

# The Challenger Sale

Compete and win in a customer-empowered world

## Why Challenger?

Three questions sales leaders frequently ask prompted the research leading to Challenger:

1. What sets the best sales reps apart in a complex sales environment?
2. How do you replicate winning sales behaviors?
3. How do you create a differentiated sales experience?

We studied thousands of customers and sales professionals around the world, spanning every major industry, geography and go-to-market model, and discovered that classic relationship building is a losing approach in today's complex business-to-business sales.

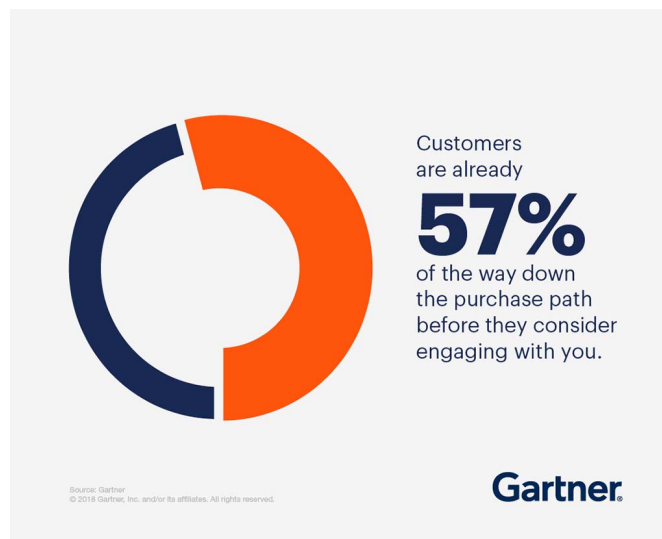
Instead, **challenging customer thinking and teaching customers new insights are key.**

## The sales environment is complex

The traditional approach to selling doesn't work today. Deals are increasingly complex, and customers have access to more information earlier in the sale. As a

result, customers are buying in new ways, delaying initial contact with suppliers and requiring greater consensus to move forward.

Today's customers don't need sales reps in the same way as in the past — customers now wait until they are 57% through the purchase process before contacting a rep. Buyers do independent research and set their own purchase criteria, all before the first seller interaction.



**“For the first time, our customers know more about us than we know about them.”**

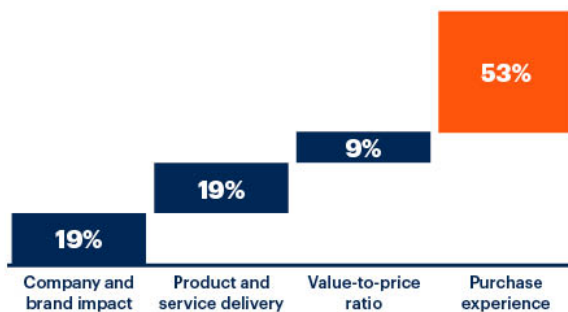
Vice President, Sales, Healthcare Industry

## **It's not what you sell, it's how you sell**

Due to this more complicated sales environment, it's no longer just about what you sell, but rather how you sell.

Our research revealed that 53% of customer loyalty is driven by the sales experience — more so than by the brand, product, service and price combined. A customer's interaction with a rep largely dictates this experience.

## Key drivers of customer loyalty



© 2019 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Gartner.

### The Five Profiles of Sales Professionals



#### Hard Worker

- Always goes the extra mile
- Doesn't give up easily
- Self-motivated
- Interested in feedback and development



#### Challenger

- Always has a different view of the world
- Understands the customer's business
- Loves to debate
- Pushes the customer



#### Relationship Builder

- Builds strong customer advocates
- Generous in giving time to help others
- Gets along with everyone



#### Lone Wolf

- Follows own instincts
- Self-assured
- Independent



#### Problem Solver

- Reliably responds
- Ensures that all problems are solved
- Detail oriented

Source: Gartner  
© 2018 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Gartner.

## Sellers fall into one of five profiles

Our research revealed that every sales professional in the world falls into one of five distinct profiles:

**Hard Worker:** Goes the extra mile, doesn't give up easily, is self-motivated, likes feedback and development

**Challenger:** Has different view of the world, understands the customer's business, loves to debate, pushes the customer

**Relationship Builder:** Builds strong customer advocates, is generous with time to help others, gets along with everyone

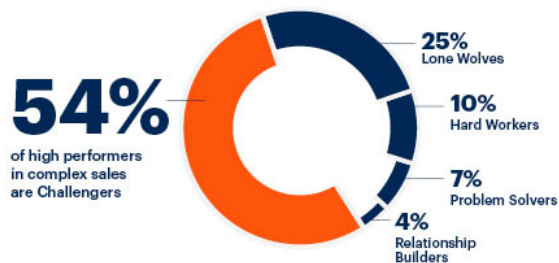
**Lone Wolf:** Follows own instincts, is self-assured, is independent

**Problem Solver:** Responds reliably, ensures all problems are solved, is detail-oriented

# Challenger reps are most likely to win

Challenger reps outperform all other profiles. In fact, more than 50% of all star performers in complex sales environments are Challengers.

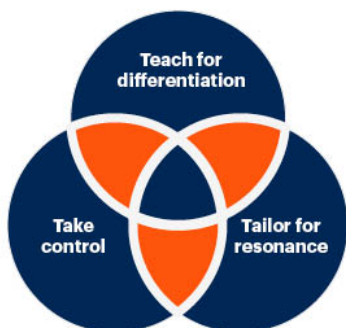
## Percentage of high performers in complex sales by profile



© 2019 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Gartner.

## Challenger selling behaviors



© 2019 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Gartner.

## Challenger rep behaviors build constructive tension

Challengers **teach**, offering a unique perspective and maintaining two-way communication.

They **tailor** their approach according to customer value drivers and economic drivers.

And they **take control** of the money discussion with the customer.

## Challengers lead with insight

The Challenger selling approach relies on delivering insight about an unknown problem or opportunity in the customer's business that the supplier is uniquely positioned to solve.

Challengers capture the customer's current belief or assumption, expose the flaws or misinformation in that thinking and present a better course of action. The better course of action helps customers learn something new about their business, usually how to save money, make money or mitigate risk.




## Get more Challenger selling resources

Learn more about what sets Challengers apart from the rest, and see if you have natural Challenger tendencies.

Work Email



Continue

 By clicking the "Continue" button, you are agreeing to the Gartner Terms of Use (</en/about/policies/terms-of-use>) and Privacy Policy. (</en/about/policies/privacy>)

## Keys to a successful Challenger rollout

Companies who achieve the largest commercial impact from Challenger focus on building sustainable capabilities by taking a methodical approach to change management and sustaining momentum over time.



**Generate buy-in**



**Prepare the organization**



**Align sales and marketing**



**Equip managers to coach and lead change**



**Build commercial insights**



**Design and deliver training**



**Embed into account planning, opportunity pursuit & CRM**



**Reinforce the change**



**Stay ahead of changing customer dynamics**

