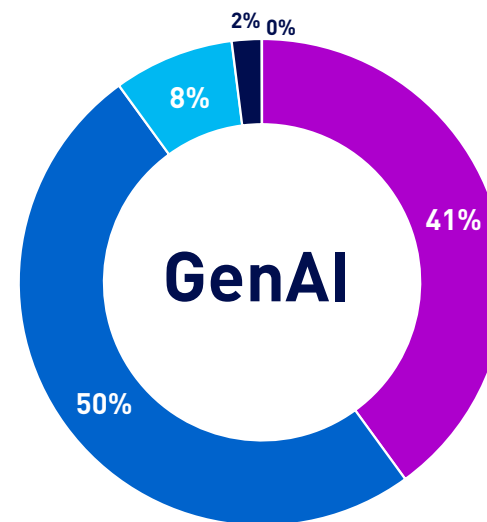
GenAI Adoption Rate

2% 0%
8%
41%
50%

GenAI

- **Yes**, and we have been doing so for over 12 months
- **Yes**, and we implemented the technology within the last 12 months
- **No**, but we plan to in the next 12 months
- **No**, but we plan to in the next 1-2 years
- **No**, but we plan to in over 2 years time

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Barriers to implementing GenAi Technologies in sales processes

Lack of expertise in training — **68%**
Security concerns — **63%**
Compliance/regulatory... — **61%**
Limited budget — **48%**
Not being seen as a business... — **46%**
My organization does not... — **2%**

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%

92% of respondents expect to experience challenges integrating GenAI.
Panasonic Connect Europe Research, 2025

Barriers

Q: What barriers, if any, does your organization face, or expect to face, when implementing GenAI technologies within its sales processes?

Almost all (**98%**) respondents expect to face barriers of some kind when implementing GenAI into sales. The most frequently cited barrier is lack of expertise for training, demonstrating recognition that – intuitive though many GenAI tools are – there is skill required to get maximum benefit.

Security concerns are also prominent. GenAI tools that are handling sensitive data must be adequately protected and must not be allowed to introduce their own security risks. Malicious actors are already actively targeting GenAI tools such as large language models – both public and in-house versions – and due consideration must be given to the additional risks posed by GenAI.

Compliance/regulatory concerns complete the top three, which are some way ahead of other concerns. Any tool of this magnitude that is handling large amounts of sensitive data must be deployed within the guardrails of legislation ranging from the GDPR to the EU AI Act. The latter's rapid and high-profile implementation means organizations are aware of their responsibility for transparent, ethical, and accountable use of AI.

In light of the above concerns, it is not surprising that **92%** of respondents expect to experience challenges integrating GenAI, and **71%** say their business has been, or will be, slow to adopt GenAI. "Slow" is a comparative word in this situation – rollout is still proceeding much faster than the majority of other technologies.

Use Cases

Q: In which areas of the sales process is your organization prioritising the use, or planned use of GenAI technologies?
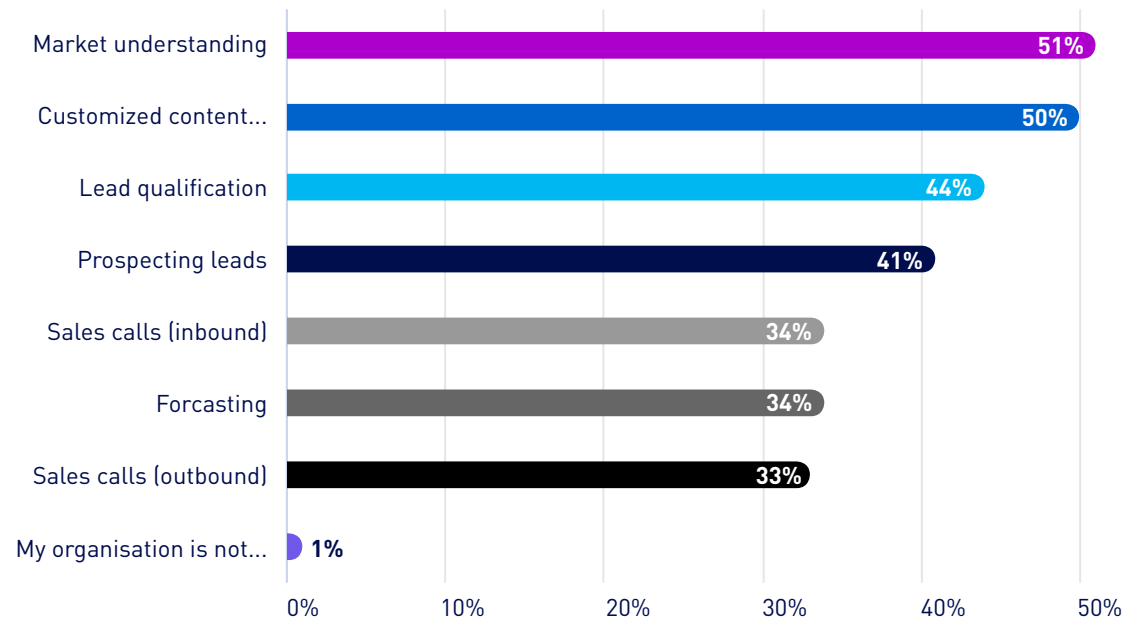
Enhancing market understanding is the top application of GenAI to the sales process. This makes sense given its ability to analyze vast data sets and produce intelligible narrative reports.

Customized content creation is the second key use case as organizations seek to personalize communications to a high degree. Customized emails and newsletters are already well-adopted in the industry, but GenAI adds another level, providing the facility to create personalized video messages and podcasts that align to customer pain points and preferences.
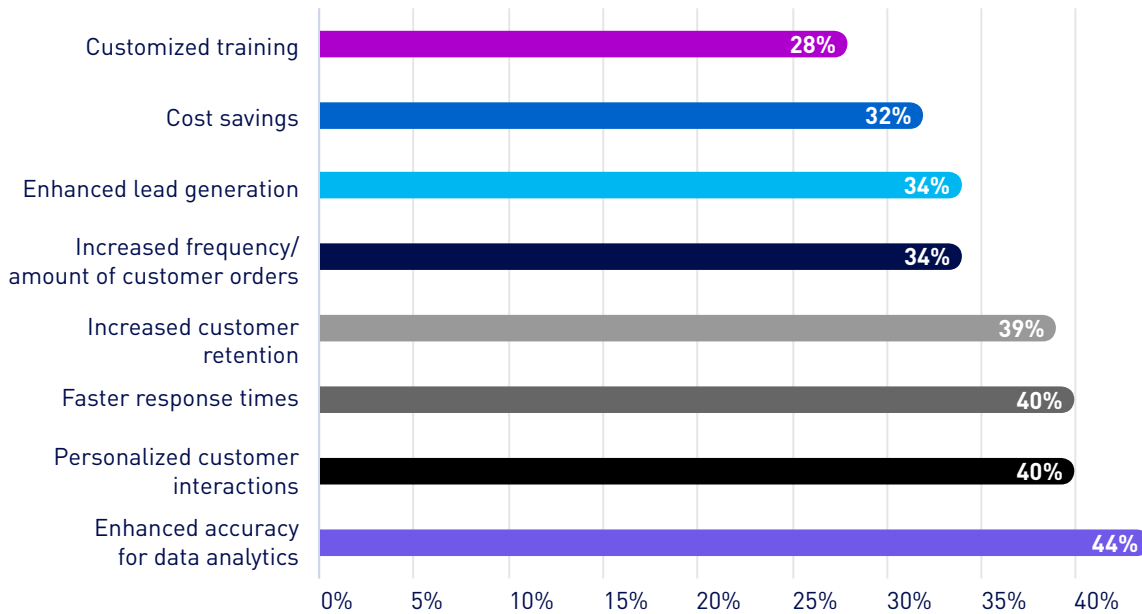
Interestingly, junior and mid-level sales professionals are more likely than senior counterparts to say that they are using GenAI for market understanding (**62%** versus **48%**). This may be down to senior sales professionals having greater market experience and trusting their own judgement more, and are less keen to hand the task to AI.

The second area of divergence is in forecasting. Here senior respondents – who have more strategic roles – are more likely to be applying GenAI than junior/mid-level (**37%** vs **20%**).

Where Sales Teams Are Implementing GenAI: Prioritization Breakdown

Category	Percentage
Market understanding	51%
Customized content...	50%
Lead qualification	44%
Prospecting leads	41%
Sales calls (inbound)	34%
Forcasting	34%
Sales calls (outbound)	33%
My organisation is not...	1%

Benefits of GenAI deployment in sales

Customized training — **28%**
Cost savings — **32%**
Enhanced lead generation — **34%**
Increased frequency/amount of customer orders — **34%**
Increased customer retention — **39%**
Faster response times — **40%**
Personalized customer interactions — **40%**
Enhanced accuracy for data analytics — **44%**

(x-axis: 0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40%)

Benefits

Q: What benefits, if any, are your organization's sales team currently experiencing or expecting to experience from using GenAI technologies?

Sales professionals are seeing the most benefit around data analytics, backed up by more personalized customer interactions, and faster response times. The second two of these reflect rising customer expectations. Retail giants such as Amazon have changed consumer baselines when it comes to targeting and responsiveness and this spills over into B2B when those consumers go to work.

The majority (**94%**) of respondents predict that the time-saving benefits of GenAI will release more bandwidth for sales professionals to communicate with prospects and customers.

Support

Q: Who provides or is expected to provide support to your organization's sales team when integrating GenAI technologies?
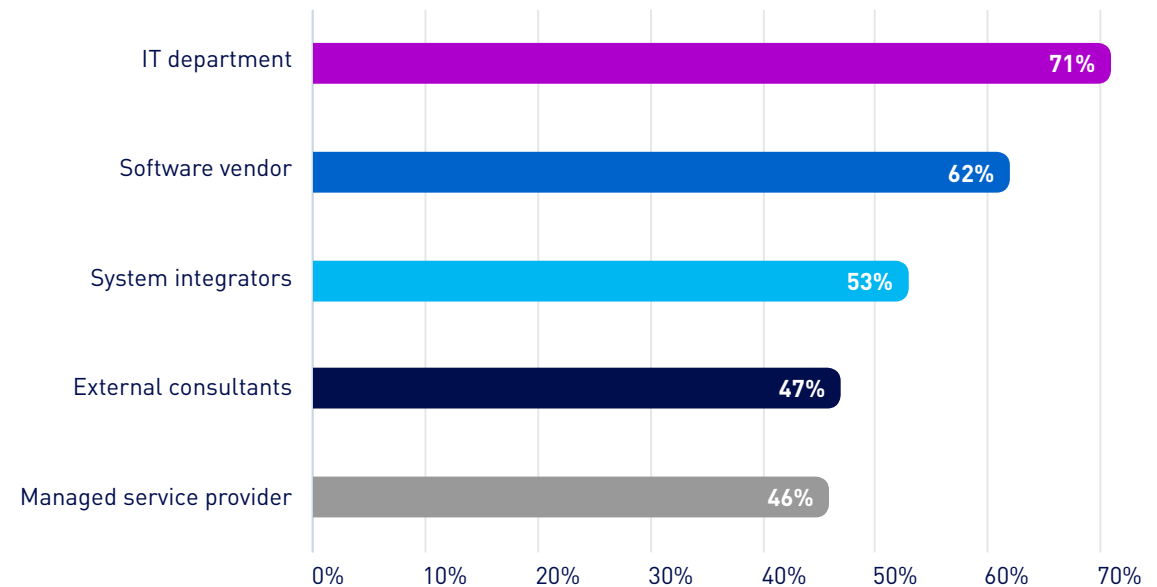
The burden of supporting GenAI integration is falling largely on the IT department. However, with the biggest barrier to adoption cited as training, it is questionable whether IT departments can provide the specific support that is required. They can deal with the operational aspects of the technology and ensure supporting facilities such as compute power are in place, but they are unlikely to be able to deliver the training needed.

In reality, GenAI rollout should be viewed as a business transformation project and be resourced accordingly. This means involving departments from HR to finance, as well as IT and risk management, to ensure that risks and blockers are identified and addressed. The biggest challenge, particularly with this technology, is speed – employees are already adopting public GenAI tools, and this must be proactively governed to avoid risks such as data breaches through sensitive customer data leaking out due to non-sanctioned GenAI use (shadow AI).

Organizations will need to look outside the business for expertise in GenAI for sales. In fact, they know this is the case, with **96%** agreeing that their organization would benefit from the help of a third party to incorporate GenAI technologies into its sales processes.

External support will be needed and we expect the demand for external consultants and system integrators to rise as organizations realize the true scale of implementing GenAI.

Who supports GenAI technology integration?

Category	Percentage
IT department	71%
Software vendor	62%
System integrators	53%
External consultants	47%
Managed service provider	46%

Expectation

Q: As a result of implementing GenAI technologies within your sales processes, by what percentage, if at all, do you expect your organization's sales to increase over the next 12 months?

Respondents currently using GenAI in their sales processes expect a **38%** average uplift in sales. Respondents from the Energy and Utilities sectors are most optimistic, expecting a **46%** increase, while those in IT and Technology companies expect just **22%** increase.

Overall, there appears to be a higher level of scepticism among respondents from IT & Technology companies. This may be due to a more sophisticated understanding of the technology hype cycle and challenges of reaching the "plateau of productivity". Certainly, IT & Technology companies will be very familiar with Amara's Law, coined by Roy Amara, an American scientist, futurist and President of the Institute of the Future. It states: "We tend to overestimate the effect of a technology in the short run and underestimate the effect in the long run."

This could certainly be applied to the current intense interest in GenAI. Perhaps IT & Technology companies are reserving judgement?

> **"We tend to overestimate the effect of a technology in the short run and underestimate the effect in the long run."**
>
> **Scientist and Futurist Roy Amara**

Conclusion

GenAI is making its mark in sales and expectations are high. Sales professionals predict a significant positive impact on sales volumes through integrating GenAI, allowing them to scale up activity while enhancing customization and unlocking more time to engage personally with customers and prospects.

Despite the rapid pace of adoption, however, there are barriers. Allowing GenAI integration to proceed in an ungoverned, unstructured way risks the business being exposed to security and compliance risks, while doing it without the right training and support for employees puts a brake on maximizing the technology's potential.

Organizations must design GenAI sales transformation projects that can proceed at pace, while laying down the guardrails and performance support that will ensure the transition is a success.

About
Panasonic Connect

With a century-long legacy in AI and a team of 1,200 AI engineers globally, Panasonic is at the forefront of transforming industries through cutting-edge AI solutions. At Panasonic Connect, we specialize in boosting productivity and efficiency across retail, logistics, manufacturing, field services, and entertainment. Building on our deep AI expertise, Panasonic Connect now offers specialized consultancy and training in generative AI, guiding businesses through seamless integration of these advanced technologies. Partner with Panasonic Connect to leverage unmatched AI expertise and innovative solutions precisely tailored to your business needs.

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