



Fifth edition

The state of sales and marketing report

2023/2024

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Foreword

The past year has been like no other in human history. Marked by ongoing economic challenges, we stand on the verge of a new era driven by advances in AI technology. While we're just at the beginning of this AI journey, we have already witnessed unprecedented innovation with a new level of accuracy and efficiency that is invaluable to business growth.

In preparing this year's Sales and Marketing report, we surveyed salespeople, founders and CEOs to understand key sales trends that affect them. Through these conversations, we've gained invaluable insights into the tools and strategies that enable businesses to thrive. In the midst of a rapidly changing business environment, sales professionals from various industries have once again demonstrated their remarkable resilience, ability to adapt to change and capacity to achieve their goals, driving businesses forward.

Despite the strong growth potential of AI-powered technologies, building and maintaining human relationships, value-based selling, social selling, smarketing and other irreplaceable social and technical skills still shape the world

of sales. The ability of sales professionals to connect, understand and respond to customer needs ensures that the sales profession remains crucial in driving business success.

We hope that the findings in this report provide you with actionable insights and inspire you to harness the power of technology to drive your own business success.

Dominic Allon, CEO at Pipedrive



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Sales trends

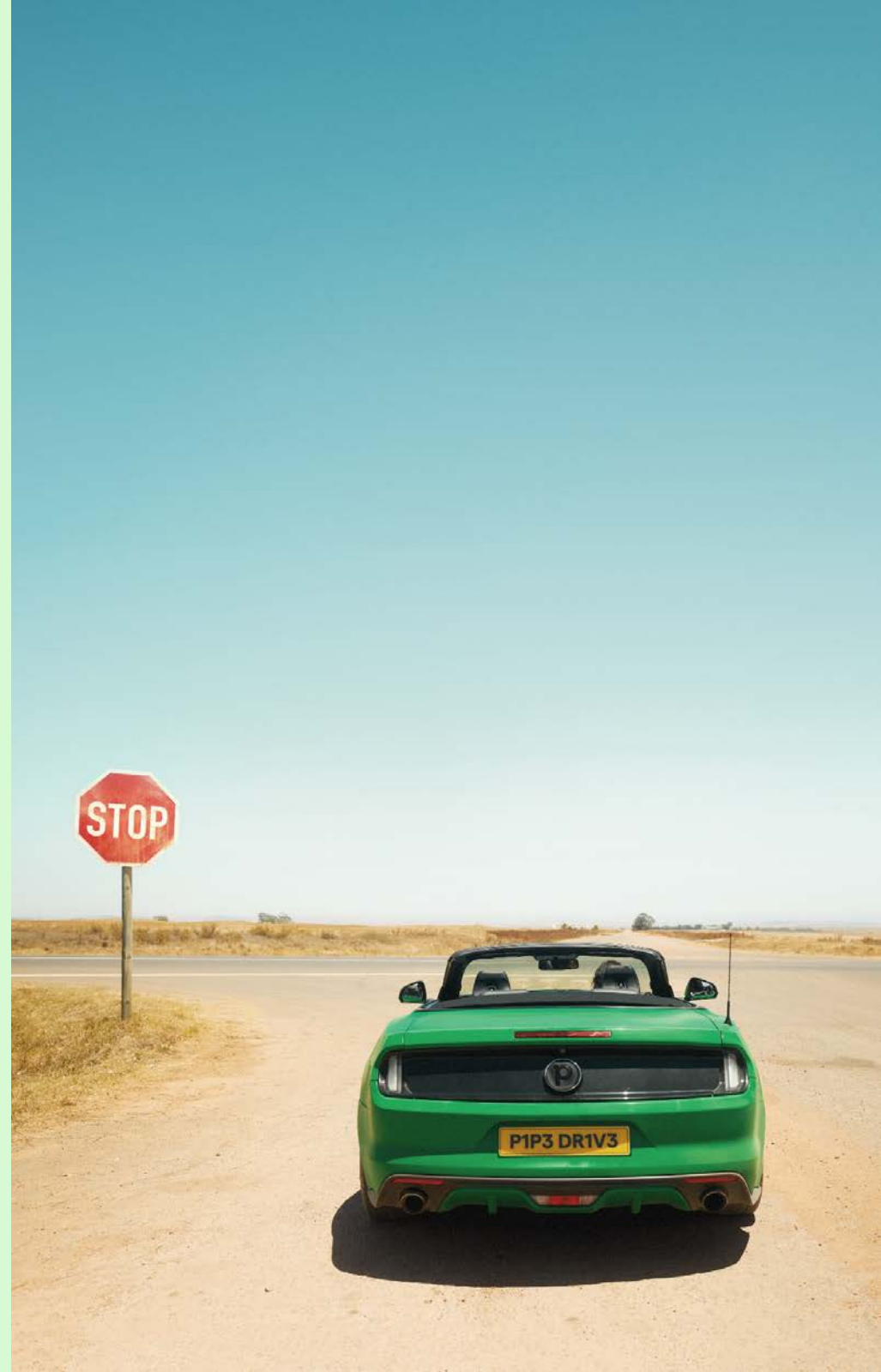
An overview of sales trends adoption

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The profiles of respondents





Performance and ways of working

Work-life balance and the mental well-being of employees is strongly connected to flexible working models. However, working overtime is still relatively common.

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What you'll find in this chapter

Key findings

1. There's a strong uplift in sales performance in 2023

71% of salespeople hit their regular sales quota either always or most of the time in 2023, which is a 19 percentage point uplift from 2022.

2. Working additional hours is widely spread, but it does not equal better results

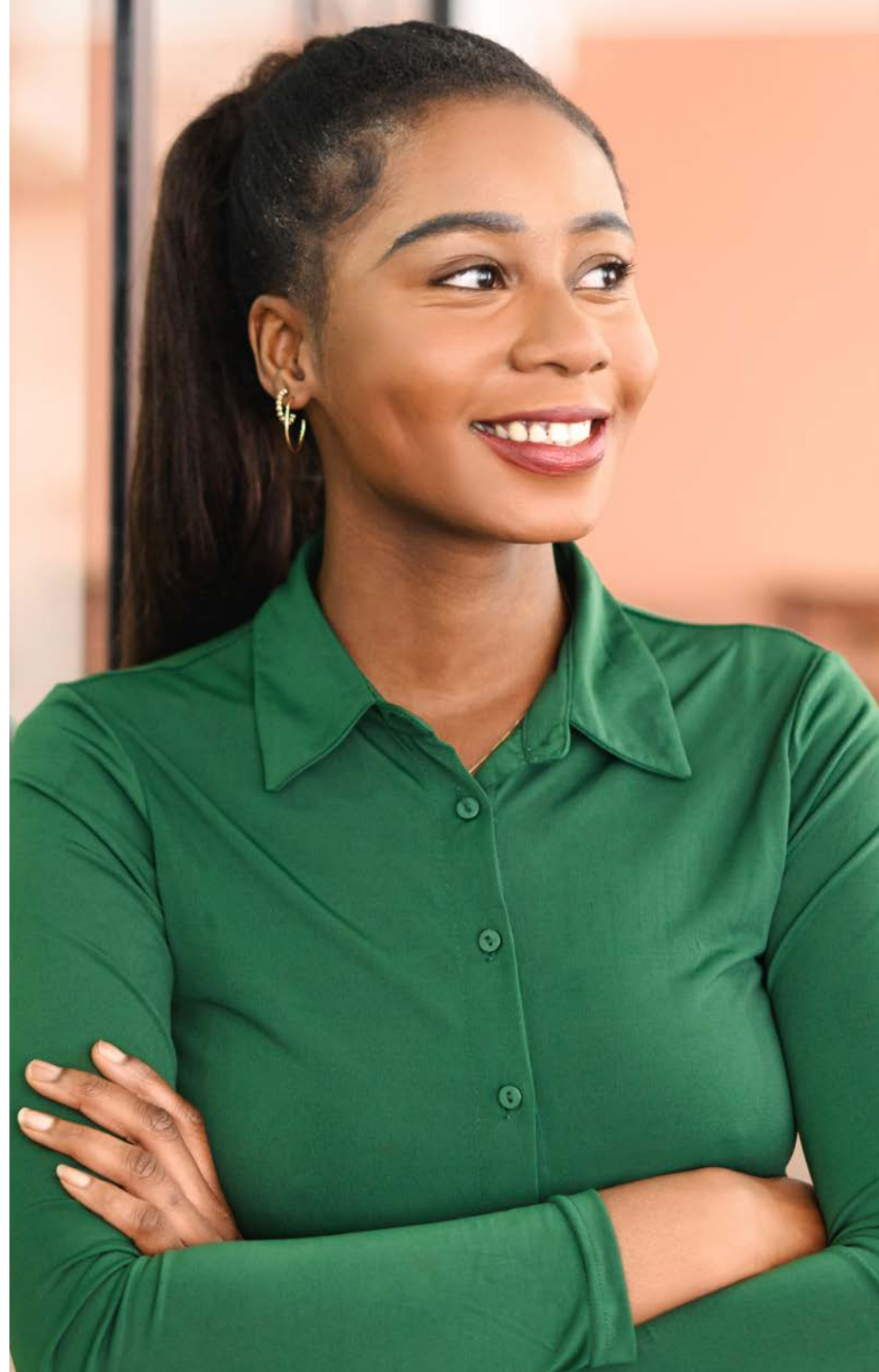
Respondents who worked additional hours were around 10% less likely to reach their sales target.

3. Only every third respondent felt supported by their manager – and it shows

Those that felt supported by their company were on average 13 percentage points more likely to reach their sales target.

4. Work-life balance is influenced by tool adoption

Respondents who use more automations in their work and have a CRM tool in place feel happier.



Salespeople thrive despite economic headwinds

Although the general economic situation has become more difficult over the past few years, it has not had a significant impact on sales professionals reaching their sales goals.

61% of respondents reached their personal sales targets in 2023, a percentage that has been stable over the past few years.

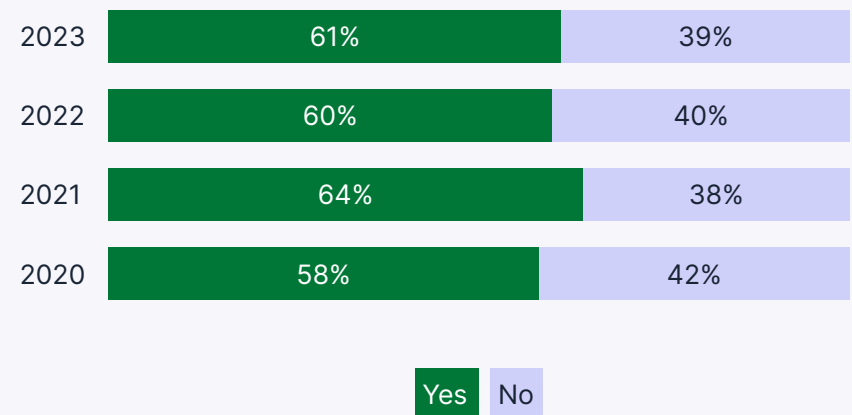


Smaller companies rely on fewer key accounts and smaller customer bases. As a result, they're more likely to be impacted by economic downturns and budget cuts from their clients. Keeping this in mind and considering the current economic challenges, achieving an overall positive sales quota is a significant success. This is a testament to the hard work of sales experts at small businesses and their ability to find digital solutions to deliver results regardless of the circumstances."

Sean Evers, VP of Sales & Partner at Pipedrive

Salespeople in smaller companies struggled more. As our numbers show, the bigger the company gets, the easier it seems for salespeople to hit their targets. This could be related to the fact that there is often a stronger support system within the company in large entities – both from managers and from colleagues.

Did you reach your personal sales target last year?



A deep dive according to segments

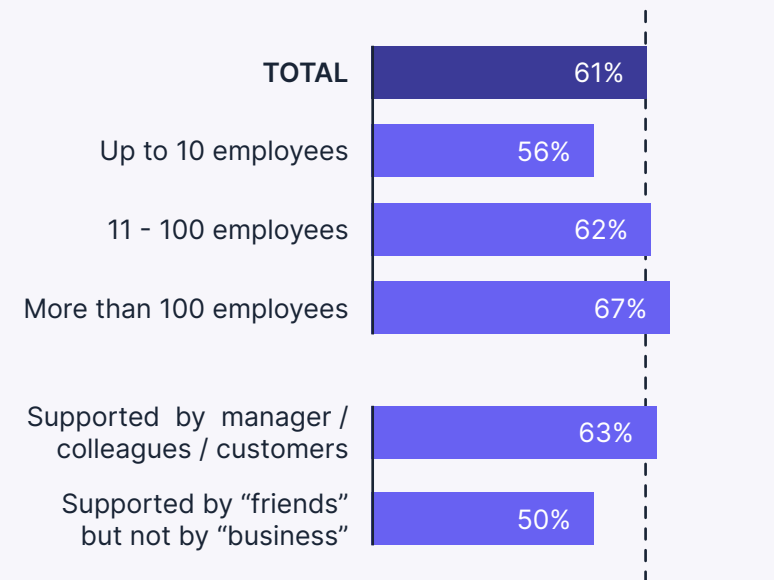
Company size comparison

- ⊕ 67% of individuals from companies with more than 100 employees reached their goals.
- ⊖ By comparison, those that worked in companies with 10 employees or fewer were 11 percentage points less likely to reach their goals.

Receiving company support

- ⊕ Respondents that felt supported by their manager, colleagues and customers showed stronger abilities to be successful: **63% of those supported by their company reached their sales targets in 2023.**
- ⊖ On the other hand, respondents who did not receive professional support were **13 percentage points less likely to meet their targets.**

Did you reach your personal sales target last year?



% of respondents in the segment who have answered "yes"

More are regularly hitting sales quotas

The **vast majority (71%) of salespeople** hit their regular sales quota either always or most of the time. This is remarkably higher than in previous years.

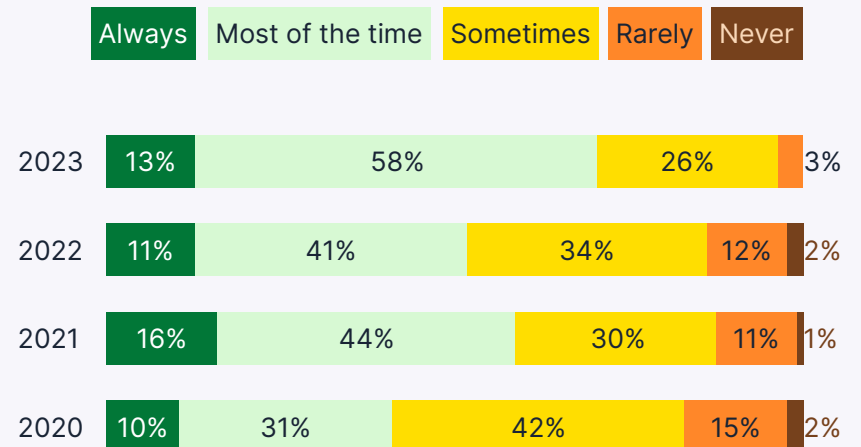


In today's business world, sales success is directly tied to the implementation of digital tools. Staying on top of everything, especially productivity and follow-ups, is crucial. Using digital tools not only helps to automate repetitive tasks but also allows for increasingly smart sales processes. Being well-informed about the things that matter and making decisions in the right order enables prioritization of leads, identification of the best times and formats for follow-ups, and management of every deal in your pipeline. As a result, sales professionals have more capacity for building invaluable personal relationships and effectively closing deals. This is an essential facet of a great CRM, and Pipedrive excels at this."

Sean Evers, VP of Sales & Partner at Pipedrive

The share of respondents who really struggle with hitting their sales quota has gone down from 14% in 2022 to 3% in 2023.

How often do you hit your regular sales quota?



Working additional hours does not equal success

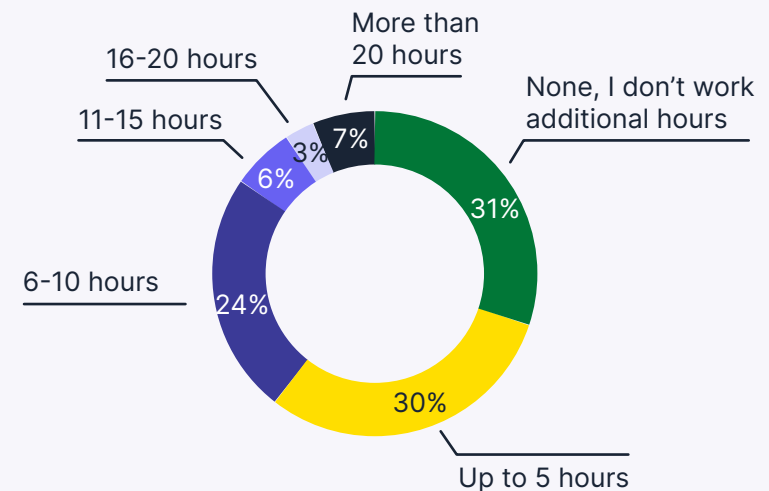
Hitting sales quotas and targets doesn't come easily – for some, it means putting in extra hours.

Only every third respondent claims not to work additional hours, while 10% of respondents do more than 16 additional hours every week, meaning that for some people, the work week can be up to 60 hours long, or even longer in some countries.

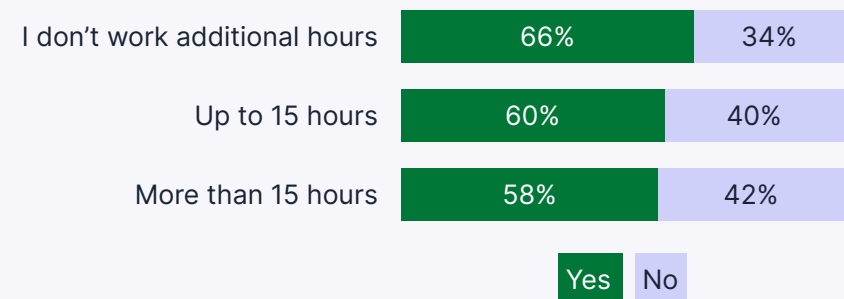
CEO/Founder-level professionals tend to work more additional hours. The same goes for men and people working in finance or construction. As for countries, **respondents in the US and the UK work additional hours most often.**

However, **working extra hours does not necessarily contribute to hitting sales goals.** The results show the opposite – the share of those who achieved their sales target is higher among employees who did not work extra hours.

How many additional hours do you usually work each week?



Did you reach your personal sales target in 2023?

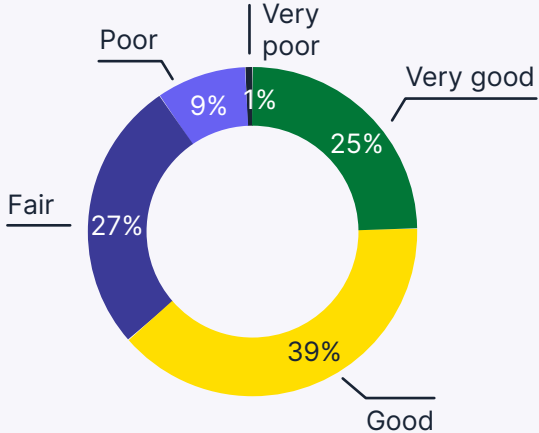


Although working additional hours is widely spread, most people rate their work-life balance good or very good

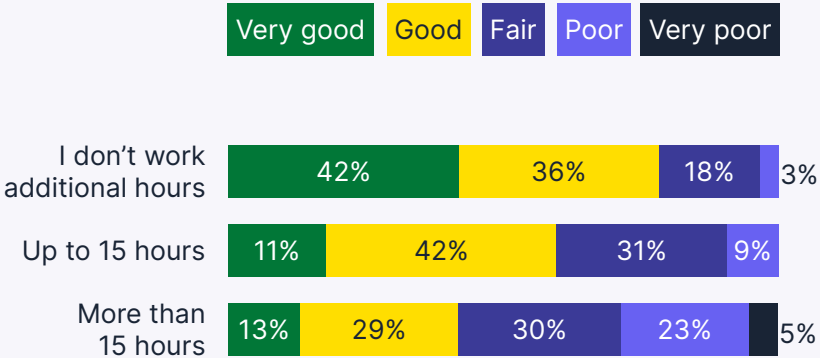
Most respondents rate their work-life balance good or even very good (64%). Only every tenth respondent rates their work-life balance as “poor” or “very poor”.

As expected, the fewer additional hours, the higher the satisfaction with work-life balance.

How would you rate your current work-life balance?



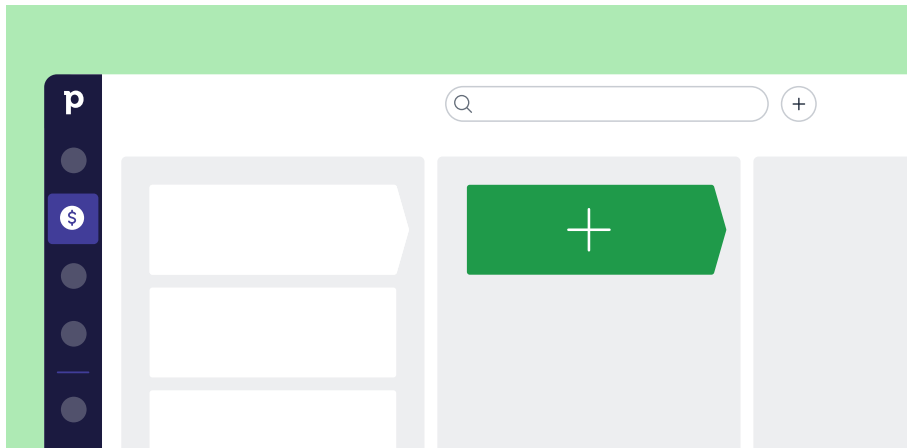
How would you rate your current work-life balance?



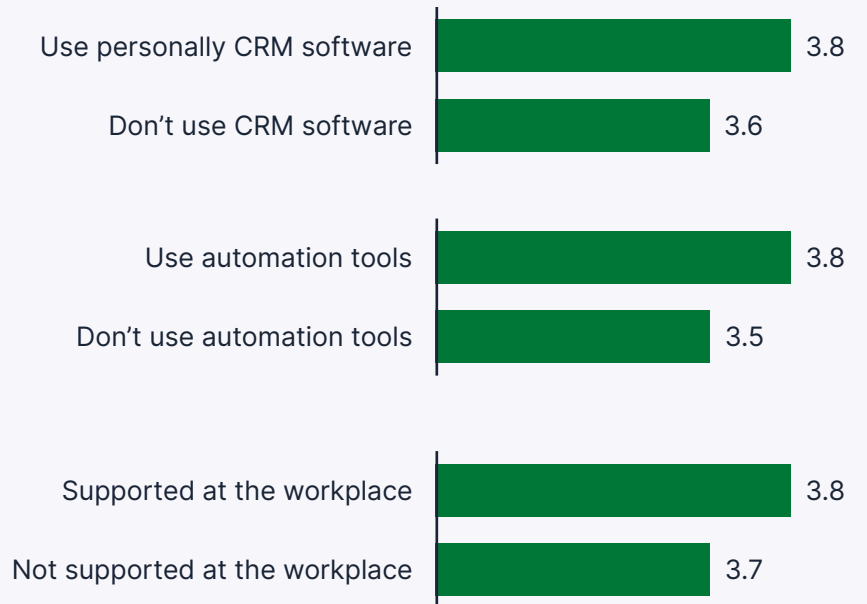
Work-life balance: results by segment

Technology also helps workers to increase satisfaction and achieve balance: **respondents who use automation tools in their work and have a CRM software in place feel happier on average.**

Those that feel supported at the workplace also tend to experience a better work-life balance.



Average ratings on a 5-points scale



The key to a good work-life balance lies in flexibility

A good work-life balance is supported by remote working options and flexible working hours. Most companies have adapted to this need and offer employees both options.

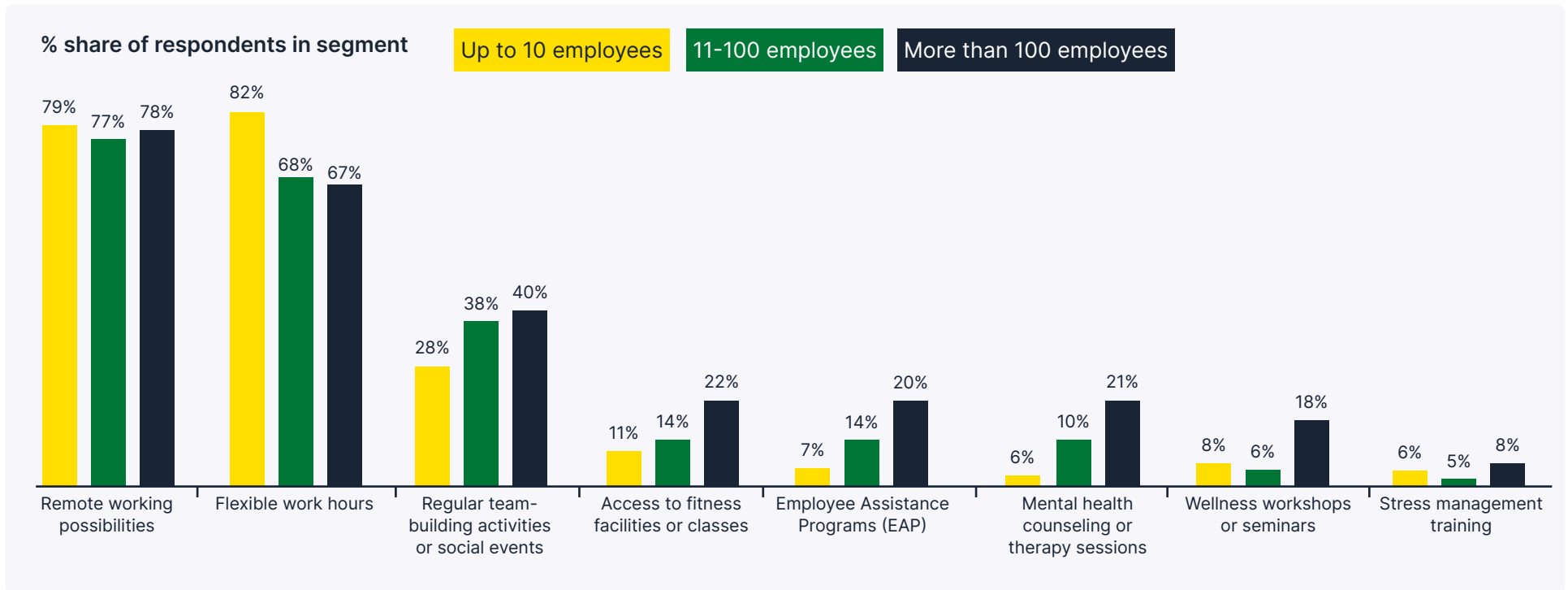
In general, bigger companies tend to grant more employee well-being initiatives, be it access to fitness offers, social events or stress management trainings.

Smaller companies are slightly more willing to offer flexible working hours.

Which of the following well-being and work-life balance initiatives does your workplace provide?



Well-being initiative results by company size



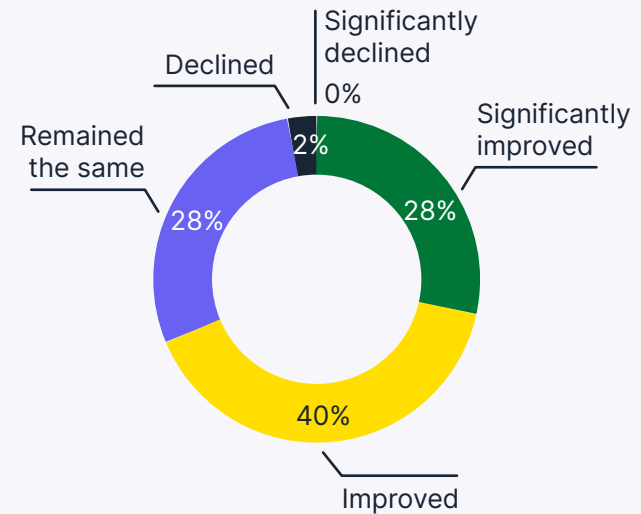
To remain or become an attractive employer in today's working world, offering hybrid work possibilities is essential. Beyond that, a modern work culture is characterized by a holistic approach that includes psychological, technological and physical factors aimed at supporting employee satisfaction, fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging both personal and professional development. Regardless of the company size, embracing these elements allows businesses to create a supportive and dynamic environment that not only attracts top talent but also enhances overall productivity and engagement."

Tanya Channing, Chief People & Culture Officer at Pipedrive

Flexible work models contribute to mental well-being

There is no doubt that higher flexibility in choices improves mental well-being: 28% of respondents whose workplaces offer flexible work models even state that their **mental well-being has significantly improved since introducing remote options.**

Since my workplace started providing flexible work models and/or remote options, my mental well-being has...

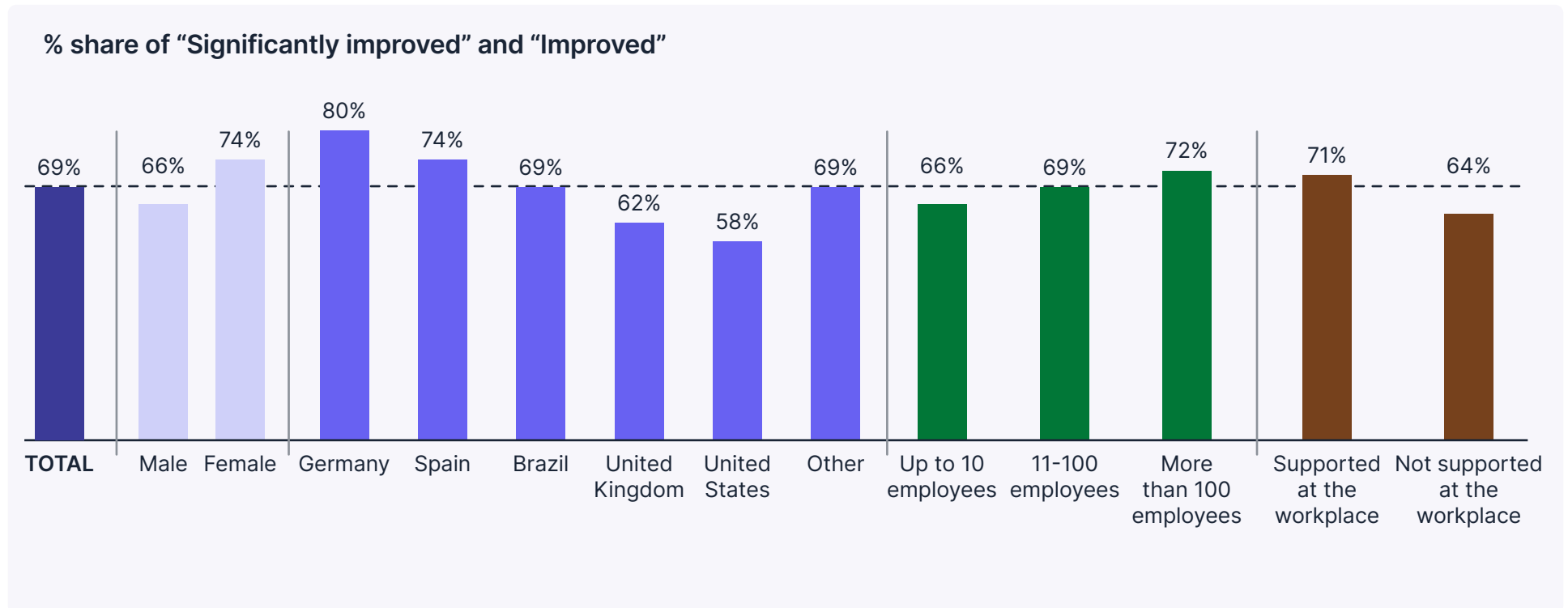


Improved mental well-being: results by segment

Women have felt the positive change slightly more than men. The positive impact of providing flexible work models and/or remote options has also been felt more strongly in **employees of bigger companies.**

On the country level, German respondents claim to feel the effects the most: **80% of German respondents claim their mental well-being has improved due to flexible work models.**

On the other end of the spectrum is the US: **Only 58% of US respondents feel a positive mental effect from it.**



Flexible work models boost employees' performance

Beside improving mental well-being, flexible and remote work models have a positive impact also on performance and productivity.

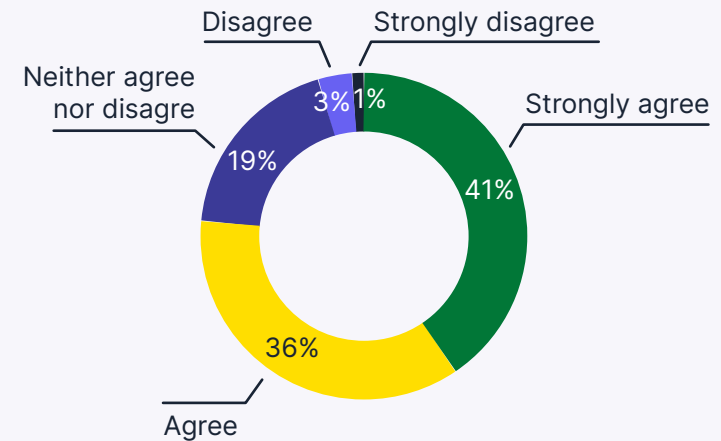


Fostering a flexible work arrangement boosts organizational culture and places a strong emphasis on trust in employees. For such a culture to thrive, leaders within the organization need to empower employees with the autonomy to make decisions that enhance their productivity and workday experience. One option to shape a culture of independence is to find ways to digitize the majority of processes and tasks in order to support long-term success. As a result, flexibility fosters a sense of ownership, accountability and independence, driving higher levels of engagement and performance.”

Tanya Channing, Chief People & Culture Officer at Pipedrive

The vast majority (77%) of respondents claim that remote or flexible work models have supported their performance.

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: “Remote or flexible work models have positively impacted my performance”?



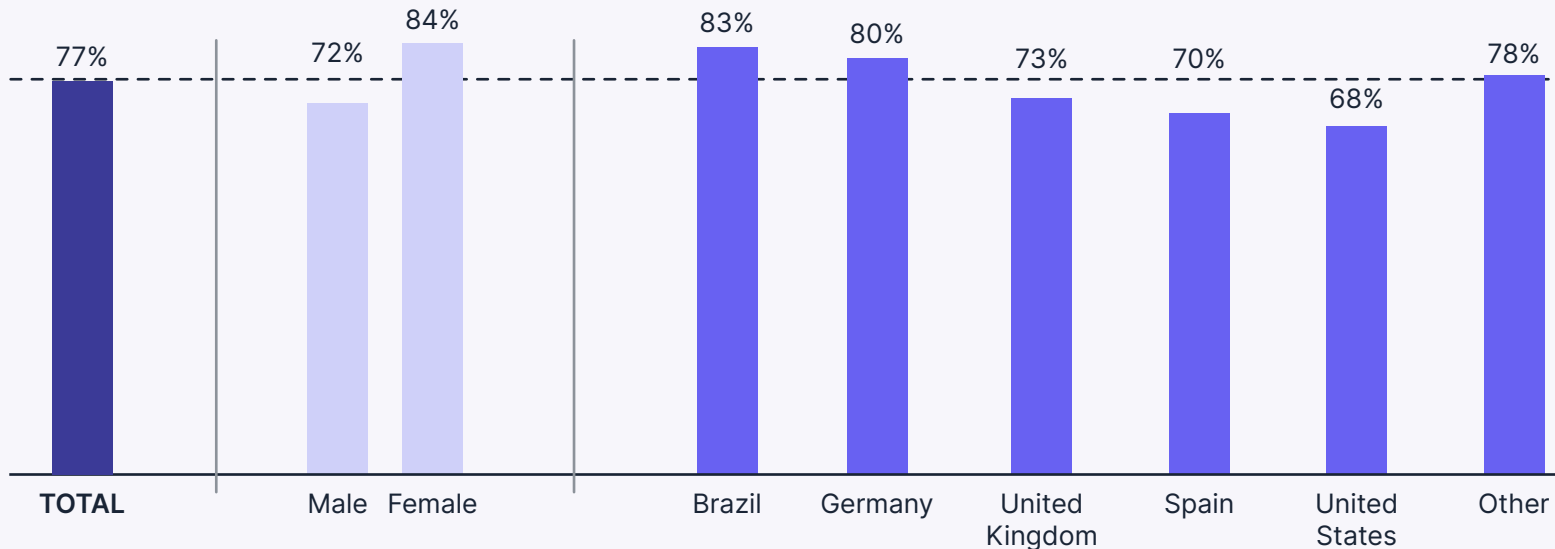
Impact on performance: results by segment

Interestingly, **women were 12 percentage points more likely than men** to respond that their job performance had improved due to higher flexibility in working.

On the country level, the strongest increase in professional performance can be seen in **Brazil (83%), Germany (80%) and the UK (73%)**.

On the other end of the spectrum are **Spain (70%) and the US (68%)**.

% share of "Strongly agree" and "Agree"

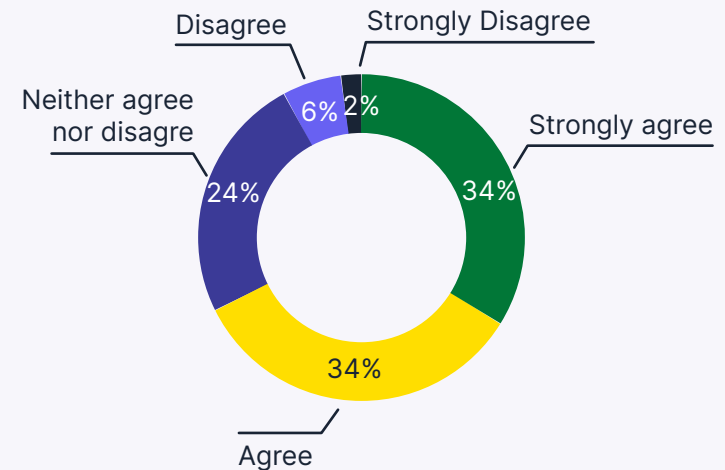


The majority of respondents are content with the level of gender diversity and inclusivity in their company

The topic of employee well-being and general happiness at one's workplace is closely related to feeling supported at your workplace – especially if you belong to an underrepresented group.

Luckily, **68% of respondents agree** that their company displays a **good level of gender diversity and inclusivity**.

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "My company has a good level of gender diversity and inclusivity"?

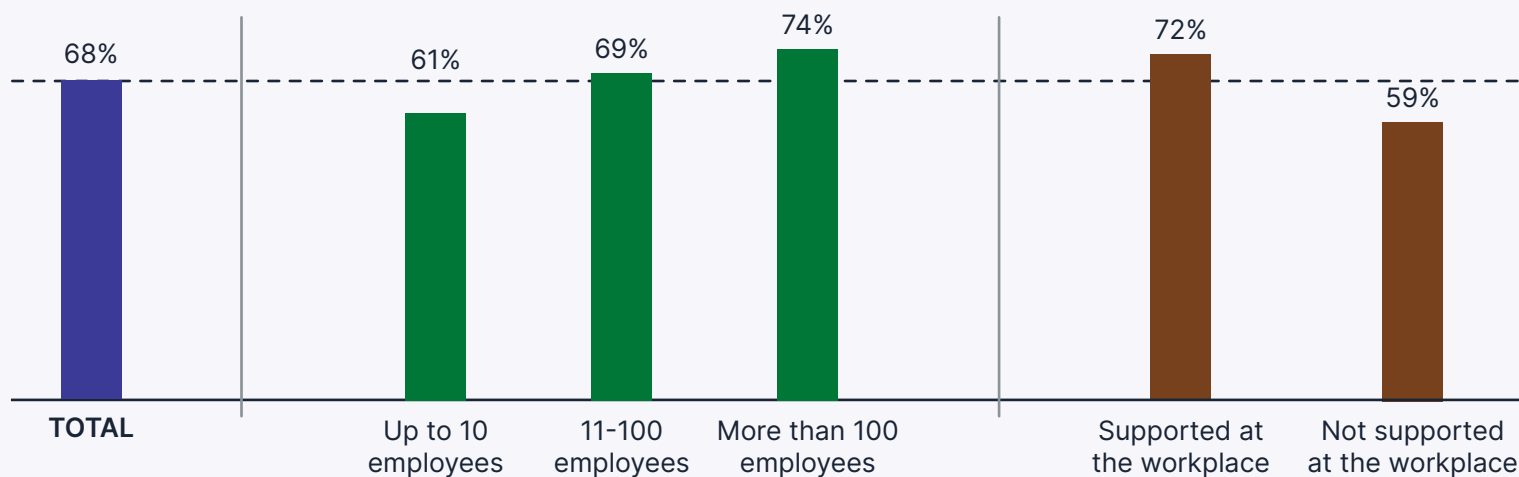


Gender diversity and inclusivity: results by segment

Companies with more than 100 employees score the **highest** in this regard with 74% of respondents either strongly agree or agree that their workplace is both inclusive and gender diverse to a satisfying degree.

There is a **strong correlation** with the general feeling of **being supported** at the workplace and experiencing a satisfying degree of gender diversity and inclusivity in their company.

% share of "Strongly agree" and "Agree"



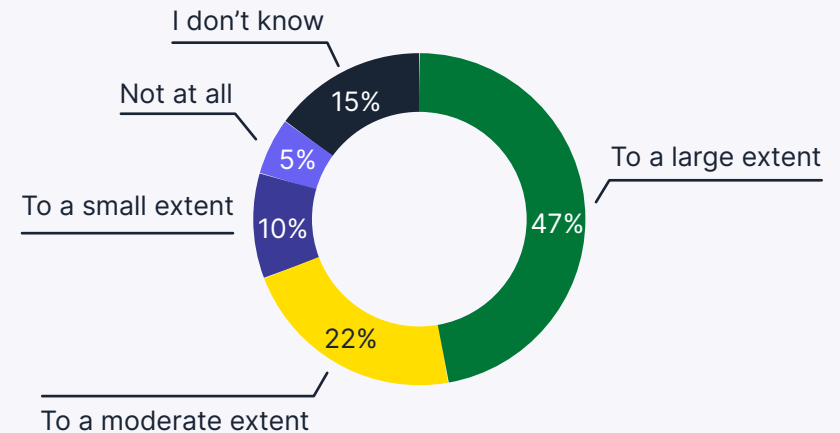
Women are being supported in their careers

Most respondents do not feel that women in their company are in a disadvantaged position and less supported compared to men.

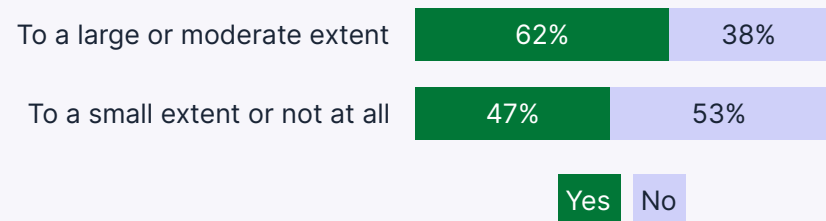
Women themselves are even more confident about this than men: **54% of women feel that they are supported “to a large extent”**, while only 44% men think the same.

However, this is influenced by the fact that 18% of men actually do not know how and if women’s career growth is supported. Unsurprisingly, **women who feel supported in their career growth are 32% more likely to reach their targets.**

To what extent does your organization support the career growth and advancement of women in sales and marketing?



Women only: Did you reach your personal sales target last year (in 2023)?

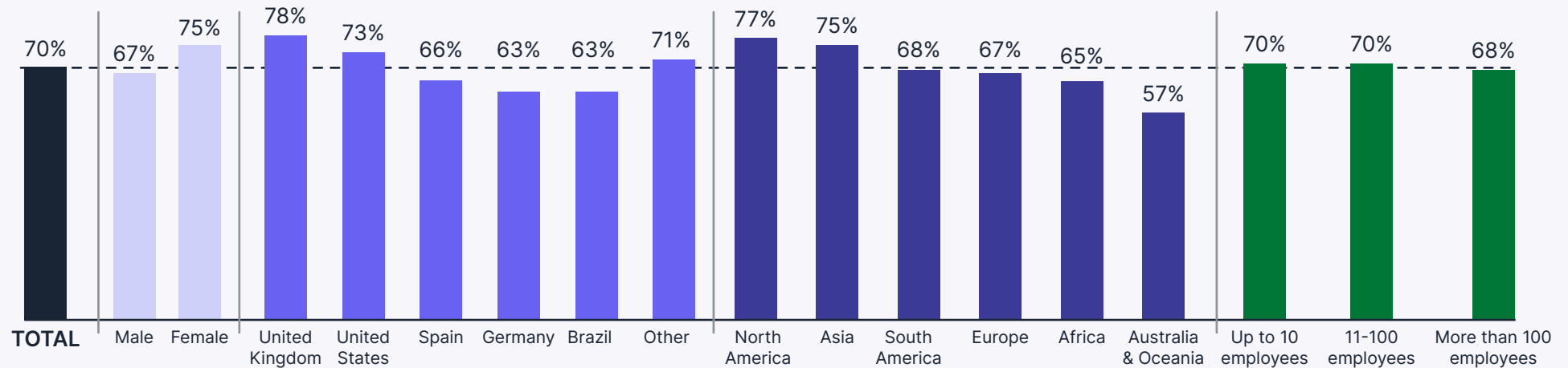


Supporting the career growth of women: results by segment

Although everything seems to be fine at first glance, there are **remarkable differences in how women are supported and empowered in different countries.**

Only **57% of respondents from Australia & Oceania** see their employers supporting women (to a large or moderate extent), while this share is as high as **77% in North American countries.**

% share of “To a large extent” and “To a moderate extent”



Sources of support: Family and friends make a difference

When asked about the main source of support in their professional life, **more than half of respondents named family and friends.**

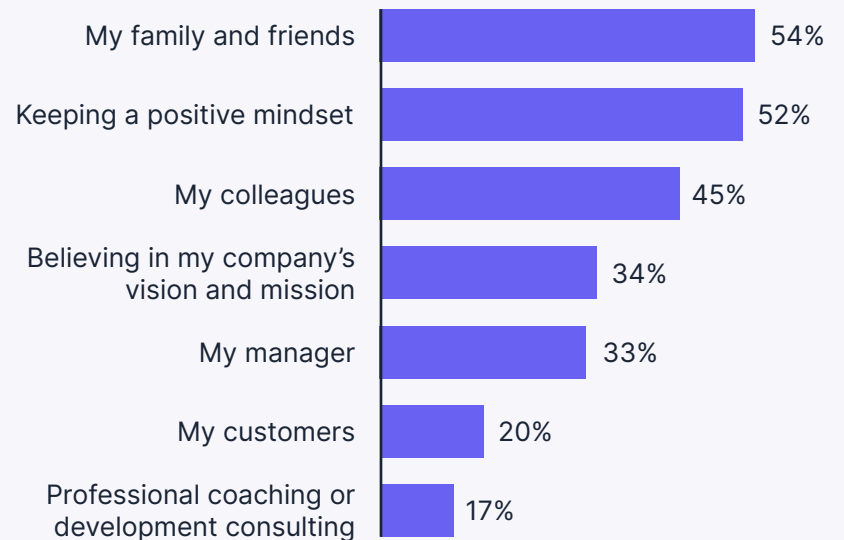
Although it is clear that workplace support is an important factor of a balanced and happy life, **only a third of respondents felt supported by their manager.**

In the same vein, a remarkable **42% of respondents didn't feel supported by either their managers or by colleagues.**

Those who feel supported by managers and colleagues find it easier to meet their annual goals and sales quotas and their overall satisfaction with their employer is higher.

In general, **managerial support is felt less by those from European and North American countries,** while respondents from Australia & Oceania and Asia receive the most support from their managers.

Who or what supported you most in your professional life in 2023?



42% did not feel any support by their managers or colleagues.



Digitization in sales and marketing

While CRM tools are already used to track sales, AI tools and automated lead generation tools have high potential.

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What you'll find in this chapter

Key findings

1. Sales departments favour CRM

87% of respondents use CRM software to track sales.

2. Tool adoption enables success

82% of respondents who are “very satisfied” with the tools available to them are likely to hit their sales quotas.

3. 35% of respondents use AI tools already

This share is even higher among smaller companies (42%).

4. Most respondents (38%) chose AI tools

When we asked them which new or emerging technology would have the biggest positive impact on their work when adopted.

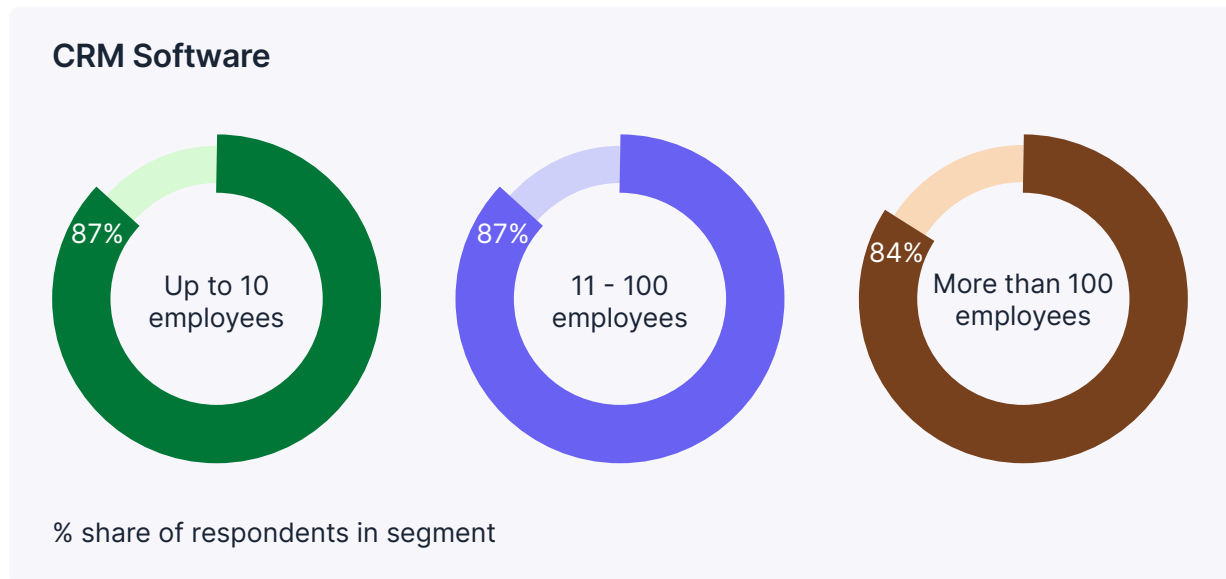


CRM software adoption

87% of companies use CRM software to track sales.

Interestingly, CRM adoption is actually lowest in companies with more than 100 employees.

Companies with up to 10 employees are among the most likely to have adopted CRM software, illustrating how much small businesses value it as a tool.



The digitization of sales processes has changed the business game for many companies, especially for small ones. By investing in technology that helps automate repetitive tasks, boost lead generation and new customer acquisition, and provide actionable insights, small businesses can accelerate their scalability. Additionally, providing ongoing training for employees to effectively use these digital tools can enhance productivity and improve customer relationships. Embracing these technologies not only streamlines operations but also positions small businesses to compete more effectively in today's fast-paced market."

Agur Jõgi, CTO at Pipedrive

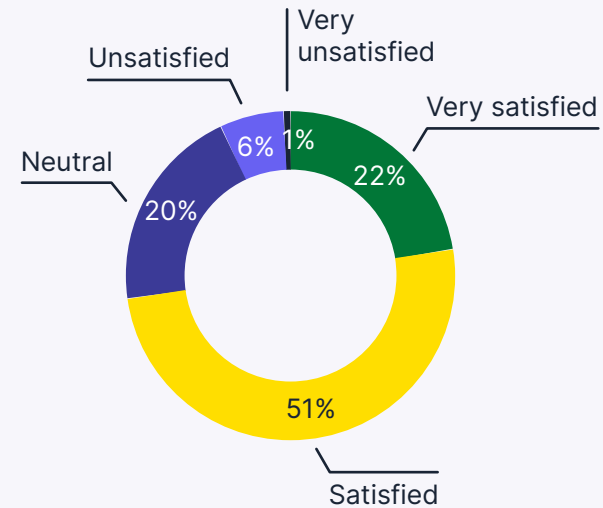
Technology helps to solve daily tasks

73% of respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied with the tools and tech they have in use to complete their daily tasks.

Having the right tools helps improve performance: **82% of respondents who are very satisfied with their tools show a strong likelihood to hit their sales quota** always or most of the time.

On the other hand, **unsatisfied respondents are less successful (62%)** in hitting their quota.

How satisfied are you with the tools and tech available to you for your work?

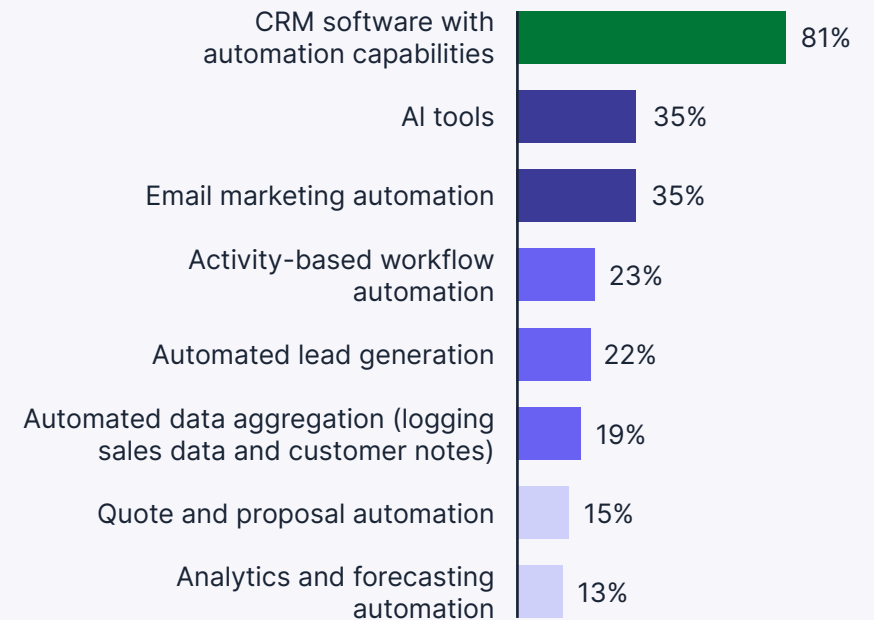


Smaller companies are leading the AI revolution

The majority of respondents already use some software with automation capabilities, with CRM tools the most common.

Surprisingly, **AI tools are currently already as popular as Email marketing automation tools**, although the latter have been on the market for much longer.

Which automation tools or technology do you use in your role?



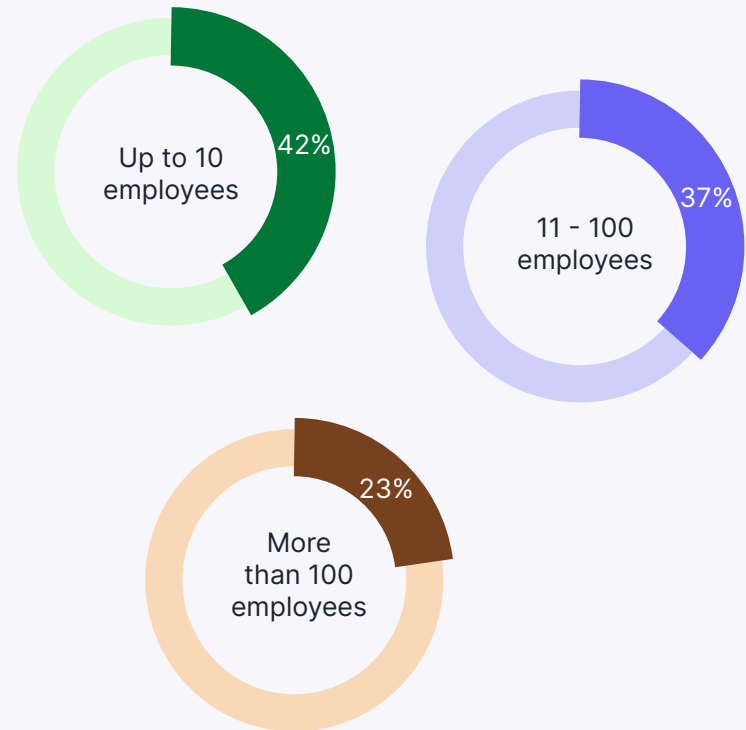
92% of respondents use at least one automation tool in their job role.

Tools and tech usage: results by company size

AI tools are used by every third respondent.

This share is even higher among smaller companies, which are likely to be more interested in solutions that would help them save time, since employees perform many different roles on a daily basis. Bigger companies seem to need more time to adopt and onboard new tools.

AI tools



% share of respondents in segment

AI tool adoption most likely to improve results

When we asked respondents which technologies would have the biggest positive impact on their work, **38% chose AI tools.**

Although **CRM software** is already in use in a big share of companies, its full potential has clearly not yet been leveraged as every third respondent feels that better CRM adoption would help them in their work – for example **adopting automation features.**

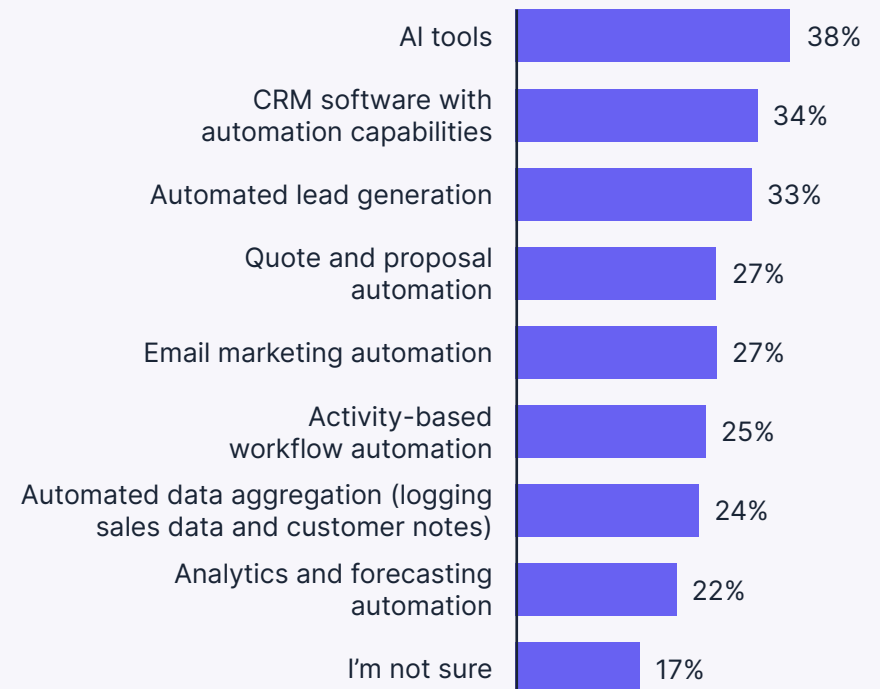


AI tools hold tremendous potential as sales professionals see a great positive impact on performance and results. By leveraging AI for forecasting and supporting everyday work, salespeople have access to real-time, data-driven insights that enhance decision-making and sales strategy development. These solutions can predict market trends, optimize resource allocation and identify new opportunities for growth, enabling to achieve higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness and driving overall success for the company.”

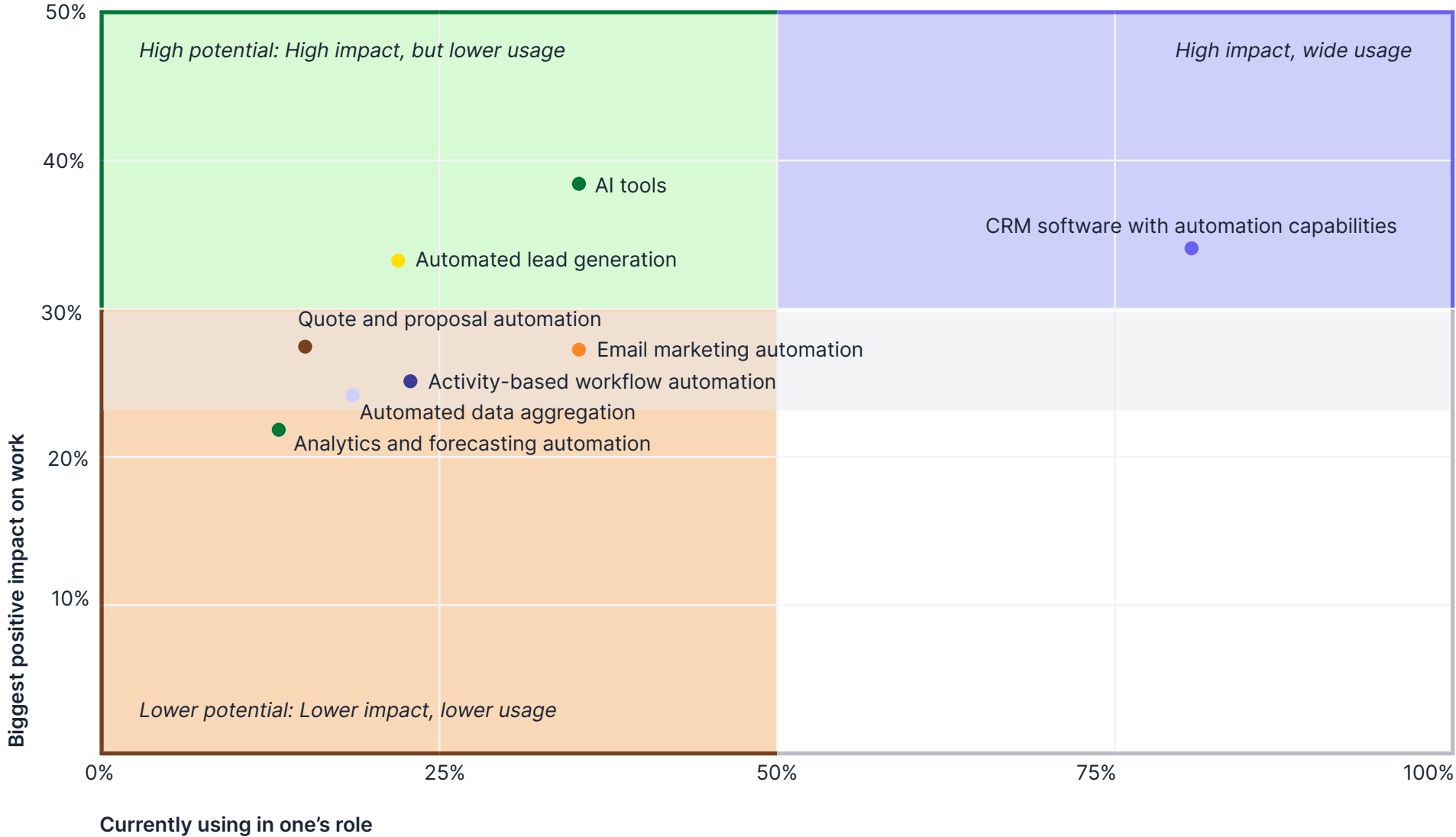
Agur Jõgi, CTO at Pipedrive

Analytics and forecasting automation is the least desired feature by many respondents, with only 22% deeming it impactful.

In your opinion, the adoption of which technology by your company could have the biggest positive impact on your work?



AI tools and automated lead generation and CRM tools predicted to have the biggest impact





Sales trends

AI-based technologies have the strongest growth potential, while value-based selling, social selling and smarketing will also continue to shape the world of sales.

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What you'll find in this chapter

Key findings

- 1. AI is already present in the sales process**
Every fourth respondent has introduced AI-based approaches to their sales process.
- 2. 76% of respondents think AI will support them**
The vast majority of respondents were optimistic about AI's possible impact on their professional life in the future.
- 3. Only 8% are afraid that AI could shrink teams**
Only a small percentage of respondents feared reductions in team size caused by the adoption of AI.
- 4. Big changes are coming**
17% of respondents are confident that AI technologies will affect all business areas in the upcoming years.



Hybrid sales and value-based selling have shaped sales processes

83% of respondents have implemented at least one new approach or technology in their sales process in the last couple of years.

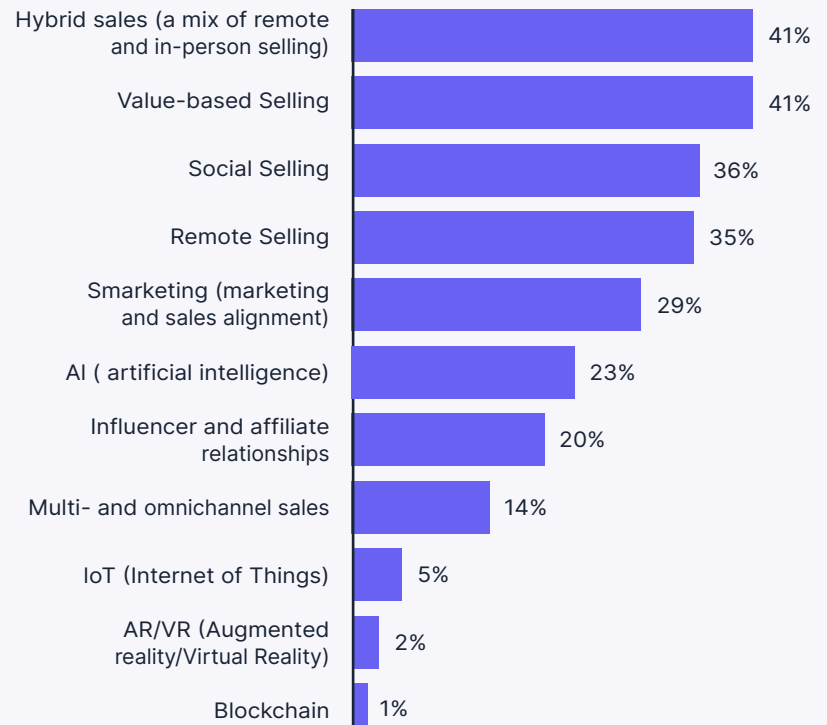
Companies from Germany and the UK have been slightly more conservative, but even in those countries 75% of respondents have revamped their sales processes within the past few years. Despite this, **German respondents have put more emphasis on implementing AI into their sales processes**, while UK respondents have tested out AR/VR possibilities.

Hybrid sales and value-based selling have shaped sales processes the most, while **every fourth respondent has introduced AI-based approaches**.

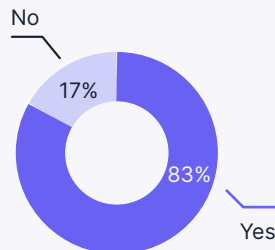
High tech approaches like blockchain, augmented reality, virtual reality and internet of things are **not widely used**

in sales and most respondents also do not believe these technologies will have a significant impact on sales in the future.

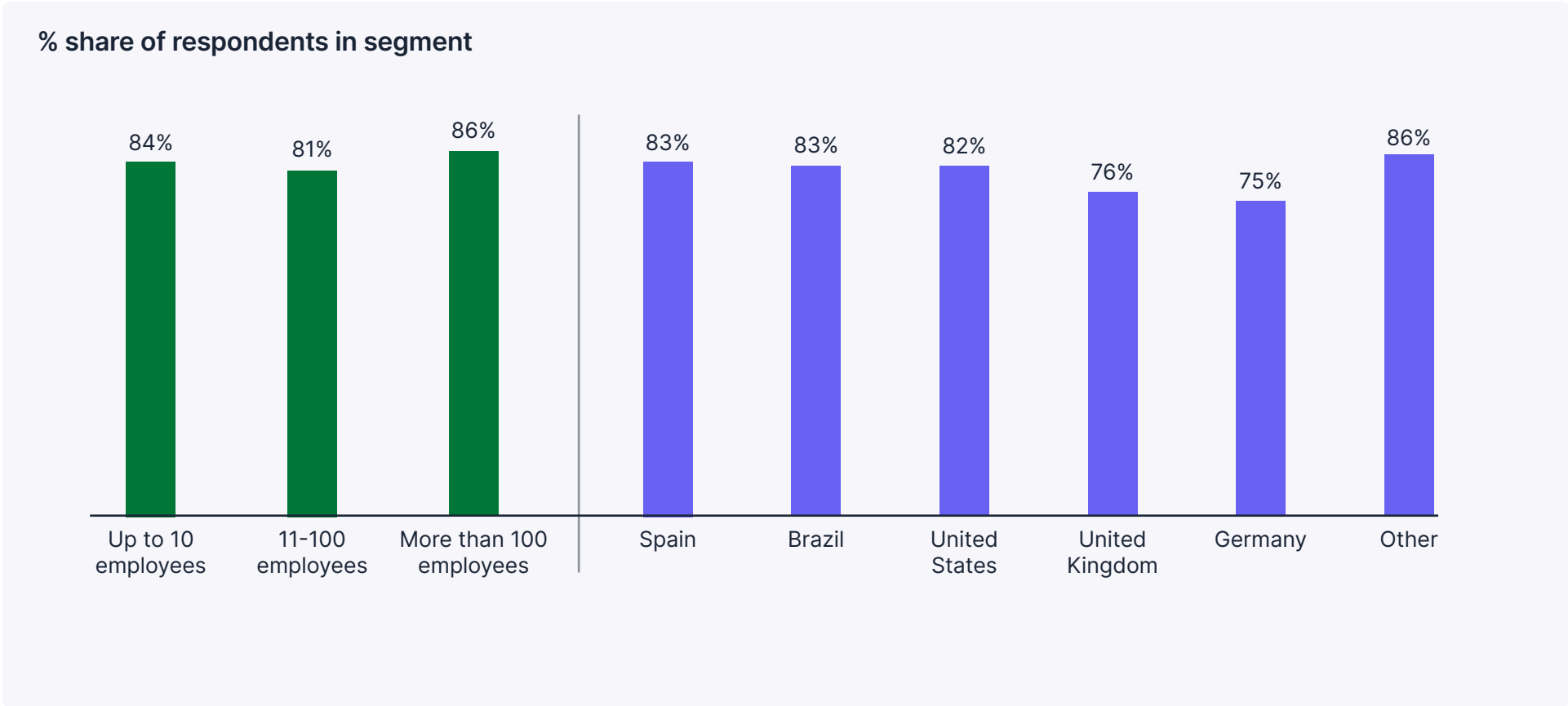
Which sales trends or emerging technologies have you implemented in your sales process in the last two years?



Share of respondents who implemented at least one new approach/technology in their sales process in the last two years



New sales approach implementation: results in segments

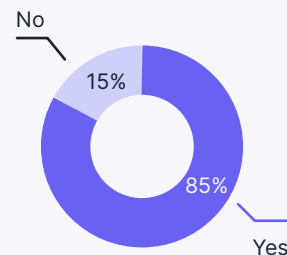


AI is expected to influence sales strategies in the future

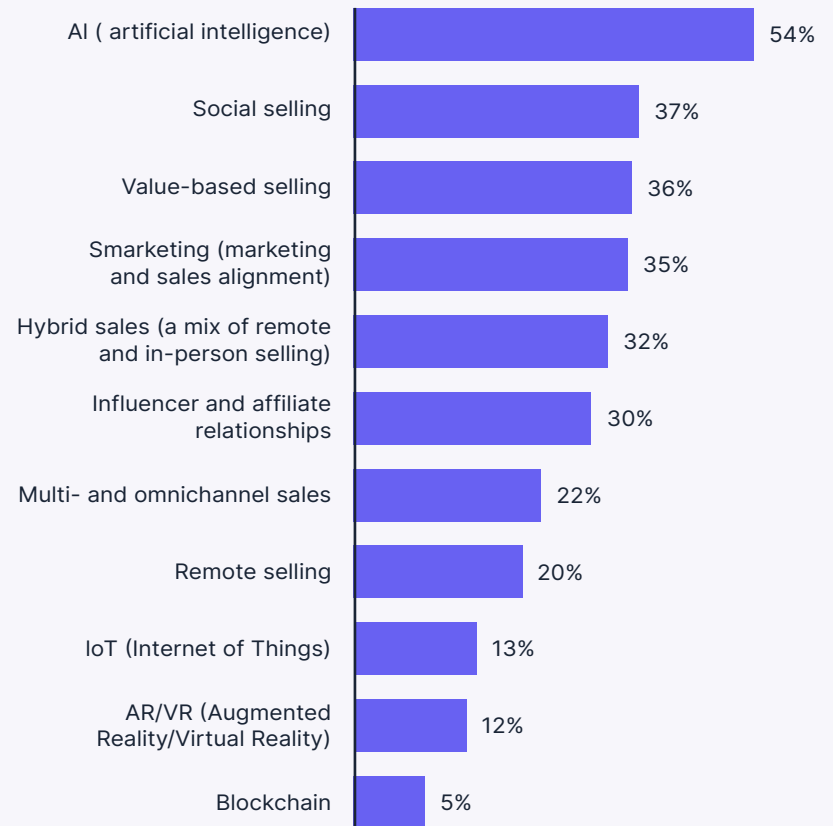
Although only every fourth respondent has implemented AI-based approaches into their sales processes, those who are actively involved in shaping their company's sales strategies see great potential in AI technologies (regardless of company size).

Value-based selling, social selling and smarketing will also continue to shape the world of sales (especially in the eyes of micro companies).

Share of respondents who feel involved in shaping company's sales processes



Which sales trends or emerging technologies do you believe will significantly impact sales strategies in the near future?



Supportive, not disruptive: The impact of AI on sales teams

Although there's been plenty of discussion around how AI might replace workers, the future doesn't look that bleak in sales: **76% of respondents have a positive outlook** and are convinced that AI could support teams in their work.

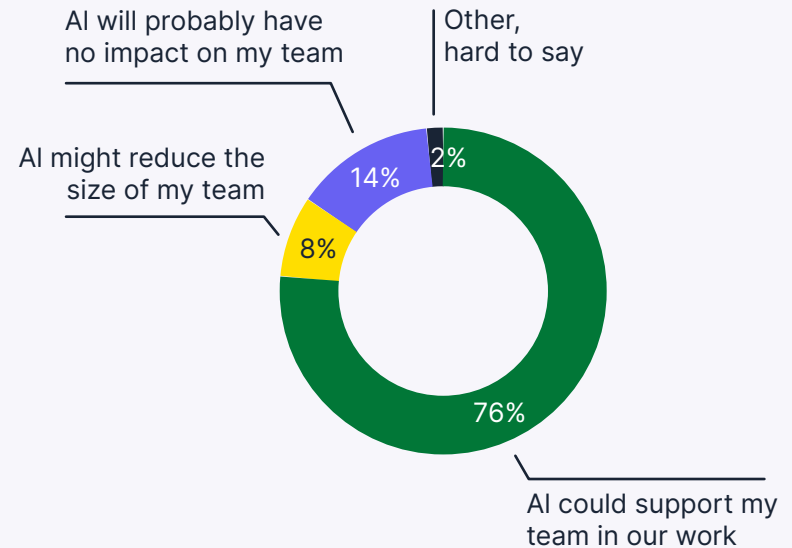
Only 8% of respondents are afraid that AI could reduce the size of their teams.

14% of respondents think that AI will not significantly affect their work and their team. This opinion is slightly more common in the construction sector.

Respondents from the USA and UK are the most likely to feel that AI won't impact them.

In all segments **AI is overwhelmingly seen as a supportive force**, rather than a disruptive one.

How do you think AI will impact your team in the future?



People will continue to build relationships, rather than AI

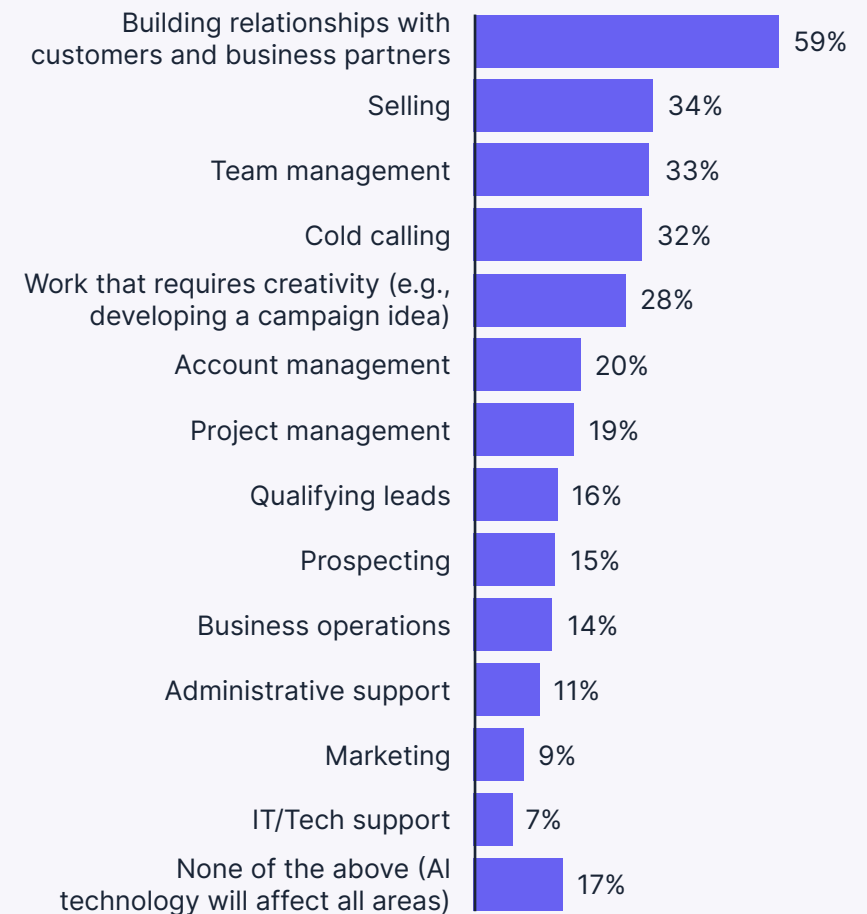
17% of respondents are confident that AI technologies will affect all business areas in the upcoming years.

The other 83% assume that there are some areas where AI will play a **less important role** – for example in **relationship building**, where the human factor is seen as a key ingredient.

Respondents are least likely to trust AI to manage **selling and team management**, and would not outsource those areas to AI.

It's interesting to note that **smaller companies seem to have more faith in AI technologies**.

Which areas of your work do you think will remain unaffected by the emergence of AI technology?



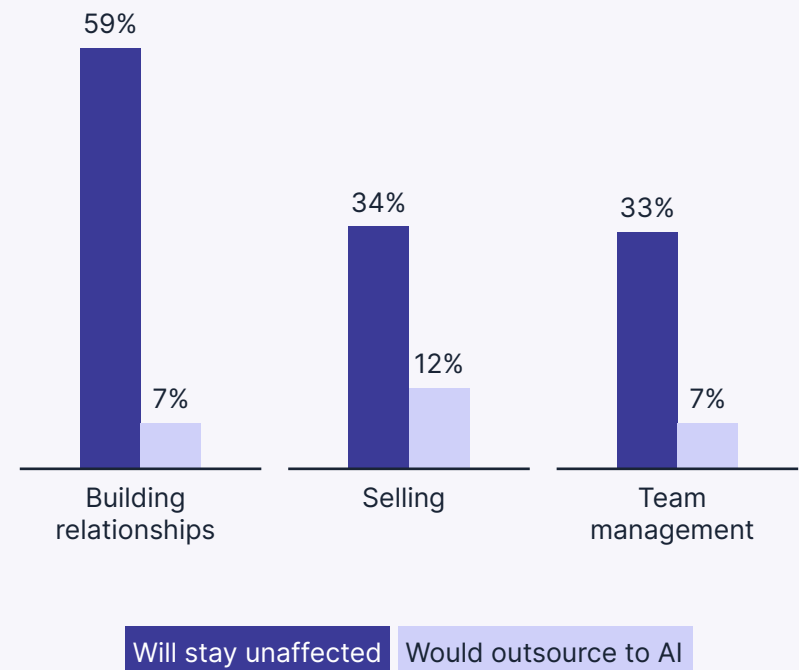
AI isn't trusted to build relationships, sell or manage teams

Even though AI might be trusted to prospect for and qualify leads in the future, respondents believe that salespeople will still play an important role, completing tasks that require soft skills.

Only **7%** would entrust both relationship building and team management to AI.

Sales professionals will also be required to perform the most important job of all: selling. Just **12% of respondents** believe that selling can be outsourced to AI technology.

Lowest AI potential (AI not trusted?)





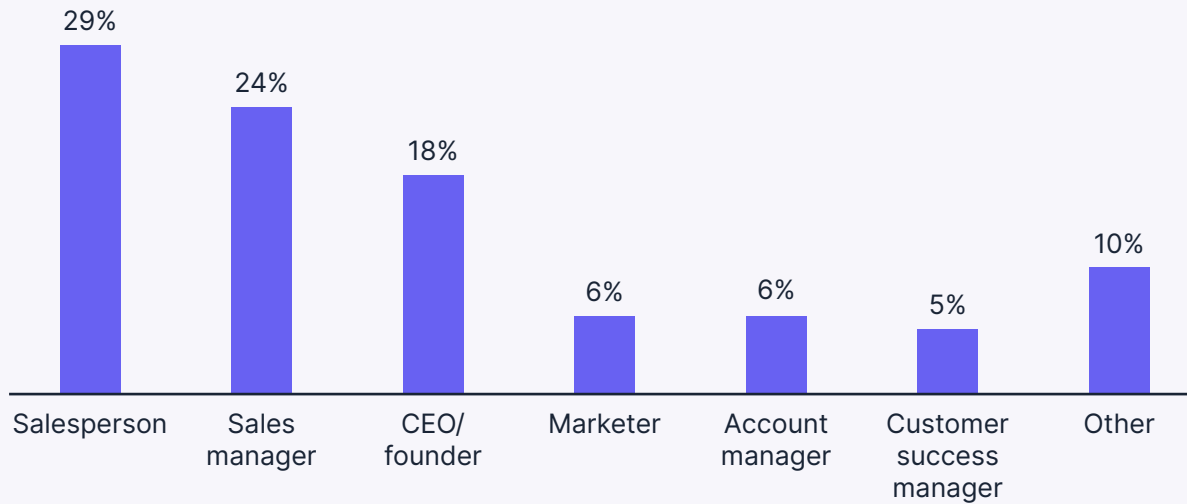
Survey respondent demographics

948 respondents from 85 countries.

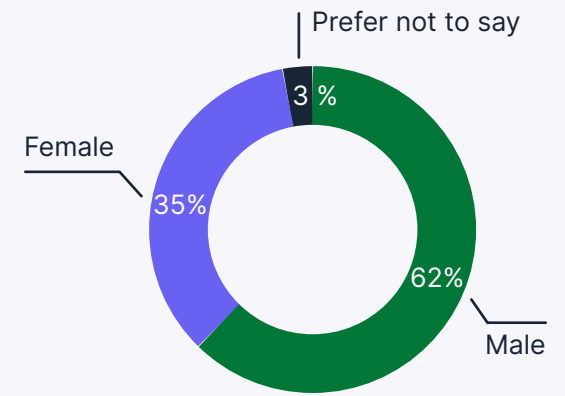
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Job role and gender

Job role

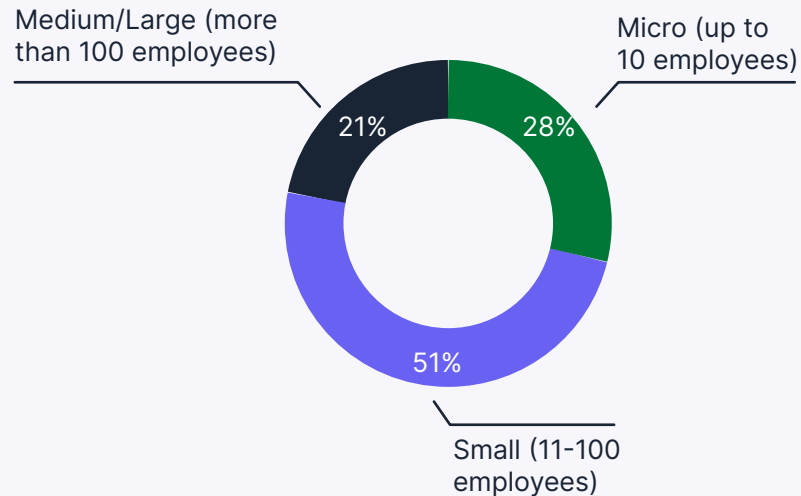


Gender

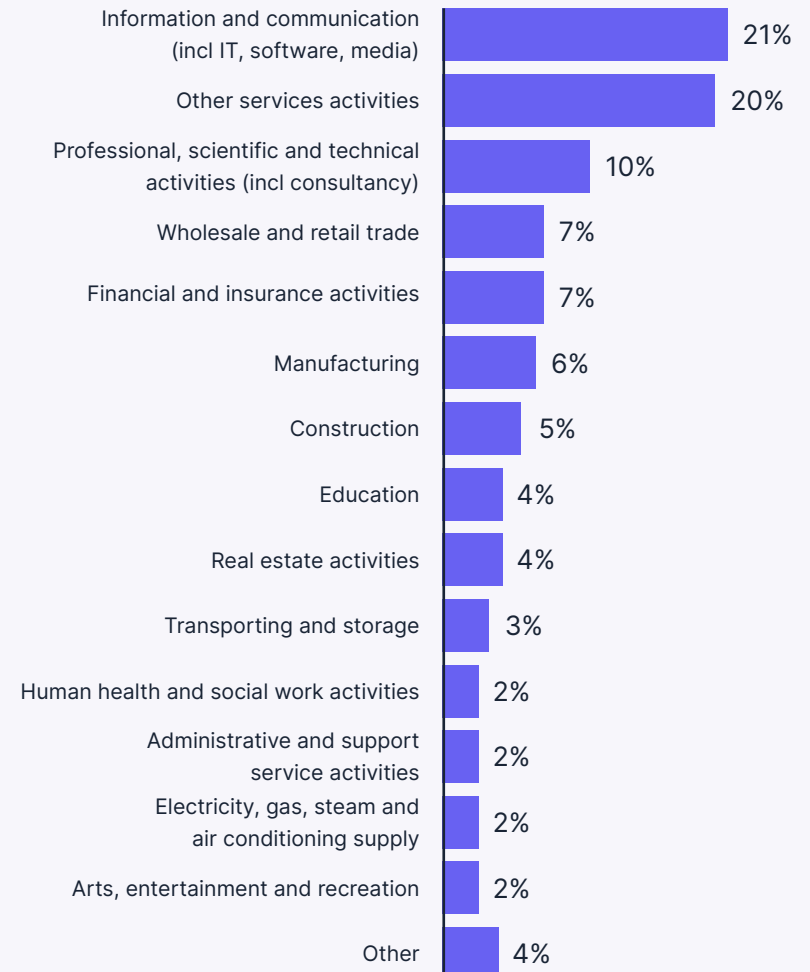


Company size and industry split

Company size (by employee number)



Main industry



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