

THE STATE OF SALES CAREERS 2026

THE NUMBER MOVES. THE TEAM CHANGES. WE START AGAIN.

A strong quarter becomes a reorg. A layoff changes the org chart before lunch. A missed target becomes a meeting invite. New tools arrive. We keep showing up while wondering whether our role will exist next quarter, and what comes next for us.



1. READ WHERE WE STAND

Score each area: 0 = unclear or inconsistent, 1 = developing, 2 = repeatable and proven.

MARKET	We can explain the customer problem, buying trigger, and business impact without a deck.	012
SELLING	We can show evidence of strong discovery, qualification, follow-up, and deal control.	012
PROCESS	We know the stage standards and use the same method when conditions change.	012
COACHING	Our managers observe the work, give specific feedback, and follow up weekly.	012
AI	We use AI safely to improve research, preparation, follow-up, and workflow execution.	012



2. OUR NEXT 30 DAYS IN THE ROLE

- ☐ Build our proof file: wins, call clips, messages, metrics, and customer evidence.
- ☐ Choose one constrained skill. Practice twice a week and review real application.
- ☐ Map the work AI can remove. Start with preparation, notes, research, and follow-up.
- ☐ Ask for one observed call and one specific coaching focus each week.
- ☐ Write our career thesis: customer, problem, role, environment, and skills we want next.

3. WHEN WE LEAD: GIVE THE TEAM A RUNWAY

- ☐ Publish role math: quota, deal size, win rate, cycle length, territory, and ramp assumptions.
- ☐ Give every new hire a 30-60-90 plan with observable skill and pipeline outcomes.
- ☐ Protect one weekly coaching loop: observe, diagnose, practice, apply, follow up.
- ☐ Standardize qualification, stage exits, opportunity reviews, and customer handoffs.
- ☐ Hold monthly stay conversations. Track patterns by manager, role, and tenure cohort.

4. ASK BETTER QUESTIONS BEFORE THE NEXT RESET

What percentage of the current team reached quota in the last four quarters?

How long did the last five successful hires take to reach full productivity?

What does the manager observe and coach every week?

Which parts of the sales process stay consistent when leadership changes?

Where is AI expected to assist, decide, or act, and who reviews the output?

Why did the last three salespeople leave, and what changed afterward?

5. REBUILD CAPABILITY BEFORE THE NEXT CHANGE



6. MAKE ONE COMMITMENT FOR THE NEXT 30 DAYS

OUR LOWEST SCORE

BEHAVIOR WE WILL BUILD

EVIDENCE WE WILL CAPTURE

OUR REVIEW DATE